

# The great debate of religion vs. spirituality

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Eternal Wisdom, Ultimate Reality, Birther of all Life, She Who Is, etc. Our spiritual journey is interpreting the precious meaning of this

unique life given to us and, hopefully, recognizing and living this Oneness, brought to us in many forms by the great teacher."

Baute went on to write that

religion attracts those of a Guardian type personality - needing certainty, Spirituality attracts those of a more Pilgrim type of personality - more open to learning, won-

der, mystery. These "types" are more bearings on a dimension rather than a dichotomy. Wholeness means having both, integrated, but ever new, never fully

"arrived." More becoming, as a verb. Jesus invited us to the journey, not to "church," certainly not to organized religion - which he opposed. He gave the Reign of God back to

ordinary folk without the need for official intermediaries.

## Air Force Academy sued, accused of religious intolerance

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rights of all our men and women, whatever their beliefs."

Weinstein filed the suit the same day that the Air Force Academy's Board of Visitors, an oversight panel that includes members of Congress, met in Washington. Board members also declined to comment on the suit.

Cadets, watchdog groups and a former chaplain at the academy have alleged that religious intolerance is widespread at the school. On Aug.

29, the Air Force issued guidelines discouraging public prayer at official functions and urging commanders to be sensitive about personal expressions of religious faith.

There have been complaints at the academy that a Jewish cadet was told the Holocaust was revenge for the death of Jesus and that another Jew was called a Christ killer by a fellow cadet. A banner in the football team's locker room read: "I am a Christian first and last ... I am a member of Team Jesus Christ."

Also, there have been complaints that cadets were pressured to attend chapel, that academy staffers put New Testament verses in government e-mail, and that cadets used the e-mail system to encourage others to see the Mel Gibson movie "The Passion of the Christ."

"My problem is not with Judaism, Hinduism, Christianity or even evangelical Christianity," he said. "It's that whenever a religion - in this case a group of people - tries to engage the machinery

of the state, it is constitutionally repugnant and violative."

The lawsuit, which names the Air Force and its acting secretary, Pete Geren, as defendants, asks the Air Force to prohibit its members - including chaplains - from evangelizing and proselytizing or in any related way attempting "to involuntarily convert, pressure, exhort or persuade a fellow member of the USAF to accept their own religious beliefs while on duty."

The lawsuit claims that

despite the new guidelines, Air Force officials "have made it clear that they have no intent to actually remedy the unconstitutional practices."

The lawsuit cites a remark by Brig. Gen. Cecil R. Richardson, the Air Force deputy chief of chaplains. "We will not proselytize, but

we reserve the right to evangelize the unchurched," he said in a New York Times article published in July.

The Air Force and Geren have refused "to make a clear statement that this is not its policy," despite repeated requests from Weinstein, the lawsuit says.

## Black, white congregations share churches

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for Christ, a small nondenominational church, several months ago. The Lutherans had shrunk from about 300 members to 190 in a decade, said Rick Tolley, the church council president. The \$850 that Ambassadors pays each month is a godsend.

Lake Shore Christian took in the New Wave Church of God in Christ about a month ago. Lake Shore is holding at about 300 members, but the average age is 65. Pastor Norman Witthuhn estimates because the building dates to 1955, maintenance is a concern.

New Wave's pastor, Asbury Johnson, started the church last year. For a time, he held services in a rented party room in a Euclid motel. The

church has only about a dozen members, but Johnson sees potential.

"I really think that it could grow to be a decent-size church, maybe 100, maybe 200 people," Johnson said. "Maybe something like Lake Shore Christian has."

Euclid has a reputation for bias. The Justice Department has spent two years investigating whether the structure of the city's electoral system prevents black candidates from winning. Supporters of a Cleveland Baptist church's plans to build a sanctuary and houses in the city say some opponents are racist.

But the black pastors say their landlords have made them feel at home.

Members of Master's United Methodist Church "have

been very gracious hosts," said the Rev. Tonya Fields-Brooks, New Freedom's pastor. "Truly, I love the people here."

Will the peace last? As college roommates quickly discover, sharing quarters can breed tension. Curtin says churches can avoid friction with written agreements that apportion responsibilities and expenses.

New Wave's one-year lease is for the small original sanctuary, though the church may seek permission to use a newer, larger room when necessary. New Wave's signs are limited to temporary lawn

placards. Both congregations must take their trash when they go.

Curtin says churches should rent within their denominations. Theological differences can add to friction caused by differences in race, language or nationality, he said.

Something went wrong at Boulevard Presbyterian Church, another predominantly white congregation on the east side of Euclid. The nondenominational Black Church of the First Born rented space for several years but recently moved out.

## Thrive at University Park

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Beatties Ford Road.


Thomasboro Church of Christ, 216 Bradford Drive, will host an "Employment Search Training Boot Camp" from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at the church facilities. The topics to be covered include: Job search strategies, resume/cover letter writing, dress for success, and interview strategies. A continental breakfast and lunch will be served. For more information and to RSVP, please call (704) 392-4253.

November 12  
University Park Baptist Church, 6029 Beatties Ford Road, will host "Thrive" women's conference that is designed to help women maximize their potential for influence. The church is hosting a simulcast from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tickets for the event are \$35 before Nov. 1 and \$40 after. For more information, call Valerie Williams at (704) 369-7736.

November 13  
Anointed Voices will perform at 4 p.m. at Marable Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church in Kannapolis. The church is located at 400 Huron St. For information call (704) 932-2863.

November 19  
Paw Creek Presbyterian Church will host its 11th annual Christmas in Paw Creek Arts and Crafts Fair. The event will be held at the church, which is located at 7400 Mount Holly Road. For more information, contact the church's office at (704) 392-0329.


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