

Theological Education - TEAC - Rationale

The Anglican Primates' Working Party on Theological Education 'Theological Education for the Anglican Communion' (TEAC)

The mission of God has been committed to the servant people of God in Christ. It is the privilege and duty of Christian leaders to provide for the equipping of the Church for this task. Central to equipping Christians for God's mission is education in the Holy Scriptures, in the teaching of the Church and in practical application of that education.

In the face of the countless tragedies facing the world today, the Christian commitment to God and his purposes for humanity is vital to being a reflective disciple. Theology is not simply an exercise for academics but the attempt by all Christian people to make sense of all God has given and revealed to us, in other people, in the world, in our place and time, in the Bible and, supremely, in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the attempt to make connections between our daily life and the Christian experience of God, faith and life in the Spirit. It is the attempt to understand why trust in the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier makes a difference, and, in that knowledge, to be willing and eager to share God's love with others.

In many places, existing, new and renewed ventures in theological education are bearing fruit, and these examples, together with the principles on which they are based, deserve to be made more widely known.

However, there are identifiable but not insurmountable difficulties facing the Anglican Communion in the area of theological education. The degree to which each may or may not be a problem varies from place to place. The difficulties may simply be defined as ...

- a general lack of theological literacy - a challenge to spiritual life and mission in increasingly secular societies and a serious hindrance to Christians in telling the gospel story and making connections between faith and life;
- inadequate engagement with contemporary thinking, culture and society - a challenge of selecting and preparing a new generation to share Christ in a world of apparently competing faiths, secularism and post-modernism;
- some confusion about the particular callings of those involved in the Church's public ministry - a challenge in particular of practising *diakonia* in a range of ministries;
- inadequately or inappropriately trained priests - a challenge of relating theological and biblical understandings to practical situations in preaching, pastoral care, evangelism and ethics, and of refreshing theology and practice;
- inappropriate practice of the particular ministry of a bishop in changing contexts - a challenge of understanding the functions of apostle-missioner, teacher, encourager, team-leader, manager, pastor, disciplinarian, public figure, example and colleague; and
- a weak or selective commitment to Christians (even of Anglicans) of other traditions and perspectives - a challenge of appreciating the positive ethos of

Anglicanism and what it can contribute to and learn from others in the Christian way.

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