Crossing cultures in marriage

By Chaplain B. Allen Vaughan

I grew up in a small town in rural Missouri with a population of around 11,000 people, and then went to a small, church-affiliated college in Arkansas. In 1990, right after my graduation from college, I embarked upon one of the most significant adventures in my young adult life. I decided to become a missionary for my church. Our training was conducted in Atlanta and New York City. I was accepted into the mission program and sent to the Philippines for a year and six months.

In the span of only three short months, I went from the life of a college student in rural America, to the life of a missionary in the Philippines. I lived in Manila, along with 10 million other people, who spoke a different language, walked in overcrowded streets, rode in smoke-belching, noisy public modes of transportation and breathed in the choking pollution of the most densely populated city in the world.

I soon came to discover the beauty of the Philippines and ingenuity of the Filipino people, but I had to go through what most first-time world travelers experience as "culture shock." In order to adapt to my new surroundings, I began to develop certain cross-cultural skills. These skills have come in handy on many occasions since my days as a missionary, and particularly in my cross-cultural marriage to one especially beautiful Filipina who became my wife.

I have come to believe that every marriage is a "cross-cultural" marriage, no matter where either partner in the couple grew up. You may have married your high school sweetheart from your hometown, or you may be married to someone who grew up in a completely different part of the world.

The truth is, culture is defined by more than skin color and language. More than likely, you were raised in a family that has a slightly different set of values than your spouse's family. These differences in values are most evident when it comes to spending or saving money, raising children, methods of discipline or religious beliefs.

The way we view the world and interpret events as we see them, is colored by the family culture in which we were raised. When you sit down to discuss challenging issues, and discover the differences you have with your spouse, it may seem at times that you both are from two different cultures.

Your spouse may not be "wrong" or "unreasonable." He or she may just be viewing the issue from a different perspective, which is influenced by how we were raised. Work at trying to understand where your spouse is coming from and learn his or her "culture." You may be surprised by what a difference it will make when you get past the "culture shock" and start to develop cross-cultural skills in your marriage. May you be blessed.

Cut and save

Typhoon Condition Information

TCCOR Storm watch - Stay tuned to channel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio and the CFAY website www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka for updates.

TCCOR IV - Essential personnel should be notified. Residents should obtain emergency supplies. Stay tuned to channel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio and www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka.

TCCOR III - Residents are advised to secure outdoor loose items. Fill vehicles and gas grill tanks. Ensure emergency kits are ready. Move items away from windows and ensure sufficient money and important documents are easily accessible. Stay tuned to channel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio and www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka.

TCCOR II - Secure outdoor items and all windows. Alert your commands' essential personnel. Stay tuned to channel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio and www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka.

TCCOR I - Residents should move fragile items away from all windows or cover them with plastic. Tape all windows. Stay tuned to channel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio and www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka for updates.

TCCOR I Caution - Non-essential personnel should remain indoors. Stay tuned to channel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio and www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka.

TCCOR I Emergency - All personnel must stay indoors and away from windows. Stay tuned to channel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio and www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka.

TCCOR Recovery - Stay indoors while damage assessment and cleanup is accomplished. Stay tuned to channel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio and www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka.

TCCOR All clear - Threat of sever weather is over. Stay tuned to channel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio and www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka.

Cut and save

The typhoon season in Japan runs from May to November, with the peak storm season for the local area occuring in September and October. The above cut-and-save provides a brief description of each typhoon readiness level and the actions that should be taken in order to be more prepared. Create one or more emergency kits that include enough supplies for at least three days. There are six basic items that should be included: water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and items for medical conditions. Have one gallon of water per person, per day and non-perishable food. Local maps, a family emergency plan and an all-hazards weather radio enable residents to respond to an emergency more quickly. Local weather information can be found via the Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka website at www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka, or by tuning in to the base information channel 15. Additionally, updates can be found at https://metocph.nmci.navy.mil/jtwc.php. Updates can be obtained every six hours at this website for all typhoons in the Pacific and the Indian Ocean.

FVAP answers voters questions 24 hours a day, seven days a week

By FVAP Public Affairs

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) opened its 24 hour a day, seven day a week call center July 15. The call center makes voting information accessible to voters living in other time zones and ensures that all issues are addressed.

Voters can call 1-800-438-VOTE (8683), e-mail vote@fvap.gov or choose the online chat option at www.fvap.gov to accommodate an easy flow of absentee voting assistance and information. Toll-free numbers from 67 countries are listed on the FVAP website at www.fvap.gov/contact/tollfreephone.html.

FVAP enhanced its existing service by teaming with the Navy Global Distance 24 hour Support Center to respond immediately to e-mails, calls, faxes and online chat from military members, their families and overseas voters worldwide. As always, FVAP subject matter experts are available during regular business hours to handle issues of greater complexity.

The following are some frequently asked questions about absentee voting:

• Can I vote absentee? - You can vote absentee in local, state and federal elections if you are a United States citizen 18 years or older and are an active duty member of the armed forces, merchant marine, public health service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, their family members, or a U.S. citizen residing outside the United States.

• Where is my legal voting residence? - For voting purposes, "legal voting residence" can be the state or territory where you last resided prior to entering military service or the state or territory that you have since claimed as your legal residence. Even though you may no longer maintain formal ties to that residence, the address determines your proper voting jurisdiction. To claim a new legal residence, you must have simultaneous physical presence and the intent to return to that location as your primary residence.

Military and their family members may change their legal residence every time they change permanent duty stations, or they may retain their legal residence without change. This may mean that the family's uniformed service member has a different legal voting residence than his or her family members. A judge advocate general officer or legal counsel should be consulted before legal residence is changed because there are usually other factors that should be considered besides voting.

• My family members are not in the military; can they also vote absentee? - Yes. Eligible spouses and children (U.S. citizens, 18 years or older) of military personnel may vote absentee. Some states allow children of military personnel residing overseas who are U.S. citizens but who have never resided in the U.S. to claim one of their U.S. citizen parent's legal state of residence as their own.

• How do I register to vote or request an absentee ballot? - You may register and request an absentee ballot with a single form: The Federal Post Card Application. This application form is accepted by all states and territories and is postage- paid in the U.S. mail, including the Military Postal System and State Department Pouch mail. Hard copies of the form can be obtained from your voting assistance officer or requested directly from the Federal Voting Assistance Program by going to www.fvap.gov or calling 00531-1208-96 toll free from Japan.

It is not too late to register and or request an absentee ballot for the November general elections. There are at least 11 states still holding primaries in September and October as well. All states, three territories and the District of Columbia will hold general elections Nov. 2. Puerto Rico will not be holding an election this cycle.

For more information, contact your command's voting assistance officer or the Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka installation voting assistance officer at 243-3372.

Summer break is coming to a close; first day of school is Aug. 30

Nile C. Kinnick High School
New student-parent orientation: Aug. 23, 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sneak Peek: Aug. 27 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.
Schedules will be distributed on the first day of school in the morning. Students are to report to Benny Decker Theater.

Yokosuka Middle School
New student-parent orientation: Aug. 23, 10 – 11 a.m.
Sneak Peek: Aug. 27, 11 a.m. – noon
Schedules will be distributed the first day of school in the multipurpose room.

Ikego Elementary School
New student-parent orientation: Aug. 23, 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Sneak Peek: Aug. 27, 2:45 – 3:45 p.m.
Class lists will be posted Aug. 27 at 1 p.m. at the Navy Exchange Mini-mart.

Richard E. Byrd Elementary School
New student-parent orientation: Aug. 23, 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Sneak Peek: Aug. 27, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

The Sullivans School
New student-parent orientation: Aug. 23, 1 – 2 p.m.
Sneak Peek: Aug. 27, 1 – 2 p.m.
Class lists will be posted noon Aug. 27 at the commissary and at the Ikego Mini-mart later in day.

Kindergarten
Ikego and Sullivans kindergarten (K) students will begin class Sept. 7
Multi-age K/1 students will begin Aug. 30 at Ikego and Sullivans
Byrd Kindergarten students will begin Sept. 1
Teachers will be contacting families and making home visits Aug. 30 – Sept. 3.