



CTEAC

The Commission for Theological Education in the Anglican Communion (CTEAC)

CTEAC Resources Bulletin

July 2023

As we reach the mid-point of 2023 this CTEAC bulletin offers you reports of two important gatherings of theological educators and church leaders, one in South India and one for Indigenous leaders in Canada. Responding to the challenges of the COVID pandemic and exploring fresh opportunities for churches and their training programmes, these reports pass on important insights for theological educators everywhere. This bulletin also includes an invitation to anyone interested in connecting theological education with formation for discipleship/Jesus-shaped living, an invitation to participate in an online programme taking place in early 2024 facilitated by an international group of tutors and church leaders. Please sign up for this important initiative.

The next meeting of CTEAC commissioners takes place on 19th July. If there are issues you would like them to discuss please contact the commissioner from your own province. A list of commissioners is [available here](#).

Theological Education in post-pandemic South Asia and Southeast Asia

Muthuraj Swamy

While the COVID pandemic has posed plenty of challenges for theological education it has also opened new avenues. This was the subject of an important consultation of sixty theological educators, postgraduate students and church leaders from South Asia and Southeast Asia who came together to reflect on theological education in the post-pandemic context. Organised by the department for Theological Education in the Anglican Communion (TEAC) in partnership with the United Theological College (UTC), Bangalore, the consultation took place at the Ecumenical Resource Centre at UTC from 11-14 April 2023. Friends from Southeast Asia joined on Zoom and it also gathered people from several ecumenical church denominations. The communicate with key insights is printed below.

The inaugural keynote lecture was delivered by Revd Prof Vasanth Raa, principal of UTC, and the closing address by Revd Prof Samuel Meshack, Pro-Chancellor of Martin Luther Christian University, Shillong, India. There were theological educators from theological institutions in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Myanmar who presented papers on the challenges and opportunities in their local contexts. Common themes included the challenges as well as opportunities in online theological education, the need for online training for theological faculty, the importance of sharing theological education resources beyond geographical and ecumenical borders, the need to reimagine theological education to suit the twenty first century, and theological education aimed at all the people of God (not just theological students in seminaries). Specific local challenges included the ongoing lack of women in theological education in many of the South Asian and Southeast Asian contexts, the digital divide in rural parts of these countries, the challenge of Hindu nationalism, political instabilities and socio-economic crises that impact theological education in many ways.

CTEAC commissioners from India – Bishop Reuben Mark from the Church of South India, and Revd Dr Sunil Caleb from the Church of North India (principal of the Bishop's College) – not only joined the consultation and but also made presentations and participated in the conversations.

The Communique

1. We Affirm

We affirm that theological education is for all people of God and by all people of God, and theology emerges from and touches all aspects of life;

We affirm that in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic we can no longer do theological education as usual;

We affirm that the sharing of resources across different borders including church denominations, nations and regions is key to the future of theological education;

We affirm that the Covid-19 pandemic, though a crisis, has provided an opportunity to see the old challenges in new perspectives and to convert new challenges into opportunities.

2. Acknowledging the Challenges

We acknowledge the many challenges to theological education in the South Asia and Southeast Asia in the post-COVID19 pandemic. Starting with the decline in the number of students enrollment and increase in drop outs, the other challenges for theological institutions are the lack of recruitment of candidates for ministry among the churches, decline in sponsorship from churches, less preparedness for online learning, the digital divide, lack of access to library resources, abuse of online resources, lack of proper pedagogy and methodology for online learning, and dip in financial resources. Other issues also are displacement, loss of job, and increase in PTSD cases. Due to the uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, fear and doubts about the future have crept into the minds of the people. The pandemic has also aggravated some of the ongoing challenges such as gender, economic, and social inequalities, and violence against religious, social and ethnic minorities.

3. Identifying the Opportunities

COVID-19 has posed plenty of challenges while at the same time has opened new avenues for theological education. We identify the following emergent opportunities for theological education in the South Asia and South East Asia post COVID-19 pandemic. There is a demand for courses through hybrid platforms and external courses. The use of technology in theological education has opened up options for the resourcing of people in any corners of the world. In courses validated by the Senate of Serampore College, counselling programs are in high demand and interest in courses such as D. Min, M.Th and D.Th in counselling studies and research are on the rise. Blended learning in theological education has widened the scope of theological education. Especially, the digitization of library resources has paved a way for sharing of library resources across state and national boundaries. Theological institutions are able to utilize facilities across borders. Newer forms of ministry through online platforms gained momentum and provided new opportunities for theologically trained graduates. There is a realization that churches and academia have to work together towards the establishing of the reign of God.

4. Envisioning New Pathways

A vision for the way forward should include how crises and consequences of the pandemic for theological education may be translated into opportunities to strengthen it.

In envisioning theological education in the post-pandemic context, local context, realities and local resources should be encouraged.

The academic institutions and seminaries should work with the local church in taking theological education forward in these challenging times. False binaries between scholarly community and faith community need to be overcome.

Online education is the future of theological education. New pedagogical tools and methodologies need to be developed to suit the changes, and the use of online resources and pedagogy is to be encouraged. Online mentoring is the new reality, and hence training for faculty for the usage of electronic gadgets, pedagogical and offline tools is highly important.

The gaps between old generation faculty and new generation students should be addressed. Students are aware of multimedia, they know how to use it, and they should be encouraged to use the latest tools for their paper presentations and research works. They should be encouraged to apply creativity and develop innovative ideas using the available tools.

Sharing of human and literature resources across borders is key in promoting theological education ecumenically, and across the many other borders.

New ways of doing field education for theological students need to be explored.

Life-sustaining programs of the church should find a place in theological education.

Theological education should include administration and management in the syllabus.

Networking with the secular academic world, especially in the context of Asia where Christians are minorities in many countries is important, and this would strengthen theological education hugely.

Learning from the Sacred Circle

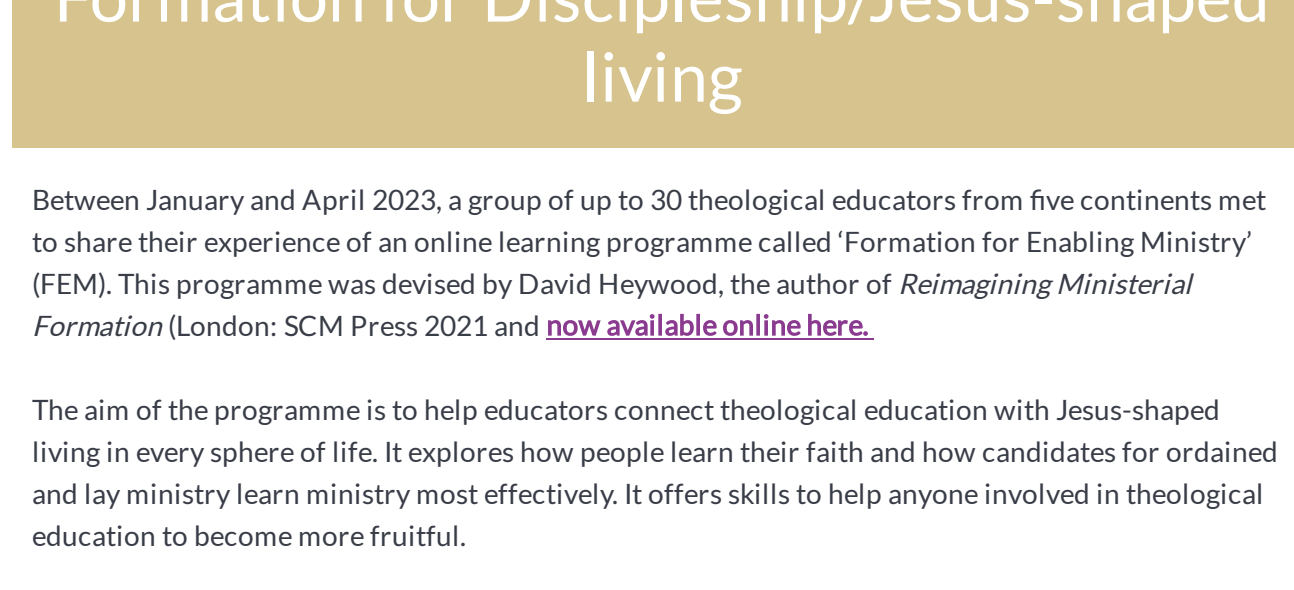
Paulo Ueti

The Sacred Circle is a gathering of indigenous Anglicans in Canada. This year it took place between May 29th and June 2nd and its journey of understanding and reconciliation has much to teach the Church's understanding of God, spirituality, and the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. The gathering took place around a fire. Rev. Arthur Anderson introduced the fire in the following way –

Isn't it interesting that the Jews had pillar of fire and smoke to guide them through the desert. Isn't it interesting that the Holy Spirit came as 'tongues of fire'. Isn't it interesting that our works are tested by fire. A charcoal fire welcomed the disciples as they came back from fishing which was familiar. From this fire the church started, and the disciples were never the same. As we gather at this Sacred Fire may your enjoy its warmth and friendships.

The Anglican Church of Canada, and many other churches such as the Anglican Diocese of Amazonia invited to the circle to share and listen, have been engaged in a process of learning and embracing Indigenous theologies, recognising the wisdom and spiritual richness of Indigenous peoples. During the assembly Archbishop Linda Nicholls said that "the rest of the church needs you". The same message was conveyed by Archbishop Marinze from Amazonia confirming this statement and sharing how much indigenous peoples must teach the whole church to manage and take care of the land (cf Gen 2:15). Indigenous Maori from Aotearoa New Zealand were also invited to the Circle and shared their perspectives and experience as peoples and Christians. Archbishop Don Tamihere spoke of their appreciation:

It was an honour to join with those who gathered at the Sacred Circle this year. Our attendance in person was in recognition of long-held relationships shared between the Maori Anglican Church and the Anglican Indigenous peoples of Canada. We wanted to acknowledge the former Archbishop, Mark Macdonald, who worked so closely with us in the past, and we wanted to express our continuing support for the new Archbishop, Chris Harper, and for ACIP in the journey ahead. As Anglican Indigenous peoples in colonised lands we have much in common, face many of the same challenges, and contain the same incredible Gospel potential. Our visit was purposed to renew all those connections, to remind each other that we are not alone but remain part of the same global Anglican Indigenous family. We encourage Archbishop Chris and ACIP to keep up the good work, fight the good fight, pursue love, joy, and peace, and seek new ways to flourish. We commit to being there in support every step of the way.



There were different areas of theological learning:

1. A spirituality rooted in water and land: One of the fundamental learnings from Indigenous theologies is the recognition of the sacredness of the water and land and its integral connection to spirituality. Profound understanding of this changes our way of life and the way we make an impact in the societies we live in. Indigenous communities have a deep understanding of the interconnectedness between people, the land, and all creation. The land is viewed as a living entity, worthy of respect and stewardship. The water is what gives life and helps to shape all things. This understanding challenges non-Indigenous Christians to re-examine their relationship with the land and to cultivate a spirituality that acknowledges the sacredness of creation.

2. The sense of Community and Relational Theology: Indigenous theologies emphasize the importance of community and relationships. The concept of "All My Relations" reflects the interconnectedness of all beings and the understanding that humans are part of a larger web of life.

It must be understood that we initially experienced God through our own languages, cultures, and worldview. For example, in Cree, God the Creator means 'The One Who Made Everything'; there is no word for 'reconciliation' in Inuktitut as behaviours/relationships dwelt only in the realms of partnership, friendship and inclusion; important ceremony included traditional regalia; kinship meant all of 'Our Relatives' including animals, birds, creatures of the water and spirits; in Cree the concept of 'authority' does not imply hierarchy but rather means only that it is conferred by others, often just for a period of time. ('The Covenant and Way of Life, Anglican Church of Canada, p.5)

This sense of community and relational theology challenges the individualistic tendencies often found in Western Christianity and encourages a sense of responsibility towards one another and the wider community (the whole creation). The creation is not a resource but source of abundant life. The emphasis on community and relationships calls for a reevaluation of hierarchical structures and a shift towards a more inclusive and egalitarian understanding of the Church.

3. Oral tradition and storytelling: Indigenous cultures have a rich tradition of oral storytelling (this challenges our western thinking of use of time for instance), which serves as a means of transmitting knowledge, history, and spirituality from one generation to another. Indigenous theologies highlight the power of storytelling as a way to connect with the Divine and to convey complex theological concepts. The Church can learn from this emphasis on oral tradition by incorporating storytelling into liturgical practices and theological education, recognising its transformative potential in shaping faith and fostering community.

4. Respect for diversity and inclusivity: Indigenous theologies emphasize the importance of honouring and respecting diversity. Indigenous communities encompass a range of languages, cultures, and spiritual practices. The Church's engagement with Indigenous theologies invites a broader understanding of diversity and inclusivity, challenging the tendency towards uniformity and assimilation. This learning encourages the Church to celebrate and embrace different expressions of faith and to create spaces where diverse voices are heard, valued, and integrated into the life of the community.

5. Healing and reconciliation: Indigenous theologies offer profound insights into the processes of healing and reconciliation. These theologies recognize the impact of colonization, forced assimilation, and the legacy of residential schools on Indigenous communities. They call for a holistic approach to healing that encompasses spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical well-being. The Church learns from Indigenous theologies the importance of engaging in acts of repentance, seeking forgiveness, and working towards reconciliation. This learning challenges the Church to address the systemic injustices faced by Indigenous peoples and to actively participate in the healing process.

6. Holistic spirituality and holistic mission: Indigenous theologies emphasize the interconnectedness of spirituality, justice, and care for the earth. They challenge the separation between the sacred and the secular and call for a holistic approach to spirituality and mission. This learning invites the Church to recognize the inseparability of worship and action, spirituality and justice, and faith and care for creation. It compels the Church to engage in transformative action that addresses the socio-economic, political, and environmental challenges faced by Indigenous communities and the wider society.

The exposure and the exploration of Indigenous theologies has yielded profound learnings that have reshaped the Church's understanding of God, spirituality, and relationships. The recognition of the sacredness of the land and waters, the profound sense of community and relational nature of theology, the power of storytelling, the celebration of diversity, the call to healing and reconciliation, and the emphasis on holistic spirituality and mission have all contributed to a more inclusive, respectful and just expression of Christianity. These learnings invite the Church to engage in ongoing dialogue, listening, and action, as it continues its journey towards reconciliation, understanding, and the building of a more just and inclusive society.

Formation for Discipleship/Jesus-shaped living

Between January and April 2023, a group of up to 30 theological educators from five continents met to share their experience of an online learning programme called 'Formation for Enabling Ministry' (FEM). This programme was devised by David Heywood, the author of *Reimagining Ministerial Formation* (London: SCM Press 2021) and [now available online here](#).

The aim of the programme is to help educators connect theological education with Jesus-shaped living in every sphere of life. It explores how people learn their faith and how candidates for ordained and lay ministry learn ministry most effectively. It offers skills to help anyone involved in theological education to become more fruitful.

A new community of practice will gather in the early months of 2024 to follow the programme together. The programme is self-paced and consists of 12 units, each requiring up to four hours to complete. The advantages of the community are the encouragement that comes from linking up with others following the programme and the guidance available from the programme's author, Dr David Heywood, and LICC theological consultant, Dr Dave Benson.

There will be five conversations on Zoom between 7.30 and 9.00 pm London time. These will take place on the following dates:

- January 8th: a course welcome and discussion of the introductory video
- February 12th: discussing FEM Stage 1, units 1 – 4
- March 11th: discussing FEM Stage 2, units 5 – 8
- April 8th: discussing FEM Stage 3, units 9 – 10
- April 29th: discussing FEM Stage 3, units 11 – 12

There will also be an informal Zoom conversation every Friday from 12.00 – 1.00 pm London time to catch up with others in the community and share what you are learning.

You will need to purchase two books:

- *Kingdom Learning* by David Heywood (SCM, 2017)
- *Adult Learning*, 5th edition, by Jenny Rogers (Open University, 2007)

All the other reading for the course is supplied free of charge for those who register. To sign-up for the community of practice, all you need to do is [register interest here](#).

We look forward to meeting and working with you in 2024!

Worship and Liturgical Studies

Do you want to improve your skills and understanding of worship and liturgy? If so, this exciting new programme leading to a post-graduate qualification which is tailored to practise and theology, answering the questions worship poses today, is for you!

Drawing on an international and ecumenical team of specialists, we will enable you to understand Christian liturgy and provide you with the skills to develop it in your church community. This will be wholly distance learning, mostly on-line, but with an optional summer-school based in Mirfield, home of the Mirfield Liturgical Institute, an integral part of The College of the Resurrection. We have a long tradition of teaching liturgy dating back to the 1890s; we have the largest liturgical library in England and many other resources for teaching liturgy and worship including striking liturgical spaces.

The programme is part of the Common Awards validated by the University of Durham. For further information, please contact:

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CTEAC Resources Bulletin

In English, Portuguese, French and Spanish

Available at <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/theology/theological-education.aspx>

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