

Boston: First impressions of ministry at MIT

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It's a long way from Beaumont to Boston. It's winter in New England, and there is no lack of heavy snow or icy wind. It reminds me of Ecclesiastes 3:1, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven." That fits my new situation in life—new city, new weather, new friends, new people, but the same God and the same gospel.

✘ Travis Nicks The streets, sidewalks and train routes of Boston feel like an indecipherable. There are always people walking on the sidewalks, or to put it more accurately, tromping through the snow and slush. I even saw a few people jogging at a slow pace—possibly training for the Boston Marathon. There are piles of snow on the sidewalks at least six feet tall that form a natural hedge between the streets and roads everywhere you go.

Many of the residents in my community are young people, mid to late 20s, due to the multitude of college campuses nearby. These campuses also house a high percentage of international students, and a big part of my ministry will involve helping these students in conversational English classes. Through those experiences, I will build friendships and have opportunities to share the gospel—a message that will be heard by some for the first time.

I am interning under Michael Dean, the Baptist chaplain at MIT, for the spring semester. The funny thing about our workspace is that it houses chaplains of multiple faiths, which is itself a reflection of the philosophy at MIT—political correctness. Michael says Boston is the politically correct capital of the world. In my estimation, MIT is a melting pot of diversity and inclusiveness. The campus has accommodations for every kind of person or

disorder or preference people might have. There are certain rules the chaplains must abide by if they are to remain in their chaplaincy, and one of them is working together peaceably in a diverse environment.

On Wednesday evenings, the Baptist Student Ministry hosts a time of fellowship and praise. The first Wednesday of every month is of particular interest because we provide an opportunity for students to write in questions anonymously about the Bible or Christianity in general. Then we take turns answering the questions to the best of our knowledge. On Friday evenings, I have been tasked with the ministry of providing a Bible study for the young men of MIT.

One of the students in attendance at the Bible study observed everyone here excels at one hobby, and I also have observed a similar phenomenon. It appears to be the case that the disciplined lifestyle required to make good grades and perform well in school carries over into other activities. However, the extreme dedication to school and the feverish work ethic that characterizes many MIT students comes at a high price—at least a couple of suicides and attempted suicides are reported from students and faculty each year.

I am thankful there are Christians who are able to contend for the faith and reach out to the hurting among the world's intellectual elite. In a world of radical inclusiveness and a forgotten Christian heritage, it is refreshing to know God will provide a refuge for his followers and a remnant chosen by grace.

Travis Nicks, a graduate of East Texas Baptist University, is serving as campus ministry intern at MIT through [Go Now Missions](#).