

Women in theological education: challenges and opportunities.

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A brief historical perspective:

In the beginning of the proclamation of the good news, we can identify that the participation of women in Jesus' group, although it seems very little, is very important because it seems that they are included when we talk about disciples in general, when they are named for some reason, especially as witnesses, followers and ministering; for example, in the story of the passion of Jesus, women appear in the crucifixion, death, tomb and resurrection of Jesus, it is to them that is announced the paschal kerygma and are sent to the other disciples to announce the new knowledge.

And although the gospels are written at a time when the process of patriarchalisation is underway, nothing is ever attributed to Jesus that could be harmful or marginalising to women. The proclamation of the Kingdom breaks the patriarchal structures; it inverts the hegemonic values and structures of that moment.

Therefore, if we reduce or annul the presence of women in Jesus' movement, we risk losing an adequate picture of human history. Recovering the position of women through the approach of texts and history that ask about their status, their role, their liberation movements, their knowledge and their sufferings, allow us a dimension of a different historical reality.

What happens nowadays

Today, feminine hermeneutic is interested in recovering the past of women ignored by hegemonic history and raises a very radical question, because it reveals cultural and anthropological conditioning so deep that were invisible, and now illuminate contemporary theological reflection.

Since the opening up of women's participation in theological work in academic, pastoral and church settings, a range of opportunities have opened up for women's faith experience in theological reflection.

In the academic fields, this richness in the exchange of experiences and opportunities to add to the mission and ministry of the Church has been developed. The development of these spaces and access to scholarships and support to work in writing production and research in the theological field gave women the opportunity to speak, present, celebrate, live and share our experience of God.

In this context, learning/teaching theology and doing theology are two pillars that allowed the voice of women to be heard. Today, in the academic field, we have a very important

number of female theologians who have approached not only the faith experience of women in the different areas of their lives, but throughout history a richness has developed in the theological agenda approached from a feminine point of view.

We acknowledge and encourage the work performed in the field of theological education for women in the Anglican Communion, both in training and as trainers in this field. We know that we have female theologians who have contributed their personal, social, cultural and religious experience to the Anglican theological work.

One advantage we have as Anglicans is our openness to ecumenical dialogue and encounter. Exchanging experiences in theological education with other women from other denominations or Christian churches, enriches and strengthens monitoring in ministry and ways to bring the good news of the kingdom to the people of God.

One of the fields that in large parts of the Anglican Communion has been opened to women is the ordained ministry. It seems to me that this is one of the visible signs of Anglican identity and that for us today is an incentive to encourage women to express their reflection and experience of God, not only in the classroom, but in the community of faith

In the particular case of Mexico, spaces and forums for participation and theological training for women have been gradually generated. Active participation within the ordained and lay ministries of the Church tells us a lot about the presence of women in the work of the Church.

In the Anglican Church of Mexico, we have Seminaries and Theological Education Centres in each diocese, trying to meet the local needs of each geographic region. The entrance to them is open to men and women, and today we can say that the entrance of women seminarians exceeds 50.

Some challenges and opportunities

The current situation brings double challenges for theological education in general.

On the one hand, we are encouraged to focus on new ways of teaching methods that present themselves today: the use and knowledge of technologies and their reach, the opening that these ways offer within the demand for education and that makes us more visible by inserting and adapting ourselves to the current reality.

On the other hand, we must strengthen the opening of spaces for more constant participation of women in the different areas of theological education, which would favourably impact the mission and ministry of the Church.

Another challenge that continues to be present, it seems at least in Mexico, is the training of female theologians, of women who produce and write theology. There are 19 women in the ordained ministry in the Anglican Church of Mexico who we celebrate and live our faith and our identity. Those who were trained in seminaries in our diocese, who are now

training for other seminarians, and who are responsible for accompanying other women in their discernment to serve Christ in his church. However, we still do not have the step to train women to produce theology and materials in the Spanish language.

The opportunities have been many, for example, the exchange of resources, materials, teachers, students to interact in the theological field; sharing the experience in other contexts to enrich reflection and training, as well as the links and contacts that are made in these exchanges.

In addition, the voice of Anglican women theologians, teachers and ordained was heard in important forums that impacted society and contributed to the strengthening of the values and principles of tolerance, inclusion, equality, justice and human rights.

Being part of the training group of San Andrés Seminary in Mexico City and being a member of the Commission of Theological Education for Latin America and the Caribbean has allowed me to see more and more women requesting access to seminaries and scholarships for study, research and production in the theological field, and this is a sign of hope and encouragement, because we all have the privilege of sharing our faith experience.