

## GLOSSARY

*“I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken.”*

Oliver Cromwell

“Glossary, a list of difficult, technical, or foreign terms with definition or translations, as for some particular author, field of knowledge, etc.”<sup>1</sup>

**Chaplain:** A clergy or faith group representative endorsed by the faith group to serve in ministry in an institutional or non-congregational setting. The vast majority of Navy chaplains have parish experience that is both a blessing and bane for all concerned. It is a blessing because it provides chaplains with valuable pastoral skills in leading worship, counseling, organizational leadership. It takes on the nature of a bane because chaplains are used to “running” their own programs. Chaplains function in a specialty ministry but they also function as Navy staff officers. This is not always easy for chaplains to do or remember. Another way of looking at chaplains is to say that a chaplain is a person who will listen, even when others won’t. A chaplain is a person who treats others with civility, humor, and grace. A chaplain is a person who cares about the needs of others and is willing to get involved to help make people’s worlds a little bit brighter, safer, and hope filled.

**Civil Religion:** In the tumultuous years leading up to the formation of the Republic, philosophers such as Jean Jacques Rousseau contributed a great deal to the thought processes of the Founders. He coined the term, “Civil Religion” in his treatise, “On the Social Contract” (1762). “There is, therefore, a purely civil profession of faith of which the Sovereign should fix the articles, not exactly as religious dogmas, but as social sentiments without which a man cannot be a good citizen or a faithful subject.” He also stated that “Now that there is and can be no longer an exclusive national religion, tolerance should be given to all religions that tolerate others, so long as their dogmas contain nothing contrary to the duties of citizenship.”<sup>2</sup>

The concept of civil religion is expressed in non-faith specific culturally shared affirmations expressed in public forums or ceremonies. These affirmations are widely, but never unanimously held by society, since nothing is ultimately held unanimously by the society. Examples of

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<sup>1</sup> Neufeldt, Victoria, Ed. Webster’s New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988, page 575.

<sup>2</sup> Mullen, David G., Ed., Religious Pluralism in the West, Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 1998, page 185 (Jean Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract and Discourses, tr. G. D. H. Cole, London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1913).

practices in USAmerica include standing for the National Anthem at sporting events and the observance of certain civic holidays such as Memorial Day, Mother’s Day, and Independence Day. In the Sea Services, civil religion is observed in retirement and change of command ceremonies, the Navy and Marine Corps anniversary balls, and more. Examples of the use and conflicts within the Seas Services regarding civil religion is an anticipated part of the faith journey reflections that were solicited as part of this project.

**Congregation:** The congregation I serve is comprised of active-duty military personnel, currently numbering some 171,152 Marines, 39,000 Coast Guardsmen, and 381,135 in the Navy. The number increases when the reserves of the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and the Merchant Marine are included. These numbers do not begin to touch upon the breadth of the community, for it also includes tens of thousands family members, retirees, civil servants, contractors, and other civilians who live in close proximity to military communities. This congregation lives and works on every continent, and Navy chaplains are called to offer ministry and services wherever the mission of the Sea Services demands. The faith traditions represented in the Fleet are staggering. The chaplains who provide this ministry currently represent more than eighty faith groups. I am an ordained minister in The United Methodist Church which endorses me to serve as a chaplain in the U. S. Navy.

**“Cooperation Without Compromise”** The Code of Ethics of the U. S. Navy Chaplain Corps says in part: “I understand, as a Navy chaplain, I must function in a pluralistic environment with chaplains and delegated representatives of other religious bodies to provide for ministry to all military personnel and their families entrusted to my care... I will work collegially with chaplains and delegated representatives of religious bodies other than my own as we seek to provide the most complete ministry possible to our people. I will respect the beliefs and traditions of my colleagues and those to whom I minister.”

This code is lived out in the commitment of chaplains to work collegially with chaplains of various faith groups toward common goals and addressing spiritual needs common to military personnel. It speaks of the necessity of individual chaplains to discern the faith boundaries of where he or she cannot be flexible without the loss of integrity from other areas where flexibility and “compromise” are not incompatible with the essential teachings of the faith group that endorses the chaplain.”

Chaplains are to unite, as one Chaplain Corps motto says, in providing innovative ministry to the personnel of the Sea Services. Chaplains are not lone rangers and cannot function effectively in that sense. Only by achieving the balance between being faithful to their faith traditions and supporting the faith of those around them does “cooperation without compromise” evolve from cliché to opportunity for ministry. A chaplain does not compromise his/her core faith belief system and is willing to cooperate with others... even those folk who believe differently from him/her, this is the heart of “cooperation without compromise.”

**Faith Community / Community of Faith:** A faith community is a synonym for a larger denomination, church, or religious system or tradition. In the context of the Sea Services, a faith community may well be understood to encompass not only the members of a specific sect within a denomination or faith group but other denominations as well. Using myself as an example might help to illustrate this point. I am a member of several faith communities, each one incorporating increasingly larger and more diverse groups and people. First, I am a member of The United Methodist Church, which is a member of those churches that trace their spiritual roots to the Wesley brothers in 18<sup>th</sup> century England. Second, I am a Protestant, a branch of Christianity that includes the churches of the west that consider themselves apart from the Roman Catholic Church. Not only am I a Protestant, but I am also a liturgical Protestant. This would include denominations such as Lutherans, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians. The Sea Services distinguishes between Protestants noting the differences between liturgical and non-liturgical Protestants centering on the ability of the chaplain to baptize infants or not.

A community of faith on the other hand, represents those members who gather themselves together to observe and practice their faith with those of similar beliefs. Communities of faith in the Sea Services range from person gathering to worship together in a particular worship style in a chapel to scripture study groups aboard ship to the various focus groups such as the Protestant Women of the Chapel and Catholic confirmation classes.

**Religious Diversity:** This is a descriptive term, objectively orientated, that deals with the fact that there are a variety of faith groups and religious beliefs present within a segment of society (such as the military) or within the society as a whole. Religious diversity rejects the notion of sameness, that is, a “one size fits all” approach to religion. One who can say that he/she accepts religious diversity accepts the presence of other faith groups without feeling that his or her own faith is lessened by their presence. Religious diversity accepts the belief of the uniqueness of the belief held by each person. The explosive growth in the last few decades of twentieth century of the religious life in USAmerica poses significant challenges to religious leaders of every stripe as well as to the secular leaders of the nation. Diversity places numerous demands upon the inter-relationships of people who are coming into ever increasing contact and conflict with their fellow citizens, people of differing views and beliefs. Navy chaplains who are asked to facilitate the beliefs of this diverse assortment of faith adherents need to understand the other person’s beliefs as well as their own core beliefs. Religious diversity involves persons whose beliefs are often not only distinct from a position held by the chaplain but are coming into increasing conflict with the chaplain and the traditional approaches to military ministry.

**Religious Pluralism:** Along with diversity, pluralism is a term that is widely used and misunderstood. It is an interpretive term, values oriented, that addresses the appropriate ways that faith adherents understand and practice their own faith while interacting with those of other faiths (or no faith) in secular or institutional settings. It is an amazingly complex and elusive term with as many definitions as can be imagined. Pluralism is defined in the Random House

College Dictionary as being “A theory that there is more than one basic or principle.” When applied to the arena of religion, pluralism is expressed that there is more than one religion that applies the same basic benefits to adherents of all religions. Pluralism is not, however, to be confused with “universalism” the attempt to create a “one size fits all” belief system. Religious pluralism accepts as a given that each person approaches the common need for interaction with the Divine from different vantage points. The benefit of holding this understanding of pluralism is that each religion is seen as contributing to the pure ideal of each tradition, namely, to offer to the believer the benefits of that belief system.

For the chaplain in the Sea Services, this means that there are certain givens that must be accepted. It means that everyone, even those who do not hold the chaplain’s own faith tradition to hear, is entitled to the benefits of religious liberty. This means that a chaplain who accepts the tenets of religious pluralism believes that to facilitate the religious needs of others is of equal importance to facilitating the needs of members of the chaplain’s own particular faith group or tradition.

**Sea Services:** The Sea Services are comprised of those elements of the United States military that fall under the authority of the Department of the Navy (DON). Specifically, these elements are: The United States Navy and the United States Marine Corps, to include both active duty and reserve components. In addition, the Merchant Marine and the United States Coast Guard, while not under peacetime control of the DON, receive Navy Chaplain Corps support. The Sea Service community includes active-duty service members, the immediate family of military members, retired military members and their families, U. S government employees who are employed by the DON, defense contractors and other civilians in certain situations such as naval hospitals. In addition, Navy chaplains are increasingly called upon to offer ministry to other U. S. military personnel in joint command and sometimes military personnel of other nations. Civilian citizens of other nations may expect to encounter a Navy chaplain, particularly those who are receiving the benefits of a community relations project (COMREL).

**Separation of Church and State:** This commonly used term is a shorthand, popular descriptive fallacy of the essence of the First Amendment. It originated first as a term from a letter of Thomas Jefferson and has been interpreted in ways ranging from faithful to funny. According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) website, “The right of each and every American to practice his or her own religion, or not religion at all, is among the most fundamental of the freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights.”<sup>3</sup> The Constitution’s Framers understood very well that religious liberty could flourish only if the government left religion alone. The Free Exercise clause of the first Amendment guarantees the right to practice one’s religion free of government interference. The Establishment Clause requires the separation of church and state. Combined, these two clauses ensure religious liberty. The notion then, that there is a rigid wall that can never be breached is incorrect. Rightly understood, the Separation Doctrine is the result of

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<sup>3</sup> American Civil Liberties Union, <https://www.aclu.org> (25 March 2005).

society's desire to ensure that there be a constitutional guarantee afforded individuals from compulsion to support a particular faith to the exclusion of all others. The doctrine also has been interpreted to offer guarantees to the various faith groups of the country that the state would take steps to prevent or limit the state's interference in the exercise of religious liberties and beliefs.