Royal Australian Army
Chaplains Department

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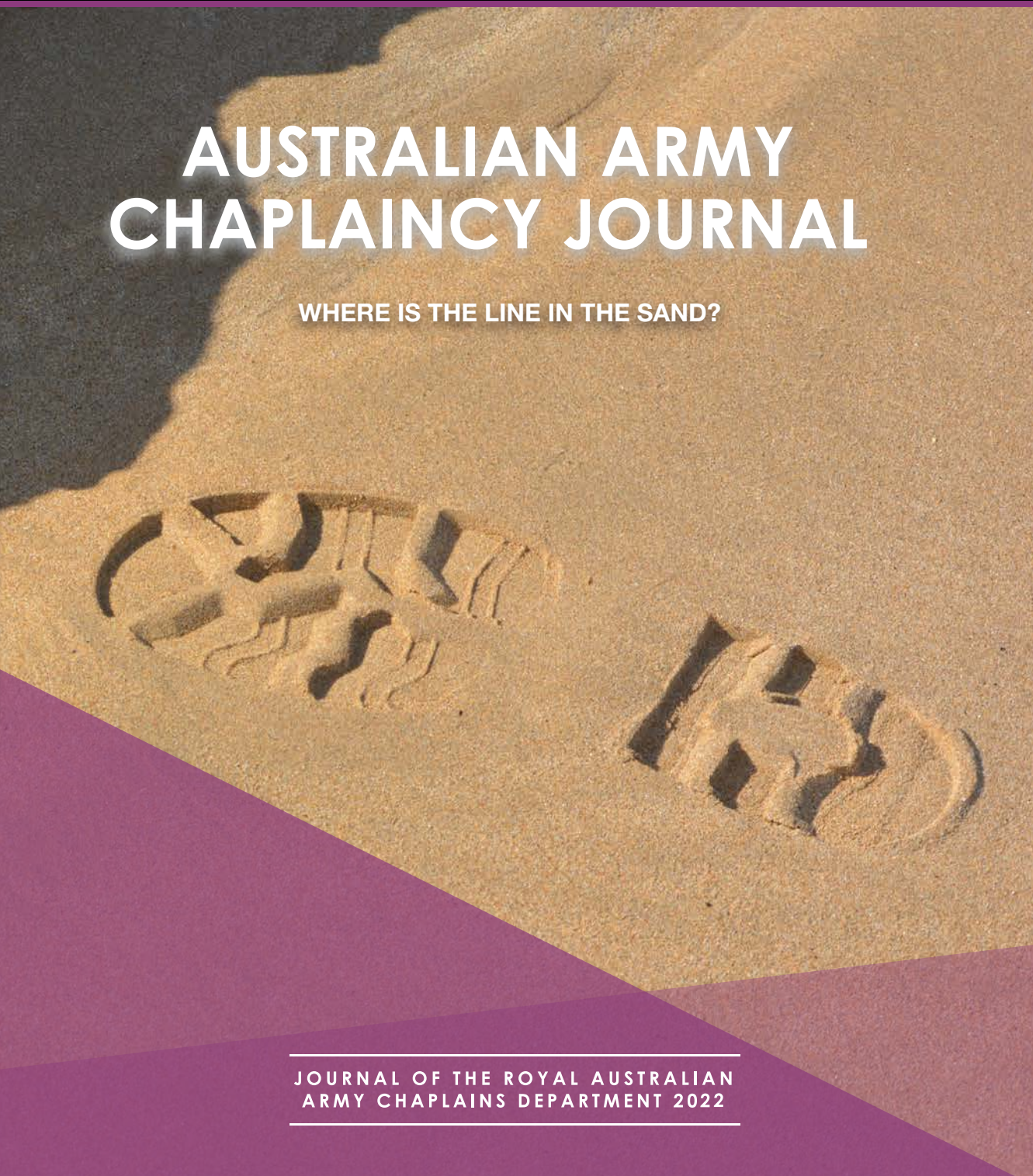
AUSTRALIAN ARMY CHAPLAINCY JOURNAL

WHERE IS THE LINE IN THE SAND?



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Editorial

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There is much in our lives which has been, is, and will be guided by lines that have preconditioned us. If nothing else the restrictions of COVID-19 has taught us this reality. The sight of one can provide a mirror of purposes and interpretations be that as a warning, an invitation, or a guide. Yet ultimately a line signifies a decision point as to whether it should be crossed, followed, avoided, dispelled, enforced or championed. The reality of its potency lies where it is positioned, and how it is applied.

Imagine for a moment you are a young nineteen year old soldier with your whole life in front of you, thrust into a war you do not believe in, nor morally support. Alongside of you stand hundreds more, all conscripts into the Army, waiting to launch themselves over the parapet into a sea of lead and almost certain death. The irony of course is that to refuse to cross the line would most likely bring about the same fate - death, for the perceived crime of cowardice. Such is the consequences of a decision to fight for a cause, or is it?

Surely one can still protest and bring about change without unnecessary sacrifice, particularly if you are the beneficiary of wealth or fame? The parable of the rich young man (Mt. 10:17-31) perhaps provides us with a clearer understanding of what one must consider at decision points in our lives. The story illustrates how a model citizen that keeps the law and cares deeply for his society's most vulnerable seeks a greater transcendental reward, but to do so he is faced with a life changing decision. Firstly he must die to his old self and hand over all his owns to the poor, only then will he have removed the barriers to finding true happiness and hope. Sadly the tested conviction of the rich young man is found wanting, for he cannot leave behind the comfort and security afforded him by his possessions.

Without singling out one group of people, it would also be safe to say that whilst many would happily champion a cause within the security of popular consensus, what say if it meant being alienated and ridiculed? Or as one wise General once reflected, "I know many young officers who are willing to die for their country, but sadly very few who are willing to lose their jobs for it!"

The theme of this year's Journal "Where is the line in the sand?" has provided authors with an opportunity to unravel the complexity and challenges that lines, be they virtual or physical, present in understanding the course to travel or cross in our life's journey. I invite you to read and ponder on the diverse nature of the 2022 Journal, the price one pays in showing moral courage or the consequences of unintended bias which closes more minds than it opens. Whilst other articles venture into multi-faith diversity, the role of chaplains in Key Religious Leader Engagement (K(R)LE), what makes an effective Padre or how in seeking the wisdom from the past better equips us for building a better future. Together with insightful book reviews, readers are provided with a healthy feast of thought, informed reason, and debate.

Footprints in the Sand

Colonel Charmaine Benfield, CSC

COL Benfield grew up in Inverell, New South Wales and has served in the Australian Army for over 20 years in the Royal Australian Corps of Transport. She considers herself fortunate to have experienced command at every rank and deployed on operations in Iraq, Indonesia, the Middle East, and South Sudan.

This article is a personal story of the times in her career that she has learnt important lessons from the Padres of her units and Army more generally.

Footprints in the Sand

One night a man had a dream.

He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord.
Across the sky flashed scenes from his life.
For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand:
one belonging to him, and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him,
he looked back at the footprints in the sand.
He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints.

He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.
This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it.

"Lord, You said that once I decided to follow you,
You'd walk with me all the way.
But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life,
there is only one set of footprints.

I don't understand why, when I needed you most, you would leave me."

The Lord replied,
"My son, My precious child, I love you and I would
never leave you. During your times of trial and
suffering, when you see only one set of footprints,
it was then that I carried You."

Every summer holiday we would stay at my Grandma's house. The room my sister and I slept in had two features I recall – a set of antlers from a fearsome antelope in Africa (apparently), and the poem "Footprints in the Sand". I read this poem every night for years and it is burned into my memory. I have often considered it a key tool for any leader to understand when they should provide guidance and when they should leave a person alone.

After twenty years of being a ‘leader’ my reflection is that leadership is entirely about character and the care you have for your fellow humans. The time when you really influenced a person who was at the lowest and saddest time in their life was probably not when you were actively seeking to lead. Instead it is the safe environment that you create, the interest you show in their work/hobby/family, and your genuine affection for them as a person well outside any desire to ‘fix’ something for them. Being the ‘leader’ means being always under observation. I suspect we really know little about how our characters influence others’ lives, or when we have made a difference – we are too taciturn a people as Australians, not likely to acknowledge or praise.

In writing this article I have thought about those Chaplains who have guided me along the way and whom I have learnt from. I will term these the lessons in my career – some barely perceptible, some very forthright, always useful. I will leave out their names, but I suspect it will not be too hard to work out. I think that the Chaplain’s role is to help a person define their own line in the sand – and the method of doing so, and nudging your charges along the journey, requires a keen understanding of and compassion for the humans.

I grew up attending my local country Uniting Church – a fairly progressive organisation, and while we as a farming community were used to outdoor physical work our Ministers were always kind, gentle, caring people. My Sunday School teacher was the exception – a Merchant Navy man who had served in the Second World War. I was fortunate to attend ADFA where I met my first military padre. He was nothing like our Ministers – he was at PT with us regularly, and he ran the ADFA Boxing Club – where I learnt my first useful lesson from a military padre: if you don’t keep your guard up, this Padre will punch you in the nose!

On operations in Iraq I watched and benefitted from the sanctuary that our padre built in his little wooden church. This was the first overseas deployment for almost every person in the Battle Group, and while over the next twenty years it would become business as usual, we had a lot to learn about managing our people away from home for six months. I would often find the Padre having a cup of tea all over Camp Terendak, with my soldiers, and bringing the feeling of his sanctuary with him. What I learnt from this Padre was that his presence made a difference – the subject discussed was irrelevant. The time he invested meant that he knew our people so well, and helped guide them to cope with their first deployment.

As an OC I found myself managing several platoons undergoing significant organisation change as we broke down the Health Companies and split the clinical staff from the allied health staff, created the Army Personnel Service Units from unit clerks, cut down and consolidated the Catering Corps, and closed unit Regimental Aid Posts. Our unit padre was a particularly different person – if I remember correctly he had been involved in some interesting missionary work. He insisted on moving to an office space where the entrance was out of view - and so I moved out of my office. What this achieved was a discrete, direct link to all my soldiers who were feeling the turmoil of the change and uncertainty about their future. He had a knack for including families in building solutions – another key lesson for a junior commander to learn.

While at CMA I was ‘invited for coffee’ out of the office with a pair of padres whom I had previously worked with. This was like the boxing padre – a direct conversation explaining that the officer selection board process was not working for the Department, and they needed me to change how we did business. In hindsight, this was obvious. At the time, it needed the courage of these two padres to tell me that the system was wrong and how to fix it. A somewhat obvious lesson – ask the experts. It also made me appreciate the variety of officers that Army needs, and on the strength of their argument we changed how we assessed every other Specialist Service Officer at selection boards.

As a CO I worked with two very different padres. One seemed to apply his faith to judge and condemn my soldiers, used his rank to intimidate my junior officers, and his behaviour was unhelpful to the welfare of the Battalion. His replacement was the opposite – a man of the people in a ‘blue-collar’ unit who genuinely enjoyed a can of Bundaberg Rum with the RSM and I at the end of a formal unit function. This padre worked in a team with the RSM, myself, and our unit Doctor to keep a quiet list we called ‘humans of concern’. Any of the four could identify a human of concern, with no background or reason required, and we would all adjust our support accordingly.

The time in my life when I most needed a padre was the ten months I spent in South Sudan. Working in a United Nations environment with other military forces whose ethics are very different to the ADF is challenging. Being locked into a country and unable to leave, a result of the global COVID pandemic, meant that the Australian contingent were entirely reliant on ourselves. I used all the lessons and guidance that I had learned over the years to retain a calm and balanced workforce, finding their own lines in the sand to deal with this multi-ethical environment. A distinguished padre who I had the pleasure to know reached out to check on me and to check on the Australian team – this was most welcome. While I had relied on padres being physically present to have an effect, this one taught me the importance of picking up the phone to check the welfare of others.

In my view, the most successful padres have been those whose footprints walk beside us, sharing tea or rum, conversation and companionship, and insisting on change where it is needed. Every person needs guidance to determine where their own personal line in the sand is, and they will absorb this differently. I would reflect that the character and care for all people that I have observed in the best padres is the basis of their effective leadership and guidance.

Multi-Faith Chaplaincy and Defence Values
A discussion paper

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Multi-faith chaplaincy has been a 'hot potato' for many organisations committed to the provision of chaplaincy services. With the gradual rise of Australians identifying with religions other than those with a Judeo-Christian heritage, questions surrounding the current scope and inclusiveness of chaplaincy services has received increasing consideration. The Australian Defence Force (ADF), as part of its commitment to *Our Defence Values*, has long held the value of chaplaincy[1] but has also recognised the need to address the issues surrounding the provision of multi-faith chaplaincy. The issue at hand to be considered in this paper, therefore, is not whether multi-faith chaplaincy is required, but how to provide chaplaincy while finding ground for workplace cohesion or unity, in such diversity. If we can find such unity, we can stave off much conflict, confusion and grief as multi-faith chaplaincy is implemented throughout the ADF.

It is to the ADF values and behaviours that we can look as the basis for our pathway to change in implementing a unified multi-faith chaplaincy team. It is, of course, one thing to pay lip service to the values and behaviours and another thing altogether to use them as the guiding principles of implementing a unified multi-faith chaplaincy. Thus, it is the purpose of this paper to demonstrate that the values of the ADF have an integral part to play in providing guidance on how we as chaplains, whether in a multi-denominational or multi-faith team, work towards implementing an inclusive and unified chaplaincy team, while preserving and valuing its diversity. Moreover, this paper also seeks to guard against the common pitfall of implementing a superficial conformity under the guise of inclusiveness and diversity at the expense of true and genuine diversity—and unity! To achieve this purpose, this paper will identify three distinctions that should be considered as part of any implementation of chaplaincy services. First, the distinction between work and worship; second, the distinction between belief and behaviour; and third, the distinction between the 'what' and the 'how' of communicating one's beliefs.

We need to distinguish between work and worship

This is fundamentally a distinction that is intended to bring about unity. Failing to acknowledge it, in my view, has brought about much disunity and disruption within chaplaincy. All chaplains, both male and female, of all denominations—and religions—are brothers and sisters in Arms. This is where we must fundamentally find our chaplaincy unity—in our joint experience and challenges we have already faced in the Service of our nation. Not all Christian chaplains, whether male or female, Protestant, Catholic, Anglican, Uniting or Presbyterian etc., perceive themselves as being equally united in Christ, that is, equally united as brothers and sisters in Christ. This is because there are at times significant differences in the beliefs and understandings of the person and work of Christ which leads to differences in theology, and therefore differences in worship. For Christian chaplains, our own understanding—and therefore theology—of the person and work of Christ is fundamental in determining 'who' and 'what' and 'how' we worship. Some of these different understandings are of little importance while other differences are significant. To nuance it further, one chaplain will find a particular difference irrelevant whereas another chaplain might find that difference eternally relevant and important.

One only needs to read Christian church history superficially to realise that differences are part and parcel of the life of the church. While too often churches have fought over seemingly insignificant differences, there have been battles, however, which were required to 'hammer out' distinctions and beliefs. These differences among the various 'Christian faiths' have often related to what constitutes orthodox Christian belief. With this in mind, it should be needless to say that one's understanding of the person and work of Christ might exclude others (in a theological sense) whose view of the person and work of Christ is different. This is because in affirming something we hold to be true we, by that very affirmation, are also denying the opposite of that truth at the same time. This means we should expect that some chaplains might have differing understandings of the Christian 'gospel' with contrary levels of importance and consequences, just as Protestantism! Protestantism is not a unified body outside of Defence chaplaincy, so we cannot expect that chaplaincy is a unified body—theologically—within chaplaincy.

That these differences exist should not be an issue. This is not a problem in and of itself unless we refuse to acknowledge these differences. As ministers of various denominations and religions, we should be convinced of what we believe and understand. We must be free to hold to these convictions.[2] We must be faithful, honest and have **Courage**, as we own our truth convictions, ordination vows and commitment to our respective authorities (i.e., Scripture or sacred writings, and for some Church tradition).[3] The problem lies, however, with how one deals with these differences. It is in dealing with these differences—whether helpfully or unhelpfully—that will determine the unity of chaplaincy teams.

If we can understand that, in the very least, all chaplains (including those outside the Christian faith) are united as brothers and sisters in Arms, we can have genuine unity in a multi-faith team. However, if we try and push a theological agreement as the basis for our unity—when it clearly does not always exist—we will inevitably undermine any workplace unity we can have. We cannot expect all Protestant chaplains to fit into one little happy theological family—let alone multi-faith chaplains—with little regard for those who share significant differences. If we do, we will cause conflict, confusion and grief because these significant differences are not being understood and we will thereby demonstrate that we hold no **Respect** for the right to hold divergent—or diverse—truth convictions. All chaplains in a multi-faith team can find a workplace unity on the basis that we are brothers and sisters in Arms, that we wear the same uniform and serve the same ADF. However, not all chaplains can find theological unity whether in a multi-faith team or even in a predominantly Christian chaplaincy team. Of course, there will be many who do find theological unity together as well.

Chaplains of all faiths are required to work together but they—respecting differences—are not required to agree on theology and thus worship together, for worship is according to one's own conscience. The individual chaplain who conscientiously chooses not to worship as part of a particular chaplaincy team must not be considered a poor team player. This is just as true regardless whether we are in a multi-denominational team or a multi-faith team. Thus, to find a unity that is genuine and sustainable into the future, we as chaplains must acknowledge that chaplaincy works better when we are committed to *work* in unity as brothers and sisters in Arms, but are free to *worship* in diversity. After all, this is the very same principle that applies in a multi-faith context as we include chaplains of all faiths whether Jew, Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist or Sikh, etc. We cannot expect or pressure two theologically differing Protestants to worship together, any more than we can expect or pressure Muslim and Buddhist chaplains to worship together. We cannot seek to inhibit the practice or belief of theologically differing Protestants any more than we can seek to inhibit the practice or belief of Sikh and Hindu chaplains, for example. Moreover, this principle is also true—and expected—of every military member. If we were to place on the wider military members the same expectations that have been, at times, placed on chaplains (i.e., an expectation of a superficial theological unity), we would be overstepping the line and may be liable to unacceptable behaviour towards those whom we serve.

We need to distinguish between belief and behaviour

If freedom to worship in diversity is granted, what then of behaviour? Let us take Christian chaplains as the example. They are free to believe the teachings of the Bible in view of the denominational interpretation and the vows of their respective ordinations. This freedom is true in reality—not just of chaplains—but all Australians and Defence members. However, whatever the beliefs may be, they are not free to behave towards other members or chaplains disrespectfully on the basis of their beliefs—no matter what side of a particular matter or issue they stand on, no matter the theological distance between them. Thus, if any chaplain is to be held to account for unacceptable behaviour it must be on the basis of their behaviour and not their belief. If one's belief results in hostile behaviour where the chaplain begins to treat other chaplains unfairly because they do not share the same beliefs, this is unacceptable.

Conversely, there is also a danger that when one chaplain finds out that another chaplain disagrees with them theologically (remembering the importance each chaplain, to varying degrees, will attach to their respective belief), that the first chaplain might then begin to treat the other chaplain unfairly based on the opposing belief. In order to attack that opposing belief, the first chaplain might then ascribe some form of 'unacceptability' to the second chaplain's behaviour—even though there was no unacceptable behaviour, it is just that the belief was offensive to the first chaplain. This offense can lead to 'targeting' the second chaplain despite that chaplain's belief not leading to unacceptable behaviour towards anyone.

This is why it is important, whether in a multi-faith or multi-denominational team, to understand the difference between belief and behaviour. Belief should not be penalised, only genuinely unacceptable behaviour. That this is the case, no one should find offense. Simply disagreeing with someone and feeling offense at that disagreement (and thus implications) is no grounds to attribute unacceptable behaviour to them. We need to clearly separate belief from behaviour, and to do this we will need **Integrity**. After all, chaplains with the same beliefs can still behave unacceptably towards each other.

We need to distinguish between the 'what' and the 'how'

Each individual chaplain is sent from their faith group in order to minister—contextually—according to their sending denomination or religion's standards. But for fear of offense, it is sometimes implied that chaplains are no longer allowed to discuss 'what' they believe even if they are invited to give an answer. Moreover, it might also be implied that if invited to share their belief, one should be hesitant to answer honestly even if it is done respectfully. Given that belief impacts how we operate or practice ministry, there must be some room for respectful conversation or explanation between chaplains of why they do what they do. There must also be a caution here, that there is a difference between discussing what one believes and forcing that belief onto others. This should not be confused. In a diverse multi-faith organisation, it is helpful to understand why someone believes what they do. If nothing else, it helps us to understand them and to consider it in view of one's own faith and thinking. Ultimately, it will demonstrate the **Excellence** expected of all of us in the ADF.

There is some temptation, however, within some chaplaincy teams to stifle any conversation relating to belief on the basis that it is disrespectful and offensive to those who hold differing positions. This being the case, this discussion may be confused with unacceptable behaviour—remembering what we believe has implications for what we do not believe, and implications for those who hold opposing beliefs—whether or not the implications are expressed. There are also temptations to allow some chaplains more freedom to speak their mind than others. We can solve this problem in either one of two ways. First, we could cancel any discussion on faith and belief in the workplace. This means it is fair across the board for all chaplains whether Jew, Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist or Sikh, etc. This would have the unintended outcome of a lack of diversity, understanding, and respect for all those involved, while potentially sowing disunity. The second way this problem can be solved is by remembering the difference between the 'what' and the 'how'. That is to say, 'what' is said is not as important as 'how' it is said.

Being mindful of the context, chaplains should be equally free to say 'what' they believe. What matters more is 'how' they say it. If what is said is said in a manner which is belligerent, intended to force, coerce or put down, then that is unacceptable behaviour. Believing something to be true is no excuse to personally attack and deride another brother or sister in Arms. However, if what is said is said respectfully, appropriately and contextually, then other chaplains should not take offense and seek to 'discipline' or harass that chaplain because they do not share the same beliefs. A 'psychologically safe' workplace is not one which prohibits the 'what' to be said, but one which ensures the 'what' is free to be spoken respectfully. Moreover, we must fight the temptation to label a workplace as 'psychologically unsafe' simply because one chaplain disagrees with the views of another. Rather, it becomes psychologically unsafe when one member of the multi-faith chaplaincy team is prohibited from articulating—albeit reasonably and respectfully—their religious convictions at the appropriate times. In the end, respectful discussion only seeks to build 'a diverse workforce with an inclusive culture, so every person is able to make their best contribution to deliver on our mission…'[5] This, of course, should be applied, no less, to ADF chaplaincy.

Conclusion

If we are to take seriously these three points of distinction, being mindful of their proximity to *Our Defence Values*, we can give multi-faith chaplaincy the best pathway to change. The challenge is how chaplains of differing views, faiths, opinions and convictions, can be empowered to engage and interreact with each other respectfully and in accord with Defence Values. The impasse may be unblocked and the 'hot potato' removed allowing us to serve faithfully and genuinely as brothers and sisters in Arms wearing the same uniform, serving the same ADF, while allowing for some very strong, yet real, differences in beliefs. Afterall, the ADF is committed to the strength that we find in diversity—this is true no less in the chaplaincy context. If we are assured that we are free to believe in accord with our own conscience, denominational distinctives and religious convictions, if we are able to discuss these distinctives respectfully, appropriately and contextually—without fear of reprisal, then each member of the multi-faith chaplaincy team will feel valued and are able to work cohesively and in unity, as we worship in diversity, being empowered by *Our Defence Values* for the benefit of the people and Nation we serve.

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End Notes

1. ‘Chaplaincy, regardless of location or operational circumstances, is integral to Defence capability and is a force multiplier because it promotes emotional, spiritual and mental well-being.’ *See, Australian Defence Force Chaplaincy Policy,* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2020), 1.
2. The ADF is opposed to discrimination against one’s beliefs, ‘Defence also recognises that it is unlawful to discriminate against a person based on their cultural, spiritual or religious belief system or non-belief based philosophy.’ *See Australian Defence Force Chaplaincy Policy,* 1.
3. The ADF respects the freedom chaplains have in this situation, ‘No-one including Chaplains can be obligated to take part in a service that may infringe their conscientious beliefs.’ *See, ADF@Worship: Services and Ceremonies for the ADF*, (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2021), 15.
4. This reasoning should also extend to the use of denominational/religious resources that various chaplains use in the performance of their respective ministries.
5. *Pathway to Change: Evolving Defence Culture 2017-22,* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2017), 6.

What is the sand?

Chaplain Sarah Gibson

Chaplain Sarah Gibson is an Anglican Priest in the Anglican Diocese of Canberra Goulburn. Sarah is currently serving full time with Army Headquarters DGCHAP-A as Director of Chaplaincy Capability.

A Story

I remember as a young priest in 1999 hearing from a colleague of his experience at an Anglican Women’s gathering service. For the first time the service had been celebrated by women, the readings had women as key characters, the hymns were focused on the feminine aspects of God or related to Women’s cry to God. He was the only man in the room. When the women sang he could not hear himself, he felt invisible. He noted in this one small moment, he felt a sense of dis empowerment. In his wisdom my colleague was able to relate, just briefly with how many feel when their voices are not able to be heard amongst the noise of others.

I have some sympathy for my colleague; I once asked some men at a service to sing more softly so we could also hear the two female voices in the room. For this man, it was eye opening, he experienced for the first time what it was like to be unrepresented and unheard. But it was for him a unique and novel experience. It is not so for many others.

In my faith context we take great efforts to provide balance and to ensure that the voices of the demographics that make up our community are heard. It’s not perfect, but all are welcome, all can lead and all have a real and vital voice. It still comes as a shock sometimes when I encounter different traditions that don’t provide the same efficacy.

Over time I have sat though several services and Chaplaincy events where I have been made to feel invisible and not of real worth. Whether it’s a talk on Biblical leadership that names multiple male leaders and ignores the women leaders that are scattered throughout the text, or hymn after hymn that celebrates being “sons”. I have learnt what it feels like to have to argue for inclusion, again and again. To ask to be heard. But as I write this I know that while I feel this, I acknowledge that I do have agency, much more than some others.

Generally this diminishing of others does not come from bad intent, it may come from a different understanding, but more likely it is simply due to inattentiveness. The effect of a talk on only male Biblical leadership is that the worth of women leaders is silenced; the voice of women through history and Christian mythology is denied and woman in the room clearly receive the message, you are invisible or perhaps in the scheme of history you are meaningless. While it may not be intentional, the lack of attentiveness from the speaker alienates people. An invisible barrier is set up, and the ability of the woman in the room to feel included and have a voice is made harder. Male voices, already in the majority are amplified and female voices are lessened. We need to do better for women and for all the diverse groups that make up ADF Chaplaincy. Hospitality is important, making people feel welcomed is important and allowing space for a voice is essential.

We will come back to this, noting that this article is not about gender relationships, rather it is about how we develop hospitable relationships that value difference. I want to use the story of missing women’s leadership stories in places throughout this article to provide some personal context to a framework I wish to explore in relation to Chaplaincy and diversity and some of the rub points that still exist within it.

It is notable that today a talk on *'only male Biblical leadership'* would no longer be acceptable in the situation that it was previously delivered. Signed off in 2021 the new Chaplaincy policy (ESP 1 Chaplaincy Services) provides clear guidance to ensure a more inclusive and responsive approach.

This journal asks the question, where is the line in the sand? But I would like to pose that this is not always the right question, the question I believe we need to establish first is "what is the sand?" The line in the sand imagery is often drawn to denote a firm position, however it is a strange analogy, sand shifts, it is notoriously bad ground to build a foundation on so by its nature it is a strange place to set a hard line.

Many Christians grew up with the song "My hope is built on nothing less" which contains the chorus:

"On Christ the solid rock I stand
All other ground is sinking sand
All other ground is sinking sand." (Mote,1936)

This song based on a Christian scriptural passage, Matthew 7:24-27, ends a significant session of teaching from Jesus known as "the Sermon on the Mount". For those not familiar with Christian scriptures, the sermon starts with *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* (Matthew 5.3) What follows is a series of eclectic teachings on a vast range of topics. This sermon is not what we would today class as good adult learning. So to conform to our modern way of understanding, readers will find all current translations break the text into bite sized chunks. It is worth however taking time to read this bit of the bible, ignoring the headings. The headings actually disrupt the chain of thought clear in the text. Reading the Sermon on the Mount as a whole feels a little like downloading a wisdom upgrade in a video game direct to your brain. There are many great nuggets of wisdom contained in the writing that most people, regardless of faith background will be familiar with, teachings such as (paraphrasing):

- do to others as you would have them do to you
- do not judge
- act with humility
- don't worry about that outside your control
- do good things
- don't be a mean and nasty person.

Calling these teachings eclectic does not in any way diminish their importance, acting on these teachings we are told is the gaining of wisdom. Despite the chorus of the song above, Jesus doesn't actually say in Matthew, build your foundation on me. The words in this Christian scripture are *"Everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man* (it's a man in this illustration even in inclusive texts) *who builds his house on rock…and everyone who hears these words and does not act on them will be like the foolish man who built his house on sand" (*Matthew 7:21-24). The house built on rock will withstand the environment and the house built on sand will not.

Sand we are told, and through experience know, is a particularly foolish place to set your foundation or your line. So what is sand? Sand is a substance that gives a false sense of security. Sand can look and feel stable, it can sit in a place for years, it can fool us into thinking that it has and always will be in a particular place, and then like many beaches in one night, with one transformative event, it is gone. Sand is attractive, comfortable and deceptively dangerous.

The particular teaching of this part of the gospel relates to piously adhering to the *form* of the law without recognising the *depth* behind the law itself; or even worse at times persecuting those the law is specifically trying to protect; whilst looking like you follow the law. The law itself is not bad, the law is good but focusing on the law in a manner that misses the depth of its wisdom is not where we should wish to be. The sermon on the mount notes that simply following rules without the heart change is like building your foundation on sand. Truly living out the transforming spirit of the law is the rock which is by contrast where we should be building our foundation and chiselling our lines.

There are numerous examples of how this is demonstrated and Matthew 5.27-28 provides a clear example to reflect on. "*You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (NRSV)* The foundation built on sand would see adultery being a property law against the husband. By contrast a foundation built on rock requires that we see a valuable human worthy of respect and thus we need to also examine our own behaviour and thoughts. In today's words this is similar to statements we make about not objectifying other people.

Dr Dafina-Lazarus Stewart in zir article *Language of Appeasement* poses an interesting question that further develops these ideas. Dr Dafina-Lazarus poses that we have become appeased by the language of diversity and inclusion, when what we are actually crying out for is justice and equity *(Stewart, 2017)*. In this line of thought, the building on sand is setting up policy, structures and practices for diversity and inclusion; while building on the rock is making the cultural changes that enable equity and justice.

The language of Diversity and Inclusion Dr Stewart poses is a commonly used language of appeasement and in ze's environment it is demonstrated in student activism with statements like:

- Advance more racially minoritised faculty staff through tenure and promotion and into senior-level roles
- Admit more racially minoritised students and offer more scholarships to help them afford to attend and achieve a degree
- Train faculty to effectively lead and deal with issues of equity in the classroom etc.

If this sounds familiar it's because it is. This is how we look at diversity and inclusion in Army; it gives us good things to report on; it allows everyone to feel they are progressing; it gives a sense of security. We see more women, more LGBTI members, more racial and more faith groups; we see diversity and we congratulate ourselves. However to draw on an extreme example such as Afghanistan; if these changes don't go deeply into the heart, they can be turned over and changed in less than a week. The deeply troubling situation in Afghanistan is of course not a simplistic one and has other elements not detailed here. In no way do I wish to down play the significant work done or the trauma of Afghanistan, yet at the same time we need to notice how hard it truly is to embed deep change. Diversity and inclusion was to some level achieved and on individual levels perhaps equity and justice too, but equity and justice which is a heart based change is much harder to achieve than the trappings of diversity. Diversity and Inclusion are not bad things in and of themselves; we want them and should strive for them but in the end they are not enough.

Dr Stewart poses a number of questions, that should challenge us all as we move Chaplaincy to be more diverse and inclusive, a few of these are as follows.

> **Diversity** asks: "Who is in the room?" **Equity** responds: "Who is trying to get into the room but can't?" "Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?"
>
> **Inclusion** asks: "Have everyone's ideas been heard?" **Justice** responds: "Whose ideas won't be taken seriously because they aren't in the majority?"

Diversity asks: "How many more of *[pick a minoritised identity]* group do we have this year than last?" **Equity** responds: "What conditions have we created that maintain certain groups as the perpetual majority here?"

Inclusion asks: "Is this environment safe for everyone to feel like they belong?" **Justice** responds: "Whose safety is being sacrificed and minimized to allow others to be comfortable maintaining dehumanizing views?"

Inclusion celebrates: "Awards for initiatives and credits itself for having a diverse leadership group." **Justice** celebrates: "Getting rid of practices and policies that were having disparate impacts on minoritised groups."

To reiterate, diversity and inclusion questions are not bad, we do want diversity and we do want inclusion but we shouldn't stop with diversity and inclusion if what we really want is justice and equity for all. This is similar to our earlier discussion of law. If all we do is look for the data that looks good, we can miss the deeper questions. The building on sand in this case is simply if our practice and policy is all about the numbers, or if we want our photos and advertising to have the look of diversity and inclusion. The building on the rock is when we change the way we do things, when we notice that we have put unintended barriers up that prevent people truly joining. When we are willing to accept things that may make us feel less comfortable, or that looks unfamiliar. This occurs when we respond with open hearts, when we take time to listen to the real and spoken needs, and in doing so make people really feel welcome and change our understanding of what it means to be part of the group.

There are real difficulties here, it is not simple to provide justice and equity for all. Not all barriers can be overcome. The nature of Army service means that some people despite being good and honourable people just can-not join. But looking at equity and justice means that within those limitations we don't construct other artificial barriers that affect our peoples well-being and thus Army's capability.

To go back to the story at the beginning. Diversity and inclusion, provided for women to serve in Army Chaplaincy in the part-time force from the 1990s, and full-time force from about 2003. It was, in a sense, diversity and inclusion policies or practices that over time enabled women to be in the room, or at the table. But what table, were they allowed at? Army Chaplaincy has had two women in senior leadership, but why did it recruit only one PD women between 2005 and 2017? Why did Air Force not have a female COORD Chaplain until 2022? Were ALL the women coming forward of a lower standard than ALL the men? What questions did we not ask? What barriers did we not examine? What structures that perpetuate inequality did we not notice? And beyond the gender paradigm, what similarity are we not noticing today?

What the questions relating to equity and justice would have brought was: the honouring of the value of women Chaplaincy leaders, the removal of structures and procedures that prevented recruitment and advancement of women and a tendency toward hospitality. As stated earlier, much has changed through time; the changes to policy, to training, the need to adhere to Defence values means that we have in practice moved beyond just following the form and generally within Chaplaincy we are now focused on providing an equitable and just workplace. The issue here is not that we need to focus on the past but rather that we need to be alert to the same questions raised in the past within different contexts now and in the future.

The job is not done, as we further diversify we need to think deeply about how we respond to the continued call for equity and justice. Diversity and inclusion will continue to change the look of Chaplaincy, but the real change comes when as a whole we embrace and celebrate the removal of barriers that limit full participation, that make people feel voiceless. We can't afford to just bring people in and not do the deep work of heartfelt change, as this is simply transient change and leaves people feeling used and abused by the end. In a recent paper, titled: *If you rise, I fall* detailed that *"members of societally advantaged groups frequently support equality and yet use their advantaged position to implement policies that perpetuate inequality"*. Even if the advantaged group is not directly disadvantaged they will see a perceived change in relative status as harmful to them. This is not a gendered phenomenon, it is simply a human one. Diversity and inclusion allows people in the door, but it is the language of justice and equity that asks the tough questions that are required if we are to really do what we say.

To meet this aim we need to keep working to transform our culture and our hearts. This transformative heart felt change will require ongoing deep listening and an openness to dialogue especially as Chaplaincy evolves further from its exclusive and familiar Judeo Christian comfort zone. For this to occur the structures, policy and procedures must continue to evolve and be upheld to provide safe spaces for the needed dialogue to occur.

Dr Kerrie Hide, an Australian Catholic theologian and contemplative scholar speaks about the need for our hearts to be willing and open and vulnerable as we enter into areas that require justice and equity. In her paper *The Theologian as Spiritual Director* she reflects on the concept that *"God will not be torn from the ground of your heart" (Solle, 2001)*. And with God (or perhaps love for those who don't recognise a deity) grounded in our hearts we should be left feeling safe to enter with vulnerability and openness into areas that are difficult to us. This is a deliberate strategy to act in love and not in fear, to be open to otherness and to hearing and engaging and this is difficult and comes at a significant risk for the minority group or view, and at a great perceived cost for the majority *(Hide, 2009)*. Not all situations can fit this manner of engagement.

There is a need for protection and defence where dehumanising language or views are being expressed. This is an active protection, Rowan Williams describes it as *"learning how to attend in love to the neighbour"(Williams, 2011, p.24)* and *"We love with God when and only when we are the conduit for Gods reconciling presence" (Williams, 2011).* These arguments tell of the striving required by Christians to refrain from setting up barriers based on believing they are good and right law followers (sand) and challenge all to go deeper in their faith to be open and willing to hear (rock).

Dr Hide's and The Most Rev'd Dr Williams work based on many significant thinkers throughout history poses this from a theological view, however the idea of open and deep engagement has broad agreement across faith and traditional cultures as an important aspect of living harmoniously across differences. In Buddhism *Tich Nhat Hahn* "Deep listening is the kind of listening that can relieve the suffering of another person" (Hahn, 2020). In Christianity and from Hebrew scriptures "Be still and know…" (Psalm 46.10).

From First Nations people, Dadirri, a word from the Ngan'gikurunggurr peoples and presented by Professor Judy Atkinson to Chaplaincy as Miriam's gift to the nation. Dadirri is the skill of "deep listening" or real listening, not assuming, not working on our answers or defensive strategy while someone else is speaking. Dadirri includes sitting in the literal sand, learning first in quietness, truly hearing and not dismissing another's world view. Dadirri requires making the connection with our wholeness and finding a peace that brings people to shared understanding.

This idea of deep listening is further supported in a review of strategies to reduce polarisation of society. Often referred to as intellectual humility it has been shown to reduce polarisation in the short term (Krumrei-Mancuso, 2020). However more study on this is required. This idea is also replicated

in general psychological advice regarding engaging in difficult conversations. *Psychology Today* articles routinely recommend amongst other things to "Approach the conversation with openness and an interest in problem solving, rather than needing to be 'right'" *(Mager, 2017).* What all theses studies definitively show is that building walls, or engaging in "we hold the truth" arguments, or closing doors to hearing the other views or experience does not help make for peaceful societies or organisations. In Christian terms, they do not build heaven on earth.

I would pose that in recent times Chaplaincy has not recognised its own actions in this area. In 2020 COL Phillip Hoglin CSC wrote an article that noted amongst other things that a significant number of Defence members would not seek support from religious Chaplains *(Hoglin, 2020)*. Largely the response while not universal within the chaplaincy ecosystem was to defend our position.

Regardless of any disagreements we have with some details, and those disagreements are probably worth their own article because there are valid concerns. At the end of the day the point Hoglin makes about representation is important. For some people who ascribe to no religious belief, knowing that their non-religious world view is valued alongside a variety of religious world views may be essential to feeling visible to the organisation or just to seeking help when needed. We also need to be alert to the language of privilege and a wish to retain comfort and status, justice would demand that we ask "Whose safety is being sacrificed and minimized to allow us to be comfortable maintaining potentially dehumanizing views?" *(Stewart, 2017).* Openness to hear would ask: "Who is not being given a voice?"

I find myself asking: how different is the *"religious chaplains provide support to all"* argument to the *"we don't need female chaplains, as male chaplains provide support to all"* argument from earlier times. I would suggest that in hindsight, running to defend this position may not be the best option, and that engaging in deep listening may still serve Chaplaincy and Army better going forward.

I am committed to a way forward where significant differences exist and where it is possible to engage in a process of deep listening. Building barriers or walls or running to defend ones self is not what we need to heal our divisions in the church or the world. But as a culture we seem to have lost the ability to listen deeply. We have forgotten the ability to be open to others and instead we build walls and retreat to our places of safety. We all need safe spaces, we all need people who agree with us but when we barrier ourselves in then we create suspicion, and suspicion leads to anger and hatred. This does not in the long term aid our world and we may well find that these barriers are built on sand, and some day, at some time the lines will be washed away leaving us exposed and vulnerable.

What is the sand? The sand is many things; it is the false narrative that we must build a wall to keep the other out and protect something (our status, or god, our selves); but equally it is the false narrative that if we just bring a diverse group of others in and make them like us, all will be fine. As our society becomes both more diverse and more polarised, we increasingly allow ourselves to only listen to our own echo-chamber of thoughts. I believe it is well past time to stop, and to look down at what we are standing on; if it is sand then rather than drawing a line it is probably instead, a time to find a rock and sit quietly and examine our hearts and our actions and our affect on others. It is time to listen to some old wisdom about open hearts, it is time to sit for the day with a willingness to hear how our words are received, it is time to take up Miriam's gift to the nation of Dadirri, it is time to build our foundation on the heart of the law rather than focusing on what we look like; acting like we own it all.

To end; going back to the beginning and addressing the previously unspoken balance by removing the silence from years ago. I wish to acknowledge the many stories of women in the Bible who led, preached, prophesied with and separately to men. While I acknowledge Peter, Paul, Abraham, Andronicus, Joseph and many other men who led, I take this time to notice Deborah, Rahab, Hagar, Ruth, Anna, Jael, Esther, Miriam, Huldah, Elizabeth, Apphia, Mary the Magdala, Junia, Prisca, Phoebe, Nympha, Euodia, Syntyche, Tabitha, Lydia, Louis and Eunice, amongst all the others who led in their communities and were strong Godly women and who have stories that can highlight aspects of leadership. Lets ensure their voices and the voices of all those less heard are given the efficacy and agency.

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Preaching In The Dark

Chaplain Hugh Begbie

In 1971/2 Hugh Begbie was called up and was sent as an officer into the medical corps via OTU Scheyville. He left in 1972 but returned as an Army Chaplain from 1989 to 1995. He served at DSU Liverpool, 5/7 RAR and Training Command. He has always been interested in working out how to communicate the faith in the complexity of life and the Army provided a very good example of that complexity. He has been committed to being as honest as possible about the temptations and the difficulties facing leaders of faith in today's world. This article was first published in

On the 25th April each year it is customary in Australia to hold dawn services. On such occasions, particularly in country towns, clergy are often asked to speak or pray. In April or November many churches remember World War 1 and sermons refer to these momentous events in our history. Clergy may also find themselves visiting 'Diggers' in hospital or speaking at their funerals. If time is taken to listen it becomes apparent that soldiers who have been at war have inhabited a morally dark place; but they are not alone. Police, like soldiers, spend their days in battle dealing with the seedy and dangerous side of life. And even politicians in their own way find themselves caught in conflict with others and with their own conscience as they seek to manage significant competing pressures and difficult moral decisions. There is in fact no profession without some moral conflict, but those that enter the extreme places and professions of the world have a particular burden to bear that we who speak the Gospel need to address with understanding and compassion. Being a soldier at war is the most extreme of these professions.

The nature and risks of war

War is chaotic and dangerous; but the hurt is not just physical, it is moral and spiritual. War is a destructive force that damages body, mind and spirit. It is the most 'judgemental' of all activities, the antithesis of Christian grace, the destroyer of human dignity, and the taker rather than the giver of life. Whether or not a war is deemed to be just, it is characterized by a darkness that feeds off lies and inflicts great harm. War creates deep fear and those who have not seen it cannot imagine the horror that it produces. Movies cannot convey its reality; the noise, the slipperiness of blood, the brutal impact of high explosives on the human body, the fear that leads to involuntary urination or defecation, the smell of death or the sense of utter chaos that threatens to overwhelm.

Fear of death and injury is important, but what many do not understand is that soldiers are also afraid of *killing*. With the exception of a few psychopaths, human beings do not want to kill and it requires special conditions for them to do so. The military training provides one means of overcoming this hesitation. In training soldiers learn to think as a group and operate under command; they are trained to place the operational goal above fear of death or injury and above their normal moral inhibitions. This does not mean they are trained to be *immoral* or that the military cannot operate with high moral purpose, but killing sits beyond the normal moral landscape and training must teach the soldier to cross it. Training alone, however, is not sufficient. It is better if those who fight and those who support them believe it is *right* to fight this battle, that they are on the good side and the enemy on the bad.

This move towards the moral high ground is achieved through propaganda. A creation of a belief environment where young men willingly enlist and kill and their families support such themes, is achieved through the power of language. You cannot fight a war without an enemy and the enemy

is defined by words. This is the role of propaganda which *all* governments in conflict resort to. With characteristic honesty C.E.W. Bean, the great World War 1 correspondent put it this way:

> In a properly organized nation the Government does not need war correspondents - it simply tells the people what it thinks will conduce towards winning the war. If truth is good for the war it tells them truth; if a lie is likely to win the war it tells them lies.[1]

The cartoonist. Jerry Robinson, illustrates this connection between thoughts, words and violence.[2]

Propaganda

The use of propaganda does not mean that there may not be *real* enemies or that it may not be necessary for a government to declare war. Neither does propaganda negate the responsibility that governments have to judge their decision by the traditional principles of just war theory But even if a war is deemed just, it is such a negative experience that it is impossible to wage or sustain unless the moral world is portrayed in binary language with the 'goodies' on one side and the 'baddies' on the other. Propaganda provides this binary language.

This will affect the soldier. When he first goes to war he will approach the enemy as the propaganda suggests. They will be made morally distant, viewed *as enemy* rather than *people*, remote and dangerous shadows in uniform, 'Nips', 'Huns' or 'Charlies', whose destiny is to be 'mopped up\ 'taken out' or 'wasted'. This distancing process, as well as being the outcome of propaganda, is a *psychological requirement* for soldiers.[3] If preachers fail to understand this phenomenon or the terrible circumstances that provoke it, they will be unable to speak with compassion or understanding to military- personnel in a time of war.

The preacher's responsibilities

Christian preachers in a time of war must understand the need to distance the enemy. This is not a good thing of itself but necessary; the preacher's task is to acknowledge this and retrieve as much good as possible from an evil situation.

In his book *The How and Why of Love,* Michael Hill discusses the importance of a 'retrieval ethic'. This ethic recognizes that Christians 'live in the overlap of the ages'[4] experiencing great tension and with some goals impossible to achieve. One such tension, Hill says, is between the 'now' and 'not yet' and involves the Christian struggling between obedience to the Lordship of Christ while at the same time acknowledging that sin is an habitual part of life. For the Christian this tension is 'fought by repentance and faith'.[5]

A second tension flows from living in a world where Christian and non-Christian live together. In this world there will be mixed values, different agenda and laws and decisions that conflict with the Christian's desires. In this context the Christian will be unable to make some choices that would normally flow from a Christian theory of ethics.[6] Consequently, the Christian has three options. He can try to impose a 'Kingdom ethic' and ignore the reality of sin; he can seek the lesser of two evils; or he can do what Hill suggests and allow Christian love to 'retrieve' as much good as possible, or at least reduce harm. Imposing a Kingdom ethic will lead to legalism, a loss of love, a false understanding of complex situations and in the end, considerable harm. To seek the lesser of two evils is to pursue an 'evil' even if it is lesser, and pursuing evil is something the Christian should abhor. It is far more biblical and positive for the Christian to allow love to be the driving motivation and in love retrieve whatever good can be found and minimise as much harm as is possible in a difficult and complex world.

With this 'retrieval ethic 'in mind, the preacher must realize that the great temptation for those involved in battle is to move from a professional distancing of the enemy to their outright dehumanization. The first task of the preacher is to retrieve as much good as possible, to help the soldier go no further than keeping the enemy distant. Nazism demonstrates what happens when this line is crossed. For them the Jews became vermin to be exterminated and their propaganda was quite explicit.[7]

When they called themselves Jews *Untermenschen* (subhuman) they were re-defining them; they were no longer people, even distant, enemy people made in the image of God, they were animals fit for slaughter. Sadly they were not alone in crossing the line. Some allies in World War II called Japanese soldiers 'monkey-men'; it was common in Vietnam to call the Viet Cong "slopes' and 'gooks'. This is a dangerous process, often exacerbated by poor leadership and training, that can lead to a loss of discipline and abuse of power. Tim Obrien says of the massacre at My Lai: 'the road to My Lai was paved, first and foremost, by the dehumanization of the Vietnamese and the 'mere gook rule' which declared that killing a Vietnamese civilian did not really count.'[8]

The preacher's responsibilities before and during a war

Prior to war there are three approaches Christian leaders have taken. The first is the classic pacifist position. Common in the early church it is probably now a minority view. Exponents typically try to apply the Sermon on the Mount literally and in all circumstances and oppose all war on principle. The challenge for the pacifist is that sometimes enemies are very real and the nation very frightened; a pacifist position has great difficulty speaking to the social realities of the time. Such a preacher, courageous though he or she may be, may find themselves isolated (or in prison) and unable to minister to a nation. I am not a convinced pacifist, and while I respect the courage of those who are, I do not think it a biblical requirement. It is rather an attempt to impose a kingdom ethic on the 'in between world' in which we live.

The second approach is sadly very common. In this scenario church leaders identify strongly with the military, providing it with theological and moral support. These preachers support the propaganda of war by publicly endorsing it as God's will. While every preacher can find themselves carried away by nationalism, those whose theology has been influenced by historic dispensationalism are most at risk. If you believe that this or that event is a sign of the end time or that prophecy demands that Israel must win in the Middle East, it becomes impossible to judge political events on their own moral terms. Moreover, the commitment to end time prophecies has a long history of failure. In his book. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* Mark Noll cites a long list of such failures and concludes:

> The evangelical tendency to exalt the supernatural *at the expense of the natural* makes it nearly impossible to look upon the political sphere as a realm of creation ordained by God for serious Christian involvement.[9]

Noll is not denying the supernatural but reminding us that God is God over *all* creation and that we have an obligation to live in this world with justice, loving kindness and humility before God.[10] The great tragedy is that some theological views paint war as in some way *good*, a God given precursor to the Second Coming, and it makes it impossible for the preacher to properly name war as *bad*- but bad it is, a moral reality of which every soldier is deeply aware. In failing to name war properly many preachers lose credibility with those who know the darkness first hand.

Noll's response to this form of preaching is helpful. He says:

> I believe that the major point of biblical prophecy is to reveal affective and cosmological dimensions of redemption in Christ and not to provide believers with a complete and detailed preview of the end of the world; and I believe that the Bible should be interpreted historically (with full attention to the human circumstances of each book), naturally (with full attention to the use of symbols, the imagination, and modes of discourse lying beyond the realm of nineteenth-century science), and Christocentrically (with the unity of Scripture resting in the determination of God to rescue sinners in Christ).[11]

The sin of Adam and Eve was to claim the right to determine what was morally good and what was morally bad, a right that belongs to God alone. Many sermons follow our forefather's example. Instead of allowing Scripture to humbly instruct us, we use the name of God to endorse *our* nationalism, *our* war, *our* desire to see the future clearly. Whether through jingoism, or blind pursuit of power, or through wrong interpretation of Scripture, the consequences of using God as *leverage* in our battles can be tragic.

Martin Luther played an important role in Church History, but he also said some terrible things about the Jews. It is easy to judge those of the past by the measures of our own day, but it cannot be denied that Luther's words provided rich fodder for the Nazi machine. While the use of colourful rhetoric was relatively common in his time,[12] the subsequent use of his words is a clear indication that a preacher must use language carefully and examine history on its own moral terms. Luther, in a series of recommendations said that synagogues should be burned, Jewish houses raised and destroyed, prayer books and Talmudic writings taken from them, rabbis forbidden to teach on pain of death, safe conduct for them on the road abolished, and the charging of interest forbidden. Finally, he recommends that they all be subjected to manual labour making a living by the sweat of their brows. Most frightening of all he refers to them as gangrene for which the appropriate response is amputation.[13]

Sadly, Luther was not the first to speak like this. Chrysostom was guilty of this kind of inflammatory language. Chrysostom calls the Jews 'dogs', likens them to a disease and calls them gluttons and drunkards. He accuses them of killing God and being associated with demons: 'For I am persuaded to call the fasting of the Jews a table of demons because they slew God.[14] Finally, in a frightening but almost certainly unintended foreshadowing of the holocaust he says:

> Although such beasts are unfit for work, they are fit for killing. And this is what happened to the Jews: while they were making themselves unfit for work, they grew fit for slaughter.[15]

A second and more subtle example comes from World War I. Michael Moynihan describes the experience of a World War I pilot who witnessed two religious services in progress on either side of no-man's land. The pilot's reaction as he observed the two padres leading worship for two groups of soldiers, one group saying *Gott mit uns* and the other *God with us*, was that 'it looked silly'.[16] We do not know what those Chaplains were thinking or saying, but the illustration highlights the risk of using religion to feed propaganda and give theological power to the machinery of war. It also illustrates that those who do the fighting recognize the scandal of theological nationalism. If preachers fall for the temptation to marry nationalism and theology, they will lose the soldier's trust, and the integrity of the faith will be lost.

A third example comes from Sydney and is quite remarkable. At Pymble Presbyterian Church in Sydney, the Rev John Gilmore urged young men to enlist and the congregation gave elaborate farewell socials for them when they did. At the first such occasion in 1914, minister and people presented as parting mementos to Douglas and Alexander Rae the gift of an automatic pistol and fifty rounds of ammunition. Michael McKernan highlights the risk of this process.

> From the outbreak of the war, clergymen claimed a role for themselves in society that was not questioned. They presumed to speak as the guardians of public morals, as the leaders of thought, as the 'wise men of the tribe'. Unfortunately, their performance did not accord with their aspirations. The thoughts they placed before the people were often banal and commonplace, little different from the ideas put forward by Australia's numerous mayors, members of parliament and other public speakers. Instead of establishing an independent viewpoint, churchmen were content to echo the general platitudes. When they spoke of morality, they did not address themselves to the pressing moral problems war provoked.[17]

The third possible approach is found in those Church leaders who recognize that the tension of belonging to both this world and the kingdom of God cannot be resolved by moving to one extreme or the other. In this world the tension must be faced with honesty. It requires a special courage and wisdom to live out the Gospel of grace in the midst of the terrible *ungrace* of war. What the preacher must do is seek the life of faith in the 'space' between the 'now' and the 'not yet' between the immanent presence of God in the Spirit and the actual presence with God in the new heaven and new earth that is yet to come and in which death and national enmity will be no more. Their task is to retrieve as much good as possible.

As preachers speaking before war it is essential to humbly question the government about the necessity of war, challenging destructive demonisation of the enemy and reminding both government and people of the costs of war. If the decision is taken to go to war, the church should be at the forefront of reminding the nation that necessary or not, war is always an evil force that destroys lives. Failure to do so can lead to terrible consequences.[18]

While recognizing the realities around them and giving proper voice to the fear and nationalism of the people, the preacher should allow space for light to challenge darkness, love to hold hatred at bay, grace to counter the overwhelming *ungrace* of war. The preacher should gently and wisely remind the people that God is on both sides and none, that there will be Christians praying and receiving communion from. Chaplains on both sides of the battle line. Further, we can remind our fellow believers that while it is necessary in war to see the enemy as enemy and permissible (or at least psychologically necessary) to keep them professionally distant, it is ungodly to dehumanize them and forget that they too are loved by God. Preachers should be discerning when it comes to propaganda; they should recognize it for what it is and lead their congregations to maintain some sense of balance, some capacity to love the enemy even when the nation rails against them. This is a very difficult task requiring great sensitivity and wisdom, but it is the task to which we are called.

While Church leaders should not be afraid to ask questions of their government they should recognize it is easy to make dogmatic statements without knowing the facts. Simplistic anti government, anti-war rhetoric can be easy but may fail dismally to understand the government's situation or the weight of responsibility it must carry. To be God's peacemakers we as preachers must stand in the gap between the social forces that want to make us conform and the temptation to walk away or stand in judgment; we must 'feel' the weight of the politics of the day but allow the Gospel to hold us back from blind obedience to its calling; we are, in the end, called to sing the Lord's song in a foreign land.[19]

The preacher's responsibilities to military personnel during and after a war

I turn now to dealing with and preaching to those who have fought in battle. In this country there is a tendency to honour and praise them. They are ANZACS; they uphold the ANZAC tradition of courage and mateship. They are set apart as role models for our society and their sacrifice is seen as redemptive in nature. It is good to give honour where honour is due; it is good to recognize courage and mateship; it is not good to condemn men and women to silence. But it is to silence they are condemned if we treat them as saints when they know full well they are sinners. How can they speak of darkness when we paint them with light?

Soldiers protect their conscience by objectifying the enemy, but in time this sanity-saving device fails, particularly with the more intimate form of killing associated with the infantry soldier at the front line.

> I was confronted by a French corporal with his bayonet to the ready, just as I had mine. I felt the fear of death in that fraction of a second when I realized that he was after my life, exactly as I was after his. But I was quicker than he was; I pushed his rifle away and ran my bayonet through his chest. He fell, putting his hand on the place where I had hit him, and then I thrust again. Blood came out of his mouth and he died.
>
> I nearly vomited. My knees were shaking and they asked me, 'What's the matter with you? I remember then that we had been told that a good soldier kills without thinking of his adversary as a human being - the very moment he sees him as a fellow man, he's no longer a good soldier.. . But I had the dead French soldier in front of me, and how I would have liked to have raised his hand! I would have shaken it and we would have been the best of friends because he was nothing but a poor boy - like me; a boy who had to fight with the cruellest weapons against a man who had nothing and spoke another language, but a man who had a father and mother and a family. So I woke up at night sometimes, drenched in sweat, because I saw the eyes of my fallen adversary. I tried to convince myself of what would've happened to me if I hadn't been quicker than him, if I hadn't thrust my bayonet into his belly first. [20]

All kinds of things can breach the protective facade of the soldier. It might be seeing the professional way a dead enemy has organized his pack, or the humour of an enemy soldier. [21] Personal photos, letters and other effects often challenge the equanimity of the soldier.

> Another time, we swept through an area pockmarked by a massive artillery barrage. Dead and wounded North Vietnamese soldiers littered the cratered landscape. I was rummaging through the rucksack of a dead North Vietnamese soldier, looking for something to eat, when I found a picture of his wife and kids. All of a sudden I realized this was a man -not a dog or a gook - but a man. At that moment, the old "him-or-me" logic didn't seem so comforting.[22]

In the end, neither determined training, nor propaganda, nor the protective language of the soldier is sufficient to protect him from the destructive consequences of killing. Eventually, the personal breaks through and haunts the soldier for the remainder of his life. The tragedy for the man at war is that he is caught in an inescapable bind that ultimately cripples many for life. Grossman speaks of this moral bind.

> The soldier in combat is trapped within this Catch-22. If he overcomes his resistance to killing and kills an enemy soldier in close combat, he will be forever burdened with blood guilt, and if he elects not to kill, then the blood guilt of his fallen comrades and the shame of his profession, nation, and cause lie upon him. He is damned if he does, and damned if he doesn't.[23]

If the preacher is to speak to those who have been to war, he must understand and voice this pain, and must do so in the context of the Gospel of forgiveness and hope. One of the deep causes of alienation for soldiers is their inability to speak about the experience to any outsider, including their wives and children. This is due partly to the wish to forget the horrors experienced; but also because war is like being on another planet. It is an experience so foreign to normal life that the soldier often finds it impossible to describe. It is also because few take the time to listen without judgment and even fewer have the ability to voice their pain for them. The preacher is called to be their voice.

Peter Marin, author of the book, *To Regain our Moral Lives*, was interviewed on the ABC Encounter Program in 1994. He spoke about the American Vietnam Veterans, many of whom are now homeless. The interview exposes the listener to the deep moral pain that flows from war and raises the question: How does the preacher bring the Gospel of grace to a person who sees no hope of forgiveness and who cannot even verbalize the true nature of his pain?

> They had agonized by the killing forced on them, by the killing they did and the dying they saw. They experienced moral pain and a kind of blossoming moral wisdom for which no-one in America has a language - a moral pain and moral suffering for which psychology has no name. What went on in our war was more terrible than we have yet acknowledged - the kinds of arbitrary killing, the almost psychotic purposeful murder of women, children and civilians was so common in the war that many of the Vets I encountered had either been involved or been very close to them so that they suffered them personally. Moral pain is simply having done something in the war which, when it is over, they find unforgivable, for which society has no forgiving mechanisms, and which has so radically changed you, that there is no way, even with outside help, that you can come to terms with what you have done and the changes that have occurred.
>
> At a deeper level I think that once you have acted like that you suddenly are aware of what all human beings are capable of doing - you are conscious, perhaps forever,

> of the evil or violence that exists side by side or immediately beneath the surface of civility of which society is made and conscious of the proximity of death which hovers right next to or beneath life. The Vets inability to speak, having a truth that has no public life, is a kind of moral pain also. How do you expiate the felt guilt of killing women and children? How do you then come home and work as a box boy or storeman?[24]

To speak in glowing terms of the soldiers' sacrifice, to give no space to the darkness which they feel, is to condemn them to silence. The soldiers' pain can be given voice in various ways. Firstly, the preacher must acknowledge the darkness of war and its moral and spiritual impact on the soldier. He must take time to listen to their stories and invite them to speak of that which is painful. This cannot be done without patience, compassion and a refusal to judge. The poetry of war can be very effective; so are testimonies or quotations from military personnel. What is clear is that the moral ambiguity - the collision between virtues such as courage, mateship and sacrifice, and the vices of killing, anger and the immoral behaviour often associated with war, must be gently and lovingly named, but named in a context of grace, hope, forgiveness and renewal. There is a great difference between an Anzac Day talk that speaks nothing of the darkness and one that conveys to the soldiers that it was the nation that sent them to the darkness, and it is the nation that now, in God's name must welcome them back, back to a place where the Gospel can be spoken and the hope of a new day pronounced.

Scripture is of course useful for this purpose, but not just by its announcement of grace. The Bible includes the voice of those who have been in battle. David's lament for Jonathan seems strange to those who have not been to war, but the language of 2 Samuel 1:25-27 is the language of 'mateship' forged in blood. Psalm 137 is rarely preached on, particular verses 7-9; but these verses are the cries of the pain of war; they voice the anguish of those who have seen their children dashed against a rock by the Babylonians and who now cry out to God for justice. If the preacher cannot hear these tearful cries, if he cannot discern that the anger is normal and appropriate; if he cannot differentiate between anger that calls on God for justice and anger that seeks personal revenge, he will not be able to speak to soldiers who have been to war.

Summary

The preacher must take every opportunity to voice for the soldier the moral pain that war has inflicted upon them. The preacher must name war for what it is and for what the soldier knows it to be. War may be necessary but is never good; it is a darkness that leads to terrible moral dilemmas, that inflicts great pain and elicits behaviour for which the soldier is now ashamed. It is in this context that the preacher can, through Word and Sacrament, remind the soldier of the offer of forgiveness and the promise of a new day. The soldier must sense from the preacher's words and actions that he understands the moral conflict that war produces, that he neither condones or glorifies war, nor condemns, but loves the soldiers as he is, broken and burned forever in the flames of conflict. It is the preacher's calling to speak of hope when the soldier's heart is broken.

To maintain the painful balance required to do this well the preacher must reflect deeply and humbly on the teaching of the Bible. The Preacher needs to seek balance between judgment and mercy, exclusion and inclusion, holding fast to his belief that both he and the enemy are sinners for whom Christ died, flawed persons but persons made in God's image nonetheless. He must take every opportunity to bring the insight and wisdom of God to bear on the difficult circumstances of war and reveal both in person and through liturgy the grace and love of God.

Finally, in recognition that it is the Spirit of God who brings this kind of love to completion in the human heart, the preacher must be a person of prayer, for it is only through a change of heart that the preacher can truly be like Christ. Perhaps the words of St Paul focus these thoughts and provide a fitting conclusion, for he reminds the preacher that the love of Jesus encompasses the enemy, that the preacher cannot judge either the wounded soldier or the enemy he fought because he, the preacher, began as God's enemy.

> You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners (enemies), Christ died for us. [25]

Rembrandt, the great 17th century artist, understood this truth deeply. In his painting: "The Raising of the Cross", he portrays himself as one of those nailing Christ to the cross. In his movie, The Passion, Mel Gibson picks up the same theme by using his own hands as the one that drove the nails into the hands of Jesus. In the end the preacher can only succeed in his difficult task if he acknowledges the darkness of war and the inescapable moral impact it will have on him. The preacher is not entirely clean; he too carries moral scars, if not from war then something else, and he too must reach out for God's grace, not only for the soldiers to whom he speaks, but first and foremost for himself. It is in this honest admission of personal failure and need before God that the preacher will find his best foundation for reaching out to those who have walked in darkness.

> The people who walk in darkness will see a great light: those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them. .. For every boot of the booted warrior in the battle tumult, and cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire. For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on his shoulders; and he name will be called Wonderful, Councillor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.[26]

End Notes

1. Bean, C. E. W., *Frontline Gallipoli: C. E. W Bean diaries from the trenches/selected and annotated by Kevin Fewster,* Sydney, London, Boston, Alien & Unvvin, 1990, p. 163.
2. © Jerry Robinson 1985, Cartoonists and Writers Syndicate, printed in Keen, S., *Faces of the Enemy: Reflections of the Hostile Imagination, the Psychology of Enmity.* Harper & Row, San Francisco, 1986, p. 10.
3. It is hard to kill a person who has a name, a smile, a wife or children. Anonymity is important and uniforms encourage it.
4. M. Hill. *The How and Why of Love, An Introduction to Evangelical Ethics,* Kingsford, Mathias Media, 2002, p 132.
5. Ibid p 132.
6. Hill points to 1 Corinthians 7:10-16 as an example of where a Christian married to an unbelieving partner who determines to leave the marriage, should let the partner go so that hostility might be avoided. Ibid p 132.
7. Keen, S., *Faces of the Enemy; Reflections of the Hostile Imagination: The Psychology of Enmity,* Harper and Row, San Francisco, 1986, p 61. Wright also points out that in *Mein Kampf* Jews were called "maggots in rotting corpses", "germ carriers" and "eternal blood suckers". He also points out that those destined for the gas chambers were called "pieces". See Wright, F., *Father Forgive Us,* London, Grand Rapids. Monarch Books, 2002, p 56-57.
8. O'Brien, T., *If I Die in a Combat Zone,* Flamingo, Sydney, 1995, p. 40.
9. Noll, Mark A., *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind,* William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Cambridge, 1994, p. 174
10. Micah 6:8
11. Noll, Mark A., *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind,* William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Cambridge, 1994, p. 142.
12. It was the relatively recent invention of the printing press that made mass propaganda possible. Being in its infancy, the use of such material was unrestrained. See Miriam Usher Chrisman, "From Polemic to Propaganda: The Development of Mass Persuasion in the Late Sixteenth Century, *Archiv fur Reformationgeschichte 73* (1982):175-196.
13. Flalsall, P. *Introduction to Medieval Sourcebook: Martin Luther (1483-1546) :The Jews and Their Lies, excerpts* (1543) http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/luther-jews.html
14. Homily VII, 5, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/chrysostom-jews6.html#HOMILY_7
15. Homily II, 6, http://www. fordham. edu/halsall/source/chryston-jews6.html#HOMILY_2
16. Moyn'ihan, M, (ed) *God on our Side*, London, Seeker and Warburg, 1983, p. 11.
17. McKeman, M., *Australian Churches at War: Attitudes and Activities of the Major Churches 1914-1918,* Catholic Theological Seminary Sydney and Australian War Memorial Canberra, 1980, p. 1-2.
18. This was the mistake of the church in Nazi Germany and later confessed. One group *(Kirchenbewegung Deutsche Christen)* actually used the language of the Messiah to speak of Hitler and his way as the way of resurrection. "Thus the Golgotha of the World War became the way of the resurrection of the German Nation through the faith of Adolph Hitler." Quoted from a 1935 magazine called *Verlag Deutshce Christen*, by James A., *Nazism and the Pastors. A Study in the Ideas of Three 'Deiitsche Christen' Groups.* American Academy of Religion Dissertation Series No. 14, edited by H. Ganse Little, Jr., Scholars Press, Missoula, Montana, 1976, p. 180.
19. Psalm 137:4
20. The words of Sergeant Stefan Westmann, 29th Division, German Army, quoted in Arthur, M., *Forgotten Voices of the Great War: A New History of WWI in the Words of the Mien and Women who were there.* Ebury Press Random House, London, 2002, p. 70-71.
21. Stiebritz, R., reports taking a shot at a Russian soldier and missing. The soldier took off his cap and waved back and laughed. This human touch was seen by Stiebritz as 'refreshing' in this case because it brought some humanity and humour back into his life. See Stiebritz, R., *Pawn of War,* Temple House, Hartweil, Victoria, 2001, p. 73.
22. Landreth, W., 'Short Tour' in Kimball, W. R., (ed), *Vietnam: The Other side of Glory,* Ballentine Books, New York, 1988, p. 153.
23. Grossman, D., *On Killing, The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society,* Back Bay Books, Boston/New York/London, 1995, p. 87. Poetry also assists the reader to explore the ambiguity of the soldier's role and the breaking in of the personal. See for example *I killed a man at Graspan* Appendix B, p. 128.
24. All countries tend to glorify their military history and minimize their failures. You will rarely read of desertion, rape, war crimes or cowardice among Australian troops but such things have occurred. For example, a group of Australian deserters roamed France for years during World War I and C. E. W Bean discusses the reality of war and fear and failure amongst Australians in Bean, C. E. W., *Frontline Gallipoli: C. E. W Bean diaries from the trenches/selected and annotated by Kevin Fewster,* Sydney; London, Boston, Alien & Unwin, 1990, p. 157-8. Even relatively minor breaches of human dignity can be painful for the soldier to endure. One story told to me by a Vietnam Veteran involved the burial of two Vietcong, one male the other female, in a sexually explicit pose. Years later such memories brought the soldier deep regret.
25. Romans 5:6-8.
26. Isaiah 9:2, 5-6.

Jesus drawing lines in the sand
(John 8:1-11)

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When it comes to asking "What would Jesus do?" part of the challenge today is relating Jesus in his cultural context to ours. Those who look to Jesus as exemplar model themselves on his values and ethical principles, even if they cannot imitate Jesus facing a dilemma the same as their own. One of my favourite gospel stories narrates when and where Jesus drew lines in the sand as he made a stand for his values.

Jesus was at the Temple and local Jewish Pharisees and Law teachers brought a woman "caught in the act of adultery" (John 8:1-11). They pointed out that according to the law of Moses she should be stoned and asked Jesus what he thought?

Several things are just plain wrong about this scene.

First, the religious leaders were not genuinely curious about Jesus' ethical decision-making processes or wisdom – they were just trying to trap him.

Second, where was the other party in the adulterous act? They had not just heard a rumour of sleeping around, but the woman was "caught in the act" so presumably her partner was caught too. Yet why did they unceremoniously drag the woman to Jesus' feet?

Third, why were these *religious* people so intent on catching, condemning and stoning the woman? Religion, which is supposed to bring out humanity's best and invite us into line with God's dream for world, can sadly (and all too often) be used to cultivate violence – *in the name of God* but not reflecting what really is God's character or will. What is it about personalities or insecurities that makes people want to point the finger at those who are different, let alone urge violence?

There is something about violence that gets the mob mentality going. I remember school fights, especially ones I was in, when I and/or mates Mark or Eddie or David were punching it out, sometimes with each other, or sometimes someone else. Crowds gathered and chorused "Fight. Fight. Fight" until Mr Louden came and broke up the brawl, with one or both of us stumbling to the headmaster's office with bloody nose.

I shake my head wondering how threats and accusations escalated so quickly into punch-ups back in the day at North Katoomba? I shake my head wondering how mistrust and greed, cultural misunderstandings and rivalries so readily escalate into war today, or even local neighbourhood conflict.

I appreciate urban mission worker Jon Owen's reflections on John 8 and relating it to community peace-making. He commented the scene brings us to the edge of religious violence and reflects a sad fact of history that the history of religion and the history of war are too intertwined.[1]

Around the time Jon and his family moved to Mt Druitt, a local gang fight dragged over weeks as two families faced off. Police were regularly called. Then a mass fight broke out, and almost a hundred people brawled. The brawl made media headlines. Questions were asked. People wanted someone to blame. What struck Jon was a Community Police Officer at a community forum who reported:

> *"As tension was bubbling away before the riot, all it would have taken was for one respected, non-partisan member of the local community to stand up and say 'Enough is enough, Let's talk' and it would have been enough to have gotten both sides to communicate, and yet, there was no one, no one willing to take a stand for the local neighbourhood. All it needed was one person, and that person did not step forward."*[2]

That Australian suburban escalation of violence is reminiscent of Jesus with that unnamed woman who was the target of blame and condemnation. Jesus' response was telling when he "stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger". This is the only time when and where that I know of that Jesus literally drew lines in the sand. But what did he draw or write?

The religious leaders may have expected him to "draw a line in sand" about righteous conduct and agree with their condemnation and suggestion that violence was the appropriate response. The metaphoric "line in the sand" refers to a moral guideline that if crossed brings a person into a state of guilt and potential accusation and condemnation. These Pharisee religious leaders brought the woman to Jesus assuming she had crossed a line (adultery) that meant condemnation and punishment were authorised and warranted and wanted Jesus' comments – likely then being able to accuse him of being either too soft or too hard. The line Jesus drew was a line way below their "adultery line" – Jesus' line was "sinless perfection" and he implied only those without sin were in a position to accuse others. This is a warning to any of us who are "line-drawing" people by nature. It reminds me to tread very lightly when I think I see sin or misbehaviour in others; to pause, take time to reflect (draw in the sand) and reflect on how with optimal ethical behaviour for myself I may deal with the issue, perhaps also seeking to embody a Jesus-like posture rather than Pharisaic hypocritical judgmentalism.[3]

When Jesus declined to engage verbally but stooped down, commentators have suggested he might have just been squiggling in the dirt while ignoring their stupidity. Others suggest he may have quoted a Scripture. Whatever he drew, the accusers still demanded an answer, so Jesus gave them one. In a masterful stroke of logic he suggested: "Alright, you want to stone her for her sin, go ahead. Let's get those who never sinned to throw first." Then he stooped down and drew more lines in the sand.

Jesus was not picking sides here in an ethical decision-making scenario but was subverting the very question of whether lines were appropriate. The line in the sand had become a means by which the self-righteous stood on one side preparing to throw stones of condemnation against those on the other. It was an "us versus them" line-drawing scenario. Jesus took the side of love. Yes it is important to know when behaviour must be held in check, when to *cross the line* and commit an immoral act is wrong. We must also know that the line in the sand can be weaponised to bring others down rather than to help them overcome their failings.[4] This condemnatory line in the sand had to be crossed, or to use the metaphor imaginatively Jesus was drawing a line and then wiping it out as a demonstration of a "third way" of non-violent response that embodied grace and forgiveness.[5]

The fourth gospel writer (John) tells us the accusers then slipped away one by one. Jesus asked the woman who was left to condemn her, she replied no one and Jesus responded: "Neither do I. Go and sin no more." While others were fixated on matters of law and judgment, Jesus was a

person of radical grace and forgiveness. He wanted to give back to the woman her freedom, her self-worth, and the wisdom to avoid being lured into abusive relationships that had robbed her of love that heals.

Jesus is a hero of mine, in part because he refused to scapegoat the vulnerable. He drew lines in the sand and stood in the gap. He offered an alternative to straight violence (walking away) and showed respect by talking to and recognising the dignity of this woman.

By standing between the crowd and this woman, at real risk of copping it in line of fire of stray stones, he diffused the violence.

Jesus' demonstration of moral courage reminds me of Desmond Tutu, who stood up for victims of violence in South Africa – whether black or white. When crowds that were cheering his achievements started calling for violence towards whites, he would yell for it to stop. He said if the crowd hurt anyone, he could no longer be their leader; such was his commitment to non-violent resolution of conflict.[6]

When I told this story in chapel at Kapooka, I reminded recruits they need to learn how to use lethal violence, but they also need to learn and never forget the importance and timeliness of withholding and diffusing violence, and how powerfully transformative that can be. Armies are in the business of administering state sanctioned violence, hopefully for a just cause, which is why soldiers act morally when administering this violence. But soldiers acting as guardians of the peace must know when to use it lawfully and when to abstain.[7] Making and guarding peace is of course our ultimate aim in Defence, and "peace-keeping" is even often the primary aim of an operation.

In Timor-Leste, in 1999, as part of Operation Warden, two Vehicle Mechanics (one was the Crew Commander, and the other was the Driver) were travelling along a remote road in an M113 Fitters Track. Both the Crew Commander and the Driver saw a young man, in a rice paddy, about 200 metres away, who raised a gun, and pointed it at the M113 as they were driving along. The crew commander then turned his main weapon (50 calibre machine gun) towards the young man, ready to fire. I relate this experience to AST trainees as a scenario and ask them would good soldiering follow rules of engagement and open fire, turn your gun but not fire until fired upon, retreat back, or some other action? I have been impressed by their mature decision-making processes. It is a good story given that the ethical dilemma was faced by two mechanics. And the trainers appreciate hearing they did not fire and that after a few tense moments, the boy ran and dropped the gun. The soldiers went over to his position and the gun turned out to be a wooden replica. As a peacekeeping operation, avoiding the violence of lethal force was the most appropriate way to achieve the mission. It also avoided the potentially morally injurious event of shooting a young civilian pretending to be a soldier. Navigating this line in the sand to win the "hearts and minds" of locals, albeit maintaining a readiness to use lethal force when necessary, is part of the challenge facing "the strategic corporal" in contexts of sometimes simultaneously facing military action, peacekeeping and humanitarian aid.[8]

From a later conflict, I read about a green-on-blue incident, referring to violence by supposed neutral or allied forces on our friendly forces, which caused the death of an Australian soldier. The young Lieutenant platoon commander was aware his platoon returning from a 72-hour patrol would be exhausted and then also angry when they heard the news. They were outraged and they wanted to go straight back out the gate to storm, the local village and find the culprit and kill him. But the platoon commander stood between the soldiers and the Forward Operating Base gate, as he saw they still had loaded weapons and rage was threatening to drive them to unjust violence. The Lieutenant, freshly graduated from The Royal Military College – Duntroon, eyed off the soldiers and stated: "The only way you are leaving this base is over my dead body." Raised voices expressed the soldier's disgruntlement, anger and desire for revenge. But the scene settled when the platoon sergeant, who had also been out on patrol and just then heard the news, moved and stood with the platoon commander. Split-second decisions of ill-disciplined use of violence is not just bad for our national reputation but the resulting moral injuries of our soldiers. Fortunately the Australian Army is full of soldiers who demonstrate this kind of ethical leadership.[9]

One of the Church's terrible historic mistakes was in the Middle Ages thinking that the Crusades were needed to usher in the Kingdom of God of earth. They were horribly mistaken. But there was stand-out counter-cultural figures such as St Francis (c 1182-1236 AD). Saint Francis was against militarism for its own sake. He sought to build bridges to the enemy rather than demonize them. Rather than drawing a line in the sand between "them and us", he crossed enemy lines to dialogue with the Sultan. Against the Crusader kingdom policies and violent ethos of the time, he sought to be a peacemaker.[10]

Such was St Francis' spirituality of peace-making, the Peace Prayer or Simple Prayer for Peace is commonly attributed as the Prayer of Saint Francis:

> Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
> where there is hatred, let me sow love;
> where there is injury, pardon;
> where there is doubt, faith;
> where there is despair, hope;
> where there is darkness, light;
> where there is sadness, joy.
> O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
> to be consoled as to console,
> to be understood as to understand,
> to be loved as to love.
> For it is in giving that we receive,
> it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
> and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
> **Amen.**

End Notes

1. Jon Owen, *Muddy Spirituality: Bringing It All Down to Earth* (Dandenong: UNOH, 2011), 144.
2. Owen, *Muddy Spirituality*, 133-134; discussed also in Kim Hammond and Darren Cronshaw, *Sentness: Six Postures of Missional Christians* (Doners Grove: IVP, 2014), 114-15.
3. Drawing on helpful conversations with my ALTC Coordinating Chaplain Greg Prosper.
4. Drawing on helpful conversations with Command Chaplain Stephen Brooks as *AACJ* editor.
5. On the idea of Jesus' "third way" of non-violent resistance that navigates between meeting violence with violence (whether justified by just war or violent revolution) or submission to oppression (whether with pacifism or non-resistance), see Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992); *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium* (New York: Galilee, 1999); discussed in Darren Cronshaw, *Dangerous Prayer: Discovering a Missional Spirituality in the Lord's Prayer* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2017), 138-142; "Resisting the Empire in Young Adult Fiction: Lessons from *Hunger Games*", *International Journal of Public Theology* 13:2 (July 2019), 129-130 [119-139]; "Beyond Divisive Categorization in Young Adult Fiction: Lessons from *Divergent*", *International Journal of Public Theology* 15:4 (Nov 2021), 434-435 [426-445].
6. Owen, *Muddy Spirituality*, 141-142.
7. Deane-Peter Baker advocates for the use of the term and ethos of soldier as guardian, rather than warrior or even professional, in *Morality and Ethics at War: Bridging the Gaps Between the Soldier and the State* (London: Bloomsbury 2021), 97-114.
8. General Charles C. Krulak, "The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War", *Marines Magazine*, 28.1 (1999), 28-34. The Vehicle Mechanic Crew Commander was Barton Smith, now a Major serving in the Land Simulation Centre at Army Knowledge Centre in Puckapunyal. Discussed in Darren Cronshaw, "Good Soldiering and Re-virtuing Military Ethics Training", *International Journal of Public Theology* (forthcoming 2022).
9. Matthew Stuart, *Preparing the Digger's Soul for Moral Injury: A Chaplain's Role in developing Spiritual Resilience for Future Ready Australian Soldiers* (ACD Master of Theological Studies minor thesis 2019), 13
10. Michael H Crosby, *Thy Will Be Done: Praying the Our Father as Subversive Activity* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1977), 73; discussed in Cronshaw, *Dangerous Prayer*, 65.

Moving forward by turning back:

Aristotle, Army Chaplaincy and the future of Australian Army Character Development

Chaplain Andrew Robinson

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Tertullian asked, "What does Athens have in common with Jerusalem?" Historically, Army Character Development has been clearly and self-consciously Aristotelian. Does this mean it is fundamentally at odds with a faith-based approach to life? Moreover, does it follow that Chaplains would have little to contribute in this space, even struggle to do so on the basis of conscience? Little could be further from the truth. Army Chaplaincy is uniquely placed to contribute to Character Development, indeed, to re-invigorate this essential activity. This is due to our personal vocational attributes, specialized education and relationships of trust with both members and the Chain of Command. At the same time, Character Development is not the panacea for wrong conduct. Recruiting processes, ab initio and more advanced military training, and Command, Leadership and Management (CLM) must all play their part. Aristotle's approach is not only the history of Army Character Development but, in this writer's view, its future as well. At the same time, before its potential can be fully realized, this method must address its own situationist challenge.

Introduction

Tertullian, the Early Church apologist, asked "What does Athens have to do with Jerusalem?"[1] That is, what could secular philosophy have in common with a mind (and life) informed by religious faith? In a similar way, we might ask "Why have Chaplains for many years been tasked with facilitating Character Development?" (Anecdotal reports suggest our capability has been doing this via structured activities with a clear educational aim since at least the 1950s.)

Historically, Army Character Development has been clearly and self-consciously Aristotelian[2]. That is, it is strongly influenced by the ancient philosopher's notions, particular in the area of moral growth. Does this mean, then, it is fundamentally at odds with a faith-based approach to life? Moreover, does it follow that Chaplains would have little to contribute in this space, even struggle to do so on the basis of conscience? Little could be further from the truth.

In this article I will argue that – far from being a line in the sand Chaplains must never cross – Army Chaplaincy is uniquely placed to contribute to Character Development, indeed, to re-invigorate this essential activity. This is due to our personal attributes, specialized education and relationships of trust with both members and the Chain of Command. At the same time, we must understand – and help others to see – that Character Development alone is not the panacea for wrong conduct. Recruiting processes, *ab initio* and more advanced military training, and Command, Leadership and Management (CLM) must all play their part.

Character Development – Chaplaincy's long involvement

What, then, is the Chaplain's task? How is it distinct from ministry in other contexts, including (but not limited to) a local worshipping community? And what should all Chaplains do, regardless of Faith Group or theological commitments? Policy guidance can be found in a number of sources. The Joint document, *ESP L1 Chaplaincy Services* lists the five primary functions of a Chaplain. These are religious ministry or support, spiritual guidance, pastoral care, advice to Command and character formation[3]. What is meant by this last term? The latter is not closely defined in *Chaplaincy Services* but is linked with "life skills training…[which can] foster resilience and enhance capability"[4]. *ADF Chaplaincy Policy*, edition 2 – although a higher level document – provides greater detail, noting that "character formation…[should include] guidance on values and ethical decision making in order to promote Service values and team cohesion".[5]

This understanding of – and the requirement to deliver character formation – will come as no surprise to Army Chaplains. Not only have we read it in policy, many of us have "lived the dream"(!), delivering Character Training (as it is often known) in both Training Establishments and field force units over many years. Others can anticipate working in this space in future postings. What may surprise us, however, is that our capability has been active in this area not simply for years, but in fact decades. Sadly, I was unable to source it for this article, however, I am aware of scholarly work that has been done on Army Chaplaincy's long involvement in Character Development. Interestingly, this reveals that the first lessons were actually delivered back in the 1950s. The rationale here was to inoculate Australian soldiers against Communist indoctrination (particularly after capture). Of course, over time both the content and delivery of Character Training have evolved. Army Chaplaincy's involvement has been a constant, however – and central to its success.

Character Development's contemporary aims

How have the aims of Character Development shifted over time? As noted, the original intent was to provide a bulwark against enemy indoctrination of Australian personnel. Much had changed, however, even within a generation and certainly by the turn of the century. Interestingly, this *fin-de-siècle* change also coincided with the publication of C. Krulak's now-famous article, "The Strategic Corporal".[6] (L. Liddy, an Australian writer, offers a helpful explanation of the concept:

> A strategic corporal is a soldier that possesses technical mastery in the skill of arms while being aware that his [or her] judgment, decision-making and action can all have strategic and political consequences that can affect the outcome of a given mission and the reputation of his country.[7])

Subsequent to this, Australian Army Character Development had a very clear purpose:

> The nature of military service is that soldiers will be called upon to serve in circumstances where peaceful resolution of conflict has failed. The purpose of developing a soldier's character is to instill the qualities and attributes that allow them to adapt to their environment and to *consistently make the right decisions* despite the pressures of fear, chaos and danger [italics added].[8]

The latest character doctrine is due for release shortly. However, similar themes are already evident in *ADF-P-O ADF Leadership*, published in November 2021. (The intent is that these two volumes – together with *ADF-P-O Military Ethics* – will be read together and their complementary doctrines applied to various ethical and leadership challenges.) There, the author urges that

> Every moment to develop character should be taken now, in training, at sea, in the barracks, on the base. It is too late once you are deployed on operations.[9]

My comments above notwithstanding, it is striking that character features so prominently in the leadership pam. Why is this the case? The rationale offered is the same as one would find in the mid-2000s:

> A leader of character will *make the right decisions* on a difficult day [italics added]. Upon those decisions may rest the lives of our own forces and the standing of our nation.[10]

Of course, this emphasis on the character and choices of a moral agent – in this case, a member on operations – is an Aristotelian distinctive.

Aristotle – his influence and the suitability of his method

This ancient philosopher has had a significant influence on Army Character Development for at least a generation and likely much longer. *LWD 0-2-2 Character* was published in 2005. It superseded the *Manual of Land Warfare 3-2-5, Character Training, 1983.*[11] No copies of this Manual could be sourced. However, given the longevity of Aristotle's approach (which I discuss further below) it is certainly possible that Character Training in this intervening period was also heavily influenced by his thinking. There is no doubt this is the case with *LWD 0-2-2*. Its first chapter begins with Aristotle's famous maxim: "we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts."[12] Later, the authors confirm that "For the Australian soldier, the principal method for developing character is described by the Aristotelian concept of practicing virtue until it becomes habit."[13]

K. Kristjánsson observes that this approach had been popular in the West for many centuries.[14] The shift to a psychologically-informed model occurred following World War Two. Key to this was the "emergence of Lawrence Kohlberg's ground-breaking thesis in the late 1950s".[15] Departing from historic views, Kohlberg saw moral development as a function of maturation.[16] In plain terms, as they grew physically and matured cognitively so men and women matured morally, but, in some cases, only up to a point. (One writer notes that, according to this view, "only 10-15% [of the population] are capable of the kind of abstract thinking necessary for stage 5 or 6 [i.e. the most advanced moral decision-making].)[17]

Kristjánsson reflects: "Such a theory was in great intellectual demand, with the egregious acts of the Second World War still fresh in the collective psyche."[18] Thinkers in this era had been forced to confront the problem of how an Aristotelian approach had not resulted in better human conduct, and, consequently, there was widespread dissatisfaction with traditional methods of promoting good character.

As stated, Aristotelian Character Development is no panacea. It also faces particular challenges from situationist factors. Nevertheless, it remains highly suited to a Defence environment and our members' needs. First, this approach to Character Development rightly focusses attention on the individual and his or her choices. These are particularly important in the battle-space. Second, its principles are straightforward and not difficult to implement.[19] In essence, men and women will develop desirable qualities when they rehearse these qualities. (A proposed Army Character Development strategy appears below. Its key components are exemplars, imitation and repetition.)

An old maxim states "No plan survives first contact with the enemy."[20] At the risk, then, of overstating the point, in the battle-space or, indeed, any other volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environment other approaches to ethical decision-making will only ever have limited utility. No list of constraints or permissions – however comprehensive – can anticipate every possible turn of events. Nor can we train members to identify every single (or even significant) consequence that will result from their actions.[21] Much better, then, that Army focusses its efforts on enhancing the character of its members. This is because *in extremis* men and women who have

been developed in this way will know what decisions they should take. As CDF (then CA) asserted in his 2017 address to the National Press Club:

> "When you're scared, exhausted, confused and your mates are dead, our weapons won't discriminate the innocent from the enemy combatant. You will."[22]

Chaplaincy – positioned to make a unique contribution

As Chaplains, we exercise a highly specialized function in Defence. To this task, we bring a unique set of attributes, education and experience.

Personal vocational attributes. If it is true that Defence specifically recruits men and women with a bias for action[23], Chaplains as a demographic are typically more reflective. Intellectually, we are interested in such things as meaning and purpose, hope for the future, reconciliation, and right conduct, and are keen to discuss these things with others. Chaplains are also, as Bonhoeffer urges, willing to listen to personnel[24]– and assist them in other ways – as they wrestle with these often complex issues.

Specialized education and training. In addition to our theological qualifications, many Chaplains have formal training in philosophy, including Aristotelian virtue ethics. (Some centuries on from Tertullian, philosophy and theology are now often regarded as complementary activities.) Most Chaplains also have practical experience leading group and individual learning activities, while some possess formal educational qualifications.

Pastoral experience. All Chaplains have a wide, pastoral experience of people and their different life circumstances. We have met and ministered to them in good times and bad, in workplaces, homes, hospitals and other contexts. The soft skills we have developed as a result – along with the goodwill Chaplains often enjoy in Defence – enable us to quickly build a rapport with members.

All in all, this set of qualities and experiences makes Chaplains ideally suited to facilitate Character Development. How might we do this? To put it one way, in Aristotle's economy character is caught, not taught. That is, it is developed through practical actions but also – very importantly – by imitation. (We see something similar in Scripture when the Apostle Paul urges the Corinthians to "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1 NRSV).) In contemporary times, this need not only occur when the exemplar, be it an apostle or someone else, is physically present. There is great value in exposing members via film and literature to exemplars from earlier ages, as well as from other nations and cultures[25].

Importantly, however, it should not be the Chaplain's role to serve as the unit's moral exemplar or, indeed, to lead Character Development more broadly speaking. (This is not, of course, to contradict policy and suggest that the Chaplain's own conduct should not be exemplary.[26]) Instead, he or she should support the Chain of Command's efforts in this space, providing SME advice and, where necessary, assisting members to up-skill, particularly in the area of reflective thinking. (As indicated below – and to paraphrase Socrates[27] – an examined life is fundamental to growth in character.)

Command, for its part, would promulgate a regular program of Character "input", including reading, viewing and Visiting Lecturers (VLs). Members – using skills taught or upgraded by Chaplaincy – would reflect on this content, identifying important lessons learnt for their lives and military service. (Their usual workplace supervisors would fulfill a mentoring function here, assisting them to articulate these.) Personnel would then seek to apply these lessons in their usual duties before completing another reflection phase, this time focussing on their growth (or regression) in various areas. The cycle should then continue. (The diagram below represents this Character Development cycle.)

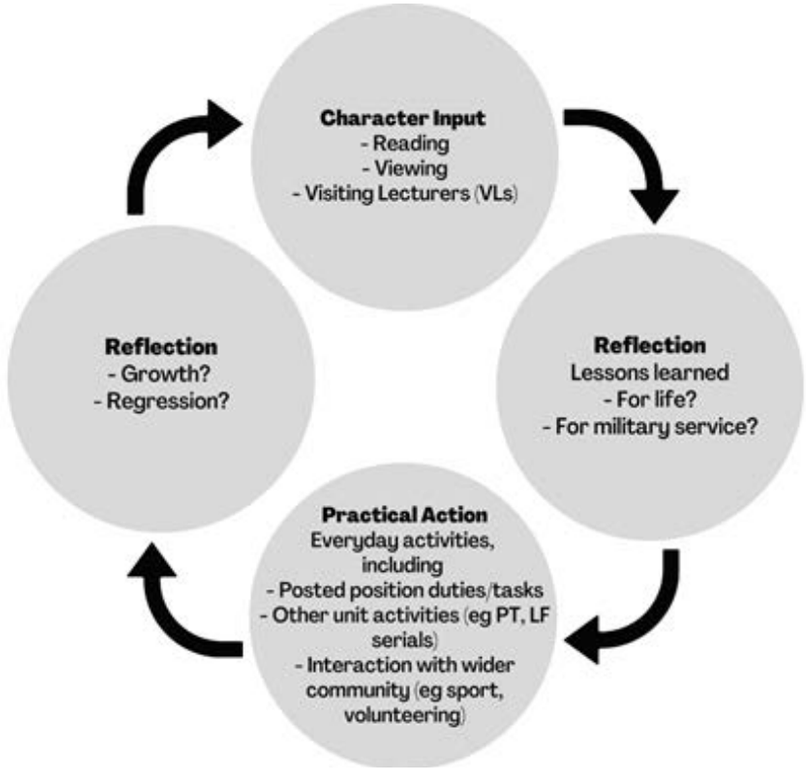

Figure 1.0 Character Development Cycle

Aristotelian Character Development – anticipated outcomes

Kristjánsson remarks on this approaches great longevity. He writes

> In the derelict battlefields of moral education lie the hulks of many old theories [– clearly, he is mixing his metaphors! –], either discarded or forgotten…It must be said, however, that this form of moral education has turned out to be extremely resilient and durable through the centuries, being reawakened in new incarnations at regular intervals.[28]

Aristotle's method is currently enjoying a renaissance through the work, among others, of the UK's Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues. The Centre sums up its mission as follows:

> [We are]…a pioneering interdisciplinary research centre focussing on character, virtues and values in the interest of human flourishing. Launched in 2012, the Centre promotes a moral [rather than a psychological] concept of character in order to explore the importance of virtue for public and professional life.[29]

This statement speaks to the promise in Aristotle's approach of producing men and women – and, indeed, soldiers – of (strong) character. In fact, this was the title of a 2018 Jubilee Centre report, detailing the results of its work with RMA Sandhurst cadets and recent (2008-2018) graduates.[30]

These were encouraging, indeed, with the authors recording that, following training, "these junior officers were well aligned with stated British Army Values and Standards; the values of integrity, discipline, courage, selfless commitment, loyalty, and respect for others."[31] Interestingly – and, no doubt, an area for further research – they noted that

> Results showed that moral dilemma scores were lowest…for infantry and artillery officers as compared to other branches of service. This finding suggests that the nature of an officer's early experience may influence the application of Army values at the onset of one's career.[32]

Aristotelian Character Development – the situationist challenge

Certainly, other scholars have observed something similar: that what are often termed "situational factors" appear to present a challenge to this method. T. Nadelhoffer, for example, writes that

> Rather than a world being navigated by moral agents armed with robust and stable habituated dispositions to act, what we find is a world whereby situational forces [including Corps' culture, but also even apparently insignificant things] play a much larger role in moral agency than philosophers have traditionally assumed.[33]

Nadelhoffer cites perhaps the most famous research on the problem, "the 'helping for a dime' studies reported in Isen & Levin (1972)".[34] He explains:

> [The] Subjects were random pedestrians in San Fransciso, CA and Philadelphia, PA who stopped to use a public payphone. Whereas some subjects found a dime that had been planted in the phone booth by researchers, other subjects did not find a dime. When subjects left the phone booth, a female confederate of the researchers dropped an armful of papers and researchers recorded whether or not the individuals leaving the phone booth stopped to help…the subjects who found the dimes were *22 times more likely to help a woman who dropped her papers than the subjects who did not find the dime.*[35]

R. Darr notes that more recent research also "suggests…human behaviour exhibits little cross-situational consistency and displays striking sensitivity to small situational changes".[36]

Supporters of Aristotle's method have offered various responses. In one paper, D. Fleming replies that

> Whilst the concerns raised by situationists should not be dismissed out of hand, situationist worries do not significantly undermine the notion of virtue. Not only is the empirical evidence cited by Doris [including Isen & Levin] of questionable value, such evidence as there is can easily be accommodated by virtue ethics [including Aristotelian character development] with only minor modifications to its approach.[37]

In another response, Darr – actually, a critic of the situationists – offers that they "are at least partially talking past"[38] virtue ethicists and not actually dealing with virtue ethics as it is. (Their treatment of A. MacIntyre is a case in point.[39]) He explains that

> Virtues are not, on MacIntyre's account, reducible to psychological traits, as the critics assume. Virtues are qualities of character. Character takes the form of an enacted narrative, which is achieved as one learns to make one's life intelligible to oneself and, more importantly, *to those others in one's moral community to whom one is accountable* [italics added].[40]

Conclusion

Aristotelian Character Development is not a panacea. Nevertheless, it holds great promise for Army. Together with other processes – including recruiting, ab initio and more advanced training, and CLM – it can provide Senior Leaders with the confidence that, despite their circumstances, ADF members will always know what to say and do. (Those words and actions will, of course, be in accordance with our common values of Service, Courage, Integrity, Respect and Excellence.) Research indicates, however, that situationist factors are problematic and can militate against right conduct. What, then, should be Army's response?

Aristotle's method has been the basis of character development – military and non-military – for centuries. Despite the threat posed by situationist factors, it would be unwise (even hubristic) to dismiss this approach too quickly. (This, of course, is G.K. Chesterton's point when he advances his colourful notion of the democracy of the dead. Chesterton explains that

> Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about.[41]

In plain terms, he is simply arguing that due weight be given to historic practice.) Has Aristotle's approach had some success – even been mostly successful – over time? The answer appears to be yes.

What, then, is the way ahead? The answer is two-fold: firstly, to support further research into situationist factors and identify the impact of these on Aristotelian character development. What is the magnitude of the situationist challenge, and – if Army is committed to an Aristotelian approach – how can this be dealt with? (This is not to suggest that all threats to the efficacy of this method can simply be removed. It would be more realistic to think and write in terms of minimizing their impact.) One suggestion, already articulated, is to ensure that the processes listed above are themselves at the proper settings, and that they deliver the outcomes Senior Leaders expect. Secondly, Army should look to re-invigorate character development for all personnel and ensure that, for the reasons listed above – namely, personal vocational attributes, specialized education and pastoral experience – Chaplains play a central part in facilitating this. Far from being a line in the sand our capability should never cross, this is exactly the space in which we should be busy.

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How Religion and Faith are Used as a Tool
to Empower People in the Australian Defence Force

Imam Ahmed Abdo
Religious Advisory Committee to the Services
(Islamic Representative)

Despite our world-views, religions and convictions, we are all human beings at heart. No one can deny the fact that we cry the same tears, shed the same blood, and produce the most contagious smile when faced with situations that bring joy to our lives.

Our world needs people who are able to rise to the duty of sharing in both the pain and joy of one other, whilst embracing each other’s cultures and practices for the common good. Whilst we may be distinctly different in our religious or non-religious convictions about the world around us, both the seen and the unseen, we are likely to agree that in an increasingly globalised village, the arbitrary borders of nation states are no longer the barrier they were in the past.

The movement and interaction of peoples from different cultures, faiths and religions is no longer limited to the physical. The metaverse, an idea of a centralised virtual world, a “place” parallel to the physical world, has already arrived whereby the human race needs to embrace and understand more than ever the motivations and convictions of one another in the physical world before we dive into the virtual world.

Drawing inspiration from the Holy Book of the Muslims:

> *“O humankind, We created you all from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Verily the noblest of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you. Surely God is All-Knowing, All-Aware.”*
> The Holy Quran, 49:13

In a saying of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he defines what being true to God actually means in practice, where he states *“the most beloved of people to God are those who are most beneficial to people.”*

To illustrate how faith and religion has been used as a means of empowerment in the Australian Defence Force, allow me to paint three pictures of positive engagements that have etched their mark with all people who were involved.

Engagement 1: Bruni Royal Armed Forces Religious Department

As part of the Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2021 Religious Engagement, I was honoured to join Royal Australian Navy Chaplain Majidih Essa in a deep conversation with three members of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) Religious Department, including the Head of Department, Commander Hj Ainolnizam Hj Ibrahim. The engagement was held via video conference, whereby RBAF opened with an Islamic prayer recited in Arabic, for the Armed forces in Brunei, as well as Australia.

During this vital engagement, Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF):

- indicated their desire and willingness to engage with ADF to support their religious department and how they provide spiritual care to their personnel, particularly as they come from a Muslim majority country
- indicated the importance of this international engagement, and how it is important for the two forces to collaborate on matters of religious affairs
- indicated the desire to hear and learn from experiences from our Chaplains in dealing in a multi faith context, particularly the struggles of personnel who practice the Islamic faith
- indicated the desire to learn how the Islamic Chaplain Imam Majidih Essa has been instrumental in strengthening Military ties during International engagements, with practical examples of Indonesia and Malaysia
- heard how the ADF's Religious Advisory Committee to the Services (RACS) Islamic Member, Imam Ahmed Abdo, provides timely advice to ADF Command and personnel, with the development of guidance papers that assist in the protection and preservation of Islamic identity and practice of Muslim personnel in the ADF

The meeting ended with a highly positive desire on both sides to continue and strengthen the relationship, and provide mutually beneficial resources that would aid in the support of members of the Islamic faith in their practice within both forces

A virtual gift was presented by RBAF to both ADF representatives, Chaplain and RACS Member. They were passed on through the ADF Attache in Brunei.

Engagement 2: Afghan refugees passing through ADF Military Base in UAE

During the recent Afghan crisis in which Australia was involved in assisting the evacuation of Afghan refugees from Kabul, the presence of an Islamic Chaplain from the ADF was vital to ensuring the spiritual well-being of evacuees transitioning through the ADF Military Base. To have someone from the same Islamic faith of the local people was instrumental in addressing the high levels of anxiety amongst refugees, in addition to being well positioned to address any concerns highlighted by those civilians.

Engagement 3: Western Sydney with the Afghan community

During the recent Afghan crisis, Australia welcomed and received groups of Afghan refugees. To assist in their smooth arrival, the Islamic RACS Member held ongoing conversations with members of both NSW Police and the Australian Defence Force to ensure the refugees had their religious needs accommodated. This included a welcome pack upon arrival, prayer mats, and other items to provide comfort to those who were forced to leave their home country. Local Afghan community leaders were also invited to engage with the refugees, speaking their language, aware of religious and ethnic sensitivities in a way that would be absent from the mind of a foreigner.

This came about as a result of the strong ties between the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services and its Islamic Faith Group representative from the Australian National Imams Council. Opportunities were identified during the period of arrival of the Afghan refugees which allowed for video conferencing to be arranged where an Islamic religious lesson was able to be delivered in the local language by a local Afghan leader. With the challenges of COVID-19 restrictions and quarantine requirements at that time, it became ever so important to provide a welcome that eased the pain and anxiety of arriving refugees, allowing them to connect to leaders that shared their Islamic faith and language.

Conclusion

Through the real life incidents described above, there remains no doubt that the value of a multi faith model in Chaplaincy and the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services is key to positioning the ADF in an increasingly diverse and complex global (and local) environment. With much excitement, energy and optimism, I look forward to maximising every opportunity available to assist the ADF in using faith as a tool for empowerment when engaging both locally and internationally.

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Training Transformation and ADF Values:
Helping trainees identify their line in the sand

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Formation in Training Transformation

Training transformation (TT) is inviting a paradigm shift beyond instructor-led, classroom-based residential learning. Part of this is making training available just-in-time and on-the-job with enhanced technology, online access and regional delivery. Yet training transformation can have a dual meaning. As well as alluding to new systems of training, the term suggests to me the need for individual "training transformation". As well as transforming training as something to do to our learning system and overall organisational ecology, we are transforming both the learner and instructor experience. Rather than a transactional approach, we are sharing, mentoring and growing both trainees and instructors.

How does this apply to character training? And what part does character development play in the overall transformation of the training ecology of Army? We believe that inculcation of Army's Good Soldiering philosophy through dedicated character training can set trainees up for a career that embodies service, courage, respect, integrity and excellence.

As Training transformation is stretching and adapting our driver training systems, we also want to see character growing and adapting for the challenges that we know our trainees will face. AST Commanding Officer, LTCOL Philippa Cleary, suggests that few organisations invest as much time and energy in people's development. This development is not just focused on job skills but on what makes us better people. We want our trainees to develop social mastery in emotional intelligence and character. We believe that this a central part of the experience of trainees at AST. Moreover, talking with LTCOL Cleary about operational deployments has helped me understand the challenges of operating in a morally ambiguous environment with limited Command oversight. Soldiers cannot rely on someone else to draw the line in the sand. Whether on operations or in the barracks, the consequences unethical decisions of individual soldiers can have massive negative implications at strategic levels. This all underlines for AST staff that what our trainees do at AST matters. A priority of AST's chain of command is for trainees to learn to be professionals who can make good decisions.[2] As the unit Padre I help anchor our character training but this is an area that AST wants all our instructors to prioritise.

I enlisted in 2019 and was posted to AST. I joined because I saw Army was committed to developing its people. I wanted to be part of an organisation that takes seriously its role of supporting and developing its people holistically – particularly through spiritual care and ethical training. COs have tasked and urged me to develop and deliver the best character training that can help trainees stay on the right side of the ethical "line in the sand" both while at AST and in their future service. This article is an exercise in reflective practice on the character training we have been developing for AST trainees.

Initial Employment Trainees (IETs) in the training continuum

The reality is that we do not know all the ethical challenges that our trainees will face in their careers. They will hold and face the power of weapons and emerging technological, psychological and cyber capabilities that soldiers of previous generations never dreamed of. They may deploy in contexts of peacekeeping and humanitarian, counterinsurgency and diplomatic missions that present all sorts of ethical and moral dilemmas. Our Australian command and control system, and the demands of contemporary operating environments, devolves enormous responsibility to soldiers. We are acutely conscious of the need for "strategic corporals" who can take independent action and make major decisions as US Marine General Charles Krulak proposed two decades ago.[3] But we also need "strategic moral corporals" to be normalised as David Glendenning suggested more recently.[4]

When the ethical line in the sand is crossed, there can be disastrous implications – for local citizens, for ADF and Australia's reputation, for mission success, and for moral injury of our soldiers.[5] Like militaries across the globe, the ADF is reassessing the demands of military ethics in the context of changing global dynamics and reassessing how best to instruct members across all ranks in ethical decision-making and leadership.[6]

At AST we are reflecting on what best practice character, ethics and values training looks like for trainees. Our questions include how is good character developed? How do ADF values develop in trainees during their time at AST? How can we best foster and contribute to a continuum of character development as trainees come from 1RTB, spend time in AST's Perentie Troop holding platoon, and while they undergo their Basic Driver's Course (BDC) or other training and then move into their first posting. Values are not issued with a recruit's kit at Kapooka but need ongoing development with practice and reinforcement. This is why we have and need a foundations training continuum. BRIG Rupert Hosking AM, when Commandant of RMC-A, said that character is at the heart of everything we do, and that it is built over time – through practice, reflection, and, sometimes, hard lessons. That might be an informal continuum for some but we want to make it a formal continuum for all trainees.

One line of effort (LOE) for ALTC's Future Ready Training System (FRTS) is to develop a Training Continuum with deliberate training, experiential development and on-the-job learning to get soldiers future ready "in contact and under pressure".[7] Across ALTC including AST, our teams are seeking to standardise our broader training for consistency and efficiencies, and for maximising the benefit of our courses. There is room to address this for character and values formation. Part of this is focused character training sessions and part can be integrating attention to ADF values across other training. Like Training Centres across Army, ALTC is developing blended and modularised training with priority for teaching beyond the classrooms including online delivery.

What these classes can provide, whether in person or online or other self-directed learning, is a context for reflection on what trainees are experiencing in their broader Army training context. Classes can offer learning spaces for trainees to consider what and where they want to develop. Thus at AST we deliver values-based training to our holding platoon before IET training. We are also developing an online version of an ADF values learning experience that we hope will be accessible through The Cove.[8] These periods of dedicated reflection can then inform and shape the on-the-job experiences of our trainees.

Before commencing at AST, trainees will have completed updated Learning Management Packages (LMPs) at Kapooka on leadership, character and ethics. The expanded LMPs now cover 40 periods (26 hours) of learner centred lessons, with 26 periods (17 hours) delivered by 1RTB chaplains complemented by Platoon Commander and Recruit Instructor input.

Army's Training Establishments build on Kapooka's character training in different ways. Combined Arms Training Centre (CATC) Training Establishments do 14 hours of Character Development that reinforces/supplements the LMPs from Kapooka. Character training at Defence Command Support Training Centre (DCSTC) and ALTC is more informal and dependent on chaplains or instructors negotiating or offering character training in between scheduled training.

At AST, for example, we do a day (5 hours class time) of character training regularly with our Perentie holding troop. The day covers the importance of character, welfare, ethical decision-making and ethical scenarios for barracks and operations. Each AST Basic Driver's Course (BDC) also has two hour-long sessions with staff and/or chaplain. The first session was jointly developed by the chaplain and instructors and is presented by either. It revisits ADF values and scenarios of bystander behaviour, alcohol misuse and sexual misconduct including attention to toxic mateship. The second session is prepared and presented by troop staff on the importance of character for a soldier's career as the trainees prepare to post to their units. AST's Perentie character day and BDC sessions are unit-allocated for character training, not mandated by an LMP, but have nonetheless become a regular part of our course rhythms.

An identified future project within Land Combat College and RMC-A is the potential development of a training package that may be used for all Army IET schools. The importance of a continuum is to offer training throughout training and career, not just at the beginning or some end point.

Adolescent learners

One key aspect of a learner-focused posture with IETs is that we are training mainly adolescents. Developmentally and socially, this is a risk factor for ethical behaviour. Robert Sapolsky suggests that the best crime fighting tool known to humanity is the thirtieth birthday.[9] The adolescent brain and especially its capacity for self-control and risk-awareness is not fully developed. At AST we saw results of this with increasing incidences of misconduct especially during COVID lockdowns in 2020. AST's previous CO, LTCOL Clarke Brown, tasked the Chaplain and instructors to develop and deliver a more consistent continuum of character training, including scenario-based training on bystander behaviour, alcohol usage and unacceptable behaviour. Yet we realised lecturing IETs on unacceptable behaviour in the short-term, or unethical soldiering for the long-term, will not necessarily help IETs mature their values.

COL Brad Kilpatrick's insights on adolescent learning strategies have helped us and our instructors understand younger Army recruits and how they think and learn (or why they don't think ahead and misbehave).[10] As CO and Chief Instructor at ADFA 2011-2013, COL Kilpatrick responded to issues of unacceptable behaviour, bullying, binge drinking, social media misuse, mistreatment of women, intolerance of difference and lying to staff to cover up.[11] From studies of adolescent brain development and educational psychology, he identified that 17-23 year old cadets and midshipmen were not adult learners but still adolescents with tendencies of higher risk taking and underdeveloped empathy, impulse control and higher order decision making. ADFA developed more adolescent-specific learning strategies.

At AST we seek to deliver character training and especially our ADF values package with attentiveness to adolescent strategies such as outlined by COL Kilpatrick. For instance, we seek to posture ourselves as approachable instructional staff in a supportive environment – including usually hosting character training in the chapel or the soldier's club as a safe space. We seek to underline the importance of the topic by giving it time, and with the introduction or input of the CO and RSM and/or OC and WSM.[12] We scaffold from movies for inspiration, though also seek to critique unhelpful stereotypes.[13] We focus on problem solving with scenarios rather than knowledge transmission. We focus on ethical decision-making processes rather than suggesting there is only one certain answer to a dilemma.[14] Wherever possible, given adolescents' underdeveloped empathy and the motivation of dealing with personally relevant issues, we invite trainees to reflect from their own perspective and current or future contexts, rather than seeking to identify with someone else.[15] Finally, we acknowledge the importance of peer status with group work. So we avoid the "Question, pause, nominate" approach to individuals and instead help trainees feel less threatened or singled out by using small group discussion then group response to report on what the group thinks.[16] We respond to demonstrations of desired thinking and behaviour with immediate generous positive feedback in that group of peers.[17]

One thing we have not yet done is adding marking that demonstrates to adolescents its extrinsic value, something COL Kilpatrick says is important for adolescent learning.[18] Assessment might be added when character training is more formally integrated in IET LMPs.

Another part of our adolescent learning strategy is discipline and behaviour management. We understand they are legally adults (or soon will be for the occasional 17-year-old) and as soldiers are responsible for their actions. Yet we also understand that as adolescents they are still forming as adults and sometimes need to learn what responsibility for their actions means. LTCOL Cleary explains AST's "behaviour management" is not just about punishing wrongdoing but about paths to redemption that also build character. Mistakes can be opportunities for learning. When trainees make ill-advised decisions, staff urge them to admit and learn the valuable associated lessons. When soldiers feel like they need to cover up, the risk is we breed a culture that hides rather than deals with problems. When soldiers of any level are prepared to own up and be transparent about mistakes, we can build a stronger Army, according to LTCOL Cleary.

One way we help our trainees see mistakes as an opportunity for growth is by explaining the difference between character slips and character flaws. Character flaws are an identified and ongoing problem with a person's decision-making. They an area where ongoing improvement is required. Less leniency is given to those with known flaws and who do not proactively attempt to correct them. A character slip is a misjudgement by otherwise sound soldiers. Usually more leniency can be given to slips since the soldiers themselves are their own harshest critics and will be less likely to repeat their mistakes. This distinction can also help Commanders when determining post flaw/slip remedial action. A character slip may occur one or more times but is generally a result of a cerebral process where judgment is lacking, such as when an adolescent has not assessed the risk or consequences or reacts inappropriately to the pressure of situational pressures or group factors. A character flaw generally results from a belief and values structure that is incompatible with ADF values and required behaviour.[19] If someone is bad with flawed character, then we do not want them in Army. But if they slip up and make a bad decision they can acknowledge, and learn from, then they can become a better soldier and contribute to a better Army.

I heard of a discussion about problems with young recruits and tendencies towards poor decisions and misbehaviour. One response was to suggest that recruit school commanders should toughen up, tolerate it less and remove offenders earlier. But a senior Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) spoke up in defence of young recruits. The NCO explained they had reached their rank but when they joined had displayed a normal share of slips in judgment. What is needed, the NCO urged, is a recognition that our recruiting base is often 17-19 years, and we can expect they will need some discipline and guidance. We should not be surprised at this, nor should we discharge the difficult ones as a first response; rather we should correct and discipline where needed, and only move out those who will not take correction.

Pedagogy for coaching values

Then Director-General of Training and Doctrine (DG-TRADOC), BRIG Ben James said part of the review and shift of transforming training is to "help our instructors become creative and engaging teachers, coaches, mentors and facilitators … We won't be asking them to do more – we'll be giving them the skills to do things ***differently***."[20] At AST we have developed and are trialling unit-based values education. The package is built around four pedagogical processes: capitalising on appreciative inquiry of trainee experience of ADF values, inspiring movie snippets for each value, a scenario to discuss, and homework to increase trainee attentiveness to ADF values.

Appreciative inquiry of past learning

We begin teaching sessions with appreciative inquiry. So to teach on ADF values, we start classes by asking trainees to explain where they have seen or themselves lived out ADF values at their best. We always like to let a class teach themselves. But we hope that leading with appreciative questions will also encourage attentiveness to how values are embodied in action in and around the trainees' experience of good soldiering. We also acknowledge that trainees bring insights about values from their pre-Army life. Moreover, applying Bloom's Taxonomy from the Military Instructor Course (MIC) has helped us broaden our use of questions to take learners to deeper levels of learning.[21]

Inspiring movie snippet

Our second pedagogical tool is movie episodes to identify an ethical dilemma or test of values and how that episode embodies a value. Our IETs are aware of most of the movies we show and so it is easy, as COL Kilpatrick identifies, to scaffold from movies and use them for inspiration. Yet also we need to critique inaccurate stereotypes since IETs' perception of military culture if often influenced by a lifetime of Hollywood stereotypes, not always accurate or helpful.[22]

Case study scenarios

After the introduction of values with questions and movie episodes, the first and primary pedagogical tool we use to practice values are case study scenarios. The scenarios are designed to present a test of integrity or an ethical dilemma.[23] The purpose is not so much to transmit knowledge about particular rules but to give trainees practice in ethical decision making and discernment of the underlying values. It is about inculcating (ethical) muscle memory. We invite small groups to identify the relevant issues and preferred response(s), which fosters positive feedback and peer-learning.[24] Some of the case studies are borrowed from CATC character training. Some were developed specifically for our trainees for where we expect their operational service may conflict with ADF values.[25]

Homework exercises

A further pedagogical tool for embedding attentiveness to ADF values that we are developing is homework exercises. Rather than just discussing the value(s) in classes, we want to send trainees off into their accommodation lines and other training with a task to look for or practice one of the ADF values, to journal about their experience, and then share it with the group at a future character training class. For a trainee journal we are planning to reintroduce the journal that trainees received at Kapooka and ask them to use that if they still have it, or give them a replacement to encourage its ongoing use.

The purpose of after-class exercises is action and practice We know that "reps and sets" helps to build that reflexive actions of good character that we need our solders to have. Janne Aalto explains ethical education which chaplains do in Finland incorporates "action competence" pedagogy where ethics is not just taught but practised. Thus the learning outcomes of training is soldiers doing the right thing not just knowing theoretically "the right thing to do".[26] Our purpose in AST values-based character training is to set trainees up for learning success not just to learn the label and description of ADF's five values but to implement them in action. Ultimately, it is about character muscle memory. Just as we drill weapon handling and tactical driving skills, we also recognise that we cannot just issue character but need to develop it with consistent training and practice.

A story we use to motivate trainees with "homework" is of Iraq War veteran Michael Robillard who had been told: "as an officer, you can only really fall on your sword once, so make sure that when you do, it's for a big enough reason". He said that high-sounding advice was unhelpful because it did not alert him to be careful about everyday subtle and concerning behaviour. It is not just genocide or war crimes, Hacksaw Ridge or American Sniper level action, which calls for moral courage and ethical integrity. Soldiers and even trainees can demonstrate values in their attitudes, discipline and team culture – not just for heroic and obvious battlefield decisions but in the subtle and mundane wherever soldiers work, live and play.[27] We also underline the importance of daily engagement in the "little things in life" and values-based habits that change the world using a video of US Navy Admiral McRaven's "Make your Bed" advice.[28]

We want trainees to be asking "How might we better practice and embody ADF values in our everyday lives and soldiering?" Part of our agenda is inviting trainees to an ongoing, career-long, process of value formation. When we see trainees identify and practice ADF values, and thus exercise their ethical muscles, this is training transformation at its best.

ADF needs to prioritise both military ethics education (in terms of stretching our thinking and intellect about ethics) but also ethics training (that bridges to practice). To think and act ethically we need background in ethical theories and frameworks but integrated with the best pedagogy of case studies and relevant application. In a time-starved training program, it can be tempting to either focus on ethical theories and leave application till later, or otherwise start directly with scenarios and never develop theoretical foundations and conceptual understanding. The focus of this package, however, is on practising the underlying foundation of ADF values. Take-home exercise is one small step of best practice pedagogy taking ethics out of the classroom and into the barracks.

ADF values – not just rote learning a list

We are still developing and beginning to trial a learning package that invites trainees to unpack the five defence values. Our aim is to develop in trainees a necessary attentiveness to values and also the practice of living them out. It is not just about rote learning a list. We are wanting to invite trainees to adopt ADF values as important to each of them and see value development as part of lifelong learning. This contributes to Army as a learning organisation.[29]

The key helpfulness of values is moral navigation. Values offer an ethical reference point for behaviour, especially important under times of distress, for when the proverbial hits the fan. As Brene Brown suggests, values offer a grid for deciding what to pursue and what to say "no" to. Brown says, "If I miss the boat, it wasn't my boat."[30]

When RSM AST, WO1 Robert Gentles, helps introduce these sessions he reminds trainees that the Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF) is that they are training for war, and thus need values to ground their actions. Just as trainees are not issued character with their kit at Kapooka, they cannot expect to get character just because they deploy. They need to learn now to do the right thing because it is the right thing to do. The RSM also offers trainees a helpful left and right of arc for their behaviour. The left of arc, he says, is ADF values. The right of arc is civilian law. Stay within those lanes, or in other words see those as lines they ought to draw in the sand not to cross, and trainees are unlikely to face disciplinary issues at AST and will be set up for a successful career of service.

Education Officer LT Matthew Malcolm has written on how ADF values are integrated in curricular and non-curricular elements of training. He suggests asking course coordinators and instructors to consider how their training shapes these values, how these values can be integrated throughout training activities. From another angle, what values are relevant for different activities? Or what values are less well developed across different courses, which might prompt us to ask, for

example, “How could I bring excellence into this task?” This can also help instructors frame their role within values, for example rather than “My job is to teach truck driving”, a values-based perspective may expand to, “My job is to prepare soldiers to win the next war, by teaching truck driving in ways that foster our values and behaviours”.[31]

I reflected in this article on training for AST’s Perentie holding troop. Another area of potential development is to workshop this material with other instructors, inviting their input on the character training package but also asking them to consider how ADF values mighty be more fully integrated into other aspects of AST’s training. This article has focused on character training for IETs. AST’s other learners include NCOs in Command Training Wing for promotion courses and experienced soldiers adding transport qualifications. These are also valuable contexts to reflect on how we can foster ongoing ADF value-based lifelong learning.

Moreover, this article assumes that it is important to give effort to developing quality character and ethics training, but also important to evaluate and adjust its delivery.[32] I have written this as an exercise in reflective practice to narrate our training development at AST and invite feedback on how we might do it better. Reflecting on the experience of writing and delivering this training package has been a helpful exercise in reflective practice. It has also been valuable to reflect, from a chaplain’s perspective in conversation with the perspective of Command, what training transformation may mean for character training. I suggest to other Chaplains and to Commanders that character and ethics requires a multi-disciplinary approach, and never belongs to one branch, Corp or Department. Neither AST nor Army has yet introduced internal feedback mechanisms nor organised external evaluation around character and ethics but acknowledge that this is valuable. Or perhaps we have not reflected on how to use our current systems such as learning review and course evaluations to incorporate character and ethics. Canada and Singapore have both introduced annual ethical preparedness reporting that assesses absorption of training.[33] Given that values formation is important to ADF, my ongoing questions are then how do we assess what values and character our members have, what is best practice in forming values, and how effective is our values and ethical training?

The Australian Army includes “Ethical Decision Making” as a component of combat behaviours, but how is this developed, measured and evaluated? MAJGEN Hocking, in his analysis of lessons from Afghanistan, recommended refining ethics doctrine, regularly monitoring organisation culture, and requiring regular and ongoing ethics, LOAC and cultural training at all levels, and testing this in “realistic and high-pressure training scenarios beyond the classroom” as part of “ready” certification.[34]

A challenge of training transformation, at all levels, is to ensure we move beyond rhetoric to the reality of best practice.

> “We’ve got plenty to do to take our training transformation beyond words to deliver a tangible, 21st Century training outcome. A vision without resources is a hallucination, and it’s important that we focus beyond words and deliver meaningful outcomes in this endeavor.”[35]

Intentionally developing and evaluating values formation and ensuring that trainees know where and how to identify their line in the sand is an essential component of training transformation.

End Notes

1. I appreciate conversations on themes of this article with staff and trainees of Army School of Transport (AST) especially CO LTCOL Philippa Cleary and Officer Commanding Command Training Wing MAJ Karl Kiss, and Coordinating Chaplains Greg Prosper (ALTC) and Matthew Stuart (1RTB).
2. Cf. Sally Rohan “An organic professional military ethic and the educational challenge”, in Don Carrick, James Connelly and David Whetham (eds), *Making the Military Moral: Contemporary Challenges and Responses in Military Ethics Education* (London: Routledge, 2018).
3. General Charles C. Krulak, “The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War”, *Marines Magazine*, 28.1 (1999), pp. 28-34.
4. David Glendenning, *Who Really Sets the Bearing of my Moral Compass? An Assessment of the Utility of Moral Autonomy in the Contemporary Operating Environment* (UK Joint Services Command and Staff College, EuroISME, 2017), p. 46; also discussed in Deane-Peter Baker, *Morality and Ethics at War: Bridging the Gaps Between the Soldier and the State* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), p. 155; Darren Cronshaw, “Good Soldiering and Re-virtuing Military Ethics Training”, *International Journal of Public Theology* 16:3 (2022).
5. Moral injury and the related needed soul repair is the focus of the Warrior Welcome Home research project I am collaborating in with Chaplains Cameron West and Robert Sutherland. http://www.research.warriorwelcomehome/
6. Cf. Thomas R. Elßner and Reinhold Janke (eds), Didactics of *Military Ethics: From Theory to Practice,* International Studies on Military Ethics Vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill Nijhoff, 2016); Don Carrick, James Connelly and David Whetham (eds), *Making the Military Moral: Contemporary Challenges and Responses in Military Ethics Education* (London: Routledge, 2018).
7. Army Logistics Training Centre, “Training Transformation”; The Future Ready Training System: Transformation Program Strategy, March 2020. https://cove.army.gov.au/sites/default/files/future_ready_training_system_strategy.pdf
8. These ADF values sessions are designed to be part or alongside of similar currently available “Quick Military Education (QME)” exercises, 20/04/2021, https://cove.army.gov.au/article/quick-military-education-qme
9. Robert Sapolsky, Behave: *The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst* (New York: Penguin 2017), 154-173.
10. COL Kilpatrick’s presentation is now a standard part of the Military Instructor Course (MIC): “Cove Conference Sydney: Adolescent Learning Strategies with Brad Kilpatrick CSC”, 17/06/2019. https://cove.army.gov.au/article/cove-conference-sydney-adolescent-learning-strategies-brad-kilpatrick-csc; see also Bradley Kilpatrick, “Design and Implementation of Adolescent Learning Strategies”, MPhil thesis, UNSW, 2017.
11. Kilpatrick, “Adolescent Learning Strategies”, 4, 43.
12. Kilpatrick, “Adolescent Learning Strategies”, 31.
13. Kilpatrick, “Adolescent Learning Strategies”, 58.
14. Kilpatrick, “Adolescent Learning Strategies”, 51.
15. Kilpatrick, “Adolescent Learning Strategies” 39, 50.
16. Kilpatrick, “Adolescent Learning Strategies”, 39, 50, 62-64.
17. Kilpatrick, “Adolescent Learning Strategies”, 54.
18. Kilpatrick, “Adolescent Learning Strategies”, 29, 64.
19. I appreciate CHAP Luke Skipper for pointing us to this distinction and CHAP Robert Sutherland for his comments on its relevance to Command.

20. BRIG Ben James, “Army Training System Transformation”, *The Cove*, 19/03/2019. https://cove.army.gov.au/article/army-training-system-transformation

21. Lorin W. Anderson and David R. Krathwohl (eds.), *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing: A revision of Bloom’s Taxonomy of educational outcomes* (New York: Longman, 2001).

22. Kilpatrick, “Adolescent Learning Strategies”, 44, 58.

23. Stephen Coleman, “Ethical Dilemmas and Tests of Integrity”, in Deane-Peter Baker (ed.), *Key Concepts in Military Ethics* (Sydney: UNSW, 2015), 8.

24. Kilpatrick, “Adolescent Learning Strategies”, 62-64.

25. We want to further develop case studies using Deane-Peter Baker’s “QUANDARY Military Ethics Scenario Development Tool”, from the SOCOMD Ethical Mentor Course, 6-10 June 2022.

26. Janne Aalto, “Challenges in Combining Ethical Education for Conscripts and Professional Military”, in Don Carrick, James Connelly and David Whetham (eds), *Making the Military Moral: Contemporary Challenges and Responses in Military Ethics Education* (London: Routledge, 2018).

27. Michael Robillard, “Case Study 1: Integrity, Institutions, and the Banality of Complicity”, in Michael Skerker, David Whetham and Don Carrick (eds.), *Military Virtues* (Havant: Howgate, 2019), 177-82; discussed in Cronshaw, “Good Soldiering and Re-virtuing Military Ethics Training”.

28. “‘Make Your Bed’ by US Navy Admiral William H McRaven”, Oct 24, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmFwRkl-TTc

29. Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (Sydney: Random House, 1992)

30. Brené Brown, Dare to Lead: Brave Work. *Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts* (London: Vermilion, 2018)

31. Matthew Malcolm, “How Can Army’s Values Permeate Army’s Workforce”, The Cove, 15/02/2022. https://cove.army.gov.au/article/how-can-armys-values-permeate-armys-workforce

32. George R Wilkes, “Evaluating Military Ethics Education: Common values, specific contexts”; in Don Carrick, James Connelly and David Whetham (eds), *Making the Military Moral: Contemporary Challenges and Responses in Military Ethics Education* (London: Routledge, 2018).

33. Wilkes, “Evaluating Military Ethics Education”.

34. Andrew Hocking, “Preparing for the Future: Key Organisational Lessons from the Afghanistan Campaign”, The Vanguard, no.2 (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2022), https://doi.org/10.51174/VAN.002/HAWQ9727, pp. 43-45.

35. BRIG James, “Army Training System Transformation”

Religious Leader Engagement
OP FIJI ASSIST 2020-21

Chaplain John Saunders
Project Officer RAAChD

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> *“In order to effectively conduct foreign policy today, you have to understand the role of God and religion. My sense is that we don’t fully understand, because one, it’s pretty complicated, and two, everyone in the U.S. believes in the separation of church and state, so you think, ‘Well, if we don’t believe in the convergence of church and state, then perhaps we shouldn’t worry about the role of religion.’ I think we do that now at our own peril.”*[1]

Background

In my two previous papers on the topic of Religious Leader Engagement (RLE), I have argued the case for RLE as a legitimate and important niche role to which military Chaplains are eminently suited. In my first paper, I examined my initial foray into RLE whilst on deployment in Afghanistan with Mentoring Task Force 3 (MTF-3) during combat operations. The second paper, jointly authored with Canadian academic, Dr Steven Moore, and New Zealand Principal Chaplain, Chaplain Ants Hawes, reflected upon our presentations to the 2018 Commonwealth Conference, at Griffith University. At this conference we each made the case for recognition of the role of military Chaplaincy in RLE.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the role of RLE in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR). Operation Fiji Assist 20-21 (FA 20-21) will be discussed as a recent exemplar of the effectiveness of RLE during HADR operations. At the conclusion of the paper, recommendations for development of RLE within Australian Defence Force (ADF) Chaplaincy will be made.

RLE on HADR operations – Literature review

This first section will be a brief review of open-source literature and unclassified military source material, with particular reference to RLE in a HADR operation. I am again indebted to Dr Steven Moore for his foundational work on RLE to which I constantly return for reference. With regard to HADR operations, Moore argues that, *“As an operational construct, RLE may be generalized from one context to another: expeditionary, humanitarian and domestic operations.”*[2] As such, the two-stage process he outlines of engagement conducting a Religious Area Assessment (RAA) followed by the RLE proper is equally relevant in the HADR context as it is to the operational. Moore’s key caveat and line in the sand for RLE in any environment is the place of RLE in “influencing activities”[3] if the purpose of those influencing activities become PSYOPS, or for military advantage, or in support of hostile activities. Having said that, he sees embedding of the Chaplain for the purposes of RLE purely in Information Operations (IO), Public Affairs (PA) and Key Leader Engagement (KLE) as being a natural fit.

In the most recent ADF Chaplaincy doctrine[4] the place of RLE[5] is formalised in policy with the Chaplain's role in RAA and RLE. The policy document is brief but comprehensive in scope and touches on all key facets of RLE taking a broad-brush approach to "operations" as an inclusive term for all military interventions. As such HADR receives no specific mention; however, reference is made to the Chaplain's role with civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) activities. The value of this policy document is in the formalisation of the Chaplain's role in RLE in the ADF.

Past Post Operational Reports (POR) from ADF Chaplains have indicated strongly that RLE not only contributes to operational effectiveness in humanitarian operations, but needs to be formalised in ADF doctrine, policy and practice. One such example is the POR from Chaplains Stephen Thomas (Army) and Andrew Watters (Navy) following deployment to the Solomon Islands on JTF637.3 in 2019.[6] Chaplains Thomas and Watters recount a number of instances where the information on community need and approaches to addressing such need, which they uncovered through RLE, was not on the radar of Australian Government agencies. Such insights included focusing humanitarian efforts through existing Church organisations and social structures rather than establishing new organisations.[7] Their extensive activities resulted in several recommendations with one key recommendation being appointment of RLE liaison officers in the Solomon Islands, and that appointment be for a four-year term to enable relationships to be built and maintained as expected by traditional custom in the Pacific.[8]

ADF CIMIC doctrine[9] which defines the role of CIMIC operators in contexts such as HADR provides another window into the possibilities afforded RLE, though the document falls short of any specific reference to ADF Chaplain involvement. CIMIC operators are expected to understand cultural and religious factors and key persons in the civil society of the area of operations (AO), including the many informal leaders who may not be in identifiable social structures.[10] Identifying this "traditional leadership" is a multi-source activity, again one in which RLE could make meaningful contribution. CIMIC's role in informing and influencing in the AO is assisted by both deliberate and opportunistic engagement, and the LWD discusses key leader engagement (KLE), but not RLE as a means to these ends. Instead, it broadly mentions that KLE and key stakeholder engagement (KSE) need to be synchronised with "other specialist capabilities" in order to best achieve planned effects.[11]

Continuing the Australian perspective, Cook and Yogendran, writing on humanitarian civil-military partnerships, identified that, *"One challenge for humanitarian civil–military partnerships is the integration of local people, local government, local civil society organisations into them."*[12] They argued that engagement between civilian agencies, militaries and non-state actors would improve partnerships and disaster preparedness and responses if such engagement was formally structured. This "institutionalised" and structured engagement would involve continuity of personnel in position to facilitate the humanitarian civil-military partnership in the Asia-Pacific. Whilst, yet again, no specific mention is made of military Chaplains as the agents for this structure, the evidence is clear that such a role would be well within the scope of ADF Chaplaincy.

The United Nations key document on civil-military humanitarian operations[13] again joins the lengthening list of comprehensive documents on HADR which ignore the potential role of Chaplains. Mention is made of religion and cultural institutions but, given that the UN Agency focus in this document is ensure to military forces operate within strict and limited guidelines, no mention is made of military Chaplains and RLE as a means to enhance humanitarian operations.

One very interesting article by a prominent scholar of peace and conflict studies, Dr Thomas Matyok[14], paints a clear picture of the chasm between secular Western militaries and the religious environments into which they are directed to operate. He states unequivocally that,

> *Irrespective of the collective denial of the facts, religion continues to advance in the world and has been on a growth ascent since 1968. Not to engage religion and religious actors in peace operations leaves a gap in our understanding of conflict, its management, and how we might engage combatants in reconciliation.*

He then continues to argue that, *"Those engaged in [peace operations] require and understanding of religion that can be characterised as a form of literacy; the ability speak with religiously informed actors in their own language."* Unfortunately, after making these astute observations, he argues for education of commanders operating in CIMIC as the answer and writes against the "outsourcing" of this to others. For Matyok, those outsourced "others" include members of the Chaplains Corps. Despite this rather contrary conclusion, Matyok's article is a clear challenge to those who engage in a *"Procrustean effort to fit the other four-fifths of the global population into a Western secular mould"* and from the perspective of this paper actually highlights the niche role for military Chaplains.

Extant US military doctrine and literature demonstrates a more matured and developed approach to utilisation of RLE in operational contexts, including HADR. US Department of Defense Joint Guide 1-05, whilst again taking the broad brush to operational deployment, makes specific reference to humanitarian concerns.

> *Chaplains may be tasked to accomplish certain liaison functions that relate to religious or humanitarian purposes approved by the commander, particularly with indigenous religious leaders and faith-based nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) operating in the OA.*[15]

The US Navy reflects this intent with their plan to "Operationalise Religious Ministry" including recognising Key Leader Engagement (KLE) by chaplains at the highest level.[16]

Writing for the *US Army News*, Ives[17] reports on the formal training and practice being given to US military chaplains to develop skills in the organisation of foreign community needs, *"so that, when time comes during a deployment, they execute it with precision."* US Air Force Chaplain (Major) David Leonard[18] posits that civil-affairs teams are the commander's lead military agent in civil-military humanitarian action, yet lack representatives specifically qualified for work with humanitarian and religious groups. For him, *"military chaplains are the superlative candidate for this role,"*[19] and that in the area of civil affairs and humanitarian operations, *"the military would be better served by adding religious specialists to increase this capability."*[20] US Navy Chaplain (Captain) Paul McLaughlin further strengthens this argument when he states,

> *Civil Affairs teams may also benefit from chaplain involvement. Chaplains' status as "members of the clergy" or "endorsed religious leaders" provides them with credentials no one else will have. It also gives them access to certain leaders, populations, and locations.*[21]

In summary, there is an awakening realisation in military and civilian spheres of the potential offered by Chaplains in RLE, particularly within HADR operations. The Canadian, US and Australian military forces are embracing this potential, but the civilian world is still somewhat lagging in recognition of said potential. This is an area for significant development considering the inter-agency cooperation generally required in HADR operations.

OP Fiji Assist 2020-21

Following the devastation caused by tropical cyclone Yasa (TC YASA), which struck Fiji on 16 Dec 2020, a diverse Task Group (TG1111.1) was brought together rapidly as an Australian Government response to the Fiji Government's recovery and repair efforts. The mission was Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) led, in support of the Fiji Government effort. The Army component was organised around the Amberly-based 6th Engineer Support Regiment (6ESR) and sailed on-board HMAS ADELAIDE on 24 Dec 20. (Yes, Christmas Eve!) TG 1111.1 was assigned the Bua Provincial area and surrounding islands on the north-western coast of Vanua Levu, as the AO. The main effort became the reconstruction of Galoa Island Primary School and water distribution at Bekana jetty, though many other clean-up tasks were conducted around the AO.

One key aspect of this HADR response was that this was the first such task attempted globally by any nation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. With many COVID tests endured and kilos lost through sweat, wearing uniform and PPE walking from village to village in 36-degree (Celsius) heat with 100 percent humidity, I can testify that this was no mean feat. It was, however, one which was ultimately successful due to very careful and thorough planning and constant consultation with Australian and Fiji health authorities by TG Command. Initially "COVID-safe Bubbles" were established for selected groups to work with Royal Fiji Military Force (RFMF) personnel in reconstruction, but when it was repeatedly affirmed that the TG contingent were COVID-free interaction with local people was permitted. This also permitted the commencement of face-to-face RLE activities.

The RLE processes on FA 20-21

On-board HMAS ADELAIDE were myself and RAN Chaplain, Simote Finau, a Tongan by birth. Chaplain Finau's presence proved to be very fortuitous in the RLE effort. At the outset, the point should be clearly made that Chaplain involvement in RLE during FA 20-21 was always a secondary effort, subordinate to the main Chaplaincy effort of pastoral and religious support to members and advice to command.

During the brief force concentration at Amberley for the Army component and the transit to Fiji, I undertook my RAA which was assisted by my prior knowledge of the religious make-up and history of Fiji. It is of significant note that no "country brief" or profile was available and that due to the Christmas stand down period, the one ADF organisation which could have supplied this was on minimal staffing. In this RAA, I was able to frame a very clear picture of the religious make-up of the AO as well as identification of key contacts in many of the religious groups. I was also able to begin telephone and email contact with religious groups during transit and in the early phase on-station. Unfortunately, due to the disrupted communications caused by TC Yasa, the time of year and the dispersed nature of Fijian Islamic and Hindu organisations, I was only able to make contact with Christian groups in the AO. The completed RAA was submitted to the Information Operations Working Group (IOWG), and this helped shape the subsequent IO and CIMIC activities.

Royal Australian Navy Padre Simote Finau and Fiji's Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama share alight moment after greeting each other on Galoa Island. (Photos courtesy of the Office of the Prime Minister, Republic of Fiji). https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=3956919624332032&set=pcb.3956922337665094

For my part, I was quickly included as part of the IOWG with the CIMIC team, Public Affairs Officer and the J2 staff, and submitted regular CHATREPS to the J2 cell, following conversations with religious group representatives, to support a general picture WRT the atmospherics and needs in the AO.

On-the-ground RLE activities involved a number of lines of operation (LOO). Firstly, it entailed accompanying commanders on official visits and *sevusevu* ceremonies with village chiefs and Fiji Government officials. The attendance at such meetings by the Chaplains instantly proved its worth. The respect afforded us as a *Talatala* (Minister), the doors which this opened and the invitations to speak and pray was instantly noted by command. The high point of the opportunities was where Chaplain Finau was invited to pray at a *sevusevu* attended by Fiji Prime Minister Bainimarama. Chaplain Finau took the opportunity to speak and to pray for the Prime Minister in particular. This was very well received by Mr Bainimarama and, in my opinion, contributed in no small measure to the open embrace of TG activities by local villagers and government officials. It also was nationally reported[22] in the *Fiji Times*, including the words of blessing used by Chaplain Finau.

At the re-opening of the Galoa Island Primary School Chaplain Finau and myself were again invited to participate through speaking and prayer, both at the *sevusevu* and the official opening. This culminating activity underscored the success and importance ascribed to the RLE effort with both the TG Command and the local Fijians being overwhelmingly supportive of the necessity for Chaplain involvement alongside the local religious leaders.

The second LOO was engagement with local village ministers and pastors to check on the health and well-being of their people, but also to provide in-person care to the minister. With the village church being central to community life and the *Talatala* being the key provider of pastoral care, this gave insight into needs at the local level. Before engaging in this activity, I was very careful to gain permission from the heads of denominations in Suva or at the regional level. My offer of in-person support was enthusiastically embraced by denominational leaders since direct contact with the ministers in the AO was impossible for those outside the province. Likewise, our visits to ministers and their families was warmly welcomed and gave opportunity for us to not only listen to them and pray for them; we were also able to feed back their needs to their denominational leadership, the TG and Fiji authorities. In the end, I received permissions from five denominations and was able to provide direct support to ministers of three.

During one such meeting the female interpreter working with me was able to have conversations with the women whilst I met with the men. She was able to find out that there was a need for feminine hygiene kits in the village and the women were keen for this to be passed on discreetly to me for attention. This request was relayed to relevant providers and the need met, but also underscores the need for RLE to consider gender-based issues in the execution of engagement.

RAN Padre Simote Finau and Fiji's Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama greet the children on Galoa Island before an official photo with Defence personnel. (Photos courtesy of the Office of the Prime Minister, Republic of Fiji). https://www.facebook.com/FijiPM/videos/423552415416579

The third LOO was to attend a worship service in one of the villages the TG had assisted. The opportunity was afforded to us with the Yadua Island community. The regular Christian congregation from HMAS ADELAIDE were flown by helicopter to the island and were able to participate in a service of thanksgiving. Chaplain Finau was invited to preach and I led the community in prayer. Such was the depth of positive feeling between the community and the TG that TG Command was without hesitation in the provision of the helicopters for transport and the ship's crew donated many items of clothing and equipment to the cyclone-ravaged community.

Fourthly, Chaplain Finau and I were able to engage with RFMF personnel and an RFMF Chaplain. Chaplain Finau was able to visit a RFMF patrol boat to meet the crew, pray and distribute some literature. I was able to speak with an RFMF Chaplain as well as meeting with RFMF engineers alongside whom our ADF engineers were working in reconstruction, to encourage them and to pray with them as well. Our efforts were always appreciated and the RFMF personnel were keen to engage with us. The ADF Commander Land Forces (CLF) in fact insisted I attend Bekana jetty with him during one visit to meet with the RFMF and pray for them since he was now cognisant of the impact of such a visit.

In the final phase of the operation, I was careful to report back to the heads of denominations, informing them of the state of their ministers and families and the community needs, but also thanking them for the opportunity to reach out and provide this support. As at the outset, the feedback I received was very appreciative of our efforts.

RLE effect on FA 20-21

The effect of RLE on the conduct of FA 20-21 was not insignificant and noticed by TG Command. I ensured the results of the RLE actions was included in the Post-Operational Report and slide pack and received a positive response to my back-brief. Informally, discussions with fellow senior TG members revealed a surprise at the ability of RLE to open doors, the receptiveness of local people to religious personnel, and the ability to provide valuable insights into key people and situations in the AO. Clearly the capacity for RLE to do this had been a completely unknown quantity until they were able to see it in action. My concept of the Chaplain as an effective "religious MODEM" is again underscored in the HADR context.[23]

More formally, CLF[24] noted in his comments on my actions during the operation that our RLE activities were highly effective in a forward deployed role, conducting KLE, cultural ceremonies and community engagement as part of reconnaissance and Community Action Teams. He notes the work done with the RAA and surmises that this work provided a basis for the positive reception by the host nation religious hierarchy. Further, he noted the support to the IO effects which occurred from RLE injection into key planning teams, providing valuable insight, particularly in the information operations cell.

Left: Australian Navy Chaplain Simote Finau blesses the newly reconstructed Galoa Island Primary School and Right: Army Chaplain John Saunders delivers a prayer at the ceremony.
http://images.defence.gov.au/S20210054

Recommendations

The fact that RLE and the involvement of Chaplains has not been well understood nor the effect appreciated, and as such only recently included in ADF doctrine or policy, is reinforced by the experience of FA 20-21. It was only by good fortune (perhaps one might posit Divine intent!) that Chaplain Finau, with his vast cultural knowledge and ability, and myself, with my knowledge and expertise in RLE, were both force-assigned to this TG. I would also suggest that it was in large part my pre-existing connection with the CLF which allowed me to successfully make the case for Chaplain involvement in RLE activities, that in turn enabled the RLE enterprise to gain traction. As such, I am proposing the following.

a. **Intentional inclusion of the Chaplaincy RLE capability.** Future HADR operations in the Pacific sphere should include a Chaplain on the OSD with specific qualifications for the conduct of RLE activities in addition to the provision of TG pastoral care and religious worship. If possible, those force-assigned Chaplains should have specific cultural and religious knowledge of the AO to which the TG is deployed.

b. **Religious resourcing.** A standing ADF Chaplaincy team should be formed to develop and maintain updated religious profiles, including key religious contact information, of countries in the Asia-Pacific to where the ADF is most likely to deploy on HADR operations. These profiles should then be provided to Chaplains as part of pre-deployment preparations.

c. **Training.** The ADF and the ADF Chaplains Committee should endorse the design and development of RAA and RLE training packages for delivery to Chaplains. Further, that Chaplains likely to be deployed on HADR operations be specifically trained in how to participate with J09 and CIMIC in IO Working Groups.

d. **Joint War-fighter Series.** RLE activities should be formally recognised by the ADF and thus intentionally developed and written into the scripting of the biennial Joint War-fighter exercise scenarios. This would allow Chaplains to practice the RLE skill-set whilst making commanders aware of the utility of Chaplains in RLE on operations.

e. **Permanent Pacific Liaison position.** Given the traditional cultural preference for in-person contacts and longer-term established relationships, serious consideration should be given to appointment of a senior ADF Chaplain as Pacific Liaison Chaplain with the express purpose of building contacts with the churches and military forces of the nations of the Pacific.

Conclusion

At first glance Madeline Albright's comment noted at the beginning of this paper could have a negative focus – that those who ignore the role of religion and the convergence of religion and the state, as it operates in many nations, do so at their own peril. A more positive spin on Albright's comments is that when these matters are considered the operation is enhanced because hitherto unseen avenues begin to open. Certainly, given that the overwhelming weight of doctrine on HADR operations discusses the need for cooperation with and coordination between many different agencies, very importantly with the host nation, RLE in the Asia-Pacific plays a key role here in establishing that cooperation and coordination. FA 20-21 ably demonstrates this reality and underscores the attention which needs to be paid to development of ADF Chaplains in the RLE capability.

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Acknowledgement

PM BAINIMARAMA ACKNOWLEDGES AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE AT GALOA ISLAND
Bua- The Prime Minister, Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, visited Galoa Island Primary School where he met with HMAS Adelaide Commanding Officer – Captain Stuart Watters and Australian Deputy High Commissioner to Fiji, Anna Dorney. The Head of Government thanked the Australian government through the Australian Defence Force for their timely response following the devastating aftermath of Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Yasa.
He stated "On behalf of all Fijians, we would like to sincerely thank the Australian Defence Force for sacrificing their time to help rebuilding the homes of those affected Fijians of Galoa and Vanualevu". The Prime Minister also held a talanoa session with the villagers at the school and was updated on rehabilitation works on the island and reassured the villagers that the relevant government stakeholders will be prioritizing the restoration of basic necessities such as water supply to the village.

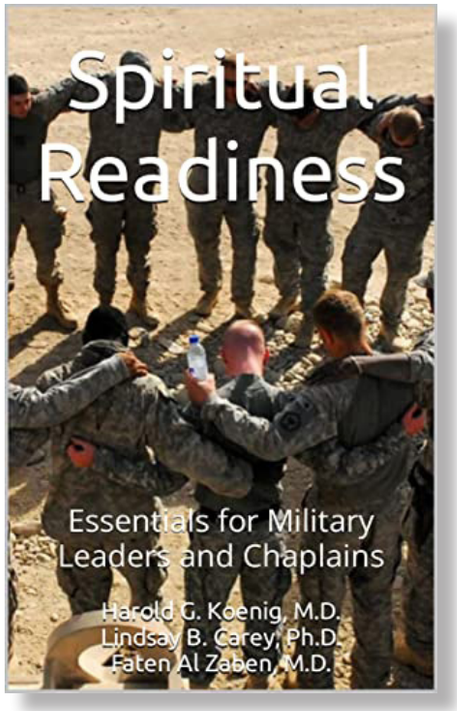
Book Review: Spiritual Readiness

Essentials for Military Leaders and Chaplains.

Authors: Harold G. Koenig, Lindsay B. Carey, & Faten Al Zaben.
Amazon Books: New York. 2022.
ISBN 979-8840830093
https://www.amazon.com.au/dp/B0BC29QTFS
290pp

Reviewed by Rev Dr Carl Aiken

Rev Dr Carl Aiken is a former Army Chaplain and Emeritus Chaplain, Women's and Children's Hospital, Adelaide, South Australia



This book is a thoughtful, broad overview text, which discusses key political, social, spiritual, and religious issues, while also providing practical tools for the care of service women and men. While it is largely US focussed, it is a highly pragmatic book that is worthy of the attention of military leaders, political decision makers and practising chaplains, irrespective of their national allegiance.

The text comprises 17 chapters, including 'mental health problems' experienced by service members, 'spiritual readiness' and how to measure it, 'religious' and 'non-religious sources of spiritual readiness', key aspects relating to 'warrior readiness' and the importance of 'human flourishing', 'building and sustaining spiritual readiness', as well as 'interventions for increasing spiritual readiness'. The book also has helpful sections on 'Easter and Indic religions', the 'Abrahamic faiths' and 'fighting with honour in a just war'.

By detailing the spiritual and religious resources that are already available to commanders, chaplains, and other care workers, the authors highlight a gap in both the preparation of military personnel for combat related roles and for their care as they return, often damaged, by their service. Importantly it makes the subtle and important point about the difference between military readiness (materiel and logistics) and warrior readiness.

Albeit briefly, it provides a clear articulation of the reasons spiritual readiness has not been more widely embraced by the military. There is now a significant body of research supporting the importance of spiritual and religious interventions in the preparation and care of military personnel. At the same time there are some community attitudes that oppose any form of spiritual and religious care being provided by the government.

The book goes beyond functional models of care to address the human aspects of military preparation and care for service women and men. It notes the importance of family and the 'conflicted' nature of warfare for good people. There is an awareness that the military sits within the context of the wider community and reflects that community encountering the same issues of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, mental health and personality issues, dynamics of marriage and family) and the impact of service, PTSD, Moral Injury and individual inner conflicts evidenced in the civilian world.

The emphasis on human flourishing is an important contribution in this book. The authors make a good case for the role of spiritual/religious support in developing and maintaining human flourishing. Traditionally this has been and continues to be for many provided in part by religious practices. They include an overview of the major faith traditions in this consideration. However, while the authors have an entire chapter on 'non-religious sources' of spiritual readiness, I don't think that there is enough attention given to the growing experience of secular spirituality.

The book provides a number of resources including a clear and succinct discussion of the similarities and differences of the major faith traditions. A number of validated resources are offered that can be used by chaplains and health care professionals. Included is an overview of 'Spiritually-integrated Cognitive Processing Therapy' (SICPT), 'Structured Chaplain Intervention for Moral Injury' (SCIMI) and 'Pastoral Narrative Disclosure' (PND) – all of which emphasize the important role that chaplains can have in the rehabilitation of service members. Also helpful is a clear description of core symptoms of moral injury, what has been called a 'soul injury' and remains poorly understood.

The authors make a strong case for paying attention to spiritual readiness for both training and preparation for the combat, peacekeeping, and humanitarian operations with which military personnel are tasked. In addition, they advocate for the care of those personnel who return from service with the moral, psychological, medical and spiritual wounds caused by that service. The authors make an important contribution to understanding that the training and care of service men and women is more than a mechanistic task and that the human, spiritual aspect, is highly significant in developing warrior readiness, performance and survival.

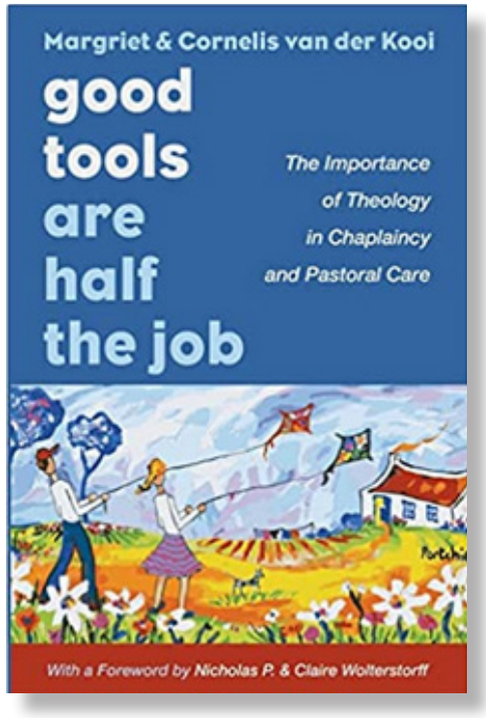
Book Review: Good Tools are Half the Job

The Importance of Theology in Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care.

Authors: Margriet van der Kooi, Cornelis van der Kooi,
Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2021.
ISBN 9780334059745
152pp

Reviewed by Darren Cronshaw

Chaplain Darren Cronshaw is a member of the Army Reserve serving at Army School of Transport in Puckapunyal. He is also Pastor of Auburn Baptist Church and Research Director with Australian College of Ministries (SCD) and Stirling College (UD).



Chaplains do not have to be psychologists or medical professionals to justify their existence or professionalism. Margriet & Cornelis van der Kooi helped me see that a line in the sand for chaplains is to courageously give of the best of our pastoral care and spiritual practices as resources for the deepest questions of meaning, life and death. Doing this with sensitivity and attentiveness to people's situations is part of the art of theologically grounded chaplaincy.

Margriet van der Kooi has years of experience as a chaplain in the Dutch medical system. She begins fifteen chapters with a case study of responding to a patient in crisis – whether from pain, loss, trauma, abuse, surprised diagnosis, guilt, anticipatory grief, hearing voices or messianic complex. The conversations lead into what are often beautiful albeit sometimes difficult pastoral conversations – about heaven, euthanasia, sexual desire, judgemental or misunderstanding relationships. As chaplain she artfully connects issues with helpful questions, patient silence, a story or joke. Sometimes she utilises liturgical traditions such as anointing the sick or guided meditative prayer, or refers to appropriate biblical readings; e.g., the Grieving Father from Luke 15, Mary and Martha from Luke 10, or the undeserved punishment of John the Baptist in Matthew 11.

Cornelis van der Kooi is a systematic theologian who adds insightful theological reflection to the bedside conversations. The mutual integration of chaplaincy and academic insights demonstrates theology at its best as a toolbox for ministry not a set of abstract concepts, and of the potency of pastoral conversations for enriching theological reflection. This reminds me that doctrine at its best is not restricted to the library but connected with the deepest challenges of human experience – as illustrated by the hospital bedside care in this book, or as it inspires me to enrich my chaplaincy with thoughtful theological reflection.

Questions of meaning, life and death are as relevant in military chaplaincy as in hospitals. In both contexts people face serious pressures at personal and soul levels. I resonated with the experience of the writers that in chaplaincy conversations God is sometimes explicitly mentioned, but more often only referred to indirectly or unintentionally. People in contemporary society come to questions of meaning with all different sorts of religious convictions or none, and yet long for what might be described as spiritual well-being, spiritual health or flourishing. One of Margriet's nursing aid colleagues had a conversation with her about euthanasia, which led to her explaining that faith did not mean much to her and yet she confessed how she mixed spiritual yearning with vocational aspiration: "sometimes I pray to Mary and ask her if she will let me come back as nurse" after which Margriet pondered "What in the world do I make of that?" (p.94). I appreciated reading how she listened attentively to individuals and discerned how best to respond with care across a range of complex human experience.

There is a refreshing raw honesty in the case studies and pastoral responses:

"Human life is no picnic, something flat and neutral, and whoever enters the terrain of coaching, counselling, or spiritual care ventures into a place where we are surrounded by the complexity of our spiritual life and inner being, our hopes and anxiety. Things are on edge here. Is my life worth living? Why do I get up in the morning? Is everything fleeing and meaningless …?" (p.127)

A challenging conclusion is that chaplains need a commitment to excellence of practice, although testing the quality of work is complex. The writers ask: "Is spiritual care, then, a profession, and is the training for it really adequate? The answer to the first question is yes; to the second, no." They model a high view of chaplaincy informed by theology, and theology renewed by practice, and urge caregivers to give of the best of their spiritual and religious resources mixed with emotional health, self-care and respect for people's world-view.

Good Tools are Half the Job is a valuable model of integration of effective pastoral care with mature theological wisdom. I plan to both discuss it with chaplain colleagues and add it to reading lists for pastoral and chaplaincy units at colleges where I teach. It is highly recommended reading for chaplains and pastoral carers, and for those responsible for training them or working alongside them in holistic caring teams.

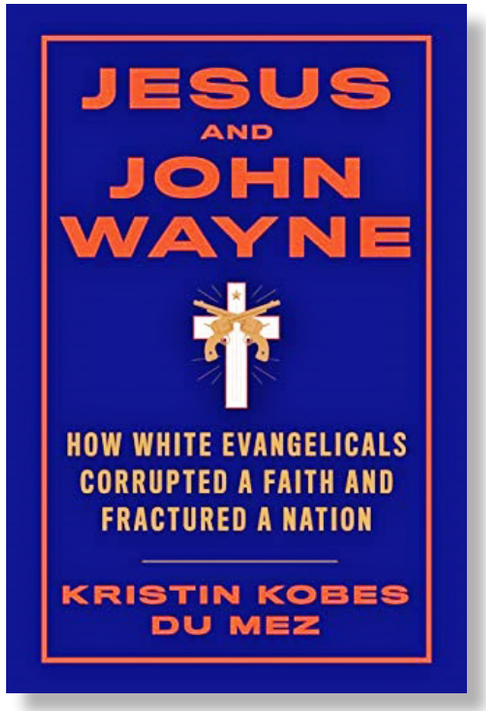
Book Review: Jesus and John Wayne

How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation

Author: Kristin Kobes Du Mez
United States: 2021
WW Norton & Co, Liveright
ISBN: 9781631495731
386pp

Reviewed by Chaplain Sarah Gibson

Chaplain Sarah Gibson is an Anglican Priest in the Anglican Diocese of Canberra Goulburn. She is currently serving full time with Army Headquarters DGCHAP-A as Director Chaplaincy Capability.



Dr Kristen Kobes Du Mez is primarily a historian, albeit a historian with some sound religious and theological underpinnings. In her provocatively subtitled book, she traces the origin of some deeply held beliefs involving Christian nationalism, patriarchy, slavery and warfare and how they have combined to influence the current wider American political and socioeconomic environment.

The book starts with a 2016 Campaign speech by Donald Trump, and ends with his election. Dr Du Mez examines how Trump became a protector of the faith and a masculine 'almost messiah' like figure for some. Trump she argues is not an aberration from the norm for a families values party but rather a consistent fulfilling of those values. These are values which idolize an aggressive male led identity culture that is far removed from the biblically depicted male identity of Jesus in the New Testament.

Throughout her book, Dr Du Mez builds a case to support how some of the things that have become signposts for "orthodoxy", (such as Biblical gender roles) within the American white evangelical community, have their source in a non biblical social construct. She traces the manner by which trusted and influential individuals, backed by a large and active press/media, have provided the means by which specific ways of understanding or interpreting Scripture have entered the mainstream Christian faith and become "truth". Throughout her book Dr Du Mez effectively demonstrates how small numbers of key people with strong ideas and large platforms have been able to influence and change traditional Christian messages and ideals of equality, and transform them into identity issues that have been fiercely and aggressively defended to shore up the power and authority of a few.

Jesus and John Wayne highlights how a need to defend these now "designated orthodox beliefs", as opposed to general Christian orthodoxy (such as those found in the Creeds), drives adherents more deeply into their own community, requiring greater levels of loyalty to specific forms and less tolerance for those who express any concerns. Those who waiver on the "designated orthodoxy issues" are often excised or vilified while at the same time people who bring forward issues occurring within the community including mistreatment or abuse by leaders are not supported or explained away; leading to many of the stories that hit the press later on. The podcast, "The rise and fall of Mars Hill" by *Christianity Today* being one such demonstration.

Dr Du Mez's work will challenge all who read it. For those who adhere to the beliefs it directly challenges; it should cause them to look again. Yet most people hold beliefs that they adhere to without real examination, because they trust those who tell them what is right. Others limit their intake of thought to leaders they agree with, and hence reinforce their own world view due to fear of what sits outside. All readers of this book should be encouraged to question what they have been told is truth, and take steps to ascertain its rightness. Likewise all readers should be encouraged to openly question beliefs and practices that are put forward as truth, especially those that are seen to cause harm, while at the same time ensuring their own actions are based in truth.

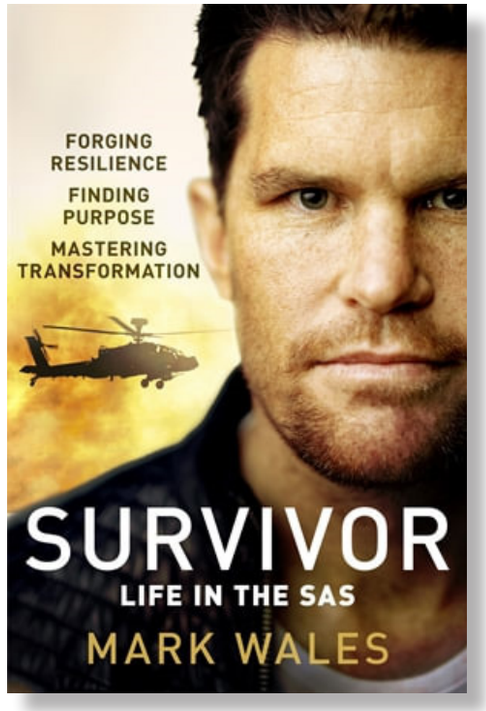
In terms of redemption, this book should encourage readers to engage in the hard work that renewal and cultural change requires. To change a culture or an individual takes time, effort and commitment to the long game. It takes a heart willing to see the damage that has been done and an real openness to change. In the final words of Dr Du Mez "What was once made can be unmade". To unmake any constructed belief system is no easy task, yet it is part and parcel of the redemptive process.

Book Review: Survivor - Life in the SAS

Author: Mark Wales
Published: 25 May 2021
ISBN 9781867537908
368pp

Reviewed by Chaplain Andrew Margetson

Andrew Margetson is a Baptist minister and has served as a pastoral support chaplain in the Army since 2008. He is currently posted to the School of Infantry in Singleton, New South Wales.



Mark Wales was crowned Survivor at the end of 2021 by a well know television show. But this was not mentioned in his book, because *Survivor: Life in the SAS* was published six months before he went on that show for a second time. His first attempt at the television show, where his met his wife Samantha, was in Samoa, in 2017 where he was voted out relatively early in the show. Mark left the Army in 2012, and at that time his miraculous story of survival had already played out, especially considering the depths of his post-operational despair.

Mark joined the Royal Australian Infantry, then the Special Air Service Regiment and deployed on multiple occasions, most commonly to Afghanistan. His darkest days occurred in the privacy and obscurity of his own home, when he dealt with the confusion and malaise as he sought to reconcile his operational experiences with his understanding of life. The answers were far from him and it seems were not discovered until after his service had been completed. By his own description, he was fortunate to survive those challenging times, scarred, but not unscathed. The tempo of the story picks up when he was deployed to Afghanistan as a Patrol Commander in 2007, assisted by the incredibly professional and courageous SGT. Matthew Locke MG. The cornfields and irrigation ditches of Oruzgan were the scene of the most poignant scenes, where his patrol 2IC was killed in action. Wales lamented, and to this day despairs of the fact that he was unable to keep his right hand man safe. He felt like a failure, and that the responsibility for this death was upon his shoulders. After this incident he saw the Afghan people in a totally different way. They were no longer seen by him as being just the enemy, but were now seen as the evil people who killed his mate. The moral pain of war and its deep impact on the human soul is clearly evident in his vivid descriptions.

Arriving home to Perth was a surreal experience for them all. There is a sense in which return from a deployment should be a time of happiness, relief and reunion. However, they generally felt embarrassed, lost and anxious about the future. Mark sums it up well in saying that “the nightmare I had been heading towards my whole life had finally arrived.” The chapters that follow describe his sense of being lost, alone and without a purpose. Deployment to Afghanistan had changed him at the core of his being and when combined with his existing world-view and self-destructive coping mechanisms, his demise was inevitable. His honesty and clarity in describing his own shortcomings and despair is to be commended; it is the most compelling and illuminating section of the book. Redeployment to that same war zone on numerous occasions was a mixed blessing. He rediscovered a strong sense of purpose each time he deployed. However, his describes the dehumanising effect of revisiting the war. Mark sums it up by saying “I truly felt like I was losing a part of myself the longer I stayed in Afghanistan.”

Mark’s transition from service comes with a great sense of relief. His adventures in business, study and travel are entertaining. It is good to see the success he enjoyed in those endeavours. Meeting his now wife Samantha was an incredible experience, only to be outdone by the arrival of their son, Harry Locke Wales. As the book draws to its conclusion, it is a relief for the reader to sense the healing journey that Mark has experienced in recent years. The scars of a long and seemingly futile war will endure, however one gets the sense that they will gradually fade to become smaller and smaller in the rear-vision mirror. Mark Wales’ epic memoir was published before his successful second appearance on the Survivor television series. But I am sure that those who watched it early in 2022 will have appreciated the way his tenacity, courage and perseverance enabled him to outwit, outlast and outplay his opponents. His book is an epic story of survival that will continue to be enjoyed and valued by many.

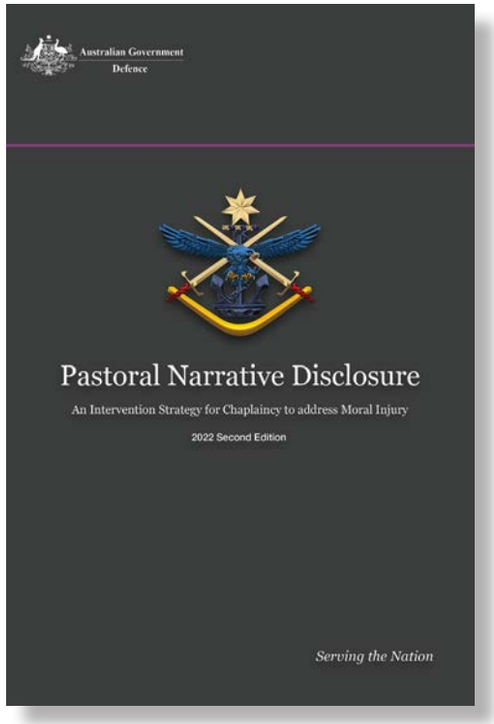
Book Review: Pastoral Narrative Disclosure

An Intervention Strategy for Chaplaincy to address Moral Injury

Authors: Hodgson, T.J. & Carey, L.B.
Canberra: Australian Department of Defence.
Defence Publishing 2022
ISBN: 978-0-6454963-0-7
230pp

Reviewed by Chaplain Andrew Watters

Chaplain Andrew Watters is a Royal Australian Navy Chaplain currently serving as a Spiritual Health and Well-being Project Officer with Joint Health Command



Was there ever a time in history when human beings were not potentially exposed to and suffered moral injury (MI)? I suspect not! Whether one emphasises the betrayal or the guilt dynamics of the experience, or a combination of both, MI is not a new concept but is found in a variety of forms in many faith traditions. For Christians, the Bible is full of such stories and their consequences. We even have a word that goes to the core of the phenomenon: sin. Other faith traditions have their own language. Over the centuries, our various faith traditions have reflected long and hard on this reality. Some conclusions were and are helpful. Others, not! Yet, at best, they are all motivated by the call to care for and support people in their journey towards healing and wholeness.

Moral injury as a recognised experience arising from the service of Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel is here to stay! Fortunately, ADF Chaplaincy is strategically positioned to offer a well-researched and developed tool to support military personnel who experience these injuries. This is the Pastoral Narrative Disclosure (PND) strategy developed by ADF Chaplains Timothy Hodgson and Lindsay Carey as part of the work of the Directorate of Spiritual Health and Well-being (DSH&W) within Joint Health Command.

The manual accompanying and resourcing this chaplaincy response, the Hodgson and Carey Pastoral Narrative Disclosure: An Intervention Strategy for Chaplaincy to Address Moral Injury (2nd Edition, Canberra, 2022), is an excellent resource for chaplaincy from those who will journey with one who has been morally “wounded”. It utilises the World Health Organisation’s bio-psycho-social-spiritual understanding of human beings, thus addressing the reality of the “spiritual” dynamic of service.

Throughout the manual, there is a fine balance of the theoretical and the practical. This is evident in the instructive forward by Professor Harold Koenig, in which he places PND within the evolving field of responses to MI. Acknowledging that nothing in research evolves in a vacuum, Koenig briefly expounds the advantages of PND. A very useful diagram follows that neatly displays the relationships of the symptoms of MI and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Concluding the theoretical introduction is a useful 2018 article by Carey and Hodgson that situates a chaplaincy delivered PND strategy within a holistic approach to support those experiencing MI.

The PND strategy has an "8Rs" stage model: Rapport, Reflection, Review, Reconstruction, Restoration, Ritual, Renewal, and Reconnection. Guided by one trained in PND, the stages assist a person to explore their experience of MI, name and understand their experiences of guilt and shame, and find ways meaningful for them in their world-view to discover forgiveness. The journey and goal of PND is towards reconnection of the person with themselves, their family, and their community. During this journey, chaplaincy facilitates, provides spiritual care, and relevant education.

Stage 1 is "Rapport", where trust is built. It involves the initial connection with the member, education about MI and the PND process and the use of an initial Moral Injury Events Scale to identify whether MI is present. Stage 2, "Reflection", invites the member to speak about their Moral Injury Event (MIE) and to baseline their understanding of their experience. "Meaning-making" which occurs through most of the stages also begins here. Stage 3, "Review", goes deeper into the experience of the MIE with an exploration of their feelings of guilt and shame. These are contextualised with the member exploring a realistic understanding of his or her own actions and responsibility. Stage 4, "Reconstruction", is a facilitated rebuilding by the member of their own value system. Stage 5, "Restoration", explores and, if possible, enables an event to restore the member's relationship with their service/command. Stage 6, "Ritual", provides an opportunity, if relevant for the member to experience a symbolic action/event that expresses their search for and/or discovery of transformation through the PND process. Stage 7, "Renewal", offers and opportunity for the member to explore whom they have hurt and how they can begin reconnecting and rebuilding relationships via acts of restitution. Finally, Stage 8, "Reconnection", explores potential on-going support services and resources as they continue on their wholeness journey.

For each stage of PND, the manual provides a theoretical foundation from both a theological (Christian) and human science perspective, a "five phase" practical guide to implement it with many useful examples, a review checklist (which functions as a preparation plan for the stage), and numerous relevant appendixes. Despite its length (227 pages), once readers familiarise themselves with the structure of the manual, it is very user friendly!

The manual is now in its second edition after only four months in print! This is due to significant "road testing" of the manual, liaising with allied health partners, and incorporating important changes. PND is definitely NOT exposure therapy! It is an in-depth empathic discussion of the persons' experiences from a chaplaincy perspective. It validates experience, establishes context, and identifies moral conflicts for the sake of meaning making.

I am trained in PND and am a recently joined member of the DSH&W team. Notwithstanding that, there is much to commend the PND manual and process. The fact that the training and the manual consistently emphasise that the pace and direction of the process is set by the member's agenda is of vital importance! The reality of loss of "power" and agency is central to the experience of MI. PND enables the member to rediscover their personal and interpersonal power. Key to on-going trust are the chaplaincy skills of listening and facilitation to enable the member to find their own way to wholeness.

Consistent with the power issue is the strategy's flexibility. Even one stage (ritual) can be removed from the process if discovered to be an unhelpful impediment. Helpfully, there are many resources to meet a member's individual needs and/or useful suggestions if something else is required. Significantly, the manual has resources for the "non-religious/spiritual" as well as for persons of other faiths. This flexibility would be strengthen by, if not inclusion, references to other faith's resources relevant to the various stages.

Further, the emphasis on a holistic approach beyond a chaplaincy embrace of the bio-psycho-social-spiritual understanding of the impacts of MI. It is important to remember that the PND tool is one critical part of a multi-disciplinary approach to supporting a member experiencing MI. At the end of stage 1, it is strongly recommended that a referral of the member also be made to a psychologist. Indeed, best practice recommends against proceeding with the PND tool until the member agrees to parallel psychological support. Thus, the use of PND is a significant opportunity to build even stronger and more effective working relationships with other health providers as well as embedding chaplaincy as part of a holistic allied health policy.

The PND 2nd edition manual is not the last word in responding to MI. This is an evolving field of inquiry, resourcing, and refining practice. No doubt, there will be future editions as best practice advances through experience and on-going research. However, it is impressive that chaplaincy is at the strategic forefront of response to MI in the ADF. It is critical that it remain so!

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