
Character Education in the U.S. Army, 1947–1977¹



Anne C. Loveland

IN January 1947, amidst great fanfare, the U.S. Army activated an experimental unit at Fort Knox, Kentucky, made up of 664 young men between the ages of 17 and 20 (average age 17 1/2).² Since the autumn of 1945, the Truman administration had been pressing Congress to institute universal military training (UMT), and the Fort Knox unit was set up to demonstrate the kind of instruction it would involve.³

Largely formulated and commanded by Brigadier General John M. Devine, who had led the 8th Armored Division during World War II, the Fort Knox experiment provided basic military training eight hours a day, five days a week. But the most publicized aspect of the experiment was the program of moral, religious, and citizenship instruction administered by three chaplains who delivered fifty-minute lectures on such subjects as “The Ten Commandments,” “Grounds for Moral Conduct,” “Purity in Thought, Word and Deed,” “Marriage as a Sacred Institution,” “The

1. I would like to thank the following individuals who helped me with the research or writing of this article: Chaplain Billy W. Libby and Professors Mark Grandstaff, Craig Cameron, and Christian Appy.

2. Rodger R. Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1945–1975* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army, 1977), 42; “Army Showcase,” *New Republic*, 16 June 1947, 8.

3. Truman’s plan for universal military training aimed at creating “a well trained and effectively organized citizen reserve” (the General Reserve) to supplement a small professional military force. It entailed a year of compulsory military training for all males beginning at age eighteen or upon completion of high school, whichever was later, followed by six years’ membership in the General Reserve. No exemptions or deferments were allowed except for total physical disqualification. See Harry S. Truman, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on Universal Military Training,” 23 October 1945, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, April 12 to December 31, 1945* (Washington: GPO, 1961), 407–9.

Citizen and Morality,” and “The Citizen and Honesty.”⁴ According to General Devine the required classes were “designed . . . to teach higher standards, ethical standards, moral standards; to teach the fundamentals of human relations; to take religion out of the church and put it into the front yards of everyday life.”⁵

Although the Congress never instituted universal military training, the Fort Knox experiment in moral, religious, and citizenship instruction is significant as the prototype of a character education program instituted throughout the Army early in 1947, which continued until 1970. In January 1947, the same month the Fort Knox unit was activated, Secretary of War Robert Patterson wrote a letter to the Army Chief of Chaplains in which he pointed to the “special responsibility” of the Chaplain Corps “for the moral and spiritual welfare of troops” and declared that he was ordering commanding officers to “allocate appropriate periods in the regular training schedule for instruction in citizenship and morality” to be attended by “all personnel.” Thus the new program, which became known as Character Guidance, was a command responsibility, but the lectures were prepared in the Office of the Chief of Chaplains and presented by Army chaplains.⁶ In the 1950s, attendance at the hour-long presentations was mandatory for all Army personnel. During the eight weeks of basic training, recruits received four hours of character guidance instruction; during the eight weeks of advanced individual training, they received two hours. All other units and organizations attended monthly hour-long character guidance sessions.⁷

4. Gilbert P. Bailey, “Umtees’—First Soldiers of the ‘New Army,’” *New York Times Magazine*, 23 February 1947, 11, 60; Matthew H. Imrie, “The Fort Knox Experiment,” *Army and Navy Chaplain* 17 (April-May 1947): 5; Venzke, *Confidence in Battle*, 40, 42; David Landman, “Can Soldiers Be Gentlemen?” *Colliers*, 6 December 1947, 86.

5. Devine quoted in *Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, Eightieth Congress, Second Session, on Universal Military Training, March 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30, 31, April 1, 2, and 3, 1948* (Washington: GPO, 1948), 917.

6. Patterson quoted in Venzke, *Confidence in Battle*, 41. Originally the character education program was called “The Chaplain’s Hour.” In August 1948, it was renamed Character Guidance. The Chaplain School, *The Army Character Guidance Program*, ST 16-151 ([Carlisle Barracks, Pa.]: Chaplain School, 1 March 1950), 3. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, an instructor at the Army Chaplain School (Chaplain Martin H. Scharlemann, endorsed by the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod), who wrote the lectures for the Fort Knox unit, produced most of the lectures for the Army as a whole. Later the Army Chaplain Board took over preparation of the lectures. Venzke, *Confidence in Battle*, 40–41.

7. Daniel B. Jorgensen, *Air Force Chaplains, 1947–1960* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Air Force Chaplains, n.d.), 254; *Army Regulation (AR) 600-30, Personnel—General, Character Guidance Program* (Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 15 October 1958). In 1948, President Truman issued an Executive

The program developed for the Fort Knox experimental unit and subsequently extended to the Army as a whole emphasized three interdependent components: religion, character building, and citizenship. Army publications explicitly stated the religious basis of Character Guidance, pointing out that the principles the chaplains taught came from the "Natural Law" and the "Moral Law," which in turn came from God. A lecture entitled "Man is a Moral Being" concluded with the declaration that "our chief responsibility as moral beings is toward God." To enforce good conduct, Character Guidance lectures appealed to God as "the final source of authority." Other lectures invoked the Bible, the Golden Rule, and the Ten Commandments. Character Guidance lectures also emphasized the importance of religious faith. One on "Worship in Life" sought to persuade the men "that the worship of God is a requirement of moral living." Another on "Religion in Our Way of Life" reminded them that religion was not only "the source of our way of life" but "that service to the nation is most effective only when religion becomes part of individual life." Similarly, a lecture entitled "The Nation We Serve" described the United States as a "covenant nation" which "recognizes its dependence upon God and its responsibility toward God." In such a nation, the lecture continued, "public institutions and official thinking reflect a faith in the existence and the importance of divine providence."⁸

Order in which he declared that it was the policy of the U.S. government "to encourage and promote the religious, moral, and recreational welfare and character guidance of persons in the armed forces and thereby to enhance the military preparedness and security of the Nation." "Title 3—The President: Executive Order 10013, Establishing the President's Committee on Religious and Moral Welfare and Character Guidance in the Armed Forces," *Federal Register* 13, no. 212 (29 October 1948): 6343. See also "Statement by the President Making Public a Report on Moral Safeguards for Selective Service Trainees, September 16, 1948," in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, January 1 to December 31, 1948* (Washington: GPO, 1964), 488. In 1951, Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall sent a memorandum to the heads of all of the service branches, directing them to insure that commanding officers "in every echelon" recognized their "duty . . . to develop to the highest possible degree the conditions and influences calculated to promote the health, morals, and spiritual welfare of the personnel under their command." G. C. Marshall to the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, the Secretary of the Air Force, the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, the Chief of Naval Operations, the Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force, 26 May 1951, SD 000.3 [1951] [Uncl] Box 607, George C. Marshall Papers, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Va. See also Frank Pace, Jr., "Protection of Moral Standards," 18 June 1951, *ibid.* Accordingly, both the Navy and Air Force developed programs of character education, taught by chaplains, similar to Character Guidance. See Richard G. Hutcheson, Jr., *The Churches and the Chaplaincy* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), chap. 7; and Jorgensen, *Air Force Chaplains*, chap. 12.

8. Chaplain School, *Army Character Guidance Program*, 10ff; "Man is a Moral Being" in Departments of the Army and the Air Force, *Character Guidance Discus-*

The chaplains who administered the Character Guidance program sought to build the character of soldiers by inculcating certain "personal and civic virtues" such as self-reliance, courage, obedience, fair play, and persistence. This effort to develop sound character constituted a new approach to behavioral problems on the part of the Army. Not only did Character Guidance emphasize virtue rather than specific rules of conduct; it also treated misconduct comprehensively rather than on an ad hoc basis. The stated objective of the new program was "to develop the kind of soldier who has sufficient moral understanding and courage to do the right thing in whatever situation he may find himself." An article in the December 1948 issue of the *Chaplain*, based on an interview with the commandant of the Army Chaplain School, noted that "formerly chaplains tried to persuade men not to fall into evil ways and explained the consequences of wrongdoing. Now they attempt to build the character of officers and enlisted men in such a way that they will not want to do wrong."⁹

The Character Guidance lectures on citizenship, which carried titles such as "The Meaning of Citizenship," "The Citizen and His Religion," and "The Citizen and His Worship," reflected the religious orientation of the program. Some lectures focused on the individual's relationship with other persons, by teaching those basic principles of morality that came from the Moral Law and were said to constitute "the moral fabric of the American way of life." Other lectures sought to inculcate an understanding of and appreciation for the United States and the religious and moral principles on which it was founded, especially the idea of freedom, which was described as based upon "a belief in the existence of God and our dependence on Him." Still others exposed the nature and threat of communism and explained how Americans could defend their country against it. The stated objective of one such lecture on communism was

sion Topics: Duty, Honor, Country, Series VI, Department of the Army Pamphlet 16-10 (Washington: GPO, 1952), 8; "Religion in Our Way of Life" in Departments of the Army and the Air Force, *Character Guidance Discussion Topics: Duty, Honor, Country, Series V*, Department of the Army Pamphlet 16-9 (Washington: GPO, April 1952), 79, 67; "Worship in Life," in Departments of the Army and the Air Force, *Character Guidance Discussion Topics: Duty, Honor, Country, Series I*, Department of the Army Pamphlet 16-5 [Washington: GPO, 1951]), 68; "The Nation We Serve," *ibid.*, 29. The religious orientation of the Character Guidance program was nondenominational. Hutcherson, *Churches and the Chaplaincy*, 154, 155, 159, uses the term "common denominator religion" to describe it, and Venzke, *Confidence in Battle*, 44, refers to it as "based in the Bible." See also *New York Times*, 28 July 1947, 14.

9. Chaplain School, *Army Character Guidance Program*, 4, 14, 15; "Chaplains," *Chaplain* 5 (December 1948): 16. See also Jorgensen, *Air Force Chaplains*, 251; "CG for GI's," *Newsweek*, 21 January 1952, 85.

“to develop a desire to live in accordance with moral principles as the best defense against the aggression of a totalitarian philosophy.”¹⁰

The Army’s character education program may be seen as the outgrowth of a new perspective on military training that assumed an indispensable role for religion and morality. In a memorandum to all Army commanders dated 27 July 1948, Secretary of the Army Kenneth C. Royall cited “a new realization . . . —that the Army has an obligation, especially to the parent [*sic*] of the youthful soldier, to continue insofar as possible under the conditions of military service, the wholesome influences of the home, the family, and the community.” Two years later, in an address to First Army chaplains, General Devine, Commanding General of the 9th Infantry Division at Fort Dix, New Jersey, observed that in the past the Army had operated on too narrow a concept of military training as including “only physical development and the teaching of strictly military subjects.” Now, Devine asserted, the Army recognized that “a true concept of training” required the addition of “moral, ethical, and spiritual guidance” to produce “a reliable, self-respecting, sincere, and loyal citizen-soldier.”¹¹

Several factors contributed to the development of the new perspective. An immediate concern of the Army in the postwar period was the high incidence of venereal disease (VD), especially among soldiers in occupied Germany. Significantly, in his letter to the Army Chief of Chaplains announcing the new program of character education, Secretary of War Patterson cited VD rates “higher than at any time in the past thirty years.” Although, as noted above, Character Guidance did not focus exclusively on venereal disease, it did approach it in a new way. In occupied Germany, as John Willoughby has pointed out, the Army command treated venereal disease as a medical problem to be solved by prophylaxis (condoms and chemical treatment)—a “relatively amoral” way of controlling the epidemic. By contrast, the Character Guidance program sought to eliminate venereal disease by focusing on the larger problem of sexual misconduct, persuading soldiers that non-marital sex was immoral, and emphasizing continence rather than prophylaxis.¹²

10. Venzke, *Confidence in Battle*, 44; “Life, Reputation, and Property,” in *Character Guidance Discussion Topics*, Pamphlet 16-5, 46, and chap. 10; Chaplain School, *Character Guidance Program*, 6; “Our Moral Defenses,” Departments of the Army and the Air Force, *Character Guidance Discussion Topics: Duty, Honor, Country, Series IV*, Department of the Army Pamphlet 16-8 (Washington: GPO, 1951), 36, 45, 49.

11. Royall’s memorandum quoted in Department of the Army, Circular No. 231 (3 August 1948); Major General John M. Devine, *Address to First Army Chaplains, New York, N.Y., 21 June 1950* (Washington: GPO, 1950), 1, 3.

12. Patterson quoted in Venzke, *Confidence in Battle*, 41; John Willoughby, “The Sexual Behavior of American GIs During the Early Years of the Occupation of Ger-

A long-term concern that also contributed to the new perspective on military training was the need to improve the Army's image. During World War II, traditional American hostility toward a large standing army and compulsory military training abated, but as soon as the war ended, it revived. Much of the criticism came from veterans, as well as men who remained in service, and it was pervasive and strong enough to undermine recruitment efforts in the immediate postwar period. The Doolittle Board, appointed by Secretary of War Patterson in 1946, addressed a wide range of complaints, from housing and pay to racial segregation and the military justice system. Although it did not specifically call for character education, its concern with "responsibility" and "character" and its recommendation that military personnel be returned to civilian society "in the best possible physical, mental, moral, and spiritual condition" suggested the desirability of some type of character-building program.¹³

The national debate over universal military training also revealed considerable unease, especially on the part of religious, labor, and educational groups, regarding what they considered corrupting aspects of the military environment.¹⁴ It was to neutralize such concern that President Truman and Secretary of War Patterson, as well as prominent civilian leaders, insisted on making character education a prominent feature of UMT.¹⁵ Army leaders were also responding to civilian criticism, as well

many," *Journal of Military History* 62 (January 1998): 160–63. See also General Jacob L. Devers, "Training the Army of Today," *Army Information Digest* 4 (April 1949): 6–7; Venzke, *Confidence in Battle*, 27, 43; Mark R. Grandstaff, "Making the Military American: Advertising, Reform, and the Demise of an Antistanding Military Tradition, 1945–1955," *Journal of Military History* 60 (April 1996): 319–20; Mark R. Grandstaff, *Foundation of the Force: Air Force Enlisted Personnel Policy, 1907–1956* (Washington: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1997), 80.

13. *Officer-Enlisted Man Relationships: Report of the Secretary of War's Board on Officer-Enlisted Man Relationships to Hon. Robert P. Patterson, the Secretary of War, May 27, 1946*, Senate Document 196, 79th Cong., 2d sess. (Washington: GPO, 1946), 5, 11, 18, 19. For a discussion of the Doolittle Report, see Grandstaff, "Making the Military American," 306–7. On the abatement of antimilitary thinking during World War II, see Michael S. Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War: America Plans for Postwar Defense, 1941–45* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977), 60–61.

14. See, for example, *Universal Military Training: Hearings*, 254–55 and passim; Hanson W. Baldwin, "UMT—'A Hot Potato,'" *New York Times*, 1 May 1947, 4; *New York Times*, 3 August 1947, 10.

15. See Truman, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on Universal Military Training," 408–9; Truman, "Commencement Address at Princeton University, June 17, 1947," and "The President's News Conference of June 26, 1947," in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, January 1 to December 31, 1947* (Washington: GPO, 1963), 284, 308; Robert B. Patterson, "Patterson Urges a 'Well-Trained Citizenry,'" *New York Times Magazine*, 29 June 1947, 9; Truman, "Remarks to the President's Advisory Commission on Universal Training,

as postwar problems of recruitment and retention, in incorporating religious, moral, and civic instruction into the regular training schedule. Then, after the reinstatement of peacetime conscription in 1948 renewed civilian apprehension regarding the unwholesome influence of military life on the millions of young men who would be drafted into the armed forces, Army leaders were able to offer assurance that their character-building programs would return soldiers to civilian society as virtuous, God-fearing, democratic citizens.¹⁶ In the late 1940s and early 1950s, President Truman and two civilian advisory committees he appointed continued to prod the Army to expand its religious, moral welfare, and civic education programs.¹⁷

Character Guidance in the Army, and the new perspective on military training that informed it, may be seen as one aspect of the preoccupation with "national preparedness" that dominated the United States in the late 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s.¹⁸ President Truman expressed the view of many civilian and military leaders in declaring that "the spiritual and moral health of the Armed Forces is a vital element in our national security. Together with a universal understanding of the principles of citizenship and American democracy, it constitutes the bedrock on which security and the success of military preparedness depend." As Michael S. Sherry has pointed out, the national security system developed during

December 20, 1946," in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, January 1 to December 31, 1946* (Washington: GPO, 1962), 509; President's Advisory Commission on Universal Training, *A Program for National Security* (Washington: GPO, 1947), 2. For a brief survey of the campaign for UMT, see James Gilbert, *Redeeming Culture: American Religion in an Age of Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 99-111.

16. See, for example, Devers, "Training the Army of Today," 6-7; Erwin Endress, "Christianity in Uniform," *Chaplain* 6 (May 1949): 20, 22; *New York Times*, 16 January 1952, 22; 6 October 1952, 25; 19 October 1952, 49, 52; 6 June 1955, 25; 2 July 1956, 23; 7 October 1956, 75; John R. Wilkins, "Three Days in the Pentagon," *Christian Century* 69 (12 March 1952): 308-9. As Mark Grandstaff has pointed out, character-building programs were one of several ways military leaders sought, not only to "Americanize" military personnel, but also to make the armed forces as an institution "more American" and therefore "more acceptable to the public." Grandstaff, "Making the Military American," 299-300, 314, 319, 320.

17. The President's Advisory Commission on Universal Training, *Report to the President on Moral Safeguards for Trainees to be Inducted Under the Selective Service Act, September 13, 1948* (Washington: GPO, 1948), 6, and see also 8, and *New York Times*, 17 September 1948, 1, 18. The other presidential advisory committee was the Committee on Religion and Welfare in the Armed Forces. For a good summary of the work of the two committees, see Gilbert, *Redeeming Culture*, 101-4, 111-18.

18. "National preparedness" is a term used by Michael S. Sherry, in his *In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), 85, 142.

the late 1940s “embodied the conviction that in an age of instant and total warfare, the vigilant nation must be constantly prepared by harnessing all its resources and linking its civilian and military institutions—indeed, obliterating the boundary between those institutions, just as the line between war and peace seemed to be disappearing.” Character education became one way the military cooperated with churches, schools, and various private organizations to accomplish what James Gilbert has called “the total mobilization of American society.”¹⁹

That Character Guidance and many of the other efforts to promote “national preparedness” should manifest a religious orientation is not surprising, given the culture in which they originated. During the postwar religious revival, secular as well as religious leaders emphasized the importance of religious faith and worship in the lives of individual Americans as well as the religious foundations of “the American way of life.” The Reverend Edward L. R. Elson, pastor of the National Presbyterian Church and author of a best-selling book on the revival, declared that “democracy as we know it in America is . . . a child of the Christian religion.” President Eisenhower, frequently praised as “the focal point” of the spiritual awakening, expressed one of its cardinal notions, that religious faith was an essential component of Americanism, in his famous statement: “Our Government has no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith.”²⁰ The U.S. Congress reflected the postwar mood in passing legislation inserting “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance and making “In God We Trust” the national motto. The public schools joined the crusade to promote religion and Americanism, and private organizations such as the American Legion and the Advertising Council mounted “Back to God” and “Religion in American Life” campaigns to “encourage regular worship attendance by all Americans and to emphasize the importance of religion in national, community and family life.”²¹

19. Truman, “Statement by the President Making Public a Report on Moral Safeguards for Selective Service Trainees, September 16, 1948,” 488; Sherry, *In the Shadow of War*, 138; Gilbert, *Redeeming Culture*, 103.

20. Edward L. R. Elson, *America's Spiritual Recovery* (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1954), 174–75; Eisenhower quoted in *New York Times*, 23 December 1952, 16. On Eisenhower as the “focal point” of the revival, see Elson, *America's Spiritual Recovery*, 53, 58; *New York Times*, 7 March 1958, 15.

21. On congressional legislation, see Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1972), 954. On the public schools, see David L. Marden, “The Cold War and American Education” (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1975); and B. Edward McClellan, *Schools and the Shaping of Character: Moral Education in America, 1607–Present* (Bloomington: ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education and the Social Development Center, Indiana University, 1992), 80–82. On the American Legion's “Back to God” campaign, see *New York Times*, 8 February 1954, 1, 11. On the Advertising

Together, the national preparedness ideology and the postwar revival inspired a religious construction of the Cold War. Portraying international communism as a religion that posed not just a military but a moral and spiritual threat to the United States and "the free world," many business, political, religious, and military leaders contended that the United States's chief weapon should be its "moral power." David E. Lilienthal, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, and John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, both warned Americans against relying solely on military force in the struggle against communism. The "true sources of America's strength," they declared, were not "material things" but rather what Lilienthal called "the spirit of this nation, . . . the faiths we cherish," and what Dulles termed "spiritual forces" and "the faith which in the past made our nation truly great." Although the Army was not inclined to rely solely on "moral power"—and neither were Lilienthal or Dulles—its emphasis on character education reflected such views of the Cold War. Thus Army Chief of Chaplains Frank A. Tobey insisted that "an essential deterrent against our enemy must remain the courageous heart, the right conscience, the clear head, the strong body fortified with the truth and obedient to the dictates of moral good." He echoed President Eisenhower's exhortation to the members of the Military Chaplains Association to continue "your work among our armed services to help raise and keep up to the highest possible pitch the morale and spiritual strength that we so badly need, as we defend freedom against totalitarianism in this world."²²

Obviously, the preoccupation with national preparedness and total mobilization presented a momentous opportunity for Army chaplains. Traditionally, their involvement in military training had been limited to lectures on sexual morality. Perhaps inspired by the appreciation high-ranking military leaders accorded them during World War II, in the immediate postwar period they campaigned for a more central role.²³ As

Council's "Religion in American Life" campaign, see *Encyclopedia of American Associations*, 2d ed. (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1959), 402.

22. For portrayals of communism as a religion, see, e.g., *New York Times*, 2 May 1947, 3; Elson, *America's Spiritual Recovery*, 81. Lilienthal quoted in the *New York Times*, 17 January 1949, 7; Dulles quoted in the *New York Times*, 12 October 1953, 16; 23 April 1958, 1, 4; Frank A. Tobey, "Character Guidance Program," *Army Information Digest* 14 (October 1959): 6; Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Remarks at the 22d Annual Convention of the Military Chaplains Association, May 6, 1954," in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954* (Washington: GPO, 1960), 462.

23. On Army chaplains during World War II, see Daniel B. Jorgensen, *The Service of Chaplains to Army Air Units, 1917-1946* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Air Force Chaplains, n.d.), 121, 149-50, 152-54, 208, 264-66; Robert L. Gushwa, *The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1920-1945* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army, 1977), 130-36, 186-90.

early as 1945, speaking before the Postwar Military Policy Committee of Congress, Army Chief of Chaplains Luther Miller explained how chaplains' religious and moral nurturing of trainees would enable universal military training to preserve and foster "the social and spiritual ideals of our nation."²⁴ According to Rodger Venzke, another chaplain, Harold O. Prudell, in the Plans and Programs Division, specifically recommended including citizenship and morality lectures prepared and delivered by chaplains as part of the Fort Knox UMT training program. Venzke also points out that in December, 1946, when Army officials were becoming increasingly concerned about the increase of venereal disease, Chief of Chaplains Miller wrote to a VD-control committee chairman in the War Department, suggesting that the lectures prepared for the Fort Knox unit be presented to all regular army trainees and personnel, a letter which doubtless influenced Secretary of War Patterson's order to commanding officers in January, 1947.²⁵

Whatever the extent of their influence in persuading the Army to implement a character education program (Army leaders, as we have seen, had their own reasons for instituting it), it is clear that chaplains regarded it as a means of raising their status and expanding their influence. In September 1947, writing about the newly established Character Guidance program, Chief of Chaplains Miller observed: "The Army chaplain is no longer playing guard; he is in the backfield. Commanding officers more and more are making up plays with the chaplain carrying the ball." Miller went on to predict that "the future will see the chaplain serving increasingly in the role of educator. More and more he will be called upon as a specialist in citizenship and morale as well as an authority in religion."²⁶ Ironically, as will be seen, the chaplains' embrace of their new role generated a perception of character education as a chaplains' program, which seems to have contributed to growing command resistance and the ultimate demise of the program.²⁷

The Army's commitment to mandatory, religiously oriented character education for all personnel remained strong throughout the 1950s. New Character Guidance regulations issued in 1961, which narrowed the range of the program, signaled the beginning of its demise.²⁸ As in the

24. Luther G. [sic] Miller, "Moral Effect of Military Service," *Army and Navy Chaplain* 16 (July-August 1945): 13. See also Luther D. Miller, "Peacetime Challenges," *Chaplain* 3 (September 1946): 19-21.

25. Venzke, *Confidence in Battle*, 40, 41.

26. Luther D. Miller, "The Chaplains in the Army," *Army and Navy Journal* 85 (20 September 1947): 74.

27. My observation draws on the argument made by Richard Hutcheson in *Churches and the Chaplaincy*, 158-59, regarding character education in the Navy.

28. Significantly, moral education in U.S. elementary and high schools also went into eclipse during the 1960s. See McClellan, *Schools and the Shaping of Character*, 82-87.

1950s, recruits continued to receive four hours of Character Guidance instruction during basic training. Following basic training all enlisted personnel below grade E-6 (i.e., below staff sergeant) received one hour of such instruction monthly. But officers and enlisted personnel of grade E-6 and higher were required to attend only a "monthly briefing" on the content of the instruction presented to lower-ranking personnel.²⁹ The new regulations reflected changes in military thinking regarding the relevance of Character Guidance. Given widespread public acceptance of selective service (before the escalation of the Vietnam war and the emergence of a new wave of antidraft feeling) and the waning of Cold War fears of "godless communism," Character Guidance seemed superfluous. Moreover, the work of military sociologists who stressed the "primary group" and "small group cohesion" as the key to combat motivation cast doubt on the argument that military training should include moral and spiritual instruction—which, it should be noted, had never won complete acceptance among military commanders. In studies of World War II and Korean War soldiers, the sociologists downplayed the significance

29. *Army Regulation 600-30, Personnel—General, Character Guidance Program* (Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 9 August 1961), 2; *ibid.*, 1 March 1965 version, 2. In September 1960, the Adjutant General's Office established 85 percent of assigned strength as a realistic attendance goal at Character Guidance lectures and briefings. Department of the Army Office of the Chief of Chaplains, *Summary of Major Events and Problems 1 July 1960 to 30 June 1961* (Washington: GPO, n.d.), 52. However, a survey of participation dated 31 August 1961 showed results far below the stated goal. In answer to the question, How often do you receive an orientation (written or oral) on the content of the monthly Character Guidance instructional packet?, out of a total of 85,591 commissioned officers, 38.2 percent responded about once a month; 4.0 percent, about once every two months; 21.4 percent, very seldom; and 36.4 percent, never. In answer to the same question, out of a total of 9,764 warrant officers, 41.6 percent responded about once a month; 7.3 percent, about once every two months; 23.6 percent, very seldom; 27.5 percent, never. In answer to the question, how often do you attend Character Guidance training?, out of a total of 758,112 enlisted men, 75.3 percent responded about once a month; 10.1 percent, about once every two months; 6.4 percent, do not attend, but receive monthly written or oral orientation; 8.2 percent, do not attend and receive neither written nor oral orientation. "Sample Survey of Military Personnel (RCS AG-366) as of 31 August 1961," prepared by Systems Development Branch, TAG Research and Development Command, attached to "Narrative Description of the Character Guidance Program, 4 January 1962" in File 721-01 Stennis Subcommittee Study, R.G. 247, Acc. No. 68-A-3353, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Md. A 1968 survey of enlisted men revealed that the percentage of those not receiving Character Guidance instruction had more than doubled from the 8.2 percent shown in the 1961 study. U.S. Army Office of the Chief of Chaplains, *Historical Review, 1 January 1967 to 30 June 1968* (Washington: GPO, 1969), 80. Charles C. Moskos, Jr., *The American Enlisted Man: The Rank and File in Today's Military* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1970), 99, described enlisted men's reaction to Character Guidance lectures as "either bored resignation or bemused cynicism."

of ideological or religious convictions in enabling men to fight effectively. Soldiers fought more for their comrades or buddies than for their nation or its religious principles or ideology, they asserted.³⁰ Character Guidance might make good citizens (although the Army already had a troop information program designed partly for that purpose³¹) but it seemed irrelevant to the production of good soldiers.

New perspectives on religion that emerged in the 1960s also persuaded the Army to reduce its commitment to Character Guidance. With the waning of the postwar religious revival and the increasing secularization of the public sphere, the program now appeared more a liability than an asset. The idea that religion should be an integral part of military training seemed constitutionally anomalous in light of the Supreme Court's school prayer and Bible-reading decisions and its emphasis on separation of church and state.³² Moreover, beginning in the 1960s, criticism of the theistic orientation of the Character Guidance program surfaced within as well as outside the Army. Some commanders disapproved of mandatory instruction in what they considered civil religion.³³ Some enlisted men complained to the Secretary of Defense and members of Congress about being "forced to go to a class in religion"³⁴ and being told by a chaplain "that in order to believe in democracy you must believe in God."³⁵ A few Protestant denominations questioned

30. See, for example, S. L. A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1947), 42-43, 141, 149, 154, 161; Edward A. Shils and Morris Janowitz, "Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 12 (1948): 280-315; Samuel A. Stouffer et al., *The American Soldier: Combat and Its Aftermath* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1949), chap. 3; Roger Little, "Buddy Relations and Combat Performance," in Morris Janowitz, ed., *The New Military: Changing Patterns of Organization* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1964), 195-223; Alexander L. George, "Primary Groups, Organization, and Military Performance," in Roger W. Little, ed., *Handbook of Military Institutions* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1971), 293-318.

31. See Thomas Alfred Palmer, "Why We Fight: A Study of Indoctrination Activities in the Armed Forces" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1991), 78.

32. On the U.S. government's increasing reliance on secular rather than religious sources in maintaining legitimacy and defining public policy, see Jeffrey K. Hadden, "Religious Broadcasting and the Mobilization of the New Christian Right," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 26 (March 1987): 2-4.

33. "Interview by Chaplain (Col.) Jay H. Ellens with Chaplain Charles Kriete," no date, typescript, 23-25, Gerhardt W. Hyatt Papers, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

34. Office of the Chief of Chaplains, "Historical Review, 1 July 1962 to 30 June 1963," typescript, 70, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Md.

35. Department of the Army Office of Chief of Chaplains, *Summary of Major Events and Problems 1 July 1960 to 30 June 1961* (Washington: GPO, n.d.), 58.

mandatory Character Guidance (as well as compulsory chapel at the military academies).³⁶ However, the most worrisome criticism (because it coincided with similar questioning of the constitutionality of the military chaplaincy³⁷) came from Lawrence Speiser, Director of the Washington office of the American Civil Liberties Union. In December 1962, he complained to Secretary of the Army Cyrus R. Vance that trainees at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, were being subjected to "religious indoctrination" during Character Guidance lectures.³⁸

In the early 1960s, the Office of the Army Chief of Chaplains refused to eliminate the theistic orientation of the Character Guidance program. It contended that the Army was "both free and obligated to uphold the basic moral and spiritual principles on which this Nation is founded," one of which was "a belief in God."³⁹ While it conceded that the program was "theistically oriented," the Chaplains Office insisted it was "not a religious program" since it had not been devised to support any religious doctrine or institution and since it offered instruction, not in "religious principles," but in "ethical, moral and psychological principles" under-

36. "United Presbyterian Report on the Military Chaplaincy [1965]," in A. Ray Appelquist, ed., *Church, State and Chaplaincy: Essays and Statements on the American Chaplaincy System* (Washington: General Commission on Chaplains and Armed Forces Personnel, 1969), 36, 37, 44; "National Study Conference on Church and State," *Chaplain* 21 (June 1964): 41-42; "Resolution Presented To and Passed by the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in Convention at Detroit, Michigan, June 16-26, 1965," *Chaplain* 22 (December 1965): 22; "Condemn Compulsory Chapel," *Christian Century*, 11 November 1964, 1388; Malvin H. Lundeen, Secretary, Lutheran Church in America, to Stephen Ailes, Secretary of the Army, 26 October 1965, typed photocopy, file 721-01 Compulsory Chapel Attendance at Service Academies (64), Record Group 247, Acc. No. 67-A-5011, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Md.

37. Venzke, *Confidence in Battle*, 126-30.

38. Office of the Chief of Chaplains, "Historical Review 1 July 1962 to 30 June 1963," 71. For another criticism, see U.S. Army Office of the Chief of Chaplains, *Historical Review, 1 July 1965 to 31 December 1966* (Washington: GPO, 1969), 148. Investigation of the ACLU complaint by the OCCH revealed that the chaplain in question had departed from the approved instructional material. He admitted that "Opportunity," the assigned topic for the December Character Guidance class, "left me kind of cold," and so, he explained, he told the assembled soldiers that he had decided to "take the opportunity of giving you the opportunity of knowing more about what different religious groups think about Christ." He said that he "talked about what the Jewish people thought about Christ, what Christians think about Him, what Mohammedans think about Him, what Buddhists and a couple of other groups thought about Christ." Office of the Chief of Chaplains, "Historical Review 1 July 1962 to 30 June 1963," 72.

39. Office of the Chief of Chaplains, *Summary of Major Events and Problems 1 July 1960 to 30 June 1961*, 58-59.

lying "traditional American concepts of personal integrity and responsible social conduct."⁴⁰

In March 1963, Secretary of the Army Vance took the initiative to prevent future complaints against the Character Guidance program. He informed commanders that Character Guidance training sessions were to be used exclusively for discussion of assigned topics and that such instruction should not take place in chapels or chapel facilities except in cases of military necessity. (The Character Guidance program, it will be recalled, was a command responsibility.) In June 1963, the Chaplains Office shifted gears, citing the Army Secretary's directive in its monthly newsletter and issuing its own warning to chaplains. To insure the "non-religious nature" of Character Guidance training and to prevent its being confused with religious instruction, chaplains were specifically prohibited from utilizing scheduled Character Guidance sessions "to deliver a sermon, to announce religious services, to upbraid troops for nonparticipation in chapel programs, to show religious films or to expound their own theological views." Only the scheduled topic was to be discussed and only approved Department of the Army training materials were to be utilized.⁴¹ For the next couple of years, confronted with "irregular" practices by chaplains, the Chaplains Office continued to invoke the 1963 directive.⁴² In addition, in May 1966, the Chief of Chaplains decided that the topic "One Nation Under God" would no longer be used in the Character Guidance program for basic trainees. Explaining the action, the Chaplains Office pointed to two concerns: first, that "an inadequately instructed chaplain" might present the topic "in such a way as to provide at least a superficial basis for criticizing the Character Guidance program as trespassing on the sphere of religion"; and second, that the topic violated the First Amendment.⁴³

40. Office of the Chief of Chaplains, "Historical Review 1 July 1962 to 30 June 1963," 70; Office of the Chief of Chaplains, "Historical Review 1 July 1963-30 June 1964," typescript, 69-70, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Md. See also U.S. Army Office of the Chief of Chaplains, *Historical Review, 1 July 1965 to 31 December 1966*, 148.

41. Office of the Chief of Chaplains, "Historical Review 1 July 1962 to 30 June 1963," 74-75.

42. Office of the Chief of Chaplains, "Historical Review 1 July 1963-30 June 1964," 70; Office of the Chief of Chaplains, *Historical Review, 1 July 1965 to 31 December 1966*, 148.

43. Office of the Chief of Chaplains, *Historical Review, 1 July 1965 to 31 December 1966*, 145; Office of the Chief of Chaplains, *Historical Review, 1 January 1967 to 30 June 1968*, 85. Until a new topic could be put together, chaplains were advised to substitute "Esprit" for the withdrawn topic; in August 1967 a topic entitled "Honor and the Soldier" replaced "One Nation Under God." Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Character Guidance Discussion Topics: Duty, Honor, Country*, Pamphlet 16-5, Change No. 1 (Washington: GPO, 18 August 1967), 1.

A look at the lesson plan for "One Nation Under God" suggests that the Chaplains Office had good reason for both concerns. The first of four lectures presented to soldiers during basic training in the 1950s and early 1960s,⁴⁴ "One Nation Under God" provides a graphic illustration of the overlapping of religion, character-building and citizenship so characteristic of the Character Guidance program as a whole. The lesson plan listed two objectives of the lecture: "To help the individual to understand the effect that faith in a Supreme Being has had on the origin and development of our country," and "To lead the individual to a recognition of the importance of the spiritual element in his training." Most of the material presented during the fifty-minute class aimed at proving that "We as a nation are *DEPENDENT* upon and *RESPONSIBLE* to Almighty God." In concluding the lecture, the instructor was directed to "EMPHASIZE: That we must cultivate within ourselves the religious beliefs and attitudes that were a part of those who built our nation."⁴⁵

As of November 1967, the Office of the Chief of Chaplains felt confident that by alerting chaplains to their proper role as Character Guidance instructors and eliminating a questionable lecture it had taken all the steps necessary to deter criticism of the Character Guidance program. Approval of its actions by the Office of the General Counsel of the Army reinforced the feeling of confidence. However, in April 1968, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) revived the issue of religion in the Character Guidance program. Director Lawrence Speiser sent a letter to the Under Secretary of the Army stating the Union's view that "the [Character Guidance] program as currently conceived and conducted raises problems under the First Amendment of the Constitution." He said the ACLU did not object to the concept of a character guidance program, but to "the religious flavor" of the existing program.⁴⁶

During the eleven months of deliberation over the proper response to make to the ACLU complaint, a three-way division of opinion developed within the military leadership. The Chief of Staff of the Army, General Harold K. Johnson, and the Vice Chief of Staff, General Ralph E. Haines, Jr., both known to be men of strong religious convictions, favored taking a firm stand in support of Character Guidance in its current form. The General Counsel of the Army and the Judge Advocate General insisted that the program could be successfully defended only if

44. Department of the Army, *Character Guidance Discussion Topics: Duty, Honor, Country*, Department of the Army Pamphlet 16-5 (Washington: GPO, 27 February 1957), 1; *ibid.*, version of 14 January 1966, vii; U.S. Army Office of the Chief of Chaplains, *Historical Review, 1 July 1965 to 31 December 1966*, 143.

45. Department of the Army, *Character Guidance Discussion Topics* (14 January 1966), 1, 3 (italics and capitalization in original).

46. Office of the Chief of Chaplains, *Historical Review, 1 January 1967 to 30 June 1968*, 88, 89.

all passages with religious connotations were deleted from the training materials.⁴⁷

The Office of the Chief of Chaplains took the middle ground. In a "position paper" on Character Guidance instruction, it claimed to be "strongly opposed to any inclusion of religion or religious dogma," since that would violate the rights of the soldiers required to attend the lectures. It also opposed "any attempt totally to prohibit the use of religious references, illustrations, or materials." Such a prohibition would deny recourse to "the historical-religious or cultural-religious foundations of civilization as . . . reflected in the great literature of the ages." It would even preclude use of quotations and illustrations from historical documents of the United States such as the Code of Conduct ("I will trust in my God and in the United States of America") and the Declaration of Independence ("all men . . . are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights"). To eliminate such references because the chaplain was the instructor or because the quotations might be "constitutionally suspect," said the Chaplains Office, was "carrying the striving for 'secularism' in Character Guidance instruction to the point of absurdity."⁴⁸

In addition to the position paper, the Chaplains Office drafted a set of guidelines governing the Character Guidance program. They emphasized that since attendance at Character Guidance classes was mandatory, individual soldiers' constitutional right to freedom of religion must be protected. "Consequently, commanders, chaplains, and other instructors must be aware of the necessity to avoid 'preaching' and incorporating religious texts or materials in any manner that may connote religious instructions [*sic*]." The guidelines further stated that "historical and cultural references which have incidental religious significance will be used in a strictly secular sense and only where necessary for an understanding of the subject matter of a particular Character Guidance lesson plan." And chaplains functioning as Character Guidance instructors must "recognize fully that their role in the Character Guidance Program is strictly as a staff officer performing a military function."⁴⁹

47. Office of the Chief of Chaplains, *Historical Review*, 1 January 1967 to 30 June 1968, 89, 90; Office of the Chief of Chaplains, *Historical Review*, 1 July 1968 to 30 June 1969 (Washington: GPO, 1970), 72-73, 74. On the religious convictions of Johnson and Haines, see Anne C. Loveland, *American Evangelicals and the U.S. Military, 1942-1993* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), chaps. 8 and 13.

48. Office of the Chief of Chaplains, *Historical Review*, 1 July 1968 to 30 June 1969, 75, 77.

49. Office of the Chief of Chaplains, *Historical Review*, 1 July 1968 to 30 June 1969, 78-79. Some of the wording of the guidelines was dictated by the Judge Advocate General's office.

A week after the Army leadership approved implementation of the new guidelines,⁵⁰ in March 1969, Congressman William G. Bray (Republican from Indiana) complained in the House of Representatives that the Chief of Chaplains was “knuckling under” to “unjustified meddling on the part of the ACLU” and demanded to know why the Army had ordered excision of passages with religious connotations from Character Guidance materials.⁵¹ As word of the Army directive spread, resentment mounted, fueled by newscaster Paul Harvey⁵² and other public opinion leaders. The commander in chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars accused Army leaders of allying themselves with “the forces of moral and spiritual erosion” undermining the United States.⁵³ A Baptist preacher in Atlanta referred to the directive as “another stab at the heart of America to take the name of God out of everything we hold dear.”⁵⁴

Responding to the furor, Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird ordered a review of the new policy. In a statement issued March 28, he promised to see to it that the Defense Department followed the law. “At the same time,” he added, “I wish to emphasize that our commanders have a special obligation to present an inspiring program of character guidance to members of the armed forces, particularly to the thousands of young men and women who enter the service each year.”⁵⁵ On April 3 he announced, “With regard to the character guidance programs within the military department, I want to state that there will be no prohibition against the use of ‘God,’ ‘Supreme Being,’ ‘Creator,’ ‘Faith,’ ‘spiritual values,’ or similar words.” He did note that “espousal of religious dogmas or particular sectarian beliefs is not the purpose of and has no place in the character guidance programs.”⁵⁶ The Defense Secretary’s statement climaxed the public furor over the Character Guidance program. It was only fitting that Laird, a Presbyterian elder, should become the hero of the media event and be represented as the man who put God and religion back in the Army.⁵⁷ His pious grandstanding converted a potentially

50. Office of the Chief of Chaplains, *Historical Review, 1 July 1968 to 30 June 1969*, 79.

51. *Congressional Record*, 91st Cong., 1st sess., 1969, vol. 115, pt. 6: 7343-44; see also Lawrence L. Knutson, “Lectures Revised: Army Bans ‘God’ in Talks,” *Washington Evening Star*, 28 March 1969, A-18; *New York Times*, 29 March 1969, 4.

52. William Willoughby, “Chaplains’ Role Under New Scrutiny,” *Christianity Today*, 25 April 1969, 32.

53. William R. MacKaye, “Row Over God in Army Talks Intensifies,” *Washington Post*, 5 April 1969, B-4.

54. *New York Times*, 29 March 1969, 4. See also “Discharging God from the Army,” *Christianity Today*, 25 April 1969, 22-23.

55. *New York Times*, 29 March 1969, 1, 4.

56. *Washington Post*, 4 April 1969, A-4.

57. Willoughby, “Chaplains’ Role,” 33.

damaging issue (for the newly elected Nixon administration with its conservative constituency) into a public relations triumph. It was not the first time military or political leaders had used the Character Guidance program to win public approval.

A year later, the Office of the Chief of Chaplains and the Army leadership replaced the Character Guidance program with a new program called Our Moral Heritage. Launched in 1970, it implemented the theory implied in the 1969 "position paper" and guidelines—that one of the functions of the program should be to present the historical, religious, and cultural foundations of American civilization while avoiding any kind of "preaching" or instruction in religion. Army publications described the new program as "nontheological and nonsectarian"⁵⁸ and defined its purpose as follows: "to identify and teach those aspects of American values which are the moral foundations of dedicated citizenship and character development."⁵⁹ As had been the case with Character Guidance since 1961, recruits were required to attend four hour-long Our Moral Heritage classes during basic training, and two classes during advanced individual training, and monthly classes continued to be mandatory for personnel in grades E-6 and below. However, the regulations for the Moral Heritage program provided that officers and enlisted personnel in grades E-7 and above were to receive training as prescribed by commanders. Although the regulations specified a briefing on the monthly lecture topic as "an absolute minimum," they gave commanders more leeway regarding character education than they had previously enjoyed.⁶⁰

The Moral Heritage program quickly foundered. (As will be seen later in this essay, resistance on the part of both commanders and chaplains undermined it.) In June 1971, in another action reducing the importance of character education in military training, the Army discontinued mandatory classes except for personnel receiving basic and advanced

58. *Army Regulation 600-30, Personnel—General, Character Guidance Program* (Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1 July 1970), 2.

59. Department of the Army, *Character Guidance Discussion Topics: Our Moral Heritage*, Pamphlet 165-5, 12 December 1969, iii.

60. *Personnel—General, Character Guidance Program*, 1 July 1970, 2. During basic (but not advanced) training, the topics discussed in OMH classes were to be different for the two sexes. The four classes for male recruits were entitled "Honor and the Soldier," "Authority and the Soldier," "Group Living and the Soldier," and "Marriage and the Soldier"; the four for female recruits were "Maturity and the Military Lady," "Hazards of the Military Service," "The Lady in the Military Service," and "Women's Service to the Nation." "Character Guidance Ad Hoc Committee Final Report, 7 Feb 1968," typed photocopy, 2, file 201-05 (67) Committee, AD HOC, Instructional Files, Record Group 247, Acc. No. 71-A-3095, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Md.

individual training. It also enlarged the discretion commanders had been given under the Moral Heritage program. The June 1971 order allowed them the option of developing moral welfare programs appropriate to the needs of the local installation, utilizing resources offered by the chaplain if they wished. Adapting to the new policy, the Office of the Chief of Chaplains devised yet another character education program, Human Self Development (HSD), which went into operation in December 1971. It was designed to "assist the commander in the exercise of his civic, ethical, and professional responsibility to promote healthy mental, moral, and social attitudes in the personnel of his command." The chaplain had primary staff responsibility for carrying out the HSD program, at the commander's request, but other staff officers and the commander himself were encouraged to lead discussions. Indeed, the Army regulation governing HSD emphasized the commander's "moral leadership" and encouraged him to use the program to "address today's challenging problems of racial tensions, drug abuse, poverty, dissent, and moral behavior" as well as "locally selected subjects chosen on the basis of Army value needs." The Army Chaplain Board continued to produce lesson plans for HSD classes, and chaplains were urged to tailor them to "the peculiar problems of the local installation" and "the particular needs of the command."⁶¹

Like Our Moral Heritage, the Human Self Development program sought to encourage "high standards of personal and social conduct" among members of the Army by strengthening their understanding and acceptance of "the basic truths, principles, and attitudes that undergird our nation's heritage."⁶² Both programs promoted secular, democratic ideals such as the dignity of the individual and the right of all human beings to equality, freedom, and justice. In their method of instruction both programs reflected the "moral revolution" of the 1960s. During that decade, new theories of morality raised questions about the validity of character education programs, whether in the armed forces or the public schools, that inculcated a system of transcendent and absolute values (the approach used in Character Guidance). The "new morality" of the 1960s not only repudiated "legalism" but any insistence on objective obligation. It proposed an inductive rather than a deductive method of approaching ethics and relied on responsible self-decision rather than

61. Office of Chief of Chaplains, "Historical Review 1 July 1971 to 30 June 1972," typescript, 64, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, D.C.; AR 600-30, 1, 2, 3; Office of Chief of Chaplains, "Annual Report of Major Activities: Historical Review of the Office of Chief of Chaplains 1 July 1972 to 30 June 1973," typescript, 108, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, D.C.

62. *Army Regulation 600-30, Personnel—General, Character Guidance Program* (Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 19 October 1971), 1. See also *Personnel—General, Character Guidance Program* (1 July 1970).

obedience to external or absolute authority. Its mood, James T. Laney observed, was "indicative rather than imperative."⁶³

Instead of the lecture system used in Character Guidance, the Moral Heritage program directed chaplains to promote dialogue and discussion. The Chaplains Office described the OMH program as "furnishing an open forum where vital moral, ethical, and spiritual issues are considered. The purpose of this approach is not to impose a value system on the soldier, but [to] assist him to develop his own meaningful value system, which will not only benefit the Army, but motivate him to be a more constructive citizen when he completes his military obligations."⁶⁴ Similarly, the HSD program also prescribed nondirective instruction in what the Chaplains Office called "'Town Meeting' settings" where the individual soldier could test his or her "options" against those held by other members of the class.⁶⁵

Based largely on behavioral science information and methodology, HSD exhibited a strong similarity to the values clarification approach to moral education, which gained considerable attention and was widely utilized in the American educational system during the 1960s. In place of traditional methods of moral education such as moralizing (transferring a set of values from one person or group to another person or group) and modeling (living a set of values that others will emulate), the values clarification approach recommended teaching a "process of valuing" whereby students learned how to develop their own set of values. Values clarification also emphasized that the values clarifying process was something that took place in a group, where individuals engaged in "social discourse" and "communication," sharing thoughts and feelings. Values clarification emphasized the situational character of moral reasoning; it considered all values, including moral ones, personal and relative; it proclaimed no hierarchy of moral standards in which certain values were regarded as more just and therefore more deserving of commitment than others. Values clarification also exhibited a strong thera-

63. James T. Laney, "The New Morality and the Religious Communities," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 387 (January 1970): 17. On the 1960s "moral revolution" and the "new morality," see also Ahlstrom, *Religious History of the American People*, 1084; Roger L. Shinn, "Theological Ethics: Retrospect and Prospect," in Edward LeRoy Long, Jr., and Robert T. Handy, eds., *Theology and Church in Times of Change* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 131-36. Theodore R. Weber, "Ethical Theory and Value Education," *Military Chaplains' Review*, Winter 1974, 28, defined "legalism" as "observing rules for their own sake and self-righteously making a virtue of rule-obedience."

64. Office of the Chief of Chaplains, "Historical Review 1 July 1970-30 June 1971," typescript, 83, 85-86, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, D.C.

65. Office of Chief of Chaplains, "Historical Review 1 July 1971 to 30 June 1972," 63.

peutic element, in that it focused considerable attention on promoting self-awareness and self esteem.⁶⁶

The way the Office of the Chief of Chaplains described HSD clearly shows the influence of the values clarification approach. "Through the new Human Self Development program," the Chaplains Office stated, "the Army seeks to improve the soldier's self-image . . . [using] a system of value education. As a soldier sees himself in relation to the fundamental values which undergird a free society, he is better able to realize his worth, to develop his full potential and to seek healthy goals for his life."⁶⁷ The "Notes for the Instructor" prefacing a series of discussion topics used in basic training advised establishing rapport with the class by emphasizing that there would be "a spirit of permissiveness throughout the entire session in which expression of honest feelings and opinions would be encouraged." The instructor should stress that there were no right or wrong answers and that every person would be treated with dignity and respect. Treating people that way would show "true democracy at work."⁶⁸ The lesson plan for "Morality and the Conscience," one of the HSD topics used in basic training, also shows that the purpose of the session was not to promote any particular system of values but rather to make participants aware of the existence of the individual conscience and of ways of "informing" and "invigorating" it.⁶⁹

Implementation of OMH and HSD coincided with a much publicized Army campaign in the late 1960s and early 1970s to "humanize" the mil-

66. Richard D. Hersh, John P. Miller, and Glen D. Fielding, *Models of Moral Education: An Appraisal* (New York: Longman, 1980), 76, 79, 9; McClellan, *Schools and the Shaping of Character*, 87-90; Howard Kirschenbaum and Sidney B. Simon, eds., *Readings in Values Clarification* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1973), 18, 22; David Purpel and Kevin Ryan, eds., *Moral Education . . . [sic] It Comes With the Territory* (Berkeley, Calif.: McCutchan Publishing, 1976), 168-69.

67. Office of the Chief of Chaplains, "Historical Review 1 July 1971 to 30 June 1972," 62. See also Office of the Chief of Chaplains, "Annual Report of Major Activities: Historical Review 1 July 1973 to 30 June 1974," typescript, 76, U. S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, D.C.; Bertram C. Gilbert, "Value Education," *Military Chaplains' Review*, April 1972, 51.

68. Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Human Self-Development Discussion Topics: Our Moral Heritage*, Pamphlet 165-10 (Washington: GPO, 15 May 1972), v.

69. "Morality and the Conscience" in Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Human Self-Development Discussion Topics: Our Moral Heritage*, Pamphlet 165-11 (Washington: GPO, 30 June 1972). For a discussion of values clarification exercises employed by two chaplains in the HSD program at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama, see Hugh J. Bickley and Ford F. G'Segner, "Games and Values Clarification: Aids in Human Self-Development," *Military Chaplains' Review* (Department of the Army Pamphlet 165-07, n.d.), 44-48, 51. In the bibliography Bickley and G'Segner singled out for special praise, because it eschewed "sermonizing" and "moralizing," a values clarification handbook by Sidney Simon, Leland Howe, and Howard Kirschenbaum, which they noted was already being used by a growing number of chaplains.

itary environment—to make military service more bearable, even attractive, in order to recruit and retain enlistees. *Time* magazine described it as an effort “to meet at least in part the demands of a brighter, more restive generation of young Americans who reject the artificiality of make-work chores and spit-and-polish regimen, who want to know the why of orders and the wherefore of authority.” Advertisements for the “New Army” ran under the slogan “The Army Wants to Join You” and stressed its concern for “individual expression and changing lifestyles.” The most publicized reforms included an increase in pay, beer machines in day rooms, elimination of reveille and bed checks, and reduction of inspections, but the campaign also promoted a “participatory” as opposed to authoritarian approach to leadership with emphasis on “communication” between officers and enlisted personnel.⁷⁰

In an effort to generate command enthusiasm for its new character education programs, the Office of the Chief of Chaplains emphasized the way they dovetailed with the “people oriented” approach of the “New Army.” The Chaplains Office declared, “The commanders must get to know the gut feelings of their men.” Character education classes offered “one of the few two-way personnel communication devices” available for that purpose. It also reminded commanders that such classes were unique among Army programs in that they addressed not just symptoms but “the causes of human turbulence and bad behavior” and dealt directly with contemporary issues and current problems.⁷¹ In addition, the Chaplains Office and the Army Chaplain Board touted the “complete flexibility” of HSD in comparison with earlier character education programs. “Here is exactly what commanders and chaplains have said they always wanted, namely, the chance to do their own thing at their own discretion, using the resources provided by the Chaplain Board,” Chaplain Bertram C. Gilbert pointed out.⁷²

Nevertheless OMH and HSD, like the earlier Character Guidance program, failed to win command support. A U.S. Army Chaplain Board field study of the Moral Heritage program found only 24 percent of commanders enthusiastic about it, 50 percent moderately enthusiastic, and

70. “Humanizing the U.S. Military,” *Time*, 21 December 1970, 16, 20; Gen. Bruce Palmer, Jr., “The American Soldier in An Equivocal Age,” *Army* 19 (October 1969): 31. See also Lt. Gen. W. T. Kerwin, Jr., “Youth’s ‘Why?’ Key Challenge in Today’s Army,” *Army* 20 (October 1970): 69–72; Lt. James H. Toner, “Cerebrations: Leaders Must Reply When Soldiers Ask,” *Army* 20 (August 1970): 56; William L. Hauser, *America’s Army in Crisis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 133–37, 139; *New York Times*, 5 September 1971, 36; 17 February 1971, 21.

71. Office of the Chief of Chaplains, “Historical Review 1 July 1970–30 June 1971,” 89, 90.

72. Gilbert, “Value Education,” 51.

26 percent with no enthusiasm.⁷³ Their long-standing skepticism toward any kind of nonmilitary training was a factor. In addition, the argument that the character education program furthered the reforms of the "New Army" carried little weight with commanders who worried that the humanizing campaign would undermine military order and discipline.⁷⁴ And, of course, the June 1971 order enlarging command discretion enabled them to ignore the character education if they were so inclined.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the Chief of Chaplains Office to promote the Moral Heritage and Human Self Development programs, many chaplains were almost as disaffected as commanders. The Army Chaplain Board field study found 39 percent of chaplains enthusiastic, 30 percent moderately enthusiastic, and 31 percent with no enthusiasm.⁷⁵ Some chaplains lacked confidence in their ability to function as facilitators in the free-wheeling group discussions of values. Others preferred the priestly-pastoral role to that of a secular teacher, or found it difficult to work closely with commanders and other staff officers in producing character education programs, or resented the erosion of their moral leadership position. Whatever the reasons for it, it is clear that chaplain disaffection played as important a role as command resistance in undermining character education in the 1970's.⁷⁶ In 1977, the Army officially discontinued the already moribund Human Self Development program.

Thus ended the Army's thirty-year experiment in character education. The transition from Character Guidance to Our Moral Heritage, then to Human Self Development, in response to developments in religion and morality and the changing needs and problems of the armed forces, reflected a shift from a religious to a secular, social-scientific orientation, from an absolutist to a relativist view of moral values, and from an authoritarian to a nondirective mode of instruction. In the beginning the character education classes were mandatory for all Army personnel; by the time the program ended only soldiers undergoing basic and advanced training were required to attend. Until the 1970s, chaplains

73. Office of the Chief of Chaplains, "Historical Review 1 July 1971 to 30 June 1972," 71.

74. Drew Middleton, "Army Reform Plan Stirs Debate on Whether G.I. Will Have Needed Discipline in War," *New York Times*, 17 February 1971, 21.

75. Office of the Chief of Chaplains, "Historical Review 1 July 1971 to 30 June 1972," 71.

76. Gilbert, "Value Education," 49, 51; Office of the Chief of Chaplains, *Historical Review, 1 July 1969 to 30 June 1970* (Washington: GPO, 1971), 82-84; Office of Chief of the Chaplains, "Annual Report of Major Activities: Historical Review of the Office of the Chief of Chaplains 1 July 1972 to 30 June 1973," 103-4; Robert D. Crick and Douglas J. Groen, "The Fitzsimmons Model for the Human Self-Development Program," *Military Chaplains' Review*, April 1972, 53, 57.

played the key role in character education; during that decade commanders were given a larger moral leadership role.

If the concern with national preparedness in the 1940s impelled Army leaders to institute character education, the decision to end the draft in 1973 hastened the demise of the program. In the early 1970s, when Army leaders began planning implementation of the all-volunteer force, they decided to deemphasize the existing character education program. With public approval of the draft no longer a concern, they sidelined a program designed to inculcate personal and civic values in an army of citizen-soldiers, relying instead on a revitalized military ethic to teach the values and behavior appropriate to professional soldiers.⁷⁷ Even though character education was not formally terminated until 1977, the change to the all-volunteer force in 1973 sealed its fate.

77. The revitalization of the Army military ethic was, of course, also a response to the erosion of discipline and morale within the Army during the latter part of the Vietnam War. Significantly, Army leaders did not look to character education as a solution to that problem. See Loveland, *American Evangelicals and the U.S. Military*, 277 and 277n. For Army leaders' early (pre-all-volunteer force) discussion of the need to revitalize the military ethic, see, for example, Lt. Col. William L. Hauser, "Professionalism and the Junior Officer Drain," *Army* 20 (September 1970): 17-22; Col. Samuel H. Hays, "The Growing Leadership Crisis," *Army* 20 (February 1970): 39-43; Kerwin, "Youth's 'Why?' Key Challenge in Today's Army," 69; Gen. Bruce Palmer, Jr., "Challenges Give Unique Chance to Better Army," *Army* 20 (October 1970): 29-31; "U.S. Army War College, Study on Military Professionalism," typed photocopy, U.S. Army War College, 30 June 1970, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.; Haynes Johnson and George C. Wilson, *Army in Anguish* (New York: Pocket Books, 1972), 28, 156-57, 189; and for a brief description of the full-blown professional ethic formulated under the administration of Army Chief of Staff General John A. Wickham in the 1980s, see Loveland, *American Evangelicals and the U.S. Military*, 278.