





## STRENGTHENING THE MILITARY BY WAY OF THE SOUL

The Role of Spirituality in the Canadian Armed Forces

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# **JCSP 40**

# Exercise Solo Flight

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## PCEMI 40

# Exercice Solo Flight

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## CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE / COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES JCSP 40 / PCEMI 40

#### STRENGTHENING THE MILITARY BY WAY OF THE SOUL

## The Role of Spirituality in the Canadian Armed Forces

#### **SOLO FLIGHT**

By Maj M.S. TORCHINSKY

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The Soldier's heart, the soldier's spirit, and the soldier's soul are everything. Unless the soldier's soul sustains him, he cannot be relied on and will fail himself, his commander, and his country in the end. It is not enough to fight. It is the spirit of the fighting soldier that wins victory. General George C. Marshall

As a social and public institution the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) ambitiously aims to reflect the society it represents. The increasingly individualistic nature of Canadian society, and its related assumption that public sphere institutions should be exclusively secular, has naturally influenced the beliefs of members of the CAF. These perceptions have challenged the understanding and practice of traditional military ethos and core values. Ironically, the increased influx of diverse cultures and religious traditions into the CAF and society at large has shone a light on this issue. This and the relative youth of new members of the CAF, reflecting a distinct generational change, raises the question of how the military should consider matters of religion and spirituality in general, and specifically, what role the CAF Chaplain Branch should play.<sup>2</sup> The Chaplain Branch has a tremendous opportunity to provide leadership on these issues, interpreting and adapting to these new realities, while continuing to care for the souls of CAF members and their families through pastoral ministry and effective spiritual resilience education. CAF chaplains are vital to this because they are uniquely positioned to address the spiritual and religious complexities faced by the Canadian military and its members.

To begin, it must be understood that there has been an organizational cultural shift within the CAF. A rise in diversity and the influence of contemporary culture is at the root of this change. The discussion will continue with general comments on religion in the public sphere that will emphasize that religious and spiritual expression has a place within the military both now

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Carl Joachim Hambro (Presentation Speech, Nobel Peace Prize Award Ceremony, Stockholm, 1953, <a href="http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel-prizes/peace/laureates/1953/press.html">http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel-prizes/peace/laureates/1953/press.html</a>, last accessed 17 April 2014).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Joanne Benham Rennick, *Religion in the Ranks: Belief and Religious Experience in the Canadian Forces* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 5.

and in the future. This will be followed by a cursory overview of religion and spirituality in the CAF today. Next, consideration will be given to the policies established by the CAF which provide a particular military ethos that under examination has clear spiritual underpinnings. Recognizing this, a definition of spirituality within a military context is needed and provided. Once defined, a wider discussion of why spirituality matters, particularly its importance to an organization and its leadership will be explored, including the role of spirituality in cultural awareness training, character development, unit cohesion, and healing and well-being. As the military's professional religious and spiritual advisor, the Chaplain Branch has developed a strategy to assist CAF leadership in its responsibilities to its members and its missions. To conclude, the paper will explore the Chaplain Branch's efforts regarding spiritual resilience programming, and what plans should be undertaken to enable future success.<sup>3</sup>

#### THE CONTEXT

## **Organizational Culture Shift**

Shifts in an organization's culture can be attributed to, and are a reflection of, changes in overall Canadian values. Canadian society is becoming more individualistic, and the priorities and goals of the group (society at large) are increasingly taking second place to the priority of one's own personal goals. Western militaries have not been unaffected by this value shift. As Winslow explains,

For the military, the core values of Army culture are subordination of the self to the group and the idea of sacrifice: the individual must be willing to subordinate him or herself to the common good — the team and common task. Furthermore,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> For the sake of simplicity, the term soldier and member will be interchanged to identify a serving member of the Canadian Armed Forces, be he or she a soldier, sailor, air man or woman, or special operative.

there must be a willingness to sacrifice one's life for the team in peace and war — without this, an armed force will risk defeat. However, in a more individualistic Canadian society, a lower priority is given to values of the community and the subordination of the self to that of the team.<sup>4</sup>

The heightened individualism that has crept into the military suggests that the traditional sense of "subordination" to a higher purpose is waning.<sup>5</sup> Further, within society at large, there has been a shift from an institutional cultural model with a focus on service above self to an occupational model with a focus on "market principles." "Self-interest over the interests of the employing organization" is taking hold.<sup>7</sup>

That said it is likely that a convergence of the institutional cultural model and the occupational model exist within the military. The good news is that soldiers seem to be "able to successfully integrate both strong institutional and occupational attitudes" at once. These changes (the shifts that have occurred) have had implications on policy development and institutional effectiveness. The military has adopted practices that not only puts individual members more in charge of their career development, but allows for them to freely express their personal views and preferences in a manner that was not afforded in the past. Policies regarding professional development opportunities, equality in the workplace, and recognition of commonlaw and same-sex marriages for instance are just a few examples of how the military has changed to reflect shifting attitudes of Canadian society. When asked, soldiers today are able to clearly identify and uphold these shifting Canadian values. 9

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Donna Winslow, "Canadian Society and Its Army," *Canadian Military Journal* (Winter 2003 – 2004): 21, <a href="http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vo4/no4/military-socio-eng.asp.">http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vo4/no4/military-socio-eng.asp.</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> John, A., "Organizational Culture — From Institution to Occupation: Australian Army Culture in Transition," *Australian Army Journal* 10, no. 3 (2013): 189.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Rennick, *Religion in the* Ranks, 127.

There has been a down side however to a shift in values. Many tensions exist in the military because of this shift. In one example Winslow notes that as Canadian citizens have become more "attuned to the 'blame and compensation' culture," they have become more litigious, choosing to "enforce their rights" within civilian courts. <sup>10</sup> In the military, this has meant soldiers with issues have increasingly directed their concerns to the Military Ombudsman rather than dealing with the chain of command. <sup>11</sup> Though the military is adapting positively to changing Canadian values and an organizational shift in its culture is occurring, it remains challenged to help its soldiers adapt to the institutional cultural model which has been and must continue to be the basis for the military's organizational culture. To be successful, the military institution must help its soldiers make the link between their values, shifting Canadian values, and traditional military values.

## **Religion in the Public Sphere**

Making a link between Canadian values, individual values, and military values is done by discovering their underlying common ethics. Religious and spiritual ethics are part of this common ethic. Though traditional liberal thought contends there is no room to discuss religious or spiritual ethics within the public sphere, this view is not universal, not sufficient, nor is it based in Canadian constitutional law. <sup>12</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Donna Winslow, 16.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Barry W. Bussey, "A Discussion on Current Issues Involving Law and Religion," *Canadian Council of Christian Charities* (blog), 23 July 2013, last accessed 28 April 2014, http://www.cccc.org/news/blogs/barry/2013/07/23/liberal-democracy-and-religion/.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is clear that a fundamental right of Canadian democracy is the right to freedom of religion. <sup>13</sup> This is supported by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which calls for the "freedom to manifest [one's] religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance." <sup>14</sup> Notwithstanding, since WWII it has consistently been suggested that any form of religious beliefs and expressions should be exclusively limited to the private sphere. 15 In other words there has been an increasing assumption that there is no place for religion in the economic, social, and political policy of Canada. <sup>16</sup> This assumption is due to an overwhelming and particular understanding of what the term secularism means. It is popularly thought that secularism entails a complete separation of church and state and that there is no place for religion in the public sphere of everyday Canadian life. It is however important to note that no policy exists in Canada that officially marks the separation of church and state. <sup>17</sup> There is room within the Canadian context to debate the place of religion in the public realm and to challenge assumptions about secularism and religious freedom. In fact, many today argue that employees should be free to bring their personal spiritual identity into the workplace as well as to openly share their ideas. <sup>18</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, s 1, Part I of the Constitution Act, 1982, being Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, Sections 1, 2, 7, 15, 24 (1).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10 December 1948, 217 A (III), UN Doc. A/810, at 71 (1948), art. 18 available at: <a href="http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3712c.html">http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3712c.html</a>, last accessed 21 April 2014. <sup>15</sup>Claude Ryan, (Opening Session Remarks, Pluralism, Religion and Public Policy Conference, McGill University, Montreal QC, October 9, 2002).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Iain T. Benson, "The Freedom of Conscience and Religion in Canada: Challenges and Opportunities," *Emory International Law Review* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 113-165. Benson suggests that religious liberty in Canada has continued to be eroded. Citing the abolition of denominational education rights in places such as Quebec and Newfoundland, he highlights that many religious individuals and groups' fears that they would be excluded have come to pass.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Laura Barnett, "Freedom of Religion and Religious Symbols in the Public Sphere," Library of Parliament: Parliamentary Information and Research Service (Revised 14 March 2006), last accessed 6 October 2008, <a href="http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/PRBpubs/prb0441-e htm">http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/PRBpubs/prb0441-e htm</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> I.I. Mitroff and E.A. Denton, "A study of spirituality in the workplace," *Sloan Management Review* 40 (Summer 1999): 83-92.

What type of ideas should be considered though? Should a distinction be made between spirituality and religion? Should spiritual ideas be allowed and religious ideas forbidden? Are the two definitions incongruent with one another? It is important that many do not see a distinction between religion and spirituality. But it is also disingenuous to simply rename religion as spirituality, or to rename God as spirituality (as some prefer to do) in order to make the discussion of religion in the public realm more palatable. And there are of course others who would be happy to have no talk of spirituality or religion at all. The point is that definitions do matter (and will be provided later on). Any consideration of spirituality in the military is not legitimate without taking into account the religious backgrounds and practices that are deeply held by and important to many of its members. The discussion of religion is further relevant because spirituality alone cannot address religious accommodation issues such as dress, flexible working hours to allow for prayer and religious observance, dietary needs, or policies that address active communication of a person's faith within the workplace to name a few. <sup>19</sup>

### Religion and Spirituality in the CAF today

While attempting to understand the place of religion and spirituality in a public institution such as the CAF, it must be noted that workplace spirituality in general is an understudied albeit growing discipline. Any of the academic research produced to date generally seeks to determine if there is any link between spirituality and individual development, and whether it is profitable for an organization's employees and leaders to be knowledgeable and actively engaged in spiritual or religious practice.<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, in over 87 scholarly articles, the majority of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Douglas A. Hicks, "Spiritual and Religious Diversity in the Workplace: Implications for Leadership," *The Leadership Quarterly* 13 (2002): 386.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Eric B. Dent, M. Eileen Higgins, and Deborah M. Wharff, "Spirituality and Leadership: An Empirical Review of Definitions, Distinctions, and Embedded Assumptions," *The Leadership Quarterly* 16 (2005): 625.

researchers hypothesize that a correlation exists between spirituality and productivity. <sup>21</sup> Still, there remains a lack of consensus amongst scholars on the subject. Some, (including this paper) choose to broaden the discussion to include spirituality's link to ethics and well-being, as well as its link to member effectiveness, while others do not. Some claim a nexus between spirituality and leadership practices while others treat workplace spirituality as an individual phenomenon.<sup>22</sup>

Looking at the CAF specifically, it is impossible to unequivocally state what individual members believe about religion or spirituality. Upon enrollment, members are obliged to note their religious affiliation, or non-affiliation. <sup>23</sup> When last accounted for, the majority of CAF members identified as Christian with more than 50% of them identifying as Roman Catholic.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, due in part to policy changes regarding the collection and compilation of religious information since the 1990s, there is today the problem of acquiring fair statistics on religion in the military. 25 What data is provided, combined with what is known about religion in Canada, allows researchers to proclaim that there is "a relatively homogenous environment of "passive" or non-practicing Christians who elevate personal interpretations of spirituality above denominational authority and atheism," both within and outside the military. <sup>26</sup> The fact that many members of the CAF are not affiliated with a particular religious community but incorporate and interpret ideals from varied traditions into their world view should not come as a surprise to any who reflect on contemporary culture at large. Rennick further notes that

...[t]he 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

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Ibid., 626.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Rennick, *Religion in the Ranks*, 95.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Ibid., 104.

personnel might be irreverently secular while also acutely attuned to existential concerns as well as seeking answers to ethical and moral questions.<sup>27</sup>

One claim Rennick does make however which cannot be substantiated is that the lack of religious understanding by secularists within the CAF can lead to discrimination against soldiers who hold either outright or nominal religious beliefs. <sup>28</sup> On the contrary, experience has shown that most who adopt the Canadian military ethos have a general respect for other members' personal beliefs and when challenged would defend those individuals even if they do not share their philosophies. What this seems to imply is that there are common values such as generosity, and the promotion of equality shared between secularists and the religious alike within the military. When brought together under the authority of the military ethos they translate that ethos through the lenses of their own values and come to discover that there may be more that draws them together than separates them. Whether that is the nature of Canadian society or the fact that many secular values are rooted in religious values is a topic for discussion at a later date. As will be shown in the next section, underlying Canadian values, particularly religious values, enable soldiers to identify with the military ethos. There remains however implications for the CAF on the manner in which religion or spirituality is understood and practiced within the organization, and that should be discussed.

#### **CAF POLICY AND ETHOS**

Military ethos "acts as the centre of gravity for the military profession," and as a "unifying spirit." Though it may not be evident to all, the importance of recognizing the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Ibid.,159-160.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Department of National Defence, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy - Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2009), 25.
<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

religious and spiritual undertones of this ethos cannot be overstated, not merely for history's sake, but in order to better understand the issues the institution faces and will continue to face. The values the CAF espouses are indeed values of the society to which it belongs. These values, these "Canadian values," which are often understood as secular, are rooted in historic Judeo-Christian values that are at the heart of traditional ethics and the rule of law Canadians have come to hold dear. Though not named as such, it can be inferred that they are indirectly implied and summarized within the *Statement of Defence Ethics* which itself details the components of the Canadian military ethos and how it shapes CAF professionalism.

CAF members are called to "respect the dignity of all people; to serve Canada before self and to obey and support lawful authority." Values such as "duty, loyalty, integrity, and courage" inform and guide a member's expectations about military service. This includes understanding and willingly participating in an organization that calls them to accept "unlimited liability" ("subject to being lawfully ordered into harm's way under conditions that could lead to the loss of their lives") and a "fighting spirit ("committed to the primacy of operations [and focusing on the] moral, physical and intellectual qualities necessary to…endure hardship and to approach their assigned missions with confidence, tenacity and the will to succeed)." It is what some might call intrepidity, "a resolute fearlessness, fortitude, and endurance." These statements of ethics are not mere policy. In order to achieve its mission, the CAF, and the whole of Canada is expecting its soldiers to embody these ethics. The difficulty seems to lie in how the military helps soldiers to do this. Teaching CAF ethics is a start. The Forces need to do more

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Rennick, *Religion in the* Ranks, 126.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Department of National Defence, "Statement of Defence Ethics," last modified 27 September 2013, http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/about/statement-of-defence-ethics.page.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Department of National Defence, *Duty with Honour*, 27, 35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1993. Also available at http://www.merriam-webster.com/, last accessed 22 April 2014.

however. Snider suggests the military must do better in helping soldiers to understand the root meaning of these ethics and where they fit within an individual's spirituality.<sup>35</sup> He further proposes that it is the institution's responsibility to "facilitate the individual's search for the moral meaning that defines a leader's character," and to provide character development programming.<sup>36</sup> This link between spirituality and ethos will be explored further in the section on spirituality and religion and its importance to leadership. But before this, coming to terms with an acceptable definition of "spirituality" is critical.

#### **Defining Spirituality for a military context**

There is no one definition of spirituality. Spirituality is difficult to define because it is personal and individual, as well as universal.<sup>37</sup> Some of us are religious. Many of us are spiritual. Many view organized religion as a human institution whereas spirituality is innate to all humanity. Within the public realm, religion and spirituality are often defined in both private and public terms. Rennick found that within the military, the members she interviewed would often even "pit" spiritual against religious.

They understood 'religion' to pertain to formal religious groups and organizations and 'spirituality' to connote personal ideas and practices relating to the transcendent. ...Being 'religious' implied an association with 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. <sup>38</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Don M. Snider, "Intrepidity and Character Development within the Army Profession," *Military Review*, (2011): 21-24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Dent, 632.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Rennick, *Religion in the* Ranks, 13.

Others would argue that being spiritual but not religious is nothing more than self-centered emotion, feeling good without any obligation to act on that feeling.<sup>39</sup> Interestingly, those who define spirituality in opposition to religion do not recognize the importance of religion to many people's spirituality nor does their definition reflect the "complex interrelationship" between the two.<sup>40</sup>

One of the definitions approved by the Chaplain Branch (through its collaboration in the development of the 2012 Canadian Maneuver Training Centre (CMTC)/Land Force Western Area (LFWA) *Achieving Spiritual Resilience* pamphlet) describes spirituality as follows:

Spirituality is a broad concept that is often confused with religion. While spirituality can be part of a particular religion, it can also be independent of religion. Spirituality is the part of us that connects us to our state of mind, being and place, and gives us a sense of belonging and purpose. ... However spirituality is practiced, it is as much a part of being human as physical and emotional aspects. We all have a spiritual dimension within us. <sup>41</sup>

The crux of this definition is the assumption that each and every person has a spiritual dimension. For the CAF and its leadership, knowledge of this is essential to the successful completion of its missions.

#### Spirituality: Well-being, Effectiveness and Organizational Success

If it's accepted that spirituality is common to all humanity, to what extent does a person's spiritual dimension contribute to their personal well-being as well as to their effectiveness with an organization? Bento suggests that spirituality enables workers to be more creative, honest,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> David Wolpe, "Viewpoint: The Limitations of Being Spiritual but not Religious," *Time*, March 21 2013, last accessed 23 April 2014, <a href="http://ideas.time.com/2013/03/21/viewpoint-the-problem-with-being-spiritual-but-not-religious/">http://ideas.time.com/2013/03/21/viewpoint-the-problem-with-being-spiritual-but-not-religious/</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Hicks, 379.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Canadian Military Training Centre/ Land Forces Western Area, 412-0005, *Achieving Spiritual Resilience*, (Montreal: Quick Series Publishers, 2012), 1. Produced in cooperation with the Chaplain Branch, this pamphlet was developed to distribute to all deploying members in LFWA and as a part of a Spiritual Resilience package given by chaplains throughout the CAF.

resilient, and compassionate. 42 This is further affirmed by Fry et al. in their work on the role of spirituality on unit success. In particular, they argue that building spiritual well-being and spiritual resilience enables soldiers to bear the "physical and psychological strains" of military service, including the recognition of their unlimited liability status, the overall effects of combat, separation from family, and the basic tenant of self-sacrifice that a soldier is called to embody.<sup>43</sup> From a leadership perspective, a spiritually attuned leader is said to be one who can inspire and encourage behaviour in employees "based on meaning and purpose rather than rewards and security, thus compelling employees to transcend their self-interests for the welfare of their organizational members, and for the sake of the mission. 44 A distinction should be made however between spiritual leading and spiritual leadership. Spiritual leading refers to the role of formal leadership and their ability to influence others. Spiritual leadership however focuses on the "collective social influence process that engages everyone" in an institution in order to "meet spiritual needs and enhance organizational commitment and performance." <sup>45</sup> It is also important to note here that within the CAF, it is a commanding officer's responsibility, not a chaplain's, to ensure that his or her subordinates have access to religious and spiritual resources. 46 Medical officers, social workers, resource workers, fitness instructors and others who are aware of the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Regina F. Bento, "When the Show Must Go On: Disenfranchised Grief in Organizations," *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 9, no. 6, (October 1994): 35-44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Louis W. Fry, Sean T. Hannah, Michael Noel, and Fred O. Walumabwa, "Impact of Spiritual Leadership on Unit Performance," *The Leadership Quarterly*, 22 (2011): 260.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> G. Dehler, and M. Welsh, "Spirituality and organizational transformation: Implications for the new management paradigm," *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 19, no.6 (1994): 20, quoted in Eric B. Dent, M. Eileen Higgins, Deborah M. Wharff, "Spirituality and leadership: An empirical review of definitions, distinctions, and embedded assumptions," *The Leadership Quarterly* vol. 16, (2005): 627.

<sup>45</sup> Louis W. Fry, 261.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Queen's Regulations and Orders for the Canadian Forces (1994 Revision) = Ordonnances et Règlements Royaux Applicables Aux Forces Canadiennes (Revision de 1994), (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1994), Chapter 33.01, last accessed 29 April 2014, <a href="http://www.admfincs.forces.gc.ca/qro-orf/vol-01/doc/chapter-chapitre-033.pdf">http://www.admfincs.forces.gc.ca/qro-orf/vol-01/doc/chapter-chapitre-033.pdf</a>. QR&O 33.01 actually states: "subject to the exigencies of the service a commanding officer shall (a) provide for the performance of religions services....

benefits of spirituality, no matter how it is defined by them, work together with chaplains to provide spiritual leadership.

In general then, spirituality is profitable for an organization. Specifically though, there are at least three areas affected by spirituality with which military leadership should be concerned. They are cultural awareness, unit cohesion, and soldier total fitness including the benefits of spirituality in healing and well-being.

#### **Cultural Awareness**

Former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has stated, "those who neglect religion in their analysis of contemporary affairs do so at great peril." <sup>47</sup> Though religion has never gone away as an issue of consequence, religion has seen a particular revival in recent world affairs. Hertog surmises,

Evidence of religious resurgence became very clear in the Shi'ite-led revolution in Iran, the liberationist movements in Latin American, the emergence of Jewish fundamentalism in Israel, the Christian Right in the United States, Hindu nationalism and Muslim communalism in India, the resurgence of religion in Eastern Europe after the fall of communism, the Islamic revival in the Middle East since the 1970s, Islamist opposition movements in Algeria, Pakistan, Egypt, and Indonesia, and ethno religious conflicts in Sri Lanka, Sudan, Bosnia, Kosovo, or Lebanon. <sup>48</sup>

Religion has been, is, and will always be relevant to individuals and culture at large. Whether it is scorned or embraced, seen as an outlet for peace or a cause of war, understanding religion both

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Madeleine Albright, *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God, and World Affairs* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 42, quoted in Eric F. Wester, "Army Chaplains: Leading from the Middle," *Military Review* 89, no. 6 (Nov/Dec 2009): 112.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Katrien Hertog, *The Complex Reality of Religious Peacebuilding: Conceptual Contributions and Critical Analysis* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2010), 18-19 quoted in S.K. Moore, *Military Chaplains as Agents of Peace: Religious Leader Engagement in Conflict and Post-conflict Environments* (Toronto: Lexington Books, 2013), 67.

as a cultural identifier and a potential motivation is essential for a military organization and its members. The problem is that as our society has become more secular, many young Canadians and soldiers are illiterate about religion. However to be operationally successful, particularly in today's whole of government approach to mission success, soldiers need to understand the spiritual underpinnings of the areas to which they will deploy in order for them to build trust, garner respect, and to avoid unnecessary cultural faux pas while building relationships with the people they have come to assist. In addition, as religion remains an important variable in the lives of new Canadians it is incumbent on the CAF and its members to understand the beliefs of the religious minorities they are attempting to integrate. Understanding one another is key for personal character development, unit cohesion and mission success.

## **Character Development and Unit Cohesion**

The ability for humanity to choose right from wrong is based on a number of sociocultural, spiritual, legal, and even biological conditions. These conditions along with an
individual's virtues, be they governed by a life rule or by their particular motivations and desires,
contribute to how a soldier functions and how they understand their place within the military
organization. There is a distinction however between what a soldier is predisposed to do (virtues)
and what they should do (ethics). Gabriel suggests there is a distinction between being what a
good person ought to be (what he calls an ethic of virtue), and doing what a good person ought to
do (what he calls an ethic of duty). For this reason alone, understanding the role spirituality
plays in both the formative and decisive variables that contribute to one's ethics of virtue and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Richard A. Gabriel, *The Warrior's Way: A Treatise on Military Ethics* (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2007), 136.

ethics of duty is vital to understanding how the military can assist soldiers in their character development, acceptance of the military ethos, and overall mission success.

While studying the link between spiritual leadership and soldier morale and character development, Fry et al. found that "spiritual leadership positively influences cadet's organizational commitment and various performance domains at the unit level." They further suggest that "people who work for organizations that they consider to be spiritual are less fearful, more ethical, and more committed." This all contributes to unit cohesion. More, when it is understood within a unit that the diversity of each member's spiritual backgrounds and circumstances are positively valued and appreciated, members are more likely to come together to work for one another and a common vision. At the very least evidence suggests that military leaders who ignore the role of spirituality in soldiers' performance miss an opportunity to increase their productivity and motivation. All leaders must begin to recognize that spiritual leadership within the military is value added and serves as a force generator for unit commanders.

#### **Healing and Well Being**

Recent academic literature continues to affirm that spirituality is a significant variable in addressing suffering and loss, able to convey meaning and hope to soldiers and their families both in times of crisis and throughout their lives. <sup>53</sup> The fact remains that soldiers, through the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Fry, 259.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Ibid., 260.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Learning and Skills Council, *Welcome to Chaplaincy: A Training Program for Multi-Faith Chaplaincy in the Further Education Sector* (London: Church House Publishing, 2008), 133-134, last accessed 16 April 14, <a href="http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1123534/welcome%20to%20chaplaincy%20training%20manual.pdf">http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1123534/welcome%20to%20chaplaincy%20training%20manual.pdf</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Rennick, *Religion in the Ranks*, 180. There is a growing body of work in this area. In her notes, Rennick cites the following research on religious responses to trauma: Farley (2007), Kalayjian (2002), Piwowarczyk (2005),

work that they do and the environment they do it in, and particularly those who have experienced combat, are susceptible to developing significant spiritual crises. Hufford notes that

...perpetrating, failing to prevent, or witnessing acts that transgress deeply held values can shatter an individual's beliefs about the purpose and meaning of life, challenge belief in God, induce moral conflict, and even precipitate a... 'moral injury.' <sup>54</sup>

Though often quoted, it is well worth repeating here the thoughts of Senator Romeo Dallaire from his book, *Shake Hands with the Devil*. When asked by a CF padre how he could still believe in God after all he had seen, Dallaire declared, "...in Rwanda I shook hands with the devil. I have seen him, I have smelled him and I have touched him. I know the devil exists, and therefore I know there is a God." When soldiers lose hope, their worldview is disrupted, their relationships become threatened, and it is possible that they are suffering from a spiritual condition instead of or in addition to a mental illness or stress injury. It is at this critical point of their lives, and in preparation for the work that they do, where spiritual support and resources are essential to soldiers' total well-being and healing. Though the stigmatization of seeking help has begun to wane, chaplains, as frontline workers are often the first helping professionals to be approached by members in need and they can do much to facilitate the help soldiers and their families need.

### CHAPLAIN BRANCH STRATEGY

The secularization and bureaucratization of the military has to an extent restricted religion to one formal sphere, that is, a Chaplain Branch. This formalization of religion within

Bernstein (2005), Beste (2003), Thompson and Vardaman (1997), Ferraro and Albrecht-Jensen (1991), and Grant (1999).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> David J. Hufford, Matthew J. Fritts, and Jeffrey E. Rhodes, "Spiritual Fitness," *Military Medicine* 175 (August Supplement 2010): 73, 76. There has been a "five-fold increase in research on spirituality" and health between 1990 and 2007.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Romeo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (Toronto: Random House Canada, 2003), xviii.

the CAF, though necessary in order to ensure efficiencies, and maintain standards and equality for both members and chaplains themselves, <sup>56</sup> could make the Chaplain Branch susceptible to emphasizing structure over substance. At its heart, its motivations and members must remain spiritually focused. That said, structure is essential and the Chaplain Branch should take the lead to create "a structure and culture in which leaders and followers can respectfully negotiate religious and spiritual diversity" within the CAF. <sup>57</sup> The 2008 Chaplain Branch's Strategic Plan entitled *Called to Serve* states three strategic effects it hopes to accomplish in order to do this. They call on the Branch to be and offer an "Operationally Relevant Chaplaincy Capability, A Learning Chaplaincy, and a Calling of Choice." <sup>58</sup> Section 2.1 states,

Chaplains must be capable of providing pastoral care, religious support, and spiritual direction in an increasingly multi-faith environment. As the religious composition of the military community becomes more diverse, chaplains must first of all be recruited to be more representative of the religious demographics of Canadian society. Not only will this require a well-developed and executed recruitment campaign, but it will also necessitate that chaplains be better prepared and equipped with the personal, religious, and spiritual tools to respond to the diverse cultural, spiritual, and religious needs of the CF. <sup>59</sup>

#### What the Chaplain Branch is doing

At its root, chaplain work is spiritual work. It is caring for the souls of soldiers and their families and is about providing moral leadership and encouragement to all in uniform. The CAF Chaplain Branch is renowned for its leadership in ecumenism and multi-faith relationships and continues to learn and model how a spiritual institution can effectively engage with and at times adapt to the spiritual reality of people influenced by modern individualistic and pluralistic leanings. The way chaplains offer pastoral support is necessarily changing. Caring for all through

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Rennick, *Religion in the Ranks*, 164.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Hicks, 379.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Department of National Defence, *Called to Serve: A Strategy for the Canadian Forces Chaplaincy* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2008).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Ibid., 5.

a ministry of presence will always be foundational. But what may be less universally understood (or even agreed upon among chaplains) is that chaplains today should be "hired primarily to spiritually support a member's resiliency" through conversation and education, not just to facilitate worship. 60 Spiritual resilience has proven to help soldiers recover from deployment injuries, assist in the prevention and/or resolution of moral injuries, teach coping skills, and address questions of meaning and purpose. 61 The previously mentioned Spiritual Resilience *Handbook* created for deploying soldiers and its accompanying presentation is one important resource. One example of a spiritual practice that can assist in developing spiritual resilience as well as build up unit cohesion is mindfulness-based meditation. Developed from Buddhist practice, though generally taught from a secular view today, it has been reported that practicing mindfulness has "wide-ranging" therapeutic benefits as well as aiding in "performance enhancement."<sup>62</sup> It is also possible to "tailor mindfulness meditation to one's own religion, making it one's own and, according to some studies, enhancing its effectiveness. 63 These initiatives as well as the individual work on resiliency done at the unit level, within teams, and alongside other professionals such as medical doctors, psychologists, social workers and family resource personnel, are beginning to pay dividends.

It must be noted that chaplains will and should continue to provide services and service space for members wishing to express their spirituality through a full range of religious expression (prayer, meditation, religious rites, sacraments, etc.) and be available to celebrate life's important milestones. However, chaplains' status as fully trained religious professionals,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Harold Ristau, "Canadian Armed Forces' Chaplains as a Primary Source of Spiritual Resiliency," *Canadian Military Journal*, 14 (Spring 2014): 47.

<sup>61</sup> Hufford, 78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Ibid. 75.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

with opportunities for advanced training in pastoral counseling, ethics, conflict resolution, and religion and culture, situates them best to provide a service to the CAF no other profession can. 64 The strength of a chaplain lies not in her abilities to lead a service, but in her own understanding and expression of her unique spirituality. Listening, learning, and engaging members whose own spirituality may be quite diverse and different from their own, chaplains can identify with and find common ground with a member, assisting them in becoming spiritually fit and ready to serve. The publication of "*Religions in Canada*" developed by the Directorate of Human Rights and Diversity assists both chaplains and all members of the CAF "to garner as clear an understanding as possible of their sisters and brothers who serve alongside them," providing a detailed look into varied spiritual traditions practiced throughout Canadian society today. 65 Whatever resources are used however, the next step for the Chaplain Branch is to be able to assess the effectiveness of its work.

#### Looking to the future

It is likely that all levels of government could do a better job of evaluating their programs and policies. The Chaplain Branch is no different. If it is to succeed, it must find ways to measure the practical applications of spiritual resilience practices. <sup>66</sup> One area in which chaplains have proven themselves invaluable is in the area of grief management and support, a topic both they and the military at large have become far too familiar with during the 2000s (Afghanistan Operations and thereafter). The unique spiritual and religious counseling chaplains offer should

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Diana Swift, "What Does the Future Hold?" *The Anglican Journal*, 1 October 2011, last accessed 22 April 2014, <a href="http://www.anglicanjournal.com/articles/what-does-the-future-hold-10097">http://www.anglicanjournal.com/articles/what-does-the-future-hold-10097</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy, *Religions in Canada* (Ottawa: Directorate of Human Rights and Diversity, 2008): ii, last accessed 10 April 2014, <a href="http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection-2011/dn-nd/D2-147-2008-eng.pdf">http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection-2011/dn-nd/D2-147-2008-eng.pdf</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> For a list of suggested metrics, see Hufford, table III and IV, 80-83.

continue to be promoted, particularly their assistance to soldiers and families suffering with survivor guilt, a common reaction to loss. Here, chaplains encourage all to take the necessary time to mourn while journeying with others in a search for greater meaning, an integral component to the healing process. <sup>67</sup>

Moreover, the Branch must do more to be a general educational resource for itself and the military at large. The foundations of many spiritual traditions are of course found within their ancient texts. Written throughout the ages, the Bible, the Koran, the Vedic texts, the Talmud, the Wiccan Rede, and countless others, each in its own way contributes to the development of individual moral and character development. Though better informed than most, it would not be a stretch to suggest that many chaplains know little of the texts, key teachings, and different interpretations of traditions beyond their own. The Branch must continue to educate itself on diverse religious and theological expressions, and the differences and commonalities expressed amongst its chaplains. The very nature of team ministry helps to facilitate this. However, focused training on world religions would do much to enhance chaplains' capabilities.

There is growing religious illiteracy amongst young people today as fewer people receive any religious instruction in Canadian homes. Younger generations, though still spiritually attuned and searching, present both a challenge and an opportunity for the CAF and the Chaplain Branch moving forward. The challenge lies in connecting members to the ethos of the institutional military cultural model. Though chaplains should not be responsible for instructing the CAF ethics program, there is a role for them helping to interpret a true Canadian "warrior"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> The *Shoulder to Shoulder* Program "builds upon existing services and increases current support. It links the families of CF personnel who have died while serving, regardless of the circumstances of death, with the many resources and compassionate support services developed to meet their unique needs. It provides families with administrative, professional and peer support, for as long as they may need it." For further information, see "Shoulder To Shoulder Program," <a href="http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/news/article.page?doc=shoulder-to-shoulder-program/hnps1vce">http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/news/article.page?doc=shoulder-to-shoulder-program/hnps1vce</a>.

code" and helping soldiers to understand that the military ethos corresponds to and is rooted in spiritual traditions and language. <sup>68</sup> The opportunity also exists to engage young people without any particular spiritual identity who may early on begin to understand the inherent importance of spiritual resilience, both as a member of the CAF and as a holistic human being, as well as the rich history and living traditions that contribute to the military ethos and moral development worldwide. To do this, chaplains themselves need to be better informed.

This issue of informed and educated chaplains will also determine to what extent chaplains can contribute to whole of government (WoG) initiatives and operations. <sup>69</sup> Who better than religious professionals to educate and train members about religion and culture? More, the developing concepts of religious area analysis (RAA) and religious leader engagement (RLE) have begun to be explored throughout the institution as well as being taught early in a chaplain's career. <sup>70</sup> Retired CAF Chaplain Moore argues that calls for religious methods in peacebuilding are becoming more pronounced, from both religious and secular organizations, including the government. <sup>71</sup>

Before concluding, some final thoughts on chaplains, their calling, and working in a public and pluralistic environment are in order. Former US Army Chief of Chaplains, Charles E. Grooms, correctly states that as with all ethical codes, chaplains must enter into the ethical code of the military "of their own free will, with the understanding that they will not betray the trust and confidence of their ecclesiastical endorser, and will hold in trust the traditions and practices of their religious faith group."<sup>72</sup> Chaplains should not be "generic religious functionaries within

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Rennick, *Religion in the Ranks*, 126.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> S.K. Moore, *Military Chaplains as Agents of Peace, Religious Leader Engagement in Conflict and Post-conflict Environments* (Toronto: Lexington Books, 2013): Chapter 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Ibid., 1-318.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Ibid., 67

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Charles E. Grooms, *The Chaplain: Fighting The Bullets* (Raleigh NC: Ivy House Publishing Group, 2002), 68.

the armed forces."<sup>73</sup> The importance of this cannot be understated for there is a temptation by some chaplains in a pluralistic military environment to become pluralistic in their ministry. Of course, a chaplain's spirituality can and should grow, perhaps even transition over time and through the encounters they have with others. However, though called to be open to diverse spiritual expressions, seeking to find common ground and understanding amongst people of vastly different spiritual beliefs, a chaplain's spiritual legitimacy while in uniform rests on the tradition in which they were formed and still represent. Whether an individual soldier is aware of this or is indifferent is not the point. And though no one can challenge an individual chaplain's spiritual development, a chaplain must be aware of whom and what they represent beyond their work within the military context.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

Reading this treatise the reader is likely left with the impression that the CAF Chaplain Branch has chosen to shift its focus from a traditional ministry model to one that is wholly focused on assisting the CAF in building up spiritually resilient soldiers. It is true that both the military as a public institution and the Chaplain Branch is actively adapting its policies, plans, and methods in response to the growing expressions of the diverse cultural, religious, and spiritual identities found within the military today. The Branch is slowly learning the benefits of these adaptations. In time and with proper reflection and metrics, it will be able to better assess the practical benefits of its resiliency programs. Its efforts to find commonalities that link all humanly innate expressions of spirituality with the military ethos while remaining steadfast and true to each chaplain's own spiritual heritage and formation must continue to be the norm. Yes, a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Kim Philip Hansen, *Military Chaplains and Religious Diversity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 141.

cultural shift has occurred and both the Chaplain Branch and the military at large continue to struggle with the challenges brought on by plurality and individualism within this contemporary age. However, there is solace to be found in knowing that in Canada all members of the military have the right to freely express or not express themselves spiritually in a public institution. Clearly military organizations have discovered there is much benefit to better understanding spirituality, how it can support the military ethic, bring meaning to loss, draw members together, and motivate and prepare soldiers to be fully fit and ready for when the call to duty arrives. Chaplains have always and will continue to be force multipliers in this regard. The manner in which chaplains do their ministry is shifting though. With a focus on operational readiness and a growing interest and acceptance of the role spirituality and religious practice plays in an operational environment, the place of the chaplain is not just in the chapel, but in the field, on a ship, or in the skies. While leading a Sunday service, advising a commanding officer, or instructing young recruits in the potential and importance of a spiritual existence and all that can entail, a chaplain's love for their creator and their love for the men and women they are called to serve remains at the core of all they do.

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