

Responding to Inappropriate Orders Williams

I'd like to go to our younger Emmanuel showing here and turn it over to him for the devotional.

That was taken in the spring of 1955 in Korea.

Let me have that first slide, Cal, that has biographical information on it. There you go.

Yeah. So very quickly as a means of introduction, I was born and raised in California, came to faith as a teenager in the local Pentecostal church that I attended.

um upon graduating from high school went to cal And in Cal, it's a requirement for all undergrad, the underclassmen, freshmen and sophomores to take compulsory ROTC. So I was in the ROTC program my freshman year and in 1950 the Korean war started and they said uh If you want to stay in college and get a deferment, apply for advanced ROTC. And so that's how I got in the program.

uh was commissioned in uh 53 entered active duty 54 and spent time primarily in infantry special forces units.

And I should say that I also want to point out that when I entered into the service, That was a completely new experience in terms of serving the Lord.

I have been accustomed to the nurture and the protection of my local church when I was in San Francisco.

But serving in Vietnam, serving in Korea was an altogether new experience. And so my walk was not what it should have been.

And as a result, when I came back from Korea, I had the opportunity to meet the woman that eventually became my wife, Thelma.

And she was the epitome of Christian womanhood.

So I knew that I had to restore, renew my walk with the Lord, which I did.

And then fortunately, I was at Fort Riley at the time.

I came in contact with a local church in Junction City and they basically took care of me and nurtured me spiritually and socially during the time that I was there.

So that was my introduction to the military.

and i wanted to make that connection about my faith i was serving the lord not that well when i first came in but by 56 that had changed and I was beginning to be outright and forceful in terms of my witness. All right, next slide.

Okay, I'll go back.

Before you go, just let me say something about my introduction Well, no, I know it. Yeah, next one, that's all right, because I get to talk about it. The next one, yeah, involvement.

um my first overseas assignment as with them with my wife was in germany and i was at munich And during that time, Colonel Palm was commanding one of the battle groups in the 24th Division, and he came down to Munich and visited the OCU. But one One afternoon when I was in the PX, a warrant officer came up to me.

and said, I know that you attend chapel. He says, have you ever heard of the Officers Christian Union? I said, no.

And he said, well, let me invite you to one of our Bible studies here on post.

and that was the beginning of my connection with uh with the officers christian fellowship And that was the first time in that was 61 yeah so that was the first time since i had been in the service that I had come in contact with officers who were very open in their walk with the Lord and their faith.

And we're certainly trying to be a witness for the Lord in the military.

And that was an encouragement for me.

And not only that, that then was the initiating event that caused me to become a member of OCF and to remain with them up until the time that I retired.

And during that time, I had the good fortune of serving as the local rep at Fort Hood and also at Fort Sheridan.

and so naturally then it was around the time i was getting ready to retire that I got a letter from Cleo saying he was starting Acts.

and invited me to become a supporter and to participate and that launched my connection with Axe. Dell was one of the leading people at that time. I got invited to a board meeting. I thought I was just going up to watch.

And at the end of the board meeting, they said, OK, we'd like you to join.

And since then, I've had the privilege of being connected with Acts.

I went to the African conference in 1986. I went down to...

Went with Dell to Liberia in 88.

And then also to Jamaica, to the celebration of the Jamaican Defense Force Prayer Group.

and then since then trips to africa and to haiti and lastly to china with carson taverner so that brings us to the topic for today let me hit this one first i just want to show this slide of annual in leadership, many, many years.

spiritual leadership. Let me just say, go back to that last picture a minute, Cal.

That was taken at the end of a training period with the German Mountain Division in Bavaria.

And the distinguishing thing about that, this was 1961, The distinguishing thing, it was the first time American or NATO troops had trained under the command of the Bundeswehr.

So it got a lot of publicity, but that was going on. Go ahead. Yeah.

Um...

In 1963, I applied for and got accepted into the Special Forces, went through the training program at Fort Bragg.

And then in January was appointed commander of one of the special forces detachments that was scheduled to go to Vietnam.

We had about a five-month training program and then we deployed in May of 1964.

And what you're looking at is an aerial view of the camp where I was located.

This was up in ICOR in the northwest corner of Vietnam.

maybe about five miles from the border with Laos.

The name of the camp was Cam Duck. It was built initially to be a sort of summer hunting lodge for the president.

And that's the reason we had that long runway. We had a runway, a concrete runway that would accommodate up to C-130s.

And so that was the way that we were brought in supplies and brought in people. There were no roads.

leading into our camp. There were no villages. There were no civilization around us. It was just us and the jungle.

So that's what the camp looked like at that point in time. You'll see one of the perimeter fence going around it on the left side.

And the runway is there at the top of the screen. And then there was also a taxiway.

for a smaller aircraft yeah so that was the setting for this um i'll call it event that i participated in and next slide um cal thanks so By virtue of the location of our camp, We supported helicopter operations and also the establishment of new Special Forces camps.

And so somewhere around June or July, the decision was made to open a new camp further out to the west, closer to the ocean border.

and the mission at that time was to monitor the ho chi minh trail and have and be able to infiltrate or to impact of the flow of people and goods up and down the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

and so the concept of operation was uh they would bring in the helicopters in the morning and then two companies of Vietnamese nuns would then board those aircraft and travel to the new camp that was to be opened. That was the plan.

And so the day of the operation arrived, the helicopters provided by the Marine Corps squadron that was at Da Nang showed up. They all spaced themselves appropriately on the strip. My boss flew in from Da Nang. He was a major.

And we stood there and saw all of the preparations being made. And then somebody runs up to us and says, the troops aren't gonna go and we said well why And they said, well, they just don't feel like that this is in their best interest and they aren't going to go.

So there we were, we had a whole runway full of toppers.

We had people standing by to support the operation, and then the troops that were supposed to make up the force going out there said they weren't going to go. And these were people of a Chinese ethnic group. We called them nuns.

A large contingent of them lived in Saigon. The French used them as military units.

And after the French left, their unit got broken up and the special forces hired many of them to serve as armed guards for the special forces troops So we had about 150 of these people out on the runway. And they said they weren't going to get on the helicopter.

and my boss needless to say was very angry and he looked at me and said, I want you to go out there and strip them of all of their military equipment and clothing.

and let them walk back to where they came from. That was the order.

and as i thought about it i said well this is going to be easier said than done number one And then secondly, I began to think, well, if those people have to walk back to where they come from, they're going to be subject to enemy action or action by the Viet Cong because there were no friendlies out where we were where the camp was so there was about a 25 mile stretch of jungle from where we were back to quote civilization and to expect them to be able to make

that journey barefoot, without equipment, without weapons, to me seemed to be very remote, impossible.

And I began to think about the ethics. I mean, I didn't use the word ethics, but I began to think about the propriety of this and saying, This just isn't going to work.

These people are likely all to get killed on their way back, trying to get back to their home villages.

And so within a very short time I said to my boss, I said, I'll take all of their equipment, their weapons, their radios, their ammunition. I'll take all of their equipment.

but I said I'm not going to take their uniforms I'm not going to strip them And we'll leave them out here on the runway and wait for transportation. There wasn't any promise of it.

But I said, I'm going to let them stay out of the camp. I won't bring them in the camp, but I'll let them stay out there on the...

until transportation does arrive. He got in his helicopter and took off and went back to Da Nang.

We took, we went over, we disarmed them, got their equipment.

and then said this is where you're going to wait until transportation comes.

uh two days passed they stood out there slept out there finally on the third day The B team did send in fixed-wing aircraft C-123s to pick them up and move them.

That was the event.

So when Del started talking, when Cal started talking about he was involved in the ethics program, This particular event came to my mind because for me it was an ethical issue.

I had received a lawful order I mean I'll say that I had received an order take off the adjective I received an order from my commander to do something, but I felt it really was inappropriate and unethical.

And so I came up with an alternate response, or as Dean says, a course of action.

And my proposal was, okay, I'll take some of their equipment, but not all of it.

And I'm not going to force them to move.

hike back to where they came from. I'm going to wait for transportation to come in and pick them up.

now very quickly there's just one and Cal mentioned this to me but it is Very true. There is one biblical incident that closely parallels this issue of when a military person issues a command that

uh let's just say is inappropriate the technical word is unlawful but issues a command, and then somebody comes along and offers...

an alternate solution to the issue at hand.

and so the story the biblical story involves david and a woman named abigail and her husband by the name of Nabal. Now, most of you are familiar with the story in 1 Samuel, the 25th chapter.

at this point in time david is still leading a guerrilla group around the southern part of israel and being chased by Saul. So what happens? is that David had provided protection for Nabal's sheep shearers and shepherds and he came along and said he thought he would collect on some of the service that was due him And Nabal refused to compensate him for his services. And that's where the first order comes into effect.

because when david is told that nabal is not going to pay him and has insulted him david says He says to his men, put on your sword.

So they put on their swords and David put on his. About 400 men went up with David while 200 stayed with the supplies.

So David's response was, okay, if Nabal's not going to compensate me for my services to him, I'm going to go up and wipe him out.

and that's what he does he he takes his men and starts moving toward nabal's home village And when he gets close to it, david has this to say he says may god deal with david be it ever so severely If by morning I leave alive one male, all of who belong to him.

So David's intention was kill Nabal and all the people that work for him.

Not necessarily an order sanctioned by God, but needless to say, David was angry.

and he was acting in response to his emotions at that time.

fortunately fortunately a woman sue comes along saves the day Nabal's wife, Abigail, hears about what is happening. She learns that Nabal is on the way, and she immediately says, that sets out on a course of action to try and stop david She sends gifts of food and supplies on animals ahead of her.

And then she gets on an animal and runs down to where David is. She meets David. How they happen to know what route he was on, I don't know, but they met.

And when she meets David, she first says, look, pay no attention to my husband, Nabal.

He is a fool and folly goes with him. But as for me, I am your servant.

and then she implores that he not ruin his reputation by shedding blood he says now the Lord has kept you my master from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands. So she lays out a course of action and what she entices, she first says Nabal is not worthy of David's actions or revenge.

she also sends food down there to provide some store some nourishment for David and his men And then she lays out an argument that it would be to David's detriment that this event would follow him the rest of his life.

And he shouldn't want to take revenge and that be a part of his legacy.

And so the bottom line is David comes to the conclusion that she is right, and he says, tells her go home in peace I have heard your words and I have granted your request Now the similarity that I see in this is that, again, based upon what Dean mentioned last week, is that ideally young so young officers coming in the service should be instructed on what difficulties they may encounter in the way of ethical actions. One of those being an improper order.

And what should you do if you encounter or are the recipient of an order that appears to you to be inappropriate. So, again, COAs, courses of action, I would think that as we look ahead concerning the ethical training for new OCF and Axe people is that we would inform them about what might be their courses of action if they are faced with an unlawful or an inappropriate order.

And I just put down a couple of things here to say, certainly determining the lawfulness of the order and that is probably the most difficult thing uh or needless to say it is subjective it's lawful in the minds of the person who gave it but it may not be lawful in the minds of the people who are the recipients.

But if you happen to be on the receiving end, you got to quickly determine, is this order I'm being given lawful? And can I carry it out in good conscience? Now, certainly there could be a time when the order is lawful, but it may violate chief or vice versa, but certainly that is the starting point for determining how are we going to respond to an order that we consider it to be unlawful.

That could be lawful in the state of what the Army regulation is, or it might be one that violates the conscience.

uh there are other factors I've looked back at the orders for MACV at that point in time and they are very clear that the military was prohibited from taking action that would injure or harm of people who were prisoners or the civilian populace. So in looking out for those soldiers, rebellious soldiers who faced going back to where they came from, To me, that would not have been wise that they would be vulnerable. They were subject to being killed or wounded.

by the communists, and that was the basis that I arrived at for saying no.

I need to come up with something more powerful, something more just.

And so that was the reason that I gave my response Okay, I'll take their equipment, their military equipment, but I'm not going to strip them down to their skivvies.

and leave them out in the jungle to make do for themselves.

I'll just say, thanks be to God, because it wasn't anything that I did, but thanks be to God, my boss accepted that.

and within two days did send transportation up to the camp to pick up these rebels and take them back to the camp from which the town from which they started. So Again, I see the merit, I see the practicality of acts coming up with ethical training.

uh for young officers at least to acquaint them with some of the contingencies that they possibly could face uh while they are in the service and especially if they are in a combat situation where orders can sometimes be given from emotion rather than from the actual need or military situation that exists. I guess it's time for questions and discussions.