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Helping Troubled First-Term Sailors on an Aircraft Carrier Experience God's Forgiveness and Avoid Recidivism

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Ministry Focus Paper Approval Sheet

This ministry focus paper entitled

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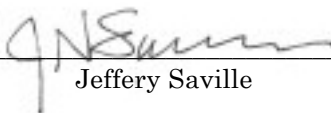
Written by

CAMERON HOOVER FISH

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Kurt Fredrickson

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HELPING TROUBLED FIRST-TERM SAILORS ON AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER
EXPERIENCE GOD'S FORGIVENESS AND AVOID RECIDIVISM

A MINISTRY FOCUS PAPER
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

CAMERON HOOVER FISH
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ABSTRACT

Helping Troubled First-Term Sailors on an Aircraft Carrier
Experience God's Forgiveness and Avoid Recidivism
Cameron Hoover Fish
Doctor of Ministry
School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary
2013

The two-tiered purpose of this study is to help Sailors serving aboard a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier, who have been to Executive Officer's Inquiry or Captain's Mast, to experience the life-changing power of God's forgiveness and avoid recidivism. The initial target population is first-term Sailors assigned to a proven post-NJP anti-recidivism mentoring program. This study adds the opportunity for these Sailors to voluntarily participate in chaplain-led small groups centered on auricular confession and the pronouncement of God's forgiveness.

Service aboard a Navy warship has tremendous physical, mental, and spiritual challenges. Enlisted basic training and officer accession programs do an excellent job of preparing men and women for military service. However, some Sailors have a hard time fully committing themselves to an organization that requires strict obedience to legal orders and is unforgiving of poor ethical and moral choices. They often look to peers rather than more senior personnel to determine what is right and wrong. This can lead to clashes with the chain of command and further alienation between new Sailors and their chosen profession.

Navy chaplains have a special opportunity to bring the language of God's forgiveness and love into this unforgiving environment. This study has produced a ministry tool sensitive to the particular concerns and limits of Navy chaplaincy while remaining faithful to Scripture, tradition, and reason. This study concludes that it has significant potential to help men and women serving not only on aircraft carriers, but in a variety of military ministry settings. Additional research, through full implementation of the proposed initiative, is needed to confirm that potential.

Theological Mentor: Kurt Fredrickson, PhD

Words: 262

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To Dr. Vincent E. (Pat) Reilly, EdD
September 22, 1915 - December 21, 2013

Teacher, educator, encourager

"This is the day which the LORD hath made;
we will rejoice and be glad in it." *Psalm 118:24*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

This final project is about helping young men and women in the United States Navy experience God's forgiveness and avoid recidivism, in particular first-term Sailors serving on board the Navy's largest capital warships. Aircraft carriers have a transient crew of over three thousand Sailors, the majority of whom are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. Chapter 1 of this paper will describe in detail the physical, mental, and emotional challenges of living and working on board a ninety-five-thousand-ton, one-thousand-foot-long warship. These conditions, combined with the diversity of religious and cultural backgrounds represented by an all-volunteer Navy, combine to make this environment one of the most challenging and rewarding communities in which to minister. At the heart of this ministry is the intentional care of Sailors.

The young men and women who voluntarily serve in the armed services of the United States do so for a wide range of reasons. Some join for a steady paycheck and education and healthcare benefits. Some join to escape a difficult home environment. Some join for the opportunity to travel. Some join to better themselves physically and mentally. Some seek to serve something bigger than themselves. Most join for some combination of these reasons.

Volunteers for the military are screened for physical and mental suitability for service. Over 90 percent of those joining as enlisted personnel have high school diplomas. A growing number of new recruits have associates degrees, and in recent years, the percentage of new accessions into the enlisted ranks that have bachelor's

degrees has also increased.[1] Promising recruits for military service, from the Navy's perspective, will show evidence of a commitment to better themselves, a willingness to follow rules and become indoctrinated into a new culture, and the physical and mental stamina to successfully complete nine weeks of basic training.

However, even those who graduate from basic training are usually not fully prepared for the particular stresses and strains of life on a U.S. Navy warship. While most ships make a considerable effort to help acclimate personnel to their new duty station, some do not adapt very well to the technological, social, and environmental challenges of working, relaxing, exercising, eating, worshiping, studying, going to the dentist, going to the doctor, and sleeping within the steel decks and bulkheads of a warship among three thousand others doing the same thing. Add to this separation from home, family, and friends and a highly structured and restrictive daily schedule, and the resulting mixture can overwhelm even the most capable new Sailors.

Just as there are multiple reasons why persons initially volunteer for Naval service, there are multiple reasons why some choose to make a full career in the Navy while others choose to leave after their initial commitment is completed. The most poignant situations arise when someone does not want to leave is forced to separate involuntarily. Involuntary discharges can result from a pattern of substandard technical and professional performance; the inability to meet medical standards; or violation of one or more articles in the legal system of the Navy, the Uniform Code of Military Justice (hereafter, UCMJ).

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, all military demographic information has been taken from the 2009 CDMC guide found at http://navydemographics.com.

It is with this latter category of Sailors, those who violate the Uniform Code of Military Justice and face Non-Judicial Punishment (hereafter NJP), that this final project is concerned. Sailors serving their first term (typically a three-to-five-year initial commitment) are the most susceptible to violating Navy regulations, such as showing up late for work or showing disrespect toward more senior enlisted personnel, because nine weeks of basic training is simply not enough to ensure that all new recruits fully grasp the importance of following the rules. Until recently, Sailors could survive relatively minor infractions, even if they went before the Captain at Captain's Mast.[2] However, in the current climate of a shrinking defense budget, one trip to Captain's Mast can mean the end of a career.

Since the earliest days of the Navy, captains have asked clergy to serve on their ships to help ameliorate some of the more brazenly inappropriate behavior of Sailors. Navy Chaplains attend both the Executive Officer's inquiry into Sailors who have violated articles of the UCMJ and Captain's Mast itself. Captains will often solicit the advice of chaplains concerning particular cases. Many commanding officers will direct that their chaplains get involved with the counseling and support of Sailors in trouble with the command, particularly those Sailors who cite personal problems as contributing factors to their violation of the rules. Chaplains can often help Sailors figure out how to turn things around before they make another bad choice, or, if it is too late to rescue a Navy career, to leave the Navy having learned something from their poor decisions.

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[2]In the Navy, Captain's Mast is the traditional name for the face-to-face encounter between the Commanding Officer and Sailors accused of violating one or more articles of the UCMJ. Captain's Mast is not a trial, hence any punishment the Captain orders is non-judicial punishment (hereafter, NJP).

One of the Navy's more successful post-NJP anti-recidivism mentoring programs, called "About Face,"[3] focuses on basic life skills, including making good choices, taking responsibility for one's actions, and choosing one's personal and professional relationships wisely. When overwhelmed, the young men and women serving in the Navy often turn to peers for guidance. The current generation of Sailors is prone to overestimate the value of advice from peers, and to underestimate the value of learning from experienced Sailors who may be only a few years older. The About Face program provides a safe and supportive small-group environment in which experienced Sailors, many of whom have been in trouble themselves but have turned things around, can break through certain barriers and reach junior Sailors.

From personal experience, I have observed powerful and lasting behavioral changes as a result of this program, which by necessity cannot have an explicitly faith-based perspective if it is to be something troubled Sailors are ordered by the Commanding Officer to attend. In particular, the class on accepting responsibility for one's choices seems to resonate quite strongly with today's younger Sailors. One of the film clips used in this class shows an athlete taking responsibility for his actions by admitting, out loud and in front of his teammates, that he had committed a major moral failure. He makes this public confession in order to receive the forgiveness and support of his teammates.

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[3] The "About Face" program was developed and implemented by Chaplain Brent Scott, Commander, U.S. Navy, on board the aircraft carrier USS RONALD REAGAN (CVN 76) in 2006. It is an unpublished work that Chaplain Scott permitted me to adapt for use on board the USS GEORGE H. W. BUSH (CVN 77) in 2010. Appendices A and B contain the ship's instruction and first two About Face class outlines as adapted for use on the USS GEORGE H. W. BUSH.

After observing nearly three dozen Sailors over a period of nearly two years react strongly to this particular class, I began to wonder what nerve was being touched. Gradually I have come to believe that the highly demanding, near zero-defect environment of an aircraft carrier can lead Sailors into the no-win situation of believing that they can never make a poor choice or moral decision, yet when they inevitably do, they should cover up, lie, or rationalize instead of owning up to what they did. From a theological and faith perspective, there is no forgiveness, no Good News, in a situation like this. There needs to be a way in which first-term Sailors can be open and honest about the ways they have missed the mark, personally and/or professionally, and to experience God's forgiveness, regardless of the consequences to their Navy careers.

The purpose of this final project is to help first-term Sailors aboard a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier, who have been to Executive Officer's Inquiry or Captain's Mast, to avoid recidivism and experience the life-changing redemptive love of God through small groups centered on auricular confession and the pronouncement of God's forgiveness. Part One of this project will examine the context of ministry in the U.S. Navy, specifically the shipboard environment of an aircraft carrier. This examination will include a brief description of the hierarchy ("chain of command") involved and how the traditional communication difficulties created by the generation gap between senior leaders and junior personal are being exacerbated by the significant differences between modern and postmodern interpretations of reality.

Part Two will look at selected biblical stories and parables concerning the loving and forgiving character of God. Modern examples of the challenges and possibilities of both individual and communal forgiveness will be explored. The paper will then explore

Roman Catholic and Protestant teachings on auricular confession and the various historical means by which God's forgiveness has been pronounced on behalf of Jesus Christ and received by the penitent. A "middle road" pastoral theology of confession and forgiveness will be presented. Finally, special attention will be given to the actual praxis of confession and the pronouncement of God's forgiveness using small groups.

Part Three will focus on creating a pilot project, entitled Spoken and Forgiven, that involves the voluntary participation of Sailors who have been assigned to the About Face post-NJP mentoring program. Group leaders will be identified from among more senior Sailors who have themselves experienced NJP during their first term, and have not only survived but have demonstrated resilience, growth, and grace in both their personal and professional lives. Several means for program assessment will be identified.

The range of challenges and opportunities of life in the Navy, in particular life aboard an aircraft carrier, requires the very best Gospel ministry chaplains can offer. At the heart of the Christian Gospel is God's reconciling work of restoring his people to himself through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This project will present one possible avenue in which God's forgiveness can be experienced by troubled first-term Sailors in a potentially powerful and lasting way.

PART ONE

MINISTRY CONTEXT

CHAPTER 1

AIRCRAFT CARRIERS: A SMALL TOWN AT SEA

This chapter will provide a description of life on board a U.S. Navy aircraft

carrier. The first part of this chapter will give an overview of the physical and

organizational structure of the shipboard environment. The second part will explore the

revolving nature of the diverse carrier population, and some leading reasons why men

and women choose to join the Navy. The third part will discuss Navy core values and the

indoctrination process, and then shift focus to the particular community standards of an

aircraft carrier. The last part of the chapter will offer a discussion of the UCMJ, NJP, and

the effects of postmodernism and current family dynamics on how community standards

are communicated, received, and upheld.

A Community That Floats

The U.S. Navy currently has eleven operational aircraft carriers, all nuclear

powered and capable of carrying over sixty military aircraft across the seven seas. The

sheer size and complexity of these multi-billion dollar national assets are difficult to

appreciate without actually setting foot on board. Even then, the dimensions and

capabilities are nearly impossible to fully take in. The steel flight deck, which contains

the steam catapults for launching and arresting wires for recovering aircraft, is four and half acres in size and sits ninety feet above the water. The distance from the top of the highest radar to the deepest part of the keel is equivalent the height of a twenty-five story office building. Carriers are over a thousand feet long and require a minimum of forty feet of water to navigate safely. They have four screws (propellers) that can propel the ninety-five thousand ton behemoths through the water at speeds in excess of thirty-five miles per hour, and the nuclear reactors driving the screws can operate for twenty-five years before the need for refueling.

In spite of these staggering numbers, a multi-billion-dollar aircraft carrier would serve no useful purpose if not for the highly skilled and dedicated Sailors trained to take them to sea, and equally skilled and dedicated pilots to safely operate aircraft from the flight deck. The carriers themselves have about three thousand personnel, while the carrier air wings (comprised of Sailors directly responsible for flying and maintaining the aircraft) have approximately two thousand personnel.

Because of the sheer numbers involved, an aircraft carrier functions like a floating small town, in which all the inhabitants work, eat, and sleep within the same building. Culinary specialists prepare and cook hot meals nearly twenty out of twenty four hours a day. Supply department personnel wash tons of laundry every day. There are two ship's stores, a barber shop, a library, an internet café, a chapel, a brig (jail), a medical ward, a dentists' office, a bank with ATMs, and multiple gyms and video game rooms - and even a Starbucks on some carriers.

A Community with a Revolving Door Population

Unlike a small town, however, there are no long-term residents of an aircraft carrier. The population of a particular carrier is in almost constant flux, even during combat deployments, as Sailors rotate to and from the ship. Nearly every week a dozen or so newly assigned Sailors report aboard for duty while a dozen or so Sailors and Officers move on to their next assignments, decide to leave the Navy, or retire after a full career of service. An individual's tour length aboard a ship ranges from two to five years.

Over 80 percent of Sailors serving on a carrier at any given time are eighteen to twenty-five years old. Among the enlisted ranks, racial and religious diversity closely approximates society at large. Because with very few exceptions earning an officer commission requires a four-year college degree, most officers come from family backgrounds which encouraged, and could afford, college education. Most enlisted personnel come into the Navy without a four year degree. Some do not have the aptitude or interest for college; some can't afford college; and some prefer the kinds of assignments they can get as enlisted Sailors, as opposed to the assignments typically offered to Officers.

A Community That Recruits

Sailors do not join the Navy planning to fail. However, they do sometimes report to chaplains in conversation that they have reached a deep level of frustration and disillusionment with the discontinuity between what they thought they were getting into and what they actually experienced. Because this project seeks to help Sailors who find

themselves in trouble in the Navy, it is important to understand their motivations for joining the Navy in the first place.

In 1973, the military draft ended and the U.S. military converted to an all-volunteer force. In the intervening years, the various services have developed recruiting enticements and practices to encourage young men and women to join the military. Some of the more memorable slogans are the Army's "Be All You Can Be"; the Air Force's "Aim High"; the Marine Corps' "The Few, The Proud, The Marines"; and the Navy's "Join the Navy, See the World" and "It's Not Just A Job, It's An Adventure."

While few join simply because of slogans, the slogans reveal what each particular service values. When recruitment goals fall short, most services have responded by adding enticements or increasing emphasis on what they already have to offer. Among those who join the Navy, the most frequently mentioned reasons for joining are the pay, medical benefits, and educational opportunities the Navy offers. Prior to 1979, Navy pay, especially for junior enlisted personnel, significantly lagged the pay of similar vocational/technical jobs in the civilian sector. Starting with the largest single year military pay raise under President Jimmy Carter in 1980, military pay has gradually improved to the point where, in consideration of the 2012 budget, it was noted that military pay has not only caught up with but has largely surpassed civilian sector pay. For many high school graduates, military pay and benefits, especially medical benefits and a robust retirement plan for those who successfully complete twenty or more years of active duty service, are the deciding factor for joining the Navy.

The post-9/11 GI education bill provides nearly eighty thousand dollars worth of education benefits for military personnel, and can be used by Sailors who serve

honorably for their initial enlistment of four or five years. In 2009, those benefits were extended to service members' immediate family, so if a Sailor chooses not to use the benefit, he or she can pass it on to his or her spouse and/or children. For many high school graduates, joining the Navy in order to attain a four-year degree after serving honorably, a dream that previously seemed out of reach due to prohibitive costs, is an opportunity too valuable to let pass.

Many do still join the Navy to "see the world" and explore new cultures, while getting away from home situations that from their perspective do not offer much opportunity for personal growth and development. Some decide that they would like to be part of something larger than themselves, something that is less concerned with profits and the bottom line and more with the value of service and projecting abroad a positive image of the United States. The current Navy slogan, "A Global Force for Good," is tapping into that larger perspective, and seems to be resonating with that particular demographic.

Shortly after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, all four branches of the military saw a significant upsurge in those who wanted to serve in the military. A sizeable number of first-term Sailors still join for patriotic reasons, although it is sobering to think that the youngest recruits currently going through basic training were six years old when the World Trade Center towers fell. Family influence is often involved with a decision to join the military. Perhaps a grandparent, parent, aunt, or uncle also served.

While this list is not all-inclusive, it does highlight some of the major motivations for joining the Navy. Of note is that no one joining the Navy can know exactly what the experience will be like to serve aboard a warship, a submarine, or in a Navy aircraft.

Officer programs and basic training can only do so much to prepare new recruits for what lies ahead.

A Community That Indoctrinates

One of the fundamental statements of service in the Navy is the phrase, "Mission first; people always." The mission of an aircraft carrier is to carry out the orders of the Military Command Authority, starting with the President of the United States, who is the Commander in Chief of all military forces. One of the first things a U.S. President asks when significant political or military unrest arises overseas is, "Where is the closest aircraft carrier?" Because a U.S. warship is considered sovereign U.S. territory, an aircraft carrier is analogous to a U.S. land-based military airport that is able to travel into international waters to launch and land military aircraft. Recent threats by Iran to close the Strait of Hormuz, through which travels a significant amount of Middle East oil, were interpreted to be bluffs, primarily because the United States has operated aircraft carrier strike groups in the region for over forty years, protecting U. S. interests there.

To carry out its "mission first" taskings, aircraft carriers by necessity are highly hierarchal. The three thousand crew members are led by the Commanding Officer, who serves as the village "mayor"; the Executive Officer, who serves as the "town manager" in charge of overall facility upkeep; and the Command Master Chief, the senior enlisted leader on board. The Executive Officer leads a team of eighteen Heads of Department, who are senior officers in charge of the various operational and administrative areas of the ship.

Traditionally, the Commanding Officer has been called the "Old Man" because with rare exception the Commanding Officer is the oldest person on board, typically in his or her mid to late forties. The Executive Officer, Department Heads, and Command Master Chief are typically in their early forties or late thirties. While there has always been a "generation gap" between the senior personnel on a ship and the most junior Sailors, this is the first time in history that the values and moral and ethical formation of senior leadership are rooted in modern culture, the values and moral and ethical formation of those they lead are rooted in postmodern culture, or at the very least in the "cusp" between the two.

The impact of this time of transition on church and ministry will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2. In addition to the emerging dynamics of the modern/postmodern divide, the hierarchal structure of the Navy is also coming under considerable pressure from the need to reduce manning costs and operate as efficiently as possible. Because the costs associated with designing, building, equipping, and operating ships have skyrocketed at a geometric rate, severe personnel cuts are seen as a quick and efficient way in which to save money.

What all this means for first-term Sailors newly reported to a carrier is that their lives are highly controlled in order to maximize efficiency. On one hand, they are enticed to join the Navy for the benefits outlined previously. On the other, they are told to put the ship and mission ahead of themselves: ship, shipmate, self, in that order of priority, up to and including a willingness to sacrifice one's own life for one's country. Perhaps most unsettling of all, there is no guarantee that a Sailor who wants to stay in for

a full career will be able to do so, even if he or she is a skilled and effective performer.[1] A Sailor also used to be able to reach retirement eligibility even with one or two trips to Captain's Mast in his or her record. This is no longer the case.

This discussion of the various pressures and concerns that first-term Sailors face would not be complete without an examination of the sorts of values Sailors are expected to make their own, because this is the area in which knowledge of what the Navy expects is not consistent with what many Sailors actually do. Joining the Navy involves a process of indoctrination of a highly diverse population into a military culture with specific values and expectations. According to the Department of the Navy's Core Values Charter, dedication to core values of honor, courage, and commitment builds "the foundation of trust and leadership upon which our strength is based and victory is achieved."[2] New recruits to the Navy, as well as officers at the U.S. Naval Academy and Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps units, are taught the Navy Core Values and are expected to both understand and live by them.[3] During basic training for new recruits, and during the various officer accession programs, future officer and enlisted personnel are taught the following basic definitions of the Navy core values:

> Honor: I am accountable for my professional and personal behavior. I will be mindful of the privilege I have to serve my fellow Americans.

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[1] In late 2011, for the first time in its history, the Navy convened an Enlisted Retirement Board (ERB) in order to select 7,500 Sailors for involuntary separation, based not on lack of performance or other factors, but simply because the Navy needed to shrink in total end strength numbers.

[2] Department of the Navy, "Department of the Navy Core Values Charter," Chief of Naval Operations, http://www.navy.mil/navydata/cno/DON_Core_Values_Charter.pdf (accessed February 24, 2012).

[3] Ibid.

Courage: Courage is the value that gives me the moral and mental strength to do what is right, with confidence and resolution, even in the face of temptation or adversity.
Commitment: The day-to-day duty of every man and woman in the Department of the Navy is to join together as a team to improve the quality of our work, our people and ourselves.[4]

Each of these core values is further broken down into a detailed explanation of specific behavioral expectations that arise.

The non-establishment clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution requires that the Navy avoid religious references when it comes to the Core Values stated above. For example, commitment to shipmates means you will not steal. There is no deontological approach to ethics that suggests that stealing is wrong in and of itself; it is the consequence of the actions that matters. Sailors' behavior that will adversely impact "good order and discipline" is prohibited not so much because it is wrong, but because lack of unit cohesion could cost victory in battle.

Consequently, new recruits coming into the Navy are often faced with a confusing set of moral and ethical guidance. The Navy focuses first and foremost on completing the mission. While some Navy leaders may try to communicate to their subordinates that they value them as people, the most lasting message is that if recruits want to stay out of the most serious trouble, they should not do anything that may jeopardize the mission. Thus, the message not to drink and drive becomes highly utilitarian: "We do not want you to have an accident and hurt others, and we do not want you to hurt yourself." Sailors are told that if they plan to drink in excess, they should make sure they have a designated driver with them to get home safely.

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[4] Ibid.

This approach is by no means unique to the military. The practice of establishing moral and ethical guidelines without pointing to a referent outside the system has been around at least since Enlightenment times. The problem is that the military in general and the Navy in particular believe that the nature of combat requires an ethical standard higher than society at large. An employee at WalMart who steals from a fellow employee may hurt morale at that particular store, and may even affect the overall profitability of the entire chain. But in the Navy, lack of trust among shipmates can lead to lack of team cohesion, which in turn can lead to a dangerous reduction in combat effectiveness. The final part of basic training involves an exercise called "battle stations," in which recruits work together to successfully complete a series of challenges that push their training to the limit. For many, this is the highlight of their training, and then they are ready to report to their first assignment. However, it is unrealistic to expect that nine weeks of training will create a uniform level of understanding of, much less living a life in conformity with, Navy Core Values.

From a Christian faith perspective, this process is analogous in some ways with welcoming newcomers into church who have no knowledge of the basic tenets and values of the Christian faith. In the early Church, catechumens to the faith were taught over a three year period, and were not allowed to receive Holy Communion until they were fully indoctrinated. Even the best discipleship programs cannot guarantee that those trained to follow in the way of Christ will do so without stumbling in some way, either through a lack of understanding or through what Christians would say is sin, falling short of the mark. Most Christian communities have some way to live out Jesus' command to forgive one another as he forgives us. In the Navy, and in particularly the community of a

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nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, there is little tolerance for failure to behave in accordance with community standards.

A Community That Punishes

First-term Sailors who report aboard an aircraft carrier face a significant number of rules and regulations that build on those learned at basic training. Navy leaders are guided by written doctrine and instructions that are applied at the local level. This information is passed both verbally and in writing to first-term Sailors who, in addition to being expected to learn their jobs, are expected to meet professional and personal behavioral standards in the highly demanding and stressful shipboard environment. All newly reported officers and enlisted personnel attend "School of Ship" classes in which they are taught the specific behavioral standards and expectations of the command. The Captain, Executive Officer, Command Master Chief, and other key leaders directly address each of these classes to ensure the message is as clear, consistent, and detailed as possible.

In most commands, the Commanding Officer also produces a vision statement for his or her tenure as leader. On board the USS GEORGE H. W. BUSH, the Commanding Officer directed the printing of large "Rules to Live By" posters, containing eight rules that he considered non-negotiable. Sailors are expected to understand and follow these rules.

Violations of an aircraft carrier's community standards result in several courses of action. Depending on the severity of the violation, the resulting punishment can range from on-the-spot verbal counseling to formal Non-Judicial Punishment (NJP)

proceedings. Non-Judicial Punishment is not the same as going to civilian court of law, and the formal rules of evidence do not apply. The legal department on board the ship gathers evidence from a variety of sources, and if a case is forwarded up the chain of command to the Captain, the Captain can dismiss the charges, or administer punishment such as restriction to the ship for up to forty five days; taking away half a month's pay for two months; and reduction in rank to a lower pay grade. Going before the Captain to face Non-Judicial Punishment is a very intimidating process, especially for first-term Sailors. The accused must get into dress uniform, practice how they enter and leave the space in which Captain's Mast is being held, and rehearse how they are to address and respond to the Captain.

Examples of violations that are likely to result in verbal counseling are showing up late for work; showing disrespect to more senior personnel; falling behind on qualifications; and slovenly appearance (poor military bearing). More serious violations that are likely to lead to a Disciplinary Review Board with the Command Master Chief include such things as repeated offenses of the nature described above; substandard watch standing; unauthorized absence; and lack of adherence to the Captain's "rules to live by." There are many steps along the process in which a Sailor can turn things around, before he or she goes before the Executive Officer and the Captain.

As recently as six years ago, a first-term Sailor might receive a verbal warning at Captain's Mast and still go on to a full Navy career. Sailors were given second, and on rare occasions, even third opportunities to learn from their mistakes and continue on. In order to retain Sailors that wanted to stay in spite of their mistakes, the Navy developed counseling and anti-recidivism programs. One of these anti-recidivism programs was

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designed and implemented by a Navy chaplain, then-Commander Brent Scott, aboard the

aircraft carrier USS RONALD REAGAN, in 2006.[5] This program focused on four key

areas: making good choices; setting boundaries (taking responsibility for one's choices);

developing a positive attitude in facing life's challenges; and fostering constructive

personal and professional relationships.

The program was designed to be an option assigned at Captain's Mast instead of

the types of punishments described previously. The intention was to communicate to the

Sailor the seriousness of the offense, and then offer a chance to turn things around so that

the Sailor might never again appear before the Commanding Officer. In a sense, the

appearance before the Captain offered Sailors a "Prodigal Son" experience by

confronting them with just how far they had strayed from community standards, and

giving them the opportunity to "come to their senses" and turn from their wayward path.

The About Face program served as a sort of "Loving Father" environment in which

Sailors assigned could openly and safely admit to their poor choices, receive forgiveness

(the program itself was a form of forgiveness), and to explore how to avoid making

similar poor choices again.

The About Face program proved very successful in helping Sailors avoid repeat

offenses. One of the most important elements of the program was the involvement of a

Reinforcement Team made up of Sailors who had been through the NJP process

themselves and had not only survived but had gone on to productive Navy careers. The

personal testimonies they provided ensured that the program stayed thoroughly grounded

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[5] Appendices A and B contain the About Face ship instruction and outlines for the first two classes, as adapted for use aboard the USS GEORGE H. W. BUSH (CVN 77) in 2010.

in reality, and their ongoing encouragement helped Sailors stay on a more positive path.

This program, in a modified form and with a key additional element, forms the basis for

the ministry strategy presented in part three of this paper.

The driving force behind the modification of the About Face program, as

successful as it was in 2005, is a change in community context. In the current climate of

the Navy, it is increasingly doubtful that Sailors will successfully complete their first-

terms, let alone full Navy careers, if they have even just one serious violation of

community standards in their records. Going before the Captain can no longer be used as

a "come to your senses" opportunity for troubled Sailors. One appearance before the

Captain now likely will result in Sailors being discharged from the Navy before

completing their initial terms of enlistment, most likely without any education and other

benefits. First-term Sailors are often shocked to learn that in spite of the Navy's

investment in them, and in spite of heart-felt appeals for second chances, just one poor

choice can jeopardize their careers.

As mentioned earlier, current senior leadership in the Navy is made up of men

and women formed under the modern understanding that there are such a things as

ultimate truth, right, and wrong. Significant weight is put on the rational, cause-and-

effect relationship between "crime" and punishment, particularly in the military. The

result is an environment where pleas for mercy and forgiveness fall on deaf ears. As one

senior leader on my ship put it, "Chaplain, the Navy and this ship make the community

standards very clear. We make the consequences of breaking the community standards

very clear. If you break the rules, you pay the price. There isn't room for forgiveness in

the Navy."

This places tremendous stress on today's new recruits, many of whom come into the Navy from homes, schools, and communities that are not entirely clear and/or consistent about rules and the consequences of breaking those rules. The Navy's "zero defect" mentality can be particularly foreign for post-modern recruits who come from homes in which there is little or no structure, supervision, and accountability. Their "rules to live by," such as they are, tend to come largely from their own experiences and those of their peers, rather than from the experiences of an older generation. Many are accustomed to learning how to function and survive in life from their peers who generally do not think about specific behavior in terms of "right" and "wrong" for their own sakes; postmodern pragmatism suggests, as Heath White writes in *Postmodernism 101*, that "truth is just whatever helps us get around in life."[6]

The combination of the Navy's near zero tolerance for making bad moral choices and a postmodern mindset that truth is "whatever helps one get around in life" has created a situation in which first-term Sailors can come to believe that outright lying to cover up poor decisions is not only acceptable, but the smart thing to do. Getting caught for disobeying rules and regulations is often viewed as the moral issue at hand, not the violation of the standards themselves. Even if most Sailors understood the term "repentance," they wouldn't necessarily correlate the word with a change in direction, a turning from wrong actions. Instead, they would seek ways in which to do a better job of ensuring their violations of community standards remain undiscovered and therefore go unpunished. The consequences of this line of thinking, and the resultant impact on such

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[6] Heath White, *Post-Modernism 101* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 49.

theological concepts as repentance, forgiveness, and God's redeeming love, will be

explored in depth in Chapter 4 of this project.

In sum, an aircraft carrier is a floating town of three thousand people that creates

and recreates community every four or five years. Irrespective of their diverse economic,

social, and ethnic backgrounds, Sailors are expected to unite around the mission of their

ship, a mission that could well ask them to sail into harm's way and risk their lives in

service to their country. This highly transient, mission-driven environment creates

significant ministry challenges and opportunities. For first-term Sailors especially, there

is much to learn about their new work environment and about themselves. Speaking

words of encouragement, forgiveness, and hope to these Sailors, especially those who

have great difficulty adjusting to the professional and personal demands of serving

aboard a warship, can make a real and lasting difference in their lives. Chapter 2 will

explore ways in which those words of hope have been communicated in the past, and

might better be communicated in the future, especially and particularly through Navy

chaplains from the Christian tradition.

CHAPTER 2

THE CONTEXTUAL CHALLENGES OF NAVY CHAPLAINCY

The first part of this chapter will give a brief history of U.S. Navy chaplaincy, outlining its origins and purpose. This history will show how the ministry model of Navy chaplaincy is currently carried out through each command's Religious Ministry Program. While the Commanding Officer is ultimately in charge, each chaplain carries out his or her duties in accordance with the teachings of his or her faith group. Several key challenges and benefits of this structure will be explored, in particular the way in which a Commanding Officer maintains good order and discipline through a variety of means, to include non-judicial punishment.

The second part will focus on demographics of those currently serving, particularly Sailors who are in the first few years of their initial enlistment, and some of the most significant ministry needs that arise when they face the challenges of serving. Obstacles to and opportunities for addressing those needs will be discussed, and the chapter will conclude with an outline of one anti-recidivism program that is currently being used by some Navy ships and commands.

History and Purpose of Naval Chaplaincy

At a very basic level, U. S. Navy Chaplains and Religious Program Specialists exist to advise and assist military commanders in protecting and providing for the free exercise of religion rights of Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guard and Merchant Marine personnel. These rights are established in the First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution, which reads in part that "Congress shall pass no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Commanders have provided for the free exercise of religion from the earliest days of the Navy. The U. S. Navy was established on October 13, 1775. On November 28, 1775, the second article of Navy Regulations directed that "the Commanders of the ships of the thirteen United Colonies are to take care that divine services be performed twice a day on board and a sermon preached on Sundays, unless bad weather or other extraordinary accidents prevent."[1] While there is no mention of chaplains, one can infer from later documents and practice that Congress intended that an ordained clergy person would be part of ship's company.[2] Updated regulations promulgated in 1802 expanded duties of the chaplain: "[The chaplain] is to read prayers at stated periods, perform all funeral ceremonies, perform the duty of a schoolmaster instructing the midshipmen and volunteers in writing, arithmetic, navigation and whatever else they might need to make them proficient, and teach the other youths of the ship as the captain orders."[3]

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[1] United States Navy Chaplain Corps, *Chaplain's Guide to Professional Naval Chaplaincy* (Washington, D. C.: United States Navy Chaplain Corps, 2011), 25.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

As noted above, the free exercise of religion in the military is a fundamental right protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. The chaplaincies of the military departments have been established to "advise and assist commanders in the discharge of their responsibilities to provide for the free exercise of religion in the context of military service as guaranteed by the Constitution."[4] The Navy formalizes its requirements and expectations for the facilitation of free exercise of religion within the Navy through the Secretary of the Navy's instructions, specifically the Secretary of the Navy Instruction (hereafter, SECNAVINST) 1730.7D. Navy chaplains meet religious ministry requirements through four core capabilities: 1) they "facilitate the religious requirements of personnel of all faiths"; 2) they "provide faith-specific ministries"; 3) they "care for all service members, including those who claim no religious faith"; and 4) they "advise the command."[5]

The first capability of chaplains, facilitation, means chaplains are to identify the religious needs of Sailors or Marines in their commands. Most chaplains do this by doing periodic religious needs assessments in which Sailors and Marines are given the opportunity, on a voluntary basis, to divulge information about their religious affiliation, if any, and their desire to participate in command religious programs.

First and foremost, Navy chaplains are called to serve the people of the sea services. This mandate is encapsulated in the Navy Chaplain Corps' motto, "Called to Serve." The *Chaplain's Guide to Professional Naval Chaplaincy* states that chaplains must "support commanders in making their personnel and their families mission-ready

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[4] Ibid., 8.

[5] United States Navy, "Religious Ministry within the Department of the Navy." Secretary of the Navy Instruction (SECNAVINST) 1730.7D, 2008, 5.

through the delivery of religious ministry and pastoral care."[6] In 2010, the Chief of

Naval Operations, Admiral Gary Roughead, stated, "Our people are the foundation of our

mission success."[7] Sailors support the Navy's mission through their own personal

readiness and through the readiness of their families. Chaplains assist them on their

spiritual, moral, and ethical journeys.[8] As professional Naval chaplaincy has evolved

over 237 years of history, its focus on caring for all people has been carried out, in word

and deed, through the faithful commitment of clergy from a wide range of religious

traditions and backgrounds.

Command Religious Ministries Program Leadership

Navy chaplains deliver the four core capabilities listed above both as religious

ministries professionals and as commissioned officers. Navy chaplains are required to

meet professional standards set by the Navy, as well as receive the official endorsement

of a recognized religious organization. As commissioned officers, chaplains swear or

affirm to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies,

foreign and domestic, and to obey the lawful orders of those appointed over them.

Unlike "officers of the line" (those trained to command crews on ships, submarines, and

aircraft), chaplains are non-combatants and cannot assume command.

Command at sea in particular demands clear lines of authority and responsibility.

The Commanding Officer of a ship, submarine, or aircraft squadron deployed in harm's

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[6] United States Navy Chaplain Corps, *Chaplain's Guide to Professional Naval Chaplaincy*, 2011, 9.

[7] United States Navy, *Naval Operations Concept 2010* (hereafter, NOC 10), http://www.navy. mil/maritime/noc/NOC2010.pdf (accessed December 12, 2013).

[8] *Chaplain's Guide to Professional Naval Chaplaincy*, 10.

way is held accountable for everything that happens on board his or her command. This includes the various ministries that fall under the command religious program. Chaplains and Religious Program Specialists are considered subject matter experts in ensuring the free exercise of religion, and they are responsible for carrying out the Commanding Officer's program. However, ownership and accountability of the overall Religious Ministries Program remains with the commander.

The natural consequence of this is that many commanding officers consider the Command Religious Program a part of the overall contribution to the mission through care for Sailors. All officer-of-the-line commanders are tasked with doing all in their power to make their commands the most effective fighting forces they can. They are evaluated and promoted to greater responsibility based upon their ability to effectively carry out the orders of those appointed over them. The institutional expectation is that service members and their families deserve compassionate care which will lead to mission-ready Sailors. To many line commanders, providing for the free exercise of religion is both a U. S. Constitution-driven obligation and a means to an end: spiritually, morally, and ethically ready Sailors and families who will enhance mission accomplishment.

As stated previously, the Chaplain Corps' motto is "Called to Serve." Navy chaplains, aided by Religious Program Specialists, are called to serve their people, the Naval Service, and each other.[9] Meeting the religious ministry needs of Navy and Marine Corps personnel includes faith-specific ministry as well as a range of multi-disciplinary programs, such as Operational and Combat Stress Control, Sexual Assault

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[9] Ibid., 9.

Prevention and Response, Suicide Awareness and Prevention, and Individual and Family Resiliency.[10]

Demographics

According to a recent Pew Forum Center report, one in five adults has no religious affiliation, and one-third of adults under thirty are religiously unaffiliated.[11] According to recent recruiting statistics, 88 percent of enlisted new accessions in the Navy are eighteen to twenty-four years old and 96 percent are under thirty.[12]

Chaplains are endorsed by a particular religious organization to represent their particular ecclesiology and care. In the pluralistic environment of military life, chaplains seek to balance their endorsers' expectations for ministry with the Navy's requirement that they minister to all. In more traditional language, chaplains are responsible for the "care of souls" of all.

Commanding officers understand the importance of the free exercise of religion. Their primary concern, however, is mission accomplishment. In the particular case of an aircraft carrier at sea, this means safely operating a nuclear-powered ship, launching and recovering aircraft, and providing air support and other missions effectively and reliably.

Consequently, there are two primary values behind every Command Religious Program: each Sailor's constitutional right to free exercise of religion, and caring for

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[10] Ibid., 10.

[11] Pew Research Center, *"Nones" on the Rise: One-in-Five Adults Have No Religious Affiliation* (Washington, D. C.: Pew Research Center, 2012), 9.

[12] Department of Defense, Office of the Undersecretary for Personnel Readiness, *Population Representation in the Military Services 2010*, Section II, 13, http://prhome.defense.gov/RFM/MPP/AP/POPREP (accessed December 19, 2013),.

Sailors in such a way that mission accomplishment is maximized. While not necessarily in direct conflict with each other, tension can and does arise between a utilitarian approach ("means to an end") and the inherent value of religious experience and expression for their own sakes. Ministry planning must take into account the need to speak at least three languages: the language of the military line community, the language of ecumenism and religious tolerance, and the language of one's own religious organization. When this is added to the need to understand the postmodern mindset of many of those under thirty, the age group that forms the backbone of the Navy's personnel, and the ministry context becomes even more challenging.

Working with Sailors as they transition from teenage years into young adulthood offers significant challenges and opportunities. Basic training starts what is sometimes referred to as the "Sailorization" process. The mission of Recruit Training Command is to "develop [Navy recruits] into smartly disciplined, physically fit, basically trained Sailors . . . [instilled with] the highest standard of Honor, Courage, and Commitment."[13] The customer for these basically trained Sailors is the fleet.

Obstacles

The demographic of those aged eighteen to twenty-five presents significant ministry obstacles, especially in this particular time in human history. One of the chief challenges about this age group about which many scholars agree is that society is in the midst of a movement from modernism to postmodernism. While it is beyond the scope of this project to go into detail about the causes and ramifications of this transition, a

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[13] Recruit Training Command website, "Mission Statement," http://www.bootcamp.navy.mil/ mission.asp (accessed December 12, 2013).

basic summary should be sufficient to provide information on the key factors that impact ministry to the dominant age group in the Navy.

Western culture can be divided into three major ideological periods: premodern, modern, and postmodern. The modern period began around 1600 and lasted until the late twentieth century.[14] The transition from pre-modern to modern was largely driven by the Enlightenment, which lasted from 1650 to 1750, and the effects of the Enlightenment lasted for centuries to come.[15] The postmodern ideological period is currently underway, with its origins traced to the mid-1900s, although a definitive start point likely will not be determined until the current ideological period is more developed.

Because both the U. S. Navy and U. S. Navy Chaplain Corps came into existence in 1775, their structures and culture reflect both premodern and modern influences. In particular, provision for the free exercise of religion reflects tensions between centralized control and democratic reform similar to those found in the Declaration of Independence and the U. S. Constitution. Likewise, American churches are influenced by premodern and modern culture. One of the greatest challenges faced both by American churches and the Navy Chaplain Corps has to do with the fact that America is quickly becoming postmodern in thinking as well as in culture. White provides the following summary: "Premoderns placed their trust in authority. Moderns lost their confidence in authority and placed it in human reason instead. Postmoderns kept the modern distrust of authority but lost their trust in reason and have found nothing to replace it."[16]

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[14] White, *Postmodernism 101*, 12.

[15] Ibid., 13.

[16] Ibid., 41.

The combination of distrust of authority and loss of trust in reason presents a significant challenge to institutions and structures that require clear lines of authority and which depend on reason to communicate thoughts, ways of doing things, and values. Every Navy command places both power and responsibility in the Commanding Officer's hands. Good order and discipline requires basic consent of those serving in the military; the Uniform Code of Military Justice (hereafter, UCMJ) is based on values and "lessons learned" passed down from one generation to the next.

If one fifth of the U. S. public and one third of adults under thirty are not religiously affiliated, then the main purpose of the Navy chaplain—"to provide for the free exercise of religion for Sailors of all faiths"—is becoming increasingly tenuous. Words such as "confession," "repentance," and "forgiveness" are less likely to be part of a Sailor's vocabulary in 2013 than they have been at any time in the history of the Navy. Moreover, the postmodern suspicion of authority in all forms makes it difficult for service members to recognize the value of the knowledge and insight chaplains have that may be helpful for them to avoid trouble.

This last point is especially poignant when the postmodern suspicion of reason leads to a general sense that there is no place to turn, and that no one person has a better answer than another. With nearly half of all new Navy recruits coming from single-parent, blended, or other non-traditional families in which one or more adults is referred to on a first-name basis, teenagers turn to peers for information more readily than to the adults in their lives.

Opportunities: Ministering to Sailors facing Non-Judicial Punishment

While there are serious obstacles to bringing hope in God to Sailors in trouble, there are many opportunities for ministry that arise out of the unique sea-going environment of a Navy aircraft carrier. Navy chaplains provide faith-specific worship services and religious education classes. They also facilitate a wide range of ministries for other faith groups through the use of trained lay leaders. In a range of commands and in a variety of ways, Navy chaplains have developed programs to address the stresses and challenges of sea-going life.

One of the key sources of stress and challenge for many first-term Sailors is meeting the strict standards of military life. As part of their leadership responsibilities, military commanders maintain good order and discipline through a wide variety of proven leadership tools and instructions. When Sailors violate articles of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, commanding officers may impose non-judicial punishment (hereafter, NJP). Offenses range from routinely showing up late to quarters (relatively minor) to sleeping on watch (significantly more serious) to dereliction of duty, desertion, and assault. Punishments can range from verbal counseling and dismissal, to three days bread and water in the ship's brig (jail), to "other than honorable" (OTH) or "bad conduct discharge" (BCD) from the Navy.

Chaplains support Sailors through one-on-one counseling and referrals to medical personnel, financial counselors, career counselors, or disbursing personnel, depending on the Sailor's needs and desires. Because chaplains have privileged communication (absolute confidentiality) with military personnel, they can provide a safe place to discuss issues that might otherwise require disciplinary action. The Department of Defense

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recognizes the value of having a person on board command in whom Sailors can confide without fear of repercussion.

Chaplains are present at NJP to provide advice to the Commanding Officer as well as to support Sailors in trouble. Since NJP is not a court, the usual rules of evidence do not apply. The Commanding Officer has to decide whether or not an offense has been committed, based on pre-NJP investigations and statements, and then determine how much punishment to award. Punishment can range from restriction only, usually thirty days, to three days bread and water, reduction in rank, and the forfeiture of half month's pay for two months. While the outcome of NJP may lead to discharge from the Navy under a variety of characterizations, such a determination is not considered part of the proceedings at Captain's Mast.

The encounter at Captain's Mast is not one-way. The accused are given opportunity to ask questions and to invite character witnesses to speak on their behalf or to make a statement to reduce the seriousness of the charges. The chain of command of the accused is present, along with the legal officer, chaplain, the drug and alcohol advisor to the command, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service officer (if assigned), and the Master at Arms, who ensures the proceedings go in accordance with Navy regulations.

The accused may also refuse to say anything at Captain's Mast without fear of additional charges. However, it is usually in the best interest of the accused to give the captain some idea of what he or she was thinking when the offense was committed. The Commanding Officer needs to know what kind of Sailor is standing in front of him or her. If this is a Sailor who is sincerely remorseful, contrite, and desirous of change, and if the charges are not serious offenses requiring discharge, such as illegal drug use, most

Sailors at this end of the spectrum are likely never to make another appearance before the Captain.

At the other end of the spectrum are Sailors who do not understand that what they did was wrong, are only remorseful because they got caught, or who have an apathetic or hostile attitude toward the Navy. These Sailors are likely to return to Captain's Mast repeatedly until they have a pattern of misconduct which results in discharge from the Navy. No amount of discussion at Captain's Mast and no amount of punishment seems to reach this population.

Between these two poles are the Sailors who are most likely to need, and benefit from, an anti-recidivism program such as the one on which this project is based. Navy chaplains, together with Masters at Arms, psychologists, and senior command leadership, have developed character-building programs that have shown promise with this middle group of Sailors. From deeply probing why a Sailor decided to make a poor moral decision to discussing a constructive vision of his or her future, it is the goal of these programs to change the behavior of Sailors, to "break the cycle of pain," as one Commanding Officer put it,[17] and to help these Sailors avoid making such poor decisions in the future.

The process is one of helping Sailors recognize that they are jeopardizing their chances of fulfilling the commitment they made to the Navy because they are choosing not to obey lawful orders. But while NJP may be focusing on the very pragmatic outcome of making Sailors less likely to violate the UCMJ again, the care provided after

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[17] Admiral David Architzel, then Captain Architzel, would use this expression frequently when conducting Captain's Mast aboard the USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT in the late 1990s.

punishment is intended to do much more than that. "No further masts" sets the bar too low. [18] The goal is honorable, courageous, and committed men and women whose lives in the Navy and beyond will be full and productive.

The "About Face" Program

One such program, entitled "About Face," was designed and implemented by Chaplain Brent Scott while aboard the aircraft carrier USS RONALD REAGAN. [19] This program is designed to be a "last chance" opportunity for Sailors to take control of their lives and avoid being separated from the Navy due to disciplinary problems. Chaplain Scott, in his capacity as advisor to the Commanding Officer, would consult with him prior to NJP and recommend or not recommend a Sailor for the About Face program. The determination of who would or would not be eligible for the program was based on several factors, including severity and number of offenses; whether or not the Sailor showed motivation to stay in the Navy; and whether or not the Sailor's chain of command (the Sailor's immediate supervisor, division officer, and department head) believed he or she would benefit from the program.

Once several Sailors are recommended for the program, the identified Sailors gather in a designated space on board the ship, usually a classroom where noise and distractions are minimal. In addition to the chaplain's leadership of the groups, Chaplain Scott identified and trained a team of mentors who served as additional voices during the four ninety-minute classes. These mentors were First Class Petty Officers and above who

[18] Captain Rick Rubel, Distinguished Professor of Ethics at the U. S. Naval Academy, has been paraphrased here from his mentor training program. By "masts" he is referring to "Captain's Masts."

[19] Appendix B contains the first two class outlines of Chaplain Scott's unpublished program. Used by permission. All page numbers concerning the About Face program refer to Appendix B.

themselves had experienced professional and personal difficulties early in their careers,

but who were able to overcome them and move on to be productive Sailors. Their

discussion input and ongoing support of the Sailors are a crucial component of the

program, because they give visible credibility to the assertion that all is not lost. There

can be new life and hope, even in the often unforgiving environment of the Navy.

There are four themes presented in the About Face program: choices, boundaries,

attitude, and relationships. Each of these themes is presented in discrete classes one week

apart, using a mixture of video clips, fill-in-the-blank worksheets, and discussion. The

program first addresses choices because young Sailors often do not connect where they

are with the choices they have made. The Navy is an all-volunteer force, and when

Sailors first join, they raise their right hand and take the U. S. Armed Forces Oath of

Enlistment:

> I, (*NAME*), do solemnly swear (or affirm) 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; and that I will obey the orders of
> the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over
> me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help
> me God.[20]

Sailors sometimes choose to obey some legal orders and deliberately disobey others. The

choices junior Sailors make during liberty and leave that get them into trouble are often,

in their minds, not connected with their choices while at work pier side or underway.

Being in the right place at the right time in the right uniform ready to carry out assigned

tasks is all part of obeying orders, as is obeying local and federal law. The first session of

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[20] U. S. Congress, "U. S. Armed Forces Oath of Enlistment," Section 302, Title 10, United States
Code. This oath was originally written in 1775 and adopted by Congress in 1789. The current version was
written in 1960.

About Face helps the Sailors connect the choices they make with the consequences of those choices, using the principle that "you reap what you sow."

The second section, boundaries, builds on the choices theme by highlighting the very important concept of taking responsibility for one's own actions. Sailors often try to pass responsibility for their actions to someone or something else: a bad relationship, peer pressure, stress, or leadership that does not understand them. Sometimes they try to avoid the concept of responsibility altogether by explaining their deliberate disobedience as a mistake, or by saying they thought they would not get caught. As Chaplain Scott puts it, "We live in a day when assigning blame in the midst of a problem or difficult circumstance is more common than accepting responsibility. It's not uncommon to hear things like, 'It is my parent's fault,' or 'I wasn't given the same break,' or 'my Leading Petty Officer [immediate supervisor] doesn't like me.'"[21]

Taking responsibility for the poor choices they have made can be a real challenge for troubled first-term Sailors, indeed for anyone. It involves great vulnerability and risk, and some prefer the more familiar path of passing blame than the unfamiliar path of examining poor choices made, accepting responsibility for them, and making a conscious effort to change behavior. Religious terminology such as contrition, confession, and repentance are not explicitly used here to avoid imposing any sort of religious ideology on a command-directed program. However, the goal of this project is to add a purely voluntary piece that does bring the experience of God's forgiveness into this very difficult place. How this might be done will be explored more fully in Chapter 6.

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[21] CAPT Brent Scott, CHC, USN, "About Face" program outline, "Choices" class, 2.

The third theme is attitude, or choosing one's perspective in life. This has to do with what Chaplain Scott calls the "law of seeing and believing": "Whatsoever a Sailor sees in life is *how* he will live his life."[22] Chaplain Scott asserts that attitude grows out of the ways individuals interpret particular events or circumstances. This section urges Sailors to reflect on the connection between what they choose to tell themselves and the consequences of giving one's life a particular meaning based on those particular interpretations. The issue is not whether one will experience difficult circumstances, but how one responds to them.[23]

The fourth and final theme addresses relationships, and how important it is to have people in one's life who can be trusted. In the Navy in particular, trust is essential. The safety of the aircraft, ship, or submarine requires that when a Sailor has said he or she has done certain maintenance on schedule and in accordance with proper procedures, others trust that this is so. While the workload and stresses of Navy life may tempt an individual to take shortcuts, a team where there is trust is more likely to hold its members accountable and keep each other on track. Good relationships among fellow Sailors can be very helpful in making positive choices and avoiding negative ones. Sailors who isolate themselves from family, friends, and co-workers do not benefit from the strength and reassurance that trusting relationships provide.

Returning to the "setting boundaries— taking responsibility for one's actions" section of the About Face program, personal observation has revealed that many Sailors respond strongly and positively to the film clip used as an illustration for confessing out

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[22] Ibid., 1.

[23] Ibid.

loud to making bad moral choices. The film clip was taken from the 2005 version of the movie, *The Longest Yard*, in which a professional football quarterback has been incarcerated for taking bribes and intentionally losing a championship game.[24] In the scene used by the About Face program to illustrate the value of taking responsibility for one's actions, the quarterback attempts to rally the prison football team to win a game against the prison guards. None of his teammates will play hard for him. Some intentionally allow him to be swarmed and violently sacked by the guards.

The quarterback calls a time out and, in the huddle, admits that he had thrown the championship game. He says they probably all knew it already, but that he "had to say it out loud." Once the character takes responsibility for his actions and indicates that he would never do such a thing again, the rest of his teammates accept his "confession" and play their best.

Granted, this is a fictional Hollywood movie script with a feel-good ending. Nevertheless, this clip consistently produces lively discussion and interaction by Sailors and mentors who participate in the About Face program. The tendency of younger Sailors to be strongly influenced by peers causes them to pay close attention to the peer relationships portrayed in the movie. When honor among fellow inmates is demonstrated, it serves as a reminder that all have places in their lives that they would prefer to keep secret from others. Among people's greatest fears is that what is hidden will be revealed. By observing a Hollywood portrayal of a moment in which a person openly confesses fault and intention to change, and who then experiences communal

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[24] *The Longest Yard*, directed by Peter Segal, Paramount Pictures, 2005.

forgiveness and communal support to amend life, the Sailors themselves seem to sense that such an experience may be possible for them.

From Secular to Religious Language

For Sailors to flourish personally and professionally, there has to be a sense of hope and direction to get them through the stresses and challenges of life at sea. The About Face program quite rightly avoids explicitly religious language and imagery because the overt use of such language could be considered proselytizing. Also, traditional religious practice, symbolism, and language are increasingly unfamiliar to men and women under thirty, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

However, first-term Sailors' unfamiliarity with the "old language" of confession of sin, forgiveness, and repentance provides an opportunity to teach and use such language in new ways. In most faith traditions, there are resonances to such concepts as making good moral choices and taking responsibility for one's actions. Honest self-examination, confession of wrongdoing, and desire to change for the better is not only a secular hope but a spiritual hope as well.

From a Christian perspective, the first two classes in the About Face program could be viewed as a process of helping Sailors "come to their senses," both in the narrower perspective of violating the UCMJ and in the larger perspective of their life trajectory as a whole. Those familiar with Jesus' parable of the return of the prodigal son will recognize that honestly facing one's own choices and openly and honestly taking responsibility for them are the essential first steps toward experiencing God's merciful love and forgiveness. This can be figuratively and literally a homecoming.

It is this last piece that this project is intended to address: homecoming and welcome, in the deepest senses of forgiveness of sins, love, and new life. This project proposes inviting Sailors assigned to the About Face program, on a purely voluntary basis, to the practice of auricular confession in a small-group setting. These Sailors will be offered an opportunity, which they may never have had before, to experience God's love and forgiveness. The evangelical role of auricular confession, even for those who are not part of any faith community, makes explicit the spiritual value of taking responsibility for one's life choices. Part Two will explore the literature, ecclesiology, and theology behind this proposal's ends and means.

PART TWO

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

A significant amount of religious literature emphasizes the importance of forgiveness in human relationships. Repentance and forgiveness are at the heart of the Christian Gospel. The early Church developed the practice of auricular confession as one means through which individuals and communities can better love God and neighbor.

This literature review covers several important works that address confession, forgiveness, and amendment of life. *The Confessions of St. Augustine* provides a classic example of human tendency to seek one's own will at the expense of loving relationship with God and with others. The Anglican tradition of taking a "middle road" between Roman Catholic and Protestant teaching on auricular confession and absolution, is explored. The review then looks at a modern theological treatise on human and divine forgiveness from the perspective of someone who knew first-hand the frightful brutality of the Kosovo war of the 1990s. The literature review concludes with a theological examination of how the embodiment of forgiveness might be expressed most effectively through the use of small groups.

Confession as a Means to Experience God's Forgiveness and Love

The Confessions of St. Augustine

Saint Augustine addresses his *Confessions* directly to God, but invites readers to actively listen in. Both Augustine and the reader are drawn into something larger than themselves. Augustine speaks with an open heart, revealing his struggles to fully commit to God: "Too narrow is the house of my soul for you to enter into it: let it be enlarged by you. It lies in ruins; build it up again. I confess and know that it contains things that offend your eyes. Yet who will cleanse it? Or upon what other than you shall I call?"[1]

Augustine recognizes that throughout his life, in particular the part of his life prior to his conversion to Christianity at age thirty-three, he became strongly attached to habits and ways of living that were opposed to the will of God. His particular forms of willfulness growing up included doing all he could to play rather than to attend to his studies; his enjoyment of plays and the circus; his pride in rhetoric and intellectually out-shining fellow students; and his enjoyment of sex, which he refers to as "bodily pleasures." He recalls himself as a youth seeking help from God, crying out, "'Give me chastity and continence, but not yet!' For I feared that you would hear me quickly, and that quickly you would heal me of that disease of lust, which I wished to have satisfied rather than extinguished."[2]

Augustine learned, through both his knowledge of God revealed in Scripture and his experience of God's forgiveness, that those who call upon God with "broken and contrite hearts" receive love, not hate; faith, not distrust; and hope, not despair. While

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[1] *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, trans. John K. Ryan (New York: Doubleday, 1960), 46.

[2] Ibid., 194.

such language may sound strange to the increasingly large percentage of Sailors who do not claim a particular religion or faith, re-vitalizing and re-asserting such language about God could prove highly effective in the intensity of the operational environment. The hope-bringing power of confessing sins "out loud" to God is a central theological assumption of this doctoral project. The greatest value in this work is in its encouragement to enter a process of honest self-evaluation and confession, and that the encounter with a trustworthy, loving, and grace-filled God will transform for the better those who risk so doing.

The limitations of this classic work by St. Augustine in light of the ministry challenge of this project primarily stem from the increasing number of Sailors who have vague notions of who God is and what the Church teaches about the importance of confession and forgiveness in light of God's love. L. Gregory Jones, whose book *Embodying Forgiveness* is reviewed later in this chapter, rightly asserts that "Augustine's *Confessions* show quite powerfully [that] the confession of sin must be contextualized within the larger significance of confessing our great joy in the God who loves us, gives us a self, and enables us to praise God in the disciplines of Christian community."[3] The challenge of this project is to provide such contextualization for Sailors for whom such language is unfamiliar at best and completely unintelligible at worst. Augustine's *Confessions* would make no sense to a Sailor who has no belief in God and the value of Christian community.

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[3] L. Gregory Jones, *Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 184.

Anglican/Episcopal Perspectives on Auricular Confession

The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology
by Paul Avis

Paul Avis's work well summarizes, with theological depth and historical breadth, the essentials of Anglican belief and practice. Avis writes that the following three aspirations provide an encompassing description of Anglican ecclesiology: (1) Anglicanism aspires to be a catholic faith; (2) Anglicanism aspires to be a reformed faith; and (3) Anglicanism aspires to be a reasonable faith.[4] Those who identify themselves as members of the worldwide Anglican communion take what is referred to as a *via media*, or "middle road." If, as Avis asserts, Anglicanism aspires to be a catholic, reformed, and reasonable faith, then the theological basis of specific practices—in this case, auricular confession—should be discussed with these three aspirations in mind.

From a Roman Catholic perspective, sacramental private confession of sin to a priest is the chief means for a follower of Christ who is truly penitent to hear Christ's words of consolation and forgiveness. The "seal of the confessional" permits the penitent to be highly specific, and the priest assigns penance commensurate with the sin or sins confessed. This, in turn, prepares the penitent to receive the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, "a foretaste of the heavenly banquet" that communicates God's love to those created in God's image. The words of absolution and consolation, in both individual and communal confession, can be spoken only by a priest in the apostolic order.

From a Protestant Reformation perspective, the clericalism of such an approach may lead to an abuse of power. Most Protestant traditions insist that there is no

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[4] Paul Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2008), 32-33.

intermediary necessary between God and penitent other than Jesus Christ. Direct access

to God has been attained at great cost through Christ's death and resurrection. The

curtain of the temple has been torn in two. There is no need for the curtain of the

confessional.

The strength of Avis's work is his balanced approach, taking the best of Catholic

and Reformed theology and applying it to pastoral practice. He values the use of

traditional liturgy and sacramental ritual, not as means unto themselves, but for

strengthening and upbuilding of the community. He does not claim that Anglicanism is

uniquely or even best suited to provide non-Roman Catholics with spiritual tools that

Roman Catholics find helpful. However, Avis does argue that Anglicanism is well suited

to do so through wise utilization of its rich liturgical heritage. Both the Church of

England, in *Common Worship*,[5] and the Episcopal Church, in *The Book of Common

Prayer*,[6] have resources for private confession in addition to general confession offered

during liturgies of the gathered community such as Morning and Evening Prayer and

Holy Eucharist.

One of the limitations of Avis's work is his lack of commentary on why the

Anglican Church first moved away from a sacramental understanding of confession and

then returned to its optional use centuries later. The Anglican and Episcopal Church

historian John Booty attributes the rejection of sacramental confession to something in its

very nature. Booty writes, "[Sacramental confession] was designed to console the sinner

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[5] The Anglican Church, *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England: Pastoral Offices* (London: Church House Publishing, 2005), 13-23.

[6] The Episcopal Church, *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, Together with The Psalter or Psalms of David* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1979), 447-452.

but it did not."[7] It would have been helpful for purposes of this project if Avis directly

had addressed how confession and forgiveness currently practiced in the Anglican

Church answers Booty's critique.

Confession and Forgiveness in Community

Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation
by Miroslav Volf

The thesis of this work comes down to a simple but very challenging argument:

that it is possible for persons to be in meaningful relationship with those whom they have

the most intense personal, social, and ideological differences, without surrendering their

own dignity and selfhood. The book proposes two ways in which those relationships

stand and fall: exclusion, the intentional creation of active barriers between; and embrace,

where the other is welcomed and forgiven at potentially great personal and communal

sacrifice. This challenging book's main contribution to this project is that it takes sin and

brokenness very seriously, on both individual and societal levels. Sailors can greatly

benefit from Volf's theological assertion that their own struggles as either the unforgiving

one or the unforgiven one are not as hopeless as they might first seem.

When the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, many countries formerly under the

Soviet Union's control become independent, free states. Nowhere did this freedom

movement take place more brutally than in the former Yugoslavia. Century-old hatreds

that simmered among ethnic and religious groups, which for decades had been restrained

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[7] John E. Booty, "The English Reformation: A Lively Faith and Sacramental Confession," in *The Anglican Moral Choice: The Anglican Studies Series*, ed. Paul Elmen (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow Co., Inc., 1983), 16.

by Soviet domination, rapidly boiled over into violence and armed conflict. Throughout the 1990s, Orthodox Serbs, Roman Catholic Croatians, and Islamic Bosnian Serbs became entangled in what seemed to be intractable conflict. The thought of forgiveness seemed impossible between injured parties who had harbored enmity for each other since the fifteenth century.

Miroslav Volf, a Croatian theology professor living in the United States, had developed and presented a theological treatise on forgiveness using the images of "exclusion" and "embrace." Volf's mentor, German theology professor Jurgen Moltmann, challenged him: "But can you embrace a *cetnik*?"[8] This question haunted Volf:

> It was the winter of 1993. For months now the notorious Serbian fighters called "*cetnik*" had been sowing desolation in my native country, herding people into concentration camps, raping women, burning down churches, and destroying cities. I had just argued that we ought to embrace our enemies as God has embraced us in Christ. Can I embrace a *cetnik*—the ultimate other, so to speak, the evil other? What would justify the embrace? Where would I draw the strength for it? What would it do to my identity as a human being and as a Croat? It took me a while to answer, though I immediately knew what I wanted to say. "No, I cannot—but as a follower of Christ I think I should be able to." In a sense this book is the product of the struggle between the truth of my argument and the force of Moltmann's objection.[9]

For followers of Jesus Christ, the divine command that one "ought" to forgive one's enemies becomes a lifelong spiritual discipline, which Volf's book addresses eloquently. In the series of questions Volf asks, it is clear that confession and forgiveness is hard work. It is deep work.

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[8] Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abington Press, 1996), 9.

[9] Ibid.

For the small group model proposed in this project to have any real impact, it is crucially important to avoid trivialization of confession and forgiveness. Sailors may or may not be aware of the depth of their pain and anger over their past, the deeper reasons behind the choices that brought them into conflict with the Navy, and their inability to build meaningful connections with their fellow Sailors. While they do not normally use such strong language, there are enemies everywhere. They question why they should forgive their imperfect family situation, their unfaithful significant other, the recruiter who talked them into joining the Navy, or the Chief Petty Officer who caught them drinking under age. These questions touch on what would justify such a figurative or literal embrace of the "enemy." Some Sailors remark that they have become different people, in negative ways, after joining the Navy. They might wonder whether "forgiving" the Navy for a real or perceived sense of injustice means giving up oneself. These are all intensely personal and communal questions for Sailors. Volf had to confront the question of whether or not he would embrace his "ultimate other," a *cetnik*. This project will ask Sailors to confront their own strong resistance to embracing a shipboard and wider Navy community which may be their "ultimate other."

Volf argues that the war in the former Yugoslavia added to the vocabulary of evil the term, "ethnic cleansing," which "has become the most powerful current metaphor" for the practice of exclusion.[10] He goes on to give what he considers a "bare-bones" sketch of exclusion:

> First, exclusion can entail cutting of the bonds that connect, taking oneself out of the pattern of interdependence and placing oneself in a position of sovereign independence. The other then emerges either as an enemy that must be pushed

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[10] Ibid., 57.

away from the self and driven out of its space or as a nonentity—a superfluous being—that can be disregarded and abandoned. Second, exclusion can entail erasure of separation, not recognizing the other as someone who in his or her otherness belongs to the pattern of interdependence. The other then emerges as an inferior being who must either be assimilated by being made like the self or be subjected to the self. *Exclusion takes place when the violence of expulsion, assimilation, or subjugation and the indifference of abandonment replace the dynamics of taking in and keeping out as well as the mutuality of giving and receiving.*[11]

The demanding operational environment of an aircraft carrier at sea requires an extremely high level of expertise, interdependence, and trust among Sailors. Some Sailors have never before been challenged to take on so much responsibility so quickly, and they interpret this new environment as hostile because it is so alien to them in so many ways. "Ship, shipmate, self" is the hierarchy of values imposed on their time and attention. Many find it very difficult to fit in; some will not make it through basic training largely because they do not adapt to the Navy way of life. Reporting to a new ship can be particularly daunting, as the hierarchal structure of the chain of command serves the mission, but may at times leave individual Sailors feeling either excluded altogether or so forcefully assimilated that they fear complete loss of self. In addition, the fears they have during the adjustment period may cause some to exclude others. Exclusion can go both ways. The "mutuality of giving and receiving," as Volf describes, is a distant hope, if a hope at all.

The antidote to the kind of hopelessness created by an alien environment filled with real or perceived "hostile others" is not returning hostility in kind, but what Volf calls "embrace." Volf's theology of embrace comes from Luke 15:11-32, the parable of Jesus commonly referred to as the parable of the prodigal son. Volf reads the story at the

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[11] Ibid., 67. Emphasis added.

social level, showing how the younger son's goal in demanding his inheritance was to separate himself from his father. The older brother's goal is to enforce the rules that separate him from his father and brother. In contrast, the father's behavior is guided by one fundamental "rule": relationship has priority over all rules.[12]

Volf makes clear that the priority of relationship over rules has its own challenges. While the human tendency to create boundaries and "other-ness" can lead to the imposition of power by one group over another, the complete absence of rules and distinctions can create anarchy and chaos. Overcoming distrust in even the most benign environments can be quite challenging. In the operational military environment, Sailors face violence, injury, and intense swings in expectations and demands, all in a community which requires a certain level of indoctrination, assimilation, and conformity. Volf's work suggests that one good way to work through the alienation that such an environment can create is to take time for self-examination, reflection, and renewal. This project is designed to facilitate that process in a safe and supportive setting.

Theological Bases for a Small Group Forgiveness Ministry

Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis
by L. Gregory Jones

This work by Dean Gregory Jones of Duke University Divinity School maintains a laser-like focus on the vital connection between human and divine forgiveness. In his introduction, Jones stresses the importance of solid theological thinking when discussing something as tricky as forgiveness: "While I applaud the growing conviction—or at least the hope—that forgiveness can become a means of breaking apart cycles of violence,

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[12] Ibid., 158-164.

vengeance, and bitterness, I suggest that the issues need to be more carefully situated within the Christian doctrine of the Triune God."[13]

The understanding of God as a trinity of co-equal Persons in eternal relationship with one another leads to a relational understanding of confession and forgiveness. Like Volf, Jones emphasizes the communal nature of forgiveness: "A Christian account of forgiveness ought not simply or even primarily be focused on the absolution of guilt; rather, it ought to be focused on the reconciliation of brokenness, the restoration of communion—with God, with one another, and with the whole Creation."[14] This argument, sustained and supported throughout his book, led directly to this project taking a small-group, rather than an individualistic, approach to confession and forgiveness.

Embodying forgiveness is hard work, for individuals and for communities. It needs to focus on the here and now, on what is actually going on in people's lives. Shipboard communities pulse with triumphs and tragedies, breakthroughs and breakdowns, great gains and devastating losses. Jones reminds his readers that the divine imperative to forgive others as God forgives us requires first that believers take very seriously their sinfulness in relation to God in highly specific ways:

> The *particularity* of God's forgiveness, of God's judgment of grace, requires and enables lives of repentance in the context of the communion of God's inbreaking Kingdom. Unfortunately, when we fail to see and embody this forgiveness in relation to particular lives, specific situations, and concrete practices, we too easily transmute the notions of judgment and grace, forgiveness and repentance into abstractions that destroy rather than give life.[15]

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[13] L. Gregory Jones, *Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), xi.

[14] Ibid., xii.

[15] Ibid., 136.

Jones also emphasizes that the kind of specificity found in the confessional is required in community, as difficult as that might be to live out in practice:

> One of the most offensive things Christians all too often do is to proclaim a general and abstract forgiveness without any regard for the complexities of a specific situation or a particular person's life. Such proclamations often misfire because they have failed even to diagnose the relevant issues; even worse, however, is their tendency to trivialize the suffering endured (and, worse, to trivialize the suffer*er*). God's forgiveness is universal in scope; but it cannot be abstract. Knowing how to practice the craft of forgiveness involves an ever-deepening and ever-expanding ability to provide accurate discernment of the particular.[16]

Jones also emphasizes the salutary and positive characteristics of what he calls "reconciling forgiveness," which is the term he prefers to use rather than, variously, "penance," "reconciliation," "confession," or "binding and loosing":

> We are called to confess our praise, our sin, and our faith—not in some vain attempt to make us worthy before God nor in the hope of earning forgiveness from God. Nor do we confess simply to weigh ourselves down with the burden of sin and a self-denying humiliation. As Augustine's *Confessions* show quite powerfully, the confession of sin must be contextualized within the large significance of confessing our great joy in the God who loves us, gives us a self, and enables us to praise God in the disciplines of Christian community.[17]

Jones cautions that while

> Bonhoeffer rightly worried about communal confession creating a climate of autobiographical exhibitionism on the one hand and gossip on the other . . . too many Christians are unwilling to practice communal confession in any sense with one another. . . . We need to worry equally about a privatized Christianity that presumes that forgiveness can be had apart from the disciplines of Christian community and the need to turn to those we victimize and those who have victimized us.[18]

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[16] Ibid., 229.

[17] Ibid., 184.

[18] Ibid., 187.

In later chapters, Jones goes on to reaffirm the positive potential of specific practices, such as anointing with oil, which have all but disappeared from many Protestant traditions.

Jones's work focuses on forgiveness in Christian community. One challenge for this project is asking Sailors to shift perspective from what to them may have little to do with divine and human forgiveness to the deep personal and communal awareness needed for positive change. Sailors will be offered the opportunity to be part of such a group on a purely voluntary basis. Significant time and energy will be needed to build the kinds of relationships necessary to avoid the tendency toward trivialization and narcissism, of which both Jones and Bonhoeffer warn.

The primary critique of Jones's work is that he does not seem interested in connecting auricular confession with the embodiment of forgiveness. The craft of listening well can draw out in others a willingness to speak out loud about some of the toughest issues inside themselves. While Jones certainly addresses this, it would have been helpful to hear more about the possibilities of small group confession and forgiveness.

Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry: An Integrational Approach
by Gareth Weldon Icenogle

It is a premise of this project that between private, individual confession and public, communal confession during community worship, there is a third option: small group confession. Chapters 6 and 7 will present a strategy for using small groups to make room for that option, which would enable Sailors to experience God's forgiveness

and love. It is important both theologically and sociologically to support small group

ministry as a means to this end.

In his introduction to his seminal work on small group ministry, Gareth Incenogle

emphasizes that it is not a "how to" book but a "why" book.[19] His goal is to bring

"theological depth" to the Christian small group movement.[20] Icenogle writes,

"Community is the purpose for Jesus Christ, the Son of God, being born, living among

us, dying and being raised from the dead. Community . . . is the common life between

God and humanity, and small groups are the most visible and frequent form of this

community."[21]

Many Sailors struggle to make sense out of what has happened to them personally

and professionally, especially in times of challenge and heartbreak. Many have not been

part of, do not know how to find, or do not know how to develop communities in which it

is safe to discuss their fears and failures. Encountering God's love and forgiveness may

be the last thing on their minds. But if Icenogle is right, there is no better place for

broken, hurting individuals to experience God's love and forgiveness than in a small

group. He writes,

> Understanding first of all that sin has dominion within every human group, the
> small group can then become a place for the healing and restoration of broken
> individuals, and broken relationships. Every small group is a reenactment of the
> "hiding behind" garden leaves and trees. Every group will experience the feelings
> of fear and shame that our nakedness will be seen by God and others. But as

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[19] Gareth Weldon Icenogle, *Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry: An Integrational Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 11.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 10-11.

continuing paradox, in admitting that these dysfunctions are happening, the small group can establish a confessional base to rebuild into God's redemptive future.[22]

Icenogle is very careful to address both the potential good and potential dangers of the small group environment. Small groups leaders must have the maturity, training, and empathy to work through what he calls the "small group paradox": "Small groups are trapped in the 'paradox' of hunger for intimacy ('it's not good to be alone') and fear of intimacy ('they sewed fig leaves to cover themselves')."[23] When done well, leadership of small groups can establish a safe environment in which there is intimate confession and forgiveness.[24] Done poorly, leadership of small groups could actually cause more harm than good.

Icenogle provides helpful guidelines for choosing and training leadership of small groups. He directly addresses the necessary concerns over small group dynamics and leadership, and how important it is that all members of the group feel safe and protected at all times. Navy chaplains who wish to implement the strategy proposed in this project will be responsible for group leadership in the highly sensitive area of confession of sin and the pronouncement of God's forgiveness.

This, however, leads to one of the main limitations of the small group model for ministry. The demands placed on the leaders can be quite challenging. Even without the auricular confession piece added, the About Face program needs highly skilled leaders for the group discussions. Some chaplains may not feel comfortable or equipped to lead such discussions.

[22] Ibid., 29.

[23] Ibid., 27.

[24] Ibid., 278.

When auricular confession of sensitive issues is added, the leadership task becomes even more daunting. It is important that the persons in charge have leadership authority, but authority as servant leaders who themselves are in need of forgiveness. The Episcopal Church's liturgy for auricular confession recognizes this, as the pastor asks for God's forgiveness before hearing the penitent's confession. The model proposed in Chapter 6 walks a narrow path between the clericalism of a priest or pastor being the only one who can pronounce forgiveness in Christ's name, and the egalitarian approach emphasized by such groups as Alcoholics Anonymous. In the shipboard setting, this will require that a delicate balance be struck between authentic vulnerability and the necessary boundary between commissioned officers and enlisted personnel. These considerations will be worked out in more detail in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 4

ECCLESIOLOGY

Navy chaplains need to be wise and skillful at working in a multi-cultural, multi-faith setting. An aircraft carrier has the population of a small town, but the cultural diversity of a large city. Unlike in a big city, however, there is no separation of communities into quarters or blocks. Everyone lives, works, and plays within a thousand feet of each other. Amidst the diversity within a geographically tight community, Sailors have a single mission: to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign or domestic.

The Church, too, is very diverse in ecclesiologies but united around the mission of knowing Christ and making Christ known. Navy religious ministries instructions require chaplains to provide for their own particular faith groups and facilitate for the religious needs of all. Christian chaplains in particular do well to be as generous as possible in their understanding of the Church, without compromising their core beliefs. Genuine ecumenism among various expressions of the Christian faith can greatly facilitate the spiritual care and nurture of Sailors from a wide range of backgrounds. It is in an

ecumenical spirit of unity of purpose amidst diversity of ecclesiology that this chapter is written.

Examination of and Reflection on the Church

This section of the chapter begins with an understanding of passages of Scripture related to the Church, with particular attention paid to the Gospel of Matthew, the epistles of Paul and Peter, and historical accounts from the Acts of the Apostles. The chapter next outlines some of the basic ecclesiological convictions of the Episcopal Church. The discussion from an Episcopal perspective includes the definition of the Church, the mission of the Church, and the means by which the Church carries out that mission. The strengths and weaknesses of Episcopal ecclesiology will be explored. The opening section of the chapter concludes with some personal reflections on what it means to be the Church.

The Church in the Bible

In the canonical order of Scripture, the first New Testament use of the Greek word translated into English as "church" is found in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew. Jesus and his disciples have come into the district of Caesarea Philippi, and Jesus asks them an identity question, "Who do people say the son of man is?" (Matthew 16:13).[1] The disciples reply with the various things they have heard people say about Jesus: some say he is John the Baptist raised from the dead; others say he is Elijah returned as foretold by Scripture; while others say he is Jeremiah or some other prophet. Jesus then asks the

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[1] All biblical references will be taken from the New Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

disciples, "But who do you say that I am?" (16:15). Simon Peter answers, "You are the

Messiah, the Son of the living God" (16:16). Jesus then says to Simon, "Blessed are you,

Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in

heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church

[ἐκκλησίαν], and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it" (16:17-18).

Matthew is the only one of the four evangelists to use ἐκκλησίαν in the context of

Peter's confession of who Jesus is. In Mark and Luke, Jesus commands his disciples to

keep silent following Peter's declaration. John records the differing opinions about who

Jesus is (John 8:40), but has no account of Peter's confession that Jesus as the Messiah,

the Son of the living God, and Jesus' response.

The Roman Catholic Church uses this passage from Matthew as one of the pillars

of support for the primacy of Peter among the Apostles. The Vicar of Rome, the Pope, is

considered by the Roman Catholic Church to be in direct succession to Peter, and this

gives him primal authority among all Christian leaders. This hierarchal ecclesiology

leads to a biblical hermeneutic in which passages of Scripture concerning the nature of

the Church are interpreted through the eyes of the Church. Since assemblies of

Christians gathered for worship existed before the New Testament was written down,

leaders and members of the Roman Catholic Church consider themselves the rightful

stewards of biblical interpretation of the Church.

From a Protestant perspective, this passage from Matthew is interpreted to mean

that Christ built the Church on Peter's confession. Confession of faith that Jesus is the

Messiah is the bedrock against which the gates of Hades will not prevail. Three

movements of identity in Matthew 16 are inseparably tied together: who people in

general say Jesus is; who those closest to Jesus say he is; and the calling forth (εκκαλεω) of those who confess Jesus as the promised Messiah of God, the Christ. Jesus gives his word that a Church so built will prevail against sin, death, and Hades.

The work of the Reformers addressed a wide range of issues, from personal piety to translation of the Bible into the common language. The process of reformation itself both drove and responded to changes in ecclesiology. By taking the Bible out of the exclusive stewardship of the Roman Catholic Church and making it accessible to all, the Reformers enabled Scripture to be examined and reflected upon by all. This included deeper and broader examination of the meaning of church, particularly in the accounts from Paul's letters and the Acts of the Apostles.

At its core, the Church is a called out assembly or gathering of people who believe and confess that Jesus is the Messiah. This is not a complete description. The epistles of Paul, Peter, and parts of the Acts of the Apostle further elaborate on what the Church is and what that means in terms of mission, particularly the mission of reconciliation between God and humankind.

The sense of a called out assembly or gathering is not unique to the New Testament. In the Septuagint Old Testament, εκκλησια is used as the equivalent to the Hebrew word for "assembly of the Israelites," especially when the assembly is gathered for sacred purposes.[2] Moses addresses his farewell discourse and blessing to "all the assembly of Israel" (εκκλησιασ) (Deuteronomy 31:30); Joshua read the Book of the Law before "all the assembly of Israel" (εκκλησια) (Joshua 8:35) to inspire them to re-commit

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[2] Joseph Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 1664.

to obeying and serving their God. Stephen uses the term εκκλησιασ when during his

lengthy speech in Acts he refers to "all the assembly of Israel" gathered at Mount Sinai

(Acts 7:38).

The Acts of the Apostles also records an early discussion as to what is essential to

be part of the called-out Christian community and what is not. During a council at the

church in Jerusalem, the apostles and elders of the church considered whether or not

circumcision according to Mosaic Law is necessary for salvation (Acts 15). The Apostle

Peter argues that since God gave the Holy Spirit to Jew and Gentile alike, as evidenced

by the miraculous signs and healings and phenomenal numerical growth of the Church

among the uncircumcised Gentiles. He writes, "Why . . . test God by putting a yoke on

the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we

believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same

manner as they" (15:10-11).

The Church is a called-out community of persons saved by grace through faith in

the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus promises that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

The Apostle Paul likens that community to a body, over which Jesus is the head

(Ephesians 1:22-23 and 4:15). Paul extends the body metaphor in his extended

discussion of spiritual gifts in his first letter to the church in Corinth: "For as the body is

one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one

body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether

Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. .

. . Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually" (1 Corinthians 12:12-13,

27).

Anglican Theological Tradition

While there is not a distinct Anglican ecclesiology, the history of Anglican

tradition is nearly unique in the way it has been influenced by Roman Catholic

ecclesiology on one hand, and Lutheran and Reformed ecclesiology on the other. To

maintain its claims to catholicity, as theologian and Anglican Church apologist Paul Avis

puts it, "Anglicans . . . have disclaimed all distinctiveness of faith and order . . . to assert

their continuity with the early Church and their aspirations to what they regarded as true

catholicity, with its principles of the paramount authority of Scripture and the

interpretative role of antiquity."[3] While maintaining its catholicity, the Anglican Church

sides with Protestants on issues of church authority and sacramental grace. Avis rightly

argues that Protestants do not accept

> that the divine society of the Church should be centralized in a virtual
> ecclesiastical monarchy (as the Roman Church has become over the past
> millennium), the fountainhead from which all authority and sacramental grace
> must flow. Protestants and Anglicans insist that there is a direct relationship, not
> only between the believer and Christ, but also between the whole body of the
> Church as a communion (*koinonia, communio*) and its divine source and head.[4]

The Anglican Church historically has served as a *via media* ("middle road")

between Protestants and Roman Catholics. Avis describes the basic tenets of this middle

road as follows:

> [Anglicanism] not only insists on the individual's access to and communion with
> God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit (in the doctrine of justification by
> grace through faith . . .), but it also unequivocally affirms the God-given nature of
> the Church as a divine society embracing heaven and earth (the Church
> triumphant and the Church militant), with its threefold order of bishops, priests
> and deacons in historical continuity of ordinations and its sacramental

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[3] Paul Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology* (London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2008), 44.

[4] Ibid.

ministrations that mediate the salvific presence of God through earthly elements of water in baptism, and bread and wine in the Eucharist.[5]

This rather lengthy description highlights three essentials of Anglican ecclesiology: (1) individual access to and communion with God is made possible through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit; (2) the Church is a divine society; and (3) the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist mediate God's saving presence.

The Episcopal Church is the American expression of Anglicanism. When asked what they believe about the Church, Episcopalians often respond that the way in which they worship best expresses what they believe ("*lex orandi, lex credendi*," that is, "the law of prayer is the law of belief"). Since 1549, Anglican/Episcopal worship has been carried out in accordance with the rites and practices contained in the *Book of Common Prayer* (currently referred to as *Common Worship* in the United Kingdom and in the United States as *The American Prayer Book*).

However, appealing only to the experience of Anglican/Episcopal worship is not enough to answer the question of what Episcopalians believe about the Church. The Episcopal Church provides "an Outline of the Christian Faith, commonly called the Catechism" near the back of the same *Book of Common Prayer* used for worship.[6] For Episcopalians, the layout of the *Book of Common Prayer* is significant. Worship services are to be experienced before they are explained. Experiencing the mystery and wonder of God in Word and Sacrament comes before teachings about the Church.

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[5] Ibid., 47.

[6] The Anglican Church, *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1979), 845-862.

The catechism defines the Church as "the community of the New Covenant."[7] "New Covenant" in turn is defined as "the new relationship with God given by Jesus Christ, the Messiah, to the apostles; and through them, to all who believe in him."[8] This catechetical definition of Church establishes the importance of the concept of a called-out community of faith made up of persons who claim Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.

Anglicanism can claim two strengths that are relevant to this project's thesis. First, the Anglican Church continues to hold in creative tension both the catholicity of the Church and Protestantism's critiques and reforms. It does not claim a unique ecclesiology. This enables Episcopal chaplains to work collegially alongside fellow Christian chaplains in particular and among Sailors in general. Second, the Episcopal Church's use of both word and sacrament to convey God's message of love and reconciliation equips it well to help achieve this project's goals.

The Episcopal Church also has clear weaknesses. First, its hierarchal structure that includes bishops, priests, and deacons, in a world that is increasingly anti-hierarchal, may put off those who are suspicious of authority. In an increasingly secular Navy, a hierarchal Church structure may put up more barriers to the experience of God's love and forgiveness than it takes down. While troubled Sailors might appreciate the involvement of a chaplain, they could also view chaplains as part of the same system of power to which they are finding it difficult to adapt. This could discourage troubled Sailors from either seeking or accepting the pastoral care provided by a Navy chaplain through this particular expression of faith.

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[7] Ibid., 854.

[8] Ibid., 850.

Second, the Episcopal emphasis on "decency and good order" in worship may come across as overly rigid and lacking in room for spontaneity. Traditional liturgical language and ritual, recitation of the Creeds, scripted prayers, and delivery of sermons in a general form and style substantially unchanged for a hundred years all suggest an old-fashioned, outdated Church. The work and gifts of the Holy Spirit are not as visibly present and valued in many Episcopal churches as they are in other expressions of the Christian faith.

The third and perhaps most troubling weakness of Episcopal ecclesiology is that to those outside the Episcopal Church, it appears that much of what is said and done by Episcopal clergy is for the benefit of those who already believe that Jesus is the Messiah. The preached Word is most often designed to instruct and build up in faith those who have already come to faith. The Episcopal Church's understanding of an "altar call" is the invitation to receive Holy Communion, an invitation which is extended to those who have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

These weaknesses can largely be attributed to the Anglican Church's ambivalence about evangelism. Anglicans and Episcopalians tend to err on the side of modesty and reticence when it comes to bringing persons to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Strengthening already existing communities of faith tends to be the priority. Establishing new Episcopal churches through evangelism does not get as much attention. Architecturally, many traditional Episcopal churches are designed to look like inverted boats with open wooden rafters, simulating the inner structure of a ship's hull. At times access to the "ship of faith" appears available primarily to those who already know how to climb the rigging. This project is one small effort to address these weaknesses, by

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taking the Church to the unaffiliated rather than waiting for the unaffiliated to come to the Church.

What It Means to Be the Church

Anglicans experience most intimately what it means to be the Church through the liturgies of the Episcopal Church. The word "liturgy" is derived from the Greek word for "service" or "ministry," λειτουργία (*leitourgia*).[9] The Gospel of Luke uses this word when referring to the temple service of Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist (Luke 1:23). From this, the word "liturgy" has come to mean "the work of the people." Liturgy influences the design and decoration of worship space, the types and use of vestments and other liturgical symbols, and the setting of Holy Scripture and parts of the liturgy to music. Worship itself is ordered, literate, and filled with Holy Scripture, both in the prayers and in the reading and proclamation of the Word.

In my own life growing up in the Episcopal Church, my experience of the Church was a weekly, formal gathering of those who professed Jesus as Lord and God was worshiped through music, prayer, preaching, and sacrament. There was no sense of outreach or evangelism beyond charitable giving to benefit social causes. In the setting of a smaller Episcopal congregation I attended while at college, the bread and wine of Holy Communion were passed from person to person around the circle of the gathered community. Here the Church was a more intimate, less formal gathering than previously. There was a preaching outreach ministry, along with regular visitation to a nursing home. Theological, political, and social issues were woven together by the university chaplain in

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[9] Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 3187.

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sermons that ranged from the highly intellectual to the highly experiential. In this setting, I experienced the Holy Spirit and the sense of God's forgiving love in deep and powerful ways.

As a Navy chaplain, finding the right balance between being true to my ecclesiological roots and sharing the love and forgiveness of God with many Sailors who have never before experienced these has become my daily calling and privilege. To be the Church is to be the healing hands and feet of Christ in a world that desperately needs his love and forgiveness. Scripture, theological tradition, and experience all lead back to Peter's confession that Jesus is the promised Messiah. On that rock Christ has built his Church, and nothing will prevail against it.

Alternative Ecclesiological Models

In the Episcopal Church, an ordained Episcopal priest generally gives a pronouncement of forgiveness during the worship service, using a written form of absolution found in the *Book of Common Prayer*. Many Lutheran and Reformed traditions similarly use written prayers accepted for general use by pastors from those churches. Free Church pastors tend to use words of assurance drawn directly from Scripture, following either silent or auricular confession of sin. For purposes of this project, a chaplain may communicate God's forgiveness in full accordance with his or her Church's teachings. The basic truth which needs to be communicated is that in Christ, one's sins are forgiven.

In military chaplaincy, theological debate over the ontological nature of the priesthood is not helpful in bringing words of God's forgiveness to the ears of those in

need. The realities of danger, violence, injury (both physical and moral), and death can make these kinds of theological discussions irrelevant at best and counter-productive at worst. In an environment which demands as much cooperation among chaplains as possible, it is very important to be clear about what is essential to being the Church and what is *adiaphora*, or non-essential.

Another alternative ecclesiology is the "missionary ecclesiology" of the late theologian and Anglican bishop Lesslie Newbigin. Although Newbigin was Anglican, his writings encourage a way of thinking that differs from the traditional ecclesiology of the Anglican Church. In his book, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, Veli-Matti Karkkainen explains that Bishop Newbigin built his ecclesiology on an understanding that "the essential nature of the Church is missionary, rather than mission being *a task* given to the Church." [10] Newbigin's overall ecclesiological approach can be described as missionary, ecumenical, and dynamic.[11] Newbigin elaborates on these three themes in a book he published early in his career, entitled *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of the Church*.[12]

For Newbigin, it is the saving presence of Christ that constitutes the Church, but that presence is most fully encountered in the preaching and celebration of the sacraments. The Word is preached and the sacraments are administered in and by the Church as well as to the Church, and Christ, the head of the body, acts in them and

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[10] Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 151.

[11] Ibid., 152.

[12] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of the Church* (London: SCM Press, 1953).

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through them.[13] This accords well with Scriptural and Anglican ecclesiology. However, Newbigin's challenge is that to be fully the Church, there also must be a missional, ecumenical, and dynamic thrust to everything the Church does. As outlined in the conclusion of this chapter, this project attempts to honor all three of these mandates.

Insights from the Social Sciences

As discussed in Chapter 1, the increasing fragmentation of society and shift away from institutions such as the Church have led to the current situation of one in five Americans identifying themselves as "nones," that is, those who claim no religious affiliation. Among those who identify their religion as "nothing in particular," 88 percent say they are not actively looking for a religion that would be right for them.[14] The Pew Research Center study states bluntly, "Overwhelmingly, they think that religious organizations are too concerned with money and power, too focused on rules and too involved in politics."[15] Others have suggested that "organized religion" has for too long been stuck in a premodern and modern modality, and needs to take into account the fact that Western culture is shifting rapidly into a postmodern mindset.

In *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, Karkkainen discusses the continued relevancy of the Church. He contends that the Church will remain relevant depending upon how well it functions as a "fellowship of men and women, a fellowship of the Spirit, a

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[13] Ibid., 57.

[14] Pew Research Center, *"Nones" on the Rise*, 10.

[15] Ibid.

koinonia."[16] He asserts that a community "with purpose and hope for the future will be something to look for."[17] This assumes that that the religiously unaffiliated will start to look for affiliation if only the right kind of *koinonia* is created, offered, and made known by Christian communities.

Offering religiously identified communities "with purpose and hope," where reconciliation with God and each other is proclaimed and experienced, may not be enough, no matter how inviting and welcoming those communities may be. It may be that no amount of improving the quality of *koinonia*, no matter how well intentioned, will make the non-affiliated seek affiliation. This project suggests a different approach. Rather than trying to reverse the sociological trend away from community by focusing on better community, this project proposes taking the experience of God's forgiveness out to those who might otherwise never darken the hatch of a ship's chapel. The last section of this chapter will explore a framework within which Sailors themselves can create and become the right kind of *koinonia* through an experience of confession and forgiveness.

A Sacramental, Missional, and Ecumenical Theology

In the Episcopal Church catechism, sacraments are defined as "outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace."[18] Grace is defined as "God's favor towards us, unearned and undeserved; by grace God forgives our sins, enlightens our minds, stirs our hearts,

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[16] Karkkainen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 231.

[17] Ibid.

[18] The Anglican Church, *The Book of Common Prayer*, 857.

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and strengthens our wills."[19] In James 5:16, members of the Church are encouraged to confess their sins to one another and to pray for one another, that they may be healed. Healing could be considered an outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace of God's forgiveness. However, one does not have a sacramental ecclesiology to believe in the importance of confession and forgiveness. Chaplains from a wide range of traditions have personally experienced the power of confession and God's forgiveness and have seen that power at work in others.

Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church has largely moved away from considering confession to be on the same sacramental plane as Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist. Several penitential orders of worship have been passed down to the current (1979) *The Book of Common Prayer*. "The Reconciliation of a Penitent . . . is a separate pastoral rite in which those who repent of their sins may confess them to God in the presence of a priest, and receive the assurance of pardon and the grace of absolution."[20] The instructions in *The Book of Common Prayer* state that "the Reconciliation of a Penitent is available to all who desire it. It is not restricted to times of sickness. Confessions may be heard anytime and anywhere."[21] Absolution may be pronounced only by a bishop or priest. *The Book of Common Prayer* states, "Another Christian may be asked to hear a confession, but it must be made clear to the penitent that absolution will not be pronounced; instead, a declaration of forgiveness is provided."[22]

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[19] Ibid., 858.

[20] Ibid., 861.

[21] Ibid., 446.

[22] Ibid.

As previously discussed, this is one area in which the missional and ecumenical mandates developed above demand that focus be placed on what unites rather than divides churches. What is common among Episcopalians, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, and many other denominations is that confession can be heard by any Christian, and that scriptural declaration of forgiveness and words of assurance can be spoken by any Christian. For the religiously unaffiliated Sailors who may take part in the Spoken and Forgiven groups, there is no ecumenical value in insisting that only bishops or priests may pronounce absolution. Words of forgiveness from Jesus' lips, spoken by a faithful chaplain in the power of the Holy Spirit to a wounded and hurting Sailor, will certainly suffice in allowing God's balm to bring healing.

Jesus' earthly mission was to restore all people to unity with God and each other. Following his crucifixion, death, and resurrection, he appeared to Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter, John, and then to the rest of the disciples. In John 20:21-22, Jesus says to the disciples, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." The mission of the Church, the body of Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit following Jesus' resurrection and ascension, "is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ."[23] At its most basic missional level, the Church continues on earth the work that Jesus began on earth.

A community of called-out believers in Christ is at the heart of what Church is and is the center from which the mission of reconciliation is carried out. There can be no

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[23] The Episcopal Church, *The Book of Common Prayer*, 855.

reconciliation of the individual apart from the community, and there can be no true community without reconciliation with God and with each other. With the help of the Holy Spirit and the promise of Jesus Christ that he will never leave his followers comfortless, the Church is called to shine forth God's forgiveness and love.

This project proposes exploring the missional and ecumenical potential of confession by taking it outside a worship service and placing it in the context of small groups voluntarily made up of participants in an anti-recidivism program for troubled first-term Sailors. This is not a call to return to the confessional. Rather, instead of trying to make worship services ever more attractive to the unaffiliated, and then counting on the preached Word and duly administered Sacraments to bring individuals to a state of contrition, the anti-recidivism program itself would help identify Sailors who are truly contrite and may desire to take an additional step of having their consciences assuaged. This project seeks to dynamically transform an inward-looking sacramental practice of confession and forgiveness into an outward-looking means of mission to the increasingly large percentage of religiously unaffiliated young men and women serving in the Navy.

It may seem counterintuitive to use the sacramental rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent as the framework in which to create and become communities of restoration with God. Sailors can be highly resistant to anything that smacks of religion and religiosity. "Going to see the chaplain" can be seen as weakness, and issues of moral courage and ethical decision making are often considered solely leadership issues. The Chaplain Corps speaks forcefully that seeking help and moral guidance from a chaplain shows

responsibility and maturity, but sometimes the message is lost in the challenges and stresses of the shipboard environment.

One of the ways around this resistance is to take a missional approach and meet the Sailors where they are, rather than ask them to come where the chaplains are. Confession and forgiveness need not take place only in public worship at church or privately in the confessional. Confession may take place from the operating table, deathbed, or on the battlefield, or numerous other situations. Done intentionally in a small group setting, the use of a specially tailored form of the rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent could provide the kind of experiential encounter with God that moves even religiously unaffiliated Sailors closer to God and to each other.

CHAPTER 5

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

The theology from which this proposed ministry initiative has emerged begins with a loving God who is perpetually seeking to overcome estrangement and embrace his creation. From two of the earliest words recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures, "God said," to the final words of the risen Lord Jesus Christ near the end of Revelation, "Surely I am coming soon," the conversation of reconciliation is initiated and continued by God. The Hebrew word *dabar* contains both word and action; what God says calls it into being. God calls into being creation, which he calls good. Christ embodies God's love and forgiveness, and from the earliest days of his earthly ministry, Jesus called to repentance all those who would follow him as Lord.

In this chapter, a pastoral theology of confession and forgiveness will be presented, using Jesus' parable of the lost son (Luke 15:11-32) as the framework for the discussion. Three biblical examples of how confession leads to individual and communal experiences of God's love and forgiveness will be explored. These examples were selected to bring out issues common to the lives of Sailors. They are also stories which translate well into a small-group discussion of God's forgiveness and mercy.

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Prayers and liturgies from the Anglican/Episcopal tradition, which support and guide intentional auricular confession, will then be examined. A theological rationale for using small groups outside of a worship service as the setting in which these prayers and liturgies might be used will be presented. Finally, a critique of the Anglican/Episcopal tradition will be made from the perspective of two other religious traditions, and some concluding thoughts will be offered.

The Parable of the Lost Son: Invitation and Hope

Saint Luke, the writer of the third Gospel and the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, is known in tradition as a physician. When physicians seek healing, they seek to restore individuals to the fullest life possible. Luke focuses on faith in a loving God, Jesus' power to forgive sins, and miraculous healing stories and the power of Jesus' forgiveness of sin. When faithful friends went to extraordinary lengths to bring a paralytic into Jesus' presence, Jesus told the paralytic, "Man, your sins are forgiven" (Luke 5:20). The scribes and the Pharisees who observed Jesus saying this considered it blasphemy, because only God can forgive sins. Jesus perceived their objections and asked, "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, "Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the man who was paralyzed—"I say to you rise, take up your bed and go home" (5:23-24). The paralytic immediately rose, took the bed on which he had been confined for countless years, and went home, glorifying God (5:25). The scribes, Pharisees, disciples, and onlookers, as well as readers to this day, are forced to confront the question whether or not Jesus does indeed have the power to forgive an individual's sins.

Luke is also concerned about the connections between Jesus' forgiveness of sins, physical healing, and restoration to community of those being healed. Jesus encountered ten lepers as he traveled between Samaria and Galilee (Luke 17:11-19). As Jesus entered the village, the lepers stood at a distance and cried out to Jesus, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us" (17:13b). Jesus told them to "go and show [themselves] to the priest" (17:14). All ten lepers were healed while on the way to the priest, indicating that Jesus had indeed had mercy on them. The lepers had been made acceptable to God. This physical healing not only restored the ten lepers to full community in their village, but to full participation in the divine community as well. There is an element of each individual being made clean physically, but the aspect of welcome back into community is equally important.

During his earthly ministry, Jesus was confronted by religious leaders for his apparent lack of appropriate decorum and boundary-setting. He who had no readily identifiable religious credentials called disciples who likewise had no religious credentials. Jesus walked among lepers, who were considered ritually unclean. He ate with tax collectors and allowed a prostitute to wet his feet with her tears and wipe his feet with her hair. This was too much for the Pharisees and scribes. If Jesus was indeed of God, then he should not have mingled with sinners.

All four Gospels portray this tension between the expectations surrounding the coming of the Messiah and how Jesus carried out his mission. In particular, the synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—all tell stories about Jesus' interactions with the institutional religious leaders and record how Jesus responded. Luke, however, is the only Gospel in which Jesus tells three parables in response to the mutterings and

grumblings of the Pharisees and scribes that "this fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:2).

The three parables in Luke's gospel are the parable of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son, commonly known as the parable of the prodigal son. R. Alan Culpepper rightly asserts that Chapter 15 is the center of Luke's Gospel and the "parable of the prodigal son, the waiting father, and the elder brother" is the most important parable Jesus tells.[1] Jesus progressively reveals the increasingly generosity of a forgiving God who rejoices when something that has been lost is found and returned to its rightful place. The central focus in all three is the overflowing joy and celebration of the ones doing the finding and receiving back: "Rejoice with me [the owner of the sheep], for I have found my sheep that was lost" (Luke 15:6); "Rejoice with me [the woman of the house], for I have found the coin that I had lost" (Luke 15:9); and "Let us eat and celebrate, for this son of mine [the loving father] was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" (Luke 15:23). In all three parables, the speaker invites those around him or her to join in the celebration. In the parable of the lost son, the father goes outside the house to personally extend the invitation to the elder son, whom the reader learns is least likely to respond in joy. The sequence of three parables ends with a question Jesus leaves unanswered: will the elder son join the celebration?

In addition to revealing the character of a loving father, Jesus' parables also reveal the kind of character that can keep people from fully accepting the forgiveness and love of the father. The first kind of character that stands in the way is revealed in the lost son.

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[1] R. Alan Culpepper, *The Gospel of Luke: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections*, in *The New Interpreter's Bible, Volume IX* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 300.

When the younger son says to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that will be belong to me" (15:12a), he is asking both for his inheritance and the right to dispose of it as he pleases.[2] The younger son was breaking with his father, brother, and community in making such a request. Jesus continues, "So he [the father] divided his property between them" (15:12b). The word translated as "property" in the NRSV is literally *bios* or "life" (βιοσ in Greek).[3] The father "divided his life between them," and the younger son headed off into the world free from his family and community obligations. Since the son deliberately cut himself off from all familial and community ties, he had no sense of his need for forgiveness and healing until he was forced by circumstances to face the consequences of his personal choices.

The second kind of character creates obstacles to God's forgiveness in another way. The elder brother represents the religious leaders who claim to know God best and are indignant or offended when God is more generous and forgiving to sinners than they would prefer God to be. They tend to place conditions on God's love, lining up theological hurdles to clear and hoops to jump through on the penitent's part before God's embrace is extended to those who have gone astray.

When the lost son "comes to his senses," the healing process can begin. His journey home begins with the realization that his situation, though dire, is not hopeless. He has a place to go to that is better than where he is. He changes direction. Instead of heading further away from his loving father, he turns his face toward home and starts the journey. On the way, he rehearses what he is going to say to his father. He plans to say

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[2] Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992), 371.

[3] Culpepper, *Gospel of Luke*, 301.

out loud, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands" (Luke 15:18).

In Christian theology, "coming to our senses" means that believers first recognize that they, through their own volition, often separate themselves from a loving God and put distance between God and themselves. It is the believers' own doing, not God's. They sin against God and their neighbor; they do things they should not do; they leave undone things they should have done. Like the lost son, they rehearse in their minds what they want to say to God. On the path home, they confess out loud to God, to their pastors, and to others that they have strayed far from the path set out in Scripture and tradition and desire to get back on track, with God's help.

The younger son is not the only one who is potentially lost to the father. The prodigal son is not the only one who needs to come to his senses. The older brother needs to clearly see his own predicament. The older brother is outside the house. The father comes to him and implores him to come inside. He wants him to share in his joy at finding his lost son. If the older brother does not change direction and overcome his indignation toward his father, he will be as lost to his father as the prodigal son once was.

Sailors who get into trouble are very interested in whether or not they are treated as strictly, or as leniently, as others are for the same violations of the UCMJ. The generosity of the Commanding Officer is not as important as equal treatment under the UCMJ. Some conversations during the About Face program bring out the intensity of hurt and pain when someone believes they have been treated differently from others facing the same charges.

The parable of the prodigal son is a story about the love of God as told by the One whom Christians claim reveals the character of God more fully and completely than any other person in history. In the next section, three biblical accounts of that character in action will be explored. The power of God's forgiveness for individuals and communities shines through these accounts.

Three Biblical Stories of Auricular Confession

Sailors who have been in the service for a few years often develop a knack for telling sea stories, usually with more than a little exaggeration and embellishment. Stories help pass the time, but they also help Sailors express their thoughts and fears among peers. Storytelling builds a greater sense of belonging and it also strengthens individuals for the daily stresses of service.

The Bible is filled with stories about individuals and communities wrestling with their relationships with God and with each other. Many of these stories give the tellers an opportunity to bring into the present the reality of God's saving deeds in the past. This is *anamnesis*, active remembrance, which is the opposite of amnesia. In 1200 B.C.E., the story of the Israelites was recorded: "The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders" (Deuteronomy 26:8). The one telling the Exodus story brings the power of the story to future generations. The stories told are also powerful tools for bringing theological themes to the fore that otherwise might stay hidden.

While there are many biblical stories of forgiveness in action that would work as examples, this section presents three that tie in well with concerns of Sailors. First, the

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story of King David's sin with Bathsheba and its aftermath could well represent the worst

nightmare of any Sailor: betrayal by leadership. Second, the story of Jesus at dinner with

Simon the Pharisee brings out elements of self-righteousness and class distinctions that

could ring true with many first-term Sailors. They are in a new environment and are

trying to figure out their place in the hierarchy. Some Sailors leave a rough home

situation in order to improve themselves, only to find that some pre-judge them for what

they have left behind. Third, the story of Peter and the disciples' encounter at the shore

with the risen Jesus Christ reveals the complexity of broken loyalties, abandonment, and

letting down one's friends. Some of the deepest fears of first-term Sailors are tied in with

worry about not measuring up in times of trouble, of not being there for their buddies

when they are needed most.

King David, Nathan, and God (2 Samuel 11:1-12:14)

King David's sexual sin with Bathsheba was bad enough. Even worse was his

murder of Bathsheba's husband, a loyal soldier whom David ordered to be placed at the

front of battle to ensure his death. Worse still was his attempt to hide his sin and appear

righteous. It takes Nathan's clever storytelling (2 Samuel 12:1-6) to catch David with his

own self-judgment. David knew that what he did was deserving of punishment. He did

not want to say anything out loud about it until he was confronted by it. Nathan asks a

question on behalf of God: "Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is

evil in his sight? You have smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his

wife to be your wife, and have slain him with the sword of the Ammonites" (2 Samuel

12:9). Once the "what" has been made known to all, it becomes possible to discuss the "why."

When a Sailor stands before the Commanding Officer, accused of violating a single or multiple articles of the UCMJ, the communication is not one-way. Sailors are given the opportunity to explain why they did what they did. This allows the commander an opportunity for instruction and correction, and also to do the hard work of determining whether a Sailor is redeemable or not. In addition to assigning punishment for violations of the UCMJ, commanding officers not only have to make a judgment call in determining a fair and equitable punishment for the particular violation, but also assess whether or not the Sailor shows true contrition, remorse, and a desire to change.

Sometimes the accused Sailors refuse to say anything, perhaps believing that saying nothing is better than revealing too much about what took place. But as it is for David attempting to cover up his sin, this is misguided and things usually do not go well for the accused. When it comes to knowing what actually happened, most NJP legal investigations get a very large percentage of the story right. It makes no sense for a Sailor to continue to lie and cover up, and yet some still try to make themselves look as good as possible in the face of overwhelming contrary evidence.

Sailors who do not try to fight the charges against them often start off their remarks by saying something similar to these words: "Captain, I know what I did was wrong. I don't really know why I did what I did. It was a stupid mistake, and I'll take my punishment." Most commanding officers will try to help Sailors go deeper than that. Deliberately disobeying legal orders, after swearing or affirming to obey them, is not a mistake. Disobeying legal orders is a moral choice, a willful decision that shows a lack

of commitment to the Navy. To paraphrase Nathan, commanding officers want to know why the Sailors standing before them "have despised their word, to do what was wrong in their sight."

Some Sailors make these connections, and are willing to do the work necessary to ensure nothing they do jeopardizes their opportunity to have a successful first tour or career in the Navy. Often it goes deeper than that, and they not only never again face NJP, but become superior Sailors and, after leaving the Navy, good citizens. Other Sailors do not even recognize that what they did was wrong. Some come from backgrounds and cultures where "wrong" is anything you get punished for if you get caught. The mistake is getting caught. These are the Sailors who make no connection between NJP and a change in moral behavior. No amount of effort can bring them to a level of contrition that opens them to positive change. They are quite likely to recidivate, be administratively separated from the Navy with an "other than honorable" discharge, and make poor citizens as civilians.

Most Sailors fall somewhere between complete, heartfelt contrition and outright denial and rejection of the Navy's core values. The About Face program is targeted to those who show at least a glimmer of promise that they will benefit from some serious self-reflection and honest re-evaluation. It is a scary thing for many to enter into such hard work, because it requires honor, courage, and commitment, the lack of which may have caused them to get into trouble in the first place. Determining whether or not a Sailor is likely to respond to the invitation to reflection is a difficult judgment call for the Commanding Officer to make. This is why the recommendation for About Face is done in consultation with the chaplain. Chaplains can err on the side of being too optimistic,

and convince the commanding officers to cast their net wider than they might otherwise do.

The preceding comments outline a general pattern to which most chaplains can relate. Throughout the NJP process there are several opportunities for Sailors to confess honestly and openly what they did and why they did it. While such honesty will not necessarily bring complete forgiveness from the Commanding Officer, it is certainly taken into account when options for punishment are considered. Experience suggests that one of the most egregious "sins" a military member can commit, deliberately ignoring or disobeying legal orders, is also one of the "sins" most difficult to confess. The Greek word for sin, ἁμαρτία (*hamartia*), means literally to "miss the mark." Military personnel are held to high standards, and most hate to admit they have missed the mark, both professionally and personally. Nevertheless, confession and forgiveness are absolutely essential when it comes to overcoming the guilt and shame of letting down a shipmate, spouse, family member, or friend; rebuilding a positive vision for the future; and finding hope and new life in the aftermath of making poor moral choices.

Just as Sailors try to hide rather than honestly confess to their commanding officers what they have done, King David tried to hide rather than confess to God what he had done. The path to hope for David was to trust in God. The longer David sought to "hide" from God like Adam and Eve in the garden, and refused to say out loud what was on his conscience, the worse it got for David. David expresses just how intense the spiritual pain was for him: "When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long" (Psalm 32:3). There is a price for remaining silent about one's sins: deterioration and death. It is not until David says out loud that he had sinned that

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David experiences God's forgiveness. He writes, "I acknowledged my sin to thee, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD'; then thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin" (Psalm 32:5).

Sailors have to overcome the embarrassment, shame, and even humiliation that can come from making poor moral decisions. It takes great courage to trust God and those listening, enough to take the risk to confess one's faults, but failure to do so can result in a downward spiral into ever worsening decision-making. This downward spiral can lead not only to dire personal consequences in this life, such as various addictions, loss of a Navy career, and alienation from friends and family, but to dire eternal consequences as well. A small confessional group may be the only setting in which some will be willing to do this, with the assurance that the God of the Bible does not break or crush a bruised reed (Isaiah 43:3: Matthew 12:20).

Simon the Pharisee, Jesus, and a Sinner (Luke 7:36-50)

In this scriptural account, a Pharisee named Simon invites Jesus to dine with him. Meals are very important occasions in Middle Eastern cultures to this day. The stature of guests brings honor to hosts. When "a woman in the city, who was a sinner" (Luke 7:37) begins to wet Jesus' feet with her tears, wipe his feet with her hair, and anoint his feet with expensive oil, the Pharisee said to himself, wondering about Jesus' status, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him" (Luke 7:39). Knowing the Pharisee's heart, Jesus responded with a short parable of a creditor who forgives two debtors, one who owed a large amount and the other who owed little. Jesus asks Simon which of the two debtors would experience the

creditor's forgiveness more fully, which would be more grateful, thankful, and loving toward the creditor. Simon answers, "The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more" (Luke 7:43). Jesus tells Simon that he has "judged rightly," and then points out the difference between the sinful woman's warm, overflowing reception of Jesus, expressed through tears and touch, and Simon's rather cold, reserved reception of Jesus, expressed through the absence of any intimate gestures.

When a Sailor stands before a Commanding Officer, the Sailor's status is usually one of shame and embarrassment. Some handle this by becoming defiant and defensive, attempting to rationalize what they did. But there are occasions where real tears, contrition, and desire to change are expressed. If a Sailor can go deeper in a trusting and trusted setting, then true repentance can take place. It is too much to ask for this turnaround to take place in its entirety during the few minutes of the official NJP proceedings with the Commanding Officer. However, all the resentment and bitterness that can build up inside a first-term Sailor may find relief following NJP in the ministry initiative this project is undertaking. The theological goal is to have Sailors get glimpses of the Good News by being honest and open about the true state of their innermost being without fear of reprisal. One purpose of putting Sailors on restriction is to give them an opportunity to think deeply about where they are and what it will take to take them where they want to go. The first two About Face classes could be effective in bringing Sailors beyond simple remorse over getting caught to genuine sorrow over what they have done. Contrition has an element of sorrow in it, but it is the sorrow of Good Friday; it leads to the joy of Easter Day.

Simon Peter the Apostle, Jesus, and Feeding Sheep (John 21:1-l9)

John's Gospel provides a rich and detailed account of how the same voice that had denied Jesus three times can also say to Jesus three times, "You know that I love you." At the time Jesus needed Simon Peter the most, Simon Peter not only disappeared, but disavowed knowing Jesus. Abandonment is one thing, but outright denial is even worse.

Sailors do not want to let down those they love. Peer friendships can take on the strength and meaning of familial bonds. In fact, the demands of life at sea can create ties of camaraderie and friendship that are rarely found outside the military community. However, Sailors are sometimes so desperate to avoid guilt that they will even betray the strong bond to their shipmates who are in the place of their family. This betrayal only adds to the guilt they feel inside and makes them even more conflicted in their inner being. Depending on the Sailor's attitude and the skill of the Commanding Officer and his chaplain advisor, NJP proceedings can clarify responsibility and relationships or muddle them. NJP, and by extension, the About Face program, are the command's attempts to enhance a Sailor's understanding of personal and communal responsibility, which in turn results in better relationships and teamwork for the Navy's mission and for more relational satisfaction in the Sailor's life as a whole.

Peter is restored to full community with Jesus not by attempting to cover up his denials, but by letting Jesus gently bring him back into the fold. Jesus addresses him as "Simon, son of John" three times; three times Peter says that he loves Jesus. Over a breakfast of bread and fish, Peter is welcomed back into community and becomes re-energized for mission. History shows Peter never again denied Jesus. In fact, just the opposite occurred: Peter's faithful witness to the love of God in Christ Jesus let him to a martyr's death.

Jesus' parable of the lost son, and these three accounts, all involve auricular

confession, forgiveness, and a sort of homecoming, and all involve more than simply God

and the penitent. Community gathering and forms of worship are important. In the next

two sections, two theological themes from the Episcopal tradition that address both

private and public confession will be discussed, and some theological support for a small

group ministry dedicated to confession and forgiveness will be provided.

Themes of Confession and Forgiveness in the Episcopal Tradition

From the reforms under King Josiah when the temple scrolls were re-discovered,

to the call to repentance by John the Baptist, to the reformation of the Church in the

Middle Ages, to Vatican II, and to the present day re-examination of the Church's

mission in a postmodern context, individual and communal recognition and confession of

sin have been important motivators for reform. Individuals and communities have,

through the centuries, found that their lives are often not what they sense they should be.

They seek ways to experience anew God's love and forgiveness.

On an individual level, the early Church developed the practice of auricular

confession as the chief means through which individuals could express contrition, hear

words of grace and forgiveness, and thereby more fully love God and neighbor. In his

book, *Sacramental Life: Spiritual Formation through the Book of Common Prayer*,

David A. deSilva writes, "[Self-examination and confession] is an exercise in

appreciating the full import of our sinful choices, attitudes, and lifestyles, so that we can

comprehend the depth of God's mercy and compassion toward us and, experiencing a

fuller measure of gratitude toward him, be catapulted into greater degrees of love toward God and our neighbor."[4]

Getting Sailors to recognize the connection between their moral choices and the predicament in which they find themselves is not easy. Those who come from backgrounds with few or no positive moral standards and little accountability for failing to meet them may not understand the NJP and About Face process at all. Personal observation of the About Face program and nearly twenty-five years of pastoral counseling experience have shown that taking responsibility for one's own actions requires both commitment to change and courage to see it through. Facing up to one's own responsibility for the choices one makes requires significant strength of character, character that is willing to risk condemnation, rejection, and even repeated failure when attempts to change course and try new ways of thinking and acting do not quite work out.

The Episcopal tradition is also open to the idea that confession to God and one another can be beneficial for individuals who may have little knowledge or understanding of the Church's teaching about God as revealed in and through Jesus Christ. The theology behind this project allows room for what is sometimes referred to as "common grace." Sailors of great faith, little faith, or no faith in Christ may still respond to an invitation to "say out loud" whatever is weighing most heavily on their hearts, and to hear God's words of forgiveness pronounced by a person of faith. In the words of Richard Mouw, the recently retired president of Fuller Theological Seminary, "What we must

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[4] David A. deSilva, *Sacramental Life: Spiritual Formation through the Book of Common Prayer* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 104-105.

keep in mind . . . is that 'all the words' God has spoken to us include also words of compassion for human beings who live in rebellion against the divine ordinances."[5]

However, responding to the invitation to confession does not necessarily mean a Sailor will accept God's offer of forgiveness. Sailors who do not accept God's offer of forgiveness may experience a psychological catharsis by airing out his or her sins in a safe and supportive environment. But it is fervently hoped that the work of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God might bring so much more. This is the evangelical thrust of this project. Without undue pressure or coercion, Sailors may be asked a simple question following their confession and the pronouncement of God's forgiveness: "Have you accepted God's forgiveness in Christ Jesus?" If the answer is yes, then God has indeed brought those Sailors, regardless of their previous state of belief or unbelief, into the loving arms of Jesus Christ.

The General Confession

In the Anglican/Episcopal tradition, the main Sunday worship service, Holy Eucharist (literally, "Holy Thanksgiving"), is a joyful banquet that celebrates the victory of Christ over death and the reconciliation of humankind to God. "This is the feast of victory for our God, Alleluia!" is the song of the Great Vigil of Easter. As previously discussed, Jesus' parables in Luke are meant to encourage all who know and love God to celebrate with God when even just one repents and returns to God.

All community celebrations of the Eucharist are meant to help believers experience afresh the joy of "new and unending life" in the risen Christ, and to put them

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[5] Richard J. Mouw, *He Shines in All That's Fair: Culture and Common Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 100.

in mind of their own sinfulness and need to return to a loving, forgiving God. To assist

with the latter, the *Book of Common Prayer* provides a prayer of confession, sometimes

referred to as the "general confession." The Deacon or Celebrant leading the service

invites the gathered community to pray together, using the words, "Let us confess our

sins against God and our neighbor." The physical posture for saying the confession is

usually kneeling. The idea of this physical posture is to convey respect for God and a

sense of one's own sinfulness in the presence of the Holy.

It is important to note that the words "our sins" are used, rather than "my sins." It

is not just the younger son who is invited to the feast. The elder son is as well. No one in

the gathered community is completely free of any wrongdoing against God and neighbor.

After a period of silence to offer particular sins, all who are gathered join in with the

same words: "Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought,

word and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone." This

statement is set in context of the two great commandments: "We have not loved you with

our whole heart," and "We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves."

This is the first part of the prayer of general confession, drawn almost directly

from the prayer of the prodigal son: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before

you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son" (Luke 15:21). In the story of the

prodigal son, the reader knows the content of his sin: wishing his father dead by

demanding his inheritance, running away from home and his father's business, and

squandering the inheritance he took from his father on wild or dissolute living.

Specificity of this sort, in general confession every Sunday, is impractical. There

is not sufficient time to go over all the ways those present have missed the mark as

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individuals and as a community. However, on special occasions, a more specific

confession is available in liturgical form. The Episcopal Church provides a Litany of

Penitence for use on Ash Wednesday at the start of the season of Lent, as well as a Great

Litany. Both of these litanies allow for a longer focus on the ways in which the faithful

have not loved God with their whole hearts, minds, and strength, and have not loved their

neighbors as themselves.

In the Ash Wednesday service, the cries of King David expressed through Psalm

51 are read in unison prior to the Litany of Penitence mentioned previously. David

recognizes that true sorrow is more than simply remorse for "getting caught." It is

sorrow for the deep-seated human tendency to go after one's own selfish desires

regardless of what that does to one's relationship with God and with one's neighbor. "I

have been wicked from my birth, a sinner from my mother's womb," David cries to God.

He opens himself to God's forgiveness: "Had you desired it, I would have offered

sacrifice; but you take no delight in burnt-offerings. The sacrifice of God is a troubled

spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."

The next part of the general confession is a single short sentence that contains the

crucial ingredient of contrition and a desire to change spelled out above: "We are truly

sorry and we humbly repent." The general confession concludes with a petition to God:

"For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may

delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen."

This is the pattern of confession in a regular worshiping community. When the

same people gather each Sunday, there is comfort and healing in the rhythms of worship

that carry into the following week. But the lack of specificity in the confession can allow

members of the congregation to cover up and hide particular sins of which they are most ashamed. This could well mean some never fully experience the forgiveness of God, not because God does not forgive them or they are not asking in the right way, but because they do not fully trust the loving God from whom they are holding back their honest confession. As Henri Nouwen writes in his masterful reflection on the parable of the prodigal son, "I still think about [God's] love as conditional and about home as a place I am not yet fully sure of. . . . Belief in total, absolute forgiveness does not come readily."[6] Creating a home where God's absolute forgiveness can be discussed, expressed, experienced, and lived requires focus and intentionality, and a Sunday morning worship service, no matter how welcoming, cannot do so on its own. Thus, there is a need for another approach to auricular confession that might prove more helpful for Sailors unfamiliar with any worshiping tradition.

<div align="center">The Reconciliation of a Penitent</div>

The Episcopal Church provides an introduction to the rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent which addresses both theological and pastoral concerns. "The ministry of reconciliation, which has been committed by Christ to his Church, is exercised through the care each Christian has for others, through the common prayer of Christians assembled for public worship, and through the priesthood of the Church and its ministers declaring absolution."[7] The introduction goes on to say, "The Reconciliation of a

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[6] Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 52.

[7] The Anglican Church, *The Book of Common Prayer*, 446.

Penitent is available for all who desire it. It is not restricted to times of sickness.

Confessions may be heard anytime and anywhere."[8]

It is this latter nature of being available for all who desire it, anytime and

anywhere, that makes the rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent, or at least a modified

version of the service, particularly useful in the shipboard environment. The prodigal son

returns home to confess his sins, but his father does not wait for him to arrive. Instead,

the loving father runs out to meet the son on the road home.

Something needs to be done to reach those who otherwise would not be reached.

This project models the active joy of the father by bringing the opportunity for confession

out of the confines of a Sunday morning worship service to a space and time more

congenial to Sailors. This could help Sailors experience God's love and forgiveness on

the road rather than having to wait until they have, in the eyes of the Church at least, fully

arrived at the house.

A Group of Trusted Others: A Theology of Confession in a Small Group Setting

The parables told by Jesus and the biblical stories of forgiveness in the preceding

section all involved more than one person. They demonstrated how confessing one's sins

out loud, in the presence of trusted others, can lead to a deeply moving experience of

God's forgiveness and love. Small groups of trusted others can provide an effective

setting in which sins can be confessed and God's forgiveness can be experienced, even

by the most skeptical and distrusting of individuals.

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[8] Ibid.

Sailors invited to be part of these shipboard small groups will have faced

disciplinary action as a result of violations of the UCMJ. Initially, the only requirement

for "membership" in the About Face program is a desire to stop getting into trouble with

the command. Participants are supported in their efforts to re-commit to their enlistment

or commissioning oaths. These small groups offer the opportunity to go even further, to

dig deeper into one's own hurt, anger, shame, and bitterness. The chance to confess to

God and to one another one's greatest fears and failures, in a safe environment, can turn

people's lives around.

The small-group model is already working well with military personnel in parish

settings. John Sippola, a Lutheran pastor who works with re-integrating combat veterans

into faith communities, encourages churches to create small groups for veterans, which

he calls "circles of care": "Veterans, especially those suffering the invisible wounds of

war, often benefit from a small group of trusted people who offer a nucleus of safety

within the larger congregational structure."[9] The Sailors in the About Face post-NJP

mentorship program may not be suffering invisible wounds of war, but they do carry with

them guilt and shame over some of the poor moral choices they have made. They, too,

could benefit from being part of a safe circle of trusted peers and mentors "called out"

from the larger ship community.

Two Critiques by Theological Sources outside the Anglican/Episcopal Tradition

In considering the theological basis for auricular confession in the presence of

ordained clergy, it is important to consider the practices of other denominations and

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[9] John Sippola et al., *Welcome Them Home, Help Them Heal: Pastoral Care and Ministry with Service Members Returning from War* (Duluth, MN: Whole Person Associates, Inc., 2009), 63.

traditions. As noted in Chapter 4, not all Christian ecclesiologies teach that an ordained priest is the only person who can or should speak God's words of mercy and forgiveness. Many traditions draw from biblical passages that emphasize the value of Christians confessing to one another their sins (James 5:16) and that pronouncement of forgiveness is a function of the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9). From this perspective, any Christian may speak words of assurance that God has already forgiven those who confess their sins (1 John 1:9).

In this section, a Free Church model of confession will be briefly explored, highlighting the importance of preaching conviction and the value that ecclesiology places on silent confession between the contrite sinner and God. The impact of this ecclesiology in the shipboard environment will be addressed. Next, a Methodist pastor's alternative to the religious language of confession will be briefly discussed.

Preaching Conviction versus Auricular Confession

As discussed in Chapter 4, many Free Church and Evangelical traditions argue against auricular confession as practiced by Roman Catholic and some sacramental Protestant churches, especially against their emphasis on the role of the ordained pastor as an intermediary for God's grace. In contrast, common Free Church practice is to emphasize the preaching role of the pastor. Pastors use the preached Word, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to convict hearers of their sinfulness. Many services provide an opportunity for those so convicted to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, and for Christians who have fallen into sin to repent, perhaps in their seats or by

coming forward to silently pray at the front of the church. It is this process of internal

conviction that opens up the individual to experiencing God's forgiveness in Christ Jesus.

This approach to bringing people to a powerful experience of God's forgiveness

can be very effective. Preaching conviction of sin is an indispensable part of Christian

tradition, and it has an important place in the setting of an aircraft carrier at sea. The

chaplain-led Protestant services on board usually provide a range of experiences in order

to reach Sailors from a variety of Christian traditions. Some Sailors respond very

positively to a Free Church, Evangelical approach, while others seek out and find a home

in more liturgical traditions.

This highlights the value of creating an opportunity for inviting first-term Sailors,

many of whom have no or little religious background, into a small-group program where

they can confess out loud their personal and professional brokenness. This approach

figuratively runs to meet Sailors where they are, and starts with the kind of openness and

generosity that Jesus showed to those who felt least accepted by God. The vision is to

create an experience using traditional forms of confession and forgiveness in a non-

traditional setting.

Discovery versus Confession

John Patton, a pastoral counselor from the Methodist tradition, places the priority

not on confession of sins, but on a process of discovery:

> Human forgiveness is not doing something but discovering something—that I am
> more like those who have hurt me than different from them. I am able to forgive
> when I discover that I am in no position to forgive. Although the experience of
> God's forgiveness may involve confession of, and the sense of being forgiven for,

specific sins, at its heart it is the recognition of my reception into the community of sinners—those affirmed by God as his children.[10]

It makes sense that Sailors who are harboring anger and resentment toward those who have hurt them may benefit from a process of discovery of how much they are like one another. Starting with confession in a small, trusted group is a good way to get the process going. Nevertheless, for a Sailor to genuinely experience God's forgiveness, it is imperative that the process involve, as Patton asserts above, "confession of, and the sense of being forgiven before, specific sins." No one can feel truly received into the community of sinners—as Patton puts it, "those affirmed by God as his children"— without open and honest confession. This project provides that opportunity.

Concluding Theological Reflections

This project's overall approach has been heavily influenced by personal experience. In sixteen years as an active duty Navy chaplain, I have encountered many first-term Sailors who, despite having little or no religious affiliation, have found hope in the language of confession and forgiveness. Facing the challenges of military service, in particular obeying orders and following rules, can bring individuals to seek a deeper understanding of themselves and of the world in which they live. Military chaplains are privileged to be invited into that seeking process, and this is where I have most often have the power of bringing God into the conversation.

Critics could insist that the language of confession, forgiveness, repentance, and amendment of life is pre-modern and modern in concept and experience, and can no

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[10] John Patton, *Is Human Forgiveness Possible? A Pastoral Care Perspective* (Lima, OH: Academic Renewal Press, 2003), 16.

longer foster positive change in either individuals or communities in a postmodern world.

These concerns were addressed in Chapter 2. Critics could also see this model of

ministry as a form of proselytizing, or perhaps a self-serving attempt to make relevant an

out-dated, authoritative system. During the implementation of this program, attempts

were made to counter this critique by making the program entirely voluntary for the

Sailors, and insisting that the value of a structured, intentional focus on confession and

forgiveness is based on theologically sound and proven principles that bridge time and

generations.

The About Face program as it stands is very effective at reducing the likelihood a

Sailor will again face NJP. However, it would be a missed opportunity not to engage

those Sailors who so desire to take things deeper spiritually, to grow closer to God and

one another through an optional additional element of auricular confession and

forgiveness. A fundamental assertion of this project is that Sailors who avail themselves

of such an opportunity would not only become better Sailors but better people. This

leads to the third major section of this project, the strategy for this ministry initiative.

PART THREE

STRATEGY

CHAPTER 6

GOALS AND PLAN

The language of confession and forgiveness has transformative power for Sailors who have made poor moral and ethical decisions in the stressful world of shipboard life. The two-tiered goal of the Spoken and Forgiven ministry initiative is to reinforce the anti-recidivism thrust of the About Face post-NJP mentoring program and to provide an opportunity for Sailors to experience God's forgiveness. This combination will help Sailors make significant positive changes that will benefit them both professionally and personally.

This chapter will summarize the key theological conclusions from Chapter 5 and explain some of the implications for the ministry challenge presented above. The preferred future for this ministry initiative will be described, informed by these theological conclusions. The specific components of the new ministry strategy will then be described in detail, to include how participants will be identified and how leaders of the program will be selected and trained. The chapter will conclude with thoughts about possible expansion of the program should it prove effective with the initial target population.

Theological Conclusions

There are three key theological conclusions from Chapter 5. First, forgiveness is at the very heart of the Christian Gospel. Scripture and tradition reveal the forgiving character of God. God is like a loving father who rushes out to embrace and welcome his children, even when his children willfully have made bad moral decisions and gone down paths that take them a long way from home. Second, experiencing God's forgiveness is most likely to occur in community with others rather than on one's own. Third, the journey to experiencing God's forgiveness begins by "coming to one's senses" and recognizing where true home lies. The steps on the journey home include taking full responsibility for one's actions and confessing out loud in the presence of trusted others one's sins of commission and omission. A small group setting made up of trusted others provides a biblically supported model in which this kind of confessional conversation can take place.

Implications

There are several implications of these theological conclusions for the ministry challenge this project addresses. First, in the highly demanding, stressful, unforgiving world of military service, it is vitally important to proclaim God's forgiveness even when institutional forgiveness seems unlikely. Like David, Mary Magdalene, and Peter, Sailors need to know, on both an intellectual and experiential level, that there is hope for productive, happy lives even after moral and ethical failures. While Sailors may face punishment for the poor choices they make, they need not be defined by their failures and give up on their attempts to be successful Sailors and citizens.

Second, the way in which God's forgiveness is proclaimed is important, especially in a population that is increasingly unfamiliar with talk about God. As mentioned in Chapter 2, an increasing percentage of men and women coming into the military has no religious affiliation. The religious vocabulary of contrition, confession, absolution, divine forgiveness, and repentance are largely a foreign language to many Sailors. Any ministry strategy that seeks to bring God into the conversation of day-to-day life at sea requires a significant amount of translation on the part of the chaplain. Chaplains need to meet Sailors where they are—literally by spending time in their work spaces, and figuratively by understanding their life circumstances and the environments from which they come. Chaplains must listen deeply to the stories and concerns of their Sailors. Only after genuine personal connections have been made will chaplains find it profitable to bring the language of God and forgiveness into their conversations.

A third implication is that how Sailors are likely to come to their senses is often a mystery. The prodigal son comes to himself when he hits rock bottom after a long period of time wasting his inheritance in a far away country. King David had had a long period of time to consider his sins both before and after being confronted by Nathan. The woman washing Jesus' feet had lived for years with accusing glances and moral condemnation. Peter agonized over his denial of Jesus both during the three long days between the crucifixion and resurrection as well as the time between the resurrection and Jesus' appearance on the shore of Galilee.

The NJP process is relatively short, and Sailors may or may not come to their senses before, during, or immediately after the ten or fifteen minutes they stand in front of the Commanding Officer. NJP may lead Sailors into greater introspection, self-

awareness, and a desire to change, or may cause them to put up even stronger defenses against taking responsibility for the choices they have made. While the process of NJP ends when the Commanding Officer dismisses the Sailor standing in front of him or her, the learning process may or may not. More time may be needed. The punishment of restriction for thirty to sixty days is intended to provide that time. Likewise, a ministry initiative meant to effect positive change in Sailors likely will need to continue over weeks or months.

A fourth implication is that assessing a Sailor's level of contrition will require wisdom and discernment. The sincerity of the prodigal son's contrition is conveyed by his action: he returns home. David repents by rending his garments, fasting, and crying out in agony to God. The tearful woman welcomes Jesus with all her heart, mind, and spirit as she wipes Jesus' feet with her hair. Peter dives into the sea and swims toward Jesus, joyful to see that his Lord is alive.

Those Sailors who show contrition are most likely to be open to experiencing God's forgiveness. If Sailors believe they have done nothing wrong, or the poor choices they have made are inconsequential in their lives, then they are unlikely to attempt the journey toward forgiveness or take it very seriously if they do. A ministry strategy that seeks to communicate God's forgiveness experientially needs a way to assess levels of contrition. This need will be addressed under strategy content later in this chapter.

The final theological implication is that this project is necessarily Christo-centric in perspective. The forgiving character of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, who laid down his life on the cross that we might truly live, is an indispensable underlying

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theological theme of this project. Jesus' death on the cross makes forgiveness and reconciliation with God and one another possible.

One of the requirements of Navy chaplaincy is that chaplains care for all Sailors, no matter their religious affiliation. God's generous, overflowing love and common grace and the call to Navy chaplaincy requires one to cast the net as wide and as far as one can to include as many faith traditions as possible. The Spoken and Forgiven model is strong and effective, but limited in scope to Sailors who are open to Christian assertions. Chaplains from other faith groups may be able to adapt this model by employing concepts from their own religious traditions, in efforts to help Sailors from their same traditions align their lives for productive naval service and harmony with the divine.

A Preferred Future

Many Sailors come into the Navy with baggage and wounds that can predispose them to making poor moral choices and decisions. While physical wounds show up on x-rays, wounds to a Sailor's soul can remain hidden until he or she acts out in ways that bring about trouble with the Navy legal system. Childhood sexual and physical trauma, parental divorce, family drug and alcohol abuse, and suicidal ideations and attempts are a few examples of the kinds of soul wounds Sailors may bring with them into the Navy. The "sailorization" process begun in basic training addresses many of these concerns, but it needs to continue at a Sailor's first command to give each Sailor the best chance for success. Unfortunately, sometimes even the best commands miss opportunities to help Sailors make a smooth transition to military life, and first-term Sailors find themselves in

trouble with the command. Some offenses are significant enough to require a courts-martial, but most are relatively minor and can be handled by the command at NJP. Unfortunately, even relatively minor scrapes with authority can start a "cycle of pain" in which Sailors find themselves getting into even further, and often more serious, trouble.

A preferred future would be that the majority of first-term Sailors who go to NJP will amend their lives and become better Sailors and citizens, as well as experience God's forgiveness. Chaplains and psychologists do one-on-one counseling, and some ships' psychologists set up therapy groups to deal with the emotional, psychological, and spiritual wounds many young men and women carry with them into the Navy. However, small groups for confession and forgiveness are hard to find. Additionally, the hierarchal structure of the Navy can be stifling at times, especially for those caught up in the disciplinary process. It is beneficial for such individuals to have programs in place where Sailors safely can express their deepest personal concerns without fear of reprisal.

John Sippola, a parish pastor, former hospital chaplain, and retired chaplain in the Minnesota National Guard, argues that churches have a strategic role in promoting relational and spiritual well-being of returning veterans and their families. In particular, he reports that 67 percent of returning veterans find that attending the weekly worship service is the most helpful thing those affected by trauma can do to re-integrate into community life.[1] Therefore, he has implemented a small-group ministry that builds on this foundation, where confession and forgiveness play an important role in the re-integration process. As noted above, many Sailors carry deep trauma with them when they come into the Navy. While fewer Sailors serving aboard ship have developed a

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[1] Sippola et al., *Welcome Them Home, Help Them Heal*, 112.

habit of attending Sunday worship services, they might be open to attending small group meetings such as proposed in this project and receiving care there.

Strategy Goals

There are four strategy goals of this project which are informed by the previous theological analysis. The first strategy goal is to introduce Sailors to religious and secular concepts of confession and forgiveness. This introduction will use biblical illustrations of divine forgiveness for individuals and communities, as well as modern stories of the power of human forgiveness in places such as South Africa, Northern Ireland, and within the Amish community of Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania.[2]

The second strategy goal is to have Sailors experience for themselves the loving welcome of a forgiving God. The prodigal son, the woman at Jesus' feet, and the Apostle Peter all experienced God's forgiveness first-hand. These are moments of divine encounter when love overcomes estrangement and even the deepest of wounds are healed. The initiating element in all these encounters is an outward expression of contrition and a movement toward God. Sailors will be given the opportunity to make such an outward expression through the use of a traditional model of auricular confession used in a contemporary setting.

The third strategy goal is to have Sailors carry the experience of God's love and forgiveness into their daily lives. Sailors will need ongoing encouragement and support as they build a vision for a better future for themselves and re-commit to the Navy's core

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[2] Two excellent resources which contain powerful stories of forgiveness are Michael Henderson, *Forgiveness: Breaking the Chain of Hate* (Wilsonville, OR: BookPartners, Inc., 1999), and Donald Kraybill et al., *Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007).

values of honor, courage, and commitment. The intent is that Sailors who have experienced God's forgiveness through participation in this program will prove by their actions to be more resilient and successful Sailors and, even more importantly, more loving and forgiving human beings who are connected to God.

The fourth strategy goal is to further strengthen trust between chaplains and their commanding officers. This goal is more implicit and ancillary to the previous three, and should emerge as this project's strategy is implemented. One of the four core competencies of chaplains is to serve as religious, moral, and ethical advisors to the command. Chaplains who enhance the morale, good order, and discipline of a command become highly valued members of the Commanding Officer's leadership team. To implement this project's strategy, a chaplain will need to interact with his or her Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and Command Master Chief on a regular basis to keep them apprised of the smooth operation of the program and the progress of various Sailors' moral development.

Strategy Content

The specific strategy content of this project involves six steps. The first step is to identify those Sailors facing NJP who would most likely benefit from the About Face post-NJP mentoring program.[3] The second step is to invite Sailors within the About Face program to a voluntary Spoken and Forgiven small group, in which guided, intentional confession and pronouncement of forgiveness is practiced. The third step is to identify and prepare a safe place for this small group to meet. The fourth step is to lay the ground

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[3] See Appendix A for the USS GEORGE H. W. BUSH's About Face Post-NJP Mentoring Program ship instruction and Appendix B for the first two About Face class outlines.

rules for what takes place within the small group, in particular, the importance of respecting confidentiality. The fifth step is for the chaplain to lead the small group through a litany of confession modified for the shipboard environment, where Sailors can focus on specific areas of temptation and poor choice-making. The chaplain or a chaplain-appointed Sailor will conclude this litany with the pronouncement of God's forgiveness. Chaplains may then offer anointing with oil for healing if their traditions allow. The sixth and final step will be to evaluate the process and determine what follow-up is required.

Step 1: Identify Sailors

The Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, Command Master Chief (senior enlisted leader aboard the ship), and Command Chaplain together identify those Sailors facing NJP who are likely to benefit from the About Face program. This is already taking place aboard the USS GEORGE H. W. BUSH. The assessment includes a determination of a Sailor's willingness to be open and honest about his or her choices, and to take responsibility for those choices. This discernment process requires wisdom and experience in judging another person's sincerity. On a subjective level, the command leadership team needs to assess whether or not a Sailor is truly committed to amending his or her life. This assessment is based on how the Sailor has performed since getting into trouble, uniform appearance and military bearing at NJP, and the testimony of his or her chain of command as to whether or not he or she is a reliable worker. What a Sailor says at NJP is also taken into account.

Judging a Sailor's sincerity and degree of contrition is difficult but not impossible. Captain Rick Rubel of the U.S. Naval Academy has developed a tool for testing contrition that he uses in the Academy's Honor Remediation Program. This program is designed to match one-on-one mentors for midshipmen[4] to help them take responsibility for and successfully overcome violations of the Academy's honor code. After over a decade of experience working with these students, Captain Rubel correlates the potential for success with a range of typical responses:

1. "Sir, I'm really sorry I did this, and really want to know why I did this, so I will never even think about doing it again." (sincere—wants self improvement)
2. "I know what I did was wrong . . ." (accepts responsibility)
3. "I know what I did was wrong . . . but . . ." (gray area)
4. "I just got caught, everyone else was doing it too." (denial; follower)
5. "I'm sure this will help me . . ." (I'll tell you whatever you want to hear) (smooth talker)
6. "If I hadn't gotten caught, I probably would not have thought about it." (lacks moral conscience)
7. "I grew up where 'right' is what you get away with, and wrong is what you get caught doing." (cultural change)
8. "I didn't do anything wrong. The CO/Navy is wrong." (complete denial—accepts no responsibility)[5]

Captain Rubel asserts that midshipmen who use language similar to the first three responses respond to well to remediation. Midshipmen who use language similar to responses seven and eight show lack of remorse, and remediation is not attempted. Those who use the middle responses, four through six, could go either way.[6]

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[4] The term "midshipmen" applies to both male and female students at the U. S. Naval Academy.

[5] Captain Rick Rubel, "USNA Honor Remediation Training," unpublished slide presentation used to train mentors in the Honor Remediation program at the United States Naval Academy, revised August 2013.

[6] Ibid., slide 20.

Assessing a Sailor's level of contrition using Captain Rubel's list of typical responses is one useful tool for identifying Sailors who are most likely to benefit from the About Face program. Sailors who make statements similar to those in groups one through six above have either come to their senses or are heading in that direction. Sailors in groups seven and eight are likely to be too resistant to and disruptive of the overall goals of About Face and this project to warrant being assigned to the program.

Step 2: Invite Sailors to Participate in the "Spoken and Forgiven" Program

The first two classes of the About Face course focus on choices and taking responsibility for those choices. During both classes, Sailors are encouraged to do some honest self-examination and reflection, through a structured process of watching brief film clips, participating in group discussion, and filling in handouts related to the topic of each class. The discussions are secular; no explicit language about confession, forgiveness, and repentance is used. During the second class, "Boundaries," Sailors often respond positively to a movie character who tells his community that he had done something in his past of which he was ashamed, was tempted to do something similar again, but decided instead to go in a more positive direction. In so doing, he earns the respect of those around him.

It will be in the discussion following this film clip that theological language is introduced in a non-threatening, non-proselytizing manner. The chaplain will introduce this discussion with the following words: "The character in the film found forgiveness and new life after confessing his poor moral choices out loud to trusted companions. What might it feel like if you could do the same?" The chaplain will further note that

taking responsibility for one's moral choices is the first part of traditional prayers of confession from a wide range of faith traditions. After some discussion, the invitation to the Spoken and Forgiven program would then be extended, with an emphasis that participation is purely voluntary. The Spoken and Forgiven experience will take place during the week between the second and third classes of the About Face program, on a different day and in a different space.

Step 3: Create a Safe Space for Confession and Forgiveness

The shipboard environment leaves very little room for privacy and quiet, even in berthing and lounge areas. At times, the best care a chaplain can give a Sailor is to allow him or her to sit alone in the chaplain's office, relax, and be free from noise and interruption for a few precious moments. Peace and quiet can go a long way to restoring strength to face the day.

Most chaplains' offices are too small to host more than two or three people. Spaces need to be found and reserved where larger groups can meet. Due to their size, aircraft carriers and large deck amphibious ships have spaces set aside for classrooms and chapels. For the About Face program, a classroom with audiovisual support is the ideal setting. The classroom setting also makes the About Face program and integral part of the overall training and education program of the ship.

However, for small groups in which confession, prayer, and quiet meditation will take place, a chapel setting provides an intimate space in which Sailors can feel safe and secure. The chapel space also provides a place where lighting can be dimmed, candles can be lit, and music can be softly played in the background to create an inviting

atmosphere. Unlike in some classrooms, the chairs can be moved to create circles, which for purposes of confession and more intimate discussion are more conducive to open conversation than rows all facing one direction.

Step 4: Establish Ground Rules for Conversation

On board ship, saying certain things out loud in the presence of someone other than a chaplain may, in certain cases, require legal action. The small group confessional model proposed in this project will necessarily be limited by the fact that only chaplains have absolute confidentiality. However, there is still promise in a group which mutually agrees to take nothing outside the circle of confession. What is said in the group stays in the group. Confession can still be highly specific without getting in details that might have to go beyond the bounds of the group.

For example, someone in the group may bring to mind a specific wrong done against a shipmate, perhaps theft, and confess out loud that he or she is sorry for wronging a shipmate without specifically mentioning the content of that wrongdoing. If the Sailor wanted to go into greater detail, he or she could then speak to the chaplain privately in another setting. Indeed, the process of small group confession could well lead Sailors to go deeper with the chaplain than they might have done without a community of support to start them on the journey.

In addition to confidentiality, the ground rules for conversation in the small group include allowing individuals to speak without being interrupted or judged. In his book, *Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry*, Gareth Icenogle argues that "God's pattern for empowerment of humanity is not in the building of hierarchal power

structures, but in the gathering of priestly circles of face to face communities. . . . Small groups are to be circles of mutual priesthood, where power is shared. . . . Each person turns to a neighbor to administer the grace, mercy, peace, and love of God."[7] Also, no one is required to say out loud what is on his or her heart, although it is hoped that the trust level of the group would be high enough to elicit that response. This is where the group facilitation skills of the chaplain will be of significant importance.

<div align="center">Step 5: Carry Out the Spoken and Forgiven Program</div>

From a faith perspective, honest self-examination, confession of sin, true repentance, and amendment of life are made possible by the grace of God. When Thomas Cranmer composed the *Book of Common Prayer*, the daily Morning Prayer service contained a confession of sin that recognized that our human condition required frank admission that we make poor moral choices that affect our lives and the lives of those around us. This general confession is to be said individually and in community in order prepare the hearts and minds of participants for worship.

There are two prayers of general confession in the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*. What follows are the first few lines of the version most often used in current Episcopal Church worship, during both the Daily Office and Holy Eucharist:

> *The Deacon or Celebrant says*
> Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.
>
> *Officiant and People together, all kneeling*
> Most merciful God,
> we confess that we have sinned against you
> in thought, word, and deed,
> by what we have done,
> and by what we have left undone.

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[7] Icenogle, *Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry*, 101.

> We have not loved you with our whole heart;
> we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
> We are truly sorry, and we humbly repent.[8]

The general confession is addressed to "merciful God." The subject is the plural "we" because people of faith recognize both their individual and collective need for God's mercy and forgiveness. Sins against God are in thought, word, and deed, and are made evident by what believers have done and left undone. Believers have disobeyed the two Great Commandments: they have not loved God with their whole heart and they have not loved their neighbors as themselves.

For the small group setting proposed in this project, the general confession provides a framework on which to hang more specific foci. Here is where chaplains leading the group, drawing from the particular concerns and challenges of their military environment, can tailor a Litany of Penitence to their communities. The following is a suggested approach for an aircraft carrier.

The chaplain sets up the chapel with a circle of chairs suitable for the number of Sailors in the small group. A single lighted candle or a simple object of attention is placed on a small table in the center of the circle. The community gathers around the table. After some moments of quiet, the chaplain reads a contemporary translation of the story of the prodigal son. The chaplain then provides teaching on his or her understanding of God's forgiving character. Next, the chaplain explains that the purpose of the group is to offer up to God and one another those personal concerns that have come out during the About Face program discussions. The chaplain makes clear that all agree that what is said in the time together stays within the group, and that only the

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[8] The Anglican Church, *Book of Common Prayer*, 79.

chaplain has absolute confidentiality, so no one should say out loud in the group setting

anything that must be reported up the chain of command. The first part of the meeting

should take as long as needed for participants to quiet themselves and focus on the

process. Once the chaplain discerns that participants are ready, he or she begins the

Litany of Penitence:

Chaplain:	Loving, forgiving God: We confess to you and to one another that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.
	I invite us to say out loud ways we have not forgiven others, here on the ship, at home, or in some other area of our lives. (Pause for specific confession.)
Chaplain:	We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives.
	I invite us to say out loud ways we have been unfaithful to God and to our own best selves. (Pause for specific confession.)
Chaplain:	We confess our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people.
	I invite us to say out loud how we have put ourselves before ship and shipmates. (Pause for specific confession.)
Chaplain:	We confess our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves.
	I invite us all to say out loud how we have coveted the blessings of others and been ungrateful for our own. (Pause for specific confession.)
Chaplain:	We confess our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work.

I invite us all to say out loud how we have disobeyed orders or taken shortcuts in our work in order to pursue our own wants. (Pause for specific confession.)

Chaplain: We confess our unloving thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us.

I invite us all to say out loud ways in which we have pre-judged others and treated them differently than how we wish to be treated. (Pause for specific confession.)[9]

Following recitation of the Litany of Penitence, a time of silence is observed. A box of tissues should be available to pass around, as some might find themselves tearing up over some of the things that have come to mind as they went through the litany. These tears can be indicators that genuine catharsis is taking place. The chaplain then offers words of comfort and consolation, in these or similar words:

Chaplain: The Almighty and merciful Lord grant you absolution and remission of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit. Amen.[10]

or

Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and for his sake forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Jesus Christ and by his authority, I therefore declare to you this day the entire forgiveness of your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.[11]

A pamphlet-style version of this proposed service is provided in Appendix C. Chaplains may freely adapt this litany, drawing on their own faith traditions. Elements such as anointing with oil, handshakes, and appropriate hugs (with the permission of

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[9] Adapted from the Litany of Penitence from the Ash Wednesday liturgy found in The Anglican Church, *The Book of Common Prayer*, 267-268.

[10] The Anglican Church, *The Book of Common Prayer*, 42.

[11] Adapted from the opening of the liturgy at the Sunday Protestant Holy Communion Service at the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland.

those being hugged) may be added. The goal is to create an environment in which meaningful expressions of contrition, confession, God's forgiveness, and the desire to change can take place.

Step 6: Evaluate the Spoken and Forgiven Piece of the Overall Program

Following the fourth and final class of the About Face program, those Sailors who choose to participate in the optional Spoken and Forgiven piece will be given the opportunity to evaluate it. They will be asked if they found the small group experience of confession and forgiveness helpful, and if so, how the experience has continued to impact their lives. They will also be asked if they would recommend the experience to others. Appendix D is a simple one-page evaluation form that can be adapted as needed to provide the Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and Command Master Chief with an assessment of the usefulness of the program and suggestions for ways in which it might be improved.

Initial Target Population

The initial target population to test this strategy includes those first-term Sailors who have been to NJP and were identified by the command leadership team as suitable candidates for the About Face program. Because the About Face program is designed to help Sailors successfully complete their initial commitment, Sailors who violate UCMJ articles requiring mandatory processing for discharge will not be eligible. Neither will third-time offenders, because three offenses represent a pattern of misconduct and most commanding officers only permit one or two "strikes" before initiating separation processing.

As the program evolves, it is hoped that small confessional groups may provide preemptive rather than reactive ministry opportunities for commands. Personnel in Indoctrination Division would be the next population to warrant attention. Sailors newly reported aboard a command could benefit by having the opportunity to safely confess the particular temptations—such as a short temper, issues with anger, poor impulse control, and poor understanding of authority—that may be taking them down paths toward making poor choices. Providing positive influences to offset negative peer influences could help them change their lives for the better before other, more negative patterns develop.

Leadership and Training

The About Face program relies a great deal on the participation of and mentorship by more senior Sailors who were themselves in trouble early in their careers and were able to turn things around. They are trained in the course material and participate in the four About Face classes. Their presence and influence embody the possibility of hope for young Sailors who think that they have squandered their opportunity to serve in the Navy and are on the verge of giving up entirely. Together with the chaplain, members of the About Face reinforcement team provide ongoing care beyond the classes themselves. As discussed in Chapter 2, Sailors are heavily influenced by their peers, so it is important to find mentors who can provide encouragement and accountability as Sailors walk a new and unfamiliar path. This support not only helps preclude recidivism, but keeps the vision of being a better Sailor and person fixed in a Sailor's consciousness.

However, the confessional piece proposed by this project necessitates that only the chaplain should be involved with the confessional groups. This preserves the boundaries of good order and discipline. If members of the reinforcement team are present in the confessional small groups, they might inhibit junior Sailors from going deeper into what may be truly troubling their consciences. Likewise, reinforcement team members might not open up for fear of revealing too much about their own weaknesses and failures in the presence of men and women they might someday lead. These limitations are one of the reasons Alcoholic Anonymous groups do not function very well on board ship, even a very large command. It is impossible to maintain anonymity in a group when all are wearing uniforms that have last name and rate or rank visible to all.

However, this does not mean members of the reinforcement team cannot encourage Sailors in the About Face program to take advantage of the confessional groups. Much of the interaction between program participants and program leadership is enhanced by the relationships built between the chaplain and the leadership team. If reinforcement team members trust the chaplain, they will express that trust to the About Face program assignees.

The selection of the reinforcement team members will be done using the advice of the ship's Command Master Chief, who will help identify First Class Petty Officers and Chief Petty Officers who have leadership and communication skills appropriate for this sort of instruction, as well as have had missteps in their careers which they were able to overcome. From a command perspective, training mentors who participate in character development programs adds richly to the talent pool of command leadership. From the mentors' perspective, their own professional development and personal growth will help

them in their careers, wherever the Navy may send them. In a very real sense, they are given a chance to pass on to junior Sailors what they have learned from their own poor choices.

This chapter has developed a small-group model of confession and forgiveness. The Letter of James urges people of faith to confess their sins to one another and pray for one another "that [they] may be healed" (James 5:16). The first letter of Peter calls people of faith "a chosen race, a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 3:9). Believers both confess their sins to one another and speak God's words of forgiveness to one another. The proposed Spoken and Forgiven model, when offered in the context of the About Face class on taking responsibility for one's actions, provides an opportunity to bring the healing power of divine forgiveness into a proven mentoring program. Chapter 7 will outline the proposed implementation timeline, as well as address ways in which the Spoken and Forgiven model might be expanded for a broader target population.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AND EVALUATION

This chapter will describe the new ministry initiative in greater detail and present

a timeline for its implementation. It will then list the physical and human resources

needed to fully support the pilot project. Finally, it will suggest appropriate evaluation

tools and create an assessment plan to determine whether or not the project effectively

achieves its goals.

The New Ministry Initiative: Spoken and Forgiven

The new ministry initiative will involve adding a confession and forgiveness

element to the About Face post-NJP mentoring program already in place on board the

aircraft carrier USS GEORGE H. W. BUSH (hereafter USS GHWB). This element will

involve voluntary participation in a small-group experience of auricular confession and

the pronouncement of God's forgiveness. It will be offered to each discrete class that is

assigned to the About Face program at any given time. The experience will last thirty

minutes to an hour, depending on the number of participants and their willingness to

confess specific things they have done and left undone.

The Spoken and Forgiven piece will be explained during the second of the four About Face classes, which focuses on taking responsibility for one's actions. Sailors who choose to participate in the time of confession and forgiveness will make their commitment privately to the chaplain outside of the About Face classes in order to maximize privacy and minimize any sense of group pressure to participate. Additionally, the Spoken and Forgiven group will take place between the second and third classes of the About Face program, on a different day and in a different space, so it is seen as an entirely separate and optional piece. There must be no sense of coercion to participate on the part of the command.

Pilot Project Timeline

The first step in the pilot project involved adapting and implementing the About Face Post-NJP Mentoring Program on board the USS GHWB. The program's suggested video film clips and handout materials were purchased. Chaplain Joel Degraeve, the chaplain assigned to the embarked Carrier Air Wing, set up his personal laptop computer so the video clips could be easily cued up and presented at the appropriate times during the four classes. Chaplain Degraeve also made slight modifications to the class discussion outlines and handouts, bringing his extensive pastoral care and counseling experience into the material.

The senior chaplain worked closely with the Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and Command Master Chief to determine the most effective time in the NJP process to assign a Sailor to the About Face program.[1] When Chaplain Scott developed

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[1] The author of this paper was the senior chaplain on the USS GHWB at the time.

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the program on board the USS RONALD REAGAN in 2006, the Navy was shorthanded and needed to retain as many Sailors as possible. This meant Sailors might have one or two NJP cases and not face administrative discharge. The About Face instruction on the USS RONALD REAGAN specified that the Commanding Officer, in consultation with the chaplain and chain of command, would assign suitable Sailors to the About Face program as a final opportunity to turn things around.

However, by mid-2010, the Navy Personnel Command determined that the Navy was overmanned and needed to downsize. Second chances for disciplinary issues became fewer and fewer. One trip to Captain's Mast could mean the end of a Sailor's career, especially if there were other infractions, even relatively minor ones, in his or her record.

This change in circumstances prompted the USS GHWB command leadership team to consider offering the About Face program option at a lower level in the NJP process. If an NJP case is dismissed at the Executive Officer's Inquiry (hereafter, XOI), which takes place prior to Captain's Mast, that Sailor will have no blemish on his or her record. Accordingly, the About Face instruction for the USS GHWB put assignment to the About Face program in the Executive Officer's hands, in consultation with the chaplain and chain of command. This proved to be a very useful tool, as it was clear to Sailors facing the Executive Officer that they had come close to ending their careers, but had been given a very precious second chance. The Executive Officer made it very clear that failure to complete the About Face program would bring the Sailor right back to face him and the case would automatically be forwarded up to the Commanding Officer.

The USS GHWB About Face program instruction was signed by the Commanding Officer on October 26, 2010 (see Appendix A). In early November 2010, with the assistance of the USS GHWB Command Master Chief and the carrier air wing Command Master Chief, the Senior Chaplain recruited a reinforcement team of six mentors. The reinforcement team consisted of four First Class Petty Officers, one Chief Petty Officer, and one Senior Chief Petty Officer. They represented a variety of rates and departments, and included ship and wing personnel. All six mentors had been to NJP earlier in their careers. They had not only survived the experience, but they had changed those patterns of behavior which had gotten them into trouble. They came highly recommended for both their exemplary performance and their ability to communicate effectively in a small-group environment.

The classes were held in the ship's chapel on four consecutive Sundays from two to four o'clock in the afternoon. Sundays were chosen because when the ship was underway for local operations off the east coast of the United States, the operational tempo was often reduced on Sundays. This meant less noise on the flight deck, which is located directly above the chapel.

The first USS GHWB About Face class convened in November and December 2010. The class met on the second, third, fourth, and fifth Sundays during a six-week underway period. The leadership of the initial class included the senior chaplain, the wing chaplain, and two mentors from the reinforcement team. Seven first-term Sailors were assigned to the program.

All seven Sailors fully participated in and contributed to lively discussions each week. The small-group setting allowed for the development of trust and support among

the Sailors, and the presence of the mentors reinforced the vision that poor choices can be overcome. The mentors embodied hope that Sailors can and do survive NJP early in their careers. At the conclusion of the first program, the participants were given the opportunity to send personal messages directly to the Commanding Officer, stating whether the program was valuable to them or not. The reports were very positive, and the Commanding Officer directed that the program should continue, with an annual review by the USS GHWB leadership team to assess its ongoing value and to make adjustments and improvements as necessary.

The second step was to add the Spoken and Forgiven element, which is the confession and forgiveness piece. It became clear after the second class with this first group that some of the Sailors were carrying with them deep-seated hurts from a sense of broken trust with the Navy,[2] strained relationships with family and friends back home, and feelings of alienation from their fellow Sailors. Complaints were also being voiced about work center tensions, unfair treatment by leaders, and a sense of being singled out even before they had a chance to prove themselves.

For some of the Sailors, deep-seated issues of lack of forgiveness, of others and of themselves, lay beneath their indignation and bravado. The film clip from the movie *The Longest Yard*, presented and discussed in the second class, brought out some self-awareness in the Sailors that was not there at the start of the first class. The hypothesis was made that Sailors assigned to the About Face program would benefit from an experience of God's forgiveness. Such an experience would need to be offered outside of

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[2] It is not uncommon for Sailors to say they had been lied to during the recruitment process.

the command-directed program to avoid even a hint that this portion of the program was being mandated by the Command. That would clearly cross the line into proselytizing.

From January to April 2011, the ship went through an intensive work-up cycle in preparation for the ship's first-ever combat deployment scheduled for May to December 2011. Our Religious Ministry Team had hoped to fully develop the small group confessional piece during the work-up period, to include the specific content of the confessional liturgy and the best way in which to implement it. Unfortunately, the chaplains' workload during the work-up cycle did not allow time for this. The number of Sailors seeking counseling with the three ship's chaplains or the wing chaplain increased significantly, and several major chaplain-led command events precluded designing and implementing the new ministry initiative prior to deployment. During the deployment, the operational tempo was such that we were unable to continue to develop the project. After returning from deployment, the USS GHWB went through a month of stand-down, a few short underway periods, and then transited into the Norfolk Naval Shipyard for ten months of shipyard work.

It is regrettable that the USS GHWB Religious Ministry Team was not able to fully implement and test this project's thesis. However, another Religious Ministry Team on an aircraft carrier or other large naval platform which already has an About Face or similar mentoring program in place would be an ideal setting in which to test-run the voluntary Spoken and Forgiven piece proposed in this project. It is also conceivable that a Religious Ministry Team serving in a Marine Corps battalion or squadron might be a suitable venue for testing.

Leadership Development

Even though the specific program itself was not implemented, initial leadership development occurred through the identification and incorporation of the About Face reinforcement team. The persons recruited as mentors built significant trust with the Sailors who came through the program. The mentors embodied the hope discussed in the classes. They served ably as group facilitators and hospitality leaders, setting the tone for open and honest conversation about making poor choices and taking responsibility for those choices. As mentioned above, the USS GHWB Commanding Officer asked Sailors in the initial group to write open-ended personal letters to him via email, evaluating the About Face program. All the responses were favorable, with particular praise for the mentors' advice and counsel. In addition, the chaplains developed their skills as facilitators, and they gained experience with addressing the questions and concerns of the Sailors in the program.

Mentors are not to be present in the Spoken and Forgiven piece, but their presence and support throughout the program would provide a valuable sounding board for the Sailors under their own terms and timing. It is possible that following the time of confession, a Sailor would not divulge to a mentor what was said, but would still find conversation about the overall experience to be a helpful way to process what happened. This could also be a time in which mentors who themselves have experienced divine forgiveness through weekly worship might invite Sailors to the worship service of their choice.

Resources

The USS GHWB chapel was chosen because of its location away from major work and berthing spaces, its comfortable ambience, and its audio-visual capabilities. The chapel on the USS GHWB is in the same location as the chapels on all twelve NIMITZ-class aircraft carriers. It is on the third deck (third floor) above the main deck on the port side of the ship, about one third of the way back from the bow. It is adjacent to the ship's reading room, library, and chaplains' offices.

This location is both very familiar to the crew, but it is also off the main thoroughfares and some distance from major work spaces. This gives the whole complex a set-apart feel. Sailors can come to the library to read books, surf the Internet, and send messages home; they can record books on DVD to mail to their children; they can meet with the chaplains in their offices; and they can quietly meditate, pray, or worship in the multi-faith chapel.

Unfortunately, the chapel is also directly below the main deck, where aircraft put their engines to full power before being slung into the air by the steam catapults, and aircraft land by dropping their tailhooks, "catching" a thick arresting gear wire, and then coming to a sudden stop while simultaneously going to full power just in case they miss. On the USS GHWB, additional soundproofing material was added to the overhead to help reduce the noise during flight operations. The ship's public address system can also be turned off in the chapel, although should an emergency arise, classes would need to cease immediately and picked up again on a later date.

The USS GHWB has a medium-sized television screen mounted on the bulkhead (wall), which facilitated the video presentations and discussion. The USS GHWB chapel has a dropped overhead (ceiling) with incandescent vice fluorescent bulb lighting, simulated wood paneling on the bulkheads and cabinets, and the deck (floor) is simulated hardwood instead of the standard gray steel. The upholstered chairs are comfortable and are easily moved into rows or circles as needed by those using the space. For the About Face classes, the chairs were arranged in a circle in front of the television, and the Sailors assigned to the program sat intermingled with the chaplains and mentors.

Conversation flowed well around the circle. The ideal group size was five to seven assignees, plus two chaplains and one or two mentors. Groups larger than this seemed to allow some assignees to hide from engagement in conversation, while groups smaller than this seemed to intimidate some of the assignees. The USS GHWB chapel proved to be an excellent resource for the About Face classes. There is no public space on the aircraft carrier that is more intimate and conducive to small group gatherings than the chapel. Perhaps one of the greatest attractions of all is that the chaplains and Religious Program Specialists maintain the chapel schedule and are responsible for its care and cleanliness.

It has been stated earlier that the Spoken and Forgiven group should meet in a different place and time than the four About Face classes, to make clear it is a voluntary piece that brings explicitly religious content and language into the post-NJP mentoring process. The About Face classes should be taught in a ship's classroom, and the Spoken and Forgiven group should meet in the chapel. This makes clear that the About Face classes come under the command's teaching, training, and mentoring initiatives, while

the confession and forgiveness piece is explicitly part of the command's religious ministries program, hence what takes place in the chapel is protected under Title 10 rules for religious services and practices.

As part of the Litany of Penance, chaplains are encouraged to use vestments and stoles if that is part of their tradition. From the earliest days of basic training, Sailors are indoctrinated into Navy customs and traditions, all of which are replete with structured rituals and symbolism. A structured liturgy supported by rich sacramental symbolism such as candles, vestments, and oil for healing could be particularly moving for Sailors familiar with such traditions, while for other Sailors it could be intimidating and off-putting. Chaplains need to use discretion in all cases, keeping focus on the experience of divine forgiveness.

The posture for pronouncement of forgiveness is important as well. At the time of confession, Sailors are invited to either stand or kneel, the traditional postures for prayer. This reinforces the special nature of the event. Some people are kinesthetic learners and learn best through physical movement and appropriate physical touch, such as a hand on their shoulder as forgiveness is pronounced.

Written resources include biblical stories of confession and forgiveness. John Sippola, during a web presentation on the power of forgiveness in the lives of veterans, offers the following list of helpful passages from the Bible:

1. Psalm 22 (Lament)
2. Psalm 25 (Lament and forgiveness)
3. Psalm 51 (Lament and forgiveness)
4. Psalm 130 (Lament and forgiveness)
5. Matthew 11:28-30 (Removing the burden of perpetration)
6. 1 John 2:1-2 (Forgiveness)
7. John 20:2-30 (Our job of forgiveness and Thomas's experience of forgiveness)

8. Mark 5:34 (Release from the burden of suffering)
9. Luke 7:50; 8:48 (Release from the burden of shame and suffering)[3]

Assessment of Goal Attainment

The chief measure for assessment of the About Face program aboard the USS

GHWB was whether or not the program reduced recidivism. During my time on board,

just one of twenty-seven Sailors who completed all four classes of the About Face

program went to a second NJP within one year following completion of the program.

While there was no control group against which to compare this recidivism rate, the

GHWB command leadership team assessed the post-NJP mentoring program to be a

highly valuable addition to its resources for leading and mentoring Sailors.

The two-tiered goal of the Spoken and Forgiven pilot project is to reinforce the

secular anti-recidivism thrust of About Face and to provide opportunity for Sailors to

experience God's forgiveness. The process has been described through which that

opportunity is offered, starting with a target population of those Sailors assigned to the

About Face post-NJP mentoring program. The evaluation form found in Appendix D

gives Sailors the opportunity to answer questions about their experience: "Did you

experience forgiveness from God? Do you feel less burdened by your guilt and better

able to focus on your present and future concerns?" If Sailors express a positive attitude

about their future, especially a sense of hope that they can and will recover from their

poor choices in the past and intend to make better choices in the future, this would

strongly suggest that the project's two-tiered goal has been attained.

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[3] John Sippola, "Confession and Forgiveness for those who also struggle with Post-traumatic Stress," slide 15, Episcopal Health Ministries, http://www.episcopalhealthministries.org/resources?pg=19 (accessed November 26, 2013).

God's forgiveness pronounced to an individual could well include evidence that something very special has taken place. The Apostle Peter went on to do wonderful works on behalf of Jesus after he heard Jesus' words of forgiveness following the resurrection. The same happened to the Apostle Paul, to tax collectors, to prostitutes, and to other sinners.

However, Jesus' parable of the lost son suggests that an experience of God's forgiveness may or may not lead to a commitment to discipleship. One might infer that the lost son was so grateful for his father's loving welcome home that he never again left his father's side, but Jesus did not say. The older son may have responded to his father's loving invitation and joined with him in celebrating his lost brother's return. Again, Jesus did not say. It is possible that Sailors could experience forgiveness but not commit themselves to following Jesus on the way.

Together with the Sailors' self-assessment, the discerning eye of the chaplain and others of faith may help bring out evidence of true repentance or μετάνοια (*metanoia,* "change of mind"). Evidence of an "About Face" from a faith perspective could start with a Sailor seeking out further conversations about the meaning of what happened in his or her experience, further sharing of scriptural stories, and deeper reflection on the loving character of God. Perhaps a Sailor would begin to attend small group Bible studies and/or Sunday worship services.

Another area to look for might be a Sailor's ability and desire to forgive the slights and hurts of fellow shipmates, of family and friends, and of his or her chain of command. Still another might be to look for a Sailor's ability to look beyond himself or herself. Sailors who experience God's forgiveness might be more inclined to reach out in

service to others. Their ship and community involvement may extend beyond their individual work centers.

If the program had been implemented before I transferred to my new assignment, I would have added an opportunity for Sailors to meet with me, if they desired, either immediately following the small group confession or a few days later. This follow-up meeting would have taken place in my office, where Sailors could discuss confidentially their experience of God's forgiveness. Such meetings would have complemented the written evaluations.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this final project is to help troubled first-term Sailors aboard an aircraft carrier avoid recidivism and experience God's forgiveness. The proposed ministry model for doing so is small Spoken and Forgiven groups led by Navy chaplains in which Sailors can safely and confidentially confess things done and left undone for which they feel they need forgiveness. The ecclesiology of the Episcopal Church was examined, with particular focus on its strengths and weaknesses with respect to this project's thesis. The *Book of Common Prayer* prayers of confession at Sunday worship, the rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent, and the Litany of Penitence from the Ash Wednesday liturgy, were examined and adapted for use in the Spoken and Forgiven small group model of ministry. To address the needs of Sailors with little or no religious affiliation, this ministry model intentionally moved confession and forgiveness outside Sunday morning worship and placed it within the context of a post-NJP anti-recidivism mentorship program. Concerns about leadership and the physical space in which these groups would meet were discussed. While the pilot program was not implemented and tested, military chaplains in a variety of settings could adapt the proposed program for their particular environments, drawing from their own faith traditions.

Contextual Considerations

The military environment leaves little room for human error. Airmen, Coastguardsmen, Marines, Sailors, and Soldiers are constantly reminded that the nature of the military vocation demands the highest standards of professional competency. The Navy places tremendous demands on its Sailors starting at a very young age. Severe

injury can occur and lives can be lost, even in non-combat situations, if a Sailor does not follow proper procedures. Even those who are newest to a command are expected to know how to fight fires, control flooding, and provide basic first aid for their shipmates. This is in addition to the expectation that they will qualify in their particular area of expertise and take on even greater responsibility. The transition to an organization with necessarily high standards of performance and accountability can be highly stressful to those who may never have experienced such challenges before.

Moreover, the standards extend beyond the professional setting and into personal lives and behavior. Military personnel are subject to the UCMJ both at work and while on liberty or leave. In military vernacular, one is an Airman, Guardian, Marine, Sailor, or Soldier "24/7," that is to say, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Personal responsibility for one's moral and ethical actions both on and off the job is inescapable, all the way up the chain of command to the ship's Commanding Officer.

Commanders are held accountable for everything that happens under their command. Because of this responsibility, they are granted authority to punish subordinates who have violated their legal orders. Recent congressional initiatives to take the prosecution of sexual assault cases out of the hands of military commanders has met with great resistance from the military because one of the traditional pillars of good order and discipline is the absolute authority and responsibility of the commander for the actions of those under his or her command.

Resources for Military Personnel

The Navy provides a wide range of resources to those who volunteer to serve, from the time they report to their first command to the point of transition back to a civilian career or retirement. Fleet and Family Support Centers provide free counseling in areas such as personal and family relationships, budgeting and financial management, employment opportunities for spouses, and community service and outreach. Navy hospitals and clinics have civilian and military psychiatrists and psychologists, as well as substance abuse counselors. Every military base has command-appointed and trained Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (hereafter, SAPR) personnel, along with numerous vetted referral agencies for a range of personal issues. The Department of Defense also sponsors Military OneSource, an organization accessible by telephone and Internet, which provides a wide assortment of civilian counseling and other resources.[1]

In addition to and in conjunction with these resources, military chaplains offer two aspects that no one else in the military can: they provide for and facilitate the free exercise of religion, and they offer absolute confidentiality when counseling Sailors. Military personnel swear or affirm to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. The free exercise of religion is protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution. Since the founding of the United States, military leaders have recognized the value of religion in both enhancing morale and developing positive moral and ethical decision making. Absolute confidentiality provides a safe place for military personnel to admit and discuss breaches of conscience and poor moral choices, weigh options, and

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[1] Military OneSource may be accessed by phone at 1-800-342-9647 and on the Internet at www.militaryonesource.mil.

find hope in facing professional and personal challenges that relate to one's past, present, and future. This safe place extends to the telephone. The Navy has a ChaplainCare crisis telephone line manned around the clock, which puts Sailors in touch with chaplains to provide confidential care over the phone if need be.

Fewer Sailors coming into the military are affiliated with any religious organization. Fewer are familiar with biblical stories of confession and forgiveness, let alone individual and communal liturgies in which persons of faith hear assurances of God's forgiveness and are empowered to try again after moral and ethical failures. If Sailors have not had any personal experience in which they were able to safely admit to making bad moral and ethical choices (that is, to confess sins of omission and commission) and hear God's words of forgiveness, they may be unable to sum up the courage to even try to change, and simply give up on themselves and their Navy career.

The Navy allows little leeway between professional ethics and personal morality. Without a place to safely and confidentially confess moral and ethical failures, the pressures of shipboard life can push Sailors beyond their ability to cope. Recent scandals in the military involving extramarital affairs among senior leadership, sexual assault at training commands, and the selling of secrets for personal financial gain demonstrate that the Navy's core values of honor, courage, and commitment extend beyond the end of the work day and work week. When a young man or woman raises his or her right hand to serve in the Navy, it is difficult for that individual to fully understand just how high the standards of service are.

Sailors who get caught making poor moral and ethical decisions often attempt to cover up and lie in an attempt to minimize punishment. Once their violations of the

UCMJ are discovered, they may add to the charges by making false official statements or conspire with others to fabricate an even more egregious lie. The About Face post-NJP mentoring program helps catch this downward spiral before things get so serious that the Commanding Officer has no choice but to severely punish such Sailors and administratively separate them from the Navy.

Saying out loud in the hearing of a compassionate listener that one is sorry for hurting one's relationship with God and neighbor through words spoken and unspoken, things done and left undone, is one of the most effective ways to open oneself to experiencing God's forgiveness. This experience of God's forgiveness can bring healing and new life on scales both small and great, and it can help people be more effective in their workplaces, including Sailors aboard ships. Navy chaplains can help bring the transformative power of auricular confession and pronouncement of God's forgiveness into one of the most secularly unforgiving environments imaginable. It is worth making every possible effort to do so.

APPENDIX A

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS GEORGE H. W. BUSH (CVN 77)
FPO AE 09513-2803

BUSHINST 5800.3
CRMD
26 Oct 10

USS GEORGE H. W. BUSH (CVN 77) INSTRUCTION 5800.3

From: Commanding Officer, USS GEORGE H. W. BUSH (CVN 77)

Subj: ABOUT FACE PROGRAM

Encl: (1) Sample Assignment Letter
      (2) Sample Letter of Completion

1. <u>Purpose</u>. To provide policy and guidance implementing About Face as a post-Executive Officer's Inquiry (XOI) or Non-Judicial Punishment (NJP) rehabilitation program.

2. <u>Discussion</u>. Many Sailors who appear at XOI/NJP possess the potential to become productive members of the command leading to successful careers in the Navy. About Face is a rehabilitation program used at the Executive Officer's (XO) or Commanding Officer's (CO) discretion, designed to re-orient a Sailor by providing organized, focused mentorship and instruction in decision making and responsibility.

3. <u>Policy</u>. Only the XO or CO have the authority to direct a Sailor to About Face. Four mandatory sessions will be taught in a period of four weeks. The Senior Chaplain will oversee program instruction, group mentorship involving senior enlisted personnel, and provide feedback in the event there is a violation of the attendance requirements.

4. <u>General Guidance</u>. Per discussion and policy, the following guidelines are published:

    a. Only the XO or CO may direct a Sailor to About Face. Assignment to the program will be based on assessment that a particular Sailor has the potential to benefit from the program.

    b. At the conclusion of XOI or NJP, the Senior Chaplain (or a delegated chaplain) will deliver the XO's Assignment Letter (enclosure (1)) to the Sailor with a copy forwarded to both the assigned Sailor's Head of Department (HOD) and to Legal Department.

    c. When enclosure (1) is delivered, the XO will inform the Sailor of the time and location of the next About Face session. Unless there are unusual operational circumstances, an overseas port visit, or a ship-wide holiday routine in place, About Face

will be held at the same time and place each week. In the event
that a change in schedule takes place, the Senior Chaplain will
inform the Sailor's Division Officer.

  d. A muster will be taken at the beginning of each session.
Since About Face is the appointed place of duty for the assigned
Sailor, the HOD will be notified in the event there is an
unauthorized absence.

  e. When the assigned Sailor completes all four sessions, he
will receive a Letter of Completion (enclosure (2)), with copies
forwarded to the XO, Legal Department, and the HOD.

  f. Failure to attend, participate in, or comply with the
About Face program may result in adverse administrative action
or punitive action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice
(UCMJ).

5. Content of the Program. There will be two formal sections
to About Face; instruction and mentorship.

  a. Instruction. The Senior Chaplain will cover four topics
in four individual sessions. The topics follow:

    (1) Choices. The law of sowing and reaping; reinforcing
the power of making right or wrong choices; how
consequences/results are determined in the decision making
process.

    (2) Boundaries. Taking responsibility for one's own
life; identifying the purpose of boundaries; understanding the
benefits of staying within the boundaries.

    (3) Attitudes. Choosing one's perspective on life;
helping the Sailor to see that an individual's attitude is one
of the choices they make for themselves.

    (4) Relationships. Sailors can't do it on their own;
reinforcing the value of positive and healthy relationships.

  b. Mentorship. A Reinforcement Team (RT) will be chosen
from hand-picked E6 and above Sailors who have been taken to
Captain's Mast and subsequently made a positive turn-around in
their careers to become outstanding Sailors and role models.

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The Command Master Chief will provide a list of RT candidates to the Senior Chaplain for final approval and use.

    (1) The RT will provide testimonial support to the instructional section of the program and participate alongside the Senior Chaplain in each weekly session.

    (2) Deckplate follow-up will be provided by the RT to encourage post-XOI/NJP improvement in attitude and behavior.

    (3) The RT will provide regular feedback to the Senior Chaplain and CMC on each subject's progress.

6. Review. The Senior Chaplain is responsible for the annual review and update of this instruction.

D. H. MILLER III

Distribution:
Electronic only, List I, via CVN 77 S-drive
S:\Admin Department\Command Reading\BUSH Instructions & Notices

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SAMPLE ASSIGNMENT LETTER

Date

From: Executive Officer, USS GEORGE H. W. BUSH (CVN 77)
To: BMSN Iwana Turnaround, Deck/1st

Subj: ABOUT FACE ASSIGNMENT LETTER

1. You are directed to participate in About Face.

2. About Face consists of four weekly sessions held every [day
of the week] from [time window] in Training Classroom [number
and tack number]. Failure to attend the sessions as outlined by
the Senior Chaplain will result in a Page 13 entry in your
service record and disciplinary action.

3. Upon completion of the four sessions, a Letter of Completion
will be forwarded by the Senior Chaplain to Legal Department,
your Head of Department, and the Executive Officer.

4. Failure to attend, participate in, or comply with the About
Face program will result in adverse administrative action or
punitive action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice
(UCMJ).

W. P. PENNINGTON
By direction

Enclosure (1)

SAMPLE LETTER OF COMPLETION

Date

From: Senior Chaplain
To: AT3 Ima Newman, AIMD/IM-3

Subj: ABOUT FACE LETTER OF COMPLETION

1. You have successfully completed all four required sessions
of the About Face program.

2. A copy of this letter will be forwarded to your Head of
Department, Legal Officer, and the Executive Officer.

3. It is my sincere desire that the instruction and mentorship
received during this program has aided in your development on
both a personal and professional level. Please feel free to
stop by my office any time with questions or concerns and
remember that to perform an "about face" is to commit to walking
in a different direction!

                        C. H. FISH

                                        Enclosure (2)

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OUTLINES OF THE FIRST TWO CLASSES OF THE ABOUT FACE PROGRAM

Original author: CAPT Brent Scott, CHC, USN
Adapted for use on the USS GHWB by LT Joel Degraeve, CHC, USN

CHOICES

Every Action Is A Future Investment

MOVIE: *Men of Honor*
START: 10:40
END: 14:09

SCENE SET UP: Swim call: Setting in the pre-70's Navy. Segregation was present in the military as it was in all of American society; separate berthing and in this case, a separate swim-call. The injustice of racism well noted in the movie, but that is not the issue for our discussion tonight: whether or not there is a time to do what is right, regardless of the consequences. This is the story of Navy diver Carl Brashier, the first black diver in the United States Navy. In a segregated Navy, there was extreme resistance and reaction to a black Sailor becoming a Navy diver.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1.   Do choices always have consequences?
2.   Did Carl Brashier stop to consider the choice of swimming?
3.   Did he deliberate the consequences?
     a. He said, "What are they going to do, make me wash more dishes?" He considered a consequence, but maybe not the right one.
4.   Did someone counsel him before making his choice?

TRANSITION:
Life has rules. Everywhere we go or we are a part of has lists of do's and don'ts, rights and wrongs. When you look at driving a car, you have to buckle your seat belt, drive the speed limit, turn on your blinker, don't cross the middle line, etc.

Even going the bathroom has rules. When you go, you must flush…and sometimes wipe! And if you're married, put the seat down!

Isn't it funny? We hate to be told what to do; but when it comes down to it, we cannot avoid the fact that everything we do has rules.

Rules—we hate them! But they are everywhere! The choice is whether we choose to follow them or face the consequences if we do not follow them. We have to make the choice.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTION:
1. What are the pieces and parts of a <u>choice</u>?
    a. An individual
        i. Someone who makes the choice
    b. Options
        i. Options are centered on beliefs.
        ii. Individual beliefs are based on prior experiences and present influences that culture options in a person's individual understanding about life and their life skills.
        iii. Individual beliefs motivate an individual's life decisions.
    c. Consequences
        i. Choices have positive rewards or a negative consequence.
        ii. Every choice has a "fork in the road", a good or bad result.

ILLUSTRATIONS:
1. NATURAL LAW-GRAVITY
    a) Take a pencil, hold it in the air, let it drop
    b) In simple terms, how would you explain gravity to someone, how would you characterize the law of gravity?
        i. "What goes up must come down."
    c) Gravity is a force that you may not understand.
    d) Gravity is a force that you may not see.
    e) You may not even believe in gravity, but it is always in effect.
2. BEHAVIORAL LAW-LAW OF SOWING AND REAPING
    a) Law understood in the components of farming
        i. Farmer: the one who is responsible for the outcome
        ii. A seed: choice made
        iii. Fruit: the results, the benefits
    b) "Whatsoever a man sows, that he will also reap."
        i. *Choices* are *seeds* that are planted.
        ii. *Fruit* is the *result*
        iii. ***Therefore***: *Choices* will produce *results or consequences.*
    c) Good choices
        i. Good choices bring an individual more power and more freedom.

TRANSITION:
Let's face it—our lives are covered in yuck…some bad choices. But for whatever reason, we try and make our bad choices look pretty. We cover it up with smiles and rationalizing—whatever we can do to make it look like we've got it all together.

MOVIE: *A Few Good Men*

START: 2:00:21
END: 2:10:17

SCENE SET UP: Hard-nosed Marine Colonel who set himself up to determine what the rules were. A substandard Marine, one he thought was gay, "Code Red" was his way of teaching the Marine a lesson: toughen him up. Two young Marines were sent in to rough their shipmate up to get his attention, instead he died from a pre-existing physical condition.

DICUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Did the Colonel rationalize his choice?
2. Did he feel that he was justified in doing what he did?
3. Do you think he thought he was exempt from consequences, exempt from the rules?

APPLICATION INSTRUCTION:

In reality, the more we try to cover up our bad choices, bad seeds planted, the more our life will begin to stink, producing rotten fruit. To improve, we should use the Principles of Behavioral Law

1. Principles of Behavioral law
    a. **Like kind produces like kind.**
        i. Farming illustration
        ii. Corn will always produce corn, never wheat
        iii. Good choices produce good consequences.
        iv. **Life Application Choice Making**:
            1. Determine desired outcome first
            2. Determine needed choices to make desired outcome happen
            3. ***Determine the desired outcome and make appropriate choices.***
        v. Group Discussion about choices that make a desired outcome happen
            1. How do you get more freedom at work?
            2. How do you get an ESWAS?
            3. How do you get physically fit?
            4. How do you develop good relationships?
            5. How do you have a meaningful marriage?
    b. **The individual seed produces many seeds**.
        i. **Illustration**- cut open an apple
        ii. You not only reap the same kind, you reap more. If that weren't the case, the farmer would go out of business. He plants one apple seed hoping to get a tree full of apples, which produces several apples, and each apple has many seeds. One seed produces abundant fruit.
        iii. ***Choices are far-reaching***.

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      iv. Discussion questions
           1. What are some of the big decisions one makes in life?
           2. What are some of the smaller, less critical decisions you may make in your life?
               a. SUDS=Seemingly Unimportant Decisions.
               b. Follow you for your life.
               c. <u>We are the sum total of the choices we make.</u>
                   i. You sow a thought, you reap an act
                  ii. You sow an act, you reap a habit
                 iii. You sow a habit, you reap character
                 iv. You sow character, you reap destiny

2. Unlike a seed, a choice can't be retrieved.
    a. The outcome is determined at the point of making the choice.
    b. Discussion questions:
       i. Ever said something you regretted saying 15 minutes later?
      ii. Ever made a decision that you wanted to retrieve and "do over?

3. What are some of the components of good choice management?
    a. Get counsel
      i. Difficult counsel is hard to hear.
          1. In making decisions, people tend to favor the positive, hoped-for outcome, rather than examine potentially harsh realities.
             a. The more important the decision, the more importance we should place on counting the cost.
      ii. Make some choices before they need to be made
          1. Don't bully through without reflection or thought.
          2. Think through end result.
          3. Ask Tough Questions
             a. Will it violate moral law?
             b. A civil law?
             c. Religious/spiritual law?
             d. <u>Right versus Wrong</u>
      iii. Change your thinking patterns
          1. End-based thinking
             a. Analyzes the end-result
                i. Taking the possible choices out to their final outcome
               ii. Ask <u>which choice will do the greatest good for the greatest amount of people</u>
              iii. Assesses consequences and forecasts the outcomes
                 1. Who gets helped?
                 2. Who gets hurt?
          2. Rule-based thinking
             a. Follow the principle that you want everyone else to follow

  b. Act in such a way that your actions could become a universal standard that others ought to obey
    i. What if everyone did this? Would that be a good or a bad thing?
  c. Stick to your principles and let the chips fall where they may

 3. Care-based thinking
  a. Do unto others what you would want them to do to you.
  b. Put yourself in the other person's shoes
  c. Imagine how it would feel if you were the recipient
    i. Who gets hurt?

CONCLUSION:

Why are you here? (Ask the attendees to share the reason for their choice to enter the United States Navy.)

How close are your choices tied to your reasons for entering the Navy?

BOUNDARIES

Accepting Responsibility for Your Own Actions

APPLICATION INSTRUCTION:
1. Review from last week: the Principle of Sowing and Reaping.
2. "Whatsoever a man sows, that he will also reap."
   a. Farmer: the one who is responsible for the outcome
   b. A Seed: A choice made
   c. Fruit: The consequences or rewards
3. How does the principle relate to our choices?
   a. *What does it say?* "Whatsoever a man sows, that he will also reap.
   b. Farming language.
   c. **We determine what kind of crop we want to grow. Choices are the seeds planted. Like kind produces like kind. There are inevitable consequences to our choices.**

MOVIE: *A Few Good Men*
START: 2:10:17
END: 2:13:25

SCENE SET UP: Two Marines followed an unlawful order given by their Commanding Officer to "rough up" a young Marine who was thought to be malingering and weak. The Marine died and the two were both charged with murder. Though the truth came out about the unlawful order, the Marines were still dishonorably discharged for conduct unbecoming.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Which of the two had a harder time accepting responsibility for their actions? The younger Marine could not understand why they were punished since they only obeyed an order.
2. What about the older one? The older Marine told the younger one that there was a greater law than obeying an order: taking care of a shipmate. He admitted that they had failed their shipmate.
3. Did they consider the consequence? Probably not. Marines are taught to obey without question, especially from an officer.
4. What choice management techniques might have spared them from making a bad choice? When a tough thing is being asked of you, always take the necessary time to think through the choice being made, along with the accompanying consequence. Do what is right, even in the face of criticism or punishment.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTION:
1. Barriers or boundaries?

a. What do the following things have in common?
      i. A moat; A foul line; skin; sidewalk; a wedding ring

ILLUSTRATION: The Gift of Boundaries
There was a study done on children playing in fields. When there was a fence surrounding the field, the kids explored every nook and cranny of the field. They would play right up to the fence. When the fence was taken away, the kids tended to huddle together in a small section in the middle of the field, afraid to wander too far from each other.

b. *They indicate barriers or boundaries.*
      i. Boundaries define limits, mark off dividing lines.
      ii. The purpose of a boundary is to make clear separations between different turf, different territory. . .
c. Can you think of other physical boundaries that mark off or define limits?

2. TAKING RESPONSIBILITY
a. A boundary also implies responsibility.
b. A boundary gives someone a sense of what he or she is responsible for.
c. A boundary either says, "This is mine to take care of," or "This is my responsibility."
d. A boundary also says, "No one else can or should handle this for me."
e. Why is it so important to acknowledge and accept responsibility for your life?
      i. Accepting responsibility enables you to understand your role in creating results that are in your life, then learn how to *choose* better so you *have* better.
f. RESPONSIBILITY = ABILITY+TO RESPOND:

3. **PROACTIVE AND REACTIVE RESPONSES**
a. It is important for us to know where our responsibility lies because it will require both *proactive* and *reactive responses.*
b. What is a proactive response?
      i. A proactive response is any action I take within the realm of my responsibility to produce the desired result.
      ii. Example: For instance, if I have a yard to take care, then I have to mow it, water it, pull some weeds; even plant a few flowers to make it nice. I might even put up a fence to keep the dogs out of the yard if I want to look really nice.
      iii. What are some proactive responses I might make in a significant relationship where I care for someone?
      iv. What kinds of things will I do in that relationship to show I'm responsible?
c. What is a reactive response?

      i. A reactive response is an action I take within the realm of my responsibility after something goes wrong or something negative happens.

     ii. A reactive response is an admission that I'm at fault or I made a mistake.

   iii. Example: For instance, if I am driving the forklift in the hangar bay and I clip the tail on an aircraft, and there's no one around to see it.

   iv. Why is it important that I take responsibility for this action?

    v. What are some reactive responses I might be required to take in that significant relationship we were talking about?

   vi. When might I be called upon to admit a mistake?

  vii. When I take ownership for a mistake, what does that do to the relationship?

MOVIE: *The Longest Yard*
START: 1:32:35
END: 1:35:31

SCENE SET-UP: Huddle scene: A former pro football quarterback is convicted of gambling against his own team by throwing a big game and lands in prison. While there he is forced by the warden to organize a rag-tag team of inmates to play the near-professional prison guards, a way of roughing up and mistreating the inmates "legally." When the warden figures out the prisoners could win, he threatens to frame the Quarterback with the death of another inmate if he doesn't purposefully throw the game. The other prisoners give up on him when figure out what he is doing. But as he recognizes his wrongdoing, weary of living lies, he decides to work against the agreement made with the warden and play the game to win.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think his teammates decide to leave him vulnerable in the game? They found out his reputation of cheating while in the pros.
2. Do you think that's odd coming from a bunch of convicts?
3. Why is there a turn in their response to him? The player then told his men in the huddle: "I'm sure you know this, but I want to say it out loud."
4. Why out loud? Take responsibility for your own action. It always bring favor and respect from others.

***It's fairly easy in the physical world, to discern where we need to take action, but not so easy in behavior, thoughts, choices, and feelings. We have a responsibility there too. I'm responsible for my words, or my attitude, or the way I behave.

The dangers of victimitis

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Victimitis… a disease or irresponsibility in which an individual starts to think that every negative event that happens is someone else's fault.

TYPICAL RESPONSES TO A PROBLEM, DIFFICUTLY: ASSIGN OR ACCEPT.
You can accept responsibility OR you can assign it to another. **We live in a day when assigning blame in the midst of a problem or difficult circumstance is more common than accepting responsibility.** It's not uncommon to hear things like: "It is my parent's fault, or I wasn't given the same break, or my LPO doesn't like me."

Have someone read this quote: "You are accountable for your own life. Good or bad, successful or unsuccessful, happy or sad, fair or unfair, you have been given charge over your own life. You have always been accountable; you always will be accountable. If you don't like your job, you are accountable. If your relationships are shipwrecked, you are accountable. If you are overweight, or if you don't trust people who are in authority, or if you are not happy – whatever your life circumstance is, you can not dodge the fact that you have responsibility for it.

Very few want to say it's me or I need to make a change or adjustment in my attitude or I take responsibility for my actions. THE BUCK STOPS HERE!!!

In the last several years, we heard our former President say when confronted with immoral wrongdoing, "I did not have sexual relations with Ms. Lewinski." With all the evidence to support the contrary, it was hard for the man to say, "I'm sorry. I did it." Sadly, that kind of escape from reality is not isolated in a man. It is a flaw in the character of mankind.

Let me remind you why this is so important:
- If you don't accept responsibility in the midst of difficulty, **you will misdiagnose every problem** you have.
- If you misdiagnose, **you will mistreat**.
- If you mistreat, **things won't get better**, plain and simple.

By deciding that you are a **victim**, by shifting blame, you convince yourself that something has been **done to me**. It draws the profile of a helpless, weak, disabled person, rather than someone able to overcome adversity.

It fits Webster's idea of a victim: "one who has been deceived or dumped; a chump, a butt, a fall guy; one who has been offered up to oppression, loss, or suffering."

Flight from responsibility will prevent us from keeping the "teeth in our bite" and going on to work on controlling our life. If you truly want to change, and you truly acknowledge that you have a part in your own experience, then you must analyze what you've done or haven't done to create the undesirable results.

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APPENDIX C

SPOKEN AND FORGIVEN:
A SERVICE OF CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS
FOR SMALL GROUPS

Chaplain and Penitents together: **Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; in your great compassion blot out my offenses. Wash me through and through from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions all too well, and my sin is ever before me. Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

Penitents: Pray for me, a sinner.

Chaplain: May God in his love enlighten your hearts, that you may remember in truth all your sins and God's unfailing mercy.

Chaplain: Hear the Word of God to all who truly turn to him:

Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. *Matthew 11:28*

But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe – the best one – and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" *Luke 15:22-24*

Chaplain: Loving, forgiving God: We confess to you and to one another that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

I invite us to say out loud ways we have not forgiven others, here on the ship, at home, or in some other area of our lives. *(Pause for specific confession.)*

Chaplain: We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives.

I invite us to say out loud ways we have been unfaithful to God and to our own best selves. *(Pause for specific confession.)*

Chaplain: We confess our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people.

I invite us to say out loud how we have put ourselves before ship and shipmates. *(Pause for specific confession.)*

Chaplain: We confess our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves.

I invite us all to say out loud how we have coveted the blessings of others and been ungrateful for our own. *(Pause for specific confession.)*

Chaplain: We confess our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work.

I invite us all to say out loud how we have disobeyed orders or taken shortcuts in our work in order to pursue our own wants. *(Pause for specific confession.)*

Chaplain: We confess our unloving thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us.

I invite us all to say out loud ways in which we have pre-judged others and treated them differently than how we wish to be treated. *(Pause for specific confession.)*

Chaplain and Participants together: **Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; in your great compassion blot out my offenses. Wash me through and through from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions all too well, and my sin is ever before me.**

Chaplain: The Almighty and merciful Lord grant you absolution and remission of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

or

Chaplain: Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and for his sake forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Jesus Christ and by his authority, I therefore declare to you this day the entire forgiveness of your sins in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Chaplain: Now there is rejoicing in heaven; for you were lost, and are found; you were dead, ad are now alive in God. Go in peace. The Lord has put away all your sins.

SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT
THE USE OF THIS SERVICE

1. While it is hoped Sailors will take this opportunity to address specific moral choices honestly and openly, this service does NOT provide the privileged communication and absolute confidentiality that a one-on-one conversation with a Navy chaplain provides. If a Sailor's auricular confession could potentially lead to legal or other disciplinary action, he or she snhouuld NOT say out loud any particulars that would require legal or chain-of-command disciplinary action. That Sailor is more than welcome to speak with the chaplain privately at another time.

2. Words of God's forgiveness should be spoken by the chaplain in accordance with his or her tradition. Chaplains from traditions that emphasize the priesthood of all believers (I Peter 2:9) may have another member of the small group speak the words of God's forgiveness. However, it is intended that a chaplain be present to lead and facilitate the overall program.

3. This service is adapted from the rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent (pp.449-451) and the Litany of Penitence (pp. 267-268) from the Ash Wednesday liturgy found in the Episcopal Church's 1979 Book of Common Prayer.

APPENDIX D

Please help us make the optional Spoken and Forgiven portion of the About Face program as useful as possible by answering the following questions:

1. My pay grade is: (circle one)
    a. E-1 to E-3
    b. E-4 to E-6

2. I voluntarily participated in the Spoken and Forgiven group because: (circle as many as apply)
    a. I wanted to experience something I hadn't experienced before
    b. I wanted to connect or reconnect with God
    c. I needed to get something off my chest in a safe environment

3. This experience: (circle as many as apply)
    a. was a waste of time
    b. reminded me of things I already know
    c. taught me new things I didn't know
    d. helped me change my attitude toward the Navy/Marine Corps
    e. helped me change my attitude toward life in general
    f. can help a person avoid trouble if they apply the material
    g. other: _____

4. Two or three of the most important things I learned through this experience were:

5. I think this experience would be useful for: (circle as many as apply)
    a. no one, it is a waste of time
    b. Marines/Sailors who went to at least one level of disciplinary hearing
        (i.e. go to Office Hours, DRB, XOI, Captain's Mast)
    c. Marines/Sailors who are on the edge of getting into trouble and need some
        help before they really do get in trouble (either with the military or life in
        general)
    d. all E-3 and below
    e. all E-6 and below
    f. other _____

6. This experience could be improved by:

7. Rank/Rate and Name (optional)_____

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