

CHAPLAIN KLINGENSCHMITT'S REBUTTAL TO NAVY SPOKESMAN

31 DEC 05

(RESPONSE TO NAVY TIMES ARTICLE)

Dear Navy Times Editors,

I'm the Navy Chaplain on the hunger strike, protesting the Chief of Navy Chaplains written 1998 policy that if I pray "in Jesus name" then I ought to exclude myself from public prayer.

My Commanding Officer told a Navy board to end my 14-year career, because "Chaplain Klingenschmitt over-emphasized his own faith system" in my prayers and sermons.

For the last 7 months, my supervisor Chaplain Holcomb told me repeatedly, and showed me documents from the Chief of Chaplains, that my CO's negative letter made me ineligible for continuation, so I'd be sent home.

But when he heard I might be interviewed on TV, Chaplain Holcomb suddenly reversed his opinion, saying (verbally), "well I don't think you'll really get fired."

But he provided no documents, and admitted he had no authority to put his opinion in writing. So on 20 Dec I announced my hunger strike, and 21 Dec I appeared on national TV. And then (suddenly) the Chief of Navy Chaplains renewed my contract on 22 Dec, after my bishop's request sat on his desk for 7 months.

And yet, even today, the Chief of Navy Chaplains stands by his written statement, that if I pray publicly "in Jesus name" that I'm denigrating other faiths. (And I still can't wear my uniform in public, if I talk about Jesus.) All the documents are on my web-site: www.persuade.tv

So I continue to fast. And I pray our President will sign an executive order to make his Admirals enforce the law since 1860, 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."

Why doesn't Chief of Chaplains agree with public law? And why are 65 Navy Chaplains still suing the Navy, most no longer in uniform, claiming they were denied promotion because of their evangelical faith?

//signed//

Chaplain Klingenschmitt

(See 30 Dec 05 Navy Times article...next page...)

December 30, 2005

Protesting chaplain extended on active duty

By Jenn Rafael

Times staff writer

A chaplain who went on a hunger strike saying the Navy was trying to force him out of the service has been extended on active duty, according to the Navy.

Lt. Gordon Klingenschmitt, an evangelical Episcopal priest, began his water-only fast Dec. 20. He claimed Dec. 22 during a vigil outside the White House that his convictions were going to cost him his job. He said the Navy objects to him praying in the name of Jesus.

But Navy spokesman Lt. William Marks said Friday that Klingenschmitt had been granted an indefinite extension because he had provided the appropriate "proof of continued or renewed ecclesiastical endorsement." Marks also said the 37-year-old Air Force Academy graduate twice had been orally notified of the extension in December, and a written notice of the extension was mailed to him Dec. 22.

Marks said Klingenschmitt is still on active duty as a staff chaplain assigned to Naval Station Norfolk, Va. "He's not being processed for separation," Marks said, adding that the chaplain is not subject to discipline for his White House protest because he was acting as a private citizen.

When reached by phone Friday, Norfolk Command Chaplain Capt. Norm Holcomb said Klingenschmitt was off duty through the weekend. On Klingenschmitt's Web site, <http://persuade.tv>, a press release dated Dec. 26 states the chaplain plans to continue his hunger strike because of regulations limiting public prayer.