Staying Connected

May 2011

Free Methodist Chaplain Newsletter
Volume 26, Issue 5

FOR Chaplains, Chaplain Families, and all who pray for F M Chaplains Connecting
CHRIST-Family-Church and People in need!
Chaplain Endorsing Agent Rex Carpenter

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Devotional by our F M Chaplain Association
Member at large, John Lefler

Our Unique Ministries

In this post-Easter season I’ve been thinking about the great contrasts in Peter’s life:

- A man called from his vocation of catching fish to catching men.
- A man who “followed” Christ, but didn’t always really believe what He said.
- A man who said he would “die with Christ,” but denied Him three times.

In John 21, Peter and the others returned to fishing. Jesus meets them on the shore and we have the scene where Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him. Three times Peter says “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus says “feed my sheep.” Peter asks Jesus about John’s ministry - “What about him?” Will the same things be required of him? The same ministry? The same martyrdom? Jesus responds with “what’s that to you? You must follow me.”

Peter’s ministry would be unique. The simple requirement was to follow where Jesus led and not worry about what Jesus required from others.

We have been called to a unique ministry: “Chaplain.” It’s as if Jesus said to us “Do you love me?” And we responded with “Yes Lord, you know that we love you.” “Then feed my soldiers, feed my sick, feed my dying, feed my firemen, feed my children.”

I appreciate Paul’s words in Ephesians 6:7 - “Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men.” And we are serving Him where he has called us. I give thanks to God for your unique calling. May God richly bless you and give you success.

Indiana State Police and Evansville Fire Dept.
Chaplain John Lefler and Sandy, Melody Hill FMC pastor, Evansville IN

As Memorial Day approaches, our thoughts turn to profound truths/values: family, life, death, heroism, sacrifice, service, hardship, honor, prayer, and peace. We think about Jesus saying and doing: “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends since you do what I command you to do.” John 15:13-14 We think about the military past and present. Our deep gratitude for sacrifices made in our behalf by Jesus and veterans can renew our devotion/aspiration to build, with God’s guidance and power, a life and a nation worthy of such sacrifices.
In February Louise & I visited 7 chaplain families in NC and GA (2 Navy, 6 Army) who are following JESUS & feeding his sheep. Bless the LORD and pray for their ministry and families.

Navy Chaplain David Pahs, we visited Tuesday eve. at Outback Steakhouse and on Wed. morning he showed me his ministry areas at New River Marine Air Group, NC and he introduced me to two of his Sr. Chaplains. We had lunch with one of them. His wife Jerian and children were visiting in Denver at the time. David is enthusiastic about feeding the sheep Jesus brings across his path in this abundant “pasture” of young American Marines. He recently completed a fruitful two year ministry tour with Canadian Naval forces in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Chaplain Pahs keeps in contact with River Supt., Dennis Jeffery.

Navy Chaplain Stephen Coates was assigned in October to Camp LeJeune Marine Base NC. In Feb. with Steve we toured the facilities, met staff; and took his family out to eat and visit in the evening. They were missing Taryn who is attending college out of state. On 4 March they moved into base housing, and Steve deployed on 13 March to minister to marines engaged in the war on terror. Chaplain LCDR Coates serves as the Deputy Chaplain for II Marine Expeditionary Force Forward. This staff, under the Command of Major General John Toolan, has charge of the multinational Regional Command Southwest encompassing all of Helmand and Nimruz Provinces in Afghanistan. This area will see some of the summer’s heaviest fighting. Working with thirty (30) Chaplains serving Marines throughout the Area of Operations, Steve has opportunity to preach at Forward Operating Bases and in Camp Chapels, to encourage both Chaplains and Marines, to support those on patrol and those working long days in a high-tech Combat Operations Center. He meets weekly with a group of men dedicated to obedience to Christ and actively sharing the life transforming good news of the gospel. His “100 Man Prayer Base” comprised of men around the world support him constantly in prayer. As a staff chaplain, his administrative workload is high so he works diligently to maintain his devotion to the Word of God and to prayer through creative daily disciplines.

Army Special Forces Chaplain Rick Winchester, Headquarters Company, 528th Sustainment Brigade (Airborne) is in his last few months at Ft Bragg. Rick showed us his guys doing “jumps” out of helicopters (which he, Anthony Randall and Kurt Spond do regularly). We took him and Lesa out to eat at a catfish place and talked late in the evening back at their house. Chaplain W trains Unit Ministry Teams for deployment, advises leaders on unit morale issues, mentors chaplains, leads Bible studies, and small group ministries. He’s been selected for a year of leadership training ILE/CGSC (Intermediate Leadership Education/Command and General Staff College at Ft Leavenworth KS, which will start early this summer.
LESA & RICK at home  Green Beret Mon.

Army Special Forces Chaplain Kurt Spond
(pictured with Charlie, Emma, wife Mary, Katie)
deploys for a month or two (like Anthony Randall) every six months to the war zones.
Kurt gave us a tour of the 82nd Airborne Museum and Special Operations sites. Then we took their family (and Rick W.) “out” for a pizza lunch and fellowship. Kurt arranged for us two nights in DV quarters in Normandy House on post: excellent treatment and quite economical. “Bringing God to the Soldier and the Soldier to God” is how Kurt describes his ministry. He is Pastor at Linden Oaks “Chapel Next” and has a full plate of unit visitations, counseling, and training “his guys” in spiritual resilience.

Army Special Forces Anthony Randall
was deployed, so we got some pizza and drove out to his house to visit and pray with Jeanine and their kids: Aria, William, and baby John Phillip. 8 May John Phillip was dedicated at their local UMC.

Anthony deploys regularly throughout the world with his unit. He recently conducted two marriage retreats and a family retreat, with over 90 families and 100 children impacted. He leads a weekly Bible Study (7-10 people) at work that includes satellite groups deployed. He and Jeanine lead a weekly marriage fellowship group (8-9 couples) at their home. It is exciting to see people coming to Christ and growing in their personal and professional lives. Anthony “deeply appreciates Rex and Louise’s care for his family while deployed and he enjoyed the time with them when he has been home.” He recently earned his Polish Airborne Wings and was promoted to Major. Congratulations Anthony! He stays in touch with his Supt. Dennis Jeffery and The River Conference.

Army Chaplain Major Bart Herndon & Amy hosted us (with son Dallas) Saturday evening “out” and overnight at their house. We attended his 0900 Traditional Service at Ft Stewart and met his staff and supervising chaplain. Bart says, “the Lord continues to increase attendance in our Traditional Worship Service. We have grown from 55 average attendance to 75 in 5 months. Our mission is to evangelize and disciple believers.” Bart is also the Deputy Division Chaplain and was the project officer for the Fort Stewart Easter Sunrise Service 24 APR 2011. They had over 200 Soldiers and family members in attendance and the guest speaker was the FORSCOM Chaplain (COL) Mike Tarvin. Chaplain H was the project officer for the “Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield National Prayer Breakfast” on 21 March 2011. The U.S. Army Chief of Chaplains Major General Doug Carver was the guest speaker. 500 Soldiers and guests attended!
Army Chaplain Major Sam Cabrera and Laura, with Anna (up one step) welcomed us to his 1100 Gospel Service. He preached on God’s promise to Abraham and Sarah – a son: “never discount what God can do!” Very inspirational. One soldier at the altar prayed to received Christ (3 did so the previous Sunday!) Besides being the pastor of the Army’s largest Gospel Service, Sam is also the Deputy Installation Chaplain at Ft Stewart. We took Sam and Laura, daughter Anna & daughter-in-law Carly out for food & fellowship. Sam is a member of our FM Chaplains Executive Committee. What a privilege to visit in person the ones we pray for so often. We have wonderful chaplains!

0900 Srv Ft. Stewart  1100 Gospel Srv & Choir

Prayer Requests for Afghanistan and Military Chaplains – From ACCTS (Association for Christian Conference Training and Service), supporting Evangelical Chaplains and Christians from among third world military leaders.

- Pray that Taliban funding (especially the poppy harvest) would be cut off, as funding has a direct impact on their ability to attack Afghans and Coalition Forces.

- Pray that more and more of the Afghan people would see the evil of the Taliban, reject their teachings, and reach out to them in love.

- Pray that more members of the Taliban would repatriate themselves like the 50 who did last month, rejoin their families, and support the Afghan government.

- Pray especially for my First Sergeant, my Gunnery Sergeant, and my XO (second in command). I have a great burden on my heart that they would come to know Jesus, and understand how much God loves them."

Pray for all chaplains – institutional and military, especially for our deployed chaplains and their families:

- **Army Chaplains Jim Souza and John Hubbs**, both deployed from Ft Hood TX to Iraq a year

- **Navy Chaplain Steve Coates** is deployed with Camp LeJeune Marines in Afghanistan for a year

- **Anthony Randall and Kurt Spond** both deploy from Ft Bragg intermittently with Special Forces

**Register for our PDC**

Nearly 70 chaplains and spouses are registered for our Professional Development Conference (PDC) 11-13 July. There is room for more endorsed chaplains and candidates! Register for $75 with Bud at anstedbud@yahoo.com.