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# Living in the Shadow: A Theological Discussion on the Place, Purpose, and Meaning of Australian Defence Force Chaplaincy

Reverend Dr David Grulke  
Chaplain, Army Logistic Training Centre

## **Abstract**

Defence Chaplaincy is a unique aspect of the church's mission engagement with the secular world. However, little work has been undertaken by the church to frame it theologically and ensure it is set well within the organisational context in which it exists. This paper is an attempt to open the theological dialogue on Defence chaplaincy and to offer some ways in which the church can begin to think theologically about this unique ecumenical engagement. It is not an attempt to provide answers, but a challenge to the church to collectively engage in a theological discourse that will empower its presence in an alien world.

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In 2013 the Royal Australian Army Chaplains Department celebrates 100 years since formation. In this time Chaplains, from all three services, have served in every military, peace and humanitarian operation Australia has undertaken. Strangely, however, little has been written or researched regarding the theological frameworks in which this ministry operates. There is a significant amount of historical material, some verging on the purely mythical with religious fabrications akin to delusional apocalyptic religious propaganda through to more earthy accounts articulating the chaplain's personal struggle with the inhumanity of war. While this material may be interesting, it fails to peel away the pragmatism of pastoral practice to reveal the theological meta-narratives that determine why and how chaplains function in a secular organization. This is not something unique to Defence chaplaincy, for all forms of chaplaincy appear to suffer from the same lack of theological deliberation.

It appears strange that in an age when secular organisations are utilising such valuable and scant religious resources little is being done to explore the theological implications and ramifications of this inter-relational merger between secular and religious worlds. In the rare case where such discussions have taken place they have floundered by a lack of interest from the organisation, or a lack of robust theological engagement from the religious bodies. Modern organisations are dominated by hangovers from the industrialised paradigms of the twentieth century. This pragmatism focuses the organisation on productivity and output as measures of success. The rationalised consummation of productivity and the need to pursue profitable success offers little scope for the more deliberate process of critical reflection that an appropriate theological engagement demands. The religious world has not been immune to this industrialisation of its world-views. In a world where the social influence of structured faith systems has waned and collective religious conviction has been gradually superseded by the pursuit of individualised spirituality, religious bodies have retreated into their fortresses of faith and adopted an apologetics that is far more defensive and self-justifying than it has historically been. Chaplaincy, with its tenuous links to the religious body and consumed by the pragmatic pressures of the organisation, resides in the shadows of both. Too often it is overlooked or disregarded, not taken serious as an aspect of the religious body's social engagement with the world, and allowed to drift under its own efforts to sustain a justification for its presence in both worlds. Understandably, therefore, to open a discourse on the theological parameters of chaplaincy is not an easy task, and this paper can never hope to provide definitive outcomes in this regard. Nevertheless, the conversation needs to begin if chaplaincy is to remain a unique entity that can contribute effectively to both the secular and religious worlds. This discussion is an attempt to open the door to begin facilitating this possibility.

The very point of interaction between secular and religious, or church and state, pose significant theological questions for both sides of the divide. The debate in Australia is not complicated by constitutional dilemmas such as exist within the United States of America.<sup>1</sup> In this setting the constitutionally enshrined freedom of religion, the role of the state, the separation of powers, the individualisation of the spiritual, and the historical baggage of a nation that has emerged with a unique and strong religious under current all complicate the very essence of the dialogue regarding the place, purpose and function of chaplaincy within the United States military. The United States debate is coloured by the legitimacy of a perceived religious imposition upon what has become a fundamentally modern view of individual religiosity that has permeated Western society over the past several decades. While elements of this debate are present in the Australian social psyche, they lack the passion and fervour of the United States experience. Far more relevant is the emergence of a social religiosity defined by the secularised organisation to serve its vision, mission, and structural intent. It is not as concerned with the faith systems from which chaplains are drawn. Instead it prefers to value the presence of 'religious professionals' enshrined in an overall understanding of holistic well being on both the collective and individual levels with the end state of enhanced productivity. This essentially industrialised world view articulates the religious professional as an agent of capability and productivity whose presence facilitates success. It is for this fundamental reason that many organisations have adopted the presence of a 'chaplain', with government policy actually facilitating the employment of religious individuals within the secularised system. In this environment, chaplaincy is sustained in direct correlation to the way it contributes to the successful achievement of the organisation's outcomes. It is understandable that in this pragmatic climate, where productivity is pursued with religious zeal, that little desire resides within the organisation to dig deeper into the theological discourse that validates the existence of the chaplain within the non-religious world. As long as chaplaincy functionally adds to the organisation's productivity, there is no need to ask the deeper questions. Chaplains, and their ecclesiastical masters, are delusional if they think the secular organisation utilises their services for any other means apart from that which the organisation deems as value adding to their productivity or operational outcomes.

For many, this rationalisation of the religious within the context of the secular appears vague or even theologically repulsive. For the theologian, residing within the citadel of the academy and alienated from the fracas of common existence, such pragmatic rationalisations based on productivity or outcomes remain difficult to justifiably sustain. It is far easier to obscure chaplaincy behind

the meeting of specific religious needs within the organisation, presupposing that such needs must be internally met because they cannot be adequately met external to the organisation. Such justifications appear precarious considering that not all organisations, including similarly focussed organisations, employ chaplains or actively seek religious input within their organisational fabric. Given the contemporary individualisation of religiosity, and the misalignment of such within a compartmentalisation of the individual that segregates work, home, faith and relaxation, it appears strange that organisations would actively seek to meet these needs within the timeframes of active employment. However, despite the vagaries of displaced religious manifestations there appears an emerging recognition within the organisation that such segregation of the individual is unsustainable. It is more probable that this recognition emerges as the primary justification for the presence of chaplains within the secular realm. A more holistic, functional individual is more productive and better able to support the organisation in its drive for successful outcomes than fragmented individuals torn between personal loyalties that constitute their world.

Some evidence is emerging that supports this perspective, and places it in a more creative light than the negative drive for pragmatic outcomes. This holistic approach to the individual and the subsequent meeting of religious needs appears to establish a positive affirmation in terms of the organisations purpose. This has mainly been drawn out of research from within the Scottish hospital system where the evidence suggests that religious input aids the healing process of the patient.<sup>2</sup> The pragmatism of this evidence does not adequately answer the deeper questions that the presence of a chaplain imposes within any non-religious organisation. It does, however, raise the question whether the organisation is capable of actually articulating this, or whether such is the task of the Chaplains and their associated ecclesiastical bodies. Similar research from Scotland suggests this to be the case:

*The question raised by this report is not whether or not there is a role for chaplains. There clearly is a role and we can show what this role is. Rather the question is, can chaplains effectively conceptualise and articulate their role in language and within structures that make sense to other healthcare providers?*<sup>3</sup>

This is the most pressing concern for Defence Chaplaincy. In what ways can it adequately articulate its role so that both the theological tradition is sustained while simultaneously translating that tradition into a language the Defence organisation can comprehend?

One way in which this has been done is through the language of 'presence'. What this presence is, and why it is important to the secular organisation needs better clarification. Why it can only be provided by a religious presence also remains open for discussion. These questions challenge chaplaincy to articulate this 'presence' in ways that reflect the theological frameworks from which it arises and effectively engages the secular paradigms in which it manifests.

In Defence this question of 'presence' is often articulated in poorly constructed and vague terminology. Chaplains often cite their ministry, in nonchalant ways, as a 'ministry of presence', with little regard to whether it is a valid theological expression of the clerical office, or if it is terminology that adequately translates the theological tradition into a secular context. In addressing these concerns, there is a need to understand the nature of the ecclesiastical office, the Chaplain, and the theological tradition as it exists within the framework of a theological continuum. At one end, found with the more sacramental traditions, is an ontological understanding of the clerical office. At the other end is a functionalism that struggles to deconstruct the clerical office from such ontological concepts and attempts interpretative reductionism into the realm of organisational leadership.

Ontologically, the clerical office is often seen incarnationally, as the means by which the church is manifest, or the presence of Christ is expressed. Importantly, an ontological perspective links the clerical office directly to the 'means of grace', often expressed through the church's sacramental activity. It is this sacramental expression of the Word which facilitates the presence of Christ in the world. While various nuances exist, and unique expressions are seen across the sacramental traditions, they essentially embrace an ontology, or coming into being, in which Christ is made present, or incarnated, into the World. The preaching office is incorporated into this tradition as the means by which God speaks through the sacred text to His people. These concepts have far deeper understandings than what can be articulated here. There is, however, a sense of the mystery of God which is grasped by God's gracious gift of faith. The individual is not the means by which Christ is incarnated and made present. This incarnational work of the Spirit is inextricably linked to the clerical office alone, which functions only in relation to the means of grace Christ has given to the church. The chaplain belongs to an ecclesiastical office intimately interwoven within a deep theological appreciation of the church's ecclesiology. Ontologically, a ministry of presence only occurs in the context of the means through which God has given to the church to facilitate this possibility. For Chaplains in this tradition, it is the office enacting the means of grace, not the individual, which brings God's presence into the organisation.

At the other end of the theological spectrum, such ontological notions are rejected. The individual is capable of finding and experiencing the presence of God independent of such theological impediments. The sacramentality of the church becomes nothing more than a memory of a past event or a means by which individual's can affirm their personal faith. The presence of God is found in the individual encounter, especially as it manifests in an appreciation of God through self examination of the sacred texts. Even the preaching office is not a manifestation of the voice of God, but a call to examine the Word and come to a point of faith affirmation based on a reasonable and often logical appreciation of the facts presented. The church's ecclesiology, or self understanding, is separate from the clerical office. The church is constituted by individuals gathered as like-minded believers in Christ. From within this mix emerge individuals whom the collective body set aside to provide a safe-guard for those theological insights integral to the collective's identity. A 'ministry of presence' is hard to define in this context. The church as a collective body is integral to an understanding of Christ's presence. Essentially, in contrast to the ontological perspective, the incarnational aspects of theology are not well defined by the functionalist position, and so it becomes difficult to adequately articulate a 'presence ministry'.

In the light of this, and given the diversity of the church's tradition represented within Defence, how is a 'ministry of presence' to be understood? From a sacramental perspective, the administration of the means of grace and the speaking God's Word into a situation, clearly expresses an incarnational understanding of chaplaincy. The mere personal presence of a chaplain, however, is insufficient to adequately express this ontological appreciation. Allowing Christ to become real requires the active engagement of the core elements which bring the church into being. Without these sacramental elements within the overall ministry of the chaplain, the chaplain reverts to the same status as any other individual functioning independently of the ecclesiastical office. It is this reality of an ontological theology that makes the notion of a 'ministry of presence' non-sensical when articulated by clergy who do not align themselves within the sacramental understandings of the ecclesiastical office. In this sense, those who claim a 'ministry of presence' that incarnates the presence of Christ, assuming that is the presence being referred to when such a term as 'ministry of presence' is used, outside the elements essential to an ontological theology becomes nothing less than ego driven self inflated idolatry. In this bizarre reversal, the accusation of ecclesiastical idolatry aired against the priestly office by a theological naivety confronts any clergy who articulates their chaplaincy as a 'ministry of presence' devoid of the elements essential for the full expression of such an incarnational

theology. This divine incarnation is not an individual endeavour but a task entrusted to the church and made real through the clerical office as it acts in, with, and through the church regardless of the environment in which this ministry takes place.

Even in the functional understandings of ministry, church is never seen as an individual manifestation, but one that always occurs in the context of community. Functionalists are quick to divorce themselves from such individualism, and although they will not utilise the sacramental concepts of the ontological perspectives to define church, the collective sense of faith and community still remain integral to any understanding of how Christ is made present in the world. For the functionalist Christ is seen in community, which makes the notion of individual chaplaincy conducting a 'ministry of presence' outside the ecclesiastical community incomprehensible.

Chaplains, clearly, bring about an engagement with the presence of God only when they act within the defined parameters of their theological frameworks. Chaplaincy confidentiality is an example of how this transpires. Within the Christian tradition only the confessional requires strict confidentiality. The confessional, when understood sacramentally, is the means of grace in which the forgiveness of God is pronounced. On hearing the individual confession the cleric announces reconciliation with God through Christ to the repentant individual. This act, which is ultimately between the person and God, is facilitated as the Words of God's grace are announced in the totality of Christ's forgiveness. This is what remains confidential, for the position of trust filled by the cleric is one that ensures the confidence of God's mercy upon the penitent. This may be extended into other forums of pastoral care, but such forums are lesser manifestations of the sacramental functionality of the confessional. One needs to acknowledge a separation of function in this regard. The simple chat, the use of counselling models, the generic clerical interaction, while all relying on trust as a confidence builder, are not subject to the same rules of confidentiality that applies to the confessional. One has to be cautious not to confuse the confessional with other forms of pastoral interaction. The presence of Christ is found in the confessional because it administers the means of grace through the process of divine reconciliation. The same presence is not as obvious in the generic pastoral interaction of clergy that transpires outside the sacramental engagement, or operates devoid of the Word of God, that could have just as easily been facilitated by any non-religious person. This concept of the confessional reaffirms the reliance of chaplaincy, not on the individual, but on the means of grace that creates and sustains the church and, through the church, incarnates Christ's presence in the world.

Religious clerics, regardless of their faith tradition, exist to further the core elements of that faith. In many ways they fail to conform to the notion of expert, so prominent in the Modern and Industrialised paradigms, and fit far more easily into the notion of a guardian of the tradition. Giddens' exposition of the specialist, expert or modern professional is a summary of Modernity.<sup>4</sup> Acquiring the correct amount of knowledge, conforming to the appropriate professional standards, and sustaining one's status amongst their professional peers is sufficient for any individual with the money, time and commitment to become a professional practitioner in their preferred field.<sup>5</sup> Modern medicine, psychology, social work, finance, business, management, industry, trades, academia, to name a short list, all conform to Giddens' appreciation of how the Modern world functions. The religious world resides in transition, with pressure to conform to the Modernist paradigms but still entrenched clearly in the traditions out of which they have emerged. The clerical office is entrenched within the traditions that shape and determine their religious paradigms. When they move out of the immediacy of this paradigm, and venture into the secular world they do not cease being intimately shaped by that paradigm. The essence of their office remains intact, and they facilitate the dimensions of their faith tradition into this secularised environment. This clash of the faith tradition with the secularised world requires reconciliation. The faith tradition is an embedding paradigm, indicating an inherent integrity to the totality of the norm, whereas Modernity and the secularised world it has created is disembedding, creating elements that exist alienated to the integral structures that sustain the norm. The contrast of these fundamentally opposite paradigms is of a greater challenge to the ecclesiological frameworks of chaplaincy than it is to the secular organisation dominated by such disembedding mechanisms. One has to question how well the poorly articulated and often flawed notion of a 'ministry of presence' aids this reconciliation. The demand for such an ecclesiological presence does suggest that there is something within the religious paradigm that the secular organisation cannot provide through its own disembedding mechanisms. The challenge of adequately answering this is one of the looming challenges facing both paradigms. Reconciling two alien world-views and structures of power needs to be grappled with if both the secular and religious are to benefit from the presence of the cleric in the organisational environment.

Chaplains do not represent themselves. They operate within the paradigms of their faith tradition, and embody a formulaic truth system articulated within their theological and denominational traditions. This reality of the ecclesiastical life, that chaplains represent something beyond their own being, places expectations upon them that supersede those of the general public. This important point appears



to be disappearing from the concepts articulated by individual clergy, especially those engaged in secularised institutional ministries. The idea that chaplains exist in isolation from their denomination, that they can function without regard for their theological tradition, or to assert that they wish to have no current or future engagement with their faith tradition are seriously worrying concerns. The clerical office belongs to the church. It is an ecclesiological office of the faith tradition, to which it is solely accountable and subservient. To intentionally isolate oneself from this tradition self imposes disendorsement from the denomination or faith group, and automatically negates continued functionality as a chaplain. This religious isolationism is a crass misrepresentation and amounts to nothing less than religious fraud. It indicates a lack of personal and faith integrity, and demonstrates deep personal dishonesty. The church and the secular organisation, if both seek to sustain the integrity of using such ecclesiastical representation within the organisational structure, should seriously challenge the ongoing continuation of such individuals. If the organisation is seeking from the faith tradition something which the organisation is unable to provide, if there is to be a process of reconciling the disembedding system of Modernity with the formulaic truth systems of the tradition, then integrity to such traditions remain paramount. It is the systemic collectivisation of opposite mechanisms that surpasses modern individuality, and demands integrity within the antithetical systems of the church and the secular organisation if adequate articulation and empowerment of each is to occur. While theological variations may exist within the various traditions represented in Defence, and within these traditions mechanisms of control vary in intensity, the reality remains that chaplains remain linked inextricably to their faith tradition.

This is highlighted through the dimension of authority and legitimacy. Technically, Chaplains do not exist within the formal structures of control within Defence. Although there is a degree of subservience to these structures, the loyalty demanded on Defence members, does not apply in the same way to Chaplains. Loyalty to the organisation always remains subservient to the loyalty of Chaplains to their faith and its traditions. Such a position doesn't undermine the role of the Chaplain. Instead, it provides an external perspective, coloured by an alternative paradigm, and spoken with the authority of the ecclesiastical office. The reality that Chaplains have rank but do not exert authority through that rank, indicates that such an advisory role becomes only as important as that which the organisation grants to it. It is for this reason that issues of integrity, honesty and faithfulness to their calling as religious leaders emanating out of a direct and sustained relationship with their faith tradition remains fundamentally important for the sustainment of a chaplaincy presence within Defence. The fact that chaplains speak on behalf of the

tradition from which they have come, means they speak in, with and through the church, and allow the dialogue of reconciliation to take place in which the opposing paradigms can find transformative resonance for current and future functionality.

The way clergy act within the organisation, also draws out this convergence of alternating world-views. There are no differentiations in expectations for cleric behaviour based on the environment in which they exist. These expectations are not professional standards, as found within expert systems; rather they are intricately linked to the tradition and the need to uphold the integrity of that tradition in which they are entrusted guardians. Primarily, they exist to uphold the nature of God, the way in which God is understood and incarnated, the way in which the church or denomination is defined, and the integrity of the tradition reflected through the clerical office. This is embedded and defined within the sacred texts of the faith tradition. In the Christian paradigm the qualities and behaviour required are articulated throughout the Bible. Paul informs Timothy<sup>6</sup> that Christian clergy should be above reproach, sober minded, respected, disciplined, hospitable, well thought of outside the faith community, self-controlled, gentle, upright, and love what is good and right. Paul talks about faithfulness in marriage and an ability to manage one's own house and family well, giving a clear appreciation that a stable and well managed family life is integral to the capacity of the clerical leader. The ability to teach, to demonstrate a holy life, and faithful adherence to the Word of God, including both instruction and correction, are also listed as important aspects for any holder of the clerical office. Clergy should not get drunk or use alcohol inappropriately, be violent, seek out quarrels or arguments, be arrogant, be ill or quick tempered, love money or seek material gain, pursue personal power or self-exaltation, be gossips or slanderers, and be a recent convert to the faith or faith tradition. All these qualities are listed, not because they fill some legal requirement, but because the ecclesiastical office reflects the nature of Christ and are representations of the faith community. Consequently, chaplains can never be 'one of the boys' for the nature of their office automatically negates this possibility. As bearers of the ecclesiastical office, set aside by the church, they exist as aliens and sojourners journeying through a strange land to be a light within the dark shadows of the world<sup>7</sup>.

While the church has a responsibility to ensure their clergy comply with these standards, any organisation that embeds the clerical office into its structure assumes a shared responsibility with the ecclesiastical body in ensuring that these standards are maintained. Advancement, leadership, seniority, appointment to

supervision or oversight, should not be set on the standards of the organisation, but on the standards outlined within the faith traditions from which the clergy are appointed. Clearly this is a challenge for any organisation to adopt a set of values that may run contrary or antithetical to that which is important to that organisation. The presence of an alternative paradigm already indicates that the organisation is working with conflicting mechanisms. The onus here, however, is not for the faith tradition to align its expectations of its clergy to organisational standards, but for the organisation to modify its processes if an adequate reconciliation of such perspectives is to be empowering and transformative. For the organisation to apply these ecclesiastical standards ensures that the core values desired by the organisation and found in the clerical office are sustained and not usurped by a secular paradigm that is foreign to these integral values.

This question of authority and legitimacy is an important engagement for the organisation and the church. The fundamental question always reverts to where the chaplain's authority resides. Christianity, Islam and Judaism all have, at the core of their faith system, a sacred text and all claims to legitimacy and authority exist in direct relationship to the way these texts are engaged within the various religious systems. While each have different hermeneutics governing the interpretation of these texts, and even within the sub-groups embedded within the larger religious frameworks these hermeneutics can dramatically change, there remains an intrinsic link between the legitimacy and authority of the clerical office and the sacred texts unique to each faith. This total reliance upon the sacred text to legitimate the clerical office exists in isolation to other norms, and embeds the ecclesiastical office within the faith tradition, reasserting the early conversation about guardians and experts, and eviscerating any individual usurpation of authority outside the faith tradition. Any secular demands arising from an engagement of the clerical office with the secular organisation is superseded by the various hermeneutical understandings shaping the clerical office within the faith system. To assert other norms as relevant or important dismantles the frameworks of legitimacy and undermines the core reliance of the office on the sacred text. In essence, to subordinate the sacred text removes the authority of the clerical office and makes it redundant.

This becomes an issue in how the Chaplain functions within an organisation such as Defence. While Chaplains agree to the same conditions of service as any other individual, this agreement always exists in direct relationship to the clerical office they hold. Neither Defence nor the individual can declare ownership to it. The authority for such an office always derives directly from the ecclesiastical

or religious body out of which the chaplain has been released. Even the term 'released' is relative, for the authority to remain clergy is not an individual authority but one which is held in sacred trust by the denominational body. While this varies in degree of control, and different hermeneutics portray variations in the overall narrative, the one thing that remains true is that no individual has the authority within their own right to claim the clerical office, and no organisation outside the religious group has the authority to create its ecclesiastical manifestation. Why any secular organisation, devoid of religious norms, would wish to create their own clerical office is an interesting question, and while the establishment of 'secular clergy' is another topic, such issues bring into question the legitimacy of a non-religious body to create a position within that body that affirms, by their very presence, some form of social religiosity vacuous of any reference to a faith structure or paradigm. This also challenges trends within chaplaincy to create a 'neutral' or 'non-spiritual' form of religion that removes any reference to God. Such moves are clearly incomprehensible given the frames of reference governing the release of clergy by their religious group into Defence. The naïve and ignorant claims of avoiding being the cause of offence, and the deliberate shift away from the necessary apologetics of the faith system in order to facilitate this, means that the Chaplain must inevitably act in violation to the core faith elements established within their religious office. If this is an attempt to create a non-religious form of chaplaincy to sustain a valid place within the organisation, then why would the organisation seek religious or denominationally based clergy? The actual seeking of chaplains presupposes that the organisation willingly accepts specific religious overtones within the organisation. While intentionally not creating offence may be desired, a degree of angst always exists when world-views, especially diametrically opposed views, coexist. Organisationally, however, the benefit to the whole outweighs the perspectives of the few, and in highly structured organisations like Defence, greater paradigms are present that drive organisational purpose and output. It is this desire for productivity that seeks the use of chaplaincy within the organisation, and assumes that everything encompassed by the clerical office is valid and deemed essential within the organisation's overall functionality.

Assuming the above conclusions are valid, the question of purpose for the clerical role within the organisation remains unsettled. This is a difficult question to answer, as demonstrated by the Scottish hospital experience, and relies inevitably on the chaplain being able to adequately articulate their purpose in terms understood by the organisation. One way this is currently happening is by employing the

mantra of 'pastoral care'. This anomalous and loosely used term is heavily laden with presuppositions and pre-understandings. Pastoral care is not a term unique to the clerical office, but is widely used within education, health care, welfare, industry and other agencies to mean a raft of things not directly related to its religious origins. Interwoven in this confusion is the anti-intellectualism prevalent within chaplaincy, and the naïve and crass pragmatism used to justify continued existence. Theologically speaking, all pastoral care is heavily laden with theological understandings. No chaplain can engage in such pastoral practice without engaging their theological frameworks. Whether this happens subconsciously or in a deliberative process of critical reflection, is irrelevant. The simple practice of pastoral care is an exercise in the praxis of theology; it is both theory driven and practice applied. To claim that chaplaincy is not to be academic, intellectual, or theologically attuned, but that the only requirement is to deliver 'pastoral care' is a sad aberration of a poorly perceived theology devoid of relevance or meaning, and ultimately redundant to the unique dimension of pastoral practice chaplains provide within an organisation.

Theologically, pastoral care is governed by an interaction with the divine, and primarily incorporates the applied use of the Word and the sacraments. In contrast, the modern secular aberrations of pastoral care are stripped of their faith roots, and are defined as anything from psychotherapy, professional counselling, social welfare, relationship maintenance, acts of charity, or community service. While in Christian pastoral care these things remain evident, they do so in a theological sense only in so far as they facilitate an interaction with the divine. It is this other-worldly, beyond the human condition, divine encounter through which hope, help, health and fullness is facilitated. Without this engagement beyond the self, pastoral care denigrates into the disembodied disciplines of specialised expertise already discussed. Because of the intimate link with the sacred, the reliance upon the sacred text, and the intent of facilitating this engagement into the human dimension, pastoral care is not simply a form of religious social work or spiritual psychology. Its perspective is external to the human condition, understanding it in terms of the divine, and existing to create hope that draws the individual beyond this fundamentally flawed existence. Christian pastoral care embraces a theological perspective in which all relationships are seen in terms of their status with the divine, and all problems are considered through a perspective of alienation from this external reality. Such a theological perspective denies the power of the self to heal and restore hope from a world which is consumed by its self established egocentric introspection. This cyclic self destructive human reality lies at the heart of a religious framework that offers

a world view where transformation toward a higher or ultimate reality is possible. Christian pastoral care is intimately linked to this theological understanding thereby separating it from all human or secular models. Chaplains cannot act without these frameworks impacting on their application of pastoral care. To do so moves them outside their theological frameworks and once more makes them an illegitimate manifestation of the ecclesiastical office.

The other inseparable dimension to pastoral care is education. Scripture always articulates pastoral care in direct correlation with the responsibility of teaching as Paul's reference to the shepherd-teacher in his letter to Ephesus demonstrates.<sup>8</sup> However, this teaching is very specific, and concerns itself with empowering individuals to comprehend how the divine functions in regard to the human condition, always emphasising God's intentional focus on restoring humanity. This restorative work transpires through the nature and work of Christ, which is freely and unconditionally offered to all who seek it. The ongoing living out of this restored relationship with the divine also exists as a critical dimension to pastoral care. It is this input from the divine and the ongoing encounter with the divine that finds a fuller expression through the teaching dimension of the pastoral care function. Chaplaincy does not exist to deliver pastoral care in the narrow secularised pragmatic sense articulated by the naive mantras aired currently within Defence, but always embraces the responsibility of teaching what the pastoral encounter means in the life of the individual and the community. To deny pastoral care this opportunity is to disempower it and ultimately prevents it from offering the fullest benefit it can to the organisation. The anti-intellectualism that opposes this difficult task, that rejects any form of critical theological engagement, creates a delusion form of ministry through imposing a crass pragmatism devoid of theological praxis. Ultimately such anti-intellectualism dismantles chaplaincy as a valid and empowering presence within the organisation.

There are a lot of concepts and theological reflections that have been articulated throughout this discussion. Almost certainly, some of the points and perspectives will cause discomfort and raise further questions. It is the courage to pursue this discomfort and ask why it arises that is the challenge of both the religious institution and Defence organisation. The challenges that arise from this dialogue are what will further the discourse that is required if chaplaincy is to find a place that it can theologically articulate within the secular context. Several themes remain consistent, regardless of the future direction of any theological discourse. Chaplaincy is unique and belongs first and foremost to the religious system from which it has been drawn. The organisation utilises chaplains because it has

a need which it believes only chaplaincy can fulfil. These two points separate chaplaincy from any other functionally similar group. Chaplaincy is the link for both the individual and the organisation to some higher reality, which it can or cannot adequately articulate, but which it acknowledges, by the very presence of chaplaincy, that such links have a degree of importance within the organisation's paradigms. Chaplains are obligated to standards that exist outside the immediate paradigms of the organisation, and which may run contrary to the organisation, but for which the organisation adopts a degree of responsibility to expect by accepting clergy within their structure. And finally, the presence of chaplains hold a purpose which requires clearer theological articulation if the chaplain is to be empowered to provide a full and whole effectiveness within the organisation. These things sum up much of what has been discussed, and provide a possible framework for any future theological conversation that needs to take place. These concepts are not definitive, but provide a start point for the church, the secular organisation, and the chaplain. Hopefully all will continue the conversation and thereby begin to theologically shape chaplaincy as a constructive and meaningful presence within the shadow of the organisation and the church. ■

## Endnotes

- 1 Cf. R. Chuck Mason & Cynthia Brougher, "Military Personnel and Freedom of Religious Expression: Selected Legal Issues", Congressional Research Service, April 8, 2010 <<http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf&AD=ADA521221>> accessed 24 August 2010. "This report provides an overview of the requirements of the First Amendment related to military personnel's religious exercise. It analyzes current constitutional and statutory requirements regarding religious exercise, and provides a framework for how Congress and the courts might consider future issues that arise related to service members' religious exercise. Specifically, the report examines the limitations placed on service members in uniform in the exercise of their religious beliefs. It also examines the role of military chaplains and the legal challenges associated with publicly funding religious personnel. The report analyzes efforts by Congress and the Department of Defense to address the constitutional concerns that are raised by these issues." This is an illustration of the current contentious issue of US Military Chaplaincy the US Constitution. The creation of this report for the US Congress highlights the frequency and dominance of the contentiousness surrounding the US Constitution and religious freedom as it relates to the existence of Chaplains in the US Military. This is supported by the numerous articles, both contemporary and historical, that support this unique US position on Chaplaincy.
- 2 "Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy in NHS Scotland 2008 - Revised Guidance, Report and Recommendations: Revision and Update of HDL (2002) 76 "Spiritual Care in NHS Scotland" - Dealing with progress and change since 2002 and making recommendations for the Future." <[http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/3796/211108spiritual\\_care\\_revised\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/3796/211108spiritual_care_revised_guidelines.pdf)>, accessed 24 August 2010.
- 3 Harriet Mowat, John Swinton, Clare Guest, & Liz Grant, "What do Chaplains do? The role of the Chaplain in meeting the spiritual needs of patients" University of Aberdeen Centre for Spirituality, Health and Disability & Mowat research, Report No. CSHD/MR001 Edition 2, February 2007 <[http://www.abdn.ac.uk/cshad/documents/Chaplains\\_Report.pdf](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/cshad/documents/Chaplains_Report.pdf)>, accessed 24 August 2010.

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- 4 Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 27ff.
- 5 Anthony Giddens, "Living in a post-traditional society", in Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens & Scott Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1994), 84-85.
- 6 1 Timothy 3:1-13, 2 Timothy 2:14-26, Titus 1:5-9.
- 7 1 Peter 2:11-12.
- 8 Ephesians 4:11.