

## APPENDIX B

### PRE – AND POST-TEST QUESTIONS: THE CHAPLAINS RESPOND

*“You exist so truly, Lord my God, that You cannot be even though not to exist.”*

Anselm of Canterbury

#### **1. Describe the process/reasons for your becoming a Navy chaplain**

**Chaplain #1** Being a chaplain seemed like the best way for me to combine my interest in the military with my calling to ministry. During the two-year period between graduating from seminary and going for ordination. I applied to be an Intel officer. I didn't get too far in the process, and took this as an indicator that God was validating my call to ministry (funny how I managed to get through seminary and an initial pastorate without getting this square in my mind!). I went for ordination and applied first to the Army. It was right after Desert Storm and they weren't bringing many chaplains directly onto active duty. The Navy was, and 13 years later, I'm still around!

**Chaplain #2** I became a Navy chaplain because God just dumped it in my lap really. My plan through seminary had been to go back to Japan and be a career tent-making missionary, teaching English as a means to have reason to be involved in Japanese people's lives. In their culture, having a valid reason to be involved in their lives is incredibly important. God shut all the doors to Japan, which had been so very open before. The last two times I went there, it only took 2 weeks from idea to concrete position offer and plan. This time, after 5 months, nothing had come together at all, and the resources were far greater. I had contacted the Navy many months before about the chaplaincy, but came to the conclusion it was not for me. The officer recruiter position had been gapped (unbeknownst to me) for months, and was finally filled. On his second day, the new recruiter listened to his message of months prior, contacted me and within a month, I was all set to go before the board. I had to wait 2 months for the board to meet, and after the meeting was called and told I had made it. Quick, easy, not problems, the complete opposite of trying to get back to Japan.

**Chaplain #3** God impressed upon me that I was uniquely qualified for ministry. I had already surrendered to His Call to full-time ministry and was pastoring a church. God confirmed His direction by opening the doors to get endorsement, then a commissioning, and ultimately in coming active duty. At each step of the way there were significant obstacles to overcome (mostly bureaucratic/administrative).

**Chaplain #4** My process of becoming a chaplain, in human terms, began in about 1890 when my great-grandfather Leonard went to sea. After he returned he married and had my grandmother. She married a sailor. Their two daughters, my mother and aunt, both married

sailors. My father's brother was a sailor; my uncle's brother was a sailor. I was raised in the very cradle of the Navy. I took Navy Junior ROTC in High School. The Navy offered me a ROTC scholarship to college in 1976. However, there were too forbidden fields of study, agriculture, and theology. Since I had felt called to the ministry since childhood I passed on the Navy at that time. After college and seminary came fourteen years of pastoring. Then I had an associate pastor who wanted to be a Navy chaplain. I wrote a letter of recommendation for him. The Navy rejected him and invited me instead. Since I had always wanted to be in the Navy, and since I had been at the same church for 12 years, and ready to move on, and since my family supported me, I simply walked into the office and asked where I could sign up. The surprised Officer Programs Director tried all sorts of inducements, but I said, "No, I know what this job is about, and I know the benefits. Just show me the paperwork." The rest is history.

**Chaplain #5** I wanted to give back to my country...and I was hungry (in that order). So, being a Reserve chaplain was a blessing...especially after I came to enlist as a musician reservist something not available in the Navy). I came on active duty after the Reserve experience and the deepening of my own faith.

**Chaplain #6** Having the ability within the system to care for and impact in a positive was the life development of military individuals. Not in the vocational sense – but in support of their development as emotional, personal, and even spiritual selves. As a “federal” chaplain I am able to access 100% of personnel primarily because of the mandate for equality of care and the limiting of any personal/religious agenda I might possess. Becoming a Navy chaplain was a chance for me to serve in a mission field – with resources! To work within the confines of a system so that individuals serving above self might have the opportunity to increase as a direct result of the commitment to serve.

**Chaplain #7** I was interested in going into the Navy officer program when I began college as a chemistry major. As the Lord began to transform my life I became a religion major with an interest in campus ministry. I was attracted to a non-traditional ministry environment focusing upon young people away from home that was multi-ethnic and religiously diverse. While in seminary the Chaplain Corps recruiter came and I was drawn to an environment with the ministry focus I desired and experienced the return of the dream to serve in the Navy. I sense this as my specific call to ministry.

**Chaplain #8** Mostly political. I had been an Air Force Reserve Chaplain for seven years while in the parish ministry before I applied to come on active duty. The Air Force had no need for me, but the Navy did. This was during the big buildup in the mid 80's The process by which I became a chaplain in the first place was a matter of Divine calling, I think. The chaplain who recruited me was simply calling through the Yellow Pages looking for young pastors to talk to about the reserves. When he called me, I answered “yes” instantly. No thought, just reflex. It felt right. I've never looked back. The reasons for which I became a chaplain – looking back on it now may have to do with a faith amount of disillusionment with the parish ministry at the time I received the phone call from the recruiter; a desire to be part of something really BIG; a desire to serve my country; and, I think, most of all a missionary vision of reaching out to people in an

area that is pretty specialized and in a way not everybody can do. All of this I lump together into the idea of Divine Vocation.

**Chaplain #9** The reason and process was totally a “God-thing” for me. I was the Dean of Students at a Bible college in Oklahoma City. I invited our endorsing agent to come and talk with the students about the ministry potential that existed in the military. He came and did so – as he was preparing to leave, I related that I held an interest prior to going to seminary about becoming an Army chaplain. There were few slots available at that time – in fact, I applied but was rejected due to the large amount of other candidates that were more qualified than I. After much talk about the potential of becoming a Reserve chaplain and remaining at the college I agreed to apply for Reserve status. Once I completed the application and submitted it to the endorsing agent along with my resume, he called me and stated that he would not submit my application (on April 2, 1999) as he felt in his spirit that I needed to apply for active duty status in the Navy. I flatly denied that statement was from the Lord. I help no desire to give up my job/ministry at the college and pursue a military career. However, I did prayer, along with my wife, and we felt God opening this door of opportunity for ministry. I decided to apply for active duty status (April 8, 1999). Long story short – on June 7, 1999 I reported to Chaplain School in Rhode Island – two months total prep time from decision to activation.

**Chaplain #10** As a freshman in the high school, I had decided I wanted to into law enforcement and would get my initial training through the military. This was my plan through the end of my high school experience. After a call to ministry and college, while attending seminary, I met with a Navy chaplain recruiter and once again considered military service but this time as a chaplain. After 3 years of ordained ministry in a local church, the call came again from a Navy chaplain I had spoken earlier to consider coming onboard as a chaplain. At the time I was sensing a pending move and was seeking where I might go. This request came at just the right time and almost to the day of my initial enquiry with the endorsing agent, was sworn in to begin my Navy career. That was 12 years ago this September 2004.

**Chaplain #11** After fifteen years of teaching (Special Education Teacher) while assisting chaplains in the ministry, I wanted to become a full time minister – realizing Paul’s admonition to the church of Thessalonica – if no one works, they don’t eat! After praying, I tried to enter the US Air Force as a Chaplain but was disqualified due to the fact that I had asthma as a child and I did not meet the weight standards (although I passed the body fat!). Once receiving word that I had not been accepted into the Air Force, I began my sixteenth year as a teach but not wholeheartedly. One day in November, I took off and decided to spend that time in prayer to God seeking His will for my life. It was during this time that I remembered the words of a trusted friend who told me to seek entry into the gospel ministry through another branch of service. It was during this time that I was connected to the regional Chaplain for the particular area I was in. He began to tell me about the different ministry opportunities the Navy offered and asked me to apply. With some reservation, I applied. Throughout the course of the process I had moments of doubt and disbelief but God proved otherwise. He placed godly people in my life to help me get through this process. When accepted, I was elated; new life had begun in me – What God has for me is for me!

## **2. How has your faith influenced the ministry you provide?**

**#1** In many ways, I suppose I'm an unlikely candidate to be a chaplain. Being an introvert, I find deck plate ministry emotionally exhausting. I would say my faith influences me to step outside my comfort zone to be engaged in people's lives. I remember the trepidation I felt every day as I walked down the pier to my cruiser. Every morning, I'd pray "Lord, there's no way I can do this on my own. You have to give me the strength because I don't have it on my own." The Lord honored that prayer and blessed my ministry. My faith also influences the ministry I provide because like Paul, I believe that influencing people for Jesus is the only eternally significant thing I can while God has me in this life (Phil. 1:22). Finally, I believe that my life isn't mine to do as I please. The love of Christ compels me to no longer live for myself, but for Him who died and was raised again on my behalf (2 Cor. 5:14-15). I am far from epitomizing this standard, but my faith seems to always bring me back to this truth.

**#2** My faith very much influences the ministry I provide. I do try to be sensitive to a person's religious preference, but I will pray with a Marine who tells me he/she is a Christian or believes in the God of the Bible. Also, from a Biblical perspective, many of the problems my counselees experience have logical cause and effect characteristics, which I try to bring out...not so much that the principles come from the Bible, but that the principle is true. An example would be trying to help a young man see how going UA would bring appropriate consequences. The Biblical principle being: One reaps what one sows. I try to help him understand that his actions will have undesired consequences and he would do well to think it through to its logical conclusion before acting.

**#3** They are inseparable. The latter is an expression of the former. My faith tells me God created me and has a plan for my life. That plan is but a small part of His work in this world and requires me to co-labor with Christian brothers and sisters. Without that sense of God's purpose in my life, I would not be able to be a chaplain. There have been several times in my life when I have tried to do other things (CIA, law, business, etc.), but I was never able to continue in a line of work to which I was not called.

**#4** My faith controls my ministry completely. By that I mean that just as Jesus went about doing good, so do I. My life motto has always been, "If you cannot do the good you would, do the good you can." So I do. That applies to the fields of counseling, worship, community relations, and on and on. You didn't ask but since I am on the topic I have never felt a serious conflict between faith and the Navy. The fact is that Navy Regulations ask continuously for improvement in the life and character of its Sailors. I am here to help provide that. I am not a war fighter, but I help make adult people able to make good choices about how they fight the wars. I am here to represent God, which I do to the best of my ability.

**#5** Not only crucial, but necessary as the ministry is mixed with other faith communities and points of focus. I'd lose my reason for being a chaplain if I did not hold to my faith.

**#6** My faith is personal – and in that statement do not read contention. It is the drive – and source – of the interest I have in meeting the needs of others. As a personal power source it motivates ME – something that is more often than not lost on my military constituency. And that

too is OK. In great part the work I do is easy when I forego the “go ye therefore’s” and concentrate on meeting the needs of young people without an agenda – whether they be religious, age-based, cultural, or contrived. For the young military member, as often as not the only “faith” they perceive me to have is more of a hindrance than a help. That’s why they would not cross the street to talk to me – not that I am a bad person; rather, that I am perceived to be “a good person” and therefore only accessible when things are really bad! Of course, that denies me equal and full access and chaplains have to work hard to overcome the stereotypes in order to keep the doors of access open. So...my faith can be a problem – especially when I am trying to “be all things to all people.”

**#7** It is the love of Christ which compels me to go listen to the stories of young Sea Service personnel and tell them of the transforming story of Christ. If they are unwilling or unready to hear the story of Jesus I am still committed to weaving and integrating stories of hope, faith, and joy into their lives to assist them in finding meaning and purpose through healthy spiritual relationships as they grow and serve our nation.

**#8** Two things- faith in God motivates me to do the ministry; what I believe forms the ministry I provide. I believe in God and I am a Christian but I am extremely pluralistic. Some of that comes from my absolute unwillingness to believe that God hates anything he has made. I can’t believe Christians are the only ones in all of his creation that have the truth. Because of that, I must interpret the teaching that Jesus is the way to heaven in the broadest possible sense – that through his person and work all people are saved (whether they believe in him or know him or whether they do not). Following from that, it appears to me that the best place for me is to be in the chaplaincy, reaching out with Good News and pastoral care to a very broad cross section of humanity.

**#9** My faith is essential in providing ministry. My personal faith in the Lordship of Jesus Christ is the foundation upon which I am able to provide ministry to the men and women of the Naval services. In fact, as I look back – I think the main reason that the opportunity of military ministry did not transpire was that God needed to develop within me a faithful heart. I relied – during most of my teen years and early adulthood on what I knew about God in my head instead of what was in my heart (which was not very much at that time...). My faith allows me to boldly pray for those I minister to and know that God will develop men and women of faith as I faithfully submit to Him and minister to His people.

**#10** I serve at God’s will and my service is to make those I serve, i.e., CO, XO, and others successful in their work while bringing to all an understanding of God’s presence in all places and all circumstances. My faith has led me to make this a central theme of ministry and it has been blessed in every command I have worked.

**#11** God has been telling, “We walk by faith – belief in God and not in ourselves – trusting Him even when we do not understand and or see where He is trying to take us and or do in our lives for His glory, His honor, His praise!” I am a faith walker due to the fact of some tragic experiences I had to encounter with no one to trust but Jesus and His written word, which has brought me comfort and direction throughout my own years of despair. Now I have to (it is an

imperative for me) follow His lead, knowing that He will guide me into paths of righteousness for His name's sake! I love Jesus, yes I do, I love Jesus!

### **3. What is the one area of being a Navy chaplain that you find the hardest to accept?**

**#1** Consistent with my introversion, I'm not all that good at playing the role of prophet. One of my greatest regrets is running into two shipmates while on liberty in Thailand. Both were married, but when I encountered them, they were in the company of prostitutes. I was so stunned I didn't know what to say, so I didn't say anything. Both ended up getting divorced. I don't know if saying something would have saved their marriages, but I wished I would have just asked them if they were sure if they wanted to do what they were obviously planning on doing. I believe I had the moral credibility with them to cause them to reconsider, but failed to act. I'm always afraid that I will again fail to act when I should and bring discredit to Christ.

**#2** Nothing about the job itself is difficult to accept however, I find it hard to develop good, solid friendships with female peers. The first reason is because there are simply not many female chaplains in the Navy. Out of the 65 or so attached to Camp Lejeune in one way or another, I am the only female chaplain. The closest one is stationed at Cherry Point. I have become friends with Marine female officers, but as is expected, the rotation cycle moves them away or me away before much can be accomplished. Another factor is that I find myself completely drained both emotionally and physically during my free time, so I don't really have the energy to go out and meet new people.

**#3** Working with other faith groups – pagan, non-Christian, barely Christian.

**#4** The long distances from family. I am on the fourth major deployment in 6 years.

**#6** Personnel with the Chaplain Corps itself – i.e. Chaplains (and their follow) who use their religious endorsement to define vocational ministry. In a sense, abrogating the contractual obligation to provide/facilitate – and care for the 100% in order to shore up the needs of the very few who attend divine services. In that vein – the lack of “blue collar” work ethic when it comes to meeting the needs of the 100%. A mentality that says through action that “services to be provided at 10AM and 2PM” are more important than being instant in season and out. The weakness of line commanders to allow some chaplains to exist within the system in spite of an almost across the board lack of ability within the military construct to carry out life enhancing ministry – i.e. through inflated fitreps, lack of oversight, and inability to direct chaplains to provide effective and interactive ministry within the command structure.

**#7** The increasing marginalization of religious ministry.

**#8** The area of Navy Chaplaincy that I find hardest to accept: the politics. I'm a realist, though, and I know that politics is in everything. I wish chaplains didn't have rank but again I don't know any way around it and keep our work organized and keep the Chaplain Corps viable in an institution that only comprehends rank. The other aspect of politics that is hard for me is political

correctness. Everybody is entitled, no matter how weird or difficult, to his or her lifestyle and to have it validated by the government. And that includes me.

**#9** The hardest thing for me is the lack of cooperation and spirit of teamwork from some within the Chaplain Corps. We preach love and acceptance of a loving God but fail to exhibit this same quality as chaplains toward one another. I am concerned that many of may be actively nailing our own coffins in the area of potential ministry when we take a defensive stance against others or even within our own religious circles.

**#10** That there is little one can do when officers senior to you act with poor judgement and in the end a junior chaplain has no other choice that to take the hit. If I might take liberty to name a second, the practice of senior officers expecting the junior to approach them rather than the senior making first contact. Both of these show poor leadership and speak of a pharisaical spirit rather than one of comradery.

**#11** I am new to the chaplaincy. Therefore I really have not encountered any areas of non-acceptance. Perhaps in a year, I will be able to answer this question.

#### **4. How have you responded to requests for ministry from persons outside of you faith group or tradition?**

**#1** I'm a believer in collegiality. It's a hallmark of the chaplaincy that isn't replicable in the civilian pastorate. That being said, I do not receive many requests for religious support in my current job owing to the fact that I'm in a niche billet.

**#2** I will do whatever it is that I can do to facilitate the meeting of their religious needs. I have no problem finding a Muslim Imam for an Islamic person who needs to worship in his way. I do not consider facilitation a compromise to my faith in any sense.

**#3** I have ensured they have supplies, materials, and logistic support for their group.

Two reasons – 1) God created them with a choice. They are entitled to make their own decisions with regard to faith expression. Many times this means a person will decide something radically different than what God desires (based upon God's Word). 2) If the individual isn't provided for, then the most conservative, orthodox Christian is in jeopardy of losing the same support.

**#4** Those requests are frequent and an important part of ministry. I have helped Jewish and Muslim sailors and Marines get kosher meals, Catholics find a place to get married (I am an Episcopalian), Muslims struggling with their faith/ethnic identity/ and the US policies to the Middle East. All you have to do is love people and do well by them; Jesus gave us the definition of doing unto others, as we would have them do for us.

**#6** To turn away people because they are not my flavor is the very sin that got us 247 kinds of Baptists, a divided church, and inability for various faith traditions (and religions) to come to some sort of peaceful dialogue. When we DO NOT respond to people – with and without faith – we make our ministry about US. This casts a poor light on our commitment to decrease while he

increases. In truth, when we violate the communal trust to love one and all – as Jesus and the Father were one – we show a face all too common in the world of discord – a sullen face that most recognize very well.

As a statement of fact based on my experience: Almost every single event that I have been asked to do – and that includes 5 deployments into the war zones over the past year to do return and reunion/suicide/prevent/life skill GMT – comes from persons outside of my faith – rather the alacrity, energy, and professionalism that is brought to the event at hand. Whether a change of command prayer – and that’s a whole other story – or a deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan to provide face to face contact of a personal nature – my faith endorsement put me in uniform (like having a union card!) – but it’s what God does with you as you wander the private lives of these oft-maligned servants that makes all the difference.

**#7** I listen to their story and look for connecting points to assist them in their journey. I pray for them. I live a life before them that reflects the hope, joy, love, and power of my faith tradition and a God who cares. I listen with compassion. I point them to their preferred resources for spiritual growth and invite them to consider other options.

**#8** I have responded to requests for prayer and services from many faith groups. Example: yesterday I took the request for funeral (graveside) services for a Jewish veteran. The family wanted a Rabbi but none was available. So the Jewish Lay Leader and I cooperated in the service. He spoke all the Hebrew parts and I did the rest of the ceremony. It was a learning experience for both of us and the family found the whole thing just perfect – just what they wanted for their loved one.

**#9** Yes – I have worked with and provided “Blessing of the Fleet” prayers at a Catholic Church for a Catholic Community as they blessed the emergency vehicles of the community. I have dedicated children of Catholic and Jewish faith parents (with them knowing I was a Protestant Christian Chaplain).

**#10** I understand my role as a minister to reach out to every person who may need ministry. If their faith tradition is different from mine, I still have an obligation to meet them where they are and to provide for them as best I can through materials or finding someone who can assist them. If I can’t provide myself, I find someone who can.

**#11** N/A – I have to share with them what I know. I can’t give them anything else. I will direct them in other areas but what and or who I am they will get!!!

## **5. Define the following:**

### Pluralism

**#1** In purely theological terms, I’m not a pluralist or even much of an ecumenist. That being said, I believe strongly that I can have fellowship with any Christian who holds to the historic foundations of orthodox Christianity. I see pluralism not so much in theological terms but rather in terms of social policy. Democratic societies function best when there is mutual respect and



tolerance between religious or ethnic groups. To answer your question directly, I am a strong advocate for social pluralism, but not theological pluralism. It's a realist's response, but it has so far proved workable for me.

**#2** Pluralism to me is the state in which varying religious viewpoints co-exist in harmony for a purpose outside of each of their respective messages.

**#3** Being who you claim to be, expecting others to be who they claim to be, and tolerating the differences.

**#4** We are all here jostling with each other. I don't have to become what you are, though you and I are both free to present what we are and invite people to join us.

**#6** The concept that advocates for a "people-centric" approach to the imponderable mysteries of faith and life.

**#7** A recognition of the diversity of religious experience, allowing different traditions to coexist. To be a protagonist for your faith without being an antagonist for another's faith.

**#8** As contrasted with "universalism" which I understand to be the idea that "all paths lead to heaven," I think of pluralism not from a human point of view but from what I imagine God might be thinking. All the different faiths and religions and points of view are neither right nor wrong. They just are. Whether we think they are sufficient for anything at all, i.e., getting to heaven, living a good life, whatever...they simply are and they have a right to be.

**#9** Understanding and respecting difference of religious traditions.

**#10** The practice of being able to work with persons from varied backgrounds to provide a comprehensive ministry to all. One's faith needs never to be compromised with this practice.

**#11** Although we have these words, they do not really exercise this because Christians are not allowed to exercise their religious beliefs freely. If we are allowed to use the name of Jesus freely like we should, many would convert and this is what the evil spirits do not want to occur. Nevertheless, the name of the Lord is a strong tower and the righteous runneth unto it and is safe.

### Civil Religion

**#1** Civil religion has been coined by some (in my experience, disparagingly) to describe religion that has been denuded of its spiritual distinctiveness. I concur with this view, but my commitment to pluralism means that I do not close public prayers "in Jesus' name." I feel that a prayer should be something that most people can say amen to; if an Imam closed his prayer in the name of Allah, I'd feel excluded. I know many chaplains will cite a never-named Rabbi friend, who says, "I expect a Christian to close a prayer in Jesus' name," but I suspect that citation may be partially anecdotal. Again, I sound something of an idealist, but that's how I have personally reconciled the tension.

**#2** Civil religion to me is religion rooted in American traditions, not any one faith necessarily, which gives all persons involved regardless of religious background, a sense of holiness or the presence of divinity in a public ceremony.

**#3** When pomp & circumstance, ceremony, tradition, custom, patriotism, etc. become a religious belief or expression for a given person.

**#4** Religion without God. In other words, having the Chaplain say nice things about a ceremony without offending anybody or talking to God about it. I don't know how to practice that religion so I just pray to the Christian God about what we are doing and invite others to join in.

**#6** A corporate-centric (or culturally-based) interest in the sublime – underscoring man's need to humility, connectedness, and goodness.

**#7** A religious perspective which endorses the general spiritual and ethical standards shaped by the state or society. Loyalty to God through loyalty to the state.

**#8** I think of this as the nation's or state's way of invoking the Divine blessing on its existence and its actions and conceiving of God as being somehow interested in and guiding the affairs of the state. This has nothing to do with salvation. It's what the Lutherans call, "the Kingdom of the Left" – God's authority given to duly constituted authority to keep order and mete out justice. This is different from the "divine right of kings" but the subtlety of the difference is lost on many. I know that many think our government has become increasingly hostile to religion in the past few decades but I don't think that's true. The government is so pluralistic that it regards all equally under the law and it is so single mindedly focused on the welfare of the state that it cannot deal with an idea of God who focuses his love and energy through Christians only.

**#9** A generic act of worship which may or may not provide any real meaningful worship.

**#10** The practice of combining civil law with religion as it involves the state and a person's practice of faith in a public setting verses the private belief and practice.

### Meaningful worship

**#1** Any worship is meaningful if focused on glorifying God. There are obviously many styles of worship, so I see the "meaningful" aspect as subjective. That's okay. Because of our individuality, some people prefer one style to another. Where I do get nervous is when one group espouses that their style is superior to others – in my book that becomes counterproductive.

**#2** Meaningful worship is worship that is truly faith specific to the individual. For example, myself as a Christian would not be able to have meaningful worship in a Mormon religious service. Meaningful worship must contain within it, the specifics of one's faith and most probably, that to the exclusion of any other contradictory faith practice.

**#3** When God experiences a connection with His people. Most of the time "meaningful worship" is used to describe how a worshipper feels, but Christian worship should always have Christ as its focus, not the individual.

**#4** Connecting people to God, whether they are in the field or the chapel.

**#6** The process by which the faithful are transformed by the renewing of their minds and thereby prove what God's will is by acting out the fruits of the Spirit. It is most definitely not something that only happens on Sunday AM!

**#7** An encounter with God in community that engages my sensory, intellectual, spiritual, and physical being.

**#8** I like what James Fowler says about faith. It is a "meaning making activity." It's how what you believe helps you make meaning out of the stuff that happens to you and the stuff that you do. Or, with Rabbi Kushner, he may wonder what it means "When Bad Things Happen to Good People." In other words, the event is processed within a faith-frame of reference and meaning is understood or comfort received. Meaningful worship is a lot like that. It's not just a style of worship within my comfort zone, although it is partly that. Meaningful worship is worshipping in such a way that I am helped to understand myself and what's happening to me in such a way that I am helped to enjoy my life as the gift God intended. Many elements figure into this idea – music, scripture, good preaching (!), the fellowship of like-minded person, the sharing of the miracle of human caring, gracious surroundings that point to the transcendent and don't simply reflect what's architecturally popular at the time the church was built.

**#9** Any truly heart felt expression of adoration to God that is intended to elicit modification in attitude and servitude of God.

**#10** Worship that draw the worshipper into substantive contact with the one who is being worshipped. It is communication with one's God.

### Free Exercise of Religion

**#1** My definition is allied with my understanding of pluralism. It means that people have a statutory right to worship according to their personal convictions, or not worship at all. This does not imply a no-holds-barred, anything goes type of antinomianism, however. Freedom is not the freedom to do anything you want; it is the freedom to do as you ought. Applied to religion, this means that I may exercise my right to worship as I please, but at a minimum, I must be tolerant of others right to do the same. As chaplains, we have a responsibility to ensure that this right is unhindered within the broader context of good order and discipline. Sometimes I sense that chaplains are more concerned about their own personal right of religious expression without being concerned about the other's rights as well. It may be a fine line at times, but it's a tension we need to live with.

**#2** Free exercise of religion is the right and privilege granted to every American by Title 10 of the United States Code and the United States Constitution. "Congress shall not establish religion nor prohibit the free exercise thereof." Service members of the military are granted chaplains who are there to provide for such freedom, as operational commitments allow.

**#3** The freedom to express one's religious beliefs.

**#4** The very Constitutional reason why I exist, to facilitate the freedom of religion of our service members.

**#6** When people can actually worship – or not worship – in truth without fear of reprisal AND with the protection of those agencies who value the results of that pluralism on the longevity of a good society.

**#7** Our essential right as Americans to believe and practice religious beliefs according to our custom or conscience.

**#8** Every person has a constitutionally guaranteed right to practice within his/her religious tradition without danger of being oppressed or persecuted for it. The government must not say to anyone that what he/she believes and practices is wrong. The government may not even go so far as to help provide and/or facilitate one faith group more than another because this would be a mild form of “establishment.”

**#9** The right granted to all the opportunity to worship and perform religious practice a they feel compelled as long as those acts do not infringe upon the rights of others.

**#10** All persons have the right to practice their faith as long as their practice does not infringe on the rights of others.

#### “Cooperation without Compromise”

**#1** I’ve found this motto of the Chaplain Corps to be largely true. I’ve personally never been pressured to compromise a theological or moral position I’ve held for the sake of cooperation, but I know of others who feel they have been.

**#2** Cooperation without compromise is in essence to me, pluralism, in that the varying religious viewpoints and person co-exist in harmony for the purpose of providing for the free exercise of religion of any and all service members and authorized persons in the military context.

**#3** Getting along with people you don’t agree with.

**#4** How we do things. I cooperate with Catholics, Jews, and all manner of Protestants to bring the service members to God, to meaningful worship and whatever else they may need. I don’t have to attack those of other groups, though where appropriate I certainly have the freedom to exercise my right to speak on behalf of what I think is good and right.

**#6** A clear mandate to put the needs of the member ahead of your own – even when you think you’ve got it all going in the right direction. What is key? Remembering it is not about you – within the military construct. Chaplains who consider compromise a “black mark” are probably best left for the local parish and not a military/industrial vocation.

**#7** An effort to respectfully co-labor with persons of divergent religious perspectives while remaining true to one’s own for the benefit of the common community or institution. A prayer-filled endeavor!

**#8** Coming from a pluralistic framework, this notion expresses the ideal that we will help each other as much as we can yet still stay true to our own faith groups. Further, it means that we consider ourselves a team – all different players in different positions, yet one team whose goal is to provide ministry to all under the first amendment. To define roles and goals within this ideal is challenging. To do casuistry is virtually impossible. Working under this vision requires immense patience, broad-mindedness, and a fundamental respect for each person and each faith tradition.

**#9** Obligation of clergy to cooperate as fully with members of other faith traditions in making the free exercise of religious expression possible for everyone while still keeping true faithfulness with their own traditions.

**#10** Working cooperatively with persons of other faith traditions to accomplish a comprehensive ministry without the need to give up one's personal faith and how it is practiced.

### Faith

**#1** Trusting God enough to be obedient to what he says, even when everything else around you is screaming at you do the exact opposite.

**#2** Faith is choosing to subscribe to a system of thoughts and ideas that are not readily provable or significantly evident.

**#3** “The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen.”

**#4** Scripture tells us it is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see, Hebrews 11:1 NIV.

**#6** Something that is mine – not necessarily yours! It has great personal import – is valuable to me and my own development – and a great start for ministry.

**#7** An active pursuit and trust in God with an expectation of fulfillment of Divine promises.

**#8** Many think of faith from a doctrinal/traditional/historical standpoint – faith as “Knowledge, Assent, and Trust.” Others prefer to define it within relational terms – God and the believer live within a “relationship” that is called faith. I agree with all of that. What we believe helps us to believe. However, coming from the development-constructive school of psychological thought, I prefer to add to it the insights described under “meaningful worship,” i.e., faith as a “meaning making activity.”

**#9** Knowing without evidence, believing without seeing and trusting without having fact – all of these comprise the characteristic of faith.

**#10** Trusting one's God to be and do in his own time just as he has promised without doubt or the loss of patience.

## POST-TEST QUESTIONS

### **1. Having read reflections from a number of different traditions, what, if any, change can you identify in how you might respond to requests for ministry from persons outside of your faith group or tradition?**

#1 None. I'm always willing to do all I can to support someone's request, whether or not they are of similar faith. Hopefully, this should be a given for all chaplains since this falls under the aegis of protecting the free exercise of religion. One of the biggest takeaways for me was the need to offer programs for people who won't come to a worship service but are nonetheless interested in "spirituality." I have an obligation to meet their needs, yet I can use this dialogue about spirituality or religion to address people's underlying preconceptions. Underlying the religious beliefs of many of the non-Christian respondents is a worldview that people don't often think about explicitly. People should explore these often-ill-defined conceptions if they are to have an intellectually complete faith. By addressing the structure of these worldviews, I can address the relative strengths and weaknesses of the religions that are built upon them. Obviously, I must be an honest broker in this; people will see right through it if all I do is try to convince them that my brand of evangelical Christianity is better than anything else. But I can also walk people through an analysis of their world views so that they can see why I believe a Christian perspective offers more explanatory power than any other.

But just like any other chaplain, I cannot accommodate some requests for theological reasons or due to matters of conscience. I do however need to balance pluralism with my commitment to conscience and theological principal. Based on reflections, 1-6, I sense that trying to build a faith community out of so many divergent perspectives on faith and pluralism would be impossible with compromising my conscience. I certainly respect the beliefs and convictions of those who take different views than I do. That's the nature of pluralism, and pluralism is the right thing for a diverse society to function. But I do not endorse wholesale ecumenism since I believe it robs spirituality of a basic element: a faith that is centered on the person of Jesus Christ. Spirituality as a generic pursuit apart from a deeper, more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ has little personal interest for me, but as I said, I will provide some programs in order to subtly influence people's world views and also because I have a responsibility to do so as a guarantor of social pluralism.

Many of the reflections (#23, #24, & #25) are written by people who started off with the church, then got turned off. It challenges me to seek ways to incrementally move these people towards biblical Christianity. Lastly, I am reminded of the incredible responsibility I have as an ambassador of Christ. What I say, do, or how I act can draw people closer to God or drive them further away. One of the reflections, written by a Coast Guardsmen, hides us chaplains for "not being there when I needed you." The realities aside, people expect us chaplains to be all things for all people. This isn't realistic, but I think we can sometimes reject the idea outright instead of trying to move out of our personal comfort zones. I can't be ALL things to ALL people, but I can be MORE things to MORE people than I currently am!

#3 None.

**#4** Since I have already been doing so much of what the pained sailors and family members ask I cannot imagine too much else to add or change.

**#5** Well... I guess my hackles are up a little over some of the slots we all find in faith. Industrial and institutional faith has never been my forte and is out of the mission focus of a God of Love for me... of course, that's from my limited view and I know that this kind of structure is so necessary for so many. My want is for the structure to fit the focus... the mission.

**#7** Having heard similar sailor and family faith journeys or stories over 20 years there is not significant change produced by the reflections read here.

**#8** No change. I'm already about as pluralistic as I need to be in my vocation and my life. All of the reflections I've read reinforce my view that people will believe what they must (or prefer). Their early training may influence consciously or unconsciously but people these days feel free to believe what suits them. The difficulty that presents in trying to minister to people is that we have only a barely rudimentary "common language" of morality, ethics, traditions, or anything that will help us cooperate and communicate.

**#10** I don't think I would respond any different to those of another faith tradition. I see my role as one who must facilitate for them and will carry on this important role in any circumstance.

## **2. In what has the interaction with members of other faith groups, including other chaplains, affected the understanding and practice of your own ministry?**

**#1** I think the basic collegiality that is demanded of chaplains has been helpful. One chaplain mentor of mine rarely asks chaplains up front what faith group they are. To him, a chaplain is a chaplain. Faith distinctives do matter, but there is a basic fellowship between clergy in uniform that defies theological pigeonholing.

I believe I have been most challenged in the practice of my ministry by those who are more to the right than to the left of me on the theological spectrum. I see myself as a right-of-center conservative; those who are more conservative tend to challenge my thinking more and have provided me with better professional and personal stimulation than those to my left or those of other faith groups altogether.

**#3** I was not trained in the "Christian Calendar." My first assignment as a chaplain was with a very seasoned Catholic. He taught me a lot. I have incorporated much into the seasons of the year.

**#4** Many others have helped me immensely. In my current job I have a Charismatic worship leader, while I am a "rather reserved" Episcopalian. Since Jesus does not give me room to demand conformity to me, but only to him, we both work together wonderfully well. My prime mentor is Church of Christ, non-instrumental. So I get help from that direction too. My official interview was given to me by a Jewish Rabbi, so my appreciation of that side is also strong. However, in all that I have tried to remain true to Jesus and Scripture and not simply be blown about by every wind of doctrine.

#5 Soured me on many occasions; warmed my heart on many more. Most find God or build upon self; I celebrate the first as I would in any congregation.

#7 They have expanded my understanding and amazement for the richness of the human spiritual quest and the multiplicity of ways persons worship, celebrate, and live out their relationship with God in community. I am often intrigued by how much faith can impact their daily lives for some, yet remain on the fringe for others. With chaplains I'm encouraged by how unyielding some can be in holding to their faith tradition, yet find the grace to assist Sailors and Marines where they are and enable them to live better if not for the highest purpose. These encounters with such diverse perspectives have helped me to refine and more clearly define where I stand theologically and where I must operate or conduct ministry that is authentic and characterized by integrity. I learned over the years to seek biblical perspectives for what I can.

#8 In my career as a military chaplain spanning nearly 25 years so far in the reserves and on active duty, I came first to tolerate certain other faith groups; eventually, with the experiences of working together and sharing experiences, I came to respect them and what they believed. The toleration grew not only into respect but also in some cases admiration and gratefulness for the things their traditions add. But this was only with certain faith groups within my comfort zone, i.e., Protestantism. Eventually I became comfortable with tolerating Catholics, Jews, and Muslims and other theistic religions. And then the comfort grew into the same kind of respect and gratitude I came to feel for my fellow Protestants. I have come to accept and tolerate almost any and every faith tradition in what one can call "world religion" at this point in my faith journey; I'm working on the respect part.

#10 I know that others have a sincere understanding of what their own faith tradition is and that it is very important to them. This knowledge guides me as I try to provide for those of different faith backgrounds and maintain a sincere respect for their faith traditions.

### **3. Briefly describe a sermon or message that you offer describing to your congregation these reflections.**

#1 I'm not sure I would offer a sermon on what I've learned based on these reflections. That is not to say that I have not been touched or influenced by them; as I mentioned under question #1, reading these reflections will have an impact upon how I deliver pastoral care to people. It will also help me in how I will shepherd people towards spiritual growth. Regarding the reflections reminds me that the process of Christian discipleship is usually never as tidy or as lockstep as I'm prone to think it is.

#4 When I preach in Chapel I preach the gospel on a systemic basis. Therefore I regularly come to such passages as "Our Father..." Once I preached an entire sermon on what it means to say "Our Father." By no means am I a squishy liberal. But oftentimes conservatives are portrayed as hard, mean, and generally unhappy with life. I don't think Jesus was called a friend of sinners for nothing. I think he was invited to their parties, as the Bible attests he was, because he was the kind of guy they wanted to be with I try to model that, teach that, and preach that. Paul tells us



that he wasn't called to baptize but to preach. I think he meant that nobody's church or denomination will save, but only Christ. Therefore I can enjoy whatever God brings to me, or to my flock as Chaplain, without having to ask if it is truly Anglican. Instead I can be an Anglican / Episcopalian, and enjoy all that God is doing.

#7 There was a man who saw three paths. He pondered, "Do they all lead to the top of the same mountain or will following each lead to a different mountain peak?" So he chose a path and began the journey meeting other sojourners along the way. He experienced healing and hope, a bit of confusion, but wouldn't stop until he truth on one path, or the other.

#8 I could not preach such a sermon at this point in my ministry. People don't want to hear it. They look for other things in sermons. I might be able to write an article or a book on it someday. But I'd still have to think about it seriously and only would do it if I had any idea it would help anybody who struggles with the same things.

#10 Love Sincerely From A Pure Point:

#1 My positive response to others a reflection of God's work in me.

#2 My positive response to others an opportunity to share the love of God.

#3 My positive response to others an opportunity to practice my own faith.

#4 My positive response to others creates an opportunity for further dialogue for ministry.

Closing point – how we respond to others no matter what their faith background must be influenced by our personal response to God in the practice of our own faith. A right response to God will bring a right response to others.

#### **4. Have you ever been asked to facilitate a faith group/individual whose needs you were uncomfortable meeting? Please describe.**

#1 My experience has been limited to individuals asking me to conduct weddings. Generally, I almost always say yes, but I also do tell people where I am coming from in terms of what I believe. For instance, after telling people that I do not believe or support them living together, many decline to pursue me further. I am preparing myself for what I will do for Wiccans when I report to my next command. I will tell them that I will support them fully in their constitutional rights, but that their exercise of faith must be within the confines of command policy. I do not see this as a compromise. It is part of the "price" of serving as a chaplain.

#3 One of the reflections was from a Jewish JAG. He indicated that chaplains had provided supplies and help with logistics, but fell short of providing the "spiritual" or "pastoral counseling" that he needed. I can provide supplies. I can ensure space is available for worship. I can encourage lay leaders. But I cannot counsel on the spiritual or pastoral plane apart from Christ. I was once asked to do a wedding. Both originally indicated they were evangelicals. Before I can wed a couple, I require counseling. In this case, it became apparent that both individuals were skipping from one religious background to another, with the belief that "all roads lead home." That which determines whether a person is a Christian or not (where you

stand on the death, burial, and resurrection) was completely lacking. I was unable to continue counseling and did not oversee the wedding.

**#4** Yes, I have helped with the Wiccan needs on several ships and stations. One of my best friends on one deployment was a Wiccan, which he hid from me for months for fear that I would do something, I don't know what, to him. But despite that discomfort with their beliefs, I have had to defend them to the XO or CO who wanted to stamp out Wiccan practice. Do I like Wiccan commitments? No, but I do believe that my freedom or religion depends on theirs.

**#7** I did on several occasions. I made arrangements where they could have a place for their meeting and religious expression that was distinct from the chapel where Christian worship was conducted and allocated resource for their sacred text and religious artifacts. This allowance for their "free exercise" was mutually acceptable.

**#8** When I was the director of the Lay Leader program onboard the USS George Washington, CVN73m I was asked by a shipmate to facilitate his free exercise of his Wiccan faith. We had a Native American group onboard of which he had briefly been a part but this was not meeting his needs. He style himself as the prospective Pagan Lay Leader for the ship. Wicca was his faith but he wanted to reach out to all those who saw themselves in the pagan traditions. I asked my Command Chaplain if I really had to do this. He set me to the task of researching Title X and SECNAV and all the rest. I found that it had to be done. I objected on the grounds of the vows of my ordination and all my Christian conscience. He graciously agreed to facilitate the group himself.

**#10** I have never been asked to facilitate the needs of another that made me feel uncomfortable. Many times I have been asked by persons of faith groups such as Muslim, Buddhist, Wicca, Orthodox, Jewish, or Sikh to assist them in the practice of their faith. Each time I have successfully worked out the needs and provided for their faith practices.

**5. Given the diverse nature of the military faith community and your own experiences in this ministry setting, what advice would you give a civilian clergy person who was considering entering the Navy as a chaplain?**

**#1** Being a chaplain is not for everyone. It demands a degree of theological flexibility. Conservatives of all religions will likely find this challenge more daunting than progressives, but I would encourage a conservative to join the military because chaplains of their perspective are needed for the system to work, and the same is true for the progressive. If that Independent Fundamental Churches of America (IFCA) pastor doesn't join the military, who will meet the needs of fundamentalist military members? Will there be tensions that this IFCA chaplain will have to thread? Yes, but those tensions are worth bearing in order to have the opportunity to influence people for Christ. The same obviously is true for everyone else. There is also a lot to be said for the incredible diversity of ministry as a military chaplain. A former pastor of mine has written that ministers are true renaissance people. If this is true, then how much more so are

military chaplains! As someone who has an intuitive attraction to the renaissance man persona, this in itself is enough of a reason to join the military.

Charles, thanks for your efforts to put this all together. I wanted to participate because I am doing a D.Min dissertation myself. Though it was a bit intimidating to me when I saw that I needed to read 60 faith reflections, I quickly found that the experience challenged my thinking. I hope to revisit your site from time to time to refresh myself on the complexities of spiritual growth. And when you turn your dissertation into a book, I will gladly buy it!

**#3** “If you can do anything else with a clear conscience – do it.” Having said that, I would start again in a heartbeat – no regrets, no second thoughts.

**#4** There is no place more like heaven on earth than the military. There are people of every race, every orientation, and every kind mostly pulling for one goal. You will be confronted with the best and the worst of humanity. You will be challenged to grow beyond yourself and your tradition and trust God. Heaven, I think, will be much more like the military than the Church. Churches tend to be affinity groups of people who are like each other in belief, race, and class. Not so heaven, and not by choice, but necessity. God does that to us too. He makes us work with people who aren't just like us and not at all what we would have chosen. It is also about young people and family ministry. You get to play with Marines and also go to sea. Who would want anything more?

**#7** Find an operative guiding principle which allows you to conduct your ministry with compassion and integrity. For me it is two-fold: I am called to “Render unto God what is God's and unto Caesar what is Caesar's.” I am commissioned to ensure my fellow sea service personnel have the opportunity for the free exercise of their religion.

**#8** First and foremost, abandon the idea that the Navy is hiring you to be a Lutheran, Methodist, Catholic, Jewish (denominational) chaplain. Such a thing does not exist in the Navy. You are permitted and indeed encouraged by both church and state to provide freely for those of your own denomination. However, you are not only permitted to facilitate and care for all others, you are ordered to do so.

Second, if this is out of your comfort zone, don't despair. We are a team. Nobody is going to make you do something you can't do. Not only would your endorsement be in jeopardy, we would be doing you a disservice as a fellow chaplain.

Third, understand that, although this is fundamentally MISSIONARY WORK, you are not allowed to proselytize. Bluntly, if you believe your faith requires you to convert everybody to faith in Jesus Christ and that if you don't keep faith with this requirement your own soul is in jeopardy, rethink your decision to be a chaplain. The thing you are permitted to do is bear witness within certain parameters; what you are constrained from is bearing that witness within circumstances when that would not be appropriate, e.g., a public (Civil Religion) prayer at a Change of Command. It may take some time to become comfortable with that part of your mission. Be patient with yourself. The opportunities are still there, and the rewards are great.

Fourth, learn every day about somebody else's faith. Don't be a "one trick pony" – a chaplain who can only do one thing. Be useful. Look and think and learn every day. When someone from a faith group different from yours asks you to pray, know what you can and can't do in advance from the standpoint both of your own willingness and your church body's requirements. You may be surprised at how far you may be permitted to journey with that person down their path.

Last, understand that being a chaplain is a divine vocation. If you do become a chaplain, let it be because God has called you to a unique ministry. Military chaplaincy is not just a job. Nor is it an escape from the emptiness or abuse one sometimes feels in parish ministry. You will be part of an incredibly diverse team and you will do some powerful work in some very unique locations, often at times, when life and death hang in the balance. It takes a specialized kind of person to even desire to do this much less be good at it.

**#10** It is truly an opportunity to "Be all things to all people." Never be afraid to engage others from different backgrounds and to provide and facilitate care for all. In the end it leaves the sweet aroma of Christ wherever you go. Blessings!