

An Atheist Chaplain? Say It Isn't So, Harvard University

Harvard University, a school that was established four centuries ago to educate the ministry and that adopted the motto "Truth for Christ and the Church," has done the unthinkable: It has elected an atheist as its chief chaplain, media outlets have reported.

Chosen by Harvard's organization of chaplains, Greg Epstein, 44, took on the position last week, reported. The university was named after a pastor, John Harvard, and "it would be more than 70 years before the school had a president who was not a clergyman."

In his new role, reports, Epstein, who wrote the book *Good Without God* and was raised in a Jewish household, will coordinate the activities of more than 40 university chaplains, including Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist and other religious leaders on campus.

While Harvard University had a Christian foundation in the beginning in the 1600s, that apparently has eroded and conformed to a worldly view of education and life, totally shunning the teaching of the Word of God.

"There is a rising group of people who no longer identify with any religious tradition but still experience a real need for conversation and support around what it means to be a good human and live an ethical life," Epstein told *The New York Times*. "We don't look to a god for answers. We are each other's answers."

A *Harvard Crimson* survey reported that in its class of 2019, those students were found two times more likely to identify as atheist or agnostic than 18-year-olds in the general population. {eoa}

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