



Royal Australian Army Chaplains Department

In this Sign Conquer

Australian Army Chaplaincy Journal

Journal of the Royal Australian Army Chaplains Department
Summer edition, December 2013

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- The Current and Future Challenges of Australian Army Chaplaincy
- Looking Backward: Australia in Retrospect, Part 1 of 3
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- The search for Identity and Meaning in Army Chaplaincy:
A Theological Journey of Australian Army Chaplaincy 1913–2013
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Australian Army Chaplaincy’s Future Challenges
- The Search for Identity and Meaning in Army Chaplaincy:
The Theological Future of Australian Army Chaplaincy – 2013 and Beyond
- The Past, Present and Future — Conversations on the Tensions,
Theology and Professionalisation of Chaplaincy

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Editorial

Principal Chaplain Geoffrey Webb
Director General Chaplaincy – Army

It is a great pleasure to write the editorial for the re-establishment of a professional journal for Australian Army Chaplaincy. For many years, due to the energy of a small number of chaplains, the chaplaincy journal, *Intercom*, flourished. Sadly, *Intercom* lapsed and, since then, there has not been a professional journal devoted to military chaplaincy, a gap that was noted in a recent article in the *Australian Defence Force Journal*.¹ The author noted that a search of articles on chaplaincy, including on Australian chaplaincy, produced no articles by Australian chaplains. If we are to remain a relevant and professional capability for the Australian Army we need to reflect in a considered and academically rigorous fashion on both our practice and theology. One of my aims during our in-service training and conferences over the past three years has been to encourage us as a department to move further in this direction. Thanks to the initiative of the Army Chaplaincy Senior Management Conference in May and the willingness of Chaplain David Grulke, we now have the opportunity to relaunch our professional journal.

This journal will be one more avenue for confronting the apparent contradiction between military service and religious faith. That contradiction is very complex. The well-known theological difficulty often called ‘the problem of pain’ is particularly pointed when it comes to participation in armed conflict. How, one can ask, can a good God have anything other than a completely negative attitude to any human being engaged in armed conflict? Yet in Defence chaplaincy we offer the presence

of God in that very activity. Chaplaincy remains the affirmation that God has a place and, I would argue, an essential place in making sense of participation in war and in maintaining the humanity of those called to defend their communities by the use of lethal force.

Chaplaincy has historically proven its worth in all armies and this first edition of the *Australian Army Chaplaincy Journal* is based around articles on the experience of Australian chaplaincy. Why chaplains have always, in some guise or other, accompanied soldiers into battle is not always clearly articulated. However history demonstrates that there is a deep-seated awareness that chaplains are an essential component of any armed force even when there is a relative absence of religious fervour among the members of that force. The idea that there was some golden age in the Australian military when all soldiers were animated by deep religious faith is shown by Michael Gladwin's research to be a comfortable myth. This is not just the case for Australia. The Vietnam-era song *Sky Pilot* is a reminder that, even in the US, there has been ambivalence at times regarding the role of the chaplain. Chaplaincy has always had to deal in a contested and ambivalent space.

The opportunity for chaplains and other contributors to comment on and think through these issues is essential if chaplaincy is to contribute as effectively as possible to the life of the Army. As I hinted above, chaplaincy is about maintaining the humanity of soldiers faced with the evil and, even more confronting, the moral ambiguity that armed conflict entails. The presence and worship of God can appear contradictory to the practice of the art of war, but a sense that there is a transcendent purpose in the confronting of evil by armed force can go far in ensuring the maintenance of the humanity of those engaged in this confrontation. As recent history has shown, it isn't just in armed conflict that soldiers have had to deal with the moral ambiguity and downright evil inherent in living in the world as it really is. The Army has been active in peacekeeping and peace-making operations in which soldiers have had to face enormous moral challenges. There have also been the several occasions in recent years when soldiers have responded to the tragedy of natural disasters. In all these situations chaplains are the ones who are asked either openly or implicitly to make sense of what has the capacity to outrage the moral standards of the soldiers who face these challenges.

The other circumstance that underlines why chaplains are significant actors within the military occurs on ceremonial occasions. While in the face of an increasingly secularising culture there is a push to minimise the religious element in these ceremonies, chaplains are still called on to contribute that unspoken but apparently essential transcendent element in honouring those who died or suffered in the service of their country.

All these elements of military life and the role of chaplains in that life need to be explored critically by each generation of chaplaincy if we are to be as effective as possible in meeting the needs of soldiers who serve in a vocation which will always offer grave challenges to their humanity.

The challenge Australian Army Chaplaincy and indeed Australian Defence Chaplaincy will always confront in maintaining a journal is the small number of chaplains we have and, consequently, the small base for producing articles. However I want to encourage anyone with an interest in chaplaincy and religion and its relevance to the military environment to submit papers for this journal. I noted in the latest *Australian Army Journal* an article on religious diversity in the Australian Defence Force. This is the sort of article I believe would be grist to the mill of the *Australian Army Chaplaincy Journal*. Many chaplains have produced articles during their postgraduate study and I encourage you to consider submitting them for publication. I would also encourage anyone from the wider Army with an interest in chaplaincy and theology to contribute articles.

I trust and anticipate that the *Australian Army Chaplaincy Journal* will be a catalyst for thinking through chaplaincy and religion in the Army in particular and the Australian Defence Force in general. I'm very pleased that we have made a positive beginning and I hope and pray that God will bless this endeavour and that from it will flow theologically and spiritually sound material that will enhance what is already a highly appreciated chaplaincy capability. ■

Endnotes

- 1 *Australian Defence Force Journal*, Issue 191, 2013, p. 23.

100 Years

Rev Jim Cosgrove
Senior Chaplain 17th Brigade

In the Army there are many who perform heroic deeds
our proud history has stories brave to tell.
And then others in the Army's ranks
are there to serve their needs
in their daily lives and godly needs as well.

The chaplains in the Army are a dedicated group
they've served our soldiers for 100 years.
As confessors, friends and mentors
to their company or troop
sharing times of laughter, blood, sweat and tears.

There were chaplains at Gallipoli
as men bled upon the shore,
there were chaplains with the Rats of Tobruk.
There were chaplains in the trenches
in the horror, blood and gore
giving solace as the ground around them shook.

In Bougainville, Namibia, Iraq and Vietnam,
in Korea and East Timor, World War II.
In Rwanda and Somalia
and in Afghanistan
the chaplains have been with them through and through.

In their service they are thankful
just to be the soldiers' friend,
they're not in it for the medals or rewards.
They continue so these diggers know
God's love will never end,
they are happy that the glory is the Lord's.

Now the chaplains are approachable,
for that the troops give thanks,
that's why they're known affectionately as Padre.
And the last two decades have included
women in their ranks,
and they in turn are sometimes known as Madre.

There are padres at Kapooka
when the young recruits arrive,
to support them as they face their brave new world.
And the padres at Duntroon
will help the Staff Cadets survive
as command responsibilities are unfurled.

As the leaders of tomorrow face the hardships of today
and on courage and endurance they depend.
While their character is tested in their struggles day by day
they know the padre's there to be their friend.

Yes the padre can be called on in a hundred different ways
as their Ministry of Presence so evolves.
And the soldiers, they respect him,
and they're happy that she prays
for the welfare of their young immortal souls.

There are christenings of children
and it happens now and then
that a soldier also asks to be baptised.
At a river or the ocean it's a special moment when
this new Christian stands with heaven in his eyes.

There are times when as a nation
that a sorrow great is ours
when we hear in war of soldiers that we lose.
And the padre will be called on in those agonising hours
when they have to give a loved one tragic news.

And the padre will stay with them
as the family sadly grieves
and support them in the tasks they have to do.
In their sorrow and heart-brokenness the padre still believes
that God understands the pain they're going through.

But other times are full of joy as when a child is born
or asked to lead a wedding celebration.
And on Anzac Day the chaplain
leads a service in the dawn
recalling sacrifice that built a nation.

From day to day the padres
do their work behind the scenes
supporting every level of command.
They're ready to be called on in their everyday routines
to listen, say a prayer or lend a hand.

In the annals of our country where our stories are all told
and there's mention of devotion, love and mystery.
Perhaps within these records a small legend will unfold
of the padres who have played their part in history. ■

The Current and Future Challenges of Australian Army Chaplaincy

Chaplain David

Senior Chaplain Special Operations Command

Abstract

At Director General Chaplaincy – Army’s Strategic Management Conference, at Mittagong in May 2013, Major General Angus Campbell, Deputy Chief of the Army, and Major General Jeff Sengelman, Head of Modernisation and Strategic Planning – Army, were invited to talk about how they saw the state of chaplaincy in Army and the challenges it faced. This article is a reflection on these discussions, which urged chaplaincy to embrace issues such as inclusivity and diversity, and the role of being the voice of ethical and moral reason. The presentations were challenging and provocative, with a clear agenda to invite chaplaincy back into the public discussion on these matters. Chaplains have more to offer than caring for people. They can be a significant voice of influence across all aspects of Army’s focus and capability.

*Whatever is has already been,
and what will be has been before;
and God calls back the past.*¹

The writer of Ecclesiastes reminds the reader of the cyclical nature of time. The entire book offers a critique of humanity and its endeavours, and reminds people that those who ignore the lessons of history are destined to repeat the mistakes of the past. Such a thought resonates with God's history, as can be demonstrated through the ages. Yet secularity, evolution, revolution and even the supposed nihilist's "death of God" cannot seem to shake Jesus' popularity. As Hans Kung says,

*... those time-conscious theologians who always like to ride on the crest of the latest wave, hoping to reach a new shore, have noticed that the wind has changed again: from secularity to religiosity, from publicity to interiority, from action to meditation, from rationality to sensitivity, from the "death of God" to interest in "eternal life".*²

"Are we part of a purposeful historical process? What voice or voices can we be? Where are we going?" These were some of the questions the Senior Chaplaincy Strategic Management Conference (SMC), sought to address at Mittagong, NSW, in May 2013. Defence is undergoing immense change with a new white paper and a strategic reform program looking at options to make the organisation more lean, efficient and effective. Chaplaincy is not immune from this reform program. Chaplains have an opportunity to help shape the future of chaplaincy.³ So what challenges need to be addressed and what opportunities can be pursued?

The Deputy Chief of the Army (DCA), Major General Angus Campbell (now Lieutenant General in charge of "Operation Sovereign Borders"), listed five priorities of the Chief of the Army (CA), Lieutenant General David Morrison. They were:

- Support for operations,
- Recovery of wounded, injured and ill,
- Diversity and inclusion,
- Concepts of amphibious capability, and
- Plan Beersheba: creating similar deployable Brigades.

The DCA focussed the conversation on two of these, "Diversity and Inclusion" and "Recovery of wounded, injured and ill".

In focussing on the issue of gender, cultural diversity and inclusion, the DCA made it clear that the message of being a diverse and inclusion environment was paramount in the mind of the CA. He noted several factors that influenced the future development of Australia's modern Army. These included, the constraints on recruiting, being limited to Australian citizenship and skewed toward male Anglo-Saxon Australians, the associated decline in this pool of recruiting possibilities, and the reality that while 140,000 immigrants enter Australia each year it normally takes up to three generations before this demographic contributes to their national military force.

He then noted the need to increase the female demographic in Army, moving up to, and beyond, ten to twelve per cent (10%-12%) of Army's overall population. To achieve this requires some flexibility, and some trial and error. One example may be the trial of a one-year recruitment plan. Another may be the possibility of recruiting females with a friend, and posting both together to a specific location. The DCA noted that the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) were exploring the option of women undertaking air crew training, with both males and females screened through the same aptitude testing to undertake such a career option. Other options to create a more inclusive workforce within Army included ideas such as making career pathways less rigid than they currently are, and creating more options for distance education to increase learning and skill migration possibilities.

The Defence White Paper speaks of regional engagement within the Indo-Pacific and Asia Pacific regions. In ensuring success in this, the Army needed to make in-roads into non-European, Anglo-Saxon, demographics. This means finding ways not to simply recruit beyond this traditional pool, but to find ways to be more engaging into other cultural groups, especially those within the regions referred to within the White Paper. This means a greater appreciation of working together and establishing a habit of cooperation beyond our gender or cultural bias. The DCA suggested Army needed a broader approach to language, including the increase within Army of recruits that speak more than one language. The challenge to get the most out of Army's people means that a mixed approach is required. Such an approach provides for greater diversity of ideas, and the opportunity to glean from these the best ideas for Army's future capability. Research shows that across the workforce, regardless of blue, white or pink-collar industries, organisational diversity produces better performance than monoculture environments. If an organisation is both inclusive and diverse, research suggest an eighty per cent (80%) improvement in overall performance.

The DCA highlighted the need for Chaplaincy's active engagement in the recovery of wounded, injured or ill members of the Army. He went on to say that, this was not to be a single, one off, active engagement, but one, which draws others into a multi-disciplinary approach that cares for Army's people affected by their service. In particular, he noted the Australian statistics of twenty to twenty-five per cent (20%-25%) having some mental health issue in their lifetime and that twelve per cent (12%) of these will be chronic. This is not simply a human tragedy, but has significant economic implications for the nation. As a select population group, Army's over representation in this statistic, given their exposure to trauma and human tragedy commensurable with the scale and intensity of operations, is significant. While addressing this issue requires a multi-agency approach, the DCA called Chaplains to step up and play a significant role in this space. Several agencies are already making in-roads into this recovery process. The Defence Special Needs Support Group can make Chaplains aware of places where support is sometimes slow to respond. Utilising a number of volunteer groups within the community, who have the time and willingness to support Chaplains in their task of assisting recovery and adjustment, are also a possibility. The regional Transitions Support Cell is another group doing great work, and with whom Chaplaincy could align with great effectiveness. The DCA noted that Units do not always advise their people appropriately, and highlighted the missed opportunity of ensuring their people get the right support. The flow on effects of this means that people are not getting the level of support that may help them to pause, prior to making a decision to discharge from the organisation. Chaplains can offer great assistance into this space. The capacity of chaplaincy to connect with the lives of people, and to see where disconnections are taking place, is of vital importance. Embracing a multi-faceted approach in considering and in dealing with problems is a great capability Chaplains bring to Army.

Major General Jeff Sengelman, Head of Modernisation and Strategic Planning – Army (HMSP-A), approached the SMC with a slightly different tact. Noting his concerns over the future and modernisation of Army, with particular focus on *The Army Objective Force 2030*,⁴ HMSP-A questioned the role of ethics and morality in the decision making process of Army's leaders. As warfare seems ever more complex, changing and uncertain, Army's men and women encounter operational environments where they are challenged by difficult questions and dilemmas that they are not fully prepared for. They will be increasingly called upon to make difficult moral and ethical choices that are not easily explained in 'rules of engagement' or in lessons learned during force preparation. These leaders need to know why they are acting the way they do, and making the decisions they

are making. They need to adopt an action-reflection mode of learning behaviour in which their choices are understood and assessed internally. However, this behaviour must always arise out of a fundamental belief that the conduct of warfare involves people. Moral and ethical behaviour is not explained by science or legality, and perhaps is best understood in the way decisions impact people and communities. The current trends in Army indicate that the objectivity of science or the imposition of legal ramifications shapes much of this discussion. Have we gone too far? Have we forgotten that morality and ethical behaviour has a different basis, namely the impacts it has on people themselves? If something is legal, does that make it right? Moral and ethical behaviour must be the foundation in all aspects of what we do as an Army.

HMSP-A indicated that Chaplaincy can have a key role in supporting moral and ethical decision making within the command group provided the relationships, trusts and bonds between Commanders are appropriately established and maintained. He questioned whether being part of a chapel or religious community, and all the various nuances such association entails, was the primary purpose of chaplaincy within the military? Beyond the provision of pastoral advice, Chaplains were once considered an essential part of the command. They were integral to the group of executive officers oriented to advise and support commanders in their decisions. For a number of reasons, this appears to be no longer, or much less, the case. In these days of specialisation, the chaplain is often restricted to pastoral and 'well-being' support, with little valid input to the big decisions of war. Yet historically, Chaplaincy was, and retains the potential, to be integral in helping command reflect on the moral and ethical dimension of various courses of action. As we know from practice, actions must not only be legal they must also be weighed up in terms of the ethical and moral decision-making process. If the Chaplain is not part of the executive leadership team, who is in that space to offer advice to decision makers on such matters? Should this be a domain for chaplaincy within the Australian Defence Force (ADF)? A domain where Chaplains might contribute more intentionally to help commanders with the dispositional and character factors required to make balanced, and ultimately good, decisions.

Having a clear, shared vision of where chaplaincy is going is essential for Chaplaincy. This will help set the conditions for change. In questioning, "how do you make a choice of where to go?" HMSP-A suggested that Chaplains needed to think critically and carefully about the future of their role. They need to establish a vision and goal that is not prescriptive but instrumental in facilitating change.

Change in terms of knowing where to go and setting the goals to achieve this, and change in terms of attitude, balancing moral and ethical decision making, guided by the 'right things'.

In the military sub-cultures of the past, legitimacy and respect had to be earned by the candidate fulfilling the entire selection criterion. The group were tight knit, suspicious of those who had not shared their experiences. They were distrustful of outsiders. Many warriors, selected because of their clear, critical thinking and problem-solving ability, believe they have little choice. Such specious thinking has led to terrible and well documented atrocities. Chaplains can be at the vanguard making sure the Army changes in their mindset – how we fight, being agile and adaptive. For Chaplains to have a legitimate voice in this space, a number of factors need attention. That means building trust over time by understanding, listening and developing mutual respect. The central thing Chaplains bring to the Army is the capacity to build relationships, which become the cornerstone of any trust relationship. As Stephen Covey suggested in *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, people achieve credibility by “ethos, pathos and logos”.⁵ This means effectively using language to convey your message, which in the military context, is the language of war fighting. For Chaplains to be effective in this space they need to be able to offer their unique input within this context.

One of the current issues within Defence, as a whole, is *Pathway to Change*.⁶ This document sets out the steps the ADF will take to effect cultural change. *Pathway to Change* expresses Defence's cultural intent and describes the standards of behaviour Defence requires of its people. Within the Adaptive Army paradigm, it places the onus on the individual to take responsibility for his/her behaviour, and requires everyone to assist the organisation to live that culture. There is a particular responsibility placed upon leaders to be moral exemplars. *Pathway to Change* accepts the presupposition that there is a problem in Defence, noting that the recent incidents of misconduct are not simply aberrations.

*We should be surprised, angered, embarrassed and saddened – every time there is a revelation about unconscionable behaviour by a member of the Defence community.*⁷

A set of clearly articulated values drives *Pathway to Change*. The acronym PLICIT – Professionalism, Loyalty, Integrity, Courage, Innovation and Team Work, clearly expresses the values that underpin the organisation. Other values expressed within the document are diversity and the values already articulated by each single Service. The end state is to have “a culture that is just, inclusive, reporting and learning.”⁸

Pathway to Change is an example of an institutional response to unacceptable behaviour. It is the result of teaching people how to think through these issues. However, are there flaws inherent within it? While it talks about culture and behaviour, it misses any real discussion on methodology, particularly in terms of reflective practice and the change of behaviour to attitude to character. It lacks a robust discussion on culture, values and ethical thinking, and is silent on how these manifest amidst the change required within a conversation on ethics and values throughout the document. Is there such a thing as an Australian culture? Is it possible to define clearly such a thing in the modern cultural milieu of Australian society? Can such a conversation take place in terms of the Army? If so, then can this be used to improve the *Pathways to Change* document? People act based on the way they think. Individual behaviour derives from our attitudes. Therefore, unacceptable behaviour comes from unacceptable attitudes. Respect, a fundamental attitude, needs to be part of this conversation. However, we also need to define what is normal and acceptable, which is a hard challenge in an environment like Australia, especially when it affirms freedom and diversity in attitudes, behaviour, values, morals and ethics. In this, and the previous discussion by HMSP-A, Chaplains were urged to enter the debate by producing articles and papers for publication that grapple with the dilemmas and changes occurring within Army.

In addressing the Lowy Institute for International Policy on 30 May 2012, General David Hurley, Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) spoke about *The ADF: Set for success*. In his address, he reflected on the past decade of ADF deployments saying no one could have foreseen it would be a time of fighting and deployments, or that we would be back in East Timor and the Solomon Islands. He questioned whether we will relive the “great peace” of the post-Viet Nam period, and suggested that, notwithstanding anything else, we live in a period of “great change and transition.”⁹ General Hurley asks Defence to be more efficient and thoughtful about “the choices we make about the nature of the capabilities that we develop.”¹⁰ The future, he suggests, will be marked by greater economic interdependence, increased levels of communications, and more travel. The consequences of this are greater coastal development, rising urbanisation, and an increased pressure and competition for resources. Furthermore, the impact of natural disasters, disputes over territory, and access to resources consequences will have greater consequences than ever before. Displaced persons, terrorism, piracy and proliferation, will not subside. He flagged multilateral engagement with our regional partners and allies, such as the US, China, Japan, India and Indonesia, involving exercises in the future testing of such

things as Maritime Security, humanitarian assistance, Disaster Relief Operations and Peacekeeping. In particular, there will be a need to provide stability operations in countries experiencing governance challenges. This has consequences for the delivery chaplaincy capability in the future. Chaplains will require skills in delivering services to ADF personnel involved in border protection, disaster relief, and joint or combined exercises. Skills in supporting humanitarian missions and in trauma situations will be required Chaplains respond to emerging situations particularly in our own region. Chaplains will need to earn their place among Army's decision makers, utilising the language of war fighting and establishing trust within the organisations they work. ■

Endnotes

- 1 Ecclesiastes 3:15
- 2 Hans Kung, *On Being a Christian*, (London, UK: Collins, 1977), 134.
- 3 The DCA plans to conduct a review of the delivery of Chaplaincy across Army to determine whether the current basis of posting chaplains most effectively meets the needs of Army.
- 4 Commonwealth of Australia, *The Army Objective Force 2030: Primer*, Land Warfare Development Centre, Australian Army Headquarters, Puckapunyal, 2011.
- 5 Stephen R. Covey, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, (Simon & Schuster Ltd: London, UK, 1999),
- 6 The Defence Committee, Department of Defence, *Pathway to Change*" Commonwealth of Australia, 2012, <http://www.defence.gov.au/pathwaytochange/docs/120410%20Pathway%20to%20Change%20-%20Evolving%20Defence%20Culture%20-%20web%20version.pdf>, accessed 26 Sept 2013.
- 7 Ibid., 9.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 David Hurley, "The ADF: Set For Success", *Australian Defence Force Journal*, Issue No.188, 2012.
- 10 Ibid., 5.

Looking Backward: Australia in Retrospect, Part 1 of 3

Rev Prof Allan Harman AM (BA, BD, M.Litt, ThM, ThD)

Introduction

The fact that this year we are celebrating the centenary of the formation of the Army chaplaincy branch suggests that it is a good time to reflect on the past religious history of Australia, to look at the present, and to try to glimpse the future. This should provide us a perspective through which to view our task in Army chaplaincy.

I recently heard John Anderson, the former deputy prime minister, speak twice at Deakin University, Geelong. What he said jogged my memory on questions relating to our civilisation and particularly the decline of the West. A well-known lecture by Dr Carl Henry in 1970, 'The Barbarians Are Coming', also came to mind. This lecture was delivered in Philadelphia and, at that time, it seemed unduly pessimistic to many.¹ The lecture began with the words: 'We live in the twilight of a great civilization, amid the deepening decline of modern culture.' Many have since revised their assessment of cultural change to come much closer to Carl Henry's position.

Origin of Australia

The American Revolution created two countries, United States of America (USA) and Australia. Once the American colonies had revolted, Britain could no longer send convicts to Georgia, and so new destinations for convict ships had to be found. The decision was made to create a convict settlement in New South Wales (NSW), and later this was extended to include all the colonies in Australia except South Australia. In five colonies, convicts and former convicts lived and worked in close proximity to free settlers. Convicts, and those who were given tickets of leave, lived with and worked for settlers, especially those engaged in agriculture.

Arthur Phillip, a naval officer, was chosen as the first governor of the Australian colony and he selected Rev. Richard Johnson as the first chaplain. Johnson was actually nominated by the Clapham Sect, and John Newton, the author of 'Amazing Grace', even composed a poem about him and his future duties in NSW.

Before the first fleet sailed, Johnson visited hulks on the Thames, although he was advised not to continue this practice, or indeed to descend into the hulks, in case he contracted an illness! On the way out to Botany Bay, he was not aboard one of the major transports but on a small supply ship. However, on Sundays, he was taken across to two of the main transports to conduct services.

Commencement of settlement

The fleet first anchored in Botany Bay, but it was soon apparent that the lack of fresh water was going to limit the usefulness of that site for settlement. Following further investigation, the fleet sailed into Sydney Harbour and so, on 26 January 1788, the new colony was proclaimed.

The first church service was conducted by Richard Johnson on Sunday, 3 February 1788. A monument to mark the occasion stands on the corner of Bligh and Hunter Streets, Sydney. The inscription includes the text of Johnson's first sermon: 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?' (Ps. 116:12). Governor Phillip provided Johnson little assistance, and he had to erect a church at his own expense in 1793, at or near the site of the monument. This building was maliciously burnt down five years later. Johnson only received payment for the building many years later.

The early years were not notable for religious life. Governor Hunter wrote in 1798: 'a more wicked, abandon'd, and irreligious set of people have never been brought together in any part of the wo'ld.' Intrinsic antagonism carried over from England,

notably the alienation of the British working class from the church in the eighteenth century. The fact that Anglican ministers also served as magistrates aggravated the resentment of many of the prisoners towards the church. Around a third of the convicts were Irish Catholics, and no provision was made for a priest to minister to them until a convict priest, James Dixon, was given provisional emancipation in order to say Mass in 1803. Following the Castle Hill rebellion in 1804 that liberty was withdrawn, and it was not until 1820 that two priests arrived to minister to the Catholic population. The attitudes towards religious life in the early period set the pattern for the rest of the century.

Development in the mid-nineteenth century

Rapid and diverse growth in the colonies meant that people were very dispersed making it difficult for clergy to provide Christian instruction and conduct services. While many religious families managed to sustain their convictions without the presence of clergy, many others succumbed to their situation and virtually abandoned religious practice. The large number of released convicts, having no desire to take part in religious worship and practice, added to the anti-Christian element in the general population.

One significant source of information on religious life in the Australian colonies is found in the replies by Scottish ministers of the Free Church of Scotland (held in the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh) to questionnaires sent to them by the Colonial Committee of their church. These reports, in providing answers to the questionnaire, provide many details about the general religious and moral life of the various communities. This provides collaborative evidence concerning the secularism of much colonial life. Melbourne, for example, was a secular city, and this was evidenced in the fact that the charter for the University of Melbourne included a prohibition against the teaching of religion.

John Barrett's assessment was that, up to 1850, the Australian churches were never able to claim more than a minority of the population.² That claim has never been seriously challenged.

The turn of the century (1900)

By 1900, democratisation and social reform had pushed organised religion to the side. Statistics for attendance at church at the time are available and are best examined against the census figures for religious affiliation. In some states, such as South Australia, the records show that over 99% of people indicated that they belonged to a religious group. But for NSW, the figures show that, in 1900,

only 28% of people attended church, though this figure was boosted by much higher attendance among those of Methodist, Congregationalist, Baptist and Salvation Army persuasion.

It is quite frequently asserted that Australia was somehow a 'Christian' country from the time of the first settlement. Early lawmakers and judges believed that they were safeguarding a system of law derived from the Judaeo-Christian traditions. Later, they operated on the basis that law and government were value-free. However, the assertion that Australia was a Christian country is unsupported by the evidence and, likewise, it is a myth that somehow Australian legal practice upheld Christian views.³

Development of chaplaincy

Military chaplaincy developed in Australia during the first twenty years of the twentieth century. Naval chaplaincy came first in 1912, followed by Army chaplaincy in 1913, and then in 1920 by Royal Australia Air Force chaplaincy. The development of these branches should be viewed in context of the social and religious conditions prevailing at that time. By no means were the first chaplains universally accepted or encouraged, nor was their work easy. They had to earn the respect of service personnel rather than simply expecting recognition because of their status as clergy.

The first large movement of Australian troops was to Egypt in advance of the landing in Gallipoli. Among the first chaplains was William McKenzie, a Salvation Army officer. When he reported for duty in Sydney before embarking he was met by an officer who regarded him very dubiously, commenting: 'I know very little about the Salvation Army.' The new chaplain replied that he knew little about the King's Army, 'but look here', he said, 'we'll teach each other!' Some of the men were far more outspoken, swearing and wondering why they deserved to have McKenzie as a chaplain. Reports of behaviour by Australian troops in Egypt, and particularly in Cairo, tell their own story. It was not easy ministering in such circumstances, but McKenzie and others gained respect and admiration for their self-sacrificing work.

The attitude of senior military figures to chaplains was also significant. General Birdwood, who commanded the ANZACs during the Gallipoli invasion, gave instructions that no chaplains were to be allowed ashore in the first landings. However, he had to quickly alter his instructions because they were needed to help care for the wounded and to bury the dead.

The chaplains in the First World War had to carve a niche for themselves. This they did with bravery and fortitude. They suffered alongside the troops and, at Gallipoli and in France, some were even killed. These early chaplains marked the enduring pattern for those who followed. ■

Looking at Australia Today: A Glimpse at Our Society, Part 2 of 3

Rev Prof Allan Harman AM (BA, BD, M.Litt, ThM, ThD)

Introduction

Australian society has changed enormously since the end of the Second World War. We are living in a multicultural, multiracial, multilingual society. Even in remote areas one can hardly be unaware of how our social structure has altered. The census of 2011 showed that over 300 languages are spoken in Australian homes, with a decided shift to Asian languages in more recent times. We are all part of this transformation, and Defence is a microcosm of what is happening in the wider society.

Challenges facing us today

One of the greatest pressures we are facing comes from post-modernism. Probably the most significant way this manifests is in the absence of absolutes, particularly in moral life. The thought patterns in the world have changed radically in the last few decades and yet many of us do not realise how this new situation impacts on the Christian church and its agencies. This is as true of those of my generation as it is of those who are much younger. However, there is one major

difference. Those of my generation grew up with different attitudes to truth and moral issues, while those who are younger have been surrounded by changes in attitude during the whole of their lifetimes.

We see the changes in many areas of life, including the church, politics, business and education. So often there is an absence of principle because everything has become relative. What is popular becomes what is right. The herd mentality takes over, like the French revolutionary who said: 'The mob is on the streets. I must find out where they are going, for I am their leader!'

What changes do I have in mind? Let me illustrate this by quoting from an American Jewish professor of philosophy. In his book *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*, Allan Bloom comments:

There is one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of: almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative. If this belief is put to the test, one can count on the students' reaction: they will be uncomprehending. That anyone should regard the proposition as not self-evident astonishes them, as though he were calling into question $2 + 2 = 4$. These are things you don't think about.⁴

Bloom goes on to say that, regardless of the student's background, the response is the same: truth is relative. There are no absolutes in life. Openness was regarded as the major insight of the late twentieth century. The greatest danger from this modern point of view is that some people will still hold that truth is absolute and they are to be feared because this is being intolerant!

In a general way we see this exhibited in Western societies. Increasingly much has been reduced to the lowest common denominator, and that applies to education as well. One American Jewish talk show host put it like this:

Liberals are always talking about pluralism, but that is not what they mean ... In public schools, Jews don't meet Christians. Christians don't meet Hindus. Everybody meets nothing. That is, as I explain to Jews all the time, why their children so easily inter-marry. Jews don't marry Christians. Non-Jewish Jews marry non-Christian Christians. Jews for nothing marry Christians for nothing. They get along great because they both affirm nothing. They have everything in common — nothing. That's not pluralism.⁵

A consequence of this relativist position is that all faiths are regarded as equal. On this basis, there can be no exclusiveness in religious matters, and claims for tolerance become a claim for equality of all faiths. Compromise so often replaces commitment. Even 'tolerance' has changed so that its adherents push to suppress viewpoints that stand against a dominant position.

Another consequence is that all language has as many interpretations as it has readers. But here there is a major inconsistency. Road rules and traffic signs, for example, are regarded as being capable of only one interpretation. Interestingly, this claim is more common among those studying literature or social sciences, not among mathematicians or scientists.

Post-modernism exerts tremendous pressure. Whereas after the Enlightenment the challenge to the Christian faith was 'prove it!', the response today when we tell someone about the Gospel, or our own personal commitment to Christ, will often be: 'I am happy for you, but so what for me?'

Another result is the absence of integration — there is no uni-verse. The change this has brought is that universities in general no longer have an integrating factor. The English word 'university' (cognate to 'universe') contains the idea of unity of knowledge or approach that bound a group of scholars together. Clearly the concept was that within a university there was adherence to a common basis of knowledge that tied together the teaching in all the faculties. That concept is perfectly valid, providing there is a basis that enables the knowledge and teaching to be viewed from a single perspective.

Our present position

Today as Christians we are in a position very like that of the early believers in New Testament times. The Palestinian and the wider Mediterranean worlds of the first century ad were also multicultural, multiracial, and multilingual. Throughout the centuries, Christians have often lived in such multifaceted societies, and we do today. Our calling is to be both salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16). ■

Looking to the Future: Pluralism — The Challenge Ahead, Part 3 of 3

Rev Prof Allan Harman AM (BA, BD, M.Litt, ThM, ThD)

Introduction

Some years ago my wife and I visited South Carolina. Our hostess had made arrangements to take us to visit a cotton plantation. She got lost on the way, but managed to locate a farm belonging to a cousin. An old Afro-American farmhand was sweeping the driveway. I got out of the car, asked directions, and he explained the route we had to take. As I got back into the car he said: 'Which way you going, suh?' I repeated his instructions, but got one turn wrong! 'No, suh.' He repeated the process, and again the same question was posed to me: 'Which way you going, suh?'

This is a highly relevant and important question. We need repeatedly to ask ourselves the same question in relation to our Christian ministry and specifically in reference to our chaplaincy involvement: 'Where are we going?'

We must recognise that the future is not going to be easy for Christians in Australia.

There has been a downgrading of the Christian presence. This is manifest in many different ways. To take but one example, Anzac Day services are losing their distinctively Christian character, which is being replaced by a more secular approach to the commemoration.

Christians are also being pressured to 'conform' to the prevailing world view. Whereas previously Christian viewpoints and practices were encouraged, now the Christian voice is being muted or silenced.

At present there is disparagement, which may lead to stronger ridicule and then to active persecution. I am not a prophet, but that is where, in my opinion, the current trends are heading. Some legal cases in Britain show us the trend there that could easily be replicated here.

The future in Defence chaplaincy

Three facts seem certain about our chaplaincy work in the future:

The number of non-Christians in the Defence Force is going to increase. At present the numbers are comparatively small, and are probably not even in proportion to the general population figures. Already there is quite a spread of non-Christian faiths represented, and these will increase over time.

The number of those professing no religion is going to increase. At present, around one third of those in the Defence Force have no religious affiliation at all. Whereas previously Defence members would give their nominal religious affiliation, now the figures are close to reality. About a hundred years ago almost everyone claimed to be Christian.

There can't be any legal compulsion to maintain the Christian position in society in general, or in the Defence Force in particular. Some of us can well remember when certain Christian religious observances were compulsory for all in the Defence Force. I conducted the last compulsory service at Laverton for women recruits in the Royal Australian Air Force at the completion of their initial training. To take the opposite position would be an attempt to perpetuate the myth that we live in a Christian country. People can't be forced by legislation to adhere to Christian beliefs or moral standards.

Facing the future with realism

If I am right about future trends in Australia, then what follows for us as chaplains?

We as Christians, and especially Christian Defence chaplains, need to have a Christian mindset, a Christian world view. Our faith is expressed in far more ways than just the conduct of religious services, and we need to be able to draw out the implications of our faith for the whole of life.

We need to prepare for the greater impact of non-Christians in Defence who will wish to assert their rights. So far this has been apparent in some issues such as those relating to food and uniforms, but it could easily extend to other issues.

As chaplains we have always been in Defence to serve others. Right from the outset of Defence chaplaincy, our Christian chaplains have served Defence members without discrimination. I am sure that the present situation will continue, as we see non-religious or non-Christian members coming to chaplaincy centres to seek help.

At some time in the future we will have other non-Christian chaplains in addition to the small number of Jewish chaplains we already have. We need to prepare for this introduction of non-Christian chaplains. When that happens we will have to maintain our position as Christians and as Christian chaplains with integrity.

Some try to separate what they do in one area of life (their private life) from what they have to do in public. At one of the lectures John Anderson gave in Geelong, he was asked about the integration of Christian belief into his political views. He recounted how one fellow cabinet minister used to say to him: 'John, leave your Christian beliefs at the door of the cabinet room!' In effect, we have seen a very similar position stated more recently — that politicians can have a private or theological position but a completely opposite one with regard to parliamentary legislation.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu adopted a different position in his chairmanship of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. He has written about how the commission commenced its meetings under his chairmanship:

Very few people objected to the heavy spiritual, and indeed Christian emphasis of the Commission. When I was challenged on it by journalists, I told them I was a religious leader and had been chosen as who I was. I could not pretend I was someone else. I operated as who I was and that

*was accepted by the Commission. It meant that theological and religious insights and perspectives would inform much of what we did and how we did it ... As I grow older I am pleasantly surprised at how relevant theology has become, as I see it, to the whole of life.*⁶

That latter position is one we should emulate. We have to be who we are in chaplaincy, and service to all does not mean we have to abandon our own faith commitment.

What of the future?

I refer again to Carl Henry's 1970 lecture. To the phrase 'The Barbarians are coming', he added, 'however, Jesus Christ the Lord is coming!' His assertion means that we must assess the future in terms of biblical eschatology. Christ comes to vindicate God's righteousness and to crown his grace. There is a real danger that pessimism will rule hearts, but the Christian message is one of optimism because of biblical teaching on the lordship of Christ.

We can't predict the future of Christianity in Australia, but we must take a broad view of God's kingdom. History teaches us that religious life ebbs and flows. The biblical teaching on the final end of all things should encourage us to press on with our tasks, and also to take heart. We are servants of Christ and, because of that, servants of others. Let us continue to serve with vigour and enthusiasm in our calling as Defence chaplains. ■

Endnotes

- 1 The lecture is reprinted in his book, *Twilight of a Great Civilization: The Drift Toward Neo-Paganism*, Crossway Books, Westchester, 1988, pp. 15–22.
- 2 John Barrett, *That Better Country: The Religious Aspect of Life in Eastern Australia 1835-1850*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1966, p. 206.
- 3 Probably the best discussion on this is by Keith Mason, 'The Myth of an Inherently Christian Legal System' in *Constancy and Change: Moral and Religious Values in the Australian Legal System*, Federation Press, Sydney, 1991, p. 130.
- 4 Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1984, p. 1.
- 5 Don Carson, 'Christian Witness in an Age of Pluralism' in D.A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, *God and Culture*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1993, p. 36.
- 6 Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, Rider House, London, 1999, pp. 72–73.

‘Captains of the Soul’: The Historical Context of Australian Army Chaplaincy, 1913–2013

Dr Michael Gladwin (BA DipEd, MA (Hons), PhD)

He who cannot draw on three thousand years [of history] is living from hand to mouth.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

In early October 1941 a 39-year-old Presbyterian Army chaplain arrived in Singapore. Earlier in the year the Reverend Hugh Cunningham had farewelled his wife Beatrice, then pregnant, and their five-year-old daughter. The Glasgow-born chaplain had been a draper and commercial traveller before migrating to Australia in 1925 to pursue a vocation as a minister in the Presbyterian Church. He had offered for chaplaincy service in May 1941. Appointed to General Base Depot Malaya with the Australian 8th Division, Cunningham was one of 34 Australian Army chaplains and 22,000 Australians who went into captivity after the surrender of Singapore to Japanese forces in February 1942. A third would never return.

After being transferred with other Australians from Changi to the Thai border in November 1943, Cunningham suffered the unimaginable horrors of what would become death camps on the bank of the River Kwai. Ernest Gordon, a Scottish prisoner of war whose account of life there was later published as *Miracle on the River Kwai*, recorded the arrival of Cunningham and a British padre in his camp on the Thai–Burma railway in 1944:

The Australian chaplain, Padre Hugh Cunningham, did not fare so well. The Japanese surprised him in the act of thumbing through a school atlas. For two days they confined him in a bamboo cell so low that he could not stand up in it, and so narrow that he could not sit down. To make doubly certain of his discomfort, a guard came by at certain intervals and prodded him with this bayonet.¹

The arrival of the two padres, however, completely altered the dynamic in the camp. 'Between them', wrote Gordon:

they built up the church, and, with it, the morale of many in the camp ... Abruptly, our captors issued an order forbidding religious services, of which they had become increasingly suspicious. They had sworn to bring us to complete subjection; they had not done so. We were bent but not broken. Out of a condition of no purpose had appeared men with purpose. If this improvement continued, the guards reasoned, our gatherings could become a potential focus for revolt.²

The padres' captors initially had little conception of a chaplain's officer status and his apparently unique relationship with the troops. A fellow padre recalled listening to Cunningham's account of his treatment in captivity:

The Japanese were bewildered by [Cunningham's] status and role of chaplain ... He was treated just as firmly and harshly as all the other prisoners. The prison guards constantly brought him in for questioning to try and determine who he really was ... being shown great respect ... [yet] not holding any rank ... Because of their uncertainty about him, he was kept in virtual isolation and given restricted access to his fellow POWs. Eventually one of his Japanese guards was able to gain an inkling of his position and special status. He was given an arm band to wear with green Japanese characters written on it and instructed to wear it at all times. Soon he began to be treated with great honour by the guards ... and he was allowed unfettered movement amongst his fellow prisoners. His captors did not tell him what was written on his arm band and he did not discover its meaning until after he was freed and returned to Australia. The translation read simply, 'Captain of the souls of men'.³

The significance of Cunningham, and his status as a rallying point for morale and resistance among the troops, is undeniable. Yet padres and religious activity served as a focus of morale in several other camps, as Gordon and Australian prisoner of war Geoffrey Bingham have shown in their accounts of the quiet but powerful religious revivals that broke out among prisoners.⁴

Contemporaries and later historians have also highlighted the remarkable discipline, stoicism and will to survive of Australian soldiers and their padres in captivity.⁵ It says much about the underlying significance of Christianity in Australian society during the Second World War. Yet the importance of men like Cunningham and many of his fellow padres (who were remembered by fellow prisoners with enormous affection and respect) was not simply due to the residual strengths of Australian Christianity in the Second World War, or to their personal dedication and individual charisma. Cunningham personified a model of practical service and religious and moral leadership that had been forged by the Australian Army Chaplains' Department during the Great War, and by a generation of chaplains before them in South Africa. This tradition of service and leadership was carried on in the Second World War and through the Cold War in Korea, Malaya and Vietnam. And it continues in the post-Cold War world's operational climate of peacekeeping and desert wars.⁶

The epithet that Cunningham wore around his arm — 'Captain of the souls of men' — points to the questions that lie at the heart of this article. How have chaplains lived up to that poignant description, inscribed on Cunningham's prison armband, of their high calling among Australian soldiers? In other words, to what extent has the Australian Army chaplain been a 'captain of the soul' over the last one hundred years? And what has that looked like in reality? How has it changed over time? How has the Royal Australian Army Chaplains Department (RAAChD) developed to facilitate the chaplains' vocation?

That phrase on Cunningham's armband is a potent symbol of the chaplain's dual role in the Army: first, as a spiritual and moral leader; and second, as a military officer (fittingly, the rank of the majority of chaplains and their entry level has always been captain). It also hints at the possible tensions that this dual role might entail, not least that of the chaplain's service of two masters, God and Caesar. I want to begin this article by considering some ways in which these roles have changed over the last century. I'll then briefly chart the historical development of the RAAChD before attempting to assess the impact and contribution of Army chaplains over the last hundred years. This article draws on some of the key

findings of my forthcoming history of the RAACHD and its chaplains, entitled 'Captains of the soul. A history of Australian Army chaplains'. That larger work, the first full-scale history of Australian Army chaplaincy and its corps, provides the broader backdrop and historical context for many of the conclusions drawn here.

The role of the chaplain in the Australian Army

The chaplain's unique and enduring role has been religious ministry, encompassing the conduct of worship services, sacraments and religious instruction, as well as rites of passage such as baptisms, weddings and funerals. The locations have varied: dugouts at Gallipoli; trench saps at Pozieres; on altars made out of unused thunder boxes in Vietnam fire patrol bases; and in the combat outposts of Uruzgan Province. The form has sometimes changed: after the Vietnam War chaplains were spared the often sickening task of battlefield burials (after 1966 dead soldiers were repatriated as a result of public outrage that Australian soldiers were paying for bodies of comrades to be flown home). Yet the task of connecting people with the divine has not changed, whether through preaching, conversation, prayer or the rituals and practices of worship. And while the message of God's gracious redeeming love for all people is unchanging, chaplains of all periods have had to adapt their presentation of that message in a simple and succinct way for an increasing majority of officers and soldiers who have had little previous contact with religious life.

From the outset chaplains played a key role in pastoral care. Yet this role underwent quiet shifts in focus after the 1960s. 'No Psychs accompanied soldiers on to the beach at Gallipoli', observed one chaplain in East Timor recently.⁷ But after the 1960s the increasing secularisation of Australian society coincided with the growing sophistication of the social sciences in general and psychology and sociology in particular. New techniques were becoming available for understanding humanity and for assisting people in times of crisis, stress or distress. As one contributor to the RAACHD's *Command Chaplains Newsletter* noted in the mid-1970s, it had been 1,400 years since Gregory the Great had written the first textbook on pastoral care, while it had not been all that long ago that the physician and parish minister had shouldered the burden of professional care in communities. Today, however, they had been joined by:

*the psychotherapist, the clinical psychologist, the social worker, the marriage guidance counsellor, the welfare officer, the health visitor, the probation officer and a whole host of other professionals and semi-professionals committed to caring for their fellows.*⁸

These changes were occurring against the backdrop of a welfare state which since 1945 had taken over many aspects of caring responsibility that were once the province of churches and voluntary agencies. Some of these welfare agencies such as the Family Liaison Organisation (FLO) had already infiltrated the Army by the 1970s. Such developments, while welcomed by many chaplains for their potential to assist in their crucial role of pastoral care, prompted reassessments of the chaplains' role which have been going on ever since. The introduction in 2000 of a specialised 'care chain of command' — in which chaplains have worked within a larger team of medical officers, psychologists and social workers — has given chaplains powerful tools for pastoral care through training in counselling, clinical pastoral education, critical incident and mental health. Yet, this has also forced chaplains to define their unique role beyond a merely therapeutic model of chaplaincy.

Another role that has expanded significantly over time has been that of educating and training, whether in character training, moral leadership, marriage preparation or in lectures on culture, ideology and spirituality. For over a century chaplains have helped to calibrate the moral compass of soldiers who have been authorised to use lethal force in increasingly complex settings. This has been underpinned by a long-standing Christian tradition of just war theory (especially the *ius in bello*) and rules of engagement that find their true magnetic north in the absolutes of the divine moral and natural law. It has been said that service in the military is a high calling. Those 'who may be required to take another human life should value it most of all'.⁹ A former Anglican Bishop to the Defence Force put it this way:

*Knowing the time and the place in which the 'sword' can or ought to be drawn will continue to determine whether its use will bring humanity nearer to heaven or hell.*¹⁰

The most influential medium for this work — and for introducing many soldiers to both the Gospel and a church tradition — has been character training. There is a long-standing belief in chaplaincy circles that character training emerged from the experience of Korean War prisoners of war and the famous *Korean Document* that advocated spiritual reserves to combat communist ideology. It is true that the ideological fissures of the Cold War and the introduction of National Service expanded character training and transformed it into a more rigorous and universal course of training. Yet the actual origins of character training lie in the Commanding Officer's (CO) hours introduced by Australian chaplains (following a British precedent) during the Second World War. The concept of

moral leadership was first suggested at a conference of chaplains in March 1946 and later fleshed out by two Australian chaplains-general, Charlie Daws and Alex Stewart, during their tour of inspection of Japan in early 1947. Daws and Stewart were struck by the absence of a moral and spiritual compass among members of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF). Many in the force were young (19–20 years old) and had gaps in their schooling and cultural awareness, not least because their early moral and educational formation had been disrupted by the Second World War. With the unanimous support of the occupying force's COs, the chaplains-general pitched the proposal at a RAACHD conference in 1946. It was decided that the instruction and fellowship of the soldiers could best be organised on a unit basis with various 'cells' forming a network throughout BCOF. The chaplains-general also envisioned the creation of periodical schools or courses for soldiers identified as 'moral leaders'.¹¹ The first course was held in July 1946 in the Japanese town of Beppu. Character Guidance courses emerged over a decade later, drawing on lessons learned from moral leadership courses and a Royal Air Force course that was in turn derived from an Australian Catholic layman's book on the Ten Commandments as the 'Maker's Instructions'. Character Guidance courses grew exponentially from the late 1950s and remain a crucial component of chaplains' ministry today. One Vietnam-era chaplain went as far as extolling them as the 'jewel in the crown' of chaplaincy.¹²

The chaplains' traditional role as adviser to commanders and staff on religious, moral and ethical issues represents the area in which chaplains have exercised a prophetic role. A long-standing tradition of chaplains has publicly challenged the tactical — and sometimes the strategic — *status quo*. An Australian chaplain became one of the most vocal critics of the Boer War as a result of what he witnessed on the African *veldt*. Padre Timoney was outraged by punitive British policies that were being implemented by Australian troopers against civilians and infrastructure. Using his platform as war correspondent for the Sydney-based *Catholic Press* newspaper, Timoney sent a flurry of articles and letters exposing the cruel operations and their destructive effects.¹³ It was in the context of this deteriorating guerrilla war that prisoners began to be shot, the most famous case of which resulted in the conviction and death by firing squad of Lieutenants Harry 'Breaker' Morant and Peter Handcock of the Bushveldt Carbineers. Timoney's sympathies are clear from a *Catholic Press* article published in December 1900:

*[The Boers] see their country in ruins, their field and crops destroyed, their cattle driven away by the enemy, and the flames from their burning houses rising sky high. I have known instances in which our troopers did not leave in a house a morsel of bread for the women and children. Is it any wonder that among a people so independent a spirit consumes them?*¹⁴

For publicising such sentiments, Timoney was reported to have had a 'dramatic interview' with Lord Alfred Milner, British High Commissioner in South Africa and one of the chief architects of the war. The flinty padre refused to withdraw one word he had written.¹⁵

Chaplains have always had to tread a fine line in their relationships with senior officers. Second World War chaplains, for example, generally felt that senior officers gave them excellent support, especially those in the higher echelons of generals and brigadiers. There was a tendency for some officers, however, to believe that they virtually 'owned' their chaplains and could do with them as they saw fit. Students at the fledgling Army Chaplains' School were warned of the tendency of brigadiers to adopt 'attitudes of omnipotence'. When one brigadier took it upon himself to post a chaplain in September 1943, the response of the chaplains-general (who alone possessed the authority to recommend postings) was swift and decisive. The result was a regulation ordering that no chaplain could be transferred from one unit to another without at least the approval of the Deputy Chaplain-General.¹⁶

Several chaplains were forced on occasion to challenge men of high rank when they considered the situation demanded it. The most notable of these run-ins was with the irascible General Blamey himself. At least one chaplain believed him to be 'hostile and contemptuous' towards chaplains. Anglican padre Fred Burt, for example, was incensed at Blamey's infamous quip that the men of 21 Brigade were 'rabbits' (the implication being that only rabbits got shot in the back). 'This was a cowardly lie', retorted Burt. 'I buried about 100 of them and they "fell with their faces to the foe".' While home on leave, Burt addressed the Perth Millions Club and replied to one question with the following observation of Blamey: 'If a man cannot run a police force of 400 men [the Victorian Police Force], how do you expect him to run two armies?' When Burt was ordered by the pro-Blamey Adjutant-General (Major General Lloyd) to apologise to an irate Blamey, Burt refused, opting instead to leave the Army. It wasn't Burt's first run-in with officials. Earlier in the war he had publicly castigated the French Consul in Palestine for his anti-semitism.¹⁷

During the Vietnam conflict, United Churches padre John Hughes' article on chaplaincy in the *Army Journal* reasserted the conviction of Great War chaplain Geoffrey Studdert-Kennedy (*aka* 'Woodbine Willie'), 'that War [was] pure undiluted filthy sin' and had 'never redeemed a single soul'. Hughes lamented that the children of the Second World War generation were now 'entangled in the military morass of South-East Asia'. Nevertheless, Hughes gave short shrift to contemporary arguments that chaplains were an 'anachronism'. The chaplain's ministry, he argued:

*was no more concerned, in the primary meaning, with the issues of pacifism or patriotism, than the practical help of the Good Samaritan had to wait upon the theological verdicts of the Jerusalem Sanhedrin before becoming effective.*¹⁸

In Hughes' opinion the chaplain had only one justification for his role:

*and that [was] found in the compassion of Christ. As long as there are men and women broken and lost in body, mind or soul, there, in Christ's name, will the Army chaplain seek to minister to them.*¹⁹

Notably it was veteran chaplains, such as Anglican Roy Wotton and Methodist padre Frank Hartley who had buried hundreds of young Australian men in the jungles of New Guinea, who most vocally opposed Cold War conflicts that were burying hundreds more in the jungles of South-East Asia. Hartley was labelled the 'pink parson' by Prime Minister Bob Menzies because of his stand against the banning of the Communist Party in Australia, his support for nuclear disarmament and his opposition to Australian foreign policy, including the Vietnam conflict.²⁰ Hartley's message was uncompromising, equating shrill anti-communism with Nazi fascism:

*'We must preserve our way of life' is the slogan belonging to those who consider themselves belonging to today's Master Race. I'm not surprised that a case is being made for the use of Napalm Bombs, Phosphorous Bombs, Germ Warfare.*²¹

In more recent years, Roman Catholic padre Gary Stone publicly denounced Australia's participation in the Second Gulf War, while Religious Advisory Committee to the Services (RACS) member Anglican Bishop Tom Frame publicly supported it before a high profile *volte-face* in which he damned it as unjust and immoral.²² Nevertheless these public voices have constituted a minority.

Certainly, the chaplains' officer status has constrained their ability to speak truth to power publicly. At the same time, however, it has enabled them to engage in truth-telling and 'tough love' from a position *within* the chain of command and at the grassroots, whether with commanders or other ranks. Indeed, officers appear to expect it. One Australian infantry commander suggested recently that the ideal chaplain will be, among other things:

*a physically and mentally robust person. The best chaplains will possess and harness this toughness. A good chaplain can expect to have forthright discussions with all members of a unit, from the sailor, soldier, or airman or airwoman who has a personal issue to the commanding officer who has a policy that is dangerous or simply just wrong.*²³

The creation of the RACS in 1981 also bequeathed a mechanism by which leaders of military chaplaincy were able to exercise a prophetic role within the highest echelons of the Australian Defence Force. They have had access to the ear — and occasionally the devotional aspirations — of Army Chiefs without the constraints of a commission. RACS members and chaplains alike have also played an important part in helping their churches to take *informed* stances on Australia's strategic outlook and defence commitments.

Far less well known is the chaplains' important contribution to the nation's corporate memory and the commemoration of Australians at war. Among the most articulate and best educated soldiers both on the battlefield and on the home front, and trained by profession to be shrewd judges of human nature, chaplains have bequeathed a rich vein of historical sources. They have published unit and campaign histories, memoirs and have served as war correspondents (two in fact, during the Boer War, when journalists such as Banjo Paterson were incapacitated). Chaplains were also at the forefront of honouring Australian sacrifice in war, whether in creating Anzac services, building chapels or sponsoring the erection of 'sacred places' as war memorials on the Australian landscape. An Anglican Great War padre, David Garland, created the first Anzac services, and Anglican padre Arthur White invented the dawn service. But both men eschewed a militaristic or mawkishly sentimental nationalist Anzac myth for a full-blooded recognition of individual sacrifice that pointed towards the supreme sacrifice of Christ. Over time, however, the religious meanings would be shed in favour of a more secularised civil religion.

Some role changes have been welcomed. After the Great War, chaplains largely forsook the time-consuming and potentially distracting roles of entertainments officer (or 'Charlie Chaplains', as some padres called it), orderly or canteen manager. A new role has recently emerged in Australia's peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, where chaplains' role in using their religious understanding to win 'hearts and minds' has proved crucial, even if under-utilised. Increasing international recognition of military chaplains' 'external operational mandate' of fostering reconciliation and peace in war zones suggests that new roles for chaplains will emerge in the future. One small incident recounted by an Australian chaplain during the Second Gulf War is telling in this regard:

after discussing with an Iraqi colonel what we each perceived to be the differences between Islam and Christianity he embraced me with the words 'but we can still be brothers'.²⁴

Since the Great War, chaplains have also channelled large quantities of money and resources from Australians — especially Australian churches — to both their soldiers and local civilians in impoverished or war-torn countries. Others have established non-government organisations, while some even sought to adopt children from countries such as Vietnam after serving with the Army there. A prevailing joint operational tempo, tri-service training and combined health elements have all created new roles for Army chaplains who have increasingly had to minister to sailors and airmen as well as diggers. Finally, the growing importance of both Special Forces and women within the Army since the early 1990s has fashioned new roles for padres and 'madres' alike. All of these issues will be discussed in more detail in my other article in this journal.

The evolution of the RAACHD

Soldiers fight battles, it has been said, but it is 'generals who make the decisions that lead the soldiers to fight'.²⁵ Likewise in both peacetime and war the Chaplains' Department (hereafter called the Department) senior officers and church advisers have grappled with the difficulties of ensuring that chaplains can fulfil their calling. Another aim of my research has been to chart the origins and history of their efforts.

After more than a decade of failed attempts following Federation in 1901, the Department was established in December 1913. Just for the record, it should be noted that the precise date of the birthday of the Australian Army Chaplains' Department has been the subject of controversy. After a request from the Army Newspaper Unit for the date of the birthday of the RAACHD, the Department's

1979 conference concluded that the birthday was the commissioning date of the first chaplain who left for the Sudan campaign in 1885 (in actual fact, there were two chaplains). The historically fickle conference changed its mind the next year, however, after an address from Brigadier Maurice Austin on the appointment of chaplains and the establishment of the Chaplains' Department proper in December 1913. Nevertheless, veteran chaplain Douglas Abbott argued as late as 1995 that the 1 December 1913 date was incorrect, apparently on the ground that attempts had been made to establish and organise the Department since 1902.²⁶ This argument, however, carries little weight. While there certainly were attempts to create a department in 1901 (a year earlier than Abbott suggests), all the proposals put forward before 1913 for an establishment and a departmental structure came to virtually nothing. Moreover, the historian of the RACHD, Michael Snape, has conclusively dated the beginning of that department from 1796, the year a Royal Warrant established the position of Chaplain-General and an administrative structure under his authority. There is no question, *pace* the 1979 chaplains' conference and Abbott, that the birthday of the Department is 1 December 1913, as formally promulgated in the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*.²⁷ I'm sure this is a heartening finding for all who have organised corps centenary celebrations!

In 1913, then, the Department was established with a multi-denominational leadership structure quite unlike other imperial chaplaincy corps. The latter typically had one senior or principal chaplain at the top. The Australian Department's four-pronged structure reflected the absence of an established church in Australia and a level playing field since the Church Acts of 1836 — in terms of status and state funding — for Australia's *four* major denominations. For several chaplains the creation of four chaplains-general resulted in embarrassment about such obvious sectarian divisions and confusion among allied chaplaincy corps about who was actually in charge. In any case, the Department's administrative superstructure groaned under the weight of Great War demands and struggled to ensure sufficient numbers of chaplains. Amid massive demobilisation and the denuding of Army in the inter-war years the Chaplains' Department was close to moribund, with only the occasional attendance of chaplains at training camps.

The major change during these years was the abolition of badges of rank in 1920, which set the Australian Department apart from every other Allied corps (although it brought Army into line with the Australian Navy). The decision did not receive popular support from the majority of Army chaplains and it split senior chaplains along denominational lines. It was only passed because it had the support of the Anglican and Roman Catholic chaplains-general.²⁸ In 1942, after three years of

operations in which the ambiguity of not wearing badges of rank caused confusion and frustration, there remained only one dissenting voice among chaplains-general. The reinstatement of badges of rank that year was almost a unanimous decision.²⁹

It was not until 1942, with the complete remodelling of the Army to fight the war against Japan in the Pacific, that the Department gained for itself a proper command and staff structure. Over the course of the Second World War, the Department comprised a staggering 754 chaplains. This was easily the largest and most ecumenical gathering of religious leaders in Australian history.

Nevertheless, the leadership structure of part-time chaplains-general, which lasted for some 60 years, proved inadequate following the creation of Australia's first regular professional army (the Australian Regular Army) in 1947. Although the years between 1945 and the early 1970s were marked by profound ecumenical cooperation, they were also marked by policy 'on the run', grounded in the old dispensation of a volunteer Army and marked by reactive rather than forward thinking. Pleas for greater professional standards in training and service conditions were ignored by senior chaplains and an 'old guard' of part-time chaplains-general. Maximum seven-year commissions meant that many able chaplains were lost to their home churches or to Navy and Air Force. The period of equipoise came in 1971 when a cadre of chaplains finally secured permanent rather than short-service commissions for the first time. The post-Vietnam Army's move towards tri-service arrangements from the mid-1970s led to a wholesale remodelling of the Army Headquarters organisation and resulted in the creation in 1981 of the RACS and Principal Chaplains Committee system. The increasing professionalisation of chaplaincy was furthered in 1989 with the abolition of the British 'classification' system (of four classes of chaplain) and the adoption of a 'divisional' structure which linked relative rank to recognised competencies and experience. Extended reform from the mid-1990s resulted in the creation of a specialist officer structure in 2002 and tri-service training in 2003. By 2003 the Department had comprehensively addressed a range of issues — leadership, organisation, training, resourcing, service conditions, recruitment and retention — that had never been adequately dealt with during the first 90 years of its existence.

Training is just one area that has come a long way since 1913. Great War chaplains were given no training whatsoever. William Moore recalled being referred to a firm of military tailors in Adelaide 'for advice as to whether I should wear Breeches or Slacks!' The CO of his light horse brigade initially took so little notice of Moore that he had to apply personally for a horse.³⁰ Even on arrival in the field, chaplains usually met with little direction. Anglican padre Kenneth Henderson recalled

asking his senior chaplain 'for all the advice he could give me' on arrival in France. "My boy," replied the grizzled chaplain, taking his pipe out of his mouth, "I can give you no advice. Every man must work out his own salvation. Think out where you'll be most useful, and go there".³¹ Great War chaplains benefitted from British and American chaplaincy training on the Western Front after 1917, but fifty years later things were little different. Anglican padre Peter Dillon received his first chaplaincy training *after* his return from a tour of duty in Vietnam. Few chaplains received specialist training and preparation at Canungra before deploying to South Vietnam. Roman Catholic padre Keith Teefey described his introduction to the Army:

*I did a two week Chaplains' School which explained the structures of the Army, showed me how to put on a uniform, salute, put up a hutchie, handle a ration pack ... After that one is on one's own ... My way was just to go with the troops. In the preparation for [South Vietnam] I went on exercises with them in the cold and the wet and the heat of the Putty Ranges and Shoalwater Bay, dug fighting pits, did early morning PT [physical training] ... or whatever.*³²

A lack of training was sometimes embarrassing for the innocent padre abroad, as one found out when he asked the headquarters battery of his artillery unit at Nui Dat where their guns were located.³³

The tradition of ecumenical cooperation has remained consistently strong within chaplaincy. Indeed one could almost argue that there are no sectarians in Australian foxholes. Jewish-Christian relations have also been warm both during and since the Great War, while chaplains have provided every opportunity for the spiritual needs of those of other faiths. Nevertheless, denominational emphases and tensions will always remain, especially at senior levels and because most chaplains spend the majority of their time outside foxholes. Sporadic debates have emerged about the validity of the Salvation Army's church and ordination status, while the Second World War witnessed some unedifying scenes in which Lutheran pastors applying for chaplaincy were tailed by intelligence operatives and even detained in prison on suspicion of Nazi links or sympathies.³⁴ The only major bust-up was a controversy in the 1950s over traditional Anglican consecration of the 'colours' of units, but that was sorted out by diplomacy and compromise in 1956. An Anglican Chaplain-General 'consecrated' the colours; the Catholic Chaplain-General 'blessed' the colours (canon law forbade the consecration of non-sacred objects, so the same blessing given to a marriage ring was used, substituting 'colours' for 'ring'); and the United Churches Chaplain-General 'dedicated' the colours to God and country. Roman Catholic Deputy Chaplain-General Alo Morgan

called it a compromise and a fiction — but a necessary one. The practice worked well when the Hall of Remembrance at the Australian War Memorial was dedicated in 1959 and has been retained ever since.³⁵

Chaplains have played an important role in intellectual life. Since Anglican padre Kenneth Henderson's thoughtful and critical analyses of chaplaincy during the Great War and afterwards, the RAACHD has similarly benefitted from able theologians and intellectuals within its ranks. Such chaplains have, however, remained a minority. The Anglican journal *Capellanus* provided a valuable but short-lived forum for discussion of practical and theological issues of chaplaincy during the Second World War. But it was not until the late 1960s that there emerged a flowering of intellectual engagement with the pressing moral questions raised by modern armed conflict and the provision of uniformed chaplaincy. This had much to do with the RAACHD's massively expanded role in the development and delivery of character training, combined with the need to attempt to unravel multiple moral and theological Gordian knots: the nuclear age, the ideological polarities of the Cold War and the countercultural 1960s, the rise of the social sciences and caring professions, and the tragedy of the Vietnam conflict. A group of intellectually engaged chaplains published the *Command Chaplains Newsletters* and *Intercom* journal between the early 1970s and 1994. Since then, however, there has been no equivalent forum or clearing house, apart from conferences, for thinking hard about chaplaincy and the many complex theological issues it raises. This is despite the introduction since the 1990s of postgraduate theological study for those ascending to senior positions and a large body of literature on chaplaincy developed by British, American and Canadian chaplaincy corps. While some Australian thinking has continued in recent decades, some have questioned whether the theological nettle of chaplaincy has truly been grasped.

Plaster saints in barracks? The RAACHD's contribution to the Army

What overall conclusions, then, can be drawn about the contribution of the RAACHD and its chaplains to the Army over its first century? This is not an easy question to answer. The chaplain and the historian of chaplaincy alike deal with intangibles that cannot readily be weighed or measured. As one historian of American chaplaincy has noted:

*When the spiritual impact of a sunset or a starry sky, a symphony or a throb of sympathy or affection can be measured, it may be possible to compute those potent forces outside the sphere of the physical sciences which the chaplain is in the Army to intensify and direct.*³⁶

Generalisations are always risky in assessing the impact of chaplains on diggers. Yet the value of chaplains in boosting morale cannot be gainsaid. Two Australian officers put it this way in a seminal journal article on Army manpower published in 1980:

[T]he universal experience of generals from Xenophon to Montgomery who claim that man's faith is important to him and thus the Army, cannot be denied. Indeed experience has led us to believe that there is an inner strength in all men connected with his belief in God and the leader who disregards it is no better than a fool.³⁷

Another finding of 'Captains of the soul' is that chaplains in their various roles have contributed significantly as 'force multipliers' for the Army's mission of warfighting, peacekeeping and humanitarian work. Chaplains have assisted in the repair of broken souls, broken hearts and broken parts; the fine-tuning of the soldier's moral compass; and the preservation of his or her ethical sensibilities.

As the accounts of many chaplains and soldiers have testified, chaplains have also acted as a kind of 'sacred sapper', building bridges through their words and deeds to help thousands of soldiers at every level of the Army to connect with the divine and the transcendent. This is, after all, surely one of the fundamental reasons for the existence of both church and synagogue. 'The military chaplain is meant to bring humanity to an inhuman situation', said Father Mulcahy in an episode of *MASH*.³⁸ Australian chaplains have certainly done that. But this seems to me to be only half the task. The military chaplain is also meant to bring — and embody — the divine persona in an inhuman situation.

The limits of the chaplains' impact on diggers is certainly tangible in declining attendance at religious services since the 1960s, occasionally high venereal disease rates and hedonism among soldiers, or a certain reserve about deeper things. Is this evidence simply confirmation of Rudyard Kipling's poetic observation that 'single men in barr[a]cks don't grow into plaster saints'? Some Australian historians appear to have too easily taken the ostensibly blasphemous digger at his word. Australian religion and spirituality, like the digger, has been observed as notoriously taciturn. One Great War chaplain likened the digger to a 'camouflage artist'; a Second World War chaplain likened him to a deep artesian well that only needed the correct method of tapping. Historian Manning Clark and others have likened Australian spirituality to 'a whisper in the mind and a shy hope in the heart'. A shyness indeed, but a hope nevertheless, as sociologist Gary Bouma points out.³⁹ There is a massive body of evidence concerning the many thousands of Australian soldiers who have gratefully accepted the religious ministrations of chaplains,

or have made decisions to follow Christ; or for sharply rising worship attendance rates in proportion to the proximity of battle. Exactly what religion has meant for the digger is a vast and complex subject beyond the scope of this article, or indeed the history I have recently completed. But the digger, it would seem, doth protest too much. And others, perhaps, have made too much of such protestations.

Equally difficult to measure is the chain of influence that is started when a chaplain leads a man or woman to higher ideals and transcendent loyalties.⁴⁰ One brief case study among many may suffice. Anglican padre Aubrey Pain patiently guided a young soldier through a maze of existential and intellectual doubt in the Changi and Kranji prisoner of war camps. Sixty years later that young soldier wrote this about Pain:

A chaplain by the name of Aubrey Pain stuck by me through thick and thin ... One day he said to me, 'Geoffrey, you have a very good mind. You pose significant questions. But I don't have the answers.' He smiled his deliberate and devised sanctimonious smile and said, 'I can't prove God to you. But I tell you something,' he peered into my eyes. 'I tell you, Geoffrey, I know him!' With that he lowered his head as though heading off into a gathering storm, and, forward bent, he loped off. I half-grinned, but I knew he was better than my literary mentors ... Aubrey Pain was a man in whom there was no guile and everybody seemed to love him ... a chaplain to whom men came time and again. He had stuck with me in my struggles to find something beyond what I had known. He would wave away my polemics as if they counted for nothing. Although very much an Anglo-Catholic he would preach on Good Friday in the Changi Square like a Salvation Army officer or a militant Methodist preacher. When he was a priest before what he called 'the altar', he was a sacerdotal minister of the holy rites and a different person in manner of speaking ... he seemed to love the times we talked on theology and practical spirituality. The test of the man was that the men loved to talk to him. They appreciated his ministrations at the bedside or just where they were working. He was unmarried, but in no way effeminate. In the services he would have his glass of beer with the men but he had no time for blue jokes or bawdiness. Men appreciated him and acted accordingly. Every so often the memory of him comes to me ... For me he was one of the greats.⁴¹

That young soldier, Geoffrey Bingham, was ordained in the Anglican Church after the war, serving as a missionary, theological educator and author for 60 years. His remarkable vocation included authorship of over 200 books; a powerful preaching and teaching ministry that filled churches in Australia, Britain, America,

New Zealand, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Thailand and New Guinea, and brought him the award of an Order of Australia medal.⁴² The profound lessons learned in captivity, and the spiritual revival that many experienced there, were foundational for Bingham's long and influential ministry.⁴³

In the final equation, the contribution of chaplains is perhaps best summed up by the poignant words carved into the tombstones of so many unidentified Australian soldiers whom their padres buried: 'Known only to God'.

Still another reality cannot be ignored. Chaplains, like the soldiers they serve, have not been immune from the temptations and stresses peculiar to military life. Some chaplains have sworn like troopers, drunk like fish, been too much 'one of the boys', 'played the officer' to compensate for their ineffectiveness, crumpled under pressure, 'gone native' with martial enthusiasm, lapsed from acceptable standards of moral conduct, dwarfed their ministries due to unnecessary clashes with COs, or been better suited to pastoral care in a parish church, lacking the instinctive abilities of a soldier's chaplain in a war zone. In doing so, some have lost the integrity and 'set-apartness' (or holiness) of their vocation, causing damage that has taken their successors enormous effort to repair. In the mid-1990s Colonel J.C. Brewer, Chief of Staff of the 2nd Division, offered this sobering reflection on his contact with chaplains over 32 years as an officer in the ARA, including service in Malaya. He catalogued some of the failures he had seen among chaplains:

Being the most popular officer in the unit or even competing with the Commander for the title of most influential individual in the unit — behaviour I have observed in chaplains in different places ... chaplains who were unable to cope with having to conduct themselves as officers. Some decided, in their wisdom, to be magnanimous to the soldiers and to tell them that they didn't have to salute. Consider the confusion that results ... I have had the experience of a chaplain in my unit who professed that he had lost his faith. That was a tough interview for a young regimental officer, I can assure you! I have seen others who strove so hard for acceptance that they became the hardest drinkers and cursers in the unit. There have been others who have been pacifist; some who disdained the uniform and what it represents and found every possible reason to avoid being involved in unit activities; some who were reclusive, electing to sit behind a closed office door waiting for clients; some who thought that their role was that of welfare officer for the soldiers and who shunned the officers and NCOs because they represented management and must therefore be at the source of the problem.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, a strikingly consistent finding of my research is that such chaplains have only ever constituted a tiny minority. One former Protestant Principal Chaplain, for example, could recall in over 40 years of Army chaplaincy only two cases of gross misconduct requiring instant dismissal of chaplains.⁴⁵ And on the other side of the ledger, Colonel Brewer observed that:

I have had other experiences of chaplains, such as the two outstanding members of [3RAR] in Malaya ... in the early 1960s ... I have the utmost regard for chaplains of all denominations ... A good chaplain is a priceless asset and the spiritual reward from doing the job well, must be profound ... at the divisional level the chaplains are a fundamentally important resource. Their importance derives from their influence ... The relationship between the Commander at all levels and his chaplain is an important one that is neglected at peril ... There have been some outstanding chaplains whose positive contribution to the overall effectiveness of their unit has been incalculable.

Moreover, for the bewildered young recruit, as Brewer had once been, the padre was 'the welcome presence of the personage who could provide legitimate reassurance and encouragement — a source of stability in a period of uncertainty and turbulence.'⁴⁶

This enduring and valued contribution of the RAACHD and its chaplains underscore two broader findings. The first is the way in which many chaplains have managed to reconcile — practically, morally and intellectually — the possible role tension resulting from serving church and state simultaneously. The second is the extent to which Army chaplaincy managed to expand its resources and reach within one of Australia's largest public institutions — from a profoundly religious and monotheistic base — at exactly the time that scholars have observed a decline in Australian religious adherence. Religion, like chaplaincy in other areas of Australian public life, has not gone away. In fact, chaplaincy's size and profile has actually increased. In turn, these findings stand in contrast with the prevailing pacifist and secularising outlook of historians and sociologists of the 1970s and 1980s who assumed first that military chaplaincy contained insoluble role tensions, and second, that religion was retreating from the public square to give the nation a secular future, with religion relegated to the private sphere (if it still existed at all).⁴⁷

One thing that can be said without any qualification is that the chaplains' ministry of presence — in the field and on the home front — has established a proud tradition of devoted service that has garnered a deep gratitude and respect from

diggers of all ranks and their families. It is clear from my other article in this volume that Australian society's outwardly religious complexion has changed significantly over the last fifty years, but, as chaplains of all eras will testify, a deep and abiding respect for the chaplain and his position in the Army has not. Padre Keith Teefey, for example, was well aware of this reputation when he entered Army chaplaincy in the 1960s:

I was amazed and often embarrassed by the welcome and the cooperation I received wherever I went. I was always made aware of those who had gone before me, and that I was trying to fill 'big boots'.⁴⁸

That respect has not come without a cost. For over a century well over two thousand Army chaplains have accompanied Australia's soldiers wherever they have gone, from the blood-drenched beaches of Gallipoli to night patrols in the remote mountainous desert regions of Afghanistan. While seeking to minimise and repair the tragic human cost of war, they have also borne it. Scores of chaplains lost their lives during the First and Second World Wars, many while acting as stretcher-bearers on the Somme, among the Light Horse in Palestine or with diggers in the swamps and jungle tracks of New Guinea. Others died while ministering to fellow prisoners in the green hell of Japanese prisoner of war camps. Chaplains have been wounded in all conflicts in which Australia was involved during the last century, in some cases carrying the physical and psychological scars for the rest of their lives. Chaplains have also tended the wounded in aid posts and field hospitals overseas, and in repatriation hospitals at home. They have sojourned with soldiers and their families through the joys and the tragedies of daily life, helping to heal the human cost of soldiering and providing a listening ear, a waterproof shoulder and wise counsel. In this way Australian Army chaplains have exercised a profoundly incarnational ministry. The padre has been described as 'God's flesh and blood representative within the unit'.⁴⁹ A digger might think such a description too ethereal and insist that the padre is embedded in the unit or, as one digger put it during the Vietnam War: 'one of us, without a gun'. In this light, then, there are good grounds for believing that to a significant extent Australian Army chaplains have, like Padre Hugh Cunningham on the River Kwai, been 'Captains of the soul'. ■

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The Search for Identity and Meaning in Army Chaplaincy: A Theological Journey of Australian Army Chaplaincy 1913–2013

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⁹ *What has been will be again,
what has been done will be done again;
there is nothing new under the sun.*

¹⁰ *Is there anything of which one can say,
'Look! This is something new'?*
*It was here already, long ago;
it was here before our time.*

¹¹ *No one remembers the former generations,
and even those yet to come
will not be remembered
by those who follow them.¹*

Introduction

As a parish pastor in the late 1990s serving in north-west Tasmania, I had a couple of church leaders keen on gemstone fossicking. One summer they invited my family and me to join them. So we packed up the camping gear and headed off to the opposite side of the island to fossick for gemstones. I recall the fun of watching my young children stand in the middle of an icy stream, scoop their pan into the sandy bottom of the creek, and point with great excitement at what they had found. I didn't have the heart to tell them that they hadn't discovered a precious gemstone, so we ended up with a bag of pretty, but essentially worthless, stones. For the adults it was a different story. We spent hours panning in those creeks and, in the end, we had amassed a few small stones of minimal value.

I begin this theological journey with this story for it so readily reminds me of the task before us as we fossick for those rare theological gems that have shaped Australian Army chaplaincy over the past one hundred years. While there is ample historical data on Army chaplains and chaplaincy, the theological narrative is sparse, conflicted at times, and often hidden. Wading knee-deep in the data and fossicking for the theological gems hidden within this historical seam is a challenging task. At times, it felt like panning for gold flecks in the Simpson Desert. However, every now and then, the theological piece sparkles and reinvigorates the search for more.

This is the first of two papers. In this paper, our task will be the exploration of the theological insights that have shaped chaplaincy, focussing on the theological conversations within the historical material. The second paper will contemplate the implications of these insights and offer a reflection on what these mean for the future of Army chaplaincy. Before I begin, however, I need to air several caveats as a start point for our conversation. The first is that this conversation converges on the Christian theological discourse. Historically, with the exception of our Jewish brothers whose story is unique in itself, the inter-faith element within Australian Army chaplaincy is non-existent. While the multi-faith discourse is emerging as an important conversation in the contemporary Army environment, it is missing from this historical narrative. The second caveat is that there will be gaps in the presentation and, at times, assumptions will be made based on observed trends. Interestingly, prior to the 1970s, not much exists within Australian military chaplaincy outside the historical narratives. However, dramatic changes in the post-Vietnam period impelled chaplaincy to enter a theological conversation over its legitimacy, purpose and practice. The chaplaincy journal *Intercom*, launched in

1972 by Bruce Roy as an Army initiative before becoming Australian Defence Force (ADF) focused, provides a primary resource for this theological conversation. The final caveat deals with the way we approach theology, which in this paper will be in the form of critical theology and theological praxis. Consequently, while these papers will offer a critical reflection on the facets discussed, they do not present the only possible perspectives. As we explore this material, alternative perspectives will arise, along with moments of theological angst. Engage the theological discourse with the spirit intended. No-one has all the answers; however, as we collectively enter the theological discourse we may discover a response that urges us forward, while giving glory to God in the process.

As this is not a historical piece, I do not intend to explore the material chronologically or even systematically. Instead I intend, as we journey through the conversation, to explore several themes emerging from the historical material. Many of these will also resonate through Michael Gladwin's material, and in this way reinforce the significant theological themes shaping chaplaincy over the past century. The five most significant themes are:

1. the distinctive role, identity and meaning
2. the ecclesiastical relationships of chaplaincy
3. the challenge of inter-denominationalism and the myth of ecumenism
4. practice and pragmatism
5. the formation of theological frameworks for chaplaincy

While other themes emerge from the historical material, these five encapsulate theological discourse in some way. There will be overlap, partly because these five impinge on one another, and partly because some of the issues emerging in one find some level of congruence in others. When fossicking, sometimes you have to revisit old sites to find new gems, and sometimes the gems you find only become more valuable in the context of others.

This is a challenging topic. It forces us to look in the mirror and take stock of what we see. It may not always be what we want to see, or what others may expect of us. Paul's words to Corinth, however, are a guiding reminder of our journey:

¹¹ *When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.*

¹² *For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

¹³ *And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.²*

We are people who only see in part what God sees in full. As leaders in Army chaplaincy, we require a level of maturity that acknowledges our limitations and accepts that there is always more to what we see. We act with this in mind, striving to be agents of love who reflect the living presence of Christ.

Role, identity, and meaning

What is a military chaplain? More so, what is a military chaplain within the context of the Australian Army? This single question, more than any other, has been the focus of theological discussion for much of the history of Army chaplaincy. In its multiplicity of forms, it varies from direct examination through to subtle nuances hidden behind moments of reflection and contemplation. This is not simply a question of practice, despite the pragmatic assumptions that what one does reveals who one is. The depth of this question resonates at the core of identity and meaning. It confronts the ecclesiastical presuppositions about public ministry and attempts to frame these in relation to a secularised world beyond the ecclesiological identity of church where such frameworks logically belong. The struggle of coming to terms with this is evident in the historical journey of chaplaincy.

Role, and the associated questions of how this is developed, rests on the theological understanding of identity and meaning. From a theological perspective, identity always pre-empts function or role. However, this identity has not always been forthcoming, and at times situation, context, and organisational expectation have been the dominant determining factors. Yet hidden within this discourse exists an often misunderstood, or unacknowledged, clash of ecclesiology, reflected in an ecclesiastical praxis that subconsciously shapes the various interactive nuances within chaplaincy. This tension has not always resonated comfortably with chaplains, who at times have been the recipients of harsh, even hostile, criticism from fellow chaplains, the Army, and their civilian ecclesiological peers. This tension

remains evident in contemporary chaplaincy and serves to highlight the importance of meaning and identity as the precursor to role, which remains an elusive and slippery theological discussion to the present day.

Until the more recent introduction of lay chaplaincy within the Catholic Military Ordinariate, Army chaplaincy has always been the domain of ordained clergy.³ This tradition dates back in British history, the forerunner of the Australian military model, to as early as 430AD and persisted within various clerical associations with the British military up until 1796.⁴ In 1796, a Royal Warrant disbanded the Regimental Chaplain model prevalent since Elizabeth I, and created a single Royal Army Chaplains' Department (RACHD) under the appointment of a Chaplain-General.⁵ As time progressed, other denominational clergy such as the Presbyterians (1827), Catholics (1836), Wesleyans (1881) and Jews (1889) joined the RACHD. In all these cases, the men who became chaplains were ordained or recognised preachers/ministers/priests within their denominational or faith tradition. With the formation of the Australian Army after Federation, chaplains continued to be ordained clergy serving local military units. In 1913, when the Royal Australian Army Chaplains' Department (RAACHD) was formed, the tradition remained intact and continued until the recent shift to include trained and qualified laity within Catholic chaplaincy.

While some may consider the move by the Catholic Bishop to include laity as a shift from the norm, history demonstrates that it is not a new concept. With the formation of the Uniting Church, a robust discussion emerged, similar to that currently occurring in a variety of other contexts, as to the theological essence and nature of chaplaincy and the role of the church within it. One model explored whether chaplaincy should be demilitarised and handed to civilian clergy. Two catalysts appeared in the 1970s that prompted this discussion. One was the coming together of disparate denominations into the Uniting Church, the other the post-Vietnam angst. This latter provocation of the nation's social conscience questioned the purpose and meaning of chaplaincy within the military, particularly in the United States (US) and, to a lesser extent, Australia. In response, R.G. Hutcheson, a US Naval chaplain, produced an article entitled 'Should the Military Chaplaincy be Civilianised?'⁶ In this article, while acknowledging the angst, he raises important questions about contextual ministry, particularly about how organisations such as the military have a culture of exclusion towards those not embedded within their world. The Uniting Church, responding to elements of this discussion, went one step further by asking whether chaplaincy should even be the domain of ordained clergy. Jim Moody writes:

The Church has argued, by implication, that chaplains are ordained people who are sent out, on her behalf, to minister to unique groups of people. The Church accepts that she has a ministry to these unique groups and that their needs are not always met by the parish situation. However, it does not automatically follow that the ordained should be the persons who are set aside to minister. The needs might well be met by a different order of ministry than that carried out by the ordained, and if, as shown above, the ordained ministers are not carrying out the tasks they were ordained to do, we should be seeking other ways for ministry to be carried out in the Army.⁷

Moody's point is that if chaplaincy is not fundamentally about enacting the priestly role embedded within the ordained traditions of the church, then perhaps it is possible for the non-ordained to perform this task. Gary Stone takes up this point in 1993, when he advocates the role and place of lay ministers within the Army:

Chaplains should seek to identify, equip and install such lay ministers as are suitable, available and necessary for the mission of the church to be fulfilled.⁸

The rationale for the introduction of laity into chaplaincy requires further examination, but it is not a new question, and evidence suggests that the churches are already well ahead of ADF chaplaincy in utilising laity in chaplaincy roles within the health care, aged care and educational contexts of ministry.

The questions Moody and Stone ask are valid. What distinction exists in Army chaplaincy, particularly in function, between those ordained and those not? Assuming that the ecclesiological world, in most cases, can determine clear theological lines of demarcation between ordained and non-ordained, is the secular organisation also capable of embracing this distinction? The tensions evident in the stated need to have ordained individuals in an operational environment, and the claim that non-ordained are incapable of providing similar levels of chaplaincy support, appear to suggest that the Army does not comprehend this delineation.⁹ One would even suggest that an ecclesiastical angst exists in Army chaplaincy based on traditions that do not delineate ordained from lay ministry as precisely as others do. Despite this situation, and the context from which it arises, not all denominational groups accept the move towards lay chaplaincy as evident within the Catholic Ordinariate. Importantly, while there may be a reluctance among most denominational groups within Defence to explore this as freely as the Catholics, it needs to be acknowledged that some churches have explored and introduced lay chaplaincy into industry, health, aged care and educational institutions. The question of whether they would also choose to do this within the Army remains unresolved.

The salient truth is that most churches and chaplains theologially conceptualise the Army as a ‘parish ministry’ and the default model for this is ordained clergy. This fundamental assumption is perhaps the single most identifiable cause of the tension that exists in chaplaincy. This is not merely a chaplaincy problem, but one that remains within the church itself. As Moody comments,

The Church has not always clearly defined the role of chaplain and has failed to heed the warnings that many chaplains have been giving. Many chaplains succumb to one of two temptations. They have either been tempted to identify totally with the group of institution they are serving, i.e., Defence Force chaplains have been tempted to act like professional officers, school chaplains like school teachers, hospital chaplains like para-medics, or they have been tempted to join the ranks of the helping professions and retain only a tenuous link with the Church. It would appear that because the Church has not defined the role of the chaplain he becomes confused about his role and can lose direction directly.¹⁰

This single comment by Moody appears to encapsulate the primary cause for tension and angst within chaplaincy that resonates through all the literature. The introduction and presence of lay chaplains within Defence only serves to compound this dilemma.¹¹

It is significant and important to note that not all those who claim the title of clergy have access to Army chaplaincy, even if they come from one of the recognised denominational groups. Historically, in order to be an Army chaplain one had to be a minister/pastor/priest/preacher of good standing within a recognised denominational body. In 1796, this meant:

Qualifications laid down at this time for the appointment of chaplains are of interest – zeal in his profession and good sense; gentle manners; a distinctive and impressive manner for reading the Divine Service; a firm constitution of body as well as of mind.¹²

Today, the Army recruiting process does not contain such explicit qualifications. Instead, qualifications for entry as a chaplain include denominational endorsement, theological qualifications, ordination (or equivalent), experience in pastoral ministry, Principal Chaplain and senior denominational chaplain approval, and the ability to meet standard Army officer enlistment criteria.¹³ What the concept of ‘good standing’ means appears to be relative and somewhat subjective. It seems dependent on the denominational body and its lines of hierarchy and control

within its frameworks of theological governance. It would be unfair, and potentially unwise, to assume that similar standards apply across all denominational groups. Despite a generic rule of five years, similar relativism is also applicable for time and experience within the denominational group, including reference to pastoral practice and the immediacy of such associations for the candidate. The only single, seemingly consistent control point resides with the military enlistment process itself. This speaks volumes for the theological autonomy each denominational group claims as its own, and highlights the fundamental claim of chaplaincy — namely that chaplaincy belongs not to the church as a whole, or to the Army as an employer, but to the various denominational bodies that make up the Christian component of the Australian religious environment. Chaplaincy does not belong to the Army, despite the material benefits and tangible rewards offered for such service. It is not an ecclesiastical entity unto itself, nor is it fair to claim it as a definitive representation of the Christian churches. Even those denominational groups with their own ecclesiastical governance within the ADF exist within a larger denominational body to which they are ultimately accountable.

For the most part, while denominational affiliation has been the standard requirement for chaplains in the Army over the past one hundred years, it has always been qualified as those who hold the Public Office of the Ministry in whatever form each denominational group recognises. The importance of this distinction is not to be underestimated. There is a strong thread of conversation that assumes that the identity of a chaplain is always associated with those who occupy the Public Office of the church. In this sense, the various nuances associated with the Public Ministry all apply to chaplaincy. Coupled with this is the fundamental assumption, especially as it weaves its way through the historical discourse, that this ministry reflects the parish setting. The ecclesiological expectation is that chaplains perform the same duties as their civilian counterparts. The only variant is the unique and specific military context in which this takes place. In 1943, the RACHD booklet described the duties of a chaplain as:

*... the usual services on Sunday, commencing with early celebrations of Holy Communion, and the Church parade service for various units; generally a Sunday School in the afternoon, and the voluntary service at night. Duties during the week consist of hospital visitation; visitation of detention barracks ...; religious instruction to recruits, and to the children in the day schools; visitation of married quarters, and of troops in barrack rooms ...*¹⁴

The only wartime adaptations to this list of duties concerned morale and encouragement of soldiers before battle, and the task of comforting casualties or dealing with death. The assumption remains evident that the tasks of a parish priest/minister are simply transferrable from the civilian context to the military. In a similar US publication, the authors speak quite openly of the similarities between parish and military practice, even to the extent of discussing how to avoid competing with one another for parishioners.¹⁵ The tasks of leading worship, teaching the faith, visiting the sick and burdened, touching lives, drawing the lost back into the faith community, all of which a civilian minister/priest does on a daily basis, are advocated as the same for the military chaplain. The pluralistic nature of the military environment and the unique activities of preparing for, or engaging in war, seem to be the only modifications applicable to his role. This same assumption remains the prevalent theme, with the requirement for pastoral practice, which is assumed to be parish practice, as one of the prerequisites for entry into twenty-first century Australian Army chaplaincy. The skills developed in parish practice, such as leading worship, visitation, outreach, pastoral care and teaching, are all assumed as fundamentals for ministry within the Army environment.

The tension this assumption causes permeates the literature. In an article entitled 'Chaplaincy in the 1990s', John Quinlan lists five core activities for chaplaincy:

worship/spirituality — both on base and in the field

sacramental — including the preparation for reception of the sacraments

character training — character guidance, character development and character leadership

counselling — pastoral and relationship

visitation and pastoral care of soldiers in units and in their homes¹⁶

Quinlan then evaluates these core activities and makes the following comments:

Should this brief evaluation be even partially accurate, it indicates that Chaplains spend more of their time engaged in work they are not specifically trained for, and less in areas which Chaplains alone can do. Such anomalies require us to question the stated core activities, and especially the priority as listed. In the 1990s, what are the actual core activities of individual Chaplains? What should they be? Do we take on tasks to fill our time or meet client needs? What are the client needs? How much time is spent on administration for the sake of it?¹⁷

The nuances in this conversation highlight the tension in the identity of chaplaincy. On the one hand, there is a strong resonance in the core activities with the tasks performed by civilian clergy in their parish settings and yet, on the other, the clinical terminology of ‘client’ and ‘needs’ enters the discourse. This subtle, yet obvious change in language enters the historical narrative in the mid-1970s, and suggests the emergence of other factors impinging on the traditional role and identity of Army chaplaincy.

It is evident in the material that the parish model of ministry does not so easily fit specialised ministries beyond the normative setting that is the backbone of the church’s presence in Australian society. For the most part these tensions surface as a more contemporary problem for the practice of public ministry in an increasingly secularised environment. The evolution and evolving nature of hospital chaplaincy provides a good illustration of the changes being applied that shift the identity of chaplaincy away from the parish model. The introduction of Clinical Pastoral Education, for example, has been an evolving movement, beginning in the early years of the twentieth century and eventually formalising in the late 1960s. It was this movement that introduced the chaplain to a process of clinical practice and critical reflection on the ministry within a health-oriented institution.¹⁸ Similar shifts have occurred in industrial chaplaincy and, to a lesser degree, in school-based chaplaincy. However, for the most part, Army chaplaincy has resigned itself to function as if the Army was simply a parish environment.

For at least the first fifty years of chaplaincy this was a generically valid model as the majority of soldiers were associated with church communities in some way, albeit loosely. Michael McKernan, commenting on Father John Fahey, the first chaplain ashore at Gallipoli, writes:

*The spiritual welfare of his Catholics was assured, he believed, for he insisted that every man make confession a few hours before the landing. In the first three weeks of the campaign he could not say Mass as it was too dangerous to gather men together in close formation.*¹⁹

Describing a routine resembling the life of a parish priest/minister, McKernan continues,

*Soon enough something like routine settled over the peninsula; so agile are human beings in accepting and accommodating the extraordinary. The chaplains spent their time yarning with the men, encouraging them and praying with them. When it was possible and safe they would hold a church parade ... several of the chaplains gave lectures and talks on this [church history] and other biblical themes.*²⁰

The importance of the parish community and the identity of priest/minister within it continued until the turmoil of the 1960s and the socio-political chaos of the Vietnam era. Around this time society shifted, the religious institution became questionable, and church attendance commenced an escalated period of decline still apparent today. Yet the model of the parish priest remains evident. Tom Frame, in reflecting on Royal Australian Navy chaplaincy, comments on the expectation that chaplains know what it is they are to do, under the apparent assumption that they are simply parish ministers in uniform:

Most of the time we expect the chaplain to 'simply get on with it'. But what is 'it'? Current demands on chaplains often only go as far as the requirement to conduct Sunday services. For the remainder of his time the chaplain is required to find plenty to do, remain motivated and entirely dedicated to who he is committed to serve.²¹

The model of the parish priest appears consistent as the normative model on which chaplaincy finds its identity. In many ways, there appears to be historical precedence for this, and the ongoing conversation on mission and evangelism bears witness to this ongoing sub-theme of the parish priest/minister in uniform. There is nothing new about this, for in 1642, in response to the Irish rebellion, four Presbyterian ministers accompanied the Scottish Army into Ireland and subsequently planted the seeds for the reorganisation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.²² What is fascinating about this tale is that the article describing this appeared in an edition of *Intercom* whose overall theme, 'patterns of Ministry' appears local church-centric. The index gives just a hint of this:

- The Army, Society, and the Bible,
- Patterns of ministry
- Army Chaplains who formed a church
- Finding shepherds – Is 'shared ministry' a possibility in a garrison church?²³

Over the years, a number of conversations seem to re-emerge within Army chaplaincy centred on the concept of ministry, mission and outreach. The transposition of military communities into the surrounding civilian communities is one of many catalysts compelling chaplains to grapple with the concept or need to create, sustain or maintain their connectedness within the garrison church model. It is of interest to ponder whether this framework continues to persist in the minds of many contemporary chaplains, especially with the apparent need to encourage Defence to upkeep, upgrade, or build base chapels.

In 1993 Gary Stone, in what appears to be a rather bold move, conducted a review of the mission and ministry of the church in the ADF. In perusing Stone's material in Intercom, it is evident that a larger document originally existed.²⁴ It is also evident that a strong lay-oriented Catholic theology, influenced by Catholic lay movements which seemed to flourish in the 1980s and early 1990s, shaped much of what Stone concluded. Integral to Stone's review is the concept of the garrison church, which essentially appears as a replication of its civilian counterpart. Peter Playsted's response to the review is interesting:

Before we get down to specific comments by Colonel Stone, there appears to be an underlying assumption on his part that Christian members of the Defence Force of Australia ought to, as part of their normal faith commitment, automatically identify with Chaplains and with Base Chapels simply as a matter of course, because the Chapels and the Chaplains are there, as provided by the 'system'.²⁵

From the literature available, Playsted's comment is far more generically applicable as a guiding assumption of military faith practice among chaplains than as a criticism of Stone's approach. It should come as a surprise to no-one that such a mindset resides within chaplaincy, particularly when one considers that the foundational model for chaplaincy remains that of the parish priest/minister.

The pressures of an increasingly secularised environment saw chaplaincy forced to redefine itself in the post-Vietnam era. Previously, the role of pastoral care and counsellor, the unique position of confidante, the openness of soldiers and families to chaplaincy engagement, the welfare and support required, and the generic capability of the chaplain as parish priest/minister allowed extraordinary freedoms of ministry. The gradual introduction of professional entities such as social workers and psychologists forced chaplaincy into a process of pragmatic reflection on what it actually did as a separate and unique contributor to Army's overall capability. Increasingly, as time progressed and the religious identification of Australians waned (exaggerated by the military environment that, although a sub-culture of a national social psyche, is notorious for its ambivalence, verging on blatant anti-religiosity), chaplains unwittingly entered a new competitive arena. They were competing not with their civilian clergy colleagues over who goes to whose church, but with others who had rapidly encroached on what chaplains traditionally understood as pastoral care and welfare support within Army. The traditional domains of chaplaincy were now invaded by expert systems working from a legal-rational mindset, which easily assimilated itself into the burgeoning bureaucracy of the modern Australian Army. In an irony of circumstance, post-Vietnam

chaplains began to redefine much of what they did in terms of welfare support and counselling rather than religious activity, and in the process opened the door for the rapid encroachment of other agencies that could enter the public discourse far more easily than the religious guardian.²⁶

The mental health domain was not new to chaplaincy. In fact, for the greater part of the last one hundred years it was the chaplains' sole domain, and they filled this dimension of chaplaincy in a unique way and far more intensely than their civilian counterparts. There is enough evidence to assert that, before the rise of the secular priests of modernity (psychologists and their lesser order of social workers), chaplaincy was well entrenched, well read and intellectually capable of contributing effectively and meaningfully to this more specialised form of mental health support.²⁷ For example, chaplaincy engaged the pastoral care of individuals affected by alcohol and drugs well before Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATODs) and other contemporary ADF alcohol and drug initiatives. In 1979, *Intercom* featured several articles on alcohol abuse and the methods of treatment and pastoral care. Stan Hessey's article, 'What can we do about Grogstrife?' could be a plagiarised copy of contemporary Army statements and policy, except that it was written thirty years before Defence psychologists finally conceived what they call today 'world's best practice' in treating and managing alcohol-related issues.²⁸ Included in the same issue of *Intercom* were two other interesting articles, one by John Hamilton on Army policy on alcohol abuse,²⁹ and another theological piece by Hans Spykerboer, 'The Biblical attitude to alcohol.'³⁰ Chaplains were also talking about issues of post-traumatic and critical incident stress long before the current focus by Defence psychologists. In 1991 Ron Paschke wrote an article entitled 'Critical Incident Stress Debriefing' in which he clinically deals with the issue and offers pastoral advice on managing this in soldiers that appears to resonate with the current approaches to critical incident mental health support.³¹

The chaplain as clinician is not a new concept for Army, and it is evident that chaplains pioneered, albeit it in relative isolation from the rest of the church, many of the current trends in pastoral practice in more specialised fields such as hospitals, prisons and industry. As these fields developed, and a more clinical or professional practitioner model emerged to sustain pastoral care/support/ministry in these civilian institutions, Army chaplaincy remained within its traditional model. Consequently, Carl Aiken's work in hospital chaplaincy as a specialised field has seen degrees of translation attempted in Army chaplaincy practice. This has not always been readily accepted or embraced because, fundamentally, chaplaincy remains entrenched in a parish model. Nevertheless, the basic assumption behind

Aiken's model is that chaplains are clinical practitioners with the tools and methods akin to such a professionalised approach enabling them to act in consistent and concurrent ways with other health professionals. As Aiken noted, 'In line with other clinicians in public health, chaplains use World Health Organisation codes for recording the provision of their pastoral care.'³²

Aiken's approach is not isolated in chaplaincy. Others have written about the influence of chaplaincy work in the field of disassociation and stress,³³ the chaplaincy response to trauma and medical resuscitation,³⁴ and chaplaincy involvement in critical incident debriefing,³⁵ to highlight a few. Today, the movement into spiritual injury as an aspect of mental health is a new shift for chaplaincy, but one already well established in other contexts.³⁶

The push to a more professional, clinical approach to chaplaincy shifts military chaplains to an entirely different plane compared to the training and employment experiences of most civilian clergy. The introduction of mental health programs such as Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST),³⁷ ATOD, and critical incident debriefing programs, has imposed a clinical language and model on chaplaincy's response to such events. Army chaplaincy has, at times, embraced such an approach with the introduction of the now defunct 'pastoral care and trauma' course in the early 2000s, contracted and run from the chaplaincy department at Westmead Hospital in Sydney. Some chaplains have undertaken various levels of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), which is a mandatory requirement for entry to hospital chaplaincy.³⁸ Clinical pastoral education, clinical language and practice, spiritual health and injury, and the drive to professional forms of clinical supervision, find moments of resonance throughout the historical development of chaplaincy.³⁹ This has raised issues of angst, suspicion, confusion, identity, role, function, meaning and purpose among chaplains, many of whom find the transition confrontational or, conversely, enter it with glee and abandonment. Either way, the process of critical theological reflection seems somewhat absent from the historical and contemporary discourse.

The validity of this clinical professional practitioner approach and its acceptance among chaplains remains questionable. Despite the trend towards a specialised appreciation of chaplaincy, most chaplains remain embedded in the pastoral model of the parish priest/minister. In 1994, at the RAACHD corps conference, despite the challenge of redefining the ministry and mission of chaplaincy within a unique institutional context, the conversation appeared to have become bogged down in discussion of the normative models of parish ministry. While Peter Woodward

raised the question of the RAACHD's mission and questioned the traditional concepts of church ministry, he failed to offer any real conclusions on what alternatives may exist to this mission:

*... the traditional concepts of church ministry based on worship and sacraments, evangelism and missionary outreach and pastoral care and parish structure set out the way ahead or do Chaplains seek out innovative ways of relating to the life and faith in the Army community?*⁴⁰

Woodward acknowledged the difficulty of the task, noting the variations in theological perspectives and the individualism of chaplains, but one is pushed to decide whether his outcomes are realistic. History suggests that the idealism evident in the article remains unresolved. Other authors in the report, all of whom seem bound to a paradigm that works well within a parish setting, raised similar concerns. Campbell Egan's piece on liturgy,⁴¹ Carmello Sciberras's piece on ministry to those with a theistic affiliation,⁴² and Gordon Petersen's piece on the rise of civilians in the ADF and implications for ministry,⁴³ all grapple with the changing nature of chaplaincy. The challenge with all these articles is to discern what it is they are actually trying to achieve for, in the end, they seem tied intimately to models of worship, pastoral care, mission and evangelism that seem more comfortable in a parish setting.

In the same report, Ian Schneider introduces the notion of ministry to the institution.⁴⁴ While this article finds resonance with some of the trends already discussed, it does open the door to another separate theological concept. Schneider's idea that chaplaincy has a larger ministry beyond the individual is not new. In 1978, Rod Tippett introduced discussion on how chaplaincy ministers within and to a bureaucratic organisation and, in 1979, Charles Wellings continued the discussion.⁴⁵ In the post-Vietnam era, the role of chaplaincy within the military bureaucracy came under particular scrutiny, most notably from Harvey G. Cox, who launched a critical assault on chaplaincy in his book *Military chaplains: From religious military to a military religion*.⁴⁶ Even today, the place and role of chaplains within the Army, especially as a Federal Government-funded ministry, continues to experience some level of scrutiny in the wake of the Federal Government's school chaplaincy program.⁴⁷ All Cox's contributors raise a fundamental concern about how chaplaincy relates, functions or ministers to the organisation or institution.

Several themes emerge from this particular discussion. The first is accountability to a legal-rational form of authority that is structured to sustain forms of domination over the sphere of human activity it wishes to control. How do chaplains,

whose primary allegiance is to their faith and denominational body, balance their denominational obligations and loyalty with the demands of the Army which provides materially for their ministry? This theme starts to emerge in subtle yet quite significant conversations throughout the material, particularly in the post-Vietnam era. One of those conversations concerns the actual link, whether by short service appointment/commission or permanent appointment, of the chaplain with the Army. It would appear that, until the 1970s, few chaplains were granted permanent commissions as Army officers. Instead, chaplains served seven-year appointments, much like the current short-service contracts, with approximately 25% offered permanent commissions.⁴⁸ Denominational ownership and responsibility for the chaplain was the accepted norm, and oversaw the return of chaplains to parish ministry once their seven-year appointment ended. However, sometime around the early 1970s permanent commissions were introduced, raising questions of identity for chaplains, particularly over to whom they were answerable. Roy Cosier, in an article entitled 'Professional CHAPLAIN, or PROFESSIONAL Chaplain', opens the discussion about the degree to which a chaplain should embrace the regimental system of administration, commenting that 'this question is becoming more pressing, and demanding more attention from the chaplaincy system itself. Especially now that permanent commissions are becoming available to Australian Regular Army chaplains.'⁴⁹ Evidently there was some concern that, with permanency of commission, chaplains would lose their unique clerical identity and become subservient to their secular military masters who would shape their ministry for them.⁵⁰

Cosier's question also emerges with the debate over the wearing of rank. Despite notions that this is a long and hotly debated topic, the narratives appear to demonstrate that it only truly emerged as an issue in the post-Vietnam era. A.B. Patersen's article is invaluable in this discussion as he outlines the history of rank within chaplaincy, noting that senior ecclesiastical leaders were the first to insist on badges of rank for chaplains.⁵¹ The argument, evident in the historical material, and surfacing periodically in the contemporary environment, advocating the removal of these clear identification symbols with the Army, takes on a pseudo-pastoral air which assumes that badges of rank are barriers to effective pastoral practice. This is not an issue peculiar to the Australian Army context. The same debate surfaces periodically in similar military contexts internationally. For example, US Air Force Chaplain Robert Stroud comments on badges of rank with an anecdote that frequently surfaces among Australian Army chaplains:

One night I was walking with my boss as we visited campsites for teams who had come in from Guam for a deployment competition. He was of the camp that believe rank is a perk for which we work and that we already wear our cross over our hearts anyway ... As we approached the first camp fire, the troops surrounding it peered at us as we approached in the darkness. When they could make out the insignia, the senior NCO said with obvious relief and welcome, 'Hello chaplain!' And in the next breath with rising tension in his throat he awkwardly added, 'Oh hello colonel!' What had begun as a cordial reception immediately became a potentially uncomfortable one, and even after we clarified that we were both chaplains, the initial awkwardness persisted. I looked at my supervisor hoping he had recognized what had just happened. Sadly, he was basking in the glory of being welcomed as a chaplain and being treated with deference (or more likely, apprehension) as a senior officer.⁵²

On the one hand, the issue of rank identifiers is about humility in service, while on the other it is about connectedness in ministry. Rank has the potential to transform the servant leader of the ecclesiastical or traditional authority system into a person operating as one who exerts power through the means of a legal-rational system of authority. How does one establish integrity and credibility within a faith system, while finding credibility and acceptance in a bureaucratic hierarchy? Similarly, where does the line of disconnect exist between a ministry within a legal-rational system of power, and a specific ministry to those yoked to an impersonal structure of authority? Do badges of rank connect the chaplain too intimately to the legal-rational power of the Army, or is it merely a means to empower chaplains to minister and advocate for the worth and value of individuals beyond the confines of such structural power? Patersen offers a compelling conclusion by advocating that it is the person, not the worn rank, who determines the worth of a chaplain:

Whether or not badges of rank inhibit the effectiveness of a chaplain in his work among fellow servicemen is surely a question of an individual's state of mind ... the genuine effectiveness of any individual is not dependent upon his badges of rank. It follows therefore, that one must question the ability of any officer or NCO who needs a badge of authority to do his or her work. The best chaplains I have met during my years of service are those who obviously do not need their badge of rank.⁵³

The permanency of chaplains within the system, and the benefits that go with this, including rank and salary, continue to cause tension within the theological world views of chaplains. This is partly because most chaplains do not comprehend

their world view as professional religious practitioners caught up in an expert system. Instead, many chaplains continue to see themselves as individuals deeply embedded in the traditions of a faith system best articulated in the normative context of a faith community in which they function as guardians of the tradition. This clash of world views permeates the material and remains unresolved, despite efforts to assimilate chaplaincy more intimately into the Army structure.

Before leaving this conversation about the way chaplains relate to the Army as an organisation, some comments on the structure of chaplaincy within the Army are necessary. Throughout the history of Army chaplaincy, and particularly as chaplains began exploring a more professional practitioner approach rather than the parish clergy model, numerous attempts at structuring chaplaincy emerged. These varied in form and included such aspects as RAACHD structures,⁵⁴ a conference system,⁵⁵ charters to govern chaplaincy,⁵⁶ professional standards, guidance for ministry⁵⁷ and even the introduction and development of character guidance. The cyclic approach to restructuring appears to correspond with the natural tendency of bureaucratic organisations to reorganise periodically under the guise of change. In most cases, such reorganisation is simply a natural occurrence in which a legal-rational authority redefines the parameters of its authority and control over its domain. However, with a change in chaplaincy's senior leadership came the inevitable attempt to restructure, reorganise, redirect or refocus the department. The most interesting aspect is the way in which these attempts at organising and structuring chaplaincy seemed to ignore the ecclesiastical models and began to mimic the Army's hierarchical means of control and assertion of power. The other interesting aspect is the degree of success these attempts at organising chaplaincy actually enjoyed.

Chaplains are inherently independent creatures, created in the forges of Christendom to be isolated, independent functionaries of the faith tradition. This is the essence of pastoral formation. Although rooted in an academically oriented faith community, this formation facilitates the transition to a religious community that is often isolated and disengaged from similar communities. Additionally, this formation rarely takes place within a team environment. Chaplaincy draws these independent entities into a collective, and then attempts to organise them under the framework of an alien world view. It should therefore come as no surprise to any observer that, in attempting to adopt the structural models of its secular master, chaplaincy leadership finds resistance, lack of trust and confidence, various levels of angst, and even rebellion by individuals who see the world very differently. This appears to describe the history of attempts

to organise chaplaincy along a legal-rational framework. Coupled with the complexities of this task are the various denominationally coloured theological world views each chaplain brings to the table. The challenge for chaplaincy, if the historical evidence is correct, is not how to group chaplains into a cohesive organisational whole, but how to empower different theologies to coexist in a way that empowers chaplaincy. This appears to be the failure of Army chaplaincy in adopting a legal-rational approach to structure and organisation, which assumes all parties will inherently contain within their psyche an acceptance that the core ideals of the legal-rational authority are valid. Such systems are notoriously ruthless as they systematically remove those who cannot adjust to and adopt such an ideal. Chaplaincy needs to ascertain whether it is *of* the system or *in* the system. The confusion of the past and the inability to successfully structure along legal-rational frameworks suggests that chaplaincy is theologically uncertain where it wishes to align itself. This becomes even more apparent in the conversation on character training.

Character training permeates the literature and demonstrates a clear path of progress. However, it appears to arise from a perceived need for chaplains to embed themselves in a niche within Army. Historically, while chaplains have always had the opportunity to teach soldiers through CO's hours and other instructional opportunities, the introduction of an intentional Character Training program began to formalise the teaching component of chaplaincy.⁵⁸ Character training, in its current understanding, first emerged around the same time as the National Service scheme.⁵⁹ The recruitment of large numbers of young men, many of whom were emotionally immature and relatively naive about the world, prompted the Army to recognise the need to influence soldiers in a way that enabled them to act morally and spiritually, and this became the domain of chaplaincy. The purpose of character training, therefore, was to develop a level of resilience in soldiers, using religious faith as a presupposed basis through which this resilience was empowered:

Character Training could then be described as a prophetic ministry of the church whereby a group of service people is enabled to reflect and interpret its own life situation, live that situation and express it in the light of God's Word.⁶⁰

There appears to be little conversation on the validity of this assumption. On the contrary, the case argued in favour of such an assumption is not often along theological grounds of identity and meaning, but on the anecdotal evidence of experience.⁶¹ It is interesting to note that recent US scholarship suggests that the model used in character training is fundamentally flawed and ineffective.⁶²

The place and purpose of character training, as a distinctly chaplain-delivered program, raises a variety of questions concerning the validity of indoctrinating young people with a religious world view on the assumption that such a world view enhances their capacity to perform as soldiers. Peter Berger and Daniel Pinnard highlight the challenges implicit in character training, noting that, ‘in the character guidance programs, the chaplain functions directly as an indoctrination agent on behalf of the military.’⁶³ In elaborating further on the role of the chaplain in character training or ‘religious education’, Berger and Pinnard assert that all chaplaincy-delivered training in the military is designed with the outcomes of the military firmly embedded against those which may be of direct individual worth for the soldier:

Religion, in the military as in many other social institutions, concerns itself with the individual under the aspect of ‘therapy’ ... Looking at any therapeutic enterprise, one can always ask the question ‘therapy for whom?’ The conception of religion in the military officially maintained by chaplaincy, of course, would reply ‘for the individual soldier.’ We have no intention of disparaging or denying this notion; it does, indeed, correspond to the facts – but only to a part of the facts. For we can also vary the question slightly and ask ‘therapy on behalf of whom?’⁶⁴

The point Berger and Pinnard raise is valid for Army chaplaincy to ask concerning any activity it pursues within the organisation. In an article by Stephen Muse and Glen Bloomstrom, the concerns of Berger and Pinnard appear highlighted with a level of clarity that seems assumed, yet partly obscured, in the Australian context:

It is our thesis that those men and women most likely to serve well in battle and survive it to live well in life are those who practice the way of the warrior striving to make themselves fit for both life and war. The U.S. Army Chaplain’s task is strategic in supporting this effort ... Chaplains in particular (who are trained to integrate both theological, pastoral, and clinical skills) have a vocation to support warriors in such a way that they successfully serve both God and country.⁶⁵

The question of which master chaplains actually serve finds little traction within the literature produced on Australian Army chaplaincy. In fact, for much of the history of chaplaincy within the Australian Army, such a confrontational question remains obscured behind the need to meet the training outcomes and expectations of the system. Chaplaincy assumes this need is real and, therefore, it has a legitimate contribution that it alone can validly input into the secular Army organisation, affirming the illusion of the religiosity it advocates. In answering the ‘to whom’ question, Berger and Pinnard add:

*An answer is suggested if we find that what is therapeutically recommended for the individual turns out to be functional for the institution that sponsors the therapist. Put simply: we would contend that the moral and religious profile that emerges from our materials is conducive to 'good soldiering' in the interest of the military – an interest that has no intrinsic relation to either morality or religion.*⁶⁶

Character training has long been the domain of chaplaincy within the Army. It appears strange, however, that in the light of tensions associated with the clash of authority systems, purpose and meaning within a secular organisation, and the inherent core identity as a guardian of tradition, character training remains unquestioned. This is so, even to the point that the potential loss of this from chaplaincy increases angst to unprecedented levels compared with other dimensions of chaplaincy practice.

Similar concerns and levels of angst exist over marriage education within the Army. Chaplaincy has enjoyed a long-standing relationship with marriage preparation, and incorporated Defence policy when it included the preparation of couples for de-facto or service-recognised relationships. The belief that healthy marriages or relationships produce effective soldiering resonates with Muse and Bloomstrom's article. In 1979 a series of articles appeared in *Intercom* on marriage education.⁶⁷ Over time, a marriage preparation course evolved, colloquially entitled 'sub one for marriage', until chaplains were removed from all collective preparation of relationship courses outside marriage after the latest iteration of recognised relationship policy introduced by Defence. Since then, both commanders and chaplains have expressed angst at the absence of such training. The motives for such concerns appear, however, more associated with enabling Army's capability and minimising administrative and welfare management of soldiers, than a course to prepare people for committed relationships. The issues raised by Berger and Pinnard surely apply to the legitimacy of such marriage/relationship training in the same way as they raise questions concerning character training.

The second major theme that emerges from the discourse concerning the place of chaplains within the organisation framework of the Army centres on the prophetic voice. This is a primary theme throughout Cox's work, which readily points out that chaplains, along with the rest of the religious community were, in the opinion of many of his contributors, obliged to confront the military engagement in Vietnam. It does not contend that this was solely the responsibility of chaplains, although it does imply that chaplains were at times complicit in the atrocities of this conflict through the ministry they conducted on behalf of the military organisation and

the silence such obligated service self-imposes. The larger question Cox and his contributors raise concerns how the religious voice finds validity in a secular organisation that directly sponsors those empowered by the religious community to function as one segment of a greater whole:

*How does a chaplain proclaim a prophetic gospel when he is wearing the uniform of the military, is paid by the state, and furthermore is dependent on his superior officers for advancement?*⁶⁸

This is not a new question. In 1981, *Intercom* published a series of articles on the morality of war, including an interesting series of extracts on war and the comments people have made to either justify or minimise the harsh complexity of military conflict and killing.⁶⁹ The primary issue is the way Christianity engages society, especially when society's political masters pursue a course that utilises violence as the means to a political end. Interestingly, the overwhelming majority of Christian churches in Australia remained relatively silent over Australia's recent operational engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some have pondered whether this silence is possibly an extreme reaction to the hostility that surfaced over the nation's involvement in Vietnam. However, there were some, albeit conflicting, voices in a small segment that chose to comment on the invasion of Iraq and operations in Afghanistan. While there was open support,⁷⁰ counterbalanced by strong objections,⁷¹ chaplaincy within the Army remained silent. The only response evident was a small number of articles and papers, not all published, on the question of a 'just war'.⁷²

Historically, the response of Army chaplains to the prophetic voice has been to reject their obligations to speak to the organisation, claiming that the prime purpose of their ministry is to the individuals who serve in the Army. When such a voice emerges, it is often subtle and indirect, indicating a hesitancy to engage the organisation directly with a prophetic ministry. This approach seems complementary to Schneider and others who advocate that there is a definite role of ministry to the organisation itself, and that chaplaincy needs to assimilate itself more closely within the bureaucratic structures of the Army. That role, however, is not a prophetic role in the true sense of one who speaks against the injustices or immorality of the organisation or institution. The RAACHD Corps conference reached this conclusion in 1973,⁷³ which Schneider restates:

²¹ *I am not suggesting that we all become prophets to the system pointing out its flaws and injustices ...*

²² *The form of ministry I suggest would be better seen within the biblical frame of the Wise Man, the Sage, or the Seer ... What we need is men of wisdom who have good insight as to just how the army institution works who are willing to apply Christian principles to the system and its processes so that they become more people-centred.*⁷⁴

This partially affirms the role of one who offers guidance, counsel and advice on matters of morale, morality and religious matters, but avoids the more challenging confrontational position of the prophetic voice. Cox and others search for the latter voice. Chaplains, so they advocate, are best positioned to offer insights that empower the church's prophetic voice because of their intimate engagement within the military environment. James Haire's commentary on this is worth noting:

*Let us now draw together these three factors. First chaplains are to be individuals who in their own very idiosyncratic ways freely present the light, freedom, release, and good news. Secondly they need to be constantly aware they are interacting with God in the movement of history and therefore the quality of what they do is extremely important. Thirdly, they need to present the unnerving nature of Jesus. At the same time they need to be aware that they are acting in an ambivalent situation for ambivalent employers who have considerable power, and may question the validity of the institutions for which they work.*⁷⁵

While not speaking directly about the prophetic, although he does allude to it earlier in the article, there is a clear tension between presenting an authentic Christ-like voice to the Army while being aware of the context of the organisation to which that voice speaks. This affirms Schneider's position, as he suggests that chaplaincy needs to take an intentional approach to its engagement with the institution:

³¹ *The need for involvement within the bureaucratic institution is seen as necessary. It will reduce the inequities and injustice in the system and allow an economy of effort and demonstrate a priority of care for individual soldiers and their families.*

³² *It will also take seriously the biblical imperative to make religion practical and people oriented in its care and give substance to the idea that justice is also a part of the responsibilities of the Department.*⁷⁶

However, the means to achieve this appear vague. There is talk of a specialised form of ministry, assimilation of the processes and practices of the Army into chaplaincy, the development of some form of ethical review committee consisting of chaplains, and even a seat on the Chief of Army's advisory group. Schneider's last comment is most telling in this approach, and sums up the fundamental difficulty of his approach: 'Finally, I suggest Principal Chaplain's Committee development of a theology of practice for the institution of Army.'⁷⁷

There is very little theological work within the church, much less chaplaincy, to begin exploring this topic. In those institutional settings where such a conversation has taken place, it has been in the form of non-critical pragmatism, or it has moved chaplaincy into the realm of the expert or professional practitioner. While Army chaplaincy remains embedded in a pseudo-parish ministry model, it is hard to envisage the achievement of this outcome.

The conversation about ministry to an organisation, whether that is prophet or sage, raises the issue of how well chaplaincy links into the churches itself. Chaplains, regardless of what they do or what they say, always act because of the ecclesiastical authority bestowed by the denomination that sends them. This is the historical position of chaplaincy, which makes it unique within Army. The intimacy of these links arises periodically within the material. In 1976, an editorial comment appeared in *Intercom*, entitled, 'Is Army Chaplaincy a second rate ministry?'⁷⁸ The article conveys several criticisms by civilian clergy, such as financial benefits, positions of power, and an interesting comment by a theologian:

*Not so very long ago a senior lecturer at a Theological College told me that in his opinion Army Chaplaincy was not a complete ministry. To find a complete ministry, he went on to say, one must leave the Army and return to the parochial ministry.'*⁷⁹

This understanding weaves its way through the material.⁸⁰ The churches' perception of Army chaplaincy seems generally disengaged, disinterested and, at times, vague:

One gets the impression from the Army, the Churches and some Chaplains that Army Chaplaincy is a ministry outside the Church.

The Churches. Few ARA Chaplains, so far as I have been able to determine, are involved in Church Boards or are selected to be representatives in their church's national assemblies or conferences, or to attend refresher courses, etc. It tends to be assumed that the Army has first call on our time and talents.

Chaplains. Some Chaplains express open abhorrence at any denominational involvement.

The Army. The attitude which could be said to be reasonably prevalent in the Army amongst senior Officers is that the Army pays the Chaplains salary and the Chaplain will therefore do as the Army bids.⁸¹

Interestingly, the same concerns appear prevalent among all three groups in the contemporary environment.⁸² While the sending denominations have some level of direct or indirect representation and oversight within the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services (RACS), a committee established as recently as 1981,⁸³ theological interaction with the rest of the church seems absent.⁸⁴ Outside material specifically developed within chaplaincy, the Australian experience appears to be one of blissful silence. This contrasts with US chaplaincy which seems to produce an abundance of material from a variety of perspectives, evident within the church community as well as the chaplaincy world.⁸⁵ This is not an indictment of Army chaplaincy, as those in other forms of chaplaincy or non-parish-based ministries will affirm similar experiences. The material suggests that, while there is a degree of ownership from the church concerning chaplaincy, the general experience has been one of isolation and disinterest, allowing chaplaincy to progress its own agenda and form of ecclesial relationships. However, not all of this is the fault of the church. Despite advocating that chaplaincy is ‘an integral part of the Church’s local ministry’,⁸⁶ there is anecdotal evidence of chaplains adopting a position of an independent, self-styled, ministry intentionally alienating all ties they may have with their denominational body.

The question of ecumenism within chaplaincy presents another interesting conversation. The general assumption is that chaplaincy operates under the framework of an ecumenical relationship, but little evidence exists to validate this. It is important to appreciate the history of ecumenism and its several distinct dimensions before assessing the historical validity of Army chaplaincy as an ecumenical enterprise. The first distinct approach towards ecumenism is the pragmatic realisation of survival in isolated and restrictive circumstances, as experienced by late nineteenth and early twentieth century Christian missionaries. Sheer necessity saw a pragmatic acceptance of other Christians amidst a non-Christian, frequently hostile, resource-poor environment. This practical coming together became the seed for the emergence of the World Council of Churches in 1948. A second distinctive in ecumenism, advocated by Catholics, Orthodox, and some Lutherans, develops an ecumenical propensity from the ecclesial

understanding of the Body of Christ which, for example, has particular sacramental implications about Eucharist participation as a witness to the unity of the church. Remaining in the tradition of Pius XI *Mortalium Animos*,⁸⁷ Vatican II became a catalyst for advancing this approach,⁸⁸ which today has some practical realisations with the establishment of a personal ordinariate for Anglican clergy wishing to return to the Catholic communion.⁸⁹ The third distinctive aspect of ecumenism is theological. This is often reflected in Protestant circles where a theological distinctive becomes the cause for division, or organisation of the church. The task of ecumenism, in this sense, is to find common ground on which to develop an ecumenical relationship. The intentional outcome of all these ecumenical approaches is the unity of the church, in whatever forms advocated by each distinctive.

This deliberate approach toward ecclesiological unity is not evident within the history of chaplaincy. In fact, Army chaplaincy preserves denominational identity, assures the integrity of its enactment and application, and sustains the unique theological flavour that encases each tradition. The existence of three denominational groups, and the independent way each of these act, testifies that the unity of the church is not the aim of Army chaplaincy. Historically, the structure of Army chaplaincy is unlike any other aspect of Army. The church maintains a level of independent ecclesiastical governance that supersedes the Army's structure, even though the Army provides the material benefits necessary to sustain chaplaincy. It has done this under the independent auspices of each sending denomination or faith group, and although appearing somewhat rigid in its composition, there are historical indications of denominational flexibility. In 1913 four Chaplains-General, each representing the main branches of the Australia Christian churches at the time, were appointed to Army Headquarters. A fifth Chaplain-General appeared in 1940 representing a collective of smaller churches and, in 1942, a senior Jewish chaplain entered Defence representing the Jewish community.⁹⁰ These Chaplains-General were bishops or ecclesiastical equivalents who held the corresponding rank of major general.⁹¹ The formation of the RAACHD is a significant moment in Australian history. Prior to that, chaplains served with the colonial armies formed in each of the states under independent local church governance arrangements. The move to Federation and the formation of a national standing military saw the creation of the RAACHD similar to its British counterpart which was formed in 1796. Federation and a national army formalised a loose ad hoc ecclesiastical arrangement into an administrative whole. The Catholics understood the importance of this more than any others for, with the appointment of the first Catholic Chaplain-General, the Holy See granted Archbishop Carr, the Archbishop of Melbourne, personal faculties as Ordinary of the Australian Forces.⁹²

While this early development is starkly different to today's configuration with no Chaplain-General, simply Principal Chaplains, and only three departments with their own unique theological configurations, the lines of ecclesial governance remain intact. The bishops and their denominational equivalents no longer wear uniforms or rank, although there are military directives affording them treatment in accord with their original predecessors. But in terms of denominational governance and religious oversight, they wield as much power and influence as in the past. Despite the changes and the passing of time, this denominational differentiation remains the case for at least two denominational groups, and is the loose arrangement used by other denominations to manage their ecclesiastical governance.

Perhaps the most obvious point at which this distinction of denominational identity exists is in the character training courses. Despite the frequent attempts to modify these to form a non-denominational training package, the courses retain their denominational baggage, particularly at Kapooka. This is not new, for in 1977 it was recorded that:

*The conference made no actual decision in regard to the non-denominational question, but it was quite clear that at this stage the RC Church would not agree to non-denominational Character Training at points of entry into the Army, except that the possibility of experimentation at RMC was mooted.*⁹³

Similar patterns also exist within the posting cycle, with chaplaincy teams in certain locations, particularly Kapooka and Duntroon, retaining the denominational division. The same report, as cited above, also discussed the issue of chaplaincy coverage to deliver character training and concluded with the intent to raise additional tri-denominational teams.⁹⁴ It should come as no surprise to anyone that non-denominationalism is an inappropriate and offensive concept to a number of denominational groups. The statement concerning Catholic chaplaincy in the ADF sums up the angst such denominationalism creates:

*True ecumenism guarantees deep respect for the doctrine, principles or faith and religious practices of churches and faith traditions other than the one held personally. It does not equate to non-denominationalism which is deeply offensive to those committed in faith to a particular believing community.*⁹⁵

Similar concerns are found amongst Lutherans.⁹⁶ It is not surprising, therefore, that the current Catholic Bishop raised a similar angst about denominational coverage in operational zones, especially Catholic coverage, in his comments as reported in *The Australian*.⁹⁷

Some of the greatest tensions that have occurred in chaplaincy over its historical development have been over denominational theological practice. Frequently this emerged from a lack of respect or validation of the theological traditions that defined each chaplain involved in the altercation. Ecumenism is an interesting concept, but in terms of Army chaplaincy, it is a mythical hangover of misinterpreted intentions. The reality is, and remains to this day, that Army chaplaincy is actually an inter-denominational endeavour, structured and engaged to sustain the denominational distinctiveness within a world that possibly fails to comprehend the pastoral intention behind such lines of religious demarcation.

The challenge that continually arises in the theological development of chaplaincy seems to centre on this particular point.⁹⁸ It not surprising that structuring chaplaincy, creating an organisational identity that works, enabling teams to function effectively and efficiently, have all been ongoing struggles over the years. However, perhaps the single most vexing problem faced by chaplaincy is the inability to reconcile differing denominational traditions, with their entrenched theological identities, into a relatively cohesive whole. This is a theological issue of some concern, especially when certain theological traditions hold the numerical weight within key leadership positions and operate out of sheer ignorance or oblivious to those around them who carry fundamentally polarised theological approaches deep within their theological being. The evidence of mistrust, apprehension, lack of respect, hostility, abuse, and other forms of angst, which arise periodically in the historical material, are direct reflections of the inability to reconcile within chaplaincy that which the church has failed to reconcile after centuries of discourse.⁹⁹

This theological distinction is all too evident in the identity and meaning in which chaplains frame their ecclesiastical sense of self, ultimately in one of two theological positions in which minor personality-based variants are sometimes apparent. The first is the functionalist approach, often associated with a more reformed understanding of ministry; the second is the ontological approach, often associated with a sacramental approach to ministry. One of the ways chaplains have described what they do is in the terminology of ministry of presence.

This simple term has two very distinct and polarised understandings. The first is a purely functionalised understanding which refers to the chaplain being physically present where soldiers are present:

Chaplains learn that the most effective way to make that Marine connection is through what they call a 'ministry of presence' in which the chaplain is present everywhere, from the chow hall to PT, from the squad bay to the firing range. All the while, the chaplain sows the seeds of trust. Through familiarity, eventually the Marines welcome the chaplain, sharing their thoughts and the events of their lives.¹⁰⁰

The second is a more ontological approach, in which the understanding of a ministry of presence is not one which creates space for the sake of the chaplain, but one in which Christ is incarnated into the moment:

*As an Army Chaplain I have found it very important to try and identify with the soldiers in what they are doing ... through doing this as a chaplain it can then relate to them that God also is involved in their lives. That God gets his hands dirty with them, that he can laugh and cry and sweat and have a drink with them and this makes **GOD** more relevant and more real ... For he is virtually saying to the soldiers that you will see God coming to you through me, and so the type of God they will come to know will depend on how the chaplain lives ...¹⁰¹*

The importance of the ontological, incarnational aspect of a 'ministry of presence' is intimately and uniquely tied to the sacramental understanding of ministry. It is a ministry that incarnates the presence of Christ through the means of grace. Intimately interwoven in, with, and through the public ministry is, for some traditions, the clear distinction of priest from laity, that the office segregates itself from the world so that it can incarnate Christ's presence into the world. This is vastly different in understanding from a purely functional approach which sees the relationship between Christ and the individual as a personal encounter. In this context, the symbols of the church, including the public ministry, simply affirm or remind the individual of this personal encounter. In chaplaincy, this polarised view affects the need to remain distinct, as in denominational identification, the need to be present, and the need to create space for the sacramental encounter with God. Tension and angst manifests when a professional or clinical model of ministry subjugates and de-traditionalises the priestly office. Similarly, the opposite is so. The blurring of theological distinctives, the push towards non-denominationalism,

the levelling of chaplaincy as if all are functionally the same, creates moments of angst among chaplains. The historical reality of our journey draws this out as a constant theme.

Conclusion

Our journey has been reasonably long, and taken us along various paths. But in no way is the journey we have taken here definitive. There is a lot more that could be said. Throughout this journey, however, the single focus has been the question of identity and meaning for chaplaincy. This exploration of historical material has taken a brief glance at the way in which chaplains have opened their own hearts and attempted to make sense of what it is to be an Army chaplain. The conversation persists, as the themes explored continue to rise to the surface. It is evident, however, that without a greater appreciation of the various theological nuances evident within chaplaincy and the way these interact, not simply within the Army environment but with the various theological traditions active in chaplaincy, Army chaplaincy will continue to flounder in the future as these nuances seem destined to continually re-emerge. This is neither negative nor inappropriate. On the contrary, if Army chaplaincy channels and engages an ongoing dialogue that is theological and practical (a form of theological praxis), it has the chance to be a blessing to the denominational bodies that lay such possessive claim to it. The potential exists, if engaged in a spirit of respect, grace and humility, for this conversation to be a powerful and creative message of how to theologically and religiously coexist, not just to the churches which have historically fostered chaplaincy, but to those other religious entities within Australia which are yet to claim their place within the Army environment. ■

Endnotes

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- 2 1 Corinthians 13:11-13.
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- 13 An applicant for appointment to the RAACHD is required to:
 - Be from an endorsed denomination or faith group represented within the current religious diversity of Army personnel. These denominations are currently the Anglican Church, Catholic Church, Uniting Church, Presbyterian Church, Baptist Union of Australia, Lutheran Church of Australia, Churches of Christ, Salvation Army and Council of Australian Jewry.
 - Provide documented evidence of a minimum of three years' denominationally endorsed theological and ministry training;
 - Provide documented evidence of ordination or equivalent;
 - Have at least two years' post-ordination pastoral ministry experience (but preference is for at least five years);
 - Have endorsement and approval from the candidate's denomination, at the national level, that they are of good standing with their denomination and suitable representatives for Army chaplaincy;
 - Have approval of the Army Principal Chaplain to initiate recruiting;
 - Be deemed suitable by the appropriate denominational Senior Chaplain (full-time candidates) or Regional Staff Chaplain (part-time candidates) and be endorsed by the appropriate member of the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services (RACS) or Churches Advisory Committee (CAC) member (ARes); and
 - Satisfy the entry criteria applicable for Army officers.

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2. Some interdenominational ministries are not *directly* connected with the word and sacraments (the 'outward marks of the church'), although they are usually connected in some way. When pastors appointed to such ministries are called to engage in an activity which involves the word and sacraments, they must act in such a way that they give a clear and uncompromising witness to the marks of the church. For example, if they are called on to preach, they must preach as people committed to the Lutheran witness to the gospel. They should, if necessary, insist that their status as a Lutheran pastor is advertised and made known to all concerned. If the Lord's Supper is celebrated in meetings they have to attend as part of their ministry, they must refuse to commune, and if asked, give their reasons for refusing to commune.' See 'Pastors serving full-time in interdenominational ministries', *Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions of the Lutheran Church of Australia*, G2, prepared by the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations, approved by the General Pastors Conference, 1975, adopted by General Synod, 1975, edited March 2001, at: <<http://lca.org.au/doctrinal-statements--theological-opinions-2.html>> accessed 17 May 2013.
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Looking Forward by Understanding Backward: A Historical Context for Australian Army Chaplaincy's Future Challenges

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Abstract

Søren Kierkegaard once observed that 'life is lived forward but understood backward'. In this article, I want to do something similar: to look backward into history as an aid to looking forward to future challenges. This article offers some reflections from the perspective of a professional historian, in light of the past, on some potential challenges facing Australian Army chaplaincy. While future Army doctrine and tactical/strategic contexts are important in this discussion, they are not the primary focus. Instead my focus is on historical trends that can inform those in the present who are planning for the future. Historians do not make good prophets, but by taking the long view they can help to rescue us from the 'provincialism of the present'.

The first part of this article sketches an historical context for discussion of Army chaplaincy's efforts to 'look forward'. To that end, it is worth dwelling for a few moments on historical patterns of religious involvement that have

been changing significantly from the 1960s to the present. As we shall see, increasing secularisation, the reconfiguration of religion, the growth of religious pluralism and changes in Australian culture and social structure form the backdrop for the future challenges Army chaplaincy faces. Having sketched the historical context, I will then consider some possible future challenges for Army chaplaincy under some broader themes: secularisation and pluralism; professionalism; caring for souls; recruitment; new roles; leadership and administration; and intellectual foundations. As with my other articles in this journal issue, much of the discussion below is drawn from my history of Australian Army chaplains, *Captains of the soul*, to which I refer the reader for more detailed discussion and references.¹

A leading sociologist of Australian religion, Gary Bouma, argues that although Australia's religious and spiritual life has 'a healthy future' and that many continuities of practice will remain, there have been — and will continue to be — significant changes. The degree of change, he adds, will reflect:

*the continued influence of the Australian religious institution, the impact of changes in Australian culture and social structure and the responses of Australian religious groups to each other and their changing situation.*²

This following discussion will consider evidence for these changes, first in relation to the decline in institutional adherence amid secularisation and increasing religious pluralism, and second, evidence for revitalisation and reconfiguration of Australian religion and spirituality.

A recurring theme in the minutes of chaplains' monthly conferences in Vietnam during the late 1960s was the irregularity of church attendance by Australian soldiers.³ There were also concerns among the higher command about a correlation between poor church attendance and declining moral standards. An Australian Task Force Vietnam cable in 1966 reported breathlessly that only 10% of soldiers attended religious services. Rates of venereal disease (or 'social disease' as it was euphemistically described at the time) were also alarmingly high.⁴ Declining church attendance among troops was a reflection of larger societal shifts with which chaplains had to contend after the 1960s, a decade which historian Ian Breward has described as the 'hinge years' of Australian religious history. Although a few church leaders had sounded warnings about increasing secularism and unbelief, statistics of religious adherence suggested only a 'slow

proportional decline' from 1945 until the 1960s. From then on, however, political, cultural and social pressures led to the dismantling of censorship, loosening of controls on the availability of alcohol and gambling, a decline in prohibitions on sport, entertainment (including television after 1956, which did away with evensong in Anglican churches) and commerce on Sundays, and a significant rise in divorce and numbers of one-parent families. This was compounded by expanding higher education, a new spirit of criticism of political and religious institutions, the pushing of cultural boundaries, greater household affluence with its golden calf of material comfort, commercialised youth culture, and a social climate encouraging rejection of tradition, self-expression and a personal search for truth, over loyal adherence to the denomination of a typical baby-boomer's youth. The result was the erosion of a century-old consensus about the Christian foundations of the religious, social and moral order.⁵ Royal Australian Army Chaplains' Department (RAAChD) leaders had observed the beginnings of these changes during the occupation of Japan, but they were becoming more apparent in Vietnam and afterwards.⁶

At the risk of inflicting death by statistics, it is helpful to consider the evidence for decline that has emerged from the hard data-crunching of Australian sociologists and historians in recent decades. In 1961, 88% of Australians described themselves as Christians. In 2011 that figure was 61.1%. In 1961, 0.4% of people self-defined as having 'No Religion', whereas in 2011 that figure was 22.3% (although it should be noted that included in this group are those who might consider themselves 'spiritual' but not 'religious'). Australians have increasingly abandoned religious rites of passage, especially since civil celebrants were introduced in the 1970s for both marriages and funerals. In 1970, for example, 12% of all marriages were conducted without a religious ceremony; in 2007 that figure had jumped to 63%. Some 8% of Australians now attend church on a typical Sunday, about 14% once a month. Catholic attendance has fallen from 50% of Catholics in 1950 to around 14% in 2006. Compared with other Western countries, Australian religious involvement falls somewhere between the relatively devout nations such as the United States and Italy and the low levels of participation found in northern Europe (but it is closer to the latter). Traditional patterns of recruitment and socialisation through schooling have also broken down. Catholics, for example, educate 20% of Australian schoolchildren, and while the majority consider themselves Catholic, many reject the teachings of the church and rarely or never attend Mass.⁷

Recent studies of Gen Y (those born between 1981 and 1995) show that 46% regard themselves as Christian in some sense, though less than half that figure have any kind of church involvement or church affiliation; 17% follow New Age or

alternative spiritualities and 28% have no belief in God or are undecided. It is a sobering fact that the highest level of non-belief is among the university educated and the 15–34 age group — exactly the demographic that is targeted by the Army. Other social changes have had an impact. Women have traditionally outnumbered men in Australian churches, but since entering paid work in larger numbers since the 1960s both men and women under 40 are under-represented in church attendance. From the 1990s, in most non-Catholic denominations, the number of women in pastoral ministry increased at a faster rate than did the number of men.⁸ Clearly, there is evidence of religious decline. Yet there are exceptions to this pattern of decline: congregations with a definite evangelical message and theology in Anglican, Baptist and Uniting churches have had success in attracting young families and children. The Pentecostal movement has also been successful. Tapping the *zeitgeist* of informality, immediate experience and welcoming those in the outer suburbs of capital cities with high population growth, young families and second-generation migrants, they have quadrupled in thirty years (though from a low base of 0.3% to 1.1% of the Australian population). They account for one in ten of regular church attenders, now outnumbering churchgoing Anglicans.⁹

Nevertheless, the evidence for decline has to be set against other important discernible trends. The first is a rise of popular interest in spirituality, especially among young adults, in response to the secularisation of public culture. This is a search for individual religious experience, a desire for 'connectedness' with a larger whole, but nevertheless detached from churches and a notion of 'absolute' religious truth. Their sources are eclectic, diverse and sometimes intellectually shallow, spread internationally by the internet and encompassing eco-spirituality, the teachings and texts of Eastern religions, 'ancient wisdom' of Aboriginal Australians, Celtic spirituality and the New Age movement. New rituals of mourning and commemoration are evident in roadside memorials for vehicle crash victims or the civil quasi-religiosity of Anzac Day observances.¹⁰

A greater religious pluralism has been given impetus by waves of immigration since the late 1970s from Asia, the Middle East and Africa, which has challenged Australians who seek a secular future for their nation. The proportion of self-identifying Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus rose from 1.4% of the population in 1986 to 6.2% in 2011. Religion can be a powerful source of identity for migrants, for example among Muslim youth. But migrants have also diversified and invigorated ageing Christian congregations, especially among the Roman Catholic Church, which historically has had a strong Irish character. Recent migrants from South-East Asia, the Middle East and Latin America comprise the majority who

attend Mass and send their children to Catholic schools in many suburban parishes of capital cities. Young Asian men are also making up a significant proportion of students for the priesthood.¹¹

Also bucking the trend of secularising decline is the expanded roles of older churches in social welfare and education, as well as in public debates involving ethical issues. From the 1990s the Australian government began tendering out welfare commitments to non-government (mostly church-linked agencies). Changed methods of school funding have also encouraged non-government schools, again mostly linked to churches. Religion has come to the forefront of public policy in debates over the management of religious diversity and competition; discussions on the delivery of public policy providing assistance for disadvantaged groups, aged care and education (including school chaplaincy); and the framing of social policy on issues such as embryonic stem cell research, same-sex unions and euthanasia. Churches are expected to contribute to the process of decision-making on these issues. Religion has also assumed greater visibility in the public sphere since the Howard years (1996–2007) with a cottage industry of books and articles studying the influence of various religious groups in the formation of socially conservative policies and the alleged use by politicians — under both Howard and Rudd — of symbols and coded language, ‘dog whistles’ to appeal to conservative Christian voters both on the right and the left. Note, for example, Kevin Rudd’s 2007 article setting out his manifesto on the relationship between Christianity and the political order (compare this with his declaration in May 2013 of support for gay marriage).¹²

At the same time, Australian politics has generally divided along secular rather than religious fault lines (with rare exceptions). Historian Hilary Carey points out that:

*Australians have traditionally eschewed the politicisation of religion, even while recognising that religious difference — between Catholic and Protestant, established Church and dissenter, evangelical and Anglo-Catholic — was one of the most enduring bases of social division and conflict ... In a new century, it remains to be seen if the perceived differences between Muslims and Christians in Australia will be de-politicised as effectively as the differences that formerly divided the ethnic churches of the British Isles.*¹³

Much like Mark Twain’s declaration that rumours of his death were exaggerated, religion is alive and well in twenty-first century Australia. Scholars and journalists now write about the influence of religious groups in politics, an emerging religious

marketplace, and the ways Australians are seeking a sense of the transcendent and exploring new religious movements outside traditional church structures. Cultural historians have begun to address the religious dimensions of Australian life. Gary Bouma sees in Australia a process of reconfiguration rather than simple decline. Defining secularity as a social condition in which 'the religious and spiritual have moved out from the control of religious organisations', Bouma argues that, although mainstream denominations are shrinking so that some bodies previously central to Australian life will become more marginal, there are distinct signs of religious revitalisation and innovation, indicating that 'religion and spirituality will be a significant part of Australia's future'.¹⁴

Bouma further identifies a longstanding 'cultural macro-trend from the rational to the experiential and emotional as the dominant forms of authority shaping the ways Australians express their spirituality'.¹⁵ Noting that each of the three forms of authority and transcendence — tradition, reason and experience/emotion (most Christian thinkers would add Scripture to this threefold cord) — plays a role in any period of history, but in each era one form will tend to be more dominant. This transition from rationality to experientialism has had profound implications for Australia's religious and spiritual life: denominations of Christianity that developed a rational approach to the exclusion of tradition and emotion, such as Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Uniting and the Reformed, are experiencing rapid declines in membership and attendance. Presbyterians and Anglicans emphasising rational Protestantism (with the exception of liturgical Anglicans) attracted large congregations and much social and political power prior to the 1960s, but not any more. As we have seen, there is a stronger following among Pentecostals and rational Protestant groups which have adopted certain aspects of Pentecostalism, often along charismatic lines. The Roman Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council (or Vatican II, 1962–65) opened the hierarchy to reason-based arguments in an unprecedented manner, while maintaining a traditional authority structure. But it has lost many clergy and religious — most in order to marry — and recruitment declined in part due to the diminution of the moral superiority of clergy and religious by Vatican II. Yet, as Bouma points out, there is:

*nothing more experiential than a well-conducted Eucharist. The Catholic Church has maintained a higher degree of balance in the tension between the three forms of authority [tradition, reason and experience] while always retaining traditional authority as its primary and ultimate mode.*¹⁶

Catholicism in Australia has also maintained its position in Australian society due to post-war immigration of Catholics. Hilliard, however, sounds a note of caution:

[Bouma's] optimistic assessment may not take sufficient account of the growing number of Australians who have no particular religious or spiritual beliefs and do not engage in religious practices; they will be a major influence in the future. Religion is not disappearing from Australian life but it is becoming more diverse, more fragmented and more a matter of individual choice. In the Australia of the twenty-first century there will be a wider range of religious alternatives than ever before but no common story, no shared faith reinforced by social institutions.¹⁷

Implications and challenges

Secularisation and pluralism

Given these historical patterns and developments, what are the possible implications for Army chaplaincy? In terms of increasing ethnic and religious diversity, it is worth noting that the social integration of newly arriving migrant groups typically takes decades. It usually takes until a second or third generation for migrants to join their adopted nation's defence forces, so it is possible that increasing diversity within the Australian Defence Force (ADF) will be apparent in the next two decades. However, given the current geopolitical climate and media portrayals of religious fundamentalism dogma mutating into mass terrorism, it remains to be seen how religious groups such as Islam will integrate socially. If chaplaincy for these groups is considered, this raises further questions about who speaks for Islam in Australia, given 'denominational' differences such as those between Sunnis and Shias.

An increasingly pluralised and secularised Australian society may produce senior Army leaders with diminished Christian sympathies or religious beliefs. Their consequent appetite and support for the overtly religious dimensions of chaplaincy (rather than a bland 'lowest common denominator' spirituality) remains to be seen. In such circumstances exemplary leadership and thinking that demonstrates the full range of benefits brought to the Army by uniformed chaplaincy will be needed more than ever.

The combination of declining denominational adherence but continuing spiritual interest also raises the question of how you present Christianity from a denominational perspective to soldiers who have little concept of what *Christianity* is, let alone its denominational shades. At an intellectual level, there is a modest but growing interest at places such as the Royal Military College, Duntroon, in

movements such as the so-called 'New Atheism'. This demands development of a strong theistic apologetic of the kind that chaplains have always presented (for example, the free will defence against theodicies). It is interesting to note that a rigorous apologetic syllabus was developed during the 1960s for the foundational documents and lecture outlines of Commanding Officers' (COs') Hours and Character Guidance.

It seems to me that a tool such as the 'Faith under fire' short course, modelled on the 'Life of Jesus' course developed by the Sydney-based Centre for Public Christianity, is a good example of the kind of apologetic tools necessary for pre-evangelism in a biblically and theologically illiterate culture that has imbibed facile cultural forms of relativism and postmodernism. Another striking feature of 'Faith under fire' is that it is on the one hand an apologetic tool to introduce soldiers, sailors and airmen to the Christian faith; but on the other hand it is cleverly presented and marketed in a language that the Army understands, drawing on concepts that have currency in recent psychological research such as 'spiritual fitness', 'spiritual health' and 'spiritual resilience'. It therefore fits with the Australian Defence Force's (ADF) continuing recognition of both spiritual fitness and a religious faith as crucial factors in members' lives alongside mental, emotional and physical health. As the course website itself suggests, the emphasis is on:

*the importance of an individual's beliefs and the influence this has on character and the capacity to cope with challenges unique to the military environment. Defence service can be a time when people consider who they are, what they believe and stand for. Combat raises important questions about the use of force, self-sacrifice and the threat of death and injury. These issues are of a spiritual concern, relevant to all service men and women.*¹⁸

The appeal to spiritual fitness might also gain traction in an Australian culture that, as Bouma has pointed out, increasingly relies on the experiential and emotional (rather than the rational) as the dominant form of authority or transcendence.

Prophet margins: padres and professionalism

If there is any overriding theme in the administrative evolution of the Chaplains' Department between 1945 and 2013 it is surely one of increasing professionalisation. This process, as we have seen, began in the late 1960s and was followed by the overhaul of the Department's leadership in 1981 [which abolished the Chaplains-General Conference and instituted the Principal Chaplains and Religious Advisory Committee to the Services (RACS) structure]. There was

further restructuring towards a 'divisional' rather than a 'classification' rank system in 1989–90, and the introduction of the specialist officer structure in 2002. An era of part-time chaplains-general working within the paradigms of a volunteer army gave way to a command structure that better mirrored the professional Regular Army that had emerged during the Cold War. Chaplains were given the opportunity to be better led, better integrated with their sending churches and the Army, better organised, better paid, better prepared, better resourced and better trained than ever before. Yet these changes have not been without their challenges.

While the move to a specialist staff structure has generally been welcomed by chaplains and other Army officers, it has not been without criticism. Not surprisingly, increasing professionalism has raised concerns about chaplains being too preoccupied with promotions and service conditions or 'going native' and becoming more 'of the system' than 'in the system'. Some chaplains have also observed that there is a place for the chaplain's traditional 'naiveté' and 'quirkiness', bringing a humanising and prophetic presence within an organisation that has, more than most, the potential to be impersonal and dehumanising.¹⁹ There is also the reality that a Christian minister depends on the empowering and guidance of the Holy Spirit — rather than merely professional competencies — if he or she is help anyone to encounter Christ. Yet at the same time, many chaplains have stressed that the critical issue is not the rank, status or professional standing which is bestowed on the individual. Rather the chaplain's own priestly vocation, character and ability to connect with soldiers are the touchstones of effective uniformed ministry. The able chaplain is the one who can avoid the temptation to 'play the officer' or 'pull rank', although the latter can be useful when the need arises to 'get things done'. It is up to chaplains and their leaders to remember that vocation trumps competency although both are necessary in a professional and highly skilled army. In this sense chaplaincy remains a profoundly incarnational ministry in which chaplains are asked to exhibit the professionalism and competency of those to whom they seek to minister.

Clarifying roles

A related issue is the perennial need to clarify and define the role of the both the Department collectively and the chaplain personally within a continually changing Army. This issue must be understood in the context of increasing secularisation and religious pluralism in Australian society, and the opening of the traditional domain of chaplains — pastoral care and social welfare — to the contributions of specialists from the rising class of 'caring professions' such as psychologists, welfare officers and social workers. A crucial historical development in clarifying

chaplains' roles, as noted in my other article in this journal, was the definition and implementation of senior and coordinating chaplains' roles within the new divisional system since 1989. The roles and competencies of chaplains were further defined within the specialist officer structure in 2003. The fruit of this hard thinking and reforming has been distilled in the most recent incarnations of the doctrinal statements and personnel instructions dealing with the vision, roles and responsibilities of the Department and its Army chaplains. This has culminated in the opening statement of the present Department's charter, in which the emphasis on chaplains' religious role is remarkable. The chaplains' roles have also been clarified in terms of five key areas: *first*, religious ministry; *second*, pastoral care; *third*, training, including character development and character training; *fourth*, advice to commanders and staff on religious, welfare, morale and moral issues; and *finally* administration and management.

A consistent finding of my research has been that the incarnational nature of the chaplain's ministry — of living and sweating with soldiers in their units at home or in patrol bases while on operations — means that the chaplain performs a radically different role from the psychologist and the social worker. Because chaplains are posted to units, ships and formations they experience the impact of incidents and deployments and are, as the submission to the 2002 Specialist Officer Tribunal put it:

*uniquely placed to minister to service personnel in a manner in which welfare workers and psychologists are not. They are on call 24 hours a day and available to Commanders to provide counselling support to members and their families both individually and collectively.*²⁰

And just like the families of serving members, the families of many chaplains bear the sacrifices and associated stresses of military service. The relational and spiritually grounded nature of chaplaincy also stands in potential contrast to the clinical distance and humanist assumptions of many psychologists and social workers. Additionally, soldiers and veterans appear more likely to seek spiritual or moral counselling from chaplains rather than from clinicians. Nevertheless, as Baptist padre Carl Aiken has argued, chaplains should conceive their work as part of a holistic and collaborative team approach within a 'care chain of command', while not abdicating parts of their role — such as relationship and bereavement counselling — to other professional groups.²¹

Panel beaters of the soul

Historical experience suggests that a significant challenge in the coming decades will be the latent impact of the increased tempo of Army operations over the last two decades. In the post-Vietnam era, in light of lessons learned from the trauma of returning Vietnam veterans, a great deal of work has been done on the psychological effects of deployments.²² The majority of Vietnam veterans seemed to adjust readily on their return and reintegrate into society, leading stable and productive lives. Yet a significant number reported a high level of restlessness in their careers, personal lives and relationships, especially those who were scarred by their combat experience.²³ In some cases the ill-effects were latent. By 2009 more than 19,000 (of a total of 60,000) veterans were classified as 'totally and permanently incapacitated', of whom 14,000 were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Common symptoms varied:

*flashbacks, nightmares, anxiety, rage and depression, often associated with alcohol and drug dependence; the social consequences could include divorce and family breakdown, crime, violence, vagrancy, and even suicide.*²⁴

One implication is that there will be future health challenges that chaplains will have to help address, such as post-traumatic stress, 'moral injury', or what one chaplain describes as 'spiritual wounds or dents in the soul' for a significant minority of those who have been deployed. Major General John Cantwell, who has written powerfully on the shattering effect of his own PTSD, observes that thousands of Australian men and women sent off to armed conflict or service as peacekeepers will have to deal with 'the mental scars and wounds of things they have seen or done'. PTSD is often undiagnosed or suppressed to maintain a career and avoid stigma, or as part of the 'warrior ethos' which lauds 'mental and physical toughness as vital prerequisites of success in training and combat'.²⁵ Chaplains are, of course, aware of research predicting that many will seek help several years after they discharge from the Army.²⁶

Chaplains have played — and will continue to play — a crucial role in bringing healing to the bodies, the minds and the souls of those who have been exposed to armed conflict, genocide, mass deportation and ethnic cleansing. In a context of increasing professionalism and clinical/therapeutic modes of chaplaincy, relationships with churches will need to be nurtured so that chaplains can remain anchored in their faith tradition and secure in their primary vocation as priests, pastors, ministers or rabbis.

An interesting example of how one chaplain has integrated his church relationship with this therapeutic mode of chaplaincy is the recent initiative of Anglican padre Rob Sutherland. His Churchill Fellowship research into 'spiritual wounds or dents in the soul' had a practical outworking in the first church-based program in Australia for war veterans who are dealing with spiritual wounds. Because coming home was 'one of the biggest struggles for our veterans and their families', Sutherland and his parish responded creatively by running 'Warrior Welcome Home', consisting of a four-day retreat and a welcome home community dinner attended by his local bishop, parliamentarian and over 100 parishioners.²⁷

Recruitment

It hardly bears mentioning that recruitment will remain a major future challenge. An important innovation of the early 1990s was the introduction of the Long Term Schooling scheme.²⁸ On balance, most chaplains appear to have viewed this innovation as a welcome development. Some observers have suggested, however, that two years has not always been sufficient to enable the 'priestly' vocation to flourish and to subsume the prior 'warrior' ethos and command mindset. Priests drawn from among soldiers will need sufficient time to shed the warrior ethos, while a generally smaller, ageing and increasingly less diverse pool of chaplaincy recruits will require a focus on capability as well as on numbers and retention.²⁹ It remains to be seen whether the three-year pastoral placements (rather than two years) make a difference.

These recruitment efforts notwithstanding, a chronic shortage of chaplains since the 1990s has become one of the most significant challenges for the RAACHD, particularly for the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Uniting Church communities. In particular, the transition to a specialist officer structure has raised concerns in some quarters about recruitment. The more chaplains are integrated as officers, the more they have to meet various Army requirements for those who serve as officers. A recurring problem has been physical fitness standards because the clergy pool from which the Department recruits chaplains is largely an ageing demographic (the more so among mainline denominations). Even if nominees have been found suitably qualified, medical conditions have in several cases disqualified candidates from chaplaincy. A former Uniting Church RACS representative, Gale Hall, observed that a third of prospective chaplains he nominated were deemed unsuitable on medical grounds, a problem compounded by the fact that the average age of a Queensland Uniting Church minister is now 57 years. By way of contrast, the Baptist and Churches of Christ denominations train more ministers than they can employ. This makes the provision of chaplains anything

but a problem. Indeed, their nominees have been given positions left vacant by denominations struggling to find suitable candidates. In addition, in 2010, a chaplain was commissioned from a Pentecostal denomination with a young demographic, the Australian Christian Churches (formerly the Assemblies of God and best known for its Hillsong mega-church), to serve the needs of Army personnel from that Christian tradition.³⁰

If the Army is a young person's game, to what extent should chaplaincy be a young person's game? During the Second World War similar debates emerged concerning age. While some chaplains and officers favoured youth due to the devastating effect on health of service in malarial New Guinea, others observed that they did not want 'glorified sports masters'; moreover, they argued, many soldiers, including senior officers, would not open their hearts to an idealistic young clergyman in his twenties.

Roman Catholic chaplaincy has felt the shortages most acutely, as indeed has its broader denomination which has struggled in recent decades to attract sufficient numbers of parish priests, let alone priests for service chaplaincy. In 2013 only one-third of available Roman Catholic chaplains' positions had been filled. Since the 1990s senior chaplains have increasingly relied on 'permanent and transitory deacons', who may or may not be commissioned in the ADF, and 'lay pastoral associates' (lay men or women or members of Religious Institutes judged as suitable by the Military Ordinariate) and other clerics or lay pastoral associates acting in a full-time or part-time capacity as members of the Army Reserve.³¹ Senior Roman Catholic chaplains have valued the contribution and presence of deacons and lay pastoral assistants, not least laywomen within an Army that has given female soldiers a greater range of roles and a priority in recruitment. Deacons and lay pastoral assistants can do many of the things that priests can do, such as provide pastoral care, counselling and a ministry of presence. Nevertheless, deacons and lay pastoral associates cannot replace a priest who brings to chaplaincy seven years of training, a strong sense of vocational identity and priestly ministry, pastoral experience and the authority to provide for the full sacramental needs of Roman Catholics.

A further flow-on effect of the shortage of priests is fewer opportunities for non-Roman Catholic chaplains to rub shoulders with Roman Catholic priests and therefore fewer possibilities to promote mutual ecumenical understanding. All of this is not helped by the extended lead time (sometimes as lengthy as two years) that it takes to recruit chaplains and the recurring problem of retirement ages.³²

Although age requirements have been relaxed, chaplains still have to meet the same medical and physical entry requirements applied to all other officer entry pathways.³³ Contracting civilian clergy — on the current British model — might be examined as a possibility for the future if uniformed clergy cannot be recruited.

New roles

Women and Army chaplaincy

New roles for chaplains also appear to be emerging. Chaplaincy has provided significant opportunities for ministry to women, as Kaye Ronalds, the first female chaplain in 1992, pointed out at an early stage in her service:

I have noticed that some of the significant encounters have been with women which have included a domestic violence victim, a single young woman needing to focus her spiritual life and a woman nearing the end of her career who needed to deal with some unfinished grieving. However, I have also met with men for prayer and provided counselling.³⁴

The growing number of women in chaplaincy comes at a time when women are being seen as essential to the ministry of several churches and in the combat support operations so vital to the Army's counterinsurgency doctrine. Women, for example, have accompanied patrols and interacted with local women in Afghanistan. As one officer has observed, '[t]he cultural sensitivities of men searching women in Afghanistan [at checkpoints] cannot be understated'.³⁵

Who cares wins: chaplains and Special Forces

The chaplain's role has become increasingly important among Special Forces soldiers and their families at home, not least because the operational tempo has increased enormously since the Special Air Service's (SAS) deployment to East Timor in 1999. Sadly, so has the number of casualties, a disproportionate number of which have been Special Forces soldiers. This is partly because the units have become, as historian David Horner notes of the SAS, the 'ADF's force of choice'.³⁶ A 'very small part of the national family ... are doing most of the country's war fighting', remarked Australian Defence Association director Neil James after the recent death of an SAS soldier on his *seventh* deployment to Afghanistan.³⁷ Special Forces chaplains have argued that 'for every operator they have in the field' there are 'several other people in support who are not as well trained and not as resilient as the shooter'.³⁸ The need for adequate chaplaincy coverage is clear.

Given the unique characters and skill sets of Special Forces soldiers — Alpha type personalities with extraordinary drive and resilience, both mental and physical — the chaplains who work among them have to be vigorous, highly motivated and conscientious. A degree of physical robustness also helps to make inroads into the Special Forces world. Several Special Forces chaplains have been noted for their physical prowess, whether on the rugby field or in boxing, self-defence or general physical fitness. Padre Keith Wheeler, the SAS's Reserve chaplain from 1999 to 2003, has gone down in SAS folklore for his running. Unbeknown to most SAS soldiers, as a young man Wheeler had run for Australia in two Commonwealth Games and was only the second Western Australian (after Herb Elliott) to run the four-minute mile. Trading on the misconception that 'the Padre would be a slacker', an Executive Officer who knew Wheeler's history told soldiers prior to a cross-country run, 'Everyone who falls in behind the padre will be running the circuit again.' Despite being in his fifties, Wheeler finished close to the front. Most of the soldiers had to run the circuit once more and apparently never again underestimated the padre.³⁹

A ministry of reconciliation

There is also a burgeoning literature articulating chaplains' potential role as agents of reconciliation in theatres of operations. 'Chaplains' external ministry of reconciliation', argues Croatian-born Yale theologian and ex-serviceman, Miroslav Volf:

*may be an essential component of the success of an army's peacekeeping mission. After all, ideally military chaplains know the world of religion — they understand religious teachings, rituals, and practices, and they can help create bridges across religious divides. It makes eminent sense to enlist them to do just that.*⁴⁰

Chaplains have argued that chaplaincy can have a much greater role in this way than it currently does. 'We're supposed to be subject matter experts in matters of faith, not just Christianity', one points out, 'involving us with the local mullah or imam.' Bob Bishop noted that his liaison with local religious leaders in Iraq could have been exploited far more than it was:

Command didn't understand the integral nature of religion to the local people and the importance of it. I got up to speak to a group of Iraqi soldiers and before I could get up to speak two independent people, without any organisation, got up and spoke for five minutes each about honoured they were to have the Australian 'man of God' in their presence. I was absolutely

*blown away. There is great opportunity for connecting and in fact making our job on the ground a lot easier — by building bridges of common mutual understanding to the degree that we can have them. [But in Iraq] there was too much concern that I was a high value political target.*⁴¹

Clearly a future challenge for Australian Army chaplaincy is to articulate its importance and place in this context of the Army's work.

Assessing the RAACHD's leadership structure and administration

There will always be a tension between promoting the interests of one's own denomination and prioritising a different sort of ministry among increasingly secularised, unchurched members who are completely ignorant of Christianity, let alone denominational nuances. Among some chaplains, especially those from more hierarchical churches such as the Anglican, Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches, there are fears of a watered-down 'common Christianity' that blandly overlooks some of the profound differences in denominational distinctions and doctrinal or sacramental emphases.

Yet leading chaplaincy figures have sometimes encountered difficulty convincing their churches of the importance of chaplaincy to their own church's mission and ministry. The loss of the chaplains-generals' uniform and their officer status has also prompted some RACS members to wonder whether this innovation involved giving away too much that had been valuable. Although RACS members have two-star *status*, the significance of the standing of RACS members has not always been comprehended within military circles where symbolism, rank and uniform hold sway. Despite these concerns, due respect has been the usual experience of most RACS members. Yet there have been times where it has appeared that their actual role within the ADF has not always been understood or appreciated by senior military officers.

Principal Chaplains have observed a preference among Army chiefs to hear one unified voice. 'Rule by committee', observed one RACS member, is foreign to Army command structures. A single leader 'with whom the buck stops' fits better with the Army ethos. This cultural conditioning means that Army chiefs naturally turn to the full-time Principal Chaplain when discussing chaplaincy matters. This is entirely understandable given that the full-time Principal Chaplain is in close proximity at Army Headquarters. Some Principal Chaplains and RACS members have welcomed a move towards a single rotating leader who can advocate for churches and chaplains at the highest levels, a model employed by many foreign

chaplains departments and corps. Others have lamented the diminution of the traditional committee system with its promise of collective wisdom. Yet other Principal Chaplains have identified friction resulting from role confusion when RACS members have intervened in operational matters, mostly posting arrangements and policy functions. Nevertheless, as several have observed, no better alternative structure has yet to be proposed. Their attitude to the RACS and Principal Chaplain's Committee⁴² structure appears to chime with Churchill's famous dictum on democracy: 'the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time'.

The intellectual foundations of chaplaincy and war

Historian Jeffrey Grey argued recently that if the Army is to be able to fulfil its self-proclaimed mission to 'fight smart', it must develop 'the intellectual capacities of the organisation'. Citing the eighteenth-century general and theorist Maurice De Saxe's dictum that 'instead of knowing what to do, soldiers will fall back on doing what they know', Grey asserts that the Australian Army has long been proficient at the tactical level but less so at the higher strategic levels. It therefore needs to devote greater attention to knowing its history and developing the military arts.⁴³ Similarly, chaplains have often excelled at the 'tactical' level of religious ministry and pastoral care, bringing a profound religious understanding to the intellectual and existential questions of soldiers in barracks, trenches, prisoner of war camps and hootchies. But like the Australian Army, chaplains have been less productive at the higher strategic and doctrinal level of creative theological thinking about chaplaincy.

Several factors are driving the need for greater intellectual engagement. Profound moral and theological issues have been raised by a post-Cold War world in which continuing conflict has been driven by religious fundamentalism, political ideology, ethnic rivalry, socio-economic disparities and mass terrorism, not least since 9/11 and the Bali bombing. Such questions have been given an added urgency in the light of Australia's heavy operational commitments in recent decades. Many have questioned Australia's involvement in the so-called 'war on terror' (now elided to a 'campaign against terror') first in Afghanistan and then in Iraq. The ADF's involvement in peacekeeping, peace enforcement, reconstruction and support to humanitarian activity has been less difficult to justify. Yet even those undertakings, as one Australian chaplain points out, involve 'the use of — or posturing and willingness to use — lethal force as an option, albeit a final option, when other measures are exhausted'.⁴⁴

The position of chaplains and their ecclesiastical leaders in light of just war theory is that political authorities, in the final evaluation, are morally culpable for any decision to go to war (*ius ad bello*). The soldier's legal and moral responsibility is for his or her own just actions on the battlefield (*ius in bello*). Herein lies the enduring relevance of Augustine, Aquinas and Grotius's just war principles on the taking of another human's life in the line of duty: such action is only just if the person killed is an enemy combatant similarly engaged in war, sharing the same risks and responsibilities; and it is just if harm to the innocent — or non-combatants such as prisoners of war or the wounded — is avoided, even if this adds risk for the soldier. Otherwise killing is unjust, illegal and sinful, incurring civil, military and divine judgement. Nevertheless, with a pervasive Army doctrine of counter-insurgency and difficult strategic environments such as Iraq and Afghanistan, where insurgents do not wear military uniforms and where the weapons of choice are roadside Improvised Explosive Devices, long-range sniper rifles and suicide bombers, a commitment to showing restraint and protecting the innocent is an immense challenge.⁴⁵ The same could be said of places where Australian soldiers witness atrocities, as in Somalia, Cambodia, Rwanda and East Timor. These are environments in which soldiers desperately require chaplains' help in calibrating their moral compasses.⁴⁶ A retired Principal Chaplain with 40 years of chaplaincy experience echoed this sentiment in commenting that all clergy have to do their ethical and moral sums before entering military chaplaincy. But they must never stop doing those moral and ethical sums while engaged in it.⁴⁷

Public discussions of Australia's political and strategic posture are a reflection of chaplains' continuing engagement with the just war tradition as well as the extent to which chaplains have been able to retain a prophetic edge in their ministries. Uniting Church chaplain Kaye Ronalds observed on becoming a chaplain that it was:

*somewhat disconcerting to be part of the establishment. I'm used to being in parish life where the church is separate from the state. A chaplain must keep alert lest one neglects the prophetic role and instead fears to offend the hand that feeds.*⁴⁸

But that prophetic calling is by no means only a public one. As Hugh Begbie has argued, drawing on the terminology of 'retrieval ethics', the 'task of the chaplain is to seek the Christ-like love that retrieves as much good as possible while at the same time striving to minimise harm'. In practical terms this means that a chaplain does not remain silent when in a position to say something that will bring good or reduce harm, whether speaking to a digger or challenging a CO. But the right to

speak has to be earned by integrity of character and a willingness to suffer with soldiers in their darkest hours.⁴⁹ Another means of retaining that edge, as some chaplains have observed, is to be a channel to churches of informed opinion on strategic and military decisions, enabling churches to speak truth to power with the nuanced insights of their chaplains.⁵⁰ Additionally, the chaplains' role as 'subject matter expert' in religion and as soldier's confidant demands a carefully thought out response, as does the potential role tension of rendering ultimate loyalty to God while in the pay and in the command chain of Caesar's army.

Chaplains have also been able to draw fruitfully on deepening wells of theological reflection emerging from overseas chaplaincy corps. As we saw in my previous article, there is evidence for theological reflection on chaplaincy — particularly from the late 1960s to the mid-1990s — and the emergence of a prophetic voice in both public and private contexts. Yet the public output of theological reflection has been modest since then, despite many chaplains engaging in postgraduate study of chaplaincy and practical theology. There is little recent evidence of a wider or sustained conversation on the theological rationale for chaplaincy and war. A recent request from almost a hundred chaplains for theological papers examining uniformed chaplaincy elicited just six responses.⁵¹ Some have wondered whether the intellectual nettle of chaplaincy has been grasped in the last two decades, fearing within chaplaincy a tendency towards anti-intellectualism or the lazy adoption of a 'naive and crass pragmatism' to justify chaplaincy's continuing existence and role within the Army.⁵² There is no doubt that Australian Army chaplains have produced some profound reflection on uniformed ministry and demonstrated a capacity for sustained examination of the pressing moral and ethical problems facing the Army and their own department. The need for this kind of intellectual engagement remains undiminished in a society and an institution that questions the value of institutionalised religion and those who are its official representatives.

Some chaplains have been doing this thinking. But since 1994 there has been no dedicated journal or forum — apart from corps conferences — for the dissemination of these ideas across the RAACHD or within ADF chaplaincy, or from the growing body of literature emerging from overseas chaplaincy corps, not least those in the United States, Britain and Canada. Clearly chaplains need to develop their intellectual capacities and to think deeply and creatively about their vocation and *raison d'être*, so that they can know 'what to do' instead of 'falling back on what they know'. In 1999 the Army resurrected the *Army Journal*. There had not been a dedicated Army publication for scholarly reflection on soldiering for 23 years.

The value of such a forum for Australian Army chaplains — to help anchor chaplains in theologically informed and ecclesiastically grounded vocations within a rapidly changing post-war Army — is obvious. So too is the value of a historically informed perspective on both Army chaplaincy and a changing Australian society. Such a perspective, as Peter Stanley has argued recently, 'will enable the Royal Australian Army Chaplains' Department to enter its second century with a deeper understanding of its past, one that can only benefit its future'.⁵³ ■

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The Search for Identity and Meaning in Army Chaplaincy: The Theological Future of Australian Army Chaplaincy – 2013 and Beyond

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^{5b} *Cursed is the one who trusts in man,
who draws strength from mere flesh
and whose heart turns away from the Lord.*

⁶ *That person will be like a bush in the wastelands;
they will not see prosperity when it comes.
They will dwell in the parched places of the desert,
in a salt land where no one lives.*

⁷ *But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord,
whose confidence is in him.*

⁸ *They will be like a tree planted by the water
that sends out its roots by the stream.
It does not fear when heat comes;
its leaves are always green.
It has no worries in a year of drought
and never fails to bear fruit.¹*

Introduction

The deuteronomic history² of Israel is a fascinating journey of theological reflection over Israel's political leadership and its impact on the people God rescued from slavery and gave the promised land of milk and honey.³ Written after the Babylon exile, the deuteronomist theologically contemplates the fate of Israel in the light of its relationship to God, the temple as a central point of worship and adherence to the law. David, despite his numerous flaws, is the central figure of faithfulness and pious loyalty. He is the benchmark that measures all before him and all those who followed. Finally, the deuteronomist's conclusion is a forlorn denunciation of a people who, despite the fulfilled promises of God, squandered their blessings by abandoning the One who had made them His own. The deuteronomic history is a classical piece of critical theology growing out of not merely the historical narrative, but the experience of living through the ramifications of that narrative. It sets the scene for the years that followed, and gives reason to the shifts and factions emerging in the Intertestamental period that shaped the various dynamics of Israel's life at the time of Jesus. The task before Army chaplaincy, in the light of the past one hundred years, is similar to that of the deuteronomist. It has the opportunity to critically reflect on its past and to contemplate what implications this may have for the future of Army chaplaincy. This is not an easy task, as evidenced in the soul-searching of post-exilic Israel. Nevertheless, after one hundred years, this task offers the opportunity to rediscover God's voice as he speaks to Army chaplaincy, reshapes it, and realigns it to achieve His purposes.

Since the formal establishment of Army chaplaincy in 2013 as the Royal Australian Army Chaplains' Department, chaplains have deployed into every theatre of operation in which Australians have served. This includes two world wars, Korea, Malaya/Borneo, Vietnam, East Timor, Solomon Islands, Iraq and Afghanistan. It also includes United Nations operations, humanitarian aid, and other operations in support of Australian foreign policy.⁴ As we saw in the previous paper, the presence of chaplains within a military context has well-established historical roots dating back to 430AD in the British context⁵ from which Australia's military emerged.⁶ Prior to Federation, chaplains served in the colonial armies of the independent Australian states as far back as the Maori Wars (1860s), the Sudan contingent (1885) and the Boer War (1899–1902).⁷ It would appear that, regardless of the socio-religious construct, religious practice has historically found a place within the military organisation. This is not incidental, but a deliberate policy of active inclusion by the military to engage the services of religious entities to maintain and sustain religious practice.

While the presence of a chaplain appears a contradiction to the uninitiated, military commanders have traditionally valued a religious practitioner as a supportive element to their operational capability. Given the nature of war — the use of force as an extension of government policy — it is unsurprising that chaplains find a presence in a military environment. The operational circumstance elicits demands on individuals that, historically, have relied on the presence and experience of chaplains to create a sense of healing, self-meaning and purpose for those enmeshed within it. Emerging from the muck and chaos of war, deep questions of meaning, value, worth, identity and life ooze from the horror of this self-inflicted, self-destructive inhumanity:

During the Vietnam conflict, a chaplain accompanied his unit on patrol through the dark, thick, rain soaked foliage of a remote jungle somewhere in Southeast Asia. As the patrol cautiously approached the crest of a hill, the men paused, sensing danger. They all recognized that they could be walking into an ambush.

A small squad, it was decided, would advance. The rest would stay back. As the chaplain began to move out with the advanced party, the young officer in charge stopped him. "Chaplain you stay. We can't afford to lose you. Besides, we may be needing you!"

That issue settled, the young lieutenant – along with a few brave comrades – moved out, and as feared, stepped into the deadly sights of an ambush.

The parting words of that brave, boy-warrior still echo long after they were spoken: "Chaplain, you stay. We can't afford to lose you." As those men were facing death and eternity, a chaplain was there – there to pray for them, to face what they faced, and to serve as a living reminder of the caring presence of God. That is what chaplains in the military do.⁸

The wounds of war go well beyond the immediacy of the encounter, haunting participants throughout their lives, and creating an absence of humanity that remains for many beyond the immediacy of the experiential trauma. Historically, the hope for these post-war casualties, and the need to rationalise this act of inhumanity close to the actual engagement, has long been considered most appropriately met through the holistic longevity of religious practice. This is the fundamental position adopted by those who advocate spiritual resilience⁹, and is historically one of the key motivators for the development of character training in the Australian Army in the 1950s.¹⁰ The need to endure within the

framework of an effectively functioning humanity amidst the brutality of war finds chaplains embedded amidst the combatants themselves. The historical narrative of chaplaincy affirms that this fundamental aspect of chaplaincy has remained consistent up to and including the Australian Army's present operational engagements. Such a reality surely imposes a sobering effect on any centenary celebration for the Royal Australian Army's Chaplaincy Department.

This intentional preservation of chaplaincy remains true into the modern era. While some may think it strange that a secular organisation, which the Australian Army has become, intentionally retains a religious entity within its structural paradigm, the Australian Army continues to view chaplaincy as an important and integral aspect of its overall capability. However, despite the numerous articles in which commanders and their subordinates have appraised and affirmed the important work they perceive chaplains perform, the organisational validation of chaplaincy appears strangely absent.¹¹ It would seem that formal justification for the presence of chaplaincy relies on the religious communities to argue its case for a place within the organisation. This raises one of the fundamental issues the Army needs to address as it critically reflects on the centenary of service of its chaplaincy department. While we journey through our discussions, this fact needs to remain at the forefront of our thinking. It is insufficient for chaplains, as religious beings, to provide the sole justification for their existence. At some point, the Army has to validate for itself why it needs chaplains and what it actually expects of chaplains in terms of the capability the organisation provides on behalf of the nation under the watchful eye of its political masters.

In the previous paper we explored the search for meaning and identity within chaplaincy over the course of its history. Several themes emerged from this discussion:

1. the distinctive of role, identity and meaning
2. the ecclesiastical relationships of chaplaincy
3. the challenge of inter-denominationalism and the myth of ecumenism
4. practice and pragmatism
5. the formation of theological frameworks for chaplaincy

This previous journey raised a number of issues, some of which will form the focus of this paper. The first involves the theological tensions that have emerged within chaplaincy as it has grappled with its place in a secular legal-rational authority. These appear in issues of clerical identity such as priest/minister compared to

religious practitioner or clinician, the pastoral or prophetic voice of chaplaincy, and the lines of demarcation between church and Army governance over chaplaincy. In a social theory sense, this debate is about the coexistence of a traditional authority paradigm within a legal-rational form of authority. The notion of a guardian or one who locates knowledge within a tradition best exemplifies the former, while the expert system, which relies on the rationalisation of knowledge, typifies the latter. The second issue emerging from the historical journey concerns the narrative and language chaplaincy relies on to sustain its presence within the Army. This is not just a chaplaincy issue, but spills over into the language others use concerning chaplaincy. It is often difficult to embrace other voices, especially for those struggling to make their own voice heard. Nevertheless, these other voices have a significant impact on the place, identity and meaning of chaplaincy within the organisation. The third issue to emerge from the historical narrative is the theological interpretation of chaplaincy. This theological narrative is like a spectre that continually haunts the historical journey of Army chaplaincy over the past one hundred years. The propensity for chaplaincy to be naïvely pragmatic impinges on its capacity to engage the religious entities to which it answers theologically. Consequently, this pragmatism inhibits chaplaincy's capacity to shape the organisational environment of the Army so that both the individual and institution comprehend chaplaincy's capacity to contribute. The impetus to create a theological framework for chaplaincy, however, appears elusive. The various nuances and polarities evident in such a diverse group, compounded by the potential introduction of other faiths beyond the Christian tradition, suggest that perhaps chaplaincy needs to look beyond the framework and deconstruct its various theologies to uncover a theological method that speaks across traditions and even faith groups.

Tensions in chaplaincy and implications for the future

Historically, chaplaincy has adopted the model of parish priest/minister. For the most part this has meant remaining within the ecclesiastical tradition from which chaplains have come, and enacting those things from within that tradition that uniquely identify them as priest or minister. Moody's discussion on whether chaplaincy should remain the domain of the ordained clergy questions the validity of this assumption. It asks chaplains to dig deep into the core of their identity and being as priest/minister and ask whether they continue to fundamentally enact, engage, incarnate, reflect or function as ordained clergy within the ministry of Army chaplaincy. More so, Moody goes on to say:

The present trend is for ordained ministers to seek greater professional capability in a wider number of fields ... Perhaps ministers should be seeking to do more in equipping the people of God to fulfil their ministries instead of seeking greater professional expertise themselves. For example, it may be better to take a trained nurse or teacher, equip them for pastoral care and place them in the hospitals and schools, with the support of a congregation and an ordained minister, than to train a minister of the Word to do something other than that which the Church has set him apart to do. Is it impossible to explore this idea in the case of the defence force? ¹²

This is not a new question. Other forms of chaplaincy have raised similar issues. The Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA), for example, laboured hard on the question of why they engaged ordained clergy as chaplains within their schooling system. The end result was to accept that there is a fundamental difference in the school environment between chaplaincy and the ministry of Word and Sacrament, and they redefined their clergy as 'school pastors'. In making this definition, the LCA stated that:

the Lutheran Church of Australia affirms that the public ministry is 'public, foundational, and ecumenical, since it is by the public proclamation of the gospel and the public administration of the sacraments the Holy Spirit creates, upholds, and extends the church throughout the world'. Accordingly, if the gospel is to inform the Lutheran school, the public ministry needs to be present.

2.2 Thus the primary role of the pastor at a Lutheran school is to exercise the public ministry of the church through a proclamation of the word of God and the administration of the sacraments. ¹³

For the LCA, the ministry of Word and Sacrament remains integral to the ordained ministry. Wherever ordained ministers serve must naturally correlate to this essential understanding. The result is that Lutheran schools today, especially the larger schools, utilise a team ministry in which ordained clergy function alongside teaching staff, student counsellors and lay chaplains.

Similarly, the Federal Government's national school chaplaincy initiative is not clergy-oriented. In fact, the contrary is so, with the overwhelming majority of school chaplains members of the laity, particularly those under the age of thirty.¹⁴ For the purposes of this scheme, a school chaplain is a person who:

- is recognised by the school community and the appropriate governing authority for the school as having the skills and experience to deliver school chaplaincy (as outlined in Section 1.5) to the school community
- is recognised through formal ordination, commissioning, recognised religious qualifications or endorsement by a recognised or accepted religious institution or a state/territory government approved chaplaincy service and
- meets the minimum qualification requirements, as outlined in Section 5.5¹⁵ Subject to sections 5.5.2 and 5.5.3, school chaplains and student welfare workers must have a minimum Certificate IV in Youth Work or Pastoral Care or equivalent qualification. The minimum qualification must include mental health related [qualifications] and [make] appropriate referrals [to] unit/s of competency. Both qualifications are part of the nationally accredited Community Services Training Package under the Australian Qualifications Framework.¹⁶

The validity and efficacy of this school chaplaincy program has not been without its criticism¹⁷, including challenges in the High Court¹⁸, but the report undertaken by Philip Hughes and Margaret Sim indicates that it is generally well received and effective.¹⁹ Hughes and Sim affirm that the work of school chaplains bears little resemblance to that expected of ordained clergy, particularly in the embodiment and enactment of the priestly office:

However, the case studies suggested three different emphases in the ways in which chaplaincy is conducted:

1. *Pastoral Care of individuals emphasis, focussing on talking with individuals in either informal or structured ways;*
2. *Pastoral Care of groups emphasis, focussing on group activities such as sport, music, gardening, hobbies, or discussion groups (in some cases this moved towards a 'Community Development' model);*
3. *Educational emphasis, focussing on educating students, often through group activities, about relationships, behaviour management, interpersonal values, and social justice.*

In no case did one emphasis take over to the exclusion of others. However, the emphasis varied with the needs of the school and the skills and abilities of the chaplains.²⁰

The core identifiers for the clerical office are not required in secular school chaplaincy. In fact, the appointments of such individuals rely on the school community and a range of other agencies, not all of whom are actual denominationally oriented church communities. Additionally, an individual must meet a specific set of qualifications explicitly articulated in the guidelines as a prerequisite for consideration as a school chaplain. The standards are well below that expected of ordained clergy in most religious communities. The entire scheme appears geared to the non-ordained rather than the ordained. In fact, one could argue that having non-ordained individuals in this scheme lends greater credibility to the pastoral dimension and avoids the perceived 'religious indoctrination' associated with ordained clergy and seized upon by opponents of the scheme.²¹

The discussion over school chaplaincy is highly pertinent to the debate over whether Army chaplains should be ordained clergy/ministers or religious clerics. As Moody points out, if Army chaplains do not essentially enact, engage or incarnate the theological fundamentals of their clerical office, then is it not possible for laity to undertake this ministry?²² Clearly, the answer to this is yes, if the Catholic moves to include lay chaplains in their Ordinariate are any indication. While expedience and necessity appear to be primary motives for this inclusion of lay chaplains, one cannot discount the theological underpinnings that are evident in this move. Theologically, there is already a distinction within Catholicism in the way the ordained office is understood. Within Holy Orders, Catholic theology centres the focus of its ministry on the priest as one ordained in the apostolic tradition. It reserves its judgement on the validity of other forms of ordination, with consideration and dispensations extending only to those traditions that Rome identifies as maintaining this specific apostolic tradition.²³ In essence, theologically, Catholicism considers all non-Catholic chaplains as essentially non-ordained. Thus the introduction of lay chaplaincy accords with the way Catholicism theologically understands the other denominational traditions within chaplaincy. Putting aside the sacramental responsibilities uniquely assigned to the priestly office, the introduction of laity simply affirms Moody's point that where priests/ministers are not required, lay people are able to function as effectively, and in some case potentially more effectively, than the priest/minister. Some would even argue that in a specialised form of ministry such as chaplaincy, lay people have fewer theological and sacramental encumbrances imposed on them and consequently offer more effective ministry than that possible from the ordained office. It is not uncommon, for example, to see brothers and nuns heavily engaged in chaplaincy-type roles within the Catholic community. With the constant battle to find ordained clergy, especially from the more sacramentally oriented traditions,

surely a motive behind the Catholic Military Ordinariate's introduction of lay chaplains is to challenge the other denominational and religious groups involved in Army chaplaincy to re-engage the question of whether trained, skilled and qualified lay people can deliver chaplaincy as effectively as the ordained cleric.

Similar issues concerning the differences in role of ordained cleric and religious practitioner/clinician have arisen in the area of hospital chaplaincy. Hospital chaplaincy, unlike Army chaplaincy, has taken a much more intentional and deliberative approach to embracing the challenge of meaning and identity within the health care institution. Apart from the introduction of Clinical Pastoral Education as a mandatory requirement for hospital chaplains, regardless of whether they are ordained or not, the health care system has also begun to embrace the capability chaplaincy adds to the delivery of health care. There are numerous articles and books emerging from the US, the UK and Australia which deal with hospital chaplaincy, not simply as an extension of the ministry of the church or religious body, but as an integral and necessary component of an overall health care strategy. One example is *Professional Spiritual & Pastoral Care: A Practical Clergy and Chaplain's Handbook*, edited by Rabbi Stephen Roberts, compiled to assist the ongoing development of chaplains as clinical professionals.²⁴ Carl Aiken's input into chaplaincy has produced a clearly articulated clinical chaplaincy model.²⁵ Spiritual Care Australia (SCA), of which Aiken is National President, redefines the role of chaplain as 'Spiritual Care Practitioner':

*Spiritual Care Practitioner (spiritual/pastoral care practitioner, chaplain) is a person, paid or unpaid, who is appointed and recognised as the specialist in this field. The Spiritual Care Practitioner supports people spiritually and emotionally through person-centred, relational, supportive and holistic care – seeking out and responding to expressed spiritual needs. This may include managing requests from an individual for a faith representative of their choice.*²⁶

SCA is an emerging governing body for the provision of health-care-related chaplaincy. Integral to the spiritual care practitioner model that SCA advocates is professional oversight within clear clinical supervision guidelines and expectations.²⁷ The model adopted clearly reflects the professional models of supervision evident in other aspects of the health care industry, and affirms that such supervision does not occur without a heavy training liability on individuals and organisations for an ongoing professional development program. The material suggests that there is a clear theological shift in understanding of the chaplaincy role,

and that engagement in those areas where such empirical models prevail requires an ecclesiastical adjustment away from that traditionally upheld in the churches and religious communities.

This tension in shifting theological paradigms, particularly over the clerical identifiers and the clinical approach, persists globally within health care chaplaincy. There is a growing body of research and thought attempting to reconcile this dichotomy of being. Fundamental to this conversation is the chaplain's place in and relationship with the religious community or church. Seward Hiltner, in grappling with precisely this issue, writes:

But it is also not enough to have more and better trained professional practitioners. The pastor and chaplains are indeed professional workers, and they do require technical training. But they are also, and in fact, representatives. They speak and act not just for themselves or for a body of knowledge and skill, but for the Christian community, the Christian church. An evaluation of what they do can never stop at the point of their technical competence, therefore, but must always go on to ask: How well have they helped people to appropriate for themselves the purposes and common goals of the Christian community? How effectively has their representative function been carried out?²⁸

Hiltner draws attention to the relationship between practitioner and priest, and highlights this as one of the key points of tension evident once the priest/minister begins to minister beyond the immediacy of the church or religious community. The fundamental question remains, who does the chaplain actually represent?

In an expert system, knowledge is disembedding, in that it is non-local and decentralised. It separates the immediacy of the context from the social relationship. Additionally, expertise presumes the separation of time and space, which it promotes as a condition of time-space distancing on which it 'guarantees' that what is being offered is legitimate.²⁹ Expert systems, based on methodical scepticism, function through the remediation of knowledge rather than formulaic truth. Specialisation in knowledge is a hallmark of expertise. Consequently, individuals with the time and, often, money to acquire the knowledge through a process established and recognised by a professional association, which may also have various regulatory agencies overseeing it,³⁰ can then independently establish themselves as specialists or expert practitioners in their own right. Today we see this in the form of apprenticeships, in which a person is immersed in the intricacies, skills and knowledge of a specific trade.

This in turn empowers the individual, once he/she completes the required time and learning, to then become established as a tradesperson. Similarly, entry into the medical world is full of individuals who, having acquired the prerequisite level of knowledge according to the professional association, are then able to establish themselves as medical practitioners or specialists. Within an expert system, there is no link to any form of esoteric wisdom, one simply needs to 'trust', as an act of faith, based on the experience of interacting with the system, that it generally works as it says it should.³¹ Finally, a developing institutional reflexivity intrinsically links such systems with a regular process of loss and reappropriation of the skills and knowledge utilised by the expert.³² People engage these individuals, regardless of whether they are tradespeople or some form of specialist, on the fundamental principal that the body of knowledge they have accessed is valid and appropriate to the issues they need resolved:

The reliance placed by lay actors upon expert systems is not just a matter – as was normally the case in the pre-modern world – of generating a sense of security about an independently given universe of events. It is a matter of calculation of benefit and risk in circumstances where expert knowledge does not just provide the calculus but actually 'creates' (or reproduces) the universe of events, as a result of the continual reflexive implementation of that very knowledge.³³

In terms of a professional practitioner approach for chaplaincy, therefore, an expert system defines the knowledge, creates the conditions in which that knowledge is utilised, and functions on a belief that this knowledge is useful to those with whom no direct or immediate relationship may be present at the time the knowledge is required.

The tension that emerges within Army chaplaincy is that, until relatively recent shifts in focus, religious leaders such as priests, ministers and clerics came from an entirely different system. In the pre-modern world, a world that generally retains its influence over the way the religious world continues to define itself, the premise of guardianship has tended to define leadership. Such guardianship exists within a traditional authority type which links its legitimacy to time-honoured rules and powers.³⁴ Leadership is not about formal procedures as much as it is about the links one has to the formulaic truth that underpins this system. More than this, leadership is understood as that which exists as the repository of the tradition, which comes from a process of formation that incorporates the leader into the tradition itself.³⁵ The symbols, rites, practice, etc., all of which emerge from the tradition, are the means by which the leader enacts the tradition and asserts

authority as one embedded within the tradition. Regardless of the denominational or religious body to which they belong, access to the role of ordained religious leadership is not dependent on the acquisition of a body of knowledge.

Other factors beyond knowledge enable individuals to enter the clerical office:

*Guardians, be they elders, healers, magicians or religious functionaries, have the importance they do in tradition because they are believed to be the agents, or the essential mediators, of its causal powers. They are dealers in mystery, but their arcane skills come from their involvement with the causal power of tradition than from their mastery or any body of secret or esoteric knowledge.*³⁶

For example, simply acquiring an academic degree does not guarantee ordination. Religious bodies require processes of formation, testing the desire or 'call' of individuals to become a religious leader within their tradition. Not all people are able to access such an office; indeed, a significant number of religious bodies exclude women from entering the clerical office. Additionally, unlike a professional system where it makes no difference what intimate association a person may have to a body of knowledge, the religious communities expect the demonstrable presence of some level of faith intimacy with the religious tradition. For example, an individual, having spent a lifetime embedded in the Christian tradition, could not then become an Imam. A leader in scientology cannot become a Catholic priest overnight. The generic normative reality of the religious world is that, unless there is a deep, long-term personal connection with the tradition, one simply cannot decide to be a clerical leader regardless of the knowledge that may have been acquired:

Guardians are not experts, and the arcane qualities to which they have access for the most part are not communicable to the outsider ... 'a traditional specialist' is not someone who has an adequate picture of some reality in his or her mind, but someone whose utterances can be, in some contexts, directly determined by the reality in question.

*Status in the traditional order, rather than 'competence', is the prime characteristic of the guardian. The knowledge and skills possessed by the expert might appear mysterious to the layperson; but anyone can in principle acquire that knowledge and those skills were they to set out to do so.*³⁷

Unlike expert systems, no amount of money, time or knowledge acquisition is a guarantee of access to the Public Ministry. The fundamental reason for this resides in the reality that ecclesiastical ministry is not an individual endeavour:

*The distinguishing characteristics of tradition are ritual and repetition.
Traditions are always the properties of groups, communities, or collectives.
Individuals may follow traditions and customs, but traditions are not a quality
of individual behaviour in the way habits are.*³⁸

This position of high importance to the religious system always points back to the faith community that has entrusted such leadership to an individual. In this way, religious leaders, clerics, priests, ministers, pastors and all other persons of prominence within the religious community exist fundamentally as guardians of that tradition.

Reconciling this understanding of the guardian of the tradition with a model of clinical religious practitioner has been the underlying tension emerging within Army chaplaincy over the past several decades. At its core it is fundamentally a clash of authority systems. The legal-rational authority system, epitomised by the modern bureaucracy, is a disembedding, all-consuming entity. Weber's concept of such systems as the 'iron cage' of bureaucracy affirms that these systems, through a legal-rational propensity, exert absolute control that extends to the outermost elements of their influence.³⁹ Foucault describes these systems of control as oppressive forms of centralised power, a sort of panopticism, which structure themselves so that only the centralised head knows all that is occurring, keeping the other elements isolated from one another with access only possible through the central control point.⁴⁰ Religious bodies tend to function differently. They operate within the framework of a traditional authority in which power is relationally oriented, shared and engaged through the experience of community. All have access to the guardians of knowledge that underpin the traditional authority system, with control exerted through the process of ritual, story, myth, encounter and experience. The central figures in this authority type are not the disengaged, dehumanised, disembedded expert or specialist practitioner. On the contrary, the community discovers its identity and meaning through intimate relational connectedness.

Throughout the history of Army chaplaincy, the bureaucratic mechanisms of the Army have tried to impose its legal-rational form on chaplaincy. This has caused angst, rebellion, resistance and concession. For example, the numerous historical attempts at structuring and organising Army chaplaincy appear to have far more in common with the legal-rational forms of a modern bureaucracy than they do with the relational dynamics of their ecclesiastical masters.⁴¹ At the same time, chaplains have historically railed against the adoption of a legal-rational process that threatened to disentangle their links to their denominational bodies.⁴² The perennial debate about badges of ranks sums up the pastoral angst, subtle

rebelliousness, and the final resignation towards acceptance of the norm imposed by existing within a legal-rational authority system.⁴³ In the light of the historical material, it is interesting to ponder what previous chaplains would make of such programs as the in-service scheme, competency-based training at the Defence Force Chaplains' College, moves to codify and quantify chaplaincy activity, and the development of a permanent career progression path within chaplaincy. The question many of these chaplains would raise, one suspects, is to what degree does chaplaincy embrace a system of authority that is fundamentally alien to the one in which they are ecclesiastically embedded? Is there space for a 'professional' chaplaincy model, such as the clinical chaplain model, and if so, in what ways does this disengage chaplains from the traditional systems of authority that still seek to exert governance over them? In other words, at what point do the scales tip, and chaplains finally leave the church and become fully committed agents of the secular legal-rational authority of the Army's bureaucratic machine?

This is fundamentally a theological question. Within His High Priestly prayer, Jesus prays:

¹³ I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴ I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.⁴⁴

The call to discipleship is one that draws individuals out of the earthly kingdom and places them within the heavenly realm of God. This is not yet realised, so the challenge of discipleship is living in a world where one does not truly belong. This world is naturally hostile to the disciple, working to draw individuals away from their true home. But the call to discipleship is to endure, because they have been set aside by God:

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, ^[c] in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

*¹⁰ Once you were not a people,
but now you are God's people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.*

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. ¹² Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

There is a purpose to this setting aside of the disciple. It is to proclaim the redemptive act of a loving God, whose mercy is beyond all comprehension, and whose love never fails.⁴⁵ Having such a call comes at a cost to the Christian, for he/she now exists as an alien and exile in the world. The world will be hostile to these people. This is the normative reality of sinful humanity — that which it cannot understand it destroys or rejects. However, faithfulness to the call of God, living as one whose true home is not of this world, ultimately bears witness to the world of the glorious love of God. Peter goes on to say, therefore, that we are to accept human authority and submit to it:

¹³ For the Lord's sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴ or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. ¹⁵ For it is God's will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish. ¹⁶ As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. ¹⁷ Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor.⁴⁶

This does not mean that this human authority becomes the standard by which Christians live their lives as aliens and exiles — people who are in the world yet not of the world. There is still a need to maintain the distinctive and acknowledge that human authority has its place; but the ultimate call of the Christian is to bear witness to the authority of God.

Historically, the alignment of chaplaincy with the church has always maintained this clear distinction. It has been an example to both the church and the Army and, one would suggest, beyond the Army, of the position of chaplains as aliens and exiles to the organisation, yet as a group that bears witness to God's grace and love. Throughout Army chaplaincy's history, this single, fundamental motivation resides at the heart of why most chaplains have accepted the church's call to serve in the Army. Is it possible, therefore, to accept an *expert* model of chaplaincy, one that conforms to the normative apparatus of a legal-rational framework, without losing this sense of alienation from the world? Is there a place for such an approach to chaplaincy and, if so, what implications will it have for the evolution of chaplaincy? These pressing questions reside at the core of chaplaincy.

The answers will determine whether it remains as one with the church, or whether the church will abdicate this ministry to the Army as another human resource capability alongside similar clinical practitioners, as has happened in other forms of chaplaincy where the ecclesiastical links are tenuous at best.

Deconstructing the myths of chaplaincy

In 2013, chaplains remain as integral to the Army's operational activity as they were in 1913. Consequently, chaplaincy is assured of its place in the Army's modernisation. In the Army Objective Force 2030 (AOF2030) chaplaincy exists as a single capability brick. This inclusion, however, is also confrontational. It challenges the Army, and the religious communities claiming a place within it, to rationalise, justify and define the nature of this single capability brick. As we have already discussed, this becomes even more challenging given that the language of the Army resembles the legal-rationalised authority structure of a modern bureaucratic organisation, while the language of the churches tends to be more aligned to a traditional authority system. AOF2030 does not articulate what capability chaplaincy provides, what function it serves, what outputs it delivers, or who provides it. There are inherent assumptions that what is now in place in terms of chaplaincy support, regardless of its religious composition, is what will be required in a future concept of the Army. Despite one hundred years of service, chaplaincy remains an undefined capability within the Army. Notwithstanding the numerous documents, doctrine and other publications, the core question of being appears elusive. The capability exists, and Army Objective Force 2030 (AOF2030) considers it integral to the Army's future, but it lacks the robust foundational understandings of identity required to define its outputs. This anomalous situation, within a legal-rational authority structure that defines every component in a rational and empirical sense, demands urgent consideration. While such an empirical understanding of chaplaincy is questionable given our previous discussion, it highlights the complexity that if chaplaincy is to remain embedded within the formal bureaucratic parameters of the Army it requires definition that utilises terminology that a legal-rational world view can comprehend.

A centenary of service is a milestone worth noting. The danger in any celebration, however, is the tendency of those intimately involved in the social construct celebrating this milestone to use it to reinforce their own collective psyche, affirming a worth that others may not share. Such celebrations demonstrate a tendency to affirm a collective self-importance, perpetuate structural myths and croon self-praises that insist others stop and note how special they imagine

they are. This self-congratulation, self-posturing, self-affirming and self-serving is healthy in moderation, for it reinvigorates the collective narrative. When it becomes excessive, however, it risks sounding like a gaggle of geese to everyone but the geese themselves. For that very reason, chaplaincy needs to deconstruct its language, examine what this says about chaplaincy, and ask whether this is the language required for the future shaping of chaplaincy.

Reality is difficult to digest. Nevertheless, it is important to honestly and critically reflect on the narrative chaplaincy has created, and ask whether its assumed legitimacy is sustainable in the post-religious, post-industrial, individualised, secularised, high-modernity construct of the 2013 world. In terms of a legal-rational authority, the cost analysis, systemic inputs and organisationally driven outputs, all regulated by the bureaucratic structuralism of contemporary military organisations, demand justification in terms of a single sustainment cost to the organisation. While chaplaincy attempts to present itself as a unified and natural expression of knowledge structured around a specific narrative through which it reveals its collective identity, it assumes that this narrative appeases the cost displacement it demands by having an acknowledged place within the organisation. However, the structuring of knowledge displayed through its narratives also conceals the social, relational and power arrangements constructed by chaplaincy to legitimise its place within the structures of a legal-rational authority. The issue in determining the validity of chaplaincy within the military organisation therefore, concerns not the knowledge it chooses to reveal, but that which it chooses to conceal. This is inherently evident within the discourse of modernity and the notion of trust in abstract systems. Modernity pre-conditions people to accept as valid a rationalised empirical reality of the world.⁴⁷ Such an approach nurtures a level of ambiguity, which is the basis for all trust relationships. However, trust is only necessary where ignorance is evident and such ignorance creates a form of scepticism or caution. This is evident in much of the historical journey of chaplaincy, and remains central to the language chaplaincy uses to define its presence within the Army. Tensions emerge at this rub point of language with chaplaincy couching itself in the terms of an abstract system which, out of ignorance, accepts the fundamental claims of chaplaincy within the Army as a capability. These tensions emerge from experience and expectation. If someone in the Army has a bad experience, then doubts over the validity of chaplaincy are bound to emerge. Similarly, a positive encounter produces acceptance of the validity of chaplaincy claims. This creates vulnerability for chaplaincy, and threatens to unravel the assumptions that assure the existence of chaplains within an abstract system of knowledge such as the Army.⁴⁸

The social, relational and power arrangements sustaining the presence of military chaplains require exposure, deconstruction and discernment if the organisation and chaplaincy are to find a way to mutually coexist in the future. All social entities create their own narratives. These narratives shape the way they view their place in the world and determine their external and internal interactions. It is the validity of this narrative that requires scrutiny, as all groups are prone to varying forms of *pseudologia fantas'tica*⁴⁹ or mythomania.⁵⁰ As time passes, the propensity of any unchecked collective narrative is to generate self-centred exaggeration and fanciful interpretation that inevitably emerges through the beliefs and actions of the group, regardless of whether it is true. This unchecked narrative will often embellish the truth, participate in a form of collective exaggeration, or simply fabricate propagandas that it uses to sustain the collective identity, complementing the larger narrative to which it belongs, or to counter this narrative to define uniqueness. In a religious-military context, Col Stringer's *The Fighting Mackenzie: ANZAC Chaplain* and, even more so, *800 Horsemen: Riders of Destiny*, epitomise the propensity to create a narrative that supports a religious position rather than reflects the accuracy of the information.⁵¹ The social, relational and power relationships which reside behind the façade of the language used by chaplaincy to sustain its structural knowledge require exposure to ascertain the depth of *pseudologia fantas'tica* within its narrative. Only through the deconstruction of its narrative can chaplaincy reclaim truths that are valid and verifiable for its place within the domain of the legal-rational authority.

A process of deconstruction is not an easy task. It requires exposure of a core understanding that many have never seen, or have seen and chosen to leave hidden. It is confrontational, for it uncovers truths people may not wish to engage, either because they are complex and painful, or because they are actually irreconcilable. Additionally, the task of deconstruction may be impossible, as the passage of time, the development of a *pseudologia fantas'tica* within the collective psyche and the cognitive capacity of the group may never permit full disclosure. The emotional links groups establish with their narratives will frequently cause them to balk at the notion of deconstruction. The fear of change, the risk of exposure, the perceived loss of self-identity intimately linked to the collective narrative, all cause feelings of reluctance to engage this process. The subjectivity that resides within the individual fear of deconstruction finds resonance with the collective angst of a challenged legitimacy or questioned integrity caused by external forces demanding justification within the meta-narrative of the bureaucratic organisation. However, this process also presents opportunities for growth. Stripping the vine back to its trunk can create moments of re-creation and re-configuration.⁵²

A willingness to confront the barriers, endure the pain and become vulnerable is humbling yet powerful. Those willing to expose their narrative to the process of deconstruction often find a reinvigoration of their place within the larger social context.

In terms of Army chaplaincy, Christian roots contain narratives of brokenness and reconciliation, destruction and resurrection, death and rebirth, decay and renewal, illness and health. Deconstructing chaplaincy, therefore, not only seeks to strip back the façade time has constructed to reveal its hidden narrative, it also allows the potential rediscovery and reclamation of that which time has shrouded. One hundred years of chaplaincy provides the opportune moment to determine the depths of its *pseudologia fantas'tica*, and decide whether Army chaplaincy should redefine itself in terms of the post-industrial, late-modernity world view that governs the meta-narrative of the Australian Army, or whether to remain within the ecclesiological narrative. A centenary offers the chance to confront the myths chaplaincy has created, expose the narrative or narratives that currently sustain its place in the Army and, in the context of the organisational world view, experiment with what chaplaincy needs to be and needs to become if it is to remain integral to the organisation's capability. While chaplaincy could undertake this task alone, the danger is that it will simply reaffirm its *pseudologia fantas'tica*. However, in humility and openness, if chaplaincy extends the invitation to the Army to share this task of deconstruction, to invite it to measure whether chaplaincy should remain a legitimised capability brick as AOF2030 asserts, then a valid shared discourse is possible. Whether radical change is required to transform chaplaincy into a capability that better serves the modern military environment, or the current status quo is acceptable, is surely a matter for a collective discourse between chaplaincy and those it is committed to serve.

A group's narrative contains both implicit and explicit concepts. Ownership of these resides with the group itself, regardless of whether the concept evolves within the group or external perceptions inflict it on the group. Chaplaincy contains numerous examples of these nuances in its historical narrative. Time and space does not permit an exhaustive examination of these, but several emerge that are worth exposing to illustrate the process of theological deconstruction.

Patronage: A patron is someone who protects, advocates or defends an individual or group. Its intent is relational in as much as the patron or master bestows benevolence on another who reciprocates loyalty or service to the patron or master. The framework of this relationship derives from tradition and encapsulates the belief in the timeless sacredness of the relational interaction between the patron

and those who receive patronage.⁵³ This relationship is strikingly different to the relationships established in a bureaucratic context which are formed from an established rationality, an appeal to an abstract legality, and the presupposition of technical skills or training.⁵⁴ Under patronage, the relationship or power exerted by both parties often exists as a personal right rather than the impersonal association found in bureaucratic systems.⁵⁵ This latter point is important in describing how patronage works. Bureaucratic or legal-rational systems of authority objectify power and rely on the acquisition of specialist knowledge derived directly from a technical imperative. In a patronage, the traditional frameworks of power emerge directly from a sense of loyalty and faithfulness which manifests in a form of reciprocity that creates a sense of social recognition.⁵⁶

The concept of patronage is not new in religious language. The Catholic tradition contains a long-established understanding of patronage within the tradition of sainthood. The tradition bestows or entrusts the responsibility of intercession or protection of individuals or places to a saint. Patronage appears to permeate military environments in which a senior mentor, benefactor or patron often determines seniority and promotion. The challenge for chaplaincy is to determine whether it relies on patronage to legitimate its ongoing presence and influence within the Army. The concept of patronage implies that influential individuals extend support to chaplaincy because of a form of religious empathy or sympathy, or a belief that those who engage in the mysteries of the faith are best positioned to sustain the holistic well-being of individuals in the organisation. The latter claims that the organisational proximity of chaplaincy situates the capacity to affect this well-being better than other similar welfare-based agencies. Often this debate finds its origins in the concepts of faith and loyalty to the religious tradition rather than an affirmation of the rationalised focus on technical specialisation.

History is telling on the point of patronage. When the patron disappears from the scene, those benefitting from this patronage either disappear, often with fear of death chasing them out the door, or must redefine their relationship to gain favour with their new potential patron. If patronage is a part of the language used by and in relation to chaplaincy, then this issue must reside at the heart of chaplaincy's future within the Army. In a growing secular, religiously ignorant, pseudo-spiritual pluralism, what will happen when those in positions of command and influence no longer hold a religious empathy or a sense of loyalty and faithfulness to the religious tradition? Does chaplaincy have to realign itself so that it manifests a rationalised form of objectivity towards the technical knowledge it claims for itself? Does it need to embrace a form of abstract legality in which it sufficiently

meets the disembedded norms of a legal-rational system and, in the immediacy of its other competing interests and parties, empirically sustain its continued relevance within the Army? Is patronage a sustainable justification for the continued development of chaplaincy as a capability brick? How will chaplaincy function in a non-chaplain-friendly environment? Patronage is a concerning element of the narrative surrounding chaplaincy, as its subjectivity appears transient at best and unsustainable for an argument of capability.

Pastoral care: Chaplaincy often asserts that its principle function is pastoral care. This assertion within the chaplaincy narrative remains relatively undefined. Haunted by various nuances reflective of a diverse theological environment of ecclesiastical input, the concept of pastoral care secretes poor and ignorant assumptions that cloud its potential output. What does the Army mean when it demands pastoral care? Even more, what do chaplains mean by such a heavy theologically laden term? This is not an easy question to answer as even theologians struggle to pin down the actual description or definition and tasks of pastoral care. Edward Farley comments:

*Complicating the description of the task and agenda of pastoral care is the tension between theological and functional-situational aspects, between 'pastoral' and 'care.'*⁵⁷

Farley goes on to note that the functional-situational definition of pastoral care is simple. He defines it as:

*Pastoral care is the exercise of ministry on the part of the church community and its leadership toward individuals, families, and groups as they experience a problem or need. Any human crisis, suffering, frustration, or enduring misery, any and all situations of human life engagements, can be occasions for this task.*⁵⁸

It is easy to comprehend why this definition of pastoral care is utilised freely in Army chaplaincy. It covers a plethora of situations, all of which the chaplain can engage under the premise of pastoral care. However, something is missing from this piece, and pastoral care, in terms of its delivery within the Army, appears skewed. That is partly because the actual form of pastoral care remains elusive. What is the focus of pastoral care for chaplaincy and, for that matter, the Army? The duality of this question seems polarised and confused among the four forms pastoral care exhibits. Is pastoral care in the Army *classical clerical*⁵⁹, *clinical pastoral*⁶⁰, *communal contextual*⁶¹ or *inter-cultural post-modern*⁶²? Historically, chaplaincy

has delivered across all four aspects of pastoral care. The current trend, and one that has surfaced periodically in the history of Army chaplaincy, appears to be one of alignment with the delivery of clinical pastoral care. Surely, the concept that chaplaincy is an alternative or de facto form of social work or mental health, such as that promoted by Aiken and others, is a simplistic understanding of pastoral care.

The secular priests of modernity articulate the concept of mental health and social well-being in empirical terms that are often alien to the language traditionally used in chaplaincy. They miss the presence of a transcendent reality, a soul or spirit, that is both within the person and which transcends the person. This transcendence, or God, crosses the individual, social, communal and cultural influences on the health and well-being of an individual. This is the gospel imperative of pastoral care:

*Pastoral care as a ministry is thus more than simply processing people to the proper specialities and more than simply mastering and applying one or more specialities to human need. It reflects the general structure of all ministry as something that takes place at the junction of tradition and the current situation: the Christian past as a salvific power persisting into the present by way of the ecclesial community and its testimony as well as the variety of ways human beings experience themselves and their world as problematic.*⁶³

Farley points to another dimension absent from the empirical, rationalised, clinical model of chaplaincy, namely the place of the faith community in pastoral care. Theologically, chaplaincy should be concerned with the subjectivity and individualism through which the health and well-being of the individual is comprehended. The danger in the overemphasis on the clinical pastoral care model is that we separate ourselves from the divine and deal with the individual as one disembedded and distanced from the community in which he/she must live. We fail to acknowledge that 'Christian pastoral care is essentially ecclesial and in conflict with the pervasive individualism in our society.'⁶⁴ Christian-oriented pastoral care occurs in community, which resides in the context of the larger, even global, communities that constitute the human experience. Should Army chaplaincy engage in the domestication and privatisation of pastoral care? Is there a place for the separation of pastoral care from serious theological exploration? What are the implications of such a process? Forrester asserts that doing so creates a:

*... difficulty in relating to victims of injustice and oppression. This is partly because modern pastoral care's dominant concern with subjectivity and interpersonal processes makes it hard for it to relate constructively to the disease and distress which are rooted in systemic disorder and social conflict.*⁶⁵

Theologically, all pastoral care has, at its core, the connection of the individual with the divine, or some higher ideal. It accepts the flawed and chaotic nature of being human and acknowledges that only a connectedness with the divine will provide the path to healing and well-being. The whole story, what makes this image complete, is the individual's engagement with the ecclesial community through which the core elements of God's grace are transmitted and enacted.

A theological understanding of pastoral care sees the human condition in a holism that goes well beyond the secular norms of mental health or social work. It must always include the spiritual dimension as fundamental to an understanding of being human. This is the essence of a pastoral theology, which contextualises pastoral care beyond the narrow parameters of the secular agenda:

*Pastoral theology may be understood as a critical reflection on that nature and caring activity of the divine, and of human persons in relation to the divine, within the personal, social, communal and cultural contexts of the world. Pastoral theology is described as pastoral because of its focus on the care of persons and communities. It is theological because it reflects on the nature and activity of the divine, and of humanity in relation to the divine as portrayed and understood through various practices and documents of faith.*⁶⁶

All pastoral care occurs within a continuum of practice. It includes everything from critical response and trauma management, liturgy and ritual, spiritual practice, and educational tools devised to pre-empt and recover from a fall into the chaos of being human in a flawed world.

The use of the term 'pastoral care' in the Army, it would appear, is an alternative to the concept of cognitive, emotional or relational health. It has only recently become associated with spiritual well-being, spiritual trauma, and spiritual injury, all fledgling concepts in the mental health world.⁶⁷ Despite the theological questions associated with a clinical understanding of pastoral care, the clinical shift of pastoral care is emerging as a consistent voice in chaplaincy and the ADF organisation. If Army chaplaincy exists as an alternative to, in competition with, or a complement to other care-based agencies then, in a secularised organisational context, it is doomed. There is no evidence available that suggests it has the empirical tools

that are critical to justify its assertion of pastoral care as a primary capability in a legal-rational authority. More importantly, however, before chaplaincy bolts down the rabbit hole of empirical relativism, it needs to decide whether chaplains are to be religious practitioners, religious professionals or religious experts, or whether the traditional ecclesial understandings of ordained priestly ministry are sufficient.

Prophet, sage, teacher, truth teller: Throughout the historical journey of chaplaincy, the voice of the chaplain has continued to emerge as a point of exploration and concern. Some, such as Harvey Cox, advocate the need for the prophetic voice.⁶⁸ Others, such as Ian Schneider, argue for the voice of the sage.⁶⁹ Chaplaincy documents describe the chaplain as one who ‘provide(s) generic religious advice’ and ‘specialist advice, including religious, spiritual, moral, ethical, cultural, and welfare advice.’⁷⁰ Complicating this voice of chaplaincy are its pastoral obligations to the individual and to the organisation; the domination of the organisation over chaplaincy and the demands it makes given the resources it invests in chaplains; and the ecclesial obligations of chaplains to their religious and faith traditions. Within the language surrounding chaplaincy, there is an assumption that chaplains speak as those who tell the truth, who speak of everything, holding nothing back. Foucault describes such a person as a *parrhesiastes*.⁷¹ The concept of *parrhesia* takes two forms. The pejorative sense concerns incessant, irreproachable, unrepentant chatterboxes who feel they must say everything and anything that is on their mind. There are no limits to what they say, or even what they should say. The other, more positive, sense in which *parrhesia* is used is in simply telling the truth without reservation or concealment or hiding any aspect of it either directly or indirectly through linguistic embellishment.⁷² Chaplaincy functions under the assumption that *parrhesia* is accepted as a means of social interaction. In other words, while chaplains position themselves to tell the whole truth and embrace a concept of courage that what is true concurs with what they personally believe to be true, they do this in the context that one receiving the truth accepts it as truth regardless of the consequences to either party.⁷³ The speech of the parrhesiast ignores the normal rules and presuppositions of rhetoric. Parrhesiasts are not concerned with the use of language and clever discourse to persuade another to adopt a position they may not embrace themselves, for it is the total, unblemished truth they wish to impart. Finally, a parrhesiast is not a professional truth-teller, but one who positions him/herself in a mode or stance of telling the truth, similar to adopting a position from the stance of virtue.⁷⁴

The question for chaplaincy is which voice it should use when it speaks to the Army in which it serves and to which it is materially obligated. What is the understanding of 'religious advice' or 'specialist advice, including religious, spiritual, moral, ethical, cultural, and welfare advice', in terms of both the chaplain's enactment and the Army's expectation? Is the chaplain a military parrhesiast, one whose stance within the Army is to speak the truth to individuals and to the organisation? If the chaplain is one who engages in the modality of truth-telling, then the difference between prophet and sage is fundamental to this conversation. Both emerge in the historical narrative of chaplaincy, but neither embodies a level of comprehension, as one would expect. While these difficulties are raised, they are never resolved as, essentially, whether a chaplain acts as prophet or sage is really a question of source and authority.

There are multiple understandings of the way the prophetic voice manifests itself. These range from a charismatic perception of the Spirit's voice in the present through to a liberation theology understanding of social gospel concerned with social oppression and systemic injustice. The dominant voice articulated concerning the prophetic is that which speaks as a moral conscience of the organisation. This is the generic thrust of Cox and others who advocate the need for the church and, to a lesser degree, chaplains in the military, to have a prophetic voice and ministry to secular organisations within society such as government and the military.⁷⁵ Others advocate that the prophetic voice is less institutional and more individually focussed. When a chaplain speaks on behalf of a soldier, or advocates for the benefits of a military family, he is enacting the prophetic voice. However, one needs to strip this back to its essence to ask whether he/she is actually using the prophetic voice:

... the prophet, like the parrhesiast, is someone who tells the truth. But I think that what fundamentally characterizes the prophet's truth-telling, his veridiction, is that the prophet's posture is one of mediation. The prophet, by definition, does not speak in his name. He speaks for another voice; his mouth serves as intermediary for a voice which speaks from elsewhere. The prophet, usually, transmits the word of God.⁷⁶

This is the fundamental biblical understanding of the prophet. Prophets enter directly into the counsel or court of God before departing to speak to the world the words God gives them.⁷⁷ Only a prophet who speaks God's word is worthy of being listened to, and those who do not have the call of God are not considered prophets, regardless of the words they speak.⁷⁸ From a theological sense, therefore, the prophetic voice is only possible when it is God's voice spoken,

or mediated through the prophet. In the New Testament this concept of the prophetic voice, while evident in some charismatic forms of divine utterance, extends principally to the role of the apostle, or one who is sent. The apostle does not speak on his own authority, but on the authority of the one who sends him. This is clearly evidenced in the various commissions⁷⁹ and eventually the great commission at the end of Matthew's gospel in which Jesus gives to the church the teaching and enacting of the gospel imperatives⁸⁰. If chaplaincy wishes to claim the prophetic voice, then it can only do so when it speaks on behalf of God. There needs to be very clear lines of delineation between the Word of God, spoken through the chaplain, and the common voice a chaplain shares as one with a moral conscience.

This opens the door to the other voice advocated by individuals such as Ian Schneider that the role of the chaplain is akin to that of a sage. The sage is very different to the prophet in that he/she speaks in his/her own name:

... the sage – and in this he is unlike the prophet we have just been talking about – speaks in his own name. And even if this wisdom may have been inspired by a god, or passed on to him by a tradition, by a more or less esoteric teaching, the sage is nevertheless present in what he says, present in his truth-telling. The wisdom he expresses really is his own wisdom.⁸¹

Unlike the prophet, or even the parrhesiast, the sage is wise of and for him/herself and has no obligation to share that wisdom. Wisdom is the prerequisite for being a sage, and this mode frames any discourse in which the sage may engage. However, this discourse is not freely given, but structurally silent, used only in response to direct questions or a sense of urgency that requires some form of wise intervention. There is a vast contrast between the wisdom articulated by a sage and that found in the wisdom literature of the Bible. Biblical wisdom emerges from an intimacy with God.⁸² It does not remain hidden or reserved by the writer. On the contrary, the very purpose of the wisdom literature in the scriptures is to proclaim the presence and being of God to the world, especially among God's people, and to call people into a relationship with God, not the writer. It is quite possible for a chaplain to act as a sage, and in fact the clinical model of chaplaincy tends to lean towards this. The clinical practitioner is the one who, through engagement using the specialised knowledge of his practice, embodies a form of wisdom that he/she can share if asked. The invitation to share one's wisdom, it would seem, is always dependent on the request of others. But is such a role possible for a chaplain who embodies a notion of truth that reflects his/her intimacy with a faith tradition? In other words, does a chaplain ever speak as a sage from his/her own wisdom?

The challenge in being a parrhesiast is to tell the truth. Such a discourse always occurs on the premise that the one telling the truth totally believes the truth he/she tells. This is true for either the prophet or the sage, with the difference the source of authority from which the truth originated. On the one hand, a sense of fate or faith is integral to the prophet, whereas for the sage a sense of being or self-understanding is essential. However, there is one other aspect of the parrhesiast that requires discussion — the role of teacher. The authority to teach comes neither from an intimacy with the divine nor from a sense of self-understanding. To teach requires technical knowledge which is acquired, mastered and subsequently passed on to those wishing to learn the skills associated with such knowledge. Knowledge does not have to have a moral component. It can remain an abstract, disembedded, disassociated set of skills without the risk of truth-telling inherent in being the prophet, sage, or even parrhesiast. The fundamental difference between the teacher and the sage, and what draws some level of commonality with the prophet, is that the teacher has an obligation to teach. The teacher is only capable of acquiring his/her knowledge because he/she has been the recipient of teaching. The obligation to share this knowledge, therefore, is inherent in the reality of its sharing by those who taught before, and the need to pass such knowledge to those who are yet to come. Otherwise the technical imperatives of the knowledge are no longer valid, and the knowledge is displaced or forgotten. In chaplaincy, especially in relation to character training, historical imperative manifests in the validity of the technical knowledge soldiers require. The common assent, particularly in terms of morality, ethical conduct, self-awareness, community and resilience, are all taught on the premise and validity of the religious narrative to affect positive change. The delivery of character training by chaplaincy is an aspect of truth-telling which requires deep reflection on the validity of its fundamental claims. Is the truth-telling that element of teaching, as in the impartation of technical knowledge, something that those acquiring the knowledge affirm as necessity? Or is character training a reflection of either the sage or prophet?

To tell the truth is a risky undertaking, especially in a legal-rational organisation that structures power in such a way as to control the truth it wishes to hear. Chaplaincy's voice in this world is of vital importance. It is, arguably, all it brings to the organisation as a whole. While it enacts the ritual and tradition of the faith, it often does this in the context of the faith community. Even when it does this publicly, it still operates out of the faith traditions from which it comes. However, when it comes to the capability it contributes to the organisation, only the knowledge it imparts through the voice it engages affects the organisation's

capability outputs. It is of vital importance, therefore, that chaplaincy define which voice it intends to use to be truth-tellers to the Army. This voice must reflect the theological integrity of its being if it is to have any credibility within the organisation.

Career or vocation: In the early 1970s, Army chaplaincy experienced a dramatic change that was to affect the department within the contemporary context of the Army. Short-service commissions of seven years for Army chaplains were phased out in favour of permanent commissions. At the time this caused various levels of angst, especially over the issue of who chaplains would see as their primary authority. Much of this angst was eventually alleviated with the five-year rule imposed, as a generic norm, on all prospective clergy wishing to enter the Army as chaplains. However, the expectations of chaplains began to change. Generic and specific military courses for chaplaincy were introduced, leading to the development of a general training expectation in chaplains. Pay and conditions began to be normalised and attempts made to achieve some form of equity with the churches. Other items, such as phones, eventually computers, even mobile phones, all embraced with some degree of excitement, became part of the chaplain's equipment.

The fundamental concern that began to emerge, however, was the question of whether chaplaincy was a career or a vocation. Vocation, understood within a theological framework, is a calling. It has a deeper association with a sense of being than a career has with the notion of employment. Vocation is all-encompassing and all-consuming. Unlike a career, chaplains do not go home at night and separate themselves from their vocation. Modernity distances and disassociates the human world. Work, family, recreation and rest all operate in ways that disassociate them one from the other. One goes out to work and associates with one specific group of people whose common interest is the work he/she shares. That person returns home to family, where he/she re-engages with the immediacy of familial relationships, and may even extend these to other immediate family relational networks. One goes out to play, often forming another social network which may be disconnected with either work or family. Then one rests, separated from the community behind the fortresses that guard this particular space. Life in modernity is a series of disconnected encounters that often compete for the limited amount of time and space any individual is capable of giving at any point in time.

The concept of vocation transcends this disassociation with modernity. It searches deep into the soul of being human and asks what it is that God is calling the individual to be. It asks the fundamental question about what it is in this world that

defines who we are. Modernity, more so than at any other time in history, answers this by imposing the definition of work. When people ask us what we are going to be, we shape our normative answer by the work we intend to pursue or in which we are currently engaged. Vocation, however, asks us to look beyond this and to seek out who God intends us to be. It is for this reason that Luther can talk about all the above four elements of modernity in terms of vocation and find moments of connectedness in all of them through the presence of God who calls one to live a life that reflects His presence in one's life. For Luther, vocation is a sense of calling through which the various activities of our lives engage, whether that be work, family, play, rest or whatever else God's providence manifests in service in the world. Vocation realigns us to a position in which we consider all that we do as an act of service through which God's presence incarnates into the lives of others.

While all people have a vocation in the generic sense that Luther uses it, certain individuals are set aside for the specific ministry that functions in direct relations to God's activity in the world. Various theological traditions define how this ministry manifests, but all agree that it is a distinct activity beyond the normality of the human experience of life. The way various traditions train their clergy reflects the importance of vocation within their traditions. The process of acquiring knowledge is only part of the entire process of formation into ministry. As discussed earlier, there is a necessity to be absorbed into the intimacy of the tradition, to begin to embody that which the tradition upholds as vital for the enactment of the clerical office. There is also a need to test the vocation, to ascertain that the calling is valid and that it is such that one can represent the tradition faithfully. Unlike a career, which relies on the acquisition of technical knowledge and skills, the pastoral vocation requires an acknowledged intimacy with the essential aspects of the faith tradition.

For the major part of Army chaplaincy history, this understanding of vocation has been essential to the functional legitimacy of the chaplain. Chaplains have been priests/pastors/ministers within their own theological tradition. The church has sent them, or released them, to represent the church in a secular organisation. The question that confronts chaplaincy after a centenary of ministry concerns the viability of this approach into the future. As discussed earlier, a clinical model of chaplaincy doesn't necessarily require guardians of the tradition. Professional expertise operates under its own authority associated with the trust individuals have in the knowledge such specialisation reflects. The Army could create its own cadre of 'chaplains', all of whom reflect whatever religiosity the Army deems necessary for its effective operation without the impediment of the churches' ecclesial polity. After all, similar trends are occurring in the health care sector and,

while the National Schools Chaplaincy Scheme retains a dominance of Christian input, scope exists within the policy for schools to appoint whoever they desire as a chaplain regardless of religious flavour. Individuals enter these arenas of chaplaincy, possibly out of a sense of vocation, but more than often, the notion of career is pre-eminent in their actions.

The angst associated with this conversation resonates throughout the historical narrative. However, today it would appear to be even more confrontational than at any point in the chaplaincy department's previous hundred-year history. While the churches are facing pressures to reduce their period of formation in order to fill vacancies across their faith communities, chaplaincy has already begun to address this through the introduction of an in-service training scheme. Unlike the church, however, chaplaincy faces a new dilemma, namely the confusion between vocation and career. The mindset which suggests one enters the process of pastoral preparation specifically to undertake a specialised ministry is foreign to the traditional mindset of the churches. As far as the churches are concerned, people enter ministry preparation to become a minister of the church. Specialised ministry may draw individuals down a different path in the future, but most churches prepare people for the generic model of parish priest/minister. Chaplaincy as a career choice, devoid of the necessity to be one who understands and comprehends the intricacies of the faith tradition such a ministry reflects, or at least one who minimises the theological formation process, has taken chaplaincy down a path that potentially separates the responsibility of the church to oversee and shape these individuals. The proof of this lies in the sense of identity articulated by chaplains. The self-styled 'lone ranger' singular individual who acts independently of the church because he/she is an Army chaplain appears to be more common than one may think. Of course, such a concept is not to be discounted, and could even be affirmed, but that would mean a distinct theological shift, or even abandonment of the way chaplaincy has tried to shape itself over the past one hundred years.

Pseudologia fantas'tica: Space does not permit an exploration of other themes within the language of chaplaincy, although there are many more. For example, the discourse over whether chaplaincy is ecumenical, or inter-denominational and what either means if it were to become inter-faith; or the language chaplaincy uses to describe some of its ministry such as 'ministry of presence', 'collegiality' or educator of character. Even the discourse others use about chaplaincy such as 'nepotism', 'careerism', 'materialists' etc., and whether chaplaincy should own some of this discourse is a matter for another conversation. What has been shared

is an example of the process of theological deconstruction and a reflection on the implications of such a process in redefining the theological discourse. Ultimately, every group, not just chaplaincy, has to articulate and own those elements within their discourse that may in some way reflect a collective form of pseudologia fantástica and ask whether that is a language which satisfies the collective image through which the group desires the world to comprehend it. The language we use reflects the identity and meaning we attach to ourselves. It is the way, whether we like it or not, those around us measure the ministry we offer.

Theology or theological method

Throughout the historical narrative, a constant echo reverberates around the theological frameworks of chaplaincy. Within the material, several brief attempts at creating and subsequently trying to invoke the theological discourse concerning how a theology of chaplaincy may look, have appeared. However, Army chaplaincy has, especially over the past decade or two, taken on a fundamental pragmatism, through which an undercurrent of anti-intellectualism weaves its way. This should not come as a surprise to anyone looking in at chaplaincy from the outside. Chaplains are faithful, dedicated and committed people of faith, who share a fundamental concern for the soldiers to whom they minister. On the most part, they enter the Army not out of an interest in the intellectual conversation that engages the theological diversity and expression of such a ministry, but out of a simple and single passion to serve in a practical and physical way. On the most part, they see this as an extension of their denomination's ministerial obligations to bear the Gospel into the community. It is not surprising that the theological discourse is missing, or at least limited, within Army chaplaincy. A quick glance at the historical narrative is evidence enough that this is a common thread within chaplaincy, for the same names continue to arise as contributors to *Intercom* articles.

The danger in adopting a fundamental pragmatism toward the ministry of chaplaincy is that the work required in validating and legitimating it within the secular context remains undone, or at the very least incomplete. Chaplaincy, therefore, has to rely on other aspects to sustain its presence and affirm its worth, such as patronage, simple good will, or anecdotal experience of the chaplains as 'a good person to have around'. However, the problem extends beyond chaplaincy for, without a serious engagement in the church's theological discourse, chaplaincy will remain at the periphery of the church, relegated to ignorant interpretations of a religious caste system which struggles to comprehend anything beyond the bleating and incessant demands of the local parish priest. This notion of a 'second-rate' ministry, around which Bruce Roy attempts to generate discussion⁸³,

the feeling of isolation and abandonment that Kevin Russel examines⁸⁴, and the loss of denominational identity and, in some cases even loyalty, all testify to the danger of not engaging the theological discourse and drawing the church into this conversation. This is also a criticism of Cox and others who, while critical of military chaplaincy, are even more critical of the absence of the church's voice in this mix.⁸⁵ The problem does not reside entirely at the feet of chaplains who, after all, as noted above, are fundamentally pragmatic practitioners of pastoral ministry. The church bodies, those ecclesial agencies claiming ownership of the ministry chaplain's offer, also need to take stock and search deeply to discover why they have not stepped into the fray and begun the theological discourse. Their disengagement is just as much a contributor to the challenges now facing chaplaincy as is the pragmatism within chaplaincy itself.

The theological challenge is simple enough to state. What are the theological frameworks that sustain and empower chaplaincy to provide a religious ministry within a secular organisation? The wording of this is intentional, for chaplaincy, while being predominantly Christian for the past one hundred years, with the Jewish chaplains trotting along almost unobserved, will not remain that in the near future. The challenge of other faiths, and the political agenda that will eventually impose their introduction, regardless of the numbers to justify this inclusion, is already knocking at the door of chaplaincy. While Christian chaplains will need to interpret the question above in terms of their own tradition, chaplaincy needs to equip the Army to frame it in terms of a much broader religious diversity reflective of Australian society and the socio-political agenda.

In the immediacy of the current climate of chaplaincy and that which has historically been the norm, the question of a theological framework remains elusive. The mere presence of denominational identities offers an insight as to why this is the case. Within Army chaplaincy there is no Christian meta-narrative to which all the denominational entities would, or even could, subscribe. There is no true theological framework that all share in common. Instead, a mix of theologies exists, all of which shape the way individual chaplains enact the ministry they provide. In this mix there are pockets of commonality, yet even in these, the subtle and not so obvious distinctions remain theological barriers to ecclesiastical unity. Not even the ecumenical creeds provide a basis for common theological identity, for there exist different theological understandings of baptism itself, a fundamental entry point for the Christian journey. The more obvious distinctions over the sacramentality of some churches and the way this is interpreted, or not even engaged in, preventing at least one religious body providing chaplains to the ADF,

is another clear example of the theological division. The move to create a non-denominational identity for chaplaincy is, therefore, fraught with critical moments of monumental failure. The simple notion that such an identity is even possible is naïve at best. While the Army may wish to pursue an agenda of normalisation and commonality for chaplaincy, the ecclesial and denomination theological imperatives that govern the chaplains themselves make this fundamentally impossible. This will only be elevated to another level of complexity with the introduction of other faiths.

Perhaps the solution, therefore, is not in developing a theological framework for chaplaincy, but in the development of a theological methodology within which chaplaincy can function. Ecumenical and inter-faith discourse is impossible if the various parties bring to the table their own hermeneutical language and method and expect the others to comprehend, engage, and accept their position as valid. To engage in such a discourse, a common language, or at least a common hermeneutic or theological method, is required. This is the story of the Catholic and Lutheran *Joint Declaration on Justification*. This fundamentally divisive issue, from the time of the Reformation, took years to unwind itself into a common understanding. It was not until each party adopted a theological methodology of listening to the other that they came to understand that the theology they had articulated on justification was similar. The different language each party used had maintained a division that, in listening to each other, neither could sustain:

14. The Lutheran churches and the Roman Catholic Church have together listened to the good news proclaimed in Holy Scripture. This common listening, together with the theological conversations of recent years, has led to a shared understanding of justification. This encompasses a consensus in the basic truths; the differing explications in particular statements are compatible with it. ⁸⁶

The conversation between Catholics and Lutherans has not ended; instead this simple joint declaration has opened up the hope and possibilities of further discussion, not just within elements of justification where disagreement was still evident, but in a range of other theological areas that have divided these two bodies for centuries. A theological methodology that empowers chaplaincy to do the same, that positions chaplains in the place of the listener, but empowers them also to understand what it is they are hearing, is fundamental to the future of chaplaincy.

Chaplains are fundamentally pragmatic individuals. They tend to fit into a well-established niche that they have found in the Army, a similarly fundamentally pragmatic organisation. However, behind the pragmatism of the Army lies a rich and vast reserve of intellectual research, experimentation, theory and application. The pragmatism of the Army, which is the key capability it delivers to the nation, exists based on the hidden theoretical narrative that structures the very nature of its practical applications, not just as a warfighting capability, but across the various other capabilities it provides. Without the intellectual and theoretical engagement with the body of knowledge that nebulates around the military arts, the Army could not provide the capability expected of it. The same is true of chaplaincy. While accepting that chaplaincy is fundamentally pragmatic in nature, it is only capable of being so because of its relationship to the theological narratives that empower the ministry of the church. That is the fundamental premise of this paper, and the guiding intent behind the conversation that it presents. When chaplaincy loses touch with this theological narrative, it ceases to be a chaplaincy that is reflective of the theological and denominational tradition from which it has come.

All theology is practical, and all practice is theological. One cannot divorce oneself from theological DNA and still claim to be a chaplain. The very statement itself is a theological statement about the worth and value one sees in theological tradition. Every action a chaplain performs has a theological dimension to it. In fact, the very presence of a chaplain in the Army is a theological expression of the need to have a religious or spiritual dimension within the Army. The difficulty is that most chaplains are poorly equipped to undertake the theological reflection imperative to the ministry they perform. This is not their fault, but the fault of a theological system that is either intellectually skewed or, at the other extreme, practically skewed in such a way that there is no process to shape within them the correlation between theology and practice. Consequently, chaplains, the majority of whom tend to be skewed towards practice, are unable to engage the theological process that correlates their practice with a theological foundation. Thus it is easy for chaplains to act as chameleons and simply adopt practices they see other similarly engaged professionals within the Army perform. They easily slip into being an officer, a psychologist, a social worker, a soldier, or any other identity that appeals to their passion to find an identity that makes sense, not just to those around them, but which they perceive the organisation expects of them. What is missing from their formation is the methodology to correlate their practice with their theological frameworks — a methodology that affirms that their practice is their theology and their theology is their practice, one that comprehends the correlation between practice and theology as a hermeneutical interchange where the one empowers the other.

The theological challenge, therefore, does not simply confront Army chaplaincy. It also confronts the Army itself which, while desiring to have chaplains, must create space that offers opportunity for this theological discourse to occur, not just in the context of the individual chaplain, but across chaplaincy and within the Army itself. It also confronts the church, denominationally, ecumenically and even inter-faith. In this way chaplaincy has the opportunity to re-engage the church and seek to find ways it can better shape clergy wishing to enter a specialised ministry such as Army chaplaincy.

For chaplaincy, the 'so what' of this discussion requires more consideration. One of the issues emerging from the historical narrative is the power of having a forum in which such a conversation can occur. For just on twenty years, Army chaplaincy had such a forum in the form of *Intercom*. Reading through the forty-odd issues of this journal, especially the earlier editions, there is clear evidence that Bruce Roy saw *Intercom* as a forum for the theological discourse on chaplaincy:

Intercom as the 'blurb' opposite indicates is for chaplains. It is not an official journal of churning out officialese. It is simply for chaplains 'to intercom'.

There will be three areas in which this magazine can be a useful servant to chaplains: it helps us keep abreast of each other's movements, personal and family happenings ... social notes; it can be an opportunity of strengthening our ability to be chaplains to the Army ... practical articles; it can be an opportunity to think deep about chaplaincy or about the faith ... a 'think tank'.⁸⁷

The historical narrative indicates that Roy's final two points became the core of *Intercom* over the two decades of its production. It became a forum for which individuals not only wrote articles, but invited others to make a thoughtful, theological response. It also drew on other material from overseas and across the wider church that, in some way, spoke to an area of interest to chaplaincy. Today, despite some attempts at reviving *Intercom* in an electronic form, this forum for 'strengthening our ability to be chaplains' and the opportunity to 'think deep about chaplaincy' is sadly absent.

Having a forum is one thing, empowering chaplaincy to engage the theological discourse is another. This is especially so when, as already identified, most chaplains do not have the necessary theological praxis within their formation to engage in such a discourse. While applauding the move to a more professional form of chaplaincy, the shift to achieve this through the process of vocational education or competency-based training is disappointing. Vocationally based training is to clergy as finger painting is to theoretical physicists. While both can

undertake the process of such an activity, the ‘so what’ question will always reside in the depths of their beings. These deeper questions of what this means theoretically, what the various nuances of the colours mean in comparison to a much broader and deeper appreciation of the universe, why patterns emerge under certain circumstances, and why others are absent, all struggle to emerge in a context where all that is required is a simple image. Similarly, in the theological sense, the nuances of meaning, identity, role, incarnation, image, symbol, apology and the numerous other theological questions, remain unanswered in a system that is simply concerned with proving that an action can be performed in the correct sequence under a variety of circumstances. It is of interest that the Chaplain Occupational Analysis for the Defence Force Chaplains’ College, conducted in 2008, identified the absence of a meta-narrative or theological framework across the joint chaplaincy environment in which to embed chaplaincy.⁸⁸ It then subsequently channelled training into the vocational stream of competency-based learning, not based on any theological imperatives, but on an essentially and fundamentally pragmatic appreciation of chaplaincy. While such training has its place, it is surely deficient given the absence of a theological method in which the fundamental hermeneutics embedded within the different theological frameworks of contemporary Army chaplaincy can emerge and be collectively heard and explored. The absence of a deep and intentional process of critical theological reflection, in the true sense of that advocated within a theological praxis, does little to empower the necessary discourse chaplaincy must have if it is to remain a valid and legitimate ministry of both the church and the Army as it moves into the future.⁸⁹

The ongoing theological narrative of chaplaincy is of pressing concern. As the Army moves toward AOF2030, and as the pressures of providing a more politically sensitive form of chaplaincy — including the introduction of an inter-faith dimension — increase, the need to be able to engage intellectually with the Army environment will determine the ongoing viability of chaplaincy within the Australian military context. Good will, active pragmatism and reliance on the historical precedent will be insufficient to sustain a chaplaincy model, which the organisation will demand to satisfy its fundamental mandate as a political arm of the state. However, this is not just a task for chaplaincy, as Michael Ward comments in a reflection on Moltmann’s public theology:

From this, Moltmann formulates a ‘double strategy’ that, whilst not without its inherent tension, at least acknowledges the problems identified by Scott and Gill in their respective approaches. Reform from above, in which chaplaincies arose from a reform of the church’s ministries, not from the

community, is essentially futile. So too is reform of the community from below. The solution he favours is the 'double strategy' of the two taken together. True, it will never be possible to do proper justice to our work, say, in the hospital community and our role as a worshipping and identifiable Christian church with the hallmarks of charismata. But by attempting to hold the two in tension – sometimes being peripheral, sometimes central – we maintain what Moltmann calls 'the fellowship of Christ'. Without this fellowship, various conflicts in the hospital become reduced to peripheral questions of ethics rather than the questions and crises on the human level at which chaplains operate.⁹⁰

While Ward discusses hospital chaplaincy, his comments on a 'double strategy' are applicable to the Army's context. The theological challenge for chaplaincy is to find ways of engagement with the Army, the church and all others who have a vested interest in the ongoing presence of Army chaplaincy.

Conclusion

The theological narrative of chaplaincy is not an easy beast to embrace or understand. Theological nuances from a diverse array of theological worlds, all trying to find a resonance within a world that is fundamentally alien to their own, permeate Army chaplaincy. The paradigms of the theological tradition clash with the empiricism of the legal-rational world. The polarities of theological understanding, and the ways in which these are practised, not only cause tension among chaplains, but create angst and confusion in a world that systematically normalises everything within a rationalised commonality governed by rules and regulations to sustain the normative necessities of its being.

This paper has attempted to capture only a small snapshot of the theological issues surrounding chaplaincy, and that have emerged from the theological narrative of Army chaplaincy's centenary of being. There is little doubt that the world has dramatically shifted since 1913 when Army chaplaincy was first formally added to the Australian Army's various capabilities. As the Army looks towards AOF2030 and continues to explore the modernisation of a highly skilled, highly professional, well-regarded and well-equipped small Army, chaplaincy remains integral to this future. However, this presence requires more than a simple line in AOF2030 identifying it as a capability brick. The questions that need to shape this conversation, however, are not pragmatic; they are not simply the surface issues of numbers, location, use or deployment of capability. The real issues, from

which these emerge, are fundamentally theological. That is the future challenge for Army chaplaincy: to find its theological voice, to shape its capability in a way that is integral to this voice, and to engage the organisation of the Army, the church and Australia's religious communities in a way that enables this voice to be heard, comprehended and transformative. ■

Endnotes

- 1 Jeremiah 17:5b-8.
- 2 Deuteronomy to 2 Kings.
- 3 Deuteronomy 26:9.
- 4 United Nations operations include warlike, peace-making, peacekeeping and humanitarian aid.
- 5 It is of interest to note that the Roman armies did not have 'chaplains' as such. Officers and other soldiers performed priestly tasks, and there is evidence of some form of priestly engagement in the various cults that permeated the Roman Army. However, the presence of a specific military *sacerdos* (priest) appears absent. Ralph W. Mathisen suggests that the lack of historical evidence in the pre-Christian era of the Roman Army supports this assertion. It is not until the fifth century that solid evidence begins to emerge of Christian clerics accompanying the Roman armies, hence the date of chaplaincy back to the British context of 430AD. Ralph W. Mathisen, 'Emperors, Priests, and Bishops: Military Chaplains in the Roman Empire' in Doris L. Bergen (ed), *The Sword of the Lord – Military Chaplains from the First to the Twenty-First Century*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, IN, 2004, pp. 29–43.
- 6 P. Middleton Brumwell, *The Army Chaplain: The Royal Army Chaplain's Department – The Duties of Chaplains and Morale*, Adam & Charles Black, London, 1943, pp. 9–17.
- 7 See Tom Johnstone, *The Cross of ANZAC: Australian Catholic Service Chaplains*, The Church Archivists Press, Virginia, Qld, 2000, pp. 1–7.
- 8 Donald W. Hadley and Gerald T. Richards, *Ministry with the Military: A Guide for Churches and Chaplains*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1992, p. 27.
- 9 'Theorists have posited that individuals motivated by a strong human spirit experience a number of benefits (e.g., Frankl, 1985; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). They are better able to accept the reality of a situation, develop creative coping strategies, find meaning in trauma, maintain an optimistic view of the future, access their social support network, generate the motivation to persevere, grow from adversity, and mitigate serious psychological problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder.' Kenneth I. Pargament and Patrick J. Sweeney, 'Building Spiritual Fitness in the Army: An Innovative Approach to a Vital Aspect of Human Development', *American Psychologist*, Vol. 66, No. 1, January 2011, p. 59, at: <ftp://ftp.ict.usc.edu/arizzo/IOM/AmerPsychologist%20Jan2011/9%20amp_66_1_58.pdf[1].pdf>, accessed 20 May 2013.
- 10 Doug Abbott, 'Character Training: In the Beginning', *Intercom*, Issue 13, July 1976, pp.7ff.
- 11 See Chris Field, 'Twenty-First Century Chaplains: Their Role in the Australian Army: Leaders, Innovative and Tough', unpublished; C.J. Brewer, 'Opening Address: 2nd Division Army Chaplain's Conference – November 1993', *Intercom*, Issue 44, Winter 1994, pp. 18–23; Eric Philip, 'A Commander and His Chaplains', *Intercom*, Issue 17, December 1977, pp. 41–43.
- 12 Jim Moody, 'Chaplaincy as a role for the unordained?', *Intercom*, Issue 21, December 1979, p. 22.
- 13 'The Public Ministry in the Lutheran School', *Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions of the Lutheran Church of Australia*, Vol. 2, J2(b), Adopted by the Board for Lutheran Schools, August 1995, edited October 2001.

- 14 Some 59% of chaplains were female, and 41% of chaplains were male. In terms of age, 28% of chaplains were under 30 years of age, 25% were between 30 and 39, 23% were between 40 and 49, 19% were between 50 and 59, and 4% were 60 years of age or older. Philip Hughes and Margaret Sims, *The Effectiveness of Chaplaincy as Provided by the National School Chaplaincy Association to Government Schools in Australia*, School of Psychology and Social Science - Social Justice Research Centre, Edith Cowan University, September 2009, p. 14, at: <<http://www.socialsurvey.com.au/chaplaincyeffectiveness>>, accessed 17 May 2013.
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The Past, Present and Future — Conversations on the Tensions, Theology and Professionalisation of Chaplaincy

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Abstract

Director General Chaplaincy – Army held a strategic management conference at Mittagong in May 2013 in which he asked participants to look to the past, reflect on the present and explore the future in terms of chaplaincy and its place within Army. Several speakers presented papers that considered issues such as the current and future direction of Army, the historical forces that have shaped, and continue to shape chaplaincy, and the theological journey that exists within Army chaplaincy. The conference participants were then divided into small groups to explore specific aspect of these papers before coming together for a larger plenary discussion. The article that follows is a collation of those discussions that present a basis for the more detailed and specific discussions required to proactively position chaplaincy as a future presence in Army.

In May 2013, as part of the centennial celebrations for the Royal Australian Army Chaplains' Department (RAAChD), Director General Chaplaincy – Army (DGCHAP-A) held a strategic management conference. The aim of the conference was to explore the historical and theological background of chaplaincy, and to consider the contemporary implications of this in terms of the future place of chaplaincy within Army. Dr Michael Gladwin and Rev Dr David Grulke presented four papers in total, two on the history and theological background of chaplaincy, and two on the implications of historical and theological development for the future of chaplaincy. After each dual presentation, small groups took the opportunity to discuss the issues raised. Three groups convened, each with a particular focus. The focus points for these groups included:

- the professionalisation of chaplaincy
- the theological challenges of chaplaincy
- the tensions evident in chaplaincy

This paper is a record of those discussions based on the notes taken by each group.

Professionalisation of chaplaincy

The group tasked with this topic discussed the changes in chaplaincy in a more professionally oriented form of ministry within Army. While the group acknowledged the pressure for a more professional orientation, it affirmed that chaplaincy is a call and not simply a job. Indeed, the group considered that chaplaincy is an art, embedded within the concept of vocation. The group also drew a distinction between profession and vocation, emphasising the need to be professional in one's vocation where professionalism is about being competent and accountable. Chaplains need to demonstrate competence in the way they care for people. However, they also need to be accountable to Defence, Principal Chaplain and their respective denomination for the way they deliver chaplaincy within Army.

There was recognition within the group that structures have changed over the historical journey of Army chaplaincy. The RAAChD has been an evolving element within Defence. The way Army trains chaplains has also changed dramatically over the past century, particularly in recent years with the development of chaplaincy competencies. This is the product of a change in function over time, particularly as other specialists have entered the Army. The group then discussed the need to maintain a relational focus, to ensure that chaplains maintain their image as a safe source of help and support, and the need to ensure that chaplains remain mindful of their own safety in all they do.

Discussion then turned to theological frameworks for chaplaincy. There was some debate over whether chaplaincy is functional or relational, with the group agreeing that it may be a combination of both, with some tension between the functional and relational elements within chaplaincy. The question of ordination also emerged from this conversation. Are chaplains called to a specific ministry and, if so, what does the role to which they are called require of them? The group agreed that recognition of chaplains by the Christian community was essential. The community needs to send chaplains on their military journey with its blessing, endorsement and support for chaplains to bring their church traditions to the Army. They are, after all, representatives of their faith community within Army. However, they also ultimately return to the church, bringing with them the skills and lessons they have learnt from engagement with a secular world. Consequently, a shift towards professionalism enhances ministry, but should not be the ultimate goal.

Chaplaincy must acknowledge that ministry within Army is to ordinary people, and is often much broader than the parish experience. Competencies are, therefore, about being able to do what is required by the people and organisation that chaplains serve. Programs such as Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASSIST) are examples of competencies that help to ensure a professional approach to ministry within Army. Competencies also enhance a professional approach by increasing the ability of chaplains to fulfil their role in a different setting. Such a professionalised approach to chaplaincy also brings with it a freedom that may be absent in a church context. Chaplains no longer need to be leaders, responsible for administering a parish, and can focus instead on core skills relevant to the ministry they perform. Aligning senior levels of chaplaincy with the more administrative liabilities of chaplaincy implies the necessity to acquire new skills, but will free the remaining chaplains to deliver pastoral care and religious ministry.

The question the group then explored was what Army, or the church, or seniors in chaplaincy, expect from chaplains. This developed into a discussion on the way people approach the question of professionalism. Do chaplains see professionalism as an opportunity to fulfil their role in the best possible way? Do they strive for excellence in chaplaincy and consider that a professional approach best supports this? Are chaplains keen to be better trained, more qualified, better organised to conduct a professional chaplaincy within Army? Alternatively, do people view professional chaplaincy as a means to increase their income or further their careers?

This discussion then led to the re-emergence of the question of career or call. If people know God has called them to a specific ministry, then surely they will be keen to do the very best they can. If chaplains continued to apply a model for ministry based on a world view from 1913, they would lose touch not only with the community but possibly also with themselves. The call is the only constant over the course of chaplaincy's hundred-year history. The only way chaplains can maintain a relevant connection to people is through adopting a professional approach that embraces training competence and relevance to the context in which they minister. Careerism is a negative approach to chaplaincy and something that should be avoided at all costs. Yet it becomes evident in chaplaincy, particularly in the way chaplains relate to one another. To whom do chaplains speak of their concerns and issues? There are different answers to this, ranging from the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services (RACS), PRINCHAP, to command and others outside chaplaincy itself. There is a need to establish some clear guidance on this, particularly in terms of how this affects the individual's approach to chaplaincy as a career or a calling. The discussion suggested that a more robust and enunciated code of conduct and ethics, the supervision of chaplains, the place of therapy and counselling, including the effect of these on a chaplain's standing within Army, are all areas that should be addressed and resourced by Army, RAACHD and, in some cases, the individual.

The world has changed, particularly over the past ten years. The new world of Army will force chaplaincy to become more professional, whether chaplains like it or not. Chaplaincy therefore needs to be proactive in the way it operates. It needs to 'get ahead of the game'. There are no options here; chaplaincy must become more professional in the way it ministers. That means taking a serious look at issues such as supervision and self-appraisal. The group acknowledged that some have been better at this than others, and that there is a fear of what supervision means and implies. The fact is, however, that external forces will dictate a more professional approach to the issue of accountability, supervision and self-appraisal. The group acknowledged that chaplaincy has improved in this area, particularly over the past ten years.

The question then asked was whether chaplains needed to be ordained. This was essentially a denominational question. The issue of Catholic pastoral associates was raised and the group noted that this experiment had not proven entirely satisfactory. Discussion of the issue of a robust chaplaincy, one in which the chaplain could operate alone and deal with issues confidently from a personal denominational standing, suggested that lay-pastoral associates had not been as successful as

Catholics had hoped. Deacons also needed better formation, and Catholics had expected too much of them given that they were operating individually. In response, a model has been developed based on Catholic teams, with the priest as moderator, and with an emphasis on mentoring as a model for ministry.

This discussion then raised the issue of formation and training. The group noted that this area has changed dramatically in recent years, with many of the old models of theological education breaking down. Formation, as a key to pastoral development, was distinctly lacking. However, many older clergy, trained under the older models, lack the training to provide solid formation to younger clergy. This presented an unreconciled dichotomy in ministry formation. Such a dichotomy also exists in the way remuneration is determined for chaplains. The Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal struggles to define the way chaplaincy works within its organisational structures and thus to determine levels of remuneration. However, the larger issue is not about pay or academic training relevant to the current pay case, but the formation and shaping of individuals into chaplaincy and ministry. At the heart of this is the representation of chaplaincy of the various denominational and faith traditions, many of which emerge based not on academic learning but on formation. This raises the issue of the in-service scheme, through which people can opt to enter chaplaincy. While people may become theologically qualified, the time restraints do not allow sufficient experience in ministry to shape these individuals. There is a need to understand maturity in ministry, which stands alongside formation and training. While life experience is important, such experience must also be viewed in context as a chaplain's identity is shaped. Chaplains need to develop a sense of being and self in the context of a broader world experience. This raises the issue of age, with older chaplains struggling to gain entry into Army because of medical issues. Army exists in a demographic bubble, as a younger population which requires an older, wiser form of chaplaincy. The group's conversation ended with agreement that there is a need to revisit these tensions and establish more robust criteria and qualifications for the future chaplaincy.

The theological challenges of chaplaincy

The second group tackled the question of the theological challenges that have confronted chaplaincy and the implications of these for the future. It began by asking whether chaplaincy was shaped by pragmatism or intellectualism. The group's response was that this was probably more of an issue of adherence to

one's faith tradition. There was no appetite for chaplains to become pseudo-psychologists or social workers. In making this distinction, the group identified three elements that make chaplaincy distinct:

- spirituality
- religion
- pastoral care

Spirituality is a fundamental link between one's religious and pastoral practice. Faithfulness to one's religious tradition or denomination is critical to this. The pastoral dimension was also included as it points to a commonality within chaplaincy, arising from an ecumenical context.

The group then raised the question of the existence of an overarching theology that shapes chaplaincy. The group felt that such an overarching theology did not exist, instead leaning towards a concept of unity in diversity. Group members acknowledged that this was difficult to sustain within the Christian tradition, and highlighted the greater challenges of promoting a concept of unity with other faith traditions. The group considered that finding an overarching theological framework would be difficult, with the inclusion of other faith groups making this almost impossible. There was a need to emphasise that chaplains from non-Christian traditions must understand the inclusive nature of the pastoral dimension, including a responsibility to respect the spiritual and religious nuances of the Christian tradition, just as is required of Christian chaplains for other faiths beyond their own. There was a subtle shift in group opinion with members concluding that there may be a common theological voice. This voice speaks of the need for respect for all faith traditions and the recognition that inter-faith is a very different concept to multi-faith.

The conversation then moved to explore other theological challenges facing chaplaincy in the future. Like the first group, this group also observed that the world has changed dramatically over the past ten years, and that even more change will occur in the next ten. Chaplains will be strangers in a new land, with Defence people less overtly religious than they are now. This means that chaplains need to be proactive in identifying gaps in the needs that they will be able to meet in the future, and finding ways to meet these needs within the range of skills they bring to Defence. A key element of this is the lack of formation or depth increasingly apparent in chaplaincy, and the emerging concept that chaplaincy is a career and not a vocation. The separation from a faith community only exacerbates this reality. In order to address this, a more stringent approach

to ensuring high standards of accountability to faith formation and maintenance is required. The group expressed concerns over the short formation time for chaplains including those within the in-service scheme, regarding this as an emerging danger, and raised the question of how this could be alleviated. The risks of such a short formation include lack of fidelity to one's denomination and an inability to appreciate the depth of this connection. There is a real need to avoid the weakening of ties between the chaplain and the sending denomination.

The group was concerned that shallow formation would prevent chaplains fully understanding their place in Army. There is a danger that, without a robust formation process, chaplains will tend to rely on their rank equivalency or status as officers rather than their call. The group observed the danger inherent in chaplains using their rank equivalency in e-mails, address books and role descriptions. Chaplains are 'chaplain' by rank, and there may be a need to define this unilateral rank as a defining of chaplains' place in Army. The group also believed that shallow formation incurred other dangers, such as chaplains relating to specific groups rather than the whole; for example, chaplains relating only to officers or relating only to soldiers, rather than to all ranks. There was also a concern that, without a robust understanding of who the chaplain is, particularly in an ecumenical and organisational context, chaplains may limit their ministry to their particular 'patch'. The very nature of chaplaincy in such a corporate context as Army means that soloists do not fit well; instead, a level of mutual trust and respect in which chaplains work together to deliver a whole ministry approach is required. Without the proper formation, the novice is in danger of missing this broader expression of chaplaincy.

The conversation then shifted to suggest that a more robust process of supervision and reporting is required. The group suggested that DGCHAP-A should speak at command, and pre-command courses, and highlight the importance of truthful, honest and robust reporting on chaplains. This should extend to encouraging senior Army officers to write critical reports where this is not already occurring.

The group then returned to the theological questions of a single unified theological framework for chaplaincy. While such a framework may not be possible, there is a need for a focused discussion on understanding and respecting the differences that do exist. In the absence of a unified theological framework, a unified methodology which engages diverse traditions may prove achievable. Chaplaincy must exist within a diversity of tradition and this is its greatest difficulty. This is already evident within the Christian denominational traditions and it is further complicated when other faith traditions are added to the mix. The danger in trying

to find common ground is that what is already strong within any tradition will be diluted. Instead, the main issue must be unity in diversity, which is actually a New Testament principle. Chaplains fail when they expect, assume, or interpret the theology of others. For this reason, greater exposure to other traditions is an essential part of chaplaincy. Such exposure develops appreciation and understanding, and avoids the diluting of one's own faith tradition. The group noted that, in other countries, there are greater limitations on the freedom to overtly express one's theological tradition and, in some cases, legislation imposes such restrictions. Australia's development and need to survive has shaped many attitudes concerning faith and the theological frameworks that govern them, prompting the development of a different approach in this nation's context. However, we need to be wary that political correctness imposes a world view, which it attempts to reinforce through legislative means. Chaplaincy needs to deal with this in the light of theological diversity.

This raised the issue of multi-faith chaplaincy within Army. What is new is not always better; it often merely changes the complexity of the existing environment. The notion that one can overlay the current models of pastoral care and religious ministry onto other faith traditions beyond the Christian context is erroneous. The specific shape of the current model for Army chaplaincy is the Christian tradition, which takes a unique approach to pastoral care and religious practice, differing from that of other faith traditions. In particular, Christian pastoral care is based on the authority of the Christian tradition, expressed in unique denominational nuances. How Christians understand chaplaincy therefore, is fundamentally different to the way it is understood by other faith traditions. The group discussed whether, given the current climate, other faith traditions should be invited to undertake a more specialist role in chaplaincy. The concept shared was a more generic centralised model, which could be detached as required, rather than the traditional unit-embedded role currently employed within Army. The conversation then ventured into how other armies employ chaplains, particularly those from other faith traditions. In some cases, general service officers assume the role of religious overseer as part of their extra-regimental duties. Australia's context is not mono-cultural as is the case with some of these groups and, rather than rely on an army of subsistence, it has a voluntary standing army which responds to the wishes of the government. The context, both cultural and intentional by design, raises many unanswered questions on the place of a multi-faith chaplaincy in the Australian Army. Within such a debate, there was some speculation as to whether this was a genuine issue or one advocated by those with no religious affiliation. The question of religious affiliation remained unanswered, with a closing comment

that the statistics appear to indicate, somewhat surprisingly, that those not directly affiliated with a faith tradition tend to send their children to Christian schools for religious purposes. Perhaps the religious undercurrent has not disappeared, just shifted to new places yet to be uncovered within the Australian social milieu.

The tensions evident in chaplaincy

The third discussion group took a deliberative approach, discussing the tensions evident in chaplaincy and offering ways to manage these. They began by exploring the tensions that surround the additional element a chaplain brings to military service, namely his/her role as a minister, pastor or priest. The theological distinctions evident in this terminology are themselves a source of tension, particularly when it comes to the ecclesiology between sacramental-hierarchical and Free Church structures. Also discussed were the issues of status that emerge in these distinctions and the level of authority individual chaplains hold according to their tradition. The disparity in educational levels was also noted as a source of tension, with concerns expressed over a second-class role assigned to chaplains due to educational standards. In order to deal with these tensions, the group advocated a need for awareness in chaplaincy concerning terminology, and an increased understanding of how various ecclesiastical traditions make decisions. There was a general consensus that greater respect among chaplains was required, and the emphasis for chaplaincy should be vocational not career oriented. There was an expressed hope that the new chaplaincy pay case might begin to address some of these issues.

The group then opened the discussion on tensions over role — essentially whether the chaplain is priest/minister or psychologist. There was recognition that professional groups, such as mental health professionals, and other elements within Army, are challenging the traditional role of chaplaincy, and in some cases superseding the chaplain's roles. Ab-initio courses for chaplains represent an important transitional step into the military, and are the primary place to explore many of these tensions. Such courses should clearly define the roles and responsibilities of chaplains. In addition, the chaplain's vocational calling should be shaped through retreats. The view of chaplaincy as a vocation or calling was highlighted as the key delineation between chaplains and other mental health, or human resource-focused professions. The group also considered the absence of a journal, such as *Intercom*, as creating a vacuum, denying chaplains a forum for sharing ideas and learning from others. The group then suggested reviving the *Anastasis* forum to allow people to read about the chaplaincy experiences of others.

The practice of chaplaincy became the focus for the next discussion. The group noted that the concept of 'loitering with intent' was uninspiring, and that such a methodology was even more difficult in Reserve chaplaincy. Often this occurred when a lack of resources or a poor appreciation of the chaplain's role was evident. The group noted the very clear role of chaplains at the Army Recruit Training Centre, with its structured and rigid program, of which character development forms an integral part. This contrasted with units in which Commanding Officers' hours have all but disappeared and Commanders are not sure what to do with their chaplain. An emphasis on gently mentoring new chaplains into their role through programs such as 'Exercise Good Shepherd' was seen as an important means to address some of these tensions. Redefining the chaplain as a specialist part of the command group and clearly articulating this in Army policy and doctrine such as the *Chaplain's Handbook* is critical to reasserting the role of the chaplain in the unit. This could be re-emphasised and restated at command and pre-command courses, coupled with an induction process by coordinating chaplains for new commanders within their area. The larger group reaffirmed, however, the deep appreciation and affection of command for chaplaincy, and suggested that what really needed addressing was the disconnect in communication between chaplains and commanders.

The necessity to provide denominational ministry and the tensions this causes emerged within the discussion, and created wider angst in the larger representation at the conference. The group noted that, having a dedicated denominationally aligned position in Afghanistan has caused some tensions and difficulties, particularly in relation to the other chaplaincy positions. Perceived inflexibility also caused tension with commanders. The group acknowledged the importance of offering a sacramental ministry to deployed members, particularly in high tempo operations with the potential for a large number of casualties. The collective opinion was that a more robust memorandum of understanding/agreement (MOU/A) should be in place for all future operational contingencies to provide clear guidelines on how such ministry could occur. Inbuilt within this MOU should be a review process to determine whether the original conditions that created the need still exist. The larger group noted that the issue over positions within operational deployments was not related to denominational tensions. Rather, it reflected a lack of planning and a further lack of appreciation of the need to raise issues before they surface as problems. Confusing poor planning with potential denominational tension trivialises the larger issues and potentially overlooks the need for chaplaincy to embrace a healthy approach to denominational or other faith tensions.

This raised issues of numbers and paucity, with particular reference to the Catholic denominational group. The group acknowledged that there were insufficient numbers of priests and those who have entered chaplaincy appear

randomly posted across Army. The solution of using pastoral assistants as non-ordained chaplains, and deacons also raised some concerns within the group. The possibility of more lateral transfers to fill this gap, with the benefit of fast-tracked naturalisation, was offered as one solution. Increased use of local civilian clergy and non-uniformed priests was also a potential solution, as was the extension of age for Reserve chaplains.

The difficulty in employing a multi-faith chaplaincy model raised some interesting discussion in the group. The lack of an Imam, or any Islamic representation, along with the absence of 'clerical' people from other faiths will be an ongoing concern in the future of Army chaplaincy. Currently Christians and Jews are the only faith groups represented in Army; however, the Deputy Chief of Army noted that Army's Islamic population is increasing. This also raised other issues such as gender diversity and a shift away from the more traditional Anglo-Saxon male demographic evident in Army. The way other faiths could be included in Army raised all sorts of questions, but the collective opinion suggested that an MOU/A should be developed to accommodate the changes required. Chaplaincy needs to be mindful of the changing face of Army, and needs to accommodate and appropriately resource other faith groups to allow them to practise their faith tradition. The concept of introducing 'clerical' people from other faiths as specialists called in as required, but not necessarily in uniform, was considered as a first step toward introducing other faith chaplaincy to Army.

Concerns also surfaced over the posting cycle. The group felt that there was no real posting plan or appropriate career progression for Army chaplains. They considered that a disconnect existed between placing the right people in the right units within the right situation to enable a more rounded and complete experience in Army chaplaincy. The perception was that no-one was really in charge of a chaplain's career, as there seemed to be no stated purpose or articulated endpoint. One way to address this would be the employment of a dedicated public servant to advise the Principal Chaplain's Committee on chaplaincy needs. There was a feeling that postings and career progression required more deliberate and careful attention by someone specifically dedicated to this task. The group recognised the need to identify senior and experienced chaplains for higher level tasks, and suggested a dual posting cycle in which the positions requiring seniority and experience are filled first, followed by a more general posting plot for the remaining chaplains. Associated with much of this was the concern that communication within the Chaplain's Department was poor, and a monthly communiqué was offered as a way to address this.

The group then began a more general conversation which built on previous discussions relating to ministry in a multi-faith and increasingly secular context. The existence of denominational tension, evident in chaplaincy at times, is a subset of a much larger issue, namely, the trend toward secularisation. Australian society has shifted dramatically from predominantly Christian non-worshippers to a society that is increasingly secular. Secularisation is becoming an aggressive force within the Australian social psyche. This absence of any religious affiliation could be fertile ground for ministry and the Gospel. It may provide opportunities for an incarnational connection with people who have no contact with any form of faith. Those ignorant or ambivalent to faith, or who consciously choose to believe in nothing, pose a greater threat to religious belief than those who have no faith convictions whatsoever. The more proactive aggressive secularist has already rejected faith as a possibility. This raised the issue of proselytisation and evangelism, and the need to better understand the distinction between these terms. More importantly, the way in which this occurs in chaplaincy, and the methods employed within a growing secular environment, require more attention. The looming issue for chaplaincy, however, is the prospect of these secularists rising in seniority and becoming the power-brokers and decision-makers of the future. Where will their interest and focus lie, and how will chaplaincy fit into this new world view? Will the current affection for and appreciation of chaplaincy continue once these people gain a level of critical mass in the halls of power?

Conclusion

The various group conversations at the strategic management conference raised far more questions than they answered. At times, the discussion saw relational tensions surface and, with the grace of God, resolve themselves in a spirit of Christian love and unity. While not all attending the conference agreed with everything recorded in this paper, there was a spirit of listening to one another and a passion to find a common way forward. The challenges that face chaplaincy in the future are very different to those that shaped its past. The one point of consensus was that more research, reading, conversation and exploration of the issues that face chaplaincy is desperately needed for chaplaincy to position itself as a valued capability and presence in Army in the future. To that end, DGCHAP-A has launched the *Australian Army Chaplaincy Journal* with the clear concept of providing a forum for this discussion that engages chaplaincy, the Army, the Australian Defence Force and the wider Australian community. People are encouraged to reflect more on the issues raised in this paper and to write articles addressing them in the context of the future of chaplaincy in Army. ■