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ARTICLE

Restoring Chaplains To The Spiritual Backbone Of Our Military Forces



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BY SA MCCARTHY/THE WASHINGTON STAND DECEMBER 22, 2025

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War Secretary Pete Hegseth is moving to restore the U.S. Army's Chaplain Corps to its original purpose: shepherding souls. In a video address last week, Hegseth announced several upcoming changes intended to remove controversial humanist and secular ideology from the military's guidelines for chaplains, empowering chaplains to do their job and minister to the nation's servicemembers.

"There will be a top-down cultural shift, putting spiritual well-being on the same footing as mental and physical health as a first step toward creating a supportive environment for our warriors and their souls. We're going to restore the esteemed position of chaplains as moral anchors for our fighting force," Hegseth declared. "This is a high and sacred calling. But this only works if our shepherds are actually given the freedom to boldly guide and care for their flock."

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Hegseth said that the Chaplain Corps' "role has been degraded in an atmosphere of political correctness and secular humanism" over the course of the past several decades. "Chaplains have been minimized, viewed by many as therapists instead of ministers. Faith and virtue were traded for self-help and self-care," he explained.

In order to rectify this issue, the secretary of War shared that he is eliminating the "Army Spiritual Fitness Guide." "In well over 100 pages, it mentions God one time. That's it. It mentions feelings 11 times, it even mentions playfulness -- whatever that is -- nine times. There's zero mention of virtue," Hegseth reported. "The guide relies on New Age notions, saying that the soldier's spirit consists of consciousness, creativity, and connection. The guide itself reports that around 82% of the military are religious, yet ironically, it alienates our war fighters of faith by pushing secular humanism."

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Additionally, the military will streamline its "faith and belief" coding system, a code system for personnel to report their religious affiliations. The system has "ballooned" to over 200 different religious beliefs recognized by the military, Hegseth shared, with many new codes being added under the previous administration for the sake of "inclusivity." "An overwhelming majority of the military population only uses six codes. Eleven are not used by anyone," the War Secretary noted. "So we're going to streamline it and move it to a new list of religious affiliation codes so that our chaplains can actually use it to minister better to the flock."

In comments to The Washington Stand, Family Research Council Executive Vice President Lt. Gen. (Ret.) William G. Boykin praised Hegseth's reforms. "Once again, America's secretary of War (SOW) has shown that he understands our military and what it takes to build a strong group of fighting men and women. He especially understands the importance of Chaplains on the battlefield," Boykin said.

"To the critics that said he was not capable of being the SOW, they ought to talk to the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines and see what they think, as they are the ones that put it all on the line and now they have a SOW that cares about everything except political correctness," the General continued. "This is good news not just for the Chaplains but for the whole military, and all I can say is, 'Thank you Pete, you've done it again.'"

"More reforms will be coming in the days and weeks ahead," Hegseth pledged. "Chaplains are intended to be the spiritual and moral backbone of our nation's forces. George Washington established the Chaplain Corps in 1775, one of his first actions as general of the Continental Army. Congress authorized chaplains for the Navy that very same year," he recounted. "For about 200 years, the Chaplain Corps continued its role as the spiritual leader of our service members, serving our men and women in times of hardship and ministering to their souls," he continued. "We are going to make the Chaplain Corps great again."

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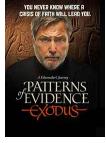
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