

FROM THE EDITOR

Transformed and Transforming

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I am very pleased to be a part of the life of this publication during this pivotal moment of transformation. We are now the *Military Chaplaincy Review* and, as Chaplain (Major General) Green's reflection notes, this shift reflects an important connection to our history and bold step into the future. Our vision is that through the *Military Chaplaincy Review* the U.S. Army hosts the professional conversation around the theory and practice of military chaplaincy. No other publication exists with this mission.

The *Review* is an Army branch publication with deep interests in Army-specific conversations, and we want to invite to our table anyone thinking deeply about military chaplaincy, especially from the joint force, in allied and partner nation forces, and in the academy. The history, traditions, and professionalization of military chaplains looks different even across the branches of the U.S. military. Chaplains from every nation face very similar kinds of questions around what it means for religious leaders to serve in uniform and how to do it well. In that spirit, I believe the theme for this issue—"Military Chaplains and the Civil-Military Divide"—is broadly relevant, even as it lands in a particular way in this moment in the life of the U.S.

In the U.S., the civil-military divide has widened in recent years. Fewer and fewer civilians have meaningful experiences with or connections to the military. There is an erosion of trust and understanding between civil society and the armed forces. Military chaplains fully embody identities that are both wholly within the civil sphere and wholly within the military sphere. Chaplains are at the intersection of religious institutions and the state. As religious leaders and commissioned officers, they embody the character and demands of both their sending religious institutions and the military. This potentially creates tensions, contradictions, moral dilemmas, and theological problems that exacerbate pre-existing social tensions. The unique position of chaplains also creates the opportunity for new possibilities.

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This issue examines civil-military questions across three research articles, one best practice article, and in the forum. In doing so, it speaks to both the challenges and possibilities. The issue begins at the beginning or at least at the beginning of chaplaincy in the U.S. by looking back to our nation's founding with John Brinsfield's article: "Points of Light: The Continental Army Chaplaincy and Civil Relations." (I would be remiss if I didn't mention here that then Chaplain (Captain) Brinsfield's scholarship on chaplains during the Revolutionary War first appeared in the pages of *Military Chaplains' Review* fifty years ago in the summer of 1974. It is an honor to have him writing for us for our inaugural issue of *Military Chaplaincy Review*) In "Missiologiical Adaptation as a Framework for United States Army Chaplains in Civil-Military Engagement," Jason Palmer offers chaplains an approach drawn from missiology for both understanding and engaging in civ-mil questions. In "Sacred Speech Development: A Shared Responsibility," Chaplain (Major) Daniel Werho argues that providing professional military education for chaplains to perform religious functions does raise important civ-mil questions, civilian endorsers and military educators both have responsibilities in the formation of chaplains for their work in uniform, especially when it comes to sacred speech.

Our forum tackles the challenges posed by the civil-military divide in conversation with the work of Susan Bryant, Brett Swaney, Heidi Urben in their article ["From Citizen Soldier to Secular Saint: The Societal Implications of Military Exceptionalism."](#) Trent Lythgoe, Katherine Voyles, and Chaplain (Major) Jordan Henricks engage in a lively and much needed dialogue around why this particular moment in civ-mil relations is so fraught.

We also have an important research article by Chaplain (Major) Matthew McCraney on "Challenging Assumptions about Disability and Special Needs in Chapel Communities." His work is theologically rich and pastorally sensitive and demands our attention. We have a best practice article from Chaplain (Major) Michael Voudouris proposing a set of practices for spiritually surviving the challenges of large-scale combat operations entitled, "Chaplain Spiritual Survivability in Large Scale Combat Operations."

Our book review section represents an embarrassment of riches with reviews across a wide range of recent books. If you are interested to write for the *Review* and don't know where to start, I encourage you to consider writing a book review. Please reach out to me, especially if you need help finding a potential book to review.

I am immensely grateful to each of our contributors, our reviewers, the Advisory Board, and Graduate School and USA-IRL senior leaders. The *Review* only happens because of their important work.

One last note. I am pleased to announce that the *Review* is moving to rolling publication. The articles, forum, and book reviews from November 2024 issue will roll out online week by week. Look for hard copies of the entire issue to come from your Religious Support Office in the near future.

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