

FEATURE

Truth Project growing fast

Story and photos by
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If feeling good is contagious, Thursday evenings at the base chapel may be a good place to catch that bug.

The Truth Project, a contemporary worship service, is held every Thursday, 7 p.m. The Protestant service started Oct. 19 and has been growing ever since.

Musicians and other volunteers, known as the Praise Team, show up at 6 p.m. to start getting ready for the service. By 6:30 p.m., a band, to include a drummer, bass player and two guitarists, and choir are putting the finishing touches on the evening's songs.

Upbeat, rock-style praise music signifies the beginning of the service as everyone is invited to stand and sing. There are no good excuses for not joining in because all the words are displayed on a large screen to make praising God as easy as singing karaoke.

Chaplain (Capt.) Daniel Morey and Chaplain (Capt.) Michael Newton, both 437th Airlift Wing chaplains, try to run the service as interactive as possible. They spread God's message through the Truth Project by using videos, skits and interaction with those who attend.

"This variation of the traditional service is open in a way that we can get interactivity between chaplains who serve and those who attend," said Newton. "We sensed there was a need for a service like this, and now we know there is."

There are usually 40 or so people in attendance at the Truth Project, but as the word has been spreading, Morey said attendance has been rising.

"We'd like to touch as many lives as possible," said Morey. "But, the important thing is that those who do attend find what they're looking for."

The bass player for the Praise Team, Zach Woodall, said those are his feelings about the Truth Project also.

"I'm not focused on how many people are there," said Woodall. "I invite people to come and I hope they do. I know that we're feeling God and that's the important thing."

Woodall said his initial interest in the service came about because of his passion for music.

"I love to play music," he said. "I want to play it the right way, and I'm doing that through the Truth Project."

Those in regular attendance range from a 6-month old to retirees and every age in between. Ann Martileno, who was with her retired husband Frank, said she finds the Truth Project very enlightening.

"I think it's wonderful," said Martileno. "The music, the talking to people. I enjoy this so much."

Morey and Newton agree the Truth Project has been so successful because of the help of volunteers.

"The Praise Team does some incredible work," said Morey. "The volunteers have made this service what it is. While there will always be a chaplain leading the service, it's almost self-supporting."

Due to TDYs and PCSing, volunteers are always needed to fill gaps on the Praise Team. Right now, Newton said drama volunteers are needed most of all.

"Drama is a profound way to say something without saying it," said Newton. "It's a very powerful way to deliver a Biblical message. People can watch a situation in a skit and think to themselves, 'I do that.' They can evaluate behaviors and actions through the use of characters."

Morey and Newton said the Truth Project is in no way replacing the traditional



Jeff Babinski brings his 6-month old daughter, Eliana, to the Truth Project.

Protestant service. However, it can go hand-in-hand with the Sunday service.

"People who go on Thursday are welcome to attend on Sunday also," said Newton. "And some of them do. We've seen some new faces on Thursdays that we haven't seen at other services. Our goal is to reach out to the whole population in uniform and offer them the services they need."

Woodall said for him, the Truth Project offers a more modern approach that he can relate with better than the traditional service.

"Back in the day, lecturing was fine because that's how people were taught things," said Woodall. "Today, everyone is growing up with computers and videos and methods of teaching have changed. I think that younger people are used to learning from these things and the Truth Project uses these tools to portray the same messages."

Newton said the Truth Project will be conducting an interesting series on God in January.

"We will talk about God's character and try to define who God is," said Newton. "There are some interesting cultural myths out there, and we'll compare those to Biblical views through a very popular movie clip."

Even if it's just to see what all the excitement is about, members of all denominations are invited to attend the Truth Project.

For more information, call the chapel at 963-2536 or visit www.charleston.af.mil/CHAS/437AW/Staff/Chapel/Protestant_Programs_.htm.



Dawn Anderson runs a lap-top to keep the slides running during the service.



Zach Woodall provides the bass for the Praise Team.



Members of the Praise Team open the Truth Project with a rock-beat worship song. (Back row left to right) Tracy Morey, Jennifer Allardice, Angela Allardice, Lara Martin, Adam West and Michael Newton. (Front row left to right) Amber Allardice, Robert Sebestyen and Daniel Morey.