

Training for Holy Orders in a New Country
by Archbishop Davies, B. D. (Cantab.) - Principal of New Theological College, Sydney.

An article on this subject intended for an English Church paper naturally suggests comparisons and contrasts between conditions in the mother land and those in the daughter dominions. My purpose, however, is simply to place a few salient facts before church people in England in such a way that they may be able to make their own comparisons.

In the first place the supply of candidates for the ministry in Australia is drawn mainly from men who have already spent some years in another occupation. Very few ordinands out here pass straight on from school or university to the Theological College.

Yet it may be said at once that there are distinct advantages to the Church in the fact that those who come forward for ordination are men who have been in the world of business or industry "on their own". It means that they have tested their vocation and have received an education in the practical affairs of life which is all the more useful in view of the conditions of church work in a country where the parishes have no ancient endowments and there is no "Established Church." Yet on the other hand it means that the educational standard of the candidates varies a great deal, & this variation creates one of the main difficulties of the Theological College in Australia.

Most of the candidates have served as lay readers before they offer themselves for ordination, and this may be regarded as the first stage in their preparation for Holy Orders. The ministrations of the laity are much more freely used in public worship in Australia than in England. If it were not for the service thus rendered by laymen a very large number of church people would be unable to enjoy opportunities for public worship. The bulk of this lay service is given voluntarily. Quite a number of laymen give up their week-ends in order to supply

services at centres which the parish clergyman is unable to visit except at long intervals. There is thus a large scope for the use of lay ~~personnel~~ ministrations, and this supplies another test of vocation & aptitude for the regular ministry.

Hence, in Australia, the average age of candidates for Orders is higher than the ~~corresponding~~ figure in England. As students they are perhaps more eager to get on with their preparation in order to throw themselves fully into the work of the ministry. As a rule the theological student I have met ^{during eleven years} ~~out here and~~ at Moore College is, to use the vulgar tongue, particularly keen on his job. This makes him very receptive, but also predisposes him to hurry through his course of preparation without forming those habits of thinking which are more useful than any amount of ready made instruction.

Let us follow out the course of training of a typical candidate. The first step is to apply to the bishop of a diocese for acceptance as a candidate for training. If accepted he is sent to a Theological College if his educational attainments are up to the standard. If not, he is placed under some kind of supervision & given a course of study to pursue. Some country bishops also apply a test of practical efficiency by placing the probationary candidate in a district as lay assistant to the rector of the parish. Most of the country parishes in Australia have from a dozen to thirty different "centres" where services are provided if anyone can be found to conduct them.

~~This. The question of as to what general standard of general education~~ If the candidate gives satisfactory evidence that he ^{is not only spiritually in earnest} but has the mental capacity to profit by the training he will receive at

The theological college, he is duly admitted. There is no fixed period of preparation. Two years is usually the minimum, and three years the regular thing. Our candidate will probably spend his first year in studying New Testament Greek, Ecclesiastical Latin, the Bible in English, certain parts of the Prayerbook, and English History & Literature. Each College makes its own arrangements for the preparatory course leading up to the strictly theological subjects.

~~The~~ The theological course universally followed in Australia is that laid down by the Australian College of Theology, a body constituted by the General Synod of the Church of England in Australia. I may save space by saying that the subjects are almost identical with those prescribed for the Durham University L. Th. The main difference ^{is} ~~are~~ that "Principles of Religious Instruction," and "Introduction to Philosophy" are compulsory subjects in the Australian course.

The student cannot obtain his Licence in Theology in less than two years. The examinations are held usually during the first week ⁱⁿ October ⁱⁿ ^{the} ^{month} ^{of} ^{October} to enable results to appear in time for the Advent ^{Examination} ^{which} ^{is} ^{held} ⁱⁿ ^{Advent} ^{which} ^{comes} ⁱⁿ ^{our} ^{late} ^{spring} ^{time} early summer. All the Australian bishops accept the Th. L., as we call it, in lieu of a full Diocesan examination of candidates for Diaconal Orders. Most bishops, however, expect their ordinands to sit for one or two extra papers set by the diocesan examining chaplains.

Let us suppose that our particular candidate has obtained his Licence in Theology, and he has still to be accepted as a candidate for ordination and to pass whatever further test may be imposed by the bishop to whom he applies. The point is that acceptance for training does not necessarily imply acceptance for ordination.

Practically all our Australian ordinands have to undergo this double acceptance. There are several reasons for such a procedure. The first is supplied by the fact already mentioned that almost all candidates are men already earning their own living in a secular calling. It is but common sense for both bishop and prospective candidate to ~~discuss~~ ^{know} each other's mind. The bishop has to know his man, and the man ought to realise the risks, ^{he will run} and ^{the} requirements he will be expected to fulfil. Our candidates are not young men who have merely to decide what occupation or career they will take up, but men who ^{are already} ~~have been~~ committed to certain responsibilities & have to run the risks incidental to change of occupation. Secondly, the principle is gaining ground that if the Church prescribes a certain course of preparation, it can enforce ~~that prescription~~ ^{it} most effectively by providing ~~that preparation~~ ^{it} as nearly free of charge as possible to the candidate.

Secondly, it is becoming generally recognised that if the Church sets a high standard of preparation, the means to attain that standard should be provided by the Church, ~~not~~ That also implies the liberty of the Church to determine what candidates are worth training. The tendency therefore is for the Church to provide training free of cost to the candidate, partly to provide the open door to all who have a real vocation, & partly to enable the church to exercise greater liberty of selection & to demand a higher standard of attainment. The general rule in Australia is that every diocese finds it advisable to finance its own candidates, and this involves a first or preliminary acceptance by a bishop before the candidate begins his training.

So far I have described the general outline of the course of theological training and the various stages in the course, namely, probation, acceptance, training, final acceptance. I have yet to say something about the

more practical side of the preparation for the ministry.

First there is the devotional training. This is organised by each College in its own way as the circumstances of each institution differ so widely. at Moore Theological College, in addition to the Daily Offices, a special devotional service is held ^{at noon} every Friday in term. A short Greek Testament is given every weekday at matins. The Holy Communion is celebrated on Sundays & Holy Days at 7.30 a.m., and a special Corporate Communion is celebrated at the beginning and end of each term. We have ^{morning} worship on Mondays to Fridays at 10 p.m. As ^h all the students are engaged in parochial duties we have but one service, early Communion & Sermon, in the College Chapel on Sundays.

^{Room} ~~Room~~ must always be left for the spontaneous growth & organisation of devotional exercises on the part of the students themselves. It is a mistake to multiply chapel services to such an extent that no opportunity is left for voluntary devotional effort among the students. For the same reason we do not attempt to map out every hour of the day so that ^{no} student is tied down to a fixed routine that leaves no loophole for an individual timetable. We ^{aim at} ~~prefer~~ training men rather than animated machines. The man who would be a spiritual leader and teacher must form his own habits of prayer, Bible study and meditation otherwise he will be at a loss when he is removed from the routine of college life.

Secondly there is the training in what may be called the technique of the ministry, namely, the reading and general conduct of the services, pastoral visitation, parochial organisation, religious instruction, sermon preparation & delivery. A few Colleges are able to give a good deal of attention to this practical training, but even where ^{Australian} special lectures and classes cannot be arranged, ~~the~~ students

^{almost too many}
 enjoy ~~for some~~ opportunities for practice in the technical details of the ministry. Nearly every student at a Theological College in Australia is called upon to conduct services and preach sermons while he is under training. Quite a number of them also undertake pastoral visitation & other parochial responsibilities for which they are paid by the parishes they assist, & thus, as it were, they "work their passage" through the period of preparation. Many of my own students have done practically the work of an assistant curate while they were still at college. At Moore College the students collect and disburse the chapel offerings, have the custody of and ~~look after~~ cleanse the communion vessels, prepare everything needed for the Holy Communion, read the lessons and conduct the other chapel services, including the daily choral evening song.

Thus, on the whole, it is correct to say that the Australian ordinand receives a more thorough all round training in the practical details of the ministry than the English ordinand receives, at any rate before ordination. Such an emphasis on the practical side is all the more ^{necessary} out here because there are very few parishes where anything like a staff of assistant clergy is maintained. Many men are placed in sole charge of a district immediately ~~before~~ ^{after} ordination, especially in the country dioceses. The point to notice is, that in Australia the newly ordained minister has already acquired an experience in parish work that the English neophyte has to acquire in his first curacy. We do need, out here, a few more parishes in which a newly fledged parson may enjoy the benefit of being one of a group of fellow curates.

The would-be ordinand has quite a large choice of institutions in Australia at which he may be trained. In fact Australia seems to be considerably over supplied with Theological Colleges. The Presbyterians

(7)

and other non-episcopal churches have each one college in each state. But the Anglicans have only partially adopted the idea of one Theological College for each province (or state). There is one college each in Queensland, West Australia, Tasmania, and South Australia. In N.S.W., however, there ~~are~~ three, in Victoria there are four Colleges or Halls preparing men for the ministry. In addition to these institutions there are more or two Diocesan Hostels which serve as (preparatory) schools of preparation.

As against this apparent surplus there must be set the fact that Anglicans amount to ~~some~~ 40 per. cent of the people in Australia. (Roman Catholics come next with 24 per. cent., Methodists 13, Presbyterians 11 percent). Also Australia is a ^{continent} ~~country~~ with a small population nearly half of which is concentrated in half a dozen large cities while the rest is scattered more or less sparsely over enormous areas. The main difficulties in the way of establishing one Central College are, (1) the great spaces & distances, (2) the wide diversity of conditions in city & country ~~district~~ areas, & (3) the differences ^{between} ~~in~~ types of churchmanship.

The contrast between town and country is much greater in Australia than in England. Church work in Melbourne or Sydney is not very different from work in Manchester or Birmingham or Liverpool. But the problems & methods of ministration in the ^{vast} ~~large~~ bush areas are totally different from those of an English country parish. It has been found advisable in Australia to fix one or two Theological Colleges in country districts, partly in order to prepare men directly for the conditions of country work, and partly to counteract the pull of the great metropolitan centres.

It is difficult at present to see how any serious attempt can be made to concentrate the resources scattered in so many colleges, necessarily small, into one ^{college} or perhaps two colleges that would serve the whole Commonwealth. Sydney to Perth (W.A.) it is 2,000

miles as the crow flies. The journey by transcontinental railway occupies six or seven days, by boat ten days. Adelaide is over a thousand miles by rail from Sydney, and over 1500 by rail from Perth. Each State has now its own University & that would suggest one Theological College for each Province. Victoria & N. S. W. are the only States that have more than one Theological College apiece, & even there it is at present impracticable to concentrate on one for each State (or Province)

In Sydney, however, the Presbyterians, Methodists & Congregationalists have pooled their teaching resources & combined for a joint Theological Course, though retaining their own colleges for residential & other denominational purposes. They have invited the Anglicans to join in & the proposal is being considered with favour. It is mainly a matter of arranging details, as the principle has been accepted as part of the movement towards Reunion.

The main reason, however, why so many institutions have to be provided for Theological teaching in Australia is that our Universities so far do not recognise Theology as a subject for degrees or courses of lectures. Melbourne University has recently refused to entertain the proposal to establish a Theological faculty. Sydney University has expressed approval of the idea, but an Act of the N. S. W. Parliament at present stands in the way & the financial provision for a Theological faculty is not yet in sight. Hence the Churches are left entirely to their own resources to provide Theological Education for their candidates for the Ministry.

Another point is that the Anglican Church in Australia has no posts to offer to men who will devote themselves entirely to Theological study & teaching. The Presbyterians have given

Just in this respect as they have established several Divinity professorships. The Anglican Church has no Divinity professorships in Australia. The adequate endowment of theological study & teaching is one of the crying needs of the Church in Australia. The demand has been made by the Conference of Theological Colleges. It has been endorsed by the General Synod, & affirmed by at least one Provincial Synod, & it has been voiced time & again in the Church papers. The Church is waiting for a generous benefactor to follow the example of those who endowed the professorships in the old country, and in the U.S.A. The Church in Australia is almost entirely dependent for its finances upon the voluntary offerings of its members. We have no ancient endowments, & the few endowments we do possess are tied up to trusts which prevent them from being applied to educational purposes.

The men who are engaged on the teaching staffs of the various colleges are nearly all pluralists by compulsion & not by choice, for they have to undertake parochial or other duties to provide the income on which they live. This is at present the most serious defect in the ways & means whereby candidates for the ministry are trained in Australia.

In fact our main difficulty both as regards the teachers & the students is lack of money. Finance is the greatest hindrance to the fulfilment of those ideals which so many cherish regarding the preparation of men for the greatest and most difficult of callings, the ministry of God's Word & Sacraments. Yet in the face of all these difficulties the Australian trained clergyman can hold his own ^{as regards} ~~in comparison~~ all round efficiency with men who have enjoyed advantages we do not yet possess but hope someday to attain.