

Religion in the Ranks: Religion in the Canadian Forces in the 21st Century

by

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I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

Religion in the Ranks offers insights into the role of religion in the modern bureaucratic institution of the Canadian Forces and the nature of religious identity among its personnel. This study of religion in a modern Canadian institution relies first on historical sociological analysis to identify the role that religion has traditionally played in the CF both in the institution of the chaplaincy and in the lives of individuals. However, given the broader social developments of the past century that have seen the authority of religious institutions wane in the face of individualism and secularization, this study goes further to examine the role religion plays in the lives of personnel in the Canadian Forces today. While traditionally religion in Canada was governed by religious authorities and institutions it now includes more diffuse, privatized, subjectivated and individualized forms that can only be studied by asking individuals about their beliefs. Consequently, this study also relies on field research in the form of in-depth interviews with both chaplains (those who represent traditional religious institutions) and personnel who may or may not affiliate with a religious tradition.

This research provides three insights of particular relevance to understanding religion in late modernity. First, it demonstrates that religion persists in an individualized, subjectivated and diffuse state in the military (as it does in Canadian society) and even people who belong to traditional religious communities have to wrestle with the new social conditions that give rise to this new form of religious identity. Modern conditions make the rise of individualism and subjectivation of religion virtually inescapable, since even those who remain in traditional and authoritarian religious communities must now *choose* to do so. Second, it indicates a new religious pluralism stemming from individual interpretations of belief that produce new ways of being religious (e.g., Pagans) in addition to the pluralism that comes from integrating immigrants from minority religious traditions (e.g., Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhist, Muslims, etc). Third, it points to the continuing relevance of the chaplaincy, an institution inherited from Canada's Christian past that has been able, more or less successfully, to adapt to these new conditions. These three observations demonstrate that despite important changes in the structure and culture of religious identity and practice, religion persists in this putatively secular social institution.

Despite the obvious signs of secularization, my interviews showed that this new form of individualistic and subjective forms of religion served a variety of purposes for CF personnel. The personal religious beliefs of the people I interviewed offered them opportunities to examine the

uncertain or unknowable aspects of life and death, morality and ethics, good and evil, as well as one's purpose for existing. Moreover, for several of the participants in this study, religion played a mediating role between the alienating forces of modernity that effected people working in large bureaucratic modern institutions.

This study also revealed the depth and breadth of the new religious pluralism that has marked Canadian society since the 1960s. This pluralism has several sources. First, Canadians raised in the Christian tradition have, thanks to the forces of individualism and subjectivation discussed above, adopted a variety of non-conformist religious perspectives, such as Wicca, neo-paganism, and other new religious movements as well as that diffuse form of religious identity called "spiritual but not religious." Second, the rise of traditional Aboriginal spirituality among Aboriginal personnel has meant a "return" or conversion to Aboriginal spirituality for many CF personnel. Finally, immigration has resulted in an increase in religious diversity and the CF has had to deal with an increase in the numbers of its members who identify themselves as Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists or members of the world's various religious traditions. Whereas traditional Christian worldviews prevailed in earlier times, religion in Canada today is marked by pluralism, individualism and rapid change.

Finally, my study found that despite the challenges posed by secularization, the transformation of religious identity and belonging, and the new religious pluralism, CF personnel remained loyal to the military chaplaincy. The transformation of the chaplaincy to these new conditions illustrates the adaptability of religious institutions in the face of modern influences. Despite requirements to fit their religious vocations into a system based on reason, bureaucracy, and the requirement for "acceptable" credentials, chaplains have been able to retain and even expand their place within the military. They have done this by adapting to aspects of military society while remaining outside the formal structures that govern other military personnel. Moreover, they have modified their role to accommodate new religious realities by taking on duties such as pastoral care and "generic" ministry to all military members regardless of their faith tradition. While senior military officials see the chaplains' presence as a means to ensuring "operational effectiveness" by keeping personnel fit for and effective in their duties, chaplains understand their role as being essential to helping personnel to order their experiences, providing comfort in the face of suffering, loneliness and fear, as well as interpreting some of the violence they see in their role. Furthermore, the transformation of the chaplaincy into a multifaith institution over the last fifty years has been remarkable. This transition

has not been without its contradictions, conflicts and difficulties. While much work remains to be done, the chaplaincy has adapted to the challenges of pluralism with some degree of success.

The evidence of the continuing significance of religion for individuals employed by a highly-bureaucratic organization such as the military indicates the continuing significance religion can have in a secular Canadian institution. It is a clear indication that despite secularizing trends that have resulted in the privatization and subjectivization of religion, religion persists in its significance, albeit in new forms, for many people. Further, indications that people turn to religious resources in times of hardship and stress suggests that religion and religious resources may retain their significance as a source of comfort and consolation despite a resistance to traditional organized forms of religion. Religion and religious diversity in Canadian society, despite their changing forms, will continue to be important social and cultural reference points for present and future generations.

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This research was inspired by the experiences of Lt. Gen. Romeo Dallaire as the commander of the United Nation Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR). He provided his encouragement and assistance a number of times during the course of the development of this work. I thank him for that. Moreover, heartfelt thanks go to the members of the Canadian Forces who participated in this research but, under the directives of the ethics ordinances governing it, cannot be named. So many of you gave generously of your time and insights and shared personal experiences that have shed light on the human toll military service takes on Canadian women and men. Similarly chaplains from across Canada gave generously of their time and energy to participate in interviews, host me on bases, allow me to sit in on their meetings and conferences, as well as directing me to various resources that might facilitate my studies. Thank you all, I couldn't have pulled this off without you! Former Chaplains General Ron Bourque and Stan Johnstone were instrumental in helping me to get started and to get finished. Ron gave me critical insights and reviewed the final draft while Stan tolerated emails, phone calls and questions by the dozen. Senior chaplains Kevin Dingwell, George Zimmerman, and Steve Moore shared their own research and directed me to other sources that I relied on throughout this study. Daniel Lagacé-Roy of the Canadian Forces Leadership Institute gave much positive support and encouragement as well as helping me to get started by sponsoring the study within the CF.

Within my academic community I was lucky to have excellent teachers and colleagues who were able to help me develop my research and improve the final product tremendously. In particular, I thank my doctoral supervisor Dr. David Seljak of St. Jerome's University at the University of Waterloo, for enduring my inelegant sentences, my confused ideas, and my occasional bouts of writer's block.

With good humour and a razor-sharp wit, he pushed me to focus my analysis, refine my writing and get the job done. His direction, support and friendship will always be deeply appreciated. Further thanks go to my committee members Dr. Lorne Dawson and Dr. Carol Duncan and my examiners Dr. Harold Coward and Dr. Whitney Lackenbauer. Much appreciation is owed to the numerous other faculty members in the religious studies departments at the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University who provided me with constructive feedback, encouragement, and friendship for the duration of the process. Special thanks go to Dr. Michel Desjardins and Dr. Doug Cowan who read my terrible first draft unflinchingly and to no personal benefit, and offered me essential guidance for revising the material.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Religion in the Canadian Forces in the 21st Century

In the last two decades, the world has witnessed a significant increase in global conflicts in which religion has been influential. At the same time, religion in Western societies, and in this case, Canadian society in particular, is increasingly less prominent. Notwithstanding its central role in the formation of the country, religion in Canada now plays a “bit part” in the shadow of political and economic forces that define national interests. Despite statistics demonstrating that Canada remains predominantly “Christian,” there is evidence to show that most people in Canada are significantly removed from the beliefs and traditions of their forebears to the point that their Christianity is largely cultural. This is most true for males aged 31 and younger (Bibby 2002, 79-88; Bibby and Posterski 1985; Statistics Canada 2004a)¹ who make up the majority of Canadian Forces (hereafter cited as CF) personnel.

Along with their lack of personal religious interest a number of recent studies point to the growing concern that young people in Canada are increasingly less knowledgeable about world religions. It is ironic that one of Canada’s primary institutions facing volatile religious elements elsewhere in the world is comprised largely of young people with limited religious beliefs of their own and very little knowledge about the beliefs of others. Furthermore, as Canada becomes increasingly pluralistic, their lack of understanding about religion will pose increasing difficulty for those within the CF who must work closely with others who are active in a faith tradition. Along with the possibility that they may not share the values and religious heritage of many of their peers in the ranks, there is significant likelihood of discrimination and harassment due to differences in values and customs stemming from religious beliefs. The focus of this study is to examine the role of religion in the Canadian Forces in

¹ See chapter four for further discussion.

order to discern the role it plays in this Canadian institution that has traditionally privileged Christians.

In 2003, just as I began to consider pursuing doctoral studies at the University of Waterloo, Lt. Gen. Romeo Dallaire published his book *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*. In this book, Dallaire describes his experiences as the leader of a UN peacekeeping mission during the 1994 Rwandan Genocide that, despite his vast command experience, affected him so profoundly that he made several attempts to take his own life following his return to Canada. I was surprised by his frequent use of religious language to describe his experiences because Dallaire, a Francophone who had been raised Roman Catholic, said he was not particularly “religious.” His repeated description of the *génocidaires* as “the devil” seemed like an unlikely description from someone of such important standing in a modern secular Canadian institution. Reading his story gave me cause to wonder if religion might not take on increased significance for Canadian military personnel facing dangerous and disturbing missions. I decided to ask personnel about their personal religious and spiritual interests and their opinions about the role these beliefs play in relation to their military duties and in the CF in general. I wanted to know if religion takes on greater meaning when personnel are away on a mission, if there really are any “atheists in foxholes,” and whether religion might, as implied by Dallaire’s repeated references to it in his book and speaking engagements, represent a resource for coming to terms with traumatic experiences. These were the questions that inspired my research.

1.2 Premise of the Book

As I began my study, I found statistics to demonstrate that the vast majority of military personnel are males from regions of Canada where Christianity is the dominant religion.² I found others to show that young males in the age group of most enlisting personnel are most likely to report “no religion” despite a religious family culture. These secular young men join the CF because they are attracted to opportunities for adventure, camaraderie, and competition. They admire the notion of participating in

a system designed to protect Canadian values and interests while simultaneously offering experience, travel, and a decent paycheque. Despite its bureaucratic structures and rigid discipline, the Canadian military has a subculture of sometimes rowdy machismo that can include heavy drinking and ribald behaviour. This “frat-boy” culture is subdominant to the dedication many CF members have to Canadian Forces’ values of service, self-sacrifice, and “duty with honour.” In addition to this secular majority, the CF is home to growing numbers of religiously active personnel from both Canadian mainstream traditions as well as minority religious groups.

To my surprise, many CF personnel were willing to talk to me about the role of religion or, as they frequently preferred, “spirituality,” in their lives. What I learned is that many people in the rational, disciplined, and resilient world of the CF have faith. Many more have a basic knowledge of the Christian principles that undergird Canadian society and a tendency to interpret (and in some cases reject) them, according to their own interests and values. The religious beliefs and values of military personnel are always well-defined or doctrinally specific and they often have little to do with organized religion. Not surprisingly perhaps, beliefs become most poignant in times of hardship and stress. I also found that CF personnel have a genuine attachment to their chaplains. Unlike civilian ministers who might have little to offer military personnel, military chaplains are highly-valued as mentors and counsellors, as well as sources of courage and consolation – even among people who claim no religious affiliation.

The thesis of this study is that, despite modern influences such as bureaucratization, secularization, as well as the deinstitutionalization and subjectivation of religion that arise in late modern society, religion retains significance for many people. Although military members participate in a modern, secular institution, many people rely on religious identity and experience both to confront and conform to military culture. This study demonstrates how the structural trends of modernization, specifically secularization (especially as an element of differentiation), the rise of individualism, the emergence of a greater ethno-religious pluralism, and bureaucratization (including the rationalization of the chaplaincy and the rise of credentialism in the process of recruitment and promotion of

² British Columbia and the Yukon Territories are the only regions in Canada where more people reported having “no religion”(39% and 37% respectively) in greater numbers than Christianity (Statistics Canada 2004a,

chaplains) have radically reshaped how religion operates in the CF today. It argues that despite the reshaping of religion in the CF by these forces, religion remains relevant to CF personnel in dealing with questions of values, meaning and morals as well as issues relating to operational stress. For the CF as a social institution, religion also remains an important feature, both as a means of maintaining the operational effectiveness of individual soldiers and units, but also, ironically, by providing a system of meaning, belonging and communication outside of the rational bureaucracy of the military.

While this study was limited by its scope as well as restrictions imposed by both the Canadian Forces and the University of Waterloo, it provides a number of insights into the continuing relevance of religion in Canada, religion in late modernity, military culture, and the role of religion in coping with stress. Additionally, it points to a number of areas where further research is warranted and provides a number of recommendations from which to proceed.

1.3 Methods

Naturally, before I could begin a study of this nature, I had to gain approval for the project from both the Office of Human Research Ethics (OHRE) at the University of Waterloo, as well as the military Directorate of Human Resources Research and Evaluation (DHRRE). In both cases, the committees limited the number of participants I could interview. The UW OHRE limited my study to 25 participants and, due to the competitive and insular nature of the CF, insisted that I ensure the anonymity of participants in order to protect them from discrimination, harassment or reprisal. The DHRRE required me to find a military sponsor to attest to the value of my study for military purposes before I was allowed to proceed. The Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, a research branch of the Canadian Forces, filled this role. With their sponsorship of my proposed study, the DHRRE approved me to include up to 30 people (ten chaplains and twenty regular force personnel) on condition that I delay my interviews by 18 months. They explained that:

the Army has just entered a phase of "regeneration" after a very long period of high operational tempo. The purpose of this period (about 18 months) is to give the soldiers some breathing room and allow

time for collective training activities that have been put on the back burner for several years. During this period of regeneration new social science research projects with high data collection demand characteristics are to be minimized... However, if there is some way you could delay your data collection until after the regeneration period, we could consider your project...³

The year following my initial proposal (2005), the Chaplain General's Office agreed to co-sponsor my research and allowed me unlimited access to Canadian Forces chaplains.⁴ While my initial goal for this study was to focus primarily on personnel and secondarily on chaplains, the restrictions placed on the study, the limitations of a student budget, and my limited access to personnel as operations again increased with Canadian engagement in Afghanistan, resulted in me having a greater access to chaplains and some difficulty finding participants in the regular forces, particularly members of religious minorities.

Over the course of three years from September 2004 until September 2007, I conducted 32 semi-structured interviews (16 chaplains and 16 non-chaplains) with military personnel about the role of religion and personal spirituality in their lives. All interviews with regular forces personnel (non-chaplains) were conducted between September 2006 and December 2007 as established by the Canadian Forces Directorate of Human Resources Research Ethics. Interviews with reservists and chaplains occurred within the expanded timeframe given above. Following the initial interviews, I occasionally had follow-up discussions to clarify aspects of the interview or ask further questions.

In addition to these formal interviews, I had numerous informal discussions and exchanged emails and telephone calls with personnel and chaplains about various aspects of life (including the religious) in the Canadian Forces. Chaplains in particular were very interested. To my surprise, many personnel were also intrigued. Some of them immediately offered their thoughts on the topic while others shrugged thoughtfully and suggested I talk to the chaplains. While these people did not all consent to participating in the study, they often made comments and suggestions that were helpful in directing my research. Further to these encounters, I attended meetings, conferences, lectures, and

³ Personal email correspondence Benham Rennick November 12, 2004.

⁴ This change was noted and approved by the Office of Human Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo.

memorial events that addressed or demonstrated the role religion plays in the military. I examined websites dedicated to specific religious groups within the CF, and I gathered news clippings about the experiences of various religious minorities and the chaplains ministering to them, as well as religious events and activities occurring on bases and in during missions. I relied on ombudsman’s reports, government documents, and Department of Defence newsletters. In addition to my own field research on the topic, I examined the little existing research and documentation that addresses the role of religion in the CF today.⁵ I did extensive research on the sociology of religion and military sociology in Canada and among NATO forces.

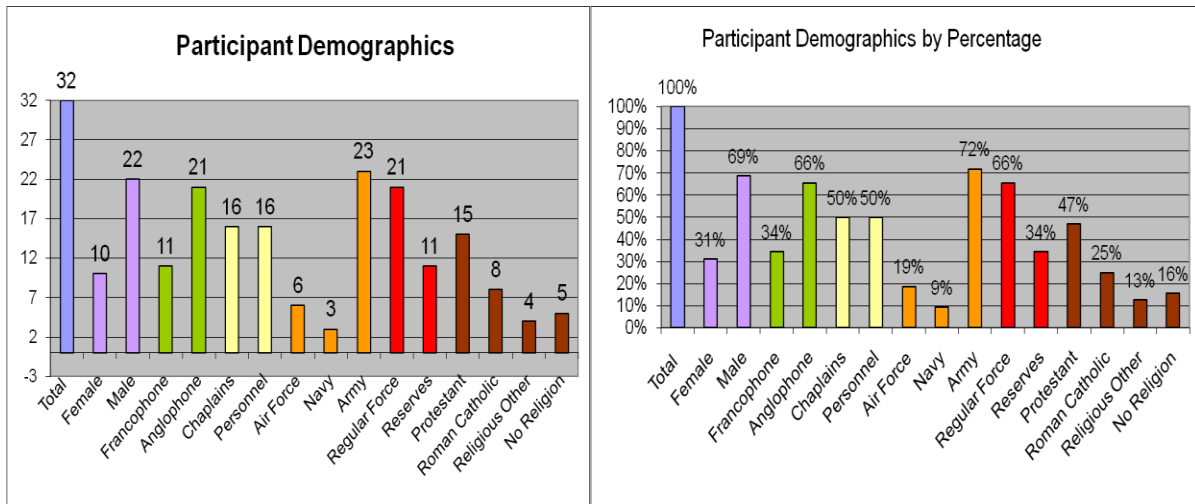
The following tables show the demographics of the participants divided into chaplains and non-chaplains.⁶

	Chaplains	Non-Chaplains
Regular forces	13	10
Reserve forces	3	6
Men	10	12
Women	6	4
Anglophones	10	11
Francophones	6	5

⁵ Most of this is in the context of the chaplaincy. However, recent efforts by US, Australian, and Dutch military policy-makers to address the lack of so-called “cultural intelligence” among military personnel is garnering some attention to religion as an aspect of culture. These projects note the importance of training military members in aspects of the culture in the regions to which they are deployed but limits religion and religious identity to one small component within the notion of “culture.” See for example Bledsoe 2005, Salmoni 2004, and Selmeski 2007.

⁶ It is important to note that in addition to the people I interviewed personally, I also used significant material from websites, news articles, and various other sources to gather information on various groups in the CF. These tables are included simply to identify groups with whom I had first-person contact.

The following tables display the demographics of the personnel I interviewed:



As these numbers show, like the makeup of the CF, the majority of participants were white, males from Christian traditions. Also in keeping with the makeup of the CF, most participants were members of the regular forces with representation from the army, air force, and navy.⁷ Although I indicate only Francophone and Anglophones here, I interviewed personnel whose first language was neither of these. For the sake of concealing their identity, I incorporated those people under the language they primarily speak in Canada. The heading “Protestants” includes Anglicans, United Church members, Baptists, Pentecostals, Presbyterians, Christian Reformed, Lutherans. “Religious Others” includes Muslims, Wiccans, and those who follow Native Spirituality.

What follows is a compilation of this data. In compliance with the University of Waterloo’s Office of Human Research Ethics (OHRE) and the Canadian Forces Directorate of Human Resources Research and Evaluation (DHRRE), it is presented in such a way as to protect the identity of those who participated. As I have already noted, the Canadian Forces are insular and highly integrated. The principle of *universality of service* means that military members can be posted anywhere they are

⁷ The majority of regular forces members are army (31%), followed by administrative and support personnel (who combined total 32%), then air force (23%), and finally navy (15%) (CBC News 2006a; DND 2006a, 2007a).

needed by the CF. This means that personnel are posted to a variety of locations and work with others from across the country. As a result, many people in the CF know each other and could easily identify another member with only a few, key pieces of information such as rank, location or service. This is particularly true for women, homosexuals, visible and religious minorities, as well as chaplains who number less than 200 in the regular forces. In order to avoid exposing participants' identities, I have changed or obscured the location of an interview, unit, mission, or rank where it does not confuse or distort the data. For example, instead of identifying someone as a lieutenant colonel, I might refer to them as a senior officer. A few of the people I interviewed are truly unique in the forces and it is with great difficulty that I can refer to them at all without making their identity obvious. In the cases where I provide a name or other information about personnel, that information is available publicly elsewhere and I have cited the source.

Despite being unable to identify personally the many people who assisted me in this research, I am deeply indebted to the chaplains, senior officers, and the personnel of the Canadian Forces. They were generous with their time, resources, and insights. They assisted me by sending documents and reports that, as a civilian, I could not otherwise have easily obtained. They welcomed me on bases and introduced me to members of all ranks and backgrounds, referred me to various resources that could further my study, shared their own research with me, and were willing participants themselves. Similarly, personnel gave freely of their time and insights and directed me to other potential participants.

Having started this project with a particular and not altogether flattering stereotype of military personnel, I come away from it with a far deeper understanding of the diversity and depth of character of the people who commit themselves to matters of national security at the expense of their freedom, relationships, safety and sometimes their lives. I sincerely hope this study will benefit military personnel and their families by alerting policy makers and military leaders to the continuing significance of religion for individuals in the CF and the military as a social institution. Furthermore, I hope to make a contribution to the sociological study of religion, particularly with respect to how religion continues to operate in institutions and individuals' lives in largely secularized societies.

1.4 Outline of the Research

I have organized this study to demonstrate the connection of historical religious development in Canada to modern day conditions in the CF. In chapter two I provide definitions for terms used and introduce key concepts as well as an overview of religion in Canada from its colonization to the present day. I take special note of the unique situation in Québec. In chapter three I make a close examination of the civilian and military influences that helped shaped the official and formal face of religion in the CF, the Chaplain's Branch. In chapter four I examine religion among the rank and file in both its private and public forms. I examine the relationship of the religious identities and practices described by personnel in the context of the themes presented in chapter one; that is, secularization, which includes the privatization, and subjectivation of religion. Further, I look at the alienating and inherently stressful aspects of military life as an influence on religious activities. Finally, in chapter five I present a summary of the data, indicate the significance of the research to military and religious studies, as well as offer some recommendations for future research in this area.

As I have already stated, there is virtually no research on the role religion plays in the secular, late modern institution of Canada's military forces. No doubt those better versed in the field of military studies will identify gaps in this study and draw further connections that I may have missed. Hopefully however, this qualitative study of the role of religion in the CF makes a meaningful contribution to both military and religious studies that will inspire future research examining the ongoing influences of religion in late modernity, religion in Canada, religion as a source of values, religion in secular institutions, and the relationship between stress and religious interests.

Chapter 2

Religion in Canada

In order to understand the transformation of religion in the Canadian Forces one must first have some knowledge of the transformation of the role and nature of religion in broader Canadian society.

Therefore, this chapter will demonstrate how religion in Canada has both shaped and been shaped by the various socio-historical forces of modernity. In the first section, I examine the relationship between religion, secularization, and modernity. In the second half of the chapter, I offer a brief overview of religious development in Canada with the goal to establishing the context out of which current understandings of religion have come.

2.1 Trends in Religion in Canada

Before commencing an examination of religion, we must establish and define the basic concepts and terms being used. In this section, I will discuss current definitions and debates on religion, secularization, de-institutionalization and subjectivation, as well as post- and late modernity. Furthermore, I will explain how these concepts apply to this study.

2.1.1 Defining Religion

A number of scholars have proposed various definitions of religion; however, a generally accepted definition remains elusive for a number of reasons I examine here. In this study I have asked participants to define and explain their religious or spiritual beliefs to me in their own words. For the purposes of this study however, “religion” and “religious thinking” indicates people’s efforts to pursue what they define as transcendent ideals as well as investigate the “big questions” of life (such as notions of an ultimate reality, the existence of the divine, their purpose in life, and efforts to reach higher states of being). Scholars of religion no longer define religion primarily in terms of belief structures or religious experiences – especially those of individuals. Equally important are religious practices, both those related to ritual (worship, rites of initiation, prayer, meditation, etc.) and ethics (social practices, morality, family structures and roles, etc.). Moreover, scholars recognize that

religion is always the product of a community; there may be important innovators and instigators of change, but religion, like a language, is a product of the social interaction of a group of people over a long period of time. Finally, scholars of religion also understand that earlier definitions of religion tended to reflect the individualism of certain forms of Protestantism and liberalism. In particular, sociologists of religion emphasize the importance of social institutions and structures in shaping religious consciousness and in continuing the tradition over the centuries (Lincoln 2003).

Consequently, when we look for religion in the Canadian Forces, we will look at all of its aspects, whether they are formal and traditional or private and subjective, expressed primarily in terms of practices or ideas, or highly adaptable communities and symbols that facilitate these efforts.

Of course, adopting a relatively straightforward definition of religion risks hiding the complexity and ambiguity of the phenomenon, especially in the conditions of late, globalized modernity. Peter Beyer describes religion in contemporary global society as “an important and somewhat arbitrary field of contestation or differentiated societal system that gains its form and meaning entirely within the larger social context in which it operates” (2003, 58). In this light, sociologists of religion provide examples where people who categorize themselves within the same religious group (e.g., Roman Catholic) might understand that label differently. For example, Roman Catholic teachings place attendance at Mass and participation in the Eucharist as central to Catholicism whereas many Québécois understand themselves to be Catholic simply because they were baptized as infants and attended Catholic schools (Bibby 2002; Lemieux and Montminy 2000). Similarly, within specific identifiable religious groups such as Buddhists and New Religious Movements, practices and beliefs can and do vary depending on ethnic identity and the focus of a particular subgroup (Dawson 1998b; McLellan 1999). For others in late modern societies, “religion” might be something one objects to (perhaps because their definition limits it to a formal tradition) or, it could be something one seeks through new interests, experiences or community (Bibby 1993, 2002; Dawson 1998b; Roof 1999; Wuthnow 1998).

While scholars have attempted to describe the “essence” of religion, there is no undisputed standard. Émile Durkheim understood religion as a product of society necessary to ensure “social cohesion” rather than a supernaturally inspired reality. He argued that all religious beliefs share in common a division of the world into the categories of “sacred” (those things “set apart and forbidden”) and

“profane” (everything else) (Durkheim 1965 [1912], 34). Anthropologist Clifford Geertz viewed religion as a powerful “cultural system” capable of motivating people and establishing a “general order of existence.”⁸ Max Weber famously refused to produce a definition of religion arguing instead that all religious experience is contingent on time, place, and the socio-historical context of the believer and therefore can have no generally applicable definition (Weber 1993 [1922]). For this reason, Weber insisted on the need for case studies to examine the relationship of religious experience within various socio-historical contexts (Davie 2003, 64). Following Weber’s lead, numerous scholars (including me in this study) have tended to provide tentative and contingent definitions that fit their particular focus of study. In fact some, such as Talal Asad, have argued that there can never be a valid “essentialist” definition of religion that does not impose standards that do not necessarily exist for all believers. He argues that Geertz’s and others’ definitions of religion are the result of a Western Enlightenment project directed by the rational scientific examination of religion as a limited and differentiated element of society rather than the all-encompassing governing authority that it continues to be in some parts of the world (Asad 1993). He states that, “There cannot be a universal definition of religion not only because its constituent elements and relationships are historically specific, but because that definition is itself the historical product of discursive processes” (29).

Despite these arguments against an essentialist definition, there have been a number of recent attempts to suggest a starting place at least. Danièle Hervieu-Léger, for example, follows Durkheim’s reasoning but offers a new definition for religion in modernity that includes not only organized religion but also invisible (or private) forms. She argues that religion can be defined as an “ideological, practical and symbolic system” through which a sense of individual and collective belonging is established and maintained through a particular chain of religious belief stored in the memories and traditional associations of individuals (Hervieu-Léger 2000, 82). For example, she argues that even as groups and individuals create new ways of believing (e.g., neo-Pagans), they

⁸ Durkheim’s perception of religion as a “unified system of beliefs and practices” that establish social cohesion and Geertz’s idea of a “cultural system” are strikingly akin to definitions of organizational culture given by Schein 1992, Pedersen et al. 1989, Pheysey 1992, Johns 1988 and others. Geertz’s full and often cited definition of religion is “...(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic” (Geertz 1973, 90).

associate their beliefs and practices with pre-existing traditions (e.g., ancient forms of witchcraft and nature religions). According to Grace Davie, such a definition makes it possible to organize meanings and practices that are identifiable as religious, but “need not be confused with every type of meaning system” (Davie 1996, 109-110). Hervieu-Léger links Durkheim’s idea that religion generates social cohesion and Weber’s notion of “ideal types”⁹ to produce a definition describing religion as a tradition-based (in this case a religious tradition) social construct that generates a sense of belonging and establishes social norms for its members. In this sense, religion *is* culture. Roger O’Toole makes a similar argument when he states that, despite decreasing numbers of participants in institutional religious congregations, “a sense of belonging, albeit derived, in many cases, from a passive, perceived identification with a particular organization, appears to be important in the Canadian context” (2000, 46). Even so, Hervieu-Léger adds the caveat that her definition is only *one* sociological approach to religion among others and is based on her goal of “accounting for the changes affecting religion in modernity” (Hervieu-Léger 2000, 81). Bruce Lincoln develops the position further by arguing that a helpful definition of religion must be “polythetic and flexible. At the same time, he insists it must address the basic matters of a discourse about the transcendent that presents itself as transcendent as well, practices geared to teaching and sustaining the discourse, a community of believers, and an institution that sustains all of these (Lincoln 2003, 5-8).

In this study I avoid taking an essentialist view of religion for reasons identified above by Asad. Instead I approach this study following Weber’s premise that each situation is contingent and must be examined individually, and Lincoln’s position that examinations of religion must include the minimal elements of beliefs, practices, community and institutions. Readers will see each of these addressed in the chapters containing material from interviews with both chaplains and soldiers. Predictably, chaplains talking about religion in the military frequently refer to community (e.g., chapel life) and religious institutions whereas military personnel more commonly describe practices and beliefs.

⁹ In his study of the successful capitalist ventures of American Protestants, Weber required a system of analysis that would allow him to apply scientific principles to his study while also recognizing that any observations he might make would be subject to his own biases and interests (Weber 1904). His response to this difficulty was to create a comparative system based on the “ideal type” – that is, an imagined model “based on relevant empirical components, formed and explicitly delineated by the researcher to facilitate precise comparisons on specific points of interest” (Christiano, Swatos Jr., and Kivisto 2002). For example, by comparing “church” and “sect” one could produce a more complete understanding of each (Weber 1985 [1906]).

Further, I recognize the importance of Hervieu-Léger's argument that religion in modernity can be public and private, but even when it is private and internal, it can be inspired by memories and traditions of formal religious teachings. Both of these aspects of religion are evident in my interviews with military personnel who have been raised according to traditional values but now see religion as a private matter or a matter of culture. Our definition of religion then, for the purposes of this study at least, is, as Lincoln recommends, flexible, yet dependent on a few basic elements. It attends to both the public and the private views, considers the beliefs, practices, community and institutions, as well as recognizing that some views are based in tradition but have taken on a private form and interpretation. It is understood as both contingent on the experiences and understanding of those I interviewed, as well as dependant upon some underlying aspect of the established social norms and values of Canadian and military society. It is one means by which personnel define and understand themselves, establish their values and develop a sense of purpose in life, as well as relate their individual interests to their military career. Throughout this study I identify religion variously as "formal or institutional religion," "private religion," and "personal spirituality." Where people participate in a particular religious institution, as in the case of military chaplains, I use the term "formal religion." Where people identify with a formal religious tradition but do not participate in an organized community, I use the term "private religion." Where people describe a vaguely defined sense of a power or force beyond themselves or reject the term "religion" or "religious," I use the term "personal spirituality."

A number of participants expressed to me their discomfort with the term "religious" as associated with a formal institution. They generally preferred instead to use the term "spiritual." Robert C. Fuller states that spirituality and religion are essentially the same thing because they connote a belief in and a desire to connect with a Higher Power or reach a higher state of being (Fuller 2000, 151). He adds that confusion regarding these terms comes from the gradual association of the word "spiritual" with "the private realm of thought and experience while the word 'religious' is associated more with the public realm of membership in religious institutions, participation in formal rituals, and adherence to official denominational doctrines" (Fuller 2001, 5). He suggests that people who call themselves "spiritual but not religious" reject formal religious organizations in favour of "individualized spirituality that includes picking and choosing from a wide range of alternative religious philosophies" (Fuller 2001, 6).

James A. Beckford further addresses this matter of pitting “religious” against “spiritual” when he writes:

Medieval and early modern notions of spirituality tended to emphasise personal discipline and the intensification of commitment to institutional teachings and practices. Yet, spirituality has come to refer to the quality of individuals’ relations with the divine or a sense of awareness of a suprareality that goes beyond life as ordinarily experienced. Indeed, it is common for Christians to construe their spirituality as a freely chosen expression of their “real selves,” thereby accentuating the difference from externally controlled religion. The re-drawn boundary between popular conceptions of spirituality and religion is associated with broad changes in culture and social relationships, including patterns of religious belonging, believing and practising (Beckford 2003, 72).

There is widespread evidence of the focus on individualized spirituality even within organized religious communities (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton 1985; Beyer 2000; Bibby 2002; Fuller 2001; Roof 1999; Stark and Finke 2000; Wuthnow 1998). Even when people who consider themselves spiritual rather than religious do participate in a particular religious tradition, they insist that as individuals, they have the final interpretive authority on religious doctrines they consider relevant to them. This modern twist makes religious belief somewhat more difficult to examine than simply relying on statistical information. Robert Wuthnow states that the highly-individualized state of modern spirituality means that it is typically

hidden from view except insofar as it is talked about or revealed through personal interviews or indirectly in public behavior ... Spirituality consists not only of implicit assumptions about life but also of the things people talk about and the things they do ... At its core, spirituality consists of all the beliefs and activities by which individuals attempt to relate their lives to God or to a divine being or some other conception of a transcendent reality. ... Spirituality is expressed in many different ways. But spirituality is not just the creation of individuals; it is shaped by larger social circumstances and by the beliefs and values present in the wider culture. (Wuthnow 1998, vii-viii)

Both Fuller and Beckford’s descriptions of “spiritual” versus “religious” apply to participants in my research. They understood “religion” to pertain to formal religious groups and organizations and

“spirituality” to connote personal ideas and practices relating to the transcendent. When I asked individuals why they were uncomfortable using the term religion, they made comments such as, “Well, I don’t go to church,” and “Religion is about rules,” and “My spirituality is my own. It’s not something someone else made up and then forced on me.”¹⁰ Being “religious” implied an association and acceptance of a formal, institutional, communal creed and formula, whereas being “spiritual” implied reliance on internal and self-directed exploration of existential and transcendent issues. Despite this differentiation between “spirituality” and “religion,” the importance of being free to choose one’s religious perspective was evident in every interview I conducted whether people associated with traditional and formal religions, had only a vague sense of their spiritual identity, or rejected religion entirely. This trend demonstrates the pervasiveness of modern forces such as individualism and subjectivation¹¹ and demonstrates a need to go beyond statistical information to personal interviews since, even within communities with highly developed doctrines, individuals today increasingly interpret religious traditions for themselves. Throughout this study, I have asked participants to define and explain their religious or spiritual beliefs to me in their own words. By allowing individuals to provide their own definitions of spirituality and religion, those that might otherwise fall into what the Canadian Census calls the “no religion” category have a voice here.

2.1.2 Secularization

Influences of modernization that include the ascendancy of scientific rationalism over faith, progress and efficiency over tradition, and the individual over community have profoundly undermined the traditional authority of religious institutions and all-encompassing notions of “the truth.” The process of secularization is a notable side-effect of changes in society wherein religious authority is undermined by scientific investigation and side-lined within a differentiated society. However, despite suggestions by influential thinkers such as Karl Marx for example, that modern rationalism would displace reliance on religion, secularization has not entirely eroded religious tendencies even in highly modernized societies such as Canada.

¹⁰ Benham Rennick personal interviews 2004-2007.

¹¹ I address the concept of individualism elsewhere in this chapter in the context of defining “modernity.” For an in-depth discussion of religious individualism see for example Wuthnow 1998 and Roof 1999.

While a number of prominent scholars of religion argued that religious authority would wane in the face of scientific rationalism, history has demonstrated otherwise. Recent events demonstrating the continuing relevance of religion in late modern society have forced sociologists of religion to reassess a number of prominent theories about secularization. Émile Durkheim, for example, believed that as institutions within a society became more structurally differentiated, religion took on an increasingly peripheral role and would lose its authority to regulate morality (Durkheim 1984 [1933]). Max Weber believed that the collision of religion with modern rationality would ultimately result in a questioning of traditional religious beliefs either in the name of scientific rationality or a more “rational” religious sensibility. In response to these contradictions believers may abandon religion *or* find ways to be innovative in adapting their beliefs to the new conditions (Weber 1993 [1922]). He described the alienation that individuals would experience in modern society as a certain “disenchantment of the world” as magic, meaning and the “uniquely human” were replaced by cold scientific calculation (Weber 1946, 148-155). Karl Marx understood religion as a form of false consciousness¹² that obscured the real problems of modern society and oppressed people under the control of capital, the state and the church. He argued that once social revolution resolved the problems of economic injustice and social alienation that people experience in industrialized societies there would be no further need for religion (Marx 1994 [1844], 28).

Even in recent decades, sociologists of religion held secularization theory to be a reality of modern, industrial societies. Sociologist Peter Berger, in his seminal work *The Sacred Canopy* (1967), described religion as a “sacred canopy” holding society together, providing shared meanings and values, as well as protecting society from chaos and disintegration. In keeping with Weber’s idea that rationalization causes a religious dilemma requiring religious innovation if one is to keep believing, Berger argued that elements of modernization such as religious pluralism and scientific rationalism, undermined the monolithic worldview of religion to cause a “crisis of credibility” and create a profound sense of moral *anomie* as shared values disappeared in the wake of religious pluralism and scientific reasoning (Berger 1967, 151). Berger argued that religious groups would respond either by adopting the world-embracing tactic of becoming one option among many in a competitive spiritual

¹² He described religion as the “flowers on the chains” that held people under oppressive control.

marketplace, or choosing to reject the modern world through staunch traditionalism (Berger 1967, 153). Since then, various religious groups have adopted these strategies to varying degrees.

During the decades of debate following Berger's book, most sociologists of religion¹³ – including Berger himself – while attesting to the sense of moral *anomie* that people experience in modern society, have rejected the classical formulation of secularization theory. In fact, in the opening pages of his book *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* Berger writes,

The assumption that we live in a secularized world is false. The world today ... is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labelled "secularization theory" is essentially mistaken. (Berger 1999b, 2)

Like Berger, José Casanova refers to secularization theory as a "myth" (1994). He argues that while some religions around the world are moving to a privatized form, others are actually making a resurgence from private life to the public realm to "participate in the very struggles to define and set the modern boundaries between public and private..." (Casanova 1994, 6).¹⁴

Among those who continue in religious traditions in Canada, numerous recent events show that religion continues to be highly significant for them (Brown 2005; Brunschot 2006; Friesen 2006; Gordon 2006; Jacobs 2006; Seljak, Benham Rennick, Schmidt, Da Silva, and Bramadat 2007). Paul Bramadat argues that "throughout Canada [...], religion continues to have an influence on social, cultural, and even economic and political spheres, and as such is not, and never has been, a strictly private affair" (Bramadat 2005, 6). Richard Johnston's evidence that religious beliefs continue to be important for influencing Canadian political views and voting patterns confirm this position (Johnston 1985, 99). Reginald Bibby, in his on-going studies of religion in Canada argues that "three in four people are talking to God at least occasionally [and...] two in four Canadians think they have actually

¹³ With the notable exception of Stephen Bruce who maintains the idea that secularization is a fact of life in much of Europe (2002).

¹⁴ Casanova notes the presence of modern public religions, that is, those that participate in the public sphere without rejecting modernity, democracy, and pluralism. He also recognizes that a number of religious groups dream of reestablishing their total authority. He sees these groups as essentially anti-modern (1994, 33).

experienced God's presence" (Bibby 2002, 227). Similarly, an Angus Reid poll conducted in 1996 shows that while less than 25% of Canadians actually attend a place of worship regularly, nearly two-thirds retain a strong sense of conventional Christian commitment (Angus Reid Group 1996). Further, Bramadat and David Seljak argue that among many ethnic groups in Canada "religious communities provide a vital context in which the concerns of minority groups are expressed" (Bramadat and Seljak 2005, vii).¹⁵ Research on religion in Canada by numerous other scholars supports this position (Banerjee and Coward 2005; Jantz 2001; Johnston 2001; Lemieux et al. 2000; McLellan 1999; Sullivan 2003; Tulchinsky 2001) and implies that religion has not waned in significance but has changed in its form and appearance. In some cases, science and rationalism has undermined religious authority, but in other cases, such as those identified by Casanova (1994) and McLellan (1999), it has taken on renewed importance. As we shall see later in this study, for military personnel working alongside individuals from different religious traditions, on missions in regions where religion is of primary importance, and while facing stresses associated with a military career, this is often the case. Although traditional Christian communities may not have the same influence they once exerted over Canadian society, and immigration patterns have changed to bring growing numbers of non-Europeans (and their non-Christian religious beliefs with them) to Canada, it is clear that, despite decreasing membership in many religious institutions, religion remains an important factor in Canadian society. To understand this fully, we must examine the new forms and function that religion has taken on in Canada.

2.1.3 Deinstitutionalization and Subjectivation

Scholars who document the persistence of religion highlight the deinstitutionalized and highly subjective¹⁶ forms that it now takes. Following the work of Weber (1904) and Berger (1967), Pierre Bourdieu describes the "objectivated" state as being directly observable practices, institutions and objects and the "subjectivated" state as an internal and self-reflexive state where self-identifying associations, values and behaviours provide a foundation for orienting action (Bourdieu, Chartier, and

¹⁵ While Bramadat and Seljak write mainly in the context of major minority groups in Canada, others have made a similar case for smaller groups including Asian Buddhists (McLellan 1999) and those affiliated with New Religious Movements (Dawson 1998b).

Darnton 1985, 3-6). Roof and Wuthnow both make the case that religion in America has become increasingly subjectivated since the 1950s and 1960s. They state that, although society has become more secular as people depart from traditional ways of practicing religion, many people have developed new, highly-individualized, privatized, and subjectivated ways of experiencing religion (Roof 1999; Wuthnow 1998). Davie describes this approach to religion as “believing without belonging” (Davie 1994) and both she and Hervieu-Léger argue that religious “ways of being” are continually reshaped and reformed in the face of social influences that now extend beyond traditional options to more individual and privatized forms (Davie 1996; Hervieu-Léger 2000). Bibby’s continuing analyses of religion in Canada show similar evidence as people depart from institutional religion and embrace individualistic alternatives (Bibby 1987, 1993).

At the heart of modern religious movements lie the subjective interests of individuals. Ulrich Beck writes that, “The ethic of individual self-fulfilment and achievement is the most powerful current in modern Western society. ... Individuals who aspire to be the authors of their lives and the creators of their identities, are the central characters of our time” (Beck 1999, 9). Given the pervasiveness of this individualistic perspective, some argue that the uncertainties of the modern world have actually *increased* the demand for religion. Anthony Giddens suggests that the uncertainties of modernity cause people both to revert to repressive old forms of religion *and* generate new ways of believing (Giddens 1991, 224).¹⁷ Hervieu-Léger argues that while religion continues to generate social cohesion for group members, the ambiguities and complexities of modern society requires various new and different religious forms (Hervieu-Léger 2000, 166-167). Lorne Dawson demonstrates this by pointing to the rise of interest in New Religious Movements that results both from the deinstitutionalization and subjectivation of religion as well as a rejection of secularizing trends in modern society (Dawson 1998b, 28).

In this relocating and reshaping of the self, religion is both a product of modernity and a response to it that meets a social need. William Katerberg explains that,

¹⁶ Bourdieu builds on work by Michel Foucault in “The Subject and Power” in 1983.

During the 1960s, in both Canada and the United States, multicultural ideology, the welfare state, and consumer capitalism further encouraged diversity, fragmenting identities [as a result]. In the process, identity became less a matter of [religious] citizenship and more about consumer choices. It shifted from rooting people in various overlapping communities, with rights and obligations, to a consumer ethic of therapeutic self-realization and personal development. The fragile balance between rights and obligations, and individuals and communities, moved towards individualism and rights. (2000, 287)

As a result, the religious structure of Western, capitalist societies has become something of a “spiritual marketplace” (similar to the economic marketplace), offering endless religious ideas, options and practices to be selected or rejected by religious “consumers” according to personal goals and interests (Roof 1999; Stark et al. 2000; Wuthnow 1998). Within these groups, the notions of individualized self-development and transformation find their zenith (Beckford 1984; Roof 1999; Wuthnow 1998). Roof argues that people in this marketplace, mainly those who identify themselves as “spiritual but not religious,” constitute a “quest culture” wherein traditional theological doctrines have given way to much vaguer beliefs. These people paradoxically distance themselves from organized religion even though many of them continue to participate in traditional religious communities. However, unlike traditional forms of religion where the religious authority controls, or at least strongly influences, the focus of the group, in the subjective model, the individual assumes responsibility for identifying and pursuing interests and concerns that stem from their own religious point of view. This dynamic operates even for religious people who attend church.

The forces of modernity have done much to reshape traditional religion divesting interpretive and moral authority from religious institutions and placing it in the mind of the individual. Even when it persists in a traditional form, believers frequently retain final interpretive authority for themselves rather than deferring to religious leaders. Further, while numerous modern religious movements emphasize the development of the individual, global and holistic interests, such as environmental and

¹⁷ Roger O’Toole further adds that, “in the hands of authoritative sociologists, modernity is given the appearance of being variously, constitutive of religion, ambivalent towards religion or exclusive of religion” (2000, 39), see also Beckford 1992 (12).

health concerns, tie the individual back into a wider community of like-minded believers and thereby maintain social cohesion among individuals.¹⁸

2.1.4 Postmodernity, Late Modernity

Significant sociological inquiry has been devoted to identifying the specific and relevant aspects of the current social phenomenon often referred to as “postmodernity” that distinguish the current period from “modernity.” Definitions of modernity incorporate ideas such as rationalism, progress, and efficiency while at the same time recognizing there is also a fracturing of social cohesion in the face of industrialization (Beckford 2003, 12). O’Toole says that modernity is typically associated with “science, rationalization, industrialization, democratization, individualism, capitalism, the nation-state, secularization, differentiation, organization, efficiency, growth, and dynamism in various combinations” (2000, 36). These identifiers have much in common and are helpful when referring to industrialized societies. They are less helpful when applied to post-industrial, technology-based, globalized societies. Much of the discussion concedes that the current so-called “postmodern” era includes many of the markers of modernity described above while adding new realities stemming directly from globalization as well as technological and scientific advances. Among these are the free-flow of information via the media and internet, new risks resulting from environmental, health and military crises, rampant consumerism, as well as the loss of identity and traditional reference points (such as religious affiliation or membership in trade unions and guilds), to name a few (Bauman 1992; Beck 1999; Giddens 1991; Lyon 2000b).

Scholars describe the postmodern context as both ambiguous and contentious because postmodern individuals tend to reject traditional authorities such as religion, government and academia, and instead favour highly subjective and individualized interpretations of meaning (O’Toole 2000, 39). For example, several scholars argue that postmodern societies inundate people living in them with opportunities and options for consumption (Beck 1999, 6; Giddens 1991, 172; Lyon 2000b, 73-88). However, instead of being “autonomous, integrated, rational modern individuals, able to choose or construct an identity, postmodern individuals are disintegrated multiple personas, whose ‘choices’ are

¹⁸ For further discussion see Dawson (1998a, 131-157).

fabricated in diverse political and cultural marketplaces” (Katerberg 2000, 289). As a result, sociologists attempting to identify trends are hindered by the recognition that religious and cultural identities in the West reflect “fragmentation and diversity *and* homogenizing trends” that makes it impossible to be precise about anything because while people pursue many of the same interests in the same ways, each individual interprets the world differently (Katerberg 2000, 287).¹⁹ While in modern societies individuals may have defined themselves according to national or religious affiliations, those living in postmodern societies might cite family ethnicity, gender, or sexual preference in addition to country of birth and place political and ethical interests on par with religious values. The result is that groups once considered homogenous might now be highly differentiated (e.g., not all Canadians are Caucasian Anglo-Saxon Protestants or French Roman Catholics) and assumptions based on an undifferentiated society are likely to cause problems for everyone.

To confuse the matter further, even the label “postmodernity” is problematic as some scholars use the term to suggest that the current context is a new era in history, while others believe it is simply an extension of modernity. Because of this, a variety of labels are used to describe the current social milieu. Giddens (1991) rejects the notion that the present period is a new era in history and refers to the current context as “high modernity,” that is modernity with a few additional developments that were not present during the industrial revolution. Hervieu-Léger (2000), like Giddens, rejects the notion of a new era and uses the term “late modernity” to emphasize the new ways in which rationalization continues to shape modern society. Fredric Jameson, who sees the current historical period in the context of Western capitalism, speaks of “late capitalism” (1991). Jameson equates “late capitalism” with “postmodernity” and closely identifies it with American military and economic interests and pursuits (Jameson 1991, 5). He argues that late capitalism has introduced global society to new forms of businesses that include transnational and multinational organizations not tied to any particular country or nation, a new model of international banking that includes the huge burdens of debt carried by developing nations, a “mediaization” of culture where one’s version of reality is skewed by the largely capitalist values of media sources, automated technology that allows for mass production of goods and higher profit margins for manufacturers, as well as a greater economic value

¹⁹ Original emphasis.

on “aesthetic innovation” (i.e., novelty and variety) over and above function and practicality (Jameson 1991, xix, 5).

Unlike those who see the current context as a new era separate from that which has been defined as “classically modern,” I view the present milieu as a second wave of modernity where much of what was established during the industrialized era (e.g., scientific rationalism, progress, and bureaucratic efficiency) remains within a society now dominated by globalized interests, scientific and technological advances, greater information exchange and a more relativistic – even cynical at times – outlook towards any one claim to “the truth.” Throughout this study I employ Hervieu-Léger’s term “late modernity” to identify the present sociological and historical situation. For the purposes of my study, we will look at the consequences for CF members and the military institution of increased late modern trends towards pluralism, shifting identities, and greater individualism.

2.1.5 Summary

While many traditional forms of religion persist – and others are lost – religious activities increasingly occur outside of traditional sacred spaces. Late modern individuals may find community in a traditional church or synagogue, an on-line “virtual community,” or a course dedicated to alternative healing. Members of a religious community might live in close proximity or far apart, connected only by satellite television and internet resources. Whether spiritual pursuits occur in communities or in solitude, individuals’ desires for self-improvement and growth as well as alienating aspects of late modern society frequently push them towards religion. Even as these pursuits focus mainly on the individual, they are shaped and influenced by one’s inherited traditions and values. Furthermore, individual interests that focus on late modern concerns such as environmentalism and health crises establish social cohesion among otherwise disparate individuals by identifying a baseline of shared values.

Like Canadians in civilian society, Canadian Forces personnel are products of, and participants in, late modernity. They are self-directed and self-governing even though the majority share a common Christian heritage and commitment to military objectives. Moreover, they are all members of an organization whose structures and culture developed out of a Christian social context and which

retains many of the markers of that Christian influence and interest. Because the past two decades have witnessed the privatization of religion in Canada, many people have developed a sort of cultural amnesia that obscures the Christian origins of many of the Canadian interests and values (such as duty, honour, respect, loyalty, integrity and self-sacrifice) so firmly embedded in military culture. Even non-religious military personnel understand these values as central to the “honourable” responsibilities of military service and, without necessarily recognizing or valuing their origins, they are united in the shared military culture that is formed by them. As a result, although many in the CF are not religious, they participate in the traditions and uphold the values of the Canadian military in such a way as to establish and maintain a social cohesiveness that results in a distinct military culture. The next section examines the religious establishments that laid the foundation on which CF military culture is based.

2.2 An Overview of Religious Development in Canada

In his book *Understanding Military Culture*, Allan English argues that national culture has a powerful influence on military culture and in fact sometimes, “the culture of a nation’s armed forces can have a reciprocal influence on the development of a national culture” (2004, 41). As we shall see in both this section and the next chapter, this is precisely what has happened in Canada. On one hand, civilian movements (including religious movements) have influenced the formation and direction of the military, and on the other, political and military priorities (such as peacekeeping) have shaped national identity. This reciprocal influence demands attention to the historical development of both civil and military society with special notice, for the purposes of this study at least, paid to the role of the churches and the chaplaincy.

David Lyon, in his introduction to *Rethinking Church, State, and Modernity: Canada between Europe and America*, writes that in Canada, the “churches still represent by far the largest single repository of the religious life” even as new forms of religiosity are appearing (Lyon 2000a, 18). He argues that, if we are to properly understand these new ways of being religious, we have to recognize that religion in Canada is “channelled and filtered by distinctive Canadian cultural and historical experiences” (Lyon 2000a, 18). In the section that follows, I present a brief overview of the socio-historical trends that have both defined and been defined by the Christian churches in Canada with the

goal of demonstrating how Christian religious influences have contributed to Canadian culture in general and military culture in particular.

2.2.1 The Failure of Establishment

Although religion in Canada is quite different from the early days of European settlement when French and British colonizers along with laying claim to the land imported their religion, it is clear that Christian institutions have strongly affected the development of Canadian society.²⁰ In this section, I examine the failure of the established Canadian churches to retain singular religious authority over society,²¹ the rise of religious pluralism, and the compromises made by the churches in the face of growing diversity. Further, I look at the ongoing influence of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, the unique situation in Québec, and the cultural pervasiveness of Christianity.

The role of religion in New France and British North America was sufficiently integrated with all aspects of state and society that when French and later British colonizers established their authority over a region they naturally imposed their religious values on the cultural, political, economic, and social institutions that developed therein. Bramadat and Seljak argue that at that time, it was taken for granted that “the state would defend the interest of the [established] Church (including suppressing its competitors) and that the Church would teach people to submit to the lawful authority of their political and social masters” (Bramadat and Seljak 2008, 3). As a result, from the 1700s to the late-1800s early institutions were clearly defined by the Christian values of those in authority. In regions under French control Catholicism dominated, while in English territories the Church of England was granted state-sanctioned authority that lasted until the mid-1800s (Murphy 1996a, 113, 184-188).²²

²⁰ Religious alternatives have always been present in Canada (take for example Native Spirituality) however, they have not typically had the capacity to influence Canadian society on a national or even provincial scale (McRoberts 1997, 3). For more on the religious experiences of Canadian native peoples in relation to the mainstream churches, see Murphy et al. 1996. For more on native religions during this era, see Niezen 2000 and Sullivan 2003. For more on the contributions of other non-Christian religious groups (such as Sikhs, Jews, and Muslims) in Canada, see Bramadat et al. 2005.

²¹ The established churches were state sponsored bodies able to influence political decisions. See for example, Grant 1988, Murphy et al. 1996, and Clark 1948.

²² This authority was established in the Constitution Act of 1791 that, along with defining the regions of Upper and Lower Canada established the “clergy reserves” allotted for the Church of England to finance its religious

Ultimately however, established church rule in Canada failed because, unlike in the home countries of France and Britain, church authority in the new territories suffered from lack of resources, competition from one another and other smaller sects, as well as having to struggle against the problems of a widely-dispersed population that was not always warmly inclined to Church governance of their frontier lifestyles (Clark 1948). Nonetheless, the *idea* of a Christian Canada remained significant in both Anglophone and Francophone regions.²³

In the decades following Confederation, Christian pluralism in English-Canada increased with the arrival of groups such as the Mennonites, Russian Doukhobors, as well as Orthodox Catholics from Northern and Eastern Europe during the late 1800s (Grant 1988 [1972], 33, 119; Murphy 1996a, 137).²⁴ Meanwhile small Anglo-Protestant sects with the aim of influencing the government on social and moral issues attempted to form alliances with similar churches across the country (Clarke 1996, 266-267). English Protestant denominational groups eventually came to include the Presbyterians,²⁵ the Methodist Church in Canada, and the Anglicans (Clarke 1996, 267-269).²⁶ Similarly diversification of beliefs and tradition in the Catholic Church in Québec and across Canada occurred with the arrival of European Catholics from Ireland, Poland, Italy and, more controversially, Orthodox Catholics from the Ukraine, Greece and Russia (Grant 1988 [1972], 97).²⁷ English-

activities and pay its parsons. The Anglican Church, while legally established only in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, maintained a prominent position in other English regions as well. It lost its preferred status during political reforms of the 1840s and 50s (Murphy 1996b, 184).

²³ See for example Airhart 1993, Choquette 2004, Clark 1948, Grant 1988.

²⁴ Minority groups including many belonging to non-Christian religions were present in Canada before this time. Jews were in Canada as early as the 17th century (Ravvin 2005, 115), Japanese Buddhists and practitioners of Chinese religions were present from the mid-1800s (Boisvert 2005, 72; Lai, Paper, and Paper 2005, 90), and Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus arrived in the early 1900s (Banerjee et al. 2005, 33; Mahmood 2005a, 57; McDonough and Hoodfar 2005, 136). For a full discussion of the history and contributions of the largest religious minority groups in Canada, see Bramadat et al. 2005.

²⁵ The Presbyterian Church was formed by the unification of the Church of Scotland with the Seceders and the Free Church in 1875 (Clarke 1996, 268).

²⁶ In 1925, after a number of years of negotiations, the United Church of Canada formed from the union of Methodists, Congregationalists and most Presbyterians as well as a number of smaller groups. In later years additional small congregations and churches joined as well (Clarke 1996, 341-343; Grant 1988 [1972], 221-222). For a further discussion of the development of denominationalism in the United States and Canada, see Mead 1954.

²⁷ The inclusion of Orthodox Catholics was controversial because their beliefs allowed for married priests and an orthodox liturgy making it difficult for either Francophone or Anglophone priests of the Latin Rite to serve

speaking Roman Catholic bishops, with the goal of assimilating newcomers as Anglophones, encouraged Poles, Germans, Italians and others settling in French-governed parishes across Canada to develop ethnic parishes rather than joining in with those already operating in the region (Clarke 1996, 352).²⁸ In addition to linguistic diversity, these groups brought their own distinct costumes, pageantry, and celebrations that increased differences between parishes rather than unifying Canadian Catholic culture.²⁹

Mark Noll states that Canadian and American religious developments during this period were very similar as believers in both countries “linked the progress of Christianity with the advance of civilization” (Noll 1992, 246). However, the power and influence retained by French Catholics in Québec and Acadian New Brunswick, ensured that “Canada was never to know the sort of unified vision of Protestant purpose for the nation that many evangelicals thought had been established in the United States” (Noll 1992, 246).³⁰ David Martin echoes this when he describes how the Canadian national myth of establishing God’s “Dominion from sea to sea,”³¹ never developed the influence of American millennialism because of a lack of “dynamic density” to support it (Martin 2000, 29).

them and leaving the new immigrants unsatisfied with the religious supports they could receive. See Grant 1988 (98).

²⁸ The bishops’ goal in creating these congregations was to avoid immigrants settling in regions under the authority of Francophone bishops from assimilating as French Canadians. The Anglophone bishops encouraged national parishes as a means of maintaining English Roman Catholic hegemony outside of Québec (Clarke 1996, 352).

²⁹ See McGowan 1999 for examples from Irish immigrant groups and Martynowych 1991 for Ukrainian examples. Eventually, as these ethnic groups integrated into Canadian society, rather than remaining segregated from other Catholics, they joined in with local Catholic institutions and associations (such as schools, hospitals, and labour unions) and claimed their own sphere of influence in the Canadian mainstream (Clarke 1996, 348, 352).

³⁰ There is significant literature on the contentious relationship between Protestants and Roman Catholics in Canada and the US at this time. For two brief examples, see Katz 1966 and Bordieu et al. 1985. For more on this relationship earlier in the history of Canada, see for example, Grant 1988, Murphy et al. 1996, and Noll 1992.

³¹ In 1867, Leonard Tilley, a Methodist politician, used Psalm 72:8 to describe the relationship Christianity was to have in the new nation according to the Protestant vision (Noll 1992, 246).

Unlike Americans, Canadians retained their ties to Old World France and England and, as a result, “Canada was situated culturally *between* the United States and Europe” (Noll 1992, 246).³²

Ties to France and Britain, along with caution regarding relations with America resulted in “a pragmatic politics receptive to change, suspicious of any form of totalitarian democracy, and deeply concerned with the multi-racial and multi-cultural problems that have come to dominate the twentieth century” (Noll 1992, 246). Moreover, these different loyalties and the unwillingness of Canadian politicians to retain an established church (or churches) after 1854 stopped either group from exercising a religious monopoly in Canada.³³ David Martin describes the Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant churches in Canada as “shadow establishments” that have heavily influenced society through “a social gospel of international good works” despite having been disestablished by the state (2000, 26, 29).

2.2.2 Pluralism and Compromise

Between the years 1871 and 1911, Census figures show that almost 90% of Canadians affiliated with either the Roman Catholic (39-42%), Methodist (15-18%), Presbyterian (15-16%), or Anglican (13-15%) denominations (O'Toole 2000, 43).³⁴ The “intimate association of religion and politics [at the time...] bred in religious elites a deep sense of national responsibility that culminated in a crucial role in the creation of the nation” (O'Toole 2000, 42). Nation building was an important project of the churches during the nineteenth century as religious groups “helped to shape Canada’s emergence as a modern nation even as they were being shaped by it” (Noll 1992, 246). The resulting milieu was one in which previously distinct religious bodies and ethnic groups could find objectives on which they could collaborate. Protestant assemblies in particular exerted influence on matters of national interest

³² Noll also remarks that the War of 1812 was a defining moment for Canada to establish itself as something “other than” American. He states “The War of 1812 thus resembled the American Revolution: it was an opportunity for Canadians to join the United States that they chose not to take” (1992, 247).

³³ While the Church of England lost state power in 1854, numerous social services in Québec remained under the official jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches until the 1960s.

³⁴ The census information given is from censuses taken in the years 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, and 1911 consecutively (O'Toole 2000, 43). I have rounded the figures up to the nearest whole number.

by speaking and voting as a collective (Grant 1988 [1972], 222).³⁵ Furthermore, they exercised strong political influence through social gospel and evangelization initiatives that led to even greater opportunities for Protestant collaboration (Clarke 1996, 322). The willingness of Protestant churches in particular, and eventually Roman Catholics, to see beyond doctrinal differences in order to promote common causes created a context in which ecumenical movements could flourish in later decades (Clarke 1996, 342).

As the nation faced radical changes influenced by industrialization and state expansion, the churches demonstrated impressive leadership in shaping Canadian interests. O'Toole writes:

Although threatened and altered considerably by the multifaceted encounter with modernity, Canadian churches and denominations exerted a vigorous reciprocal influence. Far from capitulating to secular forces, they succeeded in making social, economic, political, and constitutional concerns a part of their spiritual project to an extent that ensured that a depiction of Canada as a fundamentally religious nation was a sober and exact sociological assessment (2000, 41).

Civic-minded groups across Canada were taking on various forms of activism based on their Christian faith to improve the conditions of others. Temperance and other social reform movements were part of a

general effort toward the improvement of the worth of the human being through improved morality as well as economic conditions. The mixture of the religious, the equalitarian, and the humanitarian was an outstanding fact of the moral reformism of many movements. Temperance supporters formed a large segment of movements such as sabbatarianism, abolition, woman's rights, agrarianism, and humanitarian attempts to improve the lot of the poor (Gusfield 1955, 222-223).

³⁵ Catholic groups during this period were somewhat less effective at mobilizing nationally as local bishops tended to retain greater influence over a region than any national collaborative effort could produce (Grant 1988 [1972], 222).

Nellie McClung, an active and influential member of the Methodist Church of Canada, provides us with an example of the types of social and moral reforms embraced by Christian men and women during the early 20th century. McClung was an active and outspoken advocate for temperance, education, health services, senior's pension programs, women's rights, and better conditions for factory workers, among other things (Hallett and Davis 1993). In Catholic circles, movements such as farming co-operatives, youth groups, institutions dedicated to health and education and labour unions such as the Federation of Catholic Workers Canada, sought reforms and social justice (Lemieux et al. 2000, 27-40; Linteau, Durocher, Robert, and Ricard 1986, 94-99)

For English Protestants, it was a natural extension of both the institutional and cultural sense of religious obligation and moral imperative (as well as a continuing sense of patriotism towards Britain) that, during WWI, many Christian clergy enlisted as soldiers in order to serve their fellow Canadians in the trenches.

The passion and fervour that Canadian Protestants had hitherto devoted to social reform was redirected to fighting the 'war to end all war.' Believing that they were fighting not only to defend freedom, democracy, and justice against the brute force of Prussian militarism but to preserve Christianity itself, they saw the conflict as a holy war. Protestant clergy preached sermons urging young men to do their patriotic and religious duty by enlisting in the army; they threw their support behind conscription when the government introduced it in mid-1917; and, in the election that followed, they called on Canadians to vote for the wartime Union government in the name of God and Country (Clarke 1996, 335).

Similarly Roman Catholic bishops endorsed participation in what they viewed as a just cause and, despite a history of animosity towards Britain, both French and Irish Canadian Catholics and their priests rallied to the cause (Grant 1988 [1972], 113).³⁶

O'Toole, speaking about the expansion of the churches during this period of Canadian history says,

According to the script of the Enlightenment project and some contemporary theories of modernity, the period in which Canada

³⁶ This phenomenon is discussed in greater detail in chapter three.

forged its way to political independence and economic success should have proved a classic case of religious decline in the face of rapid industrialisation, rationalization, differentiation, technological change, and state expansion. In fact, the new nation witnessed a remarkable growth and intensification of religious activity that constituted nothing short of a *success story* (O'Toole 2000, 41).³⁷

However, the surprising success of religious movements during the 18th and 19th centuries was not to last in the face of hardships and uncertainty imposed by World War I and the Depression of the early 20th century resulted in decline in the churches (Grant 1988 [1972], 136-160). In the period following the Great War, particularly in Protestant circles,

returning veterans generally suspected all established authority, including that of religion. Disenchantment had struck a new generation of students, who denounced the churches for their uncritical patriotism [and support of Britain during the war]. The 1920s soon came to be seen as an era of outright rebellion against religion and flight from the churches (Clarke 1996, 340)

Nonetheless, the initiatives in which the churches participated during this time established social welfare services for all as an important Canadian value and continued to influence the character of the nation (Baum 2000, 150; Van Die 2001, 4). Protestant social reform and evangelical movements continued in a general spirit of inter-Protestant cooperation throughout the 1920s and 30s (Grant 1988 [1972], 121-122).³⁸ In a parallel vein, Pope Pius XI's 1931 encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* called upon Catholics to reorganize their societies according to the Christian values of cooperation and social harmony rather than conflict and segregation (Clarke 1996, 352-353; Logan 1927). Both Roman Catholic and Protestant churches during this period "pursued a moral and spiritual alternative

³⁷ Original emphasis.

³⁸ This is not to say there were always cordial relations between Protestant sects and denominations for this was decidedly not the case. John Webster Grant writes that "Sectarianism, fundamentalism, opposition to church union, and resistance to cultural assimilation were all, in their varied ways, expressions of a lack of confidence in the clerical leadership that had been seeking since confederation [sic] to give a religious shape to Canadian life. All of them were marked by hostility to official or unofficial establishments and by resentment against ecclesiastical involvement in secular affairs" (1988 [1972], 129-130). Further, the crisis in capitalism also led to new religious movements and utopian visions (see for example S.D. Clarke on Aberhart and Social Credit (1948)).

to money, machinery, and materialism in a decidedly modern manner. By means of well-organized and highly efficient involvement in the secular world, religion undoubtedly assisted in the modernization of Canada, changing its own form accordingly” (O'Toole 2000, 42).³⁹

Following the Second World War, optimism buoyed by a thriving economy, low unemployment, rising wages, and the return of thousands of military personnel resulted in both a post-war economic boom and religious revival in Canada. Ever-increasing numbers of immigrants fed the growing economy with their needs and their contributions. In fact,

the country's general affluence made possible a vast expansion of the public sector as the federal government introduced new social programs such as old-age security and expanded the existing unemployment insurance plan, laying the foundations of the welfare state. Social welfare, once a prime area for Christian activism and engagement was fast becoming the responsibility of the secular state. Nevertheless, the prevailing mood of the post-war years, especially the deep longing for a return to a secure, normal life, was conducive to a reawakening of religious commitment (Clarke 1996, 355).

Similarly, the healthy economy and a renewed interest in religious values meant greater contributions for Canadian churches to use for Christian projects. For example, John Webster Grant notes that the United Church of Canada alone was able to build some 1500 churches between 1945 and 1966 in their efforts to meet the needs of their growing congregations (1988 [1972], 161).

Following the War and up until the 1960s, the mainline Anglicans, United Church of Canada, and Presbyterians continued to represent the majority of Protestants in Canada while conservative churches gained in numbers due to growth among Pentecostals and the immigration of large numbers of members of the Dutch Christian Reformed Church (Bouma 1963; Philipps 1947; Sas 1958; Statistics Canada 1961). In a parallel vein in Québec, Catholic membership and attendance was the highest among Catholics in Canada and remained so until well into the 1950s (Lewis 1940, 66-68; Perin 1996, 356).

³⁹ In fact, William F. Ryan argues that Roman Catholic priests in Québec aided in the industrialization of that province (1966).

Despite the appearance of rapid church growth from 1945 to 1960, this period of religious vitality heralded the beginnings of great change.

Alongside the circumstances conducive to religious renewal, other forces were at work that tended to weaken people's ties to and involvement in the churches. The tension between the two tendencies became most apparent in the culture of suburbia. While the suburban lifestyle in some ways promoted traditional values, it also broke through a number of taboos and fostered a preoccupation with material comfort and success [previously eschewed in the thrifty and self-restraining Victorian era] that undermined spiritual commitments. ... The religious ethos of Canadian Christians, Catholic and Protestant alike, was rooted in a culture that made cardinal virtues of self-restraint and deferred gratification. But post-war prosperity and technology brought the promise of immediate comfort and pleasure. ... Worldly attractions of the consumer society overshadowed, if they did not entirely subvert, the forces of religious renewal (Clarke 1996, 357).

Despite increases in overall numbers of adherents due to the baby boom, this elementary shift in core values actually meant a decrease in the numbers of people regularly attending churches (Bibby 1987, 12-17).⁴⁰ The declining proportion of Canadians attending Sunday church services meant that at the same time more people than ever were going to church, more people than ever were staying home.

2.2.3 Ecumenism and Modernization

Increasing individualism, rapid social change, the rise of the interventionist state, and continuing social concerns following the War years ultimately required new responses from the churches in Canada. One of the most significant of these changes was the opportunity for Canadian Roman Catholics to embrace the idea of Christian collaboration following the pronouncements of Vatican II on ecumenical cooperation.⁴¹ The opportunities for ecumenism introduced by Vatican II's Decree on

⁴⁰ Roman Catholic responses to new social realities have often lagged behind Protestants. During the 1950s for example, when Protestants began to notice a sharp decline in church attendance, Catholic weekly attendance remained high in both Québec (88%) and English speaking parishes (75%) throughout Canada (Bibby 1993, 6).

⁴¹ Pope John XXIII described the goal of the Second Vatican Council as the *aggiornamento* of the church. See the *Decree on Ecumenism Unitatis Redintegratio* (Pope John XXIII 1964).

Ecumenism would find special significance for Canadian Catholics and their Protestant peers determined to create opportunities for dialogue and exchange first of all between Christian communities, and eventually with other religious traditions from around the world.

The original ecumenical movement in Canada was a Protestant initiative designed to generate collaboration and unity between the growing numbers of Protestant sects and denominations (Murphy 1996b, 144; Wright 1991). Protestant groups in Canada had engaged in ecumenical projects (such as missionary efforts that gave precedence to spreading the gospel over sectarian doctrine) since the founding of the nation (Murphy 1996b, 125; Wright 1991). Social gospel and evangelical movements of the late 19th and early 20th century strengthened these efforts (Gusfield 1955; Heer 1962; Logan 1927; Moffatt 1982). For example, in 1944, Canadian Protestants joined forces under the auspices of the Canadian Council of Churches as a means of improving relations among themselves and furthering Protestant initiatives in relation to the Canadian state and society (Grant 1988 [1972], 155-156; Wright 1991).⁴² However, Protestant and Catholic relations throughout Canada had always been tense, if not openly hostile (Noll 1992, 256-262),⁴³ and thus the early ecumenical movement was restricted to Protestants and often had the additional motive of opposing Roman Catholic teachings (Murphy 1996b, 144; Noll 1992, 257-259; Wright 1991). The declarations of Vatican II that allowed Roman Catholics to engage Protestants as “brothers” provided the impetus for a genuine ecumenical dialogue and collaboration as never before (Horgan 1990). Ironically however, just as the churches were learning to heal inter-faith rivalries, many believers had already lost faith in the religious institutions and were looking elsewhere, or not at all (Bibby 1987, 21).

⁴² Protestant ecumenism reached a pinnacle with the formation of the World Council of Churches that, although proposed before the war, was not formalized until 1948. Although Catholics were not part of this venture during its formation or inauguration, they now participate as observers and contribute to other ecumenical councils working in cooperation with the WCC (Grant 1988 [1972], 155-157).

⁴³ In fact, John Moir explains that the anti-Catholic sentiment that swept across Canada nearly one hundred years earlier caused that era to be known as “the fiery fifties” (1993, 279). Protestants considered Catholic beliefs to be idolatrous and superstitious and led to “indolence and poverty, both of which were breeding grounds for crime and disease” (Clarke 1996, 297). Protestants also resented the papacy which, they argued, “arrogated to itself powers that properly belonged to God.” According to many Canadian Protestants, “Catholic beliefs and practices – most notably, the sacrifice of the mass [sic], the adoration of the sacred host, the veneration of the saints, and the practice of confession – were patently idolatrous, clear evidence that Catholics were held in thrall to priestcraft and superstition” (Clarke 1996, 297). For further reading on the influences and

Towards the end of the 1950s, participation in most Protestant churches started to level off as the media, consumerism, and other secular influences began to exert more control over people (Bibby 1987, 20-21, 1993, 282; Grant 1988 [1972], 185). The moderator of the United Church of Canada at the time noted that the “alumni of the swollen Sunday schools of the previous decade [...showed] considerable interest in personal religion but also exposure to ‘an endless relativity in faith and morals’” (Grant 1988 [1972], 184). John Webster Grant argues that the series of reforms in Protestant churches that had already started in the 1950s “constituted a carefully planned if not always well integrated program of modernization” designed to improve the church’s image and promote better understanding of its message (1988, 186; Grant 1988 [1972]). However, while the churches attempted to modernize, those proposing the changes, “thought mainly in terms of doing more effectively what the church was already doing rather than of examining critically the role of the church in an increasingly secularized Canada” (Grant 1988 [1972], 188). As a result, although the churches adopted many modern management strategies taken from the world of business, they still often failed to meet the changing needs of their members (Bibby 2002, 12-13).

For Roman Catholics, adaptation to modernity came in the form of the Second Vatican Council, a worldwide convocation of church leaders that took place at the Vatican between 1962 and 1965 (Bibby 1987, 17; Daly 1985). Vatican II initiated a redefinition and renewal of Roman Catholic theology, piety and ecclesiology. The Council’s new emphasis on social teaching and its recognition of the autonomy of the state and political society as well as the right of the individual to act according to their conscience encouraged Catholics to leave their cultural ghettos and participate in social change.⁴⁴ This new form of participation in public life replaced the Church’s pre- or even anti-modern position of the late 19th and early 20th century. Among the more radical changes occurring in the Church was the Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) already mentioned, that directed Roman Catholics to engage other Christians in an effort to overcome the obstacles of doctrine and

development of Catholic-Protestant relations in Canada, see Johnston 1984, Miller 1993, Moir 1993, and See 1983.

⁴⁴ For examples of how this change affected Roman Catholics around the world, see Casanova 1994.

discipline that had split the Church centuries earlier (Bibby 1987, 17-18; Daly 1985, 772; Grant 1988 [1972], 191).⁴⁵ Vatican II emphasized inter-church dialogue rather than agreement.

Dialogue, as understood in ecumenical circles, means a conversation that presupposes not agreement on belief but willingness to take seriously the convictions and concerns of others. Its aim is not the attainment of a predetermined program but the achievement of openness to the other and to the future. The concept, which emerged in the early twentieth century from discussions among Protestant and Orthodox churchmen, was adopted enthusiastically by the fathers of the Second Vatican Council and affected all cooperative ventures and union negotiations of the 1960s. It could also be applied more broadly to conversations between Christians and Jews, members of other religious communities, or adherents of such secular ideologies as Communism (Grant 1988 [1972], 194)

The influences of Protestant ecumenism, the pronouncements of Vatican II, and general efforts to bring the Christian churches into modernity would prove important for integrating and accommodating immigrants, including large numbers of non-Christians, flooding into Canada. Furthermore, the attitudes of openness to other religious perspectives developed during this period would eventually be important for creating opportunities for inter-religious dialogue and a number of interfaith initiatives.⁴⁶

2.2.4 A Revolution in Québec

While the ecumenical spirit of the 1960s and 70s was creating exciting new opportunities for growth for most of the country, modernizing influences were having a different effect in Québec where the

⁴⁵ Perhaps even more radical was the Church's decree on religious freedom *Dignitatus Humanae* that confirmed the right of individuals to religious freedom and decried the use of force or coercion in making any person "act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits" (Pope Paul VI 1965).

⁴⁶ The first interfaith initiative in North America happened in 1893 with the first Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago. Later initiatives in Canada have largely stemmed from the ecumenical movements that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. For more on religious pluralism and interfaith efforts during this period, see for example Miedema 2005.

rapidity of change was frequently felt as overwhelming.⁴⁷ *La Révolution Tranquille* is widely understood as the movement of Québec society during the 1960s and 70s away from its traditional religious past and into the secular, modern context. Many Québécois continue to view the years preceding the Quiet Revolution as the “dark ages” of Québec where the Church controlled every aspect of people’s lives (Lemieux et al. 2000, 10; Linteau et al. 1986, 591-592; Perin 2001, 87-88; Seljak 2001, 259).⁴⁸ After 1960, fuelled by media influences, international political and civil movements and the same relativism that had helped deplete English Protestant congregations, resentment towards the “old” Québec and the “old” Catholic Church boiled over (Linteau et al. 1986, 589-597).⁴⁹

At the same time, civil reform movements such as the peace movement and women’s liberation efforts, as well as religious movements such as the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), Pentecostals, and Jehovah’s Witnesses provided new religious and moral alternatives to traditional Catholicism (Linteau et al. 1986, 590). Additionally, a growing interest in efforts toward self-determination proved a powerful alternative for the interests and energy of young Francophones. Even within the Church, many religious personnel left in droves or, if they stayed, they embraced the new society and its social values (Seljak 2000, 136-139). Paul-André Linteau (et al.) remarks

Puis très rapidement, au milieu de la décennie, s’amorce un mouvement de départs qui touche d’abord les communautés de frères et les prêtres, pour gagnes ensuite les communautés de sœurs. Les chiffres sont éloquentes. Vers 1960, on compte 8 400 prêtres, mais en 1981, leur nombre n’est plus que de 4 285; quant aux communautés,

⁴⁷ For further reading on this tumultuous era, see for example Linteau et al. 1986, Grand’Maison 1970, Comeau et al. 1989, and McRoberts 1988.

⁴⁸ Lemieux and Montminy argue that, at the beginning of the 20th century, those in the Church in Québec lived in the same poverty and hardship as the people while providing many opportunities such as education, health care, and other social resources that would not otherwise have been available to poor farmers (2000, 29-30).

⁴⁹ Along with the influences of the American Civil Rights movement, protests against the Vietnam War, and decolonization efforts around the world (some of which fostered revolutionary sentiments), Québec was struggling with the question of self-determination. The separatist motto was “Vive le Québec libre!” The nationalist debate in Canada turned into an international diplomatic issue after President of France, Charles de Gaulle, ended a public speech during his visit to Expo ’67 in Montreal with the words “Vive le Québec! Vive le Québec libre!” much to the irritation of the federal government and most Canadians (Daniels 1973; Linteau et al. 1986, 673-674).

elles voient leurs effectifs passer de 45 253 à 29 173 membres entre 1961 et 1978 (Linteau et al. 1986, 592).

At the same time people and clergy were leaving the Church to invest themselves elsewhere, political reforms under the leadership of Liberal leader Jean Lesage resulted in *la laïcisation* and *la décléricalisation* of Québec society as roles traditionally filled by the Church moved under the control of secular authorities (Linteau et al. 1986, 393-403, 579-388, 589-395).⁵⁰ In a relatively short period, Montreal changed from a conservative, Roman Catholic enclave to a progressive, secularized, cultural centre teeming with poets, musicians, academics and radicals (Lemieux et al. 2000, 55-62; Linteau et al. 1986, 676-720).

Raymond Lemieux and Jean-Paul Montminy argue that this complex era was marked by the three significant changes: the secularization of Roman Catholic social institutions such as health care, social services, and education; the pronouncements of Vatican II that undermined and relativized religious certitudes; and the pervasiveness of new communications technologies that exposed Québécois to international affairs and North American consumer culture (Lemieux et al. 2000, 54-55). The radical changes that occurred across Québec society during this period moved the Church in Québec from the centre to the margins of society. Seljak writes that, during this period, although the Church lost much of its power in the public sphere, "...privately French Quebecers remained faithful to their heritage. In mainstream culture, Catholicism became almost wholly privatized as a religion of rites of passage and a cultural touchstone" (Seljak 2000, 133). Lemieux and Montminy concur that the departure from the Church "n'est cependant pas nécessairement un rejet. On reste paradoxalement attaché à l'héritage reçu [...] Dans les moments charnières de l'existence (naissance d'un enfant, mariage, funérailles d'un parent), la pratique abandonnée refait surface" (Lemieux et al. 2000, 69). In fact, even today 85% of Francophones in Québec continue to identify themselves as Roman Catholic despite virtually empty churches and very low attendance at Mass (Bibby 2002, 11). According to Lemieux and Montminy Roman Catholicism in Québec represents "une référence identitaire de dernière ligne" although this "bottom line" does not necessarily influence daily behaviour or take precedence over other influences (Lemieux et al. 2000, 87). In effect, Catholicism

⁵⁰ For a discussion of how these changes eventually impacted the school system in Québec, see Seljak 2005.

in Québec, they argue, has become more of a cultural than religious product: “il ressemble de plus en plus à un catholicisme sans Église, sans communauté de foi et sans identité qui lui soit propre” (Lemieux et al. 2000, 87-88). If Roman Catholicism remained important in the private sphere, in the public context, distinctive language and culture replaced religion as the hallmark of modern Québec society. Although events that occurred in English Canada also affected religion in Québec on some level, the matter of language and the integration of church and state in Québec resulted in a number of developments unique to the Francophone experience.

The large numbers of British immigrants that arrived after WW II ensured a continuation of the Empire in English-speaking regions of Canada. In Québec however, where birth rates dropped sharply in the 1960s, no such influx of French nationals occurred. Monica Boyd comments that “The absolute and proportionately large numbers of immigrants from Britain to Canada contrast with the immigration of Canada’s second charter group. Since 1970, immigrants from France represented around 2 percent of the total annual immigration to Canada” (Boyd 1976, 91).⁵¹ As a result, many in Québec voiced growing concerns about the protection of the French language and culture (Linteau et al. 1986; McRoberts 1997). As nationalist foment in Québec drew political attention to Francophone protests for greater provincial autonomy and the promotion of Québécois in the economy and government offices, the federal government struggled to quell rising discontent in the province while pursuing the goal of Confederation.⁵² In this process, Pierre Trudeau and his Liberal government placed tremendous importance on protecting human rights “of which he judged language rights to be central” (McRoberts 1997, 142).⁵³

⁵¹ She adds, “When coupled with the fact that since 1968 Québec has had the lowest birth rate of all Canadian provinces, the low numbers of immigrants from France mean that the national proportion of Canadians who speak French may decline. This potential diminution no doubt underlies the recent concern expressed by the Québec government over language maintenance...” (Boyd 1976, 91).

⁵² There is extensive literature on this topic, see for example Clift 1982, Quinn 1979, and McRoberts 1997. Louise Fontaine notes that during this struggle, the term *le province de Québec* was slowly replaced in the media and official government documents by *le Québec* and also “the State of Québec.” By 1978, government documents contained the phrase “the Québec nation” (Fontaine 1995, 1042, 1044). For a full discussion see McRoberts 1997.

⁵³ While both the New Democratic Party and the Progressive Conservative parties had been ready to accommodate Québec’s claims to nationalism, Trudeau’s Liberals had a plan to adopt national policies for French and English bilingualism that would convince Québécois that the federal government was *their* government and the protector of the French language in Canada (McRoberts 1997, 79).

As a means to achieving their goal, the Liberals initiated a federal study on *Bilingualism and Biculturalism* in Canada. The initial findings of this study resulted in the implementation of the *Official Languages Act* (1969) that made various recommendations to address discrimination against French speakers outside of Québec (Fontaine 1995, 1042).⁵⁴ Ironically however, this study also discovered numerous ethnic groups found in enclaves across Canada (Fontaine 1995, 1042). In recognition of the ethnic pluralism already present in Canada, in 1971 the federal government created an official policy on multiculturalism, McRoberts writes “...the federal government became committed to a policy that tried to combine official status for two languages with equal status for an infinite number of cultures. In other words, bilingualism was coupled with multiculturalism” (McRoberts 1997, 117).⁵⁵ The intention of this project was to check Québec nationalism,⁵⁶ the perhaps unintentional result was the embedding of multiculturalism and freedom of religion as national values (McRoberts 1997, 159-161, 169-171).

In the ensuing decade, Québec and the federal government continued to negotiate the place of the province within or alongside Canada.⁵⁷ In 1982, the federal government passed the *Constitution Act* in which the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* was enshrined. The Charter ensured the protection and promotion of human rights, established the value of multiculturalism as an important aspect of Canadian society, and addressed the matter of fair treatment of minority groups which was

⁵⁴ This project was initiated by then Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson and continued later under Trudeau.

⁵⁵ Following the implementation of the *Official Languages Act* that established official bilingualism, the Gendron Commission (1972) to study the French language in Québec published its findings. In the third volume, *Les Groupes Ethniques*, “ethnicity and immigration were clearly emerging as important poles about which the debate on language, culture and national identity revolved” (Fontaine 1995, 1043).

⁵⁶ In fact, Louise Fontaine argues that “in the areas of immigration and culture in particular, the emergence of the federal policy on multiculturalism can be seen as a reaction to Québec nationalism” (1995, 1042).

⁵⁷ Following the victory of the No side on the Québec referendum of 1980, Trudeau’s Liberals focussed on moving Canada to complete legislative independence from Britain (it is by no means clear that the No vote settled the question of Québec nationalism as current events continue to demonstrate). Trudeau saw the repatriation of the Constitution Act (1982) as an opportunity to update the Constitution to ensure continued protection and involvement for Québec. He particularly emphasized the importance of protecting language rights which he labelled more generally “collective rights” (McRoberts 1997, 160-161). The Canada Act of 1982 was the last act of British Parliament for Canadians as it effectively severed all remaining legislative control of Canada from Britain and recognized Canada as a fully independent nation.

then translated by the courts and human rights councils as necessary (Canada 1982).⁵⁸ All of these values are embedded in Canadian federal and provincial institutions. For members of these institutions, including military personnel, the contents of these documents define the Canadian national values these institutions and their members are committed to upholding.

Clearly the rapid movement of Québec society into the modern mainstream is unique in Canadian history and heavily influenced by Catholic identity (or rejection thereof). Rejection of Church governance during the Quiet Revolution resulted in the *laïcisation* and *décléricalisation* of Québec society. Despite this reality, large numbers of Québécois continue to identify themselves as Roman Catholics if only in the cultural context described by Hervieu-Léger in the preceding chapter. At the same time citizens of Québec cast off the authority of the Church, they embraced the idea of a unique place in Canada for Québec culture. The emphasis placed on protecting the minority culture and language of Québec resulted in policies that have ultimately contributed to greater recognition, inclusion, and freedom for other minority groups in Canada. Some of these policies have been influential in establishing the rights of individuals to freedom of religion and conscience, ensuring a commitment to religious pluralism by governments and courts, and introducing the idea of accommodating the needs of minority groups (including religious minorities).⁵⁹ As a result of the rights and freedoms embedded in the *Charter*, a number of landmark rulings have occurred in Canada with respect to the rights of religious minorities and reasonable accommodation for these groups. Further, Canadians have come to understand religious pluralism as one aspect of the Canadian value for multiculturalism.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ See for example Seljak et al. 2007. Multiculturalism was further embedded when the House of Commons Standing Committee on Multiculturalism was created in 1985 and again in 1987 when the Standing Committee on Multiculturalism stated that multicultural policy had moved from simply preserving cultures to *promoting* equality by aiming to reduce cultural and racial barriers to individual freedom (Pal 1993, 138-139). A new policy reflecting this “clearer sense of purpose and direction” was effected in July 1988 when the Mulroney government adopted the Multiculturalism Act (Dewing and Leman 2006).

⁵⁹ See for example Seljak et al. 2007.

⁶⁰ See for example Seljak et al. 2007.

2.2.5 The Pervasiveness of Christianity in Canadian Culture

In addition to the creation of the *Charter* and the establishment of multiculturalism as a national value, immigration has also had an important effect on religion in Canada in late modernity. From very early in Canadian history, numbers of non-Christian immigrants integrated into the Anglophone or Francophone Christian mainstream. In some cases, they managed to retain their distinct cultures.⁶¹ Following WWI and II, the Canadian government modified its immigration policies to limit the numbers of non-white, non-European immigrants allowed into Canada (Boyd 1976; Kelley and Trebilcock 2000). In 1962, this racist policy was changed from being a system based on ethnicity to one based on accumulated “points” attributable to education, French and English language acquisition, as well as occupational skills and their potential to contribute to Canadian society (Boyd 1976, 83; Kalbach 1987, 82-110).⁶² In the period from 1960 to 1972, 1.5 million immigrants arrived in Canada with the highest numbers arriving in 1966-1968 (Statistics Canada 2003a).

Even as the majority of immigrants continued to come from European and at least nominally Christian countries, a growing presence of individuals from non-European and non-Christian groups was becoming noticeable, particular in some of the larger centres across Canada.⁶³ Pauline Côté suggests that influences on Canadian society by these minority groups fostered the current Canadian value of tolerance, including religious pluralism (2004). She states, “Very early in the *Charter* era, the [Supreme] Court elected to balance individual rights against public values and societal needs. By so doing, it seems to have developed a kind of civic ethos that might have replaced ‘common Christianity’ as the public culture of the land” (430). The Charter includes a “notwithstanding clause” that is limited by the “within reason” clause. The first of these grants protection to the province over and above the individual while the second protects the common good by limiting religious freedoms that would hinder the common good. She suggests that the Canadian attitude

⁶¹ See for example Ravvin 2005.

⁶² Canada’s Immigration Policy from 1967-1973 further expanded opportunities for immigration by allowing settled immigrants to sponsor extended family members. Even with this sponsorship, citizenship papers for these immigrants were still processed and approved based on their ability to contribute to the Canadian economy (Boyd 1976, 85).

⁶³ See for example Bramadat et al. 2005.

towards visible and religious minorities has changed from one of discrimination to one of acceptance and even appreciation:

In Canada, toleration has evolved over time towards democratic pluralism. Driven by some fierce legal battles, and manifested in the adoption of various instruments of human rights protection, the latest of which being the *Charter*, a new responsiveness developed to the rights of religious minorities (434).

Clearly, as numerous recent events have demonstrated, while multiculturalism and pluralism may be considered Canadian values in government policy and federal and provincial law-making, at a grass-roots level, there is still much to be done (Seljak et al. 2007). The question of religious tolerance in Canada remains open to debate and, while accommodation of religious needs is occurring in various institutions across Canada, there is evidence of a sort of religious ranking that gives prominence to some groups (such as Judaism and Islam which share an Abrahamic tradition with Christianity) above others (Côté 2004, 435). This reality is evident even in government institutions such as the Canadian Forces where Christianity continues to dominate.

2.3 Conclusion

An analysis of the effects of modernization on religion in Canada makes clear that religion developed in response to and as an influence on Canadian social conditions. Universities, schools, hospitals, and social welfare projects such as orphanages, family counselling and addiction treatment programs, most frequently started under the auspices of various Christian churches in Canada. The expansion of the state led increasingly to the privatization of religion and the increased separation of church and state as government agencies assumed authority for many of the services previously provided by the churches (Baker 1997). Even so, O'Toole insists that,

The persistently *Christian* character of Canada, in a broad sense, is an important legacy of this past century and a frequently underestimated fact of considerable sociological interest. Despite the impact of secularization, an apparent crisis of religious commitment and a rapidly expanding non-European presence, Canada remains decidedly Christian ... Moreover, a recent expansion of numbers of those embracing religions other than Christianity together with an increase in those professing no religion has not altered this state of

affairs to any significant degree. Canada remains a society where Christian traditions with historical roots in Britain and Western Europe dominate the demography of religious identity from Newfoundland to British Columbia (O'Toole 2000, 45).⁶⁴

O'Toole emphasizes that religious groups (particularly Protestant Christians) in Canada have served as the “essential prerequisites of modernity, generating those values and norms vital to the structure and process of dynamic modern social systems” (O'Toole 2000, 37, 44).

In Québec, the struggle for greater national recognition, the identification of the contributions of ethnic minority groups in Canada, and increased immigration contributed to special protection for minority groups and helped set the stage for a more liberal democratic society fostering the values of religious pluralism and multiculturalism alongside elements of the welfare state (Baker 1997, 3-4). Despite these pluralistic and multicultural developments, O'Toole argues that,

The history of religion in Canada is, in large part, the story of conflict, competition, and accommodation among Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and the groups that formed what is now the United Church ... Furthermore, the domination of churches and denominations, especially these so-called Big Three, is still arguably the paramount characteristic of organized religion in this country (O'Toole 2000, 45).

Over two-thirds of the Canadian population today continues to identify themselves with the Roman Catholic, Anglican or United Church of Canada and approximately 76% of Canadians fall into the general category “Christian” (Bibby 1993, 152-168; O'Toole 2000, 46; Statistics Canada 2004a).⁶⁵ The influences of the “big three” cannot be underestimated in examining religion in the Canadian Forces where the majority of chaplains continue to belong to these three groups and the majority of personnel are Roman Catholic.⁶⁶ In the following chapter, I will argue that the theories of religion

⁶⁴ Original emphasis.

⁶⁵ The Statistics Canada report *Overview: Canada still predominantly Roman Catholic and Protestant* states that “Seven out of every 10 Canadians identify themselves as either Roman Catholic or Protestant, according to new data from the 2001 Census” (2004a). Roman Catholics account for 43% of the Canadian population and Protestants 29%.

⁶⁶ This topic is addressed more fully in chapters three and four.

and the history of religious development in Canada presented here are central to understanding how religion and religious authority has existed from the early days of the CF to the present situation.

Chapter 3

An Historical Overview of the CF Chaplaincy

From its inauguration during WWI to the present, the military chaplaincy has developed from a largely unrecognized group of volunteer personnel to a fully-integrated, ecumenical, officially-bilingual, formally-trained, professional wing of the Canadian Forces. The CF chaplaincy has, in effect, become a bureaucratic, modern, religious institution in its own right. Although volunteer chaplains⁶⁷ have served with Canadian soldiers from as early as the Boer War, an official Chaplain Branch was not established until WWII.⁶⁸ In this chapter, I will look at how the forces of secularization, bureaucratization, and the emergence of religious diversity in Canada have transformed this institution. I will also examine how an institution created by Christians for a putatively Christian nation has developed to operate in a broadly secular society, marked by a much higher degree of religious diversity. I will discuss the establishment of the CF chaplaincy, the changes that occurred during WWI and II, its bureaucratization after 1946 and the emergence as part of the postmodern military after the fall of the Soviet Union. I argue that, since the Great War, the CF Chaplain Branch has moved from a context of predominantly English Protestant elitism, to a bilingual, ecumenical association that recognizes and serves Christians and non-Christians alike.

While the earliest Christian clergy in Canada were Roman Catholic priests who arrived with Jacques Cartier in 1535 during his second visit to New France (Crowley 1996, 1), the earliest-recorded

⁶⁷ The Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch Manual explains, “the name ‘chaplain’ or *cappellanus* derives from the cappa, cappella or cloak of St. Martin, Bishop of Tours, who was a fourth century convert. Martin of Tours later became the patron saint of the French medieval kings. The cloak, which was preserved as a sacred relic, was often carried into battle with the army. Often the cloak had its own tent or cappella, the custodian clergy being called Capellani. The term ‘capella’ might also refer to the tent or canopy that the French Kings built over the altar at which their soldiers worshipped” (DND 2003a, 1.1).

⁶⁸ Religious personnel have participated in military campaigns since antiquity. The first record of military chaplains dates from 7 BC in the Assyrian Army (Vagt 1937, 12). Before the Second World War, the Canadian military employed chaplains only for specific conflicts (Creerar 1995, 135).

evidence of Protestant worship occurred on board ship in Baffin Bay by an Anglican priest travelling with the Frobisher expedition in 1577 (Crowley 1996, 110; DND 2003a, 1.1). Although the French Roman Catholics maintained a “virtual monopoly over the religious life of both European settlers and native converts in what is now Canada” (Murphy 1996a, 108), the earliest military chaplains in the new territories were Protestant clergy accompanying British forces at the conquest of Acadia (1710) and Québec (1759) (Murphy 1996a, 110). The majority of British military chaplains were Anglican; however, there were small numbers of other groups such as Scottish Presbyterians.⁶⁹ Roman Catholic priests were not officially admitted to the British Army until 1802 (DND 2003a, 1.1-1.2). While still a British colony, despite laws that exempted clergymen from military service in British North America, the early clerics of Upper Canada served soldiers in militia units during the War of 1812 and in small numbers during the wars that followed (Crerar 1995, 3-9, 13). In the inaugural years at least, most clerics serving soldiers from Upper Canada were Protestant ministers (Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch 2006c; Crerar 1995; DND 2003a).⁷⁰

All British military chaplains were ascribed the familiar term “padre.” This tradition is still in use today across the Canadian Forces. Although the term is clearly an adoption of the Latin word for Father (*padre*) commonly used by Roman Catholics, the *Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch Manual* suggests that “padre” was adopted by British military personnel for their non-Catholic chaplains while serving in Spain and Portugal during the Peninsular War or while stationed elsewhere in India and Africa (DND 2003a).

3.1 1914-1945: Forming a Chaplain Branch

The eventual formation of an embedded military chaplaincy is in large part due to the impact that voluntary clergy during the First and Second World Wars had while serving the troops in Europe. Their efforts to comfort and encourage the men became as significant to those in the trenches, as well as their loved ones at home, as their ability to provide religious sacraments and bury the dead with appropriate sanctity and respect. Public and official appreciation for religious personnel who served

⁶⁹ Chaplains were with the Scottish forces that captured Louisbourg and Québec in the 1750s (DND 2003a, 1.2).

⁷⁰ For a fascinating popular account of this development, see Berton 2002 (125-224, 225-320)

alongside Canadian soldiers during both wars ultimately ensured a permanent place for chaplains in the Canadian military.

3.1.1 Religious Support for World War I

During WWI, hundreds of clerics with no military training enlisted to serve the spiritual needs of soldiers marching to war (Clarke 1996, 335; Reynolds 2003, 11-12) According to first- and second-hand accounts, chaplains on the front lines won the trust and admiration of soldiers by providing comfort and consolation to men in the trenches (Crerar 1995, 85).⁷¹ As we saw in the previous chapter, the churches during this era of Canadian history were deeply involved in social welfare projects and had a strong sense of Christian duty. This was not less true in the face of the war. John Webster Grant states that,

the churches rallied without hesitation to the national cause ... To Anglicans, who included many recent immigrants from Britain and who in any case had always maintained close ties with the motherland, the war represented an appeal to elemental sentiments and kinship. From the outset, they proved readiest of all to enlist. Liberal evangelicals, with their commitment to social involvement, saw in the war a defence of the Canada they were seeking to create and into which they were seeking to integrate immigrants of non-Anglo-Saxon origin. Catholic bishops endorsed participation in what they regarded as a just war. ... Irish Catholics set aside memories of British oppression to become ardent supporters, and even such Québec nationalists as Henri Bourassa at first took the same position. Behind these varied arguments one can discern a common motivation. Churches that had had so large a part in establishing the norms of Canadian life could not be indifferent to an enterprise that involved the nation so deeply. (1988, 113)

Along with the typical ministrations required of religious personnel, such as providing religious services, administering religious rites and burying the dead, these chaplains participated in many of the field duties. Al Fowler describes the early CF chaplain as a jack-of-all-trades who might play the role of medic, counsellor, negotiator, spiritual guide, cook or commander depending on the

⁷¹ Crerar provides many other examples throughout his book *Padres in No Man's Land: Canadian Chaplains*

circumstances (Fowler 2006, 33-58). Duff Crerar provides many anecdotes of chaplains “on the ground” giving out coffee, providing first aid, helping men read and write letters home, and boosting morale through shared stories and song.⁷² He argues that their determination to be present and involved wherever the men were, no matter how lowly the role, established their ministry as one in which their comforting presence was the most important resource for encouraging the soldiers.

In total, 447 chaplains served overseas troops during WWI under the auspices of the British Army Chaplains Department (Crerar 1995, 36-45). The majority of these were Protestants and it quickly became evident that there were insufficient numbers of Roman Catholic priests to meet the unique spiritual needs of Catholic soldiers overseas.⁷³

In fact, the denominational proportions of the militia chaplaincy were in inverse proportion to those of the country. Although Anglicans were outnumbered by Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, and Methodists in the 1911 Dominion Census, the old maxim that the official militia religion was Church of England was strongly evident [...] The cavalry, the most expensive and prestigious militia arm, employed Anglican chaplains almost exclusively, followed at a distance by the Presbyterians, with a few Methodists bringing up the rear. Significantly, not one cavalry regiment employed a Roman Catholic chaplain. The same proportions characterized the rest of the militia. (Crerar 1995, 23)

The religious bigotry of men in power, like Canada’s Minister of Militia Sam Hughes, amplified existing tensions between Francophones and Anglophones as well as Catholics and Protestants (Crerar 1995, 29-34, 48). Hughes, who despised Catholics above all, ensured the majority of military chaplains were non-Roman Catholics. Crerar states that

Hughes was determined to create an army in his image of what Canada was – but along the lines of his own Orange Lodge, conservative, and militaristic convictions. Thus he hand-picked each chaplain to the First Contingent (later, First Canadian Division). He personally approved the appointments of most chaplains during the

and the Great War (1995).

⁷² These run throughout Crerar’s work but see, for example, Crerar 1995 (119-120).

⁷³ For an excellent in-depth examination of the problems that resulted from this imbalance, see Crerar 1995, chapter 2.

next two years of the war (based on the recommendations of political cronies, hand-picked unit commanders, and sympathetic Protestant church officials). Repeatedly, he justified his choices on the principles of “fair play.” For him, this meant granting no concessions to, or consideration of, Roman Catholics ... Initially, it meant no concessions either for the large number of Anglicans enlisting. On the other hand, it meant special consideration for Methodists and Salvation Army chaplaincy candidates. French speaking candidates got short shrift, though Hughes grudgingly conceded that a few Catholic chaplains who spoke the language would be a good idea. (Crerar 2006b, 10-11)

Eventually, the majority of chaplains serving in the fields and trenches were English-speaking Protestants affiliated with the Methodist, Anglican and Presbyterian churches, although small numbers of minority groups were also present among the troops including an African-Canadian battalion, Aboriginal⁷⁴ recruits, and small numbers of Jews (Crerar 1995, 13). However, the prevalent attitudes towards non-whites ensured that the African Baptist minister retained for “the specially recruited black construction battalion” served only that regiment despite needs for a chaplain among the white troops (Crerar 1995, 68, 301). The Anglican Métis chaplain “who had come [...] with his native recruits from the west...” was eventually sent back to Canada and discharged from the service after his men were disbursed among other units (Crerar 1995, 68). At home in Montreal, Rabbi H. Abrahamowitz argued successfully for the appointment of a rabbi by pointing out that, “the Military Service Act [conscription] would bring in larger numbers of Jewish troops.”⁷⁵

Despite the imbalances and injustices of Hughes’ system, soldiers, home churches, and military officers recognized the important contributions of clergymen to those in the trenches during the first months of the Great War. For the first time, Ottawa allowed civilian chaplains serving among the

⁷⁴ The Department of Defence uses the term “Aboriginal” to include First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples – that is how it has been used throughout this work. I will discuss Aboriginals in the CF more fully in chapter four.

⁷⁵ Abrahamowitz based his argument on the fact that the British and Australian forces had employed rabbis and Canada should follow suit. Surprisingly, unlike the Métis and African-Canadian chaplains, Canadian troops did accept the ministrations of British rabbi Michael Adler while stationed in Flanders (Crerar 1995, 276, 301).

troops to be recognized as “camp chaplains” with permission to conduct services, move freely among all enlisted personnel, wear the military uniform, and hold honorary commissions (Crerar 1995, 40).⁷⁶ When the British, who saw little value in the chaplains,⁷⁷ attempted to limit the numbers of clergy going to the battlefields with Canadian personnel, Canadian policy makers were sufficiently angered that, on August 19, 1915, they organized all Canadian chaplains serving Canadian troops in Europe into the Canadian Chaplain Service under a Director of Chaplain Services (Crerar 1995, 45, 2006b, 26). A total of 524 clergymen served in the Canadian Chaplain Service during WWI (DND 2003a, 1.2).

3.1.2 World War II – Creating a Branch

With the end of WWI, the Office of the Director of Chaplain Services in Ottawa was closed and the Canadian Chaplain Service “dropped out of existence” (DND 2003a, 1.2)⁷⁸ However, when war was again declared in 1939, Anglican Bishop and war veteran George Anderson Wells, used his “high-ranking Militia contacts” to re-establish the chaplain service. At the same time, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops agreed to allow the government to use the Québec churches as air raid shelters in exchange for a separate military chaplain service for Roman Catholics (DND 2003a, 1.2). As a result of determination and experience from Anglican and Roman Catholic quarters, a loosely-defined joint chaplaincy developed (Crerar 1995, 229).

⁷⁶ These privileges remain significant aspects of the modern day Ministry of Presence discussed in later in this chapter.

⁷⁷ British Officers were unsympathetic to having chaplains go to the front with their units. Crerar writes, “Their view that padres were a particularly useless military fixture, with little influence on the men and certainly best kept out of the way, tacitly dominated army policy...” (1995, 38). The British ignored Canadian requests to have chaplains accompany their personnel and allowed for only five chaplains making the ratio of chaplains to men 1:20 000.

⁷⁸ Crerar suggests that, for many Protestant chaplains, the years between the wars were more difficult than the wars themselves as they struggled against the confines of civilian parish life and attempted to find meaningful employment elsewhere. Roman Catholic clergy adapted to the peacetime context better than their Protestant counterparts as they were quickly redeployed to meaningful work on foreign service assignments and to the mission fields of China, Argentina and elsewhere (Crerar 1995, 196).

From 1939 to 1945, chaplains again contributed to the war effort by supporting troop morale, providing spiritual services to military personnel and, in some cases, participating in battle.⁷⁹ For the first time, in addition to Militia and Royal Canadian Air Force chaplains, Royal Canadian Naval chaplains joined the ranks to serve Canadian personnel serving on board ships bound for Europe (DND 2003a, 1.3). At the end of the War, on August 9, 1945, the chaplaincy found a permanent place in Canadian military history with the formation of the Canadian Chaplain Services Protestant and Roman Catholic. This formal joint service employed 137 Protestant and 162 Roman Catholic clergymen (DND 2003a, 1.3). At the end of WWII, like so many soldiers, military chaplains came home weary and disenchanted; some returned to churches and a few stayed on with the military (Howie 2006, 59).

3.2 1946-1980: Becoming a Modern Bureaucratic Force

During the years following WWII, despite the continuing threat posed by the Soviet Union, and after the Korean War (1950-1953), Canadian and other NATO forces, adapted to a new, mostly peaceful, environment which itself posed different types of challenges and dangers. Reforms that would eventually result in the so-called “postmodern military,” a concept I will examine more fully later in this chapter, began to take shape during this period. During this time, chaplains continued to provide spiritual services to soldiers, sailors and air force personnel on bases, in operations during conflict, as well as on peacekeeping missions and later combat operations around the world (Fowler 1996, 72,147).

⁷⁹ One fascinating example is the story of Rev. John Foote who became the first Canadian Chaplain to receive the Victoria Cross for his role in the Dieppe Raid with the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry. According to reports, Rev. Foote walked amidst machine-gun fire to collect the dead and move the wounded to safety. When the ships arrived to pick up Canadian soldiers, Foote helped load casualties into the landing crafts. He then refused his opportunity for escape to safety by walking back up the beach and allowing himself to be taken prisoner by the Germans. In this way he was able to continue to minister to his regiment as a prisoner of war until they were released three years later in May of 1945 (Fowler 1996, 33-36).

3.2.1 New Alliances, New Obligations

Until the end of the War years, the vast majority of soldiers were young single men who lived in barracks on base (Bercuson 1996, 61-62). As service personnel returned from Europe and adjusted to family life, for the first time “military bases began to fill up with young wives and children” (DND 2003a, 1.3). Although cost-saving efforts after the War meant a significant reduction in the number of personnel, including chaplains, some clergy were retained for the new role of caring for families on the bases (DND 2003a, 1.3-1.4; Morton 1990, 227-229). In fact, during this period the chaplains’ primary job was finding adequate housing for young married couples and families! This interval marked the beginning of the base as a thriving community incorporating living quarters, schools, and grocery stores, and places of worship in the form of Protestant and Roman Catholic chapels.⁸⁰ Unlike during the war years, chaplains during this period added family and marriage counselling to their list of formal duties. At the same time, the Roman Catholic priests were formed into a Roman Catholic Military Vicariate under the direction of a senior priest reporting to the local bishop (DND 2003a, 1.3). Since the Department of Defence paid for the construction of military chapels, military congregations were free to maintain their link to civilian charity, social service and missionary efforts by directing their Sunday offerings to local and foreign projects (DND 2003a, 1.3).⁸¹

In the context of the Cold War as well as American military activities in Indochina, Europe and Cuba, Canadians reformed the military services on a more American model and created a stronger alliance with the United States (Granatstein 1993, 134; Milner 1999, 168-171; Morton 1990, 229-230).⁸² By 1949, Canadians and Americans had joined forces with ten other European countries to form the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) based “on the common belief of the North Atlantic union in the values and virtues of Christian civilization” (Morton 1990, 233) and, of course, to keep an eye on communist forces (Mahoney 1997). The invasion of South Korea by North Korean

⁸⁰ Early base chapels were temporary structures sometimes shared by both Roman Catholic and Protestant congregations (DND 2003a, 1.3).

⁸¹ This tradition is still in place today.

⁸² As a result, a 1947 bilateral agreement, “... cautiously committed Canada to American weapons, equipment, training methods and communications. The British pattern established since 1907, would be allowed slowly to fade [...] American equipment might or might not be superior to British patterns; it seemed more likely to be available in a crisis” (Morton 1990, 230).

communists raised concerns that the USSR might attack Europe while allied forces were distracted in Asia.⁸³ As a result, Canada posted troops and their chaplains on bases across Europe in fulfilment of NATO commitments (English 2004, 89; Morton 1990, 232-233).⁸⁴ Elsewhere in the CF, cost-cutting measures meant that roles previously exclusive to military personnel, such as engineering jobs, were outsourced to civilian organizations. Moreover, given the controversies over mandatory service and conscription during WWII, Canada began to rely on all-voluntary armed forces participation in times of conflict such as the Korean War (Booth, Kestnbaum, and Segal 2001).

Throughout the 1950s, Canada continued to contribute to NATO projects by supervising truce agreements around the world. Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson formalized this role in 1956 by establishing the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF I) that halted the Suez Canal Crisis and gave birth to modern-day peacekeeping (English 2003, 2; Holmes 1979; Morton 1990, 241-242). The growing threat of nuclear attack and the need to defend North American borders resulted in even closer ties to the US through the signing of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) in 1958 (Morton 1990, 242).⁸⁵ Despite UN and NATO commitments during the Cold War, Canadians continued to see military spending as a drain on Canadian resources and military budgets diminished significantly throughout the 1960s (Pinch 1999, 163). Following three years in Korea, and in response to the American employment of conscription to fight the war in Vietnam, Canadians vehemently opposed both mandatory service and unnecessary involvement in other countries' battles (Morton 1990, 238).⁸⁶ Throughout this difficult era, Canadian chaplains, in reduced numbers from the War Years, continued to serve with enlisted personnel during the Korean War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, in Vietnam, on peacekeeping missions worldwide and, for the first time, in base

⁸³ For more on Canada's role during the Cold War era see Legault et al. 1992 and Whitaker et al. 1995.

⁸⁴ Bland credits Canadian involvement in NATO for having "professionalized" the officers corps (1999).

⁸⁵ For one perspective on the contentious defence debate see Hertzman et al. 1969

⁸⁶ Canadians were supportive of peacekeeping initiatives (Taylor, Cox, and Granatstein 1968). For more on Canadians in Korea see Barris 1999 and Melady 1983. Despite a strong resistance to Canadian involvement in Vietnam, considerable numbers of Canadians crossed the border to enlist in the US Forces headed to Vietnam (Benham Rennick 2006b; Gaffen 1990); Canada also sent peacekeepers in on the International Commission of Control and Supervision Vietnam (ICCS) from 1973-1975 (ICCS 1973). For more on the controversial role that Canada played during this conflict, see Taylor 1974 and Levant 1986.

chapels and in chapel spaces on ships at sea (Fowler 1996, 72,147; Government of Canada 2006; Howie 2006, 61).⁸⁷

3.2.2 Unification and Integration

At home, politicians intent on organizing the forces into a more rational bureaucracy floated the idea of integrating the three defence “services” – the Royal Canadian Air Force, Royal Canadian Navy, and Canadian Army – under one Director of Defence in order to save money (Kronenberg 1973; Morton 1990, 228).⁸⁸ The idea of integrating the three services under one Director of Defence⁸⁹ had been a “persistent rumor” for many years before the process actually began in the late 1950s (Fowler 1996, 117; Morton 1990, 250).⁹⁰ For many military members attempts by government and military advisors to rationalize and bureaucratize the CF clashed with their own dedication to tradition and military custom and became a serious point of frustration. The chaplaincy was one of the first branches in the CF to be integrated in the unification process (English 2004, 96; Fowler 1996, 117). Prior to unification the chaplaincy had been organized into three separate sectors for the army, navy, and air force each headed by both a Protestant and a Roman Catholic chaplain. Unification meant that chaplains would form into a single chaplain service directed by two principal chaplains: one Roman Catholic and one Protestant.⁹¹ Further, all chaplains in the integrated branch could be employed anywhere throughout the air force, army, or navy services regardless of their own affiliation (Fowler 1996, 118; Reynolds 2003, 14). For example, under this new model, a navy

⁸⁷ Approximately 2500 members of the Canadian military services fought in Korea. During the Cuban Missile crisis, Royal Canadian Navy ships relieved American ships guarding NORAD defence locations so they could participate in the blockade. Canadian nuclear-equipped planes located in Montreal, Toronto, and the Eastern US were put on 36-hour alert. Canadians were present in Vietnam as part of the United Nations International Commission of Control and Supervision (ICCS) in 1973 (Morton 1990, 232-238, 241, 247).

⁸⁸ For a full examination of Unification in the CF and its perceived successes and failures, see Morton 1990 (247-263), Government of Canada 2004 (7.4-6), English 2004 (96), Hellyer 1990, and Bland 1987 and 1995.

⁸⁹ Prior to integration each service had its own director.

⁹⁰ Morton states that “the idea of integration of the armed forces was as old as 1922 ... By 1963, medical, dental, legal, and chaplains’ services had been integrated though the reforms produced more senior officers than economies” (1990, 250). Fowler adds, “The integration of the Chaplain Services was announced to the House of Commons on September 2, 1958, and it met with some public scepticism. An editorial in the Ottawa Journal asked: ‘Is This Integration? Or is this the creation of two new senior posts and no reductions to administration and personnel?’ In fact, the chaplain service had “gained two generals, lost four lieutenant colonels, and freed eight command chaplains for other duties” (1996, 124).

chaplain might serve on an air force base or deploy with infantry personnel. Upon receiving approval from the Roman Catholic Bishop Ordinary and the Protestant Canadian Council of Churches' Committee on Chaplain Services (also known as the 5Cs), integration in the branch officially occurred September 22, 1958 (Fowler 1996, 124). These authorities had each appointed a Chaplain General⁹² to run their side of the branch. There were to be

two chaplains general at the brigadier level, two directors of religious and moral training who would be colonels, and several command chaplains at the rank of lieutenant colonel. [...] As well, a letter was sent to all chaplains stressing that no one would lose his rank or his job because of integration. (Fowler 1996, 124)

Chaplains belonging to Protestant denominations remained part of the Protestant branch and served all military personnel who were not Roman Catholic. Roman Catholic priests remained responsible for all Roman and Orthodox Catholics who were then, and continue to be, the largest single denomination in the CF (Fowler 1996, 14).

In February 1968 Bill C-243, the Canadian Forces Unification Act came into effect and all remaining groups in the separate services were reorganized with new badges, new titles, and a unified rank structure (Bland 1987; Morton 1990, 249-254).⁹³ Furthermore, the distinct uniforms of the navy (black), army (green) and air force (sky blue), were replaced with a common "CF Green" more in keeping with the American style (Morton 1990, 252). This period marked a low point in morale as personnel felt that political and economic interests undermined military traditions (Bland 1996). One air force member I interviewed remembered this time with disgust saying, "We were so mad when

⁹¹ These were known as Chaplain Branch (P) and Chaplain Branch (RC).

⁹² The Chaplain General is the highest rank for chaplains in the CF.

⁹³ For a full discussion of this era of military history, see Morton 1990 (247-263). Allan D. English suggests that the integration of the three services during the 1950s and 60s was the originating point for what can now be seen as a distinct "Canadian Forces culture" that, despite continuing differences in some areas, pervades all three services in the CF (2004, 96). Douglas Bland argues that current uneasiness in civil-military relations stem from the civilianization and bureaucratization that occurred during the 1960s unification and integration process (Bland 1996).

they unified the services and took away our uniforms. Now instead of looking like army, navy or air force members, we looked like bus drivers!”⁹⁴

Under unification, the military adopted a business model that replaced the traditional military style of leadership based on customs, traditions and military identity with a modern structure defined by centralization of authority, rationalization of structures and roles, an emphasis on efficiency in all practices and bureaucracy.⁹⁵ The result – according to CF members at least – was a more conformist and bland institution, something like what Max Weber described when he noted that the tendency of modern society towards bureaucratization eroded culture, undermined traditional values, and created instead a uniform society (Weber 1958, 181). Civil servants began to replace a number of senior personnel at National Defence Head Quarters, civilian business administrators were employed to develop managerial skills, and leaders of service branches were given the new title deputy minister (Critchley 1993, 226-237). This process at work here is known as the “civilianization” of the forces (Bland 1996, 1999; Critchley 1993; Kasurak 1982). The goal of this process was to examine all positions in the CF seeking cost-savings and greater efficiency. Chaplains complained that Commanding Officers who had valued them in earlier years now considered them a drain on economic resources that could be spent better elsewhere.⁹⁶ One chaplain described this era with some frustration saying,

Here we were facing huge new challenges and our most experienced people were being shipped out the door. Then, ironically, a few years later when senior command saw they still needed us, they were hired back as civilian consultants at some ridiculous rate [of pay] to do the job they had been doing for years! It was ridiculous and it caused chaos in the branch.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Personal interview Benham Rennick 2005. Happily for this service member, and others of the same mind, in the mid-1980s, many of the unification requirements slackened and military personnel were permitted to return to their distinct elemental uniforms. One lasting change for the chaplains however was that they continued to be posted to any of the three services as needed regardless of their own elemental affiliation. For a full examination of Unification in the CF and its perceived successes and failures, see Morton 1990 (247-263), Government of Canada 2004 (7.4-6), and English 2004 (96).

⁹⁵ For more on the relationship between civilianization and unification, see Critchley

⁹⁶ Personal interview Benham Rennick 2005.

⁹⁷ Personal interview Benham Rennick 2005.

In the end, while savings were minimal, integration had “achieved the primary purpose of promoting a complete unification policy as well as an effective and efficient co-ordination in the organization and administration of the Chaplain Service” (Fowler 1996, 128) to make it look more like a modern business than a traditional military institution (Pinch 1999, 156-157, 161-165). Although many chaplains neither liked nor understood the new shape of a branch reconfigured by “modern bureaucratic military efficiency,” these changes paved the way to the creation of a chaplain school in the 1990s (Fowler 1996, 122,129,256).⁹⁸

At the same time that budget cuts, unification, and streamlining of the services were occurring, prevailing attitudes among Canadians about militarism were changing. In response to the American presence in Vietnam and civil unrest in the United States, peace movements swept across university campuses and public protests broke out throughout North America.⁹⁹ Even as the CF began to look more like the American Forces, Canadians were making the point that they did not want the Canadian military to *act* like the Americans. A new outlook was developing that would push Canada increasingly into non-conflict operations and give rise to a new definition of the role of the military for both members and those outside the CF.

The Canadian churches and their personnel employed as military chaplains during this time developed a decidedly different perspective on military participation than they had during earlier conflicts. While the Great War years had seen clergy people rallying to the cause of war in Europe and engaging in the battles, Christian leaders in the 1960s were aligning themselves more closely with the peace movement. In fact, at the 1968 Manitoba Conference of the United Church of Canada, a group traditionally supportive of Canada’s military and its chaplaincy programs, members argued to remove all UCC ministers from the military and prohibit them from serving in the CF altogether (Fowler 1996, 214). While the conference did not adopt the measure, the fact that it was even debated shows how the climate had changed. One United Church military chaplain at the time explained how even military chaplains could be on the side of peace:

⁹⁸ The development of the chaplain school is discussed later in this chapter.

⁹⁹ There are numerous works on the peace movements of this era. For a detailed examination of these events, see for example Wittner 1993(1993) and Moffatt 1982 (1982).

I don't have any difficulty with the ethical questions in regard to the "war machine" any more than a rural minister would worry about the growing of rye and barley and the likelihood of their being used for booze. I minister to people who have the burdens of mankind – my people sometimes might have the burden of the necessity of "war guilt" but they are people with problems and that is why I am here. I minister to people, not to a policy or a machine. Military people need a ministry as does anyone else. In effect we are trained specialists dealing with a special group. Most chaplains are really pacifists at heart – I know I am ... (Fowler 1996, 213)

Despite efforts by both Pearson and Trudeau to make Canada a nation of peacekeepers,¹⁰⁰ Canadians at the time considered peacekeeping to be a dismal failure after humiliation and loss in the Congo, Egypt, Cyprus and Vietnam (Morton 1990, 259-260).¹⁰¹ Nonetheless, David Bercuson remarks that during this era peacekeeping became so integrated in Canadian military operations that civilians "tended to forget that armies exist to fight wars" (Bercuson 1996, 58-60). In fact, during the 1970s, other than the enforcement of the War Measures Act in Québec and the on-going UNTSO (Middle East) and UNFICYP (Cyprus) missions, Canadian military personnel participated in only four other operations. These included the International Commission for Control and Supervision (ICCS 1973) in South Vietnam, UN Emergency Force II (UNEF II 1973-79) on the Egypt-Israel border, UN Disengagement Observer Force Syria (UNDOF 1974-present), and UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL 1978) (Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada 2003).

The years between the end of WWII and the late 1970s marked some profound changes in both the Canadian Forces and in civilian attitudes towards militarism. Unlike the pride and hopeful enthusiasm that prevailed in the difficult years following WWII, the American experience in Vietnam had tainted public attitudes towards soldiers and military operations during the 1960s and 70s. Economic recession forced CF leaders to seek cost-savings that, while producing a more streamlined

¹⁰⁰ Lester B. Pearson received a Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 for establishing the United Nations Emergency Force I (UNEF I) peacekeeping unit that helped end the Suez Crisis of 1956 (Morton 1990, 240). Trudeau established the Canadian Centre for International Peace and Security and "toured the world to offer himself as an international peacemaker" (Morton 1990, 264)

¹⁰¹ Morton explains that Canadian peacekeepers had been "beaten and threatened" in the Congo, they remained in Cyprus only because they had become a part of that country's economy, they were expelled from Egypt, and returned from "hopeless circumstances" in Vietnam after only 120 days (1990, 259-260).

and efficient system of operations, also cut budgets and abandoned military traditions to a point that harmed morale. Peacekeeping operations provided a tolerable and even commendable alternative to combat operations, and yet both funding and public approval continued to languish.

As radical as the changes had been during the years following WWII to the Vietnam era, the next three decades brought their own crises and reforms that directed the evolution of the military chaplaincy even further from its origins. Outside of the military, momentous changes occurred in the value systems that had traditionally informed Canadian society. Individuals demanded greater levels of personal freedom, new religious alternatives arose, and disillusionment with the churches challenged the previously strong influences of traditional Christian denominations in Canada. At the same time, Canada began to see an influx of new immigrants importing values based on systems other than what Christian Canadians understood as “normal.” In the ensuing decades, the influences of these social changes would present both the CF and the chaplaincy with significant challenges.

3.3 1980-2007: A “Postmodern” Context

I have already discussed the term “postmodernity” as it applies to civilian society however, the phrase “postmodern military”¹⁰² is widely accepted by military analysts and sociologists to describe Western military forces after the collapse of the Soviet Union.¹⁰³ While this research is not an examination of the postmodern military *per se*, it is worth noting how military sociologists apply the term. Harry Bondy explains that discussions on the value of ideas about postmodernism have resulted in two schools of thought among military sociologists. The first group

looks for sociological and political trends in military institutions and their host societies that it calls postmodern. It concentrates on changes that have become most evident since the end of the Cold War... [and addresses issues] centred on changes to the perceived threat, mission definition, the dominant military professional type, public attitudes, media relations, conscientious objectors, and the

¹⁰² The term “post-Cold War military” is sometimes used instead.

¹⁰³ One of the leading arguments on this concept is made by Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams and David R. Segal (eds.) in their book *The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces after the Cold War* (1999). There is a broad literature that supports the position. For further discussion and analysis of this topic, see Booth et al. 2001. For further discussion of the concept of postmodernism, see chapter 2.

role of civilian employees, women, spouses and homosexuals.
(Bondy 2004, 32-33)

The second group is more interested in the “cultural assumptions, behaviour patterns and institutional characteristics of the military in the context of Western society.” What both groups hold in common is the idea that, like civilian society, militarism after the demise of Eastern-European communist strongholds has changed (Bondy 2004, 33). The development of the CF Chaplain Branch during this period offers insights for both schools of thought in the way it has faced changing demographics following the end of the Cold War, and in the ways chaplains are attempting to address Western cultural assumptions that govern the branch.

The modernizing influences of the previous decades that reshaped the Canadian military were part of a chain of events happening around the world. Today’s “postmodern military” incorporates greater numbers of civilians, more women and minority groups in the forces,¹⁰⁴ more involvement of reserve forces personnel, a higher number of non-combat missions, and greater involvement with civilian populations while on humanitarian aid and peacekeeping tours of duty (Moskos et al. 1999). As we saw in chapter two, legal interpretations of the Charter ensured greater protection for minority groups and demanded a need for new workplace attitudes and policies to ensure those rights to address harassment and discrimination. This meant significant changes to military traditions and norms in order to include increasing numbers of women and other minority personnel joining the ranks.¹⁰⁵ For example, military officials accommodated religious diversity by allowing time and providing locations for prayer (for Muslims), permitting religious symbols such as long hair (for Aboriginal peoples), and allowing modifications of the uniform (for Sikhs and Muslim women) (Auditor General of Canada 2006; DND 2006b; Loughlin and Arnold 2003; Moses, Donald Graves, and Sinclair 2004). At the same time, the loss of moral consensus that comes from the dissolution of a common religious

¹⁰⁴ Allan English writes that, up until the 1960s, of the officers in the Canadian army “73 per cent were of British heritage versus 44 per cent of Canadian society as a whole. The religious background of the officer corps also reflected this divergence [...] as 80 per cent of officers were Protestant, whereas 43 per cent of the ranks were Roman Catholic...” He writes that personnel from Western and Atlantic Canada were considerably overrepresented among senior officers (2004, 90).

¹⁰⁵ Or, in the case of homosexuals, who were already in the CF despite laws prohibiting them from participation (Jackson 2003a, 4).

heritage and frame of reference meant that commanders and chaplains were also accommodating personnel with alternate value systems concerning sensitive topics such as homosexuality (Jackson 2003a, 2003b). Traditionally trained chaplains could no longer count on religious “common knowledge” among personnel to whom they ministered and people were becoming less interested in “old fashioned” religious perspectives. Further, as more personnel from non-Christian traditions joined the branch, the chaplaincy would recognize the need to move beyond ecumenism to become an interfaith establishment (Benham Rennick 2005, 2006a; Seljak et al. 2007).

3.3.1 Credentials, Equivalency and a Chaplain School

Military chaplains during the 1980s and 1990s struggled to address a serious shortage of Roman Catholic priests¹⁰⁶ and growing numbers of minority religious groups within the ranks. These developments led the Chaplain Branch to expand the types of ministerial resources available to personnel and to include more faith groups in the chaplaincy (Reynolds 2003, 14-15). To address the paucity of priests, the Chaplain Branch created a new Military Occupation Classification (MOC) of pastoral associate (PA) in 1986 (Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch 2003, 1.4). Pastoral associates are lay chaplains who provide all the services of the priest “except those that, by their very nature or ecclesiastical law, require Holy Orders [ordination]” (Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch 2003, 1.4). PAs are permitted to preach the homily at a Mass, distribute communion previously consecrated by a priest, perform baptism, marriage and funeral services, conduct preparation classes for the various sacraments, distribute ashes previously blessed by a priest, anoint the sick, confer blessings and various other pastoral duties. They may not consecrate the host for Holy Communion, hear confessions, or give the blessing during the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Normally they serve on ministerial teams that include a priest who can make up for the few important services a PA cannot provide. These Roman Catholic chaplains meet all the chaplaincy-training requirements except that of ordination.¹⁰⁷ As a result, for the first time, women and married men¹⁰⁸ could serve as

¹⁰⁶ For a full discussion of this reality, see Schoenherr 2002 and Schoenherr et al. 1993.

¹⁰⁷ For more information on pastoral associates, see Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch 2003 (1.4, 16.15-16.18).

¹⁰⁸ Catholic priests belonging to the Eastern Rite churches (e.g., Ukrainian, Russian, Orthodox, etc.) are allowed to marry. These groups belong to the Catholic branch of the Chaplaincy Branch. For further reading on the relationship between Rome and the Eastern Rite churches, see for example Stormon 1987 .

Roman Catholic chaplains. Further, the branch actively recruited clergy from smaller Christian communities, such as Pentecostals, to serve the growing number of regular forces personnel affiliated with these groups.¹⁰⁹ The increasing openness to denominational diversity presented a new hurdle with respect to obtaining equivalent credentials from new recruits.¹¹⁰

Whereas the Roman Catholic priests and mainstream Protestant ministers who had traditionally served as chaplains have at least a Master's of Divinity (MDiv.), a Master's of Theological Studies (MTS) or equivalent,¹¹¹ many smaller denominations allow ordination after only a year or two of studies at an Accredited Associated Bible College.¹¹² Since advancement and promotion are in large part based on accredited education, the inclusion of clergy with different training required greater bureaucratization in the branch in order to establish fair entrance requirements and assessment models for everyone. Senior branch chaplains decided to implement formal entrance requirements, standardized training for all chaplains in the branch, and new policies that would assure fair treatment and promotion.¹¹³ As a result, credentialism spread throughout the branch.

The increasing regulations governing chaplains culminated in the opening of in the Canadian Forces Chaplain School and Centre (CFChSC) at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Borden, Ontario on April 12, 1994 (Fowler 1996, 257). Senior chaplains at this time saw the creation of a military chaplaincy training school as an opportunity to cement their presence in the CF despite continuing secularization in Canada while also regulating and overseeing the training of all chaplains (Crerar 2006a).

The changes wrought by ecumenism in both Protestant and Roman Catholic circles in the years after World War II had laid a foundation that made possible the eventual amalgamation of the Protestant and Roman Catholic arms of the Chaplain Branch. Up until the mid-1990s, the Protestant Canadian

¹⁰⁹ For a breakdown of denominational and gender representation in the chaplaincy, see Tables 1 and 2.

¹¹⁰ These concerns are discussed later in this chapter.

¹¹¹ These differences are discussed at length later in this chapter.

¹¹² Brian Clarke writes that the main purpose of Bible Colleges established in Canada “was to provide a solid background in biblical knowledge ... they studied the Bible as revealed truth with none of the qualifications required by modern scholarship” making them, until very recently, little more than glorified high schools (1996, 345). More recently, many Bible Colleges have revamped their programs and obtained accreditation to grant university degrees. See for example the *North American Association for Biblical Higher Education* (home page at <http://abhe.gospelcom.net/index.html>).

Council of Churches Committee on Chaplain Service to the Forces (known less formally as “the 5 Cs”), and the Roman Catholic Military Ordinariate¹¹⁴ had guided the two chaplain branches independently, except in matters of mutual interest, for over fifty years (Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch 2003, 1.4- 5). During the 1990s both groups sought improved methods for serving CF personnel and their families. In 1995, in what they called “a triumph of ecumenism,” (Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch 2006b) the Protestant and the Roman Catholic Chaplaincy Branches agreed to amalgamate into one Chaplain General’s Office to direct all chaplains within the forces. By the end of 1997, the Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy (ICCMC) replaced the traditional governing authorities of the Protestant and Roman Catholic chaplains (Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch 2003, 1.4- 5). The ICCMC is a subcommittee of the Canadian Council of Churches that acts as a liaison between military chaplains and their churches, and the Department of National Defence and the Government of Canada (Reynolds 2003, 1.5,1.6, 15). Under this new model, the post of the Chaplain General alternated every two years between a Roman Catholic and a Protestant chaplain (Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch 2006b). Furthermore, all chaplains were to operate as if they were religiously “generic,” so they might serve all personnel regardless of their denomination in all aspects of their duties except ecclesial requirements (Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch 2006b). In a further demonstration of ecumenism and rationalization working hand in hand, in 2007 the appointment of the Chaplain General changed again so that it no longer alternates between Protestant and Roman Catholics but is determined every two years based on rank and experience regardless of denomination (Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch 2006b).¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Problems with these efforts are discussed later in this chapter.

¹¹⁴ The Roman Catholic authorities were known as the Military Vicariate until, “On 21 April 1986, His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, promulgated an Apostolic Constitution entitled *Spirituali militum curae*, by which he established general norms for the government of Military Ordinariates. For the Roman Catholic chaplaincy, this was most significant as it elevated its status from a Vicariate to an Ordinariate [a *vicariate* is directed by a curate who reports to a bishop whereas an *ordinariate* is directly under the supervision and jurisdiction of a bishop] and received the appointment of a full time Roman Catholic Bishop responsible for the spiritual and pastoral welfare of all Roman Catholic military members and their families.” (Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch 2003, 1.4).

¹¹⁵ At least, this is the model in theory. It will be interesting to see how the appointments under the new system play out.

The result of influences such as bureaucratization, increasing diversity, and legal recognition for individual rights and freedoms means that becoming a Canadian Forces Chaplain today is no longer the simple matter of enlisting, as it was in WWI. Now, for acceptance into the CF chaplain-training program, a clergyperson must

- be ordained, or be otherwise authorized,¹¹⁶ by their religious governing body;
- have at least a bachelor's degree or an MDiv (or equivalent) depending on what their denomination requires of them for clergy status;
- have two years of civilian pastoral experience;
- be authorized to military ministry by their ecclesiastical authorities;
- be supported in their application by a representative from the Interfaith Council on Canadian Military Chaplains (ICCMC);¹¹⁷
- receive the commendation of the Chaplain General;
- meet CF medical and physical standards;
- complete a branch selection process.¹¹⁸

Following acceptance into the branch, chaplains have two years to complete two phases of training and induction requirements. In the first phase, chaplains complete a thirteen-week, bilingual, Chaplain Basic Officer Training (ChBOTC)¹¹⁹ at the Canadian Forces Chaplain School and Centre

¹¹⁶ For example, Roman Catholic pastoral associates.

¹¹⁷ A short description of this group is available on the CF Chaplain Branch website at http://www.forces.gc.ca/chapgen/engraph/iccmc_e.asp?cat=1

¹¹⁸ This process requires applicants to complete tests, interviews and face an “acceptance board” (for further information on recruiting requirements for the Chaplain Branch see DND. The Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch, “Recruiting: regular forces” (http://www.forces.gc.ca/chapgen/engraph/recruiting1_e.asp?cat=5).

¹¹⁹ Because chaplains enter the CF with a degree, they go straight to officer training. Personnel entering the forces without a degree would attend “Basic Training.” Chaplains used to participate in the Regular Forces “Basic Officer Training Course” (BOTC). Recently, in recognition that chaplains typically enter the CF older than any other professional group coming in to the forces (when I visited the school in November 2006, the oldest “new recruit” currently in training, was 52. Regular Forces new recruits are more commonly between the ages of 17-24), boot camp for chaplains was modified to a less physically stringent program. The result is fewer injuries for older, less physically-fit chaplains and less worry for potential new recruits over the age of 40 who feel they might not pass the physical requirements of Basic Training. These statements are based on personal interviews with CF chaplains. Some chaplains argue that the ChBOTC *is* in fact as demanding as the regular BOTC and is different only in that it does not require chaplains to undergo weapons training (they are required to learn how to disarm a weapon but they are not permitted to fire one). Personal interviews with senior chaplains Benham Rennick.

(CFChSC), CFB Borden. ChBOTC is divided into two separate types of training: one that emphasizes military training, and one that emphasized ministry within the military environment. During this training, chaplains learn,

basic leadership skills, military regulations and customs, acquire the fundamental military skills of dress, drill, deportment, crisis counselling, ministry to casualties of critical incidents, and first aid. [They] also participate in physical training and sports programs. Successful completion is a prerequisite for continued enrolment and for further training. (Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch 2006a)

Further training over the course of a chaplain's career includes courses such as Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Operations, the Intermediate Leadership course for promotion to Major, the Senior Chaplain's course for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel and above, further language training, and so forth.¹²⁰

The high standards for entry mean that chaplains enter the branch later than other recruits. A senior representative of the chaplain branch wrote to me that

The average age of recruits ... changes from year to year. It would probably be safe to say 38-40 but that is not absolute. We can have no top age restrictions on recruiting (except Compulsory Retirement Age) and the minimum age is determined by the need for an MDiv (3-4 years after BA) and minimum of 2 years experience. I would guess the starting age would in general be no less than 28 usually but typically we get them much older.¹²¹

On acceptance into the branch, air force and army chaplains attain the rank of Captain (Cpt) and navy chaplains Lieutenant Commander (LtCmdr).¹²² They must spend a minimum of four years at that rank before promotion to the rank of Major becomes a possibility. Competition for promotions is

¹²⁰ On successful completion of this phase, chaplains may be promoted to Major (army and air force) or Lieutenant Commander (navy) (Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch 2006a).

¹²¹ Personal email correspondence Benham Rennick 2007.

¹²² ranking between naval and army officers is dissimilar in structure and therefore has no precise equivalent. For example, a Second Lieutenant (2Lt) is senior to a Midshipman but subordinate to a Sub-Lieutenant. Although there are air force chaplains, because these people do not take flight training, their rank follows the

based on personnel reviews and assessments by a merit board. The Office of the Chaplain General states that

For Chaplains, promotions are based on the recommendation of the ICCMC to the Chief of the Defence Staff for Colonel and the Minister of National Defence for [Brigadier General]. All lesser promotions are decided in the regular CF system.¹²³

While pay for a civilian clergy person might range from no income for volunteer pastors in small communities to significant salaries for lead pastors in a large urban church, clergy in the CF are paid according to their experience and education on par with other military officers. Information given to me from the Chaplain General's Office indicates that the starting salary of a captain in the Chaplain Branch is \$65 904. After ten years at that rank they can make as much as \$87 120. With a promotion, a chaplain's salary increases. Chaplains, like other CF personnel receive regular salary increases throughout their term of service so the longer they serve the more money they make. As in many other professions, the branch calculates a chaplain's pension based on a percentage of his or her top five wage-earning years.¹²⁴

3.3.2 Women in the Branch

As indicated in the previous section, a shortage of Roman Catholic priests created a need for pastoral associates, a number of whom were women. Before that however, Protestant women had been serving in the branch since 1981. Not surprisingly given its historical association with military chaplaincy and early recognition of female clergy, the United Church of Canada gave the CF its first female Protestant chaplain, Rev. Georgina Kling (1981). The first female Roman Catholic chaplain was Huguette Roy, a pastoral associate of course, who started in 1982. Of the regular forces

army system.

¹²³ Personal email correspondence 2007.

¹²⁴ The calculation for determining pension is based on an average salary during the top five wage-earning years of the chaplain. That average is then multiplied by two to calculate the percentage a chaplain will make of that income during their retirement years. For example, a chaplain serving 20 years (20x2=40) will make 40% of the average income they had during their top five wage earning years. If they make \$100 000 they will receive a taxable \$40 000 per year pension. Chaplains receive other one-time benefits paid on release. Personal email correspondence 2007.

chaplaincy, women represent 15% (there are 28 women and 157 men).¹²⁵ This is in keeping with the statistics on women in the CF that places women at approximately 16.7% (DND 2006b). As with current efforts to integrate other minority groups, the inclusion of women in the branch was neither painless nor simple. Some faced gender discrimination and harassment, others struggled (and continue to struggle) with traditional aspects of the branch that graphically illustrate that the job was designed for Christian men.

One of the surprising discoveries of my research was that the affectionate moniker “padre,” a Latin term for “father” historically associated with Roman Catholic priests and later adopted by military chaplains in general, is applied indiscriminately to both Roman Catholic and Protestant ministers and, more peculiarly, to female chaplains. While a number of male chaplains referred to this convention as a matter of tradition and military culture, not all the women agreed. One woman told me,

“That to me is just a lack of planning on the part of the Chaplain Branch. They knew women were joining and they were actively recruiting women but they didn’t have the foresight to address the naming issue.” She continued that some male chaplains justify the use of the term saying that it is “associated with the [ministerial] vocation but ‘padre’ does not describe my vocation – ‘chaplain’ describes my vocation. All they need to do is look at the name – it’s inappropriate and it confuses people.” I asked this chaplain how she preferred to be called and she said, “I prefer ‘chaplain’ but I don’t usually make a big deal of it if people call me ‘padre.’ I believe naming is important; we have names for people who are important in our lives. People often ask me what they should call me. In fact, when I came [to this base], I gave a little training session on appropriate naming and meanings behind names. I taught people here to call me chaplain because ‘padre’ was incorrect denominationally and gender-wise. There are female chaplains in the branch that refuse to answer to the name at all – they go by ‘chaplain’ only. One used ‘madre’ for a while...” she wrinkled her nose in distaste and laughed, “she got in trouble for it too! But the name is important to the members and it should be important to the branch too.” She continued,

“I spent a weekend kayaking with one soldier and we talked about it on and off all weekend. He wanted to know what the issues were and what the right thing to call me was – so it is important to

¹²⁵ See Table 2.

people. Just because something is historically and traditionally done one way doesn't mean it's ethically right. It's funny too, because you'd think it might be some of the old veterans saying this is how it was and forever should be, but it's not them. The old veterans, and there are a lot that come in to my chapel, they don't really care. It's the people who are really invested in the traditions that don't want to change it." Some women take the misnomer in stride however and even see it as an indication of being accepted by the rank and file. A young pastoral associate stated,

"When I came to my unit they were surprised that I was a Roman Catholic chaplain because I'm a woman. When they got used to that they said, 'Well ok, now what are we going to call you?' I told them to call me padre! And they said, 'No! We can't call you padre! That's for a guy!'" She said that she felt comfortable the title because,

"It's a term of endearment for the chaplain so why wouldn't I be? It only presented itself as an issue because the soldiers were uncomfortable with using this masculine term for me. So I said to them, 'Well, what do you want to call me' and they said, 'What about padrette?'" She chuckled and continued, "So that's what they call me! I'm the padrette! It meant a lot when they gave me a name because in the military, everyone has a nickname. When you get a name it means you're fully accepted into the group."

Apart from trying to conform to or change masculine branch traditions, many female chaplains have experienced discrimination and sexual harassment. One female chaplain described her early years in the chaplaincy as highly stressful because of the excessive pressures placed on her by male chaplains with whom she worked. She said,

"In my first posting I was posted with two older chaplains and neither of them had any time for women as ordained ministers. I was struggling because I was doing all of my boss's work and I had no guidance and I was new at the chaplain role and they were rude and aggressive with me. When I'd walk into a meeting they'd remark, 'Oh, better watch out! She's being a real bitch today!' That kind of thing. I ended up going for counselling and they moved one of the chaplains because there were other problems with him." She described how that chaplain already had a number of sexual harassment complaints against him before her experiences and added, "I would say that most women in the forces have been harassed. If you don't come into the military with thick skin you become that way very quickly." Other women I interviewed affirmed this position although most of

them also commented that the situation for women in the CF has improved significantly in the last decade.

Other forms of sexism female chaplains face are slightly more subtle and come as much from personnel as from other chaplains. One female pastoral associate, in describing the differences between herself and her male counterparts said,

“I don’t really want to perform all the sacraments but it does bother me that they treat [women] different. It’s easier for the men who are pastoral associates because everyone just assumes they’re priests. But I have the exact same training and the same degree as them or the priest, yet they treat me differently. If I’m standing in a room with a male pastoral associate or a priest, people will direct their questions to the men even though I might be the one with the most experience or training in there. That kind of bugs me but it’s gotten better over the years. When I first joined, I was [quite young] and it was a lot harder to get respect. As I get a little older I find people more respectful and the priests on base are really good about sending people back to me because they know that I know what’s going on better than they do.”

On the other hand, being a woman has some advantages. A long-serving Protestant woman explained that, despite some of the early struggles for acceptance and respect, she had benefited by her difference with a number of branch “firsts” She said,

“I was one of the first women in the branch. That was such a big deal back then and now, it’s a non-issue. I was invited to preach in a Roman Catholic Church while I was serving [overseas] and a little old lady squeezed me and, weeping, she said she was honoured to hear a woman preaching in her church. I was granted this privilege because I represented the CF. While I was in [another posting] I also preached in a Roman Catholic church where they blessed me with incense and explained to the congregation why I could not take communion but then prayed for greater unity and cooperation between the churches. Both of these situations were a real honour for me.” Similarly, Major Leslie Dawson discovered that being a female chaplain serving in Afghanistan gave her significant advantages over her male counterparts in allowing her, a Danish female chaplain, and two other female Canadian soldiers, to conduct regular visits to a women’s prison in Kabul. She writes,

we in turn heard each of their stories... stories, difficult to comprehend through the lens of our Western norms, customs and values ... a young woman in her late teens wouldn't agree to marry the man chosen for her by her parents – sentenced to a 9 month jail term. Another fell in love with a man her parents did not approve of – sentenced to an 11-month jail term. Another, raped by her cousin, doused him in gasoline – sentenced to 5 years in jail. ... While riveted in conversation with these women, children came and went infants, toddlers and youngsters all reside with their mothers within the prison walls. ... We have been granted permission to conduct weekly visits – females only.¹²⁶

On home territory female chaplains note that,

“Sometimes men actually prefer to talk to a woman. There are definitely those that have their guard up and won't talk to you, but when it comes to talking about relationships and families and stuff, they seem to prefer to talk to me because priests don't have that experience. They are often really open with me about their marriages or relationships.” One woman working in a counselling role described how, following the Rwandan genocide a number of Canadian soldiers who came to her for counselling were very angry at religion and Christian clergy in general because of their participation in the killing.¹²⁷ She remarked,

“So there was this initial anger at speaking to me as a chaplain but not so much because I was a woman. In fact, I think in some cases, it really disarmed them and there was less anxiety in speaking to me. I think a lot of the people felt that I was a ‘safe person’ because I am a woman. A lot of times these old stereotypical infantry guys would come in and I'd look at them and think, ‘They're not going to talk to me’ and they'd just open right up and tell me their troubles!”

Some female chaplains feel that their sometimes-tense relations with male chaplains cause conflict among the women themselves as they try to adapt to the male environment. One woman explained that there can be,

¹²⁶ Personal email correspondence Benham Rennick 2006. A public reference to this story and a photograph of Major Dawson is published on the branch website (deLaplante 2005). Another description of Major Dawson's peace building efforts with Afghani Mullahs is available in *Emmaus* (Harvey 2006).

¹²⁷ Many Rwandan clergy were complicit in the genocide. See Ritner et al. 2004.

“... a kind of strange, strained dynamic among the women chaplains. Some of them tried to get some support going and some were really interested but then others were not at all interested. They don’t want to segregate themselves – sort of a guilt-by-association thing, like ‘if I just hang out with the men here they might not notice I’m a woman and I’ll get along better.’” In comparison, another woman described a successful support system with her female peers on one posting saying,

“I really enjoyed working with them and being able to talk to someone that understood what I was facing. We took care of each other and really supported each other. We would watch each other’s house when one of us went on tour, we’d send each other care packages. We were on the same wavelength and we knew the importance of simple caring acts that could really make a world of difference when you are away.”

A pastoral associate made the astute remark that differences and tensions occurring between women sometimes result, not from their relationship with the men in the branch or due to their gender, but because of differences in religious culture. She commented,

“I find the Protestant women really have more of a killer instinct than I do. They learn the politics and they know how to fight for a position or a paycheque. They’re much more savvy dealing with leadership and are willing to fight to get what they want – I mean that in a positive way. I wish I had some of those skills but as a Roman Catholic, I’ve always just been told where I’ll be assigned and what I’ll be doing by the Bishop and that’s what you do. It’s not like the Protestants who have to apply for jobs and be approved by congregations. They’re more like business people than us. This is an advantage for them. For the longest time there were no women pastoral associates getting promotions but the Protestant women would get promoted. The Protestants knew how the game was played while the Roman Catholics accepted their lot and went where they were told. That’s starting to change.”

Despite these points of frustration, the personnel within the branch manage to work together effectively for the most part. One senior female chaplain told me,

“There is a lot of professional cooperation and quality leadership in the branch. You can see where the weaknesses are – some people are in it for a job, for the money, some are not very kind. But at the same time, I see a brother- and sisterhood second to none because we need each other. If

we don't, we lose the mission. We have to let go of the pettiness. The Chaplain General and senior officers expect it of us and the COs know they need us for 'their people.'”

The incorporation of women in the military is a significant point of discussion within the literature on the “postmodern military” environment. Female chaplains’ experiences with intolerance, marginalization, and harassment, as well as their confrontation with branch traditions more suited to male clergy gives an important indication of some of the potential conflicts other clergy people who do not fit the traditional model of the chaplaincy might face when they attempt to join the branch.

3.3.3 Military Operations Other Than War

At the same time that changes were occurring within the Chaplain Branch to create efficiencies, include women, and ensure fairness, the years between 1980 and 2000 brought significant changes to the types of missions Canadian military personnel supported.

During the first half of the 1980s, military expenditures continued to be highly scrutinized and tightly controlled despite the need to replace obsolete equipment in the face of on-going UN and NATO commitments, as well as increased American demands and the need for protecting Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic and along the world’s longest coastline. Ongoing sabre-rattling between the US and Soviet Union kept Canada on alert while engagement in missions termed “military operations other than war” (MOOTW),¹²⁸ meant yet another cultural shift for military personnel. In these operations, further to the relatively recent role of peacekeeping, soldiers might now be engaged in peacemaking, humanitarian aid, as well as rescue and reconstruction efforts. In the mid-1980s, besides service with UN and NATO missions already in place,¹²⁹ Canadian military personnel participated in a number of high-profile international humanitarian aid and disaster relief missions to Ethiopia, Mexico, Colombia, Armenia, Jamaica, and the small islands of Montserrat and

¹²⁸ Pronounce “moot-wuh.” Some analysts refer to these simply as “operations other than war” or OOTW. For further discussion on this concept, see Andreas et al. 2001, LaRose-Edwards et al. 1997, and Freakely 1998.

¹²⁹ Canadians had been in the Middle East as part of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) since 1948, in Cyprus with the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) since 1964, and in Syria with the UN Disengagement Observer Force Syria (UNDOF) since 1974 (Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada 2003).

Nevis (Canadian Legal Information Institute 1997).¹³⁰ Furthermore, they went to six different international locations for observer and peacekeeping duties.¹³¹ In all, the 1980s saw Canadians participate in approximately 14 different non-combat missions around the globe. Then, suddenly during the 1990s, in addition to the Gulf War, Canadians participated in over 30 variously sponsored missions that occurred worldwide and included some of the most traumatic and difficult non-combat operations ever faced by Canadian military personnel. For example, during that period, Canadian soldiers responded to the Balkan and Rwandan genocides, as well as to the fierce tribal warring in Somalia (DFAIT 2007). The new operational environment compounded the discomfort, danger, and loneliness typical of military operations by introducing atrocities and human suffering on a scale almost unimaginable to most Canadians. Stress on these missions continued to be extremely high and many people turned to chaplains for counsel and consolation (Benham Rennick 2005; English 2000, 35).¹³²

Along with the hardship experienced on these missions, personnel had increasing involvement with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Médecins Sans Frontières and the Red Cross, as well as with local government officials and civilians. In this new environment personnel must be capable of working closely and effectively with other multinational forces to secure and maintain peace, restore order and bring aid (DND 2007d; Morgan 2003, 373). Chaplains deployed to regions where religion and religious authority were a central aspect of the culture, found their religious authority and knowledge was helpful in establishing positive local relationships. This new ambassadorial role continues to be especially important when Canadian personnel are working with individuals who are not Canadian Forces members. For example, from July 2003 to January 2004 Chaplain Leslie Dawson served as the senior chaplain to the International Security Assistance Force

¹³⁰ In recognition of personnel who served on these and other humanitarian missions, the Canadian Forces commissioned a Special Services Medal Bar for Humanitarian Service (Canadian Legal Information Institute 1997).

¹³¹ These missions included the Multinational Force Observers in the Sinai Peninsula (MFO Sinai, 1986-present), UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG, 1988-1991), UN Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP, 1988-1990), UN Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA, 1989-1992), UN Observer Mission for the Verification of the Electoral Process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN, 1989) and the UN Transition Assistance Group Namibia (UNTAG, 1989-1990)

¹³² English states that stress on non-combat missions is potentially "... more stressful than combat in war" (2000, 35). See chapter four for further discussion.

serving in Kabul Afghanistan. Despite being the only woman among them, Dawson was able to establish positive relations with multi-national military chaplains and approximately forty local mullahs (Harvey 2006, 5). Similarly, during his participation in the Afghanistan mission, Muslim chaplain Suleyman Demiray said this,

My interacting with local Muslim leaders, especially those who were more suspicious of the West ... was a significant opportunity... It was a little bit problematic that I had no beard, and wore (the) Canadian military uniform ... (but) despite my appearance, they were able to accept me as a Muslim cleric because of my education and knowledge. (Arseniuk 2007)

In many non-western societies religion often retains important authority and influence (Casanova 1994). As a result, chaplains working with CF troops in these regions are sometimes able to inspire greater cooperation from civilians because of the status ascribed to them as religious leaders. Another chaplain serving on a disaster relief mission following the 2004 tsunami in South East Asia was able to establish positive relations with local Buddhists because of his religious status. Following a meeting with the senior monk at a local monastery he was able to get far greater cooperation from civilians than other non-religious members of the team. He said,

“The COs were amazed at all the information I was bringing back ... but it’s because, as a religious person, all the doors are open to you.”

Along with creating new opportunities for establishing positive relations, military operations other than war face military personnel with new ethical challenges. For example, the Executive Summary of the Report of the Somalia Commission of Inquiry states that, following their mission in Somalia, the Canadian Airborne Regiment was disbanded due to

the shooting of Somali intruders at the Canadian compound in Belet Huen, the beating death of a teenager in the custody of soldiers from 2 Commando of the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR), an apparent suicide attempt by one of these Canadian soldiers, and, after the mission, alleged episodes of withholding or altering key

information. (Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia 1997)¹³³

This experience convinced CF leaders that the training and leadership in place at the time had not evolved sufficiently to support personnel on the new types of missions faced by Canadian troops (Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia 1997; Razack 2004; Whitworth 2005; Winslow 1997).¹³⁴ Further, the fiasco in Somalia demonstrated a strong need for cultural sensitivity and religious literacy about both the civilian populations and the international troops with whom Canadian soldiers work (Razack 2000; Whitworth 2005). One senior commander explained to me that,

“During the 1990s the padres were a very strong ethical base but they were never really called upon by the leadership because of their connection to structured religion and many people no longer turned to structured religion anymore. It was an absolute state of desperation that would push the COs to turn to the padres ... After [Somalia], the padres got very much involved and were able to provide people with another perspective, another angle for looking at problems. At that time, they really did start to be more in your face and present.”

In response to the changing operational environment, the chaplain school added courses in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, ecumenical team building, ethics training, pastoral counselling, as well as self care (Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch 2003, 5.1-5.2). In response to the stresses faced by members employed in military operations other than war the branch mandated that chaplains participate in military training to manage critical stress, and in suicide intervention.

In the new postmodern military environment that includes operations other than war, knowledge about religion is often essential both for understanding the conflict and establishing relations with the locals. Chaplains on these missions are increasingly expected to interpret religious and cultural issues

¹³³ For further reading about this mission see for example Razack 2004 and the Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia 1997.

¹³⁴ For a discussion of the “fundamental contradiction of relying on soldiers in so-called ‘peace’ operations,” see Whitworth 2005 and Winslow 1997.

for troops and, because of their religious status, to act as liaisons with local leaders and citizens (Fowler 1996, 258-259; Harvey 2006).

3.4 The 21st Century: Towards an Interfaith Branch

The current make up of the Chaplain Branch is mostly male (85%)¹³⁵ and Protestant (48%). Of the Protestant chaplains, the majority continue to come from those denominations that have traditionally filled the branch; that is “the big three” identified at the end of the last chapter. Anglican priests account for 40% of all Protestants, and United Church ministers make up the next largest group at 28%, followed by Baptists at 15%. Roman Catholics constitute the next largest group at 43% even though the majority of military personnel are Roman Catholic. This gap results from the shortage of Roman Catholic priests in Canada. The remaining 8% of branch members come from “Other Christian” denominations except for one Muslim.¹³⁶

Historically, Canadian Forces Chaplains have demonstrated impressive adaptability in their attempts to remain relevant to the personnel they serve. However, their efforts do not always come without struggles as we saw with the inclusion of women in the branch. These struggles continue as chaplains work to minister to people without betraying their religious vocation. They are most evident in the increasingly diverse duties of chaplains who must accommodate all religious orientations equally. Religious accommodation of others, interdenominational differences, decreasing interest in the chapels and other elements of formal religion, as well as the stresses of military operations are sources of anxiety and frustration for individual chaplains and the chaplaincy branch. This section examines these contentious aspects of the modern-day chaplain branch.

3.4.1 Religious Accommodation

The culture of the branch starting with the British Chaplain Service was one based on a sentiment of Christian supremacy. In these armies, clergy were present as much to serve the warriors as to invoke

¹³⁵ These numbers are based on regular force statistics supplied to me by the Chaplain Branch. There are approximately 185 chaplains in the regular forces. See Tables 1 and 2.

¹³⁶ There is one rabbi in the reserve forces but none in the regular forces.

victory and even to fight in battle. Evidence of this culture is seen in the former chaplains' badge that bore the image of a Maltese Cross, a symbol worn by the Templar Knights who guaranteed Christians safe passage as they journeyed to Jerusalem during the Crusades.¹³⁷ The badge bore the Latin motto *In Hoc Signo Vinces* ("In this sign you shall conquer"), which recalls the victory of the Roman Emperor Constantine at the Milvian Bridge, a victory that would lead to the Christianization of the Roman Empire.¹³⁸ While Canadian military motivation during World Wars I and II were more aligned with the idea of "fighting the good fight"¹³⁹ than imposing the Christian doctrine, the culture remained strongly integrated with the notion of military power and domination inherent in the British system.¹⁴⁰

Administrative practices, government regulations and court decisions following the adoption of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* secularized all Canadian institutions by removing the Christian elements embedded in them. In the CF chaplaincy, which by nature is a religious institution, the *Charter* has presented a need to become multi-faith rather than exclusively Christian. In accordance with the spirit of the *Charter* as it has been interpreted by the courts, military chaplains of all faith traditions are required to "accommodate the fundamental religious requirements of [CF] members" (DND 2003d). They do this by offering opportunities for religious worship, performing the Christian sacraments (e.g., marriage, baptism), visiting the sick and in prison, offering pastoral counselling and crisis intervention, and advising on moral and ethical matters (DND 2003d). As more non-Christians join the CF the fundamental religious requirements have changed and chaplains have had to modify a number of their basic beliefs, practices, and traditions. For example, in 2005 senior officials in the Chaplain Branch changed the controversial branch motto noted above to the

¹³⁷ See Image 1. The Canadian badge and motto were copied from the British chaplaincy. Unlike the British badge, the Canadian badge is circled with maple leaves (instead of laurel leaves; the mark of victory) and the motto appears in Latin instead of English. See Seward 1995 for a full discussion of this group.

¹³⁸ Before the battle, Constantine is said to have looked to the sky where he saw a vision of the first two Greek letters of Christ's name (*chi* χ and *rho* ρ – see Image 2) and heard a voice saying "in this sign be victorious." Following the vision, Constantine had his soldiers place the image on their shields before marching against the forces of Maxentius. Constantine's forces won a decisive battle and the Cho-Rhi was adopted as the *labarum*, or military banner, carried by his troops in all future battles. For more on this story see Baynes 1972 and Barnes 1981.

¹³⁹ This reference comes from the New Testament book of 2 Timothy 4:7.

¹⁴⁰ See Crerar 1995 and 2006b.

more inclusive *Vocatio Ad Servitium* or “Called to Serve.” Furthermore, while Christian chaplains continue to bear the Maltese cross on their badge, new badges were introduced for Muslim and Jewish chaplains showing symbols more appropriate for these traditions.¹⁴¹

Like the badge, the official hymn of the chaplaincy, *Onward Christian Soldiers*, affirmed a culture of Christian superiority and was changed to the more inclusive *Joyful Joyful We Adore Thee*.¹⁴² In other areas, chaplains are making efforts to include non-Christians in events such as Remembrance Day ceremonies, Royal Military College (RMC) parades and other public military ceremonies. For example, a recent Consecration of the Colours (a formal religious ceremony where the flag of a regiment or group is paraded forward and dedicated in service of the country) at RMC in Kingston involved no less than eight religious groups. Roman Catholic Chaplain Padre Swavek Gorniak of RMC says:

The original regulation in the Canadian Forces stated that the consecration of colours had to be carried out by a revered religious figure. Since the Royal Military College of Canada reflects Canadian society by its mosaic of different ethnic groups, cultures and faith traditions we believed it was necessary for this celebration to have a multi faith spirit. As such, our consecration ceremony included the main religions represented at the College. (Gorniak 2001)

Other formal ceremonies have ensured that

a multiplicity of religious leaders can participate. Religious leaders from the Buddhist, First Nations, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities took part in the prayer vigil for the Unknown Soldier in on Parliament Hill. Religious leaders from those communities also participated in the multifaith consecration of the National Military Cemetery a week prior to the dedication ceremony. (Department of National Defence May 24 2005)

¹⁴¹ The Muslim badge bears an image of the crescent moon symbolic of Islam while the Jewish badge depicts the stone tablets of the Torah (laws given to Moses by God) and the Star of David. See Images 3 and 4.

¹⁴² See Appendix A. What is interesting about this change is that it works well for those belonging to Abrahamic traditions. Whether they branch will change this tradition again as other groups join, revert to allowing greater differentiation between the religious traditions (as in the pre-unification era), or drop the tradition all together remains to be seen.

The Department of National Defence provides information on a number of different religious groups in their publication *Religions in Canada* (DND 2003d) for the purpose of assisting officers and chaplains working with members of these groups.¹⁴³ Further, a number of interfaith worship spaces have been created on bases across Canada either by modifying Christian chapels, such as at Royal Military College in Kingston where the chaplains have installed a heavy curtain to separate the chapel for the purposes of Muslim prayer and arranged for the installation of footbaths in the washrooms to facilitate ablutions.¹⁴⁴ Base chaplain Lieutenant Commander Doug Ohs at CFB Shilo, was largely responsible for the creation of the first ever multifaith centre (called simply “The Faith Centre”) on a Canadian Forces base in 2007 (Power 2007). Another first on the base is the Aboriginal “Circle of Unity Lodge” housed within The Faith Centre that offers “sacred sweat-lodge ceremonies and workshops to CF members and their families” (Thiessen 2006). More recently, chaplains at the same base have invited a number of civilian religious leaders including Aboriginal Elders, a Baha’i leader and an Imam to revitalize the WWII send off ceremony for personnel being deployed to Afghanistan. In the traditional ceremony Christian chaplains blessed the troops and prayed for their safety and success. In the modern version, each religious leader or community takes a role to add their blessing to the group. Following the service religious objects such as copies of the Koran and the Bible, as well as Aboriginal smudge kits¹⁴⁵ are made available for personnel to take with them on the mission.¹⁴⁶ Along with groundbreaking efforts such as these, Christian chaplains serving on bases often rely on non-Christian civilian religious leaders to assist them in serving military personnel. For example, CFB Esquimalt in British Columbia employs a local Aboriginal elder to minister to the Aboriginals at that base and CFB Petawawa in Ontario works closely with civilian Muslim resources.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Among these groups are: Baha’i, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Native Spirituality, Rastafarianism, Sikhism, Unitarian Universalist Church, Wicca, Zoroastrianism, and others. For the complete list, see Appendix B.

¹⁴⁴ One component of Muslim prayer is ritual ablutions – or washing – of the head, hands and feet.

¹⁴⁵ The smudge ceremony is a healing and purifying ritual that involves burning sweetgrass, tobacco, sage or cedar.

¹⁴⁶ Benham Rennick personal correspondence 2007.

¹⁴⁷ Benham Rennick notes 2006.

Not all chaplains have valued efforts to update the culture from a Christian men's association to an environment that values pluralism and difference however. One chaplain describing the change to the chaplain badge said this:

This small change was met with significant opposition from a number of service members, including some chaplains. Critics objected on a range of issues but primarily they saw the change as over-zealous political correctness and an unwarranted denial of Branch heritage to accommodate a very small portion of the military community. (Dingwell 2004, 5)

For these dissenters, the exclusion of a few was less significant than the disruption of long-standing branch traditions. Other chaplains suggest that while they recognize the need for cultural changes that accommodate the needs of others, they lack the skills and resources to implement these changes effectively. One chaplain described his frustration in attempting to prepare a multifaith religious ceremony to his religiously diverse unit. He said,

“Since we had at least six different major religions represented in the unit, I didn't want to be explicitly Christian... and the branch manual had a form that they claimed was that [religiously neutral], but all they'd done was taken the traditional service and taken out name of Jesus. But you had references to God's suffering. Well... the suffering God is Jesus!”¹⁴⁸ Another chaplain, following the bombing of the Twin Towers in New York City on September 11, 2001, described his struggle to meet the needs of non-Christians in his care while serving on a tour of duty in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He said:

the first person to seek out spiritual support... [was a devoted] Wiccan ... How could a Christian chaplain help another from a vastly different faith community struggle with the emotional and spiritual challenges of that moment? Furthermore, three days later, at the request of the Commanding Officer, [I] led a memorial service so that all within the camp, military and civilian might have an opportunity to reflect and pray. Attending that service were about three hundred people of many religious backgrounds, including a large number of the locally engaged employees. Most, if not all, of these civilian employees were Muslim. This personal example is not

¹⁴⁸ Personal interview Benham Rennick.

unlike the many challenges all military chaplains face each day throughout Canada and around the world, and one can easily predict that those challenges will occur even more frequently in the future. (Dingwell 2004, 2)¹⁴⁹

As this chaplain suggests, there is every indication that religious diversity has overtaken the Chaplain Branch with its Christian roots and heritage, and chaplains are now scrambling to keep up.

For most chaplains I interviewed, serving personnel regardless of their personal spirituality is a natural aspect of the CF ministry.¹⁵⁰ For others however, the obligation to put individual rights and freedoms before their own religious perspective (about issues such as marrying gay couples, for example) creates problems of conscience and integrity that makes it difficult to do the job.

During a conference held at the University of Victoria on the *Chaplains in War and Peace: Ethical Dilemmas of Conscience and Conflicting Professional Roles in Military Chaplaincy in Canada*¹⁵¹ civilian and military personnel gathered to discuss the difficulties of performing religious ministry in an environment that incorporates large numbers of secular and also, to a lesser extent, multifaith members. During the course of discussions, it became clear that CF chaplains have distinctly different challenges than their civilian peers. They cannot count on a consensus of beliefs among the people they serve and they often find their own values at odds with their responsibility to serve all members of the CF. Further, unlike civilian ministers, CF chaplains must not only respect the diverse beliefs of military personnel but also accommodate those needs as much as possible. Retired navy Chaplain Bill Howie, stated that,

¹⁴⁹ To facilitate chaplains and commanding officers in meeting the needs of different faith groups in the CF, the Department of Defence Directorate of Military Gender Integration and Employment Equity published their innovative book, *Religions in Canada* (Department of National Defence 2003b) . The book describes “major religious and spiritual requirements and tenets, including celebrations and observances as well as dress, dietary, medical and health requirements” of thirty-eight different religious groups in Canada (Department of National Defence 2003b, Introduction). Twenty-seven of the groups in this book are Christian minority groups and eleven are non-Christian groups including Rastafarianism, Wicca, Native Spirituality and Zoroastrianism. For a full list of the religious groups described in this book, see Appendix B.

¹⁵⁰ In fact, most say that their religion serves them rather than the people to whom they minister. I discuss the role of religion in connection to military service at length in chapter four.

¹⁵¹ This conference was sponsored by the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria in British Columbia April 25-26, 2005.

“Sometimes it’s impossible to do what you’re expected to because it is fundamentally opposed to what you believe is right. To cope with this a chaplain has to be firmly rooted in something deeper.” He added that, in the context of current cultural challenges being faced by CF chaplains, “Change is always difficult – particularly when you value the tradition. Often you have to take yourself out of it, put your opinions aside in order to meet other people’s needs.”¹⁵²

For many chaplains, this is not problematic and numbers of them see the service of all people as a part of their calling as Christian ministers. However, there are those for whom religious accommodation creates serious conflicts of faith and duty particularly in the face of contentious issues such as the rights of homosexuals within the Christian churches.¹⁵³ In the same session, former Chaplain General Ron Bourque stated that gay marriage would be “something of a testing ground for padres.” He said,

“Faced with this expectation, a padre will find out if he or she is well-suited to the role. The padre’s struggle might not even be in handling the marriage ceremony but in assisting the couple at all during the process. If a padre can’t even handle a referral they’re in the wrong place. Padres need to balance caring for all with their obligations and duties. They have to consider the chapel-life aspect of the decision they make [with respect to marrying a gay couple in the base chapel] because it could damage the congregational community. It is a military policy that gay and lesbian rights be protected from discrimination and that their rights be respected, but the decision made by the chaplain will still affect the chapel life [and other military personnel attending there]. If the chaplain’s church has endorsed gay marriages and the chaplain of that denomination refuses to perform the ceremony because of a crisis of conscience, she or he risks directly disobeying their superior officer.”¹⁵⁴ Getting

¹⁵² This statement was made during a community seminar on “Chaplains in War and Peace: Ethical Dilemmas of Conscience and Conflicting Professional Roles in Military Chaplaincy in Canada” hosted by the University of Victoria Centre for Studies in Religion and Society April 25, 2006. Personal notes, Benham Rennick.

¹⁵³ Up until 1992, the military *Code of Service Discipline* meant that persons discovered to be gay or lesbian were given a dishonourable discharge (Jackson 2003a, 4). Today, gays and lesbians are free to participate in every area of the services, including the chaplaincy, and same-sex marriages are officiated by some CF chaplains (specifically, those ordained in the United Church of Canada).

¹⁵⁴ In reality, a superior officer has no authority to order a chaplain in ecclesial matters; the chaplain is directly responsible to the denomination they serve. Nonetheless, if a chaplain did refuse to comply in such a situation, that decision could provoke the displeasure of the superior officer who could then register a complaint to their appropriate denominational representative on the ICCMC.

an outside chaplain to come in and perform the ceremony might be a safe option [for addressing this conflict of faith and duty]. A further issue for the couple is that a military marriage is a guaranteed 'coming out' and they may not be prepared to deal with that. Chaplains have a 'faith and conscience' clause that allows them to make moral decisions based on their personal faith and conscience. Although this doesn't directly address the issues of impact to the congregation or disobeying a direct command from the Chaplain General, it will keep more padres in the military in the face of these types of [ethical dilemmas of conscience and conflicts of duty]."¹⁵⁵

One chaplain writes that chaplains should be "at the forefront advocating for gender equality and for the right of all to work in a harassment free environment regardless of their race or colour or sexual orientation" (Park 2003, 111). However, chaplains from denominations that do not agree with homosexuality consider this kind of remark an offence against their beliefs. On the matter of homosexual marriage, one chaplain told me,

"Even though I am required to be respectful and to care for homosexuals, I do not support what they do. I believe homosexuality is an abomination in the sight of God. I had a lesbian couple come to me and ask me to marry them and I told them my faith would not allow me to do that. But I am required [by the military] to *facilitate* their decision so I made arrangements with a civilian minister in the area who was willing to conduct the marriage. I don't agree with what they do, but I can still treat them with respect and kindness as long as they don't expect me to lie about what I believe or act against those beliefs." Other chaplains may not be so accommodating however. One homosexual CF member described to me how, on arriving at a new base, the base chaplain told the chapel community about the person's sexual orientation with the stated intentions of "protecting other believers."

¹⁵⁵ Again it must be noted that, technically speaking, the Chaplain General does not "command" chaplains. Instead, chaplains work to fulfil the mandates of the branch in accordance with their ecclesial obligations as established by their denomination. This statement was made during a community seminar on "Chaplains in War and Peace: Ethical Dilemmas of Conscience and Conflicting Professional Roles in Military Chaplaincy in Canada" hosted by the University of Victoria Centre for Studies in Religion and Society April 25, 2006. Personal notes, Benham Rennick.

For some chaplains the matter of serving others who do not belong to a Christian tradition is more basic than contentious issues like homosexuality. One chaplain described the difficulty of being involved in an interfaith ceremony explaining that, according to his beliefs,

“[I] can’t say some of their prayers, or say ‘Amen’ to some of the prayers of other groups. I struggle with the accommodation given to other groups because we [Christians] are supposed to be sensitive to all these other groups yet we’re asked to take down our cross in the Christian chapel when they want to use the space in an interfaith way. I feel that non-Christians are not expected to yield in the same way as Christian chaplains are.” A padre from a conservative evangelical tradition told me,

“Regarding ministry to other denominations – I tell people that my beliefs will affect the way I minister to them. If they don’t want that, I’ll help them find a social worker to work with them.”

Despite differing points of view, the vast majority of CF chaplains have found ways to accommodate the needs by relativizing their perspective. One chaplain explained that he does this is by relating to personnel first and foremost as a fellow-member of the CF. He said,

“If I come to them and speak to them like an Anglican priest, they’re not going to let me in, they’re going to put walls up. But if I come to them and speak like a soldier, they’re going to understand me and relate to me and trust me. I need to be able to speak like a soldier in order to relate to them and gain their trust. This ability allows me to transcend differences I couldn’t overcome otherwise. For example, one soldier, a Wiccan came to me for some help with a personal issue. He expressed his religious identity as ‘Wiccan’ but he was also a soldier. I clearly can’t relate to him as a Wiccan because I’m not Wiccan. But I can relate to him as a soldier, because I am a soldier. So we can find common ground that way and I can help him get what he needs that way.” He continued,

“I accept people as they are and I am very flexible. That can be hard for a lot of chaplains because they are so earnestly trying to ‘do good!’” he smiled. “They forget to see the people first! We need to be flexible and open-minded and willing to meet people where they are. To be able to do all that without losing sight of our institutional connection is very tricky. We need a branch that is interfaith and reflects Canadian values but individuals within that branch should be free to be who they *are* – very flexible mind you, but themselves nonetheless and following their *own* beliefs.” A female chaplain argued,

“If we’re not able to minister in a pluralistic environment where people don’t want black and white answers then we’re not going to be relevant. If we can’t talk about spirituality outside of our religious perspective and realize that there are people with different faith perspectives we will not be relevant. They don’t want us to talk about religion, they want us to journey with them as they find ways to make meaning out of their situation. It’s really about helping them find meaning in the chaos and we cannot journey with people if we’re so rigid that we can’t step beyond our own theological blinders. The sacraments are good for people who value that kind of stuff but what we really need to be able to do is to bring the sacred – our ministry of presence – into the chaos and hell.”

While religious accommodation is mandated by Canadian law, adaptations of branch traditions indicate that the Chaplain Branch has adopted religious diversity as one of its values. While some clergy in the branch struggle with how best to serve minority groups who do not share their beliefs, others struggle with the notion of accommodating non-believers and personnel with different morals at all. Chaplains have already noted some of the difficulties of ministering to members whose beliefs have little or nothing in common with their own. Furthermore, they point to difference in values, even among those who share their faith tradition, as a challenge for chaplains who desire to meet the needs of personnel without undermining the integrity of their own beliefs and vocation. These challenges will not diminish in the future. In fact, they are more likely to increase given statistics on religion in Canada that point to increasing numbers of religious minorities as well as “religious nones” (Bélanger, L. Martel, and E. Caron-Malenfant 2005; Statistics Canada 2003a, 2004a).

3.4.2 Denominational Differences and Interfaith Issues

Beyond situations that pit personal faith against duty, chaplains face the broader struggle of becoming an interdenominational and ultimately, interfaith group. While many chaplains are open to diversity in the branch, differences in vocational accreditation requirements among Christian denominations already raise concerns about equality and justice. As we saw earlier, the branch has attempted to create fair entrance standards for chaplains. However, these standards are based on the denominational requirements of Christian groups.

The different requirements for religious ministry cause problems on several levels and in relationships between Francophone and Anglophones, Protestants and Roman Catholics, and between those who are ordained and those who are not. Before the branch integrated into a single office, Protestant and Roman Catholic ministers functioned within and according to their own distinct systems. Since amalgamation, and more so now with the growing presence of pastoral associates and non-Christian groups in the branch, those distinctions have become contentious, particularly with respect to credentials and entrance requirements. One side effect of these efficiencies is a growing sense of competition in the branch. One chaplain explained to me that, prior to the amalgamation of the Protestant and Roman Catholic branches into a single unit,

“The branches behaved in a more Christian way. Now they’re all competing for promotions... thirty people for 15 spots instead of 15 spots each. I would like to see [members of] the branch treat each other better. People can be so un-Christian in our own branch. The bosses are now more worried about promotions than taking care of their people. There’s lots of in-fighting, back-stabbing and brown-nosing. It hasn’t always been this way.” Another person made a similar comment about self-promotion versus co-operation saying,

“Our bureaucracy really slows things down because instead of working to get good ideas pushed through, we’re arguing about whose ideas they are and where they came from in order to get the promotion.”

Another concern with attempting to streamline requirements for branch members is that the standards are inherently biased in favour of mainstream Christian denominations and Anglophone educational systems. Because Chaplain Branch entry requirements include ordination by a religious body (or, in the case of pastoral associates and non-Christians, approval from a religious authority), the basic level of education for clergy joining the branch is not uniform. For example, a chaplain entering as a Reverend of the United Church of Canada would first have to complete a minimum of six years post-secondary training and then be ordained.¹⁵⁶ Comparatively, Roman Catholic pastoral associates and non-Christians whose tradition does not require higher education can be accepted into the branch with

¹⁵⁶ Most clergy arrive with a Master’s of Divinity. Exceptions to this include clergy trained in French institutions in Québec. Pastoral associates and non-Christian leaders whose religious affiliation does not require higher education can enter the branch with a minimum of a bachelor’s degree.

only four years training.¹⁵⁷ Those entering the system with a Master's of Divinity (MDiv) feel that others joining with only a bachelor's degree are able to get a head start in their career with less advanced training,¹⁵⁸ Pastoral associates feel disrespected and misjudged by their Protestant and Roman Catholic ordained peers who suggest that they have less of a vocation than ordained ministers,¹⁵⁹ and non-Christians attempting to join the branch believe that traditional Christian standards place them at a disadvantage to other groups in the chaplaincy. In fact, the reality is that the branch has developed on an Anglophone, Christian, Western pedagogical model that values credentials – and certain types of credentials – above all else.

During the 2006 Annual Chaplain's Retreat a number of chaplains educated in Québec made public reference to their extreme frustration with the inherently Anglophone Protestant bias of current branch standards for accreditation and promotion. Chaplains trained in Francophone institutions in Québec graduate with *un baccalauréat en théologie spécialisé* instead of the Master's of Divinity granted to their peers trained in Anglophone universities. This three-year degree follows one mandatory year of preparatory studies at a *collège d'enseignement général et professionnel* or, CEGEP.¹⁶⁰ Francophone chaplains in the branch argued that, for a *specialized* degree they must take additional courses that give them equivalent training to their Anglophone peers arriving with an MDiv. At least one Anglophone I asked about this referred to the Francophone chaplains' training as "a glorified BA." During an open session with the Chaplain General and members of the ICCMC Québec-trained chaplains described the injustice of the situation as "un douleur profond pour les aumôniers français."¹⁶¹ Another Francophone chaplain told me in disgust that the same issue comes up every year and is never resolved.¹⁶² Since this event, after working with Université Laval in

¹⁵⁷ Or, a bachelor's degree.

¹⁵⁸ CF Chaplains have a continuing education policy so it is entirely possible for a chaplain with a BA to complete higher education at the expense of the CF after joining the branch. Those who enter with an MDiv or more presumably have done so on their own time and at their own expense.

¹⁵⁹ One Protestant minister exemplified this reality in the suggestion that, "I think there's a stronger sense of vocation with priests than PAs. PAs follow a job and may not be as committed to it as ordained ministers and priests but there's a great demand for Roman Catholics so their lack of ordination is allowed."

¹⁶⁰ The CEGEP (pronounced "say-jep") is a post-secondary institution unique to Québec. It is intended to make higher education more accessible to French-Canadian youth (Government of Québec 2004, 2005).

¹⁶¹ Personal notes, Benham Rennick, June 2006.

¹⁶² French English tensions were further exacerbated when a French chaplain attempted to make his remarks in French to the mainly English-speaking members of the ICCMC. Although wireless headphones for translation

Québec and Université Saint-Paul/Saint Paul University in Ottawa to confirm the equivalency of the Anglophone and Francophone degrees, the ICCMC now accepts the Québec BTh as the equivalent of the MDiv received at English universities.¹⁶³

The sense of injustice and inequality experienced by pastoral associates and chaplains trained in Québec offers insights into the potential problems of the development of an interfaith branch. The Francophone Chaplains argued that the bias inherent in the entrance standards would become a more poignant concern as more chaplains from foreign countries and non-Christian leaders attempt to join the branch. In fact, these issues have come up at least once already with the 2003 inauguration of the first Muslim chaplain ever to serve in the CF, Captain Suleyman Demiray (DND 2003b). Because Islam does not require specific training to be an *imam* (prayer leader), Demiray, who already held a BA in Theology from the University of Ankara Turkey, instead obtained a Master of Arts in Religion from Carleton University in Ottawa. He was granted equivalency to the Masters of Divinity degree that is required of Christian clergy.¹⁶⁴

Like some of the interdenominational rivalries just noted, chaplains express a number of concerns about the developing interfaith aspect of the branch. The ICCMC, former Chaplain General, Ron Bourque,¹⁶⁵ and current Chaplain General Stan Johnstone have stated that the Chaplain Branch is actively seeking other non-Christian religious leaders to meet growing religious needs in the regular forces (Bourque 2006). Like Christian clergy already in the branch, non-Christian chaplains who do

(to either French or English) were available to everyone at the session, none of the panel members were equipped with them – despite the fact that they were speaking to a bilingual audience in an open forum. The ensuing chaos as members scrambled to retrieve headsets was clearly an embarrassment to the members of the ICCMC and the Chaplain General. The speaker had to stand at the microphone for over a minute while people rushed to get headsets. French and English chaplains around the room were visibly disgusted with the debacle. The French padre beside me sat shaking his head in disbelief. After the break, former Chaplain General Ron Bourque gave an earnest apology to the Francophones for the lack of planning that caused panel members to be without headsets during the forum. Personal observation, Benham Rennick 2006. There were approximately 300 chaplains in attendance at the event.

¹⁶³ Personal email correspondence Benham Rennick 2007.

¹⁶⁴ Sheila McDonough and Homa Hoodfar make the interesting observation that “Canadians have adopted the notion that Muslim ‘clerics’ are performing roles comparable to those of Jewish and Christian leaders. [...] Although imams do not actually have a sacramental role, they are adapting, as priests, ministers, and rabbis have done, to the new roles as pastoral counsellors, religious educators, and representatives of the people” (McDonough et al. 2005, 140).

not have post-secondary training will find themselves at a significant disadvantage for promotion and advancement and they are likely to lack credibility and face discrimination from their peers. For example, while most rabbis graduate with a master's degree from a rabbinical school or theological seminary¹⁶⁶ (making them a good fit in the chaplaincy worldview), the majority of other non-Christian religions require no formal education or training to be a religious leader (e.g., Muslims, Hindus, and Aboriginal elders).¹⁶⁷ In some cases, religious groups may have no formal leadership (e.g., some Sikh communities, smaller Christian churches, etc.),¹⁶⁸ while in other groups, such as Buddhism and Hinduism, many religious leaders adopt world-renouncing asceticism and would therefore not be likely to consider the military chaplaincy at all.¹⁶⁹

The issue of fair entrance standards for chaplains from non-Christian traditions came up again when I interviewed an Aboriginal member of the CF who aspires to become the first Aboriginal Spiritual Caregiver.¹⁷⁰ This person argued that for the branch to require religious leaders from non-Christian groups to have similar credentials to Christian clergy is an unfair imposition of Western standards. The elder said,

“They keep saying, ‘You need some type of degree’ but my response is ‘That’s in *your* world, not in *my* world. Stop trying to make your world mine because your world is not the same as mine!’ The chaplaincy must recognize our ceremonies and sacredness just as we recognize theirs. Their way of doing things is bureaucratic, ours is not. They have to realize that our sacred life ways are as valuable as theirs but they are done in different ways. The CF way is a huge bureaucracy and sometimes it’s *too much!* They need to stop and think for a moment because while they aren’t getting

¹⁶⁵ Brigadier General Ron Bourque served as Chaplain General from 2003 to 2006.

¹⁶⁶ See for example The Jewish Theological Seminary <http://www.jtsa.edu/> and the Hebrew Theological College <http://www.htcnet.edu/>. Interestingly, prior to the formalization of the Chaplain Branch and recent efforts to become an interfaith branch, rabbis are the only minority group to have served Canadian soldiers.

¹⁶⁷ Muslim Imams may or may not have formal Qu’ranic training (McDonough et al. 2005, 140-141). Hindu priests and Aboriginal elders are recommended to leadership by their communities and do not require academic training or religious licensing (Acker 2006; ACP 2001; Banerjee et al. 2005, 32; NAHO 2001).

¹⁶⁸ Some do take special training in scripture reading or religious song and music (Mahmood 2005b, 56).

¹⁶⁹ For further reading on this topic see Lipner 1994. Similarly, many Buddhists would fall into this category; see McLellan 1999.

¹⁷⁰ This name was recommended to the ICCMC by a panel of Aboriginal elders from Manitoba that included Métis, Ojibwa, Ashinabe, Dakota and Cree nations. There are currently three Christian Aboriginal chaplains in the Chaplain Branch.

things done, people continue to hurt!” At the same time, this person said that taking a religious studies degree was a good and reasonable alternative to having to acquire specific credentials as an elder,

“I think that’s ok because ... part of our calling is to be a leader to all people ... This would help me to understand and help people from all different religions and backgrounds.” In early 2008 a panel of elders from Manitoba recommended that Aboriginal elders who join the branch could be trained in the First Nations and Aboriginal Counselling (FNAC) degree program at the Brandon University in Manitoba to meet the branch entrance standards.¹⁷¹ This is a four-year bachelor’s degree program in clinical counselling from the point of view of Aboriginal spirituality. As yet (May 2008), no final decisions have been made regarding the appointment of non-Christian Aboriginals to the Chaplain Branch.

Along with concerns about fairness and adequate training, the branch continues to struggle on the journey to becoming an interfaith institution with questions such as which religious groups should be included in the branch and who might effectively represent groups where there is significant diversity of thought and belief within. The following statement made by former Chaplain General Ron Bourque about the difficulty of inviting non-traditional groups to join the highly bureaucratic branch again indicates the emphasis placed on Western standards that govern notions of which religious groups are “acceptable” and what constitutes “appropriate” training for a chaplain. During the 2006 Annual Chaplain’s Retreat Bourque gave the example that a Hindu can be a priest because his family calls him a priest but asked,

“Is that good enough for the people of the CF? How can we call a Hindu chaplain who can represent the CF on a national level and achieve a level of accreditation and accountability that is equivalent to the time and training put in by all of [the current chaplains]? Many religions are not as bureaucratized as Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism.” When I asked one long-serving chaplain trainer what would happen if a Pagan wanted to become a chaplain he replied with a snort,

“Man, some chaplains get into a real tizzy if a Pagan so much as wants to walk into a chapel!” Then, more thoughtfully, he added, “But if there was a demonstrated need, then they’d be accommodated – eventually. It takes time to work through these things with accreditation issues and

all that, but they would be accommodated.” The assumption in both cases is that while the branch policies can be adjusted to accommodate different religious groups, the religious leaders from these groups would also have to adapt their culture and traditions to fit in with Canadian military requirements for accreditation and training.

During the open forum of the 2006 Annual Chaplain Retreat, some chaplains charged that, “the branch is interfaith in name but not in reality” and asked the ICCMC representatives when other non-Christian groups would be invited as members of the ICCMC panel.¹⁷² The General Secretary to the Canadian Council of Churches and United Church minister, the Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton, explained that the ICCMC was working with other Canadian institutions that have recently addressed this or similar issues in order to develop a system that could work for the Canadian Forces.¹⁷³ She explained that one of the hurdles the ICCMC faces is in appointing a representative for groups who are very diverse. For example, in the context of the Canadian Forces at least, the label “Aboriginal” includes the great variety of peoples that fall under the label First Nations, as well as Métis, and Inuit¹⁷⁴ populations; most Aboriginal people are Christians (there are currently three Aboriginal Christian chaplains serving in the regular forces) and some follow traditional Native Spirituality.¹⁷⁵ The problem is in identifying one person to advocate effectively on behalf of all people within these groups. Similarly, although the vast majority of Muslims are Sunni or Shi’ite, there are a number of smaller sects within Islam too.¹⁷⁶ Further, while there are growing numbers of new religious

¹⁷¹ For more information see <http://www.brandonu.ca/Academic/FNAC/admission.asp>

¹⁷² Currently the ICCMC has representatives from the Roman Catholic Church, the Presbyterians, the United Church of Canada, the Lutheran Church, the Anglican Church, and the Churches of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Former Chaplain General Ron Bourque raised the pertinent question of the appropriateness of having the ICCMC continue as a subcommittee to the Canadian Council of Churches, given that it is to be both interfaith, and is ultimately accountable to the Government of Canada for meeting the diverse spiritual needs of military personnel and their families.

¹⁷³ She mentioned Corrections Canada and the Toronto Police Association. Benham Rennick notes 2006.

¹⁷⁴ There are currently approximately 1300 Aboriginals serving in the CF, not including the Canadian Rangers who patrol Canada’s Canadian High Arctic and employ their own local elders. Many of Aboriginals in the CF are Christians; however, the Department of Defence has been actively recruiting Aboriginals since the early 1970s and has a growing number of personnel who follow the Medicine Way, or Aboriginal Spirituality (Moses et al. 2004).

¹⁷⁵ According to Statistics Canada, the majority of Aboriginal people in Canada identify themselves as Christians (2001b). Further, most Inuit members in the CF are members of the Rangers and employ their own civilian elders.

¹⁷⁶ Sunnis represent the vast majority of Muslims followed by Shi’ites. Behind these two groups are numerous

movements in Canada, such as Wicca, these frequently lack the continuity of belief, structure, and leadership of an established religious tradition making it extremely difficult to fairly represent them as a group and, as with Muslims and Aboriginals, appoint a representative that can speak on behalf of all members.¹⁷⁷ However, the inclusion of three non-Christian religious leaders to the ICCMC during 2007 and 2008, (Rabbi Dr. Reuven P. Bulka, a Modern Orthodox Jew from Ottawa; Imam Dr. Mohammed Iqbal Al-Nadvi, a Sunni Muslim from Oakville Ontario; and Aboriginal Elder Roger Armitte, Ojibwa Elder-in-Residence at the University of Manitoba), is an indication of the seriousness with which the branch is approaching its interfaith status.

Even as individual chaplains, the Chaplain Branch and the ICCMC work to include members of other faith groups, some chaplains are worried about how everyone will work together. For example, although the branch expects all chaplains to minister to all personnel regardless of their religious beliefs, the fact that the great majority of CF personnel have a Christian background makes it relatively easy for most Christian chaplains to relate to the members. The assumption among some chaplains is that, for members of other religious traditions, finding common ground may not be so easy. I asked a navy chaplain how minority chaplains might serve on a ship and was told,

“Our one Muslim chaplain would be useless on a ship... He couldn’t do a Sunday liturgy and about 99.9% of the crew are Christian even if in name only. He’d have to be more like a social worker. On a base he’d do just fine because he could still do all the pastoral care stuff and just refer people to an appropriate religious leader which is what we all do – I don’t try to step in for a Rabbi or a Lutheran, I just redirect people to someone that can help them.” One visible minority chaplain who reported having personal experiences of discrimination in the CF explained to me that,

“The CF chaplaincy has a lot of challenges to face, but I think the main one is with the integrations of other religions. Even when we integrated with the Protestants and Roman Catholics there were problems, but we didn’t choose to fight about them. In that case, we chose instead to find common ground and work from there, but you don’t solve problems by sweeping them under the rug!

smaller sects including Sufis, Wahhabis, Zaidis, Ismailis, Kahrijites, Fatimids, and others. For more information on the sects of Islam, see Shahrastani 1984 and Khuri 1990.

¹⁷⁷ For more on the informal nature of Pagan religions including Wicca, see Berger 1999 and Dawson 1998.

You have to address them to solve them. If you are willing to face the problems and address them, it can be a really good union. Theological differences are so wonderful... and so dangerous!” he said chuckled, “With the Protestant-Roman Catholic amalgamation, it was easy to find commonalities but when you add groups with whom there is less common ground there will be more problems because there is a lot of fear. We don’t necessarily have understanding between religious groups so I worry that with the interfaith movement, unless we are willing to talk about our fears and our concerns openly, then we will create internal animosity. If you just drop people in and say, ‘Now work together,’ you create anger. We are 99% Christian now and everyone is saying, ‘How will we have to change because of *them*?’ Until you’re willing to realize that and talk about it, it will build until it explodes.” He continued,

“From the minority perspective, it’s not good to be the ‘only one’ because you could be ostracized or you could be invited...” he paused thoughtfully, “but you are never *fully* invited because you are different! You are never fully invited because people are scared and they don’t really *know* you. So, if you just bring in a few minority religious leaders to be symbols of integration, that’s not good enough. Then you really haven’t gone deep enough to understand and overcome assumptions and fears. No one really wants to face the real question, which is ‘Who are we and how do we want to be constituted?’ because that’s too dangerous! But there is hope, because we have a very good community and good leaders and we trust in God for our future. When we talk about integration here in the CF, what we’re really talking about is ‘some day.’ I think, until you have real numbers of minority personnel in the CF, you don’t know how your integration policies are working. You’ll see if there is real integration when you see minorities growing in numbers in the CF. It’s good to plan, but you can’t really tell until the situation is occurring.”

Without genuine dialogue, commonality of purpose, and equality, the branch could be consumed by factionalism. The successful amalgamation of Protestants and Roman Catholics into one branch as well as the integration of women and pastoral associates indicates that the chaplains are capable of overcoming their differences. Current efforts to increase the fairness of branch entrance requirements as well as numbers of minority leaders show that the branch is committed to the interfaith project. Whether it can be successful in this project is yet to be seen. However the struggles that occurred

during earlier integrations are helpful indicators of possible difficulties religious minorities could face.

3.4.3 Waning Chapel Life

While chapels were important community centres in the post-war years, increasing secularization has reduced considerably the numbers of people now participating in chapel life at most bases. In Protestant chapels when chaplains from a different denomination or with strongly divergent doctrinal stances are posted on a base to replace a departing chaplain there can be serious disruption to the chapel community. Currently there are 43 Christian chapels on CF bases across Canada. Of these, twenty-two are Protestant and twenty-one are Roman Catholic. Many of these chapels share a single building and, in some cases, modifications have also been made to allow interfaith use. At the present time, the Chaplain Branch does not have information about the size and nature of base chapels in Canada. One senior officer remarked that,

“Post Cold-War operations de-emphasized support including chapel life so there is no central information available on chapel size. We need to generate this information in order to get a sense of what is going on in the chapels. This is a structural problem.” Another added,

“Prior to 2003 these stats were not even compiled. There has been an increase in worship from 2003-2004 but we only have very generic information.” Before military cuts during the 1980s chapels “were regularly monitored and this data was available. In those days, chapel life was essential enough to strategic life to know what was going in the chapels... We need to ask ourselves, should chapel ministry be our focus or should we be doing things outside the chapel?”

Chaplains who serve in base or operational chapels across Canada, at sea, and in temporary shelters on operations are called Chapel Life Co-ordinators. Their role is to ensure the effective operations of the chapel by overseeing all the activities that occur therein including Sunday services, Sunday School programs, religious rites such as weddings, special events, and any number of other activities. One pastoral associate described the chapel activities in this way,

“I run the Roman Catholic chapel on [this] base. I manage the Catholic Women’s League here, I pastor the chapel, and I make sure the priests – we have two priests that come on base – are scheduled for Masses and [I do] other administration stuff. Four times a year I’m allowed to do a

liturgy. I'm allowed to baptize... That's an old navy tradition – sailors like to have their children baptized on a ship. I also do burials at sea – usually for retired people who want their ashes strewn at sea.” Another chaplain explained duties at an air force base this way,

“I am the CLC – that is, the Chapel Life Coordinator for the Protestant Chapel [on this base] – I coordinate all the chaplains and the chapel activities. And of course, I oversee all the spiritual activities for the military families here on the base. We [the base chaplains] are obviously much closer with the families [that attend the chapel] than we would be [if we were posted] in a unit because we see them every Sunday or at the activities we have during the week – Bible studies, conferences, picnics or potluck or whatever activity. Even though I'm responsible for the [Protestant] chapel, I remain in constant contact with the base – with everybody, all military, from different confessions. A lot of them will come into my office and they are Roman Catholic. You need to respect that; it is part of the ministry we're doing here. We're here to help the people, we're not here to convert them to our faith or to bring them to our group. That's not the purpose of this [system]...”¹⁷⁸ One chaplain explained that on bases where there are many people from the different mainline churches attending one chapel

“then you need to mix everybody together to work. That is not always easy because they have different civil, moral, and even Biblical perspective of some issues which makes it very difficult.” For those who attend chapels, community and mutual support are central.

Doctrinal and theological differences between Protestant groups have become a significant hurdle for maintaining continuity within a base chapel. For example, one chaplain explained that when chaplains with different doctrinal stances replaced one another at a chapel,

“it really changes the nature of the chapel. Every three years they move the chaplains out and it creates chaos for the community. Just imagine replacing a Pentecostal with an Anglican. There is such a diversity of theological positions that it just confuses people. Every time the chaplain changes people are left in chaos.” Another chaplain said,

“the chapels are getting much smaller so the Chaplain Branch has mandated that all chaplains must worship on base. In reality that's never going to happen. For example, on some bases there will

¹⁷⁸ This interview was conducted in both French and English. This quote includes my translations.

be several chaplains serving a chapel – like at [CFB] Borden, you could have an Anglican, a Christian Reformed, United, and Pentecostal all serving together. Well if I’m supposed to worship there and the Pentecostal – I’ll pick on the Pentecostals for a minute – is preaching and they’re saying that gays and lesbians are an abomination to God and they see women as less than men then I don’t consider that a good place for my family to worship.” As a result, in order to accommodate personal religious interests, and for the sake of continuity, many personnel elect to attend civilian churches off base rather than attend the base chapel.

In fact, chaplains seem to disagree about the continuing value of Christian chapels on bases. At the Annual General Meeting of the Protestant Advisory Group in 2005, one senior chaplain commented that, “50% of chaplains are saying we don’t need chapels ‘the way they are now.’” While another suggested that, “Chapels do really well at the Big Event moments – reacting to crises in life. There needs to be room for both chapel life and other ministry opportunities.” Another chaplain argued that chapels remain important to many military families asking,

“How do we live out our life of faith if we don’t have a worship community? There has to be a place for people to go to back home when there are problems. Some chaplains don’t see themselves as responsible to the families and they refer them elsewhere – to family ministries. This has always been central to our ministry. The chaplain and the chapel are both powerful symbols that people turn to. How many chapels are staying in touch with their people? – sending notes, praying for them, offering family support etc. The biggest question is how we meet the needs of the member and their family.”

Although many insist that the chapel can be the heart of the Christian community on a large base with an effective chapel leader, others remark that in an increasingly secular and interfaith environment, Christian chapels make little sense. One Anglican priest remarked that most military personnel,

“are not interested in chapels. I don’t think the chapels will remain as they are but I hope they will transform themselves. We need a sacred space on every base and every mission – a place specifically set apart and sacred. When I’m on a mission, I set up a sacred space and educate people about how it is to be used. There will be no icons, no visible indicators of any one faith group. It will be for everyone.” I asked how his denominational authorities would feel about this stance and he

replied with some surprise, as if the thought had never occurred to him, “I don’t know!” He threw up his hands, “but it would be pretty foolish for me to set up a chapel for the five Anglicans that will be out there!” He laughed then added solemnly, “People need a place on a mission where they can go to heal mentally and spiritually because the task they do hurts them in ways civilians don’t understand and don’t ever have to encounter. We need these spaces on missions and on bases. They need to be for everyone. In this sense, I’m a military chaplain before I am an Anglican priest. It has to be about their needs first.” When I asked one female chaplain about the ongoing value of chapels she stated,

“In 20 years...? I don’t know... With the shortage of priests and the lack of interest in churches, it’s hard to say. If they closed the chapels and sent people to local churches that would be ok in a big centre but if you’re up in Cold Lake that could be a problem. One of the military’s strengths has been that it always provided for all its members’ needs – doctors, social workers, religion.” Another Protestant chaplain said,

“Yes, there is value in maintaining the chapels but they need to be handled more thoughtfully and intentionally. We need to see if there are better ways to meet people’s needs. In times of crises, in times of deployment, people really turn to the chapels and the chaplains but I’m not sure the chapels should be the same as they have been for the last thirty to fifty years.”

Some Christian chapels now also accommodate personnel of different faith groups. For example, at the Christian chapel at Royal Military College in Kingston, chaplains have divided the chapel space by installing a large curtain that separates the Christian aspects of the room (statues, a lectern, a cross, etc.) from a section containing no imagery. Muslims use this section of the chapel space to pray. Similarly, under the direction of base chaplain, Lieutenant Commander Doug Ohs, in May 2007, the first Canadian Forces Base Faith Centre officially opened at CFB Shilo in Manitoba. Similar to the Christian chapels, this Faith Centre is a stand-alone facility constructed expressly to accommodate the needs of non-Christian groups. During the opening ceremony, Padre Ohs said,

It's important that if we're going to take seriously the responsibility to care spiritually for all our soldiers and families, that we need to provide the resources and facilities in which everyone can come and worship (Power 2007).

This precedent-setting move is likely to set the tone for future prayer, worship, and meditation centres at bases across Canada.

Problems of discontinuity in chapel life, decreasing relevance of traditional religious practice, as well as growing religious diversity are some of the problems that late modern society poses for traditional chapel life. Even while some personnel continue to use the chapels as places for Christian worship, others chapels, such as the one at RMC in Kingston Ontario, have been modernized in step with growing multi-faith needs and have opened their doors to others who need a place for worship. CFB Shilo has gone a step further by creating a distinct place for non-Christians to worship. A number of CF personnel made it clear that a “sacred space” for meditation and refuge are helpful to them. Although chapels continue to fill a role, if only a small one, in the current context, it is not clear how they will be transformed in the future. The evolution of base chapels will be interesting to watch as Canadian military demographics change in the coming decades.

3.4.4 Operational Stress

Beyond their traditional religious duties, modern-day chaplains counsel individuals suffering from operational stress. Accumulated stress or a highly traumatic event can result in serious and debilitating neurological problems such as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD is defined as a “psychological injury” caused by “psychological trauma, such as that experienced on stressful operations or deployments” (Canadian Forces Health Services 2004a). Chaplains are often the first people to identify personnel who are showing symptoms of PTSD due to their close interactions with members. When they are trained as psychotherapists and professional counsellors they may be part of a team of professionals helping to treat people with these problems. Even as they attempt to help members coping with mental health concerns, chaplains face many of the same stresses inherent in military life. As a result, chaplains are susceptible to operational stress because of their own duties.

Chaplains are active members of the Canadian Forces Operational Trauma and Stress Support Centres.¹⁷⁹ Although they might be trained clinical counsellors, psychotherapists or psychoanalysts,

¹⁷⁹ Canadian Forces Health Services established five of these centres across Canada to complement existing health services available to military personnel. They state that, “Military operations can expose military members and their families to extraordinary stresses, which can produce problems in their lives. Some of these problems may be characterised as illnesses, and some as normal reactions to abnormal situations. This array of problems can appear in the emotional, spiritual, psychological or social domains. They are sometimes

chaplains offer an alternative perspective for coping with stress and trauma. One chaplain working in a stress support hospital explained,

“The chaplain is a spiritual part of the treatment to deal with the meaning of life and spiritual ideas. During the course of the psychotherapy they will name some anger at God – that they blame him – ‘Why is it like this?’ ‘Why me?’ ‘Why do you let so many people be left like this?’ They feel confused. From a religious perspective, the belief that God understands is a big part of the healing. When people can feel that God is with them and that there will be justice at some point, there is comfort in that. On a tour of duty, for sure, we have people who turn away from God and others who turn toward him.” A chaplain working as a clinical counsellor explained that,

“...studies prove that many people who are well grounded in a good religious community and practice their faith, are more inclined to have better mental health than those who do not practice at all or those who practice on their own. Chaplains give people opportunities to include spiritual and religious experience [in their treatment] to help them get over their PTSD. They use their religious beliefs to hold off PTSD and to manage it in a positive way.” Another padre said,

“People who have religion have hope. We can help people who are struggling to see that, even though they are having a hard time and they are dealing with something difficult, it doesn’t have to be the way forever. Sometimes they just need to be able to talk about the way they are feeling and what they are going through. Sometimes they need medication. I try to listen to them and visit them and let them talk about their experiences.” A psychoanalyst told me that,

“I know by my own experience [working with personnel] and I know from the research as well, that a spiritual component helps a lot of people to overcome PTSD. They have to hang on to something or relate to something. They have to see that what they’ve done over there was useful for the people – that they helped other people. Mainly people who think they have done nothing good suffer a lot and it’s harder to treat them for PTSD.”¹⁸⁰

manifested as substance abuse, addiction, depression, anxiety, or a variety of psychiatric disorders, one of which is posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)” (Canadian Forces Health Services 2004b).

¹⁸⁰ For further discussion of military members desire to “do good” see chapter four.

Chaplains who work in the clinics do not see religious beliefs as a “magic bullet” for healing from trauma. Instead, they see it as another resource with the potential to aid in the recovery project. One chaplain explained,

“In some situations they will come away damaged even if they have religion. Religion can help in addition to social services and other resources – it can certainly help. The stronger a person’s faith and sense of connection to God, that offers a whole new level of support they can rely on to get them through difficult times. Faith in God gives people a sense that they’re not alone. Prayer can be a way to lift people’s spirits and they’re comforted to know that death is not the end – it’s just a movement beyond. Your whole philosophy of life is changed if you believe in life after death and have a view of God.” Another person remarked,

“In the more severe types of stress there is a real sense of hopelessness and meaninglessness for the person. We [chaplains] offer hope and help them find answers. A lot of the time people already have the answers deep within themselves so we just journey with them through their suffering and they find what they need in themselves.” Another chaplain working as a full-time member of a treatment centre said,

“We are open to hear about their spirituality or their religious experience. They know that I’m not going to ask them questions about these issues but they know I am open to hear about these issues and I’m not going to judge them. The psychologists are not prepared to hear about spiritual or religious issues. When you see their course of studies, there is nothing at all about human spirituality – it’s all about the human sciences. They pretend they are really neutral but they are not neutral at all.”

Nearly all of the stresses experienced by personnel in military operations (with the exception of being expected to kill others if necessary) apply to chaplains. These stresses are compounded for chaplains who serve many personnel because they must be available to personnel 24-hours a day leaving them few opportunities to manage their own stresses. A chaplain just returned from operations remarked,

“The problem with a tour is that it’s a long time to be ‘on’... The longer the tour, the harder it is to be up and encouraging and positive.” A female chaplain added,

“Being the only person out there doing the job, you aren’t allowed to have a ‘bad day.’ You’ve always got to be smiling and happy and up. Everyone else can have a bad day but you just can’t and you’ve got no support out there so it’s very hard.” A priest told me,

“The last [mission] was rough because I caught [a tropical disease] and I came back to Canada very burnt out. Physically, psychologically, emotionally, spiritually, I was empty. I was there six months. I was the only chaplain there; there was no social worker, no medical officer at all, for five hundred people. . . .” A Protestant chaplain told me that the worst part of his experiences during a combat operation was,

“seeing the body bags come back and parading soldiers after the loss of a friend. Theologically, how do you reflect on that when you see how broken these guys are? You have to be able to keep offering pastoral care but seeing these things and being in these situations leaves strong impressions on you.” An Anglican said,

“It’s a very lonely job because you can never say how you feel. As a chaplain you have no one to go to, but you learn to cope. You know, you take a little down time or you go off on your own for a while and then you come back ok.” A pastoral associate who had listened to horror stories of cruelty and violence from soldiers who had been deployed to Bosnia remarked,

“Sometimes when they tell you what they’ve experienced, it never really leaves your head either.” One chaplain who served in Afghanistan said that demands on a chaplain’s time during a mission often make it impossible to address personal stress at the time. He explained that,

“It’s when you come back and start to process things that you realize what you’ve been through. . . . We remain in our roles providing care to people in their grief even as we’re going through it ourselves.” He continued, “The closer you are to the people, the tougher it is to manage. Any chaplain worth his salt wants to be with their people when they’re dealing with a loss but it’s hard on everyone. You go through the rituals real fast – within 24 hours there’s a Ramp Ceremony where the body is placed in the container that ships them home for the funeral, within 48 hours there’s a memorial service, and then you’re back to work.” Chaplains in these situations have few sources of comfort to rely on when they are on a mission.

As with regular personnel, chaplains understand there is stigma associated with needing professional mental health care. In fact, a chaplain dealing with operational stress noted that if it is difficult for

personnel to seek professional mental health care then it is extremely difficult for padres to do so. He said,

“it’s hard to go to therapists in the CF when I’m also expected to be a padre to them! I compromise my relationship with them by unloading all my junk on them – then I can’t be their padre! We’re either going to have a few more guys punching out because they can’t get over their experiences – or the attitude to operational stress has to change. There are a lot of CF people that still think PTSD is bullshit. We need to give permission and encouragement – especially for people who are being deployed all the time; we need to normalize ongoing professional self care. Once that’s a normal aspect of the career, I think we’ll see chaplains being willing to talk about their issues. It’s a crucial issue – it really is. The idea for this job is to have a long faithful run, not a sprint and a crash or to be the walking wounded and there are some of us like that here now. But why should we be killing ourselves? Why should we hurt ourselves in this way?” However, chaplains do hurt as they subsume their personal needs to their military duties to serve others.

Chaplains who are not willing to seek professional care have developed a number of methods to cope with the pressures on them and to protect themselves emotionally and psychologically. Some of these methods include recording their thoughts in a journal or on tape, or relying on another chaplain. She said,

“You can learn over time to be more objective – that you don’t have to own everybody else’s problems. At first it’s overwhelming but then you start to realize, yes, people have lots of problems, but you don’t have to carry them all. You’re there to walk beside them. To journey with them. You only have yourself to offer others. If you’re hurting, you don’t have anything to offer.” Another explained,

“The job [on a mission] can be challenging and hard but it is what it is. As long as I kept up the things that regenerate me: meditating, writing, etc. then it was doable. It becomes hard when you don’t do the self care. You need to take that time. You could be busy 24/7 and work yourself to death but you can only last so long doing that. We can’t allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the mission or we don’t help anybody.”

One person described their methods for self-care during a high-stress operation this way,

“I have to take some time and be on my own for a while. Because sometimes what they tell you is devastating and you just need some time on your own to process it. It’s after those discussions that it’s hard for me.” She described having counselled a soldier who had seen the gruesome death of a child and explained, “After that I wandered around the camp for a whole day and a night because I couldn’t sleep and I couldn’t get the images out of my head. I had to pull away from the group. I called home to my mother – she knows when to just let me talk. I have a few good supports like that – you have the other padres too, but you sometimes need just your own people, like a close friend or a relative. There are times when you have to pull away and be alone. Sometimes I would just leave the camp on my half day off to be away from everyone, but at the same time you reach out to the people that are closest to you, the ones you know you can really trust. I have to stop being a chaplain for a while – in my head at least.”

Like the personnel they serve, chaplains in operations experience all the pressures and strains of the mission environment. Unlike personnel, a chaplain must care for the spiritual and emotional well-being of hundreds of others with little support for his or herself. On stressful and traumatic missions this becomes impossible and chaplains themselves can become incapable of continuing their military duties due to stress-related injuries. This was the case with the chaplain who served with the UNAMIR forces in Rwanda. His emotional injuries resulted in his eventual release from the CF (Fowler 1996). Subsequently, there is a tremendous need for chaplains to be able to care for their own mental and spiritual needs if they are to remain effective with the troops. While they receive some training for this, they often serve as many as 700 personnel during a mission meaning that, on a difficult mission their services can be much in demand. Like personnel, chaplains do repeat deployments and are susceptible to accumulated stress. Further, like those they serve, padres fear the stigma associated with requiring professional mental health services.

3.5 Unusual Ministers

Unlike civilian ministers who work in a local parish where religious participation is completely voluntary, military chaplains must bridge the gap between the modern bureaucratic aims of the military and the personal needs of the individuals who are employed by that institution. They are similar to civilian clergy in that they offer religious services and pastoral care to members of their own denomination. Furthermore they preside at public commemorative ceremonies, the dedication of

ships, the consecration of regimental or squadron colours,¹⁸¹ ramp ceremonies,¹⁸² military funerals, and various other formal events. In these things their presence is reminiscent of an earlier era when religion was present in many institutions in Canada. Unlike most civilian religious leaders however, military chaplains work in a unique context. They are charged with caring for people from a wide array of religious and spiritual perspectives, including non-believers, and those opposed to religion. Further, they work in a secular and demanding environment where they might sometimes be expected to be on duty for 24-hours a day for weeks or even months at a time. The chaplains have adapted to today's pluralistic and individualistic society by modernizing their pastoral practices and emphasizing the personal aspects of their Ministry of Presence. While some scholars have argued that that pluralism and relativism encourage secularization¹⁸³ (Berger 1967, 23-26, 94; Bruce 1990, 1995, 67), military chaplains have actually secured a place for their traditional role by being able to meet the needs of personnel. Through their emphasis on serving the individual, chaplains are able to minimize the sense of alienation and dehumanization that some members experience due to their participation as functionaries in a modern efficiency-based, hierarchical and bureaucratic system.

Former Chaplain General Ron Bourque, during a lecture delivered at the University of Victoria, explained that military chaplains

“...need to have ethical behaviour – to know what they represent beyond themselves. They are servants of a religious body [so] they must act, speak, forgive, [and] counsel in keeping with the church they represent. Without the Church, a Christian chaplain has nothing to offer. When people come to chaplains, they're looking for a direct line to God. Their mandate is to minister to their own, facilitate the worship of others, and care for all.”¹⁸⁴ Retired navy chaplain Bill Howie at the same lecture described chaplains as,

“ministers: priests, rabbis, imams. ... They are moralists, thinkers, peacekeepers, peacemakers, deliverers of bad news, performers of rites, soul-builders, re-builders, companions of

¹⁸¹ In this sense, “colours” refers to the regimental flag.

¹⁸² A ramp ceremony is the formal event during which a flag-draped container bearing the body of a soldier who has been killed in operations is loaded on a transport plane to be flown home for funeral services.

¹⁸³ See Chapter 2 section 2.1.2 Secularization

¹⁸⁴ This statement was made during a community seminar on “Chaplains in War and Peace: Ethical Dilemmas of Conscience and Conflicting Professional Roles in Military Chaplaincy in Canada” hosted by the University

the brave, partners of the necessary, buriers of friends but they are not soldiers.”¹⁸⁵ While these attributes have much in common with the obligations of civilian clergy, as one trainer at the CF Chaplain School and Centre noted, the military is a very different environment from a civilian parish and requires a person with unique skills. She said,

“Civilian settings are more forgiving but here your problems and weaknesses will get you a hammering from the COs¹⁸⁶ and the personnel. There’s a widely known story of one CF chaplain whose tremendous arrogance got him sent off a ship in a dinghy because the CO was so fed up with him! Sometimes we do get those who are a ‘bad fit’ and they stay on because it’s good pay in a good career with good benefits. Some people are here just for the money, but most are here because they’re good at it and it’s what they love. When you’re incompetent in a civilian church you can get away with more, but in the CF incompetence glows in the dark. Incompetence, arrogance, insecurity – these are all personality issues that make people a poor fit for the role.”

The major differences between military chaplains and civilian chaplains are notable in their motivations and commitment to their role in the CF. The nature of their duties that depends largely on their presence and rapport with personnel is central to their success in this role. Finally, their ability to keep one foot in the military system and one foot outside of it makes them both unique and relevant to military members.

3.5.1 Personality, Motivation, Commitment

The differences between chaplains can be considerable and yet it is their shared qualities that give them special significance in the CF. Chaplains I met shared a welcoming and open personality, a desire to do something “beyond parish life,” and a commitment to serving military personnel and their families. While I did meet the odd chaplain with a very narrow sense of meaning and purpose, mostly in the context of spreading the Christian gospel, the majority of chaplains were extremely open to various religious perspectives and were highly respectful of other points of view. While Christian chaplains hold in common a commitment to Christian principles, there is by no means a

of Victoria Centre for Studies in Religion and Society April 25, 2006. Personal notes, Joanne Benham Rennick.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Commanding Officer.

consensus on *how* they understand or uphold those principles. For example, while one chaplain might describe homosexuality as “an abomination in the sight of God” another will understand Christianity to require acceptance and hospitality towards homosexuals in their faith community.¹⁸⁷ One chaplain explained her openness to others’ beliefs this way,

“I think people come to me because they know I have an inclusive outlook. I try to be very non-judgmental of people. People think that chaplains are one way... A lot of people come to talk to me and the first thing they say is, ‘I don’t go to church, is that ok?’ and I say, ‘Yes, that’s ok.’ Our personal understanding of God can only be that – it’s *our personal understanding* of God. If I believe a minister should be white and male, well that might work for me, but it’s not going to work for everybody else. It’s arrogant to say that our understanding is the only way to know God. We can’t pigeonhole God like that. I don’t believe we’ve got the corner on God.” This openness and non-judgmental outlook is effective for dealing with those late-modern individuals described in chapter two who may or may not be religious, are often highly reflexive, aware of religious alternatives, and doubtful of all-encompassing views of “the truth” (Bauman 1992; Beck 1999; Bibby 2002; Giddens 1991; Hervieu-Léger 2000).

Like their openness to different ways of believing, another characteristic of chaplains that makes them credible to personnel is their love of military life. A chaplain trainer working at the chaplain school explained,

“You really have to love the military for this job. In hospitals and prisons, chaplains don’t have the same attachment and loyalty to the institution. It’s funny that a lot of people assume the military is about one type of person – conservative, ordered, rigid – but I’ve met a lot of eccentrics in here! Despite having to be in uniform every day, there are a lot of people here because it’s *not* typical. There is a lot of variety and opportunity to do something different. There can be a lot of excitement and there’s this sense of belonging to a really big family because of the camaraderie.” A reservist chaplain remarked,

“I like the lifestyle and I enjoy what I’m doing. This unit has a reputation as being pretty tough, spit-and-polish types. If you can’t keep up, you get left behind. If I had joined any later [in

¹⁸⁷ In some cases, the chaplains may themselves be homosexual.

life] I'd be too old to handle it. But I like to run, so one of the things I'm doing that I think will appeal to them and make me more credible is putting together a team for the Military Ten-Miler in Washington.¹⁸⁸ We'll all run together as a group of Canadian soldiers. It's good for morale."

A female chaplain explained that the environment appealed to her skills and training and she liked the systemic organization and the order found in the chain of command. She added laughing,

"... and the uniform makes life really easy! It's great not having to decide what to wear every day!" She continued enthusiastically, saying, "I was working as a civilian chaplain and a friend of mine was a reservist. There was a need for a chaplain for the cadets and I thought I would try it. When I arrived at the base, I told my driver, 'You turn this van around right now! I'm going home!'" She laughed again, "He said, 'Sorry Padre, you've got to report. That's my orders.' So in I went. I was there for about two weeks with my eyes bugging out of my head and then I just fell in love with it." Many clergy said they joined the CF in order to challenge themselves both physically and spiritually. One minister told me,

"My parish was full of little old ladies – I never saw a young person there. I thought joining the military would give me an opportunity to grow and be challenged in having to work with young people and people of different faith groups." Another explained,

"I was always interested in the chaplaincy because I wanted to do ministry but I wasn't interested in being the manager of a 'spiritual country club' – a parish" he smiled. "I enlisted when I was 37. For a lot of CF Chaplains this is a second career that they come to when they've had enough of parish life." He continued saying, "Many chaplains in the CF are refugees from the civilian ministry. It's an escape from the civilian churches. We are a bunch of renegades and rebels.¹⁸⁹ I could not work in a civilian church – they're too comfortable, too safe, too easy. The CF *is* a ministry

¹⁸⁸ The Military Ten-Miler takes place annually in Washington DC. Civilian and military teams and individuals run in this race to raise money for army programs. For more information see the website at <http://www.armytenmiler.com/Info/Racehistory.cfm> (Army Ten-Miler 2007).

¹⁸⁹ Clearly, in some cases, they are indeed renegades. I interviewed one padre who, despite restrictions under the Geneva Convention that mark padres as non-combatants, had elected to carry a gun during part of a mission. He described a scenario where he was called to go to a very unsettled area to visit a civilian population. The orders were for him to have a driver and a guard because he was not to bear arms. He chose to carry a gun because he was concerned that by not doing so, he put his guard and driver at greater risk as they would be obligated to defend his life should a security breach occur.

but it's also just 'what I do' – it's who I am. I believe that what I do helps others, but most often it helps me.”

Along with their love for adventure and discipline, chaplains, like those they serve, have a profound sense of duty that accompanies their “call to serve.” During a deployment a chaplain typically serves approximately 500 personnel not including civilians and other military personnel who might work in a camp or at other operational locations. While this ratio is a vast improvement over the British allowance of one chaplain for 20 000 personnel during WWI, the normal rigours of the job and the changing operational environment places a lot of pressure on a chaplain during a tour of duty. Chaplains in operations manage chapels, perform religious duties, and provide pastoral care and counselling services. Along with their normal duties, chaplains in operations are often involved in establishing and facilitating civil-military relations with local leaders, civilians and members of local non-governmental organizations working in the region. Further, they often organize and facilitate humanitarian aid projects that give personnel a positive focus during particularly difficult missions.

One Protestant Francophone chaplain explained the expansive nature of operational duties this way,

“When we're chaplains in the field, we're asked to be everything. To be a mental health specialist, a psychotherapist, a social worker, a spiritual guide. Everything!” Another padre said that sometimes psychologists and social workers are present to help personnel during a mission,

“but that is not always the case. Sometimes we don't have them. It depends where you are I could be in a camp where all the medical and other services are, but I could be [an hour or more] from there somewhere in the field or somewhere where a [traumatic] event took place and I will have to face or meet the soldier who has been exposed to the event.” Another chaplain described his experiences in Afghanistan this way,

“you're living and working together as a team all the time. There is no more Monday to Friday stuff. You can be putting in twelve to fifteen-hour days and then you get hit at night and you're milling around at night with the guys, seeing what happened and if everyone's ok. For the first while, you're getting up out of interest – to see what's happened – you know, when a rocket hits the camp or something like that. But eventually, you start to wake up when there's an incident and

then you just roll over and go back to sleep. You're not hurt so you just roll over and figure, if someone is hurt, they'll send someone to find you."

Many chaplains I met demonstrated their motivation to be with personnel during difficult experiences. As operations in Afghanistan intensified, a chaplain who had served in a number of difficult and high stress operations requested to be deployed there saying,

"How can we prepare people if we don't know what they'll be facing? How can we give them the tools that they need if we don't know what they need? If I am going to care for my people and make them ready to be successful in this mission, then I have to go. I have to know what I'm talking about." Another chaplain just returned from Afghanistan said,

"This is why we join – we don't want to sit around. We want – *I* want to experience what the soldiers are experiencing in the [the mission environment]. I need to know what that cost is. You can look at these things academically, but we need to be there and really understand it. You need to live it." A middle-aged Protestant chaplain said,

"When I read the roll call for guys we lost in Bosnia and again for Afghanistan, I knew over half of them. I want to be there with them, to take care of them. That's what chaplains do. Almost any chaplain would say the same thing." Yet another padre explained,

"I can't wait for my next deployment!" He smiled rubbing his hands together gleefully, "Although, it is hard on my family, I am ready to take care of people and help them through the situations they are facing. It is so important to be with people when they are vulnerable. I know how hard it can be for them because Canadians are so innocent – really innocent. They don't see or experience the hardship that goes on all over the world. So I am eager to be there for them to work beside them and encourage them. I am not afraid to go. I am not afraid to die. I am willing to be with those who are suffering and to stand beside those who are willing to stand for and defend freedom with their very lives; this is a sheer privilege for me. They are so innocent! They are so honourable! They could be home with their families, getting on with their lives, but for the sake of freedom, they go. This is what they believe in! They want to be there! Aside from the incentives, they really believe in the missions!"

The personalities of many military chaplains are tolerant of a variety of religious beliefs and enthusiastic about the military lifestyle. They are motivated to meet the different needs of personnel in order to help them in their duties and improve the quality of their lives. They are committed to putting members' needs before their own comforts. While many civilian clergy share some of these qualities, military chaplains' willingness to embrace diversity in a harsh secular environment that sometimes places them in mortal danger and takes them away from home for months at a time makes them truly unique among religious leaders.

3.5.2 Presence, Trust, and Rapport

Another unique aspect of the military chaplains' role is that the central focus of their job is not performing religious rites and duties but simply their presence and relationships with personnel. Although they do perform religious rites both chaplains and personnel made it clear to me that that is not the most significant aspect of a chaplain's role. Instead, what personnel appreciate most and what chaplains spend the majority of time cultivating is a Ministry of Presence.

The mission of the CF chaplaincy is to "support and enhance the operational effectiveness of the Canadian Forces by contributing to the moral and spiritual well-being of the members of the CF and their families" (DND 2007c). Chaplains are obligated both by the branch and Canadian Law to "accommodate the fundamental religious requirements of [CF] members" (DND 2003d) that includes offering opportunities for religious worship, performing the Christian sacraments,¹⁹⁰ visiting the sick and in prison, offering pastoral counselling and crisis intervention, and advising on moral and ethical matters (DND 2007c). When I asked chaplains about their actual roles in the CF, they typically stated that, while their religious beliefs are what brought them to the role and what help them to fulfil it, their religious duties have very little to do with the services they are called upon to deliver. One retired minister said, "In theory [chaplains are] there to look after the troops' spiritual needs but the troops don't really express a lot of spiritual needs." While personnel do come to them to arrange their weddings, have their children baptized, or for funeral and remembrance services, one chaplain stated

¹⁹⁰ Naturally, when providing these types of religious services, they work in accordance with their own faith traditions.

that, “Frankly people don’t come to us to talk about religion; they come to talk about life.” Another added,

“Very few appreciate [us] for religious services – 2%, maybe 5% value [chaplains] for that. Most people value us just for being there to care for them. Nobody else does that. We don’t need to *do* anything; we just need to be there. We just need to be real.”

This lack of interest in traditionally religious services is not surprising if senior military personnel and chaplains are correct that many military personnel are “passive Christians.”¹⁹¹ However, despite the non-traditional focus of chaplains’ duties, all the chaplains I interviewed argued that they could not do their job without their religious beliefs. Further, they, as well as the military personnel they serve, argue that the role of the chaplain goes beyond being simply an alternative type of counsellor both because chaplains rely on religion to do their jobs and because personnel believe them to have special insights about spiritual and existential matters. Further, unlike counsellors, chaplains who frequently share in the stresses of military life, receive an unprecedented level of trust from the people they serve. These aspects that set chaplains apart from social workers and non-religious counsellors are most evident in their “Ministry of Presence.”

Chaplains engage military personnel through their “Ministry of Presence.” Padre Lee Bezanson says, “It means where the troops go, we go. When they are wet, tired and sleep-deprived, we are wet, tired and sleep-deprived. It’s the foundation of the chaplaincy. It’s essential for building trust” (deLaplante 2005). Chaplain Leslie Dawson explained it this way, “If people know who you are and think you are approachable and credible, they turn to you very quickly during difficult times” (deLaplante 2005). Another chaplain defined it as “being around and being available to the troops.” The Ministry of Presence, because it puts chaplains in the same environments and conditions as personnel, makes them credible sources of compassion and consolation who, unlike the mental health worker stationed in a base hospital or office, knows exactly what a soldier, sailor, or air force member is experiencing. In this sense, as in the earlier description of chaplains who overcome the relativization of their calling by rooting themselves in beliefs and traditions bigger than themselves, chaplains resist the modern

¹⁹¹ See chapter four for a detailed discussion of this point.

bureaucratic formulae of military society. Unlike social workers who must conform to the routinized requirements of the modern military bureaucracy by keeping records and maintaining reports, chaplains are able to deal with problems in an idiosyncratic, open-ended and personalized way that establishes them at once within and beyond the CF objectives for bureaucratic efficiency. Further, their closeness to and support of personnel makes them an important resource for overcoming the sense of alienation personnel might experience as members of a large impersonal institution.¹⁹²

The military environment is a tough and exclusive world where any sign of weakness – physical, emotional, psychological – carries a heavy stigma (Benham Rennick 2005). Personnel attest to this stigma and cite the chaplains as a positive alternative for help. One woman in the air force told me, “One of my bosses was in Sierra Leon – he was so messed up when he came back he couldn’t stand the sight of a uniform. A little child had died in his arms and he just couldn’t cope. And there are always some of these ‘tough guys’ saying things like, ‘We never should have sent him over there in the first place because he couldn’t handle it’ or ‘He’s not a real man’ or even the people trying to be kind say things like, ‘Some guys are just more *sensitive* than others.’ They never accepted him back at work. There’s a definite stigma attached to mental health issues. One of my senior officers said to me, ‘I heard you’ve been going to a social worker. You’ve got to be careful who you tell that to – just keep it to yourself.’ On paper the military says it’s perfectly ok to get help whenever you need it, but then you get responses like that – it’s totally different on the ground.” A non-religious junior officer said,

“I’d definitely go to the chaplain over the social worker. There is real stigma attached. You have a *problem* if you talk to a social worker. We have to go see the social workers as part of our reintegration process when we return from a mission to assess if we have PTSD or anything. We say, ‘I went and passed my crazy test today.’ People talk this way about the social workers – I don’t think anyone would choose to see a social worker over the padre. They send you to the social workers when you’ve failed, when you’ve let the military down, when you’re a write off, but the padre, well, he’s just the padre – he’s...” she searched for the right word, “*nobody!* Social workers and medical personnel are there when you’re sick but the padre’s there when your mum dies or when your baby

¹⁹² For more on alienation in modern secular society see chapter one.

gets sick. There's more of a sense that they're a normal part of your life. So many of us have grown up with these religious people in our lives – we've seen them forever, we're comfortable with them.” A senior commander at the recruit school in St. Jean described the heavy stigma of being labelled mentally unfit for duties and added that chaplains are very important for supporting personnel struggling with operational stress because, “None of [the soldiers] want to take ‘les escaliers de la hante,’ as it is called at St. Jean, to see the social worker.”¹⁹³

This culture of toughness makes it difficult for social workers and mental health practitioners to earn the trust of military personnel. Although chaplains receive pastoral care and counselling training that is similar to that of medical professionals and some even work as professional counsellors or psychologists, their role as religious leaders sets them apart from health professionals as a non-stigmatized source of help. As a result, they frequently serve as the first line of crisis intervention. As one padre told me,

“Soldiers will get in touch with the chaplain for whatever kinds of crises they are going through. The first step they will take is to see the chaplain and talk about what they're going through, and then we decide who will work with them. It could be a social worker, it could be a psychologist, we may need to get them some financial support, we might contact the commander to deal with [career concerns]. We're there to intervene on all kinds of issues. It's a more holistic approach to the person but we're not there to do counselling for the long term. We have training in counselling, but we're not specialists in the field. It's part of the first line of crisis intervention. We see a variety of crises and then we dispatch them to where they should be.” Another chaplain explained that people turn to the padres when they think,

“9-1-1! Oh God help! They come because they're trapped, stuck in a bad situation.” One chaplain working as a trainer at the Chaplain School and Centre in Borden told me that, “In a day on a normal base you probably deal with five to seven [cases] on a very intense, personal level. They come into your office, close the door, and fall apart and that happens to you over and over again. We try to be intentional about separating ourselves from their problems and being

¹⁹³ This statement was made by Lieutenant Colonel Christian Mercier, Commandant of the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School in St. Jean, during an address given at the 2006 Annual Chaplain's Retreat. Benham Rennick personal notes, June 2006.

objective. A big part of the chaplain school training is learning to deal with these situations. Chaplains are required to take the training even though they've already been trained in all aspects of chaplain care. Dysfunctional chaplains end up in a desk job or otherwise away from personnel they might bother. We give the training plan but after that, it's up to them to be successful."

A number of chaplains made reference to the difficulty of resisting trying to solve everyone's problems. A priest explained,

"Many of us have a saviour mentality and that is very dangerous for us because it can swallow you whole and overwhelm you. From a Christian context, we have to remember that we're not the saviour, Jesus did the saving and we're not Jesus." One pastoral associate remarked, "I used to try to find solutions for all these problems but I have learned that you just can't. Most of the people who come to me are subordinates and they have no control over their situation so mostly I just act as a sounding board. I try very hard to show them that I see them as more than what they have done – just because they have done something bad that doesn't mean that's who they are."

Another young chaplain similarly remarked,

"I used to try to solve everything for people – they would come to me with a problem and I'd try to 'fix them.' I was overwhelmed. Now I have learned how to move back a little – now I just listen and try to direct them to take control more."

Those who are able to resist taking responsibility for others' problems find that the strength of their role comes from their ability to be present with people and listen to their concerns. A reservist pastoral associate said,

"I just listen. People really just want to be heard. Today it's all about 'me' – nobody is willing to listen to anyone any more. People just want someone to sit and let them talk and just to listen to them." A Presbyterian minister said,

"As counsellors, we do nothing but listen. Each case is different. You journey with them – you can't try to have a quick fix or take responsibility for their problems, but you try to show them hope as we take the journey together. Whatever the people come up with, it's got to come from their own heart, their spiritual search has little to do with me, but I make the journey with them. People need to find their own way to recover and to change. It's fantastic to see that." A significant number

of chaplains referred to their ability to “just be present” in this way with people. I asked how a chaplain might deal with a person they disliked and one pastoral associate told me,

“Just for the record, I dislike *no one!*” She gave a hearty laugh and then became thoughtful, “But if someone comes to me, a person I have difficulty with, I accord them the same respect as I do to others. Just because I have a difference of opinion with them doesn’t change their right to be heard.” She continued, “People want someone to listen to them. Initially they want a solution, but mostly they just want to be heard. Nobody listens to anyone anymore. Listening is central. There’s so much chatter in our lives. There’s so much interference – the TV is always on, there are video games or music. There’s lots of talking but nobody listens. People want to talk and share but there’s no place for it in our society so people feel lost and confused – like they’re not validated and not respected. When I sit with someone, I want to give them that respect. People really just want to be heard.” A woman said,

“I remember when I was counselling one person I had this momentary wave of panic, ‘Oh my God! What do I do?!’ but then I go with what the person is saying and I let them talk. Some of them have held back for so long that they just let it all flow out and you have to let them talk. Once that’s done, I try to go back to key points that keep coming up to help them get some clarity on what’s really bothering them about the situation.” In the same way that chaplains avoid the relativization of their calling by rooting themselves in religious tradition and belief, in their counselling role they exchange the impersonal nature of the faceless machinations of the military institution to engage people on a personal level. In these ways chaplains exist at once within and apart from the bureaucratic structures of modernity in the CF.

Along with the mundane pressures of life and crisis intervention, personnel rely on chaplains to help them deal with the sense of alienation they experience as members of a large impersonal institution. Alienation in the military results from human individuals being employed as functionaries to meet military objectives. In such a scenario their personal needs and interests are subsumed by the goals of the institution. The result is that people suffer from depression and other mental health concerns. Symptoms of these include drug and alcohol abuse and even suicide attempts. Depression and mental health concerns in the military are significant, and for those who have served on difficult missions, can be two to three times as high as those found in Canadian civilian populations (DND 2002a;

English 2000).¹⁹⁴ Further, although CF efforts in the last decade have brought alcohol-related problems to lower than the civilian average, it remains an area of concern for CF officials who put the “lifetime prevalence of Alcoholism [at]... 8.5% for members of the regular forces and ...8.8% for reservists” (DND 2002a). Similarly, suicide as a response to depression and personal problems remain an area of concern for CF officials, particularly given that suicide is the leading cause of death in Canada for men aged 25-29 and 40-44. Statistics Canada reports that “about 4% of Regular Force members reported having thoughts of suicide at some point in 2001, and almost 16% had considered it at some point during their lifetime” (Boddam and Ramsay 2005).¹⁹⁵ A padre on a large army base said,

“We have a lot of people who attempt suicide. One officer called me one night when I was on duty to tell me he was planning to kill himself. So I went to his house. He said to me, ‘I’m going to commit suicide. I just said good night to my children and that’s it.’ His wife was [there] screaming and crying and I said, ‘Thank you for calling,’ and I sat down and said, ‘Now go ahead.’ He said, ‘What?!?’ and I said, ‘Go ahead. I’m here with you.’ ...So he stops and he sits down and starts to think about [what] he is saying.... he did not commit suicide and he got better – it took him a long time, but he got better and now he has a very rich, full life.” He continued explaining the reasons behind the member’s suicidal thoughts,

“He had endured so much as a soldier, taking care of his men, and never wanting them to know he was suffering and stressed out. He didn’t want them to think he was weak or that he couldn’t handle his duties, so he just kept taking on more and more – ‘for the guys,’ ‘for the job.’ He was really tired and fed up but he didn’t want to burden *them* with his struggles so he was ready to

¹⁹⁴ Statistics Canada surveys show that in civilian society depression occurs in approximately 1 in 4 people over a one year period According to the Canadian Forces 2002 Supplement of the Statistics Canada Community Health Survey, mental health issues include: depression, alcoholism, social phobias, post traumatic stress disorder, panic disorders, and generalized anxiety disorders. Since this survey was conducted in 2002, the Canadian Forces has made strident efforts to combat mental health issues. One result is that there is greater awareness that these problems exist, there are more resources for care, and in the case of alcoholism at least, CF personnel now rank lower than the national average for this disorder (DND 2002a). For further details, see Table 5. For further discussion of mental health issues in the CF, see chapter six.

¹⁹⁵ Overall statistics on Canadian suicides are based on successful suicide and put the rate at 15 per 100 000. The Canadian Mental Health Association states that “Men commit suicide at a rate four times higher than that of women. ... Women, however, make 3 to 4 times more suicide attempts than men do, and women are hospitalized in general hospitals for attempted suicide at 1.5 times the rate of men” (Canadian Mental Health Association 2006).

kill himself in order to protect them from having to see his weakness! Unbelievable!” A female chaplain described a similar scenario. She told me this story,

“My first duty call was to the house of a man hanging by his tie. He killed himself because his wife took a girlfriend. She didn’t care at all and moved in with her girlfriend right away. He had killed himself because of the shame he felt – he couldn’t face his friends because of what *she* did.” Emile Durkheim calls this “altruistic suicide,” a form of suicide he discovered to be most common among military personnel. He argued that it occurs when an individual becomes so alienated from their own identity that they are willing to sacrifice themselves in order to preserve the best interests of the group (1952).

One padre described his system of watching for signs of stress and depression in the regiment this way:

“When soldiers return from tour I have a practice of taking them for lunch somewhere off base. I don’t wear uniform and we just talk. I usually have a pretty good sense of who needs more attention than others from their peers – who’s had a good tour or a bad tour and I can keep my eye on them a little more. If any flags go up about the person’s state of mind, I work with the family, the parents, and other officers to get the person out of onerous duties until they’re doing better. The CF has gotten a lot smarter since Somalia about post traumatic stress disorder and stress issues. There is one social worker for the brigade and she’s really very good. We share whatever information we can on these matters to help the person along. The expectation of the padre is you may not be able to ‘fix’ them but you’re the one safe place people can go to. For example, one sergeant lost his licence [for drinking and driving]. I make sure he gets the help he needs, check in on him, ask how it’s going, ask if what he’s doing is helping, that kind of thing.” A Francophone padre said,

“During *la Révolution Tranquille* they took the church out of the system but they took all the social values with it. French people are left with a vacuum and the result is that we have one of the highest rates of suicide in the world.¹⁹⁶ There are four suicides a day in Quebec. So, there’s an emptiness there about value and faith and where we are going. If you transpose that in the military

¹⁹⁶ The Canada Safety Council states that suicide is the leading cause of death in Canada of men between the ages of 25 and 29 (Canada Safety Council 2006). Suicide in Québec is the highest of any province in Canada (Moore 1999). For further discussion of the relationship between the quiet revolution and suicides in Québec,

world, well, military are not different from all the other people – they come here with all their values, with all their experiences of faith. But, I must say that, when they become military, the Church is better perceived. A lot of military [personnel] who didn't attend church as civilians join the military and get in contact with a chaplain. It changes their perspective of what church is, what religion is, what a chaplain is, what a priest is, what a pastor is. The chaplain and the priest take their full meaning there.”

Along with the fact that there is no stigma of weakness attached to talking to a chaplain, chaplains help people overcome feelings of alienation by remaining outside the normal military bureaucracy. As we already saw, they are not required to keep records of those who seek their counsel and, in fact they may maintain absolute confidentiality except in cases where “there is a reasonable chance that [a person] may pose a threat to others or themselves, when there is indication of abuse of minors, and when ordered by a court of law” to share private information (Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch 2003, 3.4). Military health professionals and social workers are obligated to inform the Chain of Command about personnel issues that might limit a member's deployability. If a member is deemed to be unfit for service, they can be released from service. The unusual place that chaplains occupy outside of military bureaucracy and hierarchy makes the chaplain's office a “safe place” for personnel to talk about their problems without fear of stigma from their peer group or reprisals that could limit their career. While interactions with health professionals and social workers are regulated, intentional and focused on the objective of identifying a member's ability to meet CF requirements, interactions with the padres are private, open-ended, idiosyncratic and “invisible.” One chaplain suggested that,

“some of the social workers are kind of jealous because they don't have the privileges and the freedom we have. Everything that is said to them has to be recorded and kept on file and it can be subpoenaed whereas I never keep notes or records. When people come to me, I don't write anything down. In fact, in my journal I code appointments and anything that could be incriminating so that it can't be subpoenaed into court. People know that.” A chaplain working in one of the operational trauma centres said,

see Krull et al. 1994 .

“They know that when they come to see the chaplain, they won’t be judged for anything and that we won’t keep a file on them. You talk to the chaplain in the room nobody has to know about it – it doesn’t leave the room.” All but one of the CF personnel I interviewed, regardless of their spiritual perspective, said they would seek the help of a padre over that of a social worker or health care professional.¹⁹⁷

Max Weber argued that the regulated nature of modern institutions and the objectives of bureaucratic institutions to develop and maintain efficiencies would alienate and enslave people trapped in its “iron cage” (Weber 1958, 181). Military chaplains have found a way to circumvent the constricting and depersonalized nature of military bureaucracy by relying on their religious identity and their Ministry of Presence. Their rootedness in a religious tradition and value system that elevates people about goals for efficiency is what allows them to be effective in this role. One Francophone padre described it this way,

“It’s not always easy to be the caregiver. It’s a challenge... I would call it a vocation. If you just do it as a job, maybe you’re not in the right place because it’s more than a job. If you just do it to have a job, maybe you’d be better off as a social worker or a psychologist working nine-to-five and that’s it. We’re more than that. We need to be available almost any time and more so when we go in operations.” Another person described the role of the chaplain this way,

“The chaplains talk about the Ministry of Presence. If that’s true, then our very presence is to be a ministry – like a sanctuary – that safe place where a person can feel [protected]. [In that case,] their perspective on religion doesn’t really matter. It’s all about mine! I have to look to my faith to let me do this job. You can’t let this job just be about getting a paycheque and still care deeply about people.”

Unlike most occupations in the CF, chaplains have an amazing amount of freedom to move among the members. By being present, caring chaplains are able to establish a rapport with personnel that eventually leads to a relationship of trust. These three elements of presence, rapport and trust are

¹⁹⁷ Both chaplains and personnel recognized the value of having these other sources available, and in many cases, chaplains and health care professionals work in tandem. However, most personnel said they would take their concerns first to the padres. See chapter 5 for further discussion.

necessary for an effective Ministry of Presence. All of these exist in the chaplaincy in stark contrast to the results-oriented, planned activity of bureaucrats who focus on efficiency. An easy-going Francophone chaplain explained to me that,

“You have to go to the people. You’re not in your office waiting for the people – although that would be great!” He raised his bushy eyebrows at the novelty of the thought and chuckled. He continued, “You’re going to the people and when you’re going to the people, you’re going to the problems, but that is the strength of our ministry – we know the [personnel].” A navy chaplain reported that personnel will come to him because,

“I’m closer [than the social workers]. They know me. They see me every day. A drowning man looks for the closest person – it doesn’t matter if they’re not a lifeguard. Social workers are farther back than we are. If they were on the front line working with and living with the personnel, [personnel] might go there, but we’re with them all the time, they know us, and so they come to us. It’s a natural step – a natural reach.” Another chaplain working on a ship said,

“I would say people in the military think about religion more than people on civvie street¹⁹⁸ because they know the padres and they see us – we’re always around. We’re known as the ‘nice people’ on base. Even when I go into the coffee shop [outside the base], civilians come up and want to chat with me – they know I’m a chaplain by my uniform.” An earnest female Francophone chaplain explained,

“You have to be visible and you have to be deliberate. I intentionally go and meet people I will be working with and I tell them, ‘I am the chaplain and I will be working with you;’ especially the CO [commanding officer] and then the troops. I go to the COs first because that’s who I would be dealing with if any problems come up with the personnel and if they don’t know me it’s going to be harder for them to hear what I have to say.” An Anglican minister on a large army base explained,

“I do a lot of what I call ‘loitering with intent’ – that is, I make myself available, I hang around where people can see me and where it would be easy for them to approach me if they want. People will talk to you and tell you what’s going on if they know you and they trust you. *If* they trust you! But you have to be there for that. You have to be visible and you have to earn that trust and be willing to maintain it. It’s something you really have to work at. If troops know they can confide in

¹⁹⁸ A military expression for referring to civilian society.

you without breaking confidence, without losing face with their peers, and without being viewed as a weakling, they'll talk to you.” He observed that, “People have a tendency to project their impressions of the overall religious institution onto us as representatives of that institution. You can't get around that and you can't let yourself be paralyzed by it. You have to be willing to be with people despite that disconnect. You just have to accept that they might see you that way and then work to change it!” A captain remarked,

“... it's not about 'scoring points for Jesus.' I tell people who I am and my religious background, but I also let them know I'm a comrade and I'm here for them and I'm interested in them. I think it's probably harder for personnel today to understand what the padre does than it was 40 years ago when ministers and priests were an everyday part of life and you grew up with them in your community. Now you have to work harder at the outset about what you *do* as a padre. I can be up front about being a member of organized religion, but I make it clear that I'm first and foremost there to serve them. I tell them that the only church service they're likely to be at without their permission is their funeral and I'd rather not be at that – they understand that.” A female chaplain serving on an air force base concurred explaining that,

“People will talk to me if they know me and see me, and it has to be on their turf. So I go out in the smoking areas, the dining area, and the sports areas where people are, so they can put a face with the name. Then, when I'm in the smoking area, some soldier will begin to talk to me about the trouble he's having in his marriage and that's when we can go off and chat. Once they know me, there's no stigma attached to talking to me – they don't have to come to me, I go to them. By the time I left my last base, I was counselling at least five people a day who would just drop in to chat about their lives. It didn't matter their rank, I'd see privates, COs,¹⁹⁹ captains, colonels – all the ranks came in. When I see that happening, I know I'm doing something right.”

Chaplains find the rapport between them and the personnel comes after a period of persistent involvement in the life of the troops. I asked one newly recruited chaplain if people were willing to come see him he explained how he was learning to fit into the system,

¹⁹⁹ Commanding Officers

“They’re starting to... it’s taken a while. When I first started I went to some senior chaplains for advice and they all said, ‘If they see you, they’ll talk to you. If they don’t see you, they won’t.’ So I joined in with a lot of their activities – rucksack marches carrying these 100-pound packs, winter camping, going to the rifle range, helping unload trucks. It gives you credibility when you’re out there doing things with them and you’re not afraid to get dirty. Some soldiers probably think I’m a waste of space because I don’t carry a gun but I think I’ve been able to help a lot of them.” Another congenial padre said,

“It always helps to have a good laugh! When I approach people, the first thing I do is look for an opportunity to laugh at myself. You can’t remain uptight and defensive when you’re having a good laugh together. You have to work through the projections others impose on you as a chaplain and one way to do that is to laugh because, really, we humans are such foolish creatures!”

Other chaplains echoed this willingness to “play the fool” and allow themselves to be laughed at, a role not welcomed by other military personnel. One young female chaplain described her participation in a recreation day event requiring her team to repeatedly don and doff equipment in a relay procession. Each member would put on a new piece of equipment, complete the relay, remove the equipment and pass it to the next person who would then add a piece of equipment for their turn. The chaplain went last and described a hilarious scenario of her dressing in full combat gear, quickly finding a suitable (“and fair! I didn’t want to cheat!”) substitute for the rifle she could not carry, and attempting to complete the relay only to collapse on the field during the home stretch. She described how none of the personnel in her unit could even come to her assistance because they were laughing so hard and she, trapped in all her gear and completely out of breath, was unable to “croak for help.” She said,

“If chaplains are going to be effective, they have to *be present* most of all. Participation is the key thing. People have to see them and know who they are. There are lots of opportunities to be with the personnel – in [physical training], at special events, on training excursions, you need to interact and make yourself known equally to the COs and the officers and the regular members. And you need to be a part of play time and have some fun with people – they need to see you as human. Be real, don’t be on a pedestal, be human.” The result of her willingness to “be real” with the people

she serves is a genuinely warm rapport. She described how, after being on a mission or an assignment away from home,

“I love going home to my unit and they’re happy to see me. There’s a real sense that I am *their* chaplain and it really feels like home. They call me about all kinds of stuff all the time – even though they have all these civvie²⁰⁰ options. We have a really good rapport. It’s a great experience. They know that the answers I give them will be based on my Christian faith but they ask me anyway because they know I’m not going to shove it down their throats. I do whatever is in my power to help them if I can.” Another evangelical padre who had served during a particularly difficult operation said,

“I really did feel loved and appreciated on that mission by command and personnel. I’d go out of the camp for a few days and people would say, ‘Boy, I really missed you!’ and that really helped. You know your role is important when people are saying that to you.”

Their rootedness in a tradition that elevates human interests above corporate goals along with unique freedoms that place them outside the bureaucratic and hierarchical elements of the CF establish chaplains as an important intermediary between the personal needs of members and the institutional goals of the organization. Chaplains make efforts to be present with personnel and establish trusting relationships by working alongside them and joining in many of their activities and training programs. Their rapport with personnel and the fact that chaplains are not health care workers establish the padres as a viable source of care and consolation in the face of the stress and hardship inherent in military life. Chaplains are able to maintain one foot in the efficiency-focused bureaucratic hierarchy of the military and the other foot in the individualized, community-based environment of loosely-defined personal relationships with military personnel. This ability to straddle the two worlds is based on their religious beliefs that transcend military objectives. Their intermediary role makes them an important resource for unlocking the “iron cage” of modernity and helping individuals to overcome the alienating effects of a being a member of a large bureaucratic institution such as the CF.

²⁰⁰ Civilian.

3.5.3 Alike but Different

Thus far I have argued that military life can be alienating and impersonal yet, on the other hand, there is much literature attesting to the camaraderie and fellowship present within the military profession that makes it feel more like a family environment than a faceless institution (Benham Rennick 2006b; English 2004; Pedersen et al. 1989; Schein 1992). In fact, the military has aspects of both of what Ferdinand Toennies has described as *Gemeinschaft* (a community that is a natural and spontaneous outgrowth of family life within an interdependent and bonded group of people) and *Gesellschaft* (a contract-based society formed from the free association of individuals dedicated to personal success) (Toennies 1963 [1887], 65). The CF has elements of both community and society according to Toennies' definitions. It has authority figures, rules, camaraderie and fellowship; there is tradition and celebration, as well as competition and rivalry.²⁰¹ While chaplains, senior officers, and subordinate personnel I interviewed often described the CF using the metaphor of the family – Toennies' *Gemeinschaft* – they frequently experienced the alienating sensibilities of the *Gesellschaft*. Effective chaplains in this environment through their religious traditions that, as Toennies notes can continue to influence people “by hallowing the events of family life: marriage, birth, veneration of elders, death” (Toennies 1963 [1887], 219) are able to bridge the gap between the two environments. Because they are outside the normal bureaucracy of the military institution, they play a role somewhere between that of an authority figure and that of a peer. They are like military personnel and yet they are unlike them.

While chaplains listen, advise, keep confidences, intervene when possible, and make sacrifices of their time and energy, in order to fulfil their role effectively, they must maintain boundaries that set them apart from other personnel. One fit and burly chaplain remarked candidly,

“I am *never* ‘one of the guys’²⁰² – I am quite willing to be something different and they know that. It's not a democracy – it's a tribal situation and I'm the ‘holy man’ if you will – that's my job. I

²⁰¹ When conditions are not optimal, the environment is more like a dysfunctional family where abuse, neglect and betrayal occur. See for example Bercuson 1996, Razack 2004, Winslow 1997. (Razack 2004; Winslow 1997)

²⁰² Both male and female military personnel often use the masculine pronoun even when there are women in the unit. Senior personnel and some women are more likely to refer to “guys and women.” Women make up only

might be a foolish holy man but *that's* my role – not being ‘one of the guys’. I am with them but not one of them. I can have a beer with them, share a few jokes, but then I go home. I don't get drunk and party with them. Whatever happens after that they usually tell me about the next day – sort of an involuntary confession because somebody else tells me ‘Hey did you hear about Jim...!’” he chuckled, “These guys might laugh at religion and at the idea of clergy, but when they come to me, they want to know I'm connected to the current. They want me to be a holy man, even if they see me, or what I stand for as foolish, they're counting on that.” A gentle and soft-spoken padre from Québec said,

“We are part of them, but we are not them. They would not appreciate if the chaplain acted like a soldier, but they like the fact that the chaplain is alongside them. We have to be with them and let them stand back a little bit and be what they are as well. Being a chaplain is a little like being a mother!” he smiled and shook his head.

That perception of being a “holy person” alike and yet different from the people they serve crosses denominational boundaries, goes beyond the basic aspect of being a counsellor, and distinctly sets them apart from all the other “rational” roles in the CF. One senior chaplain who has served on numerous missions explained it this way,

“It's pretty clear that soldiers see chaplains as some kind of mystical religious person. I know [our Muslim chaplain] experiences this too. They don't really get what we do, but they know we're there to take care of them.” Another female chaplain explained to me,

“When I was the chaplain at the recruit school some of the cadets would ask ‘Why do we have a padre here instead of a social worker?’ and I would say to them, ‘You are going to be a soldier. You are going to be in theatre. If you get wounded or someone in your unit dies, who would you rather talk to?’ They always answered, ‘Oh, ok, now we get it!’ They see us as someone who offers hope – more than just a hope for getting better or getting out of here [a mission] but something beyond that – a transcendent hope. A divine hope, I guess. This helps them move on with what they have to do.”

11% of the CF and the vast majority of these fill clerical roles. One female chaplain described the ratio of men to women on two different naval missions as being, “42 women to 245 men and the second was 7 women to 245 men.” Another chaplain working in operations explained that, aside from civilians, “there were only five or six [women] in a camp of approximately 300.”

Although chaplains carry rank that marks their training and experience, identifies their career progress within the branch as well as giving them the respect and deference of junior members, they do not have the authority to command personnel and subordinates are not required to defer to them in the same way they would a non-chaplain of the same rank. In effect, they are commissioned officers without a commission!²⁰³ As one chaplain told me,

“There is a tradition of understanding that the chaplain takes on the same rank as whoever he or she is talking to.” Because of this, military personnel of all ranks may freely approach chaplains of any rank. Similarly, chaplains are free to speak to anyone at any level in the chain of command.

At one base, while walking alongside a chaplain wearing the rank of a Lieutenant Colonel, military personnel saluted him as we passed. I noticed that he thanked the personnel as they greeted him and he remarked,

“Really, it’s just a courtesy that they’re affording me – they don’t have to salute but they’re trained so well!” He laughed, “As soon as they see the rank, they salute, but as a chaplain outside the rank system, they’re not really required to salute so I make a point of thanking them when they do.” Another young chaplain commented,

“My rank is a legal fiction – I’m a captain but I don’t have the [military] training or experience of these guys and they know it. But because I’m a padre, I’m free to talk to whomever I want above my rank. If soldiers come to me with problems with their superiors, I can go up the chain and help them with that. Rank can open doors but I can’t give anyone orders. If I did ask or tell someone to do something, they would do it simply because it’s drilled into them – they see the rank and respond – but I can’t technically command them. I can bring someone up on charges – for example if a sergeant was abusing a private – but I can’t command them.” A Francophone padre added,

²⁰³ Commissioned officers are the only personnel in the military imbued with sovereign power (that is to say, the governing authority of the country) to give orders (command) a unit. These officers have specific post-secondary education intended to provide them with training and experience for a leadership role. Non-commissioned officers often have technical training or have moved up through the ranks without specific leadership training. They may hold a leadership position but they do not typically have authority to give orders to other personnel.

“We are very well respected because we are the only rank that can bypass all the other ranks. We can talk to a soldier and we don’t need to go through all the steps to move up the chain of command. In the hierarchical world of the military, this is powerful! This access allows us to talk to [a soldier], and in a few minutes, we can be in the office of the colonel to talk about the issue. At the same time, we’re the only rank that does not give any orders. This is good because, if we did, it would put us in a conflict of interest!” A female Protestant chaplain explained that the freedom from the chain of command means that chaplains “can often resolve a problem faster than going through the regular chain. But you learn early that there are always two sides to every story and you have to be sure you get both sides before you go up the chain or you look like an idiot!” She added seriously, “You have to know what you’re talking about!”

Their ability to act as intermediaries is important for sustaining the institutional objectives and addressing the personal needs of members. At the institutional level chaplains can identify and help to resolve issues that could harm morale and thereby decrease efficiency. On the personal level chaplains can assist people to overcome personal problems that can leave them feeling isolated and alienated. In a lecture presented at the University of Victoria, retired navy chaplain Al Fowler stated that, “A good superior officer will rely on insights from the padre. These can be act as a barometer to the morale of the unit. The chaplain plays an integral role in this context and bridges some of these tensions by assisting the CO to fulfil his or her military obligations while also speaking on behalf of the personnel.”²⁰⁴ Another fifty-something padre said,

“In general, the military takes very good care of its people [but], when people do fall through the cracks, it’s the chaplain’s job to advocate for them and the COs are willing to listen to the chaplains as advocates.”²⁰⁵ One east-coast chaplain remarked,

“I’m the only one on board who can go into any room on the ship. Other personnel can only go into their own mess – like an officer can’t go into a junior mess – but I can. So I am all over the ship – like the [parent] checking everywhere to see how my babies are doing!”

²⁰⁴ Personal notes, Joanne Benham Rennick. This statement was made during a presentation at the seminar on “Chaplains in War and Peace: Ethical Dilemmas of Conscience and Conflicting Professional Roles in Military Chaplaincy in Canada” hosted by the University of Victoria Centre for Studies in Religion and Society April 25, 2006. For the published transcript see Fowler 2006

²⁰⁵ He added, “The fact is that some people should not be in the CF. If you’re not up for the role then you can’t

As we saw earlier in this chapter, those in authority positions may experience even greater feelings of isolation and alienation because others are relying on them to lead. For those members the role of chaplains as intermediaries becomes even more significant because, along with being able to provide commanders with insights on the rank and file, the chaplain is often the only person a he or she can turn to for advice and counsel. Lieutenant Colonel Christian Mercier, Commandant of the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School in St. Jean, during an address given at the 2006 Annual Chaplain's Retreat explained how,

“Commanders make decisions that can change or end people’s lives – sometimes they make mistakes and there is no one for them to turn to. We call this ‘the loneliness of leadership’ and one’s best efforts are not always good enough. COs need chaplain support and encouragement, because you are the only one who can stay close and offer guidance to us at times like these.”²⁰⁶

The chaplains’ ability to negotiate between the impersonal aspects of military society and the subjective needs of those who work there makes them an important mediator between the alienating and isolating aspects of the modern bureaucracy and the comforting and familiar elements of natural human relationships. They, like those they serve, are functionaries within the system. At the same time however, unlike CF personnel, their religious role places them beyond the system. The effect of this paradoxical role is that chaplains are able to negotiate the system while also transcending it, not just for their own sake, but as a means for helping members bridge the gap between modern society and innate human needs.

3.6 Conclusion

The Canadian Forces Chaplaincy has changed much since its earliest days when volunteer clergy enlisted in order to minister to soldiers. Since the end of World War II, various sociological trends in Canada and North America have generated the need for new standards and policies to accommodate changing demographics within the CF. The reduction of forces following the Second World War

be protected, but if it’s an unfair situation the ombudsman’s there to help.”

²⁰⁶ Benham Rennick personal notes, June 2006.

resulted in bureaucratization that made the branch more hierarchical, but also ensured greater equality between religious denominations. Religious ecumenism, new religious individualism (including the loss of denominational identity), and the secularization of society that followed the turbulent years of the 1950s and 60s created both opportunities for new religious alliances and struggles to meet a greater variety of spiritual needs – including those that are highly subjective and have no connection to an established religious group. New patterns of immigration ensured greater ethnic and religious diversity and engagement in all areas of Canadian society, including the military. The adoption of a policy of multiculturalism as well as a greater attention to human rights created a need to accommodate differences such as those that stemmed from the loss of moral consensus such as homosexuality.

Since the Great War, the CF Chaplain Branch has moved from predominantly Protestant elitism, to an ecumenical association with Roman Catholics, to an interfaith branch open to non-Christian religious groups, to supposed defenders of all military personnel regardless of creed or “race or colour or sexual orientation” (Park 2003, 111). Instead of entrenching themselves in tradition and resisting the realities of modernity chaplains have adapted and changed. By eliminating exclusive aspects of branch culture, particularly in public settings, they normalized pluralism and acceptance of difference and held it up as an ideal for the rank and file. Further, by taking the lead on these types of potentially contentious issues, chaplains provided an effective example to personnel.

The Department of National Defence describes military chaplains today as essential to the overall operational effectiveness of the forces through their support of the needs of its members (DND 2007c). Even as they remain partially outside of the military “system,” they contribute to the overall “efficiency” of the military objectives. They do this by facilitating the establishment and maintenance of socio-cultural norms and values, offering guidance and direction in moral and ethical matters, as well as intervening to resolve tensions within a unit and between personnel. Furthermore, they help people remain effective in their roles by giving them virtually the only opportunity for non-stigmatized counsel and consolation in the face of personal and job-related stress and hardship. Their ability to address the personal and individual needs of members while also contributing to institutional goals makes them unique intermediaries within military society.

Chaplains represent an important aspect of military culture as keepers of tradition through their prominent roles in public and military ceremonies, parades and memorial events. At the same time, they attempt to assist military members to overcome the alienating aspects of military society. Despite the many changes they have addressed in the last forty years, CF chaplains will continue to have to adapt to the new demands of late modernity as they attempt to meet a greater variety of religious and spiritual needs, integrate more religious leaders into the branch, adapt to the demands of a changing operational environment, and seek ways and opportunities to overcome religious ignorance and discrimination.

Chapter 4

Religion in the Ranks

While CF chaplains represent formal institutional religion, the majority of those outside the chaplaincy are better described by Robert Fuller's label "spiritual but not religious." In fact, if it were not for the aspect of "unlimited liability" that goes with their duties, young military personnel would be much like their civilian peers who, for the most-part, have come out of religious traditions but are not likely to participate in religion. The term "unlimited liability" indicates the inevitable loss of life, whether one's own or another's, that invariably comes with the "profession of arms" that includes military service (Hackett 1963, 222; National Defence 2003, 4).²⁰⁷ The combination of the secular nature of many young men in Canada today and the inherent risk of mortal danger in military service creates a unique subculture in which personnel might be irreverently secular while also acutely attuned to existential concerns as well as seeking answers to ethical and moral questions. Additionally however, a minority of CF members continue to participate in formal religious traditions. Although they subject these traditions to their own interpretive authority, they identify them as helpful in assisting them to be effective in their military duties.

In this chapter I examine private religion as it is demonstrated by the majority of military personnel who are not active in religious traditions. Next, I look at the influence of military duties on promoting interest in spiritual and existential questions and pushing personnel to integrate and uphold "Canadian values." Finally, I examine formal religion as it appears among the minority who participate in formal religious traditions. I argue that moral and ethical concerns as well military duties intended to uphold Canadian values promotes religious thinking and leads some people to engage the services of a chaplain to assist them. Furthermore, I argue that their lack of knowledge about religious identity

²⁰⁷ General Sir John Hackett's book *The Profession of Arms* (1963) established the element of "unlimited liability" as definitive in separating military personnel from their civilian peers. He writes: "The essential basis of military life is the ordered application of force under an unlimited liability. It is the unlimited liability which sets the man [sic] who embraces this life somewhat apart. He will be (or should be) always a citizen. So long as he serves he will never be a civilian" (222).

makes it difficult for them to relate to religious minorities in the ranks and also on missions to regions where religion is central to the identity of the population where they are stationed.

4.1 Private Religion

In this section I argue that the vast majority of CF personnel are young, nominally Christian males who have some interest in spiritual and existential issues although they are not necessarily active in a religious organization. Because they frequently have little appreciation for traditional religious authority their thinking about these matters is individualized and self-directed. Despite a lack of data to clearly identify religious affiliation in the CF, my interviews suggest that many military members are living examples of the late modern trends toward secularization and subjectivization that we examined in chapter two.

4.1.1 A Dearth of Statistics

One of the most significant hurdles for establishing the religious affiliation of CF personnel is that, although the information is collected, it is not compiled. Enlisting military personnel are required to identify their religious affiliation, or non-affiliation, when they join the CF.²⁰⁸ This information is marked on their dog tags and compiled for unit padres and commanders when new personnel join a unit but it is not compiled across the forces. Up until the mid-1990s, the CF did collect and compile this data until, as one senior chaplain told me, “Someone decided the question [about religious affiliation] was irrelevant and had it removed from the form. We’ve been trying to get it back on ever since.” As a result, military officials have no accurate information on the religious makeup of the troops.

According to the 1990s statistics on religion in the military, the majority of personnel at the time were “...mostly Christian and mostly Catholic if they have any religion at all.” Since then, Census reports show significant growth among non-traditional religious groups in Canada. Simultaneously, the CF has been making efforts to incorporate greater numbers of minority personnel. As we shall see later

²⁰⁸ Personnel have the option of selecting “no religion” in which case, the acronym “NRE” appears on their dog tags.

in this chapter, ethnicity and religion frequently go hand-in-hand implying that greater numbers of minority groups in the ranks is likely to increase religious diversity in too. Because of these changes, along with the fact there is no evidence to show otherwise, both the DND and the Chaplain's Branch posit that religious affiliation in the CF is similar to that of Canada. According to this reasoning, the CF should be predominantly Christian with a small secondary population of Muslims and very few numbers of other minority groups.²⁰⁹ Trends among young men and those from Québec require us to look more closely at what religion in the CF might actually look like.

Of all the regions in Canada, only British Columbia and the Yukon Territories reported greater percentages of people having "no religion" (39% and 37% respectively) than those belonging to one of the Christian denominations (Statistics Canada 2004a, 2004b). While 79% of enlisted personnel come from the regions with predominantly Christian populations (Statistics Canada 2007),²¹⁰ 77% of those who join are young Caucasian males between the ages of 17 and 24 years (Auditor General of Canada 2006, 2.28, 25.51; DND 2004; Holden 2005).²¹¹ Studies on youth in Canada indicate that young men are most likely to report "no religion" despite having been raised in a religious home

²⁰⁹ Statistics Canada places the percentage of Christians in Canada at over 70% with the majority of those being Roman Catholic (43.2%) and the remainder (29%) subsisting mainly of mainline Protestant denominations. The largest denominational percentages outside of Roman Catholicism are the United Church of Canada at 9.6% and the Anglican Church of Canada at 6.9% (2004a). Following the Christian majority, 16% of Canadians report "no religion." Muslims represent the fastest growing minority group and presently represent 2% of the population. Jews follow them at 1.1% and Hindus, Sikhs, and Buddhists account for 1% each (Statistics Canada 2004a). Ontario hosts 61% of all Muslims in Canada. Québec is home to the next largest group with 20%. The remaining Muslims in Canada are distributed throughout BC (10%), Alberta (8%), and the remaining provinces (2%) (Statistics Canada 2004b).

²¹⁰ Thirty-five percent of enlisted personnel come from Ontario, Québec contributes 21%, Nova Scotia is responsible for 12%, Alberta 11%, British Columbia 8% and the remaining provinces 7% combined (the final 6% come from outside Canada). In Ontario, 66% of the population is either Roman Catholic or Protestant (33% each) while in Québec, 83% of the population identifies as Roman Catholic. In Nova Scotia, 86% of the population belongs to Christian denominations (49% Protestant and 37% Roman Catholic) and in Alberta, 65% are Christian (39% Protestant and 26% Roman Catholic). For further statistics on military personnel by province see the Statistics Canada Table "Military Personnel and Pay" at <http://www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/govt16a.htm> (Statistics Canada 2007).

²¹¹ Members of visible and religious minorities in the CF are present mainly in reserve units based in large centers such as Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal (Benham Rennick 2006a; Holden 2005). See chapter 5. In 2006, 16 000 women served in the CF accounting for 16.7% of the total forces (12.8% of Regular Forces and 20% of reservists) (DND 2006b). In Canadian civilian society, women account for just over 50% of the population at 16 468 000 according to the 2006 census (Statistics Canada 2006).

(Bibby 2002, 79-88; Bibby et al. 1985; Statistics Canada 2004a). In fact, Statistics Canada reports that,

On average, people who reported they had no religion tended to be younger than the general population. Almost 40% were aged 24 and under, compared with 33% of the total population. Their median age was 31 years, below the overall median age of 37 for the general population. Males were more likely to report no religion than were females. (Statistics Canada 2004a)

This means that even though the majority of members enter from largely Christian provinces, they belong to an age group that disavows religion.

At the same time, while statistics show that the largest majority of Québécois identify themselves as Roman Catholic, other research indicates that Roman Catholicism in Québec has more to do with culture and heritage than active participation (Bibby 2002; Lemieux et al. 2000). Furthermore, one could easily speculate that religious groups with strong military traditions such as Sikhs and Aboriginals join the CF in larger numbers than are present in civilian society.²¹² These three trends indicate a need to test the assumption that religion in military society is similar to that of Canadian society.

Without valid data on religion, it is difficult to say what the majority of CF personnel believe. However, available evidence shows that most Canadian military personnel are young, Caucasian, males from provinces that report Christian denominations as the primary religion. One lieutenant colonel explained that,

“We take that information [on religious beliefs] when they come in, just in case something happens, and most will declare a religious affiliation. The ones that aren’t religious aren’t the majority, but they’re a growing minority.” These types of speculations from personnel and chaplains at all levels and various locations throughout Canada suggest that the majority of CF personnel are

²¹² Canadian Aboriginals have a long history of military service (MacFarlane and Moses 2005). However, differences of culture and problems with discrimination have resulted in poor recruitment and retention rates for Aboriginals in the last three decades. As a result, the CF has designed a number of programs aimed at recruiting and retaining Aboriginals in the forces (Bergeron 2006; McCue 2000; Moses et al. 2004; White 2000).

what one person described as “passively religious” and mainly Christian. One senior officer in a large urban centre remarked,

“I would say most people are passively religious – Christians that is. There are hardly any non-Christians.” A captain describing his regiment threw up his hands and smiled,

“We’re all Christmas and Easter Christians here!” A Francophone pilot said, “I’m Roman Catholic.” He gave a little laugh, shrugged and added, “We all are in Québec... none of us go to Mass, but we’re all Roman Catholic!” An air force mechanic describing himself as something of an agnostic told me, that he occasionally attended church, “mostly because it makes my father very happy.”

Speculation by those with access to members’ personal records as well as statements such as these suggest that, even if they are not active in their faith, most personnel joining the CF bring with them some background in Christian principles and values, even if they have distanced themselves from traditional practices and formal institutions.

4.1.2 Privatization of Religion

As noted in chapter two, those who study religion in modernity frequently point to the growing significance of religious individualism and the importance of a self-defined world view. For many people, including those who continue to participate in established religious communities, this subjective outlook takes precedence over established religious doctrines (Hervieu-Léger 2000; Roof 1999; Wuthnow 1998).

Part of this response comes from a rejection of traditional ways of believing. One base chaplain working in a predominantly Christian province explained,

“We live in a period of post-Christendom. So many people are very angry and uncomfortable with Christianity because of the many failings of the Church – and rightly so, I don’t blame them. I meet post-Christians all the time in this job. They’ve come from a Christian background and heritage and, although they continue to be very spiritual people and they retain some of that heritage, they’re not willing to express their beliefs in that context anymore because of the damage that’s been done and the harm the churches have caused. They can no longer relate to the Christian churches. For

them, religion is what is *done* to innate human spirituality. They continue to be quite spiritual but it's not formal – they don't want the religion.” A homosexual member of the air force gave evidence of this type of thinking and the significance of religious individualism by saying,

“I am not a religious person. I believe there's something out there but I feel that religion is entirely human made. It's a bunch of rules for you to follow. I don't go to church – especially because of the way most churches deal with gays. That really turns me off. I don't like the way they label people. I'm more comfortable with the term spirituality. To me that indicates more of a way of thinking, having a particular attitude, being positive and hopeful, that type of thing.” A woman said,

“I believe there is something bigger than us. I don't believe in religion, especially organized religion because I think it often creates more problems than it solves. I believe in a God and that we have a purpose in being here.”

While people argue that anger at the churches makes them resistant to formal religion, they persist in having religious interests that are directed and inspired by their personal definition of what is important. This privatization of religion is not exclusively a response to anger at abuses by formal religion traditions;²¹³ it is also a side-effect of the differentiation of social roles in modern society. Paul Bramadat argues that, today in Canada there is a,

fairly deeply entrenched general assumption in federal, provincial, and municipal governments, and in the broader society, that religious life should be considered private, as something the state and polite adults should consider off limits, like one's sexual proclivities.
(2005, 6)

This idea that a person's religious interests might be “none of your business” was made clear to me by a soldier I approached to request an interview. He responded angrily saying,

“I feel that I'm not qualified to comment. You'd be better to direct your inquiries to one of the padres. I have NRE [No Religion] on my dog tags – my spirituality is a very private matter and frankly, I'd like to keep it that way.” His stated claim of having “no religion” is not, in fact, an

²¹³ For example, in the case of church-run orphanages, residential schools, and boarding schools where many children were physically and sexually abused by the clergy assigned to protect and care for them (Llewellyn 2002; Shupe 1998; Thomas 2003).

indication of nihilism. Instead, it is an indication that his beliefs are “none of your business,” private, and not open to further examination or discussion.

The rejection of traditional religious authority as well as the very private nature of personal spirituality makes some of the “old military traditions” distasteful experiences for many personnel. For example, within the CF today a number of traditions continue to impose formal Christian beliefs on personnel who are not always appreciative. Although religious parades and ceremonies are now largely voluntary there are still some instances when personnel feel imposed on by the presence of religious tradition at military functions. A sailor told me,

“We have this mandatory parade called ‘divisions’ – it’s a navy thing where you have to go on parade and a lot of times there are prayers and, even if the chaplain’s not with us, the captain or first officer or someone will say the prayers and they’re praying to Jesus. I don’t like this and others don’t like this because lots of people don’t pray to Jesus and frankly, I think it’s disrespectful. You’re required to be at the parade and therefore you’re required to listen to the prayers. I know that religious events are supposed to be non-denominational because I looked it up on the Chaplain General’s homepage, but they’re actually not.” She continued, “[Jews and Muslims on board] were not happy about it! And I know they had problems with the predominance of Christianity on board – but even a lot of the Christians are bugged by the *forced* part of it. If they’re going to involve religion, they better be respectful about it. When you enlist, you have certain expectations about what you’re going to have to put up with, but even in civilian life where you don’t have to agree with your boss or co-workers. You don’t have to worship with them!” She continued,

“Just recently at a mess dinner²¹⁴ I was asked beforehand to say grace. I told my senior officer that I don’t ‘do’ grace but the officer pushed it and asked me again at the meal and I refused again – publicly.” She half-smiled and added, “I was ‘spoken to’ about that afterwards! Mostly because I had embarrassed him, I think, but I was spoken to. But yeah, it’s the forced participation that bugs me the most.” Another non-religious army member remarked,

“I really think that they need to have more of a sense of religion as something that’s personal for people. I’m not sure there should be a place for public prayers in the military – at a memorial

service, ok, because you're not forced to attend – where people attend because it's mandatory for them to do so.”

Resentment towards formal religion and privatized notions of religious belief is not less evident in Québec despite the fact that statistics show that approximately 83% of Francophones continue to identify themselves as Roman Catholic (Statistics Canada 2004b). Sociologists of religion interpret this paradox as a cultural and traditional affiliation rather than an active and personal religious choice. They point to the fact that while only about 20% of Québec Catholics attend Mass regularly many go for important events such as baptisms, weddings and funerals (Bibby 2002, 80; Lemieux et al. 2000, 69; Seljak 2000, 133). One senior chaplain explained to me that Francophones in the CF,

“are almost all baptized [Roman Catholic] – more than 80% because they are baptized as a baby and they don't have a choice! In the CF about 50% [of all personnel] are Roman Catholic anyway and about 40% are French.” Those Québécois who are Protestant tend to be evangelicals. Despite evidence of growth among Christian evangelicals in Québec, Reginald Bibby notes that this movement is neither large nor wide spread as most Québécois, even though they find few “personal benefits” in Roman Catholicism, are “adamant about the fact that they have no interest in switching to another religious tradition” (Bibby 2002, 81-82).²¹⁵

Despite their unwillingness to switch, Francophones, like numbers of their Anglophone peers, harbour resentments towards the Church. A Francophone who “rarely” attends Mass explained,

“In the French Canadian context, there is extreme discomfort with organized traditional religion because of the Roman Catholic experience but there is still a strong interest in spiritual experiences. People don't want to be denominationally pigeon-holed. The Roman Catholic experience in Québec has made people very edgy and wary of traditional, organized religion.” A Francophone padre stated that,

²¹⁴ A mess dinner is a formal event to mark special occasions. Because mess dinners are considered parades, attendance is compulsory.

²¹⁵ Reginald Bibby points out that between 40 and 50% of Québécois claim they would become more involved if they found it personally beneficial (2002, 82).

“In Québec, they have a view of God that is associated with religion, the past, and pain... They’re very bitter about the past, very frustrated about it, and they reject faith. They reject religion and, if they turn to something, it will be a spiritual experience which doesn’t have religious connotations or Christian connotations... They have presupposed what God *should* be and since the reality doesn’t match their idea of what God should be then [they believe] there cannot be a God. People can have a very emotional response to God. There is a type who defends God, one who rejects God and one who talks to God – and that talking to God can be in anger, or frustration, but it’s still talking. I think some people fear that God will reject them so people just leave.” At the same time that they are angry with the church however, they retain an association with it as a cultural indicator of Québec identity. Lemieux and Montminy describe this as “*un catholicisme sans Église*” and note that to this cultural identity Roman Catholics from Québec add any number of esoteric and occult beliefs (Lemieux et al. 2000, 98-100). A Francophone trauma counsellor said,

“[Francophone] military personnel are very spiritual people. I think mostly their spirituality is connected to fear and death.... They’re talking a lot about how they see God, life. There’s a lot of people who are into New Age – they take a little bit of this and a little of that to make their own religion. They are angry at the Church. There are not so many that are interested in the Church – probably not more than 5-10%; but they are very spiritual.” Another chaplain described the Québécois fascination for the occult saying,

“French and English [people] don’t look at spirituality the same way. English people relate spirituality with ...religious faith. For most French people spirituality equals ‘mysticism’ and mystical experience where you have occultism and all kind of esoteric approaches to the experience. New Age movements are part of that experience. ... French people are much more inclined to esoteric experiences and occultism. Much more than the English people – no doubt about it, I’ve seen that.” Francophone personnel retain cultural ties to their Roman Catholic tradition while incorporating alternative religious thinking as well as interpreting their beliefs subjectively.

Like their Anglophone counterparts, what we see among Québécois is both a resentment of traditional religious authorities as well a retained interest in spiritual matters. The result is a group of people whose beliefs are highly-subjective, individualized and private even though the majority of them identify themselves simply as “Roman Catholic.”

4.1.3 Subjectivization and the Religious Quest

For military personnel coming out of a Christian heritage, an individualized search for meaning appears to be the new norm. While numbers of people continue to believe in aspects of a religious tradition, they may reject the denominational label or reinvent beliefs in accordance with their own interpretations. This subjectivization of religious belief is noted by a number of scholars who examine religion in late modernity. For example, Danièle Hervieu-Léger argues that when people link religious tradition with new ways of interpreting meaning they retain the symbolic, ideological, and practical benefits of belonging to a community of believers without diminishing the significance of their personal experiences and interpretations of the meaning behind the beliefs (Hervieu-Léger 2000, 82). Lemieux and Montminy, describing Catholicism in Québec, state that this individualized faith is a religion that lacks a church body, a faith community or even its own proper identity (2000, 88). Yet it retains meaning for Québécois, in the ways Hervieu-Léger has described. Robert Fuller describes these people simply as “spiritual but not religious” (2000).

Military personnel provided numerous examples of the awkward relationship people in late modernity can have with formal religion as well as giving evidence of efforts to interpret meaning for themselves. An infantry sergeant told me,

“I was raised Anglican – that’s my background, but I wouldn’t described myself that way. I’d probably describe myself as ‘none of the above’!” A soldier in his early thirties said,

“I see my spirituality as a different way of rationalizing stuff that’s going on in the world.” A Francophone Canadian remarked,

“My spirituality is best identified in my sense of good and evil. I’ve moved away from the idea that most Christians have of God being someone you ask for things like protection and good tidings. I no longer find that understanding credible.” The subjectivation of religion to personal interpretation illustrated here seems to go hand-in-hand with the notion of religious “seeking” described earlier by Roof and Wuthnow (1999; 1998).

Of the people I interviewed, almost every practicing believer and several of those with “no religion” described *seeking* and *choosing* as an important part of their spiritual development. Although some

elected to stay with the faith in which they were raised, these people remarked that they had examined other possibilities before returning to their family tradition. Others described their personal religious beliefs as a reaction to the religious beliefs with which they had been raised. A number of people expressed their spirituality as a vague and ill-defined search for meaning and purpose. A woman who claimed to have “no value for religion” but believes humanity is “here for a purpose” remarked paradoxically that,

“I go to church sometimes – actually, I go to a lot of churches. I don’t hate them *all* – sometimes I get a lot of peace from being in a church.” A Francophone soldier commented that although many people in the CF reject formal religion,

“Religion, faith, and spirituality, are still very important for many people. Almost all of us want to believe there is *something* above us giving purpose and meaning to our lives and experiences – even if we don’t know what that something is.” Another person said,

“Sure I’ll pray that something happens or doesn’t happen if I’m worrying or frightened, but I don’t know who I’m praying to!” He laughed, “But I do pray... I just pray to... *whatever!*” He laughed again then shrugged, “When I think about [the attacks of September 11, 2001] and things like that, I wonder, if there was a God, would he or she really let that kind of thing happen?” Along with evidence of spiritual seeking and religious thinking openness to spiritual opportunities was also evident among personnel. One woman with no religious affiliation described a difficult personal situation that inspired religious thinking and a religious quest as she struggled to cope with the situation. She said,

“Several years ago my ex-husband and his family were murdered. That was really hard for me. That was definitely a spiritual time in my life. I spent a lot of time jogging and working things out in my head. I talked to myself and I meditated [but] I definitely would have appreciated some spiritual guidance and support during that time. That would have helped me. I would have appreciated the contact – even if they just said ‘We heard and we’re sorry, is there anything we can do?’ But I didn’t get it – not from anyone I knew at the time.” A petty officer with no religious beliefs told me,

“My last boss was very spiritual – he was a Buddhist. He always tells me to be happy and leave work behind. He says that what is important in life is your family – that’s a pretty unusual attitude in the CF because you’re supposed to put Canada and Canadian values before yourself and

your family. Buddhism and his sense of spirituality appeal to me because of the meditation aspect. I wish I had some resources like that.” A young female soldier who had grown up in a Christian home but does not affiliate with any religious group explained,

“I might call myself more of a Wiccan because I’m open to the idea that there is more than one god and I love the idea of Mother Nature and anything about nature really.”

Those who participate in formal religious traditions made similar statements regarding the search for and selection of their personal religious values as well as the authority of subjective interpretations over formal doctrine. One man told me he had grown up in a Christian home and finally converted to Islam after “a long spiritual journey.” Paradoxically, a soldier raised in a Muslim home said,

“I didn’t always buy into Islam. I had to do a lot of research and comparison before I was convinced. First I had to decide if I believed there was a creator and when I felt sure of that, I went out looking at all kinds of religions trying to see which one fit best with what I believed. I had my doubts – everyone does – but I went all out to try to understand and see if I could believe. I needed to find a religious perspective that made sense to me.” A convert to evangelical Christianity who was very active in his denomination still argued,

“I don’t really like the word religion; I prefer just to call myself a Christian.”

Even after finding a sense of spirituality that “made sense” to them, a few people continued to struggle with uncertainty and personal interpretations of their faith. A Muslim explained that since his initial conversion experience he had grown less fastidious in his religious practice. He said,

“I’ve become more lax since my initial conversion. I don’t pray as much. I’m not too hung up on Halal meat and that kind of thing. My core beliefs in Islam are still there but I’m less attached to the dogma. Some of that has come from minor conflicts with my family. Islam is not about creating conflict so I let some of those things go that were upsetting my relationships with my family. I think being in university has caused me to think more critically about a lot of my beliefs and now I find that there are a number of aspects of Islam on which I prefer to reserve judgement. Before I would just have looked at things – like take Shari’a family law for example – and I would have said ‘Yes, this is good, this is the way it is supposed to be.’ But now I find I reserve judgement on that.” A practicing Protestant described similar struggles with his continuing efforts to make sense of his religious beliefs. He said,

“I have difficulty with the whole notion of divine intervention when I see so many other heinous things happening around the world... Why no intervention there? It’s a real questioning point for me. I don’t know how to rationalize that whole concept. Is it luck? Is it natural influences? I don’t know. I can’t answer that but my rationalization process makes it hard to jump to the idea of divine intervention [saving us from bad situations]. ... I’ve talked about it with my minister. He says that if you don’t have questions, you’re probably not really seeking in your spirituality, so I’m ok with having some questions about what I believe.” One can see this individual’s application of scientific rationalism embedded within his individual and subject efforts to “make sense” of his spiritual ideas.

The lack of data on religion in the military makes it impossible to state definitively the nature of religion in the ranks. However, existing statistics on military society and religion in Canada allow us to piece together information that suggests a relatively homogenous environment of “passive” or non-practicing Christians who elevate personal interpretations of spirituality above denominational authority *and* atheism. There are also those who resist formal religion while remaining open to spiritual experiences and still others who continue to seek understanding and insight into the traditions they have embraced. Regardless of their religious point of view, the individualized and subjectivated nature of their beliefs is evident. These qualities are key indicators of human experience in late modernity. Whereas one variety of modern thinking would dismiss religious beliefs out of hand as impossible to test, prove or quantify through scientific means, the late modern appreciation for personal interpretation and a variety of experience allows individuals to examine religious issues through both a rational and subjective lens. This commingling of modern tendencies to apply scientific reasoning and late modern tendencies to elevate personal interpretive authority above traditional authority gives us striking insights into the way religion is re-made in late modernity.

4.2 Religious Interest and Military Duties

So far we have identified a group of individuals who appear to come mainly from Christian traditions in Canada. Many of these people no longer participate in formal religious activities although they retain some ties to their heritage through traditions, religious rites of passage, and even their continued quest for religious understanding. This image does not represent the whole picture of

religion in the military however, nor does it identify aspects of military duty that encourage people to pursue religious interests. For one thing, the “unlimited liability” aspect of military duties often leads people to questions about suffering, meaning, and the “big issues” of life. As we saw in the previous chapter, bureaucratic and competitive elements of modern societies have the potential to alienate (Toennies 1963 [1887]). This alienation is often amplified for military personnel who, due to the current operational tempo of military deployments, sometimes feel, as one soldier put it, like “a small cog in a big machine.” Finally, the types of duties that military members are obliged to do and the environments in which they are posted often raise questions about values and ethics. These three aspects of modern military society – mortal danger, the bureaucratized nature of military employment, and duties that raise moral and ethical concerns – cause some people who might not otherwise have cause, to turn to religious resources and think about religious issues.

4.2.1 Unlimited Liability, Suffering and Meaning

Unlike civilians who pursue potentially dangerous jobs in the service of society, “soldiers go to their work with the deliberate intention of destroying lives and property” (English 2004, 33). The chapters on Military Culture and Ethics in the Report of the Somalia Commission of Inquiry states:

The concept of unlimited liability in defence of national interests distinguishes members of the military profession from other professions. Furthermore, the military allows for the lawful killing of others in the performance of duty. Moreover, the responsibility of military leadership permits the sacrifice of soldiers’ lives in order to achieve military objectives. The stark and brutal reality of these differences from normal society has traditionally been a distinguishing feature of military life, contributing to a sense of separateness – even superiority – in relation to the civilian population (Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia 1997).

One senior military commander emphatically described the way in which unlimited liability influences religious thinking among personnel. He said,

“Soldiers take part in a profession that ... calls for him to commit an act [killing] ... that in any other circumstance would be illegal! Both killing and being killed are central to the aspect of unlimited liability that goes with soldiering – soldiers recognize this. The spiritual context of a

soldier's thinking comes from the full realization that he's going against what I consider to be a fundamental element of human nature. The profession of the soldier, in that sense, goes against everything that society and religion teaches with regards to valuing human life. Yet it can be understood as a need for maintaining order in human society and even preserving human life!" He continued,

"So, in a soldier's mind, he's experiencing the limits of both societies and there is an enormous amount of inner thinking that is dedicated to that – even in the most macho guys and girls. It's an entirely different plane from the civilian world and from other professions. It's a whole different framework." A young infantryman reiterated this point of view saying,

"While most people aren't very religious, you can't separate religion from the military because, when you have some young guy signing up to go to Afghanistan and he's filling out his will, you can't tell me he's not thinking about life and death and what's going to happen to him spiritually." One senior female officer explained that

"People want to go overseas and fire machine guns. It's not a 'normal' world. You might see 15-20% where they enter and end up in 'safe roles' but that's not the norm. Military personnel are risk takers..."

A chaplain serving with an infantry regiment composed mostly of 20-something young men explained that the personnel he serves are,

"not pious or moral in the sense that civilian church people are stereotyped as being. But they do have a sense of mortality that most civilians don't have. They handle dangerous equipment and they're trained to kill people – even though they don't talk about it in those terms – they're taught in terms of 'targets' but that's what it is. You can't handle some of that big firepower equipment without thinking about and knowing that it will kill people." He continued, "I get some funny questions some times. One young guy came up to me and said 'I don't believe in a specific god but I believe there is a creator. If I died, what kind of prayers would you say for me?' I think what he was asking was, 'How do you, with your clearly defined religious perspective, relate to me with my fuzzy theology?' So they're not religious in that sense but they are willing to talk about prayer, the soul, the creator. They have that postmodern spirituality without a home." A Francophone counsellor in a trauma centre said,

“When they are talking about their experiences on a mission ... when they are talking about people who were killed and why... to me, these are spiritual questions. When I’m counselling people, hearing about their values and existential questions helps me understand their experience. They are mainly asking questions about life and death and their mission and they are very quick to name God. They [often] felt so helpless because they were in a defensive position but they were not allowed to intervene. [They can find] no meaning in that so they ask, ‘Where is God?’” Civilians who do not work in an environment of heightened mortal danger may not be as attuned to the types of spiritual and existential questions military personnel ask.

Canadian military missions in the twenty-first century frequently take the form of operations other than war that we examined in chapter three. Canadian Disaster Assistance Recovery Teams (DART) offer primary medical care and clean water after tsunamis, earthquakes, landslides and floods (DND 2005b). Civil-military cooperation²¹⁶ efforts, such as the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) that go in ahead of troops to “win the hearts and minds” of locals, work with civilian governments, members of non-governmental organizations and other non-military personnel (O’Neill 2005). Each of these scenarios requires personnel to leave home for an extended period and adapt to harsh conditions. Sometimes these missions are positive experiences that bring relief to suffering populations,²¹⁷ but other times they are devastating experiences that leave personnel in despair.²¹⁸ A chaplain who had served on a security mission to Asia described the environment as “very difficult” because

“there was a lot of rain, a lot of mosquitoes, a lot of spiders and ... dangerous snakes. We were sleeping on the ground. ... We would wake up in water up to our knees. You could only take your wet blanket and cover yourself. It was the same cycle every night for six months.” He continued, shaking his head, “There were a lot of physical ailments, malaria, fever, nausea, vomiting, that [kind of] stuff. As a chaplain part of my job was to keep them focussed on the mission but they

²¹⁶ The Department of Defence refers to these as CIMIC efforts (O’Neill 2005).

²¹⁷ For example, members of the DART team that served in Sri Lanka following the 2004 tsunami described that experience as “very positive” because they were able to bring immediate assistance to people in need. Benham Rennick personal notes 2006.

did not feel the [purpose of the] mission had been made clear in the first place. I had to try to help them to change their attitude because you don't have any control once you're there in the bush in the middle of nowhere. You have no control of that but you have control of your attitude. So you can have an attitude that will lead to depression and nervous breakdown or an attitude that will keep you happy." This example is an experience common to all personnel who are deployed to harsh environments. On these missions members are obligated to subjugate their human needs and experiences and act as functionaries for military objectives regardless of the personal toll.

Along with the hardship they must endure, some missions confront members with concerns they would not otherwise have to face. A Francophone soldier described arriving in Afghanistan wearing full combat gear and thinking,

"What kind of a mess are we in? We weren't feeling too cocky just then. ... you can't be the same after that. You just can't. At the same time, you are using all kind of techniques to protect yourself – you would cry every minute if you really took the time to think about what you're going through. It's awful to think about death, it's unbelievable." A captain serving with an infantry unit in Kandahar gave this scenario,

"The majority of us came to that theatre with the experience of ... the former Yugoslavia with the mindset we had in that theatre – where you could go out among the civilians, you could go for a pop, or a slice of pizza. But here! ... There's no way any soldier's going to be able to do any of that stuff here without putting himself at great risk. ... There was a lot of harassment outside the camp. We experienced a lot of suicide bombings, a lot of IEDs [improvised explosive devices]... That kind of thing makes people pretty jumpy. ... [our team experienced] rocket packs going right through the back seats of the LAVs [light armoured vehicles], rollovers, poor road conditions, suicide bombers – you know, [the Afghanis] would fire into engine blocks of cars or support vehicles, they would *not* yield or back away from our vehicles.... You had to force them to give way. All of this was pretty new for Canada – and that was a PRT [Provincial Reconstruction Team]! They're supposed to be, you know, the 'soft and friendly' group going in and building relationships with the

²¹⁸ See Dallaire 2003 and Fowler 1996. A number of personnel on this 1994 mission that saw nearly 800 000 people slaughtered by fellow Rwandans have been diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder and released from the CF. Several of these people have attempted suicide. Personal notes Benham Rennick.

locals so the mission can go forward smoothly but it's really not like that." A sergeant described losing a member of his team at the end of his tour in Afghanistan. He said,

"All the work was done and the guys were just weeks from going home. They'd done their job, they'd completed their mission and then this rollover happens and one of their buddies is dead – it was really hard to take. That was really, very difficult." An army major explained,

"The experience of being on a mission is unique; we're all exposing our lives there. Today we're all together but maybe tomorrow one of us won't be there. When you go into a theatre of operations where you are confronted with death, you need to make some kind of sense of your life." He explained that in an environment where you see death and dying every day, questions about the purpose and nature of life feel commonplace. In a context where rockets are hitting the camp every night, it doesn't seem so strange to discuss the "big issues" of human existence.

While military personnel, who are well trained and prepared for the environments into which they are posted, might be able to deal with the stresses of a single tour of duty Canada's relatively small total force size means that the bigger concern for continuing operational effectiveness is accumulated stress from multiple deployments (Canadian Forces Health Services 2004a, 2004b). As noted in the previous chapter, seeking help for stress and mental health concerns carries a significant stigma within military culture where toughness and resilience are prized qualities (DND 2002b, 2003c; Marin 2004; Mosse 2000). Regardless of their military training, personal toughness and emotional resilience however, military duties and repeated deployments to difficult environments virtually guarantee that CF members will experience anxiety, hardship or trauma at some point during their military careers. As one commander explained mental health problems resulting from military duties are simply,

"another type of injury – *not* a sickness or a weak frame of mind – it's an outright injury. Some will lose an arm and some will have their grey cells screwed up! We should not be singling out that injury as unusual or weak or cowardly – it's an honourable injury received from doing an honourable job." While this may be true the reality of the stigma associated with mental disorders is a serious barrier affecting the treatment of CF personnel. In fact, a number of recent inquiries place cases of post-traumatic stress disorder among current Canadian Forces members at approximately 20% and indicate the operations in Afghanistan are contributing to the rising numbers (CBC News

2006c; DND 2002b, 2003c).²¹⁹ Other studies show that military personnel are twice as likely to suffer from depression and anxiety as the civilian population but, despite the higher prevalence, only one person in ten will seek help (Statistics Canada 2002).²²⁰ The chaplains and other religious resources are non-stigmatized alternatives that personnel are willing to engage for addressing the mental stresses they experience while carrying out their military duties.

A number of people who served on missions identified the hardship and uncertainty of their experiences as a motivation for seeking spiritual guidance and support. A sailor remarked,

“... we lost someone at sea. He fell overboard and was lost. He had been in the Gulf with us. When you work on a ship, being lost at sea is something you think about. You think, ‘Is this going to happen to me? I’d be so cold and so afraid and eventually I’d drown’ – it’s frightening. The chaplain knew we were feeling this way and he talked to me about it, and he talked to others and he said that at a time like that you can lean on religion if you want and he helped us.” A different sailor who described himself as having no religion was in the Persian Gulf during the Gulf War. He told me that the chaplain was able to comfort him and fellow sailors when they faced up to the danger of the mission. He said,

“In the Gulf [War] they gave out these nuclear attack suits and that got to me. I thought, ‘Holy shit, we could really die here.’ Obviously they gave them out because they believed there was a real risk of that kind of threat so I was frightened and I was able to talk to [the padre] about that and he helped me. Mostly he gave me a sense of not being alone, that others were afraid too and that we were all there together. That helped a lot. It’s not that the mission was even that tough; it’s just that when you’re away from home for a long time it’s really hard. Your whole life is disrupted and it’s hard.”

Personnel on military missions face the fear of death, the hardship and danger of their duties, the trauma of seeing others suffering, and situations that challenge their values. In these situations, many

²¹⁹ There is a wide literature on “battle stress,” “shell shock,” “operational trauma,” and PTSD. I do not pretend to be an expert in this area of study, only to suggest that chaplain might provide an additional means of support for personnel facing these types of stresses in the field. See for example Figley et al. 2007.

²²⁰ Statistics indicate that one in twenty civilians seek professional help for depression and anxiety (Statistics Canada 2002).

people will turn to religious resources for comfort and consolation as well as direction and advice on finding meaning and purpose in their roles. A chaplain explained that,

“Soldiers are not typically emotionally needy people. They’re tough and they know how to suck it up and they have to be fairly motivated and disciplined to do well here so they tend to have fairly good coping skills. They’re not unemotional people; their toughness makes them resilient but it also inclines them to bottle things up and that can lead to problems. Most often they need contextual information to help them process things – they need to know these are normal feelings and that someone cares enough to listen to them.”

A young female chaplain related this story of a non-religious soldier who sought her help to deal with atrocities he had witnessed during his duties. She said,

“He had been in Bosnia and he had seen some pretty bad stuff. Then when we were in Afghanistan he saw something that brought it all back to him and he couldn’t get it out of his head. It had something to do with a dead child, and what he had seen in Bosnia, and the fact that he had kids at home about the same age. He was a really big, tough guy and he was just sitting with me weeping. He came to my office one day and he said, ‘Padre, I feel I can talk to you,’ and he sat down and started telling me about all the horrors he had seen in Bosnia and how he felt so powerless – and still felt powerless even now – in the way he thought about it and expressed his anger and emotions. This was stuff he couldn’t tell anyone without risking his job and career opportunities.” A chaplain posted with Francophone troops in Haiti described a scenario where the soldiers struggled to find meaning and purpose in their difficult and unpleasant duties. He explained that,

“the engineers were having nightmares over one of the tasks we had. They were burying several hundred corpses every six or seven weeks. During one of my meetings with the engineers someone made the comment that ‘Not even a prayer is offered.’ So, we organized a funeral service and we went over to the site – it’s called the Valley of the Bones – where our engineers would dig deep into the ground and bury the bodies. With the small funeral service, we gave meaning to the situation. We explained that what we were doing was a service to the community that didn’t have the money to bury their own dead. Each of those bodies was somebody’s baby, their mothers, grandmothers, and grandfathers – and we did it with as much dignity as possible. And that made sense to us as Canadians in something that didn’t make sense.” In both these examples, although

personnel were not necessarily religious themselves, they turned to the religious resource of the chaplain to help them find meaning in their experiences and comfort for their suffering.

Leaders may experience the alienation, hardship and distress of military duties more acutely than their subordinates. Those in command experience what one Lieutenant Colonel referred to as the “loneliness of leadership” and come to the chaplains as a place to talk about their decisions and concerns with a mission.²²¹ As one chaplain explained,

“You see, we train our officers to be more self-sufficient and to find their own answers – and we *should* do that since they’re in leadership roles – but that usually means that they come with the bigger problems.” While they have similar experiences as the personnel who rank beneath them, they bear the added burden of responsibility both for the safety of their people and local civilians, and also for the success of a mission. One senior officer said,

“I know that some of the people that were with me [during a particularly difficult mission] say, ‘Listen, we did all we could and on top of that, we saved a bunch of them!’ and they find comfort in that. That’s ok for them. For a commander, it’s different. Those in leadership are overcome with guilt at being left alive. Sure, there’s fear of battle, fear of death but there are also complications in these missions in terms of the use of force or the non-use of force, crimes against humanity, barbarianism, horror, etc.” A captain described the extreme stress he had experienced during his last mission and explained how, just as he was preparing to leave his last mission he had an almost prescient sense of doom for one young soldier in his unit. He said,

“I was watching him standing there in his role – he was really keen and eager – I had a soft spot for this kid – a real nice kid. He was so proud to be there doing his job. But I’m standing there watching him, with his back to the event, watching the crowd and seeing his face...” His voice broke and he started to weep as he explained how he had been overcome by a strong sense that that young man was going to die during the mission. Several weeks after his return to Canada and while still on leave, he saw the news announcement that the earnest young soldier he had admired so much had been killed in operations. With tears streaming down his face he said, “*That* was tough. Because, relationally, you’re connected. I would have been able to handle it better if I’d been there but when

²²¹ See chapter three.

you're home and you're on your own and you know these guys. By God that was hard!" Another platoon commander said,

"One day a suicide bomber detonated his vehicle right beside mine – our vehicle was built to withstand a blast but they're not foolproof. The vehicle was heavily damaged but we had no casualties. We had to secure the area and then get transportation to another base and when we arrived the media was waiting and there were quick calls home to reassure everyone – but they were made at an unusual time so that immediately put everyone on high alert at home. It was pretty crazy and they were all worried." He continued, "I found that during those high stress times I was just really focussed on the job – getting the task done and taking care of my subordinates. I'm in a leadership role so I feel I really have to be focussed for the sake of my people. But afterwards when you think about what happened... yeah, then it really hits you. At the time, you just fall into your training and you react and deal with the situation. Later you have time to think it through a little more." Those in authority have the added pressure of being in a position to expose others to grave danger. This role can heighten the sense of stress and anxiety felt by those in a position to protect civilians or command other members.

Despite their lack of interest in formal religions while at home, some people find that during operations the chapel can become a sanctuary of comfort, consolation, and peace. One Roman Catholic priest who had served in the Balkans explained,

"I held weekly services and was in charge of three different camps that were spread out geographically. I would go to them by truck. People would come pretty frequently to the chapel because it was the one place you could just be there, just sit there, and be still and quiet. Quite a few came." Another padre described a weekly Bible study he had conducted while on a mission,

"I was seeing 50 to 60 people who came faithfully [each week]. I saw a lot of people becoming Christians who were not believers before." He added that more people attend chapel during a mission both because of "the context, and they don't have as many other distractions either!" He continued, "There are other kinds of activities like a game room where we have a pool table and all kinds of other things to do, but life is more than just having fun and the chapel becomes important for people. They have the time to [attend chapel] there." Another who had served in a combat mission in Afghanistan said,

“We’d see people stopping in [to the chapel] before going out on a mission for a spiritual check-up, some prayer time, some solitude. Most definitely we’d see people attending chapel that don’t go to church at home. Troops definitely take advantage of the spiritual resources on a mission – and the chaplain. Some of those people had a religious leaning at home, but not all of them.” A navy chaplain said,

“I ran a chapel on board ship except when we were in port – there was too much competition then because there were bars!” he laughed. “But we had a core group of about 15 or 20 people from the 240 on board who would come regularly. That wasn’t bad. But even those who didn’t come, people were glad to know that worship was happening and that we were praying and having worship. We became like an icon for everyone else – it made people feel better knowing that we were there!” The evidence of increase interest in places of “sanctuary” noted by these chaplains was not a phenomenon exclusive to Christian chapels or those who are religious.

Other than the Christian chapels, a number of personnel cited an interest in having religiously neutral “sacred spaces” available to them, particularly on ships and during missions. One sailor who described herself as “not religious” commented that, while Sunday services were regularly held while at sea, what she and other sailors would really like is a neutral sacred space on the ship. She said,

“There’s no chapel [on board]. When we’re at sea a Sunday service is held in one of the messes. They have services with voluntary attendance. A lot of people go – you can even get a replacement if you’re on watch so you can attend but I have never attended one of these services. It would be wonderful to have [a sacred space] and I know people would use it – definitely... especially if it was a neutral place. It is *very* hard to be alone on a ship and people would go there just for the silence and to be alone. Even when you’re sleeping you’ve got 50 people to a room and bunks with a curtain across that you can’t even sit fully upright in! There are always some people up and some people sleeping and there’s nowhere to go unless you maybe head up to the smoking area outside on the upper deck! People would definitely go to a sacred space room. I know they would.” An army commander said,

“We need ecumenical chapels where people can just come and sit in peace. We’re going to become more multi-ethnic and multi-religious so it’s illogical to keep building one Roman Catholic chapel here and a Protestant chapel there and a Jewish one and so on.” Despite the lack of a physical

space, some non-religious personnel are able to create private sanctuaries for themselves. An infantryman with no religious inclinations explained that he found consolation and relaxation possible through “downtime.” He said,

“I had my own room but the walls are paper thin, you’re never really alone or away from everything. But I’d put on the head phones and listen to some music and zone out – make people disappear, make camp disappear. There was a chapel there and the padres were available, but I never really felt the need. Hanging out with the guys in my unit was really good too – we’d talk about what was going on and support each other and that community really helped us out.” One person, describing their personal system for dealing with stress and hardship, said,

“I have a *remembrance* that I think of whenever I am stressed or lonely or upset. It’s of a place where I have never felt better in my whole life. It was in the Arctic in July. I had climbed a small mountain – about 3500 feet and it was snowing at the summit. When I looked out over the valley below me there was this full rainbow beneath me. I often reflect on that and I can get there whenever I need to in my own head.” The reliance on “sanctuary,” whether physical or ethereal, as a place to “get away” from one’s troubles, separate oneself from the demands of the modern world, or simply find peace and quiet, is yet another indication of the continuing relevance of religion, albeit in a new and highly-subjective form, for members of late modern society.

Beyond sacred spaces and spiritual practices, some personnel find religious artefacts, such as Bibles and religious medals, become more meaningful for them during military operations. There is considerable evidence of people in civilian society responding to trauma and crises in similar way, such as after the attacks of September 11, 2001²²² and when secular engineering students at l’École Polytechnique in Montreal in 1989 responded to the deaths of 14 of their female peers by organizing a candle-lit vigil at the Roman Catholic shrine l’Oratoire St-Joseph (Milot 1991).²²³ Milot refers to these surprising and even “superstitious” religious responses to tragic circumstances as a “life insurance” approach to faith. David Seljak argues that, “Like life insurance, faith may provide a

²²² There are numerous websites dedicated to memorializing the victims and sustaining the survivors and annual remembrance ceremonies continue to be held around the world. See for example “America Responds” (PBS.org 2001).

certain peace of mind in daily life but one never really thinks about it – until tragedy strikes...” (1997, 6).²²⁴ Unlike civilian daily life, tragedy is a frequent companion during military operations.

Many personnel in the CF display this tendency too. When describing the religious responses during a tour of duty, one Roman Catholic priest posted with a French Canadian unit said,

“There was typically a very low turnout at Mass but there seemed to be a high level of spirituality. I would make religious articles available – crosses, medals, Bibles – and they would disappear as soon as I put them out. For some people going on a tour really heightens their spirituality and they pray more and become more religiously-minded. When you’re facing questions of your own mortality it becomes natural to have questions about life after death and so on. It’s not necessarily fear-related; it can come from a healthy sense of your own mortality. Although most people didn’t attend services – that’s not surprising because it reflects the situation in society and in Québec [the home province of the personnel he was serving] – there was a real connection with physical symbols of religion.” I asked why the interest in these articles was higher during a tour and he said,

“Whether they thought these could protect or connect them with God...?” he shrugged, “but people talked about praying more and reading their Bibles.” An Anglican priest said,

“for some people its superstitious... they believe the medal can protect them. For other people, they believe in the power behind the medal – the divine power that it represents.” Another chaplain said,

“I leave out devotionals and I offer them a little cross they can hang on their dog tags.” He noted that while some people take these others say, “‘No thanks, it’s not my thing’ and that is ok.” A navy chaplain remarked,

“I was surprised when we went out to sea – we got about 100 Bibles from the Canadian Bible Society and I made them available to people and they were just *gone!* People came and took them.” Then, laughing, she added, “But then, maybe they were just looking for something to read!” What

²²³ There is considerable research on religious responses to trauma, see for example Farley 2007, Kalayjian 2002, Piwowarczyk 2005, Bernstein 2005, Bridgers 2005, Beste 2003, Thompson et al. 1997, Ferraro et al. 1991, and Grant 1999.

these chaplains note about the interest of personnel in religious symbols is reiterated by members who rely on these resources.

Several soldiers who had recently served in Afghanistan commented on the psychological comfort they took from wearing a religious medal of saints believed to offer protection to travellers (St. Christopher) and soldiers (St. Michael). When I asked personnel about these articles they described them as important symbols of their spirituality; particularly during operations. Some understood them in terms of “additional protection” as you might expect from a magical talisman, while others understood them as a marker of their personal faith (e.g., Anglicans and Roman Catholics). One field sergeant told me,

“Before I left, my mother gave me a little St. Christopher medallion. So I put it on my dog tags and I always had it with me for the entire time I was there. Actually, I ended up with a whole bunch of these medallions. Someone else gave me another St. Christopher that I kept in my pocket. Then, one day after we had been through a number of incidents during one outing, the padre came up to our group – it had been a hairy day with one major incident after another – it all hit the news back home – and he said, ‘Oh, you guys are killing me!’ and he started handing out these St. Michael medallions. All the guys were crowding around him to get one. So I ended up with two of those in addition to my St. Christopher medallions,” he chuckled and continued, “I had one on my tags, one in my uniform, one in my gear, and one in my room!” I asked if these people, whom he had described as “not very religious,” were self-conscious about receiving the medallions and he remarked with some surprise, “No! They were lining up to get them! I found that I kept checking to see if I still had it on me. Every once in a while or when something would happen I’d touch my dog tags and make sure it was still there.” He continued,

“We provided escorts for supplies. We were always on minimum four-hour standby. Our longest mission kept us out of our camp for about 36 hours. We’d been in theatre for 10 days. We had a suicide bomber, an ambush, a mortar attack, a land mine incident and one of our vehicles ended up in a sewage ditch. We were up for about 30 hours when we finally ended up in another secure camp. That was a pretty hairy day. We had a whole bunch of different guys from different

²²⁴ Raymond Lemieux and Jean Paul Montminy have argued that this approach to religion is not uncommon

backgrounds in that group. No one was openly religious – praying or talking about spirituality or anything like that – there were even a couple of atheists. I remember this one guy in our group; he never struck me as particularly religious, but he seemed pretty upset and he made this comment that he'd lost his medallion. He was trying to find the padre so he could get another but I told him that padre had shipped out. He seemed upset, agitated, even a little shaken by it because he couldn't get another. So, I told him he could have mine," he chuckled, "because I had about four anyway! But he was a subordinate and he was pretty upset and I felt like he needed that reassurance and I could see that he was visibly relieved when I gave it to him. His shoulders relaxed and he seemed more at ease." The reliance on religious symbols suggests that, even while many people accept these objects simply for their "life insurance" quality or out of superstition, it indicates there is perhaps a grain of truth to the adage that "there are no atheists in foxholes."

Religious interest that is sparked during a mission is sometimes meaningful enough that it is retained even after personnel return home. This is not altogether surprising given that human beings tend to carry their experiences with them through memory (Irwin-Zarecka 1994). Religious experience that has been helpful for dealing with trauma or hardship during a deployment might also have value for managing the memories of that experience once a member returns home (Benham Rennick 2006b). Iwona Irwin-Zarecka points to the spiritual practices of Vietnam Veterans as a way for them to cope with their own experiences as well as a means of recognizing others' losses (Irwin-Zarecka 1994, 8, 14, 47-48). Religious tendencies that stem from traumatic experiences also highlight the late modern tendency noted earlier in this chapter, by which individuals apply modern rationalism through a subjective interpretive lens to find a personally acceptable notion of "the truth." One Francophone who had been on a very difficult humanitarian mission demonstrated this tendency when he explained that his formerly nominal beliefs were reshaped by the experiences of the mission,

"There was a point in my experience where I went from a place of horrible depression where I was going to be over run and wiped out to a very nurtured position and I had a sense that a Greater Being was there with me – another Spirit, you know, a deity or something beyond this human level. Its presence there with me at that moment – that knowledge that I was not completely abandoned,

among Catholics from Québec (2000).

because that's totally how I felt, was what was important. We were going to die. The fact that there was something else, bigger than us, gave me the ability to make the shift from despair to hope. But there is not doubt in my military mind that we're not just operating in a vacuum. When I came back from [that mission] there was a real sense that we needed some reference points to help us make sense of what we had experienced. Whatever formal structures of religion I had – mostly Roman Catholic – before going were tested beyond all logic while I was there. But then, faith is not logical! So maybe that type of test is exactly what is needed if you are seeking a more definitive understanding of your spirituality! My faith was tested by the nature of the catastrophe and the impact of that. Everything that my religious understanding was built on helped me, or informed me and gave me a reference point for processing what was going on however, not much of what I knew gave me any comfort!" One young army sergeant said,

"I never really relied on religion much personally. I've always been a very rational, self-reliant kind of person. I worked my own issues out, sometimes with the help of my friends and family but generally in the absence of religion. But my faith has been reinvigorated because of my deployment. I'm now an active church goer – I go church every Sunday!" he shook his head smiling and said, "I'm still a little surprised at myself for that! It still seems a little strange to me! I find now that I'm going willingly and actively engaging my faith and seeking out understanding." An Aboriginal explained to me that,

"It's against Creator to kill people so when we go against Creator then we need healing. So we go to healing circles, spiritual powwows, that kind of thing, but it's a long process." Another French Canadian recovering from PTSD said that, during his treatment in Québec he kept ending up in the Marie-Reine-du-Monde Cathedral, a large Roman Catholic church in downtown Montréal. He said,

"I'd go there and sit in the back in the semi-darkness and listen to the music or watch the Mass – not participate in it – and absorb the solace that the building – that space – could provide. It was the atmosphere itself, the silence, the smells, that was very comforting." In these examples, religious resources become a tool for rationalizing one's traumatic experiences and personal losses at the same time they provide comfort and consolation for living with the memories one retains from the experience.

Religion is not always a source of comfort however. In some instances people find religious beliefs and values further confuse them as they try to comprehend the experiences of a mission. For example, a military psychotherapist working with personnel in a trauma hospital told me that among those who had served in Rwanda there was,

“a lot of questioning about the absence of God because they saw so many peoples’ dead bodies over there and they buried so many people. It’s not normal. They cannot figure out how people can be so cruel – you don’t see anything like this in Canada! They were not able to relate to what happened there. There was no meaning to it and they were not able to find some kind of meaning for their experience and what they saw. Romeo [Dallaire]’s way of referring to the devil is fairly common among people who served in Rwanda. When you see the eyes of evil...” his voice dropped to a whisper, “you’re looking at their eyes but you see no life! You see so much hate in their eyes, it’s incredible.” He shook his head gently and said, “It’s an emptiness and coldness. People notice it and they talk about it all the time. They cannot forget it at all. It comes back to them in dreams – the look of the person. I remember one case where the client was dreaming every night and the main things he was seeing was the eyes.” Another soldier explained to me that, during a recent mission, the religious authorities in the region were part of the problems occurring there. He said,

“So, even as you are there debating your personal beliefs, the institution that gave these to you is part of the problem! Then you’ve got some real freaking out going on! It’s also a bad situation when you’re facing people whose religions teach them that using force and killing people is a positive part of their religion. Then you’re not facing an enemy who’s fighting for nationalism or even a medal – but because he wants to become a martyr and get closer to God! How are you supposed to understand that?! So your own spirituality is being tested all the time and then you’re face to face with someone who’s doing things you think are horrible because his religion tells him those things are good! This just exacerbates the situation and makes it even harder to unravel it and understand it.” In scenarios like these, the cognitive dissonances of understanding religion to be one thing (good) and seeing it in the place of evil leaves people confused and disturbed rather than comforted and consoled.

What we have seen in this section is that religious pursuits and military duties often go together. Spiritual interests in the CF can be inspired by suffering, personal hardship, as well as the difficulty of finding meaning in harsh and traumatic circumstances. Many people who are not religious and do not

engage in religious activities on home soil find courage, consolation and meaning through religious resources in the mission environment. Among these resources are the person of the chaplain, “sacred spaces,” and religious objects such as Bibles and religious medals. Whether these resources are used as magical charms, much like a lucky rabbit foot or other talisman, or whether people believe in the “power behind the symbol” they turn to them in times of stress and fear as a source of comfort and consolation. Sometimes they even retain these interests after they leave the environment as a way to rationalize their experiences. At other times however, the role religion plays in a conflict or a region can undermine its usefulness as a resource for understanding and interpreting traumatic experiences. In any case, the role religion plays in relation to military duties gives important insights into the ways in which late modern individuals use both objective and subjective means to shape and define their understanding of the world.

4.2.2 Operational Tempo, Dehumanization and Alienation

If it is true that military duties that place people in mortal danger and cause them to experience personal hardship inspire religious responses, current CF operational tempo that subsumes human needs and relationships to military objectives amplifies a desire for the community and comforts that religious resources can provide. Not only are members required to ignore their personal experiences of discomfort, loneliness, and fear in order to complete their military responsibilities, but they are now expected to do so more frequently and for longer periods. The stresses of interrupted personal life and strained relationships are another reason that many people who are not religious at home turn to religion and religious resources during deployments.

Over and above the mortal and psychological risks of a dangerous mission, military personnel give up significant amounts of their personal time to training and deployment. The policy on deployment tells personnel that if they serve on a military operation,

for 180 days or more, you should not be posted outside Canada again (or to an isolated post to which your family cannot travel at public expense) for one year. Exceptions to the one year limit may be approved ... if you volunteer or if service requirements dictate... When you return home from a[n] operation lasting six months or longer, you should have a 60-day respite ... (Assistant Deputy Minister Human Resources 2005)

Canada's relatively small total force (regular and reserve forces combined) only consists of approximately 62 500 personnel. Present involvement in Afghanistan as well as ongoing commitments to other operations means that capable people are deployed repeatedly and frequently for terms as long as six to nine months (English 2000; Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence 2003). When the need arises, personnel do not receive the one-year exemption stated in the policy above. As a result, personnel experience significant disruptions to their personal life and have little time or energy to process and overcome the accumulated stress of the mission environment. A counsellor at an operational stress centre added,

“You do the first mission and it's not so bad. But [after] another mission it's getting worse because you have an accumulation of stress. When you have stress for a week it's not so bad, but when you have stress for six months you're developing pathological stress.” As one commanding officer told me,

“The real problem comes from the fact that we're such a small force! There's a small base of people with the necessary skill sets that are actually deployable and we use them over and over again. The medical people are exhausted, the engineers are stretched *beyond* beyond – you could continue through all the trades. People are *tired*! And that's where the stress comes in. It's hard to package stress when it comes over a 2-year period! It's not just an isolated event, it's an accumulation of things.” Accumulated stress, as we saw earlier, can present itself in a number of ways. People I interviewed noted that manifestations of stress take a heavy toll on personal relationships.

While some CF members suggested that military personnel and their partners are in fact *more* committed to their marriage relationships because they recognize the difficulties they will face going in (a possibility supported by the lower statistics on divorce and separation),²²⁵ Canadian Forces members continue to struggle to balance their military and family obligations. The Department of

²²⁵ A 1998 report on social demographics in the CF places marriage and common-law lifestyles at approximately the same as the general populations (78.5%). The divorce and separation rate however is 50% lower than the Canadian national average at 5.3% (Truscott and Dupre 1998). In a more recent study on quality of life issues in the CF, 77% of military personnel and their spouses or common-law partners rated their relationships as “satisfactory” (41%) or “completely satisfactory” (36%) with another 17% reporting “somewhat satisfied” (12%) and “neutral” (5%) (Dowden 2001, 15).

National Defence recognizes that the personal lives of military members suffers as the result of the “cumulative and combined impact of all sources of time away including courses, training, attached postings ... as well as deployments” (Directorate Quality of Life 2007). What this means for personnel is that, as one member put it,

“When you’re overseas on a mission, you check out of your marriage. There’s a lot of glory that goes with being on a mission but there’s no glory for the person stuck at home making life continue – there’s no glory in doing the laundry!” Another person commented that marriages in the CF are either “rock solid or totally broken.” Often those dealing with family and personal crises will turn to the unit chaplain for consolation, support, and advice.

A number of people described the time lost due to military training and deployment as a serious infraction on healthy personal relationships. A Francophone member of the air force who had served in Kosovo explained,

“You don’t know how long six months is until you’ve done one of those tours. I know of at least one guy who intentionally broke his arm so he could go home. It was just such a long time to be away and it’s hard on your family and your relationships. Sometimes you go and it’s not the same girlfriend when you get back because they can’t handle it. Some guys get the call that their partner is leaving and they do everything to get back and when they get there, their bags are all waiting on the front step for them – it’s too late. It’s a hard life. But I’m not going to do that to myself. If it gets crazy, I’m going to get out. I’ve seen too many people’s lives fall apart from what they’re expected to do. When they start asking me to be away all the time, that’s when I’ll be asking for my discharge.” Another Francophone serving in the army commented,

“I have a little baby at home – 18 months. When I went to Afghanistan she was just two months old and I couldn’t believe how she changed when I came back. Now I go away to a conference or training for a week or two and she won’t talk to me for a day or two when I get back! We are being deployed in a few months; we don’t know where or for how long yet. I will do that deployment but after that, I’m not going to do it again. I’ve seen too many families destroyed by the military experience and I’m not going to do that to my family. It’s not worth it to me.” Another member who had done several six-to-nine-month tours over the last three years told me,

“My little daughter tore a big chunk of her hair out while I was away. She stopped as soon as I came home. That’s tough...” His voice broke, “In a way, I think she believed that I was choosing the mission over her. We romanticize these missions – there’s the adrenaline rush. I put my death file on my desk before I left – you know, in case anything happened – and [my wife and I would] make jokes about it, ‘You’ll make a lot of money if I die!’ I know it sounds pretty morbid, but we all do it. All soldiers do that. You have to. But the reality is, these kids are seeing you leaving and they’re not sure you’ll come home.” Another reservist soldier said,

“When I was deployed there were a number of stressors and disagreements with my family. These were the hardest things for me to cope with while I was away. I’d call because I wanted to touch base or connect and then we’d get off on some other issue and end up discussing that and there was nothing I could do about it right then so that made it really hard. I just wanted to talk to them and we’d end up in some discussion about something else. Then, when I got home it was really stressful because all those issues were outstanding and we had to work through all of them – that was the real readjustment phase for me.” A naval officer described the loneliness of a shipboard mission saying,

“...being stuck out there... you’re always thinking ... that there’s no way to go home. [On our longest mission] we missed every holiday. We missed Hallowe’en – you don’t really think of that as a holiday but a lot of the guys were thinking that they were missing their kids and they couldn’t take them out and that – Christmas, New Year, Valentine’s Day, Easter! It was hard. People don’t realize how hard it is to be on a ship because you’re away a lot and you are really limited in your contact to the rest of the world. You can’t call and you only get a few emails and only once a day. If someone at home forgets to email you and that’s all you’re depending on, that can be just awful for a crewmember!”

Chaplains note that members on deployment frequently seek them out for advice about personal relationships. One Francophone padre remarked that, during his tour in the Balkans most people came to him about,

“stresses about being away from home. Some of the guys had been on tour in the region four times already and they were pretty tired out. Chaplains can recommend an extra leave of absence if someone needs it – for example, because of a death at home. We can allow extra phone time – the soldiers are usually only allowed two 15-minute calls a day usually. We can contact the chaplains at

home to contact the family and help out on that side.” Another Protestant chaplain who had served in Afghanistan said,

“We usually have several cases where a guy is [on a mission and] he’s just trying to make sense of what is going on and he receives a phone call from his wife to announce that she is leaving him. So they come to the office right away and try to find a solution. We try to process the crises and see if we are going to repatriate this person or keep him there. We have to figure out how we can help the spouse or the girlfriend to go through this crisis herself.” Another woman chaplain who had served in Afghanistan told me that the first and last months of her tour were the busiest times for her. She explained that in the early part of the tour people came for comfort and encouragement because “they were afraid,” while later in the tour they came because their families were going through turmoil due to their absence. She explained that,

“... when you’re on tour it puts a lot of stress on relationships and a lot of people break up. There might be problems at home but when you go away for a long time those problems are magnified.” Another female chaplain said,

“On tour, relationships breaking up become a big, *big* deal! Being conservative, I would say there’s about a 40% break-up rate during tours.” While people in these situations rely on chaplains for their help, it is not necessarily because the member is religious or even has a religious interest. Instead, it is because, as we saw in the previous chapter, the chaplains’ role as an intermediary gives her a privileged place in the otherwise dehumanizing, bureaucratic hierarchy of military society. As a result of their ability to bridge the two worlds of military society and family life, chaplains are able to minimize some of the alienating and dehumanizing experiences that military personnel encounter.

At the same time that chaplains are interceding to minimize the dehumanizing aspects of military life for members, they must subsume their own experiences of hardship and the stresses of being separated from their home community to their military obligation. Ironically, this means that even as chaplains “put a human face” on military operations, they themselves may be dehumanized and objectified by the role. As a result, not all chaplains are successful at meeting the needs of military personnel. Personnel explained that the “good padres” were personable, approachable and showed genuine interest in them; that is, they were able to bridge the gap between the military “machine” and

the member's personal needs. The "bad padres" who acted more like social workers by keeping their distance and remaining aloof from personnel left people feeling misunderstood and alienated.

Members provided examples of chaplains who were effective at helping them to overcome the alienating aspects of military society as well as describing some who failed. One ship's Warrant Officer stated,

"With our last chaplain, I would have gone to him for just about anything but this new one I wouldn't. The last one was very open. He was everywhere! He had been around longer and he knew what people needed. He spent time with people and he engaged you. He often solved problems on the ship before they became big issues. I've never really been comfortable with chaplains but the last guy didn't talk about religion. He talked about what you wanted to talk about. Everyone loved him. He'd be wherever the hardest work was being done – I mean, he wasn't out there in his robes – he was working alongside sweating and grunting with everyone else. He'd often go up to the smoking area and be with the people – someone said he actually started smoking because he spent so much time in the smoking area with people! But that's where the grumbling is and that's where the problems come out and he could often nip the issues in the bud. When someone was complaining about something, he was there to say, 'Come on and we'll take a walk and we'll talk about that.'" I asked one person who described himself as a nominal Christian who had served in Afghanistan if he had found the chaplains helpful to him. He told me that the padres who showed little interest in the personnel were of little help while another who seemed to genuinely care about the troops had a real impact. He said,

"I found it depended on the padre. I connected more with one particular padre that I would only see from time to time passing through other camps but our unit padres weren't that helpful. There was a Francophone Roman Catholic and an Anglican out there but I didn't really connect with them. But then there was this other Lutheran padre who was really great. The fact that he really cared about us made a huge difference. He cared and gave us his attention and showed he was concerned and that went miles towards his credibility and our respect for him." A naval officer who described herself as non-religious said,

"I have seen chaplains do some really wonderful things over the years. Maybe this comes from their sense of faith and knowing that people want help. But mainly, the most important role of the chaplain is that it's a safe place to talk. With the last chaplain we had, I could go in there any time

and say whatever I needed to get off my chest without worrying that it would be repeated – even if it was something like ‘I hate my boss’ or ‘I hate my husband, he doesn’t love me and he doesn’t miss me enough when I’m away’ or whatever. It’s a safe place to rage. There were times I’d go in and the chaplain would say to me, ‘Do you want me to do anything about this or just listen?’ He really understood what people needed from him.” I asked if she could confide in her friends on board and she said, “No! There’s just too great a chance that you might say something in anger about someone and then have it repeated – so much hurt and anger can result from that and that’s especially bad on a ship where you work so closely together. The chaplains I know have been incredibly discreet.” A senior commander remarked,

“Soldiers ...will seek out opportunities to speak and talk about their issues and padres are excellent listeners – the good ones. [Sometimes] what you absolutely, crucially need, is someone who will sit there for four hours and not ask a question but give you that atmosphere of confidence that you can let absolutely anything out. They are a positive tool, not a throwback to the dark ages – standing there with a cross and threatening people with the damnation of hell!”

Disruptions to personal and family life and the intense and frequent nature of Canadian military deployments are yet another cause for non-religious personnel to turn to spiritual and religious resources. Sometimes both religious and non-religious personnel seek the help of chaplains who can get members extended telephone or email time to work out personal problems, offer advice and consolation, and even have personnel repatriated when necessary. The descriptions that members provide about religious resources in these situations points to a tendency by personnel to apply aspects of modern rationalism under the authority of subjective individual interpretations for getting their needs met. While personnel may not believe in or value the religious traditions at their disposal they recognize chaplains and other resources as “tools” for meeting their personal needs. Ironically, this application of rationalism means that, even as chaplains are able to transcend much of military culture for the sake of serving personnel, they too become functionaries within it as they are “used” by members who require help and by military authorities interested in maintaining operational efficiency.

4.2.3 Values and Ethics

The religious reflection that results from the unique stresses of military service are evident in the values military personnel embrace regarding self-sacrifice, honour, duty and the greater good. Military personnel, regardless of religious identity, commit themselves to protecting and upholding Canadian values as they are described in the Canadian Forces document *Duty With Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*. This document states that

...the very legitimacy of the profession of arms in Canada demands that the military embody the same fundamental values and beliefs as those of the society it defends... The *Constitution Act* of 1982, the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and other foundational legislation all reflect the value Canadians place on the democratic ideal, the rule of law, and the concept of peace, order and good government. (Canadian Defence Academy/Canadian Forces Leadership Institute 2003)

Civil-military analysts identify the reciprocal influences of a military force and the society from which it stems (Ben-Eliezer 1998; Edmonds 1990). As we saw in chapter two, Canadian society maintains many Judeo-Christian values that secular Canadians simply identify as “Canadian values.” The Canadian Forces has enshrined these values in their statements of military ethos and codes of conduct.²²⁶ However, while military socialization is important for teaching values, the values a person brings with them to the military are far more significant for determining how fully they will embrace the military ethos (Bercuson 1996, 108-109).²²⁷ The nature of religion in late modernity as subject to individual interpretations of meaning, and the reality that many values stem from religious traditions suggests that many CF members may not have a clear sense of their personal values (religious or otherwise). As a result, while they can commit themselves to upholding “Canadian values” they may not always be certain about what this entails and how to do so appropriately.

²²⁶ Although it is important to recognize however, that the stated values of an organization are not always the same as those operating in its everyday practices (Cotton 1983, 12; Johnston 2000, 33; Pedersen et al. 1989, 116-118). In fact Cotton, the inspiration for the current Canadian Forces Ethos Statement, argued that a military ethos should propose the aspired-to values of rather than reflect the actual values in place in a military environment.

²²⁷ See also Bachman et al. 2000 and Pheysey 1993.

In their efforts to better understand and support the values they are required to uphold, military personnel sometimes turn to chaplains for direction and insight. One chaplain explained that,

“The forces are supposed to look like Canada and act like Canada except that they’re willing to give up their right to a safe environment. They’re willing to put themselves in danger to preserve those values.” He said that even as personnel engage in roles that uphold these values, they are not always clear about what the values are. He continued,

“There are very few opportunities for young soldiers to ask questions and talk about things. The CF is very much about proficiencies but there are few opportunities to talk about the purpose behind missions and that type of thing. Soldiers should always [have the] opportunity to ask, ‘Am I doing the right thing?’ I usually ask returning soldiers how they felt about the mission and, while they’re not very articulate about it, they usually say it was good because ‘Those folks really need [help].’ They also say things like, ‘Man, that’s one screwed up place!’ But they have a sense of the good in [their role].” A navy chaplain said,

“They want to be Canadians first. They want to uphold Canadian values and there seems to be enormous reflection on *how* they’re supporting those values.” He added that members,

“...depend on us to tell them when they’re going astray. They’re willing, as soldiers, to let others lead. They have a very high sense of honour and shame and they want to do their job well. They want to do a good job for a good cause but they’re not always reflecting on the bigger picture. Chaplains need to clarify for soldiers and COs when the activities are no longer representing [Canadian] values. We need to clarify for them what they’re doing and relay that information – especially if there’s a disconnect between the goals of the mission and the behaviour that’s occurring – up the chain.” A Francophone chaplain explained that,

“People like to talk about their existential frustrations; it comes up when people don’t have a sense of who they are and what they’re doing and so forth. And these are spiritual questions because they are associated with values, morals, meaning, etc.”

On top of the “Canadian values” described by *Duty With Honour* many military members superimpose their own “warrior’s code.” One chaplain explained,

“In terms of spirituality, soldiers understand the Code of the Warrior, what Zen Buddhism calls *Bushido*.²²⁸ They connect strongly with the sense of honour and duty that belongs to the warrior – that’s their religion. It’s mostly unspoken but it’s there.” Another chaplain working with an infantry regiment commented,

“The military is a strangely anachronistic setting where they’ll still use words like ‘chivalry’ without a smirk. There’s a retained sense of the soldier as gentleman that goes right back to the Knights of the Round Table.” Among the young personnel, the image of the gallant knight changes somewhat; as one young tattooed and pierced member of an infantry unit with a reputation for being very tough explained,

“We might meet a guy who’s an alcoholic and a chain smoker, who’s divorced and is totally screwed up. But he’s been in Afghanistan and on other missions and to us, that guy’s a hero because he has given himself body and soul to the CF – to support the missions, to fight and protect – to uphold Canadian values. He is tougher and harder than other people. He’s a survivor. That guy is a hero to us.”

Sometimes military ethos identifiable in the notion of being a “warrior” supersedes the obligation to uphold Canadian values and moral leadership is not always available. One recent example where Canadian Forces members’ actions were discordant with Canadian values and moral leadership was lacking occurred in 1991 when the First Canadian Airborne Regiment served on an observation and peacekeeping mission in Somalia. A number of improprieties and abuses occurred during this mission including the murder of a Somali teenager and the refusal of members to cooperate with the inquiry (Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia 1997).

Following this tour of duty, the Canadian Airborne Regiment was disbanded and a full investigation occurred to discover the cause of the failure of the mission.²²⁹

²²⁸ See for example Newman 1989.

²²⁹ There is extensive literature on the events that occurred in Somalia. See for example Bercuson 1996, Razack 2000, Whitworth 2005 and Winslow 1997. One of the many controversies arising from the Somalia Affair was the discovery by the media of a number of “trophy photos” of captive Somalis taken by members of the squadron. Among those photos eventually released to the media was one of Padre Mark Sargent standing behind five bound and blindfolded young boys being held for attempting to steal garbage from the Canadian compound at Belet Huen. While the photograph implied complicity in the boys’ mistreatment, what is not immediately obvious is that the chaplain is speaking to a local leader, who stands half-concealed behind a

That incident made it clear that military personnel need both moral leadership and encouragement to think and act in ways that accord with Canadian values and since then, moral and ethical training has taken a more prominent place in pre-tour work up training. Chaplains are now frequently relied upon to act as moral leaders who draw attention to the lapses between desired and actual values. The Chaplain Branch calls on padres to

provide ethical advice and counsel ... [and] deliver ethical training to units as required. The chaplain is called to exercise a prophetic minister in challenging Reserve and Regular Force Units to exhibit the highest possible ethical standards in the conduct of peacekeeping and humanitarian operations as well as in theatres of war or regional conflict. The chaplain must be the moral conscience of the unit. (DND 2003a, 6.4)

One Francophone chaplain who had served in Afghanistan described the importance of having a moral advisor among military units. He said,

“In the CF we anticipate a higher level of consciousness from most of our soldiers. If you just obey because you are afraid, there is a problem. A lot of our people are limited to peer pressure to conform – Somalia was an example of that – because you live and breathe with a small group that controls the whole game and puts a lot of pressure on you. It is very easy to give in to that. What is ‘right’ and what is ‘wrong’ is determined by the group; it shouldn’t be like that.” A naval chaplain explained how chaplains are in a position to guide people in their moral decision-making. He said,

“Chaplains can help to clarify situations for soldiers. So, when things are not going well, when there are problems happening, a chaplain can help the soldier see what is going on and offer them some perspective that can lead to good moral choices.” Another stated,

“My biggest job is to help people find their place in the organization and to flourish in their role and most of all, help them keep away from the ‘dark side of the force,’” he smiled. “When individuals don’t have a lot of power they can end up going over to the ‘dark side’ without anyone noticing – it’s easy for them to be coerced into ‘group think’ because they think that’s just how it is in

billboard (his feet and elbow are evident in the picture). Reports exonerating Sargent argue that, speaking through a translator to local leaders, the padre was able to intervene and stop the boys from being beaten and further abused. Sargent was issued a commendation for his “commendable performance” in Somalia (Razack 2000; Thompson 1999; Tuck 1999).

the military. Somalia is the perfect example of that. Lots of little unchecked actions resulted first in individuals and then the whole group going over to the dark side.” I asked how the situation in Somalia might have been prevented and he replied,

“People in authority, with power, should have spoken up about what they were seeing and hearing and noticing much earlier than they did. A lot of this system works very informally, if you can address the problems before the next decisions are made then you can resolve the problem. A chaplain in a case like that one might have the capacity to influence individuals away from these types of situations by clarifying for them the path they’re taking. When you can help them see the route they’re taking and how it’s out of sync with the mission, then a lot of times the problems will correct themselves.” He continued,

“In real life the ‘bad guys’ are not always so easy to identify. When you’re in theatre, there can be a real cognitive dissonance between what you expected or what’s supposed to be happening and what’s really going on around you. The people you’re supposed to protect might appear as bad as the ‘bad guys.’ So you start to lose perspective about right and wrong, good and bad. You need someone outside of that situation to give that perspective back and identify and clarify what’s going on. Your spouse isn’t there and your friends are all dealing with the same thing so it falls to the padre to help you work through the cognitive dissonance that is happening in the field.” The cognitive dissonance described here often results from a clash of, or perceived absence of values that causes a kind of moral *anomie*.

The moral and ethical questions that military duties raise for people sometimes cause them to turn to religion because of their sense of moral *anomie*.²³⁰ As we saw in chapter two, the secularization of society that removes a religious moral frameworks of understanding can also result in a sense of instability and un-rootedness known as *anomie* (Berger 1967; Durkheim 1965 [1912]; Hervieu-Léger 2006). On some difficult missions military personnel experiences a conflict between the Canadian values they are expected to uphold and those in evidence in their host society. As a result, they experience uncertainty, discomfort, fear, and frustration (*anomie*) with the mission. Those in authority can sometimes address some of these concerns by clarifying to goals of the mission however, those in command are typically obliged to deal with tactical and strategic issues before

personnel issues and often they are struggling with their own moral and ethical concerns. In these cases, personnel go to chaplains for help sorting out ethical dilemmas and developing an understanding of the values and ethics they are supporting (or resisting) during the mission.

This was certainly the case during the UNAMIR mission to Rwanda. In the face of genocide, an act utterly opposed to Canadian values to protect human life and appreciate differences, it fell to the chaplains to help personnel find meaning in the chaos that surrounded them. Unit padre David Melanson “found himself listening to an endless flow of stories and emotional outpourings” from personnel on the mission. He later reported,

Our jobs took us into areas of the country that the troops called... ‘killing fields.’ The majority of these places...were local community parishes and churches. Around the church grounds and in the sanctuaries we found the remains of thousands of human beings; children, women and men slaughtered without mercy. The scenes, the smell and the horror of it was beyond any words that could be uttered. Silence was the only language understood at these sights. In the darkness of night these ‘killing fields’ were often revisited in our dreams. (Fowler 1996, 258-259)

On deployments that take personnel to unstable regions where they face the suffering of local people experiencing famine, the after-effects of a natural disaster, injury and loss of life, as well as civil and military unrest, their sense of dislocation, culture shock, and *anomie* can be significant – not just in terms of being in a different environment, climate, and terrain, but also with respect to differences of values in the local society. Individual reports and transcripts from the Somalia Commission of Inquiry offer vivid examples of personnel dealing with culture shock, a frustrating and uncertain mission, as well as a serious lack of understanding of the Somali culture and value systems (Commando.org 2004; Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia 1997). In fact, one analysis of the abuses that occurred in Somalia suggests that lack of knowledge about the culture and values at work in the region led personnel to “dehumanize” the Somalis (Whitworth 2005). A counsellor at an operational trauma centre said,

²³⁰ See chapter two.

“Here [in Canada] we don’t have a clue of what war is really like. The thing that struck me while I was over there [in Afghanistan] is the peace and the freedom and the abundance that we have in Canada. They didn’t have any of these. They hear bombs all the time, they can’t speak freely, and they don’t have food and comforts. Canada is such a clean, sterile country and then these soldiers get sent into a place where people are killing each other and being left there – that never leaves you. You can really lose faith in humanity. I have people asking me, ‘How could they do that? How can people do that to one another?’” A chaplain serving with a Francophone unit said,

“Soldiers go through an emotional trauma because of a value judgement they make about the event. For example, what is wrong with a child being killed unless there is a value associated with it? The event is filtered through our ethical and moral value system. I have had a lot of people telling me stories where they were so hopeless and they were so upset because somewhere somehow they felt they should have been able to control the event.”

The sense of moral *anomie* reported to this chaplain is not just a result of one’s own value judgements and decisions. Sometimes it results from the tensions between the values a Canadian Forces member takes with them on a mission and those that are evident in the society where they are posted. An army major provided one such example. He told me that,

“I think anybody who goes into a situation that is different than what they have normally seen will be changed. In the military we go off on tours, we come back different. You’re affected by the environment. One of the major contributors is the feeling of helplessness. I remember when I was in Bosnia, it was during the Kosovo bombing, and I remember a trucker coming back to camp just weeping because they had driven by a convoy of maybe 500 people – women and children out in the rain, out in the cold. He came back crying because, what could we do for those women and children who are suffering and didn’t ask for this?” He shrugged, “Well, there wasn’t much we could do. It wasn’t our role to be doing a humanitarian task. The UN had people there taking care of that so our role was to bring stability to the country. But we’re not used to that; we don’t come from a country where there are wars, and you don’t see people who are abandoned along side of the road. You’re in those countries and a woman’s on the side of the road giving birth on the side of the road. What do you do? You stop, you put her in the back of the truck and you allow her to give birth in the back of the truck. But you’re not trained for that! You’re trying to assist out of human interest – you do the best you can. What happens if the baby dies? That would be traumatic! Is that your fault? No, but

it's a traumatic event because it doesn't happen here." A Francophone infantry member who had served in Afghanistan explained,

"You give something as basic as a water bottle to a little child, and hundreds of them will jump on him and beat him up to get it. I gave [one child] a package of gum and there was a fight because they all came and jumped on him. They are like animals and they hunt like animals. But these people are in survival mode. They are threatened. They are walking the street with no shoes. There is no water supply. We don't know what it is for a woman or a man not taking a shower for months but if you have to choose between drinking the water and washing, you will drink, you won't wash. So, we don't have a clue about what it's like until we're there and you see this different life. War is beyond language, beyond words – it's an experience."

Others reiterated the disorientation that flowed from having their personal values conflict with the values apparent in their host society. An army member who had served in Haiti described leaving the hospital morgue in the city where he was stationed during a disaster relief mission. He said,

"As I was walking out of the morgue there was a father who was walking to the morgue with a two-year-old baby in his arms. His eyes and mine met and I could see the pain in [his face]. I wasn't used to 500 bodies piled up one on top of the other in various states of decomposition... I wasn't used to that so when I walked into the morgue, the stench, the sight, was for me... something else." He closed his eyes at the memory. "Maybe he'd been there before but the pain and the hurt of having just lost his child and having to take him *in there* was just as real as it would be for any father here in Canada." A woman who had been posted to Egypt said,

"... we were told that if we ever got into an accident and hurt or killed someone with our vehicle we were to leave the scene right away because of the 'eye for an eye' thing. They told us there was a good chance that civilians would surround you and kill you in retaliation for their loss. I was standing in the street one day when a young kid stole a truck and ended up driving it up on the sidewalk and hitting someone – the whole town pulled him out of the truck and starting beating the shit out of him. It was mob violence." All of these examples of having one's own values in conflict with what is occurring in the operational environment point to the significant impact of moral *anomie* on the state of mind of military personnel.

A number of recent reports demonstrate how in some cases the profound sense of *anomie* a person experiences during a mission can produce extreme emotional, psychological, and spiritual stresses

that can lead to serious psychological injuries. Lt. Gen. Romeo Dallaire, in both his book and many of his public speaking engagements about the Rwandan genocide relates his extreme frustration at not being able to intervene and stop the imminent slaughter (CBC News 2005; 2002; 2003). A report by the Canadian Forces Ombudsman on the experiences of Cpl. Christian McEachern indicates frustration at not being “able to make a difference” as a source of his post traumatic stress disorder. During his duties as a member of the UN Observer Mission to Uganda in 1993, he states,

...while we're over there, there were a number of incidents that happened where we weren't allowed to do anything about it 'cause we weren't in Uganda to do anything ... I think the one that bothered me the most was the night the woman got raped right beside our compound, we could see the whole thing and hear her screaming. I called in about three times and asked if I could interfere, fire a shot or do something and I wasn't allowed to do anything because security for the division compound could not be compromised, so ... we just had to stand there and watch. That bugged me, that was probably the worst ... the act was pretty bad but not being able to do anything ... you trained hard to go over there and be able to make a difference and then they tie your hands like that ...(DND 2002b)

Members of the failed mission to Somalia describe the hopelessness of their mission and their feelings that they were unable to make any positive contributions to the region. In part this led to the anger and resentment they felt toward the Somali people (Commando.org 2004; Razack 2004; Winslow 1997). A woman I interviewed who had been posted to the Middle East and Bosnia said,

“...we really noticed the cultural differences. We’d have to stand back and watch when the locals were being cruel to animals or hitting their wives. You’re not allowed to get involved and that can be very upsetting. I think that has something to do with being Canadian – but not being able to intervene adds a lot of stress to a mission. The women in Bosnia saw their kids being attacked by wild dogs but we had to continue to stand guard and we couldn’t help. That was terrible.” In these cases it is not just a conflict of values that causes moral *anomie*, it is the ensuing feelings of guilt, responsibility, and anxiety that come from not having upheld one’s values.

In situations where the violation of one’s personal values leads to a serious inner conflict, religion can help to restore meaning and order and establish “good” in the face of “evil.” In some cases, even though they are not allowed to intervene to stop the violation of these values, military personnel seek

alternate ways to “make a difference” and uphold Canadian values. I heard numerous stories of deployed personnel contacting their families and home communities to collect sports equipment, warm clothes, school, medical, and other supplies, to send overseas for military personnel to distribute. At other times, personnel use their limited free time to initiate or participate in projects to rebuild schools, orphanages, hospitals and libraries that improve the day-to-day conditions of local people. Al Fowler gives the example of personnel in Rwanda going into an orphanage that,

housed about five hundred displaced children of all ages. Most were sick, with diseases ranging from scabies to cholera. The soldiers, especially those who had children at home, were deeply moved and spent a lot of their off-duty time trying to help the orphans. Eventually, the regiment was supporting 2300 children in six orphanages...(1996, 259)

A chaplain I interviewed said,

“Soldiers love orphanages – working in orphanages is a way for them to concretely do something that helps people. It’s important to soldiers on tour to be making a difference in people’s lives.” A different chaplain who had served on a humanitarian and reconstruction mission explained how personnel there had helped to rebuild schools in the region. He said that kind of work is,

“... always good for morale of the soldiers because they have the sense of helping people. They don’t like to feel that they serve nothing. They have to feel that they help people. That is the Canadian soldier basically – the saviours of the world!” he laughed.

In fact, nearly all of the people I interviewed mentioned the personal objective of “doing good” in their military duties. One person described this as “fighting evil,” another saw it as “improving conditions for civilians,” and someone else explained that they hoped to be able to “make something good come out of a bad situation.” One commander suggested that personnel in his command, by seeing themselves on the side of “good,” are better able to cope with the stress of the mission,

“... they see themselves as an ally with God for fighting pain and evil in this world. I can tell you when we were [in Afghanistan], we did our best to fight evil. I couldn’t explain it but I lived it, and I acted on it and I responded to it... So that’s at least one of the steps that people can take [to overcome stress] is the idea that they are helping to fight evil.” Another person posted on a Provincial Reconstruction Team said,

“what was really great was that soldiers who had been there the year before could see how far things had come and they were saying, ‘This is worth doing!’ because of how far the region had come.” An army captain told me,

“The stuff we do in the post-Cold War era is more on the side of the angels than not. Accounts from young people coming back from Afghanistan are positive – that we’re there helping create democracy and tolerance. It’s certainly not the stable environment we had during the Cold War – the Afghanistan mission is very complicated. This unit is trained for combat but they’re not in there to kill the enemy, they’re there because civilians need protection.” One senior commander said,

“Soldiers in the field doing some of these different projects might get some level of instant gratification but if it also gives them some type of solace, an easing of some of their pain, even unconscious pain, and that is very important. It’s like taking cough syrup, it doesn’t take the cold away, but it does help you breathe easier and makes the condition less painful. That way it’s not always about bad stuff, not always about having to revert to force. If you’re fighting to protect people there’s a certain level of satisfaction in that but you may still be doing some pretty horrible stuff. But if you’re building a bridge, you’re into a whole new dimension of providing support. These projects should be made essential parts of a soldier’s normal routine for these guys to be able to sustain their ability to handle the incredible trauma they can face – these are routes that give immediate consolation. These different projects can be a high point they can look back to and say, ‘It wasn’t all bad. We weren’t able to intervene here and people were killed but we were able to build that or do this and that did help some.’” He continued, “The veterans of these missions will want to talk, to laugh, and to cry – it’s absolutely important that they be able to do that. If they only have things to cry about, things that bring out pain and anger, then there will be no comfort for them. They will remain bitter and broken.” Helping people and “making a difference” in other’s lives are a way for members to “fight evil,” “do good,” and avoid being “part of the problem.” These are examples of how military personnel uphold values they cherish and overcome their sense of moral *anomie* even when they are not allowed to intervene in other areas or impose their values those in the region.

The unlimited liability of their duties, their repeated exposure to hardship and stress, as well as the moral and ethical concerns inherent in their duties contribute significantly to religious interests by military personnel. Their obligations as members of a military force raise questions about existential

issues, the meaning of suffering and hardship, as well as ideas about “right” and “wrong,” “good” and “evil.” Although many personnel turn to chaplains and other traditional religious resources to help them deal with these concerns, the thinking, discussions, value judgements, and questions that result from them can be considered religious in their own right according to late modern notions of religion as subjective, quest-based, and spiritual but not religious.

4.3 Formal Religion

As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, the majority of military personnel come out of Christian traditions. At the same time we saw that many of those people do not actively participate in their communities. However, along with the mainly secular or “passively Christian” personnel in the ranks, and those who turn to spiritual and existential concerns when they are pressed by the unusual pressures of their duties, there are a number of personnel in the CF who actively participate in formal religious traditions and bring their religious values into the military with them. This minority of personnel includes practicing Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, and others. Like the passive Christians and secular personnel already described, religious resources often facilitate these members in the accomplishment of their duties. At other times however, their religion can distance them from their peers and separate them from the military *esprit de corps*.

In this section I will identify some of the formal religious groups present in the CF. I will argue that their religious values can sometimes help their members to be more effective in their duties and sometimes hinder them in relating to their peers as well as putting them at odds with military culture and traditions. Finally, I will argue that ignorance about religion among the majority of military personnel puts these individuals at increased risk for discrimination, harassment, and other unfair treatment.

4.3.1 Religious Groups

Recent statistics on religion show that religious minority groups in Canada are growing rapidly while the numbers of people in traditional Canadian denominations is are growing slowly, remaining stable

or dropping.²³¹ While the implications of these changes are already being felt throughout Canada in legal battles over rights to religious freedom and religious discrimination, the CF has only begun to feel those effects (Seljak et al. 2007). As immigrants look for opportunities to pursue a viable and rewarding career in Canada, religious diversity will begin to affect the CF more seriously. Military policy-makers must anticipate and provide for the various needs of religious minorities, but they must also consider the impact that differences of culture and belief might have on military society.

As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, the CF remains an institution comprised mainly of white, Christian (at least by culture) men. Those I interviewed noted the absence of many minority personnel within the CF. A naval officer who managed personnel files for approximately 250 people on board ship remarked,

“I don’t think we have any Jews or Muslims on board right now – we recently had one Jew and one Muslim but they’re deployed right now so I don’t think we have any.” Another person who, during the past three years of service, had lived on three different bases near multicultural urban centres and served on three tours of duty remarked,

“I know maybe one Black guy that I can think of and two or three Muslims.” One woman studying at Royal Military College in Kingston said,

“The male to female ratio is about ten to one. In my first year class, there were about 125 students to start. There were no Natives, one [Hindu], zero Muslims, and at most, two Black students.” Another person on a large base reported,

“In my squadron [there are] about 60 to 70 people. There are no Hindus, Natives or Sikhs. There’s one Asian, one Black, and two [White] women. I mean, if you walk around in this area there are very few non-white people.” An African-Canadian member said,

“There are really very few minorities in the CF. If you look around the largest bases, there are only about two guys that are not white!” He gave a big guffaw and added, “If I want to see another Black guy, I have to stand in front of a mirror! They’re just not there!”

Despite the current homogeneity of the Canadian military however statistics strongly suggest that this is about to change. Although the majority of Canadians continued to identify themselves as

²³¹ Complete Statistics Canada Census 2001 information is available online at the following Statistics Canada website: <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/home/index.cfm>

Christians (72 %), in the 2001 census there were increasing numbers claiming to have “no religion” (16 %) and other groups such as Muslims (2 %) showed significant increases in their membership (Statistics Canada June 28, 2004). The following table shows the impact of immigration on traditional religion in Canada between the years 1991 and 2001 with the largest increases occurring among Muslims, Christian sects, Hindus, Sikhs, and Buddhists.

Table 1. Major religious denominations, Canada, 1991 and 2001²³²

	2001		1991		Percentage change 1991-2001
	Number	%	Number	%	
Roman Catholic	12,793,125	43.2	12,203,625	45.2	4.8
Protestant	8,654,845	29.2	9,427,675	34.9	-8.2
Christian Orthodox	479,620	1.6	387,395	1.4	23.8
Christian, not included elsewhere**	780,450	2.6	353,040	1.3	121.1
Muslim	579,640	2.0	253,265	0.9	128.9
Jewish	329,995	1.1	318,185	1.2	3.7
Buddhist	300,345	1.0	163,415	0.6	83.8
Hindu	297,200	1.0	157,015	0.6	89.3
Sikh	278,415	0.9	147,440	0.5	88.8
No religion	4,796,325	16.2	3,333,245	12.3	43.9
*Note: Aboriginal spirituality (+175%), pagan (+281%) and Serbian Orthodox (+109%) communities grew significantly in this period, but the actual number of adherents is not over 30,000 in any of the three categories.					

²³² Adapted from a Statistics Canada table available at:
<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/Products/Analytic/companion/rel/canada.cfm>

**Includes persons who report “Christian,” “Apostolic,” “Born-again Christian” and “Evangelical.”

Further, Statistics Canada projects that, due to immigration and high birth rates, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh religions in Canada will have the highest rate of growth of all non-Christian religions between now and 2017 and could eventually account for as much as 10% of the population (Bélanger et al. 2005, 19).²³³ Jack Jedwab suggests that these groups will continue to be concentrated in urban areas. He writes:

In the greater Toronto area, approximately one out of six residents will be either Muslim or Hindu and the two groups combined will pass the one million mark. In the nation’s capital, much like in Montreal the Muslim population will be greater than all other [non-Christian] religious groups combined, as it will near the 100,000 mark. Calgary will see growth in all non-Christian groups while in Vancouver, the Sikh population will remain the largest non-Christian group (Jedwab 2005).

What little diversity currently exists in the CF is most evident in the reserves; particularly in units from large urban centres. One recruiter with a large reserve unit in Ontario commented,

“In this one unit of about 150 men, we had six faith groups represented. There was a Zoroastrian, Roman Catholics, Hindus, Muslims, Jews and Sikhs... There is a lot more diversity in the reserves...”²³⁴ Another chaplain working with a multicultural and religiously diverse reserve regiment near Montreal told me her unit hosts Asian, African, South American, and Eastern European Canadians including Muslims, Christians, Jews, Sikhs and those who claim no religious affiliation.

Reserve forces exist in hundreds of communities across Canada (Jedwab 2004). They involve approximately 25 000 personnel and have represented up to 40 % of the membership of past

²³³ David Seljak notes that by ignoring Chinese religions these statistics are too low for some groups and, by basing the projections on young people in these groups remaining affiliated with the religion, some of the numbers are too high (Seljak et al. 2007, 32-33).

²³⁴ Presently, as in the regular forces, there is virtually no research, nor are there statistics on religion in the reserves.

peacekeeping operations (DND 2007b). Along with being able to refuse deployments, reservists have the advantage of being free to pursue whatever civilian interests, housing options, and jobs they like. Most reservists have full-time employment outside of the military forces and participate for non-economic reasons (Pinch 1999, 160). Students make up over a quarter of the personnel and participate for only a short time while in university or college (Department of National Defence 2003a). This freedom from total immersion in military life and the opportunity to serve for a limited time (e.g., during university), and in situations of interest to them makes reserve military service a flexible and career-enhancing option for many people (Pinch 1999, 161). The “deployment of primarily regular-force personnel, with limited numbers of similarly trained reserve augmentees, is considered the most efficient and effective response to crises around the world” (Pinch 1999, 160-161). This means that reservists are likely to continue to be deployed and, as a result, increase the religious diversity of troops during a tour of duty. Military analysts note the tension between needing to employ reserve personnel and the difficulty of managing such an unrestricted workforce (Pinch 1999, 160).²³⁵ Consequently, policy-makers at National Defence Head Quarters are more likely to overlook the religious diversity that comes with using reserve forces in their efforts to provide for the essential needs of regular forces personnel.

As we saw earlier, the lack of statistics on religious identity in the CF makes it difficult to know what religious groups are present. In keeping with the civilian population however, following a Christian majority (that may or may not be active in their faith), Muslims are thought to be the next largest faith group. While the Chaplain General’s Office suggests there are approximately 200 Muslims in the military (Canadian Press 2003), Commander Denise LaViolette, a CF spokesperson, suggests the regular forces numbers are approximately 648 (CBC News 2006b).²³⁶ In either case, it is clear that the number of Muslims is well below the Canadian Census general population tally of 2% that would put it closer to 1250 based on a total force population of 62 500. Despite their minority status, Muslims are present at a number of bases and in reserve units across Canada, as well as at Royal

²³⁵ Pinch notes for example that “In the absence of structural supports [for reserve forces], military planners are likely to remain vexed by problems of absenteeism, high turnover (greater than 30% a year in many units), recruiting and training” for these units (1999, 160).

Military College in Kingston Ontario. There are currently only three Muslim women in the CF (CBC News 2006b) and there is one Muslim chaplain, Imam Suleyman Demiray, in the Chaplain Branch (DND 2003b). However, the CF is currently making efforts to recruit more Muslims (Adeba 2006; CBC News 2006b).

Like Muslims in the CF, there is conflicting data on the actual numbers of Aboriginal members. While one 2005 report states there are “more than 2500 Aboriginal members” (Barnes 2005) a July 2006 Canadian Forces Health Services Group bulletin says, “According to CF Self-ID census data, there are around 1400 Aboriginals in the CF” (Acker 2006).²³⁷ Another Department of National Defence document suggests that Aboriginals number about 1438 (2.3%) in the regular force population and about 2125 (3.4%) in the total force population (White 2000).²³⁸ Whatever their actual numbers, the vast majority of Aboriginals in Canada belong to Christian denominations (Statistics Canada 2001b).²³⁹ One Aboriginal elder working with Native Peoples at a large base said Aboriginals represent about 3.1% of the personnel in the CF but most of them are Christians. He said,

“Aboriginal Christians don’t just practice Christianity in an Aboriginal way – they’re either Christian or they follow Aboriginal spirituality.”

While I had anticipated the presence of Muslims and Aboriginals, I was surprised to hear numerous accounts of CF Wiccans and Pagans from both chaplains and personnel.²⁴⁰ While there are only about 21 000 Pagans in Canada, Statistics Canada cites Pagans (including Wiccans) as having seen the greatest increase in membership in proportional terms between 1991 and 2001 of any religious

²³⁶ She bases her estimate on the number of CF personnel who are from predominantly Muslim countries (CBC News 2006b). Clearly, this is a problematic method given that approximately half of Canadian Arabs are Christian (62%) (Statistics Canada 2001a) and it does not include Canadian Muslims or converts to Islam.

²³⁷ These numbers do not include the Canadian Rangers reserve regiments employed to patrol Canada’s remote northern and coastal communities. The Canadian Forces Support Training Group (CFSTG) states that the Canadian Rangers are mostly Cree and Ojibwa who number approximately 4000 (DND 2005a).

²³⁸ These numbers are based on a total force (combined regular and reserved forces) of 62 500.

²³⁹ Statistics Canada indicates that 85% of Aboriginal Peoples belong to either the Roman Catholic Church or a Protestant denomination, 13% cited “no religion” and, only 2% cite Native Spirituality.

²⁴⁰ Clearly, religious statistics on the makeup of the CF or, at the very least, a quantitative study, are required to confirm or deny this observation, but significant numbers of this group seem likely.

group in Canada (Statistics Canada 2003b). Two different Pagans, hearing about my study, contacted me directly to ask for assistance in locating “sympathetic chaplains” to assist them with personal matters. One of these people had a Pagan friend suffering from operational stress who was looking for spiritual guidance. The other person was convening a local conference on Pagans in Chaplaincy and requested a military contact. One air force member commented that while she had not noticed much religious diversity at other locations where she had been posted, at her most recent posting out west she noticed, “there are a lot of Wiccans and [New Agers] here.” There are at least two Canadian web communities dedicated to Pagans in the military.²⁴¹ An officer speculated on the presence of Pagans in the military:

“It’s my impression that a lot of lesbian women are affiliated with paganism and Wicca as feminist or non-patriarchal religions. The CF, compared to civilian society, is a very safe place for lesbians and gays. It’s my impression that many of them join because of the protections built into the system.”²⁴² There are indeed considerable resources on the involvement of the gay community in New Age religious groups.²⁴³ If it is true that military regulations governing the rights of gays are effective and more homosexuals are participating in the CF as a result, then it is possible that the number of New Age practitioners is higher in the CF than Canadian society.

²⁴¹ See for example, CFB Pagans of Petawawa Ontario (at http://www.witchvox.com/lx/dt_lx.html?a=caon&id=29122), and Canadian Military Wiccans of Interlake Manitoba (at http://www.witchvox.com/lx/dt_lx.html?a=camb&id=26338). For LGBT Pagan websites see for example “Gay Paganism: A Celebration” (at http://www.witchvox.com/_x.html?c=gay) and LGBT Pagans (at <http://members.aol.com/gendervariant/faith/pagan/webring.htm>).

²⁴² Based on some comments I had heard from a number of minority personnel I was surprised by this statement and asked if he really believed the protections were effective. He answered, “The protections are working and homosexuals have a much easier time of it here because if there’s a problem there are ways to deal with it and it’s not allowed [to continue].” He explained that a gay member of his family, “has had a really difficult time in civilian life. Civilian corporations don’t have the same protections built in, they don’t care as much if someone’s being harassed. It’s really changed in the CF over the last few years. They used to throw you out if they heard you were gay. Now, nobody even blinks. One woman came in to the office of a big, burly sergeant I know asking for an IR [imposed restriction – an approved delay in moving “dependents, furniture and effects”] request. The guy said, ‘Ok, husband’s name?’ and she said, ‘Sue’ and he writes down S-U-E without batting an eyelash and goes through the rest of the form!”

²⁴³ See for example Ford 2005, Penczak 2003, and Shallenberger 1998. There are numerous websites dedicated to LGBT Pagans, see for example “Gay Paganism: A Celebration” (at http://www.witchvox.com/_x.html?c=gay) and LGBT Pagans (at <http://members.aol.com/gendervariant/faith/pagan/webring.htm>).

Even though minority religious groups are more evident in reserve units from large urban regions of Canada, they continue to represent a very small segment of the total force population. They are most evident to other personnel, to officers, and to chaplains through their differences from the mainstream.

4.3.2 Religious Practices and Values

Even while the CF is taking steps to accommodate the growing diversity within the ranks, those who actively practice formal religious traditions other than mainline Christianity have learned to be flexible and accommodate their religious requirements to their military environment. As I have already noted there are numbers of CF members who are active in a formal religious tradition. These include members of Christian denominations, Sikhs, Muslims, Pagans, as well as other groups. Their adherence to a formal tradition makes them a minority among the largely secular rank and file. Moreover, their commitment to religious practice and values frequently sets them apart from their non-religious peers. Sometimes this puts them at odds with military objectives and sometimes it helps them to be more diligent in their duties.

A number of new CF policies accommodate the needs of those who are actively religious but do not fit into the Christian heritage of military society. For example, Aboriginal members are now permitted to wear their hair longer than standard regulations permit, Sikhs may wear turbans or other head coverings as long as they comply with safety regulations for helmet use, Orthodox Christians (or Jews, Muslims, and Sikhs) can wear beards as long as they comply with safety regulations for properly fitted gas masks, and Muslim women can wear a specially-designed, loose-fitting uniform that conforms to Islamic requirements for modesty. Despite these accommodations however, practicing believers continue to face some difficulties by being religiously different in the conformist environment of the military.

Religious personnel who want to practice their faith have learned to adapt their needs to their conditions. The willingness of believers to modify and adapt their beliefs in order to meet military obligations points to the individualized and subjectivated nature of religious identities in late modernity. With issues related to dietary requirements and dress, some members have learned to

make compromises with their normal routines while others simply accept the possibility that they will be set apart from their peers because of their beliefs. A Sikh soldier writes,

“Helmets are tough issue to deal with ... I tie a *dastar*,²⁴⁴ (a touch smaller than I normally would), and place the helmet over top. The other Sikhs I’ve come across in the CF wear helmets over their Turbans or *Patkas*.²⁴⁵ No helmet [means] no CF service” (Bains 2006). Although not all Sikhs are vegetarians, some do follow a restricted diet and, like Jews, Muslims and Hindus, who follow religious dietary laws, they require religious accommodation to meet these needs. One Sikh writes that,

“Being a vegetarian in the army has been a very small inconvenience as the army is quite accommodating....” But another person counters,

“Getting a Veggie meal is not guaranteed.” He adds, that in order to make sure his needs are met, he often supplies himself with “additional food, (granola bars, powdered soup, nuts, and seeds) to supplement my rations in the field” (Bains 2006). A Muslim man described his efforts to fulfill his religious requirements while conducting his military duties this way:

“When I first went to basic training I didn’t tell anyone that I needed to pray. Here I had been praying my whole life and then I went for two days without praying and I just couldn’t take it! It was like going without food, so I told them. At first they thought I was joking and trying to get out of some training but when they realized I was serious they accommodated me. Back in those days there were only a very few Muslims joining – I think it’s better now, that there are more Muslims joining.” He said that finding time to pray,

“was pretty hard because we’d go out on marches or runs at 5:00 in the morning – right when I needed to be praying. I’d be praying so fast! Then I learned to get up a little bit earlier,” he grinned sheepishly.

Like their non-Christian counterparts, some members of minority Christian groups find that CF policies might oppose their beliefs. A fundamentalist Christian remarked that, in general, it was not particularly difficult for him to practice his religious beliefs but,

²⁴⁴ A Sikh head-dress; some can be as small as a bandana tied around the head; others are a variation on the turban. My emphasis.

“...you have to be careful about certain policies. I have this stereotype of being a redneck, anti-woman, anti-gay guy but it’s not true. There is some persecution. Like with the harassment policies. If I express my opinion about same sex marriage issues people will think I’m intolerant. That has happened to me when we were in the mess and I called homosexuality an abomination and one guy’s sister was a lesbian so he complained. I got a warning. Christians are going to be persecuted because of the harassment policies. We’re going to run afoul of them simply by stating what we believe.” He suggested that the rule against proselytization creates tension for Christians who are not allowed to tell others about their faith. He remarked,

“They would have to rationalize their beliefs and decide if they were willing to compromise on some levels for the sake of the greater good.” Like other religious personnel in the CF, this soldier has found ways to accommodate his religious needs despite an environment that does not always allow him to practice his faith according to his beliefs. He explained.

“When I was working in officer training I had the guys go to a church service in the field – church is not mandatory but I told them, ‘You guys are going to be officers and you need to know what padres do. So pick a service, Protestant or Roman Catholic, and go to it.’ I wanted two services because I don’t believe Roman Catholics preach a saving gospel but they sent out this liberal Anglican.²⁴⁶ Here’s about 25 guys and probably none of them are Christian and here’s a perfect opportunity to preach the gospel and what does he do? He gives them some High Church liturgy thing that took about 15 minutes!” He shook his head in disgust and continued, “So I asked if I could give my testimony and he said yes and *I* preached the gospel! Then I gave them all New Testaments which they took mostly as something to read,” he chuckled and continued, “but I was really encouraged because after that about four or five of them came up and thanked me and asked more about it. I’m a soldier of Christ!”

Christians from more mainstream groups sometimes have difficulties too. For example, one navy chaplain explained how accommodating Christians from different denominations could be problematic on a ship. With respect to ministering to Roman Catholics he said,

²⁴⁵ A *Patka* is another form of Sikh head-covering. It is both less formal and requires less cloth than a full turban. My emphasis.

“that depends on the Roman Catholic. If religion doesn’t get in the way then it is no problem and they will take communion from me and see me as a substitute Catholic. But if religion gets in the way, and it does for some people, I find out where the churches are in our next port and I have that information available for them when we arrive.” A Francophone pastoral associate described similar difficulties trying to help both Christians and non-Christians. He said,

“I pray with people. I don’t do sacraments at all because I am not a priest. I just pray and be with them from a Christian perspective, unless they are Muslim, because they wouldn’t appreciate that!” He laughed and added, “I have had to pray with Muslim people so then I just pray in a neutral way!” I asked how they responded to his efforts and he said, “Not so bad, they were very good. Because when you have a need, you have a need. And with the Jews, we can get by with our Judeo-Christian roots.”

Spaces for religious practice also require adaptation and flexibility. One chaplain explained that during a tour of duty in Kosovo, a group of Muslims requested a private space for prayer. The chaplain gave them access to the tent he used for an office. On the same tour, he described how a group of Wiccans had “taken over” the chapel for their religious purposes without first approaching him for help. He was able to work out a compromise with them that both met their requirements more effectively than the chapel space and made a contribution to the mission. They agreed to build an open-air, circular bunker that was otherwise required by the base, to use for their solstice celebrations. This chaplain explained to me that,

“The only concession I had them make was they couldn’t have their celebrations ‘sky-clad [naked].”²⁴⁷ He smiled, adding, “For safety reasons, you know!” More recently, Canadian Major Malcolm Berry serving on Task Force Afghanistan in Kandahar made a similar accommodation for Wiccans requesting to conduct a spring ceremony,

‘We had no difficulty with that [accommodating a pagan religious ceremony]. We just didn't want them to do it ‘sky-clad’ (naked) in this environment because it would be too dangerous.’ The six Wiccans - a Canadian and five Americans – were invited to hold

²⁴⁶ Many conservative Protestants hold this view. See chapter three for the historical relations between Roman Catholic and Protestants in Canada.

²⁴⁷ Wiccans, Pagans, and Neo-pagans, who typically associate closely with nature and the earth, often perform religious rituals in the nude, or “skyclad.” For more on modern Pagans, see for example Berger 1999.

their service outside the Christian fellowship centre. They were given water, candles and food that they were welcomed to eat inside the centre after the ceremony. The Wiccans were treated with the same respect as any Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jew, Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist. (Canadian Press 2007)

During a humanitarian aid mission CF Muslims worked together with the unit chaplain to establish a Muslim prayer room. The chaplain told me that together they,

“made sure it was in good shape and maintained and we made sure that everyone treated it with respect. We didn’t let people walk on the tarp [covering the bare floor]. There was a Muslim woman, a medic, on that trip, and she was very shy and didn’t really ask for anything, but she wanted to be able to hear the prayers and teachings. So we set up a separate area for her as she had asked. It was just this tiny little space on a balcony with a tarp on the floor and a table. It was so small and rustic and I kept saying to her, ‘Are you sure this is alright?’ and she would say, ‘Oh, yes, yes, this is perfect!’ She was just so happy to have the space. All of the Muslims were so grateful to have a space and I was invited to come and sit in on sessions of Qu’ranic teachings. I really felt privileged in that. Clearly the space was really important to them and we were glad we could help.” Ironically, Muslims in Canada do not always have the same resources. A Muslim man on a base in Canada said,

“When we’re on manoeuvres there is no place to go for Friday prayers and I just pray out in the open. Here [on base], I go into a little room at the back and pray but in the field, there’s no where to go so I just do it outside.” Another Muslim commented,

“I say prayers throughout the day – even in barracks or on field manoeuvres. At first I felt pretty self-conscious about it, and sometimes I still wonder what people are thinking about me when they see me praying, but I’m used to it now.” Similarly, an Aboriginal woman described how a lack of spiritual resources for Aboriginals in the CF is a source of frustration that can result in departure from the military. She said,²⁴⁸

“Sometimes in this journey [of life] there are greater difficulties and we turn towards the elders and ancients and medicine people. Padres try to help but there’s no one for us in the system in

²⁴⁸ Retention of Aboriginals is a long-standing problem in the CF. Accommodation of religious and cultural traditions such as wearing long hair is an example of one way in which the CF has attempted to increase recognition of Aboriginal needs (Bergeron 2006; MacFarlane et al. 2005; McCue 2000; White 2000). The

uniform. If the padre can't help me in my journey I have to leave the CF and go back to my home, go back to my reservation and my people, where people understand me and can help me on my journey.”

Beyond food and practices, a number of religious personnel identified religious community as an important element of their beliefs. Community is established in a number of ways including groups that meet on bases across Canada, in civilian organizations such as churches and mosques outside of military bases, through virtual communities and websites, and through personal relationships maintained by email and telephone. Aboriginals at CFB Shilo and Esquimalt use on-base facilities but employ civilian elders to direct group activities and ceremonies. Similarly, Muslims at CFB Petawawa and Royal Military College gather to socialize, pray and discuss aspects of their beliefs. As we saw in chapter three, CF Christians participate in base chapels across the country that typically provide Sunday services, youth nights, family days, and community service opportunities. Canadian Sikh, Pagan, Wiccan, and Christian military personnel have established internet sites dedicated to their experiences as religious people serving in the Canadian Forces. One Wiccan website states,

I decided to start this group because I know how hard it is to find other pagans/wiccans when you are either in the military or a dependent of someone that is. Especially with all of the moving! This group is for helping you to meet and keep in contact with others that are in the same situation you are in. Also to have someone to talk to about anything related to the military, paganism and/or wicca [sic]. Please use this group to your advantage and make new friends. (Beylia 2006).

Another website dedicated to Sikhs in the Canadian Forces states that the goals for the forum are to:

- 1) connect current and former Sikh members working within the Canadian Armed Forces
- 2) provide information, guidance, and support to past, current, and future members of the CF (Sikh and non-Sikh) (Bains 2006).

Both Christians and Muslims described being highly involved in civilian religious groups. One Christian soldier described the importance of his civilian church as a source of support for him and

recent establishment of an Aboriginal Lodge at Canadian Forces Base Shilo is another attempt to better meet these needs.

his family while he is on tour. Another evangelical Christian who was deployed to the remote Canadian outpost at Alert Bay where there is no chaplain and no regular opportunities for religious experience or community, told me that even though there was no chapel and no chaplain,

“a group of guys would get together on Sunday morning or during the week. We’d have a couple of guitars and do some Bible study and stuff like that. It was pretty informal.” A young Muslim man posted in a region where there were few others Muslims said,

“It makes it really difficult not having that community because the army takes up so much of my time. I know I’ve fallen away from some of the Islamic ways that I carried out easily when I had that community. I would really like to know about other CF Muslims – maybe a web based community or resources that are available for us. I’d like to know what others in the CF are going through.”

Active members of religious traditions in the CF sometimes face special challenges in pursuing their religious practices that go beyond the uneven nature of religious resources available to them and the need for adaptability in their practices. For example, they sometimes face suspicion about the veracity of their needs as well as discrimination and intolerance from senior personnel and chaplains who do not have sufficient knowledge about the requirements of their religious tradition.²⁴⁹ One chaplain gave me this example,

“One guy in my battalion wanted to grow a beard during Ramadan but the regulations on this are strict [because of health and safety requirements for gas mask use]. The guy never had a beard before and a lot of Muslims don’t grow their beard during Ramadan so senior command wanted to know why this guy suddenly wanted to grow a beard. It turned out that he belonged to a particular Muslim sect where the men always grow a beard during Ramadan. When we found out that was they

²⁴⁹ In some cases, accommodation cannot be made. For example, one base chaplain told me, “One young guy asked if he could identify himself as a Jedi” on his dog tags. Jedi (a term for the Galactic Knights of the popular Star Wars series (Lucas 1977)) is not currently one of the options for religious self-identification in the CF (available in Table 7) although I heard numerous references from chaplains describing personnel who wanted to identify their religious perspective in that way. A different chaplain told me this story, “I married a couple – both military – a while ago. The woman was Christian but the guy was very uncomfortable with expressing his spirituality that way. So, I asked him how he would express his spirituality and he said the closest thing he could relate to was being a Jedi. So, for the purposes of making him comfortable with the whole wedding ceremony, we identified him as a Jedi Knight and he was very happy with that!”

case, senior command was ok with it – as long as it was in keeping with the safety regulations – and everyone was happy. I had to get outside help with that because I didn't know enough about Islam and what was required." A Muslim soldier explained,

"I had a Sergeant Major ask if I really needed to pray when I said I did because someone had told him that Muslim prayers could be modified for military services. This is partly true – in times of war and things like that, you can make up prayers later or say them at a different time but I didn't feel my situation warranted that accommodation. You have to be really tactful in these situations though because he wasn't flat out saying I couldn't pray, but my impression was that he thought I should be doing it on my own time. After some discussion and explanation it ended ok." A padre described a scenario where a Sikh soldier approached him for help resolving a need for special accommodation for his religious diet. The chaplain explained that the soldier was not receiving vegetarian rations as he had requested because his religious need "wasn't being taken seriously" by his commanding officer.

While the Canadian Forces are required by law to make religious accommodation for personnel, Canadian military culture presents a different challenge to those who do not quite fit in with the majority of the rank and file due to their religious beliefs. North American military analysts argue that establishing military culture is foundational for producing an effective fighting force (Ulmer, Graves, and Collins 2000) because, among other things, it can generate cohesion within a homogeneous group (English 2004; Snider 1999). At the same time some analysts argue that military forces establish doctrine to combat negative elements within the ranks that *do not* conform to military expectations (Johnston 2000, 30).²⁵⁰ Racism is an example of one such behaviour. Donna Winslow argues that efforts by the military to establish group cohesion can actually reinforce behaviours that conflict with official military policy because personnel learn to "cover up" for one another in order to protect the group when infractions against military policy occur (1998). As a result, one unfortunate effect of the homogenizing nature of military culture in Canada is that it can be both abusive towards and exclusive of the very people the CF are seeking to incorporate, such as women, Aboriginals and visible minorities.

²⁵⁰ Paul Johnston warns that military doctrine that encourages certain qualities are an indication of what is *lacking* in that environment rather than being an indication of the core values already in place (2000, 30).

While most Christians belonging to mainline denominations have no real difficulty fitting in with the Judeo-Christian values that form the basis of Canadian military culture, other groups might.²⁵¹ For example, Sikhs have a long tradition of participation in the military that makes them more likely to pursue a military career. However, many Sikhs abstain from alcohol, a central component of fellowship and camaraderie in every regimental group.²⁵² In a civilian setting, a Sikh's decision against drinking alcohol might have little effect on the camaraderie and fellowship between peers, but in the CF drinking is a significant component of military tradition. As a result, a religious restriction (coupled with the visible differences of skin colour or dress code) quickly identifies non-drinkers as outsiders in an environment where conformity and inclusion is paramount for success. When religious values conflict with military culture and tradition, religious personnel face an internal struggle between their religious ideals and their military obligations. Ironically, the values that set minority religious groups apart from their secular peers can also help a member to be more effective in their role. Religious personnel in the CF described to me scenarios in which their religious values have been both a help and a hindrance to their ability to conform to the group and establish their right to membership within the group.

Aboriginals, Christians, and Muslims are among those who find their religion helps them in the military duties. Canadian Aboriginals have a long history of military service and come from a culture that highly values the concept of self-sacrifice for the greater good. Many of these members believe that much of their religious tradition supports their role and duties as members of the CF. An Aboriginal woman explained,

“I am a warrior. We are all warriors. All Aboriginals raised in Aboriginal spirituality are warriors. To be a warrior is to be someone who picks you up when you fall down, who lends a shoulder for you to cry on, who brings people up when they're down. You don't have to be a soldier to be a warrior – you are a warrior in everyday life.” Similarly, a Christian soldier remarked that being raised in a religious home had taught him to:

²⁵¹ Seventh-day Adventists, for example, typically refrain from alcohol and meat in their diets. Most Pentecostals and many Baptists do not drink alcohol.

“...follow the rules, put others first, don’t cheat, don’t screw people over, don’t lie, believe in fair play. All of that carries over into my duties.” He continued,

“That whole southern evangelical schtick about being a prayer warrior and fighting the good fight – it all applies here too. Christianity and the military ethos are very similar and the military shares those inherited Christian values. The military and faith are both sort of like big blankets that wrap you up and make you feel safe because everything is under control. They tell you how to act and think and behave – they tell you who you are. I don’t know if that makes me seem weak but they’re both very straightforward and I find that comforting. The struggle comes when the military wants you to do something that your religion says is wrong.” Like the Aboriginal and Christian members, a young Muslim soldier argued that his beliefs help him to conform to the expectations set by the military. He said that without his religious values,

“I would do foolish things that would make my life harder. Belief in Islam helps me to carry myself in a good way and to behave in a way I can be proud of. It governs my behaviour and the way I speak to people. It helps me to deal with different people and behave modestly and appropriately. It forces me to have integrity and accountability and respect that I might not have otherwise.” Another Muslim agreed sentiment arguing that,

“Islam really helps me in my duties because the disciplines of the religion carry over into the work ethic in the CF. Islam has taught me to do well under pressure and stress, it’s helped me appreciate fellowship and community and all of those are also present in the CF. It helps with everything – it gives a sense of purpose and direction to everything I do. I’m working and challenging myself as a Muslim as much as I’m working and challenging myself as a soldier. Some people are just here for the money, some are here for the experience and the community – all of this is also part of my experience too, but I also have a reason and foundation for my work that comes from my religious beliefs.” A Wiccan soldier explained that being able to practice her religious beliefs while on tour helped her in her duties. She said, “You are challenged when you come over here just to deal with the situation, and by somebody supporting your faith it makes it less challenging” (Canadian Press 2007).

²⁵² In fact, concerns about alcohol dependence in the CF have led to a number of internal programs to address alcoholism. The CF now boasts a lower dependence on alcohol than the national average (Statistics Canada 2002). See chapter four.

At the same time that religion can help people in their military duties, religious personnel identified scenarios where their beliefs and practices set them apart from their peers and ostracized them from military culture. As the young Muslim quoted above noted,

“It’s not the job that makes it hard being a Muslim – it’s more that there are aspects of the informal culture that are opposed to Islamic values.” Members of other religious groups concur that military culture in itself sometimes represents a significant obstacle for full participation for religious minorities in the CF. For example, an Aboriginal writing on the differences between CF and Aboriginal culture notes that these can cause frustrating barriers for career advancement and can be the source of misunderstanding between unit members. She gives the example that,

“in Inuit culture, a woman must not look an older man in the eye, as this is being disrespectful. In the military, if you don’t look your supervisor in the eye, they think you have something to hide” (Bergeron 2006). One Canadian Forces study notes that military culture differs from Aboriginal culture by being more assertive, leadership-driven and hierarchical (McCue 2000). I asked a Muslim soldier what it was like to be a religious person in the CF and he replied,

“It’s hard! Often it is very hard because of the CF culture – you know it’s kind of rough and rugged and there’s lots of drinking and womanizing – not that I’m saying everyone is like that but that element is certainly there. I’ve had to adapt some things. Like there’s this tradition that you buy everyone a round [of beer] whenever you get promoted and that put a lot of pressure on me because it’s not something I believe in. So when I got promoted, I bought pizza for everyone instead. Just things like that that make you different. Some of the boisterous, crude attitudes prevalent in the CF are totally opposite to the teachings of Islam and I find I have to fight that. And you *can* fight it, but you have to always work at it.” Another Muslim stated that being a religious person in such an environment “can be very hard.” He continued,

“It would be so easy to do things here that I would never do with my own group of peers – drink, swear, be promiscuous. It’s pretty hard to behave one way when every one around you is expecting [to do so], but when nobody cares and they’re even encouraging you to do things you normally don’t – like, ‘come out for a drink with us’ – it can be hard. It would be even easier to do things on a training session when you’re with a whole other group of people you don’t even know because then there’s no accountability at all. The most challenging thing is trying to uphold your

principles when you're not with other Muslims – which most people here are not. I still find it hard to excuse myself to pray because I wonder if they see me the way the media portrays us and I wonder what they're thinking of me. Drinking is an issue because everybody drinks around here. Profanity is an issue because they don't hold back with swearing. It presents real challenges for me because it would be easy to fall into those ways.”

Practicing Christians also struggle to fit their religious values in the context of their military duties. One person argued that his conversion to Christianity “changed his priorities.” He explained that, because of his newfound religious identity, he had been,

“...delivered from smoking and drinking. I've dedicated myself to spreading the gospel and to raising my kids in a Christian home.” One side effect of this change is that,

“I self-destructed my own career by deciding to put my family first. I chose not to take assignments that would have got me promotions because I felt I ought to be available to my family. How can you offer your kids a good Christian influence when you live three thousand kilometres away? So I continue on with low assignments to fulfil my duties as a Christian father.” Another person noted that the Christian commandment to “spread the gospel” often puts him at odds with other personnel. He said that because their practices and beliefs oppose his own religious beliefs it is particularly difficult for him to work with homosexuals and practitioners of non-Christian traditions. A young infantryman explained that he spent much of his spiritual energy trying to rationalize his personal values in the face of military culture and that he is not always successful at balancing the two perspectives. He told me

“The infantry attitude is to drink, fight, and fuck. So I definitely drink more and swear more than I used to. Does Jesus like it when I do those things?” he shrugged, “Probably not. But I don't have a moral conflict between my faith and these behaviours. You can't ascribe a moral value to guns or alcohol or drugs or any of that. These things are not necessarily bad in themselves – it's what you do with them that make them a problem. Some people become abusive and immoral when they drink, but I don't. Does drinking put me at greater risk to make mistakes I might regret? Sometimes, yes... sometimes no... there is definitely a conflict between this environment and my religious beliefs. But Christianity is supposed to free us, not bind us. You follow the rules because you love people, you don't love people because you follow the rules!”

Military life is hard for everyone but it is harder for the minority who are actively religious. Moreover, religious personnel who do not belong to a mainline Christian tradition face a number of additional hurdles to pursuing their religious beliefs. Among these are frustrations due to special dietary and dress requirements, a lack of religious leaders equipped to help them, limited space for worship and prayer, difficulties integrating duties and religious obligations, self-consciousness that comes from being different, and finally, suspicion and intolerance from peers and commanders. Alternatively, religious beliefs and values can be beneficial for establishing and maintaining qualities and behaviours that make a person moral, conscientious and considerate of others. Conversely, it has the potential for creating internal difficulties for personnel who find their loyalties divided between religious values and military objectives. Those in the CF who practice their religious beliefs have learned to accommodate their religious practices to military culture and duties even while they use these practices to help them be more effective in their roles or resist corruptive elements of this society. Even though these people participate in formal religious traditions these modifications that suit the beliefs to the environment demonstrate once again, the subjective and individualized nature of religion in modernity.

4.3.3 Religious Ignorance and Discrimination

While the pursuit of religious interests can set personnel apart from their peers, sometimes it is the lack of religious knowledge that is most damaging to group cohesion and for creating situations of misunderstanding within the ranks. Studies show that Canadian attempts to minimize Christian privilege in Canada have ensured that the majority of Canadian young people know very little about world religions (Seljak 2005; Seljak et al. 2007; Sweet 1997). Moreover, ignorance about religion can be a serious problem when Canadian military members are deployed to work with personnel from international forces and also with civilian populations that do not share Canadian “Christian” values. Some CF members who practice a formal religion believe their peers lack basic knowledge about their religious identity that can sometimes result in inadvertent discrimination. A Muslim told me that,

“Very few people ask about my religion. I think most of them are embarrassed to ask ‘stupid questions’ because when people *do* ask me things they always frame it that way... ‘Is this a stupid

question? I don't mean to be stupid but... I think they're interested, they just don't know how to ask. I think it's good when they ask, it shows that they're trying to understand." An Aboriginal describing discrimination from co-workers explained that, although she was hurt by comments made about her;

"I believe what was said was out of ignorance and lack of education." Similarly, two Sikh reservists from the Toronto region indicate that, others have little knowledge about their religion. One notes that,

"I have not come across any blatant discrimination or harassment. In fact what I have come across is positive curiosity, understanding, and acceptance" (Bains 2006). Another Sikh from the same region indicates that curiosity about his religious identity is common among those with whom he works. He states that almost of the people he has met

"... have shown an earnest interest in the turban and Sikhism" (Bains 2006). These examples suggest that ignorance about religion is a reality in the CF even when personnel do not experience discrimination as a result. Lack of knowledge and an unwillingness to ask questions that could lead to greater understanding have the potential to create misunderstandings between personnel. A Muslim gave this example of religious ignorance from a unit member during a training session. He said,

"One time we were waiting to hand in weapons and it was time to pray so I started to pray and another soldier thought I was having a break down and he came over to me and said, 'Hey are you alright?' and tried to help me." He gave a surprised laugh and continued, "Of course I couldn't answer him because I was praying! So I finished my prayers and then I explained what I had been doing." While the Muslim soldier had no problem explaining his practices to his deeply-embarrassed colleague, examples of religious illiteracy have the potential to create anger and resentment both within a regiment and with religious civilians with whom Canadians are expected to work. For example, a Roman Catholic soldier who served on a mission in the Golan Heights described a scenario that created tension between the secular members and a non-practicing Muslim in his unit. He told me the Muslim soldier was,

"angry because we were using prayer mats as carpets. We had them beside our beds to keep our feet warm. They had pictures of Mecca on them and he was annoyed because we were standing on them." Clearly the lack of religious knowledge evident in this example has the capacity to create conflict within a unit. On a larger scale however, such as when troops are required to work in a

region where religion is central to the culture, such ignorance has the potential to put both military and civilian lives in danger as well as undermine the goals of the mission.

The lack of religious knowledge among the mainstream of military personnel, along with requiring extra effort from religious minorities to get their basic needs met, can also sometimes appear to create groups of “outsiders.” A convert to Islam said that discrimination can occur when people know someone is different and has different needs but do not understand why. He explained that people in his regiment know he is a Muslim,

“mainly because of the ‘no pork’ issue and stuff like that. In the army when you’re working so closely with people all the time, they know about any special requirements you have. They see me when I pray and they know if I’m eating something different from them. It’s really important to have discussions in the army because that kind of stuff comes up sooner or later. I think it’s harder for the ‘old guard’ to deal with it when they see me praying but the young people are ok with it and now there’s so much more emphasis on harassment and discrimination that everyone’s terrified of stepping on someone else’s toes.” Another Muslim soldier commented,

“I think there’s also a strong sense of ‘us’ and ‘them’ mentality. For example, the army is a very Canadian institution and then you’ve got all these Western military forces engaged in the so-called ‘War on Terror’ that in many ways translates to ‘War on Islam.’ Some of our most recent engagements have been in Muslim nations – Bosnia, Somalia, Afghanistan – there’s a real sense of uneasiness in this regard. A lot of Muslims are uncomfortable with Canada’s roles in those theatres and also there’s a sense of betraying other Muslims. So there’s this sense of being on the outside. This is one of the biggest drawbacks.” He explained that as a Muslim he is willing and ready to engage in combat in Afghanistan or other Muslim nations in order to uphold Canadian values. He explained, “I’d prefer to go in on a humanitarian mission but if they asked me to go as a rifle man, would I go? Yeah, I’d go. It’s not my first choice but there’s such a strong humanitarian and nation building aspect to that operation [Afghanistan] that I’d go. The Taliban is not an Islam I know, so I don’t consider it a conflict with my beliefs. In fact, my religious beliefs are more of a motivation to go and be part of a project that helps people out of that kind of situation.” Despite his willingness to fulfill his duties as a soldier, this person’s religious identity establishes him as different from his peers.

Ironically, religious minorities, as well as being a target for discrimination against others and persecution, can also be a source of discrimination if they attempt to impose their beliefs and values on other members or make assumptions about other groups such as women, homosexuals and religious minorities, because of their religious beliefs. A fundamentalist Christian soldier provided a poignant example of both religious illiteracy and religious intolerance when he remarked that Islam “is a revelation given by demons.” Further, his clear lack of religious tolerance for other faith perspectives makes it impossible for him to relate to others who do not share his beliefs. He told me,

“People tease me and call me a redneck and say I’m intolerant and a hard-core [evangelical] and all that but I’m intolerant in the way that Jesus was intolerant. We believe all other religions are false therefore other religions see us as intolerant. The interfaith aspects of the CF are offensive to me because if you’re not giving credit to God, it doesn’t count. I don’t count Allah as God, or Buddha. If I’m told to give equal time to all faiths, I don’t want any part of that. Praying is absolutely useless unless you’re praying to the one true God.”²⁵³ He continued explaining that his religious beliefs also influence his relations with women and his understanding of the role they should play in the CF. He said,

“I don’t think women should be in combat arms. That should be closed to women. They should not be on fighting ships, fighter pilots or attack helicopters or Military Police or in the infantry. They could be nurses because they’re more compassionate than men. I’m not saying women should be barefoot and pregnant and all that, but I do think that women’s first domain should be the home and family. I think the Leave-It-To-Beaver model is a good one.” Similarly, his religious beliefs precluded him from accepting the rights of gays and lesbians. He stated,

“I wouldn’t want them to think I condone what they do or anything, like in the same way that if someone was stealing I’d point it out. If I’m working with a guy and he’s in my face about it and looking for my approval then I’d tell him what I thought.” One lesbian told me that this attitude is not particularly unusual from Christians. She said,

²⁵³ Allah is understood by Muslims to be the “God of Abraham,” known to Jews as YHWH and Christians as the Father of Jesus. Buddhists do not view the Buddha as a deity but as a philosopher (although practically speaking some may worship him as such). See McLellan 1999.

“We’ve still got the rednecks in here who just want to shoot guns and say things like ‘Fags should be blown off the face of the earth’ – I’ve heard that said. But mostly I’ve found that those people are the ‘good Christians’ who hide behind their Bibles, which say that homosexuality is wrong.” Religious intolerance in these examples is inverse to that demonstrated earlier. In cases where a person has strong beliefs that oppose other groups, their religion is the *source* of discrimination and intolerance rather than the object of it.

While evangelical personnel have a faith imperative to “share the gospel” the CF does not allow them to proselytize their beliefs. One chaplain remarked that,

“You don’t have to lie about your beliefs as long as you’re not trying to convert people. I think a lot of the evangelicals have a hard time because part of their theology is to evangelize and so they’re always trying to convert people. People avoid them because they don’t like being preached to.” There are other Christian personnel who see their calling to share the Christian story differently. One young Christian soldier earnestly remarked,

“If you want to bring people to know God and to love other people the first step towards that is *inclusion* not exclusion! Instead we have to try to help people where they are without imposing our beliefs. Beating people over the head with our Bibles and all that – that’s not being a good Christian – that’s being an asshole. It’s more important to just meet people where they are. I’ve met Muslims and others who don’t believe anything, and we all bring something different to the table. I can learn from all of them. I am always eager to hear where people are coming from.”

As these examples have shown, values that are not shared and differences that are not understood have the potential to result, either intentionally or unintentionally, in discrimination against members of religious minorities in the CF. Paul Bramadat argues that religious identity often intersects with ethnicity and race and, as a result, religious discrimination is often tied to racial discrimination (2005, 1-3). Visible minority personnel and senior officers I spoke to suggested that it is those at the bottom of the rank system who do not know their rights who are at the greatest risk to suffer abuses and discrimination that could result in them abandoning the military profession. Numerous studies on the retention of minority groups such as Aboriginals and women indicate ongoing failure in this area (CBC News 2006b; MacFarlane et al. 2005; NATO 2006; White 2000). While there are no parallel

statistics on religious minority groups, addressing religious illiteracy and discrimination is one way to improve the experiences and potentially the retention rates of certain groups. One visible minority chaplain stated that,

“The [minority] soldiers at the bottom of the rank system are at the greatest risk for abuses because they don’t know their rights, they don’t know the policies, and they don’t know who to go to if they face problems. We have to protect these people. It’s really not easy for them, because if you speak up, you could end your career right there.”²⁵⁴ Personnel from religious minorities echoed this statement during my interviews with them. One Muslim soldier argued,

“There’s been a lot of good work done about the harassment and discrimination issues in recent years but there’s still a culture in the CF that is unfriendly to Muslims. There should be more attention paid to that culture and what drives it and what it means if the CF wants to recruit more Muslims. It needs to be made into less of a white male club – not just for the sake of Muslims – so that others feel like they are a part of the community.

“[Muslims] have to be made aware, that there is a lot of room to negotiate for improved treatment. I’ve always had good treatment but I’m a white guy. Others I know have had a lot of problems... [The CF needs to] make their programs and resources more widely known to people – especially incoming cadets. I know how to handle any problems I might have – I know what my options are and where to go and who to talk to but a private coming in doesn’t know any of that and they might think they just have to take bad treatment but they don’t. There’s also still a long way to go toward creating a multicultural dynamic in the CF. They could be doing a lot more to encourage minorities in the CF. For example, if you want more Muslims, you need to have a Muslim recruiter, get them in, promote them through the ranks and show that they’re valued. This makes the role more

254 He added, “The worst stories [of discrimination] I hear are from those coming from the recruiting centres. In fact, the recruiting centres are probably the worst places for Black people and minorities to go. If you heard some of the stories of the way minorities are being treated at the recruiting centres you would not believe it! They are told that they will never be officers, that they’ll never get promoted, and frankly, a lot of that is true. It’s not a good experience! Why would minorities join if that is how they are being treated at the front door? [Some bases are] very, very bad for that type of discrimination, I would say [bigger urban centres are] better because they’re used to seeing more minorities and they’re not as afraid of them. It’s not about people being bad, because they’re not bad, it’s a fear of the unknown. But I think it’s changing... slowly.”

credible and viable to other Muslims. Plus, when more minorities are in the ranks, the culture will naturally change in response to that diversity.”

Indeed, while the regulations are in place to discourage discrimination and the stated aims of the military are to incorporate greater numbers of minority groups in the CF, many personnel lack basic knowledge about other religious groups and that creates circumstances in which misunderstanding and discrimination are inevitable. Ignorance about religion also causes some personnel to feel like “outsiders” and is the source of conflict within units. On a larger scale, lack of knowledge about religion and religious values has the potential to cause serious problems during operations that occur in regions where religion is central to the culture and when Canadian Forces must work with UN troops from other parts of the world. Finally, statistics on immigration and religion in Canada suggest there is a strong likelihood that diversity in the CF will continue to increase in the coming decades. Because ethnicity is often tied to religious identity, there is a need to protect the rights of practicing religious personnel along with ensuring better education about religious identity for all members.

4.4 Conclusion

Data on religion in Canada and statistics on military personnel suggest that the majority of CF members come out of a Christian heritage. Given their age and gender, it is likely that many of them reject religious institutions and, particularly among Francophones, harbour some resentment toward traditional religion. When military personnel consider religion at all, most of them do so from a subjective and privatized perspective where they pick and choose elements that are meaningful to them and discard aspects they do not value. Numbers of them have sought or continue to seek spiritual knowledge to help them understand the “big questions” of life such as the search for personal meaning and purpose and the causes of suffering in the world.

In fact, the aspect of unlimited liability and the hardships inherent in their job cause the mainly secular personnel of the CF to reflect frequently on these types of existential matters. Moreover, the types of missions they undertake and the experiences they undergo during these missions cause them

to reflect on both their personal values as well as the Canadian values they are sent to support.²⁵⁵

These values motivate personnel to engage in humanitarian aid efforts, and participate in projects to fight “evil” with “good.” Privatization of religion allows people to take what they want and reject other aspects of formal religious traditions. Personnel use these resources to help them overcome the alienation of working within a large, impersonal, bureaucratic institution. They also use them to address the sense of *anomie* they might experience on a deployment to a region where their own values are challenged. Religion in the military is a resource that some people rely on to help them perform their duties with greater integrity, duty and efficiency.

Individualistic interpretations of religious meaning and purpose allow military personnel to conform their religious identity to the military culture. At the same time, it can be a source of alienation and difference that sets believers apart from their secular peers. Despite policies intended to improve the experiences of minorities in the CF, many religious personnel still feel discouraged by the ways in which their religious beliefs set them apart from their peers. Evidence that Canadians have little knowledge about religions has serious implications for the military given that ignorance about religious beliefs has the potential to cause inadvertent discrimination against religious minorities. On an interpersonal level, ignorance about religions can feed intolerance and lead to misunderstanding within a unit. On a grand scale, it has the potential to create significant difficulties and misunderstandings with potentially deadly results for personnel commissioned to serve in countries where religious belief is central to the culture.

²⁵⁵ C.A. Cotton, with reference to military ethos, comments that the “spiritual dimensions of military systems are more important than the physical” and a military ethos should identify “what ‘ought to be,’ rather than what is” (1983, 10-13)

Chapter 5

Conclusions

5.1 The Continuing Significance of Religion

Even as participation in traditional religion wanes among military personnel, we find that interest in religion remains significant in the Canadian Forces. As one soldier commented, “Religion, faith, and spirituality, are still very important for many people. Almost all of us want to believe there is *something* above us giving purpose and meaning to our lives and experiences – even if we don’t know what that something is.” Religion in the Canadian Forces provides three insights of particular relevance to understanding religion in late modernity. First, it demonstrates that religion persists in an individualized, subjectivated and diffuse state in the military (as it does in Canadian society) and even people who belong to traditional religious communities have to wrestle with this fact. Second, it indicates a new religious pluralism stemming from individual interpretations of belief that produce new ways of being religious (e.g., Pagans) in addition to the pluralism that comes from integrating immigrants from minority religious traditions (e.g., Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhist, Muslims, etc). Third, it points to the continuing relevance of the chaplaincy, an institution inherited from Canada’s Christian past that has been able, more or less successfully, to adapt to these new conditions.

Despite the obvious signs of secularization, my interviews showed that religious interests persist in individualistic and subjective forms among CF personnel. The personal religious beliefs of the people I interviewed offered them opportunities to examine the uncertain or unknowable aspects of life and death, morality and ethics, good and evil, as well as one’s purpose for existing. As we saw earlier, even those who continued to participate in formal religious traditions increasingly interpreted their beliefs for themselves. They often added elements of different religious traditions to the beliefs and practices of their own, while ignoring certain aspects of the tradition by which they identified themselves. Modern conditions make the rise of individualism and subjectivation of religion virtually inescapable, since even those who remain in traditional and authoritarian religious communities must now *choose* to do so. Moreover, for several of the participants in this study, religion played a

mediating role between the alienating forces of modernity that effected people working in large bureaucratic modern institutions.

My study of religion in the CF also revealed the depth and breadth of the new religious pluralism that has marked Canadian society since the 1960s. This pluralism has several sources. First, Canadians raised in the Christian tradition have, thanks to the forces of individualism and subjectivation discussed above adopted a variety of non-conformist religious perspectives, such as Wicca, neo-paganism, and other new religious movements as well as that diffuse and poorly-defined form of religious identity called “spiritual but not religious”(Fuller 2001). Second, the rise of traditional Aboriginal spirituality among Aboriginal personnel has meant a “return” or conversion to Aboriginal spirituality for many CF personnel – especially since Aboriginal people are disproportionately represented in Canada’s armed forces. Finally, immigration has resulted in an increase in religious diversity and the CF has had to deal with an increase in the numbers of its members who identify themselves as Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists or members of the world’s various religious traditions. Whereas traditional Christian worldviews prevailed in earlier times, religion in Canada today is marked by pluralism, individualism and rapid change.

Finally, my study found that despite the challenges posed by secularization, the transformation of religious identity and belonging, and the new religious pluralism, CF personnel remained loyal to the military chaplaincy. The transformation of the chaplaincy to these new conditions illustrates the adaptability of religious institutions in the face of modern influences. Despite requirements to fit their religious vocations into a system based on reason, bureaucracy, and the requirement for “acceptable” credentials, chaplains have been able to retain and even expand their place within the military. They have done this by adapting to aspects of military society while remaining outside the formal structures that govern other military personnel. Moreover, they have modified their role to accommodate new religious realities by taking on duties such as pastoral care and “generic” ministry to all military members regardless of their faith tradition. While senior military officials see the chaplains’ presence as a means to ensuring “operational effectiveness” by keeping personnel fit for and effective in their duties, chaplains understand their role as being essential to helping personnel to order their experiences, providing comfort in the face of suffering, loneliness and fear, as well as interpreting some of the violence they see in their role. Furthermore, the transformation of the

chaplaincy into a multifaith institution over the last fifty years has been remarkable. This transition has not been without its contradictions, conflicts and difficulties. While much work remains to be done, the chaplaincy has adapted to the challenges of pluralism with some degree of success.

5.2 Modernization and Religion in the CF

Some of the hallmarks of life in late modernity include the differentiation and bureaucratization of society, secularization, the rise of pluralism and the privatization of religion, individualism and the subjectivation of experiences, as well as access to a variety of alternative ways of viewing the world through global culture and modern technological advances. All of these elements are evident in Canadian military society. Furthermore, all of these aspects of late modernity influence the role and nature of religious identity within that society.

As we saw in chapter two, differentiation and the bureaucratization of Canadian society (including military society) resulted in the increasing separation of roles for religious and public life in Canada. Religious authorities lost their ability to impose beliefs and values through public institutions such as government and schools. In part these developments occurred in order to “modernize” Canada in response to the demands of democracy and modern economies. Not surprisingly, many of the Christian values of both the French and English communities formed the basis of the new, putatively secular “Canadian values” established in Canadian laws and institutions.

Differentiation occurred at the same time that many Canadians were leaving the traditional religious institutions in which they had been raised. While some of these people continued to hold on to their traditional religious identity in their private lives, they became increasingly reluctant to identify themselves publicly with a formal religious organization. In other cases they abandoned religious affiliation and belief altogether or joined different religious communities. This period of secularization and privatization of religion further de-emphasized the public role of religious authorities in Canada and elevated the rights and freedoms of individuals over traditional religious authority.

Even as numbers of Canadians departed the churches, Canadian society became more religiously diverse due to increasing immigration from non-European countries. Furthermore, increasingly sophisticated technological advances and accessibility of international travel meant that members of religious minorities in Canada had less need to assimilate than in previous generations (Bramadat 2005, 14-17). As a result, many recent immigrants actually became more committed to their religious identities than they had been in their home countries and organized broad community initiatives centering on mosques, gurdwaras, and temples. Canadian commitments to multiculturalism and religious freedom as well as visible evidence of religious diversity in Canada further undermined the traditional religious influence of the Christian churches. At the same time, it highlighted the need for laws and policies to ensure the inclusion of members of these and other minority groups. Given that the Canadian Forces – and especially its chaplaincy – had been organized around an assumed common Christian identity (split as it was between Protestants and Roman Catholics), this new diversity represents a new and real challenge.

The effects of the broad social developments of modernization can be seen in the role that religion plays in the Canadian Forces. The differentiation and bureaucratization of the forces marginalized religion to one formal sphere, that is, a chaplain branch governed by policies to ensure efficiencies, maintain standards and ensure equality for its members and those they serve. Secularization and privatization of religion meant that fewer military members were engaged in formal religious communities at the same time that religious pluralism contributed to the increasing presence of members of religious minority groups. Ironically, this meant that there was greater evidence of religious identity (through the accommodation of the uniform for religious minority personnel) at the same time that formal participation in traditional Canadian churches by others in the ranks began to wane. This will mean that conflicts over religion in the CF will no longer pit the Christian majority against religious minorities; rather, it is more likely that conflicts will centre on the demands of religious people in the face of a pervasive secular culture that ignores religion or believes that it should remain a wholly privatized affair.

Religion in the Canadian Forces then, like religion in Canada, is a product of the late modern social context from which it stems. It is differentiated, for the most part, from other aspects of military life. It reflects the secularization of wider Canadian society and gives evidence of privatized notions of

belief even as numbers of participants belonging to a variety of religious communities increase. It relies first and foremost on individual and subjective interpretations of belief to govern behaviours, establish values and morals, and cope with the harsh conditions of military service.

5.3 Lack of Religious Knowledge

Research shows that young people in Canada today have little knowledge about religion (Seljak 2005; Sweet 1997) and CF personnel are no different. My study showed a decrease in knowledge about religion just when increasing participation of members of religious minority groups in the CF as well as the new types of missions being undertaken by the Canadian military indicate a need for education about world religions for all military personnel.

This development may contribute to future conflicts. Members of the Canadian Forces require more education about religion if they are to better understand the culture of the regions in which they are now being posted. Most of these regions are societies where religion is fully integrated with culture and where Western assumptions about the conflict between reason and religion as well as the separation of religion from politics do not hold. The Legault Report on Armed Forces and Canadian Society states that,

The rapid advances of civilian society as regards educated communication and debate have not been paralleled in the Armed Forces. The education of the officers and troops was focused almost exclusively in the past on purely technical military functions, which certainly favours the operational quality of our troops, but at the same time severely handicaps them in their need to adapt to contemporary society. We need soldiers who are both educated and capable of discernment within an environment where, most of the time, the objective is no longer to conquer or destroy but rather to construct and to participate in building peace. (Legault 1997, 4.1)²⁵⁶

Part of that call for education and discernment must include training about world religions, including differences in values. A senior military official told me that the Canadian military will work increasingly with multinational forces and non-governmental organizations that involve,

²⁵⁶ Original emphasis

“Multi-religious scenarios where we’re working together with people from different religious traditions; and more and more military operations in developing nations [where tribal groups are present]. We’re going to need people to be able to teach about that and help people to work together and understand [each other]. Soldiers need a better grasp of the spirituality in those environments.”

Apart from the challenges of a mission, personnel require more education about religious identity in order to address behaviours that foster exclusion, and lead to discrimination and harassment of members of religious minorities. While traditionally the imposition of military culture has been effective for establishing group cohesion and esprit de corps within a *homogeneous* group,²⁵⁷ Canadian values of multiculturalism and fairness enshrined in the *Charter* and laws requiring the provision of “reasonable accommodation” for religious needs²⁵⁸ has the potential to create a situation of “us” and “them” that works against group cohesion. As new recruits from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds join Canadian Forces, they receive “cultural awareness, harassment and racism prevention training” (DND 2007a); however none receives training that helps them understand the religious differences that set them apart.²⁵⁹ Although military policy states that open discrimination and harassment of others will result in expulsion from the CF (Jedwab 2004), simple ignorance about other religious groups virtually guarantees further problems of misunderstanding and conflict. Members must be able to ask questions and present concerns about religious differences among their

²⁵⁷ Donna Winslow notes that in some cases, unit cohesion has been so powerful that loyalty to group members has taken precedence over upholding mission values. See Winslow 1998.

²⁵⁸ The idea of “reasonable accommodation” comes from a 1985, Supreme Court of Canada ruling against Simpson Sears Ltd. in its bid to demand an employee who was a member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church work on Saturdays. The judge ruled that “In a case of adverse effect discrimination, the employer has a duty to take reasonable steps to accommodate short of undue hardship in the operation of the employer's business.” *Ont. Human Rights Comm. v. Simpsons-Sears*, [1985] 2 S.C.R. 536, 1985 CanLII 18 (S.C.C.). Recently, demands for accommodation of religious needs have promoted a sometimes heated debate in Quebec and Ontario.

²⁵⁹ A current project by Brian Selmeski of the Royal Military College of Canada’s Centre for Security, Armed Forces and Society addresses the need for cross-cultural training for military personnel (2007). He suggests that all military personnel should receive “cultural intelligence” training. For entry level personnel this should consist of “cultural self-identity as a citizen-soldier – who am I, how do I see the world, what are the values etc. that are important to me, etc” (19). For those in intermediate roles cultural training should allow them to act as “Intra-Cultural Facilitators” by developing their expertise in “knowledge of key domains of culture (kinship, religion, exchange, etc.) among other things. Those in advanced roles should act as “Pluri-Cultural Leaders” able to work with civilians and personnel from non-European regions of the world while those in senior positions should be competent “Cross-Cultural Ambassadors” (19). Selmeski points to a growing

peers. Further, they require accessible moral leadership, direction, and feedback on their behaviour in order to maintain and uphold the institutional policies of the CF with regards to members of minority groups – whether those are defined by religion or other characteristics.

If these policies are not enforced members of religious and other minority groups will continue to experience exclusion, discrimination and harassment that could lead to increased stress and suffering for personnel, reduced retention of members of minority groups, and numerous lawsuits and human rights complaints against the CF. Further, if the lack of religious knowledge in the CF is not addressed, efforts to accommodate and integrate religious minorities will fail because of cultural differences and a lack of mutual understanding between those coming from different traditions.

5.4 Stigma and Anomie

Although the CF is a modern bureaucracy, it retains a formal religious institution in the form of the chaplaincy. This is partly because it retains a number of elements from an earlier era (for example, the notions of honour and self-sacrifice). Similarly, the chaplaincy and other religious resources – which allegedly represent non-rational elements – are helpful in dealing with irrationalities within the system by mediating between the bureaucratic and hierarchical elements of military society and basic human needs for familiarity, community and support.

An example of religion's contribution to the effectiveness of the CF is the role of chaplains in assisting personnel suffering from the negative effects of stress and trauma. Although Canadian Forces policy makers as well as senior commanders insist that efforts to increase treatment options and increase knowledge about operational stress with the aim of minimizing stigma is working, the personnel at the grass roots level to whom I spoke disagreed. Their recognition of this stigmatization caused them to turn to alternatives, including religious outlets, before seeking assistance from mental health professionals. The resources they pursued included personal religious practices (such as prayer

acknowledgment by US and other military forces that personnel trained in the liberal arts are becoming increasingly important in postmodern military engagements (Selmeski 2007, 26).

and meditation), physical symbols (such as crosses and medallions), “sacred spaces” (such as the chapel) and the person of the chaplain.

The person of the chaplain remained significant even for personnel who rejected formal religion because padres were able to maintain confidences and bypass the chain of command to resolve issues. They were considered “safe” to talk to about personal problems because they play something of a “neutral” role in the competitive and hierarchical military environment. Other resources such as religious objects, the chapel, as well as various contemplative and meditative practices played a similar role by giving physical evidence to spiritual concerns as well as establishing “neutral zones” separate from military life. The chapels provided a space of quiet respite; practices such as meditation, prayer, silent reflection, and group worship restored people’s confidence and courage as well as providing them with a sense of equanimity; religious objects such as religious texts and medals created a visible indicator of protection, hope and courage. In relying on these resources rather than the help of social workers, health care professionals, or mental health counsellors, personnel got their human needs met while avoiding the criticism of their peers and superiors as well as the stigma associated with needing mental, emotional or physical help.

Along with helping to address mental health concerns, religious resources can be helpful for addressing moral *anomie* during a mission. Missions in regions where human rights abuses, genocide and other forms of radical violence challenge a Canadian military member’s sense of “right” and “wrong” may cause a profound sense of *anomie* or emotional, spiritual and psychological chaos. Former Lieutenant General Romeo Dallaire’s experiences with post traumatic stress disorder following his mission to Rwanda during the genocide that occurred there is a prominent example of the potential damage attributable to such *anomie* (Dallaire 2003). Under these conditions, many people turned to the chaplains and religion to help them “make sense” of their experiences. The evidence that individuals may turn to religious resources when their personal values were at odds with their experiences on a mission was significant in that it indicated a desire for moral and spiritual assistance even among those who were secular and individualistic in their religious outlook. Under such circumstances religion had the potential to influence moral and ethical decision-making at the same time it could restore hope, give meaning to difficult but seemingly meaningless tasks, and create opportunities to “do good” by helping others.

Although not all personnel are religious, there is evidence that they might still rely on religious resources at some point during their military career, as in the case of the atheist serving in Afghanistan who had some “good discussions” with the padre. Although more research is required to determine the types of resources personnel value, it is clear that members appreciate opportunities to reflect on and discuss religious issues. If religious resources are not available to personnel, it is likely that many will refuse alternative sources of counsel that carry a stigma and will continue to bear the burdens of stress alone.

5.5 Contributions to Knowledge

This study of religion in the CF contributes to research on several fronts including studies of religion in Canada, debates surrounding secularization and the persistence of religion in late-modernity, as well as studies on military culture and society. Additionally, as a case study, the role of religion in the Canadian military has implications for our understanding of other public Canadian institutions, such as prisons and hospitals, which face issues related to religious diversity and equality, interfaith cooperation, as well as religious discrimination and intolerance.

The persistence of religion in highly-bureaucratic organizations indicates the continuing significance religion can have for people employed in other secular Canadian institutions. Along with those who continue to participate in traditional religious communities, those who identify themselves as “passively-religious,” “spiritual-but-not-religious,” believers in “...something, I’m just not sure what!” as well as those who continue to seek a higher meaning and purpose for their lives through all manner of religious and value-laden initiatives indicate a need to further examine the role of religion among late-modern individuals.

The evidence that religion – in both its traditional forms as well as in new and individualized forms – still plays an important role for people is an indication that secularizing trends do not always imply a weakening of interest in religious issues. Instead, my study, like many others (Fuller 2001; Heelas and Woodhead 2005; Hervieu-Léger 2000; Lyon 2000b; Roof 1999; Wuthnow 1998), points to a significant change in the way that religious beliefs are understood, practiced and activated. Evidence that people turn to religious resources in times of hardship and stress suggests that religion and

religious resources may remain valuable sources of comfort and consolation despite individuals' rejection of traditional organized religious forms.

5.6 Further Research

As an exploratory and qualitative study, this work only scratches the surface of the information that could be gleaned about the role of religion in the Canadian military. Given that I could not conduct large-scale surveys of CF personnel, we do not know the numbers of personnel who actually go to see a chaplain, attend a religious service, or engage in other types of religious activity. Further, we do not have a full picture of the motives that inspire personnel to engage in these practices. Obviously a more comprehensive study to identify the nature, frequency and motivation behind these activities is needed if we are to develop a better understanding of the role religion plays in the CF.

The most obvious first-step in extending this research would be for military statisticians to recommence collecting and compiling information on religion from personnel. Furthermore, the qualitative aspect of this study needs to be complemented by broader empirical surveys about religious interests and values (including perspectives that are “spiritual but not religious”), religious knowledge, and the role of religious resources on deployments. For example, questions such as “How often do you go to a chaplain?” and “Why do you go?” would clarify the conditions under which personnel seek out religious guidance. Besides adding to our general knowledge, answers to such questions would allow military officials to effect policies that could improve the quality of life for personnel, ensure adequate and appropriate moral and ethical leadership, and supply additional resources to assist in averting serious stress disorders for example.

In addition to having to negotiate religious differences within the ranks, Canada's current security and defence policies that point to continued participation in military operations other than war highlight the need for military personnel to acquire religious knowledge for dealing with civilians and international military forces as a means to establishing good relations and avoiding abuses such as

those that occurred in Somalia.²⁶⁰ Further research that makes a serious effort to uncover what knowledge military personnel currently have and lack is essential to being able to provide adequate training and information to prepare all members of the CF for the postmodern military environments. For example, a survey to discover what military members know and think about Muslims would point to areas where further training and education is warranted both for dealing with differences within the ranks as well as for negotiating civil-military and inter-military operations in Islamic countries.

The role religion plays in assisting military members to cope with emotional and psychological stress needs to be examined seriously. While this study suggests that chaplains are important sources of non-stigmatized consolation and comfort who provide an alternative to the professional mental-health resources, it is not yet clear how effective they are. Moreover, as this study has shown, chaplains require increased training and support in their role of aiding military personnel in dealing with stress because they are frequently facing considerable stress themselves. More research is required to understand the best ways of addressing these needs.

Finally, expanding this study to include the role that religion plays in other Canadian institutions, such as prisons and hospitals, would broaden our understanding of the role of religion in Canada generally, and especially in environments where people face acute ethical, moral, and existential concerns. For example, rescue workers, law enforcement and security personnel, correctional service providers, as well as health care professionals all work in potentially highly stressful environments where issues of life and death are frequent aspects of their duties either for themselves or those in their care. Although these people are members of secular public institutions that are not challenged by the same degree of unlimited liability and universality of deployment as CF personnel, it is not inconceivable that religious interests are significant for them as they are faced with existential concerns, moral and ethical dilemmas, as well as traumatic and stressful experiences. Studies that examine the role religion plays for individuals employed in these types of public service roles would enhance our knowledge of the role religion plays in Canadian public institutions.

²⁶⁰ Coincidentally, remarks made by participants in this research suggest a need for a closer examination of issues such as the experiences of Muslims in the CF after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the relationship of New Age and Neo-Pagan religions to the gay and lesbian community within the CF, as well as a comparison of male versus female members' experiences with religion.

Religion and religious diversity in Canadian society, despite their changing forms, will continue to be important social and cultural reference points for present and future generations. Identifying, and preparing for this reality is an essential task not just in the ranks of the Canadian Forces but across Canadian society.

Appendix A – Branch March Past Lyrics

Previous - Onward Christian Soldiers

Refrain:

Onward, Christian soldiers,

Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus,

Going on before!

1. Christ the royal master,
Leads against the foe;
Forward into battle,
See his banners go!
2. Like a might army
Moves the church of God!
Brothers, we are treading
Where the saints have trod!
3. We are not divided,
All one body we,
One in hope and doctrine,
One in charity!
4. Onward. then, ye people!
Join our happy throng!
Blend with ours your voices,
In the triumph song!
5. Glory laud and honour,
Unto Christ the king,
This through countless ages,
Men and angels sing.

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee
God of glory, lord of love.
Hearts unfold like flowers before thee
Opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
Drive the dark of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness
Fill us with the light of day.

All thy work with joy surrounds thee,
Earth and heaven reflect thy rays.
Stars and angels sing around thee,
Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,

Flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird, and flowing fountain,
Call us to rejoice in thee.

Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, rejoice

Mortals, join the mighty chorus
Which the morning stars began.
Father love is reigning o'er us,
Brother love binds man to man.
Ever singing, march we onward,
Victors in the midst we strife.
Joyful music leads us sunward,
In the triumph song of life.

Appendix B – Religions Listed in *Religions in Canada*

Anglican Church of Canada	Judaism
Baha'i Faith	Lutheran Church
Baptist Church	Mennonite Church
Brethren in Christ	Native Spirituality
Buddhism	Pentecostal Assemblies
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	Presbyterian Church in Canada
Christian and Missionary Alliance	Rastafarianism
Christian Reformed Church	Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	Roman Catholic Church
Church of the Nazarene	Salvation Army
Doukhobors	Seventh-Day Adventist Church
Eastern Orthodox Churches	Sikhism
Evangelical Free Church	Ukrainian Catholic Church
Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada	Unitarian Universalist Church
Free Methodist Church	United Church of Canada
Hinduism	Wesleyan Church
Hutterian Brotherhood	Wicca
Islam	Worldwide Church of God
Jehovah's Witnesses	Zoroastrianism

Appendix C – Religious Faith Groups in the Canadian Forces²⁶¹

Religious Category	Canadian Population by Category ²⁶²	% of Religious Population	Current Chaplains (Total 185)	Chaplains Expected Based on %	Difference
Roman Catholic	12,793,125	51.50%	78	95.3	-17.3
Eastern Rite Catholic	126,200	0.51%	2	0.9	1.1
Sub-Total – Roman Catholic	12,919,325	52.00%	80 (43%)	96.2	-16.2
United Church	2,839,125	11.43%	25	21.1	3.9
Anglican	2,035,500	8.19%	35	15.2	19.8
Baptist	729,470	2.94%	13	5.4	7.6
Lutheran	606,590	2.44%	9	4.5	4.5
Presbyterian	409,830	1.65%	6	3.1	2.9
Sub-Total - Traditional Protestant Groups	6,620,515	26.65%	88 (48%)	49.3	+38.7
Pentecostal	369,475	1.49%	6	2.8	3.2
Salvation Army	87,790	0.35%	1	0.7	0.3
Christian Reformed Church	76,670	0.31%	1	0.6	0.4
Evangelical Missionary Church	66,705	0.27%	1	0.5	0.5
Christian and Missionary Alliance	66,285	0.27%	1	0.5	0.5
Methodist (6)	25,730	0.10%	2	0.2	1.8
Brethren in Christ	20,590	0.08%	0	0.2	-0.2
Non-denominational (5)	40,545	0.16%	0	0.3	-0.3
Protestant not included elsewhere (2)	549,205	2.21%	3	4.1	-1.1
Sub-Total - Churches of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada	1,302,995	5.24%	15 (8%)	9.7	+5.3
Greek Orthodox (3)	215,175	0.87%	0	1.6	-1.6
Orthodox not included elsewhere (4)	165,420	0.67%	0	1.2	-1.2
Ukrainian Orthodox	32,720	0.13%	0	0.2	-0.2
Serbian Orthodox	20,520	0.08%	0	0.2	-0.2
Sub-Total – Orthodox	433,835	1.75%	0	3.2	-3.2
Aboriginal spirituality	29,820	0.12%	0	0.2	-0.2

²⁶¹ These numbers were prepared by L.Col. Kevin Dingwell of the Chaplain General's Office.

²⁶² Does not include the 16 per cent of respondents who identified themselves as “no religion” or adherents of “Chinese religions” (Statistics Canada June 28, 2004).

Muslim	579,640	2.33%	1	4.3	-3.3
Jewish	329,995	1.33%	0	2.5	-2.5
Buddhist	300,345	1.21%	0	2.2	-2.2
Hindu	297,200	1.20%	0	2.2	-2.2
Sikh	278,410	1.12%	0	2.1	-2.1
Pagan (7)	21,080	0.08%	0	0.2	-0.2
Sub-Total – Other Faiths	1,836,490	7.39%	1	13.7	-12.7

Christian not included elsewhere (1)	780,450	3.14%	0	5.8	-5.8
Mennonite	191,465	0.77%	1	1.4	-0.4
Hutterite	26,295	0.11%	0	0.2	-0.2
Adventist	62,880	0.25%	0	0.5	-0.5
Jehovah's Witnesses	154,750	0.62%	0	1.2	-1.2
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	101,805	0.41%	0	0.8	-0.8
Sub-Total – Unclassified	1,317,645	5.30%	1	9.8	-8.8

Appendix D – Statement of Defence Ethics

Statement of Defence Ethics

The Canadian Forces and the Department of National Defence have a special responsibility for the defence of Canada. This responsibility is fulfilled through a commitment by the department and its employees, and the Canadian Forces and its members, to the following ethical principles and obligations:

Principles

- Respect the dignity of all persons
- Serve Canada before self
- Obey and support lawful authority

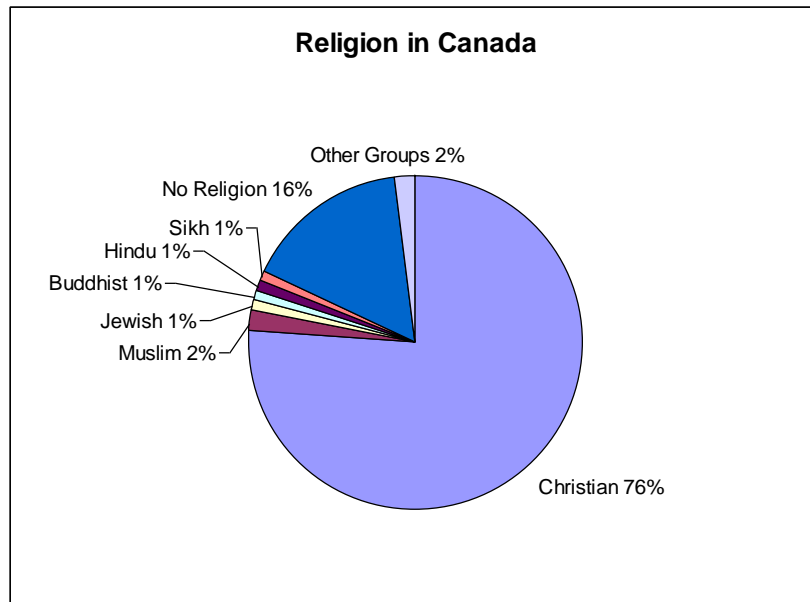
Obligations

Integrity	We give precedence to ethical principles and obligations in our decisions and actions. We respect all ethical obligations deriving from applicable laws and regulations. We do not condone unethical conduct.
Loyalty	We fulfil our commitments in a manner that best serves Canada, DND and CF.
Courage	We face challenges, whether physical or moral, with determination and strength of character.
Honesty	We are truthful in our decisions and actions. We use resources appropriately and in the best interests of the Defence mission.
Fairness	We are just and equitable in our decisions and actions.
Responsibility	We perform our tasks with competence, diligence and dedication. We are accountable for and accept the consequences of our decisions and actions. We place the welfare of others ahead of our personal interests.

Appendix E – Women in the Regular Force Chaplaincy

Religion	Total Chaplains	Men	Women	Percentage of Total Chaplains by Religious Group
Roman Catholic	80	71	9	11.25%
Anglican Church of Canada	35	29	6	17.14%
United Church of Canada	25	17	8	32.00%
Baptist	13	10	3	23.08%
Presbyterian	6	5	1	16.67%
Lutheran	9	8	1	11.11%
Churches of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada	16	16	0	0.00%
Muslim	1	1	0	0.00%
	185	157	28	15.14%

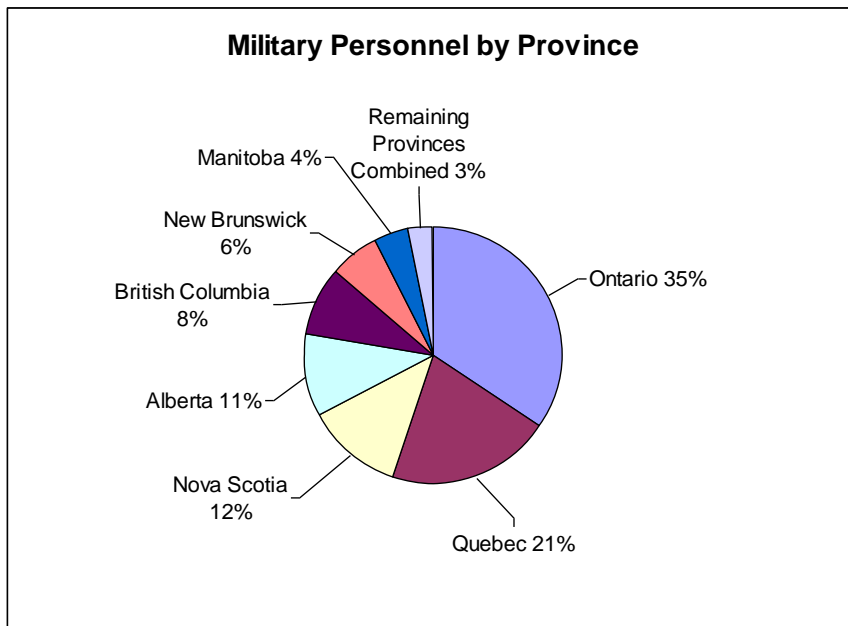
Appendix F – Religion in Canada



Based on figures from Statistics Canada (Statistics Canada 2004a)

Appendix G – Military Personnel by Province

Canada by Province	80,747	82,245	82,563	84,212	86,151
Ontario	26,907	27,751	27,681	28,413	29,741
Québec	15,569	15,384	15,402	16,121	17,663
Nova Scotia	10,526	10,598	10,696	10,830	10,520
Alberta	8,887	9,052	9,209	9,078	9,090
British Columbia	7,461	7,741	7,776	7,793	7,298
New Brunswick	4,852	4,949	4,959	5,084	5,300
Manitoba	3,800	3,960	3,908	3,927	3,824
Remaining Provinces Combined	2,740	2,805	2,925	2,959	2,712



Based on Statistics Canada Table on Military Personnel and Pay (Statistics Canada 2007)

Appendix H – Chaplain’s Badges

Maltese Cross



Former Chaplain’s Badge



Current Chaplain Badge Muslim, Jewish and Christian



Available on Department of National Defence and Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch websites (DND 2006c, 2007c)

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