

Assisting Ecclesiastical Leaders in Ministering to Members

CHAPLAIN THOMAS S. HELMS, III

Well, it's good to see everybody. I want you to know that it scares me to death to be a speaker at one of these things, right? I—the young lady sitting beside me, she was like, oh, you're the speaker today, right? Well, I want you to know that I feel like I have many friends in the audience, right? I feel like everybody out here is a friend. I do recognize, however, that we do have a lot of guns in the audience here today. So I hope not to be too boring.

I actually took my two nephews on a tour of the Pentagon this last week. And we had them up in northern Virginia. By my house is—the national gun museum is by the house, and it's free. So I take visitors to that because it's free, right? So they got to go see all the guns there, and then I took them to the Pentagon, and right under my floor in the Pentagon, one level down there is—these are, like, kids, right? What are they interested in? I take them to see the gold-plated AK-47 that was in the case—they're from Iraq—and such things.

And then I started talking to them about their future in the military, because right now, recruiting in the military is a big thing, right? Even chaplains; we're all supposed to be recruiters. So I began to recruit them for the chaplain corps, and it was going really well until they asked me about my weapon. And somebody pointed out that chaplains don't carry weapons, and I lost the sale right there.

So I did. Neither of them were interested, but it just hit me when I got here that they can still go to the border patrol, right? So it wasn't a wholesale loss there. I recognize that we have a diverse audience in here today. So as I share the principles, I want you know, I think the principles that I share will be pretty broad gospel principles that can deal in many different circumstances. And although I will share examples that touch on the army, I think that from any of your experiences, you could probably relate to these.

I was touched yesterday. If you could ask my kids—I called my kids after general conference on the phone and said, hey, what do you remember? I knew that one of them would answer and say that their very favorite and most memorable talk was the one with the hobbit, OK? I just knew that the hobbit was going to be a winner, at least among one of my kids.

And when I think—President Uchtdorf spoke about going on an adventure; he was broadly speaking about you. Because you all have chosen—and it's kind of an adventuresome field, right? Being a chaplain, it's just—I mean, when you tell people in the Church you're a chaplain, they kind of look at you and—I don't know, maybe they're mumbling words about priestcraft in the background; I don't know. But it's a unique field, isn't it?

I feel like when you sign up to be a chaplain, you're just choosing an adventure. You have chosen to leave that soft, nice hobbit hole back there and go on an adventure. I want you to know that although much of your ministry is not dealing with members of the Church, today I've been asked to choose that part that does. Because as a representative of the Church, you will find that there are special and unique ways that you can assist your local ecclesiastical—well, that's a—your local Church leaders, and ministering to members.

In fact, this is not just a sideline task, but is expected of chaplains who are endorsed by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, that you will be alert, ready, eager, and willing to participate with local ecclesiastical leaders, and ministering to members when the Lord puts them in your path, or when you are smart enough to be in their path.

I am going to use a mantra, kind of, to outline my talk that comes from the army. It's perhaps one of the best leadership paradigms that I have encountered in my life, and that's the paradigm of be, know, and do. Those three words fit very well in the gospel, but that's what we actually used in the army to say, what do we need when it comes to a good leader? It used to be the title of one of our field manuals—be, know, do.

So I would say—and I want to tell you, the end from the beginning, this is what you're going to get out of my talk, and then I'll say some stories, OK? You need to be holy. You need to know published and prophetic guidance. And third, you need to do ministry with members now. So that's what you're going to get. I already told you, and if you stay awake to the end, you'll hear some of those things, OK?

So number one: as I was preparing this talk, it really struck me that, as Elder Wood said this morning—what did Elder Wood say? He said you need a minister from higher ground, right? Minister from higher ground. And as was mentioned yesterday in general conference, you need to be holy. You need to be clean.

As I was walking to general conference yesterday and the day before, I think the same minister chose me both times to make comments, OK? And I don't know, I like the ministers on the side; at least they're engaged. They at least care what they're doing, OK? They at least have a passion. But there's one minister, as I was walking by him yesterday, he singled me out of everybody in the crowd, and he said, "Colonel"—everybody knew who he was talking about, OK? I was the only one walking in uniform with that particular crowd crossing.

He said, "Colonel, if you don't repent, you're going to hell." That's what he said. And it kind of shocked me, OK, so I was shocked for about two seconds. And then I thought about it, and then—it wasn't appropriate to engage him, and he was doing his work right there, but I kind of engaged the people that were walking across the sidewalk with me, and I gave, like, a response. And my response was, well yeah, that's totally true. If I don't repent, I'm going to go to hell. And so—and I didn't say it, but so is everybody else walking on the sidewalk with me, OK?

But at least we were walking in the right direction, OK? In life. And I want you to know, if you were listening to general conference—I love coming to general conference. Every time I come to general conference, there's something I feel like I need to change. Don't you feel like that? I mean, if you don't come to general conference and feel like there's something that you need to repent of, some way that you need to turn, something that you need to do better, then you were—you just were asleep, OK? At general conference.

It's one of the great blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ, is the knowledge that we have that we need to repent on a frequent basis. So I cheated this general conference. I was close by when the women's conference happened on TV, and I listened in, OK? And so I would challenge you, if you didn't hear women's conference, that you particularly pay attention to the new Young Women theme, and some of the changes that are written in there are extraordinarily profound. And life changing.

So the young men are all jealous that the women have such a good theme anyway, right? So they have a good theme; we have model—I don't know. Maybe the young men will get something someday. But the young women have a phenomenal theme that they can focus on, and part of it now deals with—directly with repentance.

And for any of you men who were listening last year, of course you got a message about your TV watching habits and sports from the prophet, and your need to repent, change, and do better. Well, I would tell you, perhaps the most important thing that we can do in order to increase the effectiveness of our ministry as chaplains is to repent and be more holy. In fact, it's really impossible to be effective as a chaplain without the cleanliness that is required for inspiration from the Holy Ghost.

There are many who think that they're involved in ministry because of their titles but who are simply spinning

their wheels, as they don't have the spiritual traction to go anywhere of true significance. One of my jobs right now, working as the executive officer for the chief of chaplains, is all of the bad news in the army and the chaplain corps comes to me. That's literally one of my jobs. So I receive all of those emails and sift through those.

And so now on the chaplain corps, we have, on active duty, about 2,800 chaplains. That's a significant—not active duty—active duty, guard, and reserve, OK? Some of you are like, there's openings. So amidst all of the compos in the army, we have 2,800 chaplains. That's a lot of chaplains, right? The vast majority of which are doing great things and are clean and worthy to minister.

However, week after week, I still see ministries destroyed because of serious moral failings. One of the great blessings we have in the gospel of Jesus Christ, twice a year, is to get reminders from our prophets and leaders in ways that we can improve. And on a weekly basis, as we go before the Lord and partake of the sacrament, we should be better chaplains because of what we do, what we partake of, and what we covenant to be.

I once had an interview with Elder Nelson at the time, one-on-one. They were interviewing people to become a stake president. I have no idea why I was invited. But I was invited. But it was interesting that before you had an interview with President Nelson, you had to fill out a bubble sheet. There was. There was a list of questions going through the very simple things of your life and what you were doing, and you actually had to fill in, like, little bubbles, like, it could be graded by a machine. I don't think it was graded by a machine, but that's how it was done, OK?

So I went for my interview with President Nelson. And as I did my interview with President Nelson, it was a special experience, as you can imagine, just being able to be in a room with Elder Nelson. And I had just come from—I'm not going to cry today, OK? So I had just come from a hospital room. I had just had—I just had a jump with my soldiers. I was an airborne paratrooper in the 82nd, and after our jump—actually, my airplane didn't jump. I was actually the jump master on that jump, and ready to send my paratroopers out, and we hit a bird, and so the air force called it off. So there was, like, no jump. So they drove us out to the drop zone.

But in coming back from that jump, one of our larger vehicles—we'd stuffed 28 paratroopers in the back of it—had rolled. And it just then rolled this way—it rolled end over end, and it flipped. And so I had soldiers at a mass casualty situation where I had soldiers in five different hospitals.

And I had one of my soldiers who wasn't supposed to live. Like, literally, that night I picked up his wife. She was so new there, she didn't—she didn't even know how to get to town. She had been in town for a couple of weeks. I picked up his wife to take her to the hospital to see her husband.

And as we walk in, if you go into a hospital, if you go to the emergency room and then they tell you, no, there's another room we need to take you into, that's not normally a good sign. And so as we took this young lady into that room along with their small—I don't know—one-year-old baby, the doctors came out and explained the situation. And it was a very difficult situation. He didn't expect her husband to live through the night.

But he did. And in a coma, in a state of nonresponsiveness, having been told that her husband was paralyzed from the—definitely from the waist down, probably from the neck down, and would never—all of the bones in his body were crushed. They had him on one of those rotating beds.

So I spent time in the hospital, and it was coming back from the hospital that I went to meet with President Nelson. And as I met with President Nelson, if you can imagine, I probably wasn't in an emotionally solid state, coming out

of the hospital. And so for me, it was an angelic ministry to be able to meet with him, because I didn't even really know that much about President Nelson at the time, and the fact that he dealt with this stuff all the time—but he gave me really good advice.

And then he turned to my personal worthiness and went through my bubble sheet with me. And as we went through the bubble sheet, he asked me the questions again. And he seemed to be very concerned about my personal worthiness, more than I thought he should have been concerned about my personal worthiness. And he kept on asking a particular question time and time again to me, and whether I felt good about certain aspects of the temple and my—following my covenants. And I really did feel good about those.

And finally, he was like, but here on the bubble sheet, you said this. And I guess I'm not a good test taker, because I'd filled in the wrong bubble on my sheet. So I invite you to examine yourselves, go through those new temple questions, and ask yourself every once in a while—am I worthy to be a chaplain who represents the Lord? Number two: know published and prophetic guidance. One of the best things that you can do to be helpful to local ecclesiastical leaders is to know the published program of the Church and follow it. It's amazing that there is guidance in many areas that we have out there.

I was in a meeting last week here at the Church Office Building where they were reviewing how we were doing with our soldiers actually in other countries. And in that meeting, it was mentioned that chaplain—or that Church leaders in many countries don't know what to do to assist their military leaders. But it was also pointed out that guidance could be found in the Church Handbook of Instructions. And—however, there was a little voice sitting to my left. His voice may have—it could have been Vance Theodore, OK? But he said the following: he also said that we don't follow the guidance in the United States, either.

It's true. There is so much that's given out there already that's prophetic. It's meant for us in our ministries, that's already printed. It's already out there. As a bishop of the Fort Bragg Military Ward, my ward was spared from having me a lot of the time because I deployed. It was kind of a break. Although I deployed with my ward members, too, so I had them scattered with me downrange. But back then it was OK to have three counselors, and so I did. I had three counselors—you can't do that today, but back then I had three counselors.

And my third counselor was a guy by the name of Ernie Severn. And he was a great guy. I had fantastic counselors—I thought the ward was in great hands while I was gone. But before I left, one of my great concerns was, what were we doing to meet the needs of our young single adults in the military? Were we truly meeting their need? And the answer was—absolutely not. There were so many young single adults that weren't coming, or would come and wouldn't stay. They just didn't have all the fellowship they needed. And so I deployed.

And I came back a number of months later. And when I came back a number of months later, I discovered that there was an entire single adult military branch that was formed out of our ward. I mean, it was amazing. All of these people came out of the woodwork. They were vibrant. They were doing phenomenal, much better than when I was there.

And so I asked Ernie, who was responsible for the program, well, what did you do? And here's what he said. He said, I picked up the Church Handbook of Instructions, and I followed it. That's what he said, and I was amazed. And Chris Dyne went on to be the branch president of that branch; he did a phenomenal job. But it's amazing what you can do if you actually know what is published, what's out there, what has the Church provided for you.

I remember as a new chaplain, I was confused sometimes what I should do in counseling. And it inspired—I was inspired one time—I actually had a glass top of my desk to take a document that was much smarter than me, and that was the proclamation on the family. And I actually slid it under the glass of my desk, so when all these people

could come in with their marriage problems, I was sometimes inspired to use portions of that document as to things that could help families, help people. It is an inspired document.

I just served in a district presidency in South Korea. And when I got there—it's a military district. It's an English-speaking military district. As a member of the district presidency, one of my responsibilities, one of the things I was interested in was our high councilors. And we had some phenomenal high councilors. But we also had, as you can expect in a military district—when you're working around military folks, there's a lot of young folks, too, right? There's a lot of people that need to be educated, perhaps learn new callings.

But one of the things that I found was interesting among my high councilors is I had high councilors who were—I mean, a lot of times when get a high councilor, they're just older folks, right? Who've had experience in the Church. That wasn't necessarily what I got with the high council. In the high council that we had, I had—we had high councilors who were afraid to speak. We had high councilors who were afraid to travel. We had high councilors who were afraid, sometimes, to go to church.

So I wondered what I should do to help train my council. And so I thought of many different things that I saw, but then I did the smart thing, and I went to the Church Handbook of Instructions. And I found that there's tons of great advice for high councilors in there, right? There's just great things that they should know, and it helped change our program for high councilors in Korea.

The same thing happened with emergency preparedness in Korea. When I was in Korea two years ago—I don't know if you remember; we remembered in Korea—it was a pretty tense time in Korea. We had families that were afraid to come to Korea with their spouses because they just didn't want to die, OK? So it was a fairly tense time in South Korea a couple of years ago.

So one of the questions we asked as the district presidency is—are we prepared? What would happen to our district—what would happen to our members if North Korea invaded? And so we needed to come up with a program to handle the situation. And lo and behold, we did a little research, and the answer to that program is found in—it's not found in the Church Handbook of Instructions. It's pretty close, though. There are some things in the Church Handbook of Instructions, but where else could you go to find materials on what to do for emergency preparedness? What's the answer? Where can you find it?

Welfare services. I want to say LDS.org, but that's wrong, OK? So it was back then—it's now ChurchofJesusChristofLatterDaySaints.org—has some connections, and also there's another website that's connected; it's called—Provident Living. There you go. Provident Living. There are Church resources that are published that we're expected to know and use, and that was the answer for getting our wards and branches ready for the invasion of the hordes of the North, OK? Which luckily hasn't happened so far.

But it's a blessing to feel that you are prepared, because if you are prepared, you do not have to—you don't have to fear. So I would ask you, what can you do to receive inspiration? I would tell you, if you read through Church Handbook Number 2, you would find some of the most profound doctrines in the gospel expounded in simple and incredible ways. It is one of the most incredible resources we have in the Church and is often underlooked or underutilized by leaders, which include chaplains.

As chaplains, you can give informed advice and counsel with local Church leaders if you know what the materials are. Also, it's a, what are you doing to follow the current advice—the most recent stuff—from our prophets and leaders? I used to love—well, I don't know if I loved, sometimes I felt interrogated—when Elder Oaks—what did Elder Oaks used to do with us at these conferences? Well, he used to interrogate us a little bit after general confer-

ence, right?

Well I know some of you started taking notes after he looked out at the audience and he would say, OK, what did you get out of general conference, OK? What was actually said in general conference? Well, I would ask you, how is what the prophet said in general conference changing the way you minister as a chaplain? Because it can, and it should.

I remember, as a brand-new division chaplain in El Paso, Texas, I had a meeting with all my chaplains. We brought them in, and I gave them a speech, and all they needed to do is—as chaplains, OK? After I gave this speech, I had a very courageous and incredible deputy division chaplain who looked at me and said, hey, sir, I need to give you a little feedback. We really need some inspiration. That's what he said after my speech.

And so I did some soul searching as to, what should the guidance and direction of my chaplains be? And my chaplain assistants, my religious affairs specialist, what do I have to offer them that is inspirational? And so I thought and I pondered. And what came to me was—well, if the prophet's all about the rescue, so can the 1st Armored Division, OK?

So our motto, as the 1st Armored Division, as UMTs, my focus for the UMTs was—the rescue. The rescue. If I was there now, it might be ministry, OK? But I found that as I focused on the words of the prophets, that I could use that in my role as a chaplain. There were things that I just couldn't find in other ways.

So I'd ask you, how are you looking at your Church leaders? Are you following them? Are you considering their counsel and advice? And then number three: do ministry with members now. If you aren't doing ministry with members now in your role as a chaplain, you should probably repent and find a way to do it. Why? Because you're missing out in the—you're missing out in part of the great adventure.

I already know that you're doing phenomenal ministry with nonmembers. That's part of what you do on a daily basis. However, there are special and unique ways that you can minister to members. And sometimes I even think as chaplains, it's even possible to be a chaplain and to receive a paycheck sometimes without really changing lives. As was mentioned this morning, sometimes chaplains—maybe their hearts—maybe they're burnt out a little bit.

So I would ask you, are you really changing lives in your ministry? What are you really doing on a frequent basis to make an impact in somebody's life? I love the term, the self-licking ice cream cone—have you ever heard of that term before? The self-licking ice cream cone—it probably was a term that was coined a number of years ago. They've used it to describe—I think what was an air base in Vietnam.

There was an air base in Vietnam or another country that was really designed—the air base was designed to protect, I believe, the marines who were there to guard the air base. So the marines were really there to guard the airplanes and protect the airplanes, but the airplanes were really there to guard the marines, and there wasn't really—that was it. It was kind of a self-licking ice cream cone.

Why I would ask you, in your ministry, have you ever become a self-licking ice cream cone? I've heard it said sometimes that we've got to be careful about putting too many chaplains in the same location. Because the fellowship—but they'll just fellowship one another. What are you really doing to change somebody's life on a daily basis?

And if we're talking about members of the Church, what are you talking about? What are you doing to help somebody to be on the covenant path? How can you help save somebody's soul that the Lord has put in your path as a Latter-day Saint? And so I have just a few different ideas. Some things that I've seen people do—and so I'll throw these ideas out to you, and some of them may not apply, but here are some of the things that I have seen.

By the way, first off, you just have to decide to do something, right? I'm going to say some quotes and you can tell me who said it, right? Quote number one—never let a problem to be solved—and this is my problem because I get stuck in email, right? I could just live in email land. The chief's office, I could do email from 5:30 in the morning to 9:00 at night, and I will never get to the end of my box; it'll never happen. There's no way that I can do all there is to do. But Thomas S. Monson convicts me—oh, I already gave it to you, right? Oh, I was going to have you guess.

OK. I believe the first one, he said the following: he said, "Never let a problem to be solved become more important than a person to be [helped]" ("Finding Joy in the Journey," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 86). There are sometimes so many administrative tasks out there. There are, and we do have to do administrative tasks. But sometimes those just have to be left behind, right? "Never let a problem to be solved become more important than a person to be loved." OK, now I won't give you the person here. Do it now.

AUDIENCE: Spencer Kimball.

THOMAS HELMS: Spencer W. Kimball, right? First—what was his first motto? Do it. And then it expanded to be—do it now. Because all of us love to procrastinate, right? Lift where you stand. Jump in the pool. Just jump in the pool and swim. That was last general conference; look it up. "For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward" (verse 26). Doctrine and Covenants section—58. OK.

The following are some examples of ministry that I've seen where people have reached out and have partnered with local leaders of the Church in their chaplaincy responsibilities. Some people have already mentioned it here, and I've heard it. One of the great untold stories of the Church that a lot of people don't know is what's going on in our basic training and advanced individual training—places where our soldiers go to do basic training. Do you know what's happening there?

So Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Jackson, South Carolina; there's some air force bases, there's some marine bases out there—some of the highest-baptizing English-speaking areas in the world. Those particular places. Where we have gathered together among those different places, they out-baptized some missions in the Church, and they have been doing so for quite a while.

But what have chaplains done in those locations to make that happen? Well, chaplains have done the following. First, at Fort Benning, South Carolina, a couple of decades ago—

AUDIENCE: Fort Benning, Georgia.

THOMAS HELMS: Right. Fort Benning, Georgia. Phew! Thank you for keeping me all in line, OK? It takes a village to keep me in line, OK? So Fort Benning, Georgia, well, what it took was somebody to get the space involved, right? Sometimes what it takes is working through logistics. And the chaplain, sometimes we work and we grease some of those areas so that ministry can happen with our local leaders.

Now, who's actually doing a lot of the ministry in those locations?

AUDIENCE: Senior couples.

THOMAS HELMS: Senior couples are doing a phenomenal job, right? Senior couples also partnering with local missionaries and with local priesthood leaders are doing—they're just doing phenomenal things in those locations. However, that is only able to happen because in those locations, we've had—we've had chaplains who have prepared the way. We've had chaplains who've gone in and talked to the other chaplains on post and said, hey, can we have

some space? Where can this really happen? Or perhaps it is, hey, we need some buses so that we can get our AIT students off to the local congregation. Or—and the list just goes on and on and on.

Sometimes it's chaplains behind the scenes that help connect the need with the resources so that that ministry can take place in unusual ways and unusual circumstances. Worshipping and getting people to church should be one of your jobs as a chaplain. It should just, like, roll into what you are as a chaplain.

I saw this happen in El Paso, Texas. When we gathered—it actually happened in El Paso, Texas, OK? It's talked about in the Church Handbook of Instructions, but it actually happened there. The local priesthood leaders got it, and the stake presidents there called a local committee to deal with military relations there. They had an active working committee. It was amazing, OK? It was really fun to see.

But as I attended one of these meetings, also invited to this meeting was the Church service missionaries, of which we had quite a number of couples there, and the chaplains were involved. And one of the chaplains involved was a guy by the name of Lance O'Neill, OK? He was just a chaplain who was there. Is Lance here today? Where's Lance out there today? OK, so I'm telling stories about you today, Lance.

As I said in the meeting, it had been impressed on me that as we were dividing stakes in El Paso, Texas, we did not have enough church buildings. We just did not have enough church buildings. But I want you to know, I had the 1st Armored Division chapel on post. And if you've seen churches in the military now, they look exactly like—

AUDIENCE: Stake centers.

THOMAS HELMS: Stake centers, right? I mean, they're almost indistinguishable from a stake center. And why is that? Because one of our Latter-day Saint chaplains gave the plans for a stake center—the Church actually donated the plans for a stake center so that the military would not have to pay for the plans to the army. And that's a way—if you go around an army post, you see all these stake centers in army posts.

So as the 1st Armored Division chaplain, we had a stake center already built on post that was virtually empty. And so I mentioned this at one of our military relations committee meetings that Lance O'Neill was sitting in. Lance O'Neill, as a chaplain and as a member of the high council, I want you to know this did not take months for him to think about. Literally within days of me mentioning that at a committee meeting, he had already met with his stake president.

He had already counseled with his leaders and they came back and said, oh yeah, this is something we want to do. We want to have a ward that is situated on post in El Paso, Texas. How did that happen? Because a chaplain was engaged with his priesthood leaders and didn't sit on it a long time, went to the right authorities, and said, I'll do this now. And it's turned out to be a pretty good deal there in El Paso, Texas.

Well, the same thing just happened in Korea. In Korea, a lot of things are being aligned in different ways. When I got to Korea, we had a congregation that met out in the town, and the Church had provided a building that was not up to your standards. The building was—it was nice to have a building to meet in, OK? I'm not saying it's terrible, but it was cold in the winter. It was hot in the summer, which is dangerous to walk into sometimes. And it was—it was just way too small. Even for these 70 members that we had attending, it was getting a little cramped.

And so behind-the-scenes work had to happen. And as chaplains in the area, chaplains had to do work to convince the Area Authorities that this was a good move. And the United States, as I've seen congregations move on post, it's been easy—we've just done it, right? Things don't always happen in other countries like that, OK?

So the Area Authorities, as we spoke to them, the area leadership, the physical facilities department actually came

to see our new chapels that have just been built on Camp Humphreys. I want you to know that the new chapels that have just been built on Camp Humphreys are phenomenal. All of the money in the universe couldn't have—it's incredible the facilities that they've just built; they actually have parking spaces. Which in Korea is—oh, it's like gold to them, to be able to go to a church and have a parking place. It is just really a cool thing to be able to park at church.

So over time we were able to move—it actually happened fairly quickly. The Church fills its facilities; people came to the new church on post that looked somewhat like a stake center, OK? It's a little bit different design than the one the United States, but it's still just like a stake center, OK? They came there, and they were—they were pretty impressed. They actually measured the rooms, OK? A little bit bigger than a stake center there in that location.

And they also provided the funds to be able to give to the local worship services there so that we could have a service on post. And what happened to our numbers in that local area? Well, we went from a congregation of 70 to a congregation in one year of 270 people. Because the path was just made. The facilities were there, and it was just made possible that this growth could happen in that area.

And we knew other people were moving to that area from other places in Korea; it wasn't just that we had a great facility. There was also a need because of places that were being closed, things that were being shifted. So I would ask you, in your roles as a chaplain, what are you doing to help facilitate worship?

Now I've mentioned buildings that are cool and unique, but I also know for you, worship may be—well, it may be on a berm on a border somewhere, for the border patrol. It might be on a battlefield, for chaplains. It might be in a hospital in a side room or in a chapel at a hospital. If it's in a hospital, it might even be broadcast so that people could watch it in rooms.

You exist as a chaplain to help facilitate worship. What are you doing to do that among the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints today?

Second, getting people to the temple. It's really fun to do worship, but then it's super fun to—it's super fun to get people to the temple. In Korea, recently, I watched a branch president by the name of Loren Omer. Where's Loren Omer? Is he out there? Yes, he's in the back. He's super skinny and he's fast, so he can eat whatever he wants at these luncheons, OK?

It's a joy to see Church leaders in Korea bring their soldiers on a monthly basis to the temple to worship. It's a joy to see people jump through the hoops to figure out how to get a van from their small air force base in the middle of nowhere to get their members to the temple. It's just super special to be involved in the temple.

When I was in El Paso, Texas, one of our great challenges there was the fact that our members in the military service in El Paso, Texas, are not allowed to do what? They're not allowed to go to the temple because the temple is in Juarez, Mexico. And so one of the great things that chaplains are working on right now in El Paso, Texas, is to allow the Church members who are members to go to the temple. Because what's happening? Their spouse is already going. Their children are already going to the temple. I have no problem sending my wife and kids to the temple there; they're pretty safe in the way they do it.

The ministry as chaplains also involves—I would ask you the question, what are you doing to get your folks on the covenant path? And that means getting them to the temple. Being available to accept callings and assignments from your ecclesiastical leaders. So in being chaplains, we're not negated from our responsibility to hold callings, right? You should hold a calling as your regular ministry, OK? It'll help you feel better about getting paid at work,

OK? If you hold a regular calling in your ward where the Lord can bless you in unique ways.

But I have found in many examples and circumstances that your calling at church can also enhance your ministry at work. The following have been some of my assignments. And I will go over mine; I won't hit yours. But the following have been some of my assignments in the military. I served on six different high councils. I've served as a branch president, a bishop in the district presidency. Not all of those were my favorite. Some of my favorite were 11-year-old scout leader, OK? That's a true adventure right there, when you talk about leaving the hobbit hole.

Teacher, adviser, Young Men presidents, which won't exist anymore. Institute teacher, ward gospel doctrine instructor. I have found in many of those circumstances that my ministry as a chaplain was enhanced somehow by my ministry at church. That just bled over. There were unique things that happened.

I would say that your local leaders will respect your call as a chaplain as they see you magnify your call at church. They will understand better your call as a chaplain as they see you do your call well at church. When they ask you to do something, because they know that you're a chaplain, there is a simple philosophy that I have for getting good staff work out of those that work for me in the military. It's not hard for me.

If I ask one of my soldiers to do something and they actually do it, and then they return and tell me that they did it, they're gold. They really are. I can't tell you how rare that is, right? It just is. But I would tell you it's the same for your priesthood leaders. When you're asked to do a special assignment for a priesthood leader, because they look at it and say, you're a chaplain, you probably have unique capabilities, if you actually do that assignment and then return and tell them that you did it, guess what? You're going to get another assignment, by the way, OK? It's just going to happen.

You're like gold in the Church, right? If you can do that in the Church, if you can be given an assignment and return and do it, you will reach more of your potential as a chaplain. So I would just mention a few different things that stake presidents or bishops have asked me to do. When I was in Korea, I was asked to put on a young single adult conference for the YSAs there. It was great fun.

I've been asked to host general authorities in different capacities as they've come to interact with senior military leaders. I've been asked to—me and my wife were just asked to take 57 youth from Korea to Japan on an FSY trip. I've been asked to be in charge of seminaries or institutes. I've been asked to do a very wide variety of things. I wish I had done all of them with the same level of commitment that the Savior would expect of me in any calling and in any responsibility.

So I would ask you, what is the need? At the end of the day, it comes down to the ministry, normally, to the one. What is the need? What are you actually doing when you run across that person in the lunch line that says, oh yeah, I am a Latter-day Saint? Do you really follow up on that? How do you do, as a chaplain, when you find out that this person over here that you work with grew up as a Latter-day Saint?

I love this story this morning from Elder Wood. Didn't you love that story? That he shared where he was bold enough to say, well, I'll just take this book and read it. I would ask you, in your role in working with ecclesiastical leaders, are you holy? Are you ready for when that circumstance happens, or are you even hoping to have that circumstance happen because you pray for it to happen? Are you knowing the published guidance that's out there so that you can give wise counsel and advice to your local ecclesiastical leaders, and do you do ministry, and do you do it now?

I testify that I know that this is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I know that this is a grand adven-

ture. I know that the Lord has called many of you to minister in unique ways as chaplains. I pray that we might follow Elder Nelson in his calls for us to be a little better, to do a little better, and to minister to those that we run across. And those things I say in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

AUDIENCE: Amen.