

John McDougall, army chaplain, 'regrets' book promotion video

by [Tom Vanden Brook](#) in the [July 22, 2015](#) issue

John McDougall, an active-duty army chaplain, has published a book titled *Jesus Was an Airborne Ranger* and appeared in a promotional video in uniform to promote it.

McDougall recently returned from Afghanistan where he served as chaplain for the 75th Ranger Regiment. He wrote the book, he told the army in a story published on its website, because “the Jesus of many churches is a weakling—someone our Rangers cannot relate to.”

The video was removed from the website in mid-June by the book’s publisher, said Charlene Guzman, senior publicist for WaterBrook Multnomah Publishing Group. McDougall regrets having appeared in uniform and was not speaking on behalf of the military, she said. He had cleared writing the book but not the video with military lawyers.

The army’s story carries a disclaimer saying it “is not an official U.S. Army or Department of Defense endorsement of the book.” [In an e-mail to the *Century* regarding this article, McDougall stated that his book reflects his own views and not those of the DOD, U.S. Army, or U.S. government. He declined to comment further.]

The video had no disclaimer. It featured McDougall’s U.S. Army uniform and 75th Ranger Regiment tab, and signified his deployment to war zones.

McDougall’s appearance in uniform endorsing a commercial or political venture violated military rules, said Tatjana Christian, an army spokeswoman.

“Chaplains are authorized to offer messages endorsing Christianity while in uniform as part of their official faith group religious support duties,” Christian said. “This video was not a part of those official duties.”

Mikey Weinstein of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, a watchdog group, fears that Islamic militants could use the video to convince followers that the United States is waging a Christian war against Muslims, he said.

“This is propaganda of unparalleled proportions for ISIS,” Weinstein said.

McDougall said the book counters the notion that Jesus wasn't a fighter.

"We've made him into . . . someone who wouldn't pose a threat to anyone," McDougall said in the video. "I can't find that Jesus in scripture. Yes, there are moments when he's gentle. There are also moments when he's ferocious. I want to recapture that aspect that has been lost."

The book's promotional material continues that theme: "Get ready to see Jesus like you've never seen him before—a battle-scarred combatant who stared death in the face and won. . . . This is the Warrior Christ who has descended from the heavens, defeated the Enemy, and rescued humanity. Now, he calls us to continue his mission and fight for others—our families, our communities, and the world." — *USA Today*

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