

This document sets out the theological position of London Seminary on certain core issues and demonstrates how these are applicable to a number of matters of contemporary relevance and debate. It also sets down the practical implications of that position for the life and work of the Seminary. The purpose of this document is to set down in writing the position that the Seminary has held on these matters since its inception. It was approved by the Board of Governors of the Seminary at its meeting on 19th May, 2009, and amended at its meeting on 7th February 2017.

## **CORE BELIEFS AND ETHOS**

The Constitution of the Seminary provides that the object of the Seminary is 'To advance the Evangelical Christian Faith in accordance with the Doctrinal Basis of the Seminary'. For this purpose, the Seminary has the power 'to provide training for men who are called to and are gifted for the ministry of the Christian Gospel and who subscribe to the fundamental doctrines of Protestant Evangelical Christianity as set out in the Doctrinal Basis' and 'to provide a course of studies to develop biblical qualifications and spiritual qualities, including the development in the student of that manner of reasoning and application of principles that are derived from the Scriptures.'

The Basis of Faith of the Seminary is set down in its Constitution. It provides that the Scriptures are the 'supreme authority as the only rule of faith and practice'.

Thus the Seminary is an evangelical and Protestant institution, whose core beliefs are defined by the Basis of Faith and rooted in a Protestant, evangelical understanding of the Christian Scriptures, Old and New Testament. This defines the ethos which the Seminary seeks to establish and maintain in all aspects of its life and work.

The Seminary, in common with large numbers of evangelical churches and Christians in this country and throughout the world, holds that the teaching of Scripture on certain matters of contemporary relevance is as follows.

### **1. Marriage**

Marriage is ordained by God for the good of mankind and for the glory of God. The only marriage approved by Scripture is that between one man and one woman, lawfully joined together in matrimony. (See Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:3-9; Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:18-19; Heb. 13:4).

### **2. Sexual relations**

Scripture recognises both the blessing and the dangers of the human capacity for sexual relations. It therefore places clear and absolute limits on the persons between whom such relations may subsist. Scripture permits and encourages sexual relations only between two persons, one male and one female, who are married to

one another, as defined in paragraph 1. All other sexual relations are forbidden. (Gen. 2:24; Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18; Rom. 1:24-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 7:1-5; 1 Tim. 1:8-11; Jude 7)

### **3. Gender**

God created us male and female and calls us to live according to our gender identity which is inseparable from our biological sex determined at conception. Our identity may not be changed or reassigned. (Gen. 1:27)

#### **4. Pastoral office**

Scripture teaches that the work of the pastoral office is restricted to men. (1 Cor. 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:11-15; 3:1-7; Tit. 1:6-9)

#### **IMPLICATIONS**

These positions have the following implications for the life and work of the Seminary.

1. The Seminary is a primarily vocational institution. It is thus essential that those involved in teaching at the Seminary live lives which are in accordance with the core beliefs and ethos of the Seminary. Their teaching must also conform with those core beliefs and ethos. All who teach at the Seminary must therefore be in agreement with the evangelical Protestant faith. Moral lapses lead to disciplinary action. With regard to the specific matters discussed above, the Seminary does not use in a teaching role anyone who is in a sexual relationship with someone to whom they are not married, as defined above, nor does it employ someone who has undergone gender re-assignment.
2. For similar reasons, administrative staff must also be in agreement with the evangelical Protestant faith and must live lives which are in accordance with the core beliefs and ethos of the Seminary. Failure to do so, particularly in an institution as small as London Seminary, would have a significant impact on the life and ethos of the Seminary as a whole. Thus the principles set out in the preceding paragraph apply also to administrative staff of the Seminary.
3. Students at the Seminary are training for ministry in the evangelical, Protestant church. The training includes biblical and spiritual qualities and qualifications. It is thus essential to enable the Seminary to fulfil its objectives that the student body complies with the core beliefs and ethos of the Seminary. Students are required to be in agreement with the Doctrinal Basis of the Seminary. Moral lapses lead to disciplinary action. With regard to the specific matters discussed above, the Seminary does not admit as a student anyone who is in a sexual relationship with someone to whom he is not married, as defined above, nor does it admit anyone who has undergone gender re-assignment.
4. Because the course which London Seminary runs is devoted exclusively to the training of men for preaching and pastoral work, in accordance with its Constitution and on the basis of the Scriptural principles set out above, only men are accepted onto the course.