# The Bible and U.S. Military Chaplains[1]

by Chaplain (LTC) John D. Laing[2]

## Introduction

When Dr. Severance invited me to speak on the subject of military chaplains and the Bible, I agreed without giving much thought to the particulars of what I might say. I had just finished my book on Evangelicals and military chaplaincy and was currently serving a tour in Iraq, so I felt pretty comfortable with the general topic. And let's be honest, in once sense, it's pretty straightforward: "The Bible has always played an important role in military chaplaincy ministry, as we should expect." Now let's go eat! [NOT SO FAST...] But in another sense, the topic opens up a whole host of interrelated and somewhat complex issues. Let me list out five for your consideration: 1) History of military chaplaincy; 2) History of Bible printing, publication, and distribution to military service members; 3) Examination of how chaplains have used Scripture in sermons and other venues; 4) Examination of how political and military leaders have utilized Scripture to motivate the military; and 5) Discussion of chaplaincy and the First Amendment.[3] It is my hope to address, if only briefly, each of these. I will do so using the First

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[3]Much of the discussion regarding chaplaincy has to do with issues related to the relation between church and state. It is readily admitted that when the Constitution was first penned, the concept of the separation of church and state was not fully developed or clarified, and this lack of clarity has impacted understandings of the chaplaincy and its role in governmental institutions (military, hospitals, prisons, legislatures, etc.). As Williams notes, "The federal constitutional *principle* of separation was operative before the founding of the republic among the original colonies *for a long time* only in Rhode Island. Separation on the level of the state came to be implemented only gradually and with groping uncertainty, in several instances well after the establishment of the republic. In

Amendment as the overall compass. Specifically, I will examine the first, second, and fourth in terms of the Establishment Clause, and the third in terms of the Free Exercise Clause. The story of U.S. military chaplains and the Bible mirrors the story of our nation and its continuing struggle to come to grips with how to balance the rights of the individual with the good of the whole; how to ensure that all people, even those in the minority, are enabled to pursue happiness in a life characterized by liberty.

The First Amendment to the Constitution states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." It is typically interpreted as including two aspects or "clauses": the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause. These two clauses are meant to protect the individual from various forms of religious coercion by the state (specifically, the Federal Government). It should be noted that there is sharp disagreement among Americans over the meaning and significance of the First Amendment, from armchair politicians in barber shops, to the halls of Congress and the chambers of the Supreme Court. These differences are a matter of hermeneutics, of the proper methods of interpretation. Some maintain that the Constitution (and its Amendments) should be interpreted and applied in strict adherence to the original intent and wording of the authors/framers. Others maintain that the Constitution is a living document which derives its meaning more from the current culture than from long-deceased, though admittedly great, men. These differences in approach to interpretation are not reserved only for the Constitution, for there is much debate

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Massachusetts it was more than two centuries after the first colonizations (1620, 1630) that separation was to be fully effected (1833). Since the American military chaplaincy had its origins in the colonial period and remained closely connected with the state militia and at the call of the governor in both the Revolution and the War of 1812, it is clear that what were once regarded as wholesome practices of the model of chaplaincies of the mother country became an integral part of American Army and Navy statute and custom well before the present civil libertarian refinements had been drawn out in an increasingly pluralistic continental commonwealth." George H. Williams, "The Chaplaincy in the Armed Forces of the United States of America in Historical and Ecclesiastical Perspective" in Military Chaplains: From a Religious Military to a Military Religion, ed. Harvey Cox (New York: American Report Press, 1971), 13-14.

within theological circles over the same issues as applied to the meaning and significance of the Biblical text. While in both cases, I myself adhere to the "authorial intent" approach, I also recognize that I am not in the majority. With regard to the Constitution, it is important to understand that the vast majority legislators, executives, and justices follow the living document approach (in some variety or another). Any strategy one hopes to develop for engaging the issues must taken into account that reality.

**History of Chaplaincy**

While we might hope that the original reasons for including chaplains in the ranks of the military of the United States from its very inception--the chaplaincy is one of the oldest regiments in the Army, second only to infantry, having been established 29 July 1775--were religious (e.g., in order for the burgeoning country to have its beginning grounded in Scripture, the importance of the spiritual in the lives of soldiers, or the like), we would be at least somewhat mistaken. A more pragmatic reason dominated General Washington's request for funding of chaplaincy to the Virginia Legislature. During the French and Indian War in which he served as a Colonel, Washington saw a real need for chaplains in the officer corps. He wrote that it would be good for each regiment (what is now known as a battalion) to incorporate a "gentleman of sober, serious and religious deportment, who would improve morale and discourage gambling, swearing, and drunkenness."[4] Williams argues that this attitude still reflected a British approach to the military, which saw the chaplain as a "brother officer and gentleman on the staff for the commander more than for the soldiers" [and this attitude still sometimes prevails among commanders and chaplains alike, though it is increasingly becoming a thing of the past--

[4]Letter to Governor Dinwiddie of 12 June 1757; John C. Fitzpatrick, ed. The Writings of George Washington, 39 vols. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931-44), II, 56.

chaplains serve both the commander and the service persons of the command; ideally, the chaplain serves the command by serving the troops].[5]

So Washington was concerned about morality among the troops, specifically, drunkenness, gambling, and foul language (as if those issues can be eradicated from the military), and he felt that a clergy presence as part of the command would dissuade such activity. This curtailment was seen as helpful in keeping good order and discipline, which became an increasing challenge for the Colonial army as the war dragged on. He was also concerned about propriety; the Continental Army needed to be a full-fledged army if it were to take on the redcoats. In a letter to Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia, Washington explained that, while the officers of his command were willing to pay for the salary of a chaplain out of their own pockets, the State *ought* to provide for a chaplain because it is standard procedure for civilized militaries. He wrote, "The want of a chaplain does, I humbly conceive, reflect dishonor upon the regiment, as all other officers are allowed. The gentlemen of the corps are sensible of this, and did propose to support one at their private expense. But I think it would have a more graceful appearance were he appointed as others are."[6] The meaning and nature of his concern in using the phrase, "a more graceful appearance" is admittedly unclear, but seems to have something to do with propriety and perhaps a little less to do with piety.

So there were pragmatic concerns related to the efficient operation of military which served as a basis for requesting chaplains. However, I said that we would be *somewhat* mistaken (and not completely in error) because, as we shall see, when it comes to military chaplains, legislative reasoning is not always the whole story. That is, the secular justification for having a

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[5]Williams, "The Chaplaincy in the Armed Forces of the United States of America in Historical and Ecclesiastical Perspective," 18.

[6]Letter to Governor Dinwiddie, I, 740.

chaplaincy, while legitimate, is not always the only motivation for desiring chaplains in the ranks. Washington clearly had strong religious convictions of his own (though he rarely spoke publicly or wrote about them), and *required* his troops to attend divine services, some of which he conducted himself (when a chaplain was not available). He also led soldiers in special services of thanksgiving after victories, hardly the act of one who was merely using religion as a tool for military effectiveness.[7]

Washington's reluctance to speak of his faith and his view that faith is a private matter between the individual and God, has led to much confusion, speculation, and outright controversy. As Smith puts it in his scholarly work on faith among U.S. presidents, "The fact that Washington, unlike some other founders, never expounded his convictions in a systematic way makes unearthing and analyzing his religious perspective very challenging."[8] Nevertheless, Smith still notes that Washington was more religious than most persons of the time, citing his support of military chaplains, his pattern of church attendance, and his expressed views on the Bible, prayer, God, and salvation.[9] Smith suggests that Washington's faith, whatever it was (i.e., how serious or devout a Christian), grew as a result of his trials as General of the Continental Army and then President of the United States. He also notes that Washington clearly saw religion as necessary for a stable society: "The address [Farewell Address] reiterated his staunch belief that religion and morality were essential to upright conduct, social tranquility and national success."[10] Needleman agrees, arguing that Washington saw religion, freely chosen [and thus,

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[7]It is worth noting that these activities today would be seen as a violation of Establishment.

[8]Gary Scott Smith, *Faith & the Presidency: From George Washington to George W. Bush* (New York: Oxford, 2006), 24.

[9]ibid., 26.

[10]ibid., 51-52

freedom of religion], as necessary for the survival of society because it preserves morality both in individuals and in the culture. In his farewell address, Washington emphatically made this point: "Let it be simply asked, where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligations desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigations in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."[11] Needleman is quick to point out that Washington is not here suggesting that religion serves merely as a useful tool for politics in a protoMarxian way, keeping the masses opiated. Rather, he sees it as serving the national good: "Washington is not cynical, but deeply practical in recognizing in religion the power it can have to help prevent the principle of personal gain from dominating the individual psyche and the life of society, especially a society in which personal liberty prevails."[12]

While the debate over the extent of the faith commitments of our nation's founding fathers continues to rage, there can be no doubt that Washington believed there was not only pragmatic, but also spiritual value in the ministry and presence of chaplains in the military.

**Bibles in the Military**

Throughout the history of the United States, the Word of God has been an important part of the lives of military members as they went off to war. Any examination of military chaplains and the Bible with a view to implications for Establishment would be remiss if it did not include

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[11]George Washington, "Farewell Address" in *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources,* ed. John C. Fitzpatrick, 39 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1931-44); http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch18s29.html.

[12]Jacob Needleman, *The American Soul: Rediscovering the Wisdom of the Founders* (New York: Torcher/Putnam, 2002), 132

some discussion of Bible publication for and distribution among military service members. I would like to address three items in this regard: the Aitken Bible, the publication of Bibles by the U.S. Government during WWII, and the commendation of Bibles to soldiers by politicians and military leaders.

**Aitken Bible.** The first item I would like to address is the Aitken Bible. Some have attempted to trace Bible distribution to soldiers via official channels back to the Revolutionary War. The Aitken Bible has an interesting story in its own right which involves some intrigue, some seeming corruption, and not a little controversy. You can see a copy of the Aitken Bible in the museum. If you were to go and look at it, you would immediately notice its size--it is relatively small, at least compared to the much larger subscription Bibles commonly printed in that era. [By way of comparison, look at the example of a subscription Bible like that to which President Washington had subscribed--it is four to five times larger than Aitken's work!] Its small size has led some antiques dealers to dubb Aitken's work "The Bible of the Revolution" and to suggest Aitken undertook the printing to meet the needs of American soldiers for Bibles small enough to carry in their coat pockets. As evidence of this claim, they point to correspondence to and from George Washington mentioning the Bibles as gifts to Revolutionary War soldiers from Congress. But no such gift was ever made and there is no evidence that this was the original intent of the printing endeavor.

As best I've been able to tell, what actually happened is this. During the Revolutionary War, the colonies experienced a shortage of Bibles due to the fact that Bibles had typically been imported from England. Three Presbyterian ministers (Francis Alison, John Ewing, and William Marshall) petitioned the Continental Congress to fund, on the basis of a loan, the importation and utilization of equipment and supplies to print Bibles in America. That is, they asked Congress to

fund the publication of the Bible with the expectation of repayment; a sort of "bail-out" for Bibles. The stated goal was that Congress would ensure that the Bibles would "be sold nearly as cheap as the common Bibles, formerly imported from Britain and Ireland, were sold."[13] Apparently, some printers were engaging in what today we call "price gouging," and so, as Reverend Allison relayed, "unless the sale of the whole edition belong to the printer, and he be bound under sufficient penalties, ... we fear that the whole impression would soon be bought up, and sold again at an exorbitant price..."[14] Well, I'm not sure what to think about the possibility of the Federal Government getting into the business of Bible-price regulation, but anyway, after looking into the matter, Congress decided it would be cheaper to try to import Bibles from elsewhere, though this was never accomplished (and the reasons for this are in dispute).

Anyway, this sets the stage for Robert Aitken, who had worked as the Congressional printer until 1779. He ran a large printing office, published the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, and was known for his careful work (something most American printers were not known for at the time). He had already published editions of the New Testament, and began working on a complete edition of the Bible in order to fulfill the need caused by the war. Interestingly, and somewhat damning, between 1777 and 1780, several resolutions were presented to Congress (by friends of Aitken) to attempt to regulate the importing and/or printing and sale of Bibles in the U.S., though none were successful.

In 1781, Aitken began his own lobbying efforts with Congress, the most visible (and only successful) one being a request for Congressional authorization of his work. The nature and significance of the Congressional resolution regarding Aitken's Bible is a matter of some dispute

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[13]"Papers of the Continental Congress," National Archives Microfilm Publication M247, r53, i42, v1 p. 35.

[14]Ibid.

today. Some emphasize the wording in the resolution which notes "his care and accuracy in the execution of the work" and which cite the edition as "an instance of the progress of arts in the country." They see the recommendation as nothing more than an early "buy American" campaign by the Federal Government--like Congress saying, "this American-printed Bible is just as good as those imports, so if you're in the market, buy this one (as opposed to the foreign-printed editions)." So, for example, Rodda writes, "The books that were printed in America were not only more expensive than those imported from England, but had a reputation for being full of errors. Congress knew that as soon as the war was over and books could once again be imported, any progress that the book shortage had caused in the printing industry [in America] would end. The war had already created an opportunity for American printers to prove themselves, and Robert Aitken had done that. Printing an accurate edition of a book as large as the Bible was a monumental task for any printer, and Congress wanted it known that an American printer had accomplished it."[15]

Others emphasize the language which seems to commend both the Bible itself and the work that Aitken undertook in producing it because of its religious and pious nature. That is, some argue that Congress passed the resolution because they wanted to encourage Americans to buy (and presumably read) the Bible. Some of the wording of the resolution certainly seems to give this impression: "That the United States in Congress assembled, highly approve the pious and laudable undertaking of Mr. Aitken, as subservient to the interest of religion ... they recommend this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States ..."[16] So Barton,

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[15]Chris Rodda, *Liars for Jesus: The Religious Right's Alternate Version of American History, vol. I* (Charleston, SC: Booksurge Publishing, 2006), 15.

[16]Gaillard Hunt, ed. Journals of the Continental Congress 1774-1789, vol 23, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1914), 574.

commenting on the resolution of Congress endorsing the Aitken Bible, writes, "Congress, composed of America's premier group of statesmen and patriots, was neither ashamed of nor reticent about placing their whole-hearted endorsement on the use of the Bible for schools and citizens."[17] Lest we miss the point Barton hopes to make, the title of his book, *The Myth of Separation,* should make it clear.

It is not my purpose here to resolve this dispute and I do not intend to weigh in on it, except to note that it seems to me that the two positions are not mutually exclusive. That is, it seems that both aspects have truth to them. It is typical for government to act with a view to some secular purpose and it is rare for it to do so based on purely moral grounds. That is, the idea of *American interests* has always driven policy; when we go to war, it is because American interests have been threatened or harmed. However, to suggest that the Continental Congress had only a secular purpose in view here and would just as easily have endorsed, say, a secular novel if it had been printed free of error, seems to ignore the vast amount of discussion of the value (dare I say, "necessity") of religion for the State.[18] This approach is consistent with the language of the founding fathers, who invoked both biblical and rationalist language for God. The two were not seen as contrary, but as complementary. As Novak put it, "Our founders

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[17]David Barton, *The Myth of Separation: What is the correct relationship between Church and State?* 3rd ed., (Aledo, TX: WallBuilder Press, 1992), 106.

[18]In the case of many of the Founding Fathers, specifically Protestant Christianity was seen as necessary for undergirding the ideals of the nation. For the sake of space, I will not defend this thesis now, and so leave it for another time, but evidence abounds. Many of the colonies outlawed Catholicism, and in some cases, the ban remained into the nineteenth century. Several of the founding fathers were suspicious of Catholicism due to perceived loyalty to the Church over the nation, as well as bigotry inherited from their European forebears. In fact, some of the delegates to the Continental Congress complained about the representative from Maryland, since he was Catholic, and even tried to get him barred from the proceedings. Other evidence also exists. For example, 29 of the first 30 chaplains for the House of Representatives were either Presbyterian, Methodist, or Baptist, with one Unitarian serving for one year, and it was not until 1841 that an Episcopalian served in that post, and not until 2000 (the current chaplain) that a Catholic priest served in that capacity. Similarly, laws regulating who could serve as military chaplains demanded ministers of the Christian denomination until 1862, when Congress agreed to change the wording of the law to allow ordained clergy from any denomination, paving the way for Jewish chaplains.

learned—and taught—a *twofold* language. The language of reason *and* the language of biblical faith. They did not think that these two languages—at least as regards principles of liberty—were in contradiction. These two languages form a union. The Creator spoke both languages, and so can we."[19]

So how did Aitken's Bible come to be associated with Revolutionary War soldiers? Unfortunately for Aitken, his Bibles were completed just before the war ended. This timing proved disastrous, for trade with Britain soon resumed, and the shortage of Bibles was only a fading memory as were the hopes he had for a quick sale of his stock. He approached Congress and asked if it would purchase at least some of his Bibles (he requested one-fourth of his stock, or around 200 Bibles per state). The request was denied. So he decided to try another route. He asked a friend, Reverend John Rodgers, to talk with George Washington about procuring the Bibles to give as gifts from Congress to those who served as soldiers in the American cause. If Washington were to ask, Congress would surely grant the request. In his letter to Washington, Rodgers noted the noble undertaking of Aitken and the possible financial ruin it could cause him without some governmental intervention, and then he appealed to Washington's own sense of duty and piety:

> What I would take the Liberty to suggest to your Excellency, is the presenting each Soldier, & Non Commissioned Officer in the American Army, with a Copy of this Bible, by Congress, on their being disbanded. This would serve not only to save a deserving Citizen from Ruin who highly merits Attention; but would serve to furnish those brave Men to whom America is so greatly indebted for their Liberties, in the Hand of Heaven with a sure Guide to eternal Life, if they will but take heed of it.[20]

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[19]Michael Novak, "God's Country *or* Taking the Declaration Seriously," Francis Boyer Lecture, Washington Hilton, February 25, 1999.

[20]"John Rodgers to George Washington," May 30, 1783, *George Washington Papers, 1741-1799* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress), Series 4, *General Correspondence.*

Washington's reply was to say that he would have liked to have done so, had Congress not already sent two-thirds of the soldiers home, concluding, "It would have pleased me well, if Congress had been pleased to make such an important present to the brave fellows, who have done so much for the security of their Country's rights and establishment."[21]

As you may have guessed, the nature of Washington's reply is disputed. Some have argued that Washington was merely being polite and would never have approached Congress with such a request, given the financial problems it faced at war's end.[22] Others take the words at face value considering Washington's own promotion of religion among the troops (which I mentioned earlier). Of course, there is no way we can know what Washington would or would not have done if the timing had been right, and I'm not sure it really makes any difference anyway. What is of note, however, is that there is no suggestion in any of the correspondence that such a gift would have been inappropriate. That is, there is no indication that Rodgers or Washington or anyone else, for that matter, would have seen a government-purchased Bible given to soldiers to be an instance of government establishment of religion or a violation of the principles which eventually led to the Establishment Clause.

**GPO Printed Bibles.** The second item(s) I would like to consider is a Bible published by the Government Printing Office and distributed by the Army. While the government has always provided for the spiritual care for military personnel by employing chaplains in the ranks, it has not always provided religious materials for use in worship or private devotion. Most often, Bibles given to service members have come from private organizations such as the Gideons

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[21]"George Washington to John Rodgers," June 11, 1783, ibid.

[22]So Rodda writes, "This letter is nothing more than a polite reply to Dr. Rodgers. It is highly unlikely that Washington would have asked Congress to buy the Bibles, even if the idea had been proposed earlier. Most of the soldiers being discharged were owed months, or even years, of back pay and Congress was deeply in debt. ... It's a pretty safe bet that Washington would have been far more concerned with paying the soldiers than giving them Bibles." Rodda, *Liars for Jesus*, 20.

International, the Pocket Testament League, and the United States Christian Commission, among others, as well as from local churches and Sunday Schools. Many of these organizations have partnered with Chaplains for distribution to troops and sailors, airmen and marines. The most successful of these organizations was the American Bible Society, which was formed for both religious and political reasons in 1816. There was, at least among some politicians, a certain sense of despair over the spiritual direction of the country. Thomas Jefferson, an outspoken skeptic (not to mention a Republican), had been elected President, and Thomas Paine's works of heresy were best-sellers. While some persons unsuccessfully tried to rebut Paine with works of their own, a growing number came to see the answer to the nations ills in the Word of God. The most important and influential was Elias Boudinot, who had served as President of the Continental Congress from 1782-1783, and became the ABS's first President. As Gutjahr describes it, "Confident in the ability of the Word to speak for itself, Boudinot spent his remaining years occasionally taking up the pen himself, but predominantly using his considerable energies, finances, and personal connections to bind together disparate local bible societies into one powerful, centralized group ... The American Bible Society was born."[23] Upon its founding, the ABS immediately began distributing Bibles to military servicemen, with sailors on the USS John Adams being the first recipients in 1817. Many prominent Americans served with the ABS, the most prominent being John Jay, first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Signor of the Declaration of Independence, Governor of New York, and perhaps the most influential founding father you've never heard of (though John Witherspoon and Benjamin Rush are contenders as well), and who declared that his greatest honor was to serve as its President from 1821.

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[23]Paul C. Gutjahr, *An American Bible: A History of the Good Book in the United States, 1777-1880* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 11.

Not until World War II did the military supply system include religious materials for service members. At that time, the Government Printing Office, at the request of the Army Chief of Chaplains, printed various Scriptures for soldier use as well as pew and field versions of hymnals or songbooks [it is worth noting that the hymnals included Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and secular patriotic songs). In 1941-42, a Roman Catholic version of the New Testament was printed, followed by a Protestant version in 1942. A version of the Jewish Holy Scriptures was also printed (1941-42).

Some may wish to see this as vindication of their belief that America is truly a Christian nation (or at least founded on Judeo-Christian principles). They may be tempted to argue that the Government Printing Office only published religious texts from the Old and New Testaments because it (i.e., the Federal Government) views those Scriptures as truth over against the holy writ of other faiths (e.g., the Quran or the Upanishads), but this would be a mistake. While I believe it to be both an obvious and demonstrable truth that the United States was founded (at least in many aspects) on Judeo-Christian principles, the activity of the Government Printing Office during World War II in publishing Bibles for the military is not good evidence of that fact. The Tanak(s) and New Testaments were ordered by the Army Chief of Chaplains at the time, Chaplain (MG) William R. Arnold, and the GPO simply executed the request. The reasons Chaplain Arnold had for requesting the order could give insight into *his own* motives, but cannot speak to the Federal Government's position on any particular religion or religious text. That is, even though Chaplain Arnold was an official of the government, his opinion (even in his capacity as an officer of the Government) does not constitute official Government policy, even if it may, and this is not certain, given that *appearance*. [Incidentally, we could also say that the

President's remarks in an official speech, for that matter! We live in a republic, not a kingdom or dictatorship!]

Unfortunately, we cannot know all of Chaplain Arnold's reasons for requesting Bibles through the GPO rather than allowing soldiers to receive Bibles by the means which had become standard up to that time (i.e., civilian printers), but we can note some of the issues that would have influenced his decision to make the request. First, we should address the likely reason for ordering the specific texts he did (Old and New Testaments) and not ordering others. It is not so mysterious or revealing as may first appear. The three types of volumes published represented the three types of chaplains employed by the Army at the time (Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish). While this is only speculation, I would argue that it is likely that, had there been Muslim chaplains serving at the time, Arnold would have included copies of the Quran in his print request, though we cannot be sure. Chaplaincy leadership has always been keenly aware of its role in ministering to a pluralistic force and its actions have reflected the needs of the whole community. Evidence of my contention can be found in the composition of the Armed Forces Hymnals first printed by the GPO at the same time as the Bibles we are considering. They were designed to function as hymnals for all religious services conducted in the military chapels. They included Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish hymns, along with patriotic songs and (in the 1974 version) even some Native American songs, as well as liturgical readings and services for all three faiths. Similar contents could be found in the field hymnals used by both Army and Naval personnel at the time. More will be said about these rather unique worship aids in a moment or two.

Second, there is good reason to see Arnold's request as necessary due to the rapid increase in personnel numbers within the Army when the U.S. entered WWII. In 1940, just after

the outbreak of hostilities, the Army numbered less than 500,000 in both the Regular and Reserve forces. By the end of 1941, the number had swelled to over 1.5 million, and entering 1945, the Army numbered 5 1/2 million men (growing from 8 divisions at the beginning of the war to 94 division at war's end). This explosion in personnel numbers created almost insurmountable logistical difficulties across the services, most acutely in the supply chain. The need for Bibles was immediate and may very well have proven overwhelming for the civilian printers, since preference for raw materials was given to government agencies supporting the war effort.

Third, the developing professionalism of the chaplaincy in the military caused a re-evaluation of the military's responsibility to provide supply for the religious needs of service members. It would no longer be acceptable for the military to rely on private organizations (e.g., Bible societies) to provide the Scriptures to chaplains for distribution to soldiers. If the Army provided a chaplain to lead soldiers in worship, so also it should provide the resources needed for that worship. If the Army saw spiritual care of soldiers as important, as epitomized in the employment of chaplains, so also it should provide the materials needed for that spiritual care. It is hard to imagine chaplains trying to execute their duties without official supply, but that was the case for approximately the first 150 years of the chaplaincy. Chaplains were issued clerical supplies (typewriters, field desks, etc., but were expected to provide their own ecclesiastical supplies. This odd situation may be due in part to the, well, "odd" relationship chaplains have had with the military. Even though the government had provided for chaplains in the military since its inception, they were routinely seen as something of auxiliary officers--they carried status and were given pay an allowances commensurate with commissioned officers, but did not

have career progression and separate supervisory relationships like other branches.[24] It was not until 1904 that chaplains were allowed to progress to the ranks of Major and Lieutenant Colonel (Prior to that time, a man could serve an entire career without the benefit of promotion), and it was not until 1914 that they were able to wear rank insignia and the full uniform of staff officers. Budd summarizes the changes and their impact on the self-perception of the chaplaincy:

> As chaplaincy emerged from the First World War, much had happened to transform ministry within the military. Chaplains had become almost totally integrated into the military organization. All chaplains were commissioned, their billets were now an integral part of the tables of organization, and their duties were spelled out more completely. Uniforms of chaplains were virtually indistinguishable from those of other staff and line officers. Rank and pay had been equalized. Chaplains were more than ever a part of their respective units, more identified with their respective units, more identified with their fellow officers and their military service. ... Professionalization and bureaucratization became the institutional vehicles to accomplish the best possible accommodation of ministry to the military. Chaplains had the access they desired, the authority they needed, and the autonomy to which they felt entitled as a profession.[25]

In addition to the concerns already addressed, we can get a glimpse into Chaplain Arnold's thought by examining a letter he wrote to the troops included at the back of the GPO published Bibles. In it, he encouraged soldiers to get to know their unit chaplains and to seek counsel from them. He also exhorted the soldiers to know the Word of God and to put it into practice. The result, said Arnold, is that the soldier will become "a man of power and influence among his fellows," and will exalt "his military service to the high level of religious faith, courage, and loyalty." What is interesting, though not surprising, is that the message was

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[24]By way of example, when General Pershing desired to organize the chaplains of the American Expeditionary Forces in a more systematic way (similar to other officer branches), he hired a civilian pastor who was near and dear to his own heart to do the job. Bishop Charles H. Brent served as the head chaplain for the AEF and opened the door to the development of the Army Chief of Chaplains position following the war. Brent's efforts are to be lauded in their scope and efficiency, but the fact that he was a civilian and given the rank of Major (Pershing lobbied for Lieutenant Colonel) with no military training evinces the laissez-faire attitude toward the chaplaincy as a solid member of the military command staff at the time. All of that was to change following the War, as military chaplains were granted full recognition and acceptance in the officer corps.

[25]Richard M. Budd, *Serving Two Masters: The Development of American Military Chaplaincy, 1860-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 157-58.

included in all three religious texts published by the Government Printing Office. So Chaplain Arnold's motives were both religious and duty-oriented. He sought to provide his chaplains with the resources they needed, he sought to use those resources as a way to promote the *chaplaincy* (and not just one religion), but he also sought to inculcate a love for Scripture in the troops.[26]

Some may wish to view the events surrounding the GPO's publication of Bibles during WWII and its aftermath as vindication of their beliefs that such activity (and chaplaincy as well for that matter!) is a violation of the Establishment Clause. They may wish to argue that the fact that the GPO did not publish Bibles prior to this and has not done so since, confirms the action as an exception attributable to either a lapse in judgment or a special allowance under the War Powers Clause, which grants the Federal Government (specifically Congress) extraordinary freedom to violate requirements of the Constitution for the purpose of prosecuting War and defending the nation [The War Powers Clause has been used by the Department of Defense to justify what would normally be considered violations of service members' civil rights]. This line of reasoning would also be mistaken.

We have already noted some of the factors which probably influenced Chaplain Arnold's request. Prior to the massive build-up of troops in WWII, the civilian printers were able to meet the ongoing demand for Scriptures among soldiers, so such a request was not necessary, and the chaplaincy was still developing its understanding of its role in the military as a profession and member of the officer corps, which influenced its understanding of the government's responsibility to provide religious materials for chaplain and soldier use. But, it may be

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[26]While I suspect Chaplain Arnold would have requested Qurans and other, non-biblical religious texts printed had the chaplain corps had persons serving those faiths in its ranks, I am not so sure that he would have included the same letter in the back of those texts. There is a difference between providing materials, and endorsing them.

wondered, what about the massive and rather sudden build-up of soldiers once the U.S. decided to enter WWI?

In order to answer this question, a brief examination of the history of the Government Printing Office will be necessary. Now, before your eyes begin to glaze over, let me promise that I will be brief. As I read through the 200+ pages of GPO history for the first 150 years (for your benefit), I myself was literally "bored to tears," as multiple yawns led to uncontrollable watering of the eyes. Nevertheless, there were, in actuality, a few morsels of information that help elucidate our inquiry into how printing was managed and undertaken for governmental purposes.

During the colonial period and into the early years of the Republic, government printing (and during this period, we are predominantly speaking of the publication of bills and other legislative documents) was handled on a contractual basis with private printers, most of whom ran local newspapers (they were the only businesses at the time which were equipped to handle the work load). As the nation (and along with it, the federal government) grew and gained stability (e.g., a regular Capitol in Washington, D.C., rather than a "roving Capitol"), the demands for government print increased significantly. Those individuals lucky enough to receive contracts eventually had to move their businesses to the Capitol. Congress adopted a *lowest bidder* method of awarding contracts, which eventually proved ineffective, as a 1819 Congressional Committee appointed to explore the subjects of how to procure timely and accurate printing for the Legislature concluded: "... at first glance, it [the low-bid method] may strike the mind as the most economical, experience and observation do not prove it so. ... both Houses have frequently to wait long for interesting and important communications, reports, bills, etc. and the loss of time thus incurred, considering the daily expense at which Congress sits,

costs the nation much more than the difference, between the present price, and a more liberal allowance."[27]

In other words, in order to keep costs down to win contracts, printers had to use fewer employees, which slowed down production. Similarly, such reduction in costs prevented the hiring of the best qualified and skilled labor. The Committee also argued that lowest bidder contracts "prevent that care and attention ... which is necessary to its neatness and accuracy," and this brings disgrace and ridicule on our country, since the documents were distributed not only in the U.S., but also abroad. That is, it looked unprofessional and had the potential to cause confusion on important legislative issues. [I include this only because I find it simultaneously amusing and sad that contract-writers for the government have obviously not learned their lesson. I guess military contract writers forgot to read the history of the GPO...] The Committee recommended a federal government printing office.

Well as you may have guessed, nothing was done about the issue, at least not immediately, and for some good reasons. There was a healthy skepticism of a strong centralized government among some politicians and costs and oversight were also concerns. But the issue of a federal print office would arise again. As the need for government print continued to grow into the middle of the 19th century, several printers had to be employed to meet the demand. This had the unsavory consequence of variety in style and quality of product. In addition to the need for standardization, other problems arose. You know, there is a saying: "Even as things change, they stay the same," or as King Solomon put it, "There is nothing new under the sun" (Ecc. 1:9). Allegations of corruption and croneyism had arisen even within Congress over contracts given for printing, and in both 1858 and 1860, Congressional investigations found that, at a minimum,

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[27]James L. Harrison, ed. *100 GPO Years, 1861-1961: A History of United States Public Printing* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1961, Sesquicentennial Edition, 2010), 14.

waste had occurred (if not also fraud). The conclusion to the 1858 investigation found "...there is no competition for this work, and no general contract is made for its execution. It is a grand monopoly for a few individuals, who reap therefrom enormous profits," and that "further checks and safeguards are required, both in the purchase and in the use of the paper for public printing."[28] At this point, Congress approved the establishment of a Government Printing Office, and President Buchanan signed Joint Resolution No. 25 on June 23, 1860. So, prior to 1860, the Federal Government could not have printed Bibles because it had not such agency.

During the Civil War, there was great difficulty for printers in general and the GPO was no exception. The Government Printing Office worked nonstop, with many workers setting type during the day, and drilling as soldiers (in order to defend the city from Southern invasion) at night. Scarcity of resources, both paper and ink, made the work of printing difficult, so there was no expansion of the Government Printing Office's responsibilities at that time. Northern Chaplains continued to get copies of the Scriptures donated by the YMCA, ABS, US Christian Commission, and the like.

Chaplains of the Confederacy faced a much more difficult time. A ban on trade with the Southern states by President Lincoln and Northern blockades of Southern ports made importing Bibles almost impossible, and the Bible societies in the South had depended on the headquarters of the American Bible Society (in New York) to supply Bibles prior to the schism. In March 1862, the Confederate States Bible Society was formed with a view to printing Bibles for the south, priority going to Confederate soldiers. It was headquartered in Augusta, Georgia, as Northern soldiers had confiscated the Bible plates from the Southwestern Publishing House when they invaded Nashville, Tennessee. The war was particularly difficult on the Southern

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[28]ibid., 25

printers. Commenting on the situation, Harrison writes, "The South particularly felt the pinch, because paper, ink, and type had come from the North. In the South, newspapers were reduced in size, headlines were omitted, and frantic appeals were made for rags and materials for making paper. In some cases, wrapping paper and the blank side of wall paper were used, with shoeblacking serving as improvised ink."[29] Many private efforts to import Bibles allowed for some of the demand to be met, but a lack seemed to pervade the South in the war years.[30]

It was not until after the civil war that any military branch's printing needs were given to the Government Printing Office. In 1870, the Department of the Navy printing was granted to the GPO. Thus, during the Civil War, the GPO could not have printed Bibles for the military because of scarcity of resources, its difficulty in simply meeting the demands of print for the legislature, and military print being outside of its purview.

But perhaps the most obvious reason the GPO did not print Bibles until WWII is that prior to 1920, there was no official serving within either the Army or the Navy to make the request. As already noted, it was not until *after* WWI that the chaplaincy really became fully integrated into the military as a separate profession. Prior to that time, chaplains had served with units, but there was no centralized supervision for the corps. That is, there was no Army or Naval Chief of Chaplains, and the chaplaincy had only recently begun to see itself as a military profession along with other officer corps. Thus, there was no mechanism for ordering government-printed Bibles. Even if such a request had been made upon America's entry into WWI, the GPO would have had difficulty executing the request, given the short time constraints

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[29]ibid., 36.

[30]For an interesting discussion, see W. Harrison Daniel, "Bible Publication and Procurement in the Confederacy" *The Journal of Southern History* 24:2 (May 1958): 191-201.

and all the other higher-priority requests (e.g., ongoing legislative printing requests, military technical manuals, etc.).

But once the door was opened to Bible production by the GPO, we may wonder, why did it not continue to do so? That is, why do chaplains today not get their Bibles from the GPO? Here, again, the answer is not that it is disallowed under the First Amendment, but simply because none were/have been requested. But why not? No one knows for sure, but it is here that we return to the example of the Armed Forces Hymnals. While they were/are the epitome of pragmatism in terms of content, the source of their strength (i.e., diversity) is also the source of their greatest weakness, namely, when you try to please everyone, you invariably please no one. The hymnals served a need, but chaplains increasingly have found them to be inadequate. Each distinctive faith group has its own songs, hymns, praise choruses, and liturgical items, many of which cannot be found in the hymnals. The Armed Forces Books of Worship seemed to be best suited for use by mainline Protestant denominations (for the "Liturgical" services), and so it fell out of favor as the number of Evangelical Protestant chaplains grew to the detriment of mainline denominations and as worship styles have changed (e.g., predominant use of praise choruses). Similarly, growing religious diversity in the ranks revealed the inadequacy of the Worship Books, which only really provided for three faith groups. Now that the Army has Muslim and Buddhist chaplains, appropriate hymns and liturgies would need to be added, not to mention other faiths not yet represented by chaplains (e.g., Wicca), but I'm not sure that would be viewed with much favor by anyone. It's one thing to have what we might call "Biblical faith" worship materials bound together in a single volume, but it's quite a different thing to include non-biblical and even pagan items alongside "A Mighty Fortress" and "Just As I Am." It is true that military chapels function as multi-use facilities and there is always tension regarding the varied

use of sacred space, but the use of worship resources which include other religions can be seen as intrusive on the worship services of each faith. And so chaplains (and devout service members) increasingly began calling upon churches and synagogues from their own traditions to provide worship materials for use by the troops. [For example, I had a group of folks from Tennessee who were serving within my Area of Operations. Many came from the Church of Christ tradition and wanted a denominationally-specific service. One of the soldiers was a deacon in his church back home and had his church send Church of Christ hymnals and I gave them time in the chapel to gather for worship]. The dissatisfaction with the old Armed Forces Hymnals led the Army supply system to make allowance for ordering denominationally-specific worship materials and chaplains can now order a variety of privately published hymnals.

In the same way, one Bible does not fit all. There was a time in U.S. history when the Authorized version was dominant, but that is no longer the case. While the KJV still commands broad allegiance, several other translations are now widely read and circulated, most notably the Revised Standard Version and its descendants and the New International Version and its descendants (and as a good Southern Baptist, I should also note the American Standard, New American Standard, and Holman Christian Standard versions). The point is that a one-size-fits-all approach to Bible procurement for the military is ineffective and unnecessary, and as you can imagine, it is also costly. Even though the Government Printing Office has vast resources, it simply cannot compete with the private sector for the variety of Bible publication.[31]

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[31]Interestingly, this is a point Gutjahr makes regarding the American Bible Society and the survival of other printers. Since no one could compete with the ABS on cost, printers had to make their Bibles more elaborate. Gutjahr argues that the Bible's loss of prominence in American life and culture came as a result of a complex set of factors, from a reduction in the costs of printing and the subsequent availability of a massive number of other books, to the rise of higher criticism of the Bible and the doubts they raised regarding its truthfulness, to the changing religious makeup of the United States due to wave upon wave of (non-Protestant) immigrants at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Perhaps most surprising though, is Gutjahr's thesis that the efforts of Bible publishers to get Bibles in the hands of more people by seemingly altering the content through the production of new translations, the

Today, Bibles (both Protestant and Catholic versions), Tanaks, and Qurans may be ordered through the military supply system. These items are no longer printed by the Government Printing Office, and instead publishers may apply for a national stock number for their items and chaplains can order the supplies they wish to use or have on hand for distribution to their service members. Thus, there are numerous versions of the Bible available for order through official channels with government funds. The most popular are those published by the International Bible Society. Thus, while we cannot know for certain why the Government Printing Office no longer publishes sacred texts, there is good reason to think it has less to do with perceptions of separation of church and state and more to do with flexibility and desire of chaplains/best practices. If chaplains would rather use privately published materials and would not utilize generic Bibles produced by the government, then it makes no sense for the government to be in that business.

**Presidential and Military Leaders' Notes.** The third item I would like to address regarding Establishment are the many notes by politicians and military leaders included in Bibles printed for members of the armed forces. Particularly during times of war, military and political leaders have encouraged service members to practice their faith and read the Scriptures. During World War I, President Woodrow Wilson wrote a message to the troops for inclusion in some privately published New Testaments (Pocket Testament League's military Bibles). In it, he encouraged service members to read "not little snatches here and there, but long passages that will really be the road to the heart of it," because it is the "word of life." He noted that wisdom

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addition of study notes and other aides, or the mixture of fable with the biblical stories did more to undermine confidence in the Bible: "This study argues that the reasons for the diminishing role of the Bible in American print culture and largely founded and revealed in the evolving content and packaging of the Holy Scriptures. The Bible's myriad mutations played an enormous, and hitherto almost entirely ignored, role in determining the Bible's place in American hearts and minds. ... In attempting to woo buyers and readers to their bible editions, American publishers helped erode the timeless, changeless aura surrounding ‚the Book' by making it ‚the books.'" Gutjahr, *An American Bible*, 3-4. I am not convinced that Gutjahr has given enough credence to the destructive effects of liberal theology and higher criticism, but his thesis is interesting.

is to be found in the Scriptures--that the Bible points individuals to those actions and attitudes which lead to true happiness (e.g., loyalty, truthfulness, selflessness) exemplified in the peace of knowing one has "the approval of Christ, who gave everything" for him and warns against those which "are guaranteed to make men unhappy" (e.g., selfishness, cowardice, greed, etc.)--and suggested that the Scripture itself can transform the individual. Wilson, then, saw knowledge of the Scriptures and following its dictates as tied to both happiness and also good citizenship (something Aristotle, interestingly enough, tied to true knowledge, or *episteme*). In summary, he wrote, "When you have read the Bible, you will know that it is the Word of God, because you will have found it the key to your own heart, your own happiness, and your own duty." Notice that Wilson tied *duty* to happiness, along with "readiness to give everything for what they think their duty" (what I summarized as "selflessness" above), and tied *cowardice* to unhappiness as "low and mean."

Notes from other prominent military leaders and politicians have been included in other wartime Bibles. General John J. Pershing, Commander of the American Expeditionary Forces and the first U.S. Army Chief of Staff, characterized the Axis powers as anti-Christian and encouraged soldiers to "trust in God" for comfort, and to find strength to overcome temptation in "the teachings of our Savior." War hero and former President of the United States, "Colonel" Theodore Roosevelt also wrote a message to the troops for inclusion in Bibles. He allegorically compared the Germans and Turks to Moloch and Beelzebub, exhorting our soldiers to "fight valiantly" against these forces of evil in the cause of justice. In addition, he instructed the soldiers to be merciful, especially to women, children, and the elderly, and suggested that they "study the life and teachings of the Savior" in order to "walk humbly."

During World War II, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt wrote a letter to soldiers, "commending the reading of the Bible to all who serve in the armed forces of the United States." The tone of his letter is more pluralistic and secular in nature, speaking of how persons of "many faiths and diverse origins" have found wisdom in its pages and how it can serve as "an aid in attaining the highest aspirations of the human soul."

In each of the cases cited, the Bible was used to spur the soldiers on in the cause of war, while also reminding them of their moral duty to serve with honor. This wedding of Scripture and service to country is a theme to be found throughout our nation's history, particularly within the chaplaincy, and has led some cultural critics to suggest that America has always had a sort of politicized religion, in which honor to God is important so long as it supports the agenda and ethos of the State. While I do not agree with this assessment, I do recognize the potential for abuse which exists within the chaplaincy and the need for Christians to be vigilant against the temptations to transform the prophetic ministry of the chaplain into the court prophet's work in service of the crown The chaplaincy itself and the examples from Bible production and distribution to military members do not violate Establishment, and chaplains should be wary of any attempt to do so.

**Conclusion**. Two other examples with regard to concerns over Establishment with Bible production, procurement, and distribution are worth noting, even if only in passing. The first is the controversy which erupted a few years ago when Holman Bible Publishers unveiled their new line of military Bibles. Versions for the Navy, Air Force, Army, and Marines were all produced with the respective official department seals affixed to the front covers. Critics complained that the use of the seal gave the impression of a government endorsement of the

Bible and therefore, violated Establishment. Holman had received permission from the Departments of the Navy, Air Force, and Army, and has continued to produce the Bibles.

The second example comes from my own experience recently in Iraq. It has been a pretty common practice in recent years to order camouflage Bibles from various private publishers with unit crests or other distinguishing markings printed on the covers. When we got word that our unit was going to be deploying to Iraq, I submitted the necessary paperwork to order some Army Combat Uniform patterned Bibles with our unit crest, the T-patch, on the cover. The request was denied by the state, supposedly for funding reasons. Once we were in Iraq, I resubmitted the request, and this time, I made sure that the total amount of my purchase request would not exceed the amount that my own Commander could approve, since we arrived at the beginning of the draw-down, and new purchases received scrutiny that had not been seen in that theater. Imagine my surprise when I was told that our JAG (military lawyer) expressed grave concern about the practice of (in his words) "emblazening" the unit crest on religious materials! He was not sure that such a use of government funds was legal since the kinds of funds we were going to use have very stringent requirements, and so he consulted the USF-I HQ JAG office. Their reply was that they were concerned that such an item violates Establishment! When I appealed to the USF-I Chaplain's office, I received no help because the mantra they had been preaching from day one was, "We're leaving; shut things down, don't start things up; consolidate." Our Resource Manager (the guy who controls the funds for the Commander) was also reluctant, given the timing of our deployment and the emphasis on downsizing. After several avenues of attack with no success, I finally capitulated and raised the white flag. As disappointing as it was to not get the Bibles I wanted for my unit (and to be honest, I think our JAG, Resource Manager and Commander would have all liked to have them), what was most

troubling about the whole affair was that the HQ JAG office cared nothing about precedent. This attitude is reflective of those who see the Constitution as flexible and evolving in its meaning rather than static and located in authorial intent. Much more could be said about this, but we should just note that the evolutionary interpretation of the First Amendment is not limited to Establishment. It also impacts interpretations of Free exercise.

**Free Exercise**

This leads us to consider the state of military chaplaincy today. I would like to address a number of somewhat disturbing issues in the media lately which give the impression that there is a systematic persecution of [true] Christians by military leadership, or that there is a censuring of religious speech and expression within the military in the name of political correctness. Specifically, I want to very quickly address three issues: (1) The burning of Bibles by the Army leadership, (2) The question of prayers in Jesus' name, and (3) the lifting of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy regarding homosexual service in the military.

Let me begin by acknowledging that there has been a growing amount of litigation (actual and threatened) against the activities of chaplains in the military. Groups like Michael [I refuse to call a 50+ year old man, "Mikey"] Weinstein's *Military Religious Freedom Foundation,* which brought suit against the U.S. Air Force Academy because of proselytizing activities by cadets and leadership, activities which allegedly often included anti-semitic rhetoric.[32]

**Burning of Bibles.** A relatively recent article in *Newsweek* magazine reported on growing tensions within the military over proselytization. Several events in recent years have

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[32]For a thorough, though skewed and somewhat self-aggrandizing account of Weinstein's battle with Air Force Academy administrators and Evangelical leaders, see Michael L. Weinstein and Davin Seay, *With God on Our Side: One Man's War Against an Evangelical Coup in America's Military* (New York: St. Martin's, 2006).

caused these issues to come to the fore. Lawsuits by evangelical chaplains and/or chaplaincy advocacy groups or endorsers arguing for the right to practice their faith(s), and by activist groups arguing for a more strict interpretation of the concept of separation of church and state, along with news reports of conflict within the military over evangelizing activities of soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan have caused much confusion. Stories of military officials confiscating and burning Bibles of soldiers have fueled further outrage among evangelical Christians and speculation of persecution by a largely secular government.

The headlines which reported the burning of Bibles read as though it was a seizure and destruction of personally owned Bibles of U.S. Soldiers, an action which clearly and unequivocally violates the free exercise rights of the affected individuals. Listen to some, in order to get a flavor for the reporting: "Pentagon Burns Soldier's Bibles" (www.redroom.com); for effect, some even added, "Military Chaplains Attacked" (www.city-data.com). Perhaps the most inflamatory (if possible to surpass the previous) was, "Pentagon Burns Bibles--Honors Korans + Sodomites" (www.christian-forum.net). However, further investigation will reveal that the headlines were more "spin" than responsible reporting. What actually happened was that some Bibles translated into Farsi and Pashtun were sent to Afghanistan for U.S. soldiers to give out as gifts as they went out to meet with local nationals (typically, village elders). There are differing stories about the intent. Some claim the Bibles were to be used by Christian soldiers to proselytize the Afghanis, an activity forbidden by General Order #1. Others claim the Bibles were merely meant to be a symbol of Western culture; something the recipients would probably never have the opportunity to own otherwise, and that soldiers were not engaging in evangelizing activity. Whichever the case, Al Jazeera got hold of footage showing the stock of Bibles and

aired it, causing widespread anxiety throughout the Muslim world. At that point, the Pentagon ordered the books gathered and destroyed.

What are we to say about events like this? On the one hand, it is outrageous that a holy book was destroyed at the command of the military leadership (especially when the President was so concerned about a private organization's plan to destroy its own copies of holy books of a different sort). On the other hand, those who had the Bibles sent knew that they were engaging in activity which could be interpreted (no matter what their intent) as violations of General Order #1, and if publicized (as here), had the potential to put American military members' lives at risk. As I have noted elsewhere, the sharing of one's faith is possible in the military context, if it is done in a respectful, non-threatening and welcome manner. I will give a demonstration of one approach I have used in just a few moments. The destruction of the Bibles was not a violation of Free Exercise, at least not in the way that many reports suggested, but the prohibition on evangelizing in the military has the potential for impinging on the First Amendment if it is given a very wide application (e.g., no talk of religion allowed at any time, save the chapel hour).

**Praying in Jesus' Name.** I have written extensively on this subject elsewhere, so I will not say a whole lot, but will instead let a picture (or in this case, video) say the 1,000+ words I would need to adequately address it. **[VIDEO]** As you could see, I felt comfortable closing my prayer at the deployment ceremony with the words, "in Jesus' name," and was not court-martialed for it. At the same time, I have also prayed (even for another prayer at this same event) prayers that end with the words, "in Your holy name," "in Your name," or even just, "Amen." The supposed prohibition on sectarian prayers in the military is something of an urban legend. Chaplains have always been exhorted to offer more "pluralistically-conscious" prayers at secular functions, but at the end of the day, the event belongs to the Commander, and he or she

has the right to decide if a prayer is appropriate and who will give it. If the chaplain feels compelled to pray in Jesus' name and the Commander is okay with it, then the repercussions are on him/her and not the chaplain.

**"Don't Ask, Don't Tell."** One of the hottest issues currently being discussed in the military is the lifting of the ban on homosexual service by the removal of the long-standing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. As the Obama Administration has made its views known, and key military leaders have weighed in on the issue, the average soldier has also been asked to voice his opinion, though it is unclear what difference it will make when it comes down to policy-making. Army Knowledge Online, along with the other branch services for internet communications, has requested input on the issue from all registered members. Similarly, "Stars and Stripes," the military newspaper, has asked for the opinions of its readers, which is comprised of active duty, reserve, and retired personnel. The published letters have revealed a wide divergence of opinion on the issue among military members.

This is not the first time the issue of homosexual service has been broached, and each time, Chaplains and Scripture have been at the center of the controversy. As Loveland has shown, the specter of opening military service to openly gay persons during the Clinton Administration roused the ire of evangelical groups both inside and outside the military establishment and it revealed the strength of evangelical groups to influence cultural norms and national policy.[33]

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[33]She writes, "...evangelicals' mission to the military and their campaign to influence national policy generally developed along parallel lines. The debate over homosexuality in the military revealed the potency of a working alliance between the two movements. ...If anything, the controversy over homosexuality in the military suggested that military evangelicals, separately or allied with fellow believers in the civilian sector, constituted a force to be reckoned with in the future." Anne C. Loveland, *American Evangelicals and the U.S. Military, 1942-1993* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 340-41.

While the primary legislative argument against allowing openly gay persons from serving has been the potential adverse effects it would have upon morale and unit cohesion (and subsequently, mission effectiveness), there can be no doubt that biblical reasons stand in the center of the opposition for many. A number of chaplains, both actively serving and retired, spoke out when the Clinton administration flirted with lifting the ban. Retired Chaplain (Brigadier General) James M. Hutchens appeared before the House Armed Services Committee to argue for it's retention. While he did quote passages against homosexuality from the holy texts of several religions, the bulk of his argument was drawn from the New Testament. His summary statement drew heavily from Romans, chapter one, and included eight propositions, including the claims that the wrath of God is revealed against it, it is based on a willful choice, a refusal to honor God and ingratitude toward God, and that it is contrary to God's law, and its acceptance constitutes a step away from God.[34] As you are probably aware, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was the compromise solution dreamed up by the Administration. Prior to that time, recruiters routinely asked potential recruits if they were homosexual or had ever engaged in homosexual activity, and a positive answer was an effective bar from enlistment. At the time, conservative Protestant and Catholic persons alike were opposed to the measure, seeing it as a compromise with ungodliness; it is ironic that many now see it as the salvation of the soul of the military...

When in Iraq recently, I received a call from the United States Forces Iraq (USF-I) Headquarters Chaplain's Office. While such a phone call would not have necessarily been so unusual given the fact that my supervisory chaplain was the USF-I Chaplain, the occasion of this call was not friendly. A battalion chaplain in my brigade had written a letter to the editor on the

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[34]"Testimony of Chaplain (Brigadier General) James M. Hutchens, ARNG, Retired, Before the House Armed Services Committee ... May 4, 1993."

repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and it was published in "Stars and Stripes." The comments in the letter had drawn the attention of folks at the Pentagon, and a call had been made to Iraq and then to me. I was asked to have a talk with our young chaplain in order to address the issue.

My own knee-jerk reaction was one of discomfort, for I thought I was being asked to silence someone who was [rightfully] speaking out against ungodliness and standing up for the Word of God. As I listened to the representative from the head chaplain's office, I tried to determine his angle, and after I asked a few clarifying questions, I had a good handle on what was, and what was not, being asked of me. Contrary to conspiracy theorists and the like, we were not trying to silence opposition to the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." In fact, both the chaplain who called me and I agreed with much of the letter. Many evangelical chaplains have expressed concern over the lifting of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" for fear it could lead to limitations on free speech. If homosexuals are allowed to serve openly in the military and receive protected status from harassment, it could mean that sermons which speak against such activity would be labeled "hate speech," or violations of Equal Opportunity regulations. These concerns are legitimate, and have been voiced by many Christian advocacy groups. The problem the hierarchy had with the letter had nothing to do with the substance of the argument, but rather with the tone it took toward Administration officials and Chairman of the Joint Chief, Admiral Mike Mullen, and this, right on the heels of the firing of General McChrystal.

Thus, I contacted the young chaplain and commended him for his passion about the issue, but also tried to help him see how to communicate passion while remaining respectful of those in authority. He agreed, and the issue was resolved. But I recognize that some persons in his position would have seen this as some attempt to censor his speech for God's Word. Some in his position may have characterized the whole affair as an anti-Christian agenda by liberal

leadership in the military chaplaincy. Nothing could be further from the truth, at least in this instance. However, there is some truth to the accusation that, at least at times, liberal chaplaincy leaders seek to silence evangelicals or to impose their own theological viewpoints.

Take, for instance, an alternate viewpoint on "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" recently published in "Stars and Stripes." In his guest column, retired Naval Chaplain (CAPT) John F. Gundlach took issue with the standard concerns of conservative chaplains (i.e., the potential limitation of chaplain speech and free exercise that lifting "Don't Ask, Don't Tell could represent). First, he correctly noted that military regulations both require all service members, regardless of sexual orientation, to carry themselves with comport and professionalism, and prohibit sexual harassment within the ranks. Second, he pointed out what he sees to be the hypocrisy in conservative chaplains' concerns about discrimination: "But while they worry about being discriminated against, they openly discriminate against some of the very people they are pledged to serve and serve with."[35][I will say more about this in just a moment]. Third, he argued that conservative chaplains will "continue to have the same rights they've always had to preach, teach, counsel, marry and conduct religious matters according to the tenets of their faith," adding that they should refer those of differing opinions to other chaplains.

But he did not stop there, and this is what is most troubling about Gundlach's piece. Early in the article, he acknowledged that conservative Christianity represents the lion's share of military chaplaincy today, and stated that "this brand has become almost an established religion in today's military," and then noted that other points of view [i.e., his own in favor of homosexuality] should be "heard and respected."[36] Yet he himself does not appear willing to

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[35]John F. Gundlach, "Chaplain, I Beg to Differ" Stars and Stripes Sept. 7, 2010, available at http://www.stripes.com/chaplain-i-beg-to-differ-1.117373, accessed October 25, 2010.

respect the views of conservative Christians, who see homosexuality as an affront to God and an abomination. He characterizes this view as discriminatory and its presentation in, for example, sermons, as "hate speech." After expressing doubt that many chaplains will leave the services over the issue or that many denominations will pull their chaplains out, he concluded that "if they choose to do so for the reasons stated; the services will be the better for it."[37]

This language is particularly disappointing, for it reveals either a profound lack of understanding of the chaplaincy or a profound lack of openness to (or what Gundlach calls, "respect for") opposing viewpoints. I am fairly certain that Gundlach understands the role of the chaplaincy (probably better than I do!) given his previous assignments, which included a tour at the Naval Chief of Chaplains Office working in recruitment and on the Personnel Advisory Group of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board. This must lead us to the unsavory conclusion that Chaplain Gundlach, who, recall, served in a recruiting and personnel advisory role for the Naval Chief of Chaplains, does not really value diversity as much as he claims, at least when diversity means that someone disagrees with his own, liberal theology and agenda. Tolerance appears all too often to be a one-way street.

**Conclusion**. Concerns over free exercise for both military service members and chaplains abound in the pluralistic military context. The very reason the chaplaincy is allowed to continue to exist, even on an evolutionary reading of the First Amendment, is in order to ensure access to ministry for those who wish receive it. Chaplains are free to preach and teach the Bible as they understand it, in accordance with the dictates of their respective faith groups. While the specific issues examined here do not constitute violations of free exercise, chaplains must remain vigilant, for there are some segments of society which believe that Establishment always trumps

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[36]ibid.

[37]ibid.

Free Exercise. It is fortunate (or should I say, "a blessing") that the Supreme Court has not as yet agreed with that assessment.

**Demonstration/Comment on Devotional Guides**