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The United States Army Chaplain as Prophet in the Twenty-First Century: "Is There a Soul of Goodness in Things Evil?"

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THE UNITED STATES ARMY CHAPLAIN AS PROPHET IN THE TWENTY-FIRST
CENTURY: "IS THERE A SOUL OF GOODNESS IN THINGS EVIL?"

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the American Studies Program

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

by

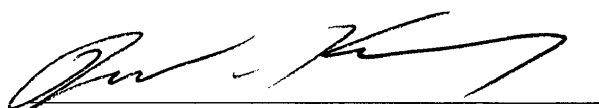
Donald W. Kammer

2005

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
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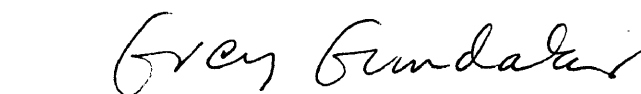


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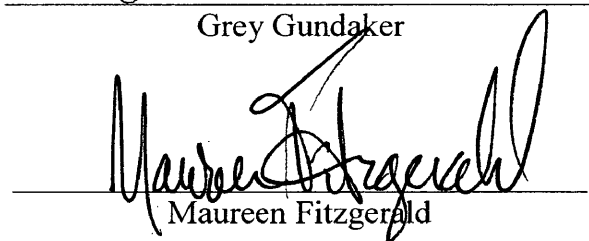
Approved by Committee, March 2005



Chandos M. Brown



Grey Gundaker



Maureen Fitzgerald

To my wife Mei Shan and my son Kyle

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ABSTRACT

The United States Army chaplain serves side by side with American soldiers around the world. He or she is assigned to a military unit and provides pastoral care for soldiers and their families. Yet, the chaplain also has a role as staff officer for a commander. This dual relationship as pastor and staff officer is but one of many points of tension a chaplain encounters while serving in the military.

Every chaplain is endorsed to serve in the Army by a religious denomination or community which expects the chaplain to function as a faithful representative of that group. This is a source of tension as the goals and deeds of the military may conflict with the goals of the chaplain's religious community, which expects the chaplain to be a prophetic presence representing its tradition.

Harvey Cox once asked the question, "The man of God, and the man of war: what have they to do with one another?" This is still a good question. It represents a problem that every chaplain must encounter. The fundamental problem for this paper has to do with the prophetic nature of the chaplain in the context of the Army. Will the chaplain speak truth to leaders when those same leaders determine the chaplain's career's success? Will the chaplain take a place at the commanders table and offer contradictory opinion when a policy is immoral and unjust?

The nation and the Army will be robbed of a perspective and presence that represents the humanitarian and religious traditions of the nation if chaplains remain muted before commanders. An Army chaplain must appropriately give enthusiastic opposition to decisions which violate the conscience. The chaplain must communicate his or her moral concerns in tactful confrontation with commanders, and at the same time, do so in such a way to preserve his or her presence for pastoral ministry to soldiers. The chaplain, to be truly effective, must have a pastoral as well as a prophetic place in the Army.

THE UNITED STATES ARMY CHAPLAIN AS PROPHET IN THE TWENTY-FIRST
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INTRODUCTION

“MOSUL, Iraq (Reuters) - A roadside bomb blast in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul Saturday killed three Americans and wounded two; so Iraqi police at the scene told Reuters.”¹ This sentence was one of thousands of such accounts of combat casualties reported within American newspapers, magazines and on websites since the start of the War on Terror’s Iraq invasion on March 19, 2003.² This sentence’s simplicity and unemotional tone offers a glimpse of the nearly regular toll being paid by American men and women serving, primarily from the United States Army, in pursuit of America’s Middle Eastern foreign policy objectives.³ In December of 2004, a few months after the roadside blast, in the same city, a suicide bomber killed over twenty and wounded sixty American soldiers in a tented cafeteria only a few days before Christmas.⁴ Casualties of this nature were a steady and dull throb as America relentlessly prosecuted its worldwide War on Terror.

¹ “Bomb in Northern Iraq Kills 3 Americans – Police,” *Reuters.com*, 1 September 2003, <<http://www.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml;jsessionid=FF0MIJVYNV2BCCRBAELCFFA?type=topNews&storyID=3735914>> (1 September 2003). Reports of United States military casualties in Iraq are tracked on several websites daily. CNN’s website, *CNN.com* “War in Iraq,” March 2003, <<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2003/iraq/forces/casualties>> (1 January 2005) is a good example. Several other websites track the fallen such as the “Iraq Coalition Casualty Count,” <<http://icasualties.org/oif/>> (1 January 2005) and Antiwar.com, 2005, <<http://www.antiwar.com/casualties/>> (1 January 2005).

² The term *War on Terror* (or “*War on Terrorism*”) is freighted with controversy reflecting polarization in American politics. The major criticism to the use of the phrase is its semantic breadth. It may dangerously expand the traditional and historical notion of war in American foreign policy. Where does a War on Terror stop? Is this an everlasting war? In response to the September 11 2001 terrorist attack the US Congress implicitly declared war on terrorism with the September 18 2001 *War Powers Resolution*: “use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons the President determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.” Thus, the “War on Terror” became the official term of the Bush administration describing its comprehensive and opened prosecution of worldwide war.

³ “War in Iraq: Forces: US and Coalition Casualties,” *CNN.com*, July 2004, <<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2003/iraq/forces/casualties/>>, (27 July 2004). CNN maintains this website which contains photos of service members killed in action, name, hometown, age, unit, details and nationality. The site also provides a geographical breakdown as well as an estimate of total wounded in action.

⁴ “Suicide Bomber in Mosul Attack Was Likely Wearing an Iraqi Military Uniform,” Associated Press, 23 December 2004. “Iraq Bombing Represents Security Breach: Suspected Suicide Bombing in Iraq Represents Fundamental Military Security Breach,” *ABC News: The Associated Press*, 23 December 2004, <<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=355626>>(18 January 2005).

Since the start of the War on Terror, United States military chaplains, Army, Air Force, Navy (including Navy chaplains serving with Marine Corps units), and Coast Guard have responded to the death and injury of thousands of soldiers and civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan. These chaplains, in addition to their primarily religious duties, provide pastoral care in the form of crisis intervention and their presence as a man or woman of God in the midst of the tragic events of war connected to the use of this nation's military power. Indeed, chaplains have also been casualties in the war. Father Timothy Vakoc was critically injured on 29 May 2004.⁵

Although hundreds of chaplains have served in Iraq, chaplains remaining in the United States assist in deployment and redeployment of soldiers; they also perform funerals and provide ongoing care for grieving and troubled family members. As an organization, the United States Army Chaplaincy has evolved to become an extremely valuable asset of care for the Department of Defense.

Chaplains are caregivers. They offer needed care unique to the military situation of soldiers and their family members. As the war in Iraq evolves, the expected increase in reports of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or combat stress symptoms will no doubt enhance the pastoral counseling load of chaplains.⁶ For both those working in the military services, and those civilian chaplains employed by the Veterans Administration, cases of PTSD will increase the workload of the nation's medical and psychiatric community nationwide for years. Part of the price any nation pays for involvement in war is not only the broken bodies and tragic deaths, but also violated and traumatized minds.⁷ Chaplains are considered essential in providing care which

⁵ "Archbishop O'Brien Prays for Chaplain Timothy Vakoc at Mass for Military Chaplains," *Catholics in the Military*, July 2004, <<http://www.catholicmil.org/html/articles/archbishoppraysforfrvakoc.html>> (20 July 2004). Libby George, "Chaplain hurt in Iraq shows signs of recovery: Thousands check Web site about Robbinsdale native," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 13 July 2004. Chaplain Vakoc was returning to camp after offering Mass for troops when His Humvee was ambushed with an IED. (improvised explosive device). Vakoc suffered the loss of an eye, broken bones and massive head trauma.

⁶ Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), xiii-xiv. Shay's work delving into the trauma of PTSD is a brilliant and original look at combat trauma and its impact upon character. It presents a portrayal of the impact of war upon soldier's who fought in Vietnam.

⁷ Shay, 203-205.

mitigates such trauma. Although the chaplain is not a clinical therapist, the chaplain does offer counseling interventions which are pastoral and easily accessible for all soldiers and family members.

The Army expects much from its chaplains in the form of pastoral care for soldiers, particularly in view of expected combat trauma and disruptive family separations due to the War on Terror. More than in any other period in American history, the chaplain now plays a critical role in pastoral ministry to soldiers facing the stress of battle. Indeed, with a chaplain in nearly every battalion sized unit, chaplains are the “go to person” for innovative and immediate care interventions. This becomes clear when one considers that chaplains are regularly trained in suicide prevention procedures and critical incident debriefings. Their pastoral counseling skills are considered vital to a strong United States Army and to the mental and spiritual health of soldiers and family members. If there is any one person who has his or her finger directly on the pulse of what soldiers are going through and thinking, it would be the unit chaplain. With such knowledge the chaplain is equipped with vital information allowing him or her to address sensitive issues with commanders.

Obviously, chaplains are religious specialists in their distinctive faiths and offer sacramental and worship-oriented care for soldiers and their families. Yet, another distinctive aspect of the chaplain’s work is in connection to the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States’ concern with freedom of religion. This is more of a political function than a religious one. That a chaplain’s commitment to the “free exercise of religion” has become the key justification of a United State’s government funded military chaplaincy, is a point worth noting for further study. Army chaplains today are viewed as defenders of Constitutional “free exercise.” Indeed, the Army chaplaincy has become increasingly concerned with this issue, a concern which was not as prominent throughout most of American history. This focus might slowly redefine the mission and fundamental task of the chaplain in the eyes of the State. Indeed, attorney Israel Drazin claims this has already been done. He argues that the only legitimate reason

for the existence of the military chaplain is to "secure free exercise rights" for service members.⁸ He rejects any other historical legal justification for the chaplain in the military. This is but one example of many unique issues, tensions and paradoxes with which chaplains must grapple.

The vocation of the military chaplain is a source of great fulfillment for those who serve; and the value of the Army chaplain to commanders is not an issue in doubt for most military leaders today. However, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the chaplaincy did have difficulty and experienced many low points. For instance, in previous centuries, during peacetime, military chaplains occasionally were non-existent. However, in times of war, the Army chaplain has proven an essential element to the Army; and the government has commonly brought many to active military service.

For some, the military chaplain bears both a divine, or distinctly noticeable spiritual aura, and a certain kind of worldly authority. For many soldiers, the chaplain represents a mystical dynamic, which even a non-religious soldier values and will recognize. For example, in airborne units, even though a soldier may have little religious inclination, he or she desires their parachutist chaplain to jump out of the airplane first.

Although a spiritual professional, the chaplain also possesses the rank and status of a commissioned officer in the United States Army. This dual role reflects the paradox of the Army chaplaincy. The chaplain inherits a history of struggle with this paradox. Such tension has been part of the vocation since its inception; it is a dilemma and tension due to converging and contrasting roles.

Chaplains have not always been a diverse group. There was a time when there were no female chaplains in the Army. Today, in addition to female Protestant chaplains, there are Buddhist and Jewish female chaplains on active duty.⁹ The Army chaplaincy as an institution has

⁸ Israel Drazin and Cecil B. Currey, *For God and Country: The History of A Constitutional Challenge to the Army Chaplaincy* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1995), 205.

⁹ There are no female Roman Catholic chaplains. However, the first Buddhist chaplain in the military is Lt. j.g. Gracie Shin. After graduating from George Mason University with a BA in Philosophy and Religious

evolved over the years, grappling with issues of rank, salary, uniform, combatant status, organization, gender and its own identity in and outside the military and other issues.¹⁰ Indeed, the Army chaplaincy has been in transition from its inception; and in the year 2005, this transition remains daunting.¹¹

The job of the Army chaplain is a position laden with opportunities for speaking the truth boldly, pointing people to spiritual help and confronting injustice; but at the same time the vocation promises conflict and tension. This is because the chaplain faces the continuing critical test and challenge of being prophetic, as a conscientious representative of one of America's many faiths, within a bureaucratic structure which expects uniformity.¹²

The term "prophet" or "prophetic" is broad and should be defined for this paper. First, to be prophetic, a chaplain must speak the truth when it may be politically and professionally advantageous to remain silent. Second, a chaplain must also live and walk in the truth to maintain credibility with soldiers and family members. Chaplains who show poor integrity and character violate expectations of others, even if they may speak words prophetically. In his book *The Sociology of Religion*, Max Weber offers a view of the prophet which may be helpful to

Studies she completed a MA in Buddhist studies from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkley, California. She was commissioned in the Navy in July of 2004. Army Buddhist chaplains are probably soon to follow. "First Armed Forces Buddhist Chaplain Commissioned," *The Military Chaplain*, September-August 2004, 5.

¹⁰ Parker Thompson, *From its European Antecedents to 1791: The United States Army Chaplaincy* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army, 1978). This is the first of a series of historical texts published by the Army which describe the transition and evolution of the Army chaplaincy over the years. Each of the seven texts review the chronological development of the Army alongside its chaplaincy, include anecdotal (war story) material, detail the religious and political climate in which chaplains work, describe the work organizational structures and portray the attitudes, theology and behavior of chaplains. Primary source material is the focus of the texts in order to serve deployed chaplains who may not have access to libraries. The last volume was completed in 1995 by the Army chaplain ethicist and historian at the US Army War College. John W. Brinsfield, Jr., *Encouraging Faith, Supporting Soldiers: The United States Army Chaplaincy 1975-1995* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army, 1978).

¹¹ Colton, Kenneth R., "MCA's Role," *The Military Chaplain*, July-August 2004, 4.

¹² *The Random House Webster's College Dictionary* gives seven various definitions for the word prophet. This paper primarily uses the seventh definition: "a person who speaks for some doctrine, cause, or movement." In relationship to the Army chaplain's role as a prophet, I believe the chaplain must speak to his or her commander boldly and truthfully concerning issues that impact matters of conscience and human dignity. The vernacular for this is "going toe to toe with the boss," in private. Yet without the life of a prophet, the message of the prophet has little influence.

understand this dual role which the chaplain leads. Weber describes two distinct and separate categories of the prophet.¹³ He argues that one kind of prophet has an *ethical* duty to proclaim the truth; and he also argues that another kind of prophet is called to be an *exemplar*, and lives the truth.¹⁴ For Weber these two kinds of prophets were quite distinct, but for the chaplain the two merge. The Army chaplain combines these roles, and speaks out for ethical issues, but also is expected to be an exemplar in day to day association with others. To fail as an exemplar is to fail to be prophetic. To fail in speaking the truth boldly is to fail to be prophetic. To fail to be prophetic is failure as a chaplain.

The chaplain's military religious supervisors and commanders who function as bosses over a chaplain may not share the chaplain's own personal religious or philosophical convictions. Yet, a chaplain of integrity will strive to remain faithful to the traditions of faith which he or she represents, that is, from the many colored religious quilt of America. Indeed, the conflict between the uniformity expectations of the Army and a chaplain's unique faith perspective is a source of tension. There are chaplains who are easily tempted to abandon their unique, abrasively and prophetic religious identities and adopt a more malleable and friendly form of religion which suits the military bureaucracy's penchant for uniformity quite well. Such a chaplain is less prophetic in function. This paper argues that abandoning the prophetic would compromise the validity and historic nature of the Army chaplaincy.

At another time and during another war, Harvard's Professor Harvey Cox once asked a paradoxical question: "The man of God, and the man of war: what have they to do with one another?"¹⁵ This remains a suitable question. It might be better stated, "How can a person of the Spirit be a person of war?" I contend it is possible as long as the chaplain retains a boldly prophetic spirit and can confront commanders as chaplains must, often in private, toe to toe and face to face, respectfully. The problem of being prophetic within a system like the Army is a

¹³ Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (Boston: Beacon, 1922), 46.

¹⁴ Ibid, 55.

¹⁵ Cox, v.

question well worth investigating. A malleable Army chaplaincy expecting a uniformity stilling the prophetic voice of prophetic Pentecostals, Catholics, Buddhists, Muslims and Jews, is a chaplaincy that should be avoided.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to investigate unique tensions related to serving as an Army chaplain in the twenty-first century and to investigate aspects of the prophetic nature of the chaplain's work. Although I focus upon the United States Army chaplaincy, some application may be made to the other military services as well.

The United States, in its nearly two-hundred and fifty year history, has employed military chaplains in every war. They have served out of their various and distinctive religious traditions as representatives of both God and country. These chaplains are embedded in military units and wear stitched onto their military uniforms, the Roman cross, the Star of David, the crescent moon of Islam and the Buddhist prayer wheel. On one collar is a symbol of faith; and on the other is the insignia of rank. At face value this mixing of the secular and sacred may seem to be a contradiction, just as serving as both a soldier and a minister also might raise questions for some. Nevertheless, this is part of the challenge and dilemma of being a chaplain. The Army chaplain is uniquely equipped to function and converse within the context of the States' expectation for its citizens to benefit from pluralism and the freedom to engage in the tenants of their own particular religious traditions. These various religious traditions reflect a broad spectrum of faith in America; and the chaplains of these faiths enjoy an open door to the military culture as representatives from the nation's numerous religions and worldviews.

Since its inception at the dawn of the American Revolution, the Army chaplaincy has evolved into a bureaucratic and professional organization which has secured a finely tuned place within American popular culture and military sub-culture. Although the chaplaincy as an

organization fulfills key roles within the United States Army, there are also challenges which raise ongoing questions in the presence of continual religious changes in our own culture.

The relationship between the chaplain and soldier raises questions. Does association with the military impact the religious essence of the person of God, the chaplain? What have been the sacrifices the chaplain has made to a sense of religious calling by his or her absorption into the military, if any? In the context of revolutionary change in the nature of religious demographics in America, does the twenty-first century chaplain also experience anxiety since the organization in which he or she serves, the chaplaincy, is more or less a creation of an earlier era and thought? Will the growing presence of chaplains from Islam, Buddhism and Pentecostalism alter the nature of the chaplaincy?

Also, the latest revolution in American religion - one might say reformation - must be grasped if the chaplaincy is to be comprehended well. David Barrett's chapter in *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal* offers an insightful evaluation of the growth of the twentieth century Pentecostal/charismatic renewal movement. In the United States alone, perhaps a third of actively involved Christians are participants or connected, and the chaplains entering the service today, in many cases, reflect the theology and experience of Pentecostalism and charismatic communities.¹⁶

INTRODUCTION TO THE UNITED STATES ARMY CHAPLAINCY

The United States Army chaplaincy has traditionally traced its roots as far back as the ancient Hebrew communities portrayed in the Jewish Scripture.¹⁷ The Pentateuch's Deuteronomy 20:2-4, describing religious persons appointed to accompany soldiers into battle, has been a

¹⁶ Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit, 1901-2001* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2001), 381-414. See also Barrett's chapter in Stanley M. Burgess, ed., and Eduard M. van der Mass, ass. ed., *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, revised and expanded (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002).

¹⁷ Parker Thompson, *From its European Antecedents to 1791: The United States Army Chaplaincy* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army, 1978), xi.

traditional text employed to justify chaplains serving in the military: “And it shall be when ye are come nigh unto the battle, which the priest shall approach and speak unto people.”¹⁸

Traditionally, this has been taken to mean words of spiritual comfort for those going into battle. As Christianity gained prominence within the Roman Empire, clerics also accompanied the armies of Christian royalty into combat.¹⁹ Their primary function was pastoral and religious, yet occasionally they were combatants.

Chaplains from Spain were present in the North American English colonies with the first settlers and explorers of the New World.²⁰ The Franciscan Frey Juan de Padilla was a chaplain of the conquistadors. He had also hoped to establish the Gospel among the indigenous residents of the New World.²¹ When Coronado’s search for the lost city of Eldorado failed, and the expedition returned to Mexico, Frey Juan chose to remain behind for the sake of the Gospel, hoping to claim hostile Indians for Christ. This is an early example of the struggle of multiple tensions chaplains often encounter as they attempt to serve both their God and government. In this case, Frey Juan sided with his religious missiological leaning to evangelize the lost. He was killed by the Indians in 1542 on the plains of southwest Kansas.²²

The modern religious diversity within the United States gives justification for looking past singular Jewish roots of clerical involvement in warfare. Chaplains have become more cognizant of pagan and non-Christian cultures. Indeed, the recent trends in the Army chaplaincy, with newer religious representation from Muslims and Buddhists and the highly visible presence of new religions and denominations such as Wicca, have given arguable justification to reflection upon the non-Jewish roots of religious military ministry in general. Dale R. Herspring calls

¹⁸ King James Version of the Bible.

¹⁹ Thompson, xi.

²⁰ Richard M. Budd, *Serving Two Masters: The Development of American Military Chaplaincy, 1860-1920* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 8. This is a recent important work on the American military chaplaincy. The years between 1860 and 1920 were the defining period for the American military chaplaincy as we know it today, resolving, at least for a time, issues of tension such as rank and combatant status of the chaplain.

²¹ Thompson, 1.

²² Thompson, 1.

attention to this in regard to pagan priests in the Roman Army.²³ One recent article reflecting upon the history of the chaplaincy considered practices of pagan priests engaged in religious ministrations, to include ritual sacrifices and the reading of auguries from the entrails of animals on the eve of a battle, as connected to this honorable tradition, and as antecedent to the American chaplaincy.²⁴ Noting the connection to the pagan world is not incidental; it does offer a certain spiritual continuity which is inclusive of religions which do not look to a purely Judeo-Christian framework as their ideological source. Indeed, many chaplains and churches may not concur with this perspective, this pluralism, but in the context of the larger religious transition in the United States, the connection should not be taken lightly.²⁵

It was in the fourth century near Amiens in Gaul, that the military chaplaincy in the West traditionally identifies its genesis. It is in the Christian legend of St. Martin.²⁶ Many descriptions of the origin of the military chaplaincy in the West appeal to the legend of St. Martin of Tours. He was a fourth century soldier who offered aid one evening to a shivering beggar in the frigid cold. Martin had no financial resources, so he cut his own cloak into two pieces with his sword and gave it to the beggar. Later that evening Martin experienced a vision of Christ wearing the half-cloak. This incident precipitated his conversion to Christian faith; and he surrendered his life to religious vocation. In time, after his years of service to the church and the gradual development of a historical legacy, Martin of Tours became the patron saint of French kings. His cloak, the *cappella*, was carried into battle with soldiers as a symbol of the merciful presence of the Lord. The cloak eventually became a sacred relic to be cared for by a

²³ Dale R. Herspring, *Soldiers, Commissars, and Chaplains: Civil-Military Relations since Cromwell* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001), 5-6.

²⁴ Rod Dreher, "Ministers of War: The Amazing Chaplaincy of the U.S. Military," *National Review*, March 2003, 30. In 1867 chaplains had the rank of captain of infantry, but were limited to wearing only the plain black coat without braid. In the past century and into the twenty-first century chaplains have primarily worn both rank and faith insignia. Cox, 45.

²⁵ Fundamentalist churches, which do endorse chaplains, decry the pluralism within the chaplaincy. The American Council of Christian Churches condemned the chaplaincy for adopting pluralism in its 2002 Conference, through "Resolution 02-7 Chaplaincy Concern," <http://www.hardingville.com/ACCC/2002Resolutions/ACCCRes02-7.htm> (1 August 2004).

²⁶ Richard G. Hutcheson, Jr., *The Churches and the Chaplaincy* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 17.

cappellanus, a priest. So the *cappellanus* became known as chaplain. This is the linguistic source for the term “chaplain” in our own day. It also offers a clue to the nature of the chaplaincy as an entity with ties to both church and state and hints at the resulting tension from that relationship. The legend firmly illustrates the caring nature of the chaplain’s task. The chaplaincy has often pointed to it as a heritage to cherish.²⁷

During the Norman invasion of Great Britain in 1066, chaplains accompanied William the Conqueror and eventually gained a firm place in the evolution of British military forces.²⁸ Chaplains served during the eras of the Tudors, Stuarts, and Cromwell, and into the reign of the Hanoverians.²⁹ Cromwell’s professional New Model Army set the pattern for the chaplain as a permanent fixture of England’s military force; and when the British Army later adopted many of Cromwell’s efficient military structures, it also adopted the role of the chaplain within those units. After the demise of Cromwell, the concept of the professional full-time military chaplain was readily absorbed during the reign of Charles II and James II.³⁰ Chaplains became integral to the regimental system of the British Army. It was ultimately through the British system that the North American colonies inherited the chaplain as a customary presence within military formations.

For the British and for most of the English speaking world the function and duty of the chaplain has traditionally been the *care of souls*. Indeed, to meddle in other more secular affairs would not have been considered an appropriate option for the chaplain. This religious focus of the chaplain limited the primary work of the chaplain to traditional functions of clergy as articulated in Army regulations:

The preacher, be he priest or minister, whether Lutheran or Reformed or Roman Catholic, his office is well enough known and there is much respect to be paid him; and the laws of war provide severe punishment to those who offer an

²⁷ Dreher, 31.

²⁸ Thompson, xi.

²⁹ Thompson, xii.

³⁰ Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States* (New York, N.Y.: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 4.

offence or injury to his person or charges. His duty is to the have *care of souls*, and it is well if he meddle with no other business, but make that his only care.³¹

Their duties were clearly defined and the commanders were responsible for seeing that their regiment had “a well-governed and religious preacher...so that by this life and doctrines the soldiers may be drawn to goodness...where divine duties are to be performed by the preacher.”³²

These duties were defined in military regulation for the company commander, who was obligated “to see prayers read at the head of his company every night; and on Sundays he will compel all soldiers not on guard to go to the Colonel’s tent to hear prayers and a sermon.”³³ Clearly, the focus at this point in the chaplaincy was purely religious, although there was one exception in Cromwell’s military. This exception is emblematic of a struggle chaplains regularly encounter in history, that of being assigned additional duties. Cromwell’s chaplains were temporarily given the duty of being military reporters for the press, “publishing the maneuverings and battles of the New Model Army.”³⁴ Chaplains in the United States Army occasionally face similar additional duties, but their primary focus has remained *care of souls*.

The British chaplain became the model for the Continental Army of Washington. Indeed, Washington, commander of Colonial Virginia troops before the American Revolution, wrote pragmatically concerning his expectations and vision of the military chaplain:

A gentleman of sober, serious, and religious deportment, chosen for this important trust would improve discipline among the men, raise their morale and check gambling, drinking, and swearing in the regiment...The want of a chaplain does, I conceive, reflect dishonor upon the regiment.³⁵

This British model expected the chaplain to be an example of virtue. It also expected the chaplain to function based upon tactical exigencies with each regiment being assigned a chaplain to accompany soldiers into battle. More or less this has been the system throughout the most recent

³¹ Thompson, viii. Quote from John G. Smyth, *In This Sign Conquer: The Story of the Army Chaplains* (London: A. R. Mowbray and Company, LTD., 1968), 4.

³² Smyth, 14.

³³ Smyth, 14.

³⁴ Smyth, 17.

³⁵ Eugene Franklin Williams, *Soldiers of God – The Chaplains of the Revolutionary War* (New York: Carlton Press, 1975), 36.

history of the United States chaplaincy; chaplains are assigned to tactical units primarily and they go to war with the soldier.

But it was not primarily so throughout the nineteenth century, where the garrison chaplain was the norm. Except for a few African American chaplains assigned to black frontier regiments, and the West Point chaplain, the chaplaincy was a garrison, a frontier post assignment.³⁶ This frontier role eventually gave way to the most common assignment of an Army chaplain today, within the battalion.³⁷

Battalion chaplains in the Army are supervised by brigade chaplains, brigade chaplains by division chaplains, and division chaplains by major support command chaplains (MACOM).³⁸ Chaplains, in addition to work with troop units, are also assigned to hospitals, confinement facilities and the Army's regimental schools as ethics or world religions instructors. Additionally, there are assignments to command staffs, the Pentagon and to civil affairs battalions. Also, similar to when chaplains were assigned duty at frontier forts, chaplains today continue to serve in garrison duty. At these posts or installations chaplains have the primary responsibility of running chapel programs and managing worship services.³⁹ Unit chaplains supplement this installation work, but the primary focus of a unit chaplain is their specific battalion, brigade, division or major support command. When heavy overseas deployments because of war occur, installation chaplains are essential. They remain behind to provide care for families. Reserve chaplains are activated to fill holes in the system.

³⁶ Alan K. Lamm, "Buffalo Soldier Chaplains: A Case Study of the Five Black United States Army Chaplains, 1884-1901" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1995), 1-2.

³⁷ A battalion totals generally between five-hundred and a thousand soldiers; however the range depends upon the nature of the military unit and its mission. A brigade generally has a few thousand. A division has ten to twenty thousand soldiers. Regimental schools are the key centers which train soldiers. For example, Ft. Benning trains the Infantry. Ft. Leonardwood trains engineers. Ft. Lee trains quartermasters; and Ft. Eustis trains transporters.

³⁸ The historic three tier brigade, division and corps (MACOM) structure is being condensed into a two level architecture, a shift to a more modular army. See *2005 Army Modernization Plan* (Washington, D.C.: Army G-8-FD, Director, Force Development, 2005) <http://www.army.mil/features/MODPlan/2005/MP2005full.pdf>, (1 March 2005).

³⁹ Budd, 11.

Before the American Revolution chaplains existed in the militia of the North American colonies. Military chaplains have also served in the professional Army of the United States since the Continental Congress authorized them on 29 July, 1775.⁴⁰ In May of the following year Congress required that two chaplains be assigned to each Continental Army regiment.⁴¹ A total of 218 chaplains served in the American forces during the Revolutionary War.⁴² Chaplains also served with French, Hessian, British and Tory forces. Immediately after the Revolutionary War the Army chaplaincy was dissolved but was again reestablished in 1791, when a chaplain was appointed to serve in the, at that time, tiny United States national army, established under the Constitution.⁴³ Although the government retained only a handful of chaplains during the decades after the Revolutionary War, and occasionally had no chaplains on the federal pay rolls, the state militia chaplains were always present and during emergencies were called up.⁴⁴

On July 9, 1776 George Washington wrote that “The blessing and protection of Heaven are at all times necessary, but especially so in times of public distress and danger.” He made this comment in approval of Congress’s decision to establish a funded chaplaincy.⁴⁵ Supporters of the chaplaincy have historically appealed to such precedents as the official statements of Washington and the decisions of the Continental Congress in order to justify and explain the existence of chaplains from the beginning of the nation until the present day. For most of the nation’s history, chaplains have been funded by both federal and state governments.

Now, the army chaplaincy is a highly structured entity with professional schools and specializations. The rank structure ranges from the second lieutenant chaplain candidate to major

⁴⁰ *FM 16-1: Religious Support*, Headquarters, Department of the Army 26 May 1995, vii. Chaplains did serve in the colonies before the war, but it was this decision of the Continental Congress which established the national commitment to the office of the chaplain. It was the *The Act of July 1779*.

⁴¹ Budd, 9.

⁴² Budd, 9.

⁴³ Budd, 9. Budd mentions that chaplains in the regular army were quite intermittent during the first few decades of the United States, and they again disappeared between 1800 and 1808 due to the reduction in the size of the military and negligence. This demise of the chaplaincy in federal forces may be deceptive, however, because chaplains were widely present and influential within the militias of the states.

⁴⁴ Herspring, 18-20.

⁴⁵ Dreher, 30.

general and Chief of Chaplains. Enlisted chaplain assistants serve in the chaplain branch and range from private to command sergeant major.⁴⁶ The organizational rank structure didn't really come into focus until after World War I when the Chaplain School was established and efforts were made to professionalize the chaplaincy.⁴⁷ This was also when the first Chief of Chaplains and administrative structures which established the Chaplain Branch as a regimental officer category in the military came into being.⁴⁸

Over the years, the United States Army Chaplaincy has evolved, experiencing continual organizational refinement and transition. In terms of numbers, the peak was reached in World War II, when nearly 9000 chaplains served in the Army.⁴⁹ In 2004, there were around 1200 active duty Army chaplains. During the War on Terror hundreds of reservists have been activated. Chaplains have served visibly and with significant impact in all of America's wars; but their service has not been without tension and challenge. Indeed, tension and challenge have molded and incited the continual evolution of the Army chaplaincy.

THE TENSION POINTS IN THE CHAPLAIN'S RELATIONSHIPS

As Staff Officer to the Commander

The commander-chaplain relationship is one typically known for tension. Commanders view chaplains from their own prior experiences with other chaplains, good or bad. This is usually a memory from earlier in their careers, or in connection with their own religious background. A Baptist commander may have different views from a Roman Catholic commander in how the chaplain is utilized. Often these relationships are negotiated through the skill of the chaplain in interpersonal relationships. Some commanders may be very religiously observant;

⁴⁶ Chaplain assistants provide administrative support and assist the chaplain in carrying out his or her duties. They are integral to the chaplaincy system.

⁴⁷ The Navy didn't authorize such a school until after World War II; and the National Security Act of 1947, creating a separate Department of the Air Force provided for a school for Air Force chaplains.

⁴⁸ Donald, F. Crosby, S. J., *Battlefield Chaplains: Catholic Priests in World War II* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1994), xvi.

⁴⁹ Crosby, viii.

others may have no interest in religion at all. However, almost every commander acknowledges the impact and potential benefit of the chaplain within the unit and understands the Constitutional First Amendment requirement of religious freedom.⁵⁰

From a pragmatic point-of-view the chaplain is quite helpful in resolving problems in the ranks and intervening with potential problems of soldiers, such as suicide and marital difficulties. The chaplain's influence as a pastoral counselor and as a soldier's means to bypass the normal chain of command on personal issues is valued. The chaplain often resolves soldier problems when soldier issues are neglected at company command level.⁵¹ The soldier goes to the chaplain and the chaplain can bring the issue directly to the battalion commander or attempt to resolve the issue in another way. Serving in this capacity at times places a chaplain at odds with leadership, especially when the chaplain goes to bat for a soldier and above the heads of the soldier's supervisors at the company level.

Chaplains serve on a commander's staff. In addition to their professional religious duties and involvement in the post chapel program, they are responsible for advising commanders in matters of morale and religion. This is a dual role responsibility of working as an officer on a staff, with all that entails, and functioning as a pastor to soldiers and their families. Some chaplains are able to juggle adroitly their identity as both pastor and staff officer. However, this is done with difficulty and requires experience and relational skill. It also requires an ability to make tough choices. Soldiers commonly evaluate their chaplain with comments similar to: "that chaplain is more of an officer than a chaplain;" or "that chaplain listens and can get something done for soldiers." Such phrases communicate the reality that the term "chaplain" has retained its popular significance and still relates to the work of caring.

⁵⁰ Brinsfield, 40-43. In fact, all officers who command at the battalion level attend a course taught by the Chief of Chaplains' office describing the chaplaincy, with particular focus on the commander and chaplain relationship.

⁵¹ A company is a subordinate unit to the battalion and may have about 100 soldiers.

An evaluation from a commander for a chaplain which reads: “She is a consummate staff officer,” goes very far indeed because chaplains are valued for more than their clergy skills. The chaplain who walks well in both worlds will usually find success. Some chaplains may become superb yes-men in the quest to succeed; they sacrifice their integrity for advancement and practice self promotion with agility, like any other profession.

Chaplains experience unique tension as they enter the Army, because at the battalion level their first assignment is to be placed onto a commander’s staff. The inexperienced chaplain will have to learn quickly to operate in this stressful environment. Chaplains must be adaptable because all of their commanders will be different; every supervisory chaplain will be different; and every unit will be different. Such is a recipe for conflict, disequilibrium and tension.

As Servant of the Churches

In order to serve, every chaplain must be endorsed by a Department of the Army recognized religious denomination or entity. This endorsement is not a governmental approval of the group’s philosophy or theology; it is recognition that the group meets certain standards for tax exemption and fits other limiting criteria. These groups range from smaller churches such as the Korean Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship International, the Syro-Russian Catholic Church, the Islamic Society of North America, and the Federated Orthodox Catholic Churches United Sacramentally to the more prominent Roman Catholic, Southern Baptist and Methodist communities. There are more than two-hundred and fifty such entities which endorse chaplains. A hundred years ago there were around twenty.⁵² When a chaplain enters active duty he or she in a sense departs one religious community and enters a new community, the military; although ties remain with one’s origins.⁵³ Most chaplains

⁵² Earl F. Stover, *Up From Handyman: The United States Army Chaplaincy 1865-1920* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains Department of the Army, 1977), 257.

⁵³ The number of endorsers representing a variety of chaplains continues to grow. Recently Buddhists have been added with the wheel insignia; and there is discussion of adding Wiccans or pagans.

have few problems working with such religious diversity, but on occasion there are difficulties. The chaplain officer basic course touches on issues of pluralism and attempts to train new chaplains to function in an ecumenical environment; but this goal is not always realized.⁵⁴ There are chaplains who see the military as a means mainly to proselytize or a means to serve their religious self interests alone. Chaplains are required to serve all faiths and if they can't do so they usually don't last in the system very long.

Chaplains are not required to perform or lead a worship service, perform a marriage or do anything that would violate their faith. For example, Missouri Synod Lutherans will usually not participate in worship services with a chaplain of another background, not even other Lutherans. Some chaplains will not marry divorced people. On occasion chaplains refuse to work with Mormons for religious reasons. Even with such freedom of conscience, the system works well, although tension and conflict are never completely absent.

Occasionally, fundamentalist chaplains struggle over issues of pluralism and providing religious assistance to people of all faiths. Lutheran chaplains (ELCA) face the creative prospect of ministry to Baptist and Pentecostal believers who would probably never set foot in an ELCA church, yet Baptist and Pentecostals now make up a major portion of Protestants in the Army. Although the chaplain officer basic course discusses free exercise of religion, it doesn't delve into matters of theology or anything that might be viewed as religiously sectarian. As a general rule, theology is not taught in military chaplain training because it is assumed that each chaplain is a responsible and endorsed member of their religious tradition and competent in that field. The chaplain school's task is to develop chaplains who support the need to care for every soldier, regardless of faith. Unfortunately, some religious traditions have little interest in other communities of faith; so many chaplains enter active duty with minimal understanding of the diverse religious dynamic of the United States. This deficit in training prior to entry can easily lead to conflict and misunderstanding.

⁵⁴ U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School, 2004, <http://www.usachcs.army.mil/> (5 AUGUST 2004).

One issue which continues to linger has been the “Prayer in the Name of Jesus” controversy. The Canadian government recently required military’s chaplains to refrain from the use of specific Christian references during public services. This elimination of “Jesus Christ,” Trinitarian terminology and speaking “in the name of God the Father” in preference for more generic terms also reflects the trend in the US military.⁵⁵ Most chaplains in the United States Army would have no problem with using various names for God found in the Scripture in prayer. Yet, some denominations expect their chaplains to pray in “The Name of Jesus” only, whenever they pray, or at least not to be prohibited from doing so. Many churches would have difficulty if distinctive Christian prayer were to be prohibited by governmental policy. The Churches would never accept a prohibition. Currently there is no official prohibition in the Army, but the culture does pressure chaplains to use more generic forms of prayer for the purpose of sensitivity and diversity. Such tension between a chaplain’s individual practice, the cultural drive toward sensitivity and the Army’s institutional adoption of uniformity poses a point of tension. Chaplains who make this an issue will experience institutional conflict.

Chaplains from diverse religious traditions are usually assigned to a chapel as a team and must work out how they are going to run the service together. On a post there may be several chapels and each chapel may reflect a liturgical, evangelical, gospel or charismatic flavor. At first glimpse, this looks quite difficult to accomplish. A post may have two Southern Baptists, a United Pentecostal and a Presbyterian assigned to one chapel. Generally the sorting out works, though on occasion there are problems that need to be ironed out. For example, consider this scenario. A Presbyterian chaplain was told to perform a Lutheran service by a post chaplain because no Lutheran chaplain was available. This included the Sacrament. The Presbyterian chaplain refused to do it because he felt that it would violate the conscience of the Lutheran congregation. This issue might be elevated to Department of the Army level and finally resolved

⁵⁵ Susan Martinuk, “Fighting for the Liberty of Others While Limiting Our Own,” *The Province* (March 28, 2002), A16.

in favor of the Presbyterian chaplain, who continued to lead the service but did not serve communion.

The denominational endorsers hold the ace in the hole when it comes to authority over their chaplains. At any moment, for nearly any reason a denominational endorser may pull the endorsement of a chaplain. Within thirty days that chaplain should be out of the military. This does occur more with the Roman Catholic chaplains, because the dioceses must fill their parishes with priests, all too few in the Army, but even fewer in the parishes. This potential removal from the Army by an administrative decision of a church leader, unconnected with the chaplain's accomplishments or reputation in the military, is a source of tension for chaplains. Technically if a denomination felt strongly enough about a war they could eliminate their chaplains from the service entirely. This said, many churches which may oppose a specific war--Iraq for instance--still support their endorsed chaplains, and continue to endorse new chaplains. Many peace churches struggle with whether or not they want chaplains in the service to care for their people who are also in the service. The tension of knowing one's home denomination has protested a war and that one is serving in that war is one of the complexities of the call that chaplains must face. Being faithful to one's denomination and personal convictions, while at the same time serving soldiers who will kill the enemy, requires special capacity and skill.

As Target of the Critics

In the United States, many of the twentieth century critics who opposed the military chaplaincy based their criticism upon issues of church and state separation.⁵⁶ They rejected the constitutionality of the chaplaincy; they believed that the existence of chaplains violated the wall of separation. Their challenges have provided a point of tension for the chaplaincy as an institution, forcing chaplains to grapple with incisive condemnation, often from within their own

⁵⁶ In the past twenty years there has been a focus on the chaplaincy as a church vs. state issue. In particular, chaplaincy critics of the Vietnam era spent energy questioning the relevancy of the chaplaincy to the integrity of religion itself.

denominational religious communities, as well as from the outside. Still, uniformed military chaplains continue to serve, paid by the federal government, commissioned by the President, in a pluralistic society which has both advocated and rejected the legality and legitimacy of their vocation.

In early 1970, Harvard University's Harvey Cox, author of the best seller *The Secular City*, joined a two century long discussion on the US military chaplaincy.⁵⁷ Cox's *Military Chaplains: From Religious Military to a Military Religion* stimulated the intense debate over the Vietnam War, waged in both popular and academic culture, by attacking the existence of the military chaplain.⁵⁸ At the time, America was a divided nation; and significant opposition to the institution of the military and the political and social structures supporting involvement in Vietnam increased as the anti-war movement gained momentum. This opposition to war encouraged incisive attacks upon the nature and usefulness of the military chaplaincy, an entity which seemed to accompany and encourage the soldier and offer silent sanction to the terror and evil of warfare, which America viewed on television's daily evening news.

Cox himself does not focus his attention on issues of constitutionality primarily; rather, he saw the chaplaincy issue as more of a theological role conflict with the state. His concern was not the mixing of religion with state. Cox's concern was moral and not constitutional. It was the dilution or poisoning of the purity of religion by the state, which he saw as the fundamental issue sparking his concern. For Cox, the chaplaincy was co-opted by association. Such a situation led Cox to ask: "The man of God, and the man of war: what have they to do with one another?"⁵⁹

So, what might United States Army chaplains be doing in Iraq or perhaps in Iran in the future? They would be doing what they do in any country with engaged American forces, serving

⁵⁷ Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965). This text was a phenomenal best seller which described the progressive secularization of the world as a logical outcome of Western religion."

⁵⁸ Harvey G. Cox, ed., "Introduction: The Man of God and the Man of War," *Military Chaplains: From Religious Military to a Military Religion* (New York: American Report, 1973), iii-iv.

⁵⁹ Cox, *Military Chaplains*, v.

at the behest of United States national policy. In Mosul, Iraq, an Army chaplain assigned to a medical facility provides pastoral support to soldiers injured and dying because of a car bomb; a battalion chaplain offers care for the grieving members of a military police company which suffered two deaths in combat in an ambush. A few days later the Military Police battalion chaplain will develop and lead a memorial ceremony or a memorial service establishing some form of context to the death of another American soldier in Iraq.⁶⁰ Soldiers and commanders will attend this service. At the same time, a Special Forces chaplain, airborne and ranger school qualified, spends a few minutes praying with a team of men who in the evening will fly into a nation bordering Iraq or Afghanistan by Black Hawk helicopter in an attempt to snare an Al Qaeda operative. During the week of Thanksgiving a quartermaster convoy carrying turkeys is ambushed, wounding a warrant officer who happens to be Jewish; a Jewish chaplain responds and arrives at the Combat Support Hospital (CASH) to provide pastoral care to the dying soldier. These hypothetical examples of chaplain involvement reflect a broad range of possible and actual care interventions. Army chaplains prepare men and women to go into combat, visit them in hospitals and are there at the head of the casket leading the graveside service at Arlington National Cemetery, final resting place for many in America's War on Terror.⁶¹ This picture of a person of God involved intimately with men and women of war is part of the essential being of the Army chaplain; it is also the very relationship which Harvey Cox calls into question. For Cox, the chaplain at the side of the soldier in each of these instances is a compromise and a scandal. To Cox, the chaplain has no business entwined as an asset to an evil system that kills.

⁶⁰ *FM 1-05, Religious Support* (Washington, D. C.: Headquarters Department of the Army, 18 April 2003) 1-5. The memorial ceremony is primarily a patriotic event with a minimal religious content, however it does allow for the non-sectarian reading of scripture and prayer. This is a mandatory formation for soldiers. The memorial (worship) service, on the other hand, is attended voluntarily. The distinction is a fine line. See also "Religious Activities: Chaplain Activities in the United States Army" *Army Regulation 165-1* (Washington, D. C.: Headquarters Department of the Army, 26 May 2000).

⁶¹ Elaine Jarvik, "2nd Utah Soldier in 9 Days Killed in Iraq," *DeseretNews.com*, 28 November 2003, <http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,1249,565034894,00.html> (27 November 2003). Today I received an email from a journalist friend. His son, David J. Goldberg, was killed in Iraq on Wednesday. Chaplains are engaged in pastoral care just as has been described above.

In addition to the work of Harvey Cox, other Vietnam era chaplaincy critics such as the Roman Catholic pacifist, Gordon C. Zahn, sociologist Peter Berger and theologian Robert McAfee Brown, help us to understand the anti-chaplaincy reasoning of the Vietnam War era; and they each have chapters in the Cox text. Their words continue to stimulate reflection today concerning those who wear the uniform of the soldier and the cloth of the clergyperson.

Military Chaplains: From Religious Military to a Military Religion, edited by Harvey Cox contains incisive essays from Cox, Gordon C. Zahn and Robert McAfee Brown as well as others, critical of a compromised institution, the military chaplaincy. However, their 1960's based arguments, in light of twenty-first century American religious culture, are less relevant. The religious environment has been changing for the past thirty years. At the close of the twentieth century, America was shifting away from traditional mainline denominations to a more diverse and populist denominational and non-denominational mix. Indeed, in the world at large, a fundamentalist religious milieu is taking root. Catholic author James Carroll decries this transition impacting the world, saying, "world Christianity (is falling) increasingly under the sway of anti-intellectual fundamentalism."⁶² This shift also impacts the theological, philosophical and ethical perspectives of chaplains, because many are products of American churches which reflect similar religious transformation.

Much of this transition is from the growth of Pentecostal/charismatic religious communities and quite religiously experiential.⁶³ Additional communities in this transformation are Mormons, Muslims and other new American religions. Since the context of religion is evolving in the United States, it is important to realize that the variety of chaplains serving in the chaplaincy has also changed because these diverse traditions are now endorsing their own

⁶² Philip Jenkins, "The Next Christianity," *The Atlantic Monthly* (October 2002), 59.

⁶³ Stanley M. Burgess, ed., and Eduard M. van der Mass, ass. ed., *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, revised and expanded (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002), 281-302 this section, Part II, Global Statistics, details growth patterns of Pentecostal religion. The term "Pentecostal" is used rather broadly and includes members from most if not all religious bodies within Christianity. Most scholars who follow contemporary religious movements would acknowledge that Pentecostalism has become a pervasive force in World Christianity.

chaplains. Thus, the make-up of the US Army chaplaincy has been numerically influenced by this religious transition. Groups such as the Southern Baptists and Pentecostals outnumber the mainline denominations today. For example, many Pentecostals have reached senior ranks within the chaplaincy system. In 2004 the Deputy Chief of Chaplains in the Air Force was Assemblies of God.⁶⁴ In 2004 the Deputy Chief of Chaplains of the Navy was from the Open Bible Churches.⁶⁵ Both groups are Pentecostal. Typically, the deputy assumes the Chief of Chaplain's spot after a normal rotation of a few years. Soon the Chief of Chaplains of two services will be from Pentecostal denominations that came into existence around the time of World War I.

An old military proverb states, "The longer a war continues the more barbaric it becomes." Barbaric wars eventually turn public opinion away from war. When war turns barbaric the real test of the chaplain comes into play. What does a chaplain do, when a soldier tells of a war crime or an atrocity? What does one do, when government policy advocates action that violates one's own conscience? Chaplains have faced such concerns in the past and there is no reason to expect that the twenty-first century will be any different.

In the seventies, the criticism of Cox and others of the existence of the chaplain did not result in the elimination of the chaplaincy, as they would have wished at the time. However, the chaplaincy is quite different today for their efforts. The chaplaincy went out of its way to resolve many of the issues they raised. Just as the Army's leadership, through modernization and reformation, sought to deal with its own problems and scandals in the early seventies, the chaplaincy also sought transformation.⁶⁶

National disillusionment with a ten year war in Vietnam, which produced cultural identifiers such as free fire zones, My Lai, body counts, blanket bombing of population centers

⁶⁴ *USAF Chaplain Service Website*, < <http://www.usafhc.af.mil/>> (5 August 2004).

⁶⁵ *United States Navy Chaplain Corps*, < <http://www.chaplain.navy.mil/CoC/Staff.asp>> (8 August 2004).

⁶⁶ John W. Brinsfield, Jr., *Encouraging Faith, Supporting Soldiers: the United States Army Chaplaincy, 1975-1995* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army, 1978), 1, 10.

and a multitude of other associated atrocities smeared the chaplain alongside the soldier.⁶⁷ When soldiers returning from Vietnam were spat upon, chaplains were also in the crowd, also being assaulted in like manner. Race riots, drug abuse, the legacy of Vietnam, national protests and draft avoidance contributed to catastrophically poor morale in the Army well into the mid seventies. As the Army struggled to move past this morass and transform itself, the Army chaplain corps sought to forge solutions through its own transformation. As part of that transformation the arguments of the critics were not ignored.

As Defender of Free Exercise and the Constitution

In 1979 the chaplaincy faced a serious threat based upon legal challenges related to the separation of church and state. In that year two Harvard law students filed suit against the Army in the New York Federal Court.⁶⁸ This case challenged the constitutionality of the chaplaincy, arguing it violated the “establishment” clause of the United States Constitution.⁶⁹ The junior Army attorneys assigned to the case first wanted to argue that the plaintiffs were not proper parties to the suit, that they lacked standing because they were not military themselves.⁷⁰ This approach would have surrendered the substantive argument that the chaplaincy violated the Establishment Clause of the United States Constitution. The government recalled Rabbi Israel Drazin to active duty. Dr. Drazin, in addition to having been a chaplain, rabbi, author, scholar and attorney, was the senior attorney of the Law offices of Drazin and Drazin, P.A. from 1974-1998. Drazin was called to active duty to assist the Army’s Judge Advocate General (JAG) team and coordinated the case with the Chief of Chaplains office.

Drazin’s response was to offer a redefinition of the chaplaincy by arguing that the function of the chaplain was not promotion of one’s own religion, but in effect the presence of the

⁶⁷ David Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt*, (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1975), 154.

⁶⁸ Federal Court of Appeals. *Katcoff v. Marsh*, 755 F.2d 223 (2d Cir. 1985).

⁶⁹ Isreal Drazin, “The Constitutional Challenge to the Military Chaplaincy,” *Voices of the Chaplaincy* (Arlington, Virginia: The Military Chaplaincy Association, 2002), 79-82.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 81.

Chaplain was to ensure, as a specialist in religion, that all soldiers would be guaranteed the constitutional right of freedom of worship. In essence, the existence of the chaplaincy was tied to the “Free Exercise Clause” of the United States Constitution. Therefore, the presence of chaplains could not violate the “Establishment Clause.”⁷¹ Chaplains supported the Clause. Of course chaplains were members of their own traditions and represented them sacramentally, but Drazin argued that they also held the obligation based upon the Constitution to provide for the free exercise of religion for all soldiers regardless of their religious tradition or religious belief. Indeed, this was a key function of the chaplain in the Army.

This innovative redefinition may pose a difficulty for some chaplains because it reduces the emphasis of the individual chaplains’ unique religious identity (denominational distinctive) in favor of a more uniform chaplaincy, dare one say, Constitutional chaplaincy, with a higher obligation to support the free exercise of religion. It represents an evolutionary development of chaplain doctrine which utilizes chaplains in a broader fashion than tradition and history warranted. By this response to the federal legal challenge, the chaplain suddenly becomes responsible for insuring the Army’s compliance with the Constitution, and the chaplain’s function is defined not primarily, or only, as a proponent of his or her own religious tradition, but as the Army’s advocate of Constitutional free exercise.

For example, Southern Baptist and Pentecostal theological practice includes aggressive evangelism of non-Christians as a norm. Some religious groups in the military would view this “evangelism” as proselytism and unacceptable. Evangelistic religion and the requirement to support all soldiers in the free exercise of religion may be contradictory tasks. Some military chaplains have potential conflicting roles. They are both ministers of their denomination and also protectors of the Constitution’s right of free exercise. This is a recipe for tension and conflict. Drazin, by employing a shrewd tactical redefinition of the nature of the chaplaincy, saved the chaplaincy for a time, but also gave it an additional non-religious function. In much the same

⁷¹ Ibid.

way that Cromwell's New Model Army required chaplains to make war reports, now it might be argued that the chaplain's foremost governmental sanctioned activity is more pluralistic than sectarian.

Eventually the plaintiffs dropped the case, so it didn't move forward to the Supreme Court. It was a victory for the chaplaincy, but the chaplaincy continues to live under the threat of a renewed challenge at some point in the future.⁷² This reality provided motivation to the Army chaplaincy for continual emphasis on the importance of "free exercise" for each soldier by the chaplain. For if chaplains do not support all faiths fairly, Drazin's legalistic rationalization for their existence will be made ineffective. Chaplains who refuse to support soldiers of diverse faiths are eventually removed through poor evaluations.⁷³ For its own survival the Army chaplaincy has assumed the responsibility to speak out when it comes to religious diversity and freedom of religion. In a sense, the chaplain has become a voice, the prophetic voice which insures Muslims and Jews, Buddhists and Wiccans a place at the table of religion in the military. If chaplains fail to provide religious support for the diverse religious strains within the military, they will have failed in their task to serve every soldier, and will have compromised the nation's vested interest in their ministry.

THE PROPHETIC VOICE OF THE CHAPLAIN— MUTED OR NOT

Is There a Soul of Goodness in Things Evil?

"There is some soul of goodness in things evil, would men observingly distil it out."⁷⁴

This quote is quite a conclusion to *Chaplains in Conflict: The Role of Army Chaplains since*

⁷² Brinsfield, *Encouraging Faith*, 130.

⁷³ Ibid, 129-130. Chaplains are obliged to find religious resources and support for soldiers who may be of other faiths. A non-Muslim chaplain does not perform a Muslim prayer service; and a Protestant does not perform a Catholic mass.

⁷⁴ *Henry V*, Act 4, scene 1, quoted in Stephen H. Loudon, *Chaplains in Conflict: The Role of Army Chaplains since 1914* (London: Avon Books, 1996), 1.

1914, for the Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain of The British Army.⁷⁵ His application of this Shakespearean quote from *Henry V* illustrated a tension which exists in the British military chaplaincy. It is the same tension the American military chaplaincy faces. The institution is not pristine. There is evil and there is good within. To expect the chaplaincy as an institution to fit a utopian image of spiritual perfection is both unrealistic and overly optimistic.⁷⁶ Yet, it is such a utopian expectation that the critics of the chaplaincy require for the chaplaincy to be justified in their eyes. This is the expectation of Harvey Cox, who argues the evil is poison to the good. Louden suggests that both can exist beside one another, the person of God with the man of war, side by side.

Louden understands that by its very nature the chaplaincy has nothing to say to its accusers. There are many problems and red blood is visible, but it is the blood both of the dying being comforted and the blood of identification with an institution of killing. To refuse to be tainted by association with the institution would mean not being present to minister to the injured and dying. Indeed, the chaplaincy is a profession that blends the worldly as well as the religious; and it would be foolish to argue that the work of the chaplaincy is without any compromise or accommodation. Compromise and accommodation are ever present. Is it possible to gain some benefit from such an institution? Is any benefit derived from the presence of the chaplain in the midst of war? These are significant questions.

Some of the critics do not want to see blood on the hands of the representative of God. The critics view the marriage of the clergyperson and the military problematic, leading to an inevitable compromise of principles; and they have raised a very high bar indeed if they expect the chaplain to be totally insulated from even a hint of accommodation. The nature of the beast requires a delicate balance between a prophetic religious voice and accommodation to reality, the

⁷⁵ Stephen H. Loudon, *Chaplains in Conflict: The Role of Army Chaplains since 1914* (London: Avon Books, 1996).

⁷⁶ The chaplaincy is secular in the sense that chaplains have secular responsibilities; and it is religious in that they also have religious responsibilities.

exigencies of state service. Achieving this balance is a source of tremendous tension and a challenge for every chaplain who serves. It is also a challenge for the state, which is obligated to tolerate the prophetic utterance among its servants.

Gordon C. Zahn wanted to eliminate all chaplains from the military.⁷⁷ His justification in essence is that they are unable to speak the truth prophetically and have become a part of a corrupt system, silenced by that system itself.⁷⁸ To Zahn, Judeo-Christian religion anticipates a certain opposition to the world as a requirement for religious ministry.⁷⁹ But military chaplains, as part of the evil system, are unable to function without compromise. They will always fail to guide their constituents against the evil values of the worldly military. They can't turn their back on the institution and speak truth, because the power and employment benefits of state are too lucrative. The accusation is that the chaplains can't bite the hand that feeds them, that they are irredeemably compromised by their employer. Zahn cites a World War II era directive from the German High Command which said that the chaplaincy served as a tool "strengthening the fighting power of the troops...like every German, the chaplain must also direct his entire work to the great objective of winning the war."⁸⁰ To Zahn there is no such thing as a prophetic chaplain.

There may be commanders today in the American Army who would concur with the statement of the German High Command, and wish to employ their chaplain as an asset of war primarily. There may be commanders who would intentionally employ their chaplains as

⁷⁷ Gordon C. Zahn, *The Military Chaplaincy: A Study of Role Tension in the Royal Air Force* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969). Zahn may not wish to eliminate ministers from influencing the military but he was committed to eliminating chaplains as officers and as members of the military "...the pastor in uniform constitutes an affirmation—rightly or wrongly so—that there is no basic incompatibility between the values represented by the religious community and the war being waged by the secular ruler." Zahn, *The Military Chaplaincy*, 225.

⁷⁸ Gordon C. Zahn, "Sociological Impressions of the Chaplaincy," Harvey G. Cox, ed., *Military Chaplains: From Religious Military to a Military Religion* (New York: American Report, 1973), 85-86. Zahn also did a study of the RAF chaplaincy, *The Military Chaplaincy: A Study of Role Tension in the Royal Air Force* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969).

⁷⁹ Zahn's focus only on Judeo-Christian religion would not fit a contemporary critique of the chaplaincy as an institution because the institution today has chaplains from other world religions. However, the critique of Judeo-Christian chaplains within the institution would be valid for those chaplains.

⁸⁰ Zahn, 60. This is a quote from Albrecht Schubel, *300 Jahre Evangelische Soldatenseelsorge* (Muenchen: Evangelischer Presse Verband Fuer Bayern, 1964), 145.

intelligence assets gaining information about local religious leaders and people. Sending the chaplain to a village and then debriefing him or her is only one illustration of numerous ways the chaplain might be utilized as an asset of war. Would this pose a problem for a chaplain? Would it violate his or her sense of mission?

Zahn would see little difference from this portrayal of the chaplain in Nazi Germany and the prayer offered by the chaplain serving with Colonel George S. Patton III, in Vietnam, when he was asked to pray for a high body count.⁸¹ The chaplain prayed: “Oh Lord, give us the wisdom to find the bastards and the strength to pile on.”⁸² Zahn brutally applies his analysis of the German chaplaincy to the American chaplaincy. Zahn presents a picture of a coldly rationalistic utilization of the chaplain for the sole benefit of the state, for its victory and mission success. Whatever ministry the chaplain does is subservient to the state’s. To Zahn, the chaplain can never have a valid prophetic ministry that confronts command; the chaplain is unable to speak truth to power as long as the chaplain serves the commander. To Zahn, the chaplain, as a military person is a mere cog in the machine of war, who may last only a short time unassimilated, but in the end becomes a useful tool of an evil system. Zahn would not abide Louden’s rationalization, that there is good in the bad, that the devil can be placated. For Zahn, the value of having legitimate ministry to soldiers and their families can never be a justification for the chaplain’s presence and his or her surrender to an evil system which corrupts the essence of what it is to be a person of God.

Cox and many others serve as vivid critics of the chaplaincy, opposing the evil of war and the massive American military industrial complex. He views the chaplain as a compromiser with little believability, a person without integrity. Cox complains that the military has “spread its metallic claws around the globe to hundreds of bases and bivouacs.”⁸³ The chaplaincy,

⁸¹ General Patton’s son.

⁸² Doris L. Bergen, *The Sword of the Lord: Military Chaplains from the First to the Twenty-First Century* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 236.

⁸³ Cox, vii.

complicit in this enterprise, confronts us with conflicting claims of God and Caesar.⁸⁴ What is to be believed from the testimony of the one who speaks the words of Caesar and the words of God from both sides of the mouth? For Cox it is the “military industrial complex which laps up America’s wealth and at the same time advances Imperial America which is so corrupting.”⁸⁵ Who would want to be such a chaplain? How could a person of God serve such a monster? The Army chaplain may be either a naive participant in the matter or complicit, a person without integrity. Either way the chaplain is painted red with the same blood guilt as the soldier. These critics would question if a chaplain could ever exert a prophetic voice and challenge the evil.

The magazine, *Christian Century*, which often reflects positions sympathetic with the more liberal wing of North American Christianity, articulates a point-of-view which would enrage some anti-chaplaincy activists.⁸⁶ The *Christian Century* in the past has expressed affinity more sympathetic to the position of Cox and Zahn, especially in the 1970’s. Yet in June of 2003 the editor of the magazine, John M. Buchanan justified continued advertisement for the military chaplaincy in *The Christian Century*. The Navy regularly placed ads designed to encourage pastors to consider the chaplaincy as a feasible option for their ministry. Buchanan responded to certain complaints from anti-war readers, who criticized such advertisements for chaplains. He said,

I’ve learned to respect those who minister, even if I disagree with what the military is doing. The actions of the military and the role of chaplains are issues we will continue to address in the content of the magazine. And we’ll continue to run ads for military chaplaincy.⁸⁷

The tension of the chaplaincy is not an internal struggle only for chaplains. It belongs to the broader Christian community; and in this case, the editor of *The Christian Century* admits the complexity. In the article, “Congregation in Uniform,” he argues that to abandon those within the military culture by denying military chaplains would be more harmful than to provide the

⁸⁴ Cox., xii.

⁸⁵ Cox., vii.

⁸⁶ By “liberal,” I mean those Christian churches who reject war, particularly the Iraq War.

⁸⁷ John M. Buchanan “Congregation in Uniform,” *Christian Century* (June 14 2003), 3.

chaplains. For that reason he acknowledges the need for military chaplains, for the sake of the men and women, the sons and daughters of America.⁸⁸ This statement concurs with Louden's quote of Shakespeare. "There is some soul of goodness in things evil, would men observingly distil it out." In essence it is preferable to have the chaplain in the system doing spiritual work and as a prophetic presence, perhaps toned down somewhat. Who will speak clearly on moral, ethical and spiritual issues if not the chaplain? Who will give voice to the needs of the exploited within the military bureaucracy? Who will confront commanders and remind them of their obligation to do justice? Who will point people to God in the midst of death and tragedy if not the chaplain? The churches which condemn warfare are faced with a dilemma if they wish to excise the chaplain from the military bureaucracy; they eliminate a prophetic presence. But this raises another question. What if the chaplains' voices are silenced; and what if they are not prophetic?

My Lai – Where Were the Prophetic Voices of the Chaplains?

The Army chaplaincy connection to the My Lai atrocity and massacre of 16 March 1968 is but one example of a failure to provide relevant religious influence and prophetic intervention when it mattered. There were two chaplains involved in the cover-up tragedy, Francis R. Lewis and Carl E. Creswell.⁸⁹ Lewis was the Americal Division chaplain and Creswell was the Americal Division Artillery Brigade chaplain, who was first told of the atrocity by a helicopter pilot, Warrant Officer Hugh Thompson. To a certain degree the chaplain contribution to the cover-up simply supports Cox's claim that a chaplain is unable to speak out as a prophet in the military culture because he or she is ensnared by an evil system.

The day after My Lai, 17 March 1968, the Sunday edition of the *News Sheet*, a publication of the Americal Division in Vietnam, reported that one hundred and twenty-eight

⁸⁸ Ibid. The protested add was for the Navy chaplaincy.

⁸⁹ Venzke, 157-159.

enemy fighters were killed and thirteen suspects detained from the village of My Lai.⁹⁰ What was not stated in this account was that war crimes had been committed, and that the “enemies” were non-combatant civilians. Indeed, the casualty toll may have been more than five-hundred civilians.⁹¹ For almost a year the information of the event was held within the Americal Division; and no action was taken. This allowed many of the participants enough time to leave the military and become legally unreachable.

The Army’s intense investigation began after the cover-up was exposed by Rob Ridenhour, who at the time was a young soldier who had collected hearsay information. When he left the Army, Ridenhour wrote letters to more than thirty congressmen and Senators.⁹² It was more than a year after the atrocity that the Ridenhour’s letter made an impact. He wrote the letter in March 1969, and the first news report was in November of 1969, reported by Seymour Hersh.⁹³ Mo Udall was the Senator who eventually responded to his letter, and within two weeks the Pentagon initiated an investigation which ultimately resulted in key officers and enlisted soldiers being charged with court-martial offenses. These charges included murder and assault to commit murder. However, only one person was convicted. Lieutenant William L Calley, Jr. was charged with premeditated murder in the killing of more than a hundred men, women and children. At the time, popular opinion supported Calley and many viewed Calley as a scapegoat. In fact, there was photographic and recorded evidence to convict him, alone. Other officers were not convicted although careers ended, eventually. Calley was sentenced to life, but was released in 1975 after a long string of appeals. The chaplain involvement in this was no less than a tragic failure to speak

⁹⁰ *Americal News Sheet*, 17 March 1968, 1. Quoted in ⁹⁰ Rodger Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace: The United States Army Chaplaincy 1945-1975* (Washington, D. C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains Department of the Army, 1977), 156.

⁹¹ “Department of the Army, Report of the Department of the Army Review of the Preliminary Investigations into the My Lai Incident” (The Peers Report), Volumes I-III (1970).

⁹² Douglas Linder, “Famous American Trials, July 2004, <<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/mylai/mylai.htm>> (5 August 2004). This site at the University of Missouri Kansas City has many of the primary documents of the My Lai atrocity.

⁹³ Doug Linder, *Famous American Trials: The My Lai Court-Martial 1970*, <<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/mylai/mylai.htm>> (3 August 2004). Seymour M. Hersh, *My Lai 4: A Report on the Massacre and its Aftermath*. (New York: Random House, 1970), xii. The first mention was in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* 13 November, 1969.

out. It was a blind eye turned and an intentional reluctance to push aggressively for the truth concerning the murder of civilians.

A few days after the killings occurred, Hugh Thompson, the helicopter pilot who witnessed the atrocities, went to his chaplain with the story, but nothing came of the encounter. No chaplains were on the scene during the atrocity; however, Thompson indicated that innocent civilians had been slaughtered.⁹⁴ The chaplain covering Thompson's aviation unit, Creswell "verbally passed the report" to the Americal's Division Chaplain, Francis R. Lewis.⁹⁵ At this point the details are uncertain, because Lewis and others did not remember the precise content of conversations, which by the time of the trials had occurred, was a year and a half in the past. Lewis claimed that he passed the information that he was given by Creswell to four staff officers. He said that he was told that some of the officers were cognizant of the complaint and were looking into the matter. Lewis then dropped the ball, believing that the issue was being dealt with.

During the court-martial testimony the staff officers did not remember the encounter as described by Lewis. Indeed, two officers denied that Lewis had said anything to them. The failure to report this to the legal authorities by both chaplains contributed to the cover-up. Lewis later said that he didn't think that Creswell's account warranted the attention. Were the chaplains intentionally involved in a cover-up of the murders of innocent Vietnamese? They may not have intentionally been, but their actions presented a picture of an ineffective response and hinted at a compromised system. When the months passed without any action, the chaplain should have followed-up? The Peers Report points out the chaplains should have reported the war crimes to the Army's Criminal Investigation Command (CID). *The New York Times* suggested that the silence on the part of the chaplains revived "the old two masters problem concerning chaplains in the armed forces," meaning that it is difficult for a chaplain to serve the state and God at the same

⁹⁴ Chaplains were assigned to the Calley's unit but heard nothing of the crime, nor were they present.

⁹⁵ Venzke, 158.

time.⁹⁶ Indeed, this case tarnished the chaplaincy for years and became a case study in officer basic courses Army wide, including the chaplain school which trains all Army chaplains.

The investigation, headed by General William Peers, produced a blunt document, *The Peers Commission Report*, which recommended court-martial proceedings for both chaplains along with twenty six other officers and two enlisted photographers. This included the most senior leaders of the Americal Division.⁹⁷ The silence or failure to follow through on the part of the senior division chaplain and brigade chaplain was deemed an act worthy of court-martial by General Peers. The junior chaplain reported the incident, but the senior chaplain failed to follow through with action.⁹⁸ Both were obligated to act according to the report. Harvey Cox's point hits hard in this case; the chaplaincy failed to provide prophetic leadership during an atrocity and war crime.

Cox suggested that the Army system and culture corrupted the chaplain's involved, hindering their ability to do what was right? Would a chaplain in the twenty-first century be able to resist this corruption? Has the chaplaincy adjusted to this My Lai failure so that similar atrocities may be avoided, or at least reported and condemned? If the Army chaplaincy failed to learn from My Lai, what will it do when confronted with contemporary atrocity or criminal activity such as at the Abu Gharib prison in Baghdad? The chaplain must ask if he or she would have done any better. Is there a dynamic ethical obligation for a chaplain to confront a commander, to report, to go above a local commander? Prophecy must be more than a magic trick or fortune telling, as is common in many contemporary religious movements. It must speak

⁹⁶ *New York Times*, 30 January 1972, 6.

⁹⁷ "Department of the Army, Report of the Department of the Army Review of the Preliminary Investigations into the My Lai Incident" (The Peers Report), Volumes I-III (1970): Section Six: Suppression and Withholding of Information. The chaplain was criticized with the Division staff "As discussed in Chapter 10, shortly after 16 March 1968, W01 Thompson went to the Division Artillery Chaplain, CPT Carl Creswell, with a report of what he had seen at My Lai (4). Chaplain Creswell in turn, without reporting the matter to his commander, went to the Division Chaplain, LTC Francis Lewis, with the story. As previously discussed, LTC Lewis' efforts at investigation were futile and he allowed the matter to pass without substantive effort to bring it to the attention of his superiors."

⁹⁸ W. R. Peers, *The My Lai Inquiry* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1979), 214-215. In addition to the chief of staff and other staff officers the commission proposed that charges be preferred against the division chaplain. Charges were never filed.

truth even when it costs. Every chaplain should be obligated to speak wisely and boldly truth to those who have authority for the benefit of those who don't. If that is not possible, then perhaps the argument of a Cox and Zahn merits consideration. A chaplain unwilling to confront a commander and push to the limits is a chaplain that need not exist at all.

Accommodating the Blessing of Cannons

Cox suggests that nearly all key theological voices-post 1945, Martin Buber, Reinhold Niebuhr, Juergen Moltman, and Johann Metz....all advocate the elimination of the idols of race and state from the religious community.⁹⁹ To them the concept of the military chaplaincy reflected a bankrupt ideology, more of a crusade mentality-a relic of a bygone era. Even if there are roots in western culture, the institution violates the essence of what biblical religion is all about. This attitude reflects a popular consensus of the Vietnam era criticism. The era could not envision the chaplain influencing or transforming the military culture. The fear is much more that the chaplain's employment would be as an asset of state warfare.

One popular image of a chaplain is that of a clergy person who functions as an apparatus to "bless the cannons." Indeed this is a practice that does fit the practice of some chaplains. Some chaplains view the practice negatively, while some religious traditions within the increasingly more pluralistic chaplaincy would celebrate the blessing of cannon as a means of identification with the work and person of the soldier, and as a visible religious commitment to success in war. Other chaplains would have difficulty with such a practice, and would not participate. Such actions could be perceived as portraying the entire chaplaincy as a willing and eager participant in war making. They may also establish expectations that replacement chaplains may not measure up to or desire, especially those who would abhor the practice and see it as an unwarranted sanctioning of killing. It is difficult to fit into the shoes of a tank-blessing chaplain when the battalion commander has the expectation that the chaplain will bless his tanks, every

⁹⁹ Ibid., x.

one. It's not easy to say, "No sir, I won't bless your tanks." This is the sort of tension that a chaplain may face when arriving into a unit where the commander has such expectations of a chaplain. In truth, chaplains do refuse to do such things, but that decision is often made with a cost. What Zahn fears most are perfunctory Enola Gay prayers.¹⁰⁰ In other words, can a chaplain pray for an atomic bomb to have a safe flight followed by a blessed impact upon the target? Zahn refuses to accept that a minister of God might be identified with a Hiroshima like bombing. To Zahn, the chaplain walking side by side in prayer with the man of war is problematic and scandalous.

The critics of the chaplaincy occasionally portray the chaplain as one engaged in the larding of sermons... "with the kind of fire-eating bombast best calculated to boost the morale of the fighting man and spur him on to the supreme sacrifice of life, if need be."¹⁰¹ Sermons advocating or justifying war (and weapons blessings) are methods of some chaplains; yet other chaplains would see such extreme polemic harmful to the essence and integrity of their efforts of ministry. Partisan and politicized sermons minimize the authority and power of one's call and work as a person of God. Political sermon making turns a chaplain into little more than a rabbit's foot in the eyes of those being served.

Most chaplains, the ones who take themselves seriously as spiritual leaders, struggle with such behavior, and would be reluctant to pray a prayer as crass as requesting a high body count for a combat operation. But they would pray for safety and divine protection for their troops going out on a patrol. Although the chaplain might not pray for a tank, prayer for the soldiers in the tank would be a viable option. Chaplains must find a way to relate to the military culture in constructive ways that don't violate the conscience of either the chaplain or the soldier. To function in the Army system as a spiritual leader is a crucial objective for the chaplain. This does necessitate a certain amount of accommodation. Accommodation is not always to be shunned. It

¹⁰⁰ Zahn, "Sociological Impressions of the Chaplaincy" from Cox, 59.

¹⁰¹ Zahn from Cox, 59.

may be a necessity for creating an open door to dialogue. The question of how far one goes to connect with soldiers in the military culture is a source of tension for every chaplain. There are few clear lines. Some chaplains would have no problem with a prayer of blessing for a tank. Others would. Indeed, there is little difference from a prayer for a new armored vehicle and the invocation prayed at the christening of a new aircraft carrier or nuclear powered submarine.

Accommodating the General with a Prayer

“Chap, I need a weather prayer, now.” The results driven style of leadership, hallmark of the focused American military commander, expects to employ the chaplain pragmatically. Most chaplains have been asked to give weather prayers, and this becomes a matter of some note when they are in the field with their commanders if weather conditions are less than perfect. Some chaplains feel discomfort about such encounters with their results driven commanders, as if they really could command the heavens with a prayer. Then again, there are some chaplains who would feel up to the task! When the sun shines, it is always a good day for a chaplain.

In World War II, during the Battle of the Bulge in the Ardennes, General Patton asked his chaplain for a weather prayer, for dry weather in December of 1944. Chaplain O’Neill, the Third Army Chaplain told Patton, “May I say, General, that it isn’t a customary thing among men of my profession to pray for clear weather to kill fellow men.”¹⁰² Patton replied, “Chaplain, are you teaching me theology or are you the Chaplain of the Third Army? I want a weather prayer.” He wanted it “Now!” The chaplain went out, drafted it and the prayer was published, printed and sent to the entire army on thousands of note cards. When the weather improved the chaplain was awarded a bronze star and the event went into military folklore. Not only is this part of American folklore, many commanders have heard this story; and they don’t hesitate in expecting the same results from their own chaplain’s weather prayer.

¹⁰² James O’Neill, “The True Story of the Patton Prayer,” (Washington, D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950. cited in *The Army Chaplaincy: Professional Bulletin of the Unit Ministry Team* (Spring 1995), 20.

This suggests an apt question: “What harm is there in a weather prayer?”¹⁰³ The chaplain’s encounter with Patton is a good illustration of a chaplain negotiating a potential conflict through deft and skill. Chaplain O’Neill’s prayer is directed against the “oppression and wickedness” of the enemy, not toward the taking of life. He followed his conviction and at the same time offered a prayer that pleased the commander. Chaplains encounter such situations often. They come in a multitude of guises, but in every scenario the chaplain needs wisdom. O’Neill confronted a commander, General Patton, who might have felt far more comfortable with the prayer his son received from his own chaplain in Vietnam, “Oh Lord, give us the wisdom to find the bastards and the strength to pile on.” Father O’Neill decided to hold onto his conviction that war was at best a necessary evil, and not pray for the death of the enemy. This may be a fine point, but it does illustrate that chaplains are able to exert influence which mitigates the harshness of war, at least to a small degree. It also shows there is no consensus in the chaplaincy in how to approach this subject. One chaplain prays to pile it on the enemy; and one avoids praying for the death of the enemy, only that justice would prevail. Each decides how to pray based upon his or her individual theological and philosophical perspective.

Accommodation of Multiple Masters

The dilemma of serving two masters is not a unique struggle of the chaplain. Multiple roles which conflict occur in other professions too. But the military chaplain is one of the best examples of a profession that by nature has built in tension.¹⁰⁴ The picture of a clergyperson pledging allegiance to the Constitution of the United States and taking a vow to support and

¹⁰³ Ibid. O’Neill’s actual prayer did not ask God to kill the enemy. He phrased it in such a way to keep his own conviction that one should not pray for the death of another human being. *Prayer: Almighty and most merciful Father, we humbly beseech thee, of Thy great goodness, to restrain these immoderate rains with which we have had to contend. Grant us fair weather for Battle. Graciously hearken to us as soldiers who call upon Thee that armed with Thy power, we may advance from victory to victory, and crush the oppression and wickedness of our enemies and establish Thy justice among men and nations. Amen.*

¹⁰⁴ Physicians also face similar issues.

defend that Constitution, and at the same time maintaining commitment to God and a religious tradition, presents a picture of tension. The Apostle Matthew wrote,

“No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn.”¹⁰⁵

This text has often been cited as a portrayal of the work of the chaplain. This role conflict is a fundamental avenue of criticism for the opponents of the chaplaincy. It unites the Vietnam era critics. Indeed, even Korean War era sociologist Waldo W. Burchard argues that it “is impossible for a Christian in military service to reconcile this conflict. If it is done at all it is through rationalization or compartmentalization.”¹⁰⁶

Former World War II chaplain Robert McAfee Brown debates the policy of making ministers into soldiers, which in his words “legitimizes war.” “The chaplain constituted as a military officer “implies a virtually uncritical sanctioning or condoning of war.”¹⁰⁷ He asks what would happen if the chaplain came “to see that killing, even in warfare, is an evil that must be directly opposed rather than indirectly sanctioned.”¹⁰⁸ Would the chaplain then resist speaking his or her mind, or would he stay in the system and attempt to work internally, silencing his or her prophetic urge for a greater purpose. Ultimately this is about the freedom to speak truth, to be prophetic about convictions. Brown argues that the chaplain must speak out; but he doesn’t believe the chaplain would resist immoral national policies. The silence of the prophet communicates agreement with the evil, according to Brown. Brown served at the end of World War II as a military chaplain and later became an anti-war voice until his death in 2001.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Matthew 6:24, New Jerusalem Bible.

¹⁰⁶ Waldo W. Burchard, “Role Conflicts of Military Chaplains,” *American Sociological Review*, vol 19, no. 5 (Oct., 1954): 528-535. See also Waldo W. Burchard, “The Role of the Military Chaplains,” (Doctoral Dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1953).

¹⁰⁷ Brown, 142.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 142-143. If that were the case, then every chaplain would be compelled to leave the institution.

¹⁰⁹ John Dart, “Frontline Theologian: Robert McAfee Brown (1920-2001),” *Christian Century*, 10 October 2001, <http://www.findarticles.com/cf_dls/m1058/27_118/79371655/p1/article.jhtml> (23 May 2004). Brown was not a pacifist. He thought the war to stop Hitler was a just one, however he was quite prominent in criticism of the Vietnam and Gulf wars.

Burchard cites five areas of irresolvable conflict which relate to the dual role conflict of the chaplain. They are: the doctrine of love; universal brotherhood; peace; non-resistance to evil; and the commandment “Thou shalt not kill.”¹¹⁰ He believes the chaplain violates each of these by mere service in the military. According to Burchard, this conflict serves as continual tension for the chaplain as he or she constantly lives underneath the implications and judgment of hypocrisy.

Not everyone would agree with Cox, Burchard or Brown about the hypocrisy of the chaplaincy. In the twenty-first century, the make-up of the Army chaplaincy is ethnically and philosophically diverse, reflecting a variety of denominations and levels of acceptance of warfare as a means to resolve conflict. The reluctance to embrace the chaplain in our culture is not as strong as it once was, especially in the 1970’s. Recent films episodically have portrayed chaplains in a more positive fashion. Spielberg’s *Saving Private Ryan* shows a chaplain on Omaha Beach praying for wounded and dying soldiers.¹¹¹ In the recent HBO series *Band of Brothers* chaplains are portrayed both on the beach and in the field recklessly providing pastoral care to soldiers in the midst of combat.¹¹² Chaplains are portrayed in popular media in ways quite distinct from the negative portrayal of the Vietnam era. Even the *M.A.S.H.* model improved on the Vietnam portrayal of the chaplain bearing arms with grenades attached to an ammunition belt, photographed in magazines like *Time*.¹¹³

It is the commanders who often express commitment to the value of the chaplain’s effort as a spiritual leader. They do so with great enthusiasm. The reason for commanders to speak of the importance of soldier spirituality may be practical, but it is still instructive:

I look upon the spiritual life of the soldier as even more important than his physical equipment.... The soldier’s heart, the soldier’s spirit, the soldier’s soul are everything. It’s morale—I mean spiritual morale—which wins the victory of the soldier who knows God and who has the

¹¹⁰ Burchard, 529.

¹¹¹ *Saving Private Ryan*, dir. Steven Spielberg, Dreamworks and Paramount, 1998, CD.

¹¹² *Band of Brothers*, dir. David Frankel and Tom Hanks, 6 discs, HBO Home Video, 2002, CD.

¹¹³ Venzke, 149.

spirit of religious fervor in his soul. I count heavily on that type of man and that kind of army.¹¹⁴

Such words of praise for the importance of the spiritual life of the soldier are found throughout the military. Such words by key leaders also establish an expectation that the chaplain, as the unit's spiritual leader, is to impact the military culture positively.

With such sentiment it is no wonder that Zahn would complain...that a chaplain so fused into the system does indeed become "complicit as an instrument and vehicle of the secular authorities' power...in essence a vehicle of massive and organized violence."¹¹⁵ Zahn mentions medical troops in the same context as the chaplain arguing that their presence on the battlefield as willing participants, even if they are there to care for the wounded and dying, makes them bear the guilt of war by association. To Zahn, both the medical troops and the chaplains as they provide care also participate in the crime of war.¹¹⁶ It is not the chaplain alone who faces this institutional challenge to professional fidelity. Physicians, dentists and nurses experience such role tension too; but they do not usually sit on battalion staffs.¹¹⁷

The nature of the chaplain's role continues to be debated within and outside of the military. The denomination that appoints the chaplain may have rejected the decision of the Bush administration to go to war in Iraq. Several major US churches opposed the invasion of Iraq based upon their understanding of the concept *just war*. These churches reject US policy and the use of military force. Where does that leave their chaplains who serve? Most chaplains reconcile these differences and continue to serve. On occasion a chaplain will leave the service for such considerations of conscience, but this is not common. Most retain their professional identity as a minister within an institution of war through accommodation. They choose to live

¹¹⁴ Daniel B. Jorgensen, *The Service of Chaplains to Army Air Units 1917-1946* (United States Air Force, Chief of Chaplains, 1961), 227. in Charles R. Bailey, *Religious Support and the Human Dimension of Warfare in the 21st Century and Beyond*, (Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA: U. S. Army War College, 7 April 2003), 20.

¹¹⁵Zahn, 62.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Budd, 3.

with the tension, even if many in their fellow civilian ministers protest and regard them as outcasts.

THE PROPHEPIC CALL

Struggles with relational tension and accommodation were not new in the 1970's when Cox edited *Military Chaplains: from Religious Military to a Military Religion*.¹¹⁸ Chaplains have always struggled with dual roles related to their relationship with their churches and the state. There have also been numerous other questions and concerns in the two century history. How integrated should chaplains be in the military system itself? Should they wear a uniform? Should they have an officer's rank? Should chaplains have authority over subordinates and should they in the age of jihad, bear a weapon for personal protection?¹¹⁹ Should the government pay them? James Madison favored not paying chaplains from public funds, yet they are paid by the government.¹²⁰ Such issues have been and are still being debated to a greater or lesser degree. These debates place stress upon chaplains because they highlight the chaplain's vulnerability to having his or her integrity and prophetic nature compromised or influenced.

Yet, perhaps the most critical debates relate to the areas which may drag the chaplain along the path to what Cox, Zahn and others feared. When confronted with policy evil, can the chaplain be prophetic? Can the chaplain put career at risk for the sake of truth? How does the chaplain respond when his or her values are relegated to insignificance or rejected because of pressing state interests? Accommodation may be feasible when it comes to a prayer for weather, or the blessing of a tank, but is there a point where a chaplain instead of accommodating must say, "Enough?"

¹¹⁸ Hutcheson, 18.

¹¹⁹ Richard M. Budd, *Serving Two Masters: The Development of American Military Chaplaincy 1860-1920* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 7.

¹²⁰ Cox, 30.

The Snare of Realpolitik

The Cold War is finished and we hear rumblings in the media of an Imperial America. *Warrior Politics*, by Robert D. Kaplan, has gained attention as a viable resource for foreign policy makers in the current Bush administration.¹²¹ The book also is hailed by Henry Kissinger and Newt Gingrich. On one occasion even President George Bush invited the author to Camp David for informal policy discussions. Kaplan argues that the Christian ethic is not sufficient for the real world.¹²² He states that although Christianity may have a powerful moral influence, it can't approach the usefulness of the pagan ethic represented by the likes of Plutarch, Machiavelli or even Sun-Tzo. Kaplan may abide a Judeo-Christian ethics based upon interpersonal relationships or personal probity, but he also argues that statecraft must be more pragmatic and effective. For national policy to function in the real world, the gospel of turning the other cheek is useless on the streets of Baghdad or poppy fields of Columbia.

Therefore, Kaplan advocates implementation of Realpolitik, a more practical and material form of political influence with less moral and ethical restraint.¹²³ The willingness of Kaplan to adopt brutal but effective "pagan" approaches to maintain world order is hailed by some as a way to avoid the constraints of the Judeo-Christian belief and ethic. *Life* editor, Henry Luce, once cynically asked Father Courtney Murray if foreign policy had anything to do with the Sermon on the Mount.¹²⁴ Kaplan would say, "Of course not." Kaplan sees little relationship between the two. He suggests employing the Christian ethic, but when times get tough in international relations, the best option is the pagan ethic, in other terms, Realpolitik, or reality based politics and diplomacy.

Realpolitik thinking offers broad possibilities in terms of the use of force for American foreign policy and for the military. Steven Menashi hints at the successful application of this

¹²¹ Robert D. Kaplan, *Warrior Politics: Why Leadership Demands A Pagan Ethos*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2002).

¹²² Kaplan, 77.

¹²³ George Wiegel, "Moral Clarity in a Time of War," *First Things*, vol 128, (January 2003), 20-27.

¹²⁴ Wiegel, 20-27.

realistic methodology in previous wars, citing US involvement in the Philippines at the turn of the last century. General John Pershing led forces against militants who happened to be Muslim.

His forces captured some of the militants, executed them with bullets dipped in pig fat, and wrapped their bodies in pigskin before burial – a devastating contamination according to Muslim law. “You’ll never see Paradise,” one U. S. officer reportedly told the terrorists, dashing their hope of martyrdom.¹²⁵

Menashi points out that such tactics were effective and terrorist violence was reduced, even after the departure of the American Army. Current U. S. operations in the Philippines and against other Islamicist movements may or may not be accompanied by such methods, but it is likely that such tactics of intimidation will appear, endorsed or not, as the US Military prosecutes the war in Iraq and in other hotspots.

For the time being one must understand that a soldier’s frustration and psychological trauma often leads to such acts, often rationalized through exigencies of the moment. If the United States military implements such strategies, adopts the pagan ethos of Kaplan, chaplains will be involved in one way or another. They will speak out or they will remain silent. Each chaplain will make his or her own decision to speak based upon the information at their disposal, religious conviction and willingness to confront the commander. Chaplains as advisors to commanders have the opportunity to speak on such things directly and forcefully, preferably in private. This open door to the commander is an opportunity every chaplain possesses. It is of value to the military and also the nation. The ability to be prophetic, speak truth to power, is a great responsibility for every chaplain, and an opportunity to appeal to the wisdom of the one’s conscience.

The increasing brutality of the war in Iraq and other such irregular wars will place the chaplain in situations that require tough choices. For example, when a chaplain becomes aware of a possible illegal action, what is his or her role? In 2003 the Army nearly filed court marshal

¹²⁵ Steven Menashi, “Teaching Evil,” review of *Warrior Politics: Why Leadership Demands a Pagan Ethos*, by Robert D. Kaplan, *Policy Review* (April 2002): 90.

charges against a popular 4th Infantry Division battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Allen B. West.¹²⁶ West confessed to holding a weapon to the head of an Iraqi police officer in order to extract information that possibly protected soldiers in his unit from an ambush. West threatened execution and fired his weapon near the head of the Iraqi policeman twice. Had his chaplain been aware of the incident, what would have been the chaplain's response? Chaplains work for commanders. They serve on their staffs; and they could place their career in jeopardy if they confront a commander. Perhaps the chaplain reported this act to his chaplain supervisor or perhaps the chaplain served as the confidant to his commander, providing comfort and justification for the act in the Name of the Lord. Both options could have occurred. Some chaplains would feel West's action was justified for the greater good; others would have major concerns.

Such is the tension and challenge of being a chaplain at battalion level in the U. S. Army. Such is the paradox of the chaplaincy. Apparently, Lieutenant Colonel West is a vocal and active Christian and believes he was completely justified in his act, saying he would "go to hell with a gasoline can in my hand to protect his troops."¹²⁷

Imagine the tension a young chaplain faces in such scenarios.¹²⁸ He or she might even be asked to carry the gasoline can. There are two choices for a chaplain, acceptance of the commander's action, placing a gun to the head of a prisoner to encourage compliance; or the other option, which would be exhibiting the strength and character to stand toe to toe with a commander and boldly confront him in private. Prophetic chaplains are necessary in the U.S. Army for such scenarios. Of course the chaplain would have to select the proper place and time to speak. If the prophetic voice of chaplains is ever to be silenced when it comes to issues related

¹²⁶ "Army Colonel Fired for Firing a Gun near Iraqi," *The Seattle Times.com*, 13 December, 2003, <http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2001814025_iraqidig13.html> (10August 2004).

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ New chaplains are assigned to battalions immediately after their officer basic training. Often they have minimal military experience and it takes a year or two before they become competent to function well on a staff.

to the law of war, justice and morality, then the nation must be prepared for the creep and allure of Kaplan's Pagan Ethos in thousands of small encounters between American soldiers and others. Before adoption of Kaplan's Realpolitik occurs, the nation must seriously consider the implications of adopting a pagan ethos which has few ethical scruples.

Issues of War and Peace: Just War

In the Army the articulation of the Just War doctrine is not "owned" by the chaplaincy. It is the Judge Advocate General community which is responsible for the explanation and instruction on just war. Chaplains still speak on this subject when called upon, but the official instruction on just war doctrine has become a non-religious matter, a matter of law; it is the political, the civilian leadership's responsibility to define the concept for the soldier. In essence the government determines if a war is just or unjust. The Army follows orders, trusting that the orders are not illegal. From the commander's perspective, the general assumption is that wars engaged in by America are just. Some chaplains may concur and support the decision. Yet, there are chaplains who may not concur with a given "just war" and their denominations may protest it as well. Certainly they are not obligated to concur with the war, but they could lose their job if they publicly defied a commander on this issue. There have been times where a chaplain has left the military because of this, but at the cost of leaving the men and women without religious support. This may be part of the reason that articulation of just war doctrine does not lie with the chaplaincy, because this allows chaplains to function as ministers to soldiers even when they don't view the war as just.

Chaplains represent a diverse religious dimension, and not all would support U. S. foreign policy decisions employing the Army. Thus, chaplains may actually engage in ministry in the context of a war they personally oppose. They may harbor private disagreements with the justness of a given war and at the same time provide pastoral care for the soldier who fights in the field. The difficulty for the chaplain is not so much from inside the military community; it is

from outside and from his or her own religious community. In the recent war in Iraq several churches took issue with the Bush administration's decision and justification of war.¹²⁹ One, the United Methodist Church, has many chaplains on active duty in Iraq. Yet the United Methodist Church came out publicly condemning the war. Chaplains from such denominations must come to terms with their service and answer questions of military members who may belong to traditions which opposed the war. This is a dilemma for some chaplains and a source of great soul searching.¹³⁰ However, no denominations have required that their chaplains leave the service.

Religious movements which oppose a specific war in a specific instance, pose a problem for chaplains. They often stand with a finger of judgment pointed at the chaplain. To many civilian clergy and civilians on the outside, the chaplain on the inside has betrayed his or her calling by helping a soldier to become comfortable with his or her military mission: involvement in war. Indeed, chaplains do give moral courage and encourage the soldier. A military chaplain is not going to encourage a soldier to become a pacifist, unless the soldier is already one. In that case the chaplain interviews the conscientious objector and assists in determination of the claim's validity.

Non-Combatant Clergy at War

Few roles in life are so identified with one's being as that of a clergyperson, priest or rabbi. The same is true for the role of the soldier. To mix the two vocations, results in a unique specialization. The military chaplain becomes the person of peace employed within the bowels of the war machine. Chaplains sent by the American churches work underneath the authority of commanders and underneath the religious requirements of the vocation they have chosen. This

¹²⁹ Joe Feuerherd, "Opinions clash on just war: Christian opposition to attack on Iraq is widespread, but not universal. (Nation), *National Catholic Reporter*, 7 February 2003, <http://www.findarticles.com/cf_dls/m1141/14_39/97729843/p1/article.jhtml> (29 November 2003)

¹³⁰ Most of those opposing denominations made a clear distinction between condemning government policy and supporting their soldiers and chaplains in combat. Generally there was good support for the troops.

bi-cultural status is one of a stress contrasting two worlds. One culture is a firearms wielding community with a large number of hunters and National Rifle Association (NRA) members; and the other may be a community which advocates peace and non-violent protest.

At present American military chaplains are non-combatants. They bear no weapon and usually have an armed chaplain assistant accompany them in combat situations. One might see this as an indication of the preference of the chaplain not to engage in the use of a weapon. This may not be the reality, especially since many of the Army chaplains have had prior military service before they entered the chaplaincy. The majority of chaplains have borne weapons in the past; and many hunt or fire weapons at their leisure. For example, Army Ranger, Staff Sergeant Jeff Struecker left Somalia a war hero for his participation in the events that led to the movie and book, *Black Hawk Down*.¹³¹ After his conversion he attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky and earned a Master of Divinity degree. He was later endorsed for the chaplaincy and went on active duty as an Army chaplain. This popularity as a war hero and now a chaplain earned him an invitation to be the grand marshal for the Gator Bowl parade in 2003, as well as numerous other civic speaking engagements. As a chaplain he does not carry a weapon, but his reputation as a combatant warrior gives him credibility with his men and enhances his popular appeal as a speaker.

Chaplains in America have not always been non-combatants. There is a history mentioned by Cox which extends to Chaplain Jonathan Frye who scalped Abenakis Indians in New Hampshire in 1725 and to Humwell M. Forgy who while on the battleship *Arizona*, December 7th, 1941, took command of a gun crew firing at Japanese planes. Forgy became known for the phrase turned to a popular song, "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition."¹³² Civil War chaplains were known to bear arms and even engage in combat. This history of bearing arms on occasion continued through the Vietnam War where a few chaplains carried

¹³¹ Joel B. Hannigan, "Black Hawk Down hero urges teams to trust Christ," Baptist News January 27 2003, vol.1 no 10:4.

¹³² Cox, 16.

weapons. A photo on the cover of a news magazine in 1966 showed a chaplain with a .45 caliber pistol and a fragmentation grenade hanging from his belt.¹³³ In response to the negative publicity, the Chief of Chaplains released a policy letter that encouraged chaplains to make statements and interviews only in the presence of a public information officer, reminded them of the traditional position of the Geneva Convention, and the importance to avoid unwarranted actions. Strangely, at this time the Chief of Chaplains didn't mention prohibiting the bearing of arms.¹³⁴

The Geneva Convention actually does not preclude a weapon for self-defense. Eventually, the reaction to the Vietnam era chaplain with the .45 colt pistol was to tighten the regulations about bearing arms. Current Department of the Army policy forbids the use of and training in the use of arms. Many chaplains face a struggle because of their prior service use of weapons, their desire to connect with the soldiers they serve, their lack of commitment to the justification of the non-combatant status on a philosophical basis and the desire for commanders to highlight the military background of their chaplains. By no means is this on-going debate on the non-combatant status of the American military chaplain concluded. It continues. The non-combatant doctrine may be viewed as a living doctrine, which may be altered pragmatically by situation, as the Department of Defense sees fit. With the nature of warfare envisioned in Iraq, chaplain's bearing personal arms for self-defense may become a reality, if not officially, unofficially. The common consensus among chaplains is that self defense may be justified and that the issue though resolved by Department of the Army may not be resolved in the minds of the chaplain.

In late 2003 the Army Chief of Chaplains, Major General David H. Hicks, had to send a letter to all major command chaplains in the United States Army, emphasizing the noncombatant

¹³³ Rodger Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace: The United States Army Chaplaincy 1945-1975* (Washington, D. C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains Department of the Army, 1977), 149.

¹³⁴ Venzke, 149.

status of the chaplain.¹³⁵ That this had to be done is a clear suggestion that there have been issues in Iraq related to chaplains bearing arms in the War on Terror. Embedded reporter Adam Lusher with a Brigade Combat Team reported that Chaplain Steve Hommel took up an M-16 weapon in April 2003 during a ten hour battle dubbed “The Battle of Moe, Larry and Curly.”¹³⁶ This matter, apparently resolved in Vietnam, appeared once again at the highest levels in the Army. The Chief of Chaplains August 2004 Newsletter explains.¹³⁷ In it Chaplain (MG) Hicks states that there had been serious consideration at the Department of the Army level to eliminate the noncombatant status for chaplains. Hicks states, “but in the end, after hard work and prayer, we retained our noncombatant status as chaplains.”¹³⁸ When chaplains begin to bear arms, soldiers and commanders will begin to see them as an actual combat asset in an emergency. To oppose this pragmatic position, no doubt advocated by commanders and some chaplains, would require a certain amount of courage on the part of the chaplain who wishes to maintain the traditional noncombatant status. The Chief of Chaplains for the Army exerted confrontational leadership at the highest level of the Department of the Army to retain this status for chaplains. Prophetic leadership requires the capacity to go toe to toe with the boss, the commander.

Warrior Ethos

Army Field Manual (FM) 22-100, the Army’s leadership manual speaks of the importance of moral character training for the soldier.¹³⁹ This emphasis on moral character occurs through a comprehensive focus on select Army values and intentional ethical leadership training. The Army values have an acronym, LDRSHIP. This stands for Loyalty, Duty, Respect,

¹³⁵ David H. Hicks to MACOM Chaplains, 4 September 2003, “Chief of Chaplains Policy Concerning Chaplains Bearing Arms,” Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Washington, D. C.

¹³⁶ Adam Lusher, “The 10-hour battle for Curly, Larry and Moe,” *News.telegraph.co.uk*, 13 April 2003 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2003/04/13/war213.xml&sSheet=/news/2003/04/13/ixnewstop.html>> (15 August 2004).

¹³⁷ “The US Army Chief of Chaplains Newsletter: August 2004, Department of the Army, Washington D.C.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ *FM 22-100, Army Leadership: Be, Know, Do* (Washington, D. C.: Headquarters Department of the Army, 31 August 1999).

Selfless-Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage. Over the past few years a new concept has been highlighted which is tangentially discussed in (FM) 22-100, but now it is growing in visibility across the Army. In the midst of war the Army wishes to focus on an ethos of war:

Warrior Ethos is the foundation for the American Soldier's total commitment to victory in peace and war. While always exemplifying Army values, Soldiers who live Warrior Ethos put the mission first, refuse to accept defeat, never quit and never leave a fellow American. They have absolute faith in themselves and their team. They are trained and equipped to engage and kill the enemies of the United States in close combat.¹⁴⁰

Warrior Ethos is becoming an overarching theme and doctrine for the United States Army. Its initial systematic introduction occurred Army wide in January 2004. Army Chief of Staff, General Peter Schoomaker approved this major change in the Army's training of enlisted and commissioned soldiers. Also approved was the Soldiers Creed reflecting an attempt to transform the nature of the United States Army into more of a warrior community.¹⁴¹ Every soldier: be he or she a cook, truck driver, medic, veterinarian or chaplain is a soldier first. Perhaps this very military ethos oriented posture was what stimulated vital debate over the chaplain's role as a combatant. Chaplains will be the ones who adapt Warrior Ethos to fit the long standing values and traditions of the Army.

Chaplains often are not a major part of such broad decisions of philosophical transformation within the Army. They may have an input and a voice, but the Army command makes the final decision, regardless of the advisory role of the chaplaincy. Such decisions may impact the health of families and soldiers positively or negatively. Either way, opportunities for chaplains to do the work of ministry are created whenever issues such as ethos or ethics come

¹⁴⁰ US Army TRADOC, "TRADOC Begins New Emphasis: Warrior Ethos, 27 November 2003, <http://www-tradoc.army.mil/pao/Web_specials/WarriorEthos/> (29 January 2003)

¹⁴¹ *Soldiers Creed: I am an American Soldier. I am a Warrior and a member of a team. I serve the people of the United States and live the Army Values. I always place mission first. I will never accept defeat. I will never Quit. I will never leave a fellow American behind. I am disciplined physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills. I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself. I am an expert and I am a professional. I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat. I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life. I am an American Soldier.*

into play. As an organization the chaplaincy is professionally reactive and shifts direction to fit into the Army's direction of movement. Just how the chaplaincy will respond to warrior ethos is still in question.

In the Army's culture, it would be difficult to disagree with such a concept as warrior ethos. Both the word *warrior* and *ethos* at face value paint a picture of the essence of what the Army is all about. How could a soldier have a problem with such a well crafted term? But, what does it really mean. What does "put the mission first mean?" Will it change current policies which allow for compassionate acts to help soldiers who have family problems? Will it mean longer deployments for single parents? Does "put the mission first" encourage turning an eye if an act accomplishes the mission at the expense of integrity? What does "never quit" or "absolute faith in themselves and their team" mean? Couldn't "never quit" be better stated as "know when to quit"? Does absolute faith in one's team imply anything? Other phrases such as "engage and kill the enemies of the United States in close combat" and "victory in peace and war" beg precise definition. What is "peace in victory" and how is it to be won? Will it be achieved through application of military force alone? Army chaplains must begin to sort through the implications of warrior ethos; undoubtedly this process has already begun with a significant amount of struggle. Now that warrior ethos has been accepted, chaplains will contribute through interpreting the concept in ways which provide care for their soldiers and families. For instance, would warrior ethos discourage or encourage an Abu Ghraib? Would warrior ethos engender a special concern and focus upon the families of soldiers, or not?

Concepts such as Duty, Honor and Country have been a part of the tradition of the Army from its inception; however, recent events, such as what happened to Private Jessica Lynch and the Abu Gharib criminal activity have pointed to a need to reaffirm core soldier values, such as warrior ethos.¹⁴² The thing that the conscientious chaplain must fear is that he or she might be

¹⁴² Chuck Crumbo, "Top General Promotes Warrior Ethos at Fort Jackson," *TheState.com*, 21 November 2003, < http://www.thestate.com/mld/thestate/contact_us/dispatch/7314953.htm> (29 November 2003).

expected to merge Kaplan's pagan ethos with the Army's newly adopted warrior ethos.¹⁴³ At first glance these two phrases seem similar, but if so, the Army will be troubled with continual dysfunctional and criminal behavior which may be prosecuted as war crimes. There must be a distinction between these two concepts. Such a hybrid ethos would be problematic for the chaplain and cause additional dilemma and tension. The Army chaplaincy would do well to draw a clear distinction between pagan and warrior ethos. In order to do so, the chaplaincy must act as advisors to commanders in the same way that the issue of non-combatant status was addressed. The chaplain must adopt Warrior Ethos and explain how it differs from Kaplan's ethical matrix.

Army Ethics

During the post Vietnam War era, issues of ethics and values became pervasive topics in the Army and in the chaplaincy as well. Part of this renewal of ethical focus and the increase of ethical instruction has been rooted in multiple scandals. The March 1968 My Lai massacre and the follow-up Army inquiry related to that massacre determined that Army standards of ethics were poor. It was at this point that a revolution began in the training of the officer corps.¹⁴⁴ The revolution continued to transform the military culture even with scandal after scandal into the late 1990's. This transformation in training was more than an articulation of the just war doctrine or the law of war, which in the past was the prominent ethical discourse. The new focus was on character development and it addressed each incidence of moral breakdown.¹⁴⁵

The problems in the 1990's were mainly related to ethnic extremist violence and sexual crimes and other misuses of power by leaders. On the 31st of October 1995 a sniper killed a soldier at Ft. Bragg. Later that year three other soldiers were charged with the murder of an

Gen. Schoomaker highlights the fact that the members of the 507th Maintenance Company, which took a wrong turn and was ambushed in Nasiriyah, Iraq on March 23, also failed to exhibit this "warrior ethos." They were unprepared to engage the enemy, even if they were maintenance workers. Every soldier is a warrior: doctor, chaplain, lawyer, cook or supply clerk.

¹⁴³ Kapla

¹⁴⁴ John W. Brinsfield, "Ethics and the Amgry Man," *Military Chaplains' Review* (Summer 1980), 45-59.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

African-American couple in North Carolina.¹⁴⁶ In each of these cases extremist ideologies were involved. The Nazi flag, white supremacy and such themes were discovered in the background of the soldiers who committed these crimes and others. Then in 1996, twelve soldiers were charged with sexual crimes committed at Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland. Several of these soldiers were drill instructors with responsibility over female recruits going through advanced individual and basic training. These charges included fifteen counts of rape and forty-eight related charges against twenty-one recruits. Other charges were filed in Germany against two drill sergeants. Additional charges also occurred at Ft. Bliss, Texas and Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. Between 1994 and 1998, there were also numerous other criminal incidents of indiscipline and honor code violations in the service academies.¹⁴⁷

These scandals were not alone associated with new soldiers or officers in a training environment. There were also complaints against senior officers regarding improper conduct. One fifth of the one-hundred-twenty-five complaints were investigated and most of those leaders suffered disciplinary action. The larger issue was that many of the officers went away without any criminal punishment at all. The criminal acts ranged from misuse of government property to sexual misconduct.¹⁴⁸ Chaplains in particular seemed vulnerable to scandal. A few chaplain colonels have been incarcerated at the Army's Disciplinary Barracks in Leavenworth, Kansas over the past few decades.¹⁴⁹ These moral failures and scandals resulted in efforts to upgrade training.

From the Army's perspective, the scandals made the need for ethical instruction all the more crucial. Earlier in the eighties chaplains had been eliminated from teaching positions in many Army schools, but after the scandals, they were returned. Chaplains soon existed as

¹⁴⁶ Brinsfield "Army Values and Ethics: A Search for Consistency and Relevance," <<http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/98autumn/brinsfie.htm>> *Parameters: US Army War College Quarterly* (Autumn 1998), 69-84.

¹⁴⁷ Brinsfield, 5.

¹⁴⁸ Brinsfield, 5.

¹⁴⁹ Crimes such as miss-use of government property and crimes of a sexual nature.

resident ethics instructors in all the branch service schools, such as infantry, armor, quartermaster and transportation. Although the curriculum was simple, more proscriptive in content, the chaplains also presented case studies in small groups and at most senior leadership schools offered well-developed and popular courses on ethics. The primary content for soldiers was an articulation of the traditional values of the Army and a development of practical skills for living for younger soldiers. In these schools the chaplain is also responsible for additional duties such as suicide prevention training, crisis intervention and family life curriculum. In addition to their primary mission as providers and performers of religion, chaplains took on this function as spokespersons for ethics, and the Army's values. Today, all of the branch Army schools have chaplains teaching some curriculum in ethics. As advocates for ethics in such institutions, chaplains have taken on a seer-like role and will speak boldly as instructors on a range of issues. Their influence maintains and nurtures an ethical military culture by advocating many values such as integrity and service to the Army. This is indeed a prophetic role for the chaplain. He or she is able to impact the thought of officers at all levels.

Brutality

The brutality of war leads to the brutalization of character of all involved, and it puts the chaplain in a position that may result in confrontation with command. Two key books published in the past decade hint at a justification for the Army's attempt to establish a warrior ethos which stresses character training through ethics. Jonathan Shay's *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* argues that without an ethic which takes into account the negative consequences of brutalizing an enemy, the American soldier is doomed to continual destructive post traumatic stress disorders (PTSD). The dehumanizing of an enemy impacts the soldier; the betrayal of what is right leads to harmful effects upon the conscience. Shay interviewed thousands of Vietnam veterans and concluded that the dehumanizing of the enemy was responsible for much of the trauma he faced in vets in Veterans Administration (VA) centers.

Chaplains are tasked to give advice to commanders. This must imply the chaplain's complete frankness of communication with leaders, in words which often occur behind closed doors, face to face. If one remembers the prophets of the Old Testament, one may be surprised at their boldness of communication to their Kings, who had the power of life and death in their hands.

Chaplains should emulate the boldness of a Jeremiah who speaks such words:

Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of his oppressor
the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the
alien, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent
blood in this place.¹⁵⁰

In this instance the chaplain speaks up for the exploited and oppressed. In much the same way, the chaplain should remind the commander of his or her obligation to care for the innocents, protect the victims of war, make some consideration for the single parent soldiers and protect the rights of captive enemy combatants. It is this sort of prophetic communication that the chaplain in the Army must employ, if he or she is to be faithful to the call. This bold engagement does present another tension for the chaplain.

Younger chaplains may be intimidated by such responsibility, unable to go toe to toe with a commander who is typically much wiser and experienced. Chaplains often speak in a staff meeting reminding the leadership of the human costs of actions proposed. Ultimately, the commanders make decisions, decisions which may harm or injure innocents, but also may preserve lives. The chaplain will have spoken his or her piece as a staff officer; and when the command decision is made the chaplain stands with the commander to be cursed or praised. That is a great source of tension. It does not mean that the chaplain can wash his or her hands of the decision; but it does mean that the chaplain has presented advice in accordance with his or her duty. The chaplain as part of the system has provided what was called for, but now surrenders to the decision of the commander. There is little room for public debate once the commander makes the decision. To eliminate the chaplain from this environment, because the decision may result in

¹⁵⁰ Jeremiah 22:2 from the New International Version.

the loss of life or discomfort or trauma, would be tragic. The system without the presence of a chaplain would be less humane, less ethical. Chaplains assume a voice of compassion in an authoritarian system and pragmatic system. Their influence is essential.

Dave Grossman argues that the attempt to dehumanize the enemy by making him a target is problematic. In *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* Grossman finds that soldiers who killed without dehumanizing an enemy had better recovery rates than those soldiers who viewed the enemy in a desensitized and dehumanized way.¹⁵¹

It is so much easier to kill someone if they look distinctly different than you. If your propaganda machine can convince your soldiers that their opponents are not really human but are “inferior forms of life,” then their natural resistance to killing their own species, will be reduced. Often the enemy’s humanity is denied by referring to him as a “gook,” “Kraut,” or “Nip.”¹⁵²

Grossman interviewed veterans of the Vietnam War. He concluded that those soldiers who managed to establish emotional distance from their former enemies actually experienced many more psychological problems than the men who realized they killed a human being. Those who appreciated Vietnamese culture and yet had to fight should be contrasted with those who saw the Vietnamese as “less than animals.” They were not able to recover to the same degree.¹⁵³ The task of the chaplain in view of this research is to confront any dehumanizing of an enemy. The multiple benefit of this approach is obvious, fewer PTSD instances and reduced criminal activity and war crimes.

With recovery rates in mind, chaplains find themselves at odds on occasions with the almost natural human characteristic to dehumanize enemies. Terms such as “rag heads,” “A-rab” and other dehumanizing phrases are now part of the popular culture, and this contributes to soldiers’ looking at people in a less than a human way. These terms also become part of the

¹⁵¹ Dave Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1995).

¹⁵² Grossman, 5.

¹⁵³ Shannon E. French, *The Code of the Warrior: Exploring Warrior Values Past and Present* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 5.

military culture by default; and it falls on the chaplain to raise such issues to soldiers and commanders. The chaplain should advise the commander that such dehumanizing characterizations are harmful and may impact the effectiveness of the unit. The chaplain should suggest that any dehumanizing may contribute to criminal activity in combat to include murder of prisoners, harming of civilians and other atrocities. The chaplain does this as a staff officer in public or in private, face to face. If a commander persists in such activity or permitting it, the chaplain should, depending upon the seriousness, advise his chaplain supervisor. Whenever a chaplain goes above the head of a commander, there may be a price to pay. Whenever a chaplain neglects to go above the head of a commander on an issue of importance such as this, the chaplain pays the price with his or her own integrity.

PROPHETIC PRESENCE

The implications of urban combat are a challenge for the chaplain. The rapidly moving armored formations which saw such positive press coverage in the ongoing war in Iraq are not a part of peace keeping or peace enforcement operations. In peace keeping or peace enforcement the challenge is to create peace, to battle insurgency in the cities. The major battles are over, yet the method of winning peace has become the critical challenge. What is the function of the chaplain in a place like a Baghdad? In a staff meeting, if an American commander gives an order similar to the order which Yitzak Rabin gave to Israeli soldiers a few years ago, "Go in and break their bones," the chaplain has an opportunity to influence the commander's decision process.¹⁵⁴ The chaplain should give his or her view of what is right and wrong about such an action. The chaplain is obligated to speak out. But the commander decides. There is a very fine line between combat and law enforcement and excess. The chaplain raises the issue, questions the act, as advisor to the commander. Ultimately, the boss will determine the action to be taken, but it will have been done with the words of the chaplain ringing in the ear. To abide the suggestion of Cox

¹⁵⁴ Kaplan, 52.

and Zahn and remove the chaplain from the military would remove a voice that a commander needs to hear. It would remove the prophetic voice of the conscience of America's religious people and tradition, which the chaplain must firmly represent in the military bureaucracy.

The future expectation is that warfare will become not less savage with technology, but more savage. The expectation is that third world adversaries will employ sophisticated weaponry and tactics because they have no possibility of meeting American forces on an even basis.¹⁵⁵ Since they are unable to compete conventionally, they will attempt parity through any means possible. This includes use of suicide bombers, use of chemical weapons...anything that is possible.

American soldiers may defeat a traditional enemy on the battlefield, but how is this going to occur when the enemies are not soldiers, with similar discipline and professionalism? Are these people still warriors, legal combatants? Do they deserve treatment as prisoners of war, or can they be placed in Guantanamo, indefinitely, treated with borderline torture or executed when captured on the battlefield? It is precisely in scenarios like this that chaplains must be visible as a voice of wisdom and challenge for commanders and soldiers, especially in the targeting of civilian areas. The chaplains must be present in the process, because they as endorsed representatives of the churches of America, and they are expected to influence decisions which become in the final analysis, American decisions. Commanders are not required to follow the advice of the chaplain, but at least the voice of chaplains speaking for the innocent and guilty will be a matter of consideration in the planning and execution process. Chaplains don't make the battle decisions, but they surely can have input in the process. With this said, it must be the American churches who intervene on the larger moral issue of the justness of war. When a government declares that a certain war is just, it is the responsibility of the religious communities to also address the decision

¹⁵⁵ Kaplan, 128.

The American churches must influence foreign policy through action and involvement in the culture, and they must follow through with their prophetic responsibility in areas where the chaplains must be still or at least speak in a still voice. For a chaplain to go head to head in public against a commander on issues such as the relevance or just nature of a war would be professional suicide; and it would jeopardize the privilege to serve in the military institution. Chaplains who engage in such confrontation may make a momentary splash, but they sacrifice an important responsibility based upon their religious commitment to serve men and women in uniform. It would be easy to gain immediate media attention as a disgruntled chaplain. If a chaplain wanted to be a political activist he or she should have remained outside the institution. To stay in it means that there will be opportunities to impact the decision process of commanders prophetically. However, with this said, there are indeed occasions where a chaplain may see more value in speaking in public, with an understanding that the consequences may not be very savory. There are indeed times where a chaplain must go public, even to the media, but it is foolish to do so if all avenues have not been exhausted.¹⁵⁶ The chaplains aware of the My Lai atrocity should have gone public.

Zahn doubted that chaplains would accept the opportunity and obligation to bear prophetic witness.¹⁵⁷ He believed that the chaplain would refuse to speak out against the institution on behalf of the innocent, the powerless. To Zahn, the prophetic voice of the chaplain would have included public opposition to military policy and direct public confrontation with commanders. As evidence of the failure of the chaplain to confront, Cox quotes Father Daniel Byrne who justified the silence of a chaplain in the midst of war atrocity, "We do not debate the morality of the war in general or the morality of any particular war. Our job is to look after the spiritual welfare of the men."¹⁵⁸ Many chaplains would take issue with Byrne's statement, even if

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¹⁵⁷ Zahn, 63.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 85. quote from Patrick Burke, S. C. C. "Chaplains React to Massacre, *Boston Pilot* (December 27 1969) 85.

he was the senior command chaplain in Vietnam. Cox understood this comment to mean that the chaplain abrogated a responsibility to prophetic faithfulness. Chaplains must struggle with the morality of war. They must address issues of ethics. They must be engaged in the defining of a new warrior ethos which respects the virtues and values of religious and cultural diversity in the United States of America. They must be at the forefront of defining a distinct American warrior ethos rooted in the democratic and religious principles and traditions of the nation. To do less would be evidence of a lack of integrity on the part of the chaplain. It would be a shirking of the chaplaincy's call to be prophetic. Refusal to reflect or come to terms with the issue of war and morality does seem somewhat lacking in the Byrne statement. Army chaplains function much like the salt in Matthew 5:13. Some salt causes a reaction. It irritates as well as purifies. Other salt has lost its saltiness and has become useless.¹⁵⁹ The Army is healthier for the salt that irritates, and it is weaker for the salt that is tasteless.

CONCLUSION

Without the prophetic voice of a chaplain, the military decision process would be robbed of a perspective that represents the humanitarian and religious traditions of the nation. Not all chaplains have the fortitude to speak to their commanders with prophetic voice, but those who are responsible to their calling, will speak truth as they see it. A chaplain and a commander may communicate with frank clarity in private with vigorous words, and these discussions are not aired for popular consumption, but they do influence.¹⁶⁰ Some may term this failure to confront in public, accommodation. Others may view it as truth speaking to power in private. This is left up to the individual chaplains and those churches who endorse them. One would hope that the American churches mentor their chaplains to be bold and truthful and exhibit integrity by speaking words which rattle the conscience of leaders.

¹⁵⁹ *You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its saltiness...*, NIV.

¹⁶⁰ Bailey, 12.

Without the presence of the chaplain alongside commanders, American involvement in war would be less human. It is the chaplain who points to humanitarian considerations as a religious advisor. It is of particular importance that chaplains of integrity engage their energies to influence the Army's culture. The chaplain, as a representative of his or her distinctive community: Southern Baptist, Unitarian, Roman Catholic or Lutheran, must be free to represent a point of view which reflects their traditions faithfully. It would be tragic if American Army chaplains ever lost their freedom to exert a prophetic voice in the Army.

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Vita

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