‘this is not who God is—God chooses to be a God for humanity so he will always be with humanity. God decides to be this God only because he is God in the covenant’ (p. 81). It is this reduction of the immanent to the economic Trinity that Barth consistently rejected with his doctrine of the immanent Trinity. Failing to grasp this crucial point, de Vera accepts Robert Jenson’s rejection of a *Logos asarkos* and equates the eternal Word with the *Logos incarnandus* (pp. 58, 208, 210, etc.). With Jenson then, de Vera claims that ‘God’s movement in time can be said to be constitutive of the divine being’ (p. 209). However, that is exactly the view that Barth rejected when he claimed that the ‘second “person” of the Godhead in Himself and as such . . . is the content of a necessary and important concept in trinitarian doctrine when we have to understand the revelation and dealings of God in the light of their free basis in the inner being an essence of God’ (CD IV/1, 52). In the end de Vera undermines the doctrine of the Trinity and distorts Christology claiming that ‘there is no Trinity before or beyond the desire to include humanity within the God-self . . . the essentiality of the Godhead is always with Jesus Christ, whether in essence or in flesh’ (p. 216).

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‘The Son of God goes forth to War, a Kingly Crown to Gain’, thundered the school chaplain in Lindsay Anderson’s devastatingly cynical film *If*. In front of the pulpit sat ranks of public school boys in their Combined Cadet Force uniforms about to embark on Field Day, commanded by the chaplain dressed as a cavalry officer. This was one of the most memorable anti-establishment images provided by the ‘long 1960s’ that illustrated a popularly held belief in an unhealthy symbiosis between the Church of England and the forces of the Crown. We only need think of how frequently
Bishop Winnington-Ingram of London is cited, dressed in his military uniform, and acting as an unofficial ecclesiastical recruiting sergeant for the Armed Forces in the Great War, to see how it endures. The longevity of these bellicose clerical images, although adapted and modified, demonstrates how ingrained this view is of the English, and sometimes colonial, nationalistic, nature of the relationship between the Anglicanism of certain eras, and the various states with which it coexisted.

It is perhaps with this in mind, that Professor Michael Snape, in his formidable research on the relationship between the churches of the Anglican Communion and the Armed Forces from Queen Victoria to the Vietnam War, addresses what has clearly been a complicated relationship. He takes a surgeon’s knife to preconceptions, generalizations, and misinformation through thorough research and a clinical use of evidence. His belief is that in a ‘globally rebalanced era, less male dominated, marked by secularization, anti-militarism, anti-racism, and post-imperial guilt’, it is hardly surprising that the history, development, and nature of the relationship between churches of most of the Anglican Communion and the Armed Forces ‘is consigned to the realm of amnesia and caricature’. It is difficult to conceive of an academic more able to dispel myths than the writer of this book; he achieves this not just as an historian with a particular expertise, but also through the measured style of his prose.

The scope of this volume is both ambitious and prodigious: it encapsulates the military heritage and history of the Anglican Communion, ‘and the changing nature of the relationship between the mid-Victorian period (and the first Lambeth Conference of 1867), and the era of the Vietnam War (and the eleventh Lambeth Conference of 1978).’ This was an era of imperial expansion and colonialism, world wars, the long Cold War, the dismantling of an empire, and all that is meant by ‘Vietnam’. It was possibly the bloodiest period in human history in terms of armed conflict and the use of sophisticated weaponry, with developing technology able to destroy human civilization. It might be easy for such a wide remit of historical analysis to skim over areas unfavourable to the premiss of the introduction, but this is something which the author avoids. Writers are sometimes well-informed on ecclesiastical matters or the minutiae of the history of the Armed Forces of various nations, but here we see a rare and accurate depiction of both.
Michael Snape acknowledges that, especially from the 1970s and 1980s, literature in Anglicanism ‘often betrays a curiously Anglican propensity for self-flagellation, and uncritical acceptance of external criticism’. Throughout each of the five chapters, and the afterword and postscript, the book examines personalities and themes, not shying from anecdote. Therein lies a particular strength in his writing: the use of biographical comment when it cannot be separated from historical narrative.

Importantly, Michael Snape’s analysis is not merely restricted to the Church of England, but encompasses the whole Anglican Communion, covering the entwined relationship between the growth from ecclesial colonialism to the existence of independent Anglican provinces, and the relationship to the Armed Forces through very different eras in the history of these provinces and states. Each province had its own priorities. It is interesting to note what similarly there often was between them.

Much of the changing nature of conflict, and the relationship between church and civil power, might well be seen using the Great War as a lynch pin: the lead-up to this conflagration and the decades-long after-effects make the chapter on the Great War the best in the opinion of this reviewer. Much has been written on the conflict of 1914–18 as the bibliography and footnotes show, but this chapter manages a fresh and clear examination of a period covered extensively by so many.

By way of a codicil, the author added a postscript containing some early reflections on the war in Ukraine, observing that the architecture of a world order ‘that has for decades framed the Church of England’s approach to international relations and armed conflict has been shaken to its foundations’. The interview between General Sir Nick Carter and Archbishop Justin Welby showed the contemporary existence of dialogue between archbishop and general, illustrating that some form of relationship still exists, albeit different from that between General Sir Charles Douglas and Archbishop Randall Davidson. As the author remarks, it is now possibly a changed, developing, and enduring link between spiritual and temporal, defence, peace, and war, drawing perhaps ‘more on Christian realism as a theological resource’.

This is a superb, and prophetic, volume.