Report to General Synod

Inter-Church Tertiary Chaplaincy Trust Board

February 2020.

The ITCC appreciates the support of the General Synod for its work, and notes that its interim representative is Sue Fordyce of Wellington, who attended our 2019 annual meeting. Our board comprises denominational representatives and representatives of the twelve tertiary chaplaincies. (We have no chaplaincy bodies at Nelson Marlborough Polytechnic or at the Bay of Plenty polytechnic. Our chair is the Rev. Terry Wall, a Methodist representative. The chair of the Aotearoa New Zealand Tertiary Chaplaincy Association and an ex officio member of our board is Fr Andrew McKean, the chaplain at the University of Waikato.

There has been quite a change in personnel in chaplaincy over the past year or so. In particular the Otago Tertiary Chaplaincy has faced the death through illness of one chaplain (Mike Wright) and the retirement of another (Greg Hughson). This was a particularly strong team which modelled chaplaincy to others. There is recent news that the Maclaurin Chaplain at the University of Auckland, Carolyn Kelly, is moving to become chaplain at the University of Auckland. Chaplaincies have been renewed in recent years by voluntary and part time appointments, but we are very dependent on active and vigorous chaplains, and increasingly the universities and polytechnics have come to appreciate them as important in critical incidents and in ongoing pastoral care of students, especially in the light of events last year.

The training of these chaplains continues to be a focus. There are several courses at theological colleges, although these are aimed at chaplains in a wide variety of contexts. We have struggled to find a common standard that suits all our chaplains, and perhaps need to more clearly distinguish the appropriate training at different kinds of tertiary bodies.

There are some major changes under way in the tertiary world, in particular the merger of the polytechnics into a single entity, ROVE as from 1 April of this year. At our annual meeting we were pleased to meet with Mr Chris Collins from the interim planning body. Our goal to is make an agreement with the new body which will ensure terms of access to all polytechnics with support for the work of chaplaincy. At present access varies somewhat in different institutions.

The corona virus has created pastoral issues for a significant number of students and staff and for the finances of many universities and polytechnics, but sadly we do not have contact with those isolated in their home countries.

One of our chaplaincies reported this year that it was facing a financial crisis, after another faced a crisis last year. Since the ending of denominational levies for tertiary chaplaincy, our national council has not been in a position to fund chaplaincies, but we made a small grant and offered a loan to this body. It may well be a symptom of a growing funding problem for chaplaincies and we plan to address fundraising at our next annual meeting.

Chaplaincy is changing, as institutions insist that chaplaincies must reach out to people of all faiths. Chaplains need to navigate this territory carefully. One helpful solution is to recruit chaplains from people of other faiths, and the Aotearoa New Zealand Tertiary Chaplains Association now has a number of chaplains of other faiths. Many of these face funding issues since their faiths are not familiar with the need to support people in such roles. Our position as a body is that we are funded and supported to enable Christian chaplains, but that anything we can do to encourage chaplains of other faiths consistent with our constitution will in fact be good for chaplaincy, but that the tertiary institutions for their part need to understand that chaplaincy arises from specific faith groups.

Our finances are managed by the Methodist Church of New Zealand, and we are indebted to the Prince Albert College Trust of that denomination which has made several grants enabling us to continue, albeit on a shoe string. Several dioceses of the Anglican church make grants to chaplaincies in their regions, and these are hugely appreciated.

Respectfully submitted

Peter Lineham

Secretary of the Trust Board.