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Fighting with Faith

Chaplain Matthew Zimmerman (National Baptist) felt caught. A handful of men walked into his office in 1971 and asked him to preside over a memorial service for Malcolm X in the chapel the next day. He scurried to get permission from his commander because "that sort of thing wasn't even thought about," much less regularly done. A phone conversation yielded little more than "'Absolutely not! No way!'"—a reaction that fared poorly among the African Americans he served. Hitching helicopter rides out of Can Tho as the lone chaplain available to troops in the southern part of the Mekong Delta had not prepared Zimmerman for Hanau, Germany, "the worst location with respect to race relations." He witnessed black and white soldiers literally killing one another, bloody encounters between the German police and black soldiers, and personnel self-medicating with addictive drugs. Ultimately, he performed more memorial services for fallen soldiers in Germany than in Vietnam. Perhaps it was not surprising, then, that the soldiers called the third-generation minister "'Uncle Tom,' and all kinds of unpleasant names" and decided to forge ahead with the memorial service anyway, using the base flagpole as their new location. Zimmerman apprised his superior of the new plan, at which point he was instructed, "'Be their chaplain.'"[1]

As the *Washington Post* reported in 1970, "race rifts follow the flag," and Zimmerman operated in the shadow of both. He was not even five years into his army career when he received his assignment to Europe, plucked from Fort Hood in the hopes that he could help assuage the military's extensive race problems. Born and raised in South Carolina, Zimmerman was the first black graduate of Duke Divinity

School and ministered to students at Idaho State—"not a place where you found a lot of black folks"—and then Morris College before a friend at Fort Jackson convinced him to volunteer for the chaplaincy. He expected to complete a tour of duty and return to civilian life. Instead, he crisscrossed Europe to teach equal-opportunity courses and conduct racial harmony workshops. While religion could be a salve for weary soldiers, "religious dogma" became a weapon when used to justify racism and inequality. Disarming the religious underpinnings of white supremacy became especially important as chaplains often served as the default equal-opportunity officers.[2]

The young chaplain recognized what senior army brass did not: eradicating overt hostility constituted a mere fraction of the work the military needed to do to engender equality. Midway through the 1970s, "alienation" represented the key finding of a military survey of "the black experience in chapel." The report recommended "demythologize[ing] the 'pure white' interpretation of the Bible" commonly encountered in the military and, instead, preaching justice. But "mercy and love" could not counteract festering inequities. As Chaplain Zimmerman knew, the army frequently "made a lot of not very smart decisions," such as refusing to stock black hair products based on the notion that color-blind policies quelled discrimination. He recognized this flawed logic, understanding that "you never want to say, 'we are colorblind' " because "the objective is not to make me out of a colorless, depersonalized person." Instead, the military had to learn how to respond to specific needs, to build a pluralist ethos out of particularity. And so it was that the Protestant military chaplain led a commemoration service for Malcolm X, the assassinated antiwar black nationalist Muslim leader, attended by "a hundred black soldiers in fatigues and one white lad in a suit who was supposed to be an undercover agent." The uncouth surveillance did not deter the minister. For his men, the service functioned as a release valve, allowing them to express and embrace their racial and religious identities while in uniform. Chaplain Matthew Zimmerman, who within two decades would wear two stars as the nation's first African American chief of chaplains, committed his ministry and career to an institution on the brink of extensive change.[3]

Like the rest of American society, the military was caught in the "age of fracture," flummoxed and flapping about for an appropriate course

forward after Vietnam and in the midst of raging domestic turmoil over the proper direction of the nation. The racism, sexism, and religious prejudice afflicting American society also plagued the military, and the chaplaincy was not immune. Increasing skepticism toward authority did not help a hierarchical institution during a crisis of legitimacy. In 1974, Army Chief of Chaplains Gerhardt Hyatt (Missouri Synod Lutheran) outlined "a commitment to action rather than reaction." However, like the White House's struggles to restore confidence in government after Watergate, the military lingered in a reactive posture as it endeavored to become all it could be after Vietnam.[4]

It was, therefore, an age of adaptation, and to survive, the chaplaincy—like the military—regrouped. The end of the draft and the rise of the All-Volunteer Force altered recruitment tactics, required new benefits, and yielded significantly more African American and women enlistees. Although the military's religious ministry had always been staffed by volunteers, the space vacated by liberal clergy who morally opposed the Vietnam War created new openings for the evangelicals and fundamentalists who had been itching to gain a foothold in the military since midcentury. Conservative Protestants were not the only ones eying the opportunities the military afforded. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Chaplain Corps diversified in three ways: by recruiting racial minorities, assenting to the inclusion of women, and addressing the needs of more varied faiths. Demographic shifts reinvigorated old questions: Who could serve as a religious leader? What counted—and could be accommodated—as religious practice? These anxieties took on new urgency between the fall of Saigon and the fall of the Berlin Wall. The chaplaincy thus grappled with a set of concerns that hounded American politics and society writ large: Could pluralism include the evangelical and the ecumenical, the sectarian conservative and the progressive pluralist? Could racial, gendered, and religious diversity coexist?[5]

The military wanted its personnel to fight with faith in God and country, but the late-twentieth-century chaplaincy found itself battling faith on multiple fronts. As the composition of the chaplaincy and the military personnel it served shifted, newcomers challenged the pluralist ethos that had guided the chaplaincy through much of the twentieth century. Evangelicals and humanists, African Americans and women, legal agitators and religious minorities like Sikhs and Muslims lobbed different critiques at the chaplaincy. It was too ecumenical and

too religious, insufficiently holistic and incongruously preferential, unconstitutionally sound and wretchedly unaware of its limits. Through all of these divergent claims ran the shared experience of values in tension with an institution. The military chaplaincy's well-honed, if limited, worldview assumed unity but had yet to figure out how to serve a broader spectrum of needs and desires.

While liberal Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish clergy debated the morality of accepting commissions as chaplains in the late 1960s, evangelical Protestants ministers had few qualms about supporting the war in Vietnam and even fewer about entering the military chaplaincy. Harrowing combat experiences did not dissuade Chaplain John W. Schumacher (Grace Brethren). When he received orders to return to Vietnam in 1969, he recalled his emotions upon leaving Bien Hoa two summers prior. Contemplating the ultimate sacrifice made by so many Americans in uniform, he remembered gazing out the airplane window and "vow[ing] quietly to myself, 'Never again.'" Friends and family suggested he resign his army commission, but Schumacher operated according to a sense of duty, a belief in God and the chain of command, and a single principled stance: "It is right for a clergyman to be with soldiers in time of war." His military career lasted over three decades, a period of great evangelical ferment in the armed forces.[6]

Evangelicals viewed the Vietnam and post-Vietnam chaplaincy as a grand opportunity to increase their numbers, find new believers, reach Christians abroad, and relay their faith to a larger American public. By June 1968, at the height of the Vietnam war, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) tallied 118 chaplains across the three service branches—forty-three more chaplains than in 1965, more than double the size of 1960, and more than ten times the number allotted to the NAE in World War II. The army's sixty-six NAE chaplains may have represented only 3 percent of the roster, but it reflected an unparalleled two-decade surge. By 1983, evangelical chaplains "populate[d] the corps to a greater degree than ever," thus vindicating the NAE's mid-century decision to invest in seminary infrastructure to meet the military's education requirements.[7]

As evangelical chaplains seized the chance to flood into the military, they resisted longstanding assumptions about pluralism and imported new sensibilities about particularity. Chaplain Schumacher's choices

exemplify the evangelical recalibration of the chaplain's role away from ecumenical collaboration and toward sectarian silos. Assigned to an outpost in Kontum City not far from the Cambodian and Laotian borders, Schumacher led services for Americans and developed a friendship with Father Phan Tan Van, a Vietnamese priest who had once written English propaganda for the Viet Minh. Over meals and prayer, Chaplain Schumacher learned that Father Van "genuinely loved the Lord" and cared for local orphaned children. Despite their budding relationship, Schumacher found "there was little advising [he] could do." He enjoyed regular camaraderie with the neighborhood priest but blanched at enabling the work of Catholics and Buddhists. Whether his refusal to advise these clergy emanated from a sense of religious futility or a position of religious respect is unclear. Elsewhere, he flourished. Successfully converting a drug-addled Marine, for example, constituted victory. "Every assignment," he argued, "presented ministry opportunities in abundance," though not everyone shared his definition of ministry.[8]

In fact, the NAE distinguished the persuasion of evangelism from the coercion of proselytization in order to tiptoe around the state's prohibition on the latter. Many NAE chaplains found "rewarding opportunities in terms of souls won for Christ" within the armed forces and were pleased to provide data that vindicated their successful ministry. At the Naval Training Center in Orlando, Florida, Chaplain Charles E. Dorr (Baptist) counted more than 800 men "indicat[ing] their desire to receive Christ" over eleven months—and those were merely the ones who followed through. Performing baptisms upon request had always been part and parcel of chaplains' work, but treasuring a broad-based evangelical revival through witnessing and conversion was new. As Chaplain Conrad Walker (Lutheran) explained, he baptized hundreds of soldiers at the Fort Benning chapel and in the snake-ridden Chattahoochee River. Lest his efforts seem like proselytizing, he wrote, before every ritual dunking he tried to determine the appropriate family tradition to follow. In the case of a soldier who lacked Christian parents, a "Holy Roller" grandmother offered a charismatic model and, with a Pentecostal and a Catholic as witnesses, the young man committed himself to Christ. This was evangelical military ecumenism in action: baptism of both the new convert and the born-again celebrated by Christians of many denominational communities.[9]

As more and more NAE-endorsed chaplains found a home in the military, the organization became increasingly candid about its view of the armed forces as "one of the world's greatest mission fields" from which they enjoyed amassing "a great harvest of souls." Within an evangelical frame, combat arenas and domestic environments resembled youth ministries: preaching and teaching, studying and witnessing, advising and serving all created moments ripe for personal evangelism which, if carefully conducted, could pass for standard military chaplain activities. A young sergeant visited Chaplain Walker because his wife was acting under the influence of voodoo—and purportedly targeting others with her spells. After a successful parachute jump, the military minister informed the 101st Airborne soldier that "it was time we went to prayer in Jesus' name to wash out, yes, *flush* out, any further influences of voodoo curses and such." Visits and prayers followed, and soon after the jump, the sergeant's wife also restored her faith as a Christian. Similarly, in a report from Vietnam, Chaplain Arthur Guetterman (Conservative Baptist) jotted, "Today I held four services and 10 men trusted Christ." Mission accomplished and missionary success went hand-in-hand.[10]

Becoming born-again in the heat of battle did not necessarily lead to an enduring church commitment, as many chaplains, evangelical and otherwise, discovered. Some victories, like the conversion of West Point graduate John A. Wickham Jr., would pay rich dividends, as the future army chief of staff infused his work—and the military writ large—with evangelical fervor. But for every soldier who found God, there were equal numbers who neither embraced the divine nor expressed any interest in renewed religious fervor. Chaplain Kenneth Gohr (Lutheran) admitted that "there is little evidence of 'Foxhole Religion,'" as those who were not already religious rarely changed their minds. Evangelical chaplains acknowledged this but viewed it as a challenge to overcome rather than a predetermined outcome. In Vietnam, Chaplain Kevin L. Anderson (Southern Baptist) devoted a portion of worship to asking "men to make a definite response or commitment to Jesus Christ." Although he denied using "high pressure or overly emotional appeals," the high stakes environment of combat was not neutral. Nevertheless, the chaplain who considered himself "more Marine green than . . . Navy blue" tempered his passion for Christ with the knowledge of his own weaknesses, recognizing that he had not built a program to sustain

new converts. If war dramatized the battle cry for Christianity, it also conspired to corral conversion and baptism as milestones unmoored from day-to-day habits.[11]

The chaplaincy's emphasis on ecumenism nettled many chaplains affiliated with the NAE. When a torrent of rain threatened to wash out tents, an assistant division chaplain cracked that they could deposit "2 Protestants, 2 Catholics, and 2 Jewish chaplains aboard an ark." In stark contrast to this interfaith revelry, the NAE's vigorous objection to trifaith meetings in the air force occasionally swayed military leaders to abandon their plans. But such clear sectarian victories were scarce. In 1971, the NAE's Floyd Robertson was gratified to report that while the military continued to commend ecumenical services and Sunday schools, the chiefs of chaplains finally allowed clergy to recuse themselves from these events when they deemed participation "'contrary . . . to the tenets of the church he represented or to his own conscience.'" Many of Robertson's evangelical and fundamentalist colleagues tried to push even more sectarian visions into military space. Bill Garman of the Associated Gospel Churches described the nonsectarian Vacation Bible School planned by Chaplain Patrick J. Hessian (Catholic) as reflecting "deplorable un-American, discriminatory conditions in the Army Chaplaincy." Robertson countered that Hessian, a future army chief of chaplains, had every right to act in accordance with his faith. Mutual noninfringement was the best policy, he argued, because it not only safeguarded the chaplaincy from accusations of religious discrimination but also allowed evangelical chaplains to pursue their visions without interference or restrictions.[12]

The dual roles of military responsibility and doctrinal commitment created conflicts for many of the evangelical chaplains who knew that their personal faith collided with the beliefs of the personnel they served. One chaplain, for example, reported declining to marry a couple because the airman's fiancée was a divorcée; he also refused to baptize the dying infant of another soldier. In both cases, the expected religious actions contravened his denomination's principles and his personal precepts. Nevertheless, as a staff officer, he realized his professional role bound him to find another chaplain or, if necessary, civilian minister to perform these rituals. Concerns about diluting the strength of religious messages suffused objections to ecumenical policy. The problem was not denominational—evangelicals were, on the whole, invested in

nondenominational Protestantism—but in coddling those who did not share their emphasis on salvation through Christ.[13]

Although evangelical chaplains often felt they were fighting a rising tide of pluralism, they had fellow travelers in their errand into the wilderness. As plans for Campus Crusade for Christ's Explo '72 moved forward, for example, Navy Chief of Chaplains Francis Garrett (United Methodist) promoted it, describing the weeklong evangelical festival aimed at high school and college students as "a springboard for a strategy to help fulfill the Great Commission in this generation." He expected 5,000 or so military personnel to join him in Dallas and encouraged chaplains to use their budgets and chapel funds to sponsor delegations. Chaplain Carl McNally (Baptist) planned to make the 150-mile trip to Dallas from Fort Hood, Texas, with at least 300 men in tow. Evangelicals glowed as the Holy Spirit infused the military—at least the officers and enlisted men, if not yet the chaplaincy itself. By 1972, Bibles and revivals—in Christian coffeehouses, through Jesus rallies, and by touring evangelists—became commonplace, enacted alongside a rhetorical commitment to "'bombing' North Vietnamese villages with the Gospel." A four-star general could proclaim, "The United States is not neutral about God . . . so I have no bashfulness about expressing my convictions for the Lord," and follow through with early morning prayer breakfasts and on-base Bible-study groups.[14]

Rather than hunker down and continue to smuggle in sectarian spiritual care from the bottom up, the NAE initiated a new crusade to overhaul the chaplaincy's worldview from the top down. For every chaplain who extricated himself from an uncomfortably ecumenical situation, others found themselves marginalized. One senior chaplain lamented the paucity of evangelical chaplains in senior leadership positions in the Offices of the Chiefs of Chaplains or as directors of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board (AFCB). According to him, "the chaplaincy climate is completely dominated by the ecumenical philosophy. Those of us who stand for other things are viewed as somewhat 'crack pot' and certainly 'very peculiar.' But you know that. The question is, 'where do we go from here?'" The answer, the chaplain asserted, was to acquire power. "'Since the chaplaincy is such a closed ecclesiastical system I see no remedy, or change of climate, until such time as evangelicals infiltrate the top policy making positions.'"[15] It would take time, but the Vietnam-era exodus of liberal, pluralist clergy who had

dominated the chaplaincy for over a half century opened the gates of institutional power to evangelicals. All they had to do was shrewdly pursue it.

Evangelicals were not the only religious group striving to transform the chaplaincy to meet its needs, however. While some religious groups lacked chaplains, they still viewed the chaplaincy as the best venue for pursuing recognition, accommodations, and equality. American adherents of traditional Islam and the Nation of Islam (NOI) increased in the 1970s, and more Muslims sought to practice their faith in uniform. Without Muslim chaplains, the 1970s and 1980s–era chiefs of chaplains scrambled to understand and meet Muslim needs. In 1976, a message arrived in Washington from the *USS Mitscher*, a ship in a destroyer squadron then deployed in the Mediterranean. A practicing Muslim sailor "present[ed] . . . problems aboard ship." Namely, how could the ship accommodate five daily services, Friday noon Sabbath services, dietary needs to abstain from pork "or non-kosher meat," and fasting during Ramadan? The ship's officers announced they would not make special meals but allowed him to buy and store canned tuna in his ship locker. In addition, they authorized daily prayers, "provided there is no interference with assigned military watches/jobs [and] exchange of watches is permitted" and allocated space for private worship.[16]

The accommodations met with approval, granted in bureaucratic language that supported judicious adaptations—sensitive to both religious obligations and the duties of the armed forces. "To the maximum extent permissible," navy leaders affirmed, "a member should be permitted the freedom to adhere to his religious persuasion as long as it does not hinder or restrict the effective fulfillment of the command's and the Navy's mission." The feedback also noted that "diversity of religious persuasions preclude promulgation of general standards," such that the navy needed to tailor responses to individual and military needs. When mission readiness hindered religious practice, the memo suggested, "alternative administrative measures not involving punitive action" were warranted. This leniency did not, however, justify violations of orders, for which judicial proceedings could ensue—as they had for Seventh-day Adventists in previous decades. The resolution deflected possible strife through a rhetorical commitment to religious diversity and offered flexible provisions combined with a reminder that military duties superseded religious obligations.[17]

Much like American Buddhists at midcentury, American Muslims found the military more receptive to learning about Islam when the United States pursued strategic interests in the Middle East and Central Asia. Increasing awareness of Muslim religious rituals produced more accommodations. In 1977, for example, Navy Chief of Chaplains John O'Connor (Catholic) congratulated Chaplain Victor Ivers (Catholic) for "being on the cutting edge of things" by arranging the first Muslim service at Great Lakes Naval Training Center, Illinois. But the shield of faith could easily pivot to American anxiety about the appropriate exercise of the sword of spirit. Thus, American Muslims quickly found themselves on the wrong end of religiously and racially inflected questions of dual loyalty. Like Japanese Americans in World War II, Muslim Americans faced scrutiny about their willingness to fight coreligionists abroad. In the waning days of the Cold War and against the backdrop of the Iran–Iraq War, the military could not stop itself from asking representatives of the American Muslim community, "Is there a conflict for Muslims in carrying out the policies of a non-Muslim state, that is the United States, against any conflict or potential conflict with an Islamic state?"[18]

While evangelicals sought to turn the military into a mission field and Muslims wrestled with minor concessions to their religious needs, another group sought something more basic: recognition. Like their counterparts in the 1920s, atheists and humanists felt rebuffed by the state. In 1979, petty officer Michael Hagen asked the military to create an Armed Forces Atheist Council. In writing to the secretary of defense, he accused the military of "hav[ing] an established Judeo-Christian chaplaincy for I have no figures indicating that Muslims or Buddhists, much less Atheists, have received a commission and acceptance into the Chaplain Corps." The military mandate for chaplains to graduate from seminary meant, he alleged, that all were "indoctrinated" and none had the skills to minister to atheists like him. The navy concurred in principle, but downplayed the ramifications of chaplains not serving atheists. Though it acknowledged "a basic incompatibility" between the chaplaincy and atheists, it was, to their minds, a contradiction that merited no further action.[19]

At least one minister found this response dispiriting. Chaplain Jim Bank (Unitarian Universalist) wanted to make sure that all chaplains understood the depth and range "commitment to religious pluralism in

the military requires." As a military chaplain trained in a denomination that included humanists, Bank felt obligated to support all individuals "in achieving religious wholeness as they—not we—see it." Aiding nonbelievers fell within the scope of his duties. In fact, from Bank's perspective, arguments about incompatibility failed because they were predicated on a false premise of bifurcated religious categorization. He anticipated Muslim and Buddhist chaplains entering the corps, and they would be required to minister to "those of Western religious traditions" even as Judaism and Christianity represented "deviating views" theologically. Atheism strained the limits of the chaplaincy, but atheists did not disappear. Rather, they have continued to advocate representation, counseling, and guidance on their terms.[20]

This quarrel over atheists went unresolved, but it highlighted a brief moment in which a broad range of religious and nonreligious voices lodged parallel critiques of religion in the armed forces. Evangelicals, Muslims, and atheists agreed that the success of the military chaplaincy rested on serving a broad spectrum of religions. As the NAE's Floyd Robertson insisted in 1975, "religious liberty is a two-way street. When I defend the right of our chaplains to be evangelical I must at the same time defend the right of those so disposed to be just as liberal as they choose to be."[21] He understood that within the military, religious rights could not be curtailed to satisfy particular theological orientations. At the same time, however, all of these groups felt the chaplaincy did not, or did not fully, represent them. Despite the distinct interests expressed in the evangelical desire for more sectarian military religion, the Muslim requests for appropriate food and worship, and the atheist aspiration to be included, all existed in tension with the ecumenical but not fully representative chaplaincy. As a government institution, the chaplaincy served the state and its citizens, but the goals of each could collide.

While white evangelicals wanted to help soldiers be born-again, another preacher commanded the nation to be born again. From a podium in Atlanta in 1967, Martin Luther King, Jr. pointed out that black men were dying at twice the rate of others while fighting "an unjust, evil war in Vietnam." When King asked, "Where do we go from here," he sought to persuade Americans to leave Vietnam and abandon an unjust imperial war. But for some black clergy, the tempest of the late 1960s

and 1970s compelled them to enlist to serve the men dying overseas. Although white evangelicals were the most vocal band of brothers to enter the chaplaincy in large numbers, African American chaplains increased as well. In the army, seventeen active-duty black chaplains in 1963 more than tripled to fifty-five in 1971 and climbed to sixty-five by 1973.[22] As civilians confronted racial oppression in the 1970s, so too did the military, especially as racial tensions spiraled and racial minorities increased in the all-volunteer force. Black chaplains carefully agitated to bend the military toward social justice and sought to use religion to improve conditions faced by communities of color. The black clergy who volunteered for military pulpits rejected the separatism that some black nationalists found appealing, but embraced their militancy. Spiritual resilience, they argued, could not be garrisoned to hour-long worship in chapels and religious leadership could not be cordoned off in an office. The soul, like the mind and the body, needed and was nourished by housing, food, jobs, security, and most of all, equality. Black chaplains thus strove to lead capaciously and serve the whole person in a military rife with racial friction.[23]

Minority personnel rankled at the predominantly white chaplaincy's strict distinction between sacred and secular lives. When Navy Chief of Chaplains O'Connor asked Howard University's School of Religion to assess the chaplaincy's strengths and weaknesses, he may not have expected the critique it lobbed. Black ministry, the scholars explained, applied to the whole person such that "concern for the spiritual aspect of man was not separated from his temporal need for housing, education, employment, and civil and social justice." Without committing to advocacy, chaplains stood at a remove from the reality of black lives and could not satisfy the needs of the African Americans in uniform. Recruiting and promoting more black chaplains, reconceiving Sunday services away from white, middle-class Protestant norms, addressing "the multiplicities within American Black religious experience" in Chaplain School, and fashioning opportunities for black female empowerment would certainly help. But in the end, the report insisted, the problem lay in the structure and ethos of an institution that held "the implicit belief that an understanding and response to the Black religious experience can be realized apart from an understanding of those economic, social, political and psychological forces which impact Black life presently and in the past." State-sanctioned religious leaders

could hedge and ignore the structural racism in their midst, but they would do so at their own peril.[24]

The military dawdled in addressing racism and the volatile situations that ensued during the 1960s and 1970s. "Smoldering unrest" abounded, according to Chaplain Peter Cary (Catholic). But, he continued, "the complaints of the Black Marines at the Leadership Council meetings were usually directed to that not so clearly seen or provable area," that is, to obstacles white eyes had trouble seeing. Chaplain Claude Newby (LDS) observed flaring racial tensions as well, though he claimed the environment degraded dramatically between his two tours in Vietnam. In contrast to his experiences in 1966–1967, by 1970 his infantrymen were "succumbing to civilian and rear-area trends, of dividing into us and them." In 1970, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the African American newspaper that led the Double V campaign in World War II, rebuked the army's resistance to using its coercive power to redress racism. "The army is supposed to be a disciplined body with wide jurisdiction over those who serve under its authority," an editorial lamented. "The army can and must solve the racial problems which are dogging its feet." Racial enmity extended far beyond combat areas, and bigotry knew no geographic borders.[25]

Although the Department of Defense made "eliminating racism and the effects of racism" a command task in the mid-1970s, there were only a few black officers to guide the process, which in turn amplified the role of black chaplains. In 1974, the black officer rates reached 4.2 percent in the army, 2 percent in the air force, 2 percent in the Marine Corps, and 1.1 percent in the navy. Southern whites dominated the officer ranks, placing minority servicemen at the whims and wills of those raised in the Jim Crow South. At Fort Hood, Texas, where black soldiers refused to serve as supplemental riot control for the 1968 Democratic National Convention and racial slurs triggered race riots, several chaplains began offering Sunday morning gospel services. Centered on the hymns and music with which many African American soldiers would have been familiar, the worship services brought the rhythms of the black church into military chapels. Similar services arose at bases in Colorado, Washington, and Germany, often with the help of chaplains like Elvernice Davis (United Methodist), who formed a black gospel choir to support a regular gospel service. These small efforts notwithstanding, most black soldiers and Marines found the military a hostile space, a difficulty the inclusion of a few good chaplains could hardly erase.[26]

Nevertheless, some soldiers identified racially discriminatory religious practices for the military to fight. In 1974, Private Paul R. Armstrong alleged that "the policies of the Mormon institution are racist to an extent that it has an effect on the 'racial harmony' on this post." Mormons did not allow African Americans to hold the priesthood until 1978, and in 1974, Armstrong tried to use the chaplaincy to attack this racist practice. "If the Army does not want to be described as a racist organization," he wrote, "it should not go along with the racist policies that are imbedded in other institutions." In filing a formal complaint, he requested that the military replace Mormon services with "Black Muslim, Buddhist, and other non-western services." Armstrong attempted to use religion as a cudgel against racism. However, the army argued that its hands were tied because it used membership, not leadership, as the standard against which to assess racism. Had the LDS Church forbade black members, rather than restricting African Americans from the priesthood, it would have been in violation of military regulations. But since the army delegated the authority to assess the religious qualifications of chaplains to faith groups, it claimed it could not justify intervention. The army nevertheless continued to ask the LDS Church, like all religious groups, to help supply "minority clergymen," thus exerting a subtle, if unintentional, pressure to open the priesthood to African Americans.[27]

The overarching need to diffuse racial tension led some commanders to request black chaplains, which, in turn, encouraged the military to recruit more black chaplains. Sent to Washington to improve race relations, Chaplain Thomas Parham (United Presbyterian) insisted that the navy learn about the African American community and commit itself to improving housing options for personnel. Parham, only the second black navy chaplain, had served in World War II before the navy forced him to resign during postwar demobilization. In 1951, he reenlisted, becoming the only black chaplain on active duty and then the first black chaplain to garner sea duty. In 1966, when Parham earned his Captain's bars, he was the first black officer to achieve the rank. But his remained a singular experience; nine years later, in 1975, a mere eleven active-duty black chaplains served in the navy. By 1980, after extensive recruitment and retention efforts, the number stood at thirty-seven.[28]

Direct interventions from the chaplaincy brass induced some change, though rhetoric continued to outpace reality. In March 1974, Army

Chief of Chaplains Gerhardt Hyatt proclaimed that "the Army has set out to win the battle against racial discrimination" and that the chaplaincy would contribute "the resources of religious faith" to improve race relations. But it had a ways to go in implementing a truly multicultural ministry. For Hyatt, race relations—including the development of command-level affirmative-action plans—required "strong moral leadership" of the sort only clergy could provide. With the switch to an all-volunteer army, the racial composition of the military changed too. By 1978, African Americans constituted 24 percent of the army, and other ethnic groups contributed an additional 4.7 percent of personnel. Among the chaplaincy, however, the ninety-two African American chaplains (including three of five female chaplains) joined with twenty-two Hispanic, Native American, and Asian American chaplains to represent a mere 8 percent of the corps. The goal, according to late-1970s Army Chief of Chaplains Orris E. Kelly (United Methodist) was to reach 15 percent by 1983.[29]

Like Hyatt, John O'Connor, who served as navy chief of chaplains from 1975 to 1979, played an instrumental role in increasing, promoting, and supporting African American navy chaplains. When Chaplain J. C. Williams (Baptist) took the pulpit as the senior chaplain at the Naval Academy in the summer of 1978, he was the first black minister to occupy that role. Bucking tradition, O'Connor had placed only Williams's name on the list of candidates forwarded to the superintendent at Annapolis, thereby ensuring cadets would encounter a black chaplain. Williams could be brash, undaunted in his explicit assessment of the military he served. The navy, he remarked, "is basically oriented around the white majority." While the twenty-three black chaplains in the sea service represented a marked improvement from the four in uniform when he was commissioned in 1969, he was determined to recruit a dozen a year. When the corps reached ninety black chaplains, its demographics would match the racial composition of the navy writ large. If the optimistic South Carolinian who had led a state NAACP chapter as a seminary student was outspoken about the needs of African American midshipmen and sailors, Williams was also confident he had the backing of his Chief. Six years earlier, O'Connor had been the first Catholic to serve as the senior chaplain at the Academy. When the navy contemplated giving the priest smaller living quarters because he had no family, O'Connor co-opted the language of the civil rights

movement when informing them, "I do not intend to ride in the back of the bus"—the same advice he gave Williams before sending him to the Annapolis, thereby permitting Williams to speak up.[30]

As African American chaplains charted a new course for the chaplaincy, they pursued a more ambitious agenda than the military recognized. Chaplain Willard Bolden (National Baptist) described the O'Connor years as "unprecedented" in the emphasis on recruiting racial and ethnic minorities into the chaplaincy and encouraging white chaplains to attend to "worship needs other than their own." In particular, Bolden explained, the creation of "various cultural workshops . . . to meet the different spiritual needs" of personnel played a vital role. Clergy crafted recommendations to realize equal opportunity in the armed forces with the chief of chaplains or his representative in attendance. The Third Annual Black Chaplains Workshop admonished their fellow military clergy, instructing them "to administer, not just to blacks, but to people." In other words, the group tried to steer the chaplaincy toward a grander vision of ministry, one more in line with the holistic spiritual and political commitments of African Americans. While black clergy garnered the verbal support of a military struggling to address racism, they—like white evangelicals—challenged the armed forces to view religion as more than an ancillary activity. They cajoled military leaders toward a new understanding of religious life, one not limited to lifecycle events or weekly devotion, but also committed to civil rights and social justice. Like white evangelicals, African American chaplains sought to coax the military chaplaincy in new direction; unlike white evangelicals, however, African American chaplains wanted to use the military for racial uplift rather than sectarian religion.[31]

Military religious leadership was on the brink of metamorphosis. If top-down decision-making within the chaplaincy broadened racial diversity, it took the top of the military hierarchy to transform the all-male chaplaincy into a mixed-gender space. At the July 1974 commissioning ceremony for new chaplains, the army distributed the first lieutenant's silver bars and the chaplain's silver cross to Alice M. Henderson (AME). But when the petite twenty-eight-year-old from Atlanta arrived at Fort Hamilton, New York, for Chaplain School, she still needed her army greens. The quartermaster had no clothes for her, as the army had not yet designed and produced uniforms for its newest

female officers. The path to the army's first female chaplain traveled through the AME Church. And like many other black women in the 1970s, Henderson had marched for civil rights, protested the war in Vietnam, and questioned the work of second-wave feminists. By the time she arrived on base, war was winding down and she saw no contradiction in entering the military. It provided meaningful employment that helped her support her son. She was no militant feminist, though, as she desisted from joining the women's liberation movement and claimed that she—a single mother—still understood men as heads of households. Even once she had stitched together a uniform that, though intended for a male body, fit her well enough, she remained a curiosity on base. Her novel presence led to lots of attention, and, unlike men, she had to prove herself ready for the responsibilities of being a chaplain—something her commanding officer reported she had done quite well.[32]

Admiral Elmo Zumwalt Jr. became chief of naval operations in 1970, and his policy directives, known as Z-grams, revamped the racial and gender dynamics of the navy.[33] Career military service and progressive social policy confused many onlookers, as Zumwalt himself acknowledged: "There's a good deal of indecision as to whether I am a drooling-fang militarist or a bleeding-heart liberal." In 1970, he required squadrons to appoint a minority servicemember as a special assistant for minority affairs and insisted that the navy fight housing discrimination. Two years later, he issued Z-gram 116, "Equal Opportunities and Rights for Women in the Navy," rescinding restrictions on women serving aboard ships and eliminating discriminatory promotion and assignment patterns. It also ordered the chaplain and civil engineers corps to accept applications from and commission women, "thereby opening all staff corps to women." Just as Truman used an executive order to desegregate the armed forces, so too did Zumwalt use policy prerogatives to integrate women. Eleven months after Zumwalt's Z-gram, Dianna Pohlman (Prebyterian) entered the navy chaplaincy, and Chaplain Henderson followed in the army.[34]

The incorporation of women was not always easy, as Chaplain Pohlman recalled. While she found Catholic chaplains quite supportive, perhaps, she conjectured, because priests were accustomed to working with nuns, Protestants "really had a difficult time with me . . . they had never experienced a woman colleague before." Army Chief of Chap-

lains Orris Kelly (United Methodist) reported varied responses to the inclusion of women clergy. Rank-and-file troops were "very open" to female religious leadership, but there was "some reluctance by some older, male chaplains to accept women professionally." Military culture, like civilian society, changed slowly, only tentatively accepting women as religious leaders.[35]

Yet improving the gender composition of the chaplaincy corps required more than internal command initiatives; it also needed the assistance of religious groups. Women still had to meet the education requirements of the chaplaincy, and not all faiths groups ordained women, which in turn limited the number of potential female military chaplains. In 1970, women constituted about 3 percent of American clergy, leaving the military with a tiny pool of candidates from which to recruit. Even those denominations that trained women could offer few potential chaplains to the military. The Presbyterian Church allowed women to attend seminary and become full clergy in 1956 but, prior to 1970, never graduated more than nine female ministers a year. In 1972, when the navy chaplaincy opened its doors to women, only the Reform Hebrew Union College and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College trained women as rabbis. And because nuns are not ordained like priests and are not empowered to celebrate Mass or perform sacraments, the Catholic Church could not endorse any women as chaplains.[36]

By the late 1970s, Navy Chief of Chaplains John J. O'Connor took on the task of finding more women to commission as chaplains. Charged by his country to build a chaplain corps composed of men and women, the Catholic priest implored religious groups to elevate women to positions of leadership and encourage them to enter the officer corps. To John W. Marriott, then the head of the LDS Military Relations Committee, he insisted he was "not being an alarmist" but urged faith groups to "aggressively" recruit women. He appealed to equity—in careers and among religions—noting changing social mores and benefits to religion. "In today's world, equal opportunity without regard to race or sex is a reality quickly coming into sharp focus . . . the implications for ministry under that concept is an opportunity to be grasped; a service to be rendered." Although the Catholic Church would not abide by his request, O'Connor was both priest and chaplain. His loyalties to God and country, pressed to the limit in Vietnam, required

him to move deftly between them as the navy's ranking religious officer. His was a role that demanded fidelity to faith and loyalty to the state. In asking religious groups to endorse female candidates to the chaplaincy, he sublimated his religion's doctrine to his country's needs—a move he would later reverse as archbishop of New York, where his positions on women's rights and sexuality fell in line with the Church and attracted controversy. As chief of chaplains, however, O'Connor modeled conscientious deference in setting aside Catholic preferences for the good of the service.[37]

Religious groups could fumble as they tried to meet military needs. Early in her seminary training, Bonnie Koppell noticed a recruiting poster and set her sights on the army chaplaincy. First, she had to convince the Jewish Welfare Board (JWB) to endorse her candidacy, an uncertain proposition given that no Reconstructionist rabbis sat on the committee, Orthodox Jews did not accept women rabbis, and the Conservative movement remained in heady discussions about ordaining women. To her surprise, the JWB supported her candidacy, and Koppell headed to the Chaplain Officer Basic Course. She was one of four Jews and three women in a class of 108—and the only Jewish woman. Nevertheless, she found the 4 a.m. wake-up calls, the marching, and the uniform requirements more challenging than her gender or her religious identity. Yet in 1980, on the verge of accepting her commission as a chaplain in the Army Reserves, Koppell encountered the opposition she had expected several years earlier. What "should have been a pro-forma shuffling of paperwork . . . became a major political battle" between Reform and Orthodox factions of the JWB. All Koppell could do was wait. There was nowhere to march as the limbo stretched on, with the rabbi ticking off days, then weeks, then years wondering what would happen. After seven years of equivocating, the JWB finally signed off on her endorsement, and Koppell became an army chaplain more than ten years after seeing a recruiting poster. Other female rabbis faced the same challenges, much to the dismay of Reform rabbis who felt the "Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America has taken a stand which further polarizes the Jewish community." To the Reform movement, the Orthodox block stank of double standards, in which the "mutual respect and equality" that had long characterized the JWB Chaplaincy Commission evaporated once women ascended the pulpit.[38]

The military's plea for female chaplains split the JWB's Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy and stymied seven decades of American Jewish unity promoted by interaction with the military. Rabbi Louis Bernstein asserted that he and his Orthodox compatriots had little choice, once endorsing Julie Schwartz as a navy chaplain "'was imposed on us,'" for "'Orthodox Judaism cannot accept women rabbis.'" Schwartz understood the situation through a different lens, one familiar to those immersed in the pluralistic environment of the military. From her perspective, "'we were not trying to make them bend their own principles or change their beliefs.'" Rather, she noted, the goal was "a compromise to allow me to have my principles and beliefs." While Schwartz sought a middle ground, the different Jewish movements continued to accuse one another of "shattering" communal consensus—fictive and fragile to be sure, but a consensus that endured until the military sanctioned female clergy. A more measured unity prevailed a few months later, when the commission reorganized as the JWB/Jewish Chaplains Council that was nominally amalgamated but allowed each Jewish movement to approve its own candidates for the chaplaincy, thus removing the impression that the Orthodox would endorse women as rabbis.[39]

Once in the military, female chaplains—like other minorities—found that top-down orders to integrate women moved the process forward but did not counteract resistance on the ground. Chaplain Janet Horton (Christian Science) described her experience as one of the first female army chaplains as being part of "the birth of a new idea" in which there were, inevitably, some "labor pains." For chaplains, she explained, the pushback often emanated from men who felt the American state had controverted or even commandeered religion. While her own denomination long understood women as religious leaders, male chaplains often disagreed, saying, "'God told me you shouldn't be here.'" One day a young man looked at her dress uniform, spilling over with medals for her work, and sputtered, "You can't have possibly deserved those awards," before spitting on her. Although she felt "a lot like a gas grill lighting up" and ready to explode, she turned to Mary Baker Eddy's teaching—"'If you do not handle evil in the very first instance, it will handle you in a second"—before responding calmly.[40]

Others were less sanguine about the work environment. Navy chaplain Carolyn C. Wiggins (CME) encountered women who sought her out "because they feel uncomfortable discussing certain problems with

men." But as the first female chaplain at each of her posts—including the Portsmouth Naval Hospital, aboard a submarine tender, and the Naval School of Ordnance Disposal—she had to navigate between pressure to outperform male chaplains and the need to "'downplay being the "first woman.'" Although Wiggins made her career in military ministry, she did so despite a "hostile chaplaincy" filled with men who "have difficulty accepting us as professional colleagues." Changing military culture—like shifting workplace norms across the United States—trudged along.[41] Expanding the gender and racial diversity of religious leadership set new precedents for who could sport the chaplain's insignia. In the 1970s, the cross and the tablets remained the standard emblems of the military chaplaincy. Nevertheless, the religious composition had changed—evangelical ministers and Eastern Orthodox priests increased while priests and rabbis declined. But some wondered whether a state-supported religious institution should exist at all.

Was the military chaplaincy necessary? Or, at the very least, why did the government employ clergy as chaplains? These questions pricked the minds of two Harvard law students while sitting in a constitutional law class, and four years after the fall of Saigon, Joel Katcoff and Allen Wieder decided to do something about it. After a summer's worth of Freedom of Information Act requests yielded valuable military documents, the pair spent the days before Thanksgiving 1979 furiously putting together a legal complaint. The army chaplaincy, they decided, was unconstitutional. It violated the First Amendment's prohibition on government establishment of religion. As taxpayers, they sought relief from the courts, hoping that a judge would bend the military to their will. They wanted the government to cease funding the chaplaincy and thereby dismantle the military's religious programming. Of course, servicemembers had a right to practice their faith—the Constitution also guaranteed them free exercise of religion. But Katcoff and Wieder argued that that could not occur, not fairly at least, with public money financing clergy salaries and chapels, with the military regulating chaplain recruitment and promotion, and with the state recognizing some religions while excluding others. The structured religious environment that the military had built over the twentieth century thus became a constitutional predicament.[42]

Theirs was not the only lawsuit to contest the military chaplaincy, but it was the first to make its way through the federal courts. Katcoff and Wieder undertook what several lawyers for the Department of Defense deemed an "ambitious" effort to decimate the modern military chaplaincy. They hit the military at a vulnerable moment, and their lawsuit gained far more traction than the military had hoped. Chaplain George Evans (Lutheran), who oversaw the Marine Corps chaplaincy, assured the public that religion in the military was on "'solvent constitutional grounds' because there ha[d] been military chaplains since colonial times."[43] The courts were not enamored with substituting history for constitutionality, however, and instead entertained Katcoff and Wieden's claims. The freshly minted legal duo wanted the courts to apply the "Lemon test," the three-pronged evaluation of interaction between religion and state developed in 1971, to the military chaplaincy. To pass constitutional muster, legislation needed to (1) have a secular purpose, (2) neither advance nor inhibit religion, and (3) avoid "excessive government entanglement" in religion. The army was confident that the military garrisons differed sufficiently from civilian contexts to make the Lemon test moot. But its legal team knew it would need to maneuver carefully to avert a rote application, which the chaplaincy might fail. Army Chief of Chaplains Kermit D. Johnson (United Presbyterian) was unflinching in his appraisal of *Katcoff:* it represented "the single most critical issue facing us at this time. The future of the Chaplaincy rests on the outcome of this case."[44]

The army loathed the lawsuit, but it turned to work, not despair. A shuffling roster of legal and religious manpower from the army and the Department of Justice collaborated to handle the impending trial. On March 7, 1980, the Harvard law graduates met their government antagonists in the courtroom of Judge Jacob Mishler, an efficient and scrupulous arbiter whom lawyers commended for being "down-to-earth." Less than a half year later, the judge issued his ruling. As federal taxpayers, Katcoff and Wieder had standing to sue, and a constitutional question propelled the case forward. When the government's initial effort to dismiss the case failed, Chief of Chaplains Johnson convened a strategy session at Manresa House, a Catholic retreat center on the banks of the Severn River. With a view of the Naval Academy in sight, the army contemplated its options, aided by a designated hitter from

the Army Reserves: Chaplain Israel Drazin (Jewish), an Orthodox rabbi, prolific scholar, Chaplain School lecturer, and attorney in private practice. The soft-spoken Drazin impressed the group, and the army recalled him to active duty. The litigation continued through Ronald Reagan's first term as president, first in district court and then in the Court of Appeals.[45]

Katcoff probed the "Olympian generality" of the six words that authorized military religion: "there are Chaplains in the Army." Soon after American television audiences bid farewell to the nation's best-known chaplain, M*A*S*H's Father Mulcahy, the Court of Appeals affirmed that "the primary function of the military chaplain is to engage in activities designed to meet the religious needs of a pluralistic community," a "formidable" challenge in light of the army's size, geographic distribution, and ethnic, racial, and religious diversity. The Court accepted the military's claim that "mobile, deployable" soldiers "uprooted from their home environments" and placed in stressful situations needed support that private civilian programming could not deliver. It was true, the Court conceded, that the chaplaincy would fail the Lemon test, but the chaplaincy did not operate "in a sterile vacuum." Willing to defer to military assessments on matters related to national security but cognizant of the fragility of free exercise, the Court framed "the test of permissibility" as one that weighed options against necessity. Much like the religious groups that studied the chaplaincy in Vietnam, the Court realized that the civilian chaplaincy proposed by the plaintiffs was "so inherently impractical as to border on the frivolous." Although the Appeals Court left room for further litigation, their decision stood: public funds, including the taxes of Joel Katcoff and Allen Wieden, could pay for the military chaplaincy.[46]

The court swatted away existential speculation about the chaplaincy as a state establishment of religion, but not before the litigation unleashed a bevy of scrutiny about the ability of military personnel to fully and freely exercise their religions. While *Katcoff* made its way through the courts, legislators from both parties peered in to inspect religion in the military, initially focusing on the character education program. Questions on other topics, such as the endorsing process, promotions, educational requirements, rules for retired chaplains, denominational recruiting goals, transfers between branches, physical standards, the Chaplain Candidate program (for seminarians), bud-

gets, and religious discrimination in leadership piled on. Congress used its spending power to further evaluate the work of the chaplaincy. The Defense Appropriations Bill of 1985, which was introduced in March 1984 and signed into law by President Reagan on October 19, 1984, included a section that mandated a Department of Defense study group dedicated to "examin[ing] ways to minimize the potential conflict between the interests of members of the Armed Forces in abiding by their religious tenets and the military interest in maintaining discipline." The committee needed to "make the maximum effort to ascertain the views of the broadest spectrum of religious organizations." In particular, Congress demanded that the military look outside the chaplaincy and speak to members of faith groups about their experiences in the armed forces.[47]

Like many of the twentieth-century military's efforts to assess religious toleration or accommodation, the study blended systematic surveying with haphazard investigation. After mailing questionnaires to 179 faith groups, the group received responses from about half and interviewed representatives of a select faiths. Some of the interviewees, like Floyd Robertson of the NAE and Monsignor James Markham of the Military Ordinariate, led organizations that endorsed chaplains. Others, like Edward Elson of the National Presbyterian Church or Mason LaSalle, the manager of the Christian Science Committee on Publication in DC, lived in the area and spent time in uniform. DC connections also led the military to Wali Akbar Muhammed, who was a member of the Nation of Islam and the managing editor of the *American Muslim Journal*, and Guru Sangat Kaur Khalsa, who belonged to the Sikh Dharma's National Affairs Advisors and was also the daughter of former CIA director of counterintelligence, James Angleton. Interviews with Muslims and Sikhs—the religions with which the military was least familiar and lacked chaplains—included military personnel. With all faith groups, the committee elicited feedback about existing accommodations and inquired about religious requirements in the realms of diet, dress, Sabbath observance, and medical practices. Throughout, the committee reported, it tried to ascertain what the military could do rather than what it already did. "While there was great concern over cohesion and unity," the report announced, "there was also a willingness to risk some differentiation if it was 'the right thing to do.' "[48]

At least one member of the interview team came to the project with ideas about what "the right thing" might be. Chaplain Drazin, whose work on *Katcoff* produced a victory for the military chaplaincy, was troubled by the "lack of sensitivity to allowing soldiers their religious freedom." The newly promoted brigadier general (and the first rabbi to hold that rank) questioned the two standards the military used to gauge religious requests: first, was it reasonable, and second, did military necessity allow or preclude deviations from the norm? The problem, as Drazin understood it, was that willingness to bend regulations was "arbitrary" and therefore often "infringe[d] on soldiers' rights." Ever an attorney, he suggested using the Supreme Court's compelling interest standard. Drawn from *Sherbert v. Verner*, a 1963 case about religion and unemployment compensation, this test first assessed whether state action substantially burdened an individual acting on a sincere religious belief and then required the state to demonstrate that it had a "compelling interest" and used the "least restrictive means" to accomplish its goals. Although using the compelling state interest standard required elucidating sincerity, which might require military meddling in matters of belief, Drazin argued that the armed forces already appraised the sincerity of conscientious objectors. Therefore, religious soldiers should and could be treated in a commensurate manner.[49]

The trials of faith experienced by minority religious groups motivated Drazin's work. Seventh-day Adventists represented a particularly acute concern. Even as courts-martial dwindled, Drazin learned there were over 100 cases of soldiers unable to observe their Sabbath. As Seventh-day Adventist Dennis Grier explained, inconsistent interpretations of regulations irritated church members. For over a decade, his commanding officers had accommodated his Saturday Sabbath and then suddenly, a new superior officer spurned even conversations about it, a response he deemed "unjust." He had hoped to find an administrative work-around through the chaplaincy, given his religious inclination "to obey those in authority." But absent assistance, Greer noted, "my faith also teaches me to obey God rather than man when there is a conflict of conscience." For Drazin, resolving this conflict did not demand reinventing free exercise of religion in the military so much as importing its scope from civilian life. "The military," he asserted, "should not adhere to a different standard than the government."[50]

For those faiths most in need of accommodation, however, regulatory exegesis was dangerous. If religious leaders reveled in interpreting faith to their congregations, they were less sanguine about military officials explicating policy to the American faithful. Chaplain Abraham Avreck (Jewish) identified the logical shortcoming that plagued the compelling interest standard: it relied on human authority. Who, after all, determined what counted as a compelling state interest? Asked to consider how he would react to an officer ordering a soldier to violate the Sabbath due to a compelling state interest, the retired chaplain said he would weigh the evidence, ask why it was compelling, and elicit the repercussions of participating or retreating. "If I felt that he had to go, I would tell him to go," the rabbi testified. But if there was no compelling interest or a feasible alternative existed, Avreck insisted, "I would do my utmost to tell him or to try, if I were in a position, to make other arrangements." Despite this imperfect balancing, the compelling interest standard nevertheless resonated with many religious leaders, including those who rarely experienced the collision between religious doctrine and military conformity. For Monsignor Markham, a reasonableness standard yielded "arbitrary" decisions, whereas a compelling interest standard pressured commanders to avoid badgering religious people. Elson, whose parishioners at the National Presbyterian Church had once included FBI Director John Edgar Hoover and President Dwight D. Eisenhower, likewise focused on the problem of command discretion, noting that there are "a lot of unreasonable people in the world."[51]

Interviews created opportunities for the military to engage in religious fact-finding and offered denominations an occasion to distinguish and justify their religious practices. Thus, Christian Scientists explained that, within the military context, their church took a pragmatic approach to matters like vaccinations. They recognized that military needs, particularly rapid deployment to areas with endemic disease, might require vaccines as a public health measure. Former navy pilot Mason LaSalle noted he could understand why "a state of readiness" demanded ensuring that Christian Scientists were "not a hazard." They could be flexible, in other words, and the church affirmed that their religion valued both authority and cooperation. Christian Scientists also used the interview to educate, teaching the American state who they were and who they were not. Specifically, Christian

Scientists distinguished their faith healing from that of Pentecostals, and they wanted the military to appreciate the difference. A memo further clarified that "the Christian Science church does not take an arbitrary, dogmatic position towards doctors characteristic of so many involved in faith healing." Christian Scientists were, their representatives asserted, a reasonable people, ready to collaborate with the military.[52]

The NAE's Floyd Robertson similarly used the interview to discredit allegations of prohibited proselytizing by evangelicals. Although some considered their efforts "to win others to Jesus Christ" a violation of military policy, he insisted on "a distinction between proselytizing and evangelism." Lest this seem like mere word play, he acknowledged the difference was difficult to detect. Evangelism, Robertson explained, relied on persuasion; proselytizing, in contrast, used coercion. A poor grasp of evangelical praxis therefore accounted for the criticism, but that, he insisted, could be rectified without altering regulations. When Monsignor Markham replied that Catholics found the policy reasonable because "Catholics are not proselytizers in the active sense," he obliquely hinted that Robertson's interpretation of both evangelism and military regulations may have been less common than evangelicals presumed (or desired).[53]

The most commonly raised concerns, however, centered on the military's unbending insistence on the appearance of uniform bodies. As in the 1950s, the dress code's prohibition of beards and head coverings, such as religiously mandated turbans (for Sikhs) and yarmulkes (for Jews), remained a point of contention. Although the military experimented with allowing beards in the 1970s, by the early 1980s, it revoked the more liberal policy. In the name of "professionalism," all beards—religiously motivated or not—became verboten. Sikhs found themselves on a roller coaster careening between exemptions that allowed their religious praxis and enforcement that interfered with serving God and country simultaneously. The consequences of erratic accommodation produced a theological problem because, as Guru Sangat Kaur Khalsa remarked, "as American citizens, we believe in our freedom of religion and as Sikhs, we believe in serving our country." In fact, soldiering was itself a longstanding Sikh tradition, and Staff Sergeant Krosen enlisted in the army (instead of the navy) because it appeared to allow men to maintain beards as necessary. His experience in Special Forces dem-

onstrated that beard-wearing Sikhs provided a tactical advantage to the U.S. in the Middle East because they could blend in. Such assurances fell flat, as the military worried that insincere or fake Sikhs might try to take advantage of a more comprehensive grooming exemption. That the American Sikh community could ascertain the difference between genuine and fraudulent community members seemed to mean little, perhaps because a parallel interview with American Muslims offered a more lenient sensibility, one that the military might have preferred to apply to all faiths. Islamic teachings encouraged beards, but the Muslim leaders the military spoke to in the 1980s minimized the importance of facial hair. They classified it as an expression of personal commitment, not a religious requirement—which made sense for clean-shaven members of the NOI. There was no reason, Waki Akbar Muhammed explained, "for us to take a chance on losing credits with the military or disturb, disrupting procedures of the military just to have them accommodate us for the wearing of a beard." He would, of course, prefer that the armed forces allow those who wanted to, but demanding permission was "extreme."[54]

Yet the religious moderate-extreme spectrum was imprecise and thus prone to generating slippery slope concerns. The military prided itself on conformity and uniform cohesiveness, which turbans and yarmulkes seemed to inhibit. Even though yarmulkes were, as Monsignor Markham noted, prevalent and unobtrusive in his home, New York City, and even though Protestants likewise had "no objection to somebody wearing his yarmulke if he wants one with his breakfast," the military still brooded over the head covering as a potential spectacle. Would a camouflage yarmulke suffice? Would a yarmulke emblazoned with the Marine Corps insignia be ok? Chaplain Avreck assured the study group that any aesthetic choice would be fine. For Jews, "a covering is a covering," whether a military-issue hat or a baseball cap. Looking to the broader Jewish world, Avreck reminded American military leaders that the Israeli Defense Forces allowed, but did not require, head coverings without disrupting other dress code requirements. Anticipating the objection that, like a beard exemption for Sikhs, a yarmulke exception for Jews might create a cascade of requests, the JWB's Rabbi David Lapp commented, "a rash of everybody putting on a yarmulke" was unlikely. Instead, he argued for allowing yarmulkes as a statement of goodwill, suggesting that yarmulke-wearing

soldiers would appreciate the dispensation because it indicated that they had been "accepted in spite of" their minority faith.[55]

While Drazin and other military leaders focused on the appropriate legal standard for religious accommodations, others were more concerned with equity. Muslims, cognizant of their minority status, requested opportunities for daily worship, alternatives to pork, and recognition of the obligations to fast during Ramadan. But more than any particular provision, they wanted fairness. Specifically, "whatever is allowed for any other group should be allowed for us . . . if members of the Jewish faith are allowed special conditions for their observances or holidays, then we would like the same consideration." It was less Muslim specificity and more religious equality that mattered. For as Wali Akbar Muhammed explained, the military needed to understand that his faith contributed to his national identity. No matter their origin—immigrant or native-born, Islam or the Nation of Islam—Muslims who lived in the United States, he argued, "are part and parcel American Muslims." Muhammed charged the military with wielding its power for the good of the state, religion, and American society. Institutionally accommodating Muslim needs would "give a broader perspective to the private sector" and encourage more religious toleration and equality across American life. The religious needs of the American faithful varied, but a desire for fairness, not neutrality, united their requests.[56]

The resulting report assimilated some recommendations but resisted others. It justified new suggestions on the grounds that "a detailed and inclusive command religious program is a vital element in all military units." The devil, of course, squirmed in the details. Granting time for short periods of religious worship rarely impeded military performance, and most dietary needs could be partially accommodated without significant alteration to regular kitchen procedures. In contrast, permitting exemptions to standard medical procedures would be reckless and allowing deviation from the uniform standards polarizing. Religious conflict was, to some degree, inevitable, but most American religious groups tempered their standards in the military environment. This, from the study's perspective, was laudable and presented the military with a corollary opportunity to resolve discord through administrative mediation instead of legal battles. Most tangibly, the report recommended revising regulations to reflect the ac-

ceptability of a non-Sunday Sabbath, exploring the possibility of combat rations that better met a variety of religious diets, and allowing chaplains to wear "religious accouterments with the uniform" while on duty. More amorphously, they suggested that the Department of Defense issue a comprehensive statement about the accommodation of religious practices, create a curriculum that taught personnel and officers about a wider variety of faith traditions, and better inform recruits about the potential tension between religious and military requirements. Despite repeated conversations with a number of faith groups that highlighted the potential benefits of unclenching the tight grip on uniform dress, the committee did not flinch: "visible or otherwise apparent exceptions to military uniform and appearance standards have a significant adverse impact on cohesion, discipline, and military effectiveness."[57]

A few months after the study issued its report, the Department of Defense issued Directive 1300.17. It ordered commanders to approve "requests for accommodation of religious practices . . . when accommodation will not have an adverse impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, standards, or discipline." This wide-ranging instruction attempted to smooth over extraordinarily uneven free-exercise rights in the military as religious pluralism accelerated in the late twentieth century. Yet the emphasis on readiness, cohesion, and discipline provided an easy out. Neither a beard nor a turban nor a yarmulke could pass military muster in 1985, but the renewed struggle to bind religious faith and military duty might have evaded scrutiny had two law students not questioned the constitutionality of the chaplaincy.[58]

As the study group learned, the religious needs of the American military extended far beyond Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, and the chaplaincy began moving away from its tri-faith architecture. A rhetorical shift replaced "three major faith groups" with "four distinctive faith groups" (Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and Orthodox), thus recognizing—and counting—Orthodox Christians as they had been advocating for decades. "Distinctive" soon took on a life of its own, as a 1987 guide to "denominational issues" defined "distinctive faith groups" as those "desiring to worship separately in denominational services," which enabled numerous evangelical Protestants to separate themselves from the longstanding tradition of "General Protestant" worship.

Nevertheless, in 1987, the Department of Defense set "a historic precedent" by finally recognizing "a group outside the Judeo-Christian tradition" when it designated the Buddhist Churches of America an official endorsing agency. (It would take seventeen years for the navy to commission Jeanette Shin as the military's first Buddhist chaplain.) Around the same time, the chaplaincy abandoned the denominational quotas that had structured chaplain recruitment since World War II—only loosely enforced and often unachieved. Finally, it took almost eighty years to expand religious leadership beyond Christians and Jews, but in 1993, after the military accepted the Islamic Society of North America's endorsement, Imam Abdul-Rasheed Muhammad pinned a crescent to his collar as the nation's first Muslim chaplain.[59]

Unlike in 1917, adding a crescent proved simple and uncontroversial, but commissioning Chaplain Muhammad rendered the Army Chaplain Corps Regimental Crest—which included only a cross and a tablet—incomplete. The army could have appended a crescent and subsequently supplemented it with additional religious symbols. However, Chief of Chaplains Matthew Zimmerman (National Baptist) decided to pursue an alternative option. Two decades after the young Protestant chaplain led a memorial service for Malcolm X and taught race relations workshops in Germany, Zimmerman became the first African American chief of chaplains. The lessons from his early years stuck with him. His time in Europe underscored "the need for diversity in the chaplaincy." As chief of chaplains, he constructed a more capacious and robust vision, one that included Muslims, promoted more women, and increased racial and ethnic diversity. The new corps crest reflected these priorities. It replaced religiously specific emblems with a white dove holding an olive branch atop an open book—a space in which each soldier and each chaplain could place God's word. The NAE was nonplussed, displeased that the chaplaincy's insignia would no longer bear the cross. But to be serious about its recently articulated commitment to "Spiritual Fitness," the military had to expand its worldview to a greater multitude of religions—symbolically and literally. Almost a quarter century after Elmo Zumwalt insisted on equal opportunity in the navy, Chief of Chaplains Zimmerman demanded the army chaplaincy do so as well. "America's Army is ministered to by a chaplaincy that is multi-faith, ethnically and religiously diverse, and supportive of the soldier's right to free exercise of religion.

We must be a model of equal opportunity," he stated, because "the denial of equal opportunity to any one diminishes the worth of the whole Army, and ultimately the Nation." Simultaneously descriptive and aspirational, Zimmerman steered the chaplaincy toward the twenty-first century.[60]