

UTS Grad Jan Breslin Enjoys the Path of Chaplaincy in Tampa

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September 3, 2015



Jan Breslin, who upgraded her Diploma of Religious Education to Master of Religious Education (MRE) in 2014, is changing careers to chaplaincy, and loving it, she tells UTS News.

“I am gaining so much from the chaplaincy program, and I’m growing professionally and personally by leaps and bounds,” she says of the program, from which she will graduate in August 2016. “I feel that a calling in chaplaincy has great potential and will be a growing field. As a matter of fact, local fast-food restaurants in Tampa are hiring chaplains to minister to employees,” she reports.

“The work of a chaplain is not counseling, rather it involves helping people move from a place of chaos or pain into a higher consciousness of meaning, relatedness, forgiveness, and/or hope. It is a ministry of presence whereby you guide people to get in touch with their own inner strength,” she explains.

“As a chaplain, one is dealing in the moment with someone who is undergoing some kind of personal crisis. My formative years of study at UTS were ideal for the work of chaplaincy because as a chaplain it is important to respect and be aware of all faith traditions or even ‘no’ faith tradition when ministering to others.

Jan started her career in ministry as a missionary for the Unification Church in 1973 and worked on a series of assignments, running the gamut of fundraising, street preaching, and witnessing on the International One World Crusade (IOWC) and on Mobile Fundraising Teams (MFT), until being asked by church leaders to apply for UTS in 1977.



Jan Breslin (center) after winning the David SC Kim Oratorical Contest at UTS in 1979

Graduating in 1979 with a Diploma in Religious Education, she worked for the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP) until her Marriage Blessing at Madison Square Garden in 1982.

With her husband, Mike Breslin, she moved with their three children to Tampa, Florida, Mike’s hometown. She discovered her natural ability in elder care by taking on the full-time responsibility of caring for the elderly mother of a good friend. Part of that responsibility included working in conjunction with Vitas Hospice which introduced many new possibilities.

That experience led her to discover the chaplaincy program created by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) which oversees programs to certify chaplains throughout the United

States. Jan is an ACPE resident at the Florida Hospital Tampa which is part of the Seventh Day Adventist Healthcare system. In order to qualify for it, she needed to get her master's degree, which the UTS registrar's office facilitated. She completed a long-distance course of study through UTS, upgraded the diploma earned in 1979, and graduated with an accredited MRE in June of 2014.

Another aspect of the chaplaincy work she likes is that her age is an asset. "I don't mind telling you that I ran into some age discrimination in two of my last jobs, but in chaplaincy it's actually an advantage to be in your sixties." Jan found that her life experience as a missionary, wife, mother, and even grandmother, are assets which open doors to intimate relationships with people, who are affected by many different personal situations.

"Almost every day, as I go to the hospital to see a client, I think about where I have come from during my course of searching for a deeper relationship with God, and what my own religious community and nation have gone through in recent years. During our CPE didactics, I am introduced to very innovative thinkers and theologians striving to make sense of the stresses modern people face each day.

"One theologian starting conversations with a variety of thinkers is Krista Tippet, the creator of On Being - a Peabody Award-winning public radio conversation and podcast, a Webby Award-winning website and online exploration, a publisher and public event convener. Her efforts include creating forums for conversations between very diverse groups in order to create greater understanding and connectedness.



"I have studied the works of researcher and storyteller Brene Brown who wrote *The Power of Vulnerability* and *Daring Greatly*. Much of her research has led her to her own personal transformation in living 'whole-heartedly' even if one needs to embrace failure, set boundaries or live through grief.

"I am also studying Edwin Freedman, author of *A Failure of Nerve* who sees our current culture as being in an emotional decline due to the 'quick fix' style of leadership today. He offers in-depth analysis as to how we got to where we are, using the same emotional, relational dynamics on every level – family, society, and nation. He sees the need for the kind of leadership that does not succumb to quick fixes, maintaining one's footing, and providing a presence to move in a direction of innovation, adventure, and courage. He gives a profoundly insightful analysis of the dynamics of human relations and how to improve the quality of leadership in times of crisis and stress.

"Personally, I think the role of chaplain is very much the sort of thing that True Father [Rev. Sun Myung Moon] envisioned when he began UTS. He was constantly encouraging us to meet theologians and participate in church visitation not only with the intention of connecting with many other faithful people, but also to expand our own horizons. I have experienced God deeply through the relationships with patients, hospital staff, and fellow chaplains. In this line of work, human beings meaningfully touch each other's souls, and God is deep, imminent and immediate in the process."