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CONCORDIA SEMINARY

MILITARY IMAGERY IN PREACHING:
AN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF NURTURING A LUTHERAN IDENTITY
IN THE MILITARY

A MAJOR APPLIED PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY FACULTY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

MARK G. STEINER

WASHINGTON, DC

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DEDICATION

In memory of Gilbert Steiner and in honor of Bernice Steiner.

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ABSTRACT

This major applied project consisted of two parts: a research component addressing the theoretical application of military imagery in preaching to a Lutheran military audience and an evaluative process, which tested the application of military imagery in preaching. The theoretical component, based upon the contributions of literature on cross cultural studies, leadership, strategic planning, rhetoric, and homiletics, recommended a homiletical strategy for preaching military imagery. The evaluative component validated the application of military imagery in preaching and recommended a strategy for promoting organic unity of military imagery with the other elements of the worship service.

CHAPTER 1

CONTEXT OF PREACHING MINISTRY

Since 1988, I have served as a Navy chaplain. The Army, Navy and Air Force each maintain their own corps of chaplains. The military chaplaincy of the United States Armed Forces, which traces its origin to 1775, exists to ensure the free exercise of religion for men and women in the military in accordance with the 1st Amendment of the Constitution, U.S. Code, Title 10, Geneva Convention Protocols, and a series of Department of Defense Directives. The Navy Chaplain Corps delivers religious ministry to members of the Navy, Marines, Coast Guard and Merchant Marines. As of April 30, 2002, Active Duty strength for the Navy was 381,901 (53,972 Officers and 323,745 Enlisted), Marine Corps was 172,741 (18,393 Officers and 154,348 Enlisted), Coast Guard was 36,914 (6,931 Officers and 29,138 Enlisted).¹ Data for the Merchant Service fluctuates frequently since personnel strength is based upon operational requirements.

The title and function of chaplain is not unique to the American military. Some have identified the Legend of St. Martin of Tours as the origin of the word chaplain. St. Martin of Tours (circa 316-397), served for a time in the military. According to Sulpitius Severus, Martin the soldier happened to meet a beggar on a frigid evening. Moved with

¹Department of Defense, "Active Duty," *Defense Almanac 2002*, 17 Oct. 2002
<<http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/almanac/people/activityduty.html>>

compassion, Martin took his own cloak, cut it in two with his sword, and gave half to the destitute man. While Martin slept the following night, he had a vision of Christ clothed in the part of the cloak he gave to the beggar. Martin heard Christ say, "Martin, who is still but a catechumen, clothed me with this robe." After he awoke, he resolved to be baptized. Later, he left military service to serve the Lord.² The Legend of St. Martin expanded to include the practice of the French monarchy entrusting an individual to guard the cloak or *chape* of St. Martin, which accompanied the army into battle. Subsequently, a variant, *capellanus*, was applied to the custodian of the cloak and is considered to be the etymology of the word chaplain.³ Even if one were to question the etymology of the word chaplain as directly associated with the Legend of St. Martin, attestation from as early as the 4th century indicates the chaplain fulfilled the function of a spiritual advisor in the military.⁴

While the title and function of chaplain seems to have a Christian heritage, the exercise of religion or ritual prevailed in the military. The Roman Legions elevated religion to a force that shaped the attitudes and behavior of Roman soldiers. Religion engendered discipline and inspiration. Through festivals, ceremonies, cultic monuments, and oaths, religion introduced a system of transformation among the soldiers to inculcate

²*A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series*, s.v. Sulpitius Severus, "Life of St. Martin," trans. Alexander Roberts, New York, 1894, 4 Oct. 2002 <<http://www.users.scbsju.edu/~eknuth/npnf2-11/sulpitii/lifeofst.html>>

³*Encyclopedia Americana*, 1962 s.v. "Chaplain, Chapel & St. Martin of Tours."

⁴ Israel Drazin and Cecil B. Currey, *For God and Country: The History of a Constitutional Challenge to the Army Chaplaincy* (Hoboken, N.J.: KTAV Publishing House, 1995), 4.

solidarity. Troops venerated the battle standard believing it would guarantee the success of the legion. The shrine occupied the central position in military camps; the soldier's oath, known as the *Sacramentum*, infused military service with sacred status.⁵ The priests, who served the Roman Imperial Army, officiated at sacrifices and ceremonies. A scene on Trajan's Column depicts "a long procession with the animals, in appropriate order, winding its way round the fort towards the altar, where the veiled priest stands with the horn players, ready to sound the fanfare which scared away the evil spirits, and the *victimarii* in the rear with their traditional axes for killing sacrificial animals."⁶

Some have identified George Washington as the catalyst in securing religious services for military personnel on American soil. On September 23, 1756, Colonel George Washington addressed a letter to Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia requesting the appointment of a chaplain for his regiment. Basing his request on the moral condition of the troops under his command, Washington made his plea for a chaplain. When his letter to Governor Dinwiddie failed to secure the desired appointment of a chaplain, Washington addressed a letter to the president of the Virginia Council on April 17, 1758. In his letter, Washington stated the need for divine services to be held in the camp.⁷ "George Washington issued the first call for ministers during the Revolutionary War. Clergymen were contracted for six months to one year's service on the same basis as

⁵*RedRampant.com: A History of the Roman Legions and Other Ancients*, "Importance of Religion in the Roman Army," 18 Oct. 2002 <<http://www.redrampant.com/roma//religio.html>>

⁶Graham Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army of the First and Second Centuries* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 120.

⁷Albert G. Huegli, *Church and State Under God* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 367.

surgeons of the day. Although no actual commissions were given, chaplains assigned to a year's service were ranked as majors."⁸ Washington's persistence in securing chaplains for the military became a reality when the Continental Congress declared military chaplaincy a legal entity on July 29, 1775. The Navy codified the provision for divine services with its adoption of the second article On November 28, 1775. "The commanders of the ships of the Thirteen United Colonies, are to take care that divine service be performed twice a day on board, and a sermon preached on Sundays, unless bad weather or other extraordinary accidents prevent."⁹

Chaplains of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) enjoy a solid platform from which to preach the Gospel persuasively. The history of Lutheran chaplains in military service testifies to the resolve of the LCMS to minister to the men and women in uniform. Although the first LCMS chaplain was Reverend Friedrich W. Richmann, who served during the Civil War, the LCMS did not officially organize to endorse military chaplains until 1917 for World War I. In fact, due to their Germanic heritage, the first LCMS chaplains to serve in World War I were suspected of collaborating with the enemy. Consequently, American intelligence operatives censored their mail and kept them under close observation. These suspicions were eventually overcome through the superior performance of LCMS chaplains in the execution of their duties.¹⁰

⁸Dale E. Griffin, "A History of the Missouri Synod's Participation in the Military Chaplaincy," Part I, *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, 72 (Winter 1999): 251.

⁹Huegli, 369.

¹⁰M. S. Ernstmeier, ed., *They Shall Not March Alone* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing, 1990), 15ff.

The LCMS's administrative structure for certifying pastors to represent the Church as chaplains is the Ministry to the Armed Forces (MAF). MAF operates under the auspices of the Board for Mission Services. As stated in the *LCMS Chaplain Guidelines*, the *raison d'être* for endorsing pastors to serve in the Armed Forces as chaplains “is to proclaim the Gospel, administer the Sacraments, and provide the spiritual ministrations service personnel need.”¹¹ MAF's current Active Duty Inventory of chaplains is as follows: 13 Air Force, 30 Army, and 39 Navy. The Reservist Inventory of chaplains not serving on active duty is as follows: 21 Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard, 59 Army Reserve and Army National Guard, and 31 Navy Reserve.¹²

During my years of chaplain service, the context of my preaching ministry comprises three distinct, yet related, worship gatherings. I have conducted Lutheran worship services on military installations for an audience consisting primarily of active duty military members and their families. I have preached to an exclusively military audience, on ships and in the field, while deployed with Sailors and Marines. Congregations adjacent to military installations have invited me to preach on national observances. Ordinarily, these congregations include members with at least some familiarity with the military.

As a result of this threefold context of ministry, I have discovered that the judicious application of military imagery in preaching serves as an effective means of nurturing a Lutheran identity in the military environment. I shall incorporate a

¹¹Ministry to the Armed Forces, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *LC—MS Chaplain Guidelines*, (1999), 7.

¹²Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Annual 2002* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2001), 359.

multidisciplinary approach in validating my thesis. The findings from cross-cultural studies have shaped my perception of the military as culture of subcultures with a unique history, language, and traditions. Military literature and the art of rhetoric lend credibility to the use of military imagery as a persuasive resource in communication. The literature of leadership and strategic planning challenge the preacher to engage in a deliberative planning process for worship spanning the Church Year. Scripture contains references to warfare and military life. Martin Luther engendered a Lutheran legacy of invoking military imagery in his commentaries, sermons, hymns, and catechism. An assessment of contemporary homiletical challenges suggests a vital role for the language of warfare to punctuate the theme of spiritual warfare and emphasize specific doctrines. This project, culminating in a homiletical strategy has undergone an evaluative process and will be discussed in chapters 9 and 10.

Some could argue that ministering within the context of the military risks prostituting the Gospel into an instrument exploited by the state. One could further argue that designing a preaching model specifically for the military *de facto* places the blessing of the Church upon every military action undertaken by the government. Such arguments are valid and worthy of Scriptural scrutiny. While it is beyond the scope of this project to consider the Scriptural and Confessional underpinnings of Lutherans serving in the military, I recognize that some Christians for reasons of conscience may object to military service and participation in a state-sponsored chaplaincy program. Lutheran theologians and the Lutheran Confessions addressed matters of conscience pertaining to the relationship between the Church and State.

Herman Sasse stated, "Again and again men have been forced to acknowledge that there finally is no answer, valid for all time, to the question of the correct relationship of state and church."¹³ Sasse maintained the church and state are served best and blest when we preserve, "the basic principle which the Lutheran Reformation once learned from Holy Scriptures and proclaimed to the world--that the divine orders of the state and the church are not to be mixed or confounded."¹⁴ Sasse's conviction was based upon Articles XVI and XXVIII of the *Augustana*. Article XVI, asserting the distinction between the political kingdom of the state and Christ's kingdom of the church, stated that a Christian might legitimately engage in just wars and render military service.¹⁵ Article XXVIII of the *Augustana* stated, "On this account our teachers have been compelled, for the sake of comforting consciences, to point out the difference between spiritual and temporal power, sword, and authority, and they have taught that because of God's command both authorities and powers are to be honored and esteemed with all reverence as the two highest gifts of God on earth."¹⁶ By focussing on the Lutheran military audience, this project follows the *Augustana* in maintaining the distinction between the state and the church, while acknowledging the criticality of a Word and Sacrament presence for Lutherans serving the military.

¹³Herman Sasse, *The Lonely Way: Selected Essays and Letters*, vol. 1, trans. Matthew C. Harrison, et alii (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2001), 175.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 241.

¹⁵Theodore G. Tappert, trans. and ed., *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1959), 37.1

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 81.4.

The use of military imagery in Christian preaching is not new. The relationship between the state and church received further scrutiny as the church began to appropriate the language of the state, specifically, the language of the military, to the church. Adolf Harnack in *Militia Christi* considered the application of military organization to the life of the Church. Harnack posed the question, "Has the church, occasionally or continuously, adopted military organization (in a transferred sense) and disciplined its believers, or a part of them, as soldiers of Christ?"¹⁷ Lest the tension in the early Church regarding participation in the military be construed as a polarity of hawks versus doves, Harnack suggested the opposition to military service was based upon the perceptions of military life.

In what follows we shall concern ourselves with the concrete relationship to the military profession and the judgments made about it. What was offensive to the early Christians about this profession can be briefly summarized: (1) it was a warrior's profession, and Christianity on principle rejected war and the shedding of blood; (2) the officers, under given circumstances, had to pass the sentence of death, and the soldiers in the ranks had to carry out everything they were ordered to do; (3) the unconditional oath required of the soldier was in conflict with the unconditional obligation to God; (4) the cult of the emperor was at its strongest in the army and was hardly unavoidable for each individual soldier; (5) the officers had to offer sacrifices, and the regular soldiers had to take part; (6) the military standards appeared to be heathen *sacra*; to reverence them was hence idolatry (in the same way, military decorations--wreaths and so forth--seemed idolatrous); (7) the conduct of soldiers in peacetime (their extortions, loose morals, and so forth) conflicted with the Christian ethic; (8) the traditional rough games and jokes in the army, for example, the *mimus*, were offensive in themselves and were connected in part with the service of idols and the festivals of gods.¹⁸

¹⁷Adolf Harnack, *Militia Christi: The Christian Religion and the Military in the First Three Centuries*, trans. David McInnes Gracie (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1981), 26.

¹⁸Harnack, 65.

In view of the aforementioned negative perception of the military, Harnack noted the irony of Tertullian and Origen, two Church fathers opposed to military service, unabashedly appropriating the language of the military for their writings. Tertullian, in *An Exhortation to Chastity*, stated, "Are not we Christians also soldiers? Yes, and subject to a stricter discipline because soldiers of so great a Leader?"¹⁹ Origen, in *Contra Celsus*, countering the assertion of Celsus that Christians should wage war on behalf of the king, stated, "We do not indeed fight under him, although he require it; but we fight on his behalf, forming a special army--an army of piety--by offering our prayers to God."²⁰

Ignatius and Clement regarded all Christians as soldiers of God. Both Ignatius and Clement interspersed military technical terms in their writings. Clement presented the military organization with its discipline as a model for Christian life. Harnack concluded the *miles Christi* or soldier of Christ appellation for Christians flourished despite opposition to military service and the potential for stirring up fanaticism with warlike devotional literature.²¹

The tension regarding military service notwithstanding, a common thread runs from Scripture throughout the life of the Church. Christian writers have espoused the language of military life to proclaim the Word of God. The undergirding theme of this major applied project is that the language of military life can be deliberately aligned with

¹⁹Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plumpe, ed., *Ancient Christian Writers*, no. 13 (New York, NY: Newman Press, 1951) "Tertullian," s.v. "An Exhortation to Chastity," trans. William P. Le Saint, 60.

²⁰*New Advent: The Fathers of the Church*, "Origen," s.v. "Contra Celsus," Book VIII, Chapter LXXIII, 12 December 2002 <<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/04168.htm>>

²¹Harnack, 27.

specific seasonal and national observances to explicate the appointed sermon text and highlight a specific doctrine. The deliberate alignment of military imagery with observances to proclaim the Gospel and illustrate Biblical truths presents an effective strategy for reaching a population, removed from its familial and spiritual moorings. In this sense, Walter Brueggemann's application of the metaphor of exile to contemporary Christians²² can be applied to Christians serving the military. To reach the exiles, Brueggemann encouraged the preacher to assume a new posture for preaching--"an exile addressing exiles."²³ Rather than surrendering Lutheran military members to a spiritual void, the challenge for the Lutheran chaplain is to understand the exilic culture of his listeners and design a strategy to engage them where they live and work.

In summary, the LCMS endorses military chaplains to provide a Word and Sacrament ministry for Lutheran military men and women. My threefold context of preaching ministry lends itself to a multidisciplinary approach in considering the effectiveness of military imagery for the military context. To gain a deeper appreciation for the military context, the following section will examine the contribution of cross-cultural studies in providing valuable insight into the military as culture of sub-cultures.

²²Walter Brueggemann, *Cadences of Home* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 11f.

²³Ibid., 3.

CHAPTER 2

THE CULTURAL CHALLENGE

The United States military consists properly of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines. These four branches of service are organizationally placed within the Department of Defense. Prior to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the United States Coast Guard was organizationally placed within the Department of Transportation and shifted to the Department of Defense in support of military operations. Each of the branches of service has a unique culture with highly specialized sub-cultures. The Army, known as the senior Service, traces its origin to the birth of the Continental Army on June 14, 1775. The Army changed its well-known motto of “Be all you can be” to “An Army of one.” The Army changed its motto in an attempt to reach the perceived interests of its target population.²⁴

The Navy claims as its birthday October 13, 1775, the beginning of the Continental Navy. From its humble beginning with two ships, the Navy has grown to a fighting force of 318 ships with 380,774 personnel.²⁵ One of the Navy’s familiar mottoes was, “Join the Navy—See the World!” Through its projection of power, the Navy

²⁴United States Army, 24 Jan. 2002 <<http://www.army.mil/armyseals.htm>>

²⁵United States Navy, 24 Jan. 2002 <<http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq31-1.htm>>

contributes to national interests by ensuring the sea remains open to maintain and expand commerce.

While the Marine Corps is considered a branch of Service, it does not have its own Department. The Marine Corps is placed within the Department of the Navy. Like the Army and Navy, the year of its inception was 1775 on Martin Luther's birthday—November 10. Certain phrases are synonymous with the Marines: "The Few. The Proud." "Semper Fidelis." "Once a Marine—Always a Marine."²⁶ The often-turbulent relationship between the Navy and Marine Corps was consummated while fighting the Barbary pirates.²⁷

The Air Force is the youngest of the branches of Service. Its birthday is September 18, 1947, but its identity cannot be discussed independent of the Army, where it began as the Army Air Corps.²⁸ The Air Force became an independent air arm and was elevated to a Service with its own Department. The Air Force, with its air superiority, prides itself on being the "first line of defense" in a post-war world.²⁹

The Coast Guard has a rich legacy of life-saving and law enforcement. The motto, *semper paratus* or Always Prepared, symbolizes the Coast Guard's spirit of vigilance in keeping the nation's waterways safe. It traces its origin through the Revenue Cutter Service, which began on August 4, 1790. Prior to the terrorist attacks of 11

²⁶United States Marine Corps, 24 Jan. 2002 <<http://www.usmc.mil/>>

²⁷A. B. C. Whipple, *To the Shores of Tripoli* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 282.

²⁸United States Air Force, 24 Jan. 2002 <www.af.mil/lib/misc/afintromay01.pdf>

²⁹U. S. Air Force, *The History and Heritage of the United States Air Force*, 12 Dec. 2002 <http://www.af.mil/history/40s/milestones/sept_17.shtml>

September 2001, the Coast Guard dedicated much of its assets toward drug interdiction and warned that it would be forced to decrease its maritime life saving service by twenty-five percent.³⁰

The branches of Service, inclusive of the United States Coast Guard, are the custodians of Service specific cultures and myriad sub-cultures. Cross cultural literature presents an effective frame of reference for examining the culture of the military. For example, Paul G. Hiebert advocated a three dimensional approach in studying cultures: cognitive, affective, and evaluative.³¹ Hiebert's model could be applied to the military and its respective sub-cultures. Applying the cognitive dimension to the military provides a frame of reference to understand assumptions and beliefs the military inculcates. Unarguably, the military is a warrior culture. It is through the lens of the warrior (i.e., soldier, sailor, airmen, marine or coast guardsmen) that military members perceive reality. Training commands or "boot camps," service academies and officer candidate schools indoctrinate the students with regard to the military culture. The affective dimension receives ongoing attention through various types of on-the-job training events. All of the branches of Service have unique procedures, traditions, and customs. Military members are taught how to "check their emotions at the door" and address each other according to rank. The military encourages members to channel their feelings of aggression toward controlled outlets as military exercises and physical fitness. The evaluative dimension plays a pivotal role in the military. All military members

³⁰United States Coast Guard, (24 January 2002).

³¹Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1985), 30ff.

receive periodic performance evaluations, which consider loyalty, respect, military discipline, and core values. Along with the performance evaluations, each military member is held accountable to the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

The military culture and its underlying assumptions circumscribe the worldview for the men and women in uniform. The military culture offers its members a coherent perception of the world—the cognitive foundation upon which to explain and respond to world events. Military members may realize a sense of emotional security because they are members of a large organization. They are issued identification cards, dog tags, and uniforms. The military worldview validates deep cultural norms, serving as a moral compass. The respective worldviews of the branches of Service reinforce a sense of integration providing the stimulus for Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen to develop a unified view of reality and solid convictions. Finally, the constancy of the military worldview assists military members in monitoring cultural change. Military members continue to live in society but must calibrate their participation in society with their oath of service.³²

While the military uniform, by definition, instills a sense of uniformity among service members, the rank and insignia indicate diverse strata within the military culture. According to Hiebert, complex societies have cultural frames or social settings with their own subcultures. This is particularly true of the various branches of Service. Some of these subcultures are readily apparent. For example, the officer community and enlisted community observe a prescribed pattern of interaction. Yet, there are several professional officer communities and many military occupational specialty ratings for

³²Ibid., 48ff.

enlisted personnel. For example, the Naval officer community includes but is not limited to surface officers, submarine officers, pilots, doctors, dentists, nurses, chaplains, and lawyers. The enlisted occupational specialties run the gamut from highly technical ratings to administrative and logistical ratings. From the sailors who repair and maintain helicopters to the sailors who operate the administration office, each rating employs its own language and standard operating procedures.

David J. Hesselgrave argued persuasively for missionaries to engage in interdisciplinary studies in order to enhance the means of proclaiming the Gospel cross-culturally. Hesselgrave's endorsement of an interdisciplinary approach to the proclamation of the Gospel offers Lutheran chaplains a valuable tool in ministering to the men and women of the military. Linguistics, anthropology and comparative religions offer chaplains rare insight into the unique backgrounds of individual military members and the military cultures they serve.³³

Unarguably, the military is multicultural. Many ethnic groups are represented in the military branches of service. Moreover, certain branches of service have a higher percentage of specific ethnic groups. From 1947 to 1992 the Navy actively recruited Filipinos. Hispanics make up 12.4% of the Marine Corps and African Americans make up 26.4% of the Army. In addition to the ethnic dimension, chaplains operate in a culture sometimes polarized over the gender dimension. Women serve in all branches of service and at the highest levels of leadership.³⁴ Consequently, chaplains will study the various

³³David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*, 2d ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1991), 38.

³⁴Department of Defense, *Defense Almanac 2002*, 13 Dec. 2002 <<http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/almanac/>>

dimensions of culture to appreciate not just what people think, but how they conceptualize and articulate their thoughts. Culture in the broad sense includes psychosocial, political, economic, and racial issues. Observing the military culture from an interdisciplinary perspective enables chaplains to engage in a rational process that will assist them to function more effectively in the culture of subcultures.³⁵

Hesselgrave's discussion of the subtleties of language is also true of the military. The military has its own jargon and frequently uses acronyms and colloquialisms: "Good to go," "I have to make a head call," and "I briefed the CO regarding the IG at PB4T." "Good to go" means everything is ready or mission capable. "I have to make a head call" means I am going to the restroom. "I briefed the CO regarding the IG at PB4T" means I gave the commanding officer a status report on the Inspector General investigation at the Planning Board for Training. Chaplains must familiarize themselves with service specific jargon and acronyms to minister effectively within the military milieu. Additionally, the dynamic of personal language or "idiolect" contributes exponentially to the complexities of communication. It is common for military members of the same ethnic background to revert to their own dialect when talking among themselves.³⁶

Learning a language entails much more than learning words. When a chaplain invests the time and energy into learning the receptor's language, the message is sent to the people that the chaplain cares enough about them to learn the language, customs and nuances of the local dialect. Sometimes learning the language includes learning the characteristic grunts uttered by each branch of service. Whether it is the "Oorah" grunt of

³⁵Hesselgrave, *Ibid.*, 99ff.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 345ff.

the Marines or the "HUA" grunt of the Army, chaplains attempt to understand the cultural dialects of the people they serve.³⁷

Employing military vocabulary and life to illustrate Scriptural truths generates a common ground and frame of reference for the listeners. One could argue that only the military personnel themselves would understand military imagery. My experience suggests the contrary. Strangely enough, military spouses and children are familiar with the jargon of the military. For example, I have often heard military spouses and children use military phrases: "good to go," "squared away," and "pull up chinks." Since family members are transferred from one place to another, military imagery in preaching tends to affirm the experience of family members.

William A. Dyrness in an essay, "Vernacular Theology," suggested that elaborating a theological framework from the community's point of view will help the preacher "discover ways in which Scripture or parts of the tradition are used in ways suited to the people's needs."³⁸ Paul R. Satari corroborated this theological framework with his emphasis on the translatability of the Christian message. Satari stated, "translatability denies that any culture is profane by asserting the legitimacy of instrumentalizing the gospel in the vernacular, that is, in ordinary, everyday life and speech."³⁹ The translatability of the Gospel recommends a cultural precedent for establishing a connection with the military culture by introducing the Gospel message

³⁷Ibid., 367ff.

³⁸George R. Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder, ed., *The Church Between Gospel & Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 268.

³⁹Ibid., 276.

with the language of the military. Employing the language of the military to present the Gospel to military personnel affirms their cultural context and accentuates the apostolic role of pastor in challenging the congregation to be shaped by the Gospel.⁴⁰

Addressing the challenges to the proclamation of the Gospel in America, A. R. Victor Raj's analyzed the resurgence of Hinduism in the guise of the New Age movement. Raj stated that Hinduism, through the New Age movement, has attracted many followers in the America. The language of the New Age movement has exerted a decisive influence on American society.⁴¹ It is not uncommon to hear the words, *karma*, *reincarnation* and *nirvana* in America. Some would argue that the mere use of words associated with Hinduism does not necessarily connote religious adherence.⁴² However, the promise of transcendence offered by reincarnation and *nirvana* are particularly seductive features in the military, where service members face the prospect of death by violent means. The influence of the New Age movement is just one of the many challenges confronted by Lutheran Chaplains in the military as they proclaim the Gospel. The operative question of what terms to employ in the proclamation of the Gospel must be carefully considered. As Raj stated, "care must be taken not to lose and let go of the distinction of the Christian message."⁴³

⁴⁰Ibid.,326ff.

⁴¹A. R. Victor Raj. *The Hindu Connection: Roots of the New Age* (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1995), 113ff.

⁴²Ibid., 53ff.

⁴³Ibid., 137.

A veritable artillery barrage of conflicting spiritual messages confronts service members. A phalanx of spiritual solicitors wait eagerly just outside the gates of military training commands attempting to capture the attention of any newly graduated recruit, who is willing to listen to their message. The proliferation of spiritual messages should incite an intensified zeal from both the clergy and laity of our Church to nurture a distinctively Lutheran identity among Lutherans serving in the military. Underscoring the distinctiveness of Lutheran spirituality from other spiritual perspectives, Gene Edward Veith, Jr., explained, "Lutheran spirituality is embodied, expressed tangibly, in Lutheran worship. . . A Lutheran sermon is never a moralistic pep talk, nor a meditation on current events or pop psychology, but the proclamation of both Law and Gospel, drawn from the appointed text of Scripture."⁴⁴

In summary, the military, a culture of subcultures, has its own language, traditions, and customs. Cross cultural research supports using the language of the military for the people of the military. Military imagery can serve as a means of connecting with the men and women of the military culture. Furthermore, the distinctiveness of the Christian message need not be sacrificed in using military language and imagery to preach in the military setting. Military imagery, if used discriminately, represents a persuasive means of communicating the sermon text. Nevertheless, ancient rhetoricians understood the persuasive, and sometimes deceptive, influence of oral communication. The next chapter will consider the suitability of military imagery from a rhetorical perspective.

⁴⁴Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *The Spirituality of the Cross* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 108ff.

CHAPTER 3

A RHETORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The art of rhetoric, with its emphasis on persuasive influence, leads one to gain a deeper sense of appreciation for the literature of war as a means of teaching Scriptural truths. Both the Chief of Naval Operations and Commandant of the Marine Corps endorse professional reading lists for the Navy⁴⁵ and Marine Corps,⁴⁶ respectively. The reading lists for the Navy and Marines include fiction and non-fiction works on topics ranging from strategy and tactics in war to leadership and diplomacy. Some of the books have inspired cinematic films and television series. The purpose of the reading lists is to encourage professional development and leadership skills among enlisted personnel and officers. One book that appears on both the Navy and Marine lists is *On War* by Carl von Clausewitz.

After the American debacle in Vietnam, U.S. military and civilian political leaders recognized the need for training military officers to understand the connection between political and military affairs. The result was the introduction of Carl von Clausewitz's seminal work, *On War*, into the curriculum of the Naval War College. Clausewitz, having observed the success of Napoleon, explained that for a nation to wage

⁴⁵Chief of Naval Education and Training, *Navy Professional Reading List*, 10 Jan. 2002 <http://cnet.navy.mil/cnet/nlpg2002/monthly/naval_reading.pdf>

⁴⁶Chief of Naval Education and Training, *U. S. Marine Reading List*, 10 Jan. 2002 <http://cnet.navy.mil/cnet/nlpg2002/monthly/mc_reading.pdf>

war successfully, there must be a unified effort among the populace, military and government.⁴⁷ The unity of effort espoused by Clauswitz can be applied to preaching. For example, as a unity of effort exists in and around the Word of God, the entire congregation moves forward, led by Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and blessed by the Heavenly Father.

Military slogans, as will be addressed in the chapter on a Lutheran Legacy, can and have been effectively used by Lutheran preachers in the proclamation of the Gospel. Through Marine Corps recruitment commercials, many are familiar with Marine Corps mottos: “The Few- The Proud-The Marines” “Semper Fidelis” “911 Force” “The Tip of the Spear” and “Esprit de Corps.” A less familiar motto but nonetheless poignant is, “Every Marine a Rifleman.” This motto, indelibly etched on the ethos of the Marine Corps, generates the image of an alert expeditionary force, marching in formation behind the unit guidon to a cadence.⁴⁸ Friend and foe of the Marines all agree that the United States Marine Corps is the force of choice for situations demanding an urgent military response.

Applying the image of the Marine Corps as a force in readiness could be an effective means of underscoring the theme of spiritual readiness with a tone of urgency. Can it be said that Christians maintain a high alert status?⁴⁹ Do Christians have a fire in their belly for proclaiming the Good News of salvation? Do our Christian leaders

⁴⁷Carl Von Clauswitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), 89.

⁴⁸United States Marine Corps, *Leading Marines* (Headquarters United States Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 1995), 14.

promote a high alert posture and model a sense of urgency for the Lord's work?⁵⁰ The Gospel according to St. Mark presents a graphic description of the end times and sense of urgency the Lord would direct us to adopt, "But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. And the gospel must first be published among all nations." 13:9-10 KJV.

The immediate military context could furnish a suitable platform from which to launch a series of sermons on spiritual warfare. The White House released a statement entitled, *The Global War on Terrorism: The First 100 Days*. The statement included President Bush's analysis of the attack: "The attack took place on American soil, but it was an attack on the heart and soul of the civilized world. And the world has come together to fight a new and different war, the first, and we hope the only one, of the 21st century. A war against all those who seek to export terror, and a war against those governments that support or shelter them."⁵¹ The war on terrorism, heightened security procedures, and homeland defense dominate the manner in which the military currently plans. Additionally, the war on terrorism is a common theme of conversations in the work place. The United States, an open society, is vulnerable to what military strategists refer to as asymmetric threats. Asymmetric threats are threats, which target vulnerable aspects of the American military or civilian sector. The bombing of the USS Cole with a

⁴⁹John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 35ff.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 42ff.

⁵¹The White House. *The Global War on Terrorism: The First 100 Days*, 25 Jan. 2002 <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/12/100dayreport.html>>

rubber raft filled with explosives, the synchronized attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon are examples of American vulnerability to asymmetric threats. From now on, Nine Eleven will conjure an image similar to that of Pearl Harbor. The nature of security has transformed the United States military and the manner in which we view our homeland security. The attention of the military and civilian leadership changed dramatically since President Bush assumed the Presidency.

Although, exclusively focusing on the sense of urgency risks imperiling the veracity of the message. The prophet Jeremiah reminds us to speak God's Word faithfully (23:28). Lest this verse be interpreted in isolation to support a sterile presentation of the Gospel, Jeremiah described a passion for or internalization of the message in the life of the messenger. "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, or speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." Jer. 20:9 KJV While allowing stylistic devices to monopolize the sermon risks compromising the Scripture text, I would argue that it is possible to reconcile substance and style.

Peggy Noonan, who had written speeches for Presidents Bush and Reagan, offered an analysis of the presidential inaugural speeches presented by Lincoln, Kennedy, and Clinton. Noonan lauded the speeches of Lincoln and Kennedy. In the case of Lincoln, she stated, "His policy was clear: He would work to forestall or avert war, he would fight it if forced. Implicit in his tone was the unstated assertion that if he fought, he would win."⁵² According to Noonan, Kennedy's inaugural address included the rhythmical flow of Lincoln, as well as quotations from Scripture. Most significantly,

⁵²Peggy Noonan, *On Speaking Well* (New York: Regan Books, 1998), 76.

Kennedy's address "was a marriage of style and substance, and has come to set the standard for modern inaugurals."⁵³ In contrast, Noonan critiqued Clinton's second inaugural address as a "cavalcade of clichés." She further stated, "Clinton himself didn't seem to know what he wanted to say in his speech. Perhaps he calculated that if he just said sort of pretty phrases it would sound as if he were communicating big thoughts. . . This is unfortunate, because every inaugural address is an opportunity to locate and define the truth, or a truth, of one's age. Which is, among other things, a public service."⁵⁴

Noonan's analysis of presidential inaugural addresses suggests valuable insights for preaching. Maintaining her analogy of the necessary marriage between substance and style, preachers cannot divorce style in preaching from the substance of the message, namely, the Gospel. "Style enhances substance; it gives substance voice, it makes a message memorable, it makes policy clear and understandable. But it is not itself the message. *Style is not a replacement for substance, and cannot camouflage a lack of substance.*"⁵⁵ With respect to the military context, military imagery belongs to the domain of style. Military imagery in preaching plays a ministerial role in making the substance of Gospel understandable for the military listener.

Noonan's discussion on style and substance is reminiscent of the tension among the ancient Greeks on rhetoric. For example, some have considered Gorgias (circa 480 to 375 B.C.) as devoted more to style than substance. "Gorgias can be regarded as having

⁵³Ibid., 78.

⁵⁴Ibid., 81.

⁵⁵Ibid., 78.

sought to create an elevated oratorical style for formal speech, distinct from conversational language, though at the risk of drawing attention away from what he was saying to how he was saying it."⁵⁶ Gorgias was also known for his emphasis on the arrangement of elements in the speech and the logical argumentation of the speech. With the sophistic strand, he was captivated with the sense of power the orator exerts to accomplish what he desires with the audience.⁵⁷

Isocrates (436 to 338 B.C.) continued to shape the influence of philosophical thought and sophistic rhetoric. Rather than traveling to his students, his students were expected to come to him and remain with him for an extended period. In an apparent response to Plato's distrust of rhetoric, Isocrates accentuated the speaker rather than art of speaking. Arguing that speech is neither inherently good nor inherently evil, Isocrates maintained that individuals are good or bad. "The Isocratean tradition is thought of as emphasizing written rather than spoken discourse, epideictic rather than deliberative or judicial speech, style rather than argument, amplification rather than forcefulness. To this it should be added that the Isocratean tradition in its purest form is a continuation of sophistry and that its main instructional method, like that of the older sophists, was listening to or reading speeches and imitating their invention, arrangement, and style."⁵⁸

In contrast to Gorgias and Isocrates, Plato (circa 429 to 347 B.C.) attacked rhetoric as the tool of deceit and flattery. Some have argued Plato's contempt for rhetoric

⁵⁶George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition*, 2d rev. ed., (Chapel Hill, NC: University of Carolina Press, 1999), 35.

⁵⁷Ibid., 35f.

⁵⁸Ibid., 45.

was directed against those who used rhetoric for nefarious designs.⁵⁹ Plato embraced Socratic thought and further developed Socratic thinking through a series of dialogues. One of his earliest works, the *Apology*, is considered by some to represent the most accurate presentation of Socrates. He denigrated rhetoric in *Gorgias* and presented a philosophical rhetoric in *Phaedrus*.⁶⁰ "The opening lines of the *Apology* make clear not only the premise on which philosophical rhetoric was developed but also the ambivalence of the philosophical orator in regard to conventional rhetoric."⁶¹

Aristotle, born in 384 B.C., opened a school in Athens in a covered walk or *peripatos*. Of Aristotle's surviving works, *Rhetoric* presents rhetoric as a *dynamis*. In this sense, rhetoric connotes potentiality, power, or faculty. According to *Rhetoric*, rhetoric is limited to the civic domain and showcased in judicial, deliberative, and epideictic speeches.⁶² "Rhetoric, rightly understood, is useful, for the audience cannot be expected to come to the right conclusion if the truth is not presented so people can understand it, and there are those whom it is difficult to instruct."⁶³ Since delivery was associated with acting, Aristotle did not consider delivery a dignified subject. Regarding style or choice of words, Aristotle advocated a style appropriate to the subject.⁶⁴

⁵⁹Ibid., 66.

⁶⁰Ibid., 41ff.

⁶¹Ibid., 55.

⁶²Ibid., 81f.

⁶³Ibid., 81.

⁶⁴Ibid., 90.

Substance need not be sacrificed in the pursuit of style. As Noonan suggested, style enhances substance. The judicious application of military imagery will not usurp the preeminent position of the message--the Gospel. Style performs a ministerial function in supporting the substance of the message. Aristotle's view of assuming a style appropriate to the subject seems to be reinforced by Scripture. For example, a tone of urgency often accompanies spiritual warfare imagery in Scripture. When the disciples escorted Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, they fell asleep. Jesus rebuked them, "Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matt. 26:41 KJV Perhaps recalling his own lapse in keeping the watch, Peter warns believers to be vigilant against Satan, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." 1 Pet. 5:8-9 KJV Urgency, in this sense, is not contrived but flows naturally from the text of Scripture.

According to Augustine, "It is the duty, then, of the interpreter and teacher of Holy Scripture the defender of the true faith and the opponent of error, both to teach what is right and to refute what is wrong, and in the performance of this task to conciliate the hostile, to rouse the careless, and to tell the ignorant both what is occurring at present and what is probable in the future."⁶⁵ Applying Augustine's dictum of duty to military chaplaincy, Lutheran chaplains have the duty of teaching the faith to people who are away from their families of origin and home congregations. The probability of death at

⁶⁵Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, Book IV: "The Duty of the Christian Teacher," (8 March 2002).

the hands of an enemy in a foreign country places the member of the Armed Forces in a vulnerable state, both physically and spiritually. The military with its specialized jargon, mode of discipline, and methods of indoctrination offers the Lutheran chaplain valuable resources for incorporating military imagery into preaching. Military imagery can assist the military audience to understand the text of Scripture and the urgency embodied in spiritual warfare texts.

In summary, military imagery is not an end but a means to enrich the sermon. This project recommends the selective, not exclusive, use of military imagery. According to Fred B. Craddock, the language and context of preaching present formidable challenges to the preacher. Craddock observed that unless the preacher maintains a high regard for words, he will fall into a repetitious rut preaching to the same people Sunday after Sunday. As a corrective against monotony in preaching, Craddock suggested various measures or exercises to aid the preacher in keeping language of the sermon fresh.⁶⁶ Implicit in his suggestions is a long-range view of preaching--a view compelling preachers to adopt a strategy. The next chapter will recommend a pastoral strategy that ensures military imagery is selectively applied, maintains a ministerial role vis-à-vis the text of Scripture, and is responsive to the audience. Fidelity to Scripture and sensitivity to the audience should not be considered mutually exclusive. A pastoral strategy, which imitates the life of Christ and maintains fidelity to Scripture, will guide those proclaiming the Gospel in the military milieu.

⁶⁶Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985), 196ff.

CHAPTER 4

A PASTORAL STRATEGY

Aubrey Malphurs, noted for his expertise in church life and renewal, offered the following observations about present-day churches:

The typical church in North America is like a sailboat without a rudder, drifting aimlessly in the ocean. As if that is not bad enough, the winds of change and the currents of postmodernism are relentlessly blowing and pulling the church even farther off course. I believe that the rudder that the church is missing is a good strategic planning process. Without it, the typical sailor—today's pastor—will find it difficult to navigate in any situation.⁶⁷

In my context of ministry, I am literally both sailor and pastor. Malphurs' critique of the church in North America is descriptive of the winds of change blowing in the military. Transience is one of the outstanding characteristics of the military chapel context. Ordinarily, recruits will graduate from Boot Camps after eight to twelve weeks of training and receive follow-on orders. A Navy or Marine deployment typically lasts six months. In the operational climate, units contributing to the sea-air-land triad coalesce to support National interests. If chaplains view the transitory nature of their environment from a defeatist perspective, their energy expended in sermon preparation will wane and an insidious indifference will color the observance of the liturgical seasons. However, if chaplains view their worship context as an opportunity to reach people, who may be at a

⁶⁷Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 9.

heightened level of receptivity for the Gospel, then chaplains will attempt to bring an organic unity to the design of the worship service.

The disciplines of leadership and strategic planning represent valuable resources for those conducting worship in the military setting. Richard Kriegbaum's discussion of what it means to assume leadership in the Church offers a corrective against slipping into worship planning complacency. Kriegbaum reminds leaders in the Church that they "are stewards of God's purposes and resources in human lives and history."⁶⁸ When the pastor or chaplain views his role of conducting worship through the lens of stewardship, worship planning becomes an extension of what it means to give the first fruits of our energy in the proclamation of the Gospel.

In addition to the dimension of stewardship, St. Paul emphasized the pastoral responsibility of equipping the saints. The military places a high premium on training personnel. A military leader would be charged with negligence, and undoubtedly face courts-martial, if he did not properly equip and train the troops under his command. Therefore, St. Paul's instruction to Timothy to exercise diligence in equipping believers for service in the Kingdom of God, "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3:17 KJV The following vignette by Chaplain Herbert C. Albrecht describes the pastoral privilege of equipping recruits and trainees at a Naval Training Command:

Last night 56 young men and 3 WAVES attended my confirmation class at Recruit Training Command Chapel here at Great Lakes, IL. That's not unusual, for each Tuesday and Thursday that many and more assemble for Lutheran religious instruction. I've also been privileged to confirm from 2 to 10 men each Tuesday, after a review session and personal interview. In

⁶⁸Richard Kriegbaum, *Leadership Prayers* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1998), 5.

1951, I confirmed 84 persons and baptized 28. . . When I arrived at Great Lakes in October 1950, I worked with recruits for about two months. I was amazed at their response to the instruction program. I've never before in the navy or anywhere else encountered such a golden opportunity. . . Why do these men want instruction and seek confirmation during their busy basic training? Others might think its "foxhole religion," motivated mostly by fear; but I know that's not true because I've asked the men. Many come from Lutheran families but, for some reason, never finished their instructions for confirmation.⁶⁹

The indoctrination in the faith, described by Chaplain Albrecht, is a poignant reminder of an all too often ignored population of our church--the men and women of the Armed Forces. Since military personnel face constant relocation and the prospect of going into harm's way, they may exhibit an increased interest in their relationship to the Lord. The golden opportunity referred to by Albrecht symbolizes the resolve of the Church to proclaim the Gospel and administer the Sacraments to Lutheran military members through the pastors it has endorsed to serve in the military.

In addition to equipping believers on an individual level, the chaplain operates in a setting conducive to building a sense of community among those attending worship. The book of Acts captures the spirit of what it means to build a community of believers. "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Acts 2:42 KJV Loren B. Mead, founder of the Alban Institute, opined that participation in community offers a safe haven in a chaotic world:

"We need to belong—to be part of a larger world. The need to belong drives us to community, a place where we know we belong. It is also a place where we will be safe—a kind of 'home base' in the world's chaotic game of 'tag.' It is a place where you are valued for what you are in yourself, but also a place that often sees more in you than you see in yourself. All of this is wrapped up in the word *community*, and all of it is a mix of people and places, memories and values. . . the church of the future must become a center within society that feeds and supports the human need for community. The challenge is made more important because of the increasing experience of deprivation of community. The challenge is made

⁶⁹Ernstmeyer, 130ff.

more difficult because of the church's loss of credibility as a source of community in our time."⁷⁰

The chaplain is on the frontlines of building community among a people, who are separated from their families and home congregations. When individuals know they are part of a community of faith, they know that the other members are praying for their spiritual growth, safety and welfare. They also know they are among people who understand the stresses and strains associated with military life.

Robert D. Dale, Director of the Center for Creative Church Leadership Development, regarded Jesus as the "Focused Master Strategist," and challenged Church leaders to consider Christ's strategy for building community.⁷¹ By this designation, Dale meant that Jesus utilized strategies singularly suited to setting a new ministry into motion. According to Dale, Jesus introduced the kingdom of God by:

1. Defining himself.
2. Building a new community.
3. Training apprentices.
4. Selecting times and places for action.
5. Mobilizing his representatives.
6. Modeling love.
7. Focusing on the risks of success.⁷²

⁷⁰Loren B. Mead, *Five Challenges for the Once and Future Church* (Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 1996), 44-50.

⁷¹Robert D. Dale, *Leading Edge* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 23.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 23ff.

Dale's strategic planning model lends itself to a military context of ministry. Military personnel live in a world of uniforms, ranks, protocol, and regulations. For some, their rank defines who they are. But, when the Word of God is proclaimed in the worship service, each individual is reminded of his or her status as a child of God. Additionally, the Word mobilizes the most disparate group of individuals into a communion of believers to expand the kingdom of God in this community. Under the leadership of the chaplain, the members of this community are trained to perform vital roles contributing to the mission as a whole. Rather than using the transience of the military parish as an excuse for not engaging in long-term planning for worship, the chaplain will face the challenge of transience by confidently embracing his role as pastoral leader and equip them for service in the kingdom.

Aubrey Malphurs offers a strategic planning model as a means of assisting pastors to align their ministry efforts with the congregational context. Malphurs' strategic planning model consisted of the following nine steps: Ministry Analysis, Values Discovery, Mission Development, Environmental Scan, Vision Development, Strategy Development, Strategy Implementation, Ministry Contingencies, Ministry Evaluation.⁷³ Applying the Malphurs' model to the military setting could assist the chaplain in posing a series of questions to design a long-range ministry plan for the target audience. For example, every congregation has a unique history and cultural setting. Acknowledging that history and cultural setting answers the question, Where have we been? What can that history tell us about our present and future? Secondly, we take a snapshot of our congregation to determine where we are right now. Our present priorities speak volumes

⁷³Malphurs, 14.

with regard to what we hold near and dear to us. Are those priorities God's priorities or merely our own preoccupations masquerading as God's priorities? Thirdly, as we look toward the future, what do we notice? Finally, having considered the future in light of God's Word, what type of ministry is the Lord unfolding before us? What are the emerging ministry needs in the short term and long term?

American military history is filled with legends of leadership: Washington, Grant, Sherman, Pershing, and Eisenhower. In the military environment, which is characterized by leadership and planning, it would be entirely inconsistent for a chaplain to adopt a haphazard approach to worship. Of course, chaplains define their role as leaders within the context of the servant leadership exemplified by Jesus. Jesus called his disciples with their strengths and weaknesses—just as they were. Their training in servant leadership began the moment Jesus called them. Jesus also named them. In Simon's case, Jesus called him Peter. Jesus made his disciples a team. Jesus tested them. He included them and made them friends. He warned and rebuked them. He restored them and encouraged them. As St. John was in the custom of saying that the disciples received greater understanding after the Resurrection, Jesus made them understand. The goal of leading is to lead others to follow Jesus.⁷⁴

The description of Jesus' ministry in the Gospel according to St. Matthew suggests a conceptual framework for preaching, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease among the people." Matt. 4:23 KJV How would the ministry triad of preaching, teaching, and healing appear if incorporated into worship services designed

⁷⁴George Barna, ed., *Leaders on Leadership* (Venture, CA: Regal 1997), 128.

for military personnel? The element of preaching in our worship would celebrate of Christ's victory over sin, death and the power of the devil. "LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth." Ps. 26:8 KJV Therefore, we shall of necessity plan worship services professing our faith in the Triune God, proclaiming our salvation in Christ, administering the Sacraments, and celebrating our Lutheran heritage. In direct response to the Great Commission Christ has given us in Matt. 28:19-20, preaching would issue an invitation to military members, separated from their families and home congregations, to be a part of a spiritual family made up of displaced individuals. Preaching would emphasize the joy of believing in Christ as our Lord and Savior, "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Luke 15:10 KJV Preaching would punctuate a contagious exuberance for worship, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD." Ps. 122:1 KJV Preaching would mobilize the listeners to witness of their faith. Christ has called us to be fishers of men, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Matt. 4:19 KJV

When the element of teaching is applied to worship, we recall the words of St. Paul to Timothy, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" 2 Tim.3:16 KJV Again, due to the short-lived nature of the relationship between individual military members and their respective Lutheran chaplains, worship reinforces the necessity of life in the Word. Given the pluralistic environment of the military, teaching fortifies Christian military members against false doctrines masquerading as the truth.

In describing his path from atheism to Christian faith, C. S. Lewis unmasked the worldly machinations, which obstruct people from believing in Christ:

My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of *just* and *unjust*? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust? If the whole show was bad and senseless from A to Z, so to speak, why did I, who was supposed to be part of the show, find myself in such violent reaction against it? A man feels wet when he falls into water, because man is not a water animal: a fish would not feel wet. Of course I could have given up my idea of justice by saying it was nothing but a private idea of my own. But if I did that, than my argument against God collapsed too--for the argument depended on saying that the world was really unjust, not simply that it did not happen to please my fancies. Thus in the very act of trying to prove that God did not exist--in other words, that the whole of reality was senseless--I found I was forced to assume that one part of reality--namely my idea of justice--was full of sense. Consequently atheism turns out to be too simple. If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning: just as, if there were no light in the universe and therefore no creatures with eyes, we should never know it was dark. *Dark* would be a word without meaning.⁷⁵

Those entering the chapel to worship depart after the benediction into a world consumed with hatred toward the Christian faith. Having been taught, these spiritual warriors will themselves go into the world and teach.⁷⁶ Just as our Nation's Commander in Chief sends troops into war to defend our National interests, our Church's Commander in Chief, Jesus Christ, sends believers into spiritual war. The teaching element of the worship service demonstrates how the Holy Spirit works through the Word to inoculate the faith of believers against the toxic weapons deployed by the realm of Darkness.

Upon hearing the hope of salvation in the proclamation of the Gospel, the element of healing dominates the tone of the remainder of the worship service. Healing manifests

⁷⁵C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1952), 38f.

⁷⁶C. Gene´Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1998), 189ff.

itself in every endeavor of our congregation to demonstrate care and concern for our members and the community. The Epistle of James linked the collective health of a Christian congregation to its capacity for the soul care of individual members:

Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Jam. 5:13-16 KJV

For deployed military members, in particular, the healing element of worship offers consolation. For the husband and wife separated due to a deployment overseas, the healing promised in the Gospel looks beyond separation to reunion. For the parent, who left son or daughter to go into harm's way, the healing promised in the Gospel builds a bridge of spiritual intimacy over a chasm of isolation.

An oft-neglected dimension of pastoral leadership and worship planning is personal devotion. According to Henri J. Nouwen, the preacher is susceptible to temptations associated with leadership--temptations to be relevant, spectacular and powerful. As an antidote to succumbing to the temptations of being relevant, spectacular, and powerful, Nouwen prevailed upon Christian leaders to devote themselves to prayer, confession and forgiveness, and theological reflection.

Are leaders of the future truly men and women of God, people with an ardent desire to dwell in God's presence, to listen to God's voice, to look at God's beauty, to touch God's incarnate Word and to taste fully God's infinite goodness?⁷⁷ . . . Confession and forgiveness are the concrete forms in which we sinful people love one another.⁷⁸ . . . Just as prayer keeps us connected with

⁷⁷Henri J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1989), 29f.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 46.

the first love and just as confession and forgiveness keep our ministry communal and mutual, so strenuous theological reflection will allow us to discern critically where we are being led.⁷⁹

Daniel exemplified the spiritual disciplines endorsed by Nouwen. Dan. 6:10 recounts how Daniel, early in his life, had established the custom of praying three times a day. Secondly, in Dan. 9:4ff., Daniel prayed a special confessional prayer on behalf of God's people. Thirdly, Belshazzar's statement regarding Daniel's ability to interpret dreams bespeaks Daniel's constancy in spiritual reflection, "I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee." Dan. 5:14 KJV.

Paradoxically, our Lord calls us to be servant leaders. Military chaplains live in this paradoxical world of servant leaders. While military chaplains are endorsed by their respective faith groups, they are commissioned officers with relative rank. The four Evangelists record the manner in which our Messiah lived a life of servant leadership culminating in his sacrificial death on the cross for our sins. The Gospel according to St. John presents a vivid account of Christ performing the task of a servant by washing the disciples' feet. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." John 13:14 KJV. While the foundation of servant leadership is inseparable from prayer, confession and forgiveness, and spiritual reflection, modeling is the manifestation of servant leadership. The servant leader models the mission of the Messiah. "The servant leader will model his mission, model what he teaches, lead while dressed like a servant and acting like a slave, and be able to pass the greatest test of

⁷⁹Ibid., 65.

servant leadership.”⁸⁰ In a culture, where “Rank Has Its Privileges (RHIP),” the Lutheran chaplain will model what it means to be servant leader for members of the Lutheran military congregation.

The event of worship should not be treated in isolation from the chaplain's life and his daily contact with service members. How does the chaplain wear his rank? Is the chaplain more of a line officer than a chaplain? According to Lovett H. Weems, Jr., the message of our words receives the intended meaning only when in harmony with our behavior.⁸¹ Our words and our behavior speak volumes with respect to what we hold near and dear to our heart—the virtues and values born of faith.

Leighton Ford's discussion of vision, values, and ventures, challenges Lutheran military chaplains to remain rooted in the Word and avoid being seduced by privileges associated with military rank. Leighton Ford, stated that our sense of vision (how we see the future) is intimately associated with our values (where our heart is) and our ventures (the action we take to pursue the vision).⁸² Ford offered the following references from Scripture to bring into sharp focus the values congregational leaders will model to reinforce the vision of the congregation:

- Have a heart for God (see Matt. 22:37);
- Love their neighbors and their families (see Matt. 22:39);
- Lead and serve like Jesus (see Mark 10:42-45);
- Be able to communicate the gospel effectively, have passion, thoughtfulness, creativity and integrity (see 2 Cor. 3:5,6);

⁸⁰Wilkes, 169.

⁸¹Lovett H. Weems, Jr., *Church Leadership: Vision, Team, Culture and Integrity* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 112.

⁸²Barna, 133.

- Live humane and holy lives that will make the gospel attractive (see 1 Tim. 4:12; Matt. 5:16);
- Be aware of their world and alert to their generation (see Acts 13:36, Eph. 5:15-17);
- Act compassionately for the lost and the needy (see Matt. 9:36-38);
- Be kingdom seekers, not empire builders (see Matt. 6:33);
- Long for unity of Christ’s people (see John 17:20-23);
- Learn to “pray the work” (see Matt. 9:35).⁸³

Leadership in the military is much more than issuing orders to the troops.

Likewise, military planning analyzes myriad factors before setting one foot on the battlefield. “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” Jer. 29:11 KJV The verse from Jeremiah reminds chaplains that their calling is not an isolated event but intimately connected to the life of the Church.⁸⁴ As leaders of the military worship setting, chaplains will view worship planning as essential to aligning all of the activities of the military congregation into closer conformity with God’s plan. Lutheran chaplains will seize the opportunity in worship to build the foundation for nurturing a Lutheran identity among military personnel and their families. As Lutherans, we celebrate our heritage in worship: Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, Law-Gospel sermons, exuberant liturgy, vibrant hymns, and intercessory prayers. Especially in the military community, we want to tell our story—the story of how we are saved by grace, through faith, on account of Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit working through the Word, the contagion from worship will grow into witness during the week. We want our Lutheran military members to know and live what we believe.

⁸³Ibid., 134.

⁸⁴Kreigbaum, 57.

In summary, the disciplines of leadership and strategic planning offer valuable insight into developing pastoral strategy for nurturing a Lutheran identity in worship. Viewing worship through the lens of pastoral stewardship, equipping believers, building a sense of community among military members and their families, and exercising a robust devotional life, establish a foundation upon which the chaplain may design specific strategies for worship. In the case of this project, the pastoral strategy for worship focuses on preaching military imagery to the Lutheran military audience. For that strategy to be valid, it must be rooted in Scripture. The next chapter will examine the Scriptural precedent for military imagery.

CHAPTER 5

A SCRIPTURAL PRECEDENT

Scripture does not present a strict taxonomy of references to military operations and military imagery. For example, attempting to draw a sharp distinction between celestial warfare and terrestrial warfare fails to consider the references, which clearly indicate God's intervention in earthly battles, such as the defeat of Sennacherib's earthly army by an angel of the LORD (2 Kings 19:35). Nevertheless, I would suggest the following framework to describe the manner in which Scripture presents references to the military: (1) actual occurrences of warfare, (2) prophetic utterances of warfare, (3) narratives involving military characters, (4) and figurative statements with military imagery.

Various types of military operations are described in the Old Testament. Some of the military engagements mentioned in Scripture include what is referred to in contemporary military parlance as principles of war.⁸⁵ For example, references in

⁸⁵Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-0 Doctrine for Joint Operations*, Appendix A-1, (10 Jan. 2003). According to the warfighting doctrine of the U. S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Principles of War guide military operations at all levels of war and include the following: Objective: direct military operation toward a clearly defined objective; Offensive: seize, retain, and exploit the initiative; Mass: concentrate the effects of combat power at the most advantageous place and achieve decisive results; Economy of Force: the judicious employment and distribution of forces; Maneuver: place the enemy in a position of disadvantage; Unity of Command: ensure unity of effort under a single commander; and Security: never permit the enemy to acquire unexpected advantage.

Scripture recount military campaigns involving tactical maneuver, strategy, weaponry, and reconnaissance.

Abram's rescue of his nephew Lot in Gen. 14 records the first detailed account of warfare in the Old Testament. Upon hearing of Lot being taken captive, Abram summoned 318 trained men and pursued the four warlord kings. Abram engaged in tactical maneuver by dividing his men and attacking the enemy at night. Consequently, he routed the enemy (14:15). Please refer to APPENDIX 1 for an excursus of selected military words.

Ex. 14 presents a detailed account of the Egyptian military force in its pursuit of the Israelites. Pharaoh mobilized his horses, chariots, officers, and troops. When the Egyptians pursued the Israelites through the Red Sea that had been divided by the LORD, the LORD made the sea flow back and drown the Egyptian army. In the song celebrating the victory over the Egyptians, the LORD is called a warrior, who hurled Pharaoh's chariots and army into the sea (Ex. 15:3ff).

Num. 1-2 describe the divisional arrangement of the tribes of Israel. All able-bodied men in Israel, who were twenty years old, or older, were considered eligible to serve in the army. The LORD directed the divisional arrangement of the tribes including instructions for encampment, with each man in a specific camp under a specific standard, around the Tabernacle as well as instructions for the tribal marching order.

In Deut. 20, the LORD enjoins several stipulations for going to war. Prior to going into the battle, the priest shall address the troops reminding them, "the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory." 20:4 NIV Then, the officers will address the army and promulgate criteria for

military exemptions: the construction of a new home, the planting of a vineyard, betrothal, and faintheartedness (20:5ff.). Upon completion of the exemption procedures, the officers appointed commanders (20:9). For the cities outside of the Promised Land, the LORD allowed a period of time to pursue a negotiated peace. For the cities considered part of the Promised Land, the LORD dictated complete destruction to prevent the Israelites from idolatry (20:10-18). The LORD prohibited the Israelites from destroying fruit trees. He permitted only non-fruit bearing trees to be used for siege works (20:20).

Josh. 2 provides a stirring account of a reconnaissance mission. Joshua sent two spies to gather information on Jericho. Rahab the harlot hid the two spies under the stalks of flax on the roof of her house. Rahab also instructed the spies to hide in the hills to evade capture. Lest there would be any confusion in Joshua's mind about who was really in charge of the battle against Jericho, the commander of the LORD's army appeared to Joshua and advised him accordingly (Josh. 5:13ff.). Joshua 6 carefully outlines the LORD's battle plan to vanquish Jericho. The specter of the Israelites marching around the city for six days with the trumpets sounding must have generated alarm and confusion among the people shut in behind the city's walls. The people of Jericho must have wondered when the Israelites would attack and stationed sentries to keep watch throughout the night. Finally, on the seventh day, Joshua gave the command for the Israelites to shout. Immediately, the walls of Jericho collapsed and God delivered the city into the hands of the Israelites (Josh. 6).

The book of Judges contains an ominous verse, which intimated unrelenting military threats to the Israelites. "Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to

prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan; only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof; . . . ,” Jud. 3:1-2 KJV In one case, the Midianites ravaged Israel. Of particular interest is the surprise attack of Gideon and his men on the Midianite camp in Jud. 7. Knowing that Israel would boast of its military victory if allowed to assemble a large force, the LORD instructed Gideon to cut the size of the force. Ten thousand men remained. Contending there were still too many men, the LORD told Gideon He would sift the force for Gideon. This time three hundred men were left to fight the Midianites. Gideon divided the three hundred men into three companies. With trumpets, empty jars and torches, Gideon launched a surprise attack at night, which caused the confused Midianites to turn on each other with their swords. It was a tactical victory.

David's military action against the Ammonites in 2 Sam. 10 was the result of the Ammonite king, Hanun, not accepting David's diplomatic gesture. Recognizing their humiliating treatment of David's delegates would portend war, the Ammonites augmented their force with mercenaries. The Arameans and Ammonites fled before Israelite forces commanded by Joab and his brother, Abishai. Then, the Arameans reconstituted their force. Having been briefed of this development, David led the Israelite force against the Arameans and decimated their army of charioteers and foot soldiers (2 Sam. 10:18). What military alliance existed between the Arameans and Ammonites prior to this war was utterly dissolved after the Arameans were crushed.

The account of Sennacherib threatening Jerusalem in 2 Kings 18-19 stands in stark contrast to the aforementioned examples of warfare because an angel of the LORD

conducted the entire military operation. After attacking and capturing the fortified cities of Judah, Sennacherib exacted tribute from Hezekiah. Sennacherib, determined to seize Jerusalem, dispatched three of his military officials with an army to taunt Hezekiah. Sennacherib's officials mocked Hezekiah's strategy and military. Sarcastically, they said Sennacherib would give Hezekiah two thousand horses if he could find riders for the horses. Isaiah encouraged Hezekiah's officials and prophesied Sennacherib's fall. Hezekiah, after spreading Sennacherib's literary ultimatum on the floor of the temple, prayed to the LORD. The LORD heard Hezekiah's prayer and an angel of the LORD slaughtered one hundred and eighty-five thousand men of the Assyrian camp in one night.

In addition to actual accounts of war, the Old Testament includes prophetic utterances of warfare, in which God would wage war against His Chosen People. In Jeremiah's prophecy against Jerusalem, his summons mobilized a force to "Prepare for battle against her! Arise, let us attack at noon. . . So arise, let us attack at night and destroy her fortresses. . . Cut down the trees and build siege ramps against Jerusalem."

Jer. 6:4-6 NIV

Ezekiel's symbolic prophecy of the siege against Jerusalem dramatized the Divine Strategy of siege works with ramps and battering rams around the model of Jerusalem. The next phase of the strategy illustrated in graphic detail how God would cause them to eat defiled food, which would be followed by a phase of starvation. Through fire and outdrawn sword, God would pursue His Chosen People and exact punishment for their sins (Ez. 4-6).

In the preceding prophetic utterances from Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the military imagery was employed to pronounce judgment on Israel. The books of Isaiah and Micah exemplify the use of military imagery to proclaim a message of hope, "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Is. 2:4 and Mic. 4:3 KJV Strangely enough, when the LORD alters the word order of this metaphor in Joel, it conveys redemption for Judah but judgment against other nations for their maltreatment of God's Chosen People. "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: . . ." 3:9-10 KJV

Nahum's prophecy described the LORD's declaration of war on Nineveh. Notwithstanding, Nineveh's allies, fortress, soldiers, shields, chariots, and spears, the LORD God said He would destroy Nineveh. The Assyrians, known for the atrocities they inflicted on their adversaries, would themselves be obliterated. "She is pillaged, plundered, stripped!" Nah. 2:10 NIV

The book of Revelation further illustrates prophetic utterances of war. According to Louis A. Brighton, in his commentary on the book of Revelation, John spoke of the war in heaven both prophetically and apocalyptically.⁸⁶ "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and dragon and his angels fought back." Rev. 12:7b NIV Later, in chapter 19, John recounted his vision:

⁸⁶Louis A. Brighton, *Revelation*. Concordia Commentary. (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 4.

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. . . Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshipped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on the flesh. Rev. 19:11-21 NIV

Various military sub-themes emerge in non-warfare narratives featuring military characters. Virtues, often associated with military life, accentuate the essence of the story. For example, the story of the friendship between David and Jonathan exemplifies the loyalty among warriors known as camaraderie (1 Sam. 20). While David's defeat of Goliath demonstrated his bravery, Jonathan's heroism was clearly demonstrated when he and his armor-bearer slew about twenty Philistines (1 Sam. 14:1ff.). Jonathan's loyalty to David, and his recognition of David's anointing, transcended any ambition to succeed his father as king over Israel.

Naaman, "a valiant soldier," (2 Kings 5: 1 NIV) was healed of his leprosy by the prophet Elisha. Naaman's position as commander of Aram's army and a highly regarded military leader is juxtaposed with the servants who played a pivotal role in his healing and bringing him to faith. A captive Israelite servant girl appealed to her mistress to encourage Naaman to seek out the prophet Elisha. Assuming Elisha was employed by the king of Israel, Naaman took a letter of introduction and a large sum of money to pay for healing. Elisha's instruction to Naaman to wash himself seven times in the Jordan

only angered Naaman. This time, his servants appealed to Naaman to do as Elisha had directed. Naaman acquiesced and washed himself in the Jordan seven times. Upon being healed Naaman made a profession of faith and offered Elisha an honorarium, which Elisha summarily refused. The request Naaman submitted to Elisha underscores the spiritual dilemmas inherent in military service. Naaman's profession of faith and awareness of the monotheistic nature of the faith generated a spiritual crisis. Naaman knew that accompanying his master to a pagan temple would risk compromising the faith he now embraced. Consequently, he requested forgiveness from Elisha in advance of this deed. Rather than granting forgiveness, Elisha simply stated, "Go in peace." (2 Kings 5:19) If one fails to comprehend from Elisha's response to Naaman that you cannot manipulate God, this message is only intensified with Elisha's rebuke of Gehazi for turning the grace of God into material gain for himself (2 Kings 5:20ff.).

The New Testament is rich with narratives involving military characters. John the Baptist made specific reference to soldiers in his preaching (Luke 3:7-14). John may have directed this portion of his message to soldiers assigned to Herod Antipas. John did not denounce the military profession. He enjoined soldiers not to engage in wanton violence or extortion and encouraged them to be satisfied with their pay.⁸⁷ Please refer to APPENDIX 2 for an excursus on military life.

In Matthew 8:5-13 (see also Luke 7:1-10), Jesus commends the great faith of the centurion. The tombstone of Facilis at Colchester depicts a centurion, who, "Unlike the legionary, he carried his sword on the left swinging from a baldric, and from his left

⁸⁷William F. Arndt, *Luke*, Concordia Classic Commentary Series. (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), 113.

shoulder his cloak made of fine material hangs in elegant folds.”⁸⁸ In another tombstone a servant holds the horse of a centurion.⁸⁹ According to Graham Webster, the centurion likely received, at a minimum, five times the soldier’s rate of pay.⁹⁰ Rather than compelling Jesus to come into his home and heal his servant, the centurion beseeched Jesus to just say the word and his servant would be healed. William F. Arndt, in his commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke, stated, "One thing is certain--the centurion was not a Jew. But he was friendly toward the Jews and may be regarded as having been 'a proselyte of the gate,' that is, a Gentile who, though not accepting circumcision and becoming a Jew in all religious observances, regarded the Jewish religion as divinely given and found satisfaction and delight in attending the synagog services."⁹¹

The Passion Narrative portrays soldiers mocking and flogging Jesus (Mark 15:16ff.), guarding Jesus during the crucifixion (Matt. 27:54), certifying Jesus' death (Mark 15:44-45), and guarding the tomb (Matt. 27:62-28:4). All three of the Synoptic Gospels record the acclamation of the centurion, who guarded Jesus during the crucifixion, "Surely he was the Son of God." Matt. 27:54 and Mark 15:39 NIV (Luke 23:47 NIV, "Surely this was a righteous man.")

Acts 10 furnishes an extended treatment of Peter's proclamation of the Gospel to the centurion Cornelius. This episode seems to offer a New Testament counterpart to the

⁸⁸Webster, 130.

⁸⁹Ibid., 131.

⁹⁰Ibid., 268.

⁹¹Ibid., 200.

story of Naaman and Elisha. Like Naaman, Cornelius was an influential soldier in the community. Whereas Elisha readily offered assistance to Naaman, Peter was not inclined to interact with a Gentile. Peter's vision clearly demonstrated that the universality of God's offer of grace crosses any cultural divide.

The proclamation of the Gospel among and acceptance by military personnel receives further corroboration in Acts 16:25-34. Paul and Silas prevented the jailer from committing suicide. The jailer asked what he must do to be saved. Paul and Silas responded, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household." Acts 16:31 NIV The jailer took Paul and Silas to his home, where he and his family were baptized.

Paul's frequent confinements and military escorts brought him into extended contact with soldiers. This repeated contact contributed to his knowledge of military life and presented a host of opportunities to proclaim the Gospel. His familiarity with the military could explain Paul's fondness for military imagery in his epistles. Acts 27 describes one such extended contact while sailing to Rome with a detachment of soldiers, under the command of Julius, a centurion. While Paul's relationship with Julius was amicable, Scripture does not indicate if Julius became a Christian. Nevertheless, Paul's contact with soldiers continued in Rome, where Paul was placed under house arrest and guarded by a soldier (Acts 28:16).

When one considers how Scripture records actual occurrences of warfare, prophetic utterances of warfare, and narratives involving military characters, Scripture's use of figurative statements with military imagery reflects internal consistency. The Psalms, for example, celebrate God as Israel's Deliverer and lament God becoming

Israel's Enemy as a result of Israel's rebellion. A sampling of Psalms celebrating God as Deliverer include metaphors with weapons, tactics, and forces. "Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle." Ps. 24:8 NIV "No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength." Ps. 33:16 NIV "Gird your sword upon your side, O mighty one; . . ." Ps. 45:3 NIV "He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire." Ps. 46:9 NIV "The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands; . . ." Ps. 68:17 NIV "He will punish you with a warrior's sharp arrows," Ps. 120:7 NIV "Praise be to the LORD my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle. He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me." Ps. 144:1-2 NIV

Ingvar Floysvik's analysis of the Complaint Psalms included a discussion of Psalm 44, a Psalm lamenting God as Israel's Enemy. In this particular case, Israel has suffered defeat in war both figuratively and literally. The military defeat at the hands of national enemies is interpreted as having been caused by God. God's people "want God to help them and to redeem them from their enemies, to give them victory over their enemies: 'Arise for our help and redeem us' (v. 27)"⁹²

Upon casual observation, the statements of Jesus regarding the sword in Luke 22 would appear contradictory. In Luke 22:36 NIV, Jesus said, "But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one."

⁹²Ingvar Floysvik, *When God Becomes My Enemy: The Theology of the Complaint Psalms* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Academic Press, 1997), 66.

Several verses later, during his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, Luke records, "When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, 'Lord, should we strike with our swords?' And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear." Luke 22:49f. NIV The apparent contradiction disappears when viewed contextually. In the case of Luke 22:36, Jesus instructed his disciples concerning the future trials that were in store for them. Speaking figuratively, Jesus' message was, "A sword will be more urgently required than a mantle; that is, there will be bloody persecution, you will have to steel yourselves for severe ordeals."⁹³ A comparison of Luke 22:49f., with Matthew 26:52ff., and John 18:10f., Jesus' order to stop the violence means that his arrest is in direct fulfillment of God's plan of salvation.⁹⁴ Furthermore, Christ's statement to the disciples in Matthew 26:52 NIV "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword," was intended to disabuse them of any Messianic expectations concerning an earthly revolution rather than a proof text supporting pacifism and prohibiting military service. This interpretation is corroborated by Jesus' assertion in Matt. 26:53 KJV, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"

Given Paul's regular contact with the military, it is not surprising that he would invoke the language of the military to illustrate a theme or doctrine. In his letters to Timothy, Paul exhorted Timothy: "to war a good warfare," 1 Tim. 1:18 KJV; "Fight the good fight of faith," 1 Tim. 6:12 NIV; and, "You therefore must endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian

⁹³Ibid., 445.

⁹⁴Ibid., 451.

affairs--he wants to please his commanding officer." 2 Tim. 2:3-4 NIV In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul urged his audience to don the "full armor of God," in order to engage in spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10ff.). Unlike an earthly military force, Christians don spiritual armor. Unlike an earthly military force, there is no room "to distinguish between officers and enlisted men, . . ." ⁹⁵ For those who would misconstrue Paul's application of military imagery in Eph. 6 as a license to engage in an earthly crusade, Marcus Barth stated Paul's military metaphors were not intended as a summons to fanatical violence waged among men but a call to spiritual warfare waged in the strength and victory of the Gospel.

In the same context in which Paul speaks of the 'meekness and gentleness of the Messiah,' he also mentions 'weapons of warfare' with which arguments and obstacles are destroyed (II Cor 10:1-6). The 'peace' and the 'gospel' to which Eph 6:15 refers can only be the 'peace made' and 'proclaimed' by the Messiah which was described in 2:13-18. It is not a victory of men inside God's kingdom over men outside it that makes the saints stand 'steadfast.' Rather the Messianic 'peace' which has united and will further draw together 'those far' and 'those near' gives strength to resist non-human, demonic attacks however spiritual their origin. ⁹⁶

In summary, actual occurrences of warfare, prophetic utterances of warfare, narratives involving military characters, and figurative statements with military imagery provide a Scriptural precedent for using military imagery to proclaim the Word of God. Guided by Scripture, Martin Luther employed military imagery in preaching, teaching, and hymnody. The next chapter will examine the Lutheran legacy of leveraging military imagery in the proclamation of God's Word.

⁹⁵David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1974), *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6* by Markus Barth, 765.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 771.

CHAPTER 6

A LUTHERAN LEGACY

According to Fred W. Meuser, Martin Luther preached "as if the sermon were not a classroom, but instead a battleground! Every sermon was a battle for the souls of the people."⁹⁷ Expounding on "the Lord of hosts," in Zech. 1:3, Martin Luther rendered the phrase to mean military or army. Moreover, he introduced a lesson on spiritual warfare.

He is, then, the Lord of soldiers or of the military. This certainly is a wonderful name for God. It is given to us not only to teach but also to comfort us. For teaching, you apply it this way: all those who confess the name of this King or Lord must be soldiers. They must always be armed and in the field, just as Job says (Job 7:1): "Man's life on earth is military service." . . . So we must lead a life of active soldiers as we are assailed by very powerful foes and as we do battle under the Lord our God. Then He is called the Lord of hosts to comfort us, that we may know that He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4). . . Instead, He has overcome both the world and the prince of the world, but he has overcome them on our behalf. Therefore it is our consolation that this good Lord of ours faithfully comes to our aid and battles for us in the field. He fights for us at our side, lest we lose faith, regardless of what great evils assail us. So this is why the prophet Zechariah here repeats the expression "the Lord of hosts" three times, as if to say: "Whatever you fear, whatever it is that you are concerned about, be confident. The Lord does battle for you. He goes ahead of you as general of the war as He fights in the field, etc."⁹⁸

Throughout his lectures on Zechariah, Luther illustrated what it meant to be a soldier of the Lord. Every believer, regardless of earthly occupation, is a soldier of the

⁹⁷Fred W. Meuser, *Luther the Preacher* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1983), 25.

⁹⁸Martin Luther, *Lectures on the Minor Prophets III: Zechariah* vol. 20, ed. Hilton C. Oswald (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1973), 8.

Lord and wields the Word of God as the weapon in waging spiritual warfare (2:1).⁹⁹ Luther included the earthly insights he gleaned from soldiers who fought on the battlefield to demonstrate how faith with its confidence, vigilance, and righteousness rises to the challenge of spiritual forces (4:6).¹⁰⁰ Since the Holy Spirit works through the Word, believers wage warfare not with earthly armor or weaponry but with the proclamation of the Gospel (10:4).¹⁰¹ In the din of war, where the adversary thrives on pandemonium with shouting and cursing, the believer fights with prayer lifted to the Lord of hosts. Through the believer's supplication in the name of Jesus, Satan and his henchmen are thwarted (12:10).¹⁰² In contrast to legendary conquerors as Attila the Hun, who surrounded himself with hoards of warriors, the Christian does not maintain an army. He does not employ mercenaries. God Himself surrounds the believer with a wall of fire. For the believer, God's wall of fire means refuge, and for the adversary, God's wall of fire means terror (2:5).¹⁰³

According to Luther, when God said He would man His house with warriors, God would man His house with those who had been consecrated to teach the Word of God. The warriors of God are apostles and teachers, equipped with the Word, who would valiantly oppose the forces of evil. Lest those, who read these warlike passages, misinterpret them to mean an earthly revolution, Zechariah prophesies the Messiah would

⁹⁹Ibid., 25.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 44.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 108.

¹⁰²Ibid., 139f.

¹⁰³Ibid., 187f.

not arrive clad in body armor or mounted on a horse of war. The Messiah would arrive in humility and righteousness (9:8-9).¹⁰⁴ Rather than warfare taking place on a physical battlefield, the office of preaching will become the focal point for spiritual warfare. Luther concluded his commentary on Zechariah in the same way he introduced it, namely, reminding his audience that the Lord of hosts is the General of His army and fights through the Gospel. It is the Holy Spirit, Who works through the Word spoken by the apostles, to ensure the arrows go forth straight and true (9:13).¹⁰⁵

The Lutheran precedent for employing military imagery is further evidenced in Luther's contribution to hymnody. Under the heading of "The Church Militant" in the *Lutheran Worship* hymnal,¹⁰⁶ "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," is included in the *Book of Worship for United States Forces*¹⁰⁷ as well as non-Lutheran hymnals. With this hymn, Luther employed military imagery to comfort the believer in the midst of spiritual warfare. The lyrics and melody evoke vivid conceptions of an armed force fighting from the fortress of God. "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," was sung at the Diet of Augsburg in 1555, became the national hymn of Protestant Germany, and was the battle hymn of Gustavus Adolphus at the battle of Lutzen in 1632.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 287f.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 293ff.

¹⁰⁶Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Worship* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), 297 and 298.

¹⁰⁷Armed Forces Chaplain Board, *Book of Worship for United States Forces* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1974), 114.

¹⁰⁸Fred Precht, *Lutheran Worship Hymnal Companion* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 317.

The thread of military imagery also runs through Luther's emphasis on catechesis. In the Preface to Large Catechism, Luther cited Deut. 6:7-8 for the purpose of admonishing believers to regularly meditate on God's Word. Luther explained God's command to study the Word in light of the spiritual danger faced by believers. If believers resolve to stand firm in the midst of the fog and friction of the guerilla warfare waged by Satan, the only sure weapon is the Word of God. Only the Word of God can protect believers against the satanic weapons of mass destruction. With the language of warfare, Luther warned believers against forsaking the sacred weapons of the Lord's arsenal. "O what mad, senseless fools we are. We must ever live and dwell in the midst of such mighty enemies as the devils, and yet we despise our weapons and armor, too lazy to give them a thought!"¹⁰⁹

In his explanation to the Lord's Prayer, Luther goaded believers to maintain a spiritual warfare bearing. "Accordingly, we Christians must be armed and prepared for incessant attacks."¹¹⁰ Likewise, in his explanation to the Lord's Supper, Luther said, "If you could see how many daggers, spears, and arrows are at every moment aimed at you, you would be glad to come to the sacrament as often as possible."¹¹¹

Some could misconstrue Luther's use of military imagery as a license to advance a political or military agenda. Luther would vehemently oppose such a notion. Luther challenged the tendency of political leaders to invoke the name of God for the purpose of arousing a nation to war. Luther called on Germany's leaders to stop masking the

¹⁰⁹Tappert, 360.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 435.

¹¹¹Ibid., 456.

bellicose rhetoric against the Turks with the language of faith.¹¹² Again, in his devotional writings, Luther challenged Germany's leaders and identified several areas symptomatic of Germany's lack of morality and goodness. Consequently, he asserted that Germany should not be surprised by the threat of the Turks and admonished his fellow Germans to pray and study God's Word.¹¹³

Lutheran preachers have followed in Luther's steps and mobilized believers through the use of military imagery. Walter A. Maier, nationally known speaker of the radio ministry show, "The Lutheran Hour," judiciously applied military imagery in his sermons broadcast over the radio waves. In a sermon preached on Defense Sunday entitled, "God Is Our Defense," Maier launched into a national call to spiritual arms against the assaults of unbelief.¹¹⁴ Capitalizing on the patriotic response to Defense Bonds, which supported the war effort in World War II, Maier generated a sense of spiritual patriotism by citing Gustavus Adolphus and other Christian soldiers who died on the battlefield.¹¹⁵ He sustained the tone of a national spiritual emergency by identifying seven national enemies: unbelief, godlessness and crime, corrupt government, unfaithful churches, immorality in the home, anti-Christian education, and disregard of God's law in labor and industry.¹¹⁶ The only defense, Maier said, against these national enemies is

¹¹²Ewald M. Plass, compiled, *What Luther Says: A Practical In-Home Anthology for the Active Christian* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 1433:4611.

¹¹³Helmut T. Lehmann, gen. ed., *Luther's Works: Devotional Writings*, vol. 43 (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1969), 165ff.

¹¹⁴Walter A. Maier, *For Christ and Country: Radio Messages Broadcast in the Ninth Lutheran Hour* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1942), 44.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, 45.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, 49.

Jesus. "Do you know any man, saint, or angel who can transfer your guilt to himself? But Jesus, precious Jesus, did: '*His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.*' His cross is your defense against sin; His blood, your defense against Hell; His death, your defense against the decay of the grave. When Christ is enthroned in your heart, you can face an accusing conscience with the triumph: '*Jesus is my Defense!*'"¹¹⁷

Through cooperative relationships with Lutheran military chaplains, Maier aired radio broadcasts of *The Lutheran Hour* overseas and from military installations.

"Through the efforts of the Rev. Floyd Dreith, Chaplain on the U. S. S. Blackhawk, now in the Philippine Islands, arrangements were made to broadcast the Lutheran Hour over a very powerful station in Manila."¹¹⁸ In "Triumph Over Temptation," Maier broadcasted his sermon on an Army post in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. He dedicated the sermon to American youth, especially those in the Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Service. Maier cleverly used the war slogans of the day, "Keep Them Flying--Keep Them Rolling," to craft spiritual war slogans, "Keep Them Clean--Keep Them Safe--Keep Them True To Christ."¹¹⁹

Turning his attention from a military installation to the field of battle, Maier used the observance of National Bible Sunday to preach the sermon, "America, Embattled, Turn To Christ!" Highlighting several erroneous predictions associated with Japan in World War II, Maier reminded the listeners that God's prophecies never fail. Maier boldly proclaimed the dreaded truth that war and bloodshed are the results of sin. Only

¹¹⁷Ibid., 53.

¹¹⁸Carl S. Meyer, *Moving Frontiers* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 397.

¹¹⁹Maier, 75.

Jesus, our Savior from sin, gives us comfort in time of war. "Particularly let every soldier or sailor who may be summoned to fight the life-and-death struggles of this war accept Jesus now, before facing the brunt of battle, so that in the midst of tumult and strife faith in His constant companionship will bestow this assurance, '*Being justified by faith, we have peace with God--the inner peace 'which passeth all understanding'*'! . . . When Jesus rules your heart in a personal, pulsating faith, you can stand confidently in stormed trenches as the din of hell itself appears to loose its fury around you."¹²⁰

While two of the hymnals commonly used in congregations of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod include a topical heading of the "The Church Militant" or "Christian Warfare,"¹²¹ the number of hymns included under these headings does not include all of the hymns with military imagery. For example, the *Lutheran Worship* hymnal lists the following under the heading of *The Church Militant*: "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"; "Fight The Good With All Your Might"; "Do Not Despair, O Little Flock"; "Lord of Our Life"; "Rise, My Soul, To Watch and Pray"; "Rise! To Arms! With Prayer Employ You"; "The Son Of God Goes Forth To War"; "Stand, Up, Stand Up For Jesus"; "Jerusalem, O City Fair And High."¹²² Strangely enough, "Onward, Christian Soldiers" is listed under the heading of *Spiritual Songs* and "Lift High The Cross" is listed under the heading of *Missions*.¹²³ Other hymns with military imagery are disbursed under the headings of Epiphany, Passion Week, Easter, and Lesser Festivals.

¹²⁰Ibid., 113.

¹²¹Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America, *The Lutheran Hymnal* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), 444ff.

¹²²Precht, 315ff.

¹²³Ibid., 522 and 311.

In summary, Luther's perception of the sermon as the "battleground of Christ" or *Kampfplatz Christi*,¹²⁴ and penchant for employing military imagery merely replicated what he saw in Scripture. Through his writings, hymns, and catechisms, Luther's deliberate use of the language of warfare was intended to accomplish a twofold purpose. Luther endeavored to comfort the believer by professing an unwavering commitment to the preeminence of God's grace. Luther also intended for the military imagery to put the believer on the highest state of alert. Following the legacy of Luther, Lutheran preachers and hymnists incorporated military imagery in preaching, teaching, and hymnody. Nevertheless, military culture does not exist in isolation from civilian society. The next chapter will examine societal pressures, which will further sharpen the Lutheran preacher's awareness of the unique homiletical challenges facing the preaching task.

¹²⁴Paul J. Grime and Dean W. Nadasdy, ed., *Liturgical Preaching* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2001), 252.

CHAPTER 7

HOMILETICAL CHALLENGES

Lloyd John Ogilvie, current Chaplain of the United States Senate, stated, "I think there's a great hunger in our time for biblically-rooted, Christ-centered, Holy Spirit empowered preaching."¹²⁵ I would argue the Lutheran heritage has served as the bedrock for the preaching referred to by Ogilvie. But preserving that heritage and nurturing a Lutheran identity in the military environment faces unique challenges. According to John R. Stott, the loss of confidence in the Gospel poses a hindrance to preaching. As a remedy, he advocated a recovery of conviction, which is rooted in one's understanding of Scripture, Preaching, God, the Church, and the Pastorate.¹²⁶ The succeeding discussion will examine these five convictions in light of the various challenges confronting the homiletical task.

Our understanding of Scripture shapes our approach to the preaching task. In his explanation to the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed, Martin Luther stated, "Neither you nor I could ever know anything of Christ, or believe in him and take him as our Lord, unless these were first offered to us and bestowed on our hearts through the preaching of

¹²⁵Michael Duduit, "Preaching to Power: An Interview with Lloyd John Ogilvie," *Preaching* vol. 17 (May/June 2002): 4.

¹²⁶John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 83ff.

the Gospel by the Holy Spirit."¹²⁷ Only the Holy Spirit, working through the proclamation of the Gospel, can bring an individual to saving faith in Jesus Christ. In contrast, some have argued that changing patterns of authority, truth, and knowledge have influenced how contemporary culture understands the message of Scripture and its messenger, the preacher. Consequently, the character of the preacher is elevated at the expense of the Holy Spirit. According to some, the authority of the preacher, and by association the message of Scripture, rests on the preacher's credibility.¹²⁸ Such an assessment allows ambiguity to reign as the hermeneutical principle. In contrast, the Lutheran theology of preaching emphasizes Scripture as the sole source and norm for doctrine. "The Holy Spirit reveals and preaches that Word, and by it illumines and kindles hearts so that they grasp and accept it, cling to it, and persevere in it."¹²⁹ The preacher is the messenger of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel to the people.¹³⁰ The Lutheran sermon is shaped by its understanding of the Word, the Holy Spirit, and the pastoral office. Moreover, the Lutheran hermeneutical principle of Scripture interpreting Scripture shapes how the Lutheran preacher approaches the Biblical text and engages in sermon preparation.

¹²⁷Tappert, 415:38.

¹²⁸Ronald J. Allen, Barbara S. Blaisdell, and Scott B. Johnston, *Theology for Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 43.

¹²⁹Tappert, 416:42.

¹³⁰Richard R. Caemmerer, *Preaching for the Church* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 39.

According to Thomas G. Long, the literary forms and dynamics of a biblical text should determine the shape of the sermon.¹³¹ Long contended that approaching the text of Scripture from this perspective assists the preacher to avoid placing a straight jacket on the text. Consequently, the preacher will appropriate the persona of a witness who bears witness to the encounter between God and man. The preacher represents the people as he prayerfully listens to the text of Scripture and represents Christ as he proclaims to the people what he has heard.¹³²

In the activity of preaching, the preacher communicates with words to pass on the words of a Scripture text along with an explanation of what the words mean. Jacob Preus underscored that Lutherans maintain stewardship over a vast reservoir of words. An essential part of the stewardship of words is to convey the meaning of our evangelical and confessional vocabulary to the people of God to assist them in understanding Scripture. Justification, the central doctrine of Christianity, must be properly explicated for the people to understand the forensic nature of the word.¹³³ Many who visit military chapel services come from a growing population of people with no background in Christianity and are Biblically uncultivated. Christian doctrinal expressions, for some, have become mingled with elements of New Age spirituality.¹³⁴ The goal is to reclaim

¹³¹Thomas G. Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1989), 11.

¹³²Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 43ff.

¹³³Jacob A. O. Preus, *Just Words* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 23.

¹³⁴Raj, 37ff.

Biblical words and redirect the listeners back to Scripture for a Spirit-filled meaning of those words.

Ronald J. Allen stated that a "significant part of the preacher's calling is to help the congregation name the divine presence in the world (and to help the congregation make a suitable response)."¹³⁵ A Lutheran theology of preaching contends the Holy Spirit is responsible for working faith through the Word to name the divine presence in the world. Saint Paul says in 1 Cor. 12:3b KJV, "no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Rom. 3 & 4 clearly articulate the function of the Law and the Gospel in bringing man to a saving faith in Christ Jesus. Simple catechetical expressions as, the Law shows our sin (S.O.S.) and the Gospel shows our Savior (S.O.S.), are ready-made sound bites for listeners to grasp the distinction between the Law and Gospel. S.O.S., which normally stands for Save Our Ship, has been particularly effective in the Lutheran worship services I conduct for the Navy recruits. Additionally, the last word of the Gospel reminds the recruits not only of life after boot camp but, most importantly, life after death--the predominance of the Gospel.¹³⁶

The postmodern context tends to greet assertions of truth with suspicion. Undoubtedly, various manifestations of clergy misconduct have undermined the probity of the pastoral office. Some would argue that invoking truth is merely a tool of influence employed by the powerful to advance their agenda. According to Allen, the manipulative use of truth has on occasion been associated with Christianity. As a corrective, he suggested that the standard, by which people of the postmodern society measure truth

¹³⁵ Allen, et al, 93.

¹³⁶ Glenn, Nielsen, "No Longer Dinosaurs: Relating Lutheran Homiletics and Communication Practice," *Concordia Journal* 25 (January 1999): 22.

claims, be based upon the experience of a community.¹³⁷ He challenged preachers to leverage their pastoral experience "to help the congregation discern the trustworthiness of the text . . ." ¹³⁸

The Lutheran understanding of the preacher's role and the proper distinction of the Law and Gospel issue a formidable response to those wary of the messenger and the message. The preacher is responsible for applying the Law in a diagnostic manner to hold listener's accountable for their sins and proclaiming the Gospel as the only protocol of treatment for the diagnosed illness.¹³⁹ This should not be construed as a mechanical demonstration of the Law and Gospel such that sermons are reduced to a monolithic Law then Gospel structure. Rather, Lutheran preaching of the Law and Gospel will revolve around the vicarious atonement of Christ and be "done from a variety of texts through a variety of forms for a variety of hearers."¹⁴⁰ The preacher preaches "to the whole person, those who are saint and sinner simultaneously, who need God's Law and Gospel proclaimed to the integrated wholeness of their lives."¹⁴¹

Preaching on sanctification completes the organic unity of the Law Gospel sermon. Preaching on sanctification affords Lutheran preachers a splendid opportunity to explain the Third Article of the Apostles Creed and assist believers in understanding the

¹³⁷Allen, et al, 60ff.

¹³⁸Ibid., 66.

¹³⁹Dean Nadasdy, "Slamming Light Against the Sour Face: Questions for Law/Gospel Preachers," *Concordia Journal* 25 (January 1999): 35ff.

¹⁴⁰David Schmitt, "Freedom of Form: Law/Gospel and Sermon Structure in Contemporary Lutheran Proclamation," *Concordia Journal* 25 (January 1999): 55.

¹⁴¹Glenn Nielsen, "Preaching Doctrine in a Postmodern Age," *Concordia Journal* 27 (January 2001): 20.

work of the Holy Spirit. The Lutheran preacher will avoid the pitfalls of antinomianism on the one hand, and moralism on the other. Sanctification, as well as justification, is the work of the Holy Spirit working through the Gospel.¹⁴² Exhortation is "possible only when the Gospel is the power to do what the exhortation asks."¹⁴³ "In his former state under the Law, the Christian had been a slave to sin. He was a willing compliant serving sin. But, since his baptism into Christ Jesus, the power of sin in the Christian has been broken; sin no longer reigns in him. Set free from sin, he has become a slave of righteousness (Rom. 6:17-18)."¹⁴⁴

Tex Sample stated that the Church has failed to respond convincingly to popular culture in its encounter with the Almighty. He averred, "The purpose of worship is not merely about changing people's *views*, it's about glorification of the God who changes our very natures."¹⁴⁵ A Lutheran theology of preaching will incorporate all three articles of the Apostles Creed. When we proclaim the doctrine of God, we do not do it in a detached, disengaged manner. Rather, we associate the doctrine of God with our community of faith on a personal level.

The cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ represent the doctrine of Justification and gave birth to the Church and its message. If the preacher does not allow the person and work of Jesus Christ to dominate the message of the sermon, he will render himself

¹⁴²Richard H. Warneck, "Notes on Preaching Sanctification," *Concordia Journal* 25 (January 1999): 58.

¹⁴³*Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁴⁵Tex Sample, *The Spectacle of Worship in a Wired World* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 116.

vulnerable to the vortex of worldly influences.¹⁴⁶ "One of the most important effects of death and resurrection begins in the preacher's life rather than the preacher's sermons."¹⁴⁷ The centerpiece of the Christian message is the passion of Jesus Christ, which culminates in the Resurrection. "Resurrection preaching has these implications: it takes death seriously denying neither death nor the alienation, loneliness, anxiety, sin, and evil, which cluster around it."¹⁴⁸

Dale Meyer's discussion of the sermon's place in the life of the congregation, as well as the worship service, suggests a dynamic role for the sermon in the military context. Meyer's retelling of the story of the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:17) by explaining the conversational import of "*antiballo*" develops greater intimacy in the sermon.¹⁴⁹ "Through pleasant speech, through instruction, and through persuasive technique, earthly things for earthly people, the preacher strives to open the hearts and minds of his hearers so that God can do a supernatural work, bestowing and nurturing faith in what is unseen."¹⁵⁰ The sermonic intimacy advocated by Meyer promises to build a solid a bridge between the message and those hearing the message.

How does the Church function in the world regardless of the specific political leanings of the state vis-à-vis the Church? William Willimon stated, "The toughest

¹⁴⁶ Richard Lischer, "Cross and Craft: Two Elements of a Lutheran Homiletic" *Concordia Journal* 25 (January 1999): 5.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁴⁸ Richard Lischer, *A Theology of Preaching: The Dynamic of the Gospel*, rev. ed., (Durham, NC: The Labyrinth Press, 1992), 28.

¹⁴⁹ Dale A. Meyer, "The Place of the Sermon in the Order of Service," in Grime and Nadasdy, 23.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

evangelical task we have as preachers is not how to make Jesus make sense in a disbelieving modern world, but whether, when he meets us in our world, as we believe he does, we will follow him or not.”¹⁵¹ Willimon's discussion of public theology and preaching to pagans is applicable to my context of ministry in a governmental environment. Willimon cited St. Paul's message to the Athenians to illustrate the polarity generated by the Gospel--some believe and some mock.¹⁵² Willimon applied Aristotle's definition of *polis* to the Christian context. The Christian *polis* is an evangelical household prepared to welcome the Savior. He suggested that water and word give birth to a Christian *polis*.¹⁵³ From a Lutheran perspective, Baptism as the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost reinforces the call of Christians to witness of God's grace in this pluralistic society. The bestowal of grace in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism joins us to the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:3ff.).

Willimon's discussion of receptive households reminded me of my assignment to a Destroyer Squadron for two six-month deployments to the Persian Gulf.

"So Jesus sends ambassadors ahead ready to prepare households for his arrival, to prepare people ready to eat and drink with Jesus when he arrives at their town (Luke 10:1). Urgency is necessitated because the Lord is already on his way. Evangelism here is not to cast the net as far as possible but rather to penetrate into marginal territory in order to ensure that some households will be prepared to show hospitality to Jesus. Households are needed that are willing to risk unconventional eating and drinking, in addition to healing and proclamation that will be for the good of the whole town."¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹William Willimon, *Peculiar Speech* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 93.

¹⁵²Ibid., 85.

¹⁵³Ibid., 100.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., 103.

Destroyers and Frigates are small ships that escort Aircraft Carriers. While assigned as a Destroyer Squadron Chaplain, I was hoisted via helicopter from ship to ship. This evolution is known as the "Holy Helo." A small but faithful worshipping community always greeted me on these ships. These individuals, who otherwise would have nothing in common, formed the households of faith on these small ships. By the end of the six-month deployment, the household of faith on each ship would enjoy the blessings associated with a community built on the Gospel. The Holy Spirit, working through the Word, cultivated a community of faith out of a disparate group of sailors.¹⁵⁵

In his discussion of corporate Christianity, Richard Lischer challenged contemporary Christians to remember their identity as God's covenant people. Reflecting the covenantal relationship with God, "the preaching of the gospel refers to the church's experience of Jesus Christ and the church's distinctive purposes in using language about him."¹⁵⁶ Secondly, "the occasion of the speech, including the community for which it is given and the many circumstances surrounding it, will shape its language and define its meaning and purpose."¹⁵⁷ The Church uses a distinctive language in proclaiming the Gospel. This distinctive language shapes how individual Christians understand their identity within the community of faith and shapes how the Church understands itself and its mission with respect to the world.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵Ibid., 112.

¹⁵⁶Lischer, *A Theology of Preaching*, 80f.

¹⁵⁷Lischer, 81.

¹⁵⁸Lischer, 80f.

Is it possible in this contemporary age to speak of pastoral authority? According to Ronald Allen, the preacher is perceived as authoritative when he defines the Gospel as God's love and justice for "each and for all."¹⁵⁹ He asserted the preacher gains credibility from the listener when he admits to the difficulty in understanding certain Scriptural texts and enables the congregation to live in ambiguity with assurance of God's presence.¹⁶⁰ There are three inherent dangers in Allen's argument for empowering the congregation to judge the credibility of the message. First, Allen ignores the work of the Holy Spirit in the preparation, delivery and reception of the message. Second, Allen elevates human reason to exert a magisterial role over the message. Third, Allen turns ambiguity into the norm rather than the exception. The unintended consequence is listeners will be predisposed to treat the sermon as the preacher's agenda and elevate their reason at the expense of the authority of the Word and the work of the Holy Spirit. In contrast, the Lutheran response is the authority of the preacher to utter assertions of truth resides in the source of the truth, namely, God Almighty. Paradoxically, the one who is a servant of the Word is the one who has authority to preach the Word.

The preacher's authority to proclaim the Word is directly linked to Scripture. Caemmerer challenged preachers to speak for God—to and for the church. "The preacher speaks for God. God has reached him with His Word that he might speak it to people. God wants to reach the people, and the preacher is God's tool for reaching them."¹⁶¹ Consequently, the preacher's task is to help the listener understand what is

¹⁵⁹Allen, 37ff.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., 38.

¹⁶¹Caemmerer, 33.

being said and apply the message to his life. The preacher will exercise diligence in knowing the Word and the people.

In addition to knowing the Word and knowing the people, the preacher will also know his limitations. We remember that we are saint/sinner as our listeners and that certain texts are beyond our sinful limitations to explicate fully. Nevertheless, a Lutheran theology of preaching will always maintain the predominance of the Gospel. C. F. W. Walther encouraged preachers to fill their hearts with the predominance of the Gospel and "speak of it from personal experience, so that, when you reach this point in your sermons, you are forced to confess to your hearers that you cannot fully express all that you have experienced, that it baffles all efforts to describe it in words, and that you can merely stammer forth a few inadequate words about it."¹⁶²

It is through the Gospel that the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of faith in believers. Believers, who gathered as a community for worship, will by God's grace be fortified through the Word to go out and bear witness of their faith in the secular community. Determined to deliver sermonic intimacy beyond the walls of the sanctuary, John Nunes challenged preachers to consider the life of the congregation within the context of the community. According to Nunes, the mandate of the Great Commission compels Evangelical Lutherans to foster community in the midst of urban diversity:

Proclaiming a universal, objective justification is nonnegotiable. The central *kerygma*--that Christ died for all irrespective of status or background or social condition--is the church's lifeline. Preaching the Gospel moves us toward a community in which all cultures are respected, all people are regarded as worthwhile, and all nations have value because God so loved the whole cosmos that He gave His only Son as the Savior. This "theological personalism"--the truth that all people and cultures, by virtue of their creation by God and the

¹⁶²C. F. W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction Between the Law and Gospel* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), 409f.

objective reconciliation achieved by Christ, are the proper focus of the Church's mission--is critical to the city. Everyone needs to hear the Law and Gospel; God desires salvation of every single mother and child, every restless young man roaming urban streets. It's God's will--no one is to be lost!¹⁶³

The sense of community engendered through the Great Commission offers a dynamic contagion for preaching in the military venue. Such preaching helps the listeners see a personal God, Who wants a personal relationship with His people. Charles L. Bartow corroborates this understanding of preaching God on a personal level. Bartow asserted that preaching is a "dialogical engagement" of God, the preacher, and the people. Through the sermon, the people are reminded of the Father's love for fallen humanity through Jesus Christ as attested by the Holy Spirit through the Word.¹⁶⁴

A Lutheran theology of preaching would be incomplete without proclaiming the means of grace available through Baptism and the Lord's Supper. St. Paul speaks to the power of Baptism in Rom. 6:4 NKJV, "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The fruits of repentance and renewal will issue forth as results of Biblical preaching that remembers the Sacrament of Baptism. Additionally, Baptism is further remembered and repeated when it is linked with liturgical worship and supported by Christian hymnody."¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³John Nunes, *Voices From the City* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 84.

¹⁶⁴Charles L. Bartow, *God's Human Speech: A Practical Theology of Proclamation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans, 1997), 120.

¹⁶⁵Grime and Nadasdy, 72.

Likewise, Saint Paul celebrates the assurance of forgiveness in the Lord's Supper in I Cor. 11:26 NJKV, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." "If the risen Christ comes to us in the sacrament with all the treasure he brought from heaven for us, then surely the sermon most properly sets the table by proclaiming this treasure. If the risen Christ brings healing medicine for body and soul in the sacrament, then surely the sermon most lovingly sets the table by inviting sin-sick hearts to receive the medicine."¹⁶⁶ The fortification for believers to engage in spiritual warfare resides in the means of grace. A Lutheran theology of preaching on the Sacraments will draw upon the rich visual elements of water in Baptism and bread and wine in the Lord's Supper to engage the listeners.

Just as military and civilian leaders carefully strategize prior to engaging in battle, Lutheran preachers will counter the homiletical challenges of contemporary society by carefully and prayerfully engaging in the preaching task. American intelligence agencies and Services diligently collect intelligence information to give the Armed Forces a decisive advantage in any military operation. Likewise, preachers will leverage information regarding contemporary society, not to compromise the message of Scripture, but to assist the listener in understanding the Word.

Paul confronted the homiletical challenges in Athens by incorporating his observations of Athenian devotion directed toward the altar of the UNKNOWN GOD into the message he preached on Mars' hill (Acts 17:19ff.). While Paul successfully engaged the Athenians, he encountered resistance when he expounded the doctrine of the

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 53.

Resurrection. "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: . . ." Acts 17:33-34b KJV Likewise, with contemporary preaching. A preacher may successfully engage his listeners but encounter resistance in developing specific doctrines of faith. The next chapter will examine prevailing influences in American society, which have resulted in a doctrinal dilemma for American Christians.

In summary, the Lutheran understanding of Scripture, Preaching, God, the Church, and the Pastorate shape the Lutheran approach to the preaching. The authority of the Pastorate is directly linked to the authority of Scripture, through which the Holy Spirit works faith in individual Lutheran military members and mobilizes them into a community of faith. The next chapter will examine how American Christians may have succumbed to doctrinal illiteracy and the urgency for Lutheran chaplains to promote a confessional presence among Lutheran military members through doctrinal preaching.

CHAPTER 8

A DOCTRINAL DILEMMA--A CONFSSIONAL PRESENCE

The military is a microcosm of society. Various external influences, both political and societal, exert pressure on the military. These influences, which will be addressed in this chapter, pose a doctrinal dilemma for the Christian Church. The operative question for this project is, can preaching in the military setting foster a Lutheran identity in the midst of political and societal influences? And, if so, how?

Robert G. Hughes and Robert Kysar asserted that doctrinal illiteracy has manifested itself at all levels of congregational life. Consumerism, radical individualism and the search for simple and immediate solutions have crept insidiously into the Christian Church.¹⁶⁷ Many Christians as well have succumbed to doctrinal illiteracy. Moreover, I would add that Christians have been lulled into a religio-political illiteracy becoming too comfortable with the religious freedom guaranteed by the 1st Amendment of the Constitution.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Robert G. Hughes and Robert Kysar, *Preaching Doctrine for the Twenty-First Century* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 2ff.

¹⁶⁸ Amendment I to the Constitution of the United States, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

According to Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, American culture is no longer openly supportive of Christianity. Claiming the Constantinian synthesis has ceased to exist, they challenge the Christian Church to assume a spiritual offensive in the world. Their thesis, “The church exists today as resident aliens, an adventurous colony in a society of unbelief,” summons the Church to remember it is a people on the move.¹⁶⁹

The dawning of each new day witnesses another religious group invoking the same amendment to guarantee its right to the free exercise of religion. This is neither an exclusively military phenomenon nor a recent development. Our nation’s courts have actively issued opinions, which have attempted to sharpen the distinction between the free exercise clause and establishment clause of the 1st Amendment. The practice of offering a non-sectarian prayer by a school-selected clergyman at a school graduation ceremony was ruled unconstitutional in *Lee v. Weisman*.¹⁷⁰ The practice of erecting Christmas crèche displays in public settings was challenged in *Lynch v. Donnelly*.¹⁷¹ *Marsh v. Chambers* considered the custom of opening sessions of the Nebraska State Legislature with a prayer.¹⁷² *Lemon v. Kurtzman* generated the three-prong test for impermissible establishment of religion. At stake was the state support of church

¹⁶⁹Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1989), 49.

¹⁷⁰Terry Eastland, ed., *Religious Liberty in the Supreme Court* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), 439.

¹⁷¹*Ibid.*, 307.

¹⁷²*Ibid.*, 293.

¹⁷³*Ibid.*, 213.

affiliated schools.¹⁷³ The institution of military chaplaincy has not escaped judicial scrutiny. The Army Chaplain Corps was legally challenged in *Katcoff v. Marsh*.

All three branches of government have taken a keen interest in shaping the relationship between the state and religion. Representing the executive branch, President George W. Bush attempts to generate support for a faith-based program called the Faith-Based Initiative. President Bush asserted that religious and community groups are, “America’s armies of compassion. . . Charities and community groups cannot do everything. But we strongly believe they can do more.” The President’s plan would allow religious groups to compete for federal grants to provide social services. Bush underscored that some religious groups as Catholic Charities and the Salvation Army already receive public support to provide social services. Bush claimed this initiative would fund the good works of the faithful not faith itself.¹⁷⁴

Representing the judicial branch of government, the Supreme Court’s attempts to reconcile the competing interests in the 1st Amendment of free exercise, establishment, and freedom of speech interest in the relationship between the state and religion revolves around interpreting the establishment clause as alluded to earlier. Interwoven in this issue are the background beliefs of the individual justices. For example, Justice Antonin Scalia, a justice on the Supreme Court, has demonstrated his support for public religion. His stance on nonsectarian prayer (i.e., in the Weisman opinion referred to above) and tolerance reflect his conception of public religion. Scalia believes “government has an interest in promoting tolerance among differing religious groups, and that such an interest

¹⁷⁴CNN, “Bush pushes faith-based program before nation’s mayors,” 12 Nov. 2001 <www.cnn.com/2001/ALLPOLITICS/06/25/bush.faihbased/index.html>

is at least as important as the dissenter's desire to avoid the appearance of participation in a public, nonsectarian prayer."¹⁷⁵

Congress, representing the legislative branch of government, shapes the relationship between state and religion through legislative action and less prominently, but equally as effective, through case-by-case advocacy. The Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) of 1993, sponsored by the 103rd Congress, attempted to support those persons whose religious exercise is substantially burdened by government. The RFRA stated, "government should not substantially burden religious exercise without compelling justification."¹⁷⁶

Some would argue that all three branches of government share a noble, mutual goal in shaping the relationship between state and religion. Namely, all three branches intend to ensure the integrity of the establishment clause of the 1st Amendment. Yet, sanctified wariness is in order. In Matt. 10:16 NKJV, our LORD said, "Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Each of the three branches of government consists of people who support and are supported by political agendas. In contrast to those who would claim the judicial branch is the least political of the three branches, J. D. Hunter concluded that the judicial system symbolizes the battlefield of cultural warfare. Even the Supreme Court, which is

¹⁷⁵Barry Hankins, "A Very Public Religion," *Liberty* 96 (3, May/June 2001): 4.

¹⁷⁶Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 Enrolled Bill (Sent to the President), (19 April 2001).

the caretaker for maintaining the law of the land, is susceptible to political machinations from the selection of presiding justices to the packing of courts.¹⁷⁷

The landscape of America has changed dramatically since our Nation's inception. Tracing the expansion of religious pluralism in America, Hunter asserted that Protestantism enjoyed a hegemonic influence from the founding of America well into the 19th century. A religious consensus, referred to as Judaeo-Christian, emerged with the underpinnings of a biblical theism. The exponential expansion of pluralism, leading up to and following World War II, manifested itself with the growth of new faiths and the phenomenon of those who claimed no religious preference. Hunter suggested two opposing views dominate the current American cultural experience: orthodoxy and progressivism.¹⁷⁸

According to Hunter, the understanding of moral authority defines orthodox and progressive alliances. Those embracing orthodoxy are committed to an external, definable, and transcendent authority. That authority "tells us what is good, what is true, how we should live, and who we are."¹⁷⁹ In contrast, adherents of progressivism are comfortable resymbolizing historic principles of faith in conformity with the contemporary *Zeitgeist*. The remarkable feature of the resulting polarity between the orthodox and progressives is that the formation of alliances cut across denominational and institutional boundary lines. The news media and political arenas have successfully shaped the rhetoric employed by orthodox and progressives by casting issues as pro-this

¹⁷⁷James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 250.

¹⁷⁸Hunter, 71ff.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., 44.

and anti-that—with no middle ground.¹⁸⁰ The unavoidable conclusion is the cultural and religious conflict in America tends to shape the manner in which Christians articulate their faith.

One could argue that the Christian Church in America tends to be susceptible to secular trends. One of the trends prevalent today is the marketing of the church by some Christians who perceive an increasing marginalization of Christianity by society and culture. Consequently, some Christian churches have resorted to marketing the church. The consumer orientation of the corporate sector has crept into the church leading to the development of metrics in pursuit of the successful church. Marketing, with its tendency to package what it promotes in the most favorable light, portrays the church as a self-interested exchange rather than as a gift of God.¹⁸¹

Those who market the church justify this strategy as the only hope for the survival of the church. P. D. Kenneson and J. L. Street sound a warning to those marketing the church. The phenomenon of shopping for churches and the proliferation of programmatic initiatives grow churches at the expense of doctrine. Building a church upon the foundation of the “customer is always right” builds a church at the expense of the church’s core message.¹⁸²

Another trend, which threatens the distinctiveness of the Christian message, is the view of pluralism promoted by John Hick. Hick claimed to build an intellectual case for Christian pluralism, which perceives all of the great world religions as legitimate means

¹⁸⁰Ibid., 45ff.

¹⁸¹Philip D. Kenneson and James L. Street, *Selling Out the Church: The Dangers of Church Marketing* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 15ff.

¹⁸²Ibid., 64ff.

of realizing the ultimate reality known by some as God. According to Hick, Christians must de-emphasize all exclusive aspects of their teachings.¹⁸³ Hick opined that his understanding of religious pluralism does not jettison the basic tenets of Christianity. On the contrary, he asserted that adopting religious pluralism allows Christians to maintain their traditions while simultaneously promoting the legitimacy of other traditions.¹⁸⁴ Yet, Hick abandons the documents of Nicaea and Chalcedon reasoning that their relevance is historically conditioned. Secondly, Hick rejects evangelism since condemned souls do not exist within his intellectual interpretation of religious pluralism.¹⁸⁵

Thus far, we have examined some converging forces, which have exerted a profound impact upon the identity and mission of the Christian Church. The government, special interest groups, polarized groups inside and outside of the church, and trends have to varying degrees shaped how Christians understand the role of the Church in America. Some Christians argue that the Church must be involved in the political realm in order to counterbalance subjectivism, rationalism and secularism. For others, a radical understanding of religious pluralism represents the most viable means of making the Church more inclusive and less threatening to society.

In view of these converging dynamics, how can the LCMS shape its future rather than be shaped by it. How can the LCMS maintain its identity and mission, remain secured to its doctrinal anchorage, and yet present a formidable witness in society, in general, and the military, in specific? Is it possible for the LCMS to assume a

¹⁸³John Hick, *A Christian Theology of Religions* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 14ff.

¹⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 42ff.

¹⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 95ff.

confessional presence in the military without making the Church a pawn in the hands of the state? Or, are we hopelessly and dangerously astride the horns of dilemma?

Stanley Hauerwas challenged the entitlement thinking so prevalent among American Christians. Rather than imitating secular society and its language to articulate the message of the Church, Hauerwas sounded the clarion call for the Church to return to its sacred language—the language of redemption and forgiveness. Rather than attempting to make “our God at home in America,” Christians are called to live the core message of the Church as a bold witness in America.¹⁸⁶

Hauerwas and Willimon suggest that Constantinianism lulled Christians into a posture of spiritual complacency. According to Hauerwas and Willimon, Constantinianism attempted to coerce people to God rather than attract people to God through conversion and transformation. They suggest that in order for the Christian Church to regain its spiritual fighting edge, it is necessary to “remind Christians that we are in a fight.”¹⁸⁷ They encourage Christians to know the enemy and engage the enemy. That which domesticates Christians, making them live obligingly to the state, is the enemy. Strangely enough, in spite of their pacifist leanings, Hauerwas and Willimon employ Marine basic training as the operative analogy for Christians engaging the enemy. Just as the United States Marine Corps turns civilians into Marines through intense enculturation, the Christian Church will seek to deliberately inculcate the practices characterizing discipleship. Key ingredients of discipleship are the spiritual

¹⁸⁶Stanley Hauerwas, *A Better Hope: Resources for a Church Confronting Capitalism, Democracy, and Postmodernity* (Brazos Press, 2000), 45ff.

¹⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 33.

disciplines that identify Christians as a people set apart. Marital fidelity, raising children and chastity represent some of the vital disciplines associated with discipleship.¹⁸⁸

The call to regain the spiritual fighting edge is punctuated by a cover story in the July 23, 2001 issue of the *National Review*. Robert P. George in his article, “The 28th Amendment,” warns Americans to protect marriage and democracy in America. George referenced the assault on the institution of marriage by those aggressively pursuing same-sex marriages. George stated that same-sex marriage activists “are putting forward a number of theories to persuade judges to declare the Defense of Marriage Act, and the state acts, unconstitutional.”¹⁸⁹ The fact that activists have already scored a major victory in Vermont with a “civil unions” law that is synonymous with same-sex marriage underscores the capriciousness of American democracy.¹⁹⁰ It is the stroke-of-a-pen changes by our government of the moral and ethical underpinnings of American culture, which validate the warning of Hauerwas and Willimon against placing implicit trust in the government to protect that which the Church holds sacred.

It is indeed precarious at best for Christians to expect the state to enact for the populace what they themselves lack the resolve to exemplify in their lives. Aristotle’s understanding of *polis* serves to illustrate how American Christians have turned individual freedom, potential and rights into theological presuppositions. For Aristotle, the *polis* served to maintain order and regulate society. In America, *polis* means that society exists for the individual to exercise his rights. Hauerwas and Willimon stated,

¹⁸⁸Ibid., 73ff.

¹⁸⁹Robert P. George, “The 28th Amendment,” *National Review* (23 July 2001): 33.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., 33.

“What we call “freedom” becomes the tyranny of our own desires. We are kept detached, strangers to one another as we go about fulfilling our needs and asserting our rights. The individual is given a status that makes incomprehensible the Christian notion of salvation as a political, social phenomenon in the family of God.”¹⁹¹

Lesslie Newbigen offers a vigorous corrective against making the *polis* the instrument of personal fulfillment. The task, says Newbigen, is to equip Christians to consecrate public and private life to God. “It means training and equipping them to be active followers of Jesus in his assault on the principalities and powers which he has disarmed on his cross. And it means sustaining them in bearing the cost of that warfare.”¹⁹²

Thus far, a compelling case has been made that the Christian Church cannot and should not rely on the state to validate its existence. It behooves the Church to assume an alert posture of spiritual warfare to regain the fighting edge. Additionally, in attempting to establish its legitimacy along Constantinian lines, the Church has unwittingly surrendered itself to the capricious will of the state. Yet, is there a Biblical precedent for the Church to engage the state at any level while remaining faithful to Scripture (Deut. 30:14) and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20)? How might the LCMS train for spiritual warfare and take that fight to the enemy?

Whatever the LCMS does as a Church, it must have solid Scriptural and Confessional testimony as its foundation. The most recent Synodical Convention reiterated that the LCMS only engages in activities that are in conformity with sound

¹⁹¹Hauerwas and Willimon, *Resident Aliens*, 32f.

¹⁹²Lesslie Newbigen, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1989), 238.

doctrine. David Mulder, an essayist of the 61st Regular Convention called for LCMS Lutherans to go to war. “The war is not with each other; the devil is the enemy. . . . If we remain in our base camps, how will those who are dying hear the Good News about Jesus?”¹⁹³ Mulder’s essay underscored the urgency of proclaiming the Gospel and being alert to Satan’s attempts of frustrating the proclamation of the Gospel. Clearly, the LCMS attempts to steer a steady course in the storm of this pluralistic society. In order to engage in spiritual warfare, the LCMS will train like it fights. Training like we fight means knowing the enemy, understanding the battlefield, donning body armor with offensive weapons, and assuming the attitude of battle.

In the book of Ephesians, St. Paul identifies both the enemy, describes the field of battle and encourages us to put on the armor of God: “Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” Eph. 6:11f. NIV St. Paul described the type of attitude we will want to adopt for the impending battle: “Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer.” 2 Tim. 2:3f. NIV

As we engage in warfare, we fight all the while knowing that Christ has already won the victory for us. St. Paul said, “We are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” Rom. 8:37 NIV We also recognize that this is a multi-front war. Satan

¹⁹³David Mulder, “Tell the Good News About Jesus to Those Around You,” essay presented at the 61st Regular Convention of the LC—MS, 19 July 2001 <<http://www.lcms.org/convention/news/c05-37.htm>>

attempts to destroy the Christian Church by destroying one soul at a time. An all too often ignored front of spiritual warfare is the age group of 18-26 year olds. Some members of this age group leave their homes and home congregations to join the military. Our Church has an obligation to ensure our Lutheran men and women, who join the military, are doctrinally invigorated to wage the spiritual warfare of their lives.

Thus far, we have considered whether or not we have become spiritually soft. We have examined the various forces that attempt to shape how we believe and live. Contemporary Christians as Hauerwas, Willimon and Newbigen have sounded the alarm that we are in the midst of spiritual warfare and must regain the fighting edge. Spiritual training through doctrinal preaching is an essential component of regaining the fighting edge. Each front of warfare requires preparation and training in order to successfully fight the battle.

The spiritual front of military service involves several thousand of our LCMS men and women. While serving the military is a patriotic and noble commitment, the analysis of the role of war in liberal democracies by Hauerwas and Willimon challenges us, as LCMS Lutherans to reflect on the type of ministry we deliver to Lutheran men and women who join the military:

States, particularly liberal democracies, are heavily dependent on wars for moral coherence. All societies may go to war, but war for us liberal democracies is special because it gives us a sense of worth necessary to sustain our state. . . We are quite literally a people that morally live off our wars because they give us the necessary basis for self-sacrifice so that a people who have been taught to pursue only their own interest can at times be mobilized to die for one another.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴Hauerwas and Willimon, *Resident Aliens*, 35.

In view of this analysis, one could argue that the LCMS should not embark in a relationship with the government to provide Word and Sacrament Ministry to Lutheran military members. The risk of compromising the Church's doctrinal and institutional integrity must be evaluated within the context of Scripture and the Confessions. Scripture illustrates men and women of God working within the institution of government without compromising their faith. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were government appointees (Dan. 1). Nehemiah served as cupbearer to King Artaxerxes (Neh. 2). Joseph was second in command to Pharaoh in Egypt (Gen. 41). While no direct reference is made in Scripture to an institutional chaplaincy, mention is made of the priest addressing the soldiers on the battlefield (Deut. 20:1-4).

Yet, as Hauerwas and Willimon contend, the risk of compromising our doctrinal integrity in this pluralistic context is real. We depend upon the state to guarantee our religious freedom at our peril. On the other hand, maintaining the opportunity to witness to the state through our involvement in military chaplaincy reminds the state of God's presence. Such a witness requires fidelity to God's Word and sanctified courage.

With his understanding of the two kingdoms, Luther preserved confessional presence and doctrinal integrity. Following Rom. 13:4, Luther viewed the secular kingdom, or civil government, as established by God to enhance life in this fallen world. Preaching on Matt. 26:51-56, the arrest of Jesus in Gethsemane, Luther affirmed the institution of government:

This text is, therefore, significant and worthy to be noted: that God has instituted civil authority and placed the sword into its hand that license may be curbed, lest savagery and other sins grow out of all bounds. If God had not conferred this divine power upon man, what sort of lives, I ask you, would we be leading? Because He foresaw that there would always be much evil in the world, He established this external remedy, which the world had hitherto not had, lest

license spread beyond limit. Thus God safeguards our life and property as with a fence or a wall.¹⁹⁵

The spiritual kingdom, manifested by Christian righteousness, is rooted in faith created by the Holy Spirit. Christians live simultaneously in both kingdoms. The Lutheran distinction of the two kingdoms should not be construed as quiescence on social issues or escapism from the world, but from an unwavering conviction of carefully distinguishing the Gospel from the civil order maintained by an earthly government. Luther's understanding of the two kingdoms and the Christian's responsibility in the secular kingdom receives further attestation in *Augustana* Articles XVI and XXVIII (Please refer to the discussion on page 7, CHAPTER 1).

Maintaining the distinction between the two kingdoms, our Church can walk confidently in its doctrine and confession. Robert Kolb's analysis of Christian doctrine and confession elucidates what is meant by doctrine and confession as well as the obligation of the Church in witnessing the substance of that doctrine and confession to the world. Kolb explained that doctrine, derived from the Latin *doctrina*, designates the content of Scripture as well as the conveying of the content into the lives of those hearing God's Word. The aim of teaching doctrine is not intended to be the robotic programming of information; it is the application of doctrine to the specific context of our hearers bridging the gap between the sinner and God's Word. Through teaching the content of Scripture, the Holy Spirit builds the bridge and forms a relationship between God and the sinner.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵Plass, 594.1814

¹⁹⁶Robert Kolb, *The Christian Faith* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), 11f.

The purpose of the Church's confession flows from the understanding of doctrine as the content of Scripture and the conveying of the content of Scripture. When the Church adheres to a common confession, believers will walk together confidently in that confession of faith. When the confession of faith is not clear, confusion will abound disrupting both the internal harmony and external testimony. "God's people live from the Word. The Word calls the church into being. When it strays from this Word of His, the church begins to die. Only in the Word of the Lord and in its proclamation and teaching does the church find purpose and life."¹⁹⁷

The accomplished novelist, playwright, and scholar, Dorothy L. Sayers, challenged the popularly held perception of her day that creed, doctrine, and dogma were dull. Sayers issued an indictment against Churchmen for their utter neglect of dogma, asserting that dullness resulted from the neglect of dogma.

Somehow or other, and with the best intentions, we have shown the world the typical Christian in the likeness of a crashing and rather ill-natured bore--and this in the Name of One who assuredly never bored a soul in those thirty-three years during which He passed through this world like a flame. Let us, in Heaven's name, drag out the Divine Drama from under the dreadful accumulation of slipshod thinking and trashy sentiment heaped upon it, and set it on an open stage to startle the world into some sort of vigorous reaction. If the pious are the first to be shocked, so much the worse for the pious--others will enter the Kingdom of Heaven before them. If all men are offended because of Christ, let them be offended; but where is the sense of their being offended at something that is not Christ and is nothing like Him? We do Him singularly little honor by watering down His personality till it could not offend a fly. Surely it is not the business of the Church to adapt Christ to men, but to adapt men to Christ.¹⁹⁸

According to Sayers, teaching the doctrine of Scripture is absolutely essential and can be exciting. Our Church is committed to teaching the doctrine of Scripture to our

¹⁹⁷Ibid., 274.

¹⁹⁸Dorothy L. Sayers, *Creed or Chaos: Why Christians Must Choose Either Dogma or Disaster* (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 1949), 35f.

Lutheran men and women serving in the Armed Forces. Since military members face time constraints limiting active participation in spiritual formation, the sermon represents the principal means of transmitting doctrine to Lutheran service members. The event of conveying the content of our faith need not be dull and lifeless.

In summary, the chaplain can open the storehouse of doctrinal treasures to those assembled for worship through the sermon. The faithful stewardship and administration of the Church's doctrinal treasures in the military context requires a homiletical strategy. Such a strategy recognizes the multi-disciplinary contributions of cross cultural studies and acknowledges the homiletical challenges of ministering within an institution of the government. For a homiletical strategy to be unabashedly Lutheran, it will imitate the legacy of Luther by integrating the proclamation of the Word, liturgy, hymnody, and sound doctrine with the seasons of the Church Year. The next chapter will propose a homiletical strategy and demonstrate how military imagery, rightly used, can further the proclamation of the Gospel.

CHAPTER 9

A HOMILETICAL STRATEGY

For those familiar with the war in the Pacific during World War II, just the mention of *PT 109* arouses vivid recollections of an American patrol craft, commanded by then Navy Lieutenant John F. Kennedy. On August 2, 1943, a *Japanese Destroyer rammed PT 109*. Two of the thirteen Americans on the patrol craft were killed. While a movie by same name sensationalized the heroism of the future president in the eventual rescue of the survivors, a critical element of the crew's rescue has gone relatively ignored. Two Solomon islanders, who served as coastal scouts for the Allied forces, abetted the rescue of Kennedy and his crewmates. The scouts, Eroni Kumana and Biuku Gasa, made contact with Kennedy and took a message he had written on a coconut to a Naval base. A plan was devised and *PT 157* was dispatched to rescue the crewmembers of *PT 109* on August 8.¹⁹⁹

Although, the real life drama of *PT 109* makes for exciting discussion, the story, properly incorporated into a sermon to illustrate a Scriptural truth, can build a bridge for the listener. For example, the preacher could use the acronym S.O.S. meaning Save Our Ship. The crew of *PT 109* lost their ship. One could say the priority of the crewmembers shifted to Save Our Skin. The two Solomon islanders, acting as scouts, formed the vital

¹⁹⁹Robert D. Ballard, "The Search for PT 109," *National Geographic* 202 (December 2002): 78-87.

link in the rescue of the crewmembers. This story could illustrate the doctrine of Justification in a sermon text, namely, God sent His Son to Save Our Skin--Our Soul--from the jaws of eternal death. By further extending the story to the specific observance, perhaps Mission Sunday, the preacher could apply the role played by the two scouts to illustrate how God uses individuals to carry out His plan of salvation. Contingent upon the manner of application, military imagery will facilitate hymn selection. The preacher would incorporate hymns with nautical metaphors, as, "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me."²⁰⁰ By drawing the attention of the congregation to the church building, the preacher is afforded an opportunity to explicate the nautical symbolism of church architecture. The congregation enjoys a full sensory experience when the preacher strives for organic unity with sermon, worship, music, and art.²⁰¹

The aforementioned example of working military imagery to serve the entire worship service reinforces the thesis of this project. The rationale behind recommending a homiletical strategy is based upon the conviction that a Lutheran identity among military members can be fostered when chaplains adopt both a long-range view of worship and the intentional application of military imagery. The application of cross cultural research to the military setting supports the view of the military as a culture of sub-cultures, with its own receptor language. The literature of leadership and strategic planning offer the chaplain resources to hone administrative skill and embrace a long-term view of worship planning. Military literature and the art of rhetoric offer the chaplain a stylistic reservoir to serve the substance of the sermon, namely, the Word of

²⁰⁰Commission on Worship, *Lutheran Worship*, 513.

²⁰¹Grime and Nadasdy, 191 ff.

God. Scripture often uses the language of war to illustrate God's relationship to man and man's relationship to man. Military imagery has characterized the Lutheran exposition of Scripture and hymnody. Yet, a homiletical strategy also demands pastoral discretion on behalf of the chaplain. Military imagery may not always be appropriate to the sermon text, the observance, or the context of time.

John H. C. Fritz, in *The Preacher's Manual*, published in 1941, stated that the Christian pulpit is desecrated when the preacher engages in diatribes on politics, nationalism, and economics. Fritz submitted the following *New York Times* editorial to underscore his point:

I wish that ministers, priests, and Rabbis, in their sermons, would stop talking about the war. In these days, more than ever, men and women need religious faith--hope and confidence and courage that only religion can give. There is no such thing as a national religion and no more than there is national happiness. Religion is individual. I wish ministers knew how sick and weary college students are of hearing the war dominate sermons. Every day in the newspapers and on the radio they hear and read speeches and articles about the war. Then, if they go to church, they hear, both in the prayers and in the sermons, nothing but war talk, either for or against it, about as inspiring as lukewarm soup. What every individual needs is the regeneration that comes through religion.²⁰²

The highly charged period leading to American involvement in World War II was characterized by its polarizing rhetoric. The above editorial, with its reference to “war dominate sermons” leads one to conclude that some preachers turned worship into a political forum to foment pro-war or anti-war sentiments. Understood contextually, Fritz’s warning against the desecration of the pulpit is directed at the indiscriminate use

²⁰²John H. C. Fritz, *The Preacher's Manual* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), 4.

of the language of war. The Lutheran understanding of Law-Gospel preaching and the two kingdoms would overwhelmingly reject the indiscriminate usage of the language of war. The Lutheran understanding of Law-Gospel preaching operates as a safeguard against the misuse of the pulpit through its adherence to the principle of the Gospel remaining the centerpiece of worship.²⁰³ The Lutheran understanding of the two kingdoms maintains the probity of the pulpit by rejecting the entanglement of Christ's message with the state's agenda.²⁰⁴

Using military imagery to advance an agenda of asserting control over or marginalizing the laity betrays another manifestation of indiscriminate use. Some of the earliest Christian writings elevated the calling of the Christian missionary and teacher at the expense of the laity.²⁰⁵ Defining the true Church and citing 1 Pet. 2:9 "You are a royal priesthood," the Lutheran Confessions issue a warning against elevating the clergy at the expense of the laity.²⁰⁶ Rather than minimizing the role of the laity, the goal of military imagery in preaching is to engage and mobilize the laity.

The preeminence of the Gospel, the doctrine of the two kingdoms, and the doctrine of the Church form the bedrock for the homiletical strategy recommended in this chapter. Rather than indiscriminate usage, this project advocates for a judicious application of military imagery, striving toward an organic unity in worship. It should be underscored that military imagery is only a means of translating the language of Scripture

²⁰³Schmitt, 55.

²⁰⁴Sasse, 175.

²⁰⁵Harnack, 39ff.

²⁰⁶Tappert, 331.69.

into a language readily apprehended by the military audience.

To optimize the organic unity in worship and sermon preparation, I have designed a Worship and Sermon Planning Matrix. The purpose of the Worship and Sermon Planning Matrix, recommended in this chapter, is to assist the preacher with the integration of military imagery, observance, the sermon text, the sermon hymn, and a key doctrine. Moreover, the matrix exercise abets the distillation of a clearly defined theme and goal for each sermon. Most importantly, the focal point of the matrix is the Word or text of Scripture, “which alone can determine doctrine.”²⁰⁷ The liturgical seasons and hymns are vehicles for transmitting the truths of Scripture and key doctrines of faith. “Standing firmly in the tradition of the trinitarian and Christological formulations of the 4th and 5th centuries, we believe that sinners are justified (declared right) with the Creator God by grace alone (*sola gratia*), through faith alone (*sola fide*), on the basis of Scripture alone (*sola scriptura*). These three great ‘Reformation *solas*’ form a handy outline of what Missouri Synod Lutherans believe, teach, and confess.”²⁰⁸ The three *solas*, articulated in the sermon and sung in the hymns, foster a Lutheran identity and form the basis for the Worship and Sermon Planning Matrix, which follows:

²⁰⁷Samuel H. Nafzger, *An Introduction to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1994), 6.

²⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 7.

Worship and Sermon Planning Matrix
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Observance	Sermon Text	Sermon Hymn	Doctrine	Imagery	Theme	Goal
St. Michael and All Angels (September 29)	Psalm 103:19-22 *Joshua 5:13-15 Revelation 12:7-12 Matthew 18:1-11	LW 171 "Holy God, We Praise Your Name"	Angels	Prisoner of War	Lord, I'm Surrounded!	To understand and be comforted by the role of angels as ministering spirits.
Reformation Day (October 31)	Psalm 46 *Isaiah 55:1-11 Revelation 14:6-7 Matthew 11:12-15	LW 297 "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"	Justification	Uniform Code of Military Justice (MCM Appendix 11: Forms of Sentences)	This Court-Martial Sentences You To ___!	Only the Gospel frees us from the condemnation of Law.
All Saints' Day (November 1)	Psalm 65:1-8 Deuteronomy 33:1-3 *Revelation 7:2-17 Matthew 5:1-12	LW 193 "By All Your Saints in Warfare" HS 880 "For All the Faithful Women"	Election	Rules of Engagement: The Fog and Friction of Spiritual Warfare	Are We The Good Guys?	Our identity depends upon the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Worship and Sermon Planning Matrix
(Page two of two)

Observance	Scripture	Sermon Hymn	Doctrine	Imagery	Theme	Goal
Good Friday	Psalm 22:1-11 Isaiah 53:4-12 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 *John 18:1- 19:42	LW 110 "Go To Dark Gethsemane"	Reconciliation	Desertion	Deserter turned Hero	In Christ we are reconciled with the Father; we are restored to service in the Kingdom.
Armed Forces Sunday (May)	Psalm 27 Nehemiah 4 *2 Timothy 2:1- 4 Matthew 26:36- 46	LW 299 "Fight The Good Fight"	Sanctification: The Christian Life and the Cross	Boot Camp	A Good Soldier	Until the Lord takes us to our heavenly home, we are engaged in ceaseless warfare.
Independence Day (July 4)	Psalm 116 *Job 19:23-27 I Corinthians 15:50ff John 17:6-19	LW 501 "God of Our Fathers"	Eschatology	Forgotten War(s)	Lest we forget	Precious in the LORD's sight are the death of His saints.

* Designates the sermon text.

The rationale for preaching military imagery on the six observances noted in the matrix is based upon my observation that certain ecclesiastical festivals present the most favorable opportunities to preach sermons with military imagery. For example, Michael and All Angels, celebrated September 29,²⁰⁹ is the same month as Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) Day, which is celebrated on September 20.²¹⁰ Reformation Day, celebrated on October 31, is the same month as the Navy Birthday, which is celebrated on October 13, 1775. All Saints' Day, celebrated on November 1, is the same month as the Marine Corps Birthday, which is November 10 (the same day as Martin Luther's Birthday) and Veterans' Day, which is celebrated on November 11. While Good Friday is a moveable worship observance, the overarching theme of desertion finds parallels in military literature.

The doctrinal focus, hymn selection, worship observance, and specific military imagery support the overarching theme of the sermon text. The appointed lessons listed under the "One Year Series' in the Lutheran Worship²¹¹ hymnal were used for the first four observances annotated in the matrix. For Armed Forces Sunday and Independence Day, I selected readings based upon the popular military themes of Boot Camp and Forgotten Wars respectively.

²⁰⁹Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1947), 566. This and subsequent references to ecclesiastical observances in the paragraph are taken from this source.

²¹⁰Chief of Naval Education and Training. *Navy Leader Planning Guide 2002*, "Navy Professional Reading List" and "U. S. Marine Reading List," 12 Dec. 2002 <http://www.cnet.navy.mil/cnet/nlpg2002/monthly/naval_reading.pdf>

²¹¹Commission on Worship, *Lutheran Worship*, 8ff.

A twofold benefit arises from using the matrix to select a doctrinal focus for each sermon. First, the preacher develops the discipline of concentrating on a doctrine that best supports the central thought of the sermon text. Second, the preacher sets about the task of intentionally moving the listeners through the fundamental doctrines of faith during the Church Year. The pastoral responsibility of designing a blueprint to inculcate sound doctrine is especially crucial in the military, where Lutheran military personnel may not always be stationed among an active Lutheran worshipping community. The *Augustana* with its twenty-eight articles of faith and the nineteen doctrines²¹² explicated by John Theodore Mueller's *Christian Dogmatics*,²¹³ offer the preacher a structure for developing the doctrinal component of the matrix.

The poignant commentary offered by Fred L. Precht in the *Lutheran Worship Hymnal Companion* enables the preacher to establish a direct linkage between hymn and sermon. For example, Precht's exposition of "The Son of God Goes Forth To War," included an excursus of a coalition intent upon changing the war imagery of the hymn. Strangely enough, a pacifist, William P. Merrill successfully refuted the coalition's effort to eliminate the war imagery.²¹⁴ Such vignettes enhance the theme of the sermon. Please refer to APPENDIX 3 for an excursus on incorporating hymn commentary into the sermon.

With the exception of All Saints' Day, I have recommended one sermon hymn. The *Hymnal Supplement 98*, with "For All the Faithful Women," affords the Lutheran

²¹²Tappert, 27ff.

²¹³John Theodore Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), XVIIff.

²¹⁴Precht, 324.

chaplain a splendid opportunity to encourage spiritual formation among Lutheran female military personnel by recognizing female heroes of faith.²¹⁵ Stanzas from both "By All Your Saints in Warfare" and "For All the Faithful Women" may be sung.

While military imagery may be drawn from a variety of sources, the recommended imagery in the matrix is drawn from military observances, military justice, law of armed conflict, military history and indoctrination. Pastoral discretion is required in selecting imagery that illustrates and not distracts from the sermon text. The selected imagery should serve, not dominate, the sermon text. It may not be in the best interest of the sermon text or audience to refer to war movies in the sermon. For example, while the preacher refers to a certain scene in a movie, members of the audience may become disengaged from the sermon and text. Of necessity, the preacher will exert the diagnostic skill essential in selecting the most appropriate type of illustrative material to expound the text and fit the audience and the unique backgrounds and temperaments of individuals in the audience.²¹⁶

The planning discipline advocated by the Worship and Sermon Planning Matrix produces the greatest benefit when the preacher has not ignored the necessity of prayer in sermon preparation. John Owen said, "For any man to undertake the interpretation of any portion of Scripture without invocation of God, to be taught and instructed by his Spirit, is a high provocation of him, nor shall I expect the discovery of truth from any one who

²¹⁵Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, *Hymnal Supplement 98* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1998), 880.

²¹⁶C. F. W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), 57.

thus proudly engages in a work so much above his ability.”²¹⁷ Through prayerful meditation on God’s Word, the discipline of worship and sermon planning will glorify God and edify the believer. The ensuing discussion, rooted in prayerful meditation on God’s Word, will offer a series of reflections on selected military imagery culminating in recommended alignment with Scripture.

The first reflection will focus on the applicability of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Military personnel, both officers and enlisted, tend to be well read, well informed, and have a keen awareness of world events. In fact, both the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps encourage Sailors and Marines to engage in professional reading through their annual Reading Lists. Among the books on the annual Chief of Naval Operations and Commandant of the Marine Corps Reading Lists is *The Rhetoric* by Aristotle. Employing Aristotle’s treatment of man’s motive in doing evil, the Lutheran chaplain can develop the effect of God’s Law on man. Additionally, it corroborates the Scriptural testimony of sin and the force of the Law. Unregenerate man sees that the advantage to be gained by doing wrong outweighs the disadvantages of possible retribution.²¹⁸ Furthermore, Aristotle’s explanation of the classes of unjust actions assists the military congregation to understand that the sin of an individual may affect the community.²¹⁹ The Uniform Code of Military Justice suggests

²¹⁷John W. Doberstein, *Minister’s Prayer Book* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1967), 311.

²¹⁸Lane Cooper, trans., *The Rhetoric of Aristotle* (New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1932), 67ff.

²¹⁹*Ibid.*, 70ff.

an appurtenant connection of Aristotle's analysis of wrongdoing to illustrate the power of the Law.

The Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) represents the law governing the conduct of both Officers and Enlisted personnel. The mere mention of the number of an article of the UCMJ identifies the charge leveled against a military member. For example, every Officer knows that Article 133 of the UCMJ administers, "CONDUCT UNBECOMING AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN: Any commissioned officer, cadet, or midshipman who is convicted of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman shall be punished as a court-martial may direct."²²⁰ Referencing the punitive punch of the UCMJ drives home the uncompromising force of God's Law.

According to Dean Nadasdy, part of the persuasive force of preaching Law and Gospel resides in an appreciation of the Law-to-Gospel Move. Nadasdy offered a list of questions to assist the preacher in a diagnostic application of the Law: "1. Does the sermon's Law hold listeners accountable to God for their sin? 2. Does the preached Law apply to every listener? 3. Does the sermon take the Law to its deepest level? 4. Is the sermon's mood in applying the Law appropriate to the text and audience? 5. Is the articulation of the sermon's Gospel symmetrical with the articulation of the sermon's Law? 6. Is the sermon's Gospel sufficient to overcome the sermon's Law? 7. Does the sermon's Gospel have wings? Does the sermon present a personal Gospel?"²²¹

²²⁰Department of Defense, *Manual for Courts-Martial United States (2000 Edition)*, NAVSO P-6064 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2000), "Uniform Code of Military Justice," Part IV: Punitive Articles, 77-134.

²²¹Nadasdy, 40f.

Words like the "Brig," "Fort Leavenworth," and "hard labor," strike a chord with military personnel, namely, punishment. Military personnel want to ensure they are on the right side of the bars at Fort Leavenworth, the maximum-security prison for the military. The Gospel stands in stark contrast to God's Law, represented by the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and God's condemnation, represented by Fort Leavenworth or the Brig. Jacob A. O. Preus captures this remarkable forensic contrast:

"As people guilty before the righteous Judge, the verdict of not guilty can be heard only as the greatest good news. How wonderful! Although all your thoughts, words, and deeds make you 'guilty as sin' before God, on account of Christ you are acquitted. God declares you to be not guilty of any crimes of which you had been charged. The case is closed. Court is adjourned. You are free to go. This is not because God ignored the crimes. It is because He exacted the punishment against His own innocent Son. Christ suffered the wages of sin in our place."²²²

When a military judge says, "Not guilty on all counts," the military member is free. Freedom from the charge of misconduct means being free to don his uniform, return to his unit, and resume his military duties. Legal metaphors in the military setting not only convey the sense of guilt but also loss of one's position, loss of rank, separation from one's unit and comrades. "Paul says that a person is declared righteous or just by God in the legal sense (that is, not guilty of crimes) on the basis of God's grace, on account of Jesus Christ, apart from works of the Law. . . . The righteousness that justifies is precisely God's very own justice. He gives it to us by declaring us, as a Judge would, 'Not guilty.'"²²³ Only the verdict of "Not guilty" can restore the sinner to the Lord's family.

²²²Preus, 113.

²²³Ibid., 109.

The second reflection will focus on desertion. AWOL, or absence without leave, is "Any member of the armed forces who, without authority--(1) fails to go to his appointed place of duty at the time prescribed; (2) goes from that place; or (3) absents himself or remains absent from his unit, organization, or place of duty at which he is required to be at the time prescribed; shall be punished as a court-martial may direct."²²⁴ Of course, there are a myriad of reasons why a military member might resort to going AWOL. Family problems, the fear of combat, lack of adjustment to military life, are reasons frequently invoked by military members when they are apprehended or when they surrender to military authority.

Contingent upon the intent of the military member, absence without leave may contribute to the circumstantial evidence establishing a charge of desertion--a much more serious charge. "The accused must have intended to remain away permanently from the unit, organization, or place of duty."²²⁵ As with absence without leave, military members offer a plethora of reasons to explain why they resorted to desertion. The maximum punishment for desertion with intent to avoid hazardous duty or to shirk important service is a dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and confinement for 5 years. During time of war, the punishment could be death.²²⁶ Perhaps the stigma associated with desertion, namely, cowardice is more odious than the punishment imposed by the military. How does one explain desertion to a child or a grandchild?

²²⁴*Manual for Courts-Martial United States (2000 Edition)*, Article 86.

²²⁵*Ibid.*, Article 85.

²²⁶*Ibid.*

When applying for a job, how does one explain why he deserted his comrades in the thick of battle?

The military imagery of desertion furnishes a potent medium of clarifying the account of Peter denying Christ (John 18:15ff. and Luke 22:34ff.):

Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. (John 18:17) And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. (John 18:25) One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew. (John 18:26f.) And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly. (Luke 22:61f.) KJV

Since desertion and the stigma associated with desertion tend to elicit ardent responses from those serving honorably in the military, it is essential for the preacher to ensure that the proclamation of the Gospel is symmetrical with the articulation of the Law. "To put it still another way, the Gospel must be the right protocol of treatment for the illness diagnosed. In crafting Law/Gospel sermons, metaphors continue on both sides of the pivotal Law-to-Gospel move."²²⁷ For the Gospel to be as persuasive as the Law, desertion must be counterbalanced with full restoration.

Strangely enough, during the Civil War, there was a man who was a two-time deserter turned hero. William F. Tilson, at the age of 16, qualified to be a member of Company E, of the 2nd Regiment, United States Sharpshooters. Even though he fought in the Antietam Campaign and the Battle of Chancellorsville, Army records portray Tilson as a discipline problem and report him absent from his Company. He was

²²⁷Nadasdy, 37.

subsequently charged with desertion. He re-enlisted at the end of his obligated service. He fought in the Battle of the Wilderness, where he was wounded. Perhaps due to a romantic relationship, which culminated in marriage, he deserted a second time. He was discharged from the Sharpshooters but joined Company G of the 4th Vermont Volunteers. During the assault on Petersburg, Tilson was seriously wounded by canister-shot; the lower portion of his right leg was amputated. "In an important account of Tilson's military record, in his own hand on his GAR papers, the two time deserter turned hero; a man who reenlisted after his four year obligation was met only to lose his leg soon-after, wrote the following: 'Being wounded nine times, and with the loss of my right foot being the most serious. The last one causing Uncle Sam to conclude my services of little importance.'"²²⁸

While Tilson's story does not have the patented Hollywood ending in which he was lavished with riches and honors because of his service, it reinforces the theme of restoration. When Jesus restored Peter, the restoration included full participation in carrying out the mission of Christ--"Feed my sheep." John 21:15ff. KJV Just as Tilson, upon being restored to his unit, returned to the field of battle, Peter was restored his unit, namely, the Church, and returned to the battlefield of spiritual warfare in his LORD's service. We have not been redeemed to sit out the war. Christ has called us into battle: "Onward, Christian soldiers, Marching as to war, With the cross of Jesus Going on before, Christ, the royal Master, Leads against the Foe; Forward into battle See His

²²⁸Wayne Mattox, "Special Feature: A Civil War Antiques Story," *Antique Talk*, 25 July 2002 <[http:// www.antiquetalk.com/column 148.htm](http://www.antiquetalk.com/column 148.htm)>

banners go! Onward, Christian soldiers, Marching as to war, With the cross of Jesus
Going on before."²²⁹

Richard R. Caemmerer underscores the role of the preacher and Church in
equipping Christians for spiritual warfare and the mission of Christ:

The Christian preacher wants to enlist his people for Christian witness and evangelism. . . The church prepares for witness as it trains its people to support one another's faith and witness. St. Paul's contemporaries knew that when he spoke of putting on the "whole armour of God," he thought of no solitary act, but of a troop of soldiers helping one another into their breastplates and greaves (Eph. 6:13-18). So the church today has to be enlisted person by person, not just for telling the story to those on the outside but for helping one another to the life and word that tells it. Parallel to this program is the support of missions. Far from being a fund-raising project on behalf of a national or area denomination, preaching to the goal of support for missions is a part of the Christian community's rallying itself for God's business.²³⁰

The Gospel has pronounced us not guilty of the charge of desertion. The Gospel has restored us to the Father through the blood of Christ. The Gospel has restored us to the community of faith. The Gospel emboldens us for spiritual battle. St. Paul reminds us, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Eph. 6:12 KJV But he also reminds us the victory is already won in Christ, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Rom. 8:37 KJV.

The third reflection will focus on what it means to be a prisoner of war.

"Longest-Held Vietnam POW Dies." This was the title of a newspaper article about

²²⁹The Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America, *The Lutheran Hymnal* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), "Onward, Christian Soldiers," by Sabine Baring-Gould, #658.

²³⁰Caemmerer, 194.

Colonel Floyd Thompson. Unfortunately, Colonel Thompson's prisoner of war status did not end when he returned home to American soil. He was shot down and taken prisoner by Viet Cong guerrillas. They beat him and hung him from his extremities. During his nine years of imprisonment, he tried to escape five times but was always recaptured and punished. Initially, his wife was informed that he was missing in action. She was already living with another man when the Army confirmed he was still alive from a North Vietnamese radio broadcast. His wife forbade the Army from publicly announcing his prisoner of war status. She told their children he was dead. Ironically, he could not even find solace in the length of his POW status. For several years, Everett Alvarez was recognized as the longest-held POW. After returning to America, Thompson attempted to regain his family but could not. He divorced his wife, became estranged from his children, and sustained a stroke. It was not until 1988 that he was awarded the Prisoner of War Medal. He died in July 2002. The circumstances of his death are unclear. With his friends, he was known for uttering the toast, "Here's to us, those like us, and there are a damn few of us."²³¹

American prisoners of war faced hardships ranging from deprivation of food and water to torture. In order to safeguard information that would have a direct bearing upon the outcome of the war and to maintain individual and corporate morale of American POWs, a Code of Conduct was developed. The Code of Conduct, which comprises six articles, for members of the United States Armed Forces was established by President Eisenhower on August 17, 1955. It was reaffirmed on July 8, 1964, in Department of

²³¹ Jose Dante Parra Herrera, "Longest-Held Vietnam POW Dies," *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 17 July 2002 <<http://ebird.dtic.mil/Jul2002/s20020718longest.htm>>

Defense Directive 1300.7. President Carter amended Article V of the Code on November 3, 1977, and President Reagan amended Articles I, II and VI on March 28, 1988. The concepts and traditions articulated in the Code of Conduct date back to the days of the American Revolution.²³²

The Code

1. I am an American, fighting in the forces which guard my country and our way of life. I am prepared to give my life in their defense.
2. I will never surrender of my own free will. If in command, I will never surrender the members of my command while they still have the means to resist.
3. If I am captured I will continue to resist by all means available. I will make every effort to escape and aid others to escape. I will accept neither parole nor special favors from the enemy.
4. If I become a prisoner of war, I will keep faith with my fellow prisoners. I will give no information or take part in any action which might be harmful to my comrades. If I am senior, I will take command. If not, I will obey the lawful orders of those appointed over me and will back them up in every way.
5. When questioned, should I become a prisoner of war, I am required to give name, rank, service number, and date of birth. I will evade answering further questions to the utmost of my ability. I will make no oral or written statements disloyal to my country and its allies or harmful to their cause.
6. I will never forget that I am an American fighting for freedom, responsible for my action, and dedicated to the principles which made my country free. I will trust in my God and in the United States of America.²³³

Prisoner of War and Code of Conduct imagery bring into sharp focus what it means to suffer for the sake of the Gospel. St. Paul, in Phil. 1:7ff., mentioned that he was in chains for the sake of the Gospel. Article 4 of the Code of Conduct emphasizes the criticality of keeping faith with your fellow prisoners. St. Paul draws a direct relationship

²³²ArmyStudyGuide.Com, "Code of Conduct: A More In Depth Look," 26 July 2002 <http://www.armystudyguide.com/resources/code_of_conduct_in_depth.htm>

²³³Ibid.

between his imprisonment and the brothers in the faith proclaiming the Gospel more courageously. “Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.” Phil. 1:14 NIV

St. Paul instructs Christians that they can expect to struggle and suffer for the sake of Christ (Phil. 1:29f.). Moreover, St. Paul exhorts Christians to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel regardless of what happens (Phil. 1:27). Christians are to stand firm, without being frightened, serving as a sign that God will carry out His plan of salvation (Phil. 1:27f.). Rewriting the Code of Conduct to resemble the Pauline Epistles could be an effective means of teaching the military audience about key pivotal doctrines.

The following is a sample Christian Code:

The Christian Code

1. I am a baptized child of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ and declared righteous (Rom. 6). By the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit through the Word, I have victory over death and the grave (John 14 & I Cor. 15).
2. I cannot by strength of will or physical might resist the devil, the world, and my own sinful flesh (Eph. 2). But I can do all things in Christ, Who strengthens me (Phil. 4). Though the forces of evil surround me, I know Christ has already won the victory and the Holy Spirit works in me to walk in the light of God's truth (Psalm 1).
3. When I sin, the Holy Spirit works through the Word to convict me of my sin, bring me to repentance, and assure me of forgiveness because of Christ's work of atonement (Luke 15). The Father has promised to hear my confession and forgive my sin (Psalm 51 & 1 John).
4. Like the men and women of God, who have gone before me, I can expect to suffer and be persecuted for the sake of the faith. However, by the power of the Holy Spirit I shall keep the faith, rejoice in my sufferings, and encourage my fellow believers (1 Pet. 4). I take comfort that I and all believers will be numbered with those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7).
5. By the grace of Almighty God, I shall fight the good fight of faith and receive the crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4). I shall not be afraid or be ashamed because God has given me a spirit of power, of love, and self-discipline (Josh. 1, 24, and 2 Tim. 1).

6. The Holy Spirit, through Word and Sacrament, will remind me that I am a baptized child of God and a heir of eternal salvation through Christ (Rom. 6 & 1 Cor. 11). The Holy Spirit will strengthen my faith through the Word so that I live in grace and bear the fruit of faith. When I die, I know that I shall be with my Lord forever (Psalm 23).

Code of Conduct imagery also affords the Lutheran chaplain a vehicle for assisting military personnel to gain an appreciation for the Creeds. Drawing parallels between the forceful, personal nature of the Code of Conduct and the complete certainty expressed in the Creeds instructs believers to realize they are members of the Body of Christ, which is not circumscribed by space or time. Some have referred to this age as postmodern. According to Stanley J. Grenz, the period of postmodernism was ushered in when the Pruitt-Igoe housing project, in St. Louis, Missouri, was razed with dynamite in 1972.²³⁴ Grenz characterized adherents of postmodernism as living "in self-contained social groups, each of which has its own language, beliefs, and values. As a result, postmodern relativistic pluralism seeks to give place to the 'local' nature of truth. Beliefs are held to be true within the context of the communities that espouse them."²³⁵ Given the context of postmodernism, our Creedal statements combat the postmodernist adherence to relativism, consumerism, and individualism.

Many military members are not able to visit their families of origin with great frequency. Ordinarily, the infrequency of visits is due to the cost of travel. Deployed military personnel are authorized to return home only in the event of the death of a parent, spouse, or child. Neil Postman's analysis of this culture as one based upon a television epistemology (i.e., the Age of Show Business) and the attendant trivialization

²³⁴Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernist* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 11.

²³⁵*Ibid.*, 15.

of discourse,²³⁶ challenges Lutheran chaplains to leverage the Creeds to remind military members that our Christian faith bridges the chasm which separates us from our loved ones. Faith, "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen" Heb. 11:1 NKJV is the life-sustaining force for those separated from family and the pillar of strength for those who face the prospect of a violent death in war.

Military personnel live in a world dominated by jargon and acronyms. The simplicity and certainty of the language in the Creeds stands in sharp contrast to the myriad instructions, directives, and policy statements governing every facet of military life. According to Kathleen Norris, preachers should avoid treating the vocabulary of faith as if it were a jargon employed and understood only by religious insiders.²³⁷

Lutheran chaplains are challenged to draw upon military language to assist our military members in understanding the language of our Creeds and the language of our faith.

The fourth reflection will focus on Boot Camp. Boot Camp is the nickname for the indoctrination of recruits into military life. Each branch of service has an eight to twelve week period dedicated to transforming civilian men and women into Sailors, Marines, Soldiers, Airmen, and Coast Guardsmen. I was assigned to Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, Illinois, for about eighteen months. Some Recruits, intent upon being discharged, would request an appointment with a Chaplain. During my assignment at the Training Command, I spoke with approximately six Recruits per day who were requesting discharge. The reasons they gave for desiring a discharge ranged from: "I

²³⁶Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (New York: Penguin, 1985), 101ff.

²³⁷Kathleen Norris, *Amazing Grace* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1998), 186.

could be playing pro-football" to "I could be making more money being a security guard." Occasionally, one would reluctantly admit he made "a terrible mistake!"

About one hundred Recruits would attend the Lutheran Service. Due to the rigors of training, some of them would succumb to drowsiness during the service. In my sermon preparation I was reminded of Eutychus, the young man who fell asleep and fell from a window to his death while Paul preached. "And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him." Acts 20:10b KJV While the context of this portion of Scripture does not include military imagery, three points of similarity emerge from the text, which make sermon preparation more deliberate for the Recruit audience. The man was young. Recruits are generally eighteen to twenty-six years of age. The young man was in worship. Worship attendance for Recruits at Boot Camp tends to be rather high. The young man fell asleep. It is a common occurrence for Recruits to nudge each other to stay awake during the worship service. By reflecting on the points of similarity in this text, my sermon preparation has increasingly focused on the stresses and concerns of my target audience.

Since every enlisted person must successfully complete Boot Camp in order to begin their military career, the imagery of Boot Camp introduces an experience shared by all enlisted personnel. My conversations with Sailors and Marines who graduated from Boot Camp in previous years leads me to conclude that either Boot Camp has become easier over the years or that each generation of Sailors and Marines believes their Boot

Camp was more demanding. I recall a conversation with a Gunnery Sergeant, who was distressed when he heard a rumor that Recruits were issued "Stress Cards." He was told that whenever a Recruit decided not to participate in a certain training evolution, the Recruit could pull out the Stress Card. Thus, the Drill Instructor was prohibited from compelling the Recruit to complete the designated exercise.

Boot Camp, with its physical demands and the discipline, serves as a rite of initiation into military life. Using the imagery of Boot Camp to explain Baptism will assist the military audience to grasp the transforming power of Baptism. Willimon, citing Luther, offered a poignant description of Baptismal transformation:

The human fetus is created in the waters of the womb. . . The fetus develops in the waters of the womb and, toward the end of our lives, we instinctively revert to the position of a fetus. The womb of baptism is also a tomb of death and rebirth. And the waters can be deep. . . To be a Christian is to be someone always close to death-dealing waters. As Jesus told us, every day we must take up his cross and follow. Or as Luther characterized it, every day we must wake up and volunteer for death, praying as we drag out of bed, Keep putting us to death, Lord Jesus, even as you began our baptism (*The Small Catechism*, sec. III, IV).²³⁸

Boot Camp is the beginning for the man or woman of the Armed Forces.

Likewise, Baptism is the beginning for the man or woman of faith. It is not impossible for a newly graduated Recruit to report to a unit on its way to armed conflict. It is not impossible for a newly baptized Christian to engage in spiritual warfare. Hence, the urgency for careful indoctrination. General C. E. Mundy, former Commandant of the Marine Corps, discussed the responsibility of educating Marines in the Forward to The Field Manual entitled, *Leading Marines*. Mundy stated, "If we expect Marines to lead and if we expect Marines to follow, we must provide the education of the heart and of the

²³⁸Willimon, 32ff.

mind to win on the battlefield and in the barracks, in war and in peace."²³⁹ In his Preface to the Large Catechism, Luther admonished Christians to read the Catechism in order to be armed properly for spiritual battle. "O what mad, senseless fools we are! We must ever live and dwell in the midst of such mighty enemies as the devils, and yet we despise our weapons and armor, too lazy to give them a thought!"²⁴⁰

The Christian version of Boot Camp takes seriously the context of the times. Postmodernism, with its focus on subjectivity, generates an atmosphere of uncertainty. Warriors cannot go into battle uncertain of their identity or cause. The Christian version of Boot Camp will prepare warriors for spiritual battle by reminding them of their identity as redeemed children of God and their mission, namely, the salvation of man. Doctrinal preaching accomplishes the goal of shoring up the believer's identity. Glenn Nielsen stated that the purpose of doctrinal preaching is to proclaim the Gospel faithfully. The Holy Spirit works through the Gospel and informs believers regarding the content of our faith. The Holy Spirit works through the Word to equip us for battle. It is in the proclamation of the Gospel where "the sword of the Spirit is wielded against the dark powers of this world which tempt us to doubt. There we reach into the hearts of people's lives with the one power that is ultimately victorious in this battle for our hearers' lives of faith."²⁴¹

The fifth reflection will focus on the Forgotten War(s). The Korean War, 1950-53, has become regarded as the "Forgotten War." This peculiar designation exemplifies

²³⁹United States Marine Corps, *Leading Marines*, Forward.

²⁴⁰Tappert, 360.

²⁴¹Glenn Nielsen, "Preaching Doctrine in a Postmodern Age," 29.

how America reacted to a war that did not end in decisive victory. America did not greet the Korean War Veterans with the enthusiastic fervor extended to the Veterans of World War II. Yet, the Korean War was not the only forgotten war. Vietnam Veterans, upon returning to America, felt the collective scorn of a Nation when there was no decisive victory. It has been said, "America loves a winner." That adage seems to be especially true when applied to American involvement in war.

I would argue there are many forgotten wars. America seems to have a short memory when it comes to certain areas of national life. It is this tendency to forget war and the blood shed for war which serves as a powerful weapon in the battle against spiritual complacency. Unarguably, World War II has overshadowed the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Similarly, the Mexican War, which was fought during the birth of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, is eclipsed by the Civil War. Jeff Shaara, author of *Gone For Soldiers*, a novel of the Mexican War, stated:

One of the most overlooked stories in American history is our involvement in a war with Mexico, from 1846 through 1848. The most obvious reason why the Mexican War is overlooked is it predates the Civil War by only thirteen years. Such proximity to the most horrific even in our nation's history easily explains why history books often pass over this more *minor* of wars, and skip quickly to the events of the 1860s. . . The most significant result of the Mexican War was the amount of land the United States acquired, extending our boundaries to most of the limits we are familiar with today. Compared to other wars, the cost in human life was minimal, if that term is ever appropriate. The war was short, lasting only two years, and the actual fighting involved only a dozen significant battles. But what the history lessons often overlook is the extraordinary cast of characters who first experienced the horror of combat during the Mexican War.²⁴²

Shaara's observations regarding the lack of attention to the Mexican War challenges Christians to remember, and not forget, how God delivered His people

²⁴²Jeff Shaara, *Gone For Soldiers* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2000), ix.

throughout history. Psalm 78 paints an ominous picture of the forgetfulness of God's Chosen People. "They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy." Psalms 78:42 KJV The Psalmist equated forgetfulness with rebellion. Conversely, God's remembrance of His covenant and His people was equated with their deliverance. Psalms 105 and 106 present a history of how God remembered His people and delivered them. "Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry: And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies." Psalms 106:43-45 KJV

The Marine Corps recognizes how vital it is not to forget wars. Through indoctrination, tradition, and music, the Marine Corps rehearses its history. The Marines Hymn evokes images of battles and wars in which Marines have heroically fought for our Nation.

From the Halls of Montezuma
To the shores of Tripoli
We fight our country's battles
On the land as on the sea.
First to fight for right and freedom
And to keep our honor clean;
We are proud to claim the title
Of United States Marines. (first stanza)

Each phrase of the Marines Hymn evokes powerful imagery ensuring no wars will be forgotten. For example, "To the shores of Tripoli," recalls the Barbary Wars (1801-05 and 1815). The Barbary States of North Africa were notorious for piracy and frustrated maritime commerce. Marines, dispatched aboard Naval vessels, fought bravely against insurmountable odds. Marine Lieutenant O'Bannon and his Marines secured the release

of three hundred American prisoners and were the first to fly the American Stars and Stripes atop a Tripolitan fort.²⁴³ "Perhaps the least remembered of the Barbary War's *dramatis personae* is Presley Neville O'Bannon--his named misspelled on his trophy sword, his rank incorrect on his grave. Paradoxically, the tradition of the U.S. Marine Corps."²⁴⁴

Lutheran liturgy and hymnody, integrated with the appointed sermon text and aligned with the specific observance, counteract the tendency toward forgetfulness by recalling the mighty acts of God and His incomprehensible compassion. The *Te Deum Laudamus* glorifies God for sending His Son to "overcome the sharpness of death," and "open the kingdom of heaven to all believers."²⁴⁵ The *Benedictus* praises God for raising a horn of salvation to redeem His people and save them from their enemies.²⁴⁶ The hymn, "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded," takes the mind of the believer to Calvary where we see our Savior "scornfully surrounded" (stanza 1), draws the heart of the believer to trust in the Shepherd who gave his life (stanza 5), and points the soul of the believer to the Lord of Life (stanza 7).²⁴⁷ The hymn, "I Know That My Redeemer Lives," leaves no doubt in the mind of the believer that Jesus has risen triumphant from the grave and lives eternally to save.²⁴⁸

²⁴³Whipple, 230ff.

²⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 282.

²⁴⁵Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America, *The Lutheran Hymnal*, 36.

²⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 38.

²⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 172.

²⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 200.

Art, as well as music, arouses the senses to remember and not forget wars and battles. The Korean War Memorial, Washington, DC, depicts life-size statues of American Soldiers. The coloration of the statues gives the memorial an eerie quality as if those visiting the memorial were watching real soldiers trudge through the mud and snow. It seems that the "Forgotten War" is finally being remembered and becoming etched on the collective American psyche.

Lutheran artists have vividly portrayed the redemptive work of Christ and the majesty of the Trinity. Stained glass windows, recounting events from Scripture, adorn many Lutheran Churches. Woodcarvings and sculptures memorialize the courage of believing men and women. Other artists, engaging in less traditional albeit effective expression, provoke an immediate response through their creativity. For example, Reinhold Marxhausen, renowned Lutheran artist, resolved to build his own casket. After reflecting on his mortality within the context of his faith in Christ, he took his coffin to a Lutheran school. He stepped inside the casket and read the following verse to the students:

I used to be afraid of death as anyone else. Even though we know that Christ has conquered death. My hair used to be black. I'm changing. I'm dying. This is my casket. I paid \$130 for it. When it came to my house in a cardboard box as a kit, I put it in the garage. I did not open it for a long time. I was afraid. Finally Last summer I glued the pieces together. It sits in my studio. I see it whenever I work. I stand in it most every day. I am no longer afraid. I think about my death often. When I open my eyes in the morning, I'm surprised and happy. Another day for me. A gift---unexpected. But this day may be my last. I know you are young--Full of life ahead--To look forward to--That is important. I'm 59-- Some of you will die Before I do. Farmers don't throw seeds away. They plant them. Old and shriveled people and seeds Become new after death---like these beautiful flowers. This box is a symbol. A new space capsule for my meeting

with God. A great new adventure lies before me. This box reminds me every day of God's grace and love. May it be for you also.²⁴⁹

Whether in music or art, the purpose is to help the believer to remember and not forget God's love for the world through the death and Resurrection of His Son. Jesus Christ fought, and won, the war to end all wars. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:55-57)

By establishing direct linkage between the Korean War with the theme of the Forgotten War, the preacher can demonstrate how God has used and still uses world events, even war, to advance His Kingdom of Grace. Lutheran military members, who served in Korea, served as a catalyst to focus on Korea as a mission field. Reverend Doctor Won Yong Ji, leader of the mission team that gave birth to a Lutheran presence in Korea, credits military members with supporting his theological training in America, as well as convincing the Church of the necessity of a Lutheran presence in Korea. A military chaplain assisted him in coming to America. A Missouri Synod Lutheran Army soldier and his family sponsored Professor Ji during his first days in America. Missouri Synod Lutheran soldiers and chaplains pleaded with the leadership of our Church to commence mission work in Korea. The LC--MS responded to the need for a Lutheran presence in Korea by appointing Professor Ji to lead a team of missionaries in Korea.

²⁴⁹David Morgan, "Is There an Artist in the Church? The Contribution of Reinhold Marxhausen" *The Christian Century* 20-27 March, 1991, , quoted by "Art Residencies bring the Gospel to life through art," *The Northwest United Methodist Record* September 1999, 12 August 2002 <<http://www.polkadotpark.org/waycraft/articles.htm#marxhausen>>

Professor Ji led the Korean Lutheran Mission to form operative questions, which led to the guiding principles for mission work in Korea. Protestant Christianity existed in Korea for a hundred years prior to the Missouri Synod entering the field. Wisely, the Korean Lutheran Mission posed some questions: "Why are we Lutherans in Korea?" "What was to be the role of the Lutheran mission in such a setting?" "What contribution could they make to Korea?"²⁵⁰ The Korean Lutheran Mission held an unwavering conviction that they could contribute a solid confessional and evangelical presence to Korean Christianity. From the mission's inception, the team was keenly aware of their God-given responsibility for their presence in Korea and viewed that presence as a privilege to celebrate.²⁵¹

Juxtaposing the Forgotten War in Korea with the experience of the Korean Lutheran Mission is a poignant example of God working through events and individuals to accomplish His plan of salvation. For the Lutheran military audience, the story of Reverend Doctor Ji and the Korean Lutheran Mission demonstrates how God used individuals in the military to support missionaries and rally the Church to enter certain mission fields.

The sixth reflection will focus on Rules of Engagement (ROE). Carl von Clausewitz, the eminent military strategist, referred to the confusion in war as the fog and

²⁵⁰Eugene W. Bunkowske, ed., *The Lutherans in Mission: Essays in Honor of Won Yong Ji* (Lima, Ohio: Lutheran Society for Missiology & Fairway Press, 2000), 62ff.

²⁵¹William J. Danker. *Two Worlds or None: Rediscovering Mission in the 20th Century* (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 279-281, quoting "Lutherans and the Great Commission: Some Lessons and an Unfinished Task" by James A. Scherer in *Missio Apostolica*, III (May 1995), Danker described the KLM's efforts in Korea as a reminder to the Church at large of its shared responsibility and privilege for the proclamation of the Gospel.

friction of war.²⁵² In the midst of the fog and friction of war, when your comrades are dying all around you, feelings of rage or terror could overwhelm you and cause you to forget your identity and your mission. The words My Lai will be identified with a massacre during the Vietnam War that claimed the lives of what were believed to be hundreds of unarmed inhabitants of the village of My Lai. When the news media broke the story, the date of the massacre (March 16, 1968), the Army unit involved (Charlie Company, 11th Brigade), and the officer in charge (Lieutenant William Calley), lived in infamy.

Civilian and military leaders developed rules of engage to assist the troops engaged in operations to remember their identity and their mission. Rules of Engagement (ROE) are directives "issued by competent military authority that delineate the circumstances and limitations under which United States forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagement with other forces encountered."²⁵³ ROE serve political, military, and legal objectives. Rules of Engagement evolved from the Law of Armed Conflict. Throughout the history of war, treaties and customs have developed which generally represent the collective views of the belligerents. Their principles protect combatants and noncombatants, safeguard fundamentals human rights, and facilitate the restoration of peace by limiting the amount of force and the manner in which force is applied. Together, these treaties and customs are known as the law of armed conflict. Neither the law of armed conflict nor national policy sanction devastation as an end in

²⁵²Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 117ff.

²⁵³Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Doctrine Encyclopedia* (16 July 1997), 626, 20 Dec. 2002 <[http:// www.dtic.mil/doctrine/doctrine/jrm/encyr_w.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/doctrine/jrm/encyr_w.pdf)>

itself. Restraint requires the careful balancing of the need for security, the conduct of operations, and the political objective. Joint forces of the United States operate in accordance with applicable rules of engagement. The Joint forces conduct warfare in compliance with international laws and fight within restraints and constraints specified by superior commanders. Objectives are justified by military necessity and attained through appropriate and disciplined use of force.²⁵⁴ Essentially, Rules of Engagement are intended to remind the soldier of his identity and the mission in the chaos of war.

Believers are involved in spiritual warfare. In the fog and friction of spiritual warfare, we are tempted to forget our identity as redeemed children of God. The Rules of Engagement can be invoked to illustrate the doctrine of election. The doctrine of election reminds believers of their dual identity as saints and sinners. Our identity and our mission depend upon the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"However, while it is a manifest purpose of the doctrine of eternal election to warn and exhort Christians to adhere to the *sola gratia* and not to despise the means of grace (Law-preaching addressed to Christians according to their Old Adam [*παλαιος ανθρωπος*], Eph. 4,22-24), the proper scope of the doctrine is to bless all Christian believers with true comfort and abiding consolation. In this manner Scripture employs the doctrine of election preeminently, Eph. 1, 3-6; Rom. 8, 28-30; 1 Pet. 1, 2-6; for the proclamation of the *sola gratia (sola fide)* is by its very nature the sweetest and most consoling Gospel truth, John 3, 16--18."²⁵⁵

On All Saints' Day, a day commemorating those believers who fought the good fight and kept the faith, we also remember that we are engaged in spiritual warfare. Saint Paul clearly identifies our enemies as "principalities, against powers, against the rulers of

²⁵⁴Ibid., 621-626.

²⁵⁵Mueller, 604.

darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Eph. 6:12 KJV How do you recognize an enemy who does not wear uniforms? How do you fight an enemy you cannot see? How do you fight an enemy who does not fight fairly? How do you fight an enemy who constantly shifts his forces, weapons, and tactics? How do you fight an enemy that does not adhere to Geneva Convention Protocols or Laws of Armed Conflict? They will employ every weapon in their arsenal.

How will we remember who we are and what our mission is in the fog and friction of spiritual warfare? Are there Rules of Engagement for believers? Let us hear again the words of the text, Rev. 7:14 KJV: "And I said to him, Sir, you know. So he said to me, These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

We have a dual identity. We are sinners and saints at the same time. When Adam and Eve fell into sin, sin entered into creation causing mayhem and chaos. With the chaos of sin came the punishment of death. Because of sin, we were definitely not the good guys--we were enemies of God. St. Paul said, "And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight--" Col. 1:21-22 NKJV Only through the death and Resurrection of Christ do we have the identity of saints. We have been saved through the blood of Christ.

Whereas earthly Rules of Engagement vary from one military operation to another, we have something much more reliable to remind us of our identity. We have God's Word. God's Word is everlasting. God's Word does not change from one situation to the next. The central message of God's Word is that He sent His Son to save us from

our sins. In the fog and friction of spiritual warfare, we do not ask the question, "Are we the good guys?" We know exactly who we are--we are the Saints of God. We know what God has called us to do--proclaim the Gospel with our lips and lives. The account of Stephen's martyrdom in Acts 7 demonstrates that Stephen was convinced of his identity as a child of God and held an unwavering conviction of God's appointed mission for his life.

The confessional writings of our Church echo the message of Scripture by punctuating the solace offered by the doctrine of election. The authors of the Formula of Concord state the following: "This doctrine will also give us the glorious comfort, in times of trial and affliction, that in his counsel before the foundation of the world God has determined and decreed that he will assist us in all our necessities, grant us patience, give us comfort, create hope, and bring everything to such an issue that we shall be saved."²⁵⁶ Our identity is sure. We are sinners who have been forgiven. We are saints who have been entrusted with the message of salvation.

In summary, the homiletical strategy proposed in this chapter represents a synthesis of cross cultural studies, the literature of leadership and strategic planning, Scriptural references to military imagery, the Lutheran legacy of military imagery, and the urgency for doctrinal preaching. The Worship and Sermon Planning Matrix enables the Lutheran chaplain to engage in a deliberate planning process for worship. The next chapter will discuss the evaluation process and results for evaluating the effectiveness of the proposed homiletical strategy.

²⁵⁶Tappert, 624.48.

CHAPTER 10

EVALUATING THE STRATEGY

Heretofore, the discussion on military imagery in preaching has been theoretical. In order to evaluate the thesis of nurturing a Lutheran identity through military imagery in preaching, I designed an evaluative tool (APPENDIX 4) and requested the assistance of several individuals to evaluate six sample sermons (APPENDIX 5). Through the sermon evaluation process, I planed to achieve at least three objectives, which would support the validity of the thesis: Objective 1—To utilize military imagery to enable a Lutheran military audience to connect with the intended meaning and message of the sermon's text. Objective 2—To the fullest extent possible, align the military imagery in the sermon with other elements of a Lutheran worship service. Objective 3—To identify a strategy that most effectively integrates the military imagery in the sermon with the worship service to best engage the audience.

Objective 1: To utilize military imagery to enable a Lutheran military audience to connect with the intended meaning and message of the sermon's text. My survey of cross cultural literature has led me to conclude the military is a culture of subcultures. I anticipated receiving corroborative feedback from the evaluators regarding the effectiveness of military imagery specifically for my threefold context of preaching ministry. From the military cultural perspective, did the imagery enhance their ability to connect with the text?

All of the evaluators apprehended the imagery and demonstrated a keen sensitivity regarding the potential diversity of a given audience. For example, some military evaluators opined that pacifists might be offended by military imagery in a sermon. Other military evaluators suggested a civilian audience would perhaps not be able to understand some of the military concepts as the military justice system or rules of engagement. Some of the civilian evaluators surmised military personnel, after living the military experience throughout the week, may not resonate to a sermon with military imagery. One of the former military members indicated that recruits, due to their relative newness to the military environment, might not grasp some of the military imagery.

Some of the evaluators indicated that if the military imagery was not handled properly, it could obfuscate or dominate the message. Others acknowledged that military imagery could be overdone. Yet, all evaluators responded favorably to the military imagery validating Objective 1, which was to enable a military audience to connect with the intended meaning and message of the sermon's text:

1. "The subject matter becomes a painting in one's mind to make the subject matter easier to comprehend."
2. "The imagery brings the sermon message into my realm of experience. I can reflect and seek greater understanding through prayer."
3. "When the congregation has a military background, the imagery is obviously helpful. The story of Salvation History is so filled with military images, it is easy to incorporate this imagery to preaching."
4. "The sermons helped to bring my thoughts back into focus as I try to balance my commitments to my Lord, my family, and the Profession of Arms. In these times of high op tempo, information overload, and the media playing on our every emotion; it's easy to see how good Christians get lost in the mix and start to lose focus on what matters most. Without hesitation I can say your job is the most important in all of the military. Keeping the troops focused on what is morally right, while motivating them with the power and knowledge that they are doing God's will, is sure to be a most daunting task as the 'Fog of War' descends upon us."

Objective 2: To the fullest extent possible, align the military imagery in the sermon with other elements of a Lutheran worship service. My endorsement of military imagery in preaching is predicated on the assumption that in order for the imagery to be effective, it must be integrated with the observance and aligned with other elements commonly associated with a Lutheran worship service. Most importantly, the imagery must be faithful to and subordinate to the text of Scripture. The rationale behind asking the evaluators to refer to the Worship and Sermon Planning Matrix in completing the sermon evaluations was to determine if the evaluators recognized an intentional alignment in my application of imagery with the other elements of the worship service: hymnody, doctrinal focus, and special observances. I anticipated evaluator responses would support my selective use of military imagery. From a Lutheran frame of reference, was the military imagery effectively linked with the observance in general, and the worship service in specific? Did the military imagery adequately serve the sermon text and illustrate the doctrinal focus?

Objective 3: To identify a strategy that most effectively integrates the military imagery in the sermon with the worship service in order to best engage the audience. While Christian preachers and hymnists have frequently employed military imagery in sermons and hymns, I advocate pastoral discernment in the application of military. Considering potential misapplications is an essential task toward identifying the most effective strategy in the application and integration of military imagery. By asking the evaluators to identify a shortcoming associated with military imagery, I hoped to identify misapplications of military imagery and further refine my preaching strategy. From the

perspective of pastoral propriety, how could military imagery alienate or distract the listener?

The questions in the evaluative tool are based on the categories in the Worship and Sermon Planning Matrix (Pages 101 & 102). The sample sermons include various types of military imagery. The evaluators represented my threefold context of preaching ministry: Active duty, retired, or former military members; family members of military personnel; members of civilian congregations adjacent to military installations. I requested the participation of three clergymen to incorporate a peer review dimension to the evaluative process: a civilian pastor and two Navy chaplains. Please refer to the table below for a profile of the evaluators.

Evaluator Profile

Evaluator 1	Pastor Emeritus of congregation adjacent to military installation: Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod	Evaluator 8	Spouse of service member
Evaluator 2	Active Duty Navy Chaplain: Roman Catholic	Evaluator 9	Active Duty Naval Officer
Evaluator 3	Active Duty Navy Chaplain: Southern Baptist	Evaluator 10	Civilian member of congregation adjacent to military installation
Evaluator 4	Active Duty Naval Officer	Evaluator 11	Civilian member of congregation adjacent to military installation
Evaluator 5	Retired Air Force Officer: Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod	Evaluator 12	Active Duty Navy Master Chief Petty Officer
Evaluator 6	Military Spouse and former Air Force Officer	Evaluator 13	Civilian member of congregation adjacent to military installation
Evaluator 7	Active Duty Air Force Tech Sergeant: Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod	Evaluator 14	Civilian member of congregation adjacent to military installation

Each evaluator received the following:

1. Six sample sermons.
2. Evaluator Information sheet.
3. Sermon Evaluation sheet.
4. The Worship and Sermon Planning Matrix.
5. The sermon hymns.
6. A letter thanking the evaluators for their participation with an explanation of the project and instructions to complete the evaluation.

The responses from the Evaluator Information sheet suggested the value each individual placed upon the importance of the sermon within the context of the worship service and what the individual considered the most critical elements of the sermon. The table below is a sample of evaluator responses regarding what they perceived as the most essential elements of the worship service and the sermon:

Evaluator Information Responses (A Sample)

<p>Evaluator 10: Civilian living adjacent to military installation, LCMS Lutheran, and attends church weekly.</p>	<p>The most important elements of the worship service are Holy Communion, the reading of the Gospel, and the Sermon. The ultimate purpose of the sermon is to provide meaningful, concrete insights that the listener can grasp and use to grow and become stronger in their Christian walk. The most important element of the sermon is to teach/remind the listener of certain Bible passages or theological points and relate them to mortal experience. The illustrations enhance and strengthen the Christian growth process. To me they are all important—especially for ordinary Christians such as myself who are involved in everyday life and all that surrounds them.</p>
<p>Evaluator 7: Active duty Service member, LCMS Lutheran, and attends church weekly.</p>	<p>Holy Communion and the sermon are the most important elements of the worship service. The purpose of the sermon is to clarify the Word and motivate the listener to take action. The most important elements of the sermon are the Word of God, clarified by the chaplain’s ability to bring it into present day context and amplify or echo it’s relevance in our everyday lives.</p>
<p>Evaluator 1: LCMS Pastor Emeritus, former pastor of congregation adjacent to a military installation.</p>	<p>The most important element of the worship service is the interchange of the adoration of the Trinity by God’s people with the message from God as expressed in His revelation, the Bible. The purpose of the sermon is to demonstrate the need for God’s grace through the Law. Through the Gospel shall come messages of comfort, promise, admonition, and forgiveness. The message shall be spoken or implied as in the funeral service, “A Blessed reunion in heaven.” Illustrations are remembered when all else is forgotten. The past Biblical world has a connection with the present. Often by being different in structure or content, illustrations demand the hearer’s attention. The saddest words I ever heard, came from a well-beloved, highly educated pastor, who was a boring preacher, ‘I never use non-Biblical illustrations.’</p>
<p>Evaluator 6: Former active duty member and spouse of active duty service member, and LCMS Lutheran, attends church weekly.</p>	<p>Holy Communion and the sermon are the most important elements of the worship service. The most important elements of the sermon are the text and its application to our daily life. Illustrations give a visual example. Jesus used many illustrations.</p>

The evaluators offered both stylistic and substantive feedback. APPENDIX 5 contains a cross section of evaluator responses following each sample sermon. The table on the following page offers sample feedback from the sermon preached in observance of St. Michael and All Angels Day (Sample Sermon 1, APPENDIX 5). The sermon employed Prisoner of War imagery:

Sermon Evaluation Responses (A Sample)

Observance	<p>“On POW/MIA day, in a worship service for military personnel, the military imagery was on the mark.” Evaluator 2</p> <p>“Within the military imagery, we are at war just as we are in our daily lives with the devil. Angels are there protecting us, in our battles whatever they are.” Evaluator 14</p> <p>“Medieval statues of St. Michael would depict him in full contemporary armor. He would have a spear or sword with which he would fight the devil. It would be fitting to depict him in modern body armor carrying the latest rapid fire weapon.” Evaluator 1</p>
Sermon Text	<p>“Death ends the anguish of war. Being alive, surrounded and then a prisoner is a period of suffering of a soldier. Wandering in the desert most likely had what seemed to be endless suffering.” Evaluator 5</p> <p>“Military imagery helps one to mentally absorb the concept of ‘Commander of the army of the Lord.’ This is not a Christmas card angel singing to the shepherds.” He is a fighter for the Lord. Evaluator 1</p> <p>“The text of Joshua 5:13-15 was okay. But the imagery of the sermon really brought it into focus.” Evaluator 7</p>
Sermon Hymn	<p>“The thought of an angelic choir of cherubim and seraphim would certainly be comforting to someone who is imprisoned.” Evaluator 7</p> <p>“The military imagery was most suitable. Using surrounded with two contrasting contexts (capture and liberation) was most effective. The hymn made the imagery visible.” Evaluator 2</p> <p>“The concept of Cherubim and Seraphim serving as a type of bodyguard for the Lord as they sing His praises gives a picture of a military honor guard.” Evaluator 1</p>

<p>Doctrine</p>	<p>“Angels have often been thought of as combatants and protectors for the Lord. That’s something that those of us in a military uniform can relate to.” Evaluator 7</p> <p>“Michael’s references in Daniel, Jude, and Revelations-gives biblical support to angels engaged in warfare against the forces of evil.” Evaluator 6</p> <p>“There is spiritual warfare about us in many forms. Joshua was seeking an answer as to who was standing opposite him. He learned that God’s Kingdom was in his presence. John Gatens was in the presence of the Welsh Guards when he and others were rescued.” Evaluator 5</p>
<p>Theme</p>	<p>“A soldier continually has a sense of being surrounded because the enemy can unexpectedly come from any direction. No matter where satan is around us, we can resist him, steadfast in the faith of Christ. We can be certain that angels surround us, day and night.” Evaluator 5</p> <p>“Two other events, which give the concept of Surround, are fire and flood. They imply danger only. Military images can imply both danger and protection.” Evaluator 1</p> <p>“Joshua reminds the Israelites to trust in the Lord and He would drive out the enemy. POW Gatens was surrounded and rescued. “I’m surrounded” not by enemy forces but friendly forces who will fight with me as I’m engaged in daily spiritual warfare.” Evaluator 6</p>
<p>Goal</p>	<p>“The capture of Gatens in 12/1944 and his rescue in 4/1945 showed the sharp contrast of being surrounded by forces of evil, and being surrounded by God’s love and the protection of His angels.” Evaluator 11</p> <p>“This was very visual for me and an extremely comforting message. Yes, the goal was definitely achieved. The only problem was that I needed to “work” to follow the flow of the sermon. The route to absorbing the message seemed more “scenic” rather than direct.” Evaluator 13</p> <p>“The military imagery helped to clarify the text; also, referencing angelic activity in other Scriptural locations (eg. Luke 2:14 and Matthew 4:11) was very instructive and inspirational, thus accomplishing the goal.” Evaluator 2</p>

Evaluators registered comments indicating their recognition of the distinction between the Law and Gospel elements of the sermons:

1. “In a court-martial the soldier will pay the consequences of violating the UCMJ. In the court-marital for eternal life, the consequences of our violations of the law are paid by the death and resurrection of God’s own Son, Jesus Christ.” Evaluator 14
2. “With the doctrine of reconciliation we have complete restoration in Christ, where as in the military imagery of desertion, the punishment is death or such other punishment as a court-martial may direct, there being no restoration. Only the Gospel can turn a deserter into a hero of faith. If not for the Gospel, we deserve immediate execution for our sinfulness and there would be no one left.” Evaluator 14
3. “The imagery of people as POWs – meaning that without salvation, we are prisoners of the spiritual warfare being waged against us coupled with the imagery of an army of angels surrounding us reinforced my view of angels as guardians and messengers who surround us. As a military person and a citizen of this nation during several periods of conflict – the Gulf War, Bosnia, Kosovo, etc. the military imagery (war and POWs) was commonplace to me. It spoke to experiences that I could draw on and readily identify with.” Evaluator 12
4. “The image of the military “high court” and the impact of your sentence or lack thereof tied in very nicely with the doctrine of justification. Through grace, God has saved us from a death sentence. God could have chosen condemnation for his disobedient children, we’ve certainly done nothing to deserve otherwise. Instead, he sent his one and only son, Jesus Christ, to die for us – saving us from ourselves and our sinful nature. The UCMJ is the military law. The Holy Scriptures are God’s Law – laws that all sinners break and fall short of. The image of the military court sentencing us or not, based on our actions, ties directly into our acceptance of Christ (our action) with God’s sentence (eternal life).” Evaluator 12

The manner of application and alignment of military imagery with a specific observance, the sermon hymn, and a doctrinal focus, also received a favorable response among the evaluators, thus validating Objective 2. A military evaluator indicated the sample sermon entitled, “Lest We Forget,” was the first time he had heard of the doctrine of eschatology. A civilian evaluator stated:

Your detailed description of what desertion means was of great help in my understanding about what I believe was the emphasized doctrine—that Christ took the punishment for our complete desertion of him. About desertion per se,

I've never focused so intensely on the term, e.g., how the fear aspect plays in, and of course how former rank, etc. can seldom be restored, and how a death sentence can be meted out.

When evaluators sensed a lack of cohesion between the imagery and other elements of the service, their recommendations assisted me in refining the nexus of the military imagery in the sermon with other elements of the worship service. One evaluator, commenting on the relationship of military imagery to the hymn of Sample Sermon 4, stated, "I think the hymn is suitable to the text, but I do not make the connection with the military imagery you employ. If the hymn were utilized after the sermon, the audience would probably make the connection." The same evaluator, commenting on Sample Sermons 1 and 3, recommended further development of the military imagery to sharpen the doctrinal focus:

Sample Sermon 1 – I believe you could have developed your use of military imagery a bit more and utilized illustrations that connected the concept of faith and captivity. For instance, Colonel Robbie Risner, a POW in Hanoi Hilton, elaborated in his book, *Into the Night*, on the importance of faith during his captivity and his knowledge of God's presence that helped him make it through. You may wish to use a military story of God's faithfulness and presence in battle and captivity.

Sample Sermon 3 – While you list many of the qualities of the doctrine of election, it might be helpful to come right out and explain what election is for that person who may not have been immersed in that doctrine. Sometimes, it is hard to adequately develop the many strands associated with the imagery, so it is best to find one, two or three and focus there. You talk about the Rules of Engagement, the friction and fog of warfare, martyrs, the good guys, weapons and tactics, etc. Zero in on a couple of images and develop them.

The military imagery triggered a full sensory apprehension of the message for some of the evaluators. One evaluator recalled paintings depicting Michael the ArchAngel clad in body armor. Others recalled characters and events from military history, which could be used to illustrate more completely the message of the text.

Another evaluator, commenting on Sample Sermon 4, indicated the military imagery aided the personal application of the message, "I think the goal was to make our desertion of Christ personal and you were certainly able to do this using the desertion theme."

In summary, the evaluative process indicated the military imagery enabled evaluators to connect with the text. The alignment of the military imagery with other elements of the worship service further enhanced the connection with the text. The evaluative process assisted me in identifying a strategy that most effectively integrates military imagery of the sermon with the worship service to best engage the audience in three respects. First, the evaluators responded favorably to the long-range worship and sermon strategy exemplified by the Worship and Sermon Planning Matrix. The evaluators voiced appreciation for a preaching strategy, which promoted an intentional alignment of observance, Scripture readings, hymn selection, sermon theme, and imagery. Moreover, some of the evaluators recommended the use of such a matrix for the entire year to systematically lead the congregation through key doctrines of Scripture.

Second, evaluators believed the military imagery in the sample sermons enhanced their understanding of the sermon text and their appreciation for the particular observance. One evaluator stated, "Designating specific observances to underscore the theme of spiritual warfare ensures the congregation maintains a high state of spiritual readiness." Another evaluator remarked, "Participating in this evaluation process has helped me understand how the sermon can and should fit into the rest of the worship service." Nevertheless, evaluator feedback suggested the discipline of adhering to and fully developing one or two images rather than incorporating too many images.

Third, evaluators appreciated a sermon strategy, which affirmed their service in the military and attempted to speak to them where they live and work. One evaluator observed, "Illustrating the Law of God with the Uniform Code of Military Justice and incarceration at Fort Leavenworth proved to be a particularly vivid presentation of the burden of the Law and the finality of eternal punishment. When this image was countered with a verdict of not guilty and restoration to one's unit to illustrate reconciliation with the Heavenly Father through the blood of Jesus Christ, I visualized how I could be of tremendous service to the Kingdom while serving in uniform."

CONCLUSION

Lutheran military personnel and families are separated from their homes of origin and their home congregations. Constant relocation, uncertainty, and the prospect of being killed in armed conflict, accompany military personnel throughout their time of military service. The LCMS endorses chaplains to provide a Word and Sacrament ministry to Lutheran military men and women. Lutheran chaplains, adhering to the doctrine of the two kingdoms, minister in a culture of subcultures and a pluralistic environment.

Reflecting on my experience as a Lutheran chaplain within the context of the Doctor of Ministry Program has led me to conclude that military imagery in preaching can be an effective means of fostering a Lutheran identity in the military. The theoretical and evaluative components of this major applied project validated my thesis that the judicious application of military imagery in preaching serves as an effective means of nurturing a Lutheran identity in the military environment. The theoretical component consisted of an interdisciplinary approach, which incorporated the contributions of cross cultural studies, military literature and the art of rhetoric, the literature of leadership and strategic planning, Scripture, a survey of military imagery in Lutheran preaching, teaching, and hymnody.

Cross cultural studies sharpened my awareness of the military as a culture of subcultures, each with its own customs, jargon, and symbols. Military literature and the

art of rhetoric support the use of military imagery in preaching as a persuasive resource in communication. Military imagery serves a ministerial function in supporting the proclamation of the Gospel. The literature of leadership and strategic planning rouse the Lutheran chaplain to engage in a long-range view of preaching and design a deliberative planning process for the selective use of military imagery on specific observances. Scriptural references to warfare and military life establish a precedent for military imagery in preaching. Martin Luther employed military imagery preaching, catechesis, and hymnody. The Lutheran legacy of employing military imagery is shaped by its understanding of Scripture and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works through the Word to create faith in individuals and mobilizes them into a spiritual army.

In view of the contemporary milieu, military imagery in preaching receives further testimony as a means of emphasizing spiritual warfare and focusing on specific doctrines. Societal pressures and governmental decisions, which exert a decisive influence upon the military, reinforce the criticality for the Lutheran Church to promote a confessional presence through doctrinal preaching. The evaluative process corroborated the effectiveness of illustrating doctrines with military imagery.

Various constraints necessitated a written format for the evaluative process, which precluded an oral delivery of the sample sermons on the actual observance. In my current military assignment, I do not conduct a weekly Lutheran worship service. Additionally, some of the evaluators resided outside of the local area and others faced the prospect of deploying in support of the War on Terrorism and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The benefit of the written format enabled the evaluators to submit extensive feedback on the sample sermons while referring to the Worship and Sermon Planning Matrix. For further testing

of the homiletical strategy proposed by this major applied project, I recommend an oral employment at a training command, chapel setting, forward deployed ship, or in the field with Marines.

While the research component of this project formed the basis for the theoretical underpinnings of the thesis, the evaluative process validated my homiletical strategy. Evaluators, representing my threefold context of ministry, corroborated my three objectives. Evaluators connected with the intended meaning and message of the sermon text. Additionally, the evaluative process refined my homiletical strategy for engaging the military audience. Evaluators registered the most favorable impressions of military imagery when they sensed an organic unity with the observance, sermon text, sermon hymn, doctrinal focus, theme, and goal. The evaluative process suggested that when military imagery strays from the text, dominates the text, or seems disconnected from other elements in the worship service, military imagery ceases to be an effective means of fostering a connection with the sermon text and worship service.

When military imagery maintains its ministerial role of illustrating the text, and when military imagery receives optimum integration in the moment of worship with liturgy, hymnody, and doctrine, those gathered for worship connect with the sermon. Consequently, the Lutheran understanding of the two kingdoms and three *solas* serve as a safeguard for ensuring that all imagery, military and otherwise, maintains a supporting role vis-à-vis the text of Scripture. Rather than an anomaly, military imagery is found throughout Scripture, represented in hymnody, and a frequent literary device of Lutheran preachers.

Military life, with its codes of justice and conduct, provide the Lutheran chaplain a valuable resource to engage in a diagnostic application of Law and Gospel. The concept of justification, when viewed through the lens of a military court proceeding, can engage the military audience and enhance the listener's understanding of the saving power of the Gospel. It is through the power of the Gospel, Lutheran military men and women will draw upon the Divine arsenal and be equipped to engage in spiritual warfare. "Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of the evil in the heavenly realms." Eph. 6:11-12 NIV

The discriminating application of military imagery in preaching offers a valuable tool to enrich and equip God's people. For the military audience, military imagery offers the Lutheran chaplain a persuasive medium of preaching the Word in a language readily apprehended by the listener. The deliberate alignment of military imagery with observances to proclaim the Gospel and illustrate Scriptural truths represents an effective strategy for engaging military members and nurturing their Lutheran identity. Most importantly, in a world based upon rank having privileges, military imagery in preaching demonstrates that Almighty God is the Commander and Chief of all creation and the source of our salvation.

APPENDIX 1

EXCURSUS ON MILITARY WORDS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. *Geber*, as a verb it means to be mighty, have strength, be great. When used as a noun it means man. *Gibbor* means mighty man. "The Hebrew root is commonly associated with warfare and has to do with the strength and vitality of the successful warrior. . . It is not surprising that in such a society God was often depicted as a warrior. God is the true prototype of the mighty man, and if an earthly warrior's deeds are recounted, how much more should God's be."²⁵⁷
2. *Ganan*, as a verb it means to defend, put a shield about, protect. "*Ganan* is used only in reference to the protective guardianship of God. . . . Of its eight occurrences, six have to do with the Assyrian crisis in the days of Hezekiah."²⁵⁸
3. *Hul*, as a verb it means to be firm, endure. "The basic meaning of the noun is 'strength,' from which follow 'army' and 'wealth.' It is used 244 times."²⁵⁹ When used with *gibbor* means mighty man of valor (1 Kings 1:42).²⁶⁰
4. *Halas*, as a verb it means to equip for war, put on warrior's belt, gird or arm oneself, make ready for battle. "The widest usage of this root is the meaning 'to arm' or 'gird for war.' In Num 32:21 etc. and in Josh 4:13; 6:7, 9, 13, where the Israelites are preparing themselves to invade the promised land as armed soldiers, the passive participle of this verb is employed."²⁶¹ A soldier girded himself with the *halisa* belt. "Since this was the symbol of the soldier's prowess in battle, its removal was proof that he was defeated."²⁶²

²⁵⁷R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980), 148.

²⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 168.

²⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 271.

²⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 271.

²⁶¹*Ibid.*, 292.

²⁶²*Ibid.*, 292.

5. *Hana*, as a verb it means to encamp, lay siege. As a noun *hanit* means spear, *mahaneh* means camp, and *tahana* means encamping or encampment. “The Bible indicates that at least two factors were in mind when a camp site was chosen: (1) the availability of water (Josh 11:5; Jud 7:1, and hence the advantage to camping at an oasis rather than at a site dependent on the flow of a river); and (2) lines of natural defense which formed a barricade (I Samuel 17:3; 26:3).”²⁶³
6. *Hes* means arrow. Most of its fifty-six uses occur in poetry. Arrows are deadly weapons normally shot from a bow, but Uzziah built a catapult that could shoot arrows or stones (2 Chron. 26:15)²⁶⁴
7. *Harab*, as a verb it means to slay, fight and as a noun it means sword. “From archeological and iconographic evidence we know that the common swords of the third and early second millenia B.C. were rather short. . . . At the end of the second millenium, the Philistines and other Sea Peoples introduced the long, straight sword made of iron (cf. I Sam 13:19), which could be used to cut and to stab.”²⁶⁵
8. *Laham*, as a verb means to fight or do battle. *Milhama* means battle or war. “The most significant usages of the verb *laham*, which occurs 171 times, pertain to God’s role in Israel’s wars.”
9. *Arak*, as a verb means to set in order. “Often *arak* is a military term describing the drawing up in battle order to commence the fighting. . . . At one point, Job described his anguishing state of affliction as that of military attacks by the forces of God, set against him in battle array (Job 6:4).”²⁶⁶
10. *Saba*, as a verb means to fight or serve and as a noun it means war or army. *Sebaot* means armies or hosts. Yahweh *Sebaot* identifies Yahweh as the mightiest Warrior; the One Who rules the universe and intervenes to secure His own victory for the salvation of His people.²⁶⁷
11. *Saad*, as a verb means to step or pace in cadence. “In military terms it is used primarily for Yahweh. He marches before Israel’s army, securing the battle for them (Jud. 5:4).”²⁶⁸

²⁶³Ibid., 300.

²⁶⁴Ibid., 314.

²⁶⁵Ibid., 320.

²⁶⁶Ibid., 696.

²⁶⁷Ibid., 751.

²⁶⁸Ibid., 772.

12. *Ragal*, as a verb means go on foot or spy out and *ragli* means foot soldier.²⁶⁹
13. *Rakab*, as a verb means mount and ride. When used as a noun it means chariot or charioteer. "Archeological evidence suggests Mesopotamia as the origin of the chariot, and it is highly possible that the term *rekeb* also originated in Mesopotamia."²⁷⁰

²⁶⁹Ibid., 831.

²⁷⁰Ibid., 847.

APPENDIX 2

EXCURSUS ON MILITARY LIFE—ROMAN LEGIONS

The Roman Legions engaged in a rigorous selection process for soldiers. The first stage was to establish a recruit's legal status. While the main qualifications were good health and physique, candidates were required to undergo a strict medical examination. Suitable recruits had clear eyes, erect posture, muscular shoulders, long arms, small waist, and wiry but not fleshy legs. The frontier regions produced the hardest and most spirited recruits. After the legal formalities were completed, the recruit took the oath or *sacramentum*.²⁷¹

Recruits were trained to march in step for both parade drill and long distance. Running, jumping over obstacles, charging, and swimming built up the recruit's strength and stamina. As a precursor to drilling in full armor, the recruit trained with wooden swords. Finally, the recruit donned full armor and was introduced to basic battle tactics in fighting drill. Before he was approved to join the ranks of an accepted legionary, he had to demonstrate his fighting skill before senior officers.²⁷²

The century was the basic unit in the legion. At the time of Polybius, the century contained eighty men. The century was divided into ten sections of eight men; in Republican times two centuries made up the maniple. Six centuries made up a cohort of 480 men. The legion consisted of ten cohorts. According to an account by Vegetius,

²⁷¹Webster, 120.

²⁷²Ibid., 121.

cohorts had relative importance in their battle order. "In the front line the first cohort was placed on the right, the third in the centre and fifth on the left flank, while between them were the second and fourth. Behind the first, in the second line, was the sixth, which he says should consist of the finest of young men."²⁷³

Although body armor varied, the discovery of three suits of body armor at Corbridge has been dated to AD 98-100. Overlapping iron strips protected the shoulders, stomach, and back. A helmet, probably of iron, offered protection to the skull, neck, and cheeks. The legionary's legs were bare to ensure mobility. The shield, a defensive weapon, was curved to fit the body. The offensive weapons consisted of two javelins and a sword. The javelin functioned as a disarming weapon, which, if thrust into a tactical array of overlapping shields, could oppress the opposition. A sword *gladius* was short and double-edged. A dagger was attached to the belt. Armed with these weapons, the battle tactics of the legions consisted of discharging two javelins, the rapid withdrawal of the sword, a tightening of the ranks, and a charge into the opposing enemy mass. The legionary would thrust the sword into the lower part of the enemy trunk.²⁷⁴

Calculating the soldier's pay is complicated in view of rations, bounties and donatives. Nevertheless, deductions for provisions and pay stoppages, were a source of grievance and led to mutiny. Analysis of historical records suggests the common foot soldier received less pay than those of the cavalry.²⁷⁵

²⁷³Ibid., 111.

²⁷⁴Ibid., 122ff.

²⁷⁵Ibid., 264.

Military decorations were awarded for bravery and outstanding achievement. Of the military decorations, the crowns of silver or gold were awarded for extraordinary valor in battle. Yet, among legionary symbols, the standard occupies a position of peculiar significance. The standard was both a symbol of recognition and a point of rally. The first act of setting camp was to set up the standard. "The standards were the religious focus of the Army and could be said to embody the very 'soul' of the unit. They were kept in a special shrine (*sacellum*) in the *principia* of the fortress and forts. They naturally played an important part in the many religious festivals which the Army scrupulously observed."²⁷⁶

²⁷⁶Ibid., 133.

APPENDIX 3

EXCURSUS ON MILITARY IMAGERY IN HYMNODY

Referencing the Lutheran Worship hymnal, I would argue that the number of hymns with military imagery far exceeds those allocated to the section entitled, "The Church Militant."²⁷⁷ While it is beyond the scope of this project to conduct a comprehensive analysis of hymns and military imagery, this excursus on hymnody encourages Lutheran chaplains to utilize resources, as *Lutheran Worship: Hymnal Companion*, not only for sermon hymn selection but for sermon preparation as well. Periods of history associated with the terrors of war have often been recognized as the most prolific seasons of hymn writing. According to Luther D. Reed, the carnage of the Thirty Years' War inspired hymns of spiritual depth and fortitude:

The church suffered irreparable losses. Protestant pastors who were not slain were driven into poverty and exile. Those permitted to stay ministered to their people in barns or in the forests. Ordered church life was disrupted, churches were closed, wrecked, or defiled. Liturgical books, music, and sacred vessels were destroyed, together with vernacular translations of the Scriptures. Yet even here roses blossomed in the desert. The hymns of Johann Heermann and Martin Rinkart have permanently enriched all later worship, and Paul Gerhardt learned in young manhood from the distress about him how to sing of patient trust and triumphant faith.²⁷⁸

"LORD of Our Life," written amidst the Thirty Years' War chronicles the

²⁷⁷Commission on Worship, *Lutheran Worship*, 297ff.

²⁷⁸Reed, 141.

hardship faced by the church and courageously asserts the supremacy of God. Mattheus Appelles Lowenstern gave birth to this battle-hymn, which testifies to his crucible of faith.²⁷⁹ Although, "Our Fathers' God in Years Long Gone," does not have military imagery, the author, Harry W. Krieger, served as an army chaplain during World War II. Krieger received the Bronze Star Medal and the Purple Heart among other military decorations.²⁸⁰ Hymnal commentaries offer the Lutheran chaplain the history of each hymn as well as the personal biography of hymnist. Incorporating hymn vignettes into the sermon will instill a deeper sense of appreciation for hymns and enhance the consoling value of the hymn for the listener.

Some hymnal commentaries include the Scripture text, which either served as the inspiration for the hymn or closely parallels the theme of the hymn. The commentary by Fred Precht offered such alignment with Scripture text and hymn. "Rise! To Arms! With Prayer Employ You," hymn 303 in *Lutheran Worship*, is described by Eduard E. Koch as 'a call to arms for spiritual conflict and victory,'" and assigned by Precht to Eph. 6:10-18.²⁸¹ Precht aligned the Easter hymn, "Today in Triumph Christ Arose," hymn 136 in *Lutheran Worship*, with Col. 2:15.²⁸² To the Lesser Festival hymn, "By all Your Saints In Warfare," hymn 193 & 194 in *Lutheran Worship*, Precht assigns Revelation 7:14b "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

²⁷⁹Precht, 321.

²⁸⁰Precht, 675.

²⁸¹Precht, 323.

²⁸²*Ibid.*, 153.

Sermon preparation, which purposefully aligns observance, Scripture text, hymn (inclusive of hymn history), doctrine, imagery, theme and goal, serves to enrich the worship service. "Hymns are an important part of Christianity's history. They can rarely be fully appreciated without some knowledge of their authors and composers. Such knowledge adds not only to our appreciation; it can add to our spiritual profit. And it is especially the function of pastors, and teachers to convey, from time to time, this knowledge to their congregations and classes."²⁸³ Hymnal commentaries with their hymn histories, hymnist biographies, and Scripture text alignment abet worship and sermon planning.

²⁸³Ibid., 9.

APENDIX 4

SERMON EVALUATION

Part 1: Evaluator Information

Name: _____

1. Please circle the answer that best describes your relationship to the military:
 - A. Active duty military member
 - B. Former military member (either retired or honorably discharged)
 - C. Spouse or child of military member
 - D. Civilian living adjacent to military installation
 - E. Other (please explain in the space provided)

2. Are you a professional church worker? (please explain in the space provided)

3. What is your religious affiliation? _____

4. How many times a month do you attend worship services? _____

5. What is the most important element of the worship service? _____

6. What do you believe is the purpose of a sermon? _____

7. What do you believe are the most important elements of the sermon? _____

8. Do you believe that illustrations are helpful in explaining the sermon text? (Please explain your answer)

9. Please identify one benefit from employing military imagery in preaching.

10. Please identify one shortcoming in using military imagery in preaching.

Part 2: Sermon Evaluation

Referring to the Worship and Sermon Planning Matrix, please respond to the following questions:

1. What was the number of the sample sermon you evaluated?
2. Was the military imagery for this sermon appropriate to the festival or observance? (e.g., All Saints Day or Independence Day) Please elaborate.
3. Did the military imagery assist you in understanding the text of the sermon? Please elaborate.
4. Was the military imagery suitable to the sermon hymn? Please elaborate.
5. Did the military imagery enhance your understanding of the emphasized doctrine? Please elaborate.
6. Was the military imagery appropriate to the theme? Please elaborate.
7. Did the military imagery achieve the goal of the sermon? Please elaborate.

APPENDIX 5
SAMPLE SERMONS

Sample Sermon One: St. Michael and All Angels (September 29)

Amplification: September 20 is Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) Day. I shall draw upon themes associated with prisoners of war to assist listeners to understand and be comforted by the role of angels as ministering spirits.

Sermon Text: Joshua 5:13-15 NKJV "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, 'Are You for us or for our adversaries?' So He said, 'No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.' And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, 'What does my Lord say to His servant?' Then the Commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, 'Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.' And Joshua did so."

Sermon Hymn: LW 171 "Holy God, We Praise Your Name"

Doctrinal Focus: Angels

"Lord, I'm Surrounded!"

Today we celebrate the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels. Michael, the Archangel, is mentioned in the book of Daniel, where he appears to Daniel and gives him a message from the LORD (Dan. 10:13ff and 12:7ff.). Michael is also mentioned in Jude 9 and Rev. 12:7. In both references he is engaged in warfare against satanic forces.

"September 29 was the date of the dedication, in the fifth century, of a small basilica on the Via Salaria, six miles from Rome, the first church in Italy dedicated in honor of

Michael."²⁸⁴ Angels, both good and evil, are mentioned throughout Scripture. In Gen. 3, Satan, a fallen angel, tempted Adam and Eve into sin. At the end of the same chapter we read that God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden and placed a cherubim, an angel, with a flaming sword to guard the way to the tree of life (Gen. 3:24).

In our text for this celebration of St. Michael and All Angels, someone, who identifies himself as the Commander of the LORD's army appears to Joshua. In view of the fact that the person who appeared to him had a sword that was drawn, Joshua asked the logical question. Whose side are you on? Are you one of us or one of them? Are you one of the good guys or one of the bad guys?

When you are engaged in battle or warfare, you definitely want to know the identity of the friendly forces and enemy forces. You do not want your force to be defeated. You do not want to surrender. You do not want any of your troops to be taken captive. You know that if you or your troops are taken as prisoners of war, you will endure unspeakable torture and brutality.

Our Nation has set aside September 20 as Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Day. This observance honors those who served our country and were taken as prisoners and those, whose whereabouts are unknown and presumed to have been captured. John Gatens, of the 589th Field Artillery Battalion-A Battery, recounts the story of being surrounded by the enemy and taken prisoner during the Battle of the Bulge on Dec. 23, 1944. Gatens presented a graphic and chilling account of his four months in captivity. Gatens described his POW experience as follows, "It now began to sink into our minds that the future was going to be horrible. . . The mood of the GIs was now starting to get

²⁸⁴Reed, 566.

ugly. Many things contribute to this. Being hungry and cold, and now a new problem started to develop, dysentery.”²⁸⁵

The Children of Israel knew what it meant to be in captivity. In the land of Egypt they were forced to endure unspeakable hardships. God heard their cry for help and He delivered them through His servant, Moses. Moses led the Children of Israel out of Egypt and through the Red Sea. But, in their disobedience, they failed to see how God surrounded them with His love and delivered them from captivity in Egypt. Psalm 78 paints a dreadful picture of Israel’s stubborn and rebellious spirit. “They forgot what He had done, the wonders he had shown them. . . . But they continued to sin against him, rebelling in the desert against the Most High. Psalm 78:11ff. NIV As a result of Israel’s disobedience, God caused them to wander in the desert for forty years until all those who came out of Egypt died in the desert. During that forty years, the Israelites were surrounded by their rebelliousness, held captive to their sin, and prisoners in the desert. But, God, in His compassion, surrounded them again with His love.

God raised up a new leader to take the place of Moses, namely, Joshua. God told Joshua, “Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give to them.” Josh. 1:6 NIV When Joshua became the leader of the Children of Israel after Moses’ death, there was a temptation for the Children of Israel to feel as if they were surrounded. In a sense they were surrounded. While, on the one hand, they were about to enter the land flowing with milk and honey,

²⁸⁵John Gatens, *John Gatens, 589th Field Artillery Battalion, A Battery*, 28 October 2002 <http://www.indianamilitary.org/106thinfdiv/GatensJohn_589A.htm>

on the other hand, Canaan was occupied by Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Grigashites, Amorites, and Jebusites (Josh. 3:10).

Joshua reminded the Israelites to trust in the LORD, that the LORD was among them, and that He would drive out the enemy. The LORD was with Joshua as he led the people across the Jordan River. Joshua obeyed the Word of the LORD and instructed the Israelites to receive circumcision because the people that had been born in the desert had not yet been circumcised. Upon completion of circumcision, they celebrated Passover. Now the Israelites faced their first real military test—Jericho. This is the context of the sermon text:

Josh. 5:13-15 "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, 'Are You for us or for our adversaries?' He said, 'No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.' And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, 'What does my Lord say to His servant?' Then the Commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, 'Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.' And Joshua did so."

Let us return to John Gatens' account of his experience as a prisoner of war. On April 23, 1945, Gatens was surrounded again—this time by Welsh Guards, who rescued him along with his fellow prisoners. Later, Gatens was surrounded again when he participated in the VE day celebration.²⁸⁶ Ordinarily, when we hear the phrase, "I'm surrounded," we conjure an image in our mind of a military unit being surrounded by the enemy and facing capture or death. Rarely, if ever, do we employ the phrase to mean that

²⁸⁶Ibid.

we are surrounded by a friendly force. However, in celebration of St. Michael and All Angels Day, I would challenge you to consider the phrase, "I'm surrounded," in the sense of God's army of angels surrounding us as we engage in spiritual warfare.

God surrounded the Israelites with His love. He surrounded them with His angelic army when they surrounded Jericho and won the victory. Just as John Gatens the prisoner of war was surrounded by a friendly force and rescued, God surrounds us with His love and delivers us from sin. He sent His Son to die for us on the cross and rise again victorious from the grave to give us life and salvation. Just as John Gatens, the prisoner of war, was surrounded by an excited throng on VE Day, we are surrounded by an angelic host, who rejoice over every sinner who repents and believes in Christ (Luke 15:10).

At the birth of Christ, an angelic host filled the sky and praised God saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." Luke 2:14 NIV After Christ resisted the temptations of Satan in the wilderness, angels came and ministered unto him (Matt. 4:11). God has appointed His angels to minister to believers. In Heb. 1:14 NIV, we read, "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?"

As believers in Christ, we can say in boldness of faith, "We are surrounded by the love of God and His angelic army. In Christ, we can trust in God's promise to Joshua in Joshua 1:9, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." As believers in Christ, we know in boldness of faith that God is for us and that His

army fights for us just as the Commander of the LORD's army fought for Joshua and the Children of Israel.

Through the blood of Christ, we are no longer prisoners of war. As St. Paul says in Rom. 8:37 NIV, "we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." Christ defeated sin, death, and the devil in His death and Resurrection. Our sins are forgiven; we have been released from our spiritual prison.

Yet, what does that mean for us? Now that we know we are forgiven, what does that mean as we continue to engage in spiritual warfare? Just as the LORD led the Children of Israel across the Jordan River into the Promised Land, He has taken us into a new land, the Kingdom of Grace, through the waters of Baptism. Through the power of Baptism, we daily rise up clad in spiritual armor. We follow our Commander in Chief, The LORD God Almighty, the King of Creation. We are surrounded by His angelic army.

Richard C. Jahn, in his essay entitled, "The Doctrine of the Angels," published in *The Abiding Word*, recalled his feelings of utter despair when he was informed that one of his nearest relatives, a Navy Frogman trained in underwater demolition, agreed to return to combat duty. He further recalled the tremendous comfort when a young pastor said, "I have heard great rumors to the effect that God has opened a branch office in the Pacific area, staffed by His biggest angels, and that He is looking after our boys out there."²⁸⁷

Even though Christ has won the victory for us, we still face the guerilla warfare

²⁸⁷Laetsch, *The Abiding Word*, vol. 3, "The Doctrine of the Angels," by Richard C. Jahn, 234.

waged by Satan and his force of evil angels. St. Peter, speaking from the experience of one who fell asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane when even after the Lord rebuked the disciples to stay awake and watch, tells us, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world." 1 Peter 5:8 NKJV

At the entrance of every military installation is posted the threat condition (Threatcon). Threat conditions describe progressive levels of security measures to protect against a terrorist threat. Threat condition Alpha means there is a general threat of possible activity against personnel and/or installations. Threat condition Bravo means an increased or more predictable threat. Threat condition Charlie means that intelligence indicates some form of threat action against personnel and/or facilities is imminent. Threat condition Delta means an attack has occurred or intelligence information indicates terrorist actions against a specific location is likely.

Our threat condition is one of vigilance. Yet, we know because of our sinful nature, we cannot be constantly vigilant. Like Peter, we will fall asleep. Like Peter, we will have moments of weakness. Therefore, we rely on the grace of Almighty God to sustain us as we engage in spiritual warfare. We also trust in a God Who does not slumber or sleep. His angels watch over us to protect us. Martin Luther preached a sermon on angels in which he said the following: "You should be certain that angels are protecting you when you go to sleep, yea, that they are protecting you also in all your business, whether you enter your home or leave your home. . . . Therefore even when you come to die, you should say that Christ will be with you and will have an

unnumbered multitude of holy angels with Him. You should know that angels are at your side not only in this life but also in death."²⁸⁸

This portion from Luther's sermon establishes both the theme and the goal for this celebration of St. Michael and All Angels Day. The theme of, "Lord, I'm surrounded," is not a cry for help but an exclamation of our certainty that the Lord has surrounded us with His army. As Joshua fell down to worship, we come together to offer praise and thanksgiving to the King of kings and LORD of Lords. As Luther said, we can take great comfort in God's angelic host surrounding us with Divine protection. I'm surrounded! You are surrounded. We are surrounded by a friendly force--the LORD's army. Amen.

Please refer to CHAPTER 10 for Evaluator Responses on Sample Sermon One.

²⁸⁸Plass, *What Luther Says*, 26:70.

Sample Sermon Two: Reformation Day (October 31)

Amplification: The Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) is that which defines and administers justice in the military environment. Depending upon the manner in which a court-martial interprets the UCMJ, a service member may be sentenced to death, the brig, restriction, or may be pronounced innocent. I shall invoke the imagery of the UCMJ and the court-martial sentence to punctuate the profundity of the Reformation in affirming "the doctrine of justification as the article on which the church stands or falls. This is the Gospel! For the church's continuing existence, the message of the Gospel must remain in place; that sinners are holy before God by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith alone, apart from works of the law."²⁸⁹

Sermon Text: Isaiah 55:8-9 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

Sermon Hymn: LW 297 "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"

Doctrinal Focus: Justification

"This Court-Martial Sentences You To ___!"

"The purpose of military law is to promote justice, to assist in maintaining good order and discipline in the armed forces, to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the military establishment, and thereby to strengthen the national security of the United States."²⁹⁰ Thus states the preamble of The Manual for Courts-Martial. The Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), enacted by Congress, is a federal law. Articles 77 through 134 of the UCMJ are known as the punitive articles and, if violated, can result in punishment by court-martial.²⁹¹

The most dramatic portion of the Manual for Courts-Martial is the appendix, which describes the forms of sentences. In sentencing the accused, the military judge

²⁸⁹Preus, 22.

²⁹⁰Department of Defense, *Manual for Courts-Martial-2000 Edition*, I-1.

²⁹¹*About the U. S. Military*, 4 Nov. 2002 <<http://usmilitary.about.com/library/milinfo/mcm/blmcm.htm>>

uses this formula: "(Name of accused), this court-martial sentences you _____."²⁹² The sentence could be no punishment, a reprimand, forfeiture of pay and allowances, reduction in rank of enlisted personnel, restraint and hard labor, punitive discharge, or death.²⁹³ Any sentence beyond a reprimand has serious consequence for the military member, and if the member is married with children, for the military member's family.

If one could imagine the phenomenon of words being frozen in time, the phrase, "This court-martial sentences you to _____," epitomizes the power of a single sentence altering your future. When a certain word fills the blank after the phrase, "This court-martial sentences you to," it is too late to re-write history; it is too late to reverse the chain of events that led you to this moment. No euphemisms, rationalization, blaming, or scape-goating reduce the impact of a court-martial sentence.

How much more powerful and final is the sentence, which the holy and just God could pronounce upon us? How would the God, Who condemns sin complete the sentence? Would God's celestial court sound something like this, "This court of divine retribution sentences you not to a reprimand, or forfeiture of pay and allowances, or reduction in rank, or restraint and hard labor, or punitive discharge. No. This court of divine retribution sentences you to death." Failure to carry out a lawful order or disrespect to a senior officer, pales in comparison to our disobedience and complete disregard of God's holy Law, the Eternal Code of Divine Justice. God's Law requires complete obedience. We have failed in thought, word, and deed in our ability to keep it.

²⁹²Department of Defense, *Manual for Courts-Martial-2000 Edition*, A11-1.

²⁹³*Ibid.*

St. Paul said in Rom. 5:12, NKJV "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned--" The Law of God, the Eternal Code of Divine Justice, pronounces the sentence of death. God, the holy Judge of the celestial court, raises the gavel aloft and smashes it on the bench with thunder and lightning. The prophet Jeremiah paints a vivid picture of God's judgment with these words, "Is not My word like a fire? Says the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" Jer. 23:29 NKJV

Who can save us from the sentence of the celestial courts-martial? Who can save us from the terror of the gavel pounding out the sentence of death? Is there anyone who can perfectly keep the Eternal Code of Divine Justice and stand in our place to accept the sentence of death? To ask such questions in an earthly court-martial would be absurd. Yet, listen again to our text from Isaiah 55:8-9: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." What does this mean? Does God condone sin? Does He sweep it under the carpet of the universe? Does He turn a blind eye to it? No. God hates sin but He loved you and me with such an incomprehensible love that He sent His Son to bear the sentence of death we deserved.

Jesus Christ, the spotless Lamb of God, perfectly kept the Eternal Code of Divine Justice. He lived in perfect obedience to the Father. He kept God's Word perfectly because He is the Word. St. John said, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14 NKJV Only Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, could take our

sentence of death and rise victorious from the grave. Now, in the sight of God and His celestial court we are declared not guilty. The Almighty God raises His gavel aloft and pounds out the sentence of not guilty while the celestial chorus sings with ineffable joy.

You are not guilty. I am not guilty. Our voices blend with the celestial chorus in singing praise to Almighty God for loving us, forgiving us, and saving us through the blood of Christ. This is the Good News of salvation we celebrate this Reformation Day. When Martin Luther led the Reformation of the Church, he sounded the clarion call for the Gospel and asserted that the doctrine of justification is not just some abstract concept but the doctrine upon which the church stands or falls. It is the Gospel that blows life-giving breath into us. It is the Gospel that gave birth to the Church. In order for the Church to exist, the Gospel must remain as the centerpiece. Sinners are justified before God not because God condones sin but because God forgives sinners.²⁹⁴ Jacob A. O. Preus, in his work entitled, *Just Words*, captures the drama of a not-guilty verdict:

"As people guilty before the righteous Judge, the verdict of not guilty can be heard only as the greatest good news. How wonderful! Although all your thoughts, words, and deeds make you 'guilty as sin' before God, on account of Christ you are acquitted. God declares you to be not guilty of any crimes of which you had been charged. The case is closed. Court is adjourned. You are free to go. This is not because God ignored the crimes. It is because He exacted the punishment against His own innocent Son. Christ suffered the wages of sin in our place."²⁹⁵

A guilty verdict on the charge of misconduct in the military means a loss of one's position, loss of rank, separation from one's unit and comrades. When a military judge says, "Not guilty on all counts," the military member is free. Freedom from the charge of

²⁹⁴Preus, 22.

²⁹⁵Ibid., 113.

misconduct means being free to don his uniform, return to his unit, and resume his military duties.

Only the verdict of "Not guilty" can restore the sinner to the Lord's family. When the Almighty God says, "Not guilty on all counts," we are free. Freedom from the sentence of eternal death means we have a new beginning. After the verdict of not guilty, we don a spiritual uniform--a robe washed in the blood of Christ. After the verdict of not guilty, we are appointed to positions of tremendous worth--called servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. After the verdict of not guilty, we engage in the spiritual duties of our Divine Commander in Chief--to let our "light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Matt. 5:16 NKJV

What does it mean to let our light so shine before men? Some of you may recall a Marine poster with the caption, "If you were accused of being a Marine, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" If you were accused of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? If we were on trial for our faith, would there be enough evidence to convict us of following Christ?

Peter, who denied Jesus three times, was put on trial before the high priests and the council. When the high priest and the council ordered Peter and the Apostles to cease and desist from proclaiming the Gospel, Peter received boldness from the Holy Spirit and said, "We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him." Acts 5:29-32 NKJV

Paul, who formerly persecuted Christians, was put on trial before the Sanhedrin for preaching the Gospel. The Lord appeared to Paul and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome." Acts 23:11 NKJV Paul testified of his faith before Felix the Governor (Acts 24:10), before Festus (Acts 25), before King Agrippa, and made an appeal to testify before Caesar.

Whereas God sentences us to eternal life in Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit, working through the Word, produces plenty of evidence to convict us of being followers of Christ. As we live in the power of our Baptism, the Holy Spirit produces works of faith in our lives. Only God our Father, Who loved us with an incomprehensible love, could take sinners condemned to eternal death and transform them into heroes of faith. We hear again the words of Isaiah: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

God pronounced us not guilty in the Divine Court. Through Christ's perfect obedience to the Eternal Code of Divine Justice, death and Resurrection, the Judge has pronounced us not guilty. In the power of this verdict of not guilty, we don our spiritual uniform. We celebrate our identity as servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. We gladly follow the spiritual duties entrusted to us by our Divine Commander in Chief. This Court of Divine Justice sentences you to life--eternal life. Live that life in the Word. Live that life in prayer. Live that life producing evidence that convicts you of following Christ! Amen.

Evaluator Responses: Sample Sermon 2

Observance	<p>“Yes, Reformation Day is the “reformation” of the Christian faith. This sermon discusses our reformation as we are given a new life in Christ.” Evaluator 12</p> <p>“The UCMJ defines the boundaries of behavior for a soldier. In a short time through an act of disobedience, a soldier will know there are serious consequences. A sentence could be "etched in stone." If innocent, then "You re not guilty." A just God is before each of us. A forgiving God is with each of us. Even though we are guilty of disobedience, our ever loving God forgives sinners because of the blood of Christ. "Not Guilty." Evaluator 5</p> <p>“I like the topic of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and the various sentences, and I like the concept of a Celestial Court, but I’m not as clear as I would like to be about how the UCMJ and its various sentences connect to Reformation Day (October 31), with Luther’s nailing of his 95 Theses.” Evaluator 13</p>
Sermon Text	<p>“Yes. The image of the military “high court” and the impact of your sentence or lack thereof tied in very nicely with the doctrine of justification. Through grace, God has saved us from a death sentence.” Evaluator 12</p> <p>“The UCMJ is the defining document for a soldier's behavior. Guilty or Not Guilty. The Reformation was the defining event for the Good News. It is this Gospel that gave birth to the Church. By grace we are justified.” Evaluator 5</p> <p>“The UCMJ did help with understanding the sermon text. You grab your audience’s knowledge of the court martial proceedings and penalties and connect that to a celestial court where everyone’s sentence from God should be death – but for Justification.” Evaluator 13</p>
Sermon Hymn	<p>“Yes, God is our mighty fortress – defending us and saving us from a death sentence. This is one of my favorite hymns – I find it very powerful and moving.” Evaluator 12</p> <p>“The Kingdom's ours forever! The tune is as justified as the test. Just as the UCMJ is the defining foundation for a soldier's behavior, so it is "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Evaluator 5</p> <p>“I don’t see a connection between the military imagery of the UCMJ and sentences and this hymn. I like the hymn, but the connection seems a bit specious.” Evaluator 13</p>

<p>Doctrine</p>	<p>“Yes, God could have chosen condemnation for his disobediant children, we’ve certainly done nothing to deserve otherwise. Instead, he sent his one and only son, Jesus Christ, to die for us – saving us from ourselves and our sinful nature.” Evaluator 12</p> <p>“Yes. Could I be accused of being a soldier in service to America? I can clearly understand that question. Could I be accused in a celestial court of being a sinner? The gavel of guilty does not thunder. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us --." Through "-- the Father, full of grace and truth," we are not guilty.” Evaluator 5</p> <p>“I liked the way the military imagery set the stage for the Celestial Court and the doctrine of Justification as the reason why we are all not sentenced to death. I thought the UCMJ served as an excellent attention-getter.” Evaluator 13</p>
<p>Theme</p>	<p>“Yes, the UCMJ is the military law. The Holy Scriptures are God’s Law – laws that all sinners break and fall short of.” Evaluator 12</p> <p>“The weight of military justice in the UCMJ and one being accused of being a Marine provide a clear image of tall justice before a soldier.” Evaluator 5</p> <p>“I think the imagery sets the stage for the contrast between the “courts”. On the one hand, in the UCMJ world, your sentence is related to hoped-for elucidation of facts and an appropriate finding of guilt or innocence. In God’s celestial court, there’s an automatic, prima facie case for guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. Yet the death penalty is withheld because of Justification. You grabbed my attention with the military imagery.” Evaluator 13</p>
<p>Goal</p>	<p>“Yes, without the Gospel, we are condemned to death. The image of the military court sentencing us or not, based on our actions, ties directly into our acceptance of Christ (our action) with God’s sentence (eternal life).” Evaluator 12</p> <p>“Yes. "Not guilty on all counts" sets a soldier free. There as been no misconduct. Despite our guilty sin in God's eyes, we are set free in the heavenly kingdom through faith in the death and resurrection of Christ.” Evaluator 5</p> <p>“I think it set the stage for the sermon, whose goal was achieved by the substitution of celestial court imagery for military imagery.” Evaluator 13</p>

Sample Sermon Three: All Saints' Day (November 1)

Amplification: Our identity depends upon the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. I shall invoke the imagery of Rules of Engagement to explicate the doctrine of election. Rules of Engagement (ROE) are directives delineating the circumstances and limitations under which United States forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagement with opposing forces. Similarly, the doctrine of election reminds believers of their dual identity as saints and sinners.

Sermon Text: Revelation 7:14 "And I said to him, Sir, you know. So he said to me, These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." NKJV

Sermon Hymn: LW 193 "By All Your Saints in Warfare"

Doctrinal Focus: Election

"Are We The Good Guys?"

We are taught, early on, to differentiate between the good guys and the bad guys. Whether it is in children's games or athletic contests, we are involved in events, which pit one side against the other--the good guys against the bad guys. However, good-natured contests or games appear, they always involve opposition and an outcome in which one wins and the other loses. Just as it would be unthinkable to engage in a game or contest with the intent of losing, in military operations, the purpose is to win, to protect your country, and defend your national interests.

Yet, as reasonable as that may sound, when you are on the battlefield with bullets whizzing past and bombs exploding, there is a tendency to forget your identity and your mission and react out of rage or terror. If troops succumb to uncontrolled rage and terror, their sense of identity and mission could be lost and they unleash the violence of war on innocent people. When this happens, the good guys are no longer the good guys.

The famous military strategist, Carl von Clausewitz, addressed this chaos in the midst of war. Clausewitz referred to the chaos of war as the fog and friction of war.

Because of the danger of troops forgetting who they are in the fog and friction of war, our Nation's civilian and military leaders developed Rules of Engagement (ROE). Rules of Engagement are directives "issued by competent military authority that delineate the circumstances and limitations under which United States forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagement with other forces encountered." Reduced to their most basic intent, ROE remind troops of their identity and mission.

On this All Saints' Day, we remember that we are engaged in spiritual warfare. Saint Paul clearly identifies our enemies as "principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Eph. 6:12 NKJV How do you recognize an enemy who does not wear uniforms? How do you fight an enemy you cannot see? How do you fight an enemy who does not fight fairly? How do you fight an enemy who constantly shifts his forces, weapons, and tactics? How do you fight an enemy that does not adhere to Geneva Convention Protocols or Laws of Armed Conflict? They will employ every weapon in their arsenal.

How will we remember who we are and what our mission is in the fog and friction of spiritual warfare? Are there Rules of Engagement for believers? Let us hear again the words of the text, Rev. 7:14: "And I said to him, Sir, you know. So he said to me, These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

We have a dual identity. We are sinners and saints at the same time. When Adam and Eve fell into sin, sin entered into creation causing mayhem and chaos. With the chaos of sin came the punishment of death. Because of sin, we were definitely not the good guys--we were enemies of God. Saint Paul said, "And you, who once were

alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight--" Col. 1:21-22 NKJV Only through the death and Resurrection of Christ do we have the identity of saints. We have been saved through the blood of Christ.

Our identity as saints means that we belong to the family of the Almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth. Our Heavenly Father loved us so much that He sent His Son to go into enemy territory to conduct war against the forces of evil--sin, death, and the devil. Only Christ, the spotless Lamb of God, could conquer the principalities and powers of evil. Only Christ, the Light of the world, could vanquish the powers of darkness. Only Christ, the King of kings and LORD of lords, could overthrow the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Only Christ, the Son of God, could crush the devil and trounce the satanic hordes.

Whereas earthly Rules of Engagement vary from one military operation to another, we have something much more reliable to remind us of our identity. We have God's Word. God's Word is everlasting. God's Word does not change from one situation to the next. The central message of God's Word is that He sent His Son to save us from our sins.

In the fog and friction of spiritual warfare, we do not ask the question, "Are we the good guys?" We know exactly who we are--we are the Saints of God. We know what God has called us to do--proclaim the Gospel with our lips and lives. The account of Stephen's martyrdom in Acts 7 demonstrates that Stephen was convinced of his identity as a child of God and held an unwavering conviction of God's appointed mission for his life. Likewise, the following account of Polycarp's martyrdom exemplifies the

power of God's Word to remind us of who we are and what God has called us to do even in the fog and friction of war:

Smyrna was a city of religious persecutions. . . It was here that Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, met martyrdom in the year 155, a half century or more after the book of Revelation was written. The mob howls for Polycarp's blood. The governor strives in every way to make him recant. If he will simply say: 'Caesar is Lord'; if he will but throw on the altar where the emperor is worshiped a few grains of incense; if he will revile Christ, he may escape. His reply is: 'Eighty and six years have I served him, and he hath done me no wrong. How then can I speak evil of my King who saved me:' The multitude clamors that a lion be loosed upon him, but the governor refuses. They clamor that he be burned, and the governor yields. The Jews gather wood. Polycarp is tied to the stake, the fire lighted. But it overarches him like a billowing sail. As he remains unharmed the executioner is ordered to plunge a dagger into his side. The Jews demand that the body be burned, but the Christians are allowed to bear away the half-calcined bones, which, says an ancient writer, 'were more precious to them than gold or gems.'²⁹⁶

Polycarp, like Stephen, testified of his faith in the face of certain death knowing that Christ would raise him to everlasting life. How could Stephen and Polycarp maintain an unshakeable faith in the face of an overwhelming enemy? Let us listen again to the words of the text. "And I said to him, Sir, you know. So he said to me, These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Rev. 7:14

Just as Rules of Engagement remind troops of their identity and mission in the fog and friction of war, the doctrine of election reminds believers of their dual identity as sinners and saints. The doctrine of election summons us to remember that our salvation is exclusively the result of God's grace. Nothing we do could satisfy the demands of

²⁹⁶ Daniel Russell, *Preaching the Apocalypse* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1935), 65.

God's holy Law. It is only through God's grace revealed in Christ and testified by the Holy Spirit that we have the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

The doctrine of election is also a source of profound comfort and assurance. In this regard, the doctrine of election is not a political or legal concept that shifts with the ebb and flow of National interests. Scripture employs the doctrine of election to reinforce the proclamation of the Gospel and present consolation to the believer engaged in spiritual warfare. St. Peter, who according to legend was crucified upside down, called believers the elect of God and encouraged believers to be comforted by their election in the midst of trials and persecution (1 Pet. 1, 2-6).

The confessional writings of our Church echo the message of Scripture by punctuating the solace offered by the doctrine of election. The authors of the Formula of Concord state the following: "This doctrine will also give us the glorious comfort, in times of trial and affliction, that in his counsel before the foundation of the world God has determined and decreed that he will assist us in all our necessities, grant us patience, give us comfort, create hope, and bring everything to such an issue that we shall be saved."²⁹⁷

In view of the glorious comfort presented to us in the doctrine of election, we no longer ask the question, "Are we the good guys?" We know exactly who we are and what we are about. We enjoy the same identity as the saints who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. We rejoice in the saints who have gone before us and made bold testimony of their faith. We imitate the example of Hannah (1 Sam. 1:1ff.) and Daniel (Dan. 6:10ff.), who humbled themselves in prayer before God.

²⁹⁷Tappert, 624.48.

We tread in the steps of Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:2ff.), who took up the Word of God and considered it a privilege to instruct others in the faith. We walk in the footsteps of Dorcas (Acts 9:36ff.) known for her works of charity. We celebrate the message of Tychicus (Col. 4:7), who was sent by Paul to the Church of Colosse for the express purpose of comforting the hearts of the believers--reminding them of their election in Christ Jesus.

Our identity is sure. We are sinners who have been forgiven. We are saints who have been entrusted with the message of salvation. Rather than Rules of Engagement, which change from one military operation to the next, we embrace the Doctrine of Election, which reminds us of who are in the fog and friction of spiritual warfare. We are the saints of God elected unto eternal life. Amen.

Evaluator Response's: Sample Sermon 3

Observance	<p>“It worked fine. In the end it tied into the saints and painted a picture of what things must have been like for some of them, in the day of their battles.” Evaluator 7</p> <p>“The imagery was good but could have been exploited further.” Evaluator 2</p> <p>“Yes, The comparison of the "Rules of Engagement" in the military to remind the troops of their identity and mission to the Rules of Engagement for Believers involved in daily spiritual warfare was very effective for All Saints Day.” Evaluator 6</p>
Sermon Text	<p>“I especially liked the term “fog of war” in today’s complicated politics and advanced techniques, even the build-up to war can be a bit foggy.” Evaluator 7</p> <p>“The imagery assisted somewhat; however, the later references to Biblical persons (Daniel, Priscilla, Dorcas, etc.) in the next to last paragraph were equally helpful.”</p> <p>“Yes, The text Rev. 7:14 Dual identity Saints and Sinners. Sinners from birth and Saints through Christ.” Evaluator 6</p>
Sermon Hymn	<p>“Good strong correlation.” Evaluator 7</p> <p>*“Hymn 193 presents to the congregation the idea that life is warfare during which Christians make choices. The hymn reminds us of the elect who were martyrs for the Lord.” Evaluator 1</p> <p>“Yes, ‘By All Your Saints In Warfare’ reminds us that as saints we are in a constant struggle as we are bombarded each day.” Evaluator 6</p> <p>*Evaluator 2 did not submit a response, therefore, I included the response of Evaluator 1.</p>

<p>Doctrine</p>	<p>“The term election, used in this manner, was new to me.” Evaluator 7</p> <p>“The sense of belonging to one side vs the other side, was really brought out by the ROE concept.” Evaluator 2</p> <p>“Yes, The Doctrine of Election, reminds believers of their dual identity as saints and sinners. Salvation is exclusively through God's grace. The military imagery helped to enlighten me on the Doctrine of Election.” Evaluator 6</p>
<p>Theme</p>	<p>“It pointed out how quickly you can change from the good guy to the bad in the fog of war. Expecially if you don't have a strong sense of your own identity.” Evaluator 7</p> <p>“The issue of good vs. bad conduct (fog and friction) is so important to teach. Maintaining our codes of conduct in the encounter with an enemy who does not, is so sensitive; failure to do so can have such catastrophic results. The concept of election/band of brothers, is helpful in maintaining a proper posture; I belong gives me strength.” Evaluator 2</p> <p>“Are We the Good Guys? We are the saints of God. Our rules are constant from spiritual battle to spiritual battle.” Evaluator 6</p>
<p>Goal</p>	<p>“With the coming war, and forecasts of plenty more fog, I think we need plenty more sermons that focus on our identity as a Christian soldier.” Evaluator 7</p> <p>“The imagery helped, but could have been exploited better with more comments about how we are strengthened by knowing that a host of others share our identity as believers in the death and Resurrection of Christ.” Evaluator 2</p> <p>“Yes, Our identity is dependent upon the death and resurrection of Jesus. We enjoy the same identity as saints ‘who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.’” Evaluator 6</p>

Sample Sermon Four: Good Friday

Amplification: Good Friday punctuates the utter isolation of Christ. Man deserted the Son of Man; God forsook the Son of God. Desertion could be considered one of the most heinous crimes in the military. The very mention of the word desertion in the military setting evokes impressions of cowardice. One who carries the label of deserter carries the stigma of deserting his comrades in the heat of battle when they needed him most. A deserter could never return to his own unit and be restored to his former position of leadership and trust. Employing the imagery of desertion, the goal of this sermon is move the listener to understand we have complete restoration in Christ. In Christ we are reconciled with the Father; we are restored to service in the Kingdom. Only the Gospel can turn a deserter into a hero of faith.

Sermon text: Text: John 18:27 "Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow." NIV

Sermon Hymn: LW 110 "Go To Dark Gethsemane"

Doctrinal Focus: Reconciliation

"Deserter"

"Death or such other punishment as a court-martial may direct." That is what the Uniform Code of Military Justice declares could happen if a military member becomes a deserter in the time of war. Desertion, otherwise known as Article 85, is a very serious matter.

Being a deserter means that you have abandoned your post, deserted your comrades, and turned your back on your country. Abandoned. Deserted. Turned your back. Your comrades look upon you as a coward and your family regards you as a disgrace. Where do you go with the label of deserter? Who will hire you?

Peter, the Lord's very own disciple, denied Jesus three times. Peter deserted Jesus. I find this very disturbing--don't you? Only a few verses earlier in this chapter, we read how Peter drew his sword and struck a servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. How is it that Peter could be so courageous one moment and so cowardly the next? Peter

was a man's man. He was a fisherman. He was not spineless. He was a man of action. How could Peter desert Jesus? He denied Jesus three times. And each time he denied Jesus, he denied him more vehemently. The first time he denied Jesus, he simply said, "I don't know what you're talking about." The second time he denied Jesus, he added an oath and said, "I don't know the man." The third time he denied Jesus, he cursed and swore, "I know not the man."

Have we ever deserted Christ? Have we ever denied Christ before men? When we see Peter and the fear that drove him to desert Christ, we see ourselves. One minute we might be courageous and then the next minute we become afraid. Like Peter, when we become afraid, we disassociate ourselves from Christ. Most often, this happens incrementally. Little by little we find ourselves afraid to claim that we are associated with Christ in our work places, schools, and relationships. We are afraid that we will lose our jobs, our friends, our influence, and our reputation if we clearly identify ourselves as believers. Gradually, we desert Him until we cannot see Him at all. Then, out of fear, we try to justify why we distanced ourselves from the Lord. But, justify as we may, there is no way we can justify our desertion from the Lord. In the court martial hearing where God is the Judge and the code of Law is God's holy Law, we are guilty of desertion and deserve the punishment of death.

Strange things happen when people are afraid. During World War I, the British and Commonwealth military executed 306 of its own soldiers. One such soldier, Private Thomas Highgate carries the ignominious distinction of being the first to undergo execution for desertion. When he could no longer bear the carnage of 7,800 British troops at the Battle of Mons, he fled and hid in a barn. No one defended him at his trial.

Every one of his comrades from the Royal West Kents had been killed, injured or captured. At the age of 17, only 35 days into the Great War, Private Highgate was executed. The execution of troops for desertion was intended both as punishment and a deterrent to others.²⁹⁸

A punishment and a deterrent—I wonder what would have happened to the disciples if God had immediately executed Peter for desertion. What would happen if every time we deserted God because of our sinfulness He immediately executed one of us? There wouldn't be anyone left. Because of our sin we are trapped in the endless cycle of God's Law accusing us of desertion. Like the Uniform Code of Military Justice stating that desertion during time of war calls for the death penalty, we are in a time of spiritual war. The penalty should be death—the penalty is death. Someone has to be executed. Someone was executed. That someone was Christ. Christ took our punishment of desertion upon himself and in so doing he was deserted by God. Remember Jesus crying out in bitter agony, “My God—My God—Why have You forsaken me?”

I wonder what was going through Peter's mind after he realized what he had done in deserting Christ. The Scripture says that he wept bitterly. I wonder if he joined the other disciples or if he went off by himself. We do know from Scripture that he re-joined the other disciples and was the first of the disciples to run into the tomb on Easter morning. Was it true? Had Jesus really been raised from the dead? If it is true—If Jesus really is alive, how could Peter look him in the face?

²⁹⁸Peter Taylor-Whiffen, "Shot at dawn - cowards, traitors or victims?" *Wars and Conflict* (March 2002), 12 Oct. 2002 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/war/wwone/shot_at_dawn_02.shtml>

Is it possible for a deserter to be reinstated and go on to serve? Strangely enough, there was such a man during the Civil War. William F. Tilson was a two-time deserter turned hero. At the age of 16, Tilson qualified to be a member of the United States Sharpshooters. Even though he fought in the Antietam Campaign and the Battle of Chancellorsville, Army records portray Tilson as a discipline problem and report him absent from his Company. He was subsequently charged with desertion. At the end of his obligated service he re-enlisted. He fought in the Battle of the Wilderness, where he was wounded. He deserted a second time, probably because he fell in love. He was discharged from the Sharpshooters only to later join the Vermont Volunteers. During the assault on Petersburg, Tilson was seriously wounded by canister-shot; the lower portion of his right leg was amputated. The two-time deserter turned hero. In his own hand he wrote, 'Being wounded nine times, and with the loss of my right foot being the most serious. The last one causing Uncle Sam to conclude my services of little importance.'²⁹⁹

Let us return to Peter. After the Resurrection, the third time Christ appeared to the disciples was at the Sea of Galilee. Peter and the others were fishing. We remember that when Jesus first called Peter three years earlier, Peter and his brother were fishing on the Sea of Galilee. Before Christ appeared to them, Peter, the man's man, the man of action got back to work--his work of fishing. The Lord had in mind a different type of work--a different type of fishing.

As Peter and the others were in the boat, Christ called out to them from the shore and asked them the question we always ask when we see someone fishing. "Did you catch anything?" Of course, sometimes when you ask that question, you may receive a

²⁹⁹Mattox, 4.

wise crack remark like, "Ya, I caught a cold." But the disciples did not respond that way to Jesus. They simply said they had not caught anything. Jesus told them to cast the net on the other side of the boat. They did just that and as we say in Missouri, they hauled in a mess of fish. John told Peter that the man on the shore was Jesus. Peter, the man's man, the man of action, jumped out of the boat and headed toward Jesus. After they had a meal together, Jesus said to Peter, "Do you love me?" Peter said, "Yes, Lord, You know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again, Jesus said to Peter, "Do you love me?" Peter said, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." A third time Jesus said to Peter, "Do you love me?" Just as Peter's responses became more intense each time he denied Jesus, his responses to Jesus' questions became more intense. The third time Jesus asked the question, Peter was distressed. He remembered that he had denied Christ three times and each time denial became more intense. He said, "Lord, you know everything; you know I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." That day, Peter received what we refer to in the military as his permanent change of station orders (PCS).

In Christ, God forgave Peter. Jesus reinstated Peter to discipleship. Like Tilson, the two-time deserter turned hero, Peter continued to wrestle with his fears and his sins. Each time, Jesus forgave him, reinstated him, and gave him the courage to fight the good fight of faith. We know from the book of Acts that Peter went on to be a powerful preacher and witness for the Lord. He preached at Pentecost. God used Peter to heal the lame. But the real moment of truth came when the high priests confronted Peter for preaching the Gospel. Peter did not deny Christ. He did not desert Christ. He stood firm and boldly asserted, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name

under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12 NKJV The leaders threatened Peter to stop proclaiming the Gospel but Peter again stood firm and said he would continue to proclaim the Gospel. Later on, Peter was thrown into prison. An angel freed him. Again Peter was imprisoned. Again an angel freed him. According to tradition, Peter was crucified upside down. The deserter became a hero of faith. The deserter died for his Lord.

In Christ, God has forgiven us. God calls us into his family. He feeds us with His Word. He fortifies us through the Lord's Supper. He takes away our stigma of desertion and replaces it with the seal of salvation. No longer are we deserters. Instead of being afraid to look our Father in the face because of what we have done, our Father has made his face to shine upon us and given us peace. (Num. 6:22ff.)

Because of God's love, we are no longer in bondage to the fear that led us to commit desertion. Because of Christ taking our punishment of desertion upon himself, God pronounced us not guilty of desertion. God has forgiven us. Like Peter, God has reinstated us. He has called us back to serve in his army. He has called us to clothe ourselves in the righteousness of Christ.

There is a custom among some commanding officers that when they promote someone, they will hold a surprise ceremony and summon that individual to report immediately to the commanding officer. When you are told to report to the commanding officer immediately, the first thing that pops into your head is, "What did I do wrong?" "This will probably end my career." "The CO is probably going to let me have it!" Suffice it to say, you do not expect good things to happen. Then, after you report to the CO's office, which seemed to take a lifetime as terrible things raced across your mind,

you knock on the door. A gruff voice from within says, "Enter!" You open the door and see several people present. You say to yourself, "Oh, great. The CO is going to chew me up and spit me out in front of the entire unit." The Executive Officer barks out your name and says, "Front and center." You march forward and stand at attention. The CO says, "Raise your right hand and repeat after me. I, (state your name), solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God." As the CO leads you through your oath of enlistment or oath of commissioning to reaffirm your loyalty to our Nation and our Nation's Commander in Chief, you stand up straighter. Then, the Commanding Officer unpins the old rank and pins on the new rank. The CO proceeds to tell you that you are not getting promoted because of what you have done but because of what the Nation entrusts you to do.

We have been saved, not because of what we have done. We have been forgiven not because of what we have done. We have been reinstated not because of what we have done. We have been saved, forgiven, and reinstated because of what Christ has done for us. We have been saved, forgiven, and reinstated for a purpose and that purpose is to proclaim the Gospel and witness of God's love to this broken world.

Like Peter, there will be those times when fear gets the best of us and we distance ourselves from the Lord. But the Holy Spirit works in our hearts and minds to repent of our sin and lean on God's mercy. Like Peter, the Holy Spirit will give us the courage to make bold testimony of God's love.

Instead of being charged with Article 85-Desertion, we make a bold assertion of our faith in God the Father with the 1st Article of the Apostles' Creed: I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth. We make a bold assertion of our faith in God the Son with the 2nd Article of the Apostles' Creed: And in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilot, was crucified, dead, and buried: he descended into hell, the third day he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and is seated on the right hand of God the Father almighty, whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. We make a bold assertion of our faith in God the Holy Spirit with the words of the 3rd Article of the Apostles' Creed: I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Like Peter, we can assert that when we die we shall live forever with our Lord. We shall not be executed for desertion. Listen to Peter's assertion of faith in 1 Pet. 5:10, "And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen." Let us make Peter's assertion our assertion. May the God of all grace, who called you to faith in Christ Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, strengthen you and keep you in the true faith unto life everlasting. Amen.

Evaluator Response's: Sample Sermon 4

Observance	<p>“Desertion is what Good Friday is all about, and, to tell you the truth, before reading this I’d never thought of Christ’s suffering on Good Friday quite this way, nor as poignantly.” Evaluator 10</p> <p>“I think it was a pulpit match. Peter’s protestation of love for Jesus, and his 3 times denial fit perfectly with the UCMJ language in desertion.” Evaluator 9</p> <p>“Christ bears the sins of the world to the cross, but the world does not protest his fate. Even the bravest of the disciples desert him.” Evaluator 1</p>
Sermon Text	<p>“The text was about Peter’s final denial just before Christ was taken away, and the rooster that began to crow.” Evaluator 10</p> <p>“Again, Peter’s desertion of Christ and God’s desertion of Christ were powerful analogies.” Evaluator 9</p> <p>“Biblical references such as "Peter, who denied Him" show the fate of a deserter.” Evaluator 1</p>
Sermon Hymn	<p>“‘Go to dark Gethsemane’ was the perfect hymn. This is another hymn I’ve known all my life and know for memory. In my view it reminds me every Lent of the sheer agony Christ felt in the garden of Gethsemane as a result of the desertion of his disciples, along with Judas’ betrayal and all the suffering he knew was ahead.” Evaluator 10</p> <p>“This hymn really reflected the theme of loyalty and learning from that loyalty. Perfect fit.” Evaluator 9</p> <p>“‘Ye who feel the tempter’s power,’” demonstrates how the process of desertion works. The brave man faces the enemy but when moment of decision comes, he fails. Gethsemane, more than other events, shows the despair of the twelve.” Evaluator 1</p>

<p>Doctrine</p>	<p>“Your detailed description of what desertion means was of great help in my understanding about what I believe was the emphasized doctrine—that Christ took the punishment for our complete desertion of him. About desertion per se, I’ve never focused so intensely on the term, e.g., how the fear aspect plays in, and of course how former rank, etc. can seldom be restored, and how a death sentence can be meted out.” Evaluator 10</p> <p>“The parallel was clear and concise.” Evaluator 9</p> <p>“It brought out the enormity of deserting our Savior and then added to that message the blessed reconciliation through Christ.” Evaluator 1</p>
<p>Theme</p>	<p>“Yes, definitely, besides Christ was up against paramilitary force anyway—the Roman guards and government of his time.” Evaluator 10</p> <p>“Using real examples from the Civil War and WWI really helped. Made the idea of reconciliation come alive.” Evaluator 9</p> <p>“Peter, who denied Him, becomes the center of a sermonic court martial. Only the post-Resurrection fishing trip fully brings Peter back into his old status, as the Rock.” Evaluator 1</p>
<p>Goal</p>	<p>“What also drove that point home, personally, was the terribly sad, the story of the British private, only 17 years old, who was executed for desertion after only 35 days in service; the story of William F. Tilson who fought at Antietam, Chancellorsville, . . . I could see something of myself in the central figures in each of these, which made the desertion aspect even more real (the officer receiving the promotion in the last instance, no doubt, felt abandoned until he was surprised with the promotion).” Evaluator 10</p> <p>“The sea stories and anecdotes greatly facilitated my understanding.” Evaluator 9</p> <p>“The military imagery supplied dramatic contrast to Christ's forgiving actions toward those who had run away. His was more than an application of the old militia slogan: "He who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day." He gave Peter the commission to "Feed My Lambs". From deserter to Commander in Chief.” Evaluator 1</p>

Sample Sermon Five: Armed Forces Sunday (May)

Amplification: On August 31st, 1949, Secretary of Defense, Louis Johnson, announced the inception of Armed Forces Day. The intention was to generate unity among the Branches of Service. President Truman codified the observance of Armed Forces Day in a Presidential Proclamation. "Armed Forces Day, Saturday, May 20, 1950, marks the first combined demonstration by America's defense team of its progress, under the National Security Act, toward the goal of readiness for any eventuality. It is the first parade of preparedness by the unified forces of our land, sea, and air defense."³⁰⁰ Armed Forces Day is celebrated on the third Saturday of May. While each Branch of Service prides itself on its unique contribution to the defense of our Nation, all Branches of Service employ boot camps to indoctrinate their recruits. Boot camp intends to instill esprit de corps, generate a warrior ethos, and build individual confidence through graduated levels of stress. Until the Lord takes us to our heavenly home, we are engaged in ceaseless warfare.

Sermon Text: 2 Timothy 2:1-4 "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier." NKJV

Sermon Hymn: LW 299 "Fight The Good Fight"

Doctrine Focus: Sanctification and spiritual warfare

A Good Soldier

"What have I done?" "This is not what I signed up for!" "I want a discharge!" "I can't take it anymore!" "I'd like to give that Drill Instructor a piece of my mind!" "These rules are stupid!" Do you recognize these phrases? I know that chaplains who have served at our Nation's boot camps would recognize these or similar phrases immediately. For military personnel who have endured the rigors of indoctrination at boot camp, some have felt like they reached the breaking point. Others have felt like they made the wrong

³⁰⁰DefenseLINK: U.S. Department of Defense, "'United For Freedom' Armed Forces Day History," 13 Nov. 2002 <www.defenselink.mil/afb/military/history.html>

decision. On the other hand, millions of individuals have successfully completed boot camp and served their Nation honorably and heroically. Many service members look upon boot camp as a defining experience—a rite of initiation. The Drill Instructor is the person, who stands out most in the recollections of boot camp. It is the Drill Instructor, who pushes the recruits to go beyond what they can endure.

St. Paul seems to assume the role of Drill Instructor with St. Timothy. When Paul wrote a letter to Timothy encouraging him to be strong and endure hardship like a good soldier, it reminded me of the Drill Instructor who uses a variety of methods to push recruits through boot camp. Just as recruits are relatively young when they are processed through basic training, Timothy was a young pastor, whom Paul took under his wing and treated as his spiritual son. Is it not ironic that Paul writes a letter of encouragement to Timothy while he (Paul) is in prison?

Paul knew what it was like to be attacked for the faith. Paul was a combat veteran of spiritual warfare. Paul often used the language of warfare to encourage Timothy. In 1 Tim. 1:18, St. Paul does not mince words with Timothy regarding the warfare awaiting those who believe in Christ. Saint Paul writes, "This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, . . ." Again, in 1 Tim. 6:12, St. Paul tells Timothy to, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses."

Like Paul, Martin Luther knew that spiritual warfare was part and parcel of the Christian life. In addressing the topic of courage, Luther said, "It is, of course, the nature of our flesh and blood to be courageous and cheerful as long as there is no suffering and

sorrow. I am, as the proverb puts it, not afraid of ten when I am alone. But when the weather changes, and temptation and trouble come upon us and oppress us, then we have lost the precious promises, and the comforting thoughts vanish as if Christ had never spoken any promise or had left us no comfort whatever."³⁰¹

Herein lies a critical distinction between our justification and our sanctification. When Christ hung on the cross and said, "It is finished," and died, the debt that we owed because of our sin was paid in full. When Christ rose victorious from grave, the forgiveness of our sins was sealed for eternity. While the justification that Christ has won for us on the cross is perfect and complete, our life of sanctification has just begun. Since we still have our mortal bodies and live in this sin infested world, our life of sanctification is a life engaged in spiritual warfare. The devil is waging warfare against God's children. The devil will settle for nothing less than our eternal death.

Yet, just as our justification is a gift of God through His grace, our sanctification is also a gift of God through His grace. The Holy Spirit works through the Word to bring us to faith and the Holy Spirit works through the Word to keep us in the faith. Just as it would be unthinkable for our Nation to send our troops into battle without basic training at a boot camp, God does not send us into spiritual warfare without providing us instruction in the Word. Roger L. Sommer in his essay entitled, "Sanctification," asserted, "The very fact our Church admonishes us continually to hear God's Word, to meditate upon it, to read it in our homes, to study the Bible, shows that the Church teaches the efficacy of the Word of God in sanctifying Christians. To hear God's Word,

³⁰¹Plass, 348.1032.

to read it, to study it, is not merely our duty, but we need to do it that God may have opportunity to work in us, work out our sanctification, through His Word."³⁰²

We hear again the words of Paul to Timothy, "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier."

For Paul, everything begins with the grace made possible through Jesus Christ. Paul does not say, "Be strong in yourself." He does not say, "Look within yourself for courage." He does not say, "Dig deep within yourself to overcome the enemy." Paul says, "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

For Paul, the knowledge of grace comes through the Word and it is the Word we proclaim to others. Paul does not say, "This seems like the right thing to do." He does not say, "This is what I think you should do." He says, " And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

Paul introduces the topic of hardship only after he establishes that grace comes through Christ and that we receive the saving knowledge of grace through the Word. "You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Even though we are baptized children of God, completely forgiven because of the blood of Christ, we continue to sin daily. We are engaged in a daily battle between the flesh and the spirit.

³⁰²Laetsch, 290.

For Luther, to be separated from the Word of God was to be separated from God Himself. Yet, when we are surrounded by the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh, the temptation is to forget that we our baptized children of God.

Boot Camp is the beginning for men and women of the Armed Forces. Likewise, Baptism is the beginning for men and women of faith. It is not impossible for a newly graduated Recruit to report to a unit on its way to armed conflict. It is not impossible for a newly baptized Christian to engage in spiritual warfare. Hence, the urgency for careful indoctrination. General C. E. Mundy, former Commandant of the Marine Corps, stated, "If we expect Marines to lead and if we expect Marines to follow, we must provide the education of the heart and of the mind to win on the battlefield and in the barracks, in war and in peace."³⁰³ In his Preface to the Large Catechism, Luther admonished Christians to read the Catechism in order to be armed properly for spiritual battle.³⁰⁴

Indoctrination in the faith takes the context of the time seriously. Some have referred to the time in which we live as postmodern. Postmodernism, with its focus on relativity and subjectivity, generates an atmosphere of uncertainty. Warriors cannot go into battle uncertain of their identity or cause. The Christian Church prepares warriors for spiritual battle by reminding them of their identity as redeemed children of God and their mission, namely, the salvation of man. The Holy Spirit works through the Gospel and reminds believers regarding the content of our faith. When Jesus told the disciples the Heavenly Father would send the Holy Spirit, He said, "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind

³⁰³United States Marine Corps, *Leading Marines*, Forward.

³⁰⁴Tappert, 360.

you of everything I have said to you." (John 14:26) The Holy Spirit works through the Word to equip us for battle.

Boot Camp Drill Instructors teach recruits military customs and protocol. For example, recruits learn how to salute and whom to salute. A common joke among Drill Instructors at Boot Camp is, "If it walks, salute it and if it doesn't, paint it!" A time-honored tradition everyday in the military is "Colors"—the raising and lowering of the Stars and Stripes. During Colors, the "Star Spangled Banner" is played and everyone within sight of the flag stops, turns toward the flag, and salutes until a bugle signals for the salute to secure.³⁰⁵

St. Paul, the Pastoral Drill Instructor, gave Timothy sound advice. "No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier." With these words, Paul reminds Timothy that his life is not his own—he belongs to Christ. Therefore, by the power of the Holy Spirit working through the Word, Timothy would conduct the affairs of his life and ministry to please the One, Who enlisted him, namely, Jesus Christ.

The principal method the military employs for determining whether or not a service member is performing his or her duties effectively and efficiently is the performance evaluation. Performance evaluations in the Navy measure personal traits, job performance, and job behavior.³⁰⁶ Military promotions are based, in part, on performance evaluations. While some have argued military performance evaluations are

³⁰⁵Arnold S. Lott, LCDR, U. S. Navy (Retired), rev., *The Bluejackets' Manual*, 19th Edition (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1973), 8f.

³⁰⁶Douglas L. Drewry, *Enlisted EVAL and Officer FITREP Writing Guide*, 2nd ed., updated (Pensacola, FL: Professional Management Spectrum, 1990), 5.

grossly inflated, some of you may be familiar with the humorous, albeit, unflattering comments purportedly attributed to British Military Officer Fitness Reports. For example, "His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of curiosity."³⁰⁷ Or, "Since my last report he has reached rock bottom, and has started to dig."

We certainly would not want our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to make comments like these about us if he were conducting a performance appraisal on us. Instead, as we grow strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the things that we have heard in the Word, we will want to hear our Lord say, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25:21b) We want to hear from Jesus, our Commanding Officer, Well done, good and faithful soldier!

As we grow strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the things that we have heard in the Word, the Holy Spirit equips us to endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. These are not hollow words from St. Paul. He knew what it meant to endure hardship. St. Paul knew that his strength alone was insufficient to endure hardship. When St. Paul recounted how a thorn in the flesh tormented him. We do not know exactly what it was that tormented St. Paul. What we do know is that the Lord said, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9)

As we grow stronger in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the things that we have heard in the Word, the Holy Spirit equips us to avoid entanglement with the affairs of this life. Our Lord says, "Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and

³⁰⁷*British Military Officer Fitness Reports*, 26 Nov. 2002 <<http://www.se.rit.edu/~mjl/OfficerReviews.html>>

rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:20f.)

So, good soldiers, let us be strong in the grace of Jesus Christ. Let us serve our Lord and His Church honorably. Let us endure hardship. Let us avoid being entangled in the affairs of this world. Let us live in the power of the forgiveness that Jesus has won for us on the cross. As Christian recruits, who have had their sins washed away, let us be strong in the grace of Jesus Christ and please our Heavenly Father. Amen.

Evaluator Response's: Sample Sermon 5

<p>Observance</p>	<p>"I'm in the army now!" Many recruits have said this when they step off the bus at boot camp. The Drill Instructor assertively directs each recruit to the maximum, . . . The recruit will have many opportunities to demonstrate bold fortitude." Evaluator 5</p> <p>"The imagery placed proper emphasis upon the observance without degenerating into a military pep talk or a sermon which wandered away from the observance." Evaluator 1</p> <p>"Yes, since the essence had to do with proper preparation for battle in which all Branches of Service are heavily engaged and how to properly enter battle—not relying on self but on one's training, orders and what lies ahead." Evaluator 10</p>
<p>Sermon Text</p>	<p>"Hardship is an element of soldiering. . . We, likewise, must be strong and endure the hardships of the spiritual warfare in this life. Paul certainly endured hardships in prison. His instruction and encouragement to Timothy was 'fight the good fight.'" Evaluator 5</p> <p>"It made a direct connection with training to live as a Christian. The training is not easy. There will be hardships. . . There will be moments when one must live on Christian automatic pilot." Evaluator 1</p> <p>"At first I must admit that I had bit of a hard time understanding, 'No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life,' but then I understood what was meant after reading farther into the sermon—so, indeed, the military imagery was of help." Evaluator 10</p>
<p>Sermon Hymn</p>	<p>"A recruit continually experiences 'fight the good fight with all your might.' The recruit knows that the Drill Instructor is the way. We know that 'Christ is the path.'" Evaluator 5</p> <p>"It is as suitable as was Lincoln's reply when asked to dismiss General Grant, "I cannot, he fights." Parade ground soldiers and Sunday Christians have never won a war against either spiritual or earthly enemies." Evaluator 1</p> <p>"In essence it says that we are able to 'Fight the good fight' if our strength is in Christ, just as in battle a soldier needs to be properly trained, needs to execute his orders rather than focus on their won personal abilities (or inabilities)." Evaluator 10</p>

<p>Doctrine</p>	<p>“Boot camp is a defining event for every recruit. . . Likewise, our life of sanctification through the Holy Spirit and the Word involves us with spiritual warfare.” Evaluator 5</p> <p>“It took the Armed Forces Sunday concept and enlarged the concept to fit the Christian's life and faith in all aspects.” Evaluator 1</p> <p>“It helped me focus on the importance of studying God’s Word to enhance my own readiness and ability to withstand hardship so I can follow my orders, part of which would be to teach through example, I’m sure, and so I can grow in the means of grace and in sanctification.” Evaluator 10</p>
<p>Theme</p>	<p>“The Drill Instructor is determined to make every recruit a good soldier through "-- the heart and of the mind --." The Holy Spirit with the Gospel strengthens our faith "through the word to equip us for battle.” Evaluator 5</p> <p>“What else? When one uses a text with, ‘a good soldier of Jesus Christ,’ and ‘enlisted him as a soldier.’” Evaluator 1</p> <p>“The theme, in my opinion, was Christian growth and readiness—and it would have been difficult to do this without military imagery, I think—but maybe that’s because we’re surrounded by talk about the military these days in the media. So, yes, it was very appropriate, especially to the time in which we live. Everyone in the U.S. can certainly relate.” Evaluator 10</p>
<p>Goal</p>	<p>“A soldier's performance evaluation assesses their effectiveness of duty, . . . The Holy Spirit does equip us through the Word to endure the hardships of spiritual warfare. Christ said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Evaluator 5</p> <p>“The sermon seemed to project the thoughts and desires of the Holy Spirit as written by the Apostle Paul. The imagery as taken from contemporary life rather than Roman life should make any military person pay attention.” Evaluator 1</p> <p>“The military imagery certainly achieved the goal for me in that I reviewed and learned a great deal from this sermon and it wouldn’t have worked nearly as well without the military imagery. Perhaps it worked well for me because of my interest in military history. But, truly, I feel that nearly everyone in the U.S. has some acquaintance with military parlance.” Evaluator 10</p>

Sample Sermon Six: Independence Day (July 4)

Amplification: Independence Day commemorates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress on the 4th of July 1776. The Declaration of Independence stated the intention of our Nation's forefathers to be separated from the rule of King George III. Consequently, the Revolutionary War will certainly be remembered throughout American history. Not all wars or battles of our Nation have been or will be remembered by our Nation's citizenry. Because of our sinful nature, Christians are inclined to forget the war of all wars fought and won by our Savior, Jesus Christ. This sermon will draw upon the imagery of forgotten wars and battles to illustrate the text, Job 19:23-27, and introduce the doctrine of eschatology. The sermonic goal is to move the believer to embrace the words, precious in the LORD's sight are the death of His saints.

Sermon Text: Job 19:23-27 Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever! I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes--I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me! If you say, 'How we will hound him, since the root of the trouble lies in him, you should fear the sword, and then you will know that there is judgment. NIV

Sermon Hymn: LW 501 "God of Our Fathers"

Doctrine Focus: Eschatology

"Lest We Forget"

Today we celebrate Independence Day, which commemorates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress on the 4th of July 1776. The Declaration of Independence stated the intention of our Nation's forefathers to be separated from the rule of King George III. Consequently, the Revolutionary War, which won American independence, will certainly be remembered throughout American history.

Not all wars or battles of our Nation have been or will be remembered by our Nation's citizenry. Our Nation, since its birth, has been involved in many wars and battles. Some of these battles and wars barely receive mention in history textbooks or

encyclopedias. For example, few of us would be familiar with the Barbary Wars were it not for the Marines Hymn.

While Americans love a winner, they have a short memory when it comes to the cost of war and battle in terms of lives lost and the blood that was shed. The Marine Corps recognizes how vital it is not to forget wars. Through indoctrination, tradition, and music, the Marine Corps rehearses its history. The second phrase of the Marines Hymn, "To the shores of Tripoli," evokes images of the Barbary Wars (1801-05 and 1815). The Barbary States of North Africa were notorious for piracy and frustrated maritime commerce. Marines, dispatched aboard Naval vessels, fought bravely against insurmountable odds abetting the release of three hundred American prisoners and were the first to fly the American Stars and Stripes atop a Tripolitan fort.³⁰⁸

The Marine resolve to remember its battles and wars challenges Christians to remember, and not forget, how God delivered His people throughout history. Job, in the midst of suffering, professes his faith and longs for that profession of faith to be recorded in perpetuity. "Oh that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever!"

Even with the Word of God written down on paper, sinful man forgets what God's Word says; sinful man pursues a path of disobedience. Psalm 78 paints an ominous picture of the forgetfulness of God's chosen people. "They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy." (78:42) The Psalmist equated forgetfulness with rebellion. Conversely, God's remembrance of His covenant and His people was equated with deliverance.

³⁰⁸Whipple, 230ff.

Job's profession of faith reaches a crescendo with the words, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes-- I, and not another." The hymn, "I Know That My Redeemer Lives," based on this verse from Job leaves no doubt in the mind of the believer that Jesus has risen triumphant from the grave and lives eternally to save.³⁰⁹

Just as the Marine Corps chronicles its history in its Marine Hymn, our Lutheran liturgy and hymnody counteract the tendency toward forgetfulness by recalling the mighty acts of God and His incomprehensible compassion. The Te Deum Laudamus glorifies God for sending His Son to "overcome the sharpness of death," and "open the kingdom of heaven to all believers."³¹⁰ The Benedictus praises God for raising a horn of salvation to redeem His people and save them from their enemies.³¹¹

For Marines, the Pulitzer Prize winning photograph of the raising of the American flag on Mount Suribachi evokes images of the bloody battle on Iwo Jima. For Christians, the image of Christ nailed to the cross on Mount Calvary brings into sharp focus the central message of our faith, namely, Christ shed His blood so that sinners would be forgiven. As we proceed from the cross on Mount Calvary to the empty tomb in the garden, we celebrate our place in the history of God's plan of salvation. Listen again to Job's fervent longing, "Oh that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever! I

³⁰⁹The Evangelical Synodical Conference, *The Lutheran Hymnal*, 200.

³¹⁰Ibid., 36.

³¹¹Ibid., 38.

know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes--I, and not another."

Job's profession of faith looks squarely in the face of death and sounds the clarion call of salvation. Job's profession of faith summons believers both young and old to face the uncertainties of this life by trusting in the certainty of their salvation. The psalmist rejoiced in the certainty of salvation in Psalm 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints."

In addition to the Lutheran musical heritage, Lutheran artists have vividly portrayed the redemptive work of Christ and the majesty of the Trinity. Stained glass windows, recounting events from Scripture, adorn many Lutheran Churches. Woodcarvings and sculptures memorialize the courage of believing men and women. Other artists, engaging in less traditional albeit effective expression, provoke an immediate response through their creativity. For example, Reinhold Marxhausen, renowned Lutheran artist, resolved to build his own casket. After reflecting on his mortality within the context of his faith in Christ, he took his coffin to a Lutheran school. He stepped inside the casket and read the following verse to the students:

I used to be afraid of death as anyone else. Even though we know that Christ has conquered death. My hair used to be black. I'm changing. I'm dying. This is my casket. I paid \$130 for it. When it came to my house in a cardboard box as a kit, I put it in the garage. I did not open it for a long time. I was afraid. Finally Last summer I glued the pieces together. It sits in my studio. I see it whenever I work. I stand in it most every day. I am no longer afraid. I think about my death often. When I open my eyes in the morning, I'm surprised and happy. Another day for me. A gift---unexpected. But this day may be my last. I know you are young--Full of life ahead--To look forward to--That is important. I'm 59-- Some of you will die Before I do. Farmers don't throw seeds away. They plant them. Old and shriveled people and seeds Become new after death---like these beautiful flowers. This box is a symbol. A new space capsule for my meeting

with God. A great new adventure lies before me. This box reminds me every day of God's grace and love. May it be for you also.³¹²

Christian musicians and artists have used their respective modes of expression to remind believers of our Heavenly Father's love for the world through the death and Resurrection of His Son. Jesus Christ fought, and won, the war to end all wars. Like Job, Christian musicians and artists yearn for their musical notes and works of art celebrating Christ's work of salvation to edify believers and glorify God forever.

Lest we forget, the Holy Spirit works through the Word to remind us of the forgiveness of our sins through the death and Resurrection of Christ. Lest we forget, the Holy Spirit works through the Word set to music and sculpted in stone to remind us of the all-atoning work of Christ. In the fourth stanza of our sermon hymn we proclaim, "Refresh your people on their toilsome way; lead us from night to never-ending day; fill all our lives with heav'n-born love and grace until at last we meet before your face." (LW 501) This stanza echoes the faith of Job that Christ will return and we shall enter His presence where we will live forever.

In this sermon text, Job addressed several issues pertaining to a doctrine called eschatology. Eschatology is derived from a Greek word meaning last or last things. When Christians reflect on the doctrine of eschatology, they are studying about the things associated with the Last Day. Many things taking place on the Last Day or in the Last Times are mysteries. We simply do not know when Christ will return but Scripture tells

³¹²David Morgan, "Is There an Artist in the Church? The Contribution of Reinhold Marxhausen" *The Christian Century* 20-27 March 1991, quoted by "Art Residencies bring the Gospel to life through art" by *The Northwest United Methodist Record* September 1999, 12 Aug. 2002 <<http://www.polkadotpark.org/waycraft/articles.html#marxhausen>>

us to watch and pray. We simply do not know the exact condition of the soul after a person dies but "Scripture assures us that the souls of the godly are in God's hand, . . . that they are with Christ in paradise, . . . and that they are supremely happy, Rev. 14, 13, in their new heavenly life, . . ." ³¹³

Job also addressed the certainty of God's judgment. "How my heart yearns within me! If you say, 'How we will hound him, since the root of the trouble lies in him, you should fear the sword, and then you will know that there is judgment.'" Scripture tells us when the Almighty God summons the angelic host and the celestial witnesses for the final judgment a complete and eternal separation will take place between believers and unbelievers. Those who believe will inherit eternal life and those who do not believe will go away into eternal death. ³¹⁴

God's judgment of mankind must be understood within the context of His plan of salvation. In Ezekiel 18:23 the Lord said, "Do I take any pleasure in the death of wicked? Declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?" In Luke 15:7 Jesus said, "In the same way, I tell you, there is more rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Many have attempted, through fanciful theories and endless speculations, to penetrate the mysteries of the End Times. Many will claim to have specific knowledge of the sequence of events leading to the final judgment. For example, some claim the existence of intermediate periods of time before or after Christ's Second Coming.

³¹³Mueller, 616.

³¹⁴Ibid., 633

However, when we allow the words of Scripture to speak without imposing our reason and imagination, we see a radically different message appear. Rather than being consumed with the sequence of events on the Last Day, the Holy Spirit works through this text from Job to summon us to faith in our Redeemer. Confronting our tendency to forget the source of our salvation, the Holy Spirit inspires us to use whatever gifts He has given us to proclaim the saving Word of salvation to others.

Lest we forget the victory that has been won for us through the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit works through our Baptism and takes us to Mount Calvary and the empty tomb, where we celebrate our eternal life everyday and not just one day a year. Lest we forget, the Holy Spirit inspires believers to proclaim the Word of salvation in music and art. Lest we forget, the Holy Spirit reminds us to look forward to the day when we will see our Redeemer face to face for eternity. Amen.

Evaluator Response's: Sample Sermon 6

Observance	<p>“The concise presentation of history of Barbary Wars is excellent.” Evaluator 11</p> <p>“There’s a good correlation between forgotten wars and independence day. It’s good to do a little remembering even if it was memorial day or pow/mia day.” Evaluator 7</p> <p>“A day to celebrate our military victories and Christs victory over the grave.” Evaluator 6</p>
Sermon Text	<p>“The determination of the Marine Corps to remember its history is similar to Job’s desire for his words to be recorded forever.” Evaluator 11</p> <p>“It is uniquely important for those in the military to remember past wars so that we may go bravely into battle knowing that our deeds will not be forgotten. Likewise, our service to the Lord. We must remember that He will remember! How proud and tall I stand when he reviews with me everything that I’ve done with the life that He gave me!” Evaluator 7</p> <p>“Job 19: I Know That My Redeemer Lives, brings out the reminder of our saving faith in Christ's death and resurrection. We with that belief can "look squarely in the face of death for the assurance of life" Evaluator 6</p>
Sermon Hymn	<p>“Yes. Art and music often represent history. The tradition of the Marine Hymn reflects upon the bravery of Marines past, present and to come. In the hymn, we have the "splendor through the skies" and "our grateful songs" to remind us of His holiness.” Evaluator 5*</p> <p>“I don’t see the connection between the military imagery of Fogotten Wars and this hymn. The last verse of this hymn connects to the Doctrine of Eschatology in this sermon, but I don’t believe it connects specifically to Forgotten Wars.” Evaluator 13*</p> <p>“Yes, it provides that focus of nation and spiritual.” Evaluator 6</p> <p>*Evaluators 7 and 11 did not submit feedback, therefore I included remarks from Evaluators 5 and 13.</p>

<p>Doctrine</p>	<p>“Somewhat. However, my understanding of the doctrine of eschatology was mainly enhanced by the last two paragraphs, which eloquently preach that one should simply trust the Word of the Lord regarding end times, and ignore speculation.” Evaluator 11</p> <p>“I’ve never heard of eschatology before this sermon.” Evaluator 7</p> <p>“I had not focused on the Doctrine of Eschatology. After having read the sermon, I am recalling a photo and news article recently. The photo depicted a line of young military members waiting at the Judge Advocates Office to prepare their Last Will and Testament. Quotes from those in line voiced the uncertainty of life and being alive in a year if sent to combat. The military member is faced with life’s uncertainties and needs the reminder of the certainty of salvation which this sermon brings to life.” Evaluator 6</p>
<p>Theme</p>	<p>“Very appropriate. The imagery draws parallels between the way the sacrifices of the Marine Corps in the Barbary Wars, and the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, may both be forgotten.” Evaluator 11</p> <p>“It is easy for us to remember independence day. It ‘s important to remember all the other battles that have kept our independence.” Evaluator 7</p> <p>“Lest we Forget the Forgotten Wars: Military veterans especially understand the feelings of being forgotten. They deal everyday with the scars of battle and resent being forgotten. Christ has His scars. We as Christians must not forget the battle for our salvation through Christ's death and resurrection.” Evaluator 6</p>
<p>Goal</p>	<p>“Yes, though I had to think kind of hard about this connection: as the Marines honor deaths of their fallen comrades, the Lord sees as precious the death of His followers.” Evaluator 11</p> <p>“A great parallel, as we remember those who have gone before us in battle, God remembers His Christian soldiers.” Evaluator 7</p> <p>“Death of Saints: Christians have life in death. We are with Christ in paradise becomes a reality to the military member and comfort to the military member’s family.” Evaluator 6</p>

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