

Air Force Suspends Ethics Class

August 17, 2011

The Air Force suspended an ethics course that has been taught by its chaplains for more than twenty years because the material included passages from the Bible. The course in question carries the title "Christian Just War Theory." It was taught by chaplains at the Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. Both Old Testament and New Testament verses were used.

The challenge to the class was brought by the Military Religious Freedom Foundation that argued that the course violated the constitutional separation of church and state. A spokesman for the Air Force said the purpose of the course was to help missile launch officers understand that "what they are embarking on is very difficult and you have to have a certain amount of ethics about what you are doing to do that job." He went on to say that the class was suspended the same day the complaint was filed.

The class is currently under review by Air Force officials in order to determine whether to revise the material or end the class. Given the speed at which they suspended the class, I suspect that this will be the last we hear of a class on "Christian Just War Theory."

Considering the current climate, I guess it is surprising that such a class lasted as long as it did. Various groups calling for freedom from religion have been challenging any teaching or event that could possibly be considered an unconstitutional establishment of religion.

David French, senior counsel at the American Center for Law and Justice, says there is not violation of the Constitution. He has served in the military and reminds us that "Just War theory has been a vital part of American military history for the last several hundred years." He believes it is "another attempt to cleanse American history of its religious realities."

Yes, it does seem to be just another case of removing the Bible and biblical principles from public life. I'm Kerby Anderson, and that's my point of view.