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For God & Country

*A Journal for
Military-related
Seventh-day Adventists*



REVIVAL



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Church Membership

“Chaplain, can you help me transfer my church membership? I have been stationed overseas for several years, and I haven’t been very faithful attending church, but I am trying to renew my spiritual life.”

Appeals like this come to the ACM office with increasing frequency. ACM can help. Belonging to any organization conveys personal values and goals. Church membership publicly declares your religious faith and helps define religious beliefs, commitments, and relationships. When you were baptized, you were accepted into fellowship of a local Seventh-day Adventist church, and participated in the practices of the faith.

Membership in good standing of the Seventh-day Adventist Church brings

several benefits enjoyed by those in military-related service. First, you have the assurance of forgiveness and at least one gift of the Holy Spirit bestowed on you at your baptism (Acts 2:38). You are entrusted by the Lord as His ambassador, steward, and witness (Matthew 28:18-20). You belong to one of the fastest-growing faiths in the world that is increasingly recognized for its credible biblical teachings, commonsense positions on public issues, and community services. The denomination provides many opportunities for engaging in education, health, missionary, social, family, and youth activities. Check out these Web sites for details: www.adventist.org and www.nadadventist.org.

The ACM Department also provides pastoral care and religious support for military-related members via Bible kits, devotionals, denominational journals, literature for outreach, religious retreats, and assistance with accommodation of religious practice. ACM supports Adventist military chapel worship groups overseas and approves lay



- 2 Perspective
- 4 Revival and Beyond
- 6 When Killing Isn't Murder
- 18 The Desmond T. Doss Peace Project
- 20 News Notes
- 22 Military Church/Online Giving
- 23 A New Year Greeting

members as distinctive faith group leaders. Adventist pastors are endorsed to serve as chaplains in the military; however, if ACM does not know who you are or have accurate, current point-of-contact information because you do not maintain contact with ACM or your local church, you will not receive this assistance. What should you do about church membership?

1. If stationed overseas for six months or longer, transfer your membership to the NAD Military Church, then after you return to the States, transfer it to a local church where you will be actively involved.

2. If you prefer to leave your membership in a stateside church, inform them quarterly of your address and activities. If a member does not stay in contact with their local church, “then, after an absence of two years, an individual may be removed from the membership of the church by vote of the church” (*SDA Church Manual* [2005], p. 198). They will be listed as “missing.”

3. Send your tithes and offerings to ACM or your local church via online giving. To save the church credit card fees of 4 to 6 percent, please use electronic bank transfer (less

than 25 cents). For further information, see this Web site: www.adventistgiving.org. Giving is as simple as going to www.nad.adventistchaplains.org and clicking on “Online Giving.”

4. Declare your religious preference in your military records and on your military identification tags (dog tags). Numbers help commands determine levels of religious support required, and they help ACM obtain resources for you.

5. Visit the NAD ACM Web site, open your own personnel database, and keep the information current. Stay in contact with ACM, your “church conference office” away from home.

Current and active church membership in good standing enables you to participate fully in Adventist church life. You can hold church office; serve on church boards, nominating committees, and constituency meetings at all levels; and belong to a global movement that is “God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9).

Keep your church membership current and stay actively engaged in the Lord’s work. What a privilege to belong!

LETTERS TO FOR GOD & COUNTRY

Your letters to For God and Country are always welcome. Please share short, specific, and timely thoughts with us. You should include your complete address and phone number—even in e-mail messages. Letters will not be published unless we have this information. Letters will be edited for space and clarity only.

Please note that any inclusion of a letter to this section does not imply that the ideas expressed are endorsed by either the editors of For God and Country, the directors of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, or the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Send correspondence to: Letters to the Editor, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600. Internet: editor@VerbalOxygen.com.

Thank you, ACM, for the materials you make available to those of us in military service. They are greatly appreciated and help keep me a connection with my church.

I also enjoy reading each issue of For God and Country. Keep soldiering on.

Name withheld on request

Elder Ted Wilson, president of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church, has appealed for revival within the church corporately and by each individual member.

Revival and Beyond

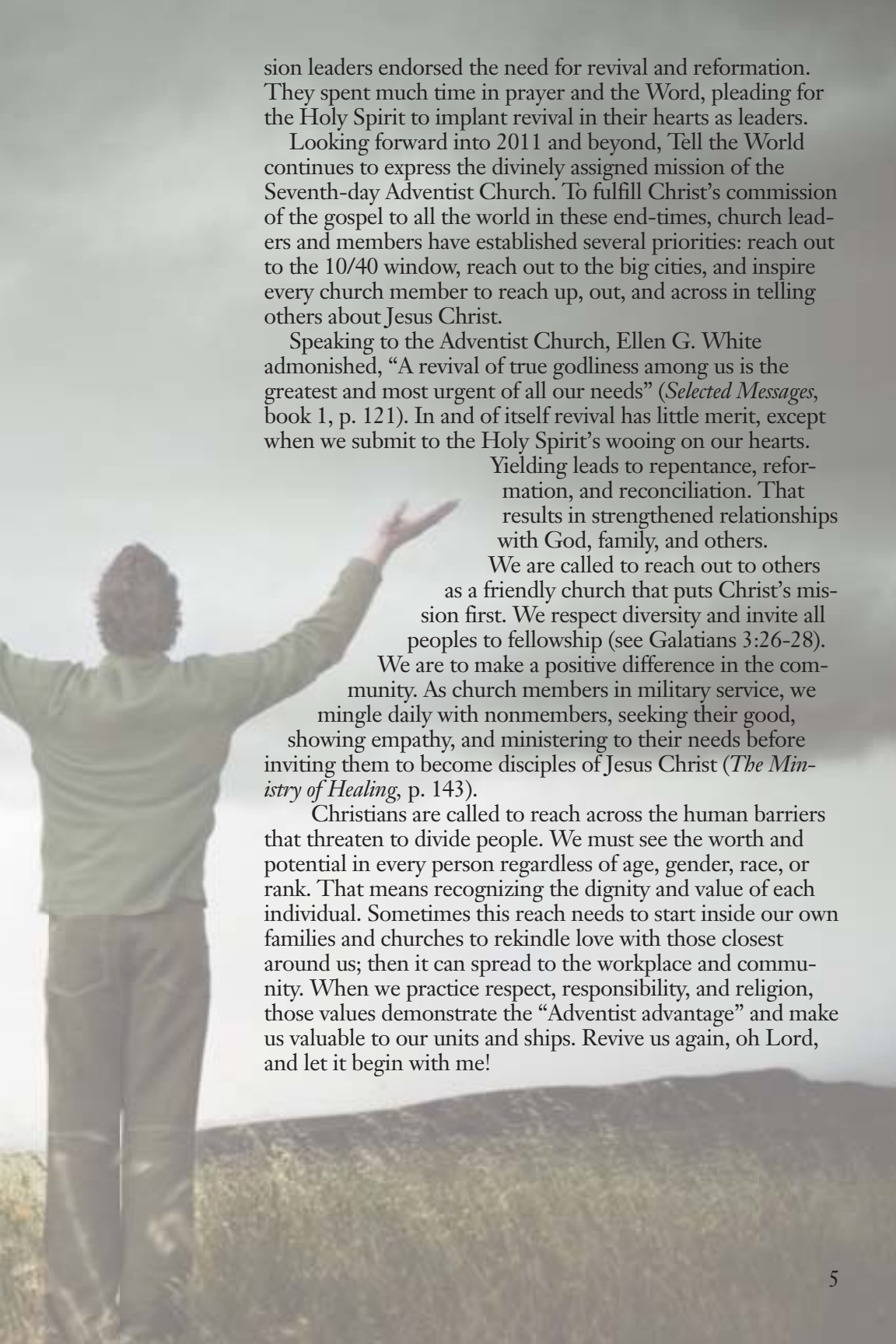


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During the tragic years of the uncivil War Between the States (1861-1865), early Adventist pioneers could have been easily distracted by the affairs of a divided nation. Instead they stayed focused on the mission given the church by its Commander in Chief, Jesus Christ. They looked forward beyond the confusion and turmoil of the times to lay the foundation of a denomination. In those four years they developed the identity, organization, and practical applications of belief for the church.

Nations are engaged now in another great conflict that has religio-political overtones. Adventists find themselves in a post-Christian world. Even among church members, undue fascination with business, fashionable trends, and sports occupy our time, inhibiting Bible study, prayer, and witnessing.

Elder Ted Wilson, president of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church, has appealed for revival within the church corporately and by each individual member. During the year-end meeting, North American Divi-



sion leaders endorsed the need for revival and reformation. They spent much time in prayer and the Word, pleading for the Holy Spirit to implant revival in their hearts as leaders.

Looking forward into 2011 and beyond, Tell the World continues to express the divinely assigned mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. To fulfill Christ's commission of the gospel to all the world in these end-times, church leaders and members have established several priorities: reach out to the 10/40 window, reach out to the big cities, and inspire every church member to reach up, out, and across in telling others about Jesus Christ.

Speaking to the Adventist Church, Ellen G. White admonished, "A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs" (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 121). In and of itself revival has little merit, except when we submit to the Holy Spirit's wooing on our hearts.

Yielding leads to repentance, reformation, and reconciliation. That results in strengthened relationships with God, family, and others.

We are called to reach out to others as a friendly church that puts Christ's mission first. We respect diversity and invite all peoples to fellowship (see Galatians 3:26-28).

We are to make a positive difference in the community. As church members in military service, we mingle daily with nonmembers, seeking their good, showing empathy, and ministering to their needs before inviting them to become disciples of Jesus Christ (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143).

Christians are called to reach across the human barriers that threaten to divide people. We must see the worth and potential in every person regardless of age, gender, race, or rank. That means recognizing the dignity and value of each individual. Sometimes this reach needs to start inside our own families and churches to rekindle love with those closest around us; then it can spread to the workplace and community. When we practice respect, responsibility, and religion, those values demonstrate the "Adventist advantage" and make us valuable to our units and ships. Revive us again, oh Lord, and let it begin with me!

When **K**



KILLING

Isn't Murder

Author's note: *This study is an effort to clarify what kind of killing is and is not included under the sixth commandment. Based on views passed on from generation to generation, many Seventh-day Adventists have considered the commandment to prohibit murder, killing in war, suicide, killing to protect self or family, etc. We have used the commandment to frown upon, if not to prohibit, the bearing of arms, guns, as instruments of war, of law enforcement, and of hunting. This includes the dropping of bombs, the firing of torpedoes and missiles, and any other use of weapons. This article will examine the words "kill" and "murder" in the Old Testament. An article in the next issue of For God and Country will explore aspects of this issue in the New Testament.*



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Principles of Biblical Interpretation

The commandment “Thou shalt not kill” is translated into English from the original Hebrew in two texts in the Old Testament, Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17. Both are quotations from God’s spoken and written law, called the Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments. They are both statements of the sixth commandment, given initially by God from Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:1-17) and repeated by Moses (Deuteronomy 5:1-21).

Originally God gave the Ten Commandments in Hebrew at Sinai to the newly liberated Israelites. In order to read and understand the commandments in English-speaking countries, the Hebrew had to be

We must remember that the Word of God in English was preceded by and sprung from the Word of God in Hebrew.

translated into English. The phrase “Thou shalt not kill” is the 1611 King James Version English translation of



King James of England

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the original Hebrew language of the sixth commandment. This is the principal English translation that brought the Bible and the commandments to us. The translation, authorized by King James of England, was completed in the year 1611. Today there are numerous translations, some using the word “kill,” and others using “murder.”

The Scripture Must Interpret Itself

Helpful at this point is a brief explanation about the Hebrew word, which we translate as both “kill” and “murder.” In the Hebrew language of Bible times, almost all the words were based on a

three-letter root. Thus, the Hebrew word for “kill” is built on three Hebrew consonants, which sound like R, TS, and CH (approximately a *k* sound). We will use their transliteration equivalents, respectively, R, S, and H, with a dot under the S and the H to indicate their unique sound in English, since English does not have single-letter equivalents for them. With vowels, which do not show up as letters in the Hebrew, the three-letter word would be pronounced RaTSaCH. Think or pronounce RaTSaCH wherever you see the three capital letters together. For simplicity’s sake from this point on, it will be referred to as RSH.

We must remember that the Word of God in English was preceded by and sprung from the Word of God in Hebrew. Thus, the meaning of the English must be first and foremost interpreted by the meaning of the Hebrew.

A second reminder is that our understanding of Scripture is not static. A number of factors have caused and will cause us to adjust our understanding of the Bible—archeological discoveries, studies of the ancient languages, historical research, and systematic Bible study. Solomon said: “The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18). A more recent and more literal translation of Solomon’s words states: “The path of the righteous is like radiant sunlight, ever brightening until noon” (Tanakh).¹ Difficult as it may be, we must be willing to adjust our understanding of Scripture when exegetical, historical, and contextual study corrects our views—even when these older views have been handed down to us by

revered leaders and writers. This was the experience of our SDA pioneers, who grew as they studied and restudied Scripture. This has been our history, and it will be our future.

Principles of Scriptural Interpretation

The word “hermeneutics” means how we interpret Scripture. Three principles of biblical interpretation are particularly relevant to this study. The first and basic principle is that the Bible interprets itself. “The classical understanding for the self-interpretation of Scripture is the famous Protestant principle of *sola scriptura*—“the Bible only”—often referred to as the Scripture principle. The Scripture principle—the formal affirmation of the position that the Bible is its own interpreter—is based on its divine-human origin.”² A second principle of Scripture interpretation—is that “it is not

We need to know the meaning of the word in the original language.

permissible to use the etymology (origin) of words in the English Bible or any translation to explain the meaning of the biblical word. In fact, the meaning of a word in the biblical languages may have a larger or smaller range of meanings than the corresponding term in a modern language.”³ Therefore, we need to know the meaning of the word in the original language.

A third principle is an expansion of

the second and deals with context. “When investigating words, the most important principle is to allow the context . . . to define the meaning of the respective word.”⁴ The context can be its use in the immediate sentence, all its other uses by the author, and its use in the rest of Scripture, that is, all the texts containing that word.

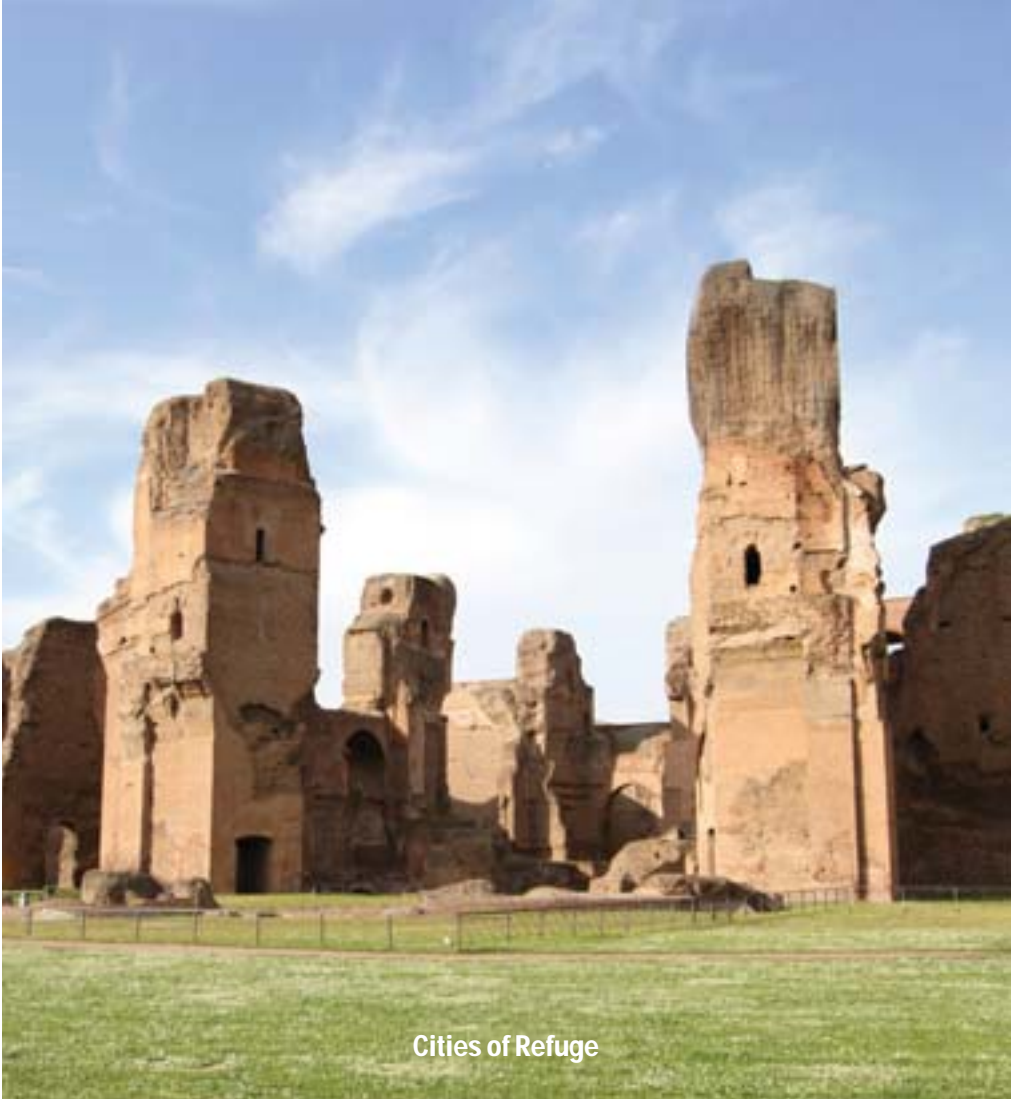
Principles of Hermeneutics

- The Bible interprets itself.
- Origins (etymology) of words in the English Bible or any translation cannot be allowed to explain the meaning of a biblical word.
- Context must be allowed to define meanings of respective words.

Finding the Biblical Evidence

With these several points in mind, let us plunge into a study of the scriptural meaning of “kill,” as derived from a study of the use of the Hebrew word רָשָׁה. The Hebrew wording of Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17 is identical. The commandment in Hebrew consists of two words. The first takes two English words to express: “do not.” The second is רָשָׁה, “kill,” or “murder.”

A Hebrew lexicon/dictionary defines רָשָׁה as to “murder,” “kill,” “crush.”⁵ Keeping in mind our three hermeneutic principles, particularly since the sixth commandment carries no explanation and the rest of the commandments do not provide any context to ascertain the scope of the command-



Cities of Refuge

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ment, we must look at all of Moses' uses of the word and all the uses in the rest of the Old Testament.

R ṢḤ , in its verb, participle, and noun forms, is used a total of 47 times in the Old Testament. These uses are summarized below.

- Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 (the Ten Commandments): two times
- Numbers 35: 20 times
- Deuteronomy 4, 19, and 22: six times
- Joshua 20 and 21: eight times
- The rest of the Old Testament: 11 times

Cities of Refuge

We start with an overview of Numbers 35, the fullest description of the cities of refuge and the most uses of R ṢḤ . This chapter is entirely devoted to God's mandate to Moses to specifically designate as cities of refuge six of the 48 cities assigned as inheritance cities for the tribe of Levi (Numbers 35:6-8). The purpose of the six cities of refuge was so that someone called a "slayer" or "manslayer" (the Hebrew word is

RSH) could escape and find sanctuary there.

Numbers 35 may be divided into nine paragraphs according to themes.

- Verses 1-5: The Levites inheritance—certain cities and surrounding land
 - Verses 6-8: Forty-eight Levitical inheritance cities, including six cities of refuge to which unintentional slayers should run
 - Verses 9-15: Cities of refuge—their general location and purpose
 - Verses 16-21: Death penalty for intentional killing—six examples of intentional killing
 - Verses 22-25: Examples of unintentional killing; trial and sanctuary for the killer
 - Verses 26-28: Exception to sanctuary
 - Verse 29: Perpetuity of refuge statutes
 - Verses 30-32: Safeguards for testimony in cases of killing; ransom forbidden
 - Verses 33, 34: Ransoming forbidden—land pollution; death the only expiation for the land
- In these verses RSH is used as a noun, a participle, and a verb. It is translated “slayer,” “manslayer,” and “murderer” as a noun or participle; and “slay,” “kill,” or “murder” as a verb in the Revised Standard Version.

When Killing Isn't Murder

In Numbers 35 the terms “slayer” and “manslayer” are defined in verses 11 and 15 as someone who kills a person without intent. The cities of refuge were selected so an unintentional killer might not die at the hand of an “avenger” of blood until they were judged or tried by their peers (“the congregation,” verse 12). This provision included Israelites, strangers,

and sojourners (verse 15). Deuteronomy 19:1-3 and 7-10, and Joshua 20: 1-6 repeat and expand this information, as Moses reminded Israel of the divine provision and Joshua executed the land apportionment mandate. Unintentional killing is further defined as killing someone without having been at enmity with the person in the past (Deuteronomy 19:4, 6; 4:41, 42).

In two passages God gives very concrete examples of unintentional killing or manslaying (killing unintentionally or unwittingly and without previous enmity). In Numbers 35:22-25 the examples are: stabbing someone suddenly without enmity, hurling an object without lying in wait, and casting a stone on someone without seeing them.

In each of these cases the slayer must not have been the enemy of the slain person, and the slayer did not seek the victim's harm. Deuteronomy 19:4-6 gives the example of killing a neighbor when an axhead slips off an ax handle while cutting wood.

Inspiration is quite clear that although the slayer has killed, they are innocent of murder and do not deserve to die, because they were not at enmity with their neighbor. Yet, because life is irreplaceable, there is responsibility, and the slayer must outrun the avenger to a city of refuge to be safe (Deuteronomy 19:6).

God further instructs Joshua in Deuteronomy 20:1-6 that, upon arriving at the gate to a city of refuge, the manslayer must explain their case to the elders, who must take them into the city, where they must remain. If an avenger is pursuing them, the elders shall not hand them over to the avenger. But the slayer must remain in that city until the current high priest dies. They are then free to return to

their own home, and the avenger cannot kill them. The verses in Numbers 35:24, 25 indicate that the congregation should judge between the slayer and the avenger, and in this case they shall restore them to the city of refuge, where they must live until the high priest's death. If the slayer should venture from the city of refuge and the avenger finds them, the avenger may kill them and not be guilty of blood, that is, guilty of murder (Numbers 35:26-28).

Murder is Intentional Killing

Six examples of intentional killing are clear, as is the penalty. Numbers 35:16-21 records the examples.

The first three are striking someone and causing death with an instrument of iron, with a stone in hand, and with a wood weapon in hand.

Each of these statements is followed by the instruction: "He is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death." The set of cases is followed by the instruction: "The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer; when he meeteth him, he shall slay."

The last three examples of intentional killing are stabbing someone from hatred, hurling at someone from lying in wait, and striking someone in enmity with one's hand.

The last case is followed by the instruction: "He that smote him shall surely be put to death; for he is a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him." In every case "murderer" is רֹצֵחַ.

Deuteronomy 19:11-13 gives the case of a murderer who flees to a city of refuge. Someone hates their neighbor, ambushes, and mortally wounds that person, and then flees to a city of



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refuge. The instruction is: "The elders of his city shall send and fetch him from there, and hand him over to the avenger of blood, so that he may die" (verse 12, RSV).⁶ No pity is to be shown. They must "purge the guilt of innocent blood from Israel" (verse 13, RSV).

God informs Israel that these statutes and ordinances are perpetual "throughout your generations in all your dwellings" (Numbers 35:29), and He proceeds to set standards for witnesses in the conviction for murder (verse 30) and forbid the ransom of murderers and manslayers (verses 31, 32). A slayer can be convicted of murder only on the testimony of two or more witnesses. And ransom cannot be paid in lieu of the death penalty or to allow a manslayer to return to their home before the death of the high priest.

Death Penalty Required

It is important to note that even in the case of a manslayer protected in a city of refuge, a death takes place—the death of the high priest expiates the innocent blood that is shed unintentionally and accidentally. So even though the manslayer is innocent of murder, responsibility for the death is theirs, carried in their

forced exile in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest. After the high priest's death they are free.

Deuteronomy 4:43 names three of the cities of refuge. All six are named in Joshua 20:7-9 and 21:13, 21, 27, 32, 36, and 38. In these passages RSH is the slayer, or manslayer, who kills (RSH) unintentionally. It is clear that these cities are refuges only for persons who kill unintentionally.

*The death of the high priest
expiates the innocent blood
that is shed unintentionally
and accidentally.*

Other Texts on Killing

Now we will complete this study with a survey of the other 12 texts that are in other contexts than the cities of refuge.

1. Deuteronomy 22:25-27 states that the rape of a woman whose screams cannot be heard is analogous to murder. Only the man is to be put to death, for “this case is like that of a man attacking and murdering [RSH] his neighbor” (verse 26, RSV).

2. Judges 19 records an act of murder by a Levite or by Gibeonites. Four hundred thousand armed soldiers ask, “How did this criminal act come about?” (Judges 20:3, NRSV).⁷ The Scripture refers to the Levite as “the husband of the woman who was murdered [RSH]” (verse 4, NRSV). The Scripture is not clear whether she died from the multiple rapes or from the

Levite's knife. In either case, her death is referred to as RSH, murder.

3. In 1 Kings 21 an act of murder is attributed to Ahab. Naboth is executed by stoning based on Jezebel's false charges so that Ahab can possess Naboth's vineyard. Elijah rebukes Ahab at God's order: “Have you killed [RSH], and also taken possession?” (verse 17, NRSV). Stoning, a legal form of execution, is here used illegally based on a false charge, and is thus a premeditated murder.

4. In 2 Kings 6:32 the king of Israel, intending to execute Elisha, is defined as a murderer. The king of Israel blames the prophet for infanticide (see 2 Kings 6:26-32) resulting from the siege by the king of Syria, or Aramea, and sends a person to put Elisha to death. Elisha says to the elders before the messenger arrives, “Do you see how this murderer [RSH] has sent to take off my head?” (verse 32, RSV). Note also that the setting here is one of armed aggression by the Syrians (verse 24), but RSH is used, not concerning the intertribal hostilities, but concerning an interpersonal conflict between two Israelites.

5. In Job 23:24 Job tells God: “The murderer [RSH] rises at dusk to kill the poor and needy, and in the night is like a thief” (NRSV). Clearly he is referring to intentional killing.

6. In Psalm 62:3, despite the murderous actions of his assailants, David trusts God. David, using the third person rather than the first person, questions those assaulting him: “How long will you assail a person, will you batter [RSH] your victim, all of you?” (NRSV). The *New American Standard Bible* (NASB) translates RSH very literally: “How long will you assail a man, that you may murder [RSH] him, all of you?”⁸

7. In Psalm 94:6 David prays divine vengeance on the wicked. He accuses: “They slay the widow and the sojourner, and murder [RṢḤ] the fatherless” (RSV).

8. In Proverbs 22:13 the sluggard is characterized as excusing his laziness because man or animal will murder him: “The sluggard says, ‘There is a lion outside! I shall be slain [RṢḤ] in the streets!’” (RSV). This is the only time that RṢḤ is attributed to an animal. Of course, the sluggard could be using personification.

9. In Isaiah 1:21 Isaiah says that while Jerusalem was once the lodging of righteousness, murderers now inhabit the city. He mourns: “How the faithful city has become a harlot, she that was full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers [RṢḤ]” (RSV).

10. In Jeremiah 7 Jeremiah personifies Jerusalem as presumptuously committing murder, while facing God and saying they are delivered. Clearly pointing out the sins, God says: “Will you steal, murder [RṢḤ], commit adultery, . . . and then . . . stand before me . . . and say, ‘We are delivered!’—only to go on doing all these abominations?” (verses 9, 10, RSV).

11. In Hosea 4:1 Hosea states: “The Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or kindness, and no knowledge of God in the land” (RSV). Verse 2 continues: “There is swearing, lying, killing [RṢḤ], stealing” (RSV).

12. In Hosea 6:9 Hosea describes the priests as banding

together to commit murder: “As robbers lie in wait for a man, so the priests are banded together; they murder [RṢḤ] on the way to Shechem” (RSV).

Several facts have become obvious:

1. In Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua, in the context of the cities of refuge, RṢḤ is principally used for only two types of violence: accidental or unintentional killing and intentional or premeditated killing of one individual by another. The former is termed manslaughter, and the latter, murder—in today’s legal system, homicide.

2. Numbers 35:27 uses RṢḤ to indicate that when the avenger of blood kills the manslayer outside a city of refuge, the avenger is not guilty of blood, or murder. The avenger is performing an appropriate act of vengeance.

3. In its other 12 occurrences, RṢḤ refers to intentional killing or murder.

4. RṢḤ is never, in any of the 47 citations, used in connection with war or in relation to the killing that takes place in war.

5. RṢḤ is never used for any other kind of killing, such as animal sacrificing.

We might note at this juncture that to institute a commandment to prohibit

• A key text to support noncombatancy does not contain a broad prohibition of killing.

• Weapons training and use in war and legal employments does not break the sixth commandment and should not be used as reasons for church discipline.

• To translate RṢḤ as “thou shalt not kill” in the sixth commandment is not consistent with the context of scripture.

unintentional/accidental killing would be irrational. So God has made a clear distinction between manslaughter and murder. The sixth commandment is a prohibition of intentional, premeditated, and malicious killing. RSH, employed in the commandment “Thou shalt not kill,” is thus more accurately translated: “Thou shalt not murder.”

at any time during their military service. All 1-A-Os have been trained only in fields that do not require use of a weapon, e.g., the medical field. This stance is called “noncombatancy.” As a church, we have also strongly advised against volunteering for military service because those who voluntarily enlist must be trained in the use of firearms and must use them to kill the enemy

RSH is never, in all of the 47 citations, used in connection with war or in relation to the killing that takes place in war.

Summary

This satisfies the three rules of hermeneutics mentioned earlier:

1. The Scripture has interpreted its use of RSH.

2. The Hebrew word RSH has a more limited scope of meanings than the English word “kill.”

3. The contexts of the use of RSH have determined and limited its meaning and scope.

Additionally, there are numerous opportunities in the Old Testament for RSH to be used in connection with war, as the Old Testament is replete with war, but it is never used in this connection.

Application Today

We have taught, since the American War Between the States, that Seventh-day Adventists who are drafted under the Selective Service Act should apply for a 1-A-O classification, which exempts them, in the military, from being required to train with or use a weapon

when ordered to do so. One of the key texts used in support of noncombatancy has been Exodus 20:13, “Thou shalt not kill,” thus interpreting the commandment as a broad prohibition of killing, which the word RSH does not support.

The translation of the commandment with the word “kill” has conveniently but somewhat erroneously provided a doctrinelike prohibition of military killing. If one is breaking a commandment in participating in military killing in war, then that person is committing a grave sin, equivalent to breaking any of the other commandments—stealing, committing adultery, idolatry, and Sabbathbreaking. Such offenses require ecclesiastical discipline—censure or removal from membership—which the church in its General Conference sessions has never attached to any of the legal forms of arms bearing.

There have been isolated cases of attempts at and actual removal from membership for persons who have volunteered for military service, and some have expressed disfavor of those who

become law enforcement officers or security guards for commercial businesses. Presently in the United States there is a moratorium on the draft, so military enlistment is completely voluntary. Thus, every Adventist who presently enters military service voluntarily becomes an arms bearer, a combatant.

In the light of this more accurate meaning and limited scope of the sixth commandment, we have done well not to discipline members who legally train with, carry, and/or use weapons of war. They have violated neither the sixth commandment nor one of the 11 *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* criteria for member discipline if they have been trained to use a weapon and have had to use it under circumstances that are legal, including military service.

This is not to say that all killing in war is justified or legal or appropriate for Seventh-day Adventists. Study of the New Testament teaching on killing and of a citizen's obligation to their government should help to clarify this.

Much as we might dislike having to say so, Bible translations have been



translators' punctuation of Jesus' reply. Virtually every translation places the comma so that Jesus said: "I say to you,

We must study what the whole of Scripture contributes to our understanding of the topic.

errantly influenced by the philosophical and theological views of the translators or by lack of proper information concerning the meaning of the original language. One notable example of this is what Jesus promised to the thief on the cross, when he asked Jesus to remember him at His coming. We take a view that is not in agreement with the

today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43, RSV). We oppose this translation on the grounds that it is inconsistent with the rest of scriptural teaching on the condition of persons in death. We believe the Scripture should be punctuated this way: "I say to you today, you will be with me in Paradise."



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So, it seems that in Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17 we must differ with the translation “thou shalt not kill” on the grounds that it is too broad, and thus it is inaccurate and inconsistent with all the contexts in which RSH is used in Scripture.

We must study what the whole of Scripture contributes to our understanding of the topic. Presently, our teaching on noncombatancy has a basis comparable to that of vegetarianism. Based on scriptural evidence and the health principles with which that evidence has been found to be consistent, we forbid the eating of unclean meats. The matter of whether to eat the clean meats or be vegetarian in diet is a matter of conscience. But we do teach that an appropriate vegetarian diet is a much more healthy diet than a nonvege-

tarian diet. There is no statement in Scripture prohibiting the eating of clean meats. In fact, Jesus and His disciples are clearly eaters of clean meats—lamb and fish, in particular.

So noncombatancy has also always been a matter of personal conscience, and we need to consider whether the New Testament does or does not support that status.

It is to be expected that there will be those who very strenuously oppose this understanding of the sixth commandment. That is their right. There are those who very strenuously oppose the eating of clean meats as a practice that exempts a soul from salvation. Fortunately, as a church body, we do not support either view.

¹Texts credited to Tanakh are from *Tanakh: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*. Copyright © The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1985.

²Gerhard F. Hasel, “Principles of Biblical Interpretation,” in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. Gordon M. Hyde (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1974), p. 167.

³Ekkehardt Muller, “Guidelines for the Interpretation of Scripture,” in *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, ed. George W. Reid (Silver Spring: Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2006), p. 125.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libris* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1951), p. 907.

⁶Bible texts credited to RSV are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1946, 1952, 1971, by Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission.

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THE DESMOND T. DOSS Peace Project

by Joel D. Klimkewicz

The life and legacy of Desmond T. Doss and his humble devotion to God is one that Seventh-day Adventists will not soon forget, but the world needs to remember. Born February 7, 1919, Doss lived an exemplary life as a servant of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For more than 60 years the church has been captivated by the miraculous story surrounding the events that took place on Okinawa's Maeda Escarpment (Hacksaw Ridge). Maeda Escarpment, once declared a holy site of peace by a thirteenth-century Ryukyu king named Eiso, was ironically the site of one of Okinawa's bloodiest World War II battles. Yet it became the literal site of peace when God showed up to help Doss save more than 75 wounded men.

Exposed to Japanese fire and armed only with a first-aid kit, Private Desmond T. Doss, medic for Company B, 77th Infantry Division, became in 1945 the first conscientious objector to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Doss was not just a hero who saved a few lives; he was a man who put God and the needs of others before himself, which ultimately resulted in a series of supernatural activities displaying the power of God in his life. A hero commits one or two acts of bravery, but Private Doss was virtually a walking miracle, saving life time and time again. From April 29 to May 21, 1945, without concern for his own safety, he offered the wounded and dying a second chance at life without ever having to take life.

The Congressional Medal of Honor citation recounts the heroism and honors Desmond Doss for his bravery. That resonates with patriotic Americans, but the award fails to capture the elements of the

story that would captivate the Japanese people who often visit the historic site of Maeda Escarpment. It is the goal of the Desmond T. Doss Monument and Peace Project to erect a monument that will reach across the cultural divide between Japanese and Americans by focusing on the power of God to save life.

Maeda Escarpment is considered a national park and is visited by tourists from around the world who wish to see the ancient castle ruins from the Ryukyu dynasty. The United States military offers a weekly tour of the site and explains the battle and the story of Doss. A monument on the site would do more than just share the story of Doss. It would be an international witness to the power of the gospel and establish a positive Adventist presence in Okinawa, Japan.

While the vicissitudes of war in Okinawa can still be seen on the faces of the aged, it is important that the young learn about the power of God to save; and the

The Maeda Escarpment as it appears today



story of God's faithful servant does just that. By building a monument on Maeda Escarpment, we will be piling up memorial stones like Joshua did at the Jordan River for generations to remember what God did in that place (Joshua 4).

Desmond Doss has been resting in the Lord since March 23, 2006, after 87 years of faithful service to our Lord and King, Jesus Christ. It is the hope that through the Desmond T. Doss Monument and Peace Project Doss's story will continue to serve God through a monument on the site. Plans also include building a Desmond T. Doss memorial hall on the property of the Okinawa International Seventh-day Adventist Church, which will serve as a type of Adventist heritage building for the Okinawa Mission, as well as a multifunctional building for church ministry.

The style and size of the monument, as well as the memorial hall, will depend greatly on fund-raising. There will be four basic phases of the project.

Phase 1: Raise funds until December 30, 2011.

- Phase 2: Finalize building plans.
- Phase 3: Complete the construction.
- Phase 4: Ribbon cutting and commemoration ceremony.

At this time we are humbly appealing to the world church for assistance in raising money to support this endeavor. The Okinawa Mission and the Japan Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist have commissioned the project committee. The Okinawa International SDA Church has provided a way for everyone to contribute by making donations payable to Okinawa International SDA Church Desmond T. Doss Monument Fund.

Supporters may also contribute to the project at ACM's online giving site or by mail. To make an electronic contribution, visit AdventistGiving.org/?OrgID=AN11AD. Mark your donation as Doss Peace Project. Choose the electronic bank transfer, rather than the credit card option.

The original memorial noting the bravery of Private Desmond T. Doss



Peace Project Committee



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OUR GOAL IS TO RAISE:

Monument	\$150,000
Memorial Hall	\$ 50,000
Total	\$200,000





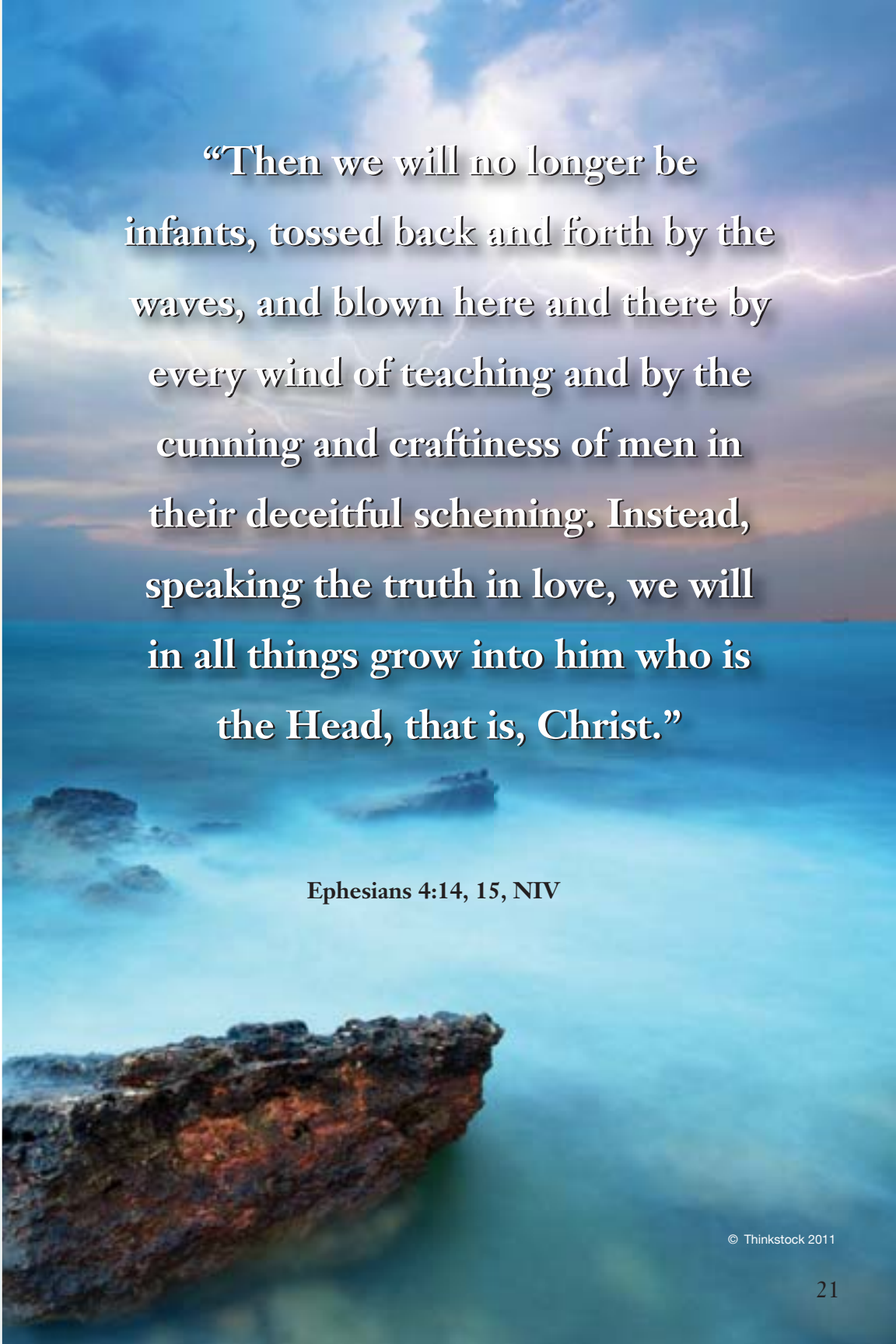
Chaplains Meet With Rilea

The following chaplains and chaplain candidates met recently with ACM assistant director for southeastern NAD Les Rilea at Fort Jackson, South Carolina: (from left to right) Chaplain Ulisese Mataafa, U.S. Army Reserve; Eliseo Aquino, chaplain candidate; Chaplain Andre Ascalon, ANG; Les Rilea, ACM assistant director, southeastern region, North American Division; Jorge Baez, chaplain candidate; Chaplain Richard James, U.S. Army Reserve; Freddy Sanchez, chaplain candidate; Chaplain Bill Cork, Air National Guard.



Project Whitecoat

More than 200 people attended a reunion hosted by the North Pacific Union Conference chapter of the U.S. Army Project Whitecoat. The event was held October 29 and 30, 2010, at the Oregon Conference Center in Gladstone, Oregon. George Ulloa serves as president of the Whitecoat Foundation Board.



“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.”

Ephesians 4:14, 15, NIV



NAD MILITARY CHURCH

Charter Membership

If you are assigned overseas for six months or longer in some type of official government or military-related service for Canada or the United States (active duty in the armed forces, civilian employee, teacher, AAFES worker, contractor, or family member), then you are eligible to join the NAD Military Church. To request a transfer of your membership, visit <http://nad.AdventistChaplains.org>. Click on the link “NAD Military Church.”

Membership transfer request forms are available under “Membership.”

Your NAD Military Church staff and board look forward to serving you!

Online Giving

Honoring God through faithful stewardship is encouraged of all Seventh-day Adventists. In the Bible rich blessings are promised to those who return an honest tithe and are generous with offerings to support God's work.

In response to requests from Adventist members in the United States military, the NSO has made arrangements for members in the U.S. Armed Forces serving outside the United States to be able to send tithes and offerings through the North American Division, and thus qualify for a receipt for tax-exempt contributions.

For your convenience go to www.AdventistGiving.org/?OrgID=AN11AD to make your online contribution.

Members are still encouraged to support the local expenses of their base chapel program. Military members serving in countries in other world divisions should contact their conference/union leadership or the division ACM director for further guidance in this area.



**RICH BLESSINGS
ARE PROMISED
TO THOSE WHO
RETURN AN
HONEST TITHE.**

A New Year Greeting




ACM staff: (back row from left) Larry Roth, Washington Johnson II, Mario Ceballos, Jose McLaughlin, Gary Councell, James North; (front row from left to right) Deena Bartel-Wagner, Arlene Bonilla, Dina Muldoon, Les Rilea

The Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries staff wishes you a joyous and prosperous new year. During the next 12 months, you will be in our prayers as you serve both your country and your God. May you find peace in the assurance of His love for you and joy in the knowledge that Jesus is coming soon.



Executive Editor: **Gary R. Councell** *Chaplain (Colonel) U.S. Army, Retired* ● Editor: **Deena Bartel-Wagner** editor@VerbalOxygen.com ● Design and Layout: **Bill Kirstein** *Review and Herald® Publishing Association* ● Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries **Gary R. Councell**, *Director/Endorser* ● **Mario Ceballos**, *Associate Director* ● The *For God and Country* journal is published by the National Service Organization (NSO), a chapter of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries (ACM). It is mailed free of charge to Seventh-day Adventist men and women serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. If you would like to be added to our mailing list, e-mail ACM or call 301-680-6780. Comments and/or articles are welcome and should be sent to the editor at editor@VerbalOxygen.com. Include your full name, complete mailing address, telephone, e-mail address, and current digital photos with all submissions. Items submitted by mail will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped return envelope. CONTACT US: Adventist World Headquarters National Service Organization/ACM, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A. Phone: 301-680-6780; fax: 301-680-6783; e-mail: acm@gc.adventist.org; URL: <http://nad.AdventistChaplains.org>. The National Service Organization 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 Adventist military-related personnel. Unless otherwise credited, all photos © Thinkstock 2011. Texts credited to NIV are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers. Adventist® and Seventh-day Adventist® are the registered trademarks of the General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists®.



*“The object of a new
year is not that we should
have a new year. It is
that we should have
a new soul.”* G. K. Chesterton

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God &+
Country**
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