

THE CHRISTIAN MILITARY CHAPLAINCY:
AN ORWELLIAN MINISTRY
Part One
A Ministry of the Ministry of Truth

The Christian Military Chaplaincy is a big, big spiritual and moral problem for the Churches and that's what we're talking about today, the Christian Military Chaplaincy. Not the Hindu. Not the Muslim. Not the Jewish, but the Christian Military Chaplaincy.

The Christian Military Chaplaincy is a big, big problem for the Churches because it is part of the larger, big, big, *biggest* lie that the Churches have been involved in, Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, and Evangelical for approximately 1,700 years. The big lie of the Christian Church is Just War Theory; that it, that it is logically possible to move from Jesus' teachings of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies in the Gospels to Christian Just War Theory; that it is possible to move from Jesus' teachings logically, to justifying killing, maiming, slaughtering, deceiving, all the many micro-acts that go on a million times over once war breaks out. It is not possible and to tell people it's possible is just outright deception.

The big lie as you probably know is a bit of a cliché for that lie that is so enormous, so all-encompassing and told so often with such authority that people could almost not even question that it's wrong, question its truth. It's an all-encompassing, reinforced, day in and day out untruth. That's Christian Just War Theory.

The Christian Military Chaplaincy is a direct and immediate arm of that lie, an arm that enters in just prior to the Christian man or woman, boy or girl, going out and slitting an enemy's throat, burning his face off, or cutting her head off. It's a lie. Those are activities that Jesus Christ would never do. Those are activities that cannot be logically justified from anything that Jesus ever said or did, no more than the Just War Theory itself owes anything to the person or the teachings by word or deed of Jesus Christ.

The reason it's such a big, big problem is that Jesus Christ is not a philosopher. Jesus Christ is the revealer, the *definitive* revealer, and the ultimate revealer of the will of the Father, of the will of God.

Many years ago, George W. Bush said that Jesus was his favorite philosopher and no one raised an eyebrow, not bishops, not priests, not ministers, not laity. In fact, they thought that was quite wonderful, that Jesus was George W. Bush's favorite philosopher. That's just nonsense, just nonsense, and no one objected.

A philosopher is a person who uses human reason to come to some conclusions about what is reality, what should be done in reality. There are almost as many philosophies as there are philosophers because philosophy is the product of exclusively human reason. What philosophy builds up, philosophy tears down. What philosophy says is good today philosophy says is bad tomorrow. Jesus Christ is not a philosopher. He is the unique, definitive, ultimate revelation of God's will. *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow”* (Heb 13:8).

The difference is a philosopher is one you can agree or disagree with, follow or not follow, modify or not modify what he or she is saying because their work is only the work of human reason interpreting what comes to them as reality in a limited sort of way. Therefore, one philosopher is [isn't] any better than I am or you are in terms of perceiving existence or understanding existence. We can agree or disagree with them or they can agree and disagree with each other as they do en masse.

Jesus as the incarnation of the will of God, as the incarnation of God, as the word of God made flesh, as the self-revelation of God, as the revelation of the will of God, the definitive will of God—what He reveals in His person, His words, His deeds is an imperative. It must be followed. Morally, it must be followed once one is morally certain to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the Living God, the Word of God made flesh. Why? Because Jesus, if He is God incarnate, does not lie, does not say “X is true” when “Y is true,” is not here to deceive. He and He alone knows the truth of what God and God's will is, the full truth and nothing but the truth.

The question that is presented to Christians in terms of Christian Just War Theory, in terms of justifying war and violence and enmity, in terms of the military chaplaincy, which is an immediate arm, an immediate voice to validating the whole just war panoply of activities that people engage in in war—the question that has to be asked is: Is it possible, is it possible, that Jesus, the Word of God, the Messiah, the Christ, God incarnate, spoke something, said something, did something that could reasonably and logically be interpreted as justifying violence and war and enmity, or, did He in His words and deeds and person communicate that violence, war, and enmity were contrary to the will of God and therefore cannot be engaged in?

The reason I'm focusing on Jesus here is because we're talking about the Christian Military Chaplaincy. And if we're talking Christian, we are talking about the foundation of Christianity being the person of Jesus, His words and His deeds as they are communicated in the Gospels. We are talking about the person of Jesus having the authority of God behind what He says. And therefore, if He says "Love your enemies," "Do good to those who hate you," "Pray for those who persecute you," "Put up your sword," "Love one another as I have loved you," that carries with it the imperative of God's will. It is not an option to choose against it if one says Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, and the Son of the Living God.

Therefore, the ultimate grave moral, spiritual issue behind the Christian Just War tradition, (small t, for it has never been dogma) and the Christian Military Chaplaincy, which is a powerful extension of that tradition into actual human life, the great question behind it is the question that came to Peter put to him by Jesus 2,000 years ago, "Who do you say I am?" If you say, "Jesus, you're a philosopher. You're a wise man. You're a holy rabbi. You're an idealist. You're Utopian," that's fine. Then, you can disagree with Jesus. You can set aside His teachings, modify them, and interpret them any way you want because they're only human conjecture and speculation.

But if you answer the question that was asked to Peter 2,000 years ago by Jesus, "Who do you say I am?" and you answer as Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the Living God," well, then one does not change the teachings of God. One does not say, "Yes, you said 'love your enemies,' but I've got a better way of doing things. You said 'put up the sword,' but that's not going to work." One doesn't say, "You said 'love one another as I have loved you,' but in this case here, I've got to love like General Schwarzkopf or Hitler or Napoleon or Caesar."

The Military Chaplaincy is a big, big spiritual and moral problem in the Church because Christian justification of violence and enmity in the Christian Just War Theory is a big, big moral and spiritual problem. It's a big, big moral and spiritual problem because as I have said, it's a big lie. And here is what exacerbates what I've just said. Jesus comes into this world to save humanity, save humanity from evil, from death, from suffering. What's at stake here is not a good way or an interesting way or a utilitarian way of getting through the day. Jesus' Way, Jesus' words and deeds are about the salvation of the individual immortal soul and the salvation of all humanity or they are about nothing.

In Catholic Canon Law, east and west, the concluding canon reads, "*The supreme law of the church is the salvation of souls.*" Jesus came to save souls. The Church is to be an extension of Christ in time and space. Therefore, the church's supreme law, supreme obligation is to save souls. And how are souls saved? By the Way that the one who has the authority to say what is the Way and the Will of God, by the Way the one who came to save souls says to live and to die. That's why Jesus is *The Way*, not simply *a way*.

And so when we substitute what is clearly an illogical extension of Jesus' teachings, Christian Just War Theory, when we substitute something else for the teachings of Jesus, we're setting ourselves up as God. We are saying we know; we know better the way of salvation and we don't care about your way of salvation. We're going to do it our way.

The problem when facing this terrible reality is the false witness of the military chaplaincy. False witness. It is telling people by its very presence and activity you can go down one road, and it's a road that Jesus rejected completely—violence, enmity.

Was Jesus so oblivious to the fact that all kinds of people justified violence, all kinds of people justified war, all kinds of people justified having enemies, killing enemies, both Jewish people and other than Jewish people? Let's not be foolish. Of course, He knew of violence and of enmity, killing people, maiming people. And yet besides knowing it, knowing that it was justified in all kinds of ways, He left us as the teachings of God is this: no homicidal violence, enmity, maiming, causing people suffering is of God's will. There is no way to logically go from the teachings of Jesus in the Gospel to saying that such things are God's will.

When you go to those things and you justify them in the name of Jesus, you are giving people false witness. You are saying that what is untrue is true. You are saying what Jesus says is evil is good. You are leading them down some path that is not the way of God unto eternal salvation as revealed by the definitive revealer of the way of God, the definitive giver of salvation, Jesus Christ.

The military chaplaincy is major league false witness, untruth, passing itself off as the truth of the Jesus of the Gospel. This is an abomination. But let us remember, the military chaplaincy is an extension of a hierarchy, an extension of the priesthood, an extension of a church that has come to believe in the big lie—that violence and enmity, murder on a mass scale, homicide on a mass scale—can be justified in the name of Jesus, that you can follow Jesus by following the way of

violence and enmity as long as it's justified by something or another. That is the witness of the military chaplaincy, but it's the witness in the military chaplaincy because it is the witness of the church from the Pope right down to the person in the pew—most of the church, 98% of the church.

The military chaplain wears a military uniform and that presents its own problems, which we may talk about later. But when he or she wears the military uniform, it *is* the military uniform, and a military uniform has certain requirements. All the soldiers, brass and so forth, in a particular unit at Fort Bragg, including the chaplains, wear this particular patch on their shoulder. It's a sword, the upside down cross really. It's a sword and it says, "Follow me." Follow me!



What kind of absurdity is it? What kind of absurdity is it that a Christian priest or minister or bishop or laymen or woman puts on a uniform that has this as what they are about—following the sword, especially when over and over and over again, the Nonviolent Jesus of the Gospels who teaches a Way of love of friends and enemies, a nonviolent love of friends and enemies says, "Follow me."

This is an absurdity, symbolic, but does it ever communicate false witness, because no chaplain, no military chaplain was ever disciplined by his church, by his hierarchy, by his congregation, by his diocese, by the Pope for wearing that symbol (and a lot of others like it). And yet, it's a complete absurdity, false witness to Jesus and His teaching in the extreme.

Now look, let's be clear. Jesus came to save sinners, all sinners, not just my kind of sinner, every kind of sinner. Any Christian or Catholic group that would want a chaplain is entitled to a chaplain, no exceptions. A chaplain is there to give Christlike spiritual guidance and all the kinds of liturgical and pastoral care that a sinner needs, individually and communally, to repent and grow in their love of God, love of Christ, in union with God through Christ. That's what he or she is there for.

Prostitution is legal in Nevada. If the Christians in the Prostitutes' Union in Nevada formed a group of Christian prostitutes and wanted a chaplain, a Christian chaplain, they are entitled to a Christian chaplain. And one should be given to them, no ifs, ands, or buts about it. However, what type of chaplain would it be? What quality of chaplain would it be? Indeed, would it even be a Christian chaplain, if a priest or a bishop or a minister were assigned to them, and he said mass for them and celebrated the Lord's supper, gave them wonderful homilies on the Trinity and the Incarnation, told them not to lie, not to steal, not to cheat, not to kill, and did all the things that a chaplain should do for this group of Christian or Catholic prostitutes, except he never raised the issue of the evil of lust. He never ever raised the issue of the evil of prostitution. What kind of chaplain would that be?

I'll tell you what kind of chaplain it would be. It would be a “kept” chaplain, one who gets a salary and gears what he or she is saying to what is acceptable to the people talking to him, to whom he's talking. And those things that are not acceptable, he'll either say nothing about or he'll justify them. Imagine if there was a Catholic or Christian chaplaincy to prostitutes justifying lust and prostitution by being silent about their logical incompatibility with anything Jesus ever said or taught!

Well, that wouldn't be a chaplaincy. That would be blatant false witness, leading Christians down a primrose path to spiritual destruction, if Jesus knows what He is talking about. Such a chaplaincy would not be a Christian chaplaincy. It would be a scheme from the dark side to keep people in a normalized state of believing that wrong is right, good is evil. Such a chaplaincy would not deserve our honor or our praise or our money. It would deserve our condemnation, not the people, but the “pastoral care” they are delivering in that way.

That is exactly what is going on with the military chaplaincy—at best. The chaplains tell the men and women in the military, “Don't lie, don't cheat, don't do drugs, don't get drunk, don't fornicate, write home to mother,” but never say a word

about the homicidal violence, enmity, deceit they engage in, the maiming of people that they are being trained to do and the fact that these acts are contrary to the will of God as revealed by Jesus. And, suppose bishops priests and ministers are first screened by the military to make sure they will not raise these moral problems and specifically instructed not to speak on such matter unless first spoken to in private? What kind of chaplaincy would that be? It would be kept chaplaincy.

And so let us now ponder what we've just said. This, the military chaplaincy, is a big, big spiritual and moral problem. It is part of the big lie of Christianity, that violence and enmity, indeed mass violence and mass enmity, can be logically justified through the teachings of Jesus. They cannot. And that's fact, not opinion.

And so I leave you with this in this first segment of this three part series, THE MILITARY CHAPLAINCY AN ORWELLIAN MINISTRY: A Ministry of the Ministry of Truth. What's the truth? I mean what's the truth for you, if you believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, and the Son of the Living God? Is *your* truth about what Jesus taught for us human beings and our salvation by word and deed, when He walked the face of the earth: the justification of violence and enmity, deceit, and all the micro acts that have to be done daily, tens and hundreds of thousands of times over in war, or the way of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies?

I cannot answer that for you and you cannot answer that for me. But what we do know is this. God knows whether we are telling the truth to ourselves or whether we are deceiving ourselves, lying to ourselves, lying to Him and lying to the world. God knows whether we are being truthful about what we understand is the teaching of Jesus on violence and enmity or whether we have chosen to morally deceive ourselves and become another cog in the apparatus to proclaim the Big Lie of Christianity, and give false to Jesus' teaching as do U.S. Christian military chaplains by the terms they agreed to in order become a U.S. Christian Military Chaplains?

-Emmanuel Charles McCarthy