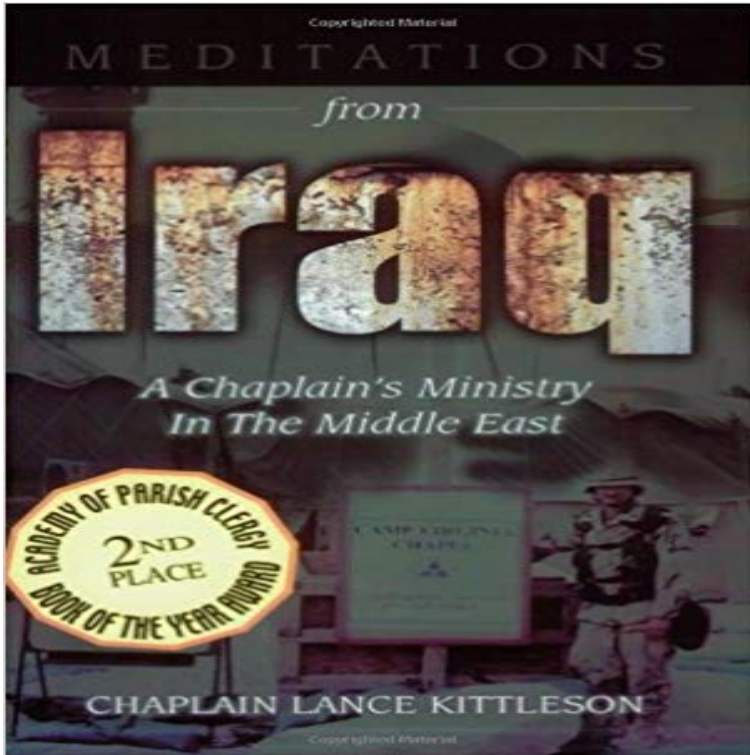


Meditations from Iraq: A Chaplains Ministry in the Middle East 2003-2004



I experienced the power of Gods grace in two ways as I have read these e-mails: I heard the story of faith of an ordinary parish pastor who served God in a rather extraordinary setting, and I experienced the power of God to make the ordinary precious. These letters are filled with simple moments of serving coffee and serving God, baptism by bottled water and denominational tensions melting under a desert sun. Lance Kittleson shares with all of us a small piece of Gods kingdom in a far-off land. (from the Preface) Elaine Siemsen Assistant Professor of Religion St. Olaf College In January 2003, Lance Kittlesons army reserve unit was deployed to Kuwait and Iraq. For the next 14 months, his ministry was transformed ? instead of pastoring an Iowa congregation, he now served under harsh and sometimes dangerous conditions as a chaplain for a support unit on the edge of war. Yet even in this chaotic and challenging environment, his trained pastors eye finds the presence of God in moments both mundane and exhilarating. In this collection of e-mails sent to family and friends during his time in the Middle East, Kittleson shares insightful, poignant, and humorous meditations on faith and life. Youll get a firsthand glimpse of military life, as well as the remarkable ways of the spirit (both divine and human) at work. When the camps altar suddenly disappears, youll read about how Kittleson comes to understand that the crude replacement altar hastily assembled from discarded shipping crates is a better symbol of Jesus than any fancy altar in an ornate sanctuary. Youll also see how the sight of a superior officer offering a cup of coffee draws quizzical responses from servicemen accustomed to a rank-conscious army. Whether you are interested in learning more about what some of our men and women in uniform are experiencing in Iraq, want thoughtful sermon illustrations, or just desire

inspirational reading that highlights Gods presence even in the worst of life, Meditations From Iraq is a fascinating volume for everyone. Some of the illuminating chapters include: * A Baptism In The Desert* The Spirits Honeywagon* The Rivers Of Babylon* Tikrit And Perspective (Or Dodging Bat Guano In The Desert)* Saint SGT Murphy* Elis Christmas Tree (Or Someone In Iowa Loves You)* The Last Convoy* SRP Blues Lance Kittleson has been an ELCA pastor since 1981. He is currently the pastor of Deer Creek Lutheran Church in Carpenter, Iowa, and St. Peter Lutheran Church in Toeterville, Iowa. Kittleson previously served parishes in Iowa and Oregon, and has been a missionary in Senegal. Kittlesons military service has included 17 years as a chaplain in the Army Reserve and 10 years as an infantry officer. He is a graduate of North Carolina State University and Luther Seminary.

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