

Carlisle Barracks Memorial Chapel Fellowship Breakfast

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To Integrate Faith, Family, and Profession: Integrate Your Ethics, Seamlessly

To recall, our Challenge: Dual Callings - God and Country

- With dual callings on our lives the challenge is to live Christianly by right integration of those callings; a balanced fulfillment of personal and professional obligations under each calling.
- And remember, “The American military and the American family are the two most greedy institutions of which we can be members.” (Professor of Sociology, Dr. Mady Segal, U.Md.)

Our First Calling – from God to salvation and discipleship in Christ’s Church, by faith through grace (pardon + power)...

- To obey Him, to become like Him (sanctification), to abide with Him now and eternally, and thus to avoid compartmentalization of our lives into fragmented roles (Oz Guinness, *The Call*, Word Publishing, 1998)
- Including, where ever we serve in whatever professional role, to make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20); one imperative “make disciples,” three participations “go, baptize, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

Our Second Calling – to vocation(s); and, for those under oath to a military profession:

- To serve Him in vocation, our work as sacred and far more important than self (enabling sacrifice); having a theology of life and calling vs. just having a job. In my experience, this is a major failure of many Christians in the military.
- Such service is a response to a call from the Republic and one of its most trusted, indeed venerated, professions; a deeply moral obligation of trusted stewardship for the nation’s security and our way of life.
- Navigating the challenge of divided loyalties, to God and to Country, to Church and to State: “*Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.*” (Matthew 22:21, a very enigmatic statement).

Failure to Meet the Challenge, Failure to Integrate – Compartmentalization of our Lives; Fragmentation our Authenticity as an Integral Person of Faith, the bane of the church...

- Not an option for the Christian; “*And whatever you do, whether in word or in deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*” (Col 3:17)

And today, another place we may fail to integrate: As a Christian, is the Ethic of your faith seamless with the Ethic of your profession? *Can you serve authentically by your Christian ethic and still be a military professional (uniformed or civilian) effective at moral leadership within a secular institution (e.g., Army) serving a secular Republic?*

- Under all service doctrines, the moral character of leaders is determinative of their, and their units’ effectiveness (character now on a par with competence).
- One way to think about leading authentically: the leader of character “seeks to discover the truth (moral sensitivity); decide what is right (moral judgment); demonstrate the courage to do it (moral courage, as opposed to moral cowardice of a bystander); always (moral integrity).” (ala James Rest, 1986)

- Such a role, correctly lived, requires consistency between three aspects of life: the leader's actions (the "walk"); the profession's Ethic, doctrine (the "talk"); and one's personal beliefs (our essence, spirituality, concept of truth and right, world view).
- It's the consistency between the profession's and the individual Christian's understanding of moral truth, that I want to focus on now.

The Christian's Ethic, Our Understanding of Moral Truth

- Generally, the Christian's ethic is the revealed will of God (which always reflects His perfect moral character), and particularly as revealed in Scripture; it is an absolute and prescriptive (vice descriptive) ethic, binding on all Christians in all circumstances and times; it is more deontological, or duty-centered, than teleological or end-centered, e.g. 10 Commandments.
 - o Thus, the rule is the basis of the action; the rule is good regardless of the perceived consequences (Romans 8:28), e.g., Abraham with Isaac...
- Service doctrines generally agree that a Leader's actions do accurately reflect his/her moral character - "Doing" flows naturally from "Being and Knowing," from the content of one's moral character, which is developed in consonance with what both the individual and institution belief to be ethical.¹
- Paul's Epistles discuss the framework in which Christians are to develop their moral character and live their lives:²
 - o Salvation is the basis of moral life, restoring the *Shalom* of before the Fall
 - o Christ-likeness is the goal of the moral life (again, our first "calling")
 - o Spiritual conflict is the context of the moral life
 - o Love is the manner of the moral life
 - o Self-abnegation, yielding to the Holy Spirit, is the means to the moral life
 - o The Holy Spirit is the agent of the moral life.
- We, as Christians, have the "norms" of the Kingdom as our guide for living the moral life of a Christian, e.g., the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount, The Great Commandment, Micah 6:8, whole duty of man, etc.³

Table Talk: Comparisons

- Are there complementarities and incompatibilities between these two ethics? YES, there are. For starters, I suggest:
 - o Complementary: e.g., concepts of self-abnegating service, authority, moral community, servant leadership, etc.
 - o Incompatible: e.g., the primary objects of your loyalty and your duty, definitions of personal success, etc.
 - As an aside, one of my early mentors taught me that for obvious reasons, one's personal success can be "seen in the eyes of your soldiers, the hearts of your children, and the smile of your spouse..."
- In sum, my encouragement to you before you return next spring to the "press of business," is to center the moral development of your Leader's Character on the Ethic of your faith. **Your professional expertise, as observed in action should reflect a uniquely Christian Character, one fully integrated with your Profession's Ethic.**

¹ For a developmental model of the leader's spirituality or personal character, see chapter 2 of Don M. Snider and Lloyd J. Matthews (eds.) *Forging the Warriors Character...* 2d Edition, (McGraw-Hill, 2008).

² Stanley J. Grenz, *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics* (Inter Varsity Press, 1997): 117-129.

³ See chapters 1-3 of Glen H. Stassen and David P. Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics* (Inter Varsity Press, 2003).