



Legal and Paedagogical Principles of the formation of Professional Competencies of Military Chaplains: Domestic and Foreign Experience


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Abstract

The war in Ukraine necessitated the introduction of military chaplaincy as an official institution in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, which became possible after the adoption of the Law "On Military Chaplaincy." (2024). Military chaplains perform not only a spiritual mission, but also provide moral and psychological support to personnel in conditions of hostilities. The experience of NATO countries shows that the effectiveness of chaplain service depends on proper professional training that combines religious, paedagogical, psychological and legal aspects. In this context, the study of the legal and paedagogical foundations for the formation of competencies of military chaplains is important for improving their training and effective integration into the Ukrainian military system. Taking into account globalization and instability in the capitalist world, military chaplaincy promotes a number of sustainable development goals by strengthening social institutions, ensuring the promotion of mental well-being and enhancing inclusive and fair military structures and practices.

The institution of military chaplaincy emphasizes the importance of emotional and moral support during warfare and post-war periods. That is why the article is aimed to analyze the legal and paedagogical foundations for the formation of military chaplains' professional competencies in Ukraine, with an emphasis on innovative teaching methods and aspects of sustainable development. The article uses the following methods of research: analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, dialectical, analytical, analogy, abstraction and generalization. The article is aimed at substantiating the legal and paedagogical foundations for the formation of professional competencies of military chaplains, analyzing educational approaches and international experience for their implementation in Ukraine, with an emphasis on innovative training methods.

Keywords: Military Chaplains, Professional Competencies, Paedagogical Conditions, A System of Advanced Training, Mentoring.

Introduction

Military actions in Ukraine contributed to the introduction of military chaplains into the structure of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, which was made possible by the adoption by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the Law "On Military Chaplaincy," (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2024) aimed at institutionalizing spiritual support in military units. Now every military unit has the right to spiritual assistance of the chaplain. A military pastor, unlike a parish priest, is a professional who comes into the military, in particular, to perform tasks related to the moral and spiritual support of military personnel.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine are aggressively integrating the standards of Western countries, in particular the Institute of Military Chaplaincy. Chaplains are important to the North Atlantic Alliance because they offer the military comprehensive assistance and support. In conditions caused by the conflict in Ukraine, the spiritual assistance of servicemen became not only decisive, but also vital. The psychological and emotional stresses experienced by the personnel of Ukraine during a tense battle affect their morale, decision-making skills and ability to endure stress (Bohdan et al., 2023). Chaplains benefit the Armed Forces of Ukraine because they promote a culture of trust in psychological and spiritual healing, reduce the risk of post-traumatic stress disorders and improve the morality of their people. Involvement of military chaplains in the activities of hospitals, medical institutions and rehabilitation centers contributes to pastoral care and spiritual support of the wounded.

Military chaplaincy is an important institution that performs not only a spiritual mission, but also plays a significant role in ensuring moral stability, psychological health, and ethical leadership in military structures. Given the contemporary challenges, in particular armed conflicts, this institution implements several Sustainable Development Goals defined by the



UNO. In this regard, sustainable development involves the integration of spiritual values into the development of the army and society. This can be explained by the fact that the physical training of military personnel and their psychological and moral well-being are equally important. The cooperation between chaplains and other social institutions creates the basis for long-term, sustainable development of the military sphere, where principles such as mutual respect, ethical standards and spiritual development come to the fore. Apart from that, their role in the post-war recovery and reintegration of veterans is closely linked to Sustainable Development Goal 3 (good health and well-being), as chaplains provide important mental health and rehabilitation support to military personnel suffering from combat stress and trauma.

The requirements of the modern military system of Ukraine and international norms that affect the professionalization of this institute make it decisive for the study of the educational and legal foundations for the development of professional competence of military chaplains. One of the most important steps in attracting the military structure of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to the standards of Western countries is the institutionalization of military chaplaincy. This ensures that the chaplain's service is accessible and meets international training standards and the responsibilities of military pastors.

The complexity of the duties performed by military chaplains during a conflict further increases the importance of research. In addition to providing spiritual support, they are critical to the psychological well-being of the military, adapting to combat, and addressing the moral dilemmas and stresses that arise during conflict. Professional training of chaplains should be based on an interdisciplinary approach that covers theological, psychological, educational, social and legal issues, as the experience of the armed forces of the United States, Great Britain, Poland, Canada and Germany demonstrates.

Creating a clear model of professional training of military chaplains, which involves the use of modern pedagogical teaching methods, the development of crisis communication skills, emotional intelligence and stress resistance, is one of the difficulties faced by Ukraine. The effectiveness of the military chaplaincy of Ukraine, which is still at the stage of formation, primarily depends on the creation of a legislative framework that will establish the status of chaplains, their duties and qualifications. Training programmes such as, for example, the Chaplaincy Training Center of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the Institute of Military Chaplaincy in Lviv that prepare military chaplains to fulfill the modern requirements of war and peacekeeping missions are also critical.

In addition to identifying important areas for improving the educational process and regulatory regulation, the study of legal and pedagogical aspects of the development of professional competencies of military chaplains will assess how well the current system of their training meets the needs of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. A thorough approach to training military chaplains is crucial in times of conflict. This includes learning abilities, psychological stability, legal knowledge and a thorough understanding of the nuances of military duty. The purpose of this study is to study global experience, find successful methods of training chaplains and develop proposals for improving the system of military chaplaincy in Ukraine.

Several scholars have researched the institution of chaplaincy, in particular, Rusnak (2024) explores the development of chaplain service in the Armed Forces, its role in supporting the military and the evolution of the legislative framework from 2014 to 2022. He analyzes the adoption of the Law of Ukraine "On the Military Chaplaincy Service" (2021) and changes after the invasion of the Russian Federation in 2022, emphasizing the need to improve legal regulation. Kapliy (2022) explores the development of military chaplaincy in the Armed Forces, its legal settlement and significance. The Law of Ukraine "On the Military Chaplaincy Service" (2021), which gave chaplains the status of military personnel, is analyzed. It offers



improvement of legislation on the number of chaplains, restrictions for the Moscow Patriarchate and protection of confidentiality.

Spivak (2022) analyzes the legal status of a military chaplain, the compliance of the Law "On Military Chaplaincy Service" with the current legislation and the need for its improvement. The social guarantees of chaplains, the rights of military personnel to religion and foreign experience are considered. The importance of psychological support of the army in the conditions of war and the subsequent legal settlement of the chaplain service was emphasized. Dolhanova (2022) analyzes the development of military chaplaincy in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe after the collapse of the USSR and its influence on the formation of chaplaincy service in the Armed Forces. The experience of Poland, Hungary, Romania, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, working according to NATO standards, has been studied. During the Warsaw Pact, the situation with military chaplaincy was under strict control of communist regimes that adhered to the Soviet model of religious management. In most of these countries, military chaplaincy was officially abolished, and the activities of clergy in the army were prohibited or severely restricted. After the fall of the communist regimes and accession to NATO, these countries restored military chaplaincy gradually, taking Western standards as a basis, which is now an important experience for Ukraine. The importance of introducing this experience in Ukraine for improving the national system of chaplaincy was emphasized.

The article is aimed at substantiating the legal and paedagogical foundations for the formation of professional competencies of military chaplains, analyzing educational approaches and international experience for their implementation in the domestic system of military chaplaincy, with an emphasis on innovative training methods that contribute to the development of psychological stability, emotional intelligence and communicative competence.

Focusing on international standards and modern paedagogical methods, this research contributes to the broader goals of sustainable development of fair military institutions and quality education, promotes inclusive societies, and ensures mental health and well-being for all individuals.

Materials and Methods

The methodology of the article is based on a comprehensive approach to the study of the Institute of military chaplaincy, its historical development, functional purpose, legal status and role in the military structures of different countries, in particular, NATO, as well as the prospects for its adaptation and improvement in Ukraine. The main purpose of the study is to determine the key aspects of the formation and development of military chaplaincy in the Ukrainian army, in particular by analyzing foreign experience, comparing models of training chaplains and assessing their role in maintaining the moral and psychological state of military personnel. The study provides an integrated approach that combines theoretical and empirical methods for deep understanding of problems, identifying patterns, formulating conclusions and developing practical recommendations.

To achieve this goal, several methods have been applied that allow for a systematic and multi-level analysis of the subject of research. The method of analysis is used to study normative legal acts regulating the activities of military chaplains, international standards of chaplain ministry, as well as scientific and practical developments in the field of military pedagogy and religious support for military personnel. The analysis allowed us to consider various aspects of military chaplaincy - from its historical formation to modern approaches to the training of chaplains in the armed forces of leading countries of the world. The method of synthesis provides the integration of the obtained data into a single system, which allows us to distinguish the main characteristics of military chaplaincy, determine its functional features and develop a conceptual understanding of its significance in military structures.



The induction method is used to derive general provisions on military chaplaincy based on the analysis of specific examples of chaplains in the armed forces of the United States, Great Britain, Poland, Germany, Canada and other countries. This allows us to establish the basic patterns of development of the chaplain service, to distinguish common features, as well as to determine the factors affecting its effectiveness. The deduction method is used to apply general theoretical provisions to specific conditions for the introduction of military chaplaincy in Ukraine. In particular, this allows us to assess the prospects for adapting international experience, taking into account the Ukrainian legal, sociocultural and military context, as well as to formulate specific recommendations for improving the system of training military chaplains.

The dialectical method allows us to consider military chaplaincy as a complex system that develops in conjunction with military, social, religious and psychological processes. It allows you to trace the evolution of chaplain service in different historical conditions, to determine the features of its transformation and adaptation to modern challenges. The analytical method is used for a detailed study of the pedagogical conditions for the training of military chaplains, in particular the development of motivation for learning, the formation of professional competencies, increasing the level of empathy and the development of communication skills. The use of an analytical approach allows us to assess the effectiveness of various educational methods in the training of military chaplains, to determine the strengths and weaknesses of existing training programmes.

The method of generalization is used to identify the main trends in the development of military chaplaincy, to determine the best practices for the training of chaplains that can be implemented in Ukraine, as well as to formulate conclusions about the effectiveness of existing and proposed models of chaplaincy service. Thus, the study of military chaplaincy is based on a comprehensive analysis of its historical development, functional purpose, international experience and prospects for integration into the military system of Ukraine. The complex application of methods of analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, dialectics, analogy, abstraction and generalization allows you to form deep conditions of understanding.

Results

1.1. International experience of military chaplaincy: Organization, training, and role in the armed forces

The role of the military chaplain is almost the same for all countries. His or her main duties include conducting religious ceremonies, providing advice on religious issues and worshipping the military while maintaining moral and spiritual power over them. Since 1775, when Congress approved new statutes for the national army, the Institute of Chaplains in the US Armed Forces has existed for more than 240 years. However, after the end of World War I, an organizational chaplain service was created. In 1918, a law was passed that established a quota of pilgrims in the Armed Forces - 1 chaplain for 1200 military personnel, and in each military district another 20 clergy (Zhygailo & Kostruba, 2022).

Since then, much attention has been paid to the religious problems of the US Army. ... "Commanders of all degrees should strictly monitor how their subordinates obey, paying special attention to religious education," by the code of military uniform of the United States. Those who offend religion or discourage this practice must face dire consequences. A candidate for the position of chaplain in the United States Army must meet the following conditions: have excellent health, receive a university education and complete at least three years of theological research at the master's level (approximately equivalent to a theological academy). In addition, he must have proper academic, psychological, moral and spiritual trust. The applicant must also be under a military service contract for at least six years.



As a rule, a candidate for the post of military chaplain must be a US citizen, have the necessary physical data and be between the ages of 21 and 35. However, the candidate cannot be older than 40 years, although the Catholic Church in the United States recently raised the age limit to 50 years. The candidate of a military chaplain must be checked by the highest bodies of his religious institution, and the candidate must belong to the clergy of this religion (Kuzmenko, 2019). Special military educational institutions are used to train personnel. For the Army and Air Force, it is the Army Chaplain School at Fort Wadsworth, New York; For the Navy, it is a United States Navy priesthood school located in Newport, Rhode Island. Since the chaplain is both a full-fledged priest and a full-fledged soldier, the chaplain training programme provides at least three months of comprehensive army training. Depending on the type of army, full training takes six to nine months. After passing the exams, he is awarded the title "Lieutenant of the service of military chaplains." (Piehler, 2025)

Students learn the basics of military art, the handling of weapons and military equipment and the peculiarities of religious practice during military duty. They are obliged to handle all weapons but do not have the right to carry or use them. The guidelines of international humanitarian law are responsible for this. According to the international Geneva Conventions, military doctors must adhere to international prescriptions. More than 200 military-spiritual officers, from lieutenant to major general, are part of the US Army from military chaplains. Among them, there are priests of Christian, Muslim, Buddhist and other faiths. Chaplains in the army perform their duties both before and during the battle (Rusnak, 2024). The council helps the chaplain under the guidance of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Construction of the Armed Forces, and the staff is responsible for overseeing the military chaplain. Unites representatives of the naval forces, navy and military clergy of the ground forces. The council is headed by three primary chaplains of the armed forces, each of whom has the rank of major general or rear admiral of a military religious service.

Along with the head of the theatre (lieutenant colonel), deputy (major) and two sergeants, the department includes the departments of the main chaplains of the organizations of the armed forces (corps, army and navy). In garrisons, on bases, in military units, hospitals and educational institutions, separate military priests were created. They report a chaplain who deals with family issues. Battalion (personnel category: captain) - the first work of the chaplain. Each chaplain of the battalion has a full-time assistant. With appropriate training, it can be a sergeant or a corporal (Dubrovina, 2017).

Of course, the main duties of the chaplain include advising commanders on the daily activities of the troops and facilitating the departure from worship and requirements (access to religious services, observance of religious holidays, prayer practice, prayer practice, clergy support and counseling). The instruction "Religious Support" serves as the main guide for the work of chaplains, outlining where, when, what and how the duties of the chaplain and his assistant are performed during peace or conflict.

Military chaplains rejoined the Polish army after the fall of the communist government. Polish military forces have accompanied pastors in peacekeeping and stable missions since 1991. In the troubled regions of the world, more than 80 priests of this type completed the service. The Polish army employs about two hundred chaplains, including Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant clergy.

The Polish government compared the position of captive clergy with the position of professional military, giving them the rank and pay of officers in the army. Clergymen in the army not only satisfy the religious requirements of soldiers but also protect those who are stressed and exhausted from mental impairment. "The role of the chaplain is to be close to the military, to accompany them in their internal development, and this should take place



based on volunteering," the experienced priest said about the appointment of the chaplain. - To the church - step! Cannot be used to command a chaplain. However, military personnel should know that the chaplain will always be there for them if they have any questions, general concerns or concerns about whether they are believers or not. Therefore, the priest will try to help and advise a soldier if he comes forward (Sagan & Harat, 2023).

The Polish Army today follows the customs of interwar Poland, which implies that chaplains serve in the Armed Forces. Even at that time, the state retained garrison churches and officers of priests. According to their standards, in the professional Polish army, one Catholic chaplain provides spiritual services to one thousand soldiers.

Regarding the salary, taking into account the length of service and military rank, the same criteria apply as for all other military personnel. The army grants the title of 'general' to a bishop elected by the church and appointed by the head of the diocese. Chaplains begin to perform their duties as junior lieutenants, as they are professional officers. When their data improves, they may eventually become colonels. We have a bishop-military bishop in military pastoral care; By this time, all the bishops were generals.

In Poland, being a chaplain requires the approval of the Catholic church hierarchy, desire and appropriate physical and mental training. The candidate for chaplains must be over 36 years of age. After being approved as chaplains, priests must first graduate from a military school to train officers. After this training, they move on to the rank of a second lieutenant, their first military rank. Previously, they could not serve as professional chaplains (Romanenko, 2022). Chaplains in Poland do not carry weapons. To protect them, other soldiers are responsible for overseas operations. Chaplains often serve as a kind of passage for soldiers and their superiors. The military often consults with priests on many issues, especially psychological ones. Talking can solve many of these problems. It is interesting to note that soldiers are more likely to communicate with a priest than with a psychologist since the psychologist must draft a report after the session and disseminate information. However, the chaplain priest must convince the soldier to seek psychiatric assistance from a psychologist if they notice that he is experiencing intense anxiety.

The topic of psychologists and chaplains in general is extremely important. Both should complement each other. For this reason, Poland continues the cycle of combined exercises for psychologists and chaplains who cooperate with the military. Chaplains of Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Evangelical churches now serve in the Polish armed forces. Since Catholics make up a large majority of the country's population, priests in the army also control approximately 150 Catholics. The second largest group of soldiers - Orthodox. Thus, 19 Orthodox chaplains are served by 15 thousand Orthodox soldiers and their families. The Orthodox Army of Poland deals with the spiritual needs of Orthodox soldiers and retains the status of a diocese in the Polish Orthodox Church (Babikov et al., 2024).

Military chaplaincy in Canada is an integral part of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and is officially enshrined in the army structure. Its history dates back to the First World War when the pastoral care of the military was organized, and during the Second World War, the Office of the Chaplain Service was created, which still operates today. Chaplains are present in all types of troops - land, naval and air forces, as well as at military bases, hospitals, peacekeeping missions and even at the forefront. Their main functions include conducting services, prayers, and rituals, as well as moral and psychological support for the military, in particular in crises, during the loss of brothers or adaptation to extreme conditions of service. Military chaplains in Canada have the status of officers, however, according to international humanitarian law, they do not carry weapons and do not participate in hostilities (Makovskiy, 2002).



They represent different religious denominations and are obliged to provide for the religious needs of all military, regardless of their beliefs. Candidates for the position of chaplain must have a master's theological education, receive a recommendation from their religious community, undergo officer training at the CAF Academy and learn military discipline, leadership and ethics. Chaplains actively participate in peacekeeping operations, accompany soldiers in conflict zones, help the wounded and support the families of the victims. The Canadian Chaplain Service is regulated by the National Defense Act and special directives and is also funded by the state. It is aimed at maintaining the morale of military personnel, observing their religious freedoms and ensuring spiritual care (Makovskiy, 2002).

The choice of countries for research is due to their significant experience in the field of military chaplaincy and the integration of chaplain services into the structure of the armed forces. The USA, Canada and Poland have well-developed systems for training chaplains, combining spiritual, moral, ethical and psychological support of the military. Their models are based on NATO standards and involve close interaction of chaplains with military units, which is important for adapting the Ukrainian system to Euro-Atlantic norms (Grimell, 2024). The experience of these countries is a practical guideline for the development of the institute of military chaplaincy in Ukraine, taking into account the specifics of national culture and the needs of military personnel.

1.2. Development of military chaplaincy and paedagogical conditions for chaplain training in Ukraine

The introduction of military chaplaincy in Ukraine began with the Directive of the Ministry of Defense No. D-25 (2006), which regulated the satisfaction of the religious needs of the military. In 2008, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the Ministry of Defense and religious organizations, which laid the foundations for pastoral care in the army. In 2009, the Council for Pastoral Care was created, which included representatives of various faiths. The main result of the Council's activities was the formation of a register of military chaplains and the development of the Concept of pastoral care in the Armed Forces. MOU Order No. 220 (2011) defined the rights and obligations of chaplains, in particular the ability to conduct divine services, organize pastoral events and maintain the psychological state of the military (Grebnyuk, 2020).

With the beginning of the ATO (2014), it became obvious that chaplaincy is an important element of moral and psychological support for the military. The government adopted decree No. 677-r, which provided for the creation of a chaplain service in the National Guard, the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the State Border Service. MOU Order No. 40 (2015) officially enshrined the service of the military clergy, determining the status of chaplains, their rights and obligations. Chaplains in Ukraine are not servicemen, they are forbidden to carry weapons and participate in hostilities. At the same time, they are obliged to comply with the Constitution, and church legislation, avoid religious conflicts and contribute to maintaining the morale of the military.

The model of military chaplaincy in Ukraine is still being formed. Some denominations believe that chaplains should be military, while others insist on a purely civilian status. There are mixed models in the world where chaplains can have special military ranks or work in civilian conditions. In 2017, military chaplains were officially introduced into the National Guard and the Armed Forces, and now the draft laws are being considered for the final legislative consolidation of their status.

Paedagogical principles.

In general, educational circumstances either strengthen or weaken the influence of certain professional activities (Dubrovin, 2017). The category of "paedagogical conditions" requires



extensive research as a scientific reality. Paedagogical conditions are defined as "a combination of certain factors, and circumstances" in psychological and paedagogical literature (Vityuk, 2000). Since they establish the methodological and organizational basis of professional chaplains and training, paedagogical conditions are crucial to ensure the effectiveness of this process. Creating the ideal atmosphere for the growth of professional knowledge, as well as the abilities of moral leadership, psychological support, spiritual support and emotional stability is the responsibility of paedagogical conditions. A well-structured learning environment improves practical experience, promotes the development of critical competencies necessary to perform professional duties and increases one's motivation to learn (Kuzmenko, 2020).

In our opinion, the term "paedagogical conditions" refers to intentionally constructed objective and subjective elements that support successful personal development, learning or advanced learning conditions (Dubrovina, 2017). The secret of a high-quality and successful educational process is the correct definition and application. During the theoretical understanding of the topic of scientific research, we laid down certain assumptions that should be experimentally tested. In particular, we assumed that the effectiveness of the formation of professional competence of military chaplains will significantly increase if:

- based on a systematic approach, an educational training programme will be modernized, which integrates educational and methodological areas of activity, the peculiarity of which is the harmonization of structural components, integrity, uniformity and dynamism and compliance with both the regulatory standards of postgraduate education and the educational needs of military chaplains;

- based on the competence approach, a set of intra-paedagogical conditions for the formation of professional competencies of military chaplains to achieve professional qualification levels will be implemented.

At the stage of creating the study, it was supposed to study the attitudes and opinions of military chaplains, instructors and specialists of the curriculum of the advanced training programme regarding the challenges associated with the creation of the Institute of Chaplaincy in the system of advanced training in 2023-2024, taking into account Vityuk, the paedagogical conditions prevailing in the educational environment determine how much specialists are trained at a professional level (Vityuk, 2000). This reality forced us to maintain the professional abilities of military chaplains in the system of advanced training.

Priority factors were determined by analyzing responses to incoming and survey results of students enrolled in training courses. The survey was conducted during the preparation of military chaplains to establish internal and external conditions for the formation of professional competencies of military chaplains:

1. internal: the positive motivation of military chaplains to study and form their value orientations in the speciality (70.4% of respondents' answers); development of empathy of military chaplains for the tasks of pastoral care in group interaction with military personnel and members of their families (59.3% of student results);

2. external: the use of innovative forms and methods of training in advanced training courses for military chaplains to ensure their professional growth (63.2% of student responses); creation of a communicative climate of trust and interpersonal interaction in the educational environment of higher education institutions based on the contact "teacher-military chaplains" (55.6% of the results of respondents).

Take a closer look at the described learning circumstances. As a result, the first paedagogical requirement is a favourable incentive for the professional training of military chaplains and the development of their value units. This guarantees the professional growth of chaplains,



contributes to improving the effectiveness of spiritual assistance to military personnel and creates the basis for the smooth integration of chaplain activities into military formations.

"The totality of motives, evidence of something to justify, inducement to activity; motivation "is the definition of the category" motivation "in the psychological dictionary (National University of Pharmacy, 2022). To receive professional training for military chaplains, which affects the development of knowledge and skills, as well as the creation of value institutions important for the implementation of the chaplain's mission, they must have a positive motivation to study. Since the work of chaplains covers a wide range of spiritual, moral and social aspects, the motivation of chaplains to develop their abilities and achieve career goals: is professional (the desire to be competent in their activities); spiritual motivation (desire to serve God and neighbour). Even in decisive combat situations, a highly motivated chaplain can motivate and inspire soldiers. Pastors can participate in helping veterans regain their moral and psychological well-being by giving them a positive incentive to train chaplains.

Dubrovina (2017), motivation is an internal process that encourages an individual to act. Positive motivation is based on interests, aspirations and beliefs that contribute to self-improvement and growth. Motivation in the context of training military chaplains becomes an integrated process that includes the social component - awareness of the importance of their mission for the army and society, the professional component - the desire to be competent in their activities and the spiritual component - the desire to serve people and God.

Creating a meaningful learning environment is one of the conceptual approaches to the development of positive motivation in graduate school. Therefore, in order to create a progressive integration of theological knowledge with psychological working methods, it is necessary to include psychology, ethics, religion and leadership experience in the curriculum (Kuzmenko, 2019).

The development of spiritual, moral, ethical, psychological and communicative abilities is the basis of the professional competence of military chaplains. Empathy, emotional intelligence, the ability to act under pressure, knowledge of military culture and familiarity with the peculiarities of the combat environment - all play a significant role. Interactive teaching methods such as role-play, situational training, crisis simulation and mentoring are the main pedagogical prerequisites (Melenets et al., 2024). Chaplains in the United States, for example, are trained at military installations where they learn how to help troops with post-traumatic stress disorder, support them psychologically after losses in combat, and help their families adapt to change.

For chaplains to effectively cooperate with military units of different religious views, training programmes in Canada focus on interfaith communication, crisis counselling and preparing students to work in a multicultural environment. The Catholic Church is the main source of spiritual education in Poland, where chaplains help the armed forces, and also participate in their moral education. Even though the Ukrainian chaplain training programme is still in its infancy, modified foreign models - for example, working with veterans and providing psychological assistance to military personnel after rotation - are already being used (Kaplii, 2022, p. 35).

Theological training, military discipline, psychological assistance, ethics and leadership are all included in the training programmes of military chaplains. Chaplains in the United States and Canada receive officer training that helps them better understand the requirements of military personnel and integrates them into military organizations. Chaplains, for example, study crises, combat psychology, and military strategy at the U.S. Military Academy. Work in international peacekeeping operations, which provides specialized training for combat zones, is given special attention in Canada, where military chaplains serve in NATO multinational groups.



Their training takes place in cooperation with the Catholic Church, which supports the spiritual traditions of the country, and the chaplain service has a strong religious origin in Poland. Although educational programmes for chaplains in Ukraine are still in the early stages of development, Western approaches, in particular those related to counselling in crises, psychological support of the military and readiness to work in military situations, have already been borrowed. Much attention is paid to the rehabilitation of military personnel returning from war zones and working with their families, which is an important aspect of chaplaincy duty (Yaroshchuk, 2024).

Educational and legal methods of teaching chaplains are very different between countries. Chaplains are officers of the armed forces of the United States and Canada, which allows them to cooperate with unit commanders and function within a single military structure. In addition to receiving special military training that covers leadership, crisis management and cooperation with military units in combat situations, they are subordinate to the army leadership.

Although chaplains in Poland have military ranks, the specifics of their work are influenced by their close relationship with the Catholic Church. Although chaplains in Ukraine do not currently have military ranks, chaplain service is still in its infancy and is moving towards an integrated model similar to that in the United States and Canada. The main difference between the methods used to train chaplains is how integrated they are into the military system; in Poland and Ukraine, their role is primarily focused on spiritual support and rehabilitation of the military after hostilities, while in the USA and Canada, they are part of the army (Holyachenko, 2023).

Approaches to military chaplaincy vary across countries for many reasons. A more detailed breakdown is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparative characteristics of military chaplaincy in different countries

	Ukraine	United States	Canada	Poland
Status of chaplains	Civilians involved in military units	Officers integrated into the armed forces	Officers integrated into the military system	Officers with military ranks
Availability of weapons	Prohibited	Prohibited, but undergoing military training	Prohibited	Prohibited, but have military ranks
Main functions	Spiritual and psychological support, moral and psychological education, rehabilitation	Spiritual support, psychological adaptation, ethical counseling	Spiritual support, crisis counseling, interfaith cooperation	Spiritual education, moral support, chaplain care
Preparation	Military Institute of KNU named after T. Shevchenko, special courses	US Chaplains Academy, officer training	CAF Academy, theological education, military training	Military educational institutions, officer courses
Financing	State funding, support for religious organizations	Federal Budget	Federal Budget	Government funding, church support
Legislative framework	MOU orders, draft laws in the process of approval	US law, military code	National Defence Act of Canada (1985)	Military charter, church decrees



	Ukraine	United States	Canada	Poland
Role in combat conditions	Rehabilitation, maintaining morale	Psychological support, participation in post-fight adaptation	Crisis counseling, support of military units	Military support, moral and ethical mentoring
Specificity	Focused on veteran rehabilitation and post-traumatic adaptation	Clear hierarchical structure, cooperation with the army	Multicultural approach, interfaith cooperation	Close relationship with the Catholic Church, national traditions
History of chaplaincy	Official implementation in 2017, development during ATO	Exists since 1775, official organization in 1918	Official consolidation after World War I	Traditionally associated with the Catholic Church, restored after 1991
Key tasks	Rehabilitation of the military, spiritual support, moral education	Ethical counseling, support of commanders, psychological adaptation	Interfaith cooperation, crisis support, moral support	Support of the Catholic faith, spiritual development of the military
Interfaith cooperation	There are representatives of different faiths, support from religious organizations	Wide representation of different faiths, consideration of multiculturalism	Focus on a multicultural approach, access to chaplains of different religions	Catholic tradition dominates, but there are Protestant and Orthodox chaplains
Participation in peacekeeping missions	Mainly rehabilitation of the military after service	Participate in international operations and on the battlefield	Widely involved in peacekeeping missions	Have experience of participation in international missions, support of military abroad
Support for military families	Assistance in rehabilitation, support for the families of the victims	Support of military families, psychological counseling	Support programmes for military families, psychological assistance	Close cooperation with military families through the church

Ukraine uses aspects of international experience in its system of training military chaplains, including in the areas of counselling in crises, moral support and working with personnel who have experienced combat stress. For example, chaplains at the Military Institute of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv are trained according to NATO standards, where they study how to establish contacts with unit commanders to maintain the morale of units and how to treat personnel after rotation (Spivak, 2022).

In addition, international programmes are widely used that allow Ukrainian chaplains to gain experience in military situations through internships in the USA, Canada and Poland. Through the integration of international standards in Ukraine, an effective chaplaincy model will be developed that meets the needs of military units and modern problems of war.

Discussion

Military chaplaincy is an important component of the development of an inclusive and humane approach to military service. Chaplains' activities facilitate the achievement of several key Sustainable Development Goals - SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), (Partnership for Sustainable Development); SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being); 4 (Quality Education), contributing to the preservation of moral principles, the psychological well-being



of military personnel, and strengthening the institutional capacity of the armed forces. The integration of the best international practices into the military chaplaincy practice permits to increase its effectiveness and make it an integral part of the security system and social support of the military. For the effective development of military chaplaincy in Ukraine, it is extremely important both to adapt the foreign experience to the real needs of the troops and to take into account the religious characteristics of the country and the combat situation. Comparison of methods of organization of chaplaincy in other countries allows one to determine the components that may be useful for Ukraine.

The chaplaincy paradigm that is most incorporated into the military system is the American one. Because they are members of command structures and hold the rank of officer, chaplains can significantly influence the morale and mental health of the armed forces (González, 2025). They undergo special training in post-traumatic stress disorders, counselling in crises and combat stress - all this is relevant in Ukraine, where the conflict has already caused a noticeable increase in psychological trauma among the armed forces. Chaplains must be deeply integrated into the military hierarchy to implement this approach, which can be challenging given current legal and bureaucratic constraints. In addition, the Ukrainian army is now undergoing modernization, so more funding will be needed to fully implement this strategy (Dolhanova, 2022).

The Canadian chaplaincy system places great emphasis on interfaith cooperation and multiculturalism. Thus, religious disputes are avoided, and military personnel, regardless of their views, are guaranteed access to spiritual assistance. Chaplains in Canada actively assist military personnel and their families by promoting psychological balance during periods of prolonged separation or conflict (McCaig, 2023). In addition, much attention is paid to peacekeeping operations, which may be crucial for Ukraine in the future. However, since this approach is mainly focused on helping the military in peacetime or while participating in foreign operations, it is less equipped to function in situations where hostilities continue.

The Catholic Church has historically influenced the characteristics of the Polish chaplaincy model, which is closely related to it. Chaplains influence the army, as they are officially recognized and have military ranks. The focus is on the moral and spiritual education of military personnel, which is also important for maintaining morale. This experience can be useful for Ukraine in establishing the formal status of chaplains and recognizing them in the military system. However, given the diversity of religious denominations in Ukraine, the Polish model can be problematic because it places too much emphasis on the dominant faith (Norman, 2018).

The main obstacles faced by the newly created Ukrainian chaplain service are the lack of specialized training for working with the wounded in the war, the lack of a clear legislative framework and the inadequate integration of chaplains into military formations. Chaplains in Ukraine often perform both spiritual and psychological functions, offering military personnel emergency support during a crisis, as they are stationed right on the front line. For the successful growth of chaplaincy, it is necessary to combine the qualities of many world models: to include chaplains in the military system, as in the USA; guarantee an ecumenical approach as in Canada; and give chaplains official status, as in Poland. Particular attention should be paid to the training of chaplains in the field of crisis counselling and psychological support since the war requires not only spiritual care but also the ability to help servicemen overcome combat stress and traumatic experiences (Brindikov, 2017).

Ukraine needs a hybrid chaplaincy model that takes into account both the real needs of the Ukrainian army and the world experience in the light of current problems. In addition to providing chaplains with official status, it is extremely important to provide them with the necessary training to work well in combat situations and rehabilitate personnel after the



conflict. Effective and long-term chaplain service that meets the needs of the army and the problems of modern combat will be created by incorporating international norms and their adaptation to Ukrainian realities.

Conclusions

To strengthen the moral, psychological and spiritual well-being of servicemen, military chaplaincy is important. Different types of integration of chaplains into the military system demonstrate the experience of the USA, Canada, and Poland; each one has their pros and cons. Thanks to the officer position, the American model guarantees chaplains complete integration into the military system, which allows them to effectively influence the moral and psychological state of the armed forces. However, the introduction of such a system in Ukraine requires significant financial resources, as well as amendments to the legislation. The Canadian strategy places more emphasis on the multicultural and interfaith elements of chaplaincy, which helps preserve religious harmony but adapts less to the circumstances of ongoing wars. The Polish model, which is closely related to the Catholic Church, provides chaplains with an official military status, which increases their authority among the military, but at the same time can create difficulties in countries with religious pluralism, such as Ukraine.

The Ukrainian system of military chaplaincy is still at the stage of formation, and the main challenges are associated with the lack of a clear legislative framework, the lack of integration of chaplains into military structures and the lack of specialized training, especially in the field of counselling in crises. For the effective development of chaplain service in Ukraine, it is worth taking into account the best practices of foreign experience. The integration of chaplains into the military system on the model of the United States will hopefully allow them to work more effectively directly with military units. Ensuring an interfaith approach, as in Canada, will help avoid conflict and ensure religious equality. Granting chaplains official status, like Poland, will increase their authority and allow them to perform their functions more effectively.

Modern approaches to the training of military chaplains, in particular interactive methods of training, counselling in crises, work with military personnel who have experienced combat stress, are one of the main directions of development. An effective system that can cope with the real difficulties faced by the Ukrainian military will be developed with the help of world experience in training chaplains. The growth of cooperation between chaplains and other systems of moral and psychological support of the army is decisive since it will serve to create a comprehensive system of assistance for the military.

Given the current difficulties, Ukraine needs a modified hybrid model of military chaplaincy, which would take into account both the real needs of personnel and world experience. A long-lasting and successful chaplain service will be created by including chaplains in military organizations, clear legislative control over their activities, an interdenominational approach and effective training. Given the ongoing conflict, the psychological rehabilitation of the military, as well as spiritual assistance, are vital, and this should be the main focus of Ukraine's future chaplaincy system.

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