

# THE GOSPEL IN THE CITY

## No. 2 Theological Education for Ministry: Moore College

This year, on the 127th anniversary of its founding Moore College has 147 full time students from fourteen ethnic groups, ten protestant denominations, and as well as our own Australian society serves five overseas denominational groupings in central Asia, South-East Asia, and Africa. 75% of its students are Anglicans. Moore College's external studies department currently serves over 1500 students through evening lectures and correspondence courses on an even wider front than its full time courses. It is, to use the words of a former Vice-Principal: "(a) theological college . . . exist(ing) for the study of theology, and not merely for the sake of candidates for the ministry."

Moreover, it is an unashamedly positional college, taking its stand, perhaps somewhat unabashedly, on the enscriptured gospel of Jesus Christ as central and normative for all christian thought and action.

What more precisely all this means, its relationship to christian ministry in Sydney and beyond, and how Moore College came to have its present shape, are the concerns of this report.

### Seminal Vision

Thomas Moore (1762-1840), a respected and wealthy citizen of the frontier city of Sydney, made provision in his will "for a College or Establishment to be called Moore's College, for the education of . . . Youths of the Protestant persuasion in the principles of Christian Knowledge." The Trustees (the Bishop of Sydney and two others), who had been given discretion as to the interpretation of the will, founded the College in 1856.

However, it was the seminal vision of Archbishop Howard Mowll (1933-1958) which has given Moore its modern and Australian profile. In 1944, explicitly motivated by the shape society was going to take and by the nature of the gospel of God and its ministry, Archbishop Mowll painted such a far-reaching and insightful picture that it is worth quoting at length:

"As we plan for the future, we must remember that the last 40 years have witnessed a very extensive development of education . . . the Church exists to bring men and women into contact with God . . . in the midst of materialism strongly entrenched . . .

I visualise, therefore, a course of training extending over 10 years, say, from 17 to 27 years. After matriculation at the age of 17 three years in Arts at

the university, followed by a year in the Settlement or Social Service Centre . . . a period spent in preliminary training at 'But-Har-Gra' or elsewhere, three years at Moore College, and then three years after ordination. So a course of 10 or 11 years is visualised . . ."

Mowll envisaged a rigorous preliminary year, encompassing: "an adequate knowledge of the text of Holy Scripture . . . He will also concentrate on languages . . . idiomatic and intelligible English, obtaining some knowledge of Greek and Latin and the historical languages of Christian literature and liturgy. The study of Hebrew . . ."

At the end of what would now be a four year course in theological studies, the student "will have done no more than lay foundations upon which he must constantly build." This building was to be done in post-ordination training, where to acquire practical skills and further theological understanding the diocese "must aim that during the first two years of priesthood the priest can leave his parish and spend three months where . . . (he) can be guided and supervised."

Anticipating the reaction of less informed minds, the Archbishop continued:

"All this may look like an ideal impossible of attainment, a counsel of perfection. It will doubtless be pointed out that many excellent Clergymen

have never followed it . . . we must not take the man of exceptional personality . . . character and drive, and who has succeeded in spite of certain limitations, and argue from his case that such limitations do not matter in the case of others who have not his gifts."

### Four Year Course

As far as the College, then under T. C. Hammond, was concerned this recognition that the study of theology required substantial time and effort received an immediate response. (The introduction of T. C. Hammond into the scene 8 years earlier had plainly been Mowll's first move in a strategy he had conceived in 1934 to ground the diocese on a firmer evangelical footing.) Prior to the vision of 1944 Moore College's Prospectus had read: "Students are trained in a two-year course according to the syllabus of the Australian College of Theology . . . and in addition are required to spend a further year . . .". In 1945 the Prospectus stated: "Having passed the Matriculation Examination, students are trained in the First Year Preliminary course, and thereafter in a two year course according to the syllabus of the Australian College of Theology for the . . . Th.L., and in addition are required to spend a further year in a specially prescribed course for the Moore College Diploma." To drive the point home, from 1945 onward the College listed students



Dining Room, Lecture Room, Deaconess accommodation.

according to years — first through to fourth year. This statement and pattern remained unchanged through 1950 under the principalship of Marcus Loane and into the '80s under Broughton Knox.

For sixteen years fourth year remained mostly part-time, but in 1960 Dr. Knox was able to announce "the provision for the first time in the College's history of a full-time Fourth Year course."<sup>4</sup> In the twenty-three years since then, the College has had 343 graduates complete four years of full-time training.

### Collegiate Education

In keeping with the long-standing character of Sydney Diocese and Australian society, the College has since its conception in the will of Thomas Moore been a lay-orientated one. It is the College's stated position<sup>5</sup> that it exists to provide a theological education for men and women who wish to (i) equip themselves with a deeper knowledge of God as revealed in the Bible, (ii) to equip themselves with the ability to minister God's word in the formal and informal opportunities which may come their way, and (iii) to develop christian faith and maturity. Unlike the English situation, ordination is not seen as the carrot to encourage the student along the road.<sup>6</sup> That fact was re-affirmed by the diocesan appointed College Committee as long ago as 1934.<sup>7</sup> 40% of the present student population have grants to train for ministries within the Diocese of Sydney.

The Faculty operates within the reformed protestant tradition as expressed in the Anglican 39 Articles of Religion. It therefore expresses its adherence to Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments as God's written word, and as containing all that is necessary for salvation. It affirms belief in



Original buildings date back to 19th Century.

the summary of the Christian faith as contained in the historic creeds and the 39 Articles.

The College is fully residential, and this is seen as an essential expression of its educational philosophy. The fact of residence means that learning is a process that takes place in and out of the classroom as faculty and students relate to each other. Discussion, encounter and imitation are integral to this process. Every student belongs to a pastoral group. Moore's philosophy of education is reflected by an emphasis on the formal aspect of instruction through lectures being balanced by an encouragement to discuss and research for oneself. All students are urged to learn by being

deeply involved in christian ministry. Further, students are bound by the critical nature of the course to interact with the views of others and come to mature and independent judgements.

### Holistic, not "smorgasbord"

The College's overt commitment to a holistic view means that all the offerings within the institution are regarded as relevant. Its stand is not that of the "smorgasbord" approach of an Arts degree and some overseas seminaries, but the integrated learning more akin to Medical studies. The student progresses from preliminary studies which give an overall picture of the subjects, through the more detailed analysis of the later years to a final year in which his work is tested and matured.

The College aims to foster the knowledge skills and attitudes appropriate to the task of Christian ministry. Put briefly, the basic knowledge must be an understanding of God's revelation, the basic skill must be that of a good teacher and evangelist who is able to facilitate learning and who offers a deep pastoral concern for those in his care, and the basic attitude must be a love that expresses itself in service and prayer.

### Only Three Subjects

To promote such an objective, to "lay foundations", the College only teaches three core subjects — biblical studies (Greek, Hebrew, exegesis, background, etc.), theological studies (historical and systematic theology ethics, liturgiology), and social studies (history, philosophy, apologetics, preaching, etc.). The aim is to allow a student to grasp "the whole counsel of God" on its own terms, and to understand the social setting in which he



Bible and Missions Course.

Photo: Ramon Williams.



Thanks to generous friends, Moore College has recently acquired an Administrative and Library block.

or she will minister. Such foundations are designed to produce a theoretical understanding shaped by the gospel against which to assess and assimilate future learning — especially in the pastoral sphere. In particular, in the fourth year the student, through advanced reading of Greek, through studies in Australian religious and social history, and through critical interaction with current thought forms completes his foundational learning and is equipped for further experience of ministry.

In 1981 the College Committee enlarged the full-time faculty to 10 members. The College considers that a minimum number of 12 full time lecturers is desirable so that all subjects can be covered at an adequate level. The college library holds 90,000 volumes, receiving about 230 periodicals and journals and 3,000 new books a year. The library is considered central to the academic life of the community, and is deeply indebted to its many generous benefactors.

### Confessional Anglicanism

In a time of uncertainty when leading English evangelicals put the 39 Articles at arm's length by declaring them "just historical", or openly denigrating them, Moore has out of conviction taken the stance of confessional Anglicanism. The Articles are not just expressions of past experience, but are living and relevant documents because, as with the creeds, they represent the gains from the Church's hard fought battle for the Gospel against contemporary cultural pressures. The Articles do not need to be abandoned, but re-affirmed and re-understood against their common reformation background in Luther,

Calvin, Tyndale, Bucer, and Cranmer. Classical reformation documents including John Calvin's *Institutes*, Cranmer's *On the Lord's Supper*, and the *First Book of Homilies*, are set reading. It is this commitment to confessional Anglicanism that has gained Moore College its reputation as "reformed protestant".

### Conversions in lectures

The move to confessional Anglicanism has not been without struggle. In the late

1940's T. C. Hammond described the character of the college and his hopes for the future: "I trust that always in Moore College the great central doctrines of Justification by Faith alone, of the Atoning Substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ our Lord, of the indwelling power of God the Holy Spirit for sanctification, may be the key note . . ."<sup>8</sup>

Yet, the statement and the pursuit of that goal was against a background of both Anglo-Catholic and evangelical subjectivism. Through the 1950's some of the students' rooms were like Chapels — with religious pictures, crosses, crucifixes, even Rosary beads and holy water "specially blessed by the Bishop of Norwich"! Excursions to Christ Church St. Laurence were not unknown. Other students, embracing an evangelical ethos from the 18th and 19th centuries, strove towards the total sanctification, the sinless perfectionism held out by John Wesley and Roy Hession.

In the midst of this man-centred religious turmoil Marcus Loane, with a breathtaking grandeur, lectured his way through the Life of Christ and the Life of St. Paul. As the story of the unmerited grace of God was unfolded some committed their lives to Christ. Broughton Knox preached on "The Secret of Real Living" — "God's Requirement of Perfection", "God's Provision of a Saviour". In 1956 he lectured from Anders Nygren's *Commentary on Romans*. Students were pointed away from introspection to Christ who was Representative Man, the Lord over death. For many there was a great relief as religious depression lifted.

The **objective** nature of the Christian gospel was at last shining through.



... Some recreation

Hammond's aspirations were becoming a reality. With the study of theology for its own sake, the temptation for conformity to this world was lessened.

### Serving Wider Community

Moore College has always taken the position that "a theological college should be ready to serve the whole church".<sup>9</sup> In 1955 the Principal could note with satisfaction the wider Christian community which the College was now serving in terms of the "unique opportunity for contributing to the future leadership of the Church in South-East Asia."<sup>10</sup> Thomas Moore's aim of a college for youths of the protestant persuasion was being realised. Today, this is reflected in a student body drawn from many ethnic backgrounds, denominations, and countries.

### Financing

The College is governed by three self-perpetuating Trustees through the College Committee, ten of whose members are elected by the diocesan synod and two appointed by the Archbishop of Sydney. From 1972-1982, on average, the diocese contributed 23% of the total income of Moore College. Since a high in 1980 of 29.21% it has decreased to 27.45% in 1982. This is reflected in the steady decline in the percentage of total diocesan allocations set aside for its theological college: 1980 — 10.8%, 1981 — 10.3%, 1982 — 9.3%.

The largest part of the College's income comes directly from the students. Friends of the College currently donate about 10% of its funds.<sup>11</sup>

### Freedom

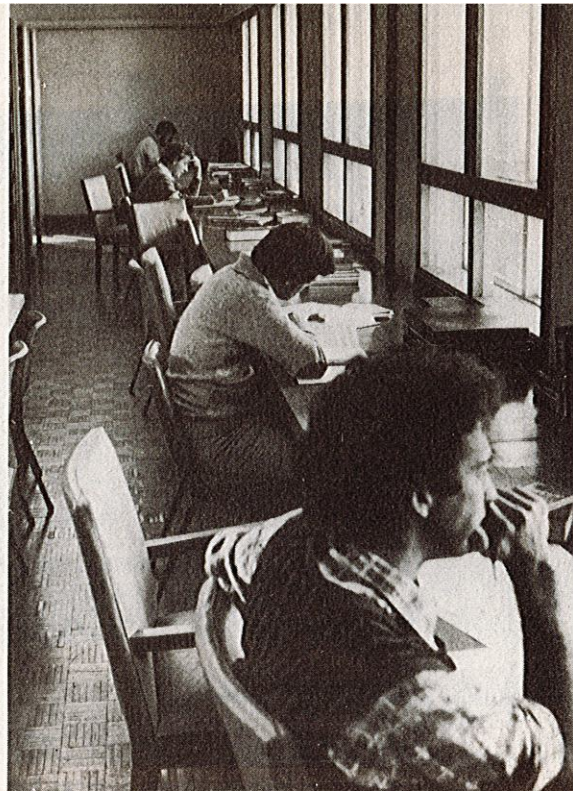
By its independence from a university structure Moore is able to freely pursue theology on its own grounds.

Universities, especially Australian universities, study theology from external viewpoints superimposed on the subject matter — mainly sociology. Their commitment is not to God, but to the phenomena of religion in the world. Remarking on the near-miss of the 1921-3 attempt to join Moore to the Board of Joint Theological Studies at the University of Sydney, Marcus Loane said, "for those who reflect on the troubles which soon arose in the Presbyterian Church on the account of the teaching of Dr. Angus and others, this was an escape for which they remain deeply thankful."<sup>12</sup>

### Part of the Whole

Theological training fits into a wider pattern of education for ministry. The writings of successive Archbishops, Principals and Vice-Principals reflects the College's ongoing resistance to the external pressure for "more practical subjects". It is not only because theology must be given priority in ministry and studied on its own grounds, (and has more than enough content to fill four intensive years), but it is also because "readiness for learning" is absent. Practical training is best gained on the job, and assimilated into a gospel-informed framework.

It is for this reason that the increase in practical post-ordination training by the diocese and other bodies has been widely welcomed. Ministers now have a variety of in-service courses they can choose from according to need — marriage guidance, Evangelism Explosion, Teacher Training, Pastoral Management (by the Lay Institute for Evangelism), Church Growth, Biblical Counselling, to mention only a few. Theological education is orientated towards understanding the **content** of Christian communication, later education addresses itself to technique. The



### Work . . .

separation of the two hinders the medium from becoming the message.

### What is Moore College?

A large number of students choose to come to Moore because it is unashamedly positional. The College has six main characteristics — confessional Anglicanism, residency, a four-year course, a commitment to serve the wider Christian community, high staffing levels, and a library developed to serve research. As such it stands as the concrete expression of the will of Thomas Moore, and the unfolding of the seminal vision of Howard Mowll. How it has come to have its present shape is the result of the ongoing vision and labours of the diocese of Sydney, the staff, and most especially the students who continue to lay out large sums of money for the sake of gospel ministry.

To what extent Moore College adequately addresses itself to understanding and evaluating the factors involved in ministering in the Australian urban context is an ongoing problem.

(The next article in this series will be on Evangelism)

### Footnotes

1. P.111, D. W. B. Robinson, "Colleges for Theological Knowledge", *Journal of Christian Education*, 5 (62) 110-116.
2. Cited from pp 8-9, M. L. Loane, *A Centenary History of Moore Theological College*, 1955.
3. *Societas*, 1944, pp 8-12.
4. *Societas*, 1960, p 37.
5. Documents submitted to the Higher Education Board of N.S.W., 1982.
6. Michael Green, "Training Local Leaders", *Church Times*, May 27, 1983.
7. Loane, *A Centenary History*, p 134.
8. *Societas*, 1947, p 7.
9. D. W. B. Robinson, p 110.
10. M. L. Loane, *Societas*, 1955, p 7-8.
11. From the Year Books of the Diocese of Sydney and audited accounts of Moore College.
12. *A Centenary History*, p 127.



. . . And more work, is the staple diet.