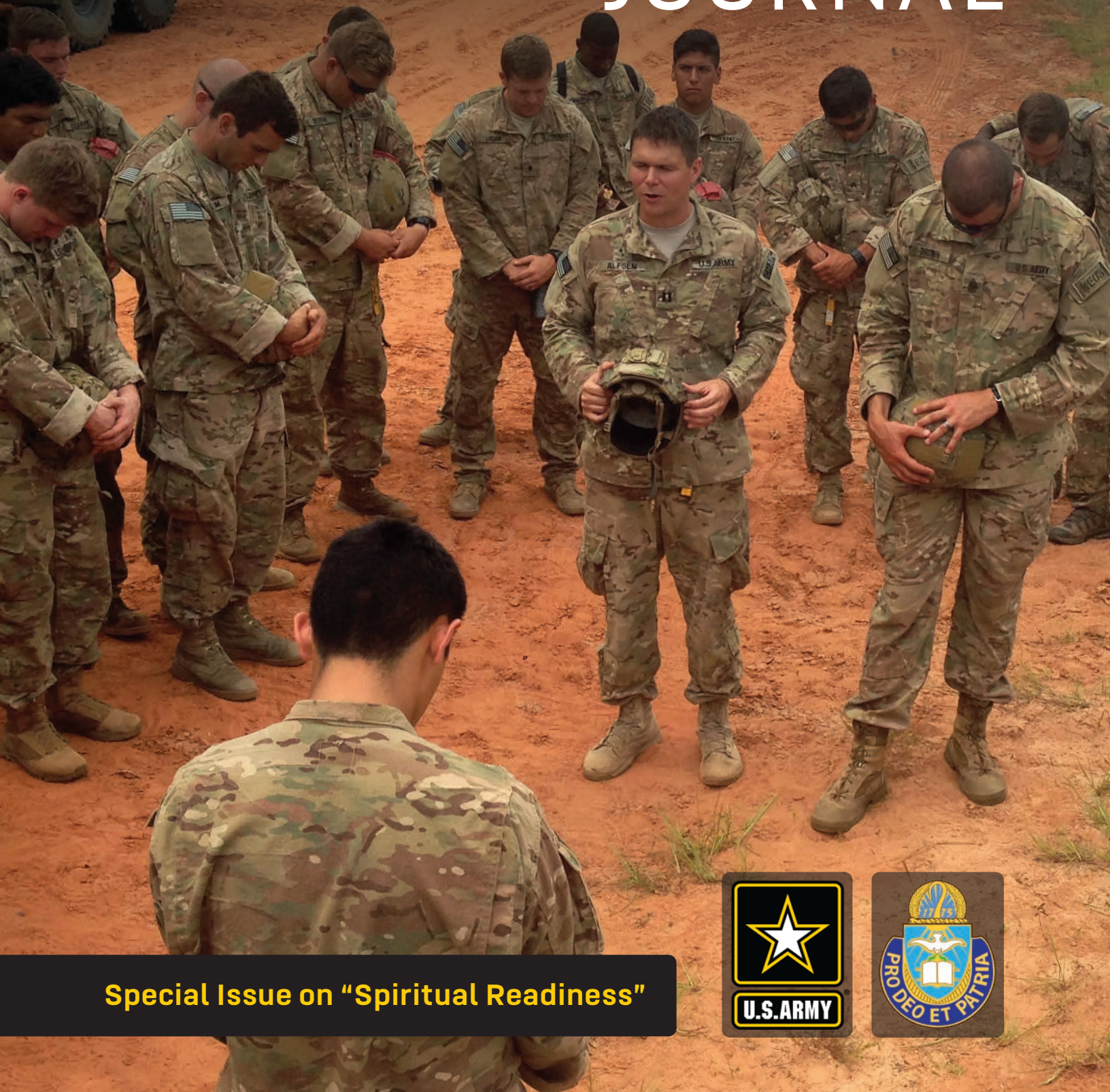


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CHAPLAIN CORPS JOURNAL



Special Issue on "Spiritual Readiness"



U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Journal

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Chief of Chaplains

Chaplain (Major General) Thomas L. Solhjem



Welcome to this special issue of the *U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Journal* addressing our Corps' mission to build Army spiritual readiness.

Army chaplains are both professional military religious leaders and professional military religious staff advisors (AR 165-1, para. 2-3b). Further professionalizing these two religious support capabilities, and the Corps' performance of its three core competencies—Nurture the Living, Care for the Wounded, and Honor the Fallen—is essential to sustaining the identity of the Corps. The *Journal* speaks to both of these professionalization challenges, as it honors the 246-year sacred legacy of the Corps' work in "Caring for the Soul of the Army."

The *Journal* itself is professionalizing as we move toward peer review of your submissions, and you can expect to see two issues a year beginning in 2022. Articles submitted to the *Journal* may be written from either a theoretical or a practical perspective. In addition to articles, the *Journal* will also feature book reviews and a new forum. The forum will provide space in each issue for in-depth and

engaged dialogue around issues that warrant sustained reflection and response, while a blog will provide space for real-time conversation about issues that matter to the Corps. The *Journal* will also act as a hub for resources and materials, including White Papers, Doctor of Ministry theses, and papers from Intermediate Level Education (ILE) and Senior Service College (SSC).

These changes to our *Journal* will support the continuing professionalization of the Corps. Chaplain Corps organizational transformation is improving overall Chaplain Corps integration, while posturing the Corps to continue getting better at delivering superior value to the Army as we provide religious support, in order to build Army spiritual readiness. The *Chaplain Corps Journal* will be a key asset on our transformational journey as an organization, because of your collegial contributions and your engagement with the new content.

For God and Country – Live the Call!

Chaplain Corps Regimental Sergeant Major

Sergeant Major Ralph Martinez



The *U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Journal* plays a crucial role in generating meaningful conversations at the strategic level, but it also shapes the Chaplain Corps' activities in the operational domain. The Journal is intended to equip Chaplains, Religious Affairs Specialists, Directors of Religious Education, and others with practical resources and with the critical skills necessary for developing practical resources.

This issue is especially important, as our Corps continues to explore new ways to build Army spiritual readiness, in accordance with chapter 10 of FM 7-22, *Holistic Health and Fitness (H2F)*. Spiritual readiness is the fourth domain in the H2F System, and FM 7-22 explains it like this on page 10-1: "Spiritual readiness develops the personal qualities a person needs in times of stress, hardship, and tragedy. These qualities come from religious, philosophical, or human values, and form the basis for character, disposition, decision making, and integrity. People develop their spiritual readiness from

diverse value systems that stem from their religious, philosophical, and human values. The spiritual readiness domain is inclusive and universally vital to all personnel no matter their background, philosophy, or religion. It applies to both religious and non-religious persons and concepts. Leaders play an active role in creating and fostering a climate that encourages individual spiritual readiness according to their respective worldviews, while at the same time communicating respect and dignity for diversity in a pluralistic setting."

Our Chaplain Corps mission is "to build Army spiritual readiness to deploy, fight, and win our Nation's wars, by providing reliable and relevant world-class religious support, as a unique element of the Army that is fully engaged across the full spectrum of conflict." Our *Chaplain Corps Journal* is intended to help the members of our Corps partner with one another and others, to become more reliable and more relevant with each passing day. I challenge each of you to invest in that process!

Surgeon General of the Army

Lieutenant General R. Scott Dingle



"It's time for us to synergize because people are first ... it's time for us to synergize so that we can be combat multipliers to ensure that our Soldiers and our Family members are getting a holistic approach that takes the mind, the body, the soul, the mental, the spiritual, the

physical into account for the overall readiness of our Soldiers and the entire Army Family."

https://www.army.mil/article/243664/leaders_receive_tools_to_facilitate_holistic_soldier_care



Rucking to Emmaus: Building Spiritually Strong People and Communities

by JoLynda Strandberg, Ed.D. and Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Cody Vest

Military life encompasses joy and challenge. The joy of serving a purpose greater than yourself, the chance to develop abiding bonds with others, and the opportunity to excel can be tempered with the stress of deployment, changes of duty station, long hours, combat stress, physical injury, and Moral Injury (MI). Why do some Soldiers and Family members grow spiritually through these challenges while others exhibit harmful behaviors? When faced with adversity and stress, some come through the challenge not only sustained, but also more able to handle life's struggles.

Spiritual growth is personally important to Soldiers and is also important to unit readiness.¹ Soldiers' harmful behaviors and struggles, such as substance abuse, MI, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), impact unit readiness in significant and detrimental ways. Equipping Soldiers with skills to effectively cope with adversity and the stressors of military life can positively affect readiness. Addressing harmful behaviors and struggles through spiritual development is one proven practical coping mechanism based in both the practical and the transcendent. A natural question for Religious Support (RS) arises: How can the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps expand the capacity for spiritual growth of individual Soldiers?

The Army Chaplaincy walks alongside Soldiers and Family members through struggles in a process of spiritual discernment. The journey on the road to Emmaus, described in Luke 24, depicts a revelation of Jesus to two disciples as they journeyed with Him.² Luke, one of the four Gospels in the New Testament along with its companion Acts, aligns the ministry of Jesus with the ministry of His followers who continued Jesus's

ministry after His death.³ The journey to Emmaus presented in Luke 24 is a model for a Christian's spiritual journey rooted in the presence of Jesus. The path to Emmaus requires faith and shows that God is revealed in experience and through community. Emmaus is the path each person treads throughout the lifelong process of forming faith, regardless of practiced religion. Paths to Emmaus are shaped by faith, community, and experience.

To explore paths to Emmaus, this article uses three points to illustrate the effectiveness of faith leaders using programs that are dual purpose, faith forming, and address struggles to support Soldiers and Family members. Firstly, James Fowler's Stages of Faith Development describes how human beings grow spiritually and the influence of this growth on core beliefs and values.⁴ Furthermore, current studies on the relationship between spiritual growth and adversity articulate measured, demonstrable, positive outcomes. Lastly, experiential outcomes and professional observations suggest practical applications.

Theoretical Framework: Faith and Spiritual Development

An operational definition of "faith" requires an understanding of spiritual development. Wilfred Cantwell Smith provides an inclusive description of faith:

At its best it has taken the form of serenity and courage and loyalty and service: a quiet confidence and joy which enable one to feel at home in the universe and to find meaning

in the world and in one's own life, a meaning that is profound and ultimate, and is stable no matter what may happen to oneself at the level of immediate event.⁵

Smith not only addresses specific characteristics of faith, but he also describes the stabilizing effect of faith on life. Army FM 7-22 also highlights the stabilizing effect of faith and describes the protective factors of the spiritual dimension:

Spirituality is often described as a sense of connection that gives meaning and purpose to a person's life. It is unique to each individual. The spiritual dimension applies to all people, whether religious and non-religious. Identifying one's purpose, core values, beliefs, identity, and life vision defines the spiritual dimension. These elements, which define the essence of a person, enable one to build inner strength, make meaning of experiences, behave ethically, persevere through challenges, and be resilient when faced with adversity.⁶

These definitions on their own do not fully address how spiritual development might address harmful behaviors. Additionally, understanding spiritual development provides context in terms of stages of growth and stages of life. Fowler's Stages of Faith Development objectively describes patterns of knowing and belief.⁷ Fowler's Stages of Faith Development is made up of six stages, but stages three through five are especially important in relation to combating Soldiers' harmful behaviors. Stage three, Synthetic-Conventional Faith, is faith identified with a religious institution, authority, or belief system.⁸ A viewpoint from outside of the person emerges in this stage, and it may coincide with late adolescence or early adulthood.⁹ Stages four and five focus

specifically on adult faith development. Individuative-Reflective Faith, stage four, centers on an individual taking personal responsibility for beliefs.¹⁰ The Individuative-Reflective Faith stage includes the reexamination of previously held beliefs and the capacity to independently judge worldviews.¹¹ Moving from the Individuative-Reflective Faith stage to the Conjunctive Faith stage, stage five, a person becomes a reflective thinker who understands truth from multiple perspectives and resolves apparent worldview paradoxes.¹² An externalized pursuit of self relative to a higher power characterizes later stages of faith development. Pursuing faith development as represented in these stages can help those struggling with stress and harmful behaviors through engaging existential questions that deepen self-awareness and spirituality. Fowler's Stages of Faith Development provides reference and context for faith-forming programs.

Adverse Challenge and Spiritual Growth in Recent Research

People are spiritual beings. The research of Dr. Lisa Miller reveals the innate spiritual capacity of all humans.¹³ Chaplain (Colonel) Robert Marsi also explores spiritual core development declaring an imperative to build an individual's spiritual core to protect against harmful behaviors impacting readiness.¹⁴ Recent research describes Post Traumatic Growth (PTG) as an outcome of specific faith-based programs designed to address harmful behaviors; Celebrate Recovery and Reboot Combat Recovery are programs in this vein.

PTG may be defined as positive personal growth experienced as a result of stress or struggle.¹⁵ PTG has important

implications for those who serve in the military. Research found the majority of veterans, 50.1%, reported PTG in relation to a traumatic event,¹⁶ but that this percentage, 72%, was even higher for veterans diagnosed with PTSD.¹⁷ The independent factors of purpose, religiosity, and connectedness contributed to PTG.¹⁸ The independent factors of faith and spirituality provided protection against the negative behaviors associated with PTSD while being related to PTG. Therefore cultivating purpose, connection, and spirituality related to trauma or struggles is key to meaningful RS.

Those suffering from PTSD may also experience MI. MI is the consequence of violating deeply held beliefs, which may cause feelings of shame and grief.¹⁹ The research of Harold Koenig et al., indicates religious involvement for veterans and active duty members, when controlled for other factors, reveals a significant inverse correlation to MI.^{20 21} Therefore, opportunities for spiritual development and religious involvement are salutary to growth through the challenges of military life.

In addition to MI and PTSD, substance abuse is increasingly a concern for Soldiers and Family members. Research focused on the effects of spirituality and substance abuse provides important data on recovery. Studies by Betty Jarusiewicz and Elizabeth Brown et al., find links between spirituality/faith and increased sobriety and decreased heavy drinking.^{22 23} Anthony Brown et al., find spirituality serves as a significant component in a person's confidence to resist substance abuse.²⁴

In addition to the positive effects of spirituality on overcoming challenges, small community-based groups provide distinct benefits. Research suggests that small, cohesive groups effectively create

community, assist in spiritual growth, and provide a safe learning experience.²⁵ Our professional experience echoes this finding: small community engagement groups that are focused around specific struggles can provide a fertile environment to both build community and develop spirituality.

Experiential Outcomes

Spiritual and religious interventions targeting specific challenges, like stress, PTSD, and substance abuse, can provide opportunities for spiritual development leading to positive outcomes. A successful intervention both develops faith and addresses harmful behaviors. Content can be tailored to location and environment in meaningful ways. Spiritually grounded programs such as Celebrate Recovery, Reboot Trauma Recovery, and faith-

based deployment support groups serve as practical paths that address life struggles while simultaneously forming and growing participant faith. Walk to Emmaus is a non-denominational Christian program that begins with a three-day experience that is followed by small group faith formation. The program is based in the precepts we just described. Challenge-based and faith-developing programs provide participants an opportunity and a safe space to discern and claim personal faith amidst personal difficulty.

Developing a community of support for Soldiers and Family members can be critical. This community can take a number of forms; here we discuss two roles: the importance of the relationship between the Soldier and their Family members, and the importance of the Army Chaplain. Fellowship opportunities

that include children and other Family members can provide and promote meaningful connection between a Soldier and their Family members. The role of the chaplain is necessarily a little more involved when it comes to integrating support at different echelons. Operating under an integrated religious support effort enhances chaplain, leader, and patron engagement within programming. For instance, chaplain assets at the installation can provide continuity for such programs while allowing division asset chaplains to engage as mission allows. This can create a unified RS effort by providing effective and engaging programs that equip Soldiers to properly address harmful behaviors and stress. Another element of command engagement is to obtain command sponsorship of the programs with direct fiscal support by the Division Commander, negotiated by the Division Chaplain.



Thematic Indicators

Successful RS programs indicate growth that can be described by Fowler's Stages of Faith Development. The exploration of faith within the context of struggle can be described by features in Fowler's Individuative-Reflective and Conjunctive Faith stages.²⁶ Based on our professional military experience, three key themes—path, context, and faith family—describe the effectiveness of faith-based programs that address stress and harmful behaviors such as Celebrate Recovery, Reboot, and Walk to Emmaus.

The path of faith and healing connects participants with similar struggles while creating supportive community. The examination of personal beliefs and respect for other views encourages groups to address personal struggle. Such interaction reflects both the Individuative-Reflective Faith stage and the Conjunctive Faith stage characteristics.²⁷ Responsive leadership and safe environments encourage growth along the path of faith and healing. This responsive leadership can support the exploration of existential truth in personal terms, providing an opportunity to create meaning. Shared experiences can provide participants with opportunities for open-minded collaboration, which can be fertile soil for spiritual development. The path of faith and healing thrives in spaces of routine and safe physical space. This predictability and safety provides room for participants to grow and develop in their capacity to address struggles. The consistency of group meetings marks personal paths in weekly routines, which allows participants the time to address personal faith and to address stressors.

The context of these interventions is important. Context refers to the elements

of mood and situation in faith-based programs that are directed towards negotiating and overcoming stress and harmful behaviors. A combination of worship and storytelling allows for direct faith development. Community programs centered around struggle provide support for healing through the building of relationships and increased self-awareness. These efforts are related to recovery capital; the support needed to heal and overcome harmful behaviors.²⁸

In addition to path and context, faith family is significant to the effectiveness of programs that address stress and harmful behaviors. Faith family refers to connections and relationships built and sustained through the programs we have highlighted. The deep, close connections made in these programs can mirror supportive familial ties. Supportive relationships such as those with significant others, spouses, and children are also important to these programs. These individuals themselves need support; they can find solace in programming during instruction or fellowship. Programing focused on school-aged children, such as that provided in Celebrate Recovery, can allow for topic exploration in appropriate ways. Experiencing healing and faith development as a part of an intimate group builds cohesive community and supports recovery in meaningful ways.

Programs, like Celebrate Recovery, Reboot, and Walk to Emmaus, which address specific stressors and/or harmful behaviors in the context of faith, are in keeping with the broader mission of the Army. These programs seek both to build strong spiritual communities, and to build the capacity of individuals within those communities to cope with stress and harmful behaviors. Connection with others and community building

require responsive leaders who meet participants where they are, encourage community, and model personal growth. The role of the facilitators is key to the effectiveness of small group, community-building programs.

Reflection

“Path” and “context” are central to creating small groups focused on both faith and capacity to deal with stress and harmful behaviors. Each person's faith journey is individual, but community is also important to spiritual growth. These realities parallel scripture, and specifically the road to Emmaus. In an Army community, a journey of faith may mirror a Soldier's long march that requires strength and determination to finish. Each person's ruck to Emmaus will be unique because each person's experiences, and self are individual. At the same time, their paths to Emmaus may be similar, because each traverses a path of authentic spiritual growth with the support of a community of like-minded individuals.

RS professionals walk alongside Soldiers and Family members on their paths to Emmaus. It is essential to partner with and to identify effective paths for Soldiers as they discover, name, and claim their spiritual selves. PTG may result when individuals are prioritized in the context of struggle and building community to effectively address spiritual development.²⁹ Furthermore, individual Soldiers who have a developed spiritual core support the Army's need for spiritually ready Soldiers, and protects those individuals against harmful behaviors that diminish unit readiness.³⁰

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Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Cody J. Vest is a native of Scott Depot, WV. In 2002 Chaplain Vest graduated from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary with a Masters of Divinity degree and returned to active duty as a chaplain, endorsed by the Southern Baptist Convention. In 2014 Chaplain Vest graduated from Webster University with an M.A. in Marriage and Family Therapy. Chaplain Vest's military education includes: AMEDD Officer Basic Course, Chaplain Officer Basic Course, Chaplain Captain Career Course, ILE, Brigade Chaplain Course, Family Life Course, Airborne and Air Assault. Chaplain Vest has been married for 25 years to the former Jennifer Hardin, from Saint Albans, WV. They has three children: Emily (19), Benjamin (16) and Abigail (13).

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Mosaic Ministry: A Model of Inclusive Ministry to Special Needs Families and Marginalized Populations in the Army Community

by Chaplain (Colonel) Brad Lee

“If it weren’t for the fact that I’m a chaplain and actively support this chapel service, my family and I would not attend this chapel.” I said those words to our pastoral team several months ago expressing my frustrating experience of attending chapel with a special needs child. I announced that my wife and I would employ a Sunday-on/Sunday-off game plan to manage our special needs son, which was an increasingly challenging and overwhelming experience during chapel services. Up to that point, we faithfully attended every Sunday. I was active in each service while my wife chased our special needs child in the back of the sanctuary or outside. COVID-19 safety measures had temporarily eliminated childcare. Typically, partway through the service I would make my way to the back of the sanctuary to relieve my wife so that she could listen to the sermon without distraction. I often arrived, however, just in time to see her pull out of the parking lot. This pattern necessitated our plan to alternate Sundays, allowing one of us to attend and participate in chapel with the other staying home to care for our son. COVID-19 has challenged all families but has highlighted the need to care for a significant and under-resourced segment of the chapel population: special needs families.

The Data

At the beginning of Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, approximately 48,000 Service members (SM) had a Family member enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) across the Army. Almost 59,000 Family members are enrolled in the

EFMP.¹ A number of Soldiers have more than one Family member in the EFMP. Privacy laws prevent access to specific data that delineates the categories that those numbers represent. EFMP enrollment represents everything from an adult with asthma to a child with a dual-diagnosis of Down syndrome and autism. Some EFMP diagnoses are medical, while others are behavioral. Some are temporary and resolve over time or with treatment, while others last a lifetime and can be a significant struggle for both the individual and families. Autism is prevalent, 1 in 58 children are diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum.² Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, Attention Hyper-Active Disorder (ADHD), and muscular dystrophy make up a significant portion of the special needs world. Caring for Army Families who have someone with one of these diagnoses represents a significant portion of the time and resources of EFMP. This overlooked, if not marginalized, group represents a burgeoning opportunity for chapel ministry. In fact, nationally only about 10% of families with a special needs child attend church.³ We can surmise that number to be similar across the Army community, and thus, that it represents the desperate need for 0a ministry to those with special needs, what I call Mosaic Ministry.

The Need

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the challenges of raising a special needs child. From telehealth appointments to virtual school, many families struggle to adapt to the reliance on technology required by social distancing practices. Worse

yet, some special needs children have exhibited maladaptive behaviors and in some cases even regressed in their diagnosis.⁴ Social distancing measures have been nearly impossible for some children to maintain for reasons related to their diagnosis. Other special needs children have suffered greatly from the lack of social interaction necessary for their own development and progress.⁵ As chapels reintroduce in-person worship services, the lack of childcare presents a new challenge to many families, including those with special needs children: What do I do with my child? Or, what do we do with our child? As with my family, the distractions created by the child make worshipping a frustrating experience. Some families navigating the so-called new normal have found effective strategies to attend chapel while others remain home. Lastly, this need to care for this population is not just about special needs children; marriages are at stake too. The divorce rate among those with a special needs child is estimated at 70-80%.⁶ From a risk-assessment standpoint marriages in these families are at great risk. Mosaic Ministry not only seeks to care for individuals with special needs, but also provides support to marriages and the overall family system as well.

The Chaplain Corps has a unique opportunity to revitalize Army chapel ministries by incorporating a ministry initiative that reaches this significant and marginalized segment of our Army Family. As COVID-19 restrictions continually change and emerge, we must adjust in order to close the gaps within our community. A significant element of this opportunity is empowering chapels to be a part of Mosaic Ministry. Special needs ministries are not new. They exist in a growing number of civilian churches and worship centers, but still

only represent a minority of ministry efforts. Furthermore, estimates suggest that barely 10% of those with a special needs child attend worship services.⁷ I am unaware of any current special needs ministries within the Chaplain Corps. Given the sheer number of special needs families represented by the more than 59,000 Family members enrolled within EFMP, this is a necessary, viable, and sustainable ministry opportunity.

The Vision

Mosaic Ministry is a renewed emphasis, increased sensitivity, and broader inclusion, into existing chapel services, to multiply the effectiveness and outreach of the overall chapel program within the Chaplain Corps. God's purpose when a special needs child enters a family is not always immediately apparent to the family. A special needs diagnosis, to varying degrees, can completely shift the structure and organization of the family. Tasks that were once normal and routine often become challenging and, in some cases, no longer feasible. For example, the simple practice of dining out for some special needs families is so overwhelming that it is easier to stay home. Other families struggle with guilt and shame related to having a special needs child, which can make public outings difficult. Even those who adopt a special needs child encounter circumstances that can challenge faith. The struggles of special needs families are real and ongoing. Many families and couples find themselves exhausted and exasperated as they navigate troublesome behaviors, medical appointments, and the internal dialogue of daily survival.⁸ Parenting is a challenging proposition, but special needs parents often struggle in particular ways with how to parent their child from day to day and even moment to

moment. Mosaic Ministry offers families the opportunity to worship in a way that accommodates their particular needs. The religious ministry professional's (RMP) personal connection with special needs families can embrace families in the particularity of their own experiences.

From my own Protestant Christian tradition, I draw inspiration from John 9:1-3, from the New Testament, "As he (Jesus) went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him'" (NIV). This passage of scripture addresses theological stigma passing from generation to generation. I have listened to stories of families whose experience is mirrored in this passage of well-intentioned people who misunderstand the struggles of raising a special needs child. People of faith have also offered me well-meaning but ultimately hurtful platitudes. Mosaic Ministry can bridge the gap between ignorance and pity to cultivate care and connection between special needs families and chapel congregations. The Chaplain Corps has the opportunity to step into the lives of these families and engage them with support, encouragement, and the opportunity to worship, in some cases, as they have never been able to before.

The Plan

In this section, I explore the plan to implement Mosaic Ministry that uses existing resources within chapel and military communities. I consider partnerships within the community that will embrace the true spirit of

collaboration across communities. The planning effort is the backbone of success to Mosaic Ministry.

PARTNERSHIP

I have personally engaged EFMP leadership at two major installations and found them to be incredibly willing to support a combined outreach effort to reach the community. I also discovered that the EFMP faces bureaucratic challenges to meet the needs of the Families that it serves. To further complicate matters, Service members often misunderstand the EFMP itself and under use it. Still worse, many Families embrace a negative view of the EFMP and attempt to avoid involvement, in spite of the requirement to complete EFMP screening. Many of those that work within the EFMP program express a desire to improve the overall image of EFMP to positively impact more Families.

The first step in planning for Mosaic Ministry is creating a partnership

between the chapel and EFMP to assess the population and potential avenues for ministry. EFMP cannot provide specific data on individual families but they are an information conduit into the lives of every Army Family enrolled in EFMP. Every installation or region has its own dynamics and culture. RMPs can develop positive collaborative relationships with local EFMP staff and leadership to open doors of understanding to the overall population. My own experience is that EFMP leadership welcomes the chance to extend opportunities that offer support to EFMP Families, especially ones that are community based and even encompass free exercise.

PARTNERSHIP EVENTS

EFMP has its own resources and capabilities to reach into the community. Partnering with them is, in effect, a ministry force multiplier. For example, a community outreach day focused

on connection and ministry to families with special needs can incorporate EFMP as both a partner and a resource. To be clear, any event must be voluntary to protect the privacy of EFMP Families. Many chapels have adequate space to conduct an indoor or outdoor event, as well as Chapel Tithes and Offerings Funds (CTOF) to provide necessary elements (food, drinks, recreational activities, etc.) for families to enjoy. EFMP provides a conduit of advertisement into the larger community. While the event focuses on families, it can include a collaborative presence and presentation of chapel ministries as well as EFMP capabilities and resources. This type of event could be a kick off to a Mosaic Ministry effort, an annual partnership event, or simply an outreach event to generate interest within the community. An event like this is the culmination of a chapel team and congregation that embraced the vision of Mosaic Ministry, and is a key element



in giving congregations the chance to form initial connections with special needs families.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is the most powerful avenue of assessment, marketing and reach into the lives of special needs families for Mosaic Ministry. There are countless Facebook groups within the military as well as the special needs community, many even by diagnosis, that offer incredible inroads into reaching and extending invitations to special needs families. The EFMP partnership is critical as in most cases they already have access into many of those domains. Additionally, EFMP appropriately manages their social media presence in a way that honors and protects the privacy of military families. Partnering with EFMP opens up avenues of approach into communities and families that our typical ministry efforts are not reaching. Lastly, and not overstated, is that this partnership and social media effort does not cost the ministry effort anything!

Another underused resource is the Public Affairs Office (PAO). Whether at the unit level or installation, the PAO is often interested in community efforts and good news stories. The PAO can be incredibly helpful in advertising a Mosaic Ministry initiative and may be willing to highlight a collaborative community event. Again, this resource is not only available and accessible, but it is free to the ministry as well.

SPECIAL FORCES

Chapel congregations are the cornerstone of Mosaic Ministry, and those that embrace this vision must equip themselves with sufficient numbers of volunteers who have specialized training. As the vision for this ministry takes root, volunteers must be identified

who are willing to be trained and serve. I should also point out that many chapels already have special needs families attending who understand this ministry and can serve as vital resources for it. By design, this ministry effort starts “at home,” and broadens out into the larger special needs community.

Through partnership with EFMP, volunteers could receive training on the more common diagnoses they may encounter in chapel services and strategies for behavior management. In addition to the necessary background checks, volunteers would be equipped to engage with special needs individuals in an appropriate, compassionate, and hospitable manner. While most individuals will be children, there are adult dependents with special needs. Compassion and a willingness to connect with special needs children and their families are vital to the success of this ministry.

MEDICAL SUPPORT

The medical community is a critical resource on every installation or in nearby communities. A significant concern to some special needs families is readily available medical care. Individuals in EFMP have a variety of medical diagnoses with both long and short-term implications. For example, children with leukemia and children with epilepsy need varying types of medical considerations in a worship service. Many medical professionals volunteer within their chapel communities and Mosaic Ministry is an opportunity that would no doubt interest many that enjoy working with special needs children. Having volunteer medical personnel in place would mitigate the concern for many special needs families that fear a medical emergency occurring outside of the home. Some chapels already have

medical personnel in their congregations who may be willing to assist if their services were needed. This collaborative effort of Mosaic Ministry with any chapel community complements and highlights the Chaplain Corps’ collaboration with the medical community.

Mosaic Ministry In Action

The coordination, collaboration, and planning necessary to bring Mosaic Ministry to fruition can take months. Make no mistake; this ministry effort requires significant buy-in, commitment, and most importantly: time. Once all of the prerequisite elements are in place, the moment to launch Mosaic Ministry arrives.

FIRST CONTACT

Hospitality is a critical element of Mosaic Ministry that requires no specific training but simply needs intentional effort and sensitivity. Those charged with warmly greeting chapel attendees should be cognizant of families who might want to use the program Mosaic Ministry. Effective greeters will let families know, for example, “We have a Mosaic Ministry for special needs families” as opposed to, “Do you have a special needs child?” The intent is to offer open-ended information versus a direct question that could be embarrassing or awkward for families. Printed and visual information that highlights Mosaic Ministry should be readily available. Consistently announcing Mosaic Ministry and providing regular updates in the bulletin will keep congregations both aware of and informed about ministry success and needs.

GAME ON!

The aspect that sets Mosaic Ministry apart is that each special needs individual is assigned a Buddy team, which consists of two volunteers,

freeing their family to focus on worship. Ideally, consent to participate in Mosaic Ministry occurs ahead of time. This ensures parental consent, a necessary assessment of the child's unique needs, and familiarization between the child and the assigned Buddy team. In other cases, families may show up willing to engage with Mosaic Ministry on the spot. Each trained member of the "Special Forces" stands ready to engage families by providing them with an overview of Mosaic Ministry, describing the safety measures in place, and discussing the backgrounds of medical personnel present at that service who are part of Mosaic Ministry. Most importantly, team members gain a thorough introduction to the child or individual with special needs and gain trust and confidence of both parent and child. In most cases, the team members would ask to sit with the child/individual. This, of course, includes agreed upon consent to participate in Mosaic Ministry, whether this occurs prior to the service or on the spot. The intent is that the team members' focus is on the child while the rest of the family is free to worship without distraction. Over time, and depending on the individual's diagnosis and specific needs, the goal is for team members to care for the child in a way that allows the family to focus on worship. This may include sitting with the child alongside their family, allowing the child to explore the campus as they desire (this is especially helpful and needed with certain diagnoses), or accompanying the child to join children's church or even the nursery with additional supervision. Team members must remember that their primary focus is to be present in their caregiving role rather than actively participating in the worship service. This highlights the crucial necessity for a solid group of team members who can rotate from week-to-week to prevent ministry burnout.

CHILDCARE

COVID-19 has affected childcare ministries in chapels across the globe. As guidance changes and develops, chapels must adapt their ability to provide childcare during worship services. In some cases, the inclusion of special needs children within existing childcare settings is optimal and I would argue could be the best-case scenario. For the longest time, our son was included in the childcare program. This was invaluable for his social development and exposure to appropriate behaviors. Such inclusion however, may not always be possible, may be temporary, or last only until the child transitions out of a structured childcare setting. Flexibility and adaptability are part and parcel of Mosaic Ministry; in some cases, this openness may mean chapel volunteers will receive specialized training in how to care for special needs children, or ensuring that childcare workers have had such training prior to employment. Some childcare agencies that contract with the military helpfully include such specialized training. In other cases, special allowances will be necessary regarding age and/or ability. Our son technically aged out of childcare at our last duty station, even though his cognitive ability was akin to that of a toddler. Communicating with childcare staff is paramount in ensuring that their training is commensurate with the specific diagnoses of those that participate in childcare as part of this ministry initiative. Ultimately, Mosaic Ministry seeks to provide safe and quality care for children so that their families can worship freely.

SMALL GROUPS

The efficacy of small group ministry has stood the test of time in both chapels, civilian worship centers, and communities in general. Small group ministry could include a group focused

on special needs families/couples. A caveat is that some special needs Families desire might shy away from a group specifically focused on special needs. However, many families struggle with the demands of a special needs family member and could find great help and support in a collective group that understands and relates to their unique challenges. This focused ministry can be catered to meet the collective needs of any chapel community. Furthermore, leadership for this small group effort does not necessarily have to come from an individual or couple with a special needs family member, but can simply be chapel members that embrace the vision for Mosaic Ministry. Using the partnership with EFMP could reach special needs families who are initially more interested in small group involvement than attending chapel. Thus, the Mosaic Ministry small group effort would become an outreach effort and a conduit of connection with families who may eventually attend a chapel service.

Expanding Horizons

Mosaic Ministry focuses on expanding chapel ministry to a specific and marginalized group within the Army Family, and it certainly aligns with the Army Chief of Staff's priority, "People First."⁹ Some of these Army Families already attend our chapels but many do not. Mosaic Ministry will not capture the interest of all EFMP or special needs families, but what if it reached 10% of that current population? What if that 10% were represented in each chapel or included just three to five families that their Mosaic Ministry was focused on? What if every chapel service included one individual in a wheelchair? How would that revitalize chapel ministry? I submit that even though Mosaic Ministry focuses on a small target group,

the potential impact reaches far beyond special needs families themselves. Consider the medical staff members, who may or may not attend chapel, but could find meaning in their own spiritual development and nurture through the simple act of volunteering.¹⁰ The heart

of Mosaic Ministry is inclusion. Chapel communities willing to risk the time, energy, and resources necessary to embrace and execute Mosaic Ministry will broaden their reach and impact into other marginalized sectors of our communities. Diverse individuals,

couples, and families have experienced isolation, marginalization, and even discrimination in some cases, will find a welcome invitation to a chapel that participates in Mosaic Ministry.

Chaplain (Colonel) Brad Lee currently serves as the Command Chaplain for the 311th Signal Command (T), Fort Shafter, Hawaii. He has also developed a presentation called “The Special Needs Marriage,” which he will present at the American Association of Marital and Family Therapy (AAMFT) 2021 annual conference. Chaplain Lee and his wife, Lori, have been married for 30 years. Together they have six children; their fifth child, Kaydan (8), was born with Down syndrome and later diagnosed with autism.

Chaplain Lee and his wife, Lori, have been married for 30 years. Together they have six children; their fifth child, Kaydan (8), was born with Down syndrome and later diagnosed with autism. Chaplain Lee’s first book “Walking with Kaydan: A Journey of Faith, Struggle, and Hope through the World of Special Needs,” will be published in the summer of 2022.

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An Army Chaplain and Suicide Ideation: Charting a Path to Spiritual Readiness

by Chaplain (Captain) Daniel Ude Asue

Suicide is a significant threat to individuals within the military and to the military as an institution. Chaplains have a unique role to play in engaging with people who may face that threat. The Department of Defense reported that 498 Service Members across all military branches died by suicide in 2019. Out of these, 114 were active-duty Army, indicating an upward increase from 84 Service Members in 2018; a record 30% increase.¹ This public health issue is clear in the respect that the number of people dying by suicide is measurable, but preventing these deaths has proven far more difficult. The Psychological Health Center of Excellence cites the 2017 Department of Defense Suicide Event Report to argue that “Suicide mortality among active-duty service members ... [is] very difficult to predict.”² This paper explores suicide ideation and the role that a chaplain can play in reducing suicide risk factors among Soldiers.

The Army chaplain is charged with providing pastoral care and is entrusted with confidentiality, which “is an essential capability of the Chaplain Corps, a key part of nurturing the living.”³ As such, an Army Chaplain should constantly improve ways of accompanying Soldiers in their trying times. Some chaplains are a part of the battalion Wellness Team and spearhead spiritual readiness efforts. An Army battalion Wellness Team is often composed of the brigade psychologists, clinical social workers, and chaplains. Psychologists administer tests to diagnose Soldiers’ and their Families’ psychological, emotional, or behavioral issues as well as to develop and carry out treatment plans for them. Clinical social workers provide mental health counseling and assist Soldiers and their Families to

endure and rise above their daily challenges. Chaplains offer quality spiritual counseling, guidance, and advice to Soldiers and their Families. Uniquely, chaplains are usually the members of this Team who are with the Soldiers in the field, during exercises, and on their range rotations. Chaplains engage with Soldiers, especially in their difficult moments, by sharing their stories and hearing their needs in a confidential setting.

The aim of this paper is not to examine the psychological causes of suicide, but rather to explore how a chaplain can be helpful during difficult moments. At the end, the paper lays out the threefold spiritual-oriented-focused approach developed by Bill O’Hanlon,⁴ a therapy he calls “Solution-Oriented Spirituality,”⁵ as a tool for chaplains to use.

Army Spiritual Readiness and Suicide Ideation

Through deeper involvement in the daily lives of Soldiers and their Families, chaplains are able to build spiritual readiness by fostering resilience. The phrase, “spiritual readiness” or “spiritual resilience” may evoke traditional connotations of religion; however, these terms are both interconnected and separate. Army doctrine identifies the significance of spirituality for holistic health: “Spirituality is often described as a sense of connection that gives meaning and purpose to a person’s life. It is unique to each individual. The spiritual dimension applies to all people, whether religious and nonreligious.”⁶ Spirituality is the inner world of a person.⁷ A chaplain explores that inner world to help Soldiers and their Families build their character

strengths in the midst of adverse conditions. These conditions may lead to harmful behaviors such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, racism, and extremism, which the Chief of Staff of the Army General James C. McConville is trying to eradicate.⁸

To address these realities, Chaplain (Major General) Thomas Solhjem, Army Chief of Chaplains, has engineered the Spiritual Readiness Initiative program. This effort tackles the growing challenges of suicide, depression, substance abuse and misuse, behavioral addictions, and harmful behaviors that are increasing particularly among Soldiers ages 18-25.⁹ My article builds on this resiliency project and acknowledges an earlier work on suicide by Chaplain (Colonel) Shmuel L. Felzenberg, which focuses on methods of combating suicide among Army personnel by exploring “verifiably beneficial tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) worthy of implementation, as well as those worth avoiding.”¹⁰ This paper additionally suggests listening to Soldiers’ stories about suicide to identify the strengths within them.

Observed Trends and Themes¹¹

Studies on suicide suggest that a combination of events can lead people to get stuck and believe that ending their lives is the only option.¹² This section highlights seven recurring common themes that a chaplain may face in interactions with Soldiers who struggle with suicide ideations.

FAMILY/RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships within and outside of the family form a substantial part of human support systems.¹³ Some Soldiers struggle to connect with Family members and may have few friends with whom

they can share their problems. For other Soldiers, certain challenging events in their Families can trigger feelings of failure in their responsibilities to their Families and society. In these situations, the chaplain should seek to accompany them in their present reality and creatively lead them to see beyond the immediate situation.

The loss of a close family member could increase suicide ideation, especially during initial stages of grieving the loss. There is pain in being separated from a loved one. This is where a caregiver may experience a human life in two distinct ways: the outward and the inward. A person may appear to be all right but still be grieving with an emotional hurt. On example is a lady who would appear to be all right during the day but could not sleep at night because she remembered her cancer-stricken husband who she took care of for four years. She was very close to her husband so much so that his death brought her nightmares. She attempted suicide three times from drug overdose¹⁴ due to depression, which is characteristic of “melancholia.”¹⁵ This displays that listening to people tell their stories is very important. Every story is different.

BREAKUPS

Soldiers who suffer sudden breakups with their spouses feel rejected and are weighed down with sadness. Such situations may result in depressive crises that are directly connected with emotional pain, loneliness, and broken expectations. Sometimes the relationships are formed over a period of time, with a lot of emotional investments. Sometimes there is the sense of shame and failure when a relationship ends. Sometimes infidelity is involved, even leading to divorce. Whatever the situation, Soldiers experience real emotional struggles in the midst of such

chaotic moments. For a chaplain, this is not time for rational arguments, but it is a time for being truly present to offer compassion to the Soldier.

PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS

Studies show that, besides external factors, genetic predisposition can contribute to chemical imbalances that may contribute to depressive states, which in turn may result in suicidal ideations. For example, Noreen Goldman, et al. have identified a connection between stressors and genetic factors that can lead to depression.¹⁶ During complex situations involving depression, the best advice is for a chaplain to observe the possible stressors and, in collaboration with Behavioral Health, help the Soldier become aware of the stressors whenever they arise.

According to Neuman’s Systems Model a person’s reaction to stressors depends on the strength of the lines of defense.¹⁷ A human body is an open system that acts in reciprocity with both internal and external environmental pressures. Various aspects (variables) of a person can become stressed, namely, psychological, physiological, developmental, sociocultural, and spiritual domains. In crises, the line of defense becomes unreliable and coping abilities are reduced, which may affect mental health. Studies have correlated self-harm and suicidal ideation with concurrent physical and mental illnesses in people.¹⁸ The longer the pain endures, the more the danger looms.

CULTURAL CHANGE

Studies show that culture influences people’s thought patterns, and in relation to suicide, culture even plays a part in how they interpret events around them and respond to stressors.¹⁹ Not only does the Army draw from a multicultural society, but Army Chaplains also interact

with Soldiers who are undergoing a change in thought processes due to experiencing generational shifts or encountering other paradigms. Certain risk factors for suicide like depression, anxiety, and mental illness are common in all cultural groups. However, how people process such factors differs from one cultural group to another.

There also seems to be a cultural wave of not accepting responsibility but passing on the blame. Some Soldiers in crisis see themselves as victims and blame everyone else for putting them in those difficult positions. These individuals rarely see their own roles in the drama of their lives. They focus on what others have done rather than their own role in these interactions. The chaplain has to be careful not to appear judgmental but rather to listen attentively without interruption. Placing blame does not take away risk factors for suicide ideation. Hence, for mental health and suicide prevention services to be effective, they must be tailored creatively. They must address the challenges and needs of each individual's mindset while being aware of cultural influences on that mindset.²⁰

SELF-RECOVERY

A significant challenge for the Army is how to build and sustain spiritual resilience in Soldiers so that they experience fewer feelings of helplessness and hopelessness during crises. Even undergoing various batteries of psychological tests may not prevent problems from persisting. The persistence of these problems may lead to Soldiers becoming emotionally drained without self-resilience or the will to fight back; opioids usage or many other addictive behaviors to quench their pain may flow from that persistence. Risky behaviors may not display a conscious suicidal intent or suicidal ideation,

however such risky behaviors exist on a "spectrum [that] can lead to opioid-overdose deaths."²¹

Another danger is that people in such situations often do not have the necessary support network. When people have access to requisite resources and are involved in activities that they enjoy the danger of suicide goes down. According to Carol Wong, people need "community and [to] stay attached with their family ... and they will have more of a reason to live."²² To improve on the prevention and treatment of suicidal thoughts and behaviors, people need to establish their own risk factors before they can find coping skills. Several longitudinal studies have found stable predictors and risk factors for suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Coping mechanisms against suicide have also been similar over time. However, with changing conditions, therapists, counselors, and chaplains should continuously adapt their approaches to meet the individual needs of clients.²³

PUNISHMENT

Soldiers who are pending or undergoing punishment could also be at risk of suicide ideation. They may feel that their world is crumbling. They may experience a loss of hope because of their fear of being thrown out of the Army. The fear of being perceived as a failure could creep in as well. A gross sense of humiliation may push a Soldier to do anything to avoid being called a failure. Vikram Patel and Pattie Pramila Gonsalves "argue that the focus on preventing suicide must extend beyond prevention of suicide mortality to addressing the loss of hope that underlies each attempt to end a person's life."²⁴ In discussions of suicide prevention, a chaplain should not focus on the suicide ideation's epidemiology, its causes, but rather on approaches to prevention, action, and interventions.

UNFORGIVENESS/BITTERNESS OF HEART

Lack of forgiveness, accompanied by strong bitterness, can be a factor in suicide ideation.²⁵ Those who have a heavy heart may look for ways of venting their anger. Suicide then becomes a possible outlet. Those who felt neglected as children may harbor resentment towards their parents. Those who were abused as children may feel bitter that their parents did not protect them enough, and feel deeply hurt from abuse suffered at the hands of someone they trusted. Sometimes they feel their families do not care about them, and, if married, that their spouses do not understand their experiences of stress. Some may feel that a spouse is turning children against them. Where infidelity occurs, Soldiers could struggle to forgive. Some Soldiers would have sought divorce, but are afraid of its implications, such as alimony. Some may think of themselves as moral failures.

A Chaplain's Track to Facilitating Spiritual Readiness

In the midst of these problems, a chaplain's role is to give hope. Suicide results from a combination of factors, but there are also many ways to attend to the different facets of this issue. How is a chaplain going to attend to suicide ideation by giving hope? O'Hanlon recounts the story of a woman struggling with suicidal thoughts who called the psychologist Viktor Frankl at 3 a.m. Frankl listened patiently to why she wanted to commit suicide and persuasively argued against her reasons. She was not convinced but agreed to come see him the following morning at 9 a.m. On arrival, she told him that none of his arguments kept her alive

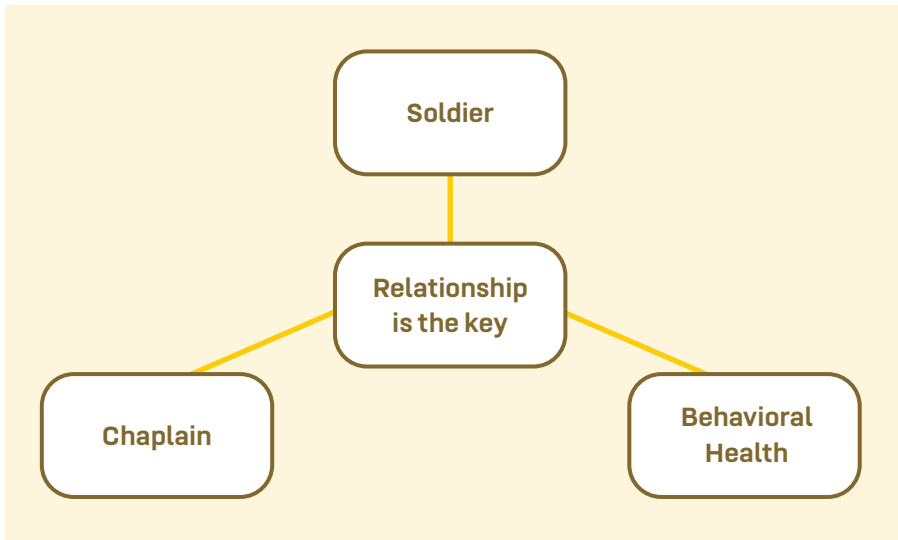


Figure 1: The Army Chaplain aims at establishing a healthy relationship with the Soldier and facilitating the same between the Soldier and Behavioral Health.

but his respectful and patient listening to her story in the middle of the night kept her alive. She decided to stay alive because there were still nice people in the world, like him; life was worth living.²⁶ Relationships are pertinent to building hope and increasing resilience against buffeting storms in life. One of the most significant things a chaplain can do in difficult situations is to be with a struggling Soldier, thereby giving hope and helping the person find reasons for staying alive.

To give hope, the chaplain must be aware of the distinct role of a chaplain in spiritual readiness and suicide prevention: “Pastors, chaplains and pastoral counselors have a vital and unique role to play in suicide prevention.”²⁷ To this end, this paper proposes to use the 3 Cs approach to spiritual readiness by O’Hanlon:

C=Connection, C=Compassion and C=Contribution.²⁸ I myself use this 3 Cs approach with positive results.

Connection: A chaplain should lead a Soldier in crisis to see the bigger picture of reality by helping him or her get connected with people, nature, or a Higher Power in life. Reality is beyond us, and we cannot simply be subjective, especially during life’s challenging moments. By encountering the bigger realm of life, a person in difficulty could relieve the prevailing stress, move away from being depressed, and even become thankful for lessons learned in life. Asking these three questions could be helpful during a conversation:

1. Can you tell me any important activities or projects that you have been involved with recently? How much enjoyment do you get from these?
2. How frequently have you been doing things in recent times that mean something to you or your life?
3. Have you ever been in a situation like this? Follow up question: How did you get out of it?

Often, people who are able to answer these questions increase their optimism and reduce their levels of pessimism by recognizing the positive things around them. Meaning making is a powerful factor in preventing suicide by providing important reasons for living; without meaning, suicide comes as the last solution.²⁹

Compassion: A person in crisis is struggling with a challenging situation. A chaplain should consciously lead such a person to the side of life where distrust gives way to love and forgiveness. Asking these two questions can help a person in crisis recall the goodwill he or she has enjoyed from others:

1. Can you recall any support you recently received from anyone? Describe how you felt supported by those people around you.
2. Can you share with me how you have been feeling about your relationships recently?

The person can use gratitude to strengthen current relationships. Again, the person may also use gratitude to form new social relationships that can constitute a support network.

Contribution: A person in crisis is shattered within so they may disconnect from those things that bring fulfillment and satisfaction. The task of a chaplain is to lead such a person to find an outlet of meaningful engagement in society. Chaplains can help someone find the motivation to work towards becoming their “best self.” Asking these two questions can be helpful:

1. Can you tell me about your hopes and dreams for the future?
2. What feelings have you had recently about working towards those goals?

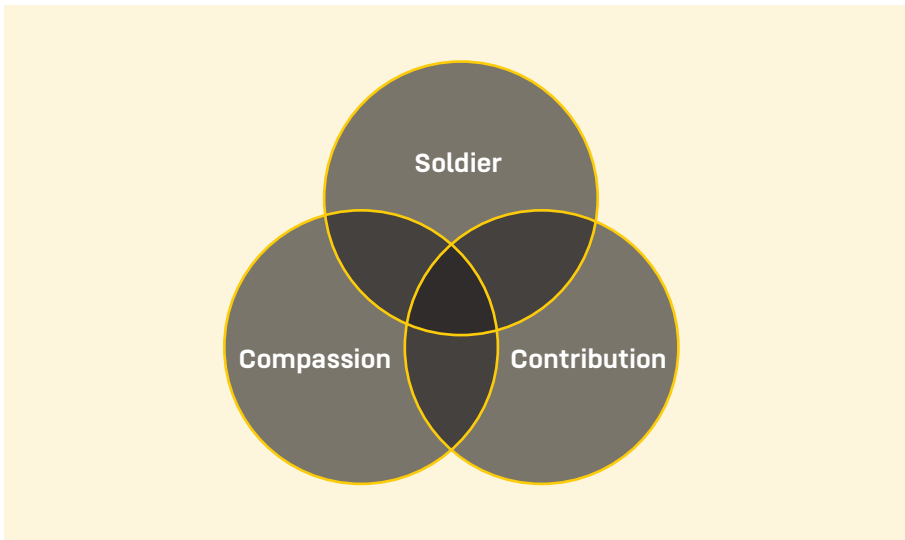


Figure 2: The 3 Cs in O'Hanlon's Model intertwine to create hope and meaning in peoples' lives.

The aim of the chaplain should be to help this person tap into good memories of the past and to be present in the connection that the person is experiencing at the moment. Gradually, the chaplain leads the person into hope for the future so that they see beauty and goodness in the midst of chaos and see through challenges to hope for a better tomorrow.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The chaplain provides spiritual and religious support in a pluralistic environment. For Soldiers who profess faith in God, dealing with suicide in the context of faith is very beneficial. Including Behavioral Health in suicide prevention does not detract from the role of faith, but rather heightens the fact that suicide results from a combination of factors. In addressing suicide, no group of providers should go it alone, but should work with other available helping agencies through the process.

All Soldiers can use spiritual resources during difficult times. For Soldiers who profess faith in God, in this paper I suggest that the chaplain can help develop clear goals toward spiritual resilience that include this faith. The Army Chaplain Corps facilitates religious practice within the Army by holding worship services. A Soldier may consider attending a chapel service to connect with people and receive spiritual strengthening. Such gatherings afford the individual an opportunity to experience fellowship, deepen insights about God, and experience encouragement from other community members and the example of those who have gone before. While whether religiosity is a direct protective factor against suicide ideation remains unsettled, it nevertheless leads to hope, which is a protective factor against suicide.³⁰ For Soldiers who are non-religious, a chaplain may link them to a community-based support network, encourage them to go out for activities like games and dinner with friends, and also show them how to engage in positive self-talk to boost personal self-worth.

A chaplain has a number of ways to help someone grow in spiritual readiness, which can have positive affective, cognitive, and behavioral outcomes. The chaplain may encourage the person growing in spiritual readiness to set aside time for prayer, meditation, and reflection on devotional materials like the Bible, movies, and other activities that they enjoy most. These motivational materials and activities could inspire and spark positive thoughts and hope. If someone is married, the chaplain may encourage the couple to watch inspiring movies or read devotional books together. This will spark communication and lead to deeper connections that allow them to support one another.

In summary, in this paper I acknowledge suicide as a major issue in society today; the Army is no exception. This is a serious issue that needs to be addressed. The chaplain, as a carrier of hope who is present with the Soldiers and their Families, should accompany them through their crises. I, however, do not explore important and well-documented issues such as: the prevalence of suicide in the Army, risk factors, treatment options, coping mechanisms, or the distinction between suicidal ideation and actual suicide behavior. Rather, I highlight how the chaplain can accompany the struggling Soldier through the use of the three Cs (Connection, Compassion, Contribution) approach to find hope and reasons to continue living.

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Religion or Spirituality?: American Religiosity and the Chaplain's Care for Soldiers

by Chaplain (Captain) Patrick Stefan

Introduction

“Religion” and “spirituality” are two terms commonly associated with Western expressions of the components of faith, and they are central to the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps’ understanding of its own mission. In fact, the U.S. Army Chaplaincy, as an institution, exists in the tension between religion, constitutional law, and spirituality. But how do these three interact? This article presses on the categorical boundaries of “spirituality” and “religion” to analyze their relationships to each other and to chaplaincy. Perhaps more importantly, I examine these terms to explain how this tension might contribute to overall Soldier care by looking closely at how each category impacts Soldier readiness and health. I will argue that an institutional emphasis on spirituality is both understandable from an historical standpoint and from the point of view of the legal cases that touch on these issues. Nevertheless, the majority of social-scientific and medical research promotes the efficacy of communal-based religious participation on human health and well-being, contra broad spirituality. Even so, the disconnect between an institutional focus on spirituality, and a social-scientific focus on religious participation opens a collaborative space for effective ministry between strategic levels of the Army Chaplain Corps and tactical Unit Ministry Teams (UMT) ministering among Soldiers. It also enables further cooperation between garrison level religious support offices and unit organizations on those same posts in the mutual pursuit of Soldier well-being.

What follows in this article is first a brief analysis of the rise of “spirituality” in the chaplaincy, which lays the groundwork for

an explanation of why the language of spirituality is important to the Chaplain Corps. I then make a constructive proposal for how an institutional focus on spirituality can foster a twofold collaborative relationship: an up–down relationship of translating spiritual readiness doctrine at the strategic level of the Army to spiritual readiness formation at the tactical level, and a left–right relationship of collaboratively building healthy religious communities between garrison and organizational unit levels at Army posts.

How Spirituality Entered Legal Discourse and What That Means for Definitions of Religion

“Religion” and “spirituality” are terms that have been defined and redefined in American jurisprudence and case law, and they have had profound implications for the Chaplain Corps. The genealogies of the terms “religion,” “religions,” and “world religions” dive deeply into the rise of the modern university, categorizations of language groups, and the Protestant classification of the world.¹ When analyzing the word “religion,” scholars tend to shift away from *sui generis* understandings of the idea to trace the rise of the concept and how it has developed in the modern world. Similarly, “spirituality,” as a category, has a complicated origin and is relatively new in debates surrounding the definition of “religion” and ritual practice.²

While this article does not try to offer new definitions of “religion” or “spirituality,” it does seek to analyze the role this language has played in the larger legal questions

concerning the constitutional viability of governmentally supported chaplaincies. To be clear, I do not think that there is a helpful or clear way for academics to draw a division between “religion” and “spirituality.”³ However, I use the two words as referring to two separate categories merely as a heuristic device, and these categories align with what people commonly mean when they draw a distinction. When most modern Americans and lawyers discuss religion and spirituality they mean something along the lines of an organized set of beliefs, rituals, and practices for the former (generally from the contested concept of “world religions”), and an individualized practice and connection with a source of greater meaning and purpose for the latter. I now turn to the relationship between law, religion, and spirituality.

In the long, often tense, history of the relationship between American religion and American jurisprudence and law, religion exerted itself a little much in the beginning, only to see jurisprudence and law draw the lines a little more brightly, especially through subsequent pushbacks on institutional religion.⁴ They both quickly realized that more definition would help them coexist for years to come.⁵

The problem was that the earliest rules, as articulated in the religion clauses of the First Amendment, lacked specific clarity; they could be interpreted narrowly or broadly. Religion was caught in this tension. Nonetheless, as time passed, reality and social growth necessitated legal articulations of religion’s place in American life. With new legal architecture desiring to both maintain the First Amendment boundary and make room for the reality of religion’s importance, “spirituality” was enlisted as a bridge. “Spirituality” rose with a

connection to religious tradition of the American past,⁶ yet contained its own amorphous and individualizing character, which allowed it to nest within the religio-legal tensions of the First Amendment and its interpretations.

This is, of course, only a very brief account of the language of spirituality in American law and society. This genealogy is complicated by recent criticisms of spirituality as a re-packaging of 19th–20th century Orientalism and colonization.⁷ Since its rise, spirituality has become a catchall for most things religious, positive thinking, mystical, or Eastern.⁸ What began, then, as a tension between religion and American case law and jurisprudence is now uneasily balanced with the rise of the spiritual in public life. The military chaplaincy navigates this tense space, and may even navigate better than other organizations.

Spirituality’s Entrance into the Chaplaincy

How did spirituality come to dominate the chaplain’s work? A brief survey of the language used in chaplain histories and manuals demonstrates that this is a relatively recent change in our nation’s history.⁹ Winnifred Sullivan, Sophia Arjana, Courtney Bender, and others have shown that the rise of language referencing spirituality in modern American religious discourse is both relatively novel (in its current form) and is part of a larger metamorphosis of how American jurisprudence and case law have understood the relationship between religion and government.

In this next brief section, I outline the rise of spirituality language in case law and jurisprudence to demonstrate the centrality and vitality of this language for

Army Chaplaincy institutional documents, such as FM 7-22. This discussion then allows me to examine the actual efficacy of the concept of spirituality in day-to-day ministry among Soldiers. That is, I open a space for the question of whether it is more helpful for the Army Chaplain Corps conceptually to work with the language of religion, of spirituality, or both.

In the wake of 19th century European thought that established the idea of distinct religious traditions around the world and the study of these traditions, pluralism became the foundational understanding of the free-exercise of religion in America.¹⁰ However, since the 1960s and 1970s, the concept of pluralism has, in the view of many scholars, been both challenged and largely transformed in both the public square and the halls of justice. A naturalized and universalized perspective of religion catalyzed a view of religion as something all humans inhabit and are inhabited by.¹¹ This shift from pluralism to universalized spirit has allowed new articulations of how religion can and should interact with government policy. Indeed, if the spiritual is free from a single religious perspective, but is instead natural to all humans, then a governmental appropriation of spirituality, if proven beneficial, does not infringe upon the establishment clause because something natural and universal cannot be established.

In *Katcoff v. Marsh* (1984), one of the earliest substantive legal challenges to the chaplaincy, the court concluded that Army Chaplains were essential for ensuring that Soldiers have the opportunity for religious practice; this freedom of religion and religious practice was viewed as vital to national security interests. The Second Circuit Court of Appeals saw the primary function

of military chaplains as “to engage in activities designed to meet the religious needs of a pluralistic military community, including personnel and their dependents,”¹² with emphasis on language of command obligation and uncoerced pluralistic opportunity for Soldiers.

However, leading constitutional scholars, such as Steven Green, have argued that the legal justification in *Katcoff* of the obligation of accommodation for “servicemembers’ religions because of a government imposed burden on that practice” stands on shaky legal ground, and if revisited would likely have to shift justification to that of a “permissive accommodation of servicemembers’ religious practice; and . . . a limited exception to the Establishment Clause.”¹³ And while *Katcoff* is not seen by most legal scholars as a significant development in the canon of First

Amendment legislation, the seriousness with which the Army responded to this case shaped the chaplaincy, allowing it to preemptively respond to the cases that would fill the dockets in the years to follow.¹⁴ *Katcoff* opened the door for several later cases that shaped American chaplaincy generally, and the Army Chaplaincy specifically. Three subsequent cases are particularly important: *FFRF v. Nicholson* (2007), *Carter v. Broadlawns Medical Center* (1987), and *Hein v. FFRF* (2007).

In the *Nicholson* case, the employment of chaplains by the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Administration was challenged. The Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF) argued that hiring such chaplains, along with the implementation of patient entrance spiritual assessments, infringed upon the First Amendment by categorically codifying “religion” over “non-religion.”

However, the district court ruled against the FFRF by (a) creating a distinction in chaplain care between an older “sacramental” system of providing opportunities to patients according to particularist needs, and a new “clinical” system toward which the VA had evolved, and (b) defining the clinical approach as one which emphasized religion in general, contra particular or pluralistic religion, as a universal and natural phenomenon shared by all humans. This allowed the court to explain to the FFRF legal team that chaplain care was “spiritual” and not “religious” insofar as the chaplain avoids “initiating or guiding religious instruction . . . [unless] that is the wish of a given patient . . . [since] providing pastoral care need not involve religion at all . . . spirituality is not necessarily religious because it concerns the meaning of life on a more general level.”¹⁵ The FFRF was unwilling to concede the distinction, but the court found the line between



spirituality and religion vital to adjudicating the relationship between religion and government.¹⁶ As Sullivan comments, “the court sees government entanglement with religious institutions as problematic but not entanglement with the spiritual life of persons. Spiritual care monitors persons not religious institutions.”¹⁷

In *Carter*, a state psychiatric hospital was on the stand for hiring a chaplain as part of its care team. The court understood the role of the government-employed chaplain in this way: “by using the word ‘spiritual,’ [Dr. Berry Engebretsen] did not mean to imply to ‘a particular denomination or world religion.’”¹⁸ Thus, care for the spiritual dimension of the psychiatric patient fulfilled a secular and universal purpose. And in *Hein*, the FFRF contested the use of taxpayer dollars for the establishment of religion over nonreligion. The majority declined to hear the case based on Article III in the Constitution, citing the lack of a justiciable controversy. Rather, they focused on the ability of the government to promote religious programs like any other social program so long as those programs were universal in nature and free from government-sponsored coercion or the proselytization of a specific person. Religion, understood in these terms, is not a danger to the establishment clause.

The evolution of juridical understanding of religion consequently shaped how religious institutions with relations to the government understood their role and limits. As Klassen and Bender astutely conclude:

one response of the military has been to move beyond the free market pluralist model, one of catering to the particularist needs of the troops, to one that accommodates and

integrates a naturalized universal spirituality as its motivating force and model of religion. This move might be seen as part of a larger cultural shift away from pluralism as a political project.¹⁹

This shift has detractors, however; American chaplaincy, in general, and Army Chaplaincy, in particular, has adjusted well to these dynamics.²⁰ Chaplains who presently fill the ranks of the Army Chaplain Corps are the heirs of this history. In recent years this includes an update to FM 7-22, which identifies “the spiritual readiness domain [as] inclusive and universally vital to all personnel no matter their background, philosophy, or religion.”²¹ It is, says the Army, “a vital domain in the [Health and Holistic Fitness] H2F System, [directly impacting] the resiliency of individuals and organizations.”²² This language echoes the four cases discussed above. And this move to an emphasis on spirituality is also evidenced by the Spiritual Readiness Initiative, which has taken the universality of spirituality and connected its benefits to psychological and social-scientific research touting the impact that spiritual health can have on Army readiness.

Threading the Needle: Working with Spirituality and Benefiting from Religious Community

To this point, I have described how the language of spirituality became a key phrase in chaplaincy settings. These moves both nested the Chaplain Corps’ mission within juridical approval, thus protecting the chaplain, and also brought to bear the empirical data that was so instrumental in cases such as *Nicholson*, thereby emphasizing the

chaplain’s important work. However, as I have analyzed the pertinent medical and social-scientific literature that has proliferated over the past two decades on the effects of religiosity on human health (physical, relational, and psychosocial), what I have found is that an important body of literature (though not all) demonstrates the significance of participation in religious community (e.g. frequency of religious service participation), rather than a general and self-reported measure of spirituality.²³ The emphasis on the role of universal and individual spirituality in human health and resiliency is disconnected from the actual measurable data behind the research that fuels this emphasis. And this disconnect is even present in the work of Lisa Miller and others who cite the effects of R/S (religion and spirituality) on health and well-being. These claims employ underlying research on measurable data that is, alternatively, a conflation of religious and spiritual into a single R/S category. This has the effect of problematizing how to distinguish between whether it is service attendance that develops an “inner spirituality” or whether an inner spirituality promotes health absent service attendance. These claims may also employ underlying research on religious activity participation that relies heavily on measurable data in reference to religious worship attendance.²⁴

The Religion-Spiritual Divide and Ministry Opportunities

I propose that this disconnect between religion and spirituality creates a collaborative space for effective ministry where strategic levels of the Army Chaplain Corps and UMTs throughout the Army, as well as the garrison religious support offices and the

organizational level UMTs on those posts can operate within a shared framework. This space thus opens the chaplain's work for greater institutional impact. A strategic emphasis on spirituality highlights the importance and legality of the Chaplain Corps' work throughout the entire Army. This, in turn, provides resources to battalion and brigade level UMTs to translate spirituality into healthy religious communities—a translation project that creates space for garrison religious support offices to work with organizational UMTs in the creation of these communities.

Religion and Spiritual Fitness: A Collaborative Approach

My initial contention is that the shift to spirituality as a broad category is understandable from both a perspective of religious history in America and American jurisprudence and case law over the past few decades. The Army seeks to quantify the benefits of spirituality to demonstrate the value of the UMT and the importance of spiritual readiness. There is, nonetheless, a disconnect between empirical medical and social scientific research and the language of spirituality. Stated even more clearly, the research behind the social benefits of religion attest (mostly) to the effects of communal religious practice²⁵ and not to the more nebulous components of spirituality. However, this disconnect can be leveraged through a strategic spiritual focus and by opening opportunities for fruitful unit and garrison ministry. These can positively shape the culture of the Army by both crafting healthy religious communities and working with already established communities into which Soldiers and Family members can connect.

The rest of this article shifts focus to a positive articulation of how a multi-layer collaborative effort could look, first between strategic levels of the Chaplain Corps and tactical UMTs, and second between garrison religious support and brigade and battalion UMTs.

Strategic and Tactical Collaboration

By placing language about the universality of spirituality in Army doctrine, the strategic level of the Army has opened a space within which chaplains can consistently have a central role. Army doctrine has codified the necessity of spiritual readiness as one domain of holistic Soldier fitness, which must be synchronized with the four other equally important domains to “optimize Soldier readiness.”²⁶ Placing spirituality in doctrine enables a collaborative effort wherein tactical level units can leverage command support at all echelons for funding and where an opportunity is created to institute effective chaplain-Soldier ministry.

If, for example, spiritual fitness is as vital to the holistically ready Soldier as physical fitness according to Army doctrine, then it stands to reason that time, opportunity, and resources should be directed to facilitate this development. This can occur through division, brigade, and battalion level efforts that are coordinated by UMTs, but resourced through commands. This, of course, occurs already throughout FORSCOM with the Command Sponsored Chaplain Led Training program. However, this funding source is primarily focused on programs designed to develop healthy Family systems, as a supplement to the Strong Bonds program. My first proposal, then, is for the strategic levels of the

Army to consider ways of funding direct spiritual development for both Families and single Soldiers, through programs and cultivation of spiritual space within units. This funding can be justified as based on both Army doctrine and statistical evidence.

As an example of this opportunity, in early 2021 as the 1st Armored Division Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion Chaplain I took over a large office space in the Division HQ. I proposed to re-purpose the space into a spiritual fitness prayer/meditation room for Soldiers within the HQ and others who might regularly visit. The stated and approved goal of the room was to cultivate spiritual fitness through space for prayer or meditation, sacred text study, and counseling. At the tactical level, all red tape was cleared. The problem came, instead, from the strategic level where requests for furniture were consistently rebuffed with the justification that FORSCOM funding is not accessible for furniture, as furniture does not constitute an operational necessity.²⁷

Several attempts were made to push the boundaries on this final layer of red tape by arguing that if spiritual fitness is a necessary component of Soldier fitness, then this room was operationally necessary in the same way that ACFT equipment was operationally necessary. Nonetheless, after several months of failed efforts, for sake of timing and accessibility I opted instead for discarded IMCOM waiting room furniture.

Examples like this demonstrate how the strategic level can assist in providing resources for brigade and battalion level ministry. The allocation of resources to particular projects demonstrates the value of the program in question to the organization and members of that

organization. Throughout the Army there are many underutilized common areas on installations. By allocating strategic level resources to re-appropriate some of them into spiritual fitness areas, the Army could facilitate spiritual growth among Soldiers who are detached from chapels and local religious communities due to transportation constraints or distance. This would tangibly and spatially demonstrate to Soldiers that spiritual fitness is, in fact, vital for all Soldiers. And this is but one example that could be supplemented by the experiences of other battalion and brigade level chaplains who are presently ministering under the pressures of late modernity.

Another example of possible strategic-tactical collaboration builds on the importance of religious community formation as a vital component to spiritual fitness. If the Chaplain Corps had a seat at strategic level IMCOM base planning, religious community could be considered as a key component to housing and community planning. Consideration could be given to build chapels within base housing communities, alongside parks and green-space, rather than detached from or on the outskirts of residential space. Partnerships with organizations and thinktanks such as the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs at Georgetown University, which have thought about the role of religious communities within urban planning would help facilitate this growth on a strategic level.

In addition to the collaboration between strategic and UMT levels, the disconnect between “spiritual fitness” as a conceptual category and the research primarily focused on frequency of religious community participation opens up a collaborative relationship between garrison and battalion and brigade levels on each installation. If

the above strategic-level initiatives were developed, garrison religious support and operational religious support could leverage both communal chapels and organizational sacred space to build healthy religious communities that grow out of battalion level ministry. I propose a three-stage development of this collaborative effort that builds upon the strategic-tactical relationship.

The first step concerns the distribution of research data to Soldiers and leaders outside of the Chaplain Corps. This effort begins by making the medical and social scientific research available for commanders at every echelon. If any other areas of fitness and programs had the type of impact on all areas of Soldier readiness (physical health, marriage stability, domestic violence, substance abuse, suicide) that religious community does, it would probably receive immediate funding and support. Of course, as outlined throughout this article, the legal tension between religion and government complicates this approach. This opens, in my estimation, a space within which the Army Chaplaincy can help commanders at all echelons navigate the development of spiritual fitness to maximize the benefits of religious community while avoiding undue command influence on Soldiers who are neither religious nor inclined toward one religious community.

Getting this information in the hands of commanders is vital to the success of this collaboration. The 1st Armored Division provides a simple example of how this can be done. The data above was consolidated into a two-page information paper and distributed to every UMT throughout the division. Individual brigade UMT training on how battalion chaplains should coach their commanders about the research behind the benefits of supporting religious

community was conducted to begin the campaign, which was followed by post-wide UMT training to explain the entirety of research to the division. The Army feeds on metrics. This information paper provided a simple, condensed, and understandable mechanism to show the measurable benefits of creating an environment in which Soldiers are allowed, encouraged, and able to connect with various religious communities of their own choosing. This was then filtered down to the Soldiers within the battalion through a poster campaign highlighting the effects of religious community participation on divorce rates, suicide rates, domestic violence rates, and all-cause mortality. Each poster had contact information for the battalion UMT, along with a list of religious services offered on post and a QR code link which allowed Soldiers to request follow up from a senior chaplain on their smartphone.

The second step concerns the training of spiritual fitness, with a focus on FM 7-22, 10.12. Again, drawing attention to the 1st Armored Division, the Division Chaplain Section developed a squad level leader guide for training spiritual fitness, which was supplemented by a six-minute video summarizing the importance of religious community participation, and an encouragement to speak with a chaplain to connect or re-connect with a religious community of their choice. Each squad level leader was trained by the battalion UMT on the first training day, who then trained his or her squad on the second training day with the UMT available for assistance. This training multiplied the priority of spiritual fitness from two members of the battalion (Chaplain and Religious Affairs Specialist) to multiple leaders throughout the ranks, emphasizing the point that spiritual fitness is a priority for the Army, and not merely for the UMT.

The third step concerns the garrison cultivation of healthy religious communities in collaboration with the installation's other organizations. This collaboration was demonstrated on Fort Bliss by the Garrison Religious Support Office and the 1st Armored Division. The two organizations collaborated to develop an initiative to bring opportunities for religious community to the far east section of the installation, a location that is devoid of chapels, yet that houses the majority of single Soldiers in the division in barracks clusters. Further efforts were made through battalion chaplains within the division participating in a working group with the Garrison RSO to develop ways by which Chapels and battalion UMTs could leverage virtual possibilities to create a connection between the individual Soldier and the larger religious communities.

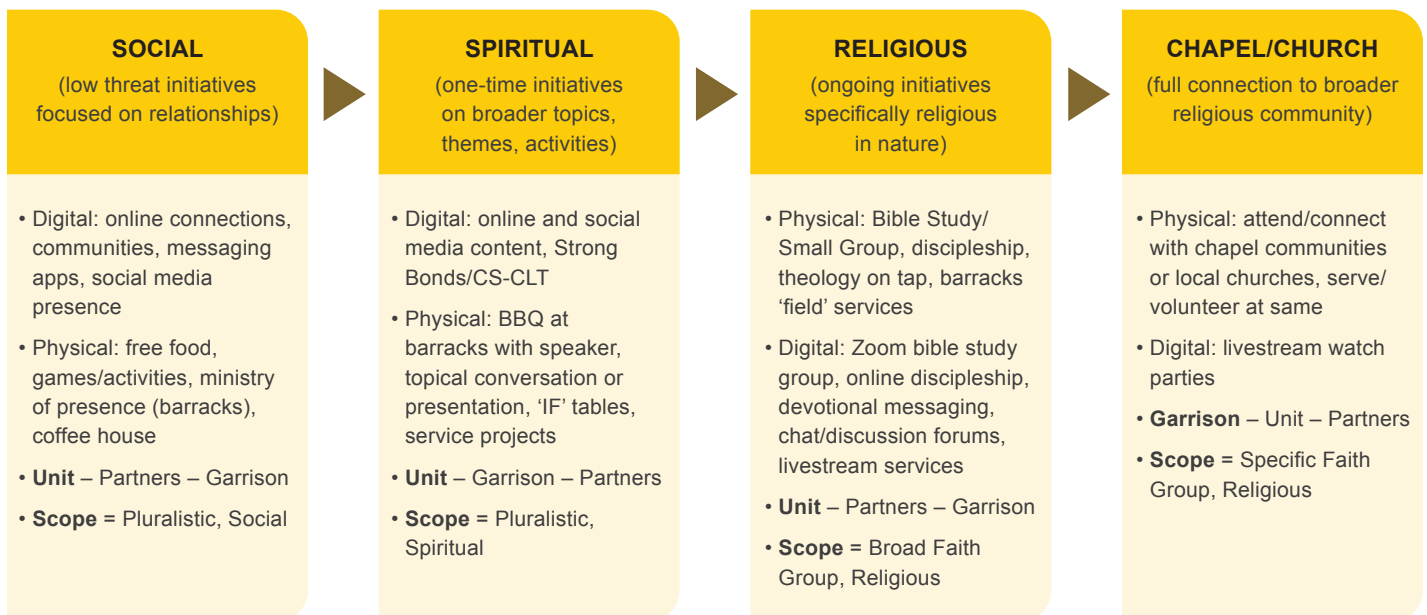
This initiative unfolded through a four-stage process, outlined below, and was designed to be supplemented by a survey of all Soldiers arriving from Advanced Individual Training identifying the chapel community in which they were previously involved to facilitate a "warm handoff" from TRADOC to FORSCOM.

Conclusion

This article demonstrates that the Army Chaplain Corps must pay more attention to the translation of universal spirituality into healthy religious communities in which Soldiers participate. However, the Chaplain Corps must remember that the focus on spirituality from an institutional level is both a necessary and positive legal evolution in our Corps' self-understanding. The disconnect between

religion and spirituality can pry open the opportunity for multi-layer collaboration throughout the Chaplain Corps.

The relationship between religion and spirituality is evolving in American legal and self-understanding. As these concepts and their definitions continue to morph, shape, and evolve, more legal challenges and transformations are certain to arise.²⁸ The Army Chaplaincy will continue to adjust to changing cultural and legal tides to provide spiritual and religious care to the sons and daughters of America who are serving in our Army. However, this article has shown that as we adjust to these shifts, careful attention must be given to how we structure ministry.



Credit: CH (COL) Douglas H. Ball, II

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NOTES

- 1 See esp. Tamoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); and Aaron Hughes and Russell McCutcheon, *What is Religion? Debating the Academic Study of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021). This article is premised on a basic knowledge of debates concerning the definition of religion in modern scholarship.
- 2 See Courtney Bender, *The New Metaphysicals: Spirituality and the American Religious Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Sophia Rose Arjana, *Buying Buddha, Selling Rumi: Orientalism and the Mystical Marketplace* (London: Oneworld Academic, 2020); Leigh Schmidt, *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2012); John Lardas Modern *Secularism in Antebellum America* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2015).
- 3 See esp. William E. Arnal and Russell T. McCutcheon, *The Sacred is Profane: The Political Nature of "Religion"* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Winnifred F. Sullivan, *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).
- 4 See esp. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2018).
- 5 See Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Spirit of the Law: Religious Voices and the Constitution in Modern America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2010).
- 6 See Bender, *The New Metaphysicals*.
- 7 Arjana, *Buying Buddha, Selling*, cf. Jeremy Carette and Richard King, *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2005), who see spirituality as a semantic product of neoliberalism, and a politically innocuous mechanism of religious commodification.
- 8 For two helpful analyses of the rise of the spiritual category see Schmidt, *Restless Souls*; Modern, *Secularism in Antebellum America*.
- 9 Consider, for example, the adjectives used to describe the Chaplain's work in Parker C. Thompson, *The United States Army Chaplaincy: From its European Antecedents to 1791* (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, 1978) who uses language referencing spirituality as descriptively operative only 5 times, but language referring to religion 50+ times in his 360-page volume. See also TM 2270-5, *The Chaplain: His Place and Duties* (1926) which mentions spiritual care or comfort only twice. While it calls for spiritual ministrations in the Chaplain's title, almost every other line concerns religious requirements; cf. FM 16-5, *The Chaplain* (Department of the Army: 1952), which identifies the first mission of the chaplain is "to promote religion and morality in the Army," following which the language of spirituality is absent, and throughout the manual, the Chaplain is called "spiritual leader" or "spiritual confidant," only secondary to religion, and less than five times throughout.
- 10 Prior to the European development of world religions through the work of comparative theology, the world was broken into four broad religious categories: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and pagan or indigenous. European comparative theology expanded the list moving intentionally toward a pluralistic approach of the world. Those religions that were deemed normative, or were "classified" by European Protestant scholars thus became the bedrock of what was identified as "religious." For a brilliant analysis of this history see Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*.
- 11 See the influential study Courtney Bender and Pamela E. Klassen, *After Pluralism: Reimagining Religious Engagement* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2010), esp. Klassen and Bender, "Habits of Pluralism," Winnifred Sullivan, "Religion Naturalized" who argue that the proliferation of religious pluralistic acceptance has morphed into a more universal understanding of the "spirit" of all humanity.
- 12 *Katcoff v. Marsh*, 755 F.2d at 226 (1984).
- 13 Steven K. Green "Reconciling the Irreconcilable: Military Chaplains and the First Amendment," *West Virginia Law Review* 110 (2007): 167–186, 179, emphasis mine; see also Ira C. Lupu and Robert W. Tuttle, "Instruments of Accommodation: The Military Chaplaincy and the Constitution," *West Virginia Law Review* 110 (2007): 89–166.
- 14 Sullivan, *Ministry of Presence*, 141.
- 15 *FFRF v. Nicholson*, 469 F. Supp.2d at 612 (2007).
- 16 See Sullivan, *A Ministry of Presence*, 39–40.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 48.
- 18 *Carter v. Broadlawns*, 857 F.2d 451 (1988), in Sullivan, *Ministry of Presence*, 155.
- 19 Klassen and Bender, "Habits of Pluralism" cited in Sullivan, *Ministry of Presence*, 149.
- 20 Though this adjustment has not been well received across the board. See, Kim Philip Hansen, *Military Chaplains and Religious Diversity* (New York: Palgrave, 2012).
- 21 FM 7-22, 10.1.
- 22 FM 7-22, 10.37.
- 23 See Patrick G. Stefan "What's Religion Got to Do With It?: A Bourdieusian Reading of Religious Participation and Human Stability" White paper for the 1ST Armored Division Chaplain Section, 2020.
- 24 To be clear, Lisa Miller's breadth of research and literature on this topic is admirable and helpful, especially to the Chaplain Corps given the above analysis of spirituality's importance in modern discourse. It is instead my contention that her research, like many in the field of spirituality and psychology, contains a neoliberal conflation of religion/spirituality that is indicative of the 21st century "scientific" study of religion that exists apart from theory of religion. The problem, in my estimation, is the conflation of data that measures frequency of service attendance with the amorphous category of spirituality. So religion becomes R/S. There are cultural reasons for this conflation, but if we desire to get down to the data as it impacts Soldier readiness, it is important we look at what it actually measures.
- 25 FM 7-22, para. 10.12.
- 26 FM 7-22, xiii.
- 27 FORSCOM 37-1-1 [NOV 14] para. 3.9.
- 28 See esp. Joseph Laycock, *Speak of the Devil: How the Satanic Temple is Changing the Way we Talk about Religion* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), for a fascinating and brilliant analysis of shifting religious challenges in American jurisprudence, wherein the challenge is becoming less about whether or not "religion" is allowed in the public square, but "which" religions we allow in the public square.



Cultivating Spiritual Readiness in a Secular Age: Embracing the Challenge and Opportunities of Ministry in the Contested Spiritual Domain

by Chaplain (Captain) Luke Heibel

The secular culture of the 21st century shapes how we think and talk about the spiritual domain.¹ One can hardly make a spiritual claim to a broad audience without it being qualified. The spiritual domain of the current age is contested territory.² Army doctrine gives clear, strong support for the spiritual domain and the need to foster spiritual readiness for all Soldiers because it fuels resilience.³ I believe that Army doctrine uses intentionally broad language to speak of spiritual readiness in the spiritual domain. Broad spiritual readiness language is useful at the strategic level, but loses effectiveness at the tactical and operational levels, down in the soil of Army life.

Religious Support professionals must be clear, precise, and spiritually-rooted to cultivate spiritual readiness. The unique value that they provide to the Army goes beyond mere resilience as a spiritual readiness goal.⁴ These goals other than resilience include cultivating Soldiers' ability to grow through suffering, find durable meaning, discover lasting purpose, and support the ideals that lead Soldiers to sacrifice for their Nation.

The goal of this article is to view Army spiritual readiness doctrine through the lens of a secular age to demonstrate how the spiritual domain is contested. I then propose a way for Chaplains in this unique Operational Environment (OE) to understand the challenges and embrace the opportunities to cultivate spiritual readiness. I use three key concepts from philosopher Charles Taylor's book *A Secular Age*: his understanding of the secular, exclusive humanism, and the immanent frame.⁵ Taylor's concepts can help the Chaplain Corps fulfill its mission to cultivate spiritual readiness with breadth and depth within what Taylor describes as a secular age.

The Contested Spiritual Domain

The spiritual domain is contested in a way that the other domains of the "Holistic Health and Fitness" (H2F) system are not.⁶ Four of the five H2F domains (Physical, Mental, Sleep, Nutrition and Spiritual) have clearly defined content that includes prescriptive health-promoting behaviors as well as advocacy concerning best practices for preferred outcomes.⁷ This is in distinction to the spiritual domain, which offers relatively little by way of prescriptive health-promoting behaviors and omits any similar rationale or advocacy.⁸ This disparity points to the challenge of using particular language within the spiritual domain. Precise language risks excluding those who disagree about ultimate things. It also appeals to divergent and contested sources of authority.⁹

Broad spiritual readiness language reflects the challenge of cultivating spiritual readiness within the U.S. Army. For instance, FM 7-22 provides an outline for General Spiritual Readiness Practices that trace the outer-form of health-promoting behaviors.¹⁰ The doctrine further allows a distinction between those General Spiritual Readiness Practices and Religious Spiritual Readiness Practices that acknowledge the sacred and make provision for the holy and sacramental.¹¹ But this doctrinal outline presents more of a silhouette than a completed portrait. The particular content is vacant, by necessity, in an effort to honor both religious liberty and pluralistic concerns.¹²

Chaplains frequently wrestle with the tensions generated by these varied and—at times—opposing goals. The organizational

riddle that emerges from the desire for unity and moral requirements of diversity requires humility, vigilance, and careful accommodation on the part of individual chaplains.¹³ Army Chaplains are called to provide substantive Religious Support (RS) within their faith tradition while remaining open, inclusive, and accessible to a diverse audience. It is a daunting task.

A way to make fresh progress with this enduring challenge is to better understand the “conditions of belief” in our contemporary secular OE.¹⁴ Conditions of belief refers to the background values and cultural factors shaping the plausibility of individual spiritual truths.¹⁵ Taylor notes that “all beliefs are held within a context or framework of the taken-for-granted, which usually remains tacit, and may be as yet unacknowledged by the agent, because never formulated.”¹⁶ One could think of any given belief as a seed and the conditions of belief as a soil-filled flowerpot. Chaplains must labor to understand how the broader ecosystem of the cultural soil (conditions of belief) affects the individual seed itself. A deeper understanding will aid Army Chaplains laboring to accomplish their RS mission in a dynamic and ever-changing OE.

Understanding “Spiritual Readiness”

SR is a consideration for all Soldiers. Army doctrine assumes that “most Soldiers identify with some form of religious belief under-lying the spiritual dimension.”¹⁷ Furthermore, Army leaders are required to support Soldier SR.¹⁸ From a doctrinal standpoint, SR is essential for every Soldier to achieve total fitness. The definition of SR from

FM 7-22 highlights this necessity.¹⁹ It further clarifies that the “spiritual readiness domain is inclusive and universally vital to all personnel no matter their background, philosophy, or religion. It applies to both religious and non-religious persons and concepts.”²⁰

Messaging from the Office of the Chief of Chaplains is precisely measured and calibrated to accommodate this diverse audience; it is inclusive enough to include every worldview or religion. Thus, generic spiritual language allows the Army to advocate for the spiritual as a unified domain with Chaplain Corps support. However, in my opinion, it also serves to avoid tensions caused by diversity. It helps facilitate the Chief of Chaplain’s strategic vision:

[T]o build Army spiritual readiness by caring for Soldiers...across the full spectrum of conflict ... by being a world-class, fully integrated network of ... Army religious support professionals, who are known for ... enhancing the readiness of Soldiers of all ranks.²¹

By Army standards, spiritual readiness can be cultivated without reference to God or transcendence. It applies equally to “religious and non-religious” sources.²² The main concern of spiritual readiness doctrine for the Army seems to be the outcome: readiness and resilience. Spiritual readiness is effective if it “develops the personal qualities a person needs in times of stress, hardship, and tragedy.”²³ How an individual Soldier arrives at readiness varies.

At the strategic level, diverse religious and philosophical systems are equally affirmed. Yet at the tactical and operational levels, precise details of the spiritual domain are noticeably more contested. The differences that emerge

between these levels require a variety of accommodations.²⁴ Seasoned military operators know aerial images of an OE are not the same as the reality on the ground. Similarly, Army Chaplains need conceptual tools to help translate broad language from the strategic level to the tactical and operational levels. These tools help chaplains make sense of spiritual readiness in a secular age.

Taylor and Our Secular Age

The writing and insights of philosopher Charles Taylor offer several conceptual tools that may help Army Chaplains better understand current RS ground realities: his understandings of the secular, exclusive humanism, and the immanent frame. Chaplains need to be familiar with these phenomena to be effective in a secular age.

Taylor is arguably the most significant contemporary author on the subject of secularism and its implications for spiritual life in the 21st century.²⁵ Prominent scholars have engaged Taylor’s challenging work.²⁶ Taylor writes about the secular age with creativity, scope and depth. One theologian remarks, “Taylor’s *A Secular Age* is the first philosophical book written in the twenty-first century that will be read in the twenty-second.”²⁷ The Chaplain Corps should not wait that long to learn from it.

Taylor’s *A Secular Age* looks at the past five centuries of Western history, theology, and philosophy to grapple with the scope of change in spiritual belief and practice. He explores how an entire civilization goes from being preoccupied with the existence of God and supernatural realities to one where faith in God does not seem to matter at all.²⁸ Taylor demonstrates how this shift happens and what it means for people

who now live in a time where coming to faith and believing in God are completely different experiences.²⁹ He says we live in a time where the exact opposite “conditions of belief” exist between our current era and past eras of belief.³⁰

So what is a secular age? According to Taylor, a secular age is one where coming to belief in God is now one option among many others and is often not an easy choice.³¹ It also means that all other non-theistic options are themselves “contested.”³² Nothing escapes scrutiny. The need to find meaning persists while the social conditions that challenge traditional beliefs remain.³³

A secular age is also a disenchanted age.³⁴ This means that life in the 21st century Western world defaults to the physical and material; it is “buffered” or insulated from supernatural influence.³⁵ A disenchanted world is also emptied of the meaning provided by supernatural perspectives.³⁶ Life is understood in primarily materialistic categories.³⁷ There are no spirits or immaterial forces imposing their will on people.³⁸ Everyday common activity is no longer defined by dependence on or vulnerability to the supernatural.³⁹ A disenchanted age is not “porous” and open to the supernatural, but is “buffered” from it.⁴⁰ This disenchantment protects from forces that are outside the control of any one individual.

Taylor contrasts a disenchanted, secular age with an “enchanted” age.⁴¹ An enchanted world is full of supernatural influences that inform all of life.⁴² The transcendent shines through and influences all aspects of life. For Taylor, this past era was a “world ‘charged’ with [spiritual] presences, that was open and vulnerable, not closed and self-sufficient.”⁴³ The world was, in a sense, haunted with transcendence and filled

with meaning that the physical alone cannot provide.⁴⁴

Most people understand the secular in one way (e.g., as simply “not religious”).⁴⁵ But Taylor, distinguishes between three senses of the “secular,” differentiated by the evolution of the word’s meaning.⁴⁶ James K.A. Smith, in *How (NOT) to be Secular*, a work that interprets Taylor, summarizes these three different types of the secular, which Taylor denotes as Secular1, Secular2, and Secular3:

Secular1 is a more “classical” definition of the secular, as distinguished from the sacred – the earthly plane of domestic life. Priests tend the sacred; butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers carry out “secular” work. Secular2 is a more modern definition of the secular as areligious – neutral, unbiased, “objective” – as in a “secular” public square. Secular3 is Taylor’s notion of the secular as an age of contested belief, where religious belief is no longer axiomatic. It is possible to imagine not believing in God.⁴⁷

In a Secular1 context, the broader society was largely religious and faith in God was assumed by most individuals. The world was enchanted; faith was normative for the whole society. Managing the sacred was so important that it required dedicated people to manage it full time.⁴⁸ In a Secular2 culture, the social conditions shifted against religion. The Western world gradually grew disenchanted. It assumed spiritual neutrality was possible and religion could simply be subtracted from modern life or confined to private spaces.⁴⁹ Religion became compartmentalized. A Secular2 understanding also assumed that as society progresses it will become

increasingly secular and religion will become more and more irrelevant.⁵⁰

In a Secular3 context, social conditions and plausibility structures shaping spiritual and religious experience have thoroughly changed.⁵¹ These conditions make it harder to believe in the supernatural just as the Secular1 context made it easier—indeed almost impossible—not to believe.⁵² Secular3 involved the creation of new conditions for what is and is not believable; this age is not characterized by the mere subtraction or compartmentalization of religion.⁵³ Unbelief is not only authorized, but is encouraged in subtle and overt ways.⁵⁴ But the burden of finding meaning in the world continues, albeit without God and transcendence as the assumed natural starting point.

We are currently living in a time, in the early 21st century, that Taylor considers to be a Secular3 context.⁵⁵ Of this time, Taylor admits our cultural background makes belief in God harder from the start.⁵⁶ In Secular3, “the zone for transcendence gets negated.”⁵⁷ This default against belief in the supernatural can also make pastoral ministry seem irrelevant.⁵⁸ It matters to Army Chaplains if who they are and what they do makes intuitive sense to the Soldiers they serve. It makes a difference how spiritual language is used and whether spiritual hope makes sense to them. The transcendent has lost much appeal and has become less intelligible as a necessary way to make sense of life.

Our Secular3 context shapes us even before we begin to think about spirituality.⁵⁹ This consideration helps interpret the challenge of referring to the spiritual as a unified domain. General categories that are broad enough to include all beliefs about the supernatural and the natural are necessary in a

contested space.⁶⁰ These conditions have direct bearing on how the Chaplain Corps cultivates spiritual readiness. In sum, we should not expect specifics of spiritual readiness cultivation to not be contested at the tactical and operational levels. Rather, the Chaplain Corps should factor this conflict into our RS methodology. The Chaplain Corps strives for clarity in its terminology while recognizing the reflex against spiritual certainty.

Secular3 sets conditions for what Taylor calls “exclusive humanism.”⁶¹ Exclusive humanism is much more than a belief system; it is a “replacement imaginary.”⁶² That is, a new set of background beliefs assumed by everyone in an era. Individuals no longer just assume life has meaning and purpose because they are created and governed by Divine purposes as may have been the case in previous eras. Instead, exclusive

humanism replaces transcendence as what gives meaning to life.⁶³ According to Taylor, exclusive humanism is a “purely self-sufficient humanism...accepting no final goals beyond human flourishing, nor any allegiance to anything else beyond this flourishing.”⁶⁴ Thus, exclusive humanism is the assumed set of beliefs that human flourishing begins and ends with human beings in this material life.⁶⁵ Exclusive humanism emerges once people feel permission in their own culture to base their lives upon something other than the transcendent.⁶⁶

Humanism itself is not new.⁶⁷ But exclusive humanism’s uniqueness is that it does not depend on the transcendent to underwrite human significance.⁶⁸ This would be impossible without Secular3 conditions that introduce a new starting point for how people experience spirituality and make meaning.⁶⁹

Exclusive humanism contrasts with religion, which is founded upon transcendence.⁷⁰ Religion witnesses to human goods that exist beyond mere human and temporal flourishing. It “only makes sense in the context of belief in a higher power, the transcendent God of faith which appears in most definitions of religion.”⁷¹ Exclusive humanism frees people from a preoccupation with the supernatural; it empowers them to find “fullness” and fulfillment solely in our natural world.⁷² Exclusive humanism sets goals that are bounded by worldly aspirations; human striving no longer seeks meaning or satisfaction in transcendence.⁷³

Taylor’s idea of exclusive humanism, when applied to the Chaplain Corps, describes a constraint on Army Chaplains who point Soldiers beyond the physical domain to hope beyond this



world alone. Chaplains cannot assume that Soldiers believe in transcendence. A loss of transcendence narrows the horizons of hope.⁷⁴ This consideration influences an Army Chaplain's guidance to Soldiers about many things, but most obviously about the issue of suffering. The question "What's in it for me?" takes on new shape in a secular age.⁷⁵ This age places greater emphasis on short-term gain over long-term character goals or ideals such as duty, patriotism, service, and sacrifice. These ideals are important to service in the military; every Soldier needs sufficient meaning to endure suffering well. Thinking through the exclusive humanism concept can help the Chaplain Corps clarify whether its mission caters to those goals and self-consciously leaves space for the transcendent in its mission and ministry.

The earth-bound goals and narrowed horizons *vis a vis* the transcendent of exclusive humanism are reinforced by another of Taylor's concepts, a boundary or perimeter that he calls the "immanent frame." The immanent frame is "a constructed social space that frames our lives entirely within a natural (rather than supernatural) order."⁷⁶ Immanence contrasts with transcendence; in fact, they are opposites.⁷⁷ The immanent frame is characterized by the practice of turning inward away from the supernatural.⁷⁸ Just as exclusive humanism seeks no goals requiring transcendence, the immanent frame acts something like an ideological ceiling or "buffer" on the supernatural. It keeps out the transcendent by habituating a society and culture to this new inward orientation.⁷⁹ These concepts work in tandem and are mutually reinforcing. The transcendent is checked at the door. The immanent frame automatically devalues the cultural currency of the supernatural.⁸⁰ Whereas transcendence

points beyond the natural to the supernatural, immanence turns human focus inward.

The immanent frame effects the conditions of belief for everyone living in that frame.⁸¹ It also goes a long way to explain the difficulty of pastoral ministry in this OE. Smith adds, "we now inhabit this self-sufficient immanent order, even if we believe in transcendence."⁸² In a real sense: "we're all secular now."⁸³

Army Chaplains today provide RS in an OE characterized by the immanent frame. Broad Army spiritual readiness doctrine supports meaningful diversity while affirming the spiritual domain and allowing for transcendence. Making readiness and resilience the goal of all spiritual readiness practices in the Army could be understood as primarily being concerned with humanism's values in the immanent frame. By catering to exclusive humanism, assuming the transcendent is not essential, we take the spiritual out of the spiritual. Spiritual readiness doctrine should acknowledge the practical limits of spiritual readiness goals that do not depend on transcendence.

Contemporary Dynamics Relevance and Competition

Taylor's conceptions of Secular3, exclusive humanism, and the immanent frame are tools that the Army Chaplain Corps can use to engage the unique challenges and opportunities of the 21st century RS OE. They address significant challenges such as the OE's effects on Chaplains' perceived relevance and RS competition within the immanent frame.

Is ministry more difficult now than other eras? Pastoral ministry has always been a challenge. Every age has trials. But the immanent frame imposes unique

constraints on chaplains. Consider the effect on chaplains of laboring to bring transcendence to bear in the immanent frame. The OE devalues the currency that many use to cultivate spiritual readiness. This frame downplays the chaplain's legitimacy to growing numbers of people who fail to see the necessity of this role. This reality can explain the loss of status religious professionals and religious institutions have experienced over the past several generations.⁸⁴ The twin factors of loss of status and the downplaying of transcendence also informs ministry burnout. Some religious professionals experience excessive strain on marriage and family, compassion fatigue, high stress, loneliness, etc.⁸⁵

These realities reflect a condition Taylor describes as the "malaise of immanence."⁸⁶ He writes, "It is as though living in a world free of transcendence, enchantment and organization around divine action has given us a freedom that leaves a [unique] discomfort."⁸⁷ This has particular implications for religious ministry professionals. Theologian Andrew Root says the malaise of immanence can lead disillusioned pastors to feel as if God and their own pastoral work are not necessary.⁸⁸ The effects of cultural disregard for the transcendent leads to an implied message of irrelevance to those whose profession relies on the transcendent.⁸⁹ Chaplains can be tempted to believe that message and devalue their ministry accordingly; alternatively, it can be a catalyst to spiritual growth and engagement. Many Army Chaplains experience marginalization even as they provide meaningful RS. This dynamic comes with the territory and has the potential to disorient as well as encourage. Army doctrine highlights the Army Chaplain's importance and the

centrality of the role.⁹⁰ Chaplains require a strong pastoral identity to weather a spiritually austere environment. They need deep spiritual roots to nourish their experience of God and to lead Soldiers spiritually.

This doctrinal stance is in tension with another challenge, which is competition between professionals within the immanent frame.⁹¹ Everyone must be value-added to keep their seat at the table. Chaplains do work that is clearly non-religious (e.g., non-religious retreats, ethics and suicide prevention briefs, etc.).⁹² This sort ministry, on some views, is simply the cost of doing business in the immanent frame. An added element that intensifies this reality of competition is that many providers now labor in what was traditionally the domain of chaplains (behavioral health counselors, etc.).⁹³ Given this role reversal, are chaplains really competitive when serving the goals of exclusive humanism in the immanent frame? Yes and no. Spiritual health and resilience are essential aspects of human flourishing regardless of one's spiritual horizon.⁹⁴ However removing the necessity of transcendence does more than marginalize chaplains—it fundamentally neutralizes them. If this trajectory continues in this context, over time they will lose institutional relevance.⁹⁵

These challenges draw attention to the stakes of doing chaplain ministry within the context of the immanent frame and to meet the goals of exclusive humanism. It may be tempting for religious professionals to romanticize a Secular¹ world where tending the sacred was the most important thing a society did.⁹⁶ The frameworks I have been discussing inform Chaplain Corps efforts in relation to opportunities for a type of explicit ministry beyond the immanent frame with practices that re-enchant and depend

on the transcendent. They also inform efforts to serve a group within the Army: No-Religious Preference (NRP) Soldiers. However, it is impossible to turn back time and this nostalgia is also short-sighted.⁹⁷

Chaplains have unique ministry opportunities in the immanent frame OE. Chaplains can sharpen their focus and deepen their impact by clearly distinguishing ministry initiatives between “immanent frame” goals and “beyond the frame” goals.⁹⁸ Ministry beyond the frame (BTF) will explicitly connect with transcendence through prayer, sacred text ministry, sacramental care, etc.

Ministry BTF uniquely cultivates spiritual readiness and brings supernatural light. It provides spiritual answers to the problem of suffering a secular culture simply does not have.⁹⁹ In a time plagued by unrest, conflict, and loss, human beings require hope beyond anything that the immanent frame can supply. Suffering is a direct threat to exclusive humanism because death and despair impose permanent limits on human aspiration that are already constrained by the immanent frame.¹⁰⁰ This is particularly important in a military context because Soldiers risk their lives for the mission. Ministry BTF can nurture spiritual readiness in this world and prepare Soldiers for possible death. Those experiencing violence on behalf of our Nation deserve as much. Ministry BTF can adequately prepare them to die with hope and confidence. It would seem hard to sustain the ideal of ultimate sacrifice apart from transcendent ideals. Ministry BTF resources the servant-leadership required to sacrifice self for others.

Chaplains can re-enchant the RS OE by making the spiritual both explicit and comprehensible.¹⁰¹ This is necessary because the spiritual domain remains

contested for both believers and non-believers alike.¹⁰² The Chaplain Corps must adapt to these operating conditions. Individual chaplains can be sensitive to differences and disagreement while striving for depth and spiritual readiness goals that meet Army's mandate by moving from generic discussions about the spiritual domain to conversations that are deep and clear.

Soldiers who identify as “No Religious Preference” (NRP) need this support. The NRP demographic is growing fast.¹⁰³ The contested spiritual domain presents NRP Soldiers with overwhelming spiritual options.¹⁰⁴ The NRP demographic reflects dissatisfaction and loss of confidence not only with institutional religion but also with secular institutions.¹⁰⁵ This disillusionment has significant implications for NRPs and for those whose profession depends on the transcendent. The “malaise of immanence” also exerts itself on Soldiers: “It is not that meaning, rites of passages, and the significance of the ordinary have been annihilated; it is just that they have been hollowed out, repurposed for ends other than experiencing the divine. This is why it feels like a malaise.”¹⁰⁶

This environment is an opportunity to rediscover ministry BTF. Meeting the challenge of this OE requires wisdom, character, and skill. Chaplains at the tactical and operational levels must expand Soldiers' spiritual lexicon. This expansion involves using precise and clear language, not generic spiritual readiness language. This precision and clarity comes when chaplains embody their distinct religious tradition with theological depth and gravity. Following from this, chaplains should also aim to re-enchant the OE with “signals of transcendence,”¹⁰⁷ evidences of

the supernatural that pierce through the natural world.¹⁰⁸ Phenomena like gratitude, wonder, laughter, longing, justice, mystery, beauty, truth, love, etc., are all signals of transcendence.¹⁰⁹ These open spiritual windows within the immanent frame and subversively

challenge assumptions of an overly confident, exclusive humanism.¹¹⁰

The historic Chaplain Corps mission statement is saturated with significance within and beyond the immanent frame. What exhortation could be more BTF than to “bring God to Soldiers and

Soldiers to God”?¹¹¹ The work of the Army Chaplain, “at such a time as this,”¹¹² requires messy particularity. Working in this way meets the growing need of Soldiers not yet spiritually ready, drifting without spiritual roots, in need of a (re)enchanted spiritual Shepherd.

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NOTES

- 1 Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2007), 2-3.
- 2 James KA Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014) 60. Vocabulary.com definition of contested, accessed April 23, 2021 <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/contested>. Contested means highly disputed and questioned.
- 3 Department of the Army, *Army Regulation 165-1: Army Chaplain Corps Activities* (Washington DC: Department of the Army, 23 June, 2015), para 1-5, 11. https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/r165_1.pdf. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 7-22: Holistic Health and Fitness* (Washington, DC, Department of the Army, October 2020) Ch. 10., 113-119. https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/ARN30714-FM_7-22-000-WEB-1.pdf
- 4 Office of the Chief of Chaplains Correspondent, email message to Chaplain Corps, April 14, 2021.
- 5 Taylor's book *A Secular Age* discusses many other concepts. The three selected are the most foundational to understanding Taylor and relevant to the issue of cultivating spiritual readiness.
- 6 Department of the Army, *Holistic Health and Fitness*, FM 7-22, para 10-1, 13.
- 7 Department of the Army, *Holistic Health and Fitness*, FM 7-22, v-vii. Consider the precise information in the Tables section that ultimately advocates for optimal performance and favorable outcomes.
- 8 Department of the Army, *Holistic Health and Fitness*, FM 7-22. The point is to highlight a contrast between general and specific language. Compare the space committed to each of the five domains discussed in the Field Manual: Physical: 59 pages, Mental: 12 pages, Sleep: 14 pages, Nutrition: 17 pages, Spiritual; 7 pages. Combining the physical with nutrition and sleep you have 90 pages of “particularity” vs 7 pages of broad outline.
- 9 James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2020) 204-205.
- 10 Department of the Army, *Holistic Health and Fitness*, FM 7-22, para 10-11 to 10-21.
- 11 Department of the Army, *Holistic Health and Fitness*, FM 7-22, para 10-22 to 10-27.
- 12 Department of the Army, *Holistic Health and Fitness*, FM 7-22, para 10-4 to 10-8.
- 13 Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Department of the Army Pamphlet 165-19: Moral Leadership*, (Washington DC: Department of the Army, 27 November, 2020), para, 2-3, d., 4
- 14 Taylor, *Secular Age*, 3.
- 15 Taylor, *Secular Age*, 3, 12.
- 16 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 13. See also: Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014) 2-3.
- 17 Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Moral Leadership*, para, 2-3, c., 4.
- 18 Department of the Army, Army Regulation 600-63: Army Health Promotion (Washington, DC, Department of the Army, 14 April 2015) 6-2, a-b. 30. https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/r2/policydocs/r600_63.pdf
- 19 Department of the Army, *Holistic Health and Fitness*, 10-1, 113. It follows: “Spiritual readiness develops the personal qualities a person needs in times of stress, hardship, and tragedy. These qualities come from religious, philosophical, or human values and form the basis for character, disposition, decision making, and integrity. People develop their spiritual readiness from diverse value systems that stem from their religious, philosophical, and human values. The spiritual readiness domain is inclusive and universally vital to all personnel no matter their background, philosophy, or religion. It applies to both religious and non-religious persons and concepts.”
- 20 Department of the Army, *Holistic Health and Fitness*, 10-1, 113.
- 21 Office of the Chief of Chaplains, U.S. Army Chaplain Corps “*Communications Playbook First Quarter FY2021*” (Washington, DC Department of the Army, 2020) 2. <https://www.spirit-filled.org/documents/USARMYCHAPLAINCORPSCOMMUNICATIONPLAYBOOKFY211STQTR.PDF>
- 22 Department of the Army, *Holistic Health and Fitness*, 10-1, 113. The point is not to argue rightness or wrongness but to highlight the conditions of effective spiritual readiness.
- 23 Department of the Army, *Holistic Health and Fitness*, 10-1, 113.
- 24 Department of the Army, *Army Techniques Publication 1-05.04: Religious Support and Internal Advisement* (Washington DC: Department of the Army, March, 2017), Appendix A. https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/Details.aspx?PUB_ID=1001990
- 25 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, ix-xi.
- 26 Colin Hansen (ed). *Our Secular Age: Ten Years of Reading and Applying Charles Taylor* (Deerfield: The Gospel Coalition, 2017).

- 27 Andrew Root, *Faith Formation in a Secular Age: Responding to the Church's Obsession with Youthfulness*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), x.
- 28 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 25. He asks specifically: "why was it virtually impossible not to believe in God in, say, 1500 in our Western society, while in 2000 many of us find this not only easy, but even inescapable?" Taylor summarizes this issue: "...there has been a titanic change in our western civilization. We have changed not just from a condition where most people [assumed belief in God and the supernatural] to one in which almost no one is capable of this, but all see their option as one among many...We have also changed from a condition in which belief was the default option...to a condition in which for more and more people [anti-supernatural belief systems] seem ...the only plausible ones." Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 12.
- 29 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 2-3. A secular age is largely understood as a historical moment when believing in the existence of God is more difficult than disbelieving in God.
- 30 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 12. Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 18. Smith notes that "Taylor is concerned with the 'conditions of belief' – a shift in the plausibility conditions that make something believable or unbelievable."
- 31 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 3, 12.
- 32 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 60-61.
- 33 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 60-61. Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 60-61.
- 34 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 4-5, 34-35.
- 35 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 25-27.
- 36 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 28-29. Smith writes: "Generally disenchantment is taken to simply be a matter of naturalization: the magical "spiritual" world is dissolved and we are left with the machinations of matter. But Taylor's account of disenchantment has a different accent, suggesting that this is primarily a shift in the location of meaning, moving it from "the world" into "the mind." Significance no longer inheres in things; rather, meaning/significance are a property of minds who perceive meaning internally."
- 37 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 27-29.
- 38 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 30-33.
- 39 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 34-35.
- 40 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 37-38.
- 41 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 28-29. He contrasts with an enchanted world: "To sense the force of this shift, we need to appreciate how this differs from the 'enchanted' premodern imaginary where all kinds of nonhuman things mean—are loaded with meaning—independent of human perception or attribution. In this premodern, enchanted universe, it was also assumed that power resided in things, which is precisely why things like relics or the Host could be invested with spiritual power."
- 42 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 27-29.
- 43 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 27.
- 44 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 27-29.
- 45 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 20-21.
- 46 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 20-21.
- 47 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 142. See also: Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 15. Or: Andrew Root, *Faith Formation in a Secular Age*: 103. Root clarifies: "our culture has little room for belief in a God, who is both transcendent and personal, who acts to bring forth an all-new reality, promising transformation."
- 48 Andrew Root, *Faith Formation in a Secular Age*, 104-105. Root observes: "...all people sought the sacred. The point of life was to commune with, even to be possessed by, a transcendent force."
- 49 Andrew Root, *Faith Formation in a Secular Age*, 106-107. Root elaborates: "In Secular 1 there was a perceived difference between temporal realms; in Secular 2 this distinct divide disappeared, as the human will became the driving power of reality. Defining the sacred as the eternal plane that breaks into the temporal became impossible, because the independent reality of eternity became more and more unbelievable. There were still sacred realities, but they were located almost completely in the institutions made by the minds of human willing. To say "secular" was not to say "that which is bound in the temporal plane in contrast to the eternal" (as you would in Secular 1.) Rather, to say "secular" in Secular 2 meant "a particular space that was a-religious." It was (is) a space where the willing of human minds promises to be absent religion. In turn, the sacred is now a unique space where human willing is allowed to seek the interest of the religious. It is a distinct and separate location where religious belief and practice are allowed their freedom."
- 50 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 21.
- 51 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 3. Taylor writes of this condition: "secularity in this sense is a matter of the whole context of understanding in which our moral, spiritual or religious experience and search takes place."
- 52 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 21-23.
- 53 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 26. He writes: "What characterizes secularity3—and the secular3 age—is not merely privative. The emergence of the secular is also bound up with the production of a new option...a way of constructing meaning and significance without any reference to the divine or transcendence...The secular is not simply a remainder; it is a sum, created by addition, a product of intellectual multiplication."
- 54 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 47.
- 55 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 3, 539. The historical timelines marking distinct changes from Secularity1, 2 and 3 are difficult to pin down, as Taylor highlights (see: 423-426). However, in a simplified sense we could say Secular1 corresponds to the pre-modern or early modern period; Secular2 covers the high modern period; and Secular3 emerges in the postmodern period. Of note for Chaplains, the US Army often functions in a Secular2 sense by the ways it acknowledges but compartmentalizes religion (Andrew Root, *Faith Formation in a Secular Age*, 106-109).
- 56 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 3.
- 57 Andrew Root, *Faith Formation in a Secular Age*, 117.
- 58 Andrew Root, *The Pastor in a Secular Age* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019) 22-23.
- 59 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 45-46.
- 60 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 62. Smith observes: "We find ourselves caught between myriad options for pursuing meaning, significance and fullness."
- 61 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 19.
- 62 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 47. Smith, using Taylor defines the Social Imaginary as: "Different from an intellectual system or framework, 'broader and deeper than the intellectual schemes people may entertain when they think about social reality in a disengaged mode,' a social imaginary is 'the way ordinary people 'imagine' their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms, it is carried in images, stories, legends, etc. (pp.171-172)" 143.
- 63 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 47.
- 64 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 18.
- 65 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 19. Taylor adds: "a secular age is one in which the eclipse of all goals beyond human flourishing becomes conceivable."
- 66 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 47-49.
- 67 James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 74. Philosopher James Sire defines humanism as "the overall attitude that human beings are of special value; their aspirations, their thoughts, their yearnings are significant. There is as well an emphasis on the human person."
- 68 Smith, *How (not) to be Secular*, 26. The right conditions needed to be in place prior to society being able "to imagine exclusive humanism as a viable vision of significance."
- 69 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 27-28.
- 70 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 19-20.
- 71 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 20.
- 72 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 19-20.
- 73 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 20-21.
- 74 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 122-123.
- 75 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 84-85.
- 76 Smith, *How (not) to be Secular*, 141. Smith adds, the immanent frame: "is the circumscribed space of the modern social imaginary that precludes transcendence." Smith concisely summarizes Taylor's view of the immanent frame which involves other important concepts outside the scope of this paper. Taylor, *Secular Age*, 542. Taylor writes: "So the buffered identity of the disciplined individual moves in a constructed social space, where instrumental rationality is a key value, and time is pervasively secular. All of this makes up what I want to call 'the immanent frame'... this frame constitutes a 'natural' order, to be contrasted to a 'supernatural' one, an 'immanent' world, over against a possible 'transcendent' one."
- 77 Wikipedia.org definition of immanence, accessed July 09, 2021 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanence>
- 78 Smith, *How (not) to be Secular*, 141.
- 79 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 27, 542.
- 80 I'm using the metaphor of monetary currency. Just as one type of currency works in one environment and not in another (you can't spend U.S. Dollars in Europe or use the Euro in America), so too does the value of spiritual currency get devalued in the immanent frame.
- 81 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 28. He elaborates: "...this shift to a new "background" is not just true for exclusive humanists; even believers believe in a way that also generally takes for granted this new background. So the shift to a secular age not only makes exclusive humanism a live option for us, it also changes religious communities. We're all secular now."
- 82 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 93. This is an oversimplified treatment. Even so, the basic concept is useful.
- 83 Smith, *How (Not) to be Secular*, 28.
- 84 E. Brooks Holifield, *God's Ambassadors: A History of Christian Clergy in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007) 327-332.
- 85 Wayne Cordeiro, *Leading on Empty: Refilling Your Tank and Renewing Your Passion* (Bloomington: Bethany House Publishers, 2009), 32-33.
- 86 Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*, 60-64.
- 87 Andrew Root, *The Pastor in a Secular Age*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019) 6.
- 88 Root, *Pastor in a Secular Age*, 6.

- 89 Root, *Pastor in a Secular Age*, 22-23.
- 90 Department of the Army, *Holistic Health and Fitness*, para.10-9, para.10-32.
- 91 Office of the Chief of Chaplains Correspondent, email message to Chaplain Corps, April 14, 2021.
- 92 Separating the "secular from religious" reflects a secular 2 emphasis."
- 93 Andrew Root, *The Pastor in a Secular Age*, 12. Root sees this as a process happening throughout the 20th Century. He writes: "As the twentieth century dawned, the world the pastor inhabited could be imagined for only and exclusively human flourishing, period...After all, [if] the pastor's job was not to take people into sacred time or uphold the sacredness of ordinary life but to help people flourish...it appeared that the new secular disciplines of psychology and sociology were much more helpful in this vein."
- 94 Even the goals of exclusive humanism depend on a definition of human flourishing that flows from the spiritual domain (e.g, values-based ethics, character and identity formation, etc).
- 95 Andrew Root, *The Pastor in a Secular Age*, 12. It is worth considering how augmenting the spiritual domain with clinical language and credentials is a way of providing chaplains with more social capital and cultural legitimacy.
- 96 Andrew Root, *Faith Formation in a Secular Age*, 104.
- 97 Smith, *How (Not) to be Secular*, 92-93. Smith observes: "On [Taylor's] account our secular age is haunted, and always has been. Certainly belief is contested and contestable in our secular age. There's no going back. Even seeking enchantment will always and only be re-enchantment after disenchantment."
- 98 Smith, *How (Not) to be Secular*, 92-93. How one inhabits the immanent frame conditions how it is experienced.
- 99 Timothy Keller, *Making Sense of God: An Invitation to the Skeptical* (New York: Penguin, 2016) 72-73.
- 100 Keller, *Making Sense of God*, 155-156.
- 101 Smith, *How (Not) to be Secular*, 61. See also: Root, *Pastor in a Secular Age*, 42-43.
- 102 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 11. Taylor writes: "This is typical of the modern condition...we live in a condition where we cannot help but be aware that there are a number of different construals, view which intelligent, reasonably undeluded people, of good will, can and do disagree on."
- 103 "Military Religious Demographics," Military Association of Atheists and Free Thinkers, accessed 23 April 2021. <http://militaryatheists.org/demographics/>
- 104 Smith, *How (Not) to be Secular*, 62.
- 105 Yuval Levin "The Case for Wooden Pews: Why Hard Religion is More Important than Ever." Deseret.com January 18 2021. <https://www.deseret.com/indepth/2021/1/18/21564215/why-hard-religion-is-important-american-faith-yuval-levin-gallup-declining-trust-in-institutions>. See also: Smith, *How (Not) to be Secular*, 62-63.
- 106 Andrew Root, *The Pastor in a Secular Age*, 7-8.
- 107 Peter Berger, "A Rumor of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural" (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1969) 52-53. Berger writes: "By signals of transcendence I mean phenomena that are to be found within the domain of our 'natural' reality but appear to point beyond that reality." See also: Joseph Berger "Peter Berger, Theologian Who Fought 'God is Dead' Movement Dies at 88. The New York Times, June 29, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/29/us/obituary-peter-berger-dead-theologian-sociologist.html>
- 108 Smith, *How (Not) to be Secular*, 62-63. These are similar to what Taylor calls "cross-pressures."
- 109 Berger, A Rumor of Angels, 52-75. I owe this insight to Os Guinness given at a public lecture at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, 1998.
- 110 Smith, *How (Not) to be Secular*, 62-63.
- 111 "Overview of Army Chaplains," U.S Army Recruiting Command Official Website, accessed April 23, 2021, https://recruiting.army.mil/MRB_ReligiousServices/
- 112 Esther 4:14, English Standard Version.

Welcome to the Forum of the *U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Journal*, a place for conversation about topics that are relevant to the Corps. Contributors to the Forum read the same text, reflect on it, and then react to one another's reflection. This dynamic creates space for interchange and exchange among our contributors.

Chaplain (Colonel) Ibraheem Raheem, Sergeant Major Daniel Roberts, and Chaplain (Major) Delana Small join the discussion. They are responding to "[From Diversity to Pluralism](#)," a piece that appears on the website of Harvard University's "The Pluralism Project." The text explores the idea that: "Pluralism' and 'diversity' are sometimes used as if they were synonymous, but diversity—splendid, colorful, and perhaps threatening—is not pluralism."

REFLECTION ON "From Diversity to Pluralism"

by Sergeant Major Daniel Roberts

"From Diversity to Pluralism" makes a strong case for looking beyond how many people think about diversity. For many, diversity does not require one to move beyond the mere tolerance of people and ideas from other cultures and religions. Pluralism, on the other hand, takes a more active approach. Pluralism does not merely accept or tolerate others, but actively engages and seeks to understand their beliefs, culture, and community desires.

To unpack this opinion, the author first provides a summary of approaches to diversity: exclusion, assimilation, and pluralism. Exclusionists completely close the door on foreigners, while assimilators allow people with different beliefs, customs, and languages into their communities only if the new people are willing to let go of their traditions and embrace the current residents' culture. Pluralists meet the author's ideal by actively engaging and embracing cultures from other nations and religions while maintaining their own sense of truth.

In general, it is hard to disagree with the author's point of view. Who would be against a peaceful, accepting community in which everyone feels respected and able

to experience an equal share of resources and agency; a place in which there are no dominant narratives or institutions? Is such an ideal community possible?

The author provides five principles for achieving the ideal pluralistic community. The first guiding principle is active dialogue between differing groups. Parties must freely exchange ideas with the purpose of learning about each other and appreciating the special values each person or group brings to the table that the author of "From Diversity to Pluralism" imagines.

The second principle is action that goes beyond simple tolerance. Tolerance is the lack of resistance. One can tolerate his or her neighbor without actually knowing them or spending any time with them. Pluralism means visiting the neighbor or inviting them over. Both steps require each person or group to lower barriers, accept the discomfort of hearing ideas with which they may disagree, and find a way to appreciate each other.

The third concept is much trickier. The author suggests that true pluralism requires members of diverse groups

to both maintain and share their deeply held values with each other: “In the public square of a pluralist society, commitments are not left at the door, but invited in. People of every faith or of none can be themselves, with all their particularities, while engaging in the creation of a civil society.” What the author does not explain is what to do when the deeply held beliefs of one group sharply conflict with the deeply held beliefs of another group. To make pluralism work in this case, one or both of the groups must compromise, or at least not act on, their deeply held beliefs.

The fourth and fifth principles require commitments—commitment to the U.S. Constitutional principles of free speech and the pledge to bring one’s beliefs to the table of public discourse. As with previously stated principles, there are difficulties that must be overcome. In recent years, the U.S. has seen clashes over the First Amendment of the Constitution, such as in the case of the cake makers. The bakers believed that their religion forbade them from making a wedding cake for a homosexual couple, and the couple felt that this was a form of illegal discrimination. Both parties brought their deeply held beliefs to the table, but they could not be reconciled with each other. The government had to step into the fray.

Pluralism, as a national and institutional ideal, is a heartwarming concept. At its core is the idea that everyone is created equal and has the same rights as everyone else

to live life on their own terms. The version of pluralism that the author espouses puts no ideal above another, builds no high towers from which to view others from above, and does not diminish anyone’s beliefs. The only value that trumps all others is the value of pluralism itself.

What the article lacks is a discussion of the more difficult, and perhaps most important, issues around pluralism. How can or should pluralism work when two groups cannot reconcile their deeply held beliefs? Such beliefs are the ones that are most likely to cause conflict and the least likely to be put aside. How are such conflict resolved? Does the government step in and potentially violate the first amendment by choosing one religion over another? Does brute force win the day? Should the majority decide? The author references multiple incidents in which minority groups were discriminated against and made it clear that she does not consider majority rule to be the appropriate instrument of pluralism.

I do not have the answers to these questions, but they are important problems to consider. Any discussion about diversity, inclusion, and pluralism must include the complexities of enacting those ideals. If we only espouse idealistic principles but do not weigh into the deep waters of potential conflicts, then we are always going to be frustrated by not reaching the ideal without ever understanding what it might take to get there, or even if it is possible.

Sergeant Major Roberts currently serves as the Chief Religious Affairs NCO in the U.S. Army Reserve Command Chaplain Directorate. His duties include collaborating with the Office of the Chief of Chaplains to help shape chaplain accessioning policy for the Army Reserve (USAR); developing USAR chaplaincy training policy and initiatives; and advising the USAR Command Chaplain, Human Resources Command and the Chaplain Corps Regimental Sergeant Major on religious affairs NCO issues. His previous assignments include the 82nd Airborne Division, the 25th Infantry Division, the United States Army Civilian Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne), the 99th Readiness Division, the 108th Training Command (IET), and the Medical Recruiting Brigade. SGM Roberts earned his doctorate in Management in Organizational Leadership with a specialization in Information Systems Technology from the University of Phoenix.

RESPONSE TO

Sergeant Major Roberts's Reflection

by Chaplain (Colonel) Ibraheem Raheem

Sergeant Major Roberts' reflection was a very thorough response to the article. I enjoyed the way he gave a succinct and practical general overview of the article. His style appeared to take in the ideas offered while offering his own thoughts and challenges alongside the article's main points. I enjoyed this easy-to-follow method. I was curious as to why he left off his name and background from the article. Having this small bit of information would be helpful for me to gain greater awareness from where he stood and what types of experiences inform his speech.

He raised the point, and rightfully so, around how the real challenges with diversity and inclusion as they pertain to pluralism eventually centers on areas of conflict and compromise over deeply held beliefs. While I agree that difference is an important area of dialogue among diverse groups, I disagree that it needs

to be a source of conflict or compromise. In addition, the original article's argument about the necessity of assimilation for me is also misleading. For me, difference presents the opportunity to learn about what we do not know about different people, places, cultures, faiths etc. Furthermore, the understanding that because I believe a particular way means it is the correct way or the only way is arrogance on my part. I have learned a great deal about ways to improve as an individual as well as in a community context from interacting with and learning from other faith communities.

To address my dislike of how the term assimilation is often understood, I offer a recipe that brings together various ingredients that have their own nutritional value, unique flavor, and their own distinct appearance. For instance, foods like breads, meats, poultry, eggs, milk, etc.,

are appreciated by eaters and cooks alike as distinct and valuable individual foods. However, when brought together they offer a multitude of different meals to satisfy individual tastes, appetites, and nutritional needs. We as individuals and communities also offer our own unique gifts to society, and when individuals and communities work together the synergy brings something totally different that neither the individuals nor separate communities could offer by themselves.

Therefore, I do not believe the question whether diversity leads to conflict or compromise. Instead, I believe it is an opportunity to learn about and from others and to appreciate the unique qualities that others bring to our lives and our whole society. Diversity is an opportunity to benefit from what uniqueness brings to us as individuals, collective communities, societies, and a great nation.

RESPONSE TO

Sergeant Major Roberts's Reflection

by Chaplain (Major) Delana I. Small

Sergeant Major Roberts investigates the tenability of Harvard's article, "From Diversity to Pluralism," with earnestness and receptivity. His reflection abridges the highlights of the article, offering a helpful

executive summary, while also assessing the feasibility of practicing pluralism in the current religious and political milieu. This reflection encourages readers to "read" pluralism in the "news headlines,"

embedding the conversation of pluralism within the confines of concrete reality. Roberts asks hard questions and addresses taboos that are neglected in Harvard's study, but remain paramount

for productive conversations about pluralism today. Overall, Roberts presents a timely, sober look on the demands of a real-world pluralism in the U.S. today.

Roberts revisits the original article's articulation of responses to diversity: exclusion, assimilation, and pluralism. Roberts identifies pluralism as the ideal response to diversity, recalling the article's vision for a utopia where individuals maintain agency and voice. But Roberts quickly reveals his apprehension that such a place exists. He intermittently relates his doubts as he traces the interlocutor's definition of pluralism through five principles. Pluralism defined as active dialogue and true engagement instead of as facades of tolerance prove obtainable goals for a community united in its diversity. Though the article insists a pluralistic society emerges out of coexisting, respected differences, Roberts acknowledges that the possibility of discord and irreconcilable dissonance undermine the author's idyllic community.

Where Roberts amplifies this discussion on pluralism is his turn toward government and legislative responsibility.

The language and image of a table that the original text presents as the seat of unity and collaboration is a reminder that inclusion and exclusion are acts and decisions that are ultimately adjudicated by someone. Inevitable conflict in a pluralistic society presumes mediation; Roberts wonders whether this mediation requires government intervention, majority rule, or even use of force. Roberts invites readers to imagine the limitations of the first amendment in these scenarios and to consider the legal implications as applied pluralism evolves. He associates terms like majority and government, positing the potential for "unofficial" state religion to dictate religious rights and usurp an achieved pluralism.

This pragmatic, authentic response to "From Diversity to Pluralism" issues readers a mandate to think deeply about current events and civil issues. It provokes readers to consider how matters of religion and conscience underscore these situations, whether subliminally or overtly. This reflection further urges champions of pluralism to consider religious issues within society over time, to consider the secondary and

tertiary effects of religious conflict and collaboration. Sergeant Major Roberts alludes to the phenomenon of agency shifting from individuals to institutions. This only occurs over time. As individuals initially promote and contend for religious accommodation, each cause remains an individual cause. But as groups assemble and pursue their religious freedoms, often these accommodations become institutionalized over time. An example of this may be a school district that votes to include Yom Kippur or Good Friday as a school holiday.

The institutionalized consequences of religious conflict or collaboration over time could result in, for instance, changes in law—civil, health, family, or immigration—the emergence of new religions, or even the dissolution of religious bodies. The outcome of today's religious encounters are tomorrow's wars or triumphs. The relevance and necessity for pluralism to function well cannot be overstated. Sergeant Major Roberts brings this imperative to the forefront and calls all to walk wisely with charity and perseverance.



REFLECTION ON “From Diversity to Pluralism”

by Chaplain (Colonel) Ibraheem Raheem

“From Diversity to Pluralism” is a relevant and timely article for Army Chaplain Corps members to reflect on during a pivotal moment in our country’s history. I am delighted to reflect upon its meaning and implications as well as to apply its overall message. As a chaplain who has served in the U.S. Army for now over twenty years as a chaplain and before that for over ten years as an enlisted Licensed Practical Nurse, I found the content of this article engaging. In addition, I found the article timely for addressing the current and persistent challenges facing Service members around the subject of practicing their faith openly while they serve in a predominantly Christian-centered orientation of religious practice. As an Imam and Muslim chaplain, I was both encouraged and disturbed by some of the article’s details. I was encouraged by the overall message that the article calls us to and charges us to embody moving forward. I was disturbed by the reality that a pastor would conclude that burning my sacred text was meaningful for him as a leader of his community. Yet his actions are no different from other leaders who do similarly destructive things instead of engaging in the relationship-building opportunities to which the article calls us.

The article offers five ways to fully demonstrate a healthy understanding and practice of pluralism. The first is *active engagement*, which I agree is the beginning of establishing real working relationships between and among people of differing faith backgrounds. In so doing we create opportunities for learning. As we learn from and about each other we begin to remove prevalent stereotypes and misconceptions. Second is to *distinguish tolerance from true knowledge* while learning about similarities and differences that are an important and elusive part of interfaith relations. Third is to identify and *hold on to our distinct differences* in place of having to leave parts of who we are to be fully accepted by others. This phenomenon is common in military service and is costly to a person’s

spiritual journey. Fourth is the connection to *the First Amendment rights* of all Americans to practice their faith freely and to not see any one faith as the state religion. This is also an important point to raise in that minority faith groups are often marginalized under the belief that the dominant faith groups are more valid. Fifth is the concept of *constructive dialogue* and creating tables that the author imagines make space for and encourage the continuation for this dialogue. I found inspiration learning about the groups and organizations that are already in place for such dialogue to exist.

The bedrock of my understanding of pluralism within my faith lies with the following verses;

(HQ 2:62¹ HQ 2:177² HQ 2:256³ HQ 49:13⁴). I am humbled every time I read these verses because I am reminded that pluralism is something I must always include as part of my functioning in society. The moment I forget that others who live by their religious beliefs are just as committed and important to a society that works for everyone as I am I have lost an important part of my faith. The article does a good job of highlighting how being committed to diversity is not enough, being tolerant is not enough, but being truly knowledgeable in relationship with and working together with diverse faith groups is what truly defines pluralism. Creating an environment of acceptance, engagement, and dialogue that fosters relationships that aim for justice and equity is the divine charge for humanity.

My career as an Army Chaplain has afforded me many opportunities to work for and with people from various faiths and ethnic/cultural backgrounds. This experience confirms both how difficult this is to do (outside of a military context people are more likely to stay within the communities that are familiar to them) as well as how fulfilling it is to bring the above verses that represent a core

part of my faith to life. A culmination of my experience is coming together with students from various faith, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds in Clinical Pastoral Education settings where we engage the subjects of diversity, inclusion, and pluralism as ways to become better

chaplains for the many Service members we serve. In addition, we are interdependent in our roles of ensuring those we serve have access to the highest quality of spiritual care and ability to worship in the way they desire.

Chaplain (Colonel) Ibraheem A. Raheem is a U.S. Army Chaplain and the Director of Clinical Pastoral Education at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, MD. He has served in the Army for over 25 years and is one of eight Muslim Chaplains in the Army. He has a DMin from Erskine Theological Seminary.

NOTES

1 "Verily! Those who believe and those who are Jews and Christians, and Sabians, whoever believes in God and the Last Day and do righteous good deeds shall have their reward with their Lord, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve."

2 "It is not piety, that you turn your faces to the East and to the West. True piety is this: to believe in God, and the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the Prophets, to give of one's substance, however cherished, to

kinsmen, and orphans, the needy, the traveler, beggars, and to ransom the slave, to perform the prayer, to pay the alms. And they who fulfil their covenant when they have engaged in a covenant, and endure with fortitude misfortune, hardship and peril, these are they who are true in their faith, these are the truly god-fearing."

3 "Let there be no compulsion in religion. Correctness has become clear from error. So whosoever disbelieves in idols and believes in God, has laid hold of the most

firm handle that never breaks. God is All-hearing, All-knowing."

4 "We created you from a single pair male and female and made you into nations and tribes that you might know each other (not despise each other). Certainly the most honored of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you."



RESPONSE TO

Chaplain (Colonel) Raheem's Reflection

by Sergeant Major Daniel L. Roberts

Chaplain (Colonel) Raheem agrees with the original author and presents a positive view of pluralism that is easy to agree with. This version of pluralism is active, engaging, and constructive—traits that are helpful for any inter-personal relationship. Raheem suggests that active pluralism is a form of relationship building. It lets individuals from diverse backgrounds and beliefs know that they are cared for and that their perspective matters. Pluralism joins viewpoints to arrive at a more diverse version of community. Raheem says that for someone who does not come from the dominant Christian perspective, a constructive version of pluralism is especially meaningful and necessary to create an inclusive religious community, which is the claim that the Army Chaplain Corps makes for itself.

Raheem also notes the importance of honoring the religious commitments of others. This is an essential element of thoroughgoing pluralism and is beneficial to all. Realizing that someone else's theology is as important to them as one's own beliefs gives rise to engagement that is sensitive. The additional benefit of deep, sensitive, and loving conversations with people from differing faith backgrounds is that a person can learn to respect someone else's point of view while gaining a deeper understanding of one's own beliefs. Pluralism benefits everyone.

Finally, Raheem correctly asserts that the Army Chaplain Corps is predominantly Christian-oriented. To some extent, that makes sense because Christians represent the largest faith group. Pluralism, as Raheem and the original work assert, ensures that minority faith

groups and non-believers alike can feel free to express their faith or lack of faith. As I considered Raheem's reflection and looked back on the "From Diversity to Pluralism" text, it occurred to me that members of the dominant group might be less inclined to see the benefits of pluralism while minority members might be more likely to embrace pluralism. Without understanding the practical benefits for all, majority members could see pluralism as a loss of power while minority groups might see pluralism as the best chance to share the benefits of community membership. To that point, it is important for leaders of the dominant group to continually remind the rank-and-file that pluralism can result in deepened faith for all and a strengthened chaplaincy. Rather than power loss, there is power sharing and strengthened trust, both of which are beneficial to a community.

RESPONSE TO

Chaplain (Colonel) Raheem's Reflection

by Chaplain (Major) Delana I. Small

In responding to "From Diversity to Pluralism," Chaplain (Colonel) Raheem offers a rare, intimate appeal to members of the Chaplain Corps to elevate their

contemporary strategies for inclusion and religious accommodation to, instead, a shared, spiritual call to minister to America's sons and daughters. His

reflection integrates his experiences as a former nurse, Imam, active duty chaplain, and Clinical Pastoral Education director as a vantage point from which to

assess and engage pluralism today. This invaluable perspective affords readers a thorough synopsis of Harvard's project while also offering a cogent critique of pluralism expressed within U. S. today and, more specifically, the Chaplain Corps and the Army.

This reflection immediately confronts the disparity experienced among service members who desire to exercise freely their respective faiths. According to Raheem, those practicing faiths outside Christianity face persistent challenges; he recalls a Christian pastor burning Qur'ans as a religious act. Raheem turns to the five principles outlined in "From Diversity to Pluralism" as a means to inoculate people against anti-pluralistic behaviors. He offers principles, including active engagement and true knowledge in lieu of tolerance, as antidotes to reductive stereotypes and misconceptions. He also illuminates the value of the first amendment in preserving the sanctity of minority faiths, particularly when mainstream faiths appear more "valid."

Drawing from his own sacred text, Raheem reframes his reflection theologically and ontologically. Cultivating pluralism within a society requires a divinely-inspired collaboration where diverse parties operate collectively in pursuit of justice, peace, and equality. Achieving pluralism remains such a great task, it requires more than mere human effort. Through principled engagement, communities like the Army can enjoy a pluralism that truly facilitates religious freedom and grants individuals the sacred space to worship.

Raheem expands the original project's discussion on the first amendment, addressing the pitfalls of society to perceive dominant faiths as more valid than minority religions. He highlights how pluralism's efficacy under these restraints may be compromised when alternative voices are ignored or excluded. This insight broadens the definition of pluralism to include categories of difference not considered in the original text, which primarily emphasized a few mainstream world

religions. Raheem's attention to diversity, inclusion, and representation of non-dominant faith groups ensures all facets of religious differences, expressed in a variety of ways like demographics and even the irreligious, remain central in the larger discussion on pluralism and free exercise.

Raheem's discussion of the validity of underrepresented faith groups resonated with me tremendously. As a theologically conservative, Pentecostal, female chaplain, I observe the limitations of dominant religious voices to perceive, interpret, and share my experiences. In jest, I recall a colleague's shock and outrage when he discovered I rarely receive TA-50 that properly fits my small, female frame, a problem he confessed he rarely faces. Often a "one-size-fits-all," dominant perspective, is applied to praxis and belief, rituals, liturgies, leadership, hermeneutics, spiritual gifts, budgets, and facility usage. I appreciate Chaplain Raheem validating the "other" voices and demonstrating, these voices are valuable.

REFLECTION ON “From Diversity to Pluralism”

by Chaplain (Major) Delana I. Small

As recently as the late nineteenth-century, the Western taxonomy of world religions affirmed a hegemony fixed in Eurocentrism and Protestantism.¹ In this schema, three categories of religious diversity emerged alongside Christianity, according to Tomoko Masuzawa: the monotheistic religions of Judaism and Islam, and a generic catchall for religions outside the European purview.² Religious diversity expanded to include spheres of praxis formerly unknown in places like North America as modernity divested the globe of its boundaries through means like the end of imperialism and technology. This is the American historical narrative Harvard University’s *The Pluralism Project* takes up in the article, “From Diversity to Pluralism.” Pluralism, as posited in this project, remains a response to diversity and a triumph when achieved.

While “From Diversity to Pluralism” offers readers a helpful primer on twentieth-century pluralism in the U.S., its cursory review simplifies the intricacies of pluralism today. Anecdotally, the author of “From Diversity to Pluralism” introduces the idea and image of a table as the place for applied pluralism, where the exchange of ideas commences in neighborhoods, councils, and chaplaincy ministries. The interlocutor labors to define pluralism apart from terms like diversity, tolerance, and relativism, and includes non-Christian American icons as evidence for the vastness of American religious culture. But these efforts seem pedantic and the article appears rather lacking in the depth and scope of diversity discussed. An antiquated paradigm of pluralism emerges, ignoring considerable shifts in the religious appetites of twenty-first century Americans. The author presumes religious identity remains affiliated with race or ethnicity and impediments to interreligious collaboration exist solely because of religion, leaving other social and economic factors unexamined. The interlocutor also neglects another critical detail relevant to the relationship of the free exercise of

religion and pluralism within the U.S. In conjuring the first amendment, the author claims that a shared civic vision and duty unites a population of like-minded, albeit diverse, Americans. The author does not address the potentiality for ever-amplifying pluralism to produce irreconcilable difference and polarization.

The idyllic table the interlocutor imagines as pluralism may not amount to the Arthurian model envisioned, however. For me this raises questions like whose table? and at whose invitation? According to this article, “the Christian church” has set the proverbial table through acts like *Nostra Aetate*. But the Catholic Church issued this statement as an official declaration of reconciliation with the Jews following World War II.³ As a localized measure of peace produced nearly sixty years ago, this declaration may not reflect the pluralistic milieu in the U.S. today.

Similarly, I wonder whether this article captures the disparity of values embodied in the American people today. The forefathers’ unprecedented vision for the free exercise of religion extended rights to Anabaptists, a degree of pluralism almost comical today. But today, the breadth of American pluralism encompasses such a wide range of religious difference that stable values and expressions of patriotism vary wildly. Diversity in the contemporary U. S. calls into conversation Hindus and Jews as well as Wiccans, Seventh-Day Adventists, and Humanists, while also engaging issues of race, gender, and sexuality as part of one’s theological persuasion. Religious pluralism cannot thrive if majority faiths merely summon others to the table; pluralism today renders all religious parties both hosts and guests.

Champions for religious freedom today must not abandon the pluralism of yesteryear, but rather strengthen this vision through innovative strategies and enhanced dialogue.

Facilitators and practitioners of pluralism must settle themselves in pluralism's growing ambiguity, especially as religious identity continues to become intertwined with the political, social, and ethical. Maintaining an appreciation for this unprecedented era and cultivating an agility to pivot with change remains paramount.

The U.S. Army Chaplain Corps and its members remain among those at the cusp of this change while modeling achieved pluralism for a nation suffering from old wounds and new fissures. Pivoting to today's pluralism is not theological surrender, but rather driven by one's theological commitments and Army commission to treat people with dignity and respect. This institution is a collaborative table theoretical in other environments. Thus, all members must take the mission of guest and host seriously within the Chaplain Corps; the onus for shared understanding falls on all parties. Those in low-density faiths and less common demographics bravely extend opportunities for

the education of their peers. They field hard questions that nurture shared understanding. Likewise, those who perceive that the Chaplain Corps reflects their likeness well—denomination, race, gender, life experience, or age—reach out in amenableness and genuine friendship.

Together, the Chaplain Corps keeps its own accountable, current, and kind. Forgiveness begins internally. Collaboration and equity thrive among Unit Ministry Teams, materially, in chapel services, appointed assignments, and voices heard in weekly syncs. Leaders can lean on each other for discernment, best practices, and shared knowledge. Unity—not uniformity—among chaplains and Religious Affairs Specialists prepares the Chaplain Corps for its strategic reach in the face of an ever-changing pluralism. The demands of today's pluralism may just engender a new dawn of harmony and growth within an institution called to nurture hope in America's sons and daughters. This remains a high, but worthy, call.

Chaplain (Major) Delana Small currently serves as a member of the Community Revitalization Division within the Office of the Chief of Chaplains. In this position, Delana and her teammates facilitate Grass Roots ministry innovation to revitalize the Chaplain Corps and the Army writ large. Delana is also pursuing her PhD in Theology at Fordham University and hopes to utilize this capability to further professionalize the Corps.

NOTES

1 Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 13.

2 Masuzawa, *Invention*, 59.

3 James Bernauer, SJ, *Jesuit Kaddish: Jesuits, Jews, and Holocaust Remembrance* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2020).

RESPONSE TO Chaplain (Major) Small's Reflection

by Sergeant Major Daniel L. Roberts

Chaplain Small takes a critical approach to the "From Diversity to Pluralism" article to point out that the essay lacks the depth needed to provide relevant strategies for the complexities of today's society and religious landscape. Small rightly argues that the original article does not include the intersection of religion with social and economic factors. The intersections of race, sexuality, gender roles, and wide-ranging religious diversity all make pluralism difficult to enact because there are many sensitivities embodied in those factors. For instance, some faith groups do not allow women to assume senior leadership roles in the church while others consider women essential to providing holistic leadership. Some religions consider non-heterosexual activity to be a sin while others do not.

In some corners, religiously inspired racism remains. Whether racism exists as a fringe element or is mainstream is debatable but the issue is a major point of discussion within religious and social circles. The question is whether pluralism is a bridging mechanism among diverse peoples or a wedge. The original author argues it is a bridge while Small adds that without an innovative and flexible approach to pluralism it may lead to division, not unity.

While I am intrigued by Small's call to ingenuity and "enhanced dialogue," I wonder what that means. Small does not provide a detailed conceptualization of "innovative strategies," which leaves me with the desire for further dialogue. Small elevates the Army Chaplain Corps as a beacon for such inventive change; she

uses terms like "dignity," "respect," and "friendship" to make her point. In and of themselves, those are not innovative terms. Indeed, any version of pluralism, inclusion, or diversity must include such concepts or be devoid of meaning.

I agree with Small on several points. Pluralism is complex and difficult to realize. Everyone's religious context includes beliefs about gender, sexuality, race, economics, and many other societal constructs. All of these are potential wedge issues. Leaders must understand that ambiguity is part of the formula and simply supplying pithy and cliché talking points will not manifest true pluralism. I am open to Small's call to innovative strategies and would like to hear more about them.

RESPONSE TO Chaplain (Major) Small's Reflection

by Chaplain (Colonel) Ibraheem Raheem

I found Chaplain Small's response professionally written and researched. I enjoyed how she brought in a scholarly appeal to her reflection and a critical lens from her own experience, especially her understanding of how racial, social, and

economic factors intertwine with religious difference but are rarely examined in a way that fully accounts for how these shape the discussion. The overall tone of her response was that the article lacked sincerity about resolving our country's

challenges with diversity and pluralism in modern times. While I agree with her basic argument and the spirit of her critique, I am not sure that the article's intent was to resolve these challenges, but rather to engage faith group

leadership in ways that begin addressing them.

My interpretation of the article was that it set out to highlight the distinction between acknowledging differences and doing the real work of creating a more pluralistic society that learns about, accepts, and appreciates those differences. The position she used to critique the article is what I think of as getting to know more about each other. For example, the article gives the five areas of focus that might structure this work (active engagement, distinguishing tolerance from true knowledge of different groups, holding on to one's identity rather than assimilating, placing emphasis on the First Amendment, and developing an ongoing constructive

dialogue). Yet the individuals and communities themselves would then have to work through the accompanying challenges without assuming there would not be any or that solving them would be simple. However, giving voice to the different points of view, values, and cultural preferences of people can alert us to explore ideas and concepts that we never thought of, imagined, or conceptualized.

Expanding my own understanding of what I thought I knew about another group exposes my blind spots, and forces me to reflect upon things that I previously took for granted. Yes, the terms alone (pluralism and diversity) can become ambiguous when the effort and structure encouraged by the

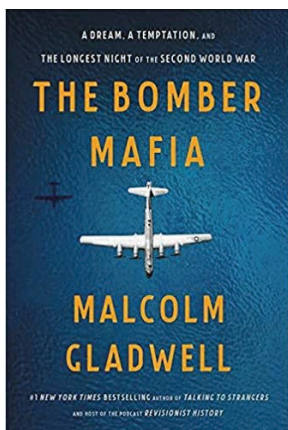
article is lacking. However, when fully engaged over extended periods of time, I believe the format offered in the article is invaluable. Another excellent point made by Chaplain Small was by asking the questions "whose table and at whose invitation." At first glance, these questions seem rhetorical, and the obvious answer would be that the majority religion of Christianity within the majority white, male Anglo-Saxon culture sets the table and issues the invitation. However, once we fully grasp the intent and spirit of the original article's take on pluralism, I become aware that each group invites the other to their tables with opportunities to build new relationships that take us into the ever-evolving future of our country and world around us.



The Bomber Mafia: A Dream, a Temptation, and the Longest Night of the Second World War

by Malcom Gladwell

Reviewed by Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Brian Koyn



On the night of March 9-10, 1945, the U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF) in the Pacific carried out a bombing raid that was so destructive that it made the atomic bomb raids a few months later seem benign by comparison. Using the recently invented napalm, a jellied gasoline developed in 1943 in an Army lab at Harvard University, American bombers set the city of Tokyo on fire. The resulting firestorm created winds that sucked mattresses out of windows, destroyed sixteen square miles of the city, and killed over 100,000 people. The scene was so terrible that aircrews donned their oxygen masks to keep from vomiting due to the red mist in the air and the smell of burning flesh. This raid is the central event that Malcolm Gladwell attempts to understand in his most recent audiobook, *The Bomber Mafia: A Dream, a Temptation, and the Longest Night of the Second World War*. Unlike most audiobooks, which are just a reading of the already existing print book, this book began life as a podcast-style book that was later translated into print by a team of writers. Gladwell takes the listener on journey to understand how exactly the U.S. found itself killing over 100,000 civilians in about six hours, in an act that flew in the face of President Franklin Roosevelt's 1939 call to the world to avoid the "inhuman barbarism"¹ of bombers targeting civilian populations.

Gladwell begins with an examination of the relief of General Haywood Hansell as the Commander of 21st Bomber Command in the South Pacific in January of 1945, and

his replacement by General Curtis LeMay. These men are the personification of two schools of thought within the Army Air Corps before and during World War II. Hansell is the representative of the so-called Bomber Mafia. Hansell was a romantic, old-school aviator who epitomized the Southern aristocrat. Hansell was part of a small group of zealots who came together as instructors at the Air Corps Tactical School (ACTS) at Maxwell Field, Alabama in the days leading up to the war. With religious fanaticism, they developed the concept of daylight, high altitude precision bombing. In their vision of a war still to come, bombers would "put bombs in a pickle barrel from six miles up,"² thereby avoiding the terrible years of slaughter experienced in the trenches of the previous war.

If the concept of daylight, high altitude strategic bombing proposed by the Bomber Mafia is orthodoxy, then Curtis LeMay is the leading heretic. A tough, no-nonsense commander who, in many ways, was the Air Force's answer to George Patton, LeMay was a man of action who seemed to believe that winning covered a multitude of sins. LeMay designed the campaign to firebomb Japanese cities. His campaign to destroy every major Japanese city lasted from the end of 1944 until after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. LeMay famously gave his philosophy of war saying, "I'll tell you what war is about. You've got to kill people, and when you've killed enough they stop fighting."³

Gladwell presents a profoundly moral argument through the exquisite symmetry between the dashing showman Hansell and the gruff, uncaring LeMay. However, as any armchair ethicist understands, hard moral choices in the prosecution of a conflict like WWII are difficult. Gladwell reveals, although maybe not intentionally, that each ideological camp had the same endstate in mind, namely the rapid end to the war. The Bomber Mafia sought to avoid bloodshed by precisely targeting key enemy targets, thereby bringing the opponent to their knees. They claimed that airpower alone could bring the war to a rapid end. LeMay, however, took a contrary position; in his thinking, war is so terrible that the only moral course of action is to do everything in your power to hasten its conclusion, including more indiscriminate area bombing of civilian targets. Gladwell's sometimes simplistic presentation and broad generalizations shortchange a profound ethical discussion.

For fans of Gladwell's storytelling, *The Bomber Mafia* will not disappoint. While exploring the primary topic of bomber strategy in WWII, he takes exciting side trips. He tells the story of the quirky engineer and inventor Carl Norden. Born to Dutch missionaries in Indonesia, Norden developed the then top-secret bombsight used in American bombers throughout the war. A precise bombsight was critical to the Bomber Mafia. As a Christian, Norden was pleased to be part of the effort to deliver bombs accurately, thereby reducing civilian casualties. Gladwell tells how the demanding Norden was so obsessed with precision that he had his team hand polish individual ball bearings to ensure that not even a bit of friction would throw off the workings of this device.

Another side trip also involves ball bearings. Gladwell tells the story of

Hansell and LeMay leading two parts of the famous bombing mission to destroy German ball-bearing production in the Bavarian city of Schweinfurt in 1943. This disastrous raid was part of a strategy that was integrally tied to the precepts of the Bomber Mafia—destroy the enemy center of gravity through precision daylight bombing. In this case, the idea to target ball bearings, critical to everything with a motor or wheels, originated at ACTS. The aviators took notice after a 1936 flood in the city of Pittsburgh brought U.S. aircraft production to a standstill. Land-based disasters were not usually a concern of the U.S. Army Air Corps. Still, this flood destroyed a factory that supplied a spring critical to the production of aircraft propellers. They asked, "What if we could do the same thing to a future enemy?" ACTS, in 1939, outlined how a fictional attack on New York City from Toronto using only a couple of bombers would take out bridges, freshwater aqueducts, and the power grid, crippling the city with a minimum of effort. It was the holy grail of warfare to find an efficient, cheap, and easy way to force the capitulation of an enemy. Schweinfurt was their chance to test their idea in the real world. If successful, the raid would have convinced the most ardent skeptic of the philosophy of daylight precision bombing. This form of storytelling is a hallmark of Gladwell's previous works, including *Outliers*, *Blink*, and others, and fans will enjoy each of these forays into a related topic.

Developed first as a series of four podcasts within Gladwell's *Revisionist History* series, *The Bomber Mafia* emerged as a full-length book with many more additions than the first podcasts. *The Bomber Mafia* is an audiobook that was also developed into a print book, a reversal of the usual order. The audiobook clocks in at a bit over

five hours and includes many novel techniques for audiobooks, including real audio interviews, newsreels, documentaries (including one WWII propaganda film narrated by Ronald Reagan), and sound effects. The audio version is compelling and is highly recommended. Included with the audiobook, when purchased from the author's website, is a listener's guide that adds some context and photos that complement the storytelling. For anyone debating whether to spend the money on the audiobook, check out the *Revisionist History* podcast for a teaser.⁴ The print book reads like standard Gladwell work, so the purist will not lose any content if eschewing the audio version, although not everything in the audiobook made the cut for the 256-page print book.

Gladwell has his critics, and historians stand at the front of the line. Most of Gladwell's other books deal with topics of the social sciences, including psychology and sociology. He is a master of using the latest research in novel ways to draw surprising conclusions. Dr. John Curotola of Fort Leavenworth writes in *Military Review* that "using only secondary sources and interviews with scholars on the topic, Gladwell provides no new insights to USAAF bombing applications, nor does he provide any meaningful revisions to contemporary narratives on the topic."⁵ In other words, Gladwell regurgitates mainstream scholarship on the U.S. bombing strategy, but he does it through a fascinating narrative. One of the most scathing reviews came from David Fedman and Cary Karacas in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*.⁶ Of their many complaints, the most glaring is that Gladwell's attempt to personify this as a religious crusade with a vivid hero and antihero falls flat in the face of the historical realities. As early as 1943, military planners envisioned a campaign to burn down Japanese cities. It was a

plan with the full support of General Hap Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Forces, and President Roosevelt. While Hansell did drag his feet in executing the massive firebombing of Tokyo, preferring daylight precision bombing, the city was an alternate target on bombing raids for months. This meant that whenever the bombers could not drop their payloads on the primary target, they would release them on Tokyo's densely populated urban districts. In the light of history, the brilliant symmetry of Hansell and LeMay that Gladwell creates is tarnished by the truth that they were two commanders following the plan. It just so happened that LeMay did it better. For objective historical analysis and understanding of strategic bombing in WWII, try one of the multitudes of books on the topic.

The Bomber Mafia is still worth listening to or reading, especially for Unit Ministry Teams and military leaders. With books focused on war in the future such as *2034* and *Ghost Fleet* on commanders' reading lists, the evolving nature of warfare is on the minds of strategic leaders. Like the original Bomber

Mafia, current leaders must wrestle with the lessons of the last war, emerging technologies, and an imagination that can envision possible permutations of combat to better prepare for that future. *The Bomber Mafia* provides narratives that could help leaders at all levels encourage thoughtful discussion about the next war. Gladwell even uses the story of ACTS to highlight an environment where innovative thinking can grow, including freedom from interference and a culture where no idea is dismissed out of hand.

The Bomber Mafia is also potentially useful as a thought-provoking primer on the intersection of visionaries, technology, and combat ethics. Even Gladwell's relatively neat and clean ethical discussions will pave the way for more in-depth conversations. The book inspires questions such as, "What happens when the technology designed to make war cleaner does not live up to expectations?" With the emergence of artificial intelligence and autonomous weapons of war, the modern military again finds itself in the same position

as leaders in the interwar years. Gladwell admonishes readers, "Ask yourself—what would I have done?"⁷ The storytelling of this book allows the reader to feel the conflict and, albeit simplistically, envision themselves within the drama.

The Bomber Mafia, writes Gladwell, "is the story of that moment [where Hansell is relieved by LeMay]. What led up to it and what happened next—because that change of command reverberates to this day."⁸ Even with its historical weaknesses, *The Bomber Mafia* is an entertaining and thought-provoking book with value for any military religious professional or combat leader. After nearly 80 years, the technological dreams of the Bomber Mafia have been realized in precision munitions delivered by stealth aircraft, and yet commanders are no closer to the cleaner war they envisioned. The arguments of yesterday remain relevant today, and this book provides a jumping-off point for serious discussion on the possible implications of the Army's preparation for the next war.

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NOTES

1 *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1939, General, Volume 1, Document 564.* The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy), Sep 1, 1939. This telegram was also sent to Paris, Rome, Berlin, and Warsaw.

2 The origin of this phrase is unclear although it was parroted by many Air Force bombing advocates and Norden officials to emphasize the capabilities of American bombers. For a brief discussion see Correll, John T. "Daylight Precision Bombing." *Air Force Magazine*, 01 Oct. 2008, www.airforcemag.com/article/1008daylight/. Accessed 28 July 2021.

3 Thomas Powers, "Nuclear Winter and Nuclear Strategy." *Atlantic Monthly*, Nov. 1984, 60.

4 www.pushkin.fm/show/revisionist-history/

5 John M. Curatola, Review of Bomber Mafia by Malcolm Gladwell, *Military Review*, May-June 2021, accessed July 27, 2021. www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/MR-Book-Reviews/June-2021/Book-Review-004/

6 David Fedman and Cary Karacas, "When Pop History Bombs: A Response to Malcolm Gladwell's Love

Letter to American Air Power," review of Bomber Mafia by Malcolm Gladwell, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, June 12, 2021, accessed July 28, 2021. <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/when-pop-history-bombs-a-response-to-malcolm-gladwells-love-letter-to-american-air-power/>

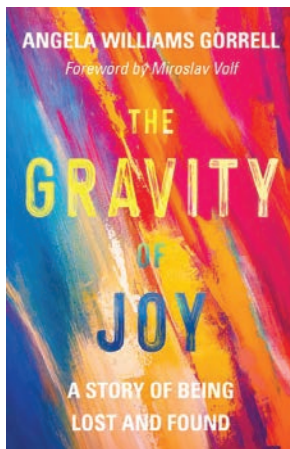
7 Malcolm Gladwell, *The Bomber Mafia: A Dream, a Temptation, and the Longest Night of the Second World War*. Pushkin Industries, 2021. 3. Prologue, 11:37-39.

8 Gladwell 3. Prologue, 9:03 – 9:07.

The Gravity of Joy: A Story of Being Lost and Found

by Angela Williams Gorrell

Reviewed by Chaplain (Major) Lisa Northway



Life brings both grief and joy. In her book, *The Gravity of Joy*, Angela Williams Gorrell portrays and teaches a practical theology that is highly compatible with the multi-faith and pluralistic spiritual environments in the U. S. military. The author's words are a primer on a fully-integrated life in any experience of grief and joy.

Dr. Gorrell's own description of her journey of devastating grief invites readers to explore their own experiences of difficulty. Within a year of being hired by Yale University to study and teach on the theology of joy, Dr. Gorrell finds herself grieving the loss of three close family members who died tragically within four weeks of each other. She reveals her own experience of Imposter Syndrome. Imposter Syndrome has been explained as an internal dynamic of self-perception that causes one to think they may be more of an actor regarding their personal or professional competency. Dr. W. Brad Johnson and Dr. David G. Smith, professors of sociology in the Department of National Security Affairs at the United States Naval War College, explain that Imposter Syndrome is normal and that it can be helpful for mentors to share their own stories of it with their mentees. Johnson and Smith state many people who enter academia and other professional institutions have experienced Imposter Syndrome.¹ Dr. Gorrell herself goes on to elaborate how she considered her status and role in the Yale community. She describes how she was supposed to be the subject matter expert on joy, but that she herself could not escape grief.² She came to an epiphany

of sorts that joy ultimately complements and assists in the processes of grief.

I met Dr. Gorrell when I was her escort for the Chief of Chaplain's Spiritual Readiness Pilot at Fort Hood, Texas, in January 2021. I had recently been named as the Garrison Family Life Chaplain for Fort Hood soon after the *Report of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee* was released for public consumption.³ According to the Report, the Fort Hood community's commitment to safety, respect, inclusiveness, diversity, and freedom from sexual harassment and assault was sorely lacking. These realities increased my zeal to bring joy to a grieving community. Dr. Gorrell's message of the complementary relationship between grief and joy was not only timely, but also had real potential to bring a form of healing the greater Fort Hood community. She beautifully explains, "Sometimes we are indeed given more than we can handle. Sometimes what we hope for never materializes. Sometimes what does not kill us does not make us stronger. Sometimes the plan God has for us means we live in exile."⁴ The Army Chaplaincy also has a felt need for Dr. Gorrell's message. We in the Corps have the capacity, as we stay true to our calling, to spread her message to our spiritually-needy communities. As we do so, Soldiers, Family members, and Civilians can discover the transformative healing power of grief.

In *The Gravity of Joy*, Dr. Gorrell masterfully characterizes grief as an opportunity. The book describes the courage to conduct a recalling

of one's own grief. In this way, the gravity of anticipatory and deep grief are present, but there is also room for deep joy. Readers of her book may discover new opportunities for grief to be infused with joy in ways they had not previously conceived. I found myself constantly writing in the margins of my personal copy, to create a guide for my future endeavors into these two God-given emotions. As I read Dr. Gorrell's book, I was reminded of Corrie ten Boom's proclamation: "There is no pit so deep, that God's love is not deeper still."⁵ Dr. Gorrell discovered this theology for herself while facilitating a weekly prison Bible study for women after the three deep tragedies in her family. The women in this Bible study taught her about the co-existence of grief and joy behind prison walls where grief is often the inescapable foundation of everyday life.

Dr. Gorrell asked her Bible study participants about their deepest longings.⁶ She discovered that these grieving women cultivated and clung to their answers as a sliver of hope for the possibility of joy, which sustained them. They desired to be reunited with their children, and wanted to be able to give and receive forgiveness—including being able to forgive themselves. They cultivated the expressions of their grief and joy even if they could not control their time in prison. These, and similar, desires make us human even when we are not sure that we want to feel human.

Dr. Gorrell takes her readers through a series of questions. In so doing, she invites us to take ownership of our answers. Her questions include: "How does pain fit into a good life? In light of suffering, what should we hope for? Given that pain is a part of the reality of being human, how do we pursue wholeness? If I feel anxious,

depressed, ashamed, fearful, or angry, is it possible for life to still be good?"⁷ In my own professional ministry in the Army Chaplaincy, I sustained a certain grief. In this recent season, I articulated, to those who asked, what I truly wanted. A strong desire of mine was to return to Family Life ministry. My own hopes and desires likely could not have materialized outside of the occurrence of the original grief, which I would not naturally have chosen.

Dr. Gorrell insists that following brokenness we need a vision of a life worth living in order to endure suffering. After World War II ended, ten Boom was released from the concentration camp at Ravensbruck, Germany. In the years after, she traveled and spoke. In her presentation, she showed the backside of a messy, chaotic piece of embroidery, after which she recited a poem entitled "The Weaver."⁸ In 2014, I was fortunate to see both the embroidery and the text of the poem at the Corrie ten Boom House in Amsterdam. The poem, written by Grant Colfax Tullar, reads:

My life is but a weaving between my
God and me, I do not choose the
colors; He works so steadily.

Oft times He weaves in sorrow, and
I in foolish pride, Forget He sees the
upper, and I the underside.

Not till the loom is silent, and the
shuttle cease to fly, Will God
unroll the canvas, and explain the
reason why.

The dark threads are as needful in
the Weaver's skillful hand, As the
threads of gold and silver in the
pattern He has planned.⁹

At the end of ten Boom's presentation, she was known to gleefully flip the embroidery over to reveal an exquisite

crown. Ten Boom's discovery took place behind concertina wire. Dr. Gorrell now communicates to a new generation that we are "part of an all-embracing story, about how, somehow, God's unconditional love encompasses the world, things are being made new, dead things come back to life again, and life is worth living...(and) God keeps showing up!"¹⁰

Within the pages of *The Gravity of Joy*, are the means, and I pray the motivation, to bless others in the midst of their deep grief while holding open the possibility of overwhelming joy. The greatest gift of the book is recognizing that grief and joy are ingredients that can be repurposed to more deeply connect to others. Quite possibly Dr. Gorrell's most practical gift amidst grief-filled human life, is in her own words:

We cannot put joy on our to-do lists—it does not work that way—but we can put ladders up against fences. We can be ready and prepare. We can set another seat at the dinner table. We can do things as part of our preparation that make it more likely that when joy is near, we will be able to recognize it and embrace it. And we can give ourselves over to the what if? of joy. We all can live postured toward joy, alive to its possibility, even in the unlikely of places, even in close proximity to our sorrow, even and most especially in the midst of our suffering.¹¹

May we each lean into our own often grief-stricken experiences with God-given strength to access the diversity of emotions necessary to sustain us on our entrusted path on both the darkest and brightest of days.

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*Special Thanks to Co-editor and Spiritual Readiness Trainer, First Lieutenant Cecelia K. Givens

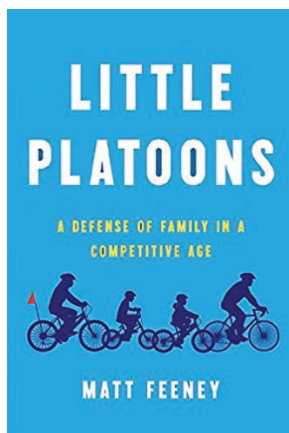
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- 1 Johnson, W. Brad, and David G. Smith. "Mentoring someone with imposter syndrome." *Harv Bus Rev Digital Articles 2* (2019).
- 2 Angela Williams Gorrell, *The Gravity of Joy*, (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2021), xvi.
- 3 Army.mil, Secretary of the Army announces missing Soldier policy, forms People First Task Force to implement Fort Hood Independent Review Committee (FHIRC) recommendations. U.S. Army, December 8, 2020.
- 4 Gorrell, *The Gravity of Joy*, 69.
- 5 Corrie Ten Boom, *The Hiding Place*, (Zondervan, 1971), 234.
- 6 Gorrell, *The Gravity of Joy*, 73.
- 7 Gorrell, *The Gravity of Joy*, 119.
- 8 Dolly Lee, "Wisdom from Corrie ten Boom When Your Life is Messy," last modified July 21, 2018, <https://soulstops.com/wisdom-from-corrie-ten-boom-when-your-life-is-messy/>
- 9 Corrie ten Boom House, *The Weaver*, poem by Grant Colfax Tullar with Tapestry by Corrie ten Boom (viewed by reviewer at Bartlejisstraat 19, 2011 RA Haarlem, Netherlands, 2014).
- 10 Gorrell, *The Gravity of Joy*, 121.
- 11 Gorrell, *The Gravity of Joy*, 169.

Little Platoons

by Matt Feeney

Reviewed by Chaplain (Major) Sean Levine



Little Platoons reads as a delightfully witty piece of extended journalism by a powerfully observant and wonderfully articulate writer. This book expresses a veritable collage of word pictures. When combined, these various pictures create the single image of a raging, fear-based competition between American families over a largely illusory leg up for their children. This struggle, by pitting families against one another, erodes the social stability that cooperation between families could establish and perpetuate. Rather than the

family maintaining its integrity as a haven from the storms seething outside the home, the family unit comes under the ever-increasing pressures of a commercialization that invades the private realm to commodify the riches of that realm in the outside world of fabricated competitive strife. Matt Feeney critiques the systemic cultural forces that threaten the autonomy of parental sovereignty and the integrity of the family.

In an opening move, Feeney respectfully doffs his cap to Edmund Burke in whose *Reflections*

on the *Revolution in France* the term “little platoons” refers to “smaller-scale human groupings that form themselves without the help or sanction of a central government.”¹ For Feeney, the family is the “most basic and sturdy” of these social associations.² The rest of the book reflects on how this “most basic” of social associations comes under threat from various external pressures. He presents these venues of pressure along developmental stages from early childhood (chapter 1), to preschool (chapter 2), to elementary school and the entrance of youth sports into the family’s reality (chapter 3), to middle school and both the social pressure on the family to engage smart technology/social media and the recruitment of family support inside the walls of the schools (chapters 4 and 5), to high school and the college admission process (chapters 6 and 7). Feeney addresses specific threats to family autonomy and integrity endemic to each parenting stage.

Feeney’s vision of the family rests on a politically conservative, or old fashioned, foundation. In short, family is something one fights for against the onslaught of the outside world. He describes the “fighting spirit”³ inherent to his image of the family by stressing how “the profound meaning and distinctive pleasures of family life are inextricably tied to the feelings of loyalty and solidarity that grow within it—the deep assumption that, confronted by life’s challenges, we will *stick together, as a family*.”⁴ Feeney captured my attention when, contrary to popular American notions of marriage and family, he suggests “the idea of family as a little band or polis founded by death-suggesting vows.”⁵ The metaphorical connection between vowing to remain faithful to one’s partner in marriage until death and the mortification of one’s own life, interests, and desires receives short shrift within the standard

American narrative of marriage and parenthood, which focuses, instead, on happiness and mutual fulfillment. This view is endemic to my own vision of marriage-as-sacrament, but the idea of marriage and family as a “death-dare” that “release[s] yourself from itself” in an ecstatic, self-sacrificial commitment rarely finds voice in the public square, least of all among books and articles from marriage and family therapy proponents.⁶

Feeney asks: What are the socio-cultural implications for the family unit itself and the culture at large? And, what happens when the most fierce and fundamental to-the-death commitments of parents to one another and to their children are exploited by public institutions such that these commitments morph into a competition with other parents and their children?⁷ In brief, “[t]he status of families as existentially different sorts of human bonds, compared to the normal systems of social life, become a profile of families scrabbling against each other for margins of advantage.”⁸ Feeney describes the destructive impact of this socio-cultural dynamic for the family and for American society, and he advocates for an awareness-based subversion of this dynamic, which makes his book the defense of the family that the book’s title implies.

Lest one get the impression that Feeney’s book represents just one more rather unreflective rant about the disintegration of the traditional family, I’ll state that Feeney’s text takes a different tack. He critiques several social cross-pressures that entice parents to hand over parental autonomy to various institutions that wield extraordinary, unwarranted power. These institutions by manipulate parental fears concerning their worries about the future: In particular the future prospects of their children’s successful entrance

into the world of adult wage earning. Feeney is up front about his training in continental philosophy—“a series of Western philosophical schools and movements associated primarily with the countries of the western European continent, especially Germany and France”⁹—and at times one discerns the influence of Marxism in his critique of American individualist capitalism and the “class struggles” inherent to the problems Feeney exposes (especially in the college admissions fiasco).¹⁰ Still, Feeney writes in a readable, sincere, and engaging tone that avoids obscure philosophical jargon, a preachy tone, and ideological rhetoric. He presents a carefully researched case against the systemic forces that invade the family. He offers new and better ways for families to express their agency while at the same time working gain power in the family’s decision-making matrix, a exploitive power that grows in proportion to the family’s engagement with these new and better mechanisms. As Feeney puts it, “what seems like a way to increase your power leaves you entangled with and bound to an outside system, which somehow gains in its power over you as you express your agency through it.”¹¹ Feeney’s incisive critique of these manipulative social narratives, embodied and mobilized as they are through powerful institutional structures, commands attention. Of these institutions, Feeney decries how, “You enlist them in your family’s quest for advantage, and then you find they’ve reached into your family and made it an extension of their institutional functions.”¹²

Feeney’s book does not offer easy ways to close ranks as a family. Feeney eschews simplistic parenting advice. “The problem,” he states, “is a collective-action one—individuals acting from a fearful mental picture of what other

individuals are doing about a future they see as fearful too, which, perversely, tends to push the real world toward the imagined scenario they're afraid of."¹³ The critique Feeney so eloquently presents in the book is of "the social forces that channel our competitive output through disciplinary procedures that, in turn, convert it into weary conformity. The sovereignty and dignity of American families are obviously not served by that kind of arrangement."¹⁴

In terms of source material, Feeney's own bright and poignant insights find support in a chorus of important voices, both past and present. He quotes the likes of Edmund Burke, Marcel Mauss, Johann Huizinga, Günther Anders,

Immanuel Kant, Hannah Arendt, B. F. Skinner, Martin Heidegger, John Dewey, G. W. F. Hegel, Malcolm Gladwell, and a host of others. Spanning the historical and philosophical idea-scape as well as present-day expertise in a variety of fields, Feeney develops arguments substantiated by a true polyphony of contributions.

Feeney's book is a timely offering. If you are a parent, and/or you work regularly with parents and families, you will want to engage Feeney's arguments. This book is a masterful and colorful critique of the sorts of cultural pressures that life in modern-day America places on the family as a social unit operating within the context of diverse social agendas

that compete for the family's allegiance. He does not discuss moral or religious pressures. Rather, Feeney describes very real and powerful socio-economic fear-based pressures. These pressures come from institutions that invite themselves, as helpful multipliers of agency, into the family, but that actually act as disintegrative forces seeking to assimilate the family away from a cohesive—and thus socially subversive—social unit toward an economically useful subunit within the larger equation of capitalist productivity. Feeney suggests that we think and ponder together with him so that ways to resist this assimilation surface as useful postures designed to protect the family from these disintegrating forces.

Chaplain (Major) Sean Levine serves as a priest in the Orthodox Church in America. He is currently stationed at Fort Carson, Colorado with his wife, Jennifer, and son, Andrew, and he is assigned as the brigade chaplain for 1st Space Brigade. CH Levine's academic interests include theological anthropology, the declinicalization of pastoral counseling, the convergence/divergence between Eastern and Western Christian thought, and the philosophical undercurrents of present-day American culture. His Doctor of Ministry dissertation, "*Neptic Pastoral Care: Sacred Dialogue in the Light of the Theanthropic Vision of the Human Person*," is in progress.

NOTES

1 Matt Feeney, *Little Platoons: A Defense of Family in a Competitive Age* (New York: Basic Books, 2021), 8. For Burke's "little platoon" quote, see Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France in Burk Select Words*, ed. E. J. Payne, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), 54-55.

2 Feeney, *Little Platoons*, 8.

3 Feeney, *Little Platoons*, 3.

4 Feeney, *Little Platoons*, 6.

5 Feeney, *Little Platoons*, 2.

6 Feeney, *Little Platoons*, 2-3.

7 Feeney, *Little Platoons*, 7. Feeney explains, "To these other social forms the unique intensity of family relations stands as bracing counterpoint: siblings seeing each other as secret keepers and protectors and protégés, parents curiously, consciously willing to die (and, if it came to it, kill) to protect their children. . . . But when the fierce commitment of parents to their children takes the form of competition with other parents and other children, it becomes much less heroically strange, much more run-of-the-mill."

8 Feeney, *Little Platoons*, 7.

9 <https://www.britannica.com/topic/continental-philosophy>

10 Feeney, *Little Platoons*, 202.

11 Feeney, *Little Platoons*, 20.

12 Feeney, *Little Platoons*, 21.

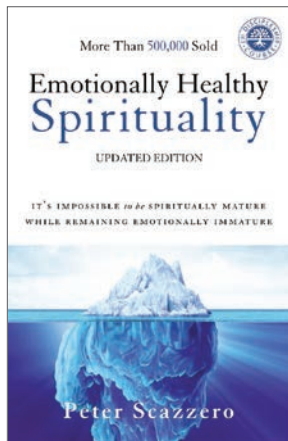
13 Feeney, *Little Platoons*, 252.

14 Feeney, *Little Platoons*, 261.

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality

by Peter Scazzero

Reviewed by Chaplain (First Lieutenant) Joy Hervey



In *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, Peter Scazzero argues that Christian spirituality can be destructive to self and others if it fails to integrate emotional health. Stated another way, the book's thesis is, "It is not possible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature."¹ Scazzero approaches the topic of emotional health with great transparency from his unique vantage point as a lead pastor who found his ministry and marriage in crisis because he neglected the disordered aspects of his own inner life. This book shares the theological and practical insights he gleaned during his journey from emotional immaturity to emotional health—insights informed by his examination of the spiritual journeys of biblical and historical figures, and by spiritual traditions such as monasticism. The book is an updated edition of a volume originally published in 2006. It has several benefits as a chaplaincy resource, beginning with the useful strategies it offers for avoiding the life imbalance, inner turmoil, and relational dysfunction that result from splitting off spiritual maturity from emotional health.

The author communicates with uncommon transparency, as one might hope for in a book about emotional health. Scazzero describes his own emotional health crisis in great detail, the nadir of which was his wife, Geri, telling him she was leaving the church he pastored due to his poor leadership. In hindsight, he characterizes this difficult conversation as "the most loving thing Geri has done for me in our entire marriage."² Scazzero also demonstrates

honesty by identifying the limitations of his own religious tradition. He makes the case that emotional immaturity accompanies a Christian worldview that focuses on activity-driven spiritual disciplines such as prayer, Bible study, service, and church attendance, but fails to create time and space for interior disciplines such as rest, silence, and introspection. Another indication of Scazzero's openness is his commitment to sharing with readers the resources and traditions he drew upon to craft a new and more comprehensive spiritual life. These include engaging with Trappism, and other monastic traditions, as well as with the work of theologians such as Martin Buber, the lives of historical figures such as Mother Teresa of Calcutta, works of literature, and salient biblical texts including the Ten Commandments, Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, and the life of Daniel.

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality contains eight chapters. The first introduces and details the problem and the consequences of emotionally unhealthy spirituality. The chapters that follow outline stations that one may journey through to experience an increasingly emotionally healthy spiritual life. The first of these stations include: knowing and becoming one's authentic self, examining the past, including one's family of origin, to disrupt unhealthy patterns, experiencing the blessing of authentic trust that comes as a result of journeying through "the Wall" of doubt and despair. The next of these stations include: acknowledging and accepting one's

limits as revealed through grief and loss, and experiencing rest and renewal by discovering the rhythms of Sabbath and the Daily Office (a habit of pausing throughout the day to practice the presence of God), and learning new skills to love others well. The final station involves developing a “Rule of Life,” a personal set of practices designed to maintain a healthy and uncluttered inner life in a culture characterized by externally focused, frenzied activity.³ Each chapter contains an engaging mix of personal anecdotes, scriptural illustrations, theological reflections, socio-cultural insights, practical strategies for personal application, and a prayer.

Chaplains may benefit from this book because it is an aid to theological, practical, and pastoral insight. Scazzero identifies theologically uncomfortable aspects of the Christian life such as despair, disappointment, and grief. He offers a specific framework through which they can be understood, not as anomalies to be ignored or distractions to be discarded, but rather as flashlights that, wielded properly, illuminate God’s presence with us and power in us. Of particular salience in the military chaplaincy context is Scazzero’s reflection on resurrection in chapter six on grief and loss. Reflecting on the Old Testament story of Job, who experienced multiple devastating tragedies followed by divine restoration, he writes, “This account is meant to encourage us to trust the living God with the many mini-deaths that we experience in our lives. The central message of Christ is that suffering and death bring resurrection and transformation.”⁴

Epistemologically, Scazzero challenges the reader to appreciate her emotional responses as a source of valid and important knowledge in one’s journey with

God. For example, when describing how to create a Rule of Life, he offers, “It may be that you recognize you have a lot of unprocessed grief due to losses from your past. You may want to make that part of your [emotional health] plan over the next year.”⁵ The author offers that emotions are worthy of our spiritual attention whether as fodder for prayer or as clues to our deepest desires and longings. The reader also learns to value not only what emotions can teach us but also how they can teach us, which is through silence, solitude, and slowing down.

This notion of silence and stillness as fertile ground for emotional health is perhaps one of the greatest practical contributions of *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* for those interested in spiritual practice. Scazzero explains how the spiritual disciplines of the Sabbath and the Daily Office embody the value of pausing to demonstrate trust and reliance upon God as well as to allow ourselves to experience being instead of doing. Most readers will be very aware of the justification and benefit of practicing the Sabbath. Fewer readers will recognize the Daily Office, which echoes Daniel’s practice of praying three times daily as well as several monastic orders’ attention to prayer at multiple set times throughout the day.⁶ Scazzero presents the Daily Office as a discipline that has been life changing for him and his wife, and encourages readers to implement it as well.

A pastoral benefit of this book for those leading others in a family, ministry, or military context is that *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* does not fall into the trap of focusing so much on interiority that it loses sight of the commandment Jesus characterized as the second greatest—loving neighbor as self. Scazzero presents a framework for understanding emotional adulthood that

is measured by how well we love others in practice. He writes that emotional infants “have great difficulty entering into the world of others” and “use others as objects to meet their needs” whereas emotional adults “have the capacity to resolve conflict maturely and negotiate solutions that consider the perspectives of others.”⁷ He wisely observes that while most Christians know that they should love others, many, even those in leadership, have not received training in the skills to do that well. In response, Scazzero describes several conflict resolution tools that facilitate loving and effective communication in a variety of relational contexts.

Two minor limitations of the book do not diminish its value. Scazzero mentions several times that practicing the principles outlined in the book has transformed the life of his church community, but he does not include concrete examples to illustrate this claim. In addition, the book could benefit from more intentional warnings to help readers avoid the trap of legalism with respect to the specific emotional health practices it offers. These drawbacks aside, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* establishes itself convincingly as an important resource for both laypersons and those involved in Christian ministry, especially when combined with the companion materials, which include a 40-day devotional as well as videos, and a workbook designed for small group study.

Scazzero is to be commended for providing laypersons and ministry leaders with a framework and methods that develop a theology to avoid the personal crisis he experienced. He hopes that this theology will encompass limits, challenges, and difficult emotions in themselves and others. As leaders, chaplains are called first to lead

themselves well, and to attend to their own emotional health is part of that mission. In addition, chaplains are in a perfect position to help Soldiers develop an emotional health plan that

is adapted to the particular internal and external battles they face. In that sense, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* is an invitation accepted first by the chaplain who then extends it to others—

an invitation to contemplative spirituality, self-awareness, transformation, and wholeness.

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NOTES

1 Peter Scazzerro, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 19.

2 Scazzerro, *Emotionally*, 19.

3 Scazzerro, *Emotionally*, 97; *Ibid.*, 189.

4 Scazzerro, *Emotionally*, 136.

5 Scazzerro, *Emotionally*, 201.

6 See Richard A. Swenson, *Margin* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2004) and Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual*

Disciplines of the Christian Life (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014).

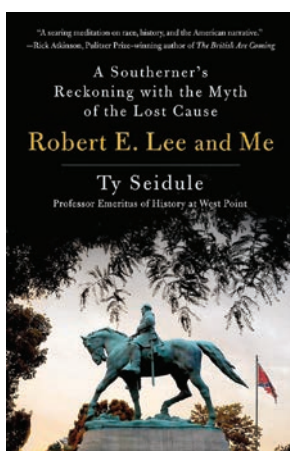
7 Scazzerro, *Emotionally*, 170.



Robert E. Lee and Me: A Southerner's Reckoning with the Myth of the Lost Cause

by Ty Seidule

Review by Chaplain (Colonel) Paul Minor



Brigadier General (Retired) Ty Seidule wrote *Robert E. Lee and Me: A Southerner's Reckoning with the Myth of the Lost Cause*. Seidule is a trained historian who taught history for many years at West Point.

The book is a memoir about Seidule's own experiences with white supremacy and his self-described worship of Lee from childhood and into his adult life. The author believed in the Lost Cause assertion that the South's rebellion in the Civil War was just and was based neither in white supremacy nor in its reliance on and commitment to slavery.

He describes how his study of history led him to the epiphany that the South's cause was shameful and that Lee was a traitor, not a hero. Seidule came to look upon his earlier life with shame and guilt. He now seeks redemption through sharing his journey out of darkness into the light.

Seidule notes throughout the book the idolatrous worship of Lee. He writes, "As a child, my view of Lee was closer to deity than man. On a scale of 1 to 10, I placed Lee at 11 and Jesus at 5, even though I went to church every Sunday."¹ He continues, "The greatest star in the Confederate constellation, the Christlike Lee, was without fault, without sin, a wholly perfect deity the like of which no one had seen, ever."² What a startling set of statements.

In addition to feelings of shame and guilt, Seidule is angry at having been raised with

what he now believes are lies, such as the lie of the happy slave, joyful in service to his master.

The author traces the history of white supremacy in the areas that he lived as a child (Alexandria, Virginia and Walton County, Georgia). Seidule later attended Washington and Lee University in an effort to achieve social status as an educated Southern gentleman. He notes that the chapel at the university was dedicated to the worship of Lee, and lacked the usual ecclesiastical accoutrements such as prayer books, hymnals, a crucifix, and a pulpit.³ A statue of Lee sat on top of the altar as an idol.⁴ The college was one of the last in the country to integrate and was historically tied to slavery.

During his long military career, Seidule served at installations named after Confederates. He chronicles this history. The Confederate Memorial at Arlington Cemetery especially angers the author. Seidule chronicles how West Point moved from a refusal to recognize Confederate leaders in the 19th century to its current embrace of those leaders including Lee. Seidule sees this change as a reaction to racial integration at the Academy. He sees much of the history of erecting Confederate statues in the same vein.

The author presents a sustained indictment of Lee as a proponent of white supremacy and chattel slavery. Lee personally profited from slavery and showed cruelty toward his slaves. Seidule argues that Lee was not a great man

at all. Seidule even takes on the tension that Lee felt between his loyalty to Virginia and to the United States by observing that Lee was the only one of eight West Point Virginia colonels who left to fight for the Confederacy. Seidule's verdict is that Lee committed treason:

Lee's actions undeniably violated the Constitution he and I swore to defend. He waged war against the United States. Because he fought so well for so long, hundreds of thousands of soldiers died. No other enemy officer in American history was responsible for the deaths of more U.S. Army soldiers than Robert E. Lee. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia killed more than one in three and wounded more than half of all U.S. casualties.⁵

The author is a convert away from the Lost Cause and the worship of Lee to an absolute condemnation of it all. He admits to his passion: "I have a convert's zeal. I know it. Sometimes my passion can verge on righteousness."⁶ His desire to be seen as righteous drives his condemnation of Robert E. Lee and the Lost Cause.

The anger, shame, and guilt that drive the author are powerful. He seeks

redemption by laying bare the evils of white supremacy in our nation and in his own personal history. But the book leaves us, as readers and as a nation, on the horns of a dilemma. Writing as a religious leader, I note that the idolatrous worship of human beings is a problem, but the purge of those who we deem unworthy may not actually solve the problem. The purge can become its own idolatry. This temptation may be especially compelling for someone like Seidule who grew up as a white Southerner who now feels guilty about his upbringing. Redemption could seem to come for him by issuing a harsh verdict of Lee. But are any of us, including Lee, completely bad or perfectly good? Seidule wants a clean path to his own redemption. He wants to be good. His self-admitted passion calls to my mind the words of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in *The Gulag Archipelago*:

If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?⁷

Seidule seems "willing to destroy a piece of his own heart," but has he purged the evil that also is there? He does not report having done anything to harm African-Americans. Much of what he confesses is guilt by association. He lived as a white Southern man who idolized Lee and the Lost Cause. Perhaps the foremost evil is the idolatry that he embraced. He placed Lee above his own claimed Christian faith. Seidule has purged himself of this first idolatry, but has he found his way back to Christian faith? He is utterly silent on that point. This leaves me and perhaps other readers to wonder if the new idolatry is the condemnation of the author's personal history, which includes condemning Lee.

The classic Christian model of repentance involves turning away from sin and turning to the Savior. Perhaps Seidule has chosen to be the author of his own redemption. Are any of us the sole author of our redemption? Will our current national moment of purging the past be judged by history as a movement toward a more perfect and just union or part of the legacy of purges that also mark human history? Time will tell. History will judge. As an historian, Seidule may be willing to wait for that judgment.

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NOTES

1 Ty Seidule, *Robert E. Lee and Me: A Southerner's Reckoning with the Myth of the Lost Cause* (New York: St. Martin's Press), 11.

2 Seidule, *Robert E. Lee and Me*, 36.

3 Seidule, *Robert E. Lee and Me*, 110.

4 Seidule, *Robert E. Lee and Me*, 110-111.

5 Seidule, *Robert E. Lee and Me*, 216-217.

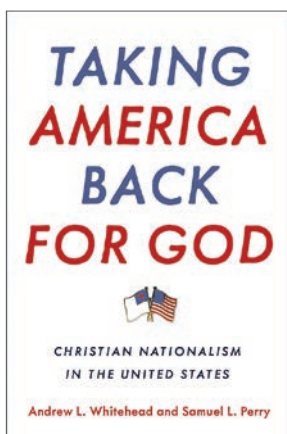
6 Seidule, *Robert E. Lee and Me*, 253.

7 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago* (London, England: Vintage Classics), 189.

Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States

by Andrew L. Whitehead and Samuel L. Perry

Reviewed by Chaplain (Major) Shawn Lee



Christian nationalism's uniquely polarizing threat to America should be understood in its context. This is the principal argument that Andrew L. Whitehead and Samuel L. Perry.¹ In a prescient book,² Whitehead and Perry offer a sociological study of Christian nationalism in America and define the phenomenon as “a cultural framework—a collection of myths, traditions, symbols, narratives, and value systems—that idealizes and advocates a fusion of Christianity with American civic life.”³ The authors identify this cultural framework as the lens, worldview, or narrative through which Christian nationalists perceive America's relationship with Christianity. Of note, this “Christianity” exists outside of an explicitly defined theological framework, presenting a god for America rather than the God of Christian scripture. For Whitehead and Perry, Christian nationalism assumes a Christian America that is nativist, white supremacist, patriarchal, heteronormative, and authoritarian.⁴ Christian nationalism is “Christianity co-opted in the service of ethno-national power and separation.”⁵

The authors are emphatic that their work is sociological rather than theological. They use publicly available data from the Baylor Religion Survey (BRS) and cross-reference the data with General Social Surveys. The BRS asks large groups of Americans a variety of questions about religion, politics, and demographics. Perry and Whitehead select six statements and compare responses to these statements

to draw correlations and scale how strongly a person holds Christian nationalist views.

The key questions include:

1. “The federal government should declare the United States a Christian nation.”
2. “The federal government should advocate Christian values.”
3. “The federal government should enforce strict separation of church and state.”
4. “The federal government should allow the display of religious symbols in public spaces.”
5. “The success of the United States is part of God's plan.”
6. “The federal government should allow prayer in public schools.”⁶

Through grouping together tendencies and trends among the respondents, they characterize an ideology of Christian nationalism and write about its implications for all Americans. The authors create a taxonomy of the four types of responses. They label them ambassadors, accommodators, resisters, and rejecters—based on a scale of advocacy for Christian nationalism through rejection of Christian nationalism. The groups reveal a set of attitudes about the role Christian faith should play in the public sphere.

- Ambassadors will advocate for a declaration of the U.S. as a Christian nation, and desire to see Christian faith privileged in the public sphere.
- Accommodators are less comprehensive in their advocacy—and while they may embrace a narrative that the U.S. is a Christian nation, they are more open to the presence of other religious groups being part of the national narrative.
- Resisters are a step removed further from Christian nationalism, arguing that Christianity is historically important but should not have formalized power defined by the government.
- Rejecters believe in a strong civil society and reject government privilege for any religion.

The authors' analysis shows that Christian nationalism is largely separate from a confessional religious tradition. Their definition distinguishes this belief system from evangelical Christianity, which some have also implicated in the January 6, 2021 riot at the Capitol building.⁷ Christian nationalism is its own category of belief and behavior, which is distinct from evangelical theology, or even "white evangelicalism" as popularly understood.⁸ The authors convincingly separate theological conservatism from Christian nationalism. Whitehead and Perry argue that evangelical Protestants exist across the spectrum of Christian nationalism, including among the groups they identify as Resisters and Rejecters. This supports their thesis that Christian nationalism is its own separate phenomena, but profoundly impacts America's political and religious life.

Whitehead and Perry examine specific political policies, particularly

those associated with the Trump administration. They question how Christians can hold seemingly un-Christian views on a variety of issues, such as what they characterize as the racist or xenophobic views about a border wall. In another instance, the authors assume that Americans who voted for Donald Trump were comfortable with his moral failures. They argue that voters who support traditional gender roles are misogynists who oppose equality in the workplace. While the authors do not make arguments for or against specific policy prescriptions, they characterize those who hold these views as "racists" and "xenophobes." In chapter two, "Power," they identify Christian nationalism as the primary distinguishing characteristic of a Trump voter, beyond other identity markers. Whitehead and Perry write, "Christian nationalism, in other words, explained almost all of the religious vote for Trump."⁹ In chapter three, "Boundaries," the authors make additional claims as to the correlative association of associating a vote for Christian nationalism with a strong predilection to "Eurocentrism, anti-Catholicism, xenophobia, and the disenfranchisement of black Americans." Whitehead and Perry lay what they identify as these racist and bigoted perspectives squarely upon those who Christian nationalists who believe that "real Americans are native-born white Protestants."¹⁰

This is where I believe that they fail to separate academic inquiry and pejorative labeling. The authors seem to use an *ad hominem* fallacy. As they question how Christians can support a border wall, they fail to examine arguments for or against the policies themselves. By instead presuming that everyone who wants a border wall is "inherently racist or xenophobic," they preclude any

legitimacy for Christians who support a border wall. Likewise, not everyone who supports traditional gender roles is a misogynist who opposes equality in the workplace. They may point to their data as irrefutable, but the authors impose a negative value upon their analysis and do not prove their secondary presumptions. This mars many of the arguments the authors make as their analysis of the BRS data is skewed with a political bent.

Even so, I strongly recommend that members of the Chaplain Corps read this book. First, it is the only empirical work of its kind. Even if one disagrees with their presuppositions or conclusions, Whitehead and Perry provide an insightful sociological exploration of the American religious landscape. The collected data and initial analytical insights offer an instructive view of Christian nationalism. For members of the Chaplain Corps and leaders in the Army, it is worth reading this book to understand our cultural environment. The book does not set out to provide philosophical or theological analysis of these beliefs although it is impossible to fully escape these influences. As such, this text is most useful to understand America's own religious operating environment. This sociological framework is broadly useful, but might be particularly useful for those chaplains who supported the National Guard mission in the National Capitol Region.

Second, the empirical data provides insights into the Chaplain Corps' own internal population – not just those Soldiers, Families, and Civilians we serve, but also members of the Corps who may hold or be susceptible to these beliefs. By naming this cultural framework, we can engage in theologically and sociologically informed dialogue around these issues.

In particular, the authors present data that show how views of military service may be predictive of Christian nationalism. They write, “only Christian nationalism predicts that Americans see serving in the military as important to being ‘a good person.’ Religious practice, on the other hand, is negatively associated with this view, meaning devoutly religious Americans are less likely to say that serving in the military is important to being a good person.”¹¹ The Army Chaplain’s dual identity as an endorsed religious professional and a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army, suggests that a large portion Chaplain Corps could be susceptible to Christian nationalism. In as much as this may be true, it is valuable for every chaplain, particularly Christian chaplains, to examine their own attitudes towards Christian nationalism. Christian

chaplains may want to be cognizant of the temptation to support a Christian nationalist worldview. Can Christian nationalism become a tribal identity? Each Service member deserves honor without using any particular tribal identity a singular barometer of moral good. Separately, any use of rank, power, and authority against those who are not of our faith backgrounds from within our formations is inconsistent with the chaplain’s dual role.

To end on a hopeful note, the lived example of the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps may indeed be a powerful response to Christian nationalism. To borrow language from Whitehead and Perry’s framework, being an Ambassador does not align with the chaplain’s dual role.¹² Every chaplain should recognize that we are political agents

on an individual level who operate in a politically divisive environment, and that this is a confusing duality for the American public. Even those chaplains who subscribe to the idea of America as rooted in a Christian identity must recognize that their very identity as a military chaplain is founded upon First Amendment freedom of religion, which protects the rights of our non-Christian chaplains and other Soldiers. Whether in the civilian educational requirements before accessioning, the iterative Professional Military Education (CH-BOLC, C4, ORSLC, etc.), or the continuing UMT/RST trainings held on a regular basis, the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps’ very identity involves modeling healthy pluralism, protecting the values of the nation’s Army, and setting an example for a divided nation.

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NOTES

1 Andrew Whitehead is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Clemson University and Assistant Director of the Association of Religion Data Archives and Samuel L. Perry is an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Religious Studies at the University of Oklahoma.

2 The book was written before the 2020 election and before the January 6, 2021 assault on the Capitol.

3 Andrew L. Whitehead and Samuel L. Perry, *Taking America Back: Christian Nationalism in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 10.

4 Whitehead and Perry, *Taking America Back*, 10.

5 Whitehead and Perry, *Taking America Back*, 145.

6 Whitehead and Perry, *Taking America Back*, 7-8.

7 Posner, Sarah. “How the Christian Right Helped Foment Insurrection,” *Rolling Stone*, January 31, 2021, <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/capitol-christian-right-trump-1121236/>

8 Whitehead and Perry, *Taking America Back*, 20.

9 Whitehead and Perry, *Taking America Back*, 62.

10 Whitehead and Perry, *Taking America Back*, 91.

11 Whitehead and Perry, *Taking America Back*, 14.

12 I believe a reasonable argument could be made that chaplains could be Accommodators, according to their faiths.

The following entries provide excerpts of and links to recently published articles that are relevant to how members of the Chaplain Corps can develop as leaders.



Leadership and the Profession of Arms

From Prussia With Love: The Origins of the Modern Profession of Arms

by MG Mick Ryan

“The profession of arms had its modern birth in the early 1800s, when battlefield defeats of nations such as Prussia drove major reforms in the training, education, equipping, and employing military organizations. Military institutions also professionalized throughout the nineteenth century as a response to the massive changes driven by the technological and social developments of the First Industrial Revolution. These technological and social changes also drove a redefinition in the relationship between governments, society, and the military in what Williamson Murray and Wayne Hsieh have called military-social revolutions. This professional impetus continued into the twentieth century as the new technologies of the Second Industrial Revolution resulted in new organizations and new theories of war. We now stand at the precipice of another era of revolutionary change in technology and society. Change is appearing so quickly in geopolitics, technology, demography, and other areas that some have called this an ‘age of accelerations.’ Somehow, our profession must keep pace with these changes while also anticipating how change in society and technology will manifest on the battlefield and in the grand strategic competition in which we now find ourselves engaged.”

<https://mwi.usma.edu/from-prussia-with-love-the-origins-of-the-modern-profession-of-arms/>

Senior Leader Behavior: What Differences Matter?

by Charles Allen and Craig Bullis

“In a March 2019 War Room article, we offered observations and recommendations for senior leader development using data collected for over a decade on the leader effectiveness of General and Flag Officers (G/FOs). Based on the number of messages we received, our conclusions in ‘Developing Senior Officers who Soldiers want to Follow’ provoked significant reaction. As intended, the essay generated conversations on leader development systems and processes and revealed intolerance for ineffective leaders, especially at senior levels. However, several readers asked for details on the most egregious behaviors we found, suggesting such information could inform efforts to improve leader development. While our Army War College (USAWC) student data did not allow for such fidelity, another series of USAWC research projects—the Division Commander Studies—provides insight into some of the most distinguishing behaviors. We will review those findings and suggest linkages between assessed behaviors and the foundational attributes that influence them.”

<https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/articles/sr-ldr-behavior/>

Why Leaders Need to Learn the Skill of Writing

by Joe Byerly

“Anyone who has worked directly for a battalion commander or above probably has experience writing ‘ghost notes.’ These are emails a subordinate writes and addresses for their boss to send to other people. Ghost notes can be weekly or monthly sitreps, updates on an ongoing situation or emails asking for additional resources. No matter the type, they are the ‘easy button’ for the commander because all they have to do is hit ‘send.’ Recently, I worked for a senior Army leader who encouraged his subordinate commanders to own their communications—meaning, write their own emails. As I reflected on his guidance, I realized there are benefits to communications ownership. I witnessed many of these benefits firsthand as I watched him communicate with senior military leaders, senior civilian leaders and his own commanders.”

<https://fromthegreennotebook.com/2020/10/03/why-leaders-need-to-learn-the-skill-of-writing/>

Competition and Decision in the Gray Zone: A New National Security Strategy

by Matt Petersen

“The gray zone is the space below the threshold of major war, or, ‘the operational space between peace and war.’ China employs maritime militia against regional adversaries, and weaponizes international law by constructing artificial islands in the South China Sea. North Korea games sanctions and engages in

cyber operations, while fostering a menacing nuclear strike capability. Russia maneuvers through cyber and information operations in Eastern Europe and worldwide. Action in this space exemplifies hybrid warfare: the ‘blurring of the modes of war...producing a wide range of variety and complexity’ against an adversary nation or alliance. These are now the principal venue and method of contest, in play in every operational theater.”

<https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2021/4/20/competition-and-decision-in-the-gray-zone-a-new-national-security-strategy>

Educating Our Leaders in the Art and Science of Stakeholder Management

by Alexander L. Carter

“When the U.S. Army released its long-awaited critique of its successes and failures in the Iraq War, many questioned how honest the Army would be with itself. A review of the documents, however, revealed an unflinching account of some of the Service’s key failures in planning and executing military operations at all levels of engagement—strategic, operational, and tactical. One explanation for this failure is that Army leaders did not fully understand the operating environment in Iraq—its totalitarian government structure, tribal allegiances, underlying ethnic tensions, and aged infrastructure. Planning assumptions were made without the benefit of insight, advice, and counsel from key individuals, particularly outside of military chains of command, who had sufficient influence and expertise to help the Service more effectively achieve its desired endstates

in that theater. How could such a well-trained Army, led by senior officers with decades of experience and education, miss opportunities to engage with these stakeholders? The answer is that our senior officers, for the most part, are not educated in stakeholder management—that is, how one engages others with sufficient power and influence or interest to solicit diverse inputs and opinions to address complicated or complex problems.”

<https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/2553413/educating-our-leaders-in-the-art-and-science-of-stakeholder-management/>

It’s Not Coddling to Care: Why “Engaged Leadership” Creates Stronger Military Units

by Andrew Bibb

“In an isolated camp in Iraq in 2008, I stood nervously in front of my team leader’s barracks door, trying to summon up the courage to knock. I was an infantry private on a weapons squad in the 3rd Ranger Battalion. And I had just screwed up. I rapped on the door and my team leader, a specialist, told me to come in. Standing at parade rest, I explained that during the previous night’s raid on a suspected enemy compound I failed to fully seat my M4 magazine in my weapon after I cleared it to board the helicopter that would take us home. The magazine fell out onto the desert floor, and by the time I noticed this the helicopter was already airborne. It was too late to fix my mistake. My team leader thought for a moment. I tensed in anticipation, expecting a blistering reprimand. Instead, he simply replied, ‘Don’t let it happen again.’ ‘I won’t,

Specialist,’ I replied, shocked and relieved. He continued, ‘You know this would be a very different conversation if I had to find out from someone else, don’t you?’ ‘Yes, Specialist.’ ‘You’re dismissed.’ I couldn’t articulate it at the time, but my team leader had just modeled engaged leadership. Having worked with me for several months by that time, he knew I was not reckless with my gear and felt guilty about overlooking even the smallest details. He also knew I would learn from my mistake. With those aspects of my particular personality in mind, he adapted his response accordingly.”

<https://mwi.usma.edu/its-not-coddling-to-care-why-engaged-leadership-creates-stronger-military-units/>

The Death of Critical Thinking in the Military? Here’s How to Fix It

by **Steve Ferenzi**

“Traditional American military culture diametrically opposes divergent thought. Despite assertions that the United States must compete in the ‘most complex and volatile’ security environment in recent memory, the military largely handicaps its own mental approach to victory. Being able to actually compete and win requires the military to elevate critical thinking as a core competency of its profession – from top to bottom. This is especially important if we want to avoid the costs of war and instead, lead through influence and tools short of armed conflict.”

https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2021/01/14/the_death_of_critical_thinking_in_the_military_heres_how_to_fix_it_656486.html

Paralysis in Peer Conflict? The Material Versus the Mental in 100 years of Military Thinking

by **Heather Venable**

“Military history rarely offers simple, straightforward lessons, much to the frustration of those seeking to apply takeaways to today. The lesson that retains the strongest hold on U.S. military thinking may be how German blitzkrieg enabled the lightning defeat of France in the summer of 1940. Theorists like John Boyd subsequently suggested that these breakthroughs stunningly ‘soften[ed] and shatter[ed] the moral fiber of the political, economic and social structure’ of the opponent, building on the promise of paralysis proposed by J.F.C. Fuller during and after World War I. Fuller had advocated incapacitating the army’s ‘brain,’ or a military’s ability to command subordinate units. According to one of the foremost scholars writing about Boyd, Fuller ‘exerted an obvious influence on Boyd through his study of strategic theory.’ In turn, Boyd and other U.S. military reformers after the Vietnam War reimagined how the nation should wage warfare.”

<https://warontherocks.com/2020/12/paralysis-in-peer-conflict-the-material-versus-the-mental-in-100-years-of-military-thinking/>

Two Kinds of Courage: The Bravery of Allan McDonald

by **Aaron Miller**

“The morning of January 28, 1986, NASA proceeded through the final launch checklist for the Challenger space shuttle. Only a handful of people

fully appreciated the disaster that loomed. This was the third time they had scheduled the launch that week, the prior launches having been scrapped for unflattering reasons. (The first delay was for predicted bad weather that never materialized and the second for a failed hatch mechanism.) The pressure to launch on the third try was intense. NASA struggled with the perception that it wasted taxpayer funds, and the White House wanted to feature the shuttle in President Reagan’s State of the Union address. So when a coldfront bringing record low temperatures to Florida settled in the night before, NASA called all of its suppliers to ensure that a below-freezing launch would be safe. The infamous conversation between NASA and Morton Thiokol, maker of the shuttle booster rockets, is rehearsed in ethics classes around the world. The executives overruled their engineers by approving the launch and sealed the tragic fate of the seven Challenger crew members before they ever entered the shuttle.”

<https://goodatwork.substack.com/p/two-kinds-of-courage>

Why We Tweet: General Officer Use of Social Media to Engage, Influence, and Lead

by **MG Mick Ryan, MG Tammy Smith, and MG Patrick Donahoe**

“We are now nearly 15 years into the Era of Social Media. Facebook emerged in 2004 and Twitter began its rise in 2006. Both have hundreds of millions of users, including military personnel. It is well past time that all of our senior leaders appreciated the value of an open dialogue facilitated by these social media tools. These new 21st century

technologies for interacting are not the only means to effect engaging and transparent leadership, but they provide an additional tool in the leadership kitbag of the most senior military leaders. Why is this so? If military institutions are to fully realize the potential of social media (they do not currently), they need all leaders from top to bottom to embrace and advocate its use.”

<https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2020/9/7/why-we-tweet-general-officer-use-of-social-media-to-engage-influence-and-lead>

Conquering the Ethical Temptations of Command: Lessons from the Field Grades

by Clinton Longenecker and James Shufelt

“Ethical lapses committed by senior business leaders are reported almost daily. Unfortunately, similar reports about military leaders also frequently appear; browse almost any contemporary military publication, and there is usually an article discussing an ethical failure by a high-ranking Servicemember. Although Department of Defense figures attest that the actual number of these failings is statistically small, they garner disproportionate attention. The critical nature of the U.S. military mission makes it incumbent on leaders to possess not only great technical competency in their jobs but also great character and integrity. Because of this demand, the U.S. military has high formal standards for ethical leadership behavior. The requirements for ethical behavior by all members of the military—and especially those in leadership positions—are clearly stated in U.S. law, Department of Defense policies,

Service regulations, and doctrine and joint Service publications.”

<https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/2553439/conquering-the-ethical-temptations-of-command-lessons-from-the-field-grades/>

The Art of Non-war: Sun Tzu and Great Power Competition

by James Micciche

“As the joint force refocuses U.S. national security strategy to address great power competition, it must update its institutional development approach to incorporate frameworks representative of new security architectures. The majority of military theories that underpin modern U.S. strategy and doctrine are drawn from Napoleonic Era theorists who focused heavily on decisive battlefield conflict. In today’s post-information age, however, armed conflict represents the least likely manifestation of competition. Today, the use of coercive military force is limited by increasing international economic interdependence and global nuclear deterrence strategies. Consequently, the current strategic operating environment demands a deeper understanding of limited warfare tactics, competitive activities below levels of conflict, and information dominance to achieve strategic objectives. Sun Tzu’s seminal work, ‘The Art of War,’ provides context that can help the United States better understand how to win without fighting, how to overcome a proclivity to utilize coercive force, and how to cultivate nonbinary understandings of war, peace, and competition. While the theories of Carl von Clausewitz, Antoine-Henri Jomini, Napoleon Bonaparte, and other eighteenth and nineteenth century European military

strategists are still applicable in planning and conducting large scale ground combat operations, they are inadequate to wholly inform strategies for conflict below the threshold of war.”

<https://warroom-armywarcollege-edu.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/warroom.armywarcollege.edu/articles/non-war/amp/>

Thinking in (Napoleonic) Times: Historical Warnings for an Era of Great Power Competition

by Alexandra Evans

“It’s July, and war has returned to Europe. Tensions have been high for months after two major powers, engaged in a contest for influence, intervened in a local political crisis. Multiple brokered agreements, breathlessly described in the international press, have collapsed, but at long last the parties appear to be nearing a peaceful resolution. Then the text of a diplomatic telegram, carefully and covertly edited to provoke outrage, leaks publicly. Mass demonstrations erupt as nationalist commentators demand retribution. With protestors gathered outside government offices, the president declares war. The scenario described is neither the pretext for a futuristic wargame nor the plot of the next political thriller in your Netflix queue. It’s the story of how France and Prussia went to war in 1870 after a brief but intense period of competition, unraveling the concert of Europe, which had maintained a fragile peace among the great powers for over 50 years.”

<https://warontherocks.com/2020/12/thinking-in-napoleonic-times-historical-warnings-for-an-era-of-great-power-competition/>

Success on Purpose: A Message for Leaders of Military Organizations

by **Russell Steven Williford and Wendi Peck**

“Why do leaders of successful military operations often struggle to recreate that success when placed in charge of standing military organizations? What do the leaders of highly effective military organizations have that is missing for organizational leaders struggling with cultures mired in bureaucracy and box-checking? We propose that highly successful military operations and organizations share a feature that is so obvious it is easy to miss: Their teams have been given a clear and meaningful purpose—an elevating ‘why’ behind their work—that they understand and embrace. This phenomenon appears to occur more naturally with active military operations than with standing military organizations. But when it does occur, the result is a committed unit that is outcome-focused and agile, prioritizes smartly, and innovates or adapts as needed. Clear and meaningful purpose

also begets collaboration; people with a common purpose tend to work well as a team, even if they have little else in common. These teams attract and retain top-tier talent. The ultimate outcome is success—success on purpose—whether in a relatively short operation or in a longstanding organization.”

<https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/2421366/success-on-purpose-a-message-for-leaders-of-military-organizations/>

Design Thinking

by **Daniel Rauch and Matthew Tackett**

“The COVID-19 pandemic is a poignant example of a rapidly changing operational environment (OE). The virus’s spread has caused chaos in almost every personal and public sector throughout the world. Facts were sometimes slow to emerge, emotions were high, and conspiracies ran rampant. Political guidance from all sides shifted and was perceived as reactive by some parties. If given the vital responsibility, how would you approach the task of leading the planning effort

for the next pandemic? How would you assess the change to the OE and identify the key people and organizations involved and affected? Would your organizational readiness be drastically impacted? You probably have an intuitive response based on this latest pandemic. But can you validate those thoughts with facts and logic? Is there structure in your supporting narrative? Having a framework in place to assess problems is a start. Whether the next problem is a pandemic, a counterinsurgency, an invasion, or a major unit reorganization, deliberately approaching those problems is essential to developing options, making sound decisions, and providing recommendations that can be understood by all. Design methodology offers a doctrinal approach to understanding, communicating, and developing approaches to situations, such as a pandemic, where structure can be elusive.”

https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-101/jfq-101_11-17_Rauch-Tackett.pdf?ver=hsjxxijwezckuh7jj29rw%3d%3d

The following entries provide excerpts of and links to recently published articles that are relevant to how members of the Chaplain Corps can develop as leaders.



The Evolving Operational Environment

Sharpening the Blunt Tool: Why Deterrence Needs an Update in the Next U.S. National Security Strategy

by Kyle Wolfley

“The 2017 U.S. National Security Strategy appeared to bring back deterrence: departing from its predecessor, the document prioritized the concept by including ‘preserving peace through strength’ as a vital national interest. From nuclear weapons to cyberspace, the strategy emphasized the logics of denial and punishment, which were hallmarks of the classical deterrence theory that emerged after World War II. However, recent thinking on deterrence has evolved beyond these simple logics. Now emerging concepts such as tailored deterrence, cross-domain deterrence, and dissuasion offer new ideas to address criticisms of deterrence in theory and practice. Therefore, the most vital question for the new administration is: how should the U.S. revise its deterrence policy to best prevent aggression in today’s complex environment? A review of the problems and prospects in deterrence thinking reveals that in addition to skillfully tailoring threats and risks across domains, U.S. policymakers should dissuade aggression by offering opportunities for restraint to reduce the risk of escalation. Despite its flaws, early deterrence thinking was born out of necessity. The advent of nuclear weapons required scholars and policymakers to discover ways to avoid nuclear Armageddon. Most scholars and practitioners favored deterrence on moral and practical grounds: saving lives and treasure is clearly preferable to expending them, which is why

the motto of the U.S. military’s primary deterrence instrument has remained ‘Peace is Our Profession.’”

<https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2021/4/8/sharpening-the-blunt-tool-why-deterrence-needs-an-update-in-the-next-us-national-security-strategy>

Military Geography and Military Strategy

by Thomas Brusino

“One of the effects of the diminished attention to military strategy as warmaking has been to focus the efforts of military strategists on crafting or sorting out objectives. The favorite gripe of military professionals, even in military strategic positions, is that all the best tactical or operational efforts in the world cannot make up for poor or unclear political or strategic guidance. But this complaint, however true, does nothing to improve the crafting and execution of war or theater of war efforts. In fact, it is almost always buck passing—based on the assumption that the military is fundamentally good at all military tactics, operations, and strategy, so any failures must lay in the political arena. Failure couldn’t possibly be the military’s fault. This line of thinking incorrectly absolves military strategists of taking responsibility for their work and it neglects important deficiencies in contemporary military strategy, especially around problems of military geography.”

<https://warroom-armywarcollege-edu.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/warroom.armywarcollege.edu/articles/geography-and-strategy/amp/>

Elevating 'Deterrence by Denial' in U.S. Defense Strategy

by Erica Borghard, Benjamin Jensen, and Mark Montgomery

"The United States is at a critical strategic juncture. At the systemic level, changes in the distribution of military and economic power signal that the American unipolar moment has passed. Protecting U.S. security and advancing U.S. interests in an increasingly multipolar world—one defined by both rising and revanchist powers—now form the crux of what national-security commentators call 'great-power competition.' Yet the conversation around great-power competition is incomplete without considering how emerging technology and global connectivity alter the strategic landscape. In calibrating a new strategic approach to great-power competition, President Joe Biden's administration should orient U.S. foreign policy around the logic of a concept known as 'deterrence by denial.' This means denying adversaries the ability to threaten the global connectivity on which we all rely. The concept must become a key aspect of defense strategy."

https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2021/02/05/elevating_deterrence_by_denial_in_us_defense_strategy_659300.html

Moving Beyond A2/AD

by Chris Dougherty

"Barring a shocking strategic shift, China and, to a lesser extent, Russia will likely continue to be the focus of the next National Defense Strategy (NDS). The previous NDS and prior strategic reviews have used the term anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) to describe Chinese

and Russian approaches that seek to prevent U.S. forces from gaining or using access to overseas bases or critical locations, such as ports and airfields, while denying U.S. forces the ability to maneuver within striking distance of their territory. Collectively, these actions could significantly constrain U.S. military interventions or raise their costs. For at least a decade, A2/AD has helped focus the Department of Defense (DoD) on critical Chinese and Russian threats to U.S. military operations in East Asia and eastern Europe. Today, however, it has outlived its usefulness as a diagnosis of Chinese and Russian approaches to warfare and as a framework for guiding subsequent operational."

<https://www.cnas.org/publications/commentary/moving-beyond-a2-ad>

Trapped by Thucydides? Updating the Strategic Canon for a Sinocentric Era

by John Sullivan

"Ancient Greek roots run deep in America. 'What Athens was in miniature,' Thomas Paine predicted, 'America will be in magnitude.' From the beginning of the American experiment, Thucydides' history of the war between Athens and Sparta provided useful lessons for the nation's founding fathers. John Adams wrote to his ten year old son, John Quincy, that his future country 'may require other Wars, as well as Councils and Negotiations,' adding, '[t]here is no History, perhaps, better adapted to this usefull Purpose than that of Thucidides.' Nearly two centuries later as an emerging Cold War threatened America's sense of security, Secretary of State George Marshall declared, 'I doubt seriously whether a man can think with full wisdom and with deep

convictions regarding certain of the basic international issues today who has not at least reviewed in his mind the period of the Peloponnesian War and the Fall of Athens.' The end of the Cold War did not result in Thucydides' retirement."

<https://warontherocks.com/2020/12/trapped-by-thucydides-updating-the-strategic-canon-for-a-sinocentric-era/>

Why the Arctic is Not the "Next" South China Sea

by Elizabeth Buchanan and Bec Strating

"The South China Sea and the Arctic are increasingly grouped as strategic theaters rife with renewed great-power competition. This sentiment permeates current affairs analysis, which features geopolitical links between the two maritime theaters. And these assessments are not resigned to 'hot takes'—the linkage features at senior policy levels, too. Consider, for example, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's rhetorical question, 'Do we want the Arctic Ocean to transform into a new South China Sea, fraught with militarization and competing territorial claims?' To what extent are China's challenges to maritime order in the South China Sea a signal for how it will approach the Arctic? Understanding the differences as well as the similarities between the South China Sea and Arctic geopolitical 'competitions' is crucial to predicting the strategic implications of future maritime posturing and policies from Beijing. Comparing the South China Sea flashpoint and the Arctic in the context of strategic competition highlights how maritime 'revisionism' is better understood as maritime exceptionalism."

<https://warontherocks.com/2020/11/why-the-arctic-is-not-the-next-south-china-sea/>

The Proxy Gambit

by Alex Deep and Yelena Biberman

“Proxy conflicts are all around us. From Ukraine to Syria to the South China Sea, great and regional powers alike are using proxies to achieve their national interests abroad. There is a certain allure to what President Dwight Eisenhower once called ‘the cheapest insurance in the world’—that is, the idea that we can use proxies to fight our wars without spending a lot of blood or treasure in the process. The perceived Russian and Iranian savvy with proxies and our own success using them against ISIS have given policymakers rose-colored glasses when it comes to outsourcing military operations more extensively. Prior to becoming the forty-sixth president of the United States, Joe Biden said, ‘We can be strong and smart at the same time. There is a big difference between large-scale, open-ended deployments of tens of thousands of American combat troops, which must end, and using a few hundred Special Forces soldiers and intelligence assets to support local partners against a common enemy. Those smaller-scale missions are sustainable militarily, economically, and politically, and they advance the national interest.’ Unfortunately, it is never that easy. Proxies present a difficult dilemma for the state sponsor. While they may offer deniability and a way to pass the burden of conflict to a third party, states must invest more in terms of money and soldiers if they want to ensure that proxies pursue state goals rather than their own. If states fail to rein in proxy behavior, the results can be costly and lead to the commitment of more resources to a deepened or expanded conflict.”

<https://mwi.usma.edu/the-proxy-gambit/>

Maneuver Warfare: “Reports of My Death Have Been Greatly Exaggerated”

by Paul Barnes

“The current doctrine of combined arms maneuver was constructed by the United States Army and her NATO allies in reply to the Warsaw Pact’s quantitative dominance in Central Europe in the 1980s. Almost forty years later, and despite its successful application in both the First Gulf War and the conventional combat phase of the Second Gulf War, some military thinkers are questioning its likely efficacy in future wars. They argue that the changing character of conflict and increasingly urbanized populations have changed the operating environment; rather than fighting conventional forces in open spaces, future war will be fought in towns and cities against irregular opponents. If their observations are a true reflection of modern warfare, how fit for purpose is maneuverism—the predisposition toward maneuver rather than attrition—in the twenty-first century, and what is the alternative?”

<https://mwi.usma.edu/maneuver-warfare-reports-of-my-death-have-been-greatly-exaggerated/>

After Vietnam, American Society’s Relationships with its Military was Badly Frayed. After Twenty Years of Post-9/11 Wars, it is Again

by Scott Cooper

“What occurs on the battlefield is not the only important outcome of a war. It may not even be the most important outcome. How the societies that fought the war

are affected by the conflict can be deeply significant and have long-lasting reverberations. Both Japan and Germany were transformed by their experiences in World War II, becoming responsible, peace-seeking nations in the aftermath of defeat. America was torn asunder by our experience in Vietnam. Society convulsed on itself trying to reconcile its opposition to an unjust and ill-conceived war with its view of the young men who were drafted to fight it. Twenty years into the post-9/11 forever wars, the forgotten, acid memories of Vietnam are important to revisit, however painful—especially the relationship between America and its military in that era. Doing so will help us to critically examine the very different but equally troubling relationship between the US military that has fought for the past two decades and the people in whose name it has done so.”

<https://mwi.usma.edu/after-vietnam-american-societys-relationship-with-its-military-was-badly-frayed-after-twenty-years-of-post-9-11-wars-it-is-again/>

The Weird and Eerie Battlefields of Tomorrow: Where Horror Fiction Meets Military Planning

by Leo Blanken

“This article intends to argue that techniques from the writing of horror fiction can improve military planning. By focusing on such literature’s capacity to unsettle the reader, this article argues horror fiction may provide a useful medium for the unconstrained exploration of future conflicts in ways current planning processes cannot. More specifically, the article focuses on leveraging two aspects of horror literature—the ‘weird’ and the ‘eerie’—to expand ideation around future wars. Failing to imagine the unsettling

potentialities of rapidly changing technology and its interactions with human agency puts us at risk of falling into conflict environments that are not only difficult but fundamentally horrifying. Challenging oneself to work through these thought-scapes as one is planning, training, and equipping is far better than when one is engulfed in a war that seems shocking and alien. The First World War, explored below, offers a sobering example of a conflict that truly horrified its participants due to their failure to grapple with the unsettling implications of their changing world. Such a proposal should not seem that strange. The strategic use of science fiction writing by the military has already become mainstream. The U.S. Army and the Marine Corps have been recruiting budding futurists from among their ranks in science fiction writing contests for years.”

<https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2020/8/25/the-weird-and-erie-battlefields-of-tomorrow>

Rightsizing Our Understanding of Religion

by Wayne Macrae

“The world of religion consists of various belief systems that influence humanity in numerous ways. Religion is global. It is powerfully influential everywhere that the joint force currently operates and extends to every corner of the globe. Religion is part of the fabric of every nation—including those that take a position against it. For governments that identify as secular or atheist, religion remains a present factor that they work to account for or control both internally and externally. Every government invests time and energy in controlling, influencing, or seeking to exist alongside religion. In recent years,

religious boundaries have begun to shift as immigration has surged, creating more overlap, interaction, friction, conflict, and competing interests of diverse influences. Understanding the interchange among intersecting religious dynamics, strategic theater goals, plans, and military operations is at the heart of global integration; this is particularly true when considering the presence of religion throughout the ‘gray zone’ between peace and war and the major role of religious dialogue in messaging to and influencing adherents. This article advocates for a strategic approach to religion and the role of the chaplain in representing it to the commander. The article also considers the dynamics and growing impact of religion, how nations interact with it, U.S. military interaction with religion, and how the U.S. military could account for that role through the utilization of religious affairs staff sections.”

<https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/2421346/rightsizing-our-understanding-of-religion/>

Unconventional Supply Network Operations: A New Frontier in Global Competition

by Daniel Egel and Jan Gleiman

“Supply chains have long been recognized as a key component in global competition. In warfare, commanders have always faced the challenge of defending their own supply lines or finding ways to attack the enemy’s, illustrated vividly in the fight for natural resources like oil and rubber during World War II. Protecting both economic and military supply chains has also been a critical U.S. objective during peacetime. President Biden’s

‘Executive Order on America’s Supply Chains’—issued on February 24, 2021—highlights the continuing importance of supply chains in competition in the 21st century. In large part, this focus reflects the growing importance of cyber and the resulting ‘supply chain wars’ between the United States and China. But the potential exploitation of supply chains for offensive U.S. operations has been much less discussed. Indeed, in sharp contrast to the multitude of discussions focused on the potential use of offensive cyber operations by the United States, systematic discussions on how to organize the United States to exploit fissures in modern supply chains in pursuit of U.S. objectives have not occurred. We believe that the United States could consider formalizing and maturing a comprehensive approach for this offensive capability, which might be called Unconventional Supply Network Operations (USNO).”

https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2021/04/17/unconventional_supply_network_operations_a_new_frontier_in_global_competition_773182.html

There’s a Big Problem Limiting U.S. Interoperability with Allies: Here’s How to Fix It

by Lucas Thoma

“The United States military is woefully unprepared for a critical element of the wars to come. The issue isn’t one of weapons systems or equipment, physical fitness or doctrine—it’s one of process. Despite an enormous network of allies and partners around the world, and nearly two decades of continuous multinational military operations, members of one of the

key groups of people who actually make such cooperation possible are understaffed, overworked, and all but impossible to find in the bureaucracy. These professionals, known as foreign disclosure officers, are the ones who write, interpret, and apply the rules and policies that govern sharing (or disclosure) with foreign partners. In essence, if process is the US military's valentine to partners, disclosure officers are their cupids. As it stands, the United States military trains disclosure officers, but it has almost no way to keep track of them. Consequently, a critical force multiplier is lost. Creating skill identifiers within the services is a low-cost way to rectify this using authorities and processes that already exist in doctrine and law. Moreover, by doing so, the services would meet key objectives of the National Defense Strategy and the National Military Strategy while strengthening interoperability and enhancing lethality of its alliances.”

<https://mwi.usma.edu/theres-a-big-problem-limiting-us-interoperability-with-allies-heres-how-to-fix-it>

Not Just for SOF Anymore: Envisioning Irregular Warfare as a Joint Force Priority

by Michael Noonan

“The recent buildup of Russian troops near Ukraine and Chinese naval exercises to the east and west of Taiwan may be seen as evidence that great power competition will require a return to focusing on the threats posed by the

maneuver brigades, air wings, and naval fleets of competitors. For the Biden administration, which entered office stating that ‘diplomacy, development, and economic statecraft should be the leading instruments of American foreign policy,’ and ‘the use of military force should be the last resort,’ there is a clear temptation to reduce US commitments to messy political-military conflicts on what many see as the strategic periphery (i.e., Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia). President Biden’s announcement last week that the United States will remove all troops from Afghanistan by September 2021 is a prominent, but certainly not the only, indicator of this trajectory. For some this means, perhaps, that there should be a division of labor between conventional forces and special operations forces (SOF) that might assign these messy contingencies to the latter forces, but that would be a mistake. As the Biden administration develops its national security strategy, it should not conflate great power competition with major theater war or conventional operations.”

<https://mwi.usma.edu/not-just-for-sof-anymore-envisioning-irregular-warfare-as-a-joint-force-priority/>

An Irregular Upgrade to Operational Design

by Brian Petit, Steven Ferenzim and Kevin Bilm

“Operational design—the analytical framework that underpins U.S. military planning—has a relevance problem. Cracking open the newly revised Joint Planning manual, one would hope to find

some insight on how to optimize military planning for today’s ‘information-age competition.’ For example, developing an information campaign to inoculate vulnerable populations against subversion, or conversely, to catalyze popular mobilization against adversary interests. Or maybe applying counter-threat finance to deny the financial access that gives adversaries leverage over partner nations. What about blending different aspects of engagement like security force assistance, foreign military sales, and international military education to simultaneously counter violent extremist organizations and compete with China and Russia? No such luck. Instead, we get more of the same design elements familiar to planners: objectives, military end state, lines of operation, center of gravity, decisive points, forces and functions, and so on. The checklist continues in the traditional fashion, focused on applying overwhelming firepower and maneuver to achieve decisive victory. This continued stagnation doesn’t bode well for national security going forward.”

<https://warontherocks.com/2021/03/an-irregular-upgrade-to-operational-design/>



