



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on May 7, 2009

Spreading Christianity in Dar al-Islam

If our military is any indication, it just may be true that there are no atheists in a foxhole. The armed forces have long seemed to be an arena wherein faith runs strong, and while this is laudable, it also creates problems with today's secular civilian authorities and top brass. One example of this disconnect has just played out, with a recent story about how American soldiers in Afghanistan were skirting military rules by engaging in shadow proselytization.



Military.com reports:

U.S. Soldiers have been encouraged to spread the message of their Christian faith among Afghanistan's predominantly Muslim population, video footage obtained by Al Jazeera appears to show.

Military chaplains stationed in the U.S. air base at Bagram were also filmed with Bibles printed in the country's main Pashto and Dari languages.

In one recorded sermon, Lt. Col. Gary Hensley, the chief of the U.S. military chaplains in Afghanistan, is seen telling Soldiers that as followers of Jesus Christ, they all have a responsibility "to be witnesses for him."

There is a hard and fast military rule barring proselytization; it's known as "General Order Number 1." However, it appears that the soldiers dispensing the Bibles operated based upon what they considered a loophole, which was to consider the Bibles "gifts."

But whether or not the servicemen were within the letter of military law, officials seem to have gone beyond it and have actually [destroyed](#) the Bibles. So much for onward Christian soldiers.

Certainly, military discipline has to be maintained; the old saying, "Yours is not to wonder why, yours is but to do or die" exists for a reason. It's also understandable that the military would place a premium on winning the hearts and minds of the Afghani people and would thus wish to avoid alienating them. Yet this incident does raise some very interesting issues.

First, it reflects the multiculturalist phenomenon G.K. Chesterton alluded to when saying, "These are the days when the Christian is expected to praise every creed except his own." Note that the military command didn't just remove the Bibles, it destroyed them. This lies in stark contrast to the gratuitous self-flagellation we exhibited when Guantanamo Bay interrogators were accused of flushing a Koran down a toilet in 2005. The allegation ultimately proved [false](#), yet the Western, politically-correct powers-that-be were so ready to demonize their own and show obeisance to Dar al-Islam that they accepted at face value what really was a very fanciful story (how do you flush a Koran down a toilet?).

We might also wonder what kind of message destroying our own holy book sends to the Muslim world.



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As I [wrote](#) in 2007, these are a hard people who look down on weakness. Sure, they don't respect our faith, but I think they'd respect us more if we respected our faith. It's just as with our promiscuity and objectification of women. Islamists despise decadence, and while they may not respect our women, they'd respect us more if we did. Or, it's much as with cowardice, something held in contempt in any land. An adversary might be happy if you turned tail and fled the battlefield, but would he respect you for it?

Then there is another manifestation of the modern contradiction wherein all values are equal but some are more equal than others. Multiculturalists actually have no trouble imposing Western norms regarding, let's say, the treatment of women, but what of freedom of religion? (It's a crime in Afghanistan to try to convert a Moslem to another faith.) Multiculturalists are more than willing to uproot Muslim traditions, placing girls in school and saying it's wrong to keep women cloistered. But then why do they shrink from saying it's wrong to keep other religions cloistered? It's a rhetorical question, of course, as the obvious answer is that statisticians care about feminism but not faith.

That brings us to the fruitlessness of the current military ventures. Statists apply our separation-of-church-and-state philosophy to the battlefield and say we mustn't "impose" a faith, yet their [faith in "democracy"](#) makes them willing to impose democracy worldwide. But of what good is this? It's much like the naiveté that caused WWI to be dubbed "The War to End all Wars," as if a military solution can remedy spiritual/philosophical problems. Now we have the political system to end all wars, as we deify democracy and mistake symptoms for cures.

But constitutional republicanism is not the cure; it's a system suited to those who have already received the cure. What is the remedy? Well, I won't indulge an in-depth theological debate here, but again, political and cultural problems always have a spiritual/philosophical basis. Can we install healthy constitutional republicanism — which came to flower in a Christian substrate — in a civilization that rejects Christianity? It's a point to ponder, as an approach that fails to address the "root causes," as leftists are wont to say, is doomed to failure.

So we're left to ask what we're doing playing doctor if symptomatic treatment — that is, preaching the gospel of "good" government — is our only recourse. When both the physician and the patient have outlawed the administering of the cure, it isn't exactly a recipe for success.



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