

**A BIBLICAL CRITIQUE OF THE SPIRITUAL ASPECT OF RESILIENCY TRAINING  
IN THE USAF WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TOWARDS COORDINATION OF  
CHAPLAINS**

by

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A dissertation submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

at the South African Theological Seminary

December 2016

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## **Abstract**

Military Chaplains have a long history of being at the forefront of Church and State relationships. They have served in various capacities throughout history at times being limited strictly to traditional religious duties and at other times serving in numerous other ways including combat actions. This study addresses the topics of the possibility of religious neutrality, a proper outworking of the first amendment of the United States Constitution in the United States Air Force and a theology of practice for Christian Chaplains while focusing research on the specific topic of soul care. The Air Force seeks resiliency for its Airmen in order to maintain their mission readiness and effectiveness. One attempt to bring this about has been an increase in resiliency initiatives and training. The training content and initiatives are often counterfeit to and in conflict with the religious faith of many Airmen. Religion has been relegated by many in the Air Force to occupy only a small section, the religious section of one's life. For the Christian, a biblically informed worldview speaks to every area of life including the concepts labelled by the Air Force as resiliency. This study utilizes original Air Force Chaplain and non-Chaplain documentation, Air Force Histories, Air Force regulations, Department of Defense regulations, personal interviews, Air Force Resiliency Curriculum and more to demonstrate the distinct and crucial role that Chaplains have and must continue to hold in providing resilient Airmen. A contrast between what the Air Force provides and what Chaplains provide is made while demonstrating that Chaplains provide access to a faith community, not just separate training and events. A biblical approach to resiliency is accomplished by exegesis of various relevant scripture passages and utilizing biblical themes and categories to inform this topic. Strategic recommendations are made for Air Force leaders at all levels in order to advance the first amendment's celebration of religious freedom by empowering Chaplains to provide alternative avenues for Airmen to receive resiliency initiatives and training rather than mandate secularized training to Christians and other religions.

# Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.1.1 Fundamentals of Chaplaincy .....	1
1.1.2 Birth, Growth and Religious Challenges .....	3
1.1.3 Current Challenges.....	6
1.1.4 Resiliency Initiatives .....	8
1.2 Problem .....	10
1.3 Objectives .....	11
1.4 Purpose .....	12
1.5 Research Design .....	15
1.6 Research Methodology .....	16
1.7 Theological Points of Departure.....	18
1.8 Hypothesis .....	21
1.9 Summary and Conclusions .....	22
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	23
2.1 Ancient Military Ministry .....	23
2.1.1 Introduction.....	23
2.1.2 Military Chaplaincy roles in the Bible .....	24
2.1.3 Ancient Military Chaplaincy in other Religions.....	26

_____ 2.1.4 Foundations of the Term and Utilization of Military Chaplains .....	27
_____ 2.1.5 Military Chaplaincy in the Middle Ages .....	28
_____ 2.2 Chaplaincy in the New World .....	29
_____ 2.2.1 Chaplaincy in Colonial America .....	29
_____ 2.2.2 Military Chaplaincy and the Revolutionary War .....	31
_____ 2.3 Military Chaplaincy and a New Nation .....	34
_____ 2.3.1 Upsizing and Downsizing .....	34
_____ 2.3.2 Military Chaplaincy and the War Between the States .....	35
_____ 2.3.3 Growth of Church and State Concerns.....	36
_____ 2.3.4 Legal Developments.....	37
_____ 2.3.5 Diverse Tasks of Military Chaplains.....	38
_____ 2.4 Military Chaplaincy in the Twentieth Century .....	39
_____ 2.4.1 World War One-Era Military Chaplaincy .....	39
_____ 2.4.2 Increased Interest of Churches in Military Chaplaincy .....	41
_____ 2.4.3 Benefit of Military Chaplains During World War One .....	41
_____ 2.5 Growth in Specialization .....	42
_____ 2.5.1 Professionalization of Military Chaplaincy .....	42
_____ 2.5.2 Beginnings of Air Force Specialization .....	43
_____ 2.5.3 Military Chaplaincy and the Second World War Era .....	45
_____ 2.6 Military Chaplaincy and the Post-World War Two Era .....	47
_____ 2.6.1 Calls for a Separate Air Force and Air Force Chaplaincy .....	47

_____ 2.6.2 Early Air Force Chaplain Culture .....	49
_____ 2.6.3 Early Air Force Chaplain Resourcing.....	50
_____ 2.6.4 Chaplains, Faith and Significant Events .....	52
_____ 2.7 Chaplaincy in the 1960s.....	53
_____ 2.7.1 Government Impact on Religion .....	53
_____ 2.7.2 Cultural Shifts .....	54
_____ 2.8 Chaplaincy in the 1970s and 1980s .....	56
_____ 2.8.1 Ministry among Diversity .....	58
_____ 2.8.2 Religious Controversies.....	60
_____ 2.8.3 Chaplains and Strategic Impact.....	62
_____ 2.9 Chaplaincy at the End of the Twentieth Century.....	63
_____ 2.9.1 Need to Demonstrate Relevance.....	64
_____ 2.9.2 Diversifying the Chaplain Corps .....	65
_____ 2.9.3 Controversies .....	66
_____ 2.10 Air Force Chaplaincy in 2000 and Beyond .....	69
_____ 2.10.1 Ministry Amid Ongoing Conflicts.....	69
_____ 2.10.2 New Challengers, Old Challenges.....	70
_____ 2.10.3 Posture for the Future.....	72
_____ 2.11 Summary and Conclusions .....	74
Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen.....	76
_____ 3.1 Introduction .....	76

3.2 1950s Care for Airmen and their Families.....	79
3.2.1 The Character Guidance Program.....	79
3.2.2 Relationship of Religion to International Conflicts During the 1950s .. .....	82
3.2.3 Pastoral Care for Airmen .....	84
3.2.4 Korean War Era Ministry .....	85
3.2.5 Beginnings of Change .....	86
3.3 1960s Care for Airmen and their Families.....	87
3.3.1 The Moral Leadership Program.....	87
3.3.2 Care Amidst Drugs, Vietnam and Daily Life .....	88
3.3.3 Teaching the Next Generation of the Importance of Chaplains .....	90
3.4 1970s Care for Airmen and their Families.....	91
3.4.1 Adult Values Education .....	91
3.4.2 The Importance of God During Captivity and Torture in Vietnam ...	93
3.4.3 The NOW Program.....	94
3.4.4 Emphasis on Families .....	95
3.4.5 New Initiatives .....	96
3.4.6 Teaching the Next Generation of the Importance of Chaplains .....	96
3.5 1980s Care for Airmen and their Families.....	98
3.5.1 Pastoral Care for Airmen and their Families.....	98
3.5.2 The Family Support Handbook Initiative.....	99
3.5.3 Diverse Ministry.....	100

_____ 3.5.4 Relationship of Religion to International Conflicts During the 1980s ..	101
_____ 3.6 1990s Care for Airmen and their Families.....	102
_____ 3.6.1 Further Changes in Moral Education .....	102
_____ 3.6.2 Pastoral Care for Airmen and their Families.....	103
_____ 3.6.3 The Core Values Program.....	104
_____ 3.6.3.1 Challenges to the Chaplain Service .....	104
_____ 3.6.3.2 Support for Chaplain Involvement in Values Education ....	105
_____ 3.6.4 Continuing Diverse Ministry .....	106
_____ 3.7 21st Century Care for Airmen and their Families .....	107
_____ 3.7.1 Ministry Emphasizing War and Crisis Care .....	107
_____ 3.7.2 Collaboration with other Career Fields .....	108
_____ 3.8 Comprehensive Airman Fitness and the Resilience Initiative .....	110
_____ 3.8.1 Origins of the Program .....	110
_____ 3.8.2 Growth of the Program .....	113
_____ 3.8.3 Teachings of the Master Resiliency Training Program .....	114
_____ 3.8.4 Ideologies Behind Parts of The Master Resiliency Training Program .	117
_____ 3.8.5 Teaching the Next Generation of the Importance of Chaplains ....	120
_____ 3.9 Summary and Conclusions .....	121
Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience .....	123
_____ 4.1 Introduction .....	123

4.2 Theological Presuppositions for a Biblical View of Resiliency.....	124
4.2.1 The Image of God in Man: Genesis 1:27 .....	125
4.2.2 The Sufficiency of Christ- 2 Peter 1:3 .....	132
4.3 The Fully-Functioning Person: A Biblical Overview.....	138
4.3.1 Theocentric.....	138
4.3.2 Christocentric .....	144
4.3.2.2 Legitimacy of a Christocentric Perspective .....	146
4.3.2.3 Christocentrism in Practice .....	148
4.3.3 Bibliocentric .....	149
4.3.4 Church-centered.....	153
4.4 Aspects of Christian Resilience.....	159
4.4.1 Individuality and Community.....	160
4.4.1.1 Importance of Unity and Community vs. Individualism.....	160
4.4.2 Maturity and Responsibility.....	167
4.4.3 Stewardship and Vocation.....	173
4.4.4 Adversity and Suffering .....	178
4.4.5 Objective Truth .....	184
4.5 Limitation of Scope .....	191
4.6 A Synthetic Theology of Resilience.....	192
4.7 Summary and conclusions.....	194
Chapter 5: Practical Solutions Between the USAF and Christianity .....	195



5.1 Introduction .....	195
5.2 Juxtaposition of Air Force Resilience Training and a Christian Worldview.....	195
5.3 Proposed Solutions.....	207
5.4 Conclusion .....	215
Chapter 6: Salient Findings and Conclusion .....	217
6.1 Introduction .....	217
6.2 Theological Presuppositions for a Biblical View of Resiliency.....	217
6.2.1 Summary of Air Force Resilience Training History .....	217
6.2.2 Summary of Christian Theology .....	227
6.3 Criticism of the Practice of the Myth of Neutrality in the Air Force .....	232
6.4 Directions for Further Study .....	234
6.5 Conclusion .....	236
Bibliography .....	239

## Table of Figures

Figure 1.....	136
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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

#### **1.1.1 Fundamentals of Chaplaincy**

American military Chaplains minister in a culturally unique microcosm of church and state tensions. They desire and prepare to provide soul care for the wellness of their troops through various means including the leading of worship, counseling, religious instruction, unit briefings and more. They seek to be faithful to their religious beliefs while working in a secular organization. The role of the holy man ministering outside of the designated temple or worship space, which categorizes much of what Chaplains do has existed for millennia. Aaron's priesthood involved many instances of ministry outside of the parish including speaking God's word to unbelieving political leaders (Exodus 7:1) and strengthening his leader's arms when they grew tired during battle (Exodus 17:12). In present day, the role of religion and holy men in preparing warriors for life on and off the battlefield has been pervasive in its impact. Even before the 5<sup>th</sup> century Christian origin of the term "Chaplain" (Mode 2000:59, Bergen 2004:4), holy men have been a familiar and trusted face both away from and in the middle of battles throughout recorded history.

Chaplaincy exists in many different forms. There are Chaplains for prisons, corporations, sports teams, nursing homes, hospitals, motorcycle groups, police stations, fire stations and more. Each Chaplain seeks to minister before God to people in his or her unique ministry environment. The military culture also has many unique characteristics. Military Chaplains may be described as attempting to serve two masters, recognizing that there are times where they must choose between divergent cultures represented by these two masters. They are commissioned officers who must give and follow orders while also maintaining their ecclesiastical vows and beliefs. There are numerous occasions where a Chaplain has been in the middle of a dilemma with options to please one of the two masters of God and

government. Public prayers, the content of retreat seminars, advice given to leadership, briefings on ethics and behavioural issues, the content of an encouraging word during staff meetings, advertisements of religious events, marriage and family views (Dart 2011) and more provide many opportunities to potentially bless or offend Airmen.

Many books have been written on individual Chaplains' lives<sup>1</sup>. Much has also been written about Chaplaincy and current issues or hot topics as they relate to Chaplaincy. A recurring theme of discussion in Chaplaincy revolves around the first amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America. Addressed in greater detail below, the first amendment begins with the right to freedom of religion. The two clauses that make up this amendment originally written as complementary are today frequently held in contempt of each other. The first clause concerns the prohibition of congressional establishment of religion whereas the second clause maintains free exercise of religion for all Americans. The concepts of these clauses are to some extent present in every American public religious dispute. One person may claim (and many have) that a military (government) Chaplain's prayer at a mandatory unit function is a violation of the first clause whereas the Chaplain may claim (and many have) that to not allow them to pray at that same event is a violation of the second clause of the first amendment.

Other religions have also historically utilized their holy men for clerical support to their armies, even being led in battle by them as in the case of Abd al Qadir al Jaza'iri, the Muslim cleric and Algerian military leader, the namesake of Elkader

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<sup>1</sup> Among these are Maguire CJ 2010. *Follies of a Navy Chaplain*, Chi Chi Press, Hackensack, NJ. Townsend T 2014. *Mission at Nuremburg: An American Army Chaplain and the Trial of the Nazis*, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, NY. Slomovitz AI 1999. *The Fighting Rabbis: Jewish Military Chaplains and American History*. New York University Press, New York, NY. Maher WL 2002. *A Shepherd in Combat Boots: Chaplain Emil Kapaun of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division*, White Mane Publishing Company. Benimoff R 2010. *Faith Under Fire*, Random House Publishers, New York, NY, and Messent P and Twichell JH 2012. *The Civil War Letters of Joseph Hopkins Twichell: A Chaplain's Story*, University of Georgia Press.

Iowa, USA (Haddam 2008:14). The authority of Bar Kochba (“son of the star”) while leading his Jewish revolts circa A.D. 132 against Hadrian’s Roman Armies was given significant legitimacy in Jewish eyes through Rabbi Akiva’s messianic interpretation of Numbers 24:17 which refers to the star rising from Jacob (Katz 2006:109). The founding of the American military Chaplaincy in 1775 preceded the official founding of the nation of America in 1776 (Budd 2002:9). Prior to the end of World War II, United States Military Chaplains served faithfully in every conflict in the history of the nation in either the Army or Navy, these being the two main categories for military service until the creation of the United States Air Force. The remaining two components of the military, the United States Marine Corps and the United States Coast Guard were and continue to be served by Navy Chaplains.

### **1.1.2 Birth, Growth and Religious Challenges**

Uncritical acceptance of the worldview behind significant technological advances in the 1940s contributed to many of the unspoken and unchallenged assumptions with which Air Force Chaplains have contended and continue to address. These advances necessitated an organizational separation between the United States Air Force and the United States Army and their respective Chaplain’s Corps. Many leaders in what was the United States Army Air Corps (the precursor to the Air Force which was at that time a part of the Army) fervently believed that air power was a distinct capability that was being impaired due to the Army’s focus on the ground. Unless it became a separate service, many argued, the United States Army Air Corps would remain a secondary force to the ground units. It was crucial that the nation’s air power not be a secondary tool in the nation’s defense, for it was recognized in the late 1940s that the country that could first achieve air superiority (using bombers, fighters and more) would win the future wars. On September 18, 1947 the United States Air Force was born and with it for better and worse, a culture that celebrated challenging the status quo, a focus on newness and technology, and an outlook that nurtured an increasing importance upon metrics and the tangible.

Another struggle ensued for the Air Force to have its own Chaplains which did not happen automatically in 1947. The Army desired to hold on to its Chaplains and

other career fields. By 1949 however, the Chief of Staff (the highest ranking general) in the Air Force decided that having career Air Force Chaplains who lived in and knew the culture (instead of Army Chaplains on loan to the Air Force for a few years) was in the best interests of the Air Force, the troops and the Chaplains. He made it official that the Air Force would have its own Chaplains. Since Chaplains are ministers in specific cultural contexts, the Chaplains that lived in the Air Force would best understand and be able to minister to Air Force members (Jorgensen 1961:5, Mathis 2007:8). This separation allowed the Chaplains in each service branch to render culturally distinct and relevant ministry to a military culture diverse yet predominantly Christian in name if not in practice.

For most of the Air Force's history, the Chaplain Corps has taken a lead role in nurturing the military personnel under their care by means of worship, religious education, special events, visitation to troops, counseling and other ministry tools. Additional programs have been put in place by Chaplains throughout the Air Force's short history to enhance the character of Airmen. Among the examples of care over the past seven decades are "The Character Guidance Program", "Preaching Missions" (Jorgensen 1963), "Moral Leadership", the "Insite Program" (Scharleman 1972), and others. During the past few decades the United States Air Force has expanded its array of caregivers to include social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and resiliency trainers. Air Force history indicates a trend toward a shrinking influence of traditional religion in public life as secular influences (and often religious adherents themselves) prefer new specialties with new titles rather than having a minister address their issues. Some of this shift is due to critiques of the necessity of and quality of care that Chaplains provide. Some of the shift is due to the decrease in cultural understanding of religion and ignorance and disagreement over the importance of a worldview that unifies all of the diversity for which many in the Air Force end up dying as a result of their military service. Religious views claim a transcendent, unchanging and pervasive effect on every area of the life of their adherents in a culture that increasingly values specialization. Though American culture is diverse, many legal disputes over religion erupt as a result of minority groups "whose religious practices are out of step with the dominant culture" (Esbeck 2006:305). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the dominance of Christianity in America and the Air

Force Chaplain Corps is increasingly being challenged by various groups. The United States legal system has, through numerous court cases on public religious practice, contributed to a weakening of public Christian cultural influence. Every court case involving religion automatically involves the First Amendment of the United States Constitution which states:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. (Archives 2016:1).

Religious discussions revolve around the first two clauses of this amendment which by standard practice are referred to as the establishment clause and the free exercise clause, respectively. Though originally written together to make one complementary statement, the two clauses are often pitted against each other when disagreements involving religion occur. Among the more significant cases related to the establishment clause of the first amendment are *Murray vs. Curlett* in 1963 in which a Maryland law requiring each school day to begin with prayer was deemed as legally establishing a religion and was thus a violation of the U.S. Constitution (Hall 2005:1) and *Marsh vs. Chambers* in 1983 which upheld that the existence of legislative Chaplains was not establishing religion (Hitchcock 2004:104). *Goldman vs. Weinberger* was one of many cases addressing the “free exercise” clause in which the punishments given to an Air Force Chaplain (Rabbi) turned psychologist who wore a yarmulke against regulations were deemed constitutional as the member’s free exercise of religion was outweighed by military need for uniformity (Levine 2010:208). That directive has since been changed and today Rabbis can wear their yarmulkes while in uniform. In all cases, one of the main concerns of the courts was to achieve government neutrality with respect to religion. In addition, the very existence of the Chaplain Corps has been challenged as to its legitimacy, legality and the makeup of its religious demographics by a court case brought in 1979 by two Harvard Law Students. It was eventually determined that the Chaplain Corps has a Constitutional right to exist since it is not promoting any one religion but it exists to promote the free exercise of religion for all (Cornell 2008:12, Surman 2009:10, Zeiger 2009:13).

### 1.1.3 Current Challenges

What then are the expectations, if any, as to what a Chaplain can do? If a Christian Chaplain is approached by a non-Christian Airman (Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Baha'i, Satanist, Atheist, etc.) how ought the Chaplain to respond? Must a Christian Chaplain conduct a Jewish Seder, Islamic prayer or Buddhist funeral if requested? To address these and other issues in line with the First Amendment and official Air Force guidance is the statement that a Chaplain "provides or provides for religious support" (Air Force Instruction 2014:4). A Chaplain "provides" by acting in accordance with his or her faith tenets. A Chaplain "provides for" the religious goals of others outside his or her faith group by finding someone(s) who can fulfil that need (i.e., a protestant Chaplain sending an airman to a Rabbi when they ask for a Shabbat service).

Many books have been written about individual Chaplains (Mode 2000, Keith 2010, etc.) and since most of those Chaplains and America's culture have been predominantly associated with Christianity, there has been less need or desire to justify the importance of Chaplains and religious freedom until the past few decades. Though the Air Force Chaplain Corps has been adjudicated to be legal, significant disagreements permeate the Chaplain Corps and the larger Air Force with respect to the proper role and definition of religion among both Chaplains and non-Chaplains. The Air Force is officially "neutral" with regard to religion (Green, Herrera, and Oakley 2010) yet intense debates continue among all ranks and in government and civilian circles (Lipka 2006, Loveland 2009, Hansen 2013). The schools of thought settle at various points on a pluralism-religious-secularism continuum (Jamal 2013). At one end of the scale are those who favour ever increasing religious diversity and pluralism which would in turn allow the Air Force Chaplain Corps allow for some diversity while upholding a foundational religious influence, historically and currently in large part from a Judeo-Christian heritage. At the other end of the continuum is some form of secularism/humanism that would support the mitigation or removal of religion from public society, one outcome of which could be the disintegration of the Air Force Chaplain Corps (Lillback 2007:38).

In the past decade an increasing number of personnel issues related to religion have occurred within the Air Force (Browning 2010, Carlson 2010). Many polarizing topics continue to produce passionate discussion including the allowance of public prayer at official events (Grace 2010), debating the creation of Humanist Chaplain positions and much more (Greenslit 2006, Lynn 2010, Parco 2012).

Government neutrality in the Air Force toward religion is the standard official practice (AFI 1-1 2011:19). There is a significant question that has not been addressed; is religious neutrality even possible? The possibility and current practice of government neutrality as exhibited in the Air Force has been challenged by some<sup>2</sup>. Chaplains often walk a tight-rope between military regulations and their faith group tenets. Requests from Airmen can at times conflict with the religious convictions of a Chaplain. Is religious neutrality ultimately possible? What are the core presuppositions on which religious issues will be assessed? Has the Air Force clearly articulated them? Some scholars believe that the social and political trends of modern western societies in the name of tolerance have in fact created a culture of intolerance that pits religious views against secular and political views. Each one maintaining that their perspective is what they must ultimately obey (Wallerstein 2005, Garry 2005:121, Walker 2008:410), and that freedom of religious conscience is good as long as one does not stray too far from Christianity (Drakeman 2007:43,

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<sup>2</sup> In April of 2014 bi-partisan members of congress submitted a letter to the Secretary of the Air Force stating among other things that: "We are concerned that the Air Force has not updated its regulations on religious freedom and appears to have the most restrictive policy of any military service" and "Air Force regulations which govern religious freedom and expression are inconsistent with Congressional intent and current law." Additionally, the article relays information on the 2012 letter from Congressmen to the Department of Defense (which oversees all of the United States Military) stating that the "Air Force is displaying a pattern of hostility toward Christianity" (<http://christiannews.net/2014/04/18/congress-urges-u-s-air-force-to-revise-regulations-to-protect-religious-freedom/>), 2015-02-05. A May 29 2014 Air Force Times article states how Congressman Randy Forbes sent a letter to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force (the Head General) to change and relax the religious clauses in AFI 1-1 as he viewed them to be too restrictive (<http://www.airforcetimes.com/article/20140529/NEWS/305290080/Congressman-Air-Force-overemphasizes-religious-neutrality>), 2015-02-05.



Underwood 2008:35). In addition, many of the issues in both the Air Force and greater American society can be traced to differing, sometimes uninformed understandings of the interpretation of the First Amendment in the U.S. Constitution (Dawson 2008:678, Lillback 2009) and the concept of separation of church and state, though the phrase itself does not exist anywhere in the U.S. Constitution (Gilpin 2010:871).

#### **1.1.4 Resiliency Initiatives**

These historical trends in the court systems, the Air Force and other currents of American culture have produced visible fruit with regard to the Air Force's most recent attempt at instilling fortitude and resiliency in their personnel through their "Comprehensive Airman Fitness" Program. The program's foundational four pillars of physical, mental, social and spiritual fitness have doctrinally and organizationally minimized the importance of people's religious views to a small scope rather than recognizing the transcendent nature of religious views across the other pillars and all of life. One of the ways in which this program has restricted religious perspective is by labelling the religious realm as "spiritual" rather than "religious" since it has been deemed by the writers of the program that spirituality does not necessitate religion, but can include it. Spirituality can include essentially any belief with or without God. In practice, there is hardly any mention of religion in this training while relegating religion itself as a tangential and personal practice. Yet the sections of training on physical, mental and social fitness each have numerous guidelines and ideals to which Airmen ought to adhere. Airmen are routinely required to attend this resiliency training in order to promote healthy living which in turn is viewed by the Air Force as a means of protecting their investment in their personnel.

There are no solid studies of which this author is aware that provide a Christian response and/or alternative to the resiliency initiatives in the Air Force. This thesis proposes to provide a Christian response and alternative approach to Air Force resiliency initiatives. Many Chaplains have approached resiliency training (typically taught by Mental Health or another office other than the Chaplain Corps) as a neutral term. Air Force guidance states that resiliency is not an inherently religious concept

at all but can include it. The current resiliency initiatives couple old concepts to describe and prescribe how to address handling stress, dealing with trauma, and learning how to live life well while using new terminology. The training is not religiously neutral.

As part of the Comprehensive Airman Fitness program, the Air Force introduced Master Resilience Training, known as MRT. MRT provides one or more days of resiliency training from a curriculum originally developed at the University of Pennsylvania. One of the MRT Core Competencies is: “Faith in one’s strengths, talents, and abilities” (United States Air Force (USAF) 2012). The Bible teaches people to use their gifts for God’s glory (1 Corinthians 10:31), but the starting point is not oneself. Quite to the contrary, scripture calls people to: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6, ESV<sup>3</sup>). A Christian’s strength starts with God, not with self. A second core competency is “I am strong” (USAF 2012) which runs counter to Paul’s assertion in 2 Corinthians 12:10 where he states: “For when I am weak, then I am strong”.

Any training involves an underlying value system whether stated or not. The resiliency training in the Air Force teaches about the spiritual part of a person as if it is merely one of many other equally important components (religious, social, mental, physical, etc.) of an individual rather than a transcendent and pervasive foundation for all else. The effects of a history of professional specialization in Air Force duties and technology can be seen in this categorized approach to health that offers a little diversity (though limited since it does not include religion other than in a vague sense) and no transcendent worldview unity to bring it all together. True spirituality is found in Christ for every spiritual blessing comes from Him:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Eph 1:3).

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<sup>3</sup> “Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version.”

To experience God's grace it must come from Christ (I Corinthians 10:4). An approach to public religion that gives credence to a civil religion, by which is meant an acknowledgement in public of a generic deity or concept and generic religious phrases has been critiqued by both atheists and devout religious adherents: "Does civil religion allow lawmakers to subvert faith by permitting them to assume a veil of piety?" (Boston 2007:12). Likewise, Air Force resiliency training teaches that vague and practically undefinable spirituality is distinct from religion. If religion is desired, any belief labelled "religious" will do. The training effectively states that religion is optional to resilience. Chapter three will state that while the physical and mental health of Airmen have definite standards for being assessed, there are no standards for spiritual health. It will also be shown how these lack of objective standards are in fact not neutral, but have a specific worldview which is in contrast to many religious beliefs. For the Christian, to live is Christ (Philippians 1:21).

### **1.2 Problem**

United States Air Force doctrine formally professes neutrality toward religion yet, it will be demonstrated increasingly either ignores or is unaware of religion as a holistic and transcendent approach to life and wellness as indicated by the approach to resiliency training. At the same time, the Air Force requires many Airmen to attend a clearly secular approach to soul care in its resiliency training program without allowing the attendees' religious practices to count as an alternative choice to the required resiliency training. Unless the Air Force changes its strategic understanding of the place and impact of religion, current and future "resiliency" training, or alternative terms will continue to elevate not neutrality, but a secular government religion above Christianity and other faiths that will make truth claims upon the Airmen it seeks to convert to its way of life. If this is allowed to occur it will easily become a violation of the first amendment that all Air Force members seek to uphold. It is likely that many Airmen in the future will remain unaware as they do today of what is transpiring since resiliency training (or whatever future terms are used to describe it) will be labelled merely as required Air Force training. To mandate secular training on topics such as meaning and purpose in life asserts the primacy of the secular world view. Religious training is not mandated, nor even

offered as an alternative to the mandatory secular training. Religious education and specifically for the purposes of this paper, Biblical Christianity offers an alternative view to address resiliency, meaning and purpose in life.

### **Problem Statement**

The Air Force claims religious neutrality while favoring and promoting secular resiliency training and initiatives over religious approaches.

### **Subsidiary Questions**

1. Historically, what has been the role of Military Chaplains?
2. How have Chaplains and non-Chaplains respectively addressed troop resiliency?
3. How does one apply a biblical framework and application to resiliency?
4. What recommendations could be implemented to ensure the free exercise of religion in resiliency training and initiatives?

### **1.3 Objectives**

Among the objectives of this research study are to:

1. Demonstrate the non-neutrality of current Air Force resiliency training.
2. Demonstrate the impossibility of neutrality in Air Force resiliency training.
3. Articulate a clear description of resiliency from a biblical theological perspective.
4. Articulate strategic guiding principles for future government leaders at all levels that will enhance religious freedom within the realm of the uniformed services.

## 1.4 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the benefit to the Air Force in encouraging existing religious care and resources as an equally valid option (if not more than equal) to current resilience training which, it will be demonstrated is at many points in antithesis to multiple religions in general and Christianity in particular. There are multiple reasons for conducting this study. One significant area of tension for the Air Force is between legacy and progress. American and Air Force culture are driven in large part by technology, new ideas and constant improvement. Thus, when it comes to soul care, treating war veterans with unseen scars, preparing less-experienced Airmen for potentially harsh future realities, and speaking to everyday life issues, the Air Force often looks for new programs to address these perceived needs. Official communication about Air Force resiliency training has been inconsistent. In a March 28, 2012 address before members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, the Surgeon General of the Air Force stated that: "Comprehensive Airmen Fitness focuses on building strength across physical, mental and social domains" (Green 2012). The spiritual pillar is not mentioned in the address. Senior Air Force leaders have stated that the Air Force does not need more "programs" but rather "cultural change" to strengthen Airman resiliency (Kime 2012). Yet, in practice resiliency training has often been briefed as a program and more recently it has become official Air Force policy in an Air Force regulation (AFI 90-506). The quality of some of the selected training curriculum has itself come under scrutiny. The Air Force uses the RAND Corporation as a trusted source for consultation and reporting on various items of concern to the Air Force. A 2011 RAND Study comparing 22 resiliency programs states that the Master Resiliency Training program used by the Air Force (a significant teaching component of the overall resiliency initiatives in the Air Force) only addresses 12 of the 20 resiliency components. In addition, the University of Pennsylvania's program's training method (the originator of the training curriculum that has been adopted by the Air Force) of those 12 resiliency components is also questioned:

We do not know whether and how well the current military resilience programs are addressing these factors in their activities. Further, there is little known

about the effectiveness of these programs on developing resilience (Gaillot *et al.*, 2011).

The Bible is not averse to new discoveries as “the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” (Psalm 24:1). Yet, there is also “nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9). A culture overly influenced by quick-internet searches for one-dimensional answers has not recognized how Christianity teaches foundational beliefs that do indeed address specific questions without being limited to specific problem sets. For example, resiliency training classes speak to “hunting the good” (finding what is “good” in one’s life). Christianity uses different and more pervasive concepts to explore the depths of what it means to be human. Christianity speaks to the definition of good not arbitrarily defined by different humans, but as created by God (God defines what is good in line with His character), why there is good (God created it and called it so), why there is evil (the Fall), why one should seek what is good (God’s commands) and how one can know what is good (common grace for all and saving grace for Christians), that no one is completely good except for God, and that Christ’s righteousness saves, changes and works out everything for good for those who love and believe in Him. These concepts have been written about in-depth for centuries.

Proponents of resiliency training may object that they are not teaching about God and religious components because they want to appeal to a mass audience and find common ground, by which is typically meant, “neutral ground”. There is no neutral ground. Either resiliency concepts were created by God or they are human attempts at defining optimum health. If resiliency is merely a human convention then diversity of perspectives can and will be pursued but they will still end up attesting to one dominant perspective. If resiliency is a creation of God then a biblical framework must be the foundation for its understanding while incorporating any discoveries whether inside or outside of Christianity that are in line with the teachings of Scripture. If God is not the standard for resiliency, then any other attempt at defining and measuring resiliency will be either completely arbitrary or it will have to borrow concepts from the Christian worldview in order to make any sense. For many Christians, secular resiliency training is an eerie yet shallow parallel to many Christian practices while it promotes Christianity and other religions as optional. This

will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6. Secular resiliency training leaves the determination of values and truth up to the individual and it expects all of its students to obey Air Force rules first and then secondarily God's rules. Airmen can express their religious beliefs as long as those beliefs and expressions do not "have an adverse impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, and good order and discipline" and their beliefs do not get in the way of a "compelling government interest" (DoDI 1300.17 2014:3). This leaves much room for interpretation. It does not recognize God as the Creator and Sustainer of all goodness and knowledge. Air Force resiliency training does not discourage worshipping the creation and denying the Creator, which Romans 1 condemns.

Offending someone can be taken very seriously with potential career implications. This hypersensitivity is not simply a result of increased religious pluralism. It is also the result of an unspoken and subconscious government religion that some utilize to diminish any who do not place faith in those secular government principles. One example is the area of public prayer. Some Chaplains have been reprimanded for praying too Christian of a prayer rather than making their prayers non-sectarian (Ferguson 2013, Pitts 2013). When one asks for a definition of "non-sectarian" it typically boils down to the likelihood of the prayer to offend anyone in the audience; a very difficult scenario to foresee unless one sticks to gross generalities; meanwhile the substance of prayers is often mitigated in the attempt to not offend. It is hoped that this project will contribute to a more cordial understanding of the needs of faith groups and instill a lessening of offense by understanding and embracing the diverse prayers, beliefs and other actions within the military, especially by Chaplains. Many Commanders (leaders) could be better-equipped to navigate and address religion and resiliency. They have many other pressing matters on which to focus. They want to see their troops flourish and the mission get accomplished. In seeking to help, many Chaplains find themselves caught off guard as if their faith is just one option among many for wellness and resiliency, rather than viewing their faith in contra-distinction to a secular resiliency program and worldview. At issue is not simply what choice people will make, but also signs of a truth war between the different approaches to caring for Airmen.

## **1.5 Research Design**

The research will begin with an overview and background of the history of military Chaplaincy in chapter two, starting with biblical examples of those who functioned in the role of Chaplain. It will then demonstrate the historical uses for better and worse of military Chaplains, narrowing more to a focus on Chaplaincy in the American military construct. This history is necessary to the rest of the study in order to provide a rationale for, and to demonstrate the continuing importance of Chaplaincy's unique and necessary contributions. Upon demonstrating the role of Chaplains, chapter three will discuss the similarities and dissimilarities between how Chaplains in the United States Air Force have cared for Airmen versus how other stated caregivers, such as psychologists and others have cared for Airmen. This chapter will also highlight historical and/or growing trends in the Air Force's approach to Airman care that can either encourage or discourage a Christian and even other religious approaches to care. Chapter four will seek to develop a biblical approach to resiliency by reframing the Air Force's terminology for resiliency with biblical categories. A description of a comprehensive worldview will be sought. Christian faith, community, thinking and living will be presented as an alternative to current imposed training that is at times fundamentally opposed to Christian and other religious beliefs and practices. In chapter five, recommendations will be discussed as potential guidance for Chaplain and non-Chaplain Air Force Leaders. Recommendations will include thoughts on how to celebrate religious freedom while maintaining a necessary degree of military uniformity. It is also hoped that the importance of a biblical worldview will be sufficiently argued in order to demonstrate that it is of great benefit to the functionality, maintenance and longevity of the United States Air Force. Finally, chapter six will draw conclusions about the nature of the Air Force's past and current approaches to Airman care. It will demonstrate the theological trajectory of Airman care and will argue for an enhanced respect for the intellectual, behavioural, social, mental, physical, and other powerful changes that a biblical worldview brings about when one is encountered by Jesus Christ.



## **1.6 Research Methodology**

The Osmer Model will be used for this study, following the Descriptive/Interpretive → Normative → Strategic pattern. An informative overview, discussion, and citing of historical military Chaplaincy sources from scripture, medieval Europe, colonial America and the United States Air Force will describe the heritage and role that ministers have held during times of peace and war. Many original Air Force documents, unknown to many current Air Force Chaplains will be cited. Alongside the military events will be many cultural and legal milestone events in America that significantly influenced the interpretation of the First Amendment of the Constitution and as a result, the manner in which religion in general and Christianity in particular was expressed in the Air Force. Many Chaplain and non-Chaplain Air Force members are unaware of the vitality that Christian Chaplains have brought to the Air Force as expressed in their lifestyle, teachings and interactions. To further garner informative data on how both Chaplain and non-Chaplain Air Force members have sought to provide care for Airmen, qualitative information will be used to elucidate the operative definition and practice of religious freedom in the Air Force from strategic and tactical levels. Information including copies of original sources from the Air Force Historical Center in Montgomery, Alabama, researched interviews with past Air Force Chaplains, personal interviews with retired Air Force Chaplains, official regulations, personal notes and experiences of the author, the Air Force Chaplain Corps official histories, graduate-level papers written by Chaplains at the Air Force's Air University, scholarly works on implications of the first amendment and more will be utilized.

Interviews will focus on Chaplain Corps members' experience of religious freedom. Were they ever pressured to compromise? What did they teach, counsel and exemplify in order to help develop Airmen of resolve and character? Answers will be communicated in quotes and discussion. The utilization of these sources will demonstrate how the Air Force has practiced soul care for its personnel and how it ought to proceed in caring for the spiritual welfare of future Airmen. It is hoped that the information presented will demonstrate a historical trend of highly valuing religion in general and Christianity specifically in the Air Force. The depth of influence on the

Air Force with regard to its strategic thinking, unit logos, approach to people care and more has strong roots in Christian thinking and beliefs. Thus, the many challenges to Christianity in the public sector must be addressed with caution by the Air Force. Much of America's and the Air Force's identity and health is connected to Christian beliefs. Many religious issues in the Air Force engender much heated discussion yet the parties involved typically do not make use of the aforementioned sources which could be of great benefit to Chaplains and non-Chaplains as they seek to navigate the future.

The chapter on a biblical model with regard to resiliency will utilize exegesis of key scripture passages that address the Imago Dei concept to reinterpret the comparatively vague and vacuous terms the Air Force uses such as "resiliency". A proper biblical study does not simply take the terms that a secular institution presents and attempt to Christianize them. A proper biblical study will look more deeply at who people are, why they are here on earth, what the meaning of life is, who God is, the importance of lifestyle behaviour and its consequences, and how change is possible. A biblical theology of resiliency will be studied as an alternative worldview and as a training option for Airmen. In chapter six the strategic portion of the thesis will address such questions as: should one particular religious worldview be dominant? Should all religious beliefs be equally tolerated? If so, how will differences and conflicting viewpoints be adjudicated? This entails a discussion of the degree of uniformity that the Air Force ought to require in training its personnel and extends in its effect to question the concepts that bind the Air Force together.

The sufficiency of scripture will be a key theological and methodological component in this discussion. This study is both academic and pastorally practical in nature and seeks to wed these two approaches in the context of Christian ministry in the Air Force Chaplain Corps. Strongly held doctrine of various religions and secularism confront each other daily in face to face engagements in the Air Force, though these confrontations are often not intended or foreseen. They occur because of the inevitable meeting of worldviews. A significant challenge for all, but especially for the Chaplains as the moral, morale and spiritual leaders of the Air Force, is not simply the doctrine communicated but the heart and the manner in which Chaplains

communicate it in a culture that is often biblically ignorant. Chaplaincy is an environment where seminary and doctrinal knowledge must be translated into a fast-paced and interactive environment that requires not only truth, but also skill in how best to communicate truth.

Strategic guidance will be given recognizing that neither the Air Force, nor all of the Chaplain Corps personnel adhere to a Christian worldview. Proposed guidance will take into account America's founding documents, Department of Defense and Air Force regulations, and other sources to chart a course allowing for faithful biblical Christian alternatives to secular Air Force training while respecting the fact that America is not a nation that legally promotes Christianity above other religions.

### **1.7 Theological Points of Departure**

The author's theological framework is Reformed Christianity. Being a minister in the Presbyterian Church of America, the Westminster Confession of Faith is the foundational document after scripture. Among the basic orthodox Christian beliefs adhered to are belief in the triune God, the Incarnation and dual nature of Jesus Christ, the fallenness of every human and creation itself, the need for repentance, salvation as being found only through Christ Jesus, and the relevance of the Bible as God's only inspired and infallible written word. Some of the other distinctive Reformed emphases to which the author adheres include a strong belief in the sovereignty of God as distinguished from fatalism, God's divine election of those whom He will save and the depravity and resulting inability of the unsaved to freely choose Christ on their own. Humans have free will, which they express either through the Holy Spirit as covenant keepers or without the Holy Spirit as covenant breakers. People are responsible for how they decide to treat God, yet it is the Holy Spirit that must change the disposition and will before anyone can truly choose Christ. Those who are truly saved can never lose their salvation as it is Christ that keeps them and not their own will.

However, Reformed Christianity is not merely a series of doctrines. It would be incorrect to state that the five points of Calvinism sum up reformed Christianity. The goal of Christianity is for people to be united in and with Christ. Conversion is not

the ultimate goal. Those who are converted are converted by God in order to glorify Him throughout every act of their life. The Westminster Larger catechism expresses it thus: "What is the chief and highest end of man? ...to glorify God, and fully to enjoy Him forever" (Kinney 2007:58). Thus there is nothing aside from perhaps sin that belongs exclusively to the secular domain. Government, law, military action, physical fitness, marriage relationships, financial budgets, vacation destinations, methods of child-rearing, education, military training and specifically military resiliency training will be approached with the desire and goal of having them be instructed and implemented in accordance with a Bible-informed, Spirit-led and Christo-telic life.

Additionally, the author has a background in biblical counseling as it has developed from the nouthetic counseling movement (all counseling knowledge begins with the Bible and reframes any views from psychology and other disciplines rather than simply integrating them) as distinguished from Christian counseling and other approaches that also call themselves biblical counseling but are not nouthetic in nature because they traditionally accept psychological theories and then seek to fit it in to a scriptural context, giving primacy to the theory and not scripture (Johnson and Myers 2010:31). A biblical counseling approach believes that every problem is to be viewed primarily in biblical categories. This is not to say that only the information found in the Bible is what is usable. God has given doctors, lawyers and other professionals common grace to shed light on areas of His creation. In addition to spiritual issues, there can be and often are multiple factors involved in a given problem that one is experiencing in life. It is to say that scripture is sufficient and is relevant to every issue and event that life brings. Biblical counseling goes beyond looking for word-searched verses for problems and mines the themes of scripture (depravity, despair, body image, glory, and more) and reinterprets our often humanistic and psychologically-controlled vocabulary. Thus in regards to the topic of self-esteem, a biblical counseling model would not try to find verses on self-esteem and simply attach verses to a psychological model in order to Christianize it. Rather, it would challenge the very concept of self-esteem and state scripture's approach to human value, where it comes from, and ultimately that value comes from God. Likewise, an alternative concept of resiliency training in the military is not to be a

Christianized version of current resiliency training with a few verses that can be inserted or taken out depending upon the audience. A biblical understanding of people will produce a radically different approach to resiliency that cannot easily be edited to please alternating Christian and non-Christian audiences.

The dichotomist rather than the trichotomist approach is held by this author. People are made up of body and soul, not body, soul and spirit. Psychology, often times is good at being descriptive of human behaviour, but it is also fundamentally a competing worldview with biblical Christianity because it does not start with the Bible as its framework. It trusts ultimately in human reason. Psychology mimics religion in that there are numerous differing and conflicting theories on defining both human problems and solutions. Among the major psychological categories are psychodynamic, cognitive, behavioural, cognitive-behavioral, family system, humanistic, existential, and more. Each one of these has numerous subsets of differing approaches to what it means to be human and how one ought to enable quality of life. In addition, there are the research, clinical, operational and other career approaches in the field of psychology. Craighead and Nemeroff list fourteen of the major personality theorists in a limited but illustrative summary of their differing approaches to life's issues (Craighead and Nemeroff 2002:1177). They summarize the differences by stating: "...thus most theories of personality...make crucial (albeit often quite different) assumptions about the basic nature of human beings" (Craighead and Nemeroff 2002:1176<sup>4</sup>). It is thus more appropriate to speak of psychologies than psychology. Each one of them is vying to state their view of what it means to be a human, the reasons for having meaning and purpose in life, why things go wrong, how to change and what is most important in life. Scripture also speaks to these important themes. Religion is not a unified field, nor is the field of

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<sup>4</sup> A more involved description of the differences between theories and approaches can also be found in Sadock, B.J. & Sadock, V.A. 2015. *Kaplan & Sadock's synopsis of psychiatry: behavioral sciences/clinical psychiatry*. 11th ed. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, Philadelphia, PA and American Psychiatric Association 2013. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition*. American Psychiatric Association, Arlington, Va.

psychology. It is inconsistent for the Air Force to present religion and spirituality in general terms while allowing a particular brand of psychology (typically some form of the behavioural cognitive approach) to be taught in official secular resiliency training.

One other aspect of the author's assumptions which adds tension and nuance to the discussion is the desire to be a "pastor to some and a Chaplain to all." As a military Chaplain, the author encounters people every day who are not Christians. Taking beliefs of which one is convinced and determining wisely how and when to communicate them through a desire to fulfill Christ's last command to "go and make disciples" adds questions of how best to approach the delivery of a Christian worldview as it relates to resiliency.

### **1.8 Hypothesis**

The hypothesis of this study is that current Air Force resilience training will teach and promote ideas that are in conflict with the religious beliefs of many Airmen and specifically, those who are Christian while those same religions are not valued as a legitimate equivalent to current resilience training. Based on preliminary research and workplace experience in this field, it is believed that this thesis will reveal that a government entity (in this instance, the Air Force) is not the proper proponent of resiliency training. Resiliency training tells people how to live and think. Any kind of training that tells people how to live and think is another worldview that competes with other religions and Christianity specifically. The Air Force already tells people how to live and think in many other areas as part of the military culture. Yet, the resiliency realm seeks to address themes that religious and specifically Christian writings and teachings have dealt with deeply in both word and deed for millennia. However, the Air Force will likely continue to seek to mandate that Christians attend secular resiliency training rather than acknowledge they receive more than sufficient holistic care and truth from their own church community.

The Air Force Chaplain Corps has been taking care of Airmen since the inception of the Air Force. Historically, Christian Chaplains have played a huge role in providing truth and spiritual care for the wellness of Airmen. A Christian approach to address the same topics that current resiliency programs seek to address (resiliency, troop

wellness, morale, etc.) will demonstrate that Air Force secular resiliency programs are a poor substitute for Christianity which speaks to the underlying issues that short-length resiliency programs omit. Christianity addresses every facet of life (why we are here, marriage, parenting, sex, good and evil, suffering, worship, guilt, shame, forgiveness, grace, and much more) and provide both deeper specifics and an over-arching framework for life that resiliency programs do not. Christianity provides in total what secular resiliency programs provide in poor a la carte fashion. Additionally, this is not simply an issue of preference for what type of resiliency training one prefers, though people ought to be free to choose the training in accordance with their worldview. It is an issue of objective truth. Diversity cannot be truly practiced when Christian teaching as it relates to resiliency is rejected outright simply because it is religious. Finally, it is believed that helpful strategic guidelines will be discovered for current and future leaders to implement regardless of their individual faith commitments.

## **1.9 Summary and Conclusions**

This chapter has introduced the background of the subject of military chaplaincy, as well as the problem, objectives, and purpose of the present study. The research design, research methodology, and theological points of departure were also treated, as well as the author's hypothesis for the present study.

The following chapter will address in greater detail a history of military chaplaincy through its roles and functions. The long lineage of military chaplaincy through western civilization will be traced, leading to the setup of the chaplaincy at the beginning of the founding of America and up to the present. This will be an important step in understanding the benefit that chaplains can bring to the military in modern times, and the cultural and historical changes that have helped and those that have hurt the ability of chaplains to fill their necessary and vital role in ministry to warriors.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Ancient Military Ministry**

#### **2.1.1 Introduction**

In order to better address the need for diverse Airmen care that encourages Airmen to benefit from resilience content and culture found within their religious identity and faith group, it will be important first to describe the origins of chaplaincy as a profession from ancient times up to the present. Chaplains were appointed for specific religious purposes that have transcendent impact on every topic of humanity. Their presence on and off the battlefield, their prayers, speeches, sermons, counsel, and acts of mercy were understood by the vast majority to be part and parcel of their deep religious convictions. Morality and religion were not as separate as they are today for many military members. Though people of many different religions have had chaplain equivalents who ministered to their militaries, the term “chaplain” is Christian in its origins. The duties and role of American military chaplains developed predominantly from a Christian worldview held by most chaplains throughout the country’s history. The dominant worldview of American citizens was also predominantly Christian for most of its history. This is not to say that America has always been a Christ-loving nation or that it was ever organized in its founding documents to be so. It is to say that the founding culture lived and embraced the Bible and its teachings as the central guiding factor for much of their thinking and behaviour in government, family, business, and military chaplaincy. Though there have been many cultural shifts throughout America’s history, much of this Biblical foundational way of thinking continues, though it is not always recognized or understood as such. Though the presence of chaplains in the beginning of America’s military campaigns was typically considered to be complementary to, not conflicting with the American government and culture of the country, throughout recent decades more challenges have grown to question the makeup, role and even the need for military chaplains in the American armed forces.



Yet, history demonstrates a strong and crucial connection between warriors and clergy.

*From the beginnings of recorded history, warriors have held the favour of the Almighty to be an important, if not decisive factor in their battles. Religious leaders for much of ancient history contributed to the war effort primarily by: communicating God's approval or disapproval of their army's cause, providing troop morale through encouragement and divine approval, providing religious services to military members, and seeking to instil in their troops a strong morality and character (Honeywell 1958:2).*

Though comparatively few in number, chaplains in the United States military impact a large network within and without their own country. Their ministry impacts the troops in their immediate circle and extends to families, churches and communities. The chaplains themselves come from denominations and faith groups that have sent them as ambassadors within a military framework to travel the world into locations that can present extreme temperatures, hazardous environments, and numerous physical and spiritual challenges.

### **2.1.2 Military Chaplaincy roles in the Bible**

The role of the priest in time of war is found early in the Bible. Deuteronomy 20:1-4<sup>5</sup> dictates that prior to going to battle it is the priest who should address the troops to remind them that God is with them. This is a demonstration of God's historic faithfulness to keep his promises to His chosen people and should not be construed to indicate that invoking His Name will result in formulaic divine blessing for every conflict. However, it has been a historic standard for warriors and the ministers who supported them to believe in the justness of their cause. In fact, it would be historically dissident to find large groups of successful fighters fighting for something in which they did not believe or to which they were opposed. Another important

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<sup>5</sup> "Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version."

distinction that must be made at this point is that for most of history, the concept of a career chaplain was seen rarely, if at all. Full-time civilian ministers functioned when needed as chaplains during times of war. In modern times, especially since the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the increase of large standing armies the chaplain positions have increasingly been held by ministers who made chaplaincy a full-time and often career endeavour.

American military chaplains minister in a culturally unique microcosm of church and state tensions. They desire to provide soul care for the wellness of their troops through various means including leading of worship, counseling, religious instruction, educational seminars on various topics and more. They seek to be faithful to their religious beliefs while working in a secular organization, the United States Military. The role of religion and holy men in preparing warriors for life on and off the battlefield has been pervasive in its impact from Aaron's priesthood involving many instances of ministry including speaking God's word to unbelieving political leaders (Exodus 7:1) and strengthening his leader's arms when they grew tired during battle (Exodus 17:12). Modern chaplains continue to figuratively hold up their leaders' during times of doubt and exhaustion. For much of history, the roles of spiritual leader and military leader were joined into one as with the biblical descriptions of Noah, Abraham and the Old Testament Judges. Phinehas, grandson of Aaron, is an early if not the first example of a chaplain in scripture. Though vastly different in some of his behaviours from how modern chaplains are expected to conduct themselves, his zealousness for sexual purity (Numbers 25:11) and his presence and involvement in the Hebrew Army (Numbers 31:6, Joshua 22:13) were a key factor to both Israel's spiritual integrity and dependence upon God for victory. His example of dedication and holiness to God are important reminders for any who would serve as chaplains. Melchizedek and Deborah were used of God in different eras to encourage Abraham and Barak, respectively, pointing them to see that God was the reason for their respective victories in Genesis 14:18ff and Judges 4:7. It is important to remember though, that a good reputation as a prophet and invoking God's name do not always equal divine approval of one's goals as Balaam and Balaak found out in Numbers 24:10-13. Their assumption of divine approval remains a temptation and caution for those involved in modern conflicts as well.

### **2.1.3 Ancient Military Chaplaincy in other Religions**

Chaplains have been a familiar and trusted face both away from and in the middle of the battle throughout recorded history. Religions beyond Christianity have historically utilized their holy men for clerical support to their armies, being led in battle by them as in the case of Abd al Qadir al Jaza'iri, the Muslim cleric and Algerian military leader who is the namesake of Elkader Iowa, USA (Haddam 2008:14). For Jewish adherents, in addition to citing Old Testament examples previously mentioned is the spiritual leadership Judas Maccabeus took upon himself to pray with his troops even interpreting dreams that were believed to foretell the outcome of future battles (Honeywell 1958:8). Wartime spiritual leadership for the Jews would come again early in the second century A.D. with the example that Bar Kochba ("Son of the Star") displayed while leading his Jewish revolts circa A.D. 132 against Hadrian's Roman Armies. His legitimacy as leader and protector rose significantly in Jewish eyes through Rabbi Akiva's messianic interpretation of Numbers 24:17 which refers to the "star" rising from Jacob (Katz 2006:109). The Roman Army experienced drastic changes over many centuries in their military religious culture that can serve as an example of differing approaches and their effects for those who are interested in the religious changes in the American military. Earlier in their history, the Romans often brought in their holy man equivalents to perform augury, defined by Encyclopaedia Britannica as a form of divination looking for signs from nature to determine if the gods were in favour of a particular course of action. However, by the end of the third century A.D. Emperor Diocletian forbade augury, and Constantius made it a capital offense. This practice would be continued in the Eastern Empire in a similar prohibition in the Codex of Justinian (Barton 2002:59)

There is no solid evidence of Christian chaplains serving in the Roman army prior to Constantine, probably because up until that time Christians were heavily persecuted. There were other religions represented in the Roman Army before and after the influx of Christianity. Constantine began the practice of having men serve as an early version of Christian chaplains and more would be added later as more soldiers became Christians (Jorgensen 1961:5).

#### 2.1.4 Foundations of the Term and Utilization of Military Chaplains

Western tradition typically grants the origin of the term “Chaplain” to the 5<sup>th</sup> century Roman Soldier who became a priest after his military days, Martin of Tours. The story is told of Martin who, while riding his horse noticed a very cold and poorly clothed beggar. Instead of ignoring him Martin dismounted and cut his cape in half with his sword in order to provide him with some clothing. This left an impression on many and tradition has it that the other half of Martin’s cloak was kept in the camp as a reminder to all of his act and of the importance of soldiers exemplifying charity and character. A person was appointed to care for this cape. That person was given the Latin title of *cappelani* or *capelin* which in today’s vernacular is transliterated to “chaplain” (Mode 2000:59, Bergen 2004:46).

Religious expression was an important component to the Greeks as well. In the fifth century B.C. Thucydides records the offering of prayers and the singing of hymns prior to the departure of the ships (Pedley 2005:116). Honeywell records an anonymous Greek writer of about 583 who captured the values encouraged from the era of their leader Belisarius. His description of the ideal leader lists quality traits that are still expected in today’s military leaders: “intelligence, calmness, prudence, severity without excess, temperance, all of these are indispensable; the art of war is identified with wisdom...” (Honeywell 1958:5). Of utmost importance is the character of the leader and his relationship to God. “But above all piety is necessary for the leader, which will bring the blessings of heaven upon the General. Next to God, he is the soldier of Providence, terror of the unbelievers, grand priest of the army, whose prayers not less than his military science will merit the victory!” This same anonymous writer lists the importance of chaplains alongside the military leader, as encouragers to warriors. “Finally come the chaplains. They play an important role in the army where exercises of piety were so assiduously practiced. In the morning and the evening they chant the trisagion, ‘Holy God, Strong God, Immortal God’, and in the moment of the combat to the cry of the combatants, ‘Adjuaa’, the multitude cry out, ‘Deus’” (Honeywell 1958:5).

Though religious leaders have been found in the thick of the battle in wars throughout history, it was not necessarily always considered to be the proper approach. There is historical precedent for ministers to limit their role to their religious duties, rather than the prosecution of the war. The Council of Ratisbon (A.D. 742) was one attempt to delineate the role of chaplains. The military restrictions placed upon ministers in this statement appear to have as their intent not a denigration of the minister's fighting abilities, but rather a high respect and valuation of the religious office and duties that they hold.

*"We prohibit the servant of God in every way from bearing arms or fighting in the army or going against the enemy, except those alone who because of their sacred office, namely, for celebrating of mass and caring for the relics of the saints, have been designated for this office; that is to say, the leader may have with him one or two bishops with their priest chaplains, and each captain may have one priest, in order to hear the confessions of the men and impose upon them the proper penance;"* (Johnston 2011:128).

The chaplain's role was considered to be a necessity for troop welfare. The chaplain would assist in seeking God's favour for a positive outcome to the battle. In case of death or defeat, the chaplain held the most important job of ensuring that soldiers were ready for death and did not experience eternal damnation.

### **2.1.5 Military Chaplaincy in the Middle Ages**

The Carolingian Age was the setting for numerous chaplains being assigned important roles, as McNeal and Thatcher have shown, such as ambassador for the king to handle matters of state in addition to guarding relics and performing the ministerial functions of preaching and counseling political leadership from a faith perspective (McNeal and Thatcher 1905). The roles and responsibilities of ministers connected to militaries have often adjusted throughout history to the needs of the ministry context. With the dawning of the Middle Ages, geographic, numerical and financial growth of the Christian church included more land ownership and more political involvement of ministers. Various authors have forcefully argued that the church was not fundamentally exercising a unilateral ecclesiastical power grab but

instead filled a vacuum left by the disintegration of the Roman, and then the Carolingian Empires (Mangalwadi 2011, Trompf 1973:3). Army historian Roy Honeywell further clarifies this point:

*"Feudalism brought some departures from this non-combatant rule. When lands were given to monasteries or other religious foundations, it became necessary for the abbots or bishops to assume their full responsibilities to their vassals. Often this meant both religious and military leadership, and numbers of these suzerain-chaplains died with sword or axe in hand. The rise of the military orders still further challenged the idea that a clergyman must not fight for the cause he supports with his prayers."* (Honeywell 1958).

During the Crusades, religious leaders on both sides supported their cause. Andreas Capellanus (Andreas the Chaplain), Fulcher of Chartres (chaplain to Baldwin of Bouillon, King of Latin Jerusalem) and Ramon of Penafort (chaplain to Pope Gregory IX) are just a few of the many clergy who ministered during this time (Schulman 2002). Muslims also had religious leaders who sought to encourage their respective side in the midst of conflict. Al-Harawi and many unnamed others preached to their Muslim brothers to encourage their joining in the fight (Falk 2010:139). At the Fourth Lateran Council, among Pope Innocent III's decrees was a list of duties for Chaplains. Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241) also listed military chaplain duties in his "Bularium Franciscanum Romanorum Pontificum" (Laing 2010:29). Much has been written about the Crusades. It will suffice at this point to state that religious leaders again played a significant role during these events.

## **2.2 Chaplaincy in the New World**

### **2.2.1 Chaplaincy in Colonial America**

Those who have filled the role of chaplain have often found themselves outside the familiar and comparatively predictable confines of a church setting. They have taken scripture's injunction to "become all things to all people" (I Corinthians 9:22). They have sought to be present wherever their flock was and experience the same challenges as them, all the while seeking to contextually communicate God's Word.

During the Age of Exploration, ministers could be found among many of the expeditions that went out to explore the new world. Chaplains accompanied many of the expeditions sent to the new world. One example is that of Chaplain Francis Fletcher of the Church of England who sailed around the world with Francis Drake in 1578-1580. Chaplain Fletcher is credited with conducting the first new world "Protestant service in the English language" in June of 1579 some fifty miles north of modern day San Francisco California at Drake's Bay, Marin County (Drury 1948).

The American colonies had chaplains ministering during every major conflict including the Pequot War of 1636-1637 and the French and Indian War. Chaplains had long served in the British government and military and the colonists migrating from there to America viewed chaplains and ministers as a necessary part of their society. During the early days of the American colonial period many well-known and respected ministers served in England as government or military chaplains, if only for a short time. Both John Owen and Richard Baxter served as chaplain to Oliver Cromwell, though with differing degrees of enthusiasm and differing levels of agreement with the new government while also expressing deep concern for ensuring theological orthodoxy among the civilian leadership (Cooper 2011:46, 107). This inclusion of chaplains in political structures continued on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. In the American colonies, Solomon Stoddard (grandfather of famous theologian and pastor Jonathan Edwards) served at one time as a chaplain to the government in Barbados (Christensen 2005) and Timothy Dwight (grandson of Jonathan Edwards and future President of Yale University) served as a chaplain in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War (Morris 1864:368).

Recorded history is a description of multiple factors that God's Sovereign Hand creates in relationship. While it is impossible to detail every influence upon the historical development of chaplaincy, certain events initiated a marked influence upon the importance of contextual ministry. The First Great Awakening in the 1730s and 1740s is one such event. The First Great Awakening was a time of mass repentance and a return to a high value of the Bible in public and personal practice and a lifestyle that honoured God. This left a Christian cultural mark on the makeup of Colonial America. It served as a formative influence upon the Colonial-era leaders

of the future country of America who would rely on their faith as they forged an official separation from England and established the government of an entirely new nation (O'Brien 1986).

### **2.2.2 Military Chaplaincy and the Revolutionary War**

Many have connected America's mainstream beliefs (God and not an earthly king is the final authority, God institutes laws to govern nations, etc.) as described in the 1776 Declaration of Independence with its political and military struggle for freedom from England. Prior to and during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century American religious (mostly Christian) faith was part of the framework of thinking of the majority of its inhabitants.

A Christian ethos pervaded the predominant culture such that the founding of the American Military Chaplaincy in 1775 preceded the official founding of the nation of America (Budd 2002:9). Christian Ministers contributed in many ways during the fight for Independence. Prior to becoming chaplains, many of them utilized their church buildings as revolutionary venues. Since churches were often the only public meeting place for large groups and the clergy were often the most educated and revered among the community as their leader it fell to the ministers when not preaching (and sometimes during) to state the response to British oppression from a biblical framework (how much philosophers John Locke and others influenced American clergy is not considered here) (Honeywell 1958:31).

General George Washington fervently believed that religious faith was imperative to the success of the war effort and that it must be instilled into his troops for their spiritual and moral development (Lillback 2006:383). To take things a step further, according to the Articles of War July 29, 1775, officers not attending services by chaplains could be punished by a court martial. Chaplains served their troops by preaching and advising both officers and enlisted men in the midst of their daily challenges. Like chaplains in previous conflicts, Revolutionary War-era chaplains aided those under their care since they were often the most educated in the camp by writing letters for them, teaching classes to them, caring for the sick and wounded and assisting in many other capacities. They suffered and prayed with their soldiers



through every experience of war (Kidd 2010:2). Some found themselves at the front lines and some even served as surgeons and commanders (Jorgensen 1961:6).

General George Washington continually emphasized the importance of religious devotion throughout his public life. During a low time when a favourable outcome of the war was in doubt, having endured a harsh winter that effected the health and welfare of his army, Washington reiterated his concern for worship both as a duty and as the precursor to strength of character. His chosen vessel to deliver the worship services across the Continental Army were his chaplains. An excerpt in the Revolutionary Orders issued at Valley Forge, 2 May 1778 states:

*The Commander-in-Chief directs that divine services be performed every Sunday at eleven o'clock in each brigade which has chaplains...It is expected that officers of all ranks will, by their attendance, set an example to their men. While we are duly performing the duty of good soldiers, we are not to be inattentive to the highest duties of religion. To the distinguished characteristics of a patriot it should be our highest glory to add the more distinguishing character of a Christian. Signal instances to providential good ness which we have experienced and which have almost crowned our arms with complete success, demand from us in a peculiar manner the warmest returns of gratitude and piety to the Supreme Author of all good (Washington 1778).*

Worship services were not a distraction, privilege or compromise where commanders had to allow their troops to go attend a personal religious rite before getting back to the real business of training for war. Worship services were held in high view because General Washington, among other colonial leaders believed that no matter how skilled an army or individual soldier was, ultimate victory was in the hands of God. One could not expect to perform well, if one did not live well.

Monolithic religious agreement in all matters was not a reality, even during the Revolutionary War. Ministers have often disagreed on important matters and the question of the public role of ministers during the Revolution was no different. Mark Noll has identified four categorizations of responses during this period, summarized below: "(1) the patriotic response, which viewed America as the chosen nation and

Britain as either Babylon or Egypt; (2) the reforming response, which attempted to separate the cause of the gospel from the cause of the states (this position was held largely by the minority Roman Catholic Church); (3) the Anglican loyalist response, which advocated that the colonies remain loyal to Great Britain on the basis of such passages as Rom 13:1–2, Titus 3:1 and others (Paul’s great text on freedom, Gal 5:1, “Stand fast, therefore, in the freedom wherewith Christ has made you free,” was interpreted by this group not as political but as spiritual freedom); and (4) the pacifist response, represented by the Mennonites, Quakers, Church of the Brethren, and Moravians (they opposed the war on the basis of loyalty to Christ and used such Biblical texts as Matt 5:39, 44; 10:23; 1 Pet 2:17; 3:9; Isa 2:4; Mic 4:3—passages that emphasize peace, non-retaliation, and obedience to the governing authorities)” (Knoll 1977:126). Though it was never created as a Christian government, the Christian way of life was the most prominent cultural binder and meta-narrative among the young nation.

The relationship of government to religion often comes under fire today, yet from the earliest years of the new nation religion held a key position. Beginning with the very first day of the first session of the First Congress in 1789 after the Articles of Confederation had come and gone, every session of Congress has been opened with prayer. It is noteworthy that many of the men who contributed to the Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, were also at this first congressional meeting, including James Madison, the author of the first amendment recognizing freedom of religion. He saw it not as a contradiction but as complimentary for congress to begin its sessions daily with prayer (Currey 1995:4). The patriotic response regarding America as a type of Israel fighting against England as a type of Babylon became the majority approach and similar religious stigmatizing would continue to future conflicts (such as The “Civil War”). This sentiment has dwindled over time to the point where today the issue of the religious undertones of wars is more contentious and is less likely to be given a serious public hearing in America.

It is interesting to note that among the four approaches mentioned above there are many similarities in modern Christian views of both War and the Military Chaplaincy. The first two are perhaps the most predominant today in church and state

discussions. People respond in varying degrees asserting that America has been a God-revering nation from the beginning and this ought to be institutionalized into public practice while others see church and state as functioning in different spheres. There are different degrees of these expressions as well. There are proponents of the stated need for a public religion; others assert a need for Christianity to be one of many national belief systems. There are supporters for a Christian government, and other approaches. It is perhaps sobering and also encouraging that chaplains have rarely (if ever) known a time of ministry that was not an uphill battle. Kidd quotes Revolutionary War chaplain and Baptist pastor Hezekiah Smith on his description of ministry during what for many Americans is considered to be the golden age of national Godly foundations: "Vice prevails greatly in the Army...Religion alas how rare! True godliness where is it?" (Kidd 2010:119).

## **2.3 Military Chaplaincy and a New Nation**

### **2.3.1 Upsizing and Downsizing**

Since there was no standing Army or Navy post-Revolutionary War, the need for soldiers in all capacities, including chaplains, severely diminished after conflicts subsided only to be reinvigorated again when war arose such as in 1812 and 1846. Due to peacetime military downsizing there was only one army chaplain on active duty between the years of 1818-1838. With the outbreak of the Mexican War in 1846 chaplains once again ministered through preaching, teaching, counseling, and in any way they could care for those in their flock. The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century was also a time of large institutional changes for the military chaplaincy. Budd notes that, while many chaplains were educated and ordained, up until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century neither of these had been a requirement (the Navy finally required ordination in 1841 and the Army required it beginning with the Civil War) (Norton 2004).

Prior to and during the Mexican War (1846-1848) a large number of Catholic immigrants, mainly from German and Irish descent had sought a new life in America. This was a cause for concern among many Protestants who believed this to be a diluting of orthodox Christianity and national cultural and religious unity. This sentiment flowed over into the war effort as well, with some almost equating an

attack by Mexico to be an attack by Catholicism. One chaplain on duty at Matamoros referring to the war with Mexico was quoted saying the following in 1846: "It has struck me very forcibly that this is the way that the Lord designs to have all this priest ridden, ignorant and unhappy country evangelized" (Hinckley 1962:124). Yet, Protestant opinions regarding the war were as diverse as any previous conflict. Some viewed Catholicism as the enemy; some viewed Mexico and Catholicism as separate concerns and some saw war itself as the evil (Hinckley 1962:1240). It was during this war that the United States Military Chaplaincy ceased to be made up of only Protestants when President James K. Polk appointed two Catholic (Jesuit) priests to the Army Chaplaincy. These appointments served multiple purposes. The increase of Catholic American citizens had increased the number of Catholics in the United States Army so providing for the religious needs of Catholic soldiers was addressed. It would also be a demonstration to Mexico of America's sincerity that this was not a religious war and could greatly aid in allaying "the fears of the Mexican Catholics in regard to their religion and church property" (Quaife 1910:411). This theological widening for inclusion of Catholic Priests in the chaplaincy contributed to an ever-widening allowance of different denominations and eventually different religions to be accepted in both the military and the chaplaincy. The limits of how wide and diverse the chaplaincy could and should become while maintaining relevancy is a constant topic of discussion and debate to this day.

### **2.3.2 Military Chaplaincy and the War Between the States**

The War Between the States (1861-1865) often referred to as "The Civil War" engendered significant changes for Chaplains. Chaplains were often elected to their position by their fellow soldiers. Thus, even though there were many qualified clergy who did serve as Chaplains, there were also some who were considered "right for the job" by nothing more than a vote from their peers for better or worse. It appears to be the last conflict in which Chaplains openly fought as combatants, often with the encouragement of their fellow soldiers. As the Mexican War approximately ten years earlier had occasioned the end of a solely Protestant makeup of the Chaplain Corps by allowing Catholic Priests to join for the first time, so America's Civil War brought about the first Jewish, female (a female Jewish chaplain) and black chaplains

serving in the military (Brinsfield 2003:37). It is perhaps an irony that recognition for having the first black chaplain (shepherding white troops) goes to the slaveholding south. "A Tennessee regiment asked "Uncle Lewis" to be their chaplain and he served with distinction from the Battle of Shiloh to the end of the war." (Jorgensen 1961:8). Furthermore, a Federal Statute of 17 July 1862 dropped the requirement for a military chaplain to be a protestant Christian (Herspring 2001:28).

By the close of the Civil War standardization of official attire for chaplains was almost complete. For most of history, each chaplain's uniform was decided upon on an individual basis, some opting for the military uniform and others for more clerical garb. There were also the ongoing discussions of chaplaincy as a profession and not just as a wartime ministry. Civilian interest in the selection process and quality of military chaplains ran high during this time. A few organizations (notably the "Christian Commission" and the "Sanitary Commission") were very outspoken against allowing any chaplain to serve who was not a high calibre-gospel-preaching example. They believed many of the current chaplains to be less than average in their ministerial abilities (Brinsfield 2003:31).

### **2.3.3 Growth of Church and State Concerns**

After the Civil War, the size and importance of the chaplaincy enlarged and decreased multiple times depending on the perceived need of ministers in the military. There were numerous factors affecting this. America had often surged the size of its military during times of war and reduced it in peacetime, so the chaplaincy was treated no differently in that respect. There was a shared concern by some politicians and many clergy and their laity of the unholy mixing of government and the church by the very existence of a military chaplaincy. Yet, for the vast majority the continued existence of a chaplaincy was intended to keep religion pure and unbridled. It was important, and so important to the nation that for some, it should never be under the authority of the government via the military. In fact, prior to the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was typically the churches of America, more so than non-church goers and the American government that argued for chaplains to be separate

ministers either volunteering or contracted by the government and not employees of the state.

One of the first protests on record in America against the federal government employing ministers as chaplains in the military came from the Kehukee Primitive Baptist Association based in rural North Carolina in the United States on December 11, 1818. The group asked Congress for the “repeal of all laws authorizing the appointment of Chaplains to Congress, the army, navy, and other public stations.” (Zeiger 2009). No response came from congress until additional petitions were filed in 1850 having been fuelled by the use of chaplains during the Mexican War. The House Judiciary Committee responded that same year with a report delineating the constitutional basis for a chaplaincy. “Having thus existed prior to the adoption of the constitution, can it be doubted that ... it was fully within the power of Congress to provide for the appointment of chaplains as that of surgeons?” (Zeiger 2009). More petitions followed and the House responded in kind affirming both the legality and importance of chaplains.

In spite of these concerns, Chaplains, due to their moral and educational standing at times served in the military not only as chaplains but at times as commanders in addition to their religious duties. Chaplains lived, ministered and sometimes died with the troops for whom they cared. It was evident from many that they served as chaplains out of their love for God and for the people who would be most directly affected by war. The Rev. Henry Ward Beecher (whose sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe fuelled abolitionist sentiment with her book “Uncle Tom's Cabin”), a very popular and engaging preacher, brought his concern for a loving Christian life while serving as both Chaplain and Commander (Beecher 1887:29, 470).

### **2.3.4 Legal Developments**

While Chaplains have been used mightily throughout history, they have had their share of detractors. Throughout history and in America respectively, military and civilian alike have been in favour of, against, or in conflict about the position and influence that chaplains have held. Until almost one hundred years after its writing the first amendment had not been involved in a serious Supreme Court case. A

subtle shift in church and state relations occurred with the case of *Reynolds v. United States* in 1879 where a federal law banning polygamy was upheld. In seeking to better define the free exercise clause of the first amendment and not allow government to regulate belief, the end result was that government could regulate certain areas of conduct such as marriage (Gillett 2000). Though it may appear minor, this would set the stage for more contentious cases between religious and government practices.

In addition, because of the pervasive reality of human depravity, there have been those who are less than qualified to hold the title of chaplain. In this excerpted letter after post-Civil War downsizing, General William Tecumseh Sherman candidly responded to an individual seeking one of the coveted thirty active duty Army Chaplain positions. His communication is forceful yet he was not opposed to chaplains, only to poor examples of chaplains:

*I think there are several hundred applicants now, each one of whom is stronger in the Faith than St. Paul, and most of whom before appointment, are anxious to be martyrs; but once appointed and confirmed they object to our frontier posts because they are ill adapted for raising a large family of small children. Of course the whole system is now a farce and meant to be so. If Congress wanted the Army to have the influence of Religion, it would allow the Commanding Officer of each post remote from civilization to hire and pay for a minister while employed, like Surgeons" (Honeywell 1958:43).*

General Sherman's remarks reflect a broad base of opinion that valued having a chaplain who would live among them and seek to be a light for the Gospel. Leaders may have cared more or less about eternal salvation versus having positive morale of the troops, but they knew the chaplain would help with either or both.

### **2.3.5 Diverse Tasks of Military Chaplains**

The Chaplain's job description has been kept somewhat vague throughout American history. This is due in part to avoiding government restriction on the religious rights of clergy and in part to the transcendent nature of a Chaplain's role. The Chaplain's

worldview ought to affect every area of his or her life and thus Chaplains have lived out their faith beyond preaching and counseling to include speaking out against vices such as drinking, profanity and sexual misconduct, advocating for the removal of unfair practices such as the flogging of sailors (Zeiger 2009:36), teaching reading, writing letters for illiterate troops, assisting in any manner of details and work projects, and serving as emissaries and ambassadors of good will. Prior to the First World War, it was a Chaplain, not a pilot who first pressed the idea to acquire flight training slides so that the pilots could be more knowledgeable. There is strong evidence that this is the origin of the first set of training slides for flying in the Army Air Corps (Jorgensen 1961:14).

### **2.4 Military Chaplaincy in the Twentieth Century**

#### **2.4.1 World War One-Era Military Chaplaincy**

Many times throughout history, the degree to which chaplains were utilized was due in large part to the faith disposition of their commander and how well that commander and his chaplain relationally connected. General John Pershing of the United States Army valued faith and saw its benefits not only personally but operationally.

*During the Spanish American War, General John J. Pershing, used his chaplain in the Philippines as a liaison with Catholic clergy in the north and Muslim leaders in the south in an attempt to ease hostilities (Lee 2006:16).*

Chaplains were again held as being vital to mission success during military campaigns. General Pershing understood that there are spiritual tools and weapons as well as physical ones. The time frame surrounding the First World War was an era of greatly increased organizational consolidation in the chaplaincy. Up to this point, large numbers of chaplains served during wartime, only to see their numbers dwindle and even have the need of the profession itself called into question during peacetime. Up until this point in American history the chaplain, though typically respected for his clerical position and role had not been on a professional par with his non-Chaplain counterparts. Chaplains were typically given officer rank (usually



Captain) but their pay was not as high as non-chaplains who held the same rank and their opportunity to exercise leadership as a separate career field had not yet occurred. The law of 1904 was a long step toward placing chaplains on a parity with other staff officers. It required higher qualifications and ecclesiastical endorsement for one to become a chaplain rather than the old system of relying on relationship or non-chaplain assessments of those who had served as line officers (Honeywell 1958:169). Further acts of Congress in 1914 helped solidify chaplains receiving the same rank and pay as their line officer counterparts (Tillman 1916:375).

In its journey to semi-autonomy the Chaplain Corps would never have achieved organizational control of itself had it not proven its worth and weight to the military in action. The following excerpt from a World War One-era military newspaper article describes (as an indicative and/or an imperative) some of the ways in which chaplains culturally related to their troops in order to be more effective:

*He doesn't pull no highbrow stuff, or talk of Kingdom come,  
But any "cif clothes" parson he can sure make out a bum;  
He doesn't mind mild cussin' and he'll smoke a cigarette,  
And doesn't say you'll go to hell for swiggin' somethin' wet.*

*Still, if you ask him for it, he will tell you 'bout the Lord.  
The First and bravest Christian, Who would never sheathe the sword  
Until all wrongs were righted; how He set His people free  
Although the Romans nailed Him to the Cross o' Calvary.* (Stars and Stripes 1918:3).

Chaplains, as reflected in the above article brought their seminary training and experience that prepared them for a parish of families and delivering 30-60 minute monologues. Once in the military context, they found that they often had to learn to change their vocabulary and engage in more brief interactive spiritual conversations rather than just preach to people. Various chaplains at various times were revered, hated, honoured and disrespected. Many chaplains connected deeply with their men winning their trust while some chaplains struggled to engender significant relationships or a vibrant ministry.

### **2.4.2 Increased Interest of Churches in Military Chaplaincy**

Out of this period grew a higher level of interest from the churches towards the chaplaincy. While the nation historically had often sent its best ministers to care for troops during wartime, it had been standard practice that almost all of those currently serving as chaplains would return in a few years (if not sooner) to their parishes. The concept of a full-time military chaplain was foreign to the vast majority, as was the concept of a large standing army. This situation was not unique to the American Military Chaplaincy. The Union Defense Force (today known as the South African Defense Force, which has the largest military chaplain corps second only to the United States) saw no reason for permanent chaplains until 1938 (Brits 1982, Snape 2008). There was also a subculture of thought, still existing in some circles today that viewed chaplains as those who had 'left the ministry' or who, if they were really good ministers would have a local civilian parish. Additionally, during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century the chaplaincy found its greatest competitors to be Christian organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the U.S. Christian Commission and United States Sanitation Commission who often believed they could do just as good a job if not better of ministering to troops (and sometimes did) than the chaplains (Budd 2002:32). However, the chaplain corps eventually won this battle for many reasons, a major reason being that a chaplain's enculturation (some would say "incarnation") into the military environment gave him access no other organization could have. A chaplain experienced basic training, advanced training, deployment to war zones and life in the barracks. Thus the chaplain was more engrained and trusted than any "outsiders" who had not lived among the troops. Many denominations recognizing this began to change their way of thinking in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and began to view military chaplaincy as another mission field for which they ought to train and prepare quality candidates.

### **2.4.3 Benefit of Military Chaplains During World War One**

Chaplains served during the First World War, again preaching, teaching, counseling, visiting their troops in austere locations, performing funerals, advising commanders, caring for the sick and wounded, writing letters, educating troops and providing a

much-needed break to warriors from the rigors of war. It is perhaps both encouraging and discouraging to consider that if there was ever a “good old days” after the colonial era in American History where most everyone attended church and lived a biblically guided moral life, it is also true that war time reveals much of the best and worst of people. Chaplains saw many of their troops helped with life problems. They preached Christ and saw many come to faith in Him. They also saw little support financially for chapel programs and some chaplains were frustrated by profanity, stealing, and sexual promiscuity among their troops. One chaplain noted that a lot of the issues stemmed from the kind of home in which the men were raised (Jorgensen 1961:41). Additionally, though the chaplaincy was not a new enterprise, there were always those in the military who had no idea what the chaplain did and in turn those who understood fully that a chaplain’s loyalty to the military was superseded by the loyalty to his endorser (ordaining church or faith group) and then finally, God (Jorgensen 1961: 59, 63).

General Pershing who was eventually named “General of the Armies” (the highest rank that can be given) understood the importance of chaplains and wrote of them during World War I: “Their usefulness in the maintenance of morale, through religious counsel and example, has now become a matter of history” (Zeiger 2009).

## **2.5 Growth in Specialization**

### **2.5.1 Professionalization of Military Chaplaincy**

It was during the 1920s that the Army Chaplain Corps was finally given internal control of its own career field with the appointment of a Chief of Chaplains. Up to this point, chaplain corps accessions, hiring, promotions, assignments, and all other administrative functions were handled by non-chaplains. These line officers, though often knowledgeable of the military system, were less than adept at understanding the unique culture and dynamics of the chaplain corps and this was a poignant reason why the chaplain corps had found itself floundering, especially during times of peace when line officers saw little need for them (Budd 2002).

The 20th century also brought about the creation of Chaplain boards within the military services (only Army and Navy for the first half of the 20th century, since the Air Force Chaplain Corps was not separate from the Army until 1949) which gave the respective Chaplains Corps' authority and oversight on who entered the Chaplain Corps. This in turned elevated the professionalism of the Chaplain Corps since they could raise the standards for education, character, and experience to which new chaplains would be required to adhere. Denominations also organized boards focused on missions and chaplains, beginning to see more and more the importance of investment and training for this unique ministry (Jorgensen 1961:11).

### **2.5.2 Beginnings of Air Force Specialization**

A crucial factor in understanding Air Force Chaplain culture is the coming of age of the United States Air Force, separate from the United States Army. The term 'Air Power', common today was a novel and polarizing topic in the early 20th century in military circles. Brothers Orville and Wilbur Wright engaged in the first successful flight of aircraft in 1903. Their invention aroused a lot of interest in flight, especially in Great Britain and France who both began intensive development of military aircraft. The United States Government did not develop aircraft to the extent of their European counterparts as a means for national defence. In addition, other factors involving Wright Brother patents during the World War One era kept the United States military air capabilities far behind those in Europe (Nalty 1997:33). The conventional wisdom of the day was that wars had and will continue to be fought and won primarily by the ground force (Army) and the Navy. Military use of aircraft was expensive, dangerous and thus contentious. It took the driving force of President Theodore Roosevelt to push the need for military use of aircraft.

Out of these initial beginnings came a section within the Army – "The United States Army Air Corps" which would develop the use of aircraft for military purposes. Lt Colonel Billy Mitchell of the United States Army was one of many daring youth who volunteered to become a pilot and take part in a flight testing and training section in the Army. He is best remembered as the outspoken visionary who foresaw that air power would be the decisive factor in future battles. He believed that aircraft, not the

ground army would turn the tide of future wars. His views were met with consternation by higher ranking officers yet he persevered. People scoffed when Mitchell claimed that a plane could disable and even sink a naval battleship. He proved his point during an exercise in July of 1921 when his flyers sunk every target, much to the chagrin of the United States Navy (Nalty 1997:94). He also believed that the Army was too ground-focused and would never be able to fully understand or utilize the incredible capabilities of Air Power, stressing that the aircraft component should become a separate entity from the Army.

As often happens with those who see the future and dare to speak out, they are viewed by some as visionaries and by others as threats. Some viewed Mitchell as outspoken, others as a selfish empire-builder. Mitchell, who had risen to the rank of Major General was defrocked back down two levels of rank to Lieutenant Colonel for his inflammatory remarks that the United States Army was not prepared for future wars and he was summarily court-martialled in 1925 for his public comments in pursuit of an independent Air Force (Nalty 1997:100). Today, he is considered a hero by many for his foresight and persistence in seeking to establish an independent Air Force. Today streets on Air Force bases are named after him and his life is studied by new Airmen in training.

Significant technological advances in the 1940s helped encourage many people in the military and government to see that an organizational separation between the United States Air Force and the United States Army and their respective Chaplains Corps was necessary in order to maintain and further grow a strong national defence. Many leaders in what was the United States Army Air Corps (the precursor to the Air Force which was at that time a part of the Army) fervently believed that air power was a distinct capability that was being hamstrung due to the Army's focus on the ground aspects of war. Unless it became a separate service, many argued, the United States Army Air Corps would remain a secondary force to the ground units. It was crucial that the nation's air power not be a secondary tool in the nation's defence for it was recognized in the late 1940s that the country that could first achieve air superiority (using bombers, fighters and other air capabilities) would win the future wars.

### 2.5.3 Military Chaplaincy and the Second World War Era

The onset of World War Two was the impetus for a gigantic influx of men and women signing up for the military. Prior to the end of World War Two, United States Military Chaplains served faithfully in every conflict in the history of the nation in either the Army or Navy Departments, these being the only two military departments until the creation of the United States Air Force. The remaining two components of the military, the United States Marine Corps and the United States Coast Guard were and continue to function under the Navy and to be served by Navy Chaplains. Many Army chaplains during this era served in the Army Air Corps (or Army Air Forces) which would remain a part of the Army until shortly after the war. Many of these “air chaplains” would make up the future Air Force Chaplaincy. The enthusiasm with which these chaplains embraced their roles was often contrary to their ecclesiastical backgrounds. During the 1930s when many of these chaplains were either in seminary or pastoring a parish, the trend among American churches was pacifism. Recovering from the Great War and hoping for no future ones, mainstream theology - strongly influenced by humanism - popularly promoted the concepts that humanity was inherently good, war was humanity’s greatest evil and peace would mean salvation (Jorgensen 1961:96). This perspective was dealt a heavy blow by the attack on Pearl Harbor and Axis aggression across the globe. To minister to more than twelve million service members who would join to fight the enemy during this conflict the United States Military at one point during the war had 11,700 chaplains (Dorsett 2012:23,31). A very different sentiment than that of pacifism was expressed in 1944 by Supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower:

*The Allied soldier sees himself as a defender of those great precepts of humanitarianism preached by Christ and exemplified in the way of life for which all true democracies stand. He sees this conflict as a war between greed and selfishness and love of power today typified in Nazism, Fascism and Shintoism.”* (Brown and Snape 2010:145).

Some things came full-circle. Japanese Captain Fuchida, who had fought for Shintoism and gave the order for the Pearl Harbor attack on America, read the testimony of a Christian United States Soldier while he was waiting to speak to General Douglas MacArthur just prior to the cessation of hostilities during World War Two. He became a Christian and years later came to America to speak to a Protestant Men of the Chapel group in 1967 at Hawaii (Jorgensen 1961:192).

It appears that most participants in the war believed in the rightness of their cause (as in past conflicts in which America had been involved). Chaplains were necessary though to provide encouragement, moral guidance and religious education in the midst of the horrors of war. They cared for those who had been maimed and scarred and they cared for those who witnessed the grotesque sights and smells of wounded and fallen comrades. Meanwhile back home in the United States, another Supreme Court case had been convened that would set the stage for major impacts to church and state relations. In *Cantwell v. Connecticut* in 1940 the immediate issue was determining the constitutionality of a state requiring permits for religious solicitation. The larger precedent that was set as a result of this case that had previously not been an issue was that the first amendment could be applied to the states and not merely the federal government. Though not yet in fruition, this precedent would encourage future religious debates at the state level to become national legal matters which would at different times benefit religions and alternately the government (Cantwell v. Connecticut 2014).

The chaplains who served in the Army Air Corps held a special place in the heart of their leaders as evidenced by the ministry opportunities given them, and the personal relationships they had with members of all ranks. In response to a letter written by a chaplain who had formerly served on his staff, the General of the Army Air Corps considered by most to be the father of the modern day Air Force, General Hap Arnold wrote:

*"Your words reflect the convictions I have had since my first flight and in addition describe why it has been contended from the day man conquered the air that there are no atheists among aviators"* (01004546 1953).

## **2.6 Military Chaplaincy and the Post-World War Two Era**

There were, however, signs of less welcoming times for the Chaplain Corps. In 1952, for the first time the Chaplaincy as an institution came under critical review. United States Air Force General Devine said, "We believe strictly in the separation of church and state but ... certainly we would be the last to contend for separation of religion from the state and morality from the state ...." (Jorgensen 1963:36).

Ironically, around the same era Chief of Air Force Chaplains Charles Carpenter found himself dealing with a congressional inquiry in the early nineteen fifties over the existence of the General Protestant Service which many Christians viewed as a compulsory mitigation of denominational distinctives though the intent at least in part was to effectively utilize limited chaplain staffs by minimizing the number of potential services (Jorgensen 1963:35).

In the course of their ministry, chaplains experienced the freedom that their predecessors of wars gone by had to preach their convictions even though the "General" Service had been utilized. At various times in its history the Air Chaplains have attempted to best resource their limited number of chaplains on a given base to provide worship for multiple denominations by means of a general service that would address the basics of protestant faith in one service. This type of service was discouraged by the time of World War Two (Jorgensen 1961:31). Chaplains at times exhausted themselves through travel (by vehicle, air, boat and by foot) to visit as many troops as they could. They sought creative ways in which to communicate healthy (Godly) living through teaching classes on sexual propriety and marriage (Jorgensen 1961:208).

### **2.6.1 Calls for a Separate Air Force and Air Force Chaplaincy**

A central argument for creating an Air Force separate from the Army was the need for specialization. Aircraft development, training, research and strategic employment would be severely hampered as long as these capabilities belonged to the ground-focused Army. This line of reasoning continued to all aspects of the Air Force, including chaplains. "Air Chaplains" it was argued needed to be trained in and kept



in Air culture. On September 18, 1947 the United States Air Force was born as its own military service, separate from the Army. But this did not mean the new Air Force automatically would have its own chaplains. Another struggle ensued to bring the “Air Chaplains” over to the Air Force. The Army desired to hold on to its chaplains and other career fields. One chaplain wrote that there was a strong sense of feeling “completely let down” by the Air Force among the chaplains and medics who had all been left in the Army to the point where he asked then retired General Hap Arnold to advocate on their behalf (01004546 1953). The issue was repeatedly articulated by Chaplain Charles Carpenter who had served as the Army Air Forces head Chaplain during World War Two and who would become the first Air Force Chief of Chaplains in 1949. His main argument was the importance of culture:

*The entire concept of the religious ministry rests upon the assumption that the pastor and the people whom he serves are united by ties of understanding which provide a sense of belonging together (Jorgensen 1961:5).*

Many have credited a one page paper written by the head Air Chaplain, Charles Carpenter, on the benefits of dedicated Air Force chaplains as a significant factor in influencing the decision in favour of the Air Force having ownership of its own chaplains.

By 1949, the Chief of Staff (the highest ranking general) in the Air Force, General Carl Spaatz decided that having career Air Force chaplains who lived in and knew the culture (instead of army chaplains on loan to the air force for a few years) was in the best interests of the Air Force, the troops and the chaplains. He made it official that the Air Force would have its own chaplains. Then Secretary of the Air Force, Louis A. Johnson submitted the transfer order on May 10, 1949 although the order did not take effect until 11 weeks later on July 26<sup>th</sup>. Of the 458 Army Air Corps Chaplains at the time, only 10 of them elected to stay with the Army rather than switch over to the new Air Force (Notes 2007). Since chaplains are ministers in specific cultural contexts, the chaplains that lived in the Air Force would best understand and be able to minister to an aviation culture (Jorgensen 1961:5, Mathis 2007:8). This separation allowed the chaplains in each service branch to render

culturally distinct and relevant ministry to a military culture diverse yet predominantly Christian in its makeup. The events surrounding the Berlin Airlift in 1949 and the Korean conflict in the early 1950s were the setting for the beginnings and unique development of specific Air Force Chaplain Service ministry and culture.

### **2.6.2 Early Air Force Chaplain Culture**

America had not had a new service branch for over 150 years and this allowed for the Air Force to question everything about its makeup. It would not necessarily maintain the same traditions, tactics, organization and culture as the Army. It would forge its own unique brand utilizing the past and looking to the future. From the beginning, the Air Force would be identified more than its fellow services with innovation and newness. At times this was a strength as in the necessary separation to professionalize and better employ air assets. At times it was a weakness when “Airmen”, as they came to be called, could be guilty of not recognizing the importance of history and tradition in favour of novelty. The Chaplain Corps was part of this process and began rethinking how it would organize itself. A key factor would be in how Air Force Chaplains would be trained. The modern Air Force Chaplain Corps College, the centre for initial and continuing education for all Air Force Chaplains traces its history at least as far back as March 1, 1918 to Fort Monroe, Virginia where chaplain training for the Great War began. It moved to various locations over the next few decades until July 1, 1953 when the United States Air Force was given the responsibility of training its own chaplains whereupon the school was moved to Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas (01087098 1987).

In 1953 chaplains gained continued organizational autonomy. In the organizational chart at each duty station, chaplains had been placed under that base’s Deputy for Personnel, rather than as a legitimate member of the Commander’s special staff. Not being a member of the special staff (lawyer, intelligence, personnel, etc.) limited access to the Commander for whom the chaplain was spiritually responsible as an advisor on personal and base-wide matters. Eventually, this issue was taken up by Air Force leadership and resolved (01026653 1953).

At the same time, proper guidelines were being put in place to necessarily codify and maximize the duties of chaplains. Air Force Regulation 24-1B published November 13, 1953 stated that chaplains would have command functions, meaning that as officers they did have leadership roles and duties within their function as chaplains, but they could never serve as a commander (01026653 1955). This helped maintain the purity of the role of the chaplain. Air Force chaplains also saw the beginnings of functions belonging to them given to more specialized offices. Until the early 1950s, it was the chaplains who ran the casualty notification office, the office that handled administrative and organizational duties in the event of serious injury or death to a service member. Chaplains to this day are still on the notification team that appears at the house to comfort the family in the event of a serious injury or death as specified in Air Force Instruction 52-101, but they do not handle the administrative functions related to those events. As a result of this change chaplains had more time to devote to the chapel and its programs.

Prior to and during World War Two, the majority of the military, especially the enlisted force, was made up of single men. In the 1950s the demographics shifted and a much larger population of the military was made up of families. It was common for service members to start a family post-war, known as the “baby-boom” generation in America and the military lifestyle became more conducive to raising children.

### **2.6.3 Early Air Force Chaplain Resourcing**

In 1950 less than ten chapels were in existence on Air Force Bases. By 1954 there were 488; some of these were temporary (Notes 2007). Chapels were typically utilized almost every day of the week for various functions to encourage Air Force families and singles in living as a community before the throne of God and each other. This also corresponds to the early years of the “Chaplain Services Personnel”, the right hand to the chaplain, today known as Chaplain’s Assistants. The job was first created in the Army Chaplain Corps in the 1920s to relieve chaplains from the inevitable administrative and logistical tasks they would encounter in the conduct of their ministry. Chaplains would spend an inordinate amount of time

seeking communion supplies, religious books, Bibles, music sheets, itineraries to travel to various camps or bases (sometimes hundreds of miles away), send monthly reports to higher headquarters on what they had been doing, prepare updates for their commanders, and much more.

The goal in providing an assistant was to keep the chaplain more focused on preaching, teaching, counseling and visitation which is what he was brought in to accomplish. Originally these assistants came along for casualty notification help. There was much left undefined about their identity. In the Air Force they had no promotion path and after casualty notification administration was given to another office, the assistants began to assist in more chapel-related administrative functions, then welfare, then more (Jorgensen 1963). Though at times frustrated by being a generalist who had no specific skillset transferable to the civilian market, many chaplain assistants creatively reached out to minister humanitarian aid during war and peacetime, to find new contexts in which to reach Airmen for God and to make their chaplains aware of issues facing the troops.

In comparison to future decades, the 1950s were a relatively peaceful time of consolidating Air Force Chaplain structure and practices. The chaplaincy enjoyed a culture across the country and the Air Force that was vastly supportive and outspoken of Christianity. Chaplains expounded the necessary consequences of their Christian beliefs among which were the equality of all Americans. In 1955 a powerful lecture was regularly repeated to Senior Chaplains at the Air Force Chaplain School. At one point in the standard lecture, the speaker emphasized his agreement with a quote from then Vice President Richard Nixon during a speech in Moscow that year:

*“Another problem which causes us concern is that of racial discrimination in our country. We are making great progress in solving this problem but we shall never be satisfied until we make the American ideal of equality, of opportunity a reality for every citizen regardless of his race, creed or color”* (01050301 1955).

Budgets were large. Air Force Regulation 165-7 of December 23, 1947 created a fund for the Air Force Chaplains for ministry purposes and also granted 36.7% of the

Army Chief of Chaplains Fund to be given to the Air Force Chief of Chaplains Fund for ministry use (01026653 year uncertain). Bases were numerous in light of the Cold War and the need for planes to transport troops, supplies, or nuclear weapons anywhere at a moment's notice. All of these factors contributed to a large and well-resourced Chaplaincy.

### **2.6.4 Chaplains, Faith and Significant Events**

Many sermons and speeches during this time articulated the differences between a communist and an American approach to life. Dwight D. Eisenhower's remarks emphasized that America's enemies during this time were atheistic, and Chaplains must be forceful and aggressive in presenting basic truths to maintain a free world (Jorgensen 1961:41). This belief was proclaimed on the other side of the globe as well in the 1950s when the Chief of Staff of the South Korean Air Force stated that they are in a war against the godless (referring to the Korean War) and he wanted United States Air Force Chaplains, many of whom were stationed in Korea to make everyone Christians (Jorgensen 1963:45).

The 1950s and the aftermath of the Korean War elucidated the importance of spiritual training. Many prisoners of war conducted themselves with honor and integrity in the midst of suffering and torture. Many chaplains suffered with and died alongside of their troops. Yet, there were enough examples of errant Airmen that Air Force leadership as a whole became more fixated on the importance of men having solid integrity and staying spiritually strong. One of the outcomes of this was the "Code of Conduct", a behavior guide that is expected to be upheld of any American military member who is captured during a wartime conflict to the best of their ability given the challenges of their captive environment (Jorgensen 1963).

Charles Carpenter, the first Air Force Chief of Chaplains would step down from that position in 1958 handing the reins off to Terrence Finnegan, a Catholic Priest who was on site to minister during the tragic events of Pearl Harbor in 1941. Chaplain Carpenter continued to set precedents after his time as chief when he spent his last two years in uniform at the Air Force Academy seeking to build up its program. To do so, he had given up his rank of two-star general and became a Colonel again. As

far as records indicate, he may be the only man in the history of the Air Force to have willingly given up his general rank (Notes 2007).

## **2.7 Chaplaincy in the 1960s**

Many significant changes occurred in the 1960s that would challenge the approaches of the previous decade, both in ministry and in the larger culture. A salient factor was the public decline of respect and interest in Christianity and religion in general. The 1950s had exhibited a surge of religious fervor. Hundreds of chapels had been built and chapel programs were booming. The large number of chapels was needed because of so many distant Air Force bases. There was often nowhere else to go for worship and there was nowhere else on base that promoted holistic care as much as the chapel since it ministered to every age group and touched their lives via weddings, funerals, baptisms, worship services, retreats, small groups, picnics and other chapel community activities. The chapels became vibrant communities throughout the week with Sunday services, and multiple weekday meetings and Bible studies. These have continued into the present day, but not without significant adjustments.

### **2.7.1 Government Impact on Religion**

In the 1960s there was a notable reaction against religion in American culture at large. Numerous factors played their part. Outside of the Air Force, Supreme Court cases began to alter public expression of religion. In each court case a specific issue was addressed but a larger precedent applicable to the entire nation was established. In 1962 *Engel v. Vitale* declared it unconstitutional for the state of New York to require a state-composed prayer to begin each school day. Such an act was declared to be a violation of the Establishment Clause of the first amendment. The outcome would be that prayer ought to be considered a personal matter (Barclay 2010).

In Pennsylvania in 1963, *Abington School District v. Schempp* stated that requiring public schools to open each day with Bible reading was a violation of the Establishment Clause. Also in 1963 was the landmark case involving famed atheism

promoter Madalyn Murray O'Hair in *Murray v. Curlett* who won a decision to end the Maryland public school practice of beginning each day with prayer. During the same timeframe, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited any discrimination on the basis of religion, and courts have ruled that this act extends to those in the military, as well (Rummage 2006). Finally, in 1968 in *Epperson v. Arkansas* the prohibition against teaching evolution in the Arkansas school district was declared unconstitutional because it was based on "fundamentalist sectarian conviction" and violated the Establishment Clause.

An important, but often ignored change to American culture occurred in 1965 with the signing of the Hart-Cellar Act. The Act revamped the nation's immigration rules and substantially changed the quota system that had been in place for much of the country's history (Public Law 89-236). With the passage of the act, the percentage of Europeans that were allowed to legally immigrate was severely diminished while natives from the Pacific Countries, Asia and Latin America grew exponentially. From 1880 – 1920 88% of immigrants to America came from Europe. These immigrants were typically Christian in belief or in enculturation. Latin America and Asia were allowed 3% and 4% respectively. By the time of a few decades after the passage of the Hart-Cellar Act results demonstrated that it would indeed impact cultural change in America. During the years 1980 – 1993 Europeans made up 13% of all legal immigrants to America while Latin America and Asia made up 43% and 39% respectively (CIS 1995). One of many results is that the religious makeup of America began to change more rapidly. So many of the immigrants were non-Christian (Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and more).

### **2.7.2 Cultural Shifts**

The Air Force from its inception had highlighted technology, novelty and a critical examination of traditions. The space race was in full swing during the 1960s and with increased technology it seemed that human beings could accomplish anything and did not need God. For many, it was a time of decreased interest and trust in legacies and the values that had been a vital part of American culture. One

individual described it as “a decade that seemed to pay excessive respect to the wisdom of the ignorant and the young.” (Scharlemann 1972:9).

Worship attendance at base chapels declined significantly (even in Vietnam during the war) though the number of ecclesiastical endorsers approving chaplains for active duty in line with their particular denomination or faith group grew to almost 40 by 1960 (Scharleman 1972:28).

Religion was becoming more of a private matter. Church leaders saw the changes and sought to reach out to a new generation. The Second Vatican Council was one way in which the Catholic Church took steps to avail itself to these times of an increasingly influential youth culture. The church and Chaplain Service collaborated in numerous ways. One example of many endorsements the church gave to the Chaplain Service is a letter from then Catholic Archbishop of New York, Terence J. Cooke who wrote on June 9, 1968 that chaplains:

*“...are engaged in a great apostolic work...I am pleased to extend an invitation to my brother priests to become Chaplains in the United States Air Force.”* (0101645 1968)

Protestants likewise sought new means to influence a culture of youth. Some sought to return to a more biblical theology in order to demonstrate the behavioral implications of their theology, as indicated in the Presbyterian Confession of 1967. Others sought a more relational and humanitarian approach making religion more marketable to youth through events and entertainment.

Chief of Chaplains Robert Preston Taylor undertook a study of his Reserve chaplains to determine future requirements and sustainability. The study assessed the average age of reserve chaplains (48 years old in 1968) and attrition rates (60%) to determine if they would have adequate numbers of chaplains from which to pull in the future. “This study projected that by 1972, 75 percent of the total Reserve chaplain pool would no longer be available in case of a national emergency. One source for new young chaplains was the Chaplain Candidate Program which had been “on the books” since the middle fifties but was not implemented until 1964.” (Scharleman 1972:205)."



## **2.8 Chaplaincy in the 1970s and 1980s**

Some of the important themes of the 1970s in the Air Force were the public ascendancy of black and female chaplains, the ending and ongoing impacts of the conflict in Vietnam, continued rise in drug and alcohol abuse that had been a concern of the previous decade but was now being more intentionally addressed (Groome 1976:11), a marked increase in psychologists being used to address issues that historically had been addressed by chaplains and some religious controversies including the controversy over compulsory attendance at academy chapels that invited involvement on the part of the American Civil Liberties Union (Scharleman 1972:214). The American Civil Liberties Union typically invoked political pressure and the threat of legal action in order to assert the type of church and state relationship with which they were comfortable. Typically, they were not ambassadors for Christian expression. In the midst of challenges however, chaplains continued as always to be faithful in ministry by preaching, counseling and being present with their Airmen through joys and sorrows.

Among other things alcohol had simply been part of the culture. It was not uncommon to go to a unit function on base and find nothing to drink but alcohol. The clubs on base were another place to enjoy social drinking. Within twenty years, by the 1990s, there was such an emphasis on responsible drinking that many of the clubs struggled to stay financially viable and much greater disciplinary and career repercussions ensued for those who could not drink responsibly (Singletary 2003).

Emphasis was placed by then Chief of Chaplains Henry “Hank” Meade on the importance of increasing the representation of minorities in the chaplaincy. During Chaplain Meade’s tenure, the Chaplain Service held an Air Force Chaplain Task Group in February of 1977 at Bolling Air Force Base to identify how black chaplains were perceived by their non-black peers (01021269 1977). In fact, the Chaplain Service was a leader in race relations, bringing in many minorities ahead of the greater Air Force culture and in higher percentages as well. The Chaplain Service was also on the forefront in the development of the “Affirmative Action Plan” and Equal Opportunity Awareness in the Air Force, ensuring worship for racial minorities

including black, Hispanic and other ethnic backgrounds of Airmen (Scharleman 1972:554).

Given how much effort had gone into separating the Air Force Chaplain Service, it is somewhat ironic that the Armed Forces Chaplain's Board submitted a feasibility study in April of 1971 to consolidate the three Chaplain Schools (Army, Navy and Air Force) into one location (00910015 1971). On March 17-18, 1976 at a meeting of the endorsers and the Armed Forces Chaplain's Board, the topic of merging the three chaplain schools was discussed again but did not become a reality (01015268 1976). The three schools would eventually co-locate in 2010 in an effort to save money but their curricula, courses, faculty and traditions would remain distinct. Currently, the three chaplain schools continue to be co-located yet are vastly different in culture. Air Force chaplains historically are based out of chapels, do not belong to any one unit but minister to multiple units on base and work for the head chaplain on base, while Navy chaplains can be assigned to a ship (fleet), a Marine Corps unit or a Coast Guard unit. Army chaplains typically work for a unit and for a commander.

The Chaplain Service doubled the number of slots for Air Force professional development schools in 1972 allowing more chaplains to interact with line officers at their career academic developmental milestones (00910015 1971). As discussed above, the Air Force Chaplain Corps has over the decades been able to acquire more autonomy over its own career field which allows its future, culture, needs and focus to be more influenced by chaplains rather than by non-chaplains who may not be in the best position to make such decisions for chaplains. At the same time, it is crucial for chaplains to be a part of the culture in order for them to identify with and influence the Air Force at all levels. Acquiring more slots for chaplains to attend developmental schools meant that top-notch chaplains would spend a year or so in seminars and classes with the future leaders of the Air Force and could by their presence bring religious concerns and pastoral wisdom to the topics of war, care for troops, budget planning and more. This in turn meant that when those future leaders were in senior level positions, they would more highly value and call upon the capabilities of the Chaplain Corps.

### 2.8.1 Ministry among Diversity

Chaplains' word and deed ministry was exemplified in many events such as Operation New Life in 1975 when they helped house, process, feed, provide for and minister to Vietnamese refugees flown into Andersen Air Force Base, Guam (1016436 1975). This required working together with chaplains of other denominations and faith groups. A hallmark of chaplaincy is cooperation without compromise. Chaplains had always come from a faith group which held their loyalties and they were expected to be faithful to their chosen group, while working together as a team made up of chaplains from other faith beliefs. Baptists would be Baptists, Methodists would be Methodists, Rabbis would be Rabbis – all while seeking to help any person that may come their way.

During the seventies and even into the eighties, the term “interfaith” was typically a narrow term, referring to any event that included Catholic, Jewish and Protestant ministers and/or participants even as the diversity of religious faith groups grew. It was during the mid-seventies that Buddhist and Bahai groups began meeting on various bases in the Air Force (Scharleman 1972:553). Amid concerns of syncretism or chaplains losing their faith in a vast sea of interfaith-supporting culture, Chaplains have often been way ahead of the civilian sector in their ability to get along with others who are not of their own faith group. As one pastor on a preaching tour throughout Southeast Asian Air Force bases remarked in his journal:

*A retiring chaplain will find the social and racial restrictions placed upon his civilian ministry in the USA strange and embarrassingly limited for American Christianity is divided by every line of demarcation: race, class, denomination, etc...While civilian US churches boast of limited ecumenical and interfaith successes, for military chaplains this aspect of ministry is a must. (01022313 1973).*

Due to the downsizing of the force post-Vietnam, not all chaplains got to stay on Active Duty. Some stayed, some had to get out of the military, some joined the Reserves and some were given the option of staying in the Air Force by taking off the cross on their uniform and working in the field of race relations (Singletary 2003).

In spite of the differences and cultures unique to both civilian ministry and military ministry an often untold but consistent practice of many chaplains has been to encourage their own parishioners to attend church off base. Attending civilian parishes was viewed as mutually beneficial for military families to be a part of the community and for the community to engage with members of the military community (Truitt 2003).

Chaplains were also able to create and maintain community relationships through civilian ministers which further connected the two communities. One example of this is the relationship that Air Force chaplains had with local orthodox priests on the island of Crete, when the Air Force had a base there. Airmen wanting to get married could not do so unless they became Greek Orthodox per the rules of the host nation, so the chaplain was their only route for marriage. The Chaplains on Crete had a strong relationship with the local clergy and so they allowed the chaplains to register the newlyweds (Scharleman 1972).

The return of hundreds of American prisoners of war in the 1970s was a very emotional and telling time. Chaplains devoted much of the decade of the 70s to spiritual care of combatants, returning veterans, returning prisoners of war, Vietnamese refugees from "Operation Babylift" and other humanitarian operations, death notifications, funerals for the deceased, and more (Army 1990:91).

In addition to all of the wonderful ministry that took place during the 1960s and 1970s, the Air Force Chaplain histories of those decades indicate many chaplains felt out of touch with the young Airmen of those generations. Some chaplains expressed an inability to relate and would at times find themselves much better prepared to communicate using techniques that had been used in the 1950s. It seemed that for some chaplains, they were never modern enough. Yet, they were reminded by Chief of Chaplains Roy Terry in the seventies that God still relates (Scharleman 1972:95). People were still fundamentally the same. They were fallen sinners, created in God's Image, created to live in relationship with Him, in need of reconciliation to God, eventually to face God's judgement and punishment unless they trusted in Jesus for the payment of their sins.

The history of women chaplains serving in the USAF began during the early 70s. Lorraine Potter, ordained in the American Baptist Church was interested in becoming a chaplain. Chaplain, Captain John M. Wagener met with her in 1973 to inform her of the opportunities available to her (01022322 1973). After coming on Active Duty, Ch Potter went through many challenges as a chaplain. Some Airmen routinely walked out during her services to protest the presence of a female minister. She experienced both open and subtle pressures to leave the Chaplain Service. She was a path-maker for all future female Air Force Chaplains and eventually became the first (and thus far, the only) female Chief of Chaplains for the Air Force (Potter 2003). Again, the Chaplain Service was ahead of the greater Air Force. Females would not be allowed to attend the United States Air Force Academy until 1976 (Scharleman 1972:21).

### **2.8.2 Religious Controversies**

A significant controversy erupted over the Armed Forces Hymnal in the mid-70s. The Armed Forces Chaplains Board had for years developed and deliberated over previous editions which hymns ought to be included in this book of worship. The book was used all over the world in military chapels and during field services. Hymn #286, titled "It Was on a Friday Morning," was the subject of thousands of complaints of blasphemy written to Air Force leaders and members of congress. Among the complaints of blasphemy were that the author of the hymn accused God of a criminal act, even sinning by putting Jesus on the cross and that Jesus was portrayed as being man and not God (against the doctrine of the Incarnation). Not everyone viewed this hymn as blasphemous but rather as an attempt at describing the reaction of Christ's crucifixion from the perspective of the criminal on the cross next to him. These interpretations came from lines such as the following:

In verse one, the criminal on the cross says to Jesus: "It's God they ought to crucify instead of you and me...". In verse three the same criminal says to Jesus: "And your God is up in Heaven and He doesn't do a thing" and finally in verse four "To hell with Jehovah to the carpenter I said. I wish that a carpenter had made the world instead.

Goodbye and good luck to you our ways will soon divide. Remember me tomorrow the man you hung beside” (The Armed Forces Chaplain Board 1974:282).

The hymn was not removed from the Armed Forces Hymnal because it was felt by then Chief of Chaplains Henry Meade (and others) that to do so would initiate a destructive practice of restricting religious beliefs. It was not placed in the next printing of the hymnal in 1977 (Carr 1996:50). Many copies of the 1974 version of the hymnal with the offending hymn can still be found today in the pews of Air Force chapels.

There are a few milestone moments that stand out in the history of the Chaplain Service. One such moment is the court case of *Katcoff v. Marsh* in 1979. During this long tussle, two Harvard Law students challenged the constitutionality of the Army chaplaincy and by extension, the other two services as well. They argued that it violates the first amendment to have government paid clergy. The plaintiffs believed that a government supported chaplaincy is contrary to the establishment clause of the first amendment. The case made it as far as Federal Court but never to the Supreme Court. The case took years to finalize and absorbed countless hours of labour for both the plaintiffs and for the Army Chaplaincy which had to divert ministry resources and personnel in order to address this challenge. In 1986 the case finally ended with the court siding in favour of the Army Chaplaincy. It was a victory, but not without penetrating consequences.

The Court held that the chaplaincy exists not to promote any religion but as models and guardians of the first amendment they “promote the free exercise of religion” (Rosen 2007). As one reads the various chaplain histories and observes their cultural shifts, there appear to be very few turning points to rival this court case. The cultural changes were greater than the legal ones. Prior to the *Katcoff* case, chaplains did practice working together with those of different faiths or none at all, but there was also a stronger communication of their denomination or faith group specific identification. Chaplains seemed more free to communicate their faith.

Post-*Katcoff*, a marked difference is noticeable. Chaplains seemed to be much more cautious about coming across as pushing their faith on someone. Perhaps related

but at a minimum demonstrating either ignorance or apathy a letter from an Air Force base was sent to the Chaplain Service headquarters in Washington D.C. inquiring if the Chapels were an example of fraud, waste and abuse. In a brief and perhaps slightly sarcastic response, a Colonel Chaplain responded with numerous reasons why the chapels are a necessity to provide worship, religious expression and other key resources that only the Chaplain Service can provide to Airmen (01050334 1981). Furthermore, the chapels are a significant means by which chaplains provide the first amendment rights to which all Airmen must be given access.

Some of this mind-set abated by the mid-nineties as more and more chaplains not exposed to the Katcoff impacts came on Active Duty. Many chaplains have recounted in person that the decade of the nineteen eighties was predominantly made up of more liberal chaplains, the majority of whom retired by the mid-nineties.

### **2.8.3 Chaplains and Strategic Impact**

Chaplains continued to minister personally through counsel and visitation and publicly through sermons, speeches and writings. Though written in 1962, the sentiments expressed by then Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel Roman T. Blatz in his paper while a student at the Air Force's Air War College were still believed by many in the late 1980s. This paper (and others) listed important distinctions between American and Russian ways of thinking that fuelled the Cold War. Of note, he continually equated a communist mind-set, moral relativism, atheism and an "anything goes" attitude as long as it helped the state (Blatz 1962).

Chaplains ministered to Airmen who supported numerous training exercises and real-world contingencies including the invasion of Panama in 1983 and Cold-War era defence of bases in Europe. On the home front, family ministry continued and grew to such an extent that one chaplain was asked to help develop a separate organization within the Air Force that would be able to take on some of the tasks related to helping families as long as it did not subtract from the chaplains' ministry. That project, begun in 1980 would eventually become a large program separate from the Chaplain Corps, known today as the Airman & Family Readiness Center with locations on just about every major Air Force base (Lundin 2012).

The American and Communist ways of thinking were often contrasted as religiously antithetical during the previous decades and it is interesting to note that in the early nineteen nineties many former Eastern Bloc nations including Russia became interested in creating their own chaplaincies. Russia even sent delegates on two different occasions to meet with the Chiefs of Chaplains of America's Army, Navy and Air Force to learn from them how to build a chaplaincy (Groh 1992).

In 1988, Chief of Chaplains Stuart Barstad created the Pastoral Ministry Team (PMT) assigning one chaplain assistant to one chaplain. This was a response to the single-manager concept which often removed younger chaplains from any supervisory experience or direct control over the chaplain assistants. It was also a response to chaplain assistants who had fallen into only doing certain duties and did not see themselves as necessarily part of the ministry team. They too needed to be out visiting Airmen (Nickelson 2007:26).

The exact relationship of chaplains to chaplain assistants would continue to morph over the years and is consistently a topic of discussion in modern times. The working relationship of chaplain assistants to their individual chaplains and to the senior chaplain is often not clear. The current structure is for all chaplain assistants to report to the senior chaplain assistant on base, who in turn works for the senior chaplain on base. This can create challenges when a junior chaplain needs help on a given task (setting up a worship service, organizing a retreat, etc.) and there is uncertainty about if that junior chaplain can task the chaplain assistant to help them which is the original reason the chaplain assistant career field was created.

### **2.9 Chaplaincy at the End of the Twentieth Century**

*"During the 1990s, we witnessed the end of the Cold War, the collapse of Communism, a rise in terrorism, and the largest downsizing seen by our military since the end of World War II."*

*Chaplain, Major General Charles Baldwin (Nickelson 2007:Foreword).*

The beginning of the nineteen nineties was the beginning of future decades of large scale United States military fighting in the Middle East. Though a short seven



months in comparison with future conflicts, “Desert Storm” brought about many deployments for thousands of troops to the countries of Iraq, Kuwait and the surrounding areas (OSD 1991:1). Chaplains deployed to minister to bombers, fighter pilots, support personnel, leaders and front line troops.

On the home front the ripples from *Katcoff v. Marsh* continued to be felt in this decade. The Chaplain Service was well aware that there were people who sought to challenge their duties and existence and articulated well-researched historical and numerical data justifying both the need and benefit of the Chaplain Service to the Air Force. The Chief of Chaplains during this time, John McDonough, initiated a number of conferences and meetings to accumulate expert input for developing a well-informed and positive response to challengers. The findings were eventually given in a somewhat lengthy brief to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and effectively demonstrated the need for the Chaplain Service. The Chaplain Service provides many unique capabilities among which are 100% privileged communication (no exceptions) when they counsel, worship services, religious education, moral advisement to leadership, pastoral visitation to troops, being the subject matter expert for religious expression and advising leadership on the relationship of religion to military missions.

### **2.9.1 Need to Demonstrate Relevance**

In March of 1993 an Air Force Officer submitted a document stating that the Air Force Chaplain Service was unnecessary and either elimination or severe minimizing of it would save the Air Force a lot of money. Ch McDonough’s response to this again formulated a solid defence of the unique capabilities and needs that the Chaplain Service addresses (Nickelson 2007:4).

The Chaplain Service also sought during the nineties to strengthen both the official and practical ways in which it contributed to the mission of the Air Force. To do so, numerous policy directives were updated stating the Chaplain’s connection to various Air Force tasks. The Chaplain Service also adopted a Strategic Plan for Global Ministry that delineated many practical outcomes to care for Airmen (Nickelson 2007:12). The three core processes specified in Global Ministry were

religious observances, pastoral care, and advisement of leadership (Nickelson 2007:34). Global Ministry was intended to communicate that deployment was to be expected for anyone who desired to be a Chaplain in the Air Force. Since the country was not in any years-long wars as in the past, but was constantly engaged in short term humanitarian efforts, conflicts and stabilization operations in bases and other locations around the world it was now normal and not an aberration that every chaplain would deploy somewhere for a few months every few years. These strategic policy shifts also dramatically changed the ministry paradigm for chaplains.

The chapel and its programs had been the centerpiece of ministry up to this point. The Global Ministry plan sought to encourage chaplains at base level to utilize their own unique ministry strengths and determine how to best advance ministry efforts at their local assignment. As always, Chaplains were expected to “provide and provide for”, meaning that they would provide ministry (counseling, preaching, rites, etc.) in line with their particular theological commitments and when dealing with Airmen who were not of those same beliefs, the chaplain would then “provide for” that airman’s felt religious needs by finding a resource that would address that need. Providing for one’s “religious felt needs” covers a wide continuum of potential activities. It could mean a protestant chaplain gives a catholic prayer bead from the chapel supplies to a catholic Airman. It could mean a non-wiccan chaplain (there are no Wiccan chaplains nor does that faith group have an endorser at this time) helps find a room for Wiccan Airmen to meet.

Much discussion occurred during this time regarding the proper model for ministry. Should it be chapel-centric? Industrial (majority of time spent out in the units)? Should it focus on more of a deployment-mindset? All three of these were utilized (deployment especially during Desert Storm) however the chapel-centric construct was the dominant approach for this decade.

### **2.9.2 Diversifying the Chaplain Corps**

The cross insignia is a well-recognized symbol of the chaplain in the Air Force. Protestant and Catholic Chaplains wear this symbol while Jewish chaplains wear a small replica of the tablets of the Ten Commandments which was authorized in

1926. The wear of the crescent for Muslim chaplains was first requested by the Chief of Chaplains' office in Dec 1992, though the first Muslim chaplain in the Air Force did not come on Active Duty until May of 1999. At that time the Air Force had fewer than 700 Muslims on active duty. The Army and Navy had had Muslim chaplains since 1993 and 1996, respectively (Nickelson 2007:107). The wheel signifying the eight-fold path of enlightenment for a Buddhist chaplain was approved in 1987 (Nickelson 2007:52), though at the writing of this paper the Air Force has yet to have a Buddhist chaplain.

At the beginning of the decade 820 chaplains were serving on active duty. By the end of the decade there were 588. By the end of 1999 the Chaplain Service counted 238 ecclesiastical endorsers that could bring forth candidates for the chaplain service for the Air Force Active Duty, Reserve and Air National Guard components. Religious demographics of America continued to diversify creating challenges for the Chaplain Service leadership to ensure that there was adequate representation for them (Nickelson 2007:103).

### **2.9.3 Controversies**

In the mid-nineties another significant court case on religious rights occurred. The immediate issue was catholic concern over President Bill Clinton's veto of the Partial Birth Abortion Ban in 1995 (Levy 2002:1). Catholic leaders (including the Archbishop for the Military Diocese – who is responsible for all military catholic priests) asked his parishes (including Air Force Catholic Priest Chaplains) to send in postcards to Congress asking them to override the veto. This initiative was known as the "Project Life Postcard Campaign". Military catholic priests were also expected to invite their congregations to participate in this campaign.

This grew into a significant issue with a lot of public attention. The Chaplain Service requested a legal opinion from the Air Force Judge Advocate General (JAG) which stated it would be against policy for catholic priests to participate in this. The Chaplain Service stated in public many times that chaplains can preach according to the dictates of their conscience, but should not get involved in political action (i.e., participation in a writing campaign). After many inquiries from news corporations

and concerned citizens the trial finally took place. On April 7, 1997 in the case of *Rigdon v. Perry* (in which one active duty and one reservist chaplain were willing to be plaintiffs even though it brought with it the possibility that they would be viewed negatively and negatively affected in further career progression in the chaplain service, along with three other non-chaplain plaintiffs) the Federal District Court of Washington D.C. ruled in their favour. This meant that the Department of Defense had no legal standing or right to interpret the directives that the Archbishop had given to his priests (Nickelson 2007:122).

Privileged communication was further upheld due to a situation in which a chaplain had received privileged communication from a person who worked in United States Strategic Command and had access to classified information. At concern was whether the chaplain had to divulge what was shared (Nickelson 2007:123). "Privileged communication" is an official term in the Air Force Chaplain Service indicating that any communication made to a chaplain as a matter of religious conscience is completely confidential. In practice it means that when military, their families, and other personnel speak to an Air Force chaplain about anything, it cannot be disclosed by the chaplain without the express written consent of the counselee. No other function in the Air Force can offer this.

Chaplains maintain a special bond with Airmen because unlike psychologists, social workers and any other counsellor the chaplain has no exceptions to reporting individuals. Even if the individual in the counseling session states that they are going to kill themselves, hurt someone else, or commit some other type of crime the chaplain is bound to secrecy unlike anyone else who would have to report such matters. Rather than a cause for alarm, this has been an assurance of help. It is rare, if at all that Airmen have taken advantage of this to actually commit heinous acts. They come to the chaplain because they want help. Privileged communication continues to be an incredible capability that chaplains provide.

A growing argument over public prayer in the military continued to fester. Initiated by a staff officer who objected to staff meetings beginning with prayer, the JAG in 1998 again rendered a legal opinion that prayer at mandatory events should not occur.

The JAG did also qualify that this was a legal opinion and not official policy or directive, a point about which Chief of Chaplains William Dendinger also reminded those inside and outside the chaplain service. A legal “opinion” does not obligate religious practices to change (Nickelson 2007:126).

Public prayer continues to be an area of debate. In the midst of growing religious diversity, the constitutional pattern and practice has been that public prayer is part of our heritage. It is not an endorsement of religion but an exercise of our religious freedom and a reminder of the nation’s trust in God. There have been Airmen who have either been uncomfortable with or complained against prayers given at mandatory functions such as change of command ceremonies, promotion ceremonies and others. The guidance from the Chaplain Service up to this point continues to be “cooperation without compromise” meaning that chaplains ought to pray in such a manner as fits the occasion. The application of this has at times become contentious.

There are those who believe chaplains should pray a non-sectarian prayer with the intent to pray such a prayer that no one listening would be bothered by it. There are those who believe to do such a thing necessarily restricts religious expression and that they ought to pray at a public event in the same manner (though addressing the theme of each specific event) as they would in a parish setting. Prayer is never required at any of these events. Having a prayer is decided upon by each events’ organizers. Yet, public prayer continued to be a topic of interest.

At this point, the effect of the civilian court cases dealing with first amendment rights combined with military culture to produce more questions for the Chaplain Service. On October 17, 2000 the office of the Undersecretary of the Air Force made a request for the Chaplain’s office to present a rationale for public prayer at official military functions, especially since civilian court cases, as mentioned before, had determined that prayer at public (meaning government) schools was unconstitutional. In their response less than three weeks later, the Chaplain Service acknowledged the legal precedents on school prayer but distinguished military prayers from them arguing that prayer at military functions is not a policy but a

tradition, dependent upon the situation and are to be considered legal as long as government neither favours nor discourages religious expression (Nickelson 2007:128). Religious accommodation requests, a term referring to providing for religious expression, grew as well.

## **2.10 Air Force Chaplaincy in 2000 and Beyond**

The new millennium at first appeared to be a continuation of the previous decade. It exhibited growing religious diversity, the maintaining of a predominantly Christian majority, and an Air Force culture that stayed mainly at home base with occasional calls to be part of the Expeditionary Air Force in order to support contingencies. For those alive on September 11, 2001 the horrific events and deaths caused by Islamic terrorists who flew hijacked airplanes into the World Trade Center in New York City, the Pentagon (America's Military Headquarters) and the plane that was taken over by American passengers in order to disrupt a suspected intentional crash into the United States Capitol building that instead crashed in a Pennsylvania field killing all aboard left an enduring mark (The Atlantic 2011:1).

During this era much of the traditional ministry foci continued in the Air Force: worship services, counseling, visitation of troops, programs to enhance troop wellness and other ministry initiatives were maintained. In addition, the post-9/11 Air Force exuded a heightened sense of security concerns and awareness of potential vulnerabilities. Airmen found themselves deploying all over the Middle East and Greater Asia with concentrations in Iraq and Afghanistan and where they went, there was often a chaplain with them.

### **2.10.1 Ministry Amid Ongoing Conflicts**

This era was drastically different for the United States military because it had not been in a large-scale and lengthy conflict since Vietnam, approximately thirty years prior. Chaplains deployed to locations drastically different from what they were used to: temperatures over 115 degrees Fahrenheit (46 degrees Celsius), and arid, dry, and barren locations where bare bases were being set up for sustained operations. Religion became a much more discussed topic, specifically the religion of Islam.

Chaplain found themselves at an interesting crossroads. As the results of *Katcoff v. Marsh* were continually felt, a primary justification for the job of military chaplain was to provide for the free exercise of religion for all service members. At the same time, they were questioned by many service members regarding a proper understanding of Islam. With Islamic terrorist acts occurring in many different countries and experiencing war in predominantly Islamic countries, the question, posed in many different ways typically came across as: Is Islam the cause or are these acts due to some other cause or ideology that is misusing Islam? Simultaneously there was a gross misunderstanding of the transcendence of religion in general and Islam in particular. American military deployed to Iran, Afghanistan and many other Islamic-dominant countries whose cultures, laws and social faux pas were informed by their Islamic faith. Many Americans had been taught for years that church and state are separate and so there were innumerable culture clashes that impeded the mission of the American military. The larger question of the definition and role of religion persistently impacts Air Force personnel and their missions.

The decade brought about many instances of religious accommodation desires, some old and some novel. A Pagan Airman came back from a vacation trip to his base with a forked tongue (Strmiska 2005:313), Mormon trainees at Basic Training sometimes requested that their religious undergarments be given separate laundry washing rather than be lumped in with the group laundry bag. One individual secured approval to wear a bracelet that would otherwise have been unauthorized if not for the fact that he stated it was a shaman bracelet to ward off evil spirits and bad health, per his beliefs. Groups historically identified as minority groups sought to have their own chaplain in the Air Force Chaplain Corps including Wiccans and Humanists.

### **2.10.2 New Challengers, Old Challenges**

Religious care and the Chaplain Corps have had critics in the past, from various groups. In the beginning of the twenty first century, among the most vocal were the "Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers" and the "Military Religious Freedom Foundation" (<http://militaryatheists.org/>, <https://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/>).

The former group's main goals include seeking equal treatment and provision for atheist, humanist, freethinkers and other non-theists (Torpy 2011) and establishing a humanist chaplain within the Chaplain Corps, which to date has not occurred.

Part of the discussion is classified by some as the circular argument that if humanism is a religion then it too cannot be imposed on anyone and non-prayer at public events would be a form of secular proselytization. On the other hand, if it is not a religion then more discussion is needed to determine why a humanist or pagan chaplain is needed since the Chaplain Corps exists (as *Katcoff v. Marsh* stated) to provide for the free exercise of religion. One of the counter-arguments has been that humanism is not a religion but is another example of exercising one's freedom of religion. The latter group focuses more on diminishing what they perceive to be an Air Force (and overall military) culture that is dominated by Christians who seek to unprofessionally and illegally impose their Christian faith upon non-Christians. There are numerous groups in addition to those mentioned above that at times seek to check the actions of the Air Force Chaplain Corps including the American Civil Liberties Union, Americans United (for Separation of Church and State), and others.

Public prayer was addressed perhaps more than in the past. Not a few Chaplains received complaints at times on the content of their prayers. Typically the complainant was an individual or small group. A training video on how to conduct public prayers was put out by the Air Force Chaplain Corps in the fall of 2011 and viewing it was a requirement for all chaplains to train them to be sensitive to their audience.

In 2004 a controversy erupted at the Air Force Academy, the school where the Air Force prepares 4,000 students annually to become Air Force Officers, graduating approximately 1,000 each spring to serve in the Air Force as its future leaders. The controversy was in large part over proselytization on the campus. Numerous examples were put forth such as Bible verses being placed in public locations, faculty imposing prayer and their Christian beliefs on their students, and students themselves who were described as overzealous in the sharing of their Christian faith (Loveland 2009).



Many sub-controversies resulted from this. The Chaplain who strongly asserted that proselytization did exist ended up transferred to a different assignment and the Air Force issued “Interim Guidelines” on proselytizing. Many Christians and some other faith groups believed these guidelines to be violations of the first amendment remarking that they attempted to restrict what chaplains could say. The Air Force then issued a revised version of the same that pleased many Christians and frustrated many at “Americans United for Separation of Church and State” and the “Military Religious Freedom Foundation”, to name a few (Lipka 2006).

In 2011 the Department of Defense, and thus all military services, changed a long-standing policy of not officially allowing what were labelled as same-sex romantic relationships. The majority of the chaplains at that time belonged to denominations that did not support or condone gay marriage or relationships. These chaplains saw a growing potential for negative impacts to their careers if they did not perform homosexual wedding ceremonies, allow homosexual couples to their marriage retreats, and keep their sermon topics in line with the new policy.

The National Defence Authorization Act of 2013 specifically addressed the concerns of many that inquired if disagreement or disapproval of homosexuality would negatively affect their careers. Among many other topics, the Act protected the right of conscience of military members and military chaplains. The first amendment addresses this issue already according to many, yet there was a significant concern that first amendment rights were neither clear, nor safe without the passing of this act. The demographics of the Chaplain Corps at this time are a Protestant majority. The full impact of the changes and events listed above remain to be seen. By the close of the decade the Chaplain Corps continued to see its numbers dwindle down to around 500 around 2011 amid Air Force-wide personnel cuts (Svan 2010:1).

### **2.10.3 Posture for the Future**

“Spirituality” became a popular term and often took the place of religion in documentation and discussions by chaplains and non-chaplains. Some chaplains were concerned that the new focus on providing “spiritual” care could be interpreted to mean anything and thus render the chaplain corps meaningless. Others saw it as

an institutionally supported opportunity to engage Airmen with God. The Air Force followed the Army's lead and adopted four pillars (physical, mental, social and spiritual) of wellness. The definition of "spiritual" was vague but it did bring chaplains into discussions in which they otherwise may not have found themselves. New ministry approaches were undertaken. Many more resources were made available to Airmen. The addition of Airman and Family Life Consultants (AFLC), Social Workers, Civilian Counsellors and more led some chaplains to utilize them as additional resources while others believed these additional resource consultants were indicators of an increasingly specialized society that would eventually phase out the Chaplain Corps.

In 2011, the author observed and was personally included in the after effects of a Colonel line officer deciding that he wanted and needed his own chaplain for his unit. The traditional Air Force model of a few chaplains working out of a chapel and visiting multiple units each would not work for his unit. They needed someone dedicated to them full-time. This led to 9 "embedded" Chaplain positions in the Air Force. The men chosen for these ground-breaking ministry opportunities found themselves functioning very similarly to Army Chaplains while still in the Air Force. They worked with and for Commanders and were able to get to know their Airmen in-depth because they now belonged to a unit rather than a chapel that served every unit on base. They did not have the added responsibilities of having to help run a chapel, a budget, and visit 2,000 people in many different locations across base. They were more directly able to connect their ministry with the mission because they worked for the unit commander and not a chaplain. Currently, though there is discussion about it, it is uncertain if the Air Force Chaplain Corps will continue to increase its investment into embedded positions for chaplains in order to diversify resources and perhaps help solidify its relevance as chapel attendance and the need for chapels declines.

The Air Force Chaplain Corps stands to gain increased relevance through these positions that expose younger chaplains to Air Force culture that allows them to minister to direct needs where leaders can see the value. Chaplains are the only ones who have 100% privileged communication (confidentiality). Chaplains are the

only ones who bring a transcendent perspective to the lives of those among them. Chaplains bring Airmen to God and God to Airmen. Chaplains often go anywhere – to austere locations to share and not force God's Word to people. They are the first ones at the house to deliver the heart-breaking news that a spouse's loved one is not coming home again. They comfort the bereaved and deliver memorial services as one part of guiding them through difficult times. They prepare couples for marriage, marry them and counsel them as they walk through their marriage over the years. Chaplains continue in unique environments to provide a unique perspective that only God can give that speaks into every area of life.

### **2.11 Summary and Conclusions**

This chapter has discussed the origins of military chaplaincy with significant attention to its development in the western hemisphere and specifically in the United States of America leading to the modern United States Air Force Chaplain Corps. Among salient factors contributing to the makeup of the current Air Force Chaplain Corps are church and state legal cases, changing cultural attitudes towards religion and morality and increased growth of diverse religious beliefs among the American populace and the Air Force population. The Air Force Chaplain Corps allows for diversity of religious expression while maintaining a foundational heritage built on the Christian scriptures and worldview. The role of chaplains throughout history has been distinct yet transcendent. Chaplains are distinct as ministers of God. They alone have the responsibility and burden of developing by God's grace people who will trust in Him and obey Him. They distinctly care for the living, the wounded, and the dead. In doing so, they transcend any and every career field and topic. Because of their religious distinctions, chaplains have important things to say in relation to law, ethics, resilience, war, morale, marriage, parenting, sickness, depression, and more. Thus their religious beliefs and their first amendment right to practice them leave much room for expression and little if any room for being mandated to sit through teaching contrary to their beliefs without equal time to share their own. The following chapter will compare and contrast the Air Force Chaplain Corps and non-chaplain Air Force entities in their approach to resiliency training and care for their troops and families from the beginning of the Air Force to the present day. A marked

difference occurs between the high degree of historical involvement chaplains experienced in morale, character formation, and troop life enhancement functions and ministry in contrast to the manner in which the Air Force continues to decrease the role of chaplains in these same categories. Distinctions will be made between the capabilities and roles that both chaplains and non-chaplains have filled and which of these groups is best equipped to address the resilience needs of Airmen in order to enable more effective utilization of the Air Force Chaplain Corps and the United States Air Force.

## **Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The United States Air Force has long recognized the importance of providing care beyond physical needs for their Airmen. It has often been said that Airmen are the Air Force's most important asset. This chapter will discuss how the Air Force has utilized help from numerous avenues since the nineteen-forties to make this care happen both from chaplains and chaplain assistants, non-chaplain Air Force entities and from organizations outside of the Air Force. The care given was driven in large part by ongoing discussions and differences on what the real needs of Airmen and their families were. Chaplains viewed airman's problems as ultimately stemming from the effects of living in a world that is twisted by evil both external and internal to the person. Thus, their main needs were spiritual in nature. Spiritual care however, had to take on tangible expression as they sought to help others. This did not preclude chaplains from recognizing and addressing other issues that flowed from their spiritual concern, such as Airmen's desires for community, a loving family, friendship, physical wellness and more.

Non-chaplains within and without the Air Force sought to address airman's felt needs through mental health care and other proposed solutions. The influence of religion, it will be demonstrated grew less and less important in their thinking. Issues with Airmen and sustaining a ready force were for "professionals" in an ever-growing list of areas of expertise. The chaplaincy intersected with non-chaplain entities at various times and to greater and lesser extents. The history of maintaining awareness of distinct chaplain capabilities in the midst of collaboration with other care-providers follows, and will inform the importance the Air Force places on caring for its Airmen and their families and will describe some of the ways in which care is provided that are unique to the Chaplain Corps. Concern for the well-being of Airmen has been important to leaders from the inception of the Air Force, though the way in which that concern has been described

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

has varied. It has often been a struggle during the Air Force's short history to find a clear and agreeable method for training troops with regard to the topic of character. The Constitution guarantees the free exercise of religion. The Air Force, while allowing for the "spiritual" aspect of life to be included as a necessary part in its training, ultimately devalues religion. It has eventually grown to restrict religion and spirituality to one of many pillars of human existence, thus getting rid of the benefits and realities of religious transcendence. Throughout this study, multiple different themes and initiatives begun and ended by the Air Force to address character formation will be discussed including the eventual shifts and disagreements on what the actual goal of the themes and initiatives were. Was the goal character formation or was the goal personal values clarification or something else? The current term the Air Force utilizes perhaps more than any other as its theme for wellness is "resilience" (Reivich 2010:11). Whether the term used is resilience or something else, this chapter will demonstrate key ways in which the Chaplain Corps has uniquely contributed to the health of Air Force personnel while also demonstrating some of the key indicators that added to the restriction of first amendment religious freedom and hesitance to address troop soul care from the historical religious foundations that gave birth to and nurtured America.

Chaplains have maintained that their main core capability is religious care. Religion is at the center of what they do and from this, numerous approaches for care proceed. As a result of their religious convictions, chaplains have sought to maintain a strong Air Force through developing friendships through programmed and impromptu social events, visiting Airmen in their areas of work, deploying overseas with them, conducting one-on-one counseling or small group counseling, conducting worship services and religious education, leading retreats, advising leaders on how better to care for Airmen based on what the chaplain has learned from visiting, establishing relationships with religious groups and organizations outside of the military, and creating a community within the chapel setting that expands outside of it.

Perhaps the main core conviction throughout chaplain ministries is that everyone has convictions that can only be ultimately understood from the vantage point of religion.

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

These convictions impact a person in every area of their life. No one therefore has a religious "part" to their life. They all make life changing decisions for or against God. Thus, chaplains participated in a wide array of events in people's lives as marriage dynamics, family dynamics, financial behaviour, work environment concerns, legal concerns, addictions, anger issues and more that could be traced back to a person's convictions in relation to God.

Beginning in the late 1940s the number of Air Force chapels grew exponentially due to Cold War build-up, the necessary establishment of Air Force bases separate from Army bases, and the many births during the baby-boom generation. Known at this time as the Air Force Chaplain Service, a significant transition in Air Force population occurred from a force of almost all single men during World War Two into a growing percentage of families. As a result, with many remote area bases that did not have easy access to towns, chaplains sought to provide a faith community in on-base chapels that worshippers could call home. The Air Force Chaplain Service sought to provide the same opportunities and level of service that off-base churches and synagogues provided (Notes 2007).

Chaplains also led the moral training initiative to educate Airmen on how to conduct themselves (Jorgensen 1963:14). Moral/Ethical training has historically been important to military leaders because they recognize that the majority of their troops are in the lower ranks, are very young (18-24 years old), come from very diverse backgrounds (many times from undisciplined upbringings or with values that were considered to be wrong), and because they are living away from home in a dorm room with many youth their age who have money and time off on the weekend and can get into trouble and thus need guidance. Chaplains were expected to help mitigate these issues through unofficial and official means within the confines of the Air Force culture. Chaplains were the first and foremost professionals capable of addressing morality, living a good life and maintaining the ability to endure hardships.

A significant aid in implementing help for Airmen was the quality support the Chaplain Service received from the upper echelons of Air Force leadership. Many

## Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

senior leaders were Christian in identification if not in committed practice. A few years prior to the beginning of the Air Force, the senior general for the Army Air Corps, General Hap Arnold, stated that Airmen were not fit until they were spiritually fit and it is the chaplain's job to see that they were fit. General Arnold at one point in his life had considered making ministry a career. He was a strong supporter of chaplain initiatives and consulted his own chaplain regularly before making decisions (Jorgensen 1963:6).

Chaplains were also seen as contributing to airman morale by taking their strong understanding of right and wrong and applying it to international conflicts that could both educate Airmen and perhaps destabilize their enemies. Army General Dwight D. Eisenhower articulated this in a speech in the 1940s when he stated:

*our enemies [at that time, essentially any Communist country including Russia, China and North Korea as high priorities] are atheistic and Chaplains must be forceful and aggressive in presenting basic truths to maintain a free world* (Jorgensen 1963:41).

Even foreign leaders at time agreed with the same sentiment. The Chief of Staff of the South Korean Air Force believed that the antidote to fighting evil – even to winning the Korean War would only come from the Christian conversion of North Korea (Groh 1962:45). This is just one example of the importance many held to in this decade of the impact of religious worldviews on world affairs. It also illustrates the public understanding that some views were bad. Whether by conviction or conformity the American culture saw the importance and rightness of a biblical understanding and the necessity of finding truth. Religious faith was expressed and accepted in the public square, in part because of a majority religious worldview which, to a greater or lesser degree was Christian in nature.

### **3.2 1950s Care for Airmen and their Families**

#### **3.2.1 The Character Guidance Program**

The standout program for the Chaplain Service in the 1950s was the Character Guidance Program. Initiated in part in 1948 by Chief of Chaplains Charles



### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

Carpenter, it became part of a larger venture for the Chaplain Service which Chaplain Carpenter referred to as the "Six-Point Program", officially begun in 1950-1951. Much of what occurs in the military needs to be programmatized in order to see fruition. The concept of this program sought to provide the skills and benefits of chaplains through a robust system that could be implemented within the organizational structure of the Air Force. The Character Guidance Program was not strictly a chaplain's program but rather "an Air Force program in which the chaplain plays a specific role" (01050302 1956:1). It fell under the Six-Point Program which categorized all avenues of chaplain care into six main topics including: Worship & Pastoral Care, Religious and Moral Education, Counseling, Humanitarian Services, Cultural Activities, Public Relations (Groh 1990:87). A description of each element of the Six-Point Program follows.

Worship and Pastoral Care included conducting and providing services both in and outside of the chapel setting. Worship could be held in a field, on a flight line or other creative areas in order to manifest the call to bring God to people. Most worship services took place inside the chapel and many Air Force families attended due to a resurgence of religious interest post-World War Two, the proximity of the chapel to their residence and the ability they sensed the chaplain had to identify with their life. Pastoral Care revolved around being present. Chaplains were to be among their people throughout the week in workshops, in hospitals, on flight lines, in the maintenance shops, in the personnel offices, at the guard shacks and anywhere else that Airmen could be found the other six days of the week. Visitation afforded chaplains the opportunity to assess how people were implementing (or not) the teaching they had received on Sunday. Visitation also greatly strengthened the ability of Airmen to identify with their chaplain since chaplains saw where they worked, the conditions, sometimes even engaged in the work with them and at times spoke with superiors about how to better influence morale in that unit.

Religious and Moral Education also took place inside and outside of the chapel. Chaplains were responsible for seeing that both adults and children in the chapels were given quality Sunday school lessons in order to further instill the doctrine and lifestyle of their faith. At this time, the Air Force chapel community was essentially

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

made up of either Protestant (the vast majority), Catholic, or Jewish congregations. Many organizations within the chapel began during this time including Protestant Men of the Chapel (PMOC), Protestant Women of the Chapel (PWOC), and similar groups for those of the Catholic faith, youths, and other faiths as needed. Each group was expected to live out their faith. One example of how this was encouraged is found in a memo written by Chaplain Brigadier General Robert P. Taylor and sent Air Force-wide to clarify the goals of the Protestant Women of the Chapel. Among these activities were: "Worship and Bible Study, Evangelism and Missions, Christian nurture and Personal Growth, Stewardship and Service, and Christian Vocation and Citizenship" (01016450 1958:4). Part of the motivation for such groups was stated thus:

*In our materialistic society, besieged as we are by the blandishments of our several mass media, it is an ever-recurring challenge to resist joining a modern trend - the enthusiastic pursuit of mediocrity. It is therefore of primary importance that we take every opportunity to re-assess our values, revitalize and re-affirm our faith, and maintain in our homes and in our hearts corners of tranquility where our families, our friends, and we, ourselves may be briefly sheltered and depart spiritually refreshed" (01016450 1958:12).*

These groups were avenues for further training and service both to the chapel, the base and the community at large. From these groups came retreats, which were known by different titles such as "Spiritual Life Conferences". Moral education was at times categorized as what chaplains did outside of the chapel to those who were not part of their religious flock. Yet, chaplains contributed to moral development every Sunday through their sermons, leading of worship, and encouragement to build a chapel community (01050303 1952:19).

The "Character Guidance Program" served as another element to moral education. This Army and Air Force Program was created in order to counteract what was at times described as "moral flabbiness" (Groh 1990:87). Among the goals of this program was for the Air Force to "develop intelligent moral leadership" by promoting "personal responsibility" as the central theme of the program (01050303 1952:2). A

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

council of other career fields was to be created at each base, typically made up of a chaplain, a medical officer, the provost marshal and the unit personnel leader to address any local concerns or needs related to the implementation of the Character Guidance Program. A list of the most frequently encountered topics that chaplains counseled Airmen on were: Moral and Spiritual concerns, Housing, Financial worries, Domestic difficulties, Criminal violations, Career guidance, Social adjustment, Home sickness, and death of loved ones (01050303 1952:2). Military leaders saw their missions, operations and force readiness all negatively affected by Airmen who contracted venereal diseases, got in trouble, committed crimes, who caved under pressure in combat or in captivity (such as occurred with some prisoners of war during the Korean conflict 1950-1953), and who in general lived as if they did not have a strong moral foundation.

#### **3.2.2 Relationship of Religion to International Conflicts During the 1950s**

The Cold War between communists and democratic countries further elicited a strong sense in the United States military (and for many in the civilian sector as well) that moral character was crucial in the defense of the nation. It was believed by many that communist forces were immoral and atheistic and it was imperative for America as a whole to encourage a culture that opposed such ideas through a strong belief in God, typically from the Judeo-Christian framework. The Character Guidance Program grew to 60 lectures within a couple years from its onset. All of the lectures were agreed upon by the Protestant, Catholic and Jewish decision makers in its development. In a 1952 speech during an Air Force Personnel Services Conference in Washington D.C., then Chief of Chaplains Charles Carpenter repeatedly stated the necessity for religious health if the Air Force was going to be able to maintain the kind of quality people needed to conduct the nation's business:

*the primary thing is that the United States Air Force is going to have to accept a feeling of responsibility for the complete life of the personnel who are assigned to it. That is, physically, mentally and spiritually...It is a command responsibility...We would have less difficulty and move with a great deal of greater ease if this particular fact was acknowledged by all (0105303 1952:19).*

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

*The difference between a military group and a mob is discipline...The basis of that discipline is self-discipline and the greatest contributing factor to self-discipline is that which is offered by religion (0105303 1952:19).*

Chaplain Carpenter went on to state that having submitted oneself to God, it becomes easy to submit to human authorities and minimize rebellion. He was not suggesting that the religious become uncritical pawns, but rather that they follow what is right and good (0105303 1952:20).

The Chaplain for the Far East Air Forces, which encompassed Air Force bases in the Pacific Theater, gave a poetic and insightful description of how chaplains care for Airmen by describing their ministry in terms with which maintenance Airmen would be familiar:

*Chaplains are a part of every military organization for more reasons than can be related here, but he is also a Maintenance Officer of the mind, soul and spirit. As in the case of vehicles and equipment, we should perform our own 1st and 2nd echelon but too often the Chaplain's Technical inspection of us determines that a Depot job of comprehensive rebuild is necessary. Chaplains are the only Maintenance Officers that I have ever known who have never decided that disposal by salvage is required due to the item being beyond economical repair..." (01026653 1952:21).*

The importance of religion was echoed by non-chaplain leaders as well. In a letter dated December 21, 1953 the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Lieutenant General Emmett O'Donnell Jr. wrote to the Commander of the Air Defense Command notifying him that chaplains must be given direct access to their commanders because:

*The total resources of a strong Air Force include the powerful influences of religion, morals and morale. In this sensitive area, the Air Force expects much of its chaplains (01026653 1953:3).*

### 3.2.3 Pastoral Care for Airmen

The Chaplain Service as an organization stressed the importance of Chaplains being the moral guide for Airmen. From the 1940s until 1952 chaplains were given the responsibility of the personnel offices' visitation. When any new airman was assigned to the base, the personnel office would ensure their information was recorded for their files and it was a chaplain who would visit that single airman or airman family to welcome them to the base, to inform them of how they could connect with others and to ask them of any needs they might have. Chaplain Carpenter asserted that any time a new airman arrives at a base, his supervisor sits down with him and explains his duties and his expected contributions to the unit. It is assumed by too many in leadership, Chaplain Carpenter further explained that Airmen will just know the right thing to do. Airmen have moral expectations in addition to job expectations that are placed upon them. Who is there to talk them through that? They receive ongoing job training but who helps them develop their character so that they can grow morally? The chaplain can help guide them through one on one counseling, by inviting them to worship services and through many of the other offerings thus far mentioned in the Chaplain Service (01050303 1952:20).

The Chaplain Service served as reminders and educators of the foundations of American ideals which were tied to a Judeo-Christian understanding of the world. These concepts had become such a part of American culture, and the Air Force culture in particular that many people did not realize their origin. In a regularly delivered lecture given to chaplains at the first senior chaplain course titled "Americanism", the Chaplain Service described the religious underpinnings that color our culture:

*As to belief in God, there has always been the conviction that religion and freedom of the individual go together...our belief in a moral law...the belief in the dignity and worth of the individual...terminal value, not just instrumental value...belief in the equality of man (01050301 1955:6-9).*

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

Ironically, as important as religion was to the Air Force, a study of new recruits showed a disconnect between the ideal and reality. In a 1955 interview of 11,713 new recruits at Air Force Basic Training, the results showed that:

*45% claimed membership in a church or synagogue; 80% felt the need of more religion...for over 80%, religion was a vague matter (01050302 1956:4).*

Of significant concern to the Chaplain Service was the lack of moral development of the newer Airmen who would one day be leaders in the Air Force. These newer Airmen would be in senior positions by the early to mid-seventies which would be a significant negative turn for allowing religious truth to be taught to Airmen. In a 1956 speech presenting the Character Guidance Program to senior leaders in the Air Research and Development Command, Chaplain Colonel George S. Wilson remarked that today's recruits are:

*Thorough-going materialists and often their only criterion of behavior is expediency or utility. Their primary concern is not 'is it right or wrong?' but 'will I get caught?' (01050302 1956:5).*

Later on in the same speech, Chaplain Wilson connected the benefit of chaplains to address moral instruction and improvement of Airmen:

*God only knows how much good has been accomplished by the chaplains in the Character Guidance Lecture Program. I only know this – that when the chaplains on a base or in a Command have participated in the program with well-prepared and ably-presented lectures, attended by a large percentage of the Command – that there is a proportionate increase in attendance at religious services and a pronounced decrease in civilian and military offenses (01050302 1956:8).*

#### **3.2.4 Korean War Era Ministry**

The effects of the Korean War (June 1950 – July 1953) left an indelible mark on the importance of integrity for Air Force leadership. Of the 7,860 military who became either prisoners of war (POWs) or were categorized as missing in action (MIAs) 908

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

of them were Air Force members who endured incredible suffering during their time of captivity:

*The prisoners throughout communist Korea faced brutal torture, random genocide, lack of food, absence of medical aid, and inhuman treatment, which became a familiar daily struggle of survival. Under these conditions men committed acts inconsistent with their character. Everyone was forced to deal with the external and internal pressures of confinement for which they were not adequately trained. Washington was perplexed at the number of men who participated in collaborating with the enemy or conducted acts against fellow POWs. An investigation took place to these alleged accusations and became validated. A plan was needed to prevent this from reoccurring in future conflicts (Daland 2011:1).*

After years of development and thought, a “Code of Conduct” for wartime and capture was developed to list and clarify how American military members were expected to conduct themselves. In August of 1955 it became law that every military person would adhere to the code. Teaching the code of conduct to Airmen was not exclusively a chaplain mission but chaplains were relied upon heavily to teach it to Airmen (Brucatro 1981:9).

#### **3.2.5 Beginnings of Change**

The decade ended with trends that could be confusing to some. Which direction, spiritually speaking, would the Chaplain Service go in order to care for Airmen? There was growing religious diversity in America and an upcoming generation of youth that appeared less interested in formal religious worship and religion than their parents had been. In addition, mental health professionals gained significant input into chaplain counseling techniques. A marriage counseling course for Catholic chaplains at Catholic University and another for Protestant chaplains at the Hogg Foundation, University of Texas, were inaugurated in 1956 (Groh 1962:17). Perhaps ironically, it was stated multiple times in the chapel regulations that no secular activities would be held there even though secular thought was allowed for chaplain training and chaplain counseling (Groh 1962:145). It is also worth noting that psychologists were not expected or mandated to be taught how to counsel from the

## Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

Bible and other religions, to pray with their “clients” as they are called in mental health, nor to adopt the religious perspective as the professional and best way to counsel. Yet, chaplains were expected to imbibe and absorb secular psychological techniques and beliefs with the implicit assumption that their religion was inadequate when compared with the verified results of “science”.

In the midst of it all, the Chaplain Service was convinced that for the most part Air Force leaders saw the connection between morality and military efficiency which was immensely strengthened by the contributions of chaplains (Groh 1962:108). By the end of the decade, due to a changing of mission tempo in the Air Force and because it was felt that the Character Guidance Program lectures were getting a bit dated, it was deemed important that a new program take its place. In 1957 the Dynamics of Moral Leadership became the venue through which character training would take place in order to:

*keep military personnel aware of those principles of moral leadership which are essential to the accomplishment of the Air Force mission (Jorgensen 1963:255).*

This program had fewer lectures than the previous program. Chaplains gave quarterly lectures to three different groups (divided into officers up to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, Non-Commissioned Officers and enlisted personnel) (Jorgensen 1963:255). As the decade progressed, chaplains continued to be viewed as the expert go-to person for instilling morality and character into Airmen.

### **3.3 1960s Care for Airmen and their Families**

#### **3.3.1 The Moral Leadership Program**

The 1960s began with strong endorsement of chaplain programs by Air Force leadership but this quickly waned with the onset of a vast religious lethargy and often times a reaction against organized religion. The “Moral Leadership Program” which began in 1961, was in many ways a continuation of the programs the Chaplain Service had conducted in the past. Training the next generation of Airmen to be people of character had been part and parcel of chaplain ministry since the inception



### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

of the Air Force. With the onset of the 1960s, that position of influence to train young Airmen began to wane. Moral Leadership:

*met growing opposition. In fact, the whole effort was cancelled on July 1, 1966 for all personnel except those in basic training, technical schools, the officer candidate school, and WAF [Women's Air Force] instruction. During the first six months of 1960, chaplains presented a total of 1,302 moral leadership lectures to 102,000 people. (Scharlemann 1972:15).*

Attendance at seminars plummeted since this was the first time that it was no longer mandatory for most Airmen to attend them. It is noteworthy that the Air Force would regularly mandate rather than simply provide any training it deemed necessary to maintaining a ready force. The fact that moral character training was no longer mandatory signaled a loss of the belief in religious transcendence, the loss of a unifying worldview and a growing practice of favoring the myth of the separation (versus "distinction") of church and state. The Chaplain Service responded by trying to make distinctions between themselves and the military culture and focus more on church renewal and offering what could be considered to be a more pastorally engaged approach. The adjournment and after-effects of the Second Vatican Council December 8, 1965 helped drive this as well. As a result of this council the Catholic Church expressed greater receptivity towards those who were not Catholic. One significant intent of the Catholic Church was to figuratively open the doors of the church to include more people and recognize that God can and does connect with and save some who are outside of the Catholic Church. Another intent was for the church to be distinct yet engaged with the world. Air Force Regulation 265-1 of 2 September 1966 was revised and for the first time a reference to spiritual renewal was included as being connected with the chaplain program (Dierker 1997:99).

#### **3.3.2 Care Amidst Drugs, Vietnam and Daily Life**

At the same time, Airmen sought out chaplains because the challenges and difficulties of military life affected them. The Air Force's increasing involvement in the Vietnam conflict led many Airmen into situations of suffering, injury, captivity, death, witnessing of death and destruction where they could choose to seek refuge

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

in God, or in something or someone else. The Air Force chaplain history from the 1960s is replete with many ways in which chaplains contributed to maintaining and building Airmen who could handle the challenges of the Vietnam conflict. A chaplain activity report from Binh Thuy Air Base from the summer of 1968 is representative of how this was accomplished. Protestant and Catholic services were conducted weekly. Anywhere from 58 to 120 Airmen would show for a service. Offerings were collected to donate to a school program led by a local Vietnamese church. In addition, 300 pounds of clothes and 50 pounds of food were collected and donated to the local Catholic Church for distribution to refugees (01021272 1968:1).

Illegal drug use increased drastically during this timeframe and it affected the military culture as well. Many sought help from the chaplain because chaplains are bound to secrecy, no matter what is said because they are the only ones in the military with “privileged communication”. Airmen knew that what they shared would be kept in confidence and not relayed to base law enforcement. One chaplain at McChord Air Force Base in the state of Washington described why many Airmen were involved in drugs:

*Most of these kids are looking for some kind of escape. I would say the most used word in our conversation is, ‘I’m bored...with the way the military goes...with my room...with the food...with my life’ (K141.32054.356 1967:4).*

Chaplains combatted drug use through counseling and by encouraging Airmen to be part of something larger – a worshipping community in the chapel or outside the gate of the base in a civilian parish. One of the counter-intuitive truths of biblical faith is that humans often don’t need more, they need less. The theology of sacrifice, laying down one’s cross and service provided a powerful antidote to a generation that at times suffered from having been given too much comfort, material goods and leisure time with little to no guidance other than to seek their own interests. Many chaplains at remote sites delivered the “Insite Program” to Airmen to discuss and educate them about current issues such as alcohol and pornography and how to make wise decisions that will not harm their body or soul (Scharlemann 1972:104). Because of the often strong relationship among clergy, be they military or civilian, chaplains were

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

able to harness the resources of organizations outside the military to help Airmen. Some chaplains used the national Christian non-profit organization “Teen Challenge” which specialized in assisting those with drug and alcohol addictions to help free Airmen from that destructive behavior and to live a life honoring to Christ (Scharlemann 1972:64).

Chaplains still continued the home visitation program as another means of meeting people where they were in life and ministering to them. The chaplain would visit at least every family that indicated interest in the chapel and their faith (typically Protestant) (K484.706 1968:1).

Chaplains provided multiple avenues in which to foster community and expression of faith in God. Faith was not treated as an esoteric term, but as a belief system that must be acted upon. In accordance with that, chaplains hosted local orchestras and choirs to perform at chapels, started choirs among their Airmen, taught pre-seminary and pre-marriage courses, collected designated offerings to help those in need, used chapels as distribution centers to help people during disasters and organized spiritual fitness programs for the enhancement of the faith of their flock (Scharlemann 1972:56, 57, 117, 142, 116).

#### **3.3.3 Teaching the Next Generation of the Importance of Chaplains**

Chaplain Scharlemann, the historian for the Chaplain Service for the decade of the 1960s prepared a solid summation of the importance of chaplains and their necessity for a populace that lives with God as their foundation:

*The presence of chaplains in the military structure testifies that the Air Force, like the nation it serves, is committed to the position that life's ultimate issues are not determined by national law or military directive, but by the religious outlook and values of the individual citizen (Scharlemann 1972:20).*

*It would be a mistake to assume that men can reach a meaningful understanding of their existence by means of mere rational analysis or by the force of technological progress...chaplains serving in the Air Force kept proclaiming to all who would hear that the greatest calamity that can befall men is to face themselves in a world without*

*God. Chaplains sounded a firm note, reminding men and women that a nation is neither secure nor free unless the Lord is its God (Scharlemann 1972:25).*

### **3.4 1970s Care for Airmen and their Families**

With the dawn of a new decade, the Chaplain Service continued a holistic approach of care at home station and in war zones. Chaplains ministered through counseling, work-place and home visitation, chapel programs, worship services, building a community of faith, humanitarian outreach, community outreach and relationships, advising leaders on how to improve care for Airmen and their families, leading retreats and other events, educating Airmen and families at chapel and base seminars, assisting with refugee efforts (such as finding housing for 1300 Vietnamese refugees at Andersen Air Force Base and in Guam during Operation New Life in 1975) (1016436 1975:1). Chaplains continued to be recognized as the moral experts and were required by Air Force Regulation 50-31, Moral Leadership (October 24, 1969), at the request of the commander, to deliver moral leadership training to Airmen, mainly during their first year of service. The Chief of Chaplains' office was responsible for providing training materials. (Groh 1986:609)

#### **3.4.1 Adult Values Education**

A vast shift in philosophy for the broader American culture, which in turn affected the Air Force significantly altered the character training of Airmen in the 1970s. Up to this point, the mindset from the culture at large and Air Force leadership had been that the intent of the official training that chaplains gave to Airmen was for the purpose of instilling in Airmen the knowledge, training and desire to conform to that which was right. The intent was to help create or grow Airmen of character and mold them to a certain standard. A new program introduced in 1974, known as "Adult Values Education" immediately pointed to a shift of thought by its very title. Chaplain Service Historian John Groh described the new program as:

*a developmental program with a person-centered approach that sought to meet people in their life situations, and help them take charge of their own living and learning. "Discovering self, taking charge of one's life, becoming more responsible to*

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

*self, becoming more accountable to others"--these were the goals of the new AVE [Adult Value Education] programs...Some suggested that the ML [the previous Moral Leadership program] program was institutionally-oriented, authoritarian, a program that portrayed the chaplain as a transmitter of social and cultural values. The new AVE program, in contrast, was portrayed as person-oriented, non-authoritarian, involving the chaplain as a facilitator who assisted the individual in identifying and clarifying values. (1986:611-612).*

Thus there was a decreased emphasis on telling Airmen how to live, and instead helping them discover how they wanted to live in the Adult Values Education Program. Chaplains still retained the right to represent their respective denominations in any training they would give, though that has been an on-going area of discussion in the chaplaincy. Some military members and some military chaplains believe that a chaplain should only speak from their faith perspective during a faith-specific event, whereas other military members and chaplains believe that they always represent their respective faith group and thus must pray in accordance with that whether in public or private settings.

The literature of the new program stated that "the maturity and self-responsibility of Air Force members had to be assumed," which in the 1990s Air Force program would be described thus: "people are good." Until the 1970s, and a specific report commissioned by the Chief of Chaplains to validate the Adult Values Program, it was not assumed or stated that people are inherently good (Krieger 1997:102). This was another important shift in Air Force culture. Most chaplains had taught that people are depraved. That is, they are flawed. They do good things, but their thoughts and deeds are twisted towards selfishness and other vices. As a result of this teaching, there was a need for reliance upon God in order to help people change and save them and others from themselves. With the introduction of the Adult Values Program, the optimism of human purity and the denial of depravity at work in every human heart communicated that God was less important if not irrelevant. If people are inherently good, there is no need to save them or change them other than for another human to have control over them. This in turn lessened the importance of the content that chaplains provided since for most chaplains, awareness and

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

understanding of one's sin is crucial to understanding the need for God, training in morality, and instruction on what is right and what is wrong. The chaplain would now be more of a facilitator than an instructor (Krieger 1997:104). In the midst of such changes, chaplains continued to reach out to Airmen and their families and teach them through various means. Chaplain John Singletary described ministry during this time as:

*a broad family ministry...You have everything a local church has. You have men's programs, you have single Airmen, you have wives' programs, choirs, Sunday school, vacation bible school, ladies retreats, men's retreats just like you have at a local church...coffeehouse...summer camps* (Singletary 2003:1).

#### **3.4.2 The Importance of God During Captivity and Torture in Vietnam**

It is ironic that in the midst of a lessening of moral absolutes in official training stateside, many Airmen captured by the Vietcong during the Vietnam War absolutely clung to God. The Air Force would eventually become familiar with the fact that though they had not trained their people for capture, the church had trained many of them before they even entered the military. As prisoners of war returned in the early 1970s, chaplains were fully engaged with the returnees of the total 508 Airmen who had been imprisoned or were still missing in action (Air Force Personnel Center 2014:1), their families, with those whose loved one did not return, and with helping people return to a normal life. A few chaplains interviewed and studied the experiences of the prisoners of war and produced a report for the Air Force on their findings. Stories abounded of church services in cellblocks, one of the prisoners being appointed the chaplain for the group, and writing Bible verses on toilet paper to have some written text. The impact and benefit of religion stood out in the report:

*Summarizing their findings, the chaplain researchers concluded that "the spiritual life of these POWs did much to develop an inner strength or reservoir to face the threats of loneliness, fear, punishment, and disappointment"* (Groh 1986:45).

*Their second conclusion was that the early religious training of the prisoners was extremely important: To develop the virtues of patience, courage, perseverance, and*

*hope that were so important in prison life, the POW fell back to the religious training of home and church, to the practices and hymns of early family life, and to the Christian teachings on suffering and pain (Groh 1986:46).*

*Their third conclusion centered on the chaplain's ministry to flying personnel. "The debriefings studied," they wrote, contained no mention of any spiritual direction or guidance given by chaplains to aircrew members. Although this establishes no ground for any inference that chaplains have been ineffective in their ministry to aircrew members (it must be remembered that the debriefings did not address this subject), it does serve as a point of challenge to chaplains to develop a program and an active ministry for the flying personnel they serve" (Groh 1986:46).*

### **3.4.3 The NOW Program**

The Chaplain Service historically responds to perceived gaps in ministry care and the needs of the Air Force such as those mentioned above. Taking into consideration these two factors, in the 1970s the Chaplain Service invested their ministry skills into new avenues. Chaplain Major William Jacobs was the first director of an Air Force Drug Abuse Course at Lackland Air Force Base (00910015 1971:5). The Chaplain Service began its own "NOW" initiative as a transition in programming. Instead of a multi-year character training program, annual themes were developed (the first year was the "NOW Man" in 1970 followed by Family, then Church, then the World (01034011 1970:6). To enhance the NOW program, the Chaplain Service collected feedback from mini-conferences held by chaplains on every Air Force Base on the issues with which Airmen and their families were dealing. The categories that were listed, in no particular order were:

*Commitment to values and life-styles of the past, The family as a self-existent entity, The shifting seat of authority in the family, The problem of increasing leisure time, The problem of affluence, The problem of mass media influences, The problem of permissiveness, The military as ghetto, Unique problems of military life, Strengths and values of military life, and Solutions offered to problems of contemporary military family life (00910016 1971:2).*

The proposed solutions included increasing family solidarity and increasing communication.

#### **3.4.4 Emphasis on Families**

Amidst the changes in programming and the role of chaplains came an interesting quote in the preface to the December 1970 edition to the Air Force's Airman Magazine by then Chief of Staff of the Air Force General John D. Ryan who cited the numerous stressors to Airmen and their families at home and abroad and then went on to say:

*Without the spiritual resources and moral fiber that our Chaplains have helped to nurture within the family unit, these pressures could be unendurable (01034011 1970:2).*

In a summary of reports from chaplains in the Military Airlift Command (MAC), a number of chaplains listed some of the significant problems and proposed solutions for the marriage and family difficulties in the Air Force:

*One area in which Chaplains can work effectively is in teaching the traditional spiritual values concerning matrimony.....The counseling cases I have dealt with have been the result of marriage at too young an age, immaturity, lack of preparation, and selfishness on the part of one or both partners.....The one serious difficulty I would venture to mention is the failure to accept the Christian responsibilities of marriage as pretty well spelled out in the Scriptures. This very often is brought about by a lack of sincere preparation for marriage on the part of the spouses. Of course we have the constant problem of youthful marriages as well as quick marriages, but I believe if we look for a unique problem today (in or out of the military), the finger can be pointed in the direction of responsibility.....We have too many Chaplains witnessing marriages without adequate preparation on the part of the spouses. There is no challenge to the spouses. It is very often too easy for them to get married (01050299 1976:5).*



### **3.4.5 New Initiatives**

In spite of the challenges, the Chaplain Service developed further means for building and maintaining Airmen of integrity. Two chaplains were chosen to travel on Air Force Drug teams throughout the world to teach Airmen about the negative effects of drugs (00910015 1971:6). They conducted seminars to combat alcohol abuse (K141.32054-355 1976:11). Chaplains created and executed the “MAST” (Married Airmen Sharing Together) Program across many bases to strengthen marriages (01026594 1975:24). Chaplains stressed their still relevant role because “people” were the largest expense for the military, more than half of every dollar spent (01026594 1975:26). During the Vietnam conflict, many aircrews were concerned with the possibility of death and chaplains spent hours praying with them (Groh 1986:34). Chaplains led retreats for the family members of prisoners of war and were heavily involved in counseling, providing religious rites and even a marriage vow renewal for returning prisoners of war (Groh 1986:36, 43).

Jewish Chaplains in their Religious Education curriculum stressed that their religion was for all of life (01021270 1976:1). The Chaplain Service saw their religious faith as touching on every facet of life and chose as their theme for 1977-1978 “Ministering: A Way Of Living” (01021269 1978:14).

Yet, for all of the ministry initiatives, the Chaplain Service continued to reach out to secular counselors to be trained by them. Some chaplains saw this as positive, while other chaplains critiqued that the training was not biblical enough (Groh 1986:465).

### **3.4.6 Teaching the Next Generation of the Importance of Chaplains**

Though there were concerns of Chaplain Service identity, there was respect for the unique role and religious care that chaplains provide. Chief of Staff General Charles Gabriel (writing in the 1980s to describe the work of the chaplains in the 1970s up to 1986) stated:

*The values that sustain a life of public service flow largely from our religious heritage...The life of faith is a central element of effective leadership. Chaplains play*

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

*an important role in our community and are essential to the moral and spiritual well-being of our people. Their most urgent responsibility is to move among us as visible reminders of God, calling us by presence, work, and action to live as responsible persons, citizens of "one nation, under God." (Groh 1986:iii).*

Chaplain, Major General Roy Terry, Chief of Chaplains from 1970-1974 also focused the Chaplain Service on their unique and divine relationship:

*We cannot leave out our theology and just psychologize people – we lose relevance...many institutions could do an even better job than religious institutions in many of the tasks that we have accepted as a part of our ministry today, but there is no other institution that has the message of redemption, a message of hope. We must not forget that. Our hope is God (Groh 1986:101).*

Ministers have served as a prophetic voice throughout their service to warriors. Chaplains proclaimed the supremacy of God over government while obeying the rules of their government as long as they were not in conflict with their faith. The military structure often fixated on how to solve world problems with a “cannot fail” attitude. In contrast, chaplains and ministers alone tend to be the only voices that would speak of someone saving us other than ourselves. Among the reminders of God’s Sovereignty over human affairs came this sermon that was delivered inside the Pentagon, the headquarters for the United States military in Washington D.C. during regularly scheduled services known as “The Pentagon Pulpit”:

*I don't believe that the military is going to save the world. I don't think any country is going to save the world; indeed, I don't know of any country in this world, including ours, that doesn't need to be saved itself. I guess that's why we are here this morning, because we know the Somebody who saves...In this assembly this morning it doesn't make any difference what your rank was or is. We're all standing at the foot of His cross because we all have the same position of need for what He has to give by what he did (01034012 1975:1).*

### **3.5 1980s Care for Airmen and their Families**

#### **3.5.1 Pastoral Care for Airmen and their Families**

The Adult Values Education program continued up until 1988. It was also known as “Values Clarification”, a further indication of the formal emphasis on personal values rather than absolute values. The program was not in favor of anarchism. It did expect certain norms and standards to be upheld, yet it did place a strong emphasis on the individual clarifying their own values. In 1988 however, the program was no longer deemed effective, though it would continue until 1993 until the “Core Values Program” came into being (Krieger 1997:99).

In spite of the huge ramifications of the court case *Katcoff vs. Marsh* in 1979 mentioned in chapter three, section 4.6.2, chaplains continued quality ministry. Some were tentative in light of the recent public legal challenge to the military chaplaincy but overall, ministry continued to address current needs from a religious foundation. Chaplain, Colonel William D. Franks stressed the holistic nature of chaplain ministry in a 1981 interview, stating that chaplains are present for so many “firsts” in Airmen’s lives. They are there for their first time away from home, first (and hopefully only) marriage, first child, first job, and numerous other milestones for young Americans who were cut off from their home communities due to distance (Franks 1981:17). Chaplains were agents of change in regards to those who were more marginalized for various reasons. Chaplains had counseled Airmen on a diverse array of topics throughout the existence of the air force. One such topic that was not new to chaplains was the topic of homosexuality. Chaplains had been counseling and seeking to help Airmen and dependents if needed in this area. There are records of chaplains dealing with those practicing homosexuality from the 1950s up to the present. In 1981, Chaplain Colonel Robert Hendricks stated the role chaplains had played:

*While we still on the books basically have the same approach to that sexual lifestyle, we’ve seen a lot of change and I think there’s more willingness on the part of chaplains and people in command to try to deal with people of this lifestyle in a more caring kind of way (Hendricks 1981:18).*

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

Chapel sermons were used to proclaim God's word into the daily lives of Airmen and their families. A publication of "Best Air Force Sermons" for 1985 listed sermons on such topics as Humility, Conversion, Kingdom-Eyes, Love Your Enemies, A Mature Faith, The Lord's Prayer, Aids: The New Leprosy and on hearing the Word of the Lord (01119037 1985:1). Chapel communities in turn created numerous avenues for growth and care. A worship bulletin from Tempelhof Chapel from 1984 in Germany lists what was standard practice for chapels across the Air Force: prayer meetings, Bible studies, worship, music, teaching, financial contributions to help others and spiritual growth (Tempelhof 1984:1).

#### **3.5.2 The Family Support Handbook Initiative**

In 1981 The Chief of Chaplains office developed "A Handbook in Support of Family Life" as part of continuing the growth of support for airman families compared with the early Air Force that had been comprised mostly of singles. The handbook discussed data, findings and yet reminded its readers that people are not ultimately defined by statistics.

*Religious faith and spiritual values are essential parts of positive family life. The strength of many families is influenced by their faith in a living God...The profile of families is not complete until we include the faith by which they live (01050333 1981:1).*

The handbook lists commonalities of the conceptions that different religions have with regard to family (including Islam and Buddhism) such as the concept of covenant and also clarified distinctions but seeks its foundation of family beliefs from a Judeo-Christian heritage. Among the key components of family that they describe from a Judeo-Christian worldview are:

*All important relations occur within a covenantal framework...the basic covenant relation is that between God and His people...[marriage in particular is characterized by] monogamy and fidelity (01050333 1981:3ff).*

The handbook, as a response to the "Families in Blue" sociological study conducted by the Air Force aimed to affect change in the family issues (divorce, parenting

issues, and marriage issues) the report cited. The handbook noted the immense importance of religious faith outside of anything that sociological studies could highlight or fix:

*Almost every faith perspective which we have described contains elements which could be described as transcendent dimensions of marriage and family...Most religious traditions think of family as the basic unit of community, but for theological reasons, not just sociological ones...Family has a divine vocation or calling...Marriage is the 'school' of community created by God...the family is essential to the existence of religious communities themselves...The opposite is also true. Religious families would not exist apart from the support, the nurture and identity of the faith family of which they are a part (01050333 1981:53).*

### **3.5.3 Diverse Ministry**

At Pacific Air Force Bases where inter-racial marriages were frequent, with some bases listing that almost half of their married Airmen were married to Asian women, chaplains sought creative ways to help. The chaplains at Osan Air Base, South Korea created a Phase 1 and Phase 2 program for ministering to those in inter-racial marriages, both pre and post-marriage. Singles were not left out either through ministries such as "PCS" (Positive Christian Singles) who met two to three times per week for Bible study, recreation, dinners and fellowship (01050304 1980:2). Perhaps due to all of the cultural changes, the influence of secular counseling in the Chaplain Service, court cases challenging the legitimacy of the chaplaincy and the decreasing honor given to religion in popular culture, some chaplains, more often the younger chaplains at times wanted to specialize and see themselves as a 'counselor' but not as a preacher. More seasoned chaplains such as Chaplain Colonel Newton V. Cole, the 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force Staff Chaplain, viewed that as a mistake and cautioned a different approach for any chaplain who would hold to that perspective:

*People still want a chaplain to be a preacher, a teacher, a counselor, a pastor; those four basic roles have not changed...No, I don't want to [be] categorized in any way. I want to be a chaplain...I'm sorry for him [chaplains who view themselves as specialists] because I don't think he really comprehends his total calling...People*

*want a pastor; they want a pastor who is [a] man of God. They want a person who has a special sense of calling...regardless of what his particular church tradition is (01129618 1981:13-14).*

### **3.5.4 Relationship of Religion to International Conflicts During the 1980s**

Advising leadership is a key component of chaplain ministry. Sometimes this is well-received and other times it is not. The 1980s were a time of heightened awareness and concern for the uncertainty of the direction the Cold War was going, predominantly between self-avowedly atheistic Russian Communism and American Democracy which upheld a strong belief in God (though neither side would be consistently monolithic in these beliefs). At times, chaplains stated that geo-political ideologies and actions inherently come from religious beliefs:

*Atheism is not something accidentally added on to communism, but an intrinsic part of its doctrine...hence communism poses a complete break with the Judeo-Christian heritage...in communism, morality is subordinated to the class struggle and whatever promotes the communist cause becomes 'moral' (Blatz 1987:11).*

*Communism is a false secular religion with pseudo-psychological explanations of the great verities of life, such as the creation, life on earth and the world to come (Blatz 1987:21).*

Chaplain, Colonel Stuart Barstad expanded this perception to call people back to God in the midst of any perceived crisis whether it be the fear of war or something more personal. In a February 1982 speech at a National Prayer Breakfast he stated there are crises everywhere including war, drugs, violence, economic concerns and more, but:

*There is a far more serious crisis in our world and it has to do with the very basic issue of life. The question of what life is all about...I am talking about the loss of a sense of moral order in the universe...If this is all there is to it (life) then the cynics, the pleasure seekers, and the suicides are right...The Founding Fathers tied their responsibility for life into an awareness of their relationship with the Creator. It is the*

*spiritual dimension of life which really clarifies what morality is all about...Sometimes we forget what it means to be created in the image of God (Barstad 1982:2).*

Advising to leadership was further stressed by Chaplain Edward A. Beckstrom who wrote to educate the entire Air Force Chaplain Service on the confidential aspects of their ministry in detailing “privileged communication”, by which he meant the description in Department of Defense and Air Force regulations of a chaplain’s responsibility to maintain secrecy (confidentiality) no matter what the topic with a counselee.

Chaplain Beckstrom further cited two quotations of note to stress the uniqueness and importance of the chaplain as moral guide in an age where personal values seemed to be more popular:

*The minister is supposed to represent the highest in ethics and morals. His business deals with right and wrong, the ethical and unethical (Jones 1979:VII).*

*If we believe in sin—as I do—we believe in our personal responsibility for trying to correct it...We can lean on our brother professionals, the clergy, who have the biggest task of all. They will do their duty best if they are not denied the respect, the affection, and the cooperation of the rest of us. Not every man or woman is strong enough and brave and intelligent enough to be a minister, a priest, a rabbi. But these are our moral leaders and they must lead. We must follow and help (Menninger 1978:220).*

### **3.6 1990s Care for Airmen and their Families**

#### **3.6.1 Further Changes in Moral Education**

Chaplains had taught one or more sections of the Adult Values Education program delivering a level one seminar at basic training sites and then a level two seminar at technical training bases while also providing retreats, dinners and other means of a more holistic ministry (01101715 1990:1). In 1992, Air Force Regulation 50-31, which was the regulation authority for chaplains delivering Adult Values Education training, came under review by the legal system and it was determined that there

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

was no legal basis for "any form of compulsory religious or moral training conducted under the aegis of the chaplain" (History 1992). Following this decision, the Office of the Chief of Chaplains asked for the regulation to be rescinded (effective March 24, 1992) (Nickelson 2007:138). Some viewed this as a move that would hamper chaplain ministry, but more importantly a move that would have negative effects upon the culture of the Air Force. One critic of the new approach stated:

*None of us want to go to untrained doctors, or fly with untrained pilots, or have untrained soldiers protect our country, but for some reason we have come to believe that one can be a good person without any training in goodness* (Kilpatrick 1993:25).

It seemed that morality was an individual preference that required little training, education or reflection, yet the Chaplain Service still spoke to the ethical realm from the foundations of their respective faiths. In the 1995 Force Size analysis, there were six core wartime processes recognized for the Chaplain Service. The fifth process was "religious, ethical and quality of life advisement" (Nickelson 2007:145). Chaplains continued to provide their core competencies of spiritual care and ethical leadership and to deliver their three core processes of religious observances, pastoral care and advising leadership (Global Ministry 1999:1).

#### **3.6.2 Pastoral Care for Airmen and their Families**

By the time the 1990s came to an end, the Air Force would become much more expeditionary in nature and the Chaplain Service would adjust to a more expeditionary (fewer major conflicts, but lots of contingency operations and short-term missions) ministry construct. The advent of the Gulf War in 1991 and the conflict in the Balkans a few years later contributed to driving discussion on different ministry models. Three approaches were recognized: the parish model (focused on ministering in the chapel), the deployment model (focused on ministering in deployed locations) and the industrial model (focused on ministering in the units) (Nickelson 2007:26).

However, it was wing-level ministry, which focused most of its attention on the centrality of the chapel flowing from that to ministry to units, that dominated the focus



### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

of the Chaplain Service (Nickelson 2007:130). It was through wing-level ministry that, as had happened in the 1980s, the Office of the Chief of Chaplains was asked, this time by the Secretary of Defense in 1993 to produce a study on issues Airmen and their families were facing with recommendations for how to solve these issues (History 1993). The study addressed many issues, including marriage, stress, pregnancy, divorce, finances, family services, substance abuse, and other issues that could affect the quality and retention rate of Airmen ready to defend their nation. The study was submitted on 23 September 1993. It listed the programs that were being conducted at the wing-level by chaplains for first-term enlistees (a group of high interest to senior leaders, so as to get the newest members of the Air Force off to a good start in the military). Among the programs were:

Life-Builders luncheons, Hearts Apart groups, Right Start Orientation programs, Marriage Preparation and Enrichment programs, commander's/first sergeant's luncheons and breakfasts, and Mothers legacy programs...seminars on intercultural marriage, Christian life training, coping with change and transition, and mentoring (History 1993).

### **3.6.3 The Core Values Program**

#### **3.6.3.1 Challenges to the Chaplain Service**

In 1993, the "Core Values Program" replaced "Adult Values Education". In the four-day guru training sessions ("guru" was the term the Air Force used), it was made clear that it was more directive in nature than the previous program, listing core values that were expected to be upheld by all Airmen and were chosen with functionality, not necessarily ethics or morals in mind, yet without trying to fundamentally re-work attendees' values and moral code (Dierker 1997:166-167). Originally, in the early 1990s six core values were chosen: integrity, courage, competence, tenacity, service, and patriotism. By January of 1995, there were three: integrity, service before self and excellence in all we do (Dunford 1997:1, 3).

This was also the first time in Air Force history that chaplains had become less than the main (and often only) advisor to the commander with regard to values-related

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

programs and initiatives. The Core Values program added social actions officers and other individuals to advise the commander and contribute to the development of the program and there was "no identified role for the chaplain in the current initiative" (Krieger 1997:169, 172). The six core values the Air Force would now expect everyone to adhere to were "integrity, competence, courage, tenacity, patriotism, and service" (Krieger 1997:108). Each term was defined in the *Foundations For Quality: Air Force Core Values - Personal Application Handbook* (Appendix C). The definitions of certain terms, such as integrity and tenacity are precursors to themes that would eventually be picked up in the Air Force resiliency training of the 21st century. The Core Values program sought to inculcate Airmen into a certain standard but in a significant change of approach it did not give as much credence to the impact religion could have on core value training as did previous programs:

*...since the current Air Force Core Values initiative states that character development is not a goal, practically no reference is made to religious or spiritual aspects with the exception of such statements as 'regardless of our religious views, [we] must recognize their functional importance and accept them for that reason' (Dierker 1997:164).*

The lead Air Education and Training Command (AETC) training representative for the core values training, Lieutenant Colonel Dunford was asked if it was unusual or strange that chaplains were not being included in delivering the training much at all since chaplains have historically been the advisor to the commander on values and "character related initiatives". He responded that this initiative was not based on functions or "being stove-piped" (Dierker 1997:79).

#### **3.6.3.2 Support for Chaplain Involvement in Values Education**

The chaplains had their supporters as well. Major General Jerry White wrote in the 1996 summer issue of *Airpower Journal* that:

*We need to help our people build an internal moral compass, utilizing the Chaplain corps for that purpose. We need to encourage and enable our chaplains to teach spiritual principles of ethical behavior, not just philosophy, from the viewpoint of their*

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

*religious beliefs. The Ten Commandments and the book of Proverbs are a good place to begin, since they contain tenets accepted by almost all faiths. We certainly should not coerce people into religious instruction, but we can and should encourage them. I emphasize this aspect because religious belief calls for an integral transformation rather than just a change in behavior. Interestingly, hardly any secular literature even mentions religious instruction as part of the solution-a puzzling exclusion in view of the impressive historical place such instruction holds in forming the moral concepts of our nation (White 1996:96).*

Chaplains were eventually included in the development and teaching of the Core Values Program (Dierker 1997:167). Chief of Chaplains Donald J. Harlin, previous to this stressed the importance of the spiritual realm in an interview on August 4, 1992 stating that chaplains are the ones in the military institution who are interested and care about the spiritual dimension (Groh 1992:4).

Chaplain Harlin visited European militaries with the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Merrill McPeak in the early 90s and commented that it was significant that the Chief of Staff saw the importance of bringing him, a chaplain, along in addition to valuing the impact of religion in his life and throughout the trip. Chaplain Harlin further commented on the tenacity of religious faith as he saw it in former Soviet satellite countries that had attempted to wipe out religion:

*You can't eradicate faith from the hearts of people. Yet it [communism] tried to do so and in so doing the faith or religion of these people became so intertwined with their culture that to try to remove their faith was to try to remove their cultural identity. It was to strike a blow at their souls, at the soul of the nation, the soul of the people (Groh - Harlin interview 1992:7).*

#### **3.6.4 Continuing Diverse Ministry**

Chaplains meanwhile ministered all over the world aiding in crucial positive impacts to the Air Force mission through personal engagement. Chaplains helped build relationships with locals in deployed settings to represent the United States well (Cannon 1991:2), helped with physical and counseling needs to victims of the

Khobar Tower bombing at Dhahran Saudi Arabia on June 25th, 1996 (History 1996), led worship services throughout the world, counseled Airmen and their families through joys, tragedies, and everything in between, and built communities of faith through their religious ministry that addressed the necessity of God as the foundation for every area of life.

### **3.7 21st Century Care for Airmen and their Families**

#### **3.7.1 Ministry Emphasizing War and Crisis Care**

The 21st century quickly became a time of long deployments, a constant warfighting mentality and the ensuing responses by caregivers, including chaplains. Worship services, visitation, counseling, religious accommodation, advising leadership and more of the traditional capabilities of chaplains were depended on stateside and overseas in numerous deployed environments. Chaplains also cared for the wounded, sick and dying in hospitals around the world. Chaplains ministered in many countries in the Middle East and on other continents, though Iraq and Afghanistan were the focus. The importance of religion to those cultures was a significant factor to address if any opportunity for positive relationships were to emerge and chaplains were at times vital contributors in discussions with foreigners both in official and unofficial engagements.

As part of maintaining a force that could uphold the duties required of them, the Air Force Core Values continued to be emphasized by leadership. In addition, the chaplain corps sought out continuing education and certifications in the areas of crisis and trauma which were in significant demand due to an ongoing war effort and multiple deployments by many in the Air Force. Among the more popular training programs during the first decade of the new millennium were CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management<sup>6</sup>) which sought to educate responders to incidents (accident, wounded person, etc.) in how best to respond. ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12710792/>

Skills Training<sup>7</sup>) sought to better equip people to identify and help a suicidal person and get them to the help they needed. SafeTalk<sup>8</sup> was focused on suicide prevention as well, but more for the observer who had less skills or ability to counsel the potential suicidal person, but could be trained to be aware of the danger and get the potentially suicidal person to someone who could help. All of these were examples of a heavy reliance upon professional curricula that were labelled religiously neutral. Chaplain Corps teams were trained in these and were expected to implement them. Many Christian chaplains had no issue with these curricula viewing their theology as separate and not necessarily speaking to this area of life. Some Christian chaplains utilized it with varying degrees of skepticism, seeing any beneficial content as coming from God's common grace and any negatives as a result of the fall and an attempt of human solutions to problems which only God could solve. Though they were not the only ones to receive the training, these curricula were popular with many chaplains and were used both to respond to people in need and to help educate others in responding.

#### **3.7.2 Collaboration with other Career Fields**

Mental Health was also in high demand. Air Force psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and mental health technicians (assistants to the psychologists and other staff members) were also responding to Airmen's problems in home and wartime settings. The military also provided their personnel up to six free sessions of counseling by non-military counselors through the "Military OneSource" call-in counselor hotline. Another care provider was also added. Military Family Life Consultants (MFLC) were civilian psychologists who would spend a limited time on a given base (typically 90 days) before moving on to another base<sup>9</sup>. They could counsel Airmen and their families just like an Air Force psychologist. Among the distinctions is that the Military Family Life Consultant were not themselves military

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.livingworks.net/programs/asist/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.livingworks.net/programs/safetalk/>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.mhngs.com/app/programsandservices/mflc\\_program.content](https://www.mhngs.com/app/programsandservices/mflc_program.content)

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

and their records of their counseling appointments were destroyed when they moved on to another base.

Chaplains and mental health practitioners had differing degrees of work relationships with each other. At times they worked well and closely together. At other times they did not. One Air Force Psychologist, Dr. Wayne Chappelle wrote about the need for greater collaboration as a result of his experiences during the Iraq War. He emphasized why psychologists need to work more in tune with chaplains. His reasons for why collaboration with chaplains was needed were:

- 1. increasing need for cultural and religious sensitivity.*
- 2. influence of religious and spiritual beliefs and practices on a person's psychological disposition.*
- 3. influence of religious and spiritual beliefs on the daily lives and behavior of most Americans including mental health providers.*
- 4. the growing use of religious content by psychologists in common therapeutic interventions.*
- 5. as health care becomes increasingly multifaceted and multi-disciplinary, collaboration is regarded as a professional imperative (Chappelle 2006:205).*

Dr. Chappelle also stated how military members in a warzone were many times, perhaps inevitably, drawn to considering religious beliefs and questioning their own beliefs:

*it was apparent that the mortal threats of the battlefield cause many soldiers or Airmen to reflect upon their mortality and existential issues (e.g., values, purpose and meaning in life, thoughts of existence after death, personal relationship with God) that are intimately tied to religious and spiritual beliefs, which subsequently influence their psychological disposition (Chappelle 2006:207).*

## Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

*Historically, members of the clergy have served as healers of emotional distress well before psychologists; and in many cases continue to occupy such a position among many military personnel (Chappelle 2006:208).*

Chaplain Colonel Jimmy Browning captured the thoughts of retired Major General Jack Catton in a paper for the Air Force Air War College on the tensions in the Air Force between religious expression and religious coercion, discussing the transcendence of people's faith and its impact upon more than just the 'religious' portion of their life.

*Faith is a critical part of the warfighters' ethos. Faith is not something you do, faith is who you are; therefore, DOD leadership should continue to go to great lengths to meet and support the spiritual needs of military members of all faiths (Browning 2010:14).*

Similar appeals had been made throughout America's military history, but the audience and culture had changed. The wisdom of generations past, holding to the necessity of religious faith (and for America, the dominance of the Christian faith) were now for many just a legacy program for those who still clung to religion as a crutch, hobby or as the thing in their life that keeps them going. There was no public exaltation of a unifying religious worldview, though in practice there was a solid autonomous (secular) worldview that was placed as the highest court of authority, over God.

### **3.8 Comprehensive Airman Fitness and the Resilience Initiative**

#### **3.8.1 Origins of the Program**

This section will focus on the most recent (at the time of this writing) values initiatives and how the Air Force and the Air Force Chaplain Corps (which changed from the Chaplain Service, to the Chaplain Corps in 2008) approached helping Airmen and their families live life well.

The author observed that after years of constant deployments to Southwest Asia and throughout the globe, the military saw the need to further address the intensity,

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

longevity and impacts that constant war were having on military personnel and their families. Many military members were experiencing depression, re-living battle scenarios, finding it difficult to re-acclimate to their families and home life, killing themselves, becoming emotionally withdrawn, and not knowing where to turn.

In 2010 the Air Combat Command (ACC) portion of the Air Force began using a program called “Comprehensive Airman Fitness” (CAF) that was modeled off of the Army’s “Comprehensive Soldier Fitness” Program, a University of Pennsylvania Resiliency Training Program and also utilized capabilities of existing agencies within the Air Force. The initial catalyst for the program was concern about “self-defeating behaviors” such as suicide in the Air Force.

*Following a brief test at Moody AFB, Ga. [Moody Air Force Base, Georgia], CAF was implemented ACC-wide in June 2010. A year later, Gen. Norton Schwartz, then the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, CSAF directed implementation of CAF Air Force-wide in June 2011. CAF functions under the guidance of the Community Action Information Board (CAIB). While our resilience development is a cornerstone of CAF, it is important to point out that its initiative focuses on other key areas as well such as deployment/ financial readiness, relationship skills building and access to counseling, suicide prevention, alcohol/drug abuse; spouse/child abuse, preventable accidental deaths, celebrating life and providing hope in the face of adversity and many other aspects of individual and community wellness (Michel 2014:1).*

The use of terms historically reserved more for religious faith were now appropriated for God-less use. Terms loaded with meaning such as “hope”, “celebrating life”, “relationships” and more were utilized in a strictly humanistic manner with occasional acknowledgements to “spirituality” the definition and practice of which was left up to each individual. The Air Force eventually codified its approach to Comprehensive Airman Fitness by creating an official Air Force Instruction regulating its implementation. “Air Force Instructions” (AFIs) are the regulations for the Air Force. Of note is the intent for Comprehensive Airman Fitness to be holistic in nature and permeate each airman’s life. In practice, it competes with religious worldviews in many areas by not acknowledging that devoted Christian Airmen will not see a



### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

rationale or solid definitions of terms that are not informed by their religious beliefs. CAF seeks to help determine the foundation of Airmen's lives while relegating the ill-defined "spiritual" pillar to one of many foundations for life. This issue exists in many ways as well for adherents of other religions.

*CAF is a holistic approach to develop over-arching Airman fitness and resilience...CAF is a cultural shift in how we view and maintain fitness in a more comprehensive manner and enables Airmen to hold each other accountable against Air Force Core Values...Leaders and individuals throughout the force must understand, promote, and support CAF (AFI 90-506 2014:1).*

*Resilience training and education address the spectrum of foundational life skills and competencies to meet an Airman's needs at the right time (AFI 90-506 2014:3).*

*CAF education and training impacts every aspect of Air Force life at various levels and may be delivered through multiple methods (AFI 90-506 2014:9).*

The program, while seeking to strengthen Airmen against any potential negative issue and extremes that can result from trauma at war or at home, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, is for the most part focused on everyday life. Comprehensive Airman Fitness and Resilience training:

*Addresses everyday stressors through local training. It includes the resilience skills that enable our Airmen, civilians, and family members to optimize performance of their day to day duties and responsibilities (AFI 90-506 2014:9).*

The Air Force further clarified the intent of Comprehensive Airman Fitness and resilience training in announcements related to the completion of Air Force Instruction 90-506:

*'CAF is the tool kit needed for Airmen to work on their own resilience', said Master Sgt. Kimberly Guler, the 39th ABW Equal Opportunity director and a wing MRT. 'The tools and the how-to can be supplied, but it's up to each individual to develop their resilience by having a healthy balance of all the CAF domains. It's the foundation needed to develop what they need' (Leslie 2014:1).*

*'One thing that I want to stress is that at the very core of Comprehensive Airman Fitness is resilience,'...'We need all Airmen (military, civilian and family members) to be able to bounce back from strenuous situations that happen in their lives. To say that an individual has great coping skills is one thing, but to say that an individual is resilient takes it to an entirely different plateau (Leslie 2014:1).*

But there is little organizational imperative for spirituality to be developed, demoted to a pillar from its once transcendent place of respect, while the other pillars of physical, mental and social fitness enjoy more support. The Air Force mandates physical fitness through tests every year along with medical examinations. Airmen are typically mandated to go through a battery of tests through the mental health clinic upon the end of their deployment. Even social events are often "voluntold" events. Yet, spirituality is left up to the individual out of a misunderstanding of the first amendment. People fear the potential of accusations for favoring one religion over another while *de facto* a God-less autonomy is the operative worldview that is propagated throughout military training.

Neither chaplains nor the Chaplain Corps are ever mentioned in the 16-page official Air Force Instruction 90-506 on Comprehensive Airman Fitness. The closest the document gets to mentioning the realm of religion is in defining "Spiritual Fitness" as:

*The ability to adhere to beliefs, principles, or values needed to persevere and prevail in accomplishing missions (AFI 90-506 2014:16).*

Though diverse in its intentions, the main focus word of the program was that of "resilience". In the official training manual on Air Force resilience, resilience is described thus: "Resilient people bounce, not break, when faced with an adversity or challenge" (Reivich 2010:11). As in the past, the Air Force struggled with institutionalizing culture change formally while also intending that it become a part of Air Force culture naturally through time.

### **3.8.2 Growth of the Program**

There was a marked increase in the amount of resources and attention given to resilience initiatives by numerous senior military leaders. In his 21 July 2011

speech, then Chief of Staff of the Air Force General Norton Schwartz stated that “caring for our people and families is a strategic level objective, reaffirmed in our National Security Strategy” (Schwartz 2011:1). In a February 16, 2012 statement to members of the House of Representatives, the highest enlisted member of the Air Force, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James Roy stated:

*Building resiliency among Airmen and their families is....a key factor in maintaining the health of our force* (Roy 2012:8).

There are four pillars of the Comprehensive Airman Fitness program, which is the umbrella term for all things related to the latest resilience initiatives. The pillars are: mental, physical, emotional and spiritual fitness (although the “spiritual” pillar was not mentioned alongside the other three pillars in a March 28, 2012 address by the Surgeon General of the Air Force before members of the Senate Appropriations Committee (Green 2012:12).

As part of the Comprehensive Airman Fitness program, the Air Force has invested in developing Master Resilience Trainers (MRTs) using a positive psychology-based program from the University of Pennsylvania that certifies Air Force members during a two-week course to teach others in their units about basic resilience principles. The program was originally designed “to prevent depressive symptoms in children” (Kime 2012:10). Officers are often tasked with providing members of their staff to become Master Resilience Trainers. At times the officers (some of whom are new to the Air Force) are themselves tasked to become Master Resilience Trainers in addition to their standard duties in their full-time Air Force occupation.

### **3.8.3 Teachings of the Master Resiliency Training Program**

The Master Resiliency Training Program is taught from PowerPoint slides that are standardized in content. No class is identical to the others but the standard components are consistently taught in each gathering. As stated in the official presentation that is used by Master Resilience Trainers across the Air Force the mission of the course is to:

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

*provide you with an opportunity to enhance your effectiveness and well-being and to develop your leadership potential (Reivich 2010:3).*

The Master Resiliency Training Program lists six competencies of:

Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Optimism, Mental Agility, Strengths of Character and Connection (Trustees 2010:1). The key points for attendees are discussed during the training and are summarized on an overview sheet. Among other things, the sheet lists the following key points to remember:

1. Real-time Resilience: Shut down counterproductive thinking to enable greater concentration and focus on the task at hand.
2. Identify Strengths in Self and Others: Identify strengths in yourself and in others to build on the best of yourself and the best of others.
3. Use Strengths in Challenges: Identify strengths in yourself and in others to improve teamwork and overcome challenges.
4. Assertive Communication: Communicate clearly and with respect, especially during a conflict or challenge. Use the IDEAL model (I = Identify and understand the problem, D = Describe the problem objectively, E = Express your concerns and how you feel, A = Ask the other person for his/her perspective and ask for a reasonable change, L = List the consequences) to communicate in a Confident, Clear, and Controlled manner.
5. Active Constructive Responding and Praise: Respond to others with authentic, active and constructive interest to build strong relationships. Praise to build mastery and winning streaks.
6. Hunt the Good Stuff: Hunt the Good Stuff to counter the negativity bias, to create positive emotion, and to notice and analyze what is good.

(Trustees 2010:2).

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

The Master Resiliency Training Program also teaches about thinking traps to avoid which are:

Jumping to Conclusions

Mind Reading

Me, Me, Me

Them, Them, Them

Always, Always, Always

Everything, Everything, Everything

These terms for awareness were developed by Doctors Aaron Beck and Martin Seligman. Aaron Beck is considered the father of Cognitive Therapy which rejected Psycho-dynamic and Behavioral Theories in favor of a focus on individual change:

*Its core assumption is that the individual is capable of changing personal behavior through conscious thought, that is, cognition...CBT [Cognitive Behavioral Therapy] appears to be the favored contemporary choice of psychotherapy eclipsing psychodynamic and behavioral treatments as American society intensified its preference for personal responsibility over social responsibility, exaggerating an already exaggerated heroic individualism (Epstein 2006:193).*

Neither Beck nor Martin mention much of religion in their writings. Dr. Seligman indicated in one study that those from “more fundamentalist Christian groups were more optimistic than persons from liberal religious traditions” (Cohen and Koenig 2002:13). Another concept that is addressed is “Detect Icebergs” in order to:

*identify deep beliefs and core values that fuel what we say to ourselves in the heat of the moment and, at times lead to reactions that are out of proportion (Reivich 2010:14).*

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

Further topics include “Problem Solving”, avoiding “Confirmation Bias” and “Put It In Practice” (Reivich 2010:19-21). Attending IRST (Individual Resilience Skills Training) eventually became a mandatory requirement:

*To help the understanding and implementation of this program each active-duty Airman must complete four hours of IRST. Training for active-duty members will be tracked by unit training monitors; however, commanders will determine when and how the training is conducted and may tailor which course modules are presented based on training and local needs (Leslie 2014:1).*

#### **3.8.4 Ideologies Behind Parts of The Master Resiliency Training Program**

It is worth noting the origin of some of the concepts taught in the Master Resiliency Training Program that continued the trend from previous decades of lessening emphasis upon moral absolutes in favor of personal values. To build mental toughness, the program teaches the "ATC" Model, which stands for an "Activating Trigger Event", "Thoughts" and "Consequences". To enhance self-awareness, students of the class are taught to separate the “A” (just the facts) of a given situation from the “T” (their interpretation of that situation and “what you say to yourself in the heat of the moment”, and also separate the “C” (the consequences) (Reivich 2010:10).

These concepts, originally created by Dr. Albert Ellis, teach that thoughts and emotions are linked. One outtake from this is that events themselves do not cause any definite response. It is the interpretation or how a person thinks about an incident that determines his or her response (Reivich 2010:9). Albert Ellis is also known as the founder of Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT), and is considered to be a pioneer in the Cognitive approach to therapy. Albert Ellis had very direct thoughts on religion and especially the Judeo-Christian heritage:

*Even when a religion supposedly 'gives' you grace, you really choose it yourself, and the religious trappings in which you frame your self-acceptance consist of a redundant hypothesis (that god exists and that s/he gives you grace) (Ellis 1998:246).*

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

*REBT acknowledges that a belief in God, mysticism and pollyannaism, and irrationality may help people at times. But it also points out that such beliefs often do much more harm than good and block a more fully functioning life (Blau and Ellis 1998:183).*

*Devout religionists (both secular and divine) are almost necessarily dependent and other-directed rather than self-sufficient (Ellis 1998:238).*

The above comments are also religious and not scientific in any way by making assumptions and begging the question with undefined terms. The Air Force has undergirded mandatory training with God-less and anti-God beliefs rather than give a choice for Airmen to learn their resilience from their religion. Ellis also believed people were not inherently evil but just did more or less good and evil things (Ellis 2003:74). The material for the training thus has its roots in a perspective that does not seriously include God or people as created in His Image and even sees such views potentially as a hindrance to personal growth. The handbook and slides also state near the beginning of the course that:

*Evolution has seen to it that we remember failures more readily than successes, that we analyze bad events more thoroughly than good events...(Reivich 2010:6).*

Thus, the ideological foundations and influences of the MRT program are rooted in a secular anthropology which fails to take seriously the biblical conceptions of human nature and biblical processes of humanity's personal and spiritual development. Many Christian Airmen have been required to attend this training that is counter to their religious views that are guaranteed expression and protection in the first amendment of the constitution.

The CAF program and MRT training specifically assume and communicate the following beliefs that differ significantly from a Christian perspective:

1. Naive Objectivity: Complete objectivity is possible by people ("facts" can be determined) rather than holding to the presuppositional belief that all facts are interpreted.

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

2. Individualistic: Any positive change (define “positive”) must come about from the individual (complete self-reliance).
3. Religion Optional: God is optional to living a “better” life. Theology is only taken so far as it is personally practical and agreeable. Truth is relative and individually determined; people choose a religion that submits to their beliefs.
4. Not Comprehensive: The format is strictly academic (MRT classes do not hold worship services, lunches, service projects, baby showers, weddings, funerals and other activities that are common for church communities) and delivered by a non-expert.
5. Secular over Religious: Religion is acceptable as long as it does not supercede CAF and resilience beliefs. Religious instruction is not offered as an alternative to MRT. Otherwise, the training would not be mandatory.
6. False Novelty: Subject matter is treated as new solutions to new problems assuming an evolutionary mindset. The mission and motivation is for personal improvement that will potentially enhance the individual’s life and the Air Force’s. The anticipated benefits do not have an eternal perspective, but are interested in change now and only for this life.
7. Misguided Goal: “Resilience” is the goal, not a by-product of something else. It is one aspect of humanity that has been made into the main thing.
8. Unhelpful definition: The definition of “spirituality” is nebulous, to the point where it is almost useless.
9. Unexamined effects of human nature: Defining resiliency as not breaking in the face of adversity/challenge does not address the motivations of the heart. “Not breaking” could just as easily be stubbornness and pride.
10. No transcendence: spiritual fitness is just one of four pillars. What underlies the four pillars? What is the fundamental worldview that is fueling CAF and MRT?



### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

11. Intended for children: The MRT curriculum was designed for children experiencing depressive symptoms, not adults undergoing combat.
12. Confusing focus: Spirituality is self-defined, resilience is about “me” not breaking, and achieving this through (among other things) self-awareness and self-regulation, but it also stipulates that people erroneously think too much of “Me, me, me” in addressing problems. Most of the training is individually focused and applied. How are issues addressed communally? What brings people together beyond military culture outside of the MRT class?
13. Vague Definition of Terms: Addresses “counter-productive thinking” without defining what is “productive” and it expects people to be “reasonable”. Values are relative and so productivity could be defined according to what benefits the individual. Assumes a standard of normal functioning (what it means to be “good”) without stating how that standard is determined. Ultimate questions are not addressed although terminology from the worldviews of secular (and at times, anti-God) psychologists are used. There is an operative but not clearly articulated worldview from which this training flows.
14. Motivation: why should one “hunt the good” (define ‘good’)? Why should one praise others? Why should one have a positive outlook on life? Is the goal strict legalism? If not, from whence do these potentially selfish or self-less attitudes come?
15. Lack of Depth: “Detect Icebergs” is reminiscent of a Freudian approach to life. Icebergs do not address depravity, a fallen world, sin, etc.

#### **3.8.5 Teaching the Next Generation of the Importance of Chaplains**

Chaplains continued to address topics and themes that were also addressed by Comprehensive Airman Fitness and the Master Resiliency Training Program classes. Among these themes were: who are we as people? Why are we here? Why is there evil in the world? How can people change for the better? Is this life all there is? How do I please God? How do I forgive others? How do I deal with the effects of war? How can I be a good spouse and parent? They addressed them during their

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

worship services, counseling sessions, visitation with troops, and in advising leadership. These topics and themes were addressed not because of the resilience initiative but because chaplains have and continue to focus on the most foundational and important aspects of what it means to be human, and how to approach joy and suffering.

*But what does the medical doctor say to the Marine who says, "I lost my soul in Vietnam or Iraq/ Afghanistan."? Usually, "Go see the chaplain." Chaplains are the experts for all spiritual matters. And some problems of PTSD are spiritual. In fact, Duncan Sinclair argues that "the condition of PTSD is spiritual at its deepest level (Prince 2011:43).*

Rupe has written compellingly about the vital necessity of chaplains in Air Force life:

*it is incumbent upon chaplains to use their authority as trusted teachers and mentors to take the wisdom of the ages and rebuild the consciences of our young servicemen and women so that they can be virtuous warriors and citizens and by doing so keep the flame of liberty alive (Rupe 2011:52).*

The training that the Air Force has put forth for its people over the past few decades confuses many by mandating attendance at classes that alternate between telling people that they can essentially live however they want but there are certain scientific ways to live life better while also telling them that there are standards and core values which must be upheld as long as they are in the Air Force.

### **3.9 Summary and Conclusions**

This chapter has discussed in detail how Air Force chaplains have delivered ministry to Airmen and their families. Also discussed were the Air Force initiatives and programs designed to help their people and how those programs have changed through time. Trends can be seen through the decades with similar desires for personnel to have quality character values that contribute both to personal wellness and mission success. Changes occurred over time through the various programs due to adjustments in the greater American culture, military wars and conflicts and changes in thinking with regard to the role of religion in the Air Force and society at

### Chapter 3: History of Air Force and Chaplain Care for Airmen

large. As a result, character standards are still expected, but not due to any religious ethic. The Core Values and other Air Force standards are behavioristic. People just need to do them. The necessity of deep religious faith is optional. The centrality of Christianity to many founding principles of America and thus the Air Force has been effectively muted. The nation was never built to mandate Christianity, though the Christian worldview gave the nation the concept of religious freedom as opposed to oppression and mandating belief systems. Chaplains ministered in much the same way they always had through traditional means while constantly adjusting to the needs of the Air Force and the crises of the moment. Chaplains in each decade had the opportunity and the challenge to once again demonstrate their relevance to a new generation of Airmen and families, some of whom did not or at least did not initially appreciate the capabilities that they brought.

In chapter four, the concept of resiliency will be reframed from a biblical outlook. The concepts of resiliency and personal development will be discussed through the prism of a biblical worldview. Multiple scripture references will be used to address the concerns that Comprehensive Airman Fitness and the Master Resiliency Training Program address, but rather than seeking to attempt to fit verses and biblical concepts into a secular program, the perspective will begin from a biblical outlook with biblical themes and understanding and proceed from there to reinterpret the worldview approach that the Air Force has officially endorsed. Much of the content that the Air Force has mandated for training will be critiqued while presenting a different option for airman care. A further question that will be explored will look at the impossibility of neutrality in moral training. If all resilience, morality and value-related training comes from a perspective, then the existence of coercion against personal beliefs becomes a strong likelihood in mandated training. It is hoped that chapter four will provide Christian chaplains and ministers with an approach to addressing the most important needs for military and their families at their roots and talking through true solutions. It will also provide a pathway for choice in airman training that maintains a legitimate standard of values across different worldviews and religions. Another expected outcome is more proactive recognition and support for the importance that religion holds with regards to resiliency for people of diverse belief systems which also includes religious beliefs.

## **Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter will describe a Christian approach to life, specifically from a reformed evangelical perspective. The intent is to address what Christianity teaches concerning life both temporally and eternally while demonstrating that Christianity is vastly different from the resiliency programs (both past and present) that the USAF has utilized. Does Christianity have an approach to addressing the concept and concerns of resiliency initiatives? Christian themes that are common to Systematic Theology will be presented in this chapter with the caveat that the goal is to demonstrate a clear difference between the content and approach of Christianity to that of USAF resilience programs. Chapter Five will contrast Christianity and USAF resilience initiatives. In order for this to be done, the teachings and practices of Christianity must first be delineated. Beginning with the belief that Christianity addresses resiliency in a very different fashion than Air Force resiliency initiatives do and also with the belief that Christianity is much greater than resiliency and not limited alone to that subject, the subject of resiliency will be addressed using the Bible as the foundation for a Christian worldview. Resiliency is a term used by many in the USAF to frame discussions of wellness. A Christian worldview does not limit the framing of wellness discussions to the term resiliency. A significant departure will also be noticeable in this chapter with a concern for objective truth over pragmatism. The USAF is concerned with resiliency in so far as it brings about the desired results and mitigates problems. A Christian worldview is primarily concerned with God's truth whether that truth is being practiced or not, but emphasizes the application of biblical truth to one's lifestyle because it does work. A Christian worldview addresses resiliency but speaks with more depth to the topic of resiliency than secular alternatives and addresses life more holistically on a diverse array of topics. Two key biblical passages will be explored and studied in order to establish foundational principles of a Christian worldview. Following, a theologically strategic (strategic in the sense that a Christian worldview is all-encompassing) view will be explored related to theology proper, Christology, theological anthropology and ecclesiology. Following this, specific areas of interest as related to resiliency will be

explored that are focus areas for the USAF. These specific areas include Individuality and Community, Maturity and Responsibility, Stewardship and Vocation, Adversity and Suffering, and Objective Truth.

#### **4.2 Theological Presuppositions for a Biblical View of Resiliency**

Christian Theology, unlike USAF resilience training has a full-orbed approach to humanity. Christianity does not simply speak in particulars of how one ought to conduct themselves (though it does do that). It begins with God, who God is, who people are and how their purpose in life is determined. Genesis 1:27 is a foundational verse for these concepts. In order to address how a person ought to live, behave and think their origins must be understood. If people exist because of random acts of cosmic chance, that has implications for how they deal with crises and life in general. If people are created in the image of the all-powerful God, then their life, their problems and the solutions will not make sense apart from a deeper understanding of their identity as made in His Image. A second passage taken from 2 Peter 1:3 is imperative for a Christian understanding of how personal change and growth happen. Is Christianity of ethereal value only and no earthly good? Is Christian faith relevant and impactful or not to topics such as marital relationships, depression, hope, dealing with the personal impacts of war zones and long stretches of time away from loved ones? Must a Christian only utilize their faith when dealing with church and spiritual topics or does every topic in life (whether related to mental health, behaviour, post-traumatic stress disorder, suicide, depression, the ability to handle stress or more) necessarily invoke a theological belief system (whether for Christianity or in contrast to it)? Put differently, every area of life is to be governed by Christ and His Word and thus Christians should be alert to any training that is devoid of either of them.

There are, of course, additional biblical texts which are relevant to the current discussion. However, in order to limit the scope of the present study, Genesis 1:27 and 2 Peter 1:3 have been selected in order to demonstrate the relevance of a biblical view of foundational and unchanging human origins and of Christian growth

Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience  
(people becoming who they were made to be), respectively, to the subject of resilience.

#### 4.2.1 The Image of God in Man: Genesis 1:27

The Bible addresses all foundational elements of existence and reality. It states how and why this world exists, why people were made, the significant relationship dynamics between God and humanity, how people are to live, and the eternal outcomes of human behavior. The Bible establishes the foundational themes of reality in its very first chapter that determine the origins of humanity, and humanity's intended purpose and future (Williams 2013:76). To help flesh out many of these foundational elements, Genesis 1:27 will be exegeted and studied followed by implications that this verse carries for people as it relates to resiliency. The text used for this exegesis is taken from the Masoretic Text (MT), Leningrad Codex which is to date the oldest complete Hebrew Bible, dating from the eleventh century A.D. (Wenham 1987:xxiv).

Genesis 1:27: So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

**Genesis 1:27** וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם:

The first word in the Hebrew, בָּרָא is used three times in 1:27 to draw attention to the pinnacle of creation (mankind) (NIB 1994:57). The verb וַיִּבְרָא is a qal waw consecutive in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular imperfect, the standard translation of which is “to shape, fashion, create, always of divine activity” (Briggs 1996:135, Jenni and Westermann 1997:253).

The objects of God's creation are always created out of nothing but God's own power, rather than God taking something in existence and manipulating it (for example “heaven and earth” (Gen 1:1, 2:4, Isa 65:17, 42:5, Ps 148:5), “people” (Gen 1:27, 5:1, 6:7, Deut 4:32, Isa 43:7, 45:12), “the people of Israel” (Isa 43:1, Ps 102:19, Ezek 21:35), “wonders” (Exod. 34:10, Num 16:30, Isa 48:6f). “No material from which God ‘creates’ (cf. esp. Genesis 1:27) is ever mentioned (in the accusative or with a preposition)” (Jenni and Westermann 1997:255). This further demonstrates God's

power and control over the world and every living thing in it. Genesis 1:21 has the same use of בָּרָא to describe the creation of the sea creatures. This is in contrast to the non-biblical worldviews of that day which held that nature was a powerful cosmic force that must not be tampered with; for the biblical worldview, the sea creatures are not to be ultimately feared but to be subdued by man as part of the divine mandate given to them in Genesis 1:28 (Wilkinson 2002:21). Concerning the three occurrences of בָּרָא, the first usage is in the imperfect tense which can be used to indicate continuous or incomplete action most likely utilized as a preface to what God made when he made humans. The second two usages of בָּרָא differ in that they do not have the waw consecutive and they are in the perfect tense which typically refers to a completed action. There is not much disagreement over the use of בָּרָא in this verse. בָּרָא is only used when describing what אֱלֹהִים (God) has accomplished and is not used for what people have accomplished or done. Since בָּרָא is reserved only for אֱלֹהִים it assumes creation “ex nihilo” (Copan 2005:48). No other deity in the Ancient Near East is credited with creating and making things that are new. This emphasizes the concept that there is only one God and furthers the idea of the Creator-creature distinction (The New Interpreter’s Dictionary 2006:779, Stuhlmueeller 1996:187). God’s unique creative prowess as described in Genesis was also a strong clarifying statement against the Gilgamesh Epic, Atrahasis Epic and other Ancient Near Eastern creation narratives. It is to be expected that similarities exist between Ancient Near Eastern Texts and biblical accounts of creation for they all are seeking to describe what happened at that time in history. However, the differences are great and demonstrate clear lines of demarcation between biblical and non-biblical worldviews. Genesis teaches that creation started out perfect and had a horrible fall, whereas the non-biblical writings believe creation and humanity started in chaos and have continued to improve with time. In addition, the biblical reason for the occurrence of the flood is due to humanity’s sin. For non-biblical writings, destruction came because humanity was too noisy (Wenham 1987:xlix).

The object of God’s creation is אָדָם, used with the definite article in verse 27 whereas in verse 26 it is anarthrous (Wenham 1987:32). This first use of אָדָם, in verse 27 is used to represent humanity in general (Gromacki 2011:51, NISB 2003:8).

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

Wenham sees the terminology as moving from generic to specific. Genesis 1:27 begins by stating that God made “mankind” in His image, and then moves on to state more specifically that both male and female make up “mankind” and are both made in His image (Wenham 1987:5). The term in Genesis 1:27 that has by far produced the most discussion surrounds the meaning and intent behind the word  $\text{צֶלֶם}$ , typically translated as “image”, yet even agreement on the interpretation of this word does not settle the discussion on its intent. Ancient Hebrews were not the only people group to have an understanding of a human representing god. Pharaoh is described as the “image of [the Egyptian god] Re”, and it was commonly believed by Egyptians that his power derived from the dominion given to him by Re, reminiscent of God’s gift of dominion to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1. The “creation of the king is discussed” and “Egyptian texts speak of man being made in the image of God” (Jenni and Westermann 1997:1083, Levenson 1988:114).

The Akkadian and root meanings of the word typically describe a “statue” (2 Kings 11:18, 2 Chron 23:17), (Jenni 1997:1081).  $\text{צֶלֶם}$  is most often used to describe the “physical representation of something, e.g., an image of a Canaanite deity (Num 33:52, 2 Kings 11:18)” (New Interpreter’s Study Bible 2008:19).  $\text{צֶלֶם}$  occurs 17 times but its meaning is not settled.  $\text{דָּמָה}$ , a similar word is more settled in meaning, typically translated as “to be like, resemble”. Many of its 25 occurrences are to be found in Ezekiel’s visions (where it means “something like”) (Wenham 1987:29). Both words are used in Genesis 5:3, where Adam fathers Seth “in his own likeness, after his image” which informs the contention that the two words are not so distinct (Jenni 1997:1082).

Though these two Hebrew words have at times similar connotations, they are distinct in their final meaning, given context and other exegetical clues. It furthers the notion that the author’s intent (and God’s message) is not to give too precise of a word in order to communicate some of the diversity and depth of what it means to be human. It is possible that “image” refers to both “identity and purpose” (NIDB 2008:19) although the debate within Jewish tradition has often conflated the two terms and has sought to determine whether the image and likeness refer more to a spiritual



(appreciated more in modern times) or physical resemblance (appreciated more in ancient times) (Reiss 2011:185).

In the Old Testament the phrase “image of God” occurs only in Genesis 1-11 (though it is implied elsewhere in scripture such as Psalm 8) (NIB 1994:345). There is one passage in the New Testament, 2 Corinthians 4:4 that uses the phrase “image of God” in the Greek, referring to Christ. In Genesis 9:6, God states why a man must be killed for shedding another man’s blood. The answer is because “in the image of God He made man”. Fine nuances can be discerned in the interpretation of  $\text{דְּלִמָּצָה}$  in Genesis 1:27. Taking a cue from Genesis 5:3 and Exodus 25:40, Wenham sees “image” as describing the “product of creation rather than the process” (Wenham 1987:31).  $\text{דְּלִמָּצָה}$  can refer to a duplicate or even an idol (I Sam 6:5, Num 33:52, II Kings 11:18, a painting, Ezek. 23:14) while “likeness” is even more abstract and means “appearance”, “similarity”, “analogy” (Ezek. 1:5, 10, 26, 28) but also “copy” (II Kings 16:10) (Middleton 2005:25, Von Rad 1961:57). Of note, in Ancient Near Eastern cultures, an idol was thought to accomplish the work of the deity when the deity was not there and even Mesopotamian Kings would set up an image of themselves in locations where they wanted to establish their rule (Matthews 1997:16). There is also a non-univocal nature of both Hebrew terms such that determining the exact meaning of either term in Hebrew poetry is not possible. As further evidence of this Alter states that Hebrew poetry does not typically repeat an idea using a word the third time (usually it is in couplets) – thus the third use of image in verse 27 cannot be assumed to mean the same thing as the previous two (Alter 1992:177).

Since God has no physical form, the physical shape of humans is, while important, not the focus (Clines 1967:72, Gardoski 2007:14). Some have asserted that the use of two similar words (“image” and “likeness”) were intentionally used to help the reader understand that “physical similarity” is not what is intended (NIDB 2008:18). A biblical understanding of  $\text{דְּלִמָּצָה}$  is not a stand-alone term. It means something special because whenever the plural form of it is used it always refer to idols (NISB 2008:18).

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

Much can be determined by referring back to Genesis 1:1-2 where God first appears. God creates and creates under no compulsion. He created everything. In all of creation, humanity has the effects of the fall to fear, but not anything as it was originally created for there is nothing that exists that is outside of God's creative hand and control. Kline finds the answer to the "image" question in the "Glory-Spirit theophany" in Genesis 1:2 and highlights our ability to be creative as coming from God and intended to be used for Him both in the Old Testament (Kline 1977:12) and in the New where the focus is "about conformity to the spiritual image of Christ (Rom. 8:29, 2 Cor 3-4, I Cor 15:49)" (NISB 2008:18).

The concept of identity and behavior are continued in the early church with regard to the image of God. Gregory of Nyssa wrote in the fourth century A.D. that "One who is made in the image of God has the task of becoming who he is" (Oden 2001:405). He also sees the division of the genders as part of God's good creation while also foreign to the divine nature (no division in the divine nature) (Oden 2001:35). The image refers to man as humanity and both "male and female" as being made in the image of God. This is not to say that sexual differentiation is part of the God-head, but rather that sexual differentiation is part of the created order. Male and female were created to be together. Barth states that Gen 1:27 refers to men and women being intentionally created to be different and together (not made for homosexuality) (Barth *et al.* 1960:311). Elsewhere in Genesis 1, the female is also stated to be created out of the man to be his helper. This does not diminish value and does not mean subservience, for male and female are equal in value, but it does indicate a divine plan for male and female to be together in purpose by having different roles, such as men being held responsible for leadership in the family (this is indicated in many ways including man being created first) (Ware 2001:18).

Divine plurality is made known in Genesis 1:26-27 (perhaps it is a description of the Trinity but that is debated in scholarly circles<sup>10</sup>). This is not a statement for tri-

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10 Scholars have varying opinions on what is meant by the "Spirit of God" in Genesis 1. At times it is interpreted as "Divine Plurality" that is later in scripture clarified as the Trinity (Murphy B 2013. The Trinity in Creation. Master's Seminary Journal 24(2):167-177). Some see this passage as

theism, or that humans are created in the image of God and angels, only that God has plurality of personhood) and it follows that humanity also exists in plurality (Allen *et al.* 1990:37, Kidner 1967:52). God wanted humanity to be made in two different genders who in some way holistically (physically, spiritually, etc.) bear His image (Blenkinsopp 2011:22, Oden 2001:36, Stuhlmueeller 1996:459, Wenham 1987:32). Other ancient religions viewed sex as a gateway to communication with God. In contrast, Elohim creates a relationship between himself and humanity and gives humanity the gift of sex for procreation and enjoyment (von rad 1961:60).

Humanity also symbolizes God in some form or fashion similar to animals symbolizing Israel's guilt during sacrifices (Wenham 1987:31). One distinctive element of humanity is that no human is made "after their kind", like the rest of creation. This points to the relational capacity humans have with God. People are made to communicate with God. (Barth 1960:183-187). "God and His creation are bound together" (Brueggemann 1982:34) because of His desire to create everything. Thus we are both individuals and a community as indicated by the singular and plural uses of *בְּצִלְמֵנוּ* (Brueggemann 1982:22).

Many scholars note that less is directly said (at least in Genesis 1) about what the image "is" as opposed to what the image is to "do". The image is primarily about dominion and acting as God's vice-gerent on earth (Jenni 1997:1083, NIDB 2008:19, von rad 1961:59).

Brueggemann sums it up nicely by recognizing that the larger framework for Genesis 1:27, Genesis 1-11 affirms that "the ultimate meaning of creation is to be found in the heart and purpose of the creator" (Brueggemann 1982:12). Eugene Peterson

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definitely referring to the Trinity (Sexton J 2010. The Imago Dei Once Again: Stanley Grenz's Journey toward a Theological Interpretation of Genesis 1:26-27. *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 4(2):187-206 and Johnson J 2005. Between Text & Sermon: Genesis 1:26-28. *Interpretation*, 59(2)176-178). In addition some see this as not referring to the Trinity (Hauser A 1986. Is the doctrine of the Trinity implied in the Genesis creation account: no. Article in: *The Genesis debate: persistent questions about creation and the flood*. Thomas Nelson, Nashville, TN.). This discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis.

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

expresses more vividly how this works out, taking the creation narrative as a thematic description of how life is to be lived. Time is to be valued (life is to be driven neither by rushing nor by laziness) for God did neither in the Garden (Peterson 2005:65). In daily life which seems so often uprooted and without context, Christians find grounding in appreciating and reflecting on God's creation all around them throughout the week. Plants, animals, and people come with much diversity. God made them and we shy away from engaging and getting to know them to our detriment. Christians have been given this earth as a home. Time and space are sacred. They communicate that God has given us comforting limits (we were not created outside of the garden) that call us to interact with the rest of creation (Peterson 2005:71-72). In contrast to modern spiritualities that focus on the individual beliefs and preferences of the individual, the ever-creating true God made people to interact with diversities He created while finding their unity through relationship with Him.

Since humans are created, our existence begins and ends ultimately and finally not with our plans, hopes and dreams for how life will be lived, but with God's plans that will come to pass. People have free will within God's Sovereign plan in contrast to more fatalistic theologies, and make real choices. The concept of "image" is used differently in the New Testament which adds more data as to how it ought to be interpreted in Genesis. John's Gospel lays out perhaps more distinctly than the other gospels that Christ comes both as Creator and as part of His own creation to fix (re-create) things and people that have gone wrong. He uses signs to communicate his power to create food for thousands of people and bring people back from the dead and he re-creates relationships by restoring people back from their alienation to God (Peterson 2005:89). Garrett emphasizes the two distinct approaches the New Testament takes, those of a more past sense (that man "has" been made in God's image) in 1 Cor 11:7 and James 3:9 and those of a more future, unfinished sense (we are being changed into the image of God) Rom 8:29, 2 Cor 3:18, Col 3:10, Eph 4:24. (Garrett 1990:394). However, the Old Testament also recognizes the "becoming" portion of the image of God in passages such as Malachi 2:15: "...So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth" (Mal. 2:15). Christ himself will refer to the former sense in his

Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience engagements with the Teachers of the Law. He speaks in Matthew 19:4 and Mark 10:6, connecting Genesis 1:27 with Genesis 2:24 (Collins 2011:14).

This reinforces the truth and the implications of God creating people male and female. It seems therefore, that scripture in both testaments intends the “already and not yet” nature of the “image”. The importance of the *imago Dei* and the other implications of Genesis 1:27 apply equally to Christians and non-Christians alike (Hroboň 2014:3). All are made in His image. All are made either male or female. All were created by God. This poses significant implications for how people live their lives. These implications will be discussed in greater detail in chapter four.

#### **4.2.2 The Sufficiency of Christ- 2 Peter 1:3**

The Bible teaches that God is not merely interested in providing an ethereal salvation strictly intended for post-life experience. Eternal life is knowing God, in the present the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he sent (John 17:3). God saves people to know him now (not completely, but truly). He equips his followers with divine power to do what He has called them to do. This section will discuss the importance of 2 Peter 1:3 to understanding the Christian life.

Ὡς πάντα ἡμῖν τῆς θείας δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ τὰ πρὸς ζωὴν καὶ εὐσέβειαν δεδωρημένης διὰ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ καλέσαντος ἡμᾶς ἰδίᾳ δόξῃ καὶ ἀρετῇ.

*His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence...*

There is much discussion in theological circles as to the authorship, source and authenticity of the book of 2 Peter. Those discussions are within the purview of this paper as described in the assumptions section of this dissertation. It will suffice to give a brief background on the setting of the book prior to the exegesis.

The book of 2 Peter was most likely written in 63-64 B.C. in Rome to Christians in Rome, Asia Minor, and Egypt (Mills 2010:267), although (unlike many of the Epistles) the book is not addressed to anyone in particular (Neyrey 1993:111).

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

A major, if not the main theme of the book is eschatology. “Eschatological enthusiasm” (Schreiner 2003:255) and other phrases pointing to the eventual return of Christ occur throughout the book that discuss how to address both certainty of Christ’s return and endurance of something until that occurs (Chester 1994:153, Davids 2006:156, Himes 2011:227, Kelly 2001:223). Defense of the Parousia “is the most obvious feature of” 2 Peter (Mills *et al.* 2010:276). 2 Peter 1:3-4 is about “sufficiency of divine power and promise” (Mills 2010:287). 2 Peter 1:3-4 is an announcement to “express the great benefit of salvation that God has given to believers” (Perkins 1995:168).

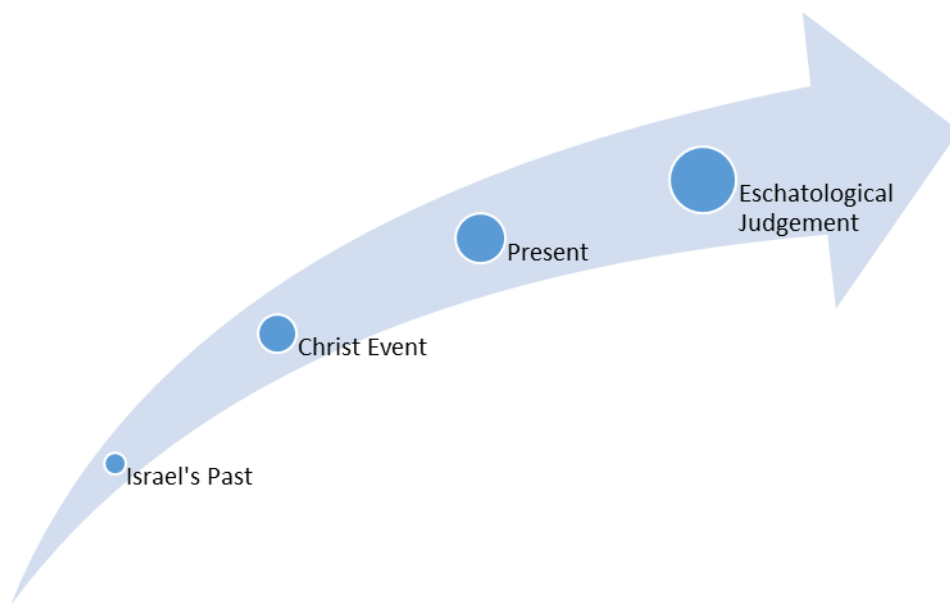


Figure 1: Green 2006:267-268

The theme of 2 Peter 1:3-4 is of import to our discussion. Green sees this pericope as proclaiming “God’s engagement with the readers in salvation” (Green 2008:179). For Novatian in his *De Trinitate*, it is about immortality (Novatian). The main concern of the book is to deliver a warning of the attacks (spiritual and physical) that will come during and after the apostles’ lives on this earth (Perkins 1995:161). Aune emphasizes the list of virtues in verses 3-11 as “virtues and promises of the godly life” (Aune 2003:354).

The writing of this is traditionally very close to Peter’s death sometime between A.D. 64 and 67 during Emperor Nero’s reign. Peter’s list of experiences is important in understanding what ought to be stressed at this juncture of his life (House 1981:53).

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

He was “present at transfiguration and gethsemane; denied Christ; first apostle to (1) preach the gospel, (2) perform a miracle, (3) speak before the Sanhedrin, (4) preach to Gentiles, (5) raise the dead” (House 1981:133).

Ὡς is an atypical word choice for opening up a New Testament letter. This conjunction is causal in nature, referring to the τῆς θείας δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ (“His divine power”), appearing with this genitive absolute (Callan 2005:634). The blessings that are listed following this phrase are a result of God’s divine power. There is to be no confusion of the source of such blessings (Balz 1991:364).

This key conjunction connects the verse to surrounding verses. Mills notes that it points the reader back to 2 Peter 1:1b. This further stresses the writer’s point that what the believer has (“a faith of equal standing with ours”) is not of their own making but is “by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Mills 2010:294). It also points the reader forward to the “list of virtues in 2 Peter 1:5-7” (Harrington 2003:243).

The grammatical structure of the translation is not so much in question as are the definitions of the words themselves. 2 Peter is distinctive in its style of writing. The book contains the highest number of *hapax legomena* in the entire New Testament. No other New Testament book contains so many words that have little to no connection to other biblical passages from which to extract their meaning (Aune 2003:354).

The atypical wording in verse 3 begins with the opening of Ὡς, followed by Greek expressions not common to the New Testament. Phrases such as θείας δυνάμεως (“divine power”) (Harrington 2003:247), ζωὴν καὶ εὐσέβειαν (“life and godliness”), τοῦ καλέσαντος ἡμᾶς ἰδίᾳ δόξῃ καὶ ἀρετῇ (“called by his own glory and goodness”) and more (Mills 2010:295) are “uncommon in the New Testament but full of meaning in the pagan world” (Green 1987:73). It is very possible that the writer was seeking to utilize common parlance in order to connect with his audience. The connections between phrases such as “his divine power”, “through the knowledge of

him who called us” and “these things”) appear to be ambiguous at times, perhaps an additional by-product of the lack of modern interpreters’ understanding of first century non-biblical Greek usage (Mills 2010:294).

The θείας of θείας δυνάμεως (“divine power”) functions as a genitival adjective connecting the power to its source namely, God. It is not merely a description of God but a periphrasis for God (Deissmann 1901:362) or the “divine being” (Acts 17:29). This concept has precedent in the Old Testament where God’s name and His power were used synonymously (Ps 53:3 LXX; Jer 16:21; cf. Acts 4:7; Exod 9:16 with Rom 9:17). Later on in the New Testament Jesus rebuked the Pharisees stating they knew “neither the scripture nor the power of God” (Mark 12:24 PAR. Matt 22:29) because they did not believe in the resurrection) (Balz and Schneider 1990:356).

δυνάμεως means “power” or “might” (Balz and Schneider 1990:355, Brown 1976:601, Thayer 1889:1487). The concept of “divine power” was used throughout Greek literature by non-biblical writers (Ep. Arist. 157; Sib. Or. 5:249; Philo, Det. 83; Abr. 26; Spec. leg. 2.2; Conf. 115; Josephus, Ant. 19:69) and biblical writers (Justin 1 Apol. 32; Clem. Alex. Strom. 1.98.4; 7.37.4) (Bauckham 1983:177). “Divine” is only used in verses 3, 4 and in Paul’s speech to the Areopagus in Acts 17 and with God always as the power – the same source that will appear at the second coming as described in 2 Peter 1:16 (Bauckham 1983:177).

ζωὴν (“life”) is one of two nouns in the prepositional phrase referring back to “all things” (πάντα and τὰ πρὸς). The word can mean physical life (Rom 8:38) and supernatural life (John 3:36). Scholars have taken turns emphasizing the physical life (Green 2008:182) and the eternal life (Balz and Schneider 1991:105, Bauckham 1983:192). Some interpret the use of ζωὴν here to intend “a godly life” while here on earth (Davids 2006:168). At the same time, the biblical writers were constantly in a polemic against the non-biblical worldviews of their day. Epicureanism was a well-known antagonist to first century Christianity. Mills argues that 2 Peter as a whole is not simply pro-Christian, but is also “an argument against the perceived heresy of



the Epicurean ethos” (Mills *et al.* 2010:281), calling Christians to “holiness” (Howe 2000:307). This strengthens the notion that 2 Peter uses ζωήν to refer to life beyond the present, against the Epicurean teachings that denied any involvement by the gods in human events, that there was no life beyond the grave and that there is no judgement by the gods after death (Mills 2010:278).

Perhaps the two categories of life are not meant to be so separated, as if the temporal and the eternal are meant to be intertwined. Christ is the only perfect demonstration of this by virtue of his incarnation. The book of Jude, which is closest to 2 Peter in structure and content, like 2 Peter only uses ζωήν once along with the qualifier αἰώνιον to clarify that eternity is in mind. Yet there are many other passages that do not add αἰώνιον but are clearly speaking of eternal life (Matt 7:14, 18:8-9, John 5:26, 40, Acts 11:18) and there are others that speak to a spiritual death that occurs while one has physical life (Acts 17:25, Rom 7:10, I Peter 3:10, I John 3:14).

The other noun making up the prepositional phrase with ζωήν is εὐσέβειαν. εὐσέβειαν is most accurately rendered “godliness”, “piety”, and “reverence” (Balz 1991:84). Another one of the typical Hellenistic terms, this word occurs in some form five times in 2 Peter (1:3, 6, 7, 2:9, 3:11) while never occurring in 1 Peter. It is only found elsewhere in the Bible (not including the six LXX references) in the book of Acts, I Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus<sup>11</sup>. The word communicates internal piety, with reference to the gods but also, “especially in Jewish and Christian usage, the respect for God’s will and the moral way of life which are inseparable from the proper religious attitude to God” (Bauckham 1983:178). As with the most likely dual use of ζωήν, εὐσέβειαν also points to living a godly life in the present but also to eternal life that God has given (Harrington 2003:243). This refers again to partial fulfillment. Christians have been given everything that they need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3) and they are simultaneously exhorted later on in the same letter as the question

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<sup>11</sup> Acts 3:12, 1 Timothy 2:2, 3:16, 4:7, 4:8, 6:3, 6:5, 6:6, 6:11, 2 Timothy 3:5, Titus 1:1.

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

is asked: “what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness...” (2 Peter 3:11). Because Christians are called by a Holy God, they are to continually strive to be holy (Howe 2000:307).

Thus, everything that a believer needs for life and godliness have been given (δεδωρημένης), though neither have yet to be completely realized. The verb δεδωρημένης appears only twice in the New Testament (Mark 15:45 and 2 Peter 1:3) and speaks of the “gift of God to mankind” (Balz 1990:364). Christians can now become “partakers of the divine nature” (Balz 1990:364).

All of these blessings come through the knowledge (ἐπιγνώσεως) of Christ (2 Peter 1:2 helps clarify that it is Christ, as in 1:2, 1:8, 2:20 (Bauckham 1983:278) which is not simply factual knowledge, but carries with it the commitment, devotion, belief and trust that accompany salvation (Harrington 2003:248). The contents of the promises are laid out more specifically in 2 Peter 1:11, 16; 3:7, 13 (entrance in the eternal kingdom, the power and coming of Jesus, new heavens and a new earth, etc.) (Balz 1990:364). Himes further notes that 2 Peter must be understood within a greater context of Petrine theology. 1 Peter, 2 Peter and the two Petrine speeches in Acts 2 and 3 present the gospel and proclaim fulfillment that is found in Jesus Christ to those who believe in Him (Himes 2011:240, Wall 2001:67).

Luther connected the seeming disconnected words of 2 Peter 1:3, pastorally describing the personal impacts of God’s gifts to us:

It is such power as serves us toward life and godliness; that is, when we believe, then we attain this much, that God gives us the fullness of His power, which is so with and in us, that what we speak and work, it is not we that do it, but God Himself does it. He is strong, powerful, and almighty in us, though we even suffer and die, and are weak in the eyes of the world. So that there is no power nor ability in us if we have not this power of God. (Luther 1523:10)

These gifts and everything that the believer needs for life and godliness come because of God’s calling each believer to “his own glory and excellence”. δόξη is typically translated “glory” in the New Testament and was the word chosen in the LXX to translate the Hebrew term **כְּבוֹד**, although when used in writings outside of the

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

New Testament, δόξη typically means “view” or “opinion”. That meaning does not occur in the New Testament (Balz 1990:345). Because God’s divine power gives Christians everything they need for life and godliness, there is neither a topic that is not foundationally informed by scripture, nor a believer who is not empowered by God with the abilities needed for life and godliness. The intent of resilience is not foreign to Christianity. A Christian worldview has much to inform with regard to resilience, though it uses different (Biblical) terminology.

### **4.3 The Fully-Functioning Person: A Biblical Overview**

Christianity more fully addresses the concept of resilience by not limiting itself to that term. Rather than address life by giving people fish, it addresses how to fish by setting the proper framework for life through a Theocentric, Christocentric, Bibliocentric and Church-centered lifestyle. These concepts are foundational to a Christian worldview and must be addressed (if not assumed) in any resilience training given to Christians. The following sections describe these terms and their application to a Christian theology of resilience.

#### **4.3.1 Theocentric**

Because humanity exists only as a result of God’s creative power, God is both the foundation and the framework for everything in creation. He is the alpha and omega of all things, including existence (Outka 2002:100). Gustaf Aulen emphasizes that “...the Christian faith is by its nature completely theocentric...” (Aulen 2002:2). Human thought, human language, human behavior though imperfect, limited and creaturely is in some way imaging (for better or for worse) the divine image in which we were created (Poythress 1999:67).

That is the beginning of what it looks like to have a theo-centric worldview. Because God is infinite, no human can fully comprehend Him. Yet, because He has made Himself known, some things can be known. Theologians, scholars and others have diligently sought to sharpen a definition of God and His attributes because understanding who God is, is the starting point for understanding everything else including oneself and how the world is to operate. The term theo-centrism is used by

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

non-Christian religions as well to describe their perspective. When the term “God” is used, definitions are paramount at least in order to determine whether it is a biblical or non-biblical God and how one understands God to be the foundation for all other knowledge. Ancient pagans equated the soul with life whereas the early church emphatically stated that all life is a gift from God (Pelikan 1971:51), not simply in contrast to other religions, but also with those who claim to not be religious:

*Many who might answer in the affirmative [that they believe in God] would be in for a surprise if they truly encountered the God of the Bible. And many who would say ‘No, I don’t believe in God’ might be surprised to discover that biblical Christians too do not believe in the ‘God’ such atheists deny.” (Wright 2004:24).*

In contrast to the biblical understanding of God, many post-modern people adhere to a weak god who “is not reliable, all-knowing, impotent, still trying to figure things out or who does not want to know everything” (House 1997:2). At the same time, many former adherents of other religions are fascinated to understand the Christian God as “Father”, for Christianity alone takes this concept to practical (and biblical) depths (Cochran 2011:17). At the same time, spirituality and a sense of the mystical has grown, not waned, even as science and technology continue. This has great potential for Christian influence and yet, as Herman Bavinck noted in recognizing this renewed taste in the spiritual, it is thoroughly immanent and concerned with what God can do for the individual here and now to the detriment of recognizing God’s transcendence which calls all people away from individualistic lives and seeks to inform the “here and now” in light of eternity (Bolt 2013:83).

The Christian understanding of God comes from both general revelation and special revelation, better known as the Bible. This will be discussed in a following section. The starting point for “God” means a Trinitarian God for Christians (McGraw 2012:141, Sanders 2014:10). God in three persons (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) all fully God but distinct in their persons, means relationship within the Godhead and perfect unity and diversity (Poythress 1999:66). This is good. God is personal, not abstract (Poythress 1999:53). It is only through Jesus Christ, due to his perfect obedience, death and resurrection that anyone can even know or approach a positive relationship with God (Jonas 2011:7, Lohse 1978:70, Migliore 2014:59). The purpose of this section is to briefly describe who God is from a

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

Christian perspective and the implications for a Christian approach to life. Many of the descriptors for God have remained consistent for almost two thousand years. For the Apologists (including Justin, Tatian, Athenagoras and Theophilus of Antioch) God is the “Self-existent, Unchangeable, and Eternal One, who is the primal cause of the world...” (Berkhof 1997:57). Later on, the Alexandrian Fathers also agreed that God is One and is the uncreated Creator (Berkhof 1997:72). Theo-centrism concerns the ultimate reality. It means that there is an omnipotent (Dan 4:35, Isa 43:13 Job 42:1-2), omniscient (Jer 1:5, Jer 23:24, Rom 11:33-36, I John 3:20), eternal being (Isa 40:28, Ps 90:2,4, Rom 1:20), perfect in His goodness (Ps 119:68, Mark 10:18, I Tim 4:4) justice (Ps 37:27-29, Isa 30:18, Rom 12:19), and love (Ps 86:15, Prov 8:17, John 3:16, Rom 5:8) who created the world and everything in it (Gen 1, John 1:1-3, Col 1:16) (Barrett 2013:6, Deusterman 2010:130, House 1997:2, Matthews 1999:16). God demonstrated that He alone is God throughout history by His acts in the wilderness. He was not like the fake and powerless Egyptian and Canaanite gods (Wright 2004:24), the Babylonian Marduk, Plato’s Demiurge nor the multiple deities of eastern religions (Cochran 2011:17).

Although the historical approach to studying God has involved a categorization of His communicable and incommunicable attributes (which is still largely upheld), some categorize the study of God differently, addressing relational attributes like Friendliness, Vengeance, Artistry, Ego and Abundance (Aucamp 2013:47ff.). The Westminster Confession of Faith describes God thus:

*There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and withal, most just, and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.*

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

*God has all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself; and is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which He has made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and has most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever Himself pleases. In His sight all things are open and manifest, His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to Him contingent, or uncertain. He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands. To Him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience He is pleased to require of them (Williamson 2004:30).*

The goal of a Christian Theocentric worldview is to both understand God and to “relate all things in ways appropriate to their relation to God” (Gustafson 2003:15) for all things do relate to God (Fout et al. 2012:324).

A key factor involved in why God is to be sought is because He is real. As Creator of reality, He defines truth. Truth is not limited to an abstract concept. Anything that is true comes from the character and creative hand of God. Berkhof connects the Gnostic’s greatest error (separating the true God from the Creator) with the same temptation that the serpent used on Adam and Eve. The God who created does not lie, He is truth and does not lie to Adam and Eve, nor to His covenant people (Berkhof 1997:63).

There is then no topic of discussion, no subject in school and no skillset in the world over which God’s character does not guide us in how to approach or respond (Smith 2009:102). Taken further, people cannot make sense of their lives, history and reality apart from God (Bolt 2013:83). As Kierkegaard stated, even though people must remain in the world in this life, “A person ultimately and essentially has only God to deal with in everything” (Hong 1995:377). This means that one is to seek and obey God even if there was no personal benefit because to understand God (even partially) is to understand (partially, but truly) life and to have true (though limited) self-knowledge. Since God created humans, humans miss out on

understanding themselves if they ignore their Creator and His intent for them.

Christians must place truth before pragmatism. Without denigrating God's actions throughout history, one can assert the validity of Oswald Chamber's sentiment: "I don't care what God does. It's what God is that I care about" (McCasland 1993:11) because doing comes from being.

In contrast, any knowledge that begins without God, which seeks to ignore God in its thought processes immediately, is suspect. It may contain God's truth (borrowed without acknowledging Him) but it will necessarily remove key components of truth. Philosophy can be a Christian endeavor, but without God as the centerpiece to it, "philosophers are the patriarchs of heretics" (Tertullian De Anima 3). Christianity is a revealed worldview. It starts with the conviction that people cannot truly know anything about God unless God first communicates to them (Grudem 1994:149). God has communicated to people through His creation and through His Word (the Bible). God's general revelation (His creative powers, His ruling overall) has been broadcast to every human (Ps 19:1, Rom 1:19-20). Bullinger further comments in response to Psalm 14 that "unless they are fools all people can know that there is a God" (Stephens 2014:168). John Calvin concurred with that assessment (Calvin 2008:9). Herman Bavinck corrected the post-Kantian faith/knowledge dualism by demonstrating that faith itself does have knowledge that is revealed (Bolt 2013:88). Cornelius Van Til asserted that scripture teaches that there is no such thing as a brute fact (communicated in passages such as Romans 1). He was responding to those who would seek to either critique or prove the Christian faith upon evidence and facts. All facts are interpreted and thus the person who seeks to prove God apart from God's revelation (specifically, the Bible and creation) is trusting in human autonomy and rationality, rather than in God (Shannon 2012:323). God exists and the universe is theocentric because of "the impossibility of the contrary" (Bahnsen 1996:492).

Another aspect of Theocentrism is that God is Sovereign, meaning that He is in control of everything. He is not merely capable of knowing and doing whatever He wants; His will is always accomplished. God rules His Kingdom which is the centerpiece of human history. Though finite humans cannot always see it,

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

everything that occurs is part of God's plan to build His kingdom (Wellum 2008:2). Since there is no one greater than God and His plans, He demands primacy in our lives as communicated in passages such as Exod 20:3, Deut 6:4-5, Isa 45:20-21, Dan 4:34-35, and Matt 10:29-31 (Schreiner 2012:7). The glory of God is the most important goal for humans. They are to seek to praise and worship God in everything they say and do, not primarily because of the perceived personal benefits but because it brings God glory (Schreiner 2012:8), regardless of the risks involved (Outka 2002:101). God is not dependent on His creation, but He does get involved in their lives (Pelikan 1971:52).

A final implication of a theocentric worldview already described in part is the relational aspect. Christianity is not ultimately about deism or even theism. God has reached out to humanity and communicated who He is, who humans are and what the relationship will be. For those who question the existence of a personal God, scholars such as Bob Robinson echoing Leslie Newbigin ask:

*why should we believe that an impersonal undefinable abstraction is a more worthy and more accessible center of the religious universe than a known person from recorded history? (Robinson 2005:4).*

He is in charge and we have informed choices to make, the consequences of which will result either for our good or for our punishment. Without knowing truly who God is, we will not know who we are and will seek to think and act towards God in a way that suits us and keeps us comfortable which then turns into "what God is doing in the world is thus contracted into what He is doing for us personally and privately" (Wells 1994:176). A right relationship with God is organic, not strictly about intellectual assent to doctrine, and it unifies thought and action (Smith 2009:102).

To "know" God means it is a "Shemitic, not Hellenistic understanding of 'know'...The circle of revelation is not a school, but a 'covenant'" (Vos 2004:8). Yet, God is not tied to any specific culture and accepts people from all cultures (such as when the Gospel was proclaimed in Acts 2 and each one heard it in his own language) though part of His plan is to conform all cultures to Himself and His culture (Wildsmith 2011:129). While a covenant relationship involves obligations, the existence of the relationship between God and humanity is not necessary, but chosen – by God. Our



## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

relationship to God exists “for its own sake” and not because God needs it or is at a loss without it (Outka 2002:99). The benefits of the relationship extend ultimately to a redeemed (not fully realized in this life) and perfect relationship with God. Every human is made for eternity, some will spend it in the embrace of God while those who do not know Him will spend it under His wrath (Schreiner 2012:16).

### 4.3.2 Christocentric

Christian theology and lifestyle is also Christocentric in nature. This term has been the subject of numerous debates and discussions. This section will describe a proper use of Christocentrism, followed by discussing what Christocentrism is, the legitimacy of the use of the term, and the practical usage of a Christocentric approach. By Christocentrism it is meant that Jesus Christ is not simply a New Testament phenomenon. His birth, death and resurrection are clearly seen throughout the Old Testament (Ps. 110:1 in connection with Matt 22:44, Ps. 118:22, 26, Zech 13:7, Isa. 40:3, Mal. 3:1, etc). The whole of scripture is geared towards God working His redemptive plan through His son in history. A Christocentric approach means that scripture is read asking the question (among many questions) of how does the life, death, resurrection and reign of Christ inform this passage, even if it is in the Old Testament (Peppler 2012:120) and how does it inform life? Without Christ there is no Christianity and thus:

*Christianity is Christocentric...[it] is not simply a set of ideas, but rests on the understanding of who Christ is and upon a relationship to him (Williams 1997:68).*

This is not simply a concern for hermeneutics but a life calling to worship Christ as central to all of life and for the goal of life to be to become like Him (Smith 2012:158).

#### 4.3.2.1 What is Christocentrism?

Though a complete understanding of Christ is impossible for finite creatures, and even though the term has been given numerous definitions to the point that some think “Christocentrism” is no longer a worthwhile term for theology (Muller 2006:254), what is revealed to us must be studied with the intent of understanding truly (though not completely) since Christ is proclaimed in the scriptures. “Christocentrism”, has been defined multiple ways as a biblical hermeneutic, a Christian praxis, the centerpiece to the doctrine of God and more. It will be enough to state the main themes of an orthodox understanding. Christocentrism means that Christ is the main interpretive key to understanding scripture. Each verse of scripture must be read in its original context, but then (because Christ has come and the scriptures have so much to say about Him) each verse must again be studied to understand how it connects with, fulfills, and clarifies Christ and his purposes (Greidanus 2004:9).

The death of Christ on the cross was necessary due to God’s will and this reveals God’s “justice and mercy” (Trueman 1998:90, 98). Christ is the head of the church (though Louis Berkhof did not want to make Christ the center of the church due to passages like I Corinthians 12, while others like A.A. Hodge did) (Berkhof 1997:557, Braaten 1987:18). He is the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15-18). Christ must be “the center and power of the whole sphere of the religious life of man” (Buckham 1905:449), though this ought not to mean that Christ obscures the Father or Holy Spirit in principle and in practice by believers. Braaten saw the irony in thinking that lessening Christ would mean a more accurate picture of God. He addressed those who accused Christocentrists as being Christomonists (it is only about Christ) thus: “Christ must decrease in order that God might increase- what a proposition for Christian theology!” (Braaten 1987:18). Christ, being God “accomplished salvation for the elect, [he] did not simply make it possible” (Trueman 1998:89).

Christocentrism entails every believer seeking to model their life to honor God. They are to do this because of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection that saved sinners. It means that every Christian will be aware (though not completely aware) of the sin in themselves. The greatest problem people face is justified judgement before a holy

God. Only those who trust in Christ (“trust” is not simply verbal assent but life allegiance) are saved from certain wrath and restored to union with Christ, for good works do not save, but we are saved in order to do good works (Eph 2:8-10). Christ is the prophet, priest and king of scripture, fulfilling and abiding in all three of those important roles (Ryrie 1986:254). Christ will visibly return one day to restore creation to perfection.

#### **4.3.2.2 Legitimacy of a Christocentric Perspective**

Scholars have questioned if there is biblical warrant for holding to a Christocentric worldview. This questioning is a relatively recent trend in scholarship. The majority of Christian theologians have throughout the church’s history been strong proponents of understanding God primarily through God the Son and have asserted that Christology is the only possible entry point for Trinitarian belief (Castro 2000:587). Origin, Athanasius, the Nicene and Antiochan schools of thought all placed Christ as the key to understanding God. Christ was the “centerpiece” (Buckham 1905:443). Ignatius of Antioch, martyred for his faith, was adamant that knowing Christ is to know God (Fudge 1972:234). Though one of the key phrases for describing the Protestant Reformation was *sola christi*, a focus on Christ is not exclusively attributable to Reformation-era Christians (such as John Calvin who, with his focus on the primacy of the Bible did not place Christ as the central key in order to know God). Some have attributed the return to Christ in scholarship to Friedrich Schleiermacher (Buckham 1905:444). Yet, the centrality of Christ was a central theme to the Reformation mindset and is not so quickly dismissed by others who assert that Reformers like Calvin were solidly Christocentric and it was those who came after them that eventually decreased the emphasis on Christ (Barcellos 2008:94). The Reformers argued that scripture is the ultimate source of our knowledge of God (Muller 2006:257), not Christ, for it is the scriptures that give us our knowledge of Christ. Following the same pattern of thought as Athanasius, the English Reformed believed that “Christ is the scope of all scripture” (Barcellos 2008:111). Harnack popularized the idea that Jesus is merely a means to God, but not the message of God, not God Himself (Harnack 2006:128).

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

With regard to the term Christocentrism, the differences in use tend towards one of two camps; those who emphasize the theocentric approach (with varying views of the role of Christ) and those who emphasize the Christocentric approach in regards to biblical interpretation and how best to understand who God is. Those in the Theocentric emphasis camp tend to believe that the focus on Christocentrism has lessened the understanding of and appreciation for who God is (He is also Father and Holy Spirit). They further believe that a lessening of Christocentrism would provide for a more accurate Christianity while those in the Christocentric camp hold that to lessen Christocentrism is heresy (Williams 1997:69).

Those who favor the Theocentric approach believe that Christ has become too nuanced (Muller 2006:253ff) or too elevated in exclusion to the rest of the Trinity. In the words of one proponent of this view, Christocentrism “distorts the mission of the church and distorts who God is” (Obaje 1987:4). This does not mean these theologians are against Christ. It would seem that their intent is to emphasize biblical themes in accordance with how much scripture itself emphasizes them (Obaje 1987:7). If Christ is not mentioned in every verse, one should not try to fit or add him in there. Scriptures such as John 3:16 bear out that it is not uniquely Christ who loved the world, but rather God who loved the world. Paul Minear found over 90 biblical images of the church and none of them, he stated was “intended to be a complete picture of the church” (Minear 2004:xxvi).

Those in favor of the Christocentric approach assert that a true and biblical understanding of God can begin only with Christ, who is God, though there are significant differences within this camp, such as the beliefs of Karl Barth who held to Christocentrism, but not a traditional view of biblical infallibility (Cortez 2007:1).

Barth saw no escape from Christocentrism, for Christ has been revealed and He is the central defining character of both history and scripture. How can He be anything other than the center (Sexton 2011:803)? Others stress that Christocentrism “is simply the Christian way of being theocentric” and the new theocentrists are promoting “Arianism” which lowers Christ far too much (Braaten 1987:18). Since Christ himself stated that the Old Testament was written about Him and He came to

fulfill it (Matt 5:17, Luke 24:44ff), scripture can only be truly understood by reading it in light of what it says about Christ or by recognizing how it relates to Christ (Smith 2012:160), because scripture points the reader to Christ (Barcellos 2008:112).

#### **4.3.2.3 Christocentrism in Practice**

What does this look like in practice? It means that Christians can learn from other religions, but not when in contrast to scripture. One such example of this would be to uphold that salvation is found in no other but Christ. Christianity is exclusive (other religions cannot save a person from eternal damnation or restore them to union with God). The growth of public tolerance for other religions presents a challenge (Williams 1997:68), but also an opportunity to proclaim the truth (every other religion believes as well that their beliefs are truth; Christianity does not have a monopoly on intolerance and “intolerance” is not always a bad word). It means that those who love Christ will seek to honor Him in all that they do. This will necessarily involve being part of a church community, for Christ died for the church (Eph 5:25). Christ will be spoken of in prayer, either implicitly or explicitly. Conversations will seek to avoid profane language and misusing the Lord’s name for a vain purpose. Any topics or discussions about resiliency, how to better oneself, escape depression, not being suicidal, gender issues discussions, discussions about image and esteem, relationship guidance, having a “good” marriage, raising children, sexual mores, spending habits, budgeting, entertainment, music choices, observance of special days and worship days and more will seek to approach all of these by honoring Christ and not being self-seeking nor by using reason unguided by scripture. No person, whether Christian or not, is to be understood “from a human point of view” but as a person created in God’s image who is either under grace and growing or under wrath (Taber 2014:73, Tolbert 1983:66). Pastoral ministry through preaching, counseling, pastoral visitation, advising others, teaching and in any other area to which they are called, must point to Christ just as Paul wanted to make “nothing known among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (I Cor 2:2). References to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit will not make sense apart from Christ (McGraw 2010:268). Gospel-living is more than a program or system. It is a “gift of a new world from God to this old world of sin and death” (Visser ‘t Hooft 1977:161).

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

Believers no longer live for themselves (Tolbert 1983:66), but for Christ with whom they have been crucified (Gal 2:20). Commitment to Christ is the way that life should be; life is normal and right (though not yet perfect, because of our remaining sin and a fallen creation) with Christ (Vincent 1968:612). Every thought whether it is about biology, chemistry, sports, economics, resiliency, war, administrative organization, disciplinary action, leadership, or anything else must be taken captive to obey Christ (2 Cor 10:5). Many people are skilled in various disciplines without recognizing Christ for who He is. One does not have to be a disciple of Christ to be a good engineer or athlete. Yet, this is not because there is such thing as a neutral skill. Rather, science, the arts, business and every other discipline in life works precisely because God made it. Anyone who succeeds in a given discipline is the beneficiary of common grace, recognizing the creation while ignoring the Creator. Because nothing exists apart from the Triune God, the non-Christian must borrow from the Christian worldview to make sense of anything. Though not complete until we are reunited with Christ after this life is over, living a Christ-centered life is part of the process of people being restored to the image of God in which humanity was originally created.

### 4.3.3 Bibliocentric

The Bible is not merely a nice book that has traditionally been a guide for Christians. The Bible is God's revealed Word. God spoke to humanity through His Son (Heb 1:1-2). Scripture is where we read and learn of Christ. Exemplary interpretations without Christ (for example, only reading the stories of Moses as about "being like Moses" rather than as pointing us beyond Moses to Christ) are inaccurate (Greidanus 2001:59).

The scriptures were written by those to whom God revealed His written word, stated in verses such as Heb 1:3 (Williamson 2004:4). The books of the Bible affirm that they are indeed the word of God (2 Sam 23:2, Luke 1:68-70, Acts 4:24-25, I Cor 2:13, I Thess 4:8, 2 Pet 3:15-16, etc. The Bible is a "worldview", a term traced back to Immanuel Kant (and then on to theologians), which is a concept that has been in existence since before creation (Schultz 2013:230). No one escapes having a

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

worldview. Everyone must believe certain things first before any facts (scientific or otherwise) can be “known” (Wolters 2005:4).

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible are foundational assumptions and so they will not be defended in this thesis. Of importance at this point is the issue of hermeneutical authority. Who determines the interpretation of scripture? If scripture (the Bible) is the foundational document for all of life (whether people acknowledge it as such or not), then its interpretation is crucial. The greatest debate in this realm that continues to this day is summarized in the phrase *sola scriptura* (“by the Bible alone”). This is closely connected to another of the five reformation-era solas, *sola fide* (“by faith alone”). Protestants believed that the Roman Catholic Church’s practice of treating church authority as equal to biblical teaching meant that faith (and eventually even the teaching of scripture) was obscured by obedience to the church’s pronouncements (Wells 1975:50).

*Sola Scriptura is the doctrine that scripture, and only scripture, has the final word on everything, all our doctrine, and all our life. Thus it has the final word even on our interpretation of scripture, even in our theological method (Frame 1997:272).*

The Reformers believed that the Roman Catholic Church had strayed from the truth by teaching that the “Church” (meaning the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church which is led by the Pope) is the final authority on biblical interpretation (known as the “dual source” view of revelation) (Schmemmann 1977:50).

For the Roman Catholic Church, this was intended to safeguard scripture. There are wrong interpretations of scripture. If anyone can interpret it any way they see fit, then all kinds of strange, errant and heretical views could be encouraged. In fact, practicing *sola scriptura* is “simply not a possibility” (Brown 1961:441). Protestants (led by Luther and Calvin among others) during the Reformation believed that the Roman Catholic Church had erred in many of its interpretations and thus the only true interpreter of scripture was scripture itself (known as the “single source” view of revelation) (Sproul 2010:25). As a result, the Reformers stated that the Roman Catholic Church had not taught “eternal justification” but rather a series of works that focused more on human merit than on Christ’s sacrifice for the remission of sins

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

(Niemela 2001:13) while dismissing that *sola scriptura* had “wide acceptance” in certain locations of “the late medieval church” (McGrath 1993:148). The leaders of the Protestant Reformation held that no human being could claim the final word on interpretation if it differed from what the scriptures actually taught (George 1988:82) for there is a definite meaning of scripture, though others would state that final interpretation does belong to the church, but it is the universal church, not the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church (Kloosterman 2006:206).

Thus, there was and is for Protestants the belief that there is a right and wrong way to interpret scripture to which scripture itself testifies (Sandlin 2000:43). Those who disagree with this approach accuse adherents of *sola scriptura* of ingesting too much Enlightenment thinking into their faith which, according to some, produced a Christianity of timeless principles divorced from an historic document (Hall 1998:25). Yet there have been plenty of professing Christians such as Klaas Schilder, Geerhardus Vos, John Murray and many others who promoted “redemptive history” while still holding to *sola scriptura* (Greidanus 2001:39).

What then is the Bible? John Peckham lists three key points. Scripture is:

*“...the uniquely infallible source of divine revelation that is available to contemporary humans collectively...” it alone provides a sufficient and fully trustworthy basis of theology, and scripture is the uniquely authoritative and final norm of theological interpretation that norms all others” (Peckham 2014:200).*

This does not mean that there is no truth to be found outside the Bible (Godfrey 2007:2). We learn from God’s general revelation as found in our exploration of creation through the study and observation of animals, plants, geography, history, the solar system, the arts and more.

A Biblocentric approach views the Bible not simply as a nice book of stories, or a collection of timeless principles, but the written message of God to humanity. “The most prevalent image by which biblical writers refer to the collection of words that became our Bible is ‘word’” (see Matt 4:4, John 1, Eph 6:17, 2 Pet 1:21, I Thess 2:13) (Longman 1998:90). Words are important, especially for people of the Word living in an image driven culture such as our modern times (Nazzareno 2008:140), and yet even the early church had the challenge of sharing the word to image-driven



#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

pagan cultures (Hunt 2003:29ff.). The Bible is to be treated as a lamp that is a guide for life (Ps 119:105, 2 Pet 1:19), it “abides forever” (1 Pet 1:25), it is “alive and powerful” (Heb 4:12), it “warns a person” (Ps 19:11), is “something essential to life” (Matt 4:4), and is “a mirror in which a person can see himself or herself” (James 1:22-25), (Longman 1998:91).

Living life upon the teachings of the Bible has many practical out workings. God knows everything, but we do not, therefore we have the opportunity to constantly learn. Ecclesiastes states (Eccl 1:9) that there is “nothing new under the sun” and so there is truly no such thing as an “invention”. There are only “discoveries” as humans discover more of God’s creation. The Bible and science are not “at odds” (Schroeder 1997:4) with each other. Science is an orderly way to study God’s physical creation, but any scientific “discovery” must fall in line with scripture. Sometimes errant interpretations of scripture are corrected by scientific discovery, for sometimes scripture is not understood in its proper context (Hayes 2007:13). Understanding the Bible in its proper context further helps understand a given passage’s application to modern situations (Porter 2014:18). Sometimes scripture corrects an errant scientific theory. Living a biblocentric life entails viewing life in both mystery and categories. The main categories of creation, fall and redemption (Wolters 2005:12) establish that God is the centerpiece of the story (Wolters 2005:18), people are not an accident but intentionally created, humanity as a whole is not consistently getting better – it was perfect and got worse. We are not the solution to our state of imperfection and the myriad of problems that affect life. We need redemption, which only God Himself can supply. In the midst of the imperfection however, God has given us Himself and His Word upon which to base our lives. Although originally from the Ancient Near East, Christianity is a worldwide religion that cannot be sequestered into a subsection of life. Religion impacts every area of life. Christianity is no different. As former Yale professor William Lyons Phelps noted:

*Our civilization is founded upon the Bible. More of our ideas, our wisdom, our philosophy, our literature, our art, our ideals come from the Bible than from all other books combined (Williams 1977:36).*

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

The Bible “governs our total life, because God is totally God, and there is no area of life and thought outside His government” (Rushdoony 1981:128). Everyone will worship something. A biblocentric world view is not akin to bibliolatry (worship of the Bible). Christians are to worship God. The Bible is His Word. Those who do not honor God’s Word as such will erect their own foundation for living. Any other foundation outside of scripture is a human-centered belief system. Leslie Newbigin observed that much of Western Culture (while at times claiming a religious and even Christian heritage) is “rooted in humanism, the enlightenment and supremacy of reason and that this approach to life is unhelpful and untrue” (Bartholomew 2004:19). We become like the idols we worship and we must worship either God or something else because our worldview influences our thinking, perception and knowledge (Beale 2008:12, Naugle 2002:253). Closely related to this is the concept of the sufficiency of scripture. Scripture is not a life dictionary where one looks up every specific situation in order to find a specific answer. Rather, scripture teaches how the universe operates (God is in charge), the reason for the problems (sin), how salvation is possible (through Christ alone), dependence on God, Godly principles, and wisdom within a Theocentric, Christocentric and Biblocentric framework – “comprehensive salvation” (Powlison 2004:43). Contrary to those who see scripture as more limited in scope, stating that it does not address psychology, historiography and other disciplines (Braun 2009:16, Muller 1997:305), scripture, in passages such as 2 Peter 1:3 reemphasizes that the Christian has everything that they need (Bulkley 1993:268).

The Bible does not contain everything we want to know, but it does contain what is necessary to know. God knows the full implications of His Word while we must continue to study and live it in order to glean more (Jowers 2009:50). Christianity challenges the sufficiency of any non-Christian belief system (Lambert 2012:7).

### **4.3.4 Church-centered**

The Christian faith has numerous tangible aspects. It does not denounce the visible in favor of the invisible, for God made the heavens and the earth. Just as any non-Christian way of thinking at its foundation has assumptions used to back up concrete results, so Christianity is expressed in life, for the physical and the spiritual (contrary

to Kant) were created to be together, not separated. The physical relationship that every Christian is called to is that of the Church. There is much that is not understood about the identity of the church (even by Christians), because nowhere in scripture is the word church (ἐκκλησία) or “assembly” consistently defined (Culver 2005:8, Rowe 2012:220). Certain themes do emerge, however. The assembly was intended to mirror the Old Testament images of the gathered people of God who had been redeemed from slavery to a life of trials in the midst of freedom (Acts 7:38, Rom 4:11, Eph 2:11-22, Eph 3:6,). It was a physical meeting of the believers, though not all at one location (Lathrop 2004:6). They gathered for the purposes of hearing God’s Word and to honor Him together (Exod 19-24, Neh 8, Isa 2) (Lathrop 2004:4). Early church gatherings were very similar to synagogue worship where “praise, instruction and prayer” in addition to the Eucharist were conducted (Walker 1985:103).

This does not leave Christians without guidelines. For the purposes of this paper, by “church” it is meant the true universal assembly of believers in Christ applied in local congregations, which are made up of Christians (those who are elect and thus growing in grace and truth – though imperfectly). Christ is the head of the church (no human rules it) and it shall never cease to exist (Williamson 2004:247). Just prior to the Reformation, the mindset of the culture was that the “one true faith and the one true church” could not be separated (Pelikan 1985:59). The lack of unity theologically, socially and otherwise among churches is sad, but it is a sign of both brothers and sisters in Christ who do not agree on all things and also a recognition that wolves and masquerading false believers exist. At the same time, the church exemplifies a welcoming community that confronts sin and evil, brings together diverse cultures, languages, socio-economic levels, age groups and more into unity under the cross, hosts an environment where lives are changed, and provides a communally grounding influence where people focus more on their common identity in Christ while utilizing their unique gifts to serve Him. A small sample of the ways in which the church has been described include an “institution, mystic communion, sacrament, herald and servant” (Dulles 1976:29-30), and as centered around the Eucharist (Stramara 2014:220, Wood 1993:427).

“The Church” is discussed throughout the history of Christian literature in confessions and baptismals, including Hippolytus’ Apostolic Tradition (A.D. 215), the Apostles Confession of Faith and from the confessions at Nicaea (A.D. 325) and Constantinople (A.D. 381) (van der Leer 2009:40), but the earliest church documents that mention it do not seek to enumerate in detail the marks of the church, or its specific structure. These are concerns of later times when the church had to address various issues that arose. Much of the focus on “ecclesiology” (a term that was first utilized during the latter part of the seventeenth century and has only been used regularly since 1945 (Pelikan 1989:282)) for the past century or more has been on the organization of the church and less on church practice (Healy 2000:3).

Should the church be led by bishops or elders? Should there be regional or higher levels of accountability or should local autonomy be the rule? It was not until the third century A.D. that church structure began to have levels higher than the local level. The councils that were held prior were on an ad hoc basis (Walker 1985:100). What role does apostolic succession play in selection of church leaders? How ought the church to determine who is a member (Chun 2015:345)? The focus of this section is to discuss what biblical practice of the church looks like.

The church begins and ends with God. He is the one who founded it and it exists for His purposes (Bosch 1992:519) as His covenant people (Hays 1994:31). This includes honoring the Trinitarian God as the founder and focus of the church and this means that Christ (the bridegroom of His lady the church) cannot be separated from His church (Kalin 1993:448, McCarthy 2005:33), nor can anyone truly claim to belong to the church and not be a disciple of Christ. Hughes Oliphant Old includes in this the centrality of Christ:

*Christian worship is in the name of Christ because worship is a function of the body of Christ and as Christians we are all one body (Old 2002:4).*

This further entails that the church is to be focused on what Christ’s focus was (McCarthy 2005:33): calling sinners to repentance (for a lifetime, not just once), an assembly that worships God, seeking to reverse the curse of the fall while recognizing that complete fulfillment will not come until He returns.

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

The church is to be a visible demonstration of community under Christ to the world. While it does have a missional component (Shenk 2005:73), and may utilize culturally distinctive metaphors (such as a “community” or doctrinal association in American terms or as a “clan” to relate more to an African mindset (Dulles 1976:29, Pobee 1979:88, Sankey 1994:447)), it does not exist primarily as a message to the world (evangelism is not the goal, but a means), but to bring glory to God and to enjoy Him forever which is the chief end of humanity (Kinney 2007:124). The three classic definitions or themes in which the church has been categorized are the “Company of the Elect”, “the Body of Christ”, and “the Communion of Saints” (Brunner 1962:22).

The church seeks giving God glory through its life together as an “assembly”. While individuals must believe (“belief” is not merely verbal assent but conviction acted upon), Christianity is a team event and as such the focus is not on individual relationships with Christ. Christ died for the church (John 10:15, Rom 5:8, I Cor 15:3, 2 Cor 5:21, Eph 2:11-22, Eph 5:25, I Thess 5:10). Christians are not primarily saved to live an independent Christian faith, but to be a part of the church (Hays 1994:34). Because Christians have been called by God for His purposes (Rom 8:28, I Cor 1:2, I Cor 7:20), “called to freedom” (Gal 5:13), and have been “called to one body” (Col 3:15, etc.) the church is not a “voluntary association of like-minded believers” (Kinnamon 2009:341). Though numerous splits have occurred over the church’s history due to disagreements or heresy, there are core beliefs as found in the historic creeds in the Christian church that have been affirmed and defended for centuries to which almost every Christian has given assent (Culver 2005:1). The church’s goal and ultimate future is unity in Christ because Christ is our maker and I Cor 1:13 reminds believers that “he is not divided” (Cope 1997:21).

How ought a church to function? God is infinitely creative and as His creation, we can only seek to re-create after Him for there is nothing new to Him. There is unity for how the church is to conduct itself and there is diversity within that unity. The Protestant Church has historically recognized the basic marks of the church as “true preaching of the Word; proper observance of the sacraments; and faithful exercise of church discipline” (Berkhof, 1974:577, Clowney 1995:101, Dever 2013:7, Hoeksema 1973:567). Thus, church is not optional, not individual and not about human

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

creativity in worship styles or service format. The people of God come together to honor Him, to confess their sins, to find assurance of forgiveness through the reading of His Word, to pray as a body, to give financially to the church for support of the church and acts of service, to be instructed in God's Word as the whole counsel of God is continually preached, to partake in the Eucharist and to grow in relationships with each other. That being said, one does not have to be a professing Christian to attend church. Unbelievers are to be welcome at church as they are, but to not remain as they are. They are instead to be changed through their identification with the body of Christ. Not all who attend church belong to Christ. Those who truly believe and belong to Christ, wherever they are located on a Sunday are the true (invisible) church. There are many people who attend a church (the visible church), but many of them do not believe. The true church is made up of those God has changed and enabled to trust in Him (the elect) which includes believers all over the world (Ps 2:8, Rom 15:9-12, I Cor 1:2, 12:12-13, Rev 7:9) (Kinney 2007:45). Not all who attend a physical church gathering are Christians for only God knows who is truly "in the church" (Pelikan 1989:174), a reality that has been recognized throughout church history (McCarthy 2005:28). Church was instituted by God for God and Christians. It is not primarily about happiness, family bonding, a more healthy life or community, though these can be effects of church belonging (Old 2002:2). Pastors are to be Shepherds, not CEOs (Halliday 2001:22). Shepherds lead their flocks into more knowledge and living out of the teachings of scripture. This has numerous implications. Because God is real, because Christ suffered, died and came alive again, Christians live in recognition that this world as it currently exists is not heaven, nor is it the best thing for which they can hope. Christians have "died with Christ" (Rom 6:8), their life is "hidden with Christ in God" (Col 3:3), the full redemption of their bodies is yet to come (Acts 3:21, Eph 4:10, Phil 1:23). The church universal has not always lived out this theology due to the long-term effects of a government-accepted Constantinian-era Christianity. Ministers since at least the time of Augustine have faced the same issues of a lethargic church that confront modern day ministers (McCarthy 2005:26). Part of recognizing that Western Civilizations are no longer biblocentric means that Christians must view their evangelism as not solely about proclamation, but about "the persuading of people to become Christians and to take their place as responsible members of the body of Christ" (William 1989:81). This is not only

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

a challenge, but an encouragement of the flexibility of Christianity, rooted in Judaism, flourishing in Hellenistic culture and demonstrating the impact and upheaval that God's truth has on any culture (Hatch 1904:5, Rowe 2012:261).

While remaining in this life, Christians are called by God to announce that the Kingdom of God is here, calling people through relationships to follow Christ and join his church while acting as salt and light to those who are not of the same beliefs and lifestyle. This means that as a church, Christians' beliefs will be public and virtue must be exemplified in their conversations with others and in the larger public arenas of government, business, academia, etc. demonstrating that God's unchanging Word continues to provide timely and culturally relevant guidance to every area of life (Clapp 1996:188, Hauerwas 2010:195).

There is no neutral ground where beliefs can be left in favor of unbiased thinking. No person escapes having a belief system. Government has a bias, just as the church does (the church is to be biased towards God's Word and His glory, because God is biased for His perfect and holy will). Government is under God (Rom 13:1-4, I Pet 2:13-14) to administer good for those under their charge, to defend them with arms as needed, and to bring God's wrath upon the wrongdoer. Thus the justice system (including the courts, police, and other public servants whose job is to aid in public safety and justice) is to be obeyed as an arm of God's justice, though only as it adheres to God's Word. The church is distinct from government. The church must speak God's truth, especially when it conflicts with government. Government does not have any right to rule the church (Kinney 2007:41).

True Christian faith requires engagement with the world working through the church to seek restoration to relationships, society, and more as we look forward to the day that God will fully redeem all aspects of His creation (Michener 2010:121). The church is to embody God's righteousness through obedience to His Word which is love, justice, grace and more in action (Hays 1994:32). The church expects suffering, both individually and corporately due to the fall which manifests itself in diseases, tragedies, weaknesses, victimization and temptations. Every person experiences some form of suffering as a result of life in a fallen world. If Christ experienced suffering, so will Christians, but it is a means of sanctification for those who love God, who are called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28) (Bonhoeffer 1995:87). The church has a life of its own apart from the world. It is to be conformed to

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

Christ, not the world (Rom 12:2). Christians throughout history have alternatively emphasized the spiritual (immaterial) nature of the faith and the material (physical) acts and nature of the church – these fuel and inform each other (Healy 2000:150, Michener 2010:123). The church as a whole sings together weekly (not many non-religious groups come together to sing unless for a performance or an earthly worship service such as a football game), she calls people to repentance (whereas society seeks ways to seek to justify themselves and rename in order to excuse sin), she calls for a Sabbath rest every seven days and in eternity (Heb 4:9), she celebrates her own calendar of events (holy days and other observances) distinct from the calendar of the geographical country in which she resides. The church is to be a community where Christians join together to worship, pray, sing, learn, eat, raise their families, share their burdens, spend significant time and find friendships and commitments that outlast any job. In short, Christianity is more than just passing on beliefs and knowledge. It is a “distinctive way of life” (Healy 2000:4) and lived out in the church as a liturgy (“the work of the people”) - its own culture with “rituals, folkways and practices as feelings, attitudes and assumptions” (Williams 1985:27).

### **4.4 Aspects of Christian Resilience**

Christianity is a practical faith. Theology and doctrine translate into daily behaviour. Orthodoxy is essential for orthopraxy.

Current Air Force resiliency training addresses five broad categories: Individuality and Community, Maturity and Responsibility, Stewardship and Vocation, Adversity and Suffering, and Objective Truth. These topics are addressed by the Air Force because they impact how people conduct themselves at home, work, in society, at church, on vacation and more. Resilience is not an isolated topic. In order to be truly resilient, a worldview capable of addressing and sustaining all of these topics must be believed and followed in order to become truly resilient. Christianity provides such a worldview. The following sections formulate a Christian theology of resilience within these broad categories. While Christian theology has historically been systematized and expressed in different categories, the present study utilizes



the categories as they are seen in current Air Force resiliency training in order to more clearly juxtapose these competing worldviews.

#### **4.4.1 Individuality and Community**

##### **4.4.1.1 Importance of Unity and Community vs. Individualism**

The first category of Air Force resiliency training is Individuality and Community. Discussions of individuality and community are a variation on the discussion of unity and diversity. There is plenty of divergence of thought with regard to this subject among theologians, though scripture does promote certain standout themes which remain true beyond the cultural timeframe in which they were first revealed. Western cultures tend to value “radical individualism which taken to its end results in no desire for God (Bartz 2013:687). Other cultures (such as African, Asian, South American and Pacific) place more value on the importance of the community and a person’s finding their identity not by virtue of their independence but by virtue of their belonging (Kunhiyop 2010:11), though individualism (a more modern term for “singularity”) is not a 21<sup>st</sup> century invention but has existed in every century (Lepori 2013:369). The Bible celebrates individual diversity within the context of communal belonging. People are made to be social (Temple 1942:64) and in truth, in the most individualistic cultures “even the most private decisions and achievements are the results of our social experience and could neither exist nor be understood apart from that experience (Rasmussen 1989:17).

The unity and belonging of humanity to one another begins with understanding each human’s creation in the image of God, expressed in community – specifically a family. Balswick and Balswick have gone so far as to say that “relationality is the primary way human beings reflect God’s image” (see Gen 1:26-27) (Balswick 2007:18). YHWH’s covenantal language is the starting point to how family is to function (Balswick 2007:20). It is a covenant that is a relationship of love and grace unearned, that also carries with it demands of the covenant (faithfulness and obedience). The covenant relationship in the Old Testament between YHWH and Israel is “explicitly depicted in familial terms” as all humans are connected physically through Abraham and his seed (Deut 32:6, 14:1, Hosea 11:1) (Atkinson 2014:129).

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

Everyone has or had a biological family which is both a reminder of sin and a reminder that points to Christ's eventual redeeming all things. The family is an inherently ambivalent image of disappointment and struggle on the one hand, and of hope and blessing on the other. (Longman 1998:265). This is no different in the church, which disappoints at times but is also Christ's chosen vehicle for setting up his Kingdom.

The primary defining theme of people's existence is that they belong to God (whether they are covenant keepers under grace or covenant breakers under wrath). The question "Who am I?" is answered by addressing "Whose am I?" as Douglas Steere noted there is "no selfhood outside of relationship" (Palmer 2000:17). Identity is found in relation to God. God created the family (biological and then further extended to additional relatives) as the basic unit of relationship which in ancient times (and often in modern times) meant that up to three generations lived in one domicile (King 2001:36, Stager 29).

Scripture knows no pneumatologic-anthropologic dichotomy. Worship of God was the center of Israelite life in their "households and as a nation" (see Deut 5:8-10, Isa 44:9-20, Jer 10:1-16) (Barton 2012:8). Some modern cultures still recognize the truth of a "unified vision of reality" where every aspect of life is connected (spiritual and physical, faith, reason, finances, relationships, sports, music, etc. (Kunyahop 2010:14). Living in loving relationships in the family is a means of honoring and loving God with the ultimate goal of experiencing Trinitarian relationship through Christ (Lepori 2013:374), though loving God and loving people are not equivalent. Because God is communal and lives in perfect relationship, we too as image-bearers are created to be communal (Gen 1:1, Gen 2:18, Mal 2:10, Matt 3:16-17, Mark 1:11, Luke 22:42, 2 Cor 13:14) (Bartz 2013:690, Kunyahop 2010:11). Even while on earth and living a sinless life with regard to God's law, Jesus had a family and friends, and spent the majority of his last three years on earth with twelve (sinful) men.

A person either embraces God through Christ Jesus or rejects Him. There is no middle ground. This has implications for education. God made the world and everything in it therefore the Bible is the lens through which every subject is viewed.

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

Education must have God as its reference point and scripture as its framework if it is to truly make sense. Knowledge is only possible because God exists. If God does not exist, knowledge is a convention and fabrication. There is no basis for saying anyone is right or wrong for truth would depend upon a given individual's inclinations. That gravity is real, that medicine works according to certain "laws", and even that logic can demonstrate things such as arguments to be true or false demonstrates that there is reality and truth. In a non-theistic understanding, there is no room for truth outside of self. Christians are called to "take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Cor 10:5). This is accomplished during Bible studies, conversations and sermons for Christians, as relational beings need others to help them grow in their faith (Bartz 2013:689) and to avoid false doctrines (Healy 2009:373). People learn in community, in biology, math, chemistry, physical therapy, medicine, theology, art, and more, but all of these subjects must be viewed in light of biblical teaching or they will be viewed from a human-centered perspective, contrary to God.

The basic unit God created was the family. As discussed above, He made male and female intentionally. Life is complex and there is great diversity to be found within God's will. There are numerous jobs that can be had, numerous ways to function in a marriage, numerous ways to raise children, but all within the framework of scripture. Instead of focusing on all of the deviations from God's Word, it is helpful to start with biblical guidelines for topics such as marriage and family. From there, any deviations will stand out. The social sciences recognize the foundational role religion plays in marriage (Carroll 2015:40) observing that those without religious faith have a marriage that is fueled by a "moral language of individualism" and is characterized by autonomy (Jensen 1998:83) rather than submission to God. Because God wanted humanity to be male and female (Mark 10:6-8), marriage existed long before the state (First Things 2015:24), gender is part of God's "good" creation. It is something for which to be thankful. Each person has been given a gender within which they are to celebrate and glorify God. Marriage is not a convenient convention, but a divine institution. It benefits humans, but ultimately exists as a means to glorify God. Adam was created first but it was not good for him to be alone. Male and female both have "joint stewardship of creation" (see Gen 1:28) and "ontological equality"

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

(equal in being), and have intentionally good differences in their functional roles as demonstrated in passages such as I Tim 2:13 and I Pet 3:7 (Campbell 2003:240).

In practice, marriage, sex and children are meant to occur in that order. Dallas comments that marriage goes wrong when it deviates from:

*Its original three-element design: heterosexual, monogamous, and built for permanence, as detailed in Genesis and reaffirmed by Christ (Gen. 2:24; Mark 10:6–9) (Dallas 2010:3).*

The opposite of “heterosexual, monogamous, and built for permanence” describes just about every method of turning away from God’s intent for marriage. “Sexual orientation” is a relatively recent term from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Biblically, there is no such thing as a “homosexual”, only those who practice homosexuality (Hannon 2014:28). God has created the genders as different from each other so that there is a natural looking to each other with the goal of union, physically and spiritually (Tsekrekos 2014:309). There are any number of additional sinful diversions from God’s intent including fornication, divorce, co-habitation and lust as expressed in voyeurism, pornography, sexting, solo sex and any other means by which people seek to “own” sexual gratification as, in the words of Augustine a “privation of the good”. This order of marriage, then sex, then children when followed (aside from sinful hearts and a fallen creation) mitigates against sexual diseases, sexual assault and abuse, relationship heartbreaks, manipulation, selfishly using others, single-parent homes, abuse, derelict children, irresponsibility and more. To support this, the biblical worldview has highly valued adulthood, rather than prolonged adolescence. The goal of raising children was so that they would glorify God and function well as adults, marked by the “completion of education, marriage, moving out of one’s parent’s home, and beginning of a career...by early twenties” (Smith 2009:6), although marriage and career are the most central since many societies (especially in the Ancient Near East) practiced multi-generational homes where the children did not move out upon adulthood and education was often not of the graduate nature, but of learning a trade). Unlike the surrounding pagan religions, Israel (and later Christianity) “demythologized” sex and did not use it as a means to

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

connect to or control the deity. Human sexuality was created by God (Atkinson 2014:131) because “What we do sexually either honors or dishonors the imprint of the divine that is uniquely borne by human beings” (First Things 2015:24).

At the same time, sexuality is important for singles as well as those who are married, for sexuality is not finally about sexual intercourse but about acting as a man and a woman. A person is not less of a person for not experiencing sexual intercourse. An individual’s life is not ultimately fulfilled by marriage, because God created us ultimately for Himself, for a higher love (Matt 19:12, Matt 19:27, Mark 12:25, I Cor 7:32-35) (Grudem 1991:xviii).

A man and woman leave their parents in order to begin their own marital bond, though they always have the responsibility to honor and care for their parents until death (Childs 1974:418). Men are called to love their wives as Christ loved the church (Eph 5:22-33), for God calls families to be holy and set apart (Atkinson 2014:34). Loving one’s bride as Christ loved the church is impossible until God perfects Christians, which is promised to them (I Thess 3:13, Eph 4:13). Yet, though perfection does not arrive until Christ returns, husbands are to not stop seeking to love their wives, for Christ has not stopped loving his church. I John 4:9 reminds the believer that they can love because of Christ’s love - “we love because He first loved us”.

In the same passage, women are called to submit to their husbands (Christ calls the church to submit to Him) and children are called to obey their parents (and Christians are to obey God) (Kostenberger 2004:249). Children, for most of history, were viewed as mini-adults. The goal of childhood was to prepare them for adulthood, unlike modern western cultures which tend to prolong childhood and responsibility (Aries 1962:58). Furthermore, the centerpiece of a child’s education is religion (following Christ and His word) (King 2001:45). They are to be involved in learning God’s Word (which includes some of the following as necessary and others as optional: church attendance, family worship, catechizing, verse memory, home singing of the psalms, etc.). All earthly successes are vain pursuits if they are not approached as a means for honoring God (I Cor 10:31).

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

Not all of scripture is equally applicable at all times. Old Testament passages have often been dismissed as irrelevant to the church. All of scripture though is God-breathed and profitable (2 Tim 3:16). Old Testament practices of marriage inform (though not completely) what a Christian marriage should look like. Kostenberger discusses at greater length the importance of properly labeling marriage in Ancient Israel as “patricentric” (centered around the father) rather than “patriarchal”, noting that the Old Testament rarely focuses on the power of the father (Gen. 3:16):

*Rather than functioning as a despot or dictator, in healthy households the father and husband usually inspired the trust and security of its members (Job 29:12-17; Ps. 68:5-6). Hence, it was not primarily the power and privileges associated with the father’s position but rather the responsibilities associated with his headship that were emphasized (Kostenberger 2004:94).*

Men will lead, and seek to be in charge either as a servant leader or as a selfish taskmaster. Many husbands find themselves somewhere in the middle of these two poles, yet each husband is growing in one of those two directions. The New Testament continues the expectation for integrity in leadership, as Dallas states, by stressing that “a man’s fidelity to family responsibilities is in direct relation to his profession of faith (1 Tim. 5:8) and qualifications for leadership (1 Tim. 3:5)” (Dallas 2010:5). The woman was always under a man’s household with the intention of protection. Ancient culture took more seriously than modern western culture the desire to protect their women from sexual abuse by having them always belong to either their father’s or husband’s family (King 2001:54). Kostenberger further recognizes that even though women have been oppressed throughout history due to sin, it was neither God’s intent, nor the biblical model:

*The women and mothers of Israel had an elevated status in the society. Women, created in God’s image (Gen. 1:27), named children, had specific roles in the household (Exod. 21), were required to be honored (Exod. 20:12), were considered to be wise (Prov 31), could become prophetesses, participated in religious matters (Kostenberger 2004:96ff).*

He further recounts of how the mother was also the primary educator and example to her children for the first ten years of their lives. God has created the family and will one day fully redeem it (Mal 4:6) (Longman 1998:265).

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

In modern western nations, it is typical that the state and religion are in many ways distinct if not separate. This was not so for most of history and still is true today for many non-western countries. With Christianity came a change, for God called people to belong to a different kingdom that superseded nationality and ethnic origin (Scott 1950:427). The role of the church is to serve as a beacon of God's Word. It is to be salt and light for the earth. The role of government is to promote justice (it has been given the power to use force to promote justice). Of central importance is that the New Testament writers view government almost apathetically. Governments change and come and go (Scott 1950:429). The focus is on the Kingdom of God that does not change. The early church demonstrated true community in part by looking to the church (not the government) for physical assistance with clothes, money and other needs (Lepori 2013:372) and viewed itself as culture's conscience, protesting that which was unjust to bring all things into harmony with Christ (Scott 1950:428).

The tightness of family and church community go together. In the Bible and today, conversions are intended to and often do impact entire households (Acts 10:48, 11:14; 16:15, 33; 18:8, I Thess 1:9b) which in turn adds families to the church (Barton 2012:7). If one is to be emphasized, it is the church community, for Christ spoke some very challenging words to those who viewed their families as the most important relationship. Matthew 22:30, Mark 3:31-35, Luke 8:21 and I Corinthians 7:38 all warn against making the family an idol, which for many Christians and non-Christians today it is (Barton 2001:48). If ever they come into conflict (as sometimes happens), loyalty to Christ is to supersede family loyalties (Barton 1996:151, Hauerwas 2001:511) as seen in passages such as Matthew 10:34-38 and Luke 14:26-27. Ephesians 5:22-33, perhaps the most famous passage used for earthly marriages is about Christ and his Church. The fact that it mentions marriage is only secondary to the centrality of Christ. Thus, while it is a wonderful desire to be married and have a heritage of children, releasing these goals if they are not in God's will for that individual is better in order to find meaning and purpose in working for the building of Christ's Kingdom (Moorman 2012:134). In addition, while the church is referred to as a bride, the more common relationship image is that of children to their heavenly Father (see Deut 1:31, Isa 63:16, Isa 66:13, Hos 11:1, Matt

6:9, Gal 3:29) (Longman 1998:266). Because people are made in His image, they are called in response to His grace on the cross to give and model grace in their marriage, in their singleness, towards their children, towards anyone they are dating (though dating itself is a fad of the past 100 years or so which often encourages a culture of romantic privileges with no responsibilities), to widows, divorcees, the elderly and more. It is another standout feature of the church that it is multi-generational unlike many sub-groups (such as club sports teams, businesses and social clubs) that have little to no representation of those who cannot care for themselves. Viewing people in the image of God means that the unborn are a priority and children in need of a family are to be adopted, unwed mothers are to be encouraged to not kill their unborn child but to find a home for them among those who will honor God. The personal benefits of belonging to the body of Christ, to a local church and being consistently and positively involved with it are secondary in importance, but exist nonetheless. God calls his people to be faithful, regardless of the personal benefit, but faithfulness does nonetheless have benefits. Those who struggle with depression, suicidal ideation, marriage issues, work concerns, sexual identity struggles, body image struggles, addictions, health concerns, parenting concerns and more find in the church a package deal of community, activities, relationships, education, worship, events, multi-generational input, expression of the arts, a liturgy for life and more. The church provides a complete package to living life well while the world presents a poorly assembled *a la carte* approach to life.

#### **4.4.2 Maturity and Responsibility**

The second category of Air Force resiliency training is Maturity and Responsibility. God has not left us to figure out what a mature adult looks like. In I Corinthians 13:11, Paul describes growth in faith by an analogy that distinguishes childhood from adulthood: “When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.” Non-Christians become adults, and they function in the world utilizing parts of God’s truth, though they deny the Creator (Romans 1). As created in the image of God, and as people who have been given everything they need for “life and godliness” (I Pet 1:3), Christians view the world differently. What is seen, the material world, is not the



finality of reality. The Christian experiences two kingdoms, described in greater detail by Augustine in his “The City of God” and John Calvin in his two kingdoms paradigm. The two kingdoms are this present material world and Christ’s kingdom which began upon his arrival to earth but has not yet reached its fulfillment and will one day take over the earthly kingdom completely (McNeill 1960:221, Tuininga 2014:224). From this fundamental distinction, numerous implications occur. This speaks to spheres of influence. Government never (even if it becomes filled with Christians) takes the place of the church. Limited government is a biblical concept. Government and government employees are held accountable for their obedience (or lack of it) to God, but Government is never to take on church responsibilities. It is the duty of the church to preach the whole counsel of God (with resulting actions to practice God’s Word in life), administer the sacraments and practice church discipline. Because people rightly belong to God before they belong to government, people are fundamentally called to communicate with their creator (Bayer 2013:77) though modern thought often believes that Christian faith should be private and unable to impact the public square. In many western countries such as America, it is further asserted that people can contend for their beliefs as long as they are not religious in nature. This current treatment of religion in western countries is due in part to a hesitancy to have any one religion have too much influence in public policy. It is a result of the popular myth that it is possible to arrive at a neutral set of beliefs, for “there is no society that is free of religious influence” (Cannell 2010: 86), and also due to the retreat of the church from the public square:

*after the triumphant spread of the natural sciences, of industrialization, and of the formation of national states. This separation led to the shift in the significance of religion from the collectivity and life’s order in society to personal moods and motivations (Asad 2002:121).*

Because people belong to God, they belong to each other. Because they belong to each other, humans are automatically, by virtue of their birth obligated to be “their brother’s keeper”. Burggraeve refers to this as humanity’s “ethical fraternity” which comes from God Himself (Burggraeve 2008:359). This is to say that the very concern of responsibility, ethics and how a person ought to act is a gift from God. The fact that people are even concerned with responsible living is another indication

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

of God's creating people in His image and of His interaction in history. A further implication is that regardless of whether one embraces a Christian worldview or not, "We are responsible, and we should be held accountable for being responsible" (Cochrane 2013:12) even though we are born in sin (Couenhoven 2013:4). Our ethics are to be shaped by Christ, not anthropocentrically in order to maximize our desires (Bayer 2013:79, Nissen 2014:165). The Christian is someone whose "integrity and uprightness" preserves them because they wait on the Lord (Ps 25:21), for whom God's word is a "lamp to their feet and a light to their path" (Ps 119:105), who is "mature" in their thinking (I Cor 14:20), and who is not tossed around because they don't know what is right but rather grow up into Christ (Eph 4:14-15). Making right choices in life (ethics) as Bonhoeffer recognized, is "about the realization of God's will" (Green 2005:47).

One impact of this approach is the awareness to be more concerned about others than oneself (Phil 2:3-4) and to seek to inconvenience oneself for the benefit of others, not for self-deprecation, but because the default position of the heart is to be self-focused (Hag 1:9, Matt 19:22, Rom 3:23, Phil 2:21, James 4:1-2). Christian maturity constantly seeks growth in the faith. This will manifest itself as more of the thought life and the behavior of a Christian are reflected upon and changed. Because time is a gift of God and only He knows how many days each person has to live (Jam 4:14, I Pet 2:24-25), a Christian's life will appreciate entertainment while being aware of avoiding excessive waste. Time is a gift to read God's word, work diligently at a vocation, spend with family and friends, and to learn more about creation through reading, multimedia and study. Time is a gift to enjoy laughter (Ps 32:11, Ps 126:2), physical exercise and numerous other activities without turning them into idols. Childhood is a time to be instructed in God's Word in order to learn faithful devotion to Him from an early age (Prov 1:7, 10:17, 22:6) and even to bear adversity (Lam 3:27). Parents are commanded to teach their children God's Word (Deut 6:4-9). As opposed to the secular mindset of allowing children to figure out who they are, to determine their own morality or ethic (which is in fact not a hands-off approach by parents but is itself an intentional education in a non-christian worldview) scripture teaches that a young man can keep his way pure by "guarding it according to your word" (Ps 119:9). God's Word is truth (Ps 25:4-5, Ps 119:160,

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

John 17:17), Youth is not created as a time to encourage the sowing of wild oats, intentionally making mistakes or practicing reckless living. This does not mean there is a verse detailing every specific situation, but it does mean that scripture as a whole informs every situation. There is plenty of diversity within God's wisdom. No human can discern everything that God knows. Discoveries in nature, anatomy, medicine, the universe and more that are made by humans are real, but small windows into God's works. Scientific discovery and the advancement of knowledge in other fields is not fundamentally an opposition to biblical faith (Jung 2012:29). The question, however must always be asked: "What worldview informs one's knowledge and interpretations of that knowledge?" Christians are to take "every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Cor 10:5). Every subject, for the Christian must and will evoke questions about how Biblical instruction informs that subject. This must be intentional on the part of the Christian. Society has daily examples of messages that are broadcast onto televisions, and other media that do not consciously seek a Biblical approach to life. It is incumbent upon parents to lead their children well in this regard. As veteran animated TV show producer Phil Vischer noted:

*...for all the educational strides being made and all the pro-social "vitamins" cleverly inserted into our kids' media diets, there is one ingredient sorely missing. There is no God on Sesame Street (Vischer et al. 2012:42).*

For the Christian, everything finds its ultimate reference point in God as found in scripture. Christians continue to encourage discovering more of what God has made, without idolizing novelty by getting rid of that which is considered old (such as the Bible). God's Word is not so much a timeless truth as it is time-enculturated truth for all times. Christians are called to not fall prey to thinking that in an age of information, more knowledge and a constant stream of new data points equals a better life apart from biblical teaching. Paul cautions Christians to not be "Always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim 2:7). Ultimately, the church is not guided by physical discoveries, for those must be interpreted in light of God's existence, creatorship, the fall, Christ's Incarnation and the redemption of the elect. We walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor 5:7). Christian maturity

necessitates growth in understanding more of God's creation from the perspective of His Word.

Money provides another wide-ranging topic in which to honor God. Disagreements persist on tithing requirements and differences in amounts, within the Christian community. Aside from this, scripture is clear that money is a tool, given by God for people to honor Him (I Sam 2:7, I Tim 6:17). This is not done in a vacuum. People must work, but it is God who gives them their strength, mind and ability to do so (Deut 8:18). Wealth is primarily a tool for provision of needs. A child raised to be skilled in a craft, graduated with impressive degrees and acquiring a respected well-paying job is not the definition of success for a Christian. Terms such as "successful" and "fulfilling" are vacuous for the person who seeks them as an end to themselves. A person can have the gift of intellect and yet be foolish and unintelligent in their ability to care for and relate to others out of genuine concern. There is no end to the number of books a person can read – the end goal is already apparent – fear God (Eccl 12:12). "There is no linear relationship between IQ and our relational lives" (Wilson 2012:3).

Christians are to provide for their immediate family and also for the body of Christ. There is no conception in scripture of the church expecting anyone outside the church (including government systems and programs) to aid them. A biblical foundation of life does not absorb common cultural terms and practices ("retirement", "investment", "vacation plans", etc.) but asks if those terms are even viable in light of scripture and if so, how? A Christian worldview sees the entirety of this life, not just the first 65 years as lived before the eyes of God to be spent in loving Him as we care for others. Christians can retire from jobs, but not from their mission to go and make disciples of Christ (Matt 28:18-20). Christians are to utilize their money wisely, but a solid retirement fund and college savings for children is not the main purpose for the money God has empowered them to earn. Money is for kingdom investment to support orphans, widows, and missionaries among others, primarily through the church. Vacations are not wrong, but they ought not to be assumed. Fun and entertainment can be enjoyed while being cognizant of how else the money could be spent. Christianity calls people away from themselves, and to deny themselves for

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

Christ in order to find themselves in Him (Matt 10:39, Luk 9:23). This is in stark contrast to modern societies in which the concept of hierarchy is not well respected, where a person's life, fulfillment and religious beliefs place "the emphasis on the individual and on the effectiveness of one's own deeds" (Lücking 2013:108).

"Spirituality" can be used by Christians and other religions, but the term is also utilized in distinction from religion which makes it a newer description for an old biblical sin, described alternately as "suppressing the truth" (Rom 1:18), "boasting on themselves" (Jer 9:23), "lovers of self" (2 Tim 3:2), "conformed to this world" (Rom 12:2), a fool (Ps 14:1, I Cor 3:18) many people enjoy "spirituality" because the focus is on the individual.

*Human beings are constituted, are created in such a way that they find their deepest love in relating to God and in a way that includes other beings as it responds to others as it responds to God. In this way we will discover our deepest desires (Jung 2012:28).*

Because people were made in relationship to God, relationships are to be expected to fail without Him. If they fail for Christians it is a result of sin, for we are called to love one another. Non-Christian relationships succeed because of common grace. Non-Christians practice biblical guidelines (seeking to love another, selflessness, etc.) because they are made in God's image, while they deny the creator who made them. Mature Christian relationships exhibit the intent of relationships from the beginning. In the context of friendship, family and marriage this means seeking to put the other person before oneself. In the context of singleness it means not entering into a romantic relationship without the goal of marriage. Further, it values relational intimacy which can be enjoyed with more than one person and sexual intimacy which is to be enjoyed only with one person of the opposite sex. Saving the sexual relationship for marriage because the man and woman have each made a commitment to love (I Cor 13), purity (Gen 1:28, 2:24, Prov 6:18-19, Heb 13:4) and faithfulness honors God (Hostetler 1994:151). Those who have sex prior to marriage create the habit that sex will not be contained by marriage. The body is made by God and so a Christian worldview honors one's own body and others by not touching anyone sexually outside of their own marriage. All bodies matter, including the

mentally and physically handicapped, the elderly, the sick, and the unborn (“Men and women who mutually consent to sex do so to all that sexual intercourse constitutes — pleasure and procreation” (Wairagu 2005:66)).

The most binding relationship for a Christian is their relationship with God, not their work, family or associations. Thus career decisions, education, training, personal budget, time management and everything else must be critiqued by scripture. After God, family and the church take precedence. Life decisions should be made with regard to how they will positively or negatively honor these institutions. This is in contrast to a modern perspective that views career or personal desires as the determinative factor in why a person should move away from their relatives and their church. Relationships are to exemplify people speaking to each other in ways that build-up and are not filled with crudeness (Eph 5:4).

#### **4.4.3 Stewardship and Vocation**

The third category of Air Force resiliency training is Stewardship and Vocation. Vocation, or “calling”, refers beyond a job or career, specifically to the call that God places on people. The word comes from the Greek *kaleo* (to call), which is to be “called” or “invited” (Bromiley 1988:995, Kleinhans 2005:395). Up until the Reformation, the predominant view of vocation was tiered. Those in the priesthood (and monks and nuns) were considered to have a higher calling. Their spiritual lifestyle was held in greater esteem than doing more earthly jobs such as running a business, a trade, or practicing medicine. Scholars have traced this way of thinking as a product from “pre-Christian pagan thinking” leading to the “spiritualizing worldview of Christianity” which made a sharp distinction between the sacred (religious ministrations and jobs) and the profane (regular jobs) (Gomes 2010:194, Kolb 2013:134). This encouraged great respect for the importance of scripture, those who teach it, the sacraments, and the importance of the church in a person’s life. However, it also contributed to a culture that believed “sacred and religious activities were more godly and God-pleasing than other activities” (Kolb 2013:134).

This belief was severely challenged by Martin Luther. Luther held that regular jobs are also “holy” (Michael 2006:104) because the primary “calling” in any Christian’s

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

life is the same – to be holy and devoted to Christ because of what Christ has done for them (Hein 1999:126). This radical conceptual change was a logical outcome of Luther's theology on justification by faith. Because salvation comes by faith alone (*sola fide*), a Christian – one who honors God is so because their heart has been changed. It is not caused or maintained by their outward behavior. Thus, a gardener who loved Christ was closer to the concept of vocation in Luther's estimation, than a priest who did not love Christ (it was also radical for Luther to suggest that some priests did not love Christ – according to the old way of thinking, by virtue of their office they were assumed to have a love for Christ) (Kleinhans 2005:395). People's occupations do not determine their faith. Luther used Romans 14:23 to press this point: "Everything that does not come from faith is sin" (Kolb 2013:134).

One potential danger that can result from this approach is the temptation to believe that since it does not matter what one does, then one does not have to do anything in order to have a calling. But God's calling does not negate human responsibility, it confirms it. The role then of Christians is to not become too dualistic in their vocation as if there is a spiritual calling in which they honor God and a separate physical calling. Venema has critiqued aspects of this two-kingdom theory as too dualistic and favors the emphasis upon every part of life to be viewed as an act of worship because redemption intends to "redeem" all of creation (Venema 2014:14).

At the heart of the discussion on vocation is the concept of personal value. Is what a person does for a living the primary source of value? Why should a person's life have value? Why is life worth living? Those who seek a calling without God can experience the common grace of limited fulfillment, but whether they realize it or not their search of a calling in denial of their creator "leads to various theologies which place false calls upon our lives" (Harrower 2015:219). The spiritual calling to be a disciple of Christ and to be united to Him is to inform every earthly engagement. Christ was perfectly incarnated. Christians are "both spiritual and bodily" and so the two go together (Kleinhans 2005:394). God made humans to be spiritual and have a body and He Himself said that was good. The first and second commandments are too often separated in Christian practice. Loving others is a way in which one loves

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

God. To fully love God, a person must love His creation which includes other people (McKenzie 2013:7). The “call” then is not to be limited to any career or paid occupation which would rob the term of its importance (Setran 2011:347). It answers the question: “What does God the Trinity call and invite us to do?” (Harrower 2015:218). The answer to this begins with importing the implications of scripture and what happens on Sunday into the other six days of the week. It is akin to the term stewardship which communicates:

*a more comprehensive view of the Christian life affecting time, work, leisure, talents, money, the state of one’s soul, and care for the whole environment. The Greek word for steward is oikonomos, from which we get our word economy or “one who manages a household.” Stewardship is also a theological term related to diakonia or ministry. God is the ultimate owner of everything (Psa. 24:1, 50:10), and He has entrusted the care of His house, the creation, to us (Romano 2008:7)*

Harrower places the call of every Christian into four basic categories to which all Christians are equally called: co-worshippers, vice-regents, disciples, and gifted servants. (Harrower 2015:220). Practical implications of this mean that one who worships will fear God first and foremost before what others think when taking on a certain profession. Worshippers will find peace in God and not be focused on a job title, income amount, promotion, recognition and the social esteem of others. Vice-regents view this world as belonging to God. “This world is not my home” is only partially true, for God made us as belonging to creation. Christians are to be stewards of the environment (without exalting the creation over the creator), seeking obedience in all areas of life as they honor God through ethical business decisions, practicing love, discipline and forgiveness in their homes and celebrating the diversity of disciplines as a picture of God’s creativity. Vice-regents encourage Christians to be scientists, artists, musicians, athletes, technologists, and anything else that explores this world that God made. A disciple (μαθητής) learns from and studies God. Every Christian is a theologian in the practical sense of seeking to understand what God has said about the topics in their life (job, family, work relationships, career pursuits, their personal budget, how they spend their leisure time, etc.). Because Christ was the ultimate servant, Christians are to serve others. The radical (and potentially healing) nature of this is apparent when practiced among people who are self-seeking in work and in their marriage. God’s call means



#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

freedom, not constraints. Kilcrease notes that in Hellenistic thought freedom and slavery were dependent on each other. For someone to have time to pursue a certain project or job they had to have a slave who would take care of the other things in their life (house, food, etc., see Phil 2:7, Gal 4:8, Rom 8:17). Christ became a slave so that Christians could be free to find true life in their calling to Him (John 10:10) (Kilcrease 2010:24). Service and devotion are counter-cultural values to modern post-Christian societies that continue to offer up more choices for lifestyles and careers that can be picked up or dropped if they are not “fulfilling”. Such cultures have:

*...multiplied options and deified choice, threatening vocational commitment and contentment while blinding emerging adults to the already present action of God in the world (Setran 2011:346).*

Astoundingly, the Roman Catholic Church has stated the need for Christianity to be an alternative culture (Harvey 2014:297). This both challenges secular ideals and is a break from the church’s own tradition of emphasizing the centrality of the church as an institution. This occurred in a papal statement stressing that the church and the calling of Christians to honor Christ is more of a social movement, rather than the “fulcrum around which the human world revolves”. Christianity, though it has physical realities (i.e., the church) is better thought of as a lifestyle. The church will at various times either stand with or against the dominant culture (Harvey 2014:297). Another way to say this is that the *Imago Dei* cannot be understood apart from vocation and that the *Imago Dei* itself is perhaps best understood and realized when we see it as vocation. Humans have already been formed and fashioned with a purpose (Sands 2010:28) without having to spend their lives looking for one.

How then should people spend their days? If God can be worshipped outside of the sanctuary then in what capacity and location? Given the above discussion, discerning the specific ways in which one will be “called” (in work, in family, in school, in leisure, etc.) is better determined in community than in isolation. Western civilizations practice radical individualism. A biblical mindset understands that safety is found in the abundance of counselors and listening to advice can preclude one from being a fool (Prov 11:14, Prov 12:15) (Chesterton 1959:39, McKenzie 2013:2).

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

While every Christian has the same ultimate vocation, there is wisdom in listening to others about how that vocation will be manifested in individual lives that do not live in isolation. Thus one of these secondary vocations can draw people together in a tangible effort of public service (Sanchez 2013:127). How they come together varies:

*Christians are called to a transformed life of obedience to Christ in every area of human life, whether in the home, the workplace, the school, science, culture, the arts, and the like (Venema 2014:13).*

The Bible is not so focused on specific careers, but about the attitude one takes to any given career. Christians are to use their diverse gifts, whatever they are, to serve others as stewards of God (Rom 12:4-8, I Pet 4:10), to use their freedom to serve others (Gal 5:13), to pour out themselves for the hungry and care for the afflicted (Isa 58:10), to show their faith by their works (James 2:18), by children obeying their parents in the Lord (Eph 6:1-4), by recognizing that though people make many plans, it is God's purpose that prevails (Prov 19:21). Christians are to be industrious and not idle (2 Thess 3:11), to provide for their families (I Tim 5:8), be productive for six days and rest on the seventh (Exod 20:9), working heartily as unto the Lord (Col 3:23), working to be a God-pleaser and not a people-pleaser (Eph 6:7), to use money but not to trust in it (I Tim 6:17). Marriage is a calling, not a checklist item or a convention that can be altered by time and culture (Kilcrease 2010:23). Working at a "regular" job (though there is no such thing in light of Christ's Kingdom) is a calling. It is only through vocation and using gifts, talents, time and money that people obey God. Stevens points out that Christians would not have such a hard time with doctrine if we would recognize that the concept of "laity" is not biblical in favor of the "priesthood of all believers" (Stevens 2000:5). Doctrine is for living. Apart from understanding vocation, it is "impossible - to know and grasp what 'love your neighbor as yourself' actually means" (Sánchez 2013:118). A God-honoring calling advances the good of others (McKenzie 2013:8). As a result of the Fall, every human endeavor, including home life and career are tainted by sin. Work, industry and labor are not the problem, for God's ordaining people to care for His creation occurred pre-Fall. It is the difficulty and sometimes futility that infects our labor post-Fall that is the problem (Murray 1957:82). The Bible does not spell out

every situation that can be experienced but lack of adherence to scriptural guidelines and wisdom will result in “inequity” (Murray 1957:105). Apart from a God-ward perspective, there is too much incentive to use vocation selfishly. People maneuver for promotion, gossip about co-workers in order to be the better-liked employee, and seek advancement over care for both clients and colleagues.

#### **4.4.4 Adversity and Suffering**

The fourth category of Air Force resiliency training is Adversity and Suffering. The subject of pain and how it can be reconciled with the existence of a good God (historically labelled as “theodicy”) has been a topic of discussion since the beginning of recorded history. More specifically, if there is a loving and all-powerful God, then why are there tsunamis that kill hundreds of people? Why are there wars, murders, diseases such as cancer and spina bifida, human trafficking, rapes, and various other events that are termed tragedies? The discussion typically revolves around the possibility or impossibility of the existence of these problems and an omnipotent, omniscient and loving God co-existing. Because so much bad happens in the world, there are only a few options. Either at least one of the aforementioned character traits of God is not true (he is either not loving because He does not care about people by allowing them to suffer or He is not omnipotent because He cannot stop the suffering, or He is not omniscient and does not know that such things are going to happen), as the famous skeptic David Hume limited the conversation to these two options (Hume 1998:100). Another option is that God does maintain His love and omnipotence in the midst of suffering. Other religions provide their answers as well. In Buddhism, suffering is “maya” or “illusion” and is not real, while Islam teaches that God is more fatalistic; a different view from the Christian teaching of free will in the midst of a sovereign God’s will.

A Christian view of suffering recognizes four major categories of why and from where suffering and pain comes. They are: a fallen creation, the sinful nature in oneself, the sinful nature in others and the evil spiritual powers (Satan and demons). It is important that all four be recognized for while it is the norm that more than one is at work, sometimes the wrong category is given credit. A fallen creation is seen

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

through decay (plants die, food perishes, animals and people age), pain (animals attack people, people starve, overheat, dehydrate, things don't work right such as mechanical failures on planes and cars and diseases) and death. Death is common, but it is not the norm. It was not the goal for God's creation. Everyone is born with a sinful nature and thus often reap problems from their own sinful choices (alcohol abuse, drug abuse, impatience, selfishness, pride, anger, greed, adultery, fornication and more). Likewise, everyone else is a sinner and it is common that people sin while being sinned against. A sinful response is often the reply to a sinful aggression. People are both victims and victimizers, often simultaneously. Finally, the reality of spiritual warfare is a battle that every Christian faces. Satan and the demons seek to tempt and derail God's chosen from union with Him even though "nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39). It is crucial for Christians to be aware of all four of these for internal sin is an ever-present potential, living in a fallen world with evil spirits seeking to destroy is always possible and engaging with other sinners seeking themselves to the detriment of others is a constant reality. Additionally, due to living in a fallen creation, suffering can occur due to "poor, naïve decisions" whereby the individual (or group) is unaware or unconcerned about the limitations of the mind, abilities and mortality (Persaud 2014:13, Plantinga 1995:121).

The Bible teaches that God is in control. Nothing happens outside of His sovereignty. He created everything (Gen 1:1, Deut 10:14, Ps 135:6-18, John 1:3, Acts 17:24-27, Eph 1:11, Col 1:16-17), which means that nothing that occurs is a result of chance or fate (McNeill 1960:198, Williamson 2004:60). Augustine and Aquinas both taught that God permitted evil, but did not create it, in order to bring good from it (Leibniz 2000:378). This has been referred to as the "blueprint" approach as opposed to the "cosmic war" approach which teaches that God does have "ultimate authority" but His creation frustrates His will at times and history is a cosmic war between God and evil, not His sovereign plan working out perfectly (Boyd 2001:15). However, God has allowed for evil while not authoring it, as the Westminster Confession of Faith states:

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

*God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass (Rom 9:15, 18, 11:33, Eph 1:11, Heb 6:17); yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin (James 1:13, I John 1:5), nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established (Pro 16:33, Matt 17:12, John 19:11, Acts 2:23, 4:27-28) (Calhoun 2007:7).*

Christians find the ultimate answer to all suffering in the historical event of the crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection of Christ, often referred to as the “Theology of the Cross”, “which calls us away from earthly power, control and health” (Persaud 2014:12). On the cross, God Himself suffered. This is an offense to Muslims who believe that a prophet (to them, Jesus is only a prophet) cannot suffer. Christ experienced physical torture and the greatest emotional angst when He was forsaken by God for the only time in history after having been in perfect relationship for eternity. God Himself enters into pain and experiences a mortal body, tiredness, hunger, thirst, mistreatment, false accusations, whipping, public disgrace, an illegal trial, torture and death and thus the Word of God speaks from historical personal experience. Why then is there suffering? God permitted sin “having intended it for His own glory” (Rom 11:32) (Calhoun 2007:12). As a result of sin, the creation was “subjected to futility” (Rom 8:20) looking forward to the day when bodies will be redeemed (Rom 8:23) because not even death can separate the Christian from the love of Christ (Rom 8:38). Christians should not understate the existential and moral abhorrence of suffering. Christians are not to call evil “good”. Evil is the absence of good. God would never allow evil “unless in His omnipotence and goodness, as the Supreme Good, he is able to bring forth good out of evil” (Augustine 1955:342).

Suffering is a vehicle of sanctification (Smyth 1847:46) and includes the “daily dying to oneself” seen in Col 1:24 (Spivey 2011:46). It was a given by Irenaeus, Tertullian, Polycarp and the vast majority of Christians of the first and second centuries that suffering and death was the expected outcome of their faith (Perkins 2002:24). While pagan worshippers revelled in their parties and orgies, Christians found suffering to be a way to honor God (Feuerbach 2004:64). Suffering is to be expected by all who live and especially by Christians who are being trained in righteousness (2 Tim 3:16) and live as “sojourners and exiles” (I Pet 2:9, 11, 4:12) (Woo 2013:310). Suffering and hardships are for Christians an avenue to further

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

trust God (Col 2:7) (Voll 2012:26), and a means of finding “more contentment in God and less satisfaction in self and the world” (Piper 2011:265), for Christ said that in this world His followers would have tribulation, but to take heart, for He has overcome the world (John 16:33).

For all of those who love God, who are called according to His purpose – God works for their good in all things (Rom 8:28). Suffering is not good in itself, but God redeems it. The problem of pain however is just as much a problem if not more for someone who is not a Christian. Every human experiences results of the fall in a corrupt creation where they are alternately sinned against while also sinning. An atheist must also account for their “moral outrage” at the evil they see (Lewis 1955:39). From whence does such moral outrage come? To say a thing is “bad” or “wrong” implies a standard. If truth is relative (the subject of section 4.4.5) then something could be “bad” or “wrong” to a particular individual or a group of people, but there is no inherent right that all must agree that something like murder, rape, torture and hurricanes are bad unless there is something that states they are bad for all people at all times. Otherwise, the “problem” of evil is just a personal preference. Evolutionary Theory as well must answer why (if the theory is true) so many species of animals die and kill each other? (Durbin 2012:139). If there is no creator, but only survival of the fittest, nature weeding out the weak and random chance, then there is no such thing as a “tragedy”. A parent dying of cancer, a child killed by a random bullet in a neighborhood gunfight, a tsunami that kills four hundred people and any other “bad” thing are simply the impersonal forces of evolution weeding out the weak. Atheists can cry and care if they want to, but they have no basis for doing so other than their own opinion and according to their own worldview, they cannot expect anyone else to cry and care. Yet, people do cry and care .and they do so because this is not the way things were meant to be (Plantinga 1995:8). Though people have suffered since Adam and Eve first sinned, it is interesting to note that the modern confusion of trying to believe in no absolute truth while maintaining there is absolute suffering is a newer phenomenon. Bebbington points out the value that earlier societies attached to pain and how the “numbing of pain is a fairly recent phenomenon” by writing “In an age without analgesics, pain could often be acute, but

it was commonly interpreted as intended for the good of the soul” (Bebbington 2005:87).

A great irony of all arguments against the existence of God in light of all of the evil in the world is that the very fact that they are concerned with evil presupposes a standard of morality in the universe which is shaped by the Christian culture (Hart 2005:15). In contrast, Christianity holds out that the ultimate end of creation and history is headed to redemption and a glorious re-creation (Lewis 2001:14). A corollary, yet often unchallenged question is: “why do bad things happen to good people?” Yet, Jesus states in Mark 10:18 that “no one is good except God alone...”. The better question to ask is, since “none is righteous” (Rom 3:10) is: “why do good things happen to sinners?” It also follows that part of the issue (for Christians) is that expectations of comfort and a blessed life contribute to dismissing suffering. Teachers such as Joel Osteen, T.D. Jakes, Joyce Meyer, Creflo Dollar and others teach to varying degrees that right faith results in life prosperity linking to a greater or lesser extent the status of a person’s spiritual condition with either the status of their finances or their degree of happiness (Bowler 2013:110). But unlike modern times, the apostles did not look for a culture that was friendly to their message. Instead, they were “beaten, stoned, conspired against and imprisoned for their witness. Invitations were rare, and never the basis for their missions” (Otis 1991:261, 264).

As created beings, human existence has limits. It cannot be completely customized like settings on a mobile device (although many people today assume that life, God, faith and truth are as changeable as any setting in the world of technology). What is to be said to sufferers? Given that there are four main reasons for their suffering, it is always safe to start with a look inward. Since the goal of Christianity is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever (which can only happen through union with Christ), any kind of suffering will expose where their heart is and possibly stimulate growth. The suffering itself can be a vocation to Christ (Fernandes 2010:263). This may mean confession of sin that contributed to a rocky marriage, divorce, legal issue, health issue or more, or it may mean that a given Christian is being called to trust God even when they do not know what or if they have done wrong, as in Job’s situation. This does not mean suffering should be sought – it will come to us in

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

God's perfect timing or due to our sin which He can then redeem if He so chooses (Fotiou 2012:22).

Suffering could be due to being victimized by others in which case the wisdom of the church community and scripture is necessary to determine the continual response over the long-haul. Suffering may be due to temptations brought by the demonic forces who cannot indwell, but nonetheless can affect Christians (2 Cor 2:10-11, Eph 4:27). Finally, suffering can result from any number of corruptions from a fallen creation (cancer, arthritis, receding vision and hearing, and more). Much of life is filled with uncertainties of what is actually wrong, such as when military combatants question the perceived moral complexities of their wartime experiences like shooting a civilian that may or may not have been an enemy. Some have categorized this as "moral injury" (Kingham 2012:63).

These four typically come in combination and the Christian finds hope because sin has been punished on the cross and forgiveness is theirs through confession to Christ. Creation will be redeemed and demonic forces completely defeated one day. It is a Christian's privilege to remind fellow Christians whose vision is clouded by their suffering and also non-Christians that we are to "attempt to witness to the nongod-forsakenness of the world even under the conditions of sin" (Hauerwas 2001:20).

A Christian has not been faithful if they simply give these answers to a sufferer (Swinton 2007:13). Though true, they are often already known by the sufferer who needs to see the body of Christ in action, listening to them without always having to throw in a Bible verse just to feel like they did some good, help them emotionally bear the burden, to assist them through acts of charity (bringing meals, visiting them, helping with basic tasks) and sharing the challenges of the suffering with them. Spiritualizing pain away and not recognizing its physical impact can add additional hurt to people (Swinton 2007:19). Some experience incredible emotional and physical pain that is not relieved until death. A Christian perspective on suffering provides the answer as to the big "why?" though many smaller "whys?" will remain unanswered this side of heaven. Yet, it must never be forgotten that a Christian's



hope (“hope” is not wishful thinking, but a yet unfulfilled reality) is in the second coming of Christ and the restoration of all creation to perfection. This was the Apostle Paul’s primary desire, to be with Christ in glory (Piper 2011:281).

#### **4.4.5 Objective Truth**

The final category of current Air Force resiliency training is Objective Truth. “Truth” is a contentious word. In modern times, the concept of truth has become relegated to relativism for many of the world’s cultures. Nothing is true apart from the individual. There is no such thing as something that is objectively true in all times and all places for all people. Every viewpoint is equally valid and true (Lanser 2010:1). Truth is a construct. The issue is not new: Pilate, in standing before Jesus who elsewhere said “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6) at his trial dismissed the possibility of arriving at truth if not the very existence of truth (John 18:38). There have been for many centuries those arguing for knowledge that is “absolutely true” in any discipline of study (not just theology) regardless of context or individual and others who have claimed that “all truth is relative” and can change (Furst 2004:1).

Related to the belief that there is no such thing as truth is the concept of “post-modernism”, which is related to but distinct at times from “deconstruction” and other similar terms. Post-modernism, though it has a diversity of proponents, at its base believes that there is no “meta-story” to history. All truth is culturally constructed either socially or individually. It has been described as the “ultimate foundationlessness of truth” and “a world of ungovernable plurality” (Hart 2007:5). This concept challenges Christianity which claims that God’s Word is truth, not a truth (John 17:17, 2 Tim 2:15). Diversity of thought, beliefs and practices is as old as recorded history. The reality of differing viewpoints is not novel. God’s people have worshipped Him amidst the pluralism of Egyptian, Canaanite, Babylonian, Greek and Roman gods where belief in the one true God was often the reason for scorn and severe persecution. Stating that no one can claim that other religions are wrong has been a chant of pluralistic cultures throughout history. Yet, for most of history, objective truth (in all disciplines including understanding nature, animals, virtue, people and more) was the standard mindset as indicated in the writings of Plato,

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

Aristotle, Aquinas and the Reformers (Smith 2007:23ff.). For most of history, the understanding was that there is a reality that people ought to discover. To go against reality (either through ignorance or apathy) would result in problems, pain or death. Historically, the study of metaphysics was revered as the attempt to determine that which is real (Geisler 2005:1, Lindsay 1903:633).

A strong challenge to truth and the ability to know anything came during the latter part of the Renaissance with philosophers like Descartes, Locke, and Kant. Kant, for his part attempted to soften the impact of David Hume's sharp criticism of a belief in God (Smith 2007:28) by utilizing themes reminiscent of first century Gnosticism, asserting that the spiritual realm is wholly separate from the physical realm and is itself a different kind of knowledge. This led to the "hard sciences" claiming to have objective truth along with the demotion in the academy and in popular western culture of religion and ethics to a status of not containing any universal truth because they are not hard sciences (Smith 2007:14). This relegation of spiritual truth to the "noumenal" world continues for popular Western culture although Christianity continues to make its claims that spiritual truths are to be "rationally contemplated, examined logically...and employed as the only reliable basis for making wise judgments" (MacArthur 1994:xvi), while not being limited solely to rational thought.

A further challenge in the following centuries to truth focused more on the practical outworkings of an anti-objective truth belief system led by men labelled by Paul Ricoeur as the "high priests and prophets of the hermeneutics of suspicion" including Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Charles Darwin, and their heirs (Mohler 2005:64). Oliver Wendell Holmes, William James, Charles Pierce and John Dewey, though diverse in many other opinions, held in common and strongly pushed for the idea in American thought that truth and ideas are not "out there" in existence waiting to be discovered but rather they are constructed by social groups in order to adapt to their environment (Menand 2001:xi). Simultaneous to the popular changing conceptions of truth came a growing belief in the scientific method with ever increasing discoveries in biology, medicine, psychology and more. Isaac Newton, himself a Christian, discovered that there are scientific laws that govern creation. Science became for many, nothing beyond a series of laws (or for some, a

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

“machine”) that many began to pursue without regard for a lawgiver. Charles Darwin gave people a reason (although a highly contentious and unproven one) to not need God (Grenz 1996:3) and the scientific approach became for many people the lens through which other disciplines (such as theology) would be viewed, assuming that there was nothing beyond the physical world because science could not determine that God existed (Veith 1994:33). The importance of these historical impacts to belief systems was addressed by Francis Schaeffer in the early 1980s, seeking to inform Christians in the western hemisphere, the majority of whom he believed did not yet perceive the reason behind the cultural transitions that were taking place.

*Christians, in the last 80 years or so, have only been seeing things as bits and pieces which have gradually begun to trouble them and others, instead of understanding that they are the natural outcome of a change from a Christian World View to a Humanistic one...All of these things and many more are only the results. We may be troubled with the individual thing, but in reality we are missing the whole thing if we do not see each of these things and many more as only symptoms of the deeper problem. And that is the change in our society, a change in our country, a change in the Western world from a Judeo-Christian consensus to a Humanistic one. That is, instead of the final reality that exists being the infinite creator God; instead of that which is the basis of all reality being such a creator God, now largely, all else is seen as only material or energy which has existed forever in some form, shaped into its present complex form only by pure chance (Schaeffer 1982:1).*

When speaking of truth, the fundamental premise is that God exists and therefore objective truth exists. There are things that are real, not constructs of the human mind or conventions that make life better. Objective truth exists and “corresponds with how things are in reality...independent of our knowing them to be true”. Two plus two equals four is true whether someone believes it or not (Smith 2007:13). This does not mean that there is no diversity within truth. Absolute truth’s application can differ across “time and culture” (Furst 2004:3). Truth is to be lived and applied and the truth to “honor your father and mother” (Exod 20:12, Deut 5:16, Eph 6:2) will look different depending on the situation. Honoring one’s parents is seen in obeying them, which itself can take many forms: by means of their child cleaning their own room after being asked, or by not allowing an alcoholic parent to buy more beer. Objective truth, unlike secular philosophy is not merely a concept or an issue of logic. It is personal. Truth begins with the Trinitarian God, for He is the “Source of all truth” (Geisler 2005:4).

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

*God never lies (Titus 1:2, Num 23:19), Christ is the Truth (John 14:6), God's Word is Truth (John 17:17), in addition, we are to be imitators of God and imitators of Christ (Eph 5:1, 1 Cor 11:1, 1 Pet 2:21) (Poythress 2013:84).*

Because God is truth and God does not change in His self-existence, the truth does not change (Lindsay 1903:638). Additionally the ninth commandment in Exodus 20:16 speaks of not “bearing false witness”, Ephesians 4:25 exhorts believers to “speak the truth”, Psalm 5:6 recounts that God destroys “those who speak lies” and Proverbs 12:22 echoes the same sentiment: “lying lips are an abomination to the Lord”. Truth was created by God and is defined by Him. Because God is relational, truth is relational. This can be seen both negatively and positively. In the negative sense, because God is truth, “a contempt for truth is equally a contempt for God.” (MacArthur 1994:25). Put positively, because “The Truth became incarnate...Christian argumentation is not ultimately about disembodied facts” (Hart 2004:5), but about Him “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3), the alpha and the omega (Rev 22:13). Therefore the only true foundation for true education is this God of truth revealed in Jesus Christ (Hoyt 1962:4).

Truth is not just a concept. It is personal and necessarily so for humans to understand it. Keefe states that “it is impossible to think of a subject or an object in itself...The absolute in human knowledge is a self, which knows itself in synthesis with thoughts or things” (Keefe 2007:299). It is a beautiful expectation that the Trinitarian God who is perfect truth also lives in perfect relationship. Truth then, cannot be known apart from relationship with God. Those who do not believe in Him know anything at all because of common grace and God's revealing His creation to them (Ps 145:9, Nah 1:3, Matt 5:45, Acts 14:17). The multiplicity of people, cultures and beliefs should not be seen primarily as a case for lack of a common binding truth, but rather as numerous examples of the diversity within God's unity. Divergences from God's character and commands in human life are a result of the fall.

Christianity believes many things that are in direct contrast to modernist and post-modernist systems of thought. In the first century, Paul wrote in Holy scripture for

## Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

Christians to “not be conformed to the world” (Rom. 12:1, 2). Disregarding this “basic tenet of apologetic defense” has led to problems in the church (Newman 1997:140). Foundationally it places God’s Word as the framework by which all other systems of thought are assessed, rather than a post-modern perspective on truth, which is a:

*position that repudiates anyone’s right even to make a truth claim...then any truth-claim dimensions of the gospel will be dramatically muted (Crouch 2004:43).*

It is not a new idea for Christians to encounter philosophies that seek to relegate God to just one of many options:

*Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (1 Corinthians 1:20-21).*

Christianity believes in truth that is “true for all persons, at all times, and in all places” (absolute truth). Christianity believes in “absolutism, exclusivism and supernaturalism” (Geisler 2012:37). There is no escape from dealing with the truth for Christians and non-Christians alike (Newbigin 1989:182). Everyone will seek to make sense of truth which inevitably leads to the big three questions: “Who am I?” “Why am I here?” and “Where am I going?” If one seeks to answer these questions without belief in God (leaving God as one of many equally true beliefs is not Christian) then, as philosopher William Lane Craig argues, that person is:

*constantly in a dilemma of making either personal or social coherence the ultimate end (even though there is no ultimate end for an atheist). An atheist has to live the “noble lie” to convince himself that there is something worth living for even though he/she believes there is not (Craig 2008:85).*

Herman Hoyt saw the subjectivist worldview as hostile to the gospel in the early 1960s. The end goal of this diversity was to “reduce their value and end in a purely human selectivity for human convenience” (Hoyt 1962:3).

Thus, without God (and no one can be in a good relationship with God without believing in Jesus Christ) the only options left are to make one’s own individual

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

beliefs the standard of truth or to find “truth” in shared beliefs among a group of people. To posit that Christianity is not correct because it is exclusive and does not allow for other truths is an argument that self-destructs by excluding Christianity in favor of other beliefs. “It takes two absolutes to have an absolute conflict” (Geisler 1974:220). William Lane Craig challenges even the existence of post-modernism, asserting that it is impossible to have a post-modern society in practice. Post-modernists, he states, believe (contrary to what they say they believe) that writings do have objective meanings. When taking medicine they don’t grab at any bottle in the pharmacy – they read the label to make sure it is what they need and not a harmful substance. People practice objectivity in every discipline except for religion and philosophy (because anything not determined by the five senses is up for anyone’s opinion) and that is a modernist way of thinking, not a post-modern one (Craig 2008:18).

Some authors assert that there is no such thing as “meaning” but they want their readers to believe that what they themselves have written does indeed have meaning and that it should be adopted as true (Barris 2006:126). Ravi Zacharias has been one of many thinkers to point out the inconsistency and illogic of stating that it is true that there is no such thing as truth or meaning (utilizing what is referred to as the “Law of non-contradiction”) (Zacharias 1994:127). This is evident in the discussion of religious truth as well: “If sri ramakrishna reverts back to hinduism because all religions are the same – why is he ‘converting back’?” (Zacharias 2002:158). This is not to say that there is absolutely nothing true in non-Christian religions, but it does mean that if the “central premises of Christianity” are indeed true, then any other worldview that opposes that is false (Geisler 2005:13).

Additionally, many of the problems (sexual assault, divorce, abuse, theft, and more) in modern day society are a result of thinking that right behavior is merely a social construction rather than an already determined way of right and wrong principles (Furst 2004:1). The issue of truth appears everywhere. The disagreements occur over a wide variety of issues.

*embryonic stem cell research, same-sex marriage, sexuality, and human cloning are really disguised arguments about the nature of truth itself (Mohler 2005:63).*

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

In contrast, a Christian view of truth brings “unity, universality and totality”, rather than piecemeal truths (Herms 2012:377). A major assumption that is often made by non-Christians (and too often by Christians) is that non-Christians need to be convinced independently of scripture with regard to absolute truth. Theologians such as Cornelius Van Til and Greg Bahnsen saw that Christians must base their foundational reasoning and argumentation on scripture, rather than base their faith on reason, which in practice is a trust in and glorification of autonomy. The Bible is the foundation of all knowledge and truth, a view supported by both Abraham Kuyper and Hermann Bavinck (White 2006:42), therefore Van Til understood decades ago similarly to post-modern sensibilities that there are no uninterested facts, yet He also asserted that the Bible is fact and the arbiter of everything else, scientific discovery, medicine, philosophy, relationships, etc. Interpretations of scripture can be wrong, but scripture itself is not. Nothing can truly be known apart from God (Berkhof 1990:4), and thus any non-Christian who claims to know anything apart from God is using God’s gifts to know them, using knowledge given them by God and is benefitting from common grace blessings while denying the Creator who gave them. The Christian assertion for truth is not for the purpose of proving that there is impersonal truth or even that there is a God, but rather to speak of truth as only known through Jesus Christ, God Incarnate and his Word. There is therefore no such thing as “common ground” where believers and unbelievers can meet (Oliphint 1987:67). The unbeliever can be brilliant in many disciplines, but this itself is a testimony against him or her when they do not acknowledge the Creator who gave them their body and mind and blessed their talents and labors. According to Ephesians 4 and Colossians 2, an unbeliever is never neutral in their thinking but has a “vain mind” and a “darkened understanding” (Bahnsen 1996:11). The non-Christian assumes that their own reason is the highest arbiter of truth and subjects God’s Word and everything else to it. Christianity challenges this truly blind faith and trust in autonomy. On what basis can one trust their own reason? The use of reason is not bad, but insubordinate to the scriptures it is self-idolatry (Bahnsen 1996:10). A non-Christian pre-supposes their own reason as the ultimate. A Christian pre-supposes the God of the Bible as the ultimate, however a Christian also holds that their view is real and true because of the “impossibility of the

opposite” (Oliphint 1990:28, Van Til 2007:9). A non-Christian’s coming to trust in Christ is not a mere matter of rational argumentation, but must also be a result of a conviction of their own sin (Hart 1994:94) recognizing that only God through Christ Jesus can save them from their sin and punishment in order to restore them to a relationship of union with Christ.

If there is no such thing as “truth”, but only “truths”, then there is no such thing as a lie, only personal preference or social convention for what is to be considered a lie. This affects group and individual relationships. If there is no lie that is truly a lie independently of what one thinks of a lie, then broken and hurt relationships must never consider that anyone was ever wrong (i.e., “no fault divorce”). If there is no truth, then there is no real reconciliation which assumes that a relationship needs to be honest and get to the truth in order have a better relationship (Van Heerden 1999:356).

Hart stresses that Christianity is often preoccupied with epistemology and theology while disregarding aesthetics. Christianity he argues, has for too long been more concerned with speech and not enough with beauty. Because the world is a violent and power-hungry place, Christianity must be different (Hart 2004:3). Thus discussions about absolute truth are not an end in themselves but a means to introduce people to God’s beautiful creation and redemption. Christianity is not simply about facts but about factual relationships, first and foremost with God Incarnate and with other people. Christians must “embody the truth of the story” (not just tell it) (Newbiggin 1989:182).

*but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. 1 Peter 3:15-16.*

#### **4.5 Limitation of Scope**

It is not the intent of this thesis to present a comprehensive guide to Christianity and resiliency. There are many more topics that could be addressed as to their relation to Christianity and resiliency, such as economics and how money is to be valued,



valuing one's body in the areas of nutrition and fitness, civics, and much more. The topics addressed above are those most germane to the present study. Resilience itself is not a comprehensive topic. According to the manner in which the Air Force uses it, it addresses pieces and not a worldview of life such as an Airman's readiness to deploy, the ability to be a good person (without ultimately defining "good" in any absolute sense) and the ability to handle life's stressors and challenges (without any sense of ultimate values outside of the individual). Yet, the Air Force presents the training and awareness initiative of the four pillars (physical, social, mental and spiritual) of resilience as foundational to its "*Comprehensive Airman Fitness*<sup>12</sup>" program.

#### **4.6 A Synthetic Theology of Resilience**

A theology of resilience does not mean that verses are applied to Air Force resilience training to determine where similarities can be found. Christianity is turned into something it is not when it is treated as an optional add-on to a resilience program. Christianity is also not held in respect when it is diluted into what it holds in common with secular resilience training topics. Christianity is a completely different worldview. It does not start with resilience, which is an impersonal program. Christianity starts with God who has made Himself known to humanity. In the current Air Force model, resilience is expected to be achieved as a result of certain beliefs and behaviors but resilience is not itself a goal. It is only the result of a goal. One does not set out to be resilient and expect to achieve resilience. One must first obtain other things as goals, such as meaning and purpose, love, faith, endurance, hope, patience, and more which have as one of their effects resilience. These goals themselves are not foundational, but come only due to the existence and character of God. God defines life and reality. There is nothing outside of His sovereign creative powers. Scripture teaches that God's truth applies to all of His creation (Genesis 1:26, Proverbs 13:16, Matthew 7:26-27, Romans 1:19, 20, 32) including those who do not believe He exists or do not believe anything written in the Bible.

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<sup>12</sup> Emphasis added.

#### Chapter 4: A Christian Theology and its Relevance to Resilience

He is therefore the creator of non-Christians. All non-believers live in His world and utilize His creation every day in the use of their bodies, in their vocations, in engaging with daily weather, and more. Every person exists because of God's will and will one day face judgement for their sins. Sin and death are the combined biggest problem of humanity, not lack of resilience. Christ, God Incarnate through his perfect obedient life, death and resurrection is the only solution to humanity's greatest problem. Because all people are made in the image of God, any true understanding of who they are and why they exist is from God and in line with the teaching of the Bible. A Christ-centered life guided by the Holy Spirit and scripture are necessities for those who would find their true meaning for existence. Christianity calls people beyond personal resilience to belong to the bride of Christ, the church. Belonging to the church means belonging to an imperfect but improving, multi-generational community of disciples of Christ who do indeed find resilience because they do not seek it, but instead seek God first and His Kingdom and His righteousness. A Christian's life is not individualistic but has accountability and fellowship through which God often ministers to people within and without the church. Christianity exhorts and brings a people to maturity (typically over time) with regard to their relationships, habits and desires. Christianity grows stewardship among its adherents, teaching them to value first the things that are not of this world in order to utilize material blessings for eternal purposes. Christianity provides a framework for vocation and how and why one is to work, which places a positive emphasis on work in general rather than the common secular mindset of simply seeking to find what makes one happy. Christianity is a worldview that expects suffering, explains it, and gives a rationale for why it occurs and how it is to be addressed. It recognizes that God alone knows the reason for everything while pulling back parts of the curtain for those who are undergoing trials and turmoil (such as Joseph in Egypt, Job, and Daniel). Christianity seeks to follow God's truth. It holds up the Bible as God's perfect word, providing a foundation to the constant changes of cultures and countries. It sees the principles in the middle of things and does not get lost ultimately in the novelty of culture, government, personalities, pleasures or ideas because it understands the same truths of God, Creation, the

Fall, depravity and Redemption continue to define ultimate reality and are at work as they have been from the beginning.

#### **4.7 Summary and conclusions**

The Bible is the ultimate written guide of life for Christians. Genesis 1:27 lays out the foundational truths that God made the world, including people. People are finite, made in His image and find their purpose and reason for existence in relationship to Him. 2 Peter 1:3 establishes that God himself has given to the believer everything they need for life and godliness. To live in a godly fashion, among other things, means to live with faith, hope, endurance and truth. Christian beliefs are central to individual and corporate lives and are to be deeply internalized with numerous ramifications in daily life. Christian faith is a worldview, a way of looking at the world and cannot be set aside without great cost when secular resilience training is introduced or mandated. Christianity lays claim to every topic known to humanity. Human origins, spiritual truth, family structure, sexual behavior, financial behavior, a theology of work, the nature of human interaction, the role of government, ethics, aesthetics and every other area of life is informed by a Christian worldview. This is both indicative of the Christian life, the way it is, and imperative in that Christians are called to “take every thought captive” (2 Cor 10:5) though none do it perfectly. For the disciple of Christ, Air Force resilience training as with any other training must be filtered through the lens of scripture rather than filtering scripture through resilience (or other) vocabulary. Christianity has the privilege of calling people back to the source. Rather than accepting new terms such as resilience that seem to address a new issue, Christianity points back to events and concepts much more ancient, lasting, and continually true that more aptly define and inform the so-called modern issues that are not modern in their origin. The next chapter will compare and contrast the conclusions of chapters three and four, discussing more specifically the differences between Air Force resilience training and Christianity, and will make recommendations on how to better create an environment that respects Christian beliefs with regard to resilience training.

## **Chapter 5: Practical Solutions Between the USAF and Christianity**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses thematic juxtapositions between Christianity and the USAF resilience initiatives followed by recommended solutions for the USAF and the Chaplain Corps to follow in order to address the concerns of non-neutrality in resilience training, inform Airmen at all levels of a better understanding of the practice of religious accommodation, and to celebrate that Christians have the right and joy to continue to grow in their relationship with God. This will renew their lives in all areas which will further impact communities (including the military communities) for the better. The solutions proposed here will address how to best allow Christian faith (and implicitly other religious faiths as well) to be respected in relation to resilience training and any future Air Force training that touches upon worldview and beliefs.

### **5.2 Juxtaposition of Air Force Resilience Training and a Christian Worldview**

A Christian worldview is a stark contrast in content, practice and beliefs to the spirituality and resilience initiatives of the United States Air Force. There are some areas of common ground (looking after one another, identifying problems and working toward solutions, etc.). These areas of common ground serve to point out that a non-Christian approach to life can often have strengths in describing problems in detail (beyond merely that the person is sad, angry, struggling, etc.). However, because a non-Christian worldview does not take depravity and sin seriously, the description of what is actually wrong is not fundamentally on point. When a non-Christian approach to life becomes prescriptive and addresses cures or helps for problems, it typically ignores Christ, Scripture, the Church, the sacraments, Christian fellowship, and more as central to the solution. Anything prescribed (or described) by a non-Christian worldview that does provide accurate and true help is a result of God's common grace, though it is typically not recognized as such. There are many points of departure between Christianity and the current approaches to resilience and spirituality. Among them are:

## Chapter 5: Practical Solutions Between the USAF and Christianity

1. Conflating terminology: “Spirituality” is the phrase of choice in resilience awareness and training rather than religion. Spirituality in common practice in the Air Force is in reality a combination of secular and individualistic psychology. The current relationship of religion and spirituality is harmfully vague. The training and Air Force Regulations state that they are different, yet they are jumbled together at times and religion is considered a sub-section of spirituality. A 2013 RAND Study on Spiritual Fitness in the Air Force mentions very little of chaplains other than to state that they should stay within their area of expertise when dealing with Airmen’s issues. The study also states that a chaplain’s faith group or denominational identity is not their primary function (Martin 2013:34). This runs contrary to the long-standing role of chaplain endorsing agencies and why it is the faith groups and denominations that certify and train chaplains for ministry, not the government. The study also lists among its recommendations that spiritual fitness is much more than (and often does not include) religion. It adds that atheist and humanist beliefs are also a part of spiritual fitness, and that “evidence based guidance” should be used for implementing spiritual interventions. It recommends looking into alternative approaches for growing spirituality (such as a blend of psychology and eastern religions), and considering non-spirituality specific interventions (Martin and Yeung 2013:40). The report minimizes the importance of religion and chaplains and instead touts the spiritual pillar being led by clinical professionals backed with data (“data” meaning scientific “evidence” which is not neutral nor all-encompassing) for their conclusions. Spirituality (they use the Air Force’s own definition with which to work) is essentially “will power to make things happen”. Does this mean that in the future, the Chaplain Corps will be a sub-department of a larger Spirituality Corps? To be fair, if psychology is the basis for spirituality training, why then is religion not the basis for mental fitness training in Air Force resiliency programs? The founding documents of America (which every Air Force member has taken an oath to uphold) specifically state that among our first freedoms are freedom of religion, not spirituality. To focus on spirituality which in practice does not speak about

## Chapter 5: Practical Solutions Between the USAF and Christianity

religion with quality depth nor utilizes religious experts is to minimize the importance of the first amendment which limits Airmen's free exercise of religion. Christianity upholds that everyone is a spiritual being, but true spirituality is found only in Christ. A Christian cannot maintain that spirituality (as it is defined in the Air Force) is a Christian view of spirituality. It is more of a vague statement that says anyone can believe what they want (as long as their behavior falls within certain organizational parameters). The Air Force continues to involve chaplains less and less through the decades in the character formation and character influence (for that is what is intended) of its Airmen. Airmen should not be expected to become resilience experts when they are trained by those who are not resilience experts whose responsibilities to engender resilience in Airmen often end with the course. Non-Christian Air Force instructors are teaching Christians (and committed adherents of other religions) about spirituality at mandatory training while the involvement of the religious experts (Chaplains) is optional. The resilience training does not qualify the definitions of many other important terms used in the course. When one is told to "hunt the good", does that mean that there is an objective concept of good? Is the term "good" relative to every Airman? If it is relative, then the concept is pointless and is reduced to another version of "get what you want". If the term "good" does refer to an objective good, then who defines that good? What is its end goal? Why should one hunt for this good? Jesus said that there is no one who is good but God (contrary to the atheist/humanist quip, Christianity proclaims that there is truly no such thing as "good" without God). Christianity calls people to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Many other terms at times appear to imply objective definitions while asserting a relative approach to beliefs, such as "optimism" (thinking positively, but positively about what and what is the standard for positive?), personal "strengths" (who determines what is a strength if all things are relative?), the "IDEAL" model (which assumes people can objectively understand personal problems without being hampered by sin and depravity and have no need of Christ for the solution), and more. The questions asked of the term "good" could also be asked of other terms from

the resilience training such as “counter-productive thinking”, a “strength” and so on.

2. Proselytizing: The Air Force has been accused of allowing proselytization to occur. Christianity was the usual target for accusations of religion supposedly being forced on Airmen. Yet, with all of the secular thought in the spiritual pillar of the resilience training, it is rarely, if ever, pointed out that it is forcing beliefs on Airmen. The MRT curriculum relies predominantly on behavioristic and cognitive (change your behavior, change your thinking) models of secular psychology. It does not stress psycho-dynamic, existentialist, family systems and others among the numerous psychological theories within the psychological realm. Thus it selects some psychological approaches over others. What if the Air Force did that with religion? Christianity addresses and expects behavioral and cognitive change, but not as the starting point. The starting point comes from God changing hearts and minds. It is incredibly more than “self-improvement”. It is an awakening from being dead in sin, and being taken away from being focused on self with hate towards God. It results in supernatural growth of character and salvation for eternity. Mere behavioral or cognitive change apart from the creator is pharisaical for a Christian. Truly, it never happens without God for any good or true change is a gift of God (either common or special grace). The “why” is a crucial aspect to change. Is one trying to change oneself out of pride, to look better? Or is it out of a thankful heart after repentance for God’s forgiveness of your sins and a relationship of peace with Christ? Additionally, the change prescribed by the resilience and spiritual fitness approach of the Air Force does not address the big questions (Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going?). Airmen may find that they can handle some of life’s stressors better after the training (as a result of common grace, not ultimately because of the worldview or intent of the training or trainers), but they have not addressed who they are (*Imago Dei*), why they are here (for Christians, to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever), and where they are going (the training does not address perhaps the most important topic with Airmen – their eternal destiny, what happens when they die and how to face death). A rocky marriage can become smoother,

## Chapter 5: Practical Solutions Between the USAF and Christianity

dealing with stress can get easier, but if an Airman's life is not one of devotion to Christ, all of the other solutions or areas of growth mean an eternity of suffering without Christ as their Savior. An improved marriage, a better career mindset, a better outlook on life – these count for nothing if a person is separated from God for eternity. The popular modern atheist and humanist quip "I'm good without god", from a Christian perspective is wrong because there is no one who is good except God alone (Mark 10:18). Christianity teaches that God is the starting point for knowing anything real. The fool has said in his heart (and in this case on paper) that there is no God. Christianity also teaches that people are not basically good. They are sinners. They are twisted by the fall. Not everything that people do is wrong (the *Imago Dei* is still present, though marred), but motives and behaviors are clouded by sinful desires. Only through Christ are sins forgiven and is true heart change (that flows in to changed thinking and behavior) accomplished. The MRT course also teaches evolutionary theory devoid of a divine creator. In contrast, Scripture begins with proclaiming that God made the heavens and the earth and all who live in it. People do adapt and adjust, but the heart of humanity is not essentially changed. People's thought processes are twisted by sin. The Air Force does not force people to attend Bible studies but does force training that is contrary to a biblical worldview. In addition to all of these differences between the resilience training and Christianity, the Air Force promotes the resilience and spirituality training as if it is neutral with broad appeal, but there is no such thing as neutrality. This training is not simply about facts, but also about presuppositions and worldviews that are not biblical.

3. Lifestyle: Christianity is a lifestyle (this topic is discussed in greater depth in chapter 4). There are people who dabble in and try Christianity but true Christianity is not something that is tried. It is an all-encompassing worldview. Christians are to greater and lesser degrees resilient because of the object of their faith, not simply because they work harder or believe more. They are resilient not because their goal is resilience but because their life is oriented toward God. The goal is bigger than resilience. The Air Force's approach to resilience is comprehensive in title and intent, but not in practice. For many



## Chapter 5: Practical Solutions Between the USAF and Christianity

Christians, their beliefs and instruction in Christianity have been ongoing since they were born. They have read and studied the Bible for years, attended worship services for years, made prayer a regular part of their life, made fellowship a regular part of their life, given money through the church to God-honoring programs and people in need, have made major financial, relational, medical, vocational and other decisions from a biblical framework along with prayer and the counsel of other Christians. Resilience training delivered over a few days speaks against (regardless of intention) what Airmen have held dear for decades. MRT training is a new thing in contrast to Christianity. Its existence is in part due to the Air Force's tendency at times to find a program to react to a problem (in this case, using a program that the Army initiated called Comprehensive Soldier Fitness). It does not recognize that though the time and setting has changed, people's hearts have not. Suffering is a part of life, even for the Christian. There will be sorrow and loss this side of eternity. Yet, for the Christian, Christ has overcome the world. He will one day restore His creation to perfection and bring His disciples into perfection to live with Him forever. People lack resilience because their hope is in the wrong things. Many Airmen, especially younger Airmen, believe that their life is their own, that beliefs are all relative and it does not really matter what one's worldview is (until they don't like that worldview or that worldview does something against them, which is simply ironically being consistent with the assumed right that others have to do what they want to do). Many Airmen live for entertainment, constant stimulation, comfort, novelty, and self. They do not have a theology for suffering and death (why sin and death happen and how they are defeated). They do not have a deep understanding of their own sin and their need for redemption. For many, the most sacred (and sometimes the only sacred) thing is themselves. Airmen can get in significant trouble if they state anything that is akin to denigrating someone because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or anything sexually inappropriate. Yet, God's name is regularly taken in vain, damnation is used as an adjective and verb in regular conversation towards one's co-workers, and hell is merely another word for adding emphasis – all in public. Religion, objective truth and

## Chapter 5: Practical Solutions Between the USAF and Christianity

others can be mocked, but not themselves. When their marriage, their job, their deployment, their girlfriend, their boyfriend, their supervisor, their latest addiction, their need for social media attention or peer approbation, or anything else lets them down, many of them truly have nothing solid on which to fall back. In contrast, Christianity calls people to put their hope in God. Their greatest need is reconciliation with God. Their greatest longing is truly to be reunited in relationship with Him. Their greatest joy is to live for Christ and to die is gain. Examined from a different angle, the resilience training being utilized and parts of the spiritual fitness approach are not appropriate at all for the military population. Originally designed for pre-teens exhibiting aspects of depression, MRT curriculum is not equipped to address adult military issues such as post-traumatic stress issues, dismemberment, death, suffering, loss of a loved one and the multitude of military-specific concerns that arise during war and during training. Meanwhile, the word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. It pierces to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow and is able to judge the thoughts and the intentions of the heart (Heb. 4:12). Air Force resilience initiatives have created four pillars in which Airmen are supposed to be strong. The spiritual pillar is too nebulous. In addition, Christianity is not a pillar among other equal pillars. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and so a Christian worldview has God's Word as the foundation for all other fitness. Physical training is of some value, it is good. But godliness has value for all things. Relationships are important, but most important is one's relationship with God. Said differently, the resilience initiatives put the cart before the horse. Resilience is made the end goal rather than a by-product of something greater. Who else trains with resilience as the end goal? People do not typically start with discipline classes. People develop their job skills and from that and through that comes discipline. Christians seek Christ and following the way of the cross of which resilience is one of many by-products, but it is not the goal. Ultimately, the resilience training is reactive, not proactive. It came about because the Air Force wanted to do something about deployment-related and home-station problems. In terms of history, it is a

## Chapter 5: Practical Solutions Between the USAF and Christianity

quick fix to personnel issues. Christianity does not always explicitly answer the question posed to it by people (such as “where is resilience in the Bible?”). Rather, it often changes their questions by addressing the deeper issue of the big three questions and takes one’s understanding further in the midst of pointing people back to God and not to themselves. There are people who do not reflect enough in their life to learn character lessons. However, it is more common that people think too much about themselves and not accurately. Scripture calls people to think more about God and His relationship to people. Scripture does not start because of a problem (like the resilience program does). It starts with God making all things good. The Air Force resilience initiatives, while seeking comprehensive culture change are programs that are more institutional than comprehensive in practice. Christianity has programmatic elements but is at root a culture. The Air Force has the challenge of maintaining some level of uniformity in its resilience training while adhering to a program that lists some basic principles, while also encouraging individualistic approaches to resilience. As a program, the training does not truly care about people (unlike the church). It is only for Airmen while they are in the Air Force. This is not to say that Air Force people do not care about Airmen. It is to say that the institution is not set up to care. The Air Force is set up as a warfighting organization. Airmen fight those wars. The Air Force wants their investment in their people maintained. Once one is out of the Air Force, the Air Force is no longer concerned about that person’s resilience to the same degree. In contrast, the Christian church is mandated by God in scripture to care for those who are struggling, frail, sick, alone, etc. The church cares for those outside of it. Being part of the church means living as the redeemed people of God. Christianity is disrespected and is no Christianity at all when it is treated as one of many options for resilience.

4. Ahistorical: Current resilience training and spiritual fitness are too reactionary with little to no historical perspective. If historical awareness was part of the decision-making process, it is not documented for public awareness. Multiple programs have come and gone in the Air Force. Life in the military means that people are constantly changing to different jobs which can make

continuity a great challenge. Were current resilience initiatives decided upon after acquiring a historical understanding such as that listed in chapters three and four of this thesis? The Air Force may assume that programs come and go because they outlive their usefulness. That may or may not be the case. From a Christian perspective there is nothing new under the sun. Airmen need Christ and they need character training (they do not simply need to have their values clarified as if all values are equally valid). The constant changing of Airman character-related programs across the decades reveals a sense of not being grounded in anything permanent. It reveals a propensity for following the culture of Airmen rather than leading them, which is the call of leaders. Air Force programs have come and gone while God's Word continues from generation to generation. Which will last longer – the current spiritual fitness and resilience initiatives or Christianity?

5. Drunk on Data: Much of life requires metrics and data assessment.

Mechanics check mileage, server administrators look at data packages and trends, medical professionals test cholesterol, blood, and various body fluid levels. Rightly so, the Air Force values data collection and assessment in many areas. It is a huge benefit to be able to gauge the lifespan of expensive aircraft, amounts of ready supplies, health of the force and other important metrics. However, not everything in life is fit for a metric. Modern society and the Air Force face the temptation to be intoxicated with data by only taking a point seriously when data "proves it" or by only listening to those who have data to back up their point. Yet, because there are no neutral facts, any data collection or presentation must have a worldview undergirding it. While religious perspectives are at times dismissed because they are simply beliefs and not facts, pronouncements made from psychological and sociological perspectives are accepted as science, though they too base their data on presuppositions of theories that are not themselves provable. This does not mean that data is to be automatically dismissed. It is rather to say that metrics and data are not the only path to knowledge, for they derive from presuppositions. On the one hand, psychology claims to be a science, on the other hand it elevates itself above specific disciplines as a discipline that

seeks to understand the whole person. This does not work for, as Clouser notes, “no one science can possibly deal with a total human. As soon as a theory offers a biological explanation it will be biology, and when it offers a physical explanation it will be physics, and if it offers a historical explanation it will be history” (Clouser 2005:163). Psychology makes claims about how truth is knowable, the existence (or not) of sin, why people behave the way they do, what benefits and hurts relationships, and makes pronouncements on how to address the human-divine relationship. Thus, psychology itself at its foundations makes religious claims. To assume that everything (including spiritual metrics and the data upon which the MRT course was selected) must have metrics is to place metrics as a functional idol. It goes beyond stating that what we can hear, see and touch is real to saying that *only* the things that we can hear, see and touch are real. It assumes only that which is quantifiable tells us truth. For the Christian, God’s Word is truth and all metrics that are accurate are so because they conform to or accurately represent the reality God has created. God made math. True metrics will never contradict scripture. The unexamined belief (not fact) that data and metrics are the only answer for everything is a worldview. It neglects the intangible. And yet the Air Force invests itself every day with numerous topics for which there are no metrics. How does one measure an Airman’s patriotism? Trust? Integrity? A test could be created for integrity but what if people lied on it? Supervisors routinely have to make judgment calls on how they rate their troops. How can the Godly love between husband and wife be measured? Parental love? Faith in Christ? The most important things in life are not quantifiable. Paul ran into a similar mindset with Jews seeking a sign and Greeks looking for wisdom, but he preached Christ crucified. Christ is wisdom and is His own sign.

6. Irony: A significant aspect of lack of appreciation for the religious and historical framework of America and the United States Air Force results in the irony that it is a Christian worldview that is the predominant forebear of the first amendment, Air Force culture, and the values it holds dear. America was never officially intended to be a Christian nation, but it is a far different thing to

## Chapter 5: Practical Solutions Between the USAF and Christianity

suggest that it was not expected nor intended that the majority of its populace, values and policies would be heavily influenced by Christianity if not themselves Christian. This is not to say that Christianity is the only belief system that encourages integrity, service before self, and excellence. When those qualities and other perceived commonalities are found between Christianity and other religions it is another sign of God's common grace. Knowledge of Him is given in greater specification in the Bible. The Christian influence in the Air Force has in many ways become like a cut flower. Things appear strong and healthy, but cut from its source, it will die. The Air Force enjoys the benefits of so much of Christian culture: the Declaration of Independence has at least four specific references to the theological basis of fundamental American policy where it bases that policy from Christian theological concepts that undergird the American government. The rights that all Americans have, it declares, come from God and not from any human. Additional benefits that flow from Christian culture include: care and concern for others, humanitarian missions, doing unto others as one would have them do to them, the presence of public prayer, many of the holidays that are observed on the calendar, symbols and crests that the Air Force has (such as the badge many medical personnel wear picturing the snake on the cross that God utilized in saving the Israelites), just war theory and its variations utilized by the Air Force which comes from the Christian tradition, the oath that all Air Force members must take which (except for a few exceptions) includes the words "so help me God", toleration of different religious beliefs, the value that we place on human life in seeking to minimize unnecessary killing and the strong desire to "leave no man behind". The existence of organizations such as the Joint Personnel Recovery Agency and our nation's desire to bring back those who are lost or captured is a direct result of Imago Dei (though most are unaware of this). If people truly believe that life is an accident and nature weeds out the weak, then we still could seek after people who are lost but there is no real need to do so. If life is random and arbitrary, then so is the concern for life. It is not necessary as a biblical mandate for those who seek to avoid the Christian worldview. Without God, why not let people die, suffer

and remain captive if it is nature weeding out the weak? Even the very desire to explore and innovate is a Christian idea. The new technologies, aircraft and the concept of programs come from a Christian worldview that sees the world as created with a mandate given to humans to fill the earth and subdue it (understand it, study it, try things out). Pagan mindsets were averse to the scientific revolution because nature was seen as a powerful force which was not to be tampered with while other religions found their foundational beliefs to be in contrast to helping nurture scientific discovery (Kennedy 1998:101, Mangalwadi 2011:222). Similarly, though there are distinctions, many military have experienced challenges in communicating to Muslims in Asia that they can participate in innovation. For many Muslims in Asia, their belief that “if God wills” is the reason they do not perform maintenance on aircraft or anticipate that they can have an effect on outcomes. An unexamined worldview can be a dangerous thing. If Christian thought, influences, history, and symbols are increasingly removed from Air Force culture the Air Force will find themselves looking for a replacement foundation for their beliefs. What will the replacement be? If it is secular humanism, it will have implications for every area of life. It will address questions (and address them very differently from Christianity) such as why should life be valued and whose life should be valued and for how long? If human worth comes not from God but from another person, who gets to decide another person’s value and if they live or die (such as in medical situations, etc.)? What does it mean to be good? Why should a person be good? Who defines what is good? What is the purpose of life? What values ought to be encouraged in people? What will the sexual ethic be? A different worldview will make a significantly different Air Force. Innovation can only truly progress when God’s truth and themes that remain necessary throughout history are adhered to. It was stated in section 4.4.5 that neither unity nor diversity are to be made absolute in God’s creation. True and healthy diversity can only occur when it has God’s unity as its foundation and framework. A university is a good, but human attempt at practicing this relationship of unity and diversity (many disciplines united by common educational principles). God intends for His creation to be diverse

within the unity of himself. Because Christianity provides an atmosphere for true diversity<sup>13</sup> built upon the unity of God and His Word it is the only worldview that can offer true tolerance.

### 5.3 Proposed Solutions

Attending to Airmen's resilience is important. They must be encouraged and grown in order to better navigate the challenges of life in and outside of the military. God's plan is that much of this should happen during their youth, with godly parents raising them in a loving God-honoring home in accordance with biblical wisdom and as part of a Christian community, the body of Christ. Many times, for many Airmen, that does not happen. Because Airmen need resilience and that requires training of some sort, the Air Force should allow for multiple avenues of achieving it. If resilience training is to be mandated, Airmen should be given choices. For Christians, there is no truth outside of God's truth. Because one aspect of Christianity involves not forcing one's beliefs on others, resilience training likewise should not be forced upon Airmen. This would be more in keeping with the intent of the First Amendment. Existing chapel programs (Bible studies, worship, counseling, and the services of other non-christian religions) should be one of many options in which Airmen could partake in order to fulfill their resilience training requirement. This could result in some Airmen treating religion as a checkbox item. However, there are already people who treat it as a checkbox item without it being a resilience requirement and the current resilience training is also not immune to be treated as a checkbox item by attendees. Encouragement by the Air Force to uphold religious faith for resilience could potentially provide Airmen the encouragement they need to explore God's word and become more resilient as one result of a stronger faith.

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<sup>13</sup> The church brings together different age groups, economic levels, social levels, health levels, vocations, backgrounds and more. It is much more diverse than the Air Force. The Air Force cannot be as diverse in part because of its mission to fight America's wars. It requires people within a certain age and health demographic.



## Chapter 5: Practical Solutions Between the USAF and Christianity

It would be beneficial to Air Force culture for personnel to become more informed about and be transparent about the worldview inherent in training. Every time a new program is put forward, the underlying worldview and presuppositions of that program should be apparent. For example, if someday humanism is recognized as a religion, then mandated training that comes from an anthropocentric worldview (such as the current MRT training) could easily be accused of promoting and forcing the beliefs of humanism. Truth in advertising training and programs is important. The Air Force places a significant amount of importance on educating Airmen in the history and traditions of the Air Force. That has not taken place with regard to the history of religion in America and the Air Force. Learning the lessons of the importance of biblical faith (discussed in chapter 2 and 3 of this thesis), which was a key component for much of the nation's history, is a positive way to inform and mentor younger Airmen. Christian worldview training allows Airmen to learn the system of thought and practice that informs on every situation, rather than getting caught up in every situation trying to start from the beginning in order to understand what to do about it.

Finally, if Air Force leaders at all levels embrace and do not shrink back from celebrating America's religious heritage which happens to be predominantly Christian (but does allow for other religions as well) it could be a powerful means to demonstrate its importance. This could be demonstrated by non-chaplain leaders (whose faiths may be and probably are very different) taking opportunities to pray in public, speak of their faith, share religious heritage stories, and thus infuse the Air Force with a greater appreciation of Christianity in America, its transcendence, relevance and power. It is very likely that religious training and specifically Christian themes and concepts have intentionally not been packaged into a mandatory class within the Air Force in the interest of avoiding (and perhaps also due to fear of) the accusation of using position and power to force religion in a secular government setting. If that is the case, and secular training (which is the current curricula) is also forcing a worldview on Airmen, then giving Airmen choice with regard to resilience training is paramount in order to help safeguard the free exercise of religion. Christian beliefs are central, foundational and crucial to Christians - – they cannot check their beliefs at the door or accommodate them in favor of taking on secular

religious indoctrination when they believe that their faith provides a holistic approach to life and truth in contrast to a program they believe is piecemeal.

Because the Air Force recognizes the need to not unduly pressure Airmen against personally held beliefs, especially in the area of religion, it is in the best interest of the Air Force to allow Airmen to select spiritual resilience training in accordance with their values. USAF active duty religious demographics as of September 2015 state that 53% of all Airmen identify with some type of Protestant faith and an additional 20% identify as Catholic, creating a total of 72% of all USAF Airmen who identify their faith within the scope of Christianity (USAF Religious Demographics 2015:1). Airmen are well acquainted and not always enthusiastic about required training. To be given choice in the matter has great potential to elevate their interest in, retention of, and dedication to intentional practice of spiritual resiliency. The Air Force would not require any additional funding or staffing in order to offer this. Chaplains are well-equipped to speak from their faith-group perspective on spiritual resiliency.

### Specific Praxis Recommendations

1. Provide Choices When Training is Required: Because the current resilience training is not theologically neutral and because the USAF strives to not force theological views on anyone, this could best be demonstrated by choice in resilience training. Such an approach would only require that resilience training be completed but allow for more diversity in how it would be accomplished. Christians would thus be allowed to opt out of the MRT sessions and attend Bible studies, worship services and other chaplain-led events instead. Airmen claiming other religions would be allowed the same option. Such an approach would demonstrate that the USAF values religion as a viable and sufficient approach to resilience. Another potential offering would be a course teaching Airmen of the history of religious freedom in America. It could focus on why religious faith and religious freedom and Christianity were so important to the founding fathers and why they have theological terms in documents such as the Declaration of Independence and in their writings. Such a course has been delivered by some Chaplains

## Chapter 5: Practical Solutions Between the USAF and Christianity

already and it has opened the door to demonstrate to Airmen the importance of religious faith. Of note, this approach is not forcing religion on anyone but in fact supports the tactic that theological beliefs antithetical to individual Airmen will not be required training.

2. Truth in Advertising: It is standard USAF practice that any Chapel event must be accurately advertised. If an upcoming retreat is a Christian retreat, then the religious affiliation must be made clear when people are signing up (i.e., “this is a Christian retreat”). Worship services must be labelled according to faith group. It would be uncharitable and potentially asking for trouble if an event was not properly advertised. To be consistent, all USAF resilience training should be advertised in such a way that it clearly states that it is not theologically neutral, but rather secular in content. Such advertising could succinctly state somewhere: “this is a secular-based training event. Any Airmen concerned that this would violate their religious beliefs should speak to their Chaplain and leadership about potential alternatives to the training”. The USAF is concerned to never force religious beliefs upon a person (although it still very much believes in standards), therefore it should not force beliefs that are contrary to Christianity (and perhaps other religions as well). This kind of truth in advertising could be directed in the Air Force Instructions (the regulations) that govern the USAF.
3. Academic Partnerships: The USAF utilized the University of Pennsylvania for the MRT training. Evidence-based research is one of many factors in deciding which curriculum to use. Religious devotion has also been researched in academia. Religion cannot be ultimately quantified (God cannot be measured) but this does not mean that the scientific world cannot in some way recognize the benefits of worshipping God for a more resilient life (God made science, so it should point to Him). The Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health at Duke University, led by Dr. Harold Koenig is one such study group that demonstrates the practical benefits of religious faith for personal health. If religious faith produces physical health benefits then the

## Chapter 5: Practical Solutions Between the USAF and Christianity

USAF could only benefit from including it in training for the enhanced readiness of their troops.

4. Greater Critical Acceptance of future Programs: There are many concerns with the current resilience initiatives and specifically the MRT training used by the USAF as discussed throughout this thesis. Greater care needs to be taken before a program is adopted and tens of thousands of Airmen are directed to go through it. Expediency and reacting to Airmen's issues just to get an 80% solution or to have a response to Congress about how Airmen are being cared for are no excuse for providing a more thought-out approach that capitalizes on resources (such as Chaplains) that have proven their value throughout time.
5. Ends vs. Means: Resilience is not an end product. To focus as much as the USAF does on resilience detracts from better goals. Resilience is a result of character. Character is a gift of God and can appear in any human created in His image according to His common grace. The goal is not just to develop Airmen who can withstand, bounce back or continue in work and in life (resilience). Airmen must have character. The USAF moved away (as seen in chapter 3 of this thesis) from speaking about definite character values in much of its training. In 2010, approximately 40 captain chaplains were cut from the active duty Air Force, one to two years afterwards the USAF planned to spend \$7 million on resiliency efforts (Ricks 2012:1). Taking half of that \$7 million dollars would cover the salaries of 42 chaplains who could directly, holistically and thoroughly engage resilience concerns.
6. Chaplains have in the past stated to USAF leaders that it is not enough to tell Airmen to keep to the core values (integrity, excellence and service before self). These values must be defined, otherwise many Airmen (having grown up thinking that values are all relative) will define those terms according to how they best suit themselves. A greater emphasis on character would help grow resilience in Airmen. True resilience comes from being a dedicated disciple of Christ. The character values could be taught (though perhaps not

## Chapter 5: Practical Solutions Between the USAF and Christianity

exclusively taught) by Chaplains. Character training is intrinsic to Bible studies, worship services and other religious means of ministry. This could further filter down to Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) and recruiting. Both JROTC leaders and USAF recruiters could have character as one of the salient factors they look for when deciding who they will bring in to their unit.

7. Provision for Operational Airmen trained in Air Force History: The review of USAF history and USAF resilience history in chapter three is information that is not common knowledge within the Air Force community. The military as an institution does well with passing on traditions and nostalgia and could do better with passing on historical organizational understanding. Many more Airmen can correctly answer USAF trivia (such as dates, names and battles) than can answer the varying cultural and military doctrine themes and trends that influenced USAF thinking both operationally and religiously. Understanding historical trends in the USAF could be of significant value in helping leaders make more fully informed decisions with regard to any number of areas under their purview. Many Air Force installations already have an official historian whose job it is to collect, organize and provide historical documentation and understanding to the installation. Typically, these historians are not brought into discussions where the commander is seeking advice and information prior to making a decision. Historians could provide an aid to how the USAF has learned about how to address problems through historical understanding. The Chaplain Corps Schoolhouse, which trains all new chaplains and chaplain assistants, should add a more robust program of briefings and seminars that educate the next generation of ministers about the history of chaplaincy (chapter 2) and the history of the USAF and resiliency (chapter 3). Many new chaplains (and non-chaplains) when impressed with the need for Airmen to be more resilient become caught up in the expediency of the moment. A new program is often developed every 5-15 years that it is hoped will answer the need. Airmen who have been in the USAF for longer often have perspective to recognize that the “new” program is at times merely a variation of a past program with a new name and

## Chapter 5: Practical Solutions Between the USAF and Christianity

both the previous and the current programs have weak points. If the Chaplain Corps had chaplains and chaplain assistants who had a more longitudinal perspective on airman care, resilience initiatives, and the role of the chaplain they would be much better equipped to transcend the moment and speak with perspective when others are caught up in the novelty of an initiative, placing their hope in a new resilience-themed program. This type of training should be taught at all levels of the Chaplain Corps College so that chaplains can get refresher briefings during the periodic career-required courses for varying rank levels. The Chaplain Corps should also hire a full-time chaplain historian. Currently (most likely due to manning and funding) and for much of its history, the USAF Chaplain Corps has maintained a Reservist Chaplain who compiles the Chaplain Corps history (often working part-time) with documentation, interviews and inputs that provide perspective on the past that serves as guidance for the future. Aircraft continue to become more technologically efficient, excellent and effective because engineers and planners take what has been done and seek to improve on it. Chaplains could learn from this approach. Without a strong historical understanding, it is much more difficult to improve since wheels get reinvented.

8. Celebrate Diversity: The USAF speaks about diversity. It desires diversity. This includes religious diversity. Currently, the USAF allows for religious diversity in religious settings (a protestant service can be a protestant service, and the same is true for other faiths). But it does not welcome religious diversity into the public sphere. There is an unspoken yet clear separation of religious events from secular events. Current resilience training does not invite or allow for a Christian to give a few briefs on the power and relevance of Christianity to resilience (nor does it allow those of other faiths to present their beliefs as they relate to resilience). Not allowing for religious briefings is more in line with segregation than diversity. The USAF ultimately seeks uniformity while trying to address diversity. At some point, the USAF must mandate unification on some things (such as the core values), otherwise there is no point to an organization, but it can still allow for faith groups to speak to resiliency from within their own worldview. This does not mean that each

resilience training now must have 20 or more speakers coming from all different religions. This could be accomplished by simply allowing for choice in resilience training as discussed above. The USAF should recognize that no training is neutral. When the MRT curriculum is being taught it is not neutral content. It is not content that will be in line with all Airmen's beliefs. Because training is not neutral, there should be an open admission that resilience initiatives come from a certain worldview. Thus, when someone shares from a different perspective (such as a Christian view towards resilience), it should be given just as much credence and opportunity to be heard.

9. Importance of Transcendence in a Specialized Culture: As recounted in this thesis, the role of chaplains has fundamentally stayed the same in its intent while also experiencing numerous changes in its approach. Things that chaplains used to do for Airmen (such as handling casualty affairs, Airman and Family Readiness, teaching ethics, and more) have been given to non-chaplains. There is an ever-growing list of areas of expertise. Within the mental health domain alone there are now psychologists, psychiatrists, licensed clinical social workers, military family life consultants and more. The Chaplain Corps has maintained since its inception that the focus for their people is on being a generalist. This does not mean that chaplains are not experts. It means that the goal is to not have hyphenated chaplains who focus on a specialty area rather than being a good minister. Chaplains have a unique opportunity in this day and age to proclaim transcendence in the midst of ever-growing specialties. One significant way is to address from their theology the subject of what binds the various aspects of life together? Airmen can specialize in flying a specific type of aircraft, shooting certain weapons, learning a specific medical discipline, learning from a family expert, and more, but what is not addressed in any of these is how to bind the chapters of one's life together with a theme. Is life more than just live, acquire, achieve, experience and then die? Too few Airmen understand that they are created by God, are intended for Him, have sinned and stand before His judgement and must trust in Jesus for salvation from divine wrath and separation from God. For many Airmen, the greatest thing going on in their

## Chapter 5: Practical Solutions Between the USAF and Christianity

life is themselves. They live for themselves and when they fail at something or they realize they cannot control everything they sometimes become depressed and even attempt to kill themselves. Sadly, some succeed. They need to understand that life is greater than the sum of its parts. This can be accomplished through encouraging choice in resilience training. Encourage Airmen to attend a worship service or become part of a Bible study group.

10. Need for Increased Chaplain Corps Specializations: Without seeking to undo any of what was said in the previous paragraph, the Chaplain Corps could also benefit from creating some specialties within the USAF chaplaincy. The goal would not be to detract from the chaplain's calling as a minister, but rather to provide additional venues where ministry could occur. A select number of chaplains could go on to advanced training (paid for by the USAF, as they do for many non-chaplains who utilize further degrees to benefit the USAF) in topics including ethics, world religions, religious leader engagement, spirituality and health, and more. Such degrees could then be the prerequisite for placing these chaplains into USAF training institutions (such as the Air Force Academy, the Air Force Culture & Language Center, the Pentagon and at Air University, to name a few). Because Christianity offers incredible resilience a chaplain who is on the faculty of a USAF school could explain and help students see in particulars how a Christian worldview impacts ethics or how it impacts their health. In effect, these chaplains would be using a specialty to draw attention to God's transcendence overarching and in the midst of all topics. Because Christianity relates to every area of life, there are many areas of study that are opportunities where Christianity can be shared and discussed.

### 5.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed specific initiatives the USAF and the USAF Chaplain Corps could utilize in order to better respect the religious beliefs of individual Airmen while also elevating historical perspective and appreciation of the transcendence of religious beliefs in the public square. Because current training and initiatives negate



## Chapter 5: Practical Solutions Between the USAF and Christianity

Christianity (and other religious beliefs) they are sequestering religious practice. Religious practice is sequestered into certain times and locations (i.e., chapel services) which for the most part are not appreciated in general USAF training venues. The following chapter will summarize this thesis, along with the major themes identified both historically in the USAF and themes of Christianity that will continue to be adhered to by many Airmen, closing with a discussion of areas for further study and a conclusion to the thesis.

## **Chapter 6: Salient Findings and Conclusion**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter will summarize salient findings from the previous chapters of this thesis. Chapter two discussed the history of military chaplaincy, its historical precedents, and utilization throughout various times and places. Chapter three discussed approaches the Air Force has taken to foster resilience for its personnel including the utilization of chaplains. Chapter four discussed significant themes of Christian beliefs, teachings and behavior exemplified for millennia in order to foster growth and right living that address and go far beyond those of current USAF resilience training. The approaches of Air Force resilience and a Christian approach to life will now be compared and contrasted in terms of the distinctions and differences that flow from the worldview of each and some of the numerous implications that follow from each worldview. The current resilience approach of the United States Air Force will then be critiqued with regard to its non-neutral religious posture. Discussion will argue for the impossibility of neutrality when teaching any topic that deals with beliefs and behavior. Finally, recommendations for further study will be stated to provide further avenues of inquiry for others.

### **6.2 Theological Presuppositions for a Biblical View of Resiliency**

#### **6.2.1 Summary of Air Force Resilience Training History**

Chapter three took an historical look at significant cultural and programmatic approaches the Air Force has taken to strengthen the character readiness in their Airmen. Chapter three explains and documents these cultural and programmatic approaches in detail. They are summarized here for the purpose of juxtaposing them against a biblical worldview.

Among the themes that continue to emerge beginning with the 1940s up to the writing of this thesis is that Chaplains tend to view Airmen's problems fundamentally as spiritual problems, regardless of the presenting problem. There are often additional factors involved in airman wellness (i.e., an airman who is recovering from

a bullet wound in combat needs physical and spiritual care). The salient point for the Air Force though is that every issue, every topic always has spiritual content at its root and thus must be addressed spiritually. Chaplains believed that spiritual care must be communicated through word and deed in tangible expression. Chaplains' ministry is transcendental in scope. Recognition of this by non-chaplains in the past has helped the Air Force understand that spiritual issues are all-encompassing. Chaplains address many issues that are often not classified as spiritual in regards to the main topic (marriage, family, work place issues, addictions, harassment, advisement, ethical guidance, etc.), but are at their foundation spiritual in their cause and solution. All other topics have for the most part been seen historically as not separate from spiritual solutions. The term "spiritual" has historically referred to organized religion, which for most of the Air Force's history has meant a Judeo-Christian understanding of reality. An additional trend that grew in scope over the second half of the twentieth century was non-chaplains within and without the Air Force seeking to address Airmen's felt needs through mental health care and other proposed solutions outside of religion. The influence of religion grew less and less important in the thinking of Air Force culture and personnel. Issues with Airmen and sustaining a ready force were for "professionals" in an ever-growing list of specialized areas of expertise. A sense of religious transcendence gradually receded. Yet, chaplains in general did not lose their sense of transcendence and as a result, conducted ministry almost anywhere in any setting.

The Air Force has struggled throughout its history to find an agreed-upon approach to moral guidance. There has not been consistent agreement on the goal of the various types of training throughout the decades. Was the goal character formation, character clarification or something else? Such questions are still unresolved while new programs continue to be put forth.

The 1940s saw the birth of the United States Air Force along with exponential institutional growth for the Chaplain Corps. Chapels were built in numerous locations to provide a religious home for Airmen and their families in austere locations, many of which are in modern times now surrounded by cities due to urban and suburban growth. Air Force demographics tilted away from the single males of

## Chapter 6: Salient Findings and Conclusion

the World War Two generation to a higher percentage of married Airmen. Chaplains led the moral training for the Air Force and were considered the best option for training Airmen to live life well and handle hardships. The culture in greater society and in the Air Force was religiously much more monolithic than at the time of the writing of this thesis, primarily grounded in a Judeo-Christian framework with most Americans and Airmen claiming either adherence to or appreciation of Christianity. One of many significant implications of this religious culture was that religion was largely held to be a public topic, not merely a private matter.

The 1950s brought the first of many programs that the Air Force and the Chaplain Corps developed to instill quality character into Airmen. The Character Guidance Program gave Chaplains a key role in development and delivery of content that would help airman become quality individuals. The general belief among the Air Force, especially its leadership, was that that there was such a thing as right and wrong and they wanted their Airmen to do what was right. The Chaplain was the go-to guy (there were no female chaplains for another two decades, not including the service of Ella Gibson Hobart, unofficially the first female chaplain (who also happened to be a Jewish chaplain) who served in the Army during the War Between the States) for counseling. Mental health was not nearly as involved in airman care at this time as it would later be. Religion was viewed by both the Chaplain Corps and many line officers as the main way to achieve military discipline and moral unit culture for mission success. Religion (by which was typically meant Judeo-Christian values) was seen as a necessity in order to maintain freedom and morality. It was widely held that Airmen have not fundamentally changed over time. They have the same ends and desires in mind (the same temptations to lust after money, sex and power along with goals to have a better life, raise their families well, be healthy, live life well, etc.). Today, they just have different means and ways to try to get what they want (such as technological changes, improvements to healthcare and more).

America's enemies (including the U.S.S.R., China and North Korea to name a few) were viewed as holding opposing (and harmful) religious values or worldviews. Secular counseling training for chaplains grew in popularity. Some chaplains embraced the secular approaches while others rejected them as contrary to their

own beliefs and faith practices. Even though no secular activities were allowed in the chapel buildings themselves, the Chaplain Corps endorsed secular counseling training for chaplains at other locations.

During the 1960s the Moral Leadership Program replaced the Character Guidance Program. The name change alone indicated a shift in focus from character for its own sake to more of a concern for practical leadership traits. Leadership traits became more of the focus more than character and integrity. The Moral Leadership Program began with high involvement on the part of the Chaplain Corps but as the decade continued there was decreasing tolerance for organized religion. As a result, the Air Force looked less to religion for life guidance. Eventually, attendance plummeted when for the first time attendance to the training was no longer mandatory. Air Force leadership did not support the importance of the training enough and so the program was eventually cancelled. The Chaplain Corps responded to these trends by making distinctions between themselves and military culture (through approaches such as the church renewal movement, and utilizing some of the after-effects of the Second Vatican Council, to name a couple). At the same time, Chaplains were crucial to the well-being and readiness of Airmen. The Vietnam conflict era provided multitudes of Airmen who were seeking God, counsel from God's word and a demonstration of God's love in the midst of many horrors from war, rising drug usage, family issues and more. In response, some of the chaplains offered secular wisdom while other Chaplains relied on their religious training (seminary education, study and their faith tenets) to address these and other problems. In the midst of the prevailing culture that heralded the space age, technology and the superiority of the younger generation that many thought had replaced the need for God, Chaplains continued to remind Airmen of the reality and necessity of worldview, the inescapability of religion and the need for God.

The 1970s Air Force culture made another significant programmatic change to the resilience of its Airmen. Adult Values Education, which came online in 1974, did not focus on values that needed to be obeyed or adhered to in a right versus wrong framework. Rather, the focus of the course was to help each airman recognize his or her personal beliefs. Chaplains in turn became facilitators (since instruction was

not the primary goal) for the program, and did not have the same opportunities as in previous decades to influence training content and to teach Airmen to live according to an objective standard of morality. There was a significant difference of opinion (as there had been in previous decades) among chaplains who believed that when they spoke in a classroom setting (such as Adult Values Education) they should talk in line with their denominational beliefs regardless of what the training was. Other chaplains believed that religious talk should be reserved only for a “religious” setting. It was during this period that it was made clear through the content of the courses that people were now deemed to be inherently good. Meanwhile, within the chapel, many services, counseling and teaching events continued to identify people as sinners in need of repentance who would experience redemption through becoming disciples of Christ. It was discovered that in challenging and horrific times, many Airmen turned to faith in God. This was made explicit by a study conducted by the Air Force on the practices and beliefs that helped prisoners of war (POWs) survive and maintain a certain degree of wellness amidst the tortuous experiences of their captivity. Another irony was that chaplains saw ministry and theology as relevant for all of life, yet still reached out to secular counselors for training.

The NOW program also began in 1970 as an Air Force theme with additional Chaplain Corps programs to accompany those themes. The NOW program had an annual focus which changed each year (the Airman, the Family, etc.), and sought to maintain some training in past values while addressing contemporary shifts. Chaplains often upheld traditional values as a solution to many of the contemporary vexations of Airmen. Among the consistent themes was that faith in God, marital fidelity, sexual purity, controlling sinful desires rather than feeding them, thinking long-term rather than for expediency, thinking less about self and more about others, and more, were solutions to avoiding the faults of the new generation of young adults who often idolized expediency, impatience, materialism and autonomy.

Adult Values Education (also known as “Values Clarification”) continued up to 1988. Though the program placed less of an emphasis on character formation than earlier models, it was not anarchistic in intent. The Air Force did and will always need standards. However, Adult Values Education was eventually deemed ineffective in

large part because values had become too relativized which was not helpful to good order and discipline. It would be replaced in 1993 with the Core Values Program. Perhaps the most significant event that impacted the Chaplain Corps for this decade was the court case of *Katcoff v. Marsh* in 1979. Two Harvard Law students sued the Department of the Army stating that the Chaplain Corps was unconstitutional because the government was paying for ministers and paying for buildings for worship services and thus supporting religion. It was further argued that this was a violation of the first amendment of the United States Constitution. The case made it all the way to Federal Court and was eventually finalized in the mid-1980s. The Harvard Law students did not win the case. However, much damage occurred to the Chaplain Corps as a result. Up until this point, Chaplains were much more open in public about their faith with their primary understanding of their role being informed by their denomination or faith group. As a result of *Katcoff v. Marsh*, which stated that the Chaplaincy is constitutional because it provides for the free exercise of religion without denigrating or over-emphasizing any one religion, this new focus became a visible part of the Chaplain Corps. The Chaplain Corps as a whole began to speak and write less of their religious beliefs in briefings, meetings, and other public opportunities. Their religious faith became less socially acceptable in public, but was relegated to the religious section of their lives (such as private devotions, Bible studies, preaching, etc.). Chaplains were again no strangers to counseling numerous issues with Airmen, even if they did not agree with their counselees. Chaplains dealt with marital issues, divorce, homosexuality (as they had since at least the 1950s) and other sex-related topics, financial problems, addictions, different religious practices, violence and much more. The Chaplain Corps developed a Family Support Handbook, since family was the thematic area of concern in the early 1980s. Among its salient points was that religious faith was essential to positive family life. The handbook mentions other faith groups, but speaks predominantly from the Judeo-Christian worldview. This was also the last full decade of the Cold War. In much Chaplain and line officer writing, airman authors, speakers and leaders perceived connections between a nation's religion (or lack of it) and their policies and behavior. Atheism and Communism were linked together. Understanding the religious terrain of enemies and distinguishing themselves from

their enemies was an important element of advising leadership. The Chaplain Corps continued to uphold the importance of religious faith for informing belief systems by educating Airmen on understanding the importance of the Imago Dei, the Fall, Redemption and more in the context of their ministry.

During the 1990s the Air Force returned to more character-based training having experienced the ill effects of teaching Airmen Adult Values Education. Adult Values Education training had encouraged the idea that privately held beliefs would be more important than transcendent beliefs. The replacement training would focus more on values that were good and would be an expectation for all Airmen. In 1992, Air Force Regulation 50-31, which was the regulation authority for chaplains delivering Adult Values Education training, came under review by the legal system and it was determined that there was no legal basis for religious or moral training forced on Airmen by Chaplains. This is worthy of note in light of the current forcing of Airmen to listen to secular training from non-chaplains during MRT and other resilience training. Moral training was pronounced to be a private matter. At the same time, ministry was focused primarily in the chapel at home bases. The Air Force simultaneously became a much more expeditionary force during this decade. Though the decade began with Operation Desert Storm, most of the Air Force's time and efforts went to shorter contingency operations all over the globe. Time away from home became more frequent than it had been in the 1980s. The Core Values Program finally replaced Adult Values Education in 1993.

This new program was the first time in Air Force history that chaplains had become less than the main (and often only) advisor to the commander with regard to values-related programs and initiatives. The Core Values program added social actions officers and other individuals to advise the commander and contribute to the development of the program and there was "no identified role for the chaplain in the current initiative". The Air Force wanted to instill certain values without overhauling Airmen's individual belief systems. The Core Values were: "integrity, competence, courage, tenacity, patriotism, and service". These would be picked up and used by later resilience programs. The training did not address religion as a necessary, major, or even important factor in values. Chaplains were eventually included in the



development and teaching of the program, but they came into an already developed program rather than as the key players in its origination as in years past. Chaplains continued to utilize their religious expertise at home station to help Airmen worship and serve their local community, and chaplains also greatly assisted the overseas Air Force community through engagements with religious leaders, missionaries, and others who could help them and their units connect with the countries to which they had deployed. These relationships were often strategically significant in establishing good relationships with local populations in foreign lands that could help or hurt Air Force missions depending on how they felt about their occupiers.

The 21st century brought significant changes to Air Force culture, operational tempo and religious issues. Chaplains were crucial to the war effort that officially began in the wake of the terrorist attacks on American soil on September 11, 2001, though military conflicts and engagements with terrorism had occurred for multiple decades prior, and some would say for centuries prior. More specialists and specialty training products were introduced for the Chaplain Corps and others to utilize. Among these were the ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) and SafeTalk curricula for suicide awareness and prevention (though, there is no such thing as suicide prevention, only suicide mitigation) and CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management) for intervening during critically stressful situations. Mental health assets continued to expand in number and reach. Psychologists, the Military OneSource hotline and the offering of a limited number of free counseling sessions, Social Workers and Military Family Life Consultants (MFLC) were all made available at many bases to help Airmen cope with the challenges of life and war. There were big pressures and well-known news stories on avoiding the perception of “proselytizing” and not pushing one’s faith beliefs on another. There was also a big push for religious diversity and spirituality beyond what was Judeo-Christian. Organizations such as the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF), the Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers (MAFT) and Americans for Separation of Church and State (ASCS) levied pressure at local and national levels to stop what they perceived as religious coercion on the part of both Chaplains and non-Chaplains in the Air Force.

## Chapter 6: Salient Findings and Conclusion

As the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (and other areas of the world) grew in duration, the military recognized that their troops were starting to feel the effects of war physically and spiritually. After almost a decade at war, the Air Force began utilizing Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF) with its four pillars of physical, mental, social and spiritual fitness, and Master Resilience Trainer (MRT) training to fortify perceived gaps in Airmen's readiness and character. CAF and MRT were often taught by young officers on the lower end of the experience ladder along with a more senior enlisted airman. After two weeks of instructor training, they were qualified to teach the course with the title "Master Resilience Trainer", while chaplains with an average of 3 years of graduate school (seminary), some with PhDs, most of them with years of experience in counseling, years of dealing with traumatic experiences and living among the Airmen every week, were not invited as the central component to either advise or train the resilience initiatives. Chaplains were not the instructors and after the training had been rolled out, were eventually guided not to become trainers in it by Chaplain Corps directives. The MRT training used some spiritually-related terms that were at times also used by chaplains, but they were redefined with a humanistic meaning. The four pillars of CAF communicated a distinct worldview where religion (any belief system) was optional and perhaps helpful, but not essential or worth discussing in any significant depth in class in order to be resilient. The term "spiritual" was used more often than "religion" and this provided an in-road for people to minimize religion and simply refer to a more vague spirituality without speaking of God and scriptures. Instead, the training was geared more toward putting the focus on the individual self and his or her spirituality. Spirituality was becoming the proper purview of more than just those who were religious or chaplains. For a significant number of Airmen, there was a noticeable avoidance and at times unspoken fear of bringing religion in to the conversation too much with regard to resilience training. Thus, CAF communicated that the spiritual realm is not transcendent, not undergirding the other three pillars, but is just one of the four. Leaders said CAF was not a program but more of a culture change, but then their speeches and regulations clearly stated that it was a program. A significant break from past training was that most of the previous decades had sought a more integrated approach to character refinement (for better or worse). Now, the goal was not

character refinement or being a person of values, but of being “resilient”. The resilience that was sought, though community aspects were at times spoken of, was ultimately a personal responsibility. Resilience competencies in the MRT training are mentioned with the individual as central and autonomous. There is no mention of or need for God. The model relied heavily upon the cognitive school of psychology and was heavily individualistic (learn it from an instructor then practice on one’s own since there is no official “resilience church” to attend). Much of the conceptual framework for the MRT course came from Dr. Albert Ellis who was anti-God in his beliefs (Ellis considered belief in God to be irrational, that people are basically good, and that our inclination to focus on failures more than successes is a result of evolution, not the Fall, not our sin nature, and not because we are mortal and fallible creatures who live before a perfect God (Ellis 2003:74, Ellis 1998:246)). Part of a chaplain’s job is to call people to repentance. Albert Ellis had a very different view of this. In fact, Albert Ellis used the Rational Emotive Therapy he developed to help a woman experiencing guilt over an extra-marital affair get rid of her guilt so that she could continue living a promiscuous lifestyle (Trader 2012:44). Airmen of all faiths, including Christians, were required to attend training that uses teachings from Albert Ellis. This is but one example of how Air Force chaplains were relegated to teaching in the chapel contexts and less outside of the chapel. In practice, this meant that the Chaplain Corps was less organic to the Air Force in function. If they did teach outside of the chapel, the cultural atmosphere was such that it ought not be too religious in nature.

It is perhaps ironic that while organizations outside the Air Force were calling for the removal of religion from the public square of the Air Force in favor of “neutral” messaging and culture, Airmen of many faiths (including Christians) were being forced to attend secular training from a specific worldview that was at many points in contrast to their faith. If all resilience, morality and value-related training comes from a non-neutral belief system, then coercion against personal beliefs becomes a strong likelihood in mandated training.

The training that the Air Force has put forth for its people over the past few decades has sent strongly differing messages. The Air Force mandates attendance at

classes that alternate between telling people essentially that they can live however they want but there are certain ways (often highlighted by “scientific” data) to live life better, while also telling them that there are standards and core values which must be upheld as long as they are in the Air Force. As a result, character standards are still expected, but not due to any religious ethic. The Core Values and other Air Force standards are behavioristic. People just need to do them. The necessity of deep religious faith is optional. The centrality of Christianity for many founding principles of America and thus the Air Force has been effectively muted. The nation was never built to mandate Christianity, but it was built with the assumption that most of its populace would believe in and practice a Christian worldview. The Christian worldview gave the nation the concept of religious freedom as opposed to oppression and mandating belief systems.

### **6.2.2 Summary of Christian Theology**

This section summarizes the theological findings presented in chapter four. These ideas are described and justified in detail in chapter four, and are presented here in summary form so that they may be juxtaposed against the philosophical and theological assumptions of Air Force resiliency training.

Christianity is theocentric. It is much broader in scope than the term resilience, yet encompasses it. Genesis 1:27 is one of the verses of specific study for this thesis, discussing the concept and implications of *Imago Dei*. People are created. They did not evolve through random chance or by accident. People are inherently valuable because of their maker (not because a ruler or any other human says they have worth). Each person is a reminder of God, not because they are deity, but because they are made in His image. God lives in relationship, in Trinitarian perfection. Humanity, as created by God, requires relationships in order to be healthy. The purpose of creation is found in God's design for it. Creation and our lives are not merely things that people are to decide on without regard for God's Word. 2 Peter 1:3, the other main verse for specific study, focuses on the sufficiency of Christ. Christ has fulfilled the greatest need of humanity. Everything believers fundamentally need for life and godliness has been given to them.

## Chapter 6: Salient Findings and Conclusion

Reality and life are theocentric in nature. Everything about them points to God (which includes Christ). Modern “spirituality” is centered on individualism (what can God do for me?). Modern beliefs that ignore the God of the Bible or promote spirituality are nothing new. They are belief systems that Christians from millennia past stood against (including but not limited to Gnosticism, Ancient Greek and Roman pagan beliefs, and more). Christianity teaches that life does not make sense apart from knowing God and that true knowledge of God is relational, not just intellectual (through study of the Bible) in nature. No true knowledge exists apart from God. It is impossible that He could not exist, for the laws of the universe, morality, logic, etc. do not make sense apart from God who made them (presuppositionalism) and is Sovereign over all things. Regardless of their beliefs, everyone lives temporally and eternally (the two cannot be separated). Every person will live forever either under God’s wrath or under God’s mercy.

Christocentrism was discussed as another crucial topic in order to better understand God. Christ is God. He is a person of the Trinity. Christocentrism recognizes that the goal of scripture’s teaching is to direct people to Jesus. This is not to take away from the Trinity, but rather to more fully appreciate the role that Christ has within the Trinity. Christ is God Incarnate, connecting with His creation on His terms and on their own level. The Old Testament eagerly hopes for a Messiah. In the New Testament, He arrives to conquer sin and death. Christians must follow Christ’s example and teachings in every topic of life. Christians can learn from non-Christians but not when in contrast to Christ and Scripture, for that would be to attempt to serve two contrasting masters. In the Incarnation was lived out perfect deity and perfect humanity. No one else can do that. In Christ is found the fulfillment of the Old Testament law. Christianity is not merely about verbal assent (“I believe in Jesus”) but about heartfelt devotion and in taking every thought captive to Christ. Jesus lived on the earth in human form and He will return one day to judge the living and the dead. Christ perfectly addresses topics that resiliency training seeks to address, but has a much more comprehensive approach than resilience. For true Christians, true resilience training will point to Christ as the ultimate means and end. True resilience for the Christian cannot be found apart from a relationship with Christ.

## Chapter 6: Salient Findings and Conclusion

Biblocentrism establishes the Bible as God's written, authoritative, infallible, sufficient and holy word. It is the written foundation for Christian thought and practice. It is a framework governing all of life, not just an encyclopedia that may or may not have anything to say on certain topics. Biblocentrism is God's special (specific) revelation along with God's general revelation (creation). Everything that is in the Bible is true, but not everything that is true is in the Bible (general revelation), yet anything that is true always conforms with the Bible, whether we understand it as such or not. Science, rightly understood falls under scripture as an orderly way to study God's physical creation. God's creation is intricate and advanced. He has made every piece of it for a purpose and knows the various ways in which chemicals, objects and elements can be compiled that result in buildings, paper, airplanes, computers, tools and more. Thus, there is no such thing as an invention, only discoveries, for everything that can be made that is good has already been in the mind of God, the Creator.

Another key component to Christianity is that it is Church-centered. This does not mean that church dictates every detail in a person's life nor does it mean that there are no other God-given influences in a Christian's life (family, school, work, etc.). It does mean that, contrary to the individualistic Christianity approach that views church attendance as optional, Christ died for the church which includes individuals, but is primarily a community. To be a Christian means that worship, prayer, confession, the Eucharist, and other aspects of the faith are multi-person events, not merely things that are done in private. Christianity is inherently relational, not individualistic. Christianity proclaims the good news that Jesus saves repentant sinners from eternal sin and eternal death. Thus when put together, as a church the foci are to be on repentance, worship, and reversing the curse through studying and helping to fight against the effects of the fall, knowing that in the end it can only be completed and accomplished by God as He continues to sanctify His people. Church is to be a multi-generational, multi-economic level, multi-ethnic, multi-social-strata community where true diversity within the unity of the true God occurs. The Church, which is made up of the people of God and not by a building, is a distinct culture from government. The church has its own customs, holidays, and practices. It has something to say about every area of life. Christians fellowship together.

## Chapter 6: Salient Findings and Conclusion

Christians hold each other accountable in order to better love their families and to utilize their resources and time for God's Kingdom. Christians love one other in spite of who they are because while they were still sinners, Christ died for them.

Christianity is the proper context of community since God is the creator of community. He made the family to operate a certain way and made it good. Everything for the Christian must have a God-ward view, whether it be education, sexuality, gender roles, church, family or anything else. Family and church are not arbitrary constructs of past civilizations. They are intentional creations of God whose purpose is to show forth Christ. Christianity expands beyond a classroom setting to a holistic approach to truth and wellness.

Christianity addresses maturity and responsibility. Ethics and responsibility are a reality and are possible because of the *Imago Dei*. The concept of good behavior - "being good" or "doing the right thing"- comes from God. In His Word He addresses why we do it, how we are able to do it, and defines what it is in light of His character. Christianity embraces artistic creativity that honors God. It practices a proper use of entertainment. Christianity views parenting as a time for parents to teach their children (pass it on), not to "let them figure it all out" on their own. All children will make their choice one day, but parents will be held responsible for their diligence or apathy in training up their children to see God as the ultimate reference point for all things. For Christians, growing up is a process primarily with the goal of honoring God and developing godly character. Success, as commonly defined by the world, is not the priority. Christians are to learn to take care of each other using their money, time and health for others' benefit. Christians are to exhibit modesty and appropriateness in physical relationships because loving God and loving others go together. Christians appreciate marriage for what it is made to be. "Spirituality" for the Christian is defined to mean "Christian", otherwise it means sin, heresy and false idols.

Christianity has a high view of Stewardship & Vocation. "Earthly" jobs are a calling as well as clerical occupations. Prior to and during Martin Luther's life, the predominant way of thinking about vocation contributed to the sacred/secular divide

## Chapter 6: Salient Findings and Conclusion

(which illustrates that church and state discussions, though nuanced for their respective times, are not necessarily new). For Christians, the goal of life and thus the goal of any job or occupation is to love Christ. This returns the conversation to the concept of *Imago Dei* – what a person does for a living does not give them value, but rather, their occupation is to be a response to God's gifts to them. Vocational disciplines become a means to study and worship God (math, hydrology, cooking, economics, etc.). Christianity is better thought of as an alternative lifestyle (the true one) rather than a social institution. The Bible is more concerned with the heart- why a person is doing a particular job or career- than with what that particular job or career is. Vocation apart from God easily becomes a road to selfishness and empire-building. Anyone who lives selflessly does so because God has gifted them to do so.

Christianity speaks deeply to the topic of suffering. It addresses the four main reasons of why bad things happen: the Fall, evil powers, internal sin and sin in other people. Theodicy and how suffering can be reconciled with the character of God are issues for every religion (and also for those who do not believe that God exists and thus have no logical answer as to why evil and suffering exist). Christianity maintains that God is still the omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent and perfect God, even as evil and suffering exist. Christianity further believes that suffering is also redemptive and is a vehicle of sanctification. Suffering was the expectation of the early church. In contrast, modern thinking is confused. It believes that there is absolute suffering (it is real, not just an opinion) but there is no such thing as absolute truth. It is the cross that demonstrates and actuates the redemption of suffering. Redemption will come in Christ. A godly response to suffering is not ultimately about epistemology. Intellectual understanding must be demonstrated by Christians to others through their care for the physical body and their hope in the reality of Christ's one day redeeming His creation.

Christianity teaches that there is Objective Truth. Objective Truth is a concept that is assumed in many other disciplines (math, chemistry, electricity, cooking, exercise physiology, tying ropes, medical care, computer technology and more) and was assumed to be reality for most of history. The ancient heresy of Gnosticism, which



taught the separation of the spiritual and physical, has never completely disappeared. Christians have throughout the centuries combated that heresy with the teaching that the spiritual (Christianity) and the physical are not completely separate. God made people body and spirit. Christianity seeks to enjoy all academic pursuits without treating these gifts as gods. God is truth. All truth begins and ends with Him. An attack on truth is an attack on God. Truth does not change. Truth became incarnate and personal in Jesus. Christianity has always fought pluralistic worldviews from the beginning. It has long been known by Christians that personal autonomy must be the god if people deny the one true God. The Non-Christian trusts in their reason and autonomy, but on what basis?

Living as if there is no objective truth is a belief that self-destructs and is inconsistent. Those who adhere to relative truth absolutely believe they are right. They do not believe that every moral choice or behavior is equal. Christianity proclaims that truth is not fractured and that there is no such thing as a neutral fact. Yet, theology is for life and not merely the classroom. Christians have often been too focused on theology and not enough on aesthetics. Christians are to be more concerned with loving people and committing to time and activities with them rather than just writing books against them and debating those with whom they disagree.

### **6.3 Criticism of the Practice of the Myth of Neutrality in the Air Force**

There is no such thing as neutrality. Those who consider themselves secular, atheist, humanist, a “none”, and other similar groups have transcendental beliefs, and those beliefs are not neutral. Groups such as this are often referred to as having beliefs, “implicit religion”, being religious, or something else (Clouser 2005:196, Dutton 2010:197, Rupe 2011:51, Scoccia 2006:57). On a national level, “Failure to establish religion signifies neither hostility nor neutrality” (Dawson 2008:681). Every belief, every action moves in a direction. God is not neutral, He is perfect. There is always a foundational belief (whether the person is aware or not) undergirding every program and initiative. Current resilience training is antagonistic to the Christian faith. While claiming to be neutral, it is in fact contrary to many Christian beliefs. It is perhaps ironic that the training does not talk about religion in

any significant depth. Religion is often publicly portrayed as both personally relevant and publicly potentially divisive. There is not the same regard for secularism, modern psychology, resilience initiatives and other influences. Yet, each one of those holds particular beliefs to which many people do not adhere. Why is that not considered divisive? Christianity (and other religions) are often publicly treated as pillars, not as transcendent and foundational. Christianity is assumed to only address “religious” topics when in reality it addresses every topic. Resilience training claims to speak about many areas of life (Airmen are told they can use this information for their job, deployment and their personal life). Why is Christianity compartmentalized while secular training is assumed to have a wide scope? Because CAF, MRT and any resilience training are all teaching definite beliefs about religion, how to live one’s life, and what ought to be valued (even if it supposedly is up to each individual), that too is proposing (some would say imposing) values. If Airmen are to listen to resilience training and are told they can take it or leave it, why is the same opportunity not afforded to chaplains to have Airmen taught the permeating power of Christianity? Seeking to embrace all views (“it doesn’t matter what you believe”) is itself a definite view that is hostile to other views (Christianity, etc.). Airmen can decide not to absorb secular psychology aspects they do not want, but they are not even afforded the same opportunity when it comes to religion in resilience training. There are concerns that using scripture references in training, even if directly applicable to the topic, would be considered as forcing religion upon the attendees. Yet, when secular concepts are taught that come from thinkers who are anti-theist, it is assumed that Airmen can ignore that aspect of the source and just focus on the point being made. Yet, again, is the same opportunity given for scripture to be shared? It is also ironic that Airmen are taken seriously in certain life choices and not in others. An airman’s sexual orientation, gender identity and belief system are rarely challenged (this is who they are) and it is assumed that by their late teens or early twenties they know for sure what they are doing with regard to those topics, yet religious training and even religious references are at times withheld outside of chapel settings because of the concern that it might unduly influence or offend Airmen. On the one hand, Airmen are considered firm in their decision. On the other, they are deemed very malleable.

#### **6.4 Directions for Further Study**

Future areas of study could include specific guidance on how Air Force leaders and all Airmen could implement their faith and beliefs into the work place in a non-abusive manner. Airmen sometimes think that the mere mention of something with which they disagree is tantamount to abuse. Rather, the free exchange of ideas and the freedom to express religious beliefs are important to the welfare and future of the Air Force. Future studies could also discuss what the necessary elements of chaplaincy are. If religious leaders from diverse faith groups all qualify as chaplains, what are the common denominators of a chaplain and how does a chaplain maintain his or her specific faith practices while functioning as a chaplain? Future studies could take a specific look at how a celebration of religious beliefs is to be practiced which could serve as a very helpful guide for Air Force leaders who often seek counsel over real-life examples of what the appropriate expression of their faith looks like. Another topic for future study would be to consider what a Christian response should be when mandated to attend secular training (resiliency or otherwise). Should Christians respectfully refuse to attend the training, even if there are consequences? Should Christian Airmen simply attend the training as ordered and not implement the principles they are taught? This does not mean Christians do not care about resilience or other people – far from it, but they are informed by a deeper and more comprehensive worldview that reinterprets the secular training to a Christocentric worldview. Is there some benefit to attending in order to understand how the secular mindset is expressing itself in this training? Furthermore, how should Christians address their concerns about non-Christian training? If secular training is mandated for Christians, should they advocate that secularists or non-Christians be mandated to attend Christian worship services and Bible studies? A corollary to this would be to clarify specifically how psychology functions as a secular priesthood. Classified into two main approaches (the study of the mind and the study of human behavior), neither approach is clear as to its intent. Clouser gives ample examples of how both the mind and behavior partake in an incredible diversity of thoughts and behaviors. The mind includes:

*acts of thought, belief, feeling, desire, and volition, any of which may be about mathematics, art, ethics, politics or economics [and any of these can be] counted beautiful, loving, treasonable, or worth money, for example. And of course, they also have spatial, physical, biotic, sensory, and logical properties* (Clouser 2005:162).

The point is that the military context has not been addressed in the literature that has made the case that psychology makes religious claims as it seeks to be a presuppositional worldview from which to define reality. Other studies have addressed the relationship and foundational conflicts between Christianity and psychology (this does not mean psychology does not have good things to offer, from common grace but it often reaches beyond its limits. The legitimate contributions of psychology is not an area of focus in this study). There are scholars who support varying levels of integration between the two and scholars who do not. Biblical counseling, of which the author is a proponent, would be another potential avenue of study to elucidate how a Christian chaplain can teach, counsel, advise and navigate from a biblical foundation and approach within the military context. Such a study would think thematically and holistically from scripture, not simply use proof texts to make a point.

Another topic for study would be to discuss if there is ever a point where Christians should no longer be in the Air Force either as chaplains or as non-chaplains. Christians have served in secular settings for millennia. Jesus and Peter spoke to Roman soldiers who followed Jesus, yet there is no mention of either Jesus or Peter asking the soldiers to leave their vocation. Given that individual conscience will determine a Christian's status in the Air Force, what guidelines could be specified to illuminate the concerns and help Christians make a wise decision with regard to their military service?

Another topic for future study would be to more fully develop religious heritage training, addressing with greater specificity the content, delivery method and implementation of education on America's religious history with numerous historical examples of how it has shaped all levels of government, including the military. This could be turned into a course very beneficial for chaplains to teach as part of their

education to Airmen. Another topic that could be addressed would be to discuss why history has not been more of a priority in the Air Force's education of Airmen. Whether it be American religious heritage, Air Force religious heritage, Chaplain Corps history, or Resilience training history, historical awareness within the Air Force and more specifically within the Chaplain Corps is not covered enough in basic chaplain courses and as professional development for more seasoned chaplains. This training would be beneficial to Chaplains who would have a better perspective on chaplain ministry and it would also provide another tool for ministry for chaplains to advise and train Airmen and their leaders on topics that are very relevant to military service and performance. To the extent that the author of this thesis is aware, there is no other report or consolidation of Air Force chaplain and resilience training covering the almost 7 decades of the Air Force's existence (chapter 3 of this thesis). The Air Force (similar to the rest of the military) has traditions and history, but constantly has to respond to and figure out how to conduct contingencies. It seems there is always a new situation, a new conflict, a new war, a new issue arising. Yet, historical understanding in these areas could be a helpful guide to both chaplains and Airmen who will find much in common with those from the past. Answers to current issues are sometimes found in principles from the past. In part because much of the military's time is spent in crisis response, it has at times become so focused on the present to the exclusion of knowing enough about the past (Chaplain Corps history, resilience history, etc.) to help address current decisions and issues.

### **6.5 Conclusion**

This study began with the goal of discovering if the Air Force claims religious neutrality, while favoring and promoting secular resiliency training and initiatives over religious approaches. Based on preliminary research and first-hand experience, the study also sought to determine if a government entity (in this instance, the Air Force) ought to be the proper proponent of resiliency training. Resiliency training tells people how to live and think. A history of Chaplains and how they have ministered to and provided for the resilience of Airmen was laid out. The secular and anti-Christian worldview and specifics of the resilience training were identified and

discussed. Among the major themes with which the Air Force struggles as it seeks to provide quality character training to its people are legacy vs. progress, neutrality, and religious hypersensitivity. Christianity and its differences with Air Force resilience training were highlighted and discussed. The thesis of this study proposed a Christian response and alternative approach to Air Force resiliency initiatives. At the heart of the issue was how to apply a biblical framework to the resilience issues. It was demonstrated that the Air Force is not neutral with regard to resilience training. It was further demonstrated that neutrality is impossible. There is always a worldview behind any training. A clear alternative to the resilience training was laid out for Christians, for Christianity is its own worldview and approach to every area of life. Christianity is extremely different in form and substance from resilience training. They are different in degree and in kind. Implicitly, other religions could have their own training as well. One potential outcome of this study is that Air Force leaders would respect the transcendent nature of Christianity and allow for it to be an alternative to secular humanist resilience training. This does not mean Christians cannot learn from non-Christians. It means they address such knowledge within their biblical framework and community. Any kind of training that tells people how to live and think is another worldview that competes with other religions and Christianity specifically. Because Christianity (and all religious belief as well) is transcendent, it will have something to say about every topic and thus will always be viewed by others as not staying in its lane. Those who do not understand the pervasive nature of Christianity will question why Christian ministers offer financial counseling, host dances, teach parenting seminars, speak about addictions, speak about the relationship of church and state, and more because Christians seek to “take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor 10:5). New training, programs and initiatives will be put forth by the Air Force in the future. Regardless of the title or content of such future programs, they will be dealing with worldview and should allow for religious diversity of choice. If the historical trend continues as it has, new programs that may or may not use the term “resilience” will continue to push secularism on religious (including Christian) Airmen often utilizing non-religious non-clergy as instructors rather than at least allowing the option to be trained by Chaplains, all of whom have Master’s degrees (and many have PhD’s), who are

## Chapter 6: Salient Findings and Conclusion

ordained and seasoned in religious education and resilience training. Strategic guidelines were proposed that will inform a better safeguarding of religious freedom and airman welfare. The research goals have been met and the thesis has made an original contribution to the field to help both Chaplains and non-chaplains think through the biased nature of resilience training in order to facilitate the free exercise of religion, appreciate America's religious foundations and be more aware of the powerful relevance, truth and fulfillment that is found in Christ and His Word.

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