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## The Reinvention of the Canadian Armed Forces Chaplaincy and the Limits of Religious Pluralism

Michael T. Peterson Rev. Dr.  
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The Reinvention of the Canadian Armed Forces Chaplaincy  
And The Limits Of Religious Pluralism

by

Michael Peterson

Master of Arts, Wilfrid Laurier University, 2015

THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
Master of Arts in Religion and Culture  
Wilfrid Laurier University

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## ABSTRACT

*The Reinvention of the Canadian Armed Forces Chaplaincy* offers an analysis of how an historically Christian religious organization, one prominently sited within an important Canadian institution, adapted to pluralism. This research is the first to examine Canada's military chaplaincy since Benham Rennick's (2011) more broadly focused study of the role of religion in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). My study is the first to focus specifically on the chaplaincy and on the ways in which it has sought to develop and maintain a pluralist identity. I trace the process by which a legacy Christian institution developed a self-image as a groundbreaking example of inter-religious harmony and cooperation, one which the current federal government has pointed to as a sign of the success of its multiculturalist policies. My research examines the extent to which religious pluralism has become part of the organization's culture, as well as the institutional and theological constraints which appear to limit the expansion of membership in the chaplaincy to faith groups not currently represented.

This study first examines the historical process by which the Canadian Armed Forces Chaplain Branch adopted its current multi-faith identity. The period in question, from the 1990s to 2003, when the Branch hired its first non-Christian chaplain, was one of significant change within the military. Demographic changes within Canadian society, combined with federal mandates on the military to diversify its membership, put pressure on the chaplaincy to change. Some who led the Chaplain Branch during this period saw the fashioning of a new multi-faith identity as a visionary process, a "long slow march to a new multi-faith reality" as one of them put it, but the process can also be seen as a strategy of relevance and institutional survival. While the move to a multi-faith identity has better equipped the chaplaincy to serve a more diverse military, it also presents ongoing challenges as chaplains make theological and social adjustments to religious pluralism within their organization.

My research shows the tensions between an expressed commitment to religious pluralism and the entrenched loyalties to religious particularity that exist at many places throughout the culture of the institution. These tensions manifest themselves most visibly at points where the pluralist ideology of the Chaplain Branch's leaders challenges the religious identities of chaplains, clergy drawn from four distinct faith groups (Western and Eastern Christianity, Islam and Judaism). One such point of tension is the Branch's ten-year quest for a visual expression of its pluralist identity that would replace the traditional holy symbol worn on the chaplain's uniform. The fact that this project was only partially successful suggests that intentionally and traditionally religious individuals may support pluralism in principle, but will balk at compromising what they perceive as the integrity of their own religious identities.

The research also explores the Branch's ecclesial governance, the Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy (ICCMC). While this body of senior religious leaders has successfully established a collegial and irenic culture within the chaplaincy, it is a culture of limited pluralism. Through in-depth interviews with ICCMC members, I explore their understanding of and commitment to religious pluralism. My findings suggest that the ICCMC, which is predominated by institutional, hierarchical Christian denominations, self-selects faith groups that look and act like they do, even if the minority faith groups represented at the ICCMC's table have different motives, including status validation and legitimation, from their mainstream Christian colleagues. While the ICCMC as the Branch's ecclesial governance has been successful in modelling a harmonious and respectful culture for chaplains to emulate, its preoccupation as gatekeepers with denominational structures and formal, institutional religion does not fully align with lived religion in the CAF, which as Benham Rennick has shown, is increasingly subjective and individualized.

While traditional forms of religious belief seem to be of declining importance to the vast majority of Canadian Armed Forces personnel, they are central to chaplains' identities. Working within an officially pluralist Chaplain Branch requires chaplains to make theological and attitudinal adjustments to the reality of other religious truth claims,

whether that reality is embodied in chaplain colleagues of other faiths, or presented to them in obligatory interfaith prayer services at Branch events. Through in-depth interviews with a cross section of chaplains, I found that most are supportive of pluralism in principle, but experience a variety of frictions with its application. Some feel that an official ideology of pluralism and what they perceive as “political correctness” limits their freedom to be true to their own faith understanding. Others describe benefiting from working alongside of non-Christian colleagues, situations that are still rare in the life of the predominantly Christian Branch, and wish that others had similar collegial opportunities. An impatient few perceive gaps between the Branch’s commitment to pluralism and its limited achievements in incorporating only a handful of representatives from monotheistic and so-called “Abrahamic” religions.

While not prescriptive in nature, this research identifies several factors which limit the growth of pluralism in the Chaplain Branch. One is the limited capacity of the institution itself to grow beyond its legacy identity, given its primarily Christian identity, structure, and focus on institutional, hierarchical religious organizations as the building blocks of its membership. The second is the limited capacity of the Branch to recruit non-Christian chaplains, a process which has to date been opportunistic and limited by the supply of candidates judged suitable by current selection standards. The third is the culture of the Branch itself, which prizes clerical credentials and adaptability to military culture in a manner which inclines chaplains to expect future colleagues to be like them. However, the research suggests that when Christian chaplains have the opportunity to work with non-Christian colleagues, they find ways of working and even praying together, thus making pluralism a lived fact rather than an abstract concept.

With over a decade since the Branch hired its first non-Christian chaplain, its commitment to religious pluralism remains an ongoing project. While the numbers of its non-Christian chaplains remain small, the change to the Branch’s culture and worldview has been significant. A multi-faith identity has been consolidated, and while its future expansion will likely continue to be cautious and incremental, all signs indicate that new faith groups will join the chaplaincy.

## Acknowledgements

It is a very pleasant thing to be paid to pursue an advanced degree, and having being an impoverished graduate student for too many years in the past, I recommend the experience highly. I am grateful to my employer, the Royal Canadian Chaplain Service of the Canadian Armed Forces, for selecting me to participate in the military's Post Graduate Training Program. The chance to engage with stimulating company, conversation and ideas for the past eighteen months has been nothing short of a paid holiday. While the military gave me this opportunity to study, the views expressed in this thesis are entirely those of the author.

I am grateful to Kay for yet again leaving friends, garden, and familiar places to follow me and my career. It is said that the military spouse is the strength behind the uniform, and while I wore civvies during this part of the adventure, the strength is still hers. Her editorial skills and tough love made this a better document.

I first met Dr. Joanne Benham Rennick almost a decade ago when she was pursuing her doctoral research. It has been a very happy coincidence to have the opportunity to work with her as my thesis advisor. Despite a busy schedule and new academic responsibilities she found considerable time to help me focus and sharpen my writing, and bore graciously with my peculiar tic of mangling her surname in curious ways. Dr. David Seljak shepherded Chapter Four of this thesis, which originated as a paper in his doctoral seminar, and made it much the better. My thanks to both Joanne and David for helping me to see with the eyes of the sociological imagination, and for showing me that sociology is cool.

Finally, to all of my chaplain colleagues, retired and serving, who generously aided me in my research, you have my thanks and my respect for your faithfulness, your devotion to others, and for your curiosity in matters of the spirit.

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

*"We are writing history".*

*Dialogue: Journal of the Royal Canadian Chaplain Service*

#### 1.1. The Chaplaincy: Traditional and Changing Roles

Religion figured prominently in the aftermath of two fatal assaults on Canadian military personnel in late October of 2014. On 20 October, Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent was the victim of a targeted killing near Montreal. Two days later, Corporal Nathan Cirillo, a soldier with the Army Reserve, was shot while acting as part of the ceremonial guard at the National War Memorial in Ottawa. His attacker, who was killed shortly thereafter inside the Parliament Buildings, was described by media and officials as an unstable loner who apparently had been influenced by violent Islamist messaging.<sup>1</sup> Both incidents commanded significant popular and media attention, and given the highly symbolic location of Cirillo's death at the War Memorial and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, created an outpouring of sympathy and affection for Canada's past and serving military members. Another prominent theme within press coverage of these events was the attackers' degree of connection with radical Islam, and there was a general consensus among media commentators that these incidents were "lone-wolf terror killing and home-grown radicalism" (National Post 2014). The attacks were denounced by Muslim groups including the National Council of Canadian Muslims (Martel 2014), and there were broad signs, including in Cirillo's hometown of Hamilton, that the general public did not blame the attacks on the wider Muslim community (CBC

News 2014). As the focus then moved to Cirillo's funeral and its aftermath, military chaplains, in their public role as representatives of organized religion within the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)<sup>2</sup>, played both traditional and non-traditional religious roles. In the chaplain's traditional role of providing spiritual and pastoral care to military members and their families, Rob Fead, chaplain to Cirillo's regiment, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, accompanied Cirillo's mother as her son's remains were returned to Hamilton, and officiated and preached at his very public funeral on October 28.<sup>3</sup> Two days before that funeral, a separate event in Ottawa showed chaplains in a newly emerging, non-traditional role that reflected the chaplaincy's increasing commitment to the pluralistic nature of Canadian religion. On the evening of October 26, Brigadier General John Fletcher, Canada's senior military chaplain and a Christian, stood in uniform alongside Jewish and Muslim clergy at an interfaith service called "Prayers for Ottawa" in an event designed to show that the national self-image of a peaceful, multicultural society still held true. As one of Fletcher's staff put it, the Ottawa service was designed around themes of "hope, peace, [and] resiliency" to demonstrate the unity of Canada and of Canadian religions.<sup>4</sup> The chaplaincy was thus able to play a role in the country's symbolic effort of repair and recovery from trauma. This essentially pastoral role was grounded in the chaplaincy's historic Christian identity and in its ties to the country's mainstream Christian denominations, but also demonstrated its determination to move into Canada's present demography of a multicultural, pluralist nation. In this respect, these two responses to the events of October 2014 together show both the chaplaincy's historical evolution in the last two

decades, and its future aspirations to be a prominent multi-faith entity within Canadian religious life.

## 1.2. Premise

Joanne Benham Rennick, the only scholar to have studied the subject with any rigour, has described the CAF chaplaincy as “an institution inherited from Canada’s Christian past that has been able, more or less successfully, to adapt” to the religious pluralism and changed conditions of the present (Benham Rennick 2011, 161). The phrase “more or less successfully” might be briefly unpacked along the following lines. The “more successfully” part can be seen in the chaplaincy’s self-image as a groundbreaking example of inter-religious cooperation, as illustrated in this recent article from its internal journal.

This ecumenical, latterly multi-faith model (with the recruitment of the first Muslim chaplain in 2003), respects the autonomy of the various churches and religions and has aroused keen interest worldwide. We can be deservedly proud, for we are the only joint multi-faith chaplaincy in the world. We are writing history. (Chapdelaine 2014b, 5).

The “less successfully” part, one could easily argue, is that while it claims to be a “multi-faith” chaplaincy, in its composition the chaplaincy is an “almost exclusively Christian” organization. As such, it is a tangible sign of the “historical privileges” and even control that Christianity enjoys within public institutions such as the military (Bramadat and Seljak 2008b, 13). That statement remains as true in early 2015 as it was when Bramadat and Seljak published it in 2008. The Royal Canadian Chaplain Service

(RCChS), as it is now known,<sup>5</sup> employs a handful of Muslim, Jewish and Orthodox chaplains amidst a sizeable Roman Catholic minority and a growing Protestant majority, so that one might legitimately ask if “tri-faith” is a better description than “multi-faith”. To be fair, however, as its numbers of non-Christian chaplains slowly grow, as its ecclesiastical leaders contemplate how to bring new faith groups into the chaplaincy, and as it finds its footing in Canada’s postmodern, pluralistic identity with events such as Prayers for Ottawa, the multi-faith identity and official culture of the chaplaincy steadily moves from the aspirational to the concrete. This progress towards religious pluralism, and its partial realization in the present, is the subject of this research.

A discussion of religious pluralism will necessarily involve religious worldviews, but it will also be a discussion of demographics. Demographics and social change drive the chaplaincy’s past and present efforts to be true to its calling, grounded in Christian theology, to serve all members of the CAF, even if it means adapting to better serve the military’s increasing diversity. This adaptation to a new demographic reality also demonstrates the chaplaincy’s continued utility and relevance to its military and civilian masters. In speaking of religious demographics as a key aspect of civil-military relations, Ron E. Hassner uses the term “interconnectedness” to describe “the degree to which the military is representative of, in tension with, or integrated into society” (Hassner 2014b, 3). Within the realm of religion, the positioning of a country’s military on this spectrum of social tension/integration would depend on factors including the distribution of religious groups within the military as compared to broader society, the character of officially sponsored rituals within military culture, and the

accommodation of religious needs, including providing chaplains to military members. In a pluralistic democracy like Canada, religion thus becomes a significant index of the health of civil-military relations, since the political and social legitimacy of the Canadian Armed Forces depends upon its effective integration into civilian society and its subordination to civilian governance. CAF leaders fully understand this basic principle. In 2011 the Chief of Military Personnel, who has oversight over the chaplaincy, stated that “to remain credible in a democratic society, both [the Department of National Defence] and CF must enjoy the support and the confidence of the Canadian public. A major factor of that support involves how representative it is of ... the gender and ethno-cultural composition of Canadian society” (Fraser 2013, 26). Achieving credibility through representing the diversity of Canadian society has become integral to the chaplaincy’s sense of its purpose and mission. The opening paragraph of *Called to Serve*, its current strategic plan, sets the tone for the document by stating that through its policy of multiculturalism, “the government of Canada and its military have demonstrated a desire for active accommodation of religious and cultural diversity, which has produced a highly fluid background for military ministry” (DND 2008, 11). As a religious institution serving the CAF, the chaplaincy clearly sees a role for itself in promoting the “interconnectedness” of Canada’s military with society, and has made it a strategic goal to achieve a greater degree of pluralism within the last decade. The pursuit of this goal has raised tensions, particularly around balancing the commitment to a greater degree of religious diversity on the one hand, while maintaining the integrity of the theological beliefs of its members as confessing religious practitioners on the other. The chaplaincy must also solve certain practical considerations, including the

accreditation, accountability and ecclesiastical representation of chaplains from minority religions, that will need to be overcome if greater diversity is to be achieved in the future. This research explores the commitment to pluralism and its resulting tensions within the areas of the chaplaincy's history, ecclesiastical governance, training, visual identity and in the attitudes of some of the chaplains who will be addressing them for the rest of their careers in the next three decades.

To understand the RCChS as an example of Canada's religious pluralism, my research focuses on three topics and interrogates three narratives or data sets. The first topic is transformation. What factors impelled the leaders of a legacy Christian organization to make the turn to pluralism starting in the late 1990s? How did these leaders reconcile and integrate pluralism with a traditional Christian model of professional, pastoral service to the military community, what Benham Rennick calls the "chaplaincy worldview" (Benham Rennick 2011, 55). How did this process of reconciliation adapt pastoral theology to the sociological reality of a changing military population? To answer these questions I examine the actions and attitudes of key figures, chaplain leaders and their ecclesiastical sponsors, to see how they created an official narrative of pluralism that has become the guiding ideology of the chaplaincy today. The second topic is identity creation and maintenance. How did the RCChS signal its new pluralist identity within the highly prescriptive and traditionalist material culture of the Canadian military? How did the chaplaincy decide on a single identifier or logo to express its pluralist aspirations, and how was that process impeded by chaplains' attachments to their religious and holy symbols? What does this episode



reveal about the tensions between religious pluralism and religious particularity? To answer these questions I turn to the official record and archival material to track and document the chaplaincy's quest for a visual identity. The third topic is culture. How do working chaplains from a wide range of religious and ethnic identities operate within the official, pluralist culture of the RCChS? How do they as vocational, confessing religious leaders understand their organization's commitment to pluralism? What gaps might exist between the official culture of pluralism and their experience in their everyday ministry with military personnel and in their interactions with one another? To answer these questions I consider the experience of selected chaplains from different faith groups but with comparable experience and stages in their military careers. The timeframe of my inquiry thus runs from the origins of the move to pluralism in the early 1990s to the present day. My study is very much of an open-ended process since, while the military and religious leaders of the chaplaincy agree in principle that its membership should continue to broaden to better represent Canada's religious demographics, the path in that direction is currently unclear.

The claim that the CAF chaplaincy is a significant religious organization worthy of academic inquiry seems defensible on three grounds, namely the complexity of the institution and of its role, the significance of the institution within the Canadian religious landscape, and the official attention and approbation it has gained as an agent of multicultural values embedded within a foundational Canadian institution. The first of these claims, that the chaplaincy is a complex institution worthy of study, might seem belied by its relatively small size, with less than two hundred and fifty full and part-time

serving chaplains. Nevertheless, in the last three decades the CAF chaplaincy has attained a degree of professionalism and institutional complexity so that it has “in effect, become a bureaucratic, modern, religious institution in its own right” (Benham Rennick 2011, 18). Whereas chaplains before the 1990s were essentially uniformed civilian clergy with the thinnest veneer of military training, chaplains today belong to a highly trained and credentialed, strategically thinking component of the CAF. The chaplaincy has established its own professional school as an accredited part of the CAF training system, has developed an increasingly sophisticated journal, *Dialogue*, for the professional development of its members, and participates in conversation with the wider CAF through internal publications such as *Canadian Military Journal*. It has expanded opportunities for its members to pursue advanced education in clinical and academic institutions, including the graduate program through which this research began. Since 1990 the chaplaincy has selected members to participate in a wide range of missions and deployments, from internal security in Oka, Quebec to the complexities and failures of peacekeeping in Rwanda and Bosnia, from disaster assistance in Haiti and the Philippines to war fighting and civil-military reconstruction in Afghanistan. This collective experience has generated a significant body of best practices and theory, that the military calls doctrine. Some of these lessons learned have been incorporated into ongoing internal training, such as courses on Chaplaincy on Deployed Operations taught at the Chaplain School and Centre at Canadian Forces Base Borden in Ontario. Other lessons learned have been incorporated within official military doctrine. The concept of Religious Leader Engagement (RLE), that Padre<sup>6</sup> Steve Moore first developed in the former Yugoslavia, holds that CAF chaplains by virtue of their role,

knowledge and interpersonal skills as religious professionals, are uniquely qualified to develop contacts with indigenous religious leaders within an Area of Operations during deployments, and thus assist Canadian and allied commanders in developing knowledge of local cultures and situations (Moore 2013).<sup>7</sup> RLE doctrine is now part of the syllabus of the Canadian Army Doctrine and Training Centre in Kingston, Ontario. As these examples indicate, the range of the chaplaincy's operations, from disaster assistance to open conflict, and an increasing body of theory of praxis that this experience has generated, point to the chaplaincy's sophistication and complexity as an institution.

In terms of the second claim for its significance in Canadian religious life, the CAF chaplaincy is a highly connected ecumenical and interfaith institution, embedded within one of Canada's most visible national institutions. Through its ecclesiastical oversight body, the Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy (ICCMC), the chaplaincy is plugged into prominent religious umbrella organizations, including the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC), the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), the Canadian Jewish Congress and leaders of Canada's Muslim community. Ecclesiastical representatives on the ICCMC are prominent figures within their own churches, including Anglican, Orthodox and Roman Catholic bishops, the current president of the EFC, and executive level leaders of the Baptist and United churches. As a body the ICCMC reports to the Minister of National Defence, and has access to senior CAF leadership. In the words of one its members, Bishop Peter Coffin, "the relationship of the ICCMC to the government, to the military, to the chaplaincy, [and] to the civilian

church roots the chaplaincy in the heart and soul of Canadian religion” (Coffin, interview). Among its currently serving members, the chaplaincy includes members from the Orthodox, Muslim, Jewish and Roman Catholic faiths, as well as Protestants from Canada’s five mainstream denominations (Anglican, United, Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian) and from the forty-three evangelical denominations represented by the EFC. Canadian religious bodies follow the careers and activities of “their” chaplains with some pride and a sense of ownership, and report on their activities in their denominational media.<sup>8</sup> Military chaplains are represented in the governing bodies of some of their churches, such as the Council of General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada. While there are some conspicuous absences within the Christian tradition, and only partial inroads into Canada’s non-Christian religious bodies, it is fair to say that the CAF chaplaincy represents and is connected to a significant portion of mainstream Canadian religious life.

A third reason for the chaplaincy as a significant subject of academic inquiry is that, in addition to its prominent position within Canadian religion, the chaplaincy also plays a role in public life by virtue of its presence in the Canadian military. While participation in the CAF is not guaranteed to all citizens because of restrictions on age and physical fitness, the CAF is undoubtedly a subset of Canada’s public square. Civilian and military members of the Department of National Defence enjoy the benefits of Charter rights and federal employment equity legislation. Subject to the demands of what the CAF calls “the exigencies of the service”, military personnel enjoy the right to religious accommodation provided that they can point to a sincerely held and

recognizable belief that does not compromise their military effectiveness (Benham Rennick 2011, Chapdelaine 2014a). The only difference between military personnel and other Canadian workers is that the former accept the principle of unlimited liability, meaning that they may be called upon to suffer injury or death while performing their duties. It is primarily because of the existential demands of unlimited liability that militaries have traditionally provided clergy to offer religious and spiritual consolation and support to their personnel. During the Cold War era, when Canada's military deployments were popularly imagined as peacekeeping, the role of chaplains became somewhat attenuated, being seen as having more to do with the maintenance of morale and morals in the static role of garrison life than with the everyday possibility of violent death and wounding (Fowler 1996). The Afghanistan mission (2002 to 2012), which could be legitimately described as Canada's longest war, reintroduced the real possibility of violent death and injury to CAF personnel. Chaplains gained a new visibility in that period, both to the troops in Afghanistan and perhaps more importantly from a sociological perspective, to Canadians at home during the public, almost extravagant occasions of grief that marked the repatriation of dead soldiers to Canada along the so-called Highway of Heroes and their subsequent funerals in towns across Canada. Jeremy Bell, who represents Canadian Baptist Ministries on the ICCMC, described these years as ones of increased stature for the chaplaincy. "But as soon as [Canadian society] became militarized, we were not marginalized. In fact we were the key pivot joint for making sense of death and suffering as an agent and extension of government policy, and without us it would have fallen apart" (Bell, interview).

The phrase “militarization of Canadian society” might be seen by some as a polemic overstatement from the left<sup>9</sup> or as an accurate description of the new prominence of the military in Canadian society. However the term is understood, it is undeniable that the CAF enjoys a refurbished place in Canadian affections that it has not enjoyed since the Somalia Inquiry of the early 1990s. Crowds gathering along Highway 401 between Trenton and Toronto during repatriations of military personnel killed in Afghanistan, the merchandising and display of “Support Our Troops” items, and large crowds on Remembrance Day in 2014 in response to the Cirillo and Vincent killings all suggest that many Canadians hold their military in high esteem. Federal policies to enhance the prestige and profile of Canada’s military past and present, such as media campaigns to mark the bicentennial of the War of 1812 and the centennial of World War One, the restoration of traditional “Royal” appellations to components of the CAF, and the return of titles and rank badges discontinued in the Trudeau Era, might all be seen as examples of “militarization”, or at least, of a new valourization of Canada’s military heritage. As part of this process, it is also undeniable that the Conservative federal government shows a newfound comfort with the presence of religion in the military. If the Chrétien government avoided giving a prominent role to religious representatives during ceremonies on Parliament Hill in response to the 9/11 attacks in 2001, the Conservatives have not displayed a similar avoidance of the subject of religion. The CAF chaplaincy has shared some of the military’s restored prestige. In May of 2014 the Governor General of Canada, the Right Honourable David Johnston, addressed the chaplaincy during its annual conference, the first time a Governor General had done so. The Governor General expressed his appreciation for the “great

significance” of chaplains and noted how, through spiritual solace and support, they had helped soldiers and their families bear the emotional costs of death, grief, injury and alienation during the decade long Afghan mission (Johnston 2014). In October of 2014, the federal government continued its traditionalist rebranding of the CAF when it renamed the chaplaincy, by royal assent, the Royal Canadian Chaplain Service (RCChS). In the announcement of this renaming, the Minister of National Defence noted that “The restoration of the Royal prefix to the Canadian Armed Forces Chaplain Branch honours this community of service men and women who have humbly sacrificed so much in service to our country” (Government of Canada 2014). As will be noted later, the current federal government sees the RCChS as a valid talking point in support of official multiculturalist policy.

These two examples of official recognition and approbation would seem to suggest that the Chaplain branch, at least for the foreseeable future, enjoys an assured place within the CAF. It was not always the case. In his history of the Protestant chaplaincy after World War Two, Al Fowler describes the period between the mid-1960s and 1990 as a time when “secular humanism seemed to be sweeping Christianity into the background of Western culture” (Fowler 1996, 177). Following the end of the Cold War era in the 1990s, as the CAF was severely downsized, the RCChS had a near-death experience when it was threatened with a severe reduction of its personnel. While the chaplaincy survived this period, it did not survive unchanged (Fowler 1996, Maindonald interview). In the mid 1990s the military concluded that the Branch’s separate and duplicate Roman Catholic and Protestant command structures were an

unsustainable luxury, and forced them to amalgamate, thus putting them on a path to greater ecumenicity and change. It may seem remarkable that the chaplaincy survived at all in these years of cultural and demographic change. One might well ask today, why has a developed, wealthy and pluralistic country decided to maintain a cadre of paid religious professionals, whose composition is overwhelmingly Christian, within the ranks of a technologically sophisticated and socially diverse armed forces? Given Canada's long history of governments disinvesting Christianity from the management and delivery of education and social programs, a trend most dramatically seen in Quebec, the survival of a military chaplaincy into the Twenty-First century seems to move against the tide of secularization. The chaplaincy may well be a remnant of the shadow establishment of Christianity lingering within the shelter of the military's traditionalist culture, but for all its conservatism the military is also a fiercely utilitarian environment. A vestigial Christendom-era chaplaincy would not have survived successive rounds of budget cuts unless commanders had seen a use for it. In her study of religion in the CAF, Benham Rennick argues convincingly that chaplains play a key role in supporting personnel as they navigate an alienating military bureaucracy and "moral anomie" of deployments and occupational stress (Benham Rennick 2011, 194-136, 166-168). The chaplaincy's pastoral support of the CAF's decade-long experience in Afghanistan underlines Benham Rennick's point. This experience went a long way to convince military leaders of the continued relevance of chaplaincy. Several chaplains received commendations from battlefield commanders for their work in Afghanistan, and in 2010 the Service as a whole received a CAF commendation for "comprehensive and effective service of all levels of the chaplaincy and [for] its



contributions to operational effectiveness” (Peterson 2010). In the post-Afghanistan era, as issues of mental health and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder become prominent, attempts by the RCChS to argue for a place within the CAF’s team of mental healthcare providers (Ristau 2014) demonstrates that its quest for relevance remains an ongoing concern.

“Relevance” is a key word in *Called to Serve*, the RCChS’ 2008 strategic plan, in which the authors took pains to demonstrate the Service’s usefulness to the military, to its commanders, and to Canadian society. Developing a capability to promote and support religious pluralism was a key part of the chaplaincy’s strategy to prove its relevance and utility to the military in the Afghanistan era. The recruitment in 2003 of the first non-Christian chaplain since World War Two, Padre Suleyman Demiray, a Sunni Muslim, was a newsworthy event in its own right (CBC News 2004), but as Canada’s role in Afghanistan deepened through 2005-06 (Stein and Lang 2007, 178-193), the capabilities offered by a Muslim chaplain began to be appreciated. When the first Canadians went to Afghanistan, a senior National Defence Department bureaucrat admitted that, “We don’t know anything about this country” (Stein and Lang 2007, 21). Over time the military saw the importance of cultural knowledge, or “CQ” (Spencer 2009), to understand the language, beliefs and practices of local Afghans and to gain their trust and counter the influence of the Taliban. The pursuit of CQ as part of a counterinsurgency strategy led to the development of Provincial Reconstruction Teams that worked with friendly combat forces to secure the countryside and win over the population. Padre Suleyman Demiray worked with such a team in the Kandahar

region, and was praised by Canadian military leaders for his ability to help them connect with the region's Pashtun Sunni population.

The Pashtun audience at the [civil military cooperation] ceremony was confronted with an image clashing paradigmatically with their limited understanding of the other. Before this Muslim audience stood Canadian military and civilian police officers with headdress removed, a Christian symbol of reverence and respect for the prayers of this Islamic cleric. An Imam embedded within the Canadian contingent was not opposing religious traditions but was embracing cultural differences. The public appearance of this Muslim cleric in uniform before an Islamic assembly aids in dispelling the long-held belief that Christian and Muslim are foes on the world stage and is a snapshot of the pluralism of the Canadian cultural mosaic. Indeed, this case demonstrates that new solutions to persisting problems may be found in ways that respect the dignity of the other (Legacé-Roy 2009, 120).

The description of a Muslim imam and military chaplain serving as “a snapshot of the pluralism of the Canadian cultural mosaic” suggests that the chaplaincy's goal of seeking relevance through diversity was successful. In the decade following Demiray's recruitment in 2003, the new multi-faith identity took on greater substance and a sense of permanence. The Muslim, Jewish and Orthodox colleagues who followed Demiray were well received by their Christian colleagues and by the wider military, and ecclesiastical representatives on the ICCMC were appointed for them. A long and sometimes painful process led to the creation of new and suitably pluralist symbols of identity to aid the Service's rebranding within the military's conservative material culture. The first interfaith worship centres were opened on a handful of bases (Benham Rennick 2011, 46), and plans exist, subject to budget restraints, to replace fifty and sixty-year old Catholic and Protestant base chapels with buildings more suitable for interfaith worship.<sup>10</sup> Most importantly, an internal culture favourable to diversity has become normalized within the chaplaincy, both within the attitudes of chaplains as I

have been able to assess them, and within the demographic makeup of the Branch as a whole. In 2014, the ranks of CAF chaplains include Asian Canadian evangelicals, African Canadian Anglicans, a Filipino Canadian Roman Catholic, and a Caucasian Canadian convert to Islam serving alongside the traditional constituency of white (primarily Anglophone) Protestants and (primarily Francophone) Catholics. In May of 2014, the Governor General of Canada could praise the Service for its traditional pastoral commitment of ministry to Canada's military, but could also say that the country's religious diversity "is so admirably reflected in the diverse, interfaith expression of the Chaplain Branch of Canada's armed forces" (Johnston 2014). The Governor General's comments suggest that the Branch's future is now far more secure than it was at the end of the Cold War era. The only uncertainty would seem to be, not about the chaplaincy's survival, but rather with the question of its future diversification and self understanding. Will it broaden its multi-faith representation, and if so, what principles will guide that process?

### **1.3. Method**

Ron Hassner notes that there is a dearth of scholarship on the subject of religion in the military, and he attributes this oversight to the fact that most scholars lack the necessary expertise in the subjects of security studies and religion (Hassner 2014b, 7). The contributors to Hassner's volume of essays on the subject all possess either insider knowledge as former military members, or research knowledge as established scholars in the field. Among the latter group, Joanne Benham Rennick<sup>11</sup> herself notes, there is

“virtually no research on the role religion plays in the secular, late modern institution of Canada’s military forces”, and she offers her own work (2011, 17), that grew out of her civilian doctoral dissertation, as an “exploratory study” that she hopes will inspire others. Certainly there is room for follow-on work, since the subject of religion is overlooked within the relatively small world of Canadian military scholars. Two recent studies of the history of the Canadian Army (Granatstein 2011, Kasurak 2013), ignore altogether the chaplaincy as a part of the military, and while they discuss the military’s response to changes in Canadian society, they do not consider religion as an aspect of multiculturalism and diversity. Military sociologists likewise have discussed the CAF’s legal and social obligations to accommodate and represent diversity without mentioning religion as a category of that diversity (Dandeker and Winslow 2000). Perhaps this lack of attention is due to the the assumption of military scholars that religion is a private matter with which they are reluctant to engage, either because of unfamiliarity or discomfort with the subject. Likewise the inattention paid to the Chaplain Branch by military historians may be because it numbers just hundreds within a military of tens of thousands. My own qualifications to take up Benham Rennick’s challenges combine Hassner’s categories of military insider and academic researcher. As an Anglican priest and a serving RCChS chaplain, I was selected to enrol at Wilfrid Laurier and complete an eighteen month Master’s degree in Religious Studies. Other than wanting me to have a degree in hand at the end of my study period, the chaplaincy did not give me any direction as to a thesis topic, nor did it pressure me in any way as to the findings I might produce. The subject of pluralism arose naturally as a research interest since, as the interviews with my peers show, it is part of the fabric of every CAF chaplain’s

working life, and sometimes a cause of tension. It is also a subject that Benham Rennick's research only began to explore. As a sociological study, her book does an admirable job of mapping the spiritual landscape of the CAF and the role that chaplains play within it, but only begins to touch on the unique challenges that pluralism poses for chaplains as religious leaders. Chaplains are pulled between the faith traditions that formed their religious and professional identities as clergy on the one hand, and their institutional loyalty to the RCChS and its pluralist identity on the other. As recruits to the military, chaplains go from the ecclesiastical and denominational bubbles of seminary and parish, with their theological and group stability and homogeneity, into a diverse and changing military where they are forced to think about who they are and who others are. They serve with chaplain peers from other faith groups whom they would likely never meet in civilian ministry, and serve a military whose religious identities range from the highly particular and intentionally practicing few to the attenuated, lapsed or undefined spirituality of the many. CAF chaplains work within an organization that seems to be in the process of near-constant change, from its visual symbols and branding to the way chaplains are expected to pray on public occasions. In my own relatively brief career I have seen this process of change first hand. When I first became a chaplain in 2006 I was issued the Service's old Christian cap badge, that has been essentially unchanged since the First World War. In my first year of service I attended a Mess Dinner<sup>12</sup> during which my colleagues, their better judgement undermined by port and nostalgia, sang the awkwardly triumphal and recently retired chaplain hymn, "Onward Christian Soldiers", thus infuriating a senior chaplain officer. Could such a scene recur a decade later?

When Benham Rennick began collecting her research data in September 2004, it was quite possible to find episodes of “significant opposition” and resentment of perceived “political correctness” which this Mess Dinner was likely symptomatic (Benham Rennick 2011, 11, 47). Now, with some seven years elapsed since her fieldwork was completed, I was curious to know how far the transformation of “a Christian men’s association to an environment that values pluralism and difference” had progressed (Benham Rennick 2011, 47). Had pluralism been successfully normalized within RCChS culture, and if so, how was an understanding of pluralism now being transmitted to chaplains who, like myself, had seen significant changes during their careers? How did these men and women, as the Branch’s face and voice to the broader CAF, understand pluralism and make it happen in their daily duties? I also wanted to know how pluralism was understood by chaplains who had been spiritually and psychologically formed by religious traditions, seminary educations, and ecclesiastical experience, and indeed, had been hired as CAF chaplains precisely because they possessed these experiences and qualifications? I quickly realized that I would need a working understanding of what pluralism means as a working term in the life and culture of the Chaplain Service. When I embarked on this research in the spring of 2014, I was told by one of its senior officers that the RCChS is not pluralistic, but rather, it is multi-faith. What I understood this leader to be saying is that the words pluralism and pluralistic convey associations of equivalency between religions that the chaplaincy is anxious to avoid. In each of my interviews with retired and serving chaplains, and with their ecclesiastical representatives, I was in discussion with a

committed, professing practitioner and leader of a faith group or religious denomination. While some research subjects were more theologically conservative than others, they all wanted to stress their openness to other faith groups and to the presence of other faiths within the chaplaincy. At the same time, the research subjects tended to stress that the plurality of faiths within the organization did not influence the theological particularities of their own faith. The research subjects tended to use words such as “syncretism”, “homogeneity” and “lowest common denominator” to describe the kind of equivalency, or negative pluralism, that they wished to avoid, namely a generic faith or world religion in which the same god or divine being might go by many names given to it by different religious traditions. “Syncretism” and “homogeneity” were also given negative associations in the chaplain training that I observed as part of my research, as well as in some RCChS documents on pluralism.<sup>13</sup> Clearly the word pluralism has a functional and descriptive meaning for chaplains as a way of describing the coexistence of multiple faiths within the CAF and within the chaplaincy, but it is not a word that either chaplains or their ecclesiastical sponsors wish to use theologically. At the same time, it is clear within the work and aspirations of the RCChS that pluralism conveys something more than simply a plurality of actors under one umbrella. In my own use of the word pluralism as it applies to the chaplaincy and its aspirations, I found a definition offered by Thomas Banchoff to be helpful:

... religious pluralism refers to patterns of peaceful interaction among diverse religious actors - individuals and groups who identify with and act out of particular religious traditions. Religious pluralism, in this definition, does not posit different religions on diverse paths to the same truth, as it does in some theological contexts. And the term implies more than the social and religious diversity explored in much sociological analysis. Religious pluralism is the interaction of

religious actors with one another and with the society and the state around concrete cultural, social, economic, and political agendas. It denotes a politics that joins diverse communities with overlapping but distinctive ethics and interests. Such interaction may involve sharp conflict. But religious pluralism, as defined here, ends where violence begins (Banchoff 2008b, 4-5).

For the purposes of my research, therefore, pluralism goes beyond mere diversity to mean the “peaceful interaction among diverse religious actors” that is at the core of the chaplaincy worldview. Diversity as it is used in the wider CAF and by military historians and sociologists can simply mean the presence of different genders, sexual orientations, languages, and ethnicities within the ranks of the military. Diversity within the military is driven by cultural and demographic changes within Canadian society and by government legislation and directives requiring the military to adapt to these changes. Pluralism is both the recognition of and adaptation to the fact that diversity entails both greater numbers of religious actors and increased interaction between them within the CAF. For the CAF as a whole, diversity, including religious diversity, can be managed in a way that does not fundamentally change the institution. For example, religious dress and accoutrements can be accommodated by dress and uniform regulations in a way that does not diminish the military’s ethos or sense that it is a distinct entity within Canadian society, uniquely suited by its traditions and values for its war-fighting role. For the RCChS, however, pluralism has meant fundamental changes to its identity as it lets go of a distinctly Christian ethos and moves towards what it calls a multi-faith identity. Pluralism in the “chaplaincy worldview” affirms that the institution should be a place where different faith groups can coexist, overlap, and share agendas without impacting one another’s theological truth claims. In its internal publications and



pronouncements from senior leaders, the RCChS prides itself as being a singular example of religious cooperation in the world's militaries

Is this understanding of pluralism and self-satisfaction shared by currently serving chaplains? During the course of my research I conducted fourteen semi-structured interviews with a cross-section of serving chaplains. My research goal was to find individuals who were primarily junior officers, holding the rank of Captain (or equivalent),<sup>14</sup> with between eight to ten year's service in the CAF. The thinking behind this criterion was that this time of service was long enough for the subjects to have seen the arc of the chaplaincy's movement towards pluralism, but was also not long enough for them to have grown overly comfortable or even complacent with the organization's culture. I sought a diversity of faith groups, gender, and ethnicity. The distribution of my currently serving research subjects is as follows:

Total: 14

Average years of service in the CAF: 8

Male: 12

Female: 2

Visible Minority: 2

Aboriginal: 1

Anglican: 5

United Church of Canada: 1

Baptist: 1

Presbyterian: 1

Roman Catholic: 2

Christian Reformed: 1

Pentecostal: 1

Orthodox: 1

Muslim: 1

In open-ended interviews ranging from thirty minutes to one hour's duration, I asked each the following questions.

Tell me about your experience of working with members of other faith groups in the Canadian Armed Forces,

- (a) What has been positive about this experience?
- (b) What has been challenging about it?

Talk about your experience of working with chaplains of other faith groups in the RCChS.

- (a) What has been positive about this experience?
- (b) What has been challenging about it?

It is often said that the CAF should reflect the face of Canada. Should this be true of the RCChS as well? To what extent should the RCChS' diversity reflect Canada's religious diversity?

The Service has taken many steps in the last decade towards becoming a multifaith organization. How would you assess its progress.

- (a) What do you think the RCChS has done well?
- (b) What could it do better?

If you took the new RCChS course in Ministering in a Pluralistic Environment, discuss your experience of the course.

- (a) What did you find positive about the course?
- (b) What did you find challenging about the course?

If you were a senior leader in the chaplaincy, would you want to move towards greater diversity and greater representation of faith groups in the RCChS? What would your reasons be for changing or not changing?

All of the research interviews were conducted in accordance with guidelines established by Wilfrid Laurier University's Research Ethics Board, and with the permission of the Royal Canadian Chaplain Service. Some of the interviews were conducted face to face during a one-day focus group, but the majority were conducted by telephone. Since these subjects are currently serving members, their identity is protected. In addition to these interviews, the data presented in Chapter Two was gathered during semi-structured interviews with six individuals who had been influential in the development of the chaplaincy's pluralism, including the four who held its top post as Chaplain General consecutively from 2001 to 2010, a key decade in the organization's history. Chapter Three also depends on data gathered during semi-structured interviews with ten of the eleven members currently serving on the ICCMC. All interviews were recorded and were transcribed by myself. Additional data was gathered by emails to individuals who played a role in the historical events described in Chapters Two and Three, and some statistical information on the present chaplaincy was supplied to me by RCChS headquarters staff.

With the chaplaincy now into the second decade of its commitment to pluralism, it seems an appropriate time to assess the progress of this experiment in Canadian religious life, and to see if it has successfully overlaid if not effaced the original trace of the "Christian men's association". My hope is that in pursuing these research goals,

my insider knowledge and expertise of military culture gives me an advantage over civilian scholars without fatally compromising my objectivity. Since Benham Rennick's pioneering work, the field has remained largely untouched, particularly insofar as religious diversity is concerned. My sense in most of the interviews with serving chaplains, as well as with some of their ecclesiastical sponsors on the ICCMC, is that while they are men and women deeply committed to their faith, they also are thoughtful and even incisive about the role of religion in Canadian society. While their individual beliefs belong to the private realm, their efforts to understand and implement a functional and even equitable form of religious pluralism within the military is a very public and integral continuation of the Canadian story of addressing diversity and integrating others.

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<sup>1</sup> Two days before, another Canadian military member, Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, was deliberately struck and killed by a second attacker who was purportedly influenced by jihadist messaging. By his family's wish, Vincent's 1 November funeral did not receive the same degree of media attention that Cirillo's did (Canada News 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Canada's military is in an ongoing process of changes to its nomenclature. Prior to March 2013, it was known as Canadian Forces or "CF", until the government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper reinserted the word "Armed" (National Post 2013). "Canadian Armed Forces" is today the military's official branding, and so this thesis uses that phrase or the initials, "CAF". I have left "CF" in place where it appears in citations and interviews.

<sup>3</sup> Rob Fead is a priest in the Anglican Church of Canada. The Cirillo funeral was conducted in the Christ's Church Anglican Cathedral in Hamilton, Ontario, simply because the Presbyterian church traditionally associated with the regiment was too small to hold the many guests, including the Primer Minister and other officials, attending the service. I learned this the day before from the Right Reverend Ralph Spence, the retired Anglican Bishop of Niagara, who assists in the administration of the Cathedral.

<sup>4</sup> The "Prayers for Ottawa" service was organized by the Anglican cathedral in Ottawa (Ottawa Citizen 2014b). Chaplain General Fletcher and the chaplain quoted here, Canon Catherine Ascah, are both Anglican clergy.

<sup>5</sup> Since the name "RCChS" is official and quite new, and since chaplains still habitually use the older name "Chaplain Branch" or just "Branch", I have elected to continue using those terms in this discussion

<sup>6</sup> "Padre" is the customary term for "chaplain" used in the Canadian Armed Forces. It is used both as a noun (e.g., "We need a padre as part of this deployment") or as a term of address (e.g., "Can I speak to you, Padre?").

<sup>7</sup> An unpublished CAF document on RLE doctrine was also provided to me by Major Steele Lazerte, RCChS, pers. comm. June 6 2014.

<sup>8</sup> A recent example of such reporting would be the Lutheran Church of Canada's online magazine reporting on LCC chaplains involved in a retrospective on chaplaincy in the First World War (Canadian Lutheran 2014). The December 2014 issue of the *Anglican Journal* likewise reported on both the Cirillo funeral and the Prayer for Ottawa ceremony and quoted the Anglican Bishop to the Armed Forces, Peter Coffin ([http://cdn.agilitycms.com/anglican-journal/Images/Articles/2014\\_Articles/12\\_Dec2014/aj-dec2014-web.pdf](http://cdn.agilitycms.com/anglican-journal/Images/Articles/2014_Articles/12_Dec2014/aj-dec2014-web.pdf)).

<sup>9</sup> Some have argued that a neoconservative "warrior ethos" has been fostered in Canada at the expense of traditional values of peacekeeping and bilateralism abroad (McKay and Swift, 2012). For an alternative point of view, see the review by David Borys (The Gregg Centre for the Study of War & Society, <http://canadianmilitaryhistory.ca/review-of-warrior-nation/>).

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<sup>10</sup> When I was managing the base chapel at CFB Suffield in 2012, I was required to complete a long questionnaire, which originated within the RCChS and was distributed CAF-wide, describing the suitability of the fifty year old structure for interfaith worship (it was in fact manifestly unsuitable). I was subsequently told that the results of this survey would be used to justify a capital campaign to renew CAF chapel infrastructure. I have no knowledge of whether such a plan is a CAF priority today.

<sup>11</sup> I first met Joanne Benham Rennick in 2007 when I was a research subject for her doctoral dissertation, which was subsequently published as *Religion in the Ranks* (Toronto: U of T Press, 2011). Dr. Benham Rennick served as my own thesis supervisor during my MA studies at Wilfrid Laurier University.

<sup>12</sup> In military parlance, a “Mess Dinner” is a lengthy formal meal, with toasts, music, and other traditions (including alcohol consumption) designed to reinforce the military ethos and subgroup identity. Three groups, Junior Ranks, Sergeants, and Officers, have their own clubs or Messes, though typically only Sergeants and Officers have Mess Dinners.

<sup>13</sup> For example, an internal 2014 “Backgrounder” document, “Chaplain Branch - New Primary Badge”, says that “The wearing of faith-specific Chaplain cap badges will continue to be an important dimension of developing a truly *non-homogenized multi-faith chaplaincy*” (italics mine; Major Derrick Marshall, RCChS, pers. comm. arch 14, 2014). More recently, a senior chaplain leader wrote in a CAF journal that “a more diverse military chaplaincy would be more efficient and more resilient than a *homogenous* chaplaincy” (Chapdelaine 2014a, 41).

<sup>14</sup> Most chaplains begin their service in their CAF with the rank of Captain or its equivalent, Lieutenant (Navy), and are thus considered to be junior officers. Senior officers are those who hold the rank of Major (or its naval equivalent of Lieutenant-Commander) and higher. Most chaplains can expect to be promoted at least once in their career.

## Chapter Two

### Planning Pluralism: Establishing a Multi-faith Chaplaincy

*“Interfaith grew out of ecumenical, so from parochial to ecumenical to interfaith.”*  
- BGen (ret'd) Ron Bourque, Chaplain General, 2003-2006.

#### 2.1. First Steps to Pluralism

On 29 September, 2001, the cadets and staff of the Royal Military College (RMC), along with the Chaplain General of the CAF went on parade for a ceremony to consecrate the College's new colours. Since antiquity militaries have invested their battlefield totems, standards and flags with sacred significance (DND 2014). In the British military tradition, that Canada largely inherited, a new regimental or unit flag, known as “the colours” was blessed by chaplains, guarded as a sacred object and reserved for ceremonial occasions and parades. Finally, at the end of its life, the flag was “deposited” in a church (often an Anglican cathedral) linked with that regiment or a unit, where it would typically hang from the rafters. However, the designers of this ceremony wanted it to acknowledge religious differences. The Chaplain General, Tim Maindonald, an Anglican, had worked with the RMC chaplains for months to understand the demographics of the student body, which represented seven non-Christian faith groups, and to include representatives of these faith groups in the consecration ceremony. Lacking a template on how to plan multi-faith prayer services, he secured the

permission of his ecclesiastical superior to improvise and “do theology”, as Maindonald later described it:

I said, OK, we’ve got all sorts of faith group families there. I’m going to invite all of the faith group families’ religious representatives down to this parade, and at the time of consecration we’re all going to ... stand around in a big circle around the drums, with the drums piled and the colours laid on top, and we’re going to go right around the circle and everyone’s going to offer a prayer in their own language or whatever they want to say. We went right around the circle and the last one was me, the Chaplain General of the day, and they had all given [me] permission to step forward and lay hands on those colours and to set them aside for RMC use (Tim Maindonald, interview).<sup>15</sup>

This consecration of colours ceremony was not the first prominent ceremony involving plural religious communities in the history of the CAF chaplaincy. As the chaplain responsible for the dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Ottawa in May 2000, Padre Dave Kettle included non-Christian faith leaders who offered their own prayers and blessings. Also working without a template, Kettle recalled that “I was just flying by the seat of my pants ... I knew that we had to have something that was inclusive and respectful, and everybody had an opportunity to participate” (Dave Kettle, interview; see also Government of Canada 2000). While it was not without precedent, therefore, Maindonald’s ceremony was sufficiently novel to attract the attention of one of Canada’s preeminent military historians, J.L. Granatstein, who called the RMC event a “perfect example of modern CF inclusiveness” (Granatstein 2011, 513).

Thirteen years later, Maindonald described the RMC ceremony as “the beginning [of] the experiment of how ... multi-faith communities could kind of do this theology together” (Maindonald, interview). While he did explain in depth what he meant by “do this theology”, over the course of our two hour-long conversation, I began to locate his



meaning in a phrase he used five times, “people of faith”. These “people” were the faith groups who had slowly grown in number and diversity since he had joined the military as a chaplain in 1975. As Maindonald described it, a new awareness to this diversity entailed a change in mission, so that the chaplaincy’s role was to “manage this as best we can ... [so that] the people of faith who are represented in Canada and represented in the CF are all going to be ministered to and looked after by the Chaplain Branch” (Maindonald, interview). In describing the mixed races and religions on parade at RMC in 2001, Maindonald is also describing the changing sociological and demographical reality that the CAF’s commanders and their political masters had been trying to manage since at least the 1990s. Was RMC a eureka moment for the chaplaincy, when it began what Maindonald called “the slow march into the new reality” of pluralism, a deliberate and planned progress, or was the chaplaincy caught up in and reacting to forces and processes beyond its control? My original research question asked why the leaders of the Chaplaincy chose to transform it from a Christian into a multi-faith organization. In hearing the story from Maindonald and the key figures who followed him,<sup>16</sup> I came to the opinion that there was little choice in the matter. Maindonald himself described a decision process where chaplain leaders concluded that “we’re going to go down this road before we’re challenged to go down this road, and we’re going to try and get it right”. This statement reflects a concern for relevance and institutional survival that is still heard in chaplain voices in 2015. As I came to see it, the more interesting research question was to inquire how a highly traditional religious organization within an equally traditional military culture adapted a Christian pastoral mindset, “ministering to and looking after” people, to a new Canadian context?

In redefining my inquiry, two related questions arose. First, what was the capacity of this essentially Christian institution to adapt, even to the point of diversifying the “people of faith” within its own ranks? Secondly, how did Maindonald’s successors create the working understanding of pluralism that guides the institution today?

## **2.2. Forced Ecumenism as a Driver of Change**

The 1990s began a period of significant change for the RCChS (or the Chaplain Branch as it was then known), as trends within the wider military impacted the chaplaincy’s structure and began to shift its culture and membership towards a multi-faith if not yet truly pluralist nature. Other than the overview presented by Benham Rennick, no scholar has documented this story from where Fowler’s partial account of the chaplaincy, arguably written in the mode of church history, left off in 1995 (Benham Rennick 2011,18-69; Fowler 1995).<sup>17</sup> My own sources for the account that follows depend largely on the subjective oral histories of the participants.<sup>18</sup> For much of the Cold War era, the Chaplain Branch was a mirror of Christian Canada. Its demographics were primarily of Francophone Roman Catholics and Anglophone Protestants of British descent, reflecting what Peter Beyer calls the “core feature” of Canada’s religious, linguistic, and cultural duality for much of the Twentieth Century (Beyer 2008,11-12). Protestant members were drawn from the five mainstream denominations (Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Baptist and United Church). Branch strength was based on a quota of one Protestant chaplain to 500 personnel and one Roman Catholic to 1000. The chaplaincy’s ministry, like the postwar civilian church, had a decidedly suburban

quality. The 1950s and 1960s saw an expansion of military bases in Canada and in Western Europe, and the concurrent construction of Protestant and Roman Catholic chapels intended to serve military members and families in neighbourhoods of residential housing, known as Permanent Married Quarters (Fowler 1996,102-113; Howie 2006, 62-63). Chaplains were expected to divide their time between pastoral duties in chapel and unit ministry on base (what the military calls *in garrison*), on exercise and the many peacekeeping deployments of the Cold War. The culture of the Service was, within its Protestant and Catholic divisions, homogenous. Stan Johnstone, a Lutheran who served as Chaplain General from 2006-2008, recalls that among Protestants in the 1980s, “the differences in those days among the denominations was not huge. There was the Anglican-Lutheran liturgical sense and there was the United Church and Baptist ... more of a free church understanding, ... but there was a great unity of thinking in terms of how to do the ministry” (Stan Johnstone, interview). Catholic chaplains, who were usually priests and always in short supply, mostly focused on sacramental ministry.

The experience of Roman Catholics in the First World War, when they served within a Protestant-dominated chaplaincy, had left a “bitter legacy” that led Catholics at the start of the Second World War in 1939 to demand their own organization under their own leadership (Fowler 1996,15-16; Chapdelaine 2014a, 35). At the senior levels of the two Branches, there was a Protestant and Catholic Chaplain General and duplicate positions for senior officers within each Branch. Protestant and Roman Catholics generally had little to do with one another except at the lower levels of day to day

cooperation, what the military calls the *tactical level*. The normal practice was to assign one Protestant and one Roman Catholic chaplain to each unit, with Catholic chaplains typically ministering to the needs of Roman Catholics and Protestants ministering to all others, although there was some crossover in the case of pastoral emergencies (Ron Bourque, interview). Protestant and Catholic chaplains generally enjoyed good relations at the tactical level, but also felt that they were part of two distinct organizations. Dave Kettle, a Presbyterian, who joined the Service in 1981, recalls that during “the first ten years of my chaplaincy, I was a Protestant chaplain and I had my Roman Catholic counterparts with whom I would cooperate with from time to time, but it was really two solitudes” (Kettle, interview).

The unexpected end of the Cold War changed the chaplaincy in a manner that made the turn to pluralism possible and desirable. Within the CAF, the 1990s would become known as “The Decade of Darkness”. With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the vanishing prospect of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe, successive federal budget cuts to defence spending from 1989-1991 ended Canada’s military presence in Europe and began a severe reduction to the number of personnel in the Regular (full time) military. While these cuts were made across the CAF, there were indications in the mid 1990s that the Chaplain Branch would be hit especially hard in what one chaplain of this era called “the great downsizing” (Maindonald, interview). Rumours circulated among Protestants and Catholic chaplains that their services might no longer be needed by a smaller military dedicated to constabulary and peacekeeping duties.<sup>19</sup> While the chaplaincy survived, this near-death experience provoked considerable

anxiety.<sup>20</sup> However, the austerities of the mid-1990s would change the very nature of the Branch. Pressed to find budget savings, the CAF made it clear that the days of separate and parallel Roman Catholic and Protestant branches would soon be over, despite the chaplaincy's objections that such an amalgamation would require significant changes in ecclesiastical governance. As Ron Bourque described it, "We weren't given a choice" (Bourque, interview). Amalgamation was formally achieved by 1995, but some steps towards greater ecumenism had already been taken and may even have helped Protestants and Catholics to integrate. An interdenominational school for chaplain training, that had first been proposed in 1992, became operational in 1994 with new training standards and job definitions, known as Military Occupational Analyses, for the personnel of an amalgamated Branch. Historian Duff Crerar credits the school for doing much to "found the mutual understanding between Roman Catholics and Protestants [that] facilitated branch amalgamation in 1995" (Crerar 2014, 18).

Amalgamation meant that Protestant and Catholic chaplains now found themselves under one another's supervision, which entailed some friction and anxiety. While the new Chaplain School had been able to define many similarities between a Catholic and Protestant chaplain's job, a good first step for greater ecumenism, there was a lingering sense that they two were almost separate species. Catholic chaplains wondered, "[I]f there's a Baptist base chaplain [as supervisor] and a Roman Catholic priest, how in the world could a Baptist pastor ever grade a Roman Catholic priest on *anything*" when the time came for annual performance reviews (Maindonald, interview), and doubtless there were Protestants who had similar concerns about working under

the supervision of a Catholic chaplain. Ron Bourque, a Catholic and the first senior chaplain to lead an integrated team, described this period as “the beginning of a true ecumenical ministry” when “unit ministry finally became the responsibility of that individual chaplain to meet the needs of whoever came to him, regardless of denomination, regardless of religious belief, regardless of ... eventually we came to sexual orientation, regardless of any of that stuff” (Bourque, interview). From his time as leader of an integrated team to his tenure as Chaplain General from 2003-2006, Bourque would make it clear to his chaplains that care for all was the new way of doing business and if they could not adapt then “they had to get out because their employer ... is the government of Canada, not our Church” (Bourque, interview). Amalgamation thus broke down a sectarian vision of pastoral ministry, where Catholic chaplains looked after Catholics and Protestants cared for everyone else. As Bourque put it shortly after his retirement in 2006, the new standard of caring for the “personal and spiritual needs of each member [of the CF]” (Bourque 2006, 91-92) was something far more than just a vision of ecumenical ministry, and was actually an alignment of the chaplaincy with Canadian values. Perhaps Bourque’s most significant contribution during his tenure as Chaplain General was his message that “The Chaplain Branch does not have a choice when it comes to ministering to the men and women of the CF and their families” (Bourque 2006, 93). This statement is today a key part of the RCChS’s ideology as expressed in its informal motto, “Minister to our own, facilitate the faith needs of others, and serve all”.<sup>21</sup>

Another step to greater ecumenism, not as involuntary as amalgamation but not entirely voluntary, either, was the entry of the first evangelical Protestant chaplain. Prior to 1990 the Branch's policy was that it would only accept Protestant chaplains from the five mainstream denominations according to a "stratified" quota system (Kettle, interview). Several chaplains, including at least one former evangelical, had entered the chaplaincy after changing denominations to one that still had room in its quotas. However, beginning in 1988, a Free Methodist pastor, the Rev. Steven Merriman, began to challenge the Chaplain Branch's policy on not recruiting evangelicals. During a two-year exchange of correspondence that reached the office of the Associate Minister of National Defence, Merriman challenged the legitimacy of the rationale for the quota system, that was being used to deny his application (Merriman, interview). His argument shrewdly appealed to the chaplaincy's ideal of an ecumenical ministry where, at a pastoral if not sacramental level, a chaplain should be able to serve all personnel, and not just those of his or her own denomination.

... and so the biggest thing that they argued about was the demographics ... because there were not enough Free Methodists in the military ... I challenged them back saying, what they're calling their chaplaincy to is an ecumenical ministry. ... [T]hey can't change then say, well, it's gotta be based on demographics if it's ecumenical. You don't go up to somebody and say, "Oh, you're Free Methodist, well, I can minister to you but I can't minister to you if you're United Church or something" (Merriman, interview).

Merriman made his case persistently, and at one point implied that he would go to the media. After taking legal counsel,<sup>22</sup> the chaplaincy relented. By 1991 Merriman was in uniform and serving as chaplain to an army regiment. Two other evangelicals, a second Free Methodist and a Pentecostal, Pierre Bergeron, followed Merriman into the chaplaincy during the 1990s.

The incorporation of evangelicals caused some friction. While the original Protestant culture had been fairly homogenous, evangelical colleagues had to overcome certain perceptions and stereotypes. Tim Maindonald recalled some of his fellow Anglicans saying that they would not work “with a Pentecostal, those people are crazy” (Maindonald, interview). While Steve Merriman felt that “overall I was never treated badly”, he did sense that “there was that little bit of .. you know, he’s this guy from this kind of evangelical church, don’t know what to expect of him” (Merriman, interview). Pierre Bergeron described being put on a kind of informal probation by his Protestant colleagues.

I remember being invited to officiate the communion service at Retreat and being told after that it was a “test”. Fortunately for me, the Pentecostal liturgy is flexible and I had included part of the Anglican liturgy so I passed the test. I wasn’t offended by such comments because I knew that the first few years I would need a flexible attitude on my part and so would my colleagues as we truly discovered who we were rather than giving way to “what we had heard about each other” (Bergeron, pers. com.).

Within the nomenclature of the Service, the handful of evangelical chaplains were officially known as Other Protestant Denominations, or OPDs. Unfortunately, the acronym became known as “Opey Dopies”, and matched another acronym for the much maligned, mandatory courses known them as Officer Professional Development. While the evangelicals bore this term with good humour, some felt that OPD was demeaning. Rev. Stewart Hunter, the first evangelical cleric to serve on the ICCMC, felt that talk of “Opey Dopies” fed into “the prevailing attitude [of] many chaplains ... that the evangelicals were a bunch of rednecks, uneducated, couldn’t care less about the finer things of life” (Hunter, interview). Not all Protestant chaplains looked down on their new



colleagues. The more evangelically minded, such as Dave Kettle, felt that “it was just plain fun to get more blood” and welcomed the evangelicals for the “richness” they added to the chaplaincy’s offerings, particularly in chapel worship (Kettle, interview). CAF Protestant chapels were then governed by a generic liturgy, the *Divine Service Book*, with a standard order of service that resembled Anglican Morning Prayer in that both were formal and highly scripted. This liturgy was largely foreign to evangelical worship styles. Protestant chaplains working on CAF bases were usually expected to take turns leading Sunday chapel worship, and evangelicals had to stretch themselves to learn the prescribed order of service. Kettle recalled that evangelical chaplains “were actually abundantly patient” with the kind of worship favoured by “the Big 5, who had had their way for so long”, and over time newer styles of music and extemporaneous prayer entered chapel life.

The integration of these few evangelical Protestants through the 1990s established a two-part model that the Branch could follow in the next decade to absorb a handful of non-Christian chaplains at little cost to itself. The first part of the model was to favour candidates with a high degree of adaptability to the institution’s culture and practice. Chaplain General Maindonald described this period as one of carefully managed change, when “we very carefully selected Pierre Bergeron, Steve Merriman and then eventually the Muslim chaplain [for their] ability to join a team that was a traditional historically established ministry platform”. Sensing that they were on probation, the evangelical newcomers furthered their cause by demonstrating that their faith convictions would not conflict with the chaplaincy’s evolving mission of service to

all. Now retired, Pierre Bergeron looked back on his career as “a great learning journey to find a common ground to work in partnership with so many other faith communities”.<sup>23</sup> The second part of the model involved ecclesiastical governance. The Branch required that all prospective faith groups have a religious overseer to ensure that new chaplains would avoid sectarian temptations (proselytization and selective care to like-minded believers) and that they held appropriate credentials (an undergraduate and a theological degree) for ministry in the CAF (Benham Rennick 2011, 30-31). Stewart Hunter, an ecumenically minded, senior minister in the Pentecostal Assembly of Canada, proved instrumental in these functions. Hunter joined the Interfaith Committee on Military Chaplaincy (described in more detail later in Chapter Three) in 1999, representing the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), supervised “his” chaplains and advocated for them. Unlike mainstream Protestants who came from a handful of accredited and denominationally affiliated seminaries, evangelical chaplains came from a bewildering variety of schools and bible colleges. Hunter was able to vouch for the credentials of evangelical candidates belonging to the forty-plus churches affiliated with the EFC, while screening out graduates from “bible colleges ... headquartered in Podunk Corners [that] no one had heard of before” (Hunter, interview). His gatekeeper function thus allowed the organization to maintain the perceived integrity of its credentialing standards and ensured that the homogenous culture of what was still essentially, as Maindonald described it, a Catholic-mainstream Protestant “traditional historically established ministry platform” was not significantly diluted. By all accounts the period was marked with the greatest collegiality. When Tim Maindonald became Chaplain General in 2001, he chose to have his installation service at Hunter’s

Pentecostal church in Ottawa, surprising colleagues who expected that it would be held, as per the custom, in either the Anglican cathedral or Catholic basilica. This was a calculated gesture on Maindonald's part, designed to show that "history tells us that it's better, because we're in harm's way, to work together and minister to all" (Maindonald, interview). The gesture also underscores the careful and strategic efforts that were being made to contain and absorb differences as the chaplaincy slowly changed. The careful selection, integration and supervision of collegial and like-minded chaplains from new faith groups thus became part of the chaplaincy's emerging model of integration as a strategy to manage pluralism. This strategy would prove valuable as the institution adapted to the changing nature and composition of the CAF during this period.

### **2.3. Military Diversity As A Driver Of Change**

The 1990s were thus a period of change and integration for a chaplaincy that was, while more diverse, still uniformly Christian. The same could not be said for the CAF. Even though it did not reflect the degree of the country's diversity as reflected in the 2001 census data (Benham Rennick 2011, 30-31; Government of Canada 2011), Canada's military had changed significantly since the era in the 1970s and 1980s when chaplains like Maindonald and Bourque joined. For much of the Cold War, debates about change in the CAF had centred on issues of combat doctrine and weapons technology. Military planners, particularly in the Army, were focused on building a large, conventional force of Regular soldiers, augmented by fully trained Reservists, capable of fighting the Soviet Union in Europe. The culture of the military in this era, heavily

influenced by Canada's historic and military ties with Great Britain, was paternalistic and unsympathetic to trends in civilian society (Bercuson 2009, 33-34). Even as late as the 1990s, the Army was dominated by "a colonial British regimental culture" (Kasurak 2013, 270-272), although this culture was slowly giving way. In the wake of public scandals and an austerity mindset that questioned the very *raison d'être* of the military after the Cold War, governments proved willing to sacrifice that storied regimental culture, as the disbanding of the Canadian Airborne Regiment in 1995 demonstrates. While successive federal governments would act to overhaul and change the culture of the CAF throughout the 1990s through measures such as leadership and ethics training, this process was not unprecedented. In fact, the military had been a laboratory for federally mandated social engineering for much of its modern history. The most famous example was the forced and highly unpopular unification of the Army, Navy and Air Force into the Canadian Forces imposed in 1968 by the Liberal Pearson government. Unification was driven by a host of reasons including a desire to assert direct control over Canada's defence policies (Gosselin 2008, 8). The CAF was also subject to changes driven by federal policies to promote equality and diversity.<sup>24</sup> The official policy of multiculturalism, declared by Ottawa in 1971, has its origins in attempts in the 1960s to address the French-English divide in Canada. Later, multiculturalism came to denote an approach to the wider ethnic diversity that was particularly visible in larger urban centres as a result of changes to immigration policies, but as Beyer notes, in 1971 "that sort of diversity - as contrasted to the older 'European' diversity - was still demographically and *visibly* insignificant" (Beyer 2008, 16-17). In 1969 the Trudeau government set a ten-year goal to achieve "proportionate representation" of the French

and English languages throughout the CAF. By 1983 the policy could be judged a success, with 27% of the CAF consisting of francophone members, so that “The resulting army was a better reflection of the country’s duality than almost any federal institution - indeed, better than any Canadian institution of any kind” (Granatstein 2011, 369-372). The Trudeau government set targets in 1973 to increase the percentage of women in the CAF, and their numbers gradually increased through the 1970s and 1980s. This process was accelerated by the introduction of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 and by a 1989 Canadian Human Rights Tribunal that “ordered that women be integrated into all military occupations by 1999”, though reaching this goal remains problematic in those occupations known as the combat arms (Granatstein 2011, 384).<sup>25</sup> The Chaplain Branch recruited its first female chaplain in 1981, though it had been searching for suitable candidates since 1975. Once hired, the Branch was not willing to place restrictions on their employment, on the grounds that “if women are going to be in combat then presumably women chaplains will be in combat” (Fowler 1996, 208). The pool of candidates increased as several churches normalized the ordination of women in the 1970s and 1980s, leading to increased numbers of Protestant women chaplains and some Roman Catholic lay women as Pastoral Associates. The Charter and the Canadian Human Rights Act opened the CAF to gay and lesbian members, while in the Chaplain Service the presence of gay and lesbian chaplains depended on the theological positions taken by individual denominations and religious bodies to human sexuality.<sup>26</sup>

While language, gender and sexual orientation all were generally addressed successfully by the end of the 1990s, another aspect of diversity, the presence, or more precisely, the absence, of visible minorities in the CAF, would prove problematic. Changes made by the Pearson government to immigration policy in 1967 meant that most new Canadians arriving in increasingly large numbers were no longer from the traditionally preferred European countries, but rather from regions such as Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean, and Asia. At the same time, through the 1960s and 1970s, CAF recruitment and retention rates were significantly declining. A cultural emphasis on personal autonomy and increased economic prosperity, as well as the declining prestige of the military profession, meant that the CAF, particularly in the combat arms, was increasingly seen as a low-wage employer of last resort (Granatstein 2011, Kasurak 2013, 160-162). Immigrants displayed little interest in military careers in their new country. Department of National Defence (DND) analysts rejected the possibility that the military itself, predominantly white, culturally French and English, and Christian, was an inhospitable environment for new Canadians. Rather, DND initially “attributed the problem to the immigrants themselves, whom the department regarded as self-segregated and whose community organizations ‘blocked access’ to military careers” (Kasurak 2013, 162). It was not until the late 1990s that the military finally set recruiting targets, what J.L. Granatstein called “quotas in plain English”. The goal was to raise the numbers of visible minorities from the then current 2% composition of the CAF up to 9% of the total of men and women in uniform.

This goal was in fact a requirement, since the [Canadian Armed Forces] fell under the terms of the federal Employment Equity Act. Whether visible minorities wanted to join the CF, any more than women wanted to join the combat arms, was unknown. Whether the failure to encourage more visible minorities to join

was a result of military bias or of choice was completely unknown (Granatstein 2011, 386-387).

To meet its obligations under the Employment Equity Act, which was applied to the military in 2002, the CAF created a Directorate of Human Rights and Diversity (DHRD) and formalized three categories for diversity recruiting goals for women, aboriginals, and visible minorities. By 2009, using 2006 data, the military could report that for the Total Force (Regular and Reserve), the CAF consisted of 17.1% women, 2.4% visible minorities, and 2% aboriginals, though an analyst reported that “some ethnic minority groups do not view the CF as an employer of choice” (Scoppio 2009, 27). While the CAF has currently reached a 4.2% representation of visible minorities, its recruiting remains well below the targets in all three diversity categories, and there has been some media speculation as to whether these targets will be relaxed (Ottawa Citizen 2014a).

The decision of the Chaplain Branch to become a multi-faith entity, approached gradually around the turn of the century and formally undertaken in 2003 with the hiring of its first Muslim chaplain, should thus be seen against the backdrop of the CAF’s concern to increase its own diversity in this period. Throughout the 1990s, chaplains were becoming aware at the tactical level that the CAF was beginning to change. Tim Maindonald recalled a process of “real recognition that the recruiting pool was no longer simply Christian. You could just look at any parade, be it Royal Military College or even a [Basic Officer Training Course] parade, and see the diversity of the people who were now on parade”. Stan Johnstone described his time in senior leadership in the Chaplain

Service as one of growing awareness of the diversity of the country and the government's evolving multicultural policies:

I think it was probably a natural progression that we would become multi-faith in the Branch, to reflect the country that the Armed Forces was there to defend. Every other entity in the Federal Government also had to exhibit the same attitudes. I think that was probably one of the largest influences.

As Chaplain General, Ron Bourque's duties included working with the CAF's Human Resources and recruitment specialists, which gave him a better appreciation of the problems involved in reaching out to immigrants who were no longer coming from "Christian countries". Bourque recalled that as diversity recruiting targets became a reality for the CAF, "I think the Branch realized, at least some of the senior leaders in the Branch realized, that we've got to be open to this as well". The Branch was also aware of the progress in religious diversity being made by the United States military. In the late 1990s, Bourque and a colleague spent a summer observing training at the US Air Force, Navy and Army chaplain schools. The Canadian visitors noted that the US "had rabbis, they had imams, they had every and any ... Christian denomination", and "[W]e learned a lot from them in terms of an openness to other faiths and other denominations" (Bourque, interview). By the turn of the century, it seemed clear to the senior leaders of the Chaplain Service that remaining with the Christian status quo was no longer an option. As Ron Bourque put it, "we realized at that time that we had to change".



What exactly would have compelled this change is unclear. Certainly Bourque's predecessor, Maindonald, had feared that the chaplaincy might be deemed irrelevant to a federal government that, he felt, was showing signs of becoming more secular.<sup>27</sup> It's possible that CAF commanders might eventually have wondered how an all-Christian chaplaincy was compatible with their diversity goals. In fact, the CAF's drive to increase its diversity seems to have made the chaplaincy more and not less relevant. It seems unlikely that military leaders clearly foresaw the accommodations and adjustments necessary to welcome more aboriginal and visible minority recruits. The perennial debate at Statistics Canada as to the value of gathering data on religious identity suggests a larger uncertainty within government policy as to the validity or importance of religion as a category of cultural diversity (Beyer 2008). "Religion", as Beyer suggests, "... hovers somewhere between being a problem, a regular and important aspect of Canadian reality, and an irrelevance" (Beyer 2008, 20). Certainly for the CAF, which ceased to collect data on its members' religious affiliation in this period, religion was either too unimportant or too problematic to keep track of. However, as the religious needs of the CAF's new recruits started to become apparent, the chaplaincy actually gained a new relevance as an in-house body of religious subject matter experts who could advise on these unforeseen questions. Maindonald recalled that during his time as Chaplain General, his officer received a steady stream of memos from the federal government, seeking information and clarifications on what constituted a religious requirement. Often these requests originated as a constituent complaint or inquiry about a subject such as soldiers wearing turbans, would work their way through the government to the Minister of Defence, and then be sent to the Chaplain General,

whose office would be expected to provide an answer. Maindonald's staff "spent a lot of time researching, phoning imams, phoning rabbis, saying is this a religious requirement or is it something that is more symbolic" (Maindonald, interview). Dave Kettle, who was Maindonald's policy officer at the time, notes that while the RCChS today may have gained a reputation for expertise in matters of religious accommodation, "ten years ago it wasn't the truth at all. We just had chaplains that could look stuff up on the internet and stickhandle their way through it" (Kettle, interview). Besides relying on whatever knowledge chaplains might have gleaned, the CAF also consulted with local faith leaders in this period. Mohammed Alnadvi, an imam who later became the first Muslim representative on the ICCMC, advised CAF recruiting officers on the subject of how to make the military a "friendly environment" for Muslims. Alnadvi identified a number of areas for the CAF to work on, including halal rations, allowances for prayer times when possible, respect for dress requirements "especially for Muslim women", and sensitivity to the feelings of Muslim CAF soldiers should they be asked to deploy on combat missions within Muslim cultures (Alnadvi, interview).

While the chaplaincy may thus have found a new, even advantageous, niche role in advising military commanders and politicians on religious matters such as the need for kosher and halal rations,<sup>28</sup> its ethos and religious worldview of service also adapted to the CAF's greater diversity. For some chaplains this adaptation came from a sense of obligation to minority religious members wearing a common Canadian uniform. In his study of religious diversity in the US military, American sociologist Kim Philip Hansen describes chaplains as specialists who "make religion happen" (Hansen 2012, 43). In

the US context, the First Amendment, which guarantees the free exercise of religion, means that chaplains have a specific and legally sanctioned purpose to protect and facilitate the exercise of religion by military members. Similar guarantees of religious freedom became operative in the Canadian military once it came under the Charter and the Canadian Human Rights Act, and Canadian military chaplains have also embraced the role of “making religion happen”. Looking back on his career just before his retirement, Padre Steve Merriman felt that facilitating the religious rights of other CAF personnel was an essential duty.

... if I have a Muslim gentleman and they're getting harassed because now they want to grow a beard and there's no Muslim here, well we [chaplains] have to take up that cause, it's a cause like other causes within our military, we're defending the Canadian rights that we would as our soldiers do (Merriman, interview).

A similar sense of duty lies behind Tim Maindonald's belief that “people of faith” should “be ministered to and looked after by the Chaplain Branch or Service”. Of course this sense of duty could easily be gathered into the chaplaincy worldview and self-image as an agent of pastoral care in the Christian tradition. From their accounts, Maindonald and his successors express this worldview with sincerity and even generosity. Ron Bourque, for example, spoke of how an emphasis on hospitality that he found within his own Christian theology guided him through his career as a chaplain.

My interpretation of the bible, from a personal perspective, Jesus always went out of his way to make the outsider feel welcome, and for me that was a principle that I believed in, that if you've got a group of soldiers that are on parade, and ninety percent of them are Christian, and ten percent of them are other faiths, who is it that you're going to invoke, if you will, and for me, it was always, let's make the other feel welcome, because they never have [been made welcome before] (Bourque, interview).

While these views seem sincere and even generous, they are nevertheless highly subjective and personal understandings of faith rather than coherent institutional policy. It could be indeed be argued that Canada's Charter of Rights guaranteed something more to religious minorities in uniform than merely to be "ministered to and looked after" by a Christian chaplaincy. At the turn of the Twenty First century, the chaplaincy's capability in serving minority faith groups was largely confined to good intentions, symbolic acts of inclusiveness such as the 2001 consecration of colours service at RMC, and acts of advocacy on behalf of the faith expressions of individuals. Any additional capabilities to serve minority faith groups, or to better distinguish the differences that might be glossed over by the vague phrase "people of faith", remained to be developed.

#### **2.4. Limited Pluralism: The Turn to Multi-faith**

The decision to hire the first non-Christian chaplain followed the pattern of integration described earlier for the first evangelical chaplains in the 1990s, with the exception that it was a deliberate, highly symbolic act rather than a grudging acceptance of an insistent few. Given that the Canadian military had employed Jewish chaplains in World War Two, there may have been some within the chaplaincy who expected that the first non-Christian chaplain would have been Jewish. Others might have looked at the census and demographic data and made a case that choosing a Muslim chaplain would have made more sense, given that Islam was technically the second largest religion in Canada, even if its adherents in 2001 only formed 2% of the

population (Beyer 2008, 21-22). Trying to extrapolate religious demographics in the military using national census data on religious affiliation was sheer guesswork, since the CAF does not collect or divulge such information, making it “difficult to say what the majority of CF personnel believe” (Benham Rennick 2001, 96). One could also have made a geopolitical argument that after 9/11, with Canada beginning a deployment of unknown duration to Afghanistan, a Muslim chaplain would have been a natural choice and might have gained the Chaplain Service favour with the federal government as a symbolic act of tolerance and inclusion. In fact what appears to have happened is that a Muslim candidate emerged first, one that the chaplaincy found eminently suitable.

Thanks to the contacts made through an informal interfaith advisory committee established by Tim Maindonald, the Chaplain Service had become aware of Suleyman Demiray, a Turkish-born Sunni Muslim. Reports of Demiray’s work in Canada as a hospital chaplain attracted Maindonald’s interest. The Chaplain General was impressed by stories of how he was able to develop strong connections with Christian family members who would ask Demiray to remain in the hospital room and pray with them rather than send for a Christian chaplain.

I remember that story of his hospital ministry being told, maybe by Andrew Irvine, the Baptist representative [on the ICCMC] who had heard of this fellow and had said, you know, if we’ve got to bring somebody in then this is the type of person we want, because he has the equivalences to be endorsed, he has the heart and sense of a pastor who’s going to minister to all ... he’s going to be inclusive enough in his ministry footprint to say, you know what, if I have to pray for a Christian or with a Christian, I will. And so we said, that’s the one (Maindonald, interview).

It's reasonably clear from Maindonald's words to see the same template from the hiring of the first evangelicals being used to evaluate to the first Muslim. Hiring the first Muslim chaplain was a strategic, even historic decision, and was positioned as such to the media (Government of Canada 2003).<sup>29</sup> As Dave Kettle described the decision process, "The first couple of candidates from outside the Christian faith had to be, to our mind, a success" (Kettle, interview). Demiray's experience as a hospital chaplain and his training in Clinical Pastoral Education<sup>30</sup> offered reassurance to chaplain leaders that he would be able to do ministry in a way that was compatible with the pastoral expectations of the Branch. He also had the requisite academic credentials ("the equivalencies") to give him credibility with his Christian colleagues, who sometimes critically scrutinized one another's credentials.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps most importantly, Demiray was non-threatening. Like the evangelical pioneers before him, he had an affable and collegial temperament that smoothed his path. Stewart Hunter, the Pentecostal representative on the ICCMC, recalled this time as a significant moment, and praised Demiray effusively, as did many key figures from this period. Hunter attributed his success to the fact that "he was not standoffish, he jumped right in, he's got a great personality" (Hunter, interview). While the affection and admiration in Hunter's words was genuine, there is also something of a proprietary manner in his and Maindonald's tone, a sense that Demiray was a good fit and an asset to the chaplaincy. The phrases "not standoffish" and "great personality" suggests that Demiray was different enough to be a symbol of the chaplaincy's new commitment to pluralism, but not so different that he could not integrate into the organization's dominant culture. Demiray went to the

Chaplain School at CFB Borden in September 2003, and when he graduated that December, the multi-faith Chaplain Branch officially began.

Further diversification happened slowly. Maindonald and his successors wanted to hire Jewish chaplains as well, but a suitable candidate was not found until 2007, when Chaim Mendelsohn became the first Orthodox Rabbi to serve in the CAF since World War Two (Government of Canada 2007). Faith group representatives needed to be found to represent Jewish and Muslim chaplains on the ICCMC and to satisfy the chaplaincy's model of ecclesiastical governance.<sup>32</sup> One of these was Reuven Bulkah, an Ottawa rabbi who had already been advising the chaplaincy as part of an informal interfaith advisory group created by Chaplain General Tim Maindonald. The other was Mohammad Alnadvi, a Toronto imam who, as noted earlier, also had advisory experience with the CAF, including recommending that a Muslim chaplain would help the military to attract Muslim recruits (Alnadvi, interview). Bulkah and Alnadvi both joined the ICCMC in 2007. Several of the Chaplains General following Maindonald wanted to include aboriginal spirituality as the next target faith group, and while this was discussed at the ICCMC for several years, it proved impossible to agree on how this might be done. An unexpectedly long and difficult battle with the military on how to represent other faith groups within a new, pluralistic Branch badge seems to have sapped some of the energy from the multi-faith initiative.<sup>33</sup> In addition, a much larger and ongoing distraction was the developing war in Afghanistan. Finding and training chaplains to support troops in theatre, as well as to care for a growing number of wounded soldiers and mourning families, consumed much of the Branch's energy

during this decade. Stan Johnstone was Chaplain General (2006-2008) during the CAF's heaviest fighting in Afghanistan, and recalled that he and his staff "were swamped, absolutely swamped with keeping our head above water on an hour to hour, never mind on a day to day basis". For a relatively small organization and command staff, there was clearly little time or capacity for the strategic planning that would likely have been necessary to make the turn to pluralism more than tokenism.

Nevertheless, rebranding itself as a multi-faith organization appears to have been strategically useful for the chaplaincy. By the end of the decade it could point to some substantial achievements as proof of its pluralist commitment. Padre Suleyman Demiray had made several deployments to Afghanistan, where his cultural and linguistic knowledge proved so useful to the Army's CQ efforts that, as Dave Kettle recalled, "we had to kind of fight to disengage [Demiray] from theatre" at the end of his tour there. By showing its support of the CAF's commitment to greater diversity, the chaplaincy earned the recognition and appreciation of senior commanders by demonstrating an enhanced capability to serve their troops. In welcoming the first Jewish chaplain since World War Two, Chief of Defence Staff Rick Hillier said in 2007, that "[T]he work of all our chaplains better equips our members to face personal and professional challenges" (Government of Canada 2007). A CAF recruiting officer felt that Padre Demiray provided a "valuable spin-off" to the military's efforts to recruit more Muslims (Elatrash 2007). In 2008 a friend of Demiray's, also a Turkish-born Sunni working in hospital chaplaincy, agreed to follow him into the RCChS, and by 2010 a rabbi had been recruited as a Regular Force chaplain. While the numbers of non-Christian chaplains



thus slowly increased, it would be difficult to imagine that in these first years much cultural or attitudinal change was asked of the 98% majority of their Christian peers. One Protestant chaplain who served through this decade offered this appraisal of his colleagues' response to the first Muslim co-worker.

I think for many it would have been, he can do his thing as long as it doesn't affect mine, which is consistent with decisions on same-sex marriages, or bringing in a larger number of [evangelicals], etc., as long as I don't have to change or compromise, feel free, please, the more the merrier. I really do think that was true. I don't think people said, what is a Muslim doing here, but that we would have to give up something in order to accommodate for that, isn't everybody's first assumption.<sup>34</sup>

Some Christian chaplains did see the transition as a positive experience. Padre Steve Merriman's own experience as an outsider making his way into the chaplaincy's dominant culture may have made him more sympathetic to his new non-Christian colleagues. Looking back on his career, he came to appreciate their collegiality and determination to integrate. Merriman's appreciation for how pluralism "deepened the whole flavour of ministry", suggests that he, like many thoughtful chaplains, seems to have realized that his minority colleagues offered capabilities to minister to the CAF's new diversity, including linguistic, cultural, and religious expertise, that the Christian majority did not possess.

I think [multi-faith] also built in a sense of cooperation. It's easy and it's not, in the sense that, after all these years of our Christian faith, that sometimes, and even amongst Christians sometimes, we may have some flaws that don't allow us to work together properly, but I think that this deepened the whole flavour of ministry. Because I'll be very personal, I looked at it and said, ok, if we get an imam, and we get a rabbi, even, so now we have two people who are specifically trained to minister to really, an ethnicity, so they can take care of their faith group very well, but can *they* look after and take care of someone who's Christian? So

the reversal is there as well. And I think overall that they've proved that they can, and they cooperate with others.

A gregarious and respected chaplain, whose propensity for calling everyone "brother" or "sister" made him famous among his peers, Steve Merriman clearly valued the chaplaincy's commitment to serve all CAF members, and was relieved that his new colleagues would live up to that goal. His initial fears that imams and rabbis might restrict themselves to "their" ethnicity or faith group was doubtless one of the hesitations that many chaplains had at the time about the multi-faith project. Even today, as the data from my interviews with Merriman's successors suggests, there is a lingering suspicion that extending pluralism would not work since minority faith group chaplains would only minister to "their own". The views of contemporary chaplains are discussed in Chapter Five of this study.

In retrospect, the Chaplain Service's transition to a multi-faith identity, while an historical moment in the history of the institution, was not difficult. Successive Chaplains General, as well as the ecclesial representatives on the ICCMC, all seem to have been of the same mind, and to have wanted to follow trends toward greater diversity in Canadian society and in the CAF. As Bourque's phrase "we had to change" suggests, there was a sense that the status quo, "entrenching themselves in tradition and resisting the realities of modernity" (Benham Rennick 2001, 69), was no longer an option. As members of an organization imbued with military and ecclesiastical discipline, the rank and file of Christian chaplains cooperated or acquiesced with the turn to pluralism. Perceptive chaplains could see for themselves that waning chapel life

was signalling the end of a dominant Christian culture that could no longer be taken for granted. Today, as Benham Rennick notes, religious practice in the CAF is primarily the domain of highly intentional individuals and minorities, whereas the majority of the CAF's demographic, particularly young white males, grow less likely to identify with any religious identity (Benham Rennick 2011, 165-165). The history of CAF chaplaincy in the 21st century, insofar as it could yet be written, is one of continued awareness of the need for change. A young Roman Catholic chaplain working among combat units at a large Army base told me that the fear of being judged irrelevant haunts him.

I don't think we can get cocky or think that people will take us for granted anymore. I've seen [Commanding Officers] change, and that's just me with seven years here. If we are not relevant, it's not like in the past, you could be completely irrelevant to all of the regiment but there's no way anyone was removing the chaplain from the military. It's a different world now.

The RCChS's ongoing quest to offer new capabilities to the CAF, from Religious Leader Engagement to Spiritual Resilience, show that the place of an institutional religious organization within a utilitarian and pluralist military culture may not be fully secured.

While the turn to religious pluralism may thus be seen as a Christian organization's embrace of an institutional survival strategy, perhaps driven by the memory of the near-death episode of the 1990s, a rationale for pluralism was imported into the chaplaincy worldview of pastoral service to all. Despite a self-congratulatory tone that is sometimes still heard within the institution today,<sup>35</sup> chaplain leaders of this period appear to have married a recognition of the CAF's diversity to their own pastoral theology of hospitality and care for the other. Maindonald's planning of the RMC service to include "the people of faith" is a case in point. Within their personally held theological

views as pastors and ministers shaped by the major Christian traditions, successive Chaplains General saw pluralism as a response and outreach to strangers who were coming into the foreign culture of the military. For Bourque it was an impulse of generosity founded in his own understanding of the figure and teachings of Jesus. Stan Johnstone explained his own sense of pluralism as a sense of curiosity in the encounter between faiths.

[Our Christian faith] is not there as a challenge, it's there as saying hey we're with you. This is who I am. Who are you? Who are you is important to me too. This is who I am and I know who you are and I think that's great.

Tim Maindonald, who was perhaps the most strategically-minded Chaplain General of this decade, saw the challenge of religious diversity as one of pastoral ministry to “the people of faith” represented in the CAF. The days when a Chaplain General could pray on behalf of the “people of faith” now appear to be over. Whether the RCChS and its faith group sponsors on the ICCMC can develop a sufficiently nuanced understanding of the “people of faith”, and find the capability to engage with them in their own traditions rather than from a position of Christian dominance, remains the ongoing question of its commitment to religious pluralism.

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<sup>15</sup> Maindonald's ecclesiastical superior was Andrew Hutchinson, then the Anglican Bishop Ordinary to the Armed Forces.

<sup>16</sup> The four Chaplain Generals in this period were Tim Maindonald (Anglican, CG 2001-2003), Ron Bourque (Roman Catholic, CG 2003-2006), Stan Johnstone (Lutheran, CG 2006-2008) and Dave Kettle (Presbyterian, 2008-2010). All four agreed to be interviewed as part of this research. The two CGs following them were Karl McLean (Anglican, CG 2010-2013) and John Fletcher (Anglican, CG 2013 - present). I did not approach either of these men for interviews.

<sup>17</sup> Dr. Duff Crerar (pers. comm.) has pointed out to me that archival material on the modern chaplaincy is significantly lacking. Other than the holdings in National Defence's Department of History and Heritage, which I have not completely examined, there is no designated archivist or archive within the contemporary RCChS organization.

<sup>18</sup> The need for a scholarly history of the modern CAF chaplaincy became abundantly clear to me early on in this project, though such a project was beyond the scope of my research goals.

<sup>19</sup> "The idea of the "constabulary force", a stripped down, more lightly armed Canadian Army geared towards enforcing ceasefires, was much debated through the 1990s (Kasurak 2013, 252-282).

<sup>20</sup> Tim Maindonald described how the chaplaincy lobbied senior military officers, base and unit commanders to declare their need for chaplains to higher command. The story survives within the RCChS culture today as a kind of folk memory and may explain why the words "relevance" or "relevant" appear 9 times in the relatively short document, *Called to Serve: A Strategy for the Canadian Forces Chaplaincy* (DND 2008).

<sup>21</sup> "Current" because the Interfaith Committee on Military Chaplaincy is currently recommending changing the order of the clauses, so that "Serve all" comes first (Bishop Peter Coffin, interview). "Vocatio ad servitum" (Called to Serve) became the official branch motto, as contained in its heraldry, in 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Major (ret.) S.K. Moore, pers. com. 5 January, 2015.

<sup>23</sup> One of Pierre Bergeron's last roles in the RCChS before retirement, a role which he said he greatly enjoyed, was as senior officer responsible for Jewish and Muslim chaplains (Bergeron, pers. com.).

<sup>24</sup> Particularly the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (1978), Section Fifteen (the equality section) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (came into effect 17 April 1985), and the *Employment Equity Act* (1996) which required the CAF and DND to be "representative of the public they serve" and to offer "discrimination-free employment" (Dandeker and Winslow 2000).

<sup>25</sup> During this period, Western militaries came to rely increasingly on women personnel for a range of support and clerical functions (Van Creveld 2006, 226-227).

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<sup>26</sup> Chapdelaine (2014a, 37) writes that “homosexual chaplains ...are accepted and do not face any discrimination, in accordance with the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*”. However, some of the faith groups represented on the ICCMC disapprove of homosexuality on theological grounds, and might not permit openly gay or lesbian chaplains of their faith groups to remain in ministry. While the ICCMC Handbook is silent on the matter of homosexuality, it does state that the Committee’s functions include setting “the academic, spiritual and professional standards required ... for endorsement and, if needs be, withdrawal of the same” (ICCMC 2014, 16). The withdrawal of endorsement would not necessarily end an individual’s employment in the CAF if they could transfer to another trade, but it would end their employment in the CAF as a chaplain.

<sup>27</sup>In my interview with him, Maindonald noted that the Chaplain General’s traditional access to the Minister of National Defence was slowly being withdrawn even before his time (2001-2003) as CG. He was also shaken when his advice was rejected by the planners of the National Day of Mourning, held 18 September, 2001 on Parliament Hill to commemorate the events of 9/11. Maindonald had argued that a prayer was appropriate for the occasion and had come in uniform prepared to deliver one. His verdict on the event, which lacked any overtly religious forms or content, was that “The government was ...moving, sidestepping a little bit away from the challenges of ecumenical or multi-faith kind of understandings, saying we’ll do this on our own and it was collapsing.”

<sup>28</sup> Tim Maindonald recalled a CAF general, an observant Jew, telling him how as a young officer he would go to the field on exercises and “scrounge around in order to subsist”. Years later Maindonald related that story to the then Chief of Defence Staff, General Henault, to illustrate the need for religious accommodation.

<sup>29</sup> The press release of 10 December 2003 is still archived on the CAF public website (Government of Canada 2003).

<sup>30</sup> Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is an accredited system of supervised training for clergy and chaplains, usually conducted in a hospital or similar institutional setting. The accrediting body for CPE in Canada is the Canadian Association of Spiritual Care (<http://www.spiritualcare.ca/index.asp>). Many CAF chaplains have some experience of CPE as part of their denominational and seminary formation. The RCChS offers advanced training in CPE for a few select chaplains.

<sup>31</sup> Since he had a B.A. in Religion from a Turkish University, and had earned an MA in Religion from Carleton University in Ottawa, Demiray was granted an equivalency “to the Master of Divinity Degree that is required of Christian clergy” (Benham Rennick 2011, 54).

<sup>32</sup> The role of the ICCMC is discussed in Chapter Three.

<sup>33</sup>This issue is discussed in Chapter Four.

<sup>34</sup> Anonymous interview.

<sup>35</sup> For example, in a recent edition of the RCChS publication *Dialogue*, one writer praises the chaplaincy as “a role model” for “respect, tolerance, equality and a sense of commonalities and building bridges”(Inniger 2014).

## Chapter Three

### Managing Pluralism: The Role Of The Interfaith Committee On Canadian Military Chaplaincy

*“You’re a Christian, I’m a Christian, we’re all Christian. Where’s the interfaith thing?”*  
Rev. Stewart Hunter, former ICCMC member.

#### 3.1. The ICCMC and Inter-Religious Dialogue

In a 2010 report prepared for the Government of Canada, Pierre Brodeur and his colleagues studied the organizations in Canada dedicated to inter-religious dialogue and sorted them into seven types of activities, including “Dialogues of Belief” and “Dialogues of Social Justice”. Brodeur’s category of “Dialogue with Governments”, in which formally constituted and representative bodies engage with governments “for the purpose of facilitating necessary accommodations and respect for the religious practices of citizens” (Brodeur et al. 2010, 12), describes the work of the Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy (ICCMC). In this respect the ICCMC resembles the oversight of prison chaplaincy for the federal government.<sup>36</sup> In its advisory role, the ICCMC has access to both the federal Minister of National Defence and Canada’s most senior military officer, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), to consult on any matters having to do with the “integrity” of all faith groups represented in the military. As an administrative and licensing body, the ICCMC provides the “professional religious oversight” that enables chaplains to function as clerics and representatives of

their faith groups. This oversight, that includes the verification of applicants' clerical credentials and good standing in their faith group, must be in place before a chaplain can receive an officer's commission in the Canadian Armed Forces (Benham Rennick 2011, 31-32). In this respect the ICCMC plays an accreditation role similar to those that allow other professionals, such as doctors, dentists, lawyers and social workers, to enter the CAF as specialist officers. The difference, of course, is that the ICCMC understands accreditation in theological terms. Central to the ICCMC's Guiding Principles, as spelled out in its newly published Handbook, is the statement of belief that "Chaplains are called by God through their faith group" and thus are not "simply professionals trained in skills to perform 'chaplaincy' tasks" (ICCMC 2014, 12). As senior members of the faith groups supplying clergy to the RCChS, ICCMC members have a pastoral and disciplinary relationship to the chaplains placed within their responsibility. As senior leaders of their faith groups ICCMC members are supposed to embody the collaborative and respectful ethos of a pluralist religious organization. As Bishop Peter Coffin, one of the ICCMC's longest serving members, explained, "If we are working with a multi-faith chaplaincy, I think the ICCMC members and the way they work model the kind of relationships that we aspire to in the Canadian Forces" (Coffin, interview).

This mandate to set a tone of effective and functional pluralism also extends to the future direction of the RCChS. As religious experts the ICCMC considers the applications of any Christian and non-Christian faith groups seeking to have their members join the RCChS as chaplains. In this aspect of their role, the ICCMC might be



described as gatekeepers of pluralism within the RCChS. While some of the Chaplains General discussed in Chapter Two described their role in the Branch as near-visionaries (e.g. Maindonald's "long slow march into a new reality"), the ICCMC's role underscores the complexity of pluralism as a process. As faith group stakeholders, the ICCMC must balance the interests of their denominations and theologies against the goals of the CAF's military and political leaders, while maintaining an awareness of the Charter and other laws as they apply to religious freedom in the military. Working within a traditional and bureaucratic governance structure, and weighing their multiple responsibilities, the ICCMC's role means that any future extension of religious pluralism will be dependent on far more than the vision of any one Chaplain General. The roles and functions of the ICCMC thus demonstrate another aspect of the tension between pluralism and particularity in the work and culture of the chaplaincy. While the ICCMC representatives mentor, encourage and even discipline their chaplains to be true to their particular faith traditions, they also oversee and shape the pluralism that is expected by the multicultural state and military they advise. The behind the scenes nature of its work may help explain why the ICCMC has attracted little scholarly attention, despite the fact that as an established body of senior religious representatives, with formal ties to the federal government, the ICCMC is a significant interfaith body within Canada's religious landscape (Benham Rennick 2011; 54-57). The larger subject of inter-religious dialogue in Canada, its effectiveness, and social impact "remains largely unknown due to a lack of research in this field" (Brodeur 2010, 5). Through semi-structured interviews with ICCMC members I aim to answer the following questions. First, what was the process and what were the underlying principles that lead to the current configuration of the

ICCMC? Second, given their commitment to their own religious particularities, how do the members of the ICCMC understand religious pluralism? Third, how would these ideas of pluralism guide the ICCMC's members in any future expansion of the faith groups represented within the RCChS?

### **3.2. History and Current Function of the ICCMC**

The practical nature of military chaplaincy seems to give its ecumenical and interfaith dimensions an immediacy and focus that is often lacking in the more general interfaith conversations and dialogues of churches and faith groups.<sup>37</sup> Karen Hamilton, the General Secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches and a member of the ICCMC, suggests that the CAF chaplaincy “is actually a lot farther ahead than a lot of society in terms of intentional thinking on [religious pluralism]” (Hamilton, interview). Historical evidence seems to support Hamilton's claim. Military chaplaincy, which calls on its practitioners to work closely together while sharing hardships as other soldiers do, has long been an agent in strengthening ecumenical and even interfaith relationships. Many Canadian chaplains returned from the First World War with hopes for “a better understanding between the Churches and of the effective carrying out of the work of the Kingdom of God” (Crerar 1995, 204). While these hopes went unfulfilled in the interwar years, the Canadian churches worked in 1939 to recreate the Chaplain Service for another war (Crerar 1995, 229). During the Second World War, Canada's Christian churches were joined by the Canadian Jewish Congress in providing chaplains and other services to Jewish members of the military (Ontario Jewish Archives, n.d.). In the

United States the story of the Four Chaplains, one Catholic, two Protestant, and one Jewish, who drowned on a torpedoed troop ship in 1943 after giving their floatation devices to other soldiers, created a powerful image of religious cooperation that was deployed postwar by those who wanted America to “live up to its pluralist creed” (Schultz 2011, 5). Mass mobilization for total war in the US included significant numbers of clergy, which meant that mechanisms to appoint chaplains of various faiths became “centralized ... and thus required more deliberate co-ordination among the various faiths, while chaplaincy training more frequently included instruction about inter-religious cooperation” (Wuthnow 2005, 32). While Canada mobilized at a smaller scale, individual Protestant denominations established their own committees to support the chaplains they sent to the military. The Roman Catholic Church organized and supported its chaplains at the diocesan level. Among Protestants, an ecumenical organization known as the Inter Church Chaplaincy Committee was created to communicate between denominations and “also served as a primary resource for the military concerning appointments, nominations for awards, and senior positions” (ICCMC 2014, 6).<sup>38</sup> After World War Two this committee became the Canadian Council of Churches’ Committee on Chaplain Service in the Forces (the so-called “5Cs”) with the following functions:

- a. Be the recognized instrument of the churches for the consideration of all matters affecting the Chaplain Services, which are of common interest to the communions;
- b. Exercise a general oversight of religion in the Forces;
- c. Act as a link between the chaplains and the churches; and

d. Serve as the common channel of communication between the churches and the Government of Canada with regard to the Chaplain Services (ICCMC 2014, 7).

For Roman Catholics, the same functions were exercised by a Military Vicariate (subsequently known as the Military Ordinariate), which was essentially an extra-territorial diocese of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>39</sup> This arrangement continued until the forced amalgamation of the Protestant and Catholic Branches of the Chaplain Service described earlier, and the creation of the current ICCMC in 1997.

The years prior to amalgamation saw an emphasis on finding Protestants who were prominent within their denominations to serve as representatives on the “5Cs”. Previously the position of denominational representative had been seen as a suitable role for a retired chaplain of the appropriate faith group (Maindonald, interview), since that person would already understand the military milieu that was (and often still is) foreign to civilian clerics.<sup>40</sup> However, there was a growing belief among the Chaplain Branch leadership that retired chaplains lacked the prominence to be effective advocates for the chaplaincy. Tim Maindonald (Chaplain General 2001-2003) wanted representatives who could act as “a conduit that goes from the 5Cs into the denominational headquarters of the day” (Maindonald, interview). Such conduits could help recruit chaplains from seminaries and parishes, placate church leaders and bishops unhappy about losing valued clergy to the military, and promote the work of the Branch to denominations that, since the 1960s, and through the agency of groups such as Project Plowshares, had been influenced by the peace and disarmament movements

(Benham Rennick 2011, 26).<sup>41</sup> While this strategy of finding more prominent “5C” representatives was thus aimed at protecting the chaplaincy’s interests,<sup>42</sup> it also helped to build support for the chaplaincy’s ecumenical and interfaith efforts. Tim Maindonald recalled working as a staff officer to his fellow Anglican, then Chaplain General Gerry Peddle (CG 1997-1999), to lobby the head of the Anglican Church, the Primate, to appoint the next Bishop Ordinary.<sup>43</sup> They managed to secure a rising star in the Anglican hierarchy, Andrew Hutchinson, who became Bishop Ordinary and Anglican representative on the “5Cs” in 1998 (Maindonald, interview). It was Hutchinson as Bishop Ordinary who supported Maindonald’s efforts to do “theology on the fly” at the pioneering interfaith service at RMC in September 2001.<sup>44</sup> Likewise, Maindonald and his Lutheran colleague Stan Johnstone were able to persuade the Rev. Dr. Andrew Irvine, of McMaster University’s Divinity School, to join the “5Cs” as the Baptist representative. Irvine went on to serve as chairperson of the newly created ICCMC, which replaced the “5Cs” after the amalgamation of the Protestant and Catholic Branches. Irvine’s academic experience as part of a certification committee for North American seminaries was seen as invaluable in helping determine what academic degrees would be appropriate equivalences to those granted by Christian seminaries when assessing the credentials of the first non-Christian chaplain candidates (Maindonald, interview). Another prominent addition to the ICCMC in this period was Stewart Hunter, who joined in 1999 as the first evangelical protestant representative. At that time Hunter was the Assistant General Secretary of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, (PAoC), which had been approached on behalf of the chaplaincy by Bob Mills, the General Secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches, to find an ecclesiastical

representative for the Branch's first evangelical chaplains, Steve Merriman and Pierre Bergeron. Hunter eventually joined the ICCMC to represent the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and to oversee its chaplains. He described the process of his recruitment as being "very, very loose, it wasn't terribly formally done" (Hunter, interview). Hunter's description of an ad hoc process challenges some of the accounts of Chaplains General described in Chapter Two, which portray the Branch's move towards pluralism as a much more planned and strategic process.

These glimpses of the ICCMC's recruitment process show that while it may have been, in Hunter's words, "informal", it was also self-selecting. The process involved relationships between RCChS leaders and their church networks working together to find what they considered to be the right people, ones with the necessary experience but also the necessary mindset. Stewart Hunter's recruitment to the ICCMC is a case in point. After the tense and potentially antagonistic period that preceded the entry of the first evangelical chaplains, Merriman and Bergeron, it was important for the chaplaincy to normalize their status and smooth the way for those evangelical recruits who would surely follow. Whereas some evangelicals have an exclusivist theology that regards liturgical and liberal denominations as deficient or even invalid expressions of Christianity, Hunter has an affable personality and a longstanding interest in ecumenical activity.<sup>45</sup> Throughout his career in the Pentecostal Assembly, Hunter has enjoyed "ministerial associations and working with Roman Catholic priests and others of other denominations" (Hunter, interview). As someone known to the Canadian Council of Churches' Bob Mills, Hunter was a safe choice. Even so, as Hunter tells the story, while

humour did smooth the way, it also showed the difference between him and his new colleagues.

[The ICCMC] kind of broke the ice and got out of their comfort zone by asking another Christian, albeit evangelical, to come around the table, and I remember, I think it was Bob Mills [who said] “You know Stewart,” and he’s United Church, “we were trembling in our boots at the thought of having an evangelical around the table and we wondered, what in the world would be the case, we figured that likely after our first meeting you would have us all on our knees crying out to God!” And I said, “Great idea, Bob, let’s try it! “ But that was the kind of camaraderie and interaction that we had together.

Incremental and informal as the process was, the addition of well-connected, senior and like-minded church leaders like Hutchinson, Irvine and Hunter gave the ICCMC prestige as well as credibility and experience in ecumenical matters. While they were working out ways to manage their diversity as Christians, the members of the ICCMC were aware that side initiatives such as the informal Interfaith Advisory Council, established by Chaplain General Maindonald in 2001, were bringing the Service into dialogue with non-Christian bodies including the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Canadian Islamic Conference (ICCMC 2014, 10). As advisors to the Chaplain General and to the Minister of Defence, the ICCMC members were aware of diversity recruiting targets and employment equity initiatives within the CAF. Given this context of increasing diversity, Stewart Hunter was probably only voicing the unspoken question when he looked at his ICCMC peers and thought, “you’re a Christian, we’re all Christian, where’s the interfaith thing?”.

Bishop Peter Coffin, the current Anglican representative on the ICCMC, felt that if the Twentieth Century was “the ecumenical century”, then the new one was a time of

“finding ourselves engaged, dealing with religious pluralism in ... a more substantial way” (Coffin, interview). Beginning in the 1960s, the major Christian denominations in Canada had preoccupied themselves with, in Coffin’s words, a “heady time” of ecumenical dialogues and coalitions, with “a real desire for organic union”.<sup>46</sup> What Coffin calls the “ecumenical century” began to wind down as “we began to realize that some of the churches had gone to places where other churches couldn’t go”, and as the denominations ran out of money and good will to continue these initiatives. At the same time, Coffin explains, the Christian churches began to realize that Canadian society and religion were changing.

But then the country began to change, and our neighbourhoods began to become more multicultural, our children have begun to find themselves in school with people of other faiths and go to the playground together which is a good thing. I always rejoice when I look out in the street and see kids who are obviously of different faiths because they’re wearing the accoutrements of their faiths, and that always gives me incredible pleasure.

Bishop Coffin’s “pleasure” in religious and cultural difference is reminiscent of CG Maindonald describing his response to seeing the new diversity of an RMC graduation parade, or of CG Bourque, whose personal understanding of the Christian gospel as an imperative to hospitality led him to welcome the Other. Evidence suggests that a non-exclusivist theology that celebrated and made a virtue of difference had come to dominate both the ICCMC and the RCChS’ senior leadership by this period. My interviews imply that these views were (and are) genuinely held, and it appears that this attitude was being mutually reinforced between the two groups. At the time, the ICCMC still had the right to approve the appointment of Chaplain Generals and their immediate subordinates,<sup>47</sup> who in turn relied on the ICCMC to guide the chaplaincy. In



this self-selecting process, and given the CAF's increasing efforts to diversify, it would be impossible to imagine a Christian exclusivist chaplain ascending to senior leadership in the Branch. Likewise, as the story of Hunter's recruitment illustrates, the ICCMC self-selected clerics who had the temperament (social gregariousness, intellectual curiosity, theological openness) for ecumenism. Another factor that likely influenced both RCChS and ICCMC leadership is a tendency for some Christian leaders, aware both of their historic monopoly on religious life and of Canada's growing diversity, to be "extremely reluctant to claim a position of dominance" (Bibby 2004, 46).<sup>48</sup> Bibby's dynamic of deference may well have influenced the thinking of some ICCMC members, and indeed will arise later in my discussions on pluralism with ICCMC members and serving chaplains. In any case, it was clear by 2001 that the ICCMC would support the Chaplain Branch as it ended its exclusively Christian era.

If anything, there was a sense among the ICCMC's members that they might have waited too long to change. Stewart Hunter recalls that the years just after 9/11 were characterized by a sense that "society and the realities of Canadian demographics were way out in front, and we [in the ICCMC] were running and panting to get caught up". A Muslim representative was not formally in place until several years after Padre Suleyman Demiray became the first non-Christian chaplain to join the Service since 1945. Born in India, Dr. Mohammad Iqbal Masood Alnadvi had studied and taught Islamic law in Saudi Arabia before moving to Canada in 1998, serving a mosque in Calgary before becoming the Director of the Al-Falah Islamic Centre in Oakville, Ontario in 2004. He was a natural choice, in that while Alnadvi had not been involved in the

recruitment of Padre Suleyman Demiray, he had previously consulted with the CAF on Muslim issues and had in fact recommended the hiring of a Muslim chaplain.<sup>49</sup> Alnadvi had been attending meetings of the ICCMC since 2004 as an invited guest, and believed emphatically that Muslim chaplains would make other Muslims more likely to want to serve in the CAF.

The idea is that Muslims feel that they are a part of the military, and they are also living as a Canadian, living as a Muslim, and both things are accepted. And of course there is an incentive as well, because [the Canadian Armed Forces] provides for them the extra benefit of education and so on (Alnadvi, interview).

Alnadvi formally became a member of the ICCMC in 2006, representing the Canadian Council of Imams. Rabbi Reuven Bulka also joined the ICCMC in 2006 as the Canadian Jewish Congress representative, though he had previously been part of the less formal Interfaith Advisory Committee formed by CG Maindonald. The rabbi of a Modern Orthodox congregation in Ottawa, Bulka was also a prominent broadcaster and philanthropist, and was active in the Canadian Jewish Congress' Religious and Inter-Religious Affairs Committee. Whereas the Canadian Muslim community had been actively seeking to have chaplains in the CAF prior to the hiring of Suleyman Demiray,<sup>50</sup> Canadian Jewish leaders did not see representation in the chaplaincy as a priority, and Bulka was surprised when the RCChS approached him. He recalls asking why he was needed on the ICCMC when there were no Jewish chaplains and "hardly any Jewish people in the military". The response delighted him.

I loved the answer ... "You know what, we're in the build it and they will come mode". We're not waiting for the need for a chaplain to be created. We want to have the chaplain there so that when the need is created, the chaplain is already in place. We want to be ahead of the curve ... we want to act rather than react (Bulka, interview).<sup>51</sup>

Like Alnadvi, Bulka knew that the CAF was trying to diversify its recruiting, and saw this appeal by the RCChS as part of a “deliberate attempt” to “openly welcome and embrace people of the [Jewish] community” and make the military a more attractive career for them. As Bulka described the recruiting messaging that was appearing in community newspapers such as the Canadian Jewish News, “This is not about how your little boychik is going ...to have to start shooting and seriousness, but to see this as an opportunity, including the great benefit of schooling that comes up when you’re in the military”. Bulka’s 2006 appointment to the ICCMC was followed a year later by the recruitment of the first Jewish chaplain, who joined an Army Reserve medical unit in Ottawa (Government of Canada 2007). Finally in 2006 a Christian Orthodox representative, the Ukrainian Metropolitan Yuriy Kalistchuk, was appointed, becoming the third sitting bishop on the ICCMC.<sup>52</sup>

Besides the selection of Muslim, Jewish and Orthodox representatives, who were all in place by the end of 2006, there had been an ongoing effort through much of the decade to include Canada’s First Nations. According to Don Thériault, the Roman Catholic Bishop Ordinary and the ICCMC’s longest serving member, this goal had initially been a high priority.

Our hope originally ...was that we would turn to our native peoples first. Start with a group that is represented throughout the country with a long history and is very much part of our national culture as it were ... I felt very strongly, and so did other members too ... it’s the native peoples that we should include first, since they’re not at our table.

ICCMC consultations with First Nations representatives<sup>53</sup> were occurring at a time when the historic Canadian churches were involved in litigation and reconciliation processes arising from their involvement, together with the federal government, in the Indian Residential Schools.<sup>54</sup> Given their embeddedness in those institutions, ICCMC members like Thériault may have seen the addition of a First Nations representative to their midst as a long overdue act of justice. The problem lay with the ICCMC members' assumption, born of their familiarity with their own bureaucratized and centralized denominations, that it would be possible to find a single representative for Canada's aboriginals and their diversity of spiritual expressions (Benham Rennick 2011, 57). The discussions ended without agreement on who that representative might be. Stewart Hunter recalls one First Nations consultant recommending that the ICCMC use aboriginal advisors on a case by case basis, rather than rely on a single representative, since "there are so many differences from tribe to tribe, that as soon as you bring one person on, everyone else is going to be upset with that person you've chosen". Today some still sound wistful notes about this episode. Don Thériault felt that these talks ended "unfortunately" while Jeremy Bell called it "disappointing" and "a shame". CG Dave Kettle seemed regretful that "We've never been able to really crack the nut of including First Nations chaplains", and expressed the hope that "one day [the RCChsS] will find a way to include at least one First Nation elder from native spirituality". According to Karen Hamilton "the issue of aboriginal spirituality" is still "a very live question" but needs to be addressed in a way "that fits better with the aboriginal tradition" (Hamilton, interview).<sup>55</sup> When this may be and how it might be done remain unclear.

While some representatives have retired and been replaced, the faith groups represented have not changed since the additions of 2006. As of February 2015, the ICCMC's member faith groups, their serving representatives and their length of service, are as follows.

- Anglican Church of Canada (The Rt. Rev. Peter Coffin, Bishop Ordinary to the Canadian Armed Forces, ten years)
- Canadian Baptist Ministries (The Rev. Jeremy Bell, Executive Minister, seven years)
- Canadian Council of Churches (The Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton, General Secretary, twelve years)
- Denominations of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (Bruce Clemenger, President, three years)
- Conference of Orthodox Bishops of Canada (His Eminence Yuriy Kalistchuk, Ukrainian Metropolitan, eight years)
- Lutheran Council in Canada (The Rev. Hans J.W. Borch, nine years)
- Presbyterian Church in Canada (The Rev. Dr. M. Jean Morris, two years)
- Roman Catholic Military Ordinariate (The Most Rev. Donald Thériault, RC Military Bishop Ordinary, sixteen years)
- The United Church of Canada (The Rev. Alan W. Hall, Executive Officer, three years)
- Canadian Jewish Congress (Rabbi Reuven Bulka, eight years)
- Imam Council of Canada (Imam Mohammad Alnadvi, eight years)

As with most committees, a list of members alone does not give a full understanding of the body's dynamics and levels of participation. Since there has been significant turnover in the last four years, and since the ICCMC is only mandated to meet three times a year, the institutional memory is concentrated in the most active and longest

serving members, particularly Coffin, Thériault, Hamilton and Bell. Among the newer members, Hall, Morris and Clemenger told me that they were still feeling their way and gaining familiarity with the military. Only Coffin and Thériault are able to devote their full attentions to the ICCMC. The other members manage full-time jobs, either in senior administrative positions (Hall, Clemenger, Bell, Hamilton, Kalistchuk) or in pastoral roles (Bulka, Alnadvi, Borch, Morris), and so find time as they are able to attend ICCMC meetings and give pastoral oversight to their chaplains. In all ten interviews with its members, when asked to name something challenging about their work on the ICCMC, each described the difficulty involved in finding mutually agreeable meeting times. Working around the many holy days and festivals of four religious calendars (Eastern and Western Christian, Jewish, Muslim) is one of the surprisingly mundane aspects of managing religious pluralism. I did once hear a hint of irritation that one of the minority group representatives did not seem equally committed to attending meetings. Jean Morris noted that she had been welcomed as the second women member at the table, and felt that she brought “another dimension in who I am as a woman in ministry”, thus commenting obliquely on the committee’s significant gender imbalance.

The 2014 ICCMC Handbook defines its role and function and follows:

The ICCMC is the medium of the faith groups in Canada for the consideration of matters affecting military chaplaincy. To fulfill this mandate, the Committee will:

- A. Act as a direct link between chaplains and their respective civilian faith group authorities;
- B. Be the common channel between the faith groups of Canada and the Government of Canada and with the Office of the Chaplain General;

- C. Ensure the integrity of all faith groups within the military is respected and that reasonable provision, subject to operational requirements, is made for the practice of their faith;
- D. Assist in the exercise of religious oversight of the ministry of chaplains;
- E. Set the academic, spiritual and professional standards required and to assist in the selection of chaplains and to assume responsibility for endorsement and, if needs be, withdrawal of the same;
- F. Assist in the exercise of pastoral oversight and care for the chaplains and their families; and provide advice and assistance in the areas of worship, religious education, pastoral ministry, Chapel Life and all other areas of religious and moral import (ICCMC 2014, 16-17).

While two of these roles (E and F) still lean towards Christian privilege and preference by normalizing chapel worship and a traditional model of accreditation, they do implicitly assume a degree of cooperation between the member faith groups. Some working understanding of pluralism is necessary for the ICCMC to be an effective interlocutor and advisor to the federal government, to have a shared commitment to the “integrity of all faith groups within the military”, and an ability to agree on the necessary standards for the accreditation of chaplains, including for those faith groups not yet within the RCChS or represented on the ICCMC. Before examining the ICCMC’s roles as a representative of religion within the public square and as a gatekeeper of faith groups allowed to join the RCChS, this chapter will next examine how the ICCMC members balance their loyalty to their religious particularities with their commitment, either full or partial, to religious pluralism.

### 3.3. Pluralism in Theory and Practice

If religious pluralism is understood simply as faith groups in respectful relationship and dialogue, then its members would readily agree that the ICCMC is an embodiment of pluralism. During our discussions, when asked to describe something positive about their experience of being on the ICCMC, each of its members praised the group's collegiality and openness. Descriptions of the Committee and its culture included words and phrases such as "cordial, respectful, quite enjoyable" (Thériault), "totally positive" (Coffin), "a good source of understanding each other" (Alnadvi), "delightful people" (Bell) and "a real sense of mutuality and respect" (Hall). Hans Borch gave the fullest expression of this sentiment:

[W] when you take a look at the world in general, and some of the horrible things that people of faith do to other people of faith, for a group of eleven people to sit down at a table of different denominations and faiths, to be able to get along and work together I think is really quite remarkable. And I think we all understand those areas that may be contentious, but we're building on what is common to everyone as opposed to what's going to differentiate us.

Clearly the members of the committee believe that their relationships are cordial, and perhaps even, as Borch suggests, are a "remarkable" witness to the possibility of peaceful engagement between religious traditions. The fact that the ICCMC is made up primarily of men (9 of 11) from traditional, hierarchical organizations that are primarily Christian (9 of 11) doubtless explains at least some of the group's collegial spirit. The group's harmonious culture may also be explained, at least partially, by the fact that the ICCMC's recruitment process, as noted earlier, tends to reinforce the group mindset. Karen Hamilton makes this point in her comment on the group's culture.



[W]e are to a certain extent self-selecting, or self-selected, I mean the different denominational representatives get selected by their denominations, but the representatives of the faith traditions are also at the table because they have substantive experience and openness to these kinds of questions, so that needs to be said as well, but that's extremely positive.

Similarly, Jeremy Bell notes that their shared experience of senior leadership positions in their churches means that “we’ve been obligated in our own personal journeys and our organizational journeys to be ecumenical” and to be comfortable in “dialogical” positions. Besides a shared experience of and even taste for ecumenical and inter-religious engagement, several other factors contribute to the ICCMC’s culture. Certainly friendships and relationships between some of the members have developed and deepened over time. In some cases these relationships are enhanced by the participants’ sense of certain similarities between their faith traditions. Bell, who takes evident pride in Baptists’ dissident heritage and “healthy disrespect for authority”, feels that his denominational perspective helps him better understand his non-Christian colleagues. As Bell reflected, because Baptists and Jews have historically been on “the margins ... [Rabbi Bulkah] and I get that and get each other, and the Imam and I get each other, because he was born in India as a Muslim and therefore is naturally part of a minority, so there is a choosing, whether ordained, providentially, or ... has been a very very good mix, and so I felt very good about that”. Bell’s choice of words (“ordained, providentially”) reminds us that he and his colleagues understand their experience of the ICCMC in light of their religious worldviews, which should not be surprising, given Robert Wuthnow’s observation that theology is “generally the underlying principle” that guides ecumenical and interfaith activities (Wuthnow 2005,

237). One might therefore ask, how do the members' religious worldviews and theologies interact at the ICCMC's table? Who amongst the group would agree with Bell that they all have been called to the table "providentially", and if so, what is there about this providence that Christians, Muslims, and Jews might agree on? Is there a shared view of pluralism amongst the ICCMC that might lead them, perhaps even impel them, to broaden both their membership and the chaplaincy's ranks?

A useful starting point in a discussion of the ICCMC's working understanding of pluralism is the statement by Catherine Cornille, a scholar of comparative theology, that "While religions tend to be naturally convinced of the superior, if not exclusive truth of their own teachings, dialogue presupposes some degree of humility about one's own conceptions of truth and a certain receptivity, even hospitality, to the truth of the other" (Cornille 2013, xiii). All members of the ICCMC come to the table with their own theologically based truth claims. Some of these might be called first-order claims as to the nature, personhood and character of the divine and the composition and interpretation of sacred texts. While the Christian majority might be in broad consensus over first-order truth claims such as Trinitarian theology, Christians might easily disagree over what we might call second-order truth claims, including theological views directly germane to military chaplaincy. A non-exhaustive list of such second-order claims would include views on the nature of ministry and who can be ordained or called to it, ecclesiastical structure, church order and discipline, sexuality, gender, marriage, morality and ethics. For the ICCMC to function, these theological differences must be

bracketed and set aside. As Karen Hamilton explained it to me, there is a popular misconception that interfaith dialogue is about “big huge ideological questions ...”

Alright, what are we going to do about the Trinity? What are we going to do about the fact that Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah and the living God? How are we going to think about those things theologically? In a context like the ICCMC, everyone knows those questions are part of the background, but we all know that they're part of the background, so they're not stumbling blocks in the way that people might perceive them to be when you're on a working committee.

This process of bracketing ensures that theological differences remain safely in the “background”, but as with the rank and file chaplains that they help to lead, members of the ICCMC are constantly confronted in their work with what Cornille calls “the truth of the other”. How they bracket, or at least manage these reminders of conflicting truths, and thus understand pluralism, differs between members and between traditions.

Even if they know that their job is not to do first-order theology, their shared work at the same table forces the members of the ICCMC to acknowledge a plurality of religious truth claims. Some members of the ICCMC describe their understanding of religious pluralism as a sense that there is a commonality, if not equivalence, to religious experience that does not diminish the particularity of their own faith tradition. For Hans Borch, a helpful metaphor for pluralism is seeing himself “in a Lutheran boat and my pilot is Christ”, while surrounded by other boats heading to the same shore. “Being in a pluralistic group, I think, for me, allows those boats to be there, allows them to make way into a safe harbour, without having to say, ‘Hey, you guys have got to come in here, this is the only boat that’s going to make it’”. Jeremy Bell chose another

metaphor, that of a homeowner welcoming a canvasser, to describe a religious pluralism that could even make space for evangelism.

[I]f Greenpeace comes to my door, it's a post-modern pluralistic society, and I need to hear their story, I need to have the patience and wisdom to hear their story, and they need to have the patience and wisdom to hear mine, uncomfortable as I may feel, frustrated as I may feel, interrupting as I may want to be, you need to hear a story in its completeness.

While the exchange of stories, governed by “an attentive and moral neutralness”, may not lead to changed minds, Bell sees the impulse to tell and hear stories as being grounded in a common sense of the divine, “a restless engagement, even a holy restlessness, a celebration of having a good strong matter”. Similarly, Jean Morris described the term multi-faith as “faith traditions existing together”, with the term interfaith as meaning “some relationship between them”. Some Christian members of the ICCMC felt that there was more space for pluralism when Christians are willing to reduce their emphasis on their own truth claims. Commenting on the format of RCChS-sponsored interfaith prayer services, which some of his chaplains find frustratingly “generic”, the United Church’s Alan Hall said that he did not himself share this frustration. “I think we, particularly in our Christian tradition, can learn to be less Christocentric in our public practice. It would be to our advantage, but that may reflect my own Christology”. Bishop Peter Coffin stated that while he believed in Christian doctrine as historically formulated (systematic theology), he was less interested in explaining it than he was interested in being attentive to what God might be doing in the present or might do in the future (revealed theology).

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, I believe that the cross lifted sin, all of those things, but the mechanics, how it actually happened, I’m not willing to second guess God any more. Revealed theology means something to me, systematic theology I’m more suspicious of, because, whose system [is it]?

Coffin's question, "whose system?", suggests an openness to the possible validity of other theological systems, other truth claims, or at least a determination not to end the discussion in a pre-emptive insistence on the validity of some orthodox permutation of the Christian system. In describing Canada's religious landscape as one of multiple systems or stories, as Coffin, Hall and Bell do, there is perhaps a common willingness to let go of a past of the "plural establishment" when their churches enjoyed considerable cultural and social dominance (Bramadat and Seljak 2008, 10).

While these mainstream Protestant representatives seemed willing to reimagine traditional Christian theologies in the context of pluralism, their colleagues from other faith groups did not seem to feel the same need to hold their religious particularity lightly. Bruce Clemenger, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) representative, described pluralism in political rather than theological terms, as a process in which minority religions, unwilling to privatize their beliefs, could pursue shared agendas in mutual self-interest, or what he describes as "a certain pragmatism". As an example of such a shared agenda, Clemenger described his involvement as an evangelical Christian, "together with Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus" in the Ontario Multifaith Coalition for Equity in Education (OMCEE), that unsuccessfully pursued public funding for religious education for minority groups.<sup>56</sup> While Clemenger mentioned that the OMCEE did have to figure out "how to do opening prayer", and laughed as he described how meetings at mosques with "juice and dates" were healthier than Christian "coffee and donuts", he was clear that the "common cause" was primarily political. "[I]t's not an indication of

theological agreement”, he explained, “but what does it mean to live in a plural society? And we all saw the importance of the spiritual dimension, the religious dimension in education”. Reuven Bulka thought that religious pluralism might be defined as an “openness to faiths” but resisted the temptation to ask whether any one set of faith claims was “right”. Bulka seemed to be more comfortable talking about a social vision of community.

To me, I mean the defining characteristic of it, is not either pluralism or multi faith, but more embracing of the total community. That’s the motif that’s always come through to me. It wasn’t a pandering, it wasn’t a concession, it wasn’t a begrudging “you’re ok”, it’s always been “We’re all in this together guys and gals, so let’s behave like that”. In other words, for me it went far beyond that theological category of multi faith, or whatever, it was much more than that.

Like Jean Morris, Don Thériault preferred the word “interfaith” to pluralism since the latter term suggests content (political, social) that he sees as being extraneous to religion. Interfaith for Thériault meant a gracious and hospitable engagement with other faith claims that did not demand that the interlocutors surrender any of their identities. He described such a surrender as “syncretism”, a search for “the lowest common denominator whereby we can work harmoniously” that would leave “no place for strong and particular churches really being who they are”. Finally, Mohammad Alnadvi echoed his colleagues in valuing the ICCMC as a place of “understanding” . He did not offer a definition of pluralism per se, but in my interview with him he seemed to define his role on the ICCMC as being primarily to explain the Islamic view to the others. Alnadvi felt that in his time on the ICCMC he had made “some kind of contribution [that] was helpful to aid Islamic perspective in interfaith issues”.<sup>57</sup>

All the members of the ICCMC I spoke with are firmly grounded in their religious and denominational identities, and expect the same of their chaplains. Indeed, most mentioned that such grounding was a necessary precondition for meaningful interfaith dialogue. If there was any theological difference in their approach to interfaith dialogue that I could discern, it was that the mainstream Protestants seemed to emphasize what Cornille calls “the truth of the other” and appeared open to a commonality of religious experience, while others emphasized the importance of being true to themselves as, in Bishop Theriault’s words, “strong and particular churches”. The Protestant church leaders on the Committee shared an awareness of their denominations’ longstanding and beneficial relationship with Canada’s establishment. Having been at the centre for a long time, these members speak of pluralism as an impulse to make space at the centre, to welcome, learn from and even delight in the presence of others. The second group, which has not enjoyed the same secure and historic relationship with Canada’s establishment, see pluralism in terms of winning space to be the highly particular faith groups they are. For Clemenger, Alnadvi, and Bulka (and presumably for Metropolitan Kalistchuk), their place at the ICCMC’s table is a verification of their legitimate place in Canada’s present-day religious landscape. For the others, whose churches have gone through painful recent decades of waning prestige and authority, and who took what Bulka called the “build it and they will come” view to his membership, the newcomers to the ICCMC represent a new and just vision of pluralism that Protestants can take pride and pleasure in. Perhaps a medial position would be that of the Roman Catholics, who in Canada’s military chaplaincy were masters in their own house from 1939 until the

1990s, and still have an institutional memory of their subordination to Protestant leadership during the First World War. This awareness may have been behind Bishop Thériault's remark to me that while his word on the Committee could be "weighty" because he represented "close to half the Branch in terms of numbers and members", he was content that "we talk until we settle and come to agreement, which is wonderful ... but there are challenges in that, too". Patrice Brodeur notes that there are different motives to participate in interfaith dialogue, including the desire of some actors to secure "personal and communal benefits/protection", and that this desire may increase "especially the more official the dialogue activity is" (Brodeur 2010, 32). Brodeur's comment may be helpful in understanding why the minority groups on the ICCMC, including Evangelicals and Roman Catholics, understand pluralism differently from their Protestant colleagues.

The ICCMC has spent much of the past few years looking inward. In 2014 it finished a lengthy project to write a Handbook to describe its history, constitution, and practice, and now may be at a point where it can begin to consider increasing its membership. Keeping the ICCMC at its current configuration indefinitely does not appear to be realistic for at least some of its members. As Rabbi Bulka reflected, "I don't see how we can legitimately, if all of the requirements are fulfilled, I don't see what argument we could muster, or that we would want to create, to say "Sorry, no entry".<sup>58</sup> It is certainly easier to imagine arguments for expansion of the number and type of faith groups. First, if three faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) have achieved "phenomenal camaraderie [and] mutual respect"<sup>59</sup>, and if the experience of relationship



is valued as much as the members claim it is, presumably the community could absorb additional members, especially considering its tendency to self-select suitable candidates? Secondly, the longstanding members' willingness to make space for other faith groups (as evidenced in Bulka's story of "build it and they will come"), and the legitimation that participation in a significant Canadian institution confers to minority faith groups able to network and find common cause in advancing their communal agendas, is likely to be appealing to other faith groups. Since membership was offered in the past to the First Nations and to Jews, will it not be offered to Sikhs or Hindus? If the evangelical churches represented in Clemenger's EFC could work with Sikhs or Hindus on social agendas in past, could they not support the presence of Sikhs and Hindus (or other faith groups) in the RCChS as a buttress for religious freedom in the public square? What would the ICCMC's members recognize as the limits of pluralism, or, as Jeremy Bell described Reuven Bulka asking when they first read the new ICCMC Handbook, "who is it meant to keep out?"

### **3.4. Gatekeepers of Pluralism**

In my interviews, several members of the ICCMC told me that they preferred the terms "interfaith" or "multi-faith" to "pluralism" as the latter word was too open ended. Jean Morris stated that she preferred the word "interfaith" because it restricts the conversation to intentional modes of religious belief, whereas pluralism could include atheism or agnosticism. As Morris put it, "The word faith has a content thing for me. Pluralism doesn't really". Likewise, Karen Hamilton felt that pluralism was "tricky" since,

under certain conceptions or definitions, pluralism could be taken to mean that “all faiths are completely equal paths to God and anything goes, that is, in that person’s perception, a path to God”. Hamilton also went on to note that one could imagine modes of religious belief, such as ones that involved polygamy or justifications for corporal punishment of children, that would challenge the tolerance of a declaredly pluralist society. The question, as Hamilton notes, is that someone has to define “what is a legitimate faith expression”. Scholars such as Lori Beaman have suggested that while religious freedom is celebrated as a virtue, its limits are often defined by official actors such as the courts and the medical establishment. Often these limits are defined in accord with the norms and expectations of the religious majority, in which the idea of Canada as a Christian nation lives on, and are defined at the expense of marginalized religious groups (Beaman 2008b, 16). Groups like the ICCMC play a role in the this official construction of religious freedom, since the government and the military frequently refers questions on the toleration and accommodation of religion to the ICCMC and its chaplains as religious professionals, or, in military parlance, as Subject Matter Experts. The common answer that emerged in my discussions with the ICCMC was that a “legitimate faith” is one that looks similar to the ones currently at the table.

ICCMC members do have some guidelines as to what a “legitimate” faith might be. The Handbook declares that under certain conditions, the Chaplain Service might welcome additional faith groups, “a Faith Group [being] defined as a group coalescing around and through a certain definable set of beliefs and believes in the relationship between the divinity and humanity, the Divine imperative and the human

response” (ICCMC 2014, 18). However, as Bruce Clemenger observed, this definition of a Faith Group requires considerable parsing and unpacking to be truly useful:

There needs to be some kind of notion of divinity or transcendence or, can it just be a force, or is it more personalized where you call on a name, Allah or Yahweh or Jehovah or God? And so, once you make that determination, by definition you’re excluding some groups that are faith oriented but haven’t defined faith that way.

In moving from the theological to the particular, from what kind of God (or gods or manifestations) to what kind of supervision and credentials, Clemenger moved to the issue that will be most important to the ICCMC in their future deliberations. Whichever faith group is the next to enter the chaplaincy must have mechanisms in place to train, credential, and manage its chaplains that will seem equivalent and recognizable to those already in place for the faith groups currently present. Equity in credentials and professional requirements among faith groups has been a source of tension within the chaplaincy in the past.<sup>60</sup> Peter Coffin noted that debates on credentialing standards still occur within the ICCMC; “some may say that this is good enough for our community, and we’re saying, we’re not recruiting for your community, we’re recruiting for everybody, so we all need to have some ownership”. It seems likely that as its diversity increases, the ICCMC and the chaplains they represent may become more comfortable with their differences in training and credentialing. For example, evangelical Protestants see ordination as a sign of proof that a minister has shown competency for some years, whereas liturgical Protestants see it as a starting point (Clemenger, interview).<sup>61</sup> As the numbers of evangelicals in the chaplaincy continue to grow, these differences will begin to seem normal. Likewise, with three Muslim chaplains now recruited and trained over the last decade, and evidently well respected by their peers, it becomes harder to object

to non-Christian equivalents to traditional divinity and theology degrees. Finally, as the churches' financial ability to support traditional seminary and training models diminishes,<sup>62</sup> chaplains may have to learn to become more charitable with one another if uniform standards for recruitment cannot be maintained. The ICCMC now appears to be in a phase where they are willing to ask if credentials can also be barriers, and if so, as Clemenger put it, to ask the further question, "are those barriers legitimate or not?".

While the ICCMC has become more comfortable with alternate forms of credentials for prospective faith groups, the failed quest to find a First Nations representative reminds us that established structures that are national in scope, or some sort of umbrella organization comparable to the EFC, remains a requirement. Christian churches not yet included within either the EFC or the CCC would need to come under the auspices of either umbrella group to be considered.<sup>63</sup> The ICCMC is currently in discussions with Seventh Day Adventists of Canada, which has several members who are interested in becoming chaplains, but has told the SDA that they cannot proceed unless they join either the EFC or the CCC (Coffin, interview). Otherwise they, like prospective non-Christian groups, would have to provide the ICCMC with proof that they are, in Bulka's words, "a bona fide religious organization which will take responsibility for the chaplain, so obviously that means that there has to be some hierarchical structure to it". These "bona fide" organizations would have a disciplinary function, capable of "pulling" or suspending a chaplain's authorization in the event of misbehaviour, but there is also a pastoral expectation, in that accountability for the ICCMC works both ways, as faith group representatives are expected to "care for"

their chaplains and to guard their spiritual wellbeing. Another expectation of a national structure is that it be fully representative of the faith group, and there was some comment in the discussions about how groups such as Hindus and Sikhs do not have such national structures in Canada at present, but could evolve in that direction (Benham Rennick 2001, 57).<sup>64</sup> The other expectation of a faith group with a national structure is that it be Canadian. Peter Coffin described how the ICCMC declined overtures for membership from the American Mormon church, since “we’re not really interested in dealing with the American Mormons. However, if the Canadian Mormons want to talk to us, then we’ll talk” (Coffin, interview). It is not clear however that the Church of the Latter Day Saints in Canada has the structure and autonomy to be the separate voice for Canadian Mormon chaplains that Coffin and the ICCMC would want it to be.<sup>65</sup> Should the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Canada choose to accept Coffin’s invitation and be accepted in turn, it would be an interesting question of taxonomy to know if the ICCMC would receive the LDS as a Protestant Christian faith group.<sup>66</sup>

The discussions about Mormons as possible additions to the chaplaincy revealed another of the criteria that the ICCMC uses to determine the legitimacy of an applicant. Any prospective faith group must show that its culture is compatible with the established norms of the RCChS, or what Benham Rennick calls the “chaplain mindset”. Some wondered if Mormon chaplains would be able to function in an organization dedicated to service rather than to evangelism and conversion. Hans Borch worried that should LDS Canada seek membership, they would need to understand the ICCMC’s rules against

faith groups proselytizing within the military, since “that’s not what we’re there for”. This concern is reasonable, given that for the RCChS’ pluralism to work, chaplains and their faith groups need to respect the organization’s multi-faith culture and work collaboratively (Benham Rennick 2011, 57-59). When asked if he might be holding Mormons to a higher standard than Christian evangelicals already within the Branch, Borch felt that the ICCMC should be particularly cautious with the Latter Day Saints, since the Mormon practice of the two-year mission as “part of their training” shows that proselytization is “much more ingrained in the Mormons” than it is in the chaplaincy’s evangelical members.<sup>67</sup> Other ICCMC members would examine a prospective faith group’s culture for its potential suitability to military culture and mission. Several members raised concerns about groups that they associated with religious traditions of pacifism, such as Mennonites and Buddhists. Jeremy Bell worried that such groups might have cultures “antithetical” to the military ethos, and would want to know if a new faith group and its chaplains would be “committed to seeing the facilitating of good healthy soldiering” (Bell, interview).<sup>68</sup> This criterion is arguably one of the most subjective since, other than explicitly pacifistic faiths that the ICCMC would rule out, it is hard to imagine a religious tradition that does not address questions of loss, meaning and transcendence in ways that might benefit military members whose service calls them to face these issues. Some ICCMC members spoke approvingly of Sikhs as a faith group with a warrior tradition that might be especially congruent with the military ethos. Reuven Bulka noted that compatibility with the military’s ethos and tradition also had a geopolitical dimension, and wondered if all faith groups were equally committed to “seeing the need for a strong military presence, because of the situation in the world

and Canada's role in it". His comment raises the issue of whether a possible military deployment by the CAF might challenge a faith group's ethnic or sectarian loyalties (Benham Rennick 2011, 165-166). Imam Alnadvi also touched on this issue when he expressed concerns about perceptions that Canada's role had shifted from "peacekeepers to fighters", which "makes military service difficult" for Canadian Muslims (Alnadvi, interview). As religion and politics continue to play roles in international conflict, and as the ICCMC's membership becomes more diverse, assessing the contribution of faith to "good soldiering" will only become more subjective.

Proportional representation, what Bulka called "the size of the community", emerged from these discussions as the most frequently mentioned criteria, and the most problematic. While the ICCMC's role, as Bruce Clemenger described it, is to "provide spiritual care for [the CAF's] diversity", the idea that every faith group represented within the CAF should have its own chaplain is not feasible. Jean Morris succinctly called this idea "ridiculous" and "not helpful". Any prospective faith group would have to represent a substantial number of both the Canadian population and the serving military. For Jews and Muslims, as Bulka noted, the decision was statistically clear, since "Muslims are now a significant, they're the second ranking religious tradition in Canada. It used to be the Jews who were and not anymore, and by a long shot, too."<sup>69</sup> Speaking of Sikhs and Hindus, Jeremy Bell thought that they might be significant enough populations to warrant representation, but he wasn't sure "what the threshold is, maybe it's a quarter million, maybe it's half a million. So there needs to be some kind of relationship there". In using the distribution of faith groups in the Canadian population

as a metric, Bell's approach is to take "the national sample, and proportionalize it", but several problems arise. The most obvious, as Benham Rennick notes somewhat incredulously, is that the CAF "*does not keep* statistics on religion", and so the assumption "that religious affiliation in the CF is similar to that of Canada" may well be flawed (Benham Rennick 2011, 95-97). Serving chaplains I interviewed had little idea about the religious demographics of their units. If only a minority of CAF personnel, Christians and non-Christians, alike are interested in intentional, formal religious practice (Benham Rennick 2011, 101-104, 137), then the arguments for proportional representation within the ICCMC and the chaplaincy as a whole seem to break down. If, for argument's sake, there is a practicing minority of Sikhs in a Reserve army unit in BC's Lower Mainland, or a practicing minority of Mormons within the CAF in Alberta, should the ICCMC not be proactively addressing their needs, rather than relying on ideas of proportional representation that, as Jeremy Bell admits, are "problematic"?

Finally, the question of whether the ICCMC should be proactive in providing spiritual care in keeping with military diversity is itself debated. In past, the ICCMC took an invitational approach to the aboriginal and Jewish communities, creating spaces for pluralism along the principle Bulka described as "build it and they will come". However, in the interviews many of the ICCMC members used the metaphor of a door or a gate that may be opened to admit new faith groups who must knock and seek admittance. In the case of the Mormons, as Coffin described, the ICCMC is waiting for LDS Canada to "knock on the door" and negotiate the terms of its admittance. Bruce Clemenger notes that it is more legitimate and more feasible to deal with faith groups who are willing to



make a commitment to military chaplaincy than it is to respond to requests from individual outliers.

[W]e need to hear from the faith group and not just the individual candidate. And if the individual candidate is having a hard time getting their faith community to mobilize on this, maybe it is too premature. Maybe the faith group doesn't understand the need, or maybe if they're reluctant to engage on an interfaith level at the committee level, then how does that bode for their candidate working well within an interfaith environment on a base?

However, Clemenger then argued the opposite side of the case, noting that if the ICCMC does not actively approach other faith groups and try to sell them on military chaplaincy, then it runs the risk of being seen as "an old boy's club" whose membership process is "kind of fixed". Clemenger would likely be the first to agree that the history of his own faith group's involvement, when outliers were admitted to the chaplaincy first and an evangelical representative for the ICCMC found later, shows that there is not just one model for expanding pluralism. Certainly the argument about being proactive versus waiting for the "knock on the door" is not settled within the ICCMC. Members such as Rabbi Bulka, who admits that "it doesn't keep me up at night thinking that we may get an avalanche of people knocking on the doors", will need convincing that a proactive approach to recruiting is necessary.

### 3.5. Conclusion - How Big A Table?

After nearly ten hours of interviews with them, it is difficult to remain unimpressed by ICCMC's culture of collegiality and even friendship. While there were occasional glimpses of disagreement and even real conflict within a group that prefers to work behind the scenes, the ICCMC seems to succeed in its symbolic role as a working model of pluralism for the chaplains they lead spiritually and ecclesiastically. Part of their success in this role surely comes from their relatively small number and their declared commitment to making decisions by consensus. In this respect the Canadian experience of managing religious pluralism compares favourably with that of the American military. The US Armed Forces Chaplains Board relies on nearly two hundred Ecclesiastical Endorsing Agencies to accredit its military chaplains, meaning that they could never fit around the same table nor even come close to speaking with a common voice.<sup>70</sup> The comparatively vast number of Endorsing Agencies illustrates the different histories of religion in the two countries, particularly the fracturing of Protestantism in the US experience (Hutchinson 2003, Albanese 2011), but this diversity, paradoxically, makes it difficult for the US chaplaincy to accept religious pluralism. A subset of these Endorsing Agencies, the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces, has published a Covenant and Code of Ethics by which chaplains agree that they will "function in a pluralistic environment with chaplains of other religious bodies to provide for ministry to all military personnel and their families entrusted to my care" (Hansen 2012, 120-121). However, because this Covenant is not universally shared, US military chaplaincy as Hansen describes it has never agreed to the principle of pluralism and

reflects the “culture wars” that preoccupy American society. As a much smaller group, the ICCMC is not only able to agree on a vision of pluralism but, perhaps more importantly, is also able to enforce it. Jeremy Bell joked that for those chaplains who stray from pluralism into proselytizing, “Game of Thrones looks like a Boy Scout show compared to what we do to people”. One of the tradeoffs for a group culture that aspires to consensus is efficiency. In describing his relatively short time on the ICCMC, Alan Hall remarked wryly that it made the United Church bureaucracy look “streamlined, nimble and fit”.

As they anticipate possible additions of faith groups, ICCMC members express the fear that they may weaken their culture of consensus should their number grow too big. Bruce Clemenger anticipated this growth when he mused about what might happen should the numbers of Muslims in the CAF increase. “I could see the argument being made, well, why have one ICCMC representative representing all Muslims? Should we have one for the Sunnis and one for the Shia and off we go”. Similarly, Hans Borch “having the eleven people that we have now is probably as big as we want to get, because anything over that is going to be untenable and unsustainable”. However, Borch was also open to a rebalancing process whereby his Lutheran chaplains might be represented by another Protestant representative in order to keep the table small.<sup>71</sup> Jean Morris wondered if an emphasis on the status quo would keep the group from “embracing new things”. As one of the newer members on the ICCMC, with less of an investment in the group’s culture than others, representatives like Morris may well push her peers out of what Clemenger called an “old boy’s club” mindset.

So I think it's an inevitable conversation, and I welcome it, because if we don't talk about [size and membership] then that's silly and that's not what we're called there to do. We have to have these conversations and we need to think about our role and we need to think about hospitality and we also need to think about entitlement, and those kinds of questions will be big for me in these discussions (Morris, interview).

These discussions that Morris looks forward to may well be forced on the ICCMC by changing circumstances. It is entirely possible that history will repeat itself, as a future Chaplain General decides that the time is right to grow the organization's pluralism beyond its current "tri-faith" configuration.<sup>72</sup> This process will certainly involve the ICCMC as the Chaplain General's advisors. As it was with CGs Maindonald and Bourque, this process will be strategic, but it will also be opportunistic in that it will depend on finding the right person. The RCChS will not add a new faith group unless it can be reasonably sure that its first chaplain representative will have sufficient commitment to pluralistic cooperation, pastoral skills, and credibility as a religious leader, all qualities that were evident in Suleyman Demiray as the first Muslim chaplain. It is likely, given their connections to Canada's religions, that this person will first come to a Chaplain General's attention through the ICCMC. Whether the next "first" is a Sikh, Mormon, or member of some other minority faith group, this chaplain's success will depend in large part on whether the ICCMC can continue to effectively foster and model the pluralistic culture, however imperfectly realized, that the RCChS depends on.

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<sup>36</sup>Prison chaplaincy is overseen by the Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy for the Correctional Service of Canada (Gagnon 2008). Interfaith hospital chaplaincy in Canada is less centralized. In general “Canada lags far behind Britain and Australia particularly in the areas of government sponsored interfaith councils” (Brodeur 2010, 17).

<sup>37</sup> One study study of religious diversity in the US suggests that no more than one fifth of Christians had participated in interreligious activities sponsored by their congregations or denominations, and that those activities were mostly informal and occasional in nature, aimed at goodwill and awareness (Wuthnow 2005, 233; see also Brodeur 2010, 11). Peter Coffin mentioned to me that “in the civilian church, a lot of our ecumenical and multi faith relationships are token polite gestures”.

<sup>38</sup>See also Thomas James Hamilton, “Padres Under Fire: A Study of the Canadian Chaplain Services (Protestant and Roman Catholic) in the Second World War.” Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2003.

<sup>39</sup> The Roman Catholic Military Ordinariate of Canada is constituted by the Apostolic Constitution of the Church, and includes members of the Eastern Rite. See <http://www.rcmilord.com/about/?lang=en> It has a close equivalent in the Military Ordinariate of the Anglican Church Committee. Both Ordinariates are represented on the ICCMC by their respective Bishops.

<sup>40</sup> As an example of the learning curve for civilian clergy joining the ICCMC, the Rev. Jean Morris told me during our interview that when she joined as the representative of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, she had “no military background”. She joked that the Presbyterian chaplains ‘captured me at [Canadian Forces Base] Borden for two days and educated me. ... They had my undivided attention, and I was shocked by the scope of their ministry, I wanted to be their number one advocate.”

<sup>41</sup> Project Plowshares today is the Ecumenical Peace Agency of the Canadian Council of Churches; see <http://www.councilofchurches.ca/about-us/> The Canadian Council of Churches is represented on the ICCMC.

<sup>42</sup> And remains so today. For example, the Anglican Military Ordinariate gives one of its members the title of Canon Recruiter, tasked with guiding interested civilian clergy through the recruitment process, and mollifying bishops who wish to retain the services of these clergy. All faith groups within the RCChS are essentially extensions of their civilian ecclesiastical bodies, and depend on functioning links and good relations with these bodies.

<sup>43</sup> The Bishop Ordinary is the Anglican equivalent of the Roman Catholic bishop on the ICCMC, and is the head of an extra-territorial diocese consisting of the Anglican chaplains serving in the CAF. Until 2014 the Bishop Ordinary was an appointment made by the Primate, the head of the Anglican Church in Canada, but upon the retirement of Bishop Coffin the next Bishop Ordinary will be elected by Anglican military chaplains, as per the vote of the Joint Assembly of the Anglican Church of Canada in 2013.

<sup>44</sup> See Chapter Two (pp. 29-31) of this study.

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<sup>45</sup> Evangelical Christians can manifest an “ingroup” mindset and practice boundary maintenance that distinguish them from non-believers and from Christians whom they consider incorrect (Reimer 2003, 50). This same group mindset was apparent in at least one evangelical chaplain I interviewed, who distinguished between those who only “proclaim themselves to be Christians” and those who are “genuinely Christian”.

<sup>46</sup> A useful description of Canadian Christian ecumenism in this period, from the United Church perspective, is found in Airhart (2014, 244-248). For a broader view, see Swidler (2013, 4-6).

<sup>47</sup> The ICCMC formerly had a role in recommending candidates for promotion to the two most senior ranks in the RCChS, Chaplain General (with the rank of Brigadier General) and full Colonel (Benham Rennick 2011, 33). This role was voluntarily surrendered by the ICCMC during the tenure of Chaplain General Karl McLean (CG 2010-2013) and promotions within the RCChS are now made only by military authority. The decision to relinquish this role may have been influenced by what Stewart Hunter described as “strained relationships” when the ICCMC did not support the requests of some CGs for extensions to their terms in office. Also, in Hunter’s account, that the ICCMC lacked the expertise to administer the CAF’s highly complex merit and scoring system for promotions, and was happy to relinquish oversight of promotions to the military.

<sup>48</sup> The United Church's reluctance to proselytize immigrants to Canada, and general loss of confidence in evangelism (Airhart 2013, 248) may also be relevant here, and may be indicative of shared attitudes among other mainline Protestants denominations.

<sup>49</sup> There may well have been others within Canada’s Islamic community besides Alnadvi who had recommended the hiring of Muslim chaplains. In my interview with him, Alnadvi could not recall whether he had recommended a Muslim padre to the Chaplain Branch or to other parties within the CAF. Archival work might shed further light on this matter, but is outside the scope of this research.

<sup>50</sup> Such at least was the recollection of Bishop Don Thériault, who told me during out interview that “Muslims were very very anxious to participate, once when we opened the door, even a little crack, and so they jumped in to participate, took their place, and were anxious to build something with the ICCMC within the CAF, namely to bring chaplains”. Again, more work within the ICCMC and DND archives is needed here to confirm this perspective.

<sup>51</sup> The Branch’s choice of Judaism and Islam as the other two components of its multi-faith identity likely had both practical and irenic motives. Practically it was possible to suggest an equivalency between the role of priest/minister, rabbi and imam as educated leaders of congregations with comparable teaching if not necessarily pastoral functions. The choice was also irenic in the term “Abrahamic religions” at this time was widely circulated in interfaith dialogue as a foundation for peaceful coexistence between Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, and as a hedge against “clash of civilizations” thinking that the faiths were irreconcilably opposed (Hughes 2012). Both sets of motives “fit” the program of a multi-faith chaplaincy ministering to the military of a successful multicultural country.

<sup>52</sup> Metropolitan Kalistchuk is the only currently serving member of the ICCMC who did not respond to my requests for an interview.

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<sup>53</sup> I have been told anecdotally that the ICCMC's aboriginal discussion partners came from the Assembly of First Nations, but, at the time of writing, I have not been able to confirm this or to get access to correspondence or documents from these discussions. Benham Rennick (2011) states that Roger Armitte, the Aboriginal Elder-in-Residence at the University of Manitoba, advises the ICCMC on aboriginal issues. This relationship appears to have ended. Armitte's name is not mentioned in the 2014 ICCMC Handbook.

<sup>54</sup> For a timeline of the Residential Schools litigations and settlement, see the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada website, <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1332939430258/1332939552554>. For the churches' involvement in the litigation and resolution processes, see Hayes (2004, 42-46).

<sup>55</sup> Benham Rennick (2011) states that Roger Armitte, the Aboriginal Elder-in-Residence at the University of Manitoba, advises the ICCMC on aboriginal issues. This relationship appears to have ended. Armitte's name is not mentioned in the 2014 ICCMC Handbook.

<sup>56</sup> The OMCEE was active in the 1990s and included Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus (Stackhouse 2000). The EFC was subsequently active in the Interfaith Coalition on Marriage and Family, an intervenor in several court cases involving definition of marriage. Coalition partners included the Islamic Society of North America and the Catholic Civil Rights League (Patrick 2011, 84).

<sup>57</sup> I should note that my interview with Imam Alnadvi was not as long as I had hoped for, and that I did have difficulties understanding his English. At least one other member of the ICCMC, Jeremy Bell, told me how much he valued Alnadvi as a partner in long and involved discussions.

<sup>58</sup> Jean Morris expressed a similar sentiment: "My personal opinion at this point without a lot of serious dialogue with my colleagues is, I don't know how we can't make the table bigger, and I would say that as a Christian, and I'm motivated by the gospel as I say that in that role".

<sup>59</sup> These words come from my interview with Reuven Bulka, but equivalents could be found in each of my other interviews.

<sup>60</sup> Disparities in the requirements for chaplains who were Roman Catholic priests (an undergraduate degree and an MDiv) and RC Pastoral Associate (a three year baccalaureate) led to tensions between Catholics as well as between mostly Francophone PAs and Protestants who felt their training to be superior (Benham Rennick 2011, 52-54). In general, a credentialed and bureaucratic Branch has given its denominations "greater equality", but has worked against those faith groups currently not included in the chaplaincy which do not have a tradition of formal leadership or formal training for its leaders (Benham Rennick 2011, 54-55, 68).

<sup>61</sup> A Pentecostal chaplain I interviewed told me that he had received his credentials for ministry from his denomination's "head office" in 2004, but was not ordained until 2010. As he put it, "Sometimes credentials are more important than the ordination on my side of things."

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<sup>62</sup> Karen Hamilton gives one example of how churches' diminishing resources are challenging the Branch's expectation that all prospective chaplains have two years pastoral experience in the civilian church. "At this particular time, everyone is cutting back, so how do the Pastoral Associates get two years of the pastoral experience that's required for them to be a chaplain, when the Catholic churches can't afford to hire a second staff?" Pastoral Associates typically rely secondary or ancillary roles in civilian ministry for their requisite experience, and are uniquely vulnerable to shrinking church budgets.

<sup>63</sup> The Canadian Council of Churches website claims to represent "85% of the Christians in Canada" (see <http://www.councilofchurches.ca/about-us/members/>). The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada website lists 43 of the evangelical denominations in Canada as affiliate members (see <http://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/denominations>). Karen Hamilton's own claim is that roughly 95% of the identifiable Christian groups in Canada are already affiliated with either the Canadian Council of Churches or the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Significant groups not included within this group would include what Beyer calls "Other Christians", including Latter Day Saints, Jehovah's Witnesses, Doukhobors and non-denominational churches (Beyer 2008b, 437).

<sup>64</sup> Although one ICCMC member said that it was a stretch to consider Imam Alnadvi representative of all Muslims in Canada. In a separate conversation, Karen Hamilton noted that Canadian Buddhists have structures of such dispersed authority that communication with them is problematic. "I'll ask Buddhists all the time, is there any way that you can possibly in your wildest imagination say that you represent the entire Buddhist community in Canada? And they'll go no".

<sup>65</sup> In this regard it is interesting to note that a legal attempt to block the fundamentalist, polygamous sect in Bountiful, BC, from using the name "Latter Day Saints" was, according to news reports, filed by "*the Utah-based mainstream Mormon Church*" (Canadian Press 2015). This description may say more about media and public perceptions of Mormons than about the church's polity, since one doesn't expect to hear the Roman Catholic church in Canada described as the "Rome-based church".

<sup>66</sup> A US friend (pers. comm. February 10, 2015) tells me that in the US Army Chaplain Corps Mormons are simply classified as Christian. "They want to be identified as a "Christian" Chaplain, which I'll give them that...they have the prerogative to identify themselves, but generally, to my knowledge, they've always had a break out worship group. The guy that I replaced in this unit was LDS, and I don't remember if he conducted a General Protestant Service for those who wanted it."

<sup>67</sup> One wonders if Borch may be working with a stereotype of Mormon practice of missions. The American scholar of religion Kathleen Flake, herself a member of the LDS, calls missions "formative moments in Mormonism" (PBS 2007). Given the importance of missions to a church structured on lay-leadership, the ICCMC may need to adjust its criteria for admission if it is to seriously consider this faith group.



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<sup>68</sup> How religion supports “good soldiering” is a complicated subject. Benham Rennick's evidence (2011, 101-136) suggests that faced with the operational stress of the military life, and the highly individualized way in which many CAF members find religious meaning through the “religious quest”, the ways in which religion supports the needs of soldiers does not map closely with religious and denominational boundaries.

<sup>69</sup> Rabbi Bulka's claim for Judaism as the onetime second largest religion in Canada is problematic, given that data collected by Statistics Canada gives an inaccurate picture of the number of Canadians practicing religions of Chinese origin (Lai, Paper, and Paper 2005, 102-105).

<sup>70</sup> For a list of the myriad US Ecclesiastical Endorsing Agencies, see <http://prhome.defense.gov/RFM/MPP/AFCB/Endorsements.aspx>.

<sup>71</sup> Having the Anglican representative speak for Lutherans would make sense, since the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) reached an Agreement of Full Communion over a year ago. However, the other Lutheran contingent represented by Borch, the Lutheran Church of Canada (associated with the US so-called Missouri Synod) is a conservative group that sees little in common either with Anglicans or with the ELCIC. Conversely, the Anglican representative does not speak for all Anglicans, as at least one chaplain belonging to the breakaway Anglican Network in Canada is represented by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. These facts remind us that the ideal of faith group representation on the ICCMC is sometimes a legal fiction.

<sup>72</sup> The incoming CG, Colonel Guy Chapdelaine, a Roman Catholic priest, has indicated that this is a possibility (2014a, 42).

## Chapter Four

### Branding Pluralism: The Search For A Multi-Faith Identity

*"There's no way I'm wearing a tree on my head!"*  
(Anonymous Chaplain Leader)



**Figure 1**  
**Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch Flag**  
**Adopted 26 July, 2012**

#### 4.1. Unveiling the Tree of Life

On 29 May, 2014, during its annual conference in Cornwall, Ontario, the Royal Canadian Chaplain Service held an event to commemorate its role in Canada's military mission in Afghanistan from 2002 to 2014. The official RCChS flag, framed and

displayed on an easel, dominated the stage and provided the focal point for the ceremony. A stranger present that day could be easily forgiven for not recognizing the flag, or for not perceiving it as having anything to do with chaplains, or even with religion. With its centrepiece showing a lush green tree growing out of rocky ground, standing in front of a stylized sunburst, the flag refused to evoke any overt religious symbolism or historical religious tradition. Only the wreath of red maple leaves surmounted by a crown suggested Canadian national and military affiliation. The Latin motto, that translates as “Called to Serve”, could just as well have implied military as religious service. This particular flag had flown in Kabul shortly before the closing of the Canadian military presence there and now represented the work of the many chaplains who had supported Canadian land, sea and air personnel deployed during the Afghan mission, as well as their families at home. The guest of honour at this ceremony was none other than the Governor General of Canada, the Right Honourable David Johnston. By his presence, the Governor General indicated the federal government’s appreciation of the pastoral role played by military chaplains in what has been, in effect, Canada’s longest war. Like the flag he stood before, the Governor General’s comments were carefully nuanced. The Chaplain Branch, he said, embodied Canada’s “rich pluralism” and “commitment to multiculturalism” (Johnston 2014). As a prominent organization within the military, the Branch pointed the way to “interfaith dialogue and co-operation” and demonstrated Canada’s values and ideals to its soldiers and to the world at large. The Governor General thus connected religion to Canada’s recent military history. A modern, liberal pluralist state had engaged in a war, and its corps of uniformed multi-faith religious professionals had helped a diverse military and society to

endure the spiritual and emotional costs of that war. While the contrasting sectarianism of the Taliban opponents was not directly mentioned, it was surely suggested in the statement that a pluralist Canada would defend its values and ideals “when necessary”.

On that day in May 2014, the RCChS flag and the crest it bore had been in service for barely two years, and its design, the Tree of Life, had ironically brought the chaplaincy back to a design that had first been considered (and rejected) a full decade earlier. When chaplains went to Afghanistan with the first of Canada’s soldiers to be deployed there in 2002, they had worn the chaplaincy’s old crest that bore all the earmarks of the era that John Webster Grant called the “unofficial establishment of Christianity in Canada” (Grant 1984, 204). Even before that first deployment, the RCChS had been taking tentative steps towards a degree of pluralism, and in late 2003, with Canada’s Afghan war in its second year, the chaplaincy signalled its commitment to diversity by hiring a Muslim imam, with a Jewish rabbi shortly to follow. While these personnel changes were accomplished relatively easily, the goal of representing that commitment visually, of essentially branding its new diversity, took nearly a decade to achieve. In searching for a new visual identity to represent its pluralist aspirations, the chaplaincy faced two problems. The first problem involved making the changes it wanted within with the CAF’s highly traditional material culture. Chaplains were unprepared to discover that the military’s visual representation of its collective and component identities, including cap badges, corps crests, and flags, was governed by conservative rules that were ill-suited to the kind of open-ended signification that the RCChS hoped to achieve. While the military’s guardians of tradition were happy to see

the chaplaincy surrender its old Christian crest in favour of a single replacement signalling its new multi-faith identity, deciding on the nature of that replacement proved difficult. Here the Branch's intentions ran into the second problem, which involved the sacred symbols particular to the religious traditions represented in the new multi-faith Branch. Practically speaking, faith-specific symbols worn on the uniform, such as cross, crescent and Torah scroll, helped military personnel identify the kind of chaplain standing before them, but for the chaplains themselves, these symbols spoke to their essential identity as professing religious practitioners. Chaplains, deeply invested in their holy symbols, were thus unlikely to surrender them in return for a new, generic symbol representing an evolving commitment to religious pluralism. The narrative of the chaplaincy's search for new symbols thus illustrates the tension between pluralism and particularity, as traditionalists reacted suspiciously to proposed multi-faith symbols that they perceived to be arbitrary and meaningless. Since much of this narrative is documented, it is also the best archival source for an understanding of how pluralism works within Canadian military chaplaincy.

#### **4.2. The End of the Christian Era**

Chaplain General Ron Bourque, was thinking about markers of religious identity when he announced, on 2 October, 2003, that the Branch would soon "experience yet another major phase of its metamorphosis".<sup>73</sup> As Bourque looked forward to the graduation of the first Muslim chaplain from the Chaplain Training School that December, he expressed the hope that a Jewish chaplain, the first in Canadian military

service since World War Two, would soon follow. With the Branch's new multi-faith direction, it could no longer rely exclusively on Christian symbols of identity. New uniform badges and insignia would be introduced for Muslim and Jewish chaplains to distinguish them from their Christian colleagues. Bourque's memorandum envisioned this as a fairly simple remedy. Christian chaplains would retain their badge with the Maltese Cross (see Figure 2, below) as it "harkens to our past and is rich in ... heritage", but for Muslim chaplains the cross would be removed and replaced with a gold crescent. When Jewish chaplains were enrolled at some future date, the cross would be replaced with "the Star of David and Tablets", as was done for Canada's Jewish chaplains in World War Two. This plan would "permit Muslim and Jewish chaplains to have the dignity of appropriate recognition yet retain a basic similarity that is shared by all chaplains". However, as the Branch was soon to discover, recruiting and training Muslim and Jewish chaplains would be the relatively easy part of Bourque's "metamorphosis". The unexpectedly hard part would be deciding what to put on their hats. It would be nine years, and four more Chaplains General, before all of these goals came to be embodied in the Branch Primary Badge unveiled in 2012, the Tree of Life, in a design that came nearly full circle to an early conception briefly considered at the start of this process.

The regulations concerning "Honours, Flags and Heritage Structure of the [Canadian Forces]" define a badge as "a distinctive sign, symbol or emblem used to identify a military organization and foster the pride and cohesiveness necessary for operational effectiveness".<sup>74</sup> Both the CAF and the RCChS are hierarchical structures

with a reverence for tradition and a deep attachment to the symbolic systems used to represent those traditions. Even though the CAF, since the 1970s, “accepted that it “had a role to play in nation-building by showcasing government policies intended to reshape Canadian society”, including the recognition of Charter rights and employment equity legislation, the military remained at least partially committed to the maintenance of a homogenous warrior ethos that was congruent with the ancient idea of the profession of arms (English 2004).<sup>75</sup> Badges, regimental traditions, and colours, such as the RMC colours consecrated by Chaplain General Maindonald in 2001, all contributed as focal points of pride and group identity to the maintenance of a homogenous military culture. All CAF members wear a badge on their headdress, known as the cap badge, that shows which regiment, corps or branch they serve in. Badges are thus utilitarian, in that they allow military personnel to identify each other by their unit and trade, but in the conservative material culture of the military, these symbols are also revered as repositories of unit history and tradition, reinforcing the military’s distinct warrior ethos. When young soldiers finish recruit training and go to their first regiment or unit, they receive that unit’s cap badge along with exhortations to uphold the unit’s legacy in their their daily duty and conduct. To achieve Bourque’s vision of new badges that would signify a multi-faith chaplaincy, the Branch would thus have to negotiate the material culture of the CAF, which meant engaging the services of the CAF’s Department of History and Heritage (DHH) and its National Defence Clothing and Dress Committee (NDCDC). Any new Chaplain Branch badge or faith identifier would have to be vetted by NDCDC, approved by DHH’s Inspector of CAF Colours and Badges, correctly designed by the Canadian Heraldic Authority (which works for

Canada's Governor General), and ultimately require royal approval before it could be



**Figure 2**  
**Canadian Forces Chaplain**  
**Branch Badge, 1975 - 2005**

adopted and worn by chaplains. In 2003, Canadian military chaplains wore badges and insignia that had changed little from those of the First World War. The chaplaincy badge [Figure 2] was a maltese cross worn above the Branch motto, “In Hoc Signo Vinctes” (“In this sign you will conquer”), words attributed to Constantine, the Emperor who oversaw Rome’s adoption of Christianity as its official religion.<sup>76</sup>

Chaplains wore this badge and motto on their headdress, as well as on certain religious items, the preaching scarf (Protestant) and stole (Roman Catholic) worn during liturgies, ceremonies, and

solemn occasions such as the repatriation of military remains. When the chaplaincy initiated contact with DHH in April of 2003, the way ahead was not yet clear. Certainly the triumphalist motto would have to be retired, but thinking on the badge itself was still in flux. In an email to DHH on 17 April,<sup>77</sup> a chaplain representative, Major Kevin Dingwell, noted that while some in the RCChS “would like to see the continuation of the present hat badge, with its Christian focus, and the creation of new badge(s) for chaplains of other faith groups”, that was Bourque’s favoured path, Dingwell and others felt that “we must have one new Branch badge that can serve all groups, and then have the insignia (cross, crescent, tablets) that could be worn on sweaters or shirts much as



we all wear the cross today”. Whatever the decision was, he noted, a new badge and new faith insignia should be created “immediately”.

DHH’s response was supportive but cautious. Major Paul Lansey, the CAF Heritage Officer, agreed that changes were needed, but warned Dingwell that the process might be lengthy. In the meantime, he mused, could the entire Branch cease using the authorized Christian cap badge and join their new Muslim colleague in wearing a generic CAF badge, so there would be no “‘second class’ category of chaplains”?<sup>78</sup> Interim steps to additionally identify chaplains by faith could be taken, perhaps by sourcing faith-specific pins or badges (e.g. cross, crescent) from the US military chaplaincy, that already had non-Christians serving as chaplains. For a permanent solution, Lansey recommended that “one new badge be produced for all members of the branch”. Besides worrying about the cost of making a handful of faith-specific badges for a few non-Christian chaplains, Lansey felt that one badge was necessary for the “maintenance of group cohesion and esprit de corps”. While admitting that he had no ideas what this one badge should look like, Lansey felt that it should be “generic” in nature.

It is probably not a good idea to restrict its depiction to just the [Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths]. In future, especially in time of war, there may be a requirement for other representations such as Hindu, Sikh, etc. We are only speaking about the central divide of the badge here. The badge frame will remain unchanged, i.e. a Crown (denoting service to the Sovereign) and the maple leaves (denoting service to Canada).

Lansey concluded with the suggestion that an ecumenical body of religious advisors might be consulted on the symbology of the “generic” badge, and promised that DHH

would do its “utmost” to support the Branch. Lansey’s email laid out a position that DHH would maintain through the entire process. The CAF’s guardians of tradition were fully supportive of a multi-faith Chaplaincy, but believed that this new multi-faith identity should be expressed in a single Branch badge.

From this exchange an interim solution was worked out through the summer of 2003. DHH supported the wearing of religious insignia above the nametag on the uniform to identify a non-Christian chaplain, and the CAF sourced these items (a crescent pin for Muslims and a Torah scroll for Jews) from the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps.<sup>79</sup> U.S. Army chaplains wore both their own religious insignia and the one unified U.S. Army cap badge, that had been created in the 1990s as a multi-faith symbol (Figure 3).<sup>80</sup> The Canadian chaplains were aware of this badge, but felt that it was not



**Figure 3**  
**United States Army Chaplains Corps Badge**

sufficiently inclusive, as “not all faith communities would see themselves as ‘people of the book.’”<sup>81</sup> or as committed to the monotheism implied in the US badge’s motto. The Branch’s Major S.K. Moore advised DHH that Chaplain General Bourque wanted to give

the Branch badge “due diligence” and that it would “take some time” to devise a proper multi-faith design.<sup>82</sup> Better progress occurred on two other fronts. The Branch had vetted its new motto, “Vocatio Ad Servitum” (Called to Serve) with DHH and a Latin consultant working for the Heraldic Authority gave his approval to the term “Vocatio” as “un mot éminemment religieux”.<sup>83</sup> This phrase, which emphasized ministry and self-giving while being sufficiently pluralist, would replace the old motto. In a further jettisoning of Christian triumphalism, in November 2003 DHH gave its approval to retire the old march past, the Victorian hymn “Onward Christian soldiers”, so that “Ode to Joy” could be played “in December, when the first Imam is accepted into the Branch”.<sup>84</sup> The new Muslim chaplain completed basic training and duly entered the Branch that December. Since it was inappropriate for him to wear the current Christian badge, he was authorized to wear an Air Force branch of service badge until a solution could be found.<sup>85</sup>

The search for a new, single badge, however, continued to be frustrating. Steven Moore, who was a chaplain staff officer at the time, recalls that the Branch conducted its own internal process, with several parties being invited to submit designs, but no consensus emerged, only “confusion”.<sup>86</sup> Eventually, several ideas were sent to the Canadian Heraldic Authority (CHA), which designs and approves all requests for official military and civilian flags, badges and armorial bearings according to established laws of heraldry dating back to the Middle Ages.<sup>87</sup> Through 2004 CHA contracted its artists to work up concepts for a multi-faith badge Branch badge. One concept combined the first letters of “Chaplain” and “Aumonier” to create a bilingual symbol (Figure 4), a



**Figure 4**



**Figure 5**



**Figure 6**

**Proposed Branch Badges, 2004 - 2005**

design that seems to have gone nowhere. A second design incorporated a sixteen-pointed star as its central device (Figure 5), and a third included a maple tree with fourteen leaves in the centre (Figure 6). In all three cases the central devices were placed on a purple background, purple being the colour traditionally associated with the Branch. The designs in Figures 5 and 6 were sent to DHH for consideration in December 2004,<sup>88</sup> and the star design was immediately rejected as being too similar to the central device used on the CAF Intelligence Branch badge. Major Lansey felt that the maple tree design met DHH's requirements for a multi-faith badge, but asked CHA for an explanation of "the proposed 'symbolism' of the badge to ensure its accuracy from the history and heritage perspective".<sup>89</sup>

By this point it was public knowledge that the Christian "In hoc signo" Branch badge was being retired, and that some reactions to this plan were hostile. Some

conservative churches were alarmed at the idea that the government might be retiring the Christian cross.<sup>90</sup> The Chair of the House of Commons Defence Committee denounced the plan as pluralism gone too far, and asked “Why shouldn’t you be able to embrace your own religious symbols?” (Canada Free Press 2004). The editor of *The Calgary Sun*, Licia Corbella, felt that eliminating the Maltese cross on the old Branch badge was a betrayal of Canada’s war dead, as remembered in John McCrae’s iconic poem, “In Flanders Fields”, buried under “crosses, row on row”. Corbella quoted one letter writer who believed that the removal of the Maltese cross was akin to the French “secular approach that attempts to eradicate religious symbolism altogether.” Instead, the writer believed it appropriately Canadian “to honour all the traditions by offering them all the use of their own symbols.”<sup>91</sup> A retired CAF member wrote to the Minister of Defence that he was ashamed to see Canada’s military and Christian heritage discarded “to satisfy the special needs of one Moslem Padre” and promised that he spoke for “thousands” of veterans.<sup>92</sup> There was dissent among serving chaplains as well. Neil Parker was a staff officer responsible for this file, and at the 2004 Branch Retreat he was tasked with collecting opinions on a collection of designs that were then under consideration as replacements for the current badge. Parker recalled a distinctly negative response from his peers.

So there was a visceral loyalty to this, and they seemed to be being asked to make a poor choice when they didn’t want to make a choice. And that would be where some of the contentious issue was, and in the public forum, very strongly. Why give up a perfectly good symbol, under which our boys fought, for no discernible gain?” (Parker, interview).

The common tone in all of these responses, as Benham Rennick also notes (2011, 47), was that non-Christian chaplains were welcome to the CAF and should be

accommodated, but not at the expense of established Christian symbols. While the issue did not not command significant public attention, all parties in the process were now aware that the Branch badge had become a sensitive issue.

#### 4.3. The Limits Of Pluralism



**Figure 7**  
CHA's design for a proposed single  
Chaplain Branch Badge, 17 February,  
2005

By early 2005, CHA had revised the Maple Tree design (Figure 7) as per DHH's request and had supplied the requested description of symbolism. The Branch had received advice that the tree could work as a religious symbol agreeable to different faith groups.<sup>93</sup> In the CHA description the tree “symbolizes service to Canada”, but there was also the hint of a theological statement that it also represented “the tree of life.” The tree's three branches represented the branches (Army, Navy and Air Force) of the CAF.<sup>94</sup> DHH now had a design and a rationale for a single Chaplain Branch badge, and tried to win support for this design within the military. Notes for a March



**Figure 8**  
**CHA Draft of Poppy Design for Chaplain**  
**Branch badge, May 2005.**

2005 meeting with Vice-Admiral Jarvis, a senior administrator, indicate that DHH regarded the issue as “extremely sensitive,” noting that “others are watching.” DHH held to the principle of one badge for one corps and believed that the religious accommodation of non-Christian chaplains could be addressed by the secondary faith identifiers (crescent, torah scroll, etc.) worn on the uniform itself. Provision of these faith identifiers would be flexible enough to accommodate any additional religions that might be represented in the Branch and would avoid a proliferation of different cap badges that could pose “embarrassment to [the] CAF.”<sup>95</sup> The archival evidence suggests however that the tree as a single Branch badge lacked support. The March 2005 meeting with Vice Admiral Jarvis generated a new idea for a Branch badge with the central device of a poppy (Figure 8).<sup>96</sup> Canada’s Chief Herald, Robert Watt, rejected this idea as inappropriate because the poppy “is too closely associated with the [Royal Canadian] Legion and with honouring the fallen.” Watt remained of the opinion that the tree design was “the superior one.”<sup>97</sup> Another suggestion at this time from DHH’s Heritage Officer was that a “fabulous creature” from mythology might be an

appropriate central device for a single Branch badge. A mythological creature such as a unicorn, “which is often associated with purity of conviction” might be an appropriate symbol for the Branch, whereas a “plethora of badges would lead to confusion amongst CAF members and detract from the Branch’s stated aim of inclusion and “maintaining the flexibility to meet the ecclesiastical needs of all faith groups.”<sup>98</sup> This intriguing idea was never visually rendered, and the Branch’s reaction to this idea, with its perhaps unfortunate implication that the faiths and beliefs of its chaplains could be represented by an imaginary creature, may only be imagined. In May of 2005, DHH’s position of “One Corps One Badge” was decisively overruled by the head of Canada’s military.

All through this process, the Branch had been publicly committed to the idea of a single multi-faith badge as an expression of its corporate, multi-faith identity. Colonel Stan Johnstone, who would follow Bourque as Chaplain General, had told the press in April 2005 that “Since we became an interfaith branch, we should have a badge under which all can serve without compromising their identity” (Presbyterian Record 2004).<sup>99</sup> However, the proviso in Johnstone’s remark was the phrase “we’re seriously considering it,” and the fact was that internally there was no agreement. The leaders of the chaplaincy could simply not agree on one badge that they felt could carry the symbolic weight of the Branch’s multi-faith identity.<sup>100</sup> In May the issue went to the highest decision making body in the CAF, the Armed Forces Council,<sup>101</sup> which ruled against DHH and in favour of the Branch’s fallback plan, that was to devise separate badges for members of each faith. The new badges (Figure 9) would all incorporate aspects of the designs already worked up by CHA, including the wreath of red maple





**Figure 9**  
**Jewish, Christian and Muslim cap badges introduced 2006.**  
**This arrangement also functioned as the Branch Primary**  
**Badge from 2006-2012.**

leaves, the Crown, the words “Chaplain” and “Aumônier” within a ring or *annulus*, the scroll with the new Branch motto and the centre background or *golpe* of purple. The only difference was that for Muslims the background would contain the crescent, “the pre-eminent symbol of Islam ... for centuries”, and for Jews it would contain “the tablets of the Law and the Magen David ... symbols central to the Jewish faith”.<sup>102</sup> In what may have been a concession to those who had protested the seeming loss of tradition, the Christian version of this badge would retain the Maltese cross, “long associated with the Chaplaincy and [which] has ancient associations with Christian spirituality and healing.”<sup>103</sup> The final versions of these three designs received royal approval in January 2006.

The year 2006 was also the year that Canada’s war in Afghanistan escalated. From January to mid-September of that year, twenty-five Canadian soldiers were killed in Afghanistan and many others wounded (Government of Canada 2014b). For the

Branch, operational issues predominated, including training and deploying chaplains for duty overseas, supporting families of deployed soldiers, burying the dead, and ministering to the grieving and to the wounded. Despite these pressures, the Branch was planning to officially unveil its new badges, issuing invitations that, ironically, carried the old Constantinian “In Hoc Signo” badge on its letterhead.<sup>104</sup> CHA artwork for the new badges were displayed on 24 September at the installation of Brigadier General Stan Johnstone as the new Chaplain General. A message drafted for this occasion for the Governor General, Michaëlle Jean, described the badges as “symbols of the respect and trust Canadians have in [chaplains] work” and as “symbols of three of the world’s great religions”.<sup>105</sup> An underlying theme of this occasion, perhaps reflected in these remarks, was that while Canada was in an intensifying war in Afghanistan, it was not at war with Islam as a religion. In his inaugural remarks, Johnstone promised that the Branch would “continue cooperation with many faith communities ... [and] continue to provide spiritual guidance to all service personnel, regardless of denomination or faith” (DND 2006). Johnstone and his two successors as Chaplain General would lead the Branch through nearly five more years of intensive conflict and wartime ministry in Afghanistan while overseeing the organization’s continued slow transformation. The old Christian badges were retired despite the grumblings of some traditionalists, the three new cap badges were issued,<sup>106</sup> and a handful of Jewish and Muslim chaplains were recruited to wear them. In 2009 stoles and scarfs with the three faith-specific badges were issued for use on ceremonial and liturgical occasions. However, the problem of finding a single, unifying Branch badge remained.

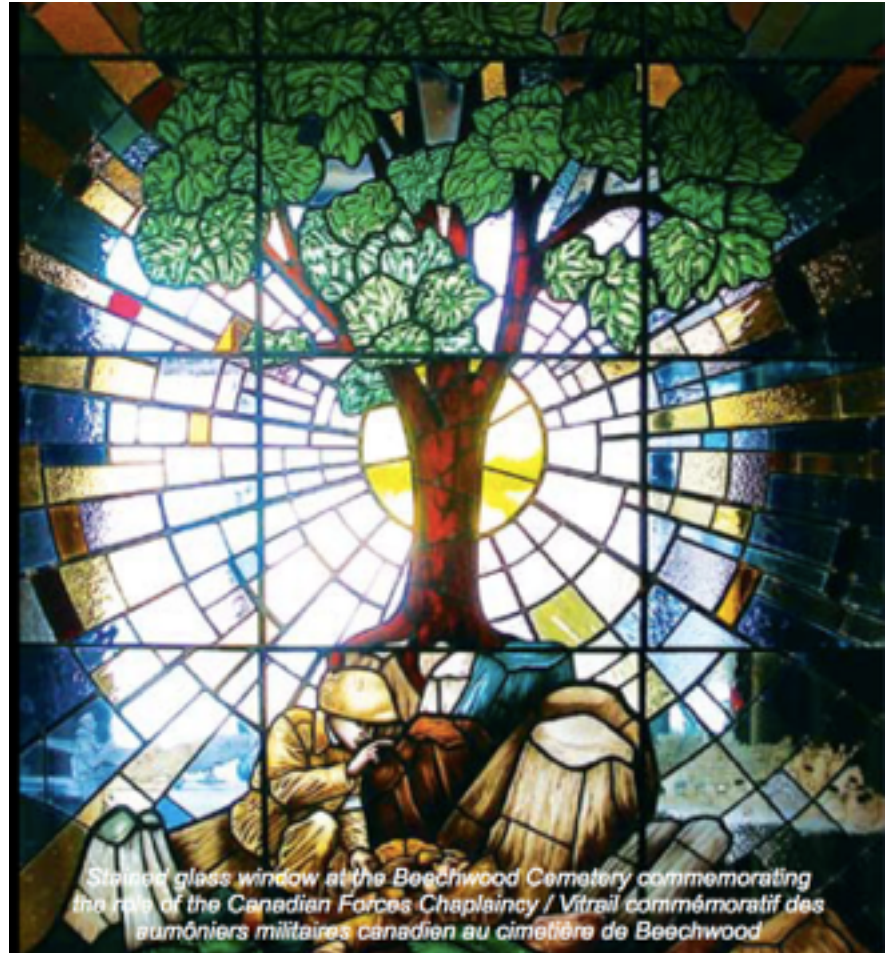
#### 4.4. From Tree to Shining Tree

By late 2010, the chaplaincy's senior leadership, the Strategic Council, decided that it was time to revisit the badge issue. There were practical as well as theological issues for this decision. Since 2006, the Branch's unified symbol, its "Primary Badge", took the form of the three faith-specific badges aligned left to right and displayed together on official communications such as letters, course completion certificates, and web pages. This arrangement was considered to be an awkward and "very incomplete solution" (Parker, interview) since it did not fully replace all traces of the Branch's old identity. The Branch's old "In hoc signo" badge and motto still appeared on the flag of the Branch School and Centre at Canadian Forces Base Borden. As long as this situation persisted, the Branch's multi-faith transformation was symbolically incomplete, and would only become more awkward if new faiths were added to its ranks. Chaplain General Karl McLean advised DHH of his intention to create, "a new single unified Primary Badge" but made it clear that it would only be used in addition to the "faith-specific" cap badges worn by his chaplains. These "faith-specific" cap badges were "consistent with the diverse religious nature of the CAF and Canadian society" and new "variations" of these cap badges would be added as "other faith traditions are enrolled in the CAF."<sup>107</sup> McLean noted that the Branch had "considered several universal religious symbols and concepts ... (e.g. light, renewal, rebirth, growth, etc.)" as well as "the possibility of a utilizing a stylized 'VS' (i.e. to represent our new Branch motto: 'Vocatio Ad Servitum'), but needed DHH's assistance to proceed further. DHH

responded positively, and gave its permission to the Branch to engage directly with CHA on the issue. Perhaps DHH saw this step as a vindication of its original position, since it felt it necessary to point out that the three faith badges unveiled in 2006 “are misrepresenting the Chaplaincy Branch. There should only be one chaplaincy badge representing all faiths of the CAF”.<sup>108</sup>

The Branch appointed Colonel John Fletcher to work with CHA on “conceptual badge development” and this time the process went much more smoothly. Claire Boudreau, who by then was Canada’s Chief Herald, recalls that when she and her staff met with Fletcher in May 2011, it only took an hour to agree on revisiting the idea of using a tree as the unifying symbol for the Primary Branch badge (Boudreau, interview). The inspiration for this idea came from a stained glass window that active and retired members of the Branch had funded and donated to the Beechwood National Memorial Centre, on the site of Canada’s National Military Cemetery in Ottawa. The Memorial Centre, which opened in 2008, includes a room, The Sacred Space, that was intentionally designed for multi-faith worship to serve “the memorial and commemorative needs of Canadians of diverse faiths”.<sup>109</sup> The window, entitled “Hope in a Broken World” (Figure 10) and designed by Canadian artist Bill Vanderboor (CanWest Media 2007, MacGregor 2008), incorporates three central symbols, a chaplain ministering to a fallen soldier,<sup>110</sup> a tree, and the sun. On the peripheries of these symbols, additional images, such as elements of the Vimy Ridge Memorial, speak to Canada’s military heritage. The dedication document for this window describes “the Tree of Life surrounded by a blaze of cloud representative of the light of God coming into our world,

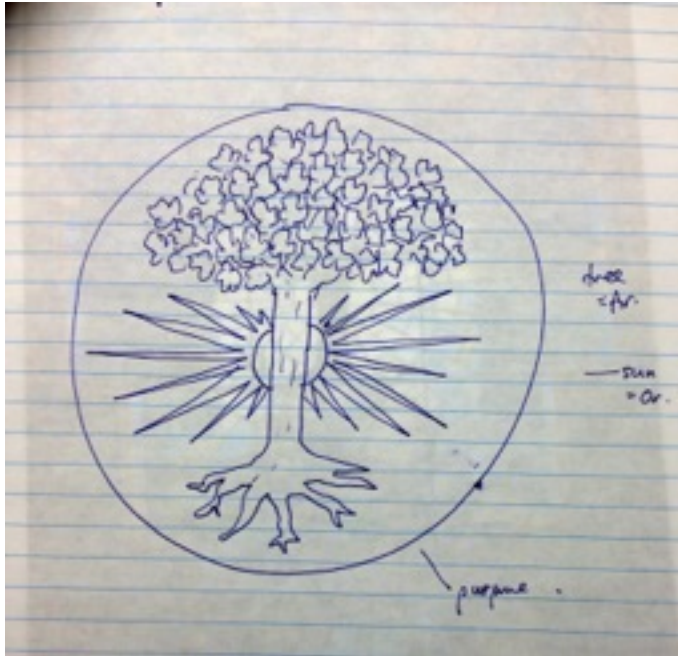
always present and part of the ministry provided to our military personnel through the presence of the padre.”<sup>111</sup> Fletcher and other Branch leaders thought that the window’s core imagery could be “the right unifying concept for a Branch badge” that would be representative of the entire chaplaincy.<sup>112</sup>



**Figure 10**  
**Chaplain Window**  
**Beechwood Cemetery**

The Beechwood window spoke powerfully to Fletcher and his colleagues as an expression of the Branch’s historical memory, its aspirations for its continued role in the CAF and in Canadian society, and its theological belief in a redemptive ministry of hope

and comfort to a military profoundly affected by the human cost of war. When the



**Figure 11**  
Initial CHA sketch of design proposed by  
Col. Fletcher, May 2011

Branch published *Called to Serve*, a 2008 document describing its strategic vision and direction, it chose a colour image of the Beechwood window for the cover. For members of the Branch who had officiated at numerous military funerals and repatriation ceremonies during the Afghanistan conflict, the image of a chaplain kneeling over a casualty was not just an historical image but a symbol of their ongoing vocation and recent work. The

context and location of the window, within the intentionally multi-faith Sacred Space and the national cemetery surrounding it, evoked the Branch's belief that it was called to minister to and comfort, both in life and death, the military of a religiously diverse country. The challenge now was to work this rich symbolic library of elements into the constraints of heraldry. Some of these challenges were decidedly prosaic in nature and serve as useful reminders that religious images often have mundane origins beneath

their layers of assigned meaning. For example, after seeing an initial sketch (Figure



**Figure 12**  
**CHA design for Primary Branch Badge,**  
**September 2011**

11), Fletcher asked that some rocks be

added as a base, so that the tree roots

were not “left dangling.”<sup>113</sup> Various

designs from the fall of 2011 (Figure 12)

show that CHA artists were able to anchor

the tree in a cluster of rocks. In later

drafts of the concept for the Badge, the

original, utilitarian role of these rocks is

upgraded to a symbolic function, so that

they represent “activities strongly rooted in

faith”.<sup>114</sup> As the design developed, CHA’s

artist, Eva Pilar-Cass, was able to retain

the window’s natural colours of brown

and green by placing the tree against a

background of gold light on top of the traditional purple. Fletcher’s idea of surrounding

the central device with an annulus bearing the words “Chaplaincy” and “Aumônerie” was

discouraged, since CHA worried that it would restrict the size and visual impact of the



**Figure 13**  
**CHA Design for Primary Branch Badge with**  
**Lumen et Lux wording, 15 October, 2011**

tree, and was subsequently dropped.<sup>115</sup> Senior leaders in the Branch were generally pleased with the artwork, but some felt that the tree (Figure 12) looked too much like a “shrub” and wanted a stronger design that more closely resembled the tree in the Beechwood window. Others wanted the “light of God” to look more golden in colour and to have a more ordered shape, less like “an explosion” and more “like a compass that could be symbolically linked to ‘spiritual direction.’”<sup>116</sup>

Branch leaders also thought briefly about including the words “Light and Life” (Lux et Vita) in the design, perhaps out of concern that the visual symbols alone did not convey these ideas adequately. “Lux et Vita” appear in a sketch dated 15 October, 2011 (Figure 13), placed in the scroll where the Branch motto would normally appear, but this plan was soon rejected. The Branch leaders evidently felt that it was more important to keep the motto “Vocatio ad Servitum”, and did not wish to complicate matters by introducing yet another Latin





**Figure 14**  
**Chaplain Branch Primary Badge**  
**Approved 20 January, 2012**

motto.<sup>117</sup> This sketch (Figure 13) also shows what would become the final design for the “Light of God”.

The final design for the Primary Badge was completed in January 2012 (Figure 14, below). It was formally introduced to the Branch at its annual retreat on 6 June 2012, when it was unveiled by Chaplain General McLean and his military superior, the CAF’s Chief of Military Personnel. A new Branch flag bearing the design was also

approved in 2012, thus ending all official uses of the old “In hoc signo” badge. The Branch instructed its members on the appropriate uses of the new Primary Badge, including all awards and plaques, documents, press releases, websites and communications. A guideline and background document told chaplains that the new badge would henceforth be “the exclusive brand of the CAF Chaplaincy”, while reassuring them the wearing of a faith-specific Chaplain cap badges will continue to be “an important dimension of developing a truly non-homogenized multi-faith chaplaincy.”<sup>118</sup> This reassurance and the phrase “non-homogenized” may have been intended to quell internal rumours that the Primary Badge would eventually replace the faith-specific cap badges with the new, generic badge. In fact, the Branch leadership had no such plans. As Colonel Fletcher noted, the Primary Badge was meant to be an overarching symbol of unity but was never intended to replace faith-specific cap badges; such a goal “is not supported and remains politically untenable”.<sup>119</sup>

The Primary Badge is only worn by one chaplain. The Chaplain General wears it on his or her scarf, below the faith-specific symbol of religious identity, as a sign of office on ceremonial occasions. Brigadier-General John Fletcher wore the badge he had helped to develop when he was installed as Chaplain General on 4 September 2013 (Ottawa Citizen 2013). The site of his installation, the Sacred Space at Beechwood National Cemetery, was the same place of inspiration that guided the creation of the Primary Badge. The figures seen around Fletcher in the photograph (Figure 15) are members of the Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy, religious leaders who advise the Branch and who endorse its members as bona fide



**Figure 15**  
**Brigadier-General John Fletcher (kneeling) during his installation as Chaplain General, Beechwood Cemetery, 14 September 2013. Fletcher, an Anglican priest, wears the Primary Badge beneath the cross as his faith-specific identifier.**

representatives of their respective faiths and denominations. The symbolism and staging of this event was intentional and significant. Christian, Jewish, Muslim and First Nations religious leaders gathered in an carefully designed multi-faith worship space, and gave their blessing to the first Chaplain General to be installed wearing a new, multi-faith symbol. The message, like the choice of an openly gay man (Shaw Media 2013) to be Chaplain General, was designed to communicate a message of tolerance and unity, with, perhaps, the unspoken message that a certain form of religion, unifying, irenic, comforting, and connecting national past to national purpose,

might still have a role to play in a Canada challenged by ten years of war with an uncertain purpose and outcome. Behind Fletcher's installation lies the story of a decade of friction and cooperation as the Branch, the military, and the government through its heraldic agency struggled to find a visual language that could convey something significant about Canada's religious diversity. While one might argue that the Primary Branch Badge is a bureaucratically contrived symbol that hints at more than it actually says, the fact of its adoption shows the persistence of the players in this story. Whatever one may be tempted to think of military traditionalists, it is a testimony to the professionalism of the Canadian Armed Forces that DHH officials always supported the Branch's efforts to diversify itself, albeit within the constraints of the "one corps one badge" tradition. For the Branch, the process revealed some truths that, perhaps in retrospect, were not surprising. Religious people, especially religious leaders, will almost always be reluctant to give up their own cherished and sacred symbols of identity. People will be wedded to the particularities of faith, even in a consciously "multi-faith" context. The Primary Badge was probably the most that could be achieved by a chaplaincy that was determined to remain "non-homogenized." However, by tapping into the Branch's cherished symbols of history, theology, and aspiration, it invites chaplains, still primarily Christian in number, to carry their traditions and hopes into a multi-faith era. While it may be less than loved by serving chaplains today, the Primary Badge remains sufficiently open-ended in its signification to accommodate future expansions of the chaplaincy's pluralism. Like the story of the turn to pluralism recounted in Chapter Two, the evolution of the Primary Branch Badge can be seen either as a deliberate quest to realize a Chaplain General's strategic vision

(Maindonald's "long slow march" and Bourque's "metamorphosis"), or as an improvised solution acceptable to a majority of the stakeholders. As Fletcher noted in his memo to the Chief Herald, the process was as much political as it was theological. As noted in Chapter Three, tradition and historic privilege, religious particularity and minority agendas are competing presences at the ICCMC's table, underscoring the difficulties involved in any serious discussion of pluralism. Whether the Tree of Life as an acceptably pluralist symbol might one day replace the particular faith symbols on chaplains' headdress is an interesting cause for speculation.

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<sup>73</sup> Memorandum, R.P. Bourque, Brigadier General, Chaplain General, “Branch Hat Badge and Other Insignia”. October 2, 2003. Department of National Defence, Department of History and Heritage, Badges and Insignias, Chaplain Branch”, File 600032 1060-5.

<sup>74</sup> CAF/DND Document A-AD-200-000/AG-000, Honours, Flags, and Heritage Structure of the CAF”, Chapter 6, Paragraph 1.

<sup>75</sup> The idea of the warrior ethos is famously expressed in General Rick Hillier’s comment, “We’re not the public service of Canada. We’re not just another department. We are the Canadian Forces, and our job is to be able to kill people.” See <https://www.munkdebates.com/the-debates/humanitarian-intervention/speakers-con/rick-hillier>.

<sup>76</sup> Traditionally, Canadian Forces mottos are in Latin. The Maltese Cross has a long association with the crusades and with the Knights Hospitaller. Except for a brief period (1969-1975) when a Latin cross was used, the Maltese Cross has been associated with British and Canadian military chaplains since the First World War. The motto, “In hoc sign vinces”, became a legend in the development of early Christianity (MacCulloch 2009, 190-191).

<sup>77</sup> Major K. Dingwell, email to Major M.R. McNorgan, Thursday, April 17, 2003. DND, DHH “Badges and Insignias, Chaplain Branch”, File 600032 1060-5.

<sup>78</sup> Major P.E. Lansey, email to Major K. Dingwell, Thursday, April 17, 2003. DND, DHH “Badges and Insignias, Chaplain Branch”, File 600032 1060-5.

<sup>79</sup> Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) LeBlanc, Facsimile and Email to Chief Warrant Officer C. Tkacz, August 29, 2003 DND, DHH “Badges and Insignias, Chaplain Branch”, File 600032 1060-5 . For images of the US religious insignia, see <http://usmilitary.about.com/library/milinfo/armybranches/blchap.htm> accessed 20 April, 2014.

<sup>80</sup> Chaplain General Bourque had toured the US military chaplain schools (Army, Navy and Air Force) and had been impressed by the Americans’ “openness to other faiths and other denominations” (Bourque, interview).

<sup>81</sup> Major K. Dingwell, email to Major P.E. Lansey, April 17, 2013. DND, DHH “Badges and Insignias, Chaplain Branch”, File 600032 1060-5.

<sup>82</sup> Major S.K. Moore, email to Major P.E. Lansey, August 20, 2013, 12:24. DND, DHH “Badges and Insignias, Chaplain Branch”, File 600032 1060-5.

<sup>83</sup> Fatima Bourhill, Canadian Heraldic Authority, Letter to Major M.R. McNorgan, August 5, 2013. DND, DHH “Badges and Insignias, Chaplain Branch”, File 600032 1060-5.

<sup>84</sup> S.J. Harris, email to Lieutenant Colonel J.A.A. Lemieux, November 6, 2003, 10:06. DND, DHH “Badges and Insignias, Chaplain Branch”, File 600032 1060-5. A march past is a regimental or corps tune, a musical marker of identity customarily played on ceremonial occasions.

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<sup>85</sup>Chief Warrant Officer Tkacz, email to S.J. Harris, March 9, 2004. DND, DHH “Badges and Insignias, Chaplain Branch”, File 600032 1060-5. The correspondence from March 2003 shows DHH officials pushing back against Branch hopes that a temporary fix could be achieved to create a specifically Muslim cap badge. DHH’s position was that the old Christian cap badge should be changed, but needed to be changed according to proper procedures and replaced with a single badge; Major P.E. Lansey, email to S.J. Harris, March 9, 2003.

<sup>86</sup> Major (ret.) S.K. Moore, pers. comm. April, 22 2014.

<sup>87</sup> As the Chief Herald of Canada, Ms. Claire Boudtreau, explained it to me (interview, March 14, 2014), the CHA works with its customers, including the military, to implement the customers’ wishes according to the prescribed rules of heraldry (see <http://www.gg.ca/document.aspx?id=81>).

<sup>88</sup> Robert Watt, Chief Herald of Canada, letter to Lieutenant Colonel J.H.G. Tremblay, DHH, December 14, 2004. DND, DHH “Badges and Insignias, Chaplain Branch”, File 600032 1060-5.

<sup>89</sup> Major P. Lansey, Inspector of CAF Colours and Badges. Memorandum, December 14, 2004. DND, DHH “Badges and Insignias, Chaplain Branch”, File 600032 1060-5.

<sup>90</sup> S.K. Moore, pers. comm. 24 April, 2014.

<sup>91</sup>“Forces Acting in Bad Faith”. Photocopied editorial, *The Calgary Sun*, November 21, 2004. DND, DHH “Badges and Insignias, Chaplain Branch”, File 600032 1060-5.

<sup>92</sup> L. Leugner. Letter to Bill Graham, Minister of National Defence, 29 November, 2004. DND, DHH “Badges and Insignias, Chaplain Branch”, File 600032 1060-5.

<sup>93</sup> S.K. Moore, pers. comm. April 22, 2014. The advice came from the Right Reverend Ralph Spence, at the time the Anglican Bishop of Niagara and a recognized expert on heraldry. Bishop Spence (pers. comm.) could not recall the details or dates of the process, but to this day retains a strong impression of hostility from some of the parties in the room.

<sup>94</sup> Robert Watt, Chief Herald of Canada. Letter to Lieutenant Colonel J.H.G. Tremblay, Inspector of Canadian Forces Colours and Badges, January 13, 2005. This letter references “changes requested by letter and by phone”, so it is conceivable that the idea of the “tree of life” arose in a phone discussion. The statement of symbolism is contained in the CHA document of 22 February, 2005. DND, DHH “Badges and Insignias, Chaplain Branch”, File 600032 1060-5.

<sup>95</sup> DHH Briefing Notes for Meeting with Vice Admiral Jarvis, Chief of Military Personnel, on Padre Badge Issue, Wednesday, 6 March, 2005. DND, DHH “Badges and Insignias, Chaplain Branch”, File 600032 1060-5. Vice Admiral Jarvis was the Assistant Deputy Minister for Human Resources (Military).

<sup>96</sup> Lieutenant Colonel J.H.G. Tremblay, email to Robert Watt, April 26, 2005. Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, HRLD 755-Chaplain Branch. Volume I.

<sup>97</sup>Robert Watt, email to Lieutenant Colonel J.H.G. Tremblay, June 21, 2005, 9:58. Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, HRLD 755-Chaplain Branch. Volume I.

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<sup>98</sup> Major P.E. Lansey, Memorandum, “Fabulous Creatures”, May 4 (?), 2005. DND, DHH “Badges and Insignias, Chaplain Branch”, File 600032 1060-5.

<sup>99</sup> The Johnstone quote was picked up in at least one other media outlet, *The St. John’s Telegram* (April 3, 2005). DND, DHH “Badges and Insignias, Chaplain Branch”, File 600032 1060-5.

<sup>100</sup> Major (ret) S.K. Moore recalls being present in 2005 when a senior chaplain said of the proposed tree design, quite forcefully, that there was no way he would wear that design on his head (pers. comm. April 22, 2014).

<sup>101</sup> The Armed Forces Council is chaired by the Chief of Defence Staff (<http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/about-org-structure/chief-of-defence-staff.page>), the service branch heads commanders of the Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Navy, Royal Canadian Air Force, and other key staff, and is analogous to the US Joint Chiefs of Staff.

<sup>102</sup> Robert Watt, Chief Herald of Canada, Memorandum to Major Paul Lansey, September 12, 2006. Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, HRLD 755-Chaplain Branch, Volume 2.

<sup>103</sup> Watt, Memorandum to Lansey, September 12, 2006. Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, HRLD 755-Chaplain Branch, Volume 2.

<sup>104</sup> S.G. Johnstone, Chaplain General, letter to Mr. Robb Watt, August 25, 2006. Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, HRLD 755-Chaplain Branch, Volume 2.

<sup>105</sup> Draft message, April 25, 2006. Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, HRLD 755-Chaplain Branch, Volume 2.

<sup>106</sup> I personally did not receive the new Christian cap badge until 2008. The process of issuing these badges was ad hoc at first, until supply and quality of production issues were addressed.

<sup>107</sup> Brigadier-General K.R. McLean, letter Thru CMP for Directorate of History and Heritage, January 2011. Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, HRLD 755-Chaplain Branch, Volume 3.

<sup>108</sup> Major G. Turpin, CAF Dress and Ceremonial, letter to Mrs. Claire Boudreau, April 18, 2011. DND, DHH “Badges and Insignias, Chaplain Branch”, File 600032 1060-5.

<sup>109</sup> “Facilities,” Beechwood Cemetery, <http://www.beechwoodcemetery.com/index.php/funeral-services/facilities.html#>.

<sup>110</sup> The image of the chaplain in this window is based on a well-known historical photograph of a Canadian army chaplain, Robert Seaborn, giving absolution to a dying soldier in Normandy (National Post 2014a).

<sup>111</sup> “Beechwood Multi-Faith Centre Chaplain Memorial Window”. Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, HRLD 755-Chaplain Branch, Volume 3.

<sup>112</sup> Colonel J.M. Fletcher, email to Manon Labelle, Bruce Patterson, and Claire Boudreau, May 19, 2011, 4:11. Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, HRLD 755-Chaplain Branch, Volume 3.



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<sup>113</sup> Colonel J.M. Fletcher, email to Manon Labelle, Bruce Patterson, and Claire Boudreau, May 19, 2011, 4:11. Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, HRLD 755-Chaplain Branch, Volume 3.

<sup>114</sup> Manon Labelle, "Concept for a Badge for Chaplaincy Badge", May 31, 2011. Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, HRLD 755-Chaplain Branch, Volume 3.

<sup>115</sup> Manon Labelle, email to Colonel John Fletcher, June 7, 2011, 3:45 PM. Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, HRLD 755-Chaplain Branch, Volume 3.

<sup>116</sup> Colonel John Fletcher, email fo Manon Labelle, September 20, 2011, 5:19pm. Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, HRLD 755-Chaplain Branch, Volume 3.

<sup>117</sup> Colonel J.M. Fletcher, email to Manon Labelle, 27 October 27, 2011. Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, HRLD 755-Chaplain Branch, Volume 3.

<sup>118</sup>Chaplain Branch, "New Primary Badge Backgrounder". Unpublished RCChS document, emailed to me by Major Derrick Marshall, RCChS, March 14, 2014.

<sup>119</sup> Colonel J.M. Fletcher, email to R.J.A.M. Cote and Major J.G. Turpin, 6 March, 2011, 11:58AM. Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, HRLD 755-Chaplain Branch, Volume 3.

## Chapter Five

### Practicing Pluralism: The Experience of Serving Chaplains

*“You know in your own heart who you are praying to, but you can be inclusive in your language.”* Serving Muslim chaplain.

#### 5.1. Pluralism as a Learned Skill

In his work on US military chaplaincy, and building on the work of the scholar Anne Loveland, Kim Philip Hansen speaks of two ideals that work in tension with one another. The first is the “Plural Ideal”, that includes chaplaincy’s commitment to respect the religious freedom and diversity of the military as “an empirical fact” guaranteed by the secular state. In the US context, “the Plural Ideal” is expressed in the motto of “Cooperation Without Compromise”, that sums up a chaplain’s duties as supporting the military’s mission, working well with chaplains of other faith groups, facilitating the religious needs of military members of other faith groups, and nurturing the faith of co-religionists. Within the Canadian context, these values are expressed in the Branch motto of “Minister to our own, facilitate the faith needs of others, and serve all”. The second ideal is what Loveland calls the “Sectarian Ideal”, that influences chaplains from faith groups whose exclusivist beliefs incline them to oppose pluralism. As Hansen notes, within the institutional culture of military chaplaincy, the sectarian ideal creates a climate “where diversity grates on the chaplains, where rivalries and prejudice get in the way of effective cooperation, and individual chaplains feel disrespected on

unappreciated” (Hansen 2012, 119-125). While the historical, social and religious factors influencing the development of US military chaplaincy are substantially different from the Canadian context,<sup>120</sup> CAF chaplains do experience some of the tensions between the pluralist and sectarian ideals. As the story of evolution of the Primary Branch Badge suggests, attachments to particular religious traditions sometimes prove stronger than chaplains’ loyalties to the Branch’s worldview and its multi-faith expression. While the pluralist ideal is clearly expressed at the organization’s command and strategic levels, it has to filter down to the tactical level where the majority of the Branch’s chaplains work and minister. Not all of these chaplains appear equally committed to pluralism as the Branch frames it. Some welcome it, but others see it as an official ideology that can seem disconnected from their experience of tensions within chaplain teams or from their desire for recognition of their theological positions. How these tactical level chaplains understand pluralism, and the degree of support for any future inclusion of other faith groups, is the subject of this chapter.

Joanne Benham Rennick concludes that chaplains’ “religious duties have very little to do with the services they are called upon to deliver” (2011, 76). This finding is warranted by her examination of chaplains’ interactions with the CAF’s rank and file, and is certainly verified by my own experience and research. In their supportive role to military personnel dealing with the alienation and moral anomie generated by operational stress, hierarchy and bureaucracy, chaplains, as Benham Rennick rightly notes, are infrequently asked to be religious specialists. What the profession calls “Ministry of Presence”, sharing isolation and hardships with military members, and

offering them counsel and friendship , is indeed a chaplain's stock in trade. Ministry of presence is not sacramental ministry. The only thing it asks military members to believe is that a chaplain cares for their wellbeing. Some of my interviews with chaplains conducted in 2014 produced accounts of ministry, such as this one, support her findings.

On deployment I did my Sunday services as an Anglican, but for the rest of the week I was a chaplain. I was talking with people and visiting them, I was walking the flight line, I was greeting flights and dealing with compassionate cases. None of that had anything to do with being an Anglican. It was about being a qualified chaplain.

Benham Rennick's social sciences-based study of chaplains' roles within the whole military institution, that views religion as a highly personalized phenomenon of late-modernity, shaped by "forces such as individualism and subjectivation" (2011, 14), might thus be expected to downplay the importance of formal religious traditions and their bearing on chaplains' identities and world views. However, as an ongoing encounter with different world views and theologies, religious pluralism raises issues and potential conflicts that force chaplains to draw on the resources of their own faith traditions to assert meaning and reconcile competing truth claims. In this respect, religious pluralism makes greater demands on individual chaplains than simple advocacy and protection of religious rights. As we noted earlier with Padre Merriman, a Christian chaplain can intervene with a military superior to explain why a Muslim soldier should wear a beard, and see this function in entirely non-theological terms as a protection of the soldier's Charter Rights, or as the assertion of a common bond as fellow Canadian soldiers. The implications of religious pluralism may be significantly more immediate and profound

when the Muslim soldier is a colleague and fellow padre with whom one is expected to work and even pray together.

When pluralism thus comes “in house”, it becomes part of a common institutional culture that needs to be maintained for the chaplaincy to be effective. In this respect, pluralism becomes a type of ongoing inter-religious dialogue. As noted in the discussion of the ICCMC’s deliberations in Chapter Three, the same dynamics of inter-religious dialogue apply to the maintenance of a pluralist chaplain culture. For the culture to be healthy, or at least functional, chaplains of different faiths have to bracket their own theological worldviews and search for ways to develop respect, collegiality and even friendship with one another. For the seasoned ecumenists and senior faith leaders of the ICCMC, developing these kind of relationships may come more easily. Likewise chaplains from minority faith traditions may have ecumenical experience in fields such as hospital chaplaincy, as well as the skills and patience gained from negotiating a majority culture.<sup>121</sup> However, for relatively inexperienced junior chaplains working at the tactical level, pluralism is a learned skill. It may well be a foreign skill for some newly recruited Christian chaplains, fresh from seminary and a few qualifying years in ministry. As one padre put it, “if they’ve lived and worked in small town ministries, then for some chaplains having the United Church and Presbyterians as neighbours was their idea of multi-faith”. In speaking of American Christianity’s experience of other religions inside the US, Robert Wuthnow suggests that many pastors and ministers prefer a “comfortable homeostasis” that allows them to avoid significant engagement with other faith traditions.

[These pastors] may have thought some about their own faith in relation to other faiths during their college and seminary years or as a result of a chance friendship with a Jew or Buddhist, but they are not likely to be putting themselves in harm's way, as it were, by deliberately organizing discussions with leaders of other religions. When such discussions do arise, they take the form of brief excursions into a cross-cultural encounter that can readily be experienced without raising deep questions about the nature of Christianity itself (Wuthnow 2005, 257).

There is little reason to imagine that the same dynamic is not true of the Canadian Christian clergy who become military chaplains. If their experience of civilian ministry is not in urban areas, the favoured destinations of many new Canadians, these chaplain recruits will tend to have minimal experience of minority faith traditions. Their Christian colleagues coming from urban areas may not be that much more knowledgeable, given that minority faith groups often cannot build mosques and temples in visible areas because of restrictive zoning requirements and obstruction from municipal authorities (Breton 2012, 132-136). My own experience of the civilian church suggests that Protestant Christian clergy tend to limit their networking to likeminded associations and ministerials. Formal denominations may select a few clergy for specialized ecumenical or, more rarely, inter-religious functions, but most clergy are focused on parochial duties.<sup>122</sup>

For new CAF chaplains in their late twenties or thirties, the RCChS' ideal demographic for recruitment, their knowledge of other faith traditions may thus be minimal. More than likely they will come into the chaplaincy curious and willing to learn, and will be inclined to support Loveland's pluralist ideal. My own research echoes Benham Rennick's findings about chaplains often wanting to escape the constraints and sameness of the denominational church (Benham Rennick 2011, 73). A

chaplain in the Christian Reformed tradition told me that “I love variety and diversity, I love engaging people who think differently than myself, fostering dialogue, honesty and openness”, and said that he found an opportunity to do this in chaplaincy that he did not find in his “one-sided” denominational culture. Almost half of my sample of serving chaplains indicated that their personal theology was of a moderate or even liberal nature, that would seem to incline them favourably towards encountering religious diversity. However, even a self-described moderate Pentecostal told me of experiences where he wondered if other Christians were true to the faith they supposedly proclaimed, which indicates that theological labels like “liberal” and “conservative” are highly subjective. Whatever his or her personal theology may be, the RCChS Christian recruit, often fresh from the formative experiences of seminary or bible college and first parish or congregation, will confront the Branch’s multi-faith worldview. Robert Wuthnow suggests that when encountering the reality of other faith groups, American Christian clergy often engage in “implicit mental bargains” that allow them to avoid the cognitive “dissonance” that “would likely occur if they took either the position that all non-Christians are eternally damned or the view that all religions are equally valid”. Under the terms of these bargains, clergy give themselves permission to avoid difficult theological questions or the “long hard discussions that would be required to identify true areas of agreement or disagreement” with other religions. Instead, they focus on a consumeristic view of religious choice, doing what they can to satisfy their own congregations and to attract others to “their small niche within the larger pluralistic environment” (Wuthnow 2005, 257). One could even extend this analysis to pastors and priests whose traditions are uneasy with the great diversity within Christianity, but

whose theologies are not fully aligned with the sectarian ideal. Either way, unless they espouse a liberal theology that is comfortable with the pluralist ideal, or unless they are completely venal, all Christian chaplains wishing to join the RCChS must make some form of mental bargain that allows them to accommodate the chaplaincy worldview. All prospective chaplains must meet with Selection Boards and are asked if they can reconcile the teachings and edicts of their faith traditions with the expectation that they will “serve all”. For some this questioning is easier than for others, depending how the chaplain has been formed by his or her tradition’s teachings on issues such as human sexuality and gay marriage, or on the exercising of ordained ministry by women. A male recruit from a conservative Christian church is warned that he may find himself working under the direction of a female chaplain superior to him in rank, and would know that he is expected to treat gay and lesbian personnel in a supportive and non-judgemental manner. Failing to conform with these expectations would be grounds for discipline and even discharge. As my research shows, not all serving chaplains are convinced that the selection process screens out those chaplains inclined towards the sectarian ideal.

If the pluralist and sectarian ideals are seen respectively as the vertical and horizontal axes on a chart, then the RCChS does not want chaplains who are located so high on the pluralist axis that they lose contact with their sense of religious particularity that might be located at the low end of the sectarian axis. Chaplains are hired precisely because of religious and spiritual formation of their traditions, and are expected to function as such within certain aspects of their military ministry, such as in dealing with their co-religionists in chapel worship, offering spiritual counsel, and administering



sacraments. Christian chaplains are expected to retain close ties with their denominational bodies, to maintain whatever spiritual disciplines and practices are appropriate for their tradition, and to remain grounded in their identity as a precondition for ecumenical and interfaith work. Colonel Guy Chapdelaine, a Roman Catholic priest who will become the next Chaplain General in the fall of 2015, makes this point in a military journal.

This plurality forces the chaplain to remain in contact with his/her religious tradition through a life of active prayer, participation in activities of his/her traditions, as well as taking the time to go on an annual spiritual retreat. The integrity of his/her vocation as a minister or religious leader is essential in order to have a healthy chaplaincy. I have noted a certain difficulty among chaplains who retire and return to their respective communities as the ecumenical and inter-religious experience has an impact upon our way of seeing the world (Chapdelaine 2014a, 40).

Note that Chapdelaine sees a danger of chaplains inclining too far towards the high end of the pluralistic ideal or axis. He seems to assume that the experience of pluralism can possibly unmoor a chaplain from his or her theological and ecclesiastical formation, and thus impair the ability to reintegrate within a theologically homogenous faith community.<sup>123</sup> Chapdelaine's exhortation is echoed by ICCMC representatives to their faith groups' chaplains, and is reinforced by denominational caucuses and programming during the annual Retreat, a must-attend event for most chaplains. Most chaplains take such messages to heart. A chaplain assigned to a staff position told me that because her day was filled with administration and management duties, "the challenge is to find other ways to nourish my vocation as a priest and pastor. I have been blessed to be able to do that pretty well in some of the local parishes."

While Christian chaplains are being told to maintain their original theological worldviews and faith identities, they face competing messages. One source of tension comes in the form of “problems of conscience and integrity” when pulled between the demand to accommodate the rights of others and their own theologically based beliefs (Benham Rennick 2011, 48). Since her study there are signs that these problems have become more manageable in the last few years, particularly as homosexuality and same-sex marriage become more culturally normative. For the last two years, chaplains of all theological stripes have adjusted to the leadership of an openly gay Chaplain General without any displays of dissent (Shaw Media 2013). Some more conservative chaplains may have decided that it is politic to remain silent, but others appear to have found ways to make peace with homosexuality. A self-described traditional Baptist chaplain told of how a same sex couple in the unit he served had given birth through in-vitro fertilization. He was quite happy to work that news into the unit’s daily briefing.

So I visit in the home after they come out of hospital and I take a picture of the couple with their new baby, and the very next day, during the eight o’clock daily briefing ... they give me a padre’s moment. That’s one of the things that I do, I flash up a picture, we’ve got a new [member] born in the unit! So I’ve been in homes, because even though there is a lifestyle or a theological viewpoint difference between myself and others, one of my responsibilities is to care for everyone, right? And I love babies too (laughs). So I have to park that sort of aspect. But I still have no problem at all in caring for people regardless of where they’re at.

As noted earlier, the chaplain worldview, built on the Christian idea of pastoral “care for everyone”, gives chaplains a resource to draw on in such cases. A Muslim who wants to grow a beard, or a a same-sex service couple, can be cared for in a manner congruent with the pastoral imperative of the chaplaincy worldview and also with a

shared military ethos in which all members are fellow soldiers who enjoy the same Charter rights. However, in the course of a given year, a chaplain may have to adjust to a new female superior as head of his chaplain team, be part of a prayer service where the Torah and Quran are read in unfamiliar languages, or work with a Muslim colleague. At some point the chaplain will be required to take the RCChS professional course, Ministry in a Pluralistic Environment, where he or she will spend two weeks studying other faiths and their theological truth claims. The chaplain may be exposed to stress or conflict from colleagues who align more with the sectarian ideal, and experience friction in their work environment. Such situations have the potential to force chaplains to examine their own theological beliefs and faith identities, and to do the mental work necessary to come to terms with the coexistence of different religious truth claims. If honestly confronted, these moments of self-examination require chaplains to draw on their own spiritual resources. These problems cannot be dealt with using the non-religious aspects of the chaplain's skill set that might otherwise get the chaplain through any day's work. How chaplains come to terms with the pluralist ideal and accommodate its challenges to their own religious particularity can advance or jeopardize their individual career aspirations, affect the health of both chaplain teams and supervisory relations, and determine support for any future extension of the Branch's pluralism. The chaplains in my research group can expect another fifteen to twenty-five years of service in the RCChS, and may be promoted into positions where they can shape the direction of its future pluralism. Their understanding of and support for religious pluralism will be a significant factor in the chaplaincy's future development and their individual success.

## 5.2. Diverse Ministers

The most recent data<sup>124</sup> I have been able to obtain from the RCChS shows the following religious affiliations of its 287 chaplains, as distributed between the full-time Regular Force (RegF) and the part-time Reserve Force (ResF).<sup>125</sup> While the exact strength and composition of the organization fluctuates slightly each year due to recruitment and attrition, these numbers give a reasonably accurate picture of the chaplaincy's religious composition.

Table 1: Royal Canadian Chaplain Service (Regular and Reserve Forces) by Faith Group as of August 2014

Catholic:	99 (72 RegF, 27 ResF), 34% of total
Muslim:	3 (All RegF), 1% of total
Jewish:	2 (Both RegF), .06% of total
Orthodox:	2 (Both RegF) .06% of total
Protestants:	181, 63% of total
Anglican:	49 (41 RegF, 8 ResF), 27% of Protestants
Baptist:	30 (24 RegF, 6ResF), 16.5% of Protestants
EFC:	39 (28 RegF, 10 ResF), 21.5% of Protestants
Lutheran:	16 (10 RegF, 6 ResF), 9% of Protestants)
Presbyterians:	13 (7 RegF, 6 ResF), 7% of Protestants)
United Church:	35 (28 RegF, 7 ResF), 19% of Protestants)

*The Catholic figure includes Roman Catholic, Ukrainian Catholic, and Eastern Rite. Among Catholic chaplains, there are 35 priests (26 RegF, 9 ResF), 5 deacons, and 59 pastoral associates.*

When compared to data gathered by Benham Rennick (2011, 34) on Regular Force chaplains for the years 2006 and 2010 (Table Two), these numbers show a pattern of fluctuation and even slight decline in numbers as a proportion of the whole for Roman Catholics and most mainstream Protestant groups within the chaplaincy. In 2006 Roman Catholics and Protestants accounted for 43% and 56.2% of the total RCChS, respectively (Benham Rennick 2011, 43). The 2014 data shows that Roman Catholics have fallen to 34% of the total (RegF and ResF) of the RCChS. While the numbers of Jewish and Muslim chaplains are slowly increasing, the most noticeable trend is the year by year increase in the number of evangelical protestants in the Branch. This number would be higher still if one includes the number of Baptist chaplains from conservative churches who might feel more at home within the EFC caucus but who are not counted as evangelicals, or those chaplains from the Lutheran Church of Canada whose theological views on scripture and gender have much more in common with evangelicals than with their mainstream (ELCIC) Lutheran colleagues.<sup>126</sup>

Table 2: Royal Canadian Chaplain Service (Regular Force), 2006-2014

Religion	Total RegF 2006	Total RegF 2010	Total RegF 2014
Roman Catholic	80	90	72
Protestant	(104)	(127)	(138)
Anglican	35	47	41
United	25	28	28
Baptist	13	19	24
Presbyterian	6	7	7
Lutheran	9	9	10
Evangelical (EFC)	16	17	28
Orthodox	0	1	2
Muslim	1	2	3
Jewish	0	0	2

Total Women	28	26	38
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The overall growth of the chaplaincy noticeable in the 2010 and 2014 numbers can be explained by a growth in chaplain recruitment authorized by the CAF at the height of the Afghan mission.<sup>127</sup> Anecdotal evidence suggests that recruitment levels have fallen significantly since 2012 as a result of overall CAF budget reductions. Also noteworthy is that the number of female chaplains as a percentage of the RegF total has fallen. In 2006 it was 18% of the total, 15% in 2008, and 16.2% in 2014. The chaplain staff officer responsible for recruiting expressed concern that the overall number of women in the RCChS was dropping, and noted that for the 2014 recruit class the applications had to be combed through twice to produce a single qualified female candidate.<sup>128</sup>

The disparity in gender is a factor in the Branch's religious diversity, and is sometimes a source of friction among chaplains. The fastest growing body within the chaplaincy, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, is composed of denominations that are theologically indisposed to ordaining women, and have never produced a female military chaplain. When I asked a Christian Reformed chaplain if there was a single women among his EFC colleagues, there was a long pause while he thought through the question. "Wow", he finally said. "I don't think there is one." Besides those represented by the EFC, there are other faith traditions in the RCChS that either do not recognize women's ministry (Lutheran Church of Canada, Orthodox Christian, Judaism, Islam, ) or restrict them to certain types of ministry (Roman Catholics only allow women

to be Pastoral Associates). Since chaplains typically work in teams under the direction of a chaplain of senior rank, theological attitudes towards gender can be one example of how the sectarian ideal is a source of friction. A woman chaplain with ten year's experience reflected on the incongruity of how Afghans could recognize her as a faith leader ("They would say Ah, you are mullah!") while some of her Christian colleagues in the Branch could not do the same.

It's men of different traditions which don't ordain females, who don't see me as anything other than a baptized Christian, and they're willing to have those kinds of conversations with you. I've never met an Imam or a Rabbi, or even a civilian practicing Jew or Muslim who would say, "I don't recognize you as a priest in your tradition."

While this chaplain encountered this reaction from colleagues "from hardline Christian traditions", she did not experience it from Roman Catholics. "[They] are alright," she mused, "I've never met a Roman Catholic priest who's said I don't recognize your holy orders."<sup>129</sup> In discussing her responses to such situations, she felt that Branch leadership training might be better calibrated to deal with such conflicts, including scenarios such as "Who's been the most annoying shit on your team and what do you do with someone who doesn't want to play nicely?". This chaplain's experience of team leadership as a woman was echoed by a colleague with twelve years of service.

At one point I was even in a position of supervision over a chaplain whose church didn't encourage women working, and there was a lot of passive aggressive behaviour and refusal to attend any services that I was leading, which was extremely uncomfortable.

This subordinate's "passive aggressive" behaviour included speaking to a male peer but refusing to speak to his team leader. While both of these female chaplains had encountered similar kinds of resistance, neither felt that this behaviour was "systemic".

One of them felt that the problem of resistance from some male peers was diminishing, and reflected on how the substantial cohort of women now moving into senior leadership positions would change the culture further. Having had an openly gay Chaplain General for the last two years, the RCChS may likely have its first female Chaplain General promoted sometime in the next decade. She will either be a Roman Catholic Pastoral Associate or a mainstream protestant, and while that person may be able to change the culture from the top down, she may find that she has to work hard to counter the diminishing number of women overall in the chaplaincy.

The recruitment of women is one of the CAF's three diversity recruitment targets, and like any other organization in the military, the RCChS is required to report its progress in recruiting women, aboriginals and visible minorities. These tables from an internal Employment Equity<sup>130</sup> report show the chaplaincy's diversity with respect to other ranks and trades in the CAF in both the Regular and Reserve Forces.

Table 3: Employment Equity Data for the RCChS (RegF) and Other CAF Officers (RegF) By Trade and Rank

MILITARY OCCUPATION GROUP	TOTAL	WOMEN		ABORIGINAL		VISIBLE MINORITIES	
	NO.	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
General Officer	96	5	5.2	2	2.1	2	2.1
Naval Operations	1347	172	12.8	23	1.7	53	3.9
Combat Arms	810	91	11.2	13	1.6	98	12.1
Air Operations - Pilots	2087	98	4.7	18	0.9	73	3.5
Air Operations	1279	179	14.0	16	1.3	42	3.3
Aerospace Engineering	867	150	17.3	13	1.5	84	9.7
Engineering	1654	148	8.	17	1.0	204	12.3
Medical & Dental	1290	628	48.7	29	2.2	116	9.0
Chaplaincy	234	38	16.2	1	0.4	18	7.7
Support	3173	1076	33.9	48	1.5	191	6.0
<b>REGULAR FORCE OFFICER TOTALS</b>	<b>16003</b>	<b>2721</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1020</b>	<b>6.4</b>



Table 4: Employment Equity Data for the RCChS (ResF) and Other CAF Officers (ResF) By Trade and Rank

MILITARY OCCUPATION GROUP	TOTAL	WOMEN		ABORIGINAL		VISIBLE MINORITIES	
	NO.	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
General Officer	9	1	11.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Naval Operations	423	80	18.9	5	1.2	28	6.6
Combat Arms	1841	75	4.1	26	1.4	122	6.6
Air Operations - Pilots	179	6	3.4	1	0.6	2	1.1
Air Operations	98	16	16.3	1	1.0	1	1.0
Aerospace Engineering	35	10	28.6	1	2.9	0	0.0
Engineering	300	31	10.3	3	1.0	26	8.7
Medical & Dental	345	124	35.9	3	0.9	35	10.1
Chaplaincy	116	11	9.5	2	1.7	9	7.8
Support	1234	399	32.3	22	1.8	83	6.7
Music	4	1	25.00	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>PRIMARY RESERVE FORCE OFFICER TOTALS</b>	<b>4584</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>6.7</b>

Employment equity data does not reveal religious identification, that the CAF considers to be confidential information. However, the data sheds light on religious diversity in two other ways besides gender. The most noticeable change in the Branch in the last decade is the growth of its visible minorities. Nine percent of serving RegF chaplains were born outside Canada, and in most cases their first language was neither French nor English. While there are no precise data on the distribution of visible minorities by faith group, they can be found in most of the groups making up the chaplaincy, from Muslims (two of three)<sup>131</sup> to evangelicals to Roman Catholics and Anglicans. Most of those visible minority chaplains are of course Christian, and their growing presence reflects larger trends in society and religion that have largely eclipsed the “Eurocentric” character of Canadian Christianity (Bramadat and Seljak 2008b, 36-37). Given the increasing racial and ethnic diversity of students in North American seminaries (ATS 2012), and the shifting of Christianity’s gravity to the Global South, the number of visible minorities in the Branch should increase. In some respects this diversity will

assist chaplains as they seek to build rapport and practice ministry of presence with minority members of the CAF. An Arabic speaking Roman Catholic chaplain, born and raised in a Middle Eastern country, told of how he was on exercise and “had developed a relationship with the Arabic speaking members on the exercise, we would smoke *shisha* together and all that”. Padre Suleyman Demiray’s ability as an imam to engage with local Afghanis has already been mentioned, and a chaplain preparing to deploy to Afghanistan himself told me how valuable “Suley’s” advice and counsel was during his own time there. Padre Roy Laudenario, a Filipino-born Roman Catholic priest, performed a similar liaison function during the CAF humanitarian mission in the Philippines in late 2013 (Government of Canada 2013a). While chaplains such as Demiray and Laudenario are greatly admired by their peers, some worry that minority chaplains may experience a certain degree of marginalization if their main value to the Branch lies in their being cultural specialists particularly suited for certain missions. One chaplain showed mild frustration in expressing her view of employing chaplains by their ethnicity.

Well, heaven forbid that anything happens on the East Coast because 80% of the CAF will insist on going because they’re all from there there. We can’t sustain this idea that this is a Muslim problem [so] send Suley. We can’t do that any more ,, a chaplain has to be a chaplain has to be a chaplain.

Other chaplains worried that their minority peers were often not linguistically or culturally ready to fulfil the “serve all” mission of the Branch. One chaplain, obviously quite comfortable in his own role as padre to several “hard-charging” Army combat units, told me that “I’ve seen some things go pear-shaped because of cultural differences. You add on to that a religious difference ... these are things we need to think about”.<sup>132</sup>

Conversely, some think that chaplains from other cultures might adapt well to an authoritarian military climate, but might lack the pastoral skills and cultural sensitivity that the Branch values. For example, speaking hypothetically, Jeremy Bell, the Baptist representative on the ICCMC, speculated that a “Korean Asian pentecostal chaplain will make an incredible warrior in terms of going over the top, and will make a lousy one, sometimes, pastorally, in dealing with the family”. Clearly these visible minority chaplains bring necessary numbers and valuable capabilities to the RCChS, provided that they can adjust to the institutional culture. However, those chaplains sceptical of minorities’ ability to integrate should recall that, starting in the 1990s, the Branch absorbed a number of chaplains from Eastern Europe, many of whom became successful and respected figures. The Branch’s recent history thus points to the successful adaptation of chaplains who are new Canadians.

The prominence of aboriginals within the Branch has not advanced significantly since the previous decade, when past Chaplains General had hoped to bring in a chaplain representing aboriginal spirituality. It is noteworthy that there are fewer aboriginal chaplains in the CAF (RegF) than there are aboriginal officers of General’s rank. All aboriginal chaplains thus far in the Branch’s history have been Christian, and the only one currently serving in the Regular Force is an Anglican priest. This individual, Major Catherine Askew, spoke to me about the complexity of ministering to aboriginals within the CAF, and of how ill-suited the chaplaincy is to that task. Currently the initiative for offering cultural and spiritual programs to aboriginal members resides with the CAF’s Directorate of Human Rights and Diversity (DHRD). Most aboriginals in the CAF are young soldiers and sailors, who can best be reached through programs run at

key bases. Other programs exist to attract aboriginal recruits to military careers (DND 2015). According to Askew, it was considered appropriate that DHRD take charge of these programs, “[since] because of the history of Christian involvement in residential schools ...it would be inappropriate for us to take leadership of the spiritual needs of aboriginal persons, that we could facilitate it but not take the lead”. Within the Branch, one of Askew’s recent roles has been to educate her fellow chaplains on aboriginal culture. In the summer of 2014 she was an instructor in this topic for the chaplain course, Ministry in a Pluralistic Environment. The Branch will continue to facilitate native members seeking accommodation for matters relating to aboriginal spirituality, but that will be the limit of the chaplaincy’s capability for the foreseeable future.

### 5.3. Ministering to Diversity

Table 5: Employment Equity Data for CAF Regular Force Non-Commissioned Members

MILITARY OCCUPATION GROUP	TOTAL	WOMEN		ABORIGINAL		VISIBLE MINORITIES	
	NO.	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
Naval Operations	2948	336	11.4	92	3.1	121	4.1
Combat Arms	11391	218	1.9	283	2.5	430	3.8
Air Operations	40	1	2.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Medical & Dental	2015	923	45.8	60	3.0	94	4.7
Comms. & Electronics Maintenance	2744	156	5.7	65	2.4	163	5.9
Maintenance - Naval	3309	124	3.7	82	2.5	154	4.7
Air Operations - Transmissions	1266	136	10.7	31	2.4	42	3.3
Operations - General	3620	366	10.1	94	2.6	221	6.1
Air Technicians	5889	490	8.3	134	2.3	313	5.3
Military Engineers	1732	87	5.0	51	2.9	52	3.0
Electrical and Mechanical	3244	88	2.7	92	2.8	99	3.1
Logistical Support	6182	1437	23.2	182	2.9	249	4.0
Clerical Personnel	3236	2030	62.7	96	3.0	178	5.5
Military Police	1335	168	12.6	34	2.5	43	3.2
Music	230	59	25.7	4	1.7	10	4.3
Senior Appointments	68	3	4.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>REGULAR FORCE NCM TOTALS</b>	<b>49249</b>	<b>6622</b>	<b>13.4</b>	<b>1300</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2169</b>	<b>4.4</b>

As noted earlier, the CAF does not keep data as to its member’s religious affiliations. Percentages of visible minorities among the non-commissioned members

(NCMs) listed within trades (Table 5) are important since, as Benham Rennick notes, they are the likeliest indicator of religious diversity within a Regular Force that is, in its ethnic and religious makeup, still primarily homogenous.<sup>133</sup> Regular Force officers (Table 3) have higher representation among visible minorities than do NCMs, which is to be expected given that virtually all officers are required to have an undergraduate degree, and are thus more likely to come from urban populations. My data gives only anecdotal evidence of chaplains' experience of religious diversity, though several trends do appear. One is that the highest number of visible minorities are in the technical and support occupations, which is unsurprising given that the skilled and educated recruits going into these trades are likely to come from urban centres. One chaplain noted that "I find the Muslim population higher in the Air Force, and that's just my experience. There are different pulls for different reasons for different trades". Equally unsurprising is that diversity is lowest among the trades (Combat Arms, Military Engineers, Naval Operations) that have traditionally drawn on rural Canada for their recruit base.<sup>134</sup> One chaplain serving with the army described his unit as "a bunch of white guys from Atlantic Canada". Asked about the unit's religious composition, he was somewhat stymied.

I have no idea what the makeup of my battalion is. None whatsoever. Other than those who I know and those who have shared with me, and that's basically been true for all of my ministries. I don't even know how to represent them. To date I have not been able to identify anyone in my battalion who is Muslim. There may well be some there but they're not identified. So I don't know if there's a need there for more training around sensitivity or Muslim issues. I really don't know.

When I asked chaplains to describe one or more situations of religious accommodation or similar professional interactions with military personnel identifying with minority religions, almost all responses involved Muslim personnel. A few mentioned

experience with other faith groups (two involving aboriginals, one Hindu, one Sikh).

Only one chaplain thought to mention new religions in response to that question, and that was only to underline the lack of any significant interaction.

I've never run into a Wiccan who wanted something specific ceremonially or practically that needed me to accommodate them. It's been a decade, I've been on three different bases, haven't been everywhere, but never ever, because it's the example that people always use, well, we have Wiccans now, but I've never had it happen. I don't know if they're all centred out East, or where they are.

The distribution of answers to this question may indicate more about the experience of Muslim non-commissioned members in the combat trades, and their particular needs for religious accommodation, than it does about the presence of minority religions within the CAF insofar as they are visible to chaplains.

In speaking of their encounters with members of other faith groups and religions, some of the chaplains I interviewed described these occasions as sources of energy and satisfaction. Some spoke of how these moments satisfy their intellectual and spiritual curiosity. In some cases, chaplains describe finding a commonality with military members and civilian Defence employees who identify with other faiths. Amidst what they see as an increasingly secular society, these chaplains respect the mere fact of intentional belief among others. A self-described evangelical Anglican felt that "there's a fraternity amongst those who are actively religious within a culture that is increasingly not". Another chaplain spoke of how he enjoyed a sense of rapport with believers of other faith groups that he did not find with "some of the passively Christian CF members that I've worked with".

When I have worked with Muslim, Hindu and First Nations CF members, yeah, they weren't looking for me to minister to them in their own tradition, but there was definitely an understanding there that I represented the sacred aspect of life, and they were very very comfortable in talking about issues, family issues, work related issues. Those have tended to be the really meaningful conversations, and yes I might not be an imam, I might not be a swami, I might not be a First Nations elder, but when a guy's having marital problems, or to a certain extent, struggling coming back from a deployment, and he doesn't have access to or doesn't get along well with his own particular faith community in a given context, talking to a Christian minister who's a chaplain seems to have been very positive for those folks.

Not all chaplains felt themselves fully qualified or trained for these encounters, and describe how they are sometimes left "struggling" because they lack the cultural or religious familiarity they might feel they need to better serve a minority member . One Navy padre told of a deployment where a shipmate, a Muslim, spoke to him about how a divorce and estrangement with his daughter left him in a crisis of "faith and honour". The chaplain described his experience as "flying by the seat of my pants, trying just to be a supportive ear". While he wished that he "could have reached out to some other supports" and resources, the common isolation of being shipboard meant that "I was mostly just a sounding board". When their interlocutors are not in crisis, and the situation is simply conversational, some chaplains appear to relish these encounters, finding them to be theologically and spiritually enriching. An evangelical chaplain described how he and a "devout" Muslim army officer came to develop an "especially good rapport".

We ended up having great conversations because he said I was the first Christian he'd met who didn't look down on him because he was a Muslim and we had some really good dialogues about faith and about our relationship as people and as created beings, our relationship to God. It was very very good.

Some chaplains rejected the suggestion that they might feel an especial rapport with intentional believers of other faith groups. One in particular felt that the padre's unique role in the military meant that "you get whatever the story is [about religion], good, bad or indifferent, or, 'I've got nothing to do with it', or 'my grandmother was', so I think secular people, as your term is being used, are just as likely to slobber all over you as a person of religious faith". Perhaps the only difference in chaplains' encounters between more secular CAF members and with those of other faith groups is that dialogue with other forms of theological truth claims can force the chaplain to examine his or her own beliefs. No chaplain described the encounter with other faiths as a moment of crisis or threat to their own belief systems, but many seemed to welcome the spiritual work that such moments required of them. An Anglican chaplain put it this way:

I think part of my challenge, part of the experience in dealing with people from other faith groups has been to, in trying to formulate [my own beliefs and state them] clearly to other people, I've been able to rest a little more comfortably in it, to say, yes, this is what I believe, these are the doctrines that I hold to as true. Now again, being a liberal, a postmodernist, I'd say they're true for me but still true and it's caused me to continue to do reading, studying in the area of Anglican history, church history, that sort of thing.

Not every chaplain is as thoughtful as this one. However, even the padre who told me, almost proudly, that "I'm no academic" admitted that a Branch course on Pluralism had forced him to think about "what does this mean for us in our faith and how we are called to live and love our neighbour?".

For most chaplains, living and loving their neighbour in the context of CAF diversity usually means practical assistance to minority members rather than abstract theological discussions with them. Many chaplains I spoke with could recall their



involvement in cases of requests for religious accommodation and were comfortable with their role “making religion happen”, to use Hansen’s phrase. In most of these cases military commanders and personnel appear willing to assist minority members in these requests. A chaplain assigned to the Navy recalled a Hindu sailor who was a “strict vegetarian”. “[T]he cooks, and the stewards, and everybody were making *huge* efforts to accommodate him and going above and beyond and in some cases probably doing some procurement that wasn’t supposed to happen to be able to get the right food according to what he said he needed”. This chaplain felt that the cooks’ efforts were especially noteworthy given the logistical challenges of stocking a warship and planning meals while at sea. Another padre with experience of frontline units, what the Army calls the *combat arms*, reported that unit commanders were invariably cooperative with requests for religious accommodation. “A lot of it has to do ... with them wanting to do the right thing and follow the rules, so they take it very professionally, they know the policy, they know there are rights ... and they try to reflect it in their work.” As part of their advisory role, chaplains sometimes have to help commanders understand cultural realities behind requests for accommodation. For example, a chaplain assigned to the Pacific Fleet noted that the sailors from the Salish and Haida First Nations came from matriarchal cultures to which CAF policies on Compassionate Leave do not readily apply. Typically military personnel can be granted special leave for the death or grave illness of an immediate family member, but the policy does not recognize the importance of grandmothers in aboriginal culture. As this chaplain noted, understanding this culture and its relationship to the spiritual dimensions of grief and mourning was “a growing challenge for the chain of command and how chaplains are supporting

members". Military responses to accommodation can also depend on context. A chaplain who was in Afghanistan with the Army explained that requests for religious accommodation were quickly granted whenever possible. "[I]f it's a matter of keeping a guy in the fight, if religious accommodation can be considered as a force multiplier,<sup>135</sup> then basically, there's not going to be an eye batted about that". However, in the highly regimented environment of military training systems, accommodation can be seen as special treatment that undermines the ideal of a homogenous military standard. The former padre of the army school for combat engineers recalled a promising student, a Muslim who "just wanted a space that would be quiet, where he could leave a prayer mat rolled up". This chaplain was surprised by the reaction of the instructional staff. While they thought the recruit had promise as soldier, "They were really holding to the notion that everyone needs to be the same on the course and if he gets a space where he can go and get some quiet, well, wouldn't everybody like to have that?" The matter eventually ascended to the school Commandant, where the chaplain successfully argued that conformity to training standards was compatible with the diversity of individuals.

[T]he response that I gave, and we engaged it a little bit, was that, yes, he is different, and everyone is different. We don't espouse a value in Canada or the CAF of everyone being the same. We may have the same goals in service, hopefully, and similar levels of commitment to Queen and country, but saying that we all have to be the same is a misplaced judgement. So that was a really fascinating one.

Even instructional staff at the RCChS' own training school struggle with finding a balance between religious diversity and training standards. A chaplain recalled a fellow candidate on his Chaplain Basic Officer Training Course, an Orthodox rabbi, whose

requests for accommodation caused tension: “I remember in the field sometimes there was a bit of a conflict, he’d want to do something and he’d get pushback from the training staff”. Besides the often rigid mindset of military instructors, age, education and experience of previous deployments appear to be factors in determining how requests for religious accommodation are received. One army chaplain felt that senior officers were more accepting of diversity because of their training and education. Likewise he thought that young soldiers, as millennials accustomed to diversity and its representation on social media, generally accepted religious minorities in the military and made allowances for them. This chaplain found the most resistance to accommodation came from a minority in the middle of the military hierarchy, sergeants and warrant officers<sup>136</sup> in their thirties and forties, often from small town Canada.

I have however encountered sometimes even disparaging remarks from, you know, the older, crustier NCOs, “What’s this about, what’s this BS, what’s going on, this guy’s trying to get out of work”. There’s that hostility towards religious accommodation as unfair and contrary to esprit de corps, and to be quite honest, ... some of those guys got back from Afghanistan and they have this idea of Islam that was coloured by their experience, often times negative.

While chaplains are expected to be advocates for all personnel and want to “make religion happen”, they are also expected to scrutinize requests for accommodation before taking them up the chain of command. Most padres can relate a story of how a soldier has tried to manipulate them with requests for compassionate leave based on fictitious family emergencies. While chaplains are expected to verify all such requests, performing due diligence on cases of religious accommodation emerged from my interviews as the most common challenge for chaplains confronting pluralism. In the case of the Navy seaman who wanted vegetarian meals to accommodate his

Hindu faith, the chaplain involved became aware that this individual was also a noted under-performer. The chain of command grew convinced that this sailor was simply unsuited for military service and gave him increasingly poor performance reviews, that he challenged as instances of religious persecution. As the chaplain put it, “it becomes very, very challenging after you dig into this to say, Yeah, but you’re really not performing well, by all the metrics that we have, and how is that related to your practice?” In situations where the pace of operations simply do not allow for instances of accommodation, chaplains will have to explain this fact to minority members.

Several chaplains described situations where the process was abused by military members who viewed accommodation as an entitlement. One padre described a case where he had to back the chain of command against a Muslim soldier who “was asking for a little too much” while on “some serious and important training”. While the soldier was “not happy” with the refusal, this chaplain “had to basically agree with the chain of command on it and explain...[that] we are not trying to take away from your faith”. Not all the chaplains I spoke with felt equally qualified to judge whether an accommodation request was legitimate. One noted that the matter was not helped when there was a recent phrase “when the chain of command is coming down saying, your religious tradition now is whatever you say you feel your religion can be”. In cases where a request does need to be documented as authentic to an established tradition, only one chaplain mentioned relying on official resources such as the 2003 Department of National Defence document *Religions in Canada* (Benham Rennick 2011, 45-46). This would be a useful area for further investigation to ask chaplains about whether and how often they used such references or if they found them valuable. Most chaplains

appeared to rely most on phone or email conversations with non-Christian friends in the Branch, especially if they had developed rapports with these members from training or postings together. There are signs however that the RCChS leadership has decided to formalize such internal queries. One chaplain found it frustrating that any request for more background information on matters of religious accommodation has to be submitted to the chaplain chain of command for approval and action, especially when previously he could just call a Muslim friend in the Branch. When I asked him why he thought this “cumbersome” new policy had come into place, this chaplain speculated that “it must have been a bad incident that happened, and the chain of command didn’t know about it and it blew up in their face. A lot of times rules come up because of bad events”. The Branch as a highly bureaucratic and centralized organization wants to prevent fiascos from occurring because a chaplain misunderstands the facts about another faith tradition or receives bad information. One way to do this is to standardize its responses to future requests for information. However, this example of the institution’s lack of faith in its Christian chaplains’ religious literacy leads one to wonder whether having more minority faith group chaplains in the Branch would help, seeing as their presence and expertise is so clearly valued by their colleagues, or whether it would complicate things further. This observation leads to an analysis of how religious diversity within the chaplaincy currently functions.

#### 5.4. Ministering Within Diversity

Unless they work in specialized or isolated or “one of” positions, most Regular Force chaplains work as part of mixed teams, and it is in the context of team ministry where most of them will experience the religious diversity of the RCChS in any significant and lasting way. Most part-time Reserve Force chaplains are embedded within their assigned units rather than on teams, and have far fewer opportunities to work with and get to know their chaplain colleagues. Depending on the size of the CAF base, Regular Force chaplain teams can range in size from two or three to over a dozen, and can include many of the faith groups represented within the chaplaincy. Most of a chaplain’s time on a base will be spent ministering to the military personnel in one or more assigned units, but he or she will also be responsible for duties shared among the chaplain team. Protestant and Catholic chaplains can usually expect to take turns leading Sunday worship in their respective base chapels, and most will take turns in the rotation as Duty Chaplain, with twenty-four hour responsibility for crises and pastoral emergencies. While all chaplains are expected to maintain their identity as clergy and religious professionals by following the spiritual practices and disciplines appropriate to their faith traditions, most chaplain teams make a practice of gathering regularly for ecumenical and even inter-faith prayer. As noted earlier in the discussion of church views on gender and women’s leadership, not all chaplains enter the mixed team on the same terms, and even create frictions that impair the group’s effectiveness and leadership. However, most of the chaplains I interviewed seemed to attach value to what I described earlier as the plural ideal. When asked to give examples of what they

found positive about the Branch's diversity, most chaplains named friendships and connections with colleagues of other groups that had contributed to learning and what they described subjectively as spiritual growth.

The opposite can be true as well, since the assertion of religious particularly and theological beliefs can impair the effectiveness of a team and its ministry to the wider CAF. A chaplain working as a team leader on a large Army base described a situation where a Roman Catholic subordinate had placed a picture of Jesus and a crucifix in a prominent place on the wall of the chaplain team's common office. This display, which the chaplain described as "mission creep<sup>137</sup> by the Catholics", provoked a Muslim soldier to ask pointedly "If he had a voice in this building". As team leader, the chaplain quickly realized that the display in a common area of objects holy to the Christian tradition was impairing the chaplains' responsibility of ministering to the military community in all of its diversity. While the objects were removed and replaced by a poster saying "Be still and know" ("It doesn't even say *Be Still and know that I am God*<sup>138</sup>, it just says *Be still and know*"), that had the merit of being a more generic assertion of spirituality, the Roman Catholic subordinate was aggrieved ("it became, you must be angry at the Roman Catholics") and the matter went up the RCChS chain of command before it was resolved. Over the course of my interviews, accounts of unhelpful displays of theological particularity were not confined to any one denomination. A Roman Catholic Pastoral Associate reported that he was occasionally annoyed by his evangelical colleagues:

[S]ometimes, you get those of a little more of a conservative, evangelical stream, where they see you still as being unsaved, and they drop hints here and there, or

they think you know less, sometimes evangelicals they feel they know about the Bible, about salvation, they think they know more about these things than a Catholic.

None of the chaplains seemed anxious to dwell on their experience of friction with colleagues. My impression was that Canadian chaplains, as Hansen notes of their American counterparts, tend to individualize personality conflicts rather than ascribe them to conflicting theological views (Hansen 2012, 152-156). However, stories like the dispute over a team's common area do reveal larger patterns of conflict. Intentional displays of theological and denominational particularity, as manifestations of the sectarian ideal, have the potential to disrupt chaplain teams, alienate CAF minority members, and impair the chaplaincy's commitment to the pluralist ideal.

While diversity does exist within chaplain teams, it is mostly limited to the diversity contained within the Christian tradition. Since 98.4% of the RCChS is Christian, the vast majority of chaplains have few opportunities to get to know their non-Christian colleagues unless they have taken training with one or served together on a team.<sup>139</sup> Very rarely did research subjects offer any detailed examples of significant and regular contact with non-Christian colleagues, but those who did seemed to value the experience. An Anglican chaplain told of how, over three years of working with a Muslim colleague, they and the rest of the team had found ways to pray together, despite "an awareness that we weren't a homogenous group in any way shape or form". Planning these informal prayer sessions allowed the team members to openly discuss their theological differences as well as to find some degree of common language.



And so we often were challenged to, whether it was Farad<sup>140</sup> doing service or one of us doing a short service, to speak with him to say, are we stepping over any bounds here, are you able to enter into this worship, are we excluding you, are we being offensive? And we learned very quickly, dealing with Farad in particular, because he's relatively liberal in his faith, he was very accommodating, and he would say, no, go ahead and say that prayer, I can't join in this aspect of it because it's not what I believe, but 99% of it, it's no problem. And I'm not offended if you believe what you believe and you want to share this prayer.

This same chaplain described a developing rapport with his Muslim colleague that led to one on one conversations about differences between Christianity and Islam. At times these discussions would be animated, since his Muslim peer "didn't pull any punches", and they would agree to walk away without agreeing, but the Anglican reported that his greatest learning was about inter-faith dialogue as a process. It wasn't, he said, about being "nice" so much as it was "about being respectful and open and listening but also speaking openly as well". This same chaplain described an experience of "culture shock" upon being transferred to another base where the chaplain team, while diverse within itself, was uniformly Christian. As he described the attitudes of his new team, "everything [here] is pushing the boundaries of what I know Farad would be comfortable with, including talk which sounds at first blush as if it's about proselytizing". From this one case, it would be reasonable to assume that an inter-faith team that is truly intentional about learning skills of dialogue and ways of being together has the potential to make Christian chaplains more knowledgeable and comfortable with religious difference. This subject would doubtless reward further research.

As noted earlier, minority faith members often possess more knowledge of the dominant faith group than the reverse, and this seemed to be true of Padre Farad, the

Muslim chaplain mentioned in the previous paragraph. Farad was very much aware of his minority status, noting that “the regulations here, services, prayers, are all Christian format, and I am trying to explain how much I can go with them”. While he could not think of anything that was challenging or difficult in his interactions with his Christian peers, he did suggest that his Anglican colleague was more curious and more willing to engage in one on one dialogue than the other team members. According to Padre X, the reason why most of his Christian colleagues were uninterested in Islam was due to the chronological development of the religions. Islam, he explained, was “the third in the line, the third divine faith, beside Judaism and Christianity”. Since Islam was the last faith to emerged chronologically from this line, Muslims “are accepting those histories and those traditions, actually, with different understandings and different interpretations”. As a result of this historical progression, X thought, it was natural that Christians would know little about Muslim belief, since Christianity was not contingent upon Islam.

Because my faith, Islam is the third one on the line, I have to learn about the other faiths as well before I come to Islam, and because of that rich experience, knowing Islam, Christianity and Judaism, I can openly explain that it’s not a big difference, actually, we are sharing and there are a lot of commonalities between those faiths. But unlike most of those chaplains, they don’t know much about Islam, because after Christianity there is no truth, Christianity is the truth for them. This is understandable because their faith says this is the end of the word, the end of their faith. So my role also is explaining that we are coming on the same line, and sharing a lot of the same truths, even though we have different interpretations.

Farad’s view of his role as having an apologetic quality, “explaining” Islam to others, is similar to a statement that the ICCMC’s Mohammad Alnadvi told me, about how an imam’s job “is to explain [Islam] first and second ... to understand from different faiths how to ... talk to each other and understand each other” (Alnadvi, interview). This

apologetic role may be one reason why Muslims would be attracted to military chaplaincy as a way of legitimating their place within Canadian society. This motive is hinted at in the comments of a Christian chaplain who described mentoring a Muslim colleague. As this chaplain put it, his Muslim peer has a solid faith that is based on the same values that any of the the main religions uphold”, but sometimes had a tendency to be “a little bit defensive ... in a Martin Luther King Jr. sort of way of being defensive, rightly so”. While some Christian chaplains are prepared to be attentive and even affectionate to their Muslim colleagues, they also seem to expect these colleagues to be affable and amenable rather than strident or even angry. These examples suggest that the chaplaincy has some distance to go before its Muslim colleagues can be said to be equal partners in spirit if not in number.

### **5.5. Praying In Diversity**

For the majority of chaplains whose teams have no non-Christian members, their fullest experience of the chaplaincy’s religious diversity comes annually at a Branch conference called Retreat.<sup>141</sup> Each Retreat has historically begun with an inter-faith prayer service organized by members of the ICCMC. As mandatory events, supported by the presence of the Chaplain General and RCChS senior leadership, these prayer services seem intentionally designed to remind chaplains that they belong to an officially multi-faith organization. However, if they are designed to signal the chaplaincy’s unity as people of faith united by a common ministry, my research data suggest, ironically, that these prayer services have the opposite effect. While a few chaplains appear to

enjoy the diversity of the spiritual expressions within these events, most expressed degrees of frustration with what they perceived to be a misrepresentation of pluralism that limited their own freedom to express their own theological particularity. In discussing their responses to these interfaith prayer events, these chaplains reveal some of the low-level, ongoing tensions between the plural and sectarian ideals working as stressors within the chaplaincy's multi-faith project.

For, the RCChS 2014 Retreat began on 25 May with roughly two hundred chaplains gathered in a large amphitheatre. Described in the program as an "opening ceremony", the event featured Christian, Muslim and Jewish prayer.<sup>142</sup> Hans Borch, a Lutheran pastor and the ICCMC chairperson, began by leading a song in English with the responsive chorus "Welcome everyone to the love of God". Three readings from sacred scriptures followed, each preceded by brief explanatory remarks. A Jewish chaplain read a psalm in Hebrew and a Muslim chaplain chanted from the Quran in Arabic. A Catholic chaplain then read from the New Testament in French. Following these readings, a United Church of Canada minister, Karen Hamilton, representing the Canadian Council of Churches on the ICCMC, preached in English and described a recent interfaith trip to Israel. Hamilton concluded her sermon by finding hope in the fact that Jews, Christians and Muslims can share a common bond as pilgrims to holy sites in Israel. A similar ceremony marked the closing of the Retreat five days later. Interfaith events of this nature have been part of RCChS Retreats for almost a decade now, and the format of multilingual prayers and readings from texts sacred to these three faith groups is frequently emulated at chaplains' regional meetings, conferences

and training courses throughout the year. These prayer ceremonies are the most elaborate and symbolic expressions of the chaplaincy's pluralism and yet, almost paradoxically, are also the most imperfect realizations of its diversity.

Prayer events such as the 25 May event are symbolic in that equal weight and time is given to each of the three faiths represented, and aspirational in the planners' assumption that these faiths can coexist harmoniously on the same stage. As one of the event's designers, Hans Borch described it as an attempt to "come to an understanding, not just of our own needs and desires in terms of faith, but an all-encompassing understanding of needs and desires of people of different faiths" (Borch, interview). While this explanation might be taken as a particularly vague expression of the pluralist ideal, they cannot possibly account for some obvious lacunae and incongruities. The most obvious of these is in the equal time and attention give to each faith group, doubtless intended to signal their equal importance, even if one could not help but notice the numerical preponderance of Christians in the room. The use of different languages, each appropriate to its tradition, while symbolic of diversity, is a linguistic barrier superimposed on a a barrier of religious ignorance. How many Christians in the room can understand Arabic or Hebrew, let alone appreciate the traditions and nuances of Muslim and Jewish interpretation of their sacred texts?<sup>143</sup> While Christians, Muslims and Jews all find the sacred within the land of Israel, this very general claim ignores a myriad of specific, historical and active conflicts. While Jerusalem is indeed sacred to all three religions, seeing Jerusalem as a source of unity rather than a source of conflict shows a particularly optimistic and irenic view of inter-

religious dialogue. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the event aspires to a multi-faith identity that could be more truthfully described as tri-faith. Polytheistic religions, which have no relationship to the land of Israel or to the Abrahamic scriptures, indigenous faith traditions, or even North American offshoots of Christianity such as Mormonism, are all conspicuously absent from the ceremony and from the ranks of the assembled chaplains. All of these noted incongruities and lacunae show that whereas agendas for inter-religious dialogue can be carefully structured to avoid points of disagreement, inter-religious prayer can be more effective at highlighting differences than it is at suggesting unity. This point is not lost on chaplains.

Some of the chaplains appear to take such services in the spirit in which Borch and the ICCMC offer them, as attempts to find commonality in the “needs and desires of people of different faiths”. A padre who self-described as a theologically liberal protestant said he was amused to see that many of his peers “seemed to be shocked to realize once again that they were part of a pluralistic Branch in some way or another”. While this chaplain did not find the service to be spiritually fulfilling, he did not sense that it was intended to be understood as a liturgical event. Rather, for him it was opportunity to hear “diverse voices” and celebrate “the diversity that makes up the Branch” before going off in the Retreat programming that was specific to his faith group. A Roman Catholic chaplain seemed to be trying to give this service format the benefit of the doubt when he suggested that it be understood “sociologically” rather than “theologically”, so that the act of praying was more important to the group than the specific content of the prayers themselves.

We do have faith, that's one thing that does unite us, we have faith in a god and a higher being, we believe in spirituality as central to who we are. If those services are framed in that way, we can find unity instead of focusing on what separates us theologically, But that's tough, that's easier said than done.

Other chaplains were less charitable. Several made it clear that it was not worship as they would understand the term, since worship implies a shared tradition and understanding. Rather, as one put it, "It's very awkward. I find it to be a collection of stovepipes that are put up at the front of the room and each one just does their thing in succession". Some chaplains went beyond "awkward" and offered quite scathing comments about these services. A self-described evangelical Anglican sensed that the structure of the service, giving equal time to all three faiths, suggested an equivalency that he found "annoying". This chaplain felt that an interfaith "theological perspective" in the Branch was promoting the idea that "all of the religions are the same and we all just say the same thing in the macro sense, ignoring the micro sense". By "macro" he seemed to mean that "a liberal progressive way, has become the dominant triumphalist view of the Branch", so that particularly "micro", traditional expressions used by some Christians, such as using the male pronoun to refer to the deity, were no longer acceptable. Another chaplain made a similar point when he described how the planners of collective Branch worship seemed extraordinarily careful to avoid the impression of Christian exclusivism.

So as far as the specifics of that worship service, it always seems to be, here is the Muslim chaplain reading from the Muslim sacred text. Here is the Jewish chaplain reading from the Jewish sacred text. And here is the Christian chaplain who will read something from the Christian tradition which will not make explicit reference to Jesus and will never be from the Gospel of John. So we might get the Beatitudes, that's a safe one, that's not going to offend anyone, but we'll never get "No one comes to the Father but through me".

These remarks are perceptive in that they accurately capture the sense of uncertainty that currently preoccupies some of the chaplaincy's Christian leaders. As a planner of the May 25 prayer service, Hans Borch spoke of his motivation not "to insult or step on the coattails of someone else". Borch gave terminology used in describing the sacred texts as an example of possibly giving offence. Were the customary Christian terms Old and New Testament still appropriate when praying with Jews, or is it respectful to call them the Hebrew and Christian scriptures? This illustration for Borch was "one of those heavyweight things where people have a love affair with their doctrine, [so] what terminology can we use that is still going to honour their doctrine and yet not step on someone else's toes?" Some chaplains would say that Borch worries too much about Christian triumphalism. As one put it, "the religious leaders I've encountered ... folks willing to engage in multifaith, ... they've said that their greatest challenge with Christians is the fact that we don't seem to want to be Christian". Borch's Jewish colleague on the ICCMC, Rabbi Bulka, would likely agree with this chaplain's remark. Bulka chuckled as he described how his ICCMC colleagues typically "bent themselves into a pretzel trying to make sure that everyone was represented" and even "over-represented in the sense that it certainly didn't reflect the 95/5 ratio - you take a look at the program and you'd think that 20% of the army is Jewish or something like that". Bulka's own feeling was that "since there's basically a shared heritage", the planners should be content with a prayer service where each tradition has content that "resonates" with them.



A Muslim chaplain who described his own role in planning these services as “not easy” seemed to agree with the Rabbi. While very conscious of his own place in culture where “the majority are Christian”, this chaplain felt that prayer could be an opportunity for religious traditions to be both authentic to themselves and respectful to others.

So instead of trying to make some new format that we could expect everyone to agree on and join with us, everybody could bring their own way of praying as a sample and then enjoy it, even some part, if you are not agreeing with what is said in the prayer, just be an observer. But this is still an ongoing discussion, it's not easy to find a solution, it's an ongoing thing. Even though we are in the common Abrahamic tradition, we aren't the same faiths. ... Besides our commonalities we have a lot of differences. We have to respect those differences.

Recent evidence suggests that the RCChS' leaders are acknowledging their chaplains' evident need to be faithful to their religious particularity. In December 2013 the Branch revised its policy on Public Prayer for the first time in over a decade. This new policy distinguishes between ceremonial events that may have a religious or spiritual component included”,<sup>144</sup> such as funerals or parades, and formal religious worship, that CAF members may never be compelled to attend. Chaplains participating in the former type of event are now authorized “to speak faithfully from their own traditions”, provided that they “fully respect other traditions and perspectives” by avoiding any comments that could be deemed negative or hostile. The new Policy also expects that chaplains will preface any spiritual content “with remarks that invite those who, for whatever reason, are not disposed to pray, to use that time for silent personal reflection or contemplation as others pray”. Chaplains are also expected to pray “for the well being of the whole community”.

Hansen's observation that prayer can be a "flashpoint of controversy" for US military chaplains is also applicable to Canadians (Hansen 2012, 137-139). In 2001 when CG Tim Maindonald issued the previous Branch prayer policy, which attempted to soften Christian particularity in favour of more inclusive language, he was roundly condemned for forbidding his chaplains to pray "in Jesus' name". Much of the anger then seems to have been motivated by conservative's sense that a "politically correct" chaplaincy was acquiescing in the loss of Christian privilege.<sup>145</sup> Even today, as my data suggests, some Christian chaplains, even though supportive of the pluralist ideal in general, appear aggrieved that a "liberal" ideology of pluralism restricts their own need to be faithful to their individual and denominational Christian particularity. In this respect theological identity, and prayer in the rare occasions that it is still a part of military culture, is undoubtedly more important to chaplains than it is to rank and file CAF members. One exception to this rule may be public prayer from minority faith chaplains. On 19 June, I observed the last day of a instruction in RCChS training on the course, Ministry in a Pluralistic Environment. For the final course exercise, chaplains were asked to imagine themselves as team leaders, and were given a fictitious scenario where a Muslim chaplain had chanted a prayer in Arabic as part of a Remembrance Day parade. As the scenario unfolded, some soldiers on parade had subsequently complained to their chain of command because the prayer had triggered unwelcome memories of their time in Afghanistan. Having read the scenario, each chaplain was then evaluated while role-playing their response to a summons by the unhappy Base Commander. Without having access to the evaluation process, it appeared to me that chaplains passed the exercise if they defended the Policy's right to allow a Muslim to

prayer while also suggesting ways the parade could have been better handled. One chaplain approached the scenario by pastorally responding to the lingering stress of deployments, while finding a different role for the Muslim chaplain in future.

So I said next year, we have two padres. The Muslim doesn't need to chant, that was the trigger. ... [W]e'll have a Muslim padre and a Christian padre. We're not running from this. We're going to engage it in a different way. We're going to remove what we understood to be the triggers. We're going to go into the units, we'll have padre's hours<sup>146</sup>, because there are people who can be triggered. If people can get triggered by this, they can get triggered at Shopper's Drug Mart. [We'll have] Padre's hours to remind them that there are resources to help out. On the padre side, it was, we were within the policy, so it's not about saying, "Oh, we've offended some people so we'll never do it again". No, what we did was ok ... but we didn't hit the mark we wanted.

The choice of this scenario as the final exercise for this course suggests the RCChS' desire to normalize pluralism, but also signals its awareness that minority religions, particularly in prominent moments like public prayer, can have a potentially disruptive influence. While individual belief among the CAF's rank and file may be highly individual and subjective, a Muslim prayer chanted in Arabic has geopolitical connotations that a public prayer by a Buddhist chaplain might not. The one account noted above, of chaplains in the amphitheatre at Retreat, evidently startled by prayers in foreign languages, suggests that even chaplains can be startled when minority religion suddenly comes into view and becomes real.

The RCChS does not adapt quickly to change, and so it may be another decade or longer before the degree of pluralism necessary to produce a Buddhist chaplain for a Remembrance Day parade is even possible. Part of this glacial pace is due to the bureaucracy of the military. The Branch course, *Ministry in a Pluralist Environment*, has

been in development since at least 2008 and has required successive approvals and accreditation as it worked its way through the bureaucracy of the CAF training system. The “Pluralism Course”, as it is colloquially known within the Branch, has only been offered three times since introduced in 2013. Many of the tactical level chaplains I spoke to are keenly eager to take this course, but given the small capacity of the RCChS School, may have to wait several years for their opportunity. The slow pace of change may also be due to the chaplaincy’s inherent sense of caution as its ecclesial leaders, like Hans Borch, search for ways to express pluralism symbolically without giving offence, while chaplains and their team leaders learn sometimes painful lessons about “doing” pluralism in respectful and meaningful ways. This rate of change will doubtless prove dissatisfying to chaplains who attend interfaith prayer sessions such as the 2014 Retreat and only notice what is not included. As one of these chaplains told me,

A common understanding of divinity is one thing, but I don’t think we’re there. We’re expressing a common understanding of a godhood which is not the same. [Our prayers are] all monotheistic, and that’s not the reality of all world religions. We need to get to the point where that’s not something that makes us cringe, or sit there with a blank look on our faces saying, what do you mean, that’s not inclusive, I talked about God? Yes, but you excluded all people who don’t believe in a one god theory.

This chaplain’s words remind us that pluralism remains an unfinished project, possibly requiring more of the Branch than it currently realizes.

None of the chaplains I interviewed would be ready to say that the Branch should go beyond the monotheism of its current “tri-faith” arrangement. Many expressed the

sentiment that the institution has incompletely normalized pluralism at the level of its rank and file. One commented that a good test of chaplains' commitment to the multi-faith project would come when a non-Christian was promoted and was placed in charge of Christian subordinates. To date, and for whatever reason, this has not happened since the first Muslim chaplain was hired in 2003. Another chaplain noted that diversification was a long process, and could not be rushed. Speaking hypothetically, he commented that if the Chaplain General told him to go out and find five Muslim imams in a year, "I wouldn't have the first clue about how to do that ... about where to attract and where to engage". Given that future change is much more likely to happen slowly and incrementally, the future of the Branch will likely be decided in the workplace, as chaplains become more comfortable with religious diversity in the units they serve and in their own ranks. My interviews suggest that most Christian chaplains are able to do the mental bracketing and adjustment necessary to hold their own truth claims comfortably in the presence of the Other, and some are even eager to do so. As more and more of them have the opportunity to do so, they are less likely to perceive religious pluralism as a top-down project, and are more likely to see it as part of the chaplaincy's culture.

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<sup>120</sup> These factors include the impact of the Vietnam War, which diminished support of liberal Christian seminaries for military chaplaincy, high numbers of evangelical protestant chaplains entering the US military, the influence of “culture wars” and and the long debate on homosexuality in US society. See Cook (2014), Hansen (2012) and Ottis (2014).

<sup>121</sup> Rabbi Bulka made this point with humour during my interview with him. “I’m often amazed at how few people know that rabbi is not singular for rabies. So often it doesn’t make a difference where, including in some people manning the phone at the Chaplaincy office, they will tell “Mr. Rabbi”, thinking it’s a first name as opposed to a title. They’ll say “what’s a rabbi”, and finally I’ll explain to them that it’s like being a reverend or something like that, so they’re actually surprised. It’s not a monumental thing, but still in the majority culture I would say it’s a hefty percentage, how many I don’t know, who do not know what a rabbi is.”

<sup>122</sup> In my own experience of the civilian church, there was little interest or energy among my parishioners for relatively mild ecumenical activities, let alone interfaith ones. One summer a Lutheran (ELCIC) pastor and I arranged two consecutive Sundays where our two parishes would visit each other’s churches for shared worship in the spirit of the 2001 Waterloo Declaration of Full Communion between the Anglican and Lutheran Churches in Canada. While our people found it a pleasant experience, neither my pastor friend nor I was encouraged by our congregations to repeat the occasion.

<sup>123</sup> Chapdelaine’s expectation that chaplains will naturally gravitate back to a religious community suggests a Roman Catholic view of ecclesiology that may not be universally shared. A popular conception exists that military chaplaincy leaves Christian clergy unsuited for a return to civilian ministry. It would be interesting to survey a range of retired CAF chaplains on their sense of vocation as they left the military.

<sup>124</sup> Major Derrick Marshall, RCChS, email to author, 19 January, 2015. This personnel information was current as of September 2014.

<sup>125</sup> I am not able to reconcile this figure of 287 with the number of chaplain officers (350) shown in Tables 3 and 4. These figures derive from different data sources provided to me by the RCChS and I have no visibility as to the method of composition behind the Employment Equity data in Tables 3 and 4. Since the number of 287 is derived from documents known as “Locator Lists” which show actively assigned chaplains and gives their faith group affiliation, I must assume that the number of 350 includes officers in various recruit and Direct Entry streams that are not yet employed as chaplains. I am confident that for the purposes of this study, the data given in Tables 1 and 2 provides a reasonable snapshot of the RCChS’ current diversity.

<sup>126</sup> Jeremy Bell, the Baptist representative on the ICCMC, told me that within the Baptist caucus there are two groups that “have been traditionally pietistic” and two that “are self-described as fundamentalist - I mean that in their terms and not in pejorative terms, and we made a decision by and large both in the Branch year by year to place most Baptists within the Baptist cohort rather than share them with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada”. Bell, interview. Lutheran Church of Canada (sometimes called Missouri Synod) members do not share communion with Lutherans of the more liberal Evangelical Church of Canada) and do not ordain women.

<sup>127</sup> My Regular Force recruit class in 2008 began the course twenty-five strong, with twenty-four (including one woman) completing. At the time this class size was considered to be remarkably large. Similar size classes were planned for the next two years, but for a variety of reasons, including shortage of candidates, these classes ended up being smaller.

<sup>128</sup>The reasons for this decline are outside the scope of this research, but are interesting given research suggesting that women are more inclined to religion than are men. Data from the American Theological Schools (2012-2013 Annual Data tables, <http://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/institutional-data/annual-data-tables/2012-2013-annual-data-tables.pdf>) shows a similar trend in decline of women in Masters of Divinity programs (the most standard qualification degree for acceptance by the RCChS) in Canada, from 687 in 2008 to 605 in 2012 (Table 2-12C). These numbers say nothing about age or physical fitness, factors that could significantly limit the pool of eligible chaplain recruits. Table 2-14A suggests the cohorts of women MDiv. students in the ages 40-49 and 50-64 are larger than women in younger cohorts. Reasons for this decline in female applications to the Branch may also include greying clergy demographics among mainstream Protestant Churches. In 2009, the Anglican Journal (2009) reported that the average age of Anglican Church of Canada clergy was 51.9 years and added that “many new employees start later in life, after making a midlife career change”, which would usually disqualify them from military service.

<sup>129</sup> Within the chaplaincy, ordained status, particularly priesthood, may establish a common interdenominational bond between Roman Catholics and some Protestants (especially with Anglicans) than is lacking between Catholic priests and Pastoral Associates, who have different educational requirements and non-sacramental functions (Benham Rennick 2011, 52-54). One Roman Catholic priest, who was influenced by liberation theology in his country of birth, wished that his peers would treat priests with less deference and Pastoral Associates with greater respect.

<sup>130</sup> Data supplied to me by Major Derrick Marshall, RCChS, pers. comm. 12 February 12, 2015.

<sup>131</sup> The most recently joined Muslim chaplain is a Caucasian, Canadian born convert to Islam.

<sup>132</sup>I have personally seen at least one chaplain, a recent Asian immigrant with an imperfect command of both official languages, who was judged unfit to function at an Army base in Western Canada until he had taken English as a Second Language courses.

<sup>133</sup> Benham-Rennick (2011, 137-142) notes that religious and ethnic diversity is greatest in the Reserve Force, as many of its units are based in urban centres and tend to attract university students seeking part-time employment.

<sup>134</sup> This point can be illustrated in part by an examination of CAF casualties incurred in Afghanistan. J.L. Granatstein (2011, 445-54, 456) notes that while three women and six visible minority soldiers were killed, “The great majority of the killed were white males between twenty and thirty-nine years in age, most having been raised in small towns, with a high proportion (more than on in five) from eastern Canada. The six biggest metropolitan areas in the country comprised 45 per cent of the population but accounted for only 20 per cent of the dead. Toronto had lost four soldiers, the same as tiny Truro, NS; Vancouver had one killed. The war’s human costs fell heaviest on Canada’s economically laggard areas, but wherever they fell, they were substantial and increasing.”

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<sup>135</sup> In military parlance, a “force multiplier” is anything which contributes to increasing the effectiveness of soldiers in combat. Some commanders consider chaplains to be force multipliers if they have a positive effect on the morale and wellbeing of troops.

<sup>136</sup> In Army terms the ranks of Sergeant, Warrant Officer and Master Warrant Officer are referred to as Senior Non-Commissioned Members, or sometimes Non-Commissioned Officers. Roughly equivalent to foremen in civilian industry, these ranks provide much of the day to day supervision of the junior ranks (Privates and Corporals) and are seen as custodians of the military ethos. In the Canadian Army, Senior NCMs tend to be soldiers of about ten years experience who have demonstrated military and leadership skills.

<sup>137</sup> “Mission creep” in military terms refers to an initially successful operation which has gone beyond its original goals or mandate, usually with unfortunate results.

<sup>138</sup> The chaplain is here referring to Psalm 46:10, from the Hebrew and Christian scriptures.

<sup>139</sup> Such opportunities are further reduced since not all non-Christian chaplains serve on teams. One of the two serving Jewish chaplains, an Orthodox rabbi, has worked in a staff position in Toronto for the past few years, and is one of only three Regular Force chaplains in that city.

<sup>140</sup> A pseudonym.

<sup>141</sup> In 2015, Retreat is apparently being renamed as the “Annual Training Event”, according to a 12 February 2015 email from RCChS headquarters.

<sup>142</sup> The observations on this event, which occurred at the NAVCAN conference centre in Cornwall, Ontario, were made by myself as an attendee.

<sup>143</sup> This point is underscored by Borch’s account of how Hamilton, as a preacher in the Christian lectionary tradition that draws from the entirety of the bible, chose a reading from the prophet Isaiah, only to be surprised when the rabbi assigned to read it protested that “never in fifteen years of parish ministry have I ever read this in church. It’s not something I would read, it’s totally out of context, it’s not reflective of what Jewish chaplaincy is” (Borch, interview). This anecdote illustrates that an assumed point of commonality, namely the Hebrew scriptures, can be a profound point of difference. It also illustrates the great difference that phrases in interfaith dialogue such as “Abrahamic religions” try to cover (Hughes 2012).

<sup>144</sup> RCChS Policy Document, “Public Prayer at Military Ceremonies”, December 2013. Major Derrick Marshall, RCChS pers. comm. June 20, 2014.

<sup>145</sup> Former CG Ron Bourque, who was Maindonald’s policy director at the time, recalled that “Maindonald “was vilified by a number of people. I can remember ... from members of parliament right down to newspaper editors, columnists” (Bourque, interview). An echo of this controversy is found in an online article by an American evangelical (Bergsma 2001),

<sup>146</sup> A “Padre’s Hour” is a time when a chaplain is given permission to talk informally to soldiers on a topic of his or her own choosing, but often with a moral, ethical or pastoral theme. The practice has been in use, particularly in the Army, since at least the Second World War.



## Chapter Six

### Conclusion: Predicting Pluralism

*“I love the trajectory that we’re on. Even though I’m very particular about my own viewpoints on faith and my own faith, I love working within an organization where I can end up working with an Imam or a Rabbi, where I go on courses with people from other religious traditions.”*  
Serving Christian chaplain.

#### 6.1. A Pluralist Chaplaincy as a Canadian Achievement?

The next RCChS Chaplain General has stated that “religious diversity is a blessing and a sign of hope”, and that the chaplaincy will “in the future [go]beyond the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths” (Chapdelaine 2014a, 42). In the nearly fifteen years since Tim Maindonald invited other faith groups to stand with him and consecrate the new colours of Royal Military College, the chaplaincy has engaged in a process of institutional self-transformation whose results, if not numerically impressive in the number of non-Christian chaplains produced, have been culturally significant. The commitment to the pluralist ideal has been established in concrete forms such as the Primary Branch Badge. This pluralist branding signals the chaplaincy’s ongoing support to the CAF’s diversity goals as one part of a larger strategy to demonstrate its continued relevance. The search for new capabilities like Spiritual Resilience and Religious Leader Engagement are other strands in this strategy. Both these initiatives show the chaplaincy searching for new ways to offer spiritual support to military personnel, and cultural and religious understanding to deployed personnel in foreign cultures. Both initiatives demonstrate the continuing importance of religion in its many

forms in the CAF and in its areas of operations overseas. It is highly unlikely that faith groups will be brought into the RCChS unless they fully understand pluralism and unless they can unequivocally support the chaplaincy's commitment to support the military by serving all of its members.

The current climate in Canadian public life will probably favour the chaplaincy's further moves towards greater pluralism in ways that were not possible at the turn of this century. Maindonald's prayer policy of 2001, which downplayed religious particularity in favour of greater inclusivity, like the end of the old Maltese cross cap badge, occasioned controversial responses from some parliamentarians and editors. At the same time there was a perceived reticence on the part of the federal government towards matters of religion. Maindonald complained of this when no one in government seemed interested in his offering to pray publicly during Ottawa's official response to 9/11. Jeremy Bell, one of the ICCMC's more outspoken members, noted that the federal response to the 1997 Swiss Air disaster displayed a similarly muted and "awkward" handling of religion and spiritual meaning (Bell, interview). There are signs that the federal government has become more comfortable with religion in the public square if it can be associated with a healthy and appropriately Canadian conception of pluralism. The 2012-13 Report on the Operation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act lavished praise on new Primary Branch Badge (the "Tree of Life") which, it claimed, was "enacted in order to be fully multicultural and reflect the CAF Chaplain Branch's move toward increasing representation of faiths including Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith groups" (Government of Canada 2013b). Similarly, the Governor General said last year

that the religious diversity of Canadian society “is so admirably reflected in the diverse, interfaith expression of the Chaplain Branch of Canada’s armed forces” (Johnston 2014). Jeremy Bell and others I spoke to attached much importance to the Governor General’s remarks, and hoped that they signalled a new and positive era for religion in public life. If these hopes are founded, and if government and public officials do have a more positive view of religion, these developments may signal a larger and more general shift from a closed secularism that would ban religious symbols from the public square, to an encouragement of multiple expressions of faith under the banner of multiculturalism. Some scholars have called the present moment in Canadian government approaches to religion an “interregnum” moment that anticipates a new post-secular reality. The key questions for Canada and for other liberal-democratic countries living out this “interregnum” are “how - or whether - to reconfigure our societies in a way that enables us to engage religious individuals, communities, and claims in a ... meaningful, reciprocal, and equitable manner” (Bramadat and Seljak 2013, 114). If Canada is indeed in such an “interregnum moment”, then the RCChS’ steps towards greater pluralism should be easier than the first ones were in 2001.

In many respects the chaplaincy has done well in getting to the present moment. It has progressed beyond its ancestor, Britain’s Royal Army Chaplains’ Department, whose uniformed members are all Christian and who still wear the old “In Hoc Signo” motto and Christian cap badge (British Army 2014).<sup>147</sup> Conversely, the RCChS seems to have managed pluralism in such a way that it has avoided the “counterpluralist impulse” that Hansen detects in US military chaplaincy (Hansen 2012). While my

interviews with serving chaplains did show some evidence of tensions arriving from behaviours and theologies inclining towards the sectarian ideal, the interviews do not suggest that chaplains perceive these tensions as severe or even disabling to the health of the institution. If we think of the plural and sectarian ideals as two axes on which one can map the culture of the chaplaincy, then the evidence suggests that the critical mass of the RCChS's members is distributed along the pluralist axis. This distribution may be due to several cultural and social factors that distinguish Canadian religious expressions from their US counterparts. It may be due in part to the culture and leadership model of the ICCMC, which is much smaller and more irenic than its fragmented US counterpart.<sup>148</sup> Several of my research subjects described experiences of encounters with American counterparts in ways that indicated they perceive US chaplain culture as being more sectarian. A Christian Reformed chaplain noted that his denominational counterparts in the US took a very different view.

In the American military also there's this group of chaplains whose sole purpose in being military chaplains is to convert soldiers to their theological faith. There's members of my denomination who write letters, saying, "Yeeshaw! Managed to convert and baptize another soldier." That is a part of what the church does but it is not what chaplains do. Then it's your agenda, and as chaplains I see ourselves primarily as servants.

Several subjects described similar encounters with US chaplains and noted a similar lack of commitment to pluralism, but those views did not entirely match with what I expected, namely a liberal Catholic or Protestant discomfort with American evangelical Christians. One self-described evangelical described participating in an exercise where a US chaplain "mentioned [evangelicals] several times" in a derogative manner. This Canadian chaplain did not appreciate being one of his US colleague's "whipping boys".

This anecdote reminds us that all faith groups may gravitate towards sectarian behaviour, especially if the climate is toxic.<sup>149</sup>

## 6.2. Changing the Workplace of the Chaplaincy

The tendency of Canadian chaplains to think that they do pluralism better than their US colleagues may say less about reality and more about how these chaplains have been influenced by the self-congratulatory tone in the RCChS's official discourse. As noted earlier, the voices of internal organs such as the quarterly journal *Dialogue*, using phrases like “we are making history” and “role model”, have an ideological function in that they reinforce the institution's worldview of pluralism. The overwhelmingly Christian demographic of the Branch offers a counter-narrative suggesting that more work needs to be done to promote real pluralism. The lack of friction within the RCChS, as compared to the US model, may well be because a dominant, mainstream Christian structure and ethos still keeps the peace and exerts a conformist influence on chaplains. This point was made eloquently by a United Church chaplain

[T]he lived reality of the Branch today is that we're still basically mainline Protestants who, in many many many instances, if you remove the labels, you really wouldn't notice the practice or the differences among the mainline Protestants, and you have the Roman Catholic Diocese within the Branch, so I'm not sure to a certain extent what has really changed. And you know what? I don't think anyone's saying that there's no place for interfaith or diversity ... but the reality is that the structure of chaplaincy within the CAF, and this is I think ... always the elephant in the room. We want an interfaith chaplaincy, but chaplaincy as we understand it is based in the Christian tradition. Having ... the clergy who go as a representative of God and who are there to serve the men

and support the chain of command, that's very much a western Christian form of chaplaincy, from Friar Tuck on down.

To make his point about the Branch's dominant culture being mainline Christian, this chaplain described a new colleague, a recruit with long experience in the Pentecostal church. Within a year, the Pentecostal was ordering clerical shirts, collars, and liturgical robes from the CAF supply system. The United Church colleague was surprised at this and asked why a Pentecostal would feel the need for these items. "No," the Pentecostal replied, "it's not what I would do in the church, but it's what people expect here." The United Church chaplain thought it was "profound" that a colleague should dress in a way that was antithetical to his own tradition in order to be recognized as a padre on ceremonial occasions such as parades and mess dinners. Several chaplains made similar observations about the dominance of mainstream Protestant and Catholic culture within the Branch, and felt that it was the result of how religions in Canada have historically developed, rather than seeing this dominance as a conspiracy. Most chaplains expressed optimism that this historical influence would diminish over time.

If Branch culture is indeed, as one chaplain described it, the marriage of a "Roman Catholic diocese and a Protestant ministerial", how might it be expected to evolve? Part of the process will be slow and deliberate, since the further implementation of planned diversity, like federal multicultural policy, is a top-down process. The new Prayer Policy (a decade after Maindonald's policy), the ICCMC Handbook (that took two years to produce), the Pluralism Course at the Chaplain School (five years in the making), and the expectation that religious subject matter

inquiries will go up and down through the chain of command rather than from peer to peer, all indicate a carefully managed and incremental process. Most tactical level chaplains I interviewed expressed a degree of removal and even alienation from this process. Several gave the perceived lack of consultation in the design of the Branch Primary Badge as an example.<sup>150</sup> The deliberate nature of the progression to pluralism may be attributable to a bureaucratic approach to multiculturalism that sees diversity as a problem that needs to be solved (Beaman 2008a, 2). This observation seems especially true of a complex institution that combines the hierarchical and traditional cultures of church and army. It does not augur well for rapid progress that the RCChS leadership staff is small, lacks capacity, and spends most of its time in a reactive posture.<sup>151</sup> As noted earlier, the addition of new faith groups will come as a result of a deliberate, strategic process when a Chaplain General decides to make it a priority, and it will be opportunistic in that qualified and suitable candidates will need to be found.

When I asked tactical level chaplains if they would support new faith groups entering the Branch, there was a common aversion to any process that might look like affirmative action. Their responses often included phrases such as “diversity for diversity’s sake” or “we’re not just throwing the doors open and saying bring us your poor and your lame”. As with some of the ICCMC members, chaplains often expressed a suspicion that a minority religion chaplain might have a sectarian focus, ministering only to their own. Others wondered if there was really an expressed need for more minority faith groups given the CAF’s demographics. One argument, offered to show that further diversification was unnecessary, was that it would be inappropriate to place

a Sikh chaplain on a Navy ship if the crew had no Sikhs to minister to. For longer serving chaplains, there was a perception that not all of the minority chaplains have been successful. One chaplain felt that the Branch's first Rabbi (no longer serving) had failed because he "wouldn't work on Fridays, wouldn't be alone in a room with a woman, and wouldn't shake hands with half the population". In hiring this person, the chaplain felt, the Branch had been "moving too fast just to have a nice looking poster." This chaplain was much more approving of the latest rabbi to join the RCChS because she felt this individual had demonstrated the flexibility to do what she considered to be practical and necessary ministry for a chaplain.

During 9/11 they opened up their temple in New York, he was a student there at the time, and elders said, well, you've desecrated the temple, and he said [to them] "What would have happened in the 1940s if people had opened their churches for you? Somebody who sees the world in that way and sees the mission field that is the chaplaincy as opposed to, OK, I'm coming to you but I've got to wear my turban all day and I've got to have two hours on Saturday to wash it and I've got to wear bare feet when I'm doing PT. If you can't fit the CAF model and mould, then there are other ways for you to worship and share, and that's no harm, no foul for us as an institution as the CAF and the chaplaincy. Not everyone fits, and that's ok.

Besides the suspicion that some religious and cultural practices (the turban and bare feet) might be disabling for the practical work of chaplaincy, many other padres expressed a concern that minority faith would lack the necessary qualifications and training for pastoral ministry. These concerns included the example of a Buddhist monk who might not have Clinical Pastoral Education or might never have helped a family with a funeral. However, the experience of the Branch's first Muslims suggests that these credentials and skills can be acquired.



One can easily imagine two factors that would work to allay these padres' fears about the next "first". The first is the role of the workplace in the integration of minorities. The movement of minorities "out-group" into environments like the workplace and form wider contacts and relationships is a factor in their integration (Breton 2012, 75). Given the importance of chaplain teams to the Regular Force RCChS, the experience of working with a non-Christian colleague can also promote their acceptance by the Christian minority. No longer in what Wuthnow called the "homeostasis" of their civilian ministries, Christian chaplains have the opportunity, if they wish to take it, to learn about their colleagues and engage in ongoing, low-level inter-religious dialogue with them. When their non-Christian colleagues are willing to "fit the model and mould" of the CAF, and demonstrate their effectiveness, their acceptance appears to be widespread. During my interviews I heard many affectionate references to Muslim and Jewish colleagues from those who had worked closely with them and gotten to know them. The second factor in promoting integration would be the strengths of the next "first" candidate. On the principle that "nothing succeeds like success", if this chaplain has a recognizable skill set and a cooperative outlook, the workplace of the chaplain team has the potential to be an integrative factor as relationships and trust are built. Seeing, working and even praying with a new and successful "first" chaplain may also diminish the lofty and perhaps unrealistic standards that some Christian chaplains would hold their as yet hypothetical colleagues to:

If you're going to be the one of, or you're going to be the first of, or even one of the first five of, we need you to come with even more to the table, so you can help us do this the proper way. Because we don't just want Joe Pastor being the first of that denomination. We want Joe Pastor PhD or something. We really need, as we do it, to think, if they're going to be a "one of", they better be a hell of

a “one of” that we can use. So for me, if I was there, that’s what I’d be looking for and I’d be pretty unapologetic about it to start with.

One could imagine someone less qualified than “Joe Pastor PhD” succeeding. It is worth noting that many chaplains who knew and worked with the first evangelical, Steve Merriman, recall a plainspoken and uncomplicated personality who was famous for caring for soldiers. Merriman had recognizable credentials for a Christian pastor, but he certainly didn’t have a PhD, and nor did he need one. Whatever the credentials that are deemed necessary, the workplace and networks of chaplain teams will be an asset to integration and acceptance of new faith groups.

### **6.3. Further Research**

There are two obvious lacunae in the scope and complexity of my work. The first is that my focus has been on the Regular Force chaplaincy rather than on the Reserve Force. I interviewed no actively serving Reserve chaplains, though several had previous experience in Reserve ministry. This was a deliberate choice, partly because of the allowable time for my inquiry but also because Reserve chaplains, who are focused on and embedded in their units, work in a different context. Since they do not work in teams, they are not forced to make the same mental adjustments or accommodations to the diversity of their colleagues that their Regular Force peers do. Another factor limiting their experience of collegial diversity is that the distribution of faith groups within the Reserve chaplaincy is much more limited and seems to map closely to either the regional church or to the affiliations and networks of local clergy that

have an influence on Reserve chaplaincy recruiting. For example, with one exception all the Army Reserve chaplains in the Province of Quebec are Roman Catholic. All but one in New Brunswick are Roman Catholic, and Ontario Reserve chaplains are almost entirely mainstream or conservative Protestants. All Reserve chaplains are currently Christian. Certainly Reserve chaplains have their own experience of ministering to diversity in their own units, will have opinions of the RCChS' move to pluralism, and may experience tensions as they negotiate between the sectarian and pluralist ideals. While it is currently quite homogenous, diversifying the faith groups within the Reserves could serve the larger goal of pluralism, since many Reserve chaplains transition into the Regular Force chaplaincy. Future research on Reserve Force chaplains and diversity would be welcome. Another interesting line of inquiry for Canadian scholars of religion might be the role of Reserve chaplains as points of connection between the military and local society at the community and congregational level.

A second lacuna is that my borrowing of Loveland and Hansen's concept of the sectarian and plural ideals is at this point barely developed. My contribution thus far has been to translate this model into the idea (albeit still largely notional at this point) of sectarian and plural axes. It would be interesting to develop this notion both quantitatively and qualitatively. One could imagine a more detailed exploration and mapping of chaplains' attitudes to religious pluralism, filtered by categories such as faith group, ethnicity, gender and age. Possibly someone with insider status and access, approved by the RCChS chain of command, and supported by the necessary sociological expertise from within the Department of National Defence or the civilian

academy, might succeed here. The resulting data could be valuable to civilian academics working in the field of Canadian religion. It might also be useful as an internal training metric for the RCChS, as a way of assessing the impact of Branch diversity programs such as the Pluralism Course on chaplain's attitudinal development over time.

While I have leveraged my insider knowledge to pursue this research, my purpose has not been to produce a prescriptive or advisory document. The RCChS will do with research what they will, though my hope is that they will approve its academic publication. However, were the RCChS to ask me to make two recommendations, I would offer these. My first suggestion would be for the RCChS, and the ICCMC, to reduce their preoccupation with recruiting and managing chaplains by denominations that are primarily Christian. There are two reasons for this. The first is that denominations have a shaping effect on the institution's culture, as chaplains exploit the resources and peer networks within their faith groups to find recruits to maintain the stature and influence of "their" teams within the culture. The second is that while the data in Chapter Five shows that chaplains rightly depend on denominational and theological identity and support to manage their own navigation of religious pluralism, chaplains' denominational identities and theologies are of little use or meaning to the men and women of the CAF that they serve. My data suggest that Benham Rennick is right to say that most CAF members are products of late modernity whose religious and spiritual views are highly individual and subjective. Chaplains are valued by most CAF members for their empathy, interpersonal skills, and as "holy" men and women who represent transcendent meaning in the times of crisis and alienation that military life

offers in abundance. If, as one padre told me, “a chaplain is a chaplain is a chaplain”, then the categories of Christian and non-Christian should recede in importance for the chaplaincy over time.

My second piece of advice would be to create opportunities for chaplains to deepen their own knowledge of and comfort with religious diversity. Some of these opportunities would come from the extension of opportunities for informal and ongoing inter-religious dialogue in the workplace at the team level, which is perhaps the most obvious argument for extending religious diversity as widely through the organization as possible. Many chaplains expressed a scepticism with the Branch’s top-down methods of teaching and instilling diversity. When asked about the purpose of the ICCMC sponsored interfaith worship at Retreat, one answered sarcastically, “To take a nap?” Other chaplains expressed strong interest in the Ministry in a Pluralistic Environment course, but with the proviso that its content be more than just “World Religions 101”. As one padre noted, “I can look that stuff up on Wikipedia”. Another hoped that the course would be about “how to really talk with one another, ... how to be respectful, disagree, or agree, whatever the case may be. I don’t think we really do anything of that nature.” Another described her hopes that the course would at least teach her to begin dialogue. “What I want to know is, how do I establish a working relationship with a Sikh, how do I approach them, how to I talk to a Buddhist? What are the initial steps? That’s what I think we’re missing in the Branch is inter-religious instruction.” Two conditions seem necessary for these hopes to be fulfilled. One is, that this chaplain have Sikhs or Buddhists (one could insert several other faith groups here) to dialogue

with. Whether those dialogue partners will be fellow chaplains in uniform is at least an possibility admitted by the next Chaplain General. The next condition is that the RCChS relax its careful management of the multi-faith project and give chaplains more of a role in it. For example, if a chaplain team has become comfortable with interfaith prayer during its meetings, could it not take over that duty from the ICCMC at the next Retreat? A home-grown interfaith prayer service, with an opportunity for the chaplain team to explain how it was developed, could conceivably be of greater value to chaplains, and encourage them to develop their own skills.

Pluralism can certainly expand further and become more authentic in the life of the Branch and the CAF as a significant public institution. Benham Rennick has invited other scholars to pursue this topic in other institutional contexts such as prisons and hospitals (2011, 170), and my own work may also be helpful in that regard. My aim has been to better understand the work of men and women engaged in the difficult talk of the maintaining highly particular religious identities, while trying as best they can to understand the claims of other faith traditions. One chaplain quipped to me that “We’re quite often like those fighting fish. We do well when we’re in our units, one chaplain amongst a whole bunch of other soldiers, but you put too many chaplains together and everything seems to break down.” While chaplains are as prone to infighting, rivalry and self-importance as most other professions, the pluralistic ideal can be a counterweight to these destructive tendencies. To adapt a phrase often used by the Christian theologian Stanley Hauerwas, the greatest achievement of religious pluralism may be that people of different faiths can remain in a room without killing one another.

Considering the mixture of religion and geopolitics that currently has CAF personnel in Iraq and Syria, and increasingly draconian and divisive measures to stop religious radicalism at home, achieving a working pluralism seems a worthwhile goal. For Canadian military personnel in this context, the hopeful sight of uniformed chaplains of different faiths in genuinely collegial relationships may be the best reason for the chaplaincy to keep pursuing a greater degree of pluralism.

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<sup>147</sup> Non-Christian civilian clergy are also part of Britain's Royal Army Chaplains' Department, but do not wear uniform (Demiray 2014, 8).

<sup>148</sup> Jeremy Bell told me of how Stewart Hunter, as chair of the ICCMC, invited John Fletcher and his husband to dinner shortly after he became Chaplain General. Fletcher offered to decline, on the grounds that he wanted to respect Hunter's faith position on homosexuality and did not want to put him in an awkward situation with his Pentecostal peers. Hunter insisted on the invitation. Bell told me this story quite reverently (Hunter subsequently confirmed the details), suggesting, to Bell at least, that the anecdote said something significant about the chaplaincy's virtuous culture. While it would be difficult to assess the impact of this event on the institution (for example, how many of Hunter's evangelical chaplains knew about this invitation, and did it influence their thinking in any way?), and should be taken with caution, it does suggest that Canadian evangelical culture has a more irenic and less contentious quality than its US counterpart (Reimer 2003). Certainly a US chaplain friend of mine was incredulous when he heard this story of Hunter's dinner invitation.

<sup>149</sup> As noted earlier, Hansen's final chapter on the US military chaplaincy suggests that the organization is troubled by a "culture wars" mentality (Hansen 2012).

<sup>150</sup> Which is particularly ironic, given that my research indicated that a consultative process on the badge design early on, at the 2004 Branch Retreat, yielded only confusion and lack of consensus.

<sup>151</sup> One senior RCChS leader noted to me that "We are usually so busy scrambling to react we don't have the time or energy to be proactive" (anonymous, pers. comm).

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