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The changing face of university chaplaincy

Trent Chaplaincy offers creative new model for building community

CHANGE, CHANGE CHANGE is everywhere. Climate change, global trade changes, workforce changes, economic changes. The simple fact is that the world has changed and it continues to change. Universities are no exception.

When viewed from the comfortable pews of the 50's and 60's, the changes may seem unfathomable or may remain unrecognizable. Young people—and those older—do not head off to Sunday church services as those of the last generation did as families, along with just about everyone else in the neighbourhood.

Instead today, young university students seek answers to understand the 'big questions of life' by other means. They describe themselves as being spiritual but not religious. An important change in perspective to note and heed. They explore mindfulness, meditation, yoga. They are highly adept in the instantaneous communication offered by multiple social media.

They seek to enact their sense of compassion with others. They engage readily in social justice issues and causes. But, it is a minority who actually adhere to any organized religion.

One notable exception is among students from faith groups other than Christian-



The Rev'd Glenn Empey
photo Michael Hudson / The Anglican

ity. My experience of such students is that generally they are much more knowledgeable about the foundation of their faith and they are more likely actively to practise their religion through organized prayer and attendance at some form of religious service.

Among Christians, the same applies to those who come from other parts of the world other than Canada or the United States. They too are more informed and engaged in the practice of their faith, than their Canadian counterparts, through visible means such as attendance at worship services and by becoming connected with a local congregation.

There still are students at university who are Christian and who do engage in religious activities on campus through their organized student groups. ... *cont'd page 3*

Event highlights '14-15

Trent 50th Anniversary

Parade re-enacts founding ceremony

Lama Lena visits Trent

Keynote address on the nature of the mind

60 Minutes for Peace

Six Trent faculty / staff each speak for 10 minutes about peace in their area of expertise

Trent International Programme

Guided meditation for over 150 new international students

Lama Lhanang returns to Trent

meditation sessions, yoga, keynote address on focusing in chaotic world

Barry Townsend, new Director of Residences

speaker at 60 Minutes for Peace

Highlights in photos

Trent Chaplaincy engages in campus life



**CAMPUS CONNECT IS THE
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creative changes (...cont'd)

Happily, in the past year, a student Christian group named *Oikos* has established itself on campus, mentored by a Trent graduate, Benjamin Peltz, and supported by Trent Chaplaincy. In reference to the total student population, the members of this group represent a minority on campus.

Still, it seems to me that there are significant opportunities for a modern university chaplaincy to reach out and serve all components of the student population.

Trent University, like many other Canadian universities, is a microcosm of society where people of different origins, faiths, beliefs come together to form a community. It is a highly heterogeneous population reflecting world demographics more so than the demographic of the Peterborough area.

This offers a significant opportunity for chaplaincy and for local congregations to connect and engage with the university community and with the wider world.

A modern chaplaincy works with a diversity of students, faculty and staff to model a sense of community in order to bring people together to learn more about one another, their beliefs, culture, history and so on. This is a way of removing barriers in community; this is a way to deeper understanding, to alleviating fears and to

promoting acceptance. This is an opportunity and a gift to celebrate.

It is an opportunity to engage in initiatives and projects that respond to those in need in areas of the world where famine, war, extreme weather, and other kinds of calamities affect survival and quality of life for so many people. It is also an opportunity to engage in similar causes at local and regional levels. This touches the core of what it means for a university student to practise and explore his/her sense of spirituality and compassion.

There are other opportunities for chaplaincy at Trent to provide a model for dialogue within both the Trent community and the Peterborough area community. Again, this brings the wider community together and offers a forum for interaction.

While the world has changed and is changing, as it has always evolved for Christians, ever since the times when they gathered secretly in caves in the first century, there continue to be ways to put the gospel message into action. Being very intentional about Jesus' command to his followers to *love one another* is the key to university chaplaincy in the present era. •

An editorial by The Rev'd Glenn Empey, Director, Trent Spiritual Affairs / Trent Chaplaincy



photo Trent University

TWO RECENT TRENT GRADS ENTER THEOLOGY

In September 2014, Michael Strang began his study of theology as a Master of Divinity candidate at Trinity College, University of Toronto.

In September 2015, Brock Grills will begin his studies in the Master of Divinity programme at Huron College, the University of Western Ontario.

"Michael was referred to me in 2013, by Dr. Mike Allcott, then Head of Champlain College," The Reverend Glenn Empey stated.

"I was happy to offer guidance to Michael in his application process."

He added, "Brock Grills is a grad with whom I had frequent contact during his final year at Trent. It is actually humbling to serve as a resource and mentor for students who are seriously considering a vocation in ministry."

"This is another example of how Trent Chaplaincy makes a positive difference on campus and in the life of the community of faith," he concluded. •

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creative dreaming for the changing world of ministry

Serving Trent and the wider community

“**T**here are two major opportunities right now that I see that can make a big difference for the Trent community and for the local community as well. And I’ve had some ideas —dreams really— that have been percolating for sometime now,” The Rev’d Glenn Empey said recently.

“One opportunity, is finding a meaningful way to enable a positive continuation on the road to healing and understanding for the community with First Nations’ Peoples. Subsequent to the shocking revelations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s work, the matter of healing, understanding, and beginning new steps are crucial to continuing the hard work begun by the Commission.”

Trent Chaplaincy has been engaging in dialogue with the First Peoples’ House of Learning at Trent to explore ways to continue on the road to healing. This will be an important partnership and initiative for the coming academic year and beyond.

The other major initiative to take shape in 2015-16 is a programme to create a multi-

faith forum at Trent University that connects with the local community and with the resources of the region.

“There are amazing resources in the people who comprise the university community and there are similar resources, not yet widely recognized in the local community. Bringing individuals and local groups together for learning and dialogue is an exciting opportunity,” Empey added.

Trent Chaplaincy is committed to creating a forum for learning, understanding through a healthy process for exploring issues and concerns.

“There is a big difference between toleration and acceptance. The way to acquire understanding and acceptance is to engage in learning through dialogue and respectful interaction,” Empey said.

These two initiatives are the primary Trent Chaplaincy programme goals for the coming academic year. •

*More details in the next **campus connect***



photo: Trent University

WHAT YOUR GRACIOUS SUPPORT ENABLES

- › pastoral care and counselling for students, faculty, and staff
- › links to local faith communities and congregations
- › annual Remembrance Day Service
- › events to put compassion into action – recent food-packaging initiatives
- › resource for student religious groups
- › resource for university administration on religious matters
- › activities to foster acceptance within a diverse community
- › special guests to speak on matters of faith
- › on-campus multi-faith space for prayer, meditation
- › memorial services and grief counselling
- › suicide prevention resource
- › outreach by students to local community
- › social justice opportunities
- › mentor for student groups
- › social media presence with current issues topics in religion / spirituality

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