

Integration in Theological Education



INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to explore the process of integration in theological education using the BA Honours Course in Contextual Theology of The Partnership for Theological Education, Manchester (England) as a case study. We begin by looking at reasons for being concerned with integration and then focus on how this is worked out in the Course.

Integration is rooted in ecumenism. In the case of the work done by Chaz Maviyane-Davies for the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Harare, art, political vision, theology, Zimbabwean culture and internationalism were brought together (see the calendar Images of Africa, published by WCC). Within The Partnership for Theological Education, theological colleges, churches and community groups, lay people and ordinands, people of all conditions and ages, are brought together in the one institution and often learn together and from each other.

The Partnership for Theological Education is composed of six theological colleges and the national, regional or local education units (by whatever name) of ten denominations. The aim of the Partnership is to contribute to the education of the whole church, including lay people of all ages, people being educated for specific lay and ordained ministries and to Continuing Ministerial Education. Our brief includes work with children and post graduate research.

The Mission Statement is

"The Partnership for Theological Education, being com-

posed of Christian churches, colleges, courses and community groups, is committed to:

** **learning** through engagement with the scriptures, past and present traditions, the world church and other faith communities and contemporary experience and thinking*

** **building** communities of learning, worship, justice and liberation which provide opportunities for all to explore theology, discipleship and spirituality, including the preparation of some for accredited forms of ministry*

** **sharing** theological resources with and among local churches and communities and with wider networks to which its partners belong.*

The Partnership is essentially an ecumenical body which seeks to express in educational terms its understanding of its part in the mission of God in Christ to the world."

In this statement care has been taken not only to integrate wide ranging experiences under the headings, learning, building and sharing, but also to make it possible for Partners wanting an educational basis and those insisting on a Christological statement to collaborate. Integrative thinking is an expression of our understanding of ecumenism, of our being part of the oikoumene. It may be possible, in a post modern way, to make distinctions between various parts of life experience, but this becomes false in any economic developmental, pastoral, liturgical or morally complex situation. We and our experiences are

