

Pentagon May Move to Court-Martial Christian Soldiers Who Share Faith

The Pentagon has released a statement confirming that soldiers could be prosecuted for promoting their faith: "Religious proselytization is not permitted within the Department of Defense. ... Court martials and non-judicial punishments are decided on a case-by-case basis."

The statement, released to Fox News, follows a Breitbart News report on Obama administration Pentagon appointees meeting with anti-Christian extremist Mikey Weinstein to develop court-martial procedures to punish Christians in the military who express or share their faith.

From our earlier report: Weinstein is the head of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, and says Christians—including chaplains—sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in the military are guilty of treason, and of committing an act of spiritual rape as serious a crime as sexual assault. He also asserted that Christians sharing their faith in the military are enemies of the Constitution.

Being convicted in a court martial means that a soldier has committed a crime under federal military law. Punishment for a court martial can include imprisonment and being dishonorably discharged from the military.

So President Barack Obama's civilian appointees who lead the Pentagon are confirming that the military will make it a crime—possibly resulting in imprisonment—for those in uniform to share their faith. This would include chaplains—military officers who are ordained clergymen of their faith (mostly Christian pastors or priests, or Jewish rabbis)—whose duty since the founding of the U.S. military under George

Washington is to teach their faith and minister to the spiritual needs of troops who come to them for counsel, instruction or comfort.

This regulation would severely limit expressions of faith in the military, even on a one-to-one basis between close friends. It could also effectively abolish the position of chaplain in the military, as it would not allow chaplains (or any service members, for that matter), to say anything about their faith that others say led them to think they were being encouraged to make faith part of their life. It's difficult to imagine how a member of the clergy could give spiritual counseling without saying anything that might be perceived in that fashion.

In response to the Pentagon's plans, retired Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin, who is now executive vice president of the Family Research Council (FRC), said on *Fox & Friends* this morning: "It's a matter of what do they mean by proselytizing. ... I think they've got their definitions a little confused. If you're talking about coercion that's one thing, but if you're talking about the free exercise of our faith as individual soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines, especially for the chaplains, they I think the worst thing we can do is stop the ability for a soldier to be able to exercise his faith.

FRC has launched a petition in Washington, D.C., which has already collected over 30,000 signatures, calling on Secretary Hagel to stop working with Weinstein and his anti-Christian organization to develop military policy regarding religious faith.

Ken Klukowski is senior fellow for religious liberty with the Family Research Council and on faculty at Liberty University School of Law. This article originally appeared on *Breitbart News*.