

All Nations Christian College

Brief Description

Larger inter-denominational college in Hertfordshire whose courses are focused on cross-cultural mission. Half of students are from overseas: 75% of students go into missionary work abroad. Web-site: www.allnations.ac.uk.

Theological Position

Evangelical: less precisely defined than at some colleges.

Courses offered

Certificate, diploma and degree in Biblical and Intercultural Studies

Certificate in Sports and Intercultural Studies

Advanced Diploma in Mission Studies

Degree in Youth and Intercultural Studies

PGDip and MA in Missiology.

Many practical skills courses offered in parallel.

Validated by

Open University (degree and Master's courses).

Observations

Strong focus on missions makes course structure and content quite distinct from most colleges. Very strong tutorial system and care and communication continue after students have left. No attempt to oversee life outside college hours.

Recommendations

Preparation for cross-cultural ministry both abroad and in UK – both shorter and longer courses.

Belfast Bible College

Prospectus not available

Brief Description

Medium sized Bible college in Belfast! International community (over 30 nationalities) and inter-denominational (over 30 denominations). Majority of students go on to missionary work in UK or abroad (very few into pastoral ministry). Web-site: www.belfastbiblecollege.com.

Theological Position

Evangelical

Courses offered

BTh, BD (including compulsory biblical languages), DipTh and postgraduate degrees.

College courses: certificate and diploma (three types).

Access courses for those with few academic qualifications.

Validated by

Queens' University, Belfast.

Observations

Spiritual formation stresses tutor groups and use of journals. Student body evidently very diverse both culturally and academically.

Recommendations

Not for pastoral ministry but worth considering for other training paths.

Bible College of Wales

Prospectus not available

Brief Description

Small inter-denominational Bible college in Swansea. About half of students go on to missionary service, others to a variety of destinations. Web-site www.biblecollegeofwales.org.

Theological Position

Conservative evangelical

Courses offered

One, two and three-year college courses.

Validated by

Courses are not validated.

Observations

Strong emphasis on prayer, intercession and the 'Every Creature Vision' of founder Rees Howell. College offers a single 'package' including food and accommodation and therefore cannot cater well for families. Programme is all-embracing with weekends timetabled as well as weekdays. The college appears to be at a point of significant change.

Recommendations

Not for the academic but worth examining by singles who want to study in a small community with a highly structured programme.

Birmingham Christian College

Brief Description

Recent merger of Birmingham Bible Institute and Springdale College. Interdenominational and multi-cultural. Students go roughly two-thirds to mission (home or abroad) and one-third to pastoral ministry. Website www.bhxc.ac.uk.

Theological Position

Conservative evangelical (EA statement of faith) with positive but not uncritical approach to charismatic movement.

Courses offered

Linked certificate, diploma and BA in theology (full or part-time)

BTh in applied theology (part-time)

Linked PG certificate, PG diploma and MA in mission (full or part-time)

Wide range of other courses available full or part-time

Willing to tailor study programmes to individuals

Validated by

University of Wales (degree and Master's courses)

Observations

Emphasis on small group fellowship for spiritual growth. Approach to spirituality and spiritual gifts requires willingness to engage with a range of views.

Recommendations

Flexibility of courses and availability of short courses recommends itself to pastor's sabbaticals and to exploratory/preparatory study.

Worth considering for all training paths except (possibly) the most academic.

Evangelical Theological College of Wales

A contribution is invited – none has been received so far.

Faith Mission College

Brief Description

Small independent Bible college in Edinburgh. 75% of students go on to UK or overseas missionary work. Web-site www.faithmission.org.

Theological Position

Conservative evangelical/Reformed, explicitly non-charismatic.

Courses offered

Two year college diploma. Arrangements for continued study (to degree level) with Open Theological College or Trinity Theological Seminary (USA) – requiring another two years' study.

Validated by

Diploma is not externally validated.

Observations

Strong pastoral oversight and mentoring; highly structured programme and stringent expectations of students' personal conduct. Some would find the approach confining.

Recommendations

Course appears best suited for preparation for evangelistic ministry (home or abroad) especially the less academic.

Free Church College

Brief Description

Small college in central Edinburgh, affiliated to Free Church of Scotland. Partner institution of the University of Glasgow. 75% of students go on to pastoral ministry. No web-site: contact amacleod@freescotcoll.ac.uk.

Theological Position

Conservative evangelical, Calvinist.

Courses offered

BTh and licentiate in theology.

Postgraduate diplomas in missiology and in theological studies.

Part-time certificate and diploma in Christian studies.

Validated by

University of Glasgow (BTh only).

Observations

Degree stresses biblical languages. No attempt to mentor students' spiritual development or guide life outside college: this is seen as local church's responsibility. College unsurprisingly has a strong Scottish flavour.

Recommendations

Other than ministerial candidates of the Free Church of Scotland, college is likely to appeal to students of well-developed and independent faith who hold similar views.

Highland Theological College

Prospectus not available

Brief Description

Small college in Dingwall, near Inverness. One of 15 partners in the UHI Millennium Institute (UHI), expected to achieve university status as University of the Highlands and Islands in 2007. Web-site: www.htc.uhi.ac.uk. Few graduates so far (college is only eight years old) so no statistics about where students have gone.

Theological Position

Conservative evangelical/ Reformed.

Courses offered

Degree in theology (4 years to Honours level)

Doctor of Ministry (in association with Reformed Theological Seminary in USA)

Post-graduate degrees which to date have been in association with University of Wales (Lampeter).

Validated by

Position at present is complex. Expecting to be validating own degrees from 2004.

Observations

College is new, small and academically in a process of rapid transition. Provides a robust Reformed training. Small size encourages sense of community: pastoral care of students is informal.

Recommendations

Likely to be appropriate for Scottish pastoral candidates.

For training at higher academic levels the current position on validation would need checking.

International Christian College

Brief Description

Formed from the merger of Northumbria Bible College and Glasgow Bible College in 1998: located in Glasgow and has grown to around 200 students. Interdenominational and international with an emphasis on mission. College is too new for accurate statistics on graduates' destinations. Web-site: www.icc.ac.uk.

Theological Position

Conservative evangelical.

Courses offered

Linked certificate, diploma and BA in theology or in youthwork with applied theology (requiring four years to Hons level).

MTh in Biblical Interpretation or by research, MPhil, PhD.

Arrangements for distance and part-time learning.

Validated by

Open University (BA and most higher degrees).

Aberdeen University (MTh by research).

Observations

Arrangements are made for pastoral oversight and mentoring but the college imposes fewer requirements than most residential colleges (ICC does not describe itself as such and inevitably there will be less of a 'community feel' as a result). Although conservative in theology, there is clearly wide diversity on issues such as the charismatic movement.

Recommendations

Well worth considering for most training paths, though bearing in mind the observations above: children's ministry and cross-cultural ministry specialisms seem attractive.

Irish Baptist College

Prospectus is in process of revision.

Brief Description

Small to medium college in Moira, Co Down, attached to the Baptist Union of Ireland. Half of graduates go into pastoral ministry; others to a wide variety of destinations. No web-site: contact ibcollege@thebaptistcentre.org.

Theological Position

Conservative evangelical, Baptist.

Courses offered

BTh and BD (the latter emphasising biblical languages) and DipTh. Also MTh, MPhil, PhD. Range of college courses run over 1, 2 and 3 years.

Validated by

Queen's University, Belfast. Also has links with University of Wales (Lampeter).

Observations

Theologically robust. Strong pastoral support and mentoring arrangements and regular contact with students' home churches. All faculty are IBC graduates, reflecting the close link with a small denomination.

Recommendations

Well worth considering for ministerial training as well as other training paths, though the close national and denominational links should be borne in mind.

London Bible College

Brief Description

Large inter-denominational college in north-west London offering a wide range of courses. Students go roughly equally into pastoral ministry; overseas ministry; the teaching profession; and other ministries or secular work. Web-site: www.londonbiblecollege.ac.uk.

Theological Position

Evangelical (embracing a wide spectrum). Not unequivocally conservative.

Courses offered

Certificate (one-year), diploma (two-year) and degree courses in Christian Life and Ministry; Theology, Music and Worship; Theology and Counselling; Theology.

PGDip and MA in Aspects of Biblical Interpretation.

MTh, MPhil and PhD.

Validated by

Brunel University

Observations

LBC is a large, multi-background community (over 50 denominations represented) where a wide range of views will be encountered. The spiritual programme and oversight of spiritual development and pastoral care appear strong. Good opportunities to study Islamics.

Recommendations

Requires a willingness to engage with differing views and to be fully involved in the life of a very diverse community.

LBC can be recommended for a general or more specialised theological preparation to high academic level but is not geared explicitly towards preparation for pastoral ministry.

London Theological Seminary

No prospectus available

Brief Description

Small college in North London aiming exclusively at preparation for preaching and pastoral ministry. Strong FIEC links. 90% of students go on to pastoral ministry. Web-site: www.lts.u-net.com.

Theological Position

Conservative evangelical/ Reformed.

Courses offered

Two-year college course with exceptionally strong focus on Scripture and biblical languages and with little apparent flexibility.

Validated by

No validation (by policy)

Observations

Spiritual oversight of students stresses mentoring by pastors of local churches and informal network within college community. No attempt to oversee students' private lives. Clearly not an academically-oriented course, which relies heavily on visiting lecturers.

Recommendations

Recommended for serious consideration by men with definite call to pastoral ministry and clearly committed to Calvinist theology.

Midlands Bible College

Brief Description

Medium-sized college in English midlands specialising in open and distance learning (with residential elements available). Students go into a wide range of ministries: a quarter go back to secular workplace. Web-site: www.midbible.ac.uk.

Theological Position

Evangelical, non-denominational and deliberately avoiding allegiance to individual strands or systems. Around half of students and faculty are from charismatic/ Pentecostal background.

Courses offered

Linked Certificate and Diploma in biblical hermeneutics. College hopes to add a third, degree-level year of its own: currently students can transfer to Lampeter's third year theology programme. Shorter and more basic courses also offered.

Validated by

University of Wales Lampeter.

Observations

College has invested heavily in distance learning programmes. Emphasis on hermeneutics and exegesis is strong – much less coverage of other areas. Pastoral care and oversight is inevitably limited. A wide range of evangelical views will be encountered here.

Recommendations

As a specialist distance learning centre, but with an accessible 'home base', will appeal to those unable to leave home or employment to study. Worth considering for training in biblical studies – not an all-round preparation for pastoral ministry.

Moorlands College

Brief Description

Larger, inter-denominational college near Bournemouth. Emphasis is on 'training Christian leaders' with a variety of possible tracks. Students go into variety of ministries including pastoral, missionary (UK and abroad) and various others. Web-site: www.moorlands.ac.uk.

Theological Position

Conservative evangelical; mainly Reformed.

Courses offered

Diploma and Degree in Applied Theology

Degree in Applied Theology (Youth and Community Work)

Degree in Applied Theology (Community and Family Studies)

One-year certificate courses which can act as foundation studies

Projected MTh course in Leadership.

Validated by

Cheltenham and Gloucester College

Observations

Systematic pastoral oversight is emphasised. Expectations of behaviour outside college hours are stressed more than at many colleges. College is a multi-cultural community.

Recommendations

Recommended for general theological preparation especially for those wishing to specialise in youth, community and family studies and in mission. College appears especially supportive of the less academic.

Oak Hill Theological College

Brief Description

Anglican theological college which majors in preparation for Anglican ordained ministry but is fully independent and caters for independent students. Significant links to FIEC. 80% enter pastoral ministry. Website: www.oakhill.ac.uk.

Theological Position

Conservative evangelical/ Reformed with strong basis of faith.

Courses offered

Linked certificate, diploma, BA and MTh in Theological and Pastoral Studies.

Certificate of ministry (one and two-year courses)

MA in Christian Theology (full or part time)

MPhil and PhD as part of Middlesex University

Course in youth and children's ministry (new)

Validated by

Oak Hill is an Associate College of Middlesex University

Also has links with University of London

Observations

Clearly the most positive towards FIEC outlook of all Anglican colleges. Worth noting that although Oak Hill has strong Reformed foundations, entry is not confined to evangelicals and will require engagement with different viewpoints on many issues (for instance on women's ordination).

Recommendations

Pastoral training

General theological preparation

Higher level academic study of theology

Redcliffe College

Brief Description

Medium-sized inter-denominational college in Gloucester which specialises in cross-cultural mission. 40% of students are from overseas and a high proportion of students go into overseas missions. Web-site: www.redcliffe.org.

Theological Position

Conservative evangelical, but exposure to wider range through links with University of Gloucestershire.

Courses offered

Linked Certificate, Diploma and Degree in Applied Theology.

One-year Professionals in Mission Certificate

14-week Across the Cultures course (orientation for short-term mission)

New MA course in Contemporary Issues on Christian Mission (from 2003)

Validated by

University of Gloucestershire: third years take a module there.

Observations

Moving away from previous suspicion of academic study but retains emphasis on the practical and experiential. Strong emphasis on students' all-round personal development and partnership with home churches. See themselves as similar to All Nations Christian College.

Recommendations

Preparation for cross-cultural ministry both abroad and in UK – both shorter and longer courses.

Reformed Theological College

Response promised – moving to new premises, new prospectus due late 2003.

Brief Description

Belfast

Theological Position:

Courses offered:

Validated by

Observations:

Recommendations:

Spurgeon's College

Brief Description

Middle-sized theological college in South London and member of Baptist Union. 80% of graduates proceed to pastoral ministry. Web-site: www.spurgeons.ac.uk.

Theological Position

Broadly evangelical.

Courses offered

Certificate and Diploma in Theology

Degree (Bachelor of Divinity)

MTh (six different courses)

Unvalidated part-time Continuing Development in Ministry course.

Validated by

University of Wales

Observations

Strong links with Baptist Union. Requires a willingness to engage closely with differing views. Evident concern for spiritual development of students including through pastoral tutors: no attempt to provide oversight of life outside college hours.

Recommendations

Orientation of degree training towards Baptist Union and breadth of views probably make Spurgeon's less appropriate for FIEC constituency.

Specialist MTh courses (e.g. Baptist and Anabaptist Studies) are worth attention.

Cornhill Training Course – Full-time but non-residential

Brief Description

Non-residential full-time course in central London. Satellite courses (one day per week) run in Sheffield and (from autumn 2003) in Cardiff. Occasional summer schools. 50% of graduates go on to pastoral ministry and 25% to secular work or further training. A ministry of Proclamation Trust – www.proctrust.org.uk.

Theological Position

Conservative evangelical

Courses offered

One-year course running four days per week (or two-year for two days per week) heavily emphasising development of preaching and teaching skills and biblical theology.

Validated by

No validation

Observations

London course is accessible only from London and Home Counties. Time together is inevitably limited because of non-residential nature. Strong emphasis on links with home and placement churches.

Recommendations

Excellent preparation for understanding and teaching Scripture. Newer regional courses merit investigation for those living in the relevant areas, but obviously the content is much reduced. Course is not academically oriented.

London Reformed Baptist Seminary – Part-time

Brief Description

Course is based on eight taught Saturdays per year plus guided reading and the production of assignments. Operates from Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. Most participants are serving pastors or church officers. Email address: LRBS@metropolitantabernacle.org.

Theological Position

Conservative evangelical, Calvinistic, Baptist.

Course offered

LRBS Diploma in Theology and Pastoral Studies – a four-year course operating on a rolling annual basis. Course majors on biblical studies and systematic theology.

Validated by

No validation

Observations

Theological position is tightly defined and takes a definite stance on issues which many would see as secondary (e.g. explicitly anti-charismatic and ‘young earth’). Pastoral oversight of students not attempted. Course fees are very low.

Recommendations

Course is likely to be attractive only to those who would be comfortable within a theological setting which, compared to most colleges, is very narrowly defined.

Prepared for Service – Part-time

Brief Description

FIEC course based on three days per month (eight months per year) taught at Reading: students are on placement in one church throughout. 10% of graduates are serving as pastors: 85% in other roles in local churches. Contact via FIEC website: www.fiec.org.uk.

Theological Position

Conservative evangelical

Courses offered

Two-year course (16 modules), wide-ranging but stressing biblical theology.

Validated by

No validation

Observations

Efforts are made to maintain course's links with students' churches and to provide some oversight of students' development: inevitably this is limited. Possibility the course will be extended in the future. Distance from centre is an issue for some.

Recommendations

Good, basic theological grounding for those who need to remain in paid employment. Not an academically rigorous course.

No response has been received from:

Cliff College
Nazarene College

Anglican colleges:

Ridley Hall
St John's
Trinity
Wycliffe Hall

Part-time courses:

Evangelical Movement of Wales
Open Theological College