



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
2000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-2000

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IN REPLY REFER TO

Ser N097/02378

18 Oct 02

Dear Colleagues:

I recently read a letter from Roy Medley, the General Secretary of the American Baptist Churches (ABC) USA, to all ABC military chaplains. His encouraging words moved me and I received permission to share his letter with you. He wrote the following:

As I awoke this morning to the news that late last night both the Senate and the House of Representatives had passed legislation authorizing the president to take military action against Iraq if necessary, my heart turned to you.

As we face the possibility that many within our armed forces and reserve units may now be called upon to place themselves in harms way on behalf of all of us, I want to assure you of my prayers (and those of our ABC family) for you and for them. Though I have publicly urged that war should be our last resort, my support for you is unqualified as you minister on behalf of our Lord and denomination with our fellow citizens.

I realize that even now you are being called upon to minister to our military personnel and their family members in a context of heightened tension and worry. The possibility of their deployment is not easy to bear. Those whom you serve are, to you, not faceless numbers but people with hopes and dreams, families and friends.

As you lead them in prayer and worship and look into their faces, I know there is an increased burden and strain you bear as you wonder what the future might hold for them. In your ministry, war is always intensely personal. We lift you in prayer to our Lord Jesus Christ that he will minister to you according to your need as you serve the needs of others.

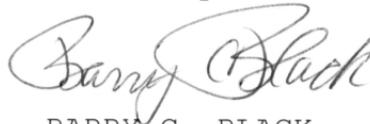
I am also aware that this same stress of worry and concern is placed upon your family as well, as they, too, wonder what the future might hold for you and for them. We also pledge our prayers for your family.

In the days ahead, even as we pray that war might be rendered unnecessary, we also pray for you, your family,

and those under your care that God might grant you favor as you serve in these uncertain and perilous times. (A. Roy Medley, General Secretary, ABCUSA)

In our Tuesday and Thursday morning devotions here in the Navy Annex we pray often for you and your families. I pray that God will continue to bless your life, ministry, and family, preparing you for the challenges ahead. God bless you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barry C. Black". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

BARRY C. BLACK
Rear Admiral, Chaplain Corps
U. S. Navy
Chief of Navy Chaplains