

**CHAPLAIN KLINGENSCHMITT ANNOUNCES HUNGER STRIKE IN
FRONT OF THE WHITE HOUSE, 20 Dec 2005**

Text of Chaplain's speech delivered on national TV:

“During these holidays people practice many diverse faiths, but it seems the war against Christmas has taken a turn for the worse, and now it's become a war against the name of Jesus himself. I am a Navy Chaplain that may soon be kicked out of the Navy because I pray publicly “in Jesus name.”

Admirals from the Pentagon, claiming to speak for the President of the United States, have already stripped me of my uniform and forbid me to pray in Jesus name in public unless I'm wearing civilian clothes.

The Chief of Navy Chaplains told me in writing that if I pray publicly “in Jesus name” that I'm denigrating other faiths. That same week he told the Washington Post “we never tell chaplains how to pray,” because we don't want to violate their First Amendment rights. His public statements and private statements contradict.

The Naval Chaplain School teaches mandatory lectures to all junior chaplains, prohibiting Muslim chaplains from praying to Allah, Jewish chaplains can't pray in Hebrew to Adonai, Roman Catholic chaplains aren't allowed to pray “in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit” and evangelicals can't pray “in Jesus name.” Everybody is taught to pray only to God and say “Amen.” Senior chaplain evaluators with clipboards criticize our prayers.

Onboard my ship, I asked my Commanding officer's permission to take turns and “share the evening prayer” with many diverse faiths, allowing my Muslim Sailor to pray to Allah, my Jewish Sailor to pray in Hebrew to Adonai, my Roman Catholic Sailor to pray “in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,” and I'd just pray “in Jesus name” every fourth night. He said “No Chaps, I don't like that. You keep saying the prayer, but you pray Jewish prayers from now on.” I obeyed him and prayed only from the Psalms for 8 months.

But the Director of the Naval Chaplain school told my Commanding Officer I was an “immature chaplain” because I claimed a right to pray

“in Jesus name,” so my CO wrote to a Navy board to end my career saying “Chaplain Klingenschmitt over-emphasized his own faith system” (i.e. in his sermons and prayers).

Now unless a Navy judge intervenes, my active duty career will be terminated next month, my family will be evicted from military housing, I’ll have NO retirement after 14 years of award-winning fitness reports, because I pray “in Jesus name.”

General George Washington prayed “in Jesus name.” And since the American Revolution chaplains have been allowed to pray according to their civilian bishop’s faith, not the government’s faith. Since 1860, US Code Title 10 Section 6031 has mandated, “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.”

But only in 1998 did the Navy establish a brand-new policy telling us if we must pray “in Jesus name” then we “ought to exclude ourselves from participation as the prayer-giver.”

65 Navy Chaplains have been involved in a class-action lawsuit since 1999 because of things like this, but Navy IG found “nothing wrong” so Navy JAG spends millions of taxpayer dollars defending religious discrimination.

As a Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy, I’m directly appealing to my Commander-in-Chief, President George W. Bush, to sign an executive order enforcing the law that’s been on the books since 1860. Now 160,000 Americans and 74 Congressmen have asked the President to sign an Executive order, not to establish new law, but just to enforce the law on the books since 1860, but the President has yet to lift his pen.

I find it ironic that Franklin Graham was allowed to pray “in Jesus name” at the President’s first inaugural, but now Admirals in the Pentagon who claim to represent the President are trying to take away my uniform for praying “in Jesus name.” Even Senator Clinton supports me, and has written a letter of concern on my behalf.

Recently the Air Force adopted similar guidelines, and now forces all their chaplains to pray “non-sectarian” prayers. But this government-sanitized prayer policy violates the First Amendment, and the Supreme Court has already ruled that “non-sectarian” prayers are unenforceable.

Today I’m beginning a hunger strike, and this communion bread will be my last meal, until the President of the United States gives me back my uniform, and lets me pray publicly “in Jesus name.” Please sign the Executive Order Mr. President, and please come and share communion with me. I’ll be standing prayer vigil outside the White House (Lafayette Park) every night this week at 6 pm, and I will be praying for our President, in Jesus name, if anyone cares to join me. I’ll also take media interviews every day at 10 am, Tuesday through Saturday.

Our troops sacrifice their lives overseas to give religious freedom to foreigners, but here in America they can’t even hear the diverse faith messages of their own chaplains. They deserve basic religious freedoms, and this isn’t about me, its about all our Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen and Marines. We must welcome a diversity of religious expression in our military. Mr. President, please enforce the law. Sign the Executive Order. Take turns and share the prayer.”