



THE AMCF WORLD CONFERENCE
SAO PAULO, BRAZIL 16-20 July 2024
THEME: "Arise shine for your light has come"
Topic: DUAL CALLING - THE MILITARY STEWARD.

(A Military Christian dual calling as a professional soldier and shining exemplary Christian witness all at the same time)

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Introduction

The calling of God, there is both a **primary** and a **secondary** call that God uses for his servants in the harvest. The Primary call we receive from the Lord is to be born again which I will expound in some depth in my discussion this morning. The secondary calling is to serve God in the Military as both a Christian and some as a Minister (Chaplain). This calling is unique in that it is need initiated. The Lord Jesus said "the harvest is plenteous but the labourers are few." The Bible is full of examples both men and women who responded to this secondary call that is why we have this conference of servants/stewards of God from across the globe.

Scope

My Presentation will cover the following areas:

1. Definition of DUAL CALLING - THE MILITARY STEWARD.
2. Uniqueness of a Military Christian/Steward.
3. The Military Christian as a good Christian.
4. The Military Christian as a good Soldier.
5. The Military Chaplain and Christian as a Steward of God in the Military
6. Conclusion.

Definition of DUAL CALLING - THE MILITARY STEWARD.

My simple definition of a military Christian/steward is that of one whose vocational calling and training is in the military and yet he/she has faith in our

Lord Jesus Christ. Some enlist or are recruited into the military when they were already born again Christians while other get to meet the Lord while serving in the military. There arises questions if these two, Christianity and Soldiering compliment one another or they are in conflict with each other. Are these roles in conflict or they are complimentary one to the other? If they are conflicting we would conclude that a good Christian cannot be a good soldier. But if they are complimentary to each other it may mean once one is a good Christian it is possible to enhance his military career and visa versa.

Uniqueness of a Military Christian/Steward.

Our uniqueness in ministry and service in the military should be seen as Gods designed Steward for the 'Misso Dei', the Mission of God for mankind, SALVATION. As ministers of the gospel in the military we have often found ourselves having to answer the question how can or is it possible for a good Christian to be a good soldier. Our ministry especially as Chaplains is based but not limited to the ministry gifts the Lord has given the church that of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers. Neither is it based solely the various gifts of the spirit found in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. Our ministry is coupled with commanders at all levels expecting of us to assist them in their chain of command and control. Chaplaincy therefore in my view is a vital command tool. Our ministry as Christian Military Chaplains is also determined by our audience or recipients of the good news. Most Christian Preachers minister to the civilian population but ours is unique we minister to the military men and women. You will be reminded that in the military the chaplain has both war time and peace time responsibilities. Unlike his counterpart in church the chaplains roles are that of a....

The Military Christian as a good Christian.

The Military Christian has the unique role of firstly becoming a good Christian and then to remain a good soldier. Maybe to break it down further is to look at what a good Christian is and what makes up a good soldier. I would like to look at two characters in the New Testament Nicodemus and the Centurion. First let us look at Nicodemus who in my view exemplifies the primary calling for a Christian. The Primary calling a Military Christian is that of Salvation which comes by accepting Jesus as both Lord and Saviour. We read in

John 3:3 Jesus said to Nicodemus "Truly, Truly I say to you , unless one is born again he can not see the kingdom of god." in short you must be born again.

In this verse and if read complete in John 3;1-8 Jesus discusses one of the foundational doctrines found in the Bible (I.e., teachings, foundational principles, basis of belief and faith) of the Christian faith: Regeneration or Spiritual Birth Titus 3;5 "He saved us , not because of righteous things we have done but

because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit”

Without being Born Again in a spiritual Sense, any person cannot be part of God’s Kingdom, meaning that a person’s life must be spiritually renewed in order to be spiritually saved and to receive God’s gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. There are several fundamentals about Salvation, Spiritual Re-birth and Renewal I would like to discuss, and these are:

1. REGENERATION OR SPIRITUAL BIRTH.

- Spiritual rebirth is an inward re-creating of a person spiritually.
- It is a total change and life transformed and these changes are seen in one’s attitude, thinking and actions.
- This occurs starting inside and demonstrated outwardly by actions. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. (John 3:6).
- A person who is Born again does not conform to the worlds lifestyle but is transformed. (Romans 12 : 2)

2. SINFULNESS OF MANKIND.

- Men is separated from God because of Sin. (Isaiah 59: 1 - 2)
- Sin is transgression or breaking the law of God (1 John 3 : 4)
- Knowing what is right and not doing it is sin. (James 4:17)
- Sin carries a personal responsibility. (Ezekiel 18: 20)
- Sin is universal (Roman 3: 23).
- Sin carries Consequences, Death. (Romans 6 : 23)

3. REPENTANCE FROM SINS FORSAKE SINFUL LIVING

- Repentance is admitting you are a sinner and turning away from that lifestyle turning to God. (1 John 1:9)
- Repentance is yielding control of your life to the Lord Jesus Christ who is the forgiver of sins and leader of life.
- Repentance is making a U-turn in life choosing the path of life from that of destruction. (Matthew 7 : 13,14)

4. TRANSITION/TRANSFORMATION.

- There is a complete change in both form and action when one is born again. 2 (Corinthians 5:17)
- There should be noticeable change in a born again Christian both in character and lifestyle. (1 Peter 4: 1,2).
- There is freedom from the slavery of sin for one who is born again. (John 8:36)
- There is love for others both in word and in deed. (1 John 4:7).

5. WORK OF GRACE

Salvation is a work of the Grace of God which was demonstrated by the sacrificial sufferings and death of our LORD Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 2 : 5, 8) "But because of His Great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by Grace that you have been saved. For it is by Grace that you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" therefore no one should boast.

In summary a good Christian should be one who has experience Spiritual Birth which brings with it

- a. Spiritual Cleansing John 3:5 Titus 3:5
- b. The indwelling of the Spirit of God. Romans 8:9 2 Corinthians 1: 22
- c. Transformation into being a new Creation 2 Corinthians 5:17
- d. Adoption as God's child John 1 : 12-13; Romans 8:16
- e. Victory over sin 1 John 3 : 9; 5:4,18

How do I get born again (The ABC of Salvation)

1. Acknowledge accept that you are a sinner.
 2. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for you sins.
 3. Confess your sins and the cleansing of your soul.
- Accept Jesus as your personal Lord and Saviour.
 - Invite him into your heart.
 - Live a life worth of your confession.

In order to be a Good Christian you must

- Read your Bible everyday.
- Pray everyday.
- Fellowship with fellow believers.
- Witness for the goodness of the Lord.

There is an open invitation today for me and you to respond to this primary call. Salvation. Call on the name of the lord you will be saved.

The Military Christian as a good Soldier.

The second part of my discourse is to deal with the trade/art of being a good soldier. The enlisting and recruitment of any people into the (conventional/traditional) military has a clear objective.

- Defence of a people, their lives/hopes/aspirations.
- Defence of the territorial integrity of a nation/people.
- Protection of national interests at home and abroad.
- Protection of the geographical political borders of a state from both internal and external foes.
- Upholding the constitution of the state.

Military Training

Those enlisted and recruited go through various, usually rigorous military training ready for combat. Military training basically assimilates what can occur in combat in an operational theatre. The military does this with the main objective of producing a hardened, aggressive and discipline cadre. Those tenants make up a good soldier. A good soldier is one drilled to take orders, march in unison with other comrades, practice all field craft manoeuvres and endurance in the worst case scenario of combat operations.

Example of the Centurion:

A story is told of us in an encounter with a Military Officer (a Centurion) who had a special kind of request before Jesus, the healing of his house servant. We read in.....

Matthew 8:8-11

8 The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed.

9 For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

10 When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.

NIV

Matthew 8:8-10

8 But the centurion replied, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." 10 When Jesus heard this, he marvelled/was astonished and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. ESV

Define a Centurion

A centurion was an officer over 100 men in the Roman Army (rank of a Major). Every centurion mentioned in the Gospels and Acts was a gentleman of high character and sense of duty, and this man was no exception. The fact that he was concerned about a lowly servant-boy indicates this. The word "palsy" indicates a kind of paralysis.

The Centurion was aware of the greatness of Jesus.

He was aware the power of command and control.

He was aware of his unworthiness/non qualification in this field (healing).

It would seem that everything about this man would have **prevented** him from coming to Jesus.

- A. He was a professional Roman soldier, and Jesus was a Man of peace.
 - B. He was a Gentile, and Jesus was a Jew.
 - C. This centurion understood that Jesus, like himself, has authority.
 - D. But this soldier had one thing working for him: he was a man of great faith.
- According to the Centurion All Christ had to do was speak the word and the disease would obey Him the way a soldier obeyed his officer. It is worth noting that only those who are under authority have the right to exercise authority.

Five qualities of a Good Soldier.

The Apostle Paul writing to Timothy about a good soldier in Chapters 2 and 4 lays down important qualities that demonstrate a good soldier and this may apply for both Military Soldiering and a Soldier of Christ.

I found these as I was researching, the original author of these qualities remain unknown yet I believe this text will encourage and challenge each of us to become the best Christian soldiers that we can be for the glory of the Lord.

I. 1 Timothy 2:3 **HE IS A FOLLOWER**

- A. Implies Relationship (The first step is to sign on.) No one can be a soldier for the Lord until he joins the army. This is done only through receiving Jesus as one's Saviour, John 3:3; Ephesians. 2:8-9; Acts 16:31.
- B. Implies Rank (There is always someone higher than you.) This is true in the Lord's army. Every child of God is under Jesus and is responsible for following Him and His will for their lives, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.
- C. Implies Rule (To refuse to follow orders is treason.) In the Lord's Army, we have the obligation of obeying His orders even unto the death. The call of Christ that has not changed, Matthew 16:24. When we refuse to live as the Lord desires, then we cross the line from follower to traitor, James 4:17.

II. 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 4:7b **HE IS FAITHFUL**

- A. 1 Timothy 2:3 His Patience - Endures hardship and does not quit. The good soldier realizes that there will be troubles along the way and is not deterred by them. He understands that pain is often part of the Christian experience, John 16:33. The Christian faces life with patience, Heb. 12:1.
- B. 1 Timothy 2:4 His Priorities - Seeks to please the Commander. The good soldier has no higher goal than pleasing His Superior. The good soldier knows that anything that interferes with his performance must be eliminated. The good soldier wants to please his Superior and does whatever he has to do to get that job done. Pleasing Jesus ought to be the first priority of every child of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Corinthians 6:20)
- C. 1 Timothy 4:7b His Practice - Guards the truth of the faith. The good soldier takes care of the things delivered unto him. He is determined to do a good job,

and he refuses to do anything to bring disgrace and dishonour upon his Superior (Phillipians 1:27; Colosians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12.)

III. **HE IS FAMILIAR WITH**

A. The Sound of the Commander's Voice - (John 10:3-5) One way to get more familiar with the Lord's voice is to spend more time listening to it. You can do this by getting in the Word. Do you know Him when He speaks?

B. The Skill of Using His Weapons - (Ephesians 6:10-18) The good soldier knows that he is engaged in mortal warfare and that the only way to succeed in the fight is to be proficient in the use of spiritual weaponry. You and I must learn the art of spiritual warfare if we intend to succeed for the glory of the Lord.

C. The Strategy of the Enemy - (2 Corinthians 11:14; 1 Peter 5:8) The good soldier knows the enemy is ever active and never rests. The good soldier knows the enemy is shrewd and ever attacking. He knows the Lord is there to help him, Hebrews 13:5. He knows that God will make a way of escape for him, 1 Corinthians 10:13. The good soldier studies the methods of the enemy and learns the weaknesses; these he exploits to the fullest extent of his ability. The good Christian soldier must be wise to the ways of the devil; he must know that Jesus is greater than any enemy, 1 John 4:4.

D. The Shadows of His Friends - (Hebrews 11:25) The good soldier not only cares about his own welfare, but he also looks out for the welfare of his fellow soldiers, Galatians 6:2. He learns about them by being around them. There is a need for the soldiers of the Lord to train together.

IV. 1 Timothy 4:7 **HE IS A FIGHTER**

A. He Is Determined - The good soldier does not retreat in the face of the enemy, he does not run from a fight. He stands his ground and fights until the battle is over. (1 Timothy 1:19-20)

B. He Is Driven - The good soldier realizes that the battle does not run according to his time frame. He knows that another is in charge of the duration of the battle, but the good soldier is driven to finish. The good soldier is in the battle to the finish. Are you? What would it take to make you quit this morning? Many Christians are about one disaster and one service away from quitting on the Lord. Does that describe you? I challenge you to keep serving and keep fighting!

C. He Is Dedicated - The good soldier dedicates himself to keeping his oath. He is determined to live for the Lord regardless of the personal cost. The good soldier **keeps the faith**, do you? He keeps it by living it, sharing it and defending it all the time. The faith is precious to the good soldier and he does everything in his power to keep it pure and undefiled.

E. 1 Timothy 4:7-8 **HE IS A FINISHER**

A. He Has Resolve -The good soldier is in it for the long haul. He does not quit at the first hint of trouble. He is a finisher. God give us Christians with the attitude of finishers.

B. He Has a Reason -Why does the good soldier endure hardship, stay in the fight, and follow the Leader selflessly? The good soldier knows the price paid by his Superior to make a place for him in the army. The good soldier knows his Lord loves him and that Jesus died to make a way of salvation for him. Therefore, he loves the Lord and no price becomes too high for the good soldier to pay.

C. He Has His Reward - The good soldier finishes his course because he knows that at the end of the war, every deed will be rewarded by the Commander In Chief. For those who stay in the battle, there will come a glad day of blessing. They will here the Lord say, "Well done thou good and faithful servant..." (Matthew 25:21,23) What will be awaiting you when you meet Jesus?

The Military Chaplain and Christian as a Steward of God in the Military.

Many armies world wide in their wisdom have established Corps/Departments/Branches of Ministers of Religion called Chaplains. They are usually uniformed serving officers who are also ordained ministers or priests of a denomination which is prevalent within that country's armed forces. They are responsible for the spiritual well-being of their congregation--uniformed soldiers and their families and community. They are Clergy men and women called to serve troops both officers and men in combat uniform and are seconded into the military by their denominations. The chaplain play vital roles in the military and they give valuable ministry to all troops and their dependants. Some of the key roles the Chaplain plays are that He/She is a Counsellor, a Pastor, a Teacher, a Healer and often provide the ministry of presence to troops. Let me discuss a few of these roles.

The Chaplain as a Counsellor

The Chaplain is a parent, to whom troops both officers and men can turn to and share their problems. Counselling is a relationship and interaction between a counsellor and a person with some problems. It is helping individuals come to terms with their lives and make decisions for themselves. More so, it is a process of assisting people to discover their own inner strength, potentials, energy and wisdom in order to cope with the problems of life. The counselee, not the counsellor has the solution.

The Chaplain Provides Pastoral Care and Professional Identity to troops.

The role of the Chaplain is that of being a Pastor and based upon pastoral identity. In the Military the Chaplain is referred to as 'Padre' which means 'father'. Their detailed knowledge of family and community helps them give valuable advice to commanding officers, while preserving the confidence of soldiers. The Chaplain's authority is derived from their spiritual base. Historically, the four functions of Christian pastoral care have been healing, guiding, sustaining and reconciling. These are amply demonstrated by the Military Chaplain in his service.

The Chaplain provides a Ministry of Presence

The Chaplain provides a soldier a shoulder to lean on and cry upon in times of intense pressures of military life and service. This is a type of ministry that can be effective without being infective to the people outside the Church environment. The place to get to know and understand the soldier is not in the Church walls or barrack room but rather in the operational theatre and at the troop's social times.

Summary of Christian Chaplaincy and Steward.

A. Chaplains' Primary Role: Health of the Flock Like their civilian counterparts, military chaplains do far more than hold services once a week. When a unit prepares for peacekeeping, chaplains are involved in the screening process to determine the suitability of individual soldiers for deployment. When a unit deploys, it may take one or two chaplains with it, while others remain at the home station, responsible for the military community and families. Chaplaincy ministry is therefore a unique ministry. It is a prestigious ministry, a ministry of presence, counselling, teaching, pasturing, guidance and directing. The ministry is a call more than an appointment. The Chaplain is answerable to the Creator more than anyone else as a steward. In wartime or during peace support operation the chaplain may be given other ministry related responsibilities such as functioning as an intermediary between locals and the command on matters that may be religious, or as a spokesperson to foster awareness about indigenous concerns, issues, or attitudes. During these peacekeeping missions, Chaplains take on a special role. First, their duties are more demanding because the soldiers are subject to the stress of operations. Second, they have a special calling to help people toward peace and reconciliation.

B. Chaplains' Secondary Role: Inter-Communal Reconciliation.

Chaplains have a unique opportunity, as well as a calling, to bring communities together and help with post-conflict reconciliation. The opportunity arises through their relatively free movement across dividing lines, and their contact with locals in order to set up the sort of relief and community work. Often, their first local contacts will be with clergymen. This is more than a professional courtesy. Clergy have a common background and training, in much the same way as military officers or doctors. They often understand each other, even when common language may be limited. Because they seek for groups and well-disposed leaders on each side, they are well placed to identify opportunities for each community to accept overtures from, or make overtures to, the other side. While the primary role of military chaplains is to minister to the troops, as this study powerfully illustrates, chaplains can do much to not only mediate conflict on the ground but also help win the hearts and minds of local populations in support of their military commander's operational objectives and post conflict stability operations throughout the world. It is important to not that when there

is no chaplain in deployment or operations commanders always calls upon a military Christian to fill in those ministry gaps. Therefore the military Christian is a vital asset in the ministry of the gospel to the troops.

Conclusion

We can safely conclude that a Military Christian and Chaplain can be both a good Christian and a good Christian. Their offices and functions do not conflict one with the other but can be complimentary as a good Christian we observed that he is saved and serves his commanders with greater integrity and diligence as unto the lord. The Military Christian therefore can be a powerful witness and steward in service. He should take every opportunity to spread the gospel of our lord Jesus Christ to men and women serving in military uniform. As a good soldier He Is Dedicated as he dedicates himself to keeping his oath. He is determined to live for the Lord regardless of the personal cost. The challenge is The good soldier keeps the faith, do you? He keeps it by living it, sharing it and defending it all the time. Are you a good soldier of the Lord? If you are like me, you probably recognize areas where you could be a better soldier. I challenge you to come to the Lord right now and let Him make things as they should be. If you have never joined the army of the Lord, then today would be a good time to make that a reality. When you pass from the scene, will it be said that you were a good soldier of the Lord and a good Christian? That is up to you!