

**God, War, and Politics:  
The American Military Chaplaincy and the Making of a Multireligious Nation**

by

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2014

In memory of my father  
Richard J. Stahl

To my mother  
Sharyn W. Stahl

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Finally, my father was always my intellectual interlocutor, especially in matters related to law, politics, and religion. During the Vietnam War, he had a low draft number and enlisted in the Reserves. After completing his initial obligation, he finished his service through weekend duty. On Saturdays, he told me, he would check in and then attend Shabbat morning services. On Sundays, he would go in and then take church call, at which point he nabbed a few more hours of sleep. I don’t think his capacious religious practice was quite what the military had in mind, but his ecumenical approach—and keen sense of administrative loopholes—nevertheless animate this project. I only wish he were here to read it.



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## NOTE ON ARCHIVES

<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Archive</u>
AANY	Archives of the Archdiocese of New York, Yonkers, NY
AJA	American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH
AJHS	American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY
BGCA	Billy Graham Center Archives, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL
BYU	Brigham Young University Special Collections and Archives, Provo, UT
CL	Congregational Library, Boston, MA
CUA	American Catholic History Research Center and University Archives, Washington, DC
DDE	Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS
GLBT	GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco, CA
FJC	Ft. Jackson Navy Chaplains' Archive, Columbia, SC
Harvard	Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, MA
HST	Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO
LDS-CHL	LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT
LOC	Library of Congress, Washington, DC
MBEL	Mary Baker Eddy Library, Boston, MA
NARA I	National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC
NARA II	National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD
Navy Yard	History and Heritage Command, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, DC
PHS	Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA
SCPC	Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA
Schomburg	Schomburg Center, New York Public Library, New York, NY
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist Archives, Silver Spring, MD
SWA	Social Welfare Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN
Utah	University of Utah Archives, Salt Lake City, UT
Wheaton	Wheaton College Archives, Wheaton, IL
Yale	Yale University Archives, New Haven, CT

## INTRODUCTION

### **Why the Mixed-Up Dog Tags of Private Leonard Shapiro Matter for Twentieth-Century American History**

The letter was a shock. It made no sense, really. Learning that her son had been killed in France on August 20, 1944 was bad enough, but the follow-up letter devastated Rose Shapiro. It stated that her child's "remains received respectful and reverential care," and then informed her that his grave was "marked with a modest Christian cross." Moreover, the note disclosed, "last rites of the Church were held, his grave was blessed, and Masses were being said regularly for him and the others who have made the supreme sacrifices for their country."<sup>1</sup> How could it be that her son, a Jewish soldier from Chicago, was treated as a Catholic?

In the midst of World War II, the Army instructed its chaplains to write condolence letters to the families of men killed or missing in action. Intended to offer comfort to families on the homefront, these missives often achieved their purpose. One wife, for example, thanked Chaplain William Larsen (Lutheran) for his "kind letter." This personal contact was a boon as she requested "a picture taken of my husband's grave. And any personal things belonging to Robert."<sup>2</sup> Larsen worked hard to write individualized letters, reaching out to friends in the unit who could provide specific information to make his words sound more familiar and thus comforting. He found that families often wanted pictures of graves and did his best to accommodate their pleas.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth C. Martin to Mrs. Shapiro, October 9, 1944, I-249, Box 10, Folder 60, AJHS.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Robert de Yoe to William Larsen, August 1945, COLL/201, Box 1, Series I, Folder: Correspondence with Killed Marines' Families, Navy Yard.

<sup>3</sup> William Larsen to Inga Larsen, July 1945 and June 6, 1945, COLL/201, Box 1, Series I, Folder: Correspondence to Family, Navy Yard. Other chaplains also mentioned photographing graves for families. See, for example, Abe Gordon to Samuel Sandmel, October 29, 1944, MS 101, Box 1, Folder 5, AJA.

But these messages were, like many of the military's protocols for handling death, also expected to be religious in tone and substance. When battlefield bluster was insufficient, the military turned to faith as solace for the wounded, the dying, and the relatives left behind. "Make men courageous and unafraid," blared one pocket-sized manual designed to aid laymen help their buddies. "Upon finding a seriously wounded man," the pamphlet instructed, "inquire at once as to the religious faith of the man concerned" and then recite the appropriate Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish prayers and, as necessary, follow the proper procedures for temporary burials. Written by the chaplains of the Antiaircraft Artillery School at Camp Davis, NC, the manual granted laymen access to religious rites in times of crisis. Even when a chaplain, the military's sanctioned religious leader was unavailable, it was imperative to provide the wounded and dead "spiritual comfort."<sup>4</sup>

And when soldiers could not speak, dog tags—or military identification tags that included names, serial numbers, and religious affiliation—declared their faith for them. Or that was one of their intentions, albeit one stymied by the subversion of standardization and efficiency. Technically, personnel were supposed to select one of three initials to indicate their religion: P for Protestant, C for Catholic, and H for Hebrew. But rules could be broken. Mormons, for example, asked to use "LDS" in place of a "P" because "we are in no sense Protestants."<sup>5</sup> While the military did not generally accommodate their requests, on rare occasions, a few intrepid Mormons managed to find "a commanding officer that maybe didn't know the rules or the regulations and he would permit LDS men to have LDS on their dog tags."<sup>6</sup> Periodically, printed dog tags contravened War Department policy and substituted a J (for Jewish) instead of the H (for Hebrew). Indeed, less than a

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<sup>4</sup> "Brief Rituals: For Emergency Use by Laymen on the Field of Battle," 1, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 262, Folder 350.001 (Lectures, Vol. III), NARA II.

<sup>5</sup> Harold B. Lee to Gustave A. Iverson, June 8, 1944, quoted in Joseph Boone, "The Roles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints In Relation to the United States Military" (Brigham Young University: PhD dissertation, 1975), 571.

<sup>6</sup> Lyman C. Berrett, interviewed by Richard Maher, October 24, 1974, p. 13, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies/LDS Chaplains Oral History Project, MS-17096, LDS-CHL.

month after the United States entered World War II, American Jewish leaders began protesting this use of the archaic racial category “Hebrew” and plead for a religiously associated “J” as an apt replacement.<sup>7</sup> While Jews, like Mormons, often failed to receive the letter they preferred, sometimes individuals found a helpful commander or quartermaster, and made themselves the dog tag of their choice. As one civilian Jewish leader remarked, “we have been into this subject of H and J on the dog tag so frequently, it is beginning to come out of my ears. There is nothing we can do about it to obtain uniformity.”<sup>8</sup>

Uniformity was scarcely the most conspicuous or challenging issue Jewish soldiers and sailors faced as they registered their faith and procured identification during World War II. Many Jewish soldiers deliberated whether or not to include their religion on their dog tags, fearing that if sent to Germany, they might be treated as Jews—and singled out for punishment—rather than as Prisoners of War. When asked how Jewish soldiers should resolve this choice between understandable trepidation and religious identity, Chaplain Charles S. Freedman (Jewish) explained that he remained unsure about the best option. On the one hand, “for many men and their families back home, it would be of the greatest importance that, should death come on the field of battle, a Jewish burial be given the deceased.” On the other hand, “expediency and practicality teaches the desirability of being a live dog rather than a dead lion.”<sup>9</sup> Martyrdom by dog tag was not necessarily ideal, yet mortality loomed over the difficult decision, no matter what choice soldiers made. And whether soldiers discussed their selection with their families was rarely clear.

Imprecision frequently characterized the state of dog tags, which made the work of graves

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<sup>7</sup> David de Sola Pool to Aryeh Lev, January 2, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 72, Folder 080 (JWB, Vol. II), NARA II. On state’s racial categorization of Jews, see Eric Goldstein, “Contesting the Categories: Jews and Government Racial Classification in the United States,” *Jewish History* 19, no. 1 (2005): 79-107.

<sup>8</sup> Samuel Silver to Philip Bernstein, March 31, 1944 and Isaac Toubin to Samuel Silver, April 5, 1944, I-249, Box 10, Folder 59, AJHS.

<sup>9</sup> Charles S. Freedman to Philip S. Bernstein, April 28, 1944, I-249, Box 10, Folder 52, AJHS.

registration chaplains even more difficult. In charge of ensuring proper religious burials, the officers first had to determine whether the dog tag signified the correct person. As Chaplain Lyman Berrett (LDS), who was stationed at Okinawa, recalled “When we would bury men...we would not always go by the name on the dog tags” because superstitious soldiers believed that their dog tags marked them as targets for bullets. To address this prospect, they exchanged dog tags with one another, which led Berrett and other chaplains to develop additional layers of verification, most often by confirming the religious mark on dog tags with other records, lists, and forms of identification. When he encountered men with “the C or the P on their dog tags and...identified them as being who the dog tag actually said they were or after we got our direct identification of the body, then we would write to the parents and tell them that they had had a Christian burial service.”<sup>10</sup> This was standard operating procedure and yet many chaplains were forced to maneuver through far more tacit signs of religious identity.

When Army Chief of Chaplains William R. Arnold (Catholic) received word of Rose Shapiro’s consternation, then, he set about trying to untangle exactly what circumstances had produced the insensitive and distressing letter. Was it a case of mistaken identity, a matter of religious opacity, or an instance of bureaucratic blunder? Addressing these questions began with a factual discovery: what was marked on the private’s dog tag? This was important because, as Arnold wrote to the chaplain who penned the condolence letter, “Mrs. Shapiro is, as the name so strongly suggests, Jewish. She is no little distraught that her son received a Catholic rather than a Jewish burial.” He posed several additional questions in an attempt to elicit what had happened and why had procedures gone awry. Was it possible the soldier had converted overseas, he wondered? Was there uncertainty or doubt about his religious preference, but if so, “could not his buddies have

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<sup>10</sup> Lyman C. Berrett, interviewed by Richard Maher, October 24, 1974, p. 14, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies/LDS Chaplains Oral History Project, MS-17096, LDS-CHL.

supplied the necessary information?” Finally, was this incident merely a mix-up, a letter sent in error?<sup>11</sup>

Upon receiving Arnold’s query, the chaplain deployed “somewhere in France” apologized profusely and hastened to clarify his actions. As it turned out—and as Chaplain Berrett experienced in the Pacific Theater—confusion reigned, and there were few mechanisms through which to corroborate religion in the field. In the absence of a clearly designated religious preference, the chaplain “selected names that I thought were of a Catholic faith. Inadvertently I selected the name Shapiro to be an Italian name, and one that was a Catholic.”<sup>12</sup> Unfamiliar with Jewish names, the chaplain saw a surname that ended with a vowel and deemed it Italian and thus Catholic. Enforcing religious clarity through dog tags and personnel lists would preclude such mistakes, he asserted. The state, in other words, needed to collect and maintain clear information. Insisting that soldiers designate religion on dog tags would prevent mishaps and mix-ups, thus enabling chaplains to honor the dead and comfort families.

After unraveling the enigma of Private Shapiro’s battlefield burial, the Chief of Chaplains sent his regrets to the soldier’s mother. Through the Jewish Welfare Board (JWB), the civilian organization that endorsed Jewish chaplains and mediated Jewish personnel needs with the state, Arnold apologized. He also promised to rectify the situation by directing the Theater Chaplain to replace the grave’s cross with a Star of David and to locate a Jewish chaplain to “conduct a proper memorial service.”<sup>13</sup>

This eight-month exchange among Rose Shapiro, the chaplain in the field, the Chief of Chaplains, and the JWB was both anomalous and routine. For the Shapiro family, the effort to trace

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<sup>11</sup> William R. Arnold to Kenneth C. Martin, January 9, 1945, I-249, Box 10, Folder 60, AJHS.

<sup>12</sup> Kenneth C. Martin to William R. Arnold, February 11, 1945, I-249, Box 10, Folder 60, AJHS.

<sup>13</sup> William R. Arnold to Isaac Toubin, March 7, 1945, I-249, Box 10, Folder 60, AJHS. At the time, Rabbi Judah Nadich was serving in the Office of the Theater Chaplain, based in Paris, and was the most likely candidate to fulfill these instructions, though he may have secured the services of a chaplain closer to the grave to do the memorial service.

the circumstances of Leonard's burial was a singular moment, a one-time problem that brought them into close contact with representatives of the state. In contrast, for the Office of the Chief of Chaplains, interfacing with the public represented standard and daily duty. Implementing the state's religious vision necessarily meant navigating between military and civilian spheres and negotiating religious disjunctures. Religions differ, and war brought Americans into contact with new, different, and sometimes-unrecognizable faiths. Chaplains could know this and still err because, prior to military service, most clergy had limited interaction with members of different faiths.<sup>14</sup> Thus arose the predicament of a chaplain who simply did not know that Shapiro was not an Italian name and was, in fact, a Jewish name. As the intense familial reaction and the diligent pursuit of a solution to Leonard Shapiro's burial indicate, death gave the American state purchase over religion in the military. Precisely because the state waged war, war led to death, and death is handled distinctly by different faiths, the armed forces needed clergy who could comfort the dying, officiate funerals, and console the living.

But the military is also a total institution,<sup>15</sup> and arming men with the faith to die fighting opened a vast arena of military ministry. The chaplaincy became the vehicle through which the state mediated military necessity and religious obligations, public ceremonies and private faith. Because the United States has neither a state church (like England) nor a consistorial system (like France), the military offers one of very few spaces in which the state formally authorized religious leadership.

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<sup>14</sup> Roland Gittelsohn (Jewish), a Marine chaplain in World War II, estimated that during his seven years as a rabbi before entering the chaplaincy, 90 percent of his interaction with clergy was with rabbis, "that is to say, almost exclusively with clergymen of my own faith. My contacts with Christian ministers, while friendly and cordial, were limited rather narrowly to an occasional interchange of pulpits, a joint religious service now or then, or an infrequent community problem....Much the same must be said of my Christian colleagues." Roland Gittelsohn, "Pacifist to Padre," 24, MS-704, Box 64, Folder 7, AJA.

<sup>15</sup> Sociologist Erving Goffman defined a total institution as "a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life." This applies as much to the military as it did to the mental institutions Goffman studied. On total institutions, see Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (New York: Doubleday, 1961), xxi.



The work of the military chaplaincy in the twentieth century underscores both the evolving religious commitments of the state and the ways in which chaplains served as brokers between military operations and civilian society.

“God, War, and Politics: The American Military Chaplaincy and the Making of a Multi-Religious Nation” reveals how the modern American state wielded power over and through religion, transforming the spiritual landscape of American society as well as using faith to support military and foreign policy goals. Steeped in the reality of American religious diversity, the military chaplaincy enabled the state to define theological ideals and innovate ritual practice. Against the backdrop of constitutional separation of church and state, the military created the religious state and intertwined religion and democracy as the ideological center of American values and empire.

This project thus asks: How did religious groups agitate and advocate for themselves as American religions? How did religion both serve and challenge the state? How did national needs mold religious beliefs and rituals, and how did military innovations in religious life contribute to shifts in the identities of religious groups in the United States? I argue that the state quietly molded American religion into an entity different than a single totalizing faith, but nevertheless contingent on a nationally exclusive set of ideas and praxis. The military recast religious faith from personal belief and universal aims to a religious vision of what I call “moral monotheism” which directed men to believe in a single God and behave ethically.<sup>16</sup> By reimagining religion as a value system outside of but drawing upon extant religions, the state not only recognized but also legitimized multiple claims to truth. Soldiers needed simply pick a religion and behave according to its ethical standards. Promulgated by the state, moral monotheism built on both Christian Republicanism and the moral establishment, but differed from former iterations in deriving power from federal

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<sup>16</sup> The military was almost entirely male in World War I and remained a predominantly male organization through the Vietnam War. While moral monotheism certainly extended to the tiny (but growing) fraction of women in the service, I use men because it describes the population with which the military was most concerned.

authority.<sup>17</sup> Theologically loose and ritually pliant, moral monotheism made the mottos “unity without uniformity” and “cooperation without compromise” possible, if also vague and unwieldy.<sup>18</sup>

As ordained clergy serving as military officers, chaplains melded religious authority and state power; more specifically, they exemplified diffuse state power.<sup>19</sup> Operating autonomously within the policy framework set by an administrative bureaucracy, chaplains made daily decisions that expanded or restricted the religious lives of Americans serving in the armed forces. The chaplain who wrote to Rose Shapiro, for example, interpreted both the religious information he possessed and the conventions of standard operating procedure. Religion and state converged in the military chaplaincy, where clergy possessed both political and religious prerogatives within an institution regulated by civilians. As they brokered religious accommodations within military space, chaplains molded and challenged religious, racial, and gender norms. When they left the service, they often used their military experiences to shape civilian debates about religion as well as race and gender.

“God, War, and Politics” is therefore a socio-political history of religion and the state from World War I through the Vietnam War. Drawing on material from over 25 military, state, and religious archives, this project places myriad faith groups—including mainline and evangelical Protestants, Catholics and Christian Scientists, Jews and Mormons, and Seventh-Day Adventists and

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<sup>17</sup> On Christian Republicanism, see Mark Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). On the moral establishment, see David Sehat, *The Myth of American Religious Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> Wendy Wall has convincingly argued that a coalition of politicians, liberal clergy, intellectuals, corporate managers, and civic leaders “worked to blunt domestic intolerance and to broaden the bounds of national inclusion by promoting both cultural pluralism and a unifying American Way.” This study extends her argument by examining the ways in which the military chaplaincy modeled and molded religious pluralism through bureaucratic mechanisms and on-the-ground rituals. Wendy Wall, *Inventing the “American Way”: The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7.

<sup>19</sup> Other examples of diffuse state power include immigration agents, welfare workers, marriage clerks, public health advocates, and federal lawyers. See: Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Margot Canady, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Michael Willrich, *Pox: An American Story* (New York: Penguin, 2011); and Risa Goluboff, *The Lost Promise of Civil Rights* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

Buddhists—within the same frame. This comparative approach illuminates the experiences of multiple faiths within military space and shows how religious groups fared in contrast to one another. It also connects religious groups in the United States to their co-religionists abroad, thereby situating American religious change in a global context.

The history of the mid-twentieth-century chaplaincy also offers a new perspective on the military, which is often viewed as an authoritarian and conservative institution. True, the military's religious division was, like the rest of the armed forces, hierarchical and often coercive, but it was also progressive, innovative, and pragmatic, frequently using its power to press for more equitable treatment of religious and racial minorities. Because the military can enforce its commitments, a handful of key individuals, such as Episcopalian Bishop Charles Brent, World War II Army Chief of Chaplains William Arnold, and Chief of Naval Operations Elmo Zumwalt, exerted an outsize and profound impact on the chaplaincy and, through it, on American religious culture. Examining how the state mobilized for war demonstrates that religion was rarely separate from the workings of the state. At times the state co-opted religion to advance its imperial goals. But religious believers also pushed back, challenging the state to live up to the moral standards it claimed to uphold.

By examining the politics, practice, and provision of religion in the armed forces, “God, War, and Politics” integrates religion into and amends the burgeoning historical literature on citizenship, civil society, and the modern state in mid-twentieth-century America. As historians Jon Butler and David Hollinger noted separately in 2004, despite religion's enduring presence in the United States, it has rarely figured rigorously into the historiography of modern America.<sup>20</sup> More recently, Kevin Schultz and Paul Harvey have argued that religion remains “everywhere and

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<sup>20</sup> Jon Butler, “Jack-in-the-Box Faith: The Religion Problem in Modern American History,” *Journal of American History* 90, no. 4 (March 2004): 1357-1378; David Hollinger, “Jesus Matters in the USA,” *Modern Intellectual History* 1, no. 1 (2004): 135-149. See also, David Hollinger, “The ‘Secularization’ Question and the United States in the Twentieth Century,” *Church History* 70, no. 1 (March 2001): 132-143, and “Why is There So Much Christianity in the United States? A Reply to Sommerville,” *Church History* 71, no. 4 (December 2002): 858-864.

nowhere,” quite remarkable in its “simultaneous presence in American history and absence in recent American historiography.<sup>21</sup> Often subsumed—or assumed—under ethnicity, culture, or class, religion frequently lingers on the periphery as an unmarked or seemingly unremarkable feature of American society. Yet scholarship on religion in twentieth-century America has significantly increased in the past decade.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, histories focusing on religion and politics tend to trace this coupling as an artifact of Cold War containment<sup>23</sup> or see religion primarily as a signal of postwar conservative or liberal enterprises.<sup>24</sup> Histories of the Christian Right, for example, imply that twentieth-century religious politics and political religion were necessarily evangelical, right-leaning, and wholly grassroots or church-leader built. This assumption distorts the relationship between

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<sup>21</sup> Kevin M. Schultz and Paul Harvey, “Everywhere and Nowhere: Recent Trends in American Religious History and Historiography,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78, no. 1 (March 2010): 134.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example: David L. Chappell, *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Wallace Best, *Passionately Human, No Less Divine: Religion and Culture in Black Chicago, 1915-1952* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Leigh Schmidt, *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality from Emerson to Oprah* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2005); Matthew A. Sutton, *Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Barbara Savage, *Your Spirits Walks Beside Us: The Politics of Black Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008); Lila Corwin Berman, *Speaking of Jews: Rabbis, Intellectuals, and the Creation of an American Public Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Joseph Kip Kosek, *Acts of Conscience: Christian Nonviolence and Modern American Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Tisa Wenger, *We Have a Religion: The 1920s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American Religious Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Sharon Davies, *Rising Road: A True Tale of Love, Race, and Religion in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Kathryn Lofton, *Oprah: Gospel of an Icon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Edward Blum and Paul Harvey, *The Color of Christ: The Son of God and the Saga of Race in America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

<sup>23</sup> On religion and the Cold War, see: Andrew J. Rotter, “Christians, Muslims, and Hindus: Religion and US-South Asian Relations, 1947-1954,” *Diplomatic History* 24, no. 4 (2000): 593-613; Seth Jacobs, *America’s Miracle Man in Vietnam: Ngo Dinh Diem, Religion, Race, and U.S. Intervention in Southeast Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); David S. Fogelsohn, *The American Mission and the ‘Evil’ Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); William Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960: The Soul of Containment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Jeremy Gunn, *Spiritual Weapons: The Cold War and the Forging of an American National Religion* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2009); Jonathan Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America’s Religious Battle Against Communism in the Early Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); and Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York: Knopf, 2012), 411-496.

<sup>24</sup> E.g.: Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Women’s Crusade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009); Daniel Williams, *God’s Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sun Belt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2012); Elesha Coffman, *The Christian Century and the Rise of the Protestant Mainline* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Matthew Hedstrom, *The Rise of Liberal Religion: Book Culture and American Spirituality in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

religion and politics in the United States and belies the role government has played in sanctioning some forms and types of religion over others.<sup>25</sup> In a comparable vein, even the work attending to religious pluralism tends to examine ecumenical efforts outside governmental purview.<sup>26</sup> Hence although religion structures personal decisions and private lives, the state's participation in evolving religious identities and affiliations remains underdeveloped.<sup>27</sup>

Current work on modern state formation has produced fruitful and illuminating studies of sexuality, law, and war.<sup>28</sup> A tremendous volume of scholarship on citizenship has likewise explored contours of race, gender, and class but generally ignores religion as constitutive of or implanted in citizenship, politics, and state administration.<sup>29</sup> To the extent that historians have parsed religion in

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<sup>25</sup> Scholars of law and religion have been more attentive to the issue of government preferences. See: Shawn Peters, *Judging Jehovah's Witnesses: Religious Persecution and the Dawn of the Rights Revolution* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002); Winnifred Sullivan, *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Kent Greenawalt, *Religion and the Constitution: Free Exercise and Fairness* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Winnifred Sullivan, *Prison Religion: Faith-Based Reform and the Constitution* (Princeton: Princeton: University Press, 2009); Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Spirit of the Law: Religious Voices and the Constitution in Modern America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Kathleen Holscher, *Religious Lessons: Catholic Sisters and the Captured Schools Crisis in New Mexico* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>26</sup> A good example is Kevin Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its Protestant Promise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). Although the latter half of the book parses sites like courtrooms and the census, state formation is not a central component of the argument.

<sup>27</sup> As Brian Balogh argued in 2003, the state is most present in work on gender, race and ethnicity, the American West and the environment. Since then, work on the state's role in labor, business, and capitalism has increased as well. Balogh, "The State of the State Among Historians," *Social Science History* 27, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 455-63.

<sup>28</sup> Margot Canady, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); James Sparrow, *The Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Joanna L. Grisinger, *The Unwieldy American State: Administrative Politics Since the New Deal* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Much of this work builds on American Political Development, a political science subfield focused on institutional change and development. As Julian Zelizer has argued, a key foundational text in the history of the state development is Stephen Skowronek's *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982). See: Zelizer, "Stephen Skowronek's *Building a New American State* and the Origins of American Political Development," *Social Science History* 27, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 425-41. On the legal origins of the regulatory state, see William J. Novak, *The People's Welfare: Law and Regulation in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

<sup>29</sup> Over the past decade, the literature on the making of the modern United States and the modern American citizenship has proliferated. See, for example: Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation on the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Nancy Cott, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Elizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003); Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Jennifer Klein, *For All These Rights: Business, Labor, and the Shaping of America's Public-Private Welfare State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Meg

the military, state administration fades from view.<sup>30</sup> Work on the military chaplaincy tends to examine the experiences of particular religious groups or specific wars.<sup>31</sup> Yet citizenship required men to defend the nation, and military service demanded that Americans live, fight, and worship with men from a variety of backgrounds and faiths. The obligations of citizenship thereby required men to experience religious difference within the nation. And because the military, like religion itself, is at once local and global, compulsory military service on occasion also produced encounters between Americans and less familiar religions abroad. In these ways, religion was bound up with the rights and responsibilities of citizenship within the modern state.

The military proved to be an ideal lab for the state to experiment with religion. While the chaplaincy was not new in 1917,<sup>32</sup> the demographics of the nation it served and the reach of its efforts changed significantly with the United States' entrance into World War I. Over the next half-century, restrictive immigration policies limited the arrival of outsiders while the draft brought

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Jacobs, *Pocketbook Politics: Economic Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Sarah Igo, *The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007). One exception that considers religion and citizenship is Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>30</sup> Anne Loveland, *American Evangelicals and the U.S. Military, 1942-1993* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996); Christopher Sterba, *Good Americans: Italian and Jewish Immigrants During the First World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Jonathan H. Ebel, *Faith in the Fight: Religion and the American Soldiers in the Great War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

<sup>31</sup> Studies of chaplains from particular religious groups include Donald Crosby, *Battlefield Chaplains: Catholic Priests in World War II* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1994) and Albert Isaac Slomovitz, *The Fighting Rabbis: Jewish Military Chaplains and American History* (New York: New York University Press, 1999). Studies of chaplains during particular wars include Lyle W. Dorsett, *Serving God and Country: United States Military Chaplains in World War II* (New York: Berkley Books, 2012) and Jacqueline E. Whitt, *Bringing God to Men: American Military Chaplains and the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014). There are also organizational and sociological studies of the chaplaincy such as Richard Budd, *Serving Two Masters: The Development of the American Military Chaplaincy, 1860-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002) and Kim Hansen, *Military Chaplains and Religious Diversity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). Deborah Dash Moore's *G.I. Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004) discusses chaplains and demonstrates how the military influenced religious identities but not how religion transformed the state.

<sup>32</sup> There have been military chaplains in the United States since the American Revolution. For histories of the early chaplaincy, see Budd, *Serving Two Masters*; Clifford Drury, *History of the Chaplain Corps US Navy, 1778-1939, Vol. 1* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1948); Roy J. Honeywell, *Chaplains of the United States Army* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1958); Parker C. Thompson, *From Its European Antecedents to 1791: The United States Army Chaplaincy, Vol. 1* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1978); Herman A. Norton, *Struggling for Recognition: The United States Army Chaplaincy, Vol. 2* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1977).

together Americans from an array of class, ethnic, religious, and, after 1948, racial backgrounds. This era also witnessed two significant debates about pacifism and religion, in the 1930s and 1960s, both of which challenged the validity of military interventions abroad. Mid-twentieth-century Americans also confronted two major ideologies—Nazism and Communism—in conflict with democracy and opposed to religion.

“God, War, and Politics” argues that the state actively managed religious groups and shaped the religious experiences of the men under its control. It re-periodizes the political history of American religion by showing that this state project began in earnest during World War I and continued to evolve over the twentieth century. During this time, the military operated simultaneously on local, national, and global scales, and military chaplains presided over religion in tight, closed quarters continually touched by defensive and imperial contact with difference. Thus “God, War, and Politics” identifies how a multi-religious military chaplaincy built a multi-religious nation over six decades of the twentieth century through three intersecting and interlocking stories.

This is a story of religious change over the twentieth century. When the United States entered World War I, its chaplaincy corps consisted of Protestants and Catholics. The Protestants in uniform affiliated exclusively with mainline denominations. They were Baptists (North and South), Congregationalists, Disciples of Christ, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists (AME, North, and South), and Presbyterians. Mid-war Congressional legislation enabled Christian Scientists, the Eastern Orthodox, Jews, Mormons, and the Salvation Army to accept military commissions. Over the twentieth century, the diversity of denominations and religions continued to increase, propelled by Americans who wanted the state to recognize their clergy as legitimate religious representatives of the nation. By the end of the World War II, quotas for military chaplains delineated numbers for 38 denominations. An additional “miscellaneous” category offered positions to 31 more groups, primarily representing evangelical, fundamentalist, and charismatic Protestants. Although the armed

forces did not acquire its first Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu chaplains until the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the chaplaincies nevertheless grappled with how to serve personnel from these faiths beginning in World War II and throughout the postwar period.

It is also a story of state regulation, albeit regulation of an arena rarely considered within government purview: religion. The regulatory state could operate directly and indirectly, and the military afforded the opportunity for both. The state set parameters for religion in the armed forces through standards, policies, and operating procedures that framed the chaplaincy's dimensions. In turn, these requirements exerted indirect pressure on religions and denominations to conform to guidelines—or, at times, to bend and stretch to meet them while advocating changing them. In this sense, the military attracted religions through both carrot and stick. It beckoned with possibilities—to serve one's country, to reach young men, to be recognized as legitimate, to imprint God on nation, and to access state power. (And, in the case of proselytizing faiths, to acquire souls.) For many denominations and religions, the military represented an irresistible opportunity. But as a coercive institution, the military also demanded adherence to specific norms—by soldiers, by officers, by chaplains, and, ultimately, by religion too. And each new inclusion, whether religious, racial, or gendered, yielded additional exclusions and limits. The military could force many things: it acted with force, it took with force, it claimed with force, and it ruled with force. But it could not force faith. It could, however, strongly encourage and build structures to fortify faith, and that it did.

Finally, it is a story of faith—of faith in God and faith in country as well as faith in law and constitutional promises. At times, these instincts harmonized and at times they conflicted. It is, therefore, a story about the trials of faith: the challenge of adhering to religious faith in secular space, the trouble of retaining faith in inconsistent institutions, and the difficulty of equitably managing multiple faiths in a constitutional system that tries to separate religion and the state. Strains of resistance were common, but rarely uniform in voice or goal. Some religious groups, like Adventists,



objected to any valence of state religion, while others, such as evangelical Protestants, were frustrated by insufficiently militant faith. At the same time, onetime stalwarts of the chaplaincy, such as mainline Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, reconsidered the comingling of the sword and the spirit during Vietnam.

The dissertation moves from World War I through the end of the Vietnam War and the abolition of the draft in three parts. Part I, *God*, examines World War I through the 1930s. Chapter 1, “Mobilizing Faith: World War I and the Emergence of the Modern Chaplaincy,” focuses on the military’s consolidation of ethnicity into three faith groups—Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism—and initial attempts to cultivate moral monotheism. Chapter 2, “‘Christ is the Melting Pot for All Our Differences’: Interwar Visions, Alliances, and Experiments,” examines the military’s ongoing efforts to use moral monotheism to define ideals of religious pluralism and set limits for religion within the armed forces.

Part II, *War*, revolves around the experiences of chaplains in World War II through the Korean War. Chapter 3, “The Gospel of *Chaplain Jim*: Boundaries of Religious Citizenship in the Warfare State,” underscores the importance of religion to the state’s wartime project while juxtaposing the rhetoric of national pluralism with the reality of its clear racial and religious limits. Chapter 4, “A Global God: The Military-Spiritual Complex in a Covenant Nation,” highlights the central role religion played in shaping American identities and worldviews as the United States became a global power in the early postwar period.

Part III, *Politics*, probes religion, protest, and political change during the Cold War and the Vietnam War. Chapter 5, “‘Maybe God is an American’: Governing Religion Through the Cold War Chaplaincy,” concentrates on the military’s response to friction between religious groups seeking validation as American faiths and highlights how foreign policy, rather than domestic pressure, propelled attention to Buddhism. Chapter 6, “Claiming Conscience: Moral Objection and Religious

Obligation in the Vietnam War,” demonstrates how moral turmoil over the Vietnam War reordered the relationship between religious groups and the state, redefined the meaning and role of religion, and reshaped the religious politics of the nation.

Undoubtedly a state religious project, the military chaplaincy was also a political project, invested and intertwined with domestic life and foreign affairs. From a constitutional perspective, the long shadow of establishment hovered over the chaplaincy; yet the greater challenge lay in the more quotidian effort to enable daily free exercise.<sup>33</sup> “God, War, and Politics” probes the processes, conflicts, and exchanges through which the military chaplaincy transformed the politics and culture of American religion. It therefore renders the obvious visible, showing that interaction between religion and state is not only regular, but vigorous, dynamic, and powerful.

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<sup>33</sup> The first legal challenge to the chaplaincy did not arise until the late twentieth century in *Katcoff v. Marsh*, 755 F.2d 223, 337 (2<sup>nd</sup> Cir. 1985). The court held that the chaplaincy passed constitutional muster. For an analysis of the case and its legacy, see Richard D. Rosen, “*Katcoff v. Marsh* at Twenty-Two: The Military Chaplaincy and the Separation of Church and State,” *University of Toledo Law Review* 38, no. 1137 (2007). As will be discussed in chapter 6, the Supreme Court discussed and sanctioned the constitutionality of the chaplaincy in *Abington v. Schempp* (1963).

**CHAPTER 1**  
**Mobilizing Faith:**  
**World War I and the Emergence of the Modern Chaplaincy**

Joseph H. Odell's career took many turns. He was a minister by training, an education reformer by conviction, and a writer by trade. In 1917-18, these roles merged: the former army chaplain traversed the United States as a war correspondent to inspect the environment in and around War Department outposts. Along the way, he attended "the most remarkable meeting." He had stopped by a number of army camps, forts, and cantonments by the time he reached Atlanta in November 1917, generally impressed by what he had encountered. But he showed up in the South expecting to be disappointed. Fort McPherson and Camp Gordon, four and fourteen miles away from city center, respectively, housed high percentages of foreign-born men, black men, and illiterate southern white men.<sup>1</sup> The combination appeared more combustible than placid, more prone to problems than collaborative. Yet when Odell spoke with soldiers and attended the weekly meeting of the executive board of the local Commission on Training Camp Activities (CTCA), he was taken aback. As he reported first to readers of *The Outlook*, a liberal religious weekly that supported the war effort, and then to other national and local papers that reprinted his column, in Atlanta he unexpectedly discovered "a unique spirit of cooperation."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 12-3, 123-31, 194-7; Nancy Gentile Ford, *Americans All! Foreign-Born Soldiers in World War I* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2001), 67-87.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph H. Odell, "Making Democracy Safe for the Soldier: An Account of What Atlanta, Georgia is Doing for a Cantonment," *The Outlook*, November 28, 1917. *The Outlook* started as *The Christian Union*, under the editorial leadership of Henry Ward Beecher, in 1870. Lyman Abbott became co-editor in 1876, editor in 1881, and renamed the weekly magazine *The Outlook* in 1893. Abbott was progressive, dedicated to social reform and a supporter of evolution. *The Outlook's* advocacy of military preparedness led to Abbott's expulsion from the American Peace Society in 1913.

Odell heard the CTCA leaders report on the past week's activities and outline plans for the future: Atlanta women mended soldiers' clothing, organized a glee club, and planned a Christmas pageant, the Transportation Committee furnished automobiles for sick soldiers, and the Entertainment Committee arranged for concerts and readings. The Federated Women's Club taught men how to sew and the Daughters of the American Revolution taught black women to knit. The Hebrew Association and the Knights of Columbus lauded the Young Men's Christian Association for lending them space for their services, dances, and lectures.<sup>3</sup> Odell was far from objective. He was undoubtedly a booster for the moral, religious, and educational work of the War Department and its affiliated civilian entities. He appreciated the quotidian integration of religion into military order, remarking that "there is nothing remote or separate or esoteric about this religion; it fits into the order of the day as naturally as the meals in the mess-room; it interweaves itself with the common occupations of his leisure hours."<sup>4</sup> His reportage also showed—whether or not he recognized it—that endeavors supporting the religious and moral welfare of soldiers could be coercive, patronizing, and authoritarian. But he was correct to express wonder at the "common sense" efforts to de-emphasize difference among Protestants, Catholics, and Jews.

After all, early twentieth-century Atlanta was not the most obvious place to witness this type of interreligious coordination and fledgling, if condescending, multiethnic and multiracial discussions. Eleven years before Odell's visit, racial violence erupted in the southern boom town as the gubernatorial candidates debated how to disenfranchise black men and newspaper headlines alleged black violence against white women. Four days of street violence destroyed black bodies and black businesses. While nascent conversations between white and black elites emerged in the wake of the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot, racial tension did not dissipate. The city remained heavily segregated,

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<sup>3</sup> Joseph H. Odell, "Making Democracy Safe for the Soldier."

<sup>4</sup> Joseph H. Odell, *The New Spirit of the New Army: A Message to the "Service-Flag" Homes* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1918), 23.

and overtly racist legislation entrenched Jim Crow policies. Even as African Americans comprised almost one-third of the population, they had few avenues to political power in a city controlled by a ward system dominated by working-class white supremacist politicians. By late 1915, the Ku Klux Klan re-emerged on a ridge outside Atlanta, and capacity crowds broke attendance records at the opening of the racist movie *Birth of a Nation*.<sup>5</sup> Religious minorities faced less hostility than the city's African Americans, but as the rejuvenation of the Klan suggests, Atlanta did not welcome Jews and Catholics. The 1915 lynching of Leo Frank—a B'nai Brith president and factory manager falsely accused and convicted of the murder of Mary Phagan—weighed heavily on the city's Jewish population, many of whom fled from the area after the hanging.<sup>6</sup> Catholics, despite comprising a small population in a largely Protestant city, still faced the Klan's wrath. Despite these racial and religious tensions plaguing Atlanta, the war years provided an opportunity to work together to meet the needs of men sent to local training camps.

Listening to the reports of Atlantans' service in heavily-immigrant and segregated but multiracial army posts compelled Reverend Odell to volunteer a war story of his own, or at least one he had recently read. The setting was the June 1917 Battle of Messines Ridge, a major British offensive that successfully recaptured a Belgian strategic outlook from German hands at the cost of about 25,000 Allied lives. There, about three miles from the French border, he told the Atlanta volunteers, "a Catholic soldier lay dying, blown almost to pieces by a bomb. No Catholic chaplain happened to be near, and no Protestant chaplain was available; but a Hebrew rabbi, acting as a chaplain to the Jewish troops, bent over the dying Catholic and held the crucifix to his lips while he breathed his last." The committee members listened to Odell in captivated silence, then applauded

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<sup>5</sup> John Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 12-3, 123-31, 185-6.

<sup>6</sup> On the Leo Frank case, see: Leonard Dinnerstein, *The Leo Frank Case* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968) and Steve Oney, *And the Dead Shall Rise: The Murder of Mary Phagan and the Lynching of Leo Frank* (New York: Pantheon, 2003).

in unison. They too valued “religious comity,” expressing it in their service to soldiers and their response to Odell’s vignette. That the story was of British origin, as only a trickle of American soldiers and chaplains had arrived in Europe by the early June battle, mattered little. It reflected American values and war priorities. As Odell reassured his readers, “some of the by-products of this war may be worth all the sacrifices of men, money, and strength we are making so freely.”<sup>7</sup>

Odell joined a small but growing chorus of chaplains and military officers who viewed religious cooperation as an important and positive consequence of the United States’ participation in World War I. Lee Levinger, a rabbi who served as a chaplain with the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) in France, returned from Europe extolling the virtues of an ecumenical chaplains corps. “Religious unity,” he insisted, and “cooperation between the denominations, is more than a far-off ideal. We know...just how it deepens and broadens the religious spirit in both chaplain and soldier.”<sup>8</sup> In his final report on the war, General John Pershing agreed, “Chaplains, as never before, became the moral and spiritual leaders of their organizations, and established a high standard of active usefulness in religious work that made for patriotism, discipline, and unselfish devotion to duty.”<sup>9</sup> Pershing’s casual intermingling of religious and moral work was typical, for the separation between them was blurry—in both civilian and military life.

Immediately after President Woodrow Wilson declared war and prepared for the first-ever nationwide draft, he and Secretary of War Newton Baker received a torrent of letters from concerned citizens. They worried not about the prospect of death or the righteousness of the cause but about the temptations of vice—alcohol, prostitution, gambling—and the scourge of impure

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<sup>7</sup> Joseph Henry Odell, *The New Spirit of the New Army: A Message to the “Service-Flag” Homes* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1918), 103-5.

<sup>8</sup> Lee Levinger, “Christian and Jew at the Front,” *The Biblical World* 53, no. 5 (September 1919): 477.

<sup>9</sup> John Pershing, *Final Report of General John J. Pershing, Commander-in-Chief, American Expeditionary Forces* (Washington: GPO, 1920), 93.

behavior reputed to fester at military encampments.<sup>10</sup> Within two weeks of entering the war, the federal government created the Commission on Training Camp Activities to organize recreation and entertainment provided for soldiers and, implicitly, to oversee the behavior of newly drafted men. Led by Raymond Fosdick, a noted urban reformer and brother of the leading liberal minister Harry Emerson Fosdick, the CTCA pledged to maintain moral purity and discharge virtuous, unstained men back to their home communities. As Wilson wrote, the organization “represented the government and the government’s solicitude that the moral and spiritual resources of the nation should be mobilized behind the troops.”<sup>11</sup>

While the CTCA directed men’s eyes away from liquor, ladies of the night, and card games toward wholesome athletics, uplifting shows, and clean magazines, the military also began to build a robust religious program of its own. By war’s end, as Pershing indicated, religion had become a clear aid to the nation’s success, a crucial weapon in the U.S. military’s arsenal. But at war’s beginning, this conclusion could not be anticipated.

In April 1917, the religious division of the United States military, the chaplaincy, contained just 146 Army chaplains and 40 Navy chaplains. As such, it was ill-prepared to serve the millions of Americans, many of whom were recent immigrants, about to be called into service. Over the course of the war, the Army’s total population increased 1700 percent, from a little over 200,000 available men to more than 3.5 million, while the Navy expanded from about 95,000 men to 533,000 men and women.<sup>12</sup> The chaplaincy multiplied as well, with the Army reaching 2230 military ministers and the

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<sup>10</sup> Nancy K. Bristow, *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering During the Great War* (New York: NYU Press, 1996), 1-4.

<sup>11</sup> Woodrow Wilson, “Special Statement” in *Keeping Our Fighters Fit for War and After* by Edward Frank Allen with the Cooperation of Raymond Fosdick (New York: Century, 1918), opening page.

<sup>12</sup> Earl Stover, *Up From Handymen: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1865-1920* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1977), 187; Richard Budd, *Serving Two Masters: The Development of American Military Chaplaincy, 1865-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 121-4.

Navy chaplaincy quintupling to 201.<sup>13</sup> These changes reflected more than simple numerical proliferation; they indicated the state's interest in providing soldiers with regular and effortless access to religion. As Joseph Odell reminded his readers, "A man can work in a mill or factory for a lifetime and never see an authorized representative of Christianity about the plant; in the army the chaplain is one of his officers."<sup>14</sup> By commissioning chaplains, the state insisted on religion as an essential component of the military; by making chaplains officers, the state vested clergy with authority and power. As the numbers of chaplains rapidly escalated, the need to regulate the appointments, deployment, and activities of military clergy intensified.

While World War I precipitated the rapid development and restructuring of the military chaplaincy, quick growth and effective management did not come hand in hand. Despite the surge of chaplains commissioned to serve at home and on the western front, the quickly ballooning number of clergy available for battle did not reflect a particularly organized approach to wartime religious service. As the war began in earnest for Americans, soldiers in the United States encountered official military chaplains, CTCA war workers, and civilian camp pastors at posts and in ports. For spiritual comfort and ritual guidance abroad, AEF soldiers could turn to a commissioned military chaplain or to any number of civilian religious clergy—Red Cross chaplains, Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) ministers, Knights of Columbus priests, Salvation Army "lassies," or Jewish Welfare Board war workers—who made their way to France to assist American troops.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Budd, *Serving Two Masters*, 121. Although 201 chaplains represented significant growth, the chaplaincy remained at only 42 percent of authorized strength.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph H. Odell, *The New Spirit of the New Army: A Message to the "Service-Flag" Homes* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1918), 22.

<sup>15</sup> Budd, *Serving Two Masters*, 8-10, 121-53; Robert Gushwa, *The Best and Worst of Times: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1920-1945* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army, 1977), 4-5. Technically, the military only recognized the chaplains as a corps in World War II; however, with the creation of the Office of the Chief of Chaplains, the military treated chaplains as a corps before they named it as such. See also, Budd, *Serving Two Masters*, 124; *Ibid.*, 125; Margaret Renton, ed., *War-Time Agencies of the Churches: Directory and Handbook* (New York: General War-Time Commission of the Churches, 1919), 149-76, 217-22, 227-46; Raymond Fosdick, "The War and Navy Departments Commissions on Training Camp Activities," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* Vol. 79 (September 1918), 130-42; John Mott, "The War Work of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United



Access to religious services abounded, but inefficiency and insufficient oversight troubled military leaders who preferred more controlled approach to religious provision and supervision. Over the eighteen months of active American participation in the Great War, the state mobilized faith to sustain its martial goals.

As the institutional locus of military religion, the chaplaincy offered a venue through which the state encouraged belief in one God, regulated ritual and moral behavior, and stimulated belonging to the American nation. Invigorating the chaplaincy demanded more than simply requisitioning additional chaplains. Building a chaplaincy suitable to the new American fighting forces—larger and more diverse than ever before—demanded altering the contours of the chaplaincy: who the military commissioned as chaplains and what expectations the military held for its religious officers. In delineating education requirements for chaplains, privileging non-denominational religion, and foregrounding morality, the military began to cultivate an ethos of moral monotheism. This principle, which stressed a belief in one God and respectable conduct over religious particularity, allowed the state to streamline its diverse and ethnically fragmented citizenry into larger, more manageable groups. It also created a guide for religious decision-making within the confines of the Army and Navy and helped set boundaries of acceptable religious accommodation. Even as the state attempted to distance itself from religious particularity, disputes, and discord, however, it could not remain isolated from religious schism and racial strife. As minority religious groups—Christian and Jewish, white and black—lobbied for inclusion in the chaplaincy and arrangements for their soldiers, the military erected new standards of American religion by holding fast to a strongly held but unarticulated commitment to moral monotheism.

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States,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* Vol. 79 (September 1918), 204-8; John Burke, “Special Catholic Activities in the War Service,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* Vol. 79 (September 1918), 213-20; Albert Lucas, “American Jewish Relief in the World War,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* Vol. 79 (September 1918), 221-8; Diane Winston, *Red-Hot and Righteous: The Urban Religion of the Salvation Army* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 219-20.

## **Drafting Men, Demarcating Religion**

Across the nation on June 5, 1917, ten million young men arrived at city halls, post offices, high schools, and public libraries to register for the draft. Passed barely a month earlier, the Selective Service Act of 1917 required American men between 21 and 31 to present themselves, complete questionnaires, and await classification by local draft boards. Introduced and celebrated by parades and festivals in many towns, this new ritual of registration asked young men to supply information and tick the boxes on Form 1001 to classify themselves as fitting into one of five groups that would separate the draftable from the exempt. Aside from names and addresses, additional sections collected information about schooling, employment history, military experience, language abilities, criminal history, physical fitness and deficiencies, and citizenship.

Military manpower needs were vast, but regulations distinguished husbands and fathers from single men; the former registered and earned exemptions to protect their families while the latter garnered trips to newly created army camps, naval stations, and, in 2 million cases, overseas. Those with supporting affidavits could claim exemptions for working as legislative, executive, or judicial officers, being ministers or divinity students, holding religious conviction against war, engaging in industrial or agricultural enterprise necessary for the war effort, or caring for a number of dependents. Immigrants and resident aliens, technically eligible for military service only if they intended to make the United States their permanent home, nonetheless endured further scrutiny about their loyalty, language use, and legitimacy. Local draft boards received nationally identifiable, if not exactly standardized, draft cards containing registrants' names, addresses, birth dates, citizenship status, occupations, marital status, and physical appearances. "Few programs," John Chambers has written, "could coincide better with the progressive era's emphasis upon social efficiency than this

idea of classifying much of the nation's manpower."<sup>16</sup>

This categorization of more than 24 million young American men determined who served, where they served, and how they served their nation in war. It sorted conscripts into definable categories, organized draftees into units, and systematized the mobilization of manpower. The taxonomy was new because military service, historically a volunteer enterprise, had become mandatory. Yet leaders and citizens alike reluctantly accepted this new relationship between the state and society, between Washington and local communities, between coercion and obligation.<sup>17</sup> A small but significant number resisted. Even President Woodrow Wilson, who as Commander-in-Chief initially preferred offering economic aid and sending only a small number of men to join the Allies, capitulated to the need for a national draft mere days before entering the United States into the Great War.

The men who donned army khakis or suited up in navy blues for a war "over there" were a varied lot. They were white and black. They hailed from Alabama and New York, California and Illinois. They were born in Cleveland and Kielce, Salt Lake City and Salerno. Some had graduated from high school, others could barely write their names. Some spoke only in English, while others conversed in Polish, Italian, Russian, Yiddish, German, Czech, Norwegian, Spanish, or Japanese. Some felt at home on farms, others forged their way in cities. They were rowdy and quiet, skilled with rifles and scared of shotguns. They were restless and excited, worried about death and determined to return as heroes.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Selective Service Regulations (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1917), 123-48; John Chambers, *To Raise an Army: The Draft Comes to Modern America* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 191.

<sup>17</sup> David Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 144-6; Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You! World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> Nancy Gentile Ford, *Americans All!: Foreign-Born Soldiers in World War I* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M Press, 2001); Bruce White, "The American Military and the Melting Pot in World War I," in *War and Society in North America*, ed. J.L. Granatstein and R.D. Cuff (Toronto: Thomas Nelson, 1971): 37-51.

But most of all, they were usually young—sheltered and inexperienced, unaccustomed to discipline and unfamiliar with war. Or so the military assumed. As Secretary of War Newton Baker asked, “What are those soldiers going to do in the towns, and what are the towns going to do to the soldiers?”<sup>19</sup> To assuage fears about the men in their care, the CTCA provided entertainment and recreation, attempting to keep impressionable new soldiers away from vice. But the CTCA also reflected Wilson’s insistence on an organization that operated as a joint venture among Americans of all backgrounds: “To cloud it by special denominational self-seeking or by insidious distinctions based on religious prejudice would be as unfortunate as it is unjust...the national interest – the supreme need of the hour – has brought together in closer union men and women of all denominations.”<sup>20</sup> Fosdick, an elite social reformer who shared Progressive-era reform credentials with Baker, oversaw a civilian agency dedicated to promoting morals in the military. But maintaining a non-sectarian moralizing agency was not, however, as easy to do as Wilson asserted.<sup>21</sup>

The millions of men who made their way to army camps and naval installations in 1917 and 1918 arrived with their own sense of moral standards. They may have liked a nightcap or a dance with the ladies, but more often than not, they also knew the hard edge of a church pew or the rhythm of Sabbath prayer. They entered the military as Presbyterians and Methodists, Episcopalians and Baptists, Catholics and Christian Scientists, Jews and Mormons, Unitarians and Disciples of Christ. The Selective Service never asked their religious affiliation or preference, except as it pertained to exemptions on grounds of conscientious objection. But the military knew its ranks consisted of men with diverse religious affiliations—far more diverse than in previous wars.<sup>22</sup> Thus the CTCA’s moral mission notwithstanding, the Army and Navy also commissioned and employed

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Jennifer Keene, *World War I* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006), 73.

<sup>20</sup> Woodrow Wilson to Raymond Fosdick, September 3, 1918, Box 1, Folder 8, National Catholic War Council, CUA.

<sup>21</sup> On the CTCA during WWI, see Bristow, *Making Men Moral*.

<sup>22</sup> Ford, *Americans All*, 13, 102-7.

chaplains as religious leaders within the armed forces. As religious personnel, chaplains oversaw the religious lives of soldiers, a task that also included—or could include—moral instruction and leadership. In fact, promulgating morality enabled chaplains to eschew religious particularity, or pernicious sectarianism, in favor of religious generality, or unity, a war goal unto itself.

Chaplains represented a very particular type of religious war worker: those vetted and approved by the state to perform three specific duties: to “hold appropriate religious services for the benefit of the commands to which assigned,” to “perform appropriate burial services,” and to “give instruction to the enlisted men in the common English branches of education.”<sup>23</sup> While Congress had not specifically delegated moral tasks to chaplains, moral instruction nonetheless permeated much of their work. As Bishop William Lawrence told the Senate’s Committee on Military Affairs in September 1917, the increased size of the military during war demanded more chaplains to support “the character—the moral character, as well as the religious sentiment—of the men.”<sup>24</sup> In particular, chaplains stood as a bulwark against the sexual depravity and venereal disease the military feared would infect its corps. Handbooks and reports alike enjoined chaplains to provide social hygiene lectures and to teach soldiers and sailors how to avoid venereal disease. Navy chaplain John Frazier, who became the first Chief of Chaplains for the Bureau of Navigation, advised his fellow clergy that the service drew men from rural areas and small towns who “have not been exposed to the pitfalls of seaport cities and consequently are unaware of the dangers, physical and moral, that attend association with lewd women.”<sup>25</sup> Being a chaplain meant more than saving souls or blessing the dead; it required teaching as well as preaching, inspiring as well as inhibiting.

To ensure that the men dispatched as chaplains were up to the task of serving men across

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<sup>23</sup> “Chaplains,” in *Compilation of General Orders, Circulars, and Bulletins of the War Department, 1881-1915* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916), 38.

<sup>24</sup> *Increasing the Number of the Chaplains in the Army: Hearings Before the Committee on Military Affairs on S. 2917*, United States Senate, 65<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session (Thursday September 27, 1917), 4.

<sup>25</sup> John Frazier, *Navy Chaplain’s Manual* (New York: 1918), 40.

religious faiths and instilling in them moral principles deemed central to the military mission, Congress delimited the qualifications for chaplains: a qualified applicant had to be (1) a “regularly ordained minister of some religious denomination”; (2) a minister “in good standing” in his denomination; “recommended for appointment by some authorized ecclesiastical body”; and (3) under 45 years old. In addition, chaplains had to (4) satisfactorily pass the same “moral, mental, and physical” exams required of all officers; these exams not only tested knowledge of writing, math, geography, and history but allocated points for academic background, theological training, teaching qualifications, and pastoral experience. Finally, prospective chaplains also had to submit five letters of recommendation from ministers in their denomination attesting to their skills in ministry.<sup>26</sup>

These standards represented more than bureaucratic measuring sticks. They epitomized the Progressive-Era push toward professionalization, which in turn signified the development of the American military as modern institution and heralded an effort by the government to enlist religion as an instrument of statecraft and nation-building. The clamor for a well-trained military chaplaincy had begun in the early twentieth century when commissioned Navy chaplains sought to improve their standing within the military by establishing and enforcing clear standards for the military’s religious officers. Army chaplains quickly followed suit, advocating for stiff credential requirements as well.<sup>27</sup> The timing was not accidental. In the aftermath of the Spanish-American War, Elihu Root—who would win the Nobel Peace Prize in 1912 and instigated the reform of legal education in the 1920s—began his five-year tenure as Secretary of War. Serving under Presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt, Root focused his attention on modernizing the U.S. Army through reorganization, centralization, and education. In particular, officers would undergo

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<sup>26</sup> Special Regulations No. 3: Appointment of Chaplains in the Regular Army and the National Army of the United States, 1917, Corrected August 31, 1918 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1918), 7-9, RG 247 (AEF) Box 2, Folder: Appointment—Choice Candidates for Chaplaincy, NARA II.

<sup>27</sup> Budd, *Serving Two Masters*, 112-4.

continuing education, moving from West Point through postgraduate training courses that culminated in classes and degrees coordinated by and offered through the newly established Army War College.<sup>28</sup>

The impetus toward a professionally-trained officers' corps echoed the late-nineteenth century drive toward standardization, legitimization, and credentialing in a multitude of occupations.<sup>29</sup> Law, medicine, and religion—historically realms of the educated elite—modernized their training significantly in this era. In medicine, the 1910 Flexner Report fundamentally altered the training of doctors by consolidating medical schools, eliminating proprietary training schools, increasing admissions standards, intensifying clinical experience, and regulating licensing. Lawyers, who like doctors had long trained through apprenticeship, began learning in accredited classrooms and, as a result of Christopher Columbus Langdell's innovations at Harvard Law School, took core classes that emphasized inductive reasoning through Socratic dialogue.<sup>30</sup>

Religion presented a slightly different case, as the imperfect alignment between seminaries

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<sup>28</sup> On the modernization of the U.S. Army, see Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 212-34.

<sup>29</sup> The implantation of the German research university model and its attendant focus on graduate training transformed American higher education, first at Johns Hopkins and then across elite institutions as old as Harvard, as new as the University of Chicago, and as public as Michigan. Fields from economics and sociology to history and political science created their own professional associations through which they could determine disciplinary boundaries and erect gates of entry and exclusion. As nonexistent and formerly male occupations such as social work and education became the province of women, a new professionally-focused middle class supported the creation of programs in social work and normal, or teacher-training institutes, in education. See: Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (New York: Knopf, 1962), 264-86, 329-72; John Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 110-54. Ian Tyrell's "Public at the Creation: Place, Memory and Historical Practice in the Mississippi Valley Historical Association," *Journal of American History* 94, no. 1 (June 2007): 19-47, illustrates the tension between access and professionalism in creating disciplinary boundaries. On the history of education schools, see Geraldine Clifford and James Guthrie, *Ed School: A Brief for Professional Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 47-84 and David Labaree, *The Trouble with Ed Schools* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 17-38. On the rise of a professionally-educated middle class, see Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1962), 111-23.

<sup>30</sup> John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, "Professional Education," in *ASHE Reader on the History of Higher Education*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., eds., Lester F. Goodchild and Harold S. Wechsler (Boston: Pearson Publishing, 1977), 379-93; Abraham Flexner, *Medical Education in the United States and Canada: A Report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching* (Boston: The Merrymount Press, 1910); Kenneth Ludmerer, *Time to Heal: American Medical Education from the Turn of the Century to the Era of Managed Care* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Bruce Kimball, *The Inception of Modern Professional Education: C.C. Langdell, 1826-1906* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

and universities both grew and narrowed in the late nineteenth century. On the one hand, academic study of religion prospered, attending to both the venerable study of the Bible and embracing fresh approaches offered by the scientific (often sociological) study of religion.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, while university presidents such as Charles Eliot and William Rainey Harper—himself a biblical scholar—argued that modern society required better and more diverse training of ministers, leaders of more conservative theological seminaries such as Princeton’s Charles Hodge vehemently disagreed. While Eliot and Harper, whose roles included the oversight of divinity schools at Harvard and Chicago, respectively, viewed non-sectarian (Protestant) theological education as the ideal, seminaries had long been the province of specific religions and particular denominations.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, charisma and dedication had carried many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century evangelical preachers farther into successful careers than the scholarship and erudition of classically-trained ministers.<sup>33</sup> Late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century seminaries and divinity schools became the proving ground and standard bearers for, in the sociological language of H. Richard Niebuhr, status as churches rather than cults. But not all religious leaders needed or wanted the sanction or warrant of school.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, for Protestants on both sides of the modernist-fundamentalist divide, credentials could attest to authority and legitimacy. In this regard, seminaries and theological schools engaged in licensing practices more commonly associated with the fields of law and medicine, and by the early

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<sup>31</sup> The Society of Biblical Literature was created in 1880 and the American Society of Church History was founded in 1888. Both contributed to the creation of Religious Studies as a field, though both also began within Protestant circles.

<sup>32</sup> On the history of religion in American higher education, see Julie Reuben, *The Making of the Modern University: Intellectual Transformation and the Marginalization of Morality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). On the tension between theological education and religious studies in the late-nineteenth-century university, see D.G. Hart, *The University Gets Religion: Religious Studies in American Higher Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 46-66.

<sup>33</sup> E.g., Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

<sup>34</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: H. Holt and Co., 1929). The late nineteenth-century also witnessed the creation of Catholic seminaries and rabbinical schools in the United States; until the twentieth century, most priests and rabbis were European imports.



twentieth-century, booming new arenas like social work, urban planning, and journalism.<sup>35</sup>

Thus starting in World War I, applicants to the Regular Army and Navy chaplaincy had to be more than just clergymen; like the rest of the military's new officer class, they had to demonstrate their professional credentials. While Congress would allow exams to serve as proxies for college degrees and ordination, in practice—in part by pitching the tests at the level of graduate education—neither the Army nor the Navy would commission a non-credentialed minister.<sup>36</sup> To the government, these standards seemed objective and even scientific. They ensured soldiers would enjoy the support of qualified, professional clergy but also removed the state from verifying religious competence. The checkboxes of age, fitness, and employment status represented clear, understandable, and verifiable measurements, albeit qualifications sometimes difficult to meet. Indeed, quite a few ministers found themselves needing to lose weight or grow a few inches to emerge from medical scrutiny unscathed. And many an applicant failed the physical, for reasons ranging from hernias and heart conditions to allergies and sickled feet. The advent of war in 1917 brought forth more than a few men considered elderly by military policy: ever eager to serve soldiers and sailors, more than one thirty-five year old found himself relegated to the Reserves, if not rejected altogether.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> In contrast, business schools boomed in the postwar period, as MBAs became a necessary credential for upper-level management positions. Mie Augier and James March, *The Roots, Rituals, and Rhetoric of Change: North American Business Schools After the Second World War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011) and Steven Schlossman, Robert E. Gleeson, Michael Sedlak, and David Grayson Allen, *The Beginnings of Graduate Management Education in the United States* (Santa Monica, CA: Graduate Management Admission Council, 1994).

<sup>36</sup> After WWI, the education requirements would be codified in law, through the National Defense Act of 1920 and Army Regulations 605-30. At that point, the pre-requisites for chaplaincy commissions became: They had to meet five criteria based on age, education, occupation, endorsement, and physical ability. More specifically, commissioned chaplains would 1) be men between the ages of 23 and 34; 2) hold a B.A. as well as a postgraduate degree from an accredited three-year theological seminary program; 3) be *actively* employed as ministers; 4) be endorsed by a civilian religious organization; and 5) pass a military physical. The Navy used a slightly lower upper age limit of 31.5 years in order to ensure that they could be promoted after a 3-year probationary period. Reserve chaplains in the Army and Navy could be older than 34. See Budd, *Serving Two Masters*, 113; Clifford Drury, *The History of the Chaplain Corps, United States Navy, Vol. I, 1778-1939* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1948), 145, 167; and Stover, *Up From Handymen*.

<sup>37</sup> Special Regulations on the Appointment of Chaplains, 1917, RG 247 (AEF), Box 2, Folder: Appointment—Choice Candidates for Chaplaincy, NARA II.

The educational benchmarks for chaplains linked the chaplaincy to the modern university in two additional and important ways. First, just as “nonsectarianism became a point of orthodoxy among education reformers” in the late nineteenth century,<sup>38</sup> so too did it become the mantra of the chaplaincy in the early twentieth century. Chaplain George Waring (Catholic), the author of one of the War Department’s guides to the chaplaincy, told the *New York Times* “that while a Chaplain could not be expected to hold services successfully for denominations other than his own, he could always hold a general service...and he should preach such sermons as would be spiritually helpful to every one, without discussing dogmatic or controversial doctrines.”<sup>39</sup> Not everyone could or would abide by this worldview, for framing religion as a common good no matter the form required setting aside doctrinal and ritual differences. As a result, the military used educational background as a proxy for openness and toleration.

Second, through the recruitment and commission of well-educated chaplains, the military imported the assumptions and ethos of liberal Protestantism central to the modern university: that non-dogmatic religion was best, that religious ideas could evolve, that voluntary prayer encouraged spiritual development, and that morality and ethics could unify disparate theological creeds.<sup>40</sup> These ideas permeated the mission of the Chaplain Schools, the space in which the military attempted to shape the chaplains’ future work among troops. As Episcopalian Bishop Charles Brent described it, “we feel that there must be a distinctly religious atmosphere, where ‘interdenominationalism’ will be the watchword, so that no one will be subjected to the proselyting spirit.”<sup>41</sup> Of course, not everyone liked this interdenominational effort. When Monsignor James Connolly, the Military Vicar of the

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<sup>38</sup> Reuben, *The Making of the Modern University*, 84.

<sup>39</sup> “What the New Army Expects of Its Chaplains,” *The New York Times*, June 17, 1917.

<sup>40</sup> Reuben, *The Making of the Modern University*, 88-132. Reuben argues that despite university reformers’ best intentions to elevate the social and scientific study of religion as a means of reconciling intellectual and devotional practices, their efforts failed and ultimately relegated the spiritual dimension of religion to the periphery of the university. At the same time, however, moral guidance and training remained central to the university (Ibid., 133-75).

<sup>41</sup> Charles Brent to Raymond Fosdick, July 16, 1918, NCWC Papers, Box 8, Folder 1, CUA.

Catholic Church, disparaged GHQ Chaplain Francis Doherty (Catholic) as “altogether too military and YMCA and not enough sacerdotal to suit me,” he illuminated the tension between the expansive and non-specific religion favored by the military and the more distinct and rigorous religion preferred by many religious groups.<sup>42</sup> Both Doherty and Connolly were Catholic, but the military expressed a clear preference for Doherty’s catholic Catholicism, much to the dismay of more parochial officials in the Church. Moreover, even after philosopher John Dewey argued that religion and ethics could be disentangled, the military assumed a tight link between religion and morality, seeing the former as the latter’s foundation.<sup>43</sup>

The emphasis on professionalization underscored the military chaplaincy’s adoption of the framework of the Progressive-Era regulatory state, with its combined focus on social efficiency and social control. Specifying age limits, professional standing, education credentials, health standards, and civilian endorsement likewise appeared objective: a set checklist of competencies that candidates either achieved or missed. Reality, however, was different.

What, for example, did it mean to be a “regularly ordained minister”? Congressional legislation about chaplains did not define the phrase, and ordination standards for the ministry varied wildly among denominations and religions. Because clergy earned automatic exemptions from the draft, the Selective Service guidelines—created by Congress at the same time the chaplaincy expanded during war—offered some parameters. The Selective Service recognized two types of ministers as eligible for draft immunity: those who were “duly ordained ministers of religion” and those who were “regular ministers of religion.” In many ways, the two were quite similar: both engaged in preaching and teaching as their “customary vocation.” Formal ordination and the

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<sup>42</sup> James Connolly to Patrick Hayes, July 7, 1918, Box G-49, Folder 3, Cardinal Hayes Papers, AANY.

<sup>43</sup> One way in which the military enacted this link between religion and morality was using the reduction of venereal disease rates as one of the primary mechanisms of evaluating chaplains during the war. Charles Brent to the Adjutant General, “Final Report,” April 26, 1919, Bishop Brent Papers, Box 16, LOC.

administration of sacred rites separated the former from simple recognition as ministers held by the latter. Distinguishing between two types of ministry hinted at some differences among American religious groups. The government officially acknowledged that not all religions require or even allow for ordination even as it missed that those same religions could include ceremonies and rites administered by non-ordained leaders. In the end, however, the Selective Service did not care whether a religious group expected their ministers to experience a call to serve or to graduate from licensed seminaries. What mattered most was the daily work of worship, sermons, instruction, and rituals.<sup>44</sup>

Education requirements restricted the Selective Service's more lax definition, but the military nevertheless embraced the standard of "customary vocation." When applicants indicated that they also stood on an assembly line or sowed fields or taught in high school, they received rejections.<sup>45</sup> The required civilian endorsement ensured that the military—and by extension, the state—would not render decisions on the religiosity of any particular individual. Instead, denominational bodies determined the spiritual aptitude and eligibility of their clerics. Yet education and professional standing requirements nonetheless meant that the state preferred and sanctioned some forms of ministry over others. In practice, these requirements forced civilian religious organizations to sift through candidates using metrics they may not have otherwise applied or to lobby for accommodations.

Protestants were by far the most variegated religious group recognized—and clustered together—by the military. By the early twentieth century, a number of Protestants had gathered together to overcome acrimony and unite in pursuit of social reform. When thirty Protestant denominations met at the Interchurch Conference on Federation in 1905, their focus was on

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<sup>44</sup> *Selective Service Regulations* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1917), 40.

<sup>45</sup> For a discussion of the ideal attributes of chaplain candidates see the Federal Council's Army and Navy Chaplains Committee, Minutes, April 25-26, 1917, RG 18, Box 70, Folder 8, PHS.

ameliorating gruesome working conditions, not engaging with the chaplaincy. The Federal Council of Churches (FCC) emerged in 1908 to cooperate in the promotion of Christian fellowship, unity, service, and influence in the United States. However, it became the most significant (though not exclusive) vehicle for Protestant engagement with the military chaplaincy during World War I.<sup>46</sup>

In 1917, the FCC's constituent denominations met with other interdenominational groups such as the YMCA and the American Bible Society to create the General War-Time Commission of the Churches as a "temporary and emergency body" devoted to coordinated religious war work. Dedicated to providing the "ministrations of religion" to the men and women "suddenly taken from their accustomed surroundings and plunged into an unfamiliar life," to engaging churches and congregations in supporting a more far-reaching ministry, and to "Christianize the ideals of the nation and so to promote that consciousness of the world-wide brotherhood without which true democracy is impossible." This lofty rhetoric connecting Christianity to democracy meshed well with Wilsonian ideals of making the world safe for democracy. Yet the General War-Time Commission's work more often lay in the mundane and everyday tasks of surveying manpower needs, distributing pamphlets, building chapels, restricting liquor sales, allocating automobiles, and facilitating communication between war workers. If the work was often routine, it nevertheless opened access to state power. Its secretaries regularly met with War Department officials, its subcommittees studied servicemen's morals and morale, and its leaders reviewed and assessed applications from clergy interested in ministering to the armed forces.<sup>47</sup>

The collaboration between the military and civilian religious groups such as the FCC reflected the state's commitment to civilian participation in the war effort. When civilian religious groups vetted applicants to the chaplaincy, relayed ritual objects such as Bibles and holiday foods to

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<sup>46</sup> For an internal history of the FCC, see: Elias Benjamin Sanford, *Origin and History of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America* (Hartford, CT: The S.S. Scranton Company, 1916).

<sup>47</sup> *Report of the General War-Time Commission of the Churches* (Cincinnati, December 1917), 224, 227.

soldiers, and funneled money to chaplains through discretionary funds, they participated in a burgeoning government-industry-citizen operational matrix. Much as a civilian Secretary of War oversaw the planning and action of military generals, so too did civilian religious groups seek to influence the moral and spiritual work of the army and navy. But just as Newton Baker initially resisted the creation of the War Industries Board to oversee wartime production and stem labor disputes, so too did he, together with General John Pershing, limit the oversight allowed to the FCC, the National Catholic War Council, and the Jewish Welfare Board.<sup>48</sup> These organizations had access to the ear of military officials and played a significant role in endorsing chaplains, but once chaplains earned commissions in the service, their allegiance turned to the state and its servicemen, not the churches and associations that had ordained and recommended them.

Yet in screening and approving chaplains, civilian religious groups sometimes altered the military more than either party might have anticipated. From its inception, the FCC attempted to institutionalize inclusion by incorporating African-American church bodies in its membership. It was a fraught arrangement, as African-American representatives operated under the aegis of white organizational executives. Nevertheless, it allowed black churches to leverage the power of the FCC to secure positions for black chaplains.

The FCC's Committee on Negro Churches began discussing the prospects for black chaplains in October 1917, six months after the United States entered the war. By then the group knew that war would not overcome or lessen the segregationist policies of the state. The African Americans who served their country in the war would not serve as equals to white soldiers, either in

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<sup>48</sup> President Woodrow Wilson's intervention enabled the creation of the War Industries Board (WIB), led by New York financier Bernard Baruch. On the WIB and government-business-labor relations in World War I, see Daniel Beaver, *Newton D. Baker and the American War Effort* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 71-78, 104-9; Robert D. Cuff, *The War Industries Board: Business Governmental Relations During World War I* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); David Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 93-143; and Robert Schaffer, *America in the Great War: The Rise of the War Welfare State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 31-46.

the roles allotted, the status accorded, or the opportunities afforded to them. Prewar military preparedness efforts included the cultivation and training of officers, but explicitly prohibited black officers from the Reserve Officer Training School in Plattsburgh, New York. Much to the consternation of the black community and press, which chafed at the thought of supporting a segregationist model, the army sent black officer candidates to Fort Des Moines, Iowa—over 1100 miles away from the white training school. And this unsatisfactory arrangement emerged only after Joel Spingarn, the white Jewish chairman of the NAACP, lobbied Major General Leonard Wood to build a training camp for black officers on the promise that he would find 200 willing and able candidates.<sup>49</sup> Well aware of the harsh realities of a segregated military, the committee focused on molding the segregated system to create openings for black leadership within the army and navy. The FCC's committee argued that "the direction of religious and social activities among the negro soldiers can be managed most successfully by negroes," thus contending that whites could not effectively oversee either the religious or social lives of black soldiers and sailors.<sup>50</sup> In contrast to the army and navy, both of which remained skeptical of black capacity for leadership, the FCC's Committee on Negro Churches championed the appointments of black officers as the best men for the job, especially in a military opposed to integration.

With regard to black chaplains, then, the Committee resolved "that there be negro chaplains appointed at once to serve...in the same proportion to the number of troops as in the case of white chaplains."<sup>51</sup> Their resolution could only go so far. The War Department employed complementary racial and religious logics to limit the presence of racially or religiously minority chaplains. The approximately 300,000 African-American soldiers in service by the spring of 1918 would have

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<sup>49</sup> The question of black officers vexed the black community in the lead up to war. Du Bois' acceptance of short-term insult for long-term gain enabled the plan to move forward. Chad Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 39-43.

<sup>50</sup> Committee on Negro Churches Meeting Minutes, October 18, 1917, RG 18, Box 70, Folder 15, PHS.

<sup>51</sup> Committee on Negro Churches Meeting Minutes, October 18, 1917, RG 18, Box 70, Folder 15, PHS.

merited several hundred chaplains. But because the men often served in small groups of 50 to 100 men, the War Department found it easy to exclude them from needing their own chaplain.<sup>52</sup> And the General War-Time Commission did not complain, even if the Committee on Negro Churches advocated for equal treatment.

Instead, the group focused on opening the chaplaincy to black ministers. Charles H. Williams formulated the argument for black chaplains by appealing the military's strong and consistent interest in promoting morale. Williams portrayed white chaplains as "sincere, conscientious men" who may have appreciated the problems and challenges faced by black soldiers but were, in the end, "unable to influence largely the colored soldiers in a religious sort of way." In contrast, he asserted, "the negro units, particularly the service battalions, that have gone to France with the clearest conception of their mission and with the finest spirit, have been those accompanied by colored chaplains."<sup>53</sup> The strength of black chaplains rested not only in their ability to rouse and motivate their men, but also in their mastery of chaplain training. Indeed, Clyde Armitage, the FCC's Assistant Secretary, confided to his General War-Time Commission counterpart that "while ten out of 55 candidates in the last session [of chaplain training school] were rejected as unsuitable for the military ministry, the negro candidates who were there were accepted and now in service."<sup>54</sup>

The one hundred percent success rate of African-American chaplain candidates was not accidental. Nor did it mean that their absolute numbers were high. While the FCC clamored to send African-American ministers to the military, it insisted on scouring the nation for "suitable" men,

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<sup>52</sup> Clyde F. Armitage, "A Memo to Mr. Cavert Concerning Negro Chaplains," June 22, 1918, RG 18, Box 70, Folder 15, PHS.

<sup>53</sup> Charles H. Williams, "A Resume of Conditions Surrounding Negro Troops," August 5, 1918, RG 18, Box 70, Folder 15, PHS.

<sup>54</sup> Clyde F. Armitage, "A Memo to Mr. Cavert Concerning Negro Chaplains," June 22, 1918, RG 18, Box 70, Folder 15, PHS.



“those who could handle men well.”<sup>55</sup> This was not an easy task, for age limits and education requirements set by the War Department eliminated many otherwise viable options. Furthermore, the War Department accepted the Congregational, Presbyterian, and Episcopal clergy the committee had found but simultaneously expressed a preference for chaplains from “the regular negro denominations, especially the National Baptists.”<sup>56</sup> But black chaplain candidates successfully completed training courses at rates higher than white candidates for one very clear reason: the FCC would only offer “the very best” applicants to nation’s armed forces. The financial and human cost was high, but Clyde Armitage insisted that the organization “[could] not afford” any other course of action, even, he acknowledged, “if it does mean a drain on the ministry and on the faculty of some of the better educational institutions.”<sup>57</sup> Black chaplains were an aristocracy of sorts, they represented African-American sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois’ “talented tenth.” With the appropriate education and comportment, they could and would succeed amidst white elites. But obstacles to entry—the combination of War Department criteria and white and black Protestant perception of excellence—conspired to keep the numbers of black chaplains low. By February 1918, only 10-12 African-American chaplains, out of set quota of 70, made it into the service. The number expanded to 26 by June 1918, and ultimately to 63 by November 1918, a miniscule proportion of the thousands of chaplains commissioned to serve the American fighting forces during the war.

Even as the army accepted the presence of black chaplains, the color line pervaded policy decisions. Hence when African-American soldiers served under white officers—either commissioned or non-commissioned—the War Department elected to fulfill the predilections of

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<sup>55</sup> Committee on the Welfare of Negro Troops, Meeting Minutes, February 16, 1918, RG 18, Box 70, Folder 15, PHS.

<sup>56</sup> Clyde F. Armitage, “A Memo to Mr. Cavert Concerning Negro Chaplains,” June 22, 1918, RG 18, Box 70, Folder 15, PHS.

<sup>57</sup> Clyde F. Armitage, “A Memo to Mr. Cavert Concerning Negro Chaplains,” June 22, 1918, RG 18, Box 70, Folder 15, PHS.

those officers rather than the men they commanded, politely noting that “they [did] not desire to place negro chaplains with these [white-led] regiments.”<sup>58</sup> This policy did not go unnoticed, but it did remain unchallenged by Protestant leaders. Multiple FCC subcommittees agitated for more black chaplains, but refused to insist on their placement in units led by white officers. However insubstantial numbers did not equate to inconsequential experiences.

Unacknowledged and perhaps unrecognized at the time, the FCC’s advocacy of African-American chaplains—whether they reached equal proportion to white chaplains or not—tested the War Department’s commitment to segregation and radically altered a tiny sliver of the Jim Crow military. The simple fact was that no Chaplain School—neither the training space in the United States nor the initiation course in France—was segregated. Chaplains entered the military as officers, and black clergy trained aside white clergy, sometimes even supplanting the latter’s efforts. That a chaplains’ training school existed at all resulted from the General War-Time Commission’s advocacy of a means through which to introduce trained ministers to military life. Moving from Fort Monroe, Virginia to Fort Hamilton, New York, and ultimately to Camp Zachary Taylor, Kentucky, the domestic school brought together recently commissioned chaplains as well as approved but not yet commissioned applicants. Passing the course meant appointments as First Lieutenants while failing the course sent men back to civilian pastorates. Ignominious dismissals were not uncommon. One white Catholic nominee, for example, earned his dismissal for “not being a good mixer and...being a poor preacher.”<sup>59</sup> Chaplains who made it to France received further training from a ten-day course designed by Bishop Brent intended to ready clergy for battle conditions and life on the front.<sup>60</sup> No

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<sup>58</sup> Clyde F. Armitage, “A Memo to Mr. Cavert Concerning Negro Chaplains,” June 22, 1918, RG 18, Box 70, Folder 15, PHS.

<sup>59</sup> Father Dineen to Father Connolly, October 21, 1918, Box G-79, Folder 4, Cardinal Hayes’ Papers, AANY. At least one black candidate failed out of chaplain school, but this was a rare occurrence. Stover, *Up From Handymen*, 216.

<sup>60</sup> Clyde F. Armitage, “A Memo to Mr. Cavert Concerning Negro Chaplains,” June 22, 1918, RG 18, Box 70, Folder 15, PHS.

matter the location—in the United States or in France, in the south or in the north—black and white clergy learned how to be chaplains together.

The tiny quotient of black chaplains thus exerted an outsized impact on the army as an institution. Whether they—or military leaders—recognized it, chaplains initiated the glacial, decades-long process of desegregating the U.S. armed forces. Integrated chaplain schools represented an unintended consequence of wartime decision-making in which unanticipated needs and limited numbers colluded to make unified training possible and even quietly acceptable. Field-ready chaplains became essential while building a separate school for a few black chaplains was impractical.<sup>61</sup> That black chaplains were ordained ministers helped in immeasurable but impressionable ways. Few in number, they represented the well-educated, black religious elite, and some of their white liberal religious counterparts were similarly invested in integration. The constrained conditions of emergency, the status of religious leaders in American society, and the relatively peripheral role chaplains occupied within the military infrastructure created the opening through which African Americans slowly began to dismantle segregationist policies within the military. The integration of the Chaplain Schools remained limited to the demarcated space of Chaplain School; it did not alter the assignments of black chaplains to black units, but it did demonstrate that integration would not damage and could simplify and even enhance operations.

### **Over There: The Chaplains of the American Expeditionary Forces**

In response to the sprawling, decentralized, and uncoordinated nature of the military chaplaincy and its concomitant religious welfare organizations in France, General John Pershing

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<sup>61</sup> This is notably in contrast to the arguments universities and professional schools proffered to duck desegregation in the ensuing decades. The University of Texas, for example, attempted to avoid integrating its law school by creating a distinct law school for African Americans under the “separate but equal” doctrine of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). The Supreme Court ultimately ruled this unequal and thus unconstitutional in *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950), one of the suite of cases that culminated in desegregating public schools in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954).

asked Episcopalian Bishop Charles Brent to devise a more systematic approach to the provision of religion to AEF soldiers. Like many Pershing appointees, Brent was a personal friend with whom the general had worked in the Philippines as well as a religious advisor who presided over Pershing's confirmation and comforted him after the death of his family in a 1915 fire.<sup>62</sup> Although tapped to serve as the bishop of the District of Columbia in 1908, Brent preferred to advise Washington from his perch in Manila.<sup>63</sup> He served as a trusted confidante to both President Theodore Roosevelt and then-Secretary of War William Howard Taft, a position that secured his status as the most politically influential bishop of the period.<sup>64</sup> Canadian by birth and American by naturalization, Brent worked with soldiers and sailors as a civilian minister throughout his career and, in the winter of 1917, served as a consultant to the Canadian government on the condition of military posts and war production factories in Europe. In Brent, nepotism and merit merged, providing the AEF with a well-connected and well-qualified man to craft and manage a new American chaplaincy. But first he had to accept the job.

After the United States entered the war in April 1917, Pershing spoke with Brent about handling the chaplains. But neither Brent, who was still shuttling between Britain, the Philippines, and the U.S. to fulfill his ministerial obligations, nor the army was ready to create a new chaplaincy system. Yet Brent's activities between spring 1917, when Pershing first approached him, and fall 1917, when he arrived in France as a special representative of the YMCA, highlight his perspective

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<sup>62</sup> Budd, *Serving Two Masters*, 125; John Pershing, *My Experiences in the World War, Vol 2* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1931), 132.

<sup>63</sup> Ian Tyrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 197-8. Tyrell argues that moral reform, enacted by both state and non-state actors (e.g., missionaries) was central to early twentieth-century U.S. imperialism. He asserts that "moral reform organizations subtly contributed to the broader sociopolitical context of American power abroad and aimed at the creation of a Christian state to effect this goal" for which World War I was the apex (9); however, Brent's role as the architect of the revitalized American military chaplaincy merits only a sentence, perhaps because the imperial aim of the chaplaincy's moralizing agenda focused principally on American soldiers and only secondarily on non-American soldiers.

<sup>64</sup> H. Allen Griffith to Charles Brent, May 3, 1908, Box 7, Folder: January-February 1908, Bishop Brent Collection, Manuscript Division, LOC.

and worldview on which he would draw as he designed a more orderly army chaplaincy.

Around the same time Pershing asked Brent to consider an assignment to streamline the AEF chaplains, the Bishop of London asked Brent to write and publish a collection of sermons for Lent 1918. Written in the Philippines in the summer of 1917, *The Mount of Vision* reveals Brent's religious ideals as articulated for a British Anglican audience in the midst of war. In "The Wholeness of Holiness," Brent emphasized the importance of and need for church unity and fellowship that rejects sectarian influences and promotes understanding. "Holiness," he proclaimed, "is wholeness as applied to God and those made in His image. It is in God's wholeness that our wholeness consists. He is all in all. What a rebuke this is to small or sectarian views of God and His purposes!" Diversity, rather than similarity, animated Brent's religious project. Recognized as "one of the outstanding pioneers in the modern ecumenical movement," Brent's commitment to Christianity devoid of division extended beyond rhetoric into practice. As the first Episcopalian bishop in the Philippines in 1901, he prohibited his missionaries from proselytizing among Filipino Catholics. The religious imperialism at the heart of the missionary enterprise need not threaten the unified church for which he longed.<sup>65</sup>

As a representative of the YMCA in World War I France, Brent carried with him more than the calling of a Protestant organization. The YMCA, like Brent, embodied a particularly ecumenical approach to religion rooted in the Progressive-era social gospel. Central to religious life on college campuses in the years preceding the war, the "Y" turned away from apologetic evangelism and toward muscular Christianity. This new outreach abandoned messages focused on personal belief,

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<sup>65</sup> Charles H. Brent, "The Wholeness of Holiness" in *The Mount of Vision* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1918), available online, <http://anglicanhistory.org/asia/brent/mount/07.html>; Eugene Bianchi, "The Ecumenical Thought of Bishop Charles Henry Brent," *Church History* 33, No. 4 (December 1964): 448-461. In her more recent article, "The Theological Discussion Group and Its Impact on American and Ecumenical Theology, 1920-45," Heather Warren classifies Brent as one of the exemplars of first generation ecumenists, alongside John Mott, William Adams Brown, and Marc Boegner. Warren, "The Theological Discussion Group and Its Impact on American and Ecumenical Theology, 1920-45," *Church History* 62, No. 4 (December 1993): 528-543. On Mott as "the greatest symbol of evangelical entanglement with the postwar politics of the state," see Tyrell, *Reforming the World*, 198-208 and 242-45.

biblical ideas, and immediate conversion in favor of a mission premised on manliness, moral character, and service to others. Character-building, an enterprise the military chaplains would embrace under Brent, constituted a significant dimension of the YMCA's goals. The emphasis on work rather than piety, and religion rather than theology, led to "the elimination of hard boundary lines between religious groups." As David Setran observes in his book on the early-twentieth-century YMCA, "the elevation of character and service over conversion meant that doctrinal nuances were left in the background." Through service activities, college students encountered people from a variety of religious backgrounds to the extent that they developed multi-faith service initiatives. More importantly, non-evangelical Protestants, non-Protestants, and even non-believers participated in activities sponsored by the YMCA. The YMCA actively encouraged this practice.<sup>66</sup> Bishop Brent's reflections in his notes about the burgeoning prospect of a chaplains' organization, such as his comment that "while the varieties of religious faith are great[,] the...purpose is one," indicated the YMCA's influence as an incubator of religious unity.<sup>67</sup>

Brent saluted the religious collaboration he witnessed in France. In a letter to his sons he wrote, "There is a considerable amount of impatience with the rivalry and competition in the churches. I myself am of the conviction that if we succeed in reaching a unified world through Internationalism and fail to realize a unified church, the future will be pretty hopeless." Religious antagonism had no place in Brent's worldview; if civil cooperation devoid of its religious counterpart rendered the future "hopeless," Brent toiled to create a hopeful future by crafting an environment in which religious cooperation could and would flourish. From his experiences in the YMCA, then, Bishop Brent approached the project of chaplain organization from a perspective of ecumenism

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<sup>66</sup> David Setran, *The College "Y": Student Religion in the Era of Secularization* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 133-4, 147, 249.

<sup>67</sup> Charles Brent, Personal Diary, January 10, 1918, Box 3, Bishop Brent Collection, Manuscript Division, LOC. Catholics desisted and resisted this ecumenical approach, often viewing it as a threat. Nevertheless, the YMCA, the Federal Council, and Brent all modeled a new Protestant cooperation.

rather than parochialism, cooperation rather than competition.<sup>68</sup>

As eager as Brent was to mold a collaborative religious experience, he also recognized the challenges ahead. In mid-December 1917, as he surveyed the conditions in France, he underscored the obstacle wartime conditions presented: “When one gets close to the situation it is much more difficult...the great thing is to keep one’s idealism alive. This is easier to do at home than here....The prospect of a Glorious death pro patria at a distance is far more glorious than when it is near at hand.”<sup>69</sup> The proximity of death magnified the gravity of crafting a new religious program for the military.

But Brent was undeterred. Though he originally resisted a military commission, he soon realized that acquiring military status would ease his work. Never classified as a chaplain, he officially served as a major working under the Adjutant General whose sole task was to “put the Chaplain’s office and function, as an important military asset, in its right relation to the Army.”<sup>70</sup> By early January 1918, he began sketching a plan for AEF chaplains by listing the clergy for whom he needed to account—old army chaplains, recently appointed army chaplains, Red Cross chaplains, YMCA secretaries, Knights of Columbus (KC) chaplains. In sum, he wrote in his diary, “At present [there is] no co-ordination between all these moral and spiritual agencies....The Y.M.C.A. cannot + must not function as a church – contrary to character + explicit promise. At present no clearinghouse for co-ordinating chaplains + Y.M.C.A. activities.”<sup>71</sup> Determining a method by which the military and civilian agencies such as the YMCA could streamline their services to best fit each organization’s mission certainly animated the project for Brent. But he moved quickly to develop a plan that

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<sup>68</sup> Robert Schneider, “Voice of Many Waters” in *Between the Times: The Travail of the Protestant Establishment in America, 1900-1960*, ed., William Hutchison (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 100-11; Brent to his sons, January 21, 1918, Box 14, Bishop Brent Collection, Manuscript Division, LOC.

<sup>69</sup> Charles Brent, Personal Diary, December 16, 1917, Bishop Brent Papers, Box 3, LOC.

<sup>70</sup> Memorandum to the Commanding General Relative to the Organization of the Chaplains, unsigned, January 10, 1918, quoted in Budd, *Serving Two Masters*, 126.

<sup>71</sup> Charles Brent, Personal Diary, January 10, 1918, Bishop Brent Papers, Box 3, LOC.

incorporated the services of each of the participating welfare groups and mimicked military efficiency and order. Namely, by drawing on the model of British and Canadian chaplains with which he was familiar through his YMCA and Canadian consulting work, Brent promoted a hierarchy of chaplains within the service. A General Headquarters (GHQ) Staff Chaplains' Office, comprised of three chaplains, would administratively oversee division chaplains who would, in turn, manage unit chaplains. The first trio of GHQ chaplains consisted of Brent, representing liturgical (high church) Protestants; Paul Moody, a Congregationalist National Guard chaplain and son of famed evangelist Dwight Moody representing congregational (low church) Protestants; and Francis Doherty, a Catholic regular army chaplain. This configuration ensured that multiple streams of Christianity would be present at the highest levels of authority and decisions would have the imprimatur, if not the full agreement, of a confederation of clergy.<sup>72</sup>

Approved by General Pershing on April 30, 1918 and established through General Order No. 66 on May 1, the GHQ Chaplains' Office managed AEF chaplains and synchronized the work of external religious welfare organizations for the duration of the war—in France. Even with this somewhat limited scope, the task was formidable. Among the first tasks the GHQ Chaplains addressed was simply determining the number of chaplains present in France. As one report stated, “No steps had been taken to tabulate the Chaplains already in the American Expeditionary Forces. No list existed, and owing to the fact that Chaplains were frequently carried on rosters by their rank (First Lieutenant), it was not always immediately possible to find them on the records.”<sup>73</sup> Finding out first, how many chaplains were present, where they were located, and what denominations they represented, and second, the religious composition of units, would allow the GHQ Chaplains to

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<sup>72</sup> Charles Brent, Personal Diary, January 10, 1918, Bishop Brent Papers, Box 3, LOC; Budd, *Serving Two Masters*, 124-32.

<sup>73</sup> “The Chaplains' Organization in the American Expeditionary Force,” October 22, 1918, RG 247 (AEF), Box 5, Folder: The Chaplains Organization and Chaplains in the AEF – World War I, NARA II.



allocate better their most prized resource: chaplains.

For even as the war progressed and Congress passed legislation to increase the number of chaplains, the GHQ suffered from an insufficient number of military clergy. In October 1918, 866 chaplains were available to serve 2 million American men in France. Instead of one chaplain for every 1200 men, as legislation called for, or even the higher ratio of one chaplain for 1800 men, one chaplain served about 2300 men. The GHQ Chaplains groused that 255 Catholic, 7 Jewish, and 604 Protestant chaplains had to suffice when there should have been 566, 30, and 1080 respectively. While the GHQ report allowed “it is not felt that more Christian Science or Mormon Chaplains are needed,” that sentiment may have reflected exasperation with the perceived narrowness of Christian Science and Mormon leaders (who counted as Protestants) than adequate coverage of soldiers’ needs.<sup>74</sup>

Mormonism and Christian Science represented American-made faiths, traditions born of nineteenth-century religious revivals and charismatic leaders that derived from but nonetheless stood apart from Protestantism. In 1830, Joseph Smith, Jr. published the *Book of Mormon*, an epic saga translated by Smith into English after he received instructions revealing the location of buried golden tablets in Palmyra, NY by the angel Moroni. Whether viewed as fantastic or fraudulent, Smith heralded a religion with America as its historic and contemporary epicenter. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints promised a restoration of the true Church, understood its members as God’s Chosen People, and pledged to create the Kingdom of God on earth, in an American territory designated by God and told to their current-day prophets as Zion. In text, church structure, worship, ritual, and—most famously—the (brief) embrace of plural marriage, the Saints made

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<sup>74</sup> “The Chaplains’ Organization in the American Expeditionary Force,” October 22, 1918, RG 247 (AEF), Box 5, Folder: The Chaplains Organization and Chaplains in the AEF – World War I, NARA II.

themselves distinctive, all the while asserting that they embodied true Americanness.<sup>75</sup>

Christian Science emerged about a half-century after Mormonism, from the experiences and teachings of Mary Baker Eddy in the urbane environs of Boston. Like Joseph Smith, Eddy created an updated canon by offering her followers a new scripture—*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (1875)—to read aside the Bible and crafted new, often secret, rituals for her followers to practice. While Eddy, unlike Smith, claimed authorship of *Science and Health*, she also presided over an unorthodox blend of belief and ritual, with her emphasis on faith healing and spiritual practice.<sup>76</sup> Christian Science generally appealed to a small subset of white, middle-class Americans in the Northeast and neither attracted the level of wrath Mormonism faced nor claimed to be archetypically American. But it too incurred suspicion and lingered at the periphery of acceptable American religions.<sup>77</sup> Thus Mormonism and Christian Science both presented a dilemma to the U.S. military: where did they fit in the Protestant-Catholic-Jewish schema used to organize and deploy chaplains? Classifying the two religions as Protestant elevated administrative ease over religious complexity. But the bureaucratic solution bred discontent, for few Americans viewed—with good reason—either Mormon or Christian Science chaplains as merely another shade of Protestant and thus accepted them as capable of leading general Protestant worship. It was one thing to allow Catholics to help Jews, Jews to help Protestants, and Protestants to help Catholics during war—such

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<sup>75</sup> Jan Shipps argues that Mormonism was a “new religious tradition,” not simply an offshoot of Protestantism, in part because unlike the emphasis on individual salvation that predominates in evangelical Christianity, the family unit and corporate structure of the church lie at the center of Mormon identity. Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1985). While scholars continue to debate whether Mormons are Protestants, the religion is undoubtedly Christian. On the connection between the origins of Mormonism and American culture, see Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*. On polygamy, religious liberty, and Mormonism, see Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

<sup>76</sup> According to Catherine Albanese, Calvinist theology undergirds Christian Science, despite the latter’s radically different form. Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 291-98.

<sup>77</sup> On Mormons and Christian Scientists as religious outsiders, see R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 25-47 and 105-27.

overtures acknowledged religious difference while enabling religious service. It was quite another to insist that any non-Catholic or non-Jewish religion could be collapsed into Protestantism, for that assumed doctrinal, ritual, and theological differences mattered not at all.

Despite their problematic characterization of Mormonism and Christian Science as Protestant, the GHQ Chaplains Office had more immediate supervisory and regulatory concerns to handle. The trio of Army chaplains managing the AEF chaplaincy also developed administrative procedures through which chaplains would write weekly reports and headquarters could process newly arriving chaplains as well as assign and deploy chaplains to the most needed areas.<sup>78</sup> As men prepared for battle, chaplains preached and led prayer services, moralized and counseled the soldiers in their units. As they followed their men into battle, however, their duties changed to providing first-aid, comforting the dying, and registering battlefield graves.<sup>79</sup> No matter the specific duty, all of this work needed to be documented and reviewed, accounted for and appraised.

Bureaucratic procedures became important not only to improve the management of the chaplaincy, but also to improve its stature. As Brent relayed to Father John J. Burke, the head of the National Catholic War Council, in September 1918, the Army chaplaincy was a work-in-progress, with only 700 chaplains performing the work of 1200. “Owing to the low rank of Chaplains they have not that official recognition which is given to other officers with analogous responsibilities,” Brent wrote. “I am very far from stressing rank for a Chaplain, except so far as it enables him to fit into the Army system and get the proper facilities to perform his duties.”<sup>80</sup> Pershing expected his officers to accord chaplains respect. To ensure his position was clear, he stated as much in an order distributed to all officers: “A sympathetic recognition of the chaplain’s duties and responsibilities is expected of every officer. It is only through their ready cooperation that he can reach the entire

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<sup>78</sup> Budd, *Serving Two Masters*, 128-9.

<sup>79</sup> Stover, *Up From Handymen*, 192-5.

<sup>80</sup> Charles Brent to John Burke, September 12, 1918, RG 010: NCWC Papers, Box 6, Folder 22, CUA.

army.”<sup>81</sup>

One way to earn the respect of other officers was to show the demands placed on military clergy. And the demands faced by Army chaplains exceeded those of regular clergy. As G. W. Weldon reported,

This life was entirely different. We used tallow candles when we could get them, carried our own water, waded through mud, held services in a leaky tent, taught Bible classes in their company streets with the sky for shelter, played volley ball with both officers and enlisted men, boxed with them, rode horse back with and without a saddle with them, sang with them around the piano in the evenings when the days work was done and a lot of other things that might seem too trivial to mention. At night I slept in an open tent where I could look out at the stars. I hope many prayers slipped out that open tent for I longed to see the work of the Lord prosper in my regiment.<sup>82</sup>

Likewise, when Lewis L. Harney (Christian Scientist) reported on the work of Christian Science chaplains, he included excerpts of their letters home. One chaplain disclosed, “We have been bombed nearly every night and on Sunday last while reading the service out in the open field to five boys, an air fight took place directly over our heads.”<sup>83</sup> Chaplain Patrick J. Lydon (Catholic) explained to his Catholic superiors that a rolling chapel was unnecessary because celebrating Mass became impractical at the front. An attack would preclude holding any service, an open field would make them easy targets for an enemy, and the very trees that provided cover in the forest would make a mobile chapel unsteady. But these challenges did not impede prayer or group worship: “When time will permit one can always find some place that will suffice. It may be that one may have to use, as I have used, a wrecked chapel, or an old barn or a shed, or maybe an old box in the woods, but it reminds one of Bethlehem and it lends an impressiveness to the Holy Sacrifice....what

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<sup>81</sup> Quoted in John Pershing, *My Experiences in the World War, Vol 2* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1931), 133.

<sup>82</sup> G. W. Weldon report, January 14, 1919, RG 247 (AEF), Box 2, Folder: Activities of Chaplains World War I and Post War, NARA II.

<sup>83</sup> Lewis L. Harney to John Axton, June 21, 1919, RG 247 (AEF), Box 2, Folder: Activities of Chaplains World War I and Post War, NARA II.

chaplains need more than a chapel is a small Ford truck.”<sup>84</sup>

Rustic conditions and the prospect of trench warfare certainly created a distinct atmosphere for religious work, but the environment in which chaplains served differed significantly from their home churches in another important way: unlike civilian clergy, military chaplains were responsible for men beyond their own denominations. In the words of Chaplain C.C. Bateman (Northern Baptist), this meant that “the chaplain [was] a spiritual sportsman [who] could use fishing tackle or exercise his use of the Gospel gun as a wing shot.”<sup>85</sup> While chaplains did not carry weapons, Bateman’s martial metaphor bespoke dexterity, an ability to adapt to new circumstances quickly. When Bishop Brent reflected on the developing chaplaincy to Father Burke a couple months before the Armistice, he noted, “One of the most gratifying things that we have seen is the spirit of fellowship and mutual respect that there is among all the Chaplains. There is no loss of conviction. Men are working along their own principles, but the element of controversy is hushed and the one thought is, how best to serve the officers and men of the A.E.F. in their supreme trial.”<sup>86</sup>

Even as the needs of officers and men varied over the course of the war and in different locales, a consistent refrain of fulfilling obligations to all men in novel ways threaded through chaplains’ reports. In France, Chaplain S. Arthur Devan (Northern Baptist) helped arrange Saturday services for the Jewish soldiers in his regiment. At the end of services, “I always (at their request) preached a sermon to them from the [O]ld Testament. It was probably an unusual combination for a Protestant clergyman to administer communion from a Catholic Altar after preaching at a Jewish

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<sup>84</sup> Alfonso Navarro report James Gibbons, undated, 2-3, RG 010 (NCWC), Box 3, Folder 52, CUA.

<sup>85</sup> C.C. Bateman report, undated, 8-9, RG 247 (AEF), Box 2, Folder: Activities of Chaplains World War I and Post War, NARA II.

<sup>86</sup> Charles Brent to John Burke, September 12, 1918, 010: National Catholic War Council, Box 6, Folder 22, CUA.

synagogue service – which I often did however, at St. Leonard.”<sup>87</sup> In his civilian life as a Protestant minister, Devan would rarely have had a reason to address Jews, but as a military chaplain, he regularly wrote sermons for them because Jewish soldiers comprised an equal part of his multireligious flock. And Protestant rituals, so integral to his life as a clergyman, were just as likely to occur in Catholic space as in a tent, a field, or a more customary chapel. Similarly, Chaplain James Howard reported that Catholics not only attended his Protestant services but, in contrast to dicta from the Church to avoid interfaith activities, he found that Catholic soldiers would “take communion at my hands [and] in a Bible class, which we kept going for several months, first in training camp and later at the front, there were both Catholics and Jews – studying the New Testament!”<sup>88</sup> For chaplains and soldiers alike, war produced more than encounters between men of different faiths; it also acquainted men with unfamiliar religions and created opportunities to craft and experience new rituals.

But ecumenical religious service to American soldiers had its limits. Chaplain Arthur C. Whitney (Christian Scientist), who earned a Croix de Guerre and Bronze Star from the French government for his service marching with and ministering to men at the front lines, received “a request or warning from one of the Chaplains at General Headquarters Chaplains’ Office not to set my religious views before others than Christian Scientists.” Appointed in one of the chaplains-at-large spots, Whitney was classified by the military as a Protestant. Yet he remained constrained by his minority religious background, unable—by dint of implied threat—to engage religiously with all the soldiers of his division. In place of spiritual ministrations, Whitney turned to sports and recreation, setting up a canteen, running a barber shop, organizing a library, equipping a tailor shop,

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<sup>87</sup> S. Arthur Devan, Final Report, RG 247 (AEF), Box 5, Folder: Chaplains in Training Areas (Overseas), NARA II.

<sup>88</sup> James M. Howard to Port Chaplain, Hoboken, NJ, May 7, 1919, RG 247 (AEF), Folder: Development of Organizations (Overseas), NARA II.

and operating a post office.<sup>89</sup> These tasks, so often handed to the YMCA and Red Cross during the war, became the chaplains' province when restricted from mass bible studies and general worship. As much as Brent and his fellow GHQ chaplains sought to professionalize the chaplaincy, concerns about perceived parochial or provincial religious groups nevertheless limited at least some of the newly appointed chaplains-at-large.

To oversee and frame the work of chaplains in France, the GHQ Chaplains' Office established a Chaplains School. Over eight days, they trained newly arrived clergy in more than military maneuvers and battlefield protocol. In stating they wanted to "give men who come fresh from America the advantage of the experience of those who have already had work in the Line and are conversant with the conditions of the Army and of life in France," they recognized that military conditions bred distinct forms of religious work.<sup>90</sup> In November 1918, 192 Protestants, 135 Catholics, and 6 Jews had trained at the Army's school in Chateau d'Aux.<sup>91</sup> Just as the Army developed a feasible training regimen through which to instill the spirit of cooperation, Charles Brent lamented, it ceased with war's end. He nevertheless offered a positive spin on the outcomes of the school and the maturation of cooperative procedures. As soldiers returned to the United States, he reported, "a chaplain either Protestant or Catholic is to be assigned to every transport. If the naval chaplain already assigned to a ship is a Catholic – the Army chaplain will be a Protestant and vice versa. This gives us a Protestant and a Catholic chaplain on every transport."<sup>92</sup> Lessons gleaned "over there" could, quite literally, travel home.

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<sup>89</sup> Arthur C. Whitney to Senior Chaplain, 91<sup>st</sup> Division, January 31, 1919, Organizational Records, Box 14668, Folder 1712, MBEL.

<sup>90</sup> Francis B. Doherty to John Burke, June 21, 1918, RG 010 (NCWC), Box 7, Folder 27, CUA.

<sup>91</sup> John Randolph to Charles Brent, Report for October 1-November 30, 1918, RG 010 (NCWC), Box 6, Folder 22, CUA. The Protestants included 59 Methodists, 39 Baptist, 35 Presbyterians, 25 Episcopalians, 16 Disciples of Christ, 6 Lutherans, 4 Congregationalists, 3 Unitarians, 3 Christian Scientists, 1 Reformed, and 1 Salvation Army. About 600 chaplains attended the school in total. Stover, *Up From Handymen*, 217.

<sup>92</sup> Charles Burke to John Burke, January 18, 1919, RG 010 (NCWC), Box 6, Folder 22, CUA.

## Advocacy from the Margins: Minority Religious Groups Become American

The summer of 1917 was an uncertain one for the Jewish Welfare Board (JWB). It was new, formed only a few months earlier to partner with the Commission on Training Camp Activities to aid Jewish soldiers. It was unofficial, not yet sanctioned by the United States government as the authorized agency for Jewish welfare work. It was unstable, challenged on the one hand by existing communal institutions such as the Young Men's Hebrew Association and B'nai Brith and opposed on the other hand by immigrant leaders chafing at the authority of New York Jewish elites.<sup>93</sup> While it had but a tenuous hold on American Jewry, the JWB nevertheless possessed clear ideas about what it could accomplish for and on behalf of American Jewish soldiers. As the civilian interface between the military and a panoply of religious and communal Jewish organizations, the JWB would promote religion and citizenship, morals and morale. It would secure the rights of Jewish servicemen and shield impressionable men from the influence of Christian organizations. It would shepherd American Jews through war as patriotic Americans and committed Jews, thus demonstrating the consonance between Judaism and Americanism.<sup>94</sup>

These often incompatible goals clashed, advocating for particularity and championing universality simultaneously. The mismatch was neither new nor atypical, a contest between values that stretched back to the early republic and applied to most intersections of religion and politics. But it acquired a new resonance as the Armed Forces became a site through which millions of young

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<sup>93</sup> Two accounts of the founding of the JWB by insiders offer competing ideas about the organization's purpose and growth but share descriptions of the challenges faced in the early days. See: Cyrus Adler, "An Account of the Origin of the Jewish Welfare Board" in *Lectures, Selected Papers, and Addresses* (Philadelphia: Privately Printed, 1933) and Oscar Janowsky, Louis Kraft and Bernard Postal, *Change and Challenge: 50 Years of the JWB* (New York: National Jewish Welfare Board, 1966). Horace Kallen felt the JWB cared more about itself than Jewish soldiers. See Horace Kallen, "The Soldier and His Jewish Welfare," *The American Jewish Chronicle*, August 23, 1918.

<sup>94</sup> Jessica Cooperman, "A Little Army Discipline Would Improve the Whole House of Israel: The Jewish Welfare Board, State Power and the Shaping of Jewish Identity in World War I America" (Ph.D. Dissertation: New York University, 2010), 38-113.



men, almost of fifth of whom were not born in the United States, marched under the flag and bore arms for the nation. The War Department's push for non-sectarianism and its need to accommodate religious Americans was similarly contradictory. All religions—or at least those recognized by the military as part and parcel of American life—stood equal and yet each required different compromises. Among the items on the JWB's agenda on the summer of 1917 were two requests the War Department was reluctant to settle: the push for Jewish chaplains and the appeal for kosher food for Jewish soldiers.

Two days after draft day and several months after the War Department began advocating for additional chaplains, Newton Baker informed the Committee on Military Affairs that he supported “the principle” of Senate bill 2527. The bill proposed to provide for the appointment of chaplains “representing religious sects not recognized in the apportionment of chaplains now provided by law.”<sup>95</sup> This was a bit of a misnomer, the law did not enumerate a list of acceptable religion groups for the chaplaincy. In practice, however, chaplains represented a limited number of mainline Protestant groups as well as Catholics. The proposed statute, which would not be signed into law until October 6, 1917, rectified this problem by creating a new type of chaplain, one tied not to regiments but instead derived from a religious group, even if ultimately assigned to a particular unit.

In its final form, the law stated “Division commanders may apply to the Adjutant General of the Army for the services of chaplains-at-large of the Jewish, Christian Science, Eastern Catholic, Mormon, and Salvation Army denominations if they deem that there are sufficient numbers of the adherents of such faiths in their divisions to render chaplains-at-large necessary.”<sup>96</sup> The emphasis on “sufficient numbers” reflected the World War-I era distribution of manpower, as drafted soldiers and sailors usually received assignments to domestic bases and ports close to their hometown

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<sup>95</sup> John Morris Sheppard, “Chaplains at Large in the Army,” Calendar No. 94, Report No. 90 (July 24, 1917).

<sup>96</sup> Quoted in *Christian Science War Time Activities: A Report to the Board of Directors of the Mother Church* (Boston: Christian Science Publishing Society, 1922), 297-8.

region. For example, majority-LDS units existed at Camp Kearney (California) and Fort Lewis (Washington) while significant numbers of Jews lived together at Camp Upton (New York) and the Philadelphia Navy Yard.<sup>97</sup> This legislation formally opened the American military chaplaincy to members of particular minority religious groups, most of which fell under the vast category of “Protestant.”<sup>98</sup>

Both Christian Scientists and Mormons, eager to embrace the chaplaincy, accepted the opportunity to appoint chaplains without questioning exactly how they would be labeled or fit in.<sup>99</sup> Their most immediate need was to determine how their men could meet the established standards for chaplains, or absent that, how flexible the military would be. In particular, both groups needed to work around the requirement for ordination as neither faith ordains its leaders. The exigencies of war overtook precision, as the army commissioned the men appointed by the Christian Science Board of Directors and the LDS Church’s leadership without recorded comment. Christian Scientists felt that their chaplains’ “willingness to conduct undenominational services in addition to their own created a very favorable impression,” which may have aided their effort.<sup>100</sup> At least some Christian Science chaplains earned the aplomb of higher-ranking officers for their prodigious efforts. Martin Jackson’s senior chaplain, for example, wrote, “Your task is peculiarly difficult because of the fact that your men are scattered and you cannot throw yourself into the little group in which you live, and feel justified in forgetting the rest of the division. In a way the ordinary battalion chaplain

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<sup>97</sup> Joseph Boone, “The Roles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Relation to the United States Military, 1900-1975,” (Ph.D. Diss., Brigham Young University, 1975), 543-45; Christopher Sterba, *Good Americans*, 7; Ernest Paugh to Cyrus Adler, October 16, 1917, I-180, Box 326, Folder: Adler Correspondence 1917, AJHS.

<sup>98</sup> Orthodox Christians (e.g., Greek, Russian, Syrian, etc) would make similar efforts to distinguish themselves from Protestants and Catholics during World War II. Until the late 1980s, the military operated the chaplaincy on a quota system, in which the military allocated 1 chaplain per 100,000 faith group members in the United States writ large—as ascertained by various censuses of religious groups.

<sup>99</sup> *Christian Science War Time Activities*, 296; Herbert B. Maw Oral History, Interviewed by John R. Sillito, 1975, typescript, 18, The James Moyle Oral History Program, Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>100</sup> *Christian Science War Time Activities*, 299.

has an easier task. His men are always right at hand and he can get to them at a moment's notice.”<sup>101</sup>

Civilians took note of the integration of chaplains from new religious groups as well. When the Navy appointed a Christian Science chaplain four months later, in February 1918, the *New York World* editorialized that this event “denotes a significant change in the public attitude toward the faith founded by Mrs. Eddy....Christian Science then and long after was an anathema to the regular religious denominations of this country....Now the Government gives it full recognition and accords its readers an equal status with the ministers of other creeds.”<sup>102</sup>

Despite the *New York World's* public proclamation, the military—not to mention the nation—did not easily accept these new chaplains. Of the three religious groups explicitly incorporated into the chaplaincy in World War I, Mormons faced the most resistance. LDS Church leaders were dismayed to find that the army allotted them only three chaplains, believing that the government had provided for “not less than twenty chaplains.”<sup>103</sup> Whether the Church misunderstood the legislation as allowing for 20 LDS chaplains or misconstrued the rejection of candidates as educationally unqualified as unfair or mistook YMCA allegations of the Church as “unChristian” and thus unfit for the chaplaincy as the critique of the state is unclear.<sup>104</sup> But Mormons undoubtedly faced significantly more scrutiny than others, in part because allegations of polygamy lingered after the 1890 revelation repudiating it and in part because the Mormon emphasis on proselytization worried other Christians.<sup>105</sup> No matter the cause, anxiety about some new religious groups filtered into the military as well.

When Newton Baker first reviewed the proposed law, he asserted that appointing additional

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<sup>101</sup> Quoted in *Christian Science War Time Activities*, 303-4.

<sup>102</sup> Editorial, *The New York World*, February 5, 1918.

<sup>103</sup> Quoted in Boone, “The Roles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,” 546.

<sup>104</sup> Boone, “The Roles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,” 547.

<sup>105</sup> “New Attack on Polygamy” *Missionary Review of the World* 31 (July 1918): 545; “Is Mormonism Still A Menace?” *Ibid.*, 806.

“chaplains-at-large” would be acceptable but cautioned that the War Department felt that “a maximum of 10 rather than 20 is a fair proportion of chaplains who should be appointed under this authority, which number will fully meet all the requirements of military service.”<sup>106</sup> Baker never explained his reasoning but his restraint may have reflected the uncertainty with which most Americans greeted Christian Scientists and Mormons, the two Christian groups that would benefit most from this change. Fifteen years earlier, the nation erupted over the election of Senator Reed Smoot, a Utahan who also served as an apostle of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. If Americans resisted seating elected Mormon members of Congress—successfully, in the 1898 case of B.H. Roberts and unsuccessfully, in the 1902 case of Smoot—how would they respond to the appointment of Mormons in a state-sanctioned religious role?

However, American Jews, not Mormons or Christian Scientists, led the push for this bill. In particular, Representative Isaac Siegel (R-NY) lobbied both the Army and the Navy to support legislative provisioning of Jewish chaplains. A brisk correspondence between Siegel and Cyrus Adler, the head of the JWB, during July 1917 highlights the effort made by the Jewish lawmaker on behalf of American Jewish soldiers. He met with Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels, who agreed that one Jewish chaplain could serve. He found Secretary of War Newton Baker amenable to more than one Jewish chaplain. He reported that Baker and the Adjutant General disagreed over whether special legislation was even necessary, as the latter thought “legal authority exists for the appointments” of Jewish chaplains, and suggested that Siegel forward two to three applications “forthwith in order that the matter might be determined.”<sup>107</sup>

No Jewish chaplains were appointed before the Chaplains-at-Large bill passed in early

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<sup>106</sup> Sheppard, “Chaplains at Large in the Army.”

<sup>107</sup> Isaac Siegel to Cyrus Adler, July 8, 1917 and July 9, 1917, I-180, Box 327, Folder: Chaplains—1917, 1919-20, AJHS.

October 1917, but by then other chaplains recognized the need for Jewish chaplains in the service.<sup>108</sup> Chaplain Ernest Paugh wrote to Adler “to ask if the Jewish Church could send us an assistant to work on my staff.” He recognized that “there are quite a few of the men of your faith” among the 3500 men in his care, though he reminded Adler that “this work would not be exclusively among the Jewish boys.”<sup>109</sup> While Paugh sought help directly albeit informally from the JWB, his effort underscored the desire among chaplains to aid the men in their midst, even as the state tarried. Siegel’s summer efforts to cultivate a pool of possible applicants were therefore useful, as they readied the JWB to supply rabbis to the armed forces as soon as legislation made it acceptable. Ten months later, General Pershing himself requested 25 additional Jewish chaplains so long, of course, as they were naturalized citizens.<sup>110</sup>

Indeed, the Chaplains-at-Large bill accomplished more than providing for chaplains from theretofore unaccounted for religious groups. It also pushed the named religious faiths to develop civilian ecclesiastical authorities that could endorse chaplains to the U.S. military. This process took a variety of different forms. The First Church of Christ, Scientist, did not need to create a new apparatus, as the Christian Science Board of Directors affirmed the acceptability of the men it recruited.<sup>111</sup>

The LDS Church took the prerogative to hand-select the men forwarded to the Army for

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<sup>108</sup> Jewish chaplains had served in the Civil War, generally securing appointments via Congress. Bertram Korn, “Jewish Chaplains During the Civil War” in *Jews and the Civil War: A Reader*, eds., Jonathan Sarna and Adam Mendelsohn (New York: NYU Press, 2010): 335-352.

<sup>109</sup> Ernest Paugh to Cyrus Adler, October 16, 1917, I-180, Box 326, Folder: Adler Correspondence 1917, AJHS.

<sup>110</sup> Telegram: McCain to Harry Cutler, August 3, 1918, I-180, Box 328, Folder: Chaplains—1918, AJHS. While Pershing was amenable to naturalized citizens, Cyrus Adler assumed that the military would be receptive to American-born rabbis. In June 1918, the Jewish quota stood at 7, but Adler also suggested that legislation establishing the ratio of 1 chaplain per 1200 soldiers accounts for the requisition of more Jewish chaplains. Cyrus Adler to Isaac Siegel, May 22, 1918, I-180, Box 328, Folder: Chaplains—1918, AJHS; The Adjutant General to Cyrus Adler, June 12, 1918, I-180, Box 327, Folder: Chaplains—1918, AJHS.

<sup>111</sup> First Church of Christ, Scientist, *Christian Science War Time Activities: A Report to the Directors of the Mother Church* (Boston: The Christian Science Publishing Society, 1922), 298-9.

service. Herbert Brown Maw, one of three Mormon chaplains to serve in World War I, had enlisted in the Air Corps when he received a message to call Charles W. Penrose, the Counselor in the First Presidency. Penrose informed Maw that the church just learned it could appoint three chaplains, and “we have chosen President B.H. Roberts and we have selected Calvin Smith,’ who was the son of President Joseph F. Smith at that time, ‘and we would like you to be the other chaplain.”<sup>112</sup> The Mormon Church took full responsibility for selecting men it deemed best fits for the chaplaincy.

The Jewish Welfare Board faced a different set of challenges than the hierarchical LDS Church or the centrally organized Christian Scientists as it had to represent multiple streams of American Jewish religious life. Representative Siegel worried that an “attempt to create a board of Rabbis or Jewish ministers in this country to finally determine upon the qualifications of Jewish chaplains would, I fear, bring about a lot of unnecessary controversy.” As a result, he preferred certifying candidates through a combination of the JWB and his personal word. Once he received assurances that both the War Department and the Navy would “take my word in that the man presented by us is qualified both by learning, education, and character to be a chaplain,” he claimed doing so would be best because “we could save time and get the men appointed in view of the urgent necessity of having them enter upon their duties.”<sup>113</sup> Siegel’s emphasis on haste notwithstanding, the JWB created a Chaplains’ Committee, which consisted of representatives from the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jewish movements, to review and endorse applicants to the military.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Herbert B. Maw Oral History, 18.

<sup>113</sup> Isaac Siegel to Cyrus Adler, October 31, 1917, I-180, Box 327, Folder: Chaplains—1917, 1919-20, AJHS.

<sup>114</sup> Cyrus Adler—who was not a rabbi but received permission from Colonel Murphy to lead the group in his capacity as Acting President of the Jewish Theological Seminary—led the committee whose members included: David de Sola Pool for the Orthodox New York Board of Jewish Ministers; Bernard Drachman for the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations; M.S. Margolies (Orthodox); Elias L. Solomon for the Conservative United Synagogue of America; William Rosenau and Louis Grossman for the Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform); and Maurice H. Harris for the Eastern Council of Reform Rabbis. Cyrus Adler to Harry Cutler, October 21, 1917 and Cyrus Adler to the Adjutant General, November 9, 1917, I-180, Box 326, Folder: Chaplains—1917, 1919-20, AJHS.

The committee received 149 applications for Jewish chaplains and endorsed 34, of which the military commissioned 25. The composition of the Chaplains' Committee notwithstanding, rabbis who served as chaplains in World War I only represented the Reform and Conservative movements. Despite allegations of discrimination against Orthodox Jews by the elite and more assimilated leaders of the JWB, deference to Reform and Conservative rabbis stemmed not from bias but adherence to military regulations as only the Reform and Conservative seminaries required college degrees. Orthodox rabbis, many of whom were not U.S. citizens and received ordination in non-US-government-accredited European *yeshivot* or seminaries, could not meet basic military requirements.<sup>115</sup>

Demarcating space for "Chaplains-at-Large" instigated what would become a decades-long project to redefine American religion, to establish American religion as a phenomenon no longer tethered to Christianity, to recognizably mainstream groups, or to large percentages of the American population. As the service of 25 Jewish chaplains during the war highlights, the quota of 20 chaplains from "religious sects not recognized" set by the Chaplains-At-Large bill did not hold. Over the course of the war, 1 Salvation Army, 3 Mormon, 11 Christian Science, and 25 Jewish Chaplains served in the U.S. military.<sup>116</sup> The bill, somewhat unremarkable on its face, accomplished more than opening the chaplaincy to additional religious groups. Immediate induction of Mormon, Christian Science, and Jewish chaplains did not mean that the process was easy or smooth, or that the nation automatically accepted or fulfilled the needs of less conventional religions. But on an instrumental level, the Chaplains-At-Large bill created opportunities for less common American religious groups to present themselves as American as well as to lobby for their needs and request

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<sup>115</sup> Lee Levinger, *A Jewish Chaplain in France* (New York: MacMillan, 1921), 93. On the state of Jewish seminaries at this time, see Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 192-3. On the mechanism of the JWB Chaplains Committee, see Cooperman, "A Little Army Discipline Would Improve the Whole House of Israel," 141-59.

<sup>116</sup> "Data Pertaining to Chaplains," RG 247 (AEF), Box 4, Folder: Data, NARA II.

accommodations from the state.

Advocacy from the margins illuminated blind spots embedded in the military's desire for nonsectarian religion and accentuated tensions between universality and particularity. As the largest new group to enter the chaplaincy during the war, American Jews occupied an odd position. On the whole, the military not only accepted but actively welcomed rabbis into the ranks of the chaplaincy and Jewish chaplains often exalted their inclusion. Even in their eagerness to serve their country, however, rabbis could not help but notice and literally mark their difference as they rejected the cross as the chaplains' insignia. Likewise, the JWB's fight for kosher food in the military accentuated Jewish distinction even as Jews sought to emphasize patriotic similarity and Wilsonian "100-percent Americanism."

As Isaac Siegel championed legislation supporting Jewish chaplains in the summer of 1917, he also helped the JWB press its case for kosher food for Jewish soldiers. Jewish law demanded separating milk and meat and forbade eating pork or shellfish. The regular presence of pork presented the biggest issue for Jewish soldiers in a military that understood meat as a dietary mainstay. Individual officers were not entirely insensitive to this problem, as Chaplain Louis Egelson reported: "The officer of my mess, a Captain and a staff-officer informed me that he would order the substitution of other food for me on the occasions when pork or ham was served. This he did voluntarily without the slightest intimation of my part."<sup>117</sup> Improvising on a case-by-case basis did not, however, help Jews writ large. Religious leaders within the community acknowledged that combat conditions represented sufficiently abnormal circumstances. Rabbi Bernard Levinthal, a one-time president of the Orthodox *Agudat HaRabanim*, the Union of Orthodox Rabbis, and a well-respected leader of the Philadelphia Jewish community, wrote "Jewish law is lenient with the soldier

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<sup>117</sup> Louis Egelson to Cyrus Adler, March 27, 1918, I-180, Box 326, Folder: Adler Correspondence, Jan.-Jun. 1918, AJHS.



who goes to war. He may eat the food that is given to him, he may even desecrate the Sabbath if ordered by his superiors to do so.”<sup>118</sup> Not all Jews were as sanguine. Albert Lucas, of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, wanted the JWB to “secure that which we feel the Orthodox Jews of this country are entitled to and it is an absolute requisite to the peace of mind and spiritual content of a not inconsiderable portion of the soldiers and sailors of our faith.” For the duration of war, Lucas was willing to accept the JWB as the religious representative of American Jewry, but he expected a more “vigorous” effort to acquire that which observant Jews required: kosher food.<sup>119</sup> Despite Levinthal’s dispensation, then, many Jews found food inseparable from identity; permission to consume *treif* (non-kosher) food left many servicemen uncomfortable and, Lucas asserted, denied them an entitlement their military service granted them.

When presenting the case for kosher food to the Navy, the JWB acknowledged that not all Jews observed laws of kashrut, that feasibility, especially “in the actual line of battle” presented a challenge, and that “all of the great Jewish legal authorities have declared for many hundreds of years that religious laws may be set aside in defense of one’s country.” But, they argued, the military’s interest in strengthening morale dictated that “it is not advisable that men should be furnished with food which is abhorrent on conscientious or religious grounds.” Even if kosher rations were not absolutely necessary, from a religious point of view, the Navy had a vested interest—or so the JWB maintained—in supporting religious practice for the sake of the service itself. Lest the appeal to national interest be insufficient, the JWB justified their stance with a nod to military practices worldwide. “We have evidence that in the British Army, Mohammedans and Hindoos have their special dietaries arranged for them according to their religious practices, and we have been informed that throughout the present war, this has been done in the French Army for the Mohammedans and

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<sup>118</sup> B.L. Levinthal, “To the Philadelphia Jewish Men of the American Army and Navy,” *The Jewish Exponent*, August 31, 1917.

<sup>119</sup> Albert Lucas to Harry Cutler, October 5, 1917, I-180, Box 334, Folder: Kashrut—1917-19, AJHS.

in the German and Austrian Armies for the Jewish soldiers.”<sup>120</sup> If American allies in the British and French militaries could endeavor to meet the needs of its imperial volunteers and conscripts, the “Mohammedans and Hindoos,” surely the United States could match the standard set by its enemies—Germany and Austria—in furnishing Jewish soldiers with cans of kosher meat.

Colonel Harry Cutler, the chairman of the JWB, offered the military an array of options for developing a standardized kosher option for Jewish servicemen. Theodore Krainin offered the aid of the Hebrew National Sausage Factory, agreeing to sell kosher items to the U.S. government at a loss by matching the prices of equivalent non-kosher meat.<sup>121</sup> Domestically, local Jewish women could operate kosher kitchens on bases or perhaps the military itself could augment its kitchen services.<sup>122</sup> The military, however, deemed none of these options practical or achievable. Even at Camp Upton, which hosted the largest number of American Jewish soldiers, the JWB made few inroads. There, the General worried about “the dangers of such a step and the undesirability of permitting here by way of precedent for further demand elsewhere and abroad. He also was certain that the Secretary of War had somewhere issued an order officially disapproving any plans for providing kosher food.”<sup>123</sup> The precedent sought by the JWB was exactly the sort of precedent the military resisted: special services for religious groups that required alterations in military protocol. The military would not prevent JWB war workers or Jewish chaplains from distributing kosher items, but the military would not alter its procedures to enable Jewish servicemen to eat according to religious law. Compromise was necessary, but not on the part of the military.

In contrast, the military did make concessions about chaplains’ insignia. The first Jewish

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<sup>120</sup> Harry Cutler to the Paymaster General, August 21, 1917, I-180, Box 334, Folder: Kashrut—1917-19, AJHS.

<sup>121</sup> Theodore Krainin to Bernard Drachman, May 11, 1917, I-180, Box 334, Folder: Kashrut—1917-19, AJHS. Krainin explained that complying with both kosher food laws and the Pure Food Act made kosher meat more expensive.

<sup>122</sup> Joseph Hyman to Harry Cutler, October 9, 1917 and Cutler to Hyman, October 12, 1917, I-180, Box 334, Folder: Kashrut—1917-19, AJHS.

<sup>123</sup> Hyman to Cutler, October 9, 1917, I-180, Box 334, Folder: Kashrut—1917-19, AJHS.

chaplains to enter the service wore the uniform given to them, a uniform that included the insignia of the Latin cross. Not surprisingly, this upset most Jews. Cyrus Adler reported being “startled” to see the cross on Navy chaplain David Goldberg’s collar and expressed concern that “Jewish men will also be a little surprised.”<sup>124</sup> Chaplain Harry Davidowitz concurred, divulging to Adler that “whenever I approach any soldier who corroborates my estimate of him as Jewish, I have to begin by explaining away my insignia. His furtive and distrustful glances at my shoulder make an immediate explanation embarrassingly imperative. And to hold services for them in my present guise may prove disconcerting to some, but I doubt whether inspirational to any.”<sup>125</sup> The War Department looked upon the situation rather differently. According to Adler, it feared “that various minor sects will each ask for some special form of recognition. I have replied with the argument that no Christian sect could set up a valid objection to the Cross whereas Jews or Mohammedans could. I daresay the matter will ultimately be adjusted.”<sup>126</sup>

Adler’s prognostication proved accurate, but the process was somewhat unwieldy. The War Department wavered as it grappled with difference in its ranks. It acquiesced and allowed Jewish chaplains to remove the cross from their uniforms but dallied over a replacement. The War Department rejected the options proffered by the JWB—a six-pointed Jewish star was deemed too similar to a five-pointed General’s star, for example—and by late spring General Henry Jerver, Acting Assistant Chief of Staff, proposed a new plan altogether. Rather than visually separate chaplains by insignia for different faiths, he suggested that all chaplains wear the shepherd’s crook, insignia of the nineteenth-century army chaplaincy. While more Christological than Jerver perhaps realized, the shepherd’s crook offended American Christians, rather than Jews, who found it

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<sup>124</sup> Cyrus Adler to Isaac Siegel, January 25, 1918, I-180, Box 326, Folder: Chaplains—1918, AJHS.

<sup>125</sup> Harry Davidowitz to Cyrus Adler, February 12, 1918, I-180, Box 326, Folder: Chaplains—1918, AJHS.

<sup>126</sup> Cyrus Adler to Harry Davidowitz, February 10, 1918, I-180, Box 326, Folder: Chaplains—1918, AJHS.

insufficiently Christian.<sup>127</sup> Here, finally, religious Americans could unite.

The Committee of Six, an ecumenical advisory group composed of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish representatives, appealed to the War Department to revoke this insignia change. The Committee of Six spoke as one, affirming the statement of Harry Cutler on behalf of the JWB: “We are decidedly in favor of the Christian chaplains wearing the cross as the insignia of their office. We would consider it a national calamity particularly in these critical days to eliminate a symbol which to millions of men is the greatest inspiration and sign of salvation.” At the same time, they asserted, “We are equally concerned in the welfare of non-Jews as well as the Jews in a broadminded way... [these] chaplains may not in conscience wear the cross, nor should they be asked to do so.”<sup>128</sup> The Committee of Six prevailed, and Jewish chaplains began wearing a double tablet (a representation of the Ten Commandments) with a Star of David affixed to the top.<sup>129</sup> Where the War Department sought sameness, the Committee of Six recognized difference. It insisted that collaboration rested on validating literal marks of distinction. A tolerant, “broad-minded” nation could encompass variety without losing unity.

### **Stand and Be Counted: The Protestant-Catholic Census Problem**

Father John Burke understood Minnie Brown’s concern. Religious life was difficult for the Catholic men serving in the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment. They only had access to a Protestant chaplain; the minister could do fine moral work, but could not lead Mass or administer sacraments. He suggested to her that remedies might be available if Catholics in such Protestant-led regiments “would represent this

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<sup>127</sup> Albert Slomovitz, *The Fighting Rabbis: Jewish Military Chaplains and American History* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 59-61.

<sup>128</sup> Unsigned report, 1918, I-180, Box 327, Folder: Chaplains—1918, AJHS.

<sup>129</sup> The tablets used roman numerals from 1917 to 1980, after which the insignia switched to Hebrew letters. Army chaplains adopted this insignia in WWI, while the Navy (which had a single Jewish chaplain) made the change in 1941. Slomovitz, *The Fighting Rabbis*, 59-61.

fact to their commanding officers with all respect and courtesy....The representation should make it clear that their protest is not directed against the person or character of their officer (the Chaplain) but solely against his inability, as a Protestant, to give them what they want.”<sup>130</sup> Burke harbored no ill will toward Protestant chaplains, but he wanted Catholic souls saved, and Protestant chaplains could not, by definition, serve as intercessors between Catholic soldiers and their God. While he offered Minnie Brown counsel to pass on to the Catholics of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, in his capacity as the head of the National Catholic War Council (NCWC), Burke knew that the likelihood of rectifying this situation was low.

Two related problems stymied Burke and other religious leaders trying to assuage concerns about the religious background of chaplains assigned to particular units. First, while a particular religion could predominate in geographically-determined regiments, the Selective Service did not collect information about religious affiliation. As a result, a Catholic chaplain could be assigned to a unit stationed at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana in which only one percent of the men were Catholic. As the local bishop reminded Father Burke, “this is of course discouraging and altogether wrong....If no attention is paid to the religious make-up of the Regiments, our chaplains will in many cases not be assigned where they can do the most good, and many regiments that are largely Catholic may be left without a priest.”<sup>131</sup> The bishop’s observation was correct: many regiments consisting of largely Catholic soldiers lacked priests. But his assessment of this condition as “altogether wrong” mistook the military’s openness to clergy from multiple faith traditions for an investment in parceling out chaplains in accordance with the religious composition of units. In fact, the military wanted to encourage religious and moral behavior without tying it to specific religious

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<sup>130</sup> John Burke to Minnie Brown, August 21, 1917, Box 10, Folder 104, National Catholic War Council, Muldoon-Burke Files, CUA.

<sup>131</sup> Bishop, Diocese of Alexandria, LA to John Burke, January 31, 1918, Box 10, Folder 104, National Catholic War Council, Muldoon-Burke Files, CUA.

beliefs or practices.

Second, the military never acquired the necessary number of chaplains to fulfill the 1:1200 ratio it sought. But for those striving to place Christian chaplains in the service, there was another problematic ratio, that of Catholics to Protestants. If Mormons, Christian Scientists, and Jews fought to be represented in the chaplaincy during World War I, Protestants and Catholics fought over the number of chaplains allocated to them. The military used data from the 1916 World Almanac in an attempt to distribute fairly Protestant and Catholic chaplains according to their respective percentages of the population of the United States. However, mere counting and dividing, Protestants alleged, miscalculated the religious breakdown of the United States. The census revealed that Catholics comprised 32.3 percent of the American population, but Protestant leaders disputed this number because, they claimed, any religious census based on church membership unjustly elevated the Catholic population because Catholics baptized infants while most Protestant denominations did not.<sup>132</sup> As a result, they argued, the military needed to adjust Catholic numbers downward. The American Catholic leadership, in contrast, fretted that they were not receiving enough chaplain spots. They knew their numbers had been decreased by 15 percent, which seemed much lower than its military-age population.

Despite the hierarchical organization of the Catholic Church and massive increase in the Catholic population in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, American Catholics lacked a united voice as religious Americans in national discourse. Regional, ethnic, and linguistic divisions separated the Catholic faithful and divided their political capital. War brought forth more cohesion, however, as fragmented and dispersed Catholic leadership coalesced to speak on behalf of Catholic Americans, to respond to the needs of Catholic soldiers, and to counter the suspicion directed at

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<sup>132</sup> Lewis O'Hern to John Burke, June 14, 1917, Box 10, Folder 104, National Catholic War Council, Muldoon-Burke Files, CUA.

Catholic immigrants through Americanization. Like its Jewish counterpart, the JWB, and its Protestant antagonist, the FCC, the National Catholic War Council (NCWC)—the predecessor to the National Catholic Welfare Council and ultimately the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops—operated as the institutional foundation for Catholic unity. Founded by Father Burke, its first meeting in August 1917 brought together 115 bishops representing 42 dioceses, 27 Catholic associations, and 18 Catholic publications to discuss the Catholic war effort. Designated by the U.S. government as the official agency representing Catholic interests in 1918, NCWC subgroups oversaw welfare work through the CTCA, the fraternal Knights of Columbus war efforts, and chaplain appointments and aid.

Father Lewis O’Hern, who supervised the appointment of Catholic chaplains to the military, carped that the FCC had “convinced the War Department that since we count children in our Church membership, we cannot be given Chaplains based on our numerical strength at all.” Cognizant of the politics of perception, he asked Father Burke to intervene with Secretary of War Newton Baker, noting that instead of requesting 40 percent of the chaplaincy quota, “it does not sound quite so big to say Thirty-Nine percent.”<sup>133</sup> A month later Baker pleased O’Hern by adjusting the Catholic chaplain quota to 38 percent, “practically what we felt we were entitled to, in strict justice.”<sup>134</sup>

Baker’s move tempered the heated exchanges between Catholic and Protestant civilian leadership during the war. But the truce was temporary. Early postwar efforts to stabilize the peacetime chaplaincy inflamed passions yet again. A memo to the Chief of Staff laid out the denominational apportionment of the 240 chaplain spots. Catholics received a mere 44 positions, or

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<sup>133</sup> Lewis O’Hern to John Burke, June 14, 1917, Box 10, Folder 104, National Catholic War Council, Muldoon-Burke Files, CUA.

<sup>134</sup> Lewis O’Hern to John Burke, July 13, 1917, Box 10, Folder 104, National Catholic War Council, Muldoon-Burke Files, CUA.

18.3 percent—a far cry from their wartime allocation of 38 percent. With 15 openings (or 6.25 percent of the total) allotted to the miscellaneous category, the military split the remaining 76 percent among 21 Protestant groups, which included 4 reserved places (1.7 percent) for African-American chaplains. The clear tabulation of numbers and percentages, notwithstanding, the distribution was not necessarily fixed as “the Secretary of War reserved the right, however, to modify these figures whenever the manifest good of the service shall make such modification necessary. The services of candidates of exceptional ability should not be lost to the Army through a too rigid adherence to the denominational basis.”<sup>135</sup> But slight modifications to account for exemplary candidates would not significantly alter this intended composition of the chaplaincy which, not surprisingly, pleased most Protestants.

The Methodist *Christian Advocate*, for example, contended that the wartime chaplaincy split of 38 percent Catholic and 62 percent Protestant was unwarranted but “no special effort was made to change it during the period of the war, lest our enemies draw wrong conclusions.” The NCWC could not help but wonder whether “our enemies” referred to Germans or Catholics, especially when the paper editorialized that “it is a matter of great gratification” that the War Department fixed the peacetime quota at 25 percent Catholic and 70 percent Protestant (with 5 percent open for other groups or to correct particular imbalances).<sup>136</sup> The reduction in quota from 38 to 25 percent of the chaplaincy did not sit well with the NCWC. Father Burke protested this change to Newton Baker, underscoring that John Axton, the newly appointed (and Protestant) Chief of Chaplains had calculated Catholics as 31.375 percent of the population. Though he considered the number “a bit low,” Burke was willing to accept it.<sup>137</sup> When his plea yielded no change, Burke’s calm reasoning turned into angry argument. “Why there should be a sudden decrease from thirty-seven to twenty-

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<sup>135</sup> Memo to the Chief of Staff, June 1920, Box 57, Folder 14, National Catholic War Council, CUA.

<sup>136</sup> “Eighty-Nine Chaplains Appointed,” *The Christian Advocate*, October 14, 1920.

<sup>137</sup> John Burke to Newton Baker, August 24, 1920, Box 57, Folder 14, National Catholic War Council, CUA.



five in inexplicable,” he proclaimed. The repercussion of this modification would be clear: given this “unwarranted discrimination,” Catholic parents would discourage their sons from entering the military and the Church would dissuade its priests from entering the chaplaincy. The chaplaincy quota, he concluded, “is a very serious, national question,” but “it has been made a football for denominational advantage.”<sup>138</sup>

### **Armistice and Its Aftermath: Postwar Religious Politics**

Chaplain Charles Bruton kept busy in the fall of 1918. Every Sunday the priest led two masses, each week he conducted non-sectarian services, and during Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, he arranged for Jews to attend synagogue in another city on military orders. As he remarked *The Rochester Post*, “I am resolved to be as good a rabbi to them as I possibly can be.”<sup>139</sup> Chaplain Frank Wilson would not have been surprised by Bruton’s work or commentary. He too flourished in the multi-religious milieu of war. Reminiscing about his work in Europe, he wrote about his interfaith endeavors, concluding, “So there you have it—the Jewish Feast of Purim, celebrated by American soldiers in Italy, in a Young Men’s Christian Association hut, addressed by an Episcopalian chaplain, refreshments being furnished by the Red Cross society, and cigarettes donated by the Roman Catholic Knights of Columbus.”<sup>140</sup> Over and over again, the chaplains who served among the American Expeditionary Forces repeated tales of ecumenical accomplishment in the wilderness of war: of constructing new means of worship in novel venues, of finding ways to fulfill their duty to all the men of their units, of embracing the customs and rituals of faiths other than their own.

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<sup>138</sup> John Burke to Newton Baker, November 23, 1920, Box 57, Folder 14, National Catholic War Council, CUA

<sup>139</sup> “Priest Serves as Pastor of Three Faiths,” *The Rochester Post*, November 1, 1918.

<sup>140</sup> Frank Wilson, “Christian and Jew,” undated, emphasis original, RG 247 (AEF), Box 4, Folder: Morale and Moral Conditions in European Cities as Told By Chaplains, NARA II.

Their stories were real, but they belied both tensions undergirding the U.S. military's experiment in religious inclusion and, moreover, the role of the state in cultivating their unorthodox circumstances. Interfaith engagement occurred over eighteen months of war, but the perception of the value of cooperative endeavors would not linger for long. The American public would soon forget this lesson of war. It did not disappear, however, because the National Defense Act of 1920 made permanent structural and organizational changes informally accomplished during the war. For chaplains, it instantiated the one chaplain per 1200 soldiers ratio, provided for the permanent provision of chaplains with rank, and established the role of chief of chaplains to serve in four-year terms. In this leadership role, the chief of chaplains became responsible for "the investigation into the qualifications of candidates for appointment as chaplains, and general coordination and supervision of the work of chaplains."<sup>141</sup> Having spent eighteen months of war puzzling its way toward moral monotheism, the chaplaincy acquired the power to implement this religious ideal in 1920.<sup>142</sup> How the chaplaincy ought to and could govern American religion became the organization's peacetime task.

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<sup>141</sup> National Defense Act of 1920, June 4, 1920, Section 15, p. 15. The National Defense Act of 1920 amended the National Defense Act of 1916 and governed the Army through World War II. The Navy acquired its first Chief of Chaplains during World War I, though the Office of the Chief of Naval Chaplains did not officially exist in law until 1944. Drury, *The History of the Chaplains Corps, Vol. I*, 164.

<sup>142</sup> Political scientist Hugh Heclø argues, "governments not only 'power'...they also puzzle." Hugh Heclø, *Modern Social Politics in Britain and Sweden* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 305.

## CHAPTER 2

### **“Christ is the Melting Pot For All Our Differences”: Interwar Visions, Alliances, and Experiments**

The Great War was over, the Versailles Treaty signed, the National Defense Act of 1920 passed, the troops demobilized. While much of the military rushed to decommission its resources and disperse its personnel, the nation’s newly appointed and first Army Chief of Chaplains began to design, to mobilize, to create. Even as chaplains relinquished their regular army appointments and returned to their home congregations, John T. Axton set his sights on larger questions and bigger goals: what should and what would the now-official Army chaplain corps look like? What would it do? How could, should, and would military clergy serve soldiers?

About six months after becoming Chief of Chaplains, Axton received a letter from Samuel Cavert. As the secretary of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ, the group that endorsed Protestant chaplains to the U.S. military, Cavert requested that the army appoint a Protestant chaplain to complement the existing Catholic chaplain at Fort Slocum, New York. Axton responded immediately: No. “Chaplain Campbell,” Axton replied, “is one of our finest and constantly on the alert to see that the religious needs of all of the men are cared for.” The Catholic chaplain could handle the duties of his post, and could adequately serve the Protestant men stationed there.<sup>1</sup> Axton consistently reiterated that any chaplain could serve all men. To Cyrus Adler, the head of the Jewish Welfare Board, he affirmed that the War Department had already requested materials on the

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Cavert to John Axton, December 8, 1920 and John Axton to Samuel Cavert, December 9, 1920, RG 247 (1920-23), Box 1, Folder 080 (Congregational Christian Churches), NARA II. Fort Slocum, located on the western end of Long Island, would host the U.S. Army Chaplains School from 1951-1962.

upcoming Jewish holidays and expected that the chaplains would “correctly interpret to their commands the wishes of the War Department concerning religious observances for men of all shades of religious belief.”<sup>2</sup> After Christian Scientist representative Judge Clifford Smith endorsed two candidates as potential chaplains, Axton reminded Smith that Christian Science chaplains who served in the war were, like all others, eligible for reserve appointments. But too few Christian Scientists remained in the army to warrant regular appointments—a situation akin to that of the Jews. Nevertheless, he directed chaplains to “call in upon occasion representatives of sects not represented in their post” and he concluded, “The experiment is working very well.”<sup>3</sup>

The same could not be said for religion in civilian American life. Had William Joseph Simmons been privy to Axton’s correspondence, he surely would have used it to recruit new members to his burgeoning reincarnation of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). The Southern Methodist Episcopalian preacher and self-appointed first Imperial Wizard of the second KKK did not hesitate to leverage any racial or religious mixing as fodder for his white supremacist and conservative Protestant fraternal organization. The KKK recruited as many as five million white men in 4000 chapters across all 48 states into its “army of Protestant Americans.”<sup>4</sup> Whether burning towering crosses, firebombing homes, or lynching perceived violators of unwritten codes of conduct, the KKK terrorized Catholics, Jews, and African Americans across the United States. About 700 miles

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<sup>2</sup>Samuel Cavert to John Axton, December 8, 1920 and John Axton to Samuel Cavert, December 9, 1920, RG 247 (1920-23), Box 1, Folder 080 (Congregational Christian Churches), NARA II; John Axton to Cyrus Adler, December 13, 1920, RG 247 (1920-23), Box 1, Folder 080 (Jewish Welfare Board), NARA II. Prior to most Jewish holidays, Adler wrote to Axton requesting assistance in securing furloughs for Jewish soldiers and circulating information, food, and ritual objects. Although Axton supported the JWB’s work, he did ask them to send information directly to chaplains rather than indirectly through the Chief of Chaplain’s office. Axton framed his response in pragmatic language—seeking to save official communiqués for the most important observances. See Axton’s letter to Adler concerning the festival of Shavuot, May 25, 1921, RG 247 (1920-23), Box 1, Folder 080 (Jewish Welfare Board), NARA II.

<sup>3</sup> John Axton to Clifford Smith, December 14, 1920, RG 247 (1920-23), Box 1, Folder 080 (Christian Science), NARA II.

<sup>4</sup> Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 11. For an analysis of the Protestantism of the KKK, see Kelly Baker, *Gospel According to the Klan: The KKK’s Appeal to Protestant America, 1915-1930* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2011).

north of the second KKK's Atlanta origins, Simmons had an ally in Detroit industrialist and auto-making titan, Henry Ford. The press, rather than vigilante violence, proved to be Ford's weapon of choice. After buying the *Dearborn Independent* in 1918, he used the paper to print the inflammatory forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, in 1921 and, in the 8 years under Ford's helm, propagated his antisemitic views to its national readership. Although its blatant antisemitism ultimately led to its downfall in 1927, the *Dearborn Independent* fomented and nourished anti-labor, anti-immigrant, and antisemitic sentiments of the 1920s.<sup>5</sup>

While groups like Cavert's Federal Council of Churches protested the KKK and the *Dearborn Independent*, nativism—directed especially toward Catholic and Jewish immigrants—and racism persisted and percolated in more genteel realms of American life. In the early 1920s, elite universities such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton identified the rising number of Jewish students entering their classrooms and living in their dorms as a problem. Quotas—both stated and secret—became their preferred tools for maintaining Protestant hegemony in higher education (Catholics, who had an array of Catholic universities from which to choose, did not elicit the same concern or scorn in higher education though they faced similar discrimination in housing and employment.)<sup>6</sup> The first Red Scare's anxiety about Bolshevik infiltration of American life intensified the enmity toward Eastern European Jewish immigrants, some of whom identified as radicals, socialists, communists, and anarchists, but all of whom became potential agents of social and political upheaval in the eyes of nativists and scientific racists.<sup>7</sup>

Successive restrictive immigration acts culminated in the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act, which

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<sup>5</sup> Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 78-84.

<sup>6</sup> Jerome Karabel, *The Chosen: The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 77-136. On Jewish intellectuals efforts to rebuff "the Jewish question" and advance ideas about cultural pluralism within the academy, see Daniel Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism: The Menorah Association and American Diversity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America*, 78-104; Karabel, *The Chosen*, 77-86.

limited new arrivals to a yearly cap of two percent of the national-origin group's population in 1890. This quota severely curtailed immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, the origin point of most Catholic and Jewish migrants.<sup>8</sup> Anti-Catholicism, which had occasionally quieted but never abated since the arrival of Irish immigrants in the nineteenth century, erupted with the nomination of three-time New York Governor, anti-Prohibition, and Catholic Al Smith as the Democratic candidate for President of the United States in 1928. Theological and social furor convulsed Protestants; the stewing modernist-fundamentalist divide erupted in the Scopes trial and ripped apart Protestant denominations whose liberal and conservative wings had previously united over Prohibition. As religion scholar Martin Marty has remarked, interwar American society "fairly reeked of religion," with conflict the dominant stench.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, the presence of Catholic chaplains in the military prompted more than polite inquiries from the Federal Council of Churches. John Axton's counterpart in the Navy, John B. Frazier, encountered similar requests as well as protests, often from mothers frustrated with the religious arrangements on their sons' ships. When Mrs. Gable complained about the presence of a Catholic chaplain on her son's ship and petitioned Frazier to place a Protestant chaplain there instead, the first Director of the new Navy Chaplains' Division responded, "Your son, being Protestant, is unfortunate in that he has not been able to attend Protestant services, but I feel sure that had he gone to the Catholic Chaplain and requested that a Protestant Church Party be

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<sup>8</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992) and Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants Since 1882* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Martin Marty, *Modern American Religion, Volume 2: The Noise of Conflict, 1919-1941* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 4. Other historians who identify religious conflict in this period include Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972); George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981, 2006); Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982); Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Eric Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

organized on Sunday to visit a ship that carries a Protestant Chaplain arrangements would have been made by which he could have attended such services.”<sup>10</sup> Religious affiliation did not determine whether a chaplain could help sailors. A chaplain did not need to lead services to aid the men in their charge; rather, chaplains would provide spiritual ministry or direct men to others who could.

Frazier’s insistence that any navy chaplain could care for a mother’s son was typical. Appointed by Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels in 1917, Frazier—a Southern Methodist like Daniels—dedicated his time during and after the war to improving the quality and reputation of the chaplaincy. Just as he insisted on high educational standards for chaplains, so too did he consistently assert, to military and civilian audiences alike, that Protestant and Catholic chaplains were equal to one another. Likewise, Axton—a Congregationalist—surveyed World War I chaplains and addressed concerns of civilian religious leaders as he established the Office of the Chief of Chaplains. He advocated rank for chaplains, encouraged veteran chaplains to retain Reserve commissions, and, over the eight years of his two terms as Chief of Chaplains, he regularly toured domestic and foreign installations to visit chaplains in the field and make recommendations to the military chain-of-command and to Congress based on the information gleaned from his travels.

For both men, then, the early 1920s proved to be a revival. Internal army and navy histories of the respective chaplaincies consider the interwar years a low period tied to the weak fortune of a peace-time military.<sup>11</sup> Yet this quiet period offered a chance to script anew the goals and outlook of the chaplaincy. By appraising, articulating, and implementing new ideals and practices during the interwar period, the military’s religious branch initiated a state-sanctioned campaign to alter the contours of religious belonging in the United States. Simultaneously inclusive and exclusive, these

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<sup>10</sup> John Frazier to Mrs. Gable, March 20, 1918, RG 24, E377, Folder G-General Correspondence, 1915-1941, NARA I.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Gushwa, *The Best and Worst of Times: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1920-1945* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army, 1977); Clifford Drury, *History of the Chaplain Corps US Navy, 1778-1939, Vol. 1* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1948).

efforts assiduously diminished religious enmity but glossed over racial discrimination. The military chaplaincies generated a vision of American religion predicated on ecumenical theology, catalyzed and participated in civilian interfaith alliances, and experimented with policies and procedures in Civilian Conservation Corps camps designed to unify American soldiers and sailors around moral monotheism. In so doing, the military heralded the reconstitution of pluralism, from a melting pot to a tri-faith nation.

### **Visions: Constructing the Chaplaincy's Religious Worldview**

Three weeks before Congress passed the National Defense Act of 1920, on May 12-14, Navy chaplains from across the eastern United States assembled in Washington, DC for a three-day conference. Frazier had organized small conferences before, but this was the first time that the military ordered such a gathering and the first time that more than fifty active chaplains mustered for multi-day professional development that included meetings with other chaplains and ranking Navy officials. As Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, Rear Admiral Thomas Washington, told the assembled group, "I am very much delighted to see this gathering. This is the first one we have ever held, and I know that great results are going to come of it."<sup>12</sup> The conference mixed lectures and discussions with socializing, sight-seeing, and worship opportunities. The conference opened with the mass recitation of the hymn, "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" at the Mt. Vernon Place Methodist Church South. After several welcome addresses, hymns, and benedictions, the Protestant chaplains stayed for a Sermon and Holy Communion while the Catholics walked 4 blocks northeast to St. Patrick's Church for a Solemn High Mass. After a brief lunch break, the group reconvened for the remainder of the daytime sessions at the Navy Building on the edge of the National Mall, where

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas Washington, "Address," in Appendix Exhibit G to Notes from the Chaplains' Conference, in RG 24, E 377, Box 19, Folder: Conference of US Navy Chaplains, NARA I.



participants could watch the final stages of the building of the Lincoln Memorial. The mixture of sacred and secular space established the tone for the conference, in which chaplains offered lectures and participated in discussions of religious, pastoral, and administrative topics ranging from “The Place of Preaching in a Chaplain’s Work” and “The Personal Religious Work of the Chaplain” to “How We May Enlist the Sympathies and Cooperation of Our Superior Officers in Our Work” and “The Chaplain as a Shipmate.”<sup>13</sup>

Chaplain C. Q. Wright led off the instructional portion of the conference with an afternoon talk on the “The Place of Preaching in a Chaplain’s Work.” His lecture focused on the importance of bringing the Gospel to the men in a chaplain’s care, but also acknowledged the challenge of preaching, especially for new chaplains isolated on ships. A strong sense of Christian mission infused his speech. Yet even amidst a clarion call to bring sailors to Jesus, Wright admonished the chaplain who “sometimes allows his themes or his schemes to lead him into a sort of propaganda, which impresses the people as being of a sectarian spirit, and which cuts him off from a large number of people.”<sup>14</sup> By 1920, military clergy deemed the denominationalism that still permeated civilian church life an unacceptable obstacle, a division that could not sustain an audience. Even as Protestant and Catholic chaplains prayed separately, they needed to preach holistically. According to Wright, moreover, “Christ is the melting pot for all our differences: He is the only hope of unification, of harmony and success, and just now is a great opportunity to emphasize Him as the one means of bringing men together and holding them together in every creed, in every line of thought and of endeavor and being in the world.”<sup>15</sup> Wright’s message emphasized Christianity as the

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<sup>13</sup> “Program: Conference of US Navy Chaplains, Washington, D.C., May 12, 13, and 14, 1920,” RG 24, E 377, Box 19, Folder: Conference of US Navy Chaplains, NARA I.

<sup>14</sup> C. Q. Wright, “The Place of Preaching in a Chaplain’s Work,” Conference of US Navy Chaplains, Appendix Exhibit C, 1, RG 24, E 377, Box 19, Folder: Conference of US Navy Chaplains, NARA I.

<sup>15</sup> C. Q. Wright, “The Place of Preaching in a Chaplain’s Work,” (emphasis original), Conference of US Navy Chaplains, Appendix Exhibit C, 1, RG 24, E 377, Box 19, Folder: Conference of US Navy Chaplains, NARA I.

religion of the United States military—which matched his audience of Protestant and Catholic chaplains as well as the composition of a primarily Christian Navy—and hailed Christ as the great harmonizer of Americans from different backgrounds and cultures. But his language, particularly the use of “the melting pot,” reflected the larger task the American military faced—bringing together diverse Americans. Most importantly, it evinced the discourse of (white) cultural and religious pluralism articulated and promoted in the 1910s by the British Jewish playwright Israel Zangwill and contested in 1915 by the American Jewish philosopher Horace Kallen.<sup>16</sup> Even as Wright focused on American Christians, he borrowed a language and theory popularized by Jewish intellectuals, drawing on both Zangwill’s assimilatory melting pot and Kallen’s non-assimilatory harmonizing orchestra. Whether or not he was consciously adapting this language, Wright hinted at one goal of the military chaplaincy project: fusing native-born and immigrant Americans into larger, manageable religious groups.

As Chaplain C.M. Charlton explained the following afternoon, chaplains did not need to erase denominational ties, but rather understand and manage them. To that end, he described surveying the religious needs of all sailors he encountered, subscribing to and reading forty-eight periodicals that covered at least seven faith traditions, including Catholicism and Judaism, belonging to a local ministers’ association, and maintaining a library of “doctrinal or ritualistic or manual books” that covered denominations beyond his own Methodist-Episcopal affiliation. When stationed at Newport, Rhode Island, he brought in a different local cleric, or “denominational shepherd,” every day to meet with sailors. These practices, he argued, allowed him, “an evangelical

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<sup>16</sup> Israel Zangwill’s 1908 play *The Melting Pot* and Horace Kallen’s three-part series in *The Nation*, “Democracy Versus the Melting Pot: A Study in American Nationality,” popularized the term and theory of a melting-pot nation. Nineteenth-century thinkers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry James, and Frederick Jackson Turner used variations of the term, including “smelting pot,” “hot pot,” and “crucible,” but their usage did not penetrate American thought and culture in the same way Zangwill and Kallen’s did. Kallen used Zangwill’s term in order to critique it; he rejected the assimilatory project of the melting pot and advocated a harmonized orchestra as the metaphor and model of cultural pluralism. See Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*, 76-86.

Christian minister,” to aid “soul-hungry Hebrews” who “in less than an hour...[were] on their way to a synagogue.” Charlton’s practices were not uncommon; Congressional legislation mandated one chaplain per 1200 soldiers, but that ratio was rarely achieved during peacetime. The smaller standing army maintained fewer camps, forts, and outposts with dense concentrations of soldiers. As a result, chaplains—and, more frequently, local uncommissioned clergy—had to become circuit-riders in order to provide religious counsel to smaller groups of men spread across the country. Logistically, this could pose problems, as Lieutenant Colonel Robert Pierson relayed to Congress. Because Camp Custer lacked a Jewish chaplain, the military sent a rabbi to “have a meeting of the Hebrews. The automobile which was sent for him was wrecked. We found it out and rushed down and got him, and while he was about three-quarters of an hour or an hour late for the service, I think there were probably 50 or 75 Jews that had all waited there to see their rabbi when he came in.”<sup>17</sup> Too few Jews remained in the smaller peacetime army to warrant dedicated Jewish chaplains, and local—or semi-local—rabbis often supplemented the work of Christian chaplains. As the testimony of Pierson and Charlton indicate, the military invited civilian clergy to augment the religious services the state could reasonably provide.

Indeed, of the 5000 men Charlton canvassed, less than one percent claimed “no religion at all.” While most the remainder affiliated with a specific denomination, they responded well to his efforts on their behalf. Interdenominational cooperation “for the common good” maximized the “power of united impact” and, when “consistently lived up to[,] has made it easy for me to be ‘all

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<sup>17</sup> Robert Pierson of the War Department, speaking for the U.S. Army, on April 16, 1924, to the Subcommittee of the Committee on Military Affairs, on S. 2532 and H.R. 7038, 68<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., “To Increase the Number of Chaplains in the Army,” 4-5. It is telling that Pierson uses “Hebrews” and “Jews” interchangeably; his slippage between racial and religious categories in a story about religious accommodation suggests that the government viewed Jews as both insiders and outsiders at a moment that many historians view as the turning point for European ethnic groups becoming white. See for example, Matthew Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

things to all men.”<sup>18</sup> Derived from Paul’s message in I Corinthians, the phrase to be “all things to all men” emerged in World War I as a common refrain of the task of chaplains.<sup>19</sup> Like Paul, chaplains could evangelize; but unlike Paul, they could evangelize religion as only a general practice, offering spiritual succor in a nondenominational manner that transcended sectarian differences.

The emphasis on non-confrontational and generically spiritual religion embodied the military’s view of religion as a stabilizing social force. Chaplains enabled unit solidarity and cohesion by promoting religion—in various forms—as a common good shared by all. Acknowledging different religions and denominations but downplaying distinctions between them allowed the military to advance personal piety over public assertions of creedal superiority. Even as he relied on distinctly Christian language to make his point, Charlton’s experiences with and inclusion of Jews, Christian Scientists, and Mormons in his lecture alluded to a vision of American religion that moved beyond the Protestant-Catholic categories that, in the early 1920s, were not always—and often not—commonly accepted.

The effort to bridge denominational differences took a more concrete form in the development of the *Army and Navy Hymnal* in 1920-1. While the army and navy chaplaincies frequently operated on parallel planes, they worked together to devise a hymnal that would suit the military’s need for “diversity and brevity” as none of the available hymn books on the market achieved these twin goals. Moreover, a common hymnal would ease transitions and create a familiar service for soldiers and sailors moving from one locale (or chaplain) to another.<sup>20</sup> Thus Chaplain Julian Yates, who would become Army Chief of Chaplains in 1929, worked with Frazier to sketch a

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<sup>18</sup> C. M. Charlton, “The Relation of the Chaplain to His Denomination and to the Church At Large,” Conference of US Navy Chaplains, Appendix Exhibit L, RG 24, E 377, Box 19, Folder: Conference of US Navy Chaplains, NARA I.

<sup>19</sup> 1 Corinthians 9:22. See, for example, Chaplain George Waring’s comments in “What the New Army Expects of Its Chaplains,” *NYT*, June 17, 1917.

<sup>20</sup> Julian Yates, “Origins of the Army and Navy Hymnal,” 1923 and John Axton to Caroline Parker, November 5, 1920, RG 247 (1920-23), Box 1, Folder 080 (Century Publishing Co.), NARA II.

draft table of contents for a two-part, Protestant and Catholic hymnal. Within the Protestant section, the choices needed to cover hymns popular in multiple denominations, and the two chaplains designed both parts to provide sufficient range so as to give chaplains autonomy over their services but be reasonably brief to contain the length of worship as well. Once they had composed a draft, they distributed it to all chaplains in the service for feedback.

The responses of chaplains—which included prayers to cut as well as to add—guided the manuscript revisions, and with a full, vetted draft in hand, Frazier and Yates looked for a publisher. Their efforts attracted the attention of Caroline Parker, music editor of the Century Publishing Company, and she agreed to take on their project without a guaranteed minimum order. The publishing company assumed some risk, for while Frazier and Yates decided that they would not profit from their compilation, neither branch of the military required their chaplains to buy the hymnal. Instead they would promote and suggest it, but leave the purchasing decision up to each individual chaplain. Parker, who maintained a robust correspondence with all involved parties, heavily marketed the hymnal and developed band and orchestral versions to further enhance its use.

After Century acquired the rights to publish the hymnal, the Jewish Welfare Board (JWB) learned of the endeavor and sought to add a Jewish section as well. The JWB offered to arrange and pay for the additional pages, and the military agreed that this would be acceptable.<sup>21</sup> Parker, who was in New York where the JWB was headquartered, worked to accommodate all parties, and became a voluble advocate for the hymnal's chief innovation: its interfaith character. When Louis Marshall, in his capacity as president of the American Jewish Committee, wrote to her objecting to a claim made in a training manual that “the ideal officer is a Christian gentleman,” Parker advocated on his behalf. Within the publishing industry, she not only represented the vanguard of an educated and ambitious

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<sup>21</sup> Caroline Parker to John Axton, July 6, 1921, RG 247 (1920-23), Box 1, Folder 080 (Century Publishing Co.), NARA II.

post-World War I generation of women who acquired responsibility within the profession but also displayed the skills that led women into other human services roles such as personnel management and counseling.<sup>22</sup>

She wrote to Frazier and asked him to omit “Christian” from the last line of his forward in order to ensure that the hymnal would be acceptable to all. Whether Parker’s motivation stemmed from her marketing needs or sympathy for Marshall’s claim that “there are many men in the Army who are officers and many who aspire to become officers who are gentlemen and who possess all the qualifications mentioned by the authors except that they are [not] Christians” or both, she convinced Frazier to promote a non-sectarian hymnal.<sup>23</sup>

Although the JWB and Parker were both instrumental in fashioning a hymnal that could be used in Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish services, within two years this feature became part of the military’s branding. As Yates wrote in his brief history of the hymnal in 1923, it “is unique in one particular [way] if in no others. It is believed to be the only publication extant containing Protestant, Catholic and Jewish hymnology under one cover, and as such it is the confident hope of the compilers that it may be a factor in drawing more closely together the three grand divisions of the fraternity of God[-]serving Americans.”<sup>24</sup> Yates was correct. A tri-faith hymnal was new and, though he did not state it explicitly, the state’s coordination of such a prayerbook was unprecedented. That the compilers initially intended to include “the three grand divisions” of American religion elided the active efforts made on behalf of American Jewish chaplains and soldiers. Yet this erasure signifies acceptance as well. For in ignoring the efforts made by the JWB, Louis Marshall, and Caroline Parker and in taking credit for including Catholics and Jews alongside Protestants, Yates normalized

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<sup>22</sup> Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982, 2003), 226-7.

<sup>23</sup> Caroline Parker to John Frazier, June 29, 1920, RG 247 (1920-23), Box 1, Folder: Century Publishing Co., NARA II.

<sup>24</sup> Yates, “Origins of the Army and Navy Hymnal.”

all three religious groups as standard-bearers of American religion.

Yates' 1923 proclamation reflected his own recollection and, perhaps, redrafting of the past. But it did not stand alone. Rather, it bespoke the military's concurrent effort to define its view of religion and religious liberty. In 1923, the War Department convened a Conference on Moral and Religious Work in the Army. Unlike the Navy's 1920 Chaplains' Conference, the Army did not limit its conference to chaplains. It intentionally brought chaplains and military officials together with "certain prominent citizens of the country"—civilian clergy and lay leaders of religious groups—to discuss and recommend programs to improve the provision of religious and moral training to soldiers. When this group of 93 white and one black men, all "distinguished clergymen, educators, laymen, line officers, and chaplains of the Army of the United States," escaped the muggy summer thunderstorm and gathered inside the New National Museum (what would become known as the Natural History Museum) on Wednesday, June 6, 1923, they brought with them the prestige of rank and position. Famous World War I chaplains, including Paul Moody (son of evangelist Dwight Moody, and by 1923, President of Middlebury College), Charles MacFarland (who in 1923 served as the General Secretary of the Federal Council of Churches), and Father Francis Duffy (the most highly decorated clergyman in the U.S. Army) sat with the Chairmen and General Secretaries of the Federal Council of Churches, the YMCA, the Knights of Columbus, the Jewish Welfare Board, the American Red Cross, the American Bible Society, the National Catholic Welfare Council, the National Baptist Church, and the Salvation Army as well as presidents of local universities and ministers of local churches. But this was no mere gathering of elite religious leaders; aside from the respective Army and Navy Chiefs of Chaplains, the Honorable John Weeks, Secretary of War, and General John Pershing, headed the list of military officials in attendance.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Julian Yates, "Report of the Conference on Moral and Religious Work in the Army," 1, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 256, Folder 337 (Chaplains' Training Conference 1923), NARA II.

After an invocation by Axton, Secretary Weeks opened the conference, thanking all the attendees for joining him in Washington. He articulated the connection between military training and citizenship, asserting that the War Department prioritized making the “finest type of young men” recruits into excellent citizen-soldiers who could return home and serve their communities as respected leaders. To make this important transformation possible, he would rely on the wisdom, counsel, and judgment of the group gathered before him as “nothing will hold mankind better together or be of as much benefit to men of all nations as religion.”<sup>26</sup> Why was religion so valuable? Why would it unite, rather than divide, the “men of all nations”? General Pershing, whose speech immediately followed Weeks’, further explained why the military conceived of religion as so important: it propelled men toward “clean living.”

But Pershing’s “clean living” encompassed far more than the moral control pushed by Progressive, often Protestant, advocates of abstinence from drink, sex, and gambling. As he observed, “Soldiers readily see the difference between that effort which is religious, pure and undefiled, and that which merely seeks sectarian advantage. They are quick to recognize a positive and practical appeal to those in need of spiritual guidance and have little time or sympathy for those who indulge in unbrotherly denunciation of others who seek the same God through different forms of faith, expression, and relationship.” The impetus toward “clean living,” the emphasis on “pure and undefiled” religion clothed an important message about the definition of religion itself. Belief in one God, the same God, the only God, regardless of specific rituals, traditions, or prayers, mattered most to General Pershing, who had instigated the first recorded army chaplains’ conference among the Eighth Brigade in Texas in 1915. Successful chaplains would set aside sectarian difference and, by virtue of holding the position of a commissioned officer without command, would, through his

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<sup>26</sup> Julian Yates, “Report of the Conference on Moral and Religious Work in the Army,” 1-2, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 256, Folder 337 (Chaplains’ Training Conference 1923), NARA II.



own knowledge and cooperation with other clergy, minister to all men, officers and enlistees alike. Adopting the language of the clergy he so respected, Pershing concluded with a blessing of his own: “May you be divinely guided,” he said to the military and civilian, religious and lay, leaders assembled before him, “as you counsel together and formulate plans for this the most important phase of the life and training of soldiers.”<sup>27</sup>

Before the planning sessions began in earnest, Morris Lazaron gave the conference’s plenary address, “Religion for American Manhood.”<sup>28</sup> That the military would ask a speaker to dwell on manhood was neither surprising nor new.<sup>29</sup> But Lazaron did more than suggest ways that the state, through its chaplains, could inculcate manhood, manliness, and masculinity. He also helped the conference organizers demonstrate their commitment to non-sectarian religion. In this sense, Lazaron was perhaps a pragmatic choice. Ordained as a rabbi in 1915, he served as chaplain in the Officers’ Reserve Corps (ORC) in World War I, earned the rank of Major, and remained in the ORC until 1953. Moreover, he lived nearby and grew somewhat accustomed to making the 40-mile trip between his pulpit at Baltimore Hebrew Congregation and ceremonies in Washington, DC. Two years earlier, in 1921, he joined Bishop Charles Brent (Senior American Expeditionary Force Chaplain), Axton, and Frazier as the ORC Chaplain representative at the November 11 ceremony dedicating the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery.<sup>30</sup> But Lazaron was also an inspired choice, for he firmly believed that Judaism was only a religion, and Jews were not a

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<sup>27</sup> Julian Yates, “Report of the Conference on Moral and Religious Work in the Army,” 2-3, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 256, Folder 337 (Chaplains’ Training Conference 1923), NARA II.

<sup>28</sup> There are three versions of the report from the conference, one printed and distributed by the Government Printing Office and two slightly different manuscript copies in the files of the Office of the Chief of Chaplains. The full text of Lazaron’s speech appears only in one of the manuscript copies; however, he appears on the program in all versions and the official printed version provided transcripts of only the speeches by military officials.

<sup>29</sup> On manhood and the military in the quarter-century preceding Lazaron’s speech, see Kristin Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) and Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

<sup>30</sup> “Services at Tomb is Heroic as Dead is Laid Away,” *Associated Press*, November 11, 1921.

nation. He would dedicate much of his career as a rabbi, author, and citizen to Jewish-Christian dialogue and interfaith efforts, formal and informal.

Charged with articulating the relationship between “manhood” and “religion,” Lazaron started by describing his position: “I speak for no denomination or group[.] While I recognize the natural necessity for credal [sic] distinctions and have the most earnest respect for them, I take it that the object of this conference is to consider the manhood of America, and particularly the soldiers of America, not so much as Protestant or Catholic or Jew, but rather as related to those moral and religious truths which we all of us hold in common.” Like Weeks and Pershing before him, Lazaron emphasized that the military rendered denominational or sectarian differences irrelevant; common “moral and religious truths”—even if only the belief in God—would be sufficient to bridge religious differences.<sup>31</sup>

Men, Lazaron argued, share three traits: a sense of mysticism or awe (whether or not they label it religion), loyalty to larger causes, and recognition of the importance of brotherhood. By recognizing and targeting these attributes, chaplains could help develop both religious sensibilities and masculine tendencies. Framing religion as adventurous and majestic, rather than dry and boring, and hailing God as the powerful and exciting remaker of souls would help make religion accessible to young soldiers who are likely enthralled by thrill and exhilaration. Similarly, comradeship and duty—two elements of the soldier’s life—deserved emphasis whereas fighting “over differences in ceremon[y] and liturgy and doctrine [have] let the hearts of our youth go hungry.”<sup>32</sup> Lazaron’s emphasis on moral spirituality rather than doctrinal and ritual particularity meshed well with the

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<sup>31</sup> Morris Lazaron, “Religion for American Manhood,” RG 247 (1920-45), Box 256, Folder 337 (Chaplains’ Training Conference 1923), NARA II. The more typical order of “Protestant, Catholic, Jew” was not yet solidified in this period, with multiple speakers transposing the sequence of religious groups for no apparent or clear reason.

<sup>32</sup> Lazaron, “Religion for American Manhood.”

military's larger goal of influencing a broad range of young men. But his message also stemmed from genuine conviction. As a Reform rabbi, he accepted the position of the Reform Movement's 1885 Pittsburgh Platform which stressed the sanctity of God as the central tenet of all religion while repudiating law and ritual that neither sanctified nor elevated the spirit.<sup>33</sup> In his address, then, he spoke as a military chaplain and a Reform rabbi, roles that both he and the military saw as complementary.

The conditions of the Army, Lazon argued, presented an optimal situation for feeding the souls of soldiers. "There is no intimacy like the intimacy of the barracks—it breeds brotherhood," he proclaimed, and as brothers, American men "come instinctively to feel that the big human aspirations are the same in all races, nations and creeds. Out there the crown of heroism rested alike on brow of Catholic Protestant and Jew... [they] are impatient of prejudice and pettiness and that deep down in their hearts our manhood has learned the lesson of human sympathy!"<sup>34</sup> Living together made American soldiers irritated with and resistant to denominationalism; difference was no longer relevant as the soldier "feels that fundamentally all religions are based upon a belief in God and a feeling of being responsible to Him," Lazon asserted. The American soldier "believes that our varying denominations are but the way different groups attempt to describe and interpret the God-idea. He believes that our different religious formalities and rituals and ceremonies are but the way different groups symbolize and make concrete the religious idea."<sup>35</sup> Lazon claimed to know the mind of the American soldier. Yet rising nativism, anti-Catholicism, and antisemitism of the 1920s suggest that his depiction may have reflected an ideal, rather than real, depiction of American men, soldiers or civilians. But here too, his rendering of the faith of American men

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<sup>33</sup> "The Pittsburgh Platform, 1885," reprinted in Michael Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (Detroit: Wayne State Press, 1995), 387-8.

<sup>34</sup> Lazon, "Religion for American Manhood."

<sup>35</sup> Lazon, "Religion for American Manhood."

stemmed as much from his own education and commitment to Reform Judaism as it did to his experience as a military chaplain and his life as an American male. The language of the “God-idea,” the conceptualization of religious formality as symbol, and the insistence on responsibility to God as the highest calling of man all reflected key platforms of Reform Judaism.

Lazaron’s most controversial claim, hidden deeply in the profile of the beliefs of the American soldier, not only spurned divine craftsmanship of religious difference but also rebuffed any particular religion as correct. The soldier “believes that neither Synagogue nor Church can declare itself to be the sole and final representative of God on earth, the recipient of God’s complete revelation, vested with the privilege of dispensing salvation. He believes that all men of all creeds shall have a portion in the world to come, if they have led lives of goodness and service.”<sup>36</sup> Not only did Lazaron appeal to religious unity, but he also disclaimed Christ’s power of salvation, perhaps the most critical point of contention between Christians and Jews. He resisted Christian language of heaven and used Jewish language of “a world to come.” Whether or not his audience noticed, much less reacted to, these claims is unclear; that Lazaron felt comfortable making them nevertheless indicates that he felt comfortable addressing a mostly Protestant and Catholic audience on behalf of the Army chaplaincy as a Jew. At the same time, by softening his declarations with an emphasis on morals and ethics—“goodness and service”—as the foundations of religion and post-earthly futures, he demonstrated his keen awareness of the military’s developing definition of religion.

When Lazaron thus concluded his address with an appeal to the Fatherhood of God and hence the brotherhood of men *already experienced* by all soldiers, he recast the military leadership’s

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<sup>36</sup> Morris Lazaron, “Religion for American Manhood.” Catholics of the era would surely have disagreed with this statement, for Pope Pius XI dismissed all invitation to participate in pan-Christian movements, much less Christian-Jewish ones. His 1928 encyclical *Mortalium Animos* specifically forbade participation in ecumenical groups as “false Christianity.” Conservative Protestants and Orthodox Jews would have been similarly skeptical though perhaps less resistant than Catholics. On the challenges of interfaith cooperation, see Benny Kraut, “A Wary Collaboration: Jews, Catholics, and the Protestant Goodwill Movement,” in *Between the Times: The Travail of the Protestant Establishment in America, 1900-1960*, ed. William R. Hutchison (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 193-228.

rejection of sectarian difference in positive, ecclesiastical terms: “Any religious message which would claim the minds and hearts of our manhood and soldiery must not only preach God’s Fatherhood and man’s brotherhood as a pious phrase but as a consistent theology; must not only proclaim it, but live it!”<sup>37</sup> With a triumphant call to religious arms, to shame those who “sow seeds of strife among us,” and to “declare the truth that we are all of us alike sons of the living God, the loving Father...to live that America our blessed land shall be a dwelling place of justice and brotherhood,” Lazon turned the podium over to Brigadier General Charles Martin, the Assistant Chief of Staff, who asked the assembled audience to determine methods through which the Army could enhance military-civilian communities, strengthen American manhood, and make cooperation among religious groups as beneficial to the military as possible.

Over the next day and a half, the group discussed proffered suggestions, appointed committees to pursue these new ideas, and agreed upon a set of formal recommendations to enhance the chaplaincy. In the summary of pronouncements and findings, the conference made clear that the chaplain, unlike the stream of civilian religious workers sent to Europe in World War I, supported all soldiers, not just those of his denomination. Appointed and endorsed by religious groups, chaplains dedicated their service to more than morale building. While morale contributes only to military efficiency, morals and religion support men, citizens, and the nation. The chaplain, the conference declared, “is a man true to his own faith; conscientiously respectful of the faith of others. He is a living example of both religious faith and religious liberty.” To best embody and live this role, the chaplain needed the benefits of regular visits from the Chief of Chaplains, consistent contact with his particular denomination, and periodic conferences with other chaplains. The military would aid the chaplains and improve their capacity to work with officers and soldiers by developing a Chaplains’ Manual, creating a Chaplains’ School, codifying Army Regulations, building

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<sup>37</sup> Morris Lazon, “Religion for American Manhood.”

post chapels, and providing ample equipment. Finally, the group supported petitioning Congress to organize the Chaplains' Corp at full strength to guarantee all men access to a chaplain.<sup>38</sup>

A month after the conference ended, when Acting Secretary of War Dwight Davis submitted a report to the President, he informed Warren G. Harding that there was "absolute unanimity in all pronouncements and findings." Moreover this unanimity emerged in a "unique" context, for the 1923 Conference on Moral and Religious Work in the Army was notable "in that it was pansectarian."<sup>39</sup> Although the speeches and discussions did not employ the description "pansectarian," it aptly described Major General John Hines' view that "Military training develops men who have reverence for God and loyalty to the government which they serve....In the religious work of the Army we are gaining a better appreciation of all religions. We know that each expresses the common impulses of reverence for and belief in God."<sup>40</sup> As the Army increased its awareness of a multitude of religious traditions, it experimented with different expressions of its embrace of difference. The summary of conference proceedings most clearly articulated the Army's understanding of the chaplain's role as the exemplar of both religious faith and religious liberty. "Chaplains are commissioned to work for all men without distinction of creed." Furthermore, "to interpret this as meaning that all creeds are alike, or that creed is of no value, is to impose one's own religious beliefs upon others. This is to offend religious liberty, because religious liberty postulates religious differences. To wipe out all religious differences, and then claim to be tolerant, has no meaning."<sup>41</sup> The conference, in the name of prominent military and civilian leaders, asserted that

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<sup>38</sup> Julian Yates, "Report of the Conference on Moral and Religious Work in the Army," 16-18, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 256, Folder 337 (Chaplains' Training Conference 1923), NARA II.

<sup>39</sup> Dwight Davis to the President, Letter of Transmittal, July 10, 1923 in *Report on the Conference on Moral and Religious Work in the Army* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1923), v.

<sup>40</sup> Address of Maj. Gen. John L. Hines, Deputy Chief of Staff, United States Army, in *Report on the Conference on Moral and Religious Work in the Army*, 16-17.

<sup>41</sup> War Department, "Summary of Pronouncements and Findings: General Statement," in *Report on the Conference on Moral and Religious Work in the Army*, 19.

serving all faiths did not imply collapsing religious differences. It averred that religious diversity enhanced, rather obstructed, religious liberty. It adduced the modernist view that individuals could retain religious allegiances without impinging on the beliefs of others. As a whole then, the conference assumed that the military chaplaincy could overcome the religious factionalization occurring in American society and presumed that the chaplaincy possessed the dexterity to move between specific religious traditions to promote an ecumenical American religious tradition.

The Office of the Chief of Chaplains mobilized to follow through on the recommendations advanced by the conference. Some were easy to implement. Prior to 1923, Axton had already started visiting army posts and he made his tours more regular as well as requested more descriptive reports from chaplains and their commanding officers. Some projects required outside resources: in 1924, the Congressional Subcommittee on Military Affairs met to hear testimony about increasing the number of chaplains. Military and civilian religious leaders faced a much tougher audience when they asked Congress to fund additional chaplains.

Congressman John McKenzie (R-IL), for example, questioned the character and efficacy of chaplains. He wondered whether military men of cloth could reach the young men he knew back home in Illinois who regularly abandoned church for a lazy Sunday at the fishing hole or to cruise around in an automobile. Reverend S.Z. Batten, a spokesperson for the Northern Baptist Convention, attempted to allay McKenzie's fears, emphasizing that he and his fellow clergy wanted only the best men to serve as chaplains. He testified that a military chaplain ought to be "a man of ability...a man of initiative." But McKenzie interrupted him to ask "Do you draw the line between ministers who belong to the new school of evolution, as against those who do not believe in it?" Batten deflected this query, asserting that evolution lay beyond the scope or provenance of chaplains: "[M]y feeling is that a man who would go in as a chaplain and would harp on that question in one way or another is just the type of man we do not want as a chaplain. We want men

there who represent the larger religious life and who will avoid all purely trifling questions.”

Apparently satisfied, McKenzie agreed with Batten that evolution represented a “trifling” issue, allowed him to step down, and listened to testimony by other denominational representatives who supported the legislation to increase the number of chaplains in the army.<sup>42</sup> Construing evolution, which would become a national controversy in the Scopes Trial a year later, as a mere “trifling” matter illustrates the degree to which military and civilian supporters of the chaplaincy committed themselves to avoiding religious quarrels. If they could sidestep the most pressing religious, educational, and social issue of the day, then chaplains could certainly dodge deep but less publicly fraught theological debates.

For instructions on how to behave, chaplains could finally turn to a manual. On the first official day of work in 1926, Major General John Hines formally ordered the printing of the Army’s first official training manual for chaplains, *The Chaplain: His Place and Duties*. The 73-page document offered contextual, philosophical, and practical advice. After a short history of the chaplaincy from ancient to modern times, the manual defined the role of the chaplain, outlined qualifications, and delineated duties. The four main tasks of the chaplain consisted of (1) providing military personnel with opportunities for public worship; (2) offering “spiritual ministrations, moral counsel, and religious guidance” to soldiers, officers, and their families; (3) championing religious rationales for moral thought and ethical behavior; and (4) promoting character building.<sup>43</sup>

To accomplish these goals, the manual identified important characteristics of chaplains, listing the “personal qualifications” chaplains needed in addition to the physical stamina and abilities required by all military personnel: attention to duty, tact, initiative, intelligence and judgment, force,

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<sup>42</sup> U.S. Congress, Joint Hearing before the Subcommittees of the Committee on Military Affairs of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives, *To Increase the Number of Chaplains in the Army*, 68<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session, April 16, 1924, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1924), 8-9, 20-1.

<sup>43</sup> Office of the Army Chief of Chaplains, *Training Manual, United States Army, The Chaplain: His Place and Duties* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1926), III, 4-5.



and leadership. Chaplains must possess “the ability to put oneself into another man’s place” and be “judiciously minded—to play the game according to the rules.” In other words, empathy exists only within the contours of “that much-to-be-coveted reputation for square dealing.” The most extensive category, leadership, attempted to describe the personality of an excellent chaplain candidate. Struggling to find appropriate language, the section suggested the presence of an “indefinable quality which makes people follow him.” Dismissing “magnetism” as a “misnomer,” the Army guide insists that the chaplain must “be able to attract and hold and permanently influence for good the personnel within his pastoral charge.” In other words, the ideal chaplain would persuade soldiers to commit to religion and conform to military procedures; flamboyant preachers, whether emulating the dazzlingly real Aimee Semple McPherson or the fictional notoriety of Elmer Gantry, would not suffice.<sup>44</sup> Settling for a parade of attributes that coalesce into the ideal military chaplain, the handbook grasped for an appropriate designation, one that effectively echoes Max Weber’s understanding of charismatic authority.<sup>45</sup> According to Weber, “the charismatically qualified leader...is obeyed by virtue of personal trust in him and his revelation, his heroism or his exemplary qualities.” For the military’s purposes, the chaplain must, above all, bring a forceful personality capable of mobilizing the spirit of the divine for all members of the unit.

As befit a manual that emerged from the discussions of the 1923 Conference on Morals and Religion in the Army, it promoted a capacious understanding of the divine and associated religious

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<sup>44</sup> As a female minister without formal ordination, Aimee Semple McPherson would not qualify as a chaplain; however, when assessing Pentecostal clergy’s ability to serve as chaplains, the military demarcated between those who spoke in tongues and those who did not. The latter, including practitioners of McPherson’s Foursquare Gospel, represented acceptable Pentecostals. For more on the popularity and importance of Sister Aimee in the 1920s and 30s, see Matthew Sutton, *Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

<sup>45</sup> *Training Manual, United States Army, The Chaplain: His Place and Duties*, 4-6; Max Weber, *On Charisma and Institution Building*, ed. S. N. Eisenstadt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 47. Weber’s work on charisma was published in German in 1922; the degree to which the Office of the Chief of Chaplains had access to Weber is unclear. It is reasonable to think that if they had read Weber, they would have used the term “charisma” in the Manual’s section on leadership.

traditions. Section five, “Religious Observances,” bluntly stated, “officers and soldiers in the Army represent all forms of faith and hold every known religious view.”<sup>46</sup> While this certainly exaggerated the range of spiritual practices and doctrinal beliefs found among servicemen, it also bespoke a dedication to religion writ large. Even without representatives from the entire spectrum of world religions, the military positioned itself as a supporter of religious diversity beyond the religions known and accepted by the American public. Indeed, for weekly services, funerals, weddings, and other ritual occasions, “the United States Government clearly expects each chaplain to be conscientious in the performance of his sacred duties and to maintain a high ideal of his obligations to *all* religious needs of his military family.” There were, however, limits to this ideal. For example, the mandate to hold two services on a base every Sunday applied regardless of whether the chaplain’s denomination would regularly schedule two services during that period. The guide cautioned chaplains that the religious backgrounds of soldiers may vary not only according to denominations but also by degree of devotion. Accordingly, chaplains should prepare themselves to address an audience ready to receive his words and to appeal to an audience composed of those less interested in the word of God.<sup>47</sup> The manual’s behavioral directives made clear that particular beliefs, provided they fell within a theological orbit recognized by the military—primarily but not exclusively the Protestant, Catholic, Christian Science, and Jewish traditions—mattered little; an ability to inculcate accepted standards of morality, a capacity to imbue spirituality, and a facility to work with the many, not the few, mattered most.

The generous religious outlook advanced by the Army did, however, have limits. When the War Department convened another military-civilian conference on religion and morals in the Army,

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<sup>46</sup> *Training Manual, United States Army, The Chaplain: His Place and Duties*, 13.

<sup>47</sup> *Training Manual, United States Army, The Chaplain: His Place and Duties*, 13-15 (emphasis added). Congressional rules allocated chaplains by denomination according to a religious census of the military. There were too few Jews to warrant a standing Jewish chaplain (and too few Seventh-Day Adventists or other Christians who commemorated the Sabbath on Saturday), and official documents do not suggest that anyone raised the question of (or complained about) which day should be dedicated to Sabbath services.

it labeled it the 1926 Pan-Denominational Conference. Secretary of War Dwight Davis announced, “we have invited representatives from every religious body in the country. You have assembled here without distinction of creed, dogma, race, or color. . . . Minor differences of thought are thrust aside and here we have a united Church – united in the love of God and the love of country. Truly, this gathering is of great significance.”<sup>48</sup> As in 1923, the list of over 140 attendees included clergy and lay leaders from an array of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish denominational bodies, endorsing agencies, and welfare organizations such as the YMCA, the Knights of Columbus, and the Women’s Christian Temperance Union. Unlike in 1923, more African-American church leaders, women, and Congressional chaplains attended as well.

But atheists were not invited. When asked, Davis informed the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism (AAAA) that he had summoned only “a selected list of men and women who had already shown their deep interest in [moral and religious training] activities.” Dr. Charles Smith, the president of the AAAA, insisted that the atheist group was committed to the goals of the conference and pleaded with Davis to allow a representative of his organization to attend. Axton in turn recommended that Davis reinforce the religious nature of the meeting, noting, “it is not a gathering for the discussion of questions which are in controversy.” Given that the atheists’ association had been agitating for the military to cease paying chaplains’ salaries, Axton’s emphasis on avoiding controversy was not unwarranted. Nevertheless, the exchange among Davis, Smith, and Axton underscores that a belief in God circumscribed the chaplaincy’s openness to religious diversity.<sup>49</sup>

Though larger than the 1923 conference, many of the individuals who assembled in the

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<sup>48</sup> Report of the Pan-Denominational Conference, May 4-6, 1926, 2, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 257, Folder 337 (Pan-Denominational Conference), NARA II.

<sup>49</sup> Dwight Davis to Charles Smith, April 23, 1926, Charles Smith to Dwight Davis, April 27, 1926, and Memo from John Axton to the Adjutant General and the Secretary of War, April 27, 1926, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 6, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol. I), NARA II; “Court Asked to Oust Army Chaplain Suit,” *The Washington Herald*, April 23, 1926.

auditorium of the Interior Department on May 4, 1926 would have recognized one another. The majority of 1923 conference-goers returned, and many of the newcomers participated in gatherings sponsored by the Federal Council of Churches. When they sat down to listen to the opening session, familiar faces beckoned from the podium. The Honorable Dwight Davis, Secretary of War, Major General John Hines, Chief of Staff, and Rabbi Morris Lazaron again greeted the assembly. Davis dramatically framed the military's commitment to religion and thus the importance of the Pan-Denominational Conference: "The Army's entire system of training is based upon the principle that the future prosperity of the nation demands an educated citizenry in which love of country, veneration of its institutions, and love of God, predominate....Without a virile, honest and Godfearing youth, as strong in moral courage as in physical makeup, a nation is doomed to early oblivion."<sup>50</sup> With the name of the conference announcing its premise—the vital commitment to a broad religious foundation—the speakers dwelled less on comprehensive contours of American religion and more on the creeping threat that certain strains of religion posed to the military.

By the mid-1920s, pacifist thought had entered the terrain of almost all major American religious groups.<sup>51</sup> The military perceived this mode of thought as perilous, threatening to citizen and soldier alike. As religious organizations debated whether their clergy ought to serve in the military as chaplains, the military and its representatives attacked what they saw as narrow-minded, pacifist religion. Lazaron argued that opposition to national defense was short-sighted and, more importantly, he spoke for the chaplains in the room when he maintained that "we come here too, as ministers of God who devoutly believe that because a man wears the uniform is no reason to deny him the ministry and inspiration of religion." Clergy must agree that all men, soldiers or not,

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<sup>50</sup> Report of the Pan-Denominational Conference, May 4-6, 1926, 2, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 257, Folder 337 (Pan-Denominational Conference), NARA II.

<sup>51</sup> Joseph Kip Kosek, *Acts of Conscience: Christian Nonviolence and Modern American Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Anne Klejment and Nancy Roberts, eds., *American Catholic Pacifism: The Influence of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996).

deserved access to religion. Lay supporters of military ministry understood this well, he claimed. They “recognize[d] the true nature and value of the exalted office of Chaplain. You have summoned us here not as a pious gesture to appease the tongues of criticism, but because you honestly believe in the things for which we stand; because you deeply feel that you have a tremendous obligation to the parents of the land as well as to the boys and men in the service themselves.”<sup>52</sup> A mere three years after his address on “Religion for American Manhood,” Lazon could assume that disparate faith traditions could and would work together. He could no longer assume, however, that they would support military religion. As a result, he celebrated those who understood that citizenship incorporated responsibilities as well as rights. From the military’s perspective, then, religious organizations may have had the right to speak in support of pacifism, but they also had the responsibility to serve the souls of soldiers, to continue to endorse clergy as chaplains, to provide fighting men with pathways to God.

Following Lazon’s short speech, Hines reiterated the military’s commitment to cooperating with and learning from civilian life. Just as the military adopted the best business practices, he remarked, so too should it borrow the best religious practices. He implored the audience to “show us how we may spread throughout the Army a clearer idea of religion, a spirit of moderation and tolerance, a keener desire to understand and do the will of God.”<sup>53</sup> Moderation and tolerance no longer referred only to the flattening of sectarian difference; three years later, moderation and tolerance applied to the lenses through which religious groups viewed the military. Because of the challenges religion posed to the military enterprise, Army leaders stood ready to listen to civilian advice. The next morning, Brigadier General Campbell King, the head of Army personnel, reminded

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<sup>52</sup> Report of the Pan-Denominational Conference, May 4-6, 1926, 2-3, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 257, Folder 337 (Pan-Denominational Conference), NARA II.

<sup>53</sup> Report of the Pan-Denominational Conference, May 4-6, 1926, 5, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 257, Folder 337 (Pan-Denominational Conference), NARA II.

the conference that the military had listened and enacted many of the recommendations from 1923.

In response, the conference pledged its commitment to the chaplaincy and offered the military a list of suggestions, some new and some recognizable from the past. In addition to affirming the importance of chaplains retaining contact with their denominations, civilian leaders suggested that the military ought to present and promote the chaplaincy to religious groups. In this way, the military could assertively frame its religious work rather than defensively respond to attacks by pacifists. Nicer chapels, postgraduate training, and a professional chaplain journal would augment the work of chaplains, while standardizing use of the *Army and Navy Hymnal* and improving the quality of services would enrich religious experiences for soldiers.<sup>54</sup> The chaplains endorsed “chaplain” as the primary form of address, rejecting both appellations of rank and sectarian forms of address as unnecessary and counterproductive for their work.<sup>55</sup> In designating “chaplain” as the correct title, the group expressed their autonomy from both typical religious formulas and ordinary military procedures. They implicitly declared that their unique military-religious designation trumped both religious categories and military hierarchy, simultaneously distancing themselves from standard forms of religious and military authority and immersing themselves in their own particular ecclesiastical and martial role.

In addition, the mixed military and civilian group confirmed their dual commitment to peace and to the U.S. Army. First, they identified themselves as “ministers of religion in conference assembled and representative of the Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish faiths.” Second, they pledged “whole-hearted devotion to the cause of peace and the further promotion of the principles of justice, both at home and among all the nations of the world.” Finally, they characterized the

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<sup>54</sup> Report of the Pan-Denominational Conference, May 4-6, 1926, Section XI and XII, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 257, Folder 337 (Pan-Denominational Conference), NARA II.

<sup>55</sup> Report of the Pan-Denominational Conference, May 4-6, 1926, Section XI and XII, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 257, Folder 337 (Pan-Denominational Conference), NARA II.

chaplaincy as an “essentially...peaceful” vocation for which they “repudiate[d] as wholly untrue, even the inference that the United States Army uniform is a vestment only of war and not of peace. We believe that war is caused by the failure of men to obey the laws of God. It is our function and high calling to lead them to observe these laws more fully.”<sup>56</sup> Religion, the 1926 Pan-Denominational Conference insisted, hungered for peace, yearned for justice, and buttressed war only when necessary.

If chaplains dedicated themselves to the causes of peace and justice, the former was easier to accomplish in the relatively halcyon days of the mid-1920s. In contrast, justice, especially when understood as racial equality in the United States, presented an impossibility in a military far more comfortable with religious heterogeneity than racial diversity. Inasmuch as Axton repeatedly reminded his chaplains and other correspondents that a chaplain of one religious background could serve soldiers of different religious beliefs, the same commitment did not cross racial lines. The army remained segregated. During the interwar years, one African-American chaplain, Alexander Thomas, served as the post chaplain at Fort Benning, Georgia where he coordinated the religious life of 850 black soldiers. When queried by the YMCA about services for African Americans, Axton characterized Thomas as “an exceptionally capable colored man [who] yields tremendous influence with his regiment.”<sup>57</sup> Thomas served in the same capacity as other chaplains of his time—and, by Axton’s word, met the standards set by military—but his authority and impact extended only to men who shared his skin color. Leaders of the National Baptist, African Methodist Episcopal (AME),

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<sup>56</sup> Report of the Pan-Denominational Conference, May 4-6, 1926, Section XI, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 257, Folder 337 (Pan-Denominational Conference), NARA II.

<sup>57</sup> John Axton to F.A. McCarl, October 1, 1923, RG 247 (1920-23), Box 2, Folder 080 (YMCA), NARA II. Thomas died in 1937 and by 1940, three African-American chaplains served in the army. In 1940, the Office of the Chief of Chaplains claimed, “there is not any race discrimination against Negro Chaplains, either as to appointment or promotion...The War Department policy...is to assign Negro Chaplains for Negro troops.” There is no reason to believe the War Department policy with regard to African-American chaplain assignments had changed or loosened prior to 1940 (George Rixey to Ines Cavert, June 10, 1940, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 66, Folder 080 (Federal Council of Churches of Christ), NARA II).

and African Methodist Episcopal (AMEZ) churches were invited to and attended the major conferences in the 1920s. Yet while the War Department deliberately encouraged a podium of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish speakers, it did not ask African-American clergy to move beyond the audience.

The Navy cultivated and prided itself on an even more elite officer corps than the Army; this conceit mixed with racism to deride the possibility of non-white chaplains. While Catholics could present the credentials that appealed to the Navy, the Navy did not find all Catholics acceptable. In 1930, George Waring, a chaplain who went on to work for the Military Ordinariate, wrote to Navy Chief of Chaplains Sydney Evans, to inquire about how to handle a Filipino priest's chaplain application. He enclosed a photograph of the priest and said, "As it is the first application of a Philippine to become a Navy Chaplain, I thought I would write to you to find out what is the attitude of the Department regarding such an appointment, before replying to Father Rodriquez's letter." Evans replied the next day, advising Waring of the priest's incompatibility with Navy needs. "I regret to inform you that the Navy Department does not deem it advisable to consider the question of Father Rodriquez's appointment at this time. All Navy Chaplains must be able to officiate anywhere, and as ministers must be acceptable, in theory at any rate, to all officers and men in the Navy. This would not be true in the case of a Chaplain who was a Filipino," he wrote. "If the Corps were much larger such an appointment might be considered, but at present it is out of the question."<sup>58</sup> While the Navy endorsed a more minimal pluralism than the Army, it nonetheless promoted an ecumenical religious environment in which Protestant and Catholic chaplains could care for one another's flocks. But a Filipino Catholic, like an African-American Protestant, could not cross these boundaries. More importantly, the Navy would not impose even its limited notions of

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<sup>58</sup> George J. Waring to Sydney K. Evans, July 15, 1930 and Sydney K. Evans to George J. Waring, July 16, 1930 in RG 24, E377, Box 2, Folder Army + Navy Chaplain Correspondence (Catholic, 1917-41), NARA I.



toleration on race, it would not insist that a Filipino Catholic priest could be acceptable to all even “in theory” or as ordered by the Naval command. Interfaith cooperation thus ceased at the intractable color line.

### **Alliances: The Military Chaplaincy and Civilian Interfaith Organizations**

Under the vaulted ceilings of Washington’s National Cathedral, during the depths of the Depression, a handful of leading DC clergy decided to invite every local religious leader to join them in strengthening religious life in the city. They possessed an expansive view of religion and included such faith traditions beyond the common trilogy of Protestant Catholic and Jew, as Christian Scientists, Latter Day Saints, Quakers, Russian Orthodox, and Seventh-Day Adventists. The participation of two of Washington’s leading rabbis, Solomon Metz of the then-Orthodox Adas Israel Congregation and Abram Simon of the Reform Washington Hebrew Congregation, demonstrated an awareness of Jewish religious diversity. And perhaps most surprisingly for the segregated nation’s capital, the committee also sought out and invited African-American clergy from different churches. Despite prevailing racial and religious intolerance of the 1930s, Washington DC’s clergy championed a citywide program of cooperative religious outreach and uplift through a newly-formed Committee on Religious Life in the Nation’s Capital (CRLNC). As the efforts of CRLNC demonstrate, by the mid-1930s, voluntary religious associations began to map military ideas onto civilian life.

At an organizational meeting eight months later, in January 1935, a larger group resolved to hold “a meeting for Ministers of all communions to be held in some neutral place that is appropriate and central, with four speakers representing the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish faiths and a high officer of the government.” The latter addition was no accident, for the Committee had also determined that “the movement will include in its scope all races, creeds, parties, and groups, but as

over half of the people in the District are mainly dependent upon government employment...it will naturally give special attention to the needs of government employees.”<sup>59</sup> In its effort to lead the District’s citizenry to embrace the doctrines and practices of religious traditions and to sanctify religion as a pillar of American democracy, this nascent interfaith and interracial group recognized Washington as a unique city, one built upon and fortified by the business of government.

Four of the nation’s state-supported clergy—the Army and Navy Chiefs of Chaplain as well as the Senate and House Chaplains—served on the CRLNC. They helped the fledgling organization gain access to the otherwise closed civil service and military address lists. By the mid-1930s, military and civilian branches of government began opening high-level positions to religious minorities while remaining racially segregated. However, the military—and the Army in particular—had been explicitly grappling with the management of religious diversity for almost two decades. Indeed, the Committee’s emphasis on the shared goal of a robust religious life strengthened rather than weakened by religious diversity echoed the War Department’s perspective on the military chaplaincy articulated a dozen years earlier. The military was of course not the only organization anticipating interfaith cooperation; in the 1920s, the National Council (later, Conference) of Christians and Jews (NCCJ) also began to chart out terrain in which religion united rather than divided American society. Yet the NCCJ also benefited from military contacts: not only was one of its founders Secretary of War during World War I, but many former military chaplains contributed their experiences and multifaith clerical networks.

The nativism, antisemitism, and anti-Catholicism of the 1920s generated a counter-movement, a cascade of “goodwill” efforts that attempted to build coalitions across religions and collaborate to improve social welfare and stem discrimination. In 1928, the most enduring

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<sup>59</sup> Committee on Religious Life in the Nation’s Capital, Meeting Minutes, January 30, 1935; CRLNC, Memorandum, February 25, 1935, RG 24, Entry 377, Box 12, Folder: Religious Life in the Nation’s Capital, NARA I.

organization, NCCJ, began promoting tolerance in a bid to transform American society. As historian Kevin Schultz has documented, the NCCJ was more than a “wary collaboration” among Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. Rather, under the leadership of Presbyterian minister Everett Clinchy, the group strove to “make Protestants better Protestants, Catholics better Catholics, and Jews better Jews” while explaining differences and highlighting similarities in order to diminish sources of conflict, animosity, and prejudice.<sup>60</sup> Most importantly—and quite differently than earlier iterations of goodwill organizations—the NCCJ started as a tri-faith union, embedding the idea into its administrative structure by insisting on Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish co-chairs. When Clinchy needed a Protestant co-chairman, he immediately thought of Newton Baker. In trying to appeal to the former Secretary of War, Clinchy opted for flattery, remarking, “we need you because of what your name stands for in American life.” But he also pointed out what made Baker stand out from other prominent Protestants. “I happen to know,” Clinchy divulged, “that the Jews of America trust you and respect you as only a few of our nation’s leaders have gained their confidence. Will you permit me to propose your name?”<sup>61</sup> Baker’s war work, and effort at religious inclusion as politician and leader in Cleveland, made him far more amenable to a minority religious group than many other leading Protestants.

Baker agreed to lend his name and mind to the project. He pressed the group to maintain a multi-denominational, rather than nonsectarian, outlook. On a draft manuscript of Sunday School material, he rejected hedging as feeble and ineffectual. “A Christian ought to believe in Christianity, just as a Mohammedan should believe in Mohammedanism and a Jew in Judaism,” he wrote. “To introduce a lot of whereases and perhaps into the expression in the finality of one’s religious faith may be a polite concession, but it seems to me to be a disloyalty.” Instead, he expected all

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<sup>60</sup> Kraut, “A Wary Collaboration,” 193-230; Schultz, *Tri-Faith America*, 33.

<sup>61</sup> Everett Clinchy to Newton Baker, November 5, 1928, Newton Baker Papers, Box 168, Folder NCCJ 1931 & 1928, LOC.

believers—be they Catholics, Jews, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, or any other distinct entity—to believe their religion to be whole and true. “And if they do believe that,” he asked, “how can they possibly be asked to adopt a detached, speculative and deferential attitude on the subject.”<sup>62</sup> Much like Secretary of War Dwight Davis asserted to chaplains in the 1920s that religious liberty depended on religious difference, so too did Newton Baker articulate a view of religious toleration that rested on religious distinction. The War Department proved a viable training ground for the interfaith work of the NCCJ, tacitly teaching its leadership the value of recognizing rather than excising religious diversity as well as bracing them for a barrage of criticism. When personally attacked by anti-Catholics and antisemites who disdained his cooperation with other faiths, Baker mischievously replied, “I propose that you pray for me and I will pray for you and the God in whom we both believe will probably then give the greater influence to that one of us whose spirit is most in accord with His divine will.”<sup>63</sup>

In an effort to bring Baker’s calm resilience to the nation, the NCCJ initiated its first signature action: the tolerance trio. As Clinchy described it, “we are giving a practical demonstration that a Roman Catholic priest, a rabbi of a synagogue, and [a] Protestant cleric can live together harmoniously in a suitcase for seven weeks.”<sup>64</sup> The rabbi was Morris Lazaron who, from his World War I chaplain days onward, dedicated himself to interfaith collaboration while the priest, Father John Elliott Ross, joined the group from the University of Iowa. Together, they modeled civil discussion of religious tropes, stereotypes, and fears while promoting the common ground shared by Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. In this way, the NCCJ built on the work of the chaplaincy, carrying

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<sup>62</sup> Newton Baker to Everett Clinchy, April 21, 1930, Newton Baker Papers, Box 168, Folder NCCJ 1931 & 1928, LOC.

<sup>63</sup> Newton D. Baker to Richard F. Nelson, March 1932, Newton Baker Papers, Box 168, Folder NCCJ 1931 & 1928, LOC.

<sup>64</sup> Everett Clinchy, John Elliott Ross, and Morris Lazaron, “Story of the First Trio,” November 11, 1933, NCCJ Papers, Box 1, Folder First Trio, SWA.

the views and messages discussed at conferences in the 1920s to a larger national audience in the 1930s. Over time, the NCCJ broadened its reach through seminars, pamphlets, films, and Brotherhood Weeks, all of which eventually made their way into military environs over the next decade.<sup>65</sup> The military thus served as both instigator and recipient of the tri-faith message broadcast by the NCCJ.

As an early adopter and a receptive host of interfaith ventures, the chaplaincy linked grassroots organizing to the state apparatus. The Committee on Religious Life in the Nation's Capital underscored the importance of the military's religious program in creating access to avenues of power. The CRLNC directed its efforts toward government employees, but needed names and addresses of its target population. The presence of military and Congressional chaplains lent credence to their effort and material support to their plans. The Navy, for example, merrily provided the group with a list of DC newcomers.<sup>66</sup> In contrast, Leonard White, the Commissioner of the U.S. Civil Service, notified the group that official policy instructed the office "not to furnish lists of federal employees to outside organizations or agencies." But he would make an exception "in view of the purpose sought by the Committee on Religious Life in the Nation's Capital."<sup>67</sup> More importantly, the CRLNC hosted annual mass meetings in Constitution Hall, for which it asked the Army and Navy Chiefs of Chaplains to participate. It also used notable politicians to spread its message of religious cooperation. In 1935, for example, Secretary of State Cordell Hull addressed the gathering. When securing coverage from NBC, the CRLNC assured the media outlet that "at this particular time when there are such extremes of intolerance, as far as the churches are concerned,

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<sup>65</sup> Schultz, *Tri-Faith America*, 15-67.

<sup>66</sup> Edward Duff to Anson Phelps Stokes, January 6, 1936, APS Papers, Group 299, Series III, Box 188, Folder 317, Yale.

<sup>67</sup> Leonard White to Henry Barden, December 6, 1935, APS Papers, Group 299, Series III, Box 188, Folder 316, Yale. Acquiring a list from one federal agency often assisted the CRLNC in extracting lists from others. See Anson Phelps Stokes to Harriet Root, December 16, 1935, in which Stokes asked the U.S. Information Service of the National Emergency Council to follow the example set by the Civil Service Commission.

both in Germany and in Russia, the message of the Secretary of State before a gathering at the national Capital, of Jews, Protestants and Catholics will be a matter of national and perhaps international significance.”<sup>68</sup>

Collaborative efforts like the CRLNC arose in tandem with the NCCJ and exemplified the importance of Washington connections in promoting religious tolerance and toleration. Military chaplains often participated in more symbolic than substantive roles, yet even minor contributions helped cement military-civilian alliances. Cultivating these partnerships enabled the chaplaincy to test its religious message and expand its reach beyond military personnel to the broader American public. During the 1930s, then, an array of organizations and institutions began to prime Americans to accept the ecumenical worldview and moral monotheism embraced by the state through the military chaplaincy.

### **Ministering to Roosevelt’s Tree Army: The Military Chaplaincy and the CCC**

Saving the banks was a priority for the President-elect as he journeyed to Washington, DC days before his inauguration in March 1933. America had experienced depressions before, of course, but none had so thoroughly shaken the economic and social foundations of the United States. Rampant speculation decimated corporations; farmers wrung their hands as prices plummeted and credit froze; workers found themselves unemployed, on the brink of losing their homes and scavenging for food. Calamity supplanted panic as swelling poverty overwhelmed local benevolent institutions, no longer able to assist adequately millions facing desperate conditions without resources. The day Franklin Delano Roosevelt took office marked more than an inauguration of a president. It harkened the inauguration of a national rescue effort, one ultimately defined as much by

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<sup>68</sup> Anson Phelps Stokes to Mr. Berkeley, Director—NBC, September 10, 1935, APS Papers, Group 299, Series III, Box 188, Folder 322, Yale.

intransigence and failure as by compromise and success.<sup>69</sup> But before Roosevelt uttered the oath of office with his hand resting on a 1686 Dutch Bible, on the train ride to his new home, the patrician Episcopalian told his Catholic campaign advisor that religious faith would buoy the American people. That sentiment sustained him as he rallied Congress to open the banks, secure farms, create jobs, build infrastructure, and resuscitate the country.<sup>70</sup>

For Roosevelt in 1933, faith was private, religion a personal matter best left to man and his maker. But when he ad-libbed the language of his inaugural address on the dais, changing “this is a day of consecration” to “this is a day of national consecration,” he shifted from a personal sense of the sacred to the sanctification of secular politics. Roosevelt was not the first president to invite religion into the civic space. Thanking the divine and asking for providential blessings was part and parcel of the presidential repertoire. Lincoln, the only formally unchurched leader, had used the same rhetoric of consecration at Gettysburg, recognizing the role of dead Civil War soldiers in ushering in new freedoms. Roosevelt also needed faith to forestall fear long enough to bring about a national economic recovery. Little did the chaplaincy know on that cold and gray inauguration day that it would become a significant engine of spiritual solace and moral suasion.

The chaplaincy, constrained like the rest of the military by the moribund economy and isolationist politics, was about to embark on a grand experiment. Six months earlier, chaplains staffing Civilian Military Training Camps (CMTC) in dual roles as religious leaders and post bankers, observed a ninety-percent decline in the amount of money deposited with them as well as a sharp decrease in valuables men brought to camp. Nevertheless, they claimed, “the scarcity of funds did

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<sup>69</sup> On the New Deal, see: William Leuchtenberg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal: 1932-1940* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963); Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds., *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995); David Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2013).

<sup>70</sup> Anthony Badger, *FDR: The First Hundred Days* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008), 23-4.

not have a depressing effect on the students. They seemed to accept the condition as a matter of course, due to general economic depression.”<sup>71</sup> The Depression altered the chaplains’ behavior as well, for fewer chaplains than ever attended the annual meeting in Baltimore amidst a deluge of spring rain in 1933.<sup>72</sup> In a matter of months, however, New Deal legislation would rescue the chaplaincy. By mid-spring 1933, a flurry of correspondence began as military and civilian religious leaders began to implement the much-discussed ecumenical vision of the 1920s. Less than a month after he took office, Roosevelt signed legislation creating the Civilian Conservation Corps. Officially intended to protect forests, counter soil erosion, control flooding, and create access to nature, the public works program hired and housed young men. As Roosevelt predicted in his proposal to Congress, by July, over 250,000 men were employed and deployed to over 1300 camps around the country. Over its decade-long existence, 2.5 million American men would participate in the CCC. Managing this effort required the cooperation of multiple federal agencies, including the departments of labor, agriculture, the interior, and war. Only the Army had the capacity to handle the manpower and personnel needs—screening, selecting, transporting, housing, feeding, and clothing—required by the camps. Sixteen years after the United States mobilized its army for World War I, the War Department mobilized FDR’s Tree Army.<sup>73</sup>

The CCC camps attempted to solve two problems simultaneously: creating employment opportunities for a desperately out-of-work population and developing sustainable strategies to preserve the nation’s natural resources. But the program, focused as it was on unmarried men between the ages of 18 and 25, also presented itself as an effort in character-building and citizenship-training. As historian Margot Canaday has demonstrated, CCC camps were “state-created

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<sup>71</sup> “Concerning the Chaplains: First Corps Area,” *The Army Chaplain* 3, no. 1 (October 1932): 9.

<sup>72</sup> “Annual Meeting of the Chaplains Association,” *The Army Chaplain* 4, no. 1 (July 1933): 3-4.

<sup>73</sup> Badger, *FDR: The First Hundred Days*, 56; James J. McEntee, *Now They Are Men: The Story of the CCC* (Washington, DC: National Home Library Foundation, 1940), 9-12.



enclaves of male intimacy” that framed its population as family men by requiring them to give most of their earnings to “dependents”—most frequently their parents or siblings.<sup>74</sup> As such, they were places to impress particular state-sanctioned values upon men, not the least of which was religion. Roosevelt promised Congress and the nation that the benefits of the CCC included “moral and spiritual value” as creating work for the unemployed masses would “eliminate to some extent at least the threat that enforced idleness brings to spiritual and moral stability.”<sup>75</sup> Chaplains thus acquired a new role: stewarding the religious life of the CCC camps, which in turn conserved and preserved the military chaplaincy.

As the Army took on the CCC camp administration, the chaplaincy assumed responsibility for religion and welfare. A Federal Council of Churches recruiting brochure made this goal plain. It challenged “Christian Citizens” to help not only the 220,000 men in the Army and Navy but the “310,000 recently added reasons: the youth in the conservation camps.” The chaplain’s primary purpose, the funding appeal stated, was “to instill true religion into the hearts of the men he serves. This will be evidenced in strengthened character, right relation with God, and fitness for individual and social obligations.”<sup>76</sup> Like the soldiers who served in World War I, the millions of Americans who fulfilled stints in the CCC camps came from a range of backgrounds. James McEntee, first an executive assistant and then the CCC’s second director, described the camp population in terms that would become familiar during World War II. “They are from farms and cities, from Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish homes, from English, German, Irish, Italian, Polish, Swedish, French, and Indian ancestries. Some are illiterates, some college students.” No matter their backgrounds,

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<sup>74</sup> Canaday convincingly argues that these homosocial spaces enabled “gender and sexual deviance” (from heterosexual, family-man norms and expectations) to flourish and to be monitored by the state. Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 91-134.

<sup>75</sup> Quoted in McEntee, *Now They Are Men*, 10.

<sup>76</sup> General Committee, “Christian Citizens Challenged” appeal, 1934, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

however, “they have a new experience when they are all thrown together in the CCC. They must learn to live with other men of all faiths and backgrounds. They must learn to be tolerant of the opinions and respectful of the rights of others.”<sup>77</sup> To accomplish these goals, the nation needed more chaplains and more money to bolster their work.

Chaplains modeled this goal through their own behavior, though occasionally some needed reminders about how to proceed or at least how to ensure young men read their actions correctly. Early in the CCC camp experiment, Army Chief of Chaplains Julian Yates received a message from the director of the National Lutheran Council informing him that a Lutheran lad had alleged “the services of a Protestant Chaplain or minister in that camp are not to be had. He furthermore states that the only spiritual ministrations is given by a Catholic Priest who in his zeal, it is claimed, endeavors to have some of the boys turn Catholic.” Proselytization was unacceptable, and Yates forwarded the letter to the local chaplain so that he would conduct himself with proper neutrality. “Possibly the accusation of proselytizing efforts are wholly imaginary,” Yates acknowledged, “but the Chaplaincy of the U.S. Army has always steered a safe distance from even the appearance of such a practice and I am sure you will not be the exception.”<sup>78</sup> Four years later, then-Army Chief of Chaplains Alva Brasted explained, the chaplain’s “work is not denominational. This is not saying that a chaplain cannot hold a meeting especially for one group, but he must not fail to minister spiritually to all groups he serves.”<sup>79</sup> On occasion, Brasted also had to remind some chaplains about the reach of their service. In one case, he recognized as exemplary that one Chaplain Jenkins had arranged for all the Protestant services in each of his camps, but nevertheless remarked, “it is also

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<sup>77</sup> McEntee, *Now They Are Men*, 28.

<sup>78</sup> Julian E. Yates to John F. Leary, July 15, 1933, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

<sup>79</sup> Alva Brasted to Joseph Sizoo, March 19, 1937, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

his responsibility to see that Catholic services are held.”<sup>80</sup>

For the three Chiefs of Chaplains who served during the duration of the CCC—Julian Yates (Baptist), Alva Brasted (Baptist), and William Arnold (Catholic)—encouraging interfaith work was easy and obvious while harnessing the chaplain supply effectively proved to be the most difficult and constant challenge. In 1933, the Army Chief of Chaplains had 125 Regular Army chaplains at his disposal, hardly sufficient for the expanding CCC camp system. Chaplains in the Reserve Corps numbered 1200, and they provided one solution to the ever-present provisioning issue. But their availability varied, because they usually held ministerial positions in congregations that expected their presence. A September 1933 report from the Federal Council’s General Committee on Army and Navy Chaplains announced, for example, “the continuation of the Conservation Camps through the winter makes it important that the places of Reserve Chaplains who have been carrying on the work during the summer months, but who will need to return to their pastorates in the fall, shall be filled by other Chaplains not otherwise employed.”<sup>81</sup>

As the primary source of Protestant chaplains, the General Committee consistently proposed using civilian clergymen to augment the work of military chaplains. In fact, Roy B. Guild, the organization’s executive secretary, thought the CCC camps could provide relief for unemployed clergy as well as unemployed young men. He wrote to Chief of Chaplains Yates to encourage him to pay 75 to 100 “very capable” jobless ministers as “temporary chaplains” in order to aid the War Department in fulfilling its goals to fortify religion in the CCC.<sup>82</sup> To Guild’s presumed dismay, Yates replied, “I am sorry to say there is no authority for the employment of civilians for welfare work

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<sup>80</sup> Alva Brasted to Joseph Sizoo, March 25, 1935, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

<sup>81</sup> Report of the General Committee on Army and Navy Chaplains, September 21, 1933, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

<sup>82</sup> Roy B. Guild to Julian E. Yates, June 16, 1933, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

(including religious activities) in the Conservation Camps.”<sup>83</sup> Although some civilian pastors were ably assisting chaplains as volunteers, paid work was restricted to authorized chaplains. Notably, the General Committee saw a “decided increase” in applicants to the Army reserve chaplaincy after the CCC camps opened. Over the first seven months of 1933, 122 prospective military ministers contacted them, and 66 percent did so after the opening of Camp Roosevelt in Virginia’s George Washington National Forest in mid-April 1933.<sup>84</sup> Five years later, by April 1938, Reserve Chaplains presided over five times the number of worship services than Regular Chaplains.<sup>85</sup>

Outfitting the Army with additional reserve chaplains did not resolve all the logistical problems associated with the CCC camps, however. The biggest obstacle was distance. The CCC divided the country into nine Corps Areas, and many chaplains received assignments to serve up to 20 camps within broad geographic territories. E. Story Hildreth, a civilian Congregationalist minister in Connecticut, complained about the volume of work chaplains faced. He was trying to assist by volunteering his time and services in local camps, but observed the pitfalls of this work. “I don’t envy the Chaplains in charge of the work in Vermont. I am told that he has over a dozen camps already, and more to follow – and no appropriation,” Hildreth complained. “He is probably rather busy. I was rather busy, too, before this extra duty was thrust upon me, but I’ll help.”<sup>86</sup> Somewhat resigned to the state of affairs, Hildreth observed and expressed a microscopic version of what chaplains in the American West faced. In California, Rabbi David Greenberg—a rabbi turned part-time chaplain—described the conditions he confronted in the Fresno, California area: “The roads, for the most part, were one lane, unpaved, generally gravel and, in some places, just hard-packed

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<sup>83</sup> Julian E. Yates to Roy Guild, June 19, 1933, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

<sup>84</sup> Report of the General Committee on Army and Navy Chaplains, September 21, 1933, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

<sup>85</sup> Gushwa, *The Best and Worst of Times*, 66.

<sup>86</sup> E. Story Hildreth to Federal Council (written on back of financial appeal), 1933, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

dirt.” In April 1935, he found the mountain roads impassable “due to flood and road conditions...I would be traveling on a one lane mountain road with a drop of several hundred feet at the edge into a valley. The column of flash flood waters would start racing down the road ahead of me and I would have to back up the road for a quarter of a mile to a place where I could turn around and head for home.”<sup>87</sup> Weather could be “a great handicap” and transportation “very vexing,” which in turn upheld the importance of paid chaplains rather than volunteer clergy because civilian “pastors should not be expected to travel the hazardous trails in such a winter as this.”<sup>88</sup>

Geography and weather played significant roles in CCC work because the government tasked the chaplains with so many camps. As the District Chaplain in Minnesota, Alva Brasted oversaw the work of chaplains in 62 camps while William Arnold presided over chaplains in Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico while personally attending to 20 camps.<sup>89</sup> Chaplain Richard Braunstien (Methodist) aptly characterized this work within the history of his own denominational tradition. In “The Circuit Rider Returns,” he wrote, “the soul of Francis Asbury marches on” in the form of the CCC chaplain.<sup>90</sup> In automobiles rather than astride horses, CCC chaplains traversed the country, demonstrating the state’s faith in faith.

The limited number of clergy available to tend to the men flung across the country created opportunities for creative chaplains to use newer technologies to reach more men. David Greenberg, the Fresno rabbi, teamed up with a Catholic priest and Episcopalian minister to develop a weekly radio program: the Radio Forum of Better Understanding. Despite the clunky name, the show lasted seventeen years. The religious triad—much like the NCCJ’s traveling trios—offered

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<sup>87</sup> David Greenberg, “Recollections of a CCC Chaplain,” I-249, Box 30, Folder 207, AJHS.

<sup>88</sup> Alva Brasted to Roy B. Guild, April 17, 1934; Edwin Burling to Roy B. Guild, August 4, 1933; Alva Brasted to Roy B. Guild, February 24, 1936, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

<sup>89</sup> Gushwa, *The Best and Worst of Times*, 61.

<sup>90</sup> Richard Braunstien, “The Circuit Rider Returns,” *The Army Chaplain* 8, no. 3 (January 1937): 6.

commentary on the “religious understanding of the three faiths” and encouraged men of faith to talk to one another and share their religious experiences. Whether CCC listeners found the show stimulating for its content or simply because “men stationed in lonely outposts” appreciated company in the wilderness, the CCC demonstrated that interfaith cooperation on a larger military scale was possible.<sup>91</sup> The Chaplains’ Association encouraged its members to lead “non-sectarian” services: “Catholics, Protestants, and Jews should be made welcome, and the service should be sufficiently broad in its scope as to allow all to attend without embarrassment.” What exactly that service entailed remained shrouded in mystery, but circulars, bulletins, and articles consistently encouraged inclusive pastoral care.<sup>92</sup>

The prominence of character-building among the CCC’s goals made ecumenical activities more attainable, since religious worship constituted only one dimension of the chaplain’s work. Chief of Chaplains Brasted emphasized this role when he reconfigured the four Cs of the Civilian Conservation Corps Camps to refer to “counsel, consecration, cooperation, [and] character,” the tasks to which he held the chaplains under his command. More specifically, he enumerated the values he expected chaplains to inculcate. “Our task is to help men build into their personalities faith, courage, honesty, reliability, self-control, unselfishness, love, and all the essential parts of our highest character,” he wrote in a column for *The Army Chaplain*. “We are workers together with the Divine Architect in perfecting this spiritual building.” The attributes he prized, much like Benjamin Franklin’s list of personal virtues, reflected the ecumenical orientation of moral monotheism.

Trained at the University of Chicago’s Divinity School, Brasted disavowed denominationalism and bigotry to focus on a collaborative effort “with all my comrades of all Churches in the work of the

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<sup>91</sup> David Greenberg, “Recollections of a CCC Chaplain,” I-249, Box 30, Folder 207, AJHS.

<sup>92</sup> Joseph Sides, “The Functions of the CCC Chaplain,” *The Army Chaplain* 5, no. 1 (July 1934): 12. By the late 1930s, more articles discussed sermon topics that could apply to all three religious traditions. Chaplain Ernst Karsten (Lutheran) offered a particularly sensitive list that acknowledged the greater overlap between Protestant and Catholic themes but still suggested some topics that apply to Protestants, Catholics, and Jews in “The Chaplain and Religious Observances,” *The Army Chaplain* 8, no. 4 (April 1938): 131-134.

Kingdom.”<sup>93</sup> Tinged with Christianity’s worldview of building a Kingdom of God, Brasted could not escape his own Protestant mores.

At times Brasted issued orders that seemed to contradict his own assertions of broadmindedness. He allowed that “not all Army officers are professing Christians” but, he continued, “I have never found a commanding officer who did not profess to be a believer in God.” That such believers may observe rituals differently or perform different rituals escaped his consideration. On the matter of worship services, for example, he proffered strict instructions. “The proper time for the formal service of worship is on Sunday morning. There can be no good substitute for this. Not even the popular Sunday evening service.”<sup>94</sup> Without offering either a theological or practical justification for this position, he ignored the fact that not all religions or denominations hold Sunday morning sacred.

The rhetoric of non-denominationalism masked Protestant assumptions. Take, for example, the “unique club” started by Chaplain Louis C. LaMotte (Presbyterian USA). He printed membership cards for the “Civilian Conservation Corps Christian Code Comrades.” The group asked men to pledge, “As a Christian man, enrolled in the CCC, I promise, trusting in God for help, to endeavor to live an upright life.” Men needed to “strive to be true to my religious convictions,” but the language understood that faith in Protestant terms, as personal and unmarked, consisting of only “private devotions and public worship.” Except for the promise to be a “Christian man,” the standards for entry were rather broad and benign. Members would avoid “carelessness and evil,” uphold and preserve morale in the camps, play fair and encourage others, and act as “a good comrade with my fellows.” Citizenship, the card reminded the club’s affiliates, was predicated on

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<sup>93</sup> Alva Brasted, “A Message from the Chief of Chaplains,” *The Army Chaplain* 4, no. 4 (April 1934): 6; Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Charles Eliot (New York: Collier & Son, 1909), 83-85.

<sup>94</sup> Alva Brasted, “News from the Office of the Chief of Chaplains,” *The Army Chaplain* 5, No. 1 (July 1934): 5.

honor and respect for authority figures and the pursuit of “orderliness, justice, and brotherhood.”<sup>95</sup> Citizens, in other words, were moral men. Orienting religious leadership around citizenship deterred sectarianism while testing the promise of universalism.

As such, the work of the chaplain was taxing and exhilarating. After a year and a half of engagement, the Federal Council’s General Committee surveyed their men in the field. The results were both promising and foreboding. On the one hand, the ministers described the enrollees as “seeking a better way of life.” They dwelled “in most unusual and unnatural circumstances, living together for the first time in new social units” away from the influence of home and family. This, the clergy decided, was helpful because most of the young men arrived from “houses that have both a social and economic maladjustment.” Paternalism notwithstanding, the chaplains viewed the men as excellent candidates for civic training because “their minds are plastic and approachable. They are willing to learn and to understand the responsibilities of citizenship.” As a result, they saw an “unparalleled need in these unusual circumstances of both a preaching and a pastoral ministry.” On the other hand, the stated ratio of one chaplain to eight camps was overconfident, with most chaplains traveling upwards of “607 miles over roads that often are not roads” to tend to men scattered among ten or more camps. Given that the leadership of each camp included a medical officer and an educational advisor, the General Committee implored the military to reduce the ratio to five camps per chaplain and assign a dedicated chaplain to camps located in remote wilderness

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<sup>95</sup> General Committee on Army and Navy Chaplains Bulletin, May 15, 1934, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II. Chaplain Charles Conrad (Baptist) created a comparable group known as the “Golden Principle Society.” Their membership cards read “In accepting membership in the GOLDEN PRINCIPLE SOCIETY, I will strive each day to mold my life after the pattern of ‘THE GREAT TEACHER,’ JESUS CHRIST, and to ‘DO UNTO THE OTHER FELLOW AS I WOULD HAVE THE OTHER FELLOW DO UNTO ME.’ I WILL ALWAYS GIVE MY FELLOW MAN A SQUARE DEAL.” Based on the so-called “Golden Rule,” the Golden Principle Society mixed a biblical precept of “love thy neighbor” (Leviticus 19:18) with Theodore Roosevelt’s emphasis on the middle ground of a “square deal” benefitting middle-class citizens and business alike. Charles L. Conrad, “CCC Religious Work,” *The Army Chaplain* 5, no. 2 (Oct 1934): 6.



areas, far from towns whose civilian clergy could pitch in.<sup>96</sup> Two years later, little had changed when Roy B. Guild lamented to Chief of Chaplains Alva Brasted, “I only wish we could prevail on the government to limit the number of camps [per chaplain] to six.”<sup>97</sup>

The requests for more chaplains and lower ratios continued to pour in, leading the government to consider paying civilian clergy instead of relying on the spirit of cooperation for aid. At a conference attended by representatives from the General Committee, Catholic Church, and Jewish Welfare Board, Catholics and Jews seemed open to the possibility of contract clergymen, paid on a limited basis for their work in the CCC just as select doctors and educators were. Protestants, however, expressed strong reservations. “So far as the use of money was concerned...it should be used by the government itself,” Roy B. Guild reported. The Federal Council thought it prudent “that there should be no subsidizing of the work of any religious organization.” In other words, they had no interest in serving as government religious contractors rather than chaplains. Far from a viable solution, Guild argued, contracting civilians presaged “an executive problem, impossible of solution.”<sup>98</sup>

The bluster about administrative headaches disguised a much bigger and more intractable problem than how to satisfy the personnel needs of the CCC: a turn to anti-militarism and pacifism among many Protestant churches and with it, a critique of the chaplaincy itself. The outcry began three years before the CCC legislation arrived on FDR’s desk. During a Lenten sermon at Washington’s First Congregational Church, Reverend Peter Ainslie of Baltimore spoke bitingly against war. His were fighting words to an audience that included Chief of Chaplains Julian Yates in

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<sup>96</sup> Report of the General Committee on Army and Navy Chaplains, December 15, 1934, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

<sup>97</sup> Roy B. Guild to Alva Brasted, February 19, 1936, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

<sup>98</sup> Roy B. Guild to Rev. W. R. Harshaw, Jan 11, 1935, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

the pews. “There is no more justification for being a chaplain in the army or navy,” the minister thundered, “than there is for being a chaplain in a speakeasy.” His host, Jason Noble Pierce—a World War I chaplain and pastor to Calvin Coolidge—glowered, publicly disavowing Ainslie’s claims as insulting and inaccurate.<sup>99</sup> But what the *Atlanta Constitution* deemed “the venom of his pseudo-pacifist passion” was merely an opening shot.<sup>100</sup> As the CCC camps magnified the role of military chaplains, charges of immoral militarism followed.

Like those dedicated to the military chaplaincy, pacifists spent the 1920s reshaping their vision for the nation and the world. The War Resisters League (WRL), the secular proponent of absolute pacifism, consolidated its organization, retaining its single-issue focus on peace. Through parades, walks, strikes, radio shows, and leaflets, the WRL advocated nonviolent resistance to all forms of war.<sup>101</sup> The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, a secular female advocacy group, succeeded the Women’s Peace Party. In melding feminism and progressivism, it mustered women as peace activists based on presumptions about female moral concerns and visions.<sup>102</sup> Dorothy Day’s Catholic Worker movement animated priests, nuns, and lay Catholics who sought to divest themselves from the machinery of war and oppression.<sup>103</sup> The Fellowship of Reconciliation, the left-wing interfaith organization dedicated to advocating Christian nonviolence, tripled its membership from 2000 to 6000 between 1920 and 1928. What it lacked in mass appeal, it made up for in organizational fury. It not only helped bring together multiple denomination peace

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<sup>99</sup> “Minister Resents ‘Slur’ on Chaplains,” *NYT*, April 16, 1930.

<sup>100</sup> “Ainslie on Chaplains,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, April 17, 1930.

<sup>101</sup> Scott H. Bennett, *Radical Pacifism: The War Resisters League and Gandhian Nonviolence in America, 1915-1963* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 23-68.

<sup>102</sup> Melissa Klapper, *Ballots, Babies, and Banners of Peace: American Jewish Women’s Activism, 1890-1940* (New York: NYU Press, 2013); Joyce Blackwell, *No Peace Without Freedom: Race and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915-1975* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004); Linda Kay Schott, *Reconstructing Women’s Thoughts: The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom Before World War II* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); Carrie Foster, *The Women and the Warriors: The U.S. Section of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915-1946* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995).

<sup>103</sup> Klejment and Roberts, eds., *American Catholic Pacifism*.

fellowships but also used the “theology of the cross” to push for religious dissent against war and liberal democracy itself.<sup>104</sup>

Much as military leaders sought to sideline secular and religious peace activists alike as radicals unmoored from mainstream American priorities and politics, the reach of pacifists tread dangerously close to military operations. Peter Ainslie pursued his campaign to dissolve the relationship between the chaplaincy and the churches. At the 1933 meeting of the Church Peace Union, he proposed that denominations forbid their ministers from serving in the chaplaincy in war or in peace. The CCC, in other words, was as much a target as the chaplaincy during active conflict. Of all the civilian endorsing agencies, the Federal Council’s General Committee felt the influence of Christian pacifism most keenly. In the mid-1930s, the Newark Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Disciples of Christ, and the Evangelical and Reformed Churches of Christ all voted to withdraw their clergy from the chaplaincy or voted to disband the Federal Council’s General Committee.<sup>105</sup> In 1934, the Federal Council itself wondered how to address “a situation in which large numbers of men are separated from the usual civilian forms of religious ministrations. We have de facto a military parish.” Although the group concluded “this situation defines a responsibility which must be met, if humanly possible, consistently with the Church’s teaching about war and peace,” it left unstated how this would work in practice.<sup>106</sup>

Within months of the CCC’s formation, antiwar religious leaders began broadcasting their skepticism toward the enterprise, on the grounds that the Army was effectively gearing up for war. Appointed by the Federal Council to oversee religious work in the mid-Atlantic’s Third Corps Area, Thomas G. Speers worried Chief of Chaplains Julian Yates. The former Army chaplain, who had earned a Distinguished Service Cross during World War I, criticized the Reserve Officer Training

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<sup>104</sup> Kosek, *Acts of Conscience*, 8-9, passim.

<sup>105</sup> Gushwa, *The Best and Worst of Times*, 54.

<sup>106</sup> Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, September 28, 1934, RG 18, Box 1, Folder 18, PHS.

Corps from the pulpit and caused Yates to wonder whether he “may see the error of his way” and serve the CCC enthusiastically. “Candidly,” he wrote to the Federal Council, “I...believe his usefulness will be considerably diluted and our cause handicapped.”<sup>107</sup> The chaplaincy, even when assigned principally to CCC camps, became a site of religious study and conflict. Who, exactly, did chaplains serve? Could churches hold anti-war positions and endorse chaplains?

The Federal Council’s internal debates often spilled from private correspondence into the public sphere, leading Chief of Chaplains Brasted to warn the General Committee’s leadership about the deleterious effects of this debate. “As a result of sensational publicity,” he wrote in 1936, “many good Christian people in the military service...have come to feel that the hand of the church is against them because they are in the military service, and against the country.” Although Brasted recognized that the rabble-rousers did not necessarily represent the majority of church-goers, “the radical in the churches does our cause more harm than many realize,” and the Federal Council needed to contain them. He had little patience for these radicals and worried that “the ultra-pacifists’ non-resistance unpreparedness point of view” would come to dominate the Federal Council’s otherwise good work.<sup>108</sup> By the late-1930s, almost every issue of the quarterly *Army Chaplain* discussed pacifism in some form, frequently in direct opposition to voices emanating from the pages of *The Christian Century*, the major mainline Protestant periodical. To emphasize their service to the nation, the chaplains’ journal changed its standard cover image, swapping out the image of the chaplains’ insignia (a cross or a ten-commandments tablet) to an American flag, thus visually reinforcing its commitment to patriotism and the nation’s defense. Commissioned in non-combatant roles, chaplains attempted to navigate the dichotomous pulls of church and state through words,

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<sup>107</sup> Julian E. Yates to Roy B. Guild, July 8, 1933, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

<sup>108</sup> Alva Brasted to Roy B. Guild, February 24, 1936, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

trying to steer a middle course between pacifism and militarism, arguing that neither inaction nor aggression would benefit America. Nevertheless, growing tremors of war signaled changes ahead for the pulpits of civilian clergy and military chaplains alike.<sup>109</sup>

Brasted embarked on his own publicity campaign as well, publishing opinion pieces in denominational periodicals in order to make his case for the chaplaincy. In the *Lutheran Herald*, for example, he offered a “Defense of Chaplains: Plain Philosophy of a Practical Pacifist.” Drawing on Biblical and contemporary examples, he elaborated how the chaplaincy followed the model of Paul and how the military differed little from local police forces. To those who opposed war on the grounds it constituted a sin, he offered a litany of precedents usually framed as acceptable uses of force, from Joshua commanding an army of Israelites to Patrick Henry leading an American revolution. Since “no sane person wants war more than he wants disease or flood,” Brasted viewed the American military as a tool only of national defense. World peace, he concluded, rested on the ability to wage war for “better a righteous war than an unrighteous peace.”<sup>110</sup>

Little had changed a year later when the General Committee’s Chairman Joseph Sizoo attempted to allay the “great anxiety that oftentimes...is intimated that the Protestant Church has no longer loyal love and regard for those who are ministers of our faith in the Services.”<sup>111</sup> But Brasted was no longer content with platitudes. The “sensational anti-chaplaincy statements made by certain

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<sup>109</sup> Editorial Comment, *The Army Chaplain* 8, no. 1 (July 1937): 1; Cover, *The Army Chaplain* 9, no. 1 (July-Aug 1938); C. H. Woodward, “True Pacifism,” *The Army Chaplain* 8, no. 4 (April 1938): 140-141; Marty, *The Noise of Conflict*, 389; Gushwa, *The Best and Worst of Times*, 51-57; William Hughes, “A Thesis,” *The Army Chaplain* 9, no. 2 (Oct-Nov 1938): 56-63.

<sup>110</sup> Alva Brasted, “In Defense of Chaplains: Plain Philosophy of a Practical Pacifist,” *The Lutheran Herald*, (November 5, 1935): 1081-1083, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 74, Folder 080 (Lutheran (United), Volume 1), NARA II. The periodical was most likely that of the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America, which combined with other synods to become the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) in 1946, the American Lutheran Church in 1960, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1988. During this period, the Missouri Synod split from the Wisconsin Synod, with the former agreeing to supply chaplains and the latter maintaining its resistance. On the history of ELC chaplains, see Lawrence J. Lystig, “The Military Chaplaincy Program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1917-1960,” (MA Thesis: Luther Theological Seminary, 1977).

<sup>111</sup> Joseph Sizoo to Alva Brasted, February 16, 1937, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

religious leaders” was “unfortunate,” and so long as the “hostile barrage against the chaplaincy” continued, he could see little productive or helpful coming from it. In a world on the brink of war, with fighting in Spain and Manchuria in the daily news, the rancor toward both the chaplaincy specifically and “national preparedness as provided in the Constitution” generally would harm church and country. The Chief of Chaplains dedicated ten pages to defending the chaplaincy, outlining his understanding of chaplains’ roles, and asserting the importance of maintaining good relationships between the military and the churches. Although they perform non-denominational work, the denominational endorsement meant “they cannot be true representatives if they withdraw fellowship from their church or if the church withdraws fellowship from them.”<sup>112</sup>

While looming pacifism threatened to disrupt or shatter the mutually reinforcing alliance between the Federal Council and the military, civilian organizations used the CCC camps to try to shape the state’s work to their own objectives. Religious teetotalers concerned with the likely repeal of the eighteenth amendment used the CCC camps to champion alcohol restrictions. A Methodist pastor, for example, reported that “sad conditions” prevailed in Pennsylvania where there was “an established canteen selling liquor.” The drunks milling about town irritated locals who had “voted to remove all drink from our territory in this recent election. Our citizens are of a high type and want no drunken camps in our midst.” Local ministers had stopped and would continue to refuse to go to the CCC camps if the government did not contain the alcohol problem.<sup>113</sup>

Support for limiting alcohol consumption was relatively easy to procure compared to promotion of racial equality and justice. CCC policy deliberately sent men away from their home communities, thus engendering contact between unemployed Americans from different

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<sup>112</sup> Alva Brasted to Joseph Sizoo, March 19, 1937, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

<sup>113</sup> S.B. Bidlock to Roy B. Guild, November 13, 1933, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

backgrounds. Despite the geographic, ethnic, and religious mixing of men, however, the CCC was racially segregated with opportunities for African-American men scarce and underdeveloped.<sup>114</sup> In line with standard Army policy, black chaplains could only minister to black men, and chaplains, along with educational advisors and medical officers, represented the few leadership positions granted to African Americans in the CCC camps. In 1933, the Regular Army included three black chaplains (out of five total black officers), and by 1935, eight African-American chaplains had been appointed to CCC camps. When the number dwindled to four in 1938, Edgar Brown, a CCC administrator and founder of the National Negro Council, complained to the War Department.<sup>115</sup> A ratio of one chaplain to 25 African-American CCC camps was hardly satisfactory much less equal or even workable.

As an ecumenical body that included African-American churches and organized a committee on race relations, the Federal Council became a clearinghouse for race-related criticism of the CCC and tried to leverage its standing to alter racist assumptions embedded in CCC policies. After conducting an interview with Loyd Hickman, a black minister who had served as an educational advisor in a CCC camp, the General Committee alerted Chief of Chaplains Alva Brasted to problems Hickman had identified. First, as in most camps, white officers commanded black men. When Hickman arrived and replaced a white educational advisor, he was not quartered with the other officers but sent to the infirmary to sleep and to the enrollee's bathroom to shower. The prevailing racial and racist logic meant that his race denied him the rights his status conveyed. Second, he quickly learned that white officers "had too many assumptions relative to the

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<sup>114</sup> Patrick Clancey, "Conserving the Youth: The Civilian Conservation Corps Experience in the Shenandoah National Park," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 105, no. 4 (Autumn 1997): 460.

<sup>115</sup> Calvin W. Gower, "The Struggle of Blacks for Leadership Positions in the Civilian Conservation Corps: 1933-1942," *Journal of Negro History* 61, no. 2 (April 1976): 130-1, 132-3. Brown's lobbying efforts helped improve the leadership options for African Americans but earned him the ire of CCC Director Robert Fechner, who deemed him a pest. Only a couple camps acquired a full slate of African-American officers, including commanders. The restriction on black commanders stemmed from the government's interest in sating, rather than baiting, local communities who feared and resisted African-American CCC camps.

dispositions, temperament, and desires of Negroes.” One report claimed they “were lazy and would not read” and the officers therefore blocked access to the temporary traveling library. “The expressed fear was that the young men would take the books and never return them and not read them, of course.” But Hickman opened the library and “the books were always returned promptly. He found, therefore, that the boys would read.”<sup>116</sup>

Access to the Chief of Chaplains enabled the Federal Council to lobby additional authority figures. Brasted’s response, more platitude than substance, highlighted the difficulty African Americans faced in extracting concrete concessions to change the separate and unequal CCC facilities. The Chief of Chaplains responded to the complaint by allowing that “the race question is a delicate one” and “we don’t need anything to happen in the CCC which will make for ill feeling between the races.” He advised pursuing the issue with Second Corps Area chaplain who could help resolve the matter. There was very little “delicate” about the hurdles revealed to the Federal Council aside from the government’s desire to mute and ignore racial discrimination. Brasted acknowledged as much when he stated, “there is dynamite in reports of this kind. All that is needed to set it off is certain publicity.” Seeking to avoid an uncontrollable explosion but “at a loss to know what to suggest regarding the solution of this old and vexing problem,” all he could offer was “the key to the solution of all social problems...Christ.” Eager to dispatch the problem of discrimination without needlessly entangling himself in it, the Chief of Chaplains assured the Federal Council that “all our Corps Area Commanders desire that both the white and colored enrollees shall receive all the benefits to which they are entitled.”<sup>117</sup> Such assurances meant little to the men who lacked fair and just access to the material advantages the CCC gave white men. But the General Committee’s

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<sup>116</sup> Roy B. Guild to Alva Brasted, October 18, 1934; Department of Race Relations, Federal Council, Reverend Loyd Hickman, Interview with Dr. Haynes, September 14, 1934, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.

<sup>117</sup> Alva Brasted to Roy B. Guild, October 24, 1934, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 69, Folder 080 (General Committee, Volume 1), NARA II.



attempt to work through the chaplaincy signaled the opportunity the chaplaincy provided beyond religion: even when unsuccessful, civilian religious organizations could poke and prod the state through its spiritual and moral endeavors, hoping that with enough advocacy, results might eventually follow.

## Conclusion

In 1938, Reserve Chaplain William Hughes (Catholic) submitted a thesis in support of his application for promotion in rank. The study's premise assumed a "major emergency" in which a Reserve chaplain was ordered to active duty and sent to a training camp as a division chaplain responsible for overseeing other chaplains. There, they would serve recruits "from a nearby city in which pacifism is rampant due to the activities of clerical and lay propagandists." After surveying the young men, the chaplain learns that 60 percent are religiously affiliated, 25 percent are "indifferent to all religion" and 15 percent are "avowed atheists or have such tendencies." How the chaplain ought to handle this hypothetical situation required addressing three inter-related questions. What should the chaplain do to "make suitable religious provision and moral guidance"; to engender enthusiasm and high morale; and to "prevent possible harmful influence which might be occasioned by the proximity of the camp to the nearby pacifist community?"<sup>118</sup>

Hughes was confident that chaplains could tackle this situation and mold the men into faithful, loyal citizens. After consulting with the local command staff, he recommended the chaplains work out regular worship times, with services expected for Protestants and Catholics on Sundays and services for Jews on Saturdays. To address the men who appeared agnostic toward religion, he suggested making sermons attractive and energetic, tapping the mind as well as stirring the heart. Certain that "peacetime lethargy...gives way in war time in many cases to serious

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<sup>118</sup> William Hughes, "A Thesis," *The Army Chaplain* 9, no. 2 (Oct-Nov 1938): 56.

thoughts” on God, religion, and death, he deemed music desirable and philosophical discussions essential to reaching the atheistically inclined. Services that could be conducted by ministers, priests, and rabbis interchangeably offered an ideal opportunity to bring together the community. As for the threat of pacifism, the chaplain would have to decimate its influence, in part by bringing in outside speakers whose personal conversion experiences led them to forsake their pacifist and possibly disloyal pasts. Aiming for the “fraternal correction of [the] recalcitrant” required vigilance as well as an eagerness to “find the cure and the tonic in love of God and country and fellowman.”<sup>119</sup>

Hughes’ concern about the atheist-pacifist threat to spiritual and physical preparedness was exaggerated. But it was also fitting, for it illuminated the state of the chaplaincy in a world on the brink of war. While many Americans sought to distance themselves from the rapidly approaching European conflagration, the likelihood of a “major emergency” nevertheless increased. As chaplains read Hughes’ plans in fall 1938, newspapers carried word of a night of broken glass in Germany, where synagogues went up in flames in coordinated attacks on Jews. A year earlier, Japan had invaded China and less than a year later, Germany would occupy Poland. This much was clear: after almost two decades of crafting an ecumenical vision for the American military chaplaincy, chaplains understood that their responsibilities included ministering to Protestants, Catholics, and Jews alike. They recognized that the religion and patriotism could be linked, with God, country, and brotherhood coalescing into a state-supported religious adhesive critical to national defense. And so it was in April 1941, with the world at war and the United States at peace and with four years experience as Army Chief of Chaplains, that the Catholic priest reflected on his time in the military. “When I came into the Army, the Chaplains’ organization was a scooter outfit; and now it is more like a streamlined high-powered vehicle,” William R. Arnold remarked.<sup>120</sup> Eight months later, his

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<sup>119</sup> William Hughes, “A Thesis,” *The Army Chaplain* 9, no. 2 (Oct-Nov 1938): 56-63.

<sup>120</sup> Proceedings of the Conference of Administrative Chaplains, April 2-3, 1941, RG 247 (1920-1945), Box 257, Folder 337 (Conference – Administrative Chaplains, 1941), NARA II.

revved-up religious machine would be tested on an uncharted and unprecedented track.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Gospel of *Chaplain Jim*: Boundaries of Religious Citizenship in the Warfare State

When Amiela Haznar tuned her radio dial to WBZ on weekday mornings in the summer of 1942, she found an on-air friend, a confidante, a potential savior.<sup>1</sup> Haznar, the mother of a deployed soldier, regularly listened to *Chaplain Jim*, a radio drama that the Blue Network—the more prestigious of NBC’s two radio networks—began broadcasting four months after the United States entered World War II.<sup>2</sup> Like the heroes of interwar, golden-age detective fiction,<sup>3</sup> the eponymous Chaplain Jim could solve any problem. From week to week, the kind and clever Chaplain Jim solved pragmatic, metaphysical, psychological, spiritual, military, financial, and emotional challenges faced by enlisted soldiers in shows ranging from the “Case of the Soldier Who Never Received Mail” and the “Case of the Soldier Who Didn’t Believe in Miracles” to the “Case of the Soldier Who (Thought

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<sup>1</sup> Amiela Haznar to Chaplain Jim, July 20, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 23, Folder 000.77 (Chaplain Jim Administration Correspondence), NARA II. A number of mothers wrote directly to Chaplain Jim, assuming he was a real chaplain, not a character. This behavior was typical for the time; many women also wrote to Betty Crocker, another invented radio personality whose spirited advice and exhortations dominated the airwaves. See Susan Marks, *Finding Betty Crocker* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005), 35-82 and passim.

<sup>2</sup> NBC’s dual networks attracted the attention of the FCC, which determined that multiple networks constituted a monopoly, thus forcing the sale of the Blue Network in summer 1943. Two years later, the Blue Network became ABC.

<sup>3</sup> On detective fiction, see Julian Symons, *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972). Symons suggests that Philip Van Doren Stern marked the end of the Golden Age of detective fiction in his 1941 article, “The Case of the Corpse in the Blind Alley,” *Virginia Quarterly Review* (Spring 1941): 227-236. *Chaplain Jim* also implicitly followed the conventions of what Larry May has termed the World War II “conversion narrative” in which Americans overcome ethnic and class divisions at home to defeat the enemy abroad. See Larry May, “Making the American Consensus: The Narrative of Conversion and Subversion in World War II films,” in *The War in American Culture, Society, and Consciousness During World War II*, eds., Lewis Erenberg and Susan Hirsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996): 71-104.

He) Didn't Fit In" and the "Case of the Soldier Who Found God."<sup>4</sup>

When *Chaplain Jim* debuted on the week of April 6, 1942, it projected the image of the military chaplaincy that the state had envisioned, the realization of the tri-faith religious project initiated in World War I and experimented with during the interwar years. Chaplain Jim had to reach soldiers of every religious background as well as an audience comprised of a range of faiths. To millions of American listeners on the homefront, the Gospel of *Chaplain Jim* quietly insisted on religion's centrality to the state. The radio show storylines helped embed the military's religious gospel—an ideological commitment to moral monotheism, ecumenism and religious cooperation—into civilian culture. The state's religious project, carefully crafted and tested in the two decades between the wars, went public in World War II, reaching a mass audience of soldiers and Americans writ large through both the large-scale implementation of the chaplaincy and through public-private enterprises like radio shows and other publicity campaigns.

Because the military chaplaincy connected religion to national identity and citizenship, it beckoned members of minority religious and racial groups to use religion to advocate for themselves as equally American and deserving of recognition as full citizens. The very act of categorizing—or making legible—Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism as American necessarily placed other faiths outside its bounds.<sup>5</sup> African-American believers stood inside and outside these categories, unequivocally part of these faiths (most notably, Protestantism) and irrefutably different by virtue of historical and state-sanctioned segregation.<sup>6</sup> Excluded groups such as the Eastern Orthodox and Buddhists pushed for access to the military chaplaincy precisely because it represented a powerful channel of acceptance and admission to American religion and politics. Yet the instantiation of

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<sup>4</sup> For a complete list of titles, see scripts located in RG 247 (1920-45), Boxes 23-28, NARA II.

<sup>5</sup> On legibility, see James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 2-3 and passim.

<sup>6</sup> On the complexities and ambiguities of black religion as a category, see Barbara Savage, *Your Spirits Walk Beside Us: The Politics of Black Religion* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008).

Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism not as state churches but as paragons of state-sanctioned religion also generated a religious reckoning from within. While American Catholics and Jews celebrated their entrance into the American mainstream, wartime conditions forced certain adaptations and concessions. Most importantly, however, underneath the veneer of placid Protestantism, this vast category was breaking apart as it stretched to encompass Mormons, Christian Scientists, and Seventh-Day Adventists and strained to incorporate evangelicals and fundamentalists alongside the quintessential liturgical and modernist Protestant chaplains.

The Navy, unlike the Army, actively resisted these burgeoning controversies by isolating itself from the efforts of minorities—religious and racial—to access to the chaplaincy. As an institution, the Navy was smaller (some 2000 chaplains served fleets and ports over the course of the war, in contrast to over 9000 who donned the Army's camouflage), more tied to class-based elitism (and thus generally unwilling to interpret requirements flexibly), and more racially segregated. It hewed to a Protestant-Catholic-Jewish vision that, like the Army, eased Catholics and Jews into a sanctioned and well-known entity, but nevertheless continued to make occasional policy decisions that undercut their majoritarian place.

World War II marked the culmination, not the beginning, of tri-faith America. Four intense and uncertain years of war helped naturalize religious unity against enemies abroad. A quarter-century earlier, the categories of Protestant, Catholic, and Jew helped fuse a multitude of white ethnic immigrants into manageable administrative groupings during the United States' brief foray into war. By the 1940s, a commitment to moral monotheism, spread domestically by and through the armed forces, fortified the American war effort on multiple fronts across the globe. However, marking boundaries of religious citizenship prompted those designated as racial and religious others to fight for inclusion on religious grounds. Publicizing the chaplaincy's work enabled marginalized Americans to recognize that a restrictive reality belied the rhetoric of ecumenism. As they lobbied

for recognition, racial and religious minorities forced the state to tinker with ostensibly innate and fixed religious classifications.

### **Radio and Religious Belonging: The Case of *Chaplain Jim***

Chaplain Jim counseled all, illuminating the toll of war, and showed men and women alike how “The Lord Changes Things.” In the original episode draft, however, Chaplain Jim demonstrated how “Christ Changes Things.” It was William Arnold, the Army Chief of Chaplains during World War II, whose red pencil crossed out “Christ” and substituted “The Lord.” For Arnold believed that “the fact that CHAPLAIN JIM has not been specifically described as a Protestant, Jewish, or Catholic chaplain has proven to be most helpful to the broadcast....the comments coming from the various religious groups indicat[e] that he is acceptable to all. In view of this I know that you will continue your policy of keeping him anonymous.”<sup>7</sup>

For the nation’s first Catholic Chief of Chaplains, an anonymous—which was to say, ecumenical—chaplain was critical to serving the nation and winning the war. Over the run of the show, Arnold deployed his critical eye and red pencil to ensure that Chaplain Jim was unmarried (and therefore could be a priest) and never prayed to or mentioned “Christ” (so he could be a rabbi). Spread by a civilian-generated and military-sanctioned radio show, the Gospel of *Chaplain Jim* acclaimed more than the “Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.”<sup>8</sup> While the composite character was fictional and his globe-trotting adventures invented, Chaplain Jim played a real role in

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<sup>7</sup> Chaplain Jim Radio Transcript, Episode 53, May 11, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 23, Folder: 000.77 (“Chaplain Jim” Radio Scripts, Vol. II), NARA II; William Arnold to Frank and Anne Hummert, March 1, 1944, Box 23, Folder (000.77 “Chaplain Jim” Administrative Correspondence), NARA II.

<sup>8</sup> Roger Straus, the Jewish chairman of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, pioneered the phrase, “Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man,” when defining religion as the bedrock of democracy in the mid-1930s; it became a part of the currency of tri-faith rhetoric fairly quickly. See Wendy Wall, *Inventing the “American Way”: The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 8, 78, 179, and Kevin Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its Protestant Promise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

breaching the gap between the Office of the Chief of Chaplains and the homefront. He embodied the paragon of the World War II chaplaincy, the exemplar of a clergyman who could sublimate sectarian religious interests for the good of the nation, and he clothed the military's religious ideology in civilian culture.<sup>9</sup> Crafted to advance the military's particularly pragmatic religious ideals and practices—the generic multifaith moral monotheism, in which shared religious convictions centered on a belief in God and doing right by man—he also dexterously avoided the friction inherent in the tri-faith creed. Beneath the public culmination of cooperative ecumenism, tension roiled. After all, the state managed religion by policing its borders. The establishment of American religion as the shared space of three faiths necessarily sidelined and excluded religious and racial groups that possessed equal claims to and pushed for recognition of their assertions and acclamations of Americanness.

*Chaplain Jim* launched with “The Case of the Soldier Who Never Received Any Mail,” which revolved around one Paul Hendricks. When the story began, an otherwise healthy Hendricks had attempted to get himself a bed in the infirmary. With the doctor's permission, Chaplain Jim took on the task of finding out why. He went to the barracks, found Private Hendricks, and eventually uncovered that in the absence of mail from his estranged mother, Hendricks told the other men in his unit that a famous singer was “his girl.” But the Army was bringing her to base as musical entertainment, and he knew his friends would discover his lie; as a result, he attempted to hide in the infirmary. Over the next couple of episodes, the show let the radio audience hear Chaplain Jim plot with the famous singer, catch the soldiers ribbing Paul over his girl, and listen to Chaplain Jim as he

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<sup>9</sup> The Office of the Army Chief of Chaplains was well aware of its need to cultivate and protect a particular image. One of the staff chaplains working for Arnold, John Allan, reminded one of the office's sources in the field to behave in a manner commensurate with the chaplaincy and to hold reports in strict confidence as the office would “delete or clarify or fit into the military picture such sections of his report as we feel need deleting or doctoring.” John Allan to Paul Moody, May 9, 1941, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 70, Folder 080 (Guardians of America), NARA II.



convinced Paul's mother to come from afar to visit him.<sup>10</sup>

As in many later episodes, the set-up combined a mildly realistic premise with a few completely unrealistic plot turns. On the one hand, some men undoubtedly failed to get mail and made up extravagant stories to explain why. Soldiers caught one another in fabrications about their lives and families expressed remorse for their limited contact. Chaplains intervened as men faced ridicule and spoke directly to their families. Famous musicians and entertainers visited army posts and men competed to get their attention and autographs. On the other hand, chaplains did not travel to visit families or negotiate ruses with popular singers. But moderate realism sufficed, for the explicit purpose of *Chaplain Jim* was to cultivate sympathy for soldiers, demonstrate men overcoming their foibles, and elevate the chaplain as a multi-purpose guidance counselor, moral touchstone, and spiritual advisor. A few embellishments did not hurt this cause.

As part of the scene setting for Paul's army woes, the first episode also portrayed a diverse army unit. During a roll-call for mail, a sergeant yelled "McHenry... Donetti... Jamcoe... Kelly... Goldberg... Riordan... Gibbs... Hendricks" and then continues, "Maxwell... O'Flaherty... Adropoupolous... Svenson... Jackson... McDermott... Cain."<sup>11</sup> By using the Irish McHenry, the Italian Donetti, the Jewish Goldberg, the Greek Adropoupolous, and the Swedish Svenson alongside less identifiably ethnic names such as Gibbs, Hendricks, Jackson, and Cain, the scriptwriters produced an ethnically and religiously diverse unit.<sup>12</sup> While the show skirted ethnic, religious, and racial tension, it nevertheless lauded an American army comprised of men from a

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<sup>10</sup> Chaplain Jim, Episode 1, Number 1, "The Case of the Soldier Who Never Received Mail," RG 247 (1920-45), Box 23, Folder 000.77 (Chaplain Jim Scripts, Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>11</sup> Chaplain Jim, Episode 1, Number 1, "The Case of the Soldier Who Never Received Mail," RG 247 (1920-45), Box 23, Folder 000.77 (Chaplain Jim Scripts, Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>12</sup> As the military remained racially segregated until 1948 and the Hummerts prided themselves on "realism," a racially integrated unit would have been anomalous. However, African-American chaplains served in World War II and a black Chaplain Jim would not have been implausible, except in the imagination of the scriptwriters who assumed that African-Americans existed only at the periphery of the military.

multitude of backgrounds. The soldiers in Chaplain Jim’s unit embodied the list of races, ethnicities, and religions invoked in the WPA’s “Ballad for Americans” and made famous by CBS’ 1939 radio broadcast of Paul Robeson’s performance. In this way, *Chaplain Jim* adopted a common trope of the era’s radio and film productions, the contrived “roster of exotic ethnic surnames” to advance what Michael Denning has called “pan-ethnic Americanism.”<sup>13</sup>

The U.S. entry into World War II in 1941 coincided with the height of radio’s mass media influence. Yet while *Chaplain Jim* served both political and religious purposes, it differed significantly from prototypical forms of political radio—such as FDR’s “fireside chats”—and paradigmatic brands of religious radio—such as the sermons and services produced by dramatic revivalist and evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson.<sup>14</sup> In contrast to the overtly political or religious broadcasts of presidents and preachers, *Chaplain Jim* embedded a politically useful and morale-boosting form of religion into the narrative conventions of a soap opera. For three-and-a-half years, in 15-minute increments and later in hour-long segments, the radio show used religion to unite soldiers and citizens around both a military enterprise and a common belief system. In *Chaplain Jim*, the military hailed a very particular form of generic monotheism. However, by embedding its views of religion into a collaborative military-civilian radio drama, the state underplayed its own role in inculcating religion as central to the American wartime project. This was intentional. As historian James Sparrow points out, “The essential task [of morale management]...was to obscure the statist foundations of public power while insinuating them into the thoughts and lives of the citizenry.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> David Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The United in Depression and War, 1929-45* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) 761; Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Verso, 1997), 130. For a discussion of the limits of this trope and the latent suspicion toward foreigners it attempted to mask, see Wall, *Inventing the “American Way,”* 138-143.

<sup>14</sup> For more on the flourishing genre of religious radio, see Tona J. Hangen, *Redeeming the Dial: Radio, Religion, and Popular Culture in America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

<sup>15</sup> James Sparrow, *The Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 49. On wartime public-private morale initiatives more generally, see Sparrow, *The Warfare State*, 48-77.

Although *Chaplain Jim* became part of the Office of War Information's prodigious efforts to promote patriotism during World War II, it not only predated the agency's existence but also originated with a civilian. Louis Cowan, perhaps best known as the creator of *The \$64,000 Question* and president of CBS radio in the 1950s, initiated *Chaplain Jim* by proposing a religion-oriented wartime show. As a civilian consultant to the War Department's radio branch, he argued that an entertaining drama would effectively assuage parental fears about their sons at war and supersede musical or prayer-focused programs in popularity.<sup>16</sup> With the support of Edward Kirby, another civilian working in the War Department as the Chief of the Bureau of Public Relations' Radio Branch, Cowan approached Ed Kovak, the vice president of NBC's Blue Network. Kovak liked Cowan's idea and offered him a short weekday slot. Rather than take on the writing and production himself, Cowan turned to well-known radio serial producers Frank and Anne Hummert. From the New York offices of the Blackett, Sample, and Hummert advertising agency, the husband-and-wife team added another soap opera to their plentiful docket.<sup>17</sup>

In some ways, *Chaplain Jim* resembled the other serials the Hummerts developed. Like other formulaic week-long dramas, the plot built until it reached a suspenseful climax resolved by the end of the week. Similarly, it was a national, weekday, daytime show directed at women.<sup>18</sup> Before every episode, radio announcer George Ansbro introduced the show by "inform[ing] the radio listeners that the program was 'dedicated to the mothers, wives, sweethearts, and families of the men who

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<sup>16</sup> Louis Cowan, interview by Eric Barnouw, March 1, 1967-May 1, 1967, Oral History Transcript, Columbia University Oral History Research Office, New York, NY.

<sup>17</sup> Howard Blue, *Words at War: World War II Era Radio Drama and the Postwar Broadcasting Industry Blacklist* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2002), 185-88. Before the war, Kirby had served as the Director of Public Relations of the National Association of Broadcasters and was initially brought into the War Department as the Civilian Advisor for Radio. As a result of mail indicating listener support for religious programming, NBC separated its religious radio from its education section. See, "Religion: A Job for Jordan," *TIME Magazine*, February 15, 1943.

<sup>18</sup> The show was publicized nationally in white and black newspapers alike. See, for example, "Radio Today," *The New York Times*, May 19, 1942 and "Radio Programs," *Atlanta Daily World*, Dec 23, 1945.

wear the khaki of the United States Army.”<sup>19</sup> Each episode also ended with Chaplain Jim addressing his target female audience in the same way. Just as he asks every soldier whether he has written to his mother, so too does he conclude: “mothers, wives, and sweethearts are asked this question. ‘Have you written to your boys in the Army this week? They want mail. They want to hear from you. So write...write to them cheerfully and regularly. Keep their spirits up. Don’t let them worry about you. Sit down and write today!’”<sup>20</sup> The explicit injunction to write to their soldiers highlighted that although *Chaplain Jim* followed certain narrative conventions of daily soap operas, it owed its existence to a different and perhaps higher purpose: it represented one of many War Department efforts to improve American morale and demonstrate that the Armed Forces cared for men under its control. Chaplain Jim targeted the “average American” and attempted to garner the sympathies of homefront listeners who could listen to the War Department-sanctioned show without commercial interruption.<sup>21</sup> The state, through the War Department, recognized that soap operas served as effective carriers of government messages because, as Frank Hummert relayed to the *New York Times*, audiences would “follow an example, but won’t listen to a precept.”<sup>22</sup>

Through its association with the War Department, *Chaplain Jim* diverged from the rest of the Hummert serials in two important ways. First, the Hummerts sent every script for editorial review and approval to two military departments: the Bureau of Public Relations’ Radio Branch, which oversaw civilian morale, and the Office of the Army Chief of Chaplains, which among other tasks,

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<sup>19</sup> George Ansbro, *I Have a Lady in the Balcony: Memoirs of a Broadcaster in Radio and Television* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2000), 127. Ansbro, who introduced the show on air, claims that *Chaplain Jim* was not a soap opera, possibly because it was based on (some) actual experiences. Ansbro notwithstanding, the narrative structure and content reflected those of radio soap operas.

<sup>20</sup> Chaplain Jim, Episode 1, Number 1, “The Case of the Soldier Who Never Received Mail,” RG 247 (1920-45), Box 23, Folder 000.77 (Chaplain Jim Scripts, Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>21</sup> On the evolving representation American norms in this period, see Sarah Igo, *The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Jack Gould, “Soap Factory: Something About the Hummerts, Frank and Anne, and 6,000,000 Words a Year,” *New York Times*, February 14, 1943.

presided over soldiers' morale. Second, it incorporated the experience of actual chaplains as well as the worldview of the Office of the Chief of Chaplains into its storylines. Thus the narratives often melded fact and fiction, education and entertainment.

To develop a more accurate portrayal of a chaplain, Arnold wanted the Hummerts meet with actual chaplains. He first sent them to Jacob Rothschild, a rabbi who had spent 16 months in the Southwest Pacific, and was briefly based at the New York Port of Embarkation—easily accessible to the New York-based Hummerts.<sup>23</sup> Upon giving Rothschild's contact information to the writers, Arnold clarified, "it is not my intention that a denominational slant should be given to any broadcast. For this reason...I should like to recommend other chaplains from time to time so that you might have occasion to meet with chaplains of the Protestant and the Catholic groups."<sup>24</sup> The Chief of Chaplains' office maintained a steady emphasis on nonsectarian ecumenism. When a Mrs. E. Williams requested that Chaplain Jim "pay tribute to the Salvation Army," Arnold's office acknowledged the suggestion, but delicately ducked the plea by asserting, "it would be impossible to do justice to all these organizations" that serve soldiers. Buried in cagey language about the inadvisability of singling out particular groups lest others be left out lay the real reason the Salvation Army would not be mentioned on-air: "it would establish an undesired precedent."<sup>25</sup>

Mrs. Williams' sectarian request notwithstanding, specificity and realities of war still had their place in script development. To build a storyline about a chaplain in battle who aided his men while sick and injured, for example, the Hummerts used Chaplain Terence P. Finnegan's experiences in

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<sup>23</sup> After the war, Rothschild accepted a synagogue pulpit in Atlanta, where he denounced segregation and became an outspoken advocate of civil rights. In 1958, the Temple was bombed, presumably in response to his social justice work. See Melissa Fay Greene, *The Temple Bombing* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1996).

<sup>24</sup> William Arnold to Frank and Anne Hummert, February 14, 1944, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 23, Folder 000.77 ("Chaplain Jim" Administrative Correspondence), NARA II.

<sup>25</sup> Herman H. Heuer to Mrs. E. Williams, March 25, 1944, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 85, Folder 080 (Salvation Army), NARA II.

the Pacific.<sup>26</sup> In order to encourage improved race relations and to reach out to African-American families, Louis Cowan also persuaded the Hummers to meet with Truman Gibson, a lawyer who advocated for black soldiers as a civilian aide to Secretary of War Henry Stimson.<sup>27</sup> Cowan's effort signaled how civilians could shape the public's encounter with the military. Occasionally, then, the radio show hinted at the "Protestant-Catholic-Jewish-Negro" ideology developed by the Office of the Army Chief of the Chaplains during the interwar years which became public in World War II. *Chaplain Jim* helped convey this multi-faith—albeit racially segregated—vision to civilians.

About thirteen months after the show began, for example, the Hummerts proposed that Chaplain Jim become a transport chaplain. They sought to make him a mobile chaplain, who could "go to practically all battle fronts and to have virtually all the experiences of an Army Chaplain." They suggested several ship-based storylines, including an episode in which "memorial services for all will be conducted – Catholic, Protestant, Jewish services," in order to comfort families at home. While Arnold was willing to accept to the implausibly portable chaplain, he insisted that the memorial services be changed to "three separate services" rather than an inaccurate co-mingled ritual *mélange*.<sup>28</sup> For while joint religious services occasionally occurred, War Department policy provided for separate services, even if overseen and at times even conducted by a chaplain of a different faith. At Camp Rucker, Alabama, for example, the posted Sunday schedule allotted each group an hour for services, starting with Catholic Mass, moving to Jewish services, followed by Holy

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<sup>26</sup> Board Meeting Minutes, November 12, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 259, Folder 337 (Board Meetings, 1943-44), NARA II. Finnegan (Catholic) entered the chaplaincy in 1937, where his first assignment was a Civilian Conservation Corps post. He was in Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 and earned a Bronze Star for his work with infantry troops at Guadalcanal in 1942-3—the basis of the *Chaplain Jim* episode (though the radio show placed him in Europe). He became the second Air Force Chief of Chaplains in 1958.

<sup>27</sup> Louis Cowan Oral History; Chaplain Pinn, an African American chaplain in WWII, appeared on the show as Chaplain Jim's colleague on April 2, 1943.

<sup>28</sup> Arnold's annotation of Frank and Anne Hummert to E. M. Kirby, May 3 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 23, 000.77 ("Chaplain Jim" Administrative Correspondence), NARA II.

Communion/General Protestant Services, and an evening Christian Science service.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, to ensure that Chaplain Jim was not himself associated with a particular service, editorial marks axed lines that enumerated a Chaplain Steiner conducting a Jewish service or a Chaplain Reilly celebrating Mass in favor of banal comments about posting the schedule of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish services onboard ships.<sup>30</sup>

Likewise, when Chaplain Jim dispensed a Bible to Paul Hendricks in the second episode of the show, it was merely a Bible—not a King James, a Catholic, or a Hebrew Bible. When soldiers worshipped on the show, they simply talked about attending services weekly—exactly what the War Department wanted its soldiers to do—but avoided any reference to what kind of service. What prayers they said were irrelevant; what mattered was that they went to services and prayed. When Private Mark Sheldon’s girlfriend died in “The Soldier Who Found God,” Chaplain Jim told him, “At a time like this, we can always find one consolation...if we remember that God is with us.”<sup>31</sup> The discussion between the two men centered on a comforting God, a spiritual bulwark in hard times.

As Chaplain Jim moved overseas to combat zones in Europe, devastating and deadly war wounds became more prominent. While recovering from his own minor wounds suffered while traveling to Sicily, the chaplain spent time with other patients at a base hospital in North Africa. There, listeners heard him cheer and console injured men; when a patient died, he murmured, “May the sins of this man have been forgiven”—a less denominationally-specific form of the original sentence, “Heavenly Father, forgive this man his sins.”<sup>32</sup> The show assumed that sins committed

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<sup>29</sup> “Schedule of Services for Post Chapel, Camp Rucker, Alabama,” March 2, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 62, Folder 080 (Christian Science, Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>30</sup> E.g. Chaplain Jim Radio Transcript, Episode 259, June 19, 1945, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 28, Folder 000.77 (“Chaplain Jim” Radio Scripts, 1945), NARA II.

<sup>31</sup> Chaplain Jim Radio Transcript, Episode 36, May 26, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 23, Folder 000.77 (“Chaplain Jim” Radio Scripts, Vol. II), NARA II.

<sup>32</sup> Chaplain Jim Radio Transcript, Episode 153, August 8, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 25, Folder 000.77 (“Chaplain Jim” Radio Scripts, No. 138-160), NARA II.

during life matter at the moment of death, but also presumed a generous, forgiving God. But in the face of ruthless battles and unmistakable suffering, Chaplain Jim's stance remained the same. To a private distressed by his brother's death at Anzio, Chaplain Jim relayed his own grieving over his brother's death during World War I. "I still found comfort in exactly the way I'm asking you to find it," he stated, "in prayer and in God."<sup>33</sup> The message served a dual purpose: for the radio show, it displayed Chaplain's Jim ongoing and ever-present ability to aid any soldier, and for the audience at home, it supplied an antidote to the potential torment of daily casualty reports.

Although Chaplain Jim generally articulated his messages about religion to the listeners through the show's plotlines, occasionally the character used the show as a platform through which to address his audience directly. In January 1943, a week after President Roosevelt declared his support for the Federal Council of Churches' "Universal Week of Prayer," Chaplain Jim chimed in with encouragement after the episode finished. Assuming common and full agreement with the president's declaration that "without spiritual armor we cannot win the war, be worthy of winning it, or be fit to make the peace," the character united his audience around the common cause. Lest they be uncertain about how to proceed, however, he drew on the nurturing voice of his character to motivate Americans to participate in religious life: "My hope is that many who may have forgotten how to pray were started on this wonderful and consoling path again last week—and that such of you as were, will continue with those of us who feel life would neither be possible nor worth living without faith in God and prayer."<sup>34</sup> Tinged with a Protestant emphasis on prayer, belief, and faith, Chaplain Jim urged his followers to act. Join up, he called out, enlist in a community of worshippers and believers—if not also into the military itself.

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<sup>33</sup> Chaplain Jim Radio Transcript, Episode 192, May 4, 1944, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 26, Folder 000.77 ("Chaplain Jim" Radio Scripts, No. 161-173), NARA II.

<sup>34</sup> "President Backs A Week of Prayer," *The New York Times*, January 3, 1943; Chaplain Jim Radio Transcript, Episode 123, January 10, 1943, emphasis original, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 25, Folder 000.77 ("Chaplain Jim" Radio Scripts, No. 118-137), NARA II.



In matters of race, too, *Chaplain Jim* occasionally provided a lesson alongside a recruiting tool. If Chaplain Jim could mask his religious affiliation, he could not conceal his race. The range of men he served, as denoted by the array of neutral and ethnic surnames, meant that he was white because, in a Jim Crow military, black chaplains could serve only black men. Louis Cowan recalled meeting Judge William Hastie, an African-American civilian aide to the Secretary of War, who informed him that “one of the great problems...was that the benighted, bigoted middle class—not middle class, but lower middle class...were full of hatred for Negroes in the Army and said they were cowards and ran away every time there was a battle, and all the rest. Well, it wasn’t true as he told us, and as facts proved, and it was an unfair story.” After this conversation Cowan called the Hummerts and told them since their serials reached millions a day, and because those listeners included “the heart and the backbone of those that have the great prejudices about the Negroes,” they had a chance to sway these Americans away from prejudicial thinking.<sup>35</sup>

Indeed the Army desperately needed African American chaplains and, in March 1943, *Chaplain Jim* aired an episode-cum-commercial in an explicit effort to garner more applicants. The episode revolved around a conversation between two Chaplain Jims, the lead character and the real-life Chaplain James R. C. Pinn, who had recently returned to the United States after serving with the 41<sup>st</sup> Engineers in Liberia.<sup>36</sup> During the show, the two clergymen discussed Pinn’s work on a transport ship—where the character and the real chaplain shared a 100 percent attendance rate at their weekly worship services for the regiment known as the “Singing Engineers”—as well as in West Africa—where the rainy season stymied the construction unit’s work, but not their spirits. Prompted by Chaplain Jim to reflect on his duties, Chaplain Pinn stated, “I kept telling myself how,

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<sup>35</sup> Louis Cowan, interview by Erik Barnouw, March 1, 1967-May 1, 1967, PRCQ #917, transcript, 62-66, Columbia University Oral History Research Office.

<sup>36</sup> “Chaplain Pinn, Back in States Tells of First U.S. Negro Troops in Africa,” *The Chicago Defender*, April 10, 1943. Pinn was making the radio rounds upon his return; the article notes readers could listen to him on the Wings Over Jordan program on the Columbia Network on April 25, 1943.

I, as a chaplain, must be prepared to take full advantage of every opportunity...to inspire constantly...men to undaunted faith in God, in their country, in their offices and comrades...and in themselves.” The emphasis was unswervingly positive, highlighting all the ways black ministers, like their white counterparts, could serve American men. There was no mention, of course, of segregation, harassment, limitations, or inequitable military justice. Those were not matters for public consumption. Thus the mainstream radio campaign for black chaplains ignored the ongoing and prominent Double V campaign in the black press—the argument that victory for democracy abroad required victory for full citizenship rights for African Americans at home. Chaplain Jim (Foster) and Chaplain Jim (Pinn) made a “shoulder-to-shoulder appeal” for 4000 more chaplains, a mere 235 of which were reserved for black clergy. The discrimination inherent in opening a mere five percent of the chaplain corps to blacks remained invisible and inaudible.<sup>37</sup>

In one of the few cracks in the “anonymous” nature of Chaplain Jim, the four parts of “The Soldier Who Found God” also revealed how the chaplain entered seminary and became a member of clergy. Although no particular denominational information came across, the chaplain and his friends used the word “church” and referred to Sunday services.<sup>38</sup> On the one hand, this made Chaplain Jim decidedly Christian. On the other hand, the Office of the Chief of Chaplains employed “church” as a stand-in for any place of religious worship and the War Department encouraged—at times even insisted on—Sunday services for all religious groups unless the exigencies of battle prohibited large gatherings or formal prayer. Editorial marks on the manuscripts stressed the military chaplaincy’s capacious use of “church.” When Chaplain Jim accompanied soldiers at Normandy, he

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<sup>37</sup> Chaplain Jim Radio Transcript, Episode 134, March 28, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 25, Folder 000.77 (“Chaplain Jim” Radio Scripts, 118-137), NARA II. On the Double V campaign, see: Kimberley L. Phillips, *War! What Is It Good For?: Black Freedom Struggles and the U.S. Military from World War II to Iraq* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 20-63 and Gerald Astor, *The Right to Fight: A History of African Americans in the Military* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2001).

<sup>38</sup> Chaplain Jim Radio Transcript, Episode 36, May 26, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 23, Folder 000.77 (“Chaplain Jim” Radio Scripts, Vol. II), NARA II.

reflected on the fierce battle he witnessed: “two hours ago this field was an inferno. Now, it’s quiet again and those who have fallen will be buried with all the rites of their church ~~and the sacrament of God.~~”<sup>39</sup> Crossing out the reference to “sacrament”—a religious term most frequently used and associated with Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy—helped reduce the particularity of death rites, while maintaining “church” in the same sentence indicates that it was understood as a broad-minded term. If war killed indiscriminately, U.S. military funeral practices still followed and honored the religious affiliation of the serviceman. Indeed, when Chaplain Jim met Davy Silverberg’s mother, he assured her that her son was buried “according to Jewish rites” and “Chaplain Wise, my colleague, conducted the service.”<sup>40</sup>

Overall, the language, actions, and persona of Chaplain Jim closely mirrored the religious worldview that the War Department and the Office of the Chief of Chaplains attempted to cultivate within the armed forces. Chaplain Alvie McKnight found that the show resonated with his experiences. When he sent the Chief of Chaplains a script he wrote based on his experiences in the Solomon Islands, he wrote, “We have been fortunate enough to hear most of the Chaplain Jim Programs since my return to the United States, and I want to tell you now that they are much worth while. I also know from experience that they are quite typical of the Chaplains[?] every day experiences out there.”<sup>41</sup> Indeed, the bulk of Chaplain Jim’s work centered on counseling soldiers, often in matters of morality, complications of love and challenges of death. These topics allowed

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<sup>39</sup> Chaplain Jim Radio Transcript, Episode 198, June 18, 1944, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 27, Folder 000.77 (“Chaplain Jim” Radio Scripts, 1944), NARA II.

<sup>40</sup> Chaplain Jim Radio Transcript, Episode 237, March 18, 1945, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 27, Folder 000.77 (“Chaplain Jim” Radio Scripts, 226-250), NARA II. Although Wise potentially represented a fairly generic name, it would have resonated with American Jewish listeners as echoing the name of Rabbi Stephen Wise, one of the most prominent rabbis of the era—a scion of Reform Judaism and a friend of FDR. On Wise, see Melvin I. Urofsky, *A Voice That Spoke for Justice: The Life and Times of Stephen S. Wise* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1982). On FDR’s complicated relationship with American Jewry, see Richard Breitman and Allan J. Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013).

<sup>41</sup> Alvie McKnight to Joseph Ensrud, August 22, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 23, Folder 000.77 (“Chaplain Jim” Administrative Correspondence), NARA II.

Chaplain Jim to offer advice and comfort without delving too deeply into the specifics of any particular faith tradition.

For listeners like Amiela Haznar, however, William Arnold and his careful red pencil remained invisible and silent: his office, his work, and his agenda unseen, unheard of, and untraceable. From its inception, the show represented a civilian-military, commercial-public, Protestant-Catholic-Jewish collaboration. It became more than a morale-booster for families on the homefront; through the editorial work of Chief of Chaplains William Arnold, *Chaplain Jim* promoted a particular religious worldview central to the state's wartime mission. It also cultivated a laudable character that Arnold felt best represented his corps. Early on, he quickly eliminated the "folksy" drawl that the Hummerts had given Chaplain Jim. In the first episode, the show's audience heard Chaplain Jim say, in reference to the embarrassed soldier Paul Hendricks, "You mean he was tryin' to escape maneuvers by pretendin'?"<sup>42</sup> Thereafter, Arnold rejected any incomplete vocabulary or incorrect syntax. After all, the requirements for chaplains included a bachelor's degree and postgraduate training and ordination. Arnold wanted the listening public to hear a smart, well-spoken chaplain, not a caricature of informally trained roving preachers. The show was a recruiting tool as well as an advertising campaign. It explicitly encouraged clergy to serve as military chaplains and modeled what the military thought chaplains should be and do.

### **Constructing a Tri-Faith Chaplaincy**

"War is a dastardly business," remarked Rabbi Moritz Gottlieb in a report from the Southwest Pacific in 1943. But even amidst the most hellish conditions, signs of sacred forbearance materialized. While traveling with Colonel Ivan Bennett (Baptist), the highest-ranking chaplain in

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<sup>42</sup> Chaplain Jim, Episode 1, Number 1, "The Case of the Soldier Who Never Received Mail," RG 247 (1920-45), Box 23, Folder 000.77 (Chaplain Jim Scripts, Vol. I), NARA II.

General MacArthur's Pacific Command, Gottlieb observed "millions of men [who] have learned not to judge each other as Catholic, Protestant, or Jew." Chaplains set the standard, including a Catholic chaplain who arranged services for his Jewish men in a local Methodist Church and an Episcopalian chaplain who took on the responsibility of searching for lost Passover *matzot* by going "from island base to island base on small boats" pausing only to conduct funeral services for men who died when the Japanese sunk one of the boats.<sup>43</sup> Archbishop Francis Spellman noticed this cooperation as well. After visiting multiple domestic military installations, he assessed "the relations with non-Catholic chaplains" as "excellent."<sup>44</sup> Edward Larsen, a Lutheran Navy chaplain deployed to the Pacific, found himself drawn to the Catholic chaplain's midnight mass on Christmas Eve 1944 and celebrated the combined Protestant-Catholic choir's successful service the next day. A half-year later, as the U.S. dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki, he reflected on the impact of war on his religious thinking in a letter to his wife: "I am afraid that the constricted thinking of our synod is a little too stifling....There are so many congregations where it would be hard to fall in line especially after serving men of all faiths and trying to meet their needs."<sup>45</sup> Larsen typified the chaplains Gottlieb and Spellman observed in his openness to thinking outside the strictures of his own faith to reach the range of men served.

The work of the chaplaincy was most often studied and reported through the lenses of Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism. A mid-war press release, for example, noted that 180 chaplains had recently completed Navy Chaplain School at the College of William & Mary—"139 were Protestant, representing 18 denominations, 34 were Roman Catholic, and 7 were Jewish."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Moritz Gottlieb to Louis Kraft, November 5, 1943, I-180, Box 200, Folder: Australia—Moritz Gottlieb—1943, AJHS.

<sup>44</sup> Francis Spellman to John O'Hara, July 31, 1942, Box S/C-84, folder 4, Cardinal Spellman Papers, AANY.

<sup>45</sup> William Larsen to Inga Larsen, December 22, 1944, December 25, 1944, August 9, 1945, COLL 201 (William Larsen Papers), Box 1, Folder: Correspondence with Family, Navy Yard.

<sup>46</sup> News Release, October 6, 1943, RG 24, E377, Box 18, Folder—Releases Sent, 1943, "B," NARA I.

Similarly, a few weeks before the Japanese surrendered, the Navy confirmed to news outlets that 2,790 chaplains were on active duty: 1,968 Protestants, 780 Catholics, and 42 Jews.<sup>47</sup> In reports to the Chief of Chaplains, navy chaplains generally broke down their data into these three categories as well. Thus Robert Sassaman, a Lutheran chaplain, recorded the composition of the 91<sup>st</sup> Battalion as “658 Protestants, 318 Roman Catholics, and 31 Hebrews among the enlisted men. There were 73 others who were classified among other sects or whose medical records did not list any religious affiliation. Of the 29 officers, 18 are Protestant, 7 are Roman Catholic, and 3 are Hebrew, and 1 is an atheist.”<sup>48</sup>

Indeed the leaders of the military chaplaincies during World War II—Army Chief of Chaplains William Arnold (Catholic) and Navy Chief of Chaplains Robert Workman (Presbyterian)—developed systems and structures that imprinted an interfaith worldview upon the chaplaincy as it grew tremendously during the war years. Regulations demanded that, “so far as practicable,” chaplains should “serve the moral and religious needs of the entire personnel of the command to which he is assigned, either through his own personal services or through the cooperative efforts of others.”<sup>49</sup>

Belief in and fidelity to a Protestant-Catholic-Jewish tri-faith ideal began in the recruitment of chaplains. While each denomination mustered its own men for the military, the application process sought to ferret out the “fair-minded” from the narrowly sectarian. When Roosevelt reinstated the draft in 1940, the armed forces began to swell, and the need for more chaplains grew. Official entrance into war significantly amplified the need for chaplains, but the processes for

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<sup>47</sup> “Public Relations Material Furnished,” July 24, 1945, RG 24, E377, Box 18, Folder—Releases Sent, 1943, “B,” NARA I. The Army also discussed chaplains in these terms internally and externally. See, for example, the weekly staff meetings of the Office of the Chief of Chaplains in RG 247 (1920-45), Box 259, Folder 337 (Board Meetings, 1943-44), NARA II.

<sup>48</sup> “Public Relations Material Furnished,” July 24, 1945, RG 24, Correspondence with Chaplains, 1941-59, Box 3, Folder—Sassaman, Robert, NARA II.

<sup>49</sup> Army Regulations No. 60-5, February 20, 1941, 3.

acquiring them needed tweaking rather than formation. As in World War I, the military commissioned chaplains who met their age, physical, educational, and experiential standards and received the endorsement of a sanctioned civilian religious organization. And as before, the General Commission on Army and Navy Chaplains (Protestant), the Military Ordinariate (Catholic), and the Jewish Welfare Board, represented the largest number of religious groups. While the exact process varied slightly from group to group, all applicants had to complete forms, write personal essays, and supply reference letters in order to be considered for the chaplaincy. Despite the Military Ordinariate's efforts to empower bishops to select priests for service—and its pleas for them to supply more—the Catholic quota remained unfilled.<sup>50</sup> The Jewish Welfare Board's Committee on Army and Navy Religious Affairs (CANRA) insisted on interviewing prospective chaplains, in part to assess appearance and speech and in part to determine “the religious integrity of the candidate and the flexibility of his views in terms of the needs of the service.”<sup>51</sup>

The General Commission—whose application was used by the majority of Protestant denominations sending men to the chaplaincy—used a reference form that required rating applicants to ensure “only the right men” would be chosen. To glean a better sense of who the men were and how they might interact with military parishioners, the two-page form included a chart rating personal qualities such as energy, judgment, humor, “mental acumen,” tact, “personal magnetism,” and appearance. It solicited feedback about whether the candidate demonstrated a “genuine liking for people” and if he possessed a “constructive religious message for youth.” It queried whether the minister was debt-free and lived a “congenial” domestic life. It asked about preaching abilities and the emphasis of sermons. And it pressed for information about his attitudes

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<sup>50</sup> John O'Hara to Harold Carroll, March 10, 1945, Box 57, Folder 19, and Military Ordinariate Newsletters, 1942-3, Box 57, Folder 18, National Catholic Welfare Council Papers, CUA.

<sup>51</sup> Philip Bernstein, *Rabbis At War: The CANRA Story* (Waltham, MA: American Jewish Historical Society, 1971), 9.

on “a) democracy, b) interdenominational cooperation, c) social problems, d) economic order, e) people of different racial or religious background, f) pacifism and militarism.”<sup>52</sup> The ideal chaplain could wrestle angels like the biblical Jacob and make decisions like Solomon. To be “fit for service” meant living a morally upright (and debt-free) life while showing brains and brawn, sensitivity and charisma, wisdom and wit—preferably with a good voice to boot. It also meant holding “correct” opinions: acclaiming democracy, applauding ecumenism, praising capitalism, tolerating difference, and accepting military force as necessary.

Once selected for the chaplaincy, Chaplain School reinforced the reality of a multi-faith military. Initially located at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, the Chaplain School moved to the grounds of Harvard University in August 1942 to accommodate the ever-increasing cohorts, which grew from 75 to 450 men. The stated purpose of the five- and six-week sessions was, in military parlance, indoctrination. Not of religion, which the state presumed chaplains already had via seminary training, but in the ways and words of military life.<sup>53</sup> Dorm-rooms provided indoctrination of another sort: the school intentionally assigned men to rooms with clergy of different denominations in order to cultivate an ethos of religious cooperation.<sup>54</sup> The point was not to disregard denominational difference but respect it so that chaplains would be able to conduct denominational services as well as “do what in conscience he can do for men of other faiths in pastoral, educational, and cultural work.”<sup>55</sup> Harold Saperstein, a Jewish chaplain from New York, bunked with 2 Catholic priests and one Protestant minister. “They are all very fine fellows,” he

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<sup>52</sup> Reverend George Aki Application, November 17, 1943, RG 4373, Box 1, Folder: Chaplains Aiken-Allenby, Congregational Library, Boston, MA. Boxes 1-6 of this collection contain applications, all of which use the standard General Commission forms.

<sup>53</sup> Robert Gushwa, *The Best and Worst of Times: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1920-1945* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1977), 108-111. The school moved to Fort Devens, MA in 1944 and then to Fort Oglethorpe, GA in 1945, but the majority of chaplains who served in WWII attended sessions held at Harvard.

<sup>54</sup> Roy Honeywell, *Chaplains of the U.S. Army* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1958), 247-8.

<sup>55</sup> William Arnold to Reed Probst, October 12, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 6, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol. III), NARA II (emphasis original).



recorded, “and we get along splendidly.” Saperstein learned the lesson the Army hoped he would, finding that uniform-clad clergy made it “difficult to tell the difference between the faiths.”<sup>56</sup>

Not all incoming chaplains interpreted the interfaith lodging experiment in the same terms. Lyman Berrett traveled from Salt Lake City to Boston to attend Chaplain School, and he also noticed that “the six in the room were all six different religious denominations.” The Mormon chaplain was surprised by their habits—they drank coffee, tea, and liquor, they smoked, they caroused in the evenings, and they seemed sexually libertine. But most strangely to him, “I was the only one of six of us who actually believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and divine way and in any shape or form...ministers in other religions didn’t have that kind of testimony.” When he spurned the behavior of and was disappointed in the “philosophies” espoused by his fellow chaplains, Berrett actually showed that he graduated from Chaplain School having accomplished one of its aims. Despite his disdain for the ideas and conduct of the ordained clergy in his room, he still talked to them and learned about them. He was ready to ship out and serve as a Graves Registration Chaplain in Okinawa where, he later reminisced, “I enjoyed my association with Latter-day Saint men and Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish men.”<sup>57</sup> He absorbed the message of Chaplain School even as he resisted some of its carriers.

The military enacted its commitment to a tri-faith ideal in numerous ways. It not only allowed but encouraged the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ) to present

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<sup>56</sup> Harold Saperstein to his parents, July 21, 1943, MS-718, Box 8, Folder 14, AJA. Roland Gittelsohn (Jewish) reported the same sentiment about the Navy Chaplain School at William & Mary. He characterized his experience as “most instructive and inspiring...[it] was priceless” Assigned to a room with a Presbyterian, a Southern Baptist, and a Catholic, he stated that “I doubt if any town in America has witnessed more clean, honest, intelligent, searching curiosity about religion than the little town of historic Williamsburg since the navy chaplains took over. We asked questions of each other so fast and furiously that our biggest problem was finishing one answer before the next question was fired. I remember, as some of the most fascinating bull-sessions of my life, several evenings on which I was a lone Jew, sprawled out indelicately in a room with seven or eight Protestants and Catholics...the inter-play of three major religions in a living democracy was not limited to our personal and informal relationships. It was a conscious and deliberate part of our schooling.” Gittelsohn, “Pacifist to Padre,” MS-704, Box 64, Folder 7, AJA.

<sup>57</sup> Lyman C. Berrett, interviewed by Richard Maher, October 24, 1974, p. 4, 22, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies/LDS Chaplains Oral History Project, MS-17096, LDS-CHL.

“Dialogues on National Unity” on military bases across the country.<sup>58</sup> Likewise, during the NCCJ’s Brotherhood Weeks—weeklong celebrations of unity and consensus—Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish chaplains hosted joint “Brotherhood Services” and participated in “Brotherhood Programs” on local radio stations.<sup>59</sup> More tangibly, recruits selected one of three options for their dog tags: P (Protestant), C (Catholic), or H (Hebrew). As in World War I, the military distributed pocket-sized Armed Forces Hymnals and, after Evelyn Kohlstedt, an Iowa civilian, asked President Roosevelt to follow King George’s example and hand out Bibles, the military began to give out Protestant (King James), Catholic (Douay), or Jewish (Jewish Publication Society) scriptures. The Bibles all contained a greeting from Commander-in-Chief Roosevelt at the beginning and a postscript from Chief of Chaplains Arnold advocating contact with chaplains.<sup>60</sup>

Chapel construction soared in the early 1940s, and provided a concrete means through which to highlight religious toleration. Congress allocated almost 13 million dollars for chapels in March 1941, and over the course of the war, the Army spent almost 32 million dollars on approximately 1,300 chapels in the United States and abroad.<sup>61</sup> Designed, according to William Arnold, “by a government which declares that man shall be free to worship God as seems best to himself,” the extensive construction campaign assumed Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish worship would occur in the same building. While the standardized blueprint for clapboard-framed building with a high steeple that could seat 350 may have resembled a New England meetinghouse, the non-denominational interior offered a variety of setups for different forms of worship. Wooden pews included folding kneeling benches, the balcony could seat a choir, and an electric organ could

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<sup>58</sup> “A Dialogue on National Unity,” January 14, 1941, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 6, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol. II), NARA II.

<sup>59</sup> Newport, RI USO Unit Flier, “Brotherhood Week, February 19-28, 1943” and Morris Gutstein to William Arnold, March 10, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 6, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol. III), NARA II.

<sup>60</sup> Gushwa, *The Best and Worst of Times*, 170.

<sup>61</sup> Gushwa, *The Best and Worst of Times*, 113-5.

provide musical accompaniment. The cloth draped across the altar declared “Holy, Holy, Holy,” one of few phrases accepted (though interpreted differently) by Christians and Jews.<sup>62</sup> No art, crosses, or figures permanently adorned the exterior or interior walls because, Arnold wrote, “If the display of religious appointments in the chapel is such that men do not feel free to come into the chapel to meditate or worship when no specific service is being held by a Chaplain then we are breaking faith with the government that made these chapels possible.”<sup>63</sup> Likewise, when asked about the display of overtly sectarian Protestant or Catholic literature on book displays in chapels, Arnold offered a general principle to the inquiring chaplain: “Controversial writings may have their value, but an Army chapel is a poor place to distribute them.”<sup>64</sup> Religious debates had their place, but not in Army space.

From the top down, the Army chaplaincy tried to acknowledge distinctions while abating tension. Outside the chaplaincy, the ecumenical effort came to define a nondescript chapel building as quintessentially American. At the dedication ceremony for the first cantonment chapel built as part of the 1941 chapel expansion project, the Quartermaster General lauded the structure as “distinctively American...because only in a free country could you find a church built to be used for worship by Catholic, Protestant, and Jew alike.”<sup>65</sup>

On a local level, however, respecting difference and tempering friction depended on builders and chaplains hewing to the policies promulgated by Arnold—which would, in time, be codified in Army Regulations but had not yet been statutorily defined. In some places, the religious opportunities were vast and space easily shared. The Church Services Bulletin at Fort McClellan

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<sup>62</sup> “Holy, holy, holy” comes from Isaiah 6:3 and is found in both Jewish liturgy and Christian hymnody. In Christianity, it generally refers to the trinity.

<sup>63</sup> William Arnold to Myndert M. Van Patten, March 26, 1943, I-249, Box 19, Folder 114, AJHS.

<sup>64</sup> Ralph Vander Pol to William Arnold, February 10, 1943, and Roy J. Honeywell to Ralph Vander Pol, February 17, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 6, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol. III), NARA II.

<sup>65</sup> Scott Hart, “Army Chiefs Open Little Chapel in the Orchard,” *The Washington Post*, July 28, 1941.

listed 106 activities across 12 regimental chapels, ranging from worship services, bible studies, and devotionals to Confession, Vespers, and choir practices. On Sundays, the Second Regiment Chapel started with Mass at 9 am, and proceeded with Protestant and Jewish services in the morning and additional Christian Science and Protestant services in the evening.<sup>66</sup> Smaller venues followed the same model. At Camp Rucker, Alabama, the posted Sunday schedule allotted each group an hour for services, starting with Catholic Mass, moving to Jewish services, followed by Holy Communion/General Protestant Services, and an evening Christian Science service.<sup>67</sup> Chaplains carried the plan of sequentially using chapels with them abroad. Samuel Faircloth (American Baptist) recalled sharing a chapel north of Florence with a Catholic chaplain: “We wouldn’t clash with each other, we wouldn’t work together...The Catholic would have his service ahead of me, because they would have mass earlier. We had no problems.”<sup>68</sup>

In contrast, difficulties arose at Fort Meade, a mere 30 miles from Arnold’s DC headquarters, where a built-in Catholic-style altar and image of the crucifixion bothered the new Jewish chaplain. Chaplain Harry Southard confirmed that the Inspector General hewed to Arnold’s provisions for alternating use of the space and not affixing permanent symbols in the chapels but found uneven implementation as he toured camps and installations. The Jewish chaplain, he noted, refused to conduct services until the Army installed a curtain to cover the picture and the altar.<sup>69</sup> The problematic display of crucifixes extended beyond Fort Meade, but as Aryeh Lev told CANRA, “where gifts of a Christological nature are made, little can be done to deter the authorities from

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<sup>66</sup> “Church Services Bulletin for Ft. McClellan, Week of Sunday, February 28, 1943,” RG 247 (1920-45), Box 6, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol. III), NARA II.

<sup>67</sup> “Schedule of Services for Post Chapel, Camp Rucker, Alabama,” March 2, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 62, Folder 080 (Christian Science, Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>68</sup> Samuel Faircloth, interview by Bob Schuster, May 25, 2011, Tape 2, CN 658, BGCA.

<sup>69</sup> Harry Southard to William Arnold, December 11, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 6, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol. III), NARA II.

accepting these gifts, unless they are influenced by tactful explanations.”<sup>70</sup> Personal relationships, rather than policy directives, often determined the degree to which chapels remained neutral religious spaces.

The presence of multiple chapels could foment rather than alleviate tension. Reverend Bratcher, a member of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, found the presence of a Catholic chapel at Camp Grant troublesome. Arnold pointed out that Protestants and Catholics were free to “make separate use of two chapels” as long as everyone agreed and it caused no “inconvenience.”<sup>71</sup> In reality, Camp Grant had four chapels, and Baptist representatives who visited four months later did not find the allocation any more satisfactory. According to their observations, only one was truly neutral and thus available to all. Earl Frederick Adams deflected attention away from potentially parochial Protestant-Catholic clashes when he commented “Obviously, the Jewish group would feel quite embarrassed to use that chapel.”<sup>72</sup> The rhetoric of tolerance allowed civilian visitors to appeal for changes without relying on their own preferences; ecumenism, not Protestant sectarianism, demanded a shift in chapel allocation.

Other civilian religious leaders struggled just to gain access. Hempstead Lyons, a Christian Science practitioner, sought to hold services for Christian Scientists at Chanute Field, Illinois. But, conforming to the military definition of Christian Science as Protestant, local authorities excluded Lyons as unnecessary. “They have classed me along with the Methodist and Baptist ministers,” he complained to the head of Christian Science Camp Welfare Activities. “They evidently feel that the

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<sup>70</sup> CANRA Meeting Minutes, October 21, 1941, I-249, Box 1, Folder: CANRA Meeting Minutes, 1940-45, AJHS.

<sup>71</sup> M.E. Bratcher to William Arnold, April 21, 1943 and William Arnold to M.E. Bratcher, April 28, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 58, Folder 080 (Baptist-North, Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>72</sup> E.F. Adams to William Arnold, July 15, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 58, Folder 080 (Baptist-North, Vol. I), NARA II.

Army Protestant Services suffice in a general way for men interested in Christian Science.”<sup>73</sup> Lyons wisely asked his superiors to pursue this matter with their contacts in the military. Christian Science leaders recognized that decision-making authority rested with local commanding officers, but nevertheless appealed to the Chief of Chaplains to intervene.

The Christian Scientists were right: permission to use space was at the discretion of local authorities. The chaplaincy was responsible for “assur[ing] the right of worship of groups of all denominations,” as William Arnold told Walter Krueger, the Commanding General of the Third Army. But that did not mean the military was obligated to grant unlimited access to its bases and personnel. “Where and when, and by whom those services are to be conducted,” Arnold continued, “must be decided locally, with local conditions on mind.”<sup>74</sup> In the case of the Christian Scientists at Chanute Field, chaplaincy officials also affirmed that as long as members of the denomination requested such a service that “in general, it would seem proper for Army chapels to be made available” so long as they did not interfere with ongoing activities.<sup>75</sup> When Lyons felt frustrated by the military’s failure to distinguish Christian Science from other groups and assumed that blurring denominational lines prevented him from ministering to Christian Science soldiers, he may have been correct. But granting local commanders authority and requiring soldiers to request services also kept meddling outsiders at bay, allowing the military to assert its vision of religious fellowship in its space.

That vision adhered to unwritten standards of respectability. Joseph Gredler, a Catholic

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<sup>73</sup> Hempstead Lyons to Wilfred B. Wells, August 10, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 62, Folder 080 (Christian Science, Vol. I), NARA II. Christian Scientists were not the only religious group to press this issue. For example, from Utah, Chaplain Hugh Glenn sent a telegram asking whether civilian Mormon, Christian Science, and Seventh-Day Adventist leaders should be allowed to offer services. High Glenn to Chief of Chaplains, telegram, February 19, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 6, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol. IV), NARA II.

<sup>74</sup> Chief of Chaplains to Commanding General Third Army, Jan 4, 1943 quoted in Harry Fraser to Hugh Glenn, February 23, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 6, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol. IV), NARA II.

<sup>75</sup> Roy Honeywell to Frank Bunker, August 31, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 62, Folder 080 (Christian Science, Vol. I), NARA II.

priest, was the only chaplain stationed on his post, and he was therefore responsible for finding local Protestant clergy to offer services. He found several willing to oblige but, he wrote to the Chief of Chaplains, “one of them put on a rather sensational service, with a woman preacher. It lacked dignity.” He wondered whether there were guidelines he could use to bar that type of service and asked whether he could differentiate between ministers from denominations that “rate Chaplains” and “free lancers.”<sup>76</sup> The answer he received was perhaps less precise than he expected, but nevertheless granted him significant discretion. He ought to ensure that “in religious matters all things should be done decently and in order” and should invite only those “clergymen who belong to recognized religious bodies.”<sup>77</sup> The emphasis on men was not accidental.

When Mary Elizabeth Dibble enlisted in the Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC) to serve her country, she was stationed at Fort Des Moines. In the fall of 1942, she wrote to the Christian Science Board of Directors and noted the “need of spiritual aid” and “divine guidance” among her fellow servicewomen. Wanting to be “of the greatest service possible” and having heard that the Army was accepting women as chaplains, she wondered, “if I might not be of greater use to the Christian Science movement as a chaplain.” Dibble was probably disappointed by the response she received from Arthur Eckman, the Manager of the Christian Science Committee on Publication. He suspected she had been misinformed about the possibility of female chaplains, but had nonetheless gone through official channels to investigate the possibility. After all, as a committed Christian Scientist, he was well-acquainted with female religious leaders and had received letters from other Christian Science women practitioners who thought they would make capable chaplains—at least for WACS and WAVES. But Chaplain Rixey confirmed Eckman’s suspicions; no

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<sup>76</sup> Joseph Gredler to William Arnold, March 17, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 6, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol. III), NARA II.

<sup>77</sup> Frank Miller to Joseph Gredler, March 24, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 6, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol. III), NARA II.

women were allowed to serve as chaplains and no change in regulations was afoot. Military chaplains had to be male. The women Dibble had heard about were most likely selected to serve as chaplains' assistants "who are appointed not to do religious work but to take dictation, type letters, and do whatever else of a clerical nature that office assistants are expected to do."<sup>78</sup> To Rixey and the other men in the Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Dibble's query was preposterous. There were no women chaplains and the men running the military chaplaincy could scarcely imagine why or how women could serve in such a leadership role.

Thus even though no policy explicitly banned *civilian* women clergy from visiting their adherents on military bases, they were not necessarily welcomed either. Without receiving a list of "recognized religious bodies," Chaplain Gredler could have reasonably excluded a female Christian Science practitioner or Aimee Semple McPherson—the leader of the Four-Square Gospel who was also well-known for "sensational" worship—even though both religious groups were eligible to send male representatives to the chaplaincy. By delegating power to local chaplains and commanding officers, the military permitted personal standards of decorum and propriety—often informed by an individual's religious background—to regulate access to religious worship, often eclipsing the technocratic language of regularity and legibility.

At the same time, however, the state wanted tri-faith rhetoric to reach beyond military gates. Letters, circulars, and bulletins often referenced the work of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish chaplains—not as an unusual or unexpected event but as part of normal, everyday life in the Army. John G. Lambrides, a regimental chaplain, briefed families and friends of soldiers about the schedule of events at Camp Maxey, TX provided by Chaplain Robert J. Baldauf (Evangelical & Reformed), Chaplain Edward C. Henry (Catholic), Chaplain Abraham Klausner (Jewish), and himself (Baptist).

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<sup>78</sup> Mary Elizabeth Dibble to the Christian Science Board of Directors, September 30, 1942, Box 14669, Folder 1476, MBEL; Arthur Eckman to Mary Elizabeth Dibble, October 15, 1942, Box 14669, Folder 1476, MBEL.



Together they tendered “spiritual support to all men, irrespective of religious affiliation” and “covet[ed] your fullest cooperation and your intercession to God on behalf of our Nation in this hour of need.”<sup>79</sup> As in World War I, the Navy Chief of Chaplains resisted petitions from mothers seeking to place chaplains of their faith on their sons’ ships. A joint letter from Workman and Admiral Chester Nimitz advised Mrs. J.F. Kelley that a Catholic chaplain would not replace the Protestant one aboard her son’s ship because “it is impracticable to assign two chaplains of different faiths in ships of the naval forces.” Moreover, they pointed out, because “an exchange of church parties takes place and confessions heard and Mass said in the various ships of the Fleet by chaplains attached to other commands, this arrangement is far-reaching.”<sup>80</sup> In other words, they saw no need to swap chaplain assignments because chaplains were themselves mobile and attended to general and specific needs within the fleet.

When Chaplain Oakley Lee submitted articles to *The Christian Advocate*, a weekly Methodist paper, he often lauded the ecumenism he found in the Army. One week, for example, Jewish violinist Yehudi Menuhin played for his troops. “The Stradivarius was playing a tune of tolerance, of freedom from want of religious liberty and all the thousand and one things that go to make democracy....it mattered not that the ‘Ave Maria’ is usually associated with Catholic literature, it mattered not that we were in the Methodist Church, or that we were Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, allied forces from all the Nations, somehow it symbolized the whole thing we were fighting for.”<sup>81</sup>

If freedom of religion encompassed a variety of faith traditions, it also meant freedom not to

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<sup>79</sup> John G. Lambrides to Families and Friends of the Men of the 407<sup>th</sup>, March 2, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 6, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol. III), NARA II.

<sup>80</sup> C.W. Nimitz and R.D. Workman to Mrs. J.F. Kelley, November 17, 1941, RG 24, E-377, Box 3, Folder: Navy/Coast Guard, 1917-41, NARA I. When the letter was sent, Nimitz was the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation; a month later, he was appointed Commander in Chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

<sup>81</sup> Oakley Lee, Article on Yehudi Menuhin visit submitted for publication clearance, May 14, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 62, Folder 080 (The Christian Advocate), NARA II.

worship and not to be compelled to attend services. William Arnold sometimes had to remind chaplains that they could not, in fact, require attendance at worship hour. To Alvin Myries, he stated, “The fact remains that the service is there; and if any man fails to attend the burden of responsibility rests upon the man and not the chaplain.”<sup>82</sup> Arnold undoubtedly wanted soldiers to pray, but understood coercion was improper. Sometimes, however, religious pressure came from sources other than the chaplain. Colonel L.G. Fritz, the Commanding Officer of the North Atlantic Wing Air Transport Command, issued a memo to all station commanders and personnel serving under him. After emphasizing the importance of religious freedom as an American value, he invoked his authority as their Commanding Officer “to bring to your attention the importance of divine worship. Plan to attend the service of your choice, whenever your duties permit, from which you will derive spiritual strength and insight, and at the same time you will give support to a very important phase of the North American Wing program.”<sup>83</sup> Fritz’s logic presumed that the availability of “the service of your choice” mitigated his injunction to show up at such services. If cajoling was not exactly the same as compelling, it came perilously close when slated into the imperative of a military superior. Religious effort and military success, according to some leaders, went hand in hand.

Objections to required participation in religious services arose from religious quarters, however. At the Field Artillery School at Fort Sill, the Commanding Officer did his best to encourage tri-faith understanding among officers and trainees. He invited Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish chaplains to lead the general Sunday service together and designated a different commissioned officer to formally greet worshipers each week. His ecumenical program backfired for

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<sup>82</sup> William Arnold to Alvin Myries, November 12, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 7, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol V), NARA II.

<sup>83</sup> Colonel L.G. Fritz, “Memo to All Station Commanders and Personnel of the North Atlantic Wing, Air Transport Command,” November 22, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 7, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol V), NARA II.

Catholic chaplains and officers who, according to canon law and Papal directive, were restricted to Catholic services. They attended and spoke as necessary but felt profoundly uncomfortable yet unclear about whether they could disobey the military chain of command.<sup>84</sup> When presented with the situation, Frederick Hagan—writing on behalf of the Catholic Chief of Chaplains—reiterated that attendance at religious services, even in the military, was always an individual choice. “The advice of this office,” Hagan counseled, “is to let each individual worship God in his own way in accordance with his training and conscience. Commanding officers and chaplains should so plan the religious activities to give each soldier that privilege.”<sup>85</sup> Prescribing tri-faith experiences exceeded the bounds of military authority, but not everyone recognized the moral, creedal, or human limits of forced ecumenism.

Identifying the edges of religious toleration was challenging in part because when someone like Colonel Fritz referenced “Freedom of Worship” in his missive, he explicitly drew on President Roosevelt’s classification of “Freedom of Worship” as one of the “Four Freedoms” for which the United States was fighting. Eleven months before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt devoted his State of the Union address to a rationale for war, or at the very least, readiness for war. Along with ramping up war manufacturing, increasing munitions production, supporting the Lend-Lease program, and stimulating patriotism, Americans needed to position themselves as guardians of “four essential human freedoms”—freedom of speech and worship, freedom from want and fear.<sup>86</sup>

The response to conscientious objection to the “good war” reveals the extent to which state religious ideology exerted a powerful force within American society. In contrast to World War I, in

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<sup>84</sup> Paul L. Benedict to William Arnold, December 30, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 7, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol V), NARA II.

<sup>85</sup> Frederick Hagan to Paul L. Benedict, January 4, 1944, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 7, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol V), NARA II.

<sup>86</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, “A Message to Congress on the State of the Union,” January 6, 1941, available online through *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16092>.

which religious objectors to war faced scorn, mob violence, and imprisonment, World War II Americans greeted conscientious objectors (COs) with a mixture of disapproval and tolerance.<sup>87</sup> This reaction stemmed in part from the agreement reached between Selective Service Director Lewis Hershey and the historic peace churches—the Quakers, Mennonites, and Brethren—to create alternatives for COs. Registered COs could choose between noncombatant service, such as the medical corps (a popular option for Seventh-Day Adventists who followed the precept of “conscientious cooperation”), or alternative service either in mental institutions or Civilian Public Service (CPS) camps.<sup>88</sup> The response of World War I chaplain O.D. Foster to World War II COs is instructive. When he first visited an East Coast Quaker-run CO camp, he viewed it as “a lark for a type of mind that thinks less socially than individualistically.” By the time he made it to San Dimas, California where he found a Quaker-run CO camp consisting of men from 26 different denominations as well as 8 men lacking a religious preference, he changed his mind about the value of CPS camps. Along with several copies of the camp newspaper, *The San Dimas Rattler*, he reported to the Chief of Chaplains that “this experiment of a medley of religious males trying to live together religiously, with but the negative common interest – of objecting to war – bringing, if not holding them, together, may, if wisely directed, contribute quite as much as a sociological laboratory as their type could have contributed in a military way.”<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You! World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 21-54; Sparrow, *The Warfare State*, 203-8.

<sup>88</sup> On the Selective Service and conscientious objection, see Nicholas Krehbiel, *General Lewis B. Hershey and Conscientious Objection during World War II* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2012). On COs serving in mental institutions, see Steven J. Taylor, *Acts of Conscience: World War II, Mental Institutions, and Religious Objectors* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009). On one specific CPS camp, see Jeffrey Kovac, *Refusing War, Affirming Peace: A History of Civilian Public Service Camp #21 at Cascade Locks* (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2009). Despite the options available, a very small minority elected prison over any national service.

<sup>89</sup> OD Foster to William Arnold and John Allan, May 20, 1941 and September 22, 1941, RG 247: General Correspondence 1920-75, Box 70, Folder 080 (Guardians of America), NARA II. Foster was a founding member and secretary of the Guardians of America, a World War II incarnation of the World War I organization, Comrades in Service. The group consisted of chaplains of multiple denominations who united in the interest of interfaith cooperation. They paid Foster to rove around the US in 1941 and 1942 and report on the moral, morale, and religious conditions of military posts across the country.

The military prescription of tri-faith religion moved Catholics and Jews from the margins to the mainstream, but this did not occur without certain concessions to military order. When Otho Sullivan, a chaplain stationed at the Columbia Army Air Base, addressed his inquiry to Monsignor Arnold, he probably expected a sympathetic response. After all, he was a Catholic priest asking his superior cleric and officer for a meatless menu on Good Friday. He noted that not only would it ease the Catholic observance of Holy Week, but “fish are kosher, and usually acceptable to Protestants too.” Chief of Chaplains Arnold, however, saw the situation rather differently. “The law of abstinence,” he replied, “is a disciplinary regulation binding only on those who voluntarily profess belief in Catholic doctrines.” In his experiences, moreover, not all Catholics followed the regulation, especially those in the Southwest United States where parishes “had turkey suppers on Fridays, though I limited myself to the oyster stuffing.”<sup>90</sup> In Europe, non-Catholic chaplains sometimes found local, non-English speaking priests to conduct Mass and hear confession for their Catholic soldiers. While the language barrier did not present a problem for Mass, which was then always said in Latin, it created a problem for confession. To address this issue, some chaplains printed the Ten Commandments in two languages so soldiers could point to their infractions; it was neither complete nor anonymous, but it allowed soldiers to fulfill their obligation to perform the sacrament of penance.<sup>91</sup> Indeed, Archbishop Spellman, in his role as Military Vicar, sent a circular letter to all Catholic chaplains in 1942 informing them of the relaxation of certain sacramental rules and obligations during the war. Mass, for example, could be said in the evening if morning services were impossible.<sup>92</sup>

For American Jews, too, inclusion required ritual accommodations. If a meatless Good

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<sup>90</sup> Otho Sullivan to William Arnold, March 8, 1943 and William Arnold to Otho Sullivan, March 13, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 6, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol III), NARA II.

<sup>91</sup> Harold Saperstein, “Recollections of a Chaplain,” MS-718, Box 9, Folder 6, AJA.

<sup>92</sup> Francis Spellman, Circular Letter to all Catholic Chaplains, June 8, 1942, Box S/C-84, Folder 2, Cardinal Spellman Papers, AANY.

Friday menu was impossible, so too was mess-hall kosher food.<sup>93</sup> Saturday morning Torah-reading most often occurred on Friday nights, and one Passover Seder generally sufficed instead of the usual two.<sup>94</sup> In civilian life, rabbis and cantors generally led congregations in prayer; but Jewish rituals, unlike Protestant and Catholic services, do not require rabbinic supervision. As a result, on training bases and in combat areas without Jewish chaplains, lay leaders frequently stepped in to conduct prayers. Because the military wanted a single interface with American Jewry, the Jewish Welfare Board, and its subsidiary CANRA, had to present a united front even though American Judaism consisted of multiple movements with differing perspectives on theology, law, and ritual. In particular, the state's need for one American Jewish voice combined with extended wartime exigency to produce an unusual institution: the Responsa Committee, a group comprised of rabbinical representatives from the Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox Jewish movements that rendered *halachic*, or legal, decisions together. While its published volume *Responsa in Wartime* cautioned that its answers to Jewish legal questions—which were notable for flexibility and leniency—applied only to American Jewry serving the nation,<sup>95</sup> it nevertheless revealed how engagement with the state propelled shifts within religious groups and changes in religious doctrine.

### **Protestant-Catholic-Jew-Negro**

Yet as much as the Protestant-Catholic-Jew triptych permeated military decision-making and civilian rhetoric, the Army chaplaincy actually operated through a significantly different lens, that of

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<sup>93</sup> On Jews grappling with eating pork, see Deborah Dash Moore, *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 52-58. Canned kosher meat was made available for purchase through chaplains or at post exchanges, though that did not satisfy everyone. See material in I-249, Box 19, Folders 117-119, AJHS.

<sup>94</sup> Phineas Smoller to Laurence Troeger, March 11, 1942, MS-108, Box 1, Folder 15, AJA.

<sup>95</sup> National Jewish Welfare Board, Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy, Responsa Committee, *Responsa in Wartime* (New York: National Jewish Welfare Board, 1947). Prior to the formal printing of responsa as a book, answers were reproduced, collated, and distributed in more limited ways. Copies are available in Aryeh Lev's papers: I-249, Box 21, Folders 129-30, AJHS.

Protestant-Catholic-Jew-Negro. The religious apparatus of the armed forces functioned within a segregated military, and the Army—unlike the Navy—actively recruited and promoted black chaplains. Adherence to the color line, in which black chaplains could never serve white units, meant that race limited the assignments and opportunities available to African-American (as well as Chinese-American, Japanese-American, Filipino-American, and any other non-white) clergy. And while race also unsettled the promulgated religious order by adding another variable into categorical religious thinking, religion similarly disturbed the racial order imprinted on the World War II-era military by making African Americans equal to (white) Protestants, Catholics, and Jews.

When the military compiled internal statistics of worship attendance and chaplain strength of service, it categorized data rows marked as Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and African American. When the military dispatched civilian religious leaders overseas to boost morale, it sent Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and African-American delegations. And when the military designated chapel space for different services, it set aside time for Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and African-American worship.<sup>96</sup>

While some integrated worship services occurred, they almost always adhered to policies of strictly separate seating.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, the presence of black chaplains meant that black units had at

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<sup>96</sup> Bishop John Gregg traveled abroad in 1943, Bishop J.J. Wright in 1944, and Reverend William Jernagin followed in 1945. See material in RG 247 (1920-45), Box 2, Folder 000.3, NARA II as well as Gregg, *Of Men and Arms: Chronological Travel Record of Bishop John A. Gregg With Messages of Cheer and Good Will to Negro Soldiers* (Nashville: AME Sunday School Union Press, 1945) and Jernagin, *Christ at the Battlefield: Servicemen Accept the Challenge* (Washington: Murray Bros, 1946). For an example of statistics, see RG 247 (1920-45), Box 260, Folder: 337 (July 1944-Dec 1944), NARA II.

<sup>97</sup> When a new chaplain arrived at Ft. Clark, Texas, the African American soldiers tested the intransigent seating policy by wading into the right-side seating, theretofore understood as white seating. When told they either had to comply with the standard separate seating or face completely segregated, separate services, the black men and women boycotted services. See HQ of Eighth Service Command, May 2, 1944, Subject: Church Attendance of Negro Personnel, RG 247 (Security Classified General Correspondence, 1941-48), Box 3, Folder: 291.2 (Race), NARA II. Policies on mixed-race services were inconsistent, however. When Chaplain Thomas Wright (Catholic) refused to celebrate mass for an interracial congregation, as had been the practice at Ft. Bragg, the Army Chief of Chaplains' office requested a report and launched an investigation that also asked the Catholic Church to weigh in. Confidential Memo Re: Agitation Caused by Ordering Separate Masses for White & Colored People, Ft. Bragg, NC, April 27, 1945 and Edmund Weber to Chaplain Charles D. Trexler, May 7, 1945, RG 247 (Security Classified General Correspondence, 1941-48), Box 3, Folder: 291.2 (Race), NARA II.

least one black officer, a not insignificant accomplishment in a military that frequently assigned white officers to black units. And the inclusion of black ministers as officers provided a platform from which to decry segregation. When a black chaplain ordered to Omaha's Paxton Hotel for a Chaplains' Conference was refused a room, the Seventh Service Command decided it would no longer hold conferences in private spaces in which it could not compel integration.<sup>98</sup>

However, as a matter of policy—and despite the provisos that religion eclipsed race in tending to the military flock—white chaplains (of any faith) could serve any unit, but non-white chaplains were restricted to same-race units. This approach to chaplains extended far beyond African Americans in the U.S. military. When the Congregational and Christian Churches disclosed, for example, that a Chinese American pastor wanted to become a chaplain, the Office of the Chief of Chaplains advised the group, “the only place we could use a Chinese pastor would be with a Chinese unit. To the best of our knowledge and belief, the organization of Chinese units in our Army is not contemplated. Chinese in the service are in regular units of other Americans. Therefore, we have no requisitions for Chinese chaplains.”<sup>99</sup> The math was simple: without a wholly Chinese-American unit, there was no place for a Chinese-American chaplain, no matter his religion. The chaplaincy could include clergy from a range of religious and racial backgrounds, but only if they mapped onto the racial architecture of the military.

The Jim Crow military left many Americans without a representative of their race in the chaplaincy corps, which raised the question of how predominantly white ministers would and could serve non-white troops. By 1944, a pamphlet, “The Chaplain and the Negro in the Armed Services,” provided some answers. It cautioned chaplains that lack of experience or contact with African

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<sup>98</sup> C. H. Danielson to the Chief of Chaplains, June 26, 1945, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 121, Folder: 201.2 (Letters of Commendation and Complaints Records, Vol. I), NARA II. The Congregationalist Church, which endorsed African Americans and Japanese Americans, lodged comparable complaints about segregated hotels. See RG 247 (1920-45), Box 64, Folder: 080 (Congregationalist and Christian Churches, Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>99</sup> Walter Zimmerman to Frederick Fagley, October 15, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 64, Folder 080 (Congregational and Christian Churches, Vol II), NARA II.



Americans would not preclude assignments to black units and further, all chaplains bore responsibility for improving race relations. “There is no reason in religion,” the 30-page booklet intoned, “why any chaplain should not minister to men of any race. Thus the chaplain who at the moment is at a distance from Negroes in the service should bear in mind that tomorrow he may be assigned to a Negro unit.”<sup>100</sup> Yet while spirituality itself might have transcended the color line, chaplain assignments certainly did not.

Quite notably, white chaplains had to gird themselves to handle religious duties with black—or other non-white—units. As the pamphlet expounded, “there [wa]s more at stake here than the well-being of the Negro or the spiritual life of the chaplain. The good of our Nation is involved.”<sup>101</sup> For the good of the country, in the spirit of wartime patriotism, then, white clergy needed to understand who African-American soldiers were: that, like white personnel, African Americans remained individuals with particular concerns and perspectives; that as a group, African Americans had overcome deep and wounding challenges since emancipation; that units consisted of men from a variety of faith traditions, albeit most commonly Baptists and Methodists; that the segregated military “irritat[ed]” them and that African Americans posted to the South faced discrimination “ranging from simple inhospitality to brutal abuse.”<sup>102</sup> In general, the instructional briefing acknowledged but downplayed segregation and structural discrimination while offering simplistic advice—approach men as individuals, avoid assumptions about faith, refrain from stereotypes and distasteful jokes, eschew minstrelsy as a form of entertainment, and empathize with off-base difficulties in procuring transportation or finding recreation. Admonishing white chaplains to spurn

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<sup>100</sup> “The Chaplains and the Negro in the Armed Services” (1944): 5, RG 18, Box 4, Folder 25, PHS. Another copy can be found in RG 247 (Security-Classified General Correspondence, 1941-48), Box 3, Folder 291.2 (Race), NARA II. The pamphlet was published without a documented author and seems to have been developed by the Office of the Chief of Chaplains in consultation with leading black clergy who participated in the Federal Council of Churches.

<sup>101</sup> “The Chaplains and the Negro in the Armed Services” (1944): 7, RG 18, Box 4, Folder 25, PHS.

<sup>102</sup> “The Chaplains and the Negro in the Armed Services” (1944): 11-14, RG 18, Box 4, Folder 25, PHS.

racist language like “‘nigger,’ ‘darkey,’ [and] ‘coon,’” represented the most direct and clear instructions offered, even as the Double V campaign pushed African Americans to reconsider their roles in service to the nation, to ask whether their military service was meaningful and whether it could be used to change their status in the United States. Ever conscious of the fragility of perceptions abroad, “The Chaplain and the Negro” pressed chaplains to sway the opinions of all their men and encourage their acceptance of African-American soldiers: “the American uniform, no matter by whom it is worn, must be respected by all other Americans if our armed forces are not to suffer a dangerous loss of prestige in the eyes of foreign peoples. Similar emphasis must be placed upon respect for our allies, many of whom have colored troops in their armies and navies.”<sup>103</sup>

Nevertheless, the biggest problem, from the perspective of the Army Chief of Chaplains, was how to fill the African-American chaplain quota. In early 1943, the Army Chief of Chaplains reached out to the five principal African-American churches—National Baptists, Methodists, AME, CME, and AMEZ—and requested their assistance in filling 445 slots available for black chaplains as set by the Army’s Tables of Organization. He fretted that only 116—a quarter of the quota—were currently on duty, and should the churches not be able to fill the remainder, the chaplaincy would turn to other denominations for help. Working under the assumption that “the religious leaders of Negro churches consider it advisable to have Negro Chaplains for Negro troops,” Arnold wanted to “cooperate fully” to meet the “chaplain procurement objective.”<sup>104</sup> Within 6 months, the Army had doubled the number of black chaplains to 247, but they were racing against a quota that was increasing by 10 chaplains a month.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> “The Chaplains and the Negro in the Armed Services” (1944): 21, 29, RG 18, Box 4, Folder 25, PHS.

<sup>104</sup> William Arnold to C.H. Phillips, January 23, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 63, Folder 080 (CME), NARA II. The same letter, addressed to the appropriate church official, can be found in Box 69, Folder 080 (General Commission, Vol. V), Box 75, Folder 080 (Methodist, Vol II), Box 76, Folder 080 (AME), Box 79, Folder 080 (National Baptist, Vol. I).

<sup>105</sup> George Rixey to W.H. Jernagin, July 17, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 79, Folder 080 (National Baptist, Vol. I), NARA II.

By the middle of 1943, the Army desperately needed African-American chaplains and was willing to relinquish strict educational standards to commission them. In a letter sent to every denomination that had endorsed African Americans—from black denominations such as the AME and National Baptist Churches to more typically white groups such as the Disciples of Christ and Congregationalist Churches—the Office of the Chief of Chaplains stated, “We have an urgent need for Negro chaplains....The Chief of Service is prepared to consider men with two or more years of college or seminary training and three years of successful pastoral experience.” Despite consenting to adjusted guidelines, the military still equivocated, noting that, “Of course, the full educational and professional training is most desirable but hand-picked men with the qualifications indicated will be given consideration as the need of the service requires.” Moreover, the letter concluded, “we are not announcing any lowering of standards for Negroes and each applicant will be considered on his merits.”<sup>106</sup> When the supply of a particular group of chaplains dwindled and pragmatism demanded change, the Army chaplaincy hesitantly acceded to reduced educational credentials.

But easing the path for black ministers to become chaplains did not mean churches could necessarily or easily provide more men to the Army. Willard Wickizer, the Executive Secretary of the Disciples of Christ Committee on War Service, pointed out that the paucity of African-American ministers afflicted their churches as well and it was a “problem we have been working on.” Tellingly, he was also uncertain about the capacity of black ministers and feared losing “the few able men we do have” as they held “such key positions in the Negro brotherhood that if they were to give up their present work things would almost collapse.”<sup>107</sup> Wickizer’s unveiled racism prevented him from encouraging more men from his church to apply to the Army.

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<sup>106</sup> For a sample letter, see Walter B. Zimmerman to Willard Wickizer, July 21, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 64, Folder 080 (Disciples of Christ, Vol. II), NARA II.

<sup>107</sup> Willard Wickizer to Walter Zimmerman, August 5, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 64, Folder 080 (Disciples of Christ, Vol. II), NARA II.

Some African-American chaplains in the service felt their own denominations were not doing enough to recruit and endorse clergy. Chaplain S.A. Owen informed the Chief of Chaplains that the National Baptist Convention, USA, “has not been the most diligent” in sending ministers to the chaplaincy. He admitted that the scarcity of “well trained men” was a “handicap” to this endeavor. Much as he wanted to dedicate his post-war life to helping develop better educational pathways to allow more “Negro ministers...the advantage of liberal training” and advancing men into the chaplaincy, there was little he could do to alter the current situation.<sup>108</sup> Of the typically white denominations, the Congregational Church took on the responsibility of funneling as many African-American clergy to the military as it could, all the while advocating on behalf of racial equality in and outside the armed forces. Every time a hotel forced a black chaplain to use a service elevator at a meeting or denied food service at a group meal, the Congregationalists protested. Thus even as the Army vacillated between seeking out more African-American chaplains and ignoring the racism they experienced, religious groups seized opportunities to challenge unequal treatment.

Once in the service, black chaplains’ experiences varied considerably. The Office of the Army Chief of Chaplains strenuously claimed that “race discrimination is not practiced by our present colored chaplains in religious work” and “chaplains use their influence as far as possible to prevent racial disturbances.” At the same time, however, the administration also worried that this work of pacifying black troops was insecure, constantly influenced by external “agitators of the race question” and diminished by “prejudiced white men bungling their jobs by improper speech and action.” This dangerous combination of outside pressure and internal discrimination sometimes “got hold of some chaplains and stir[red] them up...sometimes they lose their sense of loyalty to the large

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<sup>108</sup> S.A. Owen to William Arnold, February 7, 1944, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 79, Folder 080 (National Baptist, Vol. II), NARA II.

interests of their country and people.”<sup>109</sup>

Racial inequality, in other words, could run afoul of patriotic commitments, but the solution, as Chaplain Benny Jones found out rarely rested on dismantling discrimination. It was a little hotter and a little more humid than usual on the Louisiana night that led authorities to question Chaplain Jones’s commitments. What exactly he said that muggy September night over the chapel’s public address system remained in dispute. A white officer, Second Lieutenant Francis K. Morgan, claimed he heard one thing, and the chaplain asserted he said something a bit different. Both agreed that the minister commended Camp Claiborne’s African-American soldiers for their patriotic service, framing their work in construction and service units as essential to the war effort. Did Chaplain Jones encourage the men to stand up for their rights as American citizens, suggesting they stop sitting in the back of buses or cease entering local restaurants anywhere except the front door? Did he tell them war at home loomed, a battle for the rights and dignity of black men, a fight that could involve dangers as life-threatening as combat overseas? Did he, in other words, goad a revolt, fomenting the racial unrest that plagued southern military bases during World War II? Or did he simply affirm his unit’s prowess as fighters and their rights as Americans, in order to boost their morale?<sup>110</sup>

The military intelligence officer who filed the report never interviewed Chaplain Jones. But sent through proper channels, the memo eventually landed on the desk of the Army Chief of Chaplains, who in turn dispatched one of his staff chaplains to respond. In a confidential reply, Chaplain John Monahan instructed Chaplain Edgar Siegfriedt to reign in the black chaplains serving under him and remind the clergymen of their proper role in the army. What had been an individual

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<sup>109</sup> “Racial Problems and the Chaplains’ Activities,” February 14, 1945, RG 247 (Security-Classified General Correspondence, 1941-48), Box 3, Folder 291.2 (Race), NARA II.

<sup>110</sup> Captain Paul Worden (Chief, Intelligence Branch, Camp Claiborne) to Officer in Charge, Sept 26, 1944, RG 247 (Security Classified General Correspondence, 1941-48), Box 3, Folder: 291.2 (Race), NARA II.

concern became a group matter. From Washington, DC, Chaplain Monahan suggested that the command chaplain advise his “colored chaplains that they are definitely not to promulgate racial hatred. Chaplains are appointed in the Army of the United States to furnish religious ministrations, preach the word of God, and to counsel men in the right direction...[not] to incite hatred for their fellow brethren, either white or colored.”<sup>111</sup> Under Monahan’s injunction, African Americans, already restricted to the margins of the Jim Crow army, had become responsible for staving off racial unrest, and black chaplains, already hindered by segregation, liable for provoking discord among soldiers. From this perspective, race relations ought to stand separate from the military’s project of promoting religious toleration. But Chaplain Monahan’s admonition to focus on religious work and sideline racial matters was actually impossible. In his office, in the administrative headquarters of the army chaplaincy, race and religion regularly co-mingled, often bedeviling bureaucrats but never wholly separating from one another.

### **Between Race and Religion: Japanese-American Chaplains**

Two-and-a-half months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, on February 19, 1942, FDR issued Executive Order 9066, which allowed for and led to the incarceration of about 120,000 Japanese Americans. With the notable exceptions of left-leaning public intellectuals such as journalist Carey McWilliams, photographer Dorothea Lange, Socialist party leader Norman Thomas, and African-American civil rights activist Bayard Rustin, and groups such as the pacifist Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Quaker American Friends Service Committee, and the American Civil

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<sup>111</sup> John Monahan to Edgar F. Siegfriedt, September 30, 1944, RG 247 (Security Classified General Correspondence, 1941-48), Box 3, Folder: 291.2 (Race), NARA II. Monahan’s concerns about inciting unrest were not completely unfounded: just one month earlier black soldiers had assaulted white officers, an altercation that prompted courts-martial on charges of rioting and mutiny. The trials yielded convictions, including one death sentence that was later commuted. See Adam Fairclough, *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915-1972* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 78. Camp Claiborne, located in central Louisiana, was one of several army camps to experience race riots earlier in the war as well. See Daniel Kryder, *Divided Arsenal: Race and the American State During World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 141-2 and Joe Wilson, *The 761<sup>st</sup> “Black Panther” Tank Battalion in World War II* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1999), 18-19.

Liberties Union (ACLU), most Americans accepted the internment of Japanese Americans as an acceptable cost of war. Most Americans, of course, were not directed to pack up their possessions, forced to leave their homes, and required to begin new, uncertain lives in barracks, upon the order of the benign-sounding but hostile War Relocation Authority.<sup>112</sup>

The War Department took a different tack. Although the Selective Service classified all Japanese Americans as Class 4-C (enemy aliens) after Pearl Harbor, the Army sought Japanese-American loyalty and harbored skepticism about the negative propaganda surrounding internment. Both the Army and Navy provided citizens and non-citizens—often offered the prospect of naturalized citizenship<sup>113</sup>—opportunities to serve as translators, journalists, writers, cartographers, interrogators, and spies.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, when members of the Hawaiian Territorial Guard petitioned to serve, the Army transformed it into the 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion in spring 1942. After the 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion, which included future U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye, proved its mettle in Europe, in winter 1943 the Army created the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team, which primarily consisted of mainland men whose families were interned. The patriotic bait did not entice all Japanese Americans, but some *Nisei*—especially those from the territory of Hawaii—wanted to enlist. While over 10,000 men from Hawaii were willing to sign up and complete loyalty questionnaires, mainland *Nisei* hesitated, and the 442<sup>nd</sup> could not subsist on volunteers alone. To fill its ranks, in November 1943, the Selective Service reclassified Japanese-Americans as eligible for service and drafted about 14,000 Japanese Americans.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> On the experience of Japanese internment, see Brian Hayashi, *Democratizing the Enemy: The Japanese-American Internment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

<sup>113</sup> The U.S. had barred Japanese-born immigrants from citizenship by the Naturalization Act of 1870, *Ozawa v. U.S.* 260 U.S. 189 (1922), and the Immigration Act of 1924. Thus while European immigrants had previously acquired citizenship through military service, the offer of citizenship to Japanese-Americans represented a significant departure from precedent and law.

<sup>114</sup> Hayashi, *Democratizing the Enemy*, 139-42, 157-9.

<sup>115</sup> Orville Shirey, *Americans: The Story of the 442<sup>nd</sup> Combat Team* (Washington, DC: Infantry Journal Press, 1946), 19-25. On the experience of soldiers in the 100<sup>th</sup> and 442<sup>nd</sup>, see Robert Asahina, *Just Americans: How Japanese Americans*

For the Office of the Army Chief of Chaplains, the inclusion of Japanese Americans in the Army posed three related questions: first, what chaplains would serve the 100<sup>th</sup> and the 442<sup>nd</sup>; second, could Japanese-Americans serve as chaplains and if so, whom would they serve; and third, how would the military handle Buddhism, the faith of many *Nisei* as well as the enemy Japanese.

Technically, the racial and religious composition of units was irrelevant; military policy dictated that any chaplain could serve any unit for all chaplains were commissioned to serve all men. And when the 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion came under Army command, first stateside at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, and then abroad, in North Africa and Europe, it acquired a succession of white, Christian chaplains. When Israel Yost presented himself to Lieutenant Colonel Farrant L. Turner in October 1943, the Hawaii-born commanding officer of the 100<sup>th</sup> wondered whether the military had sent a rabbi to minister to Buddhists and Christians. Yost, a pastor from Pennsylvania, quickly realized that he would find few fellow Lutherans in the seats of his chapel. Instead, for the next two years he learned how to counsel, tend to, address, and lead or arrange services for an array of Protestants, some Catholics, a core group of Mormons, and many Buddhists.<sup>116</sup> Although Yost lacked any experience with Japanese Americans and felt most comfortable with the doctrine and rituals of the Lutheran Church in America,<sup>117</sup> he earnestly committed himself to the men in his care. As he later recalled, he held adherents to Lutheran standards for Communion and “never attempted to conduct a Roman Catholic or a Mormon or a Buddhist religious rite,” but also “prayed with soldier who wanted a prayer...witnessing to my own faith but also explaining how others taught

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*Won a War at Home and Abroad* (New York: Gotham Books, 2006) and Bill Yenne, *Rising Sons: The Japanese American GIs Who Fought for the United States in World War II* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007).

<sup>116</sup> Israel Yost, *Combat Chaplain: The Personal Story of the World War II Chaplain of the Japanese American 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 1-6.

<sup>117</sup> The Lutheran Church in America joined the American Lutheran Church and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America in 1988.



differently.”<sup>118</sup> He relished baptizing those who chose to become Christians while also advocating on behalf of a soldier’s stepfather, an imprisoned Shinto priest.<sup>119</sup>

Yost crafted an imperfect but viable path through a religious canvas stretched to encompass faiths, traditions, and rituals beyond his previously known and preferred religious worldview. By the time the War Department approved the creation of the 442<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, however, Yost no longer represented the ideal chaplain for a Japanese-American unit. By then, the Army had commissioned several Japanese-American Christian chaplains and began discussing the possibility of a Buddhist chaplain. The request for a Buddhist chaplain came not from Buddhist soldiers, but—at least as requested through official channels—from Colonel C.W. Pierce, the Commanding Officer of the newly formed regiment. The Commanding General of the Third Army, which oversaw the 442<sup>nd</sup>’s training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, approved the request, and in turn, solicited a Buddhist chaplain from the Chief of Chaplains.<sup>120</sup> This was not the first time the Army handled an inquiry about serving Buddhists. In December 1942, Chaplain Wilfred Munday received a response to his query for help finding someone to serve Buddhists at Camp Grant: “Our impression would be that probably the nearest Buddhist priests to Camp Grant would be found in Chicago, Illinois....If our impression is correct, that should be close enough to secure the occasional services of one of them in ministering to those of his faith. You should, of course, take this up with your Commanding Officer.”<sup>121</sup> At the time, the Office of the Chief of Chaplains could merely hazard a guess as to where a chaplain dedicated to serving Buddhist soldiers might find a Buddhist priest. A few months

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<sup>118</sup> Yost, *Combat Chaplain*, 8. While Yost found no solace in Buddhist belief or ritual, he reserved judgment for fellow Protestants, writing, for example, that “some Protestant chaplains were weak in theological beliefs and could not understand why Christians such as Episcopalians and Lutherans preferred their own rites as much as Roman Catholics did. I never conducted a ‘Protestant’ service of Holy Communion; I always used the ritual of my own church” (131).

<sup>119</sup> Yost, *Combat Chaplain*, 67, 168-70.

<sup>120</sup> William Arnold to William Scobey, June 10, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 60, Folder 080 (Buddhist), NARA II.

<sup>121</sup> Harry Lee Virden to Wilfred Munday, December 22, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 60, Folder 080 (Buddhist), NARA II.

later, relying on an “impression” about Buddhists no longer sufficed. A large number of Japanese Americans had arrived at Camp Shelby; the Chief of Chaplains needed to find a Buddhist chaplain.

And William Arnold tried. With the Adjutant General peering over his shoulder, wanting updates on the search, Arnold looked for a Buddhist priest who could meet the Army chaplaincy requirements.<sup>122</sup> He informed Bishop Matsukahe, the leader of the Buddhist Mission of North America, that the Army would “be pleased to consider a clergyman of your faith who meets the eligibility standards” and noted that “a clergyman appointed from your faith will be assigned to a unit the majority of whose members are Buddhists.”<sup>123</sup> This was unusual. Most clergy seeking appointments contended with the unknown and some, like Israel Yost, found themselves with unexpected assignments. But a Buddhist priest was different. He could approach the chaplaincy knowing his placement, in demographic if not geographic terms, because the chaplaincy was both flexible and rigid: elastic enough to include a Buddhist but stiff enough to assume only one appropriate posting for a Buddhist priest.

Matsukahe furnished Arnold with one name, Reverend Masara Kumata, who had been relocated to Topaz, Utah, and who had already written to the Secretary of War based on advice from the Japanese American Citizens League.<sup>124</sup> At the same time, Reverend Newton Ishuira, then residing at the Gila River Relocation Center in Arizona, offered his services to the Secretary of War

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<sup>122</sup> John Monahan to the Adjutant General, March 26, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 60, Folder 080 (Buddhist), NARA II.

<sup>123</sup> William Arnold to Bishop Matsukahe, March 24, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 60, Folder 080 (Buddhist), NARA II. The Buddhist Mission in North America (BMNA) represented the confluence of Japanese migration to the United States and the introduction of Buddhism to Americans at the 1893 World Parliament of Religion. Institutionally located in San Francisco, the BNMA originated as the center of Jodo Shinshu (True Pure Land School) missionary work in the U.S. and retained tied to the headquarters in Kyoto, Japan. In the 1920s, when the BNMA trained Nisei as Sunday School instructors, it began to Anglicize much of its religious terminology, which is when religious leaders became known as ministers, priests, and bishops. During World War II, about 55 percent of interned Japanese Americans were Buddhist, the majority of which affiliated with the BNMA; in 1944, a group at the Topaz relocation center suggested changing the religion’s name to the Buddhist Church of America to emphasize their Americanness and distance themselves from Japan. Richard H. Seager, *Buddhism in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999) 51-9.

<sup>124</sup> Masara Kumata to John McCoy, March 30, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 60, Folder 080 (Buddhist), NARA II. The archival record does not make clear whether McCoy had passed Kumata’s letter to the Office of the Chief of Chaplains before or after Bishop Matsukahe wrote to Arnold.

in a letter, which was passed along to the Office of the Chief of Chaplains. To Kumata, Arnold sent an application form and requested he apply, pointedly observing, “if you are appointed, you will be the first Buddhist chaplain in the army of the United States.”<sup>125</sup> In response to Ishuira, Arnold equivocated. He thanked him for his interest, wondered whether Bishop Matsukahe would endorse him, and allowed him to apply while cautioning that the response was not “an offer or a guarantee of appointment, as appointments from your faith are made as the requirements of the service justify.”<sup>126</sup> Arnold’s wary tone may have reflected impatience with Ishuira’s Buddhist faith or concern about his Japanese-American background. But Arnold was open to a Buddhist chaplain, as his letter to Kumata suggested and the Army commissioned several Japanese-American Christian chaplains. Although Arnold may have sounded sharp, his phrasing was actually stock. “Appointments from your faith” was generic rather than directed, a standard line used in many responses to potential chaplains, letters more frequently sent by Arnold’s subordinates than by the Chief himself.

By April 1943, pressure mounted for the Army to commission a Buddhist chaplain, but if Arnold was open to Japanese-American Buddhist chaplains, he also knew that the appointment process would be more difficult. The Commanding General of the Hawaiian Department recommended two Buddhist ministers who had participated in the ROTC program at the University of Hawaii while his wife and another civilian woman furnished names as well.<sup>127</sup> At the same time,

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<sup>125</sup> William Arnold to Masara Kumata, April 5, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 60, Folder 080 (Buddhist), NARA II.

<sup>126</sup> William Arnold to Newton Ishuira, April 10, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 60, Folder 080 (Buddhist), NARA II.

<sup>127</sup> “Memorandum for Buddhists for File,” April 14, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 60, Folder 080 (Buddhist), NARA II. Both Mrs. Patterson and Miss Wallihan recommended white Buddhist priests, with the former suggesting Ernest Hunt, who as a British citizen was ineligible, and the latter advising the military to contact Julius Goldwater, an American citizen who lived in Los Angeles. The memo noted that Goldwater “is reported to have spent some time in China,” which understated his experiences in Asia as well as his connections to Japanese American Buddhism. He was the son of German-Jewish immigrants (and first cousin of 1964 Republican Presidential nominee Barry Goldwater) who had converted to Buddhism and trained in Kyoto as well as Hangzhou, China in the 1930s. During World War II, he

Colonel William Scobey from the Assistant Secretary of War's office reminded the Chief of Chaplains that "before any action is taken on [Kumata's] application he must be cleared by the G-2 Division of the War Department General Staff."<sup>128</sup> In other words, Military Intelligence would have to clear Kumata, a standard applied to no other chaplain candidates, including Japanese-American Christians. The real impediment to Kumata's chaplaincy appointment was not loyalty, however. Defective vision and an untreated cataract precluded a commission, and when he failed the Army physical, Arnold reported asking Bishop Matsukahe for another option. But, Arnold told Scobey, the Buddhist Bishop informed him that "it would not be possible to furnish another suitable candidate." This meant that "at the present time, therefore, it does not seem possible that there will be an appointment of a Buddhist chaplain."<sup>129</sup>

The present time was June 1943, and by then, another factor mitigated against the appointment of a Buddhist chaplain: tension between Christians and Buddhists, inside and outside of the Japanese-American community. From Pasadena came a message from relocated Episcopal priest, Reverend John M. Yamazaki, who implored his California contact to "make [a] 'confidential' report to Army not to take Buddhist Priest. They are the chief factor... [in] prevent[ing] Japanese [from] be[ing] American-ized." Based on this information, the correspondent, C.S. Reifanider concluded "Personally, I think it is most important if a Japanese Chaplain or Chaplains are to be appointed for the Japanese Combat Unit, that they should be Christian ministers, whether the majority of the Unit are Buddhist or not."<sup>130</sup>

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protected Buddhist Temples and the property and possessions of interned Japanese Americans, and became a pillar of the Los Angeles Buddhist community.

<sup>128</sup> William Scobey to William Arnold, April 7, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 60, Folder 080 (Buddhist), NARA II.

<sup>129</sup> William Arnold to William Scobey, June 10, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 60, Folder 080 (Buddhist), NARA II.

<sup>130</sup> C.S. Reifanider to E.M. Zacharias, June 14, 1943, RG 247: Security Classified General Correspondence 1941-48, Box 1, Folder 080 (Societies and Church Organizations), NARA II.

Internal opinion from Camp Shelby, MS, where the 442<sup>nd</sup> Battalion trained, echoed Reifanider's sentiment. Two chaplains, a Baptist and a Methodist, had been assigned to the Japanese-American combat team and both insisted that worship attendance was good, Bible class turnout consistent, and morale fine.<sup>131</sup> Moreover, according to the inspection report filed with the War Department's General Staff, "both chaplains had heard that a Buddhist priest might be assigned to the combat team and recommended against such action. Both stated that the men were coming to them for advice."<sup>132</sup> With the needs of the new trainees apparently met, a Buddhist chaplain was unnecessary. As a result, by early July, William Arnold acknowledged that his office had not commissioned a Buddhist chaplain, but "because of advice from various sources it seems best that none should be."<sup>133</sup>

A month later, when Newton Ishuira alleged religious prejudice against Buddhist priests, Arnold's office rejected the accusation. Tellingly, they argued that the composition of the 442<sup>nd</sup> was insufficiently Buddhist to warrant a Buddhist chaplain. "The preponderance of religious adherents are Christians," the reply to Ishuira stated, although no formal census was taken and no set threshold existed. Outside the Japanese-American battalion, the religious composition of units did not determine chaplain assignments; instead, theoretically the chaplaincy allocated chaplains to faiths at a rate of 1 chaplain per 100,000 adherents. But, the letter continued, "the unit now has its full complement of chaplains" thereby negating the need even to consider Ishuira or any Buddhist

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<sup>131</sup> The experience serving with Japanese Americans turned the Baptist, Chaplain Thomas E. West, into a supporter and ally of Japanese Americans. When Senator Thomas Connally asserted that he was a "better American" than Hawaiians because they lacked "American ancestry," West—by then ministering at a civilian church in Texas—protested, writing that he trained with the combat unit at Camp Shelby and moved with them to Italy and, based on those experiences, he had "nothing but the highest praise and admiration" for Japanese-Americans from Hawaii. "Former Chaplain of the 442<sup>nd</sup> Protests Connally's Remarks," *Pacific Citizen* 34, no. 11 (March 15, 1952).

<sup>132</sup> William Scobey to William Arnold, June 7, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 60, Folder 080 (Buddhist), NARA II.

<sup>133</sup> William Arnold to William Scobey, July 8, 1943, RG 247: Security Classified General Correspondence 1941-48, Box 1, Folder 080 (Societies and Church Organizations), NARA II.

chaplain candidate.<sup>134</sup>

Yet Ishuira was correct. Pernicious religious, rather than racial, logic pervaded the decision to exclude Buddhist priests from the chaplaincy. Despite Arnold's initial willingness to open the chaplaincy to Buddhist priests, the inadequate supply of ready-to-endorse Buddhist clergy combined with resistance to placing a Buddhist in the chaplaincy articulated by a sector of the Japanese-American community and army inspectors enabled Arnold to dismiss Buddhism as unnecessary to the chaplaincy. This decision did not extend to Japanese Americans writ large, for the blessing and sanction of the Congregational Church enabled four Japanese-American Christian ministers to serve as chaplains.<sup>135</sup> It was a confined and controlled military service, limited to Japanese-American units, heavily scrutinized by military intelligence, and bound by tiny numbers. The enemy, though, was (Shinto) Buddhism, and excluding Buddhists from accessing chaplains of their faith went unquestioned. Nevertheless, for Japanese Americans, Christianity opened the chaplaincy.

### **Religious Unity and Its Discontents: The Military's Protestant Problem**

For the military, "Protestant" served as an essential category of religion and a useful marker of faith, one that paralleled Catholic and Jewish and supported the tri-faith standard. During World War I, Bishop Brent had distinguished between liturgical and non-liturgical Protestants, a distinction that faded over the next two decades. Nevertheless, many of the people and denominations bracketed under the large heading of Protestant found it endlessly troubling. An Episcopal priest pointed out that "the term 'Protestants' is so general that it really means nothing at all; for in that

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<sup>134</sup> Harry Lee Virden, August 18, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 60, Folder 080 (Buddhist), NARA II

<sup>135</sup> See applications in RG 4373 (Chaplains Collection Records, 1939-1955), Boxes 1-6, Congregational Library. George Aki, Hiro Higuchi, Masayoshi Wakai, and Masao Yamada received endorsements, and Higuchi and Yamada went to Europe with the 442<sup>nd</sup> Battalion. George Aki was the first mainland Japanese-American to serve as a chaplain. He had been studying at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley when he was interned at Tanforan, Topaz, and Jerome, where he received his commission and joined the 100<sup>th</sup> (Japanese-American Combat Team). "Rev. Aki Gets Commission as Combat Team Chaplain," *Pacific Citizen* 18, no. 14 (April 8, 1944).

category would be included Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Mormons, Christian Scientists, and it really tells nothing as the definite spiritual and religious needs of the men.” Without more detailed and concrete knowledge, how could the military adequately serve the men in its care? And why, he implored, could the military not simply ask draftees about their religious affiliation? After all, Yale asked his freshman son for that very information.<sup>136</sup>

That the military was not the same as a private university and worked under a radically different constitutional order escaped Henry Sherrill. But his complaint about the blanket use of a generic label resonated with other “Protestants” as well. The 1936 Census of Religious Bodies—a task undertaken by the Commerce Department—provided a snapshot of the tapestry of American religious life. According to its survey of churches (a term used to denote any religious institutions, regardless of what it called itself), there were 256 different religious bodies counting almost 56 million members.<sup>137</sup> The census noticed the presence of small religious groups like the Bahai and Muslims, and offered a thorough and rich portrait of the diversity of American Protestantism. It did not, however, differentiate among denominations in Judaism or record ethnic differences in Catholicism. On its own, then, the census was descriptive, if imperfectly so. But in the hands of the military, it became prescriptive. It legitimated which religious groups deserved chaplains and which groups did not. The Army set a loose threshold of 100,000 members as the benchmark for inclusion in the chaplaincy.<sup>138</sup> When tiny groups such as the Gospel Firebugs—which described themselves as

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<sup>136</sup> Henry K. Sherrill to Henry Stimson, October 8, 1941, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 1, Folder 000.3 (Army\*Civilian Relations, Vol I), NARA II.

<sup>137</sup> The Census Report noted that religions count their members in different ways, and they instructed churches to report figures based on their own definition of membership. This policy of fidelity to religious groups’ membership policies respected their autonomy but inevitably created a dataset that undercounted adherents who belonged to groups with higher thresholds of membership (e.g. adult baptism) relative to others. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, “Census of Religious Bodies: 1936,” August 1, 1940, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 6, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>138</sup> This policy was not only stated and reiterated to religious groups but the annotated census found in military records has a tick mark next to groups with about 100,000 or more members. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, “Census of Religious Bodies: 1936,” August 1, 1940, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 6, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministration in the Army, Vol. I), NARA II.

“old-time revivalists”—approached the Office of the Chief of Chaplains to request a slot as “evangelistic chaplains,” the answer was easy: no.<sup>139</sup> Not only were they tiny (membership: 4),<sup>140</sup> but they did not exist on the census and thus did not exist for the purposes of the military.

Tiny churches often bothered the Chief of Chaplains with their cries for recognition, but the presence of larger, more difficult to categorize religions proved harder to reconcile. Eastern Orthodox churches presented a particularly vexing case. The 1936 Census revealed a “considerable” number of Greek Orthodox and Russian Orthodox communicants in the United States, enough to merit several chaplains. But neither faith was represented in the chaplaincy, and by 1940, the Army Chief of Chaplains anticipated that with a general mobilization a “sufficient...though necessarily scattered” group of Orthodox Americans would enter the service. He began making provisions for commissioning Orthodox chaplains by inviting the Russian and Greek Orthodox churches to nominate a church official to serve as the group’s representative to the military.<sup>141</sup> If necessary, then, the Army would contact that person to recruit, select, and endorse a chaplain.

When war came, Orthodox men were drafted and entered the military. But they were hard to spot because they had no easy way to identify themselves. When they referred to themselves as Orthodox or Eastern Orthodox, officials translated that as Catholic or Protestant as they saw fit. There were also those who self-classified as Catholics—which, technically they were, albeit not Roman Catholics—while others self-selected as Protestants—which, under the military’s classification scheme that designated everyone not Catholic or Jewish as Protestant, they were as

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<sup>139</sup> J.R. Morse to William Arnold, August 31, 1942 and Hartley Stockham to J.R. Morse, September 5, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 70, Folder 080 (Gospel Firebugs), NARA II.

<sup>140</sup> “‘Firebugs’ Will Start Revival Here,” *San Jose Evening News*, May 29, 1943.

<sup>141</sup> George Rixey to Theophilus Pashkovsky, June 11, 1940, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 85, Folder 080 (Russian Orthodox), NARA II.



well.<sup>142</sup> Metropolitan Antony Bashir wrote the President to plead the case of his Greek Orthodox followers: “We are not Roman Catholic, nor are we any form of Protestant...Our young Orthodox men are therefore either to go without Spiritual guidance and Religious Worship, or else be forced by circumstance to accept Roman Catholic or Protestant ministrations.”<sup>143</sup> The extant categories camouflaged the Eastern Orthodox, rendering them invisible and denying them warranted chaplains.

The creation of the 122<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion changed everything. In January 1943, FDR issued an executive order forming a Greek Battalion—a unit designated to parachute or boat into Greece to liberate it from Nazi control.<sup>144</sup> Its Greek-speaking immigrant and native-born commandoes were almost all Greek Orthodox, and as William Arnold had told Russian Orthodox prelate, Cyril A.W. Johnson, the year before, “If all members of any one denomination were in or near a certain place or unit the problem of religious ministration would be easy, simple, and most effective.”<sup>145</sup> Once informed about the activation of a Greek Battalion, Arnold contacted Greek Orthodox Archbishop Athenagoras and asked him to send one of his best priests immediately.<sup>146</sup> The incorporation of a Greek Orthodox chaplain also provided opportunities for more extensive conversations with and bred competition within the Orthodox churches. In particular, the Russian Orthodox clamored for chaplains of their own, gathering information about the distribution of Russian Orthodox soldiers and lobbying the War Department for a chaplain at Fort Jackson, where

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<sup>142</sup> John Telep to William Arnold, October 22, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 85, Folder 080 (Russian Orthodox), NARA II; William Arnold to J. Warren Albinson, November 29, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 70, Folder 080 (Greek Orthodox), NARA II.

<sup>143</sup> Antony Bashir to Franklin D. Roosevelt, April 1, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 70, Folder 080 (Greek Orthodox), NARA II.

<sup>144</sup> For narrative accounts of the Greek Battalion during World War II, see Andrew S. Mousalimas, *Greek-American Operation Group Office of Strategic Service Memoirs of World War II*, available online: <http://www.pahh.com/oss/toc.html> and Derek Hart, *A Favor for FDR* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, Inc., 2004).

<sup>145</sup> William Arnold to Cyril A. W. Johnson, March 5, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 85, Folder 080 (Russian Orthodox), NARA II.

<sup>146</sup> William Arnold to Archbishop Athenagoras, Feb 16, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 70, Folder 080 (Greek Orthodox), NARA II.

a 500-man strong Russian Orthodox group clustered.<sup>147</sup>

The Chief of Chaplains had unintentionally waded into internal disagreements among the various Orthodox Churches in America. When the Greek Orthodox Archbishop Athenagoras met with Arnold in Washington, he gave “the impression that he had been empowered to represent the Patriarchal Churches of the Orthodox Faith, namely the Greek, Russian, Syrian, Yugo-Slavian, and Romanian, united into one Church Federation in America.” That particular federation was fictive, but several Orthodox churches did unite as one, and faithfully sent their articles of incorporation to Arnold in the hope of attaining more chaplains. From the Chief’s perspective, however, the Orthodox Churches were spiraling out of control and asking his office to intervene in inappropriate ways. “It is not the function of this office to enter into the denominational differences of individual denominations or groups of denominations,” he warned Ralph Montgomery Arkush, the attorney representing a faction of the Russian Orthodox Church. “Therefore, the differences among the churches of the Orthodox group should be worked out among themselves.”<sup>148</sup> In other words, William Arnold wanted the Eastern Orthodox Churches to act like the Protestant denominations consolidated under the Federal Council of Churches’ General Commission or the multiple movements of American Judaism that operated as the Jewish Welfare Board’s Committee for Army and Navy Religious Affairs.

While Arnold wanted the Eastern Orthodox to unite as a single group, whether or not this approach mapped on to their civilian religious reality, the Protestant model of interdenominational cooperation was fraying. The General Commission on Army and Navy Chaplains was the successor

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<sup>147</sup> V.E. Lilkovich to John Lindquist, July 23, 1943, John Telep to William Arnold, July 28, 1943, and John Lindquist to William Arnold, August 4, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 85, Folder 080 (Russian Orthodox), NARA II.

<sup>148</sup> William Arnold to Ralph Montgomery Arkush, March 17, 1944, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 85, Folder 080 (Russian Orthodox), NARA II. When Arkush wrote to Arnold, he argued that letting the Greek Orthodox select other Orthodox chaplains was akin to Catholics allowing the General Commission to select theirs, but Arnold drew different analogies. Ralph Montgomery Arkush to William Arnold, March 13, 1944. For more on Arkush and his capacious and longstanding efforts to build an American Russian Orthodox Church, see Ronit Stahl, “Contesting the Cathedral Keys,” unpublished paper.

group to the World War I-era General Committee, overseen by the Federal Council of Churches. By World War II, the organization was bigger and more autonomous; it formally represented Mormons, Christian Scientists, and Seventh-Day Adventists, in addition to all the mainline white and black denominations it had served in World War I. But an increasing number of conservative evangelical and fundamentalist Christians resisted the General Commission's influence—not because it did poor work, but because however attenuated, it remained an arm of the liberal Federal Council of Churches.

The tension over the role of the General Commission and who spoke for Protestants—be it a mainline/evangelical or collaboration/autonomy divide—was merely a symptom of a much larger issue of the capacious, and questionably useful, category of Protestant. Amassing support from a broad cross-section of Protestant groups was never an easy task, and by 1940, the General Commission incorporated the Mormons, Christian Scientists, and Seventh-Day Adventists under its auspices. The terms of operation had changed as well. Whereas during World War I, the group as a whole endorsed clergy, by World War II, the daunting task of sending thousands of ministers to the military called for a new format. Each individual denomination would assess prospective chaplains and render decisions based on a somewhat standardized application. As a result, the General Commission served more as a paperwork conduit and lobbying agency than anything else.

Despite the dispersion of endorsing power to each denomination, not all groups relished the administrative oversight. In particular, the Southern Baptist Convention—which was decidedly more conservative than its Northern counterpart—wanted to separate from the General Commission; its leadership asserted that since it was not affiliated with the Federal Council of Churches, it should split and run its own program.<sup>149</sup> The Army was not impressed. Paul Moody, then the head of the

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<sup>149</sup> Noble Beall to William Arnold, May 6, 1941, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 59, Folder 080 (Baptist—South, Vol I), NARA II.

General Commission, assured them that Baptists could “be counted on” and were not “so sectarian or narrow-minded” as to follow through on their threat.<sup>150</sup> Moody precisely identified the Army’s concerns. It favored keeping the General Commission intact so that “it may truly represent a cross-section of the so-called Protestant element in our national life.”<sup>151</sup> The Southern Baptist Convention was welcome to mail its chaplains religious literature and demand that its chaplains send reports to the Home Mission Board, but the Office of the Chief of Chaplains resisted “any action taken...that would decrease the usefulness” of the General Commission.<sup>152</sup>

However, Southern Baptist resistance to the General Commission possibly stemmed less from the operation and outlook of the endorsing agency and more from its particular frustration with the rules of endorsement as established by the military. Southern Baptists, like many of their Pentecostal, evangelical, and fundamentalist counterparts, found it difficult to get their ministers commissioned as chaplains. Unlike Mormons, who usually had B.A.s but no ordination, these Protestants were ordained but frequently lacked college degrees and formal seminary training. Out of about 23,300 Southern Baptist ministers, only 13.4 percent (or a little over 3,000) had B.A.s and seminary training while 32.2 percent (or about 7,500) had never attended either college or seminary.<sup>153</sup> While the standards frustrated some Protestants, others viewed the requirements more opportunistically. The head of the Northern Baptist Convention’s Board of Education applauded strict enforcement of educational credentials. “The action of the Government in requiring thorough training for Chaplains has strengthened the position of accredited seminaries and I hope it will result

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<sup>150</sup> Paul Moody to George Rixey, December 31, 1940, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 59, Folder 080 (Baptist—South, Vol I), NARA II.

<sup>151</sup> George Rixey to Otis Spurgeon, December 20, 1940, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 59, Folder 080 (Baptist—South, Vol I), NARA II.

<sup>152</sup> George Rixey to Noble Beall, May 14, 1941, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 59, Folder 080 (Baptist—South, Vol I), NARA II.

<sup>153</sup> Alfred Carpenter to William Arnold, March 19, 1945, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 59, Folder 080 (Baptist—South, Vol. III), NARA II.

in a greater recognition of these standards by churches in the future.”<sup>154</sup>

Among the denominations that could not easily pass educational muster with the military, the experience of the Assemblies of God, one of the few Pentecostal denominations deemed acceptable by the military during World War II, is instructive.<sup>155</sup> A month after the United States entered World War II, the Army sent letters to religious groups encouraging them to champion the chaplaincy to their clergy.<sup>156</sup> J. Roswell Flower, the General Secretary of the Assemblies of God, wrote back, conceding that his group “is not so strict in the matter of educational requirements as are some other denominational bodies.” As a “spontaneous, aggressively evangelical movement,” college graduation was fine but not necessary, and “ordination to the ministry is dependent upon ability and success in the ministry rather than the fact of graduation from the training school.”<sup>157</sup> Flower acknowledged that the qualities prized by Pentecostals—a conversion experience, religious fervor, and enthusiastic preaching—called for little of the formal education demanded by the military. But six months later, Roswell’s position had changed. He forwarded the course catalog of the Central Bible Institute to the Chief of Chaplains and argued in favor of accepting its graduates as, he asserted, it “compares favorably with the Moody Bible School of Chicago.”<sup>158</sup> Eager to send Assemblies of God preachers to the military, the denomination legitimated education and hailed its seminary training. Unfortunately for the Assemblies of God, the military was unconvinced and

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<sup>154</sup> Everett C. Herrick to Walter Zimmerman, January 4, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 58, Folder 080 (Baptist-North, Vol. I), NARA II. Not incidentally, Herrick was the President of Andover Newton Theological Seminary, the oldest graduate seminary in the country.

<sup>155</sup> The military differentiated between Pentecostals who practice glossolalia (speaking in tongues) and those who did not; the former were unacceptable while the latter, such as male ministers of Aimee Semple McPherson’s Four-Square Gospel or the Assemblies of God, were acceptable. William Arnold to Paul Brown, July 24, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 44, Folder 032 (Letters to Congress, Vol. II, 1942-43), NARA II.

<sup>156</sup> Clergy received automatic exemptions from the draft; chaplains represent the most voluntary position within the Armed Forces under draft conditions.

<sup>157</sup> J. Roswell Flower to William Arnold, January 19, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 58, Folder (080 Assemblies of God, Vol. II), NARA II.

<sup>158</sup> J. Roswell Flower to William Arnold, July 11, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 58, Folder 080 (Assemblies of God, Vol. II), NARA II.

continued to stress the need for both college and seminary graduation.<sup>159</sup>

Some Protestants confronted a structural, rather than political, barrier to the chaplaincy. Upon evaluating chaplain candidates in 1940, Alva Brasted, a Baptist who served as the Chief of Chaplains in the mid-1930s, remarked to William Arnold, “I know that so far as the Catholics are concerned that there will be no difficulty in filling the quota with high grade candidates. So far as the Protestants are concerned, what would we do if 100 more Protestants were needed for the Chaplaincy? It’s hard to get a half dozen.”<sup>160</sup> Brasted overstated the dearth of qualified Protestants, but his comments highlight how educational obstacles to the military chaplaincy were, by and large, a Protestant—in the expansive military sense—problem.

When badgered by U.S. Senator Abe Murdock about the educational standards, which as in World War I, included a B.A. from an accredited university and postgraduate seminary training, William Arnold remarked: “It should be remembered that the duties of a chaplain extend beyond a spiritual ministrations exclusively to the members of his own religious faith. He must be a man of experience, ability, tolerance and thoroughly capable of being able to provide general spiritual instruction and inspiration to the entire command.”<sup>161</sup> The Senator from Utah was Mormon, a religious group that the military classified as Protestant. But unlike most Protestants, the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints did not ordain its clergy. Since the military viewed ordination as an essential quality for prospective chaplains, the LDS Church struggled to supply adequately credentialed men to the military. Murdock wanted Arnold to bend the rules.

Working through Congressional representatives to pressure the military for accommodations

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<sup>159</sup> Walter B. Zimmerman to J. Roswell Flower, May 5, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 58, Folder 080 (Assemblies of God, Vol. II), NARA II.

<sup>160</sup> Alva Brasted to William Arnold, February 7, 1940, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 124, Folder 210.1 (Appointment of Chaplains 1940), NARA II.

<sup>161</sup> William Arnold to Abe Murdock, June 13, 1941, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 44, Folder 032 (Letters to Congress, Vol. I), NARA II.

was a strategy employed by Mormons, Christian Scientists, and Adventists who also remained in constant contact with the Chief of Chaplains. Of these three, the Mormons were most successful. During World War II, they reached an agreement by which college graduates who had served 2-year missions could become chaplains.<sup>162</sup> The LDS Church and most Mormon chaplains argued that this was sufficient and equivalent to the backgrounds of other chaplains.<sup>163</sup> Not everyone agreed, however. Timothy Hoyt Bowers-Iron, an LDS chaplain who served in World War II and again in Korea, observed, “This may be heresy, but one of the things I felt about some of our chaplains, myself included, was that we weren’t really as well prepared theologically or philosophically.” He elaborated, “I think it is one thing to know that you have the true gospel...or [to] explain what you believe and why you believe it. It is a little different proposition where you have to produce a sermon or two every week, fifty-two weeks a year. That demands a little broader background than most of us have.”<sup>164</sup> Bowers-Iron recognized his training did not fully prepare him for the rigors of the chaplaincy. As he continued, “We went out with a tremendous assurance that we knew it all and we really didn’t know much.” His self-awareness emerged not only in comparison to better-educated Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish chaplains, but also from comparing his experiences with others from what he referred to as “small, self-contained church[es].” He saw in a Pentecostal chaplain the

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<sup>162</sup> Robert Workman to Senator Elbert Thomas, October 5, 1939, RG 24, E377, Box 12, Folder: Reference File, NARA I. This policy of granting waivers to these groups continued in the postwar period; for example, in a letter to the Ninth Naval District headquarters, the Office of the Navy Chief of Chaplains wrote, “It should be noted that clergymen representing the Latter Day Saints, Christian Scientists, and Seventh Day Adventists are normally unable to present 90 semester hours of theological academic credits. Though not stated in the Recruiting Service Instructions or other Recruiting Directives, consideration is given to a waiver of seminary training for these applicants. For obvious reasons, we do not publish this information in any manner.” (J.P. Mannion to P.B. Wintersteen, November 2, 1954, RG 24, Annual Activity and Trip Reports, Box 9, Folder: Ninth Naval district, 1954, NARA I.)

<sup>163</sup> See, for example, Charles Lyman Berrett Oral History, interviewed by Richard Maher, 1974, typescript, 3, The Charles Redd Center for Western Studies LDS Chaplains Oral History Project, Provo, Utah. For a history of Mormons in the military, including chaplains, see Joseph Boone, “The Roles of the Church of the Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Relation to the United States Military, 1900-1975” (Ph.D. Dissertation: BYU, 1975).

<sup>164</sup> Timothy Hoyt Bowers-Iron Oral History, interviewed by Richard Maynard, 1973, typescript, 8, The Charles Redd Center for Western Studies LDS Chaplains Oral History Project, Nephi, UT.

same combination of hubris and naivety.<sup>165</sup>

As more and more religious groups sought access to the chaplaincy, the military found itself twisted in a knot: it needed a neutral criterion from which to select chaplains who would be open to working with soldiers and sailors of different faiths but could not interrogate chaplains' beliefs. Education represented an imperfect proxy, one that stratified religious groups by education level—and bent to the needs of the service, in the case of recruiting black chaplains. In the parlance of late twentieth-century law, the mandatory college and seminary training standards demonstrated formal, but not substantive neutrality.<sup>166</sup> These credentials applied to every prospective chaplain, but the particularities of religious training produced disparate outcomes that favored religious groups whose ordination or recognition of clergy depended on formal education. The intent, as Chiefs of Chaplains and other military leaders reiterated, was to provide chaplains who could minister to a broad range of faiths and practices. Because the military wanted to avoid making decisions about religion—which would clearly violate the First Amendment—they opted to use education as a proxy for toleration, ecumenism, and open-mindedness.

Education distinctions merely initiated a much more contentious and enduring rift among Protestant denominations. Between the wars, the lines between mainline and conservative Protestants had hardened. The 1925 Scopes trial publicly played out the division between modernists and fundamentalists. In the face of public ridicule, many evangelicals and fundamentalists turned inward. Outside the public eye, they began building institutions and networks to challenge the mainline modernists.<sup>167</sup> Led by fundamentalist Carl McIntire, the American Council of Churches of Christ (ACCC) was one such effort directly opposed to the

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<sup>165</sup> Timothy Hoyt Bowers-Iron Oral History, 8-9, 15.

<sup>166</sup> On the different forms of legal neutrality as applied to religion, see Douglas Laycock, “Formal, Substantive, and Disaggregated Neutrality Toward Religion,” *DePaul Law Review* 39 (1990): 993-1018.

<sup>167</sup> George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980, 2006); Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).



Federal Council. While McIntire was a separatist who resisted cooperation with non-fundamentalists and saw little positive value in interfaith efforts, he was also politically aware and engaged, if not always savvy and astute.<sup>168</sup> In the military chaplaincy, he saw opportunity, though one bedeviled by the government's use of the 1936 Census. He did not mince words when laying out his argument; the census, he asserted, operated as "a perfect gerrymander against independent fundamentalists, against small denominations not in the Federal Council plan, and against fundamentalists who have been contending against modernistic Federal Council tendencies."<sup>169</sup> Staff chaplains reading this document found it bewildering, and filled the margins with an assortment of question marks, exclamation points, and comments such as "impractical," "inaccurate," and "mistaken." But McIntire's news release did not merely critique; it proposed a "simple action" as remedy to the problem it had identified. All the military needed to do was rid itself of its attachment to quotas by denomination, thereby ending the discrimination against "Protestant non-ritualistic evangelicals" that resulted by the "monopolistic hold of the Federal Council." In the budding evangelical and fundamentalist world, parachurch organizations overtook denominational sectarianism. As the Federal Council was, to their mind, "pacifistic, non-evangelical, and un-American," nothing less than the future of the nation was at stake: "In this emergency Bible-believing Christians must exert themselves to see to it that a proper percentage of fundamentalist and true American chaplains are appointed."<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> On Carl McIntire's theology and political activism, see Markku Ruotsila, "Carl McIntire and the Fundamentalist Origins of the Christian Right," *Church History* 81, vol. 2 (June 2012): 378-407. Ruotsila wisely argues that McIntire's postwar anti-Communist work helped build alliances between fundamentalist Protestants and conservative Catholics despite his separatist theology, though Ruotsila also underplays the racism undergirding McIntire's anti-civil rights position.

<sup>169</sup> J. Oliver Buswell, News Release: "How Are Army and Navy Chaplains Appointed?," October 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 56, Folder 080 (American Council of Churches of Christ, Vol. I), NARA II. This position piece accepted the Census-based quotas insofar as they allocated chaplains to Catholics and Jews, but vociferously protested the Protestant distribution. It also demanded that the military cease employing Christian Science chaplains on the grounds that the church was inclined toward pacifism, which it was not.

<sup>170</sup> J. Oliver Buswell, News Release: "How Are Army and Navy Chaplains Appointed?," October 1942 and Arthur Williams and J. Oliver Buswell to William Arnold, July 25, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 56, Folder 080

The ACCC not only wanted to participate in the chaplaincy, but also advanced its own vision to maximize operational efficiency. Arnold's deputies emphasized that the Federal Council neither controlled the General Commission nor selected which chaplains to endorse, but this effort mattered little. They also pointed out that McIntire's own denomination, the Bible Presbyterian Church, had supplied five chaplains to the Army—through conventional Presbyterian channels under the auspices of the General Commission—but this, too, was deemed inconsequential.<sup>171</sup> Rather, the ACCC's secretary and president of its Commission on Army and Navy Chaplains, J. Oliver Buswell, assured the Chief of Chaplains that he could simplify the process of chaplain appointments altogether by reducing the number of categories and thus quotas to five: Catholic, Jewish, Ritualistic/Sacramentarian (e.g., Episcopalians and Lutherans), Evangelical Protestant, and miscellaneous.<sup>172</sup> While his office had remained unfailingly polite and welcomed Buswell to visit, the ACCC's effort to reshape his command exasperated William Arnold. He finally replied to Buswell, rebutting his plan point-by-point. On the matter of denominational allotment, the Chief retorted, "On the contrary it will complicate matters and increase dissatisfaction and friction." Arnold would not be reformulating procedure to benefit the ACCC, but he reminded Buswell, his office would consider ACCC-backed chaplains through their denominations and "where that proves impossible we shall try to make a place for them in the miscellaneous group."<sup>173</sup>

This concession did not please Buswell, who continued to badger the Chief of Chaplains for

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(American Council of Churches of Christ, Vol. I), NARA II. The ACCC also forwarded letters from its constituents to the Office of the Chief of Chaplains. Mr. and Mrs. Martin Nelson, for example, wrote from Minneapolis with the news from Brownsville, TX that an army camp "does not have a Christian chaplain" and requesting that Buswell "supply a fundamentalist chaplain at the earliest opportunity" (November 22, 1942).

<sup>171</sup> Harry Lee Virden to J. Oliver Buswell, August 4, 1942 and Harry Lee Virden to J. Oliver Buswell, October 21, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 56, Folder 080 (American Council of Churches of Christ, Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>172</sup> J. Oliver Buswell to William Arnold, October 23, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 56, Folder 080 (American Council of Churches of Christ, Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>173</sup> William Arnold to J. Oliver Buswell, November 3, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 56, Folder 080 (American Council of Churches of Christ, Vol. I), NARA II.

more positions for his men. Since “in the truest historical sense of the word,” independent fundamentalists “are a Congregational body,” he announced, they “should be recognized as Congregationalists.”<sup>174</sup> This logic presupposed the Army could tell the Congregationalists—a well-established (and quite liberal) church body with its own endorsing procedures—what to do. The ACCC wanted the impossible: to order the Army to violate its own protocols that delegated endorsing authority to religious groups so that the military, and thus the state, would render no decisions on the religious suitability of any given chaplain candidate. The ACCC intuited that these procedures were not perfectly neutral, for they substituted the authority of census categories for individual professions of faith. But the ACCC was also grasping for more than recognition; as an interoffice memo noted, the group wanted “to tell us who cannot be chaplains” which was to say “all who are not members of this group.” The organization was insistent and demanding, and, after several months of regular correspondence with the ACCC, Harry Lee Virden was fed up. He was quite sure of several things. First, the ACCC “would welcome a battle-royal” with the General Commission; second, it “has a chip on its shoulder—and makes it sound as though they are against all other Christians—and that they are the only believers in the Bible”; third, “they are more interested in using the chaplaincy for the spread of their propaganda than in self-sacrificing ministry to those in the service.”<sup>175</sup>

If Virden was frustrated, Arnold was stuck. Virden’s contentions were apt, and his latter concern presented a significant philosophical and administrative hurdle. A willingness to offer non-sectarian (to the extent possible) worship and counsel represented the finely calibrated balance between avoiding the establishment of religion while providing state-sanctioned religious services

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<sup>174</sup> J. Oliver Buswell to Harry Lee Virden, November 27, 1942 and J. Oliver Buswell to William Arnold, November 27, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 56, Folder 080 (American Council of Churches of Christ, Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>175</sup> Harry Lee Virden, “Memorandum to the Chief of Chaplains,” December 19, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 56, Folder 080 (American Council of Churches of Christ, Vol. I), NARA II.

under military conditions and protecting individual rights to the free exercise of religion (or non-religion). Were the ACCC to use the chaplaincy as leverage to impose its religious ideals, it would almost certainly violate individual freedoms. But preventing the ACCC from nominating chaplains would likewise signal a restriction of religion verging on the establishment of an alternative, but exclusionary non-ACCC religious worldview.

Arnold put his faith in the military infrastructure. In the winter of 1943, he asked his staff to figure out how to reapportion procurement goals and denominational quotas to offer slots to the Independent Fundamentalists. Harry Fraser puzzled over who, exactly, the “Independent Fundamentalists” were, while George Rixey guessed at a definition, “They seem to be a group of Congregationalists, Methodists, [and] Baptists out of line with their denominations, probably on the question of Fundamentalism.” Whatever they were, “the Chief feels that they should be represented” and their task was to arrive at a number. After a brief discussion, they placed the Independent Fundamentalists in the Miscellaneous group and granted them .003 of the total. Since the War Department sought to add 4,300 chaplains in 1943, this allocation turned out to be about 12 Independent Fundamentalist ministers.<sup>176</sup> Neither the American Council of Churches of Christ nor the Independent Fundamentalists ever felt satisfied with their quota or treatment within military quarters, but Arnold was confident he did the best he could under trying (and annoying) circumstances.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Board Meeting Minutes, February 5, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 259, Folder 337 (Board Meetings, 1943-44), NARA II.

<sup>177</sup> In March, Arnold informed several commanding generals that the Independent Fundamentalists could receive 10 spots, but that no other constituent group of the ACCC had even 50,000 members and thus did not warrant chaplains. Whether this slight revision downward reflected aggravation with the group or a shift in the number of chaplains being commissioned is unclear; the ACCC felt it deserved at least double that number. After exhausting Congressional representatives to no avail, Carl McIntire wrote to the President, stating that “another one of our problems has been the chaplaincy” and neither letters nor meetings with the military had resolved the matter. William Arnold to Commanding General, First Service Command, March 9, 1943; J. Oliver Buswell to William Arnold, April 17, 1943; Carl McIntire to the President, April 1, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 56, Folder 080 (American Council of Churches of Christ, Vol. I), NARA II.

For the Chief of Chaplains, relief came in the form of another upstart organization, the conservative but more conciliatory, National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). Founded in 1942, the organization sought to collaborate and promote a positive, rather than hostile, evangelical alternative to the FCC. While Carl McIntire complained about being characterized as one of the “‘extreme’ evangelicals” when he attended an NAE study group on the chaplaincy,<sup>178</sup> the NAE approached the military with more deference and less bluster.<sup>179</sup> One of its first subcommittees was its Chaplains Commission, and by 1944, it was ready to endorse chaplains. Before it could take on that role, however, the military needed to recognize it as a civilian agency suitable for the task. Constituent members of the NAE wrote to the Chief of Chaplains asking to be represented by the organization, and prominent evangelicals like Bob Jones certified that the NAE was “not the radical crowd.”<sup>180</sup> Less than two weeks later, Arnold informed the NAE that it could serve as an endorsing agency, provided it conformed to basic rules such as representing only denominations (not individual churches) and only those not covered by other groups.<sup>181</sup>

While the NAE was generally more cordial than its rival, the ACCC, it presented some of the same administrative complications. It also received 10-12 chaplain appointments for its scattered membership, and the Army chaplain staff debated whether they should “throw the entire block at them and let them fight it out among themselves” or whether they should try to carefully subdivide the allocation—as it did for the Protestant groups comprising the General Commission. In a

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<sup>178</sup> Carl McIntire to William Arnold, May 10, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 56, Folder 080 (American Council of Churches of Christ, Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>179</sup> J. Elwin Wright to William Arnold, March 31, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 79, Folder 080 (National Association of Evangelicals), NARA II. Wright informed Arnold about the planned work-study group on the chaplaincy and asked Arnold to send a representative so they could learn how the chaplaincy operated and where they could fit, rather than first insisting on the right to represent evangelicals.

<sup>180</sup> Leonard E. Smith to William Arnold, January 20, 1944; Sylvia Ruff to William Arnold, January 21, 1944; Bob Jones to William Arnold, January 27, 1944, RG 247 (1920-45), Folder 080 (National Association of Evangelicals), NARA II.

<sup>181</sup> William Arnold to Frank Stollenwerck, February 3, 1944, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 79, Folder 080 (National Association of Evangelicals), NARA II.

preemptive effort to fend off complaints, Carl Wilberding quipped that allowing the NAE to make decisions was better, for “it seems much nicer for the other fellow to have the headache. It doesn’t hurt as much.”<sup>182</sup> Moreover, competition between the NAE and the ACCC to challenge the Federal Council did not escape the attention of the Army chaplaincy. Deputy Chief of Chaplains George Rixey attempted to maintain an unofficial truce between the organizations by recommending that the War Department’s General Staff refuse to meet with the leadership of either organization.<sup>183</sup> V-E Day was five weeks away, but Rixey’s diplomacy did little to relax unrelenting internecine Protestant conflict; the last weeks of war merely foreshadowed years of church conflict ahead. In this sense, war forced a reckoning with, though not a resolution of, the Protestant problem.

### **Conclusion: “Interfaith in Action”—The Complicated Legacy of the Four Chaplains**

Exactly what happened as the ship listed and finally slunk beneath the frigid North Atlantic waters on that cold winter night will never be certain. This much is clear: less than an hour after midnight on February 3, 1943, a German U-boat torpedoed the U.S.A.T. *Dorchester*, one of six ships in a convoy headed from Newfoundland to the U.S. Army Command Base in Narsarsuak, Greenland. By dinner, the day’s gale-force winds had calmed and most men could again stomach food. But the sea still churned with danger as the *Dorchester* entered Torpedo Junction. Less than 100 miles away from safe harbor, the ship’s captain received word that submarines had been detected and ordered all 900 men aboard—soldiers, merchant marines, and civilians—to sleep clothed and wrapped in life jackets. Less than 30 minutes elapsed between the torpedo blast and the disappearance of the luxury-liner-turned-military-transport ship into the iceberg-laden ocean. Two of

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<sup>182</sup> Carl Wilberding, Memo to George Rixey, undated, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 79, Folder 080 (National Association of Evangelicals), NARA II.

<sup>183</sup> George Rixey to Colonel Pasco, April 2, 1945, RG 247: General Correspondence 1920-75, Box 79, Folder 080 (National Association of Evangelicals), NARA II.

the convoy's escort ships, the *Escanaba* and the *Comanche*, rescued survivors frozen on rafts and floating in lifeboats—226 in all. While the *Dorchester* was equipped with enough life-jackets and life-boats for all aboard, panic combined with hypothermia to kill most of the men. Among the 674 men who died that night were four chaplains: George L. Fox (Methodist), Clark V. Poling (Dutch Reformed), John P. Washington (Catholic), Alexander B. Goode (Jewish).

The chaplains, unlike some of their charges, understood the chaos around them. They knew most men were scared, cold, and ill-prepared as they clambered into boats and rafts or jumped into the water. They distributed life-jackets and encouraged terrified soldiers to act like sailors and get into the boats—by climbing over railings, sliding down ropes, or hoisting themselves overboard into the water and swimming. Chaplain Washington fastened a life preserver onto an unprotected young man. Chaplain Goode gave away his gloves and then his boots. Chaplain Poling pushed men into the sea. Chaplain Fox waved and wished men luck. All four sacrificed their life jackets to others before linking arms, praying in English, Latin, and Hebrew, and going down together, having abandoned neither ship nor sailor nor spirit.<sup>184</sup>

News of the deaths filtered out somewhat slowly. The chaplains' families received notification that their sons, brothers, husbands, and fathers were missing in action about ten days after the *Dorchester* went down. Almost two months later, the press began publishing articles about the calamitous night. Despite the time lag, the American reaction was swift and unambiguous. Newspaper coverage dubbed the four chaplains heroes, and the men were quickly, albeit

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<sup>184</sup> "The Saga of the Four Chaplains," The Four Chaplain Memorial Foundation ([fourchaplains.org/story](http://fourchaplains.org/story)); Dan Kurzman, *No Greater Glory: The Four Immortal Chaplains and the Sinking of the Dorchester in World War II* (New York: Random House, 2004), 95-99. Slower Allied ships zigged-and-zagged in convoys to stave off the German submarine "wolfpacks" that patrolled the North Atlantic in an effort to curtail the delivery of supplies and manpower. In late 1942, the Germans had successfully sunk over a half-million tons of supplies on over 100 ships. By February 1943, the British had broken the German naval code and helped ships dodge U-boats. However, the German navy hit almost 100 more ships between February and May, when they ceded the North Atlantic.

posthumously, honored for their heroic stand.<sup>185</sup> For those who survived a bitter night tossing in the hypothermic sea, the chaplains' unselfish and cooperative last stand was courageous and uplifting.<sup>186</sup> Memories and first-person accounts of the chaplains' dedication resonated and quickly spurred commemoration of the "immortal chaplains." Within five years, a three-cent postage stamp brought the image of the four chaplains who exemplified "interfaith in action" to American doorsteps.<sup>187</sup> Stained-glass windows, chapels, awards, and foundations quickly followed. The symbolic power of the chaplains aboard the *Dorchester* was unmistakable. It highlighted ecumenical generosity in its highest form and the promise of American faith in its darkest hour.<sup>188</sup>

But the oft-used and much-lauded emblem of American religious unity was far more complicated than four men of different faiths praying together in the face of imminent death. The state played roles both obvious and invisible. It was, for example, both accidental and probable that the chaplains aboard the *Dorchester* represented multiple faiths. Two other chaplains were removed from the duty roster, and a colonel overseeing personnel selected two more names to join them.<sup>189</sup> The military committed to staffing transport ships with Protestant and Catholic chaplains; it happened that a Jewish chaplain was already assigned to this voyage. Deliberate policy-making also ensured that the chaplains would be white, well-educated, and ecumenically-inclined. The application process and chaplain school prepared these clergymen to make a choice to stand linked together as

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<sup>185</sup> E.g., "Four More Chaplains Listed as Casualties," *Los Angeles Times*, March 27, 1943; "Former Rabbi Listed as Missing at Sea, One of Four Chaplain Heroes of Sinking," *NYT*, March 27, 1943; "Four Chaplains Killed in War Honored at 'Back the Attack,'" *The Washington Post*, September 16, 1943. In 1944, the military awarded each chaplain a Purple Heart and a Distinguished Service Cross.

<sup>186</sup> Dozens submitted affidavits to the military testifying to the chaplains' actions. See Appendix 1 in Kurzman, *No Greater Glory*, 221-23.

<sup>187</sup> Louis Schwimmer, "The Story of the Four Chaplains Stamp," <http://www.schwimmer.com/fourchaplains/>. By law, commemorative postage stamps are not issues until ten years after the featured individual(s)' death, but Congress waived the rule for the Four Chaplains stamp.

<sup>188</sup> Historians have also noticed and reinforced the symbolic power of the four chaplains. William Hutchinson, *Religious Pluralism in America: The Contentious History of a Founding Ideal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 198-99; Dash Moore, *GI Jews*, 118-23; Schultz, *Tri-Faith America*, 3-7.

<sup>189</sup> Kurzman, *No Greater Glory*, 32-3.



one. Twenty-five years of military vision and indoctrination coalesced in the image of four wise men, praying aloud, each to his own maker, each in his own way, each to his own end.

The Office of War Information, in collaboration with private ventures, also crafted a political culture that trained Americans to understand the *Dorchester* in richly figurative and vividly momentous terms. *Chaplain Jim* coached listeners to see religion as vital to sustaining soldiers and the homefront alike. Faith served as a critical adhesive rather than an engine of strife in war. Between the night that the *Dorchester* was attacked and the time Americans read about it, they saw Norman Rockwell's "Freedom to Worship" painting in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Months later, the U.S. Treasury adopted Rockwell's Four Freedom series as the image selling its 1943 war bond campaign.<sup>190</sup>

The sacrifice of the four chaplains and the ability of Americans to apprehend it as heroic depended on individual decisions and state action. Through the World War II chaplaincy, the military harnessed distinct religious commitments and faith in ecumenical conviction, enlisting clergy to circulate the moral monotheism in rhetoric and deed. It was not an unbounded religious worldview; rather the military could consolidate and promote American religion precisely because it circumscribed participation in the chaplaincy to a large but limited population. As the United States turned to the task of rebuilding a world fractured and broken by war, the chaplaincy offered a state-developed and tested tool for moral and spiritual reconstruction.

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<sup>190</sup> "Freedom to Worship," *The Saturday Evening Post*, February 27, 1943. Rockwell's initial plan for painting was four men in a barbershop—a Protestant barber, a Catholic priest customer, a Jewish customer, an African-American customer, and a white Anglo customer—but early critics deemed it too stereotypical. The final image includes seven people, three men and four women, all of whom were praying "according to the dictates of his own conscience" (indicated through rosary beads, prayer books, fez, etc). See Colleen McDannell, *Picturing Faith: Photography and the Great Depression* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 145.

**CHAPTER 4**  
**A Global God:**  
**The Military-Spiritual Complex in a Covenant Nation**

Their mission was a secret. The men knew, on some level, that it was important, possibly even significant. They knew they had made it through a rigorous selection process. They knew they had prepared for eight months. They knew their work was dangerous and that it could fail. But they also heard the laughter of their fellow servicemen, felt the ridicule heaped on their silent effort, and wondered about the murky effects of their constant, if seemingly ineffective and measly, practice runs. When the selected men assembled at ten o'clock that night, they recognized that the briefing was different. At long last, they knew their charge. When their clocks hit midnight, when Sunday turned to Monday, they met again—to finalize the plan, gather equipment, and receive final instructions. And then, before they departed, they prayed. Chaplain William B. Downey (Lutheran) led the group, voicing their wishes in the heat of the dark, humid Pacific night: “Almighty Father...guard and protect them....May they, as well as we, know Thy strength and power, and armed with Thy might may they bring this war to a rapid end...and once more may we know peace on earth.”<sup>1</sup>

Nine hours later, the American crew of the *Enola Gay* dropped the atomic bomb on

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in William Laurence, *Dawn Over Zero: The Story of the Atomic Bomb*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1972), 209. The recounting of the atomic bombings Hiroshima and Nagasaki are based on Laurence’s *Dawn Over Zero*, 196-252. Laurence was a journalist whom the military officially invited to observe and report on the preparation for and bombing of Japan. The first edition of his extended narrative was published by Knopf in 1946. In his text, Downey prays to the Almighty Father. Another version, published in Liam Nolan’s history of Japanese Lutheran Kiyoshi Watanabe efforts to help Americans during World War II quotes Downey concluding his prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, but cites no source for the prayer. It is not clear which version is correct. Liam Nolan, *Small Man of Nanataki* (London: Peter Davies, 1966), 143.

Hiroshima.

As the bomb eviscerated the Japanese supply and shipping depot, the radio relay called back to base: “Mission successful.” Blinded by the light of the blast, the men could not see the destruction they had wrought. Nevertheless, Captain Robert Lewis, who maintained a log of the flight at the behest of journalist William Laurence, recorded a different reaction: “My God!”<sup>2</sup> Colonel Paul W. Tibbets, Jr., the pilot of the *Enola Gay* and the leader of the 509<sup>th</sup> Composite Group, saw only “a black, boiling nest” below. The bomb’s mushroom clouds obscured the obliterated city and the immediate decimation of one-third of Hiroshima’s population, but the men still understood the gravity of their action. It was a “sobering” moment, Tibbets said, when they experienced the shock waves of devastation before flying back to Tinian Island.<sup>3</sup> Upon their arrival, Downey found his prayers partially answered: all of the men flying B-29s on August 6, 1945 returned. His supplication for a rapid end of war—a reflection of the U.S. military’s calculated attempt to induce unconditional surrender from the Japanese by unleashing nuclear fission—went unheeded.

Three days later, Chaplain Downey prayed again: “Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we pray Thee to be gracious with those who fly this night. Guard and protect those of us who venture out into the darkness of Thy heaven. Uphold them on Thy wings. Keep them safe both in body and soul and bring them back to us....Above all else, our Father, bring peace to Thy world.”<sup>4</sup> This time, all the men, including the chaplain, knew what they were doing. This time, the prayer was more

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<sup>2</sup> Laurence, *Dawn Over Zero*, 212-22. On the fiftieth anniversary of the bombings, the Smithsonian Museum planned an exhibit of the *Enola Gay*, and a controversy erupted over the portrayal of the decision to use the bomb. See Edward Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, eds., *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1996). On the cultural and intellectual legacies of the atomic bomb in American life, see Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (New York: Random House, 1985).

<sup>3</sup> “The Operational History of the 509<sup>th</sup> Bombardment,” in *The Manhattan Project: The Birth of the Atomic Bomb in the Words of Its Creators, Eyewitnesses, and Historians*, ed., Cynthia C. Kelly (New York: Atomic Heritage Foundation, 2007), 330.

<sup>4</sup> Laurence, *Dawn Over Zero*, 229.

ambivalent, more cautious, and more concerned, seeking God's grace for men who would undoubtedly and distressingly kill. This time, the bomb's early light meant a reckoning with the dark and barbarous underbelly of God's kingdom. Within twelve hours, another crew of American pilots, bombardiers, and navigators found a hole in the day's cloud cover and detonated a second atomic bomb on Nagasaki. Less than a week later, Japan surrendered, bringing an end to World War II and bringing forth a chance for the peace for which Downey—and others—prayed and so ardently sought.

Achieving peace would prove more difficult and complicated than ending war—if war had, indeed, stopped. “War time,” legal historian Mary Dudziak has argued, is more fluid than the discrete and temporal markers of its outbreak and ending allow. If the American entrance into World War II was clear, its exit was not. Japan's surrender in 1945, President Truman's official pronouncement of the cessation of hostilities in 1946, the formal termination of war against Germany in 1951, or the signing of a peace treaty with Japan in 1952 all serve as possible endpoints.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, in the seven years between dropping the atomic bombs and ratifying a peace treaty with Japan, the United States found itself at war again, albeit with new and different enemies. War time and peace time blurred as the United States entered the ambiguously defined Cold War and then fought and concluded the Korean War. After demobilizing over 10.5 million soldiers between June 1945 and June 1947, the armed forces stood at about 1.5 million personnel. During the same two-year period, military spending shrunk from about 91 billion dollars to 10 billion dollars. Even in this leaner peacetime state, however, the dismantled war machine remained the largest military in the world.<sup>6</sup> For nine years, from the capture of Rome in June 1944 to the signing of the Korean

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<sup>5</sup> Mary Dudziak, *War Time: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3-9, 33-40.

<sup>6</sup> Robert A. Pollard, *Economic Security and the Origins of the Cold War, 1945-50* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 20-23.

Armistice Agreement in July 1953, the United States actively battled or occupied multiple regions of the world.

During this period, the American military underwent significant administrative reorganization. The National Security Act of 1947 separated the Air Force from the Army and unified the three branches of the armed forces—the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force—under the newly created Department of Defense. Initially the Army chaplaincy expected to continue to oversee and supply Air Force chaplains, as it had done for the Army Air Corps during World War II. However, the Air Force Chief of Staff decided to separate the units, and the Air Force acquired its own chaplaincy—including designated chaplains, a command structure led by Chief of Chaplains Charles I. Carpenter (Methodist), and a chaplain school.<sup>7</sup> In 1945, William R. Arnold completed two terms as the Army Chief of Chaplains, after which three men served in the post in quick succession: Luther D. Miller (Episcopalian), Roy H. Parker (Baptist), and Ivan Bennett (Southern Baptist). In the Navy, which continued to oversee ministry to the personnel of the Navy and Marine Corps, William N. Thomas (Methodist), Stanton W. Salisbury (Presbyterian, USA), and Edward B. Harp (Reformed) led the chaplain corps from the final days of World War II through the end of the Korean War. With the creation of the Department of Defense came the formation of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board (AFCB), an Army-Navy-Air Force entity responsible for collaborating on religious policy within the military. The consolidation of the three services under a single Secretary of Defense belied the military's increasingly global reach and newly-acquired global power. In the early postwar years, the chiefs of chaplains began to manage religious programs designed to address the needs of personnel stationed across the world and religious policies expected to support military

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<sup>7</sup> Initially, the plan was for the Army to continue to supervise the Air Force chaplaincy, with Carpenter designated as the Air Force Chief of Chaplains operating under the Army Chief of Chaplains. Why exactly the chaplaincies split remains unclear, though a number of apocryphal stories suggest that Army Chief of Chaplains Luther Miller overreached, and Air Force Chief of Staff, Major General Carl Spaatz, reacted accordingly. See: Charles I. Carpenter, Transcript of Interview by Captain Tocado, July 31, 1971, p. 45-8, Columbia University Oral History Collection

goals at home and abroad.

The advent of the Cold War brought with it new conditions, expectations, and concerns stateside and overseas, and the military chaplaincy was part and parcel of these shifts. President Truman and Army Chief of Staff George Marshall pressed for Universal Military Training as an alternative to the draft, and they instituted the “Fort Knox Experiment” to test the possibility of their vision among 18-year-old American men. In 1948, Truman issued Executive Order 9981, which formally desegregated the United States military. The implementation of an integrated military took years, but the process began with a number of presidential commissions and military committees in the 1940s. Supported by a trifecta of local clergy and chaplains, the Fort Knox Experiment became a symbol of the importance and success of moral training alongside military readiness. Truman’s array of presidential commissions included the President’s Committee on Religion and Welfare in the Armed Forces, which studied and applauded the chaplaincy for its commitment to defending the nation against spiritually devoid and presumed-Godless Communists.

Indeed, as the military scrambled to redefine itself and adjust to its new roles in the aftermath of World War II, the place and use of religion within the state’s martial enterprise changed as well. Although Truman and Eisenhower did not always agree—on military decisions or political strategy—the two men operated in tandem<sup>8</sup> to build a military-spiritual complex, a religious armory that ideologically and socially structured and crusaded on behalf of the American state. Chaplains instituted and instigated religion in domestic areas and foreign lands. When the military released soldiers in the aftermath of war, chaplains too sought to return to civilian pulpits. But as Army Chief of Staff, Dwight D. Eisenhower was reluctant to let go of military clergy; in April 1946, he wrote that while he was demobilizing unnecessary personnel, “the opportunity for service by the Army

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<sup>8</sup> For two different appraisals of the relationship between Truman and Eisenhower, see Steve Neal, *Harry and Ike: The Partnership That Remade the Postwar World* (New York: Scribner, 2001) and William Lee Miller, *Two Americans: Truman, Eisenhower, and a Dangerous World* (New York: Vintage, 2012).

chaplain is as great, or greater, than it has ever been.”<sup>9</sup> A mere seven years later, at the end of the Korean War, President Dwight D. Eisenhower saluted the work of “militant preachers and chaplains” who helped ground the free world in religious faith. “It seems to me,” he posited, “no one who is teaching moral standards or spiritual values has any right to do it apologetically. If I have ever had to quarrel with chaplains, it has been because they have been a little bit too diffident where I thought they should have been a little more belligerent in what they had to say.”<sup>10</sup> Whether discussing morality or spirituality, Eisenhower’s chaplains served the United States, a country the military explicitly framed as a covenant nation. In the wake of Communist threats, maintaining national Providence demanded bellicose, not bashful, clergy.

Yet little hesitancy or reluctance existed in the chaplaincy during this period. In its most expansive and restrictive ways, religion—as well as its oscillating counterpart, morality—suffused and interrupted the work of the military. In Europe, as military chaplains encountered death camps and worked with refugees and displaced persons, they harnessed the influence of spirit and state to help restart and rebuild the lives of those decimated by Hitler’s wrath. In occupied Europe and Japan, chaplains stood at the center of the military’s efforts to control and discipline bodies; chaplains lectured about sex, tried to prevent rape and limit prostitution, and sanctioned or hindered marriage. The chaplaincy fortified morality in the military, taking on a new ideological fervor in the spiritual defense of the nation during the early Cold War. In Korea, chaplains not only counseled, aided, and prayed with and for American forces, but also infused the Korean military with religious fervor through the transmission of ideas, structure, and supplies. In all of these arenas and in all of these ways, the chaplaincy embarked on a global moralizing campaign, shifting its role from religious provisioning to moral-standards bearing. In the aftermath of World War II, the American state

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<sup>9</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower to Dr. Hazen, *The Chaplain* vol 3, no. 4 (April 1946): front cover.

<sup>10</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, Speech to the Washington Ministerial Union, May 25, 1953, Papers as President of the U.S., 1953-61 (Ann Whitman File), Speech Series, Box 4, DDE.

engaged in spiritual and moral reconstruction at home and abroad. From the military's perspective, where religion signaled potentially distinct, asynchronous, and contested beliefs, morality heralded unified, harmonious, and homogenized benchmarks of behavior. As a result, elevating morality as a fusion of differing belief systems allowed the military to use the chaplaincy to generate and promote a military-spiritual complex, a defense of American democracy ultimately rooted in Protestantism but presumed to encompass diverse American faiths.

### **Living the Legacy of War: Religious Responsibilities in the Wake of Nazi Atrocities**

Emperor Hirohito's surrender was a relief: the war was finally over. Yet for many chaplains, the meaning of war, the significance of death, and the implications of American intervention abroad were just becoming apparent. Navy Chaplain Samuel Sandmel (Jewish), who was stationed in the Pacific, confessed that he felt "strangely inarticulate" upon receiving the news of Japanese capitulation.<sup>11</sup> Army chaplain Morris Frank, the first Jewish chaplain to enter Germany in 1944, expressed a similar reaction to V-E day: "My feelings are mixed – and I find it difficult to write or think. I'm happy that there is an end to the useless killing, but I can't help but think of the some 20 million who have died in this horrible war."<sup>12</sup> Over eleven months, from the liberation of France and invasion of Germany to the defeat of Hitler and the fall of the Rising Sun, American chaplains encountered the moral violence undergirding World War II: bombed-out cities, fractured families, uncertain futures, war crimes, and most vividly perhaps, the atrocities revealed in Nazi concentration and death camps.

The new world, the postwar world, proffered opportunities for peace and peddled fear of future war. Allies quickly become enemies, as fragile links between the Soviet Union and the United

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<sup>11</sup> Samuel Sandmel to Frances Fox Sandmel, August 13, 1945, MSS 101, Box 23, Folder 8, AJA. As a regular writer of lengthy letters and the future author of over twenty books, Sandmel's loss of words was unusual.

<sup>12</sup> Morris Frank to Florence Frank, May 7, 1945, SC 15430, AJA.



States broke apart, and vanquished enemies became allies, as newly democratized Japan provided a Pacific barrier separating the U.S. from the USSR and China. Amidst swiftly shifting geopolitics, however, the American Occupation Armies, in Germany and Japan alike, faced tasks both prosaic and extraordinary: how to re-establish everyday life, how to regenerate society, and how to rebuild conquered nations. Through this work, chaplains confronted not the Arendtian banality of evil, but the repercussions of an appallingly bald immorality that provoked, sustained, and concluded global warfare.

Encounters with refugees, victims, and survivors—the people who would become known as Displaced Persons (DPs) in the immediate aftermath of World War II—began in the middle of the war. From Tehran, in 1943, Chaplain David Rubin (Jewish) reported a swell of Russian and Polish Jews seeking safety, ideally in Palestine.<sup>13</sup> In Rome, in June 1944, Chaplain Morris Kertzer (Jewish) greeted 4,000 Jews gathered at the city’s main synagogue, Tempio Israelitico, knowing that the story of liberation was “even more personal” for the congregation, the soldiers and survivors who “crowded...to raise their voices in prayer and thanksgiving.”<sup>14</sup> In Paris, in September 1944, Theater Chaplain Judah Nadich (Jewish) reconnected families, spoke to the press, and became a liaison between military authorities and French Jewry, while in Rheims, Chaplain Isaac Klein (Jewish) organized a religious school and led services for the town as well as the Jewish soldiers of the Ninth Bomber Command to which he was assigned.<sup>15</sup> In Belgium, in November 1944, Chaplain Morris Sandhaus (Jewish) helped coordinate care for 56 Jewish orphans in Brussels.<sup>16</sup> In Germany, in 1945, Chaplain David Max Eichhorn (Jewish) led services for several thousand Jews remaining in Dachau

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<sup>13</sup> Louis Barish, *Rabbis in Uniform: The Story of the American Jewish Military Chaplain* (New York: Jonathan David, 1962), 21-22.

<sup>14</sup> Morris Kertzer, Reflections, and Kertzer, Address at Tempio Israelitico, June 9, 1944, MS 709, Box 12, Folder 7, AJA.

<sup>15</sup> Alex Grobman, *Rekindling the Flame: American Jewish Chaplains and the Survivors of European Jewry, 1944-48* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 29-33.

<sup>16</sup> Grobman, *Rekindling the Flame*, 33.

and tried to balance the needs and reactions of tortured survivors with the directives and orders of the American military.<sup>17</sup>

Little, however, prepared chaplains—or anyone else—for the scenes they would find at concentration camps. Reading or hearing about the unfathomable and encountering the inconceivable were not the same thing. Hitler’s plans to decimate European and world Jewry exceeded the imaginative capacity of most Americans; even those who theoretically knew what they would find at death camps could not easily process what they encountered. American soldiers discovered the first camp—Ohrdruf, a labor sub-camp of the death camp Buchenwald, by accident on April 4-5, 1945. A week later, Chaplain Edward P. Doyle (Catholic) accompanied the medics of the 104<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division to Nordhausen, another sub-camp of Buchenwald. There, he found “a world difficult to describe.” His experience with the medical brigade did little to ready him for the warped and catastrophic conditions that awaited, the 700 scarcely-alive bodies packed into barracks among 3000 corpses. “I have seen as many as 125 wounded a night in our combat area of Belgium and Holland and assisted in preparing the wounded for surgery and the like, but never have I seen such suffering and anguish,” he recalled.<sup>18</sup> A day later, U.S. Army Generals Dwight D. Eisenhower, George Patton, and Omar Bradley toured Ohrdruf, coming face-to-face with Nazi atrocities in the forms of pyres of corpses, lice-ridden bodies, and stashes of torture devices, as well as underground bunkers filled with looted art, gold, and jewelry. Eisenhower made publicizing the brutal conditions a priority: he entreated diplomats and the press to visit, to witness, and to broadcast the indescribable scene. He also ordered all units in the vicinity to tour the nightmarish camp. “We are told that the American soldier does not know what he is fighting for,” Eisenhower explained. “Now,

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<sup>17</sup> David Max Eichhorn, May 6, 1945 in Greg Palmer and Mark S. Zaid, eds., *The GI’s Rabbi: World War II Letters of David Max Eichhorn* (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 2004), 182-7.

<sup>18</sup> Edward P. Doyle, “I Was There,” Address to the International Liberators Conference, 1981, Box 2, Folder 25, Edward Paul Doyle, O. P. Collection, Providence College Library, Special and Archival Collections, Providence, RI. Also available online: <http://www.104infdiv.org/TESTIMON.HTM>.

at least, he will know what he is fighting *against*.”<sup>19</sup>

Chaplain Herschel Schacter needed no such reminder. The same day Eisenhower inspected Ohrdruf, the rabbi entered Buchenwald with Patton’s Third Army. There, he searched for Jews, going in and out of the barracks, shouting, in Yiddish, “*ibr zint frei*” (“You are free”).<sup>20</sup> He not only possessed the language skills necessary to reach many of the Jewish prisoners, but used his position as a chaplain to offer religious services to the newly-freed, starting with Sabbath services the next evening and perhaps most famously—as captured in a Signal Corps photograph—leading overflowing Shavuot services in a cavernous hall filled with both striped-clad survivors and uniformed American soldiers a month later. He also formed a *chevra kadisha*, (burial society) so as to properly bury the Jewish dead, drafted lists of survivors to help reunite families, and adapted the army postal system to the needs of survivors by mailing letters on their behalf under his name.<sup>21</sup>

While few Jewish men required the motivation of Ohrdruf, Nordhausen, Buchenwald, or any other concentration camp, they found themselves similarly challenged to comprehend and convey the extent of the devastation. When Morris Frank wrote to his wife, all he could offer were elliptical phrases: “The stories they tell – the horrors they relate – the brutalities they have undergone – unbelievable – beyond description...premeditated torture – starvation – slow death – burning hell.”<sup>22</sup> Chaplain Harold Saperstein (Jewish) found that entering Germany represented an emotional turning point, an experience like no other in the war. In contrast to fighting in Italy and

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Robert Abzug, *Inside the Vicious Heart: Americans and the Liberation of Nazi Concentration Camps* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 30. The descriptions of Ohrdruf and Nordhausen come from Abzug, 21-31. Testimony from soldiers interviewed by Abzug bears out Eisenhower’s claim; for example, Fred Bohm revealed that few of his fellow G.I.s cared much about fighting Germans until they arrived Nordhausen (33).

<sup>20</sup> Grobman, *Rekindling the Flame*, 39; Margalit Fox, “Rabbi Herschel Schacter Is Dead at 95; Cried to the Jews of Buchenwald: ‘You Are Free,’” *New York Times*, March 26, 2013. Even before Buchenwald, Schacter was considered a model chaplain, and appeared in a documentary about the Army Chaplain School that inspired at least one young man to enlist. Dash Moore, *GI Jews*, 39.

<sup>21</sup> Grobman, *Rekindling the Flame*, 40.

<sup>22</sup> Morris Frank to Florence Frank, August 28, 1944, SC 15430, AJA.

France, where he had observed his surroundings with curiosity and even delight, Germany inspired only hatred and vengeance. It was, from his perspective, “a cursed land” where “the indescribable odor of death still pervades the air. They are still digging corpses out of the ruins.”<sup>23</sup> After finding 39 boxcars stuffed with “shriveled mummies” and crematoria laden with bones and ash, Chaplain Eichhorn reported to the JWB that “we cried tears of hate. Combat hardened soldiers, Gentile and Jew, black and white, cried tears of hate.” And when Jewish survivors attacked Nazi guards, he and his soldiers stood aside, watching, for “deep anger and hate had temporarily numbed our emotions” and intervention seemed unwarranted, if not pointless.<sup>24</sup>

The Jewish ritual calendar often provided Jewish chaplains with poignant means to explain their work and emotions. Assigned to Southern France with his American troops, Chaplain Kertzer witnessed the return of the community’s rabbi to his congregation. The rabbi, whom the community presumed dead, had been serving with the Free French Interior (the French Resistance) and unexpectedly walked into Friday night services in uniform and cavalry boots. As he relayed the scene in a letter, Kertzer remarked that it “was a real Shabbat Shuvah.” In fact, September 22-23, 1944 *was* Shabbat Shuvah, the Sabbath of Return that falls between the Jewish Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and marks the pleas by the prophet Hosea for Israel to return to God. As two rabbis, one French and one American, one liberated and one liberator, led services together, they sanctified the return of French Jewry to their homes and the presence of American Jewry to fill vacant seats. When the French rabbi wished everyone a “bon Shabbat,” a good Sabbath, the American chaplain commented,

Battle-toughened men, men who had lived through Salerno and Anzio, who had driven from Rome to Florence and Pisa, who had come ashore upon the Riviera and helped in the push that drove the Nazis reeling across their own borders—seemed repaid at this moment for all their travail and sacrifice: there was a genuine look of spiritual serenity on their bright faces,

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<sup>23</sup> Harold Saperstein, April 11, 1945, MS 718, Box 8, Folder 1, AJA..

<sup>24</sup> Eichhorn, *The GI's Rabbi*, 178.

as this rabbi of the underground, brought back from the dead, repeated the priestly blessing over their young heads.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, holidays such as Passover, which celebrated the biblical exodus from Pharaoh's Egypt, and Tisha B'Av, which commemorated the destruction of the Temple in ancient Jerusalem, served as vehicles through which to make sense of the senseless worlds the Allies encountered in Europe.

Even those serving across the globe, in the Pacific Theater, interpreted Jewish holidays through the lens of the destruction of European Jewry. In the Philippines, in 1945, Chaplain Samuel Silver offered a sardonic take on the upcoming Passover holiday: "What a happy Passover it'll be, if by that time the Berlynchers have bit the dust and the Germaniacs will have been drowned in the onrushing Red Sea of tanks."<sup>26</sup> At the heart of Silver's wit lay midrash, a classical Jewish form of exegesis that uses comparisons and allegories from Biblical texts to explain the world; comparing Hitler's Germany to Pharaoh's Egypt let Silver see and offer a vision of Jewish triumph, of enemy extinguished through the hand of God—or at least Allied military force. From Okinawa, Chaplain Moshe Sachs provided a more direct explication of the meaning of Tisha B'Av in his newsletter, *The Jewish Oiy Kinawan*. In August 1946, he wrote, "the holiday must teach us to respond constructively, even militantly to Jewish tragedy...not only to mourn but to determine to build a secure homeland for the 'remnant.'"<sup>27</sup>

For Jewish chaplains stationed in Europe, attachment to the Occupation Army enabled them to serve their country *and* their people. Duty to God and country took on new import—and novel complications—as American rabbis helped shepherd the *shearith hapletab*, the "surviving remnant" of

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<sup>25</sup> Morris Kertzer to Phil Bernstein, September 24, 1944, MS 709, Box 12, Folder 7, AJA. Kertzer used the English spelling of "Shabbat," rather than the French "Chabbat."

<sup>26</sup> Samuel Silver to Richard Hertz, February 6, 1945, MS 675, Box 14, Folder 5, AJA.

<sup>27</sup> *The Jewish Oiy Kinawan* 1, no. 4 (24 Tammuz 5706), MS 773, Box 1, Folder 1, AJA. In Europe during the war, Morris Frank wrote that Tisha B'Av "has added significance – because a great part of this world is watching destruction before our very eyes. Some run rampant over a simple small defenseless people – but today we are linked together with everyone who shares the abhorrence of brutality & domination – and who loves freedom and security. Thank god we are still able to observe Tisha B'Av." Morris Frank to Florence Frank, undated, SC 15430, AJA

European Jewry, from Holocaust to new lives while reporting to military command. By virtue of their military standing and religious roles, chaplains became conduits between army protocol and civilian needs. When Chaplain Eichhorn—who officiated at the first Shabbat service at Dachau after liberation—addressed the survivors in a sermon, he made his position clear: “Today I come to you in a dual capacity—as a soldier in the American Army and as a representative of the Jewish community of America.”<sup>28</sup> As much as it was an honor to represent the military and the Jewish people, however, these “dual capacities” or twin modes of being—as American chaplain and Jewish rabbi—could also be unnerving. Ten days after the liberation of Paris, Morris Frank tried to make sense of his experience. He understood the moment as “history making” but struggled to express how it felt to meet “the remnants of our decimated people...[they] greeted me as a liberator...the first Rabbi–Chaplain–American to hold services with them....One would think I was important – or that I had single-handedly liberated the population.”<sup>29</sup> Where Frank focused on his role as a small piece of a much larger military operation, rescued Jews saw the chaplain as emblematic, if not constitutive of, salvation.

As American forces penetrated the continent and captured territory previously overridden by Nazis, the administrative work of liberation became clear. The initial experiences with survivors—announcing the arrival of American forces, rescuing men and women from starvation, sickness, and despair, holding religious services, and assailing Nazi atrocities—gave way to the more precarious challenge of figuring out how to sustain and guide DPs. The task was enormous, and chaplains were often bombarded with competing interests. While the needs of Jewish DPs, the intent of the U.S.

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<sup>28</sup> David Max Eichhorn, May 6, 1945 in Palmer and Zaid, eds., *The GI's Rabbi*, 188. Eichhorn planned to hold a Shabbat service on Saturday, May 5, 1945 in Dachau's main square that the Signal Corps expected to film; however, threats from Polish non-Jews led to a more limited service in the laundry. Colonel George Stevens (Signal Corps) and the Camp Commandant arranged to hold another service on Sunday, March 6 in the public square, which was attended by about 2000 Jews and non-Jews. Photographs and film of the “Shabbat service” thus generally depict the Sunday service – which, per the U.S. military's general policy of religious services on Sunday mornings, was not necessarily unusual even if it did not follow Jewish tradition per se. See *The GI's Rabbi*, 184-88.

<sup>29</sup> Morris Frank to Florence Frank, August 28, 1944, SC 15430, AJA.

military, the goals of aid organizations ostensibly aligned, reality was more complicated and less perfectly synchronized. The Jewish Welfare Board, for example, explicitly instructed Jewish chaplains to refrain from mentioning their relief work in reports—lest it be misconstrued or misunderstood—and enjoined chaplains to restrict such work to their personal time and initiative.<sup>30</sup>

The vast majority of Jewish DPs would, within a year after the war's formal end, find themselves in western Germany, within the American sector and under American authority—military and civilian. Organizations such as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the Red Cross, and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) coordinated and oversaw much of the work to aid the victims of Hitler's regime. But where they would (or more importantly, could) go and resettle, how they would get there, and what resources they needed to rebuild their lives remained uncertain. As DPs attempted to start life anew, American chaplains often conveyed information and assisted refugees looking for family members and family members seeking out survivors. Fred Oppenheimer was living in Chattanooga, TN when he received word that his mother, who had been sent to Theresienstadt, survived and had returned to Munich. Through a trio of Jewish chaplains, he reached out to her. First, Chaplain Morris Frank, who had recently returned to Chattanooga, suggested he write to Chaplain Herman Dicker, a rabbi attached to a medical battalion in Germany who had regular contact with survivors, Second, he then sent his mother a package through Chaplain Earl Stone, who was stationed less than 10 miles away at Ft. Oglethorpe.<sup>31</sup> Networks of chaplains enabled civilians to access and use military connections to aid family reunification.

When possible, Jewish chaplains also helped move supplies and materials from civilian

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<sup>30</sup> Grobman, *Rekindling the Flame*, 24.

<sup>31</sup> Fred Oppenheimer to Herman Dicker, July 31, 1945, Abe L. Plotkin Collection, University of Scranton Digital Collections, <http://digitalservices.scranton.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/p9000coll4/id/144/rec/25>, accessed June 17, 2013.

Jewish relief organizations through military channels to reach their European brethren. But chaplains worked under the supervision of local commanding officers, which meant that the rabbis could try to influence and direct policy but ultimately maneuvered within constraints set by army regulations and the commanders enforcing them. The military, moreover, trained men to fight, not to govern, and managing scores of refugees in chaotic environments beset with food scarcity, inadequate shelter, rampant disease, and ethnic tension challenged even the most sympathetic officers. Despite these problems, entrepreneurial Jewish chaplains like Abraham Haselkorn, Herbert Eskin, Robert Marcus, and Eugene Lipman requisitioned food, homes, and transportation—sometimes through legal purchases and sometimes through illegal borrowing.<sup>32</sup> For other Jewish chaplains, the havoc of postwar occupation provided cover for their illicit activities. Abraham Klausner, for example, transferred himself back to Dachau where he compiled lists of survivors, distributed religious goods, mailed letters on behalf of DPs (the military postal service made no accommodation for civilian correspondence), informed DPs of their rights, established schools, and created separate camps and hospitals for Jewish DPs.<sup>33</sup> Chaplain Herbert Friedman similarly engineered commotion to his advantage, albeit to liberate rare Jewish books and manuscripts, rather than people. At the urging of Gershom Scholem, a German-born scholar of Jewish mysticism at Hebrew University, Friedman forged a receipt, commandeered an ambulance, and shipped crates of documents to Palestine.<sup>34</sup>

Chaplains thus volunteered their time, knowledge, and language skills to aid DPs. But their effort—as important as it felt to them and as encouraging their advocacy may have been to DPs—was still constrained by both the overwhelming needs of DPs and the limited supplies and energy

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<sup>32</sup> Grobman, *Rekindling the Flame*, 43-52

<sup>33</sup> Grobman, *Rekindling the Flame*, 55-61.

<sup>34</sup> Robert Haeger and Bill Long, “Lost EC Treasure Found in Palestine,” *The Stars and Stripes*, December 9, 1947, MS 763, Box 1, Folder 4, AJA.



accessible to chaplains. Thus when Chaplain Aryeh Lev arrived in Europe as part of the Chief of Chaplains' post V-E day delegation, he met with chaplains working with DPs and concluded, "Money doesn't help—not when 4000 Jews come out of Buchenwald. A chaplain can do very little. What is needed is a number of trained workers and boat loads of supplies and food."<sup>35</sup>

Despite Lev's concerns, most Jewish chaplains generally understood their work with Jewish DPs not as an assigned task but as an ethical imperative derived, at least in part, from the utterances of daily prayer. Chaplain Morton Fierman traveled from London to Paris in the winter of 1945, where he first observed the impact of the Nazi regime on European Jewry: "What I saw of the Jewish civilian population made my heart turn over...[their] stories of torture, despair, difficulties threw me off balance....the world must be set right."<sup>36</sup> Aiding European Jewry, or using the chaplaincy to reset the world, transformed morning prayers from metaphor to reality, from rituals of worship to rituals of service. Praising God for clothing the naked, freeing the imprisoned, and raising the downtrodden pushed rabbis to act in God's image,<sup>37</sup> so much so that several Jewish chaplains extended their commitment to the American military. In the summer of 1946, Chaplain Herbert Friedman informed his synagogue president that "legally and theoretically" he could apply for a discharge and return to his civilian congregation. But, he insisted, "morally and according to the dictates of my conscience, I cannot." Given the ratio of 14 Jewish chaplains (several of whom were detailed and devoted to the air corps) to a quarter-million Jewish DPs, Friedman asserted that "it is simply not right" to leave.<sup>38</sup> Even as American congregations wished that their rabbis would return to their regular pulpits, some rabbis often prioritized the work afforded to them through their

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<sup>35</sup> Aryeh Lev Report, May 31, 1945, I-180, Box 200, Folder: William Arnold & Aryeh Lev, 1945—Report, AJHS.

<sup>36</sup> Morton G. Fierman, "Continental Comments," [1945], MSS 170, Box 5, Folder 5, AJA.

<sup>37</sup> These prayers come in multiple places in the morning prayers: both the *birchot hashachar* (morning prayers), which is based on a list of blessings enumerated in the Babylonian Talmus, and the *Amidah*, the liturgy expresses gratitude for God's role picking up the fallen, healing the sick, and releasing the imprisoned.

<sup>38</sup> Herbert Friedman to Louis Isaacson, July 5, 1946, MSS 763, Box 1, Folder 4, AJA.

roles as military chaplains. They saw relief work as a moral calling, and the military accepted, at least temporarily, their drive to devote particular resources (Jewish chaplains) to a particular community (Jewish DPs).

Yet while Friedman and others insisted that their presence in Europe remained essential and necessary, not everyone—military or civilian—concurred. Rabbi Joseph Lookstein traveled to Europe in the winter of 1946 and reported to Chief of Chaplains Luther Miller (Episcopalian) that there were *too many* chaplains, Jewish and Christian, lingering on the Continent. The number of troops warranted fewer military ministers, although the paucity of military need allowed chaplains to aid DPs—activity once opposed, but now supported, by most commanding generals in the region. Lookstein recommended rotating chaplains back to the United States, declaring surplus those no longer needed, and separating those who had fulfilled their terms of service.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, the Office of the Advisor on Jewish Affairs to the Commander in Chief of the European Command requested at least five and up to ten Jewish chaplains dedicated to work with DPs. As the Occupation Army transitioned to more active oversight of civilian daily life and refugee relief, it created a specialized position because “the Army believes only experienced rabbis in military uniform [could] properly perform” the task.<sup>40</sup> The Army wanted clergy familiar with military hierarchy, command, and infrastructure to serve the DPs in its orbit. Integrating work with Jewish DPs into the operational responsibilities of Jewish chaplains provided an orderly means through which to nurture the religious and communal needs of survivors.

American officials’ investment in religious life and standards of interfaith cooperation impressed European Jews more accustomed to hiding their religious practices from, rather than

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<sup>39</sup> CANRA Executive Board Meeting Minutes, March 11, 1946, I-249, Box 6, Folder 13, AJHS.

<sup>40</sup> CANRA Division of Religious Activities Meeting Minutes, October 9, 1947, I-249, Box 6, Folder 13, AJHS; CANRA Annual Report for 1946, December 23, 1946, I-249, Box 9, Folder 34, AJHS. The number of Jewish chaplains requested for this assignment fluctuated between five and ten—or upwards of a quarter of the active-duty postwar Jewish Army chaplains.

inviting in, state officials. Chaplain Friedman reported that Aubrey J. O'Reilly, the Catholic senior chaplain of the Berlin District, attended the 1946 Passover Seder. "By virtue of the interest displayed by these highly-placed military leaders in Berlin," Friedman wrote in his monthly report, "this Passover had especial significance, since the remnant of the Jewish people, seeking an escape from this land, naturally lean upon the American Army, and appreciate the consideration shown by its leaders."<sup>41</sup>

Inasmuch as the value the American military placed on religious equality and collaboration—indeed, American religious mores as conceived by the military—undergirded the work of and bolstered the chaplaincy, it also blinded military leaders to the pernicious, if unintended, consequences of uncritically applying it to postwar Europe. As the army mobilized to organize DPs, it assumed the logic of military religious praxis could easily transfer to DP camps. Of the six million DPs initially recognized on V-E day, 2.5 million were repatriated by early July 1945 and a half million fell under British, French, or Russian authority. The three million DPs remaining under American authority originally comprised an undifferentiated lot, in which Jews and non-Jews, victims and collaborators were statistically listed and defined only by nationality. Tension between Jews and non-Jews festered. Reports and warnings from chaplains, soldiers, journalists, and civilian leaders culminated in President Truman dispatching Anna M. Rosenberg, an expert in manpower and personnel, to examine the circumstances facing French Jewry and Earl G. Harrison to study the conditions of German Jews (or Jewish DPs then residing in Germany). The creation of separate camps for Jewish DPs constituted one outcome of the Harrison Report, which detailed—through the influence of chaplains like Klausner—the problems and injustices faced by Jewish DPs living alongside former assailants. Herman Dicker, an army chaplain who served in France and then Germany, later concluded that assigning Jewish chaplains to temporary special duty "eliminate[ed]

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<sup>41</sup> Herbert Friedman Monthly Report, April 1946, MSS 763, Box 1, Folder 12, AJA.

many of the obstacles caused by lack of mutual understanding” between DPs and American military authorities.<sup>42</sup>

### **Foreign Affairs: Fraternization, Sex, and Marriage**

For chaplains of all religions working in Occupied Germany, the military’s non-fraternization policy provoked some of their most significant problems. Eisenhower, as the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, issued a directive on September 12, 1944—the day U.S. forces first entered Germany—that forbade congenial contact with German nationals, making no distinction between victims, resisters, collaborators, and Nazis. Defined as “the avoidance of mingling with Germans upon terms of friendliness, familiarity, or intimacy, whether individually or in groups, in official or unofficial dealings,” the non-fraternization policy proscribed activities ranging from billeting with, attending church services with, and marrying Germans to drinking, discussing politics, or socializing with Germans. While violations incurred fines ranging from \$10 for talking to Germans to \$65 for sleeping with Germans, enforcement was lax, infringement was constant, and resistance was strong.<sup>43</sup>

Regular offenders of the fraternization policy included chaplains, not only the rabbis for whom adherence would have meant not serving Jewish survivors but also chaplains from other faiths who sought out co-religionists and felt it wrong to act standoffish. Chaplain W. Marlborough Addison (Christian Science) requested a discharge from the Army specifically so that he could serve his fellow German Christian Scientists who “need the guidance of The Mother Church.” His

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<sup>42</sup> Herman Dicker, “The U.S. Army and Jewish Displaced Persons,” *The Chicago Jewish Forum* 19, No. 4 (Summer 1961): 293; Grobman, *Rekindling the Flame*, 70-88. Dicker also pointed out that the fractious relationship between American soldiers and officers and DPs also reflected the paucity of information Americans had about DP history and psychology. “DPs often appeared seclusive [sic], difficult to understand, and uncooperative” while non-Jewish Germans “seemed to be just the opposite” and thus easier to work with and alongside (296).

<sup>43</sup> Earl F. Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944-1946* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1975), 97-8, 160, 321-327. For an analysis of the fraternization ban’s intentions and effects, see Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-49* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 42-79.

familiarity with church leadership and with the regulations of the Occupation Army seemed to make him an ideal candidate for this position. However, he lacked the requisite points to leave the Army (which demobilized men based on a protocol tied to length and quality of service as well as dependents on the homefront) and, moreover, as the Christian Science Board of Directors learned, “the whole policy of the Chaplains’ Office is against freelancing chaplains.” Thus Addison remained in Germany but continued to report on and attempted to aid Christian Scientists living under the military government.<sup>44</sup> Chaplain Timothy Hoyt Bowers-Iron (LDS) found that he vacillated between anger and obligation, uncertain of how to check the “tremendous emotional impact” of witnessing the remnants of atrocities at Nordhausen and Buchenwald against a desire to facilitate services for German Mormons. Indeed, despite the fraternization ban’s explicit prohibition of joint church services, he felt it “would be good for international relations if we could be meeting together.” With permission from his Division Chaplain, Bowers-Iron conducted a combined service, first with Germans on one side of the church aisle and American servicemen on the other and ultimately with mixed seating and regular interaction between German and American Mormons.<sup>45</sup> Like Chaplain Addison, Chaplain Bowers-Iron helped bridge German and American religious communities by sending information, visiting co-religionists—trading his cigarette allotment for gas to travel—and encouraging his church to send a leader to help the Germans reorganize their religious community.

Far more contentious than religious services, sexual contact—consensual and forced, temporary and long-term—proved particularly vexing for the military writ large and chaplains in particular. As the Allied forces marched through Germany, they encountered the German homefront, filled as it was with the elderly, women, and children. And keeping (straight) servicemen,

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<sup>44</sup> Arthur J. Todd to Walter Zimmerman, December 17, 1945; Arthur J. Todd to Herbert Johnson, December 17, 1945; W. Marlborough Addison to Herbert Johnson, January 18, 1946, ORM Box 16142, Folder 322353, MBEL.

<sup>45</sup> Timothy Hoyt Bowers-Iron Oral History, interviewed by Richard Maynard, 1973, typescript, 51-3, The Charles Redd Center for Western Studies LDS Chaplains Oral History Project, BYU.

who had been ensconced in a generally all-male environment, from expressing their interest in local women often proved futile. Within months after German surrender, American newspapers and magazines reported sexual liaisons between former enemies. By October 1, 1945, the fraternization ban was lifted—except for living with and marrying Germans.<sup>46</sup> Still, as Chaplain Bowers-Iron later commented, “the problem of keeping [men and women] apart was pretty drastic.”<sup>47</sup> This challenge extended to all fronts of the war and all areas in which American forces entered, stayed, and lived, whether as part of Occupation Armies or aiding in postwar reconstruction.

As Americans remained in foreign countries, chaplains became keenly aware of another risk of sex between American men and foreign women: rape. In both Germany and Japan, wartime propaganda and brutality raised expectations that enemies would act as barbarians and rape and sexual assault would be common.<sup>48</sup> The exact number of rapes that occurred during and after the war is unclear, in part because rape was used as a weapon of war. Between 1942 and 1945, JAG handled 904 rape cases in Britain, France, and Germany and convicted 458 men, but rape is chronically underreported and underprosecuted.<sup>49</sup> Rape charges against American soldiers peaked in Germany in April 1945, when 501 soldiers were accused of rape; accusations declined to 241 in May, when Germany surrendered, and decreased to about 45 allegations per month thereafter.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Goedde, *GIs and Germans*, 60, 76.

<sup>47</sup> Timothy Hoyt Bowers-Iron Oral History, interviewed by Richard Maynard, 1973, typescript, 57, 60, The Charles Redd Center for Western Studies LDS Chaplains Oral History Project, BYU.

<sup>48</sup> On the expectation of rape in Germany, see Atina Grossman, “A Question of Silence: The Rape of German Women by Occupation Soldiers,” *October* 72 (Spring 1995): 50-53. On the expectation of rape in Japan, see John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 123-7, 211.

<sup>49</sup> J. Robert Lilly, *Taken by Force: Rape and American GIs in Europe During World War II* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 11-12. Based on the calculation that only five percent of rapes are reported, Lilly estimates that approximately 17000 rapes by American soldiers occurred in the ETO during World War II. The documented rates of rape and sexual assault by Soviet soldiers in Germany were significantly higher. Grossman, “A Question of Silence,” 46-47.

<sup>50</sup> Not only was the line between rape and sex work particularly murky in the aftermath of war, but some soldiers saw rape of Germans as a mode of revenge. See Goedde, *GIs and Germans*, 63-65, 84-5 and Anne-Marie Troger, “Between Rape and Prostitution: Survival Strategies and Chances of Emancipation for Berlin Women After World War

Rape accusations, moreover, were not color-blind. Over four-and-a-half months, from D-Day to mid-October 1944, 179 French women lodged rape complaints against American soldiers; 90 percent asserted that their rapist was black. The troubling racial demographics of the American men accused of rape by French women led an unnamed African-American Army chaplain to prepare a pamphlet, “Let’s Look at Rape!” in the fall of 1944. Despite the jocular exclamation point, the six-page document was deadly serious. It cautioned that “All of these [rape] complaints did not stand up under investigation,” but by October 15, a mere seven weeks after the Allies liberated Paris, 64 African-American men awaited trial for rape, while only 11 white soldiers faced comparable charges. Although the military determined that only one-third of the complaints against black soldiers merited courts-martial—compared to two-thirds of the complaints against white soldiers—the numbers nevertheless portended a “disaster.”<sup>51</sup> Indeed, of the 100 American soldiers executed for committing rape in France, 86 were black.<sup>52</sup> Striking enough on their own, the statistics were especially distressing given that African-American troops comprised less than ten percent of the American Armed Forces in France at the time. That African-American soldiers faced significantly higher rates of alleged rape was not unusual. In the United States, accusations by white women toward black men were neither rare nor unexpected in this period.<sup>53</sup> Jim Crow America made the

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II,” in *Women in Culture and Politics*, eds., Judith Friedlander, Blanche Wiesen Cook, Alice Kessler-Harris, and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1986), 97-120.

<sup>51</sup> “Let’s Look At Rape!” MS-709, Box 12, Folder 2, AJA. Sex, rape, and venereal disease were rampant in France, in part because the U.S. military encouraged beliefs that French women were eager and lascivious. See Mary Lou Roberts, *What Soldiers Do: Sex and the American GI in World War II France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

<sup>52</sup> Lilly, *Taken by Force*, 160. This pattern held elsewhere in Europe (except Germany, where no soldiers were executed for rape). In Italy, one of the black soldiers executed for rape was Private Louis Till, the father of Emmett Till, the 14-year-old kidnapped and lynched in Mississippi for speaking to a white woman. Stephen Whitfield, *A Death in the Delta: The Story of Emmett Till* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 116-7.

<sup>53</sup> Black-white intimacy could be consensual as well, but white Americans framed interracial sex as coercive in order to discipline black men through the threat of and actual violence. See, for example, Martha Hodes, *Black Men, White Women: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth-Century South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999) and Diane Miller Sommerville, *Rape and Race in the Nineteenth-Century South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004). Hannah Rosen documents how the rape of black women by white men became a cudgel in struggles over black citizenship during Reconstruction in *Terror in the Heart of Freedom: Citizenship, Sexual Violence, and the Meaning of Race in the Postemancipation South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

black man's gaze, speech, and gestures suspect, no matter the reality or intention.

Yet at the very moment when racism likely inflated statistics of black men accused of rape,<sup>54</sup> a military officer and member of clergy insisted that men take responsibility for both their actions and the perception of their actions. Marked “secret,” the pamphlet reached the desk of Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, the highest-ranking black officer in the European Theater of Operations. “Let’s Look at Rape!” combined declarative sentences, clear infographics, and pertinent illustrations to make one overarching point: each soldier was responsible for his own behavior. Even when the chaplain warned men to “beware these women of easy virtue,” the Nazi and Fascist trickster collaborationists who might “accuse you of rape for the purpose of creating racial trouble in the Army and back home,” he insisted that men needed to “cover [their] movements” and watch their liquor because “drunkenness is never an excuse for YOUR crime.” The pamphlet concluded with a 4-step battle plan for every unit: 1) discuss rape and “determine that it shall not happen”; 2) teach every man the importance of not raping women and not being perceived as rapists; 3) take communal responsibility and “don’t let any man go wrong”; and 4) unite and work together to eliminate the problem. After reviewing the document, on January 23, 1945, Davis issued a memo to the Theater Chaplain advising him that “Let’s Look at Rape!” was “most timely and should be presented to all members of our service.” Three days later, the Theater Chaplain, L. Curtis Tiernan (Catholic), attached the pamphlet to a bulletin distributed to all chaplains—black and white—in Europe, noting that the pamphlet was “worthy of the serious consideration of all” and encouraged chaplains to share it with their troops.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> If the experience of American soldiers in Europe paralleled that of American soldiers in Japan, then it is likely that white soldiers peddled prejudice and promulgated racist warnings that rape was the province of black men. Many of the charges against black men stemmed from general concerns about interracial sex and white officers played a critical role in pushing trumped-up charges through the system. Michael C. Green, *Black Yanks in the Pacific: Race in the Making of American Military Empire After World War II* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 64, 27.

<sup>55</sup> L. Curtis Tiernan, Information Sheet No. 6, January 26, 1945, MS 709, Box 12, Folder 2, AJA. Tiernan’s motives are murky at best—he may simply have been following orders, he might have viewed rape as a significant moral



Sex exasperated the military and often placed the chaplaincy in an awkward spot. As an institution that understood itself as the moral vanguard and moral protector of the Americans in its orbit, the military preferred to promote chastity and abstinence as virtuous standards even as it knew that its members were sexually active. As a result, the Army approached and engaged sexual activity with a classic bait-and-switch maneuver: publicly protest and privately pardon, or vociferously rebuke while distributing condoms and treating disease.<sup>56</sup> With young, unmarried men making up the bulk of U.S. Armed Forces, chaplains were responsible for regular lectures on what the military dubbed “sex-morality.” Regardless of any given religion’s view on sex, the military assigned chaplains with the task of emphasizing self-restraint as a moral virtue. At the same time, sex happened and venereal disease was real, and the military instructed its medical staff to operate prophylaxis stations, give “personal hygiene” lectures, and dispense condoms. While some chaplains accepted this set-up as sensible and reasonable, others found themselves operating at cross-purposes. Chaplain Bowers-Iron (LDS), for example, noted that while lecturing men about sexual immorality “gave me personal satisfaction,” it had little practical effect.<sup>57</sup> A confidential overseas inspection report from Chaplain Charles I. Carpenter (Methodist)—then an Air Corps chaplain and future Air Force Chief of Chaplains—critiqued the military’s approach to sex and venereal disease as too lax and in need of reformulation. “We appear to have completely given up the fight to maintain ideals and morals, and are simply trying to salvage as much human life as possible from the possible wreckage that can result from lust run wild,” he stated. Using drugs to treat the consequences was

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problem deserving the attention of chaplains, and/or he might have understood the pamphlet as rejecting interracial sex more generally, given that he supported applying anti-miscegenation laws to potential marriages between European women and black soldiers after the war. Gerald Astor, *The Right to Fight: A History of African Americans in the Military* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 1998), 315.

<sup>56</sup> In an attempt to provide for their men’s sexual needs in a controlled environment, a few officers attempted to build brothels for their men—most of which were quickly shuttered by the War Department, based on counsel from chaplains and out of fear of publicity. Roberts, *What Soldiers Do*, 159-62.

<sup>57</sup> Timothy Hoyt Bowers-Iron Oral History, interviewed by Richard Maynard, 1973, typescript, 57, 60, The Charles Redd Center for Western Studies LDS Chaplains Oral History Project, BYU.

“deadly” because it enabled GIs to stray with few consequences. Masses of men away from the influences of home combined with “a strange emphasis on the ‘pin-up girl’ by which the eye of the soldier is often focused (and through the eye, the mind) on the feminine form from the purely physical and lust arousing standpoint” stymied even the most prudent men.<sup>58</sup>

As a Catholic priest, World War II Chief of Chaplains William Arnold had to tread carefully between the teachings of the Church (which required premarital abstinence and forbade contraception) and the goals of the military (which conceded premarital sex occurred and equipped its men with condoms). Internally, Arnold focused his concern on the “indiscriminate distribution” of prophylaxis that, in his opinion, “expose[d] the Army to the very serious charge of actively and directly contributing to the delinquency of youth.” He found it troubling that the military would puzzle and confuse men by instructing them to obey moral law while granting them the tools to flout it.<sup>59</sup> Publically, however, Arnold advised his chaplains to hold tightly to morality and decency *and* lauded most of the medical corps for offering dignified and professional presentations. He acknowledged that occasionally a doctor could act like a “gross-minded smarty” but instructed Chaplain Edward J. Waters (Catholic), him to “do what you can to strengthen the character of your boys against the crude methods of men who think that vice is merely a physical danger.”<sup>60</sup>

Despite Arnold’s efforts to placate concerned Catholic priests, they still lamented their inability to curb or restrain virile young men and Catholic leaders were comparably chagrined. When Chaplain John Curran informed Bishop John O’Hara, the Military Vicar that he stopped medical officers—including a Catholic doctor—from officially supplying condoms but felt flummoxed by

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<sup>58</sup> Charles I. Carpenter, Report on Overseas Inspection Trip, January 25, 1944, RG 247 (Security Classified General Correspondence, 1941-48), Box 4, Folder 333.1 (Inspections & Investigations), NARA II.

<sup>59</sup> Chief of Chaplains Memo to the Adjutant General, April 21, 1942, RG 247, Box 195, Folder 250.1 (Conduct and Morals—Misc., Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>60</sup> William Arnold to Edward J. Waters, March 28, 1941, RG 247, Box 195, Folder 250.1 (Conduct and Morals—Misc., Vol. I), NARA II.

“the secret undercurrent [of distribution] that always works,” O’Hara was nonplussed. He in turn wrote to Army Chief of Staff George Marshall to request a general order prohibiting the distribution of contraception. Though signed “faithfully yours,” Marshall’s reply likely disappointed the Catholic superior. The War Department held firm to its position that “our efforts to combat venereal disease must be intensely practical” and therefore, while chaplains stressed education and moral virtue, “we cannot disregard any effective means of prophylaxis recommended by the medical profession.”<sup>61</sup>

In general, the military chaplaincy perceived and acted on behalf of what historian Margot Canaday has called “the straight state.”<sup>62</sup> Although World War II marked the start of American men and women “coming out under fire” and despite many gay men serving as chaplain’s assistants,<sup>63</sup> the chaplaincy as a whole generally understood sexuality as heterosexuality. However Chaplain Charles C. Dutton became quite cognizant of homosexuality at Fort Bliss, at least after two men individually approached him, each “claiming that he is homosexual.” At a loss for how to respond, he requested assistance from the Chief of Chaplains. Frederick Hagan responded, cavalierly announcing, “there is one in every hundred.” He added, “this may not be an accurate statement but sooner or later every chaplain contacts such men and there is a need for a sympathetic and understanding approach.”<sup>64</sup> If Hagan’s response lacked much in the way of concrete guidance, it was relatively compassionate, if

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<sup>61</sup> John O’Hara to William Arnold, December 20, 1940; Army Chief of Staff to John O’Hara, January 22, 1941, RG 247, Box 195, Folder 250.1 (Conduct and Morals—Misc., Vol. I), NARA II. Despite Marshall’s clear stance, O’Hara continued to plead his case, though he succeeded only in getting the Surgeon General to pre-approve, rather than eliminate, hygiene and sex lectures. See John O’Hara to George Marshall, April 10, 1941 and William Arnold to John O’Hara, April 25, 1941, RG 247, Box 195, Folder 250.1 (Conduct and Morals—Misc., Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>62</sup> Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). On the military within the straight state, see chapter 2, “‘We Are Merely Concerned with the Fact of Sodomy’: Managing Sexual Stigma in the World War I-Era Military, 1917-1933” (55-90) and chapter 5, “‘Finding a Home in the Army’: Women’s Integration, Homosexual Tendencies, and the Cold War Military, 1947-59” (174-213).

<sup>63</sup> Allan Berube, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 62.

<sup>64</sup> Charles O. Dutton to William Arnold, August 9, 1943; Frederick Hagan to Charles O. Dutton, August 27, 1943, RG 247, Box 195, Folder 250.1 (Conduct and Morals—Misc., Vol. I), NARA II. Dutton indicates that he wrote a more detailed narrative of his experiences as well as some thoughts on how to handle homosexuality, but that document is not in the folder.

somewhat dismissive. Two years later, a few months before the war ended, Chief of Chaplains Arnold responded to a similar query with a far more vituperative stance: the gay soldier should receive an immediate dishonorable discharge because he represented “a virulent danger to the Army. His immorality exerts a vicious influence.”<sup>65</sup> Whether the severity of Arnold’s opprobrium reflected his personal views or a more lenient outcome than presuming sodomy and sending the soldier through a court-martial is not clear.<sup>66</sup> There were at least two chaplains who came under scrutiny for homosexuality: Chaplain Roderick H. Fitch and Chaplain Clyde H. Roddy (Congregational-Christian). The former was dishonorably discharged and received three years prison-time for sodomy—a charge to which he admitted guilt—while the latter faced allegations of homosexuality. Accusations were enough to dislodge a career, as Chief of Chaplains Arnold pointed out: “Entirely aside from one’s opinion as to the truth and untruth of the charges of homosexuality, it is definitely believed that the return of Chaplain Roddy to active service as a chaplain would not be to the best interest of the Service. Where there is so much rumor a chaplain would be under constant suspicion and his usefulness would be marred at every turn.”<sup>67</sup> On rare occasions when homosexuality clearly entered the chaplaincy’s gaze, consequences fluctuated according to the role as well as the whims and interpretations of the chaplains involved.

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<sup>65</sup> William R. Arnold to William P. Byrnes, January 11, 1945, Allan Berube World War II Project Papers, Box 13, File 10, GLBT.

<sup>66</sup> According to a January 10, 1943 memo from the Adjutant General, “Sodomy is an act specifically denounced as an offense in violation of Article of War 93 and is punishable by dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and confinement at hard labor in a Federal penitentiary for five years. The policy of the War Department is that the sexual pervert—the true sodomist—should be promptly tried by general court-martial” unless insufficient evidence was available or mitigating circumstances (e.g., “mental defect”) existed such that a discharge would be the best course of action. However, “in those cases of unnatural relations unaccompanied by violence, coercion, or other aggravating circumstances, where the accused is the pathic and the evidence indicates that he is not a confirmed pervert, the policy is generally to reclaim the individual to the service if he otherwise possesses a salvage value.” For this to occur, a psychiatrist would have to certify that the accused was not a “moral pervert” which could not occur if the soldier admitted he was gay. “Sodomists,” Memorandum No. W615-4-43, January 10, 1943, RG 247, Box 195, Folder 250.1 (Conduct and Morals—Misc., Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>67</sup> William R. Arnold to Frederick Fagley, October 18, 1943; William R. Arnold to the Ecclesiastical Committee of Congregational and Christian Churches of New York, February 3, 1944, RG 247 (Security Classified General Correspondence, 1941-48), Box 1, Folder 080 (Societies and Church Organizations), NARA II.

Chaplains understood military sexuality as narrowly heterosexual, but from an administrative perspective, sex still comprised more than the act itself. Hence, after receiving numerous complaints, the Army Chief of Chaplains lobbied to restrict the sale of pornographic magazines—or any “unmailable” periodicals—from post exchanges.<sup>68</sup> Adopting the post office’s classification enabled the military to bar material deemed lewd, obscene, or lascivious without allocating resources to grading publications. Yet even where successful, limiting access to pin-ups, porn, and racy magazines did not eliminate immoral temptations and examples. As more young men became officers over the course of the war, however, some chaplains found their maturity lacking. Chaplain Hugh G. Carroll (Catholic) asserted that he and other chaplains had observed “a marked degree of vulgarity and smut” as younger men attempted to impress older and higher-ranking officers attached to the 140<sup>th</sup> Infantry. Quite problematically, he continued, the enlisted men hear these exchanges which, in turn, “nullified” the chaplains’ efforts to enforce “clean speech.”<sup>69</sup>

While some chaplains vigorously policed (or tried to) a broad range of tantalizing activity, others resisted the military’s efforts to regulate their behavior. At its most extreme, Chaplain Dudley C. Lackey (Methodist) admitted “moral derelictions” after receiving venereal disease treatment at the 51<sup>st</sup> Station Hospital. After an interview with two ranking chaplains in which he confessed to committing adultery, Lackey tendered his resignation “for the good of the service” and Theater Chaplain Milton O. Beebe (Methodist) reported the infraction to the Methodist Commission on

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<sup>68</sup> William R. Arnold Memo to Chief of Administrative Services, September 9, 1942, RG 247, Box 195, Folder 250.1 (Conduct and Morals, Vol. I), NARA II. The postal service standard was insufficient for some chaplains and officers who still found “objectionable” material sold on base. E.g., Chaplain Virgil M. Haley to William R. Arnold, January 27, 1943, Box 195, Folder 250.1 (Conduct and Morals, Vol. I), NARA II. Within the chaplaincy, debates over “undesirable literature” were not limited to sexually provocative material; more often, they centered on religiously intolerant or derisive material, with allegations about anti-Catholic, antisemitic, and anti-Protestant publications regularly reaching the Office of the Chief of Chaplains.

<sup>69</sup> Hugh G. Carroll to William R. Arnold, February 4, 1943, RG 247, Box 195, Folder 250.1 (Conduct and Morals—Misc., Vol. I), NARA II.

Chaplains so that they could determine his fate as a civilian Methodist minister.<sup>70</sup> Other chaplains avoided detection by the military, although they did not necessarily hide their sexual activity. Navy Chaplain Bertram Korn (Jewish)—who eventually became a Rear Admiral in the Naval Reserves—confided to a fellow chaplain that he—a young, unmarried rabbi—was lonely at Camp Elliott, in San Diego. His “love life, much of an escape as it is, and a rugged one too – has little or no chance of permanency....But the fact that I have someone to make love to, physically and actually, does help.” Moral and religious teachings about premarital sex notwithstanding, Korn was comfortable having sex and telling another rabbi about it. His experiences, he argued, helped him understand why men he counseled accepted “any kind of marriage that presents itself.” Most importantly, he framed the challenges of Navy life as a route to “personal growth which may make us better and harder men, more likely to be better servants of God, more devoted to the things we prize and which the Army and Navy spurn every minute, more understanding of the impulses of human beings, more faithful to what is right and true and just.”<sup>71</sup> Although Korn was atypical in acknowledging his sexual forays, other chaplains also recognized sex as a human and therefore understandable desire. From the Pacific, Chaplain Samuel Silver (Jewish) wryly observed, “Most of the GIs here are fugitives from barren New Guinea GIsles, and the sight of Filipino girls dazzles them. And even more dazzling are the WACs & nurses, here in numbers....I’ve dug up a few k’subos [marriage contracts], just in case.”<sup>72</sup>

But those seeking sex did not necessarily desire relationships and marriage, and brothels provided another option—much to the dismay of chaplains. In Japan, where “it was taken for granted that the foreigners would demand sexual gratification[,] the question was simply: who would

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<sup>70</sup> Milton O. Beebe to Bishop Peele, September 18, 1944, RG 247 (Security Classified General Correspondence, 1946-48), Box 1, Folder 080 (Societies and Church Organizations), NARA II.

<sup>71</sup> Bertram Korn to Richard Hertz, January 20, 1945, MS 675, Box 14, Folder 5, AJA.

<sup>72</sup> Samuel Silver to Richard Hertz, February 6, 1945, MS 675, Box 14, Folder 5, AJA.

provide it?”<sup>73</sup> The answer, at least from the perspective of the Japanese government, was discrete “comfort facilities” built by local entrepreneurs and overseen by local police. Financed by government loans, euphemistically-titled Recreation and Amusement Association (RAA) buildings housed women who serviced the erotic fantasies and sexual desires of American soldiers while providing a buffer between soldiers and “good girls.” The inexpensive RAA facilities accomplished the goals of the Japanese government: it stemmed rape. They did not, however, achieve the interests of the Occupation Army, which, upon discovering high rates of syphilis and gonorrhea among its troops, disavowed prostitution as a violation of human rights and democracy and dismantled the RAA centers in 1946. The Japanese Home Ministry responded by asserting that women had the right to work as prostitutes, and thus legalized the profession in “red-line” districts. *Panpan* women—or women of the night—became a ubiquitous presence in the streetscapes of postwar Japan.<sup>74</sup>

Navy Chaplain Lawrence L. Lacour (Methodist) found this situation repugnant and, when the Navy did little to address his concerns, opted for a more public airing of complaints. From his perch in Tokyo Bay, the chaplain mailed a letter to *The Des Moines Register* in which he assailed commanding officers who “refused to do anything to discourage promiscuity.” The Navy, he argued, needed to “consider the moral aspects of policies governing personnel” and could not rely on all naval officers, as some “by example and advice have encouraged immorality among our men.” Against the fleet chaplains’ protest, he wrote, the Navy allowed men to frequent houses of prostitution—except for a brief mandated hiatus when Archbishop Spellman toured the area. Reprinted in local and national publications, the letter was inserted into the *Congressional Record* and led Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal to reaffirm the Navy’s public policy to suppress

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<sup>73</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 124.

<sup>74</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 121-39; Yuki Tanaka, *Japan’s Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution During World War II and the U.S. Occupation* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 133-66.

prostitution by limiting access to brothels in order to “protect the American ideals of home and family life.” Thus the *Navy Department Bulletin* reminded officers that “no action shall be taken that might be construed as encouraging, tacitly approving, or condoning prostitution.” But, the memo continued, “commanding officers will not neglect...other means of reducing venereal disease in their respective commands but will continue to exert every effort towards this objective.”<sup>75</sup> To the likely dismay of Chaplain Lacour, the knots of sexual morality remained twisted as pragmatism countered purity in policy-making.

While the Supreme Command for Allied Powers (SCAP) and the American government writ large publicly disclaimed its troops consorting with women on the fringe of respectability, it generally ignored commercial sex and obstructed marriage through immigration regulation. For chaplains stationed in the United States and across the world, officiating—or dissuading—marriage became one of the most common tasks in the immediate postwar period. Of the 16 million soldiers and sailors who served in World War II, upwards of one million (6.25 percent) would meet, marry, and bring war brides from 57 countries to the United States between 1942 and 1952. A tiny number of war grooms married WACs, WAVEs, military nurses, and other American women posted overseas.<sup>76</sup> Over 125,000 GI marriages took place during the war—predominantly in Britain and other English-speaking Allied nations, between white men and white women—while many more

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<sup>75</sup> “Charges on Naval Moral Laxity Is Printed in ‘Record’; Methodist Chaplain Says Prostitution is Permitted in Japan Occupation,” *The [Rockford] Observer*, December 2, 1945; “Sailors and Sex: Prostitution Flourishes in Japan,” *Newsweek*, November 12, 1945; “The Navy Provides Social Protection for Servicemen in Japan,” *Journal of Social Hygiene* 32, no. 2 (February 1946): 82-89. Sarah Kovner shows that military personnel often inveighed against this interference into their sexual lives; as sailor R. J. Porter exclaimed in the *Stars and Stripes*, “I’m sick of some sap I’ve never seen or heard of telling all about my morals and how to protect me from the mean old world like I was a three year old.” See *Occupying Power: Sex Workers and Servicemen in Postwar Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 28.

<sup>76</sup> Elfrieda Berthiaume Shukert and Barbara Smith Scibetta, *War Brides of World War II* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1988), 1-2. The authors compiled this number through a combination of military documents, immigration tables, newspaper reports, and regional and local statistics. They tracked numbers over a decade to reflect the initial marriages that occurred in Britain and Australia in 1942 and ultimate shift in immigration law that allowed Japanese war brides to legally enter the US in 1952. Susan Zeiger disputes Shukert and Scibetta’s one million as a severe overestimate, but provides an estimate for only wartime marriages rather than a marriage count for the decade the latter cover. See Susan Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances: Foreign War Brides and American Soldiers in the Twentieth Century* (New York: NYU Press, 2010), 250 fn 2.



sexual liaisons, some consensual, others not, some of which led to marriage and others of which did not, occurred during postwar deployments.<sup>77</sup>

The number of women seeking entry to the United States as the result of war-prompted relationships led to a flurry of Congressional legislation. First, the War Brides Act in December 1945 “expedite[d] the admission...of alien spouses and alien minor children of citizen members of the United States Armed Forces.” Then, six months later, Congress enacted the Fiancées Act to “facilitate...the admission of alien fiancées or fiancés.”<sup>78</sup> Necessitated by immigration quotas set by the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act, this new legislation sanctioned war marriages by enabling spouses and children to enter the country without running afoul of either immigration laws or national-origin quotas. Yet the legislation was neither total nor neutral: it accounted only for the marriages that resulted from the Occupation Army in Japan and thus did not dismantle the Japanese Exclusion Act embedded in the Johnson-Reed Act.<sup>79</sup> But Japanese war brides existed and their soldier-husbands wanted to return to the United States. In 1947, the Alien Wife Bill, which became the Soldier Brides Act, provided that the “alien spouse” of a citizen-soldier “shall not be considered as inadmissible because of race.” However, the law was limited to marriages cemented within 30 days of the act’s passage, thereby restricting its applicability to those who happened to marry within the month—no easy feat due to military regulations.<sup>80</sup> Only in 1952, when the Immigration and Nationality (McCarran-Walter) Act terminated Japanese exclusion by granting nominal immigration quotas to Japanese nationals—in an act that otherwise retained quotas—were Japanese war brides able to

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<sup>77</sup> Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances*, 71-72.

<sup>78</sup> Public Law 271: The War Brides Act (December 28 1945); Public Law 471: The Fiancees Act (June 29, 1946).

<sup>79</sup> In 1943, Congress repealed Chinese exclusion and permitted a quota of 105 Chinese nationals per year, in order to engage China as an ally. As Mae Ngai has pointed out, the sequential repeal of exclusion for war brides “were particularly significant because they laid the basis for Asian family immigration, which had been a near-impossibility under the exclusion laws.” Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 233.

<sup>80</sup> Public Law 213: The Soldier Brides Act (July 22, 1947).

enter the United States in large numbers.<sup>81</sup>

Against this backdrop, military chaplains played critical roles in negotiating marriage. Within the military, marriage had long been the province of chaplains. They were, after all, commissioned clergy deputized by the state to perform and certify marriages. Although marriage law varied by locale, all states authorized clergy to sanctify unions and solemnize relationships between a man and a woman by signing marriage licenses.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, starting in the Civil War, presiding over and recording marriages—most notably between free African Americans—became an integral part of chaplains' duties.<sup>83</sup> In the twentieth century, chaplains' marriage work was manifold. Pre-marital counseling, wedding planning, parental reassurance, ceremony conducting, immigration assistance, and marriage troubleshooting all fell under the chaplains' purview. Radio and television programming, ranging from the wartime "Chaplain Jim" to the postwar "Chaplains in Action" highlighted that chaplains' work might "begin[] in the chapel, but it doesn't end there."<sup>84</sup>

Although the military assumed all clergy were ready to marry men and women, this role posed difficulties for some chaplains, notably those who were not ordained and unaccustomed to effectuating civil marriage. In particular, LDS and Christian Science chaplains acquired the right and the duty to oversee marriage rites that they did not possess in their own churches. The LDS Church

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<sup>81</sup> Public Law 82-414: The Immigration and Nationality Act (June 27, 1952). Prior to 1952, about 900 Japanese war brides entered the country; during the remainder of the year, over 4200 Japanese war brides legally entered the United States. See: Shukert and Scibetta, *War Brides*, 216. Per the War Brides Act, they did not count against the standard immigration quota. Truman vetoed the Act because it maintained quotas and thus a nativist, isolationist attitude, but Congress overrode the veto.

<sup>82</sup> Michael Grossberg, *Governing the Hearth: Law and the Family in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 76, 94; Nancy Cott, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 28, 36. At times, ministers used their power to contravene state law, particularly in the case of interracial marriage. See Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 49, 90. For work on nexus of race, religion, and marriage, see Sharon Davies, *Rising Road: A True Tale of Love, Race, and Religion in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010) and Faye Botham, *Almighty God Created the Races: Christianity, Interracial Marriage and American Law* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

<sup>83</sup> Cott, *Public Vows*, 83.

<sup>84</sup> "Chaplains in Action" Script, July 25, 1950, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 484, Folder 352.11 (TV Course at Ch. School), NARA II.

sanctioned this role, though oddly framing it as a prerogative from the Church's First Presidency rather than a mandate from the state. Either way, it offered "suggestive comments which may be made to the groom and bride and the assembled party prior to the performance of the ceremony" as well as a template for the order and language of the ceremony.<sup>85</sup> One LDS Chaplain, Milt Widdison, recalled being asked to officiate at a military wedding—"military formation...and all"—for which he "borrowed a few ideas from a Methodist friend's book and went along with the program." Despite his unfamiliarity with the military ritual, he commented, "it was as valid as a quickie ceremony in a Las Vegas marriage chapel."<sup>86</sup> In the military, as in civilian life, legality sometimes mattered more than spirituality.

Christian Scientists, unsure of their legal standing since their practitioners neither received ordination nor performed weddings, queried the Chief of Chaplains. They wanted to know whether their chaplains could, in fact, oversee military marriages as well as whether this military function would spill over into civilian rights and responsibilities. Chaplain George F. Rixey allayed the Church's concerns when he asserted "that because a chaplain holds a commission in the Army, this fact should enable him to qualify in many states to perform marriages" but "if such authority was granted...it would cease when they received their discharge from the Army."<sup>87</sup> Presiding over marriages, then, could be both flexible and temporary.

Yet even when the authority to officiate marriages was permanent, the military environment

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<sup>85</sup> *Servicemen's Committee Instructions to Assistant Co-ordinators, L.D.S. Chaplains, M.I.A. Group Leaders, Mission and Stake Representatives* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1944), 14.

<sup>86</sup> Milt G. Widdison, Unpublished Memoir (2000), 49, MS 17075, LDS-CHL

<sup>87</sup> Herbert W. Beck to Herbert E. Rieke, January 26, 1942, ORM, Box 14666, Folder 1609, MBEL. There is no evidence that Rixey—or anyone else in the Chief of Chaplains Office—consulted the Judge Advocate General or any other legal authority when rendering this opinion. In 1918, the JAG asserted that a chaplain "by virtue of his appointment as such has no legal right to perform marriage ceremonies either in the United States or with the American Expeditionary Forces. Army chaplains cannot legally perform marriage ceremonies of either soldiers or civilians unless authority to do so is first obtained in conformity with the statutes" of local jurisdictions. "Right to Perform Ceremony," May 23, 1918 in *Digest of Opinions of the Judge Advocate General of the Army, 1912-1930*, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 197, Folder 291.1 (Marriages, Vol. I), NARA II.

presented quandaries unique to the office of the chaplaincy. Indeed, in the arena of marriage, the chaplain in uniform occupied the seat of secular county clerks and justices of peace as much as they inhabited their pastoral role and ministerial robes. In contrast to civilian life, for example, chaplains married men and women who fell outside their faith practices—which could confuse an American public accustomed to marriage ceremonies conducted by clergy only for couples of their religion. When challenged about a Catholic chaplain marrying two Protestants, the Office of the Chief of Chaplains responded simply, “the marriage was valid.”<sup>88</sup> In addition, when stationed abroad, chaplains occasionally encountered nations with rather different legal approaches to marriage. Much to the consternation of chaplains accustomed to formally and legally performing marriages, for example, postwar Germany framed marriage as only a civil contract. As a result, when American troops married German nationals, chaplains had to stand aside until the civil authorities approved the marriage. Chaplain Herman Heuer (Lutheran) learned that “a clergyman whether he be an indigenous clergyman or a foreign chaplain, may not perform the marriage ceremony as prescribed by civil law. The ecclesiastical solemnization is another matter which may not take place until the civil marriage has been accomplished.”<sup>89</sup> Chaplains retained the right and ability to preside over religious ceremonies following civil ones but military regulations insisted that chaplains follow German law for the purpose of creating valid marriages under international law and U.S. immigration law.

While chaplains presided over weddings in the military beyond the scope of their roles in civilian religious life, the military did not oblige chaplains to violate their own religious commands. The military respected the Jewish interdiction on interfaith marriages, allowing military rabbis to

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<sup>88</sup> John S. Monahan to John S. Hild, December 18, 1939, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 197, Folder 291.1 (Marriages, Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>89</sup> John S. Kelly to Herman Heuer, December 11, 1952, RG 247 (1951-1953), Box 513, Folder 291.1 (Marriage, Vol. XVI), NARA II.

decline to oversee them, but did not itself forbid such arrangements.<sup>90</sup> A television script initially written in Chaplain School and revised by Chaplain George H. Birney (Methodist) and Chaplain Wayne L. Hunter (Presbyterian U.S.) highlighted this situation. An officer entered the office of one Chaplain Shain and requested his services in getting married the following day. Chaplain Shain worked through a number of concerns: the apparent swiftness of the wedding (the couple had actually been dating for several years), the need for legal sanction (the couple had acquired a marriage license and had taken the requisite medical exams), and the religion of the pair (the fiancée was Jewish but the soldier was not). When the officer asserted that the faith of the chaplain is immaterial to him, Chaplain Shain retorted, “has it occurred to you that it might make a difference to me?” When the soldier expressed confusion, the rabbi explained that chaplains “regardless of their denominations still abide by the rules and beliefs of their denominations in their service just as they do in civilian life.” As he did not perform mixed marriages in civilian life, so too was he unable to do so in the military. However, rather than block the wedding, Chaplain Shain procured the number for the local justice of the peace and helped the officer make plans to wed the following day. The scene ends with the officer commending the chaplain for “standing for what you believe to be the right thing to do.”<sup>91</sup> Intended to model an appropriate course of action and to provoke

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<sup>90</sup> Unlike the military, the JWB argued that “matters of marriage and divorce are not directly connected with military duty” (M-7) and thus forbade Jewish chaplains from officiating or assisting in any form of mixed marriage, a policy in accordance with all movements of Judaism at that time. See CANRA Responsa M-1-M-9, I-249, Box 21, Folder 130, AJHS. For a slightly more flexible position on performing mixed marriage—with the caveat that “it is our policy to discourage mixed marriages”—see Philip S. Bernstein to Ephraim Bennett, January 3, 1944, I-249, Box 21, Folder 132, AJHS. Not all Jewish chaplains followed the JWB’s policy. Chaplain Samuel Rosen, for example, reported “having solemnized a number of inter-marriages” when he feared the couple would marry anyways and select another faith provided the bride (assumed to be the non-Jew) agree to take classes and convert. “Excerpt from Monthly January Report submitted by Chaplain Samuel Rosen,” February 15, 1944, I-249, Box 21, Folder 132, AJHS.

<sup>91</sup> “Chaplains in Action” Script, July 25, 1950, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 484, Folder 352.11 (TV Course at Ch. School), NARA II. The resolution to this quandary—referring a soldier to a non-Jewish chaplain or Justice of Peace—was permissible only because the soldier was not Jewish and a Jewish marriage could not occur. According to the JWB’s Responsa Committee (the body responsible for Jewish legal questions), “it is not Jewishly admissible to arrange for a civil ceremony to be performed by a Justice of the Peace or a non-Jewish chaplain or minister”; if two Jews wanted to marry, a Jewish chaplain, civilian rabbi, or “some other Jewish communal functionary authorized by the state to perform marriages” had to officiate. CANRA Responsa M-1, I-249, Box 21, Folder 130, AJHS. Navy Chaplain Francis Garrett (Methodist)—who eventually served as the Navy Chief of Chaplains—relayed a similar story from early in his career. He

discussion among clergy at Chaplain School, the scene exemplified the military's approach to religious dicta: chaplains retained the right to follow their own religion's marriage law and practice, provided their abdication did not deny members of the Armed Forces from marrying.

Interfaith marriages—legal according to the state, but often problematic if not forbidden by religions—often strained chaplains' dual commitments to the military and to specific religions. The Chief of Chaplains regularly reminded chaplains that while they had to abide by local marriage laws, civil law did not constrain interfaith marriage. As clergy, chaplains could find interfaith marriage troubling and frustrating, but “no government agency is in a position to enforce particular religious beliefs and practices.” The chaplain himself could elect not to participate in a marriage he found ethically dubious, but, as William Arnold recalled, he “once performed 385 marriages in one day, and about half them were between non-Catholics. Some were Protestant, some were Mohammedan, most were pagan.”<sup>92</sup> Whether or not his data were precise, his point was clear: chaplains followed their conscience and the needs of couples sometimes occasioned unusual or unorthodox scenarios. So long as the unconventional was legal, however, the War Department accepted it. Nevertheless, parents often found mixed marriages as worrisome as chaplains. After her son informed her of his impending marriage to an Englishwoman, Mrs. Morris Cohen pleaded with Chaplain Morris Fierman (Jewish) to intercede. “Needless to say, I was very shocked as we are of the Jewish faith, and she is not,” she wrote. “For this reason, I feel that such a marriage would be unsuitable for the problems that will present themselves will be many and great.” Although concerned with the presumed danger of interfaith marriage rather than theological prohibition per se, Mrs. Cohen nevertheless saw Fierman as her ally—indeed, she was correct. He called her son, and their

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referred a navy commander to a justice of peace when Garrett realized the man intended to enter his fourth marriage, and he was unable to marry him, per church rules. Unlike in the script, the commander did not accept this and protested to the Garrett's superior, to no avail. Rear Admiral Francis Leonard Garrett Oral History, interview by H. Lawrence Martin (1984), 24-5, Oral History Program—Chaplain Corps, United States Navy, FJC.

<sup>92</sup> William R. Arnold to Dominic Ternan, August 28, 1943, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 197, Folder 291.1 (Marriage, Vol. III), NARA II.

conversation apparently changed his mind, much to the relief of his mother.<sup>93</sup>

In other cases, both civilians and soldiers viewed chaplains as ministerial mediators on their behalf. From Sioux City, Iowa, Marilyn Penner wrote to the Chief of Chaplains on behalf of the unmarried women on the homefront, pleading with him to “absolutely prohibit marriages between American soldiers and foreign women.” She understood her request and reasoning as not xenophobic, but demographic: “Already thousands of American girls know they face spinsterhood and a life of loneliness and unhappiness” because death and foreign war brides snuffed out too many potential mates. The chaplaincy declined to follow her suggestion, asserting that “relatively few American men will marry foreign girls” and media reports were exaggerating the problem.<sup>94</sup> There were, however, a number of American men who—despite opposition from the homefront—wanted to marry foreign women, and sought the counsel and aid of their chaplains. Charlie Lerner was stationed in Calcutta, where he met and fell in love with an Indian Jewish woman named Seemah. His parents, however, remained skeptical of this match. Over and over again, he reassured them that they had nothing to worry about and implored them to accept her and assent to their marriage. Their concerns were both religious and racial, and he attempted to convince them that Seemah was “white and Jewish.” To make his case, he offered three lines of argument. First, he reminded his parents that “there are Jews all over the world, yes even in India[,] and [they] are white.” Second, he noted that he had a rival in love—a Polish Jew who “happens to be some sort of rabbi himself,” which led Charlie to point out that “if he’s after her for marriage, she must be something *zayer goot* [very good].” Finally, he offered his trump card: he planned to meet with Chaplain David Seligson who, he assured his parents, would provide a “certificate proving her a Jew

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<sup>93</sup> Mrs. Morris Cohen to Morris Fierman, March 5, 1945, MS 170, Box 5, Folder 3, AJA. For comparable letters written by concerned family members and friends, see letters collected by the JWB in I-249, Box 21, Folder 135, AJHS.

<sup>94</sup> Marilyn Penner to the Chief of Chaplains, May 24, 1942; Herman Heuer to Marilyn Penner, May 28, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 197, Folder 291.1 (Marriage, Vol. II), NARA II.

and white.”<sup>95</sup> Charlie’s father, in turn, approached the JWB to request confirmation that Seemah was Jewish and the JWB, in turn, asked Chaplain Seligson to make a determination.<sup>96</sup> For his part, Chaplain Seligson affirmed that the couple had talked to him and that Charlie had asked for his endorsement. Although Seligson implicitly indicated that Seemah was Jewish, he ducked an overt declaration of support by suggesting it would be in everyone’s best interest for Charlie to return to the United States, establish himself, and then bring Seemah over as his fiancée.<sup>97</sup> Although Seligson hardly resolved the argument between Charlie and his family, both sides saw the chaplain as an arbiter of Jewishness as well as American racial categories outside the borders of the United States.

At times, however, chaplains used the military atmosphere as cover for minor violations of religious doctrine. Chaplain John S. Monahan (Catholic), for example, petitioned the Archbishop of Baltimore to marry an enlisted couple, a Catholic male officer and a non-Catholic female soldier, in a hotel rather than in a public religious venue such as a chapel or church, as required by the archdiocese. Monahan knew that “the family of the bride, while greatly prejudiced against the Catholic Church, does not object to having the ceremony performed by a Catholic Army chaplain” but worried that insistence on a chapel wedding “might mean that sufficient pressure would be brought upon the Catholic party to make him weaken and allow the ceremony to be held outside the Church.” He further maintained that this situation was unique because, among other reasons, it came to the attention of the Office of the Chief of Chaplains after the couple had selected a

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<sup>95</sup> Charlie Lerner to Mom, Pop, and Miriam, May 19, 1945, I-249, Box 21, Folder 135, AJHS.

<sup>96</sup> Philip Graubart to David Seligson, May 28, 1945, I-249, Box 21, Folder 135, AJHS.

<sup>97</sup> David J. Seligson to Philip Graubart, June 13, 1945, I-249, Box 21, Folder 135, AJHS. While Seligson avoids the question of race, it is probable that Seemah looked white. The Calcutta Jewish community consisted of a large Baghdadi Jewish merchant class, and Charlie emphasizes that Seemah had money, which suggests that she was likely a Baghdadi Jew (whom the British classified as Europeans) living in Calcutta and educated by the British. See Joan G. Roland, *The Jewish Communities of India: Identity in a Colonial Era* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 58, 218. It is unclear what became of Charlie and Seemah’s relationship.



location, and would not, therefore, set any precedent.<sup>98</sup> The Archdiocese’s decision remains unclear, but Monahan—who served in the Chief of Chaplains Washington, DC office—certainly felt it reasonable and proper to push the Church to accommodate a particular military predicament. In addition, the Chief of Chaplains found it eminently reasonable for a soldier to select the chaplain of his choice to officiate a marriage. When a Catholic chaplain complained that a Protestant chaplain had married a Catholic couple, the military replied that unless coercion could be proved, neither the chaplain nor the soldier’s actions were problematic.<sup>99</sup>

The exigencies of war also promoted creativity and transformed regular weddings into grand celebrations. Of one of the first weddings to occur in the free Philippines, Chaplain Samuel Silver declared, “Marriages may be made in heaven, but when [the] fiancé drops in from there, a to-do naturally results.” After the soldier-groom arrived via air, he met his WAC-bride before “300 people, from colonels to privates” and three Jewish chaplains co-officiated the wedding—leading the groom to comment, “Back home I could have hardly afforded one rabbi; out here in *dem visten volt* [the desolate world], I have three of them.” The nuptials included a variety of religious customs, ranging from a Christian choir singing “O Promise Me,” “rice [being] hurled at the couple,” and a bamboo chapel in which “a white parachute [hung], providing the suitable canopy effect.” After all, Silver noted, “when the bride wears khaki & the groom is in the air force, a parachuppah is the proper touch.”<sup>100</sup>

The joy documented and cheered by Chaplain Silver did not extend, however, to many of the interracial and binational couples that met and married—generally overseas—in the postwar years. The military’s regulation of marriage represented one prong of the state’s project to moralize

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<sup>98</sup> John S. Monahan to Reverend Joseph M. Welligan, October 13, 1938, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 197, Folder 291.1 (Marriages, Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>99</sup> John S. Monahan to Thomas P. Kelly, May 29, 1942, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 197, Folder 291.1 (Marriages, Vol. II), NARA II.

<sup>100</sup> Samuel Silver to Richard Hertz, March 4, 1945, MS 675, Box 14, Folder 5, AJA.

about, control, and discipline racial bodies. The prohibition on Japanese citizens immigrating to the United States as well as state laws banning interracial marriage hampered relationships that developed abroad while simultaneously encouraging casual sexual liaisons rather than serious partnerships. Marriage, as a legal matter, rested on state law. “No Federal statute,” the Adjutant General reminded a bickering Kentucky court clerk, “empowers an Army chaplain to perform marriage ceremonies in places which are subject to the jurisdiction of the respective states without complying with the laws of the several jurisdictions where such ceremonies are to be performed.” Military bases—forts, camps, ports, and ships—remained an exception, according to the Adjutant General, in which marriage was “governed solely by the pertinent provisions of Federal law.”<sup>101</sup> The Chief of Chaplains deflected this leniency, arguing instead that all chaplains must comply with state and local marriage laws even in military space to avoid “many complicated, unpredictable and undesirable issues insofar as legal rights involved in divorces, inheritances, and other situations arising from marital status are concerned.”<sup>102</sup> Hence regardless of the state laws in effect—be it residency requirements (for couples or officiants), age of consent, blood tests, waiting periods, or miscegenation prohibitions, chaplains were “obliged to conform” to them.<sup>103</sup>

There was, of course, no federal law governing marriage per se, though a passel of military regulations affected marriage gatekeeping in the military. The most significant policy—which existed in some form between 1939 and 1996—restricted Armed Forces personnel serving overseas from marrying foreign nationals without the express permission of the country or region’s senior commanding officer. Thus while chaplains performed many marriages abroad, the commanding

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<sup>101</sup> Adjutant General to C.P. Thiesen, May 10, 1941, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 197, Folder 291.1 (Marriages, Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>102</sup> Chief of Chaplains to the Adjutant General, April 8, 1941, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 197, Folder 291.1 (Marriages, Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>103</sup> John S. Monahan to Robert E. McCormick, March 5, 1941, RG 247 (1920-45), Box 197, Folder 291.1 (Marriages, Vol. I), NARA II.

officer's "subjective assessment of the probable success of marriage" determined whether the ceremony could even occur.<sup>104</sup> General Douglas MacArthur, the commanding general in Japan, refused soldiers permission to marry women who were not allowed to enter the United States according to the rationale that doing so "would be to flaunt the sanctity of the marriage ceremony."<sup>105</sup> MacArthur, who viewed the occupation of Japan as an opportunity for "spiritual recrudescence,"<sup>106</sup> infused marriage with religious meaning in order to uphold, rather than criticize, the law. Elsewhere, military officials were more flexible but still considered a range of state and local laws when rendering decisions on marriage applications, particularly because by the 1950s, approval potentially signified additional challenges for administrators assigning couples to military bases stateside.<sup>107</sup>

Binational, interracial marriages not only tested American views of miscegenation and cross-cultural exchange, but also, for some chaplains, spurred questions about faith, doctrine, and belief. Navy Chaplain George W. Thompson (American Baptist) served as a Staff Chaplain with the Military Sea Transport Service (MSTS) from 1949 to 1952. His rotations through a variety of ships

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<sup>104</sup> War Department Circular No. 179 (June 8, 1942). This policy—which expanded AR 600-750 to apply to all personnel rather than just low-ranking enlisted men—held until Army Regulation 600-240, *Marriage in Overseas Command* (October 14, 1953) issued a more detailed list of rules pertaining to marriages between military personnel and non-citizens, including the ability of local commanders to "promulgate such local regulations as necessary but such regulations shall not be inconsistent with, or more restrictive than the policies set forth in this directive." These regulations applied to all branches of the military (Army, (Army) Air Force, Navy, and Marines). For a brief history of military marriage regulations, see: Rose Cuison Villazor, "The Other *Loving*: Uncovering the Federal Regulation of Interracial Marriages," *New York University Law Review* 86 (2011): 1395-1400 and Dana Michael Hollywood, "An End to 'Til DEROS Do Us Part': The Army's Regulation of International Marriages in Korea," *Military Law Review* 200 (2009): 164-168. For two critiques of military marriage regulation, see: Richard B. Johns, "The Right to Marry: Infringement by the Armed Forces," *Family Law Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (Winter 1977): 357-87 and Ross W. Branstetter, "Military Constraints on Marriage of Service Members Overseas Or, If the Army Had Wanted You to Have a Wife..." *Military Law Review* 102 (Fall 1983): 5-21. Johns and Branstetter both raise religious liberty issues embedded in marriage regulations, in light of the requirement of pre-marital counseling by a chaplain.

<sup>105</sup> Quoted in Green, *Black Yanks in the Pacific*, 70-1. As Green shows, this policy had particularly pernicious effects on African-American soldiers and their Japanese girlfriends—with whom many had children.

<sup>106</sup> Rodger R. Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1945-75* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1977), 1.

<sup>107</sup> Green, *Black Yanks in the Pacific*, 81. According to Green, internal memos directed the Army's Career Management Division to avoid sending married interracial couples to states that refused to recognize their marital status.

in the Pacific fleet brought him into close contact with servicemen returning to the United States with foreign—most often Japanese and Korean—brides. As a result, he wrote a memo, “If I Marry a Foreigner” which was approved for publication by the Navy in April 1952. Along with the caution to take marriage decisions seriously, to think hard about the ramifications of interracial or binational marriage, and to consider the values each individual brought to marriage, Chaplain Washington proposed a series of questions that made the standard by which he judged proposed marriages quite clear. “Would this person fit into your family and be accepted as an equal, or would the family feel you married beneath your cultural, religious, social, and moral level?” he queried. Then, focusing principally on religion, he created an unambiguous hierarchy between the Christianity he assumed Americans practiced and the other religions—implicitly Buddhism—practiced in Asia. As he articulated it, his concern centered not on the couple but on their anticipated children: “Are you certain that you will be willing for your children to be taught a religion which is contrary to and in a very definite sense has a moral standard below that of the Christian religion?” According to Thompson, it was impossible to reconcile differing belief systems, especially those that encompassed animal or ancestor worship, as “people of other countries worship gods that are strange gods, and gods that require certain loyalties to which we object. Their conception of their god and his demands are certainly foreign to our conception of our God....We cannot believe that sacrifice to heathen gods is right, and it would be difficult for us to compromise on the worship of our God.”<sup>108</sup>

Chaplain Thompson’s efforts to prevent marriages between American Christians and what he deemed foreign heathens—or, at the very least, encourage war brides to convert—did not go unnoticed. The Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention applauded his work and asked the Navy Chief of Chaplains to assist them in furthering it. They hoped to expand

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<sup>108</sup> George W. Thompson, “If I Marry a Foreigner?” (1952), RG 24 (Correspondence with Chaplains, 1941-59), Box 3, Folder Thompson, George W., NARA I.

Thompson's work to all war brides through the chaplaincy and therefore requested that all Navy chaplains conduct "Christian Friendliness Surveys" to elicit the religious affiliation of new immigrants. This was necessary, they argued, because "if we do not do something about this, they will eventually paganize us instead of our bringing them to Christ." Recognizing that not all Americans were Baptist, the Home Mission Board agreeably offered to share this information "among the various denominations and religious bodies of America, based on the religion of these war brides."<sup>109</sup> The denomination also volunteered to provide instruction classes for Japanese war brides who expressed interest in Christianity, but the Navy declined to enact their suggestions.<sup>110</sup>

While the military remained non-committal to civilian evangelization overtures, it allowed chaplains to hold religious classes for war brides on transport ships—proselytization in form, if not name. Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Methodist chaplains worked together to develop a curriculum and brochure for the classes, maintaining that "since America is a Christian nation, no person is well Americanized until he or she is informed on the teachings of the Christian religion."<sup>111</sup> That the United States was not—at least constitutionally—a Christian nation and that the chaplaincy itself included non-Christians was, to these transport chaplains, irrelevant.<sup>112</sup> Chaplain Thompson led many of these classes and explained that they were necessary because "these women are coming to

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<sup>109</sup> C.E. Matthews to Staunton Salisbury, July 17, 1952, RG 24 (Annual Activity & Trip Reports), Box 2, Folder Baptist (South) 1949-52, NARA I.

<sup>110</sup> Alfred Carpenter to Staunton Salisbury, July 14, 1952; Staunton Salisbury to C.E. Matthews, July 21, 1952; Staunton Salisbury to Alfred Carpenter, July 30, 1952, RG 24 (Annual Activity & Trip Reports), Box 2, Folder Baptist (South) 1949-52, NARA I.

<sup>111</sup> George W. Thompson, Press Release: "Navy Chaplains' Concern for Immigrant Dependents of Service Personnel," August 18, 1952, RG 24 (Correspondence with Chaplains, 1941-59), Box 3, Folder Thompson, George W., NARA I. Chaplain Paul K. Potter (Methodist) developed the text for the class, "Christianity as a World Religion," which consisted of eight sections: Statement of Purpose; The Christian Bible; The Ten Commandments; The Life of Jesus Christ; What Does a Christian Believe; What is Necessary in Order to Be a Christian; Questions About Christianity; and a Map of Palestine. In addressing whether Americans are Christian, the booklet simply states, "Christianity is a way of life. It is not forced upon anyone."

<sup>112</sup> It is notable that these efforts come from the Navy which was significantly more Christian and more conservative than the Army. However, the tenor of the Navy chaplain corps began to shift in the 1950s under Chief of Chaplains Staunton Salisbury who actively reached out to African Americans and Jews.

America to become homemakers, mothers, associates, and in time, citizens of this country...Christianity is the predominant religion in America and few of these immigrants will live where Shintoism or Buddhism have temples.” By framing the need to educate Japanese women as a type of Americanization and assimilation to middle-class domestic norms and gender roles, the chaplain avoided labeling the work evangelical. Lack of access to Buddhist and Shinto temples, not Buddhism and Shintoism, produced the religious quandary. Ever the teacher and the minister, Thompson claimed that exposure to Christianity “can give them a welcome in spite of customs, attitudes, taboos, and racial intolerance.”<sup>113</sup> Religion, in its American Christian form, will protect Japanese war brides from the prejudice and intolerance purveyed by American Christians. The faulty logic bespoke a sincere desire to prepare Japanese women for their roles as American wives and mothers along with a willful disregard—or at least disinterest—in American pluralism and religious freedom. Though relatively contained within the war bride program, the melding of American nationalism with Christianity, rather than a more generic monotheism, heralded a shift in the ideological overtures of the postwar chaplaincy.

### **Sword and Shield: Building the Military-Spiritual Complex**

The desegregation of the armed forces both significantly altered and barely maintained the tenor and operations of the military chaplaincy. On July 26, 1948, President Harry Truman issued Executive Order 9981, abolishing segregation in the armed forces. It asserted “there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin.” Technically, the order instantly overturned more than 150 years of state-sponsored segregation in the military, but the shift was not sudden nor the implementation

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<sup>113</sup> George W. Thompson, “Missionaries at Sea,” (undated), RG 24 (Correspondence with Chaplains, 1941-59), Box 3, Folder Thompson, George W., NARA I.

especially swift. The order veered between dictating that the end of discrimination occur “as rapidly as possible” and allowing that it would take time to do so “without impairing efficiency or morale.”<sup>114</sup> From a policy perspective, the impetus to desegregate the armed forces began in earnest in 1946. In the wake of race riots, violence against black veterans, and lynchings, Truman convened the President’s Committee on Civil Rights to investigate problems and recommend solutions relating to civil rights in the United States. Among its other findings, the committee’s report, *To Secure These Rights*, insisted that racial equality in the armed forces was essential precisely because military service stood at the nexus of obligations and rights. For both ethical and pragmatic reasons, the committee argued, discrimination was unjust and diminished the nation’s fighting capacity. Segregation in the military developed informally and through administrative law, and the Truman Administration recognized an opportunity to make a bold statement about its dedication to the legal equality of all Americans in the midst of a heady re-election campaign by using an executive order to bypass Congress.<sup>115</sup>

The relative acquiescence or resistance to Truman’s initiative varied by branch of service, status, and role, and the chaplaincy did not necessarily follow general trends. Although the National Security Act of 1947 unified the Army, Navy, and Air Force into a single organization, each unit sought and fought to retain its autonomy, leaving James Forrestal, the first Secretary of Defense, with little administrative power to desegregate the military unilaterally. Truman created and charged another committee—the President’s Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, better known as the Fahy Committee—with overseeing desegregation. In general, the Army and Marines proved most hostile to change, while the Navy accepted it, and the Air Force welcomed it. But while the Navy consented to desegregating its enlisted men, its officer corps

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<sup>114</sup> Executive Order 9981, July 26, 1948.

<sup>115</sup> Sheris Mershon and Steven Schlossman, *Foxholes and Color Lines: Desegregating the U.S. Armed Forces* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 158-86.

resisted integration. Meanwhile the Army—which was larger, included more Southern officers, and enlisted the most African Americans—claimed separate could be equal and continued to defy the President’s command.<sup>116</sup> Yet the Army chaplaincy was already integrated—at least administratively. The Army commissioned black clergy, trained them alongside white clergy (as it had since World War I), and promoted black chaplains. The Navy, which defiantly avoided commissioning black chaplains until late in World War II and then promptly dismissed them after the war, remained truculent. In contrast, the Air Force chaplaincy, which was led by Charles I. Carpenter (Methodist) after he separated from the Army, concentrated more on establishing itself than excluding others. Moreover, Carpenter operated under the credo, “don’t hesitate to change if it’s for the better.”<sup>117</sup>

The creation of the Department of Defense also produced the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Board (AFCB), a council that met regularly and attempted to streamline the work of the chaplaincy and, when possible, coordinate chaplaincy efforts across the military. As the Fahy Committee gained traction, the respective Chiefs of Chaplains needed to address questions about integration, so the AFCB took up the issue. During the AFCB’s second meeting, held at the Pentagon in July 1949, “the employment of negro chaplains” constituted the final matter of business to discuss. It was, “from the Navy viewpoint, purely academic.”<sup>118</sup> Indeed, it would take two-and-a-half more years and the advent of the Korean War, for a black chaplain to appear on the Navy’s active duty roster. After five years of life as a civilian pastor, Chaplain Thomas D. Parham (Presbyterian)—the second of two African-American chaplains commissioned by the Navy during World War II—returned to the

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<sup>116</sup> Mershon and Schlossman, *Foxholes and Color Lines*, 187-217.

<sup>117</sup> Charles Carpenter, interviewed by Captain Tocado, July 31, 1971, Oral History Transcript, p. 25, Columbia University Oral History Research Office, New York, NY.

<sup>118</sup> Armed Forces Chaplains Board Meeting Minutes Digest, July 6, 1949, RG 24, Annual Activity & Trip Reports, Box 1, Folder: AFC Board Agenda and Minutes, NARA II.



Naval chaplaincy, where he spent thirty-one more years in service.<sup>119</sup> Although the Korean War toppled the Navy's intransigence on racial discrimination, it also highlighted the slow path to integration. Two months after Parham rejoined the Navy, *The Christian Century* reported, "there are still no instances of chaplains being assigned across color lines" and pointed out that, much to their dismay, none of "the several chaplain corps have gone on record favoring such exchanges."<sup>120</sup> Within a few months, the mainline Protestant newspaper happily reported that while the tides of war remained uncertain, "chaplain assignments are now being made on a nonsegregated basis in army units in the Korean theater."<sup>121</sup>

Although the Fahy Committee and the prolonged effort to integrate the armed forces received sustained media coverage and public attention, the chaplaincy garnered more consideration and scrutiny from a concurrent advisory group, the President's Committee on Religion and Welfare in the Armed Forces (PCRWF). Led by Frank Weil, an attorney who presided over the Jewish Welfare Board and helped establish the United Service Organization (USO) during World War II, this committee included such religious leaders as Daniel Poling—a World War I chaplain whose son, Clark Poling, was one of the four chaplains to die on the *Dorchester*—and Edmund Walsh—a Jesuit who founded Georgetown's School of Foreign Service. Civic leaders such as Truman Gibson—a Chicago attorney who had served as an advocate for African Americans in the War Department—and Dorothy Enderis—a Milwaukee educator—also joined the committee.<sup>122</sup> Instructed to determine how the military could best enact "the 'policy of the Government to

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<sup>119</sup> H. L. Bergsma, *The Pioneers: A Monograph on the First Two Black Chaplains in the Chaplain Corps of the United States Navy* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1980), 11-14. Parham was the first black Navy officer to attain the rank of Captain, which he did in 1966.

<sup>120</sup> "Chaplains Should Practice Nonsegregation, Too," *The Christian Century*, March 7, 1951.

<sup>121</sup> "Good News from Korea," *The Christian Century*, May 30, 1951.

<sup>122</sup> On Walsh, see Patrick H. McNamara, *A Catholic Cold War: Edmund A. Walsh, S.J., and the Politics of American Anticommunism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005). On Gibson, see Truman K. Gibson Jr. with Steve Huntley, *Knocking Down Barriers: My Fight for Black America* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2005).

encourage and promote the religious, moral, and recreational welfare and character guidance of the persons in the Armed Forces, this committee accepted its mandate, and thereby to enhance the military preparedness and security of the Nation.”<sup>123</sup> More specifically, Truman created the committee for two related reasons. First, more than half the drafted servicemen in the postwar military were under 21, and he believed the military retained responsibility for maintaining the morality of impressionable American youth. Second, he understood the late 1940s as a period in which the United States “was trying to win the peace...and to win that peace we must have these young men as a backlog to secure that peace.”<sup>124</sup> Truman’s charge to the committee not only tied together religion, morality, and welfare—long the province of American military chaplains—but saw them as interrelated concerns driving the suitability of arenas such as military housing, recreation opportunities, and entertainment programs as well as guiding educational needs of the service. As a result, some of the concerns of the Weil Committee—as the PCRW was colloquially known—such as the living conditions of black soldiers fell under the province of both groups. But the Fahy Committee ultimately had a narrower, albeit far more daunting, focus on racial equality. In contrast, the Weil Committee studied a broader but ultimately more concrete set of issues—the chaplaincy, community organizations, housing, and information & education programs—in order to clarify and support Truman’s emphasis on the religious underpinnings of national security.

The chaplaincy proved to be the easiest subject for the Weil Committee to investigate and reform. A single entity within each branch of the military, its decisions rested within a clear chain of command, and it was, they found, functioning relatively well. No branch met the ideal ratio of chaplain to soldiers, presumed to be about 1 chaplain per 800 enlistees, which led to a

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<sup>123</sup> Press Release, October 27, 1948, RG 220, Box 1, Folder 2a: Executive Order 10013, HST.

<sup>124</sup> Harry Truman, Remarks to the President’s Conference on Community Responsibility to Our Peacetime Servicemen and Women,” May 25, 1949, printed in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Harry S. Truman, 1945-1953* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1966), available online: <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=1127&st=&st1=>.

recommendation to commission a much larger pool of chaplains. But according to data compiled in 1949, even the newly formed Air Force chaplaincy employed 1 chaplain for 977 soldiers, a rate that far exceeded previous peace and wartime standards of 1 chaplain per 1200 men (which was rarely achieved). As Weil informed Truman in 1950, “the extent of religious opportunities offered to military personnel is reasonably adequate....We found, too, that the chaplains themselves, have ample opportunity to function effectively as clergymen within the military service.”<sup>125</sup>

Aside from advising the military to commission more chaplains, the committee’s report highlighted two main issues: selection and training. The group worried that religious groups might reserve their best clergy for civilians and send less desirable men to minister to the military. Once chaplains entered the service, how could the branches best train them to accomplish their duties? The committee supplied little evidence that weaker candidates entered the service or that chaplains needed significantly better training.<sup>126</sup> Yet the role of the military minister differed from that of a civilian pastor in one significant way: he was responsible for the religious lives of all men, regardless of religious affiliation or race. As the report put it, chaplains needed to “demonstrate the essential unity of all races, faiths, and groups” and “being the servant of God for all, the chaplain cannot cultivate a narrow sectarian spirit.”<sup>127</sup> This was not a new vision or novel idea. The Army and Navy Chiefs of Chaplains had promoted and, to differing degrees, instilled this idea in their chaplains starting in World War I. By the end of World War II, few questioned this mission.

The postwar years demanded attention anew not because the military had forsaken religious diversity in its ranks but because the nation’s new enemy toted more than weapons and defense required more than nuclear bombs. By 1950, the PCRW declared that if “we expect our Armed

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<sup>125</sup> Frank Weil to Harry Truman, November 28, 1950, RG 220, Box 10, Folder: Chaplaincy Report, HST.

<sup>126</sup> The Military Chaplaincy: A Report to the President by the President’s Committee on Religion and Welfare in the Armed Forces (October 1, 1950): chapter 5, RG 220, Box 10, Folder: Chaplaincy Report, HST.

<sup>127</sup> The Military Chaplaincy: A Report to the President by the President’s Committee on Religion and Welfare in the Armed Forces (October 1, 1950): 11-12, RG 220, Box 10, Folder: Chaplaincy Report, HST.

Forces to be physically prepared, we must also expect them to be ideologically prepared.”<sup>128</sup> Or, in the words of Truman, “we must always make spiritual values our main line of defense.”<sup>129</sup> Inimical Communism, as embodied by the Soviet Union in the growing Cold War, demanded a fresh, if nonetheless conventional, approach. In this new world, chaplains provided more than spiritual guidance and moral suasion. They made the United States into and ensured it remained a holy nation. As the Weil report remarked, American military chaplains—in contrast to nonexistent Soviet ones— “give our democratic faith a very large measure of its strength. The other side of the conflict has organized its idea upon a rejection of moral law and individual dignity that is utterly repugnant to any of our religions. Indeed, it has been necessary for the totalitarians to attack and stifle religion because such faith represents the antithesis of everything they teach.”<sup>130</sup> The committee made explicit what had been implicit in the push for visibly public interfaith cooperation during World War II: American religion encompassed more than faith in God. Even as it eschewed sectarian divides, American religion demanded faith in the political ideology of American democracy.

To that end, the PCRW aligned with and commended the military chaplaincy’s new endeavor, Character Guidance. The military had long charged chaplains with inculcating morality in its troops, but in the early postwar years, the Armed Forces formalized this role through Character Guidance programs. The signature feature of the military chaplaincy in the three postwar branches—the Army, the Air Force, and the Navy—Character Guidance tightly and ideologically linked religion and morality with democracy and citizenship. Teaching character was not a new idea.

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<sup>128</sup> The Military Chaplaincy: A Report to the President by the President’s Committee on Religion and Welfare in the Armed Forces (October 1, 1950): 2, RG 220, Box 10, Folder: Chaplaincy Report, HST.

<sup>129</sup> “Truman Holds Religion Main Defense Line,” *The Washington Post*, March 13, 1948. This was not a new stance for Truman; as a senator in 1939, for example, he presided over a National Meeting for Moral Re-Armament. Senate document 82, National Meeting for Moral Re-Armament, June 4, 1939, available online: [http://congressional.proquest.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/congressional/docview/t47.d48.10316\\_s.doc.82?accountid=14667](http://congressional.proquest.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/congressional/docview/t47.d48.10316_s.doc.82?accountid=14667).

<sup>130</sup> The Military Chaplaincy: A Report to the President by the President’s Committee on Religion and Welfare in the Armed Forces (October 1, 1950): 1-2, RG 220, Box 10, Folder: Chaplaincy Report, HST.

Rather, the military's embrace and design of a formal moral education program represented a federal counterpart to state and local character education that became common in schools during the Depression and was rejuvenated in the late 1940s.<sup>131</sup> Through regular lectures, chaplains instilled—or attempted to—the virtues and values the state viewed as central to its mission. The impetus for this program came from Secretary of War Robert Patterson who sought to use chaplains as a weapon against growing rates of venereal disease and disciplinary cases. Army Chief of Chaplains Luther Miller (Episcopalian) then shaped the directive into a more expansive series on morality and citizenship, which reflected his leadership of the chaplaincy away from diversifying and broadening religious access and toward forming model citizens through morality education.<sup>132</sup>

Character Guidance emerged alongside and in conjunction with another mid-1940s citizenship development plan: Universal Military Training (UMT). The program intended to build a standing army ready to turn young American men into citizen-soldiers by mandating one year of military training after high school graduation (or upon turning 18), after which they would become reservists who, already trained to fight, could readily serve in the event of war. Initially contemplated by Roosevelt during World War II, championed by Truman after the war, and supported by about 80 percent of voters, UMT roused hostility to maintaining a standing army. Advocates trumpeted UMT as a cost-efficient means to secure and defend the state while providing men with necessary physical and technical skills and imbuing them with morals and values. Critics, however, charged that UMT was a wasteful, poorly designed, militaristic, restrictive, and impractical program that

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<sup>131</sup> On links between sex and character education in public schools, see Jeffrey Moran, *Teaching Sex: The Shaping of Adolescence in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 98-117; Clay Howard, "The Closet and the Cul de Sac: Sex, Politics, and Suburbanization in Postwar California" (PhD diss, University of Michigan, 2010), 57-63, 87-106.

<sup>132</sup> Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace*, 39-46. In *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America's Religious Battle Against Communism in the Early Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), Jonathan Herzog argues that the chaplaincy's emphasis on character guidance emanated from the PCRW and UMT (pp. 118-9). However, he bases his assertions only on documents found in the PCRW files rather than corroborating that evidence with material from the respective chaplaincy histories and archives and thus misstates PCRW claims as historical fact.

contravened individual liberty, stifled freedom, and abrogated rights. Debates over UMT rested on a core divide about the nature of the relationship between the obligations and rights of citizenship in a democracy. Yet even as proponents of UMT shifted their arguments away from the 1940s espousal of moral and citizenship benefits to a 1950s, Korean War-laced focus on military efficacy, critics never questioned whether the military should contribute to the creation and shaping of “good citizens.”<sup>133</sup>

Congress never passed UMT, but in 1946, the War Department designed an experimental UMT unit at Ft. Knox in which about 800 men would train for one year under Major General John M. Devine. In 1947, 664 young men volunteered for a 6-month training session, and the Army dispatched a trio of chaplains to oversee the religious and moral dimensions of the trial UMT. Entrusted to build virtuous Cold Warriors, Chaplains Maury Hundley, Jr. (Disciples of Christ), Charles J. Murphy (Catholic), and Morris E. Eson (Jewish) led worship, taught ethics, lectured on morals, and publicized the value of the program.<sup>134</sup> They met individually with every recruit, compiling reams of data on the religious backgrounds and views held by their seventeen- and eighteen-year old congregants. Citizenship and morality lectures were mandatory, and soon moved outside the experimental unit and became standard among all units based at Ft. Knox.<sup>135</sup> According to the chaplains, the moral and citizenship project succeeded: profanity, alcohol consumption, and

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<sup>133</sup> Michael Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945-1954* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 119-58; John Sager, “Universal Military Training and the Struggle to Define American Identity During the Cold War,” *Federal History* 5 (January 2013): 57-74. The anti-UMT line-up included an array of groups and interests that were often more antagonistic than allied: labor unions, educators (the American Council of Education and the National Education Association), some religious leaders (e.g. Methodist Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, Reverend Robert Graham), historians (most notably Charles Beard), and conservative businessmen publicly testified against it. Liberals often claimed it was un-American, while conservatives framed it as wasteful—a claim that Eisenhower made privately as well. Unsurprisingly, members of the PCRW including Daniel Poling and Edmund Walsh publicly supported UMT.

<sup>134</sup> Initially only Chaplain Hundley and Chaplain Murphy were assigned to Ft. Knox, which led Murphy to joke that he “was the Rabbi for the time being.” Charles Murphy, “Remarks,” August 1947, RG 247 (1946-48), Box 458, Folder 726 (Hygiene of Diseases, Vol. II), NARA II.

<sup>135</sup> Matthew H. Imrise, “The Ft. Knox Experiment,” *The Army and Navy Chaplain* XVII, no. 4 (April-May 1947): 2-6.

venereal infection rates declined and church attendance rose.<sup>136</sup> Of course, the unit's commander had removed beer from the post exchange, trainees lacked regular access to women, and made worship only technically optional—those who elected not to attend chapel faced an hour meeting with a chaplain in its stead. “Father Devine’s Heaven,” as the Ft. Knox regulars referred to the UMT unit, steeped its youth in holy fervor.<sup>137</sup> As Chaplain Murphy insisted in the post’s newspaper, “you are first, last, and always a religious animal, and UMT will not let you forget it.”<sup>138</sup>

Nor did the military want any of its personnel to forget religion or its counterpart, morality. Navy Chief of Chaplains Stanton W. Salisbury described new recruits as entering a space in which they “will be without the normal restraints imposed by the family, the church, the community, and the personal approval or disapproval of the neighborhood in which the person has individual status. Though he may not have been conscious of it, these factors, these restraints, from which he has been torn loose, have on the whole, subconsciously controlled the type of behavior performed by youth in his civilian community.”<sup>139</sup> Based on the experience at Ft. Knox, in the fall of 1947, Chief of Chaplains Miller began promoting *The Chaplain’s Hour*, a weekly eight-page outline written by Chaplain Martin H. Scharlemann (Missouri Synod Lutheran) which evolved into the serialized, six-volume set of 60 sample talks titled *Duty-Honor-Country*. At once pithy and uncompromising, the original 52 lectures—which ranged from “The Meaning of Citizenship,” “What Makes a Man a

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<sup>136</sup> “Chaplain Reports Fort Knox Experiment in Training Is Complete Success,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 22, 1948.

<sup>137</sup> Hanson W. Baldwin, “Army’s Youth Unit Called a Success,” *NYT*, May 18, 1947.

<sup>138</sup> Quoted in Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace*, 42. Although Murphy supported the mission of the Ft. Knox experiment, he also expressed frustration at needing to reach a multi-faith audience: “I feel, as a Catholic priest, that I can hit my men more effectively when I’m talking to my own Catholic group. Of course, we will agree on the fundamental law of Almighty God, though shalt not commit adultery. We’ll treat it pretty much the same way, but then when we get down to the particulars we don’t have to hold our knock out punch. I feel oftentimes when I’m talking to a mixed group that I got my hand cocked up here like a fighter and I’m never able to try to give that knock out punch.” Charles Murphy, “Remarks,” August 1947, RG 247 (1946-48), Box 458, Folder 726 (Hygiene of Diseases, Vol. II), NARA II.

<sup>139</sup> Stanton W. Salisbury, “Navy Chaplains’ Religious and Moral Program,” April 25, 1951, Chaplains’ Resource Board, Box 123, Folder 5214 (Reports to the Secretary of the Navy, 1946-58), FJC.

Man,” and “Self Control” to a “Authority as a Moral Problem,” “How Free Am I,” and “A Fool and His Money”—melded Sunday School lessons, Philosophy 101 classes, and Benjamin Franklin aphorisms into a year’s worth of relatively simplistic life lessons undergirded by unadorned anti-Communism.<sup>140</sup>

Writing Character Guidance talks became a staple assignment in Army chaplain school and, when collated and distributed, these publications served as the templates for regular moralizing, for the effort to convey “a sense of responsibility for the preservation of a free way of life.” The rubric envisaged trainees not as masses of undifferentiated uniforms but rather as individuals who would learn that “according to our great American traditions, man is a creature of God and that, therefore, he is both responsible and accountable to the Creator for what he does with his talents and life.”<sup>141</sup> For example, *Chaplain’s Hour* 24, “What is Right?” offered a “discussion of right and wrong, together with the sources of moral knowledge and the means of growing in the right.” It suggested facilitating conversations that expanded from personal considerations such as the role of motives in doing right and wrong to political theory debates about whether “our rights [are] based on right” and finally to international matters such as whether the United Nations should act as the world’s conscience and “how the evil of secret treaties between nations could be corrected by publicity.” Each edition included a sample lecture that conveyed a clear message through examples from civilian and military life, a list of discussion questions, and sources for additional reading. Chaplains could use the

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<sup>140</sup> In many ways, the lectures resembled nineteenth-century moral advice literature, often dispensed by missionaries, updated for a new Communist enemy. See, for example, Barbara Reeves-Ellington, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Connie A. Shemo, eds., *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812-1960* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire In the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

<sup>141</sup> *Chaplains’ Character Guidance Manual for Training Divisions and Training Centers*, p. 1, RG 220, Box 10, Folder 8, HST.



provided material as given or elaborate as they saw fit.<sup>142</sup>

The state evinced no concern about the Character Guidance program's conflation of religion and morality or particular religious assumptions within the program. In fact, the manual distributed to chaplains about Character Guidance stated that these "lectures are not sermons" and "they are not concerned with religion in the technical sense of that word, but only with morality." Chaplains were to teach Character Guidance, not preach. Character Guidance's provenance, the guide asserted, was merely natural theology—defined as matters of "outward decency" that completely avoided "the problems of denominational motivation." The logic made a certain military sense: by focusing attention on action, rather than supernatural causes or processes, it steered clear of sectarianism. The example proffered bespoke a different story, however. "The statement that men ought to worship God is a way of expressing the significance of the Ten Commandments," the instructions announced. "The duty of worship is a requirement made by the Moral Law as such. To explain how and why God ought to be worshipped may border on denominational instruction."<sup>143</sup> References to the Ten Commandments, however, contained no such specificity and merely fell under a commonly claimed Judeo-Christian "American inheritance"—a constructed tradition intentionally unrecognized as such.<sup>144</sup>

This view of the United States as a religious nation—a generically monotheistic one, at the very least—cemented the dichotomy between the United States and the Soviet Union, the free and the fettered, the capitalist and the Communist, the God-fearing and the God-free. As the *Chaplains'*

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<sup>142</sup> E.g. "Lectures—The Chaplain's Hour," 1-52, RG 247 (1949-50), Box 481, Folder 330.11 (Character Guidance) and *Character Guidance Discussion Topics: Duty-Honor-Country*, RG 247 (1951-53), Boxes 517-18, Folder 330.11 (Character Guidance), NARA II.

<sup>143</sup> *Chaplains' Character Guidance Manual for Training Divisions and Training Centers*, p. 1, RG 220, Box 10, Folder 8, HST.

<sup>144</sup> On the construction of the "Judeo-Christian tradition," see Mark Silk, "Notes on the Judeo-Christian Tradition in America," *American Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 65-86. On the military's role in building and heralding the Judeo-Christian tradition, see Deborah Dash Moore, *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). Character Guidance presaged comparable efforts to conjoin and sacralize American history and morality such as the explicit incorporation of God into currency and the Pledge of Allegiance in the 1950s.

*Character Guidance Manual* clarified in its first lesson, the world consisted of three kinds of nations: secular, demonic, and covenant. According to this schematic, the secular nation (suggested examples: France and Uruguay) eliminates God from public life, making nontheistic patriotic loyalty its key feature; the demonic nation (e.g., Hitler's Germany and the Soviet Union) replaces God with country; and the covenant nation (e.g., Britain and the United States) publicly acknowledges and celebrates its relationship with and reliance on divine Providence.<sup>145</sup>

Membership in this covenant nation obligated military personnel to adhere to certain behavioral standards, and while the chaplaincy undoubtedly liked thrifty, industrious servicemen, it focused its efforts on producing chaste, self-controlled ones. Thus in addition to the general Character Guidance lectures on abstinence, venereal disease, and marriage and family life, the *Chaplains' Sex Morality Lecture Manual* provided an additional six outlines for conversations on proper courtship, clean minds, sexual purity, self-restraint, and appropriate marriages. Not surprisingly, the manual pitched conventional gender norms as natural: "man by virtue of being the stronger of the two sexes is woman's protector....The role of protector covers any and all circumstances, her moral as well as her bodily welfare."<sup>146</sup> In the name of mothers, sisters, sweethearts, and daughters, men needed to guard women's honor. While warning against the terrors of venereal disease, the manual generally followed the directive of Army Chief of Chaplains Luther Miller who felt it best if the talks took "a positive moral and religious approach to the subject based on elements which contribute to character development. The positive rather than the negative approach is more sound

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<sup>145</sup> *Chaplains' Character Guidance Manual for Training Divisions and Training Centers*, pp. 5-7, RG 220, Box 10, Folder 8, HST. The idea of the United States as a covenant nation extends back to John Winthrop's 1630 sermon on the Arbell, "A Model of Christian Charity" in which he pushed his followers to build a "city on a hill." However, as Frank Lambert argues in *The Founding Fathers and the Place of Religion in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), the Founding Fathers emphasized the religious liberty, rather than Christian state, framework of the Puritan Fathers and the tension between these dueling claims persists.

<sup>146</sup> *Chaplains' Sex Morality Lecture Manual* (1948), p. 12, RG 220, Box 10, Folder 8, HST.

psychologically and religiously.”<sup>147</sup> The manual did not, however, account for the mid-twentieth century’s most cutting-edge research, a stance heartily approved by the President’s Commission on Religion and Welfare in the Armed Forces. After meeting with noted sex researcher Alfred Kinsey, PCRW chair Frank Weil cryptically informed the rest of the committee that Kinsey’s “findings are to a degree not in accordance with our concept of what the young men in the armed services were.”<sup>148</sup> Their young men were, or ought to have been, chaste, not virile. Military venereal disease statistics notwithstanding, the PCRW rejected Kinsey’s findings that Americans engaged in more frequent and varied sexual practices than generally assumed and traditionally expected. This underscores the degree to which the committee’s perspective on morality—which encompassed other forms of vice ranging from prostitution and gambling to the consumption of liquor and comic books—was often more aspirational than accurate.

On the whole, chaplains reported the implementation of Character Guidance as valuable, efficient, and successful, although occasionally dissenters voiced their objection to its efficacy. From Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, Chaplain Lawrence Nelson (Baptist) detailed his chaplains giving 136 lectures to 24,377 men and 94 sex morality lectures to 9,227 men over three months,<sup>149</sup> while from the Philippines Chaplain Loren T. Jenks (Baptist) described his clergy giving 271 lectures to 59,721 American troops and Philippine Scouts. An “irregular and unscientific” survey of the personnel of the Marianas Bonins Base Command suggested that the servicemen preferred these lectures to weekly sermons, perhaps, Jenks conjectured, because of a combination of “conscientious preparation,” “material furnished,” and the need to “keep the interest of rather large audiences sometimes amounting to 700 men.” Jenks cautioned, however, that repetition was becoming a

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<sup>147</sup> Luther Miller to Chaplain School, Carlisle Barracks, September 12, 1947, RG 247 (General Correspondence 1946-48), Box 416, Folder 330.11 (Citizenship & Morality Lectures, Vol. II), NARA II.

<sup>148</sup> Verbatim Transcript of PCRW Morning Meeting, Dec 20, 1948, p. 12-13, RG 220, Box 3, Folder 2B2, HST.

<sup>149</sup> Lawrence Nelson to Chief of Chaplains, Fourth Quarter (1947) Report, January 12, 1948, RG 247 (1949-50), Box 481, Folder 330.11 (Reports on Citizenship & Morality Lectures and VD Control), NARA II.

problem, especially for personnel who transferred in and already heard the same material.<sup>150</sup>

Chaplain Stephen H. Stolz (Catholic) lodged a more direct complaint with the deputy chief of chaplains: “Talking shop, I would pass on to you how many feel about the Citizenship Lectures. Chaplains, officers, and men have told me that they are tired of them, there are too many, that once a week for each organization is too much.” Moreover, he agreed that this grouching was warranted. “There would be no difficulty if I could preach like the military man’s Fulton Sheen...but I find it difficult to deliver ‘Honesty is the Best Policy’ on Saturdays with the same zeal as ‘Make Friends of the Mammon of Iniquity’ on Sunday. Humbly [I] suggest we declare a moratorium on these weekday talks – and have them, say, once a month and be sure that every man attends.”<sup>151</sup> Suffusing military personnel with heavy-handed morality could numb as well as motivate, but the respective chaplaincies—officially, at least—neither ceased nor adjusted the frequency of lectures.

The urgency with which the chaplaincy, and by extension, the military approached Character Guidance reflected less a commitment to religiously determinative foreign policy and more a growing unease with the declining influence of religion on domestic lives. The Navy’s program of “moral indoctrination” began when recruits arrived at training stations; as part of their orientation, they attended six lecture/discussions: Sex Education, Responsibilities, Religion, Moral Principles, Marriage and Family Life, and Citizenship. The Navy expected this “systematic approach” to trigger “the conservation and the improvement of moral standards among Naval personnel.” The inductees needed this guidance because only half of them arrived with “at least [a] nominal church relationship” and half started with “no relationship whatever, nominal or otherwise.” And of the half with any religious affiliation, less than half maintained a “strong” church relationship, thus

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<sup>150</sup> Loren Jenks to Chief of Chaplains, Quarterly Review of Citizenship and Morality Lecture Program, June 20, 1948, RG 247 (1946-48), Box 417, Folder 330.11 (Citizenship & Morality Lectures, Vol. IV), NARA II.

<sup>151</sup> Stephen H. Stolz to James H. O’Neill, July 28, 1948, RG 247 (1946-48), Box 417, Folder 330.11 (Citizenship & Morality Lectures, Vol. IV), NARA II. Even the army’s internal history deemed the rhetoric of excitement surrounding the program “naïve.” See, Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace*, 43.

leaving three-quarters of the American Navy seemingly bereft of spiritual and moral guidance.<sup>152</sup> As Navy Chief of Chaplains Salisbury proclaimed in a sermon about “This Present Generation,” “religiously we are faced with the fact that about 49% of our youngsters are absolutely illiterate in religion and the consequent moral verities.”<sup>153</sup> If military leaders and publications equivocated about whether moral instruction treaded on religious territory, they nevertheless reckoned that religious dedication fortified moral integrity and national security.

But the overlap between religion and morality remained messy and slippage could pose problems even among those supporting the same end goals. Take, for example, the Armed Forces Chaplains Board’s response to the Second Army Inspector General in 1949. The inspector demanded that each of the chaplaincies designate someone responsible for thwarting Communism through religion. The AFCB responded that, on the one hand, Communism stood outside the board’s work but, on the other hand, the chaplaincies already took care of this through the *Chaplain’s Hour* and Character Guidance which emphasized the “moral and citizenship responsibilities required in a democracy.” The inspector remained unsatisfied, still seeking some sort of “program involving books and brochures on the subject.” Unimpressed by this suggestion, the AFCB countered, “Communism was just one enemy of religious life. Materialism, secularism, fascism, communism, and any other evil philosophy was attacked constantly by chaplains through sermons, Chaplain Hour Lectures, group discussions, talks in civilian communities and in personal conferences.” The group concluded that since the inspector described himself as a “poor Methodist” who “reluctantly admitted he had not attended church or chapel services for years,” he was incapable of appropriately assessing their anti-Communist work through either religion or morality and suggested he start

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<sup>152</sup> Stanton W. Salisbury, “Navy Chaplains’ Religious and Moral Program,” April 25, 1951, Chaplains’ Resource Board, Box 123, Folder 5214 (Reports to the Secretary of the Navy, 1946-58), FJC.

<sup>153</sup> Stanton W. Salisbury, “This Present Generation” (undated), emphasis original, Retired Chiefs of Chaplains: Salisbury, Box 8, Folder: Sermons, FJC.

attending church “on or off the post.”<sup>154</sup>

Yet the very democracy hailed by anti-Communists and fought for by the military could constrain the religion the armed forces sought to promote. When Air Force Chaplain Martin Poch (Missouri Synod Lutheran) responded to a PCRW query about how the Army handled non-religious soldiers, he replied that such cases were rare but “we certainly permit him to do as he pleases, and that is his constitutional right.” Committee member Edmund Walsh was not fond of this answer and suspected other forces at work. Walsh consulted with Robert Jackson at the Nuremberg Trials and likely encouraged Joseph McCarthy to pursue Communists in plain sight. He asked the chaplains: Did any “very zealous or ultra-liberal groups” try to prevent the military from eliciting religious affiliations? Air Force Chief of Chaplains Charles Carpenter reassured him that there was no problem, joking that the military context didn’t hurt.

Yet Carpenter’s quip was not as humorous as he assumed, for there was a degree of religious coercion in the military. First, mandatory Character Guidance—no matter how strenuously the chaplaincy avowed it was moral, rather than religious, instruction—required military personnel to accede to very specific—if not always denominational—ideas about ethics and institutions, relationships and behaviors. To teach men that “marriage is a divinely established institution” meant offering a particularly Christian, and primarily Protestant, understanding of matrimony.<sup>155</sup> Second, while the military touted its multi-faith chaplaincy, not everyone shared in this positive gloss. PCRW member Daniel Poling gestured to the fragility of interfaith religious cooperation during committee hearings. Churches, according to the conservative editor of the *Christian Herald*, “said you might have fraternal relationships, but...they did not believe it was possible to have a community program on

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<sup>154</sup> Inspection of Chaplain Board by Second Army Inspector General, November 30, 1949, RG 247 (1949-50), Box 482, Folder 334 (Chaplain Board, Vol. II), NARA II.

<sup>155</sup> “The Institution of Marriage” in *Chaplains’ Sex Morality Lecture Manual* (1948), p. 27, RG 220, Box 10, Folder 8, HST

the basis of inter-faith participation and inter-faith responsibility.”<sup>156</sup> In contrast to Poling’s doubts, the Air Force reported more Protestant-Catholic-Jewish cooperation than in civilian life, noting that there were “22 chaplains on duty at Lackland Air Force Base. This is broken down into a Jewish chaplain, five Catholic, a Christian Scientist, a Mormon, and the rest the normal Protestant denominations.”<sup>157</sup> The Air Force proudly touted its acceptance of minority religions—it boasted Catholics, Jews, Mormons, and Christian Scientists among their corps. But the problem that Poling hinted at and that the Air Force chaplaincy completely missed was not the existence and endorsement of pluralism but rather increasing tensions between what the Air Force saw as “the normal Protestant denominations” and the growing interest of evangelical and fundamentalist Protestants in the military chaplaincy.<sup>158</sup> The more conservative wing of evangelicals and fundamentalists, whose political prospects rose in the postwar period, rejected the pluralism and ecumenism of the military, seeing such religious initiatives as indicators of America’s spiraling decline away from its status as a model covenant nation into irresponsible secularity and demonic futures. Equivocating on the nature of the relationship between religion and morality meant that, at times, the insistence that religio-morality centered the nation yielded religious coercion, rather than religious freedom.

### **“Wearing the Cross in Korea”**

“Tomorrow we are going into combat,” Chaplain Emil Kapaun wrote to his Catholic superior, Bishop Mark Carroll on July 17, 1950. “I have everything in order, all Mass stipends, my

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<sup>156</sup> Verbatim Transcript of PCRW Morning Meeting, November 4, 1949, p. 131, RG 220, Box 5, Folder 2B11, HST.

<sup>157</sup> Verbatim Transcript of PCRW Morning Meeting, January 13, 1950, p. 82, RG 220, Box 5, Folder 2B12, HST.

<sup>158</sup> By 1970, the National Association of Evangelicals determined that the problematic (to them) ecumenism of the chaplaincy would only be fixed when “evangelicals infiltrate the top policy-making decisions.” NAE Commission on Chaplains Report, September 16, 1970, NAE Papers, SC-113, Box 171, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton.

will, etc.”<sup>159</sup> The Kansas-born priest was wise to ready his spiritual and earthly affairs. Two months after Kapaun landed on the Korean peninsula with the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, he entered Pyongyang with his unit. As the first snow fell over the hillsides and mountains north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, the chaplain settled into a daily routine, in which he presided over regular worship, met with soldiers, and wrote letters to the families of hundreds of American men killed in combat. Two weeks later, after celebrating four masses on All Saints Day, he dug a foxhole under the full moon and bivouacked in the hills around Unsan with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion. It was a cold night, with the temperature hovering around 20 degrees, and the chaplain and his men shivered in their summer cotton uniforms. Loud bursts of rifle fire and grenade blasts awoke those who had drifted to sleep. Chinese infantrymen, sent by Beijing to aid their North Korean Communist allies, had surrounded the Americans. The surprise barrage of attacks decimated the Americans; only a quarter of the battalion escaped back to the protective cover of the UN lines, and Chaplain Kapaun was not among them. Although he enabled other men to elude capture, the resourceful chaplain found himself marching northward through frozen rivers and over snow-capped mountains. He was a frostbitten POW.<sup>160</sup>

For six months, the veteran of World War II postings in Burma and India unofficially presided over the imprisoned Americans. While his Chinese captors decided that the chaplain, despite his officer’s insignia, scarcely mattered, Kapaun’s fellow prisoners-of-war viewed him as their leader, even their savior. On their overland trek, he carried wounded men, encouraged others to stay strong, and buried the dead, including Chaplain Kenneth Hyslop (Northern Baptist). When the group reached Sambokal, or The Valley—a three square-mile former farm town surrounded by mountains turned penal colony—he spent nights secretly prowling for food, relayed messages

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<sup>159</sup> Emil Kapaun to Mark Carroll, July 11, 1950, in Arthur Tonne, *The Story of Chaplain Kapaun: Patriot Priest of the Korean Conflict* (Emporia, KS: Diddle Publishers, 1954), 136. Tonne’s text reprints many of Kapaun’s letters home and forms the basis for William L. Maher’s biography, *A Shepherd in Combat Boots: Chaplain Emil Kapaun of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division* (Shippensburg, PA: Burd Street Press, 1997).

<sup>160</sup> Maher, *A Shepherd in Combat Boots*, 1-18, 104-115.



between the separately-quartered officers and enlisted men, and led illicit worship services in which the group prayed for freedom—and the deliverance of their guards from Communism. Forced to march again, Kapaun continued to tend to his flock at Camp No. 5 at Pyoktang, a former resort town naturally barricaded by rivers and mountains and politically protected by proximity to the Chinese border. He flummoxed guards, scrounged up food, and offered impromptu worship to raise the flagging spirits of the weary. When “the majority of us had turned into animals, fighting for food, irritable, selfish, miserable,” Captain Robert E. Burke recalled, “the good priest conducted himself as a human being.”<sup>161</sup> And as a human being, Kapaun was fallible, succumbing to a combination of starvation, blood clots, dysentery, and pneumonia on May 23, 1951. Buried in an unmarked mass grave, his congregation honored him with a three-and-a-half foot handcrafted cross, carved by a Jewish captive who, in the spirit of Kapaun, tricked Communist officials into allowing the men to keep it. For his efforts, the chaplain received posthumous military decorations—the Distinguished Service Cross, the Bronze Star, the Legion of Merit medal, the Prisoner of War Medal, and, 62 years later, the Medal of Honor.<sup>162</sup>

Yet Chaplain Kapaun’s work encompassed more than the courageous service to soldiers for which he has been honored. The fearless POW priest understood the Korean War as a proxy war between the United States and the Soviet Union. He was as committed to anti-Communist ideology as he was to dignifying all humans—including enemy North Korean soldiers—with proper burials. He also viewed his military service as divine service. Months before ministering to men in Korea, he led Easter services in Tokyo, where he reported to a friend, “here I am in a Mission land, a pagan land, but one which has received exceptional blessings from God and the way it looks (if Russia

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<sup>161</sup> Robert E. Burke to Arthur Tonne, February 8, 1954, in Tonne, *The Story of Chaplain Kapaun*, 188.

<sup>162</sup> Maher, *A Shepherd in Combat Boots*, 116-161; “Medal of Honor Awarded to Korean War Chaplain,” *NYT*, April 11, 2013.

does not get in here) many of the Japanese are going to receive the true faith.”<sup>163</sup> Like many chaplains, he brought a missionary’s mentality with him to war, believing conviction and action would powerfully transform political regimes and religious systems encountered abroad. And when he found fellow Catholics in Korea, Kapaun incorporated them into his flock. In Ansung, he offered a Thursday Mass for Koreans, the first service celebrated in the town’s ransacked church since the Communists had overrun the area; although conversations between the chaplain and the townspeople generally required an interpreter, “at the altar [they] had a common language.”<sup>164</sup> The following Sunday, Korean civilians and American servicemen worshipped together; for a brief moment, before the Christian soldiers marched on, religion bound together Catholics in common cause, as neither nationality nor colloquial tongue mattered for the Latin prayers. As with Jewish chaplains and soldiers in postwar Europe, war-prompted encounters blurred the lines between fellowship and rescue.<sup>165</sup>

The Korean War ended in a stalemate, with the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and the demilitarized zone (DMZ) continuing to divide the Korean peninsula in two, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (KPA) in the North and the Republic of Korea (ROK) in the South. The United States entered the civil war in the summer of 1950, after KPA forces steamrolled into Seoul and South Korea was on the verge of collapse, and led U.N. forces until the ceasefire three summers later. After forestalling the KPA at the Pusan Perimeter in peninsula’s southeastern corner by early fall, American, South Korean, and British soldiers pushed northward during fall and winter, recapturing Seoul and re-crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel as the spring sun melted that coldest of winters. For two more

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<sup>163</sup> Maher, *A Shepherd in Combat Boots*, 83, 105; Emil Kapaun to Fred Tuzicka, April 13, 1950, quoted in Maher, 80.

<sup>164</sup> Emil Kapaun to Mark Carroll, October 4, 1950, in Tonne, *The Story of Chaplain Kapaun*, 145-6.

<sup>165</sup> Unlike other twentieth-century wars, the archival source base for Korea is quite limited. The National Archives, which holds the records of the Office of the Army Chief of Chaplains, has a mere 35 boxes from the period (compared to hundreds for the previous decades).

years, war slogged on, and casualties on both sides mounted—eventually totaling more than 4 million, half military and half civilian—as the DMZ remained the staging ground for stalemate. In this sense, the Korean War represented one of the first hot episodes in the global Cold War, a contest the United States felt compelled to participate in under the banner of maintaining the free world against Soviet and Chinese Communism.<sup>166</sup>

But U.S. interests were more tangible as well since Japanese surrender in 1945 led the U.S. to occupy the island nation as well as its colonial holdings, including Korea. When the U.S. liberated Korea from its fiercest East Asian archenemy, it did so imperiously, with no input from either Koreans or other allied powers. American occupation lasted three years, during which General John Reed Hodge attempted to contain external threats and internal unrest, in part by creating a new Korean military. During this period too, future South Korean president Syngman Rhee returned from exile abroad, guerilla rebellions challenged the fledgling national police, and a combination of political and military forces violently repressed leftist uprisings—whether factory unions or local town councils. Thus while American foreign policy experts debated the value of sending ground forces into Korea in June 1950, the discussions lasted barely a week before General Douglas MacArthur led American combat forces into battle—cavalierly, it turned out—to defend American credibility and prestige.<sup>167</sup> The final military impasse hardly elevated American stature, but in helping to render the conflict an oft-forgotten war, the deadlock at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel obfuscated the nature and consequences of the Korean War. It was, as its leading historian Bruce Cumings, writes, an “appallingly dirty” war with moral atrocities committed by both sides.<sup>168</sup> It justified containment as

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<sup>166</sup> Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History* (New York: The Modern Library of Random House, 2010), xviii, 35, and *passim*.

<sup>167</sup> Cumings, *The Korean War*, 103-46, 12-15.

<sup>168</sup> Cumings, *The Korean War*, xviii. In addition to massacres and bombings, the treatment of POWs by both sides raises questions about ethical behavior during war. American POWs testified to the inhumane treatment they received in North Korean and Chinese camps soon after release, as noted by those interned with Chaplain Kapaun above. Recent scholarship has uncovered the sordid treatment of North Korean POWs by UN forces as well. See:

the key priority of American foreign policy and with it, “the enormous foreign military base structure and the domestic military-industrial complex to service it...which has come to define the sinews of American global power ever since.”<sup>169</sup> Religion lubricated these “sinews of American global power.” As American combat forces labored to a stalemate in 1953, its chaplains endeavored to build more durable links with Korean soldiers and civilians. For Protestant and Catholic clergymen, opportunities to rejuvenate Korean Christianity coexisted with the mandate to serve the varied religious needs of American servicemen. The military-spiritual complex, initially devised in the ruins of postwar Europe and Japan and developed under the looming shadow of Communism at home, sanctioned and encouraged proselytizing in Korea. The evangelization prohibited among American soldiers and marines acquired a new legitimacy in the ideological and real battlefields of the Korean peninsula.

First, however, the United States had to mobilize its ministers. When the U.S. entered the Korean War, it rapidly needed to assemble a much larger military force, including a sufficient number of chaplains to meet the needs of armed forces personnel. Army Chief of Chaplains Roy Parker (Southern Baptist) had a mere 706 chaplains serving under him in July 1950. With few inactive reserve chaplains eager to volunteer for duty in Korea, the Army resorted to involuntary recalls, despite protests from clergy comfortable in their civilian pulpits. By October 1951, the Army finally met 98.9 percent of its authorization of 1464 chaplains, but accumulating losses in Korea hobbled efforts to stay at authorized strength. By 1953, the Army chaplaincy mustered only about

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Monica Kim, “Humanity Interrogated: Empire, Nation, and the Political Subject in U.S. and UN-Controlled POW Camps during the Korean War, 1942-1960” (PhD. diss: University of Michigan, 2011).

<sup>169</sup> Cumings, *The Korean War*, 210. On the policy of containment, see John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982). On the links between religion and containment, see two slightly different takes: T. Jeremy Gunn, *The Cold War and the Forging of an American National Religion* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2009) and William Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960: The Soul of Containment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

1400 chaplains, 87 percent of the expected 1618.<sup>170</sup> The Navy faced a comparable shortage, made more difficult by the increased allotment of chaplains to Marine Divisions. In World War II, Marine divisions received 16 Navy chaplains; in Korea, the two Marine Divisions required 26 chaplains each. Yet in midsummer 1950, the Marines counted a mere 18 Naval Reserve chaplains dispersed across its units.<sup>171</sup>

Military needs also prompted new arrangements from civilian religious groups attempting to supply chaplains to the armed forces. With insufficient numbers of priests in the regular Army, Navy, or Air Force, the Military Ordinariate scurried to redress gaps in coverage. The military vicar commended Catholic chaplains for “multipl[y]ng] themselves in caring for an armed force that was, in the losing days and in the mountainous terrain, just a little above the demoralization point.” But stretching the existing Catholic chaplaincy to its limits did not offer a sustainable course of action, and Cardinal Spellman, the Military Vicar, worried about ecclesiastical disarray in the event that either an inadequate number of Catholic chaplains volunteered or American chaplains intermingled with Republic of Korea units received ambiguous or mixed orders. The Vatican took the extraordinary step of placing all Catholic chaplains serving under or alongside American troops and her allies under the authority of the American Military Ordinariate “in order to effect some unity and uniformity of jurisdiction and privileges.”<sup>172</sup> The Jewish Welfare Board faced a similar quandary: how to ensure that the American rabbinate contributed its share of chaplains to troops in Korea. The flagship seminaries of the three main Jewish movements, Yeshiva University (Orthodox), the Jewish Theological Seminary (Conservative), and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (Reform), agreed that each would meet one-third of the Jewish chaplain quota. To accomplish this,

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<sup>170</sup> Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace*, 72-3.

<sup>171</sup> Clifford Drury, Paul Sanders, and W. Ivan Hoy, *The History of the Chaplain Corps, United States Navy, Vol. VI: During the Korean War* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960), 2.

<sup>172</sup> Military Ordinariate Annual Report, November 15, 1950 (includes Segreteria di Stato, N. 6731/50, 27 September 1950), National Catholic Welfare Conference Papers, Box 67, folder 8, CUA.

the institutions decided to draft rabbis from graduating classes.<sup>173</sup> While the state could not conscript clergy, per Selective Service Regulations, civilian religious groups could set their own standards.

Meanwhile, in Korea, bibles and hymnals became a form of religious and imperial currency as the war provided new opportunities for Americans to build relationships with Korean chaplains, ministers, and civilians. Long a mission field for American Protestants and Catholics, Korea became a mission field for the military as well. The Republic of Korea acquired its chaplaincy—comprised of volunteer civilians—in 1951, as a result of two American auxiliary chaplains pushing for its creation and helping to provide supplies.<sup>174</sup> From the headquarters of the Far East Command, Chaplain Ivan L. Bennett (Southern Baptist) determined that an English-Korean hymnal would be useful for joint American-Korean services during battle. When his office ran into roadblocks acquiring funds for printing, Bennett approached General Douglas MacArthur and asked him to sign the foreword to the hymnal (as FDR had done for the World War II-era hymnals). MacArthur's signature helped release the necessary funds and hundreds of Koreans joined Americans at Sunday hilltop, mountainside, or tent services.<sup>175</sup> When Chaplain James Wilson (Methodist) succeeded Bennett as Far East Command Chaplain, he maintained this hymnal project. However, he also sought to purchase and distribute 50,000 Korean hymnals without English translations and with hard covers.<sup>176</sup> Bennett, by then the Army Chief of Chaplains, approved printing Bibles without pages of English, but wondered if it was a pressing need given that the United States government had already

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<sup>173</sup> Remarks of Colonel Aryeh Lev, December 1, 1952, I-249, Box 18, Folder 108, AJHS.

<sup>174</sup> Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace*, 78.

<sup>175</sup> Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace*, 93-4.

<sup>176</sup> The state's willingness and effort to print and circulate Korean-language religious texts mirrored the military's earlier postwar publication and distribution of Hebrew Bibles, Talmud, and *haggadot* (the text used in Passover Seders) for Jewish DPs in Europe.

shipped 175,000 Korean hymnals overseas.<sup>177</sup>

Outside of formal chaplaincy building, American Christian chaplains often collaborated with and aided Korean allies in much the same fashion American Jewish chaplains had worked with DPs in postwar Europe. One inspection report found that chaplains served as “bridges of understanding between the local citizens” and U.S. soldiers and airmen. This role was particularly important because, the report observed, “too frequently the only Koreans our service men see are the camp hangers-on who steal anything and everything, or offer their bodies for sale. Through the chaplain, the service men came to have contact with cultured, intelligent Koreans of character, ideals and achievements equal to or superior to our own, and understanding is born.”<sup>178</sup> Laced with socioeconomic, racial, and moral opprobrium, the report nonetheless advocated contact between Americans and Koreans. Navy Chaplain Ross Trower (Lutheran)—who later served as Chief of Chaplains—modeled this lauded behavior. When attached to the First Combat Service Group, where he worshipped in the first Quonset hut chapel built by Marines in Korea, he met and prayed with a Korean Methodist minister. He also co-sponsored Bible classes with a Korean Catholic priest, and taught the Bible to Korean doctors and nurses in a Korean Army hospital.<sup>179</sup>

Although worship and Bible study could transcend linguistic and national differences, it nevertheless imposed western, and specifically Christian, norms and standards on a country immersed in Eastern religions—Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and local animist practices predominated. Protestant and Catholic missionaries introduced Koreans to Christianity beginning in the eighteenth century and successfully converted large percentages of the population by the

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<sup>177</sup> Ivan L. Bennett to James T. Wilson, December 3, 1952, RG 247 (1951-53), Box 526, Folder 461 (Army and Javy Hymnal, Vol. VI), NARA II. Wilson succeeded Bennett as Far East Command Chaplains when Bennett left for DC.

<sup>178</sup> Richard Raines to Ivan Bennett, November 20, 1952, RG 247 (1951-53), Box 494, Folder 000.3 (Reports by religious Consultants, Vol. I), NARA II.

<sup>179</sup> Rear Admiral Ross Henry Trower Oral History, interview by H. Lawrence Martin (1985), 42-3, Oral History Program—Chaplain Corps, United States Navy, FJC.

twentieth century. Yet Korean Christians did not relinquish all ties to more traditional religious practices. For some chaplains, this type of syncretic religion proved challenging to comprehend. Marine Chaplain John Muller (Reformed) observed—somewhat contradictorily—that “the average Korean has no religion, but he probably conforms to many religious practices.” This mélange of religious, often Confucian and Buddhist, rituals bothered Muller, for Confucianism he asserted, “is not a religion, but a substitute for religion. Its main belief, ancestor worship, is a real obstacle to the progress of Christianity.”<sup>180</sup> Although he countenanced “friendships with the men [that] often crossed religious lines,” he could not make sense or approve of the Asian religions present in the “heathen nation” and hampered by “spiritual poverty.” Indeed, he relished transgressing Buddhist space by “preaching Christ in what was once a Buddhist temple” and delighted in reaching out to Korean Christian churches, which he found “live, thriving [and] evangelical.”<sup>181</sup> The military chaplaincy’s emphasis on pluralism reached a sharp limit in Korea, where Christianity vied with Buddhism for adherents, and many chaplains struggled to escape an American religious logic that equated monotheism with democracy.

## Conclusion

In 1952, President-Elect Dwight D. Eisenhower remarked, “our Government has no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith and I don’t care what it is.” He went on to specify that “with us of course it is the Judeo-Christian concept, but it must be a religion that all men are created equal.”<sup>182</sup> He expressed his beliefs about religion in a classic Cold War context, contrasting an American worldview in which religion was central to a Soviet perspective in which religion

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<sup>180</sup> John H. Muller, *Wearing the Cross in Korea* (Redlands, CA: 1954), 27.

<sup>181</sup> Muller, *Wearing the Cross*, 16, 62, 29-31.

<sup>182</sup> “President-Elect Says Soviet Demoted Zhukov Because of Their Friendship,” *The New York Times* (December 23, 1952).



scarcely mattered. Placed in its Cold War context, many have interpreted his comments as a reference to a “very vague” and ultimately, empty religion.<sup>183</sup> But Eisenhower’s religion was rooted and substantive. He was both a product and shaper of the military, and his utterance signaled an assimilation and celebration of the military’s emphasis on moral monotheism. As a son of the armed forces, Eisenhower *was* “a living embodiment of the nonsectarian ideal,”<sup>184</sup> and transferred that ethos into American politics. Yet challenges to the depth and reach of that ideal coincided with his years in the Oval Office as soaring rhetoric about a religious nation unleashed heady challenges to the shape and viability of the military-spiritual complex. The chaplaincy stood as both goal and target, a political battleground for American faiths pursuing and critiquing state recognition and power.

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<sup>183</sup> See, for example, William Lee Miller, *Piety on the Potomac: Notes on Politics and Morals in the Fifties* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1964), 34.

<sup>184</sup> Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex*, 96. Herzog argues that Eisenhower, like Lincoln, benefitted from not being closely associated with a particular denomination. “When he spoke of the Almighty, Americans did not wonder if he was referring to the Baptist god, the Catholic god, or the Jewish god. It seemed as though he was referring to the same god as the Declaration of Independence.” Based on the absence of God, faith, and belief in Eisenhower’s 1948 book about World War II, T. Jeremy Gunn frames Eisenhower’s profession of religion as more opportunistic, an indication of his growing interest in the presidency. Yet Eisenhower called the work *Crusade in Europe*, and the religious language of the title may reflect passive immersion in a military religious context. Gunn, *Spiritual Weapons*, 57.

## CHAPTER 5

### **“Maybe God is an American”: Governing Religion Through the Cold War Chaplaincy**

It was hot and muggy as monsoon season crested in the summer of 1954, and hundreds of thousands of Northern Vietnamese refugees descended upon the Red River Delta near Haiphong. They had loaded the things they could carry on their shoulders and walked for days, sidestepping mines and avoiding snipers to reach the space where spongy earth met saltwater. Most were peasants, few spoke French let alone English, and almost all were terrified. Ships, gray vessels larger than most had ever seen, loomed on the horizon. Anchored at sea, too big to load from land, the hulking ships could carry 6000 refugees and transport them south, first to Saigon and then to outlying villages and camps. It took an act of faith to board the watercraft—faith that unfamiliar hunks of steel could spirit people to safe haven, faith that the uniform-clad men who uttered strange words would help, faith that leaving home was the right decision, faith that the unseen south was better than the familiar hills and mountains of the north. Reaching the ship required faith too. Faith to step onto the cavernous ramps of the amphibious landing craft that delivered people to the big ships, and faith that the vehicles festooned with banners proclaiming, “This is your passage to freedom” in English and Vietnamese would fulfill that promise, even for those who could not read.

Latin, it turned out, could serve American needs effectively, if not always efficiently. Under the suffocating late August air, rice farmers became boat people, if only temporarily. And priests, like Chaplain Francis J. Fitzpatrick (Catholic) and his Vietnamese counterparts, accomplished what signs could not. The American priest, sporting Navy-issue white shorts and short-sleeves, and

Vietnamese priests, clad in long black robes, communicated with one another and with the evacuees. Through exchanges in Latin, the clergy calmed frightened passengers, convinced them to descend ladders into the troop compartments below deck, and explained shipboard procedures. Racing against an advancing Red Curtain and a 300-day limit on border crossing, Operation Exodus—known and promoted in the United States as Operation Passage to Freedom—ferried over 300,000 people and almost 70,000 tons of cargo from north to south. After a two-month battle in early spring, Ho Chi Minh's forces successfully flushed out the colonial French regime from their garrison at Dien Bien Phu in May. The ensuing Geneva Accords divided Vietnam at the seventeenth parallel, with the Viet Minh governing the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the north and Emperor Bao Dai leading the State (later Republic) of Vietnam in the south. As the French relinquished their holdings in Southeast Asia, Ho Chi Minh established a nationalist-Communist administration in the North as anticommunist Ngo Dinh Diem left an abbey in Bruges, Belgium and voyaged to Saigon to serve as the new Republic's prime minister. Meanwhile, over the ten months, from August 1954 to May 1955, American and French ships, accompanied by 18 Navy chaplains, made 500 three (or more) day trips across the Gulf of Tonkin to the South China Sea as part of the largest civilian evacuation in history.<sup>1</sup>

Passage to Freedom was a humanitarian operation, but it was also a political and military one. Almost a million northern Vietnamese migrated south in 1954-55, and about two-thirds of the emigrants were Catholic. More than a statistical anomaly in a predominantly Buddhist country, this was a political calculation that “result[ed in] a major reordering of the religious balance of

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<sup>1</sup> Withers M. Moore, *Navy Chaplains in Vietnam, 1954-1964* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Naval Personnel, 1968), 5-54, 142-152. For an extended and celebratory account of the operation, see Ronald B. Frankum, *Operation Passage to Freedom: The United States Navy in Vietnam, 1954-1955* (Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 2007). For a more critical appraisal, see T. Jeremy Gunn, *Spiritual Weapons: The Cold War and the Forging of an American National Religion* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2009), 155-175 and Seth Jacobs, *America's Miracle Man in Vietnam: Ngo Dinh Diem, Religion, Race, and U.S. Intervention in Southeast Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 127-170.

Vietnam.”<sup>2</sup> The exodus halved the Catholic population of the north and more than doubled the Catholic population of the south, providing important support to the newly appointed Catholic Prime Minister, “America’s Miracle Man,” Ngo Dinh Diem. While refugees elected to move en masse, their decision was neither automatic nor spontaneous.<sup>3</sup> The United States, through the work of the CIA, the State Department, and the military, influenced and facilitated the population transfer. The CIA’s propaganda campaign included fabricated tales of Communist brutality, false rumors of forced labor, and fictitious leaflets about nuclear bombs, while the military provided a means of escape.<sup>4</sup> Whether Navy leaders knew the extent of CIA deception is unclear, but Rear Admiral Lorenzo Sabin, the commanding officer of sea operations for Passage to Freedom, made plain the religious networks supporting this endeavor: “The native Catholic priests are a very determined lot and so far they’ve been able to get their flocks through the Vietminh lines. And they’ve got a way of encouraging other natives to join whether they are Catholics [or] not.”<sup>5</sup> Military chaplains, as conduits of information and spiritual sustenance, often represented the last link in this chain of religious encouragement, even if they “did not think of themselves as instruments of American international policy.”<sup>6</sup>

When chaplains celebrated Mass, baptized babies, distributed religious pictures (primarily Jesus and Mary—always portrayed as white figures), and issued New Testaments to the refugees on their ships, they projected an image of the United States as a Christian nation. This sovereign savior

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<sup>2</sup> Frederik Logevall, *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America’s Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 2012), 666.

<sup>3</sup> Jacobs, *America’s Miracle Man*, 131-2. By May 1955, the Catholic population of Saigon exceeded that of Paris or Rome. Gunn, *Spiritual Weapons*, 168.

<sup>4</sup> Gunn, *Spiritual Weapons*, 167-175. The US had leafleted Hiroshima and Nagasaki prior to dropping the atomic bombs which lent leaflets a degree of credibility less than a decade later.

<sup>5</sup> Rear Admiral Lorenzo Sabin to Admiral F.B. Stump (CINCPAC), Aug 24, 1954, Operational Archives, OO Files 1954, Box 8, Naval Historical Center. Accessed online: <http://www.virtual.vietnam.ttu.edu/cgi-bin/starfetch.exe?mEIw3V065nexI8ut1@OktGxHpCCOotmo4s9gtxLiSPE3lC7ezC7UXIFcJA546ZFjWYeRKoP@v2lm67OyfSVR0uhWnQFk1CoOl2sJbv9LYQ/10390745001.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Moore, *Navy Chaplains in Vietnam*, 3.

encompassed an unrestricted array of Christians—Catholics and Protestants, to be sure, and other groups, such as Mormons, Adventists, and Christian Scientists too. Whether delivering Vietnamese families to Saigon, repatriating Muslim French Foreign Legion POWs to Oran (Algeria) or returning French Army and Navy personnel to Marseilles, chaplains led and oversaw Christian worship services—and interpreted high levels of attendance as support for these religious efforts.<sup>7</sup> Of the 16 American chaplains who served in the Passage to Freedom operation, seven were Catholic and the rest represented various Protestant denominations.<sup>8</sup> For many of the passengers on U.S. Navy ships, LDS Chaplain Spencer J. Palmer’s sense that “somehow God’s flag was the American flag” might have rang true.<sup>9</sup> Safety from Communism appeared cloaked in U.S. Navy uniforms and arrived in the form of U.S. Navy ships.

As the Cold War surged in the 1950s, the United States sought to play the role of the world’s protector, the global shield against the Soviet Union. Religion served this imperial effort by spiritually insulating democracy, rhetorically framing foreign policy, and substantively undergirding military projects.<sup>10</sup> Religious consensus was, however, more imagined than real. When Chaplain Palmer mused, based on his experiences in Korea and Japan in the early 1950s, that “maybe God is an American,”<sup>11</sup> he captured a view that the United States wanted to convey to its allies and enemies alike. In a cosmic battle for democracy, religion fortified anti-Communism. But if God was an

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<sup>7</sup> Moore, *Navy Chaplains in Vietnam*, 27-29.

<sup>8</sup> Moore, *Navy Chaplains in Vietnam*, Appendix A, 138.

<sup>9</sup> Spencer J. Palmer Oral History, p. 13, MSS 3000, BYU. For Palmer, a Mormon, equalizing God’s flag and the American flag likely represented theological and political commitments.

<sup>10</sup> On religion and the Cold War, see: Andrew J. Rotter, “Christians, Muslims, and Hindus: Religion and US-South Asian Relations, 1947-1954,” *Diplomatic History* 24, no. 4 (2000): 593-613; Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York: Knopf, 2012), 411-496; Jonathan Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America’s Religious Battle Against Communism in the Early Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Jacobs, *America’s Miracle Man*; William Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960: The Soul of Containment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); David S. Fogelsohn, *The American Mission and the ‘Evil’ Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Gunn, *Spiritual Weapons*. On the global dimensions of religion in the Cold War, see Philip E. Muehlenbeck, ed., *Religion and the Cold War* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> Spencer J. Palmer Oral History, p. 13, MSS 3000, BYU.

American, it was not clear what particular religious American God represented—and many vied to be the emblematic faith. The Protestant-Catholic-Jewish moment marked and lauded by Will Herberg had, in fact, passed by 1955 when he published his book. In its stead stood a much more robust and much more fragmented American religious mosaic.

The politics of religion erupted in the military chaplaincy. Religious conflict was hardly unfamiliar or novel, but containing rampant sectarian squabbling had been a signature feat of the chaplaincy. For several decades, the armed forces had organized Americans into three major religious groups and effectively created a viable consensus over moral monotheism that, in turn, fueled the military-spiritual complex. But in the early Cold War, two distinct entities challenged this state-crafted religious regime and threatened to fracture religious accord. First, less familiar religions—primarily but not exclusively Buddhism—vied for access to and recognition by the state’s religious apparatus. Second, upstart denominations that the state bundled together as Protestant resisted this spacious category as specious, and the military proved fertile for territorial marking endeavors. As the defense establishment grew and as additional religions and more denominations sought access to the chaplaincy, the administrative work of governing religion became more challenging. While Catholics and Jews settled into the military infrastructure as insiders, Buddhists, the Eastern Orthodox, Seventh-day Adventists, Mormons, and evangelicals jockeyed for recognition, accommodation, and, in the latter case, for power and control. No matter the contours of particular fights, each faith viewed the military chaplaincy as a means of authentication as American.

The military promised to protect the rights of religious minorities at home and abroad, but did not have a predetermined plan for accomplishing this task—especially when America’s much-vaunted religious freedom taxed the boundaries of the identities, attitudes, and practices deemed acceptable within military space. The religious diversity of the armed forces chaplaincies could

herald inclusion and brook confusion, sometimes simultaneously. Engendering respect for difference and alienating those who sought singularity often pivoted on different readings of the same circumstances. Ripe for politicking, the military failed to divine or craft a means of religious integration beyond three large and fungible categories. Indeed, the very success of an agreement that God was an American fueled tactics by marginalized groups to gain recognition and respect, for they too wanted to see their God as the American one.

Buddhism posed a peculiar problem. Eisenhower and the Supreme Court alike assumed that the American system of and support for religion rested on the presence and presumption of a “Supreme Being.”<sup>12</sup> But Buddhism—like other Eastern religions—did not rely on such a figure. Integration of a non-Western religion into the American religious landscape occurred slowly and unevenly. Advocacy by American Buddhists, primarily Japanese-Americans, faltered until the United States’ concern about religious persecution of Buddhists helped fuel support for intervention in Vietnam. When foreign policy and military needs demanded understanding of Vietnamese religion and culture, key officials turned to Army and Navy chaplains for assistance. Deployed to Vietnam as a blend of ethnographers and cultural ambassadors, Chaplain Meir Engel (Jewish) and Chaplain Robert Mole (Seventh-day Adventist) enhanced and broadened American knowledge of Buddhism. Rather than turn to American Buddhists—who spent years pressing for demarcation on dog tags and recognition as a distinct American religion—the military dispatched a Jew and an Adventist to explain Buddhism to American troops deployed to Vietnam.

During the same period, courts-martial set clear limits on behavioral expectations for American believers while festering creedal rivalries manifested in bureaucratic mudslinging. In these cases, Protestantism represented the object of concern. While Mormons and evangelicals tussled

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<sup>12</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Remarks to the Daughters of the American Revolution,” April 22, 1954, in *Public Papers of the Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954*, 617; *Zorach v. Clauson*, 343 U.S. 346, p. 313.

over education standards for chaplains and the Unified Protestant Sunday School curriculum, Seventh-day Adventists who hewed to Saturday Sabbath practices endeavored to avoid judicial scrutiny and punishment. Statements about religious liberty and freedom saturated all of these conflicts, as each denomination felt itself disrespected and trampled by the state. While Jews and Catholics navigated the military's internal channels to accommodate their needs, minority Protestants challenged the very authority of the state to encourage cohesion rather than particularity. Yet employing the same rhetoric did not indicate coordinated plans or comparable assumptions about political engagement. Seventh-day Adventists and Mormons, like Buddhists, used arguments about religious freedom in pursuit of validity and legitimacy; evangelicals, in contrast, enlisted religious liberty to dispute jurisdictional boundaries set by military Protestantism.

If faith supported American anti-Communism, it was far from clear just what that religion meant or who it included. The efforts to label, litigate, legitimate, and translate religion in this period underscore how the United States claimed God as its own but struggled to transform religious particularism into pluralism. Far from avoiding matters of faith, the state played critical roles in shaping religious identities (through dog tags), regulating religious practices (such as Sabbath observance), and monitoring religious belief (through Sunday School curricula). In the Cold War chaplaincy, intra-religious and inter-denominational politics collided with the politics of religion and the state, thrusting the military into a position of governing God.

### **Categorizing Religion: Dog Tag Dilemmas in Mid-Twentieth Century America**

In 1948, the Office of the Chief of Chaplains received a petition asking for a simple change: to allow military personnel to designate themselves as Buddhists on their dog tags—the military



identification tags that listed name, social security number, blood type, and religion.<sup>13</sup> To maximize the information contained on small metal discs, mid-twentieth-century American dog tags used single letter abbreviations to indicate religion: P for Protestant, C for Catholic, and H for Jewish (or Hebrew). For military personnel who affiliated with religions such Buddhism, Eastern Orthodoxy, or Islam—all of whom were subsumed under “Protestant”—not to mention actual Protestants who viewed denomination as important, these three initials were insufficient.

Minority religious groups who had—at best—questionable ties to the ecclesiastical definition of Protestant discovered through dog tags a clear means to lobby for basic recognition. During World War II, Mormons had asked to use “LDS” in place of a “P,” but found little aid or recourse.<sup>14</sup> Several years later, approximately 100,000 petitioners, mostly civilians living in Hawaii or California, tried to alter dog tag religion yet again. They asked the military to add another religious designation on dog tags. The organizers of the petition drive, the National Young Buddhists, also enlisted the aid of local, state, and national political leaders to support their effort. Yet the military proved surprisingly intransigent in remedying a situation that required little more than using 23 other letters in the alphabet.

A number of sympathetic local political leaders added epistolary support to the clamor for postwar change. From Honolulu, the governor of Hawaii, then a U.S. territory, championed the cause, noting that a large percentage of Hawaiian soldiers were Buddhist. From Fresno, John L. E. Collier informed the Western Young Buddhist League, “the faith that is so desired by the service men should be recognized, whether it be Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Buddhist, Mohammedan or any other faith.” From L.A., even Republican Assemblyman Harold Levering, most famous for

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<sup>13</sup> On the Civil War origins of American military dog tags, see David McCormick, “Inventing Military Dog Tags,” *America’s Civil War* 25, no. 2 (May 2012): 56-59.

<sup>14</sup> Harold B. Lee to Gustave A. Iverson, June 8, 1944, quoted in Boone, “The Roles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,” 571.

instituting a required loyalty oath for all California state employees, endorsed the effort on the grounds of equity and fairness. If Protestants, Catholics, and Jews had letters of their own, he asserted, so too should Buddhists and members of other religious denominations be able to mark their faiths appropriately. “To do otherwise,” he wrote, “is contrary to the American tradition for which so many Americans have given their lives.”<sup>15</sup> Together, each letter and each signature on the petition made two inter-related claims: Buddhism was its own religion and, as such, deserved recognition from the military as a valid American religious choice.

But even with local and state legislative endorsement, the petition proved insufficiently persuasive. Resistance came from multiple quarters, some laced with racism, some focused on empirical decision-making, but all unswayed by the rhetoric of the American way. Reserve chaplain Sydney Croft vehemently opposed all efforts made by Buddhists to participate religiously in the armed forces, whether lobbying for chaplains or for a dog tag designation. From his perch as the rector of an Episcopalian church in Hawaii, he asserted “Buddhism has degenerated; if it was a religion in the past, it is no longer a religion insofar as the draft-age group is concerned.” Claiming inside information from conversations with World War II Japanese-American chaplain Hiro Higuchi (Congregationalist), Croft made plain his disdain for Buddhism while asserting, all too strenuously, that his objections had absolutely no basis in race: “I am willingly serving all races of people in my work here, and we live harmoniously together and worship together with sincerity and brotherly devotion; there has never been any question of racial discrimination.”<sup>16</sup> If, like Shakespeare’s Player Queen, he doth protest too much, pushing beyond his carefully placed warrant helps expose his motivations, which were as much religious as racial. In the Japanese-American war experience, he

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<sup>15</sup> Ingram Stainbeck to Ralph Honda, Kenji Onodera, Shiro Kashiwa, October 26, 1948; John L. E. Collier to Ryu Munekata, November 8, 1948; Harold Levering to National Young Buddhists, December 3, 1948, RG 247, Box 466, NARA II.

<sup>16</sup> Sydney Croft to Luther D. Miller, November 20, 1948; Sydney Croft to James Forrestal, September 21, 1948, RG 247 (1946-48), Box 384, 080 (Buddhist), NARA II.

saw Christian religious revival rather than persecution. Buddhism was a threat, but not because its primary adherents consisted of racial others. Instead, the postwar return to Buddhism imperiled his religion, or at least his church, which had gained adherents during the war as Hawaiian Nisei took shelter in the protective embrace of American Christianity. And while Croft stood alone in his zealous and overt denunciation of Buddhism as debased and maladapted to the American religious context, his letters joined a chorus of naysayers, unrelenting in their hostility to classifying Buddhists as Buddhists.

Unlike Croft, most lodged objections by claiming pragmatic grounds for refusal. The Red Cross Home Service Committee, for example, theoretically supported an additional classification—offering “O” for Other as an option—but claimed that they could not endorse “B” for Buddhist because B could also stand for Bahaism.<sup>17</sup> The Armed Forces Chaplains’ Board adopted this logic and took it to an extreme. The problem, they alleged, with adding a new religious designation to dog tags was a practical one—it would result in “endless confusion” as “every minute fraction of a percent claiming distinct worship, or even simply belief in God, would request their own religious symbol. The letter ‘B’ could be interpreted as Baptist; it could mean ‘Believer’ for anyone who believes in God; or, under the duress of battle, it understandably could be misread as blood type.”<sup>18</sup> Outlandish as this reasoning was—certainly J could mean Jehovah’s Witnesses or C could indicate the Christian Missionary Alliance or P could refer to Presbyterians—it held sway. Luther Miller, the Episcopalian Chief of Chaplains, explained that it was unnecessary to change protocol because religious identification on dog tags was optional, not mandatory. As a result, he argued, limiting military personnel to three religious classifications did not violate individual rights or religious freedom but simply reduced confusion. Allowing additional markers of religious affiliation, he

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<sup>17</sup> Ruth Blakey to Mike Iwatsubo, November 17, 1948, RG 247, Box 466, NARA II.

<sup>18</sup> The Chaplain Board to the Office of the Chief of Chaplains, October 22, 1948, RG 247, Box 384, Folder 080 (Buddhist), NARA II.

warned, could lead the approximately two-hundred and fifty denominations present in the United States seeking particular notations on identification tags.<sup>19</sup>

Miller was not completely wrong; other religious groups squirmed under the ill-fitting dog tag P and attempted to acquire distinct statuses for themselves. During World War II, the Eastern Orthodox campaigned for a classification distinct from either Protestant or Catholic, the uncomfortable boxes into which officials translated “Orthodox” as they saw fit, or into which their men self-selected for lack of better options. The extant categories camouflaged the Eastern Orthodox, rendering them invisible to American eyes. In the late 1940s, as the Buddhist campaign for recognition gained momentum, the Greek Orthodox again pled their case. The “indiscriminate” designations as either Protestants or Catholics made no sense, especially because “the Orthodox Faith is practically as large as the Jewish Faith which is recognized by the proper agency as a principal denomination.”<sup>20</sup> If numerical strength served as the determining factor in American religious classification, then the Red Cross’ suggested “O” ought to refer to “Orthodox,” not just “others.” Yet these efforts to drum up support for new letters seemed to go nowhere, as J. Willard Marriott, the head of the LDS Military Relations Committee, forecast in 1947. “Even though we do not consider ourselves Protestant, and could convince them of our distinctive position, it would be very difficult for the War Department to separate us from the smaller Christian denominations and put us in a separate category,” he wrote to Mormon elders. “If they did this for our Church, it would

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<sup>19</sup> Luther D. Miller to Leonard Bloom, September 28, 1948, RG 247, Box 384, Folder 080 (Buddhist), NARA II. Depending on his source of information, Miller’s concern was either accurate or exaggerated. The 1936 Census of Religious Bodies in the United States identified 256 denominations—43 more than had been noted in 1926, and the number may well have grown over the decade. At the same time, in 1945, the Secretary of War set chaplaincy quotas that encompassed 38 religious groups (with at least 100,000 adherents) and an additional 32 denominations classified as “miscellaneous” (whose numbers likely did not reach 100,000 members), for a total of 70 recognized religious entities. Given full autonomy to select a religious identification, military personnel would probably draw on a more extensive range than the military recognized for chaplains. Whether they would have selected “Baptist” or one of the 25 types of Baptists enumerated in the census is unclear. See: “Religious Bodies: 1936, Volume I, Summary and Detailed Tables,” (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1941); “Data Sheet: Quotas for Chaplains,” May 1, 1945, RG 220, Box 8, Folder 3a, HST.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Chumbris to Luther D. Miller, January 8, 1948, RG 247 (1949-50), Box 471, 080 (Greek Orthodox), NARA II.

have the same request from Christian Scientists, Southern Baptists, United Brethren and many other minority groups.”<sup>21</sup> In trying to contain, rather than splinter, American religion, the military struggled to account for the actual diversity rather than the fictive unity it so desired.

The push for an Orthodox O lagged behind the contest over the Buddhist B, but both groups succeeded in acquiring a new letter of sorts. In January 1949, Army Chief of Chaplains Luther Miller recommended a new option, an X for “those soldiers whose religious affiliations does not fit any of the three principal denominations.”<sup>22</sup> Soldiers who elected the X could also wear another piece of stamped metal indicating their particular faith. Born of obstinacy and frustration, the X represented an imperfect compromise at best. It conceded the presence of religious faiths that did not conform to the blueprint of tri-faith America while refusing to acknowledge them as independently valid and acceptable American religions.

Indeed, during the 1952 presidential campaign, American Muslims wrote to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, asking for his assistance in marking Islam on dog tags. He demurred, insisting he could do little to help, though he left open the possibility that as president, he might be able to enact change.<sup>23</sup> But when the Romanian Orthodox church asked for an Orthodox notation in 1955, President Eisenhower followed the lead of the military he then commanded: “the Administration feels...that the religious classification letters on identification tags can serve the recognized purpose only if restricted to broad designation categories.” That plenty of religious groups were not Protestant, or Catholic, or Jewish and sought more than an uninformative X was immaterial. Indeed, the president’s staff couched the request as trivial, concluding that no letter “would accord the Eastern Orthodox faith any greater recognition than it now enjoys, both in this country and

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<sup>21</sup> J. Willard Marriott to Harold B. Lee and Mark E. Petersen, April 23, 1947, quoted in Boone, “The Roles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,” 571.

<sup>22</sup> “Chief Chaplain Asks ‘X’ Designation on Army’s ‘Dog Tags,’” January 7, 1949, *Chicago Tribune*.

<sup>23</sup> Abdallah Ingram to Dwight D. Eisenhower, July 29, 1952, Papers as President of the U.S., 1953-61 (White House Central Files), General File, Box 619, Folder OF 144B-4, DDE.

throughout the world.”<sup>24</sup> Yet the endorsement of the American state was not insignificant to either the church or the state. Whether or not an Orthodox indication on a dog tag would have increased public awareness of the church is impossible to ascertain, but the state’s imprimatur would have undoubtedly breached the fiction of tri-faith America and thus potentially have interfered with the projection of unity this invention celebrated.<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, over time, petitions wore down the military. First, in 1954, the military acceded to the Jewish request to use J, a religious signifier, rather than H, a racial marker, on their dog tags.<sup>26</sup> Larger and more significant changes soon followed. In 1955, the *New York Times* reported in a small, three-paragraph story, “every soldier may now have his particular religious denomination stamped on his identification tag.” In its rendering, the change came about as a result of Greek Orthodox protest and Army Chief of Chaplains Patrick H. Ryan (Catholic) recommending “that any and all denominations be listed.”<sup>27</sup> The Assemblies of God weekly, *The Pentecostal Evangel*, offered a different interpretation when it gleefully announced, “in [the] future, the name of the Protestant denomination will be shown.”<sup>28</sup> For the Pentecostals, the value of this change had little to do with Eastern Orthodox or Buddhist efforts to acquire a dog tag initial of their own; rather, the publication celebrated the opportunity for Protestant servicemen to declare their specific denomination instead of swimming in a gigantic pool of undifferentiated Protestants. The transformation of military identification was, in this rendering, a victory for Protestants rather than

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<sup>24</sup> Assistant to the President to the Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, June 2, 1955, Papers as President of the U.S., 1953-61 (White House Central Files), General File, Box 691, Folder OF 118G, DDE.

<sup>25</sup> Three decades later, the Orthodox were still petitioning “to be considered and listed as a fourth major religious body,” at which point the Armed Forces Chaplain Board “approve[d] the recommendation for the use of the word ‘distinctive’ instead of the word ‘major’ when addressing the matter of religious bodies or faith groups. It was noted that ‘distinctive’ could be used with all faith groups.” See AFCB Minutes, June 4, 1975 in AFCB Minutes 1974-76, FJC.

<sup>26</sup> Deborah Dash Moore, “Jewish GIs and the Creation of the Judeo-Christian Tradition,” *Religion and American Culture* 8, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 52, n. 39.

<sup>27</sup> “Army ‘Dog Tags’ to List G.I.’s Choice of Religion,” *New York Times*, July 28, 1955.

<sup>28</sup> “New Ruling on ‘Dog Tags,’” *The Pentecostal Evangel*, August 28, 1955.

the non-Protestant religions formerly construed as Protestant.

By the end of the decade, in July 1959, Army Regulations 606-5 authorized spelling out religious preferences, thereby alleviating the problems caused by the initials.<sup>29</sup> The shift to spelling out Buddhist or Presbyterian, Orthodox or Mormon was hardly a drastic move. To be sure, it signaled that the military acknowledged religious diversity in its midst and allowed atheists and agnostics a chance to self-categorize as such. At the same time however, in shifting the act of categorization from the state to the soldier, it removed the validation that accompanied the official set of PCJ lettering.

### **Litigating Religion: Doctrine and Ritual Under the Cold War Court Martial**

It was a little after 6 pm on an April Saturday in 1953, and a commanding officer instructed a private to stand guard. The soldier refused, citing his religious beliefs. The Sabbath had not yet ended and he could not, therefore, perform such work. Arrested and tried at court-martial under Article 90 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), Private Gilbert Gonzales argued that his refusal to obey a direct order was legitimate and reasonable. He was a Seventh-day Adventist (SDA), a member of the millennialist church founded by Ellen White in the mid-nineteenth century, and one of their fundamental beliefs was the seventh-day (Saturday) Sabbath. An SDA chaplain testified to the authenticity of the soldier's beliefs and the integrity of his faith, noting that "when committed to military duties, we ask for the privilege of performing, on the Sabbath, only those duties essential for the preservation of human life or the alleviation of suffering."<sup>30</sup>

Whether the military could make allowances for religious actions that did not conform to military procedure was not a new question in the 1950s, yet it acquired fresh urgency and attention

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<sup>29</sup> Chief of Chaplains Frank A. Tobey Circular Letter, August 14, 1959, RG 247 (1954-62), Box 561, Folder: 312.1 (Monthly Letters, 1959), NARA II.

<sup>30</sup> Verbatim Record of Trial of US 54 074 019 by General Court Martial, May 15, 1953, p. 31, Box 12525, SDA.

against the backdrop of the Cold War. First, the rhetorical emphasis on religion as a weapon against Communism granted minority faiths a means of framing ritual needs as American practices, or at least behaviors worth protecting. At the same time, however, military needs—perceived and real—and traditions often shielded the armed forces from fully considering issues that pitted individual rights against conscripted conformity. Second, the reformation of the military justice system—the development of the UCMJ, with its incorporation of procedural norms of civilian law (such as due process) alongside the retention of delegating legal disciplinary power to commanding officers—created a supplementary venue for adjudicating religious conflict. In fact, court-martial records suggest that religion arrived in the courtroom when either enlistees or their commanding officers did not know how to use the chaplaincy as an administrative solution or sought to avoid more measured mediation through the military’s religious apparatus. Nevertheless, chaplains—who could not be impaneled on court-martial juries—often served as key witnesses who could influence outcomes or mitigate sentencing.<sup>31</sup>

In the case of Private Gonzales, for example, the chaplain’s intervention combined with testimony from several non-SDA officers about the quality of Gonzales’ character led to a non-guilty verdict. Indeed, “it [wa]s the unanimous opinion of this court that this case never should have been brought to trial.”<sup>32</sup> Yet statements about the futility of such cases was not a common conclusion to courts-martial; most SDA soldiers brought up on charges of disobeying direct orders on the Sabbath in the mid-twentieth century were convicted, though their sentences were frequently light.

By the mid-1960s, courts-martial represented a common problem faced by Adventists, in

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<sup>31</sup> The best history of courts-martial in this era is Elizabeth Hillman, *Defending America: Military Culture and the Cold War Court Martial* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

<sup>32</sup> Verbatim Record of Trial of US 54 074 019 by General Court Martial, May 15, 1953, p. 31, 34, Box 12525, SDA.



part because Adventist participation in the armed forces accelerated dramatically in the postwar years. The SDA Church had long viewed war and the military with greater suspicion because of its negative experience with the state after the denomination's founding. After coalescing in the mid-nineteenth century under the leadership of prophetess Ellen G. White, the church grew into a denomination of American Protestant Christianity and ultimately, in the twentieth century, into a global church. But in the nineteenth century, Adventists faced a tremendous amount of persecution as a strange sect of Christianity whose adherents believed in the New Testament and in Jesus as their savior, but also embraced a set of distinct doctrines that separated them from many other Protestants—notably the binding nature of the Ten Commandments, including the injunction against murder (which applied to the battlefield); the imperative to maintain the fourth commandment to “remember and keep the Sabbath Day holy”; and dietary laws that prohibited eating pork and emphasized abstention from meat. Like other 19<sup>th</sup>-century Sabbatarians, SDA observe a Friday-Saturday Sabbath and refrain from any secular work during that period. Concerns about the morality of murder, transgression of the Sabbath, and the imperative to serve God rather than the state combined to influence the church's unique stance on war: it was not pacifist, but nevertheless wary about military service.<sup>33</sup> Adventists had harbored distrust toward the government and resisted serving in war from the Civil War onward for fear of violating their Saturday Sabbath. But unlike Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists consented to entering the military in World War I. The SDA “Resolutions of Loyalty and Service,” adopted in July 1918, articulated a stance of “conscientious cooperation” which promoted showing loyalty to the nation through enlistment in

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<sup>33</sup> "Why Seventh-day Adventists Cannot Engage in War," *The Review and Herald*, March 7, 1865. On tension between SDA and the military, see Ronald Lawson, "Onward Christian Soldiers: Seventh-Day Adventists and the Issue of Military Service," *Review of Religious Research* 37, no. 3 (March 1966): 193-218. It is important to note that the SDA position on war varied by geographic context: German Adventists served as combatants in WWI. On SDA chaplains, see Robert Mole, *God Also Loves Military People: A Brief Story of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the American Military Chaplaincy, 1860-1976* (Takoma Park, MD: General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, 1977).

noncombatant roles such as the medical corps.<sup>34</sup>

World War II proved to be a “decisive” turning point in the SDA’s approach to the military and, with it, the chaplaincy.<sup>35</sup> In the 1930s, Virgil Perry Hulse became the first SDA military chaplain, albeit one endorsed by the Northern Baptists, and served under the army in Civilian Conservation Corps camps. At the same time, the church presciently launched what became known as the Medical Cadet Corps, a noncombatant training program for physicians, medical students, and others who sought to ease their entrance into the armed forces.<sup>36</sup> Although the SDA—like Mormons and Christian Scientists—joined the Federal Council’s General Commission in March 1941, it refused to endorse men as chaplains because the chaplaincy remained, in a word, unconstitutional. As Carlyle B. Haynes, the director of the SDA War Service Commission, wrote, the military chaplaincies “still involve governmental pay for religious services; still require that this pay for religious services be taken out of general tax funds; still create a class of governmental, or state clergy; still necessitate, unconstitutionally, a religious test for public office....Government chaplaincies, in my opinion, are still vestigial remains of the union of church and state.”<sup>37</sup> For Haynes, the education and ordination requirements for chaplains represented a de facto government-administered religious test. The problem did not lie with education per se—Adventists did not object to college degrees or a trained clergy—but rather in the implications of requiring graduate work and ordination. From the Adventist perspective, seminary training might have been useful and fulfilling; once the government made it mandatory, however, education lost its internal religious prerogative and became “nothing less and nothing other than a religious test as a qualification for office under the United States....Consequently this requirement does indirectly

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<sup>34</sup> Mole, *God Also Loves Military People*, 27-29.

<sup>35</sup> Mole, *God Also Loves Military People*, 43.

<sup>36</sup> Mole, *God Also Loves Military People*, 38-40.

<sup>37</sup> Carlyle B. Haynes, “Shall We Recommend Our Ministers for Military Chaplaincies?” (1941), p. 2, Box 10519, Folder: Material from Carlyle B. Haynes Files on Chaplains, SDA.

what it does not do directly, and is just as certainly a violation of the constitution as though it were done directly.”<sup>38</sup>

Adventists also understood the role of the military chaplain clearly insofar as it reduced the Adventist minister’s outlook to a generic Protestantism. Classified as a Protestant, rather than a Seventh-day Adventist, he relinquished the opportunity to preach the full range and extent of his beliefs. Haynes and other Adventists understood that their convictions were not mainstream and were often “controversial.” Understanding the Saturday Sabbath as “the seal of God” and Sunday Sabbath worship as “the mark of the beast” would, Haynes knew, “produce religious contention”—something the military desperately wanted to avoid. Similarly, the chaplain served as a “morale-builder for our government,” not as an advocate of noncombatancy, a central SDA tenet. Thus earning a commission as a military chaplain necessarily meant limits on both conscience and speech so as to avoid a reputation as a “huckster of ecclesiastical eccentricities.”<sup>39</sup> Haynes understood Adventists’ position at the periphery of acceptable American religion; unease at diluting Adventist doctrine saturated his critique of the acceptability of the chaplaincy writ large. The education requirements for chaplains merely made manifest what was otherwise somewhat latent: the chaplaincy let church and state mingle. This perilous if not pernicious mixing, from the SDA perspective, existed to the detriment of both the church and the constitution.

Although the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists strongly objected to the military chaplaincy, it was not immune to its reach. Over the course of World War II, the church began to modify its position on government chaplaincies as a result of pressure from both the military and its own membership. Starting in 1942, the Army Chief of Chaplains began requesting applications from SDA ministers; by 1943, the Army increased its request from 3 to 25 men, and

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<sup>38</sup> Haynes, “Shall We Recommend Our Ministers for Military Chaplaincies?” 4.

<sup>39</sup> Haynes, “Shall We Recommend Our Ministers for Military Chaplaincies?” 6-7.

SDA members began asking their leadership to advise them about whether they could apply. The church continued to affirm its opposition to the chaplaincy. In February 1943, it stated, “as a body holding noncombatant principles we cannot consistently endorse applying for military commissions, there is also involved the principle of separation of church and state.” Three months later, it again considered the question of the chaplaincy and elaborated its rationale for resisting state overtures to join the chaplaincy: “If it is permissible for the state to employ religion, then it is not difficult to conceive of the occasion arising when the employing state shall determine what kind of religion shall be taught, and when and where.” This antagonism toward the chaplaincy did not stop two SDA ministers from circumventing the church by acquiring endorsements from the General Commission to become army chaplains during the first two years of the U.S. involvement in the war.<sup>40</sup> In April 1944, the church began to amend its position in favor of a milder and more ambiguous stance. After further requests to reconsider its position—from the military in need of chaplains and from Adventist ministers who wanted to serve—the church’s leadership voted to retain their historical commitment to strict separationism but to rescind their earlier statement objecting to the chaplaincy writ large. As a result, the decision to apply for a commission as a military chaplain became a matter of individual conviction rather than institutional policy. The church, in other words, did not sanction military service but did not prevent the handful of preachers interested in the chaplaincy from participating in it.<sup>41</sup> Finally, in the 1950s, the General Conference resolved to “place no barrier in the way of Seventh-day Adventist ministers of maturity and high spiritual experience undertaking this

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<sup>40</sup> “General Conference Committee Actions Regarding Chaplaincies,” (n.d.), Box 10519, Folder: Material from Carlyle B. Haynes Files on Chaplains, SDA Archives; Mole, *God Also Loves Military People*, 43-60. The emphasis on individual conscience, rather than church precepts, mirrored the Selective Service’s World-War-II-era reconfiguration of conscientious objection from an accommodation for historic peace churches such as the Quakers and Mennonites to a stance determined by individual conscience (and thus encompassing a wider range of religions).

<sup>41</sup> Seventh-day Adventists did not formally endorse their ministers as chaplains until 1950, at which point the church deemed it advisable to “place no barrier” in the way of military service. Notably, by this time, the Geneva Convention certified chaplains as noncombatants. Mole, *God Also Loves Military People*, 45; “General Conference Committee Actions Regarding Chaplaincies,” (n.d.), Box 10519, Folder: Material from Carlyle B. Haynes Files on Chaplains, SDA Archives.

line of work should they feel personally called to do so.” But their fears of government intrusion and coercion still stymied their ability to advocate on behalf of SDA soldiers.<sup>42</sup>

As the church loosened its resistance to the chaplaincy and the military more generally, Adventists began entering the armed forces in greater numbers, but challenges—especially related to keeping a Saturday Sabbath—remained. During World War II, Carlyle B. Haynes monitored complaints and attempted to intercede on behalf of the SDA War Service Commission. However, as he informed Private Richard K. Krieger, accommodations were feasible, but not required: “any privilege of this kind will have to be worked out with a soldier’s immediate superior officer.”<sup>43</sup> In the 1950s, Project Whitecoat enabled Adventists to serve their country as noncombatant medical test subjects. Run out of Fort Detrick, the top-secret program brought together church and national needs by offering Adventists the opportunity to voluntarily enlist in biological warfare trials, thus fulfilling patriotic duties while avoiding combat.<sup>44</sup> Yet not every Adventist who wanted to serve as a human guinea pig could, which meant that men who enlisted expecting to join the predominantly Adventist unit under Project Whitecoat became subject to the authority of commanding officers less aware and often unsympathetic to their concerns. Despite the cooperation between the General Conference and the armed forces engendered by the creation of Project Whitecoat, members of the SDA National Service Organization recommended Adventist men wait to be drafted rather than

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<sup>42</sup> Mole, *God Also Loves Military People*, 60-62.

<sup>43</sup> Carlyle B. Haynes to Richard K. Krieger, November 27, 1945, Box 10473, Folder 3, SDA.

<sup>44</sup> Designed by the Army Surgeon General and sanctioned by Adventist church leaders, Project Whitecoat ran from 1955 to 1974 and included approximately 2300 Adventist volunteers. Although initially understood as a means through which to contribute medically, the emphasis on biological warfare led members to scrutinize the ethics of indirect military service during the Vietnam War. “Project Whitecoat, the most dramatic demonstration of the lengths the church was willing to go to display, simultaneously, humanitarianism, patriotism, and courage, became a test of the moral reasoning underlying the formula of ‘conscientious cooperation,’” writes Adventist historian Douglas Morgan in *Adventism and the American Republic: The Public Involvement of a Major Apocalyptic Movement* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2001), 157.

enlist in order to secure noncombatant status and limit Sabbath conflicts.<sup>45</sup>

Courts-martial of Adventists accelerated in the postwar years, and these trials often hinged on disjunctures between religious dicta and military procedure. Countee Johnson was stationed at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska when he and his wife encountered a member of the Anchorage Seventh-day Adventist Church who convinced them to resume attending services. The once-lapsed Adventist returned to the church in December 1955, and after two months of “faithful” participation when possible, the airman requested Saturday leave to better fulfill his religious obligations. After speaking to the base chaplains, Johnson learned that “there was no provision...to give him Sabbath off from work” because, as a smoker and drinker, he did not appear to be a genuine believer. Moreover, while he had entered the Air Force as an unaffiliated Adventist and thus accepted a combatant role, his return to the church led him to refuse bearing arms—a not insignificant part of his job as a member of the Air Police.<sup>46</sup> His pastor asserted that Johnson had conquered cigarettes and renounced liquor, pronouncing him “100% sincere.”<sup>47</sup> Despite this testimony, when charged with violations of Article 90 and 91 of the UCMJ—for refusing direct, lawful orders to serve on Saturday and bear arms—Johnson lacked any recourse. The base commander reviewed the file and determined that “extenuating and mitigating circumstances are insufficient to warrant dropping” the charges. In particular, the commander elaborated, Johnson had received the same accommodation of several hours’ leave granted to any other air policeman, all of whom were “encouraged to regularly attend church services.” From the perspective of the Air

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<sup>45</sup> J.R. Nelson, “SDA Military Enlistments Bring Problems,” *Columbia Union Visitor* 69, no. 29 (July 16, 1964). In the early 1960s, only the Army used the draft to fill its ranks. As a result, Air Force and Navy regulations prevented conscientious objectors, which included those seeking noncombatant status, from enlisting because “service in the Armed Forces connotes the bearing of arms, the act of voluntarily enlisting is inconsistent with the belief of a conscientious objector” (Air Force Manual 39-91, February 20, 1962). Navy policy added “applicants whose religious beliefs conflict with the principle that voluntary enlistees are subject to unrestricted service on a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week basis are not eligible for enlistment” (Article C-1902, *United States Navy Recruiting Manual*).

<sup>46</sup> Merle W. Smith letter “to whom it may concern,” April 3, 1956, Box 10473, Folder: Johnson Court Martial, SDA.

<sup>47</sup> Merle Smith to George W. Chambers, March 16, 1956, Box 10473, Folder: Johnson Court Martial, SDA.

Force, Johnson's desire for 24 hours of leave, rather than the few necessary to go to church, created the problem; since "personnel of all faiths must perform scheduled duty," he could not expect to receive more leave than others took to fulfill their worship obligations.<sup>48</sup>

Indeed, the exacting requirements of the Sabbath-keeping, derived from the SDA church's distinctive doctrine, informed the church's rigorous approach to observance and, in turn, negotiations with the military. In addition to maintaining a sundown Friday-sundown Saturday Sabbath, the church defined the day of rest as one in which members "honor God by attending divine services, by ministering to those in need, and by refraining from ordinary pursuits." Expressed as practice, this doctrine instructed Adventists to attend church, allowed them to provide medical care in emergency situations, and enjoined members from partaking in routine work "such as receiving of pay, drills, attendance at inspections, and other services which could be cared for beforehand or postponed."<sup>49</sup> Standing guard, a mainstay of military regimens worldwide, constituted improper Sabbath work, and refusal to discharge that duty often served as the precipitating event in courts-martial. Similarly, indirect aid to medical staff, such as noncombatant roles in transportation or vehicle maintenance, was impermissible.<sup>50</sup> While the military understood its more limited adjustments for SDA personnel, such as permission to attend church services on Saturday mornings, as adequate, these bounded accommodations did not fully meet SDA needs. Unlike most other Protestant denominations, Seventh-day Adventists defined the Sabbath according to biblical precepts more familiar to Jews than Christians, in both temporal and regulatory terms.

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<sup>48</sup> Commander, 5039<sup>th</sup> Air Base Wing to Commander AAC, Box 10473, Folder: Johnson Court Martial, SDA.

<sup>49</sup> "Belief and Practice of Seventh-Day Adventists Regarding Sabbath Keeping in the Armed Forces," War Service Commission of Seventh-day Adventist General Conference, May 1, 1955, Box 12522, Folder: General Letters—Chaplains, SDA.

<sup>50</sup> Summarized Record of Trial, Special Court Martial of Brian M. Bennett, Virgil E. Jones, and George C. Myers, October 11, 1955, Box 10474, Folder: Bennett/Jones/Myers Court Martial, SDA. On Friday night, the three men—who were part of the Medical Detachment of the 723<sup>rd</sup> Tank Battalion—refused to transport medics to the field; they were convicted and sentenced to reduction to the lowest grade of enlisted men and a reduction in pay.

Despite the overlap between American Jews and American Adventists on Sabbath practices, American Jewry had, for the most part, already resolved its Sabbath challenges with the military, and its solutions provided little aid to Adventists. Marked by diversity rather than conformity, American Judaism encompassed a range of behaviors, and fewer American Jews meticulously adhered to all Sabbath regulations. More importantly, however, longstanding Jewish law set *pikuach nefesh* (saving a life) as a higher standard than ritual observance, even mandating violations of the Sabbath in order to do so.<sup>51</sup> By interpreting this standard broadly, rather than narrowly as the Seventh-day Adventists had, the Jewish Welfare Board's responsa committee—the entity responsible for settling matters of Jewish law for Americans in the armed forces—determined that military needs, ranging from standing guard to moving men, could fall within this exemption. In fact, the committee, which required collaboration and agreement among Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform rabbis, concluded that rabbis ought to volunteer for the chaplaincy despite the possibility of desecrating the Sabbath because “not to serve in the Army involves more than the failure to observe a mitzvah [commandment] but actually a sin of the profanation of the Name [that is, God] because of the effect such an evasion would have on the Jewish community.”<sup>52</sup> Communal allegiance and an insecure minority status compelled military service, even at the risk of violating religious law.

Therefore in contrast to Adventists who struggled to reach a consensus that their ministers could even serve as chaplains during war, Jewish leaders viewed the chaplaincy as both a necessary and an important duty. As a minority non-Christian religion within the United States, American Jews viewed the chaplaincy as an antidote to religious insecurity. While Adventists considered their non-

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<sup>51</sup> As enunciated in the Babylonian Talmud (Yoma 84b), one may fight fires, break walls, and swim (all prohibited on the Sabbath) to save a life. The rabbis derived this principle from Leviticus 18:5, which instructs the Israelites to “live by” God’s laws, and the Talmud underscored that living meant saving lives rather than letting others die. While the exact latitude of this provision has been debated, it offered a clear and viable precedent for flexibility in the military, even among the most observant Jews.

<sup>52</sup> Responsa on “Volunteering for the Military Chaplaincy,” December 13, 1950, I-249, Box 7, Folder 17, AJHS. See also form letter used to excuse Shomer Shabbat men from duty, Meir Engel, Feb 15, 1960, I-249, Box 20, Folder 120, AJHS.



Sunday Sabbath as an obstacle to military administration as well as their own participation in the armed forces, Jews assumed their soldiers would be accommodated but, as necessary, used interpretations of religious law to authorize Sabbath violations. In this sense, Jews behaved as American religious insiders, presuming and receiving aid for their more limited needs much more easily than Adventists who, although Protestant, acted as religious outsiders in need of specific religious accommodations.

By emphasizing communal standing over individual needs and the flexibility of religious law over stringency, Jews acquired access to state power that enabled influence over religious matters that might have impeded Jewish military service. Adventists resisted this pragmatic approach, in part because of doctrinal strictness and in part because of lingering misgivings about state authority over religion. From the White House, Truman had charged several American Jewish civilians with leadership roles within the military. In addition to Frank Weil, who had overseen the Committee on Religion and Welfare in the Armed Forces, Anna M. Rosenberg was nominated as Undersecretary of Defense in 1950. Rosenberg's path to the Pentagon proved challenging, as the specter of subversion hung over the nominee for the nation's first female—not to mention, Jewish—appointee to the Department of Defense.

It was not easy being saddled with the last name "Rosenberg" in the early 1950s, especially when your husband's name was Julius. To her detractors, Rosenberg's years of experience in state and federal government were irrelevant. The fact that former Army Chief of Staff and then-current Secretary of Defense George Marshall recommended her was immaterial. At its most extreme, Gerald L.K. Smith, the director of the antisemitic Christian National Crusade, congratulated his fellow rumormongers "on the terrific job you are doing in helping keep the Zionist Jew Anna M.

Rosenberg from becoming the dictator of the Pentagon.”<sup>53</sup> Their “terrific job” was short-lived, but lasted long enough to force an investigation of her past. In three unsettling weeks, Hoover’s FBI determined that while there was an Anna Rosenberg who had been on the rolls of a John Reed club in the 1930s, it was not this Anna Rosenberg. Congress confirmed Rosenberg’s appointment on December 21, at which point she assumed her role as Undersecretary of Defense, a position she occupied for three critical years in the early Cold War.

The public outcry surrounding Rosenberg’s appointment fits easily into American narratives about Cold War hysteria and Jewish narratives about anti-Semitism and power.<sup>54</sup> But it also obscures the more significant work Rosenberg accomplished in her tenure at the Department of Defense. She was not the “dictator of the Pentagon” as her attackers feared, but she insisted—likely to their chagrin—on implementing Truman’s directive to desegregate the Armed Forces and supporting legislative efforts to secure the rights of minorities within the military. Military chaplains and civilian religious leaders comprised some of her strongest and most vocal supporters. Long after he retired, Charles Carpenter, the first Air Force Chief of Chaplains, commented that aside from the Armed Forces Chaplains Board, Anna Rosenberg was the “greatest influence in the development of the chaplains’ program in all the forces” and she “has been most helpful in strengthening the spiritual standards in the service.” To Bishop William Martin, the Methodist head of the National Council of Churches, Carpenter elaborated, “Her emphasis, during her visits to all the areas in which military personnel are serving, has always been upon the necessity of maintaining spiritual and moral

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<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Alfred Friendly, “Anna M. Rosenberg: Motives of Some Investigators Unclear,” *The Washington Post*, January 18, 1951. Joseph and Stewart Alsop decried Smith as a “professional anti-Semite and tinpot amateur fascist” in their commentary on the situation, “Lesson in the Rosenberg Charges,” *Washington Post*, Dec 17, 1950.

<sup>54</sup> On Cold War culture, see: Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985); Christian G. Appy, ed., *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism, 1945-1966* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000). On antisemitism in America, see Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

standards as a part of the basic American way of life.”<sup>55</sup> The “American way of life” (a phrase Will Herberg would expound upon 2 years later) assumed a steady Judeo-Christian or harmonious Protestant-Catholic-Jewish foundation. Rosenberg represented a particularly effective intermediary in a religiously diverse society precisely because, as a Jew and a woman, she navigated the intra-Christian divisiveness that threatened fragile interfaith unity. In this way, Rosenberg’s religious particularity hailed the state’s embrace of pluralism.

American Jews ensconced in the military followed the model set by Undersecretary of Defense Rosenberg of resolving tension by working for resolutions within the extant system. When, in 1955, a Jewish soldier found himself in the same position as Private Gonzales—on the brink of court-martial for refusing to perform duties (unloading a truck) on the Sabbath—Private John Freeman avoided a trial altogether. Much to his chagrin, an established network of Jewish civilians and chaplains assisted him. He was disappointed, for he saw his predicament as “the perfect case, perhaps involving a revision of Army Regulation [and] in any case raising an almighty stink.”<sup>56</sup> Ultimately, a Jewish chaplain stationed in the area met with the staff Judge Advocate and successfully convinced him to drop charges and transfer Private Freeman to a different unit where his religious needs would pose fewer problems.<sup>57</sup>

The military had sufficiently integrated American Jews into its command structure such that Jewish leaders assumed they could negotiate a solution—a modification of practice along with a

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<sup>55</sup> Charles Carpenter, Transcript of Interview by Captain Tocado, July 31, 1971, p. 35-6, Columbia University Oral History Collection; Charles Carpenter to William Martin, January 1953, RG 24, Annual Activity & Trip Reports, Box 1, Folder: AFC Board/Correspondence 1953, NARA II.

<sup>56</sup> John Freeman to Harry, December 14, 1955, I-249, Box 21, Folder 136, AJHS.

<sup>57</sup> Jack Ostrovsky to Rabbi B. Borchardt, Dec 22, 1955, I-249, Box 21, Folder 136, AJHS. Private Freeman also contacted Rabbi Boruch Borchardt, the head of the Orthodox Agudat Israel’s Youth Division. Borchardt in turn wrote to George W. Chambers, the head of the Seventh-day Adventist War Service Commission to solicit his advice. When Chambers responded to the Agudat Israel, he expressed his own frustration with the challenges SDA men encountered in observing their Sabbath. He was resigned to less than desirable outcomes, remarking “If, because of their religious convictions, [Adventists] find themselves unable to comply with the desires of their officers they have to inform their officers of that fact. Sometimes such a situation results in a court-martial.” G.W. Chambers to Rabbi B. Borchardt, Dec 21, 1955, I-249, Box 21, Folder 136, AJHS.

mediated resolution—without a trial. Aryeh Lev, one of the key brokers who came to Freeman’s aid, insisted that the military accomplished what no civilian institution or organization had the power to do. “The official recognition by the military of the three major faiths as equals, and the promulgation of regulations reflecting that recognition, seep down from the highest echelons of command to the bottom of the military pyramid,” he wrote. “Today, as never before, Jews are accepted in America on an equal religious status with Protestants and Catholics.”<sup>58</sup> Lev placed his faith in the institutional infrastructure of the military, seeing state administrative efforts as critical agents in Jewish integration into American society. He also assumed, like many in the military with whom he was close, that Protestants represented an undifferentiated mass. Adventists did not, however, think or behave like either the mainline or liturgical Protestants who had long comprised mainstays of the chaplaincy or like upstart, evangelical Protestants pushing for entry.

Thus in contrast to Jews, Seventh-day Adventists viewed the court-martial as a necessary cost of religious conviction and a litmus test for constitutional guarantees of church-state separation. The penalties arising out of convictions at court-martial were real, if typically mild. In Countee Johnson’s case, the prosecution’s closing argument declared that religion could not excuse disobeying orders. “Gentlemen of the court, we are not all Seventh-day Adventists. We are not all even Christians. We have Mohammedans; we have Jews; and we have lots of Christian sects,” he declared. “Congress of the United States has a right to pass certain laws governing military personnel of the United States....there has been no violation of religious scruples.”<sup>59</sup> Despite his efforts, Johnson’s defense attorney could not counteract this claim. But he did push for mitigation in sentencing, noting that Johnson acted out of genuine religious belief rather than “evil purpose.” In this he was relatively successful, and Johnson bore a relatively light cost: confined to base (but not

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<sup>58</sup> CJC Director’s Report, November 2, 1960, I-249, Box 4, Folder: CJC Minutes, 1959-71, AJHS.

<sup>59</sup> Verbatim Record of Trial, Special Court Martial of Countee Johnson (AF 15 297 907), April 17, 1956, p. 69, Box 10473, Folder: Johnson Court Martial, SDA.

the brig) for 45 days and forfeiture of 55 dollars from one-month's pay.<sup>60</sup> In California, in 1951, Marine Private Ralph Thomas Clark was court-martialed after refusing to draw his rifle. Found guilty of disobeying a lawful order and conduct prejudicial of good order and discipline, he received clemency due to the "firm and sincere belief of the accused in the faith of the Seventh-day Adventist, as demonstrated by his demeanor before the court, and the clear cut absence of evil motive."<sup>61</sup> In Hawaii in 1964, Stephen Juhrs was docked 40 dollars per month for six months after a comparable conviction for disobeying a direct order to report to work on the Sabbath. There too, an impregnable gap between SDA apprehension of the problem and the military's understanding existed. In the late 1950s, the Navy reasserted its stance on SDA needs, arguing "the necessity for the continued readiness of the units and stations of the Navy does not permit...any further administrative procedure that will fully assure Seventh-day Adventists complete freedom for the observance of their Sabbath."<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, after the Juhrs' conviction, a representative of the SDA National Service Organization maintained, "it's difficult for me to believe that the Navy would call working on a tug within the harbor during peacetime essential duties to the extent that they would court-martial a conscientious young man who is trying to be a good citizen of his country."<sup>63</sup>

In the case of Adventists, reconciliation between church doctrine and military procedure appeared unlikely, if not impossible. When court-martialed for disobeying direct orders, the staff

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<sup>60</sup> Verbatim Record of Trial, Special Court Martial of Countee Johnson, 77. Although his defense counsel attempted to insert the Gonzales court-martial dismissal into evidence, the prosecution successfully argued it had not yet been authenticated and therefore had no place.

<sup>61</sup> Trial by General Court Martial of Ralph Thomas Clark, March 22-23, 1951, p. 30, Box 10471, Folder: Clark Court Martial, SDA. In his opening argument, the Judge Advocate made clear that Clark voluntarily enlisted in the Marine Corps and "religious convictions are not sufficient to constitute a legal defense to the charge of disobedience of a lawful order of a superior officer." During closing arguments, Clark's counsel asserted that the Selective Service Act of 1940 combined with the 1949 Presidential Order on noncombatant service made provisions for conscientious objectors, including the ability of service personnel to change their stance and seek noncombatant status while serving the nation. As in other cases, this did not sway the members toward a non-guilty verdict but did seem to alter the punishment set.

<sup>62</sup> Richard Johnson to George Chambers, Jan 7, 1958, Box 12522, Folder: Simonetti Letters, SDA.

<sup>63</sup> Lavern Peterson to Secretary of the Navy, July 17, 1964, emphasis original, Box 10473, Folder: Hawaii—Special—Juhrs' Case and Others, SDA.

judge advocates generally tried to impanel a non-prejudicial jury, assiduously checking whether the members were knowledgeable about or harbored distrust toward the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Yet when Countee C. Johnson stood trial in Anchorage and when Donald Hayes and Paul Williams faced court-martial in New Mexico, the Air Force JAG did not deem it necessary, providential, or important to query the members about another form of prejudice: race. In these cases, the Adventists were black men who had returned to the church or converted while in the Air Force.<sup>64</sup> In the 1950s, African Americans comprised about 6 percent of the SDA's North American Division.<sup>65</sup> Yet Seventh-day Adventism was growing globally, and it counted high rates of black membership outside the United States. While the records of these courts-martial do not indicate that race played a role in either the arrest or conviction of black Adventists and the church advocated vociferously on its members' behalf without regard to race, in other Cold War contexts, race mattered significantly.<sup>66</sup>

The experience of African-American Adventists who faced courts-martial for their ritual practices suggests that religion, even that of outsiders, could offer a certain protective veil to men in the military. If white Adventists probed the willingness of the state to accommodate their faith, black Adventists tested both the military and their faith. Less than a decade after the desegregation of the armed forces and years before racial equality became a military objective, Countee Johnson, Donald Hayes, and Paul Williams felt sufficiently comfortable to assert their religious beliefs and disobey direct orders to adhere to the tenets of Seventh-day Adventism. Whether religion

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<sup>64</sup> Verbatim Record of Trial, Special Court Martial of Countee Johnson p. 6; F.H. Hewitt to George Chambers, March 18, 1957 and March 29, 1957, Box 10474, Folder: Court-Martial – Air Force – Williams and Hayes, SDA. Neither the Johnson trial record nor the correspondence about the court-martial indicate Johnson's race; however, an obituary published in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, February 14, 2012 demonstrates that he was African American. Williams and Hayes were convicted and fined, like other Adventists in the service.

<sup>65</sup> Henry E. Felder, "Black Seventh-Day Adventists and Church Economics," in *Perspectives: Black Seventh-day Adventists Face the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Calvin B. Rock (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996), 63.

<sup>66</sup> See Hillman, *Defending America*, 92-108.

empowered their actions as racial minorities or their status as religious minorities distracted from their race in court, their Church and, for at least a brief moment in the trial, the military saw them first and foremost as Adventists.

The chaplaincy handled most religious issues internally, often by negotiating informal agreements before conflicts erupted, but commanding officers always retained the disciplinary power of the court-martial. Seventh-day Adventists comprised the majority of courts-martial over religious issues; charges always stemmed from disobeying direct orders, even if the root cause lay in religious belief. Ritual practices that contravened military policy were not limited to Adventists, however; in 1960, a Muslim soldier, Mustafa Yusuf, faced a summary court-martial for “willful disobedience of an order to remove his beard.”<sup>67</sup> After the conviction and sentencing (fines, a reduction in pay, and a required shave), the Chief of the Military Justice System queried the Office of the Chief of Chaplains, wondering whether any relevant policies applied to conscripts or other soldiers in this situation.<sup>68</sup>

The post-court-martial inquiry launched a conversation about the appropriate course of action in Private Yusuf’s case, an exchange that roamed far beyond the particularities of the case and asserted the importance of protecting religious minorities. First, the chaplaincy asked whether the order charging Yusuf to shave his beard was even “valid,” given his religious stance. Noting recent policy that allowed draftees to maintain long hair if based on religious rationales (e.g., Sikhs), the Office of the Army Chief of Chaplains suggested that the same ought to hold for beards. Similarly, the memo offered Army Regulations handling religiously-rooted conscientious objection as an analogous standard that required officers to investigate the underlying cause of atypical behavior

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<sup>67</sup> Peter C. Manson, Memo for the Record, January 26, 1960, RG 247 (1954-62), Box 544, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministrations in the Army, 1960), NARA II.

<sup>68</sup> Peter C. Manson, Memo for the Record, January 26, 1960. One possible outcome, the memo suggested, was an administrative discharge that would enable the soldier to return to civilian life without a blemish on his record.

before issuing an order. “A commissioned officer is not expected to blindly follow the letter of regulations as a limitation to judgment. He is expected to use existing regulations as a guide to determine action in similar, though not identical, cases.” Military hierarchy, the chaplain’s office proposed, did not excuse officers from thoughtfully considering a range of motivations, some of which might fall under protected categories of action. If religious belief did not constitute a sufficient defense for refusing a direct order, then religious ignorance ought not support inappropriate commands. Moreover, because the Army “extends itself considerably to observe the religious principles and customs of religious minorities,” the institution “should not ignore the minorities.”<sup>69</sup> The Army could not offer religious rights to majority faiths—including making provisions for Catholics to observe fast days, for Jews to access separate kosher rations, and for Protestants to avoid training on major holidays—without extending the same basic principles of accommodation to minority faiths.

Mere toleration of minorities was insufficient if unaccompanied by arrangements, specific to the needs of particular denominations or faiths, yet the push for broadly expansive religious rights derived as much from political concerns as it did from first principles. In the particular case of Mustapha Yusuf, the Chief of Chaplains Office concluded that the court-martial was “an infringement of his religious rights.”<sup>70</sup> The Army’s thorough investigation of the case—which found that Yusuf went AWOL for a period of time and was under psychiatric observation—included an exploration of the public relations implications, especially any sort of a letter-writing campaign “to Washington and abroad” that news of the court-martial might instigate. The concern was distinct:

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<sup>69</sup> Office of the Army Chief of Chaplains response to Peter C. Manson, Memo for the Record, January 29, 1960, RG 247 (1954-62), Box 544, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministrations in the Army, 1960), NARA II.

<sup>70</sup> Infringement of Religious Rights in the Case of Private Mustapha Yusuf, January 29, 1960, RG 247 (1954-62), Box 544, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministrations in the Army, 1960), NARA II. The Army Chief of Chaplains consulted with an imam, Hajj I. Sammsan, of the Universal Muslim Brotherhood of Islam in Detroit and confirmed that wearing a beard was a religious duty for observant Muslims. Furthermore, conversations with local personnel indicated that the post commander knew that Yusuf retained his beard for religious reasons.



Islam “is the religion of a large part of the world essential to the strength of the anti-Communist nations,” and letting loose a flap over a beard could damage foreign policy objectives. In addition, “if any officer of the Jewish faith was involved in the alleged infringement of the rights of a Moslem, it would provide a propaganda weapon of very great significance.”<sup>71</sup> The awareness of and concern about external domestic and international impressions, therefore, swayed the Army’s approach to deviance from military norms.<sup>72</sup>

Not all religious issues engendered significant change, however. When turban-wearing Sikhs requested a compromise in order to retain their headgear and maintain beards while in the military in 1960, the Army’s Adjutant General and Deputy Chief of Staff disagreed about the precedent and proper outcome. In 1953, the Adjutant General permitted a Sikh inductee to maintain his unshorn hair but forbid him from wearing a turban because it did not fit under a military helmet. To reconcile the problem, the Deputy Chief of Staff instructed the Office of the Chief of Chaplains to determine what, precisely, was religiously required. The chaplains first consulted with an attaché at the Embassy of India. He assured them that turbans were religiously mandated. He acknowledged, “there is nothing to prevent an individual Sikh from breaking these tenets of his religion if he so personally desires, and as a few have done; but this would not be well received by his community or religion.”<sup>73</sup> At the same time, “under the mistaken impression that Sikhs were a kind of Islamic

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<sup>71</sup> Memo of Record, Subject: Case of Private Mustapha Yusuf, January 27, 1960, RG 247 (1954-62), Box 544, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministrations in the Army, 1960), NARA II. The letter-writing campaign was not completely unfounded, as the imam had written to Private Yusuf’s Commanding General. “If the religion of Islam is repugnant to the Army,” he wrote, “seemingly Congress would be the proper power to come forth with a repudiation....Religious intolerant [sic] is now being directed at Jews and Catholics all over the world, will our Armies symbolically join such vehement hate?” Hajj I. Sassman to Commanding General, Fifth Army HQ, January 19, 1960, RG 247 (1954-62), Box 544, Folder 000.3 (Religious Ministrations in the Army, 1960), NARA II.

<sup>72</sup> Jews also had to work out concerns over beards. When a Seminary student wanted to enlist as a chaplain with a beard, Aryeh Lev checked with the Army Chief of Chaplains who declined to alter regulations. Aryeh Lev to Ellis H. Zirkind, August 18, 1953; Abraham Simon to Aryeh Lev, February 21, 1967; and A.E. Michelson to Abraham Simon, February 21, 1967, I-249, Box 12, Folder 72, AJHS.

<sup>73</sup> Military and Naval Attache, Embassy of India, quoted in “Summary of Major Events and Problems, FY 1961” 131, RG 247 (General Correspondence, 1954-1962), Box 561, Folder 314.7 (1961), NARA II. A Sikh soldier served, with his turban on, in World War I. The issue of turbans did not gain traction until the 1960s, presumably

sect,” the Deputy Chief of Staff’s office spoke with “an Arab official” at a local Ahmadiyya Fazl Mosque, who stated that turbans were “a matter of convenience.”<sup>74</sup> To counter this claim, the Army Chief of Chaplains Office “was finally able to secure a holographic statement from a local Sikh,” whose status in the community they could not verify, but who testified that turbans were “tradition and custom.”<sup>75</sup> Uncertain about the religious regulations regarding turbans, the Deputy Chief of Staff deemed turbans “impractical.”

At the same time, long hair and beards acquired a different, and somewhat more flexible, standard of assessment. If required by religion, the acceptability or prohibition would depend on the status of the soldier: the enlistee would have to conform to the military’s clean-shaven standards but the draftee would be allowed to keep his hair and beard.<sup>76</sup> In this rendering, religious rights were fungible, and military coercion fell disproportionately on those who elected to enter the service. Implicitly, the Deputy Chief of Staff deemed abrogating the religious rights of conscripts more problematic and less fair, even though limiting the religious rights of enlistees would discourage religious minorities from joining like other Americans.<sup>77</sup> Consultation with religious authorities abroad yielded little clarity and, much like the acquisition of knowledge about Adventist practices at home, produced few regulatory changes.

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because the Sikh-American community grew and a larger number of Sikhs sought assistance in order to serve their country..

<sup>74</sup> “Summary of Major Events and Problems, FY 1961,” 131, RG 247 (General Correspondence, 1954-1962), Box 561, Folder 314.7 (1961), NARA II. The Ahmadiyya movement originated in India (in the area that became Pakistan after partition) in 1889 and arrived in the United States in 1920. Originally headquartered in Chicago, the group moved to Washington, DC in 1950 which enabled its distribution of material to government officials. Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 73-75.

<sup>75</sup> “Summary of Major Events and Problems, FY 1961,” 131, RG 247 (General Correspondence, 1954-1962), Box 561, Folder 314.7 (1961), NARA II.

<sup>76</sup> “Summary of Major Events and Problems, FY 1961,” 132, RG 247 (General Correspondence, 1954-1962), Box 561, Folder 314.7 (1961), NARA II.

<sup>77</sup> Dissuading Sikhs from enlisting seemed to be unintentional rather than malicious. Nevertheless, this created an unequal playing field, and what Amardeep Singh of the Sikh Coalition described in 2014 likely applied in 1961: “For all intents and purposes, [the recruit] can't show up at basic training without shaving his beard, cutting his hair and taking off his turban, in violation of his religion.” David Alexander, “U.S. Lawmakers Urge Pentagon to Allow Sikhs Leeway in Military Attire,” *Reuters*, March 10, 2014.

Here, then, the limits of American religion emerged, for if God was an American, it was not a God who pleased or sanctioned the rituals of all Americans. Although the diversifying nation and global migrations of religious believers required reconsideration of standard protocols and norms, formal policy initiatives proceeded unevenly.<sup>78</sup> The chaplaincy could inquire and even advocate, thereby bringing unfamiliar religions into closer proximity, but it could not morph unfamiliar and seemingly strange rituals into the familiar and easily accepted. Such changes would take time.<sup>79</sup>

### **Legitimizing Religion: Evangelicals, Mormons, and the Protestant Chaplaincy**

In 1962, the National Association of Evangelicals declared, “evangelicals have been the pioneers of advancing Christian unity because they believe that only a spiritually united church can confront an unbelieving world. We still deplore the bigotry, intolerance, and human traditions which keep Christians from experiencing the spiritual unity for which our Lord prayed.”<sup>80</sup> The military’s capacious definition of Protestant did not, however, meet their standards. Between 1950 and 1970, the number of chaplains endorsed by the NAE tripled, from 40 to 129.<sup>81</sup> This was no accident. After its initial foray into the chaplaincy during World War II, the NAE set its sights on greater access and incorporation, seeking to influence the military from the center of its religious apparatus. Rather

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<sup>78</sup> The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 and its opening of immigration to people from Asia, Latin America, and Africa would significantly alter the religious composition of the United States. On changing religious demographics, see Diana Eck, *A New Religious America: How A "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2001) and Peggy Levitt, *God Needs No Passport: Immigrants and the Changing American Religious Landscape* (New York: The New Press, 2007).

<sup>79</sup> The acceptance of beards and headgear has remained an ongoing challenge. Just recently, the Pentagon refined regulations to support minority-religious rights, allowing personnel to wear beards and turbans so long as doing so does not interfere with assigned tasks, safety, or mission. However, the waivers continues to be granted on a case-by-case basis, rather than promulgated as a standard applied to all, much to the dismay of Muslims and Sikhs. “Pentagon Clarifies Rules on Beards, Turbans for Muslim and Sikh Service Members,” *The Washington Post*, January 22, 2014. More Sikhs served in the military in the 1960s, when less strict rules applied.

<sup>80</sup> “Declaration on Ecumenical Councils and Christian Unity,” October 9, 1962, SC-113, Box 147, Folder: Ecumenicity, Wheaton.

<sup>81</sup> Table of Chaplains in Floyd Robertson to Bill Lanpher, December 8, 1981, SC-113, Box 152, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton.

than quibble with the non-Protestants labeled as such, the NAE focused its attention on the groups it deemed most threatening—Christian Scientists and Mormons—while trying to insert its particular worldview into such Protestant arenas as the Unified Sunday School Curriculum developed for use on military bases worldwide.

Evangelicals seeking access to and power within the chaplaincy emphasized both getting their ministers accepted and trying to block clergy they deemed undesirable. The NAE perceived Mormons and the LDS Church writ large the greatest threat to Protestantism, and used the education requirement to pursue their simultaneous aims of evangelical influence and restrictive Protestantism. Mormons lacked ordained, professional clergy, which made them conspicuous targets as they received accommodations from the education standards evangelicals were striving to meet. Education waivers for Mormons and Christian Scientists were an open secret, in part because the classification of these groups as Protestant riled up evangelicals and fundamentalists who began to protest disparate treatment. The NAE carefully monitored the courtesies extended to their rivals. One 1966 report, for example, stated “Reportedly, on order from higher authority, the Department of Defense has directed that 21 Mormon chaplains be accepted without the requirement of seminary training on the theory that ministers in the Mormon Church are not required to attend a theological school.” The waiver was not new, but as knowledge of it spread in the postwar decades, it began to attract unwanted attention. The same report continued, “The Navy Chief of Chaplains consistently recommends disapproval of any candidate who does not meet the full educational requirements. Notwithstanding this recommendation to the contrary, three Mormons with no formal theological training have been approved for appointment as chaplains by the Navy Department.”<sup>82</sup> Why were evangelicals so disturbed by the commissioning of Mormon chaplains “without formal theological

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<sup>82</sup> Report: Commission on Chaplains and Service to Military Personnel, September 28, 1966, SC-113, Box 152, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton.

training”)? Rifts between evangelicals and the faiths they deemed “non-Christian” and certainly “non-Protestant” grew in this period.<sup>83</sup> But the procedures enabling Mormons to serve as military clergy had only changed slightly in the two decades following World War II. Antagonism alone does not explain why education requirements became a point of contention.

When World War II ended, J. Willard Marriott, the LDS liaison to the military, convinced the new Army Chief of Chaplains, Luther Miller (Episcopalian), to eliminate the preferences for religious school teachers among Mormon candidates for the chaplaincy. Concerned that vocational preferences reduced the pool of men, he wrote, “We feel that a college degree, a two-year mission, and a record of continued activity in the organization of our Church are the requirements which will make possible the selection of our best men for the Chaplains’ Service.”<sup>84</sup> In other words, what the military considered a useful screening measure served as a poor filter as it unreasonably eliminated high-quality candidates. The military remained noncommittal about these concessions until 1950, when the Korean War bolstered the need for chaplains. By December 1950, both the Army and the Navy (but not the Air Force) had standardized the waiver of seminary training for Mormons and Christian Scientists, allowing them to substitute three years of civilian religious work (e.g., missions, teaching, etc.) for seminary study. Nevertheless, as J.P. Mannion, Assistant Director of the Navy Chaplains Division, noted, this information was “not stated in the Recruiting Service Instructions or other Recruiting Directives...for obvious reasons, we do not publish this information in any manner.”<sup>85</sup> As with African-American clergy during World War II, the military did not advertise its

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<sup>83</sup> Rhetorically, the stance that Mormons and Christian Scientists were “non-Christians” remained implicit in the Chaplains Commission papers of the mid-twentieth century; by the 1980s, however, the language became explicit. See, for example, Chaplains Commission Semi-Annual Report, October 8, 1985, SC-113, Box 84, Folder: Chaplains Commission Pre-1988, Wheaton.

<sup>84</sup> J. W. Marriott to Luther Miller, October 2, 1945, RG 247: General Correspondence 1920-75, Box 73, Folder 080 (LDS), NARA II.

<sup>85</sup> J.P. Mannion to P.B. Wintersteen, November 2, 1954, RG 24 (Annual, Activity, and Trip Reports, 1949-57), Box 9, Folder: Ninth Naval District, 1954, NARA I. In the same letter, Mannion stated “within two years Seventh Day

willingness to bend its own rules.

While the NAE had initially contested the military's insistence on college degrees and graduate training, it took a different tack starting in the 1950s. The evangelical approach to education—and thus the college and ordination requirements—evolved considerably during that same period, and fueled its campaign to narrow the definition of Protestant within the chaplaincy. By developing middling institutes into noted and accredited educational institutions, evangelicals and fundamentalists could more easily supply ministers who met the military's requirements.<sup>86</sup> As a result, by 1951, the NAE's Chaplains' Commission agreed with Navy Chief of Chaplains Staunton Salisbury's assertion, "I want chaplains that are as well-educated as any officer on the ship so that the Admiral, if in need, will feel free to visit the Chaplain for advice." That the chaplain could reach out to and advise a ranking superior was appealing and justified a more rigorous approach to educational background.

More pointedly, the group declared, "Some are of the opinion the educational standards are too high but...this Commission feels that the very best we can produce is none too good. At the present time let us take the long range view. Beginning now, students may take enough graduate theological work so that we, within four years, can adequately supply chaplains for this great mission field."<sup>87</sup> Weak educational standards no longer passed muster with the NAE because it had created its own wide-ranging network of educational institutions; evangelicals and fundamentalists could compete with mainline Protestants as educational equals—in organizational capacity and structure, if

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Adventist clergymen will be available who will meet our existing requirements fully and will not require consideration by waiver." By 1956, only Christian Scientists and Mormons needed waivers, and by 1960, only LDS men requested them.

<sup>86</sup> Floyd Robertson to Bill Lanpher, December 8, 1981, National Association of Evangelicals, SC-113, Box 152, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton. On the development of evangelical and fundamentalist educational institutions and networks, see Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). In the post-GI Bill United States, accreditation served another very important practical purpose: it meant that veterans could use their benefits to attend these schools.

<sup>87</sup> Report of the Chaplains Commission to the NAE Board, October 11-12, 1951, Box 44, Folder 7, Torrey Maynard Johnson Papers, BGCA.

not status and prestige. Numerically, the handful of NAE-endorsed chaplains in the mid-1940s had ballooned to over three dozen by 1950. Moreover, explicitly classifying the military as a mission field represented a theological and instrumental position. The NAE was, by definition and by-laws, a proselytizing organization and thus saw the military as a fertile ground for evangelizing. At the same time, this framework also transformed the education requirements from obstacle to asset, as education became a credential that confirmed the NAE's place in the American mainstream even as it enabled (contra the military's express policy) access to more Americans and the possibility of more converts.

As the NAE prepared its preachers to meet military norms, the armed forces also made slight modifications to its requirements; in 1960, all branches of the military agreed that eligibility for the chaplaincy necessitated 90 semester hours of graduate training, no matter the denomination. For most faiths, this shift was immaterial. Seminaries required at least that many hours in the classroom to become ordained and thus the military's baseline was sufficiently flexible to warrant adherence by all. In the case of Mormons, however, the change was significant. Within five years, only five LDS chaplains remained in the armed forces. With tensions in Vietnam escalating and numbers of Mormon men drafted increasing, the Church scrutinized their dwindling presence in the chaplaincy. In 1965, the General LDS Servicemen's Committee issued a "Statement of the Chaplain Problem" detailing the obstacles LDS men faced in entering the chaplaincy and offering several suggestions for resolving them. First and foremost, they proposed that the military recognize their longstanding system of education and training, informal as it may have seemed to graduates of divinity schools and seminaries, as equivalent to other modes of education. Alternatively, they advocated a series of ideas that focused on making LDS chaplains responsible for only LDS men: placing one LDS chaplain in a region to serve all branches of the military, granting LDS chaplains traveling privileges to extend their reach, or deploying LDS chaplains in areas with high concentrations of LDS men.

With this document in hand, the Church approached the Chiefs of Chaplains, senators, and even the president to request accommodations—for failure to enable LDS men to serve as chaplains “seems contrary to the American way.”<sup>88</sup>

Not everyone agreed, however. Even the General Commission on Chaplains and Armed Forces Personnel—to which the Church belonged, at least nominally—began to question the validity of the Mormon effort to bypass the education requirements. While acknowledging that education waivers “must have seemed reasonable to the LDS Church,” the General Commission’s Executive Secretary wrote that it “has created serious problems for other religious bodies. Some church representatives are so disturbed at this erosion of chaplaincy standards and seemingly unfair concession to a single group that they may make a public issue of it.”<sup>89</sup> The pre-1960 agreements between Mormons and the military mattered little once the perception of uneven and inequitable standards flourished. In a letter to President Lyndon Johnson, the General Commission’s Vice President elaborated that even Southern Baptists and Lutherans (who contributed to the group as auxiliary, rather than constituent, members) “uphold these minimal educational standards.” Likewise, Christian Scientists, who did not demand graduate training in general, sent their chaplain candidates to graduate school and “now report[] that this requirement is beneficial.” Inadequate theological training, moreover, hampered LDS chaplains during the promotion process and “disrupt[ed] the delicate balance of church and state relations.” And while training for LDS missions equipped men for that task, it did not furnish them with the resources “for effective ministry” in the military.<sup>90</sup> J. W. Marriott, the head of the LDS Military Relations Committee, deemed the General

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<sup>88</sup> LDS Servicement’s Committee, “Statement of the Chaplain Problem,” February 1965, quoted in Boone, “The Roles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,” 622-30. For an analysis of the construction of the American way, see Wendy Wall, *Inventing the “American Way”: The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>89</sup> Ray Appelquist to J. Willard Marriott, October 23, 1966, Marriott Papers, MS 164, Box 85, Folder 2, Utah.

<sup>90</sup> Edward Brubaker to the President, November 4, 1966, Marriott Papers, MS 164, Box 85, Folder 2, Utah. Despite claiming that this dispute ought to be settled quietly, it went public in the Christian media. See, “President



Commission's letter "snippy," and responded with a religious rejoinder of his own: "The best teachers and most inspirational leaders are not necessarily the ones with the most college degrees....neither He nor any of his apostles could have met the 90-hour requirement." More to the point, the LDS church only recommended men with college degrees, who, Marriott averred, were "not uneducated."<sup>91</sup> Ultimately, however, this was more than an internecine squabble about the importance of formal theological training or ordination. It was a contest over the reach of the state, and the degree to which the military could impose education standards on religious groups operating within its purview.

Against this backdrop of critique and postwar escalation of an education arms race, the Mormon Church also began to adapt its own approach to the military chaplaincy's education requirements. Despite assurances from Army Chief of Chaplains Charles Brown that he would continue to grant education waivers to Mormons, in time the Servicemen's Committee began to explore alternatives for LDS men seeking positions as chaplains. While it did not support theological training per se, it broached the possibility of a graduate program at Brigham Young University. Daniel Ludlow, the Dean of the College of Religious Instruction, appointed a committee of BYU faculty who also held commissions as reserve chaplains to study the matter. By 1969, the university began offering classes focused on religion and counseling. Two years later, the military and the Church met and agreed that coursework focused on clinical pastoral education as well as religious texts would satisfy the military's requirements. While the Church resisted any effort to create a program parallel or comparable to seminary training on the grounds that they did not have professional clergy, the military "reminded them that any of their career chaplains would be professional clergy and as such should be academically equipped to adequately function and

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Debases Chaplaincy Standards," *The Christian Century*, November 30, 1966, and "Mormon Waiver Watched," *Christianity Today*, April 28, 1967.

<sup>91</sup> J. Willard Marriott to Ray Appelquist, November 28, 1966, Marriott Papers, MS 164, Box 85, Folder 2, Utah.

compete with their peers.” Despite the LDS emphasis on lay leadership, LDS chaplains operated outside the church and inside the military, where their status as officers and role as professional military clergy commanded commensurate education. Satisfied that the Church expressed “a willing spirit to do what they can do within the[ir] doctrinal position,” the military had found a way to uphold education requirements and cease issuing waivers to chaplains.<sup>92</sup> From 1972 forward, all military chaplains entered the service as college graduates and recipients of graduate religious training of some kind.

For evangelicals in the military, education frustrations extended beyond standards for chaplains. In the postwar years—and partially on the recommendation of the Weil Committee’s report on morals and welfare in the armed forces—the military encouraged family cohesion and built more extensive family housing on domestic and overseas bases.<sup>93</sup> In the newly-created Air Force alone, almost a million children lived on or near military bases by 1954.<sup>94</sup> Similarly, between 1950 and 1960, the number of family members who moved abroad more than quintupled, to almost a half-million.<sup>95</sup> As a result, the number of children enrolled in Sunday Schools on military bases increased dramatically. By the mid-1950s, 85,000 children sat on the registers of on-base Protestant supplementary schools. As chaplains acquired additional responsibilities as teachers in and directors

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<sup>92</sup> William Goldie (Director of Personnel), Memo about J. Willard Marriott Visit, November 30, 1971, Marriott Papers, MS 164, Box 85, Folder 7, Utah. In fact, BYU eventually created a pastoral counseling master’s program, through which Mormons—and, ultimately, non-Mormons as well—could develop the skills necessary for an array of chaplaincy settings, from the military and prisons to hospitals and industry.

<sup>93</sup> Anni Baker, *Life in the U.S. Armed Forces: (Not) Just Another Job* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 73-4. As Baker points out, military housing was generally more integrated than civilian housing, as allocation were determined solely by rank. The Weil Committee had identified the paucity of good housing for African Americans as a detriment to good order and interest in the armed forces; building base housing thus supported goals to improve racial conditions in the military.

<sup>94</sup> Jorgenson, *Air Force Chaplains, Volume 2*, 230.

<sup>95</sup> Donna Alvah, *Unofficial Ambassadors: American Military Families Overseas and the Cold War, 1946-1965* (New York: NYU Press, 2007), 32-36. The state viewed the presence of spouses and children as a useful obstacle to immoral behavior (Alvah, 24-25). Likewise, the emphasis on the nuclear family within the military echoed the cultivation of white middle-class domesticity in Cold War America. See, for example, Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).

of supplementary religious education for military dependents, they sought guidance in implementing curricula. Air Force Chief of Chaplains Charles Carpenter identified the need for a standardized curriculum that would allow children to move from installation to installation without repeating or missing key principles or information.<sup>96</sup>

With the approval of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board, a military-civilian committee comprised of Army, Navy, and Air Force chaplains alongside representatives of denominational publishing houses convened to devise what became known as the Unified Protestant Sunday School Curriculum. Protestants, the military asserted, shared four basic principles: justification by faith; priesthood of all believers; sufficiency of scripture; right to private judgment.<sup>97</sup> Much like the chaplaincy itself, the Sunday School program needed to find a way to bridge Protestant differences while systematically but flexibly educating children who moved frequently. Rather than craft entirely new materials, the committee opted to mix and match existing books, lesson plans, and materials available from commercial presses. Its 1953 prospectus, the group's first, included Sunday School units on the Bible, the Church, and Jesus from ten different denominational sources. Each service branch made its own decisions about implementation, with the Army and Navy granting chaplains the choice about using the pre-packaged plans and the Air Force forcing compliance through mandatory adoption by 1960.<sup>98</sup> Over time, the military dispensed with the variety inherent in the initial curriculum in favor of a more cost-effective bidding system. In 1962, for example, the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board won the curriculum and textbook contract because "all bids

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<sup>96</sup> Jorgenson, *Air Force Chaplains*, Vol. 2, 230-240. The military also requested curriculum suitable for Catholic and Jewish Sunday School programs from the Military Ordinariate and the Jewish Welfare Board, respectively, which, on the whole, were less controversial than the Protestant effort.

<sup>97</sup> Lackland Air Force Base Group Regulation, No. 165-1, April 2, 1957, quoted in General LDS Servicemen's Committee to the First Presidency, MS 164, Box 73, Folder 3, Utah.

<sup>98</sup> Jorgenson, *Air Force Chaplains*, Vol. 2, 233-4.

fulfilled the requirements, and this one was by far the lowest in cost.”<sup>99</sup>

Yet this victory by Southern Baptists did not thrill NAE in part because the Armed Forces Chaplains Board (AFCB) still set the requirements and in part the Southern Baptist Convention continued to endorse its chaplains through the National Council of Churches. Not yet comfortable with overt mixing of religion and the state, the NAE pushed to dislodge the Unified Protestant Sunday School Curriculum. That the Southern Baptists had recently earned the rights to develop the material was irrelevant because evangelicals considered the issue not religious education per se, but Sunday School lesson plans that did not account for their doctrinal particularity. The Southern Baptists still had to craft a curriculum sufficiently generic to suit all Protestants. They were frustrated, watching as the chaplaincy became, from their perspective, “more regimented, [with] a greater emphasis...on uniformity.”<sup>100</sup> This was fundamentally a problem for evangelicals who resisted coercive religious camaraderie, especially when it revolved around a “Church-centered and morals-centered rather than Christ-centered” theology.<sup>101</sup> Their objection took an ideological turn as well. According to a letter sent to the Army Chief of Chaplains, the high school text, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, “contained statements ‘contrary to our United States concept of individual freedom and economic way of life.’”<sup>102</sup> The Cold War demanded a particular strand of anti-Communist Protestantism, a requirement the military’s own materials failed to heed. Implanted in Sunday Schools, military Protestantism excluded them because, as the group protested to the Army Chief of Chaplains, the curriculum not only “lack[ed] ‘evangelical appeal’” but in doing so, ostracized “the

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<sup>99</sup> Office of the Chief of Chaplains Staff Meeting Minutes, May 9, 1962, RG 247 (General Correspondence, 1954-62), Box 577, Folder 337 (Minutes of the Staff Meetings, 1962), NARA II.

<sup>100</sup> Report from the Commission on Chaplains and Service to Military Personnel to the National Association of Evangelicals’ Board of Administration, October 11, 1965, SC-113, Box 75, Folder C-1965, Wheaton.

<sup>101</sup> “Summary of Major Events and Problems, Fiscal Year 1961,” 78, RG 247 (General Correspondence, 1954-62), Box 561, Folder 314.7 (Summary of Major Problems), NARA II.

<sup>102</sup> “Summary of Major Events and Problems, Fiscal Year 1961,” 78-9, RG 247 (General Correspondence, 1954-62), Box 561, Folder 314.7 (Summary of Major Problems), NARA II.

‘conservative Evangelical’ aspect of the Christian faith.”<sup>103</sup> They sought pure sectarianism, not denominationalism.

In the wake of a spate of court cases deeming government-backed religion in schools—no matter how generic—unconstitutional, evangelicals thought they had an ally in the courts. Citing *Engel v. Vitale* (1962), which outlawed a New York regents-written prayer to “Almighty God,” and *Abington v. Schempp* (1963), which proscribed Bible readings in public schools, an editorial in the evangelical *Christianity Today* lambasted the Unified Sunday School Curriculum as equally suspect. “Surely it is clear,” the magazine argued, “that this is a case in which a religious curriculum is prescribed and religious materials promoted by high military authority.” While the goal of consistent curricula was laudable, the publication noted, such “desirability cannot justify violation of religious freedom.”<sup>104</sup> It suggested that religious groups serve as the providers of all religious materials with the AFCB acting only as an information clearinghouse, thereby allowing each chaplain, each Sunday school, and each family the ability to select preferred ideas and instructions. The NAE succeeded in getting Representative John B. Anderson (R-IL) to enter the editorial into the Congressional Record where he asked members of the House who concurred with his “concern at this derogation of the religious liberty guaranteed by the first amendment” to “call for the discontinuance of the mandatory prescription” of the curriculum.<sup>105</sup> If Anderson’s plea echoed beyond the walls of the chamber, it faded to silence quite quickly.

Ironically, the NAE could have had an ally in their pursuit of more differentiated Sunday Schools had the organization discussed matters with their perceived antagonists. Mormons also

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<sup>103</sup> “Summary of Major Events and Problems, Fiscal Year 1961,” 78, RG 247 (General Correspondence, 1954-62), Box 561, Folder 314.7 (Summary of Major Problems), NARA II.

<sup>104</sup> “Religious Liberty and the Armed Forces Sunday Schools,” *Christianity Today*, July 17, 1964.

<sup>105</sup> *Congressional Record*, July 27, 1964, SC-113, Box 152, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton. On July 30, 1964, Rep. Joel T. Broyhill entered the editorial into the record yet again, albeit without discussion. *Congressional Record* 110, p. 534.

sought to provide the children of LDS servicemen with the full complement of religious education available in civilian wards. Frank C. Kimball, the vice-chairman of the LDS Military Relations Committee, succinctly identified the military's curriculum and programming conundrum: "trying to bring about a suitable philosophy which is acceptable to most people and, they think, offensive to none." Lest chaplains "lose track of any denominational difference and succumb to the pressure for uniformity," he argued, the Church needed to provide ample resources to secure Mormon leadership, training, and fellowship in the armed forces.<sup>106</sup>

Assisting LDS personnel who lived far from civilian Mormon communities presented an acute problem. Edgar B. Brossard, the President of the New England Mission, asked Chaplain Albert Northrop (United Methodist) to grant Mormons use of the chapel space at Loring Air Force Base in Maine. Fifty Mormon families lived there, 180 miles away from the closest Mormon church in Bangor, and they wanted to use the base chapel for additional services and schooling. Framing the request in diminutive terms, the Mormons promised "if approval is granted to this group, it will be understood that scheduling of services will not interfere with any of the activities of the three major faiths....Supervision and manning of these services will be furnished by the membership, and no special funds or support will be required."<sup>107</sup> Northrop was amenable to their request, in that he knew LDS Sunday services already met in the Chapel Annex and he acceded to offering space for religious school once a week, "provided it is for a limited time only." He went on to explain the restriction as necessary because a more frequent or lengthy program "would imply a denominational education program. The chaplains' policy is very positive in statements prohibiting the establishment of Denominational Schools. The reason is obvious when it is realized that there are well over 200

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<sup>106</sup> Frank C. Kimball to J. Willard Marriott, March 18, 1960, MS 164, Box 73, Folder 3, Utah.

<sup>107</sup> Edgar B. Brossard to Albert Northrop, September 19, 1959, MS 164, Box 73, Folder 2, Utah.

organized and recognized groups that could claim this privilege.”<sup>108</sup> Northrop’s reservations anticipated the response Mormon inquiries to the Chiefs of Chaplains would garner. Then-Deputy Air Force Chief of Chaplains Robert Taylor “was most sympathetic, but he was unable to give us much help” because “the military services are beset with many requests from various religious denominations for the use of chapels on military posts” and, as a result, regulations capped access to chapel space.<sup>109</sup> If the military understood fine-grained religious distinctions as invidious, so too was the erasure of difference deleterious.

Compulsory “General Protestantism” so rankled the Mormon Church that by April 1960, it compiled a nine-point memo alleging religious discrimination. “Data and Documentation Relative to Denial of Religious Freedom to LDS Servicemen” highlighted a range of abuses, from limits on denominational services and prohibition of LDS Sunday schools to uniform Protestant Sunday schools and the stringent qualifications to become chaplains.<sup>110</sup> What had been a mere annoyance during previous periods of war became a major predicament as the Cold War defense establishment infused American society. The provenance of the problem, the document reiterated, lay in taxonomy. “Latter-day Saints are arbitrarily classified as general Protestants, though our doctrines, practices, and beliefs are wholly at variance with those of all Protestant churches.”<sup>111</sup> The National Association of Evangelicals surely would have agreed, but neither those who claimed Protestantism nor those who denied it made headway with the state’s sorting scheme. And rather than work together to find a more satisfactory solution to their conjoined problems, the NAE and the LDS

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<sup>108</sup> Albert Northrop to Edgar Brossard, October 2, 1959, MS 164, Box 73, Folder 2, Utah.

<sup>109</sup> Frank Kimball to Bruce McConkie, December 8, 1959, MS 164, Box 73, Folder 2, Utah. Taylor, a WWII POW who survived the Bataan Death March and 3.5 years Japanese camps, became Air Force Chief of Chaplains in 1962. See Richard Roper, *Brothers of Paul: Activities of Prisoner of War Chaplains in the Philippines During World War II* (Odenton, Md: Revere Publishing, 2003)

<sup>110</sup> “Data and Documentation Relative to Denial of Religious Freedom to LDS Servicemen,” April 1960, MS 164, Box 73, Folder 6, Utah.

<sup>111</sup> “Data and Documentation Relative to Denial of Religious Freedom to LDS Servicemen,” April 1960, MS 164, Box 73, Folder 6, Utah.

Church fought over and through the chaplaincy and military religious programming writ large. The religious pluralism enshrined in the structure and operation of the military chaplaincy over the past four decades teetered on the brink of collapse, disrupted by believers discontent—for different reasons—with the military’s brand of ecumenism. While Mormons hankered for recognition through demarcation, evangelicals coveted power through exclusivity.

Frustration over the unsatisfactory meaning of Protestantism mounted for Floyd Robertson and other members of the NAE’s Chaplains Commission. Not only did the military continue to exclude evangelical literature from Sunday Schools, but Chaplains’ Conferences also desisted from proclamations in Jesus’ name while speakers on the dais publicly ridiculed evangelicals.<sup>112</sup> Meanwhile career officers felt snubbed and devalued as partners in religious programming because the compulsory curriculum failed to attend to their beliefs. Robertson pled his case to Air Force Chief of Chaplains Edwin Chess, imploring him to recognize that while “the matter has been camouflaged with a great deal of verbiage,” an unfair and unmanageable mixing of religion and the state remained. “Any system that permits the favoring of one religious literature to the exclusion of all others (even if it is for a very good purpose) can just as easily be employed to discriminate against individuals in the same way at the operational level when those in charge choose to do so,” he pointed out.<sup>113</sup> Correcting course, the NAE contended in the 1960s, meant eliminating the preference for unified Protestantism. Only by moving away from the cooperative ecumenism built over the past half-century and by parting matters of faith from matters of governance could religious

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<sup>112</sup> Floyd Robertson to Edwin Chess, October 22, 1968, SC-113, Box 152, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton. According to Robertson, “Dr. Haggai appeared to go out of his war to offend the evangelicals who were present. It may be that some Christians fit his grotesque description of evangelical. I don’t know if this story, like so many of his others, was apocryphal or otherwise, but his point was unmistakably clear. These people whom he chose to ridicule and then identify as evangelicals would in his opinion wreck a chapel program if permitted to participate in it. . . . Dr. Haggai’s remarks bring into bold relief the controversy over the exclusion of certain types of evangelical Sunday School literature from military Sunday Schools.”

<sup>113</sup> Floyd Robertson to Edwin Chess, October 22, 1968, SC-113, Box 152, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton. Evangelicals did not acquire this permission until 2014.



liberty flourish in the armed forces.

Evangelicals were not alone in their effort to rethink the place of particularism. At the same time Robertson registered his discontent, two Navy chaplains, Reeve Brenner (Jewish) and Francis Sampson (Catholic), engaged in an epistolary spat about Sampson's invocation of Jesus at a benediction at a 1965 training conference dinner. Indeed, although the NAE's Floyd Robertson alleged "I do not think our Jewish friends expect this type of restraint" in regards to avoiding explicit references to Jesus as savior,<sup>114</sup> Chaplain Brenner, a Reform rabbi, in fact expected conformity to military policy to limit sectarian prayer to worship. After learning through the military grapevine that Sampson was upset that Brenner had confronted him, the Jewish chaplain sought to clarify and smooth over the potential conflict with a ranking officer. Sampson, who would become the Navy Chief of Chaplains in 1967, was not offended by Brenner's complaint, but felt his brash, youthful manner was "excessively aggressive, tactless, and over-inclined to take offense from a matter that was obviously not intended to give offense." Moreover, Sampson acknowledged that he tried to avoid infelicitous impressions by "omit[ting] the terminal phrase of the invocation, 'in Christ's name we ask it'" in front of Jews. Nevertheless, upon further reflection, he decided not to continue that practice, because "we are told by Christ to make all our petitions in His name. Every non-Christian certainly knows that a Christian has the right to pray publicly or privately (as the Jew or member of any other creed has the same right) according to his beliefs." Analogizing his prayer to the cross he wore on his uniform, Sampson asserted that symbols did not intentionally offend viewers or listeners and the Jewish chaplain—like any other "Jew, Mohammedan, Buddhist, or any non-Christian" ought not see his insignia or his benedictions in that problematic light.<sup>115</sup>

Unsurprisingly, Brenner disputed Sampson's representation of prayer. It was, the Jewish

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<sup>114</sup> Floyd Robertson to Edwin Chess, October 22, 1968, SC-113, Box 152, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton.

<sup>115</sup> Francis Sampson to Reeve Brenner, March 16, 1965, SC-1365, AJA.

chaplain pointed out, far more active than a passive glance at a piece of metal affixed to a uniform. Casting the senior chaplain as severe and insensitive, Brenner questioned his reasoning and maturity, given that “for the Jew the worship of Jesus is idolatry. And inasmuch as invocations are pronounced on behalf of those assembled for all to respond Amen such a prayer induces in the heart of the traditional Jew, the impression that he has sinned.”<sup>116</sup> Most importantly, Brenner urged Sampson to consider the context of the military, claiming “one violates the noble tradition of the Chaplaincy asking Jews in a group to rise with bowed heads for a prayer pronounced in Christ’s Name, or any similar sectarian or denominational phrasing.”<sup>117</sup> Just as other chaplains used more neutral terms such as “Father, Eternal, or God,” so too could Chaplain Sampson adhere to these less offensive terms or, at the very least, warn Jews that he would adopt sectarian language.

Floyd Robertson and Reeve Brenner would have agreed on one thing: those with religious power could wield it to suit their preferences. But the two men would otherwise have talked past one another. What Brenner saw as both personal offense and a violation of the tradition of military pluralism, Robertson would have viewed as a victory for religious specificity and the legitimacy of making space for overt Christianity. Sampson likewise viewed state recognition of Catholics as permission to offer its religious teachings in public prayers in public spaces. Although Chaplain Sampson found Chaplain Brenner’s insistent claims unpersuasive, he also stood at remove from Floyd Robertson and other evangelicals’ sense of tyranny. After all, Catholics enjoyed their own Sunday School curriculum alongside dedicated chapel space, clearly-demarcated worship times, and a robust chaplain quota. Explicit permission to offer sectarian prayers in public, rather than religious

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<sup>116</sup> Reeve Brenner to Francis Sampson, March 31, 1965, SC-1365, AJA.

<sup>117</sup> Reeve Brenner to Francis Sampson, March 31, 1965, SC-1365, AJA.

service, arenas would be a long and protracted contest.<sup>118</sup> Nevertheless, by the mid-1960s, the five-decades-long effort to mold an acceptably multi-religious state institution was at stake. The conflict over the Unified Protestant Sunday School curriculum was only the beginning of an effort to bring sectarianism back into the state.

### **Translating Religion: Chaplains as Ethnographers, Ambassadors, and Brokers in Vietnam**

Chaplain Meir Engel's death presented a problem for the U.S. Army. Felled by a heart attack while deployed in Saigon in 1964, the Tel Aviv-born rabbi played an essential role in the American military operations in Vietnam. Charged with organizing a Buddhist military chaplaincy, Engel acquitted himself well, receiving posthumous honors from the Vietnamese government. His loss troubled the military because there was no ready replacement. He had acquired this duty because he was Jewish and thus removed from the "animosity and suspicion" that characterized that relationship between Buddhists and Christians in Southeast Asia.<sup>119</sup> Engel's multiple identities—an immigrant from Palestine, an American-trained rabbi, a career military chaplain, and a mediator between the United States and Vietnamese militaries—was unique, but the state's decision to mobilize him as a pivotal broker within the military was not.

In the postwar American military, within the imperial horizons of a new global power, chaplains served as critical intermediaries in the state's effort to develop religious relationships and cultural understanding in imperial arenas abroad. After a March 1965 War Games revealed significant gaps in American understanding of Vietnamese culture and religion, the Navy assigned

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<sup>118</sup> It was not until the 2014 Defense Appropriations Bill that, in the name of religious freedom, chaplains received permission to use "the traditions, expressions, and religious exercises of the endorsing faith group." See 2014 National Defense Authorization Act, Section 529.

<sup>119</sup> Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy Director's Report, May 10, 1965, I-249, Box 4, AJHS; "Chaplain Meir Engel Dies on Duty in Vietnam; Was Born in Israel," Jewish Telegraphic Agency, December 17, 1964. Engel enlisted in World War II and was recalled to the Army during the Korean War, after which he remained in the Army, serving as the Jewish Affairs Advisor in Germany in the 1950s and then as a chaplain at several U.S. posts before going to Vietnam.

Chaplain Robert L. Mole (Seventh-day Adventist) to “assist naval personnel in II, III, and IV Corps to [acquire] a better understanding of Vietnamese culture, traditions, and religion in order to improve some of the cross-cultural tensions.”<sup>120</sup> Prior to Operation Silver Lance, the Navy and Marine Corps had relied on a combination of local missionary intelligence and the Army’s *Area Handbook for Vietnam*, a 507-page volume that outlined the sociological, political, economic, and military conditions that U.S. forces could expect to encounter. Written by a team of civilian researchers affiliated with the Foreign Area Studies Division of the Special Operations Research at American University, the book claimed to offer basic background material without favoring any particular set of policy objectives. Its anonymous forward asserted that it was neither “official” nor “definitive” and lacked either the “expressed or implicit” approval of the Army. Comments and concerns, however, could be directed to the Chief of Staff for Military Operations, rather than the government contractors.<sup>121</sup>

Whatever its formal status, the Navy found the *Handbook* less than helpful in preparing its Marines to engage respectfully with foreign populations and deemed it inadequate for teaching its men how to avoid alienating local allies. The decision to deploy a chaplain as an investigator and translator of religious culture and customs in Vietnam was especially important in the wake of the Buddhist revolt that toppled the Diem government in 1963.<sup>122</sup> The Catholic leader’s crackdown on the majority religion within Vietnam made American sensitivity and delicacy imperative as a growing number of US troops entered Southeast Asia in the mid-1960s. In fact, as Marine combat units arrived in Da Nang in March 1965, Lt. General Victor Krulak, commander of the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, worried “we can win everything in Vietnam but the people, and suffer an abysmal

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<sup>120</sup> Moore, *Navy Chaplains in Vietnam, 1954-1964*, 130; Bergsma, *Chaplains with Marines in Vietnam, 1962-1971*, 100.

<sup>121</sup> George L. Harris, Robert J. Catto, Frederic H. Chaffee, Frederica Muhlenberg, Frances Chadwick Rintz, and Harvey H. Smith, *U.S. Army Area Handbook for Vietnam* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1962), iv.

<sup>122</sup> Jacobs, *America’s Miracle Man in Vietnam*, 267-70.

defeat.”<sup>123</sup> Chaplain Mole’s task was to mitigate this concern, first through investigation and ultimately through new training materials.

Mole was a puckish minister, a chaplain who took pride in his Adventist faith and his mastery of tricks and treats. After a two-year tour at Camp Pendleton, as the base’s first Adventist chaplain, he informed his SDA superiors that “no servicemen has been court-martialed here” because of proper counsel and attention to “potential trouble areas.” He recommended increasing the number of Adventist chaplains as a means of early intervention to stave off courts-martial and similar dilemmas faced by the faithful.<sup>124</sup> At the same time, a certain jest matched his earnestness. Writing from the South China Sea in 1962, he joked, “At times I think I ought to apply for an evangelistic budget as I conduct meetings seven days a week – but suppose I ought not broadcast this lest someone accuse me of ‘sabbath-breaking.’”<sup>125</sup> Humor characterized his approach to work. At the height of Cold War espionage, he delighted in sending missives in the form of “molegrams” and signing his letters “Friend Mole” or “‘The’ Mole.” While deployed in Asia, he asked a church secretary to send a poinsettia to his wife at her job at the Washington Sanitarium, to be delivered with a note “say[ing] only ‘From a Serviceman.’” He explained that it was a gift for her birthday and chuckled, “she does not expect such silliness at that age.” Ever the scrupulous accountant, he instructed his contact to “let me know the amount so I can keep my books balanced as unlike the Federal government I do not have an unlimited time to settle all items.”<sup>126</sup>

Deployed to Saigon in 1965, Mole left his post at Camp Pendleton to study Vietnam *in situ*. Confident that his language studies (Arabic and Japanese) as well as his missionary experience (in Lebanon and Cyprus) conditioned him to learn about new cultures and handle unexpected

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<sup>123</sup> V. H. Krulak, Foreword, *Understanding the Vietnamese: Personal Response Project Resource Material*, 1966, FJC.

<sup>124</sup> Robert Mole, “Resume of Seventh-day Adventist Chaplain Tour of Duty at Camp Pendleton,” May 24, 1965, Box 10599, Folder: Robert Mole, SDA.

<sup>125</sup> Robert Mole to W. F. Bradley, March 20, 1962, Box 10599, Folder: Robert Mole, SDA.

<sup>126</sup> “The Mole” to Mrs. White, December 5, 1967, Box 10445, Folder: Robert Mole, SDA.

challenges, he told a reporter that his “on-site research mission” did not represent an effort to “Americanize the Asians.” Rather, he insisted, “We’re trying to help them reach their own goals. Of course, religion is the basic value decider of all humanity.”<sup>127</sup> With a clear assumption about the importance of religion in the lives of all people in place, Mole began his mission. To prepare for his expedition, he spent a month in DC pursuing academic research and making contacts with relevant government sources before undergoing three weeks of counter-insurgency training stateside. While awaiting clearance to begin “on-the-spot research” in Vietnam, he moved to Okinawa to read and ready himself for observations and interviews in Southeast Asia.

On the last day of August 1966, Mole arrived in Vietnam, excited to consult with chaplains and local missionaries. They took him to “a number of isolated and semi-isolated posts” from which he could speak to and watch local people. In a late-September signature molegram, the chaplain reported interviewing and surveying 350 missionaries, 225 Naval Advisors, over a thousand Special Forces personnel, researchers, and civilian government employees to collect basic impressions and observations of Vietnamese culture and religion.<sup>128</sup> Over time, he recognized the drawbacks inherent to his short term of study as well as hindrances to his ability to accumulate useful data. Although he never doubted the accuracy or utility of his local Western sources, he quickly deduced that his language skills were not up to par and requested a future assignment that would allow him time to acquire new linguistic proficiencies off-duty. French, he determined, would produce deeper and more reliable information.

Despite his limited access to local knowledge, Mole pushed forward, focused on the task of relaying what he understood of Vietnamese religion to American soldiers in terms they would

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<sup>127</sup> Mole, “Resume of Seventh-day Adventist Chaplain Tour of Duty at Camp Pendleton”; Robert Mole to J.R. Nelson, September 20, 1961, Box 10599, Folder: Robert Mole, SDA; “Chaplain Is Conducting On-Site Research Study,” *The [Fredericksburg, VA] Free Lance-Star*, September 10, 1965.

<sup>128</sup> Robert Mole, “First Progress Report of Southeast Asian Religious Research Project,” September 30, 1965; Robert Mole to John Crave (Force Chaplain, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific), September 29, 1965, FJC.

comprehend. Along with Chaplain Richard McGonigal (United Presbyterian), a minister with a master's in sociology, Mole wrote a reference book, *The Religions of Vietnam in Faith and Fact*, that undergirded two lectures, "Religions in Vietnam" and "Religiously Based Customs in Vietnam," given to all pre-deployment personnel. Complete with flip-charts, discussion questions, and model simulations, these materials highlighted the United States' dual approach to operations in Vietnam combining military force and personal engagement. The latter, leaders hoped, would forestall the former. But to succeed, ground troops had to be able to convince Vietnamese people that Americans wanted to help them, and that demanded culturally and religiously respectful encounters between American troops and indigenous communities. Just as the Eisenhower-era People-to-People program attempted to promote anti-Communist foreign policy goals by spreading American culture overseas through more intimate connections and enlist Americans in soft diplomatic work through investment in music tours, gardening exchanges, medical missions, and letter-writing campaigns, so too did the military's Personal Response Project hope to cultivate "lasting friendship and willing cooperation of the Vietnamese people" by "engender[ing] in Marines a genuine concern and a deep respect for the Vietnamese as our friends, allies, and fellow human beings."<sup>129</sup> As Chaplain Warren Newman (Disciples of Christ), the officer in charge of training Marines in communication tactics, noted, "As they [Marines] learn the tactical principles of an infantry sweep of an area, they can also be introduced to the principles of courtesy and respect which are appropriate in dealing with Vietnamese village chiefs, elders, and religious officials."<sup>130</sup> Chaplains assumed a new role in-country as they became the mediators between culturally ill-equipped American military

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<sup>129</sup> Lt. General H.W. Buse (Chief of Staff, USMC), "Foreword, October 12, 1967" in *Unit Leaders Personal Response Handbook* (NAVMC 2616), 1967. On the People-to-People Program, see Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-61* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 49-56. For more on the larger Combined Action Programs of which the PRP was a part, see Richard Hunt, *Pacification: The American Struggle for Vietnam's Hearts and Minds* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995) and Michael Peterson, *The Combined Action Platoons: The U.S. Marines' Other War in Vietnam* (New York: Praeger, 1989).

<sup>130</sup> Warren Newman, "The Personal Response Project—A Communications Perspective," 1968, FJC.

personnel and Western-power-weary local Vietnamese populations.

These instructional bulletins attempted to do more than depict differences in religion and culture. In contrast to the *U.S. Army Handbook*, which merely described religions, the PRP resources discussed the implications of such differences and provided practice situations or simulations for chaplains and unit commanders to do with their men. One of the earliest asked “Do You Know About Time Concepts in Vietnam?” The worksheet then contrasted the “circular time” central to Taoism, Confucianism, Hinduism and Buddhism with “linear time” endemic to the Judeo-Christian tradition and the American Way of Life. While the former revolved around a twelve-year repeating calendar that possessed “neither end nor beginning,” the latter understood time as “a non repeating straight line with a beginning, an end and fixed important historical events.” These explanations reflected differences between Eastern and Western religious traditions, but the Personal Response Project overlaid them with subjective characterizations of respective civilizations. As a result of linear time, Americans strove to improve themselves and society. The emphasis on forward motion resulted in a litany of goods ranging from the concrete—a “high protein diet [and] vaccinations”—to the more nebulous—a “sense of urgency and necessity of immediate productive action.” In Vietnam, however, the “endless circle” of time impeded a rush to advancement and progress. In fact, given the spiritual calendar and the adverse material conditions of “diet, diseases, and climat[e],” the cultural education series asserted, “it is to the credit of the Vietnamese that this nation has achieved so much as it has.”<sup>131</sup>

Not all materials centered on condescending contrasts between the United States and Vietnam. In “Cross-Cultural Understanding can bridge the geographical distance,” Marines learned that cultural “booby traps” could be as dangerous as the physical ones planted by the Viet Cong. To

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<sup>131</sup> “Do You Know About Time Concepts in Vietnam?” U.S. Navy Personal Response Project, Series A-6, Box 10445, Folder: Robert Mole, SDA.



avoid linguistic land mines, it was imperative that “Americans and Vietnamese know and understand each other as human beings with the same basic needs” precisely because “citizens of the East and West are joined together as partners in a mutual struggle for survival.”<sup>132</sup> The *Unit Leaders Personal Response Handbook* amplified this point in lessons and discussion questions centered on interpersonal relationships, friendships, and the fundamental equality between humans. While a Corporal Smith, for example, declared local villagers to be “animals” because they lived in huts without walls, the Sergeant Major challenged him, arguing that a closer look showed more signs of similarity than difference. A chair hauled twenty miles to a clean hut, a photograph of a child, a set of tools with which to fix the home—all of these symbolized how “everybody likes staying alive and they like being left free to run their own life. In this sense, you bet your life we’re equal.”<sup>133</sup> A mix of free-market capitalism and cross-cultural awareness was intended to create a potent motivational brew.

As the United States’ military ties to Vietnam grew stronger, so too did the need to better understand Buddhism and religious festivals. Tet, most well known in the United States as the name of the late January military campaign 1968, became the subject of a number of posters and brochures. The holiday, which marks the Vietnamese New Year and celebrates the beginning of spring, melds family, spirituality, and national customs. One sign included a handy list for servicemen to learn about “Vietnam’s special holiday.” They should know, the bullet-points explained, that Tet “marks change of year” and was a “special occasion to venerate ancestor spirits”; was “when household God gives yearly account of family activities to heavenly emperor”; was an “opportunity to gather as families. Renew friendships: pay all debts”; included “many secular and religious features.” At the bottom, it proclaimed, “Respect your Vietnamese friend. Wish him a happy new year!” and helpfully added the appropriate phrasing in Vietnamese and in English

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<sup>132</sup> “Cross-Cultural Understanding can bridge the geographical distance,” U.S. Navy Personal Response Project, Series A-15, Box 10445, Folder: Robert Mole, SDA.

<sup>133</sup> *Unit Leaders Personal Response Handbook*, 71-72.

transliteration, “Chuc Mung Nam Moi’ (Chook Mung Nahm Moyee).” Subsequent pages elaborated on the meaning and importance of traditions and expectations, including reunification with family, settling spiritual and actual debts, offering gifts to family Gods, visiting friends with gifts.” To make clear how Americans should make sense of the one-to-seven day holiday, the document concluded, “TET combines many of the secular features of American holidays and the religious features of Christmas, All Souls’ Day, etc., with concepts of animism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Hinduism. Each may contribute conflicting features and ideas, but all combine to make a valid holiday for our Vietnamese allies.”<sup>134</sup> Fit into an American religious and patriotic holiday scheme, the Personal Response Project attempted to vindicate a festival season foreign to Americans and legitimize fraternal activities between servicemen and Vietnamese villagers and Popular Forces.<sup>135</sup>

Impending war in Vietnam made the American state more sensitive to Eastern religious practices, rituals foreign to most U.S. personnel. In turn, the chaplaincy increased its awareness of, interest in, and sensitivity toward Buddhism, albeit a sensibility derived from and intertwined with American foreign policy goals. For Chaplain Robert Radasky (Russian Orthodox), the program’s success rested on the chaplain’s investment. “After chaplains took steps to learn the culture, they were able to reflect an assurance about the situation which in effect counteracted casual rumor.” Radasky confirmed that religion suffused Vietnamese daily life, which made the chaplain into an important resource “even before official action provided him with the tools.”<sup>136</sup> Familiarity with religion as a structuring agent in everyday circumstances, he argued, proved helpful even without

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<sup>134</sup> “Tet,” U.S. Navy Personal Response Project, Series A-6, Box 10445, Folder: Robert Mole, SDA.

<sup>135</sup> That the military viewed fraternization as potentially helpful underscored the nature and challenge of guerilla warfare. Whereas any contact with civilians in Nazi Germany and Japan was presumed to taint military operations, in Vietnam it offered the possibility of aid. There is no evidence that the military tried to explain Japanese Shinto to personnel in the hopes it would enable mutual understanding, most likely because Shinto was seen as sustaining imperial Japan and because World War II combat did not depend on hamlet-level intimacy.

<sup>136</sup> Robert M. Radasky, End of Your Report, August 22, 1966, p. 2 quoted in Bergsma, *Chaplains With Marines in Vietnam*, 124.

Buddhism-specific knowledge.

Whether the program accomplished its goals to improve the understanding and empathy of American troops was debatable. Chaplain William Asher (American Baptist) discovered plenty of chatter about the Personal Response Program, but not all of it positive or persuasive. “The ‘Program’ meets with varying degrees of success of acceptance depending upon command attitude, proximity to combat, and an understanding of what the ‘Program’ is all about. Some Marines discuss it seriously, some with tongue-in-cheek, and some with animosity.” Countering rancor was difficult, if not impossible, because “the problems of learning to know and respect people, when some of them are incognito Viet Cong, are numerous. Once a Marine sees a buddy killed by fire from a ‘friendly’ hamlet, he’s not been receptive to the ‘Program.’ And the unscrupulous ‘friendly’ Vietnamese makes it difficult to trust any of them.”<sup>137</sup> With his Marines’ concerns seeping into his evaluation, Chaplain Asher could offer only a mixed review.

Chaplain Ronald L. Hedwall (Lutheran) had even more disappointing news. When he reported, “the program never got off the ground,” a reader scrawled sarcastically in the margins “Great! Just Great!!!” The chaplain also underscored missing variables in any “civic action,” “personal response,” or humanitarian program: first, “the tool for all of these would be a knowledge of the language,” and, second, men have “been highly trained to kill, and not trained at all to assist.” Yet while Hedwall identified and admonished key weaknesses in program design, he also touted increased compassion and concern for the Vietnamese among his men. Words failed to capture this shift, for “social pressures insist that they be vocally anti-Vietnamese, no matter what their own private attitudes and actions are.” But their behavior spoke of another story, of trained killers observing, engaging with, and caring for the Vietnamese they encountered.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> William Asher, Personal Narrative Report, 1966-67, pp. 3-4, FJC.

<sup>138</sup> Ronald L. Hedwall, “Experiences and Observations in Vietnam,” p. 2, 3, 10, 9, August 22, 1967, FJC. Hedwall was a keen observer of human nature. He recognized, for example, that Marines sought and expected

Unsurprisingly, then, units responsible for activities other than killing, such as hospital companies, found the Personal Response program more successful. Elden H. Luffman, a Southern Baptist chaplain assigned to Chu Lai in fall 1967, encountered Vietnam as part of hospital and combat units. He found the former ideal for the Personal Response Program because “Americans are unselfishly ministering to the sick and wounded bodies of the Vietnamese people” and thus more apt to build relationships. In contrast, “using the Personal Response Program as another tactical weapon for winning the war leaves much to be desired.”<sup>139</sup> After moving several hours north to a Marine Regiment based in Quang Tri, Chaplain Luffman saw the potential for success as well as the limits of the program. On the one hand, he was pleased to find “a tremendous Personal Response Program going.” There, as a result of the previous chaplain’s cooperation with two Vietnamese Army chaplains, one Catholic and one Buddhist, the Marines created positive encounters by teaching conversational English and playing basketball. From this, he concluded that successful “‘personal response’ must be experienced rather than taught in a classroom.”<sup>140</sup> On the other hand, when the First Marines left Quang Tri for the inland Khe Sanh Combat Base, they were cut off from civilian populations and “all Vietnamese became the same—the enemy....It is difficult to promote a favorable attitude towards a people who are the same as those who are constantly shooting at you.”<sup>141</sup>

The recognition and affirmation of religion sought by American Buddhists arrived to a degree through looming war in SE Asia. However the very importance of cross-cultural understanding and the increasing likelihood of out-and-out war ultimately took the Personal

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appreciation from the Vietnamese, a response they would not receive. Thus, he suggested, “the men need to be made aware that because of the historical situation, and perhaps because of the culture too, their personal response to the needs they see around them are not going to be matched by an overwhelming change in the attitudes of the Vietnamese toward them. Not at first, and not immediately” (9).

<sup>139</sup> Elden H. Luffman, “Experiences and Observations in Vietnam,” 1968, p. 1, FJC.

<sup>140</sup> Luffman, “Experiences and Observations in Vietnam,” 2-3.

<sup>141</sup> Luffman, “Experiences and Observations in Vietnam,” 3-4.

Response Program away from chaplains and placed it in the hands of other commanding officers. Marine Chaplain David J. Casazza (Catholic) thought this was wise because “the comment I heard over and over again was ‘so what?’” Since chaplains were men, not miracle-workers, he continued, “I don’t believe we ought to throw in all our chips on this one bet...[Chaplains] are giving their share of the lectures but without sincere command interest the program will fail.”<sup>142</sup> The chaplaincy could try to unsettle American views of Vietnamese people and promote them as equals, in religious and human terms. But the impact of Chaplain Mole’s research and program development depended less on religious leadership and more on a combination of circumstances and settings, social pressures and command influence.

## **Conclusion**

Cold War constructions of religious unanimity created new administrative and governance problems in overseeing and managing religion in the military. Faith, so often relegated to the private sphere as a result of key religion cases decided by the Supreme Court, could not be siphoned off to a side corridor or the family home. Rather, in the military, religion was always public and always on display. It was symbolic and substantive, and thus ripe for contest and controversy. While Adventists, Mormons, and Buddhists pressed the chaplaincy, the military, and the nation to stretch the American God to include them, evangelicals toiled to bring their vision of a Kingdom of God to the chaplaincy, the military, and the nation. Hence while chaplains often absorbed the military’s recognition of multiple legitimate paths to God, civilians spoke in a different register, seeking to impose their understanding of religion on the military.

Meanwhile, in Vietnam, some looked to Americans as agents of divine will, some as grantors of aid, and still others as emissaries of colonization. American claims to handle Vietnam in an anti-

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<sup>142</sup> David J. Casazza, End of Tour Report, p. 6, 1967-8, FJC.

colonialist frame (unlike the French they relieved) notwithstanding, the United States was growing as an imperial power. War loomed, and in Vietnam, the military chaplaincy, much like the state it served, would face its greatest test of morality and legitimacy.

**CHAPTER 6**  
**Claiming Conscience:**  
**Moral Objection and Religious Obligation in the Vietnam War**

It started with a pair, two Vietnamese bodies ablaze in protest. An elderly Buddhist monk, 73 years into his life, took his last breaths while burning in lotus position on a busy Saigon boulevard in June 1963 and, two months later, a young monk, barely into the third decade of his life, doused himself in kerosene and extinguished his life in Phan Thiet.<sup>1</sup> Then there were three, a trio of Americans who ignited themselves to speak out against war in the 1965. In March, flames danced on the body of an 82-year old German-Jewish emigré in Detroit after she took a match to her skin. Eight months later, the sun set as a 31-year-old Quaker torched himself below Robert McNamara's Pentagon window and, a week later, a 22-year-old Catholic Worker followed suit, searing himself as the sun rose at the United Nations' New York plaza.<sup>2</sup>

Thich Quang Duc, the septuagenarian monk, knew what he was doing; self-immolation was not abhorrent in Buddhism. Rather, as even the United States' *Personal Response Project* materials explained, the Vietnamese understood these human burnt offerings as “murder by oppression.” His fire, quite literally, spoke. The venerable monk's body bellowed with “courage, frankness, determination, and sincerity,” protesting the religious persecution of the American-backed Diem regime. Like the Buddha giving himself to a hungry lion to save her cubs from cannibalism, the

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<sup>1</sup> “Fire Suicide Proves Point,” *The Boston Globe*, June 12, 1963; “2d Buddhist Sets Fire to Himself, Dies: Viet Monk Protests Religious Bias,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 5, 1963.

<sup>2</sup> “Woman, 82, Sets Herself Afire in Street as Protest on Vietnam,” *NYT*, March 18, 1965; “Hate of War Led to Fiery Death,” *The Boston Globe*, November 4, 1965; “Torch Suicides: Sinful at Worst, Futile at Best,” *The Washington Post*, November 15, 1965.

monk liquidated himself to safeguard the future of Buddhism in Vietnam.<sup>3</sup> Senator Frank Church (D-ID) discerned the message quite well. Reconfigured in terms more resonant with his Presbyterian faith, he viewed the “grisly scenes” of burnt Vietnamese flesh, captured on television and published on American newsprint, as the fate of the Christians who marched into the great stadiums of the Roman Empire.<sup>4</sup> Martyrs of the first and the twentieth centuries, both vanquished while struggling to liberate their faith from imperial (and imperially-supported) overlords.

Norman Morrison, too, understood his suicidal political speech as a form of religious preservation, incinerating himself “at the cruel edge of [the] five-faced cathedral of violence” to convey the depth of his Quaker pacifism in the wake of an escalating war. “He was no fanatic,” his friend Allan Brick explained; rather, he was “just a religious man.”<sup>5</sup> The images and words of war’s suffering gave way to slaughter. What some clergy classified as sin, Morrison believed to be ritual and righteous sacrifice.<sup>6</sup>

In those years, the long 1960s, there were other fires to fight as well. In Alabama, Bull Connor’s fire hoses and police dogs attacked African Americans and their white allies fighting for civil rights. To segregationists, if not the protesters themselves, the controlled burn of brush fires among black Americans was turning quickly into a ferocious forest fire, an inferno uncontainable with fire hoses. In California, flames engulfed Watts as African-American residents revolted against police maltreatment, systemic unemployment, and discriminatory funding of schools and housing. In Washington, DC, the city ignited as word spread that an assassin’s bullet snatched Martin Luther King, Jr.’s life, and citizens already denied home rule spoke through fire—burning homes and stores.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Mole, “Vietnamese Self-Sacrifice Customs,” 18-19, FJC.

<sup>4</sup> Tad Szulc, “Kennedy Warns the Diem Regime U.S. Will Oppose All Divisive Actions,” *NYT*, September 13, 1963. Senator Church was a skeptic about Vietnam. Declassified documents show, for example, that he resisted the (literal) party line on the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin, wondering whether the incident was real or fake.

<sup>5</sup> “Hate of War Led to Fiery Death,” *The Boston Globe*, November 4, 1965.

<sup>6</sup> “Torch Suicides: Sinful at Worst, Futile at Best,” *The Washington Post*, November 15, 1965.



Meanwhile, a world away, across an ocean, napalm and Agent Orange incinerated Vietnamese villages, indiscriminately targeting civilians and soldiers alike. And in response, draft cards burned, set aflame at rallies and set afire by the Catonsville Nine. The fire next time had arrived.

“Do I really *want* to be integrated into a burning house?” asked African-American novelist and social critic James Baldwin in his 1962 meditation on race, rights, freedom, and faith.<sup>7</sup> He possessed a keen awareness of the inherent complexity of religion and politics, particularly as applied historically and globally: “In the realm of power, Christianity has operated with unmitigated arrogance and cruelty...[and] in the realm of morals the role of Christianity has been, at best, ambivalent.”<sup>8</sup> Alerted to the growing quagmire in Vietnam, other Americans began to consider and reconsider the relationship between religion and politics. Yet if America was a firescape, with moral questions crackling in its midst, religion often presented more questions than answers. The 1960s were a time of national and international ruptures—of interconnected domestic and global struggles for freedom—and the Vietnam War riveted and ripped apart the nation. Long and intransigent, the war pillaged American bodies, ravaged Vietnamese soil, and devastated both nations. In the interest of containing Communism and advancing democracy, the United States spent a quarter century, billions of dollars, and thousands of lives chasing Northern Vietnamese soldiers and Viet Cong guerillas through jungles and over mountains.<sup>9</sup> None of these expenditures—of time, capital, or humanity—produced victory, however. Whether or not the 1973 cease-fire and the 1975 fall of Saigon represented military defeats or diplomatic stalemates, and whether or not the loss of perspective—both political and moral—was gradual or immediate, military intervention in Southeast

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<sup>7</sup> James Baldwin, “Down at the Cross: Letter from a Region in My Mind,” in *The Fire Next Time* (New York: The Dial Press, 1963, 1969), 108, emphasis original. The essay was originally printed in *The New Yorker* on November 17, 1962.

<sup>8</sup> Baldwin, “Down at the Cross,” 59-60.

<sup>9</sup> Vietnamese casualty estimates vary but military and civilian deaths combined to total approximately 3.8 million people. Christian Appy, *Working Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 16.

Asia polarized the United States.

But fiery demonstrations were neither the only way to push back against state power nor the singular story of the cleavages of the Vietnam War era. Quieter battles, too, raged over the same issues but primarily were disputed through words and ideas informed by allegiances to God and to country that no longer conjoined as easily as they had in the past. For military chaplains, moral fracturing was real and religious reckoning constant. Enmeshed in the armed forces and ever cognizant of the demonstrations and protests raging around them, clergy in uniform—or those contemplating wearing them—shipped out to Vietnam where they spent twelve-month tours measuring, doubting, and accepting their value. In an end-of-tour report, for example, Chaplain Leonard L. Ahrnsbrak (Assemblies of God) confided, “As the gigantic footfalls of the Viet Cong mortars stomped their way up the ridge line toward our positions, I had to ask myself why in the name of common sense I was there rather than in a nice civilian church in the city of the Golden Gate.” As the booming sounds fell away the minister regained his composure. Hearing the voice of a Marine, and the words “Padre, I’m glad you are with us’ reaffirmed the necessity of having been there.”<sup>10</sup> The voice of the plaintive soldier alone on a bombarded ridge who confirmed the minister’s decision to serve as a chaplain occupied a critical place in the debates and decisions about the chaplaincy in this period. While some religious leaders rejected the chaplaincy altogether as an instrument of the military involved in an immoral war, others deliberated whether their faith dictated that religious obligation to men overrode moral objection to war. For those chaplains, and for the religious groups supporting them, the central question of the Vietnam War was whether God and country could align or must diverge. In other words, should chaplains occupy a prophetic role or a pastoral one? Vietnam pushed clergy to assess how to reconcile pure fidelity to God with complex responsibility to man.

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<sup>10</sup> Leonard L. Ahrnsbrak, End of Tour Report, 1966, FJC.

The assumed co-mingling of religion and morality had long defined the chaplaincy. Who but clergy and what but religion could provide a moral foundation for citizen-soldiers and commanding officers? Thus the chaplaincy—an institution built upon and committed to moral monotheism in the first half of the twentieth century—became the engine of the military-spiritual complex in the postwar period. But these visions and roles assumed a clear and easy alignment of ethics and faith with religion and state. Vietnam exposed the fault-lines in these presumptions. When war provoked moral turmoil and signaled immorality, were clergy bearing rank and insignia sanctifying profane militarism and absolving the state of improper conduct? As the Vietnam War wracked the nation, the military chaplaincy became a critical arena of conflict, a venue through which religious groups contested American politics, argued about moral priorities, and reconsidered their relationship to the state. At the center of these debates lay claims about the meaning and consequences of conscience—on individual, national, and global scales. For decades, the military made morality the centerpiece of the chaplaincy, but the moral indoctrination promoted by and in the Armed Forces could not withstand the pressure of politics. As Vietnam polarized the country, chaplains and religious groups questioned the object of religious and ethical imperatives. To whom were chaplains obligated? For what causes or what reasons should clergy serve?

As military chaplains wrestled with their religious obligations and moral priorities during a controversial war, so too did the chaplaincy itself change. As an organization staffed by volunteers, the chaplaincy depended on the cooperation of religious groups, a relationship not all denominations or clergy sought or considered valuable in the midst of a questionable war. As Jews, Catholics, and mainline Protestants disputed the legitimacy of the Vietnam War, they protested through words and boycotts. Yet when they declined to enter the military, spaces opened for religious groups that sought greater involvement with the state. For the NAE and its clergy, the obligation to serve God and the desire to serve country aligned perfectly with the openings created

by those whose conscience saw a conflict between honoring God and working for country. As a result, Vietnam instigated a demographic shift in the religious composition and tenor of the military chaplaincy from more liberal and ecumenical to more conservative and sectarian space, a transformation that heralded the reshaping of the nation's religious politics in the decades to follow. At the same time, the growing imperative to diffuse escalating racial tension coupled with a need for more chaplains led the military to invest in the recruitment of African-American chaplains and helped open the chaplaincy to women. Moral turmoil over the Vietnam War thus reordered relationships between religious groups and the state, redefined the legal meaning of religion, and reconfigured religious access to power within the nation.

### **Moral Claims and the Vietnam War**

By the late 1960s, Chaplain John J. O'Connor (Catholic) found the growing American opposition to war disheartening. A Navy chaplain since 1952, the priest had already completed a tour of duty in Vietnam in 1965. When departing Southeast Asia, he reflected on the excruciating choices he waded through as a supervisory chaplain based in Da Nang. "How do you keep close enough to the field hospital, where all casualties are brought, to be of any use to the dying, and at the same time tramp through the hills and valleys to meet the spiritual needs of the living?" he asked. "Do you turn to your all-knowing supervisory chaplain, ensconced virginally in the antiseptic halls of a crystal-palace headquarters? What if you are the supervisory chaplain and you live in a tent in a field hospital?"<sup>11</sup> Present for some of the earliest—and most confusing—troop build-ups, O'Connor agonized over how to provide religious coverage to the Third Marine Division. As the Army had already discovered, fighting in Vietnam did not resemble conventional warfare and units

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<sup>11</sup> John J. O'Connor, "A Point of View in Vietnam" (1965), emphasis original, FJC.

often dispersed over miles of treacherous terrain.<sup>12</sup> Ministering to scattered personnel challenged the chaplains sent to Vietnam who learned, as O'Connor did, that few resources existed to guide them.

As O'Connor completed his meditation on his efforts and experiences in Vietnam, the anti-war movement was gaining strength. In spring 1965, the priest's tasks in Vietnam were new, as were most aspects of American intervention. That winter, President Lyndon B. Johnson unleashed Operation Rolling Thunder, a torrent of bombing campaigns north of the 17th parallel and, in March, sent in the first U.S. ground troops—the Marines Chaplain O'Connor worked alongside. Although Congress had not declared war, the American public began to view the dual commitments of resources and people as something rather close to war. Dissent gathered strength on college campuses and spread outward across the nation.<sup>13</sup> Religious groups joined the fray, and within the year the National Council of Churches, the American Roman Catholic Bishops, and the Synagogue Council of America, among many other groups, had passed resolutions calling for the pursuit of peace through negotiation, mediation, and diplomacy in place of bombs, mines, and guns. In addition to troop withdrawals, these statements encouraged debate and heightened scrutiny of policymakers to ward off the “grave danger that the circumstances of the present war in Vietnam may, in time, diminish our moral sensitivity to its evils.”<sup>14</sup>

Ever sensitive to the moral questions of war, a chaplain not surprisingly announced in 1966 the formation of the National Emergency Committee Clergy Concerned About Vietnam (later,

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<sup>12</sup> Herbert L. Bergsma, *Chaplains with Marines in Vietnam, 1962-1971* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters of U.S. Marine Corps, 1985), 9, 19-20.

<sup>13</sup> On the demographics, nature, reach, and development of the antiwar movement, see Melvin Small, *Antwarriors: The Vietnam War and the Battle for America's Hearts and Minds* (Lanham, MD: SR Books, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> “Statement of the American Roman Catholic Bishops, Meeting in Washington DC, November 1966, in Appendix, Robert McAfee Brown, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and Michael Novak, *Vietnam: Crisis of Conscience* (New York: Association Press, 1967), 117.

Clergy and Laity Concerned About Vietnam, or CALCAV).<sup>15</sup> Prior to Yale College Chaplain William Sloan Coffin's statement, a number of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish clergy had gathered to develop a national network of chapters that would enable local clergy to engage cooperatively in the public politics of dissent. In particular, CALCAV advocated that the United States negotiate a settlement with Vietnamese leaders and withdraw troops from what they then called Indochina. The ecumenical organization strove to occupy a middle ground between religious pacifism and radical activism as well as to link the antiwar and civil rights movements. Above all, its "religious, ecumenical, and nonpacifist nature made it more resistant than most antiwar groups to the public's negative attitudes" and thereby helped legitimized dissent as a religious and political necessity among moderates.<sup>16</sup> Among the many outgrowths of CALCAV was *Vietnam: Crisis of Conscience*, written by Robert McAfee Brown (a navy chaplain during World War II), Abraham Joshua Heschel, and Michael Novak and published in 1967. To provide policymakers a rationale for pursuing a negotiated settlement, the book offered a moral argument to convince political leaders and the American public that diplomacy, rather than force, offered the best option for extricating the United States from Southeast Asia.<sup>17</sup>

The book, which sold 50,000 copies within the year, exerted the opposite effect on Chaplain

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<sup>15</sup> The name of the organization underwent multiple changes, from Clergy Concerned to Clergy and Laymen Concerned and finally to Clergy and Laity Concerned. A 1972 resolution by the local Ann Arbor, Michigan affiliate helped instigate the latter change. As Mollie Babize wrote, "While a minor change grammatically, this is – to some of us – a fairly major ideological change... I think you must agree that – given where all of us should stand on the whole women's thing – time has finally come to get our collective self in gear and change the damn thing. SO...could you – right now, this very minute – write a note to national indicating your group's decision to change that inherently sexist title so modestly? And if, in fact, your group has NOT decided to do that, WHY NOT?" Mollie Babize to CALC Field Staff, August 11, 1972, DG 120, Series I, Box 1, Folder: CALC Steering Committee, 1972, Files of Trudi Young, SCPC.

<sup>16</sup> Mitchell K. Hall, *Because of Their Faith: CALCAV and Religious Opposition to War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 175-6.

<sup>17</sup> Hall, *Because of Their Faith*, 47; Brown, Heschel, and Novak, *Vietnam: Crisis of Conscience*.

O'Connor, who seemed to view its antiwar claims as a personal rebuke.<sup>18</sup> After all, he too understood the conflict as a harrowing moral crisis. But unlike Brown, Heschel, and Novak, he viewed the commitment of ground troops to Vietnam as rational, humane, and necessary. He wrote his 1968 book, *A Chaplain Looks At Vietnam*, as a direct retort to *Vietnam: Crisis of Conscience*, a text he viewed as “misleading.”<sup>19</sup> American intervention, he asserted, reflected “much more justice and sincere concern about the peoples of Vietnam and all of Asia and all the world than self-aggrandizement, or arrogance of power...much—very much—more anguished determination to achieve a just, enduring peace than to protract war.”<sup>20</sup> O'Connor, who had completed graduate work in ethics at Villanova and was in the midst of doctoral work in political science at Georgetown, agreed with many of his opponents that “war is obviously an evil,” but unlike the Berrigan brothers, he did not equate that evil with the sin of hatred.<sup>21</sup> As he explained to Navy Chief of Chaplains James Kelly, before the rear admiral participated in an event with Heschel, “as far as I’m concerned, the Rabbi’s arguments are strictly emotional. He wants wars to end. Who doesn’t?”<sup>22</sup> Indeed, for O'Connor, Vietnam in particular—rather than war in general—was the key moral dilemma. And he viewed the war as lawful, in that it was not, in the parlance of Vatican II, total war or war “aimed indiscriminately” at the obliteration of land or populations. Likewise, he separated the morality of engaging in war from the morality of particular means of warfare; while he was willing to acknowledge not all methods were appropriate, proportionate, or acceptable, he never doubted either the legitimacy or the justness of American action on behalf of South Vietnam. War could be

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<sup>18</sup> O'Connor’s intuition was apt, for CALC helped publish a 1971 volume that decried the chaplaincy as corrupted by the military. Harvey Cox, ed., *Military Chaplains: From a Religious Military to a Military Religion* (New York: American Report Press, 1971).

<sup>19</sup> John J. O'Connor, *A Chaplain Looks at Vietnam* (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1968), 235.

<sup>20</sup> O'Connor, *A Chaplain Looks at Vietnam*, xvi.

<sup>21</sup> O'Connor, *A Chaplain Looks at Vietnam*, 7-8.

<sup>22</sup> John J. O'Connor to James W. Kelly, January 2, 1968, Chaplains Resource Board, Box 123, Folder 2, FJC.

bitter, distressing, horrific, and terrifying without being immoral.

Indeed, according to Chaplain O'Connor, the moral quandary posed by Vietnam centered on the question of obligation: moral obligation to what and to whom? "What binds us," he asked, offering a litany of options to consider: "International laws? Treaties? Pacts? Our word of honor? Private agreements between heads of states? Our real or alleged responsibilities as a world power? Self-interest? Public pledges to 'defend freedom' wherever threatened? A 'moral' obligation to defend the weak from the strong, the oppressed from the oppressor? A divine mission to contain Communism, or to lead the world?"<sup>23</sup> These were the questions everyone ought to be addressing, dissenters and proponents alike. His intent, he maintained, was not to disavow conscientious objection but to plea for all to gird their claims with facts and parse the nuances of obligation accordingly.

For all his unwavering public support of the morality of intervention in Vietnam, in more private moments, Chaplain O'Connor conveyed a more subtle position. Toward the end of his 1965 tour of duty, he challenged the very nature of a prosaic and instructive end-of-tour report. "The night has a thousand eyes. Vietnam has ten thousand faces. Every chaplain sees a different face," he wrote. "To write of 'the war' in Vietnam as viewed by 'the' chaplain, or to write of 'the' chaplain's ministry in the war in Vietnam would be to do a reader a disservice. I can write accurately of only one war in Vietnam, of very few of her faces, and of the way I personally attempt to function." In language lush and contemplative, O'Connor confessed the absence of a singular war about which anyone could exalt or complain. His experience might be illuminating, but it was unique. When excoriating his antiwar opponents, however, this calm complexity disappeared in order to promote obeisance to national leaders.

In his fidelity to the chain-of-command, O'Connor exemplified his status as both a Catholic

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<sup>23</sup> O'Connor, *A Chaplain Looks at Vietnam*, 13.



priest and a military chaplain, loyal to the hierarchy of the Church and the American state. Bothered by assertions that Lyndon Johnson acted with either “malice or stupidity,” he retained confidence in the sincerity of American military and foreign policy leaders, believing them to have spoken and acted legally, honestly, and thoughtfully. So long as the president hewed to international law and treaties and thus acted honorably, there was no reason to doubt the validity of military engagement. “Safe legal grounds,” the future Navy Chief of Chaplains conjectured, yielded “reasonably safe moral grounds” from which to operate. Blind to the dubious logic of this claim—slavery, after all, was simultaneously legal and immoral—O’Connor trusted his superiors to relay “the facts” about U.S. involvement and intervention in Vietnam accurately. Although he would later regret publishing the book, critique American involvement in Nicaragua, denounce excessive military spending, and counsel against military intervention abroad from his perch as Archbishop of New York in the 1980s, in 1968, O’Connor was “convinced that the administration has opted to accept the tragedy of war as the only available road to meaningful peace.”<sup>24</sup> In contrast to the skeptical Americans who flagged evidence suggesting the dubious legality of war, O’Connor unconditionally accepted the administration’s military goals and information channels. In this way, he echoed the position taken by other chaplain leaders. Gerhard W. Hyatt (Lutheran—Missouri Synod), who became the Army’s Chief of Chaplains in August 1971, told a reporter, “A man of discernment has to give his government the benefit of the doubt.”<sup>25</sup> Based on this view, Chaplain O’Connor addressed the challenge of conscientious objection to Vietnam not as unacceptable, but as simply unnecessary

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<sup>24</sup> O’Connor, *A Chaplain Looks at Vietnam*, 16, 225, 12-13, 4; Nat Hentoff, *John Cardinal O’Connor: At the Storm Center of a Changing American Catholic Church* (New York: Scriber, 1988), 4, 51; “Cardinal O’Connor, 80, Dies; Forceful Voice for Vatican,” *New York Times*, May 3, 2000. While plenty of critics suspected that the administration was not fully forthcoming with war information, it was not until the release of the Pentagon Papers that the full extent of Vietnam-related cover-ups became clear. The Gulf of Tonkin incident, portrayed as an unprovoked attack on U.S. warships and used as a pretext for committing U.S. forces to Southeast Asia, was distorted to aid Johnson and McNamara garner support for the war they wanted to wage.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Ralph Blumenthal, “Chaplains’ Role Questioned Because They Support War,” *NYT*, June 22, 1971.

because the war itself was, in his mind, unavoidable. The Communist foe, dedicated to the overthrow of democracy and capitalism, complicit in the ruthless obliteration of Vietnamese lives, had to be stopped.

Other religious voices concurred that the war was essential and moral, if challenging to reconcile with biblical mandates to not murder. The National Association of Evangelicals agreed that “the major issue is one of freedom” and “the price of freedom is always high.”<sup>26</sup> Army Chief of Chaplains Francis L. Sampson (Catholic) explained that violence was evil, but since “the commandment against killing...is actually a prohibition against murder,” it did not apply to war.<sup>27</sup> Even the evangelical periodical *Christianity Today* referenced the tension between violence and faith felt by God-fearing Americans: “Chaplains and lay leaders alike say the major issue raised constantly concerns the morality of war and the killing and maiming that goes on in war. In short,” the article asked, “can a serviceman serve God and country?” Interviews revealed that, with a few exceptions, most “searched and struggled deeply” to arrive at personally and spiritually acceptable answers.<sup>28</sup>

Although Chaplain O'Connor latched onto the morality of Vietnam with full fervor, other chaplains expressed less certainty.<sup>29</sup> In advance of major press conferences and speeches in the 1960s, the Navy Chief of Chaplains queried his command about relevant topics and solicited opinions about religious work in the armed forces. By the end of the decade, antagonism toward the war in Vietnam had so pervaded American society that even Chief of Chaplains James W. Kelly (Catholic) surveyed navy chaplains about whether they “consider[ed] American participation in the

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<sup>26</sup> Floyd Robertson, “Report: Commission on Chaplains and Service to Military Personnel, National Association of Evangelicals,” April 19, 1966, SC-113, Box 171, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton.

<sup>27</sup> Ralph Blumenthal, “Chaplains’ Role Questioned Because They Support War,” *NYT*, June 22, 1971.

<sup>28</sup> “Bibles in the Barracks – God and the Military,” *Christianity Today*, March 31, 1972.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Roland B. Gittelsohn, “Judaism on War, Peace, and Conscientious Objection,” *Jewish Digest* 15, no. 4 (April 1970): 52.

war in Vietnam to be morally right or wrong.”<sup>30</sup>

Officially, chaplains repeatedly asserted that Americans in uniform knew why they were fighting in Vietnam and apprehended the import of this duty. Preston Oliver (Presbyterian US) bracketed the festering antiwar movement by declaring “our men in Vietnam are not too much involved with these issues” because “they are busy doing a job, and they do not feel it is their business to second-guess the rationale behind our mission.” Moreover, he credited this approach as a manifestation of high morale in which Marines “believe what they are doing, hard though it is, is right and necessary.”<sup>31</sup> Helping the Vietnamese, Chaplain Loren Lindquist (Congregationalist) insisted, enabled Americans to tolerate the brutal conditions of combat. Improving “the future welfare of the Vietnamese gives meaning and purpose to their service—a belief based on experience and fact that communist aggression is sinister and real.”<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Chaplain Beryl Burr (Methodist) stated unequivocally “the serviceman knows why he is in Vietnam. He sees a people oppressed—and in some instances depressed—and he feels a necessity within himself to try to make life a little better.”<sup>33</sup> Certain that an attitude of friendly neighborliness demanded interference and intervention on the part of the United States, Burr accounted for high morale and muscular dedication as part and parcel of boosting the welfare and future of Vietnam. As a battalion chaplain, Roy Grubbs (Church of God) offered the Navy Chief of Chaplains some grist for a news conference prior to the Tet Offensive in January 1968. Grubbs portrayed Marines as stalwart political saviors, full of respect for the South Vietnamese as “creature[s] of God” harassed by the North Vietnamese army and the Viet Cong guerillas who fail to “recognize the essential dignity of each human being.” In this Manichean duel, the Marine “is very much aware of this threat to the peace and security of both

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<sup>30</sup> Loren M. Lindquist to Chief of Chaplains, December 29, 1967, CRB, Box 123, Folder 2, FJC.

<sup>31</sup> Preston C. Oliver to James Kelly, January 2, 1967, CRB, Box 123, Folder 2, FJC.

<sup>32</sup> Loren M. Lindquist to Chief of Chaplains, December 29, 1967, CRB, Box 123, Folder 2, FJC.

<sup>33</sup> Beryl Burr to James Kelly, December 20, 1967, CRB, Box 123, Folder 2, FJC.

South Vietnam and the entire free world.”<sup>34</sup>

Yet, letters, surveys, and end-of-tour reports furnish a slightly different—a more textured and even knotty—perspective than that of military personnel engaged in a simple fight for freedom over tyranny. At a 1967 nuclear training course for military chaplains, the clergy carried on “a free and open—and heated!—debate about the Vietnam war.”<sup>35</sup> In Vietnam, Chaplain Frederick Arneson (Lutheran) detected complexity among his congregational flock: “The truth is, we may not be unanimous in our motives for being in this country, but we are here – we did not stand idly by and talk.”<sup>36</sup> United by a sense of action, the group cohered, but not because they all agreed on intentions and purposes for getting on the planes and ships that brought Americans to Vietnam in 1968. When explaining the necessity of chaplains clambering aside Marines in the field, Chaplain Leonard L. Ahrnsbrak (Assemblies of God) disrupted the depiction of Marines as a lock-step parade of stoic, well-trained, unwavering freedom fighters. “The Church is concerned with man’s struggle with himself, his fears, life and death,” the chaplain commented, “and during operations men do a good amount of struggling in this regard.”<sup>37</sup> Neither the mandate to kill nor the prospect of death felt natural or easy, even among those drilled to obey instructions and follow the lead of commanders. Regular encounters with death, Chaplain Paul Pearson (United Methodist) speculated, explained his early observation that the troops his unit replaced “seemed to be bitter and hostile.”<sup>38</sup> Mines and snipers, not to mention mosquitoes and cobras, tested the dignity and resolve of battle-hardened and battle-weary troops; even if the soldiers and Marines entered Vietnam with clarity of

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<sup>34</sup> Roy D. Grubbs to James Kelly, December 19, 1967, CRB, Box 123, Folder 2, FJC.

<sup>35</sup> Chaplain P in the United Presbyterian Church, “The Military Chaplaincy: Captive or Free?” 1968, xi, I-249, Box 15, Folder 93, AJHS. Chaplain P also expressed his support for civilian clergy publicly protesting the war due to their conscience.

<sup>36</sup> Frederick Arneson, End of Tour Report, September 10, 1968, FJC.

<sup>37</sup> Leonard L. Ahrnsbrak, End of Tour Report, 1965-6, FJC.

<sup>38</sup> Paul W. Pearson, End of Tour Report, p. 3, 1966, FJC.

conviction, their tours of duty could still snatch that dedication from them.

The very anxieties and uncertainties described by Pearson also justified the need for deploying chaplains with troops in Vietnam. With death ever present, end of life care warranted religious oversight. Chaplain John J. Scanlon (Catholic) had an eventful tour by the time he was reassigned to a Medical Battalion. During his first few days in-country, he had learned to steer clear of heavy vehicles when riding through rice paddies. Thereafter, he acquired an array of practical knowledge: how to avoid being a sitting duck in a Viet Cong shooting gallery, how to continue a service after a chapel collapsed in the gushing rain, how to counsel men through the monsoon killing seasons, how to fashion an altar out of used artillery ammo boxes, and how to stay hydrated in oppressive heat when caught between hill fires. When reassigned to a medical battalion after nine months in the field with the First Marines, he shuddered and shivered, approaching his new duty with “fear and trembling.”<sup>39</sup> His concern was warranted as the relative quiet was a mirage. It was hectic and exhausting, for “the dead and dismembered (a highly abstract term), the seriously wounded and the slightly wounded, the neuro-psychiatric cases, dismembered emotionally and mentally—the inevitable product of violent killing, those afflicted by diseases native to this country—all these, as well as the doctors and corpsmen, form the congregation of the Field Hospital Chaplain.” The physical exhaustion of combat seemed elementary compared to “the strain of absorbing so much human hurt,”<sup>40</sup> a task understood as fundamental to the work of chaplains.

Although chaplains attempted to alleviate physical and emotional pain with prayer and counsel, many soldiers and Marines self-medicated with drugs, finding more solace and comfort through regular opiate use than through daily worship. The easy availability of narcotics in Vietnam

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<sup>39</sup> John J. Scanlon, End of Tour Report, August 1966, p. 8-9, FJC. Whether Scanlon’s use of “fear and trembling” intentionally referenced philosopher Soren Kierkegaard’s work by the same name (which analyzes the Biblical story of the sacrifice of Isaac) or Phillipian’s 2:12 or Psalms 55:6, all of which use the phrase “fear and trembling,” is not clear.

<sup>40</sup> John J. Scanlon, End of Tour Report, August 1966, p. 8-9, FJC.

in turn created more work for chaplains, as addiction and drug-related problems skyrocketed.<sup>41</sup> Few chaplains possessed any expertise in substance abuse. Peter J. Cary (Catholic) admitted as much when he wrote in his end-of-tour report that “drugs were readily available, according to the hearsay, some of which are exotic varieties not commonly found in the United States.” Unable to even identify the type of drugs his Marines inhaled or ingested, Cary struggled to find effective ways to reach his men. The uneven application of Navy Regulations made discipline even more challenging because “the almost universal response of the ‘pot-smoker’ is that smoking marijuana is no worse than getting drunk, in fact better because there is no hang-over.”<sup>42</sup> Other chaplains developed a deep knowledge of the intricacies of drug manufacturing and trafficking, however. Dell F. Stewart (Catholic) learned that Da Nang locals mixed marijuana with opium before rolling the drugs into extra-long cigarettes. This was a potent mixture, he declared, “definitely habit forming because of the opium.” Moreover, a single search-and-seizure operation in one mess hall unveiled a daily haul of more than 7,200 joints, a far cry from the 200 reported by an informant, and easily moved by an informal network of American and Vietnamese food purveyors and garbage collectors.<sup>43</sup>

Coverage of drug-addled soldiers increased in 1971, and a trio of Navy chaplains crafted a plan for Chaplains’ Relevance within Emerging Drug Order team, or CREDO as it came to be known. To counter the effects of “youth drug culture,” the program sought to boost chaplains’ confidence in offering drug counseling sessions and make appropriate referrals. The larger goal was to build “a supportive, non-threatening place where the drug involved Navyman may make the

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<sup>41</sup> On the use and abuse of heroin in Vietnam, see Eric C. Schneider, *Smack: Heroin and the American City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 159-81. Schneider argues that the dramatic decline in heroin use among returning veterans suggests that social needs and availability, rather than addiction, explains the rates of drug use. Although the acceleration of drug use was documented in the early 1970s, chaplains briefed Navy Chief of Chaplains James Kelly on marijuana, heroin, and opium during his 1967 Christmas visit to Vietnam. Ralph W. Below, “Narrative Report on the Chief of Chaplain’s Christmas 1967 Visit to III Marine Amphibious Force, RVN,” February 5, 1968, FJC.

<sup>42</sup> Peter J. Cary, End of Tour Report, 1969, p. 3, FJC.

<sup>43</sup> Dell F. Stewart, End of Tour Report, September 15, 1970, p. 3, FJC.

initial moves toward health through self-initiated inquiry.” Assuming that “despair” prompted most drug use, the program channeled the chaplains’ longtime responsibility for morals and morale to emphasize the spiritual “inner life” as an antidote to narcotics. Recovering “the worth and personal dignity of the individual” would not only help rescue those mired in drug culture but also enable peers to help one another. Whether or not the amalgam of 12-Step programs and therapeutic religion addressed the burgeoning drug issues in Vietnam, CREDO (Latin for “I Believe”) nevertheless charged chaplains with addressing an ever-expanding set of problems.<sup>44</sup>

Equipping men to handle life in the killing fields similarly required the influence of chaplains, according to John J. Glynn (Catholic). He arrived in Chu Lai in June 1965 and served with Marine combat and medical battalions where, he asserted, chaplains brandished moral restraint. Over the course of his year in Vietnam, he noticed that the assigned clergyman “is most likely the only voice in his unit who will appeal to his men to show consideration for the native population solely on the basis of charity and human dignity.”<sup>45</sup> Chaplain Richard McGonigal (United Presbyterian) observed that Vietnam placed an inordinate amount of responsibility on young officers. “In a minisecond, these men must be D.A., judge, and jury for the lives of helpless civilians and the enemy.”<sup>46</sup> Without the chaplain’s guidance, then, Marines might fail to treat the Vietnamese as people, which would hinder “our ultimate goal in Vietnam, the right of people to live as they choose – in freedom and with human dignity.” Drawing on Catholic social teachings that emphasized humans made in God’s image as the moral foundation of society, Chaplain Glynn transformed military and political operations into religious and moral work. The political aims of

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<sup>44</sup> “CREDO Program Proposal,” February 19, 1971, CRB Box 193, Folder 3, FJC. CREDO endured beyond the war and evolved into a larger pastoral counseling program in which the acronym stood for Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation. See: “Chaplains Celebrate 40 Years of Special Services to Sailors,” *Navy News Service*, April 7, 2011.

<sup>45</sup> J.J. Glynn, Report of Chaplain’s Experiences and Observations in Vietnam, 1966, p. 1, FJC.

<sup>46</sup> Richard A. McGonigal, End of Tour Report, March 15, 1968, p. 5, FJC.

U.S. intervention in Southeast Asia—warding off Communism and implanting democracy, by whatever means necessary—depended on moral conduct, and in this rendering, chaplains provided critical instruction and influence. The chaplain reminded his men of “what is often difficult to see in the midst of war – the value of the individual life, Marine or Vietnamese.”<sup>47</sup> Men of the cloth might summon what men in fatigues could not: moral courage, the audacity to behave ethically during a nightmare—or so the military and chaplains hoped.<sup>48</sup>

What Glynn characterized as principled duty, other religious leaders scorned as warped loyalty. Any support for an immoral war risked elevating mechanical patriotism over prophetic leadership. Yet the dichotomy between obligation and objection was rarely that simple or clear.

## Objection to War

More than many other chaplains, veteran Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn (Jewish) understood the plight of conscientious objectors. A former pacifist turned padre in World War II, he knew Judaism did not compel conscientious objection. But when asked by Vietnam-era draft boards to “authenticate the assertion by young Jews that Judaism validated their refusal to participate in military activity,” he did so easily.<sup>49</sup> As the retired Marine chaplain told his Boston congregation in

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<sup>47</sup> J.J. Glynn, Report of Chaplain’s Experiences and Observations in Vietnam, 1966, p. 1, FJC.

<sup>48</sup> Events like the My Lai Massacre, in which soldiers murdered, raped, and mutilated hundreds of unarmed civilians in 1968, highlight the atrocities committed by Americans as well as both the necessity and futility of chaplains pushing for morality in the field. There were three soldiers who attempted to stop the massacre and shield civilians, actions for which they were initially treated as traitors but decades later vindicated and honored. There is an extensive literature on My Lai. See, for example: Joseph Goldstein, Burke Marshall, and Jack Schwartz, *The My Lai Massacre and Its Cover-Up: Beyond the Reach of the Law?: The Peers Commission Report* (New York: Free Press, 1976); James S. Olson and Randy Roberts, *My Lai: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 1998); William T. Allison, *My Lai: An American Atrocity in the Vietnam War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012); Michael Bilton and Kevin Sim, *Four Hours in My Lai* (New York: Penguin, 1993); For an expose of American war crimes in Vietnam, including My Lai, see Nick Turso, *Kill Anything That Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam* (New York: Metropolitan, 2013).

<sup>49</sup> Roland B. Gittelsohn, *Here I Am—Harnesses to Hope* (New York: Vantage Press, 1988), 96, 99. Another former chaplain, Air Force Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg (who became a historian, public intellectual, and head of the American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress), felt his past experiences bolstered his anti-war credentials.



1970, he felt no uncertainty precisely because “Judaism gives even higher priority to responsibly motivated conscience than to government and law.” Successful abstention from service in the armed forces—measured by a government-approved classification as a conscientious objector—depended on claims of conscience. But what exactly counted as conscience, and what its sources and foundations needed to be, rattled antiwar activists and local draft boards alike. By 1964, competing definitions and derivations of conscience landed in the Supreme Court. Through several Vietnam-era draft cases, the judiciary redefined conscience, slowly removing its ties to formal religion and crafting a generous interpretation open to believers, agnostics, and atheists alike.

Neither objection to war, nor objection to state conscription, was new in 1965. American anti-war convictions and anti-draft positions were as old as colonial military campaigns and as time-honored as the Selective Service system. But circumstances had changed, and resistance to imperial endeavors took on new urgency in a world ordered by Cold War lenses and colonial frames. Consensus on the morality and legitimacy of the Vietnam War hardly existed within the political elite, much less the citizenry as a whole, and few religious groups achieved unanimity within their ranks. Even the National Association of Evangelicals’ Chaplains Commission, which generally supported American military endeavors, described their men as “appalled at how complex the problems are at all levels.”<sup>50</sup> Combat in Vietnam could be equally correct and mysterious, as “only eternity will reveal how the wrath of man has been used to praise Him in Vietnam.”<sup>51</sup>

While the American state remained cagey about the soul’s role in buffering patriotic obligations, the definition of “conscientious objection” nevertheless evolved over the twentieth

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He was “‘terribly grateful’ for the opportunity to become a chaplain because it made it easier now to be an out-and-out dove on Vietnam.” George Dugan, “Chaplains Urged to Doff Uniforms,” *NYT*, June 4, 1970.

<sup>50</sup> Floyd Robertson, “Report: Commission on Chaplains and Service to Military Personnel, National Association of Evangelicals,” April 19, 1966, SC-113, Box 171, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton.

<sup>51</sup> Floyd Robertson, “Report: Commission on Chaplains and Service to Military Personnel, National Association of Evangelicals,” April 19, 1966, SC-113, Box 171, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton.

century. In the Selective Service's initial rendition, conscientious objection required belonging to a historic peace church such as the Mennonites and Quakers. Intended to ease the work of local draft boards, this simplistic metric failed. Plenty of individual citizens held conscientious beliefs about the ethics of war that stemmed from faith but not from pacifist faiths.<sup>52</sup> By World War II, the state accommodated those who "by reason of religious training and belief, [are] conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form" by providing two options: military service in non-combatant roles or civilian public service duties (generally in conservation camps, prisons, or mental hospitals).<sup>53</sup> Severing the tie between individual conscience and church (or synagogue) membership enabled conscientious objectors to fulfill a commitment to the state through alternative means. Revised again in the postwar period, the Selective Service Act of 1948 (amended in 1951 as the Universal Military Training and Service Act) exempted religious objectors from service provided they opposed all wars. Moreover, the law defined religion as "an individual's belief in a relation to a Supreme Being involving duties superior to those arising from any human relation." This emphatically and explicitly excluded "political, sociological, or philosophical views or a merely personal moral code."<sup>54</sup> By the time the United States entered Vietnam in 1954, then, lawful conscientious objection required a commitment to a total rejection of war stemming from an individual's faith in a "Supreme Being." Relatively capacious in its description of religion and categorically strict in its articulation of enmity to combat, the Selective Service guidelines became a political battleground as draft calls expanded, inductions soared, and resistance to American militarism surged.

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<sup>52</sup> For an excellent discussion of citizenship and conscientious objection during World War I, see Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 55-82. For an in-depth examination of one divided family's experience during the same period, see Louisa Thomas, *Conscience: Two Soldiers, Two Pacifists, One Family—A Test of Will and Faith in World War I* (New York: Penguin, 2011).

<sup>53</sup> The Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, Public Law 76-783 (September 16, 1940).

<sup>54</sup> The Selective Service Act of 1948, Public Law 1759 (June 24, 1948)

Faced with specific conditions governing the possibility and plausibility of registering with the state as an objector, several Americans took to the courts. Seeking accommodation for less religiously-determined opposition to war and lacking support from either Selective Service Director Lewis Hershey or Congress, Arno Sascha Jakobson, Forest Britt Peter, and Daniel Andrew Seeger refused to be inducted in the military. When petitioning for conscientious objector status, each offered an explanation that skirted an affirmation of belief in a Supreme Being, thereby triggering the rejections that produced lawsuits. The Supreme Court consolidated the three cases into what became known as *U.S. v. Seeger*. Heard in November 1964 and decided in March 1965, *Seeger* centered on how much latitude draft boards ought to grant to definitions of a Supreme Being.

To what degree did a conscientious objector need to believe in an entity that resembled a religious God? In a unanimous decision, the Warren Court accepted Seeger's position as sincere and thus his status as a state-sanctioned conscientious objector warranted. The justices also offered what it deemed an "objective" test to which the Selective Service could subject prospective objectors: "does the claimed belief occupy the same place in the life of the objector as an orthodox belief in God holds in the life of one clearly qualified for exemption?" So long as draftees' convictions stemmed from a way of thinking and worldview that paralleled the roles of religious doctrine and creed, they could validly object to participation in the American military. Rooted in the recognition that in 1948, when the Selective Service Act passed, "we were a nation of Buddhists, Confucianists, and Taoists, as well as Christians," the Court "attribute[d] tolerance and sophistication to the Congress, commensurate with the religious complexion of our communities."<sup>55</sup> Accounting for the diversity of the American religious landscape led the Court to define religion broadly in the realm of draft law.

But applying a broad definition of faith nevertheless clung to religion as a necessary

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<sup>55</sup> *U.S. v. Seeger*, 380 U.S. 163 (1965), at 185, 192-3.

condition of conscientious objection. Indeed, the *Seeger* decision underscored that no litigant “comes to us an avowedly irreligious person or as an atheist,” which, the accompanying footnote pointed out, would produce “quite different problems.”<sup>56</sup> Into that void leapt Elliot Ashton Welsh II. Faced with a 1964 Selective Service form that read “I am by reason of my religious training and belief, conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form,” Welsh crossed out “my religious training.” His local draft board, the appeals board, and the Department of Justice officer refused to sanction his revised statement as a defensible interpretation of the law; by 1966, Welsh was convicted for refusing induction and sentenced to three years in prison. This case presented the court with a far more vexing case than *Seeger* because Welsh waffled about the degree to which his beliefs emanated from a religious perspective. Over the course of his dispute with state officials, he held strongly to a fundamental principle that “war, from the practical standpoint, is futile and self-defeating and that from the more important moral standpoint it is unethical.”<sup>57</sup> When challenged about whether he understood this perspective as religious, Welsh acknowledged that it did not conform to a conventional use of the adjective, and thus did not claim it as such. But, the Court observed, in his “long and thoughtful letter” to the Appeal Board, he stated that his antiwar articles of faith were “certainly religious in the ethical sense of the word.”<sup>58</sup> Thus the Court’s conundrum: were ethics the equivalent of or part and parcel of religion? Or were ethics something like religion but not entirely the same? Or perhaps ethics sufficiently differed from religion so as to make them set apart and distinct?

In the five years following *Seeger*, the Warren Court had become the Burger Court, and the latter lacked the unanimity on the nature of religious objection to the draft that characterized the earlier decision. Nevertheless, a plurality of the justices agreed that Welsh deserved conscientious

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<sup>56</sup> *U.S. v. Seeger*, 380 U.S. 163 (1965), at 194.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in *Welsh v. U.S.*, 398 U.S. 333 (1970), at 339.

<sup>58</sup> *Welsh v. U.S.*, 398 U.S. 333 (1970), at 343.

objector status because, “the central consideration in determining whether the registrant's beliefs are religious is whether these beliefs play the role of a religion and function as a religion in the registrant's life,” and Welsh complied with this standard.<sup>59</sup> Writing for four members of the court, Justice Hugo Black explained this conclusion by pointing out that the statute “exempts from military service all those whose consciences, spurred by deeply held moral, ethical, or religious beliefs, would give them no rest or peace if they allowed themselves to become a part of an instrument of war.”<sup>60</sup> According to this rubric, morals, ethics, and religion stood synonymous and equal, all justifying—in comparable if not identical ways—state classification as a conscientious objector. Morals, ethics, and religion, in the Court’s equation, did not fall under the “essentially political, sociological, or philosophical” views or “merely personal moral code” that the draft law excluded.

But this perspective acquired only four votes. Justice John Harlan arrived at the same result—that Welsh was entitled to conscientious objector status—through altogether different logic. According to Harlan, morals and ethics, however sincerely held or fervently believed, neither fell under the same category as religion nor could be camouflaged as religion. He deemed the position held in *Seeger* “a remarkable feat of judicial surgery” and Black’s opinion “a lobotomy” for unfastening theism from religion; these moves reflected “an Alice-in-Wonderland world where words have no meaning” instead of recognizing that Congress elevated religious objection over non-religious objection.<sup>61</sup> However, denying conscientious objector status to those opposed to all war for non-theistic reasoning, he wrote, “runs afoul of the religious clauses of the First Amendment.”<sup>62</sup> For Harlan, *Welsh* presented an Establishment clause issue: the question was not how far to stretch the

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<sup>59</sup> *Welsh v. U.S.*, 398 U.S. 333 (1970), at 340.

<sup>60</sup> *Welsh v. U.S.*, 398 U.S. 333 (1970), at 345. Welsh was a 5-3 decision because Justice Harry Blackmun did not participate as he joined the court almost 6 months after oral arguments and 6 days before the decision was handed down.

<sup>61</sup> *Welsh v. U.S.*, 398 U.S. 333 (1970), at 352, 355. In a footnote, Harlan argues that the very elasticity of Black’s definition of religion avoided an Establishment clause problem.

<sup>62</sup> *Welsh v. U.S.*, 398 U.S. 333 (1970), at 346.

definition of religion, but rather (and in line with religion-state jurisprudence of the era) whether the state treated religion and secular beliefs and behaviors equally and consistently. To act non-preferentially, neither Congress nor the Selective Service could use a religion test to enable conscientious objection.<sup>63</sup> Adhering to the stance that “legislation must, at the very least, be neutral” and allowing for a long history of state-granted exemptions from conscription, Harlan accepted that the “prevailing opinion’s conscientious objector test...cures the defect of under-inclusion,” thus enabling all Americans to access conscientious objector status, regardless of creed.<sup>64</sup>

In dissenting from the view that Welsh deserved conscientious objector status, Justices Byron White (joined by Potter Stewart and Warren Burger) diagnosed Welsh’s anti-war beliefs as constituting “a personal moral code” that, like Justice Harlan contended, was not religion and thus expressly violated Congressional directives. But the force of such a non-religious position propelled the dissent in the opposite direction; if *Welsh* prompted any First Amendment concerns, the case tended toward Free Exercise, rather than Establishment, clause matters. The exclusion of Welsh (and other non-theistic objectors) from draft immunity was constitutionally meaningless because “nothing in the First Amendment prohibits drafting Welsh and other nonreligious objectors to war.” In a bit of curlicue logic, the dissent decided that Welsh had no standing to challenge the draft law on religious grounds because the statute did not recognize the non-believer as a participant in a draft-exempt group and thus triggered no First Amendment problem.<sup>65</sup> If Welsh’s not-quite-

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<sup>63</sup> A multitude of religion-state cases in the 1960s pushed the Court to adopt positions that required legislative neutrality or non-preferentialism between religion and secular positions. See, for example, *Torcaso v. Watkins*, 367 U.S. 488 (1961) [no test oaths for public office]; *Engel v. Vitale* 370 U.S. 421 (1962) [no school prayer, however generic]; *Sherbert v. Verner* 374 U.S. 398 (1963) [denying unemployment benefits to someone fired for religious beliefs requires a compelling government interest]; *Abington Township v. Schempp* 374 U.S. 203 (1963) [no school-sponsored Bible readings]; and *Epperson v. Arkansas* 393 U.S. 97 (1968) [no prohibitions on teaching evolution].

<sup>64</sup> *Welsh v. U.S.*, 398 U.S. 333 (1970), at 362, 366-7.

<sup>65</sup> *Welsh v. U.S.*, 398 U.S. 333 (1970), at 370. The dissent analogized “If the Constitution expressly provided that aliens should not be exempt from the draft, but Congress purported to exempt them and no others, Welsh, a citizen, could hardly qualify for exemption by demonstrating that exempting aliens is unconstitutional. By the same token, if the Constitution prohibits Congress from exempting religious believers, but Congress exempts them anyway, why should the invalidity of the exemption create a draft immunity for Welsh?” (369).

religious conviction did not itself deny Welsh standing or allow for the lower court's legal judgment, then attention to the purpose of exemptions highlighted the necessity of religious dispensation. White argued that Congress' constitutional mandate to "raise and support armies" existed pursuant to the constitutional directive to permit free exercise of religion; as a result, religious amnesty became necessary lest conscription force believers, contra their free exercise rights, to participate in combat. Protecting the faithful from mandatory service represented a compelling government interest; enabling the non-religious to avoid compulsory service, in contrast, did not. While the dissent did not carry the court, it attempted to shelve ambiguity as merely persnickety rather than engage with the increasingly blurry lines of anti-war sentiment.

Indeed, additional legislation and executive orders during the 1960s continued to recalibrate the nature of the draft. Curtailed student deferments, limited to four-year degrees and 24<sup>th</sup> birthdays, replaced generous student deferments. Graduate and professional degrees no longer offered an escape hatch for the committed pacifist or the privileged resister.

Yet for many Americans, Vietnam represented war-mongering on an unprecedented scale and a quandary that wholesale religious objection could not resolve. Religious groups, too, weighed in, condemning certain forms of state-sanctioned violence or moments in imperial interventions. Most American faiths expressed distaste for war—it was horrible, nasty, abhorrent, unfortunate, and detestable. But with the exception of explicitly pacifist faiths, denominations struggled over the boundaries of appropriate and acceptable war. There were cases, most notably World War II, in which war was necessary and thus religiously justified. But Vietnam teetered on the narrow edge of a rocky cliff, its grasp on legitimacy far more slippery than earlier military endeavors including Korea. What many Catholics considered an unjust war, others—the faithful and the skeptics alike—deemed an unwarranted military campaign. Their objection was not, as the draft law permitted, to all wars but to this particular war. They promoted a position of selective conscientious objection: their

conscience, their moral instincts, their ethical scruples, stipulated draft resistance, but only when the aims or conduct of war violated certain standards.<sup>66</sup>

The Boston *Beit Din*, or rabbinical court, similarly acknowledged that it could not make a “definitive finding” on Vietnam, since it “[did] not consider itself competent to do so as a judicial body.” Yet it engaged in ten months of study, querying Jewish sources as well as Congressional and executive branch documents and domestic and international journals, to arrive at a Jewish legal answer to the question of conscience. Rabbinical courts long functioned as communal sources of authority on religious dilemmas, ranging from ritual practice to business dealings to interpersonal relations. Matters of national policy and politics, however, rarely entered their orbit. Indeed, as the responsum writer, Rabbi Samuel Korff, plainly stated, “the U.S. Government quite obviously was not represented as a party before us.” But, as in the rest of American society, “this nightmare of Vietnam” raised doubts and uncertainty about heretofore assumed congenial relationships between religion and politics. What did the imperative to seek peace require? What constituted conscientious objection and was it allowed? And finally, in light of the prevailing antiwar rhetoric and draft cases before U.S. courts, “does Judaism make a distinction between religion and morality?”<sup>67</sup>

The Beit Din determined that the national judiciary (i.e. the Supreme Court) held the ultimate power to determine the legality of war, but individuals and communities retained the power to question and judge state action. Conscientious objection, when used as a means to confront the morality of state behavior (be it on matters of war or civil rights or any other question of justice) was therefore necessary. Indeed, dissent symbolized a robust, secure nation, not a fragile, weak one.

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<sup>66</sup> Catholic just war doctrine (*jus ad bellum*) focuses on seven related criteria: rightful cause; proper authority; comparative justice; peaceful intent; last resort; likelihood of success; and proportionality. Just war theory also sets parameters for behavior during war (*jus in bello*): discrimination; proportionality; minimum necessary force; fair treatment of prisoners of war; no evil means (rape, nuclear weapons, etc). Jean Bethke Elshtain, ed., *Just War Theory* (New York: NYU Press, 1991)

<sup>67</sup> Samuel I. Korff, “A Responsum on Questions of Conscience,” January 14, 1970, 10-11, 2, 4, available online: <http://www.utzedek.org/files/Boston%20Beit%20Din,%20Conscientious%20Objection%20Responsa.pdf>.



Following the lead of a memo written by political scientist Leonard J. Fein, the Jewish court agreed, “there is no a priori reason to indulge the absolute morality of total conscientious objection and to forbid the relative morality of selective conscientious objection.”<sup>68</sup> Jewish law, therefore, supports both forms of conscientious objection. On the matter of war specifically, the court adopted a nuanced stance. On the one hand, drawing on biblical sources, it recognized that it was wrong to “stand idly by the blood of thy neighbor” and that “man is his brother’s keeper.”<sup>69</sup> On the other hand, the court appreciated the fallibility of the state, noting that the government’s authority to conduct war “is not a mandate to violate the basic principles of justice and morality.”<sup>70</sup> In elegant language that co-opted rhetorical political currency of the 1968 election, the court wrote “the ‘silent majority’ that does not demonstrate against injustice, poverty, and hunger should not be forged into an instrument for the silencing of the minority whose concern is demonstrated through an expression of protest.”<sup>71</sup>

Religion without morality could lead to idolatry, which in turn led the court to conclude that religion and morality were inseparable. But just as “every religious experience sharpens the moral awareness of the individual,” so too did “every response engendered by moral persuasion give expression to a religious grounding of moral values.”<sup>72</sup> In this way, the righteous acted religiously even without grounding their beliefs and actions in a deity. For a religion rooted in conduct—ritual, practice, and behavior—this seemingly twisty logic was perfectly straightforward: noble deeds need not originate in religion to be religious.

With support and encouragement from religious leaders, conscientious objection began to

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<sup>68</sup> Korff, “A Responsum on Questions of Conscience,” 21-2.

<sup>69</sup> Korff, “A Responsum on Questions of Conscience,” 38-9. The quotes are from Leviticus 29:16 and Genesis 4:9, respectively.

<sup>70</sup> Korff, “A Responsum on Questions of Conscience,” 35.

<sup>71</sup> Korff, “A Responsum on Questions of Conscience,” 40.

<sup>72</sup> Korff, “A Responsum on Questions of Conscience,” 53.

infiltrate the ranks, much to the dismay of many chaplains who had to advise those who Army Chaplain Jack Brown (Southern Baptist) deemed “reluctant” soldiers.<sup>73</sup> Regulations stated that those seeking discharges on grounds of conscience had to undergo an interview with a chaplain, after which the chaplain would write a report that commented on “the sincerity of the individual in his belief and an expression of his opinion as to whether the individual’s objection to military duty is based on religious beliefs.”<sup>74</sup> The shift to acting like a local draft board was often uncomfortable. Chaplain Ronald L. Hedwall (Lutheran) felt ill-equipped to address the qualms lodged by an African-American soldier who, based on his own inquiries, had “adopted the view that we, as a nation, were wrong in being involved; and that he, as a Negro, had no business being involved.” He understood the history of American intervention in Vietnam “in quite an opposite way” than the chaplain had been instructed, which left Hedwall “greatly handicapped in my ability to counsel him.” And this was not an isolated incident, but rather an opening volley. Chaplains, Hedwall told his superiors, needed improved resources and more familiarity with anti-war positions and perspectives in order to best handle resistance in the field.<sup>75</sup> Although a Presbyterian chaplain maintained, “no chaplain can decide whether the protesting soldier is right or wrong in his decision,” Chaplain Brown spared no spite in addressing dissent in his midst.<sup>76</sup> He disapproved of the “negative influence” of the antiwar movement infecting combat-ready units, and found it difficult to offer neutral counsel. “I have little patience with men I consider cowards,” he wrote in his journal on May 11, 1968. A few months later, all he could do was exclaim: “Gracious! ... What a demanding ministry” in reference to those who threatened to renounce their citizenship, write to their congressmen, and inhabit a “defector’s

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<sup>73</sup> Jack Brown, *Another Side of Combat: A Chaplain Remembers Vietnam* (Nashville, TN: Cold Tree Press, 2006), 65-7.

<sup>74</sup> Army Regulations 635-20, January 5, 1966; Office of the Chief of Chaplains, “Historical Review, July 1965-December 1966,” 43.

<sup>75</sup> Ronald L. Hedwall, *Experiences and Observations in Vietnam*, August 22, 1967, 2, FJC.

<sup>76</sup> Chaplain H in “The Military Chaplaincy: Captive or Free?” 1968, xii, I-249, Box 15, Folder 93, AJHS.

attitude.”<sup>77</sup>

Despite his aggravation with wrestling with conscientious objectors, Chaplain Brown also recognized that reconciling deep Christian faith with violence, killing, and war was neither effortless nor obvious. Prior to arriving in Vietnam, he too had thought about these disjunctures, and he wrote an article on “The Question of Jesus and War” to address how Christian Americans could resolve this dilemma. Lessons from the Bible provided a clear, if not always well-marked, trail for coming to terms with religion and war. Tracing moments of anguish and anger—of Cain’s outcry “Am I my brother’s keeper?” and of Jesus’ admonition to aid the downtrodden—Brown found a script for the necessity of military intervention. In contrast to the Boston rabbinical court which complicated the message embedded in the story of Cain and Abel by seeing protest as a form of safeguarding, the Southern Baptist minister framed the vexed war as an instance of “defending with whatever means is necessary against those who strike my brother, whoever and wherever my brother might be.” Unmoored from political boundaries or geographic proximity, confronting the communist menace could be understood as innocent filial protection. Citing Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms, Brown further argued “the privileges of freedom and peace” created an obligation to fortify those “same blessings of freedom” and to “protect his brother from greed, covetousness, and aggression” worldwide. Not only could the United States aid Vietnam, but it also should do so. And with obligation came sacrifice—most often through the lives and bodies of virile American men—and this sacrifice, in turn, demanded absolute respect, not protest. The emphasis on respect and sacrifice enabled Brown to make a place for the “patriotic pacifist,” the religious believer who refused to bear arms but willingly accepted noncombatant service. This was responsible pacifism, a position distinct from the reams of draft dodgers, antiwar protesters, draft card burners, and Canada-bound dissidents who

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<sup>77</sup> Jack Brown, Journal Entries, May 11, 1968, May 15, 1968, September 8, 1968, September 14, 1968, quoted in Brown, *Another Side of Combat*, 65-7.

engaged in “irresponsible citizenship.”<sup>78</sup> Through lenses both religious and political, the chaplain carefully distinguished the righteous from the sinful, the accountable from the culpable, and the patriotic from traitorous.

Bob Cohoon was one of those men whom Chaplain Brown would have considered a nuisance, if not a full-fledged derelict. Stationed in San Antonio when he realized he could not continue to serve in the military, he requested a discharge on the basis of conscience. A meeting with his commanding officer, in which he “spoke freely, confident that as an American citizen I still possessed the rights of free speech and freedom of religion,” failed to yield a discharge, at which point he went AWOL. A responsible soldier, he felt the need to explain his status, telling his fellow members of the San Antonio Committee for Peace and Freedom that “the Army suppresses anti-war activities” and “I was being denied my rights of free speech and freedom of religion by Army harassment, restrictions and by the common manipulation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.... a soldier might be tried for treason or mutiny for merely [sic] being associated with a peace group.” What Chaplain Brown took to be cowardice, if not national and spiritual betrayal, many in the anti-war movement saw as unusual strength of spirit. As J. Harold Sherk, a Mennonite, explained, conscientious objection (CO) “may require moral stamina of an unusual kind, not only because it is a minority position, often misunderstood and sometimes despised, but because the CO’s call to the service of God and humanity may lead him to unusual hazards.”<sup>79</sup>

These hazards could extend to chaplains themselves. While clergy chose to enter the service as chaplains, they too occasionally questioned the morality and legitimacy of the war effort. Chaplain Harry Schreiner (Jewish) wanted to catalog unmitigated devotion among his charges, but even so,

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<sup>78</sup> Jack Brown, “The Question of Jesus and War,” *The Link: A Protestant Magazine for Armed Forces Personnel* 26 n. 1 (January 1968): 16-19, reprinted in Brown, *Another Side of Combat*, 3-8. From Brown’s perspective, the Southern Vietnamese were brothers.

<sup>79</sup> J. Harold Sherk (Mennonite), Manuscript – “What is a Conscientious Objector?” (1964), DG 025, Part II, Series A, Box 7, Folder: Correspondence (Mss article “What is a Conscientious Objector?”), SCPC.

occasional exceptions clouded his pronouncement that there was “no appreciable change” in soldiers’ diligence. He admitted that “isolated cases among draftees...of doubt” existed and acknowledged that exchanges with newly inducted chaplains “reveal[ed] that a minority of the above have serious doubts about our situation in Vietnam. They are disturbed by the ‘credibility gap’ in govt. circles including the President. They question the moral issues in respect to our involvement in V[ietnam].”<sup>80</sup> Chaplain Stephen Levinson (Jewish) was one of those rabbis who agonized about how to handle his service obligation in light of his growing moral aversion to Vietnam. As soon as the Central Conference of American Rabbis validated selective conscientious objection, he requested a discharge because of the “deep, personal distress” the war provoked.<sup>81</sup>

While some Jewish chaplains struggled with the specific dilemmas kindled by the ongoing inferno in Southeast Asia, Chaplain James R. Forte (Presbyterian USA) identified why simultaneous allegiance to God and country could be far more precarious than chaplaincy boosters declared. “Jesus Christ knows no national boundaries. The military establishment knows *only* national boundaries. And the chaplain is part of that establishment.”<sup>82</sup> To be an officer in the U.S. military was to obey a human and a governmental commander-in-chief, and yet God—the ultimate authority to a member of clergy, if not also the faithful laity—observed no such state loyalties. Theological anticommunism notwithstanding, an omniscient and omnipresent God might inspire the Geneva Convention protocols but hardly obeyed the DMZ or dispersed napalm. This was the essential problem facing a skeptical or uncertain chaplain in the Vietnam War-era. As the valence of good—or at least necessary and worthwhile—war slipped away, the once conjoined dual loyalties to faith and to nation, no longer overlapped or coincided quite so smoothly.

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<sup>80</sup> Harry Schreiner to Aryeh Lev, March 24, 1967, I-249, Box 28, Folder 196, AJHS.

<sup>81</sup> Stephen Levinson to Bertram Korn, June 20, 1968, MS-34, Box 24, Folder 5, AJA.

<sup>82</sup> “The Military Chaplaincy: Captive or Free?” 1968, iii, I-249, Box 15, Folder 93, AJHS.

## Selective Conscientious Objection

The Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy (CJC) was in a bind. It barely mustered 81 percent of the 73-chaplain quota it promised to supply to the United States Army, Navy, and Air Force. Already 12 rabbis short, the group knew it would lose an additional 14 men as they completed their terms of service in the remainder of 1966, thus bringing the total of Jewish chaplains owed to the Armed Forces to 26.<sup>83</sup> And the war in Vietnam was escalating, protests against the war increasing, and rabbinical students at Yeshiva University (YU), the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) growing more resistant to military service. After all, as future members of clergy, the men who intended to be American rabbis had no obligation to enlist; as students and then as ordained rabbis they stood outside the reach of the Selective Service. The CJC, a subgroup of the Jewish Welfare Board, saw the situation differently, however. Since 1950, the CJC, in conjunction with the three main seminaries of the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform movements, had operated its own internal draft to provide the military with adequate rabbinical representation. Working together, the three major Jewish movements each furnished one-third of the military's Jewish chaplaincy quota and thereby ensured that Jewish military personnel—whether conscripts, enlistees, or officers—could reasonably access Jewish chaplains.

Vietnam broke this system. By the mid-1960s, more and more rabbinical students were filing statements of conscientious objection to war, and thus conscientious objection to serving in the military in any capacity, even as noncombatant chaplains. Orthodox rabbinical students instigated the clamor for change. The burden of the chaplaincy fell disproportionately on young, single, fit men—for the CJC's draft followed the contours of the Selective Service in separating men by marital and parental status and relied on military physicals to vet the health of men. Most Orthodox

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<sup>83</sup> Report of the Committee on Chaplaincy to the CCAR, June 8, 1966, MS 34, Box 23, Folder 2, AJA.

YU students were married and relatively unaffected by the draft. As a result, the very small proportion of YU students who fell within the draft's scope became some of its most vocal opponents. By winter 1968, YU pulled out of the CJC draft, and the Conservative Movement's Rabbinical Assembly (RA) followed suit. In 1966, the RA had proclaimed, "the American rabbinate cannot shirk its responsibility in providing chaplains." But just two years later, at its annual convention in March 1968, the organization took a radically different position. No longer concerned with "shirking responsibility," it adopted the report of its internal Committee on Chaplaincy, which asserted, "the present system of drafting men into the military chaplaincy is morally untenable and practically unworkable."<sup>84</sup> With a mere 66 Jewish chaplains in the military and 15 to be released over the summer, only the three campuses of HUC-JIR retained its commitment to the draft and to the responsibility to serve Jewish personnel.<sup>85</sup> The Reform Movement's reluctance to remove its students from the chaplaincy would, in the words of the Rabbinical Assembly, produce "a sharp crisis of conscience with which we must reckon."<sup>86</sup>

Although the number of seminarians was not huge, they were vocal, passionate, and enmeshed in a much larger, national debate about the viability of the chaplaincy, about the feasibility and ethics of "selective conscientious objection," about the tension between objection and obligation on the part of religious leaders, and about the meaning of freedom within a democracy. They were at once part of the mainstream and sitting at its periphery. They tangled with values and ideas as Americans, Jews, and future rabbis—at times expressing common feelings and at times

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<sup>84</sup> Rabbinical Assembly, "Report of the Chaplaincy Study Committee" (1966), MS 34, Box 23, Folder 4, AJA; Report of Committee on Chaplaincy, Adopted at Rabbinical Assembly Convention, March 25, 1968, p. 3, I-249, Box 15, Folder 93, AJHS.

<sup>85</sup> "Chaplain 'Draft' Ended by Rabbis," *The New York Times*, March 27, 1968. The national media and Jewish press covered the RA's public censure of the chaplaincy draft. For examples of the Jewish press coverage see: "Chaplains Oppose Rabbinic Balking," *The Jewish Week* [Washington, DC], March 28, 1968; "Jewish Chaplains Oppose 'Selective Objection' Policy," *The Jewish Exponent*, March 29, 1968; "Chaplaincy Draft Loses As Need for Men Grows," *The Jewish Post & Opinion*, April 5, 1968.

<sup>86</sup> Report of Committee on Chaplaincy, Adopted at Rabbinical Assembly Convention, March 25, 1968, p. 3, I-249, Box 15, Folder 93, AJHS.

proffering atypical arguments. They grappled with collusion in the violence of war as students within a Jewish movement whose political orientation was generally anti-war but whose communal commitments demanded sacrifice. Overall, then, they questioned and debated the role of the military chaplain, wondering whether they could accept a position that, for fifty years, the American Jewish community had seen as a badge of American religious legitimacy.

The HUC debate over conscientious objection and the military chaplaincy hinged on the meaning of morality. When announcing new registration procedures in 1965, Nelson Glueck, the president of HUC, stated that the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) “makes it a moral obligation for all eligible graduates of the College-Institute to serve in the Chaplaincy of the American armed forces.” Whereas the Conservative movement’s Rabbinical Assembly had initially framed the chaplaincy as a responsibility to American Jewry, the Reform movement’s CCAR insisted that duty to serve Jewish personnel in the military represented an ethical imperative.<sup>87</sup> A 1966 CCAR memo further elaborated, “We are all mutually obligated to provide sufficient Jewish chaplains for the needs of our men and women in the armed forces....All personal desires must inevitably bow to this obligation and need.” The appeal to need was not vacuous. Marine Chaplain Richard Dryer reported traveling extensively over the Da Nang-Chu Lai-Phubai area in order to serve “mobile and widely scattered” Jewish personnel who, despite grueling “combat patrols and similar missions,” achieved a 90 percent attendance rate at services and classes held by the itinerant chaplain. An additional Marine Jewish chaplain, Dryer noted, would be “a double boon” as it would enable more and better outreach to Jewish men as well as free up the Christian chaplains who had been pitching in.<sup>88</sup> Thus while the CCAR’s position may not have reflected the outlook of all rank-and-file Reform

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<sup>87</sup> The distinctions made by each movement followed existing ideological affiliations, in which Conservative Judaism emphasized Jewish peoplehood and Reform Judaism foregrounded Jewish ethics.

<sup>88</sup> Nelson Glueck Memo to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Students, February 11, 1965, MS 34, Box 22, Folder 1, AJA; Chaplaincy Coordinating Committee of HUC-JIR and CCAR to Members of the Classes of 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, and



rabbis, it nevertheless raised the stakes of resisting the charge to enlist as chaplains. From the CCAR's perspective, the obligation to staff the military chaplaincy stemmed not from patriotic commitment but from moral command and communal obligation.

The CCAR's stance echoed that of Protestants embroiled in comparable disputes about the moral dilemmas engendered by the military chaplaincy within their own denominations.<sup>89</sup> Rabbi Bertram Korn—a World War II chaplain and head of the CCAR's Chaplaincy Committee—informed HUC students that “chaplains are not propagandists, and they do not give religious sanction to war. Rather, they respond to the realities of life and the needs of Jews – which is the responsibility of all rabbis.” Similarly, an editorial from the General Commission on Army and Navy Chaplains, the parallel entity to the Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy, asserted that the role of the military chaplain “does not constitute or imply an endorsement of war in general or of any wars in particular.” Rather, it continued, “as morally responsible men, chaplains are not permitted to ignore the larger context in which they serve. It is to be expected that chaplains will be alert and sensitive to conditions of needless inhumanity and unlawful acts of war which might compromise their nation or undermine their own integrity and witness as ministers of the Gospel.”<sup>90</sup> That the military employed the chaplain did not, according to this logic, mitigate the chaplain's own religious training, ordination, and beliefs. The chaplain's uniform did not obstruct loyalty to religious creed or moral standards; in fact, the chaplain served watch, guarding the military from itself, from proclivities toward reckless and unnecessary violence that threatened both God and country.

Rabbinical students did not find this line of argument compelling. In 1965, the CCAR

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thereafter, March 21, 1966, MS 34, Box 22, Folder 13, AJA; Richard E. Dryer to Aryeh Lev, July 23, 1965, MS 34, Box 22, Folder 3, AJA.

<sup>89</sup> For a variety of religious arguments in support of selective conscientious objection, see James Finn, ed., *A Conflict of Loyalties: The Case for Selective Conscientious Objection* (New York: Pegasus, 1968) and John A. Rohr, *Prophets Without Honor: Public Policy and the Selective Conscientious Objector* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971).

<sup>90</sup> Report of the Committee on the Chaplaincy of the Student Rabbinic Association of HUC-NY, Feb 29, 1968, p. 7, MS 34, Box 24, Folder 2, AJA; “Editor's Note: Dissent Over Vietnam,” *The Chaplain* (June 1968).

Chaplaincy Committee received its first petition “in a number of years” for an exemption from the Chaplaincy Draft on the grounds of conscientious objection. From the LA campus of HUC, Louis Feldman wrote that he was “completely opposed to the use of military force under any circumstance” and that he believed it was “morally wrong to accept a noncombatant position in the armed forces” because “such noncombatant roles...make the combatant soldier possible.” As an institution, the military was “immoral” and Feldman could not, in good conscience, acquiesce to serving it or its members.<sup>91</sup> Less than a year later, Richard Lavin filed his claim for CO status, noting that his politics and his religion were indivisible, and “paramount in my religious convictions is a belief in the dignity and holiness of human life.” As a result, he argued, “the presence of such a clergyman in the military identifies those forces with a sanctity that does not exist. His presence is a manifestation of the myth of the ‘holy war.’ His function, as a chaplain, can only serve to perpetuate that myth.”<sup>92</sup> Military chaplains, these students asserted, provided moral cover for an immoral military, a role they could neither inhabit nor endorse.

For most rabbinical students, however, the question of conscientious objection to war was more nuanced. Few held absolute pacifist positions, but many found American intervention in Vietnam intolerable, immoral, and shameful. As the HUC-NY students stated in February 1968, “the specific problem with which we are faced is a rather intractable compulsory chaplaincy system” given that “many rabbinic students doubt the morality of serving as a chaplain in or during the Viet Nam war or doubt the advisability of having a compulsory chaplaincy system at all from either a moral or expedient point of view.”<sup>93</sup> Jerold Levy, a rabbinical student set to graduate from the HUC

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<sup>91</sup> Bertram Korn to CCAR Chaplaincy Committee, November 1965; Louis Feldman to Sylvan Schwartzman, November 8, 1965, MS 34, Box 22, Folder 3, AJA.

<sup>92</sup> Richard Lavin to Chaplaincy Coordinating Committee of HUC-JIR and CCAR, October 9, 1966, MS 34, Box 23, Folder 3, AJA.

<sup>93</sup> Report of the Committee on the Chaplaincy of the Student Rabbinic Association of HUC-NY, Feb 29, 1968, p. 13, MS 34, Box 24, Folder 2, AJA.

in the spring 1968—right as the war in Vietnam reached its apex—asserted that HUC’s mandatory chaplaincy requirement amounted to nothing less than Jewish and American institutional trampling on individual freedom and conscience. He accused Rabbi Korn and the Chaplaincy Committee of “stifl[ing] our most deeply held—one might say, *religiously* held—convictions against involvement in this immoral war; we should subject ourselves to the obedient political silence required of officers in the armed forces; we should rather than provide true religious leadership.”<sup>94</sup> The particularity of Vietnam, not a universal opposition to war, weakened and then dissolved the Jewish commitment to the chaplaincy. Although American rabbis had eagerly entered the American military chaplaincy since World War I, Vietnam—“this immoral war,” in Levy’s words—demanded a new form of religious leadership, an obeisance to God rather than country, and a resistance to unyielding military might.

Participating in the chaplaincy not only represented a potential collusion with an immoral government, but also an abrogation of the rabbi’s ability to lead through criticism and dissent. HUC students analyzing the chaplaincy recognized that “any participation in demonstrations, rallies, meetings, or counseling sessions which were aimed against the policies of the United States Government would be a violation of the oath taken at the time one receives one’s commission.” Air Force Chaplain Nathan Landman disagreed, arguing, “there is no such thing as ‘absolute freedom’ of the pulpit.” Rather, he asserted, “the preacher has to take into consideration the audience to whom he is preaching. He has to be dedicated to meeting their spiritual needs and enlarging their spiritual horizons....When a chaplain preaches on the politics of Vietnam to men in uniform, the best he can

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<sup>94</sup> Jerold Levy, letter to the editor of *The Reconstructionist*, April 17, 1968, emphasis original. The personnel strength of the U.S. military in Vietnam reached its height (543,400) in April 1968, and in November 1968, Richard Nixon was elected in part on a platform to end the war, although the U.S. would not leave Vietnam until 1973. See Henry F. Ackermann, *He Was Always There: U.S. Army Chaplain Ministry in the Vietnam Conflict* (Washington: GPO, 1989), 198.

do is demoralize their own performance.”<sup>95</sup>

Even as Jewish chaplains debated the latitudes afforded and the restrictions policed by the military, the question of freedom of conscience continued to plague the CCAR and the Jewish community writ large. On the “delicate and explosive” issue of the chaplaincy, Rabbi Stephen Passamaneck wondered whether the CCAR was “willing to put our morality where our mouth is.” Given that “coercion and conscription are indeed anathemas to a group of Rabbis who profess severally and collectively the absolute moral and religious value of personal freedom for all men,” Passamaneck continued, “how can we deny this freedom absolutely to our own members?”<sup>96</sup> Meanwhile *The Jewish Advocate* editorialized, “One of the positive factors that has emerged from the national anguish over the Vietnam War is the nagging recognition that if democracy is to flower fully, individual freedom must be expanded.” Thus, the paper asserted, the nation needed to recognize “selective but genuine conscientious objection” to war in part because only voluntary spiritual leadership could nourish soldiers and a nation in crisis.<sup>97</sup>

By the late 1960s, the viability of “selective conscientious objection” as a moral, political, and military standpoint wracked the nation, and American Jews actively engaged in the debate. Rabbi David Max Eichhorn, a retired Army chaplain who led the CJC, rejected selective conscientious objection as ignoble and destructive; pacifists, he noted, supported the chaplaincy “while the

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<sup>95</sup> Nathan Landman to Samuel Karff, May 38, 1968 (emphasis original), MS 34, Box 24, Folder 5, AJA. Landman’s position echoed that of a Presbyterian chaplain surveyed for the church’s query about the chaplaincy. In asking whether the chaplaincy was “captive or free,” one Chaplain M responded, “I am at least as unfettered as a pastor in his civilian parish when such questions as conscience versus tact arise.” See *The Military Chaplaincy: Captive or Free*, I-249, Box 15, Folder 93, AJHS. Aryeh Lev also wrote an impassioned defense of the chaplaincy, “The Function and Freedom of the Military Chaplaincy,” I-249, Box 25, Folder 93, AJHS.

<sup>96</sup> Stephen Passamaneck to Al Akselrod, August 5, 1968, MS 34, Box 24, Folder 6, AJA. Passamaneck added that career self-determination “allows the rabbi—not just the newly ordained rabbis—to go wherever he feels his ministry is needed; suburbia, the military, Hillel, the hip scene, wherever.” For Passamaneck, this was critical because Christianity threatened young American Jews: “Once the rabbinate relinquishes its contact with the military, the military chaplaincy perforce becomes entirely Christian. I put it to you: If full time Hillel directors on large campuses cannot be altogether successful against Christian missionizing, how much the less can a part time civilian chaplain hope to outmaneuver skilled young pastors?”

<sup>97</sup> “The Conscience of Chaplains,” *The Jewish Advocate*, March 28, 1968.

pseudo-pacifist, the ‘selective’ COs try to destroy the chaplaincy.”<sup>98</sup> Most American Jews, in contrast, found the idea of selective conscientious objection more palatable and understandable than total conscientious objection. Even Rabbi Bertram Korn, a tireless advocate for the chaplaincy who viewed conscientious objection skeptically, hinted at the need for a less categorical stance. In 1965, when the CCAR received its first petition for CO status from Louis Feldman, Korn responded to the rabbinical student by allowing for his convictions but nevertheless requesting that he consider a series of questions before committing himself to the CO position. First, he asked, “If the equivalent of Nazis were to arise in Europe or in America someday and attempt to wipe out the Jews by force, would you be willing to let that force have its way without opposing it in any physical fashion whatsoever?” Second, he queried, “If the Arab states were again to attack Israel and you were a resident there, would you refuse to take up arms against them while they made every possible effort to drive the people of Israel into the sea and exterminate them?”<sup>99</sup> In attempting to suss out the veracity and extent of Feldman’s convictions, Korn invoked both the recent past and present day, to considerations of Jews as victims and Jews as fighters. Couched in the rhetoric of Arab nationalism and in the biblical language of Pharaoh’s efforts to extinguish the Israelites in the Red Sea, Korn pressed the rabbinical student to assess whether his moral objection to war extended to all times and places, to the Holocaust and the nascent state of Israel, to specifically Jewish causes as well as American ones. Could an American Jewish rabbi really abhor participation in all wars?

For Korn, the answer was, undoubtedly, no. Indeed, for Korn as well as for other vociferous advocates of the chaplaincy—many of whom served as chaplains in a “good war,” World War II—the commitment was not to the American nation, to American empire, or to American force. The allegiance—religious and moral—was to *k’lal Yisrael*, or to the Jewish community within the United

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<sup>98</sup> David Max Eichhorn note appended to Jerold Levy letter to the editor, April 17, 1968, I-259, Box 15, Folder 93, AJHS.

<sup>99</sup> Bertram Korn to Louis Feldman, December 22, 1965, MS 34, Box 22, Folder 3, AJA.

States. As Aryeh Lev wrote, the military granted Judaism its standing in tri-faith America and thereby “accorded it the respected status which is now has in the total American community.” Abdicating the chaplaincy to address the problem of Vietnam was, he argued, “like using a cap gun to explode an iceberg.” Not only did it represent an ineffective solution, but it would harm only American Jews, not the government: “To remove Jewish chapels and chaplains from that service is to take from the Jewish GI a very important source of comfort, self-expression, and hope. Such a step would in no way affect the policies of our government in Vietnam.”<sup>100</sup>

But the late 1960s were a time of “impossible polarization.”<sup>101</sup> Appeals to Jewish community could not, as a rule, overcome the students’ opposition to an immoral war. Even chaplains in the field were not immune: one navy chaplain found himself more and more distressed by the war and could not countenance a position other than selective conscientious objection. On that basis, he requested a release from the service.<sup>102</sup> On the question of moral obligation, HUC students and leaders continued to volley back and forth: to individual conscience or to the American Jewish community. HUC held on to the chaplaincy draft and commitment to service for months to follow, over and against the “semi-yippy” students who seemed to enter the seminary in greater numbers each year. The draft deferments accorded to clergy may well have increased the proportion of protesting students, for seminaries stood as prospective shelters for those seeking a means of legal draft-dodging. The CCAR’s Chaplaincy Committee rejected the Reform movement’s inclination to dissolve the chaplaincy draft, asserting that they would “not be stampeded into the rejection of our moral duty.” But their verbal protests could not compete with the ever-increasing moral opposition to war: over the course of 1968 and 1969, more and more HUC students would file for CO or

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<sup>100</sup> Aryeh Lev to Mark Goldman, February 24, 1969, MS 34, Box 25, Folder 4, AJA.

<sup>101</sup> Sylvan Schwartzman to Bertram Korn, May 1, 1968, MS 34, Box 24, Folder 3, AJA.

<sup>102</sup> Stephen Levinson to Bertram Korn, June 20, 1968, MS 34, Box 24, Folder 5, AJA.

selective CO status. In 1969, the CCAR extinguished the draft.<sup>103</sup> For Bertram Korn, Sylvan Schwartzman, Aryeh Lev, and the other defenders of the military chaplaincy, there was perhaps one final, if small, victory. In 1969, Peter Rubinstein, the HUC-NY student who led the student movement against the chaplaincy, decided, after much “thinking and soul-searching” to accept a commission as a Navy chaplain.<sup>104</sup>

For prospective chaplains, selective conscientious objection offered an avenue through which they could retain fidelity to faiths that did not proclaim pacifism as well as to beliefs that did not condone wanton violence. In this way, they could withstand the pressure to consecrate state behaviors they found unacceptable. As the NAE reported, somewhat derisively, “The Methodist Church has many church leaders with rather strong pacifist leanings who do not feel ministers should serve in the chaplaincy where the preaching of such doctrine would be restricted.”<sup>105</sup> But as clergy, chaplains held envious positions from the perspective of other selective conscientious objectors. Freed from the noose of the draft, anti-war ministers, priests, and rabbis could simply choose not to volunteer for military service.

Draft-eligible laymen, in contrast, lacked an administrative escape route (though the road to Canada aided some). Guy Gillette (Humanist) refused to comply with his draft notice, declining induction in the armed forces, and Louis Negre (Catholic) sought an honorable discharge from the service. Both viewed Vietnam as an abhorrent overreach of state power; their aversion to soldiering was not universal but particular, aimed at U.S. campaigns in Southeast Asia. The court consolidated the two cases, but neither man found the relief he sought. Written by Justice Thurgood Marshall, the

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<sup>103</sup> Bertram Korn to CCAR Executive Board, May 19, 1969, MS 34, Box 25, Folder 6; Sylvan Schwartzman to Bertram Korn, October 18, 1968, MS 34, Box 24, Folder 7, AJA. For petitions and letters requesting CO and SCO status, see MS 34, Boxes 24 and 25, AJA.

<sup>104</sup> Peter Rubinstein to Sylvan Schwartzman, January 15, 1969, MS 34, Box 25, Folder 4, AJA.

<sup>105</sup> Floyd Robertson, “Report: Commission on Chaplains and Service to Military Personnel, National Association of Evangelicals,” September 20, 1967, SC-113, Box 171, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton College Special Collections.

8-1 majority opinion in *Gillette* discerned neither a religious preference nor an alternative interpretation of the statutory language that granted exemptions only to those “conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form.” Plain in its declaration and simple in its meaning, the law clearly stated “that conscientious scruples relating to war and military service must amount to conscientious opposition to participating personally in any war and all war.”<sup>106</sup> Even if selective conscientious objection emerged from a religious belief, moreover, the Selective Service standard of opposition to all war still applied to every draft-age American male, regardless of his religious affiliation or lack thereof. Indeed, in the interest of equity and fairness to all, it was imperative to maintain a system in which “the relevant individual belief is simply objection to all war, not adherence to any extraneous theological viewpoint” lest the “more articulate, better educated, or better counseled” prevail where the less sophisticated, poorly educated, or poorly advised might fail.<sup>107</sup> The very malleability of selective objection voided its legal plausibility as a matter of public policy.

While the court focused on the need to maintain the integrity of the draft and the democratic impulse at the heart of mass conscription, antiwar activists—religious and secular—hewed to selective conscientious objection as an utterly reasonable and appropriate approach to the exigencies of Vietnam. It remained possible, they felt, that other wars, like some past wars, would meet their moral standards. Justice William Douglas’ meditative dissent embraced the religious cause at the heart of *Gillette*’s plea: “I had assumed that the welfare of the single human soul was the ultimate test of the vitality of the First Amendment.”<sup>108</sup> Although Douglas lacked company, his

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<sup>106</sup> *Gillette v. U.S.* 401 U.S. 437 (1971), at 444.

<sup>107</sup> *Gillette v. U.S.* 401 U.S. 437 (1971), at 455, 458. The rhetoric of fairness echoes the 1967 Selective Service report, *In Pursuit of Equity: Who Serves When Not All Serve?* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1967). The data on enlisted men during Vietnam clearly demonstrate, however, that the “more articulate, better educated, or better counseled”—if understood as markers of class and schooling—did find ways to avoid the military altogether or, at the very least, escape deployment in Vietnam. See Appy, *Working Class War*.

<sup>108</sup> Quoted in *Gillette v. U.S.* 401 U.S. 437 (1971), at 470.



dissent also pointed to the ultimate power of selective conscientious objection. He concluded with a quote from *Board of Education v. Barnette* (1943), another wartime case that permitted Jehovah's Witnesses (and any others) to desist from the pledging allegiance to the flag every morning at school. In writing "freedom to differ is not limited to things that do not matter much.... the test of its substance is the right to differ as to things that touch the heart of the existing order,"<sup>109</sup> Douglas presaged the larger implications of selective conscientious objection for the Selective Service system.

"The existing order" could not remain, and the inability legally to accommodate selective conscientious objection ultimately dismantled the Selective Service draft as it had doomed the Jewish seminaries' internal chaplaincy draft.<sup>110</sup> The state had long been able to contain conscientious objection by bracketing pacifism because, as an outgrowth of historic peace churches, the categorical refusal to serve in the military (and, to a lesser extent, in combatant roles) made no distinction in the origins, methods, aims, or outcomes of war. But selective conscientious objection operated according to a radically different logic, deriving its legitimacy from parsing, distinguishing, and evaluating war's causes, means, and ends. In this way, it challenged one of the fundamental domains of the modern state—the ability and need to wage war.

### **Caught in the Crossfire: The End of the Military Chaplaincy?**

The angst surrounding the morality of the war, the military and the chaplaincy reached a fever pitch by the early 1970s. In 1966, the Military Chaplains' Association resolved that chaplains who served in Vietnam were "unanimous in their agreement that they, with the men they are committed to serve, are where they ought to be, that our mission is just and that the need of the

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<sup>109</sup> Quoted in *Gillette v. U.S.* 401 U.S. 437 (1971), at 470-71.

<sup>110</sup> On the turn and transition to an all-volunteer military, see Beth Bailey, *America's Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2009).

people there for our support, military, financial, and humanitarian, is real and urgent.”<sup>111</sup> However, in response to growing questions about the efficacy and morality of Vietnam, the United Presbyterian Church asked whether the military chaplaincy was “captive or free.” Could a church committed to peace and reconciliation support a military ministry? It was an unscientific survey, but it offers a telling snapshot of the concerns and priorities of the men sufficiently concerned to reply. Of the 23 chaplains who responded, most agreed that they retained freedom of the pulpit in the service—or at least maintained a position as “unfettered” as civilian pastors serving at the will of their congregations in circumstances “when such questions as conscience versus tact arise.”<sup>112</sup> Indeed, Chaplain B, an infantry chaplain in Vietnam, emphasized that he had “preached against the war, even the war in Vietnam” without any repercussions from his superiors whom, he noted, attended his services.<sup>113</sup> Chaplain L similarly insisted that clergy played a pivotal role as patriotic questioners and critics. Commanders “worth their salt at all do not want ‘yes men’ as religious teachers,” he stated, and in his estimation, his role in the armed forces lent a moral voice and a moral force to military endeavors. He would “raise unholy hell,” for example, were he to witness uncontrolled or unscrupulous treatment of prisoners. Whether he would be in a position to observe such action, he did not say.

Chaplain E suggested that there might well be a limitation on a chaplain’s freedom of speech but if so, it was “self-imposed” because military ministers limited their controversial stances to conversations within the armed forces. “My own persuasion is near pacifism, although I believe war

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<sup>111</sup> “1966 Convention Resolutions,” *The Chaplain* 39, no. 3 (May-June 1966): 24.

<sup>112</sup> Chaplain M in The United Presbyterian Church, “The Military Chaplaincy: Captive or Free?” 1968, viii, I-249, Box 15, Folder 93, AJHS. The Church anonymized the participating chaplains’ names but listed the Army, Navy, and Air Force chaplains queried as Richard L. Andrist; Richard D. Black; Richard D. Clewell; Robert T. Deming, Jr; Clifford M. Drury; Leonard S. Edmonds; James R. Forte; Lawrence L. Glover; Philip R. Hampe; Gene Huntzinger; Caleb H. Johnson; Harold B. Lawson; Richard A. McGonigal; Peter D. Salerna; Simon H. Scott, Jr; Eli Takesian; and John H. Urey. They came from the ranks of the active and reserve Army, Navy, and Air Force, and they ranged from new lieutenants to Army Majors, Air Force Colonels, and retired Navy Captains.

<sup>113</sup> “The Military Chaplaincy: Captive or Free?” 1968, vii, I-249, Box 15, Folder 93, AJHS.

is justified under certain conditions. I have presented this view from the pulpit, along with other controversial subjects, and in no way am restricted.”<sup>114</sup> He saw his intellectual opponents in nuanced terms—as “thoughtful people” who nevertheless condoned American action in Vietnam—and used the contrast between his position and theirs to show that the military allowed for heterogeneous points of view. From Chaplain F’s perspective, “All war is immoral, but...to wish war away does not make reality, incorruptibility, or morality.” As a result, he suggested, “chaplains minister to their men in all circumstances with the desire to act as God’s reconciling agent.” Here was a new definition of the chaplaincy and of obligation: military clergy stood at the interface between God and country, loyal to God and to soldiers’ reckoning with God. If this meant feuding with commanders, then so be it, as vulnerability stood at the core of “standing for the gospel.”<sup>115</sup>

Not all chaplains found the military as hospitable or open to difference. Chaplain K sounded a more cautious note, recognizing that the cost of criticism could be one’s career: “a man can be given a bad efficiency report because he is not gung-ho about the killing aspects of war.”<sup>116</sup> These comments echoed those of Army Chaplain Samuel Stahl (Jewish) who found the military hostile toward his opinions and lamented that he lacked freedom of the pulpit. “We can not freely apply Jewish insights to the Vietnam situation and other crises of equal gravity because we have donned the uniform,” he fumed. “I am constantly frustrated by these military limitations on free speech.”<sup>117</sup> Among chaplains who found the military restrictive, many sought to change the institution rather than forego their work. Chaplain H encouraged the United Presbyterian Church to help reform the military chaplaincy, or at least press the Department of Defense to refine how and when it used chaplains. Though he did not clarify exactly what these modifications ought to include, Chaplain J

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<sup>114</sup> “The Military Chaplaincy: Captive or Free?” 1968, x, I-249, Box 15, Folder 93, AJHS.

<sup>115</sup> “The Military Chaplaincy: Captive or Free?” 1968, xii, I-249, Box 15, Folder 93, AJHS.

<sup>116</sup> “The Military Chaplaincy: Captive or Free?” 1968, x, I-249, Box 15, Folder 93, AJHS.

<sup>117</sup> Samuel Stahl to Aryeh Lev, October 29, 1968, MS-34, Box 24, folder 8, AJA. Chaplain Stahl is of no relation to me.

minced no words in coaxing the church to alter or even abolish the chaplaincy. “Will it be God first or nationalism first?” he roared. Fearing the United States had embraced “American Shinto,” a term coined by historian Martin Marty to refer to a form of idolatrous nationalist self-worship from which there was no escape, the chaplain wanted his church to intervene to reform or detach itself from the chaplaincy.<sup>118</sup>

As religious voices questioning the legitimacy of the Vietnam War grew more insistent in the late 1960s, so too did the possibility of separating the chaplaincy from the state gain traction. In previous decades, the push to unyoke religion from the military generally came from the constitutionally-minded. In contrast, concern over the prospect of state-sanctioned clergy providing moral cover for immoral action propelled the drive for a civilian chaplaincy. Colonel Irving Heymont understood that rabbis rejected military pulpits because it was impossible to wear officer stripes without supporting the war—even if “grudging, tacit, or perfunctory.” Civilian rabbis, he suggested, could provide an alternate means of meeting Jewish servicemen’s spiritual needs. As a career military officer who oversaw a Displaced Persons camp in Landsberg, Germany after World War II, Heymont was familiar with the challenges of providing for religious and communal needs. Yet by the advent of Vietnam, he also recognized the moral complexity of deploying clergy in uniform.<sup>119</sup> Most chaplains, like those featured in the Presbyterian survey, were quick to spot the pragmatic obstacles: would churches want this work, would denominational bodies have the financial resources to commit to this project, would soldier-parishioners respect and respond to non-uniformed clergy, would civilian chaplains be able to function in a military environment? More

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<sup>118</sup> “The Military Chaplaincy: Captive or Free?” 1968, vi, I-249, Box 15, Folder 93, AJHS; Martin Marty *Second Chance for American Protestants* (New York: Harper, 1963), 72.

<sup>119</sup> Irving Heymont, Letter to the Editor of *The Reconstructionist*, October 11, 1968; “Irving Heymont, 90, Commanded Displaced Persons Camp After WWII,” *The Washington Post*, April 8, 2009. Heymont authored two books related to different aspects of his military experience: *Combat Intelligence in Modern Warfare* (Harrisburg, PA: The Stackpole Company, 1960) and *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust 1945: The Landsberg DP Camp Letters of Major Irving Heymont, United States Army* (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1982).

philosophically, Chaplain A wondered, would an alternative civilian chaplaincy “make for a better, freer, more creative and responsible ministry?” He advocated studying the issue in more depth but cautioned that altering internal military structures, identities, and administration might be more productive.<sup>120</sup>

Yet as draft dodging and desertion peaked,<sup>121</sup> a growing public chorus questioned the chaplaincy’s existence. Robert McAfee Brown—World War II navy chaplain, theologian, CALC co-founder, and Stanford professor—recommended a comparable distancing of the chaplaincy from the military. “Surely the time has come,” he wrote in a 1971 essay, “for the military chaplaincy to be divested of both the symbolic and actual accouterments that render its ministry ambiguous, so that a genuine chaplaincy to the military can emerge.”<sup>122</sup> Chaplains could not lumber along in a military echo-chamber, Brown argued. They needed to inhabit a new role as prophets, as the conscience of the nation, capable of raging against immorality and scorning depravity carried out in the name of patriotism. He was not alone in his outcry. Sociologist Gordon Zahn similarly argued that military chaplains faced an impossible conundrum: an ineluctable “role tension” that constrained the advice and actions of clergy in uniform. Questions of morality during war animated Zahn, who served in Civilian Public Service camps as a Catholic conscientious objector during World War II. Based on his study of the chaplains in Britain’s Royal Air Force and his encounters with the American Military Ordinariate, he characterized as a “scandal” the chaplaincy in which ministers could scarcely imagine counseling soldiers to disobey immoral orders to kill. As a result, in 1969, he used a *Commonweal* article to float the idea of radical restructuring the chaplaincy, severing it from the military hierarchy,

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<sup>120</sup> “The Military Chaplaincy: Captive or Free?” 1968, xiii-xvi, I-249, Box 15, Folder 93, AJHS.

<sup>121</sup> Appy, *Working-Class War*, 95, 112.

<sup>122</sup> Robert McAfee Brown, “Military Chaplaincy as Ministry,” in *Military Chaplains: From Religious Military to a Military Religion*, ed., Harvey Cox (New York: American Report Press, 1971), 147.

structure, and oversight and placing it wholly under the jurisdiction of civilian authorities.<sup>123</sup>

Zahn's public critique prompted the General Commission on Army and Navy Chaplains, the Jewish Welfare Board, and the Military Ordinariate to collaborate on a study of the viability of a civilian chaplaincy. The interfaith committee contemplated the option over 2 years, ultimately publishing their findings as a working paper written by Reverend Dr. Arthur C. Piepkorn—a former chaplain and professor at a Lutheran seminary—in a special 1972 issue of *The Chaplain*, the General Commission's quarterly magazine. The study assumed that the chaplaincy might be dismantled because of two distinct reasons: first, if challenged in court by strict separationists and/or secular antagonists, the chaplaincy might not pass constitutional muster, and second, ecclesiastical authorities might withdraw their support for the institution if they felt it was mismanaged or they lacked adequate jurisdiction over their clergy. The group dismissed both possible scenarios as unlikely to occur soon, but predicated its investigation on the latter as a more likely possibility.<sup>124</sup> Indeed, six years before Zahn published his piece, the two concurring opinions and dissent in *Abington v. Schempp* (1963) tipped the hand of the Court. In contrast to the mandatory Bible readings and Lord's Prayer recitations the justices deemed unconstitutional, the existence of and federal support for military chaplains did not contravene the Establishment clause. In fact, Justice William J. Brennan argued, "hostility, not neutrality, would characterize the refusal to provide chaplains and places of worship for prisoners and soldiers cut off by the State from all civilian opportunities for

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<sup>123</sup> Gordon Zahn, "What Did You Do During the War, Father?: The Chaplain's Role: Serving Morale or Morality?" *Commonweal* (May 2, 1969): 195-199. Zahn did not disclose his (personal or political) stance on conscientious objection, and his own history as a registered CO did not elicit notice or spark critique from those who disagreed with his argument for a civilian chaplaincy.

<sup>124</sup> "Armed Forces Chaplains: All Civilians? (A Feasibility Study)," *The Chaplain* 29, no. 1 (May 1972): 2-3. The Southern New Jersey branch of the ACLU had raised questions about the constitutionality of the chaplaincy in the early 1960s, but in 1964 the national ACLU's annual report disclaimed the legal action taken by the NJ chapter. However, the Church and State Committee of the ACLU had inquired about the nature and reach of the chaplaincy in 1963, though it did not express any intent to challenge the propriety of the institution. See: Charles Crabbe Thomas to Robert McNamara, September 7, 1963; John I. Rhea, "Memorandum for the Chief of Chaplains, March 23, 1965; John deJ. Pemberton to Chaplain Taylor, December 10, 1963, RG 247 (General Correspondence, 1954-75), Box 4, Folder: Constitutionality of the Chaplaincy, NARA II.

public communion.”<sup>125</sup> The constitutionality of the chaplaincy was judicially, if somewhat obliquely, secure. In contrast, a cascade of concerned believers fulminated against the chaplaincy. In June 1971, 12,000 Catholic members of the National Association of Laymen publicly requested that the Church strip the military of its priests because of “repeated instances of silence on the part of Catholic chaplains in the face of moral atrocities.”<sup>126</sup>

Indeed, the critique lodged at the chaplaincy by its most vocal religious critics in the Vietnam era zeroed in on the oddity and vulnerability of faith in the military: that the state created and managed the chaplaincy as a means of providing what the military dubbed “religious coverage” and instilling morality in the armed forces. If the first irked the secular or separationist critics, the second inflamed indignant conscientious objectors to the Vietnam War. In a trenchant appraisal of the denunciation of the military chaplaincy, the study recognized that secular condemnation notwithstanding, “the fact remains that the most vocal antagonists of the military chaplaincy at the present are within the religious bodies of the nation.”<sup>127</sup> *The Chaplain’s* feasibility paper explained this position clearly and respectfully. Even if chaplains maintained freedom of pulpit in the military, anti-

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<sup>125</sup> *Abington v. Schempp* 374 U.S. 203 (1963), at 300. Brennan interestingly deemed the presence of chaplains in the military and prisons far less coercive than religion in public schools on the grounds that “the soldier or convict who declines the opportunities for worship would not ordinarily subject himself to the suspicion or obloquy of his peers” (299). In his footnotes, Brennan also distinguished the American model of military religious provision from that of Weimar Germany, the latter of which merely allowed soldiers time off for religious observance. Arthur Goldberg was even more explicit in his concurring opinion (joined by John M. Harlan), “It seems clear to me from the opinions in the present and past cases that the Court would recognize the propriety of providing military chaplains and of the teaching about religion, as distinguished from the teaching of religion, in the public schools” (307). Finally, in his dissent, Potter Stewart used the military chaplaincy as “a single obvious example” to show that “religion and government must necessarily interact in countless ways” and too strict an interpretation of the Establishment clause would inevitably conflict with the Free Exercise clause. To counter those who might deem the military chaplaincy an Establishment violation, he produced “a lonely soldier stationed at some faraway outpost [who] could surely complain that a government which did not provide him the opportunity for pastoral guidance was affirmatively prohibiting the free exercise of his religion” (310).

<sup>126</sup> Quoted in Ralph Blumenthal, “Chaplains’ Role Questioned Because They Support War,” *NYT*, June 22, 1971. As early as 1962, Martin Siegel—a rabbi who served a two-year stint as a navy chaplain—began lobbying to civilianize the chaplaincy. His critique meandered, however, ranging from denouncing the mixing of religion and the military to denigrating the knowledge and training of clergy. Too early to reference the quagmire in Vietnam, it nevertheless anticipated some of the later censure and elicited quite a few letters in response. Martin Siegel, “Revamping the Military Chaplaincy,” *The Christian Century*, August 8, 1962: 959-960; “Whither the Military Chaplaincy,” *The Christian Century*, September 19, 1962: 1119-1120.

<sup>127</sup> “Armed Forces Chaplains: *All Civilians?* (A Feasibility Study),” *The Chaplain* 29, no. 1 (May 1972): 10.

war critics surmised that their judgment on and assessment of war had to become “irremediably faulty” when clergy were ensconced in military units, lived in military-built barracks, and reported to military commanders. Thus, they contended, “to save the chaplains (and the religious bodies which supply and endorse them) from this almost inevitable moral corrosion[,] the denominations must divorce the chaplaincy from military control altogether.”<sup>128</sup> In other words, the religiously-committed proponents of a civilian chaplaincy asked, how could instruments of the state challenge the military apparatus of the state? How could clergy occupy their prophetic mantle if enmeshed in a state project? How could churches avoid implicitly sanctioning an immoral war if their ministers wore army, navy, and air force uniforms? What Brown, Heschel, and Novak deemed *A Crisis of Conscience* was, when applied to the chaplaincy, a crisis of authority: who controlled religion in the armed forces—God or country? Denominational bodies or the military?

Over 88 pages, the study carefully imagined what a civilian chaplaincy would look like. Taking the role of civilian clergy who served members of the armed forces and their families as a starting point, it extrapolated how it could work on a larger scale. If “quasi-civilian” clergy already pitched in, could their efforts be scaled up? Could these ministers, priests, and rabbis mobilize during an uprising at home or in combat arenas abroad, and if so, how would they reach military personnel? The thought experiment went poorly, determining that such a regime would be disastrous and few religious organizations had the capacity to meet the needs of the military. On a financial level alone, the costs would exceed 47 thousand dollars per chaplain—a sum few faiths could afford to donate to the government.<sup>129</sup> Logistically, only military posts in or adjacent to major cities would access sufficiently diverse religious groups to meet the religious needs of personnel, and

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<sup>128</sup> “Armed Forces Chaplains: *All* Civilians? (A Feasibility Study),” *The Chaplain* 29, no. 1 (May 1972): 9.

<sup>129</sup> Harry C. Wood, former Navy Chaplain and head of the United Presbyterian Church’s chaplaincy program, said it would be impossible for his church to fund chaplains. George Dugan, “Chaplains Urged to Doff Uniforms,” *NYT*, June 4, 1970.



Navy ships presented a “most acute problem.” It remained unclear whether non-military preachers could reach and connect with men (and a growing number of women) in uniform. There were some potential upsides as a shift to a civilian chaplaincy might have overcome the hurdles of age, physical fitness, and education the military faced in recruiting an adequate supply of clergy and it might have reduced the amount of time chaplains spent on non-essential religious duties. Nevertheless, commanding officers would acquire significant administrative challenges for uncertain, if any, benefits. Civilians, moreover, would lack access to “the unchurched, the dechurched, the irreligious, the skeptical, the agnostic, and the atheists.” While the article conceded that the military chaplaincy did not exist to convert Americans, it recognized that religious groups used it as “at least an ancillary justification” for supplying clergy to the armed forces.

This parade of pragmatic obstacles was likely sufficient to bury the possibility and probability of adopting a civilian-driven and run chaplaincy program. Yet the study’s most potent—albeit somewhat buried—critique was historical. It mentioned that the last time civilian clergy played a significant role in military environments was World War I, and that precedent boded poorly for the future. The experience of “auxiliary” chaplains aiding the American Expeditionary Force in France, the study reckoned, “is not reassuring. The system collapsed in all but utter chaos.”<sup>130</sup> Indeed, the very pandemonium of uncoordinated and overwhelmed civilian religious services outside the purview of military command led General John Pershing to bring in Charles Brent to design and direct a reformulated military chaplaincy. Would Vietnam shred that legacy?

But this was also what made the chaplaincy powerful: as a state-sanctioned religious institution, it lived within the structure of the military it served. Access to American personnel was fundamental to its mission, as the experience with Vietnam POWs demonstrated.

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<sup>130</sup> “Armed Forces Chaplains: *All Civilians?* (A Feasibility Study),” *The Chaplain* 29, no. 1 (May 1972): 70, 27, 49-50, 20.

Who but military chaplains could attend to the religious and counseling needs of POWs returning from their forced residence at the notorious “Hanoi Hilton” and other North Vietnamese prisons? In 1973, President Richard Nixon fulfilled a 1968 campaign pledge to end the war in Vietnam—for Americans. A ceasefire for U.S. troops went into effect on January 28, the day after all parties—the United States, South Vietnam, North Vietnam, and the Viet Cong—signed the Paris Peace Accords. At the same time, a select group of Army, Navy, and Air Force chaplains reported to Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines on orders to initiate and support Operation Homecoming, the culmination of diplomatic negotiations which led North Vietnam to repatriate 591 prisoners of war. Over two months, flights carrying 40 men at a time brought American POWs back—first to the military and then to their families.

Mediating the culture shock of returning POWs could take a distinctly religious form. By 1973, when Navy Chaplain Edward Roberts (Catholic) led Mass, he did so in English, leading one of the first returnees to exclaim, ““You won’t believe it.””<sup>131</sup> In the years between when some of the Americans had been captured and when they attended Mass again, Vatican II had changed the very nature of the ritual elements that had comforted many men in prison. The captured Catholic men had kept their faith by reciting the prayers they knew in Latin, but the Second Vatican Council revised the liturgy to encourage lay participation in part by allowing prayers to be offered in the vernacular. While POWs exemplified the lay participation the Catholic Church sought, their ritual rendition no longer conformed to contemporary practices. As a result, Chaplain Roberts found that he “had to explain the new Mass before Mass.” And when he tried to offer a service familiar to his POW parishioners, he found “every time I’d try to start I couldn’t go very far and they came right

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<sup>131</sup> Edward Roberts, Report 1, February 16, 1973 in “Operation Homecoming: The Navy Chaplains’ Report—A Transcript of the Taped Situation Reports to the Chief of Chaplains Rear Admiral Francis L. Garrett,” 1973, p. 15, FJC.

through with the whole thing in Latin.”<sup>132</sup> The initial religious disconnect enabled more extensive conversations about faith and worship, meaning and ritual, between the chaplain and his men, but it also presaged challenges of reintegration into a world that kept moving while POWs waited under North Vietnamese control.

Acculturating to American life was complex, and if, as Natasha Zaretsky has argued, the campaign to release American POWs “link[ed] captured men to their families and transform[ed] the POW story into a domestic drama,”<sup>133</sup> chaplains played instrumental roles in the unfolding story. They were the bearers of the gospel and, quite often, of bad news too—of family deaths, marital troubles, and financial woes that transpired while POWs were in captivity.<sup>134</sup> In what became the iconic image of family reunification, 15-year-old Lorrie Stirm sprinted toward her father, Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Stirm, with outstretched arms, with the rest of her family in close pursuit. For six years, ever since the Air Force pilot was shot down, she and her family—her three siblings and her mother—had wondered whether they would ever see him again. Taken by Associated Press photographer Slava “Sal” Veder at Travis Air Force Base on March 17, 1973, “Burst of Joy” was printed by newspapers across the nation and won the Pulitzer in 1974. What the image could not capture, however, were the mixed emotions of the returned POW. With his back to the camera and his uniform representing all returning military men, his facial expression remained hidden. But more importantly, the photograph could not convey the experience of encountering his wife, from whom he had received a “Dear John” letter a mere 72-hours prior, on the same day he left Vietnam and re-entered American territory. And it was a chaplain who, as the designated intermediary, delivered the

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<sup>132</sup> Edward Roberts, Report 1, February 16, 1973 in “Operation Homecoming: The Navy Chaplains’ Report,” 14.

<sup>133</sup> Natasha Zaretsky, *No Direction Home: The American Family and the Fear of National Decline, 1968-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 27.

<sup>134</sup> Ross Trower, Report 1, February 16, 1973 in “Operation Homecoming: The Navy Chaplains’ Report,” 2. Chaplain Trower estimated that they had to divulge bad news between a quarter and a third of the time, most often relating to marriage difficulties and divorce.

note.<sup>135</sup>

The hypothetical civilian chaplain certainly would have been able to lead the religious services conducted for POWs upon their arrival at Clark Air Force Base. But the ability to receive orders directing chaplains and then transporting them to the Philippines as the Paris Peace Accords were being signed would hardly have been likely, if even possible. The task of relaying and mediating what one chaplain called “rather difficult sorrows” fell to chaplains precisely because they operated as extensions of the military infrastructure and could partake of military channels of information. A waiting wife might have confided in her local pastor, but sending news to her deployed, missing, or captured husband required working through the military.

### **Onward Christian Soldiers: The Demographic Consequences of Obligation in Vietnam**

Vietnam did alter the chaplaincy, changing its contours and demographics. But many changes resulted from religious groups, rather than the state. While liberal Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish clergy debated the morality of accepting commissions as chaplains, evangelical Protestants viewed the Vietnam-era chaplaincy as a grand opportunity to increase their numbers, find new believers, reach Vietnamese Christians, and relay their faith to a larger American public. By June 1968, at the height of the Vietnam conflict, the National Association of Evangelicals tallied 118 chaplains across the three service branches—43 more chaplains placed in the service than three years prior, more than double the size of 1960, and almost forty times the number who served in World War II. Hence while the Army’s 66 NAE chaplains may have represented a mere three percent of the roster, it reflected an unparalleled two-decade surge.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Carolyn Kleiner Butler, “Coming Home,” *Smithsonian Magazine* (January 2005), accessed February 17, 2014, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/coming-home-106013338/>. Stirn remained in the Air Force until 1977, but he and his wife divorced within the year of his homecoming.

<sup>136</sup> NAE Chaplain data comes from 2 corresponding sources: a five-year increment chart in a letter from Floyd Robertson to Bill Lanpher, December 8, 1981, SC-113, Box 152, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, and 1968 numbers

When Army Chaplain John W. Schumacher (Grace Brethren) received word that he would return to Vietnam for a second tour in 1969, all he could recall was his impression upon leaving Bien Hoa two summers prior. Contemplating the ultimate sacrifice made by so many Americans in uniform, he remembered gazing out the airplane window and “vow[ing] quietly to myself, ‘Never again.’”<sup>137</sup> Friends and family suggested he resign his commission. Having already spent a year in Vietnam, they argued, he had fulfilled his commitment and need not put himself in harm’s way again. His community had, in fact, intuited a breach in authorized, though not guaranteed, policy. The Office of the Army Chief of Chaplains attempted to grant three years between tours in combat zones, but manpower needs, rather than intended promises, determined duty assignments. For his part, Schumacher strove to apply his spiritual sensibilities to the irritating news, focusing on seeing the unexpected change of plans as part of God’s plan for him and thus reducing his fear and frustration.<sup>138</sup> The chaplain never rendered a decision on the acceptability or morality of U.S. involvement in Vietnam; rather, he operated according to a sense of duty, a belief in God and the chain of command, and a single principled stance: “it is right for a clergyman to be with soldiers in time of war.”<sup>139</sup>

Assigned to a MACV outpost in Kontum City, Schumacher lived in a former French military camp not far from the Cambodian and Laotian borders. There he led services for American soldiers and the Special Forces personnel residing one compound over. He also developed a relationship with Father Phan Tan Van, the Vietnamese priest who had once written English propaganda for the Viet Minh and was expected to acquire the local bishopric when the holdover French bishop retired.

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from Floyd Robertson, “Report: Commission on Chaplains and Service to Military Personnel, National Association of Evangelicals,” October 7, 1968, SC-113, Box 171, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton.

<sup>137</sup> John W. Schumacher, *A Soldier of God Remembers: Memoir Highlights of a Career Army Chaplain* (Winona Lake, IN: Grace Brethren North American Missions, 2000), 95.

<sup>138</sup> Schumacher, *A Soldier of God Remembers*, 94-99.

<sup>139</sup> Schumacher, *A Soldier of God Remembers*, epilogue.

Over meals and prayer sessions, Chaplain Schumacher learned that Father Van “genuinely loved the Lord” and together, the American chaplain and the Vietnamese priest, provided for servicemen and orphaned children alike.<sup>140</sup> Despite this budding relationship, Schumacher discovered “there was little advising [he] could do” for his South Vietnamese chaplain counterparts. The MACV command system used personnel, intelligence, operations, and logistics advisors to pursue their missions, expecting that the assigned command chaplain could handle religious guidance for their local counterparts. Yet Schumacher desisted: all the Vietnamese chaplains he met were Catholic or Buddhist.<sup>141</sup> Although the evangelical Protestant chaplain enjoyed regular camaraderie with the neighborhood priest and argued “every assignment presented ministry opportunities in abundance,” he did not seek or try to intervene in the work of non-Protestant Vietnamese chaplains. Whether his refusal to advise these clergy emanated from a sense of religious futility or a position of religious respect is unclear, but Schumacher’s mission field—reaching out to and successfully converting a drug-addled wounded Marine, for example—accompanied him throughout his military career.

No matter their duty location, evangelical chaplains were pleased when they could provide data that vindicated successful ministry. At the Naval Training Center in Orlando, Florida, Chaplain Charles E. Dorr (Baptist) counted more than 800 men “indicat[ing] their desire to receive Christ” over 11 months—and those were merely the ones who followed through. Baptisms had always been part and parcel of chaplains’ work though proselytizing was forbidden. Nevertheless, the NAE found many “rewarding opportunities in terms of souls won for Christ” within the armed forces.<sup>142</sup> In the realm of baptisms, effective pastoral work still respected denominational bounds. As Chaplain Conrad Walker (Lutheran) explained, he baptized hundreds of soldiers at the Fort Benning chapel

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<sup>140</sup> Schumacher, *A Soldier of God Remembers*, 103-4. According to Schumacher’s research, once the North Vietnamese took over Kontum Province, Father Van was placed under house arrest.

<sup>141</sup> Schumacher, *A Soldier of God Remembers*, 112.

<sup>142</sup> Floyd Robertson, “Report: Commission on Chaplains and Service to Military Personnel, National Association of Evangelicals,” April 8, 1970, SC-113, Box 171, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton.

and in the water-moccasin-laced Chattahoochee River. But before every ritual dunking, he tried to determine the appropriate family tradition to follow. In the case of a soldier who lacked Christian parents, a “Holy Roller” grandmother provided the key. With a Pentecostal and a Catholic as witnesses, the young man committed himself to Christ.<sup>143</sup> This was evangelical military ecumenism in action: baptism of the new convert and the newly recommitted shared by Christians of many creeds and communities.

As more and more NAE-endorsed chaplains found a home in the military, the organization became increasingly candid about its approach to the chaplaincy. Patriotism undoubtedly encouraged many to seek appointments, “but his primary reason for being in the chaplaincy is the same as any other missionary who has found the Lord’s will for a ministry in a given situation....the military is one of the world’s greatest mission fields.”<sup>144</sup> In Southeast Asia, evangelical soldiers and chaplains alike “maintain[ed] a faithful witness for the Lord” and amassed “a great harvest of souls as a result.”<sup>145</sup> Within an evangelical frame, combat arenas and domestic environments resembled youth ministries: preaching and teaching, studying and witnessing, advising and serving all created moments ripe for personal evangelism which, if carefully conducted, could pass as standard chaplaincy activities. A young sergeant visited Chaplain Walker with concerns about a marital rift stemming from his wife acting under the influence of voodoo. After a successful parachute jump—despite a voodoo curse placed on the military minister—the “leapin’ deacon” reconnoitered with the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne soldier and informed him “it was time we went to prayer in Jesus’ name to wash out,

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<sup>143</sup> Conrad N. Walker and J. Walker Winslow, *The Leapin’ Deacon: The Soldier’s Chaplain* (Austin, TX: Langmarc Publishing, 2004), 139-40.

<sup>144</sup> Floyd Robertson, “Report: Commission on Chaplains and Service to Military Personnel, National Association of Evangelicals,” September 16, 1970, SC-113, Box 171, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton College Special Collections.

<sup>145</sup> Floyd Robertson, “Report: Commission on Chaplains and Service to Military Personnel, National Association of Evangelicals,” April 3, 1967, SC-113, Box 171, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton College Special Collections.

yes, *flush* out, any further influences of voodoo curses and such.”<sup>146</sup> Visits and prayers followed, and soon after the theoretically ill-fated jump, the sergeant’s wife also restored her faith as a Christian. Likewise, in a report from Vietnam, Chaplain Arthur Guetterman (Conservative Baptist) jotted “today I held four services and 10 men trusted Christ.”<sup>147</sup> Mission accomplished and missionary success went hand-in-hand.

Transforming conversion in the heat of battle did not necessarily lead to an enduring church commitment, as many chaplains, evangelical and not, discovered. For every soldier who found God, there were equal numbers who neither embraced the divine nor expressed any interest in renewed religious fervor. As Catholic Chaplain John O’Connor remarked, while the “wishful-thinkers [say] that there are no atheists in foxholes, we find the same number of ‘practical’ atheists on the beaches, in the hills, the jungles, the foxholes of Vietnam that we find on Broadway, or in a recruit training center, or an ASW carrier.”<sup>148</sup> Likewise, when Chaplain Kenneth Gohr wrote a series of talking points for a Navy Chief of Chaplains’ News Conference, he offered a similar answer to a question about whether men became more religious in dangerous situations like Vietnam. “There is little evidence of ‘Foxhole Religion,’” he remarked. “As a rule, the men who were ‘religious’ back home are religious out in Vietnam and the converse is also true.”<sup>149</sup> Evangelical chaplains acknowledged these same experiences but viewed them as challenges rather than predetermined outcomes. A year with medical and line battalions in Vietnam persuaded Chaplain Kevin L. Anderson (Southern Baptist) to devote a portion of worship services to asking “men to make a definite response or commitment to Jesus Christ. I do not mean the use of high pressure or overly emotional appeals,

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<sup>146</sup> Walker and Winslow, *The Leapin’ Deacon*, 87, emphasis original.

<sup>147</sup> Floyd Robertson, “Report: Commission on Chaplains and Service to Military Personnel, National Association of Evangelicals,” October 7, 1968, SC-113, Box 171, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton College Special Collections.

<sup>148</sup> John J. O’Connor, “A Point of View in Vietnam,” 1965, FJC.

<sup>149</sup> Kenneth Gohr, “Information for Chief of Chaplains News Conferences,” n.d., Chaplains Resource Board, Box 123, Folder 2, FJC.



but an appeal which gives a man a chance to think seriously, ‘How is my life related to Jesus Christ?’ and, ‘Will I commit myself to Him?’” Anderson, who served as a typist in the Army before attending seminary and enlisting as a Navy chaplain, wanted his men to be born-again, but also wanted that experience to be deep and meaningful. Yet the chaplain who considered himself “more Marine green than...Navy blue” tempered his passion for Christ with the knowledge of his own weaknesses, recognizing that he “was never able to set up a good program to give further assistance to those who made commitments to Christ.”<sup>150</sup> If war dramatized the battle cry for Christianity, it also conspired to corral conversion and baptism as milestones unmoored from day-to-day habits.

The chaplaincy’s longtime emphasis on ecumenism and service to all remained vital to the mission in Vietnam but nevertheless bothered many chaplains affiliated with the NAE. In 1965, the mid-November torrent of rain was so constant and so heavy that the Division Chaplain’s supply and office tents were on the verge of being washed out. Making light of the situation, the assistant division chaplain cracked that they could “put[] 2 Protestants, 2 Catholics, and 2 Jewish chaplains aboard an ark.”<sup>151</sup> In stark contrast to the chaplains who reveled in the interfaith cooperation of the chaplaincy, the group ducked promoting an anticipated 1967 tri-faith Air Force meeting—a staple of chaplaincy programming—by objecting to it and swaying an Advisory Committee to abandon plans for chaplains to run and promote it.<sup>152</sup> But such clear sectarian victories were scarce. In 1971, Floyd Robertson was pleased to report that while the military continued to commend ecumenical services and schools, the Chiefs of Chaplains allowed clergy to recuse themselves from these events when they deemed participation “contrary...to the tenets of the church he represented or to his own

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<sup>150</sup> Kevin L. Anderson, End of Tour Report, July 19, 1968, p. 2, FJC; Kevin Anderson, interview by Paul Zarbock, March 15, 2007, transcript, UNCW Military Chaplain Interview Project, available online: <http://library.uncw.edu/web/collections./oralhistories/transcripts/649.html>.

<sup>151</sup> Connell J. Maguire, End of Tour Report, 1966, p. 2, FJC.

<sup>152</sup> Floyd Robertson, “Report: Commission on Chaplains and Service to Military Personnel, National Association of Evangelicals,” April 3, 1967, SC-113, Box 171, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton.

conscience.”<sup>153</sup> The dual roles of military responsibility and doctrinal commitment created conflicts for many of the evangelical chaplains who knew that their personal faith could collide with the beliefs of the personnel they served. One chaplain, for example, reported declining to marry a couple because the airmen’s fiancée was a divorcée; he also refused to baptize the dying infant of another soldier. In both cases, the expected religious actions contravened his denomination’s principles and his personal precepts; nevertheless, he realized that as a staff officer, he was bound to find another chaplain or, if necessary, civilian minister to perform these duties.<sup>154</sup> Concerns about diluting the strength of religious messages suffused objections to ecumenical policy. The problem was not transecting denominational allegiances—evangelicals were, on the whole, quite interested and invested in transdenominational Protestantism—but in molycoddling those who did not share their emphasis on salvation by Christ.<sup>155</sup>

Yet for every chaplain who extricated himself from an uncomfortably ecumenical situation, still others found themselves marginalized. One senior chaplain, who lamented the paucity of evangelical chaplains in senior leadership positions such as directors of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board or division heads in the Offices of the Chiefs of Chaplains, commented, “the chaplaincy climate is completely dominated by the ecumenical philosophy. Those of us who stand for other things are viewed as somewhat ‘crack pot’ and certainly ‘very peculiar.’ But you know that. The question is, ‘where do we go from here?’” The answer, the same chaplain asserted, was acquiring power within the system. “Since the chaplaincy is such a closed ecclesiastical system I see no remedy, or change of climate, until such time as evangelicals infiltrate the top policy making

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<sup>153</sup> Floyd Robertson, “Report: Commission on Chaplains and Service to Military Personnel, National Association of Evangelicals,” April 20, 1971, SC-113, Box 171, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton.

<sup>154</sup> Floyd Robertson, “Report: Commission on Chaplains and Service to Military Personnel, National Association of Evangelicals,” April 8, 1970, SC-113, Box 171, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton.

<sup>155</sup> Scholars frequently characterize evangelicalism as a four-pronged religious movement: conversion (being “born-again”); active proselytizing; belief in biblical inerrancy and authority; and salvation through Christ. In the military, the NAE tended to emphasize conversion and salvation.

positions.”<sup>156</sup>

Although evangelical chaplains often felt they were fighting a rising tide of ecumenism, they had allies, bridges, and fellow travelers in their errand into the wilderness as well. As plans for Campus Crusade for Christ’s EXPLO ’72 moved forward, for example, Navy Chief of Chaplains Francis Garrett (United Methodist) promoted it, describing the weeklong festival aimed at high school and college students as “a springboard for a strategy to help fulfill the Great Commission in this generation.” He would be attending and expected 5000 or so military personnel to join him in Dallas; chaplains could use their budgets and Chapel Funds to sponsor delegations and help key laymen attend.<sup>157</sup> Three thousand soldiers attended one-day spiritual retreats at Fort Hood, and Chaplain Carl McNally (Baptist), expected to make the 150-mile trip to Dallas for Explo ’72 with at least 300 of them in tow. Indeed, the Holy Spirit had begun infusing the military—at least the officers and enlisted men, if not yet the chaplaincy itself.<sup>158</sup> By 1972, bibles and revivals, Christian coffeehouses and Jesus rallies, touring evangelists and “‘bombing’ North Vietnamese villages with the Gospel” had become commonplace. A four-star general could proclaim, “the United States is not neutral about God...so I have no bashfulness about expressing my convictions for the Lord” and follow through with early-morning prayer breakfasts and on-base Bible-study groups.<sup>159</sup> Given the increasingly hospitable environment, even the end of the draft could be promoted as an advantage rather than a problem. An April 1970 report foreshadowed that if Nixon followed

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<sup>156</sup> Floyd Robertson, “Report: Commission on Chaplains and Service to Military Personnel, National Association of Evangelicals,” September 16, 1970, SC-113, Box 171, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton.

<sup>157</sup> Floyd Robertson to the Membership of the Christian Servicemen’s Fellowship, April 1972, SC-113, Box 171, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton. For more on Explo ’72 and Campus Crusade for Christ, see John G. Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ: The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

<sup>158</sup> Anne Loveland, *American Evangelicals and the U.S. Military, 1942-1993* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996).

<sup>159</sup> General Ralph E. Haines, Jr., quoted in “Bibles in the Barracks – God and the Military,” *Christianity Today*, March 31, 1972.

through with his pledge, “the termination of the draft will affect the recruitment of chaplains by removing many of the uncertainties about career status and making it possible to maintain more consistent promotion policies.”<sup>160</sup>

While evangelicals looked for opportunities to help individuals become born again, there was another preacher commanding the nation to be born again. When the evangelical chaplain asked “where do we go from here?” he was—quite possibly unintentionally—quoting Martin Luther King, who asked that question of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1967. From a podium in Atlanta, King pointed out that black men were dying at twice the rate of others while fighting “an unjust, evil war in Vietnam.”<sup>161</sup> And while white evangelicals were the most vocal group to enter the chaplaincy in large numbers during the Vietnam War era, they were not the only group to do. The numbers of African-American clergy ballooned as well. In the Army, seventeen active-duty black chaplains in 1963 more than tripled to 55 in 1971 and climbed to 65 by 1973.<sup>162</sup>

Army and Navy chaplains alike recognized the need for black chaplains and for a better racial climate in the armed forces. The most volatile situations generally arose from subtle, rather than overt, racism according to Chaplain Peter Cary (Catholic). In his end of tour report, he wrote, “smoldering unrest and the complaints of the Black Marines at the Leadership Council meetings

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<sup>160</sup> Floyd Robertson, “Report: Commission on Chaplains and Service to Military Personnel, National Association of Evangelicals,” April 8, 1970, SC-113, Box 171, Folder: Commission on Chaplains, Wheaton.

<sup>161</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., “Where Do We Go From Here?,” speech to the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual SCLC Convention, August 16, 1967, available online: [http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/where\\_do\\_we\\_go\\_from\\_here\\_delivered\\_at\\_the\\_11th\\_annual\\_sclc\\_convention/](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/where_do_we_go_from_here_delivered_at_the_11th_annual_sclc_convention/). See also Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967).

<sup>162</sup> Henry F. Ackermann, *He Was Always There: The U.S. Army Chaplain Ministry in the Vietnam Conflict* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1989), 206; John W. Brinsfield, *Encouraging Faith, Supporting Soldiers: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1975-1995, Part I* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1997), 7. The 65 black chaplains in 1973 consisted of 3 percent of the chaplaincy corps, well below the 15 percent the Army sought. There are very few references to African-American chaplains and very little material from African-American chaplains in archival sources from the Vietnam era. Jacqueline Whitt’s recent study of the military chaplaincy during the Vietnam War also notes this absence, and she suggests that few black chaplains received overseas assignments (based on religious affiliation with historically African-American denominations such as the AME, AMEZ, and National Baptist Convention). Jacqueline Whitt, *Bringing God to Men: American Military Chaplains and the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 245 fn 90.

were usually directed to that not so clearly seen or provable area.”<sup>163</sup> Army Chaplain Claude Newby (LDS) observed flaring racial tensions as well, though he claimed the environment degraded dramatically between his two tours. “Where in 1966-67 and early 1969 infantrymen were infantrymen without regard to race or color, by 1970 even they showed evidence of succumbing to civilian and rear-area trends, of dividing into *us* and *them*.”<sup>164</sup>

Racial enmity extended far beyond combat areas. Chaplain Matthew Zimmerman (National Baptist) had completed a tour of Vietnam by the time he deployed to Germany in 1971. There, the minister, who two decades later would become the Army’s first African-American Chief of Chaplains, saw black and white soldiers literally killing one another. Racial animus led to more memorial services for fallen soldiers in Germany than it did in Vietnam in 1971-2.<sup>165</sup> At Fort Hood, Texas, where black soldiers refused to serve as supplemental riot control for the 1968 Democratic National Convention and racial slurs triggered race riots, several chaplains began offering Sunday morning gospel services.<sup>166</sup> Ostensibly “designed to appeal to people of all ages and backgrounds,” the Special Song Service for Thanksgiving brought in several music groups and choirs that “specialize[d] in black Gospel music.”<sup>167</sup> Likewise, Chaplain Elvernice Davis (United Methodist) started a regular Sunday service centered on the gospel hymns with which many black soldiers would

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<sup>163</sup> Peter J. Cary, End of Tour Report, 1969, p. 4, FJC.

<sup>164</sup> Claude Newby, *It Took Heroes: A Cavalry Chaplain’s Memoir of Vietnam* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003), 521.

<sup>165</sup> Brinsfield, *Encouraging Faith, Supporting Soldiers*, 5-6. Many soldiers in Germany had served tours in Vietnam, which suggests that racial problems moved with the troops; the combination of PTSD and the relatively calm of Germany may have escalated antagonism to carnage. James Westheider has argued that combat produced better rapport between whites and blacks which reduced racial tension, but that camaraderie was fleeting. James E. Westheider, *Fighting on Two Fronts: African Americans and the Vietnam War* (New York: NYU Press, 1997). Zimmerman served as the Army Chief of Chaplains from 1990-94. The Navy’s first African-American chaplain was current Senate chaplain Barry Black (Seventh-day Adventist), who served in that capacity from 2000-03.

<sup>166</sup> “60 Negroes Balk at Possible Riot Control,” *The Los Angeles Times*, August 25, 1968; Brinsfield, *Encouraging Faith, Supporting Soldiers*, 7. These services were part of a passel of efforts to improve black morale and increase black leadership. Just as commanders supported the creation of a Black Officers Association, so too did III Corps Chaplain Tom McMinn (United Methodist) encourage black gospel services based on hearing about successful ones elsewhere.

<sup>167</sup> “Song Service Due,” *The Fort Hood Sentinel*, November 15, 1974.

have been familiar.<sup>168</sup> These small efforts notwithstanding, most black soldiers and Marines found the military a hostile space, a problem the inclusion of a few good chaplains could hardly erase.<sup>169</sup>

Religion dangled a means of contesting racial discrimination, as the case of the LDS Church reveals. In 1974, Private Paul R. Armstrong alleged “the policies of the Mormon institution are racist to an extent that it has an effect on the ‘racial harmony’ on this post.” Mormons did not allow African Americans to hold the priesthood until 1978, and in 1974, Armstrong tried to use religion to attack this racist practice. “If the Army does not want to be described as a racist organization,” he wrote, “it should not go along with the racist policies that are imbedded in other institutions.” In filing a formal complaint, he requested that the military remove Mormon services and chaplains and asked for the incorporation of “Black Muslim, Buddhist, and other non-western services” on base.<sup>170</sup> Armstrong attempted to use religion as a cudgel against racism. However, the Army argued that its hands were tied because it used membership, rather than leadership, as the standard against which to assess racism. Had the LDS Church forbade black members, it would have been in violation of Army regulations. But “the Army does not judge qualifications of persons who desire to enter the ministry of various denominations” and could hardly justify intervention in such internal religious matters.<sup>171</sup> The army nevertheless continued to ask the LDS Church, like all religious groups, to help supply “minority clergymen,” thus exerting a subtle, if unintentional, pressure to open the

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<sup>168</sup> Brinsfield, *Encouraging Faith, Supporting Soldiers*, 7.

<sup>169</sup> Part of the problem was the paucity of black officers, which meant few black soldiers saw commanders of their own race and few envisioned the military as a viable career path. In 1974, the black officer rates were 4.2 percent in the Army, 2 percent in the Air Force, 2 percent in the Marine Corps, and 1.1 percent in the Navy. Moreover, southern whites dominated the officer ranks, placing minority servicemen at the whims and wills of those raised as the powerful in the Jim Crow South. David Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt: GI Resistance During the Vietnam War* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 1975, 2005), 205, 209.

<sup>170</sup> Equal Opportunity Complaints Information Work Sheet, completed by Paul R. Armstrong, 1974, MS 164, Box 85, Folder 9, Utah.

<sup>171</sup> Information Paper, “Racial Discrimination Complaint Against the LDS Church,” May 28, 1974, MS 164, Box 85, Folder 9, Utah. This line of argument is somewhat disingenuous since the LDS priesthood was open to all white males, thus blurring the lines between membership and leadership. On race relations in the LDS Church, see Armand L. Mauss, *All Abraham’s Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

priesthood to African Americans.<sup>172</sup>

The overarching need to diffuse racial tension led some commanders to request black chaplains which, in turn, prompted both the Army and Navy to recruit more black chaplains as well as assign them to units most in need. Sent to Washington to improve human relations and recruiting, Chaplain Thomas Parham (United Presbyterian) insisted that the Navy learn about the African-American community and commit itself to improving housing options for personnel. As the second black chaplain in the Navy, Parham was forced to resign during postwar demobilization. In 1951, he rejoined the Navy as the only black chaplain on active duty and the first black chaplain to garner sea duty—on a mostly white ship. In 1966, when Parham earned his Captain's bars, he was the first black officer to achieve the rank.<sup>173</sup> But his singular experience notwithstanding, the inadequate number of black chaplains remained an obstacle to overcome. As Army Chief of Chaplains Gerhard Hyatt proclaimed in March 1974, “the Army has set out to win the battle against racial discrimination” and “the Army chaplaincy must bring to bear the resources of religious faith” to improve race relations, but it had a ways to go in implementing a truly multicultural military ministry.<sup>174</sup>

## Conclusion

The last Army chaplain left Vietnam on March 28, 1973, the same day the final group of 590 POWs was released and three months before the last American draftee was inducted.<sup>175</sup> By the early 1970s, the Vietnam War had so strained the military that the chaplains assigned to the Navy Chief of Chaplains office dressed in civilian clothes “four days a week to minimize the image of military

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<sup>172</sup> Kenneth P. Edwards to J. Willard Marriott, August 7, 1975, MS 164, Box 85, Folder 10, Utah.

<sup>173</sup> H. L. Bergsma, “The Pioneers: A Monograph on the First Two Black Chaplains in the Chaplain Corps of the United States Navy” (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1981), 11-23.

<sup>174</sup> Office of the Army Chief of Chaplains, *Historical Review* (July 1, 1973-June 30, 1974): 37-39.

<sup>175</sup> Ackermann, *He Was Always There*, 213.

presence in Washington.” Chief of Chaplains Frances Garrett emphasized collegiality in an attempt to redirect the emphasis of the chaplain corps toward spiritual identity, unity, and professional growth. He even applied principles of “participatory management” to the production of the Navy Chaplains’ Manual, in which he sought cooperation and consensus from the entire corps, top to bottom. Over the course of his tenure, from 1970 to 1975, the United States pulled out of Vietnam, and the chaplaincy lost a quarter of its strength.<sup>176</sup>

The boom and bust cycle of the chaplaincy population was typical of the roller coaster of mobilization and demobilization that characterized the American approach to war in the twentieth century. But the tenor and demographics of the chaplaincy changed during and as a result of the Vietnam War. As volunteers in the armed forces, clergy chose whether to participate in the military. Growing distrust of the government fused with mounting qualms about the morality of American involvement in Vietnam to disrupt the recruitment, induction, and experiences of chaplains. For those who viewed the Vietnam War as fundamentally immoral, the very nature of a state-supported religious institution thrust hard against the pull of religious obligation to serve men. But for those who deemed the Vietnam War acceptable, or at least necessary if still problematic, abdication of the chaplaincy by some of its most stalwart contributors—ecumenically-minded white, liberal Protestants, Catholics, and Jews—created new opportunities. Evangelical interest in and pursuit of the chaplaincy undoubtedly proliferated in the 1960s, in part because unfilled quotas created space, in part because they saw an untapped mission field, and in part because the military provided access to influence and power. However, the need to supply more chaplains to men in the field also pressured the Army, Navy, and Air Force to muster new religious recruits, and its search broadened and diversified the chaplaincy ranks as well.

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<sup>176</sup> Steven C. Gilchrist, *Tides of Change: An Administrative History of the Office of the Navy Chief of Chaplains, 1917-1992* (unpublished manuscript, 1993), 114-117.



In addition to seeking more black chaplains, the military formally opened its religious program to women in the early 1970s. Top-down decision-making broadened the racial diversity of the chaplaincy and transformed the all-male chaplaincy into a mixed-gender space. Admiral Elmo Zumwalt Jr. became Chief of Naval Operations in 1970; his policy directives, known as Z-grams, revamped the racial and gender dynamics of the Navy.<sup>177</sup> As he commented about his efforts to alter the Navy, “there’s a good deal of indecision as to whether I am a drooling-fang militarist or a bleeding-heart liberal.”<sup>178</sup> Whatever the reception of his approach, in 1970, his “Equal Opportunity in the Navy” required squadrons to appoint a minority individual as a special assistant for minority affairs and insisted that the Navy fight housing discrimination. Two years later, he issued Z-gram 116, “Equal Opportunities and Rights for Women in the Navy,” which not only rescinded restrictions on women serving aboard ships and eliminated discriminatory promotion and assignment patterns, but also ordered the chaplain and civil engineers corps to accept applications from and commission women, “thereby opening all staff corps to women.”<sup>179</sup> Just as Truman used an executive order to desegregate the armed forces, so too did Zumwalt use policy prerogatives to integrate women.

Eleven months after Zumwalt’s Z-gram, Dianna Pohlman Bell (Prebyterian) entered the Navy chaplaincy, and Alice M. Henderson (AME) followed in the Army in 1974.<sup>180</sup> The incorporation of women was not always easy, as Chaplain Pohlman recalled. While she found Catholic chaplains quite supportive, perhaps, she conjectured, because priests were accustomed to

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<sup>177</sup> “Elmo R. Zumwalt, Admiral Who Modernized the Navy, is Dead at 79,” *NYT*, January 3, 2000. Admiral Zumwalt’s actions in Vietnam were mixed. On the one hand, he opposed the war in the early 1960s. On the other, he ordered the spraying of Agent Orange in the Mekong Delta, which not only devastated Vietnamese land and people, but harmed his own son who was deployed on a patrol boat and later died from cancer resulting from exposure to the toxin.

<sup>178</sup> “Playboy Interview: Admiral Elmo Zumwalt,” *Playboy* (July 1974), 73.

<sup>179</sup> Z-gram #116, “Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women,” August 7, 1972, available online: <http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq93-116.htm>.

<sup>180</sup> The Army followed the Navy at the behest of Chaplain Charles Kriete, the Director of Plans, Programs, and Policies. Brinsfield, *Encouraging Faith, Supporting Soldiers*, 40.

working with nuns, Protestants “really had a difficult time with me....they had never experienced a woman colleague before.”<sup>181</sup> When Chaplain Henderson arrived at Ft. Bragg, she faced obstacles prosaic and profound. The quartermaster had no uniform for her, unaccustomed as he was to finding fatigues for female bodies. At the same time, she was a curiosity on base and though her novel presence led to lots of attention, she had to prove herself ready for the responsibilities of being a chaplain—something her commanding officer reported she had done quite well.<sup>182</sup>

Improving the gender composition of the chaplaincy corps required more than top-down initiatives and local support for female clergy, however. Women still had to meet the education requirements of the chaplaincy, and not all faiths and denominations ordained women, which in turn limited the number of potential female military chaplains. In 1970, women constituted about three percent of American clergy which meant the military recruited from a very small pool of candidates. Even among those who trained female clergy, numbers were low. The (Northern) Presbyterian Church allowed women to attend seminary and become full clergy in 1956 but, prior to 1970, never graduated more than nine female ministers a year.<sup>183</sup> In 1972, when the Navy chaplaincy opened its doors to women, for example, only the Reform movement’s Hebrew Union College and the

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<sup>181</sup> Dianna Pohlman Bell, interview by Margaret G. Kibbin, 1994, Transcript Oral History Program Chaplain Corps USN, p. 14, FJC.

<sup>182</sup> “Chaplaincy Ready; Quartermaster Isn’t, as Woman Signs Up,” *NYT*, August 14, 1974; “AME Minister, Rev. Alice M. Henderson, Blazes Trail for Women Clerics in the Army,” *Ebony* (October 1975): 44-52. Henderson also admitted to marching in civil rights and antiwar protests and saw no contradiction in her entrance into the military as the war was winding down. She was no militant feminist, either, as she desisted from joining the women’s liberation movement and claimed she—a single mother—still understood men as heads of households.

<sup>183</sup> Mark Chaves, “The Symbolic Significance of Women’s Ordination,” *The Journal of Religion* 77, no. 1 (1997): 87-114. For historical work on Protestant women becoming ministers, see: Virginia Lieson Brereton and Christa Ressmeyer Klein, “American Women in Ministry: A History of Protestant Beginning Points,” in *Women in American Religion*, ed. Janet Wilson James (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 171-190; Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller, eds., *Women and Religion in America, vol. 3: 1900-1968* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981, 1986); Cynthia Grant Tucker, *Prophetic Sisterhood: Liberal Women Ministers of the Frontier, 1880-1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); Catherine Wessinger, ed., *Religious Institutions and Women's Leadership: New Roles Inside the Mainstream* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996); and Carl Schneider and Dorothy Schneider, *In Their Own Right: The History of American Clergwomen* (New York: Crossroad, 1997).

Reconstructionist movement's Rabbinical College trained women as rabbis.<sup>184</sup> And because nuns are not ordained like priests and are not empowered to celebrate Mass or perform sacraments, the Catholic Church could not endorse any sisters as chaplains.

By the late 1970s, Navy Chief of Chaplains John J. O'Connor took on the task of finding an adequate number of women to commission as chaplains. To John Willard Marriott, then the head of the LDS Military Relations Committee, he wrote, "I am not being an alarmist, but unless each church provides an adequate share, the majority of the women chaplains will come from a very few churches. That would be neither desirable nor equitable."<sup>185</sup> Charged by his country to build a chaplain corps composed of men and women, the Catholic priest implored religious groups to elevate women to positions of leadership and encourage them to enter the officer corps. "Let me urge you to seek aggressively these women clergy within your church to provide them with [the] opportunity to consider the Chaplain Corps as a career," he continued. "In today's world, equal opportunity without regard to race or sex is a reality quickly coming into sharp focus....the implications for ministry under that concept is an opportunity to be grasped; a service to be rendered."

Although the Catholic Church would not abide by his request, O'Connor was both priest and chaplain. His loyalties to God and country, pressed to the limit in Vietnam, required him to move deftly between them as the Navy's ranking religious officer. His was a role that demanded fidelity to faith and loyalty to the state. In asking religious groups to provide and endorse female candidates to the chaplaincy, he sublimated his religion's order to his country's needs. It was not a violation of Catholic doctrine to encourage the participation of women; rather, Chief of Chaplains

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<sup>184</sup> Ordained by Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in 1976, Bonnie Koppell was the first female rabbi to enter the chaplaincy; the JWB endorsed her in 1978, and she entered the Army in 1979. See Koppell, "Female Rabbis in the Military: A View from the Trenches," *Army Chaplaincy* (Winter-Spring 2000), 54.

<sup>185</sup> John O'Connor to J.W. Marriott, December 5, 1977, MS 164, Box 85, Folder 13, Utah.

O'Connor—who would become Archbishop of New York after leaving the chaplaincy—used the same approach he had to reconciling morality with the Vietnam War by modeling conscientious deference in setting aside sectarian preferences for the good of the service.

## EPILOGUE

### The Military Chaplaincy and Religious Politics After Vietnam

Peggy Liebe was very upset, and she hoped President George H. W. Bush would help. Just that morning, she heard a Navy chaplain speak on her local Christian radio station. Quite alarmingly, he mentioned that “they have to allow Satanists a place to perform their worship rituals.” This news was “disturbing” and, frankly, unbelievable. Surely, she wrote, her president—“being a Christian”—could understand why this turn away from God was so troubling. It was, she concluded, a “great tragedy” that the founders lacked the “foresight to state ‘Christian religion’” in the First Amendment. After all, “how could they have known of the Eastern cults and demonism that would invade this country?”<sup>1</sup>

Although the President did not respond, the Navy Chief of Chaplains did. Alvin D. Koeneman (Lutheran) was, like the forty-first president, a Christian, but his answer may not have satisfied Liebe. He informed her that “Navy policy is to accommodate the doctrinal or traditional observances of the religious faith practiced by individual members when they will not have an adverse impact on military readiness, individual or unit readiness, unit cohesion, health, safety, or discipline.” When commanders made decisions about religious practices, they also accounted for “the impact any particular practice may have on the morale and welfare of those in their command.” As a result, it was possible to forbid any “practice [which] would be detrimental to good order and

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<sup>1</sup> Peggy Liebe to President Bush, 1989, CRB, Box 78, Folder 1736 (Other Religions + Comparative Religion), FJC.

discipline” and officers “are not required to provide a place for satanists to worship.”<sup>2</sup> But, to Liebe’s likely dismay, this meant they also retained the discretion to assist members of the military in pursuing matters of faith.

While the case of Satanists was extreme, the issue of American religious boundaries was not. Over the twentieth century, the question endured of what the state recognized as religion and what it excluded. As the demographics of the United States shifted in response to more open and flexible immigration laws and as the population of the military changed in response to the end of the draft, the chaplaincy continued to re-evaluate what ministry it provided and how it handled minority religions. The chaplaincy served as a bellweather of religious diversity and the politics of religion in the United States. Yet as the military puzzled its way through a new and fluctuating spiritual landscape, it often acted inconsistently. While it accepted the sacramental use of peyote (provided it was inhaled more than 24 hours prior to duty), protected Wiccan religion, and welcomed Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu clergy into the chaplaincy,<sup>3</sup> it stumbled trying to codify regulations allowing Sikh turbans and Muslim beards, understand the concerns of atheists and humanists, and untangle eruptions of Protestant division.

Long before American Muslims became a subject of scrutiny—first during the Persian Gulf War and then after September 11—the military encountered Islam as a religion in its ranks. In 1976, a message arrived in Washington from the USS *Mitscher*, a ship in a destroyer squadron then deployed in the Mediterranean. A sailor claimed to be an Orthodox Muslim, which “present[ed]...problems aboard ship.” Namely, how could the ship accommodate five daily services, Friday noon Sabbath services, dietary needs to abstain from pork “or non-kosher meat,” and fasting

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<sup>2</sup> Alvin B. Koeneman to Peggy Liebe, October 17, 1989, CRB, Box 78, Folder 1736 (Other Religions + Comparative Religion), FJC.

<sup>3</sup> Memorandum, “Sacramental Use of Peyote by Native American Service Members,” May 21, 1997 and J.R. McNamara to Chaplains, August 13, 1987, CRB, Box 81, Folder: Native Americans, FJC; S. J. Linehan to Sarah M. Pike, July 20, 1999, CRB, Box 82, Folder 1736/9 (Wicca), FJC.

during Ramadan? The ship's officers announced that there would be no special meals but "authority given to purchase tuna fish at local commissary with cans stored in [his] locker," daily prayers could be conducted "provided there is no interference with assigned military watches/jobs [and] exchange of watches is permitted," and private prayer space would be designated.<sup>4</sup> The accommodations met with approval, granted in bureaucratic language that supported judicious adaptations—sensitive to both religious obligations and the duties of the armed forces. "To the maximum extent permissible, a member should be permitted the freedom to adhere to his religious persuasion as long as it does not hinder or restrict the effective fulfillment of the command's and the Navy's mission."

The feedback also noted that "diversity of religious persuasions preclude promulgation of general standards" such that the Navy needed to tailor responses to individual and military needs. When mission goals and readiness hindered religious practice, the memo suggested, "alternative administrative measures not involving punitive action" were warranted. This leniency did not, however, justify violations of orders, for which judicial proceedings could ensue.<sup>5</sup> The resolution was classic. It deflected possibly strife through a rhetorical commitment to religious diversity and an offer of flexible provisions combined with reminder that duty demands superseded religious obligations. One year later, Navy Chief of Chaplains John O'Connor congratulated Chaplain Victor Ivers (Catholic) for "being on the cutting edge of things" by arranging the first Muslim service at Great Lakes Naval Training Center.<sup>6</sup> Although American Muslims did not acquire their first chaplain until 1993, when the Army commissioned Imam Abdul-Rasheed Muhammed, the military had been

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<sup>4</sup> COMDESRON TWO to CHNAVPERS, September 19, 1976, CRB, Box 79, Folder 1736/7 (Islam + Related Religions), FJC. Muslims eat hallal meat, which like kosher meat, comes from only certain animals and must be slaughtered and handled according to ritual law. Many Muslims will eat kosher meat. For a comprehensive history of Destroyer Squadron Two, the "Greyhounds of the Sea," see <http://www.cds2.navy.mil/>.

<sup>5</sup> CHNAVPERS to COMDESRON TWO, September 21, 1976, CRB, Box 79, Folder 1736/7 (Islam + Related Religions), FJC.

<sup>6</sup> John J. O'Connor to Victor J. Ivers, March 22, 1977, CRB, Box 79, Folder 1736/7 (Islamic Worship), FJC. According to Ivers' letter, Chaplain David Deramus (Lutheran-Missouri Synod) would be coordinating the "Islamic programs" and was willing to discuss his experiences with chaplains elsewhere planning on initiating Muslim services. Victor J. Ivers to John O'Connor, February 23, 1977, CRB, Box 79, Folder 1736/7 (Islamic Worship), FJC.

working with Muslims for several decades prior.<sup>7</sup>

In 1984, Congress used its leverage—funding appropriations—to direct the military to study “military regulations with regard to religious practices.” More specifically, “to promote the free exercise of religion by members of the Armed Forces to the greatest extent possible,” the Department of Defense needed to study “ways to minimize the potential conflict between the interests of the members of the Armed Forces in abiding by their religious tenets and the military interest in maintaining discipline.” The Armed Forces Chaplains Board would appoint three representatives to the eight-member committee which Congress charged with “mak[ing] the maximum effort to ascertain the views of the broadest spectrum of religious organizations.”<sup>8</sup> Charged with submitting a report by February 1, 1985, the committee contacted about 140 religious groups to interview as part of their data collection effort.<sup>9</sup> The conversations usually included national representatives of the religion as well as a service member of the religion, which enabled the military to learn more about religious practices as well as obstacles to performing them.

If studying religion and religious experiences in the armed forces revealed a number of challenges, it nevertheless concealed a group striving for access. Like their counterparts in the 1920s, atheists felt continually rebuffed by the state. In 1979, Petty Officer Michael Hagen asked the military to create an Armed Forces Atheist Council. In writing to the Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, he accused the military of “hav[ing] an established Judeo-Christian chaplaincy for I have no figures

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<sup>7</sup> “Army Admits First Muslim Chaplain,” *The Christian Century*, January 19, 1994; Laurie Goodstein, “A Nation Challenged: The Clergy; Military Clerics Balance Arms and Allah,” *NYT*, October 7, 2001; Suzanne Kappler, “Chaplain Recalls Path to Making History,” *The Fort Jackson Leader*, June 12, 2009, [http://www.army.mil/article/22584/Chaplain\\_recalls\\_path\\_to\\_making\\_history/](http://www.army.mil/article/22584/Chaplain_recalls_path_to_making_history/). The Navy commissioned its first Muslim chaplain in 1996, and the number of Muslim chaplains in the US military grew from 4 in 1999 to 14 in 2001. As with other religious groups, finding candidates who met the education requirements presented a challenge.

<sup>8</sup> Department of Defense Authorization Act of 1985, Section 554(a-e), Pub. L. No. 98-525, 98 Stat. 2494 (1984).

<sup>9</sup> As noted by Lt. Col. Rogers in “Interview with Mrs. Guru Sangat Kaur Khalea (Member of National Affairs Advisors Sikh Darma of Washington DC and VA) and SSgt Kroesen,” December 19, 1984, transcript, p. 1. CRB, Box 78, Folder 1746/46 (Sikhism), FJC.



indicating that Muslims or Buddhists, much less Atheists, have received a commission and acceptance into the Chaplain Corps.” Alleging that “by virtue of a chaplain’s mandatory indoctrination in a seminary, by military guidelines, he is not qualified to adequately meet the needs of atheists.” The military concurred. But while Hagen viewed the absence of support for atheist (as well as agnostic and humanist) personnel as a problem, the Navy was content to agree that there existed “a basic incompatibility” between the chaplaincy and an atheist council. It was, to their minds, a contradiction in terms that merited no further action, or at most delegating this responsibility to officers outside the chaplaincy.<sup>10</sup>

At least one chaplain found the resulting news coverage dispiriting. Jim Bank (Unitarian Universalist) wanted to make sure that all chaplains understood the depth and range the “commitment to religious pluralism in the military requires.” As a clergyman trained in a denomination that included theists and humanists and as a military chaplain, Bank felt obligated to support all individuals “in achieving religious wholeness as they—not we—see it.” Aiding atheists hardly fell outside his duties. In fact, from Banks’ perspective, arguments about incompatibility failed because they were predicated on a false premise of who categorized religion. After all, he anticipated Muslim and Buddhist chaplains entering the corps and they would be required to minister to “those of Western religious traditions” even as Judaism and Christianity represented “deviating views” theologically.<sup>11</sup> Atheism strained the limits of the chaplaincy, but atheists did not disappear. Rather, they have continued to advocate for representation, counseling, and guidance on

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<sup>10</sup> Michael Dean Hagen to Secretary of Defense, August 29, 1979; “Considerations of the Proposal for the Establishment of an Armed Forces Atheist Council,” September 27, 1979, CRB, Box 82, Folder 1736/8 (Proposal of an Armed Forces Atheist Council), FJC. Hagen also sent a letter to President Jimmy Carter in which he volunteered to coordinate an Atheist Council.

<sup>11</sup> Jim Bank to Toss Trower, August 17, 1980, FJC, CRB, Box 82, Folder 1736/8 (Proposal of an Armed Forces Atheist Council), FJC.

their terms.<sup>12</sup>

This skirmish over atheists went unresolved, but it highlighted a brief moment in which liberal and conservative religious voices agreed that a broad spectrum of religion—restricted as it may have been to theism—was fundamental to the operation of the chaplaincy. As Floyd Robertson of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) had insisted in 1975, “religious liberty is a two-way street. When I defend the right of our chaplains to be evangelical I must at the same time defend the right of those so disposed to be just as liberal as they choose to be.”<sup>13</sup> He understood that within the military orbit, religious rights could not be curtailed to satisfy particular theological orientations.

Many of Robertson’s evangelical and fundamentalist colleagues disagreed, philosophically and theologically, and tried to push more particular or sectarian visions into military space. Bill Garman of the Associated Gospel Churches described the non-sectarian Vacation Bible School planned by Chaplain Patrick J. Hessian (Catholic) as reflecting “deplorable un-American, discriminatory conditions in the Army Chaplaincy.”<sup>14</sup> But Robertson countered that the future Army Chief of Chaplains had every right to act in accordance with his faith. Mutual non-infringement was the best policy, he argued, because it not only safeguarded the chaplaincy from accusations of religious discrimination but it also allowed evangelical chaplains to pursue their visions without

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<sup>12</sup> In summer 2013, Jason Heap applied to be a humanist chaplain, which elicited a fiery response from those who thought the chaplaincy ought to retain a theistic orientation. John Burnett, “Should Military Chaplains Have to Believe in God?” *NPR*, July 31, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Floyd Robertson to Billy Melvin, July 21, 1975, SC 113, Box 152, Folder: Commission on Chaplains—Current Files, Wheaton.

<sup>14</sup> Bill Garman to Bob Jones, Jr., May 7, 1975, SC 113, Box 147, Folder: Commission on Chaplains—Permanent File, Wheaton. In a report forwarded to the NAE, Garman lambasted an optional chaplains conference for allowing dancing, hugging, and ecumenical prayer while not enforcing a strict dress code or forbidding discussions of topics like masturbation. Russell Shive to Billy Melvin, June 12, 1975, SC 113, Box 147, Folder: Commission on Chaplains—Permanent File, Wheaton.

interference or restrictions.<sup>15</sup>

Other faiths had reason to be less sanguine about the evangelical commitment to religious equality, however. There was, as sociologist Kim Hansen has called it, a burgeoning “culture war in the chaplain corps.”<sup>16</sup> By the late 1980s, the NAE was especially concerned about the “General Protestant” service. It had never been an ideal arrangement, given “the wide divergence in customs and style of worship among the genuine Protestant faith groups.” But, the organization asserted, “the problem has been greatly exacerbated in more recent years due to the fact that non-Protestant chaplains like the Mormons and Christian Scientists are classified as Protestant.”<sup>17</sup> The classification scheme was not new, but the potential opportunity to alter it appeared greater. By the late 1980s, the NAE focused on increasing its influence which, despite a growing number of evangelical chaplains in the service, still felt weak to them. According to Floyd Robertson, the NAE Chaplains Commission’s “participation in major policy decisions of the military chaplaincy has been limited. It now seems appropriate, desirable, and in some ways necessary for the commission to assume a more effective leadership role in matters that pertain to the Chaplaincy as a whole as well as those which impact on our own chaplains.”<sup>18</sup> The military was again a mission field, and the target extended beyond individual service members to the organization as a whole.

A flurry of position papers on the “Protestant Problem” yielded little clarity—at least in terms of tackling intractable differences among groups the military classified as Protestant. But the

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<sup>15</sup> Floyd Robertson to James C. Lont, October 26, 1977, SC 113, Box 147, Folder: Commission on Chaplains—Permanent File, Wheaton.

<sup>16</sup> Kim Hansen, *Military Chaplains and Religious Diversity* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 165-202. Hansen’s study demonstrates that chaplains disagree about the degree to which evangelicals had or lacked power in the military. Charges of evangelical take-overs grew in the 1990s, in part because of evangelical officers who were not chaplains. Michael Weinstein, who founded the Military Religious Freedom Foundation to fight evangelical influence, publicized the evangelical tenor of the Air Force Academy. Michael Weinstein and Davin Seay, *With God On Our Side: One Man’s War Against An Evangelical Coup in America’s Military* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> Floyd Robertson, Semi-Annual Report of the Commission on Chaplains, March 7, 1988, SC 113, Box 85, Folder: Chaplains Committee Pre-1992, Wheaton.

<sup>18</sup> Floyd Robertson, Semi-Annual Report of the Commission on Chaplains, October 4, 1988, SC 113, Box 85, Folder: Chaplains Committee Pre-1992, Wheaton.

NAE's goal was clear: it sought recognition—and military validation—as a major faith group, distinct from mainline Protestants and akin to Catholics and Jews. This would grant control over worship services, Bibles, schools, and the environment writ large. Moreover, they claimed, a new system would allow NAE chaplains “to best serve their own constituents. At the same time it would in no way detract from nor hinder them in their responsibilities to provide for ministry to those of other faith groups.”<sup>19</sup> As evangelicals perceived it, they were exemplars of pluralism. While they dismissed ecumenism as too homogenizing, they could point to their own organization, the NAE, as a model of a pluralist religious space that neither erased nor was trapped by denominational difference.

The NAE was pleased that new Army regulations eliminated the use of “Major Faith Groups” on the “valid” grounds that “the government may not recognize any faith group as major vs. minor.” But it still failed to resolve the Protestant problem. “Protestant as used in the military as become meaningless because it is without definition,” the 1990 semi-annual report declared. The category was “meaningless...stripped of identity by random late-comers.”<sup>20</sup> The derisive yet defensive reference to “random late-comers” underscored the sectarian impulse motivating the NAE, an urge that contradicted the military's emphasis on constructing a non-sectarian religious space. Debates over religious difference and legitimacy, so constant and yet so varied over the twentieth century, shifted once more.

While the NAE failed to convince the military to fulfill its desires, it had powerful civilian allies in Congress. The 2014 National Defense Authorization Act included an important and quite significant amendment to the U.S. Code: “If called upon to lead a prayer outside of a religious

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<sup>19</sup> Floyd Robertson, “The ‘General Protestant’ Problem,” August 21, 1989, SC 113, Box 85, Folder: Chaplains Committee Pre-1992, Wheaton.

<sup>20</sup> NAE Chaplains Commissions Semi-Annual Report, October 2, 1990, SC 113, Box 85, Folder: Chaplains Committee Pre-1992, Wheaton.

service, a chaplain shall have the prerogative to close the prayer according to the traditions, expressions, and religious exercises of the endorsing faith group.” Labeled as a “protection of the religious freedom of military chaplains,” Section 529 of this funding bill dictated by statute what internal military policy had resisted for years and what religious groups had debated for decades: could chaplains pray in denominationally specific forms outside worship services, or, in common parlance, could chaplains conclude a public prayer in Jesus’ name. The answer, for now, is yes.

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