

A Publication of the National Black Chaplains Association

# The Capsule

DECEMBER 2018 | Volume 2 Issue 1

## A Season of Holiday Celebrations

Learning the Rigors of  
Clinical Chaplaincy

Receive a Gift  
Join the NBCA

Debunking the Myths  
of Hospice Care

Leading the Battle  
Against Addiction

Celebrating Our  
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**The Capsule** is a quarterly publication that was launched in December 2017 by the National Black Chaplain's Association. This multicultural publication is centered around a mission to inform, inspire, educate and connect chaplains, families and communities of all FAITHS and RACES through information, stories, food, and poetry. The Capsule is written not only by Black Chaplains, but is also open to articles submitted by writers of others ethnic groups and other disciplines. In each issue we highlight articles with an African American, Multicultural, Pluralistic, Clinical, and Legislative Perspective – and so much more.

## The Capsule

A Publication of the National Black Chaplains Association

**The Capsule** represents a pill filled with excellent ideas that will strengthen us, various experiences that will help us cope with struggles we all face, views that may challenge us or our beliefs, and educational tools designed to enhance our ministries and our togetherness as a people. If you **swallow the pill** (that is, take in the information so that it can be beneficial to you just as food is beneficial to our bodies), it is our earnest prayer that it will inspire you to always be your best, do your best, and make a contribution to this and future generations that will be a blessing to people of all ethnicities, especially veterans and their families.

**The Capsule** is designed to help individuals cope with daily struggles, strengthen their faith, draw closer to God and be a blessing to others. We believe that by consuming the pill or taking in our content, individuals will find a renewed sense of hope through inspiration and information that positively impacts the world. We encourage your support through subscriptions and advertisements at [alfray.thomas2@va.gov](mailto:alfray.thomas2@va.gov), [donations](#), and [membership](#).

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## From the Desk of the President

### ***Happy Anniversary to the Editorial Staff as we celebrate The Capsule's First Year Anniversary!***

I am certain that this newsletter has been a blessing to both writers and readers. Thank you for such outstanding and inspiring articles. As your President, I am looking forward to seeing our former, current, and prospective writers continuing to impart knowledge and words of wisdom to our global readership. To our global readership, thank you for reading and giving us feedback. This makes us stronger and people of excellence.

In reflecting over this past year, we have experienced outstanding achievements as an organization, and I am proud of the work being accomplished by those of you in the field. Your perseverance and tireless efforts have resulted in awards, quarterly publications, and notable achievements at your respective medical centers.

As an organization we have supported the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Congressional Black Caucus, and the National Chaplain Center. Most importantly, you have cared for our Nation's Warriors and their families. You have prayed for their well-being, offered hope, and encouragement which is essential for the healing process.

The new year will certainly bring forth changes in our Leadership Team at the National Chaplain Center. As our current Director prepares for retirement, we wish him well on the next phase of his journey. We cannot adequately convey the depth of our appreciation for his leadership as Director and Associate Director of the National Chaplain Center. He has given more than forty years of unselfish service to God and Country. I hope some of you will be able to join us in Hampton, Virginia for his retirement to convey our special appreciation for his outstanding leadership, and profound commitment to serving veterans. Details to follow.

The holiday season is rapidly approaching and I extend to all of you a Happy Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Enjoy your family and friends and remember everyone in prayer, especially our veterans and the members of the National Black Chaplains Association.



**Chaplain Marvin L. Mills, Sr.  
President, NBCA**

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## FROM MY HEART TO YOUR HEART

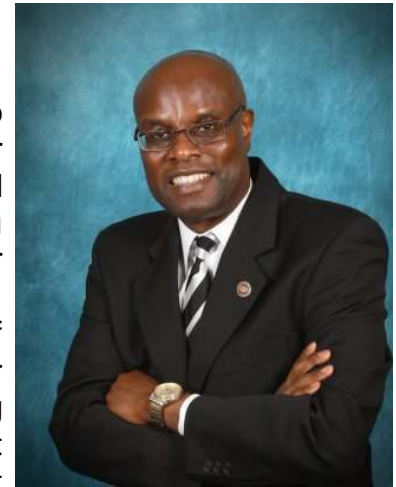
As we go into the holiday season, I want to thank all of our global readership for being a part of our family as you have read to be inspired and encouraged in your journey through life. It is our prayer that you continue to read, give us feedback, and share our newsletter with others.

As we celebrate our one year anniversary of **"The Capsule"**, a special thanks goes out to all our former, current, and perspective writers for making each issue of the newsletter special. We could not have done it without you. As the Editor in Chief, I want thank our Editorial Staff for editing each article to ensure excellence. Truly it has been an honor and privilege to be your editor. I look forward to greater things ahead of us. I am excited and energized to see what God has in store for us as a team. Be safe and blessed as you share Thanksgiving with your loved ones. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to each of you.

As we conclude 2018, think about making a financial contribution to our organization or as an advertiser. Furthermore, I want to encourage those reading this newsletter to subscribe (through [alfray.thomas2@va.gov](mailto:alfray.thomas2@va.gov)), join our organization and encourage others to do the same. (See the following inside pages and the back page for more detailed information).

We hope that the following articles from our diverse field of writers will interest you. Again, our writers are not limited to Black Chaplains. God made all people, and this is one of the reasons we have a multi-cultural newsletter which is distributed to a multi-cultural readership. In this one year anniversary edition, you will find: African Americans contributions in the Federal Government, Insights of the Pluralistic, Multi-cultural, and Clinical Perspective. Other articles that will also inspire you are: Holiday Dishes, Inspirational for the Soul, and information that we can all use. Lastly, we want you to be blessed by "An Ethical Milieu in the VA" and another perspective concerning the opioid epidemic.

As you scroll through the final edition in Volume 1, reflect on the content that is designed to cause you to think, react, and be thankful. Although our publication is lengthy, by all means, take your time, enjoy the read, and be blessed during this holiday season.



**Chaplain Rev. Dr.  
Alfray Thomas, Jr.**  
Editor-in-Chief

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# IS THE 1.9 PERCENT FEDERAL PAY RAISE STILL IN PLAY FOR CONGRESS?

by Chaplain Rev. Dr. Gary Roundtree Sr.

If the surprise pay raise approved by the Senate makes it through the House and then the White House, what would it put in your wallet? Let's put things in perspective on the House and White House positions on the pay raise. The House of Representatives passed its version of the spending package before recessing for election this fall. It chooses to remain silent on a 2019 federal pay raise. Next thing we know is that the White House's 2019 budget proposal introduced in Congress asked them to approve a federal pay freeze for all civilian employees.

What did the Senate do? It passed a four-bill omnibus spending package that included the 1.9 percent civilian federal pay raise. This measure was approved in the Senate by a vote of 92 to 6 votes. The Senate's approval of a 1.9 percent pay raise for federal employees has begun the process of countering the Administration's proposed federal pay freeze in 2019.

Now, if Congress does not take some action this fall, federal employees will face a possible pay freeze that will take effect January 1, 2019 under an alternative pay plan, which President Trump sent to Congress on August 30. The President's Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) budget includes a provision calling for a federal employee pay freeze in calendar year 2019. The president has the authority to set a pay raise or freeze, absent congressional action.

*Referenced: NARFE, Federal Times, Federal News Radio*

## THE FINAL SOLUTION

by Rev. Anna J. Thomas, Bridgeport, WV

It is hard to believe that 2018 is almost over. How time flies! With 2019 right around the corner, I am not surprised to see so much advertising for weight loss programs, gym memberships, and exercise equipment. Advertisers know that two of the top ten resolutions for the new year is to lose weight and exercise. According to a study in the journal of Clinical Psychology, only 46% of people who made New Year's resolutions in 2018 were successful. I believe that the success rate could improve significantly if the focus was on implementing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Many people consider a diet as temporary: something you follow until you reach your goal weight or clothing size. That mentality causes yo-yo dieting (lose weight and gain it back repeatedly). Also, exercise often takes a back seat when the initial muscle pain kicks in. While I do not consider myself an expert, I do consider myself an example. Many people ask me how I

manage to maintain a healthy weight and medication free at age 65. My doctor says that I am the exhibit A patient. How do I succeed? I decided to make the **final resolution**: to implement and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

My formula for implementing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle is **3D's** (documentation, determination, and discipline), **3 Low's** (low sodium, sugar, and fat), and **3 No's** (no fast food, no processed food, and no junk food). Documentation begins with recording your 4 key health numbers: blood pressure (120/80), cholesterol (less than 200), fasting glucose (70 - 100 or A1c of less than or equal to 5.7), and BMI (body mass index between 18.5 and 24.9). Your physician can provide you with this information after an annual physical and labs. Part of the goal is to improve your numbers. It also helps to have a scale and blood pressure monitor at home. I weigh myself everyday and mark it on my calendar. Keeping a food diary indicating what and when you eat will help to identify unhealthy eating habits that need to be changed. If I notice that my weight is increasing, it motivates me to make better choices. Determination is fueled by motivation. What is your motivation? Quality and quantity of life is my motivation. Discipline needs accountability. Is there a family member or friend that you trust to hold you accountable for your decision and help you to reach your goal?

The **3 Low's** and **3 No's** in my formula requires reading food labels and preparing meals rather than eating prepared meals and eating out. The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends no more than 1,500 mg of sodium per day. One serving of canned, prepared, or processed food can easily exceed the recommended amount. The AHA recommends no more than 25 grams (6 teaspoons) of added sugar per day for women and no more than 38 grams (9 teaspoons) for men. Drinking a 12 once soda (46 grams) or eating a cup of yogurt (an average of 29 grams) exceeds the daily recommendation. Low fat is important to a healthy lifestyle. Choosing lean protein: chicken, turkey, and fish can assist with weight loss and maintenance. Also, many foods that are labeled as low fat contain added sodium and sugar for enhanced flavor. Fast food, processed food, and junk food should be eliminated or limited. They only provide empty calories that are full of sodium, sugar, and fat. I must admit that I occasionally make an exception, give myself a free day, and eat whatever I want.

Exercise is essential to achieving and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. I have been doing some form of exercise for over 30 years. Exercise helps to lower blood pressure and cholesterol as well as reduces stress. The Department of Health and Human Services recommends 150 hours of moderate aerobic activity or 75 hours of vigorous aerobic activity per week, or a combination. It is important to consult with your doctor before starting any exercise regimen or implementing dietary changes. The goal of the **final resolution** is a healthier you.

# WHAT VETERAN'S DAY MEANS TO ME: ITS SIGNIFICANCE AND HOW WE SHOULD CELEBRATE IT

by **Chief Chaplain Rodney A. Lindsay, Dublin, GA**

Veteran's Day marks the significance of the time when World War I came to an end in Europe in the year 1918. The US Government declared November 11<sup>th</sup> as Armistice Day, a national public holiday. After World War II and the Korean War, Congress replaced the word "Armistice" with the word "Veteran" according to the Department of Veterans Affairs. On November 11<sup>th</sup> every year, Americans express thanks to those who fight or fought for our country. Veteran groups plan programs at 11:00 a.m. to honor those who now serve and those who served our nation.



We celebrate Veterans Day by attending community programs that pay tribute and recognition to those who served on land, sea, and air. What is quite inspiring and fun loving is going to hear bands featuring patriotic music, especially the piece that highlights each service's song. There is always a sense of unity when veterans stand with pride for their service's song. On a more serious note, we may opt to participate in a moment of silence in remembrance of those who paid the ultimate price for our country and died in the country's service. Veteran's Day is no ordinary day. It's a day of honor, a day of pride and a day of gratitude reserved for those who have answered the nation's call and have fulfilled the ultimate patriotic duty to maintain the freedoms of our country. Veteran's Day is the day we celebrate our nation's heroes.

Veteran's Day fills me with pride and humility because every veteran represents a diverse mosaic of our shared humanity. We have veterans from varying cultures, genders, religions, sexual orientations, socio-economic backgrounds. They are unique individuals from every walk of life, yet they served for the common good of humanity

with our country's best interest at heart. I clearly see in my fellow Veterans a deep and abiding love of country which is authentic patriotism in its finest form.

I also recognize the unswerving commitment and dedication to higher ideals of duty to country and freedom of life which is greater and nobler than oneself. I salute and honor our veterans who are plain, ordinary, and yet extraordinary people who not only took their bonnets and hats off to honor the United States flag, but deliberately rolled up their sleeves to it by putting skin in the game by demonstrating their selfless service to their God and country. I am grateful and thankful for our veterans; many of whom bear the invisible wounds of war. I am also eternally grateful for our veterans' widows and orphans who live in the shadows but are not forgotten.

This year, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs will announce November 1, 2018 as the first annual Day of Prayer and Reflection for Veterans. This year's theme is "Prayers of Healing for our Veterans". On November 1<sup>st</sup>, the entire Department of Veterans Affairs will publicize the importance of prayer in the lives of veterans and VA's commitment to care for veterans' whole needs. May our Most Holy and Divine, Universal and Complete bless all our veterans, their families, friends, loved ones and pets with good health, peace, and love on this Veteran's Day and all the days of our lives!

## THANKSGIVING DAY

by **Chaplain Rev. Jeffery A. Stallworth, Jackson, MS**

Today I would like to focus on Thanksgiving and the reasons that I like Thanksgiving Day. This holiday started in November 1621 when the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag Indians assembled at Plymouth to celebrate an autumn harvest. In all likelihood, the colonists enjoyed the bounty they had amassed with the help of the Native Americans. This later became an annual event that has evolved into what we know as Thanksgiving. I like it, first of all, because Thanksgiving Day is now a national holiday in America where all family and relatives get together to express their gratitude.

The second reason I like Thanksgiving is the food that is served by the many different cultures, especially, since not everybody knows how to make good dressing, or what some may call stuffing. I cannot say that about my family. They make the best of turkey, ham, egg salad, and other fixings. And how about those desserts? The food is delectably tasty in quality and quantity. A nice slice of sweet potato pie is like a taste of Heaven.





The third reason I like Thanksgiving Day is the football games that come on television. At least two NFL games are playing on this day. Even a few college teams are playing on this national holiday. You can watch one sport all day long and never getting tired. Whether you love them or hate them, the Dallas Cowboys have been a mainstay of Thanksgiving Day football for decades.

The fourth reason that I like Thanksgiving Day is because it represents British history. We should all like it because of the history. Sometimes it feels like a good history while we are celebrating Thanksgiving. But when we take a good assessment and look at the history of Thanksgiving and the people who were affected, this day represents hard times and people who really were not appreciated or respected. The Pilgrims left England to escape oppression and carve out a way of life that was supposed to offer freedom for all who dwell in the land. History tells us otherwise.

I am frustrated when I look and see that the Pilgrims never did look like me. The people who were getting slaughtered during this time were the people who they should have been thankful to see and meet. Without the support of the Natives, the Pilgrims may have become extinct.

Nevertheless, I give thanks to the Almighty on this day and every day. Regardless of our national history, we all have a lot to be thankful for. I wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving!

## CHRISTMAS DAY

**by Senior Pastor Towanda Walker-Bluiett, Richmond, VA**

Christmas Day is one of the most celebrated days all over the world. Most people choose to celebrate with family and friends. Others choose to vacation away from home on a warm tropical island. As for my family, we extend Christmas day into one long season of reverence, merriment and festivities. A manger with baby Jesus is

placed on the family room's mantelpiece to remind us of the real meaning of Christmas. We bake cookies, make holiday crafts and decorate the entire house. Christmas carols play on the radio, laptop or stream through the television as we work. Regular travel, dining and home shows are replaced with Christmas television specials and programs.

It is of the utmost importance for me to share with the little children in our family and church about the birth of Jesus. Though we do not know the exact date of his birth, we celebrate with other Christians on the twenty-fifth of December. Sometimes at church, we will host a special play or skit. Other times we celebrate with a birthday party for Baby Jesus. The adults sing happily along with the children as the candlelit birthday cake is displayed for all to see. Small gifts and packages of fruit and candy canes are given to both children and adults at the end of the program.



Sometimes the families gather in the evening for a Christmas Soiree. Everyone dresses elegantly at this event and enjoys a myriad of holiday appetizers. Candy bars, dessert bars and all the wonderful delicacies of the holiday abound. A professional photographer captures the excitement of the evening. Yet in all the joyfulness of the season, we always remind each other that all good gifts come from above. God through Jesus, receives the honor for it all.

The entire month of December is dedicated to Christmas carols during services at church. Tears well up in eyes of the adults as we sing "O Come Let Us Adore Him". Children sing loudly "Silent Night, Holy Night". The sanctuary is decorated with garland and Christmas glitter. A little manger, a star or angel is always found somewhere within the greenery. Some who never had a Christmas tree wept tears of joy as they placed ornaments on trees for the first time. After service, Christmas cookies and hot chocolate is served.

In the Bible, the birth of Jesus was celebrated with the Magi bringing gifts worthy of the king. We, too, can bring gifts fit for a king when we celebrate at our places of



worship. We can give a notable gift to help a family in need, a homeless person or a special church fund. We may even exchange gifts among ourselves. As our church members exchange gifts we sometimes join with a neighboring church to celebrate Christ's birth. I usually choose to give financially to help a family or purchase something that is needed.

Christmas is not considered a commanded feast day as in the Old Testament. On Passover and other feast days God required his people to observe these seasons. However, I believe that God honors the fact that we take time to remind others about the sacrifice His Son made for us. He left royalty and humbled himself to live on earth. Our loving Father probably missed his Son in heaven during his time on earth.

Remembering Christ at Christmas is just as important as remembering Him each Sunday morning. Without His birth there is no resurrection. Without His resurrection there is no salvation. So, come let us adore Him in the spirit of love and grace this Christmas season.

## NEW YEAR'S EVE -- NEW YEAR'S DAY

*by Chaplain Rev. Elizabeth Putnam, New York, NY*

In my tradition, we have observed New Year's Day in so many different ways. I am a Unitarian Universalist minister. Unitarian Universalism is a tradition that keeps changing and ministers create their own rituals for their congregations. For New Year's Day, the focus is on the changing of the year and the chance for new beginnings. I have been part of services that focused on letting go of the old year, especially habits or experiences in the old year that someone wants to do differently. I have been part of services that focused on starting something new in the new year and what intention or hope for growth a person wants for the year. I have also been part of services that focused on learning the lessons of the past year and what someone hopes to grow more in during the coming year.



So what sort of rituals might a minister design for New Year's Day in a Unitarian Universalist Congregation? It depends on a few things: the focus of the service,

materials available, and which spiritual traditions the minister wants to draw upon. Unitarian Universalism has a wide range of sources from Christian teachings to Earth Based traditions to Buddhist practices to Humanist writings. The cycles of the seasons and the changes in the Earth and Nature can also be important in my tradition.

One year, I led a New Year's Day ritual that focused on the changing seasons and the chance to grow in the New Year. I had construction paper and a standing wheeled bulletin board readily available along with thumb tacks and small pencils. I also had a large roll of brown Kraft paper. I decided to focus on the way a tree grows during the winter time, after the leaves fall and the tree does not seem to be doing anything. The tree is growing roots and getting ready to grow leaves. I made a large tree out of the Kraft paper with lots of bare branches. I cut out a lot of leaves in different colors. I then cut out a lot of snowflakes. I pinned the leaves all over the tree with thumb tacks and had a stack of snowflakes on a table. During the service, I invited people to think of something they learned from that year that they wanted to keep. I asked them to come take a leaf, write what they wanted to keep from the year using a small pencil, and to keep that leaf. As everyone came forward, all the leaves were removed from the tree. Later, I asked people what area of spiritual growth they wanted to focus on in the coming year. I invited people to come write that on a snowflake and then pin the snowflake at the base of the tree. The board was now a bare tree with snow all around the base of the tree. I shared a reflection on how trees spend the winter storing up, getting ready to grow, and invited those present to be part of a meditation on getting ready for the growth that would come in the New Year. I share the details of both the ritual and the preparation so that you may understand all the different ways my tradition can approach the observance of New Year's Day.

I have been part of rituals releasing parts of the old year in fire (everything to small pieces of paper burned in a fire safe pot to written on flash paper and burned in a sparkly ball). I have been part of rituals designed to be fire safe ways of releasing the old year with a big office shredder to get rid of the old habits. In whichever way one of our congregations mark New Year's Day, it is likely to focus on what to leave behind in the old, what to begin in the new, and what spiritual growth may lay ahead for each person in the congregation. I hope you find a way to welcome in the New Year not with a resolution for change, but with an embracing of the change that will come.



## COLLECTIVE TEARS DEFINING OUR COLLECTIVE BLESSING

by Chaplain Rev. Dr. Don D. Fuller, Memphis, TN

As I briefly lay out the platform of an African American, of the Federal Government, whose works, by far, could be labeled as the greatest works of any. I truly want to highlight that special collective moment that stood as a “Genesis Effect” for his contributions and our future blessings in Federal Government. Tears mean a lot!

November 4, 2008, unashamedly, is listed historically as a date that has been sealed in the hearts and minds of an endless number of people all over the world. A date, not only coined as an era of “Change,” but also as an era of ‘penultimate possibilities.’ For it was the day that the people of America, by the collective “vote” and the people of the World, by the collective “endorsement,” voted Senator **Barack Hussein Obama II**, as the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America.



On that day, what was once thought to be a “marked ambition of dreams” for encouraging African American youth, to aim and dream high; turned out to be a date where those same dreams now had a living and tangible witness. On that day, what was once thought to be a day that would never come true—in our life-time turned out to be a day where a multi-spectrum of tears flowed collectively with joy and exultation.

And some of the sweetest testaments and tears, and some of the most spine-tingling of moments, came from our senior population of African Americans. For some of these were the tears and expressions of former and current Government workers; of years past. Mothers and Fathers, grand-maws and grand-paws of ‘yester-year’ stood there with that wide-open-eyed

excitement and glow, that said “*I can’t believe it’s finally here!*” And the “it’s” that they referred to, was the moment in time that an African American obtained the highest symbol of equality and meaning that this country has to offer. When has such a collective promise been so evident? When has there been such an overflow of collective tears from such a wide and diverse spectrum of people? You and I both understand that our tears hide a multi-level of definition and meaning.

Their tears, their shoutsof joy, their fist-clinching and hand waving expressions that night gave definition to their collective—unbiased Spirit. It is the same Spirit displayed in some sporting events when the winning side stands cheering together, while the “underdog” is announced as “WINNER.” Think of that rare and special moment in sports when after the last tick of the clock...and the underdog is announced as champion, the collective unbiased Spirit of the crowd, knows no color, knows no racial divide, knows no economic divide, knows no negative



gender—social or religious divide. Some of their tears are shed in retrospect, as no one thought that it could really happen. And some of their tears are shed, looking forward to the ‘penultimate possibilities’ that lay ahead, from this collective moment.

I believe that was the unspoken message that was sent to Federal Government workers that night. Not that policies, laws and bills would change America for our Federal good. Not that a “*National Debt*” would certainly be resolved. Not that one side of Capital Hill could fix the “*broken financial and mortgage defaults issues.*” Not that our Federal

representatives would or NOT level the tables concerning Federal dollars and benefits. Not that our accumulated Vote can resolve the crisis of “*fossil fuels versus renewable energy.*” But the message was clear that night that our collective unbiased Spirit, spoke of great future blessings. The following quote is a reminder taken from President Obama’s 2008 victory speech: “*Americans who sent a message to the world that we have never been just a collection of individuals or a collection of red states and blue states; **we are and always will be the United States of America.***”

Surely, we have some obstacles to negotiate through on our present and future path. We absolutely have some repairs to initiate and some divides to reconnect. But maybe, the meaning of the collective tears in 2008, speaks clear today, that great blessings and greater possibilities are yet to behold for all of the UNITED States of America.





## YOM KIPPUR AND HANNUKAH

by Chaplain Rabbi, Barbara Speyer, Los Angeles, CA

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is the holiest day of the year for Jewish people. It states in Leviticus: 16:29: "And this shall be to you a law for all time: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall practice self-denial; and you shall do no manner of work... For on this day expiation shall be made for you to purify you of all your sins; you shall be pure before the Lord. It shall be a sabbath of complete rest for you, and you shall practice self-denial; it is a law for all time." *Yom Kippur* is a solemn day, during which observant Jews fast for twenty-five hours. Sick people are not required to fast and, indeed, may be forbidden from fasting if their health situation were to deteriorate.

There are five services on *Yom Kippur*. The first service begins at sundown. This service is known as *Kol Nidre*, which is the famous prayer chanted three times. The prayer is in Aramaic. The meaning of the prayer is that all vows and oaths not carried out are hereby cancelled and made void. In order to understand the meaning of the prayer, one looks back into Jewish history. In the days of the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal, Jews were often forced to give up their faith. Though they became Christian, they still maintained their Jewish identity at home. These Jews were called *Marranos*. In the *Kol Nidre* prayer, they beg Gd to forgive them because they could not keep their vows and they would practice their religion in secret. *Kol Nidre* refers only to vows made by man to Gd. Each service contains the *Vidui*, a confessional prayer, in which we pray to Gd to forgive us for our sins.

On *Yom Kippur* day, there is a morning service, an additional service (*Musaf*), in which there is the *Avodah* service reminding us of the practice in Temple days when the priest would bring two goats into the Temple, one for sacrifice and one to be set off into the wilderness, the Scapegoat, to atone for the sins of the people. There is an afternoon service, *Minhah*, at which time the *Book of Jonah* is read. The story of Jonah tells us that Gd is a universal Gd Who cares for all mankind and that one cannot run away from one's responsibility.

The final service, *Neilah*, is chanted at sundown and the Ark is open. People remain standing for almost an hour, praying to Gd to seal us in the *Book of Life*. At the end of the service, the *shofar*, ram's horn, is blown and the fast is over. Following the service, people break the fast and begin the building of a *sukkah*, for the holiday of *Sukkot*, which begins a few days later.

Hanukkah is a minor holiday. It celebrates the victory of the Maccabees over the forces of Antiochus IV, who attempted to uproot the Jewish religion in the second century BCE. The word Hanukkah means "dedication," referring to the rededication of the Temple, which had been polluted by the Syrian armies. In the Talmud (Tractate Shabbat, 21b), it states that all of the oil used in the menorah had been contaminated except for a small jar with the seal of the High Priest. There was only sufficient oil to last for one night, yet the oil burned miraculously for eight nights, until fresh oil could be obtained. In celebration of the miracle, the Hanukkah lights are kindled on all the eight nights of the festival.





## ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS PRACTICES: CHAPLAINS, BE AWARE

by Chaplain Mohammed M. Hossain, Washington D.C.

As a chaplain, it is important to be able to cater to every individual, regardless of their faith. While general knowledge about the patient or afflicted individual is often very helpful, many times there may be small barriers since the nuanced details about the patient's faith are not known. Islam is a religion which has many similarities with the other two Abrahamic faiths, Christianity, and Judaism. However, there are a few differences which set them apart.

Muslims may ask to be alerted of prayer times and given a small space where they can stand, bow and touch their forehead to the ground. Worship can be performed in any quiet, clean, and dry place. During prayer, the worshiper will face towards Mecca (Generally northeast in America) and should not be disturbed or walked in front of. Friday is a blessed day for Muslims, akin to Sunday for Christians. The Friday prayer, Jum'ah has a sermon which sick people are not required to attend. Chaplain services should provide a non-denominational Chapel in any VA medical Center for a Muslim prayer place as per VA directive 1111.

Before prayer, Muslims wash their face, hands and feet with water to enter a state of purification called "Wudu". It is performed as needed and some patients may require assistance in doing so. It normally takes a few minutes, perhaps longer for patients depending on their mobility. Patients with no mobility may perform "Tayammum", a symbolic ablution with no need for water. This is also done for medical reasons when there are areas of the body which cannot touch water (casts, bandages, etc.)

There are also several days which Muslims celebrate with special religious significance. Eid is one of these major religious holidays and it is celebrated twice a year. The first time is immediately after Ramadan, and the second is in the twelfth Islamic month. They are celebrated with a congregational prayer, family visitations and gift exchanges. A typical greeting on this festive day is "Eid Mubarak" (pronounced "eed moo-BAR-ak). Muslim holidays should be added to hospital administrative calendars and medical procedures and tests should also be attempted to be scheduled around them.

There are also dietary restrictions which all Muslims should abide by. The Qur'an prohibits consumption of alcohol and pork, and therefore, gelatin, lard and any byproducts of it. Health care centers can order Muslim meals from certified halal food providers. If this is not possible, vegetarian dishes, along with eggs, fish and dairy products are a suitable substitute. Also, patients are wary of medical pills coated in pork-extracted gelatin and alternatives should be sought at their request. Consider asking the patient for a contact with their local mosque's leaders or imams in such cases for further counsel regarding their requests.

These are just a few of the more common situations which I have dealt with as a Muslim chaplain. Chaplaincy is a field with a Muslim minority, and my deployment specifically is Christian dominated. I take interest in learning about the differences between our faiths, and pleasure in the abundant similarities. I hope that I have bridged a small gap in whatever misunderstandings you might have had regarding how to deal with Muslim patients as a chaplain. Peace be upon you.



*The following is a website from CAIR (Council on American Islamic Relations) which is a more complete resource that I have referenced:*

[www.cair.com/guides-to-muslim-religious-practices](http://www.cair.com/guides-to-muslim-religious-practices)

# THE HOLY SPIRIT: FROM A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST PERSPECTIVE

by *Chaplain Elder Sherri Headen, Indianapolis, IN*

At age 29, I was searching for answers and engaged in a spiritual conundrum so to speak. I was attending a church in my local area that did not study the Bible in-depth nor focus on the holistic nature of holiness individually and collectively as a family of faith. Something was definitely missing! A significant pull tugged at my heart, encouraging me to pray and seek earnestly. I had only become serious about my spiritual life and embraced my Christian faith two years prior.

I continued to attend the same church, faithfully praying for revelation and guidance. One day I received a flyer in the mail advertising a Bible study seminar focused on the Book of Revelation and Bible prophecy. Something in my heart communicated, “This is the beginning of the answer to your prayers!” I posted the flyer up in my cubicle at work and informed my co-workers about the event, encouraging them to go. Every day I focused on the flyer, and then the day came! I went to work as usual and looked at the flyer. My excitement mounted once again. As the day drew on, however, I became tired and frustrated by multiple issues at work. By the end of the workday, I questioned whether I would go to the seminar, telling myself that I was too tired. At the same time, another strong influence within my heart urged me to go as planned. I went home and laid down, but my mind was unable to rest. This restlessness and the strong influence kept urging me to get up and go to the seminar!

Finally, I decided to go, and ‘til this day, I am so glad I did! Attending this seminar resulted in a spiritual awakening in my life. At the end of the six weeks, I was baptized into membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Three and a half years later at age 32, I answered the call from God to enter ministry leadership, the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, and was commissioned as a U.S. Air Force Reserve Chaplain Candidate.

So why did I share this story? To illustrate the work of the Holy Spirit! When I referred to “a strong sense... a significant pull... a strong influence” in the story, that was all code language for the Holy Spirit’s specific movement in my spiritual awakening in the past and present. The Spirit inspired the writers of Scripture and filled Christ’s life with power. The Holy Spirit draws and convicts human beings, and those who respond are renewed and transformed into the image of God. The Holy Spirit extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures, leads it into all truth. (Gen. 1:1, 2; 2 Sam. 23:2; Ps. 51:11; Isa. 61:1; Luke 1:35; 4:18; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26; 16:7-13; Acts 1:8; 5:3; 10:38; Rom. 5:5; 1 Cor. 12:7-11; 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Peter 1:21.)

As He neared the end of His life on earth, Jesus said: “I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper” (John 14:16). The original language of this text contains a subtle nuance not evident in the English translation, centered around the word *another*, which has two distinct words and meanings in Greek. To distinguish an elephant from a cheetah, for example, the writer would have used the word *heteros*, referring to “another animal.” But if the other creature was also an elephant, they would use the word *allos*, meaning another animal of the same kind. Jesus probably spoke Aramaic, but in interpreting His meaning, John used the Greek word *allos*. What Jesus was promising here was to send us Someone essentially just like Himself. Not a force, but a Person—a Person who hears our woes, feels our pain, sympathizes with our griefs, supports us in our struggles, and empowers us for daily living and the task before us. And this mighty Third Person has been promised to us as a gift for the asking.



***Holy Spirit. (n.d.). Retrieved October 18, 2018, from [www.adventist.org/en/beliefs/god/holy-spirit/](http://www.adventist.org/en/beliefs/god/holy-spirit/)***



# THE HISTORY AND MISSION OF THE ARCHDIOCESE FOR THE MILITARY SERVICES, USA

*by Chief Chaplain Father Tony Mensah, Bronx, NY*

Prior to the creation of the Military Ordinariate and then the Archdiocese for the Military Services, an informal corps of volunteer priests served the armed forces of the United States. Beginning in 1917, the spiritual care of those in military service fell on the Military Vicariate, the equivalent of a particular church or service that is headed by a legate of the Pope. The ordinariate was headed by then-Bishop Patrick J. Hayes, an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of New York who served double duty as papal military vicar for the United States beginning on November 24, 1917.

New York was the primary port of embarkation for U.S. troops leaving for Europe and, therefore, a convenient contact point for Catholic chaplains serving with them. In November 1939, the Holy See (the Pope) formally established the Military Vicariate of the United States of America. Archbishop Joseph T. Ryan was named and installed as the first ordinary of the Archdiocese for Military Services in March 1985. In January 1986 he created the administrative headquarters of the newly independent jurisdiction in the Washington, DC area.



On July 21, 1986, then Pope John Paul II reconstituted the military vicariate as the present Archdiocese for The Military Services, USA, naming Archbishop Joseph T. Ryan its first archbishop. On November 19, 2007, Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI appointed Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, a priest of the Diocese of Cleveland, who was serving as Apostolic Nuncio to the Dominican Republic and Apostolic Delegate to Puerto Rico as Archbishop of the Military Service. He was formally installed to his present position, as Archbishop for the Military Services on January 25, 2008, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC.

The Archdiocese for the Military Services (AMS) was created by Saint John Paul II to provide the Catholic Church's full range of pastoral ministries and spiritual services to those in the United States Armed Forces. This includes more than 220 installations in 29 countries, patients in 153 VA Medical Centers, and federal employees serving outside the boundaries of the USA in 134 countries. Numerically, the AMS is responsible for more than 1.8 million men, women, and children.

The Archdiocese serves as the sole endorser (certifier) of Roman Catholic chaplains to the United States government. As of 2008, 285 Roman Catholic priests were endorsed by the Archdiocese for active-duty military service. These chaplains serve on loan from their diocese of incardination or religious order/society and are released for a term of military service. Chaplains never become members of the Archdiocese; instead, they always remain subject to their home bishop/religious superiors. The only clergy incardinated into the AMS are its archbishop and auxiliary bishops. Once a priest receives the endorsement and the subsequent faculties of the archdiocese for military services, he becomes a commissioned military officer of the United States. Unlike a conventional diocese, the Archdiocese has no parishes or parish registry. The Archdiocese receives no funding from the United States government. Rather, it is solely funded by the generosity of its chaplains, men and women in uniform and private benefactors.





## THE OPIOID CRISIS: THE STATE OF AFFAIRS -- RESEARCH AND DATA

by **Chief Chaplain Rev. Dr. Gwendolyn D. Lewis, Augusta, GA**

The United States Opioid Epidemic escalates to enormous proportions as ongoing interventions are being implemented to deal with this catastrophic problem. Individuals and families are likely to be impacted for generations by the scars and residue left by these drugs.

The problem with opioids can be traced back to the 1990's; however, in the past several years the nations has experienced a drastic increase in use. In 2015, more than 33,000 Americans died as a result of an opioid overdose, including prescription opioids, heroin, and illicitly manufactured fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid. That same year, an estimated 2 million people in the United States suffered from substance use disorders related to prescription opioid pain relievers, and 591,000 suffered from a heroin use disorder.

### **What do we know about the opioid crisis?**

- ▶ Roughly 21 to 29 percent of patients prescribed opioids for chronic pain misuse them.
- ▶ Between 8 and 12 percent develop an opioid use disorder.
- ▶ An estimated 4 to 6 percent who misuse prescription opioids transition to heroin.
- ▶ About 80 percent of people who use heroin first misused prescription opioids.
- ▶ Opioid overdoses increased 30 percent from July 2016 through September 2017 in 52 areas in 45 states.
- ▶ The Midwestern region saw opioid overdoses increase 70 percent from July 2016 through September 2017.
- ▶ Opioid overdoses in large cities increase by 54 percent in 16 states.

On October 5, 2018, CBS News Reported that the Senate passed a sweeping opioids package, one of the most significant legislative accomplishments this year. It includes dozens of smaller proposals sponsored by several lawmakers, as well as measures which create and enforce programs across every federal agency to address different aspects of the opioid epidemic. It has been lauded for its focus on treatment and recovery as well as prevention. This bill proactively addresses this growing crisis yet diminishes the individual's ability to seek help because it does not allow Medicaid to cover patients with substance abuse issues receiving treatment in a mental health facility with more than 16 beds, amending it to allow for 30 days of coverage for residential treatment. One week later, Congress passed a comprehensive bill which would prohibit the flow of fentanyl into the country by mail.

What you may not realize is that every day, more than 115 people in the United States die after overdosing on opioids. "The misuse of and addiction to opioids—including prescription pain relievers, heroin, and synthetic opioids such as fentanyl—is a serious national crisis that affects public health as well as social and economic welfare." The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that the total "economic burden" of prescription opioid misuse alone in the United States is \$78.5 billion a year, including the costs of healthcare, lost productivity, addiction treatment, and criminal justice involvement", according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse and National Institutes of Health.



## What is being done about this state of affairs?

In response to the opioid crisis, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is focusing its efforts on five major priorities:

- ▶ improving access to treatment and recovery services
- ▶ promoting use of overdose-reversing drugs
- ▶ strengthening our understanding of the epidemic through better public health surveillance
- ▶ providing support for cutting-edge research on pain and addiction
- ▶ advancing better practices for pain management

The National Institutes of Health (NIH), a component of HHS, is the nation's leading medical research agency helping solve the opioid crisis via discovering new and better ways to prevent opioid misuse, treat opioid use disorders, and manage pain. In the summer of 2017, NIH met with pharmaceutical companies and academic research centers to discuss: safe, effective, non-addictive strategies to manage chronic pain; new, innovative medications and technologies to treat opioid use disorders improved overdose prevention and reversal interventions to save lives and support recovery.

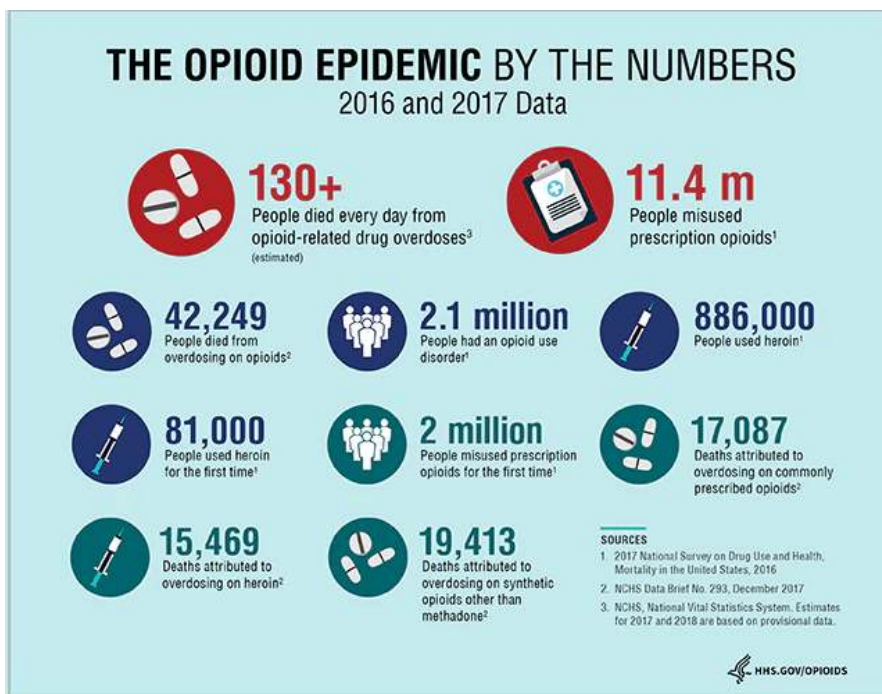
The Department of Veterans Affairs has stepped up its efforts to address the crisis. Statistics reflect that 13% of all veterans suffer with an opioid-use disorder. Veterans are twice as likely as non-veterans to die from accidental overdoses of the highly addictive painkillers, a

rate that reflects high levels of chronic pain among vets. The VA is utilizing alternative methods for treating pain and reducing dependency, such as yoga, acupuncture, mindfulness, relaxation therapy, aroma therapy, and physical therapy. In addition, the VA has started connecting with state prescription drug monitoring programs, which log controlled substances to prevent patients from obtaining multiple prescriptions from different doctors. As of February 2016, the VA said that it's currently connected to state programs in 37 states: opioid treatment programs, non-pharmaceutical approaches, and education monitoring for high risk patients.

## What can Spiritual Care Providers do?

Spiritual Meditation Therapy may be an alternative to address the spiritual injuries resulting from opioid-use disorders. Realistic approaches to this epidemic are needed so that evidence-based spiritual care is available. What can chaplains do to mitigate the fall-out from opioid-use?

- ▶ Share best-practices which your Chaplain Service adopted to identify spiritual injuries;
- ▶ Institute family, community and faith as a resource for healing deep-seated wounds;
- ▶ Provide spiritual literature aimed at addiction, and
- ▶ Spiritual mindfulness strategies



## A FAMILY'S BATTLE WITH ADDICTION

*by Chaplain Rev. Dr. Pablo R. Diaz, Danbury, CT - Guideposts, Vice President of Ministries*

Addiction can affect all people, even those who come from loving, faith filled homes. My mother-in-law, Nereida, raised her nine children with love and took them to church every Sunday, yet; four of her children became involved with drugs. In addition, her husband, a Korean War veteran and hardworking man, battled alcoholism.

When her oldest son was in his early teen years, Nereida worried he was using drugs due to his erratic behavior, but wasn't certain. Being a woman of faith, she turned to God for guidance and clarity. One afternoon while praying for an answer, she sensed God was directing her to search a specific spot in the apartment, and when she did, she found drug paraphernalia. This revealed what she feared most; her eldest child was using drugs. It was the beginning of a long journey as others in her family soon followed in his footsteps.

Though times were hard, she never lost her faith or stopped loving, praying, and caring for each member of her family. She turned to prayer and attended church to find strength and hope. And when she lost her husband and three of her children due to addiction related causes, she stayed strong in her faith and turned to her loved ones and church family for support.

Eventually one of her children was able to break free from drugs and alcohol. He is now an active member and leader at a large mega church, and a witness that God answers prayers. Today, at 85 years old, Nereida is grateful to God for helping her through those difficult days and for her loving, drug free family. When talking to others who are in a similar situation to what she went through, she tells them to, "Never give up. Keep your faith in God. Find support."

*He will give his people strength.*

*He will bless them with peace.*

*Psalms 29:11*

Lord, strengthen those who battle with addiction and their loved ones. May they find support from friends, professionals and their community.

## A SPIRITUALLY INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TREATING MORAL INJURY

*by Chaplain Rev. Gretchen Hulse, Pittsburgh, PA*

A particular veteran was referred to this Chaplain from a BH provider in the Combat Stress Recovery Clinic. The veteran wanted to address his moral injuries with a chaplain. This veteran was hesitant to speak of his actions and inactions during combat with someone other than a chaplain. He felt he could trust the chaplain due to his experience with chaplains during his military service. He was ashamed of his past and wanted to find forgiveness.

The veteran reported struggling with lack of self-forgiveness and self-compassion related to his military combat experiences. Veteran and chaplain reviewed the veteran's spiritual history and development. Veteran reports having a faith history that includes participation in the Mormon church. He reflects on positives aspects of his religious upbringing. Some of the morals and values instilled in him from this religious prospective have served him well in his personal development. Yet, several of these teachings are preventing him from experiencing forgiveness currently. This was troubling to the veteran and something he wished to further explore with the chaplain.

Chaplain and Veteran processed Veteran's existential concerns surrounding right and wrong according to the Veteran's religious beliefs. Veteran and Chaplain began to explore the Veteran's values and willingness utilizing Acceptance and Commitment Therapy exercises and core concepts. Veteran and Chaplain will continue to explore the Veteran's value system and spiritual beliefs and practices as they will influence the Veteran's ability to experience post traumatic growth, forgiveness, and maintain recovery. This therapeutic approach combined with spiritual integration helped the Veteran find self-awareness, self-acceptance, and some self-compassion. This particular Veteran was on the brink of suicide when he first came to the hospital. It was quite clear from his first interactions with psychology staff that his injuries touched deep into his soul. Over the course of months of sessions with the chaplain, this veteran is able to find a sense of peace and hope that he never thought he would experience again in this life.



## PALLIATIVE AND HOSPICE CARE: PART 2-DEBUNKING THE MYTHS

by Chaplain Rev. Dr. Phillip D. Williams, San Antonio, Texas

I have heard almost every reason given for refusing end-of-life care, especially concerning hospice. The most memorable and out-of-bounds excuse have come from the African American community. As an African American Clergy and Hospice Chaplain, this is not intended in any way to be disparaging. It is from this experience that I choose to attempt to quell the curiosity and tear down certain myths of the seven most mentioned myths that I've had to debunk. With proper education and professional, caring experiences, palliative and hospice care can make all the difference in the lives of those transitioning and their loved ones left behind. It is so important first to note that hospice and palliative care are not just for the dying. I present these myths in no specific ranking:

**Myth #1** – If I place my loved one in hospice, I'm told we must stop all medicines and treatments.

*Debunk* – The number one purpose of hospice is to provide the highest level of pain and symptom management medicines. Yes, some medicines may no longer be needed or on the host hospice's inventory and will be discontinued.

**Myth #2** – Everyone who goes into hospice dies in hospice.

*Debunk* - Hospice is not a place but a service of comfort for those with a terminal illness. Many who are diagnosed for this service have long outlived the suggested medical time frame, and some are discharged from hospice after regular balanced care.

**Myth #3** – Only people who have AIDS or cancer are referred to hospice.

*Debunk* – Greater than 50 percent of hospice patients have a terminal illness other than cancer or AIDS.

**Myth #4** – Hospice is designed for senior citizens.

*Debunk* – Infants to the most senior citizens who face a life-threatening illness are rendered the services of hospice.

**Myth #5** – Because hospice is for the dying, death is their only focus.

*Debunk* – There are pre-grief, grief and bereavement services offered to loved ones of all ages and the public at large.

**Myth #6** – Not everyone can financially afford hospice or other end-of-life services.

*Debunk* – Some insurance plans and HMOs now include hospice as an included part of their coverage.

**Myth #7** – Hospice care is provided to the patient only for the last few days of their lives.

*Debunk* – Depending on the diagnosed illness, the patient and family can receive services far beyond six months.

Recent enrollments into hospice of nationally recognized African American recording artists have assisted in breaking down some of these myths. However, because we have historically taken care of our own even to provide final care in homes, debunking will require face-to-face education – especially for African American members of palliative and hospice care interdisciplinary teams. These members must deliver the message that:

- 1 - The services of hospice are delivered in the patient's own setting be it in a private home, nursing home, assisted living facility or an around the clock in-patient unit and
- 2 - Hospice has no killer drug designed to expedite the death of their loved ones.

*To Be Continued***ASPIRING TO BE A CPE SUPERVISOR****by Chaplain Ruben D. Williams, ACPE Certified Educator Student, Pittsburgh, PA**

As an educator, patience is one of the most important characteristics that one must possess. It is essential because all learners do not learn at the same pace and there is not a cookie cutter approach to helping others reach their full potential as learners. Learning is a mutual process that requires patience from the educator as well as the learner. Patience (μῆτις) carries the meaning of being long spirited. Having this attitude is important as an educator and it is also important as a spiritual caregiver. Helping others understand themselves and how their life struggles affect who they are is not an overnight process. As a caregiver, we must use patience and allow the divine to lead in the conversation. Each person's journey is different and there are often many twists, turns, setbacks and even roadblocks. As we care for the souls of others, we must use patience as a tool to help those who are suffering.

Endurance is another aspect of pastoral education and care that is essential to helping others. Not only must the caregiver be patient, but he or she must use their ability to remain present during the suffering of others. Having a person to come alongside and remain there has a great impact on the one who is suffering. To endure shows compassion and love. The spiritual caregiver may not be able to fix the problem, but one thing he or she can do is offer themselves, suffering with the other till the suffering or grief has passed.

In my Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) journey, I have learned to endure and be patient with myself. My past supervisors, current supervisor, and mentors have taught me a lot about not being anxiously always looking to solve a problem. They have taught me that being patient first starts with me. To truly be able to help another person, I must be able to access the deep painful parts of my own soul. Becoming acquainted with grief and being patient, knowing that with the help of the divine my suffering and grief will pass has helped me in how I provide spiritual care. I am a changed person, but that change did not happen overnight and looking back I can see how those who have helped me on my journey were patient with me. This has helped me by allowing me to see myself which allows me to see others who are struggling like I have and still do from time to time. Like flowers, I believe we all have the potential to grow. However, like with flowers, the gardener must recognize that all flowers are not the same and all need different things to grow. Our souls are like flowers, they have the potential to grow and blossom, but it is the patience and endurance of the gardener that cultivates the most profound growth.

Being aware of myself and others has had the greatest impact on my life. Over the past several years I have learned to be aware of myself and others around me. This awareness has served me well in my pastoral encounters. Being aware of how patient I am has helped me to slow down and really listen to the pain that cries out when a person is talking about their story. Applying the wise words of St. James, "Let everyone be quick to *hear* and slow to speak" (James 1:19). Listening to oneself and others is the first step in becoming more aware as a spiritual caregiver. Self-awareness and being aware of others is what I have learned and this is what I seek to share with students and patients.

*Domains of Resilience*



## CPE STUDENT INTERNSHIP, RESIDENT, OR FELLOWSHIP: PREPARATION FOR CLINICAL CHAPLAINCY

*by Chaplain Rev. Jarda Alexander, San Diego, CA*

Neither my denomination nor my seminary required CPE. A kinesthetic learner, I found the clinical method of learning used in CPE to be effective in helping me reflect on my assumptions and behavior. The process was energizing and transformative. I enrolled in my first unit of CPE thinking that I could get on-the-job training in the hospital context which I saw as my mission field. I left with a greater sense of my own pastoral authority, an awareness of how my personal cultural history influenced my pastoral functioning, and how perfectionism served as a stumbling block to my own growth and connection to others. Little did I know when I began the unit that my initial learning goals would not be what I really needed to learn that summer.

CPE means different things to different people based on individual needs, attitudes and behavioral patterns. In CPE, everyone is a student on some level. Learning is a lifelong process shaped by relational connections and individual learning needs. However, not everyone is spiritually or emotionally ready for CPE. Thus, ACPE Certified Educators have criteria for student selection, one being an applicant's willingness to *receive* feedback or critique and integrate it into pastoral functioning or at the very least willingly sit with it with curiosity.

An intern is a part-time, nonpaid student with some theological education who can only engage CPE on a limited basis. A 400-hour single unit, part-time extended or full-time summer intensive, will satisfy most educational and ordination requirements. Unfortunately, students may not recognize the impact of their growth from a single unit. Those interested in professional chaplaincy and board certification will need to complete four units of CPE to be competitive.



A faster way to complete four units is through a residency. Residents are CPE students paid to learn from living human documents full-time over a year's time. This position comes with greater levels of responsibility and a stipend. However, completion of a residency in a VA facility does not guarantee a resident a VA position post-residency. One still must meet the requirements for a GS 11/12 position, score high enough to be interviewed, and then be the one selected.

Occasionally, residents desire more specialized training in mental health, palliative care, or supervisory CPE post-residency. This second year resident is a

fellow. Fellows go deeper into study and must complete a focused research project in their area of specialization. A second year fellow is expected to demonstrate advanced competence in behavioral science, theoretical approach to pastoral care, group development and process, and research. Fellows are more marketable for specialty VA positions such as lead mental health, domiciliary, or palliative care chaplains. As a student, build relationships, learn about the organization, and take inventory of your strengths *and* weaknesses. See how your personal call fits into the VA'S culture, vision, and mission.

# SPIRIT AND SOUL FOR WHOLE HEALTH

by Chaplain Elder Sherri Headen, Indianapolis IN

In the past three years that I have served as a VA Chaplain, I have continuously heard the gratefulness and praise from veterans regarding the care they receive from the VA. Mostly, I hear positive feedback, but I also encounter veterans who feel powerless regarding their plan of care. This powerlessness can significantly raise their level of frustration, anxiety and reduce their level of satisfaction concerning their care. Sometimes, a veteran may feel their voice is not being heard or their options are significantly limited. A veteran may have a chronic illness, disease process or co-morbidities where they feel a complete loss of control and hopelessness. As I have continued to learn about the VA Whole Health Initiative, I have been energized as a clinical staff chaplain to do my part in implementing it.

Whole health is an approach to health care that empowers and enables the veteran to take charge of their health and well-being and find greater fulfillment. It provides a significant way to help reduce the feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness. The Initiative is designed to address the major areas of focus in a veteran's life. Veterans are encouraged to complete a Personalized Health Inventory. Essentially, this inventory provides the veteran with an assessment tool that gauges each area of the Circle of Health (Working Your Body, Power of the Mind, Spirit & Soul, Family, Friends & Coworkers, Recharge, Food & Drink, Personal Development and Surroundings). It also includes *Me + Self Care + Professional Care + Community = Whole Health*. In the Whole Health approach, a veteran can be a powerful contributor to the physician-led plan of care. A veteran may enhance her or his medical treatment plan by attending prayer services, chair yoga classes, mindfulness sessions, painting/craft classes, Tai Chi, and nutrition/healthy cooking classes.

As a clinical staff chaplain, I recognize the importance and the absolute need for veterans to experience spiritual as well as physical wholeness. What does spirituality have to do with health? Research has found that religion and spirituality may affect a range of health issues. People who attend weekly services with a supportive community have longer life spans. Research has found that religious people smoke less, exercise more, eat more healthy



foods, and engage in less risky sexual practices, on average. Spirituality can mean building meaning and connection. Meaning and connection are central to mental health. Having them can build optimism and reduce depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress. Spirituality can help individuals manage problems like chronic pain, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, and stroke. For example, having a spiritual practice can help people tolerate pain and function better. Spirituality can give people more strength to handle stress, loss, and the effects of war.

In the next Capsule issue, I plan to provide more detail regarding some of the ways to engage in spiritual connection and exploring one's spirituality as it connects to their health.

Review this video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9TH0cBbsXQ>

Citation Reference:

[https://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/Veteran-Handouts/Introduction\\_to\\_SpiritAndSoul.asp](https://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/Veteran-Handouts/Introduction_to_SpiritAndSoul.asp)



# THE CLERICAL PARADIGM FOR CHAPLAINCY REVISITED

by *Chief Chaplain Forrest Kirk, Ph.D., Muskogee, OK*

Chaplains are Interpreters of the Secular Labels of Spirituality/Morality. It has been my strongest recommendation that chaplains be immersed in all aspects of ethics within the medical center. I majored in theology and had the opportunity to minor in psychology. However, I decided to minor in ethics and that was the best decision that I could have made as a public clergy/theologian.

A large number of chaplains lean on psychology as their primary approach to ministry. However, there are lots of disciplines focused on psychological approaches in the medical center. There are psychiatrists, psychologist, social workers, and counselors. Nursing also has a component of psychology. Psychology is considered an evidence-based discipline. However, issues like moral injury, moral distress, compassion fatigue, suicide and all other illness and sickness have an ethical/moral/spiritual component that evidence-based approaches cannot address.

An ethics committee gives advice on issues that are outside the legal and medical realm. Ethics is an arena where chaplains should be subject matter experts. Chaplains need to be the interpreters of the secular labels of morality which also have a spiritual component. For example:

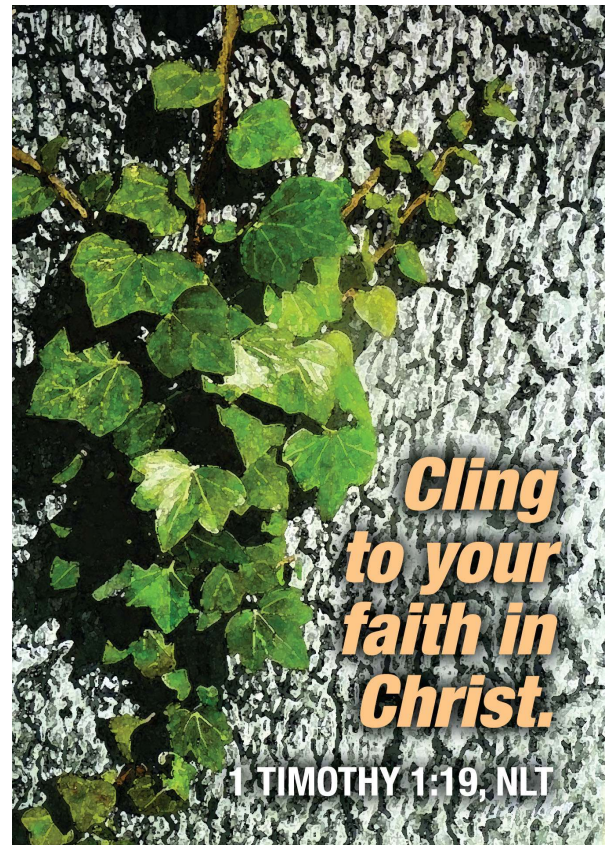
- Unconditional Positive Regard -- Love
- Just Culture -- Grace
- Patient-Centered Care -- Mercy
- Psychological Safety -- Contentment/Peace
- Shared Decision-making -- Burden-Bearing
- Safety Culture (Patient Safety) -- Loving One Another
- Moral Injury/Moral Distress -- Guilty/Corrupted Conscience
- Compassion Fatigue -- Seared Conscience
- Addiction -- Besetting Sin
- Grief/Loss -- Lamentation
- Resiliency/Coping -- Perseverance
- Obsession/Craving -- Evil/Secret Desires
- Trauma -- Dismay
- Human Error/Imperfection -- Sinful Nature
- At-Risk Behaviors -- Quenching the Spirit -- not doing what one's conscience prompts
- Reckless Behaviors -- Grieving the Spirit -- doing what one's conscience is rejecting

In addition, all labels of psychological pain anger, fear, hopelessness/despair, grief/loss, guilt and shame have one thing in common. The hurt/trauma associated with each is experienced in the brain (mind/heart) as pain (violation of the conscience).

At one time, all healing (spirit, soul, and body) was associated with theology. Theology was considered the

"Queen of Sciences." Over the last three hundred years, the "evidence-based" scientific methods have divorced itself from theology and, because of its success in addressing the issues of the soul and body, has taken the lead. Theological approaches are viewed as myth.

I contend that spiritual/moral approaches are essential to holistic wellness (healing), because there is more to healing than recovery from an organic disease. There is a moral component associated with every illness and sickness. But moral dysfunction is associated with all persons even if one's body is "healthy." Therefore, I contend that theology is still the queen of sciences, because ethics is a component of theology. It is interesting to note that a person can reach ethical contentment regardless of circumstances. A person can be in the process of dying and achieve peace. Chaplains need to develop focused expertise in Moral Medicine. The foundation of moral medicine is the restoration of a good conscience as delineated in two passages of Scripture, Galatians 6:1-5 and 1 Timothy 1:18-19. The goal of moral medicine is the maintenance of "faith and a good conscience." Chaplaincy needs to research, develop and document that concept as the clerical paradigm of spiritual healthcare for chaplaincy moving forward.





## Inspiration for the Soul

Sermonette -

## HOW CAN WE FORGET

by Chaplain Rev. Rhonda K. Lawrence (Resident Chaplain), Cleveland, OH

*How great is the goodness you have stored up for those who fear you.  
You lavish it on those who come to you for protection,  
blessing them before the watching world. (Psalms 31:19 NLT)*

In a world of fantasy and super heroes not unlike those that have come to life on the TV screen away from the comic books of yesterday, today we can engage our super heroes. We view them on picture motion screens and root for the defense they provide us from villains. Bulletproof Luke Cage fights for the defeated in Harlem, NY. He's always seen in his signature grey hoodie, and at the end of a heated confrontation, his grey hoodie is plowed with bullet holes none of which have penetrated anything further than the hoodie. Of course, now there are Black Women super heroes like Vixen, the model by day and super heroine by night. Fantasy super heroine, Storm, capable of manipulating the weather was catapulted to stardom by Halle Berry.

It is entertaining to enter the world of fantasy and super heroes to watch with amazement their superpowers wield much like the Black Panther phenomenon originating in the land of Wakanda. Oh, but Saints, it is even more gratifying to be present in the natural (the here and now) and know for yourself the power that exists in our ALL Mighty God and what's more to know that God has gifted you and me with that POWER. The POWER of God is here present in us ALL and activated by our faith. HOW CAN WE FORGET?

A first-century woman, Mary Magdalene, was cured in her body of that which afflicted her...be it an affliction of evil spirits or an affliction as scholars would deem it today to be epilepsy. Point is Jesus healed her. HOW CAN WE FORGET? This Mary, a disciple of Christ, was there during Jesus' ministry, crucifixion, and death. She was there as the guards sealed Him in the tomb. She was the same Mary, first to speak to Jesus after the resurrection and has been called Apostle of the Apostles because Jesus said to her, "Go and tell." HOW CAN WE FORGET?

The revelatory power of God that blesses His people and reveals them to a watching world was seen in one Fannie Lou Hamer the last and 20<sup>th</sup> child born to sharecroppers in Mississippi in 1917. She recognized the connection between a lack of participation in the political process and poverty among Black Americans. She worked tirelessly to eradicate both. In her words "whether you have a Ph.D., D.D., or no D, we're in this bag together." HOW CAN WE FORGET?

There is a heroic, transforming sustaining power found in Jesus. The transforming work of God in and through us rests in us, we who have accepted God's gift of grace given who are the redeemed of the Lord. He has gifted us for His divine Kingdom Work. No work is too small. It does not matter from whence you come. You are a child of the Most High God. We're blessed for the journey. The still small voice still speaks to us. HOW CAN WE FORGET? AMEN!







## Good Eats

# DON'S SUCCULENT SHRIMP-VEGETABLE ALFREDO SPAGHETTI

by *Chaplain Rev. Dr. Don D. Fuller, Memphis, TN*

I prepare this dish for my family and at large family gatherings. It is not a dish made from “scratch” but is called “semi-homemade”. It’s a quick and easy meal made from ingredients found on grocery shelves. Note: for persons who can’t consume shellfish, you can substitute chicken with the sausage. This recipe was published in our Memphis VA Cookbook. Enjoy!

*Preparation time: approximately 30 minutes*

## INGREDIENTS

2 lbs Shrimp (peeled and de-veined with tails removed)  
 1 pack Turkey Sausage (or desired flavor)  
 Bay Scallops  
 2 cans Veg-All Mixed Vegetables  
 1-13.25 oz package Spaghetti  
 1-16oz jar Ragu Alfredo Sauce  
 1-16oz jar Ragu Garlic Alfredo Sauce  
 1 package dry package McCormick Creamy Alfredo Sauce

4 tbls Smart Balance Original Buttery Spread  
 Pinch of Garlic Salt  
 [Optional] Mushrooms and Black Olives



## INSTRUCTIONS

Boil the spaghetti in the appropriate amount of water until almost done. Add the drained canned vegetables to the spaghetti and complete cooking. In a large heated, frying pan add two tablespoons of the buttery spread to melt. Then add your prepared shrimp to the pan. When the shrimp turns light pink, add your scallops and sausage. Do not over cook.

Drain the veggies and spaghetti, lower the temperature and add your alfredo sauces (wet and dry) to the pot. Then add your shrimp, sausage and scallops. [The optional items can be added, to the mixture.] Mix in another two tablespoons of the buttery spread, a pinch of garlic salt and any other seasonings to taste. Mix everything well. Simmer the entire dish on low heat for two-to-five minutes, then serve.

## TASTY CHRISTMAS SHORT RIBS

by *Chaplain Rev. Fred Tittle, Palo Alto, CA*

### INGREDIENTS

2 pounds of short ribs  
 1 white onion  
 1 clove fresh garlic  
 1 red bell pepper  
 ¼ cup olive oil  
 1 can of beef broth  
 1 tablespoon of Worcestershire sauce  
 Salt and pepper

### INSTRUCTIONS

Season the short ribs; chop ½ white onion and one clove of fresh garlic. Slice the red bell pepper. In a medium skillet, heat ¼ cup olive oil and then add herbs and vegetable and cook until brown. Remove the cooked mixture, retaining the olive oil in the pan.



Place the seasoned short ribs in the heated olive oil and brown on all sides. Return the vegetable mixture to the pan and add one can of beef broth and one tablespoon of Worcestershire sauce. Move the cooked ribs to another deep pan. Pour the both mixture over the ribs and place in a heated oven (at 325 degrees) and cook for 1 ½ hours. **Happy Holidays!**

*For the New Year*

## KAREN'S HOME-MADE POWER HOUSE BURGERS

by *Chaplain Rev. Karen Sinclair, Tulsa, OK*

Tantalize your family's taste buds this New Year's Day with these power house burgers. My family cannot get enough. I prepare this meal about once per month when the beef goes on sale at my local health food grocery store. I purchase about 3 to 4 pounds at any one time. It makes about 13 or 14 beef patties.

We have switched from eating conventionally raised beef to grass fed beef for the following reasons:

- ▶ 100% grass fed beef has fewer calories compared to conventionally raised beef because the former eats a much cleaner and natural diet – grass – compared to conventional meat where cows live in harsh cramped conditions and are fed anti-biotics, added hormones, genetically modified grains along with other unnatural foods. Because of the overcrowding and cramping, conventionally raised cows produce cortisol which leads to fattier and more unhealthy meat.
- ▶ Grass fed beef is great for people like me who battle blood sugar issues.
- ▶ According to perfectketo.com, grass fed beef is abundant in electrolytes; has six times healthier omega-3 fatty acids. With increased amounts of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), grass fed beef decreases the risk of heart disease. CLA is alleged to be one of the strongest nutrients to defend against cancer. Grass fed beef is also less toxic.

So, without further ado, let me introduce you to my mouth-watering burgers:

**Ingredients:**

4 lbs. grass fed ground beef  
3 green onions  
1 teaspoon dried thyme  
½ large yellow onion (organic)  
6 pegs of organic garlic  
2 tablespoons organic gluten free soy sauce  
2 teaspoons Himalayan pink salt  
1 teaspoon onion powder  
1 teaspoon organic garlic powder  
black pepper to taste  
¾ cup of water  
1 organic egg beaten  
3 leveled tablespoons tapioca flour

**Directions:**

Wash meat in some organic apple cider and lemon water. Pour off all the water. In a blender add all the herbs and spices with the ¾ cup water and blend together into a “nice” consistency. Add this blended herb spice mixture to the ground beef and fold in well so that all the mixture is blended into the meat. Let it marinate overnight or at least for 8 hours.

Turn oven on broil (high). Add the egg and flour to the marinated meat. Fold in well. Use a table spoon or ice cream scoop to separate meat into balls and flatten into patties. Place in baking pan in single layers. Broil for 5 minutes on each side.

Prepare your organic gluten free burger buns in a toaster oven with spread of your choice. Add a slice of organic cheese if you like. Instead of topping our burgers with lettuce, tomatoes and onions, we eat our burgers with one of my home-made salads which consists of organic spinach leaves, feta cheese, cranberries, walnuts and balsamic vinaigrette dressing. **Happy New Year!**





## WHY JOIN THE VA NATIONAL BLACK CHAPLAINS ASSOCIATION?

**By Chaplain Rev. Louis Tillman, Hampton, VA/ Langley–Eustis AFB**

Working in the Hampton VA, I came to define spirituality as that in which inspires oneself, what truly inspires a person within his/her own personal and spiritual journey. When I joined the VA National Black Chaplains Association, I knew that the Lord had ordained my steps to go forward into greatness. It was truly one of the best decisions that I have ever made in my life.

I am the youngest pastor of color in my denomination, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) where everyone is at least 20 or more years older than me. As an African American, young adult ELCA pastor, I have often felt like an outcast, and that I did not belong. Frequently, I have questioned my call to ministry and planned to leave the ministry all together until I learned about the VA National Black Chaplains Association. Seeing others like me with similar struggles provided a strong sense of belonging to this community and affirmed my pastoral call to ministry in meaningful ways. God was still working with me and through me!

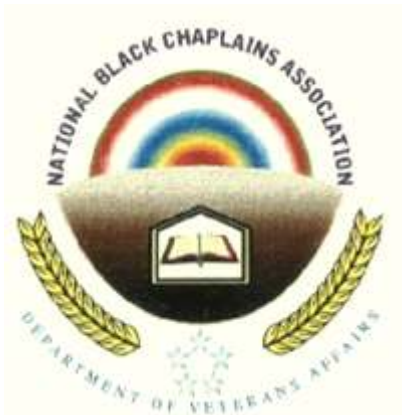
The VA National Black Chaplains Association has turned many obstacles such as finding purpose and meaning into my sense of call into promising opportunities in my career. Guidance and mentoring that I received from various members of the VA National Black Chaplains Association inspired me to join the United States Air Force Chaplaincy Corps and pursue chaplaincy at the Hampton VA Medical Center. This powerful and prophetic group of talented leaders have truly enhanced my knowledge and understanding of Federal Chaplaincy and our professional impact on those who suffer.

Have you ever wanted to sharpen your skills and find training around spiritual assessments, moral injury, compassion fatigue, or spiritual interventions? Have you ever wanted to alleviate the pain of dealing with racism and discrimination within your career and vocational paths? Have you ever wanted to truly delve into what inspires you? Have you ever wanted to be a part of something that is much bigger than you could ever image?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, then I would strongly encourage you to join the VA National Black Chaplains Association and become a member today! Be a part of the most powerful network of Black Chaplains that exist to exemplify a *Sankofa* theological stance on Federal Chaplaincy. We want you to know where you have come from to help you know where you will go. And we need you! Your presence, gifts, and theological identity is valued among our cloud of witnesses. Please consider joining the VA National Black Chaplains Association today as it will help you *to aspire to inspire before you ever expire!*



Chaplain Louis Tillman and NBCA president, Chaplain Marvin Mills, Sr.



**If you have been blessed by the content of this publication and would like to see it reach more people, please consider making a donation to the National Black Chaplains Association.**

**We are grateful for your support and look forward to helping more people.**

**I would like to support the vision of the VA National Black Chaplains Association with a donation of:**

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Your tax-deductible donation will benefit the mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs National Black Chaplains Association; to strengthen the effectiveness of not only African American chaplains, but to all other chaplains of ethnic groups, to assist in the recruitment and retention not only of African American chaplains but to all other chaplains of ethnic groups, and to foster the education, growth and development of all federally employed chaplains and professional allies.

**Why Donate to the NBCA?**

- ▶ To help bridge the gap and celebrate all race relationships.
- ▶ To heal one's view of self, others, and how we are uniquely tied to each other no matter our family of origins.
- ▶ To appreciate and celebrate cultural diversity.
- ▶ To recruit writers and new members from every sector of the globe.
- ▶ To inspire patients, veterans, families, chaplains, and all others with hope, love, and joy and a determination to make a difference and a contribution in the earth.

**The Purpose of Donations**

- ▶ To broaden the multicultural perspective because everyone is important and has something beneficial to offer.
- ▶ To support the upward mobility efforts of all Chaplains.
- ▶ To strengthens the Executive Board and their committees to plan, organize, train, teach, and host Annual Conferences.

**How Will Donations Be Used?**

- ▶ To develop training for Chaplains and non-Chaplains to effectively tackle issues together such as the Opioid crisis, MST, women's issues, and medical and health issues that impact everyone.
- ▶ To educate and network with churches and other organizations or professionals that desire to work with the NBCA to make their communities better, especially those with veterans.
- ▶ To sponsor those individuals who have a financial hardship to conferences hosted by the NBCA.

**What is the Impact of Donation?**

- ▶ The ability to change lives through knowledge and by example.
- ▶ The ability to learn from others and even better oneself in the process.