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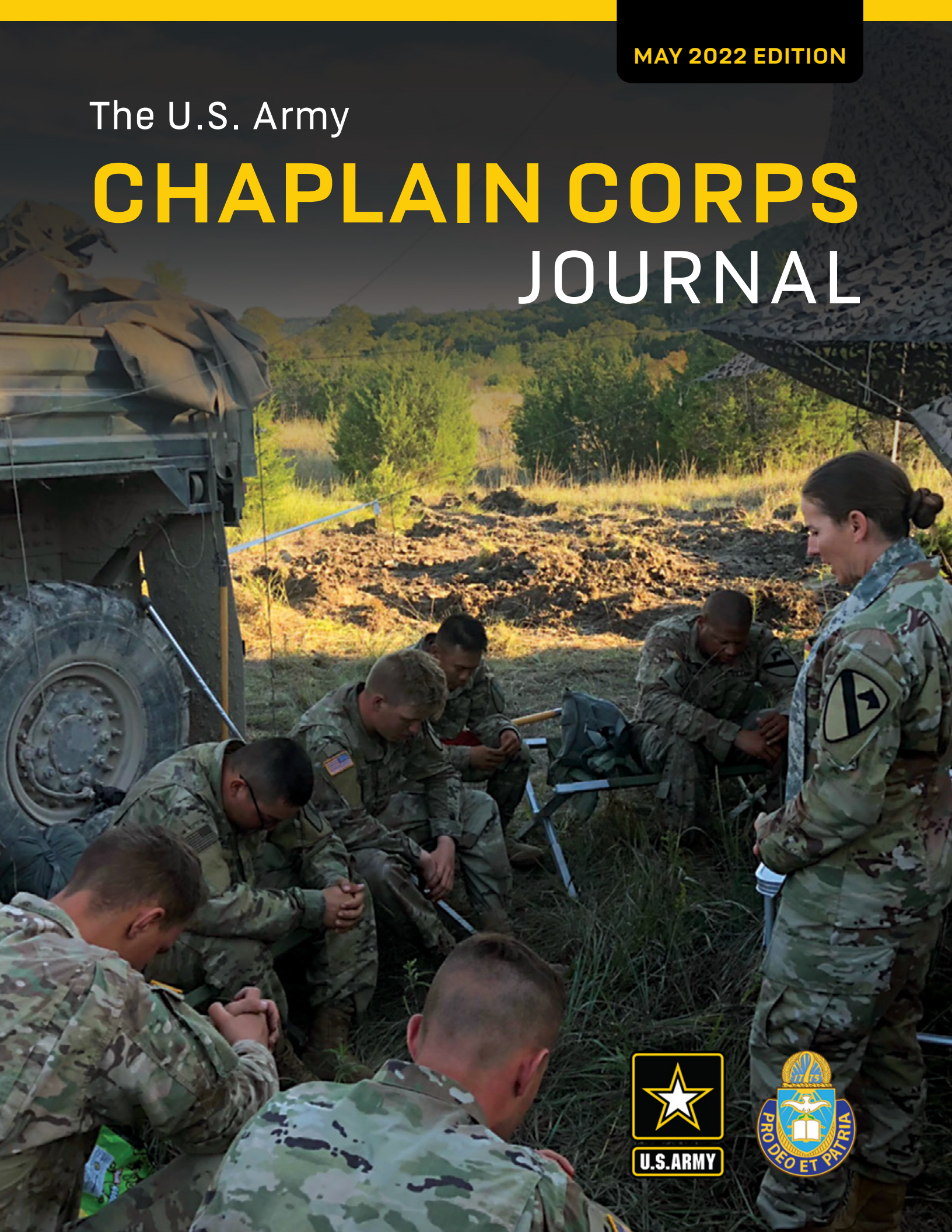
CHAPLAIN CORPS JOURNAL



U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Journal

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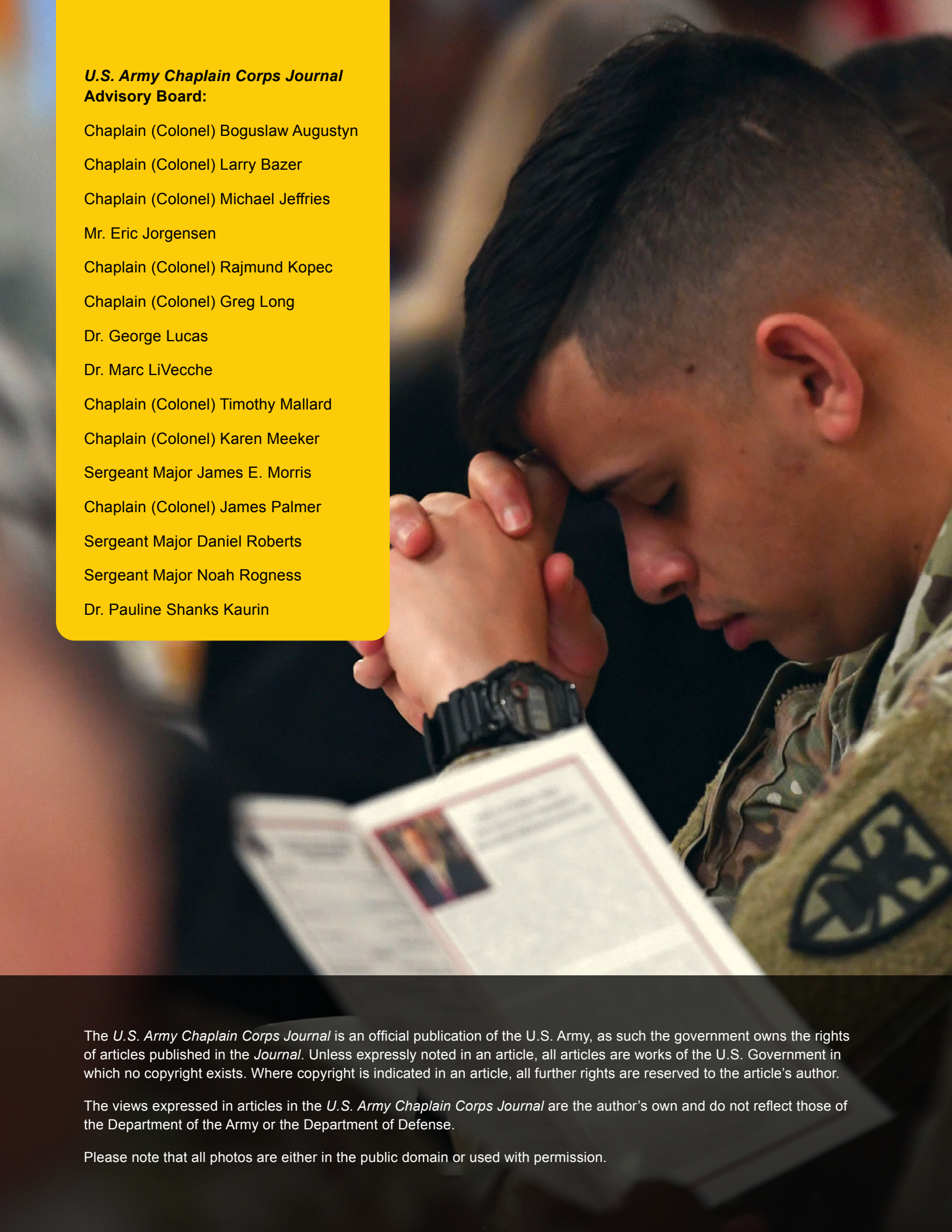

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Chief of Chaplains

Chaplain (Major General) Thomas L. Solhjem

The U.S. Army Chaplain Corps is central to supporting the "People First" philosophy of the Secretary and the Chief of Staff of the Army; and the transformation occurring at the newly formed U.S. Army Institute for Religious Leadership is key to enabling the Corps to support that philosophy in the years ahead by meeting the needs of a changing, more diverse Army. The recent changes to the *U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Journal* are also key.

In 2022, the *Journal* is beginning twice-yearly publication, and this May 2022 issue is the first of two issues to be published this year. Even as the *Journal* ramps up its publication schedule, it has also introduced a reader-review process to assess content submitted for consideration. Implementing this thorough and deliberate reader-review process aligns the *Journal* with standard academic practice, while enhancing its value to all Chaplain Corps personnel and to chaplaincies more broadly. The *Journal* is committed to using its new publishing schedule and reader-review process to deliver insightful articles written from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

Accelerating the publication schedule while elevating the caliber of the *Journal*'s content will contribute to the transformational work of further professionalizing the Corps, as the *Journal* provides space for rigorous academic engagement and for discussions that meet the felt needs of Chaplain Corps personnel. Members of the Chaplain Corps are caregivers whose professional commitment to taking care of all Soldiers, all their Family members, and all Army Civilians nests within the Army's number one priority, People. Because members of the Chaplain Corps also need to be cared for as we care for others, the *Journal* is intended to encourage, sustain, and feed us as we are accomplishing our sacred mission of building Army spiritual readiness.

Please read this issue, process it, discuss it with your Chaplain Corps teammates and others, and apply its insights as you "Invest in PEOPLE, Connect them in Spirit, and Cultivate COMMUNITY!"

For God and Country—Live the Call!

Chaplain Corps Regimental Sergeant Major

Sergeant Major Ralph Martinez

I have been privileged to help guide the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps through a season of great change. I now write this message with mixed emotions, since this is the last time I will address you in the *Journal* as your Regimental Sergeant Major. I have truly been honored to serve our Nation and our Corps in this leadership capacity.

Today's Army prioritizes Soldiers, Family members, and Army Civilians as a part of the "People First" philosophy of the Secretary and the Chief of Staff of the Army. Army leadership rightly cares about the physical readiness and lethality of Soldiers, but Field Manual 7-22 makes it clear that physical readiness is only one aspect of *Holistic Health and Fitness (H2F)*, and that Soldiers cannot be holistically healthy and fit without spiritual readiness. FM 7-22 makes this an exciting time to be an Army religious support professional.

All the members of our Chaplain Corps live out the Army's focus on its People and on their spiritual health, across our formations around the world each and every day. As I retire, I know that Soldiers, their Families, and Army Civilians are in good hands, because I know that all of you will continue building Army spiritual readiness by "Caring for the Soul of the Army."

Pro Deo et Patria!

The Moral Courage to Teach Moral Leadership

By Chaplain (Major) Jared Vineyard

U.S. Army Chaplains tend to sum up their primary area of responsibility with the phrase "religious support" or some variant of it. By regulation, "the Chaplain Corps performs or provides religious support for all Soldiers, Family members, and authorized Department of Defense (DOD) Civilians from all religious traditions."[1] Army Chaplain Corps doctrine clarifies this point when it states, "each military branch has a role (ADP 1-01). The Chaplain Corps's role is to provide religious support."[2] In addition to providing religious support, what else does the Army expect a Chaplain to do? One issue that flows from this question is around the expectations that Army Commanders have of their Chaplains with regards to realms outside their religious support mission. With all of this in mind, the general purpose of this article is to encourage Chaplains as they perform roles outside of providing religious support. To my mind, fulfilling roles outside of religious support is a subset of this primary mission that enhances a Chaplain's role in that area. The more specific purpose of this article is to encourage Chaplains that part of their responsibility is be bold in teaching moral leadership within their respective formations, or put another way, to exhibit the moral courage to teach moral leadership. The article unfolds in three parts: the first reminds Chaplains that we teach moral leadership in the United States Army; the second demonstrates that Chaplains have always taught moral leadership in the United States Army; the final part encourages Chaplains to continue teaching moral leadership to the United States Army.

The U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Teaches Moral Leadership for the U.S. Army.

Moral leadership is "the process of influencing people by providing moral purpose, direction, or motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization consistent with the Army ethic."[3] Embedded in this definition are the ideas of morals and ethics. The Army defines these terms as:

Morals: a sense of right and wrong in principles, values, and conduct.

Ethics: a system of moral principles, or rules of conduct recognized in respect to a class of human actions, a particular group or culture.[4]

Chaplains both advise on and teach about issues around morals and ethics within the scope of their regular duties. Specifically, internal advisement doctrine states that Chaplains advise "commanders on impacts of religion, morals, ethics, and morale on all aspects of military operations."[5] In addition to advising, Chaplains also are to supposed to teach explicitly on the topics of morals and ethics within the scope of moral leadership. It is important to emphasize that this teaching mission is not separate from or parallel to the religious support mission, but rather contributes to it. For instance, internal advisement doctrine states that "religious support is grounded upon law and policy, and significantly contributes to operational mission accomplishment and broader Army mission end states

of developing and sustaining a ready and resilient force of resilient and ethical Soldiers and leaders."[6] When Chaplains are actively engaged within their formations, Commanders expect that they lead Soldiers who freely exercise their religion; in addition, Commanders who lead formations with actively engaged Chaplains have a more resilient and ethical force. This is depicted in the graphic below:[7]

Chaplains teach morals and ethics primarily through Moral Leadership Training (MLT) in their formations. According to Army Regulation (AR) 350-1, the Chief of Chaplains will "exercise HQDA responsibility for moral leadership in the Army."[8] The Chief of Chaplains delegates this task throughout the Chaplains Corps, as described in AR 165-1, *Army Chaplain Corps Activities*. Specifically, section four of chapter nine outlines the scope and concept of the training. As a reminder, this section states:

9–9. INTRODUCTION

a. The MLT program of the Army is a commander's program used to build more cohesive units with stronger Soldiers, Civilians, and Families by addressing a variety of moral, ethical, social, and spiritual issues. The CCH exercises HQDA responsibility for MLT in the Army (see AR 350–1).

b. Based on the commander's intent, MLT applies Army values, the enduring social commitments embodied in our nation's founding documents, applicable legal statutes, military regulations, professional standards and traditions, and related concepts to enhance moral standards and resilience, strengthen character, promote American identity, and empower leaders with credibility.

9–10. CONCEPT

a. Many moral issues affect the lives of Soldiers, Civilians, and Families, impacting the effectiveness of service, command climate, unit readiness, and cohesion. The commander uses MLT to promote unit readiness, good order and discipline, warrior ethos, spiritual fitness, positive moral choices, and Soldier and Family care.

b. The chaplain, as the commander's advisor in matters of morals and morale as affected by religion, is the principal staff officer for this program. In MLT, the chaplain and Religious Affairs Specialist utilize values integral to the Profession of Arms, tools from a variety of human dimension disciplines, religious and spiritual factors related to ethical decision-making, and character development.

c. MLT is a command-directed program, a staff advisor chaplain function, and not a religious program. Its purpose is to strengthen moral development and resilience within the command.

d. Chaplains may provide MLT, in accordance with AR 350–1 and DA am 165–16, which supports leadership development of Soldiers in the Army profession.[9]

Simply put, the Chaplain Corps is tasked to teach morals and ethics through moral leadership training. The idea that Chaplains teach moral leadership is true today and is rooted in Army history.

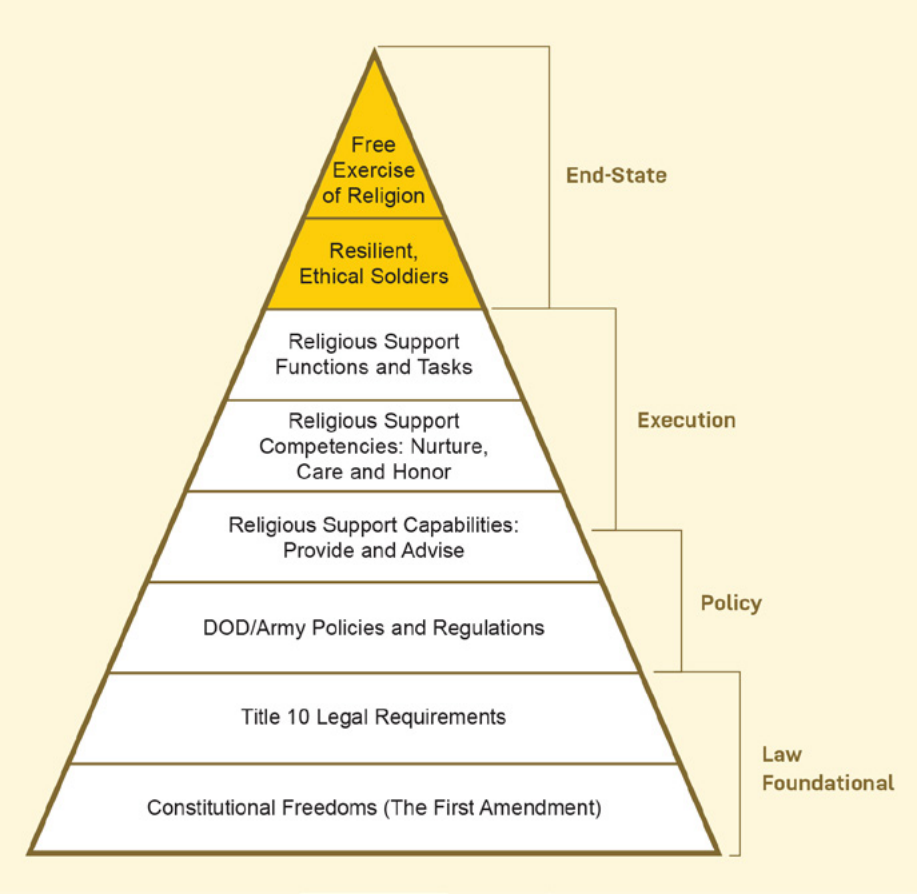

Figure 1: Fundamentals of religious support[7]

The U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Has Always Taught Moral Leadership for the U.S. Army.[10]

The Chaplain Corps has longstanding role as a key component of the moral and ethical instruction of the force.[11] This idea is seen in a letter from the Army's first commander in chief, George Washington, to General William Smallwood of Maryland, dated May 26, 1777. Washington wrote: "Let vice and immorality of every kind be discouraged as much as possible, in your brigade, and as a chaplain is allowed to each Regiment, see that the men attend divine worship."[12] Washington was very concerned with the moral character of the men he commanded. In this letter, in the same sentence, he connects the idea of moral Soldiers to the Chaplain's religious duties, specifically divine worship. Religion and morals, in Washington's eyes, are directly correlated. As such, in many cases both religion and morality could and would be taught by the same person: the Chaplain.

Decades after the Revolutionary War, the United States founded the United States Military Academy at West Point for its aspiring officers. Teaching morals, ethics, and character was vital to the institution from its founding in 1802. Historian Stephen Ambrose writes:

> The pre-Civil War American college faculties were preoccupied with the development of character. They pushed, pulled, shaped, and hammered the boys into the accepted mold of a Christian gentlemen.... At West Point, character building reached its apogee. The Academy faculty was trying to turn out not just Christian gentlemen but Christian soldiers, so the virtues of duty, loyalty, honor, and courage were emphasized more at West Point than anywhere else.[13]

At West Point, in those days, religion and morals intersected. The Chaplain was especially visible at this intersection. An early Chaplain wrote of his duties:

> I am serving here in the dual capacity of a minister and a teacher. As a minister, my chief duty is to preach on Sundays; as a teacher, I have this year 25 of the students (cadets) to teach two hours everyday.... I am trying to teach them World Geography, World History, Morality and Law among Nations.[14]

The Chaplain not only conducted services, but also instructed in morals, character, and more.

Over time, the duties of Army Chaplains expanded as the United States Army grew to meet the mortal threat of secession from the south. Men from all corners of the country joined the blue ranks to serve in the bloodiest war in American history. During the conflict:

> [I]ndividual commanders in the Union Army instituted systems of lectures and discussions on the causes of the war, the nature of slavery, and the character of American free institutions, while civilian organizations supplied individual soldiers and units with materials for their moral guidance. For those who could not read, a plan was submitted that called for officers and certain noncommissioned officers to be trained to lecture and organize discussion groups. For all practical purposes, many Army chaplains became the education officers of the Union Army.[15]

Chaplains continued to focus on their religious duties, that is religious support, in their respective formations, but they also became involved in training many of these men in morals as well as in other forms of education. In these duties, Chaplains often advised the command. "Specifically, chaplains were to make written, quarterly reports 'on the moral and religious condition of the regiment, and such suggestions as may conduce to the social happiness and moral improvement of the troops.'"[16]

The years following the Civil War placed Chaplains with the frontier Army of the American West and then internationally, eventually culminating in the 20th century with two World Wars. These wars provided Chaplains ample opportunities to expand their range of duties. Part of this expansion included mandatory Army-wide character training by 1947. This training was originally developed as a part of the Universal Military Training Experimental Unit at Ft. Knox, KY, in which the Office of the Chief of Chaplains was responsible for preparing a continuing series of discussions patterned after the Armed Forces talks known as "The Chaplain's Hour."[17] This program initiated a flurry of Chaplain Corps activity that included the publication of DA Circular 231 (3 August 1948) and Memorandum 600-900-1 (4 August 1948); followed by its consolidation in AR 15-120 (30 January 1950); only to be redesigned and rewritten in AR 600-30 as the "Character Guidance Program" (1958), and then revised in AR 600-30 (1 March 1965).[18] While the name of the program would change from "The Chaplain's Hour" to "Character Guidance," the concept remained the same. The concept was that the Chaplain Corps would teach and instruct Soldiers across Army formations in morality and character development.[19] The Chaplain Corps produced and taught this curriculum. It was both thoughtful

and in-depth. An example of the material from 1950 is graphically portrayed below:[20]

The specified intent of the program at the time was to develop a "sense of responsibility within the individual."[21] This can be seen in the graphic at the center or bulls-eye of the training. To achieve this goal, the program emphasized techniques focused on self-discipline, as well as principles highlighting the moral accountability of individuals, also seen on the graphic. The overall design of the program was for Soldiers to "have an appreciation of the moral fabric of the American way of life; [that they] might be able to recognize the moral obligations and opportunities of the military profession; understand the consequences of his attitudes and behavior; and have a sense of service and sacrifice in the performance of duty."[22] Chaplains taught classes on topics related to morality such as liberty, thrift, courage, fair play, and a host of others that are graphically portrayed on the edge circle. Along with the basic instruction, Character Guidance Councils were established at echelon to assist commands in implementing the program. Each year, the Chaplain Corps produced topics that were to be discussed across the entire Army. For example, in June of 1958, the discussion topic was personal integrity; in November of 1958 it was moderation, and in April of 1959 it was reputation.[23] More examples and anecdotes could be shared, but it is enough to say that the Chaplain Corps, historically speaking, has always been at the tip of the spear in teaching moral leadership, that is morals and ethics.

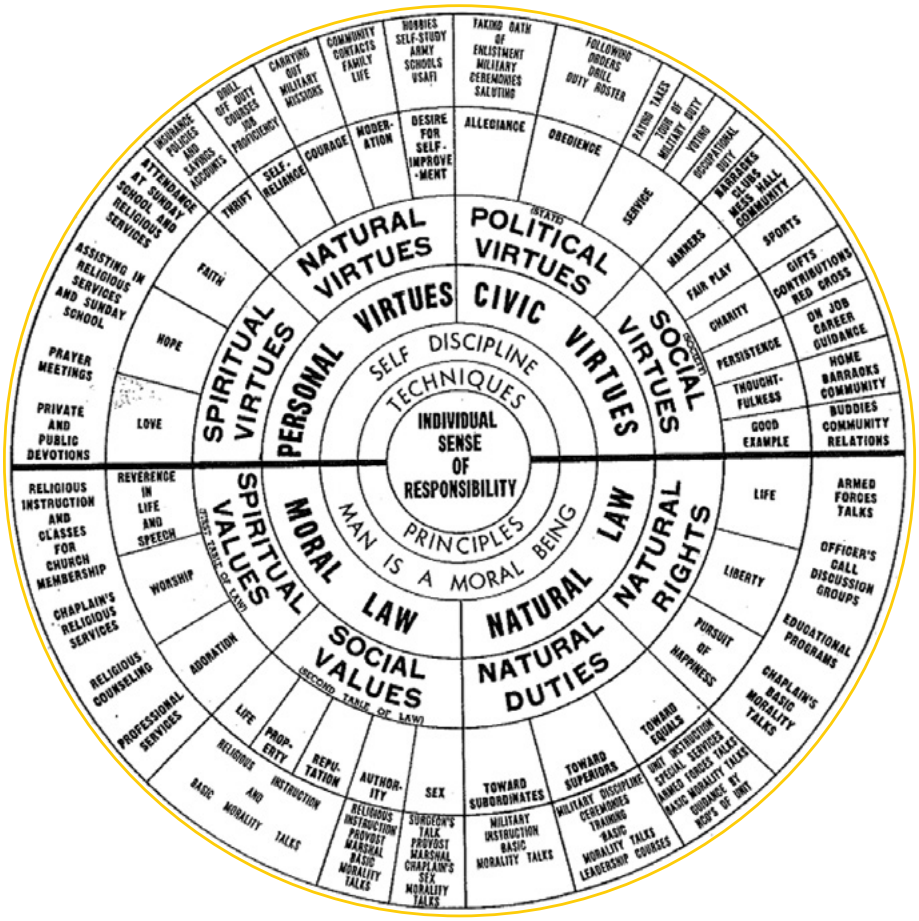

Figure 2

The U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Must Continue to Teach Morality for the U.S. Army.

On the basis of regulatory authority and historical precedent, the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps is positioned to embrace its charge as moral teachers of the force. This reaffirmation is confirmed with the latest publication of Department of the Army Publication (DA PAM) 165-19, *Moral Leadership,* dated 27 November 2020. This document describes the capabilities and responsibilities that the Chaplain Corps possesses to facilitate moral leadership development for the Army through teaching and training, in particular. But do Chaplains have the moral courage to conduct this training? Does the Chaplain have the moral courage to teach moral leadership to the force that they serve? The answers to these questions are complicated because not only are they rooted in the character, capability, and willingness of each Chaplain to engage these crucial matters, but they are also covered by Army doctrine.

As with all Army professionals, Chaplains must understand that doctrine is the starting point for all Army training. The Army defines doctrine as "fundamental principles, with supporting tactics, techniques, procedures, and terms and symbols, used for the conduct of operations and as a guide for actions of operating forces, and elements of the institutional force that directly

support operations in support of national objectives."[24] And while many Chaplains may think of Army doctrine and picture in their minds infantry maneuvers or artillery fires, the Army says a lot about the areas of ethics, morals, and character. Doctrine is the fundamental starting point for what Chaplains should consider when teaching morals, ethics, and character in the Army context.[25] Helpful publications for Chaplains to be familiar with to teach moral leadership include ADP 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession*; FM 6-27, *The Commander's Handbook on the Law of Land Warfare*; FM 6-22, *Leader Development*; FM 7-22, *Holistic Health and Fitness*; DA PAM 165-19, *Moral Leadership*; and AR 350-53, *Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness* to name a few. Specifically, DA PAM 165-19, was written especially for Unit Ministry Teams (UMTs) to think through how moral leadership training might be conducted. It gives helpful definitions and basic principles that UMTs can use as the starting point for their instruction in morals and ethics.

After gaining a doctrinal baseline for what the Army requires of its Soldiers in terms of ethics and morals, a Chaplain is now ready to create and teach courses in these areas. A great starting place for teaching topics might be the foundation's matrix for the Army Ethic. This matrix is displayed below:[26]

Each one of these areas, documents, principles, or ideas is a treasure trove of potential teaching material. For instance, a Chaplain might teach a class on the Army Ethic. Another class could be on the five characteristics of the Army profession (trust, honorable service, military expertise, stewardship, and *esprit de corps*). Another class might be on Just War Theory or the Golden Rule (both under the moral motivations which may guide Soldiers' actions).[27] This matrix provides examples of classes that a Chaplain might choose a topic from.

Some Chaplains may feel that teaching these or other related topics is stepping too far away from their role as a religious support professional. But this is not the case; teaching on these topics is congruent with the role as a religious support professional. For instance, when discussing the Army ethic, Army leadership doctrine states that "the Army ethic has its origins in the philosophical heritage, theological and cultural traditions, and the historic legacy that frames our Nation."[28] As those with expertise and a background in theological studies, Chaplains bring additional insights and moral nuances that would not necessarily be provided

FOUNDATIONS OF THE ARMY ETHIC		
Applicable to	**Legal Motivation of Compliance**	**Moral Motivation of Aspiration**
Army profession Trust Honorable service Military expertise Stewardship *Esprit de corps*	United States Constitution United States Code Uniform Code of Military Justice Executive Orders Treaties, Law of Land Warfare	Declaration of Independence Universal Declaration of Human Rights Just War Tradition (Jus ad Bellum) Army culture of trust Professional organizational climate
Trusted Army professionals Honorable servants Army experts Stewards	Oaths of Service Standards of conduct Directives and policies The Soldier's Rules Rules of engagement	Natural moral reason – Golden Rule Army Values Soldier's and Army Civilian Corps creeds Justice in War (Jus in Bello)
The *Army ethic*, our professional ethic, is the set of enduring moral principles, values, beliefs, and applicable laws embedded within the Army *culture of trust* that motivates and guides the Army profession and trusted *Army professionals* in conduct of the mission, performance of duty, and all aspects of life.		

by someone with a differing background. Also, the Army ties ethical behavior to the spiritual dimension of Soldier fitness that "draws on an individual's core religious, philosophical, or human values to develop an individual's sense of motivation, character, and intergrity."[29] Who better to address moral and ethical issues, which in Army-terms deal with the spiritual dimension, than the Chaplain?

But Chaplains can do more than simply teach a class on ethics and morals, they can be a part of a holistic solution at their level of influence. In the past, the Army used to have Character Guidance Councils, but today Chaplains at echelon need to partner with other staff officers and agencies to provide for the best possible environment, including moral environment, for the command. Many Chaplains already participate in "Health of the Force," Resilience, and other councils that assess the health and needs of the command. Chaplains can use these opportunities to be more proactive than simply discussing the situations of already-troubled Soldiers. They may lead through helping their command get "left of the boom" when it comes to high-risk Soldiers as well as Soldiers who exhibit immoral and unethical behavior.

Finally, if Chaplains really need ideas on topics to teach, they should use their technical chain to contact subject matter experts within the Corps. Every Center of Excellence in the Army has a minimum of one Chaplain ethics instructor focused on training in Professional Military Education. The instructors can provide insight, encourage proficiency in specific topics, and teach fellow Chaplains Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) or other lessons from their instruction.

It has been said that "better people make better Soldiers."[30] And while that "better" could easily relate to physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual domains, the original statement is about morality. Morality makes better Soldiers. Chaplains have the opportunity as well as the regulatory, doctrinal, and historical precedent to teach their formations moral leadership. But will we? As Chaplains, our challenge is to have the moral courage to teach moral leadership. When we teach it, we will have the opportunity to produce a more ethical and resilient operating force today that will be prepared for any of the unknown challenges that tomorrow might bring.

Chaplain (Major) Jared Vineyard currently serves as the Ethics Instructor and Writer at the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Ft. Benning, GA. He graduated from the United States Military Academy in 2002 and has earned two graduate degrees, a Master of Divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2008 and a Master of Sacred Theology from Yale Divinity School in 2019. He is married to the former Amanda Rochat, since 2002, and they have six children.

NOTES

1 Army Regulation (AR) 165-1, *Army Chaplain Corps Activities* (Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, June 2015), 1.

2 Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 1-05.04, *Religious Support and Internal Advisement* (Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, March 2017), 1-1.

3 Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA PAM) 16-100, *Moral Leadership* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, November, 2020), 4.

4 DA PAM 16-100, *Moral Leadership*, 2.

5 ATP 1-05.04, *Religious Support and Internal Advisement*, 1-3.

6 ATP 1-05.04, *Religious Support and Internal Advisement*, 1-1.

7 ATP 1-05.04, *Religious Support and Internal Advisement*, 1-1.

8 Army Regulation (AR) 350-1, *Army Training and Leader Development* (Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, December 2017), 27.

9 Army Regulation (AR) 165-1, *Army Chaplain Corps Activities*, 25-26.

10 While the concept of teaching morals and ethics has existed, the term moral leadership has not. It may have first appeared when it was suggested as a name change by CH (MAJ) James Cranford who wrote a memo on behalf of the Fifth U.S. Army Chaplain to CH (COL) Luther Evan, CONARC Chaplain, on 29 October 1958. In the memo, CH Cranford states "the terminology 'Moral Leadership' appears to be (a) better subject than 'Character Guidance' which is not always conducive to enthusiastic response." At the time, the Character Guidance program was the venue for Chaplains to train morals and ethics.

11 A key word is a 'component.' While Chaplains are tasked to teach moral leadership, others also teach and train ethics. These include the command as well as the JAG. For a more detailed account of this interplay, one could read 'The Chaplain's Role of the Ethics Team,' by CH (MAJ) Sean Wead in *The Chaplain Corps Journal* (Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, Spring/Summer 2014), 24-28.

12 John W. Brinsfield, "The Army Chaplaincy and Ethics: Historic Roots, Roles, and Reflections," *The Army Chaplaincy: Maintaining the Moral High Ground*, PB 16-08-1 (Spring-Summer 2008), 8.

13 Stephen E. Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 147.

14 Herman A. Norton, "Struggling for Recognition," in *The United States Army Chaplaincy, Volume II* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, 1977), 27.

15 Department of the Army Field Manual (FM) 16-100, *Character Guidance Manual* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, May 1966), 9.

16 John W. Brinsfield, "The Army Chaplaincy and Ethics: Historic Roots, Roles, and Reflections," 10.

17 Master Lesson Plan, USAR School Officer Career Course, 1967-1968 School Year, *Character Guidance* (New York: United States Army Chaplain School, 15 FEB 1965), 1-5 & 1-6.

18 Ibid, 1-6.

19 In 1965, the requirement was "all enlisted personnel below grade E-6 upon completion of basic training will receive a minimum of one hour of character guidance training each month… all officer and enlisted personnel of grade E-6 and higher will receive a monthly briefing on the content of the monthly character guidance discussion topic," according to TC 16-1, *Army Character Guidance Program* (Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 5 April 1965), 1.

20 ST 16-151, *The Army Character Guidance Program* (Carlisle Barracks: The Chaplain School, 1 March 1950), 18.

21 ST 16-151, *The Army Character Guidance Program* (Carlisle Barracks: The Chaplain School, 1 March 1950), 6.

22 ST 16-151, *The Army Character Guidance Program* (Carlisle Barracks: The Chaplain School, 1 March 1950), 6-7.

23 Circular Number 2-123, *Training Activities: Character Guidance Discussion Topics* (Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 25 April 1958), Enclosure 1-2.

24 Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 1-01, *Doctrine Primer* (Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, July 2019), 1-2.

25 A great overview of basic Army doctrine in general is found in ADP 1-01, *Doctrine Primer*. As a reminder all Army publications can be found at Army Publishing Directorate at armypubs.army.mil.

26 Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession* (Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, July 2019), 1-7.

27 Additionally, as one reads through the primary Army documents, topics and ideas for classes should appear through the readings. For example, one could teach a class on the 'three perspectives' to look at when facing an ethical dilemma (paragraph 2-18 of ADP 6-22).

28 ADP 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession*, 1-7.

29 Field Manual (FM) 7-22, *Holistic Health and Fitness*, (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, October, 2020), 3-5.

30 The original quote was "better men make better soldiers," from Department of the Army Field Manual (FM) 16-100, *Character Guidance Manual* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, May 1966), 26.

Lessons the Army Chaplain Corps Can Learn from Air Force Fighter Pilots

By Mr. Eric Jorgensen

I am writing as your former Army Chaplain Corps Chief of Strategic Communications, now your Chief of Strategy. I also happen to be a retired Air Force fighter pilot. I am still not entirely sure how those flightpaths intersected. I am pleased to be supporting our Corps' important work of caring for Soldiers, their Family members, and Army Civilians—the sacred work of "Caring for the Soul of the Army."

In this piece, I merge those two flightpaths in my life to share what I consider to be vital lessons Army Chaplains and the rest of us in the Chaplain Corps can learn from Air Force fighter pilots. I believe these lessons can help the members of the Corps to provide mutual support to one another so that together we can continue getting better and better at building Army spiritual readiness.

Clear, Concise, and Correct

Communication seems like a good place to start for someone who recently had the title, Chief of Strategic Communications. Allow me to tell you about a fighter pilot's "3 Cs."

In the old days, when I flew the F-15E Strike Eagle before we had datalink, we communicated visually when we could, but mostly with radio calls, as you might imagine. When we made those radio calls, we followed the rule of the "3 Cs:" our transmissions were expected to be clear, concise, and correct, in that order.

If our radio calls were mumbled, garbled, imprecise, or confusing in any way, no one would know what we were saying. If our calls were too long, our transmissions would essentially jam the frequency, even if what we were saying was clear. If our calls were incorrect, we would mislead or confuse our teammates, even if we were clear and concise.

No fighter pilot would ever key the microphone with food in his mouth to use the radio to say, "Hey, Bobby. How are you doing over there?" A call like this only leads to more questions: Who's Bobby? Which Bobby? Where is over there? What exactly do you want to know about how Bobby is doing? Why are you asking?

On the other hand, "Break right!" is just as bad, and may even be worse. This call is clear and concise, but it is incorrect because it is incomplete. A break turn is a maximum performance maneuver pilots execute to trade energy for position. When an enemy has achieved a position of advantage, fighter pilots "break" to survive. When pilots are told to "Break right!" they do it without hesitation, because they know death might be moments away.

"Break right!" is a bad radio call because everyone who hears it will break right. The clear, concise, and correct call would start with someone's callsign—"Eagle 22, break right!"—so that Eagle 22 breaks and survives, and everyone else on the frequency goes about their business without unnecessary maneuvering and confusion.

The Army has similar radio etiquette that applies to Army Chaplains and Religious Affairs Specialists, just as it applies to any other Soldier; but, even when radios are not involved, I think there is helpful carryover from a fighter pilot's 3 Cs to

Army Chaplain Corps communications —and to any organization's communications, for that matter.

When leaders provide clear, concise, and correct guidance, their teammates have a much better chance of understanding what they need to do. Clear, concise, and correct communication also saves time by clarifying, condensing, and fine tuning those meetings in our calendars and those emails in our inboxes that distract from productivity. Finally, clear, concise, and correct communication from leaders also helps to motivate their teams, in part by shortening some meetings and emails, but, even more importantly, by giving team members the opportunity to share their own clear, concise, and correct thoughts with their leaders and teammates.

When Chaplain Corps leaders communicate, their teams benefit if those leaders imagine themselves using two-way radios instead of bullhorns—and if they never say, "Break right!"

The Wingman Concept

When it comes to lessons the Army Chaplain Corps can learn from Air Force fighter pilots, the 3 Cs can be helpful, but an even more important carryover I want to offer is related to the wingman concept, which is how fighter pilots provide one another with the best possible mutual support, in order to live to fight another day. Here is the backstory.

In the U.S. Air Force, a "flight" of aircraft is two or more, usually of the same type, intentionally operated by their pilots in close proximity to one another, under the leadership of a single "flight lead." The pilot or crew of the second aircraft in a flight of two is the "wingman." The Air Force is still exploring how to improve this gendered terminology.

The close proximity of a flight of fighter aircraft starts while the aviators are planning and briefing the mission. It includes tactical operations when the pilots are flying their aircraft sometimes two miles apart, but nevertheless in complete synchronization, along with time in the clouds when the pilots are flying their aircraft sometimes only three feet apart, wingtip to wingtip, just like the Air Force Thunderbirds. It finishes only after the aviators debrief in intense detail, sometimes taking more time to debrief the mission than it took to fly it.

All this close proximity in a flight is an essential part of how fighter pilots operate. You will never see a single fighter jet flying by itself, unless the pilot is doing only the most fundamental basic flight training or simply traveling from Base A to Base B in friendly territory, neither of which is high on a fighter pilot's list of highly desirable flying activities.

Bottom line: fighter pilots do not operate alone, and they do not want to operate alone, because accomplishing important missions requires the combined efforts of a team. I think every member of the Chaplain Corps also operates at their best when they are integral members of teams operating in close proximity.

I became an Air Force fighter pilot to be an integral part of a world-class team of aviators, flying with a shared higher purpose, not to fly airplanes by myself. I could have had plenty of fun flying airplanes by myself at my local aero club, but I wanted to do something more in airplanes than just fly.

It is true that becoming an Air Force fighter pilot means initially living at the low end of a rigid pecking order where flight leads have all the authority, and new wingmen must submit to that authority by flying alongside their flight leads and doing what they are told. But I was happy to become a wingman on the Air Force fighter pilot team, even if we used to joke that a wingman should say only the following three clear, concise, and correct things on the radio:

- "2"—for check-ins and other necessary acknowledgements.
- "Bingo"—meaning the wingman is out of gas first, and the flight lead must turn the flight toward home whether the mission has been accomplished or not (an utter embarrassment for the wingman).
- "Lead, you're on fire"—but even here, a wingman should speak up on the radio only after giving lead adequate time to notice the flames for himself.

The point of the joke is that anything else a wingman could say on the radio was probably extraneous, and that wingmen should not delude themselves that saying more was part of their jobs.

Holding your tongue never feels good. Every fighter pilot therefore aspires to advance as quickly as possible from wingman status to flight lead status; and my wingmen colleagues and I worked hard at continuing to "grow up" through all of our professional qualification levels—by becoming mission-ready wingmen, and then 2-ship flight leads (who lead their own wingman), and then 4-ship flight leads (who lead their own wingman, plus #3, who leads a 2-ship of his own), and then mission commanders (who have tactical control of approximately 50 aircraft of multiple types), and then instructor pilots (who train and certify pilots at all the other levels).

Even though I could not wait to move on from being "just a wingman" to leading wingmen, I also wanted to be the best wingman ever. This meant always

striving to be on frequency and exactly in position, “checking my lead’s six” for threats, and doing whatever else it took to keep my lead alive and to support the accomplishment of our mission, starting with trusting my lead to lead. It would have never occurred to me to call my flight lead on the radio to say, “Hey, Bobby. Have you thought about maybe sorting our bandits high-low, instead of side-side?”

I knew that flying and excelling as a wingman was an essential part of my professional development as a fighter pilot because I knew that following, watching, and emulating my flight leads, and being led, trained, and encouraged by them would make me a better, more capable fighter pilot, one who would one day be worthy of the trust of his own wingmen.

Now for the Application Steps

What does all this fighter pilot talk have to do with the Army Chaplain Corps? What vital lessons can the Chaplain Corps learn from Air Force fighter pilots, and how might Army Chaplains in particular benefit from being like Air Force fighter pilots?

As I have described it so far, the wingman concept is certainly not a direct fit for the Chaplain Corps, at least as long as Chaplains and the rest of us are not flying airplanes as a part of our jobs! I nevertheless believe there is helpful carryover, despite the following significant differences between the worlds of an Army Chaplain and an Air Force fighter pilot:

- On the positive side for the Army, our new Chaplains can join the Army only if they have relevant professional work experience. This is not true of aspiring Air Force pilots, who can be accepted for pilot training even if they have never touched or even seen an airplane.
- On the negative side for the Army, each Army battalion has only one Chaplain who is expected to “fly solo” on day one, as they care for the hundreds of Soldiers in each of their battalions. They do this with the dedicated assistance of their Religious Affairs Specialists, but without another Chaplain close at hand to follow, watch, and emulate.

How can the wingman concept apply to the Army Chaplain Corps given these significant differences?

Here are my clear, concise, and hopefully correct recommendations, but I look forward to hearing from Chaplain Corps colleagues who can improve these recommendations based on their own knowledge of and experience with the demanding particularities of the Chaplain Corps mission.

1. Our Unit Ministry Teams should think of themselves like fighter jet crews of two. My crew in the F-15E included myself, doing the driving as the pilot in the front seat, and my Combat Systems Officer in the back seat, who went everywhere I did, at exactly the same speed, and only three feet behind me. The two of us had different training and different lists of specific tasks to accomplish, but many of those tasks overlapped, and it was as a team that we would not succeed or fail. I signed for the jet, and I did all the takeoffs and landings, but, whether we were operating as a wingman or as a flight lead, my backseater and I shared responsibility for our performance, for our survival, and for the survival of those flying in formation with us, as we performed like wingmen for one another inside the same jet. I believe these same words should describe the relationship of a battalion Chaplain and their Religious Affairs Specialist.

2. Our brigade Chaplains should think of themselves as flight leads. Our new battalion Chaplains may have fabulous, relevant, previous professional work experience, but very few of them have professional work experience in the Army uniform. We are wrong to expect them to operate in their battalions without active supervision from flight lead Chaplains. Battalion commanders and command sergeants major cannot fill that supervisory role for new Chaplains—only more experienced Chaplains can.

3. With our brigade Chaplains thinking of themselves as flight leads, our battalion Chaplains should embrace thinking of themselves as wingmen, who have a great deal to learn from their flight leads, and who want to be the best wingmen ever, no matter how much education or professional work experience they may have had before joining the Army. Being a Chaplain in the Army is very different from being a Chaplain or a religious leader anywhere else. When a new Chaplain thinks otherwise, it is like a new wingman taking off by himself and flying into the clouds alone before he has his instrument rating, which pilots need so they can keep track of which way is up and which way is down. Despite the way the phrase is commonly used as a compliment, “flying by the seat of your pants,” either as a pilot or a Chaplain, is actually a shortcut to crashing and burning in challenging conditions.

4. For our new battalion Chaplains to succeed while thinking of themselves as wingmen, our brigade Chaplains must act like flight leads who take responsibility for that success by bringing their formations together to plan, brief, fly, and debrief their missions. This obviously cannot involve consultation by brigade Chaplains before and after every counseling session or ceremony a battalion Chaplain conducts, but our flight lead Chaplains should interact with their wingman Chaplains as often as practical, while considering that facilitating the success of their wingmen is an essential part of their own leadership responsibilities. Brigade Chaplains must focus on their battalion Chaplains even more than they focus on their brigade commanders. This same principle of focusing down more than up applies to corps Chaplains, and to Chaplains at the major command and Army department levels. Fighter pilot flight leads know that they are responsible for the performance and wellbeing of their own wingmen before anything else.

5. Brigade Chaplains should conduct regular debriefs like critical learning events, where everyone gets to participate on equal terms. In the fighter pilot community, debriefs are the place for wingmen to ask questions and to speak their minds, despite their relative inexperience; and I would daresay that much more learning happens behind the closed doors of those debriefs than in our cockpits. Chaplains, Religious Affairs Specialists, Directors of Religious Education, and everyone else in the Chaplain Corps formation at every level should be able to take advantage of this same opportunity for learning from one another and with one another, as flight lead Chaplains conduct regular detailed debriefs.

6. Professional development for our Chaplains should happen as it does for fighter pilots, whose progression from wingman to instructor pilot comes with supervised training and checkouts, and continual constructive feedback at every stage. The team at our Graduate School is already working hard to help make that the case, but every experienced Chaplain in the religious support technical chain should be helping every Chaplain with less experience to develop through all their professional qualification levels. In the fighter pilot community,

the responsibility for the development of younger pilots is not limited to raters and to formal reviews during evaluation cycles, and instruction and encouragement happens everywhere, not just at the schoolhouse. I believe the same thing should be true in our Chaplain Corps community.

7. Our battalion and brigade Chaplains should support one another like new wingmen fighter pilots do. Wingmen share tricks of the trade as well as lessons learned. The fighter pilot world is very competitive, but I had a stake in having better pilots in the jets around me because it increased the chances for overall mission success and for survival for everyone in my mission packages—including me. Every fighter pilot wingman wants to be the best wingman ever and to grow up through all the fighter pilot professional qualification levels faster than it has ever been done by anyone else in history, but no fighter pilot can succeed or survive alone, and a loner fighter pilot is a dead fighter pilot. I believe the same principles apply to Chaplains at every level.

8. All of us in the Chaplain Corps should be wingmen for everyone else in the Chaplain Corps and across the Army, whether we are Chaplains, Religious Affairs Specialists, or Army Civilians, whether we are assigned to units or garrisons, and regardless of the ranks or positions we have or to which we aspire. This means that, even as brigade Chaplains act like flight leads, and as battalion Chaplains act like their wingmen, brigade Chaplains must also think and act like wingmen for their battalion Chaplains. Part of the fighter pilot mix is that the most experienced pilot in a formation can end up being a wingman for a squadron's least experienced flight lead on any given day. When that happens, even a colonel wingman hopes to impress her captain flight lead, because, when it comes down to it, the wingman concept is simply about teammates who are dedicated to providing one another with the best possible mutual support, so that everyone can succeed, survive, and thrive together.

There I Was

"There I was" is fighter pilot talk to warn you that a story is coming—one that probably involves a fair amount of wristwatch shooting, in addition to what my mother would have called braggadocio, even though she did not have a drop of Italian blood in her body. Sometimes the story is actually a kind of confessional, where the pilot admits to something funny or strange that they did, or maybe even to something dumb or dangerous, something from which the listener might learn a lesson or two.

I have stories from my days as a fighter pilot that continue to embarrass me, along with others that continue to make me proud, and others that continue to grieve me. My favorites make me proud because I shared an important, difficult success with my teammates.

The story I want to tell here is one of the latter, in which my wingmen helped me with much more than singing "You've Lost that Loving Feeling" in the Top Gun bar. I think the story is compelling, but skip ahead to my conclusion if you start to feel like the details I share below from yesteryear belong in *Aviation Week* and not in the *U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Journal*!

What does the story have to do with the Army Chaplain Corps? It reinforces the truth that good wingmen make me better in the same ways they make us all better, whether we are Air Force fighter pilots or members of the Army Chaplain Corps. Mutual support is the secret sauce in this recipe for success.

Our mission on the day I am remembering took us from our deployed base in Turkey into the airspace over northern Iraq, during Operation Northern Watch (ONW). ONW was a Combined Task Force charged with enforcing a no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel in Iraq. The United States and other nations of the 1990-1991 Gulf War Coalition conducted ONW to protect Kurds within Iraq and to provide them with humanitarian aid.

That day, I was leading a flight of two F-15Es on an ONW sortie that was completely unremarkable, right up until my jet's utility hydraulic system sprung a catastrophic leak while we were still over Iraq. Fortunately, I had the assistance of my Combat Systems Officer, Charlie "Gump" Finley, in my backseat, and of our wingman crew, Pat "Cheater" Cheatham and Steve "Dietz" Dietzius, who were flying as our #2.

I could not have had better help, whatever impressions the callsigns might conjure. Considering that my own callsign is "Rabbit" (another story for another day) and almost became "Donut," you are welcome to assume that I benefit from good help.

The F-15's utility hydraulic system is necessary for operating the jet's radar so we could no longer continue our mission after the leak. The system is also necessary for normal operation of the landing gear and wheel brakes, which meant that landing was going to be an unusual experience.

Our checklist directed us to drop the gear as soon as practical, to take advantage of any residual hydraulic pressure, and

then to land as soon as conditions would permit. Those checklist steps were complicated, first, by the fact that we were still over enemy territory, where our ability to maneuver would be limited with our wheels down, and, second, by the math that meant that, once we dropped our gear, we would have to divert to a Turkish air base sight unseen, because we would be burning our gas too quickly to reach our home base with U.S. forces.

I turned the jet toward Diyarbakir, while Gump coordinated completion of all the applicable emergency procedures—and while Cheater and Dietz hung on, and backed us up on our decision making, our navigation, and our communications with all the command and control folks who needed to know what was happening.

I pushed up the throttles so we could race to the Turkish border, and then I slowed down again to drop the gear. Ironically, once we did that and no longer had the gas to get home to Incirlik Air Base, we had to dump gas overboard, to make our jet light enough to land and stop in the approach end cable at Diyarbakir.

Navy jet pilots catch cables with their tailhooks every time they land on aircraft carriers. Air Force jet pilots catch cables on runways only when something has gone wrong; and this would be my first "approach end arrestment." We would also be landing with unexpended live weapons on board, which would make things even more interesting, especially because the type of cable at Diyarbakir and the weight of our jet meant we had very little margin for error on airspeed.

Cheater flew a loose formation low approach with me so we could all look at the cable and the rest of the Diyarbakir runway environment, and then compare notes; and then I had Cheater land first, since my landing would close the runway, while Gump and I got extracted from the cable. As Cheater rolled out from his landing, he said everything looked like it should. Good words to hear from a man I happily trusted with my life. But things did not turn out the way Gump and I planned.

After I landed and successfully engaged the cable as I was supposed to do, one side of the cable behind us suddenly came free from its housing, and the uneven recoil spun our F-15 like a top. Gump and I, of course, could not know what had happened behind us. All we knew for sure was that our jet was spinning backwards on the runway, with very little distance between us and the dirt, and there was not a whole lot I could do to control the aircraft. If you have been to Disney World, think of Mr. Toad's Wild Ride.

From his own memory, Gump talked me through the emergency procedure; but, even though there was probably a moment when Gump would have been well within his rights to pull the ejection handles I was able to stop the jet before we spun off the runway into the dirt or worse.

Gump got his callsign because there may be some things about him that remind you of Forrest, but I still remember the calm professionalism and the trust in his voice. I trusted him in return, even with my hands full of bucking F-15.

Many fighter pilots fly solo, and they generally manage just fine without backseaters, but never without wingmen. On that day in Iraq and Turkey, I was the flight lead in charge, but I was fortunate that Cheater and Dietz were my wingmen in the other jet, and that Gump was my wingman sitting three feet behind me.

I am competent and confident enough to say that I am generally good enough to handle most things I face alone, which is something the Army needs many of our Chaplain Corps members to say, especially those serving in our battalion Unit Ministry Teams; but I am also smart enough to know that I am even better when I have help from wingmen like Gump, Cheater, and Dietz. Mutual support is the secret sauce in this recipe for success, among Air Force fighter pilots, and among all the members of the Army Chaplain Corps.

Flying Toward Our Better Future Together

I hope you have found this article clear, concise, and mostly correct. Most of all I hope you find it helpful. I am your wingman. Check in with me anytime.

The wingman concept is a great way for us to move forward together toward our Chaplain Corps vision of building Army spiritual readiness by caring for Soldiers, their Families, and Army Civilians, across the full spectrum of conflict—as "a world-class, fully integrated network of mutually supportive Army religious support professionals." Our Chaplain Corps network of wingmen should start with battalion and brigade Chaplains, and with their Religious Affairs Specialists in their Unit Ministry Teams; but it must extend well beyond that—including, in a full, robust, and intentional way, all our Chaplains and Religious Affairs Specialists, all our Directors of Religious Education and other Civilians, and even our contractors and volunteers, no matter what distinguishes or differentiates us.

No one in our network of wingmen should be more or less valued or more or less included than anyone else, regardless of their rank, position, religion, race, color, national origin, or sex (including gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity). Our Chaplain Corps should exemplify the highest possible wingman ethos in how

we treat our own and in how we treat everyone in the Army Family.

There is no better network than a United States Air Force formation of mission-ready fighter pilots and their crewmates, but I fully believe that a wingman-minded United States Army Chaplain Corps formation could give our nation's Top Guns a run for their money, as our Corps delivers Top Care to Soldiers, their Family members, and Army Civilians, beginning with the Soldiers, their Family members, and Army Civilians within our own Corps.

No one in the world should do mutual support better than the members of the Army Chaplain Corps, even when we disagree on technique or theology. Our sacred work is "Caring for the Soul of the Army" together as a Corps, not as pilots flying their own missions solo, but as wingmen in formation, fully supporting one another as we fully support the rest of the Army Family. This means that we should communicate with one another clearly, concisely, and correctly, but, more than anything, it means that our interactions should be characterized by mutual respect and love for one another, despite any differences we may have.

Forgive me for finishing with even more Air Force lingo, but let's "Aim High" together!

Mr. Eric Jorgensen is the Chief of Strategy in the Office of the Chief of Chaplains; Headquarters, Department of the Army; Pentagon, Washington, DC. He is a retired Air Force colonel. His degrees include a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary, and a Master of Science in National Resource Strategy from the National Defense University. Mr. Jorgensen is currently a doctoral candidate in the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at The George Washington University.

Supporting Distinctive Religious Groups: The Role of Lay Leaders in the Absence of LDFG Chaplains

By First Lieutenant Scott I Klein

When George Washington assumed command of the Continental Army on July 2, 1775, he found 15 Chaplains already serving with the troops.[1] Thus, even before there was a United States of America, the Army recognized the value of religion.

For more than 200 years, military leaders have observed the positive effects of religious counseling, services, and community on Soldiers who are separated from their friends and Family members, train in far-flung locations, and face the possibility of sudden injury or death. In recent decades, researchers have uncovered strong evidence for the mental and physical benefits of religious participation. The above reasons speak to the importance of facilitating the free exercise of religion, which is a key mission for the Army and the Army Chaplain Corps.

In recent years, however, changing demographics and rates of religious participation have made this mission more difficult to achieve. For example: although today's Army largely mirrors the racial, ethnic, and gender composition of the Nation it serves, the Army Chaplain Corps does not similarly mirror the religious diversity of the Army and Nation more broadly. While nearly 30% of the U.S. population now identifies with a faith (or no faith) other than Christianity, 98% of Army Chaplains belong to either mainline or evangelical Christian denominations.[2] By contrast, religious leaders of Low-Density Faith Groups (LDFGs)—from Judaism, to Islam, and from Unitarianism to Buddhism—are greatly underrepresented in the Chaplain Corps. In the absence of LDFG Chaplains, I believe the Army should enhance its efforts to recruit, train and support qualified LDFG lay leaders so that Soldiers who belong to low-density faiths can freely exercise their right to worship so that they may reap the benefits of regular religious participation.

In this article I cite empirical evidence, uncovered by social scientists over the past few decades, about the mental and physical health benefits of regular religious participation. I then document the Army's failure, thus far, to recruit sufficient numbers of LDFG Chaplains to ensure that Soldiers who do not belong to mainstream Christian denominations (including non-Christians and those with no religious affiliation) can participate in, and receive support from, their faiths. I then discuss the current strengths and limitations of the Army lay leadership program, which provides training and support for religious lay leaders—volunteers who are allowed to fulfill some, but not all, the duties and responsibilities of an Army Chaplain. Finally, I offer recommendations to improve the lay leadership program. In the absence of LDFG Chaplains, the Office of the Chief of Chaplains (OCCH) can better equip the lay leadership program to identify, recruit, train, and support Distinctive Religious Group Leaders (DRGLs)—a.k.a., "lay leaders"—so they can provide to LDFG Soldiers the health, readiness, and resiliency benefits that derive from religious participation and counseling.

Religious Participation Offers Quantifiable Benefits

Over the past few decades, social scientists have empirically demonstrated that religion produces positive effects. Various studies have identified—and quantified—a number of positive

outcomes associated with regular religious participation. Specifically, these studies found that frequent participation in communal religious activities offers significant physical, relational, and psycho-social health benefits.

For example, a study published in 2018 found that higher rates of participation in religious services helped alleviate feelings of hopelessness, anger and loneliness among the worshippers, all of which contribute to lower mortality rates.[3] Researchers have also found that religious attendance among high school seniors promotes risk-reduction behaviors such as wearing seatbelts, abstaining from marijuana, and eating healthier foods.[4] Likewise, a 10-year study of more than 18,000 adults found that those who regularly participated in religious services had a 40% lower mortality hazard. They were less likely to be smokers or heavy alcohol users, and more likely to exercise and practice healthy living.[5]

Another survey found that marriages in which both spouses regularly participate in communal religion have the lowest risk of divorce,[6] whereas marriages in which neither spouse attends religious services broke apart 2.4 times more often.[7] Meanwhile, a study of over 13,000 men and women discovered that men who regularly attend religious services are about 50% less likely to commit domestic violence, and women who attend weekly services are 34.8% less likely to commit violence. A correlation between regular religious participation and healthier behavior has been established.

In the Army, Low-Density Religious Groups Benefit Less

Despite this evidence for the mental and physical benefits of religion, the Army is not adequately harnessing religious participation as a tool for enhancing the mental and physical resiliency of all its Soldiers. This is largely because the Army Chaplain Corps does not reflect the religious diversity of today's Soldiers. Although nearly one-third of the U.S. population now identifies with a faith other than Christianity, including the 5.9% who belong to non-Christian world religions—or does not identify with *any* religion—the overwhelming majority of Army Chaplains belong to mainline or evangelical Christian denominations. At last count, the Army had 1,465 Protestant Chaplains, 100 Catholic Chaplains, 12 Jewish Chaplains, nine Orthodox Chaplains, four Muslim Chaplains, two Buddhist Chaplains, and one Hindu Chaplain.[8] If we include Orthodox Christians as members of a Low-Density Faith Group, LDFG Chaplains comprise just 0.0175% of the Chaplain Corps. If we exclude Orthodox Christians, the percentage of LDFG Chaplains drops to 0.0119%—about 1/100th of one percent.

In sum, there are too few Chaplains belonging to LDFGs—religions ranging from Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism to Unitarianism, Paganism, Wicca and Humanism—to provide adequate support to Soldiers of those faiths. The Department of Defense (DoD) recognizes 221 Faith and Belief Codes for reporting personnel data of Service members, but because so few Chaplains are members of low-density faiths, lay volunteers have been tapped to fulfill many of the duties of Chaplains. As a result, I have yet to attend a service led by a Jewish Army Chaplain. Instead, services have been conducted by Jewish lay leaders, including myself. It is very likely that members of other LDFGs have encountered similar situations.

Moreover, since the Army's implementation of mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations in 2021, unit Chaplains have shouldered the additional burden of conducting interviews with Soldiers who are seeking a religious exemption. Given the time and effort required to process these requests, many Chaplains—including the relative handful of LDFG Chaplains—are now even more stretched than they already were, making it even more imperative that the Army provide them with qualified DRGL support. At a minimum, additional DRGLs could reduce the workload of Chaplains by offering prayer support to LDFG congregations.

Deficiencies with the Army's Lay Leader Program

A duly-authorized, well-trained and well-supported lay leader fulfills many, but not all, the duties and responsibilities of a Chaplain. For example: as a Jewish lay leader, I routinely plan, promote, and administer Jewish services, lead Torah study sessions, and conduct Shabbat services once a week. I also serve as a subject matter expert on Judaism. For instance, based on my own experiences and background I know what Jewish Soldiers need to celebrate high holidays such as Rosh Hashanah, and can work to help ensure that these needs are met.

However, there are strict limits on what a lay leader can do in the absence of a Chaplain belonging to that faith. For example: I am limited in the kinds of pastoral care I can provide, and I cannot advise a unit Commander on matters of religious accommodation. However knowledgeable a lay leader is about a religion, they cannot, for example, recommend that a Soldier be allowed to grow a beard or receive special meals for an upcoming holiday. The Army Chaplain Corps may wish to review (and potentially expand) the duties that a duly-trained LDFG lay leader is

allowed to perform when there are no Chaplains from that faith available to perform the duties.

The Army Chaplain Corps may also want to review the issue of confidentiality between lay leaders and their congregants, which is currently a "gray zone." This gray zone encompasses lay leaders, but not Chaplains. A Chaplain cannot be compelled to divulge the contents of conversations with congregants. Unfortunately, there is no rule governing privilege concerning lay leaders and the Soldiers they serve. If I returned from a meeting with a member of my congregation, and my unit Commander ordered me to divulge the content of our conversation, I would have to comply or risk disciplinary action.

Further complicating matters is the fact that all of the challenges described above are those faced by lay leaders. In the case of low-density religions, qualified lay leaders, as well as proper training, are often in short supply. And due to a lack of standard operating procedures, processes, and guidelines governing the lay leadership program, many low-density-religion lay volunteers receive inadequate support from their unit's Chaplain or commanding officer. Although AR 165-1 provides the left and right limits for DRGLs, it largely focuses on the process of appointment, not on how DRGLs can and should be supported. Each installation, unit, and Endorser handles these matters differently, which leads to underutilization and limited awareness of the program.[9]

Based on my research and experience, some lay leaders are granted the necessary time and resources (communications tools, facilities for worship, transportation to religious services, supplies, etc.), while others must fend for themselves. Lay leaders should not have to fight for resources and the other support needed to conduct religious services—services the lay leader has been authorized and appointed to conduct. Garrison Chaplains have the primary responsibility to support all recognized religious services with adequate supplies and other resources. Unit Chaplains can bear some of the responsibility, but not the bulk. Unit Chaplains also "volunteer" their time, as additional duty, for chapel services and other religious services outside of their normal unit Chaplain responsibilities. Hence, their resources, especially time, are extremely limited.

Without proactive efforts to recruit and adequately train Chaplains and lay leaders of low-density religions, many Soldiers of these faiths will be deprived of access to religious practice, along with the mental and physical benefits it can provide.

As an organization committed to building character, morale and resiliency, part of the Army's mission is to facilitate recognition, respect, and support Soldiers of any religion or no religion at all. Unfortunately, the lack of qualified and trained Chaplains and lay leaders can be, and sometimes is, interpreted as a sign of indifference or disrespect for both that faith and the Soldiers who subscribe to it. For example, when I arrived at Fort Bliss, Texas, I discovered that a Torah scroll was uncared for and unsecured. Even if we overlook the cost of replacing a Torah, which is upward of $50,000, these scrolls are considered holy objects by the Jewish people. I think everyone can agree that a Torah should be treated with respect, but nobody on Fort Bliss, in a recent experience I had there had, to my eye, demonstrated the proper care, and handling of one.

Recommendations for Improving the Lay Leader Program

The fact that the DoD recognizes so many religions and belief systems, and has a formal lay leadership program at all, reflects well on its commitment to improving the spiritual, mental and physical well-being of its personnel. Unfortunately, the administration of the lay leader program needs improvement, as well as certain adjustments, to adequately meet the needs of Soldiers of low-density faiths.

Toward that end, these are my recommendations:

- Increase efforts to recruit qualified lay leaders and chaplains of low-density faiths. Chaplains should be encouraged to discuss the process of becoming a lay leader with Soldiers of low-density faiths who show leadership potential. It is especially important for Chaplains to share their personal success stories with prospective LDFG candidates. Proposing to young Soldiers that they assume the responsibilities and duties of a lay leader is a "big ask," but in my experience, face-to-face discussions in which Chaplains stress the mental and spiritual benefits of lay leadership are very persuasive. In fact, by following this recommendation myself, I recently helped recruit, train and get certified a new DRGL, who went on to lead services, in a field environment, during the Jewish high holidays.

- Create, publish and circulate materials about the role of lay leadership to assist recruitment and build awareness. Additionally, the Chaplain Corps should advertise in the journals and periodicals of low-density faith groups regarding the need for faith leaders to serve as Chaplains or volunteers. Emphasis should be put on the diversity in the Army and the education benefits that are available.

- Replace the term "Distinctive Religious Group Leader" with "Religious Lay-Leader," and avoid abbreviations such as "DRGL." This will increase understanding of the role, and encourage individuals of those faiths to seek support from lay leaders.

- Revise and clarify the regulations governing the endorsement process for chaplains and lay leaders. Per DoDI 1304.28, the endorsement process for Chaplains and Chaplain Candidates is very clearly spelled out. Interestingly, Endorsers are also responsible for certification of DRGLs, though this is not mentioned. In fact, the term "lay leader" is merely implied at one point—a strange omission given that these individuals play an important role at remote installations and for LDFGs.[10] More research is needed, but it appears that some low-density religions do not have endorsement councils/agencies to authorize Chaplains and lay leaders. In the absence of such agencies, these religions will not be formally represented in the Army.

- Develop a mechanism for identifying DRGLs and communicating this information to unit Chaplains and Commanders. The Army records system contains a field known as an Additional Skills Identifier (ASI), which is used to identify a Soldier who possesses a potentially valuable skill—for example, a foreign language. I think it would be important for an ASI for religious leadership to be created so that anyone can immediately locate a DRGL to meet the needs of Soldiers belonging to low-density faiths. The ASI could be the basis for creating a database of directory of low-density faith lay leaders, Chaplains could seek out subject-matter-expert guidance to provide religious accommodation recommendations to commanders and senior leaders.

- Provide additional training for garrison Commanders to ensure they recognize the importance of, and provide support for, lay leaders of low-density religions.

- Codify that professional development hours for lay leaders should be supported by unit Commanders

during duty-hours, and that those serving as lay leaders should be eligible for recognition and awards.

- Consider expanding the duties that lay leaders can perform under certain circumstances, and provide more clarity with regard to issues such as pastor-congregant confidentiality.
- Implement a mentorship program to encourage experienced Chaplains and lay leaders to offer one-on-one training, education and support for low-density DRGLs. Lay leaders should also be integrated into RSO/UMT training, and receive support and guidance from 56M Religious Affairs Specialists.
- Train Chaplains and lay leaders how to properly maintain custody of, and care for, high-value religious items with which they may not be familiar.

Conclusion

In recent decades, researchers have uncovered empirical evidence of the mental and physical benefits of religious participation. However, because the Army does not provide sufficient religious support for Soldiers belonging to LDFGs, it is not adequately harnessing religion to improve the mental and physical resiliency of all Soldiers.

Unlike society at large, religion is governmentally funded in the U.S. military. This gives the Army an opportunity to finance more robust and diverse LDFG religious communities that can significantly contribute to health, readiness, and resiliency. Through improved recruitment, training, and support for lay leaders of low-density faiths, the Army can ensure that every Soldier receives the benefits of participating in their chosen faith-based activities.

First Lieutenant Scott I Klein is the MWR Director for Area Support Group Jordan and the Jewish DRGL for ARCENT. 1LT Klein holds a doctorate in educational leadership and a masters degree in Jewish Professional Studies with a concentration in non-profit management. Scott also serves his local community as the Chairman of the Village of Skokie Economic Development Commission and a member of the executive committee and active leader for the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR).

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Suicide and Purpose

By Chaplain (Captain) Joseph Newby

When I was a battalion Chaplain with the 82nd Airborne in Afghanistan my brigade experienced five deaths during a nine-month combat tour. Three were from IEDs and two were from a green on blue, partner-force incident. In the nine months after we returned, the brigade lost eight Paratroopers to suicide. 3rd Brigade lost an average of almost one Soldier per month for nine straight months.[1] The 82nd Airborne, including 3BCT, experienced a total of 14 suicides during that same timeframe. This is almost triple the rate of deaths in the entire brigade while at war with people who were actively trying to kill us. When these Paratroopers returned from Afghanistan there was a genuine sense of accomplishment. We had done something that mattered. After nine months back home, and nearly as many suicides, the response to another death was a mix of inevitability and ennui. Deployments rally everyone, even the unwilling, around a common cause. Every Paratrooper had a community and a purpose. I contend that the suicide rate of Army Soldiers and Veterans would drop if people believed they served a purpose in their community. This knowledge that they belong would give Soldiers a reason to live. This paper seeks to address how to cut suicide rates, and proposes a plan to move the Army from a place where suicide is common to where every Soldier has a role in prevention as part of their life purpose.

The Army Suicide Rate in Context

The first step in solving a problem is understanding it. Suicide rates for the Army are significantly higher than for the general civilian population. According to the Veteran's Affairs Suicide Data Report, 22 Veterans die by suicide every single day.[2] According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Veterans suicide rates are "52.3% greater than the non-Veteran U.S. adult population" and while veterans "account for about 13.7% of suicides among adults in the United States, they only make up 7% of the population."[3] This statistic includes Veterans of all ages, not just young Soldiers. In 2019 Veterans between the ages of 55-74 accounted for 38.6% of all deaths by suicide.[4] Veterans are one of the top five highest suicide demographics, along with people who live in rural areas, sexual and gender minorities, middle-aged adults, and tribal populations.[5] Male suicide rates are 3.63 times higher than female rates, and Caucasian men were responsible for 69.38% of 2019 suicide deaths.[6] Veterans often fit into several of these categories, and if they do not die young they will all eventually fit into at least two of them.

Demographics with Lower Suicide Rates

The second step in solving the problem is visualizing the solution. That is much easier to do when leaders know what right looks like. A report released by the CDC lists protective factors, such as "Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide; Connections to friends, family, and community support; and coping and problem solving skills."[7] Currently the groups with the lowest rates of suicide are females and Asian and Pacific Islanders (AAPI).[8] There is a growing, and polarized, body of work that evaluates data that indicates a lower suicide rate of religious people relative to non-religious people.[9]

Females report suicide attempts at 1.5 times the rate of male suicide attempts, but they are responsible for fewer suicide deaths than males. In 2019, the male suicide completion rate was 22.4 (per 100,000 people) while it was only 6.0 for females.[10] Women die by suicide at a rate that is about a quarter of that for men. The most popular methods of male suicide are firearms, hanging, asphyxiation or suffocation, jumping, moving objects, sharp objects, or vehicle exhaust gas, while women tend to use poisoning, cutting, drowning, hanging, and firearms.[11] The discussions about the efficiency of suicide methods in male versus female attempts are contentious, something one researcher referred to as "sexist baloney."[12] Researchers suggest that females have lower suicide rates because females "consider not just her feelings but also the feelings of others—her family, the children, even acquaintances, and how those people will be affected by a decision like suicide."[13] Many women who did not complete suicide later stated that they did not want their children to be left behind, alone.[14]

Asian American and Pacific Islander is a demographic that, while highly diverse in many ways, has a significantly lower rate of suicide than other groups. The Asian and Pacific Islander community has a suicide rate of 7.0 per 100,000.[15] In a meta-analysis of 57 different studies that focused on depression in AAPI youth, 26 of them examined protective factors for these groups. These factors generally fall under the categories of family cohesion and support, community and family responsibility, religious participation, and speaking their native language proficiently, another sign of community involvement.[16] Effectively, individuals in this demographic serve a purpose to their communities, families, and belong to a like-minded religious group, giving them a place in the world. AAPI suicide rates demonstrate that purpose that comes from community belonging and religious belief can be protective factors.

Generally speaking, suicide rates are lower among religious people than among non-religious people. I recognize that I come to this with vested interests both as a religious leader and as a special staff officer seeking to serve the Army's greatest asset, its people. Even after four deployments, and twenty years since I first put on the uniform, I genuinely love Soldiers. Despite these clear influences, I am following evidence that shows that religiosity is an effective suicide deterrent.

This phenomenon is not just something that was suggested by religious groups as a means to state their relevance. A 2015 meta-analysis of 9 different suicide and religion studies, including studying 2,339 completed suicides, finds an "overall significant protective relationship was found between religiosity and suicide completion" and the analysis shows that this factor will be effective for the majority of American Soldiers, stating: "religion was a protective factor in western settings."[17] Religious belief as a suicide deterrent is partially "based on the cultural and religious context" so Army leaders "need to strongly consider the current social and religious atmosphere of a given population when designing suicide prevention strategies."[18]

Religion and community have distinct overlap, but they are not the same thing. Religious groups offer people a purpose-built community of individuals seeking to live a good and honorable life, which can insulate people from suicidal behavior. The meta-analysis suggests that faith traditions offered "a stronger sense of community derived from the principally identical belief structure that the majority of the population shares."[19] Another article, written by researchers at the Harvard Human Flourishing Program, suggests that the protective factor came from "churches' teachings on ending one's own life, as well as social support found in the community and lower risks of depression and alcohol abuse."[20] This protective effect is not limited to Western culture. One study suggests "lower rate of suicide in Egypt could be attributed to the Islamic law or doctrine in which suicide is condemned and is considered to be a criminal act in itself."[21] Even Dr. Jesse Bering, atheist and author of the book *Suicidal: Why We Kill Ourselves*, states that there can be a correlation between lower suicide rates and religiosity with the caveat "it is church attendance, not simply religion, which protects people against suicide."[22]

For the purpose of this paper, religious beliefs, community connection, and problem solving skills are all rolled under the banner of purpose. These three things give people a place in eternity, a place right now, and the skills necessary to solve life's challenges. Together they can help provide a purpose for life.

Nearly 2,500 years ago, Aristotle proposed that everything in existence has a Final Cause. Aristotle's Final Cause refers to "why" something was created. For example, cars were created to transport people in a reasonable approximation of comfort and style. The Final Cause is easy to define for inanimate objects; hot dogs, guitars, and tooth brushes were all made for very specific purposes. It is not as easy for people to define their purpose for living, because in a cynical sense, the word "purpose" is a marketing tool to sell books. *The Purpose Driven Life* has sold 30 million copies and been translated into 50 languages. *7 Habits*

of Highly Successful People has sold over 40 million copies and been in continuous production since 1989. Viktor E. Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* has sold 16 million copies. More recent books like *Can't Hurt Me* and *Think Like a Monk* are bestsellers. The fact that these books continue to sell reflects an eternal human desire for understanding why people exist. These authors are diverse: religious, agnostic, educated, uneducated, Veterans, civilians, different ethnicities, races, and even a concentration camp survivor. Purpose is a deeply felt need that humanity desires, reaching across all races, genders, religions and creeds.

Acknowledging that the desire for purpose is a deeply-felt human need, it needs to be pulled from the ethereal and set into the rebar reinforced concrete of a defined term, starting with what philosophers have said, from the ancients to the modern, the religious and the secular. In Christianity, everything was created for a purpose. First Peter 2:9 states Christians are a "royal priesthood" and Ephesians 2:10 states humans were created to do "good works." Muslim believe that the purpose of life is ibadah, or "worship to the One True Almighty God on His Terms and under His Conditions."[23] For some Jews the highest purpose of the soul is to "embody Torah, the living word of the living God addressed to all creation... making the spiritual and ethical insights of our Torah the foundation of our lives, we transcend our human limits. We connect ourselves to God."[24]

Secular and religious scholars alike share a belief in the importance of purpose. Sean Breen, writing for the *Atheist Republic* states "We get to decide what's important to us. Atheism contains no demands nor consensus on purpose, nor does it enforce any universal meaning."[25] According to the reconstructionist Norse Pagan organization Forn Sidr, the "life purpose of a man is to become the ultimate warrior, including by developing and maintaining the core evolutionary traits and characteristics of males, in the context of a specific ethos that respects and benefits his brothers (as in other members of his war band/tribe/community), and upholds his history, traditions and identity."[26] The unifying thread is that there is a reason to be alive, even amongst those who believe you create your own purpose, and humans are temporary beings who can contribute to a larger whole or ideal. Purpose is striving mightily towards something that will benefit others more than the individual, strengthen the whole population, and is demonstrated by caring for those who cannot repay the care.

Basic Training as the Starting Point

The third step in solving a problem is to describe the plan. Evidence demonstrates that many Veteran suicides could be avoided if, like the low suicide demographics, people were aware of their life purpose and participated in like-minded community. This process can start with Basic Trainees because they are in a position, unlike any other time in their lives, where all of their basic needs are met and they do not have the opportunity for easy distraction. In Basic Training, everything that Trainees need is provided for and the excesses of life are stripped away. Trainees have a chance to look at their life experiences more objectively, and leaders can guide them to do it through the lens of purpose. Drill Sergeants and Chaplains have an opportunity to work together to help these young Trainees find a reason for living and help them understand they exist for a reason. After they leave Basic Training, their lives will be more enjoyable, they will get yelled at less, while having more freedom, more sleep, and better food. Their freedom will feel good, but it comes with a whole other set of issues. There will be different kinds of discomfort as they have bills to pay, problems to solve, decisions to make, and family to care for. Without a proper context for these difficulties it could easily leave the Trainee or even the Soldier believing all of their suffering had been pointless. Persevering through difficulty is not in vain, when done for a purpose. There will be difficulty though. To quote the Princess Bride "Life is suffering, anyone who tells you otherwise is either lying or trying to sell you something."[27]

A Solution to the Problem of Suicide

The fourth step in solving a problem is to direct the operation. "Commanders provide purpose, direction, and motivation to subordinate commanders, their staff, and Soldiers."[28] The problem, or perhaps opportunity, with purpose is that a leader cannot implant the leader's purpose into their subordinate. They can guide that person, but it will not be the subordinate's purpose. The Soldier must define their own purpose and Basic Training is the opportunity to forge it.

I suggest that we help Soldiers to discover their purpose by first identifying a problem that they feel is beyond their scope of ability to change. Once the problem is identified, leaders can help Soldiers find a way to advance in their fight against the chosen harmful behavior along with the Soldiers to their right and left. No one has the ability to solve life's problems on their own, but everyone has the ability to help solve some of the problem. The desired outcome is for Soldiers to believe "I do not have the ability to completely solve the problems in the world, but I can make things better." In the below example, I display this model through a very practical way; by looking closely at how Chaplains can engage with Trainees, the process of helping people discover and hold onto their purpose in life becomes more clear.

Phase 1: Understand the Why

Start with helping Trainees understanding their "why?" Trainees need to define the enemy. When the enemy is not clearly identified on the battlefield there will be mission creep, faulty decisions made and unnecessary casualties created. Early into Basic Training, right after a major win, such as a ruck march or obstacle course, gather all of the Trainees for this training. The Drill Sergeants should not be anywhere in sight. Their absence will allow the Trainees to relax enough to have a real conversation and reduce stress enough so they can think. It will also give the Drill Sergeant a short respite from the mental toll of constantly watching these Trainees. The Chaplain starts by introducing himself to their Trainees and talking about who they are, where they come from and why they do what they do. The Chaplain can then use their own personal "why" to help Trainees discover their own "why." To do this a Chaplain can open up the floor and ask the trainees if any of them have a life purpose, and if they do, can they define it. I do not recommend asking the Trainees if they think having a life purpose is important. Some people will think that life is pointless, and it is not helpful to have that conversation right then. It distracts Trainees from the concrete task of discovering their purpose and changes it to them contemplating if they believe in purpose. That is an important conversation, but it is not helpful right now.

Once a religious ministry professional has some of the Trainees talk about their life purpose, they can instruct everyone to close their eyes and picture their life. Have the Trainee talk about where they are from, their family composition, where they went to school, their life experience, a tragedy they have experienced in life, or something about life that they feel is unfair or wrong. Have them contemplate that for a second and let them just sit with it.

Next, ask individuals to name their own enemy in pen and ink. What is wrong with their world? Putting it on paper moves it from being an abstract concept to a reality. Open the floor to Trainees and ask them "what did you say is wrong with the world?" Select Trainees who have not spoken before and have them describe their problem. Go through three or four people and listen to what they say. Then ask them to describe a fix, improvement, solution, etc. to the problem. If they are not able to come up with a solution on their own, open it up to other Trainees who can give that person some suggestions. Use Socratic questioning as much as a religious support professional can. Once people's focus has shifted enough to the solution, it is time to wind down the session and get them back to training.

Before they are released, give them some "homework." Their whole assignment is to find solutions to their problem. Have them think about ways to affect change of a harmful behavior and destroy their enemy. Announce that they will revisit the topic in a specified time frame. Have everyone describe their enemy on a 3x5 notecard and hang it in their wall locker as a reminder to find the solution.

Phase 2: Engage the Problem

The goal of the second session is to empower Trainees to see how they can change the world, moving them forward from the being aware of the problem to working on a solution. Help them address the inequities they experience. They were given homework to start thinking through the process and find solutions. Some Trainees may have already started but others will have not. Begin by opening the floor to any Trainee who wants to speak about their ideas. Help them to refine their answer and make it more concrete by asking them clarifying questions. When a Trainee has a question about how to solve the problem, as a means of building community redirect the question to the other people in their unit. Have them crowdsource the solution. There are many different life experiences in basic training that could be tapped into.

The main issues of this session will be refining the concept. Again, Socratic questioning will be very helpful to guiding Trainees. Clarify and continue to discuss these solutions with Trainees. Finally, give them the homework of finding practical solutions to effect change. Write it down on their "problem" 3x5 card that is in their locker. This recommended solution can be changed as much as it needs to be.

Phase 3: Encourage Change

During their final weeks of Basic Training, continue to reinforce solutions with Trainees. Trainees should now have a defined problem they want to solve and a viable solution to the problem. They just have to finish Basic Training and they can move onto bigger and better things. The final session should be them talking about their plan. Give as many of them time to talk about their purpose as the religious support professional has time for. When a religious support professional can, reinforce to them that every time they receive physical training from the Drill Sergeant, they come out the other side stronger and more resilient. Those push-ups and runs are helping turn them into the leaders America and the Army need! Any time a Trainee engages a religious support professional with their solution, help them to find a path to accomplishing it. Over the next weeks, stop by their training areas and talk to any Trainees who would like to talk when they have down time. Discuss their plans and help them make their ideas more real. This is where lives and futures can be changed! As Trainees advance from Red to Blue and White Phase it is an opportunity to take Trainees from the group training environment to an individual one.

Every unit has a defined ecosystem and culture. Trainees should be encouraged to influence their community in a positive way. The more buy-in that each Trainee has, the more successful the team will be. Additionally, as statistics show, feeling like they are part of a team and community will help the Trainees overcome adversity and decrease the likelihood of a death by suicide.

Final Notes

Remember, what is at stake here is the Trainee's purpose and then the Soldier's purpose, not the Chaplain's, Drill Sergeant's, Commander's, or instructor's. Leaders can help them to see their purpose, guide them to the resources they need, and build the community they need, but the Trainee must create their own purpose. The closer they get to graduation, the more Trainees will understand that they can accomplish something if they pick a plan, stick to it and trust the process. The enemy will not be destroyed in one day, nor will harmful behaviors be banished overnight. Like Basic Training, it is something that will continually need to be reengaged until it is done. As leaders, we are tasked with creating the best fighting force for America, and this is only done by building up our people. Recently Brigadier General Patrick R.

Michaelis spoke about the need of strengthening the fighting force of the future by putting people first. He talked about the opportunity leaders have to "create and cultivate an environment in which people are enabled, empowered, and protected to work to their natural best, to be the best version of themselves, with a true sense of belonging."[29] Trainees and then Soldiers who have a purpose, encouraged by their religious beliefs and community are at lower risk of death by suicide. We can lead them to create the environment that will allow these Trainees to survive, which will have the cascading effect of strengthening our Army, our Nation and the world.

Chaplain (Captain) Joseph A. Newby is currently serving in Iraq as a battalion chaplain with 2nd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne). He graduated from Oregon State University with a degree in Political Communication, and earned his Masters in Divinity from Liberty University. He is married to his beautiful wife, Kaelinn, and they have two delightful children, Josie and Ezra.

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Providing Spiritual Care for the Next Generation

By Chaplain (Captain) Joshua Hornbaker

Introduction

Many young adults in the U.S. Army have moved away from a connection to organized religion, increasingly identifying as non-religious, with around 24 percent of young adults in the Army claiming this designation as of January 2019.[1] The number of young adults who identify as non-religious in American culture grows with each generation.[2] As the Army recruits primarily from populations of recent high school graduates and those under 25 years old, this younger generation will soon comprise the majority of Army's force.[3] As American society in general and the U.S. Army in particular experience a rise in "no preference" or "non-religious" individuals, the Chaplain Corps would benefit from finding ways to engage with and minister to these Soldiers in ways that are meaningful to them.

The Army has highlighted the importance of the spiritual domain for Soldier wellbeing. Army regulations define the spiritual dimension as "identifying one's purpose, core values, beliefs, identity, and life vision," and further says that "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."[4] Spirituality, for the Army, does not necessarily equate to religion or religiosity, but they can overlap (see Figure 1). The Army has also recently suggested how Soldiers may achieve fitness in this domain: "The Army defines spiritual fitness as the development of the personal qualities needed to sustain a person in times of stress, hardship and tragedy. These qualities can come from religious, philosophical or human values... and form the basis for character, disposition, decision making and integrity."[5] Supporting spiritual fitness is an important part of the U.S. Army Chaplain's responsibility to nurture the living. Providing religious support "includes, but is not limited to, religious functions in the traditional sense of the word religion such as worship services, rites and sacraments, and religious education," in addition to, "general spiritual and pastoral care for all."[6] An Army Chaplain must be able to provide support for all Soldiers regardless of their religious affiliation or non-affiliation.

When Soldiers are religiously affiliated, their religious beliefs help Soldiers find their identity, purpose, meaning, character, and integrity.[7] It is imperative for the Chaplain to unite these Soldiers' spiritual care with religious care. So, where the Chaplain can personally perform religious care for the Soldier, he or she will. Where direct pastoral/clergy involvement is not possible due to a Soldier's religious-specific needs, the Chaplain connects the Soldier with someone who can provide the religious-specific care. In this way, a Soldier's religious care and spiritual care needs are met because the Chaplain is simultaneously providing for the spiritual care needs of the Soldier while also performing religious care if the Soldier seeks it (see Figure 1). Chaplains are endorsed by a specific religious body and are expected to exercise their own religion. But if they are to nurture the living (and care for the spiritually wounded), regardless of the Soldier's religious background, then it is imperative that Chaplains also learn how to facilitate spiritual care to Soldiers who identify as non-religious. If a Chaplain's ministry is exclusively religious-specific in its efforts to engage with and minister to Soldiers, then he or she may lose sight of their doctrinal mandate to care for the "non-religious" in the formation.

Figure 1

Chaplains are in a unique position, when it comes to spiritual care, to touch on universal human experiences. Spirituality deals with the intangibles of humanity. It is different from, but connected to, our physical bodies. It taps into human emotions, a person's relationship with God (or higher power), his or her relationships with others, and his or her way of being in the world. Spirituality also involves metaphysical topics including purpose and meaning.[8] Spirituality and spiritual care deal with faith, purpose, meaning, needs, and experiences common to all humans and are a part of the Soldier's entire well-being.

The Chaplain is the Commander's primary means of caring for their Soldiers' spiritual well-being. The Chaplain is the subject matter expert on issues of religion, morality, and ethics, but the Chaplain is also the subject matter expert on the spiritual dimension. Whether it is grief, anger, happiness, fear, sadness, disgust, loss, purpose, meaning, or dealing with the unknown, all humans experience these—regardless of whether or not they are religious. When a Soldier deals with one of these experiences or any other human experience, the Chaplain needs to meet the Soldier in that place to begin a connection, which is a human (spiritual) connection. Spiritual care is human care; humans are spiritual and the Chaplain works with the spiritual. The Chaplain's role is to help others as they search, "Whether or not you connect with a religion, spiritual wellness means finding meaning and purpose in your life."[9]

Chaplains have all the tools necessary to perform and provide spiritual and religious care. Chaplains have the knowledge, tools, and resources to do this work. The potential issue for the Chaplain is their ability and willingness to adapt and change. As the Army continues to recruit from the Generation Z (Gen Z) population, how will the Chaplain Corps and individual Chaplains keep up with providing spiritual care for non-religious Soldiers?

A New Generation

While there has been considerable focus on reaching and ministering to Millennials, there is a new generation of young adults that is entering the U.S. Army. Gen Z, or Homelanders, are those born after 1996, and are the youngest members of the U.S. Armed Services.[10] Gen Z has a unique viewpoint, and one that often differs from other generations due to their experience of the time in history in which they grew up. Gen Z has particular values on matters ranging from geopolitics to social justice. It is essential for Chaplains to recognize that members of Gen Z are not just mini-Millennials and so require a different approach to spiritual care.[11]

Gen Z is a more diverse population racially, ethnically, educationally, and theologically than any previous generation.[12, 13] This diversity is central to who they are and how they see themselves in the world. For example, they "tend to see morals as relative and (are) growing up in a far more diverse world than previous generations have," which influences how they interact with others around them.[14]

Meanwhile, there is an overall decline in affiliation with religion among Gen Z. Consider that when faced with difficult or challenging times, "they're more likely to turn to friends or engage in hobbies such as baking, painting, sports, or music."[15] Only about one out of three members of Gen Z state that religion is important to their identity and agree that the term "atheist" is not taboo.[16] Among Gen Z, those "who identify as (atheist) is double that of older generations."[17]

This generation has also lost trust in many of the major institutions in the U.S. such as the media, public school system, police, health care system, and even religious institutions.[18, 19] The good news

is that even though these young adults have lost trust in major institutions, they often look to older generations for advice, guidance, and wisdom,[20] "Gen Z trusts older generations more than any other social institution."[21] This provides a great opportunity for Chaplains to be directly involved in the lives of young Soldiers.

Members of Gen Z see the benefits of intergenerational relationships and mentorship. In fact one study reports that "As the number of trusted adults in a young person's life increased, the level of loneliness and purposelessness they feel decreased."[22] These trusted relationships are especially important because loneliness is common among members of Gen Z, "Nearly 70% have 3 or fewer meaningful interactions in a regular day," and "nearly 40% say they feel they have no one to talk to and that no one really knows them well."[23] They are also a very anxious generation. They "suffer from more mental health problems than any other generation of kids in American history."[24] This generation desperately needs human connection and relationships.

There is a fine line to walk, however, when older generations interact with members of Gen Z. While these young adults trust older generations, they also seek affirmation from their peers if they feel like they are being discounted or not affirmed. The solution is to intentionally connect with them by relating to common experiences even if the context is vastly different.[25] These connections and relationships are invaluable. Members of Gen Z want to know they can trust, and that trust is built through listening, caring, shared experiences, authenticity, and not a ready-made answer to their problems.[26]

Members of Gen Z are less likely to attend religious services, but will continue to find their own spiritual path.[27] Religiosity, which is comprised of religious beliefs and activities, is less important to Gen Z than any previous generation. When it comes to Gen Z, only "engaged Christians are much more likely than average to consider their religious beliefs...very important to their identity," whereas, those without religious affiliation are "far less likely to say that religion is...significant...when it comes to their sense of self."[28]

To continue providing effective spiritual care, apart from religious-specific care, Chaplains should consider how to innovate in ways that engage Gen Z Soldiers as well as how to offer spiritual care to those who identify as "non-religious," especially if that number continues to grow. As Chaplains

get to know and appreciate this new generation, they may find that many of the old ways of providing spiritual care fall flat. Because Chaplains are often the special staff officers that Commanders call upon to ensure the spiritual health of their formations is supported, as required by AR 600-20 and FM 7-22, Chaplains should prepare for this mission.

Striking a Balance

Religion and religious beliefs are important to many Soldiers and their Families. The Army recognizes that Soldiers can freely practice their religion, in part supported by the religious ministrations of Chaplains. In fact, "the Chaplain Corps itself is a product of the nation's commitment to religious freedom and its recognition that religion plays an integral role in the lives of many of its Soldiers."[29] Because the U.S. Army is a religiously pluralistic organization, it requires Chaplains to have knowledge about religions and theology as well as the skills to provide care across a religiously diverse organization, and a willingness to engage Soldiers from a wide variety of religious backgrounds.[30] All of this is in addition to the expectation of continued education and growth in how to advise commanders on religious matters within the unit and how to provide religious support for all Soldiers—whether that means providing religious-specific care (that is, worship service, religious education, rites, and ordinances) or, in my view, what is essentially non-religious, spiritual care for those Soldiers who are not religiously affiliated, but find comfort in spirituality.

Religious support from the Chaplain encompasses both spiritual care and religious-specific care. Chaplains have an obligation to perform religious-specific care, such as worship services, religious education, and accommodations, for those who seek it.[31] But for the religiously unaffiliated, the Chaplain still has the obligation to provide spiritual care.

Spiritual care, which the Army finds important for its Soldiers, is still within the religious support lane even when religion is not the key focus of the care. FM 7-22 states, "UMTs and chaplain sections support and advise on spiritual readiness development for both religious and non-religious personnel."[32] Spiritual health is an important part of overall health. To stay spiritually healthy, Soldiers need spiritual fitness. The Army clarifies the contours of spirituality and its importance for Soldiers: "The spiritual dimension, as defined by the Army, is based on an individual's core religious, philosophical, psychological, or personal values, and forms an individual's sense of identity, purpose, motivation, character, and integrity."[33]

Ultimately, what it looks like to provide spiritual care has to change. I am not saying a Chaplain has to relinquish his or her own beliefs or worldview—this is inconsistent with the Army's understanding of the Chaplain's role. Rather, the Chaplain will need to be more innovative in how they use those beliefs to undergird spiritual care while also maintaining relevance for a non-religious Soldier. This type of spiritual care should flow out of the significance of religious belief, and its emphasis on care for others, rather than be regarded as a denigration or diminishment of particular religious belief. For example, Chaplains may not be able to speak from a religious perspective or use religious examples because these younger Soldiers may not understand or relate to the reference. The challenge for the Chaplain will be finding the right language that speaks to the Soldier when offering spiritual care.

I propose that spiritual care does not necessarily have to be religious in nature, but can and must meet a need for Soldiers from all religious and non-religious backgrounds. Chaplains must acknowledge and be cognizant that there are non-religious Soldiers in the Army and in their formations, and that number is likely to continue to grow over time. Next, Chaplains will have to recognize how they can provide spiritual care apart from religious-specific care by discovering ways to meet the spiritual care needs for all Soldiers. This approach to spiritual care can be evidenced in a number of different areas: "Whether it is a spousal disagreement, a career-changing decision, or even suicide ideation...chaplains are firmly planted on the side of the service members," and are there to equip Service members through the inherent difficulties that come from military life.[34] Many of these issues are common to all—irrespective of background. For these reasons, it is imperative that Chaplains create or explore new ways to engage these younger Soldiers.

Chaplains need to find ways to let their religious training and theology form the spiritual care they provide, even if it is not explicitly acknowledged. How might a Chaplain use his or her religious beliefs, without being directly religious, to provide counseling for a Soldier who is non-religious? A Chaplain who is used to being explicit about integrating religion into spiritual care might find it difficult to continue in this style. While still driven by a theological background and faith, Chaplains need to see all Soldiers, Family members, and others under their care as spiritual beings who are dealing with common, universal human experiences.

For example, by simply listening, the Chaplain can hone in on what the Soldier is saying underneath the words and assess if any spiritual needs might be unmet, where a struggle might be coming from, or what kind of spiritual care the Chaplain can provide. As the Chaplain is "actively listening to emotional pain and struggles in a [Soldier's] story," he or she might start "becoming aware of how the [Soldier's] story is triggering emotional memories within [the Chaplain]."[35] If the Chaplain recognizes the emotions they feel from hearing a Soldier's story, there can be empathy for the Soldier in a non-judgmental way. The Chaplain can then assist a Soldier to move through his or her "painful experiences...ultimately leading to self-healing."[36] In this way, the Chaplain provides spiritual care to a non-religious Soldier.

A solution to whether a Chaplain can provide spiritual care for non-religious individuals can come from the perspective of the Chaplain and whether they can see the benefits of meeting human needs that are common to all.

I believe that the onus is on the Chaplain to set aside their own ideas of what the Soldier's religious needs might be and provide for the spiritual care needs that the Soldier has.

When the Chaplain connects on the human level, he or she can begin to understand and tighten the focus to provide for the Soldier's needs (see Figure 2). For example, if a Chaplain has felt the pain of a financial burden, such as during seminary, then they can relate to a young Soldier's financial woes. There is a connection that can be made from mutual understanding. The Chaplain can then provide guidance for the Soldier from a non-judgmental and affirming position.

Chaplains should suspend previous comparisons of this generation to older (or their own) generations. A Chaplain's generation is not always better, or more resilient; no generation has it all figured out. What this means for the Chaplain is when they are listening to a young Soldier's story and hears feelings of being inadequate, unlovable, ashamed, or broken, a quick answer from the Chaplain's life might not be what the Soldier wants to hear. A listening ear and affirmation of the Soldier's personhood and humanity could be what he or she needs: in other words, a human, spiritual connection.

Chaplains need to understand Gen Z's thoughts and feelings about religion. They are not at odds with religion, which makes it "important for [Chaplains]...and other leaders to celebrate and encourage (and learn from!) these resonances with the faith."[37] For example, Gen Z celebrates qualities like diversity and empathy. There is also an openness to religion and feelings of emptiness that prompt them to look for something deeper. The Chaplain Corps would do well to utilize this younger generation's own expertise and opinions to enhance the Corps' ministry.

Spiritual training and education events are opportunities for Chaplains to engage Soldiers through face-to-face interactions. Because the Army sees spiritual fitness as a part of Total Force Fitness is important for Soldiers' overall health, Chaplains have a key role in this:

> A spiritually fit person has the ability to continuously gain understanding of who one is in terms of core values and identity; live in accordance with core values; find purpose and meaning in life; be open to and continuously seek education and experiences that broaden one's view of the world; manage thoughts, emotions, and behavior; be uplifted by strong connections with others;

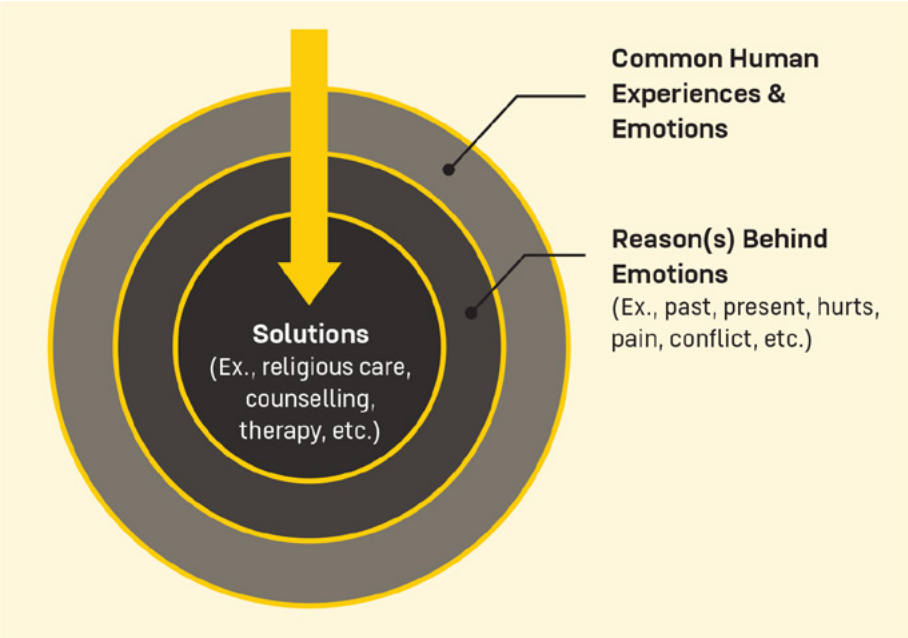

Figure 2

demonstrate the strength of will and resilience to persevere when faced with challenges and adversity; make meaning out of their experiences; and exercise the autonomy to create a meaningful life that will realize one's full potential.[38]

Spiritual fitness not only helps Soldiers, but also the organization as a whole. In the past, a spiritual fitness event may have taken the form of a prayer breakfast; however moving forward, prayer breakfasts might not speak to all Soldiers in the formation. Chaplains will need to find new and creative ways to implement spiritual fitness events into the unit's training calendars such as leading a PT session with a discussion on morality or spiritual issues at the end.

Conclusion

The youngest generation entering the U.S. Army is unlike any before them. Providing them spiritual care will require a new ways of practicing chaplaincy that may not be primarily religious-focused. Spiritual care addresses spiritual needs that are common to all humans. This care will be tailored to the specific situations and needs of Soldier and Chaplain, but will be informed by the identity (including religious background) of each. Spiritual care can be provided to any Soldier regardless of the Chaplain's theology or endorsement, but not divorced from it. Indeed, a Chaplain's theology will provide the foundation to hear the spiritual needs of the Soldier. The Chaplain can then find creative ways to meet the needs while not comprising his or her own faith, endorsement, or convictions.

Chaplains need to be resourceful and innovative in how they work through the spiritual needs and subsequent care of each Soldier they encounter. A non-religious Soldier can struggle in the same spiritual ways as a religious Soldier, but the care will look different. For the religious Soldier, an overlapping approach that provides both spiritual and religious care will be helpful. For the non-religious Soldier, spiritual care without a religion-specific approach might be more helpful. The Chaplain will need to expand his or her method in order to provide support to both.

CH (Captain) Joshua Hornbaker currently serves at the United States Detention Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He has a Bachelor's Degree from Middle Tennessee State University and a Master's of Divinity from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has been married to Cindy for 17 years and they have a 9 year old daughter. They call Tennessee home, but enjoy moving around and seeing different parts of the country.

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Welcome to the Forum: a place for conversation about difficult topics. Contributors read the same piece, reflect on it, and then react to one another's reflection. This dynamic creates space for interchange and exchange among contributors, but also between writers and readers.

For this issue Chaplain (Colonel) Rajmund Kopec, Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel) Renee Kiel, Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Brian Koyn, and Chaplain (Captain) Somya Malasri are in conversation.

They are responding to the podcast episode "Belonging Creates and Undoes Us" from On Being.

REFLECTION ON

On Being Podcast, "Belonging Creates and Undoes Us"

By Chaplain (Colonel) Rajmund Kopec

The interview's title "Belonging Creates and Undoes Us" is attention-grabbing. It alludes to a certain paradox of our human existence. Krista Tippett's interview with Pádrig Ó Tuama sometimes wanders in unexpected directions for the listener, but it provides practical wisdom worthy of further exploration and application. The interview proposes to build foundations for a constructive dialogue by the proper usage of language in the here and now. This occurs in two ways: first, the dialogue between these two participants models this constructive use of language and, second, Ó Tuama himself talks a lot about the power of language to build bridges between even people who have been violently opposed to one another. This purposeful approach helps an individual to find a sense of belonging even in a community of people with whom they may have longstanding or strongly held disagreements.

Ó Tuama proposes two fundamentals for a constructive dialogue: understanding does not mean agreeing and the conversation should take place in a safe space. He spends a lot of time talking about the importance of language. First, he considers language as a component of his spiritual background in addition to his Catholic roots. Speaking Irish "isn't merely having another language, but actually, it goes deep into the bones. It goes deep into the essence of what I have found to be important." While recognizing the limitations of any language, he stresses the impact of the words we use. Furthermore, words are powerful and intimate because "we infuse them with a sense of who we are." Language and the skillful use of words are essential to the wise framing of any issue, but particularly divisive ones. Language should also be plain, simple, and concise. Finally, asking the right question or "better question" is essential.

The interview proposes an excellent option for individuals to find a way to "belong," thus preventing isolation, self-destruction, and conflict. Ó Tuama's concept of finding "belonging" through entering a dialogue that uses proper language in the present and safe environment is a very noble and logical concept. Its practical application is certainly doable, but is also problematic for several reasons. First, ensuring a safe environment can be problematic because we are not necessarily or only talking about physical security, but about the diversity of thought as well. The latter is rather difficult for our society to accommodate due to deep polarization and commonly accepted individualism. Second, it appears

the Millennials and Generation Z are more prone to relationships with their digital devices (smartphones, iPods, etc.) than with real human beings, which hinders productive in-person dialogue. "Generation Z, has been referred to by some as the 'loneliest generation,' as their endless hours spent online can foster feelings of isolation and depression. More time spent on smartphones or watching Netflix means less time spent cultivating meaningful relationships. Additionally, many young people fall prey to the 'compare and despair' trap that social media presents." Third, the usage of very precise sentences formulated through well-defined words is rare. In general, our society prefers noise and quantity over quality of expression.

I find Ó Tuama's approach practical and encouraging. I can particularly relate to his view of belonging as growing and dying, and the underappreciated power of words. Experimental psychology points out that humans are social creatures (*homo est animal sociale*). "Humans are especially cooperative… Human ultra-sociality is based in some special psychological mechanisms—both cognitive and motivational—that have evolved to support humans' ultra-cooperative lifeways."

As cooperative social animals, we have the natural need to belong. It is in our nature. However, belonging to a group comes at a price. When we join a group such as the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps, we come with certain past experiences, habits, preferences, biases, etc. To be a productive member of a group, that is to belong, we need to learn how to undo, die to, habits that are destructive to the group and to us. We also need to learn how to improve and grow in other areas. I would even submit that belonging is about spiritual formation guided by stewardship. In essence, formation is a process of recognizing the gifts (talents) that God entrusted to a person as well as understanding one's own blind spots. Then comes the process of learning how I can utilize those talents and imperfections to benefit the group.

Words do have power. They have the power to create, bolster, encourage, and to change. The Gospel of John provides the most powerful statement "In the beginning was the Word, and Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Jn. 1.1.) Words also are very intimate, "We infuse words with a sense of who we are. So, therefore, you're not just saying a word; you're communicating something that feels like your soul." Furthermore, words have the power to change reality. If a properly deputized police officer says to a person "you are under arrest" then the individual's reality just changed. He/she is no longer a free person, he/she is going to jail. Words, regrettably, can also destroy. False witness, gossip, accusations, cyberbullying are just a few examples of words as a means of destruction. We should always be mindful of the power of words.

Chaplain (Colonel) Rajmund Kopec currently serves as Forces Command Chaplain, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He holds Masters of Divinity from Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey and Master Degree in Strategic Studies from U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. CH Kopec is a native of Poland and a Roman Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey.

RESPONSE TO

Chaplain (Colonel) Rajmund Kopec's Reflection

By Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Renee Kiel

I deeply appreciate Chaplain (COL) Kopec's thoughtful words and perspective on the podcast dialogue between Krista Tippett and Pádraig Ó Tuama. I especially resonated with his observation that "ensuring a safe environment can be problematic because we are not necessarily or only talking about physical security, but about diversity of thought as well." In other words, when we attempt to have intentional yet difficult conversations, the "emotional space" is just as important as the physical space.

The Army War College, where I serve, is currently seeking proactive and productive ways to discuss Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). One might think, given that we are all senior level leaders with advanced degrees, that these might be fairly easy discussions. They are not. They are difficult conversations, in part because the diversity of our student and faculty population is relatively low. To borrow a word from Ó Tuama, they are "lumpy" conversations. When it comes to gender and racial diversity, the Army War College is an aspiring institution. The same could be said of the U. S. Army Chaplain Corps, which has a relatively low number of women and minorities when compared to other Army Corps whose focus is Force Sustainment and/or Operational Support. I say this not to wag a finger at the Army War College or the Chaplain Corps, but rather to point out that DEI is a challenge for many organizations, including many within the Army.

Army doctrine asserts that empathy is a key leadership attribute (ADP 6-22, 2-8). If you want to be a leader in the Army, you must develop the capability to be empathetic, it is not an optional skill. Empathy means you understand what a person is feeling, even if you do not agree with the feelings or perspective. Empathy is putting yourself in another's shoes. Ó Tuama's prescription of "listening in order to understand" (vice debate) is the starting place for increasing the emotional "safety" of an environment. Such listening must go both ways. The African-American female needs to be able to openly tell her story and experience within the Army. And, when asked pointed questions, she needs to be able to say, "Mu—there is a better question you could ask," and then help the inquirer form a better question.[1] Likewise, the white male needs to be able to tell his story and experience within the Army, and be carefully listened to as well.

I once facilitated a discussion of gender awareness for Soldiers. During the discussion a female Soldier shared that during a recent company 5K "race," she felt like she had a big target on her back. She was a strong runner, but she felt that many of her male colleagues pushed hard to pass her at the end of the race because, and only because, she was a female. She felt certain her male colleagues pressed hard to pass her at the end because they did not want to be beat by a girl. She shared that it was infuriating to her and made her feel like an object. People nodded in understanding, even many of the men. The room was quiet, and then a male Soldier shared a story from his time at the academy. In a two-person race, he was pitted against a female cadet who was a strong runner. They were neck and neck and near the end of the race when he was preparing to pass her. Suddenly he found himself worrying that he would come off looking like a bully if he beat her; he described feeling so conflicted that he wondered if he should let her win because so many people were cheering for her. On the other hand, if he let the female cadet beat him, he feared he would be thought of as "a weenie" (or worse) for being beaten by a woman. He felt like he had been put into a no-win situation and was very frustrated. When he finished his story, the crowd again nodded with understanding. That was a day of listening and, God willing, increased empathy and understanding for us all.

Safe places to share stories such as these are necessary because they promote perspectives, motives, and feelings of which we might otherwise be unaware. In the words of Ó Tuama, these conversations have the power to "undo us" as well as re-create us. If such stories are shared and listened to deeply, they have the power to deconstruct worldviews, some of which we may have held very dear for a very long time. Jesus told stories for a reason—they have transformative power, even if we do not fully understand them at the time, they stay with us and reshape our souls. But it takes time, time and lots of deep listening and nodding.

NOTES

1 As Ó Tuama explains in his interview, Mu is from the Buddhist Zen tradition when means, "Un-ask the question because there's a better question to be asked. The question is limiting, and you'll get no good answer from that question. This question fails us, never mind subsequent answers."

RESPONSE TO

Chaplain (Colonel) Rajmund Kopec's Reflection

By Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Brian Koyn

Chaplain (COL) Kopec raises some interesting perspectives in response to the Ó Tuama interview. He primarily focuses on the human need to belong and become productive within the individual's social structure. The imperative to connect with others in a group is so powerful that thwarted belongingness causes most people to despair even of life.

Humans will seek connection to others, but this belonging is not always positive. In Ó Tuama's experience in Northern Ireland, each faction found a profound unity within its own group by opposing others. Terrorist organizations, religious extremists, and white supremacists find deep connections within social groups and fulfill this human longing to belong. Yet the result of connection to harmful groups is often broken lives, bloodshed, and conflict. Belonging alone is insufficient.

Ó Tuama points out that positive belonging creates us but also undoes us. The mark of constructive belonging may be the degree to which it leads to undoing. Undoing as a positive process includes opening the heart and mind to scrutiny within a trusted and welcoming environment. This requires not only a safe place but a profound humility. The result is often a restructuring of entire worldview including how we see ourselves and our place in the world.

In my religious tradition, the Church fulfills this core human requirement. A healthy local church body recognizes that all humanity is fallible, fallen, and in need of God's redemption. This community of faith provides a safe place full of grace while simultaneously challenging every individual to conform to the image of Christ.

RESPONSE TO

Chaplain (Colonel) Rajmund Kopec's Reflection

By Chaplain (Captain) Somya Malasri

The perspective of Chaplain (COL) Kopec's paper is eye-opening to me. CH Kopec focuses on the Ó Tuama's sense of the important role of language in creating community. The flow and organization of his paper captures the reader within the first few sentences. It invokes curiosity within you to continue to read and discover his take of things. The breakdown of his thought process helps the reader digest the information that is presented. This is very helpful because CH Kopec looks carefully at a number of different ways that language effects the relationships between individuals and between groups of people. The simplicity of the intricate ways, values, and views, of another is easier to comprehend with his "follow along" sentence structure than it otherwise would be. Though we both share experiences in life does not mean we share the same outlook of those experiences. With that being said, that divergence in views does not take away the value of each individual's experience. The connection that CH Kopec makes between the past and today's modern generation shows how as humans we all want the same thing; to belong. CH Kopec dives into the spiritual aspect of belonging. If you have a desire for outreach, if you are good with your words, or if you have a heart for teaching these things shape you as a person and guide you in your life. You will naturally seek for people, a place, or a society that is a reflection of you no matter the difference of backgrounds, beliefs, race, or age. You thrive when you find your tribe and find where you belong. There is a desire to see ourselves in the community and society around us. No matter who or what or where you are in life, all people want to be included. O'Tuama desired to belong, and I am sure myself and CH Kopec do as well.

REFLECTION ON

"Belonging Creates and Undoes Us"

By Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Renee Kiel

The April 2019, *On Being* podcast interview between Krista Tippett and Pádraig Ó Tuama reflects the spirit of both people involved: tender, thoughtful, and a bit ethereal. In a world of increasing polarization and vitriolic speech, the ability to hold meaningful and nourishing conversation between people who disagree has nearly become a lost art. Ó Tuama, who identifies himself as an Irish Catholic who loves Jesus, believes that respectful and constructive conversation is possible, even between long-standing enemies. He leads the Corrymeela community, Northern Ireland's oldest peace and reconciliation organization, which is situated in the midst of polarized Protestants and Catholic distracts. The Corrymeela community invites people from all over the world, some of whom have built up deep resentments and destructive narratives about the other, to have conversation. His primary instrument: ordinary, simple language. He does not employ rhetoric, pedagogical lecturing, or any type of formal program. Rather, he fosters and facilitates "soft and kind language," hospitality, and deep listening, often over cups of tea. We might all benefit from Ó Tuama's inspiring approach to building understanding and respect between people who are deeply at odds with each other.

There were two insights within the podcast that I found particularly helpful. The first deals with expectations and the second is about generosity. Ó Tuama wisely manages the expectations of people who hold opposing views. He points out that agreement is not, in fact, necessary for a healthy, respectful relationship between two parties. He astutely notes, "agreement has rarely been the mandate for people who love each other." The more one ponders this truth the more obvious it becomes: no couple agrees on all things, yet they still find ways to love each other and remain in wholesome relationship. In a similar fashion, people often maintain friendships with those who see the world quite differently. Nevertheless, we often begin difficult conversations with a false premise that agreement on key issues is a necessary condition for peace and satisfaction. In this polarized age in which division is amplified by social media, it should come as blessed relief to realize that meaningful relationships routinely transcend political, religious, and philosophical differences. The goal is to "live well together" rather than agree on all things, according to Ó Tuama.

The second nugget of wisdom I unearthed in the interview is the crucial need for a generous view of others. Ó Tuama points out that most people do things which, at the time, they believe are reasonable. We may view another's behavior and words as shocking or offensive, but we would do well to remember that the person almost certainly believes they are, in fact, being reasonable. In the same way, others may view our own behavior as ignorant, ill-informed, or rude. Yet we, too, usually say and do things that we believe are reasonable in the moment. This line of thought reminds me of Martin Luther's instruction on the eighth commandment: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." Luther writes in his catechism for the young, "We are to fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead, we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and *interpret everything they do in the best possible light*."[1] Ó Tuama's gentle reminder that other people behave in ways that seem reasonable to them is in keeping with the spirit of Luther's encouragement to put the best possible light on our neighbor's words and deeds.

I recommend listening to the podcast rather than reading the transcript because in listening you hear Ó Tuama's voice, which conveys his deep affinity with language and

respect for words. He speaks in a gentle and rhythmic tone that draws the listener into the conversation. He views poetry as the highest form of language and reads a few of his poems in the interview. He states that words reveal our inner self because "we infuse them with a sense of who we are." Ó Tuama believes in the power of language to heal, which I found refreshing and hopeful. Sadly, social media has propelled the opposite use of language: truncated words and abbreviated messages. Such form of communication is a sad substitute for deep, nourishing conversation. Into this void Ó Tuama speaks of the power of curious and kind conversation to transform people and promote belonging. Such thinking corresponds with the Christian understanding of the "Word," *Logos* in Greek. Jesus is The Word, God incarnate.[2] Just as through the Word, God created everything that exists, so also, through words people recreate each other and their relationships.

Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Renee Kiel serves as the Course Director for Strategic Leadership at the US Army War College, Department of Distance Education. As an ordained pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, she holds a Master of Divinity from the Houston Graduate School of Theology, a Master in Strategic Studies from the Army War College, and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. A native of Iowa, she and her husband have been married 34 years and have three adult sons, two of whom serve in the Army and one of whom is in graduate school at the University of Wisconsin.

NOTES

1 Martin Luther, *Luther's Small Catechism* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2008), 8 (emphasis added).

2 John 1:1-3.

RESPONSE TO

Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Renee Kiel's Reflection

By Chaplain (Colonel) Rajmund Kopec

Chaplain (LTC) Kiel's reflection focuses on three aspects of Ó Tuama's interview: expectation management, generosity in viewing others, and language. She evaluates the three aspects through the lens of relationships. Expectation management refers to a constructive dialogue in which understanding each other's positions is essential and does not depend on agreeing on all the issues. Generosity brings up the dilemma of what is reasonable in one's eyes and how to understand it. Proper language is the primary means of communication and relationship bridge building.

CH Kiel makes an excellent point with expectation management. I would take that concept even further: forgiveness is an essential element of expectation management. In relationships, agreeing to disagree plays an important role. However, some of us are set on convincing the other party that they are incorrect and our views are superior. At times, in the heat of a discussion, people make very hurtful or offensive statements. Those can be intentional or unintentional. The most common response is to entrench in our position and render an emotional response. Regardless of intentions and initial reaction, without forgiveness, any further dialogue rarely will bring any progress. Thus, forgiveness is necessary for the continuation of productive dialogue.

To put forgiveness into practice, we must recognize that it is primarily a choice, not an emotion that makes us feel good. It is an exercise of free will, which allows us to override our emotions, negative feelings, etc. In addition, forgiveness is not a one-time act. It is a healing process, which can take a long time. Frequently it challenges us to continue to make the choice to forgive. We also must recognize what forgiveness is not. It is not an approval of the offender's action. Wrong remains wrong regardless of forgiveness. It is not about forgetting. The "forgive and forget" approach is doomed to fail for two reasons. First, every wound leaves a scar, especially, emotional wounds. Second, forgetting indicates that we have not learned anything from the experience. As intelligent beings, we should take every opportunity to learn.

A generous view of others is another challenge we may face as we try to discern what is reasonable and what is not in people's statements or behavior. One technique that can help us to put that generosity into practice is to make a distinction between passing judgment and formulating an opinion. For a Christian, passing judgments becomes problematic because it is reserved for God. "The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22) and "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven;" (Luke 6:37). However, as intelligent beings, we have the right to formulate an opinion based on the available information. This comes with the recognition that I do not know all the aspects and potentially there is more to a story. In other words, we leave the door open to additional information that may change our opinion about the person or situation. That attitude opens a whole range of opportunities. We may choose to continue the dialogue, pray for the person, or simply conduct further research. To summarize, judgment is final and does not open doors for further dialogue. Formulating an opinion is a process that can help us to grow in humility, generosity, and spirituality.

Ó Tuama's interview challenges us to reevaluate our relationships and to be open to constructive dialogue. That process can help us to grow as human beings who are humble, loving, forgiving, and do not rush to judgment.

RESPONSE TO

Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Renee Kiel's Reflection

By Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Brian Koyn

Chaplain (LTC) Kiel highlights the role of expectations and generosity in building a community that both creates and undoes. She underscores the need to rid ourselves of the expectation that agreement is a prerequisite for love. This may very well be the most profound and essential point Ó Tuama makes in his interview. In the Christian tradition, Godly love is best demonstrated in the passage of Scripture that says that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. In the face of terrible behavior and outright rebellion, God's love was still at work.

Kiel also emphasizes the need for generosity in our view of others. I greatly appreciated her use of the quotation from Martin Luther on cultivating the skill to interpret every action in the best possible light. As humans, we suffer from a condition known as confirmation bias, which is the tendency to interpret information in a way that supports our existing beliefs, expectations, or assumptions. For example, if I believe that CH Kiel is a self-serving individual, I will interpret her writing on these pages to bring her attention and the apparent fame that results from writing here. Alternatively, if I believe her to be a genuinely caring person, I think that she hopes that this engagement will aid UMTs in building better religious communities. If every person adopts the generous view encouraged by Luther, the pursuit of redemptive communities becomes a more attainable goal.

On the role of truncated communication that she raises, I would welcome further discussion within these pages exploring the challenges and opportunities involved. In my own experience, I find the form of communication required on Twitter or texting assists me in precise and direct communication. Is it the truncated communication itself or the fact that our platforms disincentivize authentic listening and questioning? As CH Kopec points out in his response, how do generational differences reinforced by social media impact our religious communities? As religious professionals, these are critical questions to explore.

RESPONSE TO

Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Renee Kiel's Reflection

By Chaplain (Captain) Somya Malasri

Chaplain (LTC) Kiel's reflection of Krista Tippett and Pádraig Ó Tuama's April 2019 podcast interview was enlightening to read and humbling to engage with. CH Kiel presents two profound aspects about a cooperative conversation between two groups or people who have vastly different stances on religion. She wants even people who differ from one another to just live well together.

The first profound aspect CH Kiel identifies is about expectations. She concurs with Ó Tauma who says that at the beginning of a conversation a person should have realistic expectations. For example, in the interview Ó Tuama said he served as a mediator or guide for people or groups at his Corrymeela Community, where he led reconciliation organization meetings. Having a respectful and healthy conversation does not require agreeing on everything. Ó Tuama says that "agreement has rarely been the mandate for people who love each other." He then referenced how a couple treats each other in a healthy relationship. They may not agree on everything, but they will still find a way to love each other. To add to that assertion, the route towards finding love should be paved with dignity and respect. This would be a road allows for a journey into love. It can be can be traveled by even people who differ from one another as they move through life together.

The second profound aspect CH Kiel identifies is to have a generous view of people. I would expand that to say that a person should be open to the idea that they are not the center of the universe. CH Kiel quotes Ó Tuama: "most people do things which, at the time, they believed were reasonable." We might hear a person's words or view their actions completely opposite from what we would believe is within reason. However, that other person sees no fault in their words or deeds so cannot see that they might have communicated disdain by their own actions. The difference between these two perspectives and experiences is heavily predicated upon their personal beliefs and values.

CH Kiel references Martin Luther's instruction on the eighth commandment: "you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." I believe that in conversations involving people of varying views and backgrounds, parties will often bring a "false witness" thought to the table before the first word is ever spoken. Instead, we should be gentle with each other and welcome the growth potential of humiliation at the expense of pride.

CH Kiel says that Ó Tuama's primary instrument for accomplishing meaningful meetings was using ordinary, simple language. As part of this he does not allow pedagogical lecturing. This practice allows for a conversation where contrasting of views can be avoided. Love thy neighbor and speak well of them is something I think both parties could say occurred during the meetings at Corrymeela led by Ó Tauma.

REFLECTION ON

"Belonging Creates and Undoes Us"

By Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Brain Koyn

Belonging creates and undoes us both. This is the thought-provoking title of a dialogue between Krista Tippett and the theologian and poet Pàdraig Ò Tuama for an episode of the podcast *On Being*. Ò Tuama was the director of the Corrymeela community, a peace and reconciliation community in Northern Ireland, seeking to create a place of belonging because together is better. The interview demands the listener wrestle with their own humanity to explore the depths of what it truly means to create community.

In a world marked by conflict, misunderstanding, and violence which only serves to tear people apart, the remedy is found in true belonging in a home. According to Ò Tuama, home is much more complicated than simply a person's house and family. Even in the contentious environment of Northern Ireland, home is larger than identity derived from geographical divisions (Northern Ireland/Ireland/England) or religious heritage (Catholic/Protestant). Rather, it is an intentional community where safety is found in such measure that love can grow even amid profound disagreement. Ò Tuama's intentionality relies on two intertwined efforts: 1) Apprehending the power of language as a vehicle to convey the soul and 2) Curating interactions that overcome the forces that seek to divide.

Emerging from Ò Tuama and the Corrymeela Community, the argument he makes about community deserves careful consideration because it is tested in the crucible of factional violence and mistrust within Northern Ireland. Those involved in the Corrymeela Community are not mere spectators or pundits, but rather practitioners of the power of community in the quagmire of generational memories of hurt and hatred. Anyone planting community in this hard ground deserves a hearing and careful consideration.

Intentional community requires careful curation of the culture of interaction by leaders. Sectarianism, belonging gone bad, is the constant enemy of peacemaking. American society, like Northern Ireland, encourages name-calling and creating an environment where asking a question is viewed as being complicit. A wise framing of the environment and careful questioning is one remedy for the problem. To illustrate, Ò Tuama refers to a Zen concept of "mu." In his understanding of the concept, a respondent can answer any question by saying "mu." It means, "un-ask the question because there is a better question to be asked." Some questions can entrench fear, while others can bring more profound understanding and meaning.

Ò Tuama also advocates for creating psychological safe spaces where disagreements and differences are welcome. One challenge to designing this space is the view that agreement generates safety. As he points out, the experience of family contradicts this sentiment. Agreement is rarely a mandate for people who love each other. What is required for safe spaces is the ability to share heart, mind, and soul in dialogue with others—others who may hold diametrically opposed views, look different, and behave contrary to deeply held beliefs. All our disagreements, our pain, and our deeply held beliefs exist in people and next to people. The solution lies in building bridges of shared humanity before engaging in argument.

Language is a vehicle that enables all humans to participate in this sacred journey of shared story and connection. Ò Tuama goes so far as to liken speech to sacrament because it allows us to communicate from our souls. It also requires a courtesy and a generosity that provides for connection at a deeper level. Our words can serve to speak truth and lies, to wound or to heal,

and to bring connection or fracture relationships. The lens by which one views others' language also plays a defining role. Once again, generosity comes into play, encouraging us to ask if we heard them correctly or if we heard what we wanted or expected. Expressed language affords belonging and, by belonging, we can experience the grace of being undone by truth.

As I listened to Padrig Ò Tuama discuss his practice of peacemaking the words of Jesus challenged me. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. If we are serious about the practice of bringing peace between and within communities, deliberate action is required. As a poet, Ò Tuama is well versed in careful language. In the world of texts and sound bites, precise language is anything but ordinary. I am challenged to pay more attention to the words I use. We often hear "words mean things" to indicate that precise language is necessary to achieve shared understanding in both the Army and theology. Yet with deeply held pain and conflict, it is so easy to flippantly resort to language that seeks to define others instead of, as Francis of Assisi is widely believe to have prayed, "seek[ing] to understand, rather than be understood." The peacemaker must always be prepared, for as Ò Tuama says, "Life comes with no trigger warnings."

A role of the Chaplain is, in my view, to be the connective sinews of the community and connect one with God and one with another. As a curator of this sacred space, it falls to us to establish a place where souls can find rest. In a world that increasingly pushes us into sectarianism and encourages factions to close ranks against others, we need to experience a home more than ever. Home is about family, and families disagree. Still, the best ones continually offer a place of refuge where love abounds amid differences. What additional challenges occur in the nomadic military community? What more opportunities to strengthen our military family and community? If history is a guide, none of this will happen without constant and deliberate creation. Pàdraig Ò Tuama is on the front lines of this type of peacemaking, and his careful words challenge me to become a better peacemaker.

Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Brian Koyn is currently a student at the National War College in Washington, DC. He holds a D.Min from Wesley Theological Seminary, a M.Div. from Columbia International University, and a B.S. from USMA. Most recently, he served as the division chaplain for the 82nd Airborne Division.

RESPONSE TO

Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Brian Koyn's Reflection

By Chaplain (Colonel) Rajmund Kopec

Chaplain (LTC) Koyn's reflection focuses on the community-building aspect of the interview. More specifically, he explores the concept of community through the lens of home and family. Corrymeela is a very tangible attempt to build a community that is safe and loving even in a midst of existing disagreements. The proper usage of language and managed interactions are fundamental to establishing such a community. The outcome of this reflection is a very practical challenge to become peacemakers who build that type of community. To take it even further, it raises an important question: What deliberate actions do I need to take as a person, as a Chaplain, to become a peacemaker?

I find CH Koyn's perspective on a community particularly engaging. He takes the domestic angle and sees community as home and family, "an intentional community where safety is found in such measure that love can grow even amid profound disagreement." I love this sentence. It accurately describes my own family, to a certain degree dysfunctional, opinionated, but also supportive, loving, and reliable. Playing the role of a peacemaker, at times, in such an environment is risky and challenging.

My colleague lists three elements necessary for building an intentional community: a culture of interaction by leaders, a safe space where disagreements and differences are welcome, and the use of language as means of participation. I would submit the culture (or frequently lack of culture) of the leaders' interaction deserves further elaboration. First, we need to recognize that most of us exercise a certain level of leadership. From a kindergarten soccer team captain to the president of the town's senior citizen club, and everything in-between, people exercise leadership. Being a father, a mother, a big brother, a big sister puts one in a role of a leader. Second, true leadership is not about asserting or exercising power but is about selfless service and humility. The U.S. Army doctrine makes that aspect very clear. "Unselfish, humble leaders set themselves apart as teammates who are approachable, trustworthy, and open to follower input and advice. Selfless leaders aspire to attain goals for the greater good, beyond their own interests and benefits."[1] Understanding and practicing humility may present a challenge. Frequently humility is confused with self-depreciation. From the perspective of my Christian tradition, and of St Thomas Aquinas in particular, humility is the recognition that every good we have comes from God as pure gift. As such, one is responsible for the proper disposition of those talents entrusted by God. I'd submit that properly understood humility and selflessness are necessary attributes of a peacemaker.

As we are striving to be peacemakers, we should keep in mind that most of us shoulder the burden of leadership. As such, we are also responsible for exemplifying and shaping the culture of leaders' interaction.

It appears that CH Koyn engages the text with a particular focus on what I think of as the "end-product" that is an intentional community. In a very concise manner, he defines the community through the prism of home and family, identifies fundamental building blocks, and draws practical conclusions/challenges. My experience of the text took me in a slightly different direction. My analysis focuses on building foundations for a constructive dialogue by proper usage of the language here and now.

Even though we focus on different aspects of the text, both reflections provide additional perspective on the Chaplain Corps revitalization line of effort. "Revitalize—Chaplain Corps will empower our talent to help create a new generation of vibrant local Army communities to support and help retain all members of the Army family" (U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Priorities). Taking on the roles of peacemakers and humble leaders, who facilitate constructive dialogue, will provide an essential contribution to building spiritually thriving communities.

NOTES

1 U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leadership and the Profession*, Army Doctrine Publication 6-22 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, November 25, 2019), 2-4.

RESPONSE TO

Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Brian Koyn's Reflection

By Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Renee Kiel

Chaplain (LTC) Koyn has written an exceptionally beautiful reflection on the *On Being* podcast that featured Pàdraig Ò Tuama and Krista Tippett. I especially enjoyed CH Koyn's description of Chaplains as curators of sacred space where souls can find rest. Koyn writes, "What is required for safe spaces is the ability to share heart, mind, and soul in dialogue with others, others who hold diametrically opposed views, look different, and behave contrary to deeply held beliefs.... The solution lies in building bridges of shared humanity before engaging in argument."

In the anonymity of our socially networked world, we are surprisingly quick to weigh-in on divisive issues. Social media empowers us to pounce from afar, correcting, educating, even scolding others for their supposed ignorance and obtuseness. We feel it is our responsibility to inform and enlighten, and feel safe doing so from afar, remotely, in the comfort of our home. We confidently pound out clever responses on our keyboards, smug in our cleverness.

Unfortunately, in all this, we jump right over the bridge-building step. We have no sense of shared humanity, nothing in common with the person on the other end of our virtual retorts. The one with whom we grapple is a faceless entity. As we banter, we become more certain, more entrenched in our position. It is a dangerous way to communicate; rather than building bridges, it widens the chasm until we are each adrift on our own island of truth.

How different it is, then, to sit with our opponent, face-to-face, and share a cup of tea. I am reminded how in Afghanistan, when U.S. Commanders met with tribal leaders to negotiate, they would be asked to first sit down, sometimes for hours, and leisurely drink tea and make small talk. As support staff, I used to think this was a cultural oddity and a huge waste of time. Why can't we just get down to the business at hand? Now, I understand that in a part of the world where strife and war and enmity run deep, going back hundreds, even thousands of years, they have learned the immeasurable value of making time, lots of time, to sit and drink tea together. They weren't just making small talk, they were establishing their shared humanity. This was not a waste of time; it was wisdom borne out of years of pain and human suffering.

As Chaplains this is one of our domains of responsibility: creating sacred space for holy, healing conversations. It can happen anywhere since God is everywhere. As representatives of the transcendent, we can help create earthly spaces where souls can meet and discuss, discover, listen, and understand. People may argue and disagree, and there may be "lumpy crossings," but these conversations can take place under the divine umbrella of respect and recognition of each other's shared humanity.

This line of thought reminds me of a quote by C. S. Lewis:

> There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit-immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously—no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption."[1]

I have a son who is a combat engineer in an Army bridge unit. He tells me that bridge-building is difficult, labor-intensive work. It requires a huge coordination of effort, people, and materials. The process, he says, cannot be rushed. Each task must be performed incrementally, step by step, all atop an unstable, unpredictable fast-flowing river. Likewise, building bridges between people may sound like pleasant work, but it is arduous. It, too, must be approached carefully, incrementally, step by step, and with much respect for the difficulty of the task. Yet, a bridge, once built, enables communities to flourish and prosper. Bridge-building, both literally and metaphorically, is an essential skill for the betterment and, dare I say, survival of humanity. We would do well to begin today.

NOTES

1 C.S. Lewis, "The Weight of Glory," Preached originally as a sermon in the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford, on June 8, 1942: published in THEOLOGY, November 1941, accessed 18 January 2022. https://www.wheelersburg.net/Downloads/Lewis%20Glory.pdf.

RESPONSE TO

Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Brian Koyn's Reflection

By Chaplain (Captain) Somya Malasri

The view that I have on this paper is that is it very detailed and is a well thought out response. On my initial read I found myself wrapped into your lens of Belonging. The inclusion of the geographical placements, the religious heritage, and the community in which Ó'Tuama was in help fill in the bigger picture. Yes, we should all know this already based on our own reading material and research, but seeing it be a part of your response helps refresh all of our memories. This is important to bring to the forefront. Your focus on the psychological view of Ó'Tuama's sense of belonging really peels back the layers of what it means and how does one effectively do that work. The careful use of words helps builds community. Having the same views or intellectual thought process as others brings the sense of unity. The connection of using our words to bring peace and the support of the scripture about being peacemakers certainly does help all in need. Ó'Tuama has the same outlook when it comes to community. Though we have our differences let us live in peace amongst each other. We are all important and matter.

REFLECTION ON

"Belonging Creates and Undoes Us"

By Chaplain (Captain) Somya Malasri

After reading the interview, *On Being: "*Belonging Creates and Undoes Us," between Krista Tippett and Pádraig Ó Tuama, I have many topics for discussion. I choose to reflect on this statement: "I remember getting back on the number 16 bus elated with delight, and I had no one to tell, because to tell anybody about this exorcism into freedom would have been to have caused complication in terms of that." Ó Tuama experienced heavy burdens at one point before he openly stated that he was gay. He hid his identity as a gay man working with a strong faithful Catholic community.

People create identities and are attached to those identities. When someone rebels from their tribe, their community feels hurt and betrayal because they experienced a great loss. At the beginning of this interview, Ó Tuama's classmate from a Catholic school disappeared and found out that he attended Protestant school. The class was shocked and sad that this thing happened. A little girl asked "why did God create the Protestant faith?" They believed that the little boy belonged to their faith group—Catholicism. The class believed that no one from a Catholic school would ever think about leaving their school for a Protestant one. Once their expectations were not met; they felt loss and experienced suffering.

Even in the midst of this hardness, I believe that Ó Tuama used religion to overcome sadness and bring harmony to the community. He would focus on becoming better for himself. He emerged himself in the very community he felt abandoned him. Leading by example and having the mindset of "I have just as much right to be here as them, I'm faithful as well, my prayers are being heard too." He helped pivot the idea of religion by visiting those religious congregations and becoming more secure in his faith as well as being a member of the LGBTQ+ community. He even made it a special point to be with the religious community. Believing that hiding your faith and your personal desires is no way to live, he wanted to be an example that believing in a higher being and loving who you want can be mutually exclusive.

I choose to focus on this particular paragraph because it was relevant to me based on my childhood struggles. I was born to a Laotian family in Esaan. At that time, over 50 years ago, we were a minority group in Thailand, and were from one of the poorest parts of Thailand. I was ashamed to identify myself as a Laotian once I left my hometown for further education in the central part of Thailand. I chose to hide my identity and that was a very painful decision. I was afraid that someone would judge me on my circumstances versus my character. I did not like the feeling of being left out or counted out because of my background and felt that it was imperative for me to protect myself from unwanted, and harsh judgement for being who I am, a Laotian. At that time, the perception of people who came from Esaan was that we are poor and uneducated, and we were seen as less than. So to ensure that I would have a fighting chance to strive for the life I envisioned for myself; I had to bury my past for a very long time.

I felt that I had to become a mirror of the society I was in now. If I looked and behaved like those who were deemed successful in life then it would be easier to adapt. The means for that was survival in my new world. I attached to other people's perceptions and wanted acceptance from others. This made my early life miserable. I was not who I was, but I was who other people said I was. That birthed the feeling of being lost and confused, and subsequently led to an "Imposter Syndrome". At the time, it felt like that was the best thing to do in order to secure a better life for myself.

But as time went on I became wiser. I know now that the decision to deny an essential part of myself was the wrong choice. To allow other people to dictate my happiness, my sense of worth and how I perceive myself was not healthy and no way to live. I carried the burdens that society had placed upon me, which I fed by believing and basing my whole life on; creating that perception in my mind that I had to be anything but myself to thrive. That who I was naturally would never be enough or accepted. I carried that burden wherever I went for very long time, and it was heavy. It was not until I joined the temple as a novice monk that I realized that I could not allow other people or circumstances to control me. I had to control myself. As my teacher once said to me, the rock is heavy only if you hold onto it, but it is light if you throw it away.

There is a teaching in Buddhism called the Four Noble Truths: there is suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the path leading to cessation of suffering. Being born as human beings, we will face suffering many times throughout our life. Our duty is to overcome the hardships and sufferings we may endure and find peace and happiness in this very life. How can we live peacefully without suffering in the chaotic society? There are many ways to find peace and harmony. The same as me and my family, we used religion to overcome sufferings and find inner peace. We suffered a great deal during my early years. More than anyone. I personally believe my mother felt a great sense of loss and suffering due to my sister unfortunately losing her battle with her mental health--she tragically committed suicide. My mother was out of her mind and had frankly gone mad because the weight of it all was too much. The bond she had with my sister was very strong. Losing her daughter was so heavy on her she simply could not accept it as reality. She held onto her grief and refused to let go of it. The denial my mother went through was so strong it prolonged her suffering. How many times do we hold onto past hurt and refuse to heal and liberate ourselves. Like my mother, myself, and plenty of other people: until we decide to free ourselves from our burdens we will continue to suffer. So choose freedom, peace and happiness. Let the views of society, the weight of expectations, and the boxes and labels that were forced upon you go. They do not serve you or your purpose in life.

Chaplain (Captain) Somya Malasri serves with 121st Field Hospital, 65th MED BDE, USAG Humphreys, South Korea. He holds a B.A. Degree from Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University, Thailand and M.Div. from University of the West, CA. He emigrated from Thailand in June 2001 and is married to Waan with a son, Brooke.

RESPONSE TO

Chaplain (Captain) Somya Malasri's Reflection

By Chaplain (Colonel) Rajmund Kopec

Chaplain (CPT) Malasri's reflection focuses on the individual's dilemma of belonging to a social group. He elaborates on the challenges of conforming to the accepted standards of a community. He builds his reflection around Ò Tuama's experience growing up in a Catholic community as a gay person and in the midst of the Catholic-Protestant conflict in Northern Ireland. He also revisits his own struggles as a member of the Laotian minority in central Thailand. Against that background, he frames an individual's response and explores the level of compromise one is willing to accept to be a part of a community.

CH Malasri's personal story is very powerful and moving. He is brutally honest about the level of compromise he was willing to accept to fit in with the social groups in central Thailand. The need to be accepted led him to the point of developing an "imposter syndrome." He also recounts the tragedy of losing his sister to suicide and watching his mother, who was unable to deal with the death of her daughter. All those experiences led him to the recognition that religion helps to overcome suffering and find inner peace. To achieve these goals, he proposes acknowledgment of the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism: "there is suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the path leading to the cessation of suffering." He concludes that we should "choose freedom, peace and happiness" and dismiss the views, expectations, and labels that society forces upon us. We should reject what does not serve us our purpose in life.

I appreciate CH Malasri's focus on building individual resilience and proposing coping mechanisms to help us with unavoidable suffering. However, all those efforts appear to be apart or despite of society/community. I find that approach problematic or at a minimum an incomplete approach. One may have an impression that CH Malasri proposes to pursue personal happiness and purpose in life in complete opposition to the community's expectations that an individual finds burdensome. This approach can lead to another form of isolation and potentially to developing a "superiority syndrome."

In my reflection, I pointed out that "humans are especially cooperative.... Human ultra-sociality is based in some special psychological mechanisms—both cognitive and motivational—that have evolved to support humans' ultra-cooperative lifeways." Ò Tuama acknowledged the need for an accepting community and proposed a solution for Northern Ireland. He created Corrymeela, a peace and reconciliation community. In the context of CH Malasri's reflection, I'd like to hear what steps an individual should take to influence a community. CH Koyn, in his reflection, proposed becoming a peacemaker as defined in the Bible and understood in the Christian tradition. I'd welcome the chance to hear from CH Malasri over a cup of tea about the very nature of his proposal.

RESPONSE TO

Chaplain (Captain) Somya Malasri's Reflection

By Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Renee Kiel

Chaplain (CPT) Somya Malasri has written a beautiful and very personal meditation on Krista Tippett's interview with Pádraig Ó Tuama in her *On Being* podcast episode "Belonging Creates and Undoes Us." CH Malasri's reflection graces us by offering the profound gifts of vulnerability and self-disclosure through the sharing his personal story. In his writing, CH Malasri deftly relates his own identity struggles to that of Ó Tuama's. Ó Tuama wrestled with how he could be a Catholic and gay; CH Malasri grappled with professing his Laotian heritage while living and learning among those who viewed Laotians as inferior people. It is interesting that for both Ó Tuama and Malasri, the ability to finally embrace their own identity came from inside themselves rather than from external acceptance. The culture outside of them did not change and suddenly become more accepting, rather, they changed. They both went deep within themselves and made the life-changing decision to let go of their fear and doubt and embrace who they were, intrinsically. In some circles this is referred to as finding your voice.

There are perhaps a few lessons we as religious support professionals can glean from the inspirational stories of Ó Tuama and Malasri. First, as religious support professionals, we should never assume that just because a person seems happy and carefree that they are not dealing with painful, internal struggles, such as those of identity and belonging. Most people experience some emotional pain over the course of life. The culture of the Army, however, tends to promote stoicism. Therefore, the painful emotions carried by Soldiers are usually not worn on their sleeve. For some, especially minorities, this emotional pain and sense of isolation can be even more profound. This is especially true for young adults who are still maturing and finding their voice.

Secondly, I find it interesting that both Ó Tuama and Malasri found relief, strength, and healing by turning to their faith traditions, Roman Catholicism and Buddhism, respectively. As religious support professionals, we should never underestimate the power of a person's faith to bring them healing, comfort and restoration. In our age of the rise of the religious "nones," we may, even as Army religious support professionals, assume that most people we encounter on a day-to-day basis are "religion-less." However, this is not the case. The overwhelming majority (73%) of the Soldiers we serve have a faith tradition.[1] Victor Frankl wrote, "In some way, suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning, such as the meaning of a sacrifice." If any two establishments can to speak to the "meaning of a sacrifice,"[2] it is religion and the military. These are powerful ideas upon which Army Chaplains can build in their ministry to Soldiers.

In 2017, a groundbreaking study came out of Harvard University entitled, "Religious Communities and Human Flourishing."[3] In short, this secular study found that "human flourishing" including "happiness, and life satisfaction, mental and physical health, meaning and purpose, character and virtue, and close social relationships," is notably stronger for people who participate regularly in communal religion than for those who practice private spirituality or who claim no religion or spirituality. It is, perhaps not surprising, therefore, that both Ó Tuama and Malasri found their identity by immersing themselves in their religion rather than withdrawing from it. As military Chaplains, we must do all we can to facilitate the "religious support" of the Soldiers and Families we serve so that they, too, can flourish as the divinely inspired human beings they were created to be.

NOTES

1 Kristy N. Kamarack, *Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity in the Armed Services: Background and Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: US Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, June 5, 2019), 46, https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R44321.

2 Victor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 117.

3 Tyler J. VanderWeele, "Religious Communities and Human Flourishing," *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, October 11, 2017, https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721417721526.

RESPONSE TO

Chaplain (Captain) Somya Malasri's Reflection

By Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Brian Koyn

Chaplain (Captain) Malasri provides a courageous and intimate response to the Ó Tuama interview by sharing his own struggle of belonging and identity. I found it heartbreaking to read his account of rejection from society and education during his early years. His experience of this caste system in Thailand clearly demonstrates the soul-crushing effect of ethnic racism. Malarsi's story vividly highlights the severe impacts of how society adds to the burdens of those already in the most vulnerable positions.

Malasri reveals how he suffered under imposter syndrome. This concept was coined in 1978 by psychologists Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes; they describe a condition of anxiety, and self-doubt that exists in someone despite their achievements.[1] Many experiencing imposter syndrome feel that they will be inevitably exposed as a fraud to the world even though successful. Imposter syndrome and authentic belonging are mutually exclusive. To belong requires a level of transparency and vulnerability. Otherwise, it is not the individual who belongs, but a carefully created façade, a mirage that only exists in the minds of those observing it. A community that cultivates authentic belonging encourages the vulnerability required to remove masks. This is no easy task for each person brings to the group a measure of brokenness, contradictions, and unexplored places. However, it is only in this safe and intimate setting that belonging can transform lives.

CH Malasri mentions the important role of suffering in life. He once again courageously shared his own experiences by relating to the tragic loss of his sister. From his Buddhist tradition, overcoming suffering to find peace and harmony are central. As a Christian, I find agreement in the central role of suffering and meaning-making. Christians find identification with their Savior as he innocently suffered for our sakes. Human suffering has profound meaning because Christ will work even the worst circumstances to benefit his followers.[2] Navigating the often-treacherous path through suffering demands authentic religious communities marked by vulnerability and honesty.

The Chaplain Corps is perfectly positioned to provide this to our military community. General (retired) David Perkins, stated that, in his view, Unit Ministry Teams are the connective sinews and ligaments that hold military communities together.[3] Chaplains can use their unique position in the unit to connect individuals who would not otherwise know each other and shepherd these groups into authentic communities. These small religious networks within units are then connected to the larger chapel communities found on every installation. This is simply one way among many that UMTs can use their individual gifts and position of trust to connect soldiers and family members to transformative communities of faith.

NOTES

1 Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes, "*The Imposter Phenomenon in High Achieving Women: Dynamics and Therapeutic Intervention*," Psychotherapy Theory, Research and Practice, Vol. 15, #3, (Fall 1978).

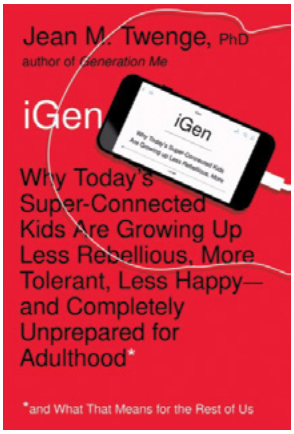
2 Romans 8:28.

3 General (ret.) David Perkins, (Lecture, US Army Religious Leader Symposium, Stockbridge, MA, Oct. 21, 2019).

iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—And Completely Unprepared for Adulthood and What that Means for the Rest of Us

by Jean M. Twenge

Reviewed by Chaplain (Major) Delana Small



Dr. Jean M. Twenge of San Diego State University is an expert about the surprising cultural, sociological, religious, and philosophical shifts sweeping the nation. Twenge affirmed her niche for demarcating definitive generational and cultural fault lines by sifting through 11 million nationally representative surveys dating back as early as the 1960s. Twenge's analysis traced the primary culprit behind a sweeping national transformation down to a single, hand-held device—the smartphone. Twenge isolated behaviors, beliefs, and practices from these 11 million surveys to show that individuals born between 1995 to 2012 are unique among her sampling.[1] The correlation she identifies is too significant for science to ignore. Twenge discovered what she calls the *iGeneration, or iGen*—those born and bred on the cusp of this specific, revolutionary, and emergent technology.

Twenge describes these phenomena in her book, *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, and Less Happy—and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood and What that Means for the Rest of Us.* Her punchy title reveals a smattering of themes to which she brings the rigors of a scientist, and the humor and caution of a parent. Her work both presents viable causation for the mental health crisis among young people and unpacks core iGen values like inclusivity and political independence. This book illuminates trends in iGen praxis and belief that will shape the nation's religious and cultural identity in the future. Twenge's must-read project deserves consideration from educators, religious leaders, chaplains, clinicians and all varieties of strategic leaders committed to the spiritual health and strength of the nation and in coming generations.

Secular, Not Spiritual

iGen'er epistemology is irreligious, according to Twenge. Her research shows that iGen'ers are not "spiritual, not religious," as is often claimed; instead, they are thoroughly secularized, less religious, and less spiritual than any generation in American history.[2] In 2016, one in three iGen'ers said that they did not believe in God while one in four said that they never prayed—even once.[3] iGen'ers describe themselves as religious illiterates. As the children of Generation X and Millennials, iGen'ers represent—in the flesh—the results of a decline in religious affiliation and spiritual belief over time. Twenge reports that even generic belief in the afterlife has diminished for young people.[4] What complicates matters is that iGen values emerge apart from any

religious orientation, or at times, in reaction against to organized religion. The "elephant in the room," as Twenge quips, is distrust among iGen'ers (and the Millennials preceding them) in institutional religion. This is particularly the case because they view institutional religion as a platform for things that are antithetical to their values, such as antigay agendas.[5] Despite some religious denominations' efforts to align religion with iGen values, many iGen'ers have entirely disengaged. Twenge predicts a fundamental transformation in American religion in the wake of a lack of religious nurturing in the upbringing of iGen'ers or broad societal expectations that affirm the need for and practice of for religious affiliation, institutional religion, spirituality, and all things ethereal.

A possible byproduct of this dissociation from religion remains an uptick in polarization across American socio-economic, racial, and regional groups. While Twenge reports a general, staggering decline of religious adherents within the iGen population, she draws out nuances in the rates of decline across demographics. Young white adolescents, for instance, are attending religious services at a far lesser rate than young Black adolescents. This demographic divide is amplified as Twenge explores the sharp contrasts in general religious beliefs across these planes of difference. Ironically, in a time of declining religious adherence, religious identity remains a powerful force for instilling difference.[6]

This disenchantment with religion and spirituality has left iGen'ers increasingly ill-equipped to address or even recognize spiritual concerns. iGen'ers tend to leverage the language of other domains to express the intangible, transcendent, and even the components of the self. Twenge cites well-known rhetoric among theologians and sociologists who suggest iGen'ers' movement toward "moralistic therapeutic deism."[7] Science is a primary conduit for iGen'ers to express belief and explain all existence.[8] Yet iGen spiritual appetites, declared or otherwise, are unsatiated; Twenge chronicles how ultra-connectivity silences this generation's need for silence.

No More Silence and Solitude?

In the late-nineteenth century, spiritual seekers aggressively retreated from the "noisy society" of the newly urbanized, industrialized world. Modern marvels like the steam engine, assembly line, telephone, and automobile dashed into the imaginations and realities of everyday people. The collision of innovation and tradition resulted in a cacophony of shifting culture. These transformations progressed society gradually, and perhaps subliminally, to disaffiliate the average person from nature, rest, and the village. In response to this changing world, vested agents of both religion and spirituality reaffirmed the value of silence and solitude over and against the noise in ways both traditional and novel. Harnessing emerging and ancient spiritual disciplines revitalized spiritual seekers and provided ways to calibrate the soul. As solitude became vogue, religious and spiritual practitioners enjoyed its restorative powers to the mind, the body, and the soul.[9]

This natural human instinct to withdraw into the power of silence and solitude is disrupted by the smartphone. Smartphones connect people to one another in ways that can crowd out spaces and times for silences and solitude. According to Twenge smartphones to reach market saturation in eight short years. The ubiquity of the smartphone marked an unprecedented epoch in human history.[10] No technology in human history—not even the wheel or the printing press—achieved such global domination so quickly. These devices inundated humans in less than a decade and since have become part of everyday life for most cultures across the globe. Today, iGen'ers (along with their parents and grandparents) reach for their smartphones first thing in the morning and the last thing before bed.[11] Constant connectivity, Twenge reports, leaves iGen'ers feeling unable to unplug. One teen admits that the continuous texting from friends feels like incessant tapping on her shoulder.[12] While the average adolescent spends roughly 17 hours a day attending school, sleeping, doing homework, and participating in extracurricular activities, he or she still spends six hours engaged with social media on his or her smartphone.[13] The bustling world that Emerson, Thoreau, and Alger escaped periodically has followed iGen'ers into their classrooms, locker rooms, living rooms, and bedrooms. The elusive silence and solitude, desired in and achieved by bygone eras, evades the smartphone generations, and the iGen in particular.

Twenge charts the toll that forgoing silence and solitude has had on America's iGen. Reading in general, whether in print or on digital platforms, has declined among this generation exponentially in the last almost two decades. According to a twelve-year-old iGen'er that Twenge interviewed, reading proves difficult because, as this tween says, "I just can't sit still and be superquiet."[14] Another student admitted lacking the patience to read, particularly because books are "boring" compared to immediate entertainment that is digitally available and visually stimulating. Standardized test scores also reflect a generation that is struggling to sit still. Written

scores and assessments of critical reading skills reveal startling declines even from the Millennials a generation before.[15] With YouTube, Twitter, and Netflix at one's fingertips, disconnecting and achieving silence is difficult to experience.[16] Hyper connectivity is leaving iGen'ers overstimulated and spiritually undernourished especially when a growing disinterest in general reading can lead to religious and spiritual illiteracy of sacred texts. Twenge bemoans that forgoing healthy solitude for hyper connectivity ultimately is recasting the iGen from the most linked generation of all time to the loneliest.

Cyber Communities and Lingering Loneliness

The Internet and smartphone introduced unprecedented connectivity for human beings. While earlier media afforded novel forms of long-distance communication, the Internet and the iPhone introduced seemingly face-to-face communication, including FaceTime, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams, in a development that rivaled technologies only dreamed of in science fiction like *Back to the Future* or *Star Trek*. Physical human connection and community have been harmed; human relationships and communities migrated to mystical platforms of the virtual, invisible, and the ultimately impersonal.

Twenge suggests physical human connection as a protective factor against mental illness among iGen. One study of iGen adults revealed that those who frequently opted for Facebook connection rather than in-person encounters experienced more mental illness and less life satisfaction. Conversely, those who communed with others in the flesh—and in the same room—experienced improved mental health and expressed more satisfaction in life.[17] Twenge further expounds that daily social networking in lieu of in-person connection compromised mental health by increasing feelings of loneliness, isolation, and exclusion.[18] Additionally, obsession in teens with phones and social media actually interferes with in-person contact, drawing them away from others at school and social gatherings and pulling them back to their screens.[19] Such behaviors produce higher risks forvand rates of depression among teens, while activities like playing sports or attending religious services, which are not dependent on phones, reduce this risk by almost 27 percent.[20]

This epidemic of loneliness is particularly surprising among iGen'ers when one considers this generation's capacity for healthy community. Twenge acknowledges an affinity for philanthropy and charity among iGen individuals. Following the 2009 economic recession, many hoped that the iGen, then children, would transform culture, particularly in the areas of economic restraint and social reform.[21] Twenge reports that these are the values that iGen'ers express across their social media platforms. iGen activists enthusiastically leverage social media to engage their political preferences and beliefs and to support their causes; the challenge, Twenge remarks, remains that of matching words and deeds.[22] Twenge encourages drawing out iGen'ers from their "echo chambers" as they "cluster" exclusively with other like-minded people on their social media platforms.[23] Bridging iGen'er ideals and practice may be the solvent for which they long so deeply.

Conclusion

Twenge exposes the longings among America's youth for community, connection, and spirituality through empirical research. Twenge's project is about the problems experienced among the iGen, their parents, and the generations navigating new technologies, post religious landscapes, and political polarization. In writing of these subjects, she offers solutions to be considered and applied in all arenas of strategic change. This book is a vital resource for those hoping to understand our culture and promote such positive change.

Today, **Chaplain (Major) Delana Small** is serving in the United States Army Institute for Religious Leadership (USA-IRL), Fort Jackson, South Carolina. In this strategic capacity, Delana is helping modernize the resources and practices of the Chaplain Corps to help build healthy Army communities and empower life-change in Soldiers, Families, and Civilians.

NOTES

1 Jean M. Twenge, *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood and What that Means for the Rest of Us* (New York: Atria Paperback, 2017), 6.

2 Twenge, *iGen*, 132.

3 Twenge, *iGen*, 126.

4 Twenge, *iGen*, 128.

5 Twenge, *iGen*, 139.

6 Twenge, *iGen*, 132-7.

7 Twenge, *iGen*, 138.

8 Twenge, *iGen*, 139.

9 See Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012).

10 Twenge, *iGen*, 2.

11 Twenge, *iGen*, 50.

12 Twenge, *iGen*, 56.

13 Twenge, *iGen*, 51.

14 Twenge, *iGen*, 61.

15 Twenge, *iGen*, 63.

16 Twenge, *iGen*, 66.

17 Twenge, *iGen*, 79.

18 Twenge, *iGen*, 80.

19 Twenge, *iGen*, 81.

20 Twenge, *iGen*, 82.

21 Twenge, *iGen*, 173.

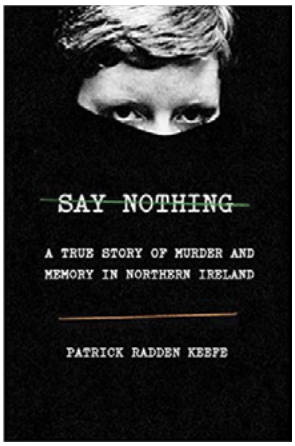
22 Twenge, *iGen*, 174-5.

23 Twenge, *iGen*, 287.

***Say Nothing**: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland*

by Patrick Radden Keefe

Reviewed by Chaplain (Captain) Anna Page



The one who controls the narrative, controls the truth. The one who controls the truth, holds the power. This power then becomes a tool; a tool wielded for healing, or a tool wielded for suffering. It is this discussion of power, truth-making, and truth-telling that journalist Patrick Radden Keefe explores in his book *Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland*.

Say Nothing documents the strife and unrest in Northern Ireland from the 1960s through today by weaving together narratives from multiple sides of a conflict. This conflict, known as "the Troubles," raged for over 30 years and pitted Catholic nationalist against Protestant loyalist, Northern Irish against British, and even neighbor against neighbor. The Troubles erupted after centuries of ethno-nationalist-religious tensions between Ireland and Great Britain. In particular, Keefe suggests in *Say Nothing* that the Troubles began in response to the oppression and injustice faced by the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland. The ensuing conflict appears to have been fought like many irregular wars. As is common in irregular warfare, grey area exists in the moral discourse of right versus wrong. Keefe captures this nuance in his narrative history.

Throughout the book, Keefe uses first person accounts to humanize a history that is often simplified – or even forgotten about – by people not of Irish descent. Through the use of interviews primarily taken from the John J. Burns Library at Boston College, Keefe inspires readers to critically consider 'Who is in the right?', 'Who is in the wrong?', and 'How does history faithfully tell a story?'. This nuancing of "right" and "wrong" is accomplished by the storylines of those who experienced the Troubles. *Say Nothing*

introduces readers to members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) who wrestled with responding to perceived injustice and fought in the Troubles, families of victims who had been "disappeared" during this era, British political figures whose policies impacted lived experiences of minority groups, and even clergy who found themselves operating in the grey of ethno-religious conflict. As Keefe writes, "This is not a history book but a work of narrative nonfiction." As a piece of nonfiction, *Say Nothing* provides a historical account to be learned and considered. As a narrative, humanity—in all its complexity—is strewn throughout the pages from the interpersonal to geopolitical dialogues.

Overall, *Say Nothing* is a captivating read for anyone interested in contemporary ethno-religious conflict, civil rights movements, and reactions to oppression, violence and political change, the radicalization of people and movements, healing from individual and collective trauma, and the mythologizing and truth telling of history. Subplots also exist within these major themes. The first is the role of women in warfare and political movements. Keefe's research includes interviews from the Price sisters who were key players in the Provisional IRA. Keefe details the operational and strategic support provided by these women during the Troubles. In this vein, *Say Nothing* is reminiscent of *The Daughters of Kobani: A Story of Rebellion, Courage, and Justice* by Gayle Tzemach Lemmon.

Another subplot is the role of clergy and the local church during times of conflict. Interviews recount that clergy provided both sacramental and political support during the height of the Troubles and the peacemaking process. This makes *Say Nothing* an interesting read when considered alongside Phil Klay's *Missionaries,* which discusses the role of clergy in the peacemaking process in Colombia in the 2000s.

Finally, the last subplot is about reckoning with the past. In part three of *Say Nothing*, Keefe explores the healing process. He details his conversations with former members of the IRA and with the surviving family of Jean McConville, one of the "disappeared." Moral injury becomes obvious when talking with former IRA members. Many of them express regret, a sense of betrayal, guilt and shame, and signs of moral distress. When talking with the surviving family, the importance of closure and truth-telling in healing become paramount. The McConville family longs for an acknowledgement from the members of the IRA of their role in the disappearance and death of their mother. For those familiar with the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in South Africa or the *desaparecidos* in Argentina and Chile, the healing and reconciliation process in *Say Nothing* will sound familiar. Keefe's book provides another perspective on this global human rights issue.

Though Keefe highlights many important and timely themes in *Say Nothing*, it is exactly these myriad themes that make *Say Nothing* a cumbersome read. *Say Nothing* came to a natural end in section two of three. Section three, "Reckoning," could be its own book focusing on the aftermath of collective trauma. If one were not reading Keefe's book for a review or for research purposes, it would have been easy to overlook themes or be tempted to skim multiple chapters. *Say Nothing* is one of those books best used as a reference if interested in a specific theme. To this end, Keefe provides an index for quick reference.

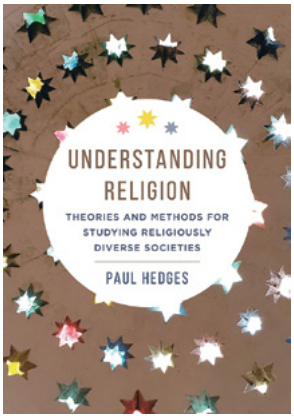
Ultimately, *Say Nothing* is a worthwhile read for chaplains. The connection between the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps and *Say Nothing* may not be apparent at first given the setting of the book. However, the themes discussed transcend the immediate conflict and have applicability for a variety of situations. For the Chaplain as religious advisor, *Say Nothing*'s context of ethno-religious conflict underscores the importance of Commanders understanding the religious and ethnic dynamics at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. For the Chaplain as religious leader, *Say Nothing* is a nod to the positive impact that clergy can have in the peacemaking process during and after conflict on the personal, interpersonal, and political levels. Finally, as persons who are concerned with truth-telling and truth-making in a power-wielding institution, *Say Nothing* is a reminder to Chaplains of the pain and strife that comes when nothing is said.

Chaplain (Captain) Anna S. Page is the battalion chaplain for the 330th Movement Control Battalion out of Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. Anna is a priest in the Episcopal Church and holds her Master of Divinity from Duke Divinity School and Bachelor of Arts in History from Wellesley College. In her free time, Anna enjoys working out, dreaming of ways to help create communities in which all persons can flourish, and spending time with her wife Sara and their cat.

***Understanding Religion**: Theories and Methods for Studying Religiously Diverse Societies*

by Paul Hedges

Reviewed by Chaplain (Major) Andrew Shriver



Paul Hedges, in his book *Understanding Religion: Theories and Methods for Studying Religiously Diverse Societies*, provides several key lenses that facilitate key chaplain competencies. The views he presents enable religious advisement research and analysis capabilities to be developed to provide relevant and critical information to military leaders and service members. Hedges is a distinguished scholar in the field of religion and international relations who has worked with a diverse range of military professionals in understanding this domain's impact on their future enterprises. This broad experience brings invaluable insight to the book.

This work does not follow in the common model of World Religions Paradigm (WRP) footsteps like Christopher Partridge's *Introduction to World Religions* (2018), Jeffrey Brodd's *Invitation to World* (2021), and the most recent work by the team that included the late Willard Oxtoby, *A Concise Introduction to World Religions* (2019). *Understanding Religion* is an incredibly useful text because it provides methods and theories that help develop a percipience about religious impacts around the globe and by establishing a foundation for strategic, operational, and tactical military leaders. Hedges employs a dynamic approach to religion:

> Whatever 'religion' may be (and taking seriously critiques that suggest we abandon the term altogether), it is neither monolithic, sui generis, nor clearly definable. Therefore, being multidisciplinary, or even interdisciplinary, is essential. We should have a diverse toolkit. This I term methodological polymorphism, which is to say that our method must take on a variety of forms in differing circumstances.[1]

The fusion of viewpoints within this text models discernment of the utility of various methods that are crucial in developing religious impact assessments. Members of the Chaplain Corps will find tools to analyze spiritual effects on military operations as well as the social, political, spiritual, and cultural aspects that faith and belief systems have in many communities.

Hedges articulates these lenses in a book that assists in bringing clarity and understanding to concerns such as: insider-outsider perspectives, the effects of gender and sexuality on religious practices. The book also touches on the history of religions, the use of power and authority, and social constructionism as they related to religious expression. Hedges reveals the importance of identity and its role in spiritual communities, the legacies of colonialism and decolonization on people's understanding of religion, the cognitive science of religion, and its effects on ethics. Hedges also discusses the material aspects of spiritual experiences to include the importance of buildings, clothing, and physical movement. Especially significant is this work's discussions of the power of ritual and myth to influence the information domain, theories of

religious violence, warfare, and conflict. Hedges confronts secularism's effect, the geography of religion and sacred sites and different conflicts related to place, and the relationship of religion and governance within a faith or belief system as well as its impact on local, regional, global politics.

Researchers and publishing firms over the last twenty years have filled niche areas on religion, spirituality, international relations, and their interactions within political and military dynamics. Presses like Palgrave, Routledge, Notre Dame Press, Harvard University Press, Oxford University Press, the Army War College, the Naval War College, and other publishing outlets, continue to produce specialized work that continues to shape the contours of the field. There is, however, a lack of entry-level generalist work that can help teach some of the critical basics in how to carry out high quality research in this field.

Authors other than Hedges tend to rely on one specific focus or discipline to develop external religious advisement capabilities within learners. They do so by using lenses as diverse as: comparative religion, the phenomenology, anthropology of religion, sociology of religion, philosophy of religion, theology, ethnography, religion and literature, material religion, critical theory, feminism, postcolonial theory, de-colonial theory, and hermeneutics. *Understanding Religion* proceeds differently by touching on a wide multitude of different disciplines. These approaches are seamlessly interwoven throughout each of the book's eighteen chapters.

Each chapter includes a reflection section and a questions that help to deepen critical thinking skills. Each also includes a further reading section that can aid those interested in certain topics to delve deeper into the best current literature on a particular topic.

Throughout the work, there are text boxes that explain important concepts and their relevance. An example is the Chinese term xiejiao, "which goes back to the Ming Dynasty to identify, 'unacceptable traditions'. The Chinese characters are xie, meaning 'false', erroneous', 'unorthodox'; and jiao meaning 'tradition/teaching'. Decisions as to what is xiejiao, that is, 'heterodoxy/heresy,' are not normally theological, and the classification has been the government's prerogative."[2] This term is currently being used to rout numerous religious group that are seen as a danger to the Community Party. Taiwan has developed especially after the end of martial law in the 1990s a freedom of religion and has a myriad of faith and belief groups that have impacted in positive ways on the culture and society of the island and have provided humanitarian assistance across south-east Asia to include efforts on mainland China. An invaluable glossary defines many key technical terms while also describing significant scholars and their areas of expertise. A number of case studies are relevant to U.S. military operations. These delve into topics such as mosques, minarets, and power or illustrates the varied approaches within Buddhism on violence. In sum, Hedges explains the importance of religion in this context, "In its varied uses, civil religion broadly refers to common aspects of national belief that provide a unifying bond and give a sacred underpinning to national life."[3] The fusion of these horizons help to develop discernment about the utility of various methods for developing religious impact assessments that military leaders will find beneficial.

Hedges highlights several constructs that are crucial within the religious advisement domain. He explains:

> If religion's place in society is changing in the modern world, secularization may be only one trend. Jayeel Serrano Cornelio speaks of four different trends [secularization, sacralization, detraditionalization, and universalization]… These are not all necessarily seen in the same place, and can be at times conflicting or overlapping trends. The rise of the so-called mega-church is indicative of aspects of these. Contemporary forms of religiosity can never simply be a "return" to the pre-modern. Tradition is rethought and re-expressed, or selectively kept. Nevertheless, in our context, some scholars suggest that whereas secular modernity gave us disenchantment, we are today witnessing a re-enchantment of the world.[4]

Military leaders need to comprehend that the sacred imbues powerful influences on numerous local populations around the world and to disregard these could jeopardize the success of any offense, defense, or stability operation.

I highly recommend this book as a resource for developing a more multifaceted and dynamic Army Chaplaincy that can provide religious support while also being able to advise military leaders in this contemporary age of mosaic warfare.[5]

Hedges has worked with and trained senior military professionals from many different nations at his current post in Singapore's military academic research center, which is comparable to the U.S. Department of Defense's National Defense University. His current work is a byproduct of these experiences that have revealed what he sees as a blind spot within these military leaders who do not understand that religion effects many regions across the world. The

effects of this influence are crucial in the creation of superior tactical and strategic religious advisement products that support military operations, command teams, and service members. This book can assist everyone in the entire Army Chaplain Corps, from the newest professionals in the Corps to the more seasoned Chaplains and Religious Affairs NCOs, in becoming better subject matter experts who can convey significant religious dynamics in a timely manner. There are many tools that we use in providing religious support and conducting internal religious advisement to Command Teams. There are few current, relevant texts that are comprehensive or affordable regarding external religious advisement despite this being a significant part of the Chaplain Corps mission. This text is a primer in this unique area of study that would benefit Army leaders in advisement. Using this resource, the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps can build the capacity to carry out this critical task in the forge of future operations.

Chaplain (Major) Andrew Shriver serves with 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. He holds a M.A. (Christian Formation and Ministry) Wheaton College Graduate School M.A. (Christian and Islamic History), Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary B.A. (History), Gordon College. He has researched Global Religious Dynamics for the past 24 years, enjoys supporting many Senior Chaplain Leaders in DoD, and looks forward to providing relevant analysis in this unique field of study in future positions.

NOTES

1 Hedges, Paul. *Understanding Religion: Theories and Methods for Studying Religiously Diverse Societies*. (Oakland: University of California Press, 2021), 8-9.

2 Hedges. *Understanding Religion*, 27.

3 Hedges, *Understanding Religion*, 431.

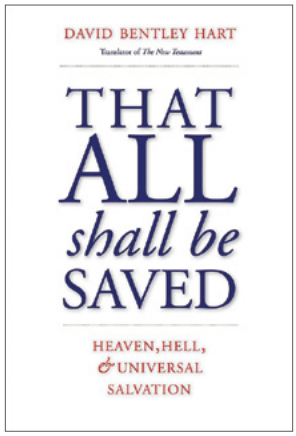
4 Hedges, *Understanding Religion*, 386.

5 The term coined by Thomas Burns, Director, Strategic Technology Office, Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA), to explain the new system of systems that incorporates both lethal and non-lethal effects (to include taking into account religious soft power elements in a given region) to achieve success in future military operations.

***That All Shall Be Saved**: Heaven, Hell, and Universal Salvation*

by David Bentley Hart

Reviewed by Chaplain (Major) Sean A. Levine



In a poignant and concise book entitled *That All Shall Be Saved: Heaven, Hell, and Universal Salvation* David Bentley Hart addresses what he considers to be one of modern Christianity's most troubling theological, philosophical, exegetical, logical, and moral problems.[1] In short, Hart finds the concept of eternal damnation to be not only theologically and philosophically incoherent but also exegetically unnecessary, logically fallacious, and morally repugnant. He takes issue with this doctrine in the eloquent and straight-forward voice that Hart's readers have come to admire.

Hart organizes his book masterfully. After the brief introduction, Part One defines and interrogates of the idea of an eternal hell. Part Two of Hart's book lays out the philosophical, theological, and exegetical rational for *apokatastasis*, and he presents this part of his argument in four meditations. Part Three, "Final Remarks," serves to bring the major lines of the book's arguments together in a brief conclusion. This book challenges widely held conceptualizations of heaven, hell, and salvation as these are conceived of in Western (and in much Eastern) Christianity, and his arguments merit reflective engagement.

According to Hart, it is not the Bible that stands in the way of our potential acceptance of his lines of reasoning (about Christ, free will, the Gospel, heaven, hell, and universal salvation) but rather our longstanding loyalty to previously, often uncritically, accepted systematic theologies. "Theologians are often the most cavalier in their treatment of the [biblical] texts, chiefly because their first loyalty is usually to the grand systems of belief they have devised or adopted; but the Bible is not a system."[2] All readers of the Bible read it within a context that conditions and determines what the Bible is allowed to mean. Hart points out, as do many hermeneutics scholars, that theological systems form the determinative lenses through which Scripture is read.

Along these lines, Hart suggests that the course of Christian thought in the West has been misguided at key points in Christian history. Examples of this include Augustine of Hippo and Anselm of Canterbury as progenitors of what Hart perceives as disastrous theological systems that have dominated Western Christianity for millennia. Hart asserts that the systems of theology developed under the influence of such missteps predispose people—theologians, clergy, and laity alike—to interpretations of Scripture that contradict good sense, compassion, and sound theological and philosophical logic. Some readers will object to the idea of holding God to the standards of human logic. Throughout this book, Hart consistently points out that retreat into a feigned, convenient mysteriousness as a cover for pervasive logical contradiction is an impoverished method of philosophical, theological, and exegetical discourse.

Hart exposes the problems inherent to widely held Christian visions of heaven, hell, and salvation. He offers an alternative Christian vision: universal salvation. Hart's treatise focuses on an explanation and defense of *apokatastasis*, or the ultimate redemption of the entire created order, including the redemption of all rational life and of all human beings. He steps beyond the popular idea of a universalism that dares to hope for universal salvation despite obvious exegetical and dogmatic odds.[3] Instead, as he explains,

> The position I want to attempt to argue, therefore, to see how well it holds together, is more extreme: to wit, that, if Christianity is in any way true, Christians dare not *doubt* the salvation of all, and that any understanding of what God accomplished in Christ that does not include the assurance of a final *apokatastasis* in which all things created are redeemed and joined to God is ultimately entirely incoherent and unworthy of rational faith.[4]

Apokatastasis includes the redemption and salvation of all rational beings—the finding of their ultimate fulfillment in the unhindered pursuit of the Good defined here as an unimpeded growth in relationship with God, the Creator.

Hart bases his argument for *apokatastasis* on ancient philosophy, Eastern patristic Christian sources, and biblical exegesis. At the core of his argument, is Hart's assertion that there is no need to postulate an everlasting hell, for there will, in the end, be no eternally unrepentant rational beings to inhabit such a horrid place. Further, he asserts that no biblical texts require belief in an everlasting hell. Hart points out the deep incoherence of the idea that an All-Loving God would set the necessary conditions for a rational being, a human person, to consign him/herself to an everlasting hell. Whether through ignorance or error in the temporally finite world, no waywardness warrants an everlasting, infinite measure of suffering and pain as punishment. In other words, is it truly reasonable to insist on an everlasting and non-contingent penalty for a temporal and contingent earthly condition and behavior?

Hart also argues that the idea that a truly free and rational human being would eternally resist the love, mercy, and acceptance of God seems preposterous. The idea of everlasting resistance to God's merciful acceptance—to the love and the very essence and source of the Good toward which the rational human being is designed to aim—violates the philosophical definitions of the terms being used. For example, in popular American thought human freedom connotes unlimited personal choice. The classical definition of human freedom, however, describes an unhindered, free pursuit of the Good—the unimpeded progress toward the final cause, the teleology, toward which a person's existence is ontologically directed. For Christianity, human freedom is the unhindered pursuit of an ever-growing and ever-deepening relationship to God. The idea that human freedom *must* contain the ability to endlessly refuse God's offer of reconciliation contradicts important and often ignored streams of historic Christian thought and belief, Hart argues. One may reasonably ask under what rationally conceived conditions might a truly free and truly rational being, created to pursue the Good, having finally found the Good in God, not freely and rationally chose relationship with God? Furthermore, what truly Good and Loving God would end the opportunity to turn toward God at the moment of death; at the *terminus* of a contingent earthly existence?

At the center of Hart's argument are two key ingredients: first, a metaphysics that allows for repentance after death and, second, a call to return to the classical vision of human freedom. In the standard Western vision of metaphysics and of human freedom, human beings misuse their freedom to willfully rebel against God and are sealed forever in that rebellion at death. In the classical Greek and in the Eastern Christian vision of human freedom, free will was compromised by the premature acceptance of the responsibility that comes with the power to deliberate. This premature acceptance of deliberative responsibility compromised, disoriented, and confused human freedom through the introduction of a foreign deliberative, or gnomic, element.[5] Wayward freedom will be overcome only by the beatific vision in death when the veil that covers the mystery of God's Being is finally lifted. In this view, the path to the Good and the Beautiful will remain ever open to the penitent no matter how long it may take for each prodigal to find his/her way home.

Hart's explication of the classical Christian concept of human freedom is worth exploring in relatively intensive detail. It is informed by his description of the free will experienced by Jesus as described by St. Maximus the Confessor. If true freedom is the capacity for a rational being to finally reject God through an exercise of the gnomic, deliberative will (as opposed to the natural will aimed toward relationship to and union with God), then Jesus Christ could not have been fully human. Instead, Jesus would only seem to be human, for Christ did not embody the gnomic, or deliberative, will that would have made Him morally deficient and rationally weak enough to turn from the will of the Father.[6] Christ, the true human being, embodied an unhindered, natural human will oriented completely toward God the

Father; his was a perfect and thus true, authentic, and complete human freedom uncorrupted by sin. The tragic turning away from God that has characterized humanity since the disobedience of our primordial first parents does not result from a natural human capacity but from the corruption of the human will through sin. This is a sickness, a character flaw that Christ did not embody.

Hart's arguments open many opportunities for objection from those who disagree with him. Yet, the imperative to read and think through the arguments in this text, its premises and conclusions, comes not from Hart's historical, theological, exegetical, and philosophical acumen but from his moral sensibility; the moral objection in particular impels pastoral attention.

Hart's views have many disapprovers and opponents. However, I encourage thoughtful readers to engage this text. If you are a Christian pastor, or a non-Christian cleric interested in Christian theology, reading and considering Hart's arguments, whatever your visceral and/or intellectual response might be in the end, will be of great benefit to your pastoral approach and practice.

Chaplain (Major) Sean A. 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 David Bentley Hart, T*hat All Shall Be Saved: Heaven, Hell & Universal Salvation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).

2 Hart, *Saved*, 161.

3 The German theologian Jürgen Moltmann emphasized universal salvation as a "certain hope" and there are many other brands of merely "hopeful universalism" that are denied any dogmatic status, as if to suggest that we have no idea what it is that God intends, but we can "hope for the best." https://www.sdmorrison.org/universalism-certain-hope-jurgen-moltmann/

4 Hart, *Saved*, 66.

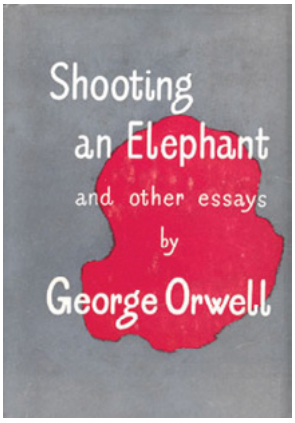
5 Hart, *Saved*, 36. Here, Hart relies on the looming patristic figure of St. Maximus the Confessor (c. 580-662), arguably one of the most brilliant post-Nicene Church Fathers.

6 Hart, *Saved*, 189.

Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays

by George Orwell

Review by Chaplain (Captain) Caleb Miller



There are three reasons the *U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Journal* benefits from a review of classic essays from the author George Orwell. First, there is considerable overlap between the theme and focus of each of Orwell's essays and the subjects chaplains would do well to study in-depth anyway. Second, because of the time-tested quality of his work, his insights have an even sharper edge when they cut into the biases of our own time, or they may strike us with their applicability to current events. Third, his works have gone the way of classics that are often referenced but seldom read or engaged at a deep level—and his non-fiction, rather than his more popular fiction, provides a helpful corrective.

Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays is a collection of writings published between 1931 and 1949 by the essayist/novelist Eric Blair, better known today by his pen name George Orwell. The essays appeared in magazines of literature, politics, and culture. Orwell deals with a wide range of topics in these essays—from memoirs of life as part of an imperial peacekeeping force in Burma in "Shooting an Elephant" and "A Hanging," to musings about the love of nature in "Thoughts on the Common Toad," to a reflection on the mundane realities of life as a time-crunched book reviewer in "Confessions of a Book Reviewer." In each work Orwell blends memoir with the sort of commentary typical of an explanatory or academic essay.

As mentioned above, the essays are chock full of the kind of content chaplains already demonstrate interest in by drafting books, articles and curriculum year after year to address: themes like trauma and moral injury, the corrosive effects of vague or illogical writing, a simple love of nature and the encroachment of technology on what makes life worth living ("if we kill all pleasure in the actual process of life, what sort of future are we preparing for ourselves?"[1]), and the dynamic relationship between a competitive nature, nationalism, and violence. There are crisp quotes on nearly every page that could easily be integrated into presentations and studies.

The three opening memoirs justify exploring the book: a description of policing with running commentary on colonialism ("Shooting an Elephant"), accounts of an execution ("A Hanging"), or suffering in an unsanitary and unsafe hospital ("How the Poor Die"). Orwell explains in a visceral way his emotional and intellectual struggle between the wracking guilt of acting for despotic and cruel British imperial foreign policy in the East and the hatred and resentment he felt for the Burmese people. This visceral quality remains throughout the events leading him to stalk an elephant out of a sense of personal embarrassment and wanting to save face with the locals.

Orwell wrote before the terms "PTSD" or "moral injury" were coined, but provides these concepts with more lived-body detail than any clinical rehearsal of symptoms or behaviors can. In one well-known account of an execution, he writes:

> "When I saw the prisoner step aside to avoid the puddle I saw the mystery, the unspeakable wrongness, of cutting a life short when it is in full tide. […] His eyes saw the yellow gravel and grey walls, and his brain still remembered, foresaw, reasoned—reasoned even about puddles. He and we were a party of men walking together, seeing, hearing, feeling, understanding the same world; and in two minutes, with a sudden snap, one of us would be gone- one mind less, one world less."[2]

Orwell was by all accounts an atheistic humanist and socialist. He was critical of capitalism and organized religion. Even so, he offers us (as chaplains from a variety of faith traditions who have our own convictions on such matters) concrete examples of what it looks like to face one's past or provide live-giving hope, encouragement, and a chance to reflect to others when the world is frightening and confusing. We seek to offer similar reassurances to a demographic of Soldiers that may be closer to Orwell's way of thinking than our own. Consider how remarkably applicable these lines about the beauty of nature remain even in the political discourse of today, with COVID-19 continuing to spread at alarming rates, civil unrest evident in conspiratorial accusations, and the tensions in eastern Europe exposing the reality of an ongoing Cold War:

So long as you are not actually ill, hungry, frightened or immured in a prison or holiday camp, spring is still spring. The atom bombs are piling up in the factories, the police are prowling through the cities, the lies are streaming from the loudspeakers, but the earth is still going round the sun, and neither the dictators nor the bureaucrats, deeply as they disapprove of the process, are able to prevent it.[3]

A second reason to read or revisit Orwell has to do with what it means to be well-read—that is, what it means to regularly digest new books while simultaneously serving as staff officers and religious leaders. GEN (R) Stanley McChrystal has recently challenged military leaders to read "eclectically,"[4] that is, outside of their profession to break out of old patterns and search for new concepts. In a similar vein C.S. Lewis famously recommended to readers that they never allow themselves a new book till they first read an old one—a necessary practice because readers "need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our own period."[5] Orwell is an example of being "eclectic" in both senses. Though not "old" by Lewis' standards (Orwell and Lewis were contemporaries), and not too far outside the realm of what chaplains and other leaders are discussing today, Orwell's various essays are aging. In nine years the oldest of the collection turns one hundred years old. Their quality and popularity make them ageless.

Orwell's work is old enough to highlight some "mistakes" in our period in history yet not so old as to make for arduous reading. An example of a challenge to our way of thinking comes in a warning that competitive international sports promote a type of dangerous regionalism or nationalism—"sport is frankly mimic warfare"[6]—a sentiment that clashes with uncritical acceptance of the normalcy of the Super Bowl, World Cup, or Olympic Games, yet might help explain why modern athletes (and many hapless referees) regularly receive death threats. On the other hand, Orwell offers commentary on cultural attitudes towards violence that are remarkably similar to the sort of fixation encountered on 24-hour cable news or live and graphic Twitter updates. He notes the media coverage of nine recent murders in England: "the amount of literature surrounding them, in the form of newspaper write-ups, criminological treaties and reminiscences by lawyers and police officers, would make a considerable library."[7]

A final reason to read Orwell goes beyond practical considerations and into deeper engagement with Orwell as an author as an exercise in empathy and careful analysis, and discover things that literary critics have long known. His works have gone the way of so many "classics," often referenced but less often read and seldom engaged at a deep level. In terms of literary accomplishment, Orwell is a towering figure synonymous with descriptive analysis and an economy of words. In terms of political commentary in pop culture, Orwell's name has become synonymous with vague and ominous complaints about tyranny. There is nothing inherently wrong with the popularity of *Animal Farm* and *1984,* but to stop there is to miss out on Orwell's original and greatest capacity for insight. When his mind was not preoccupied with fictional world-building it was freer to find an object of interest, and then ruthlessly direct all its creative powers on that point.

Take away Orwell's fiction and he may not have become the household name he is today, but there would be other dystopias or subversions of communism to read—Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Ayn Rand, and Aldous Huxley come to mind, though their ideological relationship to Orwell is more contrastive than complementary. Take away his style of essay, however, and a whole genre suffers—the Neil Postmans, Joan

Didions, Malcolm Gladwells of recent decades may still have emerged, but they would lack quite a bit of source material, and a key role model.

The essays reveal some of how Eric Blair has been lost behind the façade of Orwell. In the novels we encounter Orwell the prophet, but in the essays we get glimpses of the man behind the pen name—former Imperial police officer fluent in Burmese, dish washer, professional book reviewer, aspiring poet, school teacher, voracious reader, homeless journalist, war correspondent, broadcaster, and literary editor. In "Politics and English Language," Orwell complained that modern political writing "consists in gumming together long strips of words which have already been set in order by someone else,"[8] and his own vocabulary has been co-opted for that purpose in a way that, if he were living today, would probably horrify him.[9]

Those who have read more extensively on Orwell know this is only the tip of the proverbial iceberg.[10] Unit ministry teams and leaders from across the Corps, and officers across the force, may make many more connections than can be listed in a brief review here.

Chaplain (Captain) Caleb Miller is currently a student at the Chaplain Captains Career Course (C4) at Fort Jackson, SC, transitioning to serve as the battalion chaplain for 11th Transportation Battalion at Fort Story, VA. He holds an M.Div. from Covenant Theological Seminary and is endorsed by the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel. He has articles forthcoming in *Themelios* and *Modern Reformation*, and he and his wife Renee have three children: Otto, Mae, and Bruce.

NOTES

1 Orwell, Thoughts on the Common Toad, *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays*, 165.

2 Orwell, "A Hanging," *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays*, 15-16.

3 Orwell, "Thoughts on the Common Toad" in *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays*, 165.

4 Included on GEN McChrystal's suggested reading list is Alexander de Toqueville's *Democracy in America*, written by a cultural outsider in the 1830's. "Read Eclectically: Stanley McChrystal's Book Recommendations." *From the Green Notebook*, 02/21/2021 https://fromthegreennotebook.com/2021/02/21/read-eclectically-stan-mcchrystals-book-recommendations/

5 C.S Lewis, Introduction, *St Athanasius' On the Incarnation* (London, 1944), v.

6 Orwell, "The Sporting Spirit" in *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays*, 152.

7 Orwell, "Decline of the English Murder" in *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays*, 157.

8 George Orwell, "Politics and English Language," *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays* (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1950), 85.

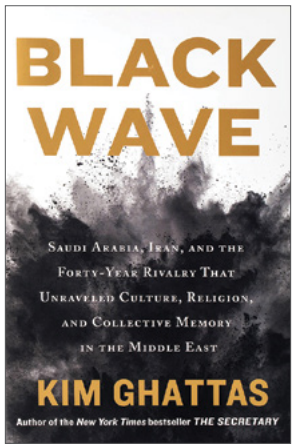
9 1984 is a work of its time, yet also relevant for the political and cultural realities of today's globally networked online world. References to "thought crime," "thought police," and "Big Brother" from the novel multiply online on a daily basis, often by people diametrically opposed to one another politically but convinced the other side constitutes totalitarianism. As one among a host of recent reviewers of 1984 has noted, "it's almost impossible to talk about propaganda, surveillance, authoritarian politics, or perversions of truth without dropping a reference to 1984." "Doublethink Is Stronger Than Orwell Imagined: What 1984 Means Today" *The Atlantic*, July 2019, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/07/1984-george-orwell/590638/

10 For other nonfiction by Orwell, see Homage to Catalonia (New York: Harcourt, 1952) and *The Road to Wigan Pier* (New York: Harcourt, 1958). One recent biography is D. L. Taylor, *Orwell: the Life* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2003).

***Black Wave**: Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the Forty-Year Rivalry that Unraveled Culture, Religion, and Collective Memory in the Middle East*

by Kim Ghattas

Reviewed by Sergeant Major Daniel Roberts



Black Wave is a highly detailed and compelling book by Kim Ghattas, an Emmy Award-winning author from Lebanon. The book begins in 1977 with the lead up to Ayatollah Khomeini's triumphant return to Iran and carries readers through the 2018 murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, an event that sparked an outcry around the world. Ghattas takes readers on a 40-year journey through the Middle East that includes violence, political intrigue, religious zealotry, and patriotic activism. Ghattas layers a depth of biographical details of the key players who shaped narratives and activated pivotal events that define the current state of the Middle East. I provide here a short treatment of the main themes of the book as well as practical ideas for religious professionals who work in the context of national defense.

Ghattas spends little time in describing the United States' involvement in the Middle East during this period. Instead, she zeroes in on the region's internal actors and the efforts they made to destroy the hopes of people who did not want to see the area become a bastion of bigotry and oppression: "Nothing has changed the Arab and Muslim world as deeply and fundamentally as the events of 1979...The radical legacy of 1979...began a process that transformed societies and altered cultural and religious preferences."[1]

Chief among the bad actors in *Black Wave* are Ayatollah Khomeini and the Saudi royal family. Khomeini was a Shia Muslim. There are many Shias who hold moderate views, but Khomeini's version was ultra-conservative in its interpretation of religious law. Saudi Arabia promoted a strictly orthodox form of Islam called Wahhabism. In truth, Khomeini and the Saudi royal family used religious conflicts between Wahhabi and Shias to further their own political pursuits. Both Iran and Saudi Arabia, in Ghattas's view, supported radical Islamists and waged proxy battles against each other. "The Saudi-Iran rivalry went beyond geopolitics, descending into an ever-greater competition for Islamic legitimacy through religious and cultural domination, changing societies from within-not only in Saudi Arabia and Iran, but throughout the region."[2] The Saudis gave billions of dollars in loans to Saddam Hussein's Iraq to prolong the Iran-Iraq war. Meanwhile, Iran infiltrated pilgrimages to Mecca with Iranians and Libyans carrying everything from political pamphlets to explosives. Khomeini was not satisfied with the House of Saud "as the guardian of the two holy sites" (Mecca and Medina). To further cement his kingdom's importance in the region, King Fahd changed his title from His Majesty the King to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. These two nations opposed each other throughout the decades covered in *Black Wave*.

Political leaders of other nations in the region contributed to the morass of violence and despotism. Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Hafez al-Assad, president of Syria who was later followed by his son, Bashar al-Assad; and Muammar al-Gaddafi, ruler of Libya, lavished wealth on their favorite clerics and militant groups while suppressing the rights of their other citizens. Ghattas describes Saddam's despotic activities that seemed to be repeated in other countries:

> Saddam became the fifth president of Iraq. He went on to crush anyone who represented an alternative. He squeezed the Shias tighter, expelling hundreds to Iran, putting clerics under house arrest. They had no recourse anymore against the brutality of the Baath regime. They were now stuck between two crazy men: Saddam and Khomeini. The Iraqi president also dismantled the backbone of progressive Iraq society, the left, by harassing and jailing people in droves: intellectuals, professors, journalists, artists, women activists—all went into exile.[3]

For religious professionals, several important ideas emerged in *Black Wave*. While religion can offer truth perspectives, elevate the soul, revitalize a community, and heal relationships, it can also be used for dark purposes. The term, "black wave" in the book's title refers to the takeover of much of Middle Eastern culture and religion by fundamentalists who waved black flags, diminished the opportunities of women, enforced strict dress codes, eliminated entertainment of all kinds, enacted the most stringent interpretations of Islamic law, and handed out corporal punishment. These groups were led, coached, and supported by religious leaders who disregarded previously-established theologies to issue new fatwas that justified and promoted violence and tyranny. The value of the lesson offered here should not be missed: the force of religion in the hands of highly revered religious leaders who cannot be questioned may be used as a cudgel to bludgeon the innocent and incite evil.

Ghattas elucidates the rivalry between two coalitions of forces that is at the heart of relations in the Middle East. On one hand are the academics, entertainers, and journalists who see the Middle East as a region rich in history, art, and scholarship, but also as lacking freedom for all. In a sorrowful summary, Ghattas describes these individuals as:

> Intellectuals, poets, lawyers, television anchors, young clerics, novelists; men and women; Arab, Iranian, and Pakistani; Sunni and Shia; devout, some secular, but all progressive thinkers who represent the vibrant, pluralistic world that persists beneath the black wave. They are the silenced majority, who have suffered immensely at the hands of those who are relentlessly intolerant of others, whether wielding political power or a gun.[4]

These groups are pitted against the coalition of militant groups, religious zealots, and dictators who are willing to resort to violence, religious dicta, and fiscal corruption to transform the region through their own lust for power and control. Ghattas illustrates these complicated dynamic in part through her discussion of The Liberation Movement of Iran (LMI), a somewhat moderate revolutionary group that was eager to guide Khomeini's government into an orthodox theocracy but found itself on the sidelines. Seeing the writing on the wall, that Khomeini was far more interested in supporting militant activities in an effort to take over the entire Middle East with his version of Islam, some LMI members, such as its founder Mehdi Bazergan, moved into his camp. The factions seeking to impose a puritanical version of Islam were well funded by the governments of Iran and Saudi Arabia through a variety of secret funds and investments in media outlets and religious schools. The professors, Imams, journalists, businessmen, and activists who benefited from truckloads of cash flowing into the region were expected to promote ultra-conservative Islamic views. Ghattas chronicles the fates of those who did not meet this expectation; those who refused were censured, fired, jailed, tortured, or assassinated.

This struggle between the coalitions played out through international warfare, murder, and national rivalry across the Middle East. The war for the hearts, minds, resources, and political systems of people in the Middle East pulled in Iraq, Pakistan, and Syria and others throughout the region. No one seemed to remain untouched from the impact of exploding bombs, religious intolerance, and political savagery. The conflict precipitated the loss of free thinking, the destruction of promising careers, the stifling of liberal arts, and the death of innocent bystanders. To tell part of this story, Ghattas focuses on Farag Foda, a secular intellectual and "thorn in the side of Islamists...was working to build a secular party, Al-Mustaqbal, the Future, bringing together Muslims and Christians."[5] Foda's day of reckoning came in 1992:

> They couldn't even face him when they killed him...He was coming out of his office with his son and a friend, in a residential suburb of Cairo. Two illiterate men who had never spoken to him or read his work sped by on a motorcycle and fired seven bullets

> into his back. They shot and injured his fifteen-year-old son, too. They were simply following orders. Safwat Abdel Ghani, detained but never charged in the plot to kill Sadat, had passed on a message through his lawyers to recruit the killers.[6]

Of particular interest for religious professionals is Ghattas's deep engagement with the variety that exists within a single religion. By diving deeply into political and religious fractures in the Middle East over the past 40 years, Ghattas illustrates some ways that divisions within a religion can be just as keenly, even violently, felt as the gulfs between different religions. Ghattas writes about the many variations and interpretations of Islamic doctrine to situate her discussion. Her attention to the sheer variety of ways of constructing and practicing Islam is crucial. A large number of people in the West have not bothered to learn about Muslim beliefs; for them, there is only one version of Islam—the violent kind that is often highlighted by the media and Western politicians. Many of the book's figures who stood on the side of freedom, academia, entertainment, and journalism are dedicated Muslims. They maintain some version of religious dress codes, offer daily prayers, maintain families and lifestyles in accordance with Islamic principles, and love Allah. These adherents do not believe that being a Muslim means choosing between the beauty of the world and religious commitment. My experience of reading the book underscores for me that in the interest of humanity, community, and pluralism, all people should remember that Muslims should not be painted with a broad prejudicial brush, there are a variety of sects in any given religion.

Finally, *Black Wave* illustrates that corruption and greed are not merely problems in politics or business. The book demonstrates the possibility that when religion is entrusted to the hands of fallible people, it can be appropriated for evil ends. The experience of reading the book leads me to note that religion is an important part of the human experience and should not be discarded because some use it to harm others. Neither should a small number of religious leaders be given carte blanche authority to dictate every aspect of human life. Religious authority is at its best when it is invested in a community of diverse leaders who speak both for themselves and the faithful at large.

Sergeant Major Daniel Roberts currently serves as the Chief Religious Affairs NCO in the U.S. Army Reserve Command Chaplain Directorate. SGM Roberts earned his doctorate in Management in Organizational Leadership with a specialization in Information Systems Technology from the University of Phoenix and holds an M.S. in Information Systems, as well as a B.A. in Management and Ethics. His published works include "Male Chaplains and Female Soldiers: Are There Gender and Denominational Differences in Military Pastoral Care" (2020; Roberts & Kovacich; Journal of *Pastoral Care and Counseling*) and "The Comprehensive Female Soldier Support Model" (2017; Roberts, Kovacich, and Rivers; Journal of *Health Care Chaplaincy*).

NOTES

1 Ghattas, *Black Wave*, 2.

2 Ghattas, *Black Wave*, 2.

3 Ghattas, *Black Wave*, 86-7.

4 Kim Ghattas, *Black Wave*: Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the Forty-Year Rivalry That Unraveled Culture, Religion, and Collective Memory in the Middle East (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2020), 3.

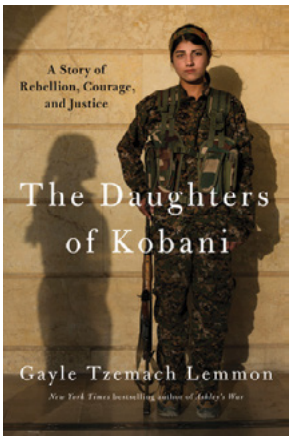
5 Ghattas, *Black Wave*, 189.

6 Ghattas, *Black Wave*, 190.

***The Daughters of Kobani**: A Story of Rebellion, Courage, and Justice*

by Gayle Tzemach Lemmon

Reviewed by Major Jessica Dawson



Writing about war has largely been consigned to men. So too, writing about women and war has also been the realm of men. The male experience has defined war. When women enter this domain, it is as an interloper, an outsider—someone who does not belong. And yet, some of the most important books about the over 20 years of conflict in Iraq, Afghanistan, and now Syria, are by women. Gayle Tzemach Lemmon's *The Daughter of Kobani* is a critical new addition to the growing body of work about war written by women, and, in this important case, about women.

The Daughters of Kobani tells the story of several women—commanders and soldiers—on the front lines of the fight against the brutally violent Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS). The books foregrounds the women's experiences and biographies; these critically important stories are about what led them to enter the fight against ISIS and their struggles during that fight. The book focuses on several commanders: Nowruz, a commander of a Women's Protection unit, Rojda, a subordinate commander in a Women's Protection Unit, Rojda's childhood friend, Azeema, who ISIS attempted to kill multiple times due to her skill with a sniper rifle, and Znarin, a soldier on the front lines. These women chose to engage on the battlefield because of something that many middle class women in America never directly experience: the need to use violence to defend themselves and their loved ones against brutal enslavement if they fail.

Lemmon makes clear that the Women's Protection Units do not seek to turn the women into men—instead the units focus on making them skilled fighters in their own rights. How women engage in war in ways that are both similar to and different from their male counterparts goes unspoken in this book. Azeema is a thorn in ISIS's side—they continually try to kill her because she represents feminine lethality. Azeema's skill with a sniper rifle is key to keeping ISIS fighters from the surety they need to support their ideology: if, as ISIS claims, women are so inferior, how does this one keep picking them off one after another? Her success on the battlefield also singles her out as an important symbolic target. ISIS nearly succeeds in killing her twice. Her dedication to leading her team, however, is something that any soldier can understand. The men she serves with also taunt ISIS, at one point they dare ISIS to come for her. The men she serves with are loyal both to her and to the ideas for which they fight: freedom not just for themselves, but also for the women fighting alongside them.

Intertwined with facts about the war, the terrain, and ISIS brutality are the stories of women who balance family and war. Rojda's mother calls her every day to make sure she is still alive. While her mother does not approve of her presence in the war, she does not cut her daughter out of her life. In one potent moment, Lemmon describes Rojda answering the phone so her mother can hear

the sound of gunfire to let her know she cannot talk. But Lemmon conveys the sense that Rojda's roles as a soldier and daughter are deeply intertwined: she inhabits both identities at once. Even in the middle of a firefight, she responds to her mother's need to know that her daughter is still alive by answering her phone.

Znarin's story began with heartbreak—prevented from finishing her education and denied the freedom to marry a man she loved, she fights for the very nation that kept her from both things. By "nation," I mean a people with a shared sense of self and stories, not a nation state—the Kurds still struggle to gain that marker of international legitimacy. And yet, they are a nation that is split across borders. These two heartbreaks lay the seeds of Znarin's awakening. She begins accompanying other women to meetings of the Congress Star, learning about women's rights, and engaging with the work of Abdullah Ocalan, a man declared a terrorist by Turkey but who is a hero to many of the Kurds fighting for their right to self-governance.

Facing the threat of enslavement and worse by ISIS, the Women's Protections Units were both a radical political experiment and an on the ground necessity. The women, arguably, had much more to lose should ISIS win—they wanted to be at the forefront of the fight against ISIS so that when they won, they could fight for their own liberation inside the nation they fought to build. The ideology advocated by Ocalan served as their watchword: he argued that civilization had been built on the enslavement of women and society must treat women equally if it is to be just. These women embody the powerful feminist idea that the personal is political but they also coopt more traditionally masculine ideals of citizen soldiers: by shedding blood in the fight against ISIS, they lay claim to their equal role in the nation that comes after.

Juxtaposed to Lemmon's detailed descriptions of these women are the faceless ISIS fighters, men made banal by their brutality and their smallness. These men joined a movement that was centered on violence, cruelty, and torture. They cannot fathom a world where a woman gives orders or is in command of her own life. Central to their ideology is the brutal enslavement, not only of women, but of anyone who they deem inferior and unworthy. This is the ideology of weak men who are afraid to live in a world that they are required to share with others. The Kurds, as Lemmon describes these women, have demonstrated is the strength of their position—their values are based on shared sacrifice, courage, and equality. That strength is also demonstrated in their willingness to die for others, not in a willingness to inflict hurt, pain, and suffering on others. In that difference lies the starkest distinction between the small, weak men of ISIS and the nation that rises from fighting it: one uses violence to dominate, the other uses it to protect.

To illustrate this: *The Daughters of Kobani* spends a large portion of the book laying out the geopolitical complexities of the Syrian Civil War that gave rise to ISIS as well as the realities of terrain, logistics, and other aspects of fighting a war against a larger, more well-equipped force. It moves seamlessly between the high-level geopolitical discussions to the more local concerns about terrain and tactics. While the political context is critical to understanding the local significance of each city and town, I wish the author spent more time with the women and how they interacted with their peers, particularly their male counterparts. There certainly are glimmers of this dynamic throughout the book, but it does not feel like the central focus. Perhaps that is the book's greatest strength: it does not spend time on proving that women belong or unpacking how men feel about it. It simply operates from the position of reality: these women are frontline fighters in a brutal urban conflict. They are soldiers, who are driven to fight by factors that are tried to their status as women. Their competence, courage and commitment speak to their fit on the battlefield.

The most powerful moments in the book are the quietest. When the women liberate towns and meet some of the women who had been brutalized by their captors, what the significance of their role as women soldiers becomes achingly clear to them. Though they are hardened by war, theirs is a war that comes with clarity of purpose and comradery that many American veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan hunger for long after they return home. American Iraq and Afghanistan vets was sometimes acutely felt a lack of purpose when they came home to a nation that barely realized we were still at war. For the daughters of Kobani, their purpose links the battlefield to the political sphere in especially meaningful and clear ways. They know what their sacrifice has provided—they have shed their blood for a new constitution, one that enshrines their status as equals before the law.

The fight against ISIS may be in its waning days, but the ideology that ISIS represents is still very much present around the world in a variety of incarnations. The idea that men's rightful place is to dominate women is a powerful drug, one being seeded into boys and men through memes and toxic online forums that tells them that women and

feminism are the reason they are not getting what they deserve. It is present in the military formations in which we serve—that women in combat make the team weaker and more vulnerable. The violent misogyny that fueled ISIS is the source of the motivation for these daughters of Kobani and that is the real power in Lemmon's book: she shows the real threat of these ideologies and the lengths to which these women have gone to prevent it from claiming more victims.

This book should be required reading in Professional Military Education and for civilians interested in strategy and the complexities of geopolitical situations like Syria. Decisions made in Washington, D.C. had personal and dramatic consequences on the ground and these women help illuminate what is at stake when far off decision-makers squabble about things that can be the difference between life and death. This book should be introduced into commissioning sources as well—especially because it treats the presence of women soldiers on the battlefield as normal rather than as a political football to be bandied about on the evening talk shows. Furthermore, this book should be included in curriculum that focus on women's studies. The fight in Kobani and the broader fight against ISIS demonstrates what women have to lose if they are not willing to sacrifice everything for the freedom that so many in the West take for granted. In this, the book offers a complex view of female liberation: one that is both at odds with and aligned with aspects of modern American feminism. *The Daughters of Kobani* demonstrates that when the political process fails, violence may often be the only solution left to secure rights. Rights not defended become mere words unless backed up with the guarantee of the state. These women have demonstrated their willingness to defend their rights, using violence because it was necessary and thus have earned their seat at the table designing their new nation. They are the epitome of citizen soldiers and embody a powerful lesson for all military leaders.

Major Jessica Dawson is the Information Warfare Research Team division chief at the Army Cyber Institute and holds a PhD in sociology from Duke University. Her research is focused on the digital disruption of social processes, narratives and privacy.

The following entries provide excerpts of and links to recently published articles that are relevant to how members of the Chaplain Corps can serve in an evolving operational environment.

The Evolving Operational Environment

1. Countering Aggression in the Gray Zone

by Elisabeth Braw

"In recent years, much has been written and said about conflict in the so-called "gray zone," often described as conflict below the threshold of combat. Gray zone aggression is an attractive option for Western rivals because it exploits the openness of Western societies. The fact that Western countries are characterized by small governments with limited powers to dictate the activities of their populations and businesses makes these countries even more attractive targets for nonkinetic aggression, ranging from hostile business activities, to cyber attacks, to kidnappings, assassinations, and even occupation by unofficial militias aligned with foreign powers. Resourceful adversaries use such actions to force wedges into the fault lines of open societies. With innovative thinking, however, liberal democracies can develop effective gray zone deterrence while staying within the norms of behavior they have set for themselves."

https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/2846403/countering-aggression-in-the-gray-zone/

2. Military Power Reimagined: The Rise and Future of Shaping

by Kyle J. Wolfley

"The belief that the U.S. military finds itself in a "complex environment"—one in which conventional war is rare, but Great Power competition has returned, coupled with the persistent threat of violent nonstate actors—is so commonplace that it can now be considered a truism.1 The United States, China, and Russia are engaged in a security competition below the threshold of open violence, yet scholars and practitioners struggle to articulate how these states' militaries attempt to achieve their goals through ways other than warfighting or coercion. This article better conceptualizes a type of military operation that is often misunderstood and understudied and that has the potential to become one of the most frequent tools of interstate competition in the coming decades. This military power logic, known as shaping, is a category of activity that entered the U.S. military lexicon in the mid-2000s amid a growing realization that nontraditional uses of force were necessary to manage new challenges. I define shaping as the use of military organizations to construct a more favorable environment through changing military relationships, the characteristics of partners, or the behavior of allies. There are four primary shaping logics: attraction to change international alignment; socialization to transform a partner's roles and practices; delegation to pass the burden of security; and assurance to reduce an ally's insecurity and manage its behavior."

https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/2679810/military-power-reimagined-the-rise-and-future-of-shaping/

3. Analyzing the Potential Disruptive Effects of Hypersonic Missiles on Strategy and Joint Warfighting

by Bruce M. Sugden

"Will the potential widespread deployment and employment of hypersonic missiles be a disruptive development for strategy

and military operations? That is, will a competitor's use of hypersonic missiles undermine assumptions underlying the Department of Defense's emerging global and regional concepts for joint warfighting, as well as undermine widely held beliefs about strategic stability and how to deter threats to America's most vital interests? Will U.S. hypersonic missiles undermine the assumptions behind Russia's and China's warfighting concepts and beliefs about deterrence, possibly allowing U.S. forces to enhance extant, or obtain new, warfighting advantages? There are conflicting assertions about the implications of the United States, Russia, and China developing and deploying high-speed maneuvering weapons delivery systems—more commonly referred to as hypersonic missiles (for the remainder of this article, hypersonic missiles will be used as a generic term) to conduct warfare. The often hyped and much-anticipated technical promise of hypersonic missiles raises questions that go to the heart of long-held U.S. operational and strategic assumptions. Issues about deterrence, offense-defense balance, basing and posture, and command and control are not likely to be found or analyzed in a program office or laboratory or on a test range. To better understand military operations featuring hypersonic missiles, and well before the executive and legislative branches debate the affordability of procuring such missiles, DOD should initiate a campaign of experimentation, 'a process of discovery about new military operational concepts and capabilities.'"

https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/2884204/analyzing-the-potential-disruptive-effects-of-hypersonic-missiles-on-strategy-a/

4. After 9/11, The United States Didn't Fight a Twenty-year War, but Twenty One-year Wars. But What Does That Mean?

by John Amble

"It's 5:31 pm on November 27, 2003. A US plane touches down at Baghdad International Airport—hardly a unique occurrence at the time. The two US Air Force pilots slow the aircraft and eventually bring it to a halt. This one, though, doesn't sport the same dull gray paint job as the seemingly endless numbers of cargo aircraft ferrying supplies to the tens of thousands of US and coalition troops in the country and the materiel to fuel the war effort. This aircraft bears the distinctive, blue and white livery of Air Force One. President George W. Bush is onboard. He's visiting US servicemembers for Thanksgiving. Few observers at the time knew what a precedent Bush was setting. He would visit troops in both Iraq and Afghanistan several more times before leaving office. His successors, Barack Obama and Donald Trump, would, as well. Nobody on the plane that day likely expected that US servicemembers would be deployed to America's post-9/11 wars for another seventeen Thanksgivings. Why does this matter? As an observation, it's hardly remarkable. It's just another way of saying what many have already said: that the United States didn't fight a twenty-year war in Afghanistan, but rather twenty one-year wars."

https://mwi.usma.edu/after-9-11-the-united-states-didnt-fight-a-twenty-year-war-but-twenty-one-year-wars-but-what-does-that-actually-mean/

5. The Limits of Logic: Why Narrative Thinking is Better Suited to the Demands of Modern Combat

by Major Angus Fletcher and Dr. Thomas Gaines

"It's an easy morning outside Washington, DC. But we're making things hard on an Army student. 'Good plan,' we say. 'Now give us another.' The student's brow furrows. What he's wondering is: Why would I come up with another plan when my first plan is good? But he's a dutiful soldier, so he tries to comply. And it's there that he hits his real mental block: How do I come up with another plan when my first plan is good? After all, if nothing is wrong with my first plan, then what could be productively changed? That the student would think this way is pure logic. Logic's core teaching is that there's one optimal decision, one error-free plan. If that plan has been identified already, it's thus not only pointless but impossible to come up with a smart alternative. Yet is logic right about this? Is there always one ideal course of action?"

https://mwi.usma.edu/the-limits-of-logic-why-narrative-thinking-is-better-suited-to-the-demands-of-modern-combat/

6. The First (and Only) Law of Robotic Warfare

by Sorin Matei

"Robotic weapons that can autonomously identify the enemy, place firepower in position, and assist in targeting are almost a reality. War waged by intelligent machines conducted by humans ensconced in bunkers or roaming from

stand-off command centers at sea or in air can alter the face of the battlefield. Such wars can change the very definition of conflict. Change will start with the possibility that vulnerabilities in enemy configuration may be better and faster diagnosed with machine learning algorithms, which can also more accurately decide if the enemy is where we expect it to be and in what strength. Open flanks and weak points can be dynamically discovered using models that predict movement in time and space. Finally, optimal moments of attack or withdrawal can be determined using machine learning, a method that based on past experience can identify what to do next. This second revolution in military affairs will not stop here, though. There is the clear possibility that the collection of data analytic tools will make the next and necessary step: full autonomy."

https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2021/11/17/the-first-and-only-law-of-robotic-warfare

7. On Space War

by Craig Boucher

"Over the past few years, there has been a huge uptick in public discourse about the 'militarization of space'—a phrase that may sound concerning, but it is also nothing new. Much of this discussion has been driven by the founding of the United States Space Force and reestablishment of the United States Space Command. Regardless of how these moves may look to some, as someone who was a party to the discussions surrounding these decisions, I can confidently say that they were not taken lightly, nor were they aimed at establishing the United States as the aggressor in the space domain. The United States did recently formally recognize space as a new warfighting domain, but in order to understand why this happened it is necessary to examine the history of warfare and human activity in the space domain."

https://mwi.usma.edu/succeeding-on-shifting-strategic-ice-lessons-for-the-us-military-from-a-century-old-story-of-leadership-and-survival/

8. Arctic Competition, Climate Migration, and Rare Earths: Strategic Implications for the United States Amidst Climate Change

by Michael Brodka

"Climate change is a crisis multiplier that will likely accelerate in magnitude over the next three decades, with far-reaching implications for the geostrategic environment that will intensify conflict drivers and threaten stability in fragile regions. Environmental changes such as water scarcity, extreme weather patterns, and shrinking Arctic ice caps pose significant security challenges for the United States. These consequences of climate change will likely exacerbate instability by causing shifts in economic bases, resource competition, and food insecurity. The U.S. cannot afford strategic indifference amidst these conditions. It must regenerate from its strategic atrophy to prepare for climate-induced variables lest it quickly becomes outpaced by its rivals. Therefore, U.S. strategy must focus on three specific areas: competing in the Arctic to protect the U.S. homeland and economic resources, mitigating destabilizing effects of climate migration in regions of interest, and diversifying rare earth supply chains to secure sustainment of green energy and defense technology. Russia and China are positioning themselves advantageously in the Arctic to control thawing sea lanes and strengthen military positions within the U.S. homeland's proximity. At the same time, Violent Extremist Organizations are weaponizing water, causing instability and forced migrations in regions containing U.S. interests. Moreover, as nations commit to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, as outlined in the Paris Climate Agreement, the demand for rare earth elements will intensify, leading to resource competition and economic coercion by China, which controls the global market. The United States must invest in a strategy that addresses both the direct effects of the changing geographic landscape and the devastating indirect effects its rivals can harness."

https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2021/9/1/arctic-competition-climate-migration-and-rare-earths-strategic-implications-for-the-united-states-amidst-climate-change

9. Tactics in an Era of Great Power Competition

by CPT Paul Erickson

"Today the Army is spending great time and energy to adapt and innovate in the context of great power competition. A significant portion of that emphasis is occurring at the upper tactical and operational levels of warfare. A survey of the current operating environment, as well as our peer and near-peer threats, suggests that much of those reforms are occurring precisely at the echelon that will be specifically disrupted during

a crisis or conflict. As such, the US Army's maneuver brigades too must adapt. Change at this echelon will be just as vital for ensuring success in future conflict. At the same time, there are also important lessons to remember from the last two decades of low-intensity conflict and counterinsurgency. The return of great power competition does not necessarily mean a return to large-scale conventional operations. In fact, the forms of conflict with other great powers that are most likely to emerge in the near future will not resemble the major combat engagements of the Cold War. This report analyzes current trends in warfare alongside the capabilities of the United States' most powerful rivals, China and Russia. In doing so, it seeks to reconcile current American practices in training, reform, and modernization efforts with the realities that will be faced at lower echelons."

https://mwi.usma.edu/tactics-in-an-era-of-great-power-competition/

10. Much Ado About Competition: The Logic and Utility of Competitive Strategy

by Dr. Bernard Finel

"Attend any wonky discussion on the challenges posed by China's rise, and someone will insist that the United States must compete with China. But ask those same pundits to define what competition with China looks like, and instead of getting a straight answer, you'll be met with incredulity, as if competing with China is really a set of self-evident and indisputable foreign policy options. Most often, competition with China gets reduced to mirroring Chinese actions—if China is going to invest in infrastructure for the developing world, so should the United States. The same, mirror-image thinking is also applied to increases in China's military, advancements in artificial intelligence and quantum computing, and so on. Contemporary discussions on great power competition are devoid of proactive, self-justified foreign policy options. A US reactive posture cedes the initiative to China, allowing Chinese interests to dictate the time, place, and modality of competition. To escape its reactive rut, the United States should apply the logic of what in business contexts is called competitive strategy, develop a coherent response to China's rise, and shape the arena of competition to favor America's strengths and exploit China's weaknesses. The presumption that actors or states have a say in how competition plays out is in some ways at odds with many strategic approaches grounded in various schools of international relations that take an essentialist approach to international competition."

https://mwi.usma.edu/much-ado-about-competition-the-logic-and-utility-of-competitive-strategy/

The following entries provide excerpts of and links to recently published articles that are relevant to how members of the Chaplain Corps can serve in an evolving operational environment.

Leadership and the Profession of Arms

1. Leadership Lessons

by GEN (R) James Mattis

"The Stand-To Veteran Leadership Program recently convened for its third module on vision and communication in leadership. Secretary Bob McDonald moderated a conversation with General James Mattis, where he provided the attendees with an abundance of valuable lessons on leadership."

https://www.bushcenter.org/publications/articles/2021/09/leadership-lessons-general-mattis.html

2. Leadership in a People-First Army

by MAJ Gregory Isham

"The clear prioritization of people above all else marks a shift from recent Army senior leader messages to the force, which focused on readiness as the number one priority. While Army senior leaders never intended for soldiers to be harmed in the name of readiness, the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee (FHIRC) revealed that harm occurs all too frequently. Among its findings, the FHIRC stated that at Fort Hood, Texas, 'readiness was the primary focus of all activities, while the [Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP)] Program and the general well-being of Soldiers was a distant second. Mission readiness completely overshadowed the SHARP program.' While the findings of the FHIRC generally focus on the Fort Hood SHARP program, the conclusion that readiness overshadowed and obfuscated all other priorities came as no surprise to many Army leaders because readiness was the number one priority. The finding of the FHIRC regarding the adverse consequences of single-minded concern with readiness is a difficult lesson that must be inculcated in the Army's readiness-centric culture to strengthen the Army long term and serve as a catalyst to place higher priority on ensuring the safety and security of people in the ranks. To maximize the commitment, talent, and true readiness of the Army to deploy, fight, and win the Nation's wars, Army leaders need to embrace a people-first mindset, implement people-first systems, and create a people-first culture throughout the Army."

https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/Online-Exclusive/Isham-1.pdf

3. The Brain is a Battlespace

by Michael Miklaucic

"Nothing could be more true today than this quip from the former U.S. Marine icon and former Secretary of Defense General James Mattis. In an age of pervasive information flows and global connectivity, our ability to process and validate information is vital to our national security. This raises an important issue in the current strategic competition between today's great powers. The problem is two-fold; first, the United States and its partners and allies are under a relentless assault in the information sphere. Information is used as a weapon to weaken our resolve and confuse our responses. Second, it is an insidious assault below the headline horizon and thus not widely recognized or acknowledged by policymakers, let alone their constituents. To be more precise, the United States and its allies and partners—supporters of the liberal, rules-based world

order—are under attack from determined authoritarian adversaries like China, Russia, and Salafist Jihadists that use information warfare intending to replace that world order with an alternative, authoritarian vision, and we are not defending ourselves."

https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2021/11/30/the_brain_is_a_battlespace_805692.html

4. Factors Related to Exclusion in the U.S. Army

by Sara Kintzle, Eva Alday, Adrianne Clomax, Michàlle Mor Barak, and Carl Castro

"The promotion of inclusion in the U.S. Army requires an understanding of how and why exclusion occurs. As exclusion can have deleterious impacts at both and individual and organizational level, reducing exclusive behaviors can have positive effects on Soldiers and the Army. To explore exclusion in the Army, 19 focus groups were conducted with 120 active-duty enlisted Soldiers. Two rounds of thematic analysis revealed four themes related to exclusion. Participants indicated exclusion to be often based on low or bad performance, personality factors that were identified as different or toxic, cliques within the Army unwilling to welcome others, and gender, with both men and women identifying exclusionary behaviors toward women within and outside of the work environment. Research findings offer insight into how and why exclusion occurs and how such behaviors can be addressed in the U.S. Army including training and addressing cultural and systemic barriers to inclusion."

https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0095327X211068875

5. Drop in Public Trust in Military Officers Portends Danger

by LTG (R) Thomas Spoehr

"Gallup recently released a poll describing how American's confidence in military officers had declined to its lowest level since it began measuring in 2001. The big news was that between 2017 and 2022, Americans who believe military officers possess "high ethics" declined by a full 10 points, down to 61%.

An optimist could see this as unfortunate but tolerable, since military officers remain one of the most respected professions, falling only behind medical professionals and grade-school teachers. A more candid appraisal, however, would see this for what it is: a vote of declining confidence by America in its oldest and heretofore most trusted institution. The military needs to make the necessary course corrections to address this situation or be prepared to endure the consequences."

https://www.dailysignal.com/2022/01/24/drop-in-public-trust-in-us-military-officers-portends-danger

6. After 9/11, Closing the Civil-Military Trust Gap

by Paula Thornhill

"U.S. government political appointees wield considerable power, including in the Department of Defense. A president needs these appointees to ensure the department is acting in a manner consistent with his direction as commander-in-chief and to help him exercise control over it. Interestingly, though, once in place, except for the most senior officials, little is known about how most appointees fulfill their responsibilities, even though their performance is critical to the department's overall effectiveness. The scholarly literature on civil-military relations reinforces this tendency to overlook appointees below the most senior level. It pays more attention to debates over civilian and military authorities—who's in charge, who makes decisions, and on what issues—than over how appointees perform their duties. Typically, these debates take on either a legalistic or an academic tone. The former involves close scrutiny of Title 10 of the U.S. Code to discern specific civilian and military legal authorities. The latter places academic analysis of civilian control at the heart of the debates. While both approaches are important, indeed core, to understanding civil-military relations, neither focuses on enhancing the Department of Defense's overall effectiveness. In fact, they can foster mistrust by dwelling on perceived violations of various civilian or military prerogatives."

https://warontherocks.com/2022/02/closing-the-civil-military-trust-gap/

7. Succeeding on Shifting Strategic Ice: Lessons for the U.S. Military from A Century-old Story of Leadership and Survival

by Neils Abderhalden

"It's October 29, 1915. Ernest Shackleton, having abandoned ship onto the frozen Weddell Sea, called his crew together. A ragtag group of twenty-eight men of varying professions, their circumstances were dire. Shackleton, the commander of the expedition, removed a gold cigarette case and gold sovereigns from his pocket, throwing them into the snow.

Gold was useless to him, he told his men. Next was the Bible. Queen Alexandra had given him this Bible before their now ill-fated Antarctic expedition; he tore three pages from the book and laid the remnants of it in the snow. Empty words were useless to him. Finally, the sled dogs' puppies: he ordered them killed. Away from the men behind a pressure ridge, the dog Sirius excitedly jumped up onto Alexander Macklin. When Macklin found his composure, he took out a shotgun and placed it to the dog's neck. With an unsteady hand, he had to do the unthinkable. But it was necessary. Shackleton's mission had changed during the course of his expedition. Everything that was extraneous he and his men left behind; everything that could not pull its weight could no longer be afforded life. Alfred Lansing, in his history of the Endurance voyage, sums up the dire situation, saying that "no article was of any value when weighed against their ultimate survival." This decisive act of leadership by Ernest Shackleton was the first in a prolonged battle against an unforgiving world, a battle in which he and his men ultimately prevailed. And it is a lesson military professionals should study as the United States closes one chapter of its history and embarks into the era of strategic competition."

https://mwi.usma.edu/succeeding-on-shifting-strategic-ice-lessons-for-the-us-military-from-a-century-old-story-of-leadership-and-survival/

8. Beyond Huntington: US Military Professionalism Today

by Risa Brooks

"Norms of the military profession today strongly reflect the Huntingtonian separation-of-spheres concept in which the military and civilian elements of policy decision making interact in particularly prescribed and distinct ways. These norms can be a detriment to civilian control of the military, the military's relationship with broader society, and the success of the country in armed conflict, undermining healthy civil-military relations and US national security writ large."

https://press.armywarcollege.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3036&context=parameters

9. Getting Oversight Right: Lessons from Fort Hood and West Point's Gender Integration

by 1LT Leah Foodman

"In late 2020, news of Army Specialist Vanessa Guillen's tragic death made headlines. Military leaders instantly fell under intense scrutiny from both the public and Congress. Unfortunately, stories similar to Guillen's are not infrequent in today's news cycle—and scrutinizing military leaders is just as commonplace. Such scrutiny is both natural and proper. But while commanders at all echelons certainly bear responsibility, there is another factor—a hallmark principle of American government—that gets less attention: civilian control of the military. Civilian oversight has an important role to play, especially given that issues like sexual assault and harassment detract from readiness, lethality, and the ability to focus solely on tackling the challenges of twenty-first-century warfare. While the ideal balance between the military and civilian officials charged with overseeing it remains the subject of an enduring debate in the minds of civil-military relations scholars, the need for proactive, effective civilian oversight is paramount and uncontested. The question remains: Whose responsibility is it to solve these issues, and how is resolution best achieved?"

https://mwi.usma.edu/getting-oversight-right-lessons-from-fort-hood-and-west-points-gender-integration/

10. Are the U.S. Military's Nonpartisan Norms Eroding?

by Trent Lythgoe

"The U.S. military's nonpartisan norms are an important part of healthy civil–military relations. Some research, however, suggest these norms are weakening. This study examines the evidence for eroding nonpartisan norms by analyzing U.S. military servicemembers' partisan affiliations and political activism levels from 2008 to 2018. It finds that since 2008, military servicemembers have become more likely to identify as partisans. Servicemembers have also become more politically active than civilians, although this is due to decreasing activism among the American public. It also finds that longer-serving service members have stronger nonpartisan norms, but that newer servicemembers are more politically active than both longer-serving servicemembers and civilians. These findings provide a firmer empirical foundation for previous claims of eroding norms and suggest more research is needed to understand how increased partisanship and political activism impacts military readiness and civil–military relations."

https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0095327X211072892

11. Doing Less to do Better: Why the Military Can't Solve It's Overwork Problem

by MAJ Alexander Thew

"It's Monday morning and the battalion is formed at the motor pool. The battalion commander steps forward and rallies motivation for this week's training events: a Tuesday airborne jump, a Wednesday squad march-and-shoot competition, and a Thursday live-fire rehearsal. By Friday, pending all training requirements complete, a half-day of equipment maintenance and everyone should be home by 1500. Sounds like a plan. Then, here it comes—the XO moves front and center. "Today's focus is vehicle maintenance. Our battalion must be at least at a 75 percent readiness rate and connexes will be organized for Friday inspection before release. Also, the S1 is here. No one leaves today unless we are 100 percent on DD93 and SGLI. Installation will hold a briefing on the new blended retirement system this afternoon in the post theater for all O-5 and below. And don't forget your flu shots! The clinic will be open first-come, first-serve 9 to 11. On the horizon, next week we begin post-wide clean up." What is not mentioned is that it's the last week of the month. Companies owe equipment and sensitive-item inventories as well as monthly training briefs by the end of the week—never mind that they also have to manifest for airborne operations this afternoon at 1400. 'If we cut just 20 percent of our day-to-day tasks, our whole unit would improve 50 percent!' a fatigued first sergeant mutters under his breath. Here we go. The Army keeps rolling along. Anyone who has spent time in a military unit has probably witnessed this scenario play out a time or two."

https://warontherocks.com/2021/12/doing-less-to-do-better-why-the-military-cant-solve-its-overwork-problem/

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