

Chaplain ministers at world's busiest U.S. military trauma center

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Chaplain ministers at world's busiest U.S. military trauma center

By Patricia Heys

Associated Baptist Press

U.S. AIR FORCE THEATER HOSPITAL, Iraq (ABP)—At the U.S. Air Force Theater Hospital in Iraq, the sounds of Army Blackhawk and Marine Sea Knight helicopters are a call to duty for Air Force Chaplain Shane Gaster.

Gaster, one of more than 90 military chaplains endorsed by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, is stationed at the Air Force Theater Hospital—the busiest U.S. trauma center in the world. He works 12-hour shifts, six days a week, ministering to wounded men and women brought in by helicopters and humvee trucks.

Baptist chaplains James Kirkendall and Shane Gaster visit at Gaster's office at the U.S. Air Force Theater Hospital in Iraq. (Photo courtesy of James Kirkendall)

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As the war goes on, so does the work of military

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As the war goes on, so does the work of military

By Marcia Nelson

Religion News Service

CHICAGO (RNS)—Once you've seen the brutal face of evil, you start looking for the tender face of God, Chaplain Robert Barry said.

Barry is an Air National Guard chaplain who spends his summers working with injured soldiers at Landstuhl military hospital in southern Germany, where American military personnel are taken after they are wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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DEPLOYED: Baptist pastor ministers in Iraq

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Chaplain Joel
Jenkins
prepares to go
out on a
convoy.

Jenkins, pastor
of First Baptist
Church in
Charlottesville,
Va., was called
up to active
duty last June
and has been
serving in
Iraq.

DEPLOYED: Baptist pastor ministers in Iraq

By Jim White

Virginia Religious Herald

HARLOTTESVILLE, Va.—Joel Jenkins, pastor of First Baptist Church of Charlottesville, Va., temporarily changed congregations last year—and the relocation was extreme. Jenkins, a longtime Army Reserve chaplain, was called to active duty in Iraq last June with barely a week's notice.

For the past 11 months, Jenkins has called a forward operating base in Baghdad's international zone home. He is assigned to the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq, which employs military and civilian forces from several nations to train and equip Iraq's army, navy, air force and police force.



Jenkins with Commander
Lieut. Gen. Dempsey of
the Multi-National
Security Transition
Command-Iraq.

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Frontline Ministry: Baptist chaplain meets spiritual needs in combat

May 25, 2007

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FRONTLINE MINISTRY: Baptist chaplain meets spiritual needs in combat

By Barbara Bedrick

BGCT Communications

The closer people get to a foxhole, the more spiritual they generally become, a frontline military chaplain observed.

Tough circumstances—and the accompanying escalated interest in spiritual matters—provide countless opportunities for military chaplains like U.S. Navy Capt. Bill Perdue of the 1st Marine Division, who recently returned from a one-year tour of duty in Baghdad and Fallujah as a multi-national Marine Expeditionary Force chaplain.

Ministering on the front lines, U.S. Marine Chaplain Bill Perdue travels with commanding officers near Baghdad. (BGCT Photos courtesy of Bill Perdue)

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“On three occasions, rocket and mortar fire landed within 50 yards of our chapel and killed a civilian contractor 30 feet away,” Perdue recalled.

Cadets learn Islam as part of "winning the peace"

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Mohammed Aly (right), a member of the Islamic Center of Jersey City, N.J., introduces himself to West Point cadet Chris Beeler. (RNS/Saed Hindash/*The Star-Ledger* of Newark, N.J.)

Cadets learn Islam as part of ‘winning the peace’

By **Wayne Woolley**

Religion News Service

JERSEY CITY, N.J. (RNS)—The lights in a Jersey City mosque flickered at dawn, and more than a dozen West Point cadets stirred in sleeping bags scattered across the prayer room.

As Imam Hussein Wahdan began the melodious call to prayer in Arabic, bearded men filed past the cadets, kneeled and then bowed to the floor to begin their morning worship.

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Chaplain strives to be the presence of Christ in war zone

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Baptist
Chaplain
Alan
Rogers
talks
with
Marines
in Iraq.
(Photo
courtesy
of Alan
Rogers)

Chaplain strives to be the presence of Christ in war zone

By Bob Perkins Jr.

Associated Baptist Press

L ANBAR, Iraq (ABP)—Chaplain Alan Rogers has baptized a Marine in an

Iraqi river under armed protection. Needless to say, it was a quick job.

A Marine Corps corporal asked Rogers to baptize in the Euphrates River in Iraq, near the Syrian border.

Southern Baptist tapped as Army chief of chaplains

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Southern Baptist tapped as Army chief of chaplains

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

Chaplain Douglas Carver has been nominated to serve as the next U.S. Army chief of chaplains—the first Southern Baptist to lead the Army's chaplain corps in more than 50 years.

Carver, 55, also has been recommended for promotion in rank from brigadier general to major general. Pending Senate confirmation, he will be promoted to his new position at a July 12 ceremony at Fort Belvoir, Va.

Family collects tributes to fallen soldier as ‘sacred relics’

May 25, 2007

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Family collects tributes to fallen soldier as ‘sacred relics’

By Wayne Woolley

Religion News Service

OUTH AMBOY, N.J. (RNS)—It happens every time a U.S. soldier or Marine dies in Iraq. The bad news immediately spreads across the base like wildfire, and in the troop recreation centers, Internet connections are shut down.

Commanders don’t want word of the death to reach the soldier’s family before military officials personally deliver the news. Once the knock at the family door comes between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m., the electronic blockade back in Iraq is lifted and a torrent of e-mails flows from the battlefield to the dead soldier’s family in America.

Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Sebban, 29, died in Iraq this spring. Sebban's family received a flood of supportive e-mails and letters from soldiers who served with him in Iraq. (RNS/courtesy 82nd Airborne Public Affairs Office.)

Chaplains prep West Point cadets for spiritual warfare

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Chaplains prep West Point cadets for spiritual warfare

By Gregory Tomlin

Baptist Press

EST POINT, N.Y. (BP)—Southern Baptist chaplains Col. John Cook and Lt. Col. Darrell Thomsen, along with other chaplains at West Point, mourn the loss of 51 academy graduates since the war began.

Still, new cadets keep coming with a desire to serve. Among the cadets are Cook's twin sons, both "plebes"—first-year students. Despite the risks involved with service, Cook said he is proud his sons, Jonathan and Joshua, have chosen to attend West Point.

U.S. Army Chaplain
Col. John Cook, a
graduate of Southern
Baptist Theological
Seminary, points to the
grave site of 2nd Lt.
Emily Perez, the first
female West Point
graduate to be killed in
Iraq. Cook is the U.S.
Military Academy
chaplain and senior
adviser to the
superintendent on
religious affairs. (BP
Photo)

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San Antonio volunteers serve wounded warriors

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San Antonio volunteers serve wounded warriors

By George Henson

Staff Writer

SAN ANTONIO—Two teams of volunteers at First Baptist Church in San Antonio are working to minister to soldiers and families during some of their most trying times.

Tom and Nell Kolterman lead a team of volunteers who provide and serve a meal to soldiers and their families at Powless House, a residential facility at Fort Sam Houston for wounded soldiers who need long-term outpatient care provided by Brooke Army Medical Center.

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2nd Opinion: Leave judgment in the parking lot

May 25, 2007

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2nd Opinion: Leave judgment in the parking lot

By Robert Tucker

The challenge of a classically trained musician to adapt to new worship styles without abandoning the old was both daunting and rewarding. My commitment to providing the finest in worship experiences led me to a crossroads in my musical journey. The desire to incorporate and become a part of the emerging church in a praise-and-worship setting meant that I needed to know something about it and to learn how to become a part of it. The old adage “if you can’t beat them, join them” has never been more true than in my case of trying to become a part of the praise-and-worship team—“team” in the broad sense of the term.

Specifically, our church had a team—a small group that included a few singers, a drummer, a bass player, a guitar player, and a pianist and organist. Perhaps out of default or due to my jazz background on the piano, suddenly it became my duty and obligation to provide leadership at the keyboard. I met this requirement with a mixture of excitement and

trepidation. Probably similar to a skydiver on his first dive or in my case a solo French horn player in an orchestra, I was confident of my basic skills but completely at a loss on how to use them. Can I fit in and learn this new system, and am I capable? Will I enhance the worship experience for the people, or will I ruin it? Is this good for the church?

As I played and sought to fit in with the team, I noticed the response of the people was not negative or bored but rather was worshipful and meaningful. In addition, the sounds emanating from the guitar were intriguing due to the added tones used for harmonic color and musical interest. Furthermore, the rhythm was multi-dimensional, with a syncopated complexity that almost defied notation. The music was engaging, creative, spontaneous and emotionally charged.

In other words, my entire training and musical thought processing were altered, and I began to rethink some things.

When it comes to counting church members, the devilâs in the details

May 25, 2007

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When it comes to counting church members, the devil's in the details

By Amy Green

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The [Southern Baptist Convention](#), with about 16.2 million members on the books, claims to be the nation's largest Protestant denomination. But Tom Ascol believes the active membership really is a fraction of that.

Ascol, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Cape Coral, Fla., points to a church report showing that only 6 million Southern Baptists attend church on an average Sunday.