CRITICAL THINKING AND ARMY RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP:
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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14. ABSTRACT

The United States Army is changing and so must the chaplaincy. At the heart of the ongoing Army transformation is a critical thinking (CT) approach to problem solving and decision-making. Given the many complex choices Army leaders face on a daily basis, the Army considers CT to be an essential leader skill, and requires its leaders to become critical thinkers. Consequently, to remain relevant in a 'critical thinking Army,' it is essential that chaplains need not only be educated on CT, but also that they understand what it portends for their religious leadership of the Army. Particularly as chaplains face new challenges and assume new responsibilities, some outside the area of their traditional expertise or training, CT skills will become even more crucial. Its shortcomings notwithstanding, CT is vital to Army religious leadership. However, to realize the value of CT to religious leadership in the pluralistic environment of the Army will require a broader understanding of religious ministry. Consequently, chaplains must overcome certain intellectual, theological, and psychological (emotional) challenges to foster coherent intellectual and theological alignment of their beliefs and ministerial practices. This study explores the relevance of CT to Army religious leadership by examining its meaning, characteristics, purpose, and requirements; outlining its strengths and weaknesses; and analyzing the challenges it poses, as well as its utility, for Army religious leadership.

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ABSTRACT

CRITICAL THINKING AND RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP: CHALLENGES AND
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The writing of a thesis is always a team effort between the student and the thesis committee. I am, therefore, indebted to the members of my thesis committee, Dr. Scott Borderud, my colleague Chaplain (MAJ) Crane, and Mr. Doug Stephensen for accepting the task of traveling this journey with me in spite of the many demands on their time. Their insights and advice were invaluable. I benefitted immensely from their experience.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

CH-BOLC   Chaplain Basic Officer Leader Course

CT   Critical Thinking

C4   Chaplain Captain Career Course

FM   Army Field Manual

USACHCS   United States Army Chaplain and School

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> There is another form of temptation, even more fraught with danger. This is the disease of curiosity. . . . It is this which drives us to try and discover the secrets of nature, those secrets which are beyond our understanding, which can avail us nothing and which man should not wish to learn.
> — Augustine (354 430 A.D.),
> *The Closing of the Western Mind*

Background

The Army requires its leaders to become critical thinkers. Given the many complex choices Army leaders face on a daily basis, the Army considers critical thinking (hereafter CT) to be an essential leadership skill.[1] In order to develop critically thinking leaders, the Army has incorporated CT as a cornerstone of its professional education. At the Army Command General and Staff College, the "mantra" for teaching CT is "how" and not "what" to think. The argument is that the "how" encourages active, independent thinking and creative ideas, and the "what" stifles them. Accordingly, the Army assumes that CT will lead to adaptive, self-aware, and agile leadership. Ultimately, the belief is that CT will help Army leaders to succeed in the fluid, complex, and uncertain operational environment in which they will be called to lead.

In response to the Army's initiative, as an Army educational institution, the United States Army Chaplain Center and School (USACHCS) has embraced CT as part of its educational philosophy and introduced a block of instruction on CT in the Chaplain Captain Career Course (C4) to expose its chaplains to intellectual developments in the Army. As Chaplain Pete Mueller[2] has noted, "The premise underlying adding CT to our C4 Course was the Army [sic] emphasis on agile leadership . . . because so much is being

required of Army officers in general, and our young chaplains in particular, we felt it was important to emphasize "how" to think over "what" to think."[3] As both religious leaders and staff officers, USACHCS believes chaplains need not only be educated on CT, but they also must understand what it portends for their ministerial leadership in the Army, particularly in view of their capacity as advisors to commanders and leaders on matters of religion, morale, and morality. Nonetheless, since its introduction, and given chaplains varying religious and theological worldviews, the course has elicited strong reservations among some C4 students.

<div align="center">Problem</div>

Given its emphasis on rational standards of judgment, some chaplains find in CT a secular humanistic or even "liberal" agenda against religious expressions and beliefs. This reservation, one would safely argue, reflects more of the ongoing political debate about the place of religion in the public sphere[4] than about CT as an intellectual process for decision-making. However, another concern of chaplains regarding CT, which is the interest of this study, is the question of suitability. Is the CT model appropriate for religious leadership?

The fundamental issue regarding this question is whether matters of faith are subject to rational assessment. Given CT's uncompromising stand on reason and logic, the overarching concern of these chaplains is whether the CT model is consistent with a religious framework rooted in certain "incontrovertible" religious beliefs. In other words, is it possible for chaplains, given their belief in the truth of divine revelation, to embrace the rational epistemology of CT?[5]

<div align="center">2</div>

Central to this issue is the reason-faith debate. This subject has a long history in Western philosophy, and for centuries, occupied great philosophical and theological minds. However, as a modern science, CT raises the discourse to a different level. Unlike the old metaphysical debate, which was primarily concerned with proving the existence of God, the interest of CT is the nature of thinking. Specifically, it is concerned with how people's beliefs and assumptions inform how they judge and order the world around them.

Therefore, as an analytical and evaluative process whose quest is to establish truth and make informed judgment, the goal of CT is to take control or minimize the influence of faulty beliefs and unwarranted assumptions on thought process. It maintains that for a decision or action to be justified,[6] it must meet certain standards of rational inquiry.[7] To that end, CT contends that no claim or source of claim–human or divine–is above rational curiosity. Accordingly, to think critically one must be able, not only to rationally prove the grounds of one's truth-claims, beliefs, facts, and assumptions, but also ensure that one's beliefs do not influence one's judgment unfairly.

Unlike the old debate, CT is not an armchair philosophy. For chaplains, it presents practical theological and ethical challenges. Chaplains' leadership revolves around the message of faith, which defines their professional identity. Therefore, underlying these challenges are certain deep-seated religious beliefs within the Abrahamic faith traditions, which dominate the ranks of the Army Chaplaincy. For instance, central to the epistemic worldview of chaplains is the belief in a supreme Deity who is the source of eternal truth. Chaplains believe in the revelatory truth of their scripture, which underscores fidelity to

their inerrancy, their infallibility, as well as their ultimate authority as a guide to belief and action.

Therefore, for most, if not all chaplains, their religious beliefs are based upon sacred, incontrovertible truths. These truth-claims are the basis of their religious leadership, and are pivotal to their thought process. They serve as the cornerstone of chaplains' decisions and actions, and are the important influences that inform how they see themselves in relation to others. As such, chaplains' truth-claims are determinative of how they understand their ministerial leadership to those within and without their faith traditions. Ultimately, chaplains' ministry begins and ends with their religious beliefs.

Understandably, therefore, some chaplains have serious concerns regarding the CT process, because it raises serious questions for them. For instance, do religious beliefs have a role in the CT process? Likewise, should chaplains' submit entrenched religious beliefs (especially their assumptions) to standards of rational analysis or even suspend them in their decision-making, as CT may require? Faith, Chaplain Mueller suggests, "resists easily agreeing to be "neutral" and completely pluralistic like philosophy."[8] Should or could chaplains entertain the possibility that beliefs that long have defined the core of their being and professional identity be faulty? Are there risks to such an endeavor? As Peter Facione has asked, "Can we reconcile our natural inclination toward reasoning with the risks that cherished beliefs may be discovered to be unfounded?"[9] In short, is such a rationalistic posture conducive to the expression of religious beliefs, and for that matter, helpful to chaplains' ministry? On the other hand, could there also be benefits to thinking critically?

Indeed, nowhere is the challenge of CT to chaplains' religious leadership more acute than in how chaplains' define their ministerial responsibility toward the "Other" within the religious and cultural diversity of the Army. It is no coincidence that discussions on pluralism at the Chaplain Basic Officer Leader Course (CH-BOLC) frequently generate strong feelings among new chaplains and chaplain candidates.[10] While legal and theological concerns often dominate debates on religious pluralism within the chaplaincy, at its root is the issue of "fairness," a vital concern of CT. The issue here concerns how chaplains treat those outside of their faith traditions. What role should chaplains' religious beliefs play in determining the rights of the "Other?" Indeed, are chaplains' religious beliefs an "objective" barometer for judging the legal rights of the Other within a pluralistic environment?

Most importantly, how does one define fairness in the context of opposing truth-claims? Could chaplains be fair to soldiers of other faith traditions without being unfair to their own need to share the "redeptive" truth of their calling? Stated differently, is "fairness" possible without tinkering, in some fashion, with one's core religious beliefs? For instance, Scott Borderud,[11] a retired Army chaplain, has observed that while military commanders look to their chaplains for expertise in theology, they nonetheless expect them in unit ministry to withhold theological judgments that would seem exclusive of other faith traditions and cultures.[12] Is that CT?

This study finds its justification in the many questions raised in this chapter. It argues that how chaplains address these questions will determine how they approach CT, and the role it plays in their ministry to the Army family, as well as in their staff officer role.

Primary Research Question

This study seeks to answer this question: Does the Army's push for its leaders to become critical thinkers undermine chaplains' religious leadership and calling?

Secondary Research Questions

In order to do justice to the primary research question, the study must also explore the following secondary questions.

1. First, the study must answer the question: What is CT?

2. Based on the response to the first secondary question, the study must determine: Are the requirements of CT conducive to the dictates of religious faith, which underlie chaplains' religious leadership?

3. Finally, this study must answer the question: Do the issues that CT raises for religious leadership in the Army make this process unsuitable to their ministry?

Assumption

This study assumes that some chaplains' negative view of CT is due to its secular outlook to reality. The study also assumes that chaplains' dogmatic presuppositions interfere with their ability to think critically. The study further supposes that the future relevance of chaplains' as staff officers will hinge on their willingness and ability to think critically.

Definition of Terms

Abrahamic Religions. The word "monotheism" has almost become synonymous with the three major religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, which are currently the only faith groups represented in the active Army Chaplaincy.[13] However, the seeming

monopoly of these religions over the term, and its theological implication among students of religion and apologetics is far from settled. For instance, deism, and to some extent monism, are considered varieties of monotheism. This study, therefore, uses the phrase Abrahamic religions in reference to the three major religions.

Argument. Argument is a claim (or a combination of claims) that one puts forth to support a judgment or an opinion.[14]

Assumption. Assumption is essentially accepting an idea without grounds to prove it.[15]

Belief. Belief and faith are often used synonymously.[16] However, there is a subtle difference between the two terms. Belief is a state of mind and is used in this study to refer to a judgment that something is true, which could be either strong or weak depending on the reasons that support it.[17]

Chaplain. This is historically a Christian concept of religious leadership, and traces its root to the humanitarian act of a fourth century Roman soldier, Martin of Tours. Martin, who became the patron saint of Medieval French Kings, is reported to have cut his cloak into two to share with a shivering beggar he met in a cold winter. This act would lead to his sainthood in the Catholic Church,[18] and eventually define the "caring" character of the modern chaplaincy. The word "chaplain" is the English rendition of "chapellain" from Old French. Chapellain comes from capellanus, which is the name of the custodial priest who carried the "capella," the "supposed" old cloak of St. Martin, into battle as a symbol of God's presence.[19] Given the pluralistic makeup of western society today, however, the term has become a generic or ecumenical term for religious leadership within public institutions like the military, the prisons, colleges, and hospitals.

The term is used in this study in its institutional sense to refer to the officially sanctioned and commissioned officers who serve as religious leaders in the Army, irrespective of chaplains religious affiliations.

Critical Thinking. The Army defines CT as "the purposeful, self-regulating judgment that includes interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference that leaders use to solve problems."[20] This definition guides this study's treatment of the subject.

Faith. Faith is a response to the Divine, and combines both the heart and the mind. Thus, faith is based on both rational and revelatory "truth." Belief undergirds faith because people place their faith in what they believe to be the truth. Therefore, this study views faith as both a cognitive and emotive expression of confidence in and commitment to the truth of one's religious beliefs in word, action or both.

Ministry. Like most religious concepts, ministry is a term that carries a number of theological nuances, depending on a chaplain's religious tradition or denomination. In this study, ministry refers to the professional activities of Army chaplains in their dual capacities as religious leaders and staff officers.

Opinion. A major concern of CT is how opinions influence decisions and actions. In this study, opinion refers to judgment or positions that one assumes on issues in the absence of clear evidence or where truth is difficult to ascertain.[21]

Other. Chaplains have functional responsibility to facilitate soldiers'[22] free exercise right. In that regard, chaplains deal with people both from within and without their own religious tradition. The study uses "Other" to refer to soldiers whose beliefs, values, philosophy, or way of life diverge fundamentally from a chaplain's espoused religious beliefs and values.

Religion and Spirituality. For most people of faith, spirituality is a necessary component of religion, and they live and express spirituality through the rituals and teachings of their faith traditions. However, in recent times, attempts have been made to distinguish religion from spirituality.[23] Some have argued that spirituality transcends religion, and that people can be spiritual without being religious. This study makes no attempt to distinguish between the two terms with regard to the leadership role of chaplains, as it considers spirituality intrinsic to religion. As such, chaplains' religious leadership is inclusive of spiritual guidance.

Religious Calling. Calling, as a religious concept, means different things within and among religious traditions.[24] For the purpose of this study, the word "calling" refers specifically to the motivation that undergirds the professional activities of religious leaders. This motivation is defined and informed by a person's understanding of his relationship with God within the teachings of his religious tradition.

Religious Pluralism. There are many definitions of religious pluralism. Some associate the concept with cultural relativism, the idea that various spiritual paths are capable of leading their followers to salvation.[25] Others consider it synonymous with cultural and religious diversity, the fact that society is made up of people of different cultural and religious tradition.[26] Yet, others use the term to imply inter-religious dialogue where people from different religious backgrounds attempt to bridge differences between their respective religions. Often the purpose of such dialogues is to foster understanding across religious lines, and are not opportunities for proselytizing or convincing others of the truth-claims of individual faith traditions.[27] Pluralism is also

9

used to imply "the need for organizations to accommodate the diverse religious beliefs of their workers."[28]

This study uses pluralism in the sense of the legal right of soldiers[29] to hold diverse religious beliefs or none at all, and the regulatory responsibility of military commanders to accommodate these beliefs within the allowance of their missions. Chaplains, as staff officers, are the commanders' representatives in facilitating soldiers' right to free exercise of their beliefs.

Religious Worldview. A worldview is a combination of values, beliefs, and attitudes that define and inform how one views reality.[30] Religious worldview in this study refers to a worldview informed by religious beliefs and values.

Secular. The study uses secular to imply an epistemic outlook to life that is purely rational and logical without consideration to religion.

Secularism. Secularism is a political doctrine that demands the separation of religion from government institutions.[31] Secularists seek to prevent the influence of religion on ethical standards and conduct.

Use of Pronouns. This study recognizes the composition of the Chaplain Corps of both male and female chaplains. Therefore, the study's use of male gender pronouns is strictly neutral, and only intended to facilitate flow of expressions. It is not meant to be discriminatory or sexist in any sense whatsoever.

Values. Values embody deeply held beliefs about certain conducts people find preferable to others.[32] Values serve as the moral and ethical basis for behavior. People acquire values from many sources including religion, culture, family, as well as from association with professional and social organizations.[33] Because of the strong link

between religion and culture, people sometimes find it difficult to differentiate one from the other.

<p style="text-align:center">Limitations</p>

There are three limitations to this study. First, the context of the study is the religious leadership of Army chaplains. Another limitation is that discussion on religion is restricted to the Abrahamic faith traditions, which are the three religions currently represented in the active Army chaplaincy, as already noted. Lastly, the researcher brings two biases to the study. First, given the subject of the study, the researcher has a professional interest in the outcome of the study. Consequently, he recognizes that could potentially interfere with the study's analysis and evaluations. Secondly, in addition to the teachings and the traditions of the researcher's own religious beliefs, the study will also discuss teachings of religious traditions outside of the researcher's. Thus, the researcher's objectivity will be a major challenge in conducting the study.

To forestall those biases, the thesis committee includes both active and retired Army chaplains outside the researcher's faith tradition to hedge against any potential religious bias. Likewise, the researcher will engage other Army chaplains as independent readers to achieve the same purpose. Additionally, the thesis committee includes a non-chaplain faculty member to circumvent professional, chaplain bias. Finally, the study's primary aim is to contribute to the professional and intellectual growth of the chaplaincy. Accordingly, to stand the test of time, the study must strive to be professional, diligent, and open-minded.

Delimitations

The scope of this study is the relationship of CT to religious beliefs as it pertains to the religious leadership role of chaplains in the Army. To have a thorough understanding of CT, the study will explore the meaning of CT, its characteristics, purpose, requirements, strengths and weaknesses. It will also explore CT's relationship with secularism to establish their similarities and differences. Further, the study will explore how CT relates to religious beliefs and examine the challenges that relationship poses for chaplains' religious leadership in the Army.

When examining religious concepts, the study will draw on common or identical concepts among the three Abrahamic traditions. Except where necessary for elucidation, it is not within the scope of this study to delve into polemical theological differences and truth claims of these religions. Nor will this study engage in polemical discussion of secularism. While this work does not intend to be the final word on the theological and ethical issues CT poses for religious leadership in the Army nor seek to minimize their enormity, nonetheless, it seeks to provoke thoughtful discussion about chaplains' reasoning skills and how those abilities inform the quality of religious leadership within the religious and cultural diversity of the Army.

Significance

The Army is transforming and so must the chaplaincy to stay relevant. At the heart of the ongoing Army's transformation is a rational approach to problem solving and decision-making. In this regard, Army chaplains, on any given day, make decisions or influence, in their advisory capacity, the decisions of Army leaders, soldiers, or family members. Some of the issues chaplains deal with on a daily basis involve deeply-held

beliefs and values, often with life changing implications for soldiers and their families. These issues challenge chaplains' self-identity, as well as their sense of fairness and objectivity.

Therefore, not only is it imperative that chaplains have heightened awareness of the "voices" that inform how they see themselves in relation to others, but also that they have an effective means by which these "voices" are filtered for possible inconsistencies with espoused religious values and principles. Most importantly, as religious leaders, chaplains must be concerned about the effects of their actions (or inactions) beyond themselves, particularly when they involve the rights of others. To realize this awareness, this study asserts that an appreciable understanding of the relationship between CT and religious beliefs is necessary.

To remain relevant in a "critical thinking Army," it is essential that chaplains understand what CT is about and what that portends for their religious leadership in the Army. If they are to make any positive impact on their commanders and officers, they must be able to speak their "language," follow their thinking processes, and exhibit CT skills. That is what the Army expects of them. The question, however, is whether CT would be a painful experience and an anathema to religious leadership in the Army or a journey of self-discovery? As the Army pushes its leaders to become critical thinkers, it seems that the balancing act for chaplains would be to remain religious without being uncritical in thought, and to be critical in thought without being unfaithful to calling. However, is that possible? This is the question the study seeks to answer.

Together with the introductory chapter, the thesis comprises five chapters. In recent times, an enormous amount of literature has surfaced on CT. While a great amount

of these materials relates to the role of CT in higher education, there is also an appreciable interest in CT outside the classroom. The next chapter provides a general overview of the state of literature in the field of CT. It looks at the issues engendered by the secondary questions, explores trends and patterns, as well as the gaps within them. Chapter 3 discusses the steps taken to gather research information, and the criteria employed to answer research questions. Chapter 4 analyzes the secondary questions identified in the introductory chapter and answers the primary question posed by the study. Chapter 5 summarizes the analysis of chapter 4, communicates the study's result, and provides recommendation on encouraging critical thought within the Army chaplaincy.

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[1]Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 5-0, *Army Planning and Orders Production* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, January 2005), 2-2.

[2]As the former Chief of Officer Training Directorate at USACHCS, Chaplain Mueller was instrumental in introducing CT in C4.

[3]Pete Mueller, Electronic Correspondence with Author, March 11, 2009.

[4]See, for instance, Stephen L. Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion* (New York: Anchor Books, 1994); Nader Hashemi, *Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[5]Vincent Ryan Ruggiero, *Beyond Feelings: A Guide to Critical Thinking,* 7th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 17.

[6]"Justified" implies that a belief or an action is based on both accurate and reliable information.

[7]Robert Todd Carroll, *Becoming a Critical Thinker: A Guide for the New Millennium* (Boston, MA: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2000), 4.

[8]Mueller.

[9]Peter A. Facione, "Reasoned Judgment and Revelation: The Relation of Critical Thinking and Bible Study," *Insight Assessment,* http://insightassessment.com/pdf_files/ABS_paper_revised.pdf (accessed May 15, 2009).

[10]While serving as an instructor at USACHCS, the researcher had many animated class discussions with students, both in the Chaplain Basic Officer Leader Course (CHBOLC) and C4, on issues dealing with CT and religious beliefs.

[11]Dr. Scott Borderud was the chair of the committee that supervised this study.

[12]Scott B. Borderud, "Pro Deo et Patria," *The Army Chaplaincy* (Spring-Summer, 2008): 91.

[13]Recently the Army commissioned its first and only Buddhist chaplain in the Tennessee National Guard.

[14]Ibid., 75.

[15]Ruggiero, 94.

[16]Solomon Schimmel, *The Tenacity of Unreasonable Beliefs: Fundamentalism and the Fear of Truth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 17.

[17]David L. Lipe, "Faith and Knowledge," Apologetics Press. http://www.apologeticsPress.org (accessed August 14, 2009), 2.

[18]Israel Drazin and Cecil B. Currey, *For God and Country: The History of a Constitutional Challenge to the Army Chaplaincy* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 1995), 4.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Department of the Army, FM 5-0.

[21]Robin Wood, "Critical Thinking," 2002, http:www.robinwood.com/Democracy/GeneralEssays/CriticalThinking.pdf (accessed May 16, 2009).

[22]This also includes soldiers' families, military retirees, and eligible Department of Defense employees.

[23]Larry VandeCreek and Laurel Burton, ed., "Professional Chaplaincy: Its Role and Importance in Healthcare," *The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education* (2001): 2.

[24]Timothy Mallard, ed., "Consider the Call: A Vocation Resource for Army Chaplains, Chaplain Assistants, and Directors of Religious Education," Washington, DC, 2003.

[25]Abdulaziz Sachedina, "The Qur'an and Other Religions," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 291.

[26]Ibid., 292.

[27]ReligiousTolerance.org, "Pluralism," http://www.religioustolerance.org/ rel_plur1.htm (accessed May 16, 2009).

[28]Olenda E. Johnson, "Diverse Views of Religious Pluralism: Implication for the Military Chaplaincy," *Directorate of Research, Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute,* Arlington, 2001, 1.

[29]VandeCreek and Burton.

[30]Robert A. Harris, "Foundations for Faith-Learning Integration" (Paper presented at National Leadership Conference, Washington, DC, June 25, 2004).

[31]Talal Asad, *Formation of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 1.

[32]Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, December 2006), 3-7.

[33]The Army for instance requires its members to live by its "LDRSHIP" values, an acronym for its Seven Core Values of "loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, integrity, and personal courage."

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

> There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.
>
> — GEN Colin L. Powel

The purpose of this study is to examine CT within the context of religious leadership in the US Army. More specifically, this study explores the relevance of CT to Army religious leadership by examining its meaning, characteristics, purpose, and requirements; outlining its strengths and weaknesses; and analyzing the challenges it poses, as well as its utility, for Army religious leadership.

Several works, both published and unpublished, have appeared on the subject of CT in recent times. Especially, owing to pedagogical interest, an enormous amount of work has been produced on the role and utility of CT in education. There is also an appreciable interest in CT within professional institutions, particularly as a tool of decision-making.[1] Likewise, there is a growing interest, particularly from religious scholars, in CT's relationship with religious beliefs, ethics, and values, which is the primary interest of this study.

To achieve the purpose of our study, we identified in chapter one the primary research question, and outlined the secondary questions necessary to pursue the quest of the study. The secondary questions examine three issues: the nature of CT, its relationship with religious beliefs, and the challenges CT poses for chaplains' religious leadership in the Army. This chapter provides a general overview of the state of literature in those areas, and explores trends and patterns, as well as any gaps within them.

<u>The Nature of CT</u>

The Army's perspective of CT draws heavily on the works of scholars in the academia. Notably among these scholars are Richard Paul and Linda Elder of the Foundation for CT. Their works feature prominently in CGSC and Army Management Staff College (AMSC) curriculums on CT. Consequently, to appreciate the Army's view on the subject is to explore not only Army field manuals that deal with the topic of CT, but also to examine the current works of scholars in the field.

Definition

The first challenge one encounters in researching CT is the lack of consensus among scholars as to what the concept means. In that regard, Michael Guillot has argued that the absence of a standard definition has led to several misconceptions about the concept of CT.[2] Therefore, several definitions abound. One definition describes it as "reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do."[3] In this definition, CT is simply a process of decision-making. Related to this definition is also the notion that CT is a rational quest for truth.[4] In the same vein, Vincent Rugggiero, the author of "Beyond Feelings," defines CT as "the process by which we test claims and arguments and determine which have merit and which do not."[5]

Besides, Richard Paul advances several definitions of his own. One of these definitions describes CT as a "disciplined, self-directed thinking that exemplifies the perfections of thinking appropriate to a specific mode or domain of thought."[6] He also defines CT as "the art of thinking about your thinking while you are thinking in order to make your thinking better: more clear, more accurate, or more defensible.[7] Unlike the earlier definitions, Paul's introduces a new dimension to CT, which is self-control over

thinking. Furthermore, Paul and Elder define CT as a process by which one seeks to improve his or her thinking."[8]

As far as the Army is concerned, CT is simply a rational tool for problem solving. According to Army Field Manual 5-0, *Army Planning and Others Production*, "Critical reasoning is the purposeful, self-regulating judgment that includes interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference that leaders use to solve problems."[9] As already noted, the Army's perspective of CT comes from the academia. As a result, the Army takes its definition directly from the consensus statement of experts on the definition of CT in the "Delphi Report" of 1990.[10]

<div align="center">Approaches</div>

Scholars emphasize that CT is a skill that requires study and practice.[11] Nonetheless, a careful review of CT literature reveals not only the scholarly interest of the writers including philosophy, psychology, sociology, and education, but also the differences in how the subject is approached and presented.

On the one hand is what one may classify as the psychological/sociological approach. This approach focuses predominately on mental skills and tends to be practical in orientation. Consequently, the content is often presented in a "how to" format of a practical guide. Among this genre, one finds Paul and Elder's "Elements of Thought," with which most people in the military are familiar.[12] According to them, every thought process involves eight elements and mastering them is crucial to becoming a critical thinker. In other words, to find problems in our thinking, one must be able to take thinking apart and analyze its various elements. These include purpose of thinking, questions to be answered, points of view to be considered, assumptions or ideas one is

taking for granted, implications and consequences of one's thinking, information one needs to answer the questions, inferences and judgments at which one arrives, and concepts and theories upon which one bases his thinking.

Another example of this approach is Peter Facione's "skills and dispositions" approach. Like the former, this approach also emphasizes mastery of a combination of certain skills and attitudes. Among the skills are analysis, evaluation, interpretation, explanation, inference, and self-regulation. The dispositions, on the other hand, include being inquisitive, judicious, systematic, open-minded, as well as having confidence in reason and commitment to truth seeking.[13]

On the other hand is what may also be classified as the philosophical/logical approach. As the name suggests, this approach tends to be more theoretical with emphasis on the principles of logic and epistemology. In this category one finds as an example Vincent Ruggiero's "Beyond Feelings"[14] and Robert Todd Carroll's "Becoming a Critical Thinker: A Guide for the New Millennium."[15] Topics under this approach normally include attitudes of critical thinkers, thinking hindrances, characteristics of arguments, and evaluating information sources and arguments.

CT and Religious Beliefs

There is an ongoing debate between scholars on the compatibility or the utility of critical thought to religious beliefs. Peter Facione, a noted scholar in the field of CT, raises the question whether some issues are beyond rational assessment given humans' disposition to think.[16] He also asks whether there are limits to where our minds can go. He observes that many subscribe to the idea that some questions are too scary to ask. He further notes that, ironically, the very people who seek to restrict the role of reason have

no problem employing it in defense of their position.[17] For Facione, the issue becomes the ability to employ our God-given skills "at forming a reasoned judgment to the sacred writings in ways that are intellectually honest and fair-minded."[18] He refers to this kind of critical thinking as "truth seeking."[19]

Likewise, Rabbi Barnard, in an essay, "Revelation: Criticism and Faith," argues that CT is crucial to religious faith. He contends that we must be "ruthless" in our critical thought in order for us to be free of "the taint of idolatry," which he defines as "taking anything that has relative or contingent value and treating it as if it had absolute value." According to him, no belief or statement is beyond rational assessment. Likewise, he is of the view that "logical conclusion of a purely rational, critical approach to religious matters is complete agnosticism." Barnard concludes by defining faith as that which takes care of questions that critical thought is incapable of addressing.[20] In Barnard's view, reason is at once necessary for faith, but not sufficient to capture its true essence.

In "The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind," evangelical scholar, Mark Noll, takes modern American evangelicals to task on the state of their intellectual outlook. Noll contends that unlike evangelicals of earlier generations, modern American evangelicals have failed significantly to pursue serious intellectual endeavors and have exhibited disdain for scholarship. For Noll, it is an irony that modern evangelical fundamentalist thinking has ignored, among other things, "somber analysis of nature, human society, and the arts," even though they believe in God as the source of nature and the one responsible for the upkeep of human institution.[21]

While Noll identifies anti-intellectualism among the ills of evangelical fundamentalist thinking, his main concern is what he characterizes as the "vigorous

prosecution of the wrong sort of intellectual life," which he believes stems from evangelical activism and populism, among other ethos.[22] To buttress this position, Noll cites Canadian scholar N.K. Clifford who argued that the "[C]rusading genius" of the evangelical mind, "whether in religion or politics, has always tended toward an over-simplification of issues and the substitution of inspiration and zeal for critical analysis and serious reflection."[23] In other words, American evangelicals have the tendency to trust their intuition than engage in thorough study of issues.

Like Noll, John Ankerberg and John Weldon in their article, "What is the Only Remedy for Sin?" discuss blind faith in the light of surveys that concluded that 43 percent of "born again Christians" agree with the statement, "It does not matter what religious faith you follow because all faiths teach similar lessons about life." They saw the polls, if found to be credible, as a manifestation of the lack of CT in the Church, because these Christians were informed neither of comparative religions nor of their own beliefs.[24] They contend that lack of CT is the principal obstacle to the Christian religion today, which they argue is causing the Church to shrink.[25]

In the same light, the role of ethics has come to the attention of scholars of CT. Some have questioned whether CT guarantees ethical behavior. Some scholars are of the view that CT is inherently ethical, arguing that it is inconsistent with "abusing one's knowledge, skills, or power."[26] Most, however, disagree with this position. In contrast, they contend that CT has nothing to do with any set of beliefs or ethical values.[27] Perhaps these scholars are concerned about the "neutrality" of CT, if it were to espouse certain ethical norms. However, as far as these scholars are concerned, to employ CT skills is a commitment to seek the truth, and that one will be impartial and honest in this quest.[28]

On the other hand, Paul notes that knowledge is not synonymous with belief nor should it be mistaken for a "symbolic representation of belief." According to him, humans can easily believe things that are not true or be ignorant of the things they believe to be true.[29] Genuine moral decision, he contends, necessitates thoughtful differentiating between socially approved mores and what is ethically reasonable. He further notes that people frequently mistake "internalized voice of social authority" for "inner voice of conscience."[30]

Furthermore, Paul and Elder further argue that often people confuse ethics with other domains of thinking such as theology, law, and ideology. This confusion, they contend, often leads to the mistaken acceptance of "social values and taboos" as universal ethical principles.[31] Particularly, for the purpose of this study, they contend that people often mistake "religious ideologies" as "inherently ethical in nature."[32] As far as they are concerned, universal ethical principles are found not in "social conventions, religious practices, political ideas, and laws," because they are variant and conflicting. Rather, they are enshrined in such documents as the United Nations General Assembly Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[33]

Perhaps for Paul and Elder, these principles were arrived at through a strictly rational process, because, as Paul argues somewhere else, trust in reason will ultimately best serve "our higher interests" and those of others. [34] However, what Paul and Elder fail to point out is that these principles did not come out of nowhere, but derive from the religious, social, political, and legal practices of individual nations represented on the United Nations General Assembly.

<u>Does CT Undermine Religious Beliefs?</u>

Forrest Baird and Dale Soden in their article, "Cartesian Values and the Critical Thinking Movement: Challenges for the Christian Scholar and Teacher," take CT to task about its values. They suggest that CT, as espoused by the CT movement, is antithetical to integrating Christian faith and learning in the classroom. According to them, contrary to its claim, CT is not value-neutral, and that it derives from Cartesian approach to knowledge that advocates timeless, certain, and foundational knowledge. These values, they contend, contradict with the historical, probable, and propositional knowledge that Christianity teaches.[35]

While the authors have some valid questions for CT, they end up committing the very mistakes they find with CT. For instance, the question regarding the values of CT mentioned above is an important point that needs to be explored vigorously. Consequently, their call on "revisiting the way we teach 'critical thinking'"[36] is laudable. However, to evaluate the entire concept of CT narrowly on "Cartesian approach to epistemology" and as a result, suggest that it has no place in Christian faith and education is problematic. Therefore, like the CT movement, their approach is a zero-sum game whereby everything is based on biblical "faith" without any role for "critical thinking."

In "Islam and the Postmodern," the Muslim scholar and diplomat, Akbar Ahmed situates the debate between CT and religious beliefs and values within the context of postmodernism and raises some existential questions for Islam in particular, and the Abrahamic traditions in general. He asks, rhetorically, how does a religious civilization like Islam, with its reliance on a clear code of behavior and traditions based on scripture, cope in an epoch that disdains the past and celebrates diversity. Likewise, "How can

Muslims retain their central Islamic features in the face of the contrary philosophy of the postmodernist age?"[37]

While Ahmed expresses concern over what he perceives as the West's hostility toward Islam, the onus of his thesis is that the Muslim world has to rethink its interpretation of Islam, if it is to stand the test of time. One may suggest that at the heart of this challenge, as far as CT is concerned, is the question of "orthodoxy" and "religious authority": What is "true" Islam, what role should "ancestral" tradition play in the understanding of Islam in modern age,[38] and who has the authority to determine what it is?

Shabbir Akhtar in "The Qur'an and the Secular Mind," raises the question whether it is plausible to isolate the Qur'an from secular probing. While acknowledging the hostility of the modern intellectual paradigm to "all faculties other than reason," especially where religion is involved,[39] he nonetheless argues that it is impossible to shield the Qur'an against what he calls "the skeptical thrust of persistently rational examination" of the secular mind.[40] According to him, the secular reason is too powerful for any religion to avoid its trial.[41]

Akhtar also notes that, the secular mind has a hidden "intellectual arrogance" in the way it goes about analyzing religion.[42] However, he contends it is undesirable to shield the Qur'an from secular assessment because it offends intellectual integrity. According to him, "The unexamined scripture is not worthy of credence."[43] Consequently, he observes that many believers admit that we must use reason in order to understand the contents of revelation. However, they also believe that the noble role of reason is not to rule over revelation, but to serve it.[44]

On his part, the South African born Muslim scholar Farid Esack takes on the issue of justice and religious pluralism in his book "Qur'an, Liberation, and Pluralism." He argues that Islamic theology, and particularly qur'anic studies, has become so "rigid" to the extent that it is difficult to deal with all "forms of otherness," both within and without Islam.[45] Accordingly, he advocates, in the fashion of South American Catholic liberation theology, for a qur'anic hermeneutics of pluralism and calls for a rethinking of the nature and role of religion to facilitate the struggle for justice and pluralism.[46]

Nonetheless, Esack acknowledges the "Pandora box" of theological issues that such hermeneutics could open. He asks, for instance, "Where does the notion of equality and justice stop?" He realizes that unlike the Qur'an, post modernity does not recognize boundaries. Consequently, he wonders where one draws the line in his or her endeavor to "rethink tradition, theological categories, and what the Qur'an means."[47]

Summary and Conclusion

While proponents of CT seem to agree on what it is not, there is no universal conception of what it is. However, its rational posture is very obvious in its varied definitions. It is also evident that the Army's understanding of CT does not depart from what pertains in the academia. This review also shows that the relationship between CT and religious beliefs and its values is at best contentious. This relationship largely derives from how one views the role of reason vis-à-vis revelation in pursuit of knowledge of ultimate reality. The review further brings to light the intellectual and theological challenges that the effort at religious accommodation of CT engenders for religious beliefs. Yet, it also points to the potential for a broader understanding of the scripture.

We also learn that while advocates of CT acknowledge the importance of moral values in thinking, nonetheless, the tendency among some CT experts is to strip these values of any religious or cultural legitimacy by appealing to "universal ethical values." However, it is evident from our review that, not only are there efforts to address the role of religious beliefs and values in CT, but also that there are efforts to question the values and presupposition of CT, which are often not evident in discussions, and left to the conjectures of its opponents.

Further, we find that in the dialogue between CT and religious beliefs, the trend has been a push for religion to accommodate CT without a reciprocal attempt on the part of secular proponents of CT to take religious claims seriously. Finally, the current state of literature in CT does not address, at a practical level, the theological and ethical issues that Army chaplains inhabit daily in their ministry to soldiers and in their advisory capacity as subject-matter-experts of the religious domain, which is the focus of this study.

We will now turn to the next chapter of our study to look at methodology, and outline the steps for pursuing the study.

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[1]Brian Dennis Egan, "The Role of Critical Thinking in Effective Decision-Making," *Global Knowledge*, http://www.globalknowledge.com (accessed June 5, 2009).

[2]W. Michael Guillot, "Critical Thinking for the Military Professional," *Air and Space Power Journal,* June 17, 2004, http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/cc/Guillot.html (accessed September 9, 2009).

[3]Alec Fisher, *Critical Thinking: An Introduction to Critical Thinking* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 4.

[4]Wood, Critical Thinking.

[5]Ruggiero, 17.

[6]Richard Paul, "Critical Thinking: What Every Person Needs to Survive in a Rapidly Changing World," *Center for Critical Thinking and Moral Critique,* ed. A. J. A. Binker, 1990, http://outopia.org/teach/resources/CritThink1.pdf (accessed April 12, 2009), 4.

[7]Barbara Fowler, "Critical Thinking Definitions," Longview Community College. http://mcckc.edu/longview/ctac/definitions.htm (May 11, 2009).

[8]Richard Paul and Linda Elder, *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools* (Dillon Beach, CA: Foundation for Critical Thinking, 2008), 2.

[9]Department of the Army, FM 5-0.

[10]Peter A. Facione, "Critical Thinking: What It Is and Why It Counts," *Insight Assessment*, 2009, http://insightassessment.com/pdf_files/ABS_paper_revised.pdf (accessed May 15, 2009).

[11]Egan, 3.

[12]The "Elements of Thought" is the basis of Army's approach to CT. At the CGSC, its posters hang on the walls of each classroom.

[13]Facione, "Critical Thinking."

[14]Ruggier.

[15]Carroll.

[16]Facione, "Reasoned Judgment and Revelation."

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Gershom Barnard, "Revelation: Criticism and Faith," May 16, 2006, http://nhs-cba.org/Criticismandfaith.pdf (accessed April 15, 2009).

[21]Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1994), 3.

[22]Ibid., 12.

[23]N. K. Clifford, "His Dominion: A Vision in Crisis," *Sciences Religieuses/Studies in Religion* 2 (1973): 323. Cited in Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 12.

[24]John Ankerberg and John Weldon, "What is the Only Remedy for Sin?", Ankerberg Theological Research Institute, 2005, http://www.ankerberg.com/Articles/ _PDFArchives/apologetics/AP3W0905A.pdf (accessed April 10, 2009)

[25]Ibid., 2.

[26]Facione, Critical Thinking, 11.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Paul, 2.

[30]Ibid., 7.

[31]Ibid., 9.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid., 48.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Forrest E. Baird and Dale E. Sodom, "Cartesian Values and the Critical Thinking Movement: Challenges for the Christian Scholar and Teacher," *Faculty Dialogue* (1993), http://www.iclnet.org/pub/facdialogue/19/baird (accessed May 15, 2009).

[36]Ibid.,16.

[37]Akbar S. Ahmed, *Postmodernism and Islam* (London: Routledge, 1992), 5.

[38]See Abdulaziz Sachedina, "Taqlid: Blind Adherence or Rational Acceptance," http://people.virginia.edu/~aas/articles5.htm.

[39]Shabbir Akhtar, The Quran and secular mind: A Philosophy of Islam (London, Routledge, 2008), 330.

[40]Ibid., 57.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid., 59.

[43]Ibid., 57.

[44]Ibid., 59.

[45]Farid Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation, and Pluralism* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1997), 13.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Ibid., 260.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

> Ideally the critical thinker is habitually inquisitive, well-informed, trustful
> of reason, open-minded, flexible, fair-minded in evaluation, honest in facing
> personal biases, prudent in making judgment, and willing to reconsider options."
> ― Department of the Army, FM 5-0,
> *Army Planning and Orders Production*

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between CT and religious beliefs as it pertains to the role of Army chaplains. Specifically, the study explores the challenges CT poses for religious leadership in the Army to determine whether chaplains could reconcile CT with religious beliefs without undermining their religious leadership and calling.

In order to achieve the purpose of this study, it was imperative for the study to analyze the secondary questions raised in the introductory chapter. To that end, the study pursued a comparative analysis approach between CT and religious epistemologies. However, before delving into the specifics of the methodology, a discussion of the steps the study followed in obtaining information for the research is in order.

Steps to Obtain Information

The study utilized various sources to gather relevant research data. The study relied primarily on CGSC Combined Arms Research Library (CARL) and the researcher's personal book collection. Besides, owing to the enormous amount of electronic materials on CT, the study also made extensive use of internet sources. It also

took advantage of open source materials through the CARL. Finally, the study drew its analysis on both published and unpublished materials.

Method of Research

As mentioned above, the study employed a comparative analysis approach to answer the primary research question posed by the study. First, the study analyzed CT and established its meaning, characteristics, purpose, and requirements. It further studied the relationship between CT and secularism and clarified their similarities and differences. Subsequently, it studied the various positions, both secular and religious, on the relationship between CT and religious faith. It then proceeded with an epistemological comparison between the two paradigms to establish where the two epistemologies diverge as well as where they converge. Additionally, the study discussed CT weaknesses and strengths, and identified the challenges CT poses for religious leadership in the Army. Finally, the study proceeded to answer the primary question of the study.

Research Criteria

The study employed a seven-step approach to analyze the relationship between CT and religious faith in order to answer the primary research question. The first step answered the question "what is CT?" The second step discussed the requirements of CT. The third examined the relationship between CT and secularism. The fourth step looked at the relationship between CT and religious faith. The fifth step discussed CT's strengths and weaknesses. The sixth step explored the challenges CT poses for Army religious

leadership. The seventh and the final step of the study analyzed and summarized the first six steps of the analysis.

Step 1-What is CT?

The initial stage of the study's analysis addressed the first of the three secondary questions posed in chapter 1, which is to establish what CT is. Accordingly, the study:

1. looked at a brief history of CT,

2. defined its meaning,

3. identified its characteristics, and

4. explored its purpose.

Step 2-Requirements of CT

After meeting the first requirement of the analysis, the study proceeded to explore the requirements of CT. This phase of the analysis essentially answers the question "what does it take to think critically?" Three requirements were identified and discussed in detail. These included:

1. Reasoning Skills

2. Intellectual Attitudes, and

3. Awareness of Thinking Hindrances

Step 3-CT and Secularism

The third stage looked at the relationship between CT and secularism. Here the focus of the study was to distinguish CT from secularism by clarifying the differences and similarities between the two concepts.

Step 4-CT and Religious Faith:

In the fourth stage of the analysis, the study examined the relationship between

CT and religious faith. Here also the focus of the study was to address the second of the

three secondary questions identified with the primary question, i.e., whether CT

requirements as identified in the second stage of the analysis are conducive to the dictates

of religious faith. Accordingly, the study discussed various positions advanced on the

issue, both secular and religious, to determine their consistency or otherwise with

religious epistemology. The positions discussed include:

1. Secular: Faith is irrational.

2. Religious:

    A. Faith discourages thinking.

    B. Matters of faith are beyond reason.

    C. CT is necessary for life of faith.

Step 5-Religious Epistemology and CT

Subsequent to discussing the various positions on the relationship between

religious faith and CT, the study compared these two epistemologies to establish their

differences and similarities in order to determine their compatibility or otherwise.

Step 6-CT's Weaknesses and Strengths

The sixth phase of the study looked at CT's weaknesses and strengths to establish

its utility or the lack thereof to Army religious leadership, subsequently leading to the last

stage of the study.

Step 7-CT's Challenges to Army Religious Leadership

In the seventh and final step of the analysis, the study discussed issues CT raises for religious leadership in the Army. Again, the objective here is to establish the usefulness or otherwise of CT to Army religious leadership. The challenges discussed are:

1. Theological

2. Relevance of Religion in a Warrior Culture

3. Knowledge of Issues, and

4. Ethical

The next chapter is the analysis phase of the study.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

> Critical thinking is a thought process that aims to find truth in situations where direct observation is insufficient, impossible, or impractical. It allows thinking through and solving problems and is central to decision making. Critical thinking is the key to understanding changing situations, finding causes, arriving at justifiable conclusions, making good judgments, and learning from experience.
> — Department of the Army,
> FM 6-22, *Army Leadership*

While CT is by no means a new concept to the Army, its emphasis on its importance and urgency to the Army professional is unprecedented.[1] However important to the Army this might be generally, we ask: What does this new Army approach to thinking portend for Army chaplains, the religious leaders entrusted with the spiritual leadership of the soldiers and their families? Is this mode of thinking appropriate for religious beliefs, and for that matter, the ministerial responsibility of chaplains? In other words, is CT compatible with religious worldview and thinking? This study examines CT within the context of Army religious leadership. Specifically, the study explores whether chaplains could embrace the CT process and still remain faithful to their religious beliefs and ministerial calling.

Beginning with a brief historical overview, this chapter explores the concept of CT. It discusses its meaning, character, purpose, requirements, and its relationship with secularism. The chapter further examines CT within the context of religious faith, analyzes the different positions on the issue and discusses its strengths and weaknesses, as well as the challenge CT poses for religious leadership in the Army.

<center>What is CT?</center>

CT is a broad concept. A study of this limited scale will by no means exhaust its varied facets and the many questions and issues it seeks to address. The objective here is to explore the basic principles that underlie the concept of CT to determine its compatibility or otherwise with chaplains religious worldview and thinking. As a start, a brief overview of the evolution of CT is in order to gain insight into some of the values that inform its outlook.

<center>Historical Background</center>

Researchers trace the origin of modern CT to Greek philosophers' more than two millennia ago. While modern CT is defined by its emphasis on reasoning, the Greeks were the first to employ this mode of thinking. As Charles Freeman has pointed out, "The Greeks were the first to distinguish, assess and use the distinct branch of intellectual activity we know as reasoning."[2] The very phrase CT, some have pointed out, derives etymologically from two Greek words: "*Kriticos* (discerning judgment) and *kriterion* (standard)."[3]

Western critical thought has long been concerned with how people acquire beliefs and the grounds upon which those beliefs rest. Particularly, from its inception Western philosophers and scientists were suspicious of claims that appeal to some form of authority. As one philosopher had observed, at the heart of philosophy (meaning Western critical thought) is independent inquiry and skepticism of all authority.[4] Consequently, those great minds would develop rational criteria for assessing claims and their grounds as basis for beliefs and actions, which posture informs modern CT.

Three areas of Western critical thought have had unparalleled relevance to modern CT: logic, epistemology, and ethics. The importance of logic derives from the use of arguments to justify beliefs and actions. In fact, another name for CT is informal logic.[5] Epistemology, on the other hand, informs how CT approaches information and evaluates information sources. Finally, because people's decisions and choices have implications and consequences for others, ethics (deciding between right and wrong actions) becomes vital to the practice of CT.

The development of CT bears imprints of many great thinkers in the Western tradition of critical thought. However, the person who has endeared himself most to advocates of CT is Socrates of Plato's "dialogue."[6] Famous for his "Socratic Method," Socrates was skeptical in his skeptical approach to life. This was embodied by the often-repeated quote, "The unexamined life is not worth living."[7] For Socrates, any claim to knowledge must first withstand critical examination. Scholars of CT have particularly taken notice of Socrates' defense of independent thinking and critical inquiry during his trial and subsequent sentence to death.[8] Consequently, skepticism, critical inquiry, and independent thinking–qualities Socrates embodied–would become essential characteristics of CT.

However, the modern CT tradition began practically with John Dewey's 1909 definition of CT, which laid the foundation for the subsequent treatment of the subject.[9] Considered the "father" of modern CT, Dewey was the first to identify CT with "reflective thinking, thus distinguishing it from the realms of emotion and intuition.[10] Edward Glaser followed Dewey in 1941 with "An Experiment in the Development of

Critical Thinking,"[11] which elevated CT from a mere concept to a subject of study.[12] Evidently, Glaser relied on the pioneering work of Dewey in his definition.[13] Nonetheless, he added new elements to the concept that were not explicit in Dewey's.

Glaser suggested that CT is a combination of attitudes, knowledge, and skill. According to him, a critical thinker must have the disposition to consider problems and subjects that fall within the scope of his experience in a thoughtful way. A critical thinker also must possess the knowledge of the techniques of logical inquiry and reasoning, as well as the skills in applying those methods.[14] Today, these elements are at the core of the practice of modern CT. From the groundbreaking works of Dewey and Glaser, CT has evolved to include new ideas and approaches and branched into different fields of study.

Definition of CT

We noted in chapter 2 that the literature is replete with many definitions of CT. It would suffice here to note that given its multidisciplinary sources, an all-inclusive definition of CT is improbable. One may further argue that the differences are more a matter of semantics and emphasis than of substance, as all the definitions converge on the basic character of CT as a deliberate, rational approach to information or knowledge.

However, this study uses the Army's definition of CT noted in chapter 2 as the basis of analysis. According to this definition, CT "is the purposeful, self-regulating judgment that includes interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference that leaders use to solve problems."[15]

<center>Characteristics of CT</center>

One may deduce several characteristics of CT from this definition. Some are noted below, but the list is by no means exhaustive.

<u>CT is a process</u>. CT is foremost a process, meaning it is a way of thinking; it is not a belief, as Haskins has argued.[16] The concern of CT is not what people believe or do per se, but rather "how" they come to subscribe to beliefs or choose to pursue an action. To think critically, one's beliefs and actions must rest on accurate information.[17] Most importantly, as far as advocates of CT are concerned, the process is neutral and unbiased, meaning everyone could use it to improve thinking.

<u>CT is Rational</u>. The bedrock of CT is reasoning, the exercise of brainpower. Advocates of CT believe reasoning (interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, etc.) is the surest path to the truth. This by no means implies that scholars of CT do not recognize its shortcomings. In fact, the opposite is true. For instance, they acknowledge that people rely on memory and perception to make judgments, which processes are imperfect.[18] They also recognize influence of environmental factors on thinking, thus making absolute objectivity impractical.[19] Simply put, scholars of CT acknowledge the limitations imposed on reasoning by human imperfection. Yet, in spite of its shortcomings, they argue, "[T]hinking is the most reliable guide to action we humans possess."[20]

<u>CT is about self-regulation</u>. The Army definition partly describes CT as "purposeful, self-regulatory judgment."[21] At the heart of CT is self-regulation, the ability to take control of one's thought process. Scholars refer to this mode of thinking as "meta-cognition," the ability to think while thinking.[22] As a concept, CT proceeds from the belief that humans are products of time and space, and therefore are invariably

<center>40</center>

susceptible to environmental and psychological influences.[23] Paul and Elder argue that without guidance much of human thinking is "biased, distorted, partial, uninformed or down-right prejudiced."[24]

Accordingly, the task of CT is to provide that guidance so people can think effectively and make informed judgments. The argument is that when people think critically, they become aware of the impact of internal and external factors on thought process and consequently take measures to overcome or minimize their negative influences, to the extent possible. "The mark of a critical thinker," argues Guillot, "is the ability to continually monitor thought process for emotional, analytical, and psychological biases."[25]

CT is not negative thinking. Contrary to what many perceive, scholars stress that the word "critical" does not mean to think negatively or be obsessed with faultfinding.[26] For the purpose of this study, this point is exceptionally important because, as Stephen Gerras has noted, some Army leaders' entertain this mistaken belief about CT.[27] The modifier "critical," the Army maintains, "means getting past the surface of the problem and thinking about the problem in depth."[28] In other words, it is the careful and purposeful examination of information.[29]

Purpose of CT

According to Robert Ennis, the focus of CT is on "deciding what to believe or do."[30] The central issue in choosing what one believes or does is the question of truth: how does one distinguish truth from falsehood? That is because, as D.Q. McInerny has argued, truth is not always easy to discern, as it "can sometimes be painfully elusive."[31]

As a result, people often resort to forming opinions or making assumptions about issues they are not certain, which in many situations leads to faulty and unreasonable judgments.

Therefore, as the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter suggests, the whole point of CT for the Army is finding truth where it is unclear or difficult to discern. CT is the Army effort at ensuring that its leaders have the necessary tools to make sound decisions when answers are not so obvious. To do that, as Ruggiero has pointed out, is to be able to distinguish "truth from falsehood, reasonable from unreasonable."[32]

The question here is not whether there is truth, but rather how to tell when one sees it. That is because, as far as CT is concerned, truth is circumstantial; it is contingent on time and space factors, and changes according to prevailing circumstances. In other words, CT is concerned with objective or "measurable" truth.

<u>Requirements of CT</u>

To become a critical thinker requires that one fulfill certain requirements. These include the ability to exercise reasoning skills, the exhibition of certain habits of minds or attitudes, and the awareness of linguistic, psychological, and sociological factors that impede thinking.

Reasoning Skills

The central question in CT is knowledge; how does one come to know? Scholars identify two approaches to knowing - either actively or passively.[33] To acquire knowledge passively is to accept what one is told.[34] The problem with this approach, scholars contend, is the tendency to accept other people's views or ideas uncritically.[35]

Usually, it is true because some "authority" or "expert" said so.[36] However, the CT question is how does one distinguish facts from fiction, truth from personal beliefs and opinions?

Consequently, CT demands that one pursue knowledge actively through reasoning. That implies using analytical skill to examine issues thoroughly, considering supporting facts and competing interpretations, and then drawing a logical conclusion.[37] Analytical skill is important for many reasons. For one, it is crucial to understanding the problem or the central question that one seeks to address.[38] For one cannot begin to address an issue until he has a clear appreciation of what it is and one's purpose for engaging the issue. It also helps to ask important and difficult questions of oneself and others, which makes it possible to identify unstated assumptions and how they inform one's point of view.

Analytical skill also makes it possible to distinguish issues and subjects with simple and clear answers from complex ones.[39] Likewise, without analytical skill one would not be able to evaluate the objectivity and accuracy of information sources,[40] which is critical to establishing the validity of facts and evidence, nor probe the logical strength of arguments.[41] Therefore, truth, as far as CT is concerned, is knowledge arrived at logically through rational process. It is truth, because it is, to the extent possible, "justifiable and can withstand the test of rational analysis."[42]

Intellectual Attitudes

As the epigraph in chapter 3 points out, the Army considers as the ideal critical thinker someone who is "habitually inquisitive, well-informed, trustful of reason, open-

minded, flexible, fair minded in evaluation, honest in facing personal biases, prudent in making judgments, and willing to reconsider options."[43] While intellectual skills are vital to CT, scholars argue that they are not sufficient in and of themselves to guarantee its practice. It is one thing to possess CT skills, but to choose to use them is a very different issue. Ultimately, people must find the motivation to utilize these skills. Therefore, to enable the use of reasoning skills, scholars stress that one must also embody certain mental attitudes.[44] Following is a discussion of a few of them.

Open-mindedness. To be open-minded, according to Carroll, is not being "dogmatic."[45] To make informed decisions, one must both be willing and committed to consider ideas different from one's own, including those that one may find unpalatable. Underscoring the Army's push for CT is the realization by its leaders that there is a tendency toward close-mindedness or groupthink within its formation, a major factor in some of the Army's operational failures in Iraq. Open-mindedness does not imply discounting one's views, especially when one feels strongly about them, but rather that one respects and values the insights of others.[46] In other words, to be open-minded is to be amenable to dissent and view disagreement as an opportunity for growth. Truth, it is argued, emerges "only after the clash of differing opinions."[47]

Fair-mindedness. While it is important to be open-minded and examine issues from different points of views, it is equally important that one examine them fairly. According to Paul and Elder, fair-mindedness involves the awareness of the need to judge all points of view equally, irrespective of "one's own feelings or vested interests, or the feelings or vested interests of one's friends, community, or nation."[48] Given the Army's

cultural and religious diversity, fair-mindedness is especially critical to the effectiveness

of the organization. Fair-mindedness challenges one to consider carefully the

implications and consequences of his or her decisions and actions. That is why CT

demands that decisions result from just and thorough assessment of competing points of

view, and not based on emotions and selfish interest. Fair-mindedness is crucial to

overcoming self-centeredness and prejudice, which are inimical to organizational growth.

Skepticism. Skepticism implies a spirit of "probing, and a hunger or eagerness for

reliable information."[49] In the thinking process, skepticism helps to examine information

and claims carefully for accuracy and objectivity, especially when one is not familiar

with the field or issue under consideration.[50] It enables one to resist accepting claims

simply because they are the majority view or some experts say they are true.[51] Rather, it

instills one with the courage and the willingness to challenge assumptions, paradigms,

and conventional wisdoms that are accepted uncritically, particularly when their intended

purpose is not clear. Skepticism is particularly vital to overcoming groupthink, a disease

at the core of most organizational failures and institutional prejudice. On the other hand,

healthy skepticism also means one is not "gullible," and therefore recognizes when to

dismiss claims that do not merit investigation.[52]

Inquisitiveness. CT encourages curiosity with a spirit of asking probing questions.

Because CT is a quest for answers, asking questions becomes an imperative. Advocates

of CT believe asking questions is the surest path to the truth. The passion for probity

derives from the belief that in order to improve reasoning and make sound judgment,

people must always seek to better their understanding of issues, events, and experiences.

As a result, inquisitiveness leads one to challenge the status quo and to seek new ways of thinking and living. That something has always been done a particular way does not mean it is right or even mean that people understand why it is done that way.

When, for instance, a curious commander of an Initial Entry Training (IET) battalion enquired from his drill sergeants why trainees were only allowed one drinking cup in the dining facility, a policy he found was encouraging trainees to opt for sugary drinks instead of water, he was shocked to learn no one knew why.[53] The irony was that they were "religiously" enforcing a policy whose origin they did not understand, and whose benefit they had not assessed. The same could be said of certain religious or cultural practices and taboos, which harm to human development is transparent to the critical mind, yet opaque to the practitioner.[54] Asking questions, therefore, helps to learn more about issues and lead to a "greater depth of understanding."[55] That would not be possible without the internal drive to probe into claims, assumptions, evidences, and beliefs. Asking questions, it is argued, is the bedrock of CT.[56]

Intellectual Humility. CT requires intellectual humility because, as Socrates has noted, "Arrogance does not befit the critical thinker."[57] Critical thinkers, argues Ruggiero, "are honest with themselves, acknowledging what they don't know, recognizing their limitations, and being watchful of their own errors."[58] Official arrogance was a major cause of bad decisions in the initial phase of the Iraqi war because some people thought they alone had cornered the wisdom on what is good for the Iraqi people, and did not need contrary opinion.[59]

To be critical in thought one must be humble and always be prepared to examine

new evidence and arguments even if such an examination leads one to discover flaws in

cherished beliefs. A mark of intellectual humility is the continuous striving for new

information, new ideas and understanding of issues through rigorous study, especially in

areas where one is inexperienced or uninformed.[60] That is because, from the perspective

of CT, current beliefs or knowledge is tentative due to the likelihood that new

information and evidences may prove such beliefs to be wrong.[61] Simply put, intellectual

apathy is not a characteristic of the critical thinker.

Independent Mindedness. Finally and yet equally important to the practice of CT

is independent mindedness. To be independent minded is "to learn to think for oneself, to

gain command over one's thought processes."[62] In other words, to think critically means

one must resist the tendency to believe because of social pressures to conform.

Independent mindedness, therefore, helps to overcome the disease of blind conformity to

the ideas and opinions of others, and challenges one to base judgment or beliefs on reason

and evidence. It also enables one to question, believe, and conform when it is reasonable

to do so.[63] Independent-mindedness nurtures the confidence to believe in one's own

ability to exercise control over his or her intellectual activities, and to arrive at reasonable

and justifiable decisions.

Awareness of Thinking Hindrances

In addition to intellectual skills and attitudes, CT also requires that one is aware of

psychological, sociological, and linguistic factors that impede thinking. Hindrances limit

one's ability to think "clearly, accurately, and fairly."[64] Again, while there are several of them, just a few are discussed below.[65]

Ignorance. CT skills is insufficient to guarantee good thinking without knowledge.[66] Ignorance implies the lack of knowledge or information prior to making a judgment.[67] Without adequate familiarity with a subject, it is not possible to offer an informed judgment on it.[68] For instance, a chaplain cannot competently advise a commander about the impact of religious beliefs in an AOR when he or she lacks adequate understanding of or reliable information on the local religion and its practices.

Ignorance is the primary and perhaps the most pervasive impediment to thinking. It leads to serious misjudgment on important issues in the decision making process, sometimes with dire consequences. For example, ignorance of foreign cultures and values has proven costly to the Army time and again. Ignorance is also a major factor in close-mindedness and consequently, extremism. It also foments prejudice, because when people lack understanding of others they easily assent to stereotypes about them.

Emotion. Emotions are an indispensable part of being human. They give life "meaning, pleasure, and sense of purpose."[69] Indeed, emotions are necessary for human self-preservation[70] because such emotions as joy, sadness, anger, etc. are internal resources that help people to deal with the daily vicissitudes of life. Also, important life decisions, whether in marriage, divorce, or medical treatment, involve a great deal of emotional investment. That means emotions are a vital constituent of the human self, what psychologist Na'im Akbar aptly describes as "the community of self."[71]

Accordingly, Haskins has noted that CT does not "discourage or replace" emotions.[72] Nonetheless, if left uncontrolled, emotions can and do impede thinking.

For chaplains, Moses casting and crashing the tablet containing God's commandments, as reported in the Scriptures, is perhaps a good illustration of how strong emotions can derail thinking.[73] Also, one finds that reported war crimes in the ongoing operations have mostly to do with decisions made out of strong feelings such as anger or hatred. While one cannot get rid of emotions to become a critical thinker, it behooves one to be aware of how they affect thinking and to take control of them. When gripped by emotions," argues Akbar, "reasoning fails to function adequately."[74]

Bias. Like emotion, bias is a universal human trait; everyone has a fair share of it. One reason for bias is differences in the values and beliefs people hold about the world.[75] Because worldview provides an "interpretive framework" for how one understands experiences,[76] bias becomes a critical discriminatory factor in the decision-making process. Particularly, given their competing truth-claims, as far as worldviews are concerned, religion can be a major source of bias. As W.M. Watts has observed, "Frequently, part of a religion's self-defense has been to form a negative image of other religions."[77] If left unchecked, bias can be detrimental to good thinking when considering evidence.[78]

Egocentrism. Ruggiero defines egocentrism as centeredness on oneself and selfish concern for one's own interests, needs, and view.[79] The problem with egocentrism is that it makes it difficult to see things from different perspectives.[80] In other words, it fosters close-mindedness. As a result, egocentric people think "the world exists for them and is

defined by their beliefs and values."[81] Self-interest defined by egocentrism can lead to prejudice of those whose views or beliefs one disapproves. Paul and Elder argue egocentrism results because humans have a natural tendency to ignore the rights and needs of others, lack appreciation for others point of view, and the limitation of their own point of view.[82]

Mindless Conformity. People often rely on experts and authorities to gain knowledge or information about important things in life. For instance, in decision-making, the Army highly values the opinions of his many subject-matter-experts (SMEs), of which chaplains are a part, in decision-making. In fact, in some situations it would be "suicidal" not to seek expert advice. However, dependence on experts and authorities has the tendency to lead to uncritical acceptance of their claims. The fact is, experts are not only human and are therefore susceptible to errors, they also have self-interest, which can influence their viewpoints.

The tendency toward conformity and deference to "authority" is especially strong within the domain of religion where orthodoxy and tradition often become "authoritarian," and consequential to challenge. Yet, some of the religious traditions are but opinions of religious authorities, which have gained institutional blessings with time.[83] Likewise, for Army leaders in general, the vertical hierarchy of the military organization may also encourage mindless conformity, given the potential career risk for challenging views or positions of superiors. This is an important challenge that the Army will have to deal with if it really wants to nurture CT in its young leaders.

CT and Secularism

Before concluding a discussion on CT, it is pertinent to look briefly at the relationship between CT and secularism, given that secularism is the lens through which some religious opponents of CT view it.

Secularism, like CT, finds its intellectual roots in the Western tradition of critical inquiry. Both concepts are "secular," i.e. nonreligious, in orientation, and project a purely rational, logical epistemology of reality. This relationship sometimes makes it difficult to distinguish one from the other. Yet, CT and secularism are dissimilar in a very important sense: CT is a process, while secularism is a belief. CT, as previously noted, is supposed to be a neutral, unbiased process that is concerned with how people think. Therefore, CT can evaluate the reasonableness of beliefs, including secular beliefs. Secularism, on the other hand, is in general terms a belief in the separation of the sphere of the profane from that of the sacred.[84]

In its extreme strand, however, it advocates not only for a barrier between religion and government,[85] but also, as Stephen Carter has argued, a complete rejection of the sacred in the public sphere.[86] To that end, secularists often present their objections to religion beliefs and the worldview those beliefs represent as the simple result of applying CT. As one scholar has observed, "All objections to revelations, whether genuine or spurious, are presented as rational."[87] This relationship between secularism and critical thought is what had led some religious advocates to associate CT with secular agenda in its effort to undermine public expression of religious beliefs. However, while this sentiment is understandable, it sometimes veers into anti-intellectualism within religious

51

communities, where genuine intellectual inquiry on matters of faith could be dismissed easily on the pretext of protecting the purity of faith from secular "blasphemy."[88]

Secularism, nonetheless, began not as anti-religion per se, but as a counter intellectual current against the clerical institution of the church, which influence it sought to curtail.[89] In the modern context of the struggle between secularism and religion, Richard Rorty argues, "Our anticlericalism is aimed at Catholic Bishops, the Mormon General Authorities, the televangelists, and all other religious professionals who devote themselves not to pastoral care, but promulgating orthodoxy and acquiring economic and political clout."[90] According to Charles Taylor, secularism resulted from society's weariness with "Wars of Religion."[91] Consequently, in society's search for religious coexistence, secularism would emerge as the viable alternative to clerical "authoritarianism."

In summary, the discussion thus far has been exploring the nature of CT to establish what the Army expects of its leaders. The study has established what the concept means to the Army and its intended purpose for Army's operations. It has also identified the skills and attitudes that CT requires, and further attempted to distinguish CT as an intellectual process from secularism as a belief. Collectively, the Army believes these skills and attitudes are critical to effective leadership and mission success. Accordingly, if leaders adopt and use them they are likely to make informed decisions and overcome problems in the complex and uncertain operational environment. Now, given the rational character of CT, what does this mean for Army chaplains? Is this

rational epistemology consistent with religious worldview of chaplains' and thinking? Answering that question is the next task of the study.

CT and Religious Faith

The reason-faith "conflict" has a long history in Western philosophical tradition. Unlike the old ontological debate over God's existence, however, the current debate concerns the epistemological value of faith. The central question is what does it mean to have "faith"? Is faith rational or irrational? Is it a form of knowledge? There are very strong opinions on this, both from secular and religious perspectives. First, we shall identify both positions and then examine them.

Secular View

Faith is Irrational. The prevailing secular position is that faith is incompatible with the rational worldview of critical thought. According to this argument, faith is "belief in something that cannot be proved."[92] In other words, faith is irrational. The basis of this argument is that faith is unnecessary in the presence of sufficient evidence.[93] For sure, as far as CT is concerned, the notion of faith as irrational does not necessarily imply that religious beliefs are untrue, but rather that their "truth cannot be demonstrated conclusively."[94] Stated differently, their truth-claims or underlying assumptions do not meet the rational, logical standard of knowing discussed earlier in the chapter or cannot be independently verified.

Faith Discourages Thinking. One religious outlook to faith is that it discourages rational inquiry of religious beliefs. As Gregory Jones has noted, "There are too many 'religious people' who become religious precisely to avoid having to think. They simply want to accept everything on 'faith,'"[95] These people find in their religious beliefs a reason not to think. As Schimmel has pointed out, perhaps this outlook to faith is borne out of the belief that nothing requires one to "provide a rational justification for his beliefs."[96]

Again, for these people faith is a set of beliefs and rules established by religious leaders for the faithful to obey strictly. Engaging in rational assessment of faith is viewed essentially as a rejection of the transcendental truth of revelation as taught by the religious authorities. Obviously, this view of faith reinforces the earlier secular argument that faith is irrational.

Matters of Faith are Beyond Reason. Another religious argument is that matters of faith are beyond the competence of reason.[97] It is often the argument some advance, particularly those who see critical thought as an enemy of faith, to avoid dealing with the questions CT raises for religious beliefs.

Faith is Necessary for a Life of Faith. In contrast, some religious scholars argue that faith is not only consistent with critical thought, but also is critical for life of faith. We shall now examine all of those positions.

Positions Examined

Faith is Irrational. The secular position is that faith is irrational. This view stems from several secular beliefs, or more appropriately assumptions, about the nature of reality. One is the dismissal of religion as irrelevant. In fact, for some secularists religion bothers on superstition.[98] Another is the belief that reason alone has answers to all questions. Montgomery Watts refers to this as the Western intellectual outlook.[99] This position derives from the belief that human experience, and for that matter reality, is only knowable through empirical evidence. If you cannot produce empirical proof, then it is not a fact; it is illusion.

Nonetheless, the blanket assertion that faith is irrational is fallacious, given that not all faiths "are created equal." Most importantly, this notion of faith arises because of an erroneous belief of what faith is about. For one, faith is impossible without some form of rational assent, either implicit or explicit, a fact some secular opponents of religion cautiously acknowledge. For instance, while Schimmel Solomon argues that faith is primarily an emotional state, he also recognizes that it has "implicit cognitive dimension."[100] To have faith is to internalize the truth of the beliefs that inform it. In other words, faith is the inner commitment and willingness to live out the truth of one's religious beliefs, which truth one has foremost established to be authentic.[101] In essence, faith is an attitude toward God. [102]

Now, how these beliefs are arrived at differs from one person to another. While some may be content with what others tell them to be the truth, others arrive at beliefs after rigorous study, exploring and questioning. But if the essence of CT is to ensure one has reasonable grounds for holding a belief or taking an action, then one should be able to

think critically and still maintain strong religious beliefs. That is the basis upon which some within the CT community see Thomas Aquinas as a critical thinker. For them, his systematic theology is a proof that one could think critically and yet maintain strong religious beliefs.[103]

Faith Discourages. Thinking. The first religious view finds thinking antithetical to faith. This outlook is contrary to the teaching of scripture. Careful reading of scripture leads one to embrace reason not only as a divine gift, but also as a necessary means of reaching God, as advanced by Thomas Aquinas.[104] It is also pertinent to note that aversion to reasoning is inconsistent with human nature as a "thinking being."

Arguably, the primary reason for this negative disposition toward thinking is ignorance coupled with the "disease" of deference to authority discussed earlier. Insecurity, the fear that one's beliefs might be exposed to be flawed, is another factor in this negative view of thinking. As Facione has noted, many believe that some questions are simply too scary to ask.[105] Some also believe critical inquiry of revelation is offensive to the sensibilities of the faithful.[106]

Matters of Faith are Beyond Reason. The second religious position asserts that matters of faith do not conform to rational requirements of reason. For some, that means reason has no role to play in religious matters to the extent possible. That would indeed be contrary to human nature to think. Properly understood, what that implies is that some issues of faith fall outside the realm of empirical experience, and therefore reason alone is incapable of addressing them. However, it does not suggest, in any sense, that those issues are beyond the curiosity of reason and so should not be questioned or scrutinized.

CT is Necessary for a Life of Faith. Another religious position is that CT is necessary for a life of faith. Scholars who find faith compatible with rational epistemology of CT find the lack of critical thought within religious communities as the greatest threat to the life of faith. For instance, as noted elsewhere, evangelical scholar Mark Noll has bemoaned the aversion to intellectual life and scholarship within the modern American evangelical community, arguing that it is detrimental to spiritual life, and is unlike the intellectual temperament of evangelicals of earlier generations.[107] Similarly, John Ankerberg and John Weldon also see the lack of CT in the churches as the principal threat to Christianity today, as it is causing the Church to shrink.[108]

On the other hand, Rabbi Barnard argues that "critical thought is the necessary foundation of religious faith."[109] Also, Farid Esack contends that lack of CT in Islamic theology and qur'anic studies has led to rigidity in Islamic beliefs, which makes it difficult to deal with all "forms of otherness" both within and without Islam. For Esack, CT is necessary for discovering the import of the qur'anic message.[110] While these scholars recognize that, as an independent process for the pursuit of truth, CT often "bumps against one's religious beliefs," they believe the problem lies in people's inability to use their God-given intellect judiciously to achieve reasoned judgment.[111]

Religious Epistemology and CT

The conflict between religion and secular epistemologies centers on the role of reason and revelation in the knowledge of reality. Is reason alone sufficient for understanding reality? What role, if any, should revelation play in this quest?

Reason as a Tool of Understanding

Central to the conflict between religious and secular worldviews is the appropriate role and limit of reason in understanding reality. Religion shares with CT the critical role of reason in human understanding of reality. Arguably, the mind is the most distinctive of all human faculties. It is the faculty of realization that enables man to understand the nature of things. Therefore, the use of reason is imperative to lead a responsible life and to realize human potential. In fact, without reason, it would be difficult to differentiate humankind from the lower animals. Neither would it be possible to exercise the ethical, moral will.

That is why the exercise of reason has always been fundamental to the pursuit of religious knowledge. Consequently, the scriptures adopt a methodology that captivates the attention of humanity to ponder and reflect.[112] It challenges it to think by engaging it in dialogue, posing questions and parables, making comparisons, and drawing attention to human nature and the nature of the universe of which humanity is a miniscule component. Most pertinently, the interpretive role of reason has been instrumental in elucidating the foundational truth of divine revelation and making it accessible to human understanding. Reason has especially been and will continue to be crucial to challenging false religious beliefs and exposing practices that are detrimental to human development, not in spite of the religions that purportedly sanction them, but for the simple reason that they are inconsistent with the very teachings of "true" religions. Therefore, to subscribe to faith is not a rejection of reason and its fundamental responsibility in the pursuit of truth.

Revelation as a Source of Knowledge

However, unlike the strictly secular rational epistemology of CT, religion finds

true knowledge as both a function of the mind and the heart.[113] Consequently, religion

accepts in addition to, and not in spite of reason, other forms of knowing outside the

rational outlook of pure reasoning because it does not limit human reality to purely

empirical experience or evidence.

Therefore, while the idea of faith, therefore, proceeds first from a firm recognition

of reason as necessary to human knowledge of truth, to have faith also means one

acknowledges the limitation of human reason to achieve the knowledge of ultimate

reality or spiritual truth. Consequently, revelation becomes fundamental to the knowledge

of ultimate reality in religious epistemology. Here the issue concerns what is known in

religious language as the "unseen," which is reality "beyond the reach of human

perception," as Muhammad Asad's described it.[114] Also, as Iqbal has perceptively

observed about philosophy, "Its function is to trace the uncritical assumptions of human

thought to their hiding places, and in this pursuit, it may finally end in denial or a frank

admission of the incapacity of pure reason to reach the ultimate reality."[115]

As far as religion is concerned, the knowledge of the unseen is only possible

through the harmonious confluence of reason and the transcendental truth of divine

revelation. To that end, revelation acts both as a complement and as a guide to reason.[116]

Therefore, "true faith" is not the absence of rational evidence or the rejection of critical

thought, but rather the awareness and belief that unaided reason by itself is incapable of

realizing that which is beyond empirical experience. This holistic approach to knowing

markedly separates religious epistemology from the secular, and often is the basis of conflict with the secular mind that fails to appreciate the transcendental nature of reality.

Therefore, the concern of both CT and religion is the knowledge of truth. However, while CT restricts knowing to only that which is accessible to human reason,[117] religion finds reason necessary, but insufficient to achieve true knowledge of reality. Consequently, it recognizes other sources of truth.[118]

Weaknesses and Strengths of CT

Like any human formulations, CT has its advantages and disadvantages. CTs greatest shortcoming is that it limits human experience to a purely empirical experience, as noted above. Things matter only if they are discernible by the senses. As Akbar points out, reason "fails to consider factors which are not always observable," and "judges only on the basis of facts."[119] However, there is more to human experience than what is humanly observable. As a quote attributed to Albert Einstein stated, "Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts." The question of "meaning" in human experience, for instance, is far beyond the "classifying and qualifying" process of reason.[120] Finding "meaning" is a vacuum that ethical value systems like religion strive to fill, the absence of which makes life worthless.

Additionally, and related to the above, the process cannot be completely neutral as its advocates want people to believe when it had already determined beforehand that a claim could only be valid when it meets a rational standard of knowing. Consequently, it effectively precludes other forms of knowing outside of its strict rational outlook.[121] Likewise, it is presumptuous to conclude *a priori* that the process is unbiased without

taking into consideration the values and orientation of the person involved with the process. That is because one's values influence his interpretation of facts.[122] In other words, CT is human and subject to misuse.[123]

Another weakness of CT is that it tends to treat thinking as exclusively a cognitive process, thereby separating it from other faculties.[124] This approach fails to appreciate the integrative nature of thinking, combining the reflective with the intuitive and the emotive.

Its shortcomings, notwithstanding, CT offers many important benefits. First, it draws attention to the critical role of reason in human understanding of reality; thinking is fundamental to how people understand themselves, their world, and their place in it. Especially for the Army, the CT process helps to understand the nature of problems and their potential for solution. It also brings to focus the invariable influence of environmental and psychological factors on thought process. Arguably, this is where CT finds its greatest strength. By creating heightened awareness to how both inner and outer "voices" inform one's worldview, CT seeks to unearth the human subconscious to the level of consciousness. As a result, it helps one to "see what is not so evident and obvious at first glance."[125] Especially, it challenges people to examine their own beliefs and actions objectively to identify their prejudice, mental models, and assumptions.

CT is also important because it helps to reveal gaps in information and to appreciate the level of one's ignorance on issues.[126] Having accurate and sufficient knowledge or information about issues one plans to judge is vital to making informed decisions and choices. Additionally, CT encourages one to look at the "big picture," and consequently, brings one to gain fuller understanding of the implications and

consequences of his or her decisions and choices.[127] This role of CT is especially

important to any form of leadership given that leaders' decisions and actions have serious

ramifications beyond themselves.

Equally important, CT assists in making better decisions and solving complex

problems.[128] With its emphasis on open-mindedness and fair-mindedness, CT becomes

extremely vital when dealing with issues and values involving deep-held beliefs and

values. Again, that is vital to leadership because of the fundamental responsibility of

leaders to make difficult decisions and find answers to problematic issues. Also pertinent

is that CT encourages people to rethink the status quo and to explore "alternatives to

existing ways of thinking and living."[129] In this regard, Jones has perceptively noted,

"Traditionalism may be tempted to ignore the importance of thinking, but vital traditions

require careful thought precisely so that we can remember the past well for the sake of

the future."[130] Lastly, and yet importantly, CT provides a systematic way to approaching

information and issues.

CT Challenges to Army Religious Leadership

Given the benefits of CT outlined earlier, it is evident why the Army is pushing its

leaders to become critical thinkers. For chaplains to be effective leaders in a CT Army,

intellectual skills, as discussed above, will be crucial, especially if they are to overcome

the many challenges that their expanding role in the Army engenders. However, to take

advantage of the opportunities CT presents, chaplains will also be hard-pressed to

overcome theological and other hurdles. The fundamental issue, as far as CT is

concerned, will be how chaplains conceive and practice religious leadership in a way that

is at once true to their religious beliefs and calling and meets the Army's expectations of them as critical thinkers.

<div align="center">Theological</div>

Theologically, chaplains will be challenged to reconcile parochial religious or personal interest with the broader perspective of the Army's expectation of its chaplains as bridge-builders across cultural lines and caregivers in a diverse formation. Indeed, this dynamic is not new to the modern chaplaincy. However, the challenge now is that commanders will be demanding that from their chaplains. Chaplain (COL) Lanious drew attention to this issue when he wrote, "As clergy, we have all been trained to articulate and defend our own beliefs and denominational or religious standards."[131] However, he continued, "Now, we are being asked to look at religion objectively and understand how it works in the context of society, its pathways and opportunities."[132]

An objective, altruistic approach to religion, as the Army now expects of its chaplains, challenges them to open their mind and seek to understand religion and its role in society beyond the limited purview of one's religious or denominational interest. Indeed, some will find this endeavor a threat to their "spiritual purity," given that "chaplains generally come from dogmatic presuppositions,"[133] which one may suggest has a lot to do with the nature of their education.[134] Religious education, noted Dennis Mueller, is such that it does not prepare students to ask critical questions of their beliefs because they "are not, indeed cannot be taught to question the validity of religious texts and claims to challenge their teachers, because these texts are purportedly the word of

God, and thus must be valid."[135] While one may not completely agree with Miller's assertion, it does suggest the challenge CT poses for the religious mind.

<center>Relevance of Religion in a Warrior Culture</center>

Particularly, a critical thinking Army will challenge chaplains to justify the relevance of religion and the role of chaplains in a warrior culture that is increasingly becoming secular. In fact, that is already evident on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan where chaplains have coined such phrases as "combat multiplier" and "spiritual battle-proofing" to justify their relevance to the operational commander.[136] But as Borderud has convincingly argued, these are meaningless concepts without any basis in reality.[137] Borderud's observation raises a CT question as to whether chaplains have adequate understanding of their ministerial responsibility. Accordingly, chaplains will have to nurture the necessary intellectual skills and temperaments to explain the mission of the chaplaincy and the importance of religion in military operations. Even more important, chaplains will have to rethink the meaning of religious leadership in an Army that continues to adjust its culture, ethos, and formation to meet the demands of a fluid and complex world.

<center>Knowledge of Issues</center>

In the same vein, CT will challenge chaplains' knowledge of issues and subjects, especially in their role as subject-matter-experts on religion. Not only does the Army's expectation of its chaplains' thrust them into that status, in fact, commanders have always considered their chaplains as such. The reality, however, is that what chaplains often present as knowledge of subjects or other traditions and faith groups is nothing more than

"theological" exposition or opinion of their faith traditions; it is often not knowledge grounded in credible research. Particularly, the CT challenge for chaplains, in this respect, is how they differentiate scripture or the word of God from theology, which is human creation.

<div align="center">Ethical</div>

Arguably, the greatest challenge that CT poses for chaplains' religious leadership is ethical. Here the question concerns fair-mindedness in how chaplains treat soldiers who do not share their religious beliefs. In their study of the constitutional challenge to the chaplaincy, Israel Drazin and Cecil Currey found that some chaplains, while being sensitive to the needs of their fellow religionists, "felt no obligation to assist persons outside their own faiths."[138] For sure, the Army does not require its chaplains to compromise their religious beliefs in order to meet the needs of soldiers, religious or otherwise.[139] However, it does expect them to strive to be fair and respect soldiers' constitutional rights. As Drazin and Currey have also noted, protecting soldiers' free exercise rights is the reason for the very existence of the chaplaincy.

Decades after Drazin and Curry's observation, there are still chaplains whose understanding of their professional responsibilities toward soldiers of other faith traditions has nothing to do with soldiers' legal rights, or the chaplain's contractual obligation, but everything to do with the soldiers professing the "wrong" beliefs. For these chaplains, helping these soldiers with their needs is tantamount to promoting those religious beliefs. That, one would argue, is double standard because it violates the ethical

<div align="center">65</div>

principle of fairness, the very right chaplains seek for themselves and for members of their religious traditions.

In a pastoral letter to the Chaplain Corps prior to his retirement as the Army Chief of Chaplains, Chaplain (MG Ret) David Hicks expressed concern about chaplains' commitment to fairness in their ministry to the "Other." He observed that to be "fair" in ministry "means a chaplain has developed an inner peace with his commitment to diversity, does not see it as a threat to his own calling, and is willing to stand up for what is right–no matter who is right."[140] In other words, one must do what is right in the face of powerful selfish desires.[141]

Indeed, such principles may not suit some religious temperaments. For example, a chaplain whose primary purpose for joining the military is to evangelize is likely to pay lip service to the principles of diversity, while claiming otherwise. Likewise, a chaplain who sees ministry in the chaplaincy foremost from the prism of patriotism (read nationalism), instead of as a calling to represent the divine moral will, is likely to confuse his politics with his ministry.[142] However, one's actions must ethically cohere with espoused religious beliefs.

If there is an issue that threatens the future of the Army chaplaincy, from a legal perspective, it is the question of fairness in taking care of the "Other." Therefore, how chaplains intellectually and theologically deal with these challenges will determine their leadership effectiveness in a critical thinking Army.

This study has surveyed the concept of CT, explored its meaning, established its characteristics and purpose, and analyzed its requirements. It also highlighted the

difference between CT and secularism, and then examined its relationship with religious

faith. The study further discussed the strengths and weaknesses of CT and identified the

challenges CT poses for chaplains' religious leadership in the Army. The study

concluded that the dictates of religious beliefs is not antithetical to critical thought, in

spite of its epistemological shortcomings. In the final chapter, the study summarizes its

findings and offers recommendations and concluding remarks.

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[1]The heightened focus on CT is evident in the Army's professional education system, as well as in major Army operational field manuals, which have recently been either revised or rewritten to cohere with the Army's new focus on critical thinking as the "center of gravity" of its operations.

[2]Freeman, see introduction.

[3]Richard Paul and Linda Elder, *Critical Thinking: Tools for Taking Charge of Your Learning and Your Life* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001), 369.

[4]Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Dubai, UAE: Kitab al-Islamiyyah, n.d.), 1.

[5]Carroll, 2.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid., 3.

[9]Fisher, 2.

[10]Dewey defined CT as "Active, persistent, and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds which support it and the further conclusions to which it tends." See Fischer, 2.

[11]Glaser sought with his instrument to measure people's CT skills.

[12]Roy Eichhorn, "Developing Thinking Skills: Critical Thinking at the Army Management Staff College," http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/army/critical/roy.htm (accessed April 24, 2009).

[13]Glaser partly defined CT as "persistent effort to examine any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the evidence that supports it and the further conclusions to which it tends." See Fisher, 3.

[14]Fisher, 3.

[15]Department of the Army, FM 5-0.

[16]Gregory R. Haskins, "A Practical Guide to Critical Thinking," August, 2006, http://www.skepdic.com/essays/haskins.pdf (accessed May 20, 2009), 3.

[17]Carroll, 3.

[18]Ibid., 9.

[19]Ruggiero, 32.

[20]Ibid., 17.

[21]See Noreen C. Facione and Peter A. Facione, "Critical Thinking and Clinical Judgment," Insight Assessment, http://www.insightassessment.com (accessed September 9, 2009).

[22]Fischer, 5.

[23]Ruggiero 4.

[24]Paul and Linder, Miniature Guide, 2.

[25]Guillot, 2.

[26]Hasking, 3.

[27]Stephen J. Gerras, "Thinking Critically About Critical Thinking: A Fundamental Guide for Strategic Leaders," U.S. Army War College, 2006, http://www.au.af.mil/au/ awc/awcgate/army-usawc/crit_thkg_gerras.pdf (accessed August 18, 2009), 3.

[28]Department of the Army, FM 5-0.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Fisher, 4

[31]D. Q. McInerny, *Being Logical: A Guide to Good Thinking* (New York: Random House Trade, 2005), 19.

[32]Ruggiero, 99.

[33]Ibid., 42.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Ibid.

[36]William C. Chittick, *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul: The Pertinence of Islamic Cosmology in the Modern World* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), 23.

[37]Ruggiero.

[38]Paul and Elder, Miniature Guide, 4.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Assessing the validity of facts requires reliable means for exploring information sources for credibility, objectivity, and accuracy. See Haskins, 7.

[41]Evaluation makes it possible to determine whether arguments contain any assumptions, and if so, whether those assumptions are reasonable. It also helps to assess the relevance and the sufficiency of the evidence that supports an argument. Relevancy refers to the quality of the evidence to support the argument, while sufficiency refers to the quantity. A good argument must fulfill both requirements. Finally, a good argument must be complete, meaning the argument fairly represents all relevant evidences - both that support or oppose it.

[42]Carrol, 1.

[43]The Army picked up this quotation directly from the Delphi Report of 1990.

[44]Fischer, 12.

[45]Carroll, 4.

[46]David H. Hicks, "Taking Spiritual Leadership to the Next Level: A Discussion for the United States Army Corps" (Chief of Chaplains White Paper, Washington, DC, 2007), 7.

[47]Udo Schaefer, "Loyalty to the Covenant and Critical Thought," trans. Harry Liedtke, 2003, http:www.udoschaefer.com/pdffiles/loyalty_engl.pdf (accessed October 21, 2009), 7.

[48]Paul and Elder, Miniature Guide, 15.

[49]Guillot, 2.

[50]Carroll, 4.

[51]Ibid., 4.

[52]Ibid.

[53]This incident took place during the author's time at Fort Jackson as a battalion chaplain.

[54]For example, denying women the right to education on the basis of religion or culture.

[55]Guillot, 4.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Ibid., 6.

[58]Ruggiero, 19.

[59]In his book, *America: Our Next Chapter*, former US Senator Chuck Hagel makes the point that "arrogance and incompetence" led the Bush Administration to invade Iraq against the counsel of many trusted allies in the Middle East. Also, the *BBC* reported that Alberto Fernandez, a senior US State Department official, had remarked in an interview with the Arabic News Channel, Al Jazeera, that the United States had been "arrogant and stupid" in Iraq. See "US 'arrogant and stupid' in Iraq," http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6074182.stm.

[60]Carroll, 5.

[61]Ibid., 6.

[62]Paul and Elder, Miniature Guide.

[63]Ibid.

[64]Carroll, 10.

[65]Other hindrances include relativism, absolutism, double standard, confirmation bias, unwarranted assumptions, appeal to authority, common belief, and emotion, slippery slope fallacy, poisoning the well, shoehorning, wishful thinking and self deception, etc. For detail discussions of these terms, see Vincent R. Ruggiero's *Beyond Feelings: A Guide to Critical Thinking* and Greg R. Haskings, "A Practical Guide to Critical Thinking."

[66]Carroll, 11.

[67]Ibid., 10.

[68]Ibid.

[69]Haskins, 3.

[70]Na'im Akbar, *The Community of Self* (FL: Mind Productions and Associates, 1985), 5.

[71]The idea behind "Community of Self" is self-knowledge. The members of the community include drives, instincts, senses, memory, conscience, will, and reason. Development of the self requires taking control of the community and creating a harmonious working relationship among its members. Whenever a member is allowed to rule over the rest, the result is lack of self-awareness.

[72]Haskins.

[73]Exodus 32:19; Quran: 7:150-154.

[74]Akbar.

[75]Carroll, 14.

[76]Harris, 2.

[77]William Montgomery Watt, *Religious Truth for Out Time* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1995), 89.

[78]Ruggiero, 106.

[79]Ibid., 87.

[80]Ibid., 88.

[81]Ibid.

[82]Paul and Elder, Miniature Guide, 21.

[83]One has only to study the opinions of religious leaders of the three Abrahamic traditions over the centuries to see how this phenomenon evolves.

[84]Hashemi, 106.

[85]Ibid.

[86]Carter, 53.

[87]Akhtar, 58.

[88]For instance, issues concerning the rights of women are mostly viewed within conservative Muslim communities as secular Western feminist effort to corrupt the Muslim women.

[89]Hashemi, 165.

[90]Ibid., 121.

[91]Ibid.

[92]Ruggiero, 46.

[93]See, for instance, Douglas Jones and Michael Shermer, "Faith, Reason, and Rationality," *Dupitatio* 8, no. 4, http://www.credenda.org/issues/8-4disputatio.php (accessed May 15, 2009).

[94]Ruggiero.

[95]L. Gregory Jones, "Why bother to think?", *Christian Century* (November 15, 2000): 1192.

[96]Schimmel, 19.

[97]Ibid.

[98]Ruggiero, 42.

[99]W. M. Watts, 85.

[100]Schimmel, 17.

[101]For instance, Muslim scholars define faith as an affirmation by the heart in agreement with what is poken by the tongue.

[102]Akhtar, 238.

[103]Foundation for Critical Thinking, "A Brief History of the Idea of Critical Thinking," http://www.criticalthinking.org/aboutCT/ briefHistoryCT.cfm (accessed November 6, 2009).

[104]Freeman, 330.

[105]Facione, Reasoned Judgment.

[106]Akhtar, 57.

[107]Noll, 3.

[108]John Ankerberg and John Weldon.

[109]Barnard.

[110]Esack, 13.

[111]Facione, Reasoned Judgment.

[112]See for instance Isaiah 1:18; Qur'an 30:21.

[113]The idea of "meditation" in the religious sense is to bring together the cognitive and emotive domains to ponder over God's words in scripture (special revelation) and its activities in physical creation (general revelation)..

[114]See his commentary on Qur'an 2:3 in Muhammad Asad, *The message of the Qur'an* (Dar al-Andalus: Gibraltar, 1980).

[115]Iqbal, 1.

[116]Taha Jabir Al-Alwani, *Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought* (Herndon, VA: IIIT, 2005), 5.

[117]Akthar, 330.

[118]The primary reference here is revelation. However, some also recognize intuition and mystical experience as valid source of genuine knowledge. See Akthar, 330.

[119]Akbar, 7.

[120]Ibid.

[121]While the primary expertise of chaplains is religion, they often find themselves dealing with issues that do not specifically fall within the realm of "religion."

[122]Harris, 20.

[123]Most scholars, for instance, are of the view that CT does not guarantee good thinking in the moral sense. See Peter A. Facione, "Critical Thinking: What It Is and Why It Counts," http://www.insightassessment.com (accessed May 18, 2009), 11.

[124]Alexander T. Pocetto, "Love and Critical Thinking: A Salesian Reflection" (Patristic Medieval and Renaissance Conference, 1989), 1.

[125]ActionAid International, "Critical Thinking," *ActionAid.* http://www.actionaid.org/assets/pdf/critical.pdf (accessed July 15, 2009), 23.

[126]Egan, 3.

[127]Ibid.

[128]ActionAid.

[129]Pocito, 2.

[130]Gregory Jones.

[131]Chet Lanious, "Framing the World Religions Discussion: 2007 World Religions Summit," *The Army Chaplaincy* (Winter-Spring 2009): 8.

[132]Ibid.

[133]Pete Mueller.

[134]It is important to note that 'dogmatism' is not limited to religious beliefs. People can become dogmatic in various respects. Extreme nationalism is one instance of dogmatism.

[135]Dennis C. Mueller, *Reason, Religion, and Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 93.

[136]Borderud, 93.

[137]Ibid.

[138]Drazin and Currey, 90.

[139]Akbar, 7.

[140]David A. Hicks, "Pastoral Letter," Washington, DC, August 15, 2006.

[141]Richard Paul and Linder Elder, "Thinkers Guide to Understanding the Foundation of Ethical Reasoning," *Foundation for Critical Thinking*, 2006, http://www.criticalthinking.org (accessed 12 June 2009), 4.

[142]The author believes that chaplains who are advocating for a combatant status for chaplains are driven, not by the lack of personal security, but rather by nationalistic and parochial religious interests.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> Believe nothing, O monks, merely because you have been told it . . . or because it is traditional, or because you yourselves imagined it. Do not believe what your teacher tells you merely out of respect for the teacher. But whatsoever, after due examination and analysis, you find to be conducive to the good, the benefit, the welfare of all beings–that doctrine believe and cling to, and take as your guide.
> — Siddhartha Gautama, founder of Buddhism (563-483 B.C.)

The beautiful, "poetic" words of the Buddha above could very well summarize the whole concept of CT, which essentially seeks to penetrate the surface of issues. For the Army, the "era of persistent conflict" has also become a time for CT; a time for leaders to learn to challenge "conventional wisdom" and mental models and to seek alternative ways of making decisions and solving problems. As the Army charts its future to confront an uncertain and complex world, it has effectively determined that the future lies in the brainpower of its young and upcoming leaders, but only if they will think, and think critically. That includes its chaplains, whose professional expertise will be vital to promoting dialogue across religious and cultural lines, even as they attend to the spiritual health of the Army family and serve as the moral conscience of the organization.

The purpose of this study has been to examine CT within the context of Army religious leadership. Most importantly, the study explored whether chaplains could become critical thinkers and remain faithful to their religious beliefs and ministerial calling. The previous chapter discussed the secondary questions posted in chapter 1. It concluded that in spite of its shortcomings, as an intellectual process, the requirements of CT is not detrimental to the dictates of religious faith, but rather is an essential resource

for the practice of religious leadership. In other words, if properly understood and practiced in a balanced manner, CT would aid chaplain's ministry, rather than undermine it. This chapter summarizes the findings of the study and offers its conclusions and recommendations.

<center>Rethinking Religious Leadership</center>

The fluidity of social, religious, and cultural transformations within the Army, and the unceasing Army expectations of its uniformed "clergy" in the operational environment will continue to challenge chaplains' ability to think outside the comfort-zone of their religious worldviews and beliefs. In fact, in the ongoing operational theater chaplains are already facing unique new challenges and assuming new responsibilities in their ministries, some bordering outside the areas of their expertise and training.

For instance, on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, young chaplains have become "cultural and world religions experts" overnight, sometimes barely weeks after graduating from CH-BOLC, analyzing the "Other" and advising commanders about the impact of religious beliefs and activities in their AOR, mostly without the requisite training or appreciable understanding of the nuances that permeate these cultures.

Likewise, a great number of them have become "virtual diplomats" serving as liaisons for commanders' outreach to local and influential religious leaders.[1] These challenges make it obvious that chaplains' religious worldviews and intellectual abilities will be tested in no small measure,[2] and their leadership will require more than just a seminary education and a good preaching voice. As Chaplain Mueller has noted, "[T]he

<center>76</center>

status quo in regards to delivering good religious support was no longer sufficient in this volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous environment."[3]

For sure, the traditional core skill requirements for "nurturing the living, caring for the wounded, and honoring the dead" will continue to feature prominently in chaplains' religious leadership. Nonetheless, they will also be challenged to rethink religious leadership beyond the limited purview of their personal and/or religious interest to contribute to bridge-building and cooperation across cultures. Therefore, chaplains' intellectual abilities (especially taking control of assumptions) will be vital to their success.

<div align="center">Recommendations</div>

Noted in chapter 4 is that CT portends theological and ethical challenges for religious leadership in the Army. This study does not pretend to solve those challenges. What it intends to do is provoke discussion and reflection on intellectual attitudes within the chaplaincy and its impact on the quality of religious leadership in the Army. CT is essentially about self-awareness and healthy self-criticism.

Self-awareness entails that one becomes conscious of how psychological and environmental influences control his thought process and the positions one assumes of issues. Self-awareness is not about the correctness or otherwise of one's values and beliefs. Likewise, it does not imply that one compromise or rid themselves of their beliefs and biases in order to succeed as leaders, especially when they feel strongly about them. Indeed every leader is a product of an environment and culture. Therefore, it is natural to have biases.

Nonetheless, one owes it to himself to change the mental models in his "belief window,"[4] if it becomes obvious that they are inimical to growth, personally and professionally. That would not be possible without self-criticism, which simply is the courage and willingness to self-assess continually one's beliefs, values, actions, and thinking processes, particularly how they cohere together. The goal of self-awareness and self-criticism is that one may overcome their weaknesses and build on their strength to greater heights. That is why the role of the "self" is fundamental to CT. It is only when a leader is self-aware and self-critical that he begins to acknowledge his or her limitations and ignorance. Consequently, he begins to appreciate the insights others bring to the leadership process and realizes the importance of seeking alternative ways of approaching problems.

CT not only fosters self-awareness and self-criticism, but also makes it easy for one to value humility and be amenable to dissent–critical leadership qualities. It challenges one to look at disagreement as an opportunity for growth, and challenges him, through the character of humility, to cultivate the necessary intellectual discipline to look at problems thoroughly and from different perspectives. A good leader respects and values the insights of others in the organization.[5] Looking at problems from different aspects helps to overcome groupthink and fosters creativity.

Open-mindedness, a critical characteristic of CT is essential for promoting an environment conducive for information sharing and exchange of ideas. The result is a healthy organization where members feel at once interdependent and independent. As members of a team, they are committed to and value the importance of teamwork, yet

they also cherish the freedom to think differently. Leaders who entertain open mindedness are likely to be intellectually curious and challenge the status quo, and look for new ways of doing things.

Therefore, to be effective, leaders must seek to grow intellectually. They must remain informed of new ideas and knowledge through reading and research. They have to avail themselves of current events on the global scene. Yet, they have to remain critical in their thinking as they explore new ideas and opportunities. Simply put, critical thinking is essential to any form of leadership, and must be cultivated vigorously within the chaplaincy. Particularly, CT must be introduced to chaplains at CH-BOLC to prepare them for the difficult task of advising commanders and to provide religious leadership that is relevant and needed.

Conclusion

To answer the question whether the Army's push for its leaders to become critical thinkers would undermine chaplains' religious leadership and calling, one must first differentiate between CT as an intellectual process, which is the interest of this study, from its use to advance a particular worldview or political agenda. In that first respect, the study found CT to be a rational, logical epistemology, which purpose is to seek the truth. The study also found in the second respect, that the transcendental nature of religious epistemology often comes into conflict with the rational, secular posture of CT. Here the study concludes that CT particularly as employed in the U.S. Army, is limited in its epistemology, and therefore cannot be depended upon entirely to explain ultimate reality.

However, it is obvious from the discussion in chapter 4 that having faith is not inimical to exercising critical thought. Indeed, to seek to improve thinking and make good decisions, as CT advocates, is actually a religious thing to do. The intellectual habits of mind and awareness of thinking hindrances that CT calls for are things that the religious leader should find not only reasonable, but also necessary to effective and fair-minded spiritual leadership in a pluralistic setting.

Therefore, the study argues that apparent conflict between the two worldviews arises, perhaps, due to an erroneous conception of the idea of faith, both on the secular and religious fronts. While the secular mind traditionally closes itself to any forms of knowing outside the dictates of pure reason, a great number of religious advocates, on the other hand, refuses or is unable to embrace and utilize its mental capacity judiciously to gain better appreciation of God, and of faith and its appropriate role in human endeavor, as the scriptures teach.

Another problem is the tendency to compartmentalize knowledge into secular and religious domains, a product of the secular culture's emphasis on the separation of church and state. This arbitrary but comfortable dichotomy between the secular and the religious often misleads the religious mind to shun knowledge that could be beneficial to it, but ignores it because of its secular label. But as Akhtar convincingly argues, "Knowledge in itself is neither religious nor secular. Only its uses can be assessed as religious or secular, moral or immoral."[6]

This study also contends that the notion that one can have faith free of any form of thinking is a false assumption. The very idea of the "spiritual" embodies not only the

emotional, but also the intellectual. Effective spiritual leadership, therefore, is that which incorporates the emotive domain with the cognitive.[7] Accordingly, religious epistemology diverges from CT in a very important way: It projects a holistic approach to knowing and understanding, an approach that incorporates the analytic with the emotive, the empirical with the spiritual.

Religious epistemology proceeds from the belief that God is the source of knowledge of the truth. He is the truth. He taught humankind what it did not know.[8] Therefore, unlike the purely dichotomous, rational, empirical approach to knowing, as CT advocates, religious epistemology views revelation and reason as complimentary. This is because true faith, which is both an affair of the heart and the mind, is contingent on both the intellectual and the revelatory knowledge.

Indeed, CT will challenge chaplains' religious leadership. However, it cannot in anyway undermine a true belief that is both theologically and ethically sound. As Woods has observed, "truth can always stand all the examination we want to subject it to. Only that which is false will fail cogent argument and logic."[9] If anything, CT should spur chaplains to higher spiritual growth. Its only problem, as earlier noted, is that it is human and therefore imperfect.

Its shortcoming notwithstanding, the study agrees with the position that critical thought is essential to life of faith, and therefore concludes that it would not undermine chaplains' religious leadership and calling. The basis of this conclusion is that true faith cannot be irrational, but rather must combine the mind and the heart harmoniously in response to the divine. Abdullah Yusuf Ali argued this point when he wrote that every

81

religious scripture "has to be read, not only with the tongue and voice and eyes, but with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience can give us."[10] The issue is not whether faith needs reason; that should be obvious to anyone who values reason as a divine gift. Rather what is at stake is how to utilize, appropriately, the power of reason in matters of faith.

CT offers tremendous personal and professional growth that chaplains can harness for mission accomplishment. As staff officers in a critically thinking Army, chaplains' knowledge and analytical skills are crucial because they will be hard pressed to prove their reasoning skills to be accepted as equal partners within the staff realm. Particularly, they will require the intellectual courage, intellectual humility, fair-mindedness, and open-mindedness to raise difficult questions of themselves and others, and to overcome bias, unwarranted assumptions and beliefs in decision-making.

In their new capacity as members of the operational, planning, and information operation cells,[11] peers and commanders will challenge chaplains to defend their assumptions and beliefs about human nature, and the role of God and religion in conflict and peace. Chaplains will find CT skills especially vital when dealing with leaders who possess "secular myopia." These leaders, according to Chaplain Timothy Bedsole, do not see the significance of religion, and for that matter the role of chaplains, in military operations.[12]

Here the issue is not about the truthfulness or otherwise of chaplains' beliefs, as much as it is about how they understand and articulate religious concepts in a constructive and meaningful way within a multi-cultural, multi-religious, and multi-

national environment. As President Jimmy Carter has observed about people's beliefs generally, chaplains' religious beliefs will be instrumental in their decisions and actions.[13]

Secular animosity, notwithstanding, the greatest challenge to religious faith, and for that matter the worldview it represents, is not the secular mind that continues to question its relevance, but rather the religious mind that has failed to make it relevant due in part to its aversion to intellectual life. To stand the test of time, religious leaders especially will have to open up their minds to new ideas and ways of learning. Particularly, chaplains will have to nurture the courage to challenge the status quo and to ask the difficult and necessary questions of their beliefs, assumptions, and actions. That will be vital, if they are to maintain "the moral high ground."[14]

Indeed, until the religious mind awakens to a proper appreciation of the role of reason in matters of religious beliefs, especially how those beliefs ethically inform one's relationship with the "Other," CT will continue, in the words of Facione, to "bump up against one's religious beliefs."[15] Such situation, one would argue, is detrimental to the chaplain, his professional status in the military, and his ministry to soldiers and officers in the demanding operational context of the 21st Century.

God knows best!

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[1]This includes Religious Leader Liaison (RLL) in operational environment and Religious Leader Engagement (RLE) through Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) activities.

[2]While the Army Chief of Chaplains has issued a policy letter supporting commanders use of their chaplains in outreach to local religious leaders, there are chaplains who, for religious reasons (and to some extent 'nationalistic' tendencies), oppose these efforts.

[3]Pete Mueller.

[4]Hyrum W. Smith, "The Power of Perception" (Lecture at the Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, February 2008).

[5]Hicks, Taking Spiritual Leadership to the Next Level.

[6]Akthar, 336.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Qur'an 96:5.

[9]Woods, 3.

[10]'Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 11th ed. (Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 2004). See Preface to 1st ed.

[11]Lanious, 8.

[12]Timothy K. Bedsole, "Religion: The Missing Dimension in Mission Planning," *Special Warfare* (November-December 2006): 9.

[13]Madeline Albright, *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflection on America, God, and World Affairs*, with Bill Woodward (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 77.

[14]See, Dr. Pauletta Otis, "Twelve Ethical or Moral Dilemmas in Military Affairs," *The Army Chaplaincy* (Spring-Summer 2008), where she raises critical questions about assumptions and being self-critical.

[15]Peter Facione, Reasoned Judgment.

APPENDIX A

Chaplain (LTC) Mueller E-mail to Author

Subject: questions
To: Dawud Agbere   Date: 03/11/09 17:23
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Dawud,

Great to hear from you! I pray your son is doing well. And the rest of
your family!

 I hope you enjoyed your time as a SGL for CHBOLC. It's too bad you
couldn't have stayed longer to shape future chaplains, but thanks so
much for your excellent work.

I apologize for not getting back to you sooner on your questions. I was
TDY for part of the time and just remembered that I needed to reply!

The premise underlying adding CT to our C4 course was the Army emphasis
on agile leadership (the Pentathlete), and a recognition that while our
chaplains generally have great educations, they sometimes lacked the
ability to translate their knowledge into new paradigms or environments.
Because so much is being required of Army officers in general, and our
young chaplains in particular, we felt it was important to emphasize
"how" to think over "what" to think.

It was felt that what we were good at, the status quo in regards to
delivering good religious support, was no longer sufficient in this
volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous environment. Yet, the decision
was more driven by the broader changes in military leadership and its
requirements than by any particular deficit in chaplains.

Because chaplains generally come from dogmatic presuppositions, the
areas of CT that deal with challenging assumptions, placing yourself in
other points of view and objectively approaching an issue, are probably
the most important that require further study in relation to the role of
the chaplain.

Many chaplains are very wary (and often rightly so) in approaches that require a neutral frame of reference or an equal acceptance of all possible viewpoints. Yet, to think critically means one has to set aside, or at least fully take into account, one's own personal viewpoint or position. How we can do this accurately and fairly without denying our faith or religious worldview is an important challenge.

I think some would argue that if we temporarily suspend our own belief only until we have completed the examination of the issue, and then go back to our previously held belief no matter what the evidence requires, then we have not truly thought critically. Yet matters of faith do not always lend themselves to rationalistic or humanistic inquiry and resist easily agreeing to be "neutral" and completely pluralistic like philosophy or metaphysics are able to do, and so places the religionist at a disadvantage. For many it is asking too much to suspend or remove belief from the inquiry.

So how we can be faithful to our God and yet faithful to the process of CT is an important challenge.

I hope this helps and I will be very interested to see where your research takes you.

Bless you and your family.

Your friend,
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