New beginnings

By Chaplain Barry Metzger

It's that time of year; a time of coming and going for many military families. Although permanent change of station moves take place all the time, the month before school starts seems to be the busiest time for overseas moves. Most of our families get used to moving every two or three years; nevertheless the stressors are real as we try to complete the packages, check off all the boxes and remember the important papers so we can avoid glitches or delays in the process. Our Chapel of Hope staff is going through change this year as well with a complete staff of five chaplains and several religious program specialists rotating in a 12-month period.

Even if we get used to the moves or enjoy the process, some may feel they are sacrificing a "sense of place" or lack certain centeredness. My children were pretty much raised in the Navy as my son was seven and my daughter was four when I came on active duty. I always found it interesting to listen to their responses when family members, teachers or friends would ask them where they were from. After watching them, I admit with a little delight, squirm and hem haw their way through an answer a few times, my wife and I worked with them to formulate a suitable response. With so much change in our lives I think it is important to emphasize the important things that make life rich and warm.

One of the important concepts is "home." Since the beginning of time it has given people a sense of peace, safety, stability and belonging. Home is more than a material structure or acquisition, it is about loved ones; family that will always be there even as friends, coworkers and acquaintances change. It's about finding a sense of connectedness in our new communities, learning how to be a blessing to others with our own unique talents and capabilities. Moving may involve tension in some regards but it can be a blessing. People have been on the move since the days of Abraham, and somehow the values of home and family have survived. What makes a transition good or bad is not how often we "hop" but how we "hop."

Another key is a sense of volunteerism. When God called Abraham to a new place in Genesis 12:2, he determined to bless him so that he would be a blessing. We are happiest when we determine to look outside of ourselves and bless someone else. Determine to fulfill our potential to be a blessing to others through many opportunities to volunteer, as well as involvement in faith events and family life as often as possible.

A third concept is having a "sense of place." Abraham moved but he held on to this "sense of place." His centeredness came from his faith, being right with God and building altars accordingly in the land of Canaan. We too, can retain our sense of place if we "build altars" through faithful living wherever we may be. The focus of our new base house or off base dwelling can be to consider the home to be a "Bethel" or house of God. Sure we may have creature comforts through electronics and comfortable furniture but maintaining a faith focus is beneficial.

These concepts can help us to avoid "motion sickness" that may lead to breakdowns within our families. We are created to be social people so if we keep a healthy focus our homes can be blessings not only to our families but to others. They can be places where we receive and give to others.

One writer puts it this way: Have you ever noticed how often people in the Bible are changing their addresses? It is hard to find anyone who is in a serious drama with God who is not on the move. No one ever finds God by nailing life down. Maybe that is because faith is always discovered along the way.

This life of change we have chosen to live means leaving something behind on occasion. Even disciples in Jesus' time were asked to leave behind their families and friends. In other instances people like Abraham were asked to leave possessions. The key to all of this I think is to look outside of ourselves and choose to accept changes in a positive manner. If we keep moving and stay strong in our faith and foundations God will take care of any motion sickness.

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. In a typical year, the Yokosuka area could be threatened by 8 to 10 typhoons, though not all those storms pass over the immediate area and they vary in strength. Service members and families are advised to be prepared for potential weather emergencies. 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.

To fully prepare, 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. Other essentials are dust masks, personal sanitation supplies such as moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties.

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.