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**ALIEN, ORPHAN, ENEMY:
RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION FOR NON-THEISTS
IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY**

**A PROJECT THESIS SUBMITTED IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE – CONSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS.....	3
CHAPTER TWO – A SACRED VOCATION	10
CHAPTER THREE – A SECULAR OFFICE	13
CHAPTER FOUR – IS NON-THEISM A RELIGION?	18
CHAPTER FIVE – THEOLOGICAL ISSUES IN ACCOMMODATION.....	29
CHAPTER SIX – MOVING TOWARD PRAXIS	54
CHAPTER SEVEN – BRIDGING THE GAP.....	60
CHAPTER EIGHT – A MODEL FOR TRAINING IN DIALOGUE.....	71
CHAPTER NINE – RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	77
APPENDIX A – TRAINING SLIDES.....	82
APPENDIX B – PRE/POST-TEST.....	94
BIBLIOGRAPHY	134

ABSTRACT

This project researched a process to motivate and equip Navy Chaplains to appreciate the nature of Non-theist worldviews, and to proactively accommodate these preferences in their practice of professional naval chaplaincy. Non-theism (an umbrella term encompassing Atheism, Agnosticism, and Humanism) was examined through historical, constitutional, legal, and demographic lenses to establish its status as a religious life-stance. Spiritual hospitality and an interpretive frame for interfaith dialogue provided a means of increasing chaplains' religious accommodation for Non-theists. Pre-test and post-test evaluations measured the effectiveness of training in dialogue as a means of enacting hospitality toward the vulnerable other.

INTRODUCTION

In 2008 the author, a United States Navy Chaplain, received a telephone call from the Commanding Officer of a warship stationed at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia. The commander requested advice in dealing with a letter he had recently received from a member of his crew:

Dear CO,

I'm writing to express my concern over the "evening prayers" broadcast each night over the [ship's internal communication channel]. I am an Atheist, and I find the prayers disruptive. It's not so much that I don't understand why some people would want to pray, but I don't feel that I should be forced to listen to it...

I understand that the prayers are part of Navy tradition and aren't likely to go away simply because I (or others such as myself) repeatedly complain. But would you consider alternating who says the prayers, allowing a Buddhist or a Wiccan to pray? Could an Atheist such as myself offer a short philosophical story or a poem? Could we have an Atheist group onboard that meets during worship times? Would you allow an Atheist lay leader?

I doubt very much that the above requests would be granted...
Sir, I respectfully request that evening prayer be discontinued...

Very respectfully,
An Atheist Sailor

The Commander's inquiry launched a quest. The author called peers, senior chaplains, and other community leaders with the simple question: "What do chaplains usually do to meet the religious needs of Non-theists?" Unfortunately, the nearly universal answer was, "Nothing." No one seemed to know what to do or why anyone would ask the question. While these answers were troubling in themselves, the assumptions and commitments behind them were more so.

Chaplains and commanders alike expressed disinterest, ignorance, and even hostility toward Non-theists, characterizing the latter's position in a number of unflattering ways. Some viewed Non-theists as 'troublemakers' or malcontents, seeking nothing but attention. Others saw Non-theism as a position of convenience or non-interest in religious questions, and thus saw Non-theists as a population open to proselytization. Still others saw Non-theists as outright enemies who desired only the destruction of the religious institutions to which many are devoted. This alternating hostility and indifference was by no means universal, but it was widespread. These troubling responses, coupled with the lack of a cogent answer to the Atheist Sailor's letter, became the impetus for this inquiry.

A brief note about terminology is prudent at the outset. Non-theists are known by several different names, and there is no broad agreement about which label is most appropriate to represent the population. Various adherents to Non-theistic life-stances claim Atheist, Agnostic, Humanist, Secular, Freethinker, Skeptic, and many other names. Those who claim one label may either tacitly accept or vehemently deny the application of another. This variety in naming can create confusion about the size and cohesion of the Non-theistic community in the United States.

For the purposes of this inquiry, therefore, the author will refer to all of the above traditions collectively as Non-theists. This is not a perfect solution, since the term also overlaps with other widely recognized religious traditions (especially Buddhism). However, conversation with Non-theists has revealed this to be the most descriptive and widely accepted term.

CHAPTER 1: CONSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.¹

The United States Navy Chaplain Corps exists, as do all American military chaplaincies, to guarantee that military personnel, their families, and other qualified users are able to exercise the rights guaranteed in the First Amendment of the Constitution. The portion of the amendment that pertains to religious freedom consists of two interdependent parts: a guarantee that no religion will be privileged by the government of the United States and a second guarantee that freedom of religious expression will be preserved.

As foundational as the First Amendment is to religious expression in the United States, and especially to the practice of military chaplaincy, its implications are frequently misinterpreted. In order to explicate the responsibilities that the amendment creates for military chaplains, a shared understanding of the concept of separation of church and state is necessary. Such a shared understanding therefore requires a brief review of the history of the First Amendment, a history that began well before the Constitution was drafted.

¹ The Bill of Rights, A Transcription. Accessed on December 12, 2012 at http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html

RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT

Bishop Thomas Curry, who has written extensively on the history of the First Amendment, notes that the first European settlers in America – the ones who ostensibly left their homeland in order to enjoy freedom of religious expression – were actually opposed to the idea of separating religion from government. Rather than viewing religious diversity as a virtue, their religious worldview cast pluralism in the same light as anarchy.² The contemporary state of American religion, with its countless denominational identities and ever-changing fusions of theology and practice, was not even conceived in the popular imagination.

What the Puritan settlers wanted was their *own* established religion and not that of the Anglican Church in England, which they saw as corrupt.³ Conflict arose in the colonies not because religious persons wanted freedom from establishment, but because each new wave of religious pilgrims wanted to establish their own faith, or their own particular expression of the commonly accepted “true religion,” which was still some version of Protestant Christianity. These various minor establishments – the Puritans in Massachusetts, the Anabaptists in Rhode Island, and so on – eventually came into conflict over which establishment would prevail as their settlement territories grew and began to overlap.⁴

This is an important historical frame. When examining the intent of the original authors of the Bill of Rights, the context of a 1,400-year tradition of established

2 Curry, Thomas 9. *First Freedoms: Church and State in America to the Passage of the First Amendment*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987. 6.

3 Curry (1987), 105.

4 Ibid.

Christianity is unavoidable.⁵ Established Christianity was the norm for Western society, and the earliest settlers in America were comfortable perpetuating that tradition. The notion of separation that was eventually encoded in the Bill of Rights was a new way of thinking in the 17th century, and the archetype that most people had in mind when discussing religious establishment was the Church of England.⁶

The problem that many colonists identified in the way the Church of England operated was the exclusion of non-members from positions of power in government. It was not government infringement upon religious rights, but exactly the opposite that created the most significant issue. The lack of a proper boundary between civil and ecclesial authority created a corrupting collusion. Religion impacted government unjustly, and government perpetuated religion. It was a vicious cycle that could only end in either revolution or resettlement.

This was also the root of conflict when minor establishments in America began to overlap – members of one sect were excluded from full communal life when they lived in an area dominated by another sect. Settlers feared the same creeping corruption that had developed in England, particularly when the centralized federal government was formed. At least part of the intent of the First Amendment, then, was to deny the new federal government any authority to move toward the establishment of any sect that might come to dominance on a national scale.⁷

Curry points out that there was some degree of hypocrisy at work in negotiating the proscription on establishment, as well. While debating the merits of disallowing

5 Curry, Thomas J. *Farewell to Christendom: The Future of Church and State in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. 9.

6 Curry (1987), 106.

7 Curry (1987), 194.

religious tests, for example, some negotiators expressed (in congressional records, no less) misgivings over allowing “heathens, infidels and pagans” access to government offices and roles that were, at the time, reserved for Christians in some state governments.⁸ Many of these concerns, understandably, were couched in objections to the amendment arguing that states had already worked out applications of the principle of religious freedom,⁹ but the irony of their arguments seems to have been lost upon those whose opinions were recorded. In any case, the primary function of the First Amendment as a limitation on federal preference of one religious life-stance over another is clear.

FREE EXERCISE

Understanding the “establishment clause” of the First Amendment is critical to understanding the “free exercise clause,” since the two are properly understood in interdependent terms.¹⁰ One of the main concerns reflected in records of discussions in Congress over the framing of the First Amendment was the propensity of established religion to support and even promote tyranny.¹¹ Translated to concrete, religiously neutral terms, government preference or privilege extended to any one religious life-stance inherently curtails the free expression of another.

Framers of the Amendment seem to have been keenly aware of this danger, and some even objected to religion’s inclusion in the Bill of Rights at all. They argued that the right to free religious expression was so vast that any effort to define it would

⁸ Curry (1987), 196.

⁹ Curry (1987), 194.

¹⁰ Curry (1987), 216.

¹¹ Curry (1987), 211.

inherently limit the scope of the natural right.¹² Giving government the power to define religion (a power which courts have continually denied ever since) opened the door to a possibility of government exercising authority over religion. Against this risk, however small it was, even James Madison publicly stated that, “religious liberty...would be preserved by mutually suspicious religious groups checking and balancing each other rather than by the virtuous behavior of those in government.”¹³

Dynamics of religious and civic authority are not alone in their complexity. Even the natural right to free religious expression described in the Bill of Rights is often misunderstood. Some view it as a right granted by the Constitution itself, as though the absence or revocation of the First Amendment would cancel the right. This is, of course, not the case. Rather, the Bill of Rights is intended to describe the natural rights of all human beings, over and against which no government can rightfully claim authority. The First Amendment simply says that federal government has no authority in religious matters at all, including validation or invalidation of any faith perspective.¹⁴

Non-theists in 21st century America argue that this fundamental spirit of the First Amendment is exactly what is violated when federal government and its entities promote religion over non-religion. Christianity is still the cultural norm in America,¹⁵ and members of the cultural majority tend to view their own traditions as harmless or even beneficial to society. Christian practices (prayer), observances (holidays and rituals) and theological norms (the existence of one benevolent God) therefore tend to go unchallenged when they appear in public life.

12 Curry (1987), 194.

13 Curry (2001), 14.

14 Curry (1987), 216.

15 Curry (2001), 9.

However, public life in the United States is intentionally secular. If government sponsors an expression of one religious life-stance in a way that privileges it over another – if it constructs monuments to the Ten Commandments in the absence of other ethical expressions, or if it erects Christian memorials in the absence of those of other life-stances – then it also violates the natural rights of all who do not share faith with the privileged religion.

In order to appreciate how directly this cultural privilege violates the spirit of the First Amendment, one need only imagine a faith other than one's own in the dominant position. For instance, if Wicca was dominant in the United States and a large pentagram was erected on the lawn of the White House each Yule, Christian Americans would understandably conclude that Wicca was unjustly privileged in the sight of federal government. This is exactly the type of privilege that is routinely enacted on behalf of Christianity.

Christianity sometimes appears to be established in America because so much of early American culture was steeped in Christendom, the long tradition of Christian establishment in European culture. In fact, some of the historical instances of establishment never registered as such when American culture was more Christianized. However, as many scholars referenced in this inquiry have stated, American culture is beginning to shift away from Christianity.¹⁶ As it does, more and more culturally Christian practices are being appropriately challenged.

Christian leaders, within both the churches and the chaplaincies, may be uncomfortable with challenges to Christian dominance. However, this does not invalidate the challenge. Americans have been coming to terms with the implications of the First

¹⁶ Curry (2001), 54.

Amendment since its adoption, as more and more diverse religious life-stances have issued challenges to the dominant culture.¹⁷ Remnants of Christendom will rightly continue to fall away from tacit acceptance in American culture.

The primary role of chaplains in the armed forces is to help safeguard service members' natural rights to free religious expression. In this role, they are not only most appropriate but also most effective when they protect all religious expression equally. "The best defense of the chaplaincy, and of any religious program in the military, is that it preserves a soldier's right to freely exercise his religion."¹⁸

The First Amendment recognizes the individual's freedom to hold whatever religious life-stance they choose; chaplains exist to facilitate that freedom. Because chaplains are inherently also religiously dedicated persons, this reality creates a tension that bears exploring.

¹⁷ Curry (1987), 219.

¹⁸ Benjamin, Maj. Michael J., "Justice, Justice Shall You Pursue: Legal Analysis of Religion Issues in the Army." *The Army Lawyer*, Nov 1998. 3.

CHAPTER 2: A SACRED VOCATION

Navy chaplains approach their duties through two interdependent frames. The first is the faith into which each chaplain was originally called and ordained. In the Christian context, which applies to over 96 percent of chaplains, this faith is grounded within the theological norms and practices of a particular ecclesiastic tradition. Each chaplain thereby comes to service with a peculiar set of imperatives and proscriptions, depending upon the traditions of their church and the conditions of their ordination, which will color their practice of the chaplaincy.

No church appoints a chaplain to military service independently, however. Because of the structure of military governance, religious bodies may not impose authorization for military service upon government. Conversely, due to the non-establishment clause of the First Amendment, government may not possess the ecclesial authority necessary to certify religious credentials. This mutual exclusion would be impassable if it were not bridged by the use of 'endorsing agents' – officers either within or affiliated with religious bodies that are also seated on a government body. It is the endorsing agent that certifies a potential chaplain's fitness for military service on behalf of the faith group represented.

A challenge to this process arises, however, when one considers the nature of the religious bodies currently represented by military chaplains. For faith groups with centralized governance, the process for identifying an endorser is obvious: the central

body itself may simply appoint an agent. If these were the only faith groups represented, then there might only be a few dozen endorsing agents and the ecclesial frame of the chaplaincy would be proportionally narrow.

However, in faith groups with no centralized governance – congregational Christians or Wiccans, for instance (though, as discussed below, there are currently no Wiccan chaplains endorsed for service in the Navy) – the process is not as unified. For these traditions, a single local body or coalition of similar congregations might nominate an agent. Many faith traditions are represented through just such “independent” endorsers. The result is a great variety of endorsers; in fact, there are currently no fewer than 215 active endorsers listed on the Armed Forces Chaplains Board website.¹⁹

The first frame of military chaplaincy, therefore, is relatively wide. The religious traditions represented in the various military chaplain corps are dominantly Christian, but these include a nearly total range of Christian traditions from Orthodox to Latter Day Saints to Universalist. Endorsing agents also represent multiple Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist traditions. Understandably, chaplains from each of these traditions enter military service with their own set of personal beliefs and practices that are at least proximate to their endorsing body.

It is important for the sake of this inquiry to note that there are Wiccan and Non-theist faith groups working toward endorser status, but their efforts have not been successful as of this writing.²⁰ This is at least partially due to a second aspect of the appointment structure for chaplains, which is the Chaplain Appointment and Retention

19 Department of Defense, “Armed Forces Chaplain Board Endorsements.” <http://prhome.defense.gov/rfm/mpp/chaplains%20board/endorsements.aspx> (accessed January 12, 2013)

20 Cooperman, Alan. “A Wiccan Army Chaplain? The Brass Wouldn’t Buy It.” http://seattletimes.com/html/nationworld/2003586870_wiccan24.html (accessed January 12, 2013)

Eligibility (CARE) Board.²¹ This board, after reviewing a potential chaplain's qualifications and fitness for service, makes a recommendation for either accession to active duty or rejection from service to the Chief of Naval Personnel's office. A current dilemma is that the CARE board considers chaplain candidates who have been endorsed, but the requirement to be an endorser is having a chaplain in the service. Faith groups without chaplains, then, face an extra burden in their efforts to gain representation in the Chaplain Corps.

The status of Non-theists in particular is discussed below, but in the present moment it is sufficient to note that the historical trend in the United States, both culturally and judicially, is toward more and not less inclusion. This is reinforced, although not realized, by the Navy Chaplain Corps' own assertion that it is a “religiously impartial government organization” that gives consideration toward diversity “particularly where a [religious ministry professional's] [religious organization] is not currently represented in the [Chaplain Corps], but is represented by Service members in the [Department of the Navy].”²² When Neo-pagan and Non-theistic chaplains ultimately do enter active military service, the diversity of belief and practice represented in the chaplaincies will only increase.

21 U.S. Department of the Navy, *Secretary of the Navy Instruction 5351.1: Professional Naval Chaplaincy*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011.

22 SECNAVINST 5351.1

CHAPTER THREE: A SECULAR OFFICE

The second frame for Navy chaplains is one that seeks to bring the great diversity of religious traditions represented in the Chaplain Corps into closer cooperation than is culturally common. This approach to institutional ministry is known as Professional Naval Chaplaincy, and is encoded in naval regulations to standardize practices of chaplains of diverse faith, skill and education. It is perhaps more fitting to say that Professional Naval Chaplaincy sets a minimum degree of standardization, however, since each chaplain remains free to practice certain aspects of chaplaincy according to the manner and form of their own religious tradition.²³

Professional Naval Chaplaincy identifies four “core capabilities” for all Navy chaplains. These are provision of religious services, facilitation of religious expression, pastoral care, and advisement to commanders.²⁴ Taken together, the core capabilities represent a full scope of religious accommodation in the armed forces. That is, through the ethical practice of each of the four capabilities, chaplains help to ensure that religion is neither precluded nor privileged within the commands they serve.

The first core competency listed in the instruction is *care*. In the practical reality of military service, this is the core competency that demands most of a chaplain's time and effort. Chaplains provide counsel, coaching, institutional care (e.g., visitation and presence in hospital and prison settings), and crisis response to all service members and

23 SECNAVINST 5351.1

24 U.S. Department of the Navy, *Secretary of the Navy Instruction 1730.7E: Religious Ministry Within the Department of the Navy*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012.

their families, regardless of faith affiliation.²⁵

Care is not a clinical practice, however. While many chaplains hold credentials as therapists, they do not engage in therapeutic practice as Chaplains Corps officers. Care often involves referral to other caring professionals, but it does not replace them. Rather, chaplains practice a ministry of presence and a kind of immediate intervention known broadly as pastoral counseling. The proximity, availability and relative intimacy of the chaplain embedded in an operational military unit enables care by fostering relationships that allow for mentoring, awareness of individual needs, and opportunities to intervene in a pre-clinical context.

This access to service members also allows for development in the second core competency of Professional Naval Chaplaincy: *advisement*. Specifically, chaplains advise commanding officers and others in their organization's leadership hierarchy on “matters of morale, morals, ethics, spiritual well-being, and emerging religious requirements,”²⁶ as well as the impact of religious concerns on military operations.

Advisement is a distinct competency from the care described above, but the two disciplines overlap significantly. Often, caring for the needs of a service member requires advising a leader of the impact of their actions or policies on the people under their care. In religious advisement, this often requires courage to speak truth to power, as religious prejudices and stereotypes are often present but unexamined in leader's decisions toward subordinates' religious rights.

For example, some commanders are quick to dismiss the religious concerns of Non-theists as either frivolous complaints or attempts to undermine order and discipline

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ SECNAVINST 1730.7E

in the unit. In these cases, the chaplain is the most appropriate person to offer advice on the legitimacy of all religious sentiment (including those of Non-theists, as discussed above) and on the impact of prejudice upon their working environment and organizational culture.

The next core competency, *provision* of religious services, is the first of the four that most chaplains develop. This is because, for the most part, chaplains are formed as religious leaders before entering active service. One of the requirements for endorsement as a chaplain is "demonstrated professional ministry expertise,"²⁷ which is generally interpreted as at least two years experience as an ordained or otherwise certified leader within the chaplain's own faith group. Of course, many chaplains come to active service with significantly more experience than this within their faith groups and para-church organizations.

Religious provision is exactly what the name implies – providing for the religious needs of those service members who share the chaplain's faith. This is direct pastoral work in the manner and form of the chaplain's own faith group.²⁸ A United Methodist minister serving as a chaplain, for instance, *provides* worship services, scripture studies, religious education, and religious counsel to other United Methodists. A Buddhist chaplain would provide similar services for Buddhists, and so on.

The key point of religious provision is that by definition the chaplain can *only* provide direct religious services for those members who share their faith. Direct religious needs (rites, ordinances, and faith-specific practices or requirements) that fall outside of the chaplain's faith group are no longer provided by the chaplain, but extend into the core

27 U.S. Department of the Navy, *Chief of Chaplains Instruction 1110.1H: Chaplain Appointment and Retention Eligibility Advisory Group*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2007.

28 SECNAVINST 1730.7E

competency of *facilitation*. Assuming that direct provision of religious services from a leader of their own faith is the preference of most, the desire of Non-theists to have chaplains on active duty is readily understandable.

Facilitation typically manifests as efforts of a chaplain, acting on behalf of the commander, to give service members of unlike faith access to people, materials, time and permissions to practice their faith as well as possible within the military context. In concrete terms, this most often means referring interested members to local churches and other religious or interest-based organizations, or clergy and other leaders, and providing rudimentary space and supplies for worship.

For example, a Christian chaplain might provide a Jewish member of their command with a prayer book or Torah (available through the Defense Logistics Agency), refer them to a local rabbi (particularly if a chaplain rabbi was available), and help inform the chain of command about religious holidays, dietary concerns, and the like. If the member wished to wear religious dress with their uniform, the chaplain would help them submit the appropriate request and advocate for the member as the request was considered. None of these actions require the chaplain to actually provide services.

One of the strongest methods available to commanders to facilitate the religious practices, however, is to make actual religious services available. This is achieved through the use of *lay leaders*. Lay leaders are members of religious organizations who are authorized to act as faith group representatives for commands without a chaplain of like faith assigned. They are appointed in writing by the commanding officer, trained and supervised by the chaplain.²⁹ Lay leaders are not chaplains and do not function according

29 U.S. Department of the Navy, *Military Personnel Manual 1730-010: Use of Lay Leaders in Religious Services*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006.

to the core capabilities outlined here. Rather, they provide faith-specific, limited services in order to facilitate freedom of religious expression. It is also worth noting, as above, that very few Non-theists are currently appointed as lay leaders in the Navy.

Navy chaplains are religious professionals in a religiously neutral organization, practitioners of a sacred call within a secular office. They are charged by their endorsing agents with maintaining their religious faith and qualifications while simultaneously providing for the free religious expression of all. The first question that this project seeks to answer is whether or not chaplains should extend their efforts at religious accommodation to those who reject traditional notions of faith altogether. That question hinges upon another: is Non-theism a religious life-stance?

CHAPTER FOUR: IS NON-THEISM A RELIGION?

Chaplain's have a constitutional, moral and religious obligation to accommodate the free religious expression of all who serve in their areas of responsibility. This accommodation, however, is limited. Efforts to protect religious expression may not compromise good order and discipline or jeopardize military operations; and the expression in question must be religious in nature. That is, it must be related to a center of value and judgment in a person's life. It must address questions of ultimate concern. In addition, many (including Non-theists) argue that it must be rooted in a community of like belief.³⁰ An examination of Non-theism as both a historic "life-stance" and a current community will show that all of these criteria are met.

HISTORIC ROOTS

Some chaplains assume that Non-theism is a relatively new phenomenon, but history reveals a different truth. Non-theism is an ancient tradition, with at least agnostic writings of the Epicureans appearing as early as 350 BCE. Hints of skepticism may be found even earlier – back to about 1500 BCE.³¹ Secular Humanism as it is most frequently known emerged in force from Enlightenment Europe, and has been a constant presence in western culture ever since. This placement in western culture is significant, because even though there is no evidence to suggest that Atheists or Humanists were

30 Epstein, Greg M. *Good without God: What a Billion Nonreligious People Do Believe*. New York: Harper, 2010, xvii.

31 Epstein, 41.

organized into an analogy of religious community in deep history, their historical persistence belies a well-established *tradition*.

This is not to say that communities of Non-theists did not exist at all. There were certainly schools of thought in the Humanist tradition that may have entailed a kind of community analogous to the ecclesial communities of Christendom. In particular, the Skeptic school persisted from the Hellenistic era into the Roman era, ostensibly all the way to 529 CE when Emperor Justinian closed the “pagan” philosophical schools.³² The notion that Non-theist efforts at forming communities are new (and by implication, invalid) is therefore difficult to defend in the light of history.

Traditions also matter a great deal more than may first be assumed. In *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and 'The Mystic East'* (Routledge, 1999), Richard King argues that, prior to Christianization of the Roman Empire in the early fourth century CE, the term 'religion' actually connoted what would be called 'tradition' in contemporary language. Christians modified the term for use in proselytism, King posits, by turning to a relatively novel strategy of studying the precepts of other religions, finding their philosophical (or theological) foundations wanting, and inserting the Christian gospel as a corrective.³³

In fact, early Christians explicitly rejected identifying themselves as a religion. This is because the term was associated with family traditions that were difficult to challenge (as King points out, it would be analogous to challenging the validity of a person's culture today). Because they would not claim to be a religion, Christians were

³² Thrower, James. *Western Atheism: A Short History*, (Prometheus, 2000), 54.

³³ King, Richard. *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India, and 'The Mystic East,'* (Routledge, 1999), 36.

persecuted as *atheists* in Roman culture.³⁴ Religion only came into use in its current sense *after* Christianity was established in Rome and Christian scholars reframed its etymology. “We should be aware, therefore, that the central explanatory category of religious studies, namely the notion of 'religion' itself, is a Christian theological category.”³⁵

When members of a dominantly Christian culture ask whether or not Non-theism is a religion, the question is inherently biased toward the negative.³⁶ The question itself frames any ensuing discussion within the norms of Christian religious identity. The criteria for a positive reply then also inevitably become Christian criteria: a written scripture, a cohesive theological tradition, a persistent community identity, and so on. Whether or not it is intended to deny inclusion is secondary; the question itself tends to exclude Non-theism from acceptable status.

However, if the historic Christian bias is removed and the question reframed to examine whether or not a deep *tradition* of Non-theism exists in human history, then the answer is clear. Non-theism has a deeper historical record than Christianity. Whether they prefer the term 'religion' or not, and whether or not members of theistic faiths prefer their company, Non-theists are in the same category as their theistic brothers and sisters with regard to religious tradition.

CORE VALUES

A second critical point in naming Non-theism as a religion relates to the question of value. Like members of theistic faiths, Non-theists draw from their life-stance a center

³⁴ King, 36.

³⁵ King, 40.

³⁶ King, 62.

of morals and values. In Barna's massive study of 'religious tribes' in America that gathered more than 30,000 questionnaires from 2000 to 2008, 67 percent of American Non-theists said that they live according to their core values³⁷ and about a quarter reported considering themselves "deeply spiritual."³⁸

Some argue that core values do not necessarily arise from a Non-theistic life-stance. Of course, this is true for the same reasons that core values do not always arise from a theistic faith. However, Non-theists do share some common ideals. According to Greg Epstein, the Humanist chaplain at Harvard University, Humanists believe at a minimum in the power and responsibility of humanity to do good, and recognize as a guiding principle the strong human instinct toward cooperation. Those dynamics together, he says, create an "internal imperative" that correlates to divine-command morality.³⁹

Epstein goes on to posit rough parallels between Humanist principles and the Ten Commandments shared by Jewish, Christian and Muslim believers. The first two commandments, concerning worship of God alone, are perhaps the most difficult to correlate. To his credit, Epstein doesn't try to replace God with another entity (e.g. a human spirit). Instead, he says that the primary goal of Humanists amounts to *ethical excellence*. "Seek the best in yourself and others, and believe in your own ability to make a positive difference in the world. Pursue truth and honesty in all you do; and be wary of allowing power, status, or possessions to substitute for moral courage, dignity, and

37 Barna, George. *The Seven Faith Tribes: Who They Are, What They Believe, and Why They Matter*, (Tyndale House Publishers, 2009), 105.

38 Barna, 102.

39 Epstein, 35.

goodness.”⁴⁰

Epstein correlates the Third Commandment (do not take the name of the Lord in vain) with a call to positivity: “be positive and constructive rather than negative and disrespectful”⁴¹ and the Fourth (remember the Sabbath) with “To be healthy, you must balance work, play and rest.”⁴² He goes on to correlate the remaining commandments largely in parallel with the traditional ones, and even to suggest more.

The exercise is not intended to simply mimic Jewish or Christian values, however. Rather, it serves to illustrate that at least some Non-theists in this age are thinking critically about core values and sharing them in community. This is a cultic activity on its face, and further substantiates the existence of a Non-theistic religious community.

SUBSTANTIAL POPULATION

The Non-theist community is neither without values nor insignificant in scope. In Barna’s study referenced above, Atheists and Agnostics alone represented eleven percent of the population sampled.⁴³ A more recent study published by the Pew Foundation found that Atheists and Agnostics were less heavily represented – just six percent of the population combined. However, it also found that persons claiming no religious affiliation at all had risen to 20 percent.⁴⁴ Given that stigma still exists in the dominantly Christian culture of the United States, there are likely many more Non-theists who claimed the “none” category, as well.

40 Epstein, 121.

41 Epstein, 125.

42 Epstein, 129.

43 Barna, 99.

44 Funk, Cary and Greg Smith. “‘Nones’ on the Rise: One-in-Five Adults Have No Religious Affiliation.” (Pew Research Center, 2012), 10.

The notion that Non-theists are a small minority is simply false. The largest faith group after Christian in the United States is “No Preference.” The third largest, ahead of Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and *every other singular religious affiliation*, is Non-theist (that is, Atheist or Agnostic).⁴⁵

Not only is the Non-theist community substantial, it is also growing. The number of people reporting no religious preference grew from fifteen percent to twenty percent from 2007 to 2012, and the percentage of adults under 30 who hold no religious preference is already over 30 percent.⁴⁶ As younger Americans come into their adulthood, it is reasonable to expect more “Nones” to identify themselves openly as Non-theists.

Considering the already large percentage of Americans who identify themselves as Atheists or Agnostics alongside the likelihood of an even larger population within the “no preference” category, it is clear that Non-theists represent a large and growing sector of the United States. What remains is establishing that Non-theists desire to form communities that constitute a form of religious practice.

SUBSTANTIVE COMMUNITY

As discussed above, Non-theist communities have existed since at least early Greek and Indian cultures, and have appeared for substantial periods of time in the Roman period and Enlightenment. Similar communities exist today, and are growing in number and diversity of form.

Anecdotally, most Non-theist communities encountered by the author have been in settings where young adults congregate. This phenomenon makes sense in light of the

⁴⁵ Funk and Smith, 13.

⁴⁶ Funk and Smith, 10.

Pew Foundation and Barna's research, since such a large percentage of the Non-theist community is comprised of young adults. College campuses and military bases have become the centers of community for a generation of religiously interested (in the classical sense) Non-theists.

There are also Non-theist religious leaders already practicing across the United States. Epstein is one example; as a chaplain at Harvard University, he meets the same needs for fellowship, education and even devotion (in terms of community cohesion) as a Christian chaplain does for his or her own community. On military bases, members of the Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers and related groups hold "Atheists in Foxholes" gatherings in 21 military communities around the world, including all four military academies.⁴⁷ They sponsor events, hold community service projects, and advocate for full inclusion in chapel-sponsored religious programming.

Non-theists are not likely to purchase property and open a church. However, like their theistic contemporaries, they do seek the security and fellowship of a community. They celebrate life events together, they study, and they help one another remain faithful to their shared ideals. This is, undeniably, a religious function. Non-theism meets every categorical test. For the purposes of Professional Naval Chaplaincy and the issue of religious accommodation, Non-theism is a religion.

LEGAL RECOGNITION

Courts in the United States have historically supported the conclusion that Non-theism in its various manifestations functions as a religion. Three Supreme Court cases in

⁴⁷ Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers, "MAAF Network: Local Groups" <http://militaryatheists.org/network/> (Accessed on January 22, 2013).

particular stand out: *Torcaso vs. Watkins*, *Welsh vs. United States* and *Wallace vs. Jaffree*. There are also at least two lower court decisions that directly support Non-theism's status as a religious life-stance.

Torcaso vs. Watkins (1961) established one of the bases for Non-theism's religious standing. In this case, Torcaso had been a notary public, but his license was revoked when he refused to publicly declare belief in God. Justice Black wrote the majority opinion wherein the Court sided with the constitutional principle forbidding religious tests for persons seeking public office. In addition, the Court explicitly confirmed that "Secular Humanism" is an example of a religion.⁴⁸

The significance of *Torcaso v. Watkins* with regard to religious accommodation for Non-theists is twofold. By affirming a Non-theistic life-stance as a constitutionally protected religious position, the decision provides support for allowing Non-theist lay leaders and chaplains in the armed forces. The converse implication, of course, is that when chaplains and commanders allow theistic faiths representation by Lay Leaders but deny the same to Non-theists, they create a legal liability.

Welsh vs. United States (1970) reinforced Non-theism's status as a *bona fide* religious life-stance. Welsh had sought to avoid involuntary service in the armed forces during the Viet Nam War on the grounds of conscientious objection. He did not use religious belief as a foundation for his objection, however. Instead, his moral objection flowed from a basically Humanist stance.

Justice Black again wrote the majority opinion. The Court ruled emphatically that Non-theistic faith serves the same function as traditionally recognized religions. "If an

48 Davis, Derek H. "Is Atheism a Religion? Recent Judicial Perspectives on the Constitutional Meaning of 'Religion'", *Journal of Church and State*, Aug 2005.

individual deeply and sincerely holds beliefs which are purely ethical or moral in source and content but that nevertheless impose upon him a duty of conscience...those beliefs certainly occupy in the life of that individual “a place parallel to that filled by...God in traditional religious persons.”⁴⁹

Wallace vs. Jaffree was another affirmation on Non-theism as a protected expression of religious belief. The case involved a challenge to mandatory prayer times in public schools. The Court ruled that an Alabama elementary school that mandated time of prayer was effectively coercing students to a religious practice that unfairly privileged theistic faith over other expressions. The opinion rendered by Justice Jackson, however, also addressed Non-theism directly by explicitly stating that the term “religion” includes non-theistic and atheistic life-stances.⁵⁰

The three Supreme Court cases highlighted above could settle the question of Non-theism’s status as a religion by themselves, but two lower court decisions help to complete the legal context in which the discussion of Non-theism as a religious tradition is nested. The first is Kaufman vs. McCaughtry (2005), in which the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Atheism is entitled to the same treatment that traditional religions receive under the Constitution.⁵¹

Kaufman vs. McCaughtry is particularly significant to the discussion of religious accommodation for Non-theists in the armed forces, since it addresses institutional ministry directly. Kaufman was an inmate in a Wisconsin prison who had requested

49 Ibid.

50 Stevens, J., Opinion of the Court: Wallace v. Jaffree, 472 U.S. 38, Supreme Court of the United States, 1985.

51 Wood, D., Opinion of the Court: Kaufman v. McCaughtry, 04-1914, United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, 2005.

permission to start an Atheist discussion group. His argument was that, since adherents of traditional religious faiths were permitted study and prayer groups, the denial was a violation of Atheists' right to free religious expression.⁵² The court agreed.

Kaufman's case is an exact parallel to the argument presented by Non-theists in the armed forces who request the same representation enjoyed by theistic faiths with regard to chaplains, lay leaders, and recognized organizations. These requests are sometimes granted, as in the case of the Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers (MAAF) and related groups such as Military Atheists and Secular Humanists (MASH) who have been recognized as religious groups.

However, these recognitions fall far short of equal treatment. For instance, no military chaplain corps has agreed to support Non-theist lay leaders or chaplains, despite doing so for every other traditional religious minority. In addition, many tactical commanders deny attempts to form groups (or allow them only as "clubs," which do not enjoy the same protections afforded to religious groups) on the mistaken belief that Non-theism is not a religious stance.

Some chaplains and commanders use another court decision to justify their denial of religious accommodation for Non-theists, but the decision actually opposes their argument. *Katcoff vs. Marsh* (1986) is a watershed case for military chaplaincy, since it was here that the West Virginia Court of Appeals held that military chaplaincy is an acceptable institution under the Constitution. Significantly, the decision was rendered in light of the chaplaincy's provision of religious freedom for *all faiths* represented within the armed forces.⁵³ This strongly implies that the constitutionality of military chaplaincy

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ 755 F. 2d 223 - *Katcoff v. O Marsh*, accessed at <http://openjurist.org/755/f2d/223/katcoff-v-o-marsh> on

also hinges upon its ability to provide for free expression of *Non-theism*.

Non-theism is a religious life-stance. It is a deep tradition in human history. It serves as a center of value and morality for its adherents. It enjoys a substantial and cohesive community of like belief. United States courts have affirmed it repeatedly. There is no standard by which Non-theism can be said to hold a lesser status under the Constitution than traditional religious faiths. In spite of this, Non-theists routinely report feeling isolated, belittled, and disenfranchised by chaplains and commanders alike. In sum, existing efforts at religious accommodation, where efforts are being made, are not meeting the felt need of Non-theists in the military services. A greater response is required.

CHAPTER 5: THEOLOGICAL ISSUES IN ACCOMMODATION

Chaplains have a clear legal obligation to accommodate the religious preferences of all service members including Non-theists, but existing efforts at accommodation are insufficient. Reasons for this may vary, but one that has been encountered most frequently by the author is an inability on the part of some chaplains and commanders to accept the religious status of Non-theists. Part of this resistance may stem from personal convictions, but at least some originates in the fact that chaplains also serve at the pleasure of their endorsing faith groups.⁵⁴

Conflicts between the legal requirement chaplains bear to assist in others' practice of a religion other than their own and theological proscriptions upon aiding a tradition that actively resists basic tenets of their faith are inevitable. These conflicts must be reconciled before chaplains can willingly and fully embrace their dual role as both religious leaders within a spiritual tradition and neutral agents of religious freedom within a secular organization.

Such reconciliation is possible through the theological practice of hospitality. Because the overwhelming majority of chaplains on active duty serve within the Judeo-Christian tradition, and because the author's own ministry arises from the Reformed Christian tradition in particular, this theological argument will focus upon those. However, it is worth noting that the other major religious traditions represented in the active duty Chaplain Corps – Islam and Buddhism – also possesses richly developed

⁵⁴ SECNAVINST 1730.7E

narratives that demand hospitality toward the vulnerable other. In fact, almost every religious tradition in the *world* possesses some variation of the Golden Rule to care for others in the way one would hope to be cared for.⁵⁵

Basic care is the chief end of hospitality. For Christian chaplains, there can be no greater fulfillment of the Golden Rule, or more appropriately the Great Commandment,⁵⁶ than faithfully enacting hospitality. In order to demonstrate why hospitality is a necessary theological stance for military chaplains, it is appropriate to first identify what practices constitute religious hospitality, who these practices are intended to benefit, and what theological principles hospitality enacts.

WHAT IS HOSPITALITY?

Biblical hospitality, though it may be unfamiliar to some, is a simple practice. In essence, it is the fundamental act and art of caring for a person who needs care. In *And You Welcomed Me: A Sourcebook on Hospitality in Early Christianity* (Abingdon, 2001), Amy Oden outlines ten characteristics of the practice of hospitality that reflect an underlying “divine analogy” which patterns human conduct after divine movement.⁵⁷ Such a pattern demands purity of intent when offering hospitality to a vulnerable stranger. Indeed, it is the host's ability to view the other as an equally valued and worthy human being that makes hospitality possible, even as the practices themselves assist the host in maintaining that view.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Epstein, 113.

⁵⁶ Matthew 22:37-40 (NRSV)

⁵⁷ Oden, Amy G. *And You Welcomed Me: A Sourcebook on Hospitality in Early Christianity* (Abingdon Press, 2001), 87

⁵⁸ Pohl, Christine D. *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Eerdmans, 1999), 68

The practice of hospitality begins intuitively with a greeting that contains a promise of service.⁵⁹ The greeting can be as simple as a verbal offer to help a stranger in need or as complex as an elaborate welcome to an expected guest, but serves as a gateway to relationship in any case. It is worth noting that even though the host is most properly *not* the one to initiate hospitality, the greeting from the host is still a necessary formality. Without it, no offer of hospitality is extended. Because hospitality is a practice of equality and mutuality, the guest's acceptance of the offer is also necessary to proceed to the next steps.

The greeting is followed by a period of “settling in” that may include a brief period of visitation, a bath or cleansing, and prayer either with or simply for the guest.⁶⁰ The visitation is an opportunity to share stories, background information, and future plans and, like the greeting, may be either simple or complex. When hospitality includes lodging, a bath serves as both ritual cleansing and opportunity for solitary comfort. Other forms of cleansing or soothing may also be offered. Prayer with and for the guest (and vice versa) is also an appropriate aspect of reception, and can serve to further introduce both guest and host to the practices of the other.

Once the guest is settled in, a period of dwelling together ensues.⁶¹ This period may include sharing the host's table, lodging, protection, and medical care when necessary. Whether all four elements are included or not, the dwelling period is primarily aimed at the guest's physical, mental and emotional comfort.

Collectively, these four practices embody a principle of *restoration* (Oden separates dwelling and restoration, but the two work well together for the purposes of this

59 Oden, 146

60 Ibid.

61 Oden, 145

exploration). By meeting the guest's basic needs for life, the host recognizes the image of God within the other profoundly. Far from being a merely philosophical, intellectual or even theological acknowledgement of the guest which may yet remain substantially empty, these practices acknowledge them concretely even in the absence of a conscious ethic. At the same time, recognizing the full humanity of the other affirms and enacts the full humanity of the self.

Sharing the table resonates as a fundamental practice that builds community across all cultures, but it warrants special attention as a central act of hospitality. Table fellowship is *the* centerpiece of Christian community, representing the unity of the church in Christ as well as the universal character of grace. That Jesus himself practiced this model intimates that the tradition of table fellowship reaches deeply into Jewish tradition, as well. Indeed, the Seder meal at Passover serves as a model.

In both Christian and Jewish traditions, all are welcome at the table without exception. Because of this, it is essential that hospitality includes some sharing of the substance of the host, and that the substance shared is mutually edifying to both host and guest. While this most frequently takes the form of a meal, other material supports would also meet the requirement. Effort toward material sharing assures that the host is truly aspiring to the guest's welfare. It is, in fact, another manifestation of loving one's neighbor as oneself.⁶²

Oden also writes of a mystery of interchangeability of the roles of host and guest.⁶³ Put simply, this refers to a premise that when hospitality is fully enacted, equality is realized in substance as well as principle. Through hospitality in its fullness, the host

⁶² Leviticus 19:18 (New Revised Standard Version)

⁶³ Oden, 36

actually receives unsought gifts and benefits from the guest.

In part, this is a theological position that recognizes God's life-giving presence in the form of the stranger⁶⁴ and God's activity in the relationship that forms between guest and host. In its completeness, however, this concept also recognizes an inherent reciprocity within hospitality that again is most readily symbolized in the shared table. In its maturity, hospitality thus begins to deepen into a mystery of communion.

The final major movement of hospitality is a process of equitable disengagement that may include almsgiving, provision for the journey, and additional protection or escort through known dangers ahead.⁶⁵ Providing additional material support for the guest extends the fellowship shared during the period of dwelling together and completes the host's obligation.

Having successfully received, restored and released the guest, the host can rest in the knowledge that they have enacted justice in accordance with God's universal command.⁶⁶ Moreover, the host will also inevitably have been transformed by their encounter with the other. They will have gained perspective, wisdom and perhaps friendship, and likely will have left off any prejudice or fear of the unknown that had been in place before the encounter. Thus both guest and host can say rightly that God has been at work in their lives.

Clear examples of the complete act of hospitality are found in each of the Judeo-Christian traditions. Most prominently in the Hebrew Scriptures, the story of Abraham

64 Koenig, John. *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (Fortress Press, 1974), 16

65 Oden, 145

66 Koenig, 133

receiving divine messengers in Genesis 18 is a primary source for hospitable practice.⁶⁷

In this account, Abraham not only greets his three angelic guests, but also runs out to meet them eagerly and begs them to remain with him. His invitation is fervent, and he promptly sets a feast before the guests, made from his best provisions. When the guests depart after promising a son to Sarah, Abraham goes on with them a little way down the road toward Sodom “to set them on their way.” This passage perfectly describes reception, restoration, and release.

Oden points out that Sarah's embarrassment over her laughter was likely the result of a violation of what was already a long-standing tradition of hospitality. Providing for the comfort of the guest was very important, and Sarah's laughter over the pronouncement of a blessing was apparently offensive on its face. Also of note is the manner in which Sarah heard the pronouncement – as she was listening near the entrance of the tent. Rather than eavesdropping, she was likely listening in order to respond promptly to the needs of her guests. This practice underscores the importance of hospitality in the archetypal household of Israel at the time. It seems that hospitality was not just a practice for the spiritually excellent, but a sacred duty that all bore toward God.

Of course, the hospitality of Abraham is just one example among many in the Hebrew Scriptures. Rahab receiving the spies in Joshua 2 and Elijah and the widow in 1 Kings 7⁶⁸ are others. In 1 Samuel, the saga of Saul is bracketed by stories of hospitality: that of the prophet Samuel in chapter 9 and that of the witch of Endor in chapter 28, and this comparison illustrates Saul's changing alignment in relation to God. The story of Ruth and Naomi is one of mutual hospitality, and Job provides a glimpse of hospitality at

⁶⁷ Oden, 17

⁶⁸ Oden, 17

work in the diplomatic relations of God and Satan.

The New Testament is similarly saturated with references to and accounts of hospitality. Jesus' entire model of ministry seems to be founded upon it, in fact. John Koenig points out in *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (Wipf and Stock, 2001) that Jesus maintained his status as 'other' throughout his ministry, adopting the model of the traveling rabbi who intentionally relied upon hospitality for subsistence, and that he instructed his disciples to do the same.⁶⁹ Jesus practiced an open table fellowship that earned him a reputation as a drunkard among some,⁷⁰ and gives an explicit spiritual law about the practice in Luke 14,⁷¹ where he encouraged his followers to invite the needy to share their table.⁷²

Perhaps the most profound example of hospitality within the Gospels for the sake of this study is the account of Jesus' encounter with the woman at Jacob's well in the fourth chapter of John's gospel. Here, Jesus encounters a woman of *unlike faith and culture*, yet their conversation is framed by an understanding that requests for hospitality may not be easily ignored. Here, too, reciprocity and the fluid roles of host and guest are illustrated, as Jesus moves from the guest requesting water to the host providing a better kind of refreshment. The conversation that follows among the disciples further illustrates that God is the ultimate host, as Jesus tells his disciples that he has food to eat that they do not know about.

It is evident that hospitality is a foundational spiritual practice for all people of faith in the Judeo-Christian tradition. The degree to which hospitality was not only

69 Koenig, 17

70 Koenig, 21

71 Oden, 19

72 Luke 14:13 (NRSV)

enacted but also *expected* even in the earliest scriptures hints that the practice is foundational to human society. Broadly held practices are inherently diverse, but within the Jewish and Christian holy texts there seems to be a consistent pattern of reception, restoration and release, and these are undertaken with the understanding that God is present in the sacred space that hospitality creates.

WHO IS HOSPITALITY FOR?

With the basic practices and background of hospitality outlined, it is necessary to turn to the question of agency. That is, who should offer and who should receive hospitality? Oden points out that hospitality within the Judeo-Christian tradition was far from an innovation. In fact Greek, Roman, and Egyptian societies all predated it, each outlining a series of practices directed toward a broad class of persons.⁷³ In each of these ancient cultures, hospitality was universally recognized as a sacred duty, sometimes even established in law, toward persons facing at least six different types of struggle.

The populations toward whom hospitality was expected were the sick and disabled, the poor and hungry, travelers and pilgrims, widows and orphans, slaves and prisoners, and the hosts themselves.⁷⁴ Each of these groups is diverse in their constitution, in terms of both their severity of need and their internal motivation to help themselves. Parsing who belongs to what category is not the point of hospitality, however. Rather, the aim of this practice appears to be cultivating a willingness to receive a guest *regardless* of the nature of their need. The sole qualifying criterion for hospitality is not need,

⁷³ Oden, 20

⁷⁴ Ibid.

according to Oden, but *vulnerability*.⁷⁵

Each of the categories of vulnerable persons listed above shares a trait of 'strangeness,'⁷⁶ of being outside of the norms of their society. 'Normal' members of society are generally expected to be sound of body and mind, self-sufficient, stable, supported by their own means or family, and self-directed. There seems to be an unwritten code that humans should not impose upon one another for provision of the basic stuff of life. Those whose need does impose upon the conscience of the general populace tend to be shunned, as they seem to threaten the well being of those who are asked to share. Fear of lack begets inaction in the face of need or, perhaps worse, inherent indebtedness between host and guest.⁷⁷

Justice demands better than this. Though most (or perhaps all) human cultures seem to tacitly accept both the presence and the neglect of vulnerable persons, "Christian hospitality always had a subversive, counter-cultural dimension."⁷⁸ Indeed, Jesus himself always confronted exclusion, challenging the rich (i.e. those without a pressing lack, and not merely the staggeringly wealthy) to open their tables to the needful.⁷⁹ The consistent scriptural mandates to do justice, to treat the other as the self, and to care for the vulnerable *in one's own society* call hospitality to the fore of human ethics.

Arthur Sutherland adds another category to those discussed above – the enemy – in his work, *I Was a Stranger: A Christian Theology of Hospitality* (Abingdon, 2006). He goes so far as to include it in the very definition of hospitality itself: "In the light of Jesus'

⁷⁵ Oden, 20

⁷⁶ Sutherland, Arthur. *I Was a Stranger: A Christian Theology of Hospitality* (Abingdon Press, 2006), 21

⁷⁷ Yong, Amos. *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbor* (Orbis Books, 2008) 121

⁷⁸ Pohl, 61

⁷⁹ Koenig, 20

life, death, resurrection, and return, Christian hospitality is the intentional, responsible, and caring act of welcoming or visiting, in either public or private places, those who are strangers, enemies, or distressed, without regard for reciprocity.”⁸⁰ Sutherland is not alone in this assertion. Amos Yong, in his *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbor* (Orbis, 2008), also asserts that the *religious* enemy is a valid recipient of hospitality.⁸¹

Why include the enemy as a recipient of hospitality? There are at least two reasons. The first is that to do so is consistent with Jesus' exhortation to love one's enemy,⁸² and is further consistent with his own practice of sharing table and teaching even with those he knew to be his adversaries. This radical practice of hospitality is not original to Jesus, either. Rahab's reception of the Israelite spies is another clear example of the call to hospitality transcending *all* human divisions: economic, political, social, cultural...*and* relational.

Second, hospitality toward an enemy embodies mutuality like no other category. When caring for the sojourner or the destitute, even the widow or orphan, the host incurs only a small degree of vulnerability. The simplest form this takes may be exposure to lack or perhaps theft, but in cases where lodging and protection are extended there is also vulnerability to real loss or personal injury. When an enemy is extended the offer of hospitality, the inherent risk of taking a stranger into one's safe places is multiplied.

As threatening as that reality seems, it is mitigated when one realizes that the guest assumes the same risks as the host. That is, an enemy who agrees to receive hospitality is similarly open to both injury and insult from the host. Thus, the boundary

80 Sutherland, xiii

81 Yong, 122

82 Luke 6:35 (NRSV)

between the roles of host and guest are much less rigid than they may be between, for instance, a rich person and a poor one. Enemies who attempt to engage in hospitality together are already extending a certain form of trust, alternating constantly between reception and extension.

Perhaps this is why Koenig explicitly asserts that hospitality is not limited to the church.⁸³ In fact, the divine command to extend hospitality pushes people of faith beyond the limits of their chosen communities. It demands that they receive the stranger in all forms and in all contexts, from mission houses to family homes. Further, they are to do so recognizing that they are strangers to the other, as well, and that they can receive the stranger equitably because God first received them.

WHY IS HOSPITALITY NECESSARY?

There is a clear scriptural thread that names hospitality as a core ethic for people of faith in the Judeo-Christian tradition, and there is also a broadly inclusive concept defining whom should receive hospitality. There are deeply historic traditions of hospitality within the Jewish and Christian faith communities, and these are commonly enacted both within and between those communities in the form of fellowship and dialogue. Despite these realities, however, hospitality is not as broadly practiced as may be imagined or hoped for.

The current era of history is generally recognized as a time of both tremendous connection (primarily through electronic media and globalization) and extreme social fragmentation. Face-to-face social interaction is less frequent at a local level while social action such as almsgiving, charity work, and even tithing are commonly “outsourced” to

⁸³ Koenig, 63

specialized organizations that function primarily at a regional level. Institutional action on a broad scale has largely replaced personal intervention on behalf of the needful, abused, and lost. The result of this institutionalization is a lack of personal care extended to the vulnerable of any given community.

Hospitality is necessary primarily because it reverses the dynamics of neglect, alienation and animosity that are common to institutional culture. By intentionally turning toward the stranger, people of faith begin to restore the genuine relationships upon which all society relies. By inculcating personal responsibility for the needs one encounters, an ethic of hospitality assures both willingness and capacity to help.

Reciprocity assures that those receiving hospitality also become agents of justice themselves. In fact, Yong asserts (in agreement with Jacques Derrida) that the guest and not the host necessarily controls the entire interaction contained in the act of hospitality.⁸⁴ When the host initiates or directs the hospitable interaction they take control of the ensuing relationship, and it becomes an exercise (even if it is subconscious) in attempting to stimulate reciprocity. This is a misuse of the discipline that breaks the justice aspect of hospitality entirely.⁸⁵ In a near echo of the ancient problem of unrequited divine love, hospitality simply cannot be imposed.

Social justice or improvement, therefore, while it is an admirable and important goal, is not in itself a sufficient cause to adopt hospitality as a way of life and faith. That is, hospitality is not effective solely as a means of addressing injustice outside of the self, but must be primarily an expression of personal faith. As Pohl writes, “to view hospitality as a means to an end, to use it instrumentally, is antithetical to seeing it as a way of life,

⁸⁴ Yong, 120

⁸⁵ Pohl, 145

as a tangible expression of love.”⁸⁶ It is the practice of personally receiving God in the guise of the other (even the *complete* other) that bears fruit in keeping with repentance and shapes a more just social order. At its root, this is a practice of personal faith. It cannot rightly exist as an act of policy.

This is not to say that obedience has no place in hospitality. As discussed above, there are many teachings in the scriptures of Abrahamic faiths asserting that God expects humanity to engage in responsively caring for the vulnerable in our midst. In receiving and acting upon to requests for help, believers are simultaneously responding to God's command to love and care. This response is perfected when the host refrains from coercion in their manner and form of providing hospitality, conforming it instead to the needs of the guest and to the realities of their predicament, and when the guest receives the hospitality of the host justly.

There is another reason for hospitality that demands attention. In each of the Abrahamic faiths, God is acknowledged not only as the source of life and love, but also as Life and Love itself. God's nature is grace, and this is expressed in the created order as well as in the mystery of human relationship. Hospitality is a way of bearing witness to divine love that fulfills the spirit of every commandment.

Mallonee Hubbard, in “The Spiritual Discipline of Hospitality: Empowering Churches to Welcome the Stranger” (Wesley Theological Seminary, 2002), reflected on Peter's vision in the tenth chapter of The Acts of the Apostles. In the vision, a sheet was let down from heaven, filled with all manner of animals that were clean to eat, as a sign of God's universal grace. No group of people – Gentile or Jew, friend or foe, or any other division or classification – is considered unclean or unacceptable any longer. God's grace

⁸⁶ Pohl, 144

is so broad that no is left out.⁸⁷ Personally extending hospitality without regard for the status of the guest enacts this grace concretely, bearing witness to its reality not just in history but today.

Justice, obedience, and love all demand hospitality as a basic spiritual practice for Jews, Christians, and Muslims. This demand is foundational. It crosses boundaries of identity, culture and vocation for both the host and the guest. It exists regardless of the nature of their relationship – alien, orphan, widow, sick, poor, or enemy. Because injustice creates both need and estrangement, the call to hospitality applies in every context in which one human being is unjustly privileged over another.

HOSPITALITY FOR MILITARY NON-THEISTS

The demands of justice that necessitate hospitality are present within all areas of life, but individual responsibility must be limited to the contexts within which each person operates. For military chaplains, this means that hospitality is most appropriately oriented toward those within the military community who suffer injustice, and particularly those who suffer religious or spiritual injustice. Thus, hospitality may be considered one of the vocational aspects of the profession – a calling that both undergirds and goes beyond the secular office or job description that chaplains occupy and fulfill.

Religious accommodation is the professional responsibility that most closely correlates with religious or spiritual hospitality. In embodying this role, chaplains ensure that each service member's natural and constitutional right to religious freedom is protected. The letter of law and policy dictates parameters within which this

⁸⁷ Hubbard, Mallonee. "The Spiritual Discipline of Hospitality: Empowering Churches to Welcome the Stranger." DMin Project Paper, Wesley Theological Seminary, 2002, 24

accommodation is considered sufficient and reasonable, as has been previously discussed, but the spirit of God's command to do justice toward the alien, the sick, the orphan, and so on demands that religious accommodation be more than a task or professional role. It must properly be an expression of personal faith that manifests in extending the full range of hospitable actions to persons in need of religious protection.

No other professional community within the military context is either positioned or equipped to provide this protection. Commanding officers, the leaders officially charged with the welfare of all personnel assigned to their care and the agents responsible for establishing a hospitable work environment, even if they have the expertise to parse religious questions and possess sufficient interest in dealing with spiritual matters, lack the resources required to navigate such matters adequately. Doctors, lawyers, and counselors are similarly engaged in peripheral matters, but lack the authority to effect appropriate changes or to adequately advise other leaders.

Religious justice is the bailiwick of the chaplain. It is because of this exclusive privilege and responsibility as agents of religious accommodation that military chaplains must learn to recognize Non-theists as *persons in need of justice*.

When one reexamines the criteria for recipients of hospitality identified above in light of the situation of Non-theists in today's military, a clear need for action emerges. Specifically, relative to the dominantly Christian culture of the military and the Chaplain Corps, Non-theists clearly fall within the categories of alien, orphan, and enemy for whom God demands hospitality.

First, consider Non-theists as strangers in a dominantly Christian culture. The military population consistently reflects that of the greater United States, though usually

with a marginally higher degree of diversity. In recent surveys, both the United States and the military populations were found to be about 65 to 70 percent affiliated with various Christian denominations.⁸⁸ By comparison, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Neopagans comprised less than one percent each and a combined total of two percent of the general population.⁸⁹

Recognizing the tendency of a dominant group to privilege systems toward itself, the United States government has historically ensured that chaplains are actually more diverse than the population they serve. Therefore, there are Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist chaplains on active duty alongside Christian chaplains, even though the populations they represent are vastly smaller. This counter-bias helps to ensure that other religious voices are both present and consulted, and facilitates full religious expression for members of groups that Christian chaplains cannot faithfully serve. In addition, lay leaders from each of these communities are authorized and may be trained to serve small communities of like faith when a chaplain of their type is unavailable.

The astute observer will ask what happened to the other 28 to 33 percent of the population described above. The answer is that members of the remainder self-identify as having either an 'other' or 'no religious preference.' Within that population is another group whose members identify themselves as Atheists or Agnostics that comprises about six percent of the total population.⁹⁰ There are likely many more within the 'no preference' category who are actually Non-theists but not willing to identify themselves as such due to fear of reprisal, distaste for dealing with efforts to proselytize them, or

88 Defense Manpower Data Center, "Religious Faith Codes – Active Duty, Active Duty Personnel Inventory File as of December 31, 2009." Compiled February 9, 2010.

89 Barna, George. *The Seven Faith Tribes: Who They Are, What They Believe, and Why They Matter* (Tyndale House Publishers, 2009), 79.

90 Defense Manpower Data Center

disinterest in religious questions.

That the reluctance to self-identify as Non-theist exists is itself a sign that prejudice on the grounds of religious identity is present and directed against a population within the military. This alone is a demand for justice. Considering that the largest non-Christian population within the military community also has no representation, either by chaplains or authorized lay leaders, when smaller groups that share a common trait of belief in a deity are proactively represented, the *status quo* is nothing less than an ongoing historic failure on the part of the Chaplain Corps to address a clear religious need for the stranger in our midst.

The status of Non-theists as aliens should be enough to trigger active accommodation on their behalf, but the need is broader than this alone implies. This is because many (certainly not all) Non-theists were previously affiliated with a theistic faith. For various reasons – intellectual differences, disillusionment, conflict, trauma, and even boredom, among myriad others – some believers stop believing in the faith of which they are a part. The religion, as they possessed it, proved incapable of holding them, and they moved away.

These may rightly be considered 'orphans' in the sense of being separated from the nurturing community of a dominant culture. This is not to imply a diminishment of the Non-theistic life-stance, however. That is, Non-theists do not require the adoption of a loving theistic community to make their lives whole. Nor are they “raised by wolves” – On the contrary, Non-theists are obviously as mature and civilized as theists. The term ‘orphan’ is meant only to convey the sense of uncoupling from an established community that some Non-theists experience when they leave their original faiths.

It is important to remember that biblical hospitality is most appropriately directed toward the orphan because of their vulnerability and not because of any perception of diminutive stature. In the post-industrial west, orphans are popularly imaged as ragged children. In the biblical model, though, the orphan is coupled with the widow. Orphans would not receive an inheritance, or the privilege of tutelage in a parent's profession, or a fortuitous arrangement in marriage. These are not the "small" people, but the disenfranchised. In this sense, Non-theists may be said to be orphans simply because of their exclusion from the privileges of religious society, and not because they lack maturity or even a community of their own.

Some orphans *are* 'adopted' by other faiths, and if their adoptive religion is one of the five others named above, then the military member can find a new community in which their new religious practice is accommodated. However, if a member renounces faith altogether, then they may find themselves well and truly abandoned. Considering that religious renunciations often trigger upheavals in family and social life, this is the very situation in which a chaplain could provide meaningful service in hospitality, but few are willing.

BARRIERS TO ACCOMMODATION

Why are so few chaplains willing to actively accommodate the religious (and not merely personal) needs of Non-theists? I believe it is because some Non-theists fall within the third category noted above – the enemy. Atheists, by definition, are those who do not believe that God exists. Non-theists as a broader category may or may not believe in the existence of God, but see no value or interest in practicing an organized faith.

While the view is certainly not shared by all Non-theists, some even view religion as harmful both to persons and societies. These may be vocal in their criticism of religious establishment or their goals to convert people away from religious faith. Similarly, some religious leaders view Non-theists as antagonists of religion and publicly speak out against them. Members of each camp view the other not merely as an alien but as an enemy, and there are members of each camp in the Navy.

Because “enemy” groups tend to be more vociferous in their disagreement, it is possible that, for some, verbal combat is the only form of inter-religious “dialogue” that they ever hear. A significant problem arises, however, when the only voices heard are those of inter-religious combatants. Constant exposure to violence can lead one to adopt violence as a means of self-protection. Non-theists and theists alike, when they are exposed to those who consider them an enemy, tend to become enemies in kind.

There is an antidote to the perpetuation of animosity, though, in a startling biblical example of receiving the religious enemy. In Acts of the Apostles, the story of Saul’s conversion has the powerful enemy of the nascent church stricken by a vision of Jesus and staying in the house of a man named Judas, presumably a fellow Jew, in Damascus. A Christian named Ananias is commissioned in a vision to go and offer healing to a man who was famous for imprisoning and murdering followers of Jesus. There was no greater enemy of the church at the time!

In the story, Ananias goes to the house, lays hands upon Saul, and calls him “brother.”⁹¹ Saul is healed and is baptized a Christian, and changes his name to Paul. While the story may seem to violate hospitality by pointing to Saul’s conversion as the motivation behind the healing, it is important to note that Ananias offered the welcome

⁹¹ Acts 9:1-17 (NRSV)

well before Saul's confession of faith. While he may have *hoped* for Saul's conversion (and fervently so, considering the danger he faced in presenting himself to Saul within a Jewish household), he offered restoration to a man who was yet his enemy.

It would be disingenuous, however, to claim that Ananias had no evangelistic intent in his visit to Saul. Christian work is often conflated with evangelism, and this itself is a common point of criticism from Non-theists. This is part of what makes the story of Saul and Ananias so compelling – tensions between Non-theists and theists cannot be completely assuaged. The temptation to view the other as enemy will likely persist, even as it does between members of various theistic faiths.

Of course, criticism of the practices and principles of one religion over another is not unique to the relationship between Non-theists and believers. Christianity itself is an exclusive faith that proclaims Jesus as the *only* way to God. Other faiths make critiques of Christianity's principles and assert their own superiority. By their nature, religious systems make claims to truth, and in general this means that they also deny the assertions of other faiths. In the face of this reality, it is nevertheless true that military chaplains with different beliefs actively accommodate other world faiths while Non-theists continue to report non-support. Why the difference?

The evidence is anecdotal, but it has been the author's experience as a member of the chaplain community that some chaplains are simply reluctant to acknowledge Non-theism as a religious identity. Rather, these prefer to view Atheism, Agnosticism, and especially 'no preference' as the *absence* of religious identity. This is twice troubling, since not only does it seek to delegitimize the deeply held beliefs of the other but it also leaves them in a category that is assumed to be open for proselytization. This view

literally adds insult to injury.

Justice demands exactly the opposite mindset. Rather than viewing 'enemy' Non-theists as those who should be either ignored or converted, chaplains should set aside any evangelical agendas and offer genuine hospitality in its fullness – reception, restoration, and release – without expectation that this will result in either restoration or conversion to their own religious community.

Non-theists clearly stand in need of hospitality. However, need alone is not enough to trigger the chaplain's responsibility. The guest and not the host must initiate hospitality, so before addressing objections and methods, it is appropriate to ask whether or not Non-theists are asking for hospitality from chaplains.

Some chaplains may report that a Non-theist service member has never approached them to request religious accommodation, but this can be misleading. According to the Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers (MAAF), many Non-theists not only desire community but also wish to be represented by chaplains and lay leaders. However, these service members face the same blocks to free expression noted above. “Coming out” as a Non-theist inherently exposes a service member to the risks of ostracism and prejudice. This risk alone undoubtedly prohibits many Non-theists from making the request for accommodation, particularly in situations where a chaplain or commander has been outspoken in their bias against Non-theistic life-stances.

Injustice is clearly present against Non-theists, and at least some desire help. The two criteria that should trigger hospitality have been met. What remains is for chaplains to enact hospitality institutionally by proactively instilling accommodation for Non-theistic military personnel as a core practice equal to the accommodation expected for all

other faiths. However, many chaplains remain either unaware of the need or simply unwilling to help.

THE MEANING OF WITNESS

The core issue at work when there is reluctance to accept Non-theism as a religious identity is the chaplain's understanding of what it means to serve as witnesses of God's grace. For Christians, this phrase is most commonly interpreted as an imperative to *tell the story* of Jesus for the sake of conversion. For others, this could also be interpreted as attempting to proselytize through a recitation of truth that is meant to convince the hearer of the superiority of one faith over another. This reading is problematic for at least two reasons.

The first problem is that reading witness in purely missionary terms severely limits both the missionary and the faith they attempt to propagate. Because argument by nature seeks validation, those who engage in purely verbal witness actually weaken the impact of what they say through their implicit plea for agreement. In contrast, concrete acts of mercy provide a far more powerful witness to grace, because they actually show grace at work in the life of the one who bears it independently of the person receiving the witness. Sadly, primacy of verbal witness almost always discounts gracious work.

That implicit denial of the efficacy of work may stem from a second problem, which is that insistently telling someone about a faith violates hospitality, and perhaps even basic respect, by assuming either their ignorance of the story being told or their susceptibility to easy persuasion, or both. 'Violates' is an operable word here, as the attempt to inject an opinion or belief into the mind of another without their seeking it is

an inherently violent action. This violence negates the grace that is ostensibly under demonstration, and fulfills Sutherland's warning against invalidation of the truth at the center of religious life.⁹²

There is a better way, of course, which is ironically demonstrated in the very text from which many Christians attain their mandate for proselytism. In the Christian gospels, Jesus commands his disciples to make disciples of all nations, to baptize them and to teach them.⁹³ It is significant that inclusiveness (hospitality) is the first item listed and teaching (verbal persuasion) is last, with *voluntary initiation* into the faith between the two! This ordered model is consistent with the deeper biblical mandate explored above. Moreover, it appears to be the model used by Jesus himself, as he instructed his disciples only to offer teaching after hospitality was extended.⁹⁴

Bearing witness to grace through hospitality is a vastly different approach than proselytism. While the actual actions undertaken may be either very different or nearly identical, there is a constant and fundamental difference in motivation. Hospitality is an act of grace undertaken in response to an invitation from the other because of the demands of one's own faith. Proselytism, whether or not it is perceived as an act of grace, is imposed upon the other in hopes that they will share one's faith.

Approaching Non-theists as potential converts not only fails to extend hospitality, it keeps them in the role of enemy by forcing them to either accept or refute the faith of the evangelist, and this in the absence of concrete evidence of grace at work. In other words, proselytism perpetuates injustice by simultaneously failing to address the extant problem (the duty of the Christian to bear witness to grace) and covering it with an

92 Sutherland, 26

93 Matthew 28 (NRSV)

94 Luke 9:5 (NRSV)

activity that is likely to fail in its own unjust goal (the coercive attempt to force agreement with the evangelist's theology).

Another possible objection to extending hospitality to Non-theistic personnel arises in consideration of reciprocity. In truth, most chaplains understand that proselytism is a poor approach to religious outreach, but many will nonetheless be unwilling to expose themselves to the possibility of being changed by meaningful dialogue with a Non-theistic service member. Aside from arguments about 'true faith' enduring criticism or similar points of contention, and what has previously been stated about hospitality being free from expectation, there is a valid question about the benefit one might see from a hospitable encounter with Non-theist service members and whether or not such a benefit outweighs any potential risk.

BENEFITS OF ACCOMMODATION

One benefit of acknowledging Non-theism as a religious identity and accepting the call to extend hospitality is that Non-theism as a community is uniquely positioned to act as a prophetic voice for classically religious persons. As stated above, many Non-theists see no value in religion and will not engage in a conversation about religion, but others will and, in fact, routinely do so. Many Non-theists, particularly those who have previously been members of religious societies themselves, possess insight into the failings of religious institutions that could help religious leaders pursue meaningful reform in areas that are open to it. It is also worth noting that even being open to such critique signals a greater strength of faith and conviction than arguing against the Non-theistic perspective ever could.

Listening to Non-theists could also carry a benefit for the chaplaincy in particular. Hearing the needs of Non-theist personnel and responding out of one's religious conviction will also strengthen the chaplain's ability to care for all. Persons of other 'minority' faiths may notice the chaplain's just treatment of the most marginalized and subsequently invite hospitality for themselves or extend hospitality of their own. This would not only strengthen the role of the chaplain, but more importantly it would also establish a model of religious justice in diversity to displace the paradigm of inter-religious competition.⁹⁵ It would literally show forth the Kingdom of God.

95 Volf, Miroslav. *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Abingdon Press, 1996), 215

CHAPTER SIX: MOVING TOWARD PRAXIS

Chaplains who understand both the legal and theological supports for accommodating Non-theism as a religious practice may nevertheless be reluctant to act. Part of this reluctance may stem from theological convictions addressed above. Another part may relate to a lack of motivation, which is addressed in subsequent chapters. One of the biggest challenges for chaplains, though, may be the simple lack of practical tools for accommodation.

Non-theistic life-stances are fundamentally different from theistic ones. Classically recognized religions – Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and even Wicca – share a common belief in deity. It is a smaller step to accommodate the other's worship of a different God than it is to attempt to accommodate the practices of one who does not believe that any God exists. Worship as a core practice is not present. Traditional disciplines like scripture study, prayer, and fellowship must be reframed. Thus, it may be that one of the most significant blocks to accommodation is that chaplains just do not know how to do it.

Fortunately, Non-theist leaders are beginning to speak out about ways religious leaders can actively engage their community. Two main sources inform the suggestions for accommodations presented here. The first is Greg Epstein, Harvard's Humanist chaplain referenced above. He offers several suggestions in *Good Without God: What a Billion Nonreligious People Do Believe* (Harper, 2009). The other is the Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers (MAAF), which maintains a section of their

website with suggestions for chaplains who seek information on how to support Non-theist service members.

The first step in accommodating the religious practices of Non-theists is common to all attempts at religious accommodation: *learning* about the beliefs, practices, and culture of the other. This can be difficult, since Non-theism is not as cohesive a community as more traditional religions. Divergent views are inevitable, but by picking a few strategic resources, chaplains can gain enough understanding to enter genuine dialogue with particular service members who seek accommodation.

In addition to Epstein's *Good without God* and the MAAF website (www.militaryatheist.org), an excellent resource for learning about Non-theism in general is Charles Taylor's opus, *A Secular Age* (Harvard, 2007). The winner of the 2007 Templeton Prize for Progress Toward Research or Discoveries about Spiritual Realities, Taylor writes from a Christian perspective about the development and future of Non-theism, not just in the United States but also around the world.

Another source of information that should not be overlooked is Non-theist service members themselves. Statistically, Non-theists are present in every context where chaplains serve (there are far more Non-theists in the armed forces than chaplains). Simply signaling openness to dialogue with Non-theists may be enough to begin forming relationships, entering conversation, and learning about the deepest concerns and convictions of the Non-theists with whom chaplains serve.

Once chaplains obtain a basic understanding of Non-theists' beliefs and practices, they may be more willing to practice what is otherwise the most common request the author has encountered in conversation with Non-theists: *restraint*. Non-theists

repeatedly request that chaplains refrain from joining in the culturally accepted practice of belittling Non-theism in word and deed.

Examples of the problem abound. For instance, a common phrase in military culture when discussing Non-theism is, “there are no atheists in foxholes.” There is no doubt, however, that Atheists have served in heavy combat in recent conflicts and maintained their Non-theistic life-stance.⁹⁶ A reasonable chaplain would be strongly averse to making a comment like this about any other faith group. That the culture accepts such slights toward Non-theists is a strong indication of the need for change.

Correcting the way chaplains speak about Non-theism is a simple and easy first step. Taking restraint further, however, may be much more difficult. For instance, the practice of public prayer by chaplains in the military has been a controversial issue for many years. Non-theists assert that prayer at mandatory military events constitutes a violation of the constitutional proscription on religious establishment. The Supreme Court has upheld the practice as constitutional, but the gravity of the conflict around public prayer should encourage a more thoughtful approach than simply declaring victory and subsequently ignoring the complaints of a valid religious minority.

Restraint in public prayer need not be a loss for chaplains, however. One of the problems with public prayer in the military is that it must be pluralistic in nature. While the courts have again validated that a chaplain may pray in a religiously exclusive manner, training and education for chaplains focuses on making prayer as inclusive as possible. Unfortunately, this often renders prayers so generic that they lose meaning for anyone who does hold closely to a religious tradition.

⁹⁶ Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers, “Atheists in Foxholes News”, <http://militaryatheists.org/atheists-in-foxholes/>, (accessed on January 22, 2012).

A better practice may be to offer prayer in a private setting before public ceremonies begin. This would allow chaplains to pray in explicitly religious terms without offending the sensibilities of Non-theists, or any others of different religious convictions. It would also actually deepen the opportunity for religious observance for those who choose to engage in prayer. This would be just one example of how a simple act of religious sensitivity could enhance religious practice, even though doing away with a tradition of the military culture could be initially awkward.

A third step in religious accommodation, and a more active one than the first two, is helping Non-theists *connect* with resources, practitioners and communities of like belief. This can be a challenge for chaplains who have historically made no effort to identify Non-theistic resources and practitioners. In fact, the author has encountered many chaplains who were surprised to find that there are dozens of resources available for Non-theists, especially through the Internet, and that there is a broad range of practitioners available to solemnize marriages and to preside at funerals, baby naming ceremonies, and other significant life events.

Another step toward active religious accommodation for Non-theists is *inclusion*.⁹⁷ Epstein suggests another simple practice: if a chaplain extends hospitality to a faith other than his or her own, then the chaplain should make an effort to do the same for Non-theists. Thus, if a chaplain invites a guest speaker to talk about Islam, then they should also invite a Non-theist at another time. If a chaplain disseminates information about an upcoming Jewish holiday, then they should also disseminate information about an upcoming Non-theist event.

Chaplains in the Navy could make a strong statement of inclusion by inviting

⁹⁷ Epstein, 164.

Non-theists to participate in one of the service's deepest traditions – evening prayer at sea. While it may seem antithetical to ask a person who does not believe in prayer to offer one, it is not as radical an action as it may first seem. Chaplains often invite lay leaders from religious traditions other than their own to participate in evening prayer on a rotating basis. Thus, on some ships there is a Christian prayer one night, a Jewish prayer the next, and perhaps even a Pagan prayer on another night. Of course, these prayers are the more generic variety required in the military context, but they are nevertheless diverse. In addition, some chaplains offer short meditations before their prayers. Inviting a Non-theist to offer a philosophical meditation and a brief dedication would not be far removed from traditional prayer, and would be strongly inclusive.

Of course, there is a complicating factor with inviting Non-theists to “pray.” Generally, the representatives of other faiths who are invited to participate in evening prayer are lay leaders – officially authorized by their churches or equivalents to represent the faith group while away from home, and officially appointed by the Commanding Officer for that purpose. As of this writing, very few Non-theist lay leaders have been so appointed, mostly because Non-theism is not broadly recognized as a religious tradition.

This leads to perhaps the most active form of accommodation that chaplains could adopt – *advocacy*. As the members of military leadership charged with advising Commanding Officers on the impact of religion on military culture and operations,⁹⁸ chaplains are uniquely positioned to advocate for the full inclusion of Non-theists in the range of religious activities available to members of every other religious life-stance. This includes the opportunity to be represented by lay leaders, the ability to gather together under the sponsorship of the Command Religious Program, and more.

98 SECNAVINST 5351.1

Chaplains can tie every other aspect of accommodation discussed here – learning, restraint, connecting, inclusion, as well as others not mentioned – through the practice of advocacy. Chaplains have power to speak with authority on matters of religion. If chaplains learn to advocate for Non-theists' rights as religiously interested persons, then the military culture will learn to extend them the same protection offered to other religious traditions.

Religious accommodation for Non-theists may seem difficult, but it is actually relatively simple. It requires a slight shift in awareness to recognize the religious nature of Non-theism, a slight broadening of the openness to inclusion that is inherent to the Chaplain Corps, and a willingness to take reasonable risks in the interest of justice.

CHAPTER SEVEN: BRIDGING THE GAP

Navy chaplains are, with few exceptions, sincere in their desire to serve the religious needs of all military service members. The Corps as a whole is conscientious, repeatedly training chaplains in the art and intention of serving their religious traditions within a pluralistic community. What has been lacking is an understanding and acceptance of Non-theists as members of a religious tradition. Addressing those two deficits could lead to the justice that Non-theist military members have been seeking. What process, then, can motivate and equip Navy Chaplains to appreciate the nature of Non-theistic life-stances, and to proactively accommodate these preferences in their practice of Professional Naval Chaplaincy?

Issues of understanding can be addressed most directly by training. The military culture possesses a well-established expectation that informational needs will be met by direct teaching from a qualified subject matter expert. Informational issues surrounding religious accommodation for Non-theists, therefore, are most appropriately addressed through a training program like the one presented below.

However, while training can help chaplains understand that Non-theism is a religious preference deserving accommodation, and that Non-theists are brothers and sisters standing in need of hospitality, it nevertheless can neither compel acceptance nor instill moral conviction that action is necessary. Many chaplains already understand that Non-theism is a religious life-stance, and some understand that hospitality is the proper

stance to adopt toward them, but very few act on those understandings. Bringing the Corps to a comprehensive *knowledge* of the issue is not enough to solve the problem.

The real center of gravity when it comes to enacting religious accommodation for any group is *acceptance*. Ability to see the other not as an enemy to be vanquished but as an equal human being is critical to building motivation toward just action on their behalf.⁹⁹ What is needed is not becoming more familiar with the dynamics of Church and State, or learning the history of Non-theism or the principles of hospitality in intellectual isolation. What is needed is for chaplains to enter into real human relationship with Non-theists. In other words, dialogue is the key to making training into transformation.

GATEWAYS TO DIALOGUE

It is appropriate to approach training in interfaith hospitality through the practice of inter-religious dialogue, because dialogue itself is a basic form of hospitality. As Koenig notes, one characteristic of hospitality is that it is a “ministry of introduction in which alienated people are brought together to overcome fears and stereotypes.”¹⁰⁰ Oden also includes dialogue as an integral part of the practice of hospitality. She places it in the second phase (named ‘restoration’ here), as a time to reframe social relationships and to engage in conversation.¹⁰¹

Dialogue is an appropriate gateway to hospitality, but how does it work? According to Pierre-François de Béthune, who served for fifteen years as Secretary General for Monastic Interreligious Dialogue, the first step is more of a movement – into humility. He argues, through the experience of early twentieth century pioneers of

⁹⁹ Pohl, 68.

¹⁰⁰ Koenig, 128.

¹⁰¹ Oden, 147.

interreligious dialogue, that true hospitality is entered in the role of the guest rather than that of the host.¹⁰² It is, after all, the guest who must initiate the hospitable exchange.

There is a natural human tendency to approach interreligious dialogue in the role of the gracious host. The host, presumably, is the one with the means to offer grace to the needy guest. The host is the hero of the story, at least in an unexamined approach to hospitality that fails to grasp the intermingled roles of host and guest. However, this is an inherently privileged perspective, and a moment's consideration reveals it to be a *barrier* to genuine hospitality. Entering dialogue in the role of host will only diminish the benefits of reception. In an echo of Jesus' teaching that "whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant,"¹⁰³ hospitality (and thus dialogue) must be entered in the role of guest, the needy supplicant.

Applied to interreligious dialogue, this manifests as a humble approach to conversation. The one who seeks to do justice on behalf of the other must enter dialogue as one truly desirous of the goodwill of the potential partner. This does not mean they must seek to be convinced of the abiding truth of the other's faith, since the purpose of dialogue is not conversion but authentic encounter. However, it does mean they must be open to the reality that the other possesses gifts worthy of reception.

The second preparatory step to dialogue, according to Béthune, is poverty. "As a precondition to becoming hospitable, it is necessary to experience for oneself the poverty and the risks of being a stranger, to the point of being at the mercy of rejection."¹⁰⁴ Christians, and clergy in particular, are not accustomed to cultural vulnerability. Even in

102 Béthune, Pierre-François, *Interreligious Hospitality: The Fulfillment of Dialogue*. (Liturgical Press, 2010), 117

103 Matthew 20:26, NRSV

104 Béthune, 118.

places where Christianity is ridiculed, seldom does adherence to the Christian faith result in concrete rejection. That is, although some practices of individuals may result in negative consequences, American Christians rarely experience real social loss as a result of their mere belief in Christianity.

Quite the opposite is true for Non-theists, especially in the armed forces. When Christianity is conflated with citizenship, as it frequently is in the patriotic and traditional military culture, individuals who vocally reject what many consider to be a foundation of that culture are at significant risk of real loss. Christians who engage in dialogue with Non-theists must approach the encounter with the awareness that, whether or not they are aware of the fact, they are also vulnerable to rejection. This will enable not just the offer of hospitality in dialogue, but also its reception.

Béthune's third precursor to dialogue is love, and here he specifically refers to a kind of sacrificial love often referred to by its Greek label: *agape*.¹⁰⁵ He points out that *agape* itself takes two paths – one inward, and the other outward. The outward path contains a specific kind of charity, “love for the stranger” (*philoxenia*),¹⁰⁶ which is a Greek synonym for hospitality!

Love for the stranger does not imply false affection. To pretend intimacy in an encounter between persons who truly lack knowledge of one another would be dishonest, and would place any fruit of dialogue beyond reasonable grasp. In fact, it is exactly the *false* manifestation of this kind of love that leads many Non-theists to judge Christians as hypocritical. When one attempts to pass a counterfeit love of the stranger in interfaith encounters, it is more likely to be a subterfuge for proselytism than an attempt at

105 Béthune, 119.

106 Ibid.

dialogue. As such, it cancels hospitality.

Genuine love of the stranger, in contrast, views the other as more than a means to any end. Instead, it seeks to genuinely encounter another whose unique being is worthy of respect. It honors the other by attempting to “assimilate and integrate [them]” into the perceived universe of the self.¹⁰⁷ Love of the stranger is, most simply, a willingness to make room for their being without insisting that it reflect one’s own.

A fourth precondition to dialogue, which may also serve as an end, is posited by Miroslav Volf. “Forgiveness is the boundary between exclusion and embrace.”¹⁰⁸ In order for authentic encounter to be possible, both host and guest must be willing to suspend not only any present hostilities, but also to forego vengeance for any past injustices, at least for a time. This willingness to entertain forgiveness is a minimal form thereof, and opens the possibility of the kind of genuine sharing and reflection that can lead to reconciliation.

Reconciliation in this sense would most likely not mean the bridging of fundamental differences in worldview. Rather, it would be a doorway to the possibility of further forgiveness. It would be an opportunity to see the other as more than an adversary, and to build a willingness to practice mutual forbearance. As Volf says, “peace is communion between former enemies.”¹⁰⁹ Forgiveness opens the final approach to genuine dialogue, which is a way of peace.

Barna underscores the necessity of dialogue for peace. In his study of the “faith tribes” referenced above, he identifies twenty values that all the tribes share, regardless of

107 Béthune, 120.

108 Volf, 127.

109 Volf, 128.

their stance on religion or the faith they claim.¹¹⁰ Despite these shared values, dialogue is becoming less and less frequent. Barna posits that failure to dialogue is the chief cause of social disintegration in the United States. He urges Christians to “take initiative to develop and nurture genuine caring relationships with people of other tribes – not for the purpose of converting them...but simply to honor God by loving and appreciating them.”¹¹¹

DIALOGUE AS TRANSLATION

Marianne Moyaert proposes a model for interfaith dialogue that treats it as an opportunity for translation. Her model is particularly appealing for chaplaincy, since the role of the chaplain as a religious facilitator often requires finding points of commonality in order to make sense of the religious needs of others. Moyaert’s model succeeds because it overcomes an impasse between two common stances that often derails attempts at dialogue.

On one side is religious pluralism, which seeks dialogue in order to affirm commonalities between religious traditions. A fundamental assumption at work in pluralism is that all religious sensibilities share a common core of beliefs, and that dialogue can facilitate the reunification of unlike minds.¹¹²

However, pluralists often fail to acknowledge that some differences are fundamental. In the case of Theist-Atheist dialogue, the gulf between believing and not believing in the very existence of God is not likely to be bridged. If dialogue is

110 Barna, 191.

111 Barna, 191.

112 Moyaert, Marianne. "The (Un-)translatability of Religions: Ricœur's linguistic hospitality as a model for inter-religious dialogue." *Exchange* 37, no. 3 (January 1, 2008): 337-364. *ATLASerials, Religion Collection, EBSCOhost* (accessed May 19, 2011), 350.

approached as a means of assimilation, in either direction, it fails as an act of hospitality and is more likely to deepen differences than to bridge them.

This is not to say that there are no commonalities between theistic and non-theistic life-stances. The example of science is fitting. Most Non-theists embrace science as the most reliable means of explaining reality.¹¹³ One might even say that Non-theists view science as a primary method of revelation, and this is a point with which Christians can agree. Keeping in mind that the culture of science arose out of the dominantly Christian Enlightenment, there are probably many more points of commonality.¹¹⁴

Despite these similarities, however, it is highly unlikely that scientists will embrace Christianity *en masse*. In fact, to do so would be detrimental to science, since strong religious beliefs have historically had a slowing effect on scientific discovery.¹¹⁵ Scientific inquiry thrives within a secular frame, just as Christian spirituality functions best within a religious one. Acknowledging this difference enables an attempt at translation, where ignoring it only creates unnecessary conflict.

Acknowledging intractable differences between life-stances is critical to dialogue, but in the extreme can itself become a barrier. The opposite extreme of pluralism, then, is relativism or particularism.¹¹⁶ Particularists work from a position of “linguistic purity”¹¹⁷ that assumes the thought processes, language, and history of their own faith tradition are completely incomprehensible to those of another.

In reality, this is a protective stance. Where the pluralist refuses to acknowledge differences, the particularist blocks dialogue by refusing to acknowledge commonalities,

113 Epstein, 10.

114 Osterman, 597.

115 Ibid.

116 Moyaert, 350.

117 Moyaert, 352.

building a wall of untranslatability around their own worldview. This cloak protects the worldview from assault by foreign concepts, thought processes, and traditions of inquiry. It is also self-affirming: dialogue with a particularist is indeed impossible...because they will never enter it!

Moyaert's alternative approach to dialogue as translation finds elusive middle ground between the extremes of pluralism and particularism. It allows, and even requires, each dialogue partner to be firmly rooted in their own 'language.' In order to translate the words of another, after all, one must first thoroughly know one's native language. This expectation of rootedness removes any perceived pressure to embrace the beliefs of the religious other in dialogue. Again, the goal is *translation*, and not *transformation*.¹¹⁸

True inter-religious dialogue then, requires a form of bilingualism.¹¹⁹ Dialogue partners listen to the experiences, insights and desires of the other through the lens of their own religious rootedness. Identifying the commonalities between the life-stances of the partners alongside the intractable difference, the partners then attempt to construct a common meaning that frames a mutually respectful relationship. This relationship does not require the conversion of either partner, but instead expects their differences to continue. The point of the dialogue is peacemaking, not disciple-making.

DIALOGUE PROCESS

Moyaert offers a three-step process to dialogue that parallels a similar process for linguistic translation. In the model, she describes internal movements of the partners rather than a structured agenda. This focus on process renders the model useful in a

¹¹⁸ Moyaert, 355.

¹¹⁹ Moyaert, 344.

number of dialogue settings, including the training paradigm described below.

Moyaert's first step in dialogue is *encountering* the religious other. The encounter, or confrontation, happens by the simple act of entering dialogue, as deepest differences become apparent. This experience is both a decision point and an interior signal that dialogue is underway. "To be challenged, disturbed and interrupted by the recalcitrant other," Moyaert writes, "is not an expression of closure, but on the contrary is a sign of the preparedness to take the other seriously in his/her otherness."¹²⁰

Moyaert's encountering phase of dialogue parallels the *reception* phase of hospitality put forth by Oden. Concrete actions on the part of partners intentionally extending hospitality in dialogue, then, could include a warm greeting, a period of visitation and familiarization, acts of cleansing and prayer.¹²¹ In light of Béthune's admonitions to humility and poverty, the invitation to hospitality may more fittingly be offered as a request for dialogue.

Moyaert's second phase of dialogue is *benevolence* toward the other. Again, this phase describes an internal dynamic rather than an intentional action, although there obviously may be some intentionality here. Benevolence arises, according to Moyaert, in response to an emerging faith that there are points of common human experience and desire between the dialogue partners that can be understood despite 'linguistic' differences.¹²² This trust counters an internal urge toward particularism by recognizing that, while not *all* differences can be bridged, some translation is possible.

Moyaert's benevolence phase also correlates to Oden's *dwelling* and *restoring* phases of hospitality, which are conflated into the latter for the purpose of this inquiry.

¹²⁰ Moyaert, 360.

¹²¹ Oden, 146.

¹²² Moyaert, 359.

This is the heart of dialogue, as partners remain together in close encounter and work through their interpretive tasks. Since the central aspect of this phase of hospitality is table fellowship,¹²³ it is appropriate that the deepest levels of sharing occur with the dialogue partners “at the table.” Of course, an actual shared meal – or some form of real sustenance – would carry important sociological benefits, as well, since food sharing is widely acknowledged as a core practice of community.

Moyaert’s third phase of dialogue is *resistance*, though the label is somewhat misleading. The resistance at work is not against influence or even transformation. Rather, it is resistance to the internal urge to absorb the other.¹²⁴ This process constitutes a second boundary that contains dialogue within a field that allows for translation. Where the benevolence phase counters the internal urge to particularism and seeks that which is translatable, this phase counters the urge toward pluralism by acknowledging that there are untranslatable aspects of the other.

Oden’s third phase of hospitality, *release*, also acknowledges that guest and host cannot continue to dwell together indefinitely. The encounter between strangers has a beginning and an end, and recognizing these boundaries contributes to the creation of sanctuary that makes genuine encounter possible. It is appropriate, then, that resistance to absorption of the other is enacted concretely in the hospitable practices of release: almsgiving, provision, and protection.¹²⁵

The parallel processes of hospitality and dialogue together set an interpretive space within which strangers can safely come to know one another, build tenuous bonds of community, and move toward peace. A final warning from Moyaert is appropriate,

123 Oden, 145.

124 Moyaert, 361.

125 Oden, 145.

however. “Though hermeneutical hospitality is the basic ethical condition for inter-religious dialogue,” she writes, “the challenge of inter-religious dialogue cannot be reduced to hermeneutics.”¹²⁶ This is because inter-religious dialogue is not undertaken simply for the purpose of understanding. Genuine hospitality is, at its root, an act of individual faith. The dialogue partners remain rooted in their life-stances. The benefit of the dialogue to the partners is the enrichment of their own faith through the interpretive tasks of encounter. That is, learning about the other can reveal previously unknown aspects of the familiar.

The Navy Chaplain Corps stands in need of a model to motivate and equip its chaplains to appreciate the nature of Non-theistic life-stances, and to proactively accommodate these religious preferences in their practice of Professional Naval Chaplaincy. Training can provide the information necessary to equip religious accommodation, but hospitality provides the theological and practical setting for such training to succeed. Inter-religious dialogue enacts hospitality. Training in dialogue, then, is the model that should be instituted.

¹²⁶ Moyaert, 362.

CHAPTER EIGHT: A MODEL FOR TRAINING IN DIALOGUE

Equipping military service members for unfamiliar action has historically been accomplished through training, and military members are well accustomed to this model of instruction. However, when approaching the task of accommodating the religious needs of Non-theists, the extreme *other* for most chaplains, an additional aspect that builds *motivation* to actively intervene on their behalf is also required. Incorporating hospitality into training renders a model that fuses a traditional training environment with aspects of inter-religious dialogue in order to promote mutual understanding that leads to a willingness to work proactively for accommodation.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants in the training were ten Navy chaplains who were living and working near the author. Each of the participating chaplains had reached “lower management” levels in the Navy’s rank structure (senior Lieutenant and Lieutenant Commander). Members ranged in military experience from eight to 16 years, and in age from 33 to 45. There were nine men and one woman.

Seven Christian denominations were represented in the participant group, ranging from Southern Baptist to Presbyterian (USA). Most of the participants were from denominations usually considered to be conservative and evangelical. The participants served military units in the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

The second set of participants was an expert panel with which some participants would engage in a brief dialogue. The panel consisted of three Non-theists with both military service and a history of leadership in their community. Jason Torpy, President of the Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers, both coordinated and sat on the panel. Mr. Torpy is a graduate of the United States Military Academy and a former Captain in the United States Army. He contributed greatly to the author's understanding of Non-theist issues, and was a principal advisor on this project.

The second panel participant was Dr. Carlos Bertha, Associate Professor of Philosophy at the United States Air Force Academy. Dr. Bertha is a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army Reserve. He served as faculty advisor for the Freethinkers student group at the academy.

The final panel member was Major Ray Bradley, an active duty Army officer. Maj. Bradley served as a Non-theist lay leader and organizer at a major Army base on the east coast, and was a leading sponsor of one of the largest gatherings of military Non-theists in recent history.

PROCESS

The training instrument itself was a standard Microsoft PowerPoint slideshow summarizing the statistical, Constitutional, demographic and theological components of this project (see Appendix A). It was designed to be brief, requiring between 30 and 45 minutes to present, in order to allow for an additional 45 to 60 minutes conversation with the panel of past and present Non-theist service members after the training phase was complete.

Because the training module was not an official Navy curriculum, it could not be presented in an official training forum. Instead, it was presented in a hotel conference room, with participants in civilian attire rather than in uniform. This arrangement helped to establish the training and dialogue as an academic pursuit, and additionally increased safety for dialogue partners, since the chaplains in attendance were not wearing rank insignia or other official attire that might have stifled open communication.

Because the training was offered as an academic inquiry using human subjects, it was ethically necessary that all participants be volunteers. Participants were invited to the training via a single electronic mail message. The message indicated the academic nature of the project and the voluntary nature of participation. Confidentiality was assured, and no material reward for participation was offered. Participants in the training and dialogue sessions attended each of their own accord.

Participants in the dialogue phase were selected from those who volunteered to participate in the training itself. Of the ten participants, seven participated in the training phase only and three participated in both training and dialogue. No one participated in the dialogue phase only. Again, no payment or other incentive was offered for participating in the study, although refreshments were offered during the dialogue phase in order to model hospitable practices.

The dialogue phase was the most delicate part of the training event, because it involved three Non-theist service members in dialogue with three overtly religious officers. Due to time constraints, the dialogue phase was conducted via video teleconference. While this arrangement curtailed some dynamics of the interaction between panelists and participants, it also allowed a broader range of panel participants.

In order to model hospitality and to ensure that the panel got their initial thoughts before the participants, the guests were asked to speak first, offering their impressions of the training (which was sent as a read-ahead) as well as any additional or clarifying information they thought pertinent. Finally, guidance was given to all participants that the dialogue was to be an opportunity to learn more about Non-theists and their religious accommodation needs, and not an inter-religious debate or opportunity to practice apologetics.

The dialogue session followed guidelines established in Moyaert's dialogue process and Oden's phases of hospitality. The first phase, encounter and reception, was enacted through a brief time of sharing and self-introduction. It is important to note that, in many ways, the first act of dialogue actually began in the training phase. This is because the first task of the training runs in parallel to the first phases of dialogue and hospitality. Encounter and reception correlates to the task of recognizing Non-theism's status as a constitutionally protected religious preference. The informational aspect of this task was enacted during the training phase. The dialogue phase was intended to build motivation and willingness for proactive accommodation, and the first phase of dialogue served as a bridge between the two.

The second phase of the dialogue was the most substantial. This phase correlated to *translation* in Moyaert's model and *restoration* in Oden's. The functional goal of this phase was to allow participants to safely acknowledge the constitutional and theological status of Non-theists while not feeling pressure to compromise their own religious footing. As noted above, the conversation was opened by the guests, who offered their impression of the training, as well as insights that they felt were important to foster a

proper understanding of the Non-theist position. Participants were then invited to ask questions of the guests, with another reminder that debate was not the purpose of the event.

The final section of the dialogue phase correlated to Moyaert's *resistance* and Oden's *release*. During this movement, chaplains were asked to articulate both their challenges to and their opportunities for religious accommodation on behalf of Non-theists. The goal of this phase of dialogue was commitment to proactive work in accommodation, so this conversation directly related to building motivation for action. The dialogue phase of training was then concluded with expressions of appreciation and the administration of the post-test evaluation.

MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS

The overall goal of training in dialogue was to equip and motivate chaplains to appreciate the nature of Non-theistic life-stances, and to proactively accommodate these religious preferences in their practice of Professional Naval Chaplaincy. The effectiveness of this training toward those ends was measure by means of pre-test and post-test evaluations (see Appendix B) that measured the chaplains' and RPs' perception of Non-theism as a religious tradition, their knowledge of how to accommodate the religious needs of Non-theists, and their willingness to do so on various levels from minimal to beyond current requirements.

Pre-test evaluations were administered to volunteers at the outset of the general training phase. In order to assure the anonymity of participants and to encourage honest feedback, participants were asked to use a unique personal code rather than name, rank or

other personally identifying information to track their responses. Upon completion, a volunteer placed the responses in an envelope marked “pre-tests” for later evaluation. The author did not take possession of the pre-tests until the envelope was sealed.

Post-test evaluations were identical to the pre-test evaluations, and were administered in two sets. After the initial training was completed, half of the initial participants were selected by lot to participate in the dialogue phase. Those who were not selected, the control group, were given the post-test evaluation immediately and dismissed. As previously, a volunteer placed the responses in an envelope marked “control” for later evaluation. The author did not take possession of the control group post-tests until the envelope was sealed.

The second set of post-tests was administered to dialogue participants at the conclusion of the dialogue phase. Again, a volunteer placed their responses in an envelope marked “sample” for later evaluation, and the author took possession after the envelope was sealed.

Pre-test and post-test evaluations were then examined to mark changes in initial knowledge of Non-theists status and needs for accommodation, as well as participants’ willingness to proactively accommodate Non-theistic religious needs. Differences in the rate of change between those participating in training only and those who also participated in dialogue were noted in order to quantify the effectiveness of training in dialogue. The results were then collated for presentation to the Director of the Naval Chaplaincy School and Center.

CHAPTER NINE – RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were several surprises in the pre-test and post-test evaluations. Perhaps the most surprising result overall was that dialogue participants actually recorded less change in both their opinions about Non-theism and their willingness to actively accommodate Non-theism than participants in the training only. In fact, they recorded almost *no* change on average. This is mostly because increases in willingness in one participant were mitigated by corresponding decreases in another.

The small number of participants in dialogue may render the statistics of this group alone less reliable. Given that all three dialogue participants recorded lower levels of change than any of the other seven participants, though, indicates that dialogue did *not* increase their motivation to accommodate Non-theists. While there are several possible explanation to mitigate this result – small group size, short duration of the dialogue, the complicated nature of topics broached, and so on – the most conservative conclusion is that dialogue may have actually hindered the goal of the training.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

One participant, in conversation after the study was completed, indicated that he “felt the agenda” during the dialogue phase. That is, he perceived that the Non-theist guests were pushing the point of Non-theism’s status and need for support. One of the panelists, in turn, agreed that advocacy was a major goal of the encounter for him and

that he “hope[d] they felt it.” Thus, some of the foundations for true dialogue were not present in this encounter.

In future trainings, then, more time should be devoted to preparing participants for the encounter specifically as inter-religious dialogue and not as advocacy. The context of training on Non-theism is inherently advocative, and pressing the point does increase exposure for participants who adhere to theistic faiths. While it should not be implied that advocacy is wrong, it should be understood that a successful dialogue would do more to move chaplains toward motivation for change than insisting that they receive a set of position points. In fact, this dynamic alone could negate hospitality.

The threat to hospitality implied above bears further exploration, since there were other threats present. Perhaps most obviously, the setting of the dialogue was not ideal. A videoconference inhibits natural conversation, in that it imposes a rigid turn taking in the dialogue itself. In fact, in order to prevent interruption of sound, microphones for all but the active speaker had to be muted. This had the effect of introducing awkward transitions and some mild annoyance at the effort required to converse. The central aspect of dialogue – table fellowship – was proscribed, and the effect on hospitality was marked.

In future dialogues, physical presence is absolutely necessary. Sharing physical space enables table fellowship, flowing conversation, and mutual vulnerability that technology cannot emulate. The 60-minute conversation shared in this dialogue would be twice as productive in a live, face-to-face encounter.

The time devoted to dialogue was also a factor. A single hour was not enough time to adequately introduce six participants to one another, let alone to explore issues of religious accommodation thoroughly. Instead of allowing one topic to open to another, as

conversation naturally flows, it became important to move the conversation to matters of central importance. This factor alone could have created the sense of agenda expressed by the participant above.

Future dialogues should either provide much more time for dialogue – an afternoon, perhaps – or take place over several sessions, or both. Time together leads to familiarity, and familiarity helps build trust that leads to deeper dialogue.

Still another possible explanation for decreased movement in dialogue participants may be that some experiences of panel members were foreign to Navy chaplains. None of the panel participants served in a Navy context, so the policy assumptions they carried were not in line with what the chaplains carried. This led to some distraction, as dialogue participants wanted to correct the panel members' perception of maltreatment by explaining how the Navy does business.

In future dialogues, Non-theist dialogue partners should share common branch affiliation with the chaplain participants. This would help prevent misunderstandings around policy differences. More importantly, this would introduce another common bond between all participants in the dialogue.

As much as the dialogue result was disappointing, mixed with this was a very positive result for members of the panel. All three of the panel members expressed surprise and delight at the willingness of Christian chaplains to engage them in dialogue. The tone of the conversation was very friendly, and the chaplain participants continued to discuss the topics from the dialogue session well after the official session ended.

The overall result reinforces the warnings from earlier chapters that dialogue cannot be used as a means to an end. The real benefit of dialogue is creating space for

genuine encounter where hospitality can be extended. The overwhelmingly positive response from Non-theist panel members and the energy generated among dialogue participants indicates that hospitality was genuinely extended and received, even if it was not purely experienced. An authentic encounter did take place, and relationships formed around an issue of common concern.

Examining the responses of chaplains who participated in training alone generates a much different picture of chaplains' willingness to acknowledge and actively accommodate Non-theism as a religious practice. Where dialogue participants barely changed their opinions at all, training participants made significant changes toward both acceptance and embrace.

In almost every case, participants in the training segment indicated that both their understanding of Non-theism as a religious life-stance and their willingness to actively accommodate Non-theists' preferences increased. The pre- and post-test evaluations were written to seek a limit, asking not only if a chaplain would offer the same accommodation to a Non-theist that they would to a person of another theistic faith, but also whether or not they would advocate for a Non-theist lay leader or serve alongside a Non-theist chaplain. Again, in almost every case, the chaplains said they would.

This openness to Non-theists as religiously qualified persons indicates that Navy chaplains are intellectually ready to adopt practices of accommodation for Non-theists. Perhaps, then, hospitality should be encouraged independent of concerns for accommodation with the understanding that the practice will naturally lead to dialogue. Alternatively, efforts to perfect the dialogue phase of training may yield the most results.

Taking the training module out of the theoretical realm and putting it to work in a

real conversation may also reveal a sobering truth, that training out of the context of relationship may generate false understanding. If that is the case, then dialogue may rightly serve as a grounding agent for training that reveals how much work remains to be done in interfaith relations.

Expanding the scope of this inquiry would help establish a more solid conclusion, but even the small study conducted here has implications for Navy chaplains. Two conclusions may be reasonably drawn. The first is that chaplains' capability and motivation to accommodate the religious needs of Non-theists may be increased through training. However, this does nothing to increase Non-theists' awareness of the chaplain's willingness to help. Training alone, therefore, will not reduce the felt need of Non-theists for greater accommodation.

The second reasonable conclusion is that dialogue, while it may complicate acceptance and motivation for chaplains, greatly increases Non-theists' experience of hospitality. It probably also gives a more realistic gauge of the difficulty chaplains and commanders face in overcoming their mutual alienation with Non-theists.

Five years after receiving the phone call that began this inquiry, little has changed in the Navy to move the Chaplain Corps toward embracing Non-theism as a religious life-stance that merits proactive accommodation from chaplains. Happily, however, a model for change does exist. Non-theists are speaking out, extending the invitation for meaningful dialogue, and opening the door for chaplains to practice a core discipline of their faith. If they do so, and if they accept the challenge represented by the "atheists in foxholes," then the chaplaincy will be as true to its professional creed as its members are to their respective faiths.

APPENDIX A: TRAINING SLIDES

Religious Accommodation for Non-theists

Disclaimers

The opinions expressed in this training presentation are those of the author and do not reflect the official position of the Department of Defense, the United States Navy, or the Navy Chaplain Corps. No endorsement is implied.

This training presentation was written in partial completion of requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree at Wesley Theological Seminary.

Your participation in this training is strictly on a voluntary basis.

It all started with a letter...

Dear CO,

I'm writing to express my concern over the "evening prayers" broadcast each night over the 1MC. I am an Atheist, and I find the prayers disruptive. It's not so much that I don't understand why some people would want to pray, but I don't feel that I should be forced to listen to it...

I understand that the prayers are part of Navy tradition and aren't likely to go away simply because I (or others such as myself) repeatedly complain. But would you consider alternating who says the prayers, allowing a Buddhist or a Wiccan to pray? Could an Atheist such as myself offer a short philosophical story or a poem? Could we have an Atheist group onboard that meets during worship times? Would you allow an Atheist lay leader?

I doubt very much that the above requests would be granted...
Sir, I respectfully request that evening prayer be discontinued...

Very respectfully,
An Atheist Sailor

A Religious Question

Is Non-theism a religious practice protected by the First Amendment?

– U.S. Supreme Court

- Religion includes non-theistic and atheistic beliefs as well as theistic ones (Wallace v. Jaffree, 1985).
- If an individual deeply and sincerely holds beliefs which are purely ethical or moral in source and content but that nevertheless impose upon him a duty of conscience...those beliefs certainly occupy in the life of that individual a place parallel to that filled by...God in traditional religious persons (Welsh v. United States, 1970).

A Religious Question

Is Non-theism religious practice protected by the First Amendment? a

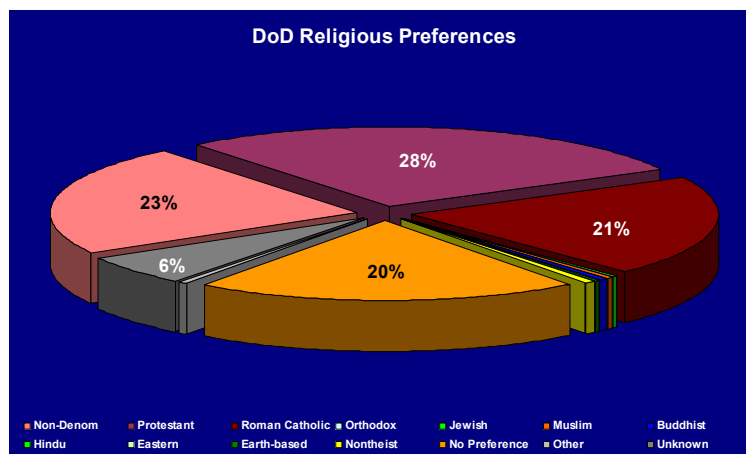
- Secular Humanism is an example of a religion (Torcaso v. Watkins, 1961).
- **7th Circuit Court of Appeals**
 - Atheism is entitled to the same treatment that traditional religions receive under the Constitution (Kaufman v. McCaughtry, 2005).

A Religious Question

Is Non-theism religious practice protected by the First Amendment? a

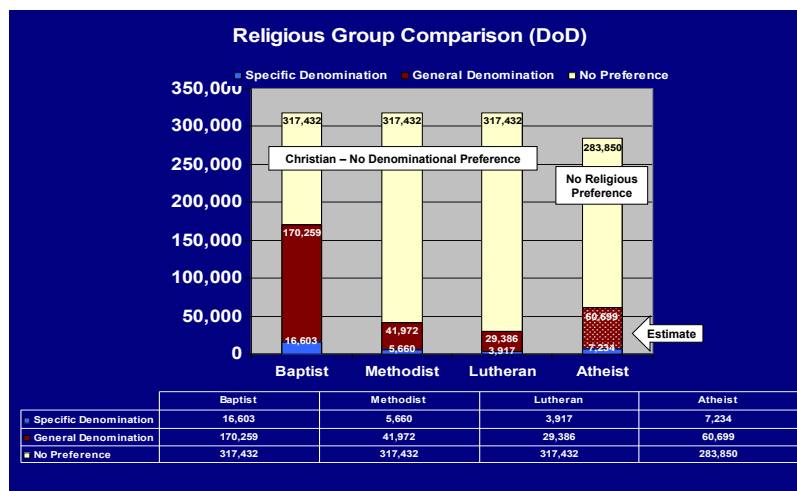
- **Department of the Navy**
 - “...As a condition of appointment, every RMP must be willing to function in the diverse and pluralistic environment of the military, with tolerance for diverse religious traditions and respect for the rights of individuals to determine their own religious convictions. Chaplains must be willing to support the free exercise of religion by all Service members, their families, and other authorized persons.” (SECNAVINST 1730.7d)
 - “Chaplains care for all Service members, including those who claim no religious faith, facilitate the religious requirements of personnel of all faiths...” (ibid.)
 - “Religious Observance. Religious observances include participating in worship services and following other doctrinal requirements on Sabbath and holy days.” (SECNAVINST 1730.8b)

Non-theists comprise a significant population



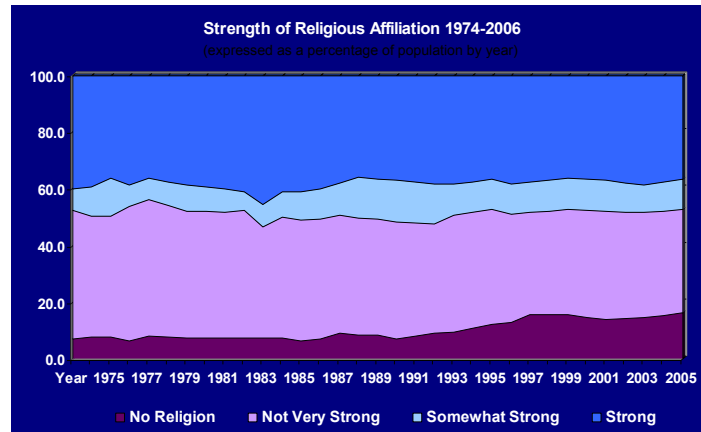
Religious Faith Codes – Active Duty, Active Duty Personnel Inventory File, Defense Manpower Data Center, February 9, 2010

A larger population may be somewhat hidden



Religious Faith Codes – Active Duty, Active Duty Personnel Inventory File, Defense Manpower Data Center, February 9, 2010

The population is either growing or emerging



National Opinion Research Center (NORC), General Social Survey, http://www.thearda.com/quickStats/qs_103_t.asp

But is it really a religious practice?

-
-
- Some are very interested in religion and enjoy discussing the history, practices, ethics, and beliefs of a variety of faiths.
- Some take a secular approach to religion, replacing theistic religious practices with non-theistic communities and other activities.
- Some are less interested in the question of religious rituals or events, but nonetheless hold strongly to reason-based ethics and a science-based worldview.

But is it really a religious practice?

- Some non-theists are members of a community of practice and some are not, in the same way that some Christians are active members of a local church and some are not.
- Non-theists often wish to solemnize and celebrate life events (marriages, births, memorials) and often prefer to seek counseling from others of like mind.
- Non-theists share the same ultimate concerns as all human beings, and are as separated from their primary communities of support as members of traditional faiths.
- Non-theists have answers to ultimate questions that they find meaningful and inspiring that are consistent with their worldview.

Why do we need to worry about this?

- Non-theism is a constitutionally protected religious practice represented by a significant population, but there is another barrier to accommodation: stigma.
- Non-theists may be less likely to seek accommodation due to:
 - Prominence of theistic faith
 - Don't want to stand out
 - Fear of discrimination
 - Don't want to be singled out
 - Desire to focus on work rather than religious issues

What should we do about it?

Keep in mind...

“The Establishment Clause forbids government to aid those religions based upon a belief in the existence of God as against those religions founded on different beliefs.” (Torcaso v. Watkins, 1961)

What would I reasonably expect a fellow chaplain or RP to do to accommodate a person of my own faith?

“The best defense of the chaplaincy, and of any religious program in the military, is that it preserves a soldier’s right to freely exercise his religion.” (Benjamin, 3)

Do chaplains and commanders have an obligation to accommodate non-theistic religious practice?

Why is this a difficult question?

- Cultural trends may be sobering.
- Accommodating non-theism is different from accommodating a practice that shares my theistic worldview.
- Our endorsers may have some questions.
- Media in popular culture tend to color all non-theistic statements as negative and amplify antagonistic statements.
- The issue may not arise often.

Some reasons to accommodate non-theism

- The same Constitutional standard that protects my practice of faith protects theirs (we share the umbrella).
- Hospitality to the stranger is a core spiritual practice of my own faith (a witness to grace).
- The Chaplain Corps is healthier when it is comprehensive in its ability to provide meaningful care to persons of all faiths.
- The issue is neither going away nor getting smaller...

A Witness to Grace

- Hospitality toward the vulnerable stranger is a central requirement of both Jewish and Christian theology.
- Materially aiding the religious other demonstrates the strength of my own faith more than verbal evangelism could.
- Recognizing the image of God in the other requires radical respect of their thoughts and decisions.
- Receiving the criticisms of the other signals humility and opens the path to forgiveness.

Is anyone doing anything now?

- MCRD Parris Island
 - Established a class for Non-theistic recruits.
- All four service academies
 - Non-theist or Humanist student groups
- Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers
 - Mostly on Army bases, but growing

Suggestions for Accommodation

Restraint in Public Practices

Avoid:

- Statements implying that non-theism is a position of convenience, protest, or indifference (e.g. “There are no atheists in foxholes”).
- Statements implying that non-theists are amoral, anti-religious or otherwise of lesser status than those of other faiths (“Atheists don’t believe in anything”).
- Passive-aggressive comments (e.g. “You’ll find out when you die”)
- Requirements to identify faith as a prerequisite for support

Suggestions for Accommodation

Restraint in Public Practices

Prayer:

- Rotate representatives from multiple faiths (including non-theists) for official (sanctioned) prayers, such as evening prayer at sea.
- Offer an option for prayer privately before or after ceremonies for those who wish to participate (rather than having prayer as part of an official agenda).*
- Do make statements that welcome and include non-theists, especially when prayer is prominent in the discussion.

* Note – the practice of non-sectarian public prayer has been upheld by the Supreme Court

Suggestions for Accommodation

Advocacy

The Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers (www.militaryatheist.org) invites chaplains to adopt a minimum statement of support:

"Non-theistic service members, including atheists, agnostics, humanists, freethinkers, and those holding other non-theistic designations, serve honorably within our nation's military. I pledge to support non-theistic service members as strongly as I support theistic service members. I further pledge not to use my position to influence individuals or the chain of command to adopt the principles or practices of my own personal religion. I concur that these statements are minimum standards of conduct to which all service members, especially chaplains and commanders, should adhere."

Consider this or similar language for policy letters, websites, or newsletters. A one-time focus on non-theism, by itself or as a part of a series on religious diversity, would also be appropriate.

Suggestions for Accommodation

Command Briefs (Indoc, Annual training, DITS, advisement)

- Advise commanders of the Constitutional status of non-theists and the impact of accommodation on unit cohesion and morale.
- Assist commanders in forming public statements and policies that show no unintentional preference for any religious worldview.
- Explicitly include atheist, agnostic and humanist service members in “the list” of faiths you will strive to accommodate.
- Include secular faith groups in public presentations on comparative religion.

Suggestions for Accommodation

Referral

- Maintain a list of non-theist / humanist organizations, counselors, celebrants and resources in proportion with other faith groups.
- Maintain literature for non-theists in proportion with other faith groups. There is a free printable brochure at:
<http://www.militaryatheists.org/resources/MAAFLivingWell.pdf>
- Alternatives to Alcoholics Anonymous and related step groups:
 - Secular Organizations for Sobriety – <http://sostampabay.org/>
 - SMART Recovery - <http://smartrecovery.org/>

Online Resources

Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers

<http://www.militaryatheists.org>

[For more info, Jason Torpy: jtorpy@militaryatheists.org]

American Humanist Association

<http://www.americanhumanist.org>

The Center for Inquiry

<http://www.centerforinquiry.net>

The American Ethical Union

<http://www.aeu.org>

Military Religious Freedom Foundation

<http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/>

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Stevens, J., Opinion of the Court: *Wallace v. Jaffree*, 472 U.S. 38, Supreme Court of the United States, 1985.

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APPENDIX B: PRE/POST TEST

PRE-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: ALT 79

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets my own faith.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!

MUCH DEPENDS UPON REGULATIONS SUPPORTING
NON-THEISTS AND LIMITING THEISTS.

POST-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: ALT 79

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(4)

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets my own faith.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(4)

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(4)

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(3)	()

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(4)

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(4)

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(4)

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!

PRE-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: 28147

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4
()	(✓)	()	()

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets of my own faith.

1	2	3	4
()	(✓)	()	()

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1	2	3	4
()	(✓)	()	()

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1	2	3	4
()	(✓)	()	()

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1	2	3	4
()	(✓)	()	()

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(✓)

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(✓)

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
(✓)	()	()	()

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	(✓)	()	()

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(✓)

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!

POST-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: 28147

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(1) ✓

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets of my own faith.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(1) ✓

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(1) ✓

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(1) ✓

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(1) ✓

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(1) ✓

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(1) ✓

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	() ✓

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	() ✓

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	() ✓

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!

PRE-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: DOW 3

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree 1 ()	Somewhat Disagree 2 (X)	Somewhat Agree 3 ()	Completely Agree 4 ()
------------------------------------	----------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------------

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets of my own faith.

1 ()	2 ()	3 (X)	4 ()
----------	----------	----------	----------

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1 ()	2 ()	3 (X)	4 ()
----------	----------	----------	----------

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1 (X)	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()
----------	----------	----------	----------

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1 (X)	2 ()	3 (X)	4 ()
----------	----------	----------	----------

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1 ()	2 ()	3 (X)	4 ()
----------	----------	----------	----------

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 (X)
----------	----------	----------	----------

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(X)	()

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(X)	()

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!

POST-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: DOW 03

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets of my own faith.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1	2	3	4
()	(X)	()	()

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(X)	()

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(X)	()

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(X)	()

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!

PRE-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: 47149

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4
()	☒ ()	()	()

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets my own faith.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒ ()	()

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒ ()	()

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1	2	3	4
()	☒ ()	()	()

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1	2	3	4
()	☒ ()	☒ ()	()

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1	2	3	4
()	☒ ()	()	()

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒ ()	()

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	(X)	()	()

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
(X)	()	()	()

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
(X)	()	()	()

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!

POST-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: 47/49

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4
()	()	☒ (X)	()

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets of my own faith.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒ (X)	()

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒ (X)	()

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1	2	3	4
()	☒ (X)	()	()

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒ (X)	()

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒ (X)	()

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒ (X)	()

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(X)	()

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	(X)	()	()

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(X)	()

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!

PRE-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: CH44

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4
()	(X)	()	()

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets my own faith.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(X)	()

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(X)	()

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1	2	3	4
()	(X)	()	()

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(X)	()

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(X)	()

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	☒

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒	()

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	☒	()	()

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!

POST-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: CHAP4

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4
()	()	(X)	()

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets of my own faith.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(X)	()

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(X)	()

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	☒

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	☒

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	☒

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!

PRE-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: WHB02

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree 1 ()	Somewhat Disagree 2 ()	Somewhat Agree 3 (X)	Completely Agree 4 ()
------------------------------------	----------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------------

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets my own faith.

1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 (X)
----------	----------	----------	----------

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1 ()	2 ()	3 (X)	4 ()
----------	----------	----------	----------

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1 ()	2 ()	3 (X)	4 ()
----------	----------	----------	----------

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 (X)
----------	----------	----------	----------

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 (X)
----------	----------	----------	----------

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1 ()	2 ()	3 (X)	4 ()
----------	----------	----------	----------

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!

POST-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: WHE82

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets of my own faith.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!



PRE-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: BED84

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4
()	()	☒	()

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets my own faith.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒	()

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒	()

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒	()

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒	()

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒	()

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	☒	()	()

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒	()

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	☒	()	()

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	☒	()	()

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!

By facilitate I mean, get them a place to meet.

POST-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: BED04

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4
()	()	()	☒

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets my own faith.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	☒

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	☒

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	☒

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	☒

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	☒

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒	()

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒	()

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒	()

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒	()

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!

PRE-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: 51792

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets my own faith.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!

POST-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: 51792

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets my own faith.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	()

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!

PRE-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: WES92

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4
()	()	☒	()

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets my own faith.

1	2	3	4
()	☒	()	()

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒	()

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	☒

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	☒

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	☒

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	☒

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	☒	()	()

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	☒	()	()

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	☒

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!

POST-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: WES92

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4
()	(X)	()	()

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets of my own faith.

1	2	3	4
()	(X)	()	()

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(X)	()

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	☒	()	()

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒	()

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒	()

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!



PRE-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: EAS 47

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4
()	(X)	()	()

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets of my own faith.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(X)	()

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(X)	()

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(X)	()



8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	☒	()

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	☒

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	☒

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!

POST-TEST

PERSONAL CODE: EAS 47

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement below on a scale of one to four, where one (1) indicates the least agreement and four (4) indicates the most agreement.

1. Non-theism (Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Humanism, etc.) should be considered a religion for purposes of accommodation under the Constitution, Naval Regulations and Professional Naval Chaplaincy:

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4
()	()	(✓)	()

2. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the tenets of my own faith.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(✓)

3. I could facilitate the religious needs of Non-theists without violating the requirements of my ecclesiastical endorser.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(✓)

4. I have the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(✓)	()

5. I am willing to facilitate the religious practices of Non-theists if asked to do so.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(✓)

6. I am willing to reach out to Non-theists to offer assistance with religious concerns.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(✓)	()

7. I am willing to advocate for the religious rights of Non-theists as I would for members of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	(✓)	()

8. I would advise my Commanding Officer to appoint a Non-theist Lay-Leader if all the ordinary requirements of such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

9. I would support the appointment of a Non-theist Chaplain if all the ordinary requirements for such an appointment were met.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

10. I would refer service members to a Non-theist Chaplain or civilian celebrant for pastoral care as I would to Chaplains of any other religious tradition.

1	2	3	4
()	()	()	(X)

Please record any additional remarks in the space below. Thank you for your participation!

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