

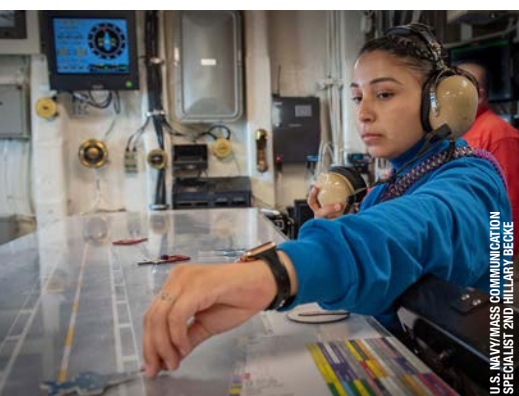


October-December 2021
NEWSLETTER

SO HELP ME GOD

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U.S. NAVY/MASS COMMUNICATION
SPECIALIST 2ND HILLARY BECKE



U.S. AIR FORCE/AUSTIN CONNAHER

MOVING ON IN CHRIST

by CH (LTC) Steven Hokana
USA (Ret.)

"For who is God, but the Lord?
And who is a rock, except our
God?"

This God is my strong refuge and
has made my way blameless.

He made my feet like the feet of
a deer and set
me secure on the
heights."

2 SAM. 22:32-34



THIS IS A BEAUTIFUL PASSAGE
in which God speaks into your life,
through the love of Christ Jesus.

This is David's voice in 2 Samuel 22.
He sings a long poem. David reflects
on the wonderment of the Lord God.
In earlier verses, he sings of death and
destruction like a violent tidal wave,
and the Lord God in opposition. It's
a tsunami versus an earthquake! This
illustrates the power of the Almighty.
The tumultuous cataclysm is simply
a "snort" from the nostrils of the Lord
God. In like manner, it's how we

respond cynically to news, kind of a
"snort" through the nostrils.

The background to this poem is
amazing. David is now old. He's no
longer handsome. Ladies no longer
sing, dance and tap their tambou-
rines, saying,

"Saul has struck down his
thousands, and David his ten
thousands" (1 SAM. 18:7).

David sings about the Lord in the
looming shadow of his mortal life
coming to an end, and he knows he
will enter eternity with God. Life was
hard for David. Kingship takes its toll.
Enemies existed from outside the

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U.S. ARMY/MASTER SGT. MICHEL SAURET



U.S. AIR FORCE/STAFF SGT. VICTOR J. CAPUTO

Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

We live in both kingdoms. As Christians, we have responsibilities in both realms. We have the right to protect our nation. We can, in good conscience, serve in government, be a judge and serve in the military. We pay taxes, marry and own property, while at the same time retaining our identity as Christians. If you want to find out more about the Lutheran's role in government, look at the Augsburg Confessions, especially Articles 16 and 28.

Service as a citizen is a great responsibility. Here is advice all Americans, especially Lutherans, ought to consider:

- Be a role model citizen of both kingdoms.



U.S. ARMY/SPC. RACHEL CHRISTENSEN

SERVING THE TWO KINGDOMS

by CH (LTC) Steven Hokana
USA (Ret.)

After exploring King David's song at the end of his life, it is important to note that Martin Luther wrote from a pastor's heart concerning the calling of military service.

He was approached by a military commander named Captain Von Kram, who was disturbed about enacting God's will by serving in a vocation of violence and bloodshed, even though it was for the protection of his country and its people. Luther corresponded with the military commander by authoring "Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved." In it, Luther wrote about the vocation and the calling of military service.¹

The backbone of this work is Romans 13.

Luther wrote:

This is why God honors the sword so highly that he says that he himself has instituted it [Rom. 13:1] and does not want men to say or think that they have invented it or instituted it. For the hand that wields this sword and kills with it is not man's hand, but God's.



Luther makes clear the depth of sin and how it corrupts institutions

created by God. We see this in relationship with one another, especially in marriage. Luther warns that the military calling can be abused. But like marriage, misuse does not make it invalid. Luther discusses how a person serving in the military must execute his God-given office. The reformer goes on to answer three questions:

1. If one's own government is evil and wicked, do we, who serve in the military, have a responsibility to rebel? Luther says **no**.
2. Do nations have a right for self-defense? Luther says **yes**. He warns against putting hope and confidence in their cause, in this case, self-defense. Luther always wants us to put our hope and confidence in God and in His Son, Jesus.
3. Can a Christian in the military suppress a rebellion against one's own nation (civil war)? The answer is a **cautious yes**. Luther believes rulers are instituted by God and answerable for their behaviors and actions.

As Christians, we serve in two kingdoms (sometimes referred to as the "two realms"). They are often referred to as the "kingdom of the right" and the "kingdom of the left." There are a ton of Bible passages that illustrate the two kingdoms. The most popular and succinct is Matthew 22:21: "Render to

- ▶ Serve in the military. (Thank you for your service.)
- ▶ Vote.
- ▶ Pray for your leadership.
- ▶ Attend worship on a regular basis.
- ▶ Be a kind, loving neighbor.
- ▶ Volunteer at church/chapel and in the community.
- ▶ Further explore the meaning of your faith as you engage the world.
- ▶ Be an informed citizen of both kingdoms.
- ▶ Take a stand.



Take time to read Luther's "Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved" (at thelc.ms/rockrohr-luther-soldiers). Military service is important to explore from the vantage point of faith. Serving "God and country" relates to our society, our country, our understanding as Lutherans and our service to one another.

Time in the military will challenge you. At the same time, the armed forces bring out the very best in your physical strength and character. Most importantly, by grasping tight to the cross of Christ and relying on His promises alone, you can thrive in the military as a Lutheran Christian.

¹Martin Luther, "Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved," Luther's Works, vol. 46: The Christian in Society III, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1999), 87-137.

Luther affirms the calling of a soldier with three points:

1. Serving in the military is God-created and intended to punish evil.
2. The military is intended by God to protect the good.
3. Military service is intended by God to preserve peace.



U.S. NAVY/CHIEF MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST AMANDA GRAY



TOP 10 LIST

for successful military service

This list is based on my experience and career in the Army, a total of 31 years, 26 of those spent as a chaplain.

— Rev. Steven Hokana

- 01 Be the absolute best at what you are called to be (Infantry, Doc, Crew Chief, EOD).
- 02 Know your job better than anybody else.
- 03 Demonstrate that you are a team player. There's no "I" in team.
- 04 Be civil, polite and respectful.
- 05 Be a hard worker. Don't cheat or cut corners.
- 06 Learn to laugh at yourself.
- 07 Ask "Is it my faith, or am I just missing family?" when you're feeling loneliness.
- 08 Be yourself. Others on your team will test you, but they do not want you to give up your faith. They want you to be who you are!
- 09 Stay in touch with your church and family. They love you and miss you.
- 10 Attend chapel, find a Lutheran service and seek out fellow Christian brothers and sisters serving with you. You are not alone.



U.S. AIR FORCE/AIRMAN 1ST CLASS ALEXIA GIVENS

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border and inside his own family. The Philistines were a constant threat. Lest we forget, David journeyed through the Absalom rebellion. God saved him from both and blessed him.

Ask yourself the following two questions: What does the Holy Spirit, speaking through the Shepherd King, say to me? How does God speak to me as a warrior after the war ends? Currently, you are serving on the front lines of freedom. Wherever you are, you did not expect combat, death, mayhem, the smells of battle and the emotions that follow when returning to your home station.

We look at King David, a warrior whom God loved so much, a flawed person who, through the Holy Spirit, held the Lord in his heart. Here is how we can respond to the terror and traumas of a life filled with violence.

We see war through the lens of God's hand in our lives. Through the love of God in Christ Jesus, you survive war, redeployment and the challenges of a military life. The Lord Jesus is with you during those challenging chapters of life.

So, when all is said and done, what is a warrior to do when he "hangs up his shield and sword"? Are we to be bitter? David wasn't. Should we be angry at God for relationships taken away? David harbored thanksgiving in his heart. It is too

easy to look back in bitterness. Be wary of the steep slide into the abyss of anger and resentment.

Bitterness and hatred are consequences of a fallen humanity; they are a sin problem. What are we to do? What is a warrior to do? What is a citizen of the kingdom of God to do?

First, we fall on the mercy of an almighty God. We sincerely and honestly ask the Lord Jesus for forgiveness.

“THE MYSTERY OF OUR ETERNAL GOD WAS TO SEND HIS SON, JESUS, TO SUFFER AND BE THE PERFECT SACRIFICE, REMOVING SIN, THE STING OF DEATH AND THE POWER OF THE DEVIL.”

Second, we search the Scriptures and not ourselves for peace. Third, we look to our Baptism and seek ways to live a life of redemption. We attend worship and participate in the Sacrament of Christ's body and blood. Finally, we seek ways to live in service to our neighbor.

Look, life is tough. We live in a fallen world. It is so easy to give in to the darker side of our nature. How easy to

join others with hoots and howls about its unfairness. Let me be clear: If we got what we deserve, we would be lost forever. We would rightfully be condemned to eternity. The mystery of our eternal God was to send His Son, Jesus, to suffer and be the perfect sacrifice, removing sin, the sting of death and the power of the devil.

David was saved by the unfathomable grace of God's love for him. We, too, are saved by the love of God in Christ. Through Jesus alone, we are saved to live with Him forever. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHECK IT OUT!

WORSHIP AND DEVOTIONS
worshipanew.org

MILITARY ONE SOURCE
militaryonesource.mil

VETERANS CRISIS LINE
veteranscrisisline.net

WARRIORS OF FAITH
thelc.ms/lhm-warriors

FORGIVENESS IS A CHOICE
shoplhm.org/forgiveness-is-a-choice

PTSD THE WAR AT HOME
shoplhm.org/the-conflict-at-home-soldiers-confronting-ptsd

VICTIM, VALIDATED, VICTORIOUS
shoplhm.org/victim-validated-victorious

STRENGTH AND HONOR
shoplhm.org/strength-and-honor-the-spiritual-warfare-against-pornography

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