

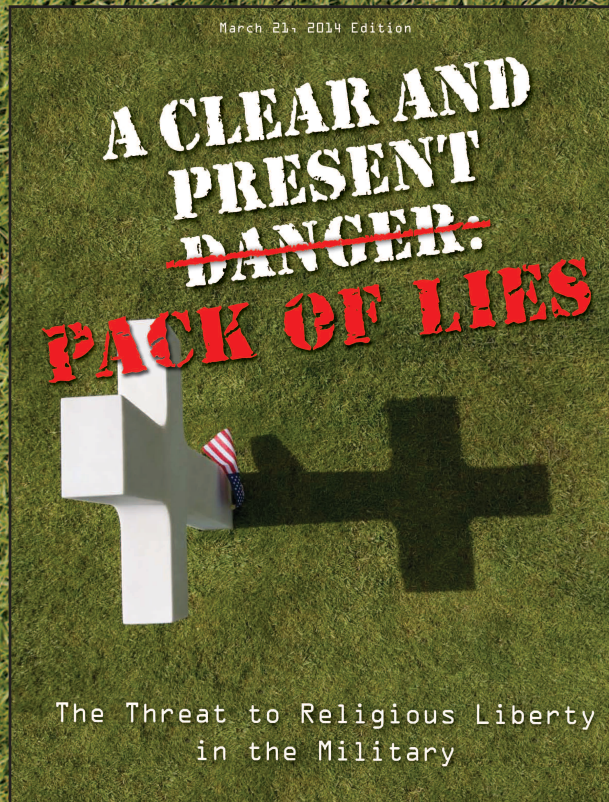
June 9, 2014

**The Three Most Often Heard Lies
From Members of Congress
Citing the Family Research Council's
Propaganda Entitled:**

A CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER:

The Threat to Religious Liberty in the Military

Otherwise Known As:



Last July, as the FY14 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) was being debated in Congress, a coalition of about a dozen and a half organizations, claiming to be defenders of religious liberty in the Armed Forces, was formed. Calling itself the “Restore Military Religious Freedom Coalition,” this coalition has now grown to over two dozen member organizations (listed at <http://militaryfreedom.org>). The goals of this organization, however, have nothing to do with defending religious liberty. The primary mission of this so-called “religious freedom” coalition is to protect the “right” of anti-gay Christians in the military to continue to discriminate against and harass LGB service members in a post-DADT and post-DOMA military.

The formation of this coalition cannot be separated from an amendment to the FY14 NDAA, introduced by Rep. John Fleming under the guise of “religious liberty.” The real purpose of Fleming’s so-called “religious liberty” amendment, however, was not religious liberty. It was nothing but a sneaky way of reversing the protections gained by LGB service members with the repeal of DADT. If passed, it would essentially have taken away the ability of military commanders to do anything to stop anti-gay harassment and discrimination within their ranks until it rose from the level of merely being a threat to good order and discipline to the level of having already done “actual harm” to good order and discipline. As long as a service member claimed that their anti-gay speech or actions were an expression of their sincerely held religious beliefs, their superiors would have been powerless to do anything to stop them.

The so-called “Restore Military Religious Freedom Coalition” was formed, in large part if not exclusively, to launch a propaganda campaign promoting the Fleming amendment and its discriminatory agenda. In an email blast sent out to its members about a meeting between this so-called religious liberty coalition’s leaders and Pentagon officials, the American Family Association (AFA), one of the largest and most influential organizations in the coalition, didn’t even try to make a secret of its goals, writing:

We made our point very clear ... Christian soldiers and airmen have the right to express their faith and to maintain deeply held religious convictions in every area including homosexuality and homosexual marriage.

In June 2013, the Obama administration strongly objected to the amendment, stating: “By limiting the discretion of commanders to address potentially problematic speech and actions within their units, this provision would have a significant adverse effect on good order, discipline, morale, and mission accomplishment.”

On July 9, 2013, Rep. Fleming, Rep. Louie Gohmert, and Rep. Jim Bridenstine, along with the leaders of the so-called “Restore Military Religious Freedom Coalition,” held a press conference on Capitol Hill in support of Fleming’s amendment. This was also when the Family Research Council (FRC), the big mover and shaker behind this coalition, put out the first of three editions of a report entitled “A Clear and Present Danger: The Threat to Religious Liberty in the Military.”

Employing a tactic often referred to as the “Gish Gallop” – presenting such a lengthy list of claims as to overwhelm anyone who might attempt to refute any of them – the current

edition of the FRC's report lists sixty-three separate claims of alleged "Christian persecution" in the military.

This report and examples taken from it have been, and continue to be, cited by members of Congress, both on the House floor and in Armed Services Committee hearings, most recently in hearings regarding the FY15 NDAA.

It was expected that Rep. Fleming, or one of the other members of Rep. Randy Forbes's Congressional Prayer Caucus, would try again this year to get the language of the Fleming amendment into the NDAA. But, they didn't even wait that long. What they are attempting to do right now, and are dangerously close to succeeding in doing, is to supplant the *real* religious liberty protections in an Air Force instruction (AFI 1-1) with an even more far-reaching and dangerous version of the Fleming amendment.

The justification for this undermining of AFI 1-1 relies entirely on the claims made in the FRC's "A Clear and Present Danger" report. But what if those claims in the FRC's report aren't true?

What follows are three examples picked from the sixty-three listed in the FRC's report. These particular three claims were chosen to use as examples because they are the ones that have been cited most frequently by members of Congress, be it on the House floor, in committee meetings, or elsewhere.

After reading the real stories behind these three claims, and judging for yourself how far apart the FRC's "A Clear and Present Danger" report versions of these stories are from the facts, please give some thought to how truthful you think the other sixty claims in this "Gish Gallop" of a report are likely to be.

And, most importantly, please remember that it is the list of examples in the FRC's report that the members of Congress who are currently trying to alter AFI 1-1 are claiming as the justification for this action. If the FRC's report isn't true, then neither is the claim that AFI 1-1 needs to be changed.

THE ONE ABOUT THE PAINTING BEING REMOVED FROM AN AIR FORCE BASE

On May 31, 2013, the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF) was contacted via email by an Air Force NCO at Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho. Attached to that email was a photograph the NCO had taken of a piece of artwork hanging in a dining hall on the base. Writing on behalf of himself and a group of twenty-one other airmen, all of whom found the artwork to be inappropriate and offensive, the NCO requested MRFF's help in getting it removed.

The photograph that the NCO sent to MRFF is on the reverse side of this page, but please don't turn the page to look at it just yet. First, without having seen the painting in question, read the description of it given in the FRC's "A Clear and Present Danger" report:

A painting including a Bible verse is removed – May 31, 2013

Weinstein complained to the Pentagon about an inspirational painting in the dining hall of Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho. It focused on a depiction of a policeman and included a Scripture citation and the image of a cross. The painting is reportedly removed 56 minutes later.

Now, still without looking at the painting, what do you picture when reading the FRC's description of its being a painting "focused on a depiction of a policeman and includ[ing] a Scripture citation and the image of a cross"?

Do you picture that there was just a small cross somewhere in the painting? That this cross was just some minor and relatively unnoticeable element somewhere in what was primarily a painting of a policeman? Well, that's what the FRC wants you to picture. They want you to think that some oversensitive anti-Christian complainer demanded that this painting be removed over a tiny little cross and Bible reference, and that the Air Force caved to one completely unreasonable person's demand in removing it from the dining hall.

Well, let's compare what the FRC's description is designed to make you envision to what was actually depicted in this painting.

Please turn the page now and look at the painting.



Yes, that is the painting that the FRC describes in its report as just being a picture of a policeman that happens to include “a Scripture citation and the image of a cross.” That is the painting that the FRC wants you to think was overreacted to by the airmen at Mountain Home Air Force Base who found it offensive, by Mikey Weinstein who acted on behalf of those airmen to get it removed, and by the Air Force in agreeing that it was inappropriate and removing it.

In addition to the obvious reasons that this painting was altogether inappropriate to be hung in a U.S. military dining hall (you know, a Christian crusader as big as the policeman, and the American flag morphing into a Christian crusader flag) the airmen who objected to this painting did not realize that the policeman in the painting was meant to be a policeman. Their natural impression, being airmen and seeing this painting on an Air Force base, was that the figure depicted was an Air Force pilot — a quite understandable perception given the strong similarity between an old-fashioned Air Force officer’s hat and flight jacket and the hat and leather jacket worn by the policeman in the painting. This same painting, if hung in a police station, would no doubt be assumed to depict a policeman, but hanging in an Air Force dining hall it was assumed by the airmen to depict an Air Force pilot – with a great big Christian crusader behind him and an American flag morphing into a Christian crusader flag in the background. For some reason, a whole bunch of airmen found this image offensive and disturbing.

To the airmen who wanted this painting removed, its message seemed pretty clear: The job of a United States airman is to be a Christian crusader.

Were these airmen who wanted this painting removed a bunch of anti-Christian atheists? Well, no. Most of them were Christians, as is virtually always the case when a group of service members comes to MRFF with a complaint about something like this. Of the group of 22 airmen who initially contacted MRFF about this painting, 17 were either Protestant or Catholic. The initial group of 22 was joined by even more airmen once the complaint was made, for a total 48, with 40 of the 48 identifying themselves as Christians.

Note that the FRC’s report, in addition to its gross misportrayal of what this painting really depicted, doesn’t even mention that it was actually a group of airmen at the base who complained about the painting, let alone that most of those airmen were Christians. Reading the FRC’s version of the story, one would think that Mikey Weinstein (named in over a third of the examples in the FRC’s report, and labeled “anti-Christian” in five) spends his time traveling from Air Force base dining hall to Air Force base dining hall in search of tiny religious symbols to complain about. And that, of course, is exactly what the FRC wants you to think.

THE ONE ABOUT THE AIR FORCE STOPPING THE TEACHING OF JUST WAR THEORY

On July 20, 2011, MRFF was contacted via email by an Air Force officer who had been through ICBM missile training a decade earlier, in 2001. The officer had stumbled upon MRFF in the course of an unrelated search on the internet. Finding out that an organization such as MRFF existed caused the officer to recall a part of his ICBM missile training that he had found thoroughly repugnant – so repugnant that he still remembered it vividly even ten years later.

Before contacting MRFF, the officer, through a FOIA request, obtained a copy of the Air Force's ICBM training materials in use at that time to see if the part of the training that he had found so offensive ten years earlier was still being used in the training of new nuclear missile officers. He found out that it was, and decided to do something to try to stop it so that no future nuclear missile officers would be subjected to what he and countless others had been subjected to over the years.

The issue, as the officer explained to MRFF, was not only the inclusion of completely inappropriate religious content in the training presentation. It was also the highly questionable timing of this presentation, which, according to the officer's recollection, occurred two or three days after the new officers arrived. In the opinion of this officer, who was speaking from his personal experience of having been through this training, the Air Force was using this religious presentation to prime the nuclear missile officer candidates for what immediately followed – the moment when these officers would be required to sign on the dotted line that they would unleash nuclear weapons without reservation if so ordered.

Just how overtly Christian was this training presentation? Well, the fact that it acquired the nickname among Air Force nuclear missile officers of the "Jesus loves nukes speech" should give you an idea.

Now, let's look at how the FRC describes the Air Force's pulling of this training in its "A Clear and Present Danger" report:

Air Force pulls ethics course from curriculum at air base – July 27, 2011

For 20 years, an ethics training course for nuclear missile officers was conducted by a chaplain at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. It included texts from the Bible and materials related to just war theory by Saint Augustine. This course was pulled for "thorough review" by the Air Force primarily due to its use of Christian reading materials.

The FRC's description is, of course, designed to give the impression that the pulling of this training presentation was part of the alleged attack on Christianity in the military that its report is trying to persuade you is happening.

But, just like the case of the painting in the Air Force dining hall, the problem with

attempting to portray the pulling of this presentation as an effort by anti-Christian zealots to rid the military of the mere mention of Christianity is that the overwhelming majority of the Air Force nuclear missile officers who wanted this presentation pulled were Christians.

Almost immediately after word got out that someone was finally trying to put a stop to this training, a group of 30 more nuclear missile officers, 29 of whom were Christians, joined the officer who had initially contacted MRFF. A few days later, 38 more nuclear missile officers contacted MRFF, wanting to join the other 31. This second group came to MRFF after Fox News released a letter written by Sen. John Cornyn of Texas objecting to the pulling of the training. 32 of the 38 officers in this second group were also Christians. The number of nuclear missile officers who contacted MRFF to join the others would eventually rise into the hundreds as word spread further, but just out of those 69 officers who came forward in the first week, there were 61 who identified themselves as Christians. And yet the FRC would have you believe that this training was pulled as part of some alleged war on Christians in the military.

So, what exactly was it about this particular presentation that so many Air Force nuclear missile officers would want to put an end to it? Was it really that they had a problem with the Air Force teaching ethics, as some have ridiculously been claiming. Of course not. Was it because there was a bit of religious material in the presentation's discussion of Just War Theory? No, that wasn't it either. Nobody had, or now has, a problem with the inclusion, in a legitimate historical context, of the role of religious figures or religious precepts in a discussion of the development of Just War Theory. But that's not what was going on in this training.

The presentation's section on Just War Theory started out just fine, with a series of slides showing Saint Augustine and listing "Augustine's Qualifications for Just War." If the presentation had continued from there with a discussion of Augustine's qualifications for just war (and included at least some content that wasn't exclusively Christian, such as mentioning the other prominent figures in the development of Just War Theory, like Cicero, and that the theory has since been updated and further expanded by the UN *because of* nuclear weapons), there would have been absolutely no objections. But that's not how the presentation continued. It continued with slide after slide of Bible verses – verses that became progressively less and less relevant to the subject of Just War Theory and closer and closer to Christian proselytizing. By the end of the section, the term "soldier" as used in the Bible verses being cited was no longer even referring to a military soldier, but to a "soldier of Jesus Christ."

The second to last verse cited was 2 Timothy 2:3, with the slide's commentary saying, "Paul chooses three illustrations to show what it means to be a good disciple of Christ." The actual Bible verse says, "Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus," the point being that "a good soldier of Christ" will try to please Jesus as a military soldier would try to please their commanding officer. Immediately following that verse, the presentation cited Revelation 19:11 to make the statement: "Jesus Christ is the mighty warrior."

You can kind of see now how this presentation earned the nickname the "Jesus loves nukes speech," right?

Christian Just War Theory



- *New Testament examples cont.*
 - Romans 13:4 In spite of personal blemishes, God calls **the emperor** to be an instrument of justice
 - II Timothy 2:3 Paul chooses three illustrations to show what it means to be a good disciple of Christ
 - Farmer – work hard and be patient
 - Athlete – be self disciplined, train

Christian Just War Theory



- *New Testament examples cont.*
 - **Soldier – be willing to put up with hardship**
 - **Revelation 19:11 Jesus Christ is the mighty warrior**

If war in the natural order is inherently unethical, it cannot be a good illustration in the spiritual order

The FRC's "A Clear and Present Danger" report says that this training presentation was pulled "primarily" due to its use of what it says were Christian reading materials. Obviously, the use of the word "primarily" indicates that there was something else about this presentation that was deemed to be offensive. So, what was this other element of the presentation to which many took offense? Well, that would be its use of former Nazi and SS officer Wernher von Braun as a moral authority.

Besides the obvious (you know, the whole Nazi thing and his literally working his slave labor force to death), von Braun had nothing to do with nuclear weapons. He was a rocket scientist. But to those in our military whose primary goal is to promote Christianity at every possible opportunity, no matter how inappropriately, von Braun's saying that Americans were "people guided by the Bible," and his "moral" opinion that only people who are guided by the Bible can be trusted, was apparently just too good to pass up regardless of any sense of propriety or concern for facts.

Nuclear Ethics:

Wernher von Braun upon surrendering to the Americans in June of 1945 said "We knew that we had created a new means of warfare, and the question as to what nation, to what victorious nation we were willing to entrust this brainchild of ours was a **moral decision** more than anything else. We wanted to see the world spared another conflict such as Germany had just been through, and **we felt that only by surrendering such a weapon to people who are guided by the Bible could such an assurance to the world be best secured.**"



But, according to the FRC's "Clear and Present Danger" report, this presentation was pulled for review by the Air Force merely because it was "conducted by a chaplain" and contained some "Christian reading materials."

THE ONE ABOUT JERRY BOYKIN NOT SPEAKING AT WEST POINT

On the night of January 26, 2012, Mikey Weinstein was contacted by a group of 27 West Point faculty members via a conference call. The reason for the conference call was that they had just found out that the speaker scheduled to appear at West Point's upcoming National Prayer Breakfast was retired Army Lt. Gen. William "Jerry" Boykin.

All of the 27 West Point faculty members who initially contacted MRFF were Christians. Those 27 faculty members were quickly joined by 85 others at West Point – a mix of faculty, staff, and cadets – for a total of 112. Of that 112 total, 98 were Christians.

In addition to the majority of faculty, staff, and cadets at West Point who objected to having Jerry Boykin speak at the prayer breakfast being Christians, a number of them were actually involved in working on the prayer breakfast. Those working on the prayer breakfast were the most outraged of all when they found out that Boykin was to be the speaker, not just because they objected to Boykin speaking at West Point, but because they had been kept in the dark about who the speaker was going to be even though they were working on the event. They felt as if they had been fooled into working on an event that they wouldn't even have supported, let alone volunteered to help with.

Due to a widespread outcry, not only from faculty, staff, and cadets at West Point, but from a number of different civil rights organizations representing various groups of Americans, Boykin withdrew from the event.

Now, here's what the FRC's "A Clear and Present Danger" report has to say about what occurred:

Army General withdraws from speaking at West Point after protest for [*sic*] anti-Christian groups – February 8, 2012

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF) launched a campaign to bar Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin (USA-ret.), a founding member of the Army's Delta Force and former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, from speaking at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. CAIR and MRFF said their opposition was based upon Gen. Boykin's "Islamophobic" comments. Gen. Boykin voluntarily withdrew from speaking at the event, stating in an interview with OneNewsNow that the pressure on the Academy, which the Obama Administration did not resist, was overpowering.

See how the FRC calls the groups that protested Boykin's speaking at West Point "anti-Christian" groups? And how MRFF and CAIR are the only groups mentioned?

Well, the FRC (besides lying about MRFF and CAIR being anti-Christian groups), leaves out an inconvenient little fact here. The first organization to formally launch a protest against Boykin speaking was neither MRFF nor CAIR – it was VoteVets, a veterans organization representing veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. But the FRC doesn't want you to know that. It's much easier for them to dishonestly paint MRFF

and CAIR as anti-Christian groups than to try to pin this label on a veterans group.

The 27 West Point faculty members who contacted MRFF on the night of January 26, 2012 (who, as mentioned, were all Christians), did so *after* VoteVets launched the protest by sending a letter to the Superintendent of West Point on behalf of the Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans they represent. The following is from the letter written by VoteVets, a letter with which MRFF was in total agreement:

It has come to the attention of our organization that LTG Boykin has been invited to speak at the USMA prayer breakfast on February 8, 2012. You may not be aware of Lieutenant General Boykin's history of extremist and hateful comments towards Islam. LTG Boykin has repeatedly characterized our war against al-Qaeda and other extremist groups, a war that we are both Veterans of, as a religious war pitting Christianity against Islam. Boykin claims to have captured terrorists in Somalia solely because the god of Muslims is "an idol." The Pentagon Office of the Inspector General later found that LTG Boykin's remarks were improper for a military officer. LTG Boykin, since his retirement, has also stated that "there is no greater threat to America than Islam." LTG Boykin also co-authored a study from the Center for Security Policy that claimed that "most mosques in the United States already have been radicalized, that most Muslim social organizations are fronts for violent jihadists."

These remarks are incompatible with the Army values, and a person who is incompatible with Army values should not address the cadets of the United States Military Academy. As has been articulated by GEN Petraeus, these remarks threaten our relationships with Muslims around the world, and thereby, our troops serving in harm's way. LTG Boykin's values are inconsistent even with current Army doctrine that is taught at the Joint Readiness Training Center, National Training Center and the Combined Arms Center which instructs Army leaders to respect the Muslim culture as a part of counterinsurgency operations. It is counterproductive for our future Army leaders to hear the views of LTG Boykin, a man whose views are inconsistent with the values of the Army as an institution.

Not to mention, many Muslim Americans have fought and died in the uniform of the American Soldier in post-9/11 combat, as well as in previous eras. To allow LTG Boykin to address the corps of cadets would be disrespectful to the Muslim cadets currently enrolled at West Point. It would be a slap to the face to Muslim Americans who have served their country, not to mention those who gave the fullest sacrifice for their nation and their comrades.

Sir, as Veterans, we have the utmost faith in your leadership. As Veterans of these wars and men who have served in combat alongside Muslim Americans, we respectfully request that you retract LTG Boykin's invite to

the USMA Prayer Breakfast. The presence of LTG Boykin at West Point would violate Army Values, as well as potentially be used as propaganda by the enemy and endanger our troops in combat.

It was *following* this letter being made public by VoteVets that MRFF was contacted by the first of the eventual 112 faculty, staff, and cadets at West Point who wanted MRFF to represent them in objecting to Boykin's speaking at the event (just as CAIR was presumably contacted by members of its organization, leading to its also joining in the protest).

So, just to recap here, of the 112 faculty, staff members, and cadets at West Point who contacted MRFF for help in getting Boykin removed as the speaker for the prayer breakfast, 98 were Christians, some of whom were actually involved in working on this prayer breakfast. And yet the FRC, in its "A Clear and Present Danger" report, claims that Boykin was pressured to withdraw from the event by "anti-Christian groups."

With Jerry Boykin being the executive vice president of the FRC and one of the authors of the "A Clear and Present Danger" report, it's pretty obvious why CAIR was also singled out in this example – they're Muslims, and, you know, "there is no greater threat to America" than those idol-worshipping Muslims.

As explained at the beginning of this report, what you have just seen are only three of the sixty-three examples of alleged Christian persecution listed in the FRC's report.

What we at the Military Religious Freedom Foundation ask is that you carefully consider, based on the three examples you just read about, how far apart the FRC's claims are from the truth, and how likely you think it is that there is any more truth to the "A Clear and Present Danger" report's other sixty claims than there is to these three.

And, once again, please remember that it is the list of examples in the FRC's report that the members of Congress who are currently trying to alter AFI 1-1 are claiming as the justification for this action. If the FRC's report isn't true, then neither is the claim that AFI 1-1 needs to be changed.



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