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# For God & Country

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Adventists in Military and  
Public Service*





# PASSION IN MINISTRY

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**A**s a young pastor, and later as an active duty Army Chaplain, I began to ask the question: “What makes successful clergy successful?” After all, I felt called to ministry and wanted to be successful in any branch of service God would lead. Therefore, the question that prompted laser-like observation of those who were successful and personally fulfilled by their vocation.

I still ask the question today, and still acutely observe. The answer I found (others may agree or not) was a common element: a passion for ministry.

Of course, education, mentoring, preparation, ongoing skill development, and other items add to success. But, if the element of passion either fades or never exists, discontent and disaster are just around the corner

at the junction of burnout and blah.

Webster defines passion as: “a strong liking or desire for or devotion to an activity, object, or concept. An object of desire or deep interest.”

Appropriate synonyms would be fervor, enthusiasm, keen interest, or zeal. Note that all of these words/concepts are very active verbs. There is nothing passive, dull, or drab about them. They sizzle like raindrops on a hot stove. Those who live and minister with those characteristics, find success in their vocation.

To the vital element of passion, I would add an insatiable curiosity and ongoing creativity. Curiosity fuels more focus, more research, more digging which, in turn, feeds a passionate work ethic. Creativity seeks unique ways to see things, make

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things, and present materials. That kind of performance becomes evident to others and acts as a magnet to observers who yearn for meaning in their lives.

The opposite is equally observable. We have all seen or experienced presentations, articles, or sermons that are stale, dry, drab, and mere empty shells, delivered so flat that you wonder if the presenter even believes it. The message, beneath the message, is: "I didn't really invest in this, but I have to do it, so here it is." It comes across with an astounding THUD! Obviously, not a descriptor of success. The essential missing ingredient is a passion with the corollary elements of curiosity and creativity.

Studies<sup>1</sup> have shown that individuals who enjoy their work have higher levels of performance because they encompass creativity, trust colleagues, and have a reduced level of stress. In short, they actually enjoy what they do. Work enjoyment brings about more positive work outcomes. The other side of the coin is the person who does the job from an internal pressure to please others or to get ahead. That life view is negatively related to work outcomes and has been related negatively to measures of psychological health.<sup>2</sup>

The passionate person would seemingly be willing to do what they do without pay. The pay, position, rank, privileges that come from success are really quite secondary, although appreciated. The joy is in a deep, passionate commitment to the

vocation, and seeing the results unfold.

The caution is that one must not allow the passion to become an obsession that overwhelms other aspects of life and family. If that is allowed to happen, the person becomes a workaholic, and their work borders on addiction with all the concomitant dangers of any addiction.

Jesus was passionate about His ministry, yet He frequently took time away from the crowds, the preaching, the healing and the miracle working. He needed, and took time to recharge, to keep things in balance and in perspective. Paul was the same way. God had to park him on Malta for a while before he got to Rome.

Passionate professionals love what they do and do what they love. And, it shows.

Wise passionate people know when to slow down, recharge, allow creativity and curiosity to perk. They keep a passion for their relationships, their marriage, and their family as bright as for their work. The balance is refreshing, energizing, and successful. They are passionately fulfilled.

And, to answer my earlier questions about successful folks, I have found that passionate people in balance are those who enjoy success and fulfillment both internally and externally. I am passionate about that.

<sup>1</sup> Burke, R. J.; Fikstenbaum, Lisa (May 2009) "Work Motivations, Satisfaction, and Health Among Managers. Passion Versus Addiction: Sage Publications: Cross Cultural Research volume 43.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



# IS YOUR HEADSPACE HEALTHY?

By Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries Staff

Daily life is replete with challenges and even unexpected potholes. Coping with these can take a toll physically, emotionally, and even spiritually. This can lead to decreased interest in your job, which can impact your performance. Intentional actions to keep your headspace healthy and an increased passion for your job bring multiple rewards.

## Prayer and Bible study –

Starting your day out with quiet time, Bible study, and prayer set the tone for how the rest of the day plays out. Spend time reading God’s life instructions to you and listening as He speaks to you both in reading the Word and in prayer. Ask for power to face the day with positivity and to be His hands and feet to all you meet.

Consistent devotional time impacts how your days, weeks, and months play out. “Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”<sup>1</sup>

**Gratitude –** Adopting a consistently positive attitude is a plus when the unforeseen happens.

You will be less likely to become overwhelmed with negative feelings when tough times come. There are many ways to reinforce a positive attitude. Keeping a gratitude journal helps you hone each day to calibrate your life towards the positive. Writing things down is more than a recounting of what you did. The action of recalling your daily progress can be

therapeutic and provides evidence that you made headway, even on days when it feels like you didn't.

A written record also assists in looking to the future. As you are writing about what you've accomplished, reflect on what yet needs to be done. These thoughts will be useful as you determine future goals.

When you consistently practice gratitude and record those thoughts, during difficult times you can reflect back on affirming events. By doing this, you can change your perspective and work through the negative feelings towards a more effective outlook.

**Goal-Setting** – Goal-setting is the practice of identifying something you want to achieve and then outlining how you will succeed. Some individuals feel weighed down with goals. Setting progressive goals helps with overwhelm. What is the overall thing you want to achieve? Identify micro-goals, midterm goals, and long-term goals as steps. You can also assign these as daily, weekly, quarterly, and annual goals. As you see achievement in various areas, you'll experience satisfaction as you see effective implementation.

**Solution Seeker** – Instead of focusing on the negative at work, become a solution seeker. Looking only at problems tends to create negative attitudes. Anyone can point out problems, but intentionally finding solutions changes how you look at your job, your department, your superiors. By finding solutions, you can energize yourself and others to

**Care for others** – Have you ever noticed that when someone smiles, it's contagious? Do you intentionally make someone smile on a daily basis? A simple action, such as a smile, has an immediate impact on others. It lifts

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their spirits, and it lifts yours. How can you intentionally show others you come into contact with that you care about them?

**Use Positive Speak** – Scientific studies tell us that optimistic thinking and speaking can prolong life. In a study conducted by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, researchers “observed strong associations between higher optimism levels and lower risks of mortality.”<sup>2</sup> The study also cites “higher optimism was associated with a lower risk of mortality from many major causes of death, including cancer, heart disease, and stroke.”<sup>3</sup>

Your mental health “is much more than a diagnosis. It's your overall psychological well-being—the way you feel about yourself and others as well as your ability to manage your feelings and deal with everyday difficulties.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Romans 12:2, New Living Translation

<sup>2</sup> *American Journal of Epidemiology*, Volume 185, Issue 1, 1 January 2017, Pages 21–29, <https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kww182>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/women-s-mental-health-matters/201510/9-ways-you-can-improve-your-mental-health-today>



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TIPS FOR  
MAINTAINING

**PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL**

BALANCE

I had a five year plan for my life, children were included, but they were distantly located in the plan. Knowing the goals I set for my life, I was responsible in considerations of family planning...or so I thought. As life would have it, I discovered that I was pregnant within the first two weeks of training at Officer Development School (ODS). As I sat in a cold and sterile medical exam room in King Hall, my well thought out five-year-plan began to unravel. This was my first lesson in balancing work and "life": *Be flexible because plans change.*

## 1: DON'T GO IT ALONE

Our family welcomed our first child, Brayden, during the middle of my pre-doctoral internship training year at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth (NMCP). While it was not ideal timing, the experience taught me the second lesson that I needed to know: *You will need support.* Completing internship and my first tour in a "geo-bachelor" status, with a small child to boot, was manageable because I sought support. My husband routinely traveled to the area every weekend for four years. I also found additional assistance from friends and family members who also lived in the area. I relied upon this system heavily after the more timely arrival of our daughter, Chloe, who was born toward the end of my tour. I was

fortunate to have family in the area, but when family isn't accessible, the relationships you form with Navy family can be just as supportive.

## 2: SPEAK UP

I would transition from NMCP to the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center while in post-partum status. At this time, the Maternity Leave instruction had been recently updated providing a substantial period of additional maternity leave. Initiating conversations about these issues with the new chain of command early communicated an important message to leaders. I was considering the needs of the department, as well as my own desires, and looking for an effective solution. It facilitated a smooth transition and reintegration period for my family, and minimized disruption to the clinical template. Lesson number three: *Don't be shy about communicating your needs.* This also applies to requesting reasonable accommodation for Sabbath observance.

## 3: ALTERNATIVES

A critical component of finding balance is having an understanding supervisor and/or chain of command that looks for alternative resources to support their staff. Our clinic has extended hours, and the ability for providers to choose their time of duty. Additionally, teleworking

Research has shown a reduction in work-life conflict, when employees have control of their schedules, and receive support from supervisors regarding personal and family life responsibilities



agreements are available within our department. Research has shown a reduction in work-life conflict, when employees have control of their schedules, and receive support from supervisors regarding personal and family life responsibilities.<sup>1</sup>

Parenthood never fails to throw curve balls like fevers, viruses, injuries, and the list goes on. Most recently, a virus leeches onto one of my children at school and infiltrated our home; both children were out with pink eye. Teleworking was the solution to the scheduling conundrum I faced. I was able to stay on top of work tasks when taking a break from the hazmat duties in my home. Having alternative resources that allow you to parent and nurture your children, while still fulfilling some aspects of clinical duties is invaluable.

#### 4: BE MINDFUL

It is easy to be consumed with clinical care, collateral duties, and household responsibilities. At times, it feels as if I leave one job only to go home and start the next; a never-ending cycle of meeting the needs of others. It can get overwhelming some days. By far, the most important lesson I've learned is: *Be Present*. Being present and fully engaged in the moment is pertinent in occupational functioning and family life. Doing so helps you to maximize the hours of work with efficiency and productivity. At home, take a moment to breathe, decompress, and recognize that one day this phase will pass, and you'll only have the memories to reflect on. Be present amidst the chaos of toys, dinner, dishes, and laundry. Listen for the infectious sounds of children's laughter, and the pitter-patter of

At times, it feels as if I leave one job only to go home and start the next; a never-ending cycle of meeting the needs of others.

tiny feet running through the house. Take the time to play with the Legos, read their favorite book for the 40<sup>th</sup> time, and bake the cupcakes they are requesting for dessert. Those are the moments that give rise to special memories in your heart, and theirs.

## 5: I NEED A BREAK

Last, but most certainly not least: *Give yourself a break.* Ballenger-Browning and colleagues<sup>2</sup> found higher rates of burnout among military mental health providers who carried large caseloads, worked long hours, and had less experience. Does this resonate with your “worker bee” status? If so, then give yourself a break. Make your health and well-being a priority; you cannot pour from an empty cup. Take advantage of opportunities for PT during the week. Visit your physician to address your health, not just to complete your PHA.

Don't forget to practice self-care recommendations. The leave you

keep storing up, you've earned it so don't let it go to waste.

Raising a family while on Active Duty can be challenging, but it is most certainly possible. It requires flexibility, support, communication, and a lot of juggling! When you reflect and consider the moments that have passed, perhaps you will find that you have concurrently achieved your initial professional and personal goals. In that moment, it's all worth it!

<sup>1</sup> Kelly, E. L., Moen, P., Oakes, J. M., Fan, W., Okechukwu, C., Davis, K. D., & ... Casper, L. M. (2014). Changing Work and Work-Family Conflict: Evidence from the Work, Family, and Health Network. *American Sociological Review*, 79(3), pgs. 485-516.

<sup>2</sup> Ballenger-Browning, K., Schmitz, K.J., Rothacker, J.A., Hammer, P.S., Webb-Murphy, J.A., & Johnson, D.C. (2011). Predictors of burnout among military mental health providers. *Military Medicine*, 176(3), pgs. 253-260.

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# REINVIGORATING YOUR PASSION

By LTC (CH) Dan Bray, U. S. Army, Retired, MS, MDiv.  
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At some point in our careers, many of us come to the point when we have doubts about our vocation. Some of the following questions arise including the following:

“Did I choose the right job?”

“Why is the other person paid more than me?”

“Why is it such a struggle to get out of bed and go to work today?”

Eventually we come to the realization that we have a need to reinvigorate the passion we once had for our work. Without that drive, we could easily spiral onto a path of substandard performances or, worse yet, cheat ourselves from years of satisfaction.

One of the first things I would suggest you do when you appear to lack focus for your job is to think back to why you chose that field in the first place. Maybe it was solely for the money. Perhaps you landed a cushy geographical location. Or it could have been the fact that you derived a sense of enjoyment helping someone else.

There is an old principle of work that I find interesting. It says

It has been said that the average person changes jobs ten to fifteen times with many workers only spending five years or less in every job.

that we should select a career that we would be willing to do even if we were not paid anything at all for doing it.

Secondly, do not be reluctant in taking a vacation. Over the years, I have witnessed multiple people who refuse to take off much needed time because “they have to save it.”

Save it for what? Now, don’t misunderstand the intention here. We all should set aside a certain number of days “in the bank” to use when we encounter short-term illnesses. But, we ought and we need to take breaks periodically from our labors if for no other reason than it will likely increase our usefulness and productivity.

Thinking of vacation time, you do not necessarily blow your spending budget and go somewhere exotic. Some of the best work-breaks can be taken right inside your own town or even home. Over the past couple of years, I have made it a point of taking every Friday and playing golf with my wife and a close friend. It is a lot of fun, plus we can a chance to connect with friends along the way.

Thirdly, find an appropriate mentor. An advisor is more than someone who can show you the right way to do a job. This person can be a sounding board or provide a

place to vent that is safe and secure. Sometimes they can challenge us to do what we once viewed as impossible or beyond our capabilities. A person “in our corner” indeed can be the very positive charge we need when we are feeling down.

Fourth, view your career like any other important relationship. It has been said that the average person changes jobs ten to fifteen times with many workers only spending five years or less in every job. Relationships take time to flourish and develop. They just don’t happen overnight, so we have to be patient with the process if we truly want to achieve something important.

Lastly, we should not think we are indispensable to our company or boss. No matter the vocation or career, there will come a time when we stop going to work. For example, when we retire and no longer make that drive to work, who will be home living with us then? In the military, particularly, whenever we PCS (move) there is the “next person up” mentality and we are often forgotten. If we have not invested in that personal or family relationship along the way, that person could very likely not even be present with us.

# A BOY & A BOOK



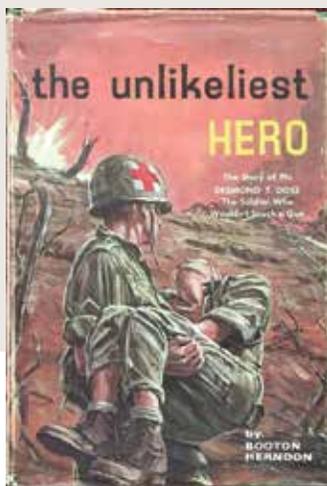
By Kevin Wilkinson, Chief of Police, retired, Neenah, Wisconsin, with Deena Bartel-Wagner, ACM Editor

It may never be known the number of boys and girls impacted by the book, *The Unlikeliest Hero*. The story of Desmond Doss resonated with readers in the 1960's, and it still does today. A young boy from the Wisconsin farmland internalized the principles Doss lived by and used them to guide his daily life.

During Kevin Wilkinson's childhood in Wisconsin many people influenced his life. "My mother was a Seventh-day Adventist, but my father was an agnostic," says Kevin. "My family, including my uncles, impacted my life. But there was a tension that I didn't understand. I felt a push and pull for rules to live by, but often, I was confused by the mixed values that I saw."

During these years, Kevin read *The Unlikeliest Hero* repeatedly. "The story fascinated me," says Kevin. Drawn to the story, Kevin internalized the principles Doss lived by, little realizing the significance this would hold for him personally.

At 18-years-old, Kevin decided the next step in his life would be to join the Marine Corps. "My dad was a Marine, and this seemed like a logical



step," says Kevin. When he left for boot camp in San Diego, Kevin faced one of the first significant challenges to his faith in his adult life.

During training, Kevin excelled in every discipline. At the top of his unit, graduation meant he'd



Chief Kevin Wilkinson (left) shares a humorous moment with fellow officers.

earn the coveted title of being a Marine. However, not everything in Kevin's soul rested easy. "I knew my participation meant I was doing things that conflicted with my Adventist beliefs," says Kevin. "I met with an Adventist chaplain and came to the conclusion that I could not become a Marine. I believed that by writing that letter I was also giving up a law enforcement career in the future, but I had to follow my conscience."

After writing the letter, Kevin was reassigned to a different unit. "These recruits were the ones who were least likely to finish," says Kevin. "This reassignment could have been a discouragement, but I took it as a challenge. The Doss story played through my mind and what he experienced. I determined I'd do my best for the rest of my time at boot camp."

Finally, boot camp finished, and Kevin received a status of training failure on his *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty* or DD 214. "This reinforced my belief that law enforcement was out of the question for me," says Kevin. "Additionally, I had to face my dad who couldn't understand why I'd taken such a position."

## To Serve and to Protect

The next few years for Kevin were filled with college and a continual desire to take a role in law enforcement. Casual comments, such as one made by a police officer after Kevin reported witnessing a crime, intensified his desire. "As I was finishing my statement, the officer asked me if I had ever thought about going into law enforcement," says Kevin. "His comment sparked something within me, and I began to apply to various police departments."

In April 1984, the Riverside Police Department (RDP) in Riverside, California accepted Kevin's application and sent him to Police Academy. "My time in the police academy was like a redemption from

"I felt a push and pull for rules to live by, but often, I was confused by the mixed values that I saw."



Taking time to de-stress is an important of life balance for law enforcement officers. Chief Wilkinson relaxes during a canoeing excursion.

what happened in boot camp,” says Kevin. “I worked hard during training and graduated first in my class.”

The work with the RDP proved to be a solid foundation for a career that prepared Kevin for duties in Riverside, San Luis Obispo, and beyond. “Although I enjoyed my work in California, it never seemed to feel like home to my wife and me,” says Kevin. “When the opportunity to move to Appleton, Wisconsin and work in that department became available, I took it.”

## Meeting the Man

That choice led to an event that Kevin never dreamed he’d have the opportunity to participate in. In 1999, the Discover the Power International Pathfinder Camporee was held in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. During the event, Kevin served as the head of security overseeing the safety and security of more than 22,000 Pathfinders and staff. One of the featured guests was Desmond Doss.

“I was busy making sure the fire lanes were clear, as they introduced my lifelong hero and mentor,” says Kevin. “I kept thinking to myself, *These people don’t understand him*. I was sure Desmond Doss was lost on this new generation. Then the crowd rose to their feet and gave him a standing ovation!”

Kevin almost missed meeting Doss that night, because of his security duties. But they eventually shook hands and engaged in conversation. “I met him again in 2004, and attended his funeral in 2006,” says Kevin. Those events helped Kevin come full circle from reading a book to meeting his hero. He continues to apply the principles he learned from the Doss story to his life today and passes them on to others, including his children and the officers and staff under his supervision.

## A Christian and Law Enforcement

Kevin committed his life to Christ as a boy and was baptized by Les Rilea at Camp Wahdoon, in Wisconsin. He lives his faith at work and participates in his local church and speaks regularly in five or six area churches.

Although he’s grappled with faith issues, Kevin says if you choose to be part of law enforcement you have to know you are called to it. “You will carry a gun. The sole purpose for this is to defend life,” says Kevin. “Sabbath duty is something you will wrestle with between yourself and God. On Sabbaths that I’ve been on duty, I’m more conscious of making a change in my day. I see myself as being present to help others rather than enforcing laws.”

Although Kevin was sure he’d never have a career in law enforcement following his stand at boot camp, he’s gone on to serve as the Chief of Police in New London, Wisconsin and Neenah, Wisconsin.

With 34 years of service, Kevin’s

Kevin Wilkinson served as Chief of Police in Neenah Wisconsin from 2009-2018.

faced both challenging situations and rewarding outcomes. He reflects on regrets wondering what he could have done differently—a drug addict in San Luis Obispo. He celebrates the wins—one of the most substantial crack seizures in Appleton. He remembers the horrific that happened in his own community—a starving child, dying at the hands of his drug-addicted mother. He’s tracked serial killers and dealt with rape victims. He’s delivered death notices. He still feels the agony of the death of an infant. “Although the baby stopped breathing, I was sure that we’d save it,” says Kevin. “We didn’t. I could taste that baby’s breath for a month.”

The rewards often come when least anticipated. “One day, as I walked the street in Neenah, a little girl came up to me and said, ‘Thank you for your service.’ Says Kevin. “I was going through a particularly rough time, and those words meant the world to me.”

As for his military discharge status, Kevin’s proven several times over he could have finished basic training and become a Marine. In his law enforcement career he’s been named Officer of the Year twice: once in California and once in Wisconsin, and received Appleton’s Medal of Valor (swiftwater rescue) among other awards.

More than 3,000 individuals have been awarded the Medal of Honor



in the United States. “The story here isn’t about what the soldier did to the enemy,” says Kevin. “It’s about what they did for their fellow soldiers. For Desmond Doss, his commitment to his integrity stood above the abuse, the threat of punishment, imprisonment, and more.”

Kevin Wilkinson’s life is one of service. He’s served his community, and now he moves on to another kind of service. Upon his recent retirement as Neenah’s chief of police, Kevin’s spending his next season of life in ministry to his aging parents. As a Christian man, Kevin’s practicing the command of Leviticus 19:32, “Stand up in the presence of the elderly, and show respect for the aged.” It’s one of those principles he learned from reading *The Unlikeliest Hero*. Service to all, no matter the sacrifice, is living the integrity-filled life.

He continues to apply the principles he learned from the Doss story to his life today and passes them on to others, including his children and the officers and staff under his supervision.

# SDA AND MILITARY RELATED SERVICE CONFERENCE

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is not a “pacifist or peace” church by the traditional definition of the terms. Though the Seventh-day Adventist Church advocates a noncombatant position, pacifism, military service, or non-combatancy are not tests of church membership.

The denomination does not act as the conscience for any member or military commander, but it does seek to inform the conscience and behavior of both, so decisions can be made with a maximum of understanding and thought. Thus, some church members are willing to train with and use weapons, while others, because of their own individual conscience, cannot have anything to do with weapons or military service.

Historically, most Seventh-day Adventists have served as non-combatant medics for two reasons: (1) Such service minimizes Sabbath conflicts (saving and maintaining life is honorable on the Sabbath), and (2) Such service is more in harmony with the church’s stated recommendation.”<sup>1</sup>

The official stand of the world church was voted during the 1954 General Conference Session and reaffirmed by action taken at the 1972 Annual Council of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists held 14 - 29 October in Mexico City, Mexico. It states: *Genuine Christianity manifests itself in good citizenship and loyalty to civil government. The breaking out of war among men in no way alters the Christian’s supreme allegiance and responsibility to God or modifies their obligation to practice their beliefs and put God first.*

*This partnership with God through Jesus Christ*

*who came into this world not to destroy men's lives but to save them causes Seventh-day Adventists to advocate a noncombatant position, following their divine Master in not taking human life, but rendering all possible service to save it. As they accept the obligation of citizenship as well as its benefits, their loyalty to government requires them willingly to serve the state in any noncombatant capacity, civil or military, in war or peace, in uniform or out of it, which will contribute to saving life, asking only that they may serve in those capacities which do not violate their conscientious convictions.*

*This statement is not a rigid position binding church members, but gives guidance leaving the individual member free to assess the situation for her or himself.*

On April 11-12, 2019, a conference entitled "The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Military Service" will be held at the General Conference headquarters. "The purpose of the meeting is to address several aspects in relation to the world church, military service, and its members," says Dr. Mario Ceballos, Director, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries and the World Service Organization (WSO). "According to the *General Conference Working Policy*, 'the World/National Service Organization (WSO/NSO) is an integral element of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries (ACM) and is the official military relations office of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Its primary mission is to provide pastoral care and religious resources to support the spiritual well-being of Seventh-day Adventists serving their nations in all aspects of government service, in and out of uniform, including military forces and law enforcement agencies around the world.'"

During the conference, attendees

Though the Seventh-day Adventist Church advocates a noncombatant position, pacifism, military service, or non-combatancy are not tests of church membership.

will review the official church position and explore viable options to support the individual member and the way they follow their conscience. "Regardless of an individual's choice—whether it is to serve as a non-combatant or a combatant, or to hold the position of pacifist, the role of the church is to provide spiritual and moral support," says Ceballos.

Other topics that will be discussed are Sabbath-keeping challenges and ways for Adventists who serve in uniform to maintain their faith tradition. Additionally, each of the World Divisions, in consultation with the Unions and Conferences within their territory, will provide reports from their regions. These will include information on conscription and alternatives to military services in the countries served by the Division, approximate numbers of members who serve in uniformed services, reports on how the Division, Unions, and Conferences are providing the spiritual support promised by the denomination, and anecdotal evidence of how members who serve in the military and police service are treated by fellow church members.

<sup>1</sup> Councell, Gary R., *Seventh-day Adventists and Military Related Service*. Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, 2011, pgs. 30-31.

# MEDICAL CADETS CORPS A NEW GENERATION



A historic meeting for the revitalization of the Medical Cadet Corps (MCC) program took place during a special training session held in Levittown, Puerto Rico, from April 30 to May 3, 2018. The meeting provided special training for MCC officers who are currently involved in the program across the North American and Inter-American Divisions, as well as initiating other leaders who are interested in reviving the MCC in their regions.

“The MCC program originally helped Adventist servicemen serve according to their conscience,” said Mario Ceballos, Director, World Service Organization–General Conference (WSO-GC). “MCC cadets are trained and equipped to provide spiritual comfort, and other services such as first aid during emergency situations.”

“In today’s world, many countries no longer have a draft, and although we never know when world events could lead to a reinstatement of conscription, it is best to prepare our young adults,” said Ceballos. “MCC training also equips cadets, ages 17 and older, to serve in their local communities in times of disaster. Their assistance during these types of

“MCC cadets are trained and equipped to provide spiritual comfort, and other services such as first aid during emergency situations.”



events fosters goodwill with residents and provides help in time of need. We want to make the MCC type of training available to individuals in every world Division.”

### **AN 84-YEAR-OLD INITIATIVE**

The Medical Cadet Corps was originally launched on January 8, 1934, on the Union College campus in Lincoln, Nebraska, United States, under the leadership of Everett Dick, a professor at Union and a World War I veteran. Training followed the approach used for training medics in the U.S. Army and included close-order drill, Army organizational structure, physical training, military courtesy, camp hygiene, litter drill, and first aid.

The Army soon recognized the value of soldiers who had received this type of training and often placed them in positions of leadership and authority within their unit.

The vision of training young men for non-combatant service caught on and other Adventist colleges adopted the program. At the 1939 Autumn Council held in Lincoln, military medical training was discussed, and attendees watched a demonstration drill by the cadets. As a result of these meetings, the General Conference

Division, Union, Conference, and local MCC leaders gathered for a recent training in Puerto Rico.



Participants engaged in strategy planning.



During the training conference, participants shared how they implement the Medical Cadet Corps program in their area.



Seventh-day Adventist Chaplain (Major) Wanda Acevedo, U. S. Army, shared with the group and thanked the Puerto Rico MCC's for their assistance following Hurricane Maria.



Rear Admiral Darold Bigger, U. S. Navy, Retired, pins on the rank of Hiram Ruiz, WSO Director, Inter-American Division.

voted to adopt the plan of military medical training. It was named the Seventh-day Adventist Medical Cadet Corps (SDAMCC).

During the recent training week, hosted by the world church's World Service Organization, MCC officers attended presentations on MCC Operations and Organization, Senior Military Leadership Protocol and Ethics with Rear Admiral Darold Bigger, U.S. Navy-Retired and Commander Washington Johnson, CHC, U.S. Navy Reserves and Assistant Director, WSO-North American Division. They discussed the qualities of executive leadership and flag officer etiquette. Dionisio Olivo, Director, WSO-Atlantic Union Conference, shared lessons and the challenges that the MCC program has faced and overcome.

## **MCCS IN THE INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION**

Hiram Ruiz, Director, WSO-Inter-American Division also shared the experiences and contributions of MCC groups in the IAD since the MCCs were established in the



At the conclusion of the training program the Medical Cadet Corps leaders are eager to advance the program in their region and see it expand to other world Divisions.

“We cannot deny the need to protect our youth and develop in them a willingness to serve in their communities.”

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1950s and even decades after the organization was deactivated and was kept running regionally.

“We cannot deny the need to protect our youth and develop in them a willingness to serve in their communities,” said Ruiz, who led the MCC in Mexico while serving as youth ministries leader at Montemorelos University.

“This is all about retaking the ministry that will allow many countries to show the face of the church full of compassion in service while it prepares young people to serve in natural disasters, in civic events, all opening the door for others to learn about the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” explained Ruiz.

Ruiz said that Montemorelos University had been running the MCC training since the 1950s up to 2013 (The MCC was deactivated in North America in 1972). Groups in Colombia, Venezuela, and other countries in Inter-America continued running on their own to assist their communities. In Puerto Rico, the church has been successfully running the MCC program since 1951, explained Ruiz.

## **PUERTO RICO MCC'S**

David Sebastian, Director, WSO—Puerto Rico Union Conference and Major General of the SDA MCC Puerto Rico Division, said that the MCC is widely recognized across the island nation. It is accepted by

the island's Centro Medico Hospital, State Emergency Management Office, by international sporting events such as World's Best 10K, several mental health government agencies, the Red Cross, and others. He said it is known for their contribution through decades of assisting the community and, most recently, following the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria on the island.

Numerous media outlets provided positive coverage about the work of the MCC cadets in Puerto Rico.

The MCC unit in Puerto Rico sees an average of 200 cadets enrolled in the 17 training schools from basic training, first responders, community service, and school of instructors.

“Even though young cadets are not called to serve in the military, the effort of this organization moves with more emphasis in the spiritual life, civic life, community service to assist in the well-being of communities, after natural disasters and other situations serving selflessly,” said Sebastian.

The MCC groups meet regionally every week in Puerto Rico among its four church region fields and meet annually for additional training under the leadership of the union, or major church region, said Sebastian.

*For more information about the Medical Cadets Corps, contact the World Service Organization of your home division or reach out to the World Service Organization at the General Conference at [acm@gc.adventist.org](mailto:acm@gc.adventist.org).*

# DREAMS, MIRACLES, AND GRANITE STONES

Dreams can overcome impossible odds when you believe fully in the goal you are attempting to reach. For Chaplain (Colonel) Richard “Dick” Stenbakken, U.S. Army, Retired, one of his dreams culminated in the National Memorial Cemetery, located in Punchbowl Crater in Honolulu. It was here the ministry of Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines Pacific Theater chaplains, both past, present and future, was formally and permanently recognized.

“The first time I visited the National Memorial Cemetery was in 1970,” says Stenbakken. “I was on a brief ‘R & R’ from a tour of duty in Vietnam. The serenity of the Cemetery was a stark contrast to the war zone that I had come from and would return to for another 100 days.”

In December 2016, Stenbakken returned to the Punchbowl with friends. During that visit, he contemplated the markers they viewed during their walk through throughout the grounds. “I was struck by the fact that there was not a single monument to commemorate the ministry and service of chaplains,” says Stenbakken. “I felt compelled to do something about it.”

That began a two-year journey of paperwork, drawings, research, and

emails to pull everything together. “One of the stipulations was that the funding for the marker had to come from the military or an organization that works with the military. We had a very diversified group involved in the planning and creative process as well as the dedication ceremony,” says Stenbakken. “I contacted Jack Lea, Executive Director, National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF) about making a presentation at the annual Military Endorsers meeting. With their support for the project, we were able to move forward. NCMAF and the Jewish Welfare Board were instrumental in funding the project.”

The commemorative 1600-pound granite marker came from India and features a special jet-black sloped surface. Three bronze, 3-D insignias represent the branches of Army, Air Force, and Navy chaplaincy. “The bronze markers were created by a company in my hometown of Loveland, Colorado,” says Stenbakken. Engraved on the stone are these words, “Honoring Military Chaplains for service to God and Country in the Pacific Theater; Placed by the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces and the Jewish Welfare Board.”

In the days leading up to the actual dedication ceremony, it seemed as though a series of events would conspire to keep the stone from arriving on time for placement. “Due to delays, the stone didn’t arrive in California until five days before the ceremony,” says Stenbakken. “It had to be unloaded and clear customs.”

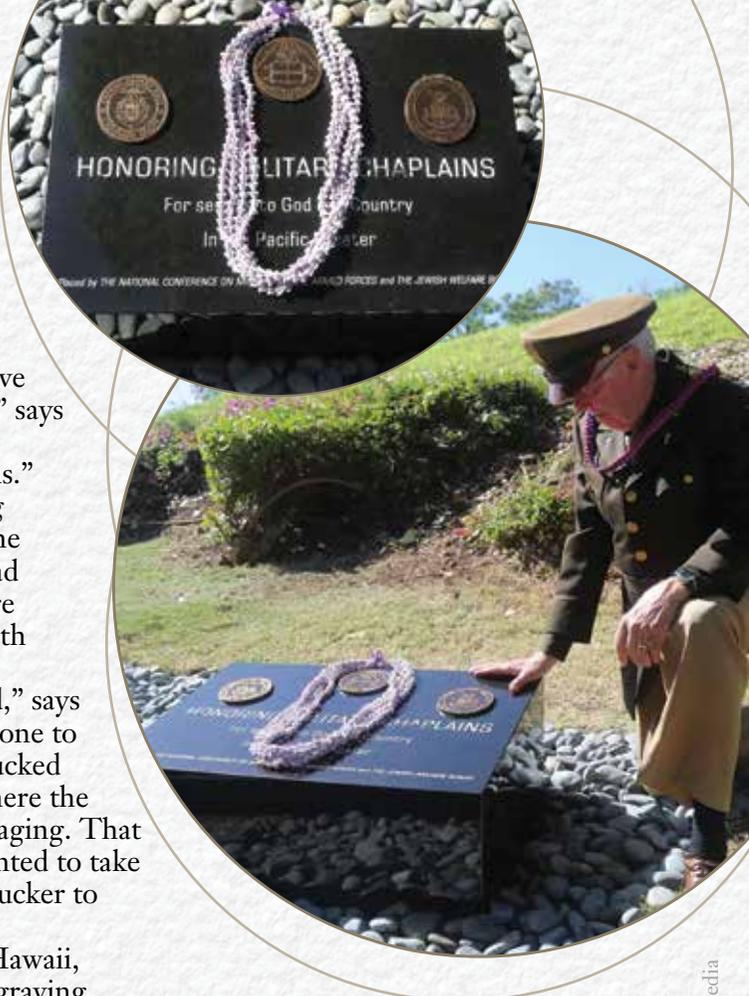
Because of the shipping delays plans to transport the stone to Hawaii by boat had to be abandoned. “We were able to secure shipment with an air freight office just 15 minutes before they closed,” says Stenbakken. “To get the stone to the airport, it had to be trucked 100 miles through land where the California wildfires were raging. That was a shipment no one wanted to take on. I finally convinced a trucker to make the trip.”

Once the stone was in Hawaii, Honor Life Memorials engraving company in Kaneohe took possession and worked overtime to complete the engraving, affix the bronze seals, and deliver it to the Puncbowl on Monday morning where it would be set in place. The dedication service was scheduled for Wednesday morning. “It’s truly a miracle that everything fell into place,” says Stenbakken.

During the ceremony Stenbakken was one of a roster of attending chaplains, including Chaplain (Major General) Paul Hurley, Army Chief of Chaplains (Roman Catholic); Chaplain Jack Lea, Director of National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (Methodist); Derek Jones, Endorser for the Anglican Church; Sarah Lammert (Unitarian

Universalist Endorser); Rabbi Irving Elson, Director-Endorser of the Jewish Welfare Board; and Chaplain Paul Anderson, Director/Endorser, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries-North American Division.

A visit to a cemetery, an 88-page application packet, two years of work, and five days of a rollercoaster journey of a 1600-pound stone with plenty of nail-biting moments culminated in the serene grounds of the National Memorial Cemetery. “This marker reminds all who see it that chaplains have been, are there now, and will continue into the future to be present to support the military service members and their families,” says Stenbakken.



Photos by: Honolulu Creative Media



## SHINE, SHINE, SHINE

“The life of a nation is secure only while the nation is honest, truthful, and virtuous.”

Frederick Douglass

Lately, for me, watching and reading the news has become a burden. Being in the know used to feel so illuminating. The news hours on television and time spent in the journals and magazines was educative. Now, when watching, listening to or reading the news I feel like I am descending into a steep, darkened vortex of misery and uncertainty. It had become depressing until in my devotions I stumbled upon a familiar New Testament text—Matthew 5: 14-16.

In my Bible the words were red lettered. As part of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus intoned the solution for extinguishing the dark cloud of despair that I would feel.

*“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

There it was. Instead of bemoaning the darkness, I am to let my little light shine. As believers in the God who created us all, and His Son who gave His life so that we might have abundant lives. We have a calling to shine.

In any circumstance of extremis, whether personal corporate or national, believers should shine brighter. Dignified confrontations and orderly demonstrations have a place. Speaking truth to power is necessary for those who are in a place to do so. For those of us who live on the peripheries of politics, social issues and emergent circumstances, we must simply let the spiritual light within us shine into the darkness.

Spiritual light is often accompanied by inspiration resolution, if not for an entire problem, maybe for an individual. I am reminded of the story of a boy on

a beach tossing starfish that had washed up onto the shore, back into the surf. When asked why he was focused on such an insurmountable task and challenged about the difference he could make. The boy threw another one into the surf and exclaimed that it made a difference to that one.

When global problems arise and threaten to darken our environments, brighten the corner where you are. Do not run away thinking that your efforts are too small to matter. Shine anyway.

Fifteen years ago, my family climbed to the top of Mount Fuji. We arrived at the crest late in the day. We did not stay long because the sun was going down and we were not prepared to stay at that altitude overnight. We began our journey down the backside of the mountain. When the sun set, we could hardly see our hands in front of our faces. Below us was a light. We trudged down the dark side of Mount Fuji toward that light. Later, we discovered that we walked 11 miles in darkness, guided by a small light bulb on the back porch of someone's house. Their little light guided us through a frightening ordeal. Your light may do the same.

In her poem titled "Let your Light Shine" Marianne Williamson speaks to the liberating power of individual light.

*Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.*

*Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.*

*It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.*

*We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?*

*Actually, who are you not to be?*

*You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world.*

*There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.*

*We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.*

*It is not just in some of us, it is in everyone.*

*And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.*

*As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.*

Ina Duley Ogdon wrote the lyrics to the song titled "Brighten the Corner Where You Are." Harry Dixon Loes penned the lyrics to the children's song, "This Little Light of Mine." George Clinton, a 1970's pop balladeer similarly opined in one of his songs that "Everybody's got a little light under the sun."

Our jobs, as believers and leaders is to continuously shine from within us the light of honesty, truthfulness and virtue. Handwringing, complaining, and debate are not enough. That light shining in us may lead us to stand up, speak out, and sign up to offer care and/or sustenance for the widows, orphans and strangers in our sphere of influence. Shine! Shine! Shine!



## JOHNSON PROMOTED to Rank of Captain



**W**ashington Johnson II, an assistant director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries–North American Division (ACM-NAD), was recently selected for promotion to captain in the United States Navy Reserve. The promotion will bring greater leadership responsibilities through extensive oversight for religious programming, and counsel to members of the Navy Reserve’s senior leadership regarding spiritual, moral, and ethical issues.

Johnson follows in the footsteps of other chaplains who have served in the United States Navy Chaplain Corps, and reached the level of Captain or higher, including Captain Herman Kibble, Captain David Girardin, Captain Mike Hakanson, Rear

Admiral Darold Bigger, and Admiral Barry Black.

“I am truly grateful to God for the blessing of this selection and the opportunity to continue my chaplaincy ministry in the new rank,” said Johnson. “It is a high honor to serve both God and country.”

In addition to his duties at ACM-NAD, Johnson also serves as a staff chaplain at the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), and the United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) in Colorado Springs, Colorado, United States.

With this promotion, Johnson will add to his chaplaincy duties in the areas of strategic planning and chaplaincy training and development. In his role at ACM-NAD, Johnson actively recruits chaplains, assists chaplains in the endorsement process, and educates the public on the multifaceted roles of chaplaincy.

“I look forward to the increased mentoring opportunities that will help to prepare the next generation of Seventh-day Adventist chaplains,” said Johnson.

Captain Johnson’s official promotion ceremony is scheduled for October 1, 2018.

# REMEMBERING MEMORIAL DAY'S PURPOSE

Recently, a group of Sailors and civilians opted out of the barbecues, picnics, parties, and family trips usually associated with the “unofficial beginning of Summer.” On Monday 28 May 2018 at 1200, EMC Willie Scott II led a Professional Military Education (PME) event at the Miramar National Cemetery in San Diego, California. Eight active duty military, and eight civilians were in attendance. Of those 16 participants, six were a combination of active duty military Seventh-day Adventists and church members from the Claremont SDA, Bonita Valley SDA, and 31<sup>st</sup> Street SDA churches.

The theme of the PME event was to recognize the seven Sailors who died onboard the USS FITZGERALD (DDG 63) following a collision at sea on 17 June 2017.

At the time of the incident, Scott was the Casualty Assistance Calls Officer (CACO) aboard the USS BLUE RIDGE (LCC 19) and



volunteered as the ‘Courtesy’ CACO to provide assistance and relief to the FITZGERALD’s CACO.

Scott was quickly assigned to the family of YN3 Shingo Douglass. He met the family at the Tokyo airport and escorted them to Yokosuka. As Courtesy CACO from 24 through 28 June 2017, Scott led the Douglass Family through the arrival, memorial service, reception, and return from Japan. Throughout the 60 hours of accompaniment, Scott was on-call to

# NAD UPDATES



meet their every emotional need as they progressed through the grief cycle.

Additionally, Scott was instrumental in organizing a private meeting between the family and the Divers from the U.S. Naval Ship Repair Facility – Japan Regional Maintenance Center (SRF-JRMC) Dive Locker who actually recovered the bodies. SRF-JRMC was Scott's former command so he used his relationship

with the Dive Locker to connect the Douglass family with the Navy divers.

His effort, guidance, and coordination made the somber visit to Yokosuka an educational and memorable experience. As an official representative of the Secretary of the Navy, he provided information, resources, and assistance the family needed following their loss.

Almost a year later, the Douglass and Scott families have maintained their friendship. "I continue to use this as an opportunity to minister to them," says Scott. The Douglass family invited Scott (now assigned to the OPNAV N1 Fleet Introduction Team, stationed in San Diego, CA) to join the family in their first Memorial Day observance since the loss of their son. "Initially, the family wanted me to accompany them to the gravesite," says Scott. "I saw this as an opportunity to train Sailors and minister to the family simultaneously." He was granted permission from the family to arrange the PME event to learn the history behind Memorial Day, remember the fallen Sailors from





the similarities that Shintoism and Christianity shared.”

Participants learned about early observances of the holiday also known as Decoration Day, and how it has evolved into today’s observances. Participants also learned details about the collision between USS FITZGERALD and ACX CRYSTAL and its impact to the Navy and the world.

“This PME event served as an alternative to the parties, barbecues, and weekend trips that Americans have the freedom to take advantage of,” says Scott. “To celebrate the life, mourn the death, and pay our respects to the family of fellow Shipmates was a more meaningful way of observing Memorial Day for the 16 personnel in attendance. Learning the personal story of one of our own from his surviving family members and having fellow Adventists in attendance were an added bonus and blessing. I pray that God continues to use me to witness and reach those that need His healing.”

the FITZGERALD, and celebrate the life and honor the ultimate sacrifice of their eldest son.

During the event, Scott offered a sermonette titled *Words of Comfort*.

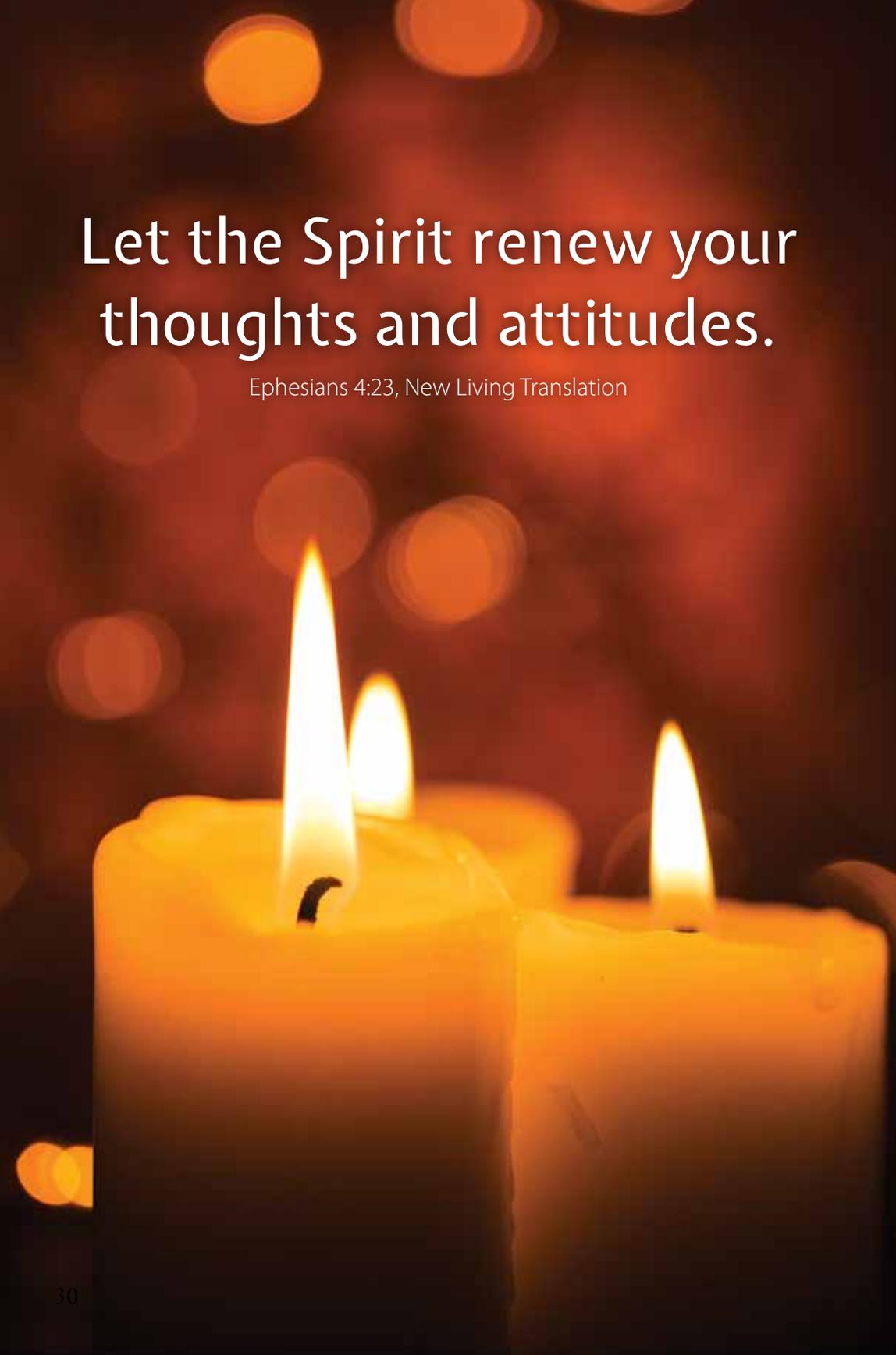
“Shingo, who was of mixed heritage (Japanese and American), was raised in a home where beliefs of Shintoism and Christianity were shared,” says Scott. “In the message, I drew a comparison between Shingo’s mixed beliefs and

## WHAT IS YOUR STORY?

Many Seventh-day Adventists have faithfully served God and country through military service. This is a legacy that should be shared with family, friends, and the church at large.

The World Service Organization is seeking stories about Adventists serving on Active Duty, in the Guard or Reserve, or from veterans about their service experiences. Please contact the editor at [ACMEditor@gc.adventist.org](mailto:ACMEditor@gc.adventist.org) to learn how your story can be told.





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When you  
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quitting,  
remember  
why you  
started.

— Emmanuel Okeke



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