the future must start with the present. We begin by identifying those areas in which change is now taking place. Obviously, when our concern is the future of the chaplaincy, some of the changes in the society at large are more salient than others. Since the chaplain participates in two major social institutions, the church and the army, we can narrow the field to those changes having the greatest effect on these two institutions. We may then ask some questions that will enable us to take a rational look at what is likely to happen in the future. First, what is the direction of the change? Toward what goal does it seem to be taking us? Second, how rapidly is the change taking place? Third, what is the outlook regarding continued direction and speed? What factors seem likely to affect the future continuation of the trend? And finally, what projection can we make about the chaplaincy in the year 2000 AD, based on each trend? Using these procedures, a framework within which any group of chaplains can engage in its own futurology exercise (or check and take issue with the conclusions of this one) would look something like that shown below. The trends listed in the left-hand column, under “Areas of Change,” are the ones to be examined in this article. Such lists, of course, might vary.

It is apparent that some current changes in the society at large are reflected significantly in both the church and the army. The changing role of women, for instance, has major implications for both institutions, and must be examined in all three categories.

While all the areas of change listed above will be looked at in the following discussion, some will receive more attention than others. Two, identified above as the trend toward social conservatism” and the “demythologizing of institutions,” will be examined in some detail, as implications for the military, the churches, and the chaplaincy are traced in each case.

Trend Toward Social Conservatism

In the evaluative study of Army Chaplaincy programs conducted by the author in late 1974 and 1975, assumptions regarding the future were listed as the background against which assessments of specific programs were made. The first of the listed assumptions about American society was:

As the trauma of Vietnam and the shock of the Watergate era continue to recede from the forefront of American consciousness, the society will be seeking ‘normalcy.’ Present trends indicate that this quest will take the same direction it has historically—a movement in the direction of social conservatism.