

Alumni Spotlight: Gregory Todd (DMin '09)



Current Title & Military Branch: Chief of Chaplains, Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy

Family: wife, five daughters, three sons-in-law, five grandchildren

Favorite professors: Dr. Timothy Laniak and Dr. Steven Klipowicz

Favorite memory: Our DMin cohort had a nice dinner together during our final week. We were able to review our last three years and what we learned from one another. It was nice to pause and reflect on what I had learned from such gifted colleagues, who I knew would go on to do great things.

What have you been doing since you left Gordon-Conwell and what are you doing now?

I had enrolled in the DMin program while still on active duty with the thought that I may leave the Navy and return to parish ministry. I felt the training in Christian Leadership would help with that transition. Instead, the Navy promoted me (three times), and I continue to serve as the Chief of Navy Chaplains, overseeing the ministry to the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. What I had learned about leadership at Gordon-Conwell continues to serve me well in my leadership role.

What do you love about your work as a military chaplain?

Military ministry is truly ministry in the “public square,” a raw environment that drives us to sharpen our ministry skills if we are to make impact with the Gospel. We get to share Christ, and the forgiveness He won through the Cross, with people who would have never darkened the door of a church. Because we wear the cross on our uniform and represent God in the institution, our acts of care become testaments to Christ’s love.

What are the particular challenges of serving as a military chaplain in general and/or in your specific context?

We live in a post-Christian age, but there is still a desire among our young people for something bigger than themselves. Our society has neglected to tell young people that they have a mind, body, *and* a soul, and yet they crave a connection with the transcendent. The chaplain’s challenge is to meet them where they are at and gently walk with them along their spiritual journey. As ministers of Christ, it is hard to be patient and let God bring the harvest, but we can be confident that the Gospel will do its work. The joy is having a front row seat to watch God work in the lives of these young people.

How has God woven together your Gordon-Conwell education with other life events to bring you to where you are now? How did you come to be doing your current work?

I believe my Gordon-Conwell education spoke to the Navy as to my leadership commitment. The education, linked to leadership experiences, contributed to my being asked to fill my current leadership role as the Chief of Navy Chaplains.



How has your Gordon-Conwell education served you in your past and current work?

I reflect on the leadership principles and tools I learned at Gordon-Conwell every day. They have become integrated in how I function in my current leadership role.

What piece of advice would you give to young alumni who are considering serving as a military chaplain?

Leaders in the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard see the value of military chaplains and are crying out for more chaplains. In fact, this is the first time since the end of the Cold War that the Navy Chaplain Corps is growing. It is a wonderful time to be part of a dynamic ministry. It is not always easy but serving as a Navy chaplain is incredibly rewarding. Many chaplains love it so much that they stay for a whole career, but even if you only serve one tour, you will return to civilian ministry better able to understand young people today, with more leadership skills and sharper at proclaiming the Gospel for our current age.

Do you have any publications or links to share?

[Religious Services Careers](#)

[The Navy Needs More Chaplains](#)

[SITREP featuring Rear Admiral Gregory N. Todd, Chief of Chaplains of the Navy](#)

[From Character to Courage: Developing the Spirit of the 21st Century Warfighter](#)

[Navy Chaplain | What is a Chaplain? What Does a Chaplain Do?](#)

[Navy Chaplain Candidate Program Manager -- Lieutenant Justin Bernard](#)