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# A Critical Analysis of the Sermon Delivered by Chaplain Harry C. Wood on December 14, 1941

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This research is a product of the graduate program in [Speech Communication](#) at Eastern Illinois University.

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Author

A Critical Analysis of the Sermon Delivered by  
Chaplain Harry C. Wood on December 14, 1941  
(TITLE)

BY

**Judy Jones Sarver**

**THESIS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

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CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

**1971**

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING  
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

8/10/71  
DATE

10/August/71  
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## CHAPTER I

### NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

#### Introduction

The Navy Chaplain Corps is splendidly organized, and has functioned brilliantly in helping to bring victory to this Nation. Many of the men who compose the Corps are returning to civilian church life and are bringing home with them a faith immeasurably deepened by the experiences they have shared with other veterans, a hope kindled and inspired by the men they saw die for our future. These clergy veterans will continue to enrich the religious life, and therefore the social life of our Nation. I propose that we salute them with the Navy's traditional "Well Done!"<sup>1</sup>

#### Isolating and Limiting the Research Problem

One chaplain who shared deeply moving religious experiences with U.S. Navy personnel during a crisis situation was Harry C. Wood. It is the purpose of this study to evaluate the effectiveness of Chaplain Harry C. Wood in adapting his first sermon to his audience and the occasion following the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

#### The Need for Investigation

Admiral Chester Nimitz said, "My own esteem for the chap-

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<sup>1</sup>U.S., Congressional Record, 79th Congress, 1st Session, (1945), No. 91, p. 11439.



lains is not so much based upon deeds of valor as it is appreciation for their routine accomplishments. No one will ever know how many young men were deferred from acts of desperation...<sup>2</sup>

As a navy wife who has served as a volunteer worker under the direction of Navy chaplains at Pearl Harbor in 1967-1968, the writer shares with Admiral Nimitz his feelings toward the work of the chaplains. It was this feeling of admiration and appreciation which prompted this research study.

At first glance it may appear as if such a study would have little, if any, significance. The late Dr. Dallas Dickey, however, suggested the value of such research when he wrote:

First, we need to continue research on the obviously recognized speakers about whom we know too little... Second, we need to give attention to recognized speakers who have been neglected... Third, we need most of all in the next few years to take up the study of speakers who are either completely unknown to many of us or unassociated with effectiveness in public address.<sup>3</sup>

Clearly a Navy chaplain delivering a sermon in the mess hall of a naval vessel on December 14, 1941, is all but unknown to the American public but worthy of consideration for the service he rendered to his battle-scarred audience that Sunday.

Such a study can also fill a gap in our knowledge of American

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<sup>2</sup>Clifford M. Drury, The History of the Chaplain Corps, United States Navy, Vol. 2, 1939-1949, (NAVPERS 15808, 1964), p. 308.

<sup>3</sup>Dallas C. Dickey, "What Directions Should Future Research in American Public Address Take?," Quarterly Journal of Speech, Vol. XXIX (October, 1943), p. 301.

oratory and homiletics. A review of related literature revealed the existence of such a void.

### Review of the Literature

A review of the related literature in speech was made to determine the originality of the study and what information could be added to current knowledge in the field of speech communication.

In order to determine the originality of the study, reports of published research studies, reports of unpublished thesis and dissertations, and reports of dissertations in progress were examined.<sup>4</sup> No study of audience and occasion adaptation by a navy chaplain has been completed nor is one in progress. Additional literature was reviewed.

The History of the Chaplain Corps, United States Navy, by Clifford M. Drury, was recommended by James D. Pfannensteil, Lcdr., USN.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Pfannensteil is the Assistant for Public Affairs to the Chief of Chaplains. He claimed that it was the best source of the chaplains' views of Pearl Harbor. This particular book could never be written again, according to its author, Clifford Drury, since all the notes and

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<sup>4</sup>J. Jeffery Auer, "Doctoral Dissertations in Speech, Work in Progress," Speech Monographs, X-XXXVI (1943-1969); Franklin Knower, "Graduate Theses: An Index of Graduate Work in Speech," Speech Monographs, X-XXXVI (1943-1969); Clyde W. Dow and Max Nelson, "Abstracts of Theses in the Field of Speech," Speech Monographs, XIII-XXXVI (1946-1969).

<sup>5</sup>Statement by James D. Pfannensteil, Lcdr., USN, personal interview, January 5, 1971.

collections for it have since been destroyed.<sup>6</sup>

Walter Lord's book, Day of Infamy, was recommended by Lcdr. Pfannensteil.<sup>7</sup>

The Puzzle of Pearl Harbor by Paul S. Burtness and Warren U. Ober was selected because it contains official messages by the Secretary of the Navy and by President Roosevelt that were delivered to the nation.

"The Fightin'est Ship", The Story of the Cruiser "Helena", by Lt. G. C. Morris USNR, was selected because it provides background written by a man who was there to observe some of the situation.

Pearl Harbor: Why, How, Fleet Salvage and Final Appraisal, by Vice Admiral Homer N. Wallin USN, was chosen because it was written by a man serving at Pearl Harbor on the day of the attack. It provides background and appraisal of the occasion.

Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt and the Coming of the War, by George M. Waller, was recommended as a scholarly text by Kevin J. O'Keefe of the history department of Eastern Illinois University.<sup>8</sup>

This Is Pearl! by Walter Millis, was recommended in the above book by George Waller.

Battle Report, Pearl Harbor to Coral Sea by Commander Walter

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<sup>6</sup>Statement by Clifford M. Drury, personal interview, June 28, 1971.

<sup>7</sup>Pfannensteil, interview.

<sup>8</sup>Statement by Kevin J. O'Keefe, personal interview, January, 1971.

Karig USNR, and Lt. Welbourn Kelley, USNR, was selected because it contained official reports from the US Navy. The authors were directed to write the book by the Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox.

"...And Pass the Ammunition" by Chaplain Howell M. Forgy USN, was chosen because it was written by a Chaplain who was stationed at Pearl Harbor during the attack. It was also recommended by Clifford M. Drury.<sup>9</sup>

Pearl Harbor by A. J. Barker was chosen because it contains some convenient summarizations of the losses facing the man stationed there. It also contains a convenient chronology of events.

United States Navy in World War II, edited by S. E. Smith, was selected because it contains excerpts from several books that are authorities in the area of the actual day of the bombing.

As for periodicals, Life and Time magazines will be used to report some first-hand observations on that fateful day.

Each of these sources provided useful information about the bombing of Pearl Harbor but none on the role of the chaplain as he administered to the needs of the personnel who assembled for church services on the Sunday following the bombing. This is the gap to be filled by this thesis.

### The Working Hypothesis

According to Auer, after having isolated and limited the

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<sup>9</sup>Drury, interview.

research problem the second step is to formulate a working hypothesis. Hockett describes the hypothesis as "a tentative conclusion about the facts observed,"<sup>10</sup> the validity of which must be tested by further observation.

Auer states that "a working hypothesis is a theoretical development of a solution, or the means of arriving at a solution, to be expressed in terms of causations or probabilities."<sup>11</sup>

It was the working hypothesis of this study that Chaplain Harry C. Wood adapted well his sermon to the audience on that occasion.

#### Research Method

The method chosen for an analysis and evaluation of Chaplain Wood's effectiveness on this occasion is the critical method. Carter and Fife suggest that, "If you want your conclusions to composite critical judgments of any speech phenomenon, or a combination of phenomena, then the chances are that you should employ the critical method."<sup>12</sup>

Recognized by Auer as six specific steps in the critical research method are: 1) isolation of a problem; 2) formulation of a

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<sup>10</sup>Homer Hockett, The Critical Method in Historical Research and Writing (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1955), p. 7.

<sup>11</sup>J. Jeffery Auer, An Introduction to Research in Speech (New York: Harper Brothers, 1959), p. 29.

<sup>12</sup>Elton S. Carter and Iline Fife, "The Critical Approach," An Introduction to Graduate Study in Speech and Theatre, ed. Clyde W. Dow, (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1961), p. 83.

working hypothesis; 3) development of a research design; 4) collection of evidence; 5) analysis or interpretation of evidence; and 6) generalization of causations and probabilities.<sup>13</sup>

The criteria<sup>14</sup> to be used in the study of the sermon delivered by Chaplain Wood is as follows:

1. To what extent, if any, did Chaplain Wood attempt to relieve feelings of stress and rebuild morale?
2. To what extent, if any, did Chaplain Wood attempt to utilize the familiar to establish rapport (common-ground) with the men at the service?

This, then, will be the research design to investigate the effectiveness of Chaplain Harry C. Wood in adapting to his audience and occasion.

#### Organization of the Study

This study has been divided into six chapters, each having a specific function.

Chapter I treats the introduction, isolating and limiting the research problem, the need for investigation, the review of the literature, the working hypothesis, the research method, and the organization of the study.

Chapter II is concerned with a brief biography of Chaplain

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<sup>13</sup>Auer, pp. 28-29.

<sup>14</sup>These criteria were derived from Chaplain Wood's statement of his purposes for the sermon during a personal interview with the author.

Harry C. Wood.

Chapter III describes the occasion of the speech; in this case, December 7th to December 14th, 1941. The immediate setting of the sermon is also investigated.

Chapter IV is concerned with the audience and analysis of that audience.

Chapter V is a critical analysis of the sermon as to audience and occasion adaptation.

Chapter VI attempts to draw the general conclusions resulting from the rhetorical analysis of the sermon and to indicate the direction which further research might take.

## CHAPTER II

### CHAPLAIN HARRY C. WOOD<sup>1</sup>

#### Early Life and Education

A boy who felt he had been "pushed out of the nest" too early had the childhood dream that he wanted to do the best he could with a ninth grade education.

Chaplain Harry C. Wood was born in Trenton, New Jersey, on August 29, 1908. He began working early in life and quit school after he graduated from ninth grade due to family pressures.

From the time I was nine years old it was determined that I get out and work as soon as I was able. My father did before me and that was to be my lot too. I was serving papers when I was ten and worked after school in the grocery store and on weekends and was able to stay in school through the ninth grade. In fact, I was in school a year longer than my father thought I should be in school.

As to his religious training, Harry attended a Methodist Church when he was very young. His family moved and their new neighbors were Presbyterian and Harry went to church and Sunday school with them. As he said about his choice of denomination, "I just followed my nose.

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<sup>1</sup>All information in this chapter is from personal interviews and correspondence with Harry C. Wood by the author.



It was not a theological premeditated choice."

Harry Wood might never have been the chaplain aboard the USS Maryland on December 7, 1941, had it not been for some developments in his life.

...I was seventeen years of age at which time the young minister came into my life and determined that there was something more here that could be developed. And in the course of a year of walking, talking, playing, and praying together, I made the decision to somehow go back to school. Thereupon I went to night school one year for five nights a week, while working as a steamfitter's helper--and then was able to go to a prep school for two years and then on to college and seminary with some help from the Board of Christian Education of our church, a little bit from my home church--nothing from the folks at home.

Chaplain Wood's educational and career chronology up to the time of the attack of Pearl Harbor was as follows:

Graduated from ninth grade . . . . .	1923
Graduated from night school. . . . .	1927
Graduated from West Nottingham Academy . . . . .	1929
Graduated with B.A. from Maryville College, Tennessee . . . . .	1933
Graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary . . . . .	1936
Ordained as a minister . . . . .	June, 1936
Received commission as Navy Chaplain . . . . .	Sept., 1939

During his time of study at Princeton Theological Seminary, Chaplain Wood had three years of speech training. He studied under Professor Donald Wheeler, "a highly revered secular professor of speech". His homiletics instructor was Andrew W. Blackwood, who has written many books in the field of sermon preparation. "We used to have to give practice sermons on which we were graded. The homiletics teacher graded us on content and Professor Wheeler took us

apart as to delivery and voice. He was pretty good at it too."

### At Pearl Harbor

I sought my commission as a Navy Chaplain . . . believing that I was entering a challenging new ministry to young men primarily in a peacetime Navy. It was only a few months before I discovered that the world situation was becoming more tense. . .

Just prior to the attack, Chaplain Wood had been talking to the Officer of the Deck and inquiring about the arrival of the mail plane from the states. He went below deck to complete preparation of his sermon for the Protestant worship service that morning. Plans had been made for Chaplain Aloysius Schmitt of the Oklahoma to precede the Protestant services with Catholic Mass.

On the way to my room General Quarters was sounded. I was surprised and somewhat bewildered. Racing to my room, I did what I usually did: closed the metal hatch over the porthole in my room. Before doing so I looked out and sighted a green plane with a large red ball on the fuselage--flying at a very low level. I completed closing the hatch and raced to my battle dressing station announcing as I went that "the Japs are here."

The day following the attack, one of Chaplain Wood's duties was to go into Honolulu and inform families of the fate of their men. In many cases, he had to address himself to new widows, but some of the time he visited those whose husbands and fathers were still alive.

I was at that all day until dark. I remember I was fed in the dark by a couple of the wives out at Waikiki and was taken to the Fire Warden's apartment and he led me through the dark to a bed where I slept that night. I was driving my car and the M.P.'s stopped me and said I couldn't even use my foot brake because of the stop light. So that was the kind of situation it was.

There wasn't much liberty for the men at Pearl Harbor during that week and Chaplain Wood could recall no one who was able to see his family during that first week. There was also a problem with notifying families still on the Mainland. Chaplain Wood noted that his family was lucky to have received news of him only four days after the attack.

This has been a short biography of the chaplain who delivered on December 14, 1941 the sermon being studied.

## CHAPTER III

### THE OCCASION OF THE SERMON--

DECEMBER 7 TO DECEMBER 14, 1941

On December 14, 1941, approximately 250 men aboard the USS Maryland filed into the mess hall. Their purpose was to attend the chapel services being held there. Approximately 140 sailors were in attendance each Sunday. Why on this particular day were there almost twice that many?

The occasion for the speech was highly influenced by the events of the preceding week. As President Roosevelt said on December 8, 1941 in his message to Congress, "...December 7, 1941--a date which will live in infamy--the United States was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan."<sup>1</sup> The attack on Pearl Harbor began that Sunday morning at 7:55 a.m. Probably the most distinctive feature of the attack was that it was a total surprise to its victims.

Sunday, 7 December 1941, was a typical day of rest in

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<sup>1</sup>Paul S. Burtness and Warren U. Ober, The Puzzle of Pearl Harbor (Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson and Company, 1962), p. 84.

Hawaii. The weather was perfect with some cloud cover overhead. The people were taking it easy as was their custom on Sundays. The military was sleeping in or eating breakfast a bit late since this was a day of relaxation and rest.<sup>2</sup>

The first Japanese planes in the Pearl Harbor area struck simultaneously on Ford Island and Hickam Field. Then began the destruction of the ships lined up in Battleship Row. Because the sermon being studied was given aboard one of these battleships, the Maryland, and because the audience were men from that ship and others around it, accounts concerning the events surrounding Battleship Row will be looked into in greater detail.

... Battleship Row on the south side of Ford Island presented the most formidable appearance, as it always did when heavy units of the fleet were in. At about the center of the southern edge, California lay at her berth; then Neosho at the gasoline dock, and farther to the northeast Oklahoma and Maryland, with Maryland inboard between Oklahoma and the Island. Next were West Virginia--known as "Weevie" to her men--and Tennessee, with Tennessee inboard. The next pair in line were Arizona and the repair ship Vestal, with Vestal outboard. At the end of the line, in a northeasterly direction from the signal tower, was Nevada.<sup>3</sup>

The Battleship Nevada, at the northern end of the Row, was preparing to raise colors. The Nevada's band was in position and getting ready to play.

As they moved into formation, some of the musicians noticed

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<sup>2</sup>Homer N. Wallin, Pearl Harbor: Why, How, Fleet Salvage and Final Appraisal (Washington: Navals History Division, 1968), p. 99.

<sup>3</sup>Walter Karig and Welbourn Kelley, Battle Report: Pearl Harbor to Coral Sea (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1944), pp. 27-28.

planes diving at the other end of Ford Island. McMillan saw a lot of dirt and sand go up, but thought it was another drill.<sup>1</sup> Now it was 7:58--two minutes to go--and planes started coming in low from Southeast Loch. Heavy, muffled explosions began booming down the line . . . enough to worry about. And then it was eight o'clock.

The band crashed into "The Star-Spangled Banner". A Japanese plane skimmed across the harbor . . . dropped a torpedo at the Arizona . . . and peeled off right over the Nevada's fantail. The rear gunner sprayed the men standing at attention, but he must have been a poor shot. He missed the entire band and Marine guard, lined up in two neat rows. He did succeed in shredding the flag, which was just being raised.

McMillan knew now but kept on conducting. The years of training had taken over--it never occurred to him that once he had begun playing the National Anthem, he could possibly stop.<sup>4</sup>

From the initial attack until approximately 9:45 a.m., the ships in Pearl Harbor were almost continuously bombed, strafed, and torpedoed by Japanese aircraft. At times, more than twenty ships were under attack at once, adding to the confusion.<sup>5</sup> For purposes of clarification, Commander Karig and Lieutenant Kelley divided the times of attack into five phases.

Phase I - 7:55 - 8:25 A.M. Combined torpedo plane and dive bomber attack.

Phase II - 8:25 - 8:40 A.M. Comparative lull.

Phase III - 8:40 - 9:15 A.M. Horizontal bomber attack.

Phase IV - 9:15 - 9:45 A.M. Dive bomber attacks.

Phase V - 9:45 A.M. Waning of attack and completion of raid.<sup>6</sup>

During that one hour and fifty minutes, Battleship Row was in turmoil.

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<sup>4</sup>Walter Lord, Day of Infamy (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1957), pp. 70-71.

<sup>5</sup>Karig and Kelley, p. 39.

<sup>6</sup>Karig and Kelley, p. 30.

Two ships were sunk, one blown up, one capsized and one was beached. Because five of the seven Battleships suffered extensive damage during the attack the Maryland was the host ship for chapel services on the following Sunday with Chaplain Wood delivering the sermon.

In setting the occasion for this sermon, the fate of each vessel in Battleship Row must be observed.

### The Nevada

The Nevada caught a torpedo near her port bow, which blew a hole in her side. At about the same time, a bomb hit the quarterdeck, causing heavy casualties among the personnel.<sup>7</sup> When the Arizona blew up, the water around the Nevada was covered with flaming oil. The senior officer, onboard at that time, decided to get the ship underway and set course for the open sea. However:

. . .the Japanese became aware at once of the Nevada's intentions, and they saw this as a golden opportunity to sink the ship in the channel, thereby bottling up the entire harbor. Every Japanese dive bomber in the vicinity immediately centered on the Nevada; bomb after bomb exploded in the water as the Japanese planes streamed down the sky to within a few hundred feet of the battleship's decks, before finding their bull's-eye.

In all, the Nevada was hit by six bombs, causing extensive flooding and severe structural damage.<sup>8</sup>

There were many fires aboard the Nevada and her personnel casualties

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<sup>7</sup> Karig and Kelley, pp. 60-61.

<sup>8</sup> Karig and Kelley, p. 62.

that day totaled 3 Officers and 47 men.<sup>9</sup> The Nevada's Chaplain, Chaplain Raymond Drinan, was not aboard during the attack. As was his usual custom, he was saying Mass aboard the hospital ship Solace prior to his regularly scheduled services aboard Nevada.<sup>10</sup>

### The Arizona

The Arizona suffered the worst fate. She was struck by the first wave of planes and dive bombers.<sup>11</sup> Two torpedos struck her side and bombs exploded on the forecastle and bridge.

And then it was that one attacking Japanese pilot realized the dive bomber's dream. His bomb dropped exactly into the Arizona's stack, exploding in the boilers and setting off the vast amount of powder stored in the forward magazine.

The ship's bow seemed to leap out of the water, and her weather decks cracked open as fire and debris shot skyward. Plumes of oil and water showered topside, and fires immediately enveloped the forward part of the ship. The fate of the Arizona . . . was sealed in the first five minutes of the attack. The magazine blast broke the ship's back and she rapidly settled in the water.<sup>12</sup>

The Arizona lost 47 officers and 1,057 men.<sup>13</sup> The Chaplain of the Arizona, Chaplain Thomas Kirkpatrick, was among the victims.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Karig and Kelley, p. 63.

<sup>10</sup>Drury, The History of the Chaplain Corps, USN, p. 24.

<sup>11</sup>Karig and Kelley, p. 75.

<sup>12</sup>Karig and Kelley.

<sup>13</sup>Karig and Kelley.

<sup>14</sup>Drury, p. 22.



### The West Virginia

The Battleship West Virginia was hardest hit in terms of volume of enemy explosives of any ship in the harbor.<sup>15</sup>

The "Weevie", as she was affectionately known to her officers and men, was hit by two heavy bombs in addition to six torpedoes, and many near misses exploded along her sides. Her loss of life included 2 officers and 103 men; . . .<sup>16</sup>

The West Virginia had to be abandoned because of many fires and imminent sinking. Her chaplain, Chaplain Forsander was rescued from the water.

The abandon ship order was given as the West Virginia sank in her berth. Chaplain Forsander, not being able to swim, donned a life jacket and helped to get a life-raft into the water. He and his companions then succeeded in picking up a dozen men in the water, including some survivors of the Oklahoma and Arizona.<sup>17</sup>

### The Tennessee

The Tennessee did not suffer as much damage as previous ships mentioned. However, when the West Virginia sank, the Tennessee, in-board of her, was wedged against a concrete quay.

The Tennessee's propellers were churning the water, but she was not moving. In fact, a part of the concrete quay later had to be blasted away before the ship could be extricated.

But the fact that the ship's propellers were turning probably saved her from considerably more damage than

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<sup>15</sup>Karig and Kelley, p. 70.

<sup>16</sup>Karig and Kelley.

<sup>17</sup>Drury.

she actually suffered. As the Arizona blew up, a few yards astern, the water about the Tennessee was covered with flaming oil. This created so much heat at the vessel's stern that the after officers' quarters were ravaged by flames, and other fires in the interior of the ship were constantly breaking out. Then Captain Reordan noted that the wash of the Tennessee's propellers drove the burning oil away, so he kept them turning.<sup>18</sup>

The Tennessee's losses were light, totaling five.<sup>19</sup>

### The Oklahoma

The fate of the Oklahoma was sealed within the first few minutes of the attack. In fifteen seconds time, four torpedoes hit the Oklahoma on her port side and she began to roll over. Many of the men aboard were trapped inside. The losses aboard the Oklahoma were 20 officers and 395 men.<sup>20</sup>

The story of Chaplain Aloysius Schmitt was an inspiring one.

He was vesting himself for 0800 Sunday Mass, and he had a handsomely bound breviary in a hip pocket.

Several men, unable to find an exit as the ship rolled, entered Chaplain Schmitt's stateroom, which they knew to contain a porthole. The Chaplain helped them out through the opening. Then he himself started through, . . . Although not a large man (as was erroneously reported in news dispatches at the time), Chaplain Schmitt's progress through the porthole was stopped when the breviary in his pocket caught on the coaming. He backed into the ship, removed his prayerbook, and was about to make another attempt to escape when several other enlisted men climbed

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<sup>18</sup>Karig and Kelley, Battle Report: Pearl Harbor to Coral Sea, p. 74.

<sup>19</sup>Karig and Kelley, p. 75.

<sup>20</sup>Karig and Kelley, pp. 66-67.

into the room. The padre insisted that these men push through the porthole ahead of him. As the last one climbed through, Chaplain Schmitt's porthole rolled beneath the surface, and water gushed in with the force of a high-pressure fire main, he did not escape.<sup>21</sup>

### The California

The severity of California's damage was primarily due to the fact that she was loaded to maximum with fuel oil. Her lower deck was flooded with oil after torpedoes and bombs blasted her fuel tanks. Many fires broke out onboard and it was feared that her magazines would blow. An order was given to abandon ship and many men dived over the side even though a ring of flames surrounded the ship. However, fire-fighting equipment was brought back to the ship and it was re-entered.<sup>22</sup>

The California remained afloat for three days, but the water continued to flood into the ship until she finally rested on the soft mud of the bottom, with only her upper works exposed. None of the ship's people felt that more could have been done to save the California; nearly a hundred of these officers and men were cited for commendation by Captain J. W. Bunkley, a number of those cited being among the 6 officers and 92 men who lost their lives.<sup>23</sup>

The Chaplain aboard the California, Chaplain Raymond Hohenstein, was injured. At first he lost consciousness due to noxious fumes. This provoked the rumor that he had died. However, during his rescue,

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<sup>21</sup>Karig and Kelley, p. 68.

<sup>22</sup>Karig and Kelley, p. 66.

<sup>23</sup>Karig and Kelley.

he received flash burns from falling shrapnel and was hospitalized.<sup>24</sup>

### The Maryland

Of all the Battleships in Battleship Row, the Maryland suffered the least.

Although the Maryland was hit by two bombs, one of which blew a hole in the side of the ship and caused her to settle several feet by the bow, her damage was not sufficient to keep her long out of action from the standpoint of permanent repairs. In addition, her casualty list included only 2 officers and 2 men . . .<sup>25</sup>

### The Days After the Attack

Although the attack upon Pearl Harbor had great effect upon the men there were other elements of consequence.

Chaplain Wood had the disparaging task of informing families of death and injury. As he said:

During the night we slept very little. On the 8th of December I gathered the names and addresses and phone numbers of literally dozens of officers and men who had their families in Honolulu. As soon as I was prepared I was permitted to go into Honolulu to carry messages of death to three widows and to inform other wives that their husbands had survived the attack.<sup>26</sup>

As proof that many of the men were worried about another attack:

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<sup>24</sup>Drury, pp. 22-23.

<sup>25</sup>Karig and Kelley, p. 70.

<sup>26</sup>Drury, p. 26.

By 9:45 A.M. the Japanese decided to retire. They withdrew, abandoning Oahu to a holocaust, and it was some time before the Americans realized that all was over. Jittery gunners shot down three of their own planes flying in from the Enterprise later that morning because they were thought to be Japanese.<sup>27</sup>

Later that afternoon, the band aboard the USS Maryland played martial music in an attempt to build morale. In one of the canteens, the juke box played over and over, "I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire."

Probably one of the most disturbing aspects was the tremendous number of rumors and scares.

Hawaii was in a state of shock. The seventy-one-year-old governor, Joseph E. Poindexter, after a soothing telephone talk with Roosevelt, had been persuaded to declare martial law a few hours earlier. There were wild rumors from all sides.<sup>28</sup>

Some of the rumors were that Japanese laborers had cut directional arrows through the cane fields and that cabs and cars driven by local Japanese were sabotaging the roads around Pearl Harbor and Honolulu. The men at Pearl Harbor could not be sure about the losses in Honolulu, and there was much speculation. Honolulu did not escape. Several people were killed on the streets of the city or elsewhere, and several buildings were destroyed, including a Japanese language school.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>A. J. Barker, Pearl Harbor (New York: Ballantine Books, Inc., 1969), p. 122.

<sup>28</sup>John Toland, But Not In Shame (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 53.

<sup>29</sup>Wallin, p. 105.

During the attack 2,036 Navy men were killed and 759 were wounded. Although these figures were not known at the time, there was much worry about the whereabouts of friends during this week. Many were still in hopes of recovering friends, as there were men still trapped and believed alive in some of the ships. But the worry about missing friends was obviously one of the problems that plagued the listeners of Chaplain Wood's sermon.

Another problem the men suffered was the fear that families were unaware of their safety. Notification in many cases was impossible for several days.<sup>30</sup>

The state of morale of the military personnel during that week was indeed low.

Yet one cannot overcome the fact that the Japanese bad, in one hour and forty-five minutes, knocked the heart out of the United States Pacific Fleet. Morally, as well as materially, they had paralyzed American naval action in the Pacific. . .<sup>31</sup>

Following the actual attack the emotional state of mind of the survivors could be characterized as one dominated by surprise, shock, chaos and grief.

Chaplain Forgy of the Cruiser New Orleans had this to say:

We turned our backs on those flaming hulks that a few minutes before had been the proud battle-line of the United States Navy. We shut our eyes and tried to tell ourselves it wasn't

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<sup>30</sup> Lord, p. 210.

<sup>31</sup> Walter Millis, This Is Pearl! (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1947), p. 364.

true at all, that this whole horrible thing was a bad dream. Surely it wasn't true; it couldn't be true. And then the compelling magnetism of that awful sight drew us over to the starboard side again and again and forced our eyes open. Each time, we prayed that we might see the fleet, undamaged and beautiful, riding at anchor under a clear sky.<sup>32</sup>

Again the shock and grief can be seen in Chaplain Forgy's visit to the Naval Hospital. He recalled this incident:

The next bed held a lad from the Arizona. His eyes were shut tight, and he muttered jumbled words of command, living again the hell of his burning ship. In the mixed-up mind beneath his bandages he was still a bo'sun's mate aboard his proud battlewagon, fighting with his men.<sup>33</sup>

As a summary of the state of mind of those at Pearl Harbor, Vice Admiral Wallin had this to say:

There was no doubt that the Japanese had scored a great victory. Most of the air bases were a shambles and a large part of the fleet was immobilized. The damage done seemed great indeed, and spirits were at a low ebb.<sup>34</sup>

#### The Immediate Occasion

"DIVINE SERVICES ARE NOW BEING HELD IN THE MESS DECKS. THE SMOKING LAMP IS OUT. KNOCK-OFF ALL CARD GAMES. KEEP SILENCE ABOUT THE MESS DECKS."

As the ship's interior and exterior public address speakers died out, all that could be heard on the mess decks for one who was attending the services was the noise of the blowers which circulated

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<sup>32</sup>Howell M. Forgy, ". . . And Pass the Ammunition!" (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1944), pp. 14-15.

<sup>33</sup>Forgy, pp. 18-19.

<sup>34</sup>Wallin, p. 109.

fresh air throughout the ship; the hum of auxillary generators which provided electricity and lighting for her many compartments, and the ever present hissing of steam as the ship received its life blood from a stationary boiler on the pier.

As the officers and men filed into the Maryland's mess decks they entered a steel compartment 50 feet by 50 feet. As it was usual for this compartment to facilitate the hundreds of men transiting three times daily for mess, there were four entranceways situated in the four corners. The overhead (ceiling) was low, estimated to be approximately 8 to 9 feet, and decorated with hundreds of wire cables traversing the length of the compartment carrying vital electricity and communication links. Any of the men entering that day could select a seat from among the benches or some of the folding chairs that were set around to accommodate more. The benches were a part of the mess hall. The tables were folded and stowed above in the overhead during church services. The benches were about six feet long and approximately four or five men sat on each bench.

At the front of the mess decks-converted chapel was a metal portable altar and pulpit which had a wood tone finish. Chaplain Wood noted that near the altar, "There were a few signal flags put up to hide some of the less handsome parts of the mess hall."

Music for the service was from either a small pump organ or a small brass band that usually played. The order of service for that day was, as Chaplain Wood said, "A very normal Protestant worship

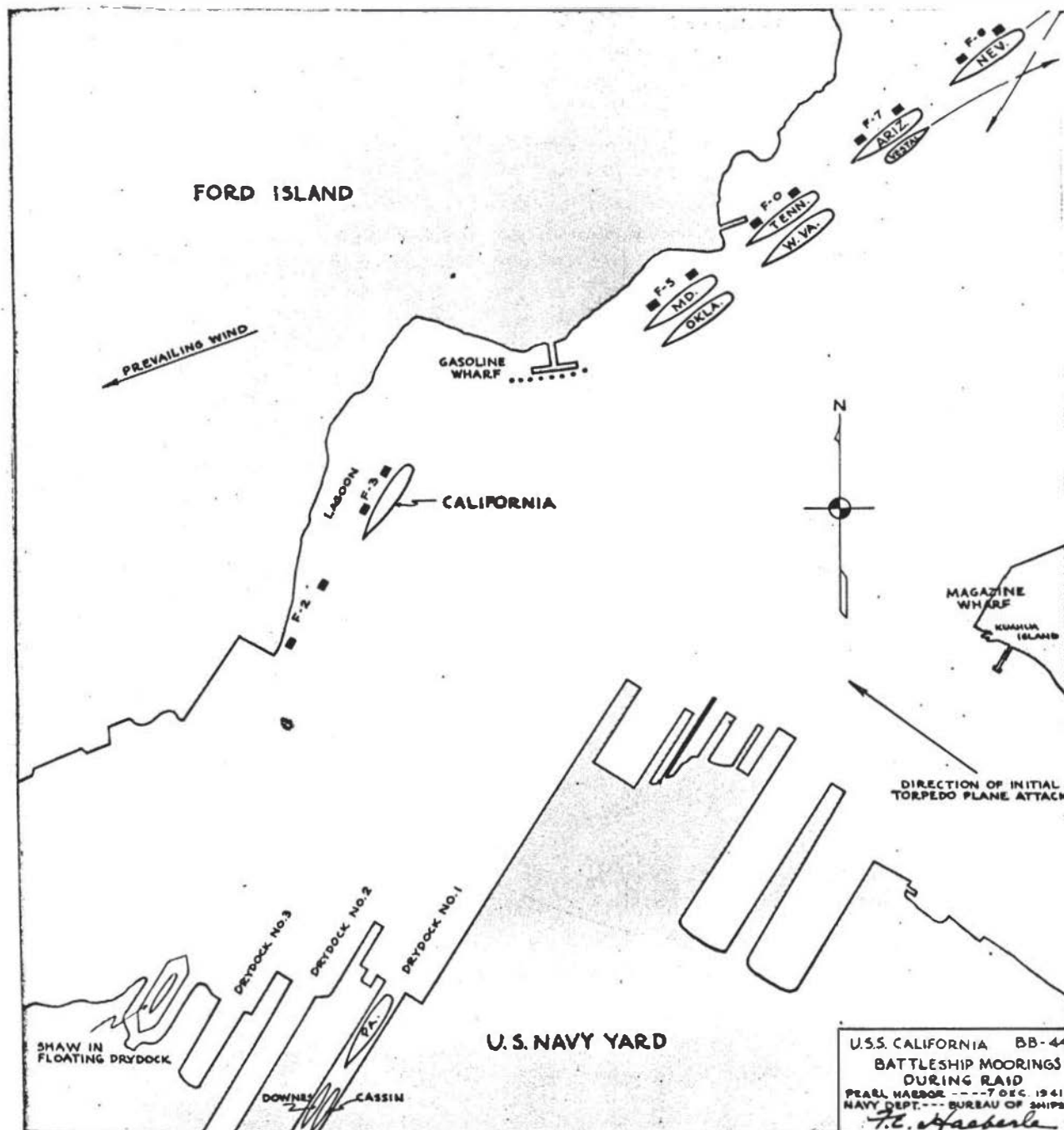


service based on the Presbyterian-Methodist tradition."

CALL TO WORSHIP  
INVOCATION  
HYMN  
RESPONSIVE READING  
HYMN  
SCRIPTURE LESSON  
SERMON  
HYMNS  
BENEDICTION

This, then, was the general rhetorical atmosphere and the immediate setting for Chaplain Wood's sermon on December 14, 1941.





Battleship Row at the time of attack.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE AUDIENCE<sup>1</sup>

. . . there are certain situations, . . . you've got to go on and you wish somebody would come along and give you some reason. I was part of their life and they were part of my life, and I was speaking to them in that context.

As Chaplain Harry C. Wood stood in that temporary chapel which was the mess hall of the battleship, USS Maryland, the men he looked at were representative of every Protestant denomination, some Catholics, some of the Jewish faith, and some who had never before attended church. Some of the men at this particular service were not personnel from the Maryland. Chaplain Wood noted, "The Maryland was pretty well intact and we got survivors from the Arizona, from the West Virginia, and some from the Oklahoma." This was unusual. Chaplain Wood had been aboard the Maryland for two years and was accustomed to addressing himself to approximately 140 men. But because of the holocaust of the preceding seven days, the total had burgeoned to about 250. The overflow could be accommodated by the mess hall, however,

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<sup>1</sup>All the information in this chapter, except for the one noted exception, was taken from interviews and correspondence with Chaplain Wood.

as some men sat on the benches and the chairs and some stood near the back of the room. Chaplain Wood noted that there were several men who stood in the open passageways. He was a bit surprised by the number of men in the audience. "This particular Sunday there was much work to be done. Considering the activities going on, we had a real large attendance." Chaplain Wood was quite familiar with some members of the audience as he had had many talks with them, he organized recreation among them, and played with them.

The age range of the audience was from nineteen to fifty-seven, with the average age approximately thirty. There were more older men than younger and some of the personnel had been aboard the Maryland for eighteen years. This was one of the reasons that there were so many close friendships among the men.

In that year, Navy ships were a close-knit outfit anyway. Some of the men had been aboard the Maryland when it was commissioned in 1923, in other words, 18 years on the same ship. They formed an attachment to the ship and each other. They had permanent homes in Long Beach which was the home port, and there were lots of very, very close friendships and concern for each other beyond the normal.

Chaplain Wood noted that members of his audience were in various states of distress. Many were concerned because they knew that their families were worried about their fates. Some had never had the opportunity to let their respective families know that they were still alive and safe. As Chaplain Wood stated,

There was a tremendous amount of concern that their families know they were all right. Of course, they were all

accustomed to writing and receiving mail regularly. Then all of a sudden, all communication was stopped. This was a great source of worry.

One of the other problems facing most of them was worry about friends who had not been found. Identification of the dead was not always possible and there was rescue work still being attempted.

Most of the attention, besides cleaning up our ship, was rescuing men from the bottom of the Oklahoma which was alongside of us. They had cut into the bottom and there was tapping going on inside. I'm not sure of the number, but I think they brought twenty-five men out alive.

The men of the audience were facing war. After the salvage and repair of the ships, they would be going into battle. This was a difficult adjustment for many to make; some of the younger men who had joined the Navy had done so thinking they were entering into a peacetime service. President Roosevelt's message to them had been clear.

I ask that Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December seventh, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.<sup>2</sup>

This, then, was the audience that Chaplain Wood faced as he delivered his sermon on December 14, 1941.

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<sup>2</sup>Burtness and Ober, Puzzle of Pearl Harbor, p. 85.

## CHAPTER V

### ANALYSIS OF THE SERMON

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the sermon delivered by Chaplain Harry C. Wood on December 14, 1941.

To what extent, if any did Chaplain Wood attempt to reduce feelings of stress and to rebuild morale?

Chaplain Wood faced the issue at hand. In the first sentence of his sermon, he referred to a cause of the feelings of distress felt by the audience when he said that "the United States of America is at war with the aggressor nations." They were, indeed, worried about the possible years of fighting ahead. The distress was further complicated by the uncertainty as to the destinies of friends: some had been killed, others wounded. The fate of some was not known. Among those in the audience were men who sustained personal injury. Others lost personal property such as letters, pictures of loved ones, money, and clothes. There was also distress caused by the uncertainty about the feelings of loved ones at home who couldn't know who had survived and who hadn't.

In an attempt to relieve some of this stress, Chaplain Wood stated that "men may be reconciled to the severest aspects of suffering

if they are confident that the disaster is not meaningless." He went on in this same vein to say that "certainly our cause is not meaningless," because "we have just witnessed the amazing patience of the wounded and the hope and calm content of dying men." Perhaps the men in the audience would have taken heart by feeling that friends and shipmates had died for a cause.

Chaplain Wood endeavored to show the men that their cause was meaningful when he spoke of the "heroism that lies sleeping here in our midst and in the hearts of ordinary men." The survivors who had performed heroic deeds were proud of their potential for further acts of heroism. Offering objectives to his listeners which could help to relieve their stress, Chaplain Wood told them that "madmen must be restrained," and "marauders must be arrested," and that the "conspiracies of bad men must be defeated."

If any of the men who had joined a peacetime Navy felt stress because they were wondering whether it was acceptable for a Christian to fight and kill, Chaplain Wood offered this:

If any man feels this call to go forth to fight his country's battles, we have a right to require him - not to be swept off his feet by the emotion around him, but to weigh his duty prayerfully and to bear in mind that if a Christian can and does fight, it may not be for mere victory in battle, but for a greater victory of justice and righteousness to which even his nation must be subject.

When feelings of stress had been reduced, Chaplain Wood attempted to rebuild morale for the task ahead,

There is no music on earth or in heaven any sweeter than



that which celebrates the victory of the human spirit over the forces that would crush it. And, for this victory, men are willing to endure any eventuality.

In trying to improve the men's morale, Chaplain Wood provided a motive for war:

We did not enter this war lightly! We entered it at a great cost! We entered it at the cost of shipmates and friends. We pay honor and respect to them today. Tomorrow we go with their memories into a war which we are determined will end any nation's dream of world-empire founded on force.

He stated that all Americans would help in the effort and thereby attempted to rebuild morale by showing that the Navy was not alone. He stimulated vivid imagery about home for them, "...toilers of the soil who rise early and labor long in order to increase the harvest of the land, women who find time to knit and sew and wind bandages for the Red Cross . . . boys and girls whose eyes glow as they pledge allegiance to the flag." In essence, he was trying to tell them they were not alone in the fight against the aggressors, but that "all will have a part in this war . . . all of these will work and give themselves willingly."

When Chaplain Wood stated that he would rather die "than have an evil force permitted to get loose in the world," he endeavored to relieve the anxiety they felt about dying. He continued in the same vein attempting to build morale by showing that there were evils worse than war. He stated that moral surrender was worse, permitting an evil force to get loose in the world was worse, and the loss of justice and liberty was worse. He called the latter "spiritual blessings which have

been maintained frequently at no less hazard than life itself." If any member of the audience needed compensation for personal sacrifice, he could have found it when Chaplain Wood said, "No higher command ever comes to any of us except through these conditions which require suffering, and if need be, death." In a further attempt to build morale, Chaplain Wood said, ". . . we must learn to live and to work in spite of what now has intervened . . ."

The use of emotion-laden words in trying to build morale and relieve distress can be seen in such phrases as, "victory of human spirit;" "amazing patience of the wounded;" "hope and calm content;" "something more than heroism;" "good men must associate;" "justice and liberty are spiritual blessings;" "happiness and freedom of millions of our fellow creatures;" "establishment of justice among the nations;" "victory in battle;" and "victory of justice and righteousness." We find the central thesis of the speech in Chaplain Wood's efforts to lessen the feelings of stress and strengthen morale:

If we have power on the inside - and if this power within prevails through good days and bad - then we shall have no regrets regardless of the outcome. The power to go on when life is against us is the deepest necessity of our lives - with or without a war.

As a final plea to attempt to help the men believe in themselves and their approaching duty, Chaplain Wood offered:

It is a great thing to set one's heart on winning eternal life. But if we ever find ourselves in heaven - one of the supreme satisfactions will be the knowledge that we have not only kept true and finished our course, but that "Passing through"

we have made the world a better place, brightened sad hearts,  
and aroused faith in God through making men believe in us.

To what extent if any, did Chaplain Wood attempt to utilize "the familiar" to establish rapport (common ground)?

Universal ideals were a source of familiarity that Chaplain Wood referred to several times during the course of the sermon. From early childhood the men in the audience had heard that there is no sweeter music than that "which celebrates the victory of the human spirit over the forces that would crush it." The concept that "madmen must be restrained," and "marauders must be arrested," was as familiar to those men as their first childhood awareness of mental hospitals and prisons. "If bad men conspire, good men must associate to defeat their conspiracies," is an idea that was probably learned by many during Saturday matinee cowboy movies. They had known from early religious training that moral surrender was a worse evil than war. Resisting evil through spiritual power was an idea as familiar to them as the church service itself.

Through the study of history they must have known that since World War I, the notion had been prevalent in America that we would "end any nation's dream of world-empire founded on force." They were also familiar with the conviction that all America would work and give themselves willingly and that justice and liberty have been maintained at the cost of life itself.

Another area of familiarity dealt with reiterating the hectic events of that week. The men in the audience knew that "after two years of abasement and admirable self-restrain, . . . the United States of America is at war with the aggressor nations." They all knew President Roosevelt's message of war that had been delivered on December 8, 1941. They were also aware the role to be played by the United States was controversial within the minds of its citizens and caused "wrestlings of spirit as keen as any we have ever experienced." Having survived the attack, the men were well aware of witnessing "the amazing patience of the wounded and hope and calm content of dying men." Similarly, they knew quite well that "we did not enter this war lightly." They were perhaps too sorely aware that entering the war was at great "cost of shipmates and friends." They must have also felt that "all of us must do our part."

The use of familiar naval terminology was another way Chaplain Wood attempted to establish rapport. He used such phrases as, "all America will now turn-to," "our routine," and "finished our course."

Externally, that is, outside of the speech, Chaplain Wood used the familiar to establish common ground. For example, even though the men aboard ship were extremely busy with work activities that day, he kept the time, place, and the traditional order of service the same as usual. He also used all the accoutrements with which the usual audience was familiar. He used the same lectern, decorated with the same

flags and had religious music available. He allowed for the usual number of hymns to be sung. "The men always enjoyed singing hymns, so we usually sang at least three or four."

Chaplain Wood prepared and delivered his sermon of December 14, 1941, with two goals in mind: a) relieving stress, and b) rebuilding morale. His principal method was use of "the familiar" in order to establish rapport and to restore some semblance of stability to the lives of these men. The preceding analysis reveals that his sermon fulfilled his expectations.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the study was to examine the audience and occasion adaptation utilized by a speaker in a time of national crisis as shown by a critical analysis. The occasion was the chapel service aboard the USS Maryland on December 14, 1941. The audience consisted of various personnel who had survived the bombing of Pearl Harbor which occurred one week prior to the service. The sermon was prepared and delivered by Chaplain Harry C. Wood, who at one point felt that his life was meaningless but through courage based upon inner strength patterned a career in the ministry which brought him to that chapel service filled with resolve to be of service to the stricken men before him. The sermon was analyzed by criteria which grew out of the purposes that Chaplain Wood set. These criteria were: 1) To what extent, if any, did Chaplain Wood attempt to relieve stress and build morale? and 2) To what extent, if any, did Chaplain Wood utilize "the familiar" as a means of gaining rapport (common-ground)?

The working hypothesis of this study was that Chaplain Wood's sermon was well adapted to the audience on the occasion. It was dis-

covered through analysis of the sermon that he did attempt to relieve stress, build morale, and gain rapport by use of "the familiar." The hypothesis was confirmed.

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## APPENDIX

SERMON FROM HARRY C. WOOD -- delivered on Sunday, December 14, 1941.

Gentlemen! After more than two years of abasement and admirable self-restraint--and an effort to preserve mental neutrality, the United States of America is at war with the aggressor nations. Superficially we have been at peace since the outbreak of hostility in Europe, but actually there have been wrestlings of spirit as keen as any we have ever experienced.

There is no music on earth or in heaven any sweeter than that which celebrates the victory of the human spirit over the forces that would crush it. And, for this victory men are willing to endure any eventuality.

We have just witnessed the amazing patience of the wounded and the hope and calm content of dying men. It is something more than the heroism that lies sleeping here in our midst and in the hearts of ordinary men. It is evidence that men may be reconciled to the severest aspects of suffering if they are confident that the disaster is not meaningless.

Certainly our cause is not meaningless! Certainly our task is cut out for us by the reality of the situation now before our eyes. Madmen must be restrained for their own good and for the common good. Marauders

must be arrested. If bad men conspire, good men must associate to defeat their conspiracies.

We did not enter this war lightly! We entered it at great cost! We entered it at the cost of shipmates and friends. We pay honor and respect to them today. Tomorrow we go on with their memories into a war which we are determined will end any nation's dream of world-empire founded on force.

We are in this war--all of us--and all of us must do our part--and all Americans everywhere must do likewise. You can be assured that many are determining this same thing this morning. All America will now turn-to and do their part; defense workers, soldiers, sailors, marines, doctors and nurses; fathers and mothers whose sons are swift to see their chance to serve, investors in Defense bonds, contributors to relief-funds, pastors and teachers who help to keep alive in our hearts the sacred fires of rational patriotism; merchants and manufacturers who demand no war-time profit, toilers of the soil who rise early and labor long in order to increase the harvest of the land, women who find time to knit and sew and wind bandages for the Red Cross, payers of special taxes who gladly bear their share of financial burden of the war; boys and girls whose eyes glow as they pledge allegiance to the flag; all will have a part in this war. And, I think we all know our America well enough to know that all of these will work and give themselves willingly.

There are worse evils than war--moral surrenders for example, against which we must contend even to the death--and it may take the

blood of others as well as our own. In the light of the fact--I would rather die than have an evil force permitted to get loose in the world. It is not the material benefits that are so important, but justice and liberty are spiritual blessings which have been maintained frequently at no less hazard than life itself. There are other ways of staking our lives that are better than war, but will that determine that we stand aside if these blessings are sacrificed? Even though we see war as an evil to be abolished--and though we hope for the spiritual power to resist evil and make war mere folly--in which no Christian would ever think of engaging--would that settle our duty at this present moment?!

It appears to me that our national existence--and the happiness and the freedom of millions of our fellow-creatures are now involved--and also the defense of the weak and the establishment of justice among the nations. No higher command ever comes to any of us except through these conditions which require suffering, and if need be, death.

If any man feels this call to go forth to fight his country's battles, we have a right to require him--not to be swept off his feet by the emotion around him, but to weigh his duty prayerfully and to bear in mind that if a Christian can and does fight, it may not be for mere victory in battle, but for a greater victory of justice and righteousness--to which even his nation must be subject.

Many of you are asking yourselves what sort philosophy, what sort of faith you can have now in the light of our present world. Many of us have been living and working on account of someone or something.



Now we must learn to live and to work in spite of what now has intervened into our routine. When our surroundings are favorable and life is normal--we go on with little to interfere with our goals. But life is not always like that. It often turns rough. And then we are tested to the depths. If our faith is purely an echo of our environment, then it will fade out. But if it is genuine it will speak from the depth of our experience--whatever may happen.

From here on you and I are to be tested perhaps beyond our deepest imagination.

If we have power on the inside--and if this power within prevails through good days and bad--then we shall have no regrets regardless of the outcome. The power to go on when life is against us is the deepest necessity of our lives--with or without a war.

As the Psalmist so clearly expressed it for us:

"Passing through the valley of weeping, they make it a place of springs." Ps. 84:6.

It is a great thing to set one's heart on winning eternal life. But if we ever find ourselves in heaven--one of the supreme satisfactions will be the knowledge that we have not only kept true and finished our course, but that "Passing through" we have made the world a better place, brightened sad hearts, and aroused faith in God through making men believe in us.

Amen