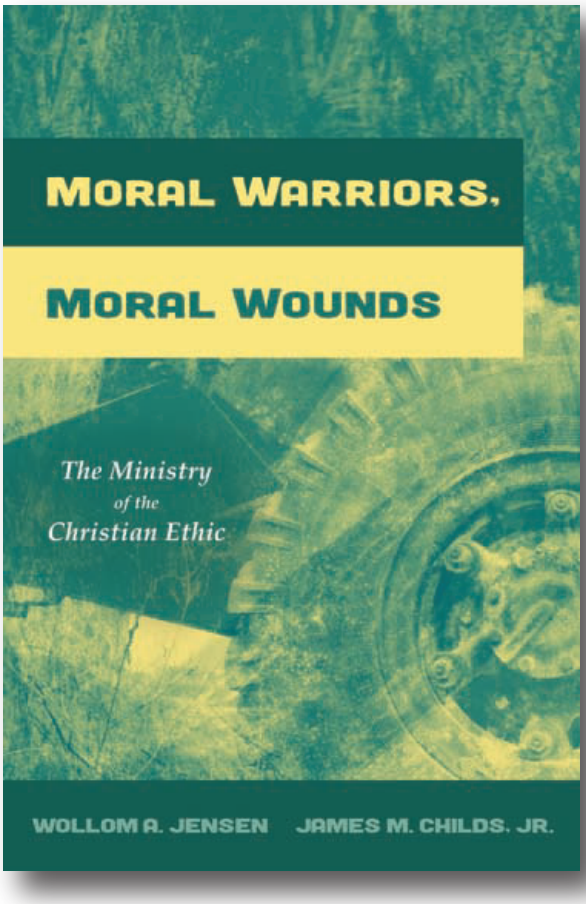
CASCADE *Books*

A division of WIPF *and* STOCK *Publishers*

wipfandstock.com • (541) 344-1528

MORAL WARRIORS, MORAL WOUNDS



The Ministry of the Christian Ethic

WOLLOM A. JENSEN
JAMES M. CHILDS, JR.

The experience of Wollom Jensen's distinguished career in military service and James Childs's long and productive career in the fields of theology and ethics combine to bring Christian ethics into dialogue with the harsh realities of military service in today's world of war. The authors seek to correlate the ethics of neighbor love with the vocation of the chaplaincy, the framework of just war theory, the published values of the military services, and sample issues such as the challenge of pluralism for the chaplaincy, drone warfare, interrogation practices, and truth-telling. Special emphasis is placed on the reality of moral injury and the moral obligation of society and the churches to respond to the needs of wounded warriors. The book espouses the view that the Christian ethic, more than a set of principles, is a true ministry to those who struggle to be faithful and fear that they have not been.

ISBN: 978-1-4982-2351-5 | $21 | 158 pp. | paper

"This is a 'first in the field' book that looks at the ethics challenges confronted by those who are military chaplains and the difficulties they face daily, with the primary focus on helping to heal the moral injuries and wounds of troops who have been to war. It is clear, clean, and concise, and in the words of a classic collect in the Book of Common Prayer, this is a book that readers should 'read, mark, learn and inwardly digest.'"

—**WILLIAM D. RAZZ WAFF,** Priest; Chaplain; Retired Major General in the United States Army (His views do not represent the Department of the Army or the Department of Defense).

WOLLOM A. JENSEN Vietnam War veteran and retired Navy chaplain, is an author, poet, preacher, pastor, and professor who currently serves as the Canon to the Bishop Suffragan for Armed Forces and Federal Ministries of the Episcopal Church.

JAMES M. CHILDS, JR. is Joseph A. Sittler Professor Emeritus of Theology and Ethics at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio. His many publications include *Ethics in the Community of Promise: Faith, Formation, and Decision* and *The Way of Peace: Christian Life in the Face of Discord*.

Media, Examination, and Review Copies:
Contact: James Stock
(541) 344-1528, ext 103 or James@wipfandstock.com

Orders: Contact your favorite bookseller or order directly from the publisher via phone (541) 344-1528, fax (541) 344-1506 or e-mail us at orders@wipfandstock.com

Moral Warriors, Moral Wounds

Moral Warriors, Moral Wounds

THE MINISTRY OF THE CHRISTIAN ETHIC

Wollom A. Jensen
James M. Childs, Jr.

CASCADE *Books* • Eugene, Oregon

MORAL WARRIORS, MORAL WOUNDS
The Ministry of the Christian Ethic

Cascade Books
An Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers
199 W. 8th Ave., Suite 3
Eugene, OR 97401

www.wipfandstock.com

Paperback ISBN 978-1-4982-2351-5
Hardcover ISBN 978-1-4982-2353-9
Ebook ISBN 978-1-4982-2352-2

Cataloging-in-Publication data:

Names: Jensen, Wollom A., and James M. Childs, Jr.

Title: Moral warriors, moral wounds : the ministry of the Christian ethic / Wollom A. Jensen and James M. Childs, Jr.

Description: Eugene, OR : Cascade Books, 2016 | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: ISBN 978-1-4982-2351-5 (paperback) | ISBN 978-1-4982-2353-9 (hardcover) | ISBN 978-1-4982-2352-2 (ebook)

Subjects: 1. Armed Forces Chaplains. 2. Military Personnel psychology. 3. Just war tradition. I. Title.

Classification: U22.3 M490 2016 (print) | U22.3 (ebook)

Manufactured in the USA.

This book is dedicated to the women and men, veterans of combat, who were morally wounded because they were and remain moral warriors.

Contents

Chapter One

By Way of Introduction

This book is a thoroughly collaborative undertaking. At the same time, we each bring distinct experiences and qualifications to the task. Therefore, it seems good to us that we offer separate introductory comments in this opening chapter in order to give the reader a sense of what each of us brings to the conversation from our personal and professional formation.

Wollom A. "Wally" Jensen

St. Francis of Assisi was born into a culture of violence. Wars between city-states such as Assisi and Perugia were common and the tribal culture served to separate communities from one another are not unlike those which we experience in the twenty-first century. In 1202 at age twenty Francis became a soldier and went off to battle in a war between Assisi and Perugia. During this particular battle the Perugians defeated the Assisians. Francis was wounded during the battles and made a prisoner of war. For a long year Francis languished in a Perugian prison and was released only when his health began to deteriorate. While being held as a prisoner of war Francis began to reflect upon his life and his service as a soldier. As his health returned Francis continued to contemplate spiritual things more deeply. Eventually, Francis metamorphosized into the gentle monastic that many of us recognize today. Quite possibly Francis's health was complicated as a result of the moral injuries suffered by everyone who undergoes armed conflict as a warrior. In a very real and personal way for me, this part of the story of St. Francis is my story as well.

At age nineteen I entered into service in the United States Army as a volunteer draftee. I had spent my high school years involved in social activities such as band and athletics. I had been named "All Conference" in football, and was made the student director and first chair trumpet of my high school band. I had my own car, many friends, and enjoyed a relatively carefree life. I did well enough academically that I never worried about being accepted in a college and entertained dreams of going off to attend university at place like the United States Naval Academy, St. Olaf College, or the College of William and Mary. My mother and father had divorced when I was four years old, and I had been in the custody of my dad. My dad died of complications resulting from a stroke when I was sixteen and one of my dad's younger brothers became my guardian. Although no one in my family had graduated from college, it was assumed that I would attend a university and when I mentioned my interest in the three schools above I was told that I could go to any college I wanted to as long as it was in North Dakota. My options were obviously limited so I chose to enroll in the University of North Dakota at Grand Forks. Because of my immaturity, my anger about having been denied going to a school of my choice, and my carefree attitude, there was not much chance that I would be successful at the university level, and I wasn't. Social fraternity activities, the university marching band, and friends were high on my list of interests while study halls and class attendance were very low priorities. By the end of the second semester I had been invited by the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences to take a leave of absence from the university due to my exceptionally poor academic performance. In June, at the conclusion of my first academic year, I volunteered for the draft, and in August I was called up and found myself on my way to basic training at Ft. Lewis, Washington. Following graduation from Army Signal School at Ft. Gordon, Georgia and thirty days of leave over Christmas, by mid-February, 1968 I found myself in the Republic of South Vietnam assigned to the 125t Signal Battalion of the 25th Infantry Division. I arrived at Cu Chi, South Vietnam in the final throes of the 1968 Tet Offensive.

While I have no intention of drawing too close a parallel between my experience and that of St. Francis, I do have some understanding of his experience as a warrior and of being in combat. I know what it is to live with fear; to be appalled by the loss of human life; to be shamed by the experience of participating in war; and the feeling of having lost one's youth in ways that those who have not been to war will never be able to

understand. I have experienced my own moral injury just as I'm convinced that St. Francis experienced moral injury. Not unlike Francis, I have sought relief from those injuries in the spiritual life and discipline of the church and in the call to ordained ministry in the church of my birth. Unlike Francis, however, I did not find my spiritual center of healing in a monastic community but rather in the community of warriors known as the United States Navy, where I spent nearly twenty-five years as a Sailor and chaplain to Sailors and Marines. It was in serving Sailors and Marines in the Sea Service that I came to feel that my combat experience was validated in that others shared my experience, gave it value, and affirmed it. I also came to realize that I had been injured morally, and that I had something to offer to other warriors by way of empathic pastoral care for them and their injuries as well. In a very real and personal way when I became a Navy chaplain it felt as though I had come home.

In this book my friend and colleague, Jim Childs, and I have attempted to articulate the ministry of military chaplaincy, the nature of moral wounds, and a way of reflection on the nature of war that is firmly grounded in the moral theology of the Christian community. It is our intention that this ethical reflection will be helpful to seminary professors who mentor chaplains or aspiring chaplains as they play key roles in the formation of those women and men for service in the ordained ministry of the church. We also intend that this book will serve as a pathway for those engaged in the work of chaplaincy within the military and in the veterans' communities where much of the healing work for veterans begins with the development of safe and sacred spaces in which to engage in the difficult and painful work of spiritual reflection. Finally, it is our hope that those warriors who are carrying a burden of guilt and shame will come to understand that not all wounds or injuries are necessarily fatal. There are at least three wounded warriors—St. Francis of Assisi; St. Ignatius of Loyola; and Wally Jensen—who through their own spiritual reflection and journeys, came to an understanding and awareness that God finds us where we are and reconciles us to himself through the bounty of his grace.

I hope that commanders who read this book will come to understand that they as well as those whom they command in combat are morally wounded. Those moral injuries are not always apparent. Frequently those moral injuries manifest themselves in medical problems that take on the characteristics of malingering. It is also not unusual that those moral injuries are acted out in disciplinary problems and inappropriate behaviors such

as uncontrolled anger, family abuse, substance abuse and self-medication, and being absent without leave. Poor performance of duties may often be a sign of the presence of moral and spiritual injury.

Parish clergy and members of congregations as well who read this book may be helped to understand their moral and spiritual culpability in the burden of shame and guilt born by those who have gone to war on their behalf. "Thank you for your service," while well intentioned, does not carry the water unless it also carries the understanding of what that service entailed. It is important for both clergy and laity to understand that while there are indeed physical, psychological, and emotional injuries such as Traumatic Brain Injury, Post-Traumatic Stress, and others that require medical or psychological treatment regimens, there also injuries to the soul of warriors who have been involved in combat. These soul injuries are not medical or psychological in nature and therefore require a different modality of treatment. These soul injuries require what might be termed a faith-based modality. These injuries are theological and spiritual in nature and need to be treated with the tools of religion in order to bring about both spiritual healing and spiritual resilience. This reality obviously puts faith communities, congregations, clergy, and faithful laity on the front lines of spiritual triage and treatment. Unfortunately, most faith communities are ill equipped to respond to such injuries.

Francis of Assisi lived during an age in which the church was a major force in the lives and culture of the people. When Francis returned home to Assisi from Perugia following his captivity as a prisoner of war he entered a period of his life in which he engaged in deep spiritual reflection and self-assessment. Socrates asserted that an unexamined life is not worth living. He meant by this that a life whose values, morals, principles, underlying assumptions regarding happiness, sadness, suffering, and the meaning of existence which had not been thoroughly examined, critically evaluated, and internalized could never provide the basis for human flourishing—*eudaimonia,* or as it is described in the Gospel of St. John, "Abundant Life" (John 10:10). What emerged from Francis's examination of his life following and in light of his experience as a warrior and prisoner of war was a transformed man who found his previous life's values vapid and unable to give him either *eudaimonia* or abundant life. He gave away his possessions, entered into a deeply religious life marked by spiritual discipline, and began a new life quite different from his previous life of privilege and

self-indulgence. In this transformation, Francis demonstrated what might today be called "resilience."

Resilience, though common in today's conversations about the physical, emotional, and psychological injuries suffered by those who have experienced combat, is not without its own controversy. The US Army has gone so far as to establish the Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness Program in 2009 at the direction of then Army Chief of Staff, General George Casey. Thinking of resilience as the ability of an object to return to its original shape following intense stress has been applied to individual warriors. Following the intense period of combat-induced stress the thinking is that if an individual can be given the requisite tools that individual has the capability to return to a state of normalcy. One of the major criticisms of resilience is the lack of a specific, objective definition. Without a commonly accepted definition of resilience research foci will be affected and the results will be untrustworthy. While the term *resiliency* can be helpful the considerable controversy surrounding it is causing some researchers to advocate for the abandonment of the term.

Nancy Sherman, writing in her book, *Afterwar: Healing the Moral Wounds of Our Soldiers,* says,

> Healing requires a complex understanding of one's war—how to make sense of its detritus and profound losses. Those losses can seem, on the one hand, all too futile in the face of war's often dubious and grand political goals, and on the other, thoroughly avoidable if only one's own conduct were just a bit more perfect. Repairing selves involves a kind of inner moral dialogue, a kind of call and response. Soldiers often feel need and hurt, and seek help that acknowledges that hurt and helps to redress it. Healing starts, then, from recognition and empathy; self-healing starts with self-empathy. All this takes time, loving support, and intellectual honesty. For many in the military, it is still all too easy to soft-peddle the realities of mental and moral injury, and to believe that with just a little bit more positive thinking and stoic sucking it up, they can get the mission done. But healing after moral trauma is not that kind of mission. Thriving after war requires a different kind of resilience.[1]

Moral wounds require moral healing. Military chaplains represent the first responders, those called to provide triage to the badly wounded, bringing the tools, training, and skills to help stop the spiritual hemorrhaging of

1. Sherman, *Afterwar,* 80–81.

those who have been morally though not necessarily mortally wounded in combat. This book is dedicated to those moral first responders and intended to introduce all others to an awareness and understanding of the nature of the ministry of military chaplains.

James M. "Jim" Childs, Jr.

My colleague in this endeavor, Wally Jensen, and I met by chance at a conference of ethicists dealing with issues of just war and related concerns; he was one of the speakers. We ended up in the same small group and "connected." Our conversation led to an agreement to work on this resource in military ethics. Happily, this agreement to collaborate also led to our friendship, which has progressed along with the work on this book.

Wally says a few things about his youth. Here we share some common ground. I was all-conference in football and went on to play football on scholarship for a time at Brown University in the late fifties. However, being musically disadvantaged, I never played the trumpet as he did. I tried for a bit in grammar school but my parents decided the $15 fee was better spent on a new muffler for the old Ford! In college I also found myself drifting from any clear sense of values. Though making my grades, I was far more immersed in fraternity parties and football. Wally's path as he describes it was to military service, eventually combat experience in Vietnam, and later to ministry and Naval chaplaincy. My path of self-rediscovery was to the ministry. I served as a white pastor in an African American church in the South during the middle of the turbulent sixties and eventually ended up teaching theology and ethics in college, university, and seminary for the past forty-six years.

Along the way I have had more than my share of personal experience of conflict and loss due to being deeply involved in church-related controversies. I mention this not to suggest for a minute that the experience and the pain of such conflicts compare to those of warriors in harm's way. Nonetheless, these ecclesial conflicts between sisters and brothers in the same faith community over matters of theology and ethics, often involving serious matters of social justice, can become deeply divisive and even vicious; they have the capacity to traumatize participants both emotionally and spiritually and in some cases lead to a sense of dislocation and loss of faith and ministry. What this kind of experience adds to my contribution to our enterprise is a deepened sense of realism about the hurtful capacities

of human beings everywhere and, I sincerely hope, a greater sensitivity to all wounded spirits. That said, I would not have undertaken this journey of a Christian perspective on military ethics without the partnership of Wally Jensen, who brings a depth of military experience as both soldier and chaplain that lends credibility to our efforts.

Over the years I have taught Christian ethics in terms of its theological foundations and various methodological expressions, including the development of my own basic approach, which is spelled out in my book, *Ethics in the Community of Promise*,[2] and which is referenced at a number of points in this book. I have taught moral philosophy in university and business ethics at the MBA level. I have worked on the correlation of these disciplines and the discipline of Christian ethics. I have taught and written about various topics of applied ethics. However, except for a bit of work on just war theory, one area of applied ethics I have not dealt with heretofore is military ethics. As a result, this has been a challenging learning experience and a rewarding one as well.

Each of the fields of applied ethics has its own particular issues. The task for the ethicist is to apply what he or she regards as universally valid principles and values to the specific issues of a given area of concern, which has its own terminology, array of salient facts, and inherent logic. For the Christian ethicist this also means engaging the perspectives of moral philosophers who are also working at the same task. The field of biomedical ethics, for example, involves many different areas of ethical engagement, including everything from end-of-life decisions to fetal stem cell research to professional conduct to experimental protocols and more. In any of these areas the ethicist needs to be acquainted with the relevant scientific data, the legal dimensions, the ethos of the profession, and, in many cases, revealing case material, not to mention the testimony of the experience of all parties involved. With all of the many considerations in play the process of ethical reasoning can become complex and at times uncertain and ambiguous. Military ethics poses the same demands for the consideration of relevant facts and experiences. Certainly the ethos and traditions of the services are a major factor. Legal realities are as prominent here as in the fields of biomedical ethics, as are considerations of the ethics of professional conduct. One can find parallels in other fields of applied ethics. Organizational ethics and ethical leadership principles can resonate with the organizational realities and the leadership demands of the military.

2. Childs, *Ethics in the Community of Promise.*

Yet, when all is said and done, there are ways in which military ethics might be judged, at least at first blush, as distinct from these other fields of applied ethics. Biomedical ethics is operating in a field of endeavor that seeks to prevent illness, heal, relieve pain, and enhance and preserve life (notwithstanding controversy over matters such as assisted dying and fetal stem cell research); this is its overarching metanarrative. The common good is also the focus of the ethics of economic justice and ecojustice. Certainly, the overarching purpose of the military is to insure and maintain peace and therefore serve the preservation of life and the common good. That should never be forgotten. Certainly, there are tough decisions in other fields where the lesser of evils may, after all considerations, be the only choice. However, for the military the inescapable reality of choosing the lesser evil is codified in just war theory, which provides the governing framework for doing military ethics. For its warriors "the lesser evil" is lived out in the chaos and terrors of battle.

Plotting how ethics apply in other fields, then, has many similarities to the challenges of doing military ethics. Yet the practitioners in those other endeavors are not trained killers or the leaders or trainers or supporters of trained killers. Does this purpose of killing the enemy, albeit for the sake of a just cause and as a last resort, make the task of military ethics distinct from all other expressions of applied ethics? I suspect that the answer is "yes and no." The task of military ethics is not distinct in that it participates in the brokenness and ambiguity that is common to the experience of all humankind and that is the enduring reality within which all ethical reasoning and moral striving must operate and often languish. Crafting an ethic for the military involves using the same principles, values, and reasoning found in all fields of ethics. And all applied ethics needs to be sensitive to the human realities involved. Ethics cannot be merely an exercise in abstract formulas. However, doing military ethics means applying those principles and values common to all ethics to situations in which life is at risk and the horrors of war can be its living context. It is an ethic for people called upon to kill other human beings at peril of their own souls. Some may relish that role; most do not. This makes the task distinct.

Beside the constant danger to life and limb, the moral and spiritual burden warriors bear for their service of possible and actual killing deserves the utmost care and consideration. The ethics of military service must be surrounded by compassion and care. It needs to be an ethics that is more than ethics but also a vision of survival for one's humanity and spiritual

well-being in a radically ambiguous moral context of warfare. We think that Christian ethics can speak to that need. The Christian ethic operates in the context of faith in divine grace and presence despite the ambiguities and uncertainties of moral striving in a world broken by sin and evil.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer quotes Luther, "*Pecca fortiter, sed fortius fide at gaude in Christo*." "Sin boldly, but believe and rejoice in Christ even more boldly." Bonhoeffer explains that Luther did not mean to suggest that we can feel free to sin since we know that God will forgive us. Rather, it was intended as encouragement for those who are paralyzed by the realization that they cannot live free from sin in this world no matter how hard they try. The world of our making is fraught with uncertainties, inescapably tragic choices, and ambiguity. These fragile spirits are encouraged by Luther to enter into life and its difficult challenges with the robust faith that God is with them even when their best efforts fall short.[3] I tell my students in ethics classes that as Christians we do not pursue the moral life of neighbor love with the presumption of *certitude*, the conviction that we can always know and do precisely what is the clear will of God even under the most complex circumstances. Such an expectation is doomed to either self-righteous self-deception or radical disappointment and even despair. Rather, we live by *assurance* of God's gracious presence as we seek to do the will of God in a radically imperfect world. Nowhere does this truth of faith apply more readily than in the living out the Christian ethic in the context of military service. It is in this spirit that we have approached the issues of military ethics.

We have tried to correlate principles and values of the Christian ethic of love with the stated values and virtues of the services. We have tried to show that an ethic of Christian love can speak meaningfully even in the situation of war. How can one speak of *agape* love in such a context? We think one can. And we think that the Christian ethic, with its stark realism and assurance of divine grace can do more than give directions about right and wrong; it can speak to the spiritual health of those caught in some of life's worst heart-rending situations.

Wally has already spoken of the audiences we hope to reach. While the chaplains feature prominently among those to whom we speak, we hope that they and others can be a link to the ministry of Christian faith communities for the support of those who serve and for engagement in seeking the well-being of the wounded. The overwhelming majority of people in

3. Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, 51–52.

our nation are not in the military and never will be but, in a real sense, we all are for they are part of us and serve for us. The more all of us know about the moral realities of military existence, the more compassionate and intelligent we will be as supporters of our service people and as voices in the policies of our government. Indeed, in the academic study of Christian ethics its application in military ethics should be the interest of all teachers and students of Christian ethics, not just those in the military or preparing for military chaplaincy; the questions of military ethics can in certain cases provide a critical test for the viability of one's ethical vision and method. At least, I have found it so.

PART I

The Chaplain and the Challenges of Military Culture

Chapter Two

The Vocation of the Chaplain

Before we can enter into the discussion of military ethics, Christian ethics, and the role of the chaplain, which is a main focus of this book, it is necessary to be clear about the vocation of military chaplaincy. As we shall see presently, military chaplains share much the same vocational formation and many of the same vocational duties as the other clergy of their faith communities. However, it is the very fact that military chaplains do share in the vocational identity of other clergy that serves to highlight the ways in which their calling differs. In a word, their commitment in military service involves requirements that draw on the theological and ecclesial sources shared with other clergy but, at the same time, may stand in real tension with those sources. Consequently, accepting the calling to military chaplaincy itself involves profound ethical questions of integrity.

Setting the Stage

Chaplains have served in the military of the United States beginning with the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. The Continental Congress authorized the Army to hire its first military chaplain in 1791.[1] Military chaplaincy is rooted within the First Amendment of the US Constitution regarding religious freedom, free speech and freedom of the press, the right of peaceful assembly, and the right to petition the government for the redress of grievances.

1. Lasson, "Religious Liberty in the Military."

> Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The heart of religious liberty is, of course, located in the first phrase of the amendment and consists of two clauses. These two clauses are often referred to as the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause. There exists within these two clauses a built-in tension that, when in balance, protects the people from a governmental establishment of any religion, and an individual's right to freely practice his or her personal religious beliefs. While the legal discussions and court decisions regarding the jurisprudence related to these two clauses are complex, suffice it to say that because of the requirements related to military service members are often required to be separated from their religious communities for extended periods of time. Therefore religious services offered by military chaplains and which are not forced upon members of the military have been deemed to be constitutional. It is instructive to note that the basis for military chaplains is not related to the religious rights of the chaplain, but rather the basis for military chaplaincy is rooted in the constitutional guarantees and protections of individual service members. In order to comply with the constitutional requirements as stated within the First Amendment the Department of Defense provides oversight and guidance through implementation of directives and instructions addressing the religious practices within the armed services. It is helpful to understand the differences between directives and instructions.

- A DOD Directive is the highest authority within the Department of Defense. As such, a Department of Defense Directive establishes policy, delegates authority, and assigns responsibility related to a particular issue within the Department of Defense.
- A Department of Defense Instruction implements the policy established within a Department of Defense Directive.

Military chaplains wear at least two professional "hats" or carry two separate controlling interests. First, a military chaplain is a commissioned officer appointed by the president of the United States to the particular service branch in a specified grade, i.e., rank. As such, the chaplain, as all commissioned officers, swears an oath of allegiance to support and defend the

Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Additionally, the military chaplain must, as all commissioned officers must, meet all of the requirements, including education, experience, the ability to successfully obtain the necessary security clearances, and physical standards as established by the Department of Defense and specific service branch.

Second, a military chaplain must meet all of the requirements of a specific faith community necessary to carry out the unique religious requirements as established by that faith community. These requirements include education, professional training and experience, ministry competence, and spiritual formation required of all professional representatives of the chaplains faith community. Normally these professional ministerial requirements lead to ordination or designation as a professional member of the clergy of the faith community. Once these requirements have been met, the chaplain's faith community, that has been recognized by the Department of Defense under the auspices of the Armed Forces Chaplain's Board—a group consisting of the Chiefs of Chaplains of the Army, Navy, and Air Force—provides official ecclesiastical endorsement to the Chief of Chaplains of the specific branch of service into which the chaplain will be commissioned. The ecclesiastical endorsement comes in the form of a Department of Defense (DD) form 2088 and certifies that the chaplain has met all of the requirements necessary to represent the specific faith community as a military chaplain.

From the very start of a military chaplain's service, the chaplain finds him or herself in something of an ethical bind. The chaplain who dons the uniform of a military chaplain is a commissioned officer with all of the rights and responsibilities attending to that office. The chaplain is also an ecclesiastically endorsed representative of the faith community that has provided the certification of chaplain's good standing as a representative of that community. Frequently the chaplain must negotiate the ethical tensions which exist between the needs of the military and the teaching tenets of the endorsing ecclesiastical community. For military chaplains, life is lived in the interstices of the military service and the civilian religious community.

The beginning point for any chaplaincy is located in a specific faith community's unique process for preparing an individual to serve as an ordained clergyperson within it. This process belongs solely to the individual faith community and reflects its theology and traditions. No two

faith communities are exactly alike and, in fact, there are slight differences reflected even within individual communities depending upon the number of seminaries or divinity schools, the number of judicatories existent within the faith communities, and the internal homogeneity or diversity of the faith communities. The predictable outcome of this reality is that clergy are not prepared in exactly the same way nor do they have exactly the same qualifications. There is no cookie cutter mold to the preparation of clergy.

Among the most important personal and professional clergy attributes identified by various faith communities are well-formed leaders who possess stable character and mature faith. Certainly faith communities rightfully expect that their religious leaders will be holy men and women who are equipped to rise up to the challenge of living personally and professionally a life of sanctity. In order to meet this challenge the clergy must be equipped with the disciplines that yield lifelong growth in their faith and practice. When referring specifically to Christian clergy one might borrow from the Eastern Orthodox who use the term *theosis* to describe the lifelong transformational process of becoming ever more godlike until we begin to participate in the divine nature, or as St. Paul describes it, we are being changed into the likeness of Christ from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor 3:18).

Once commissioned a military chaplain undergoes the basic military training for a chaplain officer. The military school for the Military Chaplains is located at the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Center in at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. The Armed Forces Chaplaincy Center (AFCC) hosts the United States Army Chaplaincy Center and School; the United States Naval Chaplaincy School and Center; and the United States Air Force Corps College. The AFCC provides the basic military knowledge for newly commissioned Chaplain Corps Officers to be able to effectively function at their first active duty stations. In addition to customs and traditions of each individual service, the students at AFCC learn military bearing, discipline, and gain a basic knowledge of field ministry skills. These chaplain students also learn the reality of working not only in a joint service environment but in an intensely pluralistic environment that daily challenges their identity and formation as clergy representatives of their individual faith communities and ecclesiastical endorsing bodies. These are but the first of many ethical and moral challenges that chaplain corps officers will face throughout their military service.

The initial and in many ways one of the most significant of the ethical/moral challenges these new chaplain corps officers will face will greet

them as they begin their Chaplain Corps Basic Course, namely, the issue of pluralism. Bishop James Magness, a retired Navy chaplain and current Episcopal Bishop for Armed Forces and Federal Ministries, is fond of describing military chaplaincy as being beyond ecumenism and fully immersed not only into pluralism, but pluralism on steroids. Military chaplaincy is a world of theological and interfaith diversity with which most clergy have only passing experience. Practicing the professional craft of ministry within the context of an intensely pluralistic environment poses challenges that simply do not exist for those living out their professional vocations within the civilian and particularly the congregational setting. What's the difference?

Congregational ministry is uniquely denominational. Parish clergy are called to serve a specific faith community and typically are trained and formed within the tradition of that community. Although the process of formation is unique to each faith tradition, clergy called to serve within the denomination all experience a similar and recognizable process of formation within the particular community. The differences in professional formation within the Christian tradition are often profound. Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and most mainline Protestant denominations require a bachelor's degree followed by a Master of Divinity degree earned at one of the denomination's theological seminaries or at an accredited and recognized divinity school. Following or as part of the education process the individual preparing for ordained ministry is often required to serve an internship or a period of service as a transitional deacon prior to ordination as a professional minister. This is often not the case for those Christians coming out of a Pentecostal background. While not the standard neither is it unusual for a Pentecostal minister to be ordained and called to serve a large congregation with a significant budget after having attended an unaccredited bible college and without having earned a Master of Divinity but having been duly recognized as one who has been called and anointed for ministry by the Holy Spirit. While all of the processes for preparation and training of ordained clergy work for their individual denominations, they do not all work equally well when it comes to serving in a broadly pluralistic institutional ministry such as that found within the military services.

During the period of time from the mid-1990s until the present there have been numerous lawsuits initiated alleging widespread discrimination against chaplains who have received ecclesiastical endorsement from evangelical bodies. Most of the litigation asserts that mainline denominations

have assumed positions of power and influence that has resulted in preferential treatment with regard to desirable assignments and promotion opportunities. These lawsuits are rooted in the perception, rightly or wrongly, that certain groups have been given preferential treatment which has resulted in a disproportionate number of mainline chaplains in senior ranks and assignments to positions widely believed to be career enhancing. One of the many legal cases resulting from the notion that evangelical Christian chaplains were discriminated against was *Larson v. US Navy*, a federal district course case decided in 2007 (486 F. Supp.2nd 11[D.D.C. 2007]). The Larson case was brought by three nonliturgical Protestant chaplains who challenged the Navy's practice of hiring according to a "thirds" policy. Although it was never clearly established that such a policy was ever in place, the litigants argued that the Navy chaplain corps had been divided into thirds (Roman Catholic, liturgical Protestant, and nonliturgical Christian and Special Worship), which they contended was inadequate to meet the constitutional requirement guaranteeing the free exercise of service members. The terms liturgical Protestant and nonliturgical Christian were long used to describe those groups who baptized infants and those who do not baptize infants. Today these two groups are loosely defined as mainline Protestants and evangelicals. The Special Worship category includes Orthodox Christians, Jews, Muslims, and all others.

The court declared the question regarding the so-called thirds policy moot because the policy was not in place at the time of the lawsuit. What the *Larson* case did establish, however, is that the Navy has neither the resources nor the requirement to meet the specific religious needs of each service member. However, the constitutional principle that accommodations are permissible if they broadly facilitate opportunities to alleviate burdens imposed upon individual religious exercise was upheld.[2] Following the *Larson* decision the Department of Defense established policy published in DOD Directive 1304.19 that the chaplaincies of each military department exist for three purposes: (1) to "advise and assist commanders in the discharge of their responsibilities to provide for the free exercise of religion in the context of military service as guaranteed by the Constitution"; (2) to "assist commanders in managing Religious Affairs"; and (3) to "serve as the principal advisors to commanders for all issues regarding the impact of religion on military operations."[3] Perhaps most importantly for

2. Mason and Brougher, *Military Personnel and Freedom of Religious Expression*, 15.
3. Ibid.

the consideration of the professional requirements of clergy serving within the Department of Defense arising out of the *Larson* case is that clergy who are going to be considered for an appointment as a chaplain in one of the military departments must "provide an endorsement from a qualified religious organization verifying, among many things, that the individual is willing to function in a pluralistic environment . . . and is willing to support directly and indirectly the free exercise of religion by all members of the Military Services, their family members, and other persons authorized to be served by the military chaplaincies. Further, applicants for appointment as chaplains must affirm that they will abide by applicable laws, and all applicable regulations, directives, and instructions of the Department of Defense, and of the military Departments that grades the appointment.[4]

While certain professional requirements have been established they are necessarily broad. The First Amendment precludes the government from establishing too specific requirements and requires that each qualified religious organization must still establish its own unique professional requirements for applicants requesting ecclesiastical endorsement. As is often the case with legal decisions there are unintended consequences that result. There is no indication that litigation resulting from real or perceived religious discrimination is diminishing. It is also a reality that the tensions between religious organizations has not diminished and when para-church organizations such as CRU (formally Campus Crusade for Christ), or the Navigators are added to the pluralistic environment, the tensions have actually increased, making for an even more challenging pluralistic context in which clergy serving within the Department of Defense are called to serve.

The differences in preparation and theological tradition coupled with the demands of pluralism suggest the real need for a faith-based approach to military ethics that is shareable among chaplains of diverse backgrounds.[5] That is our goal. Such a resource would find its place in the exercise of assistance to commanders mandated in DOD Directive 1304.19

4. Ibid., 15–16.

5. Peter French, a philosophy professor, was engaged by the Navy during the Iraq conflict to provide ethics training for chaplains. Commenting on the wide range of academic preparation from rigorous theological schools to Bible colleges and conservative seminaries with narrow curricula, French observed, "In my early years as a college philosophy professor, I taught large undergraduate courses in which the academic abilities of students varied dramatically, but I could not recall teaching such a radically diverse group in terms of academic preparation as those chaplains . . . ." French, *War and Moral Dissonance*, 7.

cited above. For example, it fits in purpose with Department of the Army (Army Regulation 165–1): "Army Chaplain Corps Activities," the section on Moral Leadership Training indicates that this is the commander's religious program for which the chaplain is the staff officer responsible for conducting the program, etc. "The commander will approve all teaching subjects." And in addition to recommended training materials, "Preparation and use of original materials by individual Chaplains, in coordination with local commanders and their staff officers is encouraged."

Though we will be writing from our perspective as Christians we do not do so from a doctrinaire stance. Our hope is that, therefore, chaplains of other faiths will be able to benefit when looking at the text through the lens of their own faith and experience.

Vocational Integrity

The Ministry and the Military Chaplaincy: Common Features and Special Challenges

The first step toward our goal is to give further consideration to the vocation of the military chaplaincy and its inherent ethical challenge to honor commitments to God and country with integrity. We begin with a few observations about the call military chaplains share with other ministers.

Theologies of ministry differ as well as patterns of ecclesial endorsement. But all ecclesial endorsements, however defined and implemented, carry with them a clear sense of "call." This call, this sense of a real vocation, is presumed to be rooted in the candidate's spiritual discernment, nurtured through education and formation, and affirmed by the person's faith community. An entailment of that call, once conferred and accepted, is loyalty to the theological tradition of the church body that has entrusted the person with its ministry. Chaplains share this commitment with all other clergy. Chaplains also share the same duties and practices of ministry with other clergy as well. These include continuance in the study of sacred texts, faithfulness in prayer, theologically informed preaching, administration of the sacraments where applicable, pastoral care and counseling, and teaching. Issues of life and death are common to all clergy just as they may dominate the work of the hospital or hospice chaplain or share in some of the heartbreak particular to ministry in hospitals for children. For military chaplains in combat matters of life, death, and injury can certainly have

their own particular traumatic characteristics, given the horrors of war. Nonetheless, ministry to the dying, the sick, or injured and comfort for those who grieve is a function shared with the ministry in general.

Other authorized ministries, though, share a common vocation and face different responsibilities, depending on their circumstances and the demands of their specific call. Thus, parish pastors, professional counselors, hospital, nursing home or hospice chaplains, military chaplains, prison chaplains, seminary professors, etc., claim the same vocational status as clergy but must interpret the theological substance of that vocation in terms appropriate to their location in the work of the ministry.

Again, all in authorized ministries, it may be presumed, share the sense of call and the theological loyalties that entails, whether serving in a congregation or in various other settings. The special challenges military chaplains face in relation to that call may not be unique but they seem to us to be more pronounced than those in other special ministries. These challenges or potential sources of tension have already been named: the commitment to serve in pluralistic settings and the difficulties that can arise in reconciling apparently conflicting demands of the dual commitment to God (one's call) and country. The first of these may at times be a factor in the second. As stated at the outset, these realities involve military chaplains ethically in a number of ways that can be gathered up under the heading of "integrity."

An Honest Theology for a Pluralistic Context

While increasing numbers of clergy and their church bodies are open to ecumenical cooperation and even interfaith conversation, their call usually does not entail an intentional ecumenical theology or even a clear understanding of other faiths, as desirable as these may be. Military chaplains do not have this option; they need to have a clear understanding of how their own theological commitments relate to those of other traditions with whom they will be intimately involved under often stressful circumstances.

Theologian Ted Peters has identified three different approaches that theologians and church bodies have taken to interacting with other faiths. The first of these is called "Confessional Universalism." Those who take this approach clearly affirm the authentic claims of their faith but remain open to the insights of others. This requires readiness for dialogue. Dialogue has its own ethical character because it entails respect for one's partner in the

dialogue and an honest exchange of views. One must state one's own position truthfully and be open sympathetically to that which the person from the other tradition is advancing. Dialogue is not debate with winners and losers; it is, we would say, a path of discovery and mutual trust. One must care about the other and genuinely seek points of unity, with a desire to see one's dialogue partner edified by what one shares rather than judged by it. And, Peters emphasizes, it takes time and stamina to continue working at it and seeking greater depth and thoroughness through the process.[6] The second outlook is labeled "Confessional Exclusivism." As the label suggests, this position brooks no alternative to its own faith tradition. There is no purpose in dialogue since holders of this view believe their knowledge is complete and absolute.[7] Some who adhere to this conviction may believe that there is no salvation outside their faith.

Finally, we have what Peters calls "Supraconfessional Universalism." Simply stated, adherents of this view believe all religions point to the same transcendent reality and all have a partial share of its revelation. Consequently, normative claims made by various religious traditions are merely a product of human narrow-mindedness. There is little to be expected from dialogue as previously described since there can be no authentically normative claims to be shared and explored for further insight.[8] One might suppose that interesting conversation might be the most likely outcome of interaction.

While Peters is speaking about interfaith relationships, it is not difficult to see corollaries to these categories in attitudes among different traditions within the same faith community. Certainly within faith communities that display different traditions and theological emphases there are exclusivists on behalf of one particular expression of the faith who find it hard to reconcile theologically with those outside their dogmatic orbit. Confessional exclusivists will find it hard to operate in a pluralistic context. An honest appraisal of whether one belongs in that category must precede commitment to military chaplaincy. If that outlook fits, how will one answer the call to *minister* in a pluralist context, rather than offer half-hearted service or to see those of other faiths simply as one's mission field?

The missional fervor often characteristic of exclusivism is illustrated by the following account. From 2003–2005 the Rev. Kristen J. Leslie, a

6. Peters, *God—The World's Future,* 353–54.
7. Ibid., 354.
8. Ibid., 361–62.

professor of pastoral care at the Yale University Divinity School, was engaged as a consultant to the chaplains at the United States Air Force Academy. The report of her work there led to her testimony before the House Armed Services Committee in June of 2005 as part of the congressional investigation of allegations of religious intolerance and Christian proselytizing at the Academy. Her discoveries were stunning. "The majority of the Christian chaplains understood their pastoral role to be that of Christian evangelist."[9] One of the chaplains returning from deployment in Iraq told of conducting baptisms of service members in Saddam's pool. "The triumph of Christianity over Islam was lost on no one."[10]

> During a general Protestant worship service, a chaplain admonished 600 cadets in attendance to return to their tents and proselytize their bunkmates, reminding them that those who were not "born again will burn in the fires of hell." In the civilian world such an admonition from the pulpit would be seen as appropriately located. In this military environment, however, chaplains are also officers who have the power to give and receive orders. In such a system, a call to evangelize can be understood as a direct order from a superior officer.[11]

There is by contrast a strong historical tradition in the military chaplaincy that has been described as "cooperative pluralism," in which chaplains understand themselves to be ". . . pastor to some, chaplain to all. That is, they are pastors or religious professionals using their liturgical, sacramental, and historical authority . . . to serve the dietary, communal and spiritual needs of their particular faith group. And they are chaplains to any member of the community, regardless of religious confession, who wants the spiritual and institutional support offered by a religious professional."[12]

The description of "cooperative pluralism" just given is a practice that fits nicely with the confessional universalist perspective, which we commend. Confessional universalism seems to us to preserve the integrity of one's theological tradition—the theological teaching one swore to uphold at ordination or its equivalent—while yet displaying openness to the faith and needs of others. Its dialogical orientation embodies the fundamental ethical principle of respect for persons, which is another way of saying

9. Leslie, "Pastoral Care in a New Public, 87.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., 87–88.
12. Ibid., 92.

respect for the autonomy of others. Respect for autonomy also expresses justice as fairness. Both of these are basic ethical norms that will be with us throughout this discussion. They fit with the character of servant leadership that will be developed in the next chapter. In addition, it is also an ethical requirement of leadership in general and military chaplaincy in particular to commit to competency. In the context of pluralism, competency involves gaining knowledge of the various religious traditions not only through dialogue but also through study.

There are a number of informative sources for such study. A good introductory text is Michael D. Coogan's *The Illustrated Guide to World Religions* (New York: Oxford, 2003). The BBC has an introductory internet resource on world religions at http://bbc.co.uk/religio/religions. Of particular interest is the extensive information available on the website of the Harvard Pluralism project, http://pluralism.org. The goals stated on the site for this project undertaken in the face of our increasingly pluralistic society are as follows:

1. To document and better understand the changing contours of American religious demography, focusing especially on those cities and towns where the new plurality has been most evident and discerning the ways in which this plurality is both visible and invisible in American public life.
2. To study the religious communities themselves—their temples, mosques, gurudwaras, and retreat centers, their informal networks and emerging institutions, their forms of adaptation and religious education in the American context, their encounter with the other religious traditions of our common society, and their encounter with civic institutions.
3. To explore the ramifications and implications of America's new plurality through case studies of particular cities and towns, looking at the response of Christian and Jewish communities to their new neighbors; the development of interfaith councils and networks; the new theological and pastoral questions that emerge from the pluralistic context; and the recasting of traditional church-state issues in a wider context.
4. To discern, in light of this work, the emerging meanings of religious "pluralism," both for religious communities and for public institutions, and to consider the real challenges and opportunities of a public

commitment to pluralism in the light of the new religious contours of America.

The supraconfessional universalist will obviously be at home in any pluralistic setting. However, the question arises as to whether or not one can effectively represent the strong themes of a given tradition that its members long for in times of spiritual or physical need. Still it is certainly possible that chaplains who hold this position can accommodate to the convictions of those served for the sake of providing ministry. The faith-based ethic that will unfold as we proceed, though cognizant of life's ambiguities and far from legalistic in its reasoning, is still grounded in firmly held distinctive theological convictions.

God and Country

The tension a person of faith may experience between service to the faith, to God, and service in the military as a representative of that faith is one that needs to be faced at the point of deciding whether or not to enter the chaplaincy. Service in the military is sworn service to the state and thereby to the common good that the military exists to protect and preserve. Chaplains share in this service. Even though they are not combatants, they also share in the reality that military service can involve armed combat and killing with rigorous training for that possibility. In today's voluntary military services each prospective service member will have to discern whether or not their conscience will allow participation in violence before making a commitment. Chaplains must also be faithful to the dictates of their conscience. Moreover, they are also authorized representatives of their faith tradition. Therefore, if they are able and willing in good conscience to enter the military chaplaincy, it is incumbent upon them to have a clearly developed theological rationale for people of their faith being involved in war. Such a rationale is needed 1) to undergird their own conscientious decision; 2) to demonstrate faithfulness to their theological tradition; and 3) as a resource for ministry to service members who are struggling with issues of war and conscience. Historically, persons of faith in the military and in the chaplaincy have turned to just war theory for help toward this end.

Just war theory has played a crucial role in providing nations and their military services with a rationale for engaging in war. Just war thinking in the Christian tradition goes back at least as far as Ambrose of Milan in the fourth century and has been prominently associated with such towering

figures as Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Martin Luther. Although just war theory is continually being interpreted and reevaluated in light of contemporary conditions, it remains the key referent in the development of military ethics. Because of this foundational role and the important discussion of how it can function in today's world, we will be giving just war theory further consideration in chapter 9. For the present it is sufficient to recall the basic criteria. This is one commonplace account. Other accounts may show slight variations in wording and listing but not really in substance.[13]

- *War must be declared by a legitimate authority:* This means there should be a public declaration. It precludes sneak attacks and represents the legal exercise of authority on the part of the government. In these days when war is being engaged against insurgents or terrorists attacking a nation in need of outside military help, the agreement of a coalition of concerned nations or organizations like NATO and the UN becomes an important factor in legitimating international intervention and in applying the other criteria.[14]
- *War must be fought only for a just cause:* This may include defense against unprovoked aggression, defense of one's allies, deterrence of a threat to peace, or humanitarian assistance to those under oppression.
- *War must be fought with the right intention:* The decision to go to war must be motivated by a desire for peace and the common good and not out of revenge, ethnic hatred, the will to power, or material or territorial gain.
- *War must be a last resort:* All means to avoid war—such as diplomatic measures, economic sanctions, or some form of international inspection or ongoing scrutiny—should be exhausted.

13. See Childs, *Ethics in the Community of Promise,* 185–86. See also the listing under "War" in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.*

14 "The Charter of the United Nations provides the modern treaty framework for *jus ad bellum*. Under the charter of the United Nations, the U.N. Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security The U.N. Security Council may determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression, and may decide what measures shall be taken under the Charter to maintain or restore international peace and security. For example, the U.N. Security Council may recognize that a State is acting lawfully in self-defense or another state is the aggressor in an armed conflict. In addition, the U.N. Security Council may authorize the use of military force." *Department of Defense Law of War Manual*, 1.11.2.