

# Report of the Name Initiative Committee

## Seeking new label(s) for those members in OA who currently concentrate in the meetings labeled “Atheist/Agnostic”

### 1. Summary

A survey was carried out in June/July 2021 among OA members who do not identify with a traditionally God-centered program, or who seek a secular approach to OA for other reasons. The goal was to determine which labels would be most attractive to like-minded people on the Find-A-Meeting search menu of [www.OA.org](http://www.OA.org).

The results of 168 respondents showed that the most popular label for the Special Focus of OA was “**Atheist/Agnostic/Secular.**” The most popular label for the Special Topic was “**Secular.**” We would like to propose adding these two labels, while keeping the existing Special Topic label of “**Atheist/Agnostic.**”

### 2. Background

Until early 2020, there were only 5 face-to-face and 2 phone “**Atheist/Agnostic**” meetings in OA. All of them were in the USA. Over a year and a half later, we have 21 meetings of which 15 are registered on [www.OA.org](http://www.OA.org). Most of these are online Zoom meetings that were started during the Covid pandemic. All of us were very relieved to have discovered a group of people with whom we could finally relate within OA.

While the registered meetings can be found through the Find-A-Meeting search menu on [www.OA.org](http://www.OA.org), many fellows came across us through word of mouth. Many of us had no idea that there was a secular movement in OA. We began talking about how we could make it easier to find the meetings.

A Name Initiative Committee was formed in April 2021 with the purpose of finding meeting labels that would attract like-minded fellows. An announcement to recruit committee members went out to all the OA meetings which used the “**Atheist/Agnostic**” special topic label, as well as unregistered secular OA meetings, and Google and Facebook groups.

Initially 10 OA members met and after a several weeks 7 OA members representing a variety of meetings and timezones (including Europe) committed to working together using an online document for ongoing discussions and bi-weekly Zoom meetings. We discussed different labels for the drop-down menu of the search function on [www.OA.org](http://www.OA.org) and whether adding more or different labels might help more people find us. At first we did not specifically distinguish between Special Topic and Special Focus. However, as we began finding each other online across many countries through Zoom, we realized that we were more properly a group of people with much in common and not just a Special Topic. We wanted to be recognized by OA as a Special Focus and to have a search option added to the [www.OA.org](http://www.OA.org) Find-A-Meeting tool.

### 3. The Process

Before approaching OA to make changes to the Find-A-Meeting labels, we wanted to find out which label names would be most likely to attract like-minded fellows. The Name Initiative Committee compiled a list of optional label names and conducted a survey.

The survey ran for 6 weeks and was publicized multiple times at all the meetings listed under the Special Topic of “Atheist/Agnostic,” as well as at unregistered secular OA meetings. In addition, we posted announcements on various Facebook and Google groups and websites used by members of these meetings.

#### 3.1 Survey Questions

We asked respondents to choose their top 2 choices for meeting labels for the Special Focus, and they could also indicate which label they would *never* use. Eight (8) new labels were proposed.

In addition, we asked them to choose their top 2 choices for meeting labels for Special Topic, and they could also indicate which label they would *never* use. Four (4) of the labels already existed (like “**Atheist/Agnostic**” and “**Spirituality**”), and four (4) of the labels were new options.

For a copy of the survey, go to: <https://bit.ly/SO-CN-Survey>

### 3.2 Survey Response Rates

We asked each meeting to report its average attendance (in yellow on the chart), and we tracked which meetings survey respondents reported attending (in green). Based on these numbers, we feel we reached a good sample of the OA Members who currently attend these meetings; there were 168 total responses.

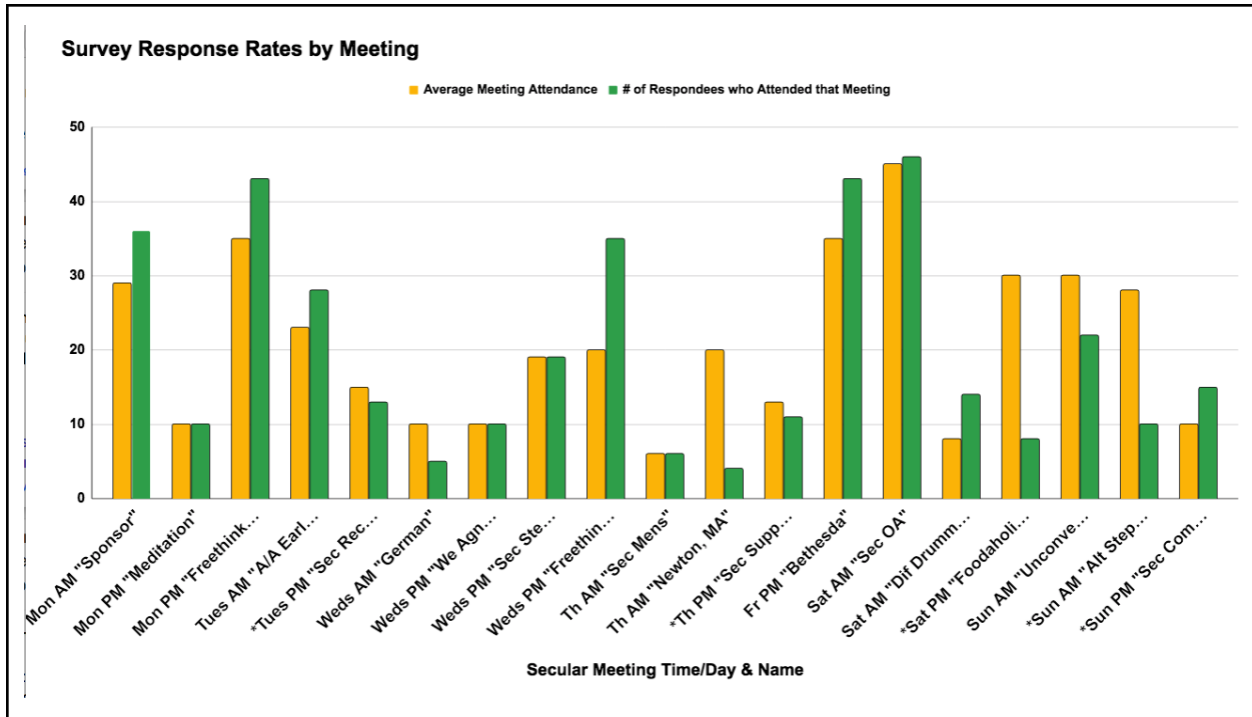


Figure 1: Respondents represent a good cross section of the secular community. Members of most meetings responded which meetings they attended (green) which sometimes exceeded the average attendance of those meetings (yellow bars). Meetings with an asterisk "\*" are non-registered OA meetings.

## 4. Survey Results

### 4.1 Special Focus

The survey asked which labels respondents would choose from the OA Find-A-Meeting drop-down menu. The following 8 new options were proposed for the Special Focus:

- Alternative Spirituality
- Apatheist
- Atheist/Agnostic
- Atheist/Agnostic/Secular
- Atheist/Agnostic/Secular/Alternative Spirituality
- Freethinker
- Open Philosophy

#### 4.1.1 Results Special Focus

- **Most popular: “Atheist/Agnostic/Secular”** was selected either as first or second choice by 93 of 168 respondents. This corresponds to 28% of the responses, since everybody had two votes. The label was widely acceptable to most other respondents, only 4 of the respondents (2%) said they would never choose this label.
- The second most popular was **“Secular.”** It was selected either as first or second choice by 62 of 168 respondents. This corresponds to 19% of the responses, since everybody had two votes. The label was widely acceptable to most other respondents, only 4 of the respondents (2%) said they would never choose this label.
- The label **“Atheist/Agnostic/Secular/Alternative Spirituality”** was selected either as first or second choice by as many as **“Secular”**: by 62 of 168 respondents. This corresponds to 19% of the responses, since everybody had two votes corresponding to 19% of the responses. *However*, it was not acceptable to 22 of the respondents (corresponding to 13%).
- All the rest of the Special Focus options received only 1-11% of the votes.

Based on these results, our Name Initiative Committee voted to request that the **Special Focus label of “Atheist/Agnostic/Secular”** be added to [www.OA.org](http://www.OA.org) (5 Yes, 1 Against, 1 Abstain).

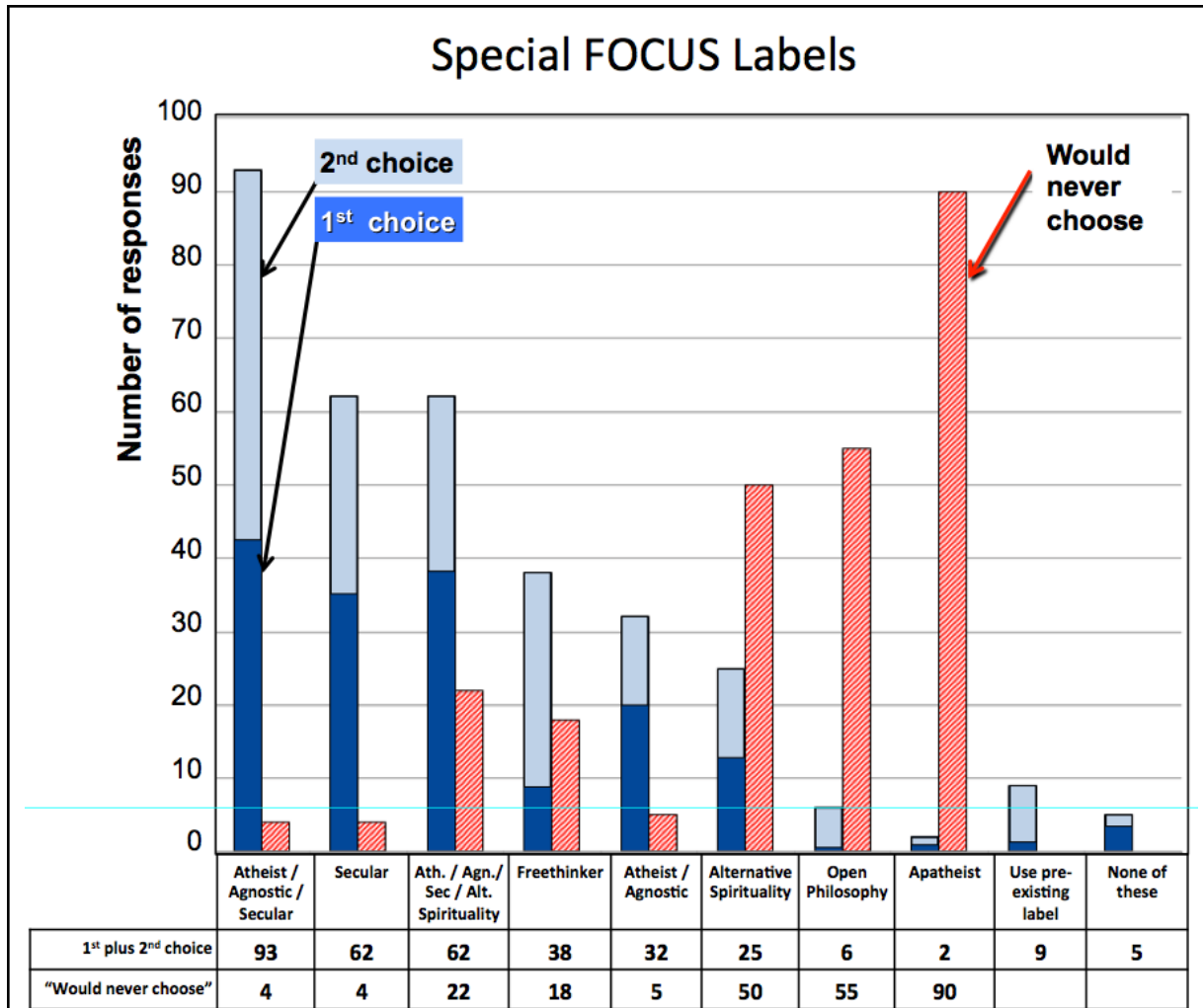


Figure 2: Labels suggested for Special Focus in Find-A-Meeting on the OA website. Respondents selected a label for their first (dark blue) and a different one for their second choice (light blue). An optional question was which of the labels they would never choose. The label that was by far most chosen was "Atheist/Agnostic/Secular." It was also the most acceptable to all respondents as it received the least number of "Would never choose."

## 4.2 Special Topic

The survey asked which labels respondents would choose from the OA Find-A-Meeting drop-down menu. The following 8 options were surveyed for the Special Topic. Four (4) were new (with asterisks) and 4 were pre-existing options:

Atheist/Agnostic

\*Freethinker

\*Open Philosophy

\*Secular

Spirituality

Spirituality (11th Step)

\*Spirituality (Alternative)

Spirituality (Meditation)

### 4.2.1 Results Special Topic

- **Most popular: “Secular”** was selected either as first or second choice by 114 of 168 respondents. This corresponds to 34% of the responses, since everybody had two votes. The label was widely acceptable to most other respondents, only 6 of the respondents (4%) said they would never choose this label.
- The second most popular label was the already existing label **“Atheist/Agnostic.”** It was selected either as first or second choice by 94 of 168 respondents. This corresponds to 28% of the responses, since everybody had two votes. The label was widely acceptable to most other respondents, only 10 of the respondents (6%) said they would never choose this label.
- The other propositions (old and new) received 10% or less votes.

Based on these results, our Name Initiative Committee voted to request that the **Special Topic label of “Secular”** be added to [www.OA.org](http://www.OA.org) and to keep the currently existing label, **“Atheist/Agnostic,”** as well (5 Yes, 2 Abstained).

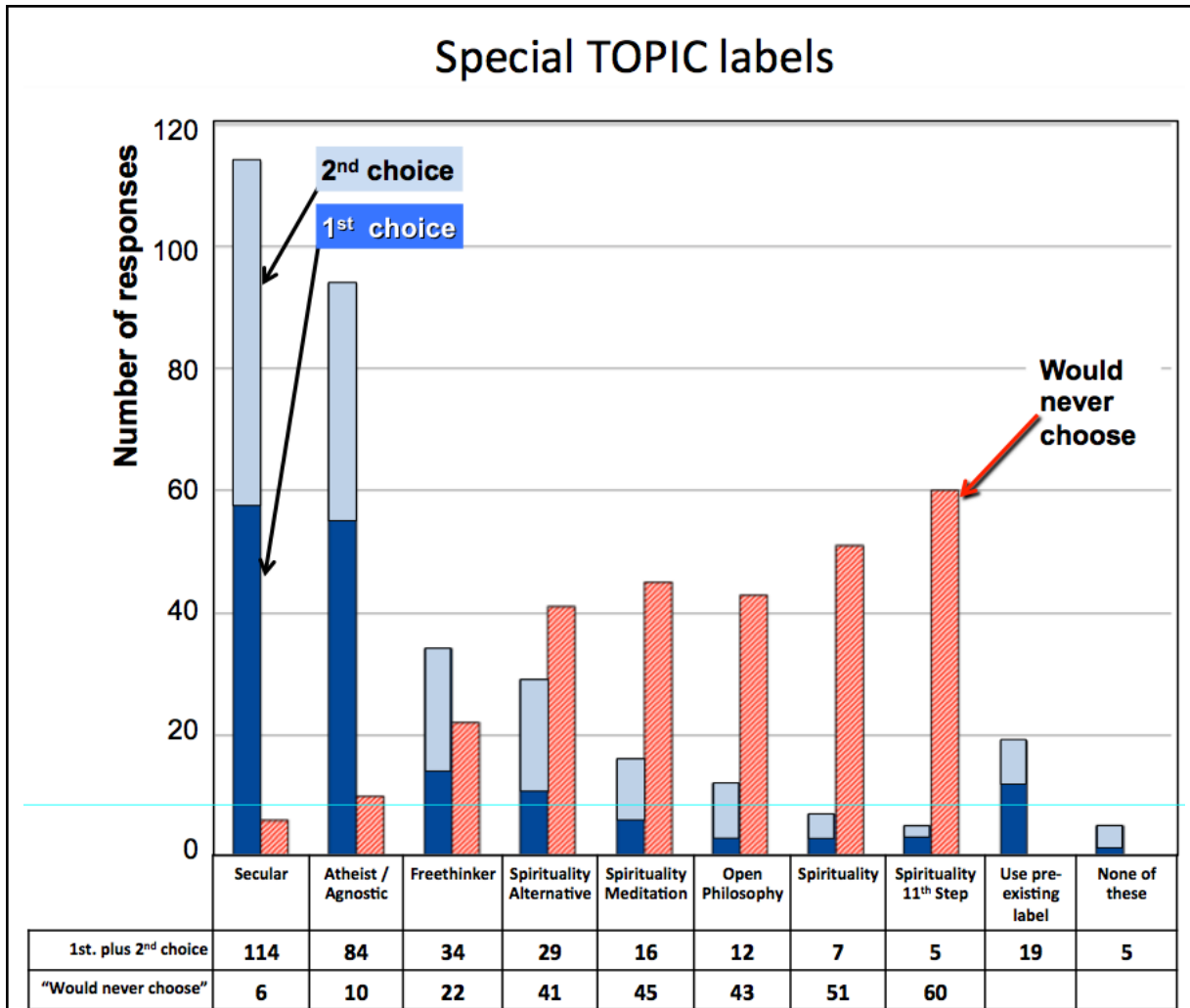


Figure 3: Labels suggested for Special Topic in Find-A-Meeting on the OA website. Respondents selected a label for their first (dark blue) and a different one for their second choice (light blue). An optional question was which of the labels they would never choose. The label that was most chosen was “Secular.” It was also the most acceptable to all respondents as it received the least number of “Would never choose.” The existing label “Atheist/Agnostic” was also very popular and acceptable to most respondents.

## 4.3 Further Results

The results presented above are based on the responses of all 168 respondents. The data was further analyzed to find out the opinions of different subsections of these respondents.

1. Label choices of OA fellows who identify by different beliefs:
  - a. Special Focus: The special focus of **“Atheist/Agnostic/Secular”** was the most popular across most beliefs (e.g., “Belief: Atheist/Agnostic” or “Belief: Spiritual but not religious”).
  - b. Special Topic: The special topic of **“Secular”** was the most popular across all beliefs.
  - c. Which labels respondents “would never choose” were unrelated to how respondents identified by belief.
2. Respondents had the same priorities regardless of whether they thought it was necessary for recovery to believe in a deity or mystical Higher Power or not.
3. The most popular labels were also the least “offensive” to all respondents, including all those who had different first choices or second choices (see questions 4 and 7, in which respondents were asked which labels they would “never choose”).

## 5. Final Recommendations

1. We would like to add a new **Special Focus** label of **“Atheist/Agnostic/Secular”** to the Drop-down menu on Find-A-Meeting. This is our most important request.
2. We would like to add a new **Special Topic** label of **“Secular”** and to keep the label of **“Atheist/Agnostic.”**

## 6. Report Submitted by OA Members

Anonymous, DS, Jenne M, Jim D, Kathie S, Laura B, and MH  
30 September 2021

## 7. Links to Survey and Detailed Results

Public Folder of Survey Files: <https://bit.ly/SO-CN-PublicFolder>  
Survey Detail Report (presentation): <https://bit.ly/SO-CN-SurveyDetails>  
Raw survey data: <https://bit.ly/SO-CN-RawData>  
Survey questions (form): <https://bit.ly/SO-CN-Survey>