

FROM THE CHAPLAIN

A BOOGER BEHIND EVERY BUSH

“The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.” Proverbs 28:1

About 0200 hours we heard something coming through the tall grass. We woke up the Marines that were trying to get a little sleep in a dry irrigation ditch and put everyone online. We were patiently waiting to see someone before blowing our Claymores. We were getting dry mouths as our eyes strained to see the enemy through the pitch-dark night, while leeches crawled up our legs, and mosquitoes dined on any exposed flesh. Our hearts began to pound as the noise increased and then suddenly before the sights of my M-16 crawled two giant land tortoises. Fear fled and the courage of lions soon returned.

The following night we set up our ambush site in the middle of a jungle trail. The Marines were in the high grass to settle in for the night after preparing our trap for ‘Charlie.’ Our sergeant delegated one man to stand radio watch and wait for the signal of a gentle tug on a rope that was securely tied to his ankle. This ingenious method of communication was to be initiated by the man who sat in the middle of the path, concealed only by the shadow of an elephant leaf. When it was my turn to watch, we heard a firefright in the distance and illumination was being put up by an artillery battery. We could hear a faint boom, boom, boom, followed by the sound of projectiles cutting through the still atmosphere, followed by popping noises as the flairs opened up and began their gentle decent, while the cannisters tumbled to the earth with a whoop, whoop, whoop. The fear of darkness yielded itself to the greater fear of being seen as the sky lit up with multiple flares falling to earth on parachutes. As the illumination lit up the landscape, the shadows cast on the ground from the trees and bushes began to move with deceptive trickery on your mind and senses. The jungle seemed to come alive with regiments of NVA and VC combatants. There was a booger behind every bush, and when I became absolutely convinced that there was indeed a column of the enemy at the bend of the trail looking in our direction, I tugged firmly on the rope. There was no response, so I took up the slack and jerked so hard that I pulled the watchman’s legs out from under him as he made his way to my position. He tumbled through the grass and a firefright ensued which was short lived and very decisive. Either Charlie fled our onslaught, or we shot up a lot of shadows from banana trees that night. Paranoia came easy for a small mobile unit, hit often by components of Viet Cong Company Q82. We were continually on the move because we were being continually pursued.

But what about those who are continually pursued by their evil ways? In the movie, *The Patriot*, Mel Gibson’s character said, “I have long feared that my sins would return to visit me, and the cost is more than I can bear.” Matthew Henry said, “What continual frights those are subject to that go on in wicked ways. Guilt in the conscience makes men a terror to

themselves, so that they are ready to flee when none pursues; like one that absconds for debt, who thinks every one he meets a bailiff." Though they pretend to be easy going, good ole' boys, they have secret fears which track them wherever they go, so that they fear where no present or imminent danger lurks. Those that have made God their enemy, and know it, see the whole of creation at war with them. Therefore, they can have no true enjoyment, no confidence, no courage, but are the embodiment of dread, as a fearful soul looking for the judgment that continually dogs them. Sin makes men cowards. On the other hand, what a holy security and serenity of mind those enjoy who keep conscience void of offence and so keep themselves in the love of God. The righteous are bold as a lion, as a young lion; in the midst of the greatest of dangers they have a God of Almighty power to trust in. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth be removed, and regiments of tyrants assault our defenses. Whatever difficulties the righteous meet with while performing their duty, they are not daunted by those difficulties.

National sins are accompanied by national disorders, riot, anarchy, and the disturbance of public peace and security: there seems to be a booger behind every bush! Because of the transgressions of a land and a general defection from God and His Word to embrace idolatry, profaneness, and immorality, many have become the princes of evil. Have we become a nation on the run, with judgement fast of our heels? Our people are divided by factions, backbiting, and devouring one another; and risk the possibilities of being cut off by the hand of God, perhaps by means of a foreign enemy (China) acting as a mercenary of Divine judgement. Falling into godlessness has cost every great civilization their existence. Babylonian, Macedonian, Grecian, and Roman Empires are no more, and it could happen to America. As the people go into bondage for their personal sins, they get the government they demand, and the princes (mayors and governors), and the kings (presidents) play the madmen, and their people suffer for it.

Chaplain Ron