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

IN REPLY REFER TO
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Dear Colleagues:

On 25 and 26 September, I visited the Field Medical Service School and the Chaplain and Religious Program Specialist Expeditionary Skills Training (CREST) at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. I had the opportunity of meeting with area chaplains and RPs, talking with key leaders of the commands, and participating in the CREST training—cammies, MREs, and all. I am most impressed with the wonderful way Chaplain Orr, Master Chief Holdren, and other important players are making significant contributions to Chaplain Corps readiness with this quality CREST training.

Returning to Washington, DC, I participated on 27 and 28 September in a comprehensive strategic planning offsite. More than forty of our senior leaders, officer and enlisted, prayerfully labored to ensure that our Corps serves God's people in a life-transforming way. Led by skilled and experienced facilitators, in two very full days we made significant progress toward defining our future. We started the offsite with prayers to lift our Corps to heaven, and felt divine assistance as we conceptualized regarding mission, values, priorities, and objectives for the future. Each member of the Chaplain Corps owes a sincere "thank you" to each participant. The fruits of their labor inform my thinking and will be essential in planning for Senior Leadership Conference 2000, in Dallas.

I ended our time together at this offsite by making several observations. First, beautiful plans mean little unless they are implemented. As we complete our strategic plan, our work has just begun. We must act. Second, we must individually model the guiding principles and values of our plan. What we do speaks so forcefully people won't hear what we say. A good way to begin such an exemplary endeavor is to make a commitment to integrity. In short, we must purpose never to deviate from strict integrity. Third, no good plan succeeds without God. Zechariah 4:6 reminds us that it is "not by might, nor by power, but by God's Spirit" that great things happen. As we face the future depending on Him, we can take great courage.

Fraternally Yours,

Barry C. Black

BARRY C. BLACK
Rear Admiral, CHC, U.S. Navy
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