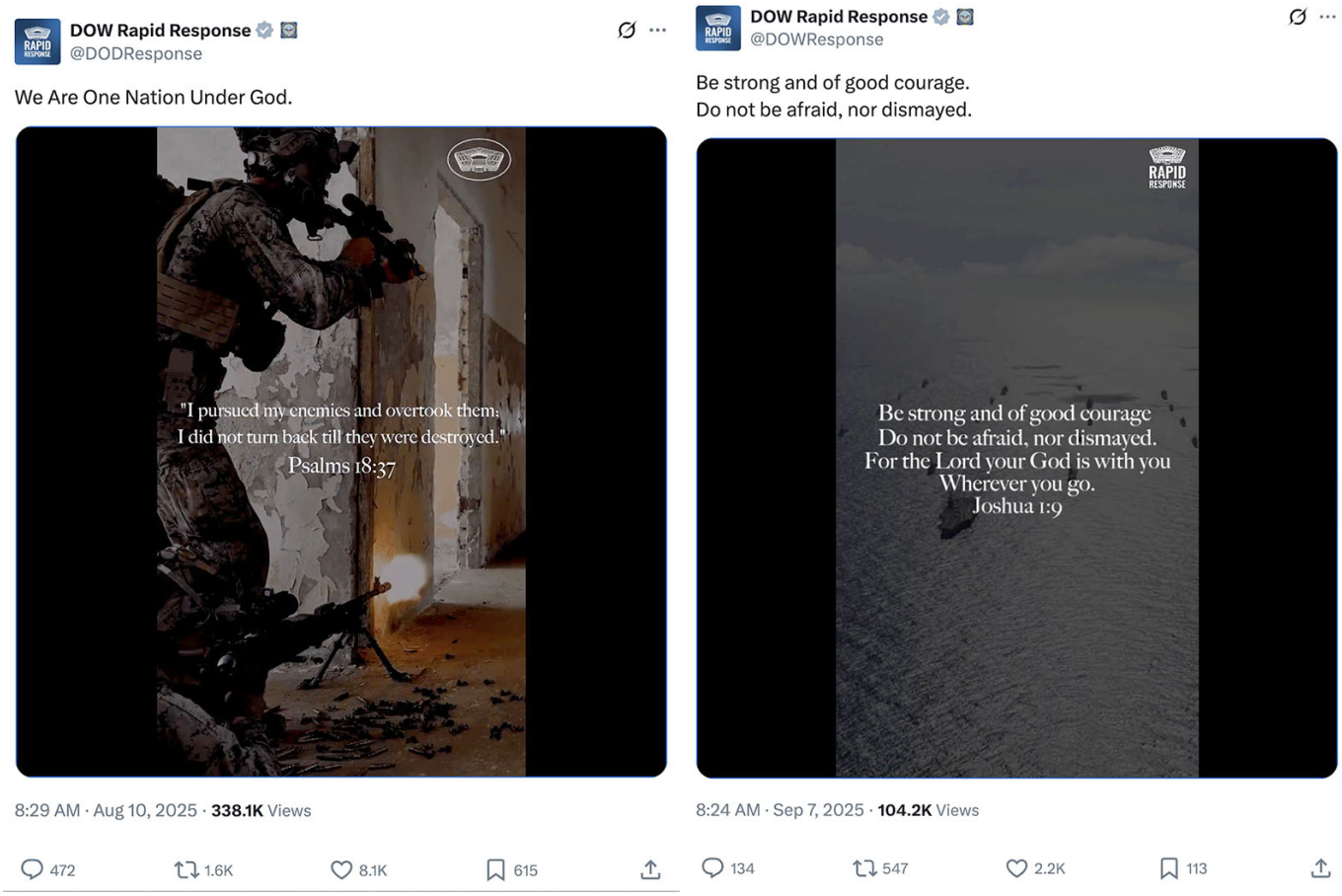
[News]
[Analysis]



Recent U.S. Department of War social media posts featuring Bible verses. (Screen grabs)

Fiona André

[View Author Profile]

Religion News Service

[View Author Profile]

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

September 10, 2025
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

The United States Department of War Rapid Response X account on Sunday (Sept. 7) posted a clip showing military personnel completing outdoor training as the words "Be strong and of good courage. Do not be afraid, nor dismayed. For the Lord your God is with you, wherever you go" faded into the screen. The video, which quotes the Bible's Book of Joshua, received more than 2,000 likes as of Tuesday.

Similar videos praising the military while quoting the Bible have flooded the former Department of Defense's social media accounts over the past few weeks.

The department, renamed the Department of War, has joined other branches of the federal government in embracing a Christian nationalist tone in its official communications. Some warn the new social media strategy could indicate how Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's conservative Christian faith is revamping the military branch.

In an email to RNS, Pentagon Press Secretary Kingsley Wilson said the videos exemplify Hegseth's efforts to celebrate the country's Christian roots "despite the Left's efforts to remove our Christian heritage from our great nation," and that "Secretary Hegseth is among those who embrace it."

"Secretary Hegseth, along with millions of Americans, is a proud Christian," Wilson said in the email. "The Christian faith is woven deeply into the fabric of our nation and shared by America's wartime leaders like President George Washington, who prayed for his troops at Valley Forge, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who gifted Bibles to American soldiers during WW2 and encouraged them to read them."

Back in early August, the DOW posted another video on X captioned "We Are One Nation Under God," a motto from the pledge of allegiance, showing military aircraft and soldiers in operations as "I pursued my enemies and overtook them; I did not turn back till they were destroyed" from Psalm 18:37 appeared onscreen. The 12-second video was shared 1,600 times and received 8,000 likes.

Brian Kaylor, a Baptist minister and the author of the upcoming book "The Bible According to Christian Nationalists," said the videos thwart the original meaning of these verses.

"Those verses were not about the United States military," Kaylor told RNS. "They weren't really even about any imperial military force, and quite the opposite. These were passages about marginalized people, people under attack. It's a very dangerous conflation of scriptural ideals with the U.S. military."

The DOW's videos, like the Department of Homeland Security's Bible-quoting social media posts, also promote a literal interpretation of Scripture, a key feature of Christian nationalist rhetoric, said Kaylor, who is also president and editor-in-chief of Word&Way, a Christian media company in Missouri.

"Christian nationalism is itself selectively literal. ... The irony about this Christian nationalism is that they're justifying themselves with the Bible, but they're only able to do it because they're being very selective on what verses they choose," he said.

Advertisement

The United States Department of War Rapid Response X account on Sunday (Sept. 7) posted a clip showing military personnel completing outdoor training as the words "Be strong and of good courage. Do not be afraid, nor dismayed. For the Lord your God is with you, wherever you go" faded into the screen. The video, which quotes the Bible's Book of Joshua, received more than 2,000 likes as of Tuesday.

Similar videos praising the military while quoting the Bible have flooded the former Department of Defense's social media accounts over the past few weeks.

The department, renamed the Department of War, has joined other branches of the federal government in embracing a Christian nationalist tone in its official communications. Some warn the new social media strategy could indicate how Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's conservative Christian faith is revamping the military branch.

In an email to RNS, Pentagon Press Secretary Kingsley Wilson said the videos exemplify Hegseth's efforts to celebrate the country's Christian roots "despite the Left's efforts to remove our Christian heritage from our great nation," and that

"Secretary Hegseth is among those who embrace it."

"Secretary Hegseth, along with millions of Americans, is a proud Christian," Wilson said in the email. "The Christian faith is woven deeply into the fabric of our nation and shared by America's wartime leaders like President George Washington, who prayed for his troops at Valley Forge, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who gifted Bibles to American soldiers during WW2 and encouraged them to read them."

Back in early August, the DOW posted another video on X captioned "We Are One Nation Under God," a motto from the pledge of allegiance, showing military aircraft and soldiers in operations as "I pursued my enemies and overtook them; I did not turn back till they were destroyed" from Psalm 18:37 appeared onscreen. The 12-second video was shared 1,600 times and received 8,000 likes.

Brian Kaylor, a Baptist minister and the author of the upcoming book "The Bible According to Christian Nationalists," said the videos thwart the original meaning of these verses.

"Those verses were not about the United States military," Kaylor told RNS. "They weren't really even about any imperial military force, and quite the opposite. These were passages about marginalized people, people under attack. It's a very dangerous conflation of scriptural ideals with the U.S. military."

The DOW's videos, like the Department of Homeland Security's Bible-quoting social media posts, also promote a literal interpretation of Scripture, a key feature of Christian nationalist rhetoric, said Kaylor, who is also president and editor-in-chief of Word&Way, a Christian media company in Missouri.

"Christian nationalism is itself selectively literal. … The irony about this Christian nationalism is that they're justifying themselves with the Bible, but they're only able to do it because they're being very selective on what verses they choose," he said.

This story appears in the **Trump's Second Term** feature series. View the full series.