

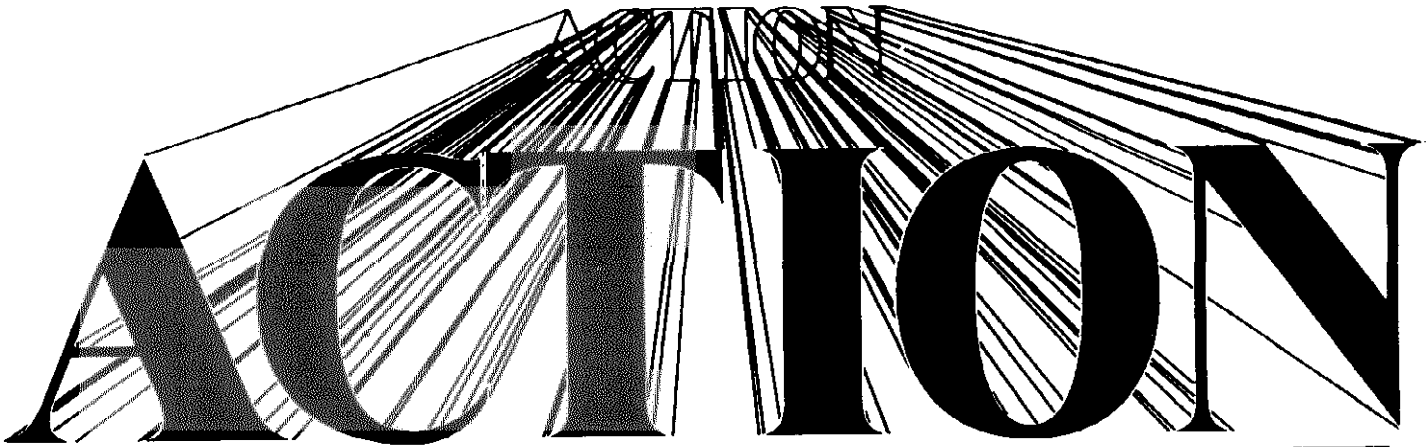
*"There is no burden as heavy as a great potential."*

*Linus, "Peanuts"*

*"Always do right: This will gratify some people and astonish the rest."*

*Mark Twain*

From  
**VISION**  
to



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**L**eadership is a responsibility, not a privilege. Promotions, as well as positions of greater authority, are not rewards based on performance in the past; they are assignments based on potential for the future. Senior chaplains cannot rest on their laurels: they must prepare to earn their pay!

But leadership is a challenge of the best kind: it is a challenge to dream dreams and share them; to look at what is and build a vision of what might be; to teach others and learn from them; to build a team devoted to service and committed to success.

Leaders face the terrible, but wonderful, responsibility of inspiring others to have faith enough to try to make a difference—working together to do some good—to do what is right in a world that needs all the help it can get.

#### **Think First—and Often**

The first challenge of leadership is to learn the difference between working hard and working smart. We are all eager to "get things done," but we should not be like the boy who has so much sawing to do that he doesn't have

time to sharpen the saw.

Don't confuse being busy with doing a good job! If we are flying off-course, the news that a tail wind is helping our speed is not necessarily good. And if we spend all our time with only a handful of people (or one "area of need"), then we may work hard without doing our job.

We must ensure that we understand the mission, and drawing from the Biblical idea of a Sabbath, we must set time aside to stop work, observe what it is we have achieved, and course-correct as required. We must see our mission within the framework of a vision that gives that mission meaning. It is the task of leadership to bring an integrity, a wholeness, to the process.

#### **Learn to Lead**

Whether leadership is an art or a skill, what is important is that **leadership can be learned**. We may not all be born with the capacity to be great leaders, but we can all learn to be better leaders.

Military training stresses leadership, and the fact that it can be taught. General Eisenhower wrote that leadership

was the "one quality that can be developed by studious reflection and practice." For all of us—as officers and as chaplains—studying leadership, and struggling to exercise it wisely, is a responsibility, not a luxury.

My first lesson in military leadership occurred in 1969, in the rivers of the Mekong Delta. My new commanding officer asked me what I was "striking for" (a term I thought applied only to enlisted personnel). That skipper told me in no uncertain terms that all line officers should strike to be command-

clear: we are staff officers who help the command provide all members of the command—men and women of all faiths—with opportunities for religious free exercise.

The first amendment guarantees that Congress shall make no law establishing religion, nor prohibiting the free exercise thereof. Military personnel can be ordered to serve far from houses of worship or religious support, so the command must ensure religious opportunities still exist. Chaplains are the staffers and subject matter experts

who help the CO live up to that responsibility—to the greatest extent possible, wherever our people serve.

How we minister to our own and facilitate ministry to others is secondary: a matter of tactics, not strategy.

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ing officers to ensure we learned to see the responsibilities of leadership through the eyes of the one in charge.

Chaplains "strike" for the job of command chaplain. We must develop leadership skills in preparation for future assignments. We must learn to see the command religious program through the eyes of the command chaplain—and, even more, through the eyes of the CO, who is ultimately responsible for its success.

#### Review the Mission

Some chaplains still argue in chicken-and-egg fashion about which comes first: whether they are officers first, or clergy. They ask the wrong question, for the answer is that both are prerequisites, and what matters is not what we were first, but what we have become. The answer today is

Our mission, regardless of faith, is the same: command religious programs (CRPs) that support all personnel.

Chaplains represent different faith traditions, and at times, competing moral values. We must be clear what it is we have agreed to do, and who it is we serve.

OPNAVINST 1730.1B outlines nine basic areas of need that every CRP should address. A look at programs in each area, and the people they target, is a quick test to see how well we accomplish our mission—or if we understand it at all.

#### Craft a Vision

"TQ" (Total Quality) stresses "constancy of purpose," based on a mission that is clearly defined. But TQ demands

to build a cathedral. Three true statements reveal three different visions.

In business, good leaders understand the difference between vision and mission. The leader of Kodak once challenged his employees to consider what business they were in. "Cameras?" one asked. "Film?" asked another. "Pictures?" suggested a third. "Memories," they finally agreed. And that idea helped shape the direction and the future of the company.

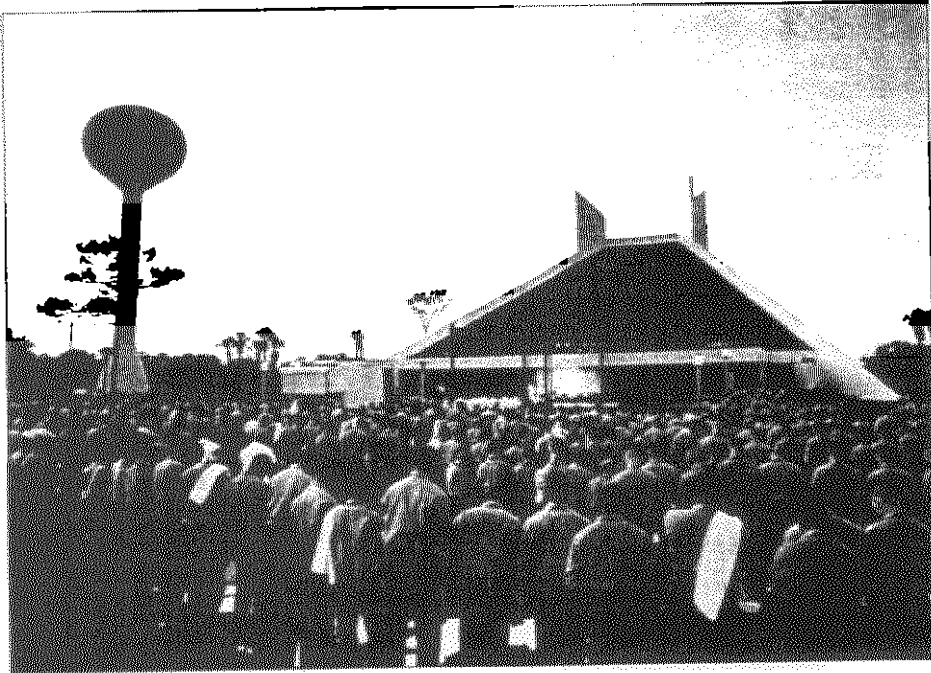
Lack of vision can be disastrous in many ways, including the loss of golden opportunities. It has been said that the railroads could have easily (and cheaply) bought up the new airlines as they formed in the 20s and 30s—and today we might be flying a "Canadian Pacific" 747 to France! Executives thought they were in the railroad business. With some vision, they would have understood they were in the transportation business.

#### A Boot Camp Vision

Central to the Chaplain Corps Vision is the concept of faith: faith that we can help, and hope; faith in our institutions and their values; faith that we can touch and help our neighbors, community, and world.

When we act based on a vision of faith, we "raise the ante" for all who hear or see: we remind them of hope, of holiness, and of dreams.

Orlando's chapel logo includes the words, "Chapel Helps You Make It Through Boot Camp; Faith Helps You Make It Through Life." Our mission is to provide religious opportunities within the constraints of basic training. Our vision is that a supportive program here can "plant world, the most dangerous for leader



huddles in a football game, the chance to plan what comes next. Chaplains who think meetings “get in the way” of ministry, rather than seeing them as part of the “plan-do-check-act” TQ approach to progress, have not yet come onboard.

On the other hand, the meetings may be the problem!

A meeting should include a time to share ideas, brainstorm options, or make joint decisions. If it is not, it should be replaced by a memorandum.

Teams are built slowly—and sometimes painfully. But remember: no pain, no gain! One writer described four steps in the process of team building:

1. **Forming** (we don’t “hire” our team, but forming includes the time to learn about each other—our styles, strengths, passions, and pains),
2. **Storming** (learning to manage conflict and dissent),

ship is, “If it’s not broken, don’t fix it.” Preventive maintenance is the name of the game. If we wait until something is broken, we’ve waited too long. Vision should always foster initiative, and remind us that “that’s the way we’ve always done it,” is never a good enough reason to do it that way now.

Bill Brien, CEO of Hanover Trust, writes that a visionary leader is not someone who makes big speeches about vision; instead, it is someone who makes day-to-day decisions with a vision in mind. Through words and deeds, from the simplest prayer at a ceremony to the longest service in the chapel, we must remember our vision, choosing our words and planning our actions with that vision in mind.

It has been said that managers do things right, but leaders ensure we do the right thing. A good manager checks that we go up the ladder, not down. But a leader questions whether or not we’re still climbing the right ladder. Some of our ladders are out-of-date models, and some are propped against the wrong wall.

It is crucial that all chaplains struggle

with a vision of what it is we do, or might do, within the Chaplain Corps as a whole, and at our local command. If we do not, we might get to the top of the ladder, only to find ourselves on the roof of a deserted building.

#### **Build a Team**

Team members must: (1) have different (complementary or interrelated) skills or abilities; (2) be committed to shared goals; and (3) believe that the goals can be accomplished better working together than working apart.

Manpower plans and detailing skills ensure that chaplains meet the first requirement. Stressing shared mission and vision achieves the second. The third is the challenge.

One test of progress is the attitude toward meetings. Teammates see meetings as opportunities to share information and learn from each other, and like

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3. **Norming** (establishing ground rules—and trust),

4. **Performing** (setting goals and working to achieve them).

The danger is to go directly from Step One to Step Four. We may all be working, but we won’t have a team. We must take time (and the risks) in Steps Two and Three, and return to them again and again. We must work hard if we hope to work well.

Team building requires participation by all, and “hands on” involvement on the part of the leader. “Hands off” leadership too often is no leadership at all—although it is often based on good intentions, and on an overreaction to a bad experience with “micromanagement” in the past.

Leadership demands we learn from

the past, but we must learn the right lessons. Mark Twain relates that a cat who sits on a hot stove will never do so again; but it will never sit on a cold stove, either.

We cannot be mentors if we remain uninvolved or removed, or if we merely offer to make ourselves available upon request. We exercise leadership when we support ongoing dialogue: asking questions that help others think through options and risks.

We all need help (and prodding) to test our perceptions, reveal our blind

We must be convinced that two heads (or more) really are better than one, and that a team is truly more than the sum of its parts.

Leaders must be advocates, involved enough to understand the obstacles in the road ahead, or they cannot help to clear the way. Some leaders say they work more for their staffs than their staffs do for them. They may not be exercising false modesty; they may be exercising good leadership.

#### Teamwork and Team Play

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*...the way we handle disagreements,  
respond to mistakes, and welcome  
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to hide mistakes or share them....*

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Team play and team work are terms that are used interchangeably, but there are subtle differences. Success demands sweat, but it should include a sense of

play (fair play!), and fun. Teams that play well take pride in their team, and look forward to a winning season.

Success is always a strong motivator. Programs should include the "wow" factor (what business leaders call "knock your socks off service"), and encourage the team to take risks and try new ideas (a "venturesome" climate). Most people want to do well, and good leadership should foster enthusiasm, job satisfaction and high spirits.

Teams cannot play if rules are not clear. In fact, poor policies and procedures that are clearly understood are usually preferable to so called "good" rules that lack clarity.

Relationships and roles should be defined. Good teams have been compared to good jazz bands: there is a need for a strong leader *and* strong players; and there must be room for creativity and improvisation without destroying the integrity of the piece as a whole.

Communication is not easy, and language (where possible) should be precise. Directing that walk-ins be treated with "courtesy and respect" is vague. Specifying that all walk-ins should be greeted within 30 seconds—and that

those who must wait should be updated on chaplain availability every five minutes—are good guidelines for office standard operating procedure (SOP).

Some directives support "intercultural communication" by defining terms for us. "Free exercise of religion" is an abstract concept for a line-officer (and for some chaplains!), but the "nine areas of need" create the framework for dialogue that we need. Using these terms whenever we can (in command briefs, quarterly reports, and brainstorming sessions) can avoid confusion and provide a bridge over sometimes troubled waters.

Must we "reverence" the religions of others—or only their rights to disagree? Does the chapel support religion, or religious freedom?

Is there a difference between "honor" and "honesty"? We can be honest and not care what others think. Honor demands we consider perceptions—how things appear, as well.

What is loyalty? Is it covering up for friends? Or, linked to accountability, is the attitude that "friends don't let friends drive drunk"—the responsibility to hold others accountable as well as ourselves?

Even when we are specific, of course, we must ensure our actions match our words. One of Deming's "14 Points" is "drive fear from the workplace"—a goal easier said than done. We must teach that we are serious through behavior, not through rules: the way we handle disagreements, respond to mistakes, and welcome constructive criticism teaches our people to hide mistakes or share them, to offer suggestions or avoid "making waves," to "fear our wrath" or seek our help.

When mistakes are made, we must be careful to point to the future—how to do better, improve the process, fix the system— not point to the past in an effort to assign the blame. Ever since Adam pointed to Eve, and Eve pointed to the serpent, the human response has been to point to others, not to help each other.

Humor or anecdotes can sometimes save the day. There is a story about an

**The "Wow" Factor**  
At RTC, Orlando, chaplains deliver holiday baskets to quarterdeck watch standers on Christmas and New Year's Eve. A simple gesture and a simple gift of Christmas cookies or a midnight (non-alcoholic) New Year's toast send a signal "with style" that chaplains care, and serve. Adding a "wow" factor often simply means taking the extra step. When we deliver a death message to one recruit today, we should visit his/her shipmates tomorrow: how are they handling the idea of death—especially those with sick relatives at home? When a patient dies at the hospital, we may be called to comfort the family. We should remember to spend time with the staff as well, who may also need to share their pain and fear.

spots, and question our assumptions. We all have "mind-sets," and carry baggage that affects our perspective.

IBM executive who made a mistake that cost the firm 10 million dollars. After the "lessons learned" session, the employee asked whether he should tender his resignation. "Are you crazy?" the founder of IBM, Thomas Watson, Sr., replied. "I just invested 10 million dollars in your education!"

Good teamwork ensures we fear neither our own mistakes, nor our neighbor's success! Some years ago, a senior chaplain told his subordinates that no one should stand above the skyline or seek the limelight. He did not remember Moses' prayer, "Would that all our people be prophets!"

The goal should not be to keep one person down, but to raise others up. Each chaplain can be a skyscraper! The leader is the "city planner," nurturing everyone's strength, so that the entire skyline is raised, and there is sufficient "limelight" to bathe everyone in its glow.

### Remember the Future

Leadership begins with the first handshake and the first "hello." New chaplains or RPs should be welcomed with a word or discussion of mission and vision, not just office routine.

Books describe leadership styles, use of power, motivational and inspirational techniques and skills. We should read what we can, and learn even more from the examples of those with whom we serve at every stage of our career.

We should strive to develop a style true to ourselves, but be flexible enough to shift gears and try new approaches. We must remember past experiences, and strive to learn the right lessons. But we must remember, and learn from the future, as well.

Once in Beirut, in a Mideast foxhole, a Marine asked me the hardest of questions: how could so much blood be shed where so many religions had been born?

I could only say that it was because of those religions—the visions of their prophets and the promises of their holy books—that we had a dream of peace at all. It was that dream that taught us how far we had to go. Only by measuring our world today against this glimpse of future times, could questions such as his be asked at all.

The time will come, the Bible promises, when the old shall dream dreams and the young shall see visions. Leadership is a challenge that should come naturally to chaplains: it is a challenge to keep a faith in which dreams and visions matter. Ω

### "A Learning Mode"

Make it clear that you welcome feedback, even when it is negative. Then convince yourself you do!

In Orlando, every staff member checking out has a chance to tell me what I could have done better. At staff meetings, we give public thanks to those whose complaints helped lead to improvement. We publicize the fact that we are not satisfied to do well: we want to learn to do better.

