



*THE LEAGUE OF CHRISTIAN DEFENDERS
THE VINDICATORS
THE PARTISANS*

*THE CHRISTIAN CHIVALRIC:
CODES OF HONOR, CONDUCT, AND SERVICE*

"He who wants to win the world for Christ must have the courage to come in conflict with it—and himself."

HONESTAS DEI SUPRA OMNIA—HONOR GOD ABOVE ALL

FROM THE COURAGE OF OUR CONVICTIONS...



It is entirely necessary for these three PARRC-originated groups to share a common vision, purpose, and to reflect a common composition.

This composition is the perception, decision, and enactment of certain modes of values and behavior which reflect that which is required for one to become a Soldier of the Cross.

There are many people in the world who claim Christianity; many who practice it; many who actually live it; but there are few evangelical Christians who dedicate their lives to the enactment of the Great Commission, given by Jesus Christ Himself, to "take this Gospel to all the world, making disciples of men..." [paraphrase].

This requires an Army, with Christ as the Supreme Commander; it requires Generals, and Captains, and Sergeants, and even Privates.

There is one characteristic that each of these levels of action reflect: they are all Soldiers.

Arrayed in the Full Armor Of God, shod throughout and covered with the prayers of the saints, confronting the enemy at the Front of the battle between Principalities and Powers of the air—for the souls of mankind.

This sounds like science-fiction, or a bit like a comic book: in point of fact, even though it may sound corny to today's world, this type of attitude and tasking was reflected commonly in many of the great groups and societies of the past.

Not the recent past, but the past of several hundred years ago; the past of chivalry, knighthood, and fraternity. Corny? Maybe. Effective? Definitely. Required? Without doubt.

Even without a great responsibility such as the Great Commission, the chivalric codes play directly into how far we have fallen from the type of men (and women) that Christ once adjured to "be thou perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." And again I say—how far have we fallen...

The Codes of Chivalry; the Twelve Items in the Pledge of the Boy Scouts; The Ten Commandments; the Beatitudes; these are all lists of ways in which to be pleasing to God and man, and to found a civilization which leads toward enlightenment and fulfillment, and not decline and fall.

We no longer place high value on being upright, Godly people; strong men and women, intelligent; refined; spiritual; capable of strong emotion; philosophical; priestly, but with a warrior's spirit and a hero's courage.

How far have we fallen...

In order to function as a composite body, the League Of Christian Defenders, The Vindicators, and The Partisans all demand that we recognize, dedicate ourselves to, and enact virtues like those found above.

Review this statement, paraphrased on the title sheet of this document:

“He who wants to win the world for Christ must have the courage to come in conflict with it.”

Titus Brandsma

Many things will be required of us to commit the Great Commission to success; one of them is the subject of this essay concerning the Chivalric, its purpose, examples of chivalric codes, and the adaptation of these codes into a modern interpretation—contemporized for use by the groups referenced above.

First, here is a definition of and information on “Chivalry:”

*“Chivalry, code of behavior that medieval knights followed. Chivalry was a feature of the High and later Middle Ages in western Europe. While its roots stretch back to the 9th and 10th centuries, the system of chivalry flourished most vigorously in the 12th and 13th centuries before deteriorating at the end of the Middle Ages. **However, the ideals of chivalry continued to influence models of behavior for gentlemen and the nobility during the Renaissance in the 16th century.**”*

II THE ORIGINS OF CHIVALRY

Chivalry originated in two parallel developments: horse-mounted cavalry, which evolved to combat threats from invaders; and feudalism, the system of political and military relationships among the European nobility.

In the 9th and 10th centuries, western Europe was under attack by invading forces of Vikings, Magyars, Muslims, and other tribes. These invaders were often expert in waging war on horseback. The armies of the European nobles were composed primarily of foot soldiers and had difficulty combating these fast-moving forces. Consequently, many of the nobles began to use cavalry training and tactics in order to counter this threat. The first knights were armed warriors who fought on horseback.

However, the maintenance of horses was expensive, and cavalry training was a long process. To support their cavalry, the nobility began to grant land to their mounted warriors for the duration of their service. The land provided the income to support the knight. This system of land holding was part of feudalism. The knights gave military service to their feudal lord or king in return for the right to hold a piece of land or property. Eventually, knighthood became a mark of social distinction, and the opportunity to become a knight was usually limited to men of noble birth.

An unwritten contract governed the relationship between a king or a feudal lord and his knights. Each year a knight was to perform a specific number of days of military service, in exchange for which he received his lands and the lord's protection. The knight was also expected to fight bravely for his lord, and to be loyal to him. Bravery and loyalty were the precursors of what was to become the code of chivalry.

III THE CODE OF CHIVALRY

*In the centuries that followed, the influences of Christianity and courtly love expanded the code of chivalry to include **religious piety and refined social graces and manners.** Chivalry gradually began to soften the harsh edges of feudal warfare. Knights were expected to treat their fellow knights and social inferiors with respect and benevolence. **The new code prohibited knights from attacking the unarmed, and knightly ideals stressed that the good knight fought for glory and Christian purposes and not for mere profit or gain.** In practice, though, most knights continued to have a keen eye for the possible financial benefits that could be reaped from an important hostage or a stolen horse.*

A Christianity and the Crusades

The early Middle Ages had been a chaotic time in Europe. However, the 11th century began a long period of renewed stability. Commerce and trade revived, and new towns and cities sprang up throughout the continent. In this comparatively peaceful climate, the Church tried to curb the warlike spirit of the feudal nobility. In the 11th century, for instance, Church councils met throughout Europe and adopted the programs known as the Peace of God and the Truce of God. The Peace of God forbade knights from attacking peasants, women, priests, and merchants, while the Truce of God prohibited battle on Sundays and holy days. Although the Church lacked the power to enforce them, the Peace of God and the Truce of God reveal the emergence of new values that questioned the wholesale warfare in western Europe typical of the 9th and 10th centuries.

*Christianity also influenced chivalry through the Crusades. The Crusades were military expeditions undertaken by Christian knights to recapture from Muslim control the holy places of pilgrimage in Palestine, or the Holy Land. Although many knights enlisted in search of financial gain, military glory, and adventure, many were also moved by genuine religious enthusiasm. This enthusiasm was reflected in the founding of the military religious orders—the Knights Templar, the Teutonic Knights, and the Hospitalers. The members of these orders took religious vows and shared a common vision of recapturing the Holy Land for Christianity. **They believed that knighthood could be a holy form of life when used for Christian purposes. These orders helped infuse chivalry with religious idealism.***

B Courtly Love

*Another major influence on chivalry was courtly love, the system that came to define relationships between knights and ladies in the feudal court. The ideals of courtly love stressed that a knight should devote himself completely to a married or betrothed woman at court. In his lady's name, he waged war or jostled in tournaments, trying to win her favor. After a period of courtship, the two might consummate their love secretly. Courtly love's influence among the feudal nobility was undeniable, despite the fact that its ideals ran counter to the Christian ideals of chivalry. Courtly love helped refine relationships between men and women at court. **To please their ladies, knights labored to master the arts as intently as they did the skills of warfare. Writing poetry, singing love songs, and playing musical instruments became indispensable to the feudal knight hoping to entertain his lady.***

IV LIFE OF A KNIGHT

The education of a knight proceeded in a way similar to that of many medieval occupations. At an early age the prospective knight was apprenticed to serve as a page, or attendant, in a knight's household. In his teens the page graduated to the status of a squire and received more responsibilities. As a squire the boy tended his knight's horses and armor, but he also gained his first battle experience. Several squires were usually apprenticed to a knight at the same time and on the battlefield they might fight as a small band of infantry around their master. Here they acquired the many skills in arms necessary for their profession. To graduate to the status of a knight, a squire usually performed some heroic deed in battle. The squire was welcomed into the order of knights by being dubbed with a sword or slapped in the face by his lord. Afterwards the new knight would receive his fief, or gift of land. As the cult of chivalry developed in the 12th and 13th centuries, knighting ceremonies became more involved. Often they occurred at court, and a knight's dubbing might be preceded by a religious vigil in which the knight vowed to uphold Christian and chivalric principles.

V THE DECLINE OF CHIVALRY

In the 14th century feudalism began to decline in Western Europe. After 1300 the European economy began to falter, and in 1347 the bubonic plague (see Black Death) appeared in Europe and recurred frequently in the 14th and 15th centuries. The plague killed a large proportion of the population, which helped to hasten the disintegration of the feudal order.

A Changes in Warfare

As feudalism declined, kings and nation-states became more important. At the same time, the arts of warfare changed in ways that made horse-mounted knights outdated. Conflicts like the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) were larger and

required more men, making the old feudal armies composed of a king's knights insufficient. Kings began to rely on professional mercenary soldiers. The introduction of the English longbow increased the importance of archers, and the development of gunpowder finally forced the armored knight from the battlefield. By the end of the Middle Ages, chivalry survived only as a code of behavior and a set of beliefs and rituals. The society for which it had been fashioned was quickly disappearing.

B The Chivalric Orders

As the military importance of the knight declined, the rituals of chivalry acquired greater meaning. For many knights, the ceremonial duties of chivalry now became prohibitively expensive as pageants and tournaments increased in number and duration, and a knight's armor and equipment became more and more elaborate. In fact, many squires who could have become knights actively chose not to do so, because of the large financial burdens that were now a part of knighthood.

Originally the codes of chivalry had crossed regional and national boundaries, and the knightly class throughout Europe had been linked by ideals of Christian purpose, benevolence, and valor. However, as the power of the nation-states increased in western Europe, knights came to see themselves as waging war for the glorification of their nation and the extension of their king's power. To encourage the nobility's patriotism, kings developed new national chivalric orders. One of these, the Order of the Garter, was used in England at the end of the 14th century to reward knights and nobles for their participation in decisive battles during the Hundred Years' War. The Order of the Garter quickly became an exclusive social distinction, and it was soon copied in France, Bourgogne, and the Spanish kingdoms as well. Knights of the Garter in England or Knights of the Order of the Golden Fleece in Burgundy were drawn from the class of feudal knights as a whole, but were not limited to those of any one lord. Thus a king might award membership in these orders to cement alliances with other important princes and nobles. Members of these chivalric orders did not perform any important military function; instead they ritualized chivalry and subordinated it to the rising power of European kings.

VI THE LEGACY OF CHIVALRY

In the 15th and 16th centuries, chivalric ideals and customs continued to survive among the European nobility. By this time their importance consisted largely of keeping alive the memory of the knight's warrior tradition and in serving as a mark of the nobility's social distinction. At the same time, literary figures throughout Europe began to utilize the code of chivalry to serve as a model for the nobility and gentlemen at court. In Renaissance Italy, Baldassare Castiglione used his *Book of the Courtier*, first published in 1528, to fashion his advice for men and women at court based on knightly etiquette. In the two centuries that followed, many writers fashioned similar advice for both courtiers and worldly gentlemen. **By the beginning of the 19th century, the figure of the knight had become romanticized. Writers saw the knight as pioneering the concept of romantic love and representing the highest expression of Christian ideals and civility.** In the 19th century, romantic authors like Sir Walter Scott began to attribute modern manners to medieval knights. Their work shows the ongoing adaptation and vigor of the concept of chivalry, a concept that continued to undergo significant historical development long after the age of medieval knights had passed.

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Now we should take a look at some historical and contemporary groups, and the "chivalric" codes they adopt and promulgate(d):

"The Function of Knighthood" by John of Salisbury

*"By the formulas in which it is expressed in the rule, Carmelite spirituality preserves the echo of the chivalric ideal of the crusaders who established it, almost in the same way in which the Exercises of St. Ignatius retain in their wording something of the military ideal of the Knights of Pamplona. **Elijah was venerated as the daring champion of God's cause: 'I am burnt up with zeal for the Lord God of Hosts.'** Six pieces of spiritual armor are described there; the cincture is the symbol of purity, indispensable for one who desires to reach the holy mountain of the vision of God:*

'Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.' The corselet which protects the vital parts of the body represents good thoughts: 'Holy thoughts will protect you. The breastplate which covers the whole body represents justice, a well regulated life, the observance of the commandments and duties of daily life. The shield is faith; for a living faith is the best safeguard for the spiritual life. The helmet symbolizes hope, confidence in God, which gives us the right to walk with freedom and confidence. Finally, the sword indicates conversation with God which as a double edge blade comes to our aid and defends us in all our difficulties'.

But what is the office of the duly ordained soldiery? To defend the Church, the assail infidelity, to venerate the priesthood, to protect the poor from injuries, to pacify the province, to pour out their blood for their brothers (as the formula of their oath instructs them), and, if need be, to lay down their lives. The high priests of God are in their throat, and two-edged swords are in their hands to execute punishment on the nations and rebuke upon the peoples, and to bind their kings to chains and their nobles in links of iron. But to what end? To the end that they may serve madness, vanity, avarice, or their own private self-will? By no means. Rather to the end that they may execute the judgment that is committed to them to execute; wherein each follows not his own will but the deliberate decision of God, the angels, and men, in accordance with equity and the public utility. . . . For soldiers that do these things are "saints," and are the more loyal to their prince in proportion as they more zealously keep the faith of God; and they advance the more successfully the honour of their own valor as they seek the more faithfully in all things the glory but of their God."

The Chivalric Ideal" by Diaz de Gamez

"Now it is fitting that I should tell what it is to be a knight; whence comes this name of knight; what manner of a man a knight should be to have a right to be called a knight; and what profit the good knight is to the country wherein he lives. I tell you that men call knight the man who, of custom, rides upon a horse. He who, of custom, rides upon another mount, is no knight; but he who rides upon a horse is not for that reason a knight; he only is rightly called a knight, who makes it his calling. Knights have not been chosen to ride an ass or a mule; they have not been taken from among feeble or timid or cowardly souls, but from among men who are strong and full of energy, bold and without fear; and for this reason there is no other beast that so befits a knight as a good horse. Thus have horses been found that in the thick of battle have shewn themselves as loyal to their masters as if they had been men. There are horses who are so strong, fiery, swift, and faithful, that a brave man, mounted on a good horse, may do more in an hour of fighting than ten or mayhap a hundred could have done afoot. For this reason do men rightly call him knight.

What is required of a good knight? That he should be noble. What means noble and nobility? That the heart should be governed by the virtues. By what virtues? By the four that I have already named. These four virtues are sisters and so bound up one with the other, that he who has one, has all, and he who lacks one, lacks the others also. So the virtuous knight should be wary and prudent, just in the doing of justice, continent and temperate, enduring and courageous; and withal he must have great faith in God, hope at His glory, that he may attain the guerdon of the good that he has done, and finally he must have charity and the love of his neighbour.

Of what profit is a good knight? I tell you through good knights is the king and the kingdom honoured, protected, feared, and defended. I tell you that the king when he sends forth a good knight with an army and entrusts him with a great emprise, on sea or on land, has in him a pledge of victory. I tell you that without good knights, the king is like a man who has neither feet nor hands.

From The Portable Medieval Reader; edited by James Bruce Ross and Mary Martin McLaughlin

Now let's take a look at listings of "chivalric" and/or "knightly" virtues (actually Christian characteristics):

KNIGHTLY VIRTUES:

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

"The Virtues of a Knight (Knightly Virtues) were part of a mediaeval chivalric code of honour. There is no definitive list of virtues, but among the most important (most frequently mentioned) are:

"Courage, Justice, Mercy, Generosity, Faith, Nobility, Hope; Being Beautiful in Spirit; Charity; Good Cheer; Courage; Courtesy; Determination; Selflessness; Endurance; Faithfulness; Forgiveness; Friendliness; Happiness; Helpfulness; Honour; Hopefulness; Humility; Justice; Kindness; Loyalty; Mercy; Morality; Nobility; Obediency; Patience; Perseverance; Prudence; Sincerity; Sympathy; Tenderness; Truthfulness; Wisdom "

The BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA CODE: Characteristics

"Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean, And Reverent"

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS:

"Traditionally, the commandments have been enumerated in three ways. In Jewish tradition, the commandments are organized as follows: (1) the prologue; (2) prohibition of the worship of any deity but Yahweh, and prohibition of idolatry; (3) prohibition of the use of the name of God for vain purposes; (4) observance of the Sabbath; (5) honoring of one's father and mother; (6) prohibition of murder; (7) prohibition of adultery; (8) prohibition of stealing; (9) prohibition of giving false testimony; and (10) prohibition of coveting the property or wife of one's neighbor. Most Protestants and Orthodox Christians combine the prologue and the prohibition of the worship of any deity but Yahweh as the first commandment, treat the prohibition of idolatry as the second commandment, and follow the traditional Jewish enumeration of the remaining commandments. Roman Catholics and Lutherans follow the division used by 4th-century theologian Saint Augustine. The prologue and first two prohibitions are combined, and the last is divided into two that prohibit, individually, the coveting of a neighbor's wife and of his property. Thus, the enumeration of the other commandments differs by one

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HERE ARE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, AS A CHIVALRIC LISTING:

"Serving The One True God, Make No Graven Images, Do Not Take The Name Of The Lord In Vain, Keep Holy The Sabbath, Honor Parents, Do Not Murder, No Adultery, No Theft, No False Witness, No Covetousness"

THE BEATITUDES:

As a result of their eschatological orientation, the New Testament beatitudes contain an element of paradox: It is precisely those who appear least fortunate—the martyrs, the poor, and the destitute—who are declared blessed. The most familiar examples occur in the Sermon on the Mount by Jesus Christ. Eight promises are recorded in Matthew 5:3-11 (nine promises, if verse 11 is separated from verse 10). A shorter version, containing four promises, appears in Luke 6:20-22. The eight beatitudes in Matthew are:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

THE "CONTEMPORIZED" BEATITUDES:

For the purposes of The League Of Christian Defenders, The Vindicators, And The Partisans, PARRC Research submits the usage of these Beatitudes according to a study done which "contemporizes" them into a listing more closely following traditional understanding (please consult the PARRC document called *"The Contemporized Beatitudes"* for information on interpretation and structure). These "contemporized" Beatitudes will be the ones used to distill out "knightly" and/or "chivalric" listings of virtues later in this document:

"Fortunate are the strict of principle, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

"Fortunate are they that ardently repent of their sins, for they shall be called for."

"Fortunate are they that are unpretentious and temperate, for they shall (can) acquire worldly possessions."

"Fortunate are they which do strongly desire justification from Christ, for they shall be abundantly supplied."

"Fortunate are they that show compassion for the less fortunate, for they shall receive Divine Grace from the Most Fortunate."

"Fortunate are the clean of thought and feeling, for they shall (can) perceive, experience, and acknowledge God."

"Fortunate are they who cause reconciliation among their brethren, for they shall be called the people of God."

"Fortunate are they who serve, and are pursued by the enemy of the Gospel, in its cause, for they shall rise above it in the existing happiness of Christ."

"Fortunate are you when men attempt to disgrace you, and taunt you, and cause you to be filled with dread, saying hurtful things propagating false Christian doctrine, because of Me; count yourself as fortunate to be in the number of the prophets persecuted in the same ways before you; your heavenly reward will be limitless."

So the listing of codes from these "contemporized" beatitudes are:

"Principled, Repentant, Unpretentious, Christ-Seeking, Compassionate, Pure, Peace-Making, Adversary Of Evil, Loyal"

OTHER CHIVALRIC CODES: (FROM, *"A Code Of Chivalry,"* by Brian Price, April 1997)

Prowess: To seek excellence in all endeavors expected of a knight, martial and otherwise, seeking strength to be used in the service of justice, rather than in personal aggrandizement.

Justice: Seek always the path of 'right', unencumbered by bias or personal interest. Recognize that the sword of justice can be a terrible thing, so it must be tempered by humanity and mercy. If the 'right' you see rings agrees with others, and you seek it out without bending to the temptation for expediency, then you will earn renown beyond measure.

Defense: The ideal knight was sworn by oath to defend his liege lord and those who depended upon him. Seek always to defend your nation, your family, and those to whom you believe worthy of loyalty.

Courage: Being a knight often means choosing the more difficult path, the personally expensive one. Be prepared to make personal sacrifices in service of the precepts and people you value. At the same time, a knight should seek wisdom to see that stupidity and courage are cousins. Courage also means taking the side of truth in all matters, rather than seeking the expedient lie. Seek the truth whenever possible, but remember to temper justice with mercy, or the pure truth can bring grief.

Faith: A knight must have faith in his beliefs, for faith roots him and gives hope against the despair that human failings create.

Humility: Value first the contributions of others; do not boast of your own accomplishments, let others do this for you. Tell the deeds of others before your own, according them the renown rightfully earned through virtuous deeds. In this way the office of knighthood is well done and glorified, helping not only the gentle spoken of but also all who call themselves knights.

Largesse: Be generous in so far as your resources allow; largesse used in this way counters gluttony. It also makes the path of mercy easier to discern when a difficult decision of justice is required.

Nobility: Seek great stature of character by holding to the virtues and duties of a knight, realizing that though the ideals cannot be reached, the quality of striving towards them ennobles the spirit, growing the character from dust towards the heavens. Nobility also has the tendency to influence others, offering a compelling example of what can be done in the service of rightness.

Franchise: Seek to emulate everything I have spoken of as sincerely as possible, not for the reason of personal gain but because it is right. Do not restrict your exploration to a small world, but seek to infuse every aspect of your life with these qualities. Should you succeed in even a tiny measure then you will be well remembered for your quality and virtue."

It is a CHALLENGING list of characteristics, reminding us of how far we have fallen from the Adamic into homo sapiens.

It seems to be an impossible listing of virtuous characteristics—but one to strive for nonetheless.

NOW, TO THE FINAL TASK AT HAND: WHAT WOULD IS THE LIST OF CHIVALRIC VIRTUES, AVOIDANCES, AND SERVICES WHICH MAKE UP THE CODES FOR THE PERSONAL STANDARDS OF THE LEAGUE OF CHRISTIAN DEFENDERS, THE VINDICATORS, AND THE PARTISANS?

THEY ARE DIVIDED IN THREE CATEGORIES:

CATEGORY ONE: THE VIRTUES

The Essential Positive Qualities That One Must Strive For:

“Courage, Faith, Nobility, Hope; Being Beautiful in Spirit; Courage; Determination; Endurance; Faithfulness; Happiness; Honour; Hopefulness; Humility; Morality; Nobility; Obedience; Patience; Perseverance; Prudence; Sincerity; Truthfulness; Wisdom, Trustworthiness, Friendliness, Courtesy, Thriftiness, Bravery, Cleanliness, And Reverence, “Serving The One True God, Keep Holy The Sabbath, Honoring Parents, “Principled, Repentance, Unpretention, Christ-Seeking, Compassion, Purity, Peace-Making, An Adversary Of Evil, Loyalty, Having Prowess, Largesse, Franchise, Spirit Of Defense”

CATEGORY TWO: THE AVOIDANCES

The Essential Negative Qualities That One Must Avoid:

“Make No Graven Images, Do Not Take The Name Of The Lord In Vain, Do Not Murder, No Adultery, No Theft, No False Witness, No Covetousness”

CATEGORY THREE: THE SERVICES

The Essential Acts That One Must Render Unto Their Neighbor, And Mankind:

“Justice, Mercy, Generosity, Charity; Good Cheer; Courtesy; Selflessness; Forgiveness; Friendliness; Helpfulness; Honour; Humility; Justice; Kindness; Loyalty; Mercy; Sympathy; Tenderness”

THIS IS A DAUNTING LIST: AND IT IS WHAT CHRIST EXPECTS US TO HONE OURSELVES AGAINST:

IT IS NOT MEANT TO BE A STICK—BUT A MEASURING STICK...

USE IT TO “BE THOU PERFECT, EVEN AS YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN IS PERFECT...”
