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For God & Country

*A Journal for Seventh-day
Adventists in Military and
Public Service*





PROPHET OF GOD, COUNSELOR TO KINGS

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A modern-day example of what it means to serve God and country and be a Seventh-day Adventist was demonstrated by Desmond Doss.

On October 12, 1945, just three years after enlisting in the U.S. Army, Desmond Doss stood on the White House lawn, the official residence of the President of the United States of America. On that day he received the nation's highest award for his bravery.

Of the 16 million men in uniform who served during World War II, only 431 received the Congressional Medal of Honor. One of these medals was placed around the neck of Corporal Doss, a Seventh-day Adventist, who during combat had not killed a single enemy soldier. He refused to carry a gun. His only weapons were his

Bible and his faith in the living God. President Harry S. Truman shook his hand and held it the entire time his citation was read aloud to those gathered outside the White House. "I'm proud of you," Truman said. "You really deserve this. I consider this a greater honor than being president." What Desmond Doss did, he did *for God and Country*.

Christians have dual citizenship. First, we are subject to the laws of God as citizens of Heaven. Second, as citizen of a country on Earth we need to also obey the laws of the nations where we live.

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.¹

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To live as the Apostle Paul describes is not an easy thing to do in today's world. Now, think about living in Paul's time! Paul was both a Jew and a Roman citizen. Paul had to follow Jewish practices and teachings. As a Roman citizen, he belonged to the Roman Empire which was oppressing his country and at the same time he was a citizen of Heaven. The challenge for many Christians, especially those in oppressed countries, is how to balance being a committed Christian with allegiance to a country. The questions that we must ask ourselves are:

Will God protect those who defy the law when it goes against their Christian or personal beliefs?

How does God regard Christians who put worldly political or business standards before Christian ethics for financial gain or social acceptance?²

The answer to those questions may be obvious to some but, is it really? How far would you go is the question to ask yourself. Every situation is different, and everyone is individually accountable to God. Christians need to answer the questions within the context of the dual citizenship.

Let's examine how Daniel and his friends approached the challenge. The meaning of the word Daniel in Hebrew is "judge of God," or "God is my judge." However, the Babylonians who captured him from Judah changed his name to Belteshazzar, which means

"may God protect his life."

Daniel was trained in the king's court for service. Because Daniel possessed wisdom from God, he was conscientious in his work. He quickly established a reputation for intelligence and for absolute faithfulness to his God.

No matter what role or position you hold in service to your country. I encourage you to do likewise. Daniel prospered during the reigns of successive world empires, and King Darius planned to put him in charge of the entire kingdom.

Daniel was first and foremost a servant of God. A prophet who set an example for God's people on how to live a holy life. Daniel also predicted the future triumph of the Messianic kingdom,³ and survived the lion's den because of his faith in God.⁴

Daniel's life of service lasted nearly 70 years and he became a Prophet of God and companion of kings. He did it all during a lifetime of service as a foreigner in a strange land. Daniel, a captive, became a skilled government administrator excelling at whatever tasks assigned to him, and you can do the same. *I dare you to be a Daniel!*

¹ Romans 13:1

² <https://victorythruchrist.org/god-and-country/>

³ Daniel 7-12

⁴ <https://www.learnreligions.com/daniel-prophet-in-exile-701182>

TO SERVE OR NOT TO SERVE

By Commander (CHC) Michael Tomlinson,
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In William Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene 1, the melancholy Danish prince, laments his future. "To be, or not to be, that is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them..." When a Seventh-day Adventist is pondering a job/career in the military they can be conflicted too as they ponder serving their country and God.

Following the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844, and failure of Christ to return, groups of Millerites began a forensic study of the Bible to determine what had gone wrong. They discovered a simple explanation—they were wrong. "*The sky and the earth will not last forever, but my words will. No one knows the day or the time. The angels in heaven don't know, and the Son himself doesn't know. Only the Father knows. So, watch out and be ready! You don't know when the time will come...It could be in the evening or at midnight or before dawn or in the morning. But if he comes suddenly, don't let him find you asleep. I tell everyone just what I have told you. Be alert!*"¹ Letting the Bible speak for itself, unencumbered by human impositions, brought clarity.

The Adventist ability to think outside the box of religious tradition kept them from being mired in old

ways of thinking when studying God's word. Coalescing around forgotten or neglected biblical truths, a core of pioneering former Millerites embraced the imminent return of Christ², the seventh-day Sabbath,³ Christ's ministry of grace in the Heavenly Sanctuary,⁴ and the value of spiritual gifts in God's remnant people,⁵ including the prophetic gift.⁶ Shunning denominations that did not acknowledge these biblical truths, they were an eclectic non-denominational movement keen to share with others.

"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.'"⁷ A realization dawned. To fulfill this commission, they needed some sort of organization and structure to be effective.

Despite being staunchly abolitionists, Adventists were developing a position on killing and war that would put them at odds with the United States Federal government during the first years of the Civil War. The soon-to-be Seventh-day Adventist church was choosing a path of non-combatancy or conscientious objection to war.

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ADVENTISTS, THANKS TO PERCEPTIVE LEADERSHIP AND THE MEDICAL CADET CORPS, WERE WELL POSITIONED TO SERVE THEIR COUNTRY WHILE HONORING GOD IN THE WORLD'S GREATEST CONFLAGRATION.

Mounting spiritual and social pressures necessitated creation of a traditional denomination. On October 1, 1860, a conclave of delegates officially adopted the name Seventh-day Adventist for the embryonic church. With the outbreak of the Civil War and 1863 Enrollment Act (draft) it became apparent Adventists needed an organization to guide them in engaging with the world. In May 1863 at Battle Creek, Michigan, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was born.

In 1864, the decision to organize into a denomination must have seemed prescient when the Federal government allowed for an exemption from combatancy to “members of religious denominations, who shall by oath or affirmation declare that they are conscientiously opposed to the bearing of arms, and who are prohibited from doing so by the rules and articles of faith and practice of such religious denomination,” who, “when drafted into the military service, (would) be considered non-combatant.” Finally, seeing a road to victory in the internecine slaughter the Federal government, despite a record of trampling on civil liberties, became open to alternative methods of service for the “peace churches.”

It would be nice to say from this day forward that the relationship between

the Adventist church and government, during war, was good, but it wasn't. Still progress was made, and the term conscientious-cooperation began to be used to explain how Adventists worked with the military without being combatants.

Church leaders, thinking about future wars, created the Medical Cadet Corps to prepare young Adventists for military service as medical non-combatants. Fast-forward to World War II. The U. S. Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 provided for mandatory alternative service for those who refused to take part in combat “by reason of religious training and belief.” Adventists, thanks to perceptive leadership and the Medical Cadet Corps, were well positioned to serve their country while honoring God in the world's greatest conflagration.

Mel Gibson's movie *Hacksaw Ridge* introduced the world to but one of the brave Adventists who chose to serve the country as a World War II Corpsman/medic—Desmond Doss. Doss, a conscientious cooperator fought to serve despite the abuse he received at the hands of his fellow Soldiers. Faithful to his beliefs Doss was wounded three times, received two Bronze Star Medals, and heroically rescued 75 Soldiers from death during the bloody Battle of Okinawa. A feat that earned him the

nation's highest military award— the Medal of Honor. As a boy, from a military family, I remember reading *The Unlikeliest Hero* with pride and awe that a Seventh-day Adventist was the only non-combatant to receive the Medal of Honor.

Yet, Doss was not the only brave Adventist ready to serve his country and go in “harm’s way.” From the mid-1950’s to the early 1970’s Adventists volunteered to serve as “human guinea pigs” in biological warfare research. Operation Whitecoat was a Cold War program designed to determine a human being’s susceptibility to biological warfare agents. Volunteers, primarily Seventh-day Adventists, were exposed to dangerous, but curable diseases to determine treatment procedures. Not only did this research have military applications, but it had positive benefits for humanity in the medical realm too. This was Adventist conscientious cooperation at its best.

The conflicts in Korea and Vietnam saw drafted Adventists serving as Corpsmen/medics. Since 75 percent of draftees did not serve in Vietnam the chance of an Adventist operating in the jungles of Indochina was unlikely. Nonetheless, some did serve alongside Adventists who volunteered to be there. A number, like my father, were career professionals who converted to Adventism in the military while others were volunteers who found themselves in Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) related to combat. As more career military men and women joined the church and young Adventists volunteered to serve in the military it compelled the denomination to examine its stance regarding military service.

Study groups gathered to address the issue. Some were outright pacifists and wanted the church to be more like Quakers and Mennonites, but this did not mesh with the idea of conscientious cooperation or Armenian freewill. On the opposite end of the spectrum, some questioned non-combatancy in light of the



biblical record where God's chosen leaders Abraham, Saul, David, Debra, etc., were combatants. Ultimately, church leaders chose to uphold the historic position of non-combatancy and conscientious cooperation. This was confirmed at the 1972 Annual Council of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Mexico City, Mexico.

On the website, *Adventists in Uniform*, we find this amplification of the 1972 document— "Notice that the Seventh-day Adventist Church advocates a non-combatant position but does not require it. Thus, some church members are willing to train with and use weapons; while others cannot, because of their own individual conscience... The Seventh-day Adventist Church does not seek to be the conscience for any member or commander. But we do seek to inform the conscience and behavior of both, so decisions can be made with maximum understanding and thought."⁸

In 1973 the draft ended, and the United States military became a volunteer force. The sword of

Damocles no longer hung-over Adventist heads, but there was a surprising anomaly—a minority of Adventists were choosing the military while active-duty military personnel were choosing the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This validated the wisdom of the church emphasizing conscience in choosing military service, because it recognized that men and women of goodwill can differ on the issue of military service and that said service does not make one a bad Seventh-day Adventist.

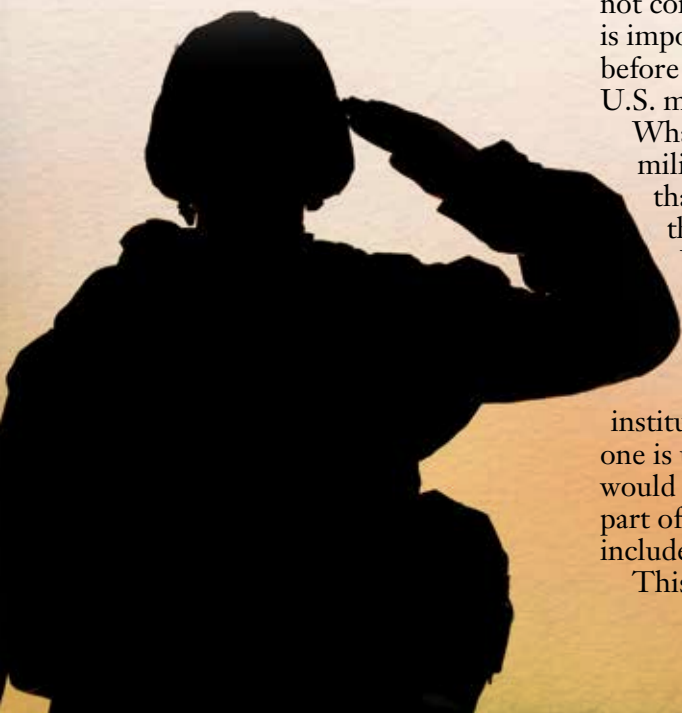
Today, all members of the military are designated as combatants excluding chaplains. Even Corpsmen/medics in a kinetic or hostile environment are "trigger pullers" first and medical personnel second. This complicates things for Adventists who want to enlist in the military but would prefer to be non-combatants.

As a veteran of both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom I know the majority of men and women deployed to combat never fired a shot in anger, but that does not mean they were not combatants. Understanding this is important for Adventists to know before choosing to enlist-in/join the U.S. military.

What is the purpose of a nation's military? To protect and defend that nation when faced with the threat or use of force/violence.

While military pay and benefits are good the military is not primarily a Federal jobs plan, health care system, or scholarship fund. It is an institution created to kill people. If one is uncomfortable with this, they would be better served not to become part of their nation's military. This includes clergy, too.

This brings me to a frustration I



MEN AND WOMEN OF GOODWILL CAN DIFFER ON THE ISSUE OF MILITARY SERVICE AND THAT SAID SERVICE DOES NOT MAKE ONE A BAD SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST.

have with two types of chaplains—pacifists and wannabe “warriors.” Those who defend their nation do not need chaplains flaunting their “moral superiority” to denigrate them and lecture them on the morality of killing/war. Killing can be traumatic and when a warfighter comes to the chaplain, they need empathy, a listening ear, and spiritual nurturing to negotiate the emotional and spiritual challenges that result from killing. It is not time to hold forth on the immorality of war. These chaplains need to have the integrity to resign and find another venue to promote their pacifism.

The opposite is also true—warfighters do not need chaplains strapping on pistols and leading combat missions. A chaplain traumatized by personally killing would be of no use to warriors. This is why in the United States the Department of Defense designates chaplains as non-combatants. Chaplains who want to be combatants need to resign, because they’re in the wrong profession just as pacifists are.

What is it that leads people to join the military? Many are looking to be part of something they interpret as important or bigger than themselves. Some are running away from dysfunctional families, abuse, or failed lives. One of my Religious Program Specialists left college early and decided the military offered him the discipline and direction he

needed to mature (he is now a Marine Corps officer). Some are looking for adventure or a challenge. For me, coming from a military family, service to the country is an important obligation/tradition to fulfill. If the economy is bad and unemployment high, jobs is a major motivator. In the United States, the GI Bill is an attractive inducement for those who want a college education but can’t afford it. Finally, some claim they were “seduced” by the “lies” of “forked-tongued” recruiters. I’m sure many of these reasons are true for Adventists too. Ultimately, as the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church recognized in 1972, this a matter of conscience and military service does not make one less of a Seventh-day Adventist, even if that person is a combatant.

What benefit is there of Adventists serving in the military? “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”⁹

While most Adventists, aside from chaplains, do not join the military to share the gospel the truth is that faithful Seventh-day Adventists can have a positive impact on other Sailors, Marines, Soldiers, Airmen, and Coast Guardsmen. Unlike civilians without military service,

BEFORE MAKING A DECISION TO ENLIST-IN/JOIN THE MILITARY AN ADVENTIST NEEDS TO BE INTENTIONAL AND KNOW WHAT HE OR SHE IS JOINING AND WHY THEY ARE DOING IT.

they have a shared experience with other military members/veterans that gives them authenticity and gravitas. Many Adventists in the pews trace their conversion to military service and the witness of faithful Adventists in the military.

A few days before I began this article a fellow chaplain sent me this message. “Greetings and Salutations. Anne and I were at a seafood restaurant/bar in Hampton this evening and had a delightful night socializing with the staff at the bar. We started talking to the manager who mentioned he was a Marine. I responded with “first in, last out.” Immediately he said, you

must be a chaplain. We got to talking and he mentioned that he was with MARSOC, to which I said, “You must know Chaplain Mike,” and he finished with “Tomlinson.” he spoke very highly of you and your work with MARSOC. I just thought I’d pass on the compliment, since we don’t always get the compliments!”

What’s interesting is I never served with MARSOC. I have served and deployed with multiple Marine Commands, but never MARSOC. This message was a reflection of my years of dedication as a spiritual servant to Marines and Sailors. An influence earned by years of “boots and utes,” hiking with full combat



loads, sleeping on the cold hard ground, range time, dropping mortars, the “kill house,” weeks without showers, eating last and/or going without food, volunteering to deploy in harm’s way and crisscrossing Iraq and Afghanistan to ensure service members, from all branches, received religious services and rites.

In 2013 my wife, Rhonda, and I celebrated Saint Patrick’s Day with another chaplain family. They also invited a young Marine Captain going through a divorce, the son of a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, to dinner too. After dinner the young chaplain began to ask questions on what makes a good “Marine Chaplain” and combat deployments? I shared my insights from serving with Marines and deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. It was clear, let us say, the Marine Captain was skeptical of my experience and advice to the chaplain. Months later, the Marine Captain after transferring to a deploying unit, saw Rhonda and animatedly exclaimed, “F*#^, everybody knows your husband. He’s a bad @\$\$, a real beast (a very high compliment among Marines)! ”

How did I become a “legend” among a generation of experienced combat Marines? I “mingled with Marines as one who desired their good... ministered to their needs, and won their confidence.” The Navy Chaplain Corps talks a lot about ministry of presence. For 20 years I have actually lived it, because two decades as a Seventh-day pastor taught me how to do it right.

If Desmond Doss had not been on that escarpment in Okinawa 75 Soldiers would have been brutally murdered, their bodies desecrated and left to rot in the sun. Only by being there was he able to save those lives.

If the Seventh-day Adventist Church

wants to have an influence on a nation’s defenders/warriors, it must have a presence in the military. The Apostle Paul understood this, “I am free and belong to no one. But I make myself a slave to all people to win as many as I can. To the Jews I became like a Jew to win the Jews... To those who are without the law I became like a person who is without the law. I did this to win those people who are without the law. (But really, I am not without God’s law—I am ruled by Christ’s law.) To those who are weak, I became weak so I could win the weak. I have become all things to all people so I could save some of them in any way possible...”¹⁰

Before making a decision to enlist-in/join the military an Adventist needs to be intentional and know what he or she is joining and why they are doing it. What is his/her reason for “signing-up?” What job are they looking to do? Is this a “entry level” job or career? Are they comfortable with the idea of going to war and possibly killing another person (this does not apply to chaplains)? While Adventists must be discerning and thoughtful before choosing to serve in the military the church also has a responsibility to support those who decide to serve. It’s a relationship beneficial to the Kingdom of God and His remnant church.

¹ Mark 13:31–37, CEV, emphasis added.

² 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17

³ Exodus 20:8–11

⁴ Hebrews 8

⁵ Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12

⁶ Joel 2:2 and Acts 2:17

⁷ Matthew 28:18–20, RSV

⁸ <https://adventistsinuniform.org/military-service/non-combatancy/>

⁹ White, Ellen G. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143.

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 9:19–23, NCV

DEFINING THE CIRCUMSTANCES

By CH (LTC) Dan Bray, U. S. Army, Retired, MS, MDiv.
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What does it mean whenever a Seventh-day Adventist individual serves in the military or government? Does it open the eyes of the collective world to see that there may be other options when looking at an issue? Or, perhaps this service means more credibility for our church if Adventists hold prominent positions. Maybe it just plain old makes us feel good about ourselves as individuals knowing that there is someone out there in the public eye making a positive demonstration of our church.

We like being on a winning team and the accolades that follow. When we see a fellow Adventist in a prominent position do well, it might cause us to eagerly inform others that we, too, are part of that group. In turn, in our respective workplace influence, we might discover new roles and functions for ourselves.

There have been thousands of Seventh-day Adventists who have and do serve in the military and government.

Look around where you serve. Are there opportunities surrounding you that call for a distinctive Adventist voice? If so, how are you responding to that call?

Some of them have held very prestigious offices, functions, and ranks. One might ponder that if someone is going to occupy a position, an Adventist should be just as good of a choice as any other person. If that is the case, then we as Adventists ought to be the best example we can possibly be. We ought to be above reproach and have high ethics.

That likely, in principle, is the heart of what we do or say. It has been written before in this column that being consistent in our lifestyle sets us apart from others. But this is a good thing. If others do the same thing over and over again because it is tradition, then we as Adventists can be that “spice” that changes the flavor of the whole entrée. Another challenge for us is that we always need to be on our “A-game” without a day off.

We may not necessarily be called to be “the” go-to person publicly. But, like Daniel’s role in Scripture, we can provide solid advice in times of need. Look around where you serve. Are there opportunities surrounding you

that call for a distinctive Adventist voice? If so, how are you responding to that call?

On the other side of the coin, what might occur if there were no Adventists to occupy key military or government positions? The military wants representations of all faiths and beliefs, for example in the Chaplain Corps, to reflect varying viewpoints of its service members. Position slots are allocated according to the percentage of that faith group inside the military. At times, our Adventists have served so well that we have actually gone above the number allotted to our faith group due to our outstanding track record.

Do we need Adventists serving in various capacities of military and government service? Yes, we do. But if there is no one ready or available, God may likely take others who are willing to be led and to be used as one of God’s tools at the time, place, and opportunity. We should not allow the circumstances of the day define us; rather we should be the ones who define the circumstances.

STEPPING OUT OF THE ADVENTIST BUBBLE



By 2nd Lieutenant Derrick Dye, United States Air Force,
with Deena Bartel-Wagner, Editor, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries—General Conference

Growing up in the Adventist bubble, Derrick Dye experienced much of what made lifelong friends among his classmates at Mt. Aetna Elementary School and Highland View Academy. “I attended the Willowbrook Adventist Church, where I actively participated in Pathfinders. Eventually, I was old enough to work at the Mount Aetna

Retreat Center and enjoyed my time there,” says Derrick. “I was very, very much in the Adventist bubble, growing up.”

A desire to serve in his community led Derrick to volunteer service at 16-years-old. “My stepfather was a member of the local volunteer fire department,” says Derrick. “It seemed like it would be a fun thing to do with him.”

Although this was a volunteer position, Derrick trained for the work he would do. “There was a lot of bookwork and learning of theory. We also had a weekly Monday night training,” says Derrick. “Firefighters need to learn how to recognize the signs of what a fire is telling you, how to handle yourself during a fire response, and how to handle ourselves at a highway scene if we were at a car crash scene.”

Hands-on training and learning from people are the best types. “There is a saying that ‘old firefighters make other old firefighters,’” says



Derrick with his sister Hope Highley, who currently serves as a Staff Sergeant in the Air Force.

Derrick. “The stuff that you learned from other old firefighters will help you become an old, wise firefighter.”

During his last two years of high school, Derrick committed his time at the fire department and kept up with his studies. “The last two years of high school shaped who I was starting to become.”

WHAT ARE YOUR COLLEGE PLANS?

As high school graduation neared, many of Derrick’s friends planned to attend college. However, Derrick was uncertain about his future plans. “Attending an Adventist college really didn’t fit into our family’s financial picture. So instead, my sisters attended a local community college, and I thought I’d do the same thing,” says Derrick. “During my senior year, as a part of a classroom assignment, I’d shadowed a Maryland State Trooper. He suggested that I consider joining

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the military because I could develop skills for a future career. I considered the idea but wasn’t convinced.”

I’LL NEVER JOIN UP

When Derrick was seven, he faced the reality of his parent’s divorce. Sometime later, when his dad joined the United States Army, Derrick didn’t

Derrick with his family at his sister’s wedding. Left to right Hope (Wootton) Highley, Victoria (Dye) Cosby, Derrick, Vivian (Dye) Gholke, Thomas Wootton, Faith Wootton, Monica (Dye) Wootton, William Wootton.





Left: (Then) Airman First Class Derrick Dye, posing with President Obama's "The Beast" Limousine inside the Fire Department as he visited the Charleston area.



Right: (Then) Cadet Candidate Derrick Dye with his father (then) Captain Daniel Dye, U.S. Army at the United States Air Force Academy Preparatory school.

know much about the military. "That was really my first personal experience of knowing someone serving in the military," says Derrick. "Because I lived with my mother, my experience wasn't one of moving every two or three years. Instead, my dad would come and visit us when he had leave."

Just prior to his high school graduation, Derrick's dad encouraged him to join him in Kentucky, where he was stationed. "I could have attended on an ROTC scholarship and had my tuition covered," says Derrick. "I told him there was nothing that could get me to join the military. But, as soon as I said, that it seemed God had other plans for me."

In April, following a conversation with his mother and stepfather, Derrick made an appointment with an Air Force recruiter. During the meeting, Derrick decided he'd enlist as a firefighter in the Air Force. "I knew

this was a good choice for me because of my firefighting experience."

WORKING AS AN AIR FORCE FIREFIGHTER

Following basic training, Derrick was stationed in Charleston, South Carolina. As soon as he arrived, Derrick began looking for an Adventist church to attend. "I checked out four different congregations," says Derrick. "When I walked into the fourth church, Sergio greeted me and asked if I had plans for lunch and the afternoon. After that, I immediately felt at home and attended that church the entire time I was in Charleston."

Derrick could see God's hand at work in the choice of his Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC). "When I arrived on base, I informed the Chief of the fire department that I am an Adventist and requested Sabbaths off," says Derrick. "Initially, because of

training and scheduling requirements, they told me that it wouldn't be possible. But they offered the option that I could take a couple of hours off to attend Sabbath services. For the first couple of months, that's what I did."

As the weeks passed, the officers and airmen recognized something different in Derrick. "The assistant chief called me to his office and said that the scheduling was changing from shifts to two days on and three days off," says Derrick. "Then he told me that they'd noticed my work ethic and that I didn't party on the weekends. And then he said that I'd have Sabbaths off from that time forward. The way I carried myself and lived my life showed God's light through me."

IS THE ACADEMY FOR ME?

Derrick knew that it was God's leading that worked out the Sabbath situation. Then he saw that same leading again through his acceptance into the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. "At Charleston Air Force Base, we have seven different fire stations. So, on any shift and any day, you could be working at any one of those fire stations which are separated between three different geographical areas," says Derrick. "I learned a Lieutenant, a recent Academy graduate, was giving a brief about the Academy later that day. I was interested in getting a commission in the Air Force, so I thought this would be a good opportunity to learn more about the Academy."

Derrick had been assigned to the fire station near where the Lieutenant was going to speak. He received permission from his Chief to attend the meeting. As it concluded, Derrick was ready to begin the Academy application process.

"THE WAY I CARRIED
MYSELF AND LIVED
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THROUGH ME."

BALANCING TRAINING AND FAITH

Acceptance into the Academy meant a year of preparatory classes and four years of studies and training in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Derrick also attended weekly Bible studies in the Academy's student groups and the local Adventist church on Sabbaths.

"Being able to fellowship is really important, especially at a place like the Academy, where it's such a high-stress environment," says Derrick. "I definitely had every opportunity to continue practicing my faith to grow it. For example, one of my best friends at the Academy is a Mormon. We've been friends since our prep school training. We've been able to have conversations about our beliefs, God, and the Bible. This interaction has not only solidified me in my Adventist beliefs but helped me have new perspectives on things I might have taken for granted."

The hard work and training almost came to a halt when the COVID-19 pandemic swirled throughout the world and interrupted Derrick's Junior year. "Most of the wing was sent home in March 2020, once COVID kind of really broke out," says Derrick. "We



As a Cadet Second Class Derrick Dye had the opportunity to participate in a job shadowing visit at Davis Monthan Air Force Base.

This care and concern by a fellow Adventist made a vital difference to Derrick.

“Having a local church family who can help is very instrumental,” says Derrick. “If there wasn’t a local church, I would have had a very different experience here.”

In May 2021, Derrick graduated from the USAF Academy and received his commission of 2nd Lieutenant. He was a nominee for the 1st Lt. Roslyn L. Schulte Cadet Award. Today Derrick is working as a recruiter for the Academy. In a year, he’ll begin his training as an Air Force pilot.

had to adapt a lot with the day-to-day routine at the school. In a typical year, at mealtime, we’d sit at tables that were 10 feet long and four feet wide with 10 people elbow-to-elbow. It was usually a bunch of your friends. With COVID, we had to adjust to eating in individual plexiglass cubicles without much interaction.”

ANOTHER CHURCH FAMILY

Derrick intentionally sought out an Adventist church when he was stationed in Charleston and repeated this action when he moved to the Academy in Colorado Springs. “The Academy chaplains are very eager to help. As soon as I arrived here, I was connected with somebody in the local church who would come and picked me up for Sabbath services,” says Derrick. The first three years that I lived here, I didn’t have a car. So, Dr. Lewis came every Sabbath and picked me up. Then after church, he’d take me to his home for lunch, and then dropped me at the Academy later in the afternoon.”

A BRIGHT, SHINING LIGHT

Throughout his military training, Derrick’s faith sustained him. The verse by Paul in Philippians 2:14, 15 was one he held on to. *Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.*

“I feel it highlights not what I’ve done in my career, but how the Lord has been leading and guiding,” says Derrick. “Doing your work without complaining and arguing can speak for the kind of person you are. You can let that shine, and people will see what you’re made of.”

Anyone interested in attending the Air Force Academy is encouraged to contact Derrick at Derrick.Dye@afacademy.af.edu.

TELL US YOUR STORY

In the days before digital photos, printed snapshots of people's stories were kept in photo albums. Those photos were the visual evidence of events, emotions, convictions, and legacies.

At the World Service Organization, we believe your story of service is important. We want to tell it in the pages of *For God and Country*.

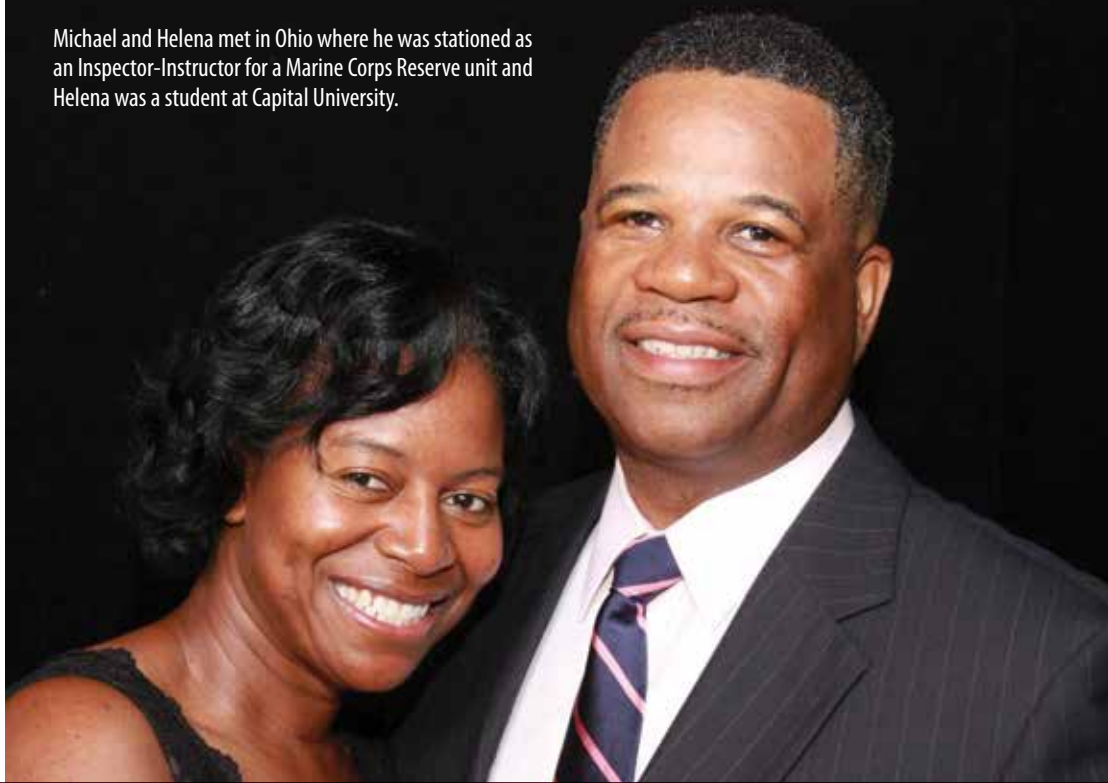
We are seeking stories about Adventists serving in uniform. This includes all military—Active Duty, Guard or Reserve, and Veterans, law enforcement, firefighters, EMTs, First Responders, Search and Rescue, and others who serve their community, state, province, or nation.

To share your story, contact the *For God and Country* editor at ACMEditor@gc.adventist.org.

**YOUR LEGACY NEEDS TO BE SHARED WITH FAMILY,
FRIENDS, AND THE CHURCH-AT-LARGE.**



Michael and Helena met in Ohio where he was stationed as an Inspector-Instructor for a Marine Corps Reserve unit and Helena was a student at Capital University.



The WATERED SEED Grew

By Master Sergeant Michael W. Dyson, U.S. Marines Corps, Retired,
with Deena Bartel-Wagner, Editor, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries—General Conference

Seeds of faith took root and grew deep and robust in Michael Dyson's life during his childhood. "I was born into a Seventh-day Adventist family as the youngest of eight children," says Michael Dyson. "Vacation Bible School, Pathfinders, and even our church basketball team helped me form lifelong relationships."

As he grew, so did Michael's faith and desire to follow God. Finally, he chose to publicly proclaim his desire by being baptized. Little did he know that one day he'd minister as a colleague with the young pastor, Walter Pearson, who performed the baptism.

Through high school, Michael continued to serve in his local church. "I was a youth elder and involved

in other activities,” says Michael. “I didn’t understand until later in life just how fortunate we were to have the wonderful pastors and leaders who ministered to us.”

Becoming One of the Few Good Men

Following his high school graduation, Michael enlisted in the United States Marines. “My older brother encouraged me to spend some time in the military,” says Michael. “He wanted me to have many opportunities and believed this would allow me to get the necessary funds to attend college.”

That initial enlistment expanded into a 24-year career. “My military duty stations were in California, Ohio, North Carolina, Okinawa, Japan, and Hampton Roads, Virginia,” says Michael. “I was deployed on ships for two six-month tours. These deployments took me to many countries including Thailand, Singapore, Australia, North and South Korea, Japan, and the Philippines.” During his military career, Michael served on the personal staffs of two flag officers and as the Marine Corps liaison to the Armed Forces Staff College in Virginia. Prior to retirement, he served as the Adjutant for the Marine Corps’ largest modified battalion.

Hard Times Bring Renewed Faith

His military career shaped Michael in ways he never dreamed. “Although my faith was established in my childhood home much before I left for the military, it did not flourish until I faced hard times.”

Michael’s physical, mental, and spiritual strength were heavily tested during basic training. “The training was

“Although my faith was established in my childhood home much before I left for the military, it did not flourish until I faced hard times.”

hard, and I leaned heavily on my faith to guide me through, most especially through this the toughest time of my life,” says Michael. “My primary Scripture was Psalm 22:1, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ It was the lowest point in my life.”

Regular Sabbath worship services also sustained Michael. “About five recruits along with me were marched to a room in the Chapel where an Adventist pastor from the local community conducted a small Sabbath worship service,” says Michael. Although brief, Sabbath worship was a time to reflect.

Ready to give up and leave basic training behind, Michael was sent to see the Chaplain. “I will never forget what he told me,” says Michael, “He said, ‘You don’t want to go home with a bald head and no uniform!’ Of course, this got my attention, and I stuck it out.”

Following basic training, Michael began his active duty service in California. “My MOS was in Administration. After three years in California, I was reassigned to Columbus, Ohio, where I served as an Inspector-Instructor for a Marine Corps Reserve unit,” says Michael. “It was here that I was able to attend church services on some Sabbaths.



Master Sergeant with his fellow Marines.

Michael and Helena have two sons, Michael and Patrick.

Michael currently serves as the senior pastor of the Sharon Seventh-day Adventist in Baltimore, Maryland

where I knew the Lord was covering me. From the jungles of the Philippines to training fields of Thailand, Korea, and other locations, I was able to have stability because of what the Word of God says. Don't get me wrong. I was young, and I was not a saint, but I had the seed of God planted in me, and when watered, it grew."

Growing Into Spiritual Leadership

As his spiritual awareness flourished, Michael found himself in a leadership position as a lay pastor. "While stationed in Japan, I was asked to serve as the Adventist Lay Pastor of the Okinawa International Seventh-day Adventist Church due to a persistent illness of the church's assigned pastor," says Michael. "Because many of the service members were located on the northern part of the island and unable to attend Sabbath services at the main church, I requested to the Commanding General and was given permission to use the Protestant chapel located near the northern bases to conduct Sabbath services."

Initially, only a couple of servicemen attended the service. "Helena taught the Sabbath School class, and I preached the sermon," says Michael. "The little service grew, and at one point, nearly 30 people attended. From this effort, a branch Sabbath School was initiated and remained active even after I returned to the United States."

However, because the training was conducted on weekends, many times I was only given an opportunity to have a time to go worship separately."

During his time in Ohio, Michael met Helena, a student at Capital University. Their friendship developed, and they dated for four years, then married in 1988. "Following her graduation, Helena accepted a commission in the United States Navy as a nurse," says Michael.

A few years later, Michael was assigned to Jacksonville, Florida. Again, he would be an Inspector-Instructor for a Marine Corps Reserve unit. During this time, he experienced a spiritual turning point. "I reconnected with God and became more active and spiritually aware in the church while in Jacksonville," says Michael. "Death was and is a part of military life, from training accidents to suicides and even warfare. As a Marine, I knew that any moment meant that I could be called to a hostile environment where death could be imminent. I was sent to places

A New Life Calling

Michael's experience as a lay leader in Japan led him to a decision when he retired from the Marines. "I come from a family of ministers. At 89 years old, my mother serves as the lead elder of her church in Kansas City, Missouri. My 92-year-old father is an honorary deacon after having served his church many years. I have a brother who is an Adventist pastor, having served over 40 years, currently in Goldsboro, North Carolina," says Michael.

Deciding to follow the next call on his life, Michael studied for the ministry earning a B. A. in Religious Studies. "I enrolled in a pilot Religious Studies Online program at Hampton University in Hampton, Virginia that was the first to be conducted online. Within six months of becoming a student, I was contacted by the University's Director of Ethics and Religious Studies program. He invited me to come for an interview as the Administrative Assistant for the program," says Michael. "I was hired as a result of the interview and worked in the program for three years. I was simultaneously attending classes and employed at Hampton University. In May of 2004, I graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religious Studies."

Pursuing his interest in evangelism, Michael learned about the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventist's Institute of Evangelism. Classes met monthly on weekends at the Columbia Union Conference headquarters in Columbia, Maryland. He concurrently enrolled in the two-year in-house program while completing his undergraduate studies. "Following my graduation from Hampton University and further encouraged by supporters, I enrolled in the Amazing Facts Center of

Evangelism (AFCOE) in Roseville, California. This was a four-month intensive evangelistic training program with a focus on Media based ministry and a truly life-changing experience," says Michael. "After successfully completing the program, six students from our class traveled to Nigeria for a month-long evangelism series, and over 200 souls were baptized."

After his return from Africa, Michael enrolled in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary (SDATS) at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, to earn a Master of Pastoral Ministry degree. "In October 2006, while in the program, I was hired as a pastoral intern in the Allegheny East Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventist in Pottstown, Pennsylvania," says Michael. "I've subsequently served in the Baltimore and Extended Area Ministerial (BEAM) in two-church district assignments in Virginia and central Pennsylvania." Currently, Michael serves as the senior pastor of the Sharon Seventh-day Adventist in Baltimore, Maryland.

Michael and his family shared a high day with his ordination to the gospel ministry on July 8, 2011. In May 2020, another celebration occurred with Michael completing his Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry.

The Vineyard Behind Bars

"I have had many opportunities to share my faith out of uniform. I have received many awards and recognitions while doing so. My passion for outreach ministry has allowed me to share the Everlasting Gospel message in many countries," says Michael.



Master Sergeant Michael Dyson

Lebanon, Pennsylvania. Currently, I am enrolled in those classes that will assist me in a new endeavor—the chaplaincy.” Along with his CPE training, Michael enrolled in the Master of Divinity program with an emphasis in chaplaincy at SDATS.

Words of Wisdom

“If you say that you are a Christian, you will be viewed as such, and your actions will speak much louder than your words. Many don’t live out their faith, not only letting God down, but they make it harder for others to have religious liberty,” says Michael. “My advice would be to strive to be authentic and be yourself. Grow in your faith privately by study in the Word of God and comparing the world to what you’ve read. Allow your faith to be a part of your career, and you will advance. Being Adventist adds another special layer of faith. It is possible to connect with other Adventists who are serving. In most duty stations, there are Adventist churches located nearby. Prior to retirement, I could see that the number of Adventist chaplains was increasing. This was a blessing to me and others. You can be as engaged as you are willing to allow yourself to be.”

Following the words of Jesus, “When I was in prison, you visited me,” Michael is deeply involved in prison ministry. “I have been actively involved in prison ministry for over 20 years, serving as a Spiritual Guide for inmates upon request from local jails to the penitentiaries of Virginia and Pennsylvania,” says Michael. “One of many inmates who particularly stands out has been incarcerated over 50 years. In 2014 and 2016, I was awarded Prison Ministry Pastor of the Year same distinction by the Allegheny East Conference Federation of Prisons.”

No Two Days the Same

A new passion has taken hold in Michael’s life as he pursues training to become an endorsed Seventh-day Adventist Chaplain. “As a pastor, I have made myself available to God, and no two days of ministry are the same; that is why I am preparing for Chaplaincy now. In the Fall of 2021, I am scheduled to begin Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) training at the Veterans Medical Center in

Being Used by God

The words of Zechariah 4:6, “The Lord says... ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord!’” are ones that Michael Wayne Dyson has chosen to live out in his daily life. “The most important thing in my life is to be used by God in whatever capacity that He desires,” says Michael. “My greatest wish is to effectively evangelize the community nearest my vineyard.”



When you are brought before
synagogues, rulers and
authorities, do not worry about
how you will defend yourselves
or what you will say, for the
Holy Spirit will teach you at
that time what you should say.

— Luke 12:11-12, New International Version

NAD Director's Thoughts **A LIFE LIVED FOR GOD AND COUNTRY**



Last week I was invited to honor and pay tribute to a leader in service to God and country. Anna May Damazo lived a life of exemplary Christian service. Ninety-five years of dedicated love, acts of kindness, and influential effectiveness. Her's was a life well-lived.

In her youth, she trained to be and worked as a nurse. Giving and caring were a part of her character. I only met her once, but I had heard of her fierce gentility. A woman of grace and bearing, Mrs. Damazo was firm but quiet in advocating her many passions and interests.

Chief among her innovations was the ideal of care for SDA servicemembers during the Cold War era. First, she married a surgeon who was commissioned into the Army during the Korean conflict. Dutifully, she followed and supported his military assignments. Then, as children came into their family, she ordered and orchestrated the home.

As the children grew, Christian education became a passion that Mrs. Damazo threw herself into. She was the driving force in the establishment of several church schools. Dr. and Mrs. Damazo lived in the Frederick, Maryland area near Fort Detrick during the Vietnam War era. He became involved with the fledgling Operation Whitecoat Project.

Operation Whitecoat was a U. S. Army research project to develop vaccines for some infectious diseases and antidotes for potential biological weapons. This project included about 2,300 Seventh-day Adventist soldiers as human test subjects. Unlike the U. S. Public Health Study in Tuskegee, Alabama, the rubrics for this study were intense. The bar of integrity was set very high, and the results were internationally effective.

Many of the young men who participated in the Operation Whitecoat project would attend church every Sabbath. Mrs. Damazo initially began inviting the soldiers to the Damazo home for Sabbath dinner. It became a rite of passage for the young soldiers. Eventually, the group outgrew the Damazo home. The church started to host the Sabbath afternoon dinner. To this day, hospitality characterizes the Frederick Seventh-day Adventist church community.

It was her nature to serve God by helping people. By supporting her husband in his work, her family needs as they developed, and by helping at church and in the community, she typified what it means to serve God and Country. For this reason, we honor her legacy in this edition.

In addition to her gifts of hospitality, Mrs. Damazo was also a philanthropist. Through the years, she led her family to give generously to members of the community. The local churches and school systems, the Frederick Orchestra, hospital foundations, and politicians are just a few of the philanthropic investments that she led. Then, as God blessed, the Damazo family invested in ministries and buildings around the world.

She leveraged influence as a wife, mother, local church leader, entrepreneur, and spiritual magnate. Her husband of 73+ years said that her character was magnetic and infectious.

It was her nature to serve God by helping people. By supporting her husband in his work, her family needs as they developed, and by helping at church and in the community, she typified what it means to serve God and Country. For this reason, we honor her legacy in this issue of *For God and Country*.

Would that we could all brighten the corners where we are as she lit up the world to which she was exposed. Mrs. Damazo was an icon of meaningful living. May God bless us all to find zones of passionate influence and to live our best lives, wherever we may be. Giving is living, and living is giving.



Paul S. Anderson

HE HAS RISEN:

Arlington National Cemetery Hosts Easter Sunrise Service

"You
are looking
for Jesus the
Nazarene, who was
crucified. He has risen!
He is not here. See the
place where they
laid him."

Mark 16:6 NIV

By Julia Simpkins

Acting Director of Public Affairs
Joint Base Meyer-Henderson Hall

At 6:30 a.m. Sunday, Easter Sunrise service commenced at Arlington National Cemetery's Memorial Amphitheater. The service, which has been held there since 1931, was curtailed into a live-streamed, virtual format because of COVID-19 restrictions. Including technical staff, there were fewer than 30 people in attendance at a venue meant to hold more than 1,000.

The lack of physical attendees did not dampen the impact of the event, however, with hundreds of online worshipers in attendance during the event and many more to replay and share it afterward.

The U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own" sent a brass quintet and a chorus quartet. The quintet played the prelude, a bugler played the church call, and the chorus quartet sang songs of worship throughout the beginning

of the religious celebration.

Easter Sunday is a celebration of what Christians believe to be Jesus Christ's return to life after being crucified to death three days before. His subsequent ascension to Heaven is the pinnacle event that signifies him as the Savior of all mankind, through redemption. Christians believe Christ bears the weight of all mankind's sins so we stand a chance of entering Heaven through divine forgiveness.

After opening prayers and musical selections were over, Chaplain (Brig. Gen.) Andrew Harewood, the deputy chief of chaplains for the U.S. Army Reserve, delivered the message for the day, "Resurrection Power" which was derived from Philippians, 3:7-11.

A member of the Seventh-day Adventist church, Harewood opened his sermon by acknowledging the space he inhabited.

Easter Sunday is a celebration of what Christians believe to be Jesus Christ's return to life after being crucified to death three days before.

His subsequent ascension to Heaven is the pinnacle event that signifies him as the savior of all mankind, through redemption.



Chaplain (Brig. Gen.) Andrew Harewood, the deputy chief of chaplains for the U.S. Army Reserve, delivers the Easter message Sunday. The service was broadcast live from Arlington National Cemetery's Memorial Amphitheater and was viewed virtually more than 23,000 times via Facebook live. Photo by Julia Simpkins, Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall

"Standing behind us at this very present moment is a sacred tomb guarded by some serious seasoned

sentinels, who are relentless in ensuring that no one comes near this Tomb of our Unknown Soldier. And while this tomb is sacred (and by the way God knows exactly who is in the tomb behind us) this tomb isn't Sovereign. This tomb stands to be a witness that the lives of those who served our nation and are now resting, mattered," he said. "Our presence, purpose, and praise here this morning talks about another tomb."

Mixing Christian metaphors and military jargon, Harewood divided his message into three distinct portions as he outlined a method for spiritual existence that would assure believers were on the right path to redemption. "My message in capsule for our nation on this Easter Sunday Morning is this," he said.

RIGHT SIZE YOUR BATTLE SPACE —KNOW WHERE YOU STAND AS A CHRISTIAN

"Like so many who have found themselves in the wrong battle space where everyone, including the church have written them off, Jesus stopped dying to redeem a condemned sinner. For in that critical act, I believe, Christ knowing what was about to happen

Harewood graphically recounted each of Christ's disciples' trials and deaths after His crucifixion, making the point that these men were willing not only to live for Christ's principles but to die for them as well.

on Sunday morning, was telegraphing what was possible to the entire world. "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings," he declared.

RECLAIM YOUR SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY — KNOW, YOUR BATTLE WEAPONS SYSTEMS

"There's a Hebrew custom which reminds us that if a family lost their property they had to go to a judge, and the book of deeds was consulted because the people had their property recorded there. This was done because it was understood that later on down the line a dependent or family member could come back and redeem the items. However, to do so, the family member must have what the Hebrew custom called a *Go'el*, that was a person who was related to the family and knows the judge. (Somebody knows where I'm going) right size your battle space. Know, where you stand as a Christian," he preached.

Building emotional momentum in what was perhaps the most dramatic moment of his sermon, Harewood graphically recounted each of Christ's disciples' trials and deaths after his crucifixion, making the point that these men were willing not only to live

for Christ's principles but to die for them as well.

He challenged the listening audience to ponder not just what was worth living for, but what was worth dying for.

RELISH IN THE PROMISE OF YOUR PRIZE—KNOW, THAT YOU'VE BEEN REDEEMED

"We attack each other by our history, but the enemy he attacks you by your destiny. God has a Purpose, a Plan, and Platform for your life," he said.

"Sitting in the beautiful amphitheater, watching the sky brighten as the sun rose. Hearing the inspirational music by the brass quintet and chorus truly made this Easter special," said Krista Kennaugh, a family member who watched in person with her family. "I was surrounded by my family, worshipping the risen Christ, and receiving the hope He offers in uncertain times. The service was well-organized and thoughtfully arranged to bring glory to our risen King."

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*The time is not far off when the people of God will be called
upon to give their testimony before the rulers of the earth.*

— Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, April 26, 1892



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