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BUILDING RESILIENCE FOR SERVICE

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Perspiration, heat, painful muscles—all real feelings and experiences from boot camp to operational service. Grit your teeth, carry the pack, keep up with your comrades...physical fitness is vital to the successful fulfillment of duties in any of the uniformed services. This is a given. Then there is tiredness, weariness, sometimes discouragement as one goes through training and then the actual service. These feelings may be exaggerated by family problems, letters or communications bearing bad news, or, just as problematic—receiving no communications at all. Loneliness becomes our companion, and we feel the loss of connection

with those we once spoke with often—or at least regularly. As important as physical fitness and well-being are, perhaps more so, are mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. In a nutshell—we need wholeness, which includes muscle strength, fitness, faith, and healthy spirituality, purpose, and optimism.

I remember doing boot camp as a newly qualified physician. I was married and had many friends from medical school, church, and the family practice I had managed for a year before my conscription. Letters came in for many of us every day (there was no text messaging in those days!). And, yet, there were some whose

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names were never called to collect a package or a message from... well... from *anywhere* or from *anyone*! These colleagues struggled through the pressures and demanding program of basic training, and experienced so much more difficulty than those who enjoyed supportive relationships and connectedness, which are the critical components of resilience! Resilience is the ability to cope under stressful and adverse circumstances. Resilience blossoms and is strengthened when we have a robust set of values anchored in belief, and connectedness with someone significant in our lives. For me and many reading this magazine—belief and values will mean a connection to Jesus Christ and His Word. They also include meaningful relationships, which might be with a spouse, father, mother, teacher, pastor—one who we hold in high regard—and who loves us unconditionally.

We have been created as wholistic beings—with physical, mental, spiritual, social, and relational dimensions. These dimensions are inextricably linked. The factors that affect one aspect of being influence the well-being of all the dimensions. So wholistic health is not just a matter of what we eat or what we drink. It encompasses our sleep patterns, the regularity of exercise, our ability to forgive and receive forgiveness, our expression and experience of the

attitude of gratitude. All of these factors influence our wellness, and, in fact, our wholeness.

I hear you thinking: “But this is an imperfect, actually broken world. Sooner or later we all will experience some sickness of some kind!” You are absolutely correct! We may be physically unwell, but still, we may experience wholeness even in, and despite our brokenness. The Apostle Paul documented this concept so clearly by reiterating God’s assurance to him. “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”¹ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses...For when I am weak, then I am strong.”¹

In this issue, we will be sharing some thoughts on how, as we serve, we may stay in the best condition for service. Keeping life in balance, with plenty of work, adequate rest, healthy eating, avoiding all things harmful while using wisely all things healthy, will help us achieve the goal of wholistic health and wellness. This is easier said than done, you may say. Correct. But remember, that Jesus came to earth as our Saviour, and also, as recorded in John 10:10, that we may “have life, and have it to the full.” May the Lord richly bless you as you determine to allow Him to give you wholeness, even despite our inevitable brokenness!

¹ 2 Corinthians 12:9,10, NIV

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HEALTHY CHRISTIANS



SHALOM: the most appropriate biblical word that conveys God's view of health. Often translated peace, shalom encompasses vast conceptual territory that is comprehensive, attractive, and compelling. The word simultaneously embodies completeness, wholeness, harmony, welfare, soundness, all that is good, all that ought to be, paid/atoned for, prosperity, peace (as in not at war), and peace (as in tranquility, safety, security, and calm).

Shalom is God's concept of health. God wishes to restore SHALOM to all,¹ and Christians are not only recipients of shalom but ambassadors of shalom also.²

Living a vibrant life to the fullest, without limitations, and for as long as possible is an innate desire we all possess. Living a totally free, healthy life **forever** is God's promised gift for His children. That promise begins to take effect at the time of conversion. To know God is eternal life.³ God has revealed Himself and His divine purpose for us through His prophets, nature, and most directly through His Son. God's Holy Spirit bears witness to this with our spirit to affirm who we are and whose we are.⁴ But knowing God and accepting Christ as Savior and Lord is a conscious mental process that may be unfathomable for those not in possession of their

full mental faculties. The reality of God, our understanding of His grace, His desire to have us partake in His shalom. Each of these starts in our minds (hearts) and permeates every facet of our being—all dimensions of our humanness.

Our "spiritual self" does not exist apart from the other dimensions of life—physical, cognitive, emotional, and relational (social). We are multidimensional integral entities, not just additive aggregates. What affects any one dimension of life affects the whole being. The "mind" or "heart" is the control center, and it affects and is affected by everything that is "us." We are counseled to diligently take care of our minds since life's issues proceed from there.⁵ We love God with our minds (hearts), and this shows through what and how we think and act, i.e., soul and strength.^{6,7} The health of the mind is affected by the health of the brain. And the health of the brain is intricately linked to the health of the whole body. This makes it incumbent upon the believer to care about what he/she puts into their mind and how they care for the health of their body. This is the way we were created and is the shalom of God's recreation.

This fact underscores the need for wholesome nutrition for the brain's sake, at least! Factors that are shown to affect the brain positively

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life forever is God's promised
gift for His children.

include physical exercise, education/learning, sleep, rest, social interaction, and deep thinking. Two-thirds of the human brain is constituted with what is called the frontal lobes (or pre-frontal cortex and motor cortex.) These two structures in the front of both sides of our brains are protected by our foreheads and are responsible for some of the features that make us human: consciousness, language, forethought, memory, morality, judgment, self-management, decision-making, compassion, abstract thinking, motivation, focused attention, character, and personality. Another essential function of the frontal lobes is the human ability to model someone else's thoughts. This is very important in communication among ourselves and understanding what we observe but also allows us to understand God and let His mind be in us.⁸ Frontal lobe damage, which is caused developmentally, traumatically,^{9,10} or chemically, can significantly impair all of these important human attributes and interfere with our spiritual, emotional, and social well-being. In other words, frontal lobe damage impedes our understanding and full participation in the shalom of our Creator.

It is important to be clear about why we care for our bodies. Christians

do not engage in healthful practices in order to *be* saved but rather because we *are* saved. We are to live healthfully in response to God's desire for us to be at one with Him, to be complete in Him, and to be the best version of ourselves to His glory. We are, after all, ambassadors of Shalom. We should do everything in our power to remove any impediments that can interfere with our connection with God and our personal relationships.¹¹ From the scriptures, we know that we were created to be in harmony with God's plan, and that requires obedience to His laws. While focusing on God's moral law as divine, we should not forget that all of the physical laws that govern from the atom to the galaxies are also divine. Some of these natural laws govern our physiology and anatomy, the ecology, and our hygiene; cooperation with these laws bring us health. Ignoring the laws of health favors sickness and disease. When we cooperate with God in His effort to recreate us, we are the beneficiaries of at least some measure of shalom.

We do well to remember that we do not belong to ourselves. We are not our own. We have been bought and paid for by God Himself. Therefore we must honor God not only in our minds but also with our bodies.¹²

Christians do not engage in healthful practices in order to be saved but rather because we are saved.

We know that the kingdom of God is more than just what we eat and drink,¹³ but we should also appreciate God for caring about our total health and well-being. The lifestyle choices we make are important to Him. Whatever we eat, drink, or do in our daily lives, we should do it to honor God.¹⁴ There is no question that healthful habits promote better health and longevity in general. However, we still live in a fallen world, damaged by sin. Perfect health and eternal life will only be restored when the New Heavens and New Earth are created as promised. Although healthy living is a necessity for all who can, it will not save us nor immunize us against all sickness and suffering. That will only come when Jesus returns, and we become full partakers of His shalom and see Him face to face. Meanwhile, until Jesus returns and fulfills His promise, we have a mission. We are called to preserve ourselves completely, body, mind, and spirit.¹⁵ A healthy body produces a clear mind. This helps us understand God's truth and resist temptation. Through the Holy Spirit, we can access God's

strength and face the daily spiritual onslaught thrown at us. God's desire for us is SHALOM: prosperity and total health.¹⁶

¹ 1 Thessalonians 5:23

² 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

³ John 17:2

⁴ Romans 8:16

⁵ Proverbs 4:23

⁶ Matthew 22:37

⁷ James 2:18

⁸ Philippians 2:5

⁹ Zawn Villines. "Frontal Lobe: Functions, Structure and Damage" (2017) www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/318139.php

¹⁰ Centre for Neuro Skills®, "Frontal Lobes" www.neuroskills.com/brain-injury/frontal-lobes/

¹¹ Hebrews 12:1-3

¹² 1 Corinthians 6:20

¹³ Romans 14:17

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 10:31

¹⁵ 2 Thessalonians 5:23

¹⁶ 3 John 2





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Living an optimal Rubber Band Life

RESILIENCE IN STRESS, ADVERSITY, AND TRAUMA

We humans are kind of like rubber bands. An unstretched rubber band isn't of much use. It lies in the drawer waiting to be picked up. Then, we pick it up, stretch it, and twine it around whatever we want to hold together. If we choose the right band for the right job and extend it to its optimum tension, or stress level, then it's quite amazing what it can do. It's such a small thing, but it can make a significant difference and be so efficient at doing what it was created for.

All rubber bands are not created equal, though. Some can stretch a lot, providing they are of good quality and have retained their elasticity. A fresh, well-made rubber band may withstand a lot of force and can stretch until it reaches the breaking point. It may be easy to recognize when we are approaching its breaking point. We can feel the tension increase and it becomes difficult to stretch the band any further. The rubber band fights back, doesn't want to expand anymore. It's clear to us that if we continue to increase the force and tension, then it will break. It's time to back off.

Other times, the rubber band we pick up may not be as elastic. Perhaps the raw materials it's made of weren't optimal. Maybe it's had a hard life, has dried up, or become old. Or, perhaps it has sustained a small cut or tear. Whatever the reason, the rubber band's stretching capacity may be significantly diminished and less than we would expect. As we stretch it, it reaches the breaking point. Sometimes without much or any warning, it snaps. It's unfortunate when a rubber band snaps. And, a snapped rubber

band isn't easily fixed. We can tie a knot of the broken ends, but, it's still broken. And, if we use a snapped rubber band, we must definitely take care not to overstretch it again.

Our lives are like rubber bands. If we never stretch at anything, then we won't really accomplish anything. At the other end of the spectrum; if we overstretch, then we may break. The paradox is that the outcome at either end of the range may be the same; accomplishing little or anything from not stretching, or from overstretching and breaking. Neither is desirable. Neither is an ideal way of living. Not stretching or overstretching is detrimental. The optimal choice lies somewhere in between.

The rubber band has a stretch level that is optimal and unique for that specific rubber band. Below that stretch level, it doesn't really hold well, and above it, there's the risk of it breaking. It doesn't really make much sense to compare it with other rubber bands and demand that it performs like others. To get the most out of that individual rubber band, you must be sensitive to its unique qualities and characteristics and find its sweet spot. The same applies to us.

In life, we stretch, and we are pulled. We choose to stretch to reach some goal we have determined for ourselves. Sometimes, we expand to live up to expectations others have to us. But, stretching isn't always a choice. Sometimes things simply happen that stretch us to or beyond our breaking point without us really having any say in it. It may be adversity or trauma that brings us to the brink of breaking or exceeds our



capacity to deal with it. When people surpass their breaking point, they break or snap in various and unique ways. The effects are not always evident immediately, but it's hard to escape untouched and unharmed. If it is work-related, maybe it'll be evidenced in burnout or some other motivation or performance issue. For some, a mental health issue ensues—depression, anxiety, PTSD, or other symptoms. For others, maybe an addiction or another kind of self-destructive behavior emerges. Some run into marital, family, or other relational problems. Whatever the outcome, whenever you push or are pushed beyond your breaking point, there will usually be some kind of negative consequences. Fortunately, if or when that happens, it's also an opportunity to reassess, re-evaluate, and reconstruct your life. Things may break us, but that doesn't mean they

destroy us. As opposed to the snapped rubber band, we may heal.

The best way to live is to make sure our rubber band is as fresh and elastic as possible. We must find, respect, and maintain our individual and unique sweet spot of being optimally stretched. Note that I say optimally stretched, not maximally stretched. Many strive to accomplish as much as possible in life and therefore desire to reach as far as possible. Some individuals want to figure out how to go all the way, just stopping short of the breaking point, and manage life there. It's a way to maximize potentially one's output and accomplishments, but it's a risky strategy. When you live life at the breaking point without any safety margins, then even small things may be enough to bring you crashing down. Also, if you think you are holding on, cracks may be forming in



areas away from your attention. Are your relationships suffering? Is your spirituality neglected? Perhaps your health habits are deteriorating?

Do you recognize that you are at the brink of your breaking point? Have you already passed it? The “true remedies” are an excellent place to start not only to cope with the current situation but also to bring your life back into balance and sustainability. “Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies.”¹

To manage stress, adversity, and trauma, not only surviving it, but being genuinely resilient, bounce back, and enjoy life with sufficient margins to the breaking point, these principles of healthy, balanced living are simple, yet profound and effective. Research affirms that engaging with nature, proper rest and sleep, exercise,

healthy and balanced nutrition, close, nurturing relationships, serving others and spirituality are key lifestyle contributors to mental well-being.²

Unfortunately, we live in a sinful, broken world where evil is a reality. It will stretch us. Sometimes it can overwhelm us. Still, there is comfort and hope in Jesus’ words: “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”³ Whatever comes our way, or wherever we find ourselves, we may seek refuge and rest in His promise: “For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.”⁴

¹ White, E.G. *The Ministry of Healing*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association; 1905.

² Walsh R. Lifestyle and Mental Health. *Am Psychol*. 2011;66(7):579-592. doi:10.1037/a0021769

³ John 16:33, NIV

⁴ Isaiah 41:13, NIV

BE KIND TO YOURSELF

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Each year many people propose or resolve, to do something different. They may have thoughts such as, “I want to be a better person; I want to lose weight; I want to be happier; or, I would like to have less stress.”

Those are admirable and desirable qualities. And, for the most part, we have to decide for ourselves that we will achieve those things. But, we will only be able to fully accomplish them if we deem them essential enough to do whatever it takes.

If you have read this far and are expecting a never-heard-of remedy, then you are in for a surprise. It's probably easier than we think. In fact, we ought to remind ourselves of the basics of good health that we learned way back in grade school or during our formative early childhood development years.

So, how can we stay strong, mentally, and emotionally?

Maintaining the appropriate balance between work and play can do wonders for our emotional health.

Multiple studies tell us of the correlation between physical and emotional or mental health. And, Scripture points out that principle as well “as we think in our hearts, so we become.” (Proverbs 23:7, paraphrase)

Consider exercise as a way to total health. No, I’m not talking about running five miles a day. Instead, it is movement, of any kind. Most of us can at least walk around the block or even get up from our chair and go around the office for five minutes. Experts tell us that we ought to strive for 20-30 minutes of moderate exercise at least three times a week. Think of what might work best for you.

Consider regular medical check-ups. I have met very few people who actually enjoy receiving a medical exam. But, it is something we all have to do, especially as we age and mature. Additionally, we need to trust our medical provider that he/she will take care of the things we are unable to do for ourselves. And, if for some reason we are not satisfied with our current medical care, keep searching for that one person that feels like a custom fit for you. There is nothing wrong with going to a specialist if our condition requires that level of expertise.

Rest, or go to bed on time. The old adage of getting at least eight hours of sleep per night is not out of date. It becomes more necessary each year. It has been said that losing sleep

may cause us other hurdles such as increased weight, heart difficulties, and may tend to make us become one of those annoying people.

Go out and play. Maintaining the appropriate balance between work and play can do wonders for our emotional health. “All work and no play” is definitely not fun. Again, find an activity that works for you and within your schedule.

Eating right. Having three nutritious, balanced meals a day is not only needed for children but should also be a target for us as adults. And, being consistent in the way we eat is equally as important. I know of some people who want to “have a cheat day” to eat whatever they want while abandoning the healthy eating habits they have accomplished for the rest of the week. The only person being cheated is ourselves when we fall victim to that thinking.

Finally, if we fall down, get back up. The military uses the word “resilience” to mean that in the middle of an adverse time, we can have the skill or desire to stick to our goals, standards, and practices. Within the context of this article, we might even learn to be a bit selfish with our bodies. Be kind to yourself, for you are the only one who truly knows what it is like to be you, along with your triumphs and heartaches.

A PRAYING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

By **Troy Price**,

Assistant Chief of Police, Vancouver, Washington with Deena Bartel-Wagner, editor

It's a story of a man named Troy. It's a story of God's direction that led through seemingly incongruent paths to a calling of service and duty.

Troy Price's foundation in his Christian beliefs began early. "I grew up in Chicago, where I attended Adventist schools from Kindergarten through 12th grade," says Troy. As a college student at Tougaloo College in Jackson, Mississippi, Troy met military recruiters. and decided to join

the United States Navy. He attended Aviation Officers Candidate School looking forward to a naval career. Then the unexpected happened. "My vision tests dropped below 20/20," says Troy. "This meant I had to leave the Navy."

With his future unsure, Troy decided to return to Chicago. "After I got home, I learned that my cousin needed a law clerk," says Troy. It seemed like a good opportunity and



Troy was grateful to have work.

But the desire to serve his country and community lingered. “While taking advantage of an educational opportunity in Southern California, I learned that the Los Angeles Police Department had openings for law enforcement officers. I decided to submit my application,” says Troy. “While I waited for my application to be processed, I worked for an insurance company as a claims adjuster.”

The weeks passed and Troy eagerly anticipated a response. “The LAPD moved too slow, and when a private security firm asked if I’d be interested in working for them, I said yes and returned to Chicago,” says Troy.

Then the unexpected happened again. “A co-worker called me and told me the Chicago Housing Authority Police Department (CHPD) was hiring officers,” says Troy. “He asked if I wanted him to grab an application for me. I told him yes.” This time things moved quickly and soon Troy was a member of the CHPD.

As he worked the streets of Chicago, Troy developed his skills as a police officer. After several years Troy began to reflect on other locations where he could serve. “Chicago is known for its brutal winters,” says Troy. “In January 1997, I was on a drug detail. The temperature was -20°F and the snow lay six inches deep. It was then that I knew that I wanted to move to a warmer location. When the City of Vancouver came on a recruiting tour, I applied.”

His application was processed, and Troy received word that he was hired. “On December 1, 1997, I began my first day as a part of the Vancouver Police Department (VPD),” says Troy.

Every police officer starts as a

“As I went to work daily, I witnessed the street crime, the drug crime and wanted to make a difference.”

patrolman. “I enjoyed the work. As I went to work daily, I witnessed the street crime, the drug crime. I wanted to make a difference.

Troy’s career was blessed with unique opportunities and he rose through the ranks serving in various capacities and receiving promotions. “Each time I was promoted, I would return to Patrol,” says Troy.

One assignment was with a fraud and forgery unit in the VPD. “My partner, Ed Hewitt, and I investigated white collar crimes—embezzlement, credit card fraud, and thefts,” says Troy. “We shared a Christian faith, and often prayed together for the work we did, for the people we encountered, for the safety of all involved.”

At the same time, Troy served as a trainer for the State of Washington Criminal Justice Training Center. “I trained law enforcement officers on issues of fraud, ID theft, writing search warrants, and working with informants.”

Another assignment was working on the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Taskforce.



“None of the self-help methods will fully restore a person without including God in their lives.”

“In 2001-2002 one of the cases we worked on was the Portland 7,” says Troy. “This was a group of men from the Portland, Oregon area who were arrested for attempting to join al Qaeda forces or to aid those forces. I received an award for some of the investigative work I did on this case.”

As a law enforcement officer there are high and low points. “When a fellow officer is killed or you have to deal with any crime dealing with children, it is a very emotional experience,” says Troy. “When people are held accountable for their crimes, it is rewarding to know that we’ve done our job.”

In both the good and the bad, Troy clings to his faith. “As an officer, it’s easy to become cynical,” says Troy. “As a Christian, it’s important to mature in your Christian walk and maintain a positive outlook. I believe my job has enabled me to become more focused and to zero in on the fact that people matter.”

Personal prayer and devotions are central to sustaining Troy in his daily work and in his ministry in his church. “Daily, I get up at 4:00 a.m. and have my prayer time,” says Troy. “This is the time that I get my life and my day centered.”

Placing his life in God’s hands daily, Troy trusts Him for his safety and wisdom in how he reacts to situations he encounters. “Several years ago, I was in Washington, D.C. for National Police Memorial Week,” says Troy. “My partner and I decided to visit some of the sites. We left our hotel in civilian clothes and chose to leave our weapons in the hotel safe. As I approached an intersection I noticed groups of males standing on all four corners. They began to approach me in a sinister fashion. Knowing what was potentially going to take place, and having nothing else to rely on but my training and God, I merely reached my hand under my jacket at my side, pretended to



make a weapon adjustment, and brought my hands to waist level in the fashion one would when making a field contact. Then, in my best field-contact voice, I said, ‘Good evening, gentlemen. Is there something we can help you with?’”

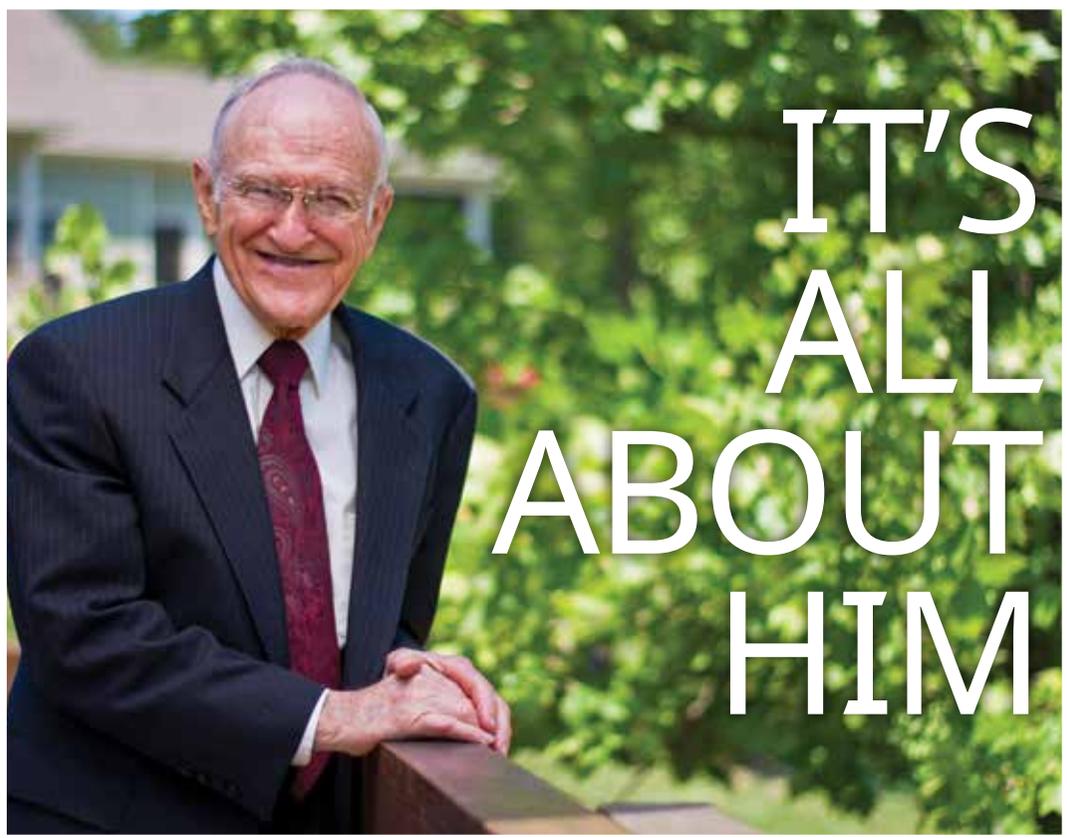
In that moment the group’s attitude changed. Uncertainty and fear flickered across their faces. The threat quickly de-escalated and Troy and his fellow officer were able to continue on their way. Troy knows he witnessed God’s protection in that moment.

Troy isn’t the only person in his family who depends on prayer. “My wife Tracy is a true prayer warrior,” says Troy. “We pray together daily, before I head out the door. She also prays for many situations that I share with her. One day, my co-worker’s father-in-law was in a medical crisis. I called Tracy to join us in uplifting his needs.” For Troy, the knowledge of this prayer support is invaluable. “Throughout my career I’ve

developed an understanding and belief that there is a better way for people, but none of the self-help methods will fully restore a person without including God in their lives.”

Today, Troy holds the position of Assistant Chief of Police and oversees the Patrol Bureau. “Our patrol resources are split between two precincts with over 100 officers,” says Troy. “We also have an excellent Neighbors On Watch (N.O.W) group of over 100 volunteers assigned to the patrol division.”

The story of Troy being called by God to serve in his community is ongoing. As he reflects on the years he’s spent in law enforcement, Troy gives this advice to others who serve. “Don’t let the job define who you are. Walking the beat, policing the community—this isn’t your real life,” says Troy. “Get back to normalcy of a regular life. Have something outside of this that is a major part of your life, including family and church.”



By Deena Bartel-Wagner,
with Jack Blanco, Th.D.

This is the story of a young boy, abandoned by his father before he was born. God ultimately led him through war, work camps, and the United States Air Force. It's a story about a man who knows that everything in his life is all about God and His divine leading.

Jack Blanco was born on a hot June day in 1929. His unmarried mother, Katie, held her new baby close and named him Johann Jacob Kiesling. Katie determined that she'd protect this premature four-pound scrap of humanity with her life.

"My mother was originally from Bavaria, the southern part of Germany," says Jack. I know nothing

about my father. He betrayed my mother with promises to marry her and then disappeared."

Katie worked hard to make a home for her tiny son, working long hours in a bakery. "Mom found babysitters to take care of me while she was working and would pick me up in the evening," says Jack.

After a series of caretakers who mistreated and ignored little Johann, Katie eagerly accepted the offer to live with her Uncle Jack and Aunt Katie. They provided safety and sanctuary for Baby Johann and his mother. "My great aunt and my great uncle loved me, and I loved them. Their kids loved me. It was sort of a happy family

situation,” says Jack. “I was nicknamed Jackie after my great uncle.”

Young Jackie attended Catholic parochial schools and began to learn about God. “What I remember about school is the kindness of the nuns,” says Jack. “I loved the attention of the nuns. They were so kind and so gentle. I will never forget them.”

MEETING OPA AND OMA

In 1938, Katie made a decision that would impact both her and Jackie’s life in unimaginable ways. “My mother wanted to return to Germany to visit her parents,” says Jack. “She saved every extra dollar and eventually we had the fare to go.”

Jackie loved his grandparents’ farm and spending time with his uncles Fritz and Joseph and his aunt Connie. When the visit ended, Jackie’s grandparents urged his mother to let him stay with them for a year. As the train pulled out of the station, none of them could imagine what lay ahead.

Across Europe, the Nazis invaded countries and secured their power. Although a tumult grew in the world, Jackie was isolated on the farm, where he worked hard, grew in his religious faith, and attended school. The first year passed and Jack was unable to return to the United States.

As war in Europe expanded, Jack became an enemy of the German state. “The attack on Pearl Harbor came over the news, and my grandfather heard about it and he was very sad. He came over to me and told



Top: Jack with his Opa and Oma Kiesling.
Bottom: The march of Nazism across Europe served as a snare that caught young Jack in its web.

Jackie’s grandparents urged his mother to let him stay with them for a year. As the train pulled out of the station, none of them could imagine what lay ahead.



me about it and gave me a big hug,” says Jack. “I could just feel his sorrow over what happened to America. Yes, there seemed to be a bonding there that I’ll never forget.”

I WAS DUPED!

Eventually, Jack completed his studies and chose to continue his education in an aeronautical engineering program. He traveled from his grandparent’s farm to Koenig-Woesterhausen, located just outside of Berlin.

“A man met me at the train station, says Jack. “He wore a brown shirt with an armband, a visor cap with a swastika, black trousers, and black boots. He asked if I was Jack and then told me to follow him. We didn’t walk very far, and there was the barbed wire, the guard dogs, and everything else. That was the first taste of the labor camp.”

Jack was a prisoner and was housed in several labor camps, until the end of World War II. He survived a lack of food, aerial bombings by Allied forces, and a supernatural intervention of being moved to a camp that would have meant certain death. Through it all, God spared Jack’s life for a greater purpose.

Finally, the war ended, and Jack was liberated. He returned to the United States through a series of miracles and learned that his mother had married Lee Blanco. “Although I’d used my mother’s maiden name all my life, she asked me if I’d be willing to legally change my name to Blanco. I told her I’d do anything for her,” says Jack. Taking this seriously, Jack completed the process and assumed his new identity of Jack Blanco.



Top: Jack and Marion on their wedding day.
Bottom: Jack on the island of Guam, during his Air Force service.

FINDING A ROLE MODEL

With the end of World War II, the Cold War began. The U. S. draft was

Jack began to search for more on how to live this new life. He visited the base library and discovered a green-bound book with the title Bible on it. He eagerly read it from cover to cover.

reinstated, and Jack received his notice to report. “I’d seen enough of war and decided to enlist in the Air Force instead,” says Jack. He shipped out to San Antonio for boot camp and then went to Cheyenne, Wyoming to train in aircraft communications.

Jack always longed for a father figure in his life, but found himself surrounded by friends who attracted trouble. “One evening I was laying in my bunk and thinking about this,” says Jack. “My father had left before I was born, so I really didn’t have a model to go by. I did not feel like I had a “father.” As I was thinking about this, the thought came to my mind—I know it was the Holy Spirit—‘Have you ever thought about using Jesus Christ as your model?’”

Jack remembered that the nuns had told stories about Jesus and how honest and trustworthy His life had been. “Then the thought came to me. If 2000 years ago, I had been walking by the Sea of Galilee He would have looked at me and said, ‘Jack, come. Follow me.’ Then I thought, now, wait a minute, that was 2000 years ago,” says Jack. “Forget it and then the Holy Spirit spoke to my conscience and my heart again and said, ‘He is not dead. He’s alive.’”

Jack began to search for more on how to live this new life. He visited the base library and discovered a green-bound book with the title Bible on it. He eagerly read it. But then he had to return it to the library. While on furlough, Jack searched



Top: Jack chose to enlist in the Air Force, rather than be drafted.

Bottom: Sabbath services became an important part of Jack’s life on Guam.

bookstores for the same book. He finally discovered it on a dusty shelf in the last bookstore he had time to visit. This copy had a different title—*Bible Readings for the Home*.

Returning to Guam, Jack learned from Carl Pinterich, an Air Force buddy, about the Sabbath. Jack decided that he had to keep God's commands and was baptized at the foot of Suicide Cliff in the Pacific Ocean. Jack eagerly wrote to his mother about his new hope in Jesus. Katie's reply devastated him. "My mother wrote that she'd raised me as a Catholic and would disown me if I changed my faith," says Jack.

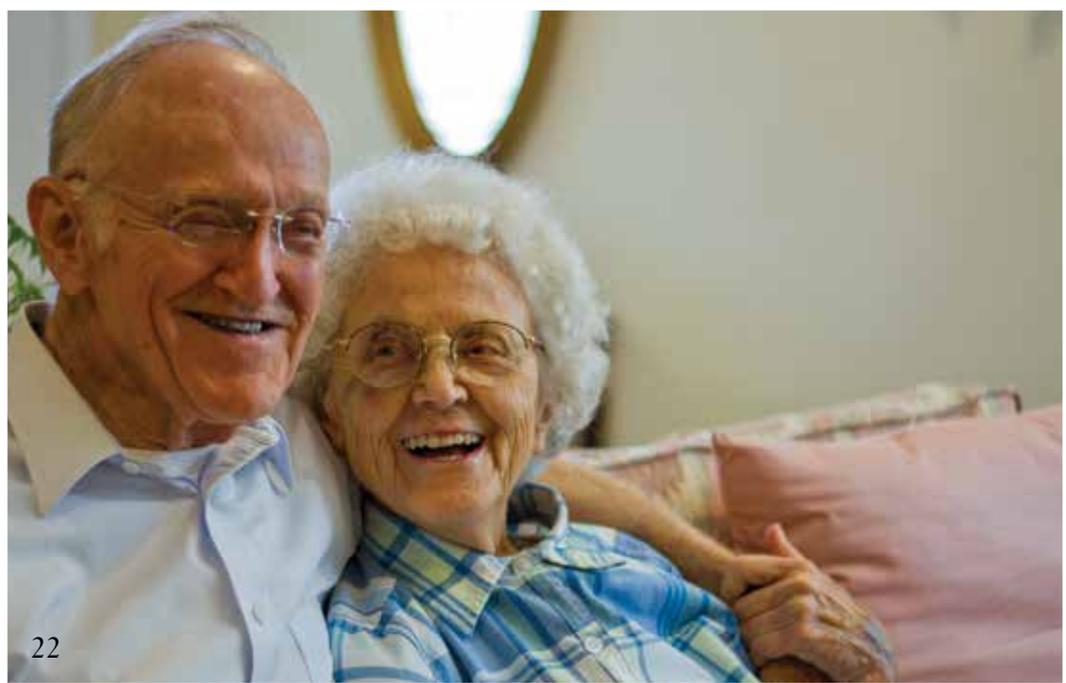
There wasn't another letter for six months, but Jack made his decision that he had to follow God, no matter the cost. When the next letter came, Katie wrote that Jack could visit during his furlough. This gave him hope. "I contacted an Adventist church in

Chicago and asked that someone visit my mother," says Jack. "I received a letter back from Marion Blasius that she'd visited my mother, but there didn't seem to be much interest."

A LIFE OF SERVICE

On Jack's next furlough, he visited that Adventist Church and met Marion. That visit led to Jack and Marion courting, their marriage, and their family. They served as missionaries in Africa and the Philippines. Jack became a pastor, an author, a professor, and a theologian. In all Jack has done and all he continues to do, the same message has remained the theme of his life. "It is all about Him," says Jack. "I didn't grow up with a father, but I have a heavenly Father. By His grace, I will not disappoint Him. I will uphold Him. I will uphold His reputation."

The Jack Blanco Story, a documentary telling the complete story of Jack and Marion, is available for purchase by calling 423-855-4877 or emailing admin@n7mc.org.



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NAD Director's Thoughts



PSALM 23

STILL WATERS RUN DEEP

Recently, I drove past the Triadelphia Dam in suburban Maryland. I could see that the dam was not completely full of water, but it was full enough that water was running through the spillway or floodgates and cascading into the river below. I could see from striated markings how deep the water could get, yet, it was still flowing. It must have been pretty deep.

Internally, I was driven back to a powerful quote I had read about spiritual influence and leadership. In the quote, Bernard of Clairvaux, a Benedictine monk from the 12th century contrasted wise and unwise spiritual leadership. He portrayed one as a reservoir and the other as a canal. For your edification, I insert the quote below.

"The one who is wise, therefore will see [their] life as more like a reservoir than a canal. The canal simultaneously pours out what it receives; the reservoir retains the water till it is filled, then {offers} the overflow without loss to itself. . . . Today there are many in the church who act like canals; the reservoirs are far too rare. . . . They want to pour [this stream] forth before they have been filled; they are more ready to speak than to listen, impatient to teach what they have not grasped, full of presumption, to govern others while they know not how to govern themselves."

At the Triadelphia Dam, I was reminded that leadership flows from abundance and pours into others. It is the byproduct of sufficiency and the antithesis of insufficiency. I was forced to consider the pace of my life. I realized that I was running hither and yon, with purpose and good effect. I was rightfully serving as a conduit of service and support, i.e., ministry, but, simultaneously becoming depleted.

Yesterday, while reposing in a rare moment of devotional solitude, in my comfortable chair on the back porch of our home, I felt the familiar, filling presence of God. I heard His voice as He restored my soul with inspiration and instructions. It was memorable, remarkable, and rare, only because I had not carved the time to cultivate those moments. I will get out there more often because meeting Him there is much more poignant than when I hear Him, more usually, in the car.

The day flew by yesterday. As I reflected before retiring for the night, I was able to count tangible blessings. I could enumerate the experiences with others into whom I was able to direct, the overflow of God's filling of my being and their purpose. It was a good and productive day. As I reflected, the attributions for success could only go to God, and the time we spent together on the porch. That is where we made a fresh connection.

Where are your green pastures, still waters, and zones for refreshing and restoration? Do you know when you need to visit them? Do you know when your rhythm of life is out of balance?

When you are manifesting patience, peacefulness, kindness, generosity, and gentility? These traits are likely the fruit of God's indwelling presence in your life. You have been filled and are radiating the spirit of sufficiency. If, on the other hand, you are leaking from the cracks of your woundedness and you are vexed, churlish, stingy, mean, and spiteful, your culverts of grace are dry because you have spent too little time in the presence of God.

Triadelphia drove me to reflect, which led me to the porch, where God renewed the right spirit within me. Please accept my story as an appeal to you to find your refreshing stream, your still waters, and green pastures. Life is too short to live in the corrals of insufficiency. Our souls were meant to soar in the stratosphere of God's all-sufficient goodness, grace, and mercy. It can only happen when we allow Him to transform us from the ruts and culverts of our lives into reservoirs of His presence, the overflow of which become life-giving streams to others.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul S. Anderson". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page.

A Sabbath **RE-ENLISTMENT**

Honor, Courage, and Commitment—these are the U.S. Navy’s core values and also three good reasons for an enlisted Sailor to re-enlist.

Aside from the intangible rewards of continued service to the country, Senior Chief Willie Scott II believes re-enlisting continues service to God. He credits the Navy with more than just enriching his life. “The Navy probably saved my life,” says Scott. “Even by knowing Christ at an early age, living in a city like Detroit, exposes one to unlimited opportunities to be a statistic. The Navy provided discipline, teamwork, camaraderie, and esprit de corps, and I wanted more of it! Sailors need to make an educated decision on what’s best for them, their families, and their ministry, if applicable.”

Scott was attracted to military order and discipline as a child serving as an Adventurer and Pathfinder at the City Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church in Detroit, Michigan. This attraction eventually led to an interest in the Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC), which jumpstarted his career and springboarded his profession as a senior enlisted leader.

Scott has a unique gift of pairing military organization and discipline with Christian service, structure, and self-control. “A lot of what I learned growing up Christian is complementary to the military-style of maintaining good order and discipline,” Scott reflects. “For example, the qualities of obedience to God’s commands and church organization is in harmony with the



Chaplain Michael J. Hakanson administers the Oath of Enlistment.



Willie Scott shares his testimony with his family by his side.

attributes of following ordinances within the chain-of-command. Another illustration is to examine the parallel between following rules and regulations and faithful keeping of the Sabbath.”

Scott also has a passion for travel and community service. While deployed to overseas locations or on work-related trips in the United States, it is his custom to visit Adventist churches and schools. He has worshipped and fellowshiped with churches in Guam, Japan, Australia, South Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, and Seychelles, and is pleased that his career enabled him to be involved with many various cultures.

In 2017, Scott assumed concurrent duties as Leading Chief Petty Officer and Fleet Engagement Specialist on the Fleet Introduction Team. He serves as a Fleet Sailor advocate in testing, evaluating, and collecting feedback to improve and modernize the Navy’s Manpower, Personnel, Training, and Education (MPT&E) systems. He is also the Vice

President of the Chief Petty Officer’s Association at the Training Support Center in San Diego.

“We must retain quality servicemen and servicewomen,” Scott says. “Those who re-enlist today will become the senior leaders of tomorrow, and ensure the future of our country and military. Our military has a proud heritage and is essential to our nation. That is why re-enlistment is so important.”

“A lot of what I learned growing up Christian is complementary to the military-style of maintaining good order and discipline.”



Family and friends gathered to support Scott.



Fellow Adventists who are serving on Active Duty attended the special Sabbath service.

Scott's re-enlistment ceremony took place at the Tierrasanta Seventh-day Adventist Church in San Diego, California, during the divine hour worship service. Captain Michael J. Hakanson, Force Chaplain, Surface Forces, US Pacific Fleet, served as the re-enlisting Officer. Hakanson's sermon was titled "Christ and the Nations: The Legacy of an American Denomination." He discussed the devotion to God and Country while keeping a separation between Church and State. Hakanson illustrated the usefulness of Christians called to serve, to spread Christ's love to others while co-mingled with those who may be lost.

The Bible uses military terms to describe being strong in the Lord by putting on the whole armor of God,¹ including the tools of the soldier—helmet, shield, and sword. It instructs us to love God and our fellow humans.² We are told we demonstrate love when we are willing to lay down our life for another.³ And most importantly, Christ set the pattern with His life, and as Christians, we follow his example.⁴

"The idea to have the reenlistment ceremony at church came from a dear friend who was commissioned to officer from the enlisted ranks in 2018," says Scott. "This ceremony was held at his church on a weekday where half the audience were military brothers-in-arms, and the other half were brethren in Christ. I was the guest speaker at his commissioning, and mentioned then how good it was to know the space where prayers went up for the promotion is the same space where the blessing was to be fulfilled with witnesses, and before God."

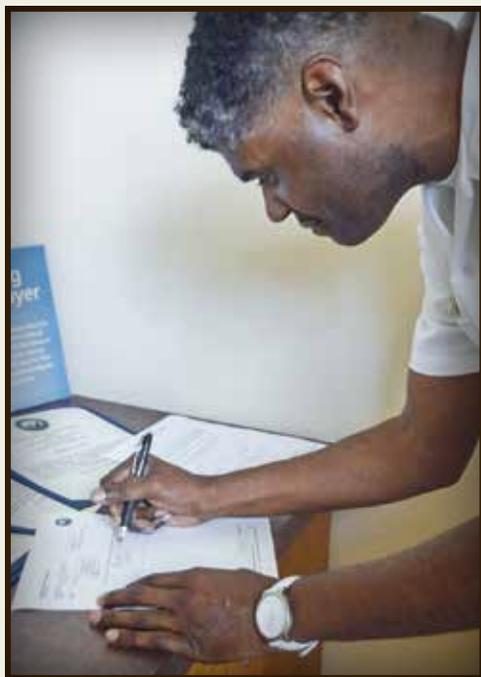
When asked why he chose to re-enlist on Sabbath, Scott shared his thoughts. "I discussed the idea with trusted counsel—a couple of Adventist Chaplains. The text, Isaiah 58:13-14 came up, and my interpretation is that re-enlisting would be an unusual and special occasion in one's career. What better way to display the love of God and devotion country than to perform the ceremony in a house of God among fellow believers and share my testimony," says Scott. "We have a thriving military committee

at my church, and I envisioned the ceremony to be complementary to the worship experience, similar to how we honor individuals during farewell blessings and on Veterans Day. I see this as no different. I think if done tastefully, we honor both God and Country with a blended service.”

The way had also been prepared with the timing of the ceremony. “Chaplain Hakanson was already scheduled to preach the same Sabbath that best fit my schedule between all the traveling I was doing that month,” says Scott. “His message was already prepared and outlined with a military theme in mind. I think that the Lord recognized a need to couple my idea with Chaplain Hakanson’s message as a live illustration to the congregation. I’m comforted knowing that multiple people commented on how wonderful the event was and that they were blessed to witness.”

Scott says that he believes God ordains everything. He knows the outcome of every situation. “I think Christian men and women who serve their country with character, dignity, and honor can rest assured that the duties they perform are condoned and respected by our sovereign God,” says Scott. “I thank God for Chaplain Hakanson, his ministry, and his willingness to support and accommodate such a radical idea.”

In his sermon, Hakanson stated, “We can change the lives of people around us as Jesus did. We live the gospel in a fallen world. I chose to become a Navy Chaplain that Jesus might be known—illustrated by my life—in the lives of men and women who serve in uniform.”



Scott signs his re-enlistment documents.

Hakanson concluded his sermon by targeting the last three words of the Oath of Enlistment, ‘so help me God.’ Hakanson noted that Scott’s re-enlistment was “a sign that his faith is important to who he is, not because it’s tied to the institution, but because it’s tied to the church, and his reason for service empowers his ministry.”

“What Adventist military members do daily is critical in securing our country for the future. Scott said. “We can also spread the gospel by living the lives that Christ often spoke of while also serving in uniform.”

¹Ephesians 6:10-20

²Matthew 22:37-40

³John 15:13

⁴John 3:16-18



Give all your
worries and
cares to God,
for he cares
about you.

– 1 Peter 5:7, NLT

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The love which Christ
diffuses through the whole
being is a vitalizing power.

– Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing*, p. 115.

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