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REACTION #10

When I have to label myself a particular religion, I used to choose Roman Catholic. Alexander Schmemmann opened my eyes to the fact that I'm truly a spirituality based Eastern Orthodox Christian who doesn't believe absolutely in liturgical devotion, even if I still can't break free from the parochial chains of a scholastic Catholic education. In fact, just today, over a year after registering as a parishioner at my local Catholic parish, I have finally dispatched to its Padre a letter resigning my membership in favor of being a nondenominational Christian.

My significant other's best friend, Terry, is a militant atheist. He's not the typical atheistic-adherent to Scientific Achievement as God, or even willing to concede there might be a Great Architect, Great Spirit, or Grand Design to the Universe. He prefers instead to quash any utterance of the name of God, *de facto* sticking his fingers in his ears and refusing to acknowledge the word God means anything, much less exists. For him, the very existence of the word God in the dictionary is the equivalent of crediting an insane delusion. Ironically, he's likely never read Rene Descartes as his Bachelor's degree is in Broadcast Journalism. He's also 70 years old and quite stuck in his ways, however still interesting. This opposite position of Terry's to Descartes is ironic because Descartes presupposes the existence of something by its having been credited with a definition.

For Terry, the concept of Jesus, immaculate conception, other miracles, or more generally any validity or wisdom in the Bible or other religious texts, is intolerable absurdity. I find him amazing because for me to succeed in my life, I need to be spiritually sound, which for me is to be devout in belief to an admixture of Zen Buddhism, Eastern Orthodox Christian, and Secular Humanism, while accommodating my partner, who doesn't know he's a secular humanist (and who is unfortunately convinced from time to time by his friend Terry that he is an atheist), as well as accommodating people so closed-minded and atheistic like Terry that they refuse to tolerate the mere mention of God, to include by any name.