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## ACLU trying to silence prayers at Annapolis

Chad Groening - OneNewsNow - 7/7/2008 8:20:00 AM



A former Navy chaplain thinks it's wrong that the ACLU would seek to restrict the free-speech rights of midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy who participate in optional noon prayers.

This is not the first time an organization has attempted to silence the optional prayers, which have been a long time tradition at Annapolis. The Anti-Defamation League unsuccessfully sought to get the Academy to end the noon prayers in 2005. Now the American Civil Liberties Union claims that even though the prayers are technically optional, social pressure compels students to join in -- and it has written a letter to the school seeking an end to the requirement that midshipmen stand for the noon prayer.

Annapolis defends its tradition of praying before lunch, the only meal where attendance is required. Gordon James Klingenschmitt, a former Naval chaplain, says most of the midshipmen do not have a problem with the tradition -- but that some who are atheists have expressed their disdain at having to stand still and listen while others are praying out loud.

"Well good grief -- does the First Amendment protect the freedom of religious expression? Does it protect the freedom of speech," he questions. "Or does it protect the easily offended ears of the bystander who really...is not harmed while other people are expressing their faith?"

America, says Klingenschmitt, is not the former Soviet Union where Christians had to either "lock Jesus in the chapel or go to underground churches."

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- *"All military functions have a prayer and it is a generic prayer at that. I do not consider it a real prayer but at least it is something. I know people who are atheist, they are good people and serve this country, and do not complain about the prayer - they respect the will of the majority. Do not like "One Nation Under God?" Then move and move to an Arab country and see how far your anti-God attitude gets you. The ACLU should be deported and I will be happy to pack their bags free of charge."*
- *"This is a mandatory formation, so don't allow prayer or allow all prayer. Imagine the uproar if Wiccans prayed and Christians were forced to stand by quietly."*
- *"How long will Christians sit idly by and watch the ACLU walk away with all our freedoms??? When will Christians start to speak out???"*
- *"Annapolis trains Naval officers. ACLU should withdraw its letter(s) with an apology. Our Military sets the standard for honor here and abroad. These men and women represent us worldwide. Their right to prayer, standing in the tradition of Annapolis, is to be respected by all. Any midshipmen who do not share their Christian beliefs should honor them. They are expected to respect the beliefs of others. They set the standard for naval personnel."*
- *"The "AntiAmerican ChristHating Liars Union" should be banned from the public forum altogether, especially where they bring religious issues into the public eye. We shouldn't have to be subjected to their religious discourse in the public square!!"*

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