Part VI: Christianity's Legacy —
The Crusades and The Inquisition
(Rethinking Exaggerated Crimes of Religion)

The previous articles have sought to answer the intellectual arguments against Christianity as articulated by the best atheist minds of our day. Now, we turn to their moral arguments and consider the charge that Christianity is worse than irrational — it is evil. For centuries, it was God who judged man and Christian clerics who issued charges of heresy and immorality. Now man has perched himself in the judge's seat and points the finger of accusation at God; and Christianity must answer the charge of fostering evil and threatening civil peace. In this article, we will investigate whether religion is the source of most of the conflict and death in the world; and if so, whether the world would be better off without it.

Prominent atheists have been very successful in convincing millions of people — even religious people — that religion has been the blight of history. In The End of Faith, Sam Harris calls it "the most potent source of human conflict, past and present." Steven Pinker writes, "religions have given us stonings, witch-burnings, crusades,quisitions, jihads, fatwas, suicide bombers, and abortion clinic gunmen." In another book, Pinker adds further offenses that he attributes to religion: he says humans believe God has commanded them to massacre Midianites, stone prostitutes, execute homosexuals, slay heretics and infidels, throw Protestants out of windows, withhold medicine from dying children, and crash airplanes into skyscrapers.

Christianity is typically the focus of the atheist moral critique. In his book Why I Am Not a Christian, philosopher Bertrand Russell argues that "the whole contention that Christianity has had an elevating moral influence can only be maintained by wholesale ignoring or falsification of the historical evidence." Columnist Robert Kuttner spells out the case against Christianity: "The Crusades slaughtered millions in the name of Jesus. The Inquisition brought the torture and murder of millions more. After Martin Luther, Christians did bloody battle with other Christians for another three centuries."

Nor have the dangers posed by religion faded with time. Richard Dawkins surveys the Middle East, the Balkans, Northern Ireland, India, and Sri Lanka and contends that "most, if not all, of the violent enmities in the world today" are due to the "divisive force of religion." So unsafe is the contemporary influence of religion, notably Islamic extremism and Christian fundamentalism, that Daniel Dennett fears "a toxic religious mania could end human civilization overnight."

The problem with this critique is that it greatly exaggerates the crimes that have been committed by religious fanatics — while neglecting or rationalizing the vastly greater crimes committed by secular and atheist fanatics. (This is the topic of my next article, in which we examine more closely the historical evidence the critics invoke. I intend to show that the widely held view that religion is the primary source of the great killings and conflicts of history is simply wrong — indeed"

(Continued ... on page three)
President's Corner

Let's Refresh Our Souls “KOINOIA”

I would be negligent if I didn't thank the Chapel Foundation “family” for the cards and prayers on behalf of my wife, Clarys, after her unfortunate fall. Progress is slow and she is easily discouraged and depressed. My request would be to pray for her encouragement and the Lord to lift up her spirits! Thank you very much!

My article for this November/December Snelling Spirit changed direction after her fall. I realized how important it is to uplift and refresh each others souls. The word “KOINOIA” came to my mind as it means, "the mutual refreshing and sharing of one another’s concerns and needs.” How that is needed in the fellowship of believers today.

I have listed below some axioms that are sometimes suggested to refresh our spirits. I've added the last one (at another time I will expand on that one). However, as we look at the axioms, the emphasis seems to come through loud and clear that there is a responsibility upon each of us to do the things that are needed in order that our lives might be refreshed. If we simply drift along each day and let the pressures of life dictate our activities, we can easily lose the sparkle of life that there is for the one who has his priorities straight. As Paul writes to the Romans he expresses the desire to come to them, that together they might be refreshed. A closer study of these verses indicates to us that the basis of that mutual refreshing was the “KOINOIA” — the fellowship and sharing of the believers with one another. How true this is as we fellowship with other believers, at the Chapel in the various acts of giving and receiving; it brings a mutual joy, a refreshing of our souls. We need to take time for the things of God with the people of God.

I am thankful for the work Barbara Sommerville is doing to get the people of God, "Chapel Members,” together for activities that refresh our souls; we need to do more of this!

Some axioms to think about that refresh us:

Take time to work — it is the price of success.
Take time to think — it is the source of power.
Take time to play — it is the secret of youth.
Take time to read — it is the foundation of knowledge.
Take time to laugh — it is the music of the soul.
Take time to be courteous — it is the work of a gentleman.
Take time to PRAY — it is the Christian’s vital breath.

"God is good — All the time God is good."

Building the Kingdom, Bob Peterson
Foundation President (651) 484-5285

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The Board welcomes input from members. If you have an idea or suggestion, please feel welcome to contact the appropriate Board person.

Scheduled 2008 Board Meetings:
Saturday (9:00 a.m.)...
15 Nov ... @ Federal Building
Sunday (1:00 p.m.) ...
21 December ... @ the Chapel

If you would like a copy of the 2007 Annual Report, please secure one in the Fellowship Hall or call the Foundation Office at (612) 970-7866 and leave your name/mailing address that we may send you a copy of this impressive report of last year's accomplishments.
that it can only be held by those who insist on ignoring or falsifying the evidence.)

Let's begin with the Crusades, which are vividly described by James Carroll as "a set of world historical crimes" whose "trail of violence scars the earth and human memory even to this day." A Roman Catholic, Carroll is an example of how many liberal Christians have absorbed the secular allegation that the Crusades illustrate the horrors of religion. Moreover, in fairly standard fashion, Carroll reserves his harshest language for the role of Christians in the Crusades. About the horrors perpetrated by the Muslim side, he is notably quiet. Here we have the familiar doctrine: religion is bad, but Christianity is worse.

But is it true? Let's remember that before the rise of Islam the region we call the Middle East was predominantly Christian. There were Zoroastrians in Persia and Jews in Palestine; but most of the people in what we now call Iraq, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt were Christians. The sacred places of Christianity — where Christ was born, lived, died, and was resurrected — are in that region. Inspired by Islam's call to jihad, Muhammad's armies conquered Jerusalem and the entire Middle East. They then pushed south into Africa, east into Asia, and north into Europe. They conquered parts of Italy and most of Spain, overran the Balkans, and were preparing for a final incursion that would bring all of Europe, then known as Christendom, under the rule of Islam. So serious was the Muslim threat that Edward Gibbon speculated that if the West had not fought back "perhaps the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the Revelation of Mahomet."

More than two hundred years after Islamic armies conquered the Middle East and forced their way into Europe, the Christians finally did strike back. Rallied by the pope and the ruling dynasties of Europe, in the eleventh century the Christians attempted to recover the heartland of Christianity and defend it against militant Islam. These efforts are now called the Crusades. (The term is a later invention; it was not used by the Christians and Muslims who fought in those battles.)

Who were the Crusaders? Historian Jonathan Riley-Smith disputes the idea that they were predatory conquerors or murderers. Rather, he says, they were pilgrims. They were responding to Christ's call to Christians to "deny yourself and take up your cross and follow me." Many of them put their fortunes and their lives at risk. Their rulers provided nothing — the Crusaders were expected to bring their own horses, pack animals, and equipment. The proof that they were not in this for gain is that virtually all of them returned poorer than they left. Yes, there was looting and foraging on the way, but Riley-Smith says this is because the Crusaders had to make provision for their own survival.

The First Crusade was a success. The Christians captured Jerusalem in 1099 and held it for several decades. Eventually, the Muslims re-grouped and routed the Crusaders. Saladin re-conquered Jerusalem in 1187. Subsequent Crusades were failures, and Jerusalem remained under Muslim rule. So the Crusades can be seen as a belated, clumsy and unsuccessful effort to defeat Islamic imperialism. Yet the Crusades were important — because they represented a fight for the survival of Europe. Without the Crusades, Western Civilization might have been completely overrun by the forces of Islam. The Crusades are also seen as a precursor to Europe's voyages of exploration, which inaugurated the modern era. Certainly one can dispute the worthiness of these objectives, and there were expeditions of rape and murder committed during the Crusades that no one can justify. Even so, these rampages do not define the Crusades as a whole. In the context of the history of warfare, there is no warrant for considering the Crusades a world historical crime of any sort. The Christians fought to defend themselves from foreign conquest, while the Muslims fought to continue conquering Christian lands.

What about the Inquisition? Contemporary historians have now established that the horrific images of the Inquisition are largely a myth concocted first by the political enemies of Spain — mainly English writers who shaped our American understanding of that event — and later by the political enemies of religion. Henry Kamen's book The Spanish Inquisition is subtitled - A Historical Revision. One of his chapters is called "Inventing the Inquisition." He means that much of the modern stereotype of the Inquisition is essentially made up.

(Continued ... on page five)
Special Patriotic/Veterans Events...

Sun, 9 Nov 08 — Veterans Day Remembrance — recognizing U.S. veterans of all branches of the armed forces.

Sun, 7 Dec 08 — Pearl Harbor Remembrance — recognizing survivors ... with a candle lighting tribute to those who have passed away since last year.

Veterans Day

President Wilson proclaimed 11 November 1919 as Armistice Day. On 13 May 1938 Congress designated November 11th of each year as a legal holiday.

In 1954, Congress amended the act of 1938 by striking out Armistice and inserting the word "Veterans" in its place and making it a day to honor American Veterans of all wars. Regardless of what day the week on which it falls November 11th will be the day of observation.

"Let us remember those who fought so valiantly, on the seas, in the air, and on foreign shores to preserve our heritage of freedom, and let us reconsecrate ourselves to the task of promoting an enduring peace so that their effort shall not have been in vain."

— President Dwight D. Eisenhower

Sunday November 9 (11:00 a.m.) the Foundation will recognize and honor veterans of all branches of service. Thank you to all who have served our country!

Getting to Know You...

Upon meeting Don Minor you might get the impression that he’s about the nicest guy in the world — and you’d be right. Like many of his generation, this WW2 U.S. Navy veteran got an early start on character development when his dad left their Monticello home seeking work during the Great Depression. Don was only nine-years-old.

Through a succession of odd jobs as a teenager, Don discovered and developed his gift of mechanics. In addition, he acquired another skill, as a strong and fearless swimmer, which he developed during the happy summers spent with friends, negotiating the swift and dangerous currents of the Mississippi River near his home. These talents, along with his character, would later prove instrumental in saving his life and the lives of at least five other men.

The first incident occurred in the summer of 1943 while Don, stationed at Camp Pendleton Marine Base, participated in a nighttime landing maneuver at sea. Out of nowhere, a large vessel struck Don’s craft. “Our boat was sunk,” recalls Don, “No warning at all. I went down with the boat, and after a struggle, I made it to the surface, minus my life jacket, eyeglasses, and the watch that my wife Edie had given me.” Nevertheless, in the chaos of that moment Don could hear someone call to him. He swam in the direction of the rescue boat, but as he was about to climb in they told him to swim further out to retrieve two more men floundering in the dark water. Exhausted, Don managed to bring the men safely to the boat, and although he was thankful to help save their lives, the memory of that harrowing night is one that still haunts him occasionally.

Another circumstance that would test Don’s mettle, happened later that summer. Don was a recent graduate from Navy diesel school, distinguishing himself at the top of his class. He had already served on the Navy destroyer, USS Ammen. In his next assignment with a repair group, he would transfer a number of aging landing craft from Monterey, California down the coast to Morro Bay. However, as the fleet got underway that evening, a storm at sea began to brew. The darkening sky seemed to portend what was to come. One of the smaller boats developed engine trouble and Don went aboard to help them out, but by the time he finished repairs, the sea was too rough to allow him to return to his own craft.

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The Inquisition, Kamen points out, "only had authority over Christians." The idea that the Inquisition targeted Jews is a fantasy. The only Jews who came under the purview of the Inquisition were Jews who had converted to Christianity. There were quite a few of these, as King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella had issued an ordinance in 1492 expelling Jews from Spain. The only way to stay was to convert. Of course, many Christians suspected that some of these "new Christians" were not Christians at all. They were Jews pretending to be Christians. Interestingly, the main source of allegations against the "new Christians" came from other Jews who were angry about their fellow Jews relinquishing their Judaism. These Jews had no qualms about testifying before the Inquisition courts – because as Jews they were exempt from its jurisdiction. Kamen points out that the grand inquisitor himself, Tomás de Torquemada, had known Jewish ancestry.

Inquisition trials, according to Kamen, were fairer and more lenient than their secular counterparts; not only in Spain, but also across Europe. Frequently, the only penalty given was some form of penance; such as fasting or what we would today call "community service." How many people were executed for heresy by the Inquisition? Kamen estimates that it was around 2,000. Other contemporary historians make estimates of between 1,500 and 4,000. These deaths are all tragic, but we must remember that they occurred over a period of 350 years.

The best example of religiously motivated violence in America is the Salem witch trials. How many people were killed in those trials? Thousands? Hundreds? Actually, fewer than twenty-five. Nineteen were sentenced to death, and a few others died in captivity. Yet the witch trials have been memorialized in books, movies, and plays like Arthur Miller’s The Crucible. Miller tried to use the Salem trials as a historical precedent to show the extensive harms of McCarthyism, but little did he realize that his historical example actually proved the opposite. Wrong though the trials were, they harmed a relatively small number of people.

It’s interesting to see the way in which atheist writers try to magnify the horror of the witch trials. In The Demon-Haunted World, Carl Sagan writes of the witch trials in Europe, "No one knows how many were killed altogether — perhaps hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions." That’s one big "perhaps." Sagan cites no sources, and the most reasonable conclusion is that he has no idea. His fellow atheist Sam Harris, who has actually done some reading on the subject, cites contemporary historical sources that put the number of witches burned much lower, at 100,000. That’s a substantial figure, but it’s a far cry from Sagan’s demon- haunted estimate, and 200 percent lower, Harris notes, than some previous absurd estimates.

Still, Harris argues, "Such a revaluation of numbers does little to mitigate the horror and injustice of this period." Why not? Let’s apply his logic to other historical events and the absurdity will become apparent. The two atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki caused an estimated 100,000 civilian deaths, and the debate continues over President Truman’s decision to end the war in this way. But let’s reduce the casualty figures by a factor of 200, in the manner of Harris, and we are down to 500 deaths for both bombs. Would this, in Harris’ words, "do little to mitigate the horror and injustice" of the bombs? On the contrary, it would dispel much of the horror and virtually eliminate any moral debate over the legitimacy of Truman’s action.

How about the Thirty Years’ War? This conflict involving the Holy Roman Empire and the Protestant states in Germany lasted from 1613 to 1643. While religious motives were present initially, historians today emphasize that these wars were mainly fueled by political contests of power. The emerging nation-states of Europe were clashing with each other over territory and influence. We can see how political motives overrode religious ones in the role played by Catholic France in the latter phases of the war: concerned about the strength of the greatest Catholic power in the world, the Holy Roman Empire, French statesman Cardinal Richelieu organized a force made up of Swedes and Frenchmen to help the Protestant side.

Just as in the Thirty Years’ War, many current conflicts that are counted today as "religious wars" are not being fought over religion. This is a point that never seems to get through to atheists like Dawkins and Harris. Dawkins complains about the media’s insistence on describing the conflicts in Northern Ireland, the Balkans, and Iraq as "ethnic" rather than religious. But the media is right and Dawkins is wrong. These are ethnic rivalries. Dawkins terms the clash between the Shiites and Sunnis in Iraq as "religious cleansing." Nonsense. Aside
from the radicals of al Qaeda, the fight in Iraq is between one group that was affiliated with Saddam Hussein, who ruled Iraq for a quarter century, and another group — the Shiite majority — that is now in power. Religion has very little to do with this mutually destructive conflict.

Dawkins gives several other examples, and they all work against him. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not, at its core, a religious one. Rather, it arises from disputes over self-determination and land. Hamas and the extreme orthodox parties in Israel may advance theological claims — "God gave us this land" and so forth — but even without these religious motives the conflict would remain essentially the same. But aren't the Jews fighting for this land because it is holy? No, they are fighting because this is their ancestral land and, after the Holocaust, many Jews have become convinced that they can feel secure only in a country of their own. The people who founded the state of Israel were secular, not religious Jews. The Palestinian Liberation Organization was from its origin a secular nationalist group.

Even when religion is clearly not the issue, modern atheist writers insist on twisting evidence to make it the culprit. I do not for a moment deny that religion can be a source of self-righteousness, and that this tendency can lead to persecution and violence. In the past it has indeed been so. In the Muslim world, violence in the name of religion is still a serious problem. But for Christians the tragedy of violence in the name of religion is thankfully in the ancient past.

I'll conclude by suggesting why this is so. In Dostoevsky's novel The Brothers Karamazov, one of the brothers tells the story of the grand inquisitor, in which Christ himself appears before the tribunal. He is immediately recognized and thrown into prison. That night, the inquisitor comes to visit him. He asks him to "go and never return again." The reason is clear — Christ's teachings are those of a peacemaker. They are the very opposite of the persecutions and violence that have sometimes been perpetrated in the name of Christianity. Jesus says in Matthew 7:1-5, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." This may not always have been the spirit of Christians, and it is not always the spirit of every Christian today. But it is the spirit of the founder and guiding light of Christianity and it continues to supply a noble standard for a war-weary and violent world.

Serving God and Country,
Rev. Dr. Kenneth L. Beale, Jr., Chaplain
(612) 747-1059
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(Continued ... from page four)

At 19-years-old, Don was the old man on the vessel of three crewmembers, each of which, including the skipper, was incapacitated with seasickness. Meanwhile the steering had gone out on the 26-foot boat, and Don had to improvise by jerry rigging the emergency tiller pipe with a rope, which he maneuvered with his legs. In an attempt to get his bearings, Don grabbed the compass but realized it was dead. In the blinding storm, Don and the crew had drifted away from the rest of the boats. They were lost at sea.

Five days went by with no food and only the rainwater they managed to capture in a tarp. To add to Don's distress, his concern over Edie and the worry she may be experiencing while waiting for him at Morro Bay bothered him tremendously. On the brink of despair, "Something seemed to take hold of me to tell me to steer in this direction," said Don. "I saw a light, I aimed for it. I kept aiming for the coast." He got the life jackets on the "kids," but as they drew closer to shore, Don noticed odd-looking waterspouts exploding on the surface.

(Continued ... on page eight)
Celebrate the Season!

Christmas Garden of Poinsettias
A tradition at the Chapel is to adorn the altar area with beautiful poinsettia plants at our Christmas Eve Candlelight Services (4 and 6:30 p.m.). The Chapel is made alive with color. You can participate by purchasing a red, pink or white plant(s) — $14 each. This tradition is made even more precious by the dedications which are made for each of the plants. It's a beautiful way to honor or remember your loved ones at this sacred and holy time of year. Contact Karen Ayers (612/727-3817) or see her in the Fellowship Hall by Dec 7th. Plants may be taken following the 6:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

Christmas Caroling at the VA
Once again, the chapel congregation will be singing Christmas carols ... making melody through the halls of the MN Veteran’s Home on Sunday December 21st (2:00 p.m.). Those interested in participating should gather at 1:30 p.m. at the Chapel Fellowship Hall. Following our caroling, the group will be going out to eat together.

Help us spread the joy of Christmas in song with those veterans who risked their lives so that we might have such freedom to express our faith.
— Your Fellowship Committee

Christmas Eve
On Sun., 24 Dec. we will have worship services at 4 and 6:30 p.m. Join in the singing of the carols in the beauty of candlelight and of a garden of poinsettias. The special music will be the “Regency” Trio featuring instrumental and vocal. A shuttle bus will be available.

Christmas Cookies Needed
The Kitchen Angels are requesting cookie donations for Sundays Nov 30, Dec 7 & 21 for our fellowship hour. Sign-up on the board just outside the Chapel kitchen. Thank you.
— Terry Ulstad Coordinator

Annual Christmas Luncheon
Be sure to mark your calendar — December 14th at 1:00 p.m. — to join your Chapel friends and their guests at our Annual Christmas Luncheon at the Embassy Suites Hotel on Highway I-494 and 34th Avenue in Bloomington. Embassy Suites will again serve us a delicious lunch for $15 per meal. Tickets will go on sale after worship in the Fellowship Hall starting November 9th thru December 7th.

Our entertainment for the afternoon will be the Moonlight Serenaders Big Band bringing us musical arrangements from the 30s and 40s era. Most of the members grew up during the Miller/Dorsey/Goodman time and their musical background began in high school bands. They perform at hundreds of parties, receptions, outdoor concerts.

— Your Fellowship Committee

In the Event of Inclement Weather...
If on a Sunday morning it is significantly snowing ... or tremendously cold ... or the winds are resulting in drifting conditions, please call our Foundation office at 612/970-7866 for an announcement of worship cancellation. In this way we will attempt to inform you of Chapel closings.

2008 Chapel Directory
The membership directory for the Foundation has been updated with all of the corrections received through end-October. The new directory will be distributed to all members beginning 16 November 2008 ... just in time for you to address Christmas cards. You will be able to pick up your copy in the Fellowship Hall.

— Leila Campbell, Administrative Assistant
Overhead a plane waved them off, and Don understood. They'd ventured into a tank artillery firing range! The boat capsized in the breakers, tossing Don and his three companions into the sea where the Coast Guard picked them up, hungry, sick and cold, but alive. "I always felt that God was with me," says Don. And on a ten-day shore leave that followed, God answered Don's other prayer when he learned that Edie had been spared needless worry, as the Navy never informed her that Don was missing at sea. "God has helped me in so many things in my life," said Don. "It's God that led me to meet Edie."

From California Don headed to Guadalcanal in the South Pacific then up to Guam aboard an LSD (landing ship dock). They carried LCM (landing craft maintenance) boats with a marine tank on each one, readied for the invasion on D-Day. After unloading the tanks in the morning, his task force went ashore the first day of the landings. "What a mess that was," Don recalled. "I lost some of my buddies from the Japanese snipers and shrapnel." Under constant fire, he wandered into a small town. There was destruction all around. In a close call he missed striking a landmine with his shovel when he attempted to clear the brush for his tent. Moments later, a nearby marine lost his life as he stepped on another mine. "There was very little rest that night," said Don. And for many more after that.

A happier memory, and one he cherishes still, occurred on a Sunday morning on the island of Guam. Don was hiking along a dusty road when he noticed a figure in the distance walking two German shepherds. As the two drew near, Don caught the sight of the stars on the tall man's cap as they sparkled in the sunlight. In a singular moment, the Fleet Admiral put Don at ease and introduced himself as Admiral Chester Nimitz. "He was just the nicest guy," reflects Don. I'm sure the admiral got the same impression of the young man he met that day.

At the end of the war, Don went home to his loving wife, Edie, and their baby boy Jerry, whom he'd never seen. He and Edie met in high school when they were just 16-years-old and married before Don enlisted. They would add two more children to their happy family, Tom and Jane. Don's other talent, carpentry, allowed him to make a good living for them building homes, including their own, where the couple still lives after 66-years of marriage. Their extended family includes five grand children and seven great grandchildren.

You might have heard Don playing his harmonica — yet another talent. But did you know that he has a certain fondness for trains, so much so that the Holker Sisters asked him to record on their "Blue Train" album. Have you guessed it? He's a human train whistle. "We were in the grapevine," Don explains. The "grapevine" was the lifeline for hobos, telling them which homes were good for a handout during the depression. "We had a large garden and my mother was always generous to them," said Don. The regular sound of that lonesome train whistle was the backdrop of his childhood. He naturally learned to imitate it — ask him about it sometime.

One of Don's favorite memories took place when he was ten or eleven-years-old. Playing near a farm one day, his well-tuned ears detected the troubling sound of a poorly running engine ... in the sky. In the next moment, an old WWI Jenny landed near him in the cornfield. The pilot jumped out and called to Don, "Get me a couple staples from that fence!" and tossed him a pair of pliers. Don complied, and in a jiffy he was in the cockpit, "scared to death," and pulling on the choke as the pilot spun the propeller at the front of the plane. At last Don stood back and watched as the plane became mobile again, mowing a large swath through the corn as it took-off. "Thanks, kid," the man called. Later, in pictures that Don saw of Colonel Lindbergh, he recognized the guy he helped that fateful day in a field of corn.

Photo: Edith and Donald Minor of Golden Valley, MN.

— submitted by Barbara Sommerville
Benevolent Giving ...

In 1947, a young 9 year old Chinese boy and his family immigrated from China to the United States, just ahead of the communist revolution and after years of brutal Japanese occupation of WW2. They were without money and spoke no English. The Chinese boy, whose name is Eugene Sit, rose from being penniless to owning one of the most successful investment firms in Minnesota, called Sit Investment, located in downtown Minneapolis in the IDS building.

Eugene was very moved by the events of September 11, 2001. He appreciated the sacrifices of our Minnesota military armed forces and everything that the United States had done for him. To show his appreciation, he started an organization called the Minnesotans’ Military Appreciation Fund (MMAF), a 501(c)(3), a nonprofit organization. The MMAF’s mission is to donate to anyone who is from Minnesota and has served in the Military after September 11, 2001. Each individual receives $500. Anyone from Minnesota who has been wounded in combat will receive $2,000-$10,000 and the family of anyone killed in combat will receive $5,000. Eugene Sit has donated over $1,000,000 of his own money and MMAF has raised over $7,000,000. Ninety cents of every dollar goes directly to the troops of Minnesota. There is no government money involved. In December, 2006, the Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation received a benevolence application from MMAF. A benevolence gift was approved at that time by the Foundation’s Board of Directors and they have been supporting MMAF every year since.

Unfortunately, Eugene Sit passed away on June 28, 2008, after a four-month struggle with pancreatic cancer. His son, Roger Sit, took over as the CEO of Sit Investment and continues to run MMAF. Roger previously served six years as a Captain in the U.S. Air Force with financial management responsibilities at Headquarters Space Division. Roger graduated with military distinction from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1984. He earned a M.S. in Systems Technology from the University of Southern California in 1987 and a M.B.A. with honors from the Harvard Graduate School of Business in 1991.

I made arrangements to meet Roger at his office in the IDS building. I also met with Kelly Boston who is the Executive Director for MMAF and a employee of Sit Investments. Roger is extremely motivated to keep MMAF alive until every Minnesota soldier comes home from Iraq and Afghanistan and is always looking for donations to show Minnesota soldiers how much their sacrifices are appreciated. MMAF is made up of seven co-chairpersons. Some of the co-chairs are well known individuals such as Arne Carlson, Walter Mondale, Rudy Boschwitz and David Durenberger. Some of the largest donors to MMAF are Federated Insurance, who has donated over $500,000 and Target and TCF Bank who each have donated over $300,000. Roger also stated that because most military records are not open to the public, it is sometimes difficult to locate all Minnesota soldiers. Roger is hoping that articles like this one in The Snelling Spirit will help raise public awareness of MMAF.

While doing the interview to write this article, I was honored to be in the presence of a great American whose father started an organization to say “thank you” to our Minnesota troops for their sacrifices. No other state has duplicated the MMAF program. Eugene Sit was inducted into the Minnesota Business Hall of Fame in June 2008. I want to say “thank you” to Roger Sit and his father Eugene Sit and all the members of MMAF for their hours of hard work and financial support to show our Minnesota troops how much they are appreciated. If you would like to donate to MMAF, please send your donation to Minnesotans’ Military Appreciation Fund, PO Box 2070, Minneapolis, MN 55402 or call (877) MN Thanx (877-668-4296) www.thankmntroops.org

— Pat Hoy, Chair
Benevolence Committee

This congregation tithes (10%) from its plate offerings. If you know of an organization/ministry ... that is in keeping with our purpose ... please feel free to secure an application to submit for financial support in 2008. Simply call the Foundation Office at 612/970-7866 ... and provide a name and mailing address.
Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation

This is a non-denominational Christian church founded in 1967. We invite you to join us for worship each Sunday at 11:00 a.m. at this historic Chapel.

The Fort Snelling Veterans Memorial Chapel is a unique Minnesota memorial—a splendid monument to the patriotism, the moral earnestness and the convictions of the people of this state— a shrine to commemorate those who have died for their country. Weekly Sunday worship is sponsored by the Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation and is not subsidized by the state.

For Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation information call the Foundation Office at (612) 970-7866, or write to the Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation, 1 Federal Drive, Fort Snelling, MN 55111-4027, or e-mail to info@fortsnellingmcf.org or check our web site at www.fortsnellingmcf.org

Ft. Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation Staff
Rev. Dr. Kenneth L. Beale, Jr., Chaplain
Ruth Fardig, Minister of Music
Leila Campbell, Administrative Assistant

The Snelling Spirit Staff:
The Snelling Spirit is a bimonthly publication of the Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation. We welcome your input, your letters and your suggestions.

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<th>Sun</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 1st Sunday in Advent</td>
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<td>1 All-Saints' Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 a.m. Bible Study</td>
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<td>Daylight Savings Ends</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 a.m. Holy Communion</td>
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<td>Turn clocks back one hour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sermon: &quot;Mary, Did You Know?&quot;</td>
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<td>Music: TBA</td>
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<td>Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chaplain: Rev. Dr. Kenneth L. Beale, Jr. — Phone: 612/747-1059 — E-mail: <a href="mailto:kenneth.beale@us.army.mil">kenneth.beale@us.army.mil</a></td>
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<td>Minister of Music: Ruth Fardig — Phone: 612/238-5822 — E-mail: <a href="mailto:ruthfardig@aol.com">ruthfardig@aol.com</a></td>
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<td>Administrative Assistant: Leila Campbell — Phone: 612/970-7866 — E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@fortsnelling.org">info@fortsnelling.org</a></td>
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<td>Website: <a href="http://www.fortsnellingmcf.org">www.fortsnellingmcf.org</a> — Fax: 612/970-7867 — Dial-a-Devotional: 612/970-7866, ext. #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 25th Sunday after Pentecost</td>
<td>3 Election Day</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Saints Day Remembrance</td>
<td>10:00 a.m. Bible Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 a.m. Worship Service</td>
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<td>9:00 a.m. Benevolence Committee Mtg. @ Richfield Am Legion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sermon: &quot;The Saints of God&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music: Norwegian Glee Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 26th Sunday after Pentecost</td>
<td>10 Veterans Day</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veterans Day Remembrance</td>
<td>10:00 a.m. Bible Study</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Foundation is Incorporated in 1966</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 a.m. Worship Service</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15 Veteran Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sermon: &quot;No Medal for Joe&quot;</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15 Veteran Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music: Centennial Singers</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15 Veteran Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 27th Sunday after Pentecost</td>
<td>17 National Bible Sunday</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 a.m. Bible Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 a.m. Worship Service</td>
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<td>22 Veteran Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sermon: &quot;Don't Be Deceived&quot;</td>
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<td>22 Veteran Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music: Nordkap Male Chorus</td>
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<td>22 Veteran Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 Last Sunday after Pentecost</td>
<td>24 Thanksgiving Sunday</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27 Thanksgiving Day</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thanksgiving Sunday</td>
<td>10:00 a.m. Bible Study</td>
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<td>11:00 a.m. Worship Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sermon: &quot;The Attitude of Gratitude&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music: ASI Male Chorus</td>
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# December 2008

## Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation

1 Federal Drive, Fort Snelling, Minnesota  55111–4027

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| 7   | 2nd Sunday in Advent  
**Pearl Harbor Remembrance**  
10:00 a.m. Bible Study  
11:00 a.m. Worship Service  
Sermon: "I'm Dreaming of a Wise Christmas"  
Music: Chord Ayres | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  |
|     | 10:00 a.m. Bible Study  
11:00 a.m. Worship Service  
Sermon: "How Do We Celebrate Christmas?"  
Music: Gordon Howell/Ruth Fardig | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  | 19  | 20  |
| 14  | 3rd Sunday in Advent  
10:00 a.m. Bible Study  
11:00 a.m. Worship Service  
Sermon: "Jesus, the Christ, was Born..."  
Music: Land of Lakes Nordic Choir | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  | 25  | 26  |
|     | 10:00 a.m. Bible Study  
11:00 a.m. Worship Service  
Sermon: "Now is the Hour!"  
Music: Nancy Guertin | 28  | 29  | 30  | 31  |     |     |
| 21  | 4th Sunday in Advent  
10:00 a.m. Bible Study  
11:00 a.m. Worship Service  
Sermon: "Now is the Hour!"  
Music: Nancy Guertin |     |     |     |     |     |     |

**Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation Staff**

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