



The Church of the Larger Fellowship  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

January 30, 2013

Scottie D. Carpenter  
Brigadier General, USA  
Department of the Army  
Headquarters, 311<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Command (Expeditionary)  
Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan  
APO AE 09355

RE: MEMORANDUM FOR Chaplain (1LT) Christopher J. Antal, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 101<sup>st</sup> Expeditionary Signal Battalion, Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, APO AE 09355

Subject: General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand

Dear Sir:

Rev. Chris Antal is a Community Minister officially affiliated with the Church of the Larger Fellowship, a Unitarian Universalist Congregation without walls. Because we do not meet in any location, but have people around the world, much of our ministry is accomplished electronically. Rev. Antal's blog, similar to mine and other ministers, is a key way that we keep in touch with our congregants about matters that are spiritual and personal. While it is open to the public, we do not advertise it or publicize it, but use it to reflect diverse voices and ministries within our congregation, to our congregants.

Rev. Antal is one of several voices which are particularly speaking to and with our members who currently serve in the military or who are veterans. His voice reaches out to many people who are suffering from depression, PTSD, and other symptoms of trauma. It also reaches out to their families, and to all of us who love and support our military members. Rev. Antal has been highly effective at ministering to these people, and his ministry has been a valuable part of our larger congregation.

While the act of 'blogging' might generally be seen as an activity designed to reach out and comment on the issues of the day, our context is a little different. Because the pieces are written as witnesses for the members of our congregation, our 'blogs' are called Daily Reflections. That is because we wish to have ministers and lay leaders reflect our congregants' lives back to them. Rev. Antal's Confession, as well as the prayers that I post regularly, are understood to be religiously oriented communications, not political screeds. I know that I read his Confession very differently from the way you describe it: I did not read it as an indictment of the military but of my country at large, which has largely begun to forget or ignore the fact that we are still a nation at war, leaving those in harm's way to be isolated and invisible.

I feel terrible that Rev. Antal's religious service to his congregation has resulted in such trouble for everyone. Our board of Directors, who commissioned him to be affiliated with the Church of the Larger Fellowship, feel similarly. We stand by his ministry with full support and appreciation.

I respectfully request that you rescind your Memorandum of Reprimand or in the alternative, file it in his local Military Personnel Records.

In faith,

Rev. Meg A. Riley  
Senior Minister