

Chaplain Klingenschmitt's scripture reading:

Acts 4:

18 Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God.

20 For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

21 After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened.

Chaplain Klingenschmitt's first CEREMONIAL prayer:

Acts 4: The Believers' Prayer

24 "Sovereign Lord, you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them.

25 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: 'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

26 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.'

27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.

28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.

30 Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." Amen.

Chaplain Klingenschmitt's second CEREMONIAL prayer:

(Prayer #25 on page 823 of the Book of Common Prayer, which book has been the required manner and form of liturgy for the Episcopal Church since 1789.)

For those in the Armed Forces of our Country

"Almighty God, we commend to your gracious care and keeping all the men and women of our armed forces at home and abroad. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and temptations; give them courage to face the perils which beset them; and grant them a sense of your abiding presence wherever they may be; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Chaplain Klingenschmitt can only grant off-camera interviews by cell-phone today.

Please feel free to call him 30 minutes after this event, at: 719-360-5132

Remarks by Rev. Rob Schenck, speaking on behalf of Chaplain Klingenschmitt:

Today is Thursday, the 30th of March 2006, and today will be remembered by historians as an event directly reminiscent of the civil disobedience of Rosa Parks, who was ordered to sit in the back of the bus, but she refused, she disobeyed, she defied orders, and she was punished by immoral government leaders who preferred racial discrimination instead of equal opportunity.

Today is the first day in American history when a Navy Chaplain intentionally defied authority, and intentionally disobeyed the orders of officers appointed over him, simply by reading Christian scriptures, and saying a Christian prayer, ending with the phrase “through Jesus Christ our Lord,” while wearing a Navy uniform.

- 1) Yesterday at Naval Station Norfolk, Chaplain Klingenschmitt’s superior officers directly ordered him not to wear his uniform today, because we openly admit that today’s event is not a divine worship service, it’s a press conference. And the chaplain’s prayers today were “ceremonial” prayers or religious elements added to an otherwise secular event. This is not a worship setting.
- 2) Navy uniform regulations allow chaplains to wear their uniform and pray however they wish during “bona fide religious service or observance,” but they cannot wear their uniforms while speaking “personal, partisan, or religious views” in front of the media.
- 3) Because Chaplain Klingenschmitt has said a prayer “in Jesus name” and read Christian scriptures at this event, he has directly spoken his own personal, partisan, religious views, while in uniform, outside of the chapel, in front of the media. If he had said these prayers during a worship service, he’d be safe.
- 4) But under the brand-new Navy prayer policy, just signed on February 21st 2006 by Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter, chaplains can only pray “in Jesus name” within the confines of a chapel setting. But if a chaplain says a prayer outside a chapel setting at an otherwise secular event, such as a retirement or memorial ceremony, or even today’s secular press conference, the Secretary of the Navy has required the content of the prayer must be “non-sectarian.”
- 5) Chaplain Klingenschmitt’s prayers today were clearly “sectarian” prayers. But the Secretary of the Navy requires “non-sectarian” prayers, which means the Chaplain can’t use words like “in Jesus name” or say prayers based on the New Testament, or pray from the Book of Common Prayer, because Sailors of other faiths might overhear the prayers, and be offended.
- 6) Today’s press conference will be broadcast worldwide, even on ships, where many Sailors of many diverse faiths might overhear this Chaplain’s prayers. The Secretary of the Navy is concerned they might be offended, so his new policy intends to protect the ears of the listener, not the speech of the chaplain.

7) Secretary Winter has therefore enforced “the heckler’s veto” and violated the spirit and intent of the First Amendment. This is yet another attempt to silence Christian speech, and we protest Secretary Winter’s unlawful orders.

Has the Secretary of the Navy actually banned the Book of Common Prayer?

Has the Secretary of the Navy banned any prayer based on the New Testament?

Has the Secretary of the Navy banned prayers “in Jesus name” outside the chapel?

Because Chaplain Klingenschmitt believes the Secretary of the Navy’s new policy is unconstitutional, and because Chaplain Klingenschmitt has taken a solemn oath to support and defend the Constitution against its domestic enemies, he has directly and intentionally disobeyed the orders of his superiors, in the spirit of Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks, by voicing a peaceful protest of civil disobedience, by standing here in uniform, in front of the White House, and reciting a Christian prayer using “Christian” language from the New Testament. He intentionally prayed from the “Book of Common Prayer,” and again he deliberately prayed in Jesus name, against the new Navy policy, and he wore his uniform in direct violation of yesterday’s explicit orders from his superiors.

Chaplain Klingenschmitt fully expects the Navy to punish him, as they properly should do, if they intend to enforce their new rules. But if they fail to enforce their own rules, they must admit their new rules are wrong, unenforceable, discriminatory, unconstitutional, and so they must immediately change their rules back to the way they’ve always been since the American Revolution, and established in Navy Regulations since 1860, and as federal law still reads today:

“An officer in the chaplain corps may conduct public worship according to the manner and forms of the church of which he is a member.” And despite the Secretary of the Navy’s attempt to redefine “public worship” we believe this law protects the chaplain’s self-autonomous prayer content in EVERY setting anywhere. Free speech doesn’t stop when you put on a chaplain’s uniform.

We now await the Navy’s decision: Will they punish Chaplain Klingenschmitt for disobeying lawful orders, or will they fail to punish Chaplain Klingenschmitt and so admit their own orders are unlawful, and therefore must be rescinded?

We await this decision from the Secretary of the Navy himself, Donald C. Winter.

And meanwhile, we renew our call for President Bush to sign an executive order, protecting chaplains of all faiths, to let them pray without censorship, according to the manner and forms of their own church, even if they pray “in Jesus name.” And we ask the American public to call the White House, and sound the alarm.

Navy Uniform Regulations (AND Federal Law protecting chaplain's prayers):

1401.3.b.(4).(b). Members of the Navy and Marine Corps, including retired members and members of reserve components are prohibited from wearing uniforms of the naval service while attending or participating in a demonstration, assembly, or activity knowing that a purpose of the demonstration, assembly, or activity supports personal or partisan views on political, social, economic, or religious issues, except as authorized in advance by competent authority or incident to attending or participating in a bona fide religious service or observance.

US Code, Title 10, Section 6031. An officer in the chaplain corps may conduct public worship according to the manner and forms of the church of which he is a member.

New Secretary of Navy prayer policy (which emasculates US Code):

Read new SECNAVINST 1730.7C: <http://www.persuade.tv/frenzy2/SECNAVINST17307C.pdf>

c. Commanders retain the responsibility to provide guidance for all command functions. In planning command functions, commanders shall determine whether a religious element is appropriate. In considering the appropriateness for including a religious element, commanders, with appropriate advice from a chaplain, should assess the setting and context of the function; the diversity of faith that may be represented among the participants; and whether the function is mandatory for all hands. Other than Divine/Religious Services, religious elements for a command function, absent extraordinary circumstances, should be non-sectarian in nature. Neither the participation of a chaplain, nor the inclusion of a religious element, in and of themselves, renders a command function a Divine Service or public worship. Once a commander determines a religious element is appropriate, the chaplain may choose to participate based on his or her faith constraints. If the chaplain chooses not to participate, he or she may do so with no adverse consequences. Anyone accepting a commander's invitation to provide religious elements at a command function is accountable for following the commander's guidance.

How SECNAV has "re-defined" the term public worship:

5. Public Worship. A term of art used in section 6031 of reference (a) that consists of Divine Services and Religious Services exclusively. Command functions, other than Divine/Religious Services, that include religious elements do not constitute public worship.

6. Religious Elements. Includes prayers, invocations, reflections, meditations, benedictions, or other religious or faith-based features traditionally or customarily incorporated in command functions other than Divine or Religious Services.