

Pentecostal Worship Services In Iraq

Church of God Chaplain (MAJ) Mickey Jett recently shared this testimony: "I just came out of our Gospel worship service with over 200 in attendance. The Holy Spirit visited in a most unusual way. Twenty of my Soldiers were in the altar, two were saved, two sanctified and two filled with the Holy Spirit. We had all ranks in the service, from Colonels to Privates; many were at the altar weeping. There is much grief over the extension of our assignments, but God works in the midst of our grief. In my message, I talked of a God who sees today, tomorrow and the future; One who moves us toward greater commitment and sacrifice. I am grateful to Him for allowing me this privilege of ministry."



Currently Serving in Combat Areas:

Chaplain (CPT) Megan Hodge	Iraq
Chaplain (MAJ) Mickey Jett	Iraq
Chaplain (CPT) William Martin	Iraq
Chaplain (CPT) Chuck Popov	Iraq
Chaplain (CPT) Terry Simmons	Afghanistan
Chaplain (CPT) Dasha Somaratna	Iraq
Chaplain (CPT) Barron Wester	Iraq
Chaplain (MAJ) Ray Williams	Iraq



Testimonies from Chaplains in Combat Chaplain Wounded While Ministering



Church of God Chaplain (CPT) Barron Wester is our first chaplain to be wounded in combat. While his unit was setting up advanced military outposts in the heart of Baghdad, his commander received news that one of their smaller advanced units had been hit. Chaplain Wester, along with his chaplain's assistant, accompanied the battalion commander to the scene where one Soldier was dead and others wounded. Chaplain Wester immediately prayed for the families of the Soldiers killed and wounded, then proceeded to attend to those in need. They were preparing to exit the area when the sniper fire occurred. The round went through Chaplain Wester's arm, exited and hit another Soldier. Chaplain Wester's assistant pushed him under the vehicle and, with his own body, protected him from further gunfire. Chaplain Wester was medically evacuated to a Field Hospital and sent to Germany where **Church of God Army Chaplains (MAJ) Joe Melvin and (CPT) David Hall** brought prayer and support to his bedside. Chaplain Melvin states, "When I arrived to minister to Chaplain Wester, I found him ministering to **PFC Richardson**, a fellow Soldier who had been wounded in the same incident as Chaplain Wester. PFC Richardson, whose wounds were so serious he would be returned to the U.S., emphasized to Chaplain Wester the importance of him returning to their unit and how much he is needed there. This reflection came from a man who obviously was experiencing the ministry of presence and compassion of a chaplain he deeply respected."

Chaplain Wester is a graduate of our Theological Seminary and had been on his first deployment for only six weeks. He and his wife, Dawn, have two children, Erin (6) and Samuel (6 months). He has recovered and returned to his unit in Iraq.



First Female Chaplain in Combat



Army Chaplain (CPT) Megan Hodge is the first female Church of God chaplain to serve in combat. She was saved at the age of seven during children's church, and filled with the Holy Spirit at 13. She graduated Lee

University and the Theological Seminary, where she felt the call to serve as chaplain in the U.S. Army. She shares her story: "The loud explosions no longer send cold waves of panic through my body. The sounds of rapid gunfire, screeching jets and hovering helicopters have simply become part of everyday life here in Iraq. In some regard, you may say I have become immune to some of the realities of war. For me, the greater war is the one taking place spiritually in the lives of my Soldiers.

My flock consists of 800 Soldiers who daily put their lives on the line; some of them will pay the supreme sacrifice. My job is to help them see that the horrors of war pale in comparison to the horrors of separation from God. I remember when I was lost, and follow the example Christ set before us when He simply loved people where they were. I identify with my Soldiers by facing my own mortality, yet finding my greatest hope in the security the Lord gives me through His Word and Spirit. I try to be that tangible extension of God's mercy and grace, regardless of the circumstances of life. There is no greater joy than seeing one of my Soldiers turn their life over to Jesus Christ!"

Church of God Chaplains Minister to Church of God Soldier

Many Church of God members serve in the military. It is incredible that Church of God chaplains have been there to minister to them. Such was the case with **Sergeant Stephen Skylar Pearson**, who was raised in the Mount Paran Church of God, Atlanta, Georgia.

While serving in Afghanistan, Sergeant Person was recently one of the few Soldiers who survived their Chinook helicopter crash. **Chaplain (MAJ) Terry Simmons** arrived at the site a few moments after the chopper went down. He ministered to those in need, including Sergeant Pearson. When the injured were moved to another site for transport from Afghanistan to Germany, **Chaplain (MAJ) Ray Williams** ministered to Sergeant Pearson and the injured aboard the aircraft; and assisted with funeral arrangements for those who did not survive. When Sergeant Pearson and the others injured arrived at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, **Chaplain (MAJ) Joe Melvin** ministered at his bedside. A few days later, Sergeant Pearson was moved from Germany to Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, D.C., where **Chaplain (CPT) Roderick Swanson**, met with him and his family to give them further ministry, fellowship and presence.



An Army Chinook chopper similar to the one that went down in Afghanistan

A few years ago, we had only a few military chaplains...is it not amazing that today, Church of God chaplains were found at four different critical sites to give ministry to a wounded Church of God Soldier?