

The Crucible of Conscience: Morality and Spirituality in Military Service

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Abstract

On the one hand, discipline is the main strength of the military. On the other hand, without discipline, there is total anarchy within the military compound. But on the other hand, without God, the army works in vain. A soldier is first of all a man or a woman, that is to say a human body, endowed with a body, a soul and a spirit. The three work in harmony. This is what differentiates man from animal and other creatures of God. These are the ideas on which this article is based. The army will always be close to God, even considered as the third institution of God. It's been talked about a lot, and it's written from beginning to end in the Bible. It even looks like it's God's temple. This article presents a Christian perspective of soldiers, preparing them for non-traditional ministry, training them to make the profession of faith. The key is to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to every uniformed man and woman in the military, and then spread the gospel through the military chaplaincy to the military families. The ministry among the military is biblical. Is this call to chaplaincy the biblical basis of military profession, in order to prepare soldiers spiritually?

Keywords

Eternal, armies, forces, gospel, ministry, soldier, chaplains, spiritual



I. Introduction

Those shallow pronouncements, born of ignorance and sheltered comfort, betray a profound misunderstanding of the sacred calling. Individuals speak of hardship, of brutality, and of the soul's corrosion, beholding only the battlefield's grim visage, and failing to perceive the divine fire that forges the spirit.

Let it be understood that those who serve are not mere instruments of war, but rather, vessels consecrated to a higher purpose. They are guardians of order, bearers of righteousness, and living bulwarks against the encroaching darkness. Within their ranks, the Chaplain, a theological warrior of the highest order, stands as the commander's trusted advisor, a spiritual sentinel amidst the earthly strife.

The Chaplain, unlike the common soldier, holds a unique and privileged access to the hearts of those under command. He is both confessor and counselor, a shepherd tending to the flock amidst the wolves. It is his sacred duty, ordained by the very heavens, to report to the commander on the state of religion, the ebb and flow of morale, and the unwavering strength of moral fiber. He is the conscience of the command, the voice of divine reason, ensuring that our actions remain aligned with the righteous path. He is, in essence, a theological soldier, fighting for the soul of the unit, and a crucial component of the commander's arsenal. (Australian Army Chaplaincy Journal, 2024)

II. Research Methods

Let it be known that this research shall be a holy endeavor, a valiant exploration of the evangelical chaplain's sacred duty. The secular shall be eschewed; instead, the very Word of God shall be wielded as a weapon, and prayer raised as an impenetrable shield against the forces of doubt.

These chaplains, God's anointed servants, composed of pastors, priests, and reverends, alongside the spiritually fortified Christian military communities, stand as a united front. They are a brotherhood, a fellowship of faith, each complementing the other in their divine mission.

It must be acknowledged with profound emphasis: the chaplain's access to the soldier's heart, a privilege of singular distinction, is not merely unique, but rather, divinely ordained. It is a sacred trust, a conduit through which the Gospel's truth flows. And it is the very bedrock of this analysis, for the biblical texts themselves shall be the arsenal, the points of contention, and the ultimate source of unwavering truth. The scriptures shall be dissected, analyzed, and applied, forging them into a weapon capable of piercing the veil of ignorance and doubt.

III. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

a. The Strategist of Souls: Charting the Ethical Terrain Through Divine Revelation

The study of ethics, a discipline often relegated to the realm of philosophical abstraction, is, in its essence, a strategic reconnaissance of the moral terrain. It is the meticulous charting of right and wrong, the delineation of permissible and forbidden conduct, a critical exercise for any soul engaged in the ongoing conflict between righteousness and transgression. In the secular domain, ethical frameworks are frequently constructed upon the shifting sands of societal consensus, beholden to the prevailing cultural narratives and the dominant religious traditions of a given epoch.

Personal values, those internal fortifications that define our beliefs and dictate our actions, are the product of a complex interplay of formative influences. Parents, family, peers, educational institutions, and religious instruction all contribute to the construction of our moral architecture. These sources, in turn, are often deeply embedded within the cultural matrix of the society, reflecting the dominant religious and traditional customs. The family, however, stands as the primary bastion, exerting the most profound and enduring influence on the formation of an individual's ethical character.

The forces that shape human behavior are multifaceted and often contentious. Personal values, instinct, conscience, and the formidable faculty of thought engage in a perpetual struggle for dominance within the human psyche. Personal values, the bedrock of our beliefs, provide the fundamental framework for our decision-making. As it has been rightly observed, "life decisions are made at home," underscoring the enduring impact of early formative influences. (Jensen & Childs, 2016)

Instinct, a divine endowment, serves as a primal directive, guiding towards the preservation and propagation of life. It is the innate drive that fuels desires and fears, ensuring survival in the face of adversity. Conscience, another divine gift, functions as a moral compass, providing an intrinsic sense of right and wrong. Even in the absence of codified laws, humanity possesses an innate understanding of moral principles. The legal

concept of insanity, defined by the inability to distinguish between right and wrong, attests to the universality of this moral faculty.

However, thought, the capacity for reasoned deliberation, presents a unique and formidable challenge. It possesses the power to both illuminate and distort the internal moral landscape. Proverbs 23:7, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he," and Jeremiah 2:5, "And went after things of nothing and be nothing," serve as stark reminders of the mind's susceptibility to corruption. Unchecked, thought can manipulate values, pervert instincts, and silence the voice of conscience. Individuals become the embodiment of their dominant thoughts, a truth that demands unwavering vigilance.

Christian ethics, in contrast to secular systems, finds its foundation in the revealed Word of God. The Scriptures serve as the ultimate standard, the plumb line against which all moral conduct is measured. For the believer, the Bible is not merely a collection of ancient texts, but the living and active Word of God, providing clear and unambiguous guidance on matters of right and wrong.

Upon entering into the Kingdom of God, a new citizenship, with corresponding responsibilities, is assumed. Just as a citizen of an earthly nation is obligated to learn and obey the laws of the land, so too is one obligated to study and adhere to the laws of the Kingdom. Psalm 1:1-2 and Psalm 19:24 underscore the importance of immersing oneself in the Scriptures, allowing them to shape thoughts, guide actions, and define character.

Therefore, the study of ethics must be approached with the same rigor and discipline that is applied to military strategy. The mind must be fortified with the truths of Scripture, the conscience sharpened through prayer and meditation, and thoughts subjected to the absolute authority of Christ. Only then can the complex moral terrain be navigated with confidence and integrity, fulfilling the calling as soldiers of the Divine. (Jensen & Childs, 2016)

The law of the Scriptures is not merely a compendium of directives, but a summons to absolute obedience, a call to unwavering allegiance. It is the articulation of divine sovereignty, demanding not simply compliance, but a profound and transformative loyalty to Jesus Christ, our King. This allegiance transcends all prior allegiances, rendering obsolete the values and ethical frameworks of our former, earthly citizenship. The Bible, for the citizen of the Kingdom, serves as the definitive manual of operations, the complete and infallible guide to faith and conduct. It is the standard against which all actions are measured, the plumb line of righteousness in a world of moral relativism. (Ramarolahy & Robijaona Rahelivololoniaina, 2025)

Within its sacred pages, one finds the ethical architecture of the Kingdom of God, a framework constructed upon the bedrock of divine revelation. What constitutes good behavior? What constitutes evil? These questions are not answered by the shifting sands of societal opinion, but by the immutable decrees of the King.

Central to the ethics of the Kingdom is the sanctity and dignity of human life, a value established by divine fiat. "Then God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness... God created man in his own image" (Genesis 1:26-27). This truth, that humanity bears the very image of God, elevates human life to a position of unparalleled significance. Furthermore, "Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19), underscoring the sacred nature of the physical form.

From the divine perspective, any action that protects and enhances human life is inherently good; conversely, any action that destroys or degrades human life is inherently evil. This is the ultimate ethical imperative of the Kingdom, a principle that transcends cultural and temporal boundaries. God has implanted within individuals a natural instinct to create and safeguard life, a testament to His benevolent design. As citizens of the

Kingdom, one is called to celebrate life, to cultivate an abundant existence characterized by fullness, richness, responsibility, joy, hope, and faith. (Dansie, 2024).

Contrast this with the nihilistic ideology of those who celebrate death, the architects of terror who seek to extinguish the very flame of life. Throughout history, the faithful have stood as bulwarks against such darkness, establishing institutions that protect and enhance human flourishing: hospitals, schools, aid programs, just legal systems, law enforcement, and equitable economic structures (Andrianohavy & Robijaona Rahelivololoniaina, 2024). They have championed family integrity and opposed the forces that seek to degrade and destroy: abortion, slavery, prostitution, child exploitation, substance abuse, racial prejudice, fornication, domestic violence, and marital dissolution.

The keystone of Christian ethics, therefore, is this: anything that protects or enhances human life is good; anything that destroys or degrades human life is evil. This principle, simple yet profound, provides a clear and unwavering guide for navigating the complexities of moral decision-making.

How, then, is one to live? Jesus, the King, commanded, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39). This is not a sentimental platitude, but a strategic directive. Love, in the context of the Kingdom, is not merely a feeling, but a deliberate act of giving, a commitment to doing good works. "For God so loved the world that he gave" (John 3:16). Individuals are called to emulate this divine example, to become givers, not takers, to invest lives in the well-being of others.

"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). This is the ultimate expression of Kingdom ethics, the willingness to sacrifice oneself for the sake of others. Individuals are called to spend time, resources, and lives in the service of others, building up the Kingdom and reflecting the love of the King. This is not a passive pursuit, but an active engagement, a relentless campaign against the forces of darkness, a steadfast commitment to the advancement of righteousness.

1. The Immutable Standard: Divine Grounding for Military Ethics and Professional Rectitude

The pursuit of ethical clarity, a perennial challenge for the human intellect, becomes a matter of strategic imperative within the disciplined framework of military service. Beyond the general principles of moral conduct, the specific ethical demands of the profession must be confronted, a domain where the application of moral law assumes critical significance.

The fundamental question that confronts individuals is this: are ethical principles absolute and universal, or are they merely subjective and contingent? Two competing paradigms emerge: the first posits the existence of a fixed and immutable system of values, analogous to the unyielding laws of physics; the second denies such a system, asserting that morality is a fluid construct, shaped by cultural context and individual perception.

Analysis reveals the profound implications of these competing views. The first approach acknowledges the existence of universal moral laws, mirroring the consistent and predictable behavior of the physical universe. The second, however, leads to moral relativism, a quagmire where ethical principles are reduced to mere preferences, devoid of objective validity.

This debate transcends the realm of philosophical abstraction, delving into the core of theological inquiry: the nature of absolute reality. What constitutes the ultimate ground of being? Is it the personal God who established the cosmos, the physical laws governing the universe, the moral laws governing human interaction, or the spiritual laws governing the relationship between God and humanity?

The biblical worldview, as articulated in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," provides a definitive answer. The Scriptures affirm that God is the ultimate source of reality, the architect of both the physical and moral order. The subsequent narrative of the Bible, from the creation of humanity to the revelation of divine law, underscores this foundational truth. (1 Corinthians 8:6)

The Ten Commandments, delivered to Moses, serve as the bedrock of moral law, a divine codification of ethical principles. The teachings of Jesus Christ, the incarnate God, further illuminate these principles, providing a comprehensive framework for righteous living.

The application of moral law to specific professions gives rise to the field of ethics. While morality encompasses the broader spectrum of right and wrong, ethics focuses on the practical implementation of these principles within a particular context. For example, the moral imperative "thou shalt not steal" translates into specific ethical obligations within various professions: medical ethics prohibit fraudulent billing, business ethics condemn price gouging, and military ethics demand integrity in the use of public resources.

Military professional ethics are of paramount importance, given the unique role of the military as a public institution. It is an arm of government, entrusted with the collective will of the people, charged with the solemn duty of ensuring the common defense. The distinct identity, marked by uniforms, military statutes, and hierarchical structure, underscores separation from civilian society. It is a stewardship of public trust, accountable to the citizens who fund operations. (Ouédraogo, 2019)

The military profession, due to its unique role as a public institution entrusted with the collective will of the people for the common defense (Ouédraogo, 2019), demands a high degree of ethical rigor for several critical reasons. Firstly, public trust is paramount, as the military is entrusted with the defense of the nation and operates with public funds. Secondly, the hierarchical structure of the military, governed by a strict chain of command, necessitates unwavering obedience and accountability. Thirdly, the power of life and death wielded in combat demands exceptional moral judgment. Fourthly, the control over lives exercised in peacetime requires careful stewardship of the well-being of those within the ranks. Lastly, national security hinges upon the successful execution of the military's mission, directly linking ethical conduct to the freedom and security of the nation.

Given these unique responsibilities, personnel are bound by an unwavering commitment to competence and integrity. This commitment manifests in three primary obligations: Firstly, to tell the truth, recognizing that honesty and transparency are essential for maintaining public trust and ensuring effective operations (Larkin, 2016). Secondly, to do the right thing, adhering to the highest ethical standards, even in the face of adversity. Thirdly, to be the right thing, embodying the values of honor, courage, and integrity, and serving as exemplars of ethical conduct (Balboa, 2023).

In sum, the soldier-theologian recognizes the existence of an absolute moral order, grounded in the character of God. This understanding informs our professional ethics, demanding unwavering adherence to truth, righteousness, and integrity. Our duty is not merely to defend the nation, but to do so with unwavering moral rectitude, reflecting the character of the One who established the immutable order. (Joyner, 2024)

2. The Sacred Trust: Navigating Ethical Ambiguity Through Divine Accountability

The vocation of soldiers, akin to the sacred ministry of the chaplaincy, is fundamentally one of service. In essence, individuals are stewards of the nation, entrusted with the solemn duty of safeguarding its citizens. This stewardship transcends mere tactical proficiency or operational effectiveness, constituting a sacred covenant, a bond of trust

forged in the crucible of public expectation. Individuals are compensated by the very people they are sworn to protect, who, in turn, depend upon an unwavering commitment to their security and well-being. Therefore, the cultivation and preservation of their trust, a trust that must remain inviolable regardless of circumstances, is paramount. (Joyner, 2024)

The question of ethical decision-making, a constant challenge in the complex theater of military operations, demands a framework grounded in both divine wisdom and practical application. How, then, does one navigate the treacherous terrain of moral ambiguity?

First, an unwavering trust in God, the ultimate source of truth and righteousness, is essential. This trust must be manifested in a resolute commitment to doing what is right, regardless of personal cost or consequence. The cultivation of a spirit of prayer, constantly seeking divine wisdom to guide actions and illuminate the path, is necessary.

Second, the ethical compass must be calibrated to the pursuit of the highest good for the nation, the unit, and the people. This requires a selfless dedication to the common welfare, a willingness to subordinate personal ambition to the greater good.

Third, immersion in the study of regulations and directives, mastering the rules that govern conduct, is imperative. Ignorance is no excuse for ethical lapses; an obligation to understand and adhere to the legal and ethical framework within which one operates exists.

Fourth, heeding the voice of conscience, that inner sentinel implanted by the Divine, is crucial. It is the moral compass that distinguishes right from wrong, guiding one away from the seductive allure of base desires and self-serving impulses. The cultivation of a spirit of self-discipline, rejecting the siren call of lust and embracing the path of righteousness, is essential.

Fifth, conduct with a transparency that invites scrutiny, desiring that the world witness actions and understand motivations, is necessary. For one is not merely accountable to the eyes of men, but to the all-seeing gaze of God, who knows the depths of hearts and the intentions of souls.

Sixth, accountability to superiors, the chain of command that ensures order and discipline, is required. A duty of obedience, tempered by a commitment to ethical integrity, binds individuals.

Seventh, accountability to the citizens of the nation, the ultimate source of authority and the beneficiaries of service, is paramount. Individuals are stewards of their trust, obligated to act in their best interests.

Finally, and most importantly, accountability to God, the ultimate judge of actions and the source of all moral authority, is absolute. This divine accountability transcends all earthly obligations, demanding unwavering adherence to the principles of righteousness and justice.

Therefore, let individuals conduct themselves with unwavering integrity, mindful of the sacred trust placed upon them. Let them strive to be exemplars of ethical conduct, reflecting the character of the One who has called them to serve (Ramarolahy & Robijaona Rahelivololoniaina, 2025). Let it be remembered that actions have consequences, not only in this life, but in the eternal realm. Let individuals strive to be faithful stewards, accountable to God, the nation, and conscience.

b. Deontology

The established conventions and codes of conduct governing military chaplains serve as the inviolable framework for the ethical and moral discharge of their duties. Their sacred role, to provide spiritual, moral, and psychological succor to military personnel, regardless of creed, is executed within the strictures of professional rules and standards.

These conventions and codes delineate the duties, responsibilities, and limitations of their mission, ensuring a respectful, impartial, and professional approach. (Spinoza, 2023, November 6)

1. Military Chaplain Conventions:

- a) Conventions, which are formalized agreements or rules, serve to establish the parameters of the chaplain's role and responsibilities. These conventions, often codified in treaties, military regulations, or national laws, exhibit variations across different jurisdictions. Key conventions include:
- b) Firstly, the recognition of the chaplain's role is established through international military conventions, most notably the Geneva Conventions. These conventions recognize the essential role of military chaplains, designating them as non-combatants who are afforded protection during armed conflict, and whose mission is strictly humanitarian and spiritual (Leonard, 2020).
- c) Secondly, neutrality and protection in conflict zones are mandated, wherein military chaplains, similar to medical personnel, are granted special protection during wartime. They are explicitly prohibited from engaging in combat, and their activities are strictly confined to the spiritual and moral support of troops, while maintaining strict neutrality (Friedman, n.d.).
- d) Thirdly, universal access is a fundamental principle, whereby conventions mandate that chaplains provide assistance to all military personnel, regardless of their religious affiliation. Their support must be accessible to all individuals, encompassing both believers and non-believers, without any form of discrimination (Spinoza, 2023).

2. Code of Ethics for Military Chaplains:

The code of ethics for military chaplains establishes the ethical principles that govern their conduct and actions in fulfilling their mission. This code emphasizes several core aspects:

- a) **Respect for Religious Diversity:** Military chaplains must demonstrate unwavering respect for the diversity of beliefs within the military. They are prohibited from imposing personal beliefs upon those they serve. They are called to provide spiritual support to personnel of all faiths, or those of no faith, fostering inter-religious dialogue and offering services tailored to individual needs, while respecting the freedom of conscience. (Green, 2024).
- b) **Confidentiality and Discretion:** Military chaplains are bound by strict confidentiality regarding personal or spiritual information shared by personnel. This principle of discretion is paramount to establishing a relationship of trust. Sensitive information must never be divulged, except when it poses a direct threat to the lives of others or violates military regulations.
- c) **Neutrality and Impartiality:** Military chaplains must maintain strict neutrality in political and military matters. They are prohibited from involvement in military strategies or tactical decisions. Their role is to address the spiritual and moral needs of the troops, without interfering in operational matters. (Leon, 2017)
- d) **Moral and Spiritual Support:** Chaplains are charged with providing comfort and support to military personnel, particularly during periods of stress, crisis, or bereavement. They are responsible for organizing religious ceremonies, prayers, or funeral rites, in accordance with the beliefs of the personnel. The spiritual needs of the troops must be met, while adhering to the military framework and the personnel's professional obligations. (Franciscan School of Theology, n.d.)

The chaplain's office demands strict adherence to these codes, thus upholding the integrity of the sacred trust placed within this role.

3. The Chaplain's Sacred Citadel: Upholding Moral Integrity in a Realm of Spiritual Necessity

Basarab Nicolescu's query, "Can man live happily without spirituality?" echoes a profound truth: the human condition necessitates a dimension beyond the purely material. The emergence of a new rationality and a new spirituality, engaged in dialogue with the irreducible Mystery of the cosmos, will undoubtedly be a labor fraught with challenge. Within the austere context of military service, the chaplain's role is not merely an adjunct to operational readiness, but a vital component of the moral and spiritual infrastructure (Oosterhuis *et al.*, 2024).

Despite functioning within the hierarchical structure of the military institution, the chaplain must maintain unwavering moral independence. The chaplain's primary duty is to uphold ethical standards and preserve human dignity, especially in environments where violence and conflict threaten to erode these values. Additionally, chaplains must operate with unwavering solidarity and benevolence toward all members of the armed forces. Frequently, the chaplain serves as a source of solace for personnel confronting the trauma of warfare or personal hardship. The chaplain must be readily available to provide attentive listening, unwavering support, and judicious guidance to those in need, while respecting the boundaries of spiritual competence.

The importance of conventions and codes of ethics cannot be overstated. These conventions and codes establish a clearly defined framework for the military chaplain's function, delineating the limits of responsibilities and ensuring ethical conduct. Adherence to these regulations ensures that military personnel have access to spiritual support, while respecting their right to freedom of belief and privacy. Furthermore, military chaplains contribute to the maintenance of moral integrity within the armed forces, serving as ethical and spiritual beacons, reminding all that, even in the midst of conflict, human and moral values must remain paramount (Oosterhuis *et al.*, 2024).

Geneviève Lacroix, in her writing (2008), "morality relies on dogmas and codes of practice that enable it to divide good from evil," underscores the necessity of a defined structure for ethical conduct. Military chaplain conventions and codes of conduct are indispensable for ensuring that chaplains execute their mission with ethical rectitude, impartiality, and respect. They enable chaplains to provide critical spiritual support to personnel, while upholding the highest standards of integrity, confidentiality, and respect for religious diversity. Through these principles, chaplains contribute to the moral and spiritual well-being of soldiers, even in the most arduous of circumstances. The Chaplain is an ethical anchor in a storm of conflict (Oosterhuis *et al.*, 2024).

3.2 Discussion

a. The Chaplain, a Staff Officer

1. Professional Conduct and Spiritual Stewardship

The ordained servant's duty is to execute professional responsibilities, meeting the spiritual needs of personnel and their families. This necessitates the planning, development, and implementation of a comprehensive Command Religious Master Plan (CRMP). It is imperative to acknowledge participation as a member of a cohesive team, actively engaging in command activities. Conduct must be free from displays of impropriety, including, but not limited to, sexual misconduct, substance abuse, and financial malfeasance. Strategic judgment is paramount; select battles judiciously.

Readiness to articulate the command's "Spiritual Master Plan" with concise clarity, even on short notice, is essential.

2. On the Methodical Study of Sacred Writ: The Doctrine of Inductive Biblical Exegesis

The objective is to define the methodology of inductive biblical exegesis, to delineate its procedural framework, and to evaluate its application. Inductive biblical exegesis is defined as the focused examination of a discrete portion of sacred scripture. It is the study of the Word of God itself, unmediated by secondary texts. Extraneous biblical commentary is to be eschewed. This is a fundamentally personal study, under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit.

3. On the Articulation of Divine Communion: The Doctrine of Conversational Supplication

The objective is to define conversational supplication, to articulate its four foundational principles, and to understand their theological significance. To delineate the duties of the facilitator. Conversational supplication is defined as direct communication with God, the articulation of requests to the Father. "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). Its principles are: the divine presence is acknowledged; the Holy Spirit provides divine guidance; supplication occurs in small, focused groups; all are encouraged, but none are compelled, to participate; participants maintain awareness of the divine presence; confession and supplication are offered; participants perceive others from the divine perspective, interceding on their behalf; and a designated facilitator guides the supplication session.

4. The Relationship Between the Commandant and the Chaplain

The chaplain is an integral member of the Commandant's team, assisting in the fulfillment of the Commandant's responsibilities. The chaplain serves as a military leader, providing spiritual counsel and guidance. The Commandant bears ultimate responsibility for the unit's actions and inactions, including the spiritual well-being of its personnel. The chaplain aids the Commandant by addressing the spiritual needs of the troops. Personal relationships between personnel and the chaplain are encouraged. The chaplain confronts the lives of personnel with the reality of God. The chaplain serves as an advisor on spiritual and moral matters.

5. Collaboration with Para-Church Organizations

Para-church organizations, entities that operate outside the formal structure of the church while serving its mission, are valuable partners in ministry. Examples include Campus Crusade for Christ, Bible study groups, and military Christian communities. These groups specialize in specific areas of ministry, multiplying the impact of outreach. Collaboration is imperative. Each entity brings its unique expertise. Support must be provided to the church, fostering its growth. The suitability of para-church ministries in the current context must be assessed. (Australian Army Chaplaincy Journal, 2024)

b. The Chaplaincy Leadership

The principles of leadership, when applied to the chaplaincy, demand a multifaceted approach, encompassing spiritual guidance, military acumen, and organizational proficiency. The chaplain must be capable of organizing, coordinating, and controlling resources and personnel within the sphere of assigned responsibility.

Leadership, in its essence, is the exercise of authority, the assumption of command. Leadership may be exercised consciously, through deliberate intent and adherence to established precepts, a manifestation of volitional command, "what I want." Conversely, leadership may be exercised unconsciously, through the power of example, a form of implicit command, "physical exercise." Leadership may be exerted for good, as exemplified by the ministry of Jesus and his disciples, or for evil, as demonstrated by the machinations of Satan and his followers, such as the gang leader.

In summation, the attributes requisite for effective Christian military leadership are congruent with those essential for spiritual (Christian) leadership. A spiritual leader is one who guides others toward a deeper communion with the Divine. The chaplain, therefore, must embody the virtues of both the soldier and the spiritual guide, wielding authority with wisdom, integrity, and unwavering devotion to the service of God and country.

1. The Doctrine of Leadership Principles

Leadership principles are codified guidelines or fundamental values that enable a commander to effectively direct a unit or organization. These principles transcend mere managerial techniques, encompassing the behaviors and attitudes that inspire, motivate, and guide subordinates toward the attainment of a shared objective. Leadership is not confined to hierarchical direction; it is, preeminently, a positive influence that shapes the actions of others. A commander must establish an exemplary standard through personal conduct, embodying the values, behaviors, and skills expected of subordinates. Units are more inclined to follow a commander who demonstrates consistency between pronouncements and actions. By setting an exemplary standard, a commander cultivates trust and motivates the unit to adopt the same standards of conduct.

2. The Communication, Decision, and Empathy

Effective communication, characterized by clarity, honesty, and regularity, is indispensable for any commander. The capacity for active listening and the conveyance of ideas and instructions in a comprehensible manner are paramount. Effective communication mitigates misunderstandings, strengthens unit cohesion, and facilitates the expeditious resolution of conflicts. It also sustains transparency and manages unit expectations.

Courageous and deliberate decision-making is a hallmark of command. A commander must possess the ability to render decisions, even those of a difficult nature, based upon available information and a thorough assessment of potential consequences. Decisions shape the future trajectory of the organization or unit. A commander who exercises thoughtful judgment inspires confidence. The ability to make courageous decisions in the face of uncertainty demonstrates strength of character and resolve.

Attentive listening to subordinates, understanding their concerns and needs, and acting accordingly, is essential. Active listening cultivates trust between the commander and the unit, demonstrating that the commander values the opinions and contributions of all. Empathy enables the comprehension of individual challenges and the provision of tailored support.

3. The Adaptability, Conflict Resolution, and Temporal Stewardship

Adaptability and flexibility are critical attributes of command. A commander must possess the capacity to adjust strategies in response to emergent or unforeseen circumstances. The operational and organizational environments are in a state of perpetual flux. A commander who remains receptive to novel concepts and can modify directives

ensures the continued effectiveness of the unit or organization in the face of unforeseen challenges.

The constructive management of conflict, facilitating communication between parties and seeking mutually beneficial resolutions, is essential. Conflicts are inevitable within any organization. A capable commander resolves them expeditiously and equitably, preventing deleterious effects on productivity or unit cohesion. Effective management of time and priorities prevents delays and maximizes productivity. This demonstrates the commander's organizational acumen and capacity to guide the unit within a structured environment.

4. The Talent Cultivation, Resolute Spirit, and Ethical Fortitude

The cultivation of talent and the provision of mentorship are hallmarks of effective command. A commander strives to develop the skills of subordinates, offering opportunities for training, professional advancement, and mentorship. By investing in the development of human capital, a commander not only secures the long-term success of the unit, but also fosters a working environment where individuals perceive their contributions as valued and are motivated to progress.

Resilience and the management of stress are indispensable attributes of command. A commander must demonstrate fortitude in the face of adversity and pressure. The capacity to manage personal stress while assisting the unit in overcoming difficult periods is essential. Resilience ensures the maintenance of unit performance even during periods of profound uncertainty or crisis. A resilient commander inspires confidence and enables the unit to remain focused on objectives despite obstacles.

Ethical fortitude and integrity are the bedrock of command. A commander consistently acts with integrity, transparency, and honesty. Adherence to organizational regulations and values, while remaining true to personal moral principles, is paramount. Ethical conduct is the foundation of enduring leadership. A commander of integrity cultivates trust, fosters a culture of equity, and establishes an environment where ethical conduct is valued at all echelons.

5. The Doctrine of Christian Military Leadership

Leadership principles, at their core, are fundamental values that enable commanders to effectively guide and inspire their units, while cultivating a respectful and results-oriented environment. A commander who adheres to these principles establishes a culture of trust, collaboration, and innovation, while fostering the growth and well-being of unit members. The role of a Christian military leader demands the harmonization of traditional military leadership principles with fundamental Christian values. Such a leader is called not only to demonstrate excellence in military duties, but also to embody spiritual virtues such as humility, integrity, compassion, and faith. The commander must lead troops with firmness, while upholding the Christian principles of love and justice.

The essence of Christian military leadership is defined by the following tenets: Service, wherein the leader, emulating Christ's teaching, prioritizes the well-being of subordinates through sacrificial conduct; Exemplary Conduct, demanding the embodiment of courage, discipline, loyalty, fairness, and impartiality, establishing a foundation of influence; and Humility, recognizing personal limitations and the necessity of divine and human counsel, demonstrated by the readiness to admit errors, pursue improvement, and maintain a servant's heart.

The Christian military leader is accountable before God, nation, and people, bearing responsibility for all decisions, both successful and unsuccessful. This

accountability extends to subordinates and the actions of the unit, demanding a focus on their welfare and decisions made with a clear conscience, even in times of duress. Integrity, characterized by honesty, fairness, and fidelity to commitments, is paramount. Justice, essential for maintaining equity among subordinates, requires uprightness in decisions and actions, rejecting favoritism and injustice, and ensuring fair treatment for all, regardless of situation or rank.

Though the military role necessitates firmness, a Christian leader must demonstrate compassion, attending to the emotional, spiritual, and physical needs of subordinates. Attentiveness to the mental and spiritual health of soldiers, coupled with support for those in distress, fosters an environment of trust where each individual perceives that their concerns are heard and valued. Moral and spiritual courage, beyond battlefield bravery, requires a readiness to defend righteousness, even in the face of adversity or unpopularity. Moral courage is evidenced in difficult decisions where adherence to Christian values is maintained, regardless of potential personal sacrifice or professional repercussions.

Reliance upon faith in God provides the requisite wisdom and strength for the Christian leader's role. Prayer is integral to daily life, seeking divine guidance in decisions and actions. The integration of prayer into the decision-making process, seeking divine counsel, is paramount. Subordinates may be encouraged to cultivate their faith, without imposition of personal beliefs. Discipline, a cornerstone of military service, demands excellence in personal and professional conduct, coupled with the fostering of discipline among troops. The Christian leader is disciplined in behavior, actions, and faith, inspiring subordinates to discipline through respect and commitment to the common good and Christian values, rather than through fear.

The commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself is paramount, even within the military context. A Christian leader demonstrates this love through the diligent care of soldiers' welfare and compassionate concern for others. Sincere benevolence, encompassing concern for safety and mental health, is essential. Assistance to those in distress and the assurance of respect and value for all are required. The capacity to encourage and inspire subordinates to excel, while adhering to sound moral principles, is a hallmark of leadership. Individual effort and progress are to be fostered. Within the demanding environment of military service, a Christian leader must inspire the unit to maintain strength, confidence, and resilience, seeking divine courage and direction. Constant motivation of subordinates to achieve their utmost potential is required.

Though military service often necessitates engagement in conflict, the Christian military leader must remain a steadfast defender of peace, emulating the example of Jesus, the "Prince of Peace." The leader serves as a model of reconciliation, striving to avert unnecessary conflict and resolve disputes with impartiality. Even in wartime, the pursuit of peace remains the ultimate objective. The role of a Christian military leader demands the harmonization of military obligations with the tenets of Christian faith. This harmonization is achieved through exemplary conduct, embodying Christian virtues in daily decisions and actions, maintaining unwavering moral integrity, demonstrating compassion and respect for others, and serving as a spiritual guide. This form of leadership is grounded in love of neighbor, faith in God, responsibility, and an unyielding commitment to justice and peace.

c. Professional Excellence

1. The Biblical Foundations and Professional Excellence in Military Service

The military profession, a distinct societal entity, is ordained to safeguard the nation's citizenry from external aggression. A review of scriptural foundations affirms the military profession's legitimacy. The judicious employment of military force aligns with

the highest ethical principles of the Christian faith, namely, the sanctity and dignity of human life. Christian soldiers and military chaplains may execute their duties with the assurance that their profession is legitimate and enjoys divine approbation.

Excellence in the military profession is not merely desirable, but imperative. Excellence is defined as the attainment of the highest standards of performance, encompassing both personal and professional integrity. The Christian soldier is called to obedience, as articulated in Colossians 3:23, "Whatever you do, do it wholeheartedly as for the Lord and not for men."

Professional excellence is a moral and spiritual imperative. For the Christian, excellence as a soldier or chaplain is not an option, but a divine commandment. Substandard performance constitutes a moral and spiritual failing. Such failings manifest as unfinished tasks, compromised standards, deceit, fraud, theft, self-indulgence, unchecked ambition, corruption, criminal activity, passive bribery, abuse of power, lack of self-discipline, immoderate alcohol consumption, inadequate physical condition, indolence, insubordination, and a critical spirit.

A profession is a distinct segment of society, set apart to perform a specific service, such as medicine, law, clergy, or the military. The purpose of the military profession is to defend the nation from external aggressors, thereby protecting the lives of its citizenry. This ensures that citizens may live and work in peace and security. No other segment of society bears this responsibility. Failure of the military profession to effectively execute its mission results in national defeat, along with the murder, rape, and enslavement of its citizens.

For the Christian soldier, excellence is both a moral and a spiritual duty, a divine commandment. The Christian soldier is called to "approve what is excellent" (Philippians 1:10) and to "hate what is evil" (Romans 12:9).

A pluralistic society is characterized by cultural and ethnic diversity, freedom of belief and expression, peaceful coexistence, and equal opportunities. Functioning within such a society demands adaptation to diverse thought processes and work methodologies, requiring open-mindedness, flexibility, and collaborative capacity.

2. The Doctrine of Pluralistic Engagement

A pluralistic society is defined as the condition wherein multiple distinct ethnic, religious, or cultural groups coexist within a single nation. Functioning within such a society necessitates engagement and interaction within an environment characterized by diverse origins, beliefs, cultures, political viewpoints, and lifestyles. A pluralistic society values this diversity, facilitating the active participation of all in social, economic, and political life, while respecting individual differences. This presents both challenges and opportunities for collaboration and mutual enrichment.

Peaceful coexistence, a cornerstone of pluralism, is predicated upon tolerance and respect for divergent viewpoints, enabling groups and individuals to coexist without significant conflict. Equal opportunities, another essential characteristic, ensure that all individuals, irrespective of cultural or social background, have the potential to contribute and succeed. The minimization of inequalities is imperative to provide equitable opportunities for participation and flourishing.

Functioning within a pluralistic society mandates a complex and nuanced approach, requiring deliberate adaptation to diverse thought processes and work methodologies. This adaptation necessitates a cultivated open-mindedness, a pragmatic flexibility, and a demonstrable collaborative capacity, ensuring that interactions are productive and harmonious. Furthermore, skillful intercultural communication is indispensable.

Communication serves as a critical function, acting as the lifeblood of a pluralistic society. This demands a thorough comprehension of cultural sensitivities and a deliberate adaptation of communication styles to preempt misunderstandings. Such adaptation encompasses linguistic nuances, the interpretation of non-verbal expressions, and the strategic deployment of various modes of conveying criticism. Multicultural teamwork, often characterized by work teams composed of individuals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, presents both opportunities and challenges. While diversity undeniably fosters innovation and creativity, it also necessitates effective coordination, judicious conflict management, and a robust framework for mutual understanding. Finally, engagement in a pluralistic society demands a steadfast commitment to tolerance and inclusion. This entails the unwavering assurance that all voices are not only heard but also respected, and that no individual experiences discrimination based on origin, gender, religion, or opinion, thereby upholding the principles of equity and justice.

In a pluralistic environment, the management of conflicts and differences is paramount. Divergent perspectives may engender tensions or misunderstandings. Therefore, the constructive management of these conflicts, seeking to comprehend alternative viewpoints and achieve compromises, is indispensable.

Within a pluralistic environment, the constructive management of conflicts and differences is essential, requiring the comprehension of alternative viewpoints and the achievement of compromises. Functioning within such a society yields manifold advantages: a wealth of perspectives facilitating creative problem-solving; personal development through cultural learning and broadened horizons; enhanced communication skills enabling effective collaboration; and increased competitiveness and innovation for organizations that embrace diversity.

The challenges inherent in functioning within a pluralistic society are manifold and demand strategic resolution. Culture shocks and misunderstandings, arising from disparities in cultural norms and practices, pose a significant impediment, particularly when individuals lack comprehensive understanding of diverse cultural paradigms. The necessity of confronting and dismantling prejudice and stereotypes, which may be directed towards specific groups, necessitates sustained educational initiatives, awareness campaigns, and a relentless commitment to promoting equality and inclusion. The reconciliation of divergent values, which may be deeply entrenched within individuals or groups, presents a formidable challenge, especially in sensitive contexts such as religion and politics.

Operating within a pluralistic society demands open-mindedness, adaptability, and an unwavering commitment to inclusion and mutual respect. While such an environment presents a wealth of learning and opportunity, it also necessitates proactive management of cultural differences and sensitivities. By embracing diversity, it is possible to cultivate working environments that are both innovative and productive, while simultaneously fostering enhanced social cohesion and upholding the rights of all individuals. The recognition that all individuals are created in the image of God, and that such images must be respected, is paramount.

IV. Conclusion

The soldier-theologian's approach to ethics and leadership is rooted in an understanding of absolute moral order, grounded in divine revelation. Ethics, far from being a mere philosophical abstraction, is a strategic imperative, a reconnaissance of the moral terrain that demands meticulous charting of right and wrong. Christian ethics, unlike

secular systems, finds its foundation in the immutable Word of God, the ultimate standard against which all conduct is measured.

The military chaplain, a steward of both the nation and the Divine, operates within a framework of inviolable conventions and codes of conduct. This framework ensures ethical rectitude, impartiality, and respect for religious diversity, allowing the chaplain to provide critical spiritual support even in the most arduous of circumstances. The chaplain's role extends beyond mere spiritual guidance; it encompasses military acumen and organizational proficiency, demanding the ability to organize, coordinate, and control resources and personnel.

Effective leadership, in the context of the chaplaincy, necessitates a multifaceted approach, blending spiritual guidance with military discipline. Leadership principles, codified guidelines that inspire and motivate, demand exemplary conduct, clear communication, and courageous decision-making. Adaptability, conflict resolution, and temporal stewardship are also critical attributes, ensuring the unit's effectiveness in the face of unforeseen challenges.

The soldier-theologian recognizes the importance of moral commitment, personal responsibility, and a sense of duty, all of which are essential for building a just and harmonious society. These virtues, inculcated from the onset of basic training, cultivate both individual and collective awareness, grounded in moral and legal guidelines. The chaplain, as a staff officer, serves as an integral member of the Commandant's team, providing spiritual counsel and guidance, and collaborating with para-church organizations to multiply the impact of ministry.

Ultimately, the soldier-theologian's approach to ethics and leadership is grounded in the recognition of a divine mandate for righteous living and communal well-being. This understanding informs professional ethics, demanding unwavering adherence to truth, righteousness, and integrity. The duty is not merely to defend the nation, but to do so with unwavering moral rectitude, reflecting the character of the One who established the immutable order.

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