

1 **VI. RELIGIOUS MINISTRY AND HOMOSEXUALITY**

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3 **A. BACKGROUND**

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5 Until the last few decades, there has been little dispute about how to deal with a member  
6 of one of the military services who is discovered to have homosexual leanings, or to have  
7 actually engaged in such conduct. These members were removed from the particular  
8 service with some degree of punitive consequence, such as an Administrative Discharge  
9 or an Other Than Honorable Discharge. During the process of enlistment or applying for  
10 a commission, it was not the practice of our armed services to probe for a list of possible  
11 moral, social or ethical deficiencies that were not connected to a criminal record of some  
12 sort.

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14 This policy was characterized by the Clinton administration as “Don’t Ask – Don’t Tell,”  
15 implying some sort of moral hypocrisy on the part of the military for punitively dealing  
16 with discovered homosexuals, but who presumably had turned a blind eye to their  
17 admission in the first place. This incorrect characterization, along with several other  
18 contributing factors, including the emergence of formidable political power on the part of  
19 the homosexual segment of American society has resulted in Congress repealing the  
20 “Don’t Ask – Don’t Tell” policy and making moot the long-standing, adequate practice  
21 of our military services in dealing with this problem. This change in public law and  
22 policy, however, does not relieve PRJC-endorsed chaplains from their responsibility to  
23 stand firmly for what is right.

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25 **B. PASTORAL GUIDANCE**

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27 **A. Remain faithful to one’s vows:** Historically, it has been the practice of each Chaplain  
28 Corps of the Army, Navy and Air Force, respectively, to insist that it expects every  
29 chaplain to remain faithful to the doctrinal practices and ordination vows of his endorsing  
30 denomination.

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32 For chaplains endorsed by the PRJCCMP member denominations this includes the vow,  
33 in some form, to be faithful to the doctrines and truths of Scripture. That necessarily  
34 involves both the duty and privilege of calling sin “sin,” whether in the formal  
35 proclamation of the Word of God, or in applying it in solving a problem in conduct or  
36 thinking requiring a biblical solution. As in our guidance on praying in Jesus’ name, and  
37 women in combat, we remind our chaplains of constitutional principles prohibiting the  
38 government from imposing upon them substantive moral/religious judgments and beliefs,  
39 such as directing them on how to pray. These prohibitions are even more stringent if  
40 attempting substantively to limit chaplains in performance of their  
41 spiritual/moral/religious duties in consensual settings where views on homosexuality  
42 would be typically discussed in preaching, teaching, or counseling contexts.

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44 **B. Perform Religious Ministry:** For PRJCCMP endorsed chaplains “religious ministry”  
45 includes all those activities and behaviors which are in accord with the inerrant Word of  
46 God, and the doctrinal standards set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith,

47 together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. Examples of “religious ministry” set  
48 forth in these standards include, but are not limited to, preaching, teaching of all religious  
49 subjects, sacramental rites, informal and formal counseling, ministry of presence, and  
50 staff interaction on religious issues. “Religious Ministry” for PRJCCMP endorsed  
51 chaplains cannot include anything that would cause a chaplain to support biblically  
52 defined sinful behavior. If a question arises as to what constitutes “religious ministry”  
53 then that particular issue should be clarified in consultation with the Executive Director  
54 of the PRJCCMP.

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56 PRJCCMP endorsed chaplains are called by God to minister to our beloved soldiers,  
57 sailors, airmen, marines and guardsmen and their respective families and there are few  
58 parts of their military or ecclesiastical life that would not be considered “religious  
59 ministry.” The ‘DOD Support Plan for Implementation of the repeal of DADT’ clearly  
60 stipulates that chaplains, in the context of their “religious ministry,” are not required to  
61 take actions that are inconsistent with their religious beliefs. In light of this ‘DOD Plan  
62 for the Repeal of DADT’ any detailed service documents requiring ‘sensitivity’ and/or  
63 ‘support’ by military chaplains for ministry to homosexual service members (also  
64 referred to as gay, lesbian and bi-sexual in DoD documents) may not in any way be  
65 construed as over-riding, or requiring the compromise of, any biblical, doctrinal or  
66 confessional standard on the part of those chaplains endorsed by the PRJCCMP.

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68 C. Affirm Biblical truth and application: God’s Word specifically addresses the sin of  
69 sodomy, and related homosexual behavior in Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; and Romans 1:26-  
70 27, in addition to the Genesis chapter 19 account of the supernatural destruction of  
71 Sodom and Gomorrah for precisely that iniquity.

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73 In light of the objective passages on the sin of homosexuality, and the Scriptural  
74 guidelines on the exercise of pastoral grace (1 Timothy 6:11-16; 2 Timothy 2:14-26), the  
75 PRJCCMP advises our endorsed chaplains to deal humbly and yet truthfully when asked  
76 about any aspect of this matter, and to do so in as courteous and kind a manner as  
77 possible. A chaplain is entirely at liberty to disagree with current secular assumptions,  
78 such as the idea that homosexuality is genetically caused, and yet may provide gracious  
79 counsel to an individual who confesses to this behavior. A service member who  
80 professes to be homosexual is still entitled to receive spiritual counsel if he or she so  
81 desires. It is not unconstitutional for a chaplain to encourage such a service member to  
82 seek the grace of Christ to repent of this, or any other sin, whether he or she is an  
83 unbeliever, or one professing faith in Christ as his or her Savior. However, this guidance  
84 must not be construed as in any way requiring any PRJCCMP endorsed chaplain to  
85 perform a marriage or union ceremony for homosexual or transgendered service  
86 members, to provide any counseling in support thereof, or to counsel or perform  
87 programmatic encouragement for homosexual or transgendered relationships before or  
88 after such a union. Chaplains endorsed by the PRJCCMP will not be permitted to  
89 perform marriage or union ceremonies for homosexual or transgendered service  
90 members, nor will they be permitted to plan, organize, lead, assist, direct, supervise or  
91 otherwise support same-sex couples retreats, family life seminars, other similar activities,  
92 or participate in any joint worship service with any chaplain who is a non-trinitarian or

93 does not accept the authority of God’s Word in what they teach and believe. Moreover,  
94 according to the implementation guidelines, our chaplains will not be required to violate  
95 their faith in conducting or sharing worship services with homosexual chaplains or in  
96 condoning that which the Word of God condemns.

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98 If a chaplain is challenged to cease and desist from addressing what is wrong with  
99 homosexual thinking or behavior, or to cover up his belief that it is wrong, especially if  
100 by one who is senior to the chaplain, we expect our endorsed chaplains to seek God’s  
101 strength not to waver, even if unjustly accused of failing to support the command, or  
102 some aspect of the command’s policies, such as equal opportunity programs. Further, if  
103 placed in such a situation, we encourage the chaplain promptly to contact the PRJCCMP  
104 for such assistance and protection as we are able to provide.

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106 D. In conclusion, PRJCCMP endorsed chaplains will continue to be under the dual  
107 authority of the military and their respective denominations. The PRJCCMP will  
108 continue to provide counsel and guidance to ensure that their “religious ministry” is  
109 consistent with their ordination vows and denominational beliefs. “Cooperation without  
110 compromise” will remain a way of life for our chaplains. In this increasingly pluralistic  
111 environment they will have to exercise wisdom in conducting ministry in the pulpit and  
112 in the counseling room, but are not restricted, according to the implementation  
113 guidelines, from counseling against a lifestyle that is contrary with the Word of God and  
114 calling for repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and for a life of virtue flowing from the  
115 love of Christ.

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117 We should all pray fervently that God will allow that which was intended for evil to be  
118 used for good as our chaplains have the opportunity to minister the Gospel of Christ to a  
119 military that increasingly reflects the social perspective of our civilian world. May He  
120 have mercy. May He give greater grace. May He keep this door of chaplain ministry  
121 open so that men and women may hear the Gospel and be saved and Christ’s Great  
122 Commission go forward in the United States military community and in our nation and in  
123 the world.