

Community-Based Research and the Faith-Based Campus

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ABSTRACT Over recent decades a significant shift has been taking hold on campuses of higher education in Canada and around the world. It is a shift towards community engagement. In this article our focus is on the research aspect of community engagement, and explores how this shift towards community-based research is playing itself out on the faith-based campus. We provide examples of two Canadian faith-based universities (Crandall University and Tyndale University College & Seminary) who were involved in a two-year community-campus research partnership called “The role of churches in immigrant settlement and integration”. Reflecting on this experience we learned that, similar to other institutions of higher education, an intentional shift towards community-based research on the faith-based campus requires attention to both the internal and external drivers that support such a shift. We also learned that faith-based campuses have their own unique ethos and therefore have distinctive drivers that can be leveraged to support such a shift. While our learnings arise out of the experience of two participating universities, their applicability may be of interest to other faith-based campuses in Canada and elsewhere.

KEYWORDS community engagement, community-based research, faith and society

Over recent decades a significant shift has been taking hold on campuses of higher education in Canada and around the world. It is a shift towards community engagement. The Carnegie Foundation, which has developed a community engagement classification system for universities, defines community engagement as “the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity” (New England Resource Center for Higher Education, 2015). Indeed, community-campus engagement networks are increasingly being seen as beneficial in addressing complex social, economic and environmental challenges that require the active involvement of diverse organizations and individuals (Spilker et al., 2016). Such a perspective is helping to bolster a shift of identity that is being promoted by campuses of higher education; a shift from detached ivory tower to that of engaged citizen.

While this shift encompasses teaching and community service through the proliferation of community service learning opportunities, in this article our focus is on the research aspect of community engagement. There are many terms being used to describe research approaches that stress community-engagement. Some common terms include: community-based participatory research (e.g., Israel, Eng, Schulz & Parker, 2005; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008),

action research (e.g., Stringer, 2007), community-engaged scholarship (e.g., Kajner, 2015), and participatory action research (e.g., Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). For our part, we will use the term “community-based research” as it seems to be gaining global traction as a synthesis term, as evidenced by the establishment of the UNESCO chairs of Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education (Etmanski, Hall and Dawson, 2014; GUNi, 2014).

Regardless of terminology, and after decades of practice, the point is that a community-based approach to research is becoming mainstream in many institutions of higher education around the world (Hall, Tandon, & Tremblay 2015). In Canada, the shift began in earnest in 1998, the year that the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) launched its Community University Research Alliance (CURA) granting program, which began to institutionalize engaged scholarship on the Canadian campus (Brown, Ochocka, de Grosbois & Hall, 2015; Lévesque, 2008). A second watershed occurred in 2012 with a speech on knowledge democracy made by David Johnson, the Governor General of Canada. The speech, and the resulting Community Campus Collaborative Initiative that followed, signaled that a shift in valuing co-constructed knowledge (in which academics and community members collaborate in research) was indeed attracting the attention of Canada’s senior leadership both within and outside of the campus (Graham & Hall, 2016).

There are compelling reasons for why this shift is occurring, reasons which we have reviewed in more detail elsewhere (see Brown et al., 2015; Ochocka & Janzen, 2014; Janzen, Ochocka & Stobbe, 2016). These reasons include the practical advantage of recognizing community members as knowledge-rich partners who offer their experiential and practical knowledge, in complement to theoretical knowledge held by outside experts, which serves to maximise research utilization (Heron & Reason, 1997; Small & Uttal, 2005; Wallerstein & Duran, 2003). From a theoretical perspective, community members are seen to provide insider knowledge useful in shaping the inquiry’s purpose and research questions, and in collaboratively refining theories (Cargo & Mercer, 2008; Fitzgerald, Burack & Seifer, 2010). Finally, a community-based approach responds to fundamental issues of fairness and equity. Knowledge democracy is advanced by recognizing knowledge creation as a matter of cognitive justice in which community members are seen as full partners in research that impacts their lives (de Sousa Santos, 2006; Gaventa, 1993; Hall, 2011).

There are a number of drivers leading to the greater uptake of a community-based research agenda on the Canadian campus. Some drivers are internal to the institution and include the growing interests of individual faculty members and students towards applied research, supportive institutional policies such as tenure and promotion policies that credit community-engaged scholarship, and the emergence of community-engaged research centres on campus (Graham, 2014). Supporting these internal drivers are national initiatives which externally resource the on-campus shift. These include: Community Based Research Canada (a network facilitating community-campus engagement); the Rewarding Community Engaged Scholarship partnership (aimed at transforming university policies and practices); the previously mentioned Collaborative Community Campus Initiative; and increasing conference venues to showcase exemplars in community-based research, such as the biennial Community University

Exposition (CUExpo, see Ochocka, 2014). In addition, a growing number of publication outlets (such as this journal) have emerged in support of engaged scholarship, as have increased funding opportunities, both in support of individual research projects (e.g., SSHRC partnership grants; CIHR community-based research grants), and in support of broader institutional change (e.g., McConnell Family Foundation's RECODE). While challenges and barriers to advancing engaged scholarship on the Canadian campus remain (see Brown et al., 2015; Eckerly-Curwood et al., 2011), the drivers listed above have combined to embolden many post-secondary institutions to actively pursue collaborative community-campus research agendas, and to do so with excellence (Janzen, Ochocka & Stobbe under revision).

But what about the faith-based campus? What do we know about how religious post-secondary schools are promoting community-engagement through research? To what extent have they embraced community-based research within the scholarship agenda of their campus?

Faith-based campuses have faith communities as primary constituents. Schools range in their age, size, geographic location, administrative and funding model, and theological orientation. They include theological seminaries and Bible Colleges, as well as liberal arts institutions affiliated with public universities, or operating as private universities. Their research capacity range from those with established research track records, to those with relatively new research programs, to those who remain primarily teaching institutions. A national network called Christian Higher Education Canada (CHEC) includes thirty-four post-secondary institutions, while other faith-based schools exist in Canada which do not affiliate with CHEC. We are not aware of any previous attempts to assess how the internal and external drivers of the shift towards community-based research (described above) are playing out on faith-based campuses.

The purpose of this article is to fill this gap and provide some insight into engaged scholarship on Canadian faith-based campuses. We will do this by critically reflecting on the experiences of scholars from two faith-based universities who collaborated on a community-based research partnership called "The role of churches in immigrant settlement and integration" (hereafter referred to as the *Churches and Immigrants* project). We begin by introducing the project and the two universities before describing their respective involvement in the study. We will critically reflect on: 1) the community-engagement agenda on campus, 2) their research capacity, and 3) the contribution of the study to how the campus engages its constituency. We end by discussing what we have learned about promoting community-based research on faith-based campuses in Canada.

Two Campuses Involved with the Churches and Immigrants Project

The *Churches and Immigrants* project was a research partnership (2013-2015) that focused on equipping church groups across Canada to help immigrants and refugees settle and integrate into Canadian society (see Janzen et al., 2015). The research was funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Partnership Development Grant and received ethics approval through the Community Research Ethics Office. The eleven research partners included leading Canadian academics in the field of religion and diversity located in five selected

sites across the country (Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, Moncton, and Halifax) as well as leaders of national denominations and major Canadian interdenominational networks (see the project website for a list of partners - www.communitybasedresearch.ca/Page/View/PDG). The project represented a rare opportunity for multiple faith-based campuses to collaborate on SSHRC-funded research.

This community-university research initiative twinned research and knowledge mobilization activities over the course of two years. The first year focused on research using mixed-methods conducted in parallel (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003). To begin, three national methods provided breadth of insight (literature review, key informant interviews with national denominational/interdenominational leaders, and a national on-line survey of denominations across Canada - see Janzen et al. 2016 for survey results). In addition, each of the five selected sites conducted both focus groups and case studies of promising practice that provided context-specific insights (see Reimer et al. 2016 for case study results). In year two, partners shared what they learned using various written formats and holding knowledge exchange events across Canada. This knowledge mobilization phase included a practical congregational *Guide to Action* (www.communitybasedresearch.ca/Page/View/Guide_to_Action), community blogs, articles in Christian periodicals, academic publications, conference presentations as well as numerous synergy sessions and social media strategies which engaged local and national stakeholders.

Both the research and knowledge mobilization activities were guided by the community-university partnership group which met every three to four months throughout the project duration. The partnership group followed principles of community-based research that emphasizes meaningful involvement, ongoing engagement, and production of useful results for positive change (Ochocka and Janzen 2014). The community-based research approach enabled power-sharing among researchers and congregational, denominational, and interdenominational leaders, both in terms of sharing control of the study design and implementation, as well as in sharing future action. Over the course of the project, partners engaged a growing network of groups and individuals interested in equipping church groups to better work with today's immigrants.

The two universities featured here are similar in size and mission, but operate in very different locales. Crandall University is in Moncton, one of Canada's smallest metropolitan areas with a total population of roughly 140,000. By comparison, Tyndale University College and Seminary is located in Toronto, Canada's largest metropolitan area, with a population of 5.6 million. Toronto's population is much more diverse in religion and ethnicity than the comparatively homogenous (white, Christian) population of Atlantic Canada.

Crandall University

Crandall University is a Christian liberal arts and science university that is located in Moncton, New Brunswick. Its denominational affiliation is with the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, with about 450 churches in the region (<http://baptist-atlantic.ca>). Crandall University was started in 1949 as a bible school, received the right to offer baccalaureate degrees in 1983, and was named a university in 1996. At present, over 800 students are taking

courses at Crandall toward degrees at both the undergraduate and graduate level. The mission of the university is to “transform lives through quality university education firmly rooted in the Christian faith” (www.crandallu.ca).

Crandall University has strong connections with several community-based organizations. First, the university has a natural affiliation with Christian churches, and many churches are actively involved in their communities. Second, students are required to complete a certain number of community service hours for graduation. Community service is not limited to churches or religious organizations, as part of the faith-based mission of the university is to positively impact their broader community. They are actively involved in homeless shelters, recovery programs, schools, and many not-for-profit organizations. All students in education—the largest major at Crandall—complete many practicum hours in local schools. Similarly, business students participate in work-term placements in local businesses. Crandall has a Director of Community Practicum. Community service opportunities are provided and service hours are recorded for each student through this office. Fourth, many community groups make use of Crandall’s facilities, including permanent space allocated to a day care for the community. Infrequent users/renters include the RCMP, sports camps and teams, and many other community groups. Finally, faculty promotion and tenure requires active service in the community. All these activities provide community linkages.

Prior to 1996, research was not emphasized for faculty. There were no resources for research, except for leaves granted to complete graduate degrees. After 1996, a tenure process was instituted, which included expectations for research, teaching and service. Now, most the roughly 25 fulltime faculty have active research agendas.

Small private institutions like Crandall University face certain impediments to research. The greatest is lack of finances. There is minimal support for research in terms of external funding opportunities or internal support. There is still no official research centre, but the university has recently hired a Dean of Faculty Development, and promoting faculty research is part of his mandate.

Despite these constraints, Crandall faculty have pursued research agendas on community topics. Faculty have studied evangelical churches in Canada and in the Atlantic region (e.g., Reimer & Wilkinson, 2015; Reimer 2003; Chan, Fawcett & Lee, 2015; MacDonald & Frazer 2014; Freeze & DiTommaso, 2015, 2014). Faculty have also completed multiple studies of Baptist youth and youth leaders in the region (e.g., Fawcett & Stairs, 2013; Fawcett, Francis, Henderson, Robbins & Linkletter, 2013). Crandall faculty also research local educational organizations, including Crandall University itself (Fawcett & Ryder 2014), local schools (e.g., MacDonald & Steeves, 2013) and education students (e.g., Bokhorst-Heng, Flagg-Williams and West, 2014). Other research completed by Crandall faculty include studies of local businesses and governmental organizations (e.g., MacDonald & Steeves 2015, 2011; MacDonald, MacArthur & Ching, 2014) (MacDonald & Laidlaw, 2003). Local populations were used in studies of drug recovery (Federicks & Samuel, 2014) and the resettlement experiences of south Asian women in Moncton (Samuel, 2009). Finally, Crandall enjoys a 200-acre campus, with a stream and large wooded areas. Science faculty have studied reforestation and tree

growth, water quality in the stream, and other research of the local habitat.

The volume of community-based research has increased significantly in the last decade, along with the total research output. The best explanation for this trend is not only the pre-existing linkages with community organizations noted above, but also the ethos of a faith-based university. Faculty at Crandall are expected to be committed Christians, who integrate faith and learning in the classroom. They are also expected to be active in their local congregations and in the community. Naturally, then, many faculty lean toward applied research, since they are invested in the success of churches, schools, and other community organizations. The summary of research above shows high investment in Christian congregations in the region particularly. These churches also shape Crandall University. The majority of the university's board are members of Baptist churches, and the Baptist Convention support the school financially. In addition, teachers and school administrators in the public school system evaluate Crandall's education students, providing feedback to the university.

The *Churches and Immigrants* project was part of the growing body of research by Crandall faculty on Christian congregations in this region (Reimer, Chapman, Janzen, Watson & Wilkinson, 2016; Reimer & Janzen, 2015; Reimer & Maskery, 2014). For the project, we completed three group interviews—one in each of Shediac, Moncton, and Halifax—and fifteen individual interviews with church leaders. We also completed three case studies of churches exemplary in their service to immigrants. Finally, we interviewed six immigrants who benefited from the services of these churches. We found that our pre-existing connections with church leaders, particularly Baptist church leaders, led to many open doors for research. This research led to stronger relationships between Crandall University and local churches. The researchers knew little about the immigrant support provided by the churches in the Atlantic region before this project, and many church leaders knew little about Crandall University. Relationships developed during the research process built mutual understanding and respect, especially with Catholic, Anglican, United, and Presbyterian churches. Many of the church visits and interviews were completed by a Crandall student. More importantly, the focus groups brought together church leaders from variety of churches, which strengthened relationships between them and allowed them to strategize future plans for immigrant support.

This applied research is particularly timely in light of the current Syrian refugee crisis. Many churches in this region have increased their support for refugees by sponsoring a refugee family or by assisting in the settlement of the 25,000 Syrian refugees brought in by the Canadian government in 2015-16. Our *Guide to Action* provides churches resources and encouragement to support immigrants. This guide and other resources were widely disseminated to churches involved in our study, and is accessed by many others.

Tyndale University College & Seminary

Tyndale University College & Seminary was founded in 1894 as the Toronto Bible Training School and was the first school of its kind to be founded in Canada (www.tyndale.ca). It merged with the London College of Bible and Missions in 1935 and changed its name to Ontario Bible College in 1968. By the time it changed its name to Tyndale in 1998 it had

added a graduate school of theology and moved from its former downtown location to a large campus in the north of Toronto. Tyndale officially became a University college in 2003 which allowed it to offer Bachelor of Arts degrees. In 2014 Tyndale started to offer a Bachelor of Education program accredited by the Ontario College of Teachers. Most recently, in the fall of 2015, it completed a move to the former home of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Tyndale is the largest theological seminary in Canada with more than 700 students (www.ats.edu/member-schools/tyndale-university-college-seminary). Its University College has an additional 500+ students. In the 2015-2016 school year the school had 48 faculty. About 95% of the seminary faculty and 84% of the University College faculty had a PhD or DMin degree or equivalent.

Tyndale's interdenominational status, and the freedom to develop its programs and vision that comes with it, has two advantages that specifically relate to community engagement. First, having no specific affiliation allows cooperation with diverse community partners. Currently Tyndale has many active partnerships including partnerships with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, The Salvation Army in Canada, a consortium of Wesleyan denominations that fund a Chair in Wesleyan studies, the Canadian Chinese School of Theology (Toronto) (with all courses taught in Mandarin), and the North American School of Indigenous Theological Studies. The Tyndale campus is also used by community groups for everything from conferences to weddings.

Second, having no natural denomination constituency allows Tyndale to serve pan-denominationally as a neutral space for organizations to meet. This is illustrated by the Tyndale Open Learning centre which was developed specifically to engage the local community. The groups that make up the Open Learning Centre (Tyndale Leadership Centre, Tyndale Intercultural Ministry [TIM] Centre, Tyndale Spiritual Formation Centre, and Tyndale Family Life Centre) build on academic strengths within the institution to offer services such as counselling, networking, access to original research, and training seminars that expand Tyndale's reach and appeal to the local community (e.g., seminars on Faith, Art, and Healing; Holistic Parenting; Rhythms of Life).

Being a private school both constrains and supports Tyndale's research capacity. As a privately funded school its finances are limited—leading to a high teaching load and a year-round schedule of classes. It also means that there is limited internal funding for research and research leaves are not available to all faculty. Furthermore, the administrative structure of the school is very lean and there is no individual or office dedicated to research development (although it does have a research officer). Finally, low salaries as compared to publicly funded universities in Canada mean faculty do not necessarily have the resources to self-fund research or travel.

Within these constraints, Tyndale has worked to hire faculty with research capacity, protect professional development funds, provide administrative support to researchers, and to celebrate the research of its faculty. Tyndale researchers have made community-oriented contributions in areas as diverse as science education (Hayhoe et al., 2010; McCuin et al., 2014), immigration (Janzen, Chapman & Watson, 2012), social inclusion (Hutchinson &

Lee, 2004), children with disabilities (Tam & Poon, 2008) and studies of autistic children (Azarbehi, 2009). Such applied research at Tyndale has been bolstered by institutional policy favouring community engagement. Faculty are encouraged to be actively involved in their local church, in not-for-profit organizations, and in public scholarship. These activities are a positive contribution to annual faculty reviews and a consideration for promotion and tenure. Noteworthy is the encouragement for faculty to be active in settings that are not explicitly Christian or church-related. The most profound shift towards community engagement beyond the church at Tyndale came in the seminary in the late 1990s with a focus on what has come to be called missional theology. This theology understands the church to be a “sent people” going beyond their established base and into the broader world around them to serve that world (Nelson, 2008). The *Churches and Immigrants* project was compatible with Tyndale’s self-identity of being a “sent people.” Furthermore, the study was in sync with Tyndale’s Mission Statement’s concern that it “serve the church and the world for the glory of God” (www.tyndale.ca/about/mission-statement-of-faith). But more specifically, Tyndale’s intercultural constituency has predisposed it to be concerned about issues of immigration and settlement. Tyndale is one of the most intercultural seminaries in North America. Less than 50% of its seminary student body is of European descent. Students come from more than 30 different ethno-cultural backgrounds and 40 different Christian traditions. Tyndale encourages these students to engage the diverse contexts in which they work and live. All graduate students need to take a course titled “Gospel, Church, and Culture” which specifically addresses issues of contextualization. Given the makeup of the student body student internships and class discussions inevitably address issues of cultural diversity and immigration.

Tyndale’s involvement in the *Churches and Immigrants* project centered around churches in the greater Toronto Area. We conducted five focus groups between February 18 and June 3, 2014. Tyndale’s long history, diverse student body and respected alumni gave it access to a large number of different church leaders, churches, service organizations and denominational bodies. This contributed to focus groups with a total of 20 different individuals, in 11 different denominations, representing 10 different countries of origin. While the objective was to learn about the practices of these churches in integrating immigrants into Canada, the focus groups also served to connect people with similar interests and as an opportunity to share ideas for how to conduct this kind of work.

We also conducted two case studies. The first was a large established church adding a focus on reaching out to the diverse community around it to its traditional focus on international work. The second case study explored the work of a small Mandarin speaking community with a primary focus on refugees. In both cases the research gave churches a better understanding of their work with immigrants.

Resources that Tyndale provided to the *Churches and Immigrants* project included the identification of immigrant church leaders and other community stakeholders who served as key informants. Tyndale Open Learning Centre’s TIM Centre dedicated some of the time of one research assistant to work on the *Guide to Action* that resulted from this research. The TIM centre used its UReach Toronto website to distribute the research reports and the *Guide to*

Action to its network (www.ureachtoronto.com/content/role-churches-immigrant-integration-settlement-project). Our research assistants gave presentations to the Hub (a United Way sponsored priority neighbourhood centre) and to a group of community organizations that work with one of the study churches. Finally, TIM centre held a well-publicized event open to all research participants and interested others to hear a presentation on the study results and to discuss those results with each other. About 100 people attended that event.

The *Churches and Immigrants* project contributed to Tyndale's community engagement trajectory in two important ways. First, this project helped students, faculty, and staff develop their ability to understand and work with immigrants. For example, Tyndale supported two students as research assistants who were able to develop substantive research skills and directed those skills towards their current work of revitalizing a rural church.

The second contribution relates to Tyndale's constituency. This project provided resources to assist immigrant church leaders in responding to cultural and religious diversity (e.g., the need for increased partnership, illustrations of effective practices). TIM ran several well-attended seminars for local community leaders where the findings were discussed and people were connected together to develop partnerships of the sort identified in the research. Furthermore, the TIM Centre's participation in the *Churches and Immigrants* project has led directly to a new SSHRC funded study on "Faith and Settlement Partnerships," and a proposed study on "Intergenerational Faith Development". An ongoing cooperative relationship with one of the case study churches from the project, development of TIM Centre's website (www.UReachToronto.ca) to specifically address the expressed needs of its users, and conversations with additional partners about cooperation on supporting intercultural ministry were also, in part, outcomes of the research.

Lessons about Promoting Community-based Research on the Faith-based Campus

Our experience of working on the *Churches and Immigrants* project afforded us the opportunity to reflect on what we have learned about promoting community-based research on the faith-based campus. While our learnings arise out of the experience of scholars from two participating universities (Crandall and Tyndale), their applicability may be of interest to other faith-based campuses in Canada and elsewhere. In general, there are two main lessons that we learned. The first main lesson highlights what the faith-based campus shares with other post-secondary institutions, while the second emphasizes the uniqueness of the faith-based institution.

Lesson #1: The need to embrace both internal and external drivers

Similar to other post-secondary institutions, the faith-based campus requires attention to both internal and external drivers when advancing community engaged scholarship on campus. Such an internal/external combination provides a more robust resource base to enable community-engaged institutional change than simply relying on either one alone.

Certainly the histories of both Crandall and Tyndale demonstrate the presence of internal drivers typical of institutions pursuing community-based research agendas: a growing interest

of individual faculty members and students towards applied research, supportive institutional policies such as tenure and promotion policies that credit community-engaged scholarship, and the emergence of community-engagement structures on campus (Graham, 2014). Yet despite this progress, significant challenges still exist. Chief among these challenges is the fact that Crandall and Tyndale do not have the same access to research resources that most publicly-funded post-secondary institutions have. In fact, on both campuses the institutional expectation for faculty to conduct research has been comparatively recent, with financial incentives to support research not yet on par with “secular-based” counterparts.

Within this context, the *Churches and Immigrants* project seemed to be an important contributor to the internal institutional change process at both Tyndale and Crandall universities. While seeing the potential of community-based research, both campuses have been in the early stages of formalizing a sustainable community-engaged research agenda with supporting institutional structures. The project built on a growing community-engaged research tradition that both campuses have been cultivating with a desire to conduct relevant and impactful research within their constituent groups. Yet there was equal recognition that both campuses needed to be better equipped to more fully realize the potential of community-based research within their sphere of influence. To this end, we see the project’s contribution to internal drivers as being twofold. First, the active involvement of faculty, staff and students on the project was another concrete demonstration of Crandall’s and Tyndale’s growing interest with community-based research, and another example of a community-engagement “mainstreaming” process that others on campus could join. Second, in the case of Tyndale, the project helped to bolster existing community-engagement structures already in place (most notably the TIM Centre) by building their capacity to better engage constituents in the future.

Beyond internal drivers leading to the greater uptake of a community-based research agenda, there are important external drivers supporting the on-campus shift. For example, the growing interest of individual faculty members in community-based research would be strengthened through participation in external community-campus engagement networks, in conferences showcasing community-university research, and through community-based research funding programs and publication outlets. In addition, institutions could pursue funding opportunities that support institutional change (e.g., McConnell Family Foundation’s RECODE), and community-engaged research projects (e.g., SSHRC partnership grants).

In the past, Tyndale and Crandall have not availed themselves of many of these growing external resources designed to support community engagement on campus. Perhaps the most significant contribution of the *Churches and Immigrants* project was in bringing financial and partnership resources to each campus. As already noted, faith-based campuses tend to have much smaller research infrastructure relative to other public universities. The funds for indirect research costs designed to build administrative research capacity at both campuses were very welcome. Also the project provided funds for employing and training students and community members in community-university research. For two consecutive years, there were a number of engagement activities oriented towards research, knowledge mobilization and community mobilization. At Tyndale the provision of physical space for the TIM centre has given it more

stability and legitimacy as it continues to engage community partners. In both universities the project connected faculty to a range of new community and academic partners, which has already led to new collaborative research proposals being submitted and another SSHRC Partnership Development Grant successfully secured. Indeed, transformation deepens and grows when faculty members and administrators develop relationships beyond the university, partnering to explore new ways of learning and working together (Heffner et al. 2006).

Lesson #2: The opportunity to leverage unique faith-based drivers

While there are commonalities that faith-based campuses share with other institutions of higher education, there are also distinctives that may encourage community-based research on campus. Below we highlight three drivers that we believe are unique to faith-based institutions and that represent opportunities for the faith-based campus to leverage.

A. *Tapping into activism that is faith-inspired.* Community-based research has a natural fit with an emphasis on Christian service, social justice and activism often promoted by faith-based schools (Cole 2014). For example, in his study of two Christian colleges in the United States, Cole (2014) notes that activism is created through a strong shared ethos, stemming from interaction among students, professors, and administrators, producing a shared vision for social justice and community involvement. Intentional programs guided student activism, which conformed to institutional expectations and parameters. Schreiner and Kim (2011) found that students in colleges/universities affiliated with the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) have higher aspirations for prosocial behaviours, and greater increase in prosocial values and goals as compared to non-religious private colleges. This penchant for prosocial behaviour is not only true of students, but of all religiously committed Canadians. Statistics Canada data show that those who regularly attend religious services donate much more to both religious organizations and non-religious organizations (Turcotte 2012), and they are also more likely to volunteer their time (Vezina and Crompton, 2012). Such activism bodes well for community-based research initiatives.

Christian schools are guided by the biblical mandate to “love your neighbor as yourself” and to fulfill the “requirement” of God in “pursuing justice”. As a result of these expectations, faith-based schools have many pre-existing links to organizations in their communities, which can facilitate access and engagement in community-based research. With its emphasis on social justice and change (Ochocka, Moorlag and Janzen 2010), community-based research therefore represents an opportunity for faith-based campuses to tap into; a scholarly expression of living out faith-inspired activism. The *Churches and Immigrants* project provided each campus another illustration of how Christian social activism (in this case working to ensure the equitable inclusion of immigrants and refugees within society) can be pursued through research.

B. *Remaining relevant to a religious constituency.* Faith-based institutions are often more dependent on donations than public institutions. Maintaining positive relationships with their religious donative constituency is important to their economic survival. This means they are answerable

to two worlds, one of which is church-based, and the other of which is grounded in established norms of higher education (Hemmings and Hill 2014). Christian schools may face a tension between “a desire to maintain the integrity of their spiritual identities on the one hand, and a push toward achieving excellence in their academic reputation on the other hand” (Matthias 2008 p. 145). Improved academic reputation requires research output and funding. Conversely, religious constituencies may push the university toward greater protectionism, or become concerned when they start looking too much like a “secular” university. Some supporters may think that seeking to improve its academic reputation could compromise the faith-based mission of the university, leading to a process of secularization common of universities in North America (Marsden 1994; Burtchaell 1998; Benne 2001).

Community-based research represents a means of helping faith-based campuses navigate these tensions. It provides opportunity for the campus and their constituencies to collaborate in ways that are meaningful and relevant, while also maintain standards of academic excellence (Janzen, Ochoka and Stobbe under revision). As an academic SSHRC-funded project, the *Churches and Immigrants* project was an example of how doing research that is relevant to a religious constituency and doing research with quality can co-exist..

C. *Embracing place as local mission.* Heffner, Curry and Beversluis (2006) found that their Christian liberal arts college in Michigan (U.S.) began the journey toward engaged scholarship by embracing the particular place in which it was embedded. For them, taking “seriously the issues and strengths of that particular city” (p 129) was paramount. The institutional culture of their campus was subsequently transformed, and an intentional and multi-disciplinary research agenda was carved out in response to pressing social issues identified by their local community. Such an “embrace your place” mentality is an institutional expression of the “missional” orientation mentioned earlier – the notion that Christians are a listening and discerning people being sent into the world around them to offer God’s hope in tangible ways (Hirsch 2006). The impetus for campus-community engagement therefore becomes theologically framed, not simply as a matter of strategy but as a God-given and context-specific sense of calling into local mission (Van Gelder 2007). What is more, it adds an emphasis on living within community in mutual relationship with others in a way that seeks to address the crisis in authority in mission after colonialism (Van Gelder and Zscheile 2011).

Not all examples of community-based research within Tyndale and Crandall are directed at the immediate geographic proximity to their respective campuses, but clearly some are. For example, the TIM Centre’s New Canadian Church Planter project focuses on the needs of new Canadians in the Greater Toronto Area. At Crandall, business professors were asked to complete an effectiveness study and other research by the local detachment of the RCMP. The *Churches and Immigrants* project built on this tradition through local case studies and knowledge exchange activities that engaged participants with the local community.

Conclusion

Religious groups have a strong tradition of participating in community-building. In both Canada and the United States faith groups were at the heart of the rise of social service provision in the latter 19th century and early 20th century (Unruh and Sider 2005), were leaders in national social reform and social justice movements (Christie and Gauvreau 2000), and sought to improve the moral and spiritual well-being of their respective societies (Reimer 2003). Communities of faith build on this historic role today by continuing to be active in community-based programs and social activism in Canada (Hiemstra, 2002).

Given deep connections to their respective constituencies, faith-based campuses are uniquely positioned to be partners in such social transformation. Their scholarly leanings can provide insightful theoretical framing to research collaborations – insights that complement the experiential and practical knowledge brought by their community partners. Their expertise in methodological techniques of systematic data gathering and analysis provide opportunity for reflective practice through rigorous empirical research. The promise of these community-campus research partnerships therefore rests in their potential to enhance evidence-based community ministry and social activism, while doing so in a way the values the “faith factor” of such work (Janzen et al. 2016).

However, such community-campus research collaborations seldom happen automatically, nor are necessarily easy to navigate. Similar to their “secular” counterparts, faith-based scholars seeking to engage their communities face both individual and institutional challenges. To begin, inherent in community-based research is a tension that exists between community partners’ goals and those of critical scholars (Hall et al. 2013; Minkler 2005; Stoecker 2005; Stoecker 2009). Whether called by God or by society, researchers that engage in community activism need to navigate this tension, critically reflecting on their own agendas, biases and relative power in relation to those of their partners (Quaranto and Stanley 2016; Strand et al. 2003). This is a healthy struggle and one that can nudge scholars from religious schools to better articulate how their activist voice is complementary to other valued voices within society (Eby, 2010).

Beyond the challenges faced by individual scholars, faith-based campuses as a whole face challenges. Institutionally campuses will likely need to undergo an intentional counter-shift towards community engaged scholarship --such is the legacy of the “ivory tower” which promoted (and owned) detached, expert-driven research (GUNI, 2014). To shift institutional culture is no easy task. This is especially true when moving towards more democratic practice. In this case the shift is toward the practice of knowledge democracy where the utility of knowledge is seen to be best co-produced and co-mobilized via community and campus partnerships (Hall 2001). A related concern is the historical tendency toward protectionism in some faith-based institutions, where engagement with those outside their religious fold is thought to erode orthodoxy. And yet, our increasingly pluralistic society requires a sensitivity to “cognitive justice” in which diverse perspectives are included in community problem-solving (Hall and Tandon 2017). Christian post-secondary schools therefore need to learn how best to engage this diversity of worldview, including with constituencies who draw

on epistemologies from non-Western traditions. Transforming the campus culture towards community engagement and community-based research therefore requires serious institutional commitment, energy and creativity from a number of players.

In this article we provided two examples of faith-based universities who are undergoing such a shift towards knowledge democracy via community-based research that engages community partners. Our reflections were seen through the lens of a shared experience of collaborating on a two-year research study (the *Churches and Immigrants* project). We learned that, similar to other institutions of higher education, an intentional shift towards community-based research on the faith-based campus requires attention to both the internal and external drivers that support such a shift. We also learned that faith-based campuses have their own unique ethos and therefore have distinctive drivers that can be leveraged to support such a shift. Above all, our experience reinforced the value that community-campus research partnerships can have in addressing societal issues that matter.

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