FeAST - Fellowship of Anglican Scholars of Theology

A Proposal

As part of its efforts to stimulate, support and strengthen theological engagement across the Ang_lican communion, the United Society Partners in the Gospel (USPG) is planning to create a global forum of scholars engaged in theological research and education.

Called **FeAST** (***Fe****llowship of* ***A****nglican* ***S****cholars of* ***T****heology*), this forum will:

- **be a fellowship** that will facilitate **encounter** between Anglican scholars, as well as **exchange** of current theological thinking and research, and
- **serve as an instrument** for building up Anglican scholars, and scholarship marked by creativity, critical-edge and courage.

Our Rationale: Why FeAST?

Global Anglicanism holds boundless theological wealth, much of which is often not sufficiently shared across (and beyond) the Anglican communion. There are several reasons for this, some of which include lack of access to and opportunity for networking, academic publishing, and participation in global academic forums. These obstacles, stem from and in turn sustain, historical imbalances in global theological scholarship which has for long privileged and accorded normative status to theologies and theological methods which have a Eurocentric bias.

Because of such privileging several theologies that are unconventional, creative, and courageous both in their method and content have been to a large extent rendered invisible and marginalised from 'mainstream' theological knowledge. This prevents a wholistic cross-fertilisation of theologies and the fostering of genuinely global perspectives in theology.

Alongside this, researchers, and theological educators across the world face other general challenges. While periods of research and early stages of one's teaching career can be exciting periods of creativity, they can also be times of isolation, frustration, and anxiety, which can be overcome by peer support and solidarity.

Our Hope: What are we seeking to do?

Conscious of the above-mentioned challenges and committed to addressing them, FeAST's focus will be on:

- Building a stable and self-sustaining platform for discussion and dissemination of current research.
- Forging 'academic solidarities' by establishing an intergenerational and international platform of mutual mentoring and support that is intentional about overcoming the 'opportunities divide' that affects theological scholarship.
- Opening opportunities for the sharing of other resources – student and faculty exchange, visiting lectureships, sabbatical opportunities, curricula, research skills, and possibilities for collaboration.

Our aim is to resource the Anglican communion in the vocation of theological research and education. Our ethos will be one of mutual learning where we build each other up in the vocation of 'doing theology'.

Our Method: How do we hope to achieve the above?

We will embrace a hybrid approach and use both in-person and online methods of encounter and exchange. Our main focus will be on three major areas:

a) ***Regular online discussion forums:*** As part of our focus on network-building, we plan to establish a self-sustaining forum that will meet on a regular basis (once a month) for seminars, book discissions and sharing of 'work in progress'. The aim is to build up a global cohort of Anglican scholars and explore the adventures and opportunities that emerge from such a network.

b) ***Publications:*** As part of our aim to disseminate recent research, we plan to initiate a publishing project that will encourage and enable critical and creative thinking on mission and theology from global perspectives. Apart from book projects the aim also will be to encourage the development of theological resources in different media (art, poetry, and media productions).

c) ***Annual Conference:*** To facilitate face to face encounter we plan to establish an annual conference, which will ensure an inter-generational encounter between Anglican scholars. Funding for ensuring a global participation in this conference will be explored and might mean working strategically with other partners.

About the name:

The choice of name is intentional and is meant to reflect the core value of hospitality. It is meant to evoke the image of a community feast, the richness of which is dependent on the gifts that are mutually shared. Meals in the biblical tradition also have the subversive feature of transcending boundaries and turning down structures of discrimination. It is our hope that FeAST will be a space where our imagination will be fed, as well as freed so that together we will learn how to stay hungry for God's justice and peace.