MINISTERIAL EDUCATION IN THE VICTORIA AND TASMANIA CONFERENCE, 1874-1977

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This article originated as a paper presented at the Workshop on the History of Australian Methodism held at Queen's College, University of Melbourne, 9-10 December 2011. It surveys theological education in the Victoria and Tasmania Conference of the Methodist Church of Australasia (and its precedent body the Wesleyan Methodist Church). It focuses on the training offered at Queen's College, the Theological Hall and the United Faculty of Theology. Important themes covered include the curriculum, funding issues and ecumenical co-operation. The location of the Theological Hall, the impact of two world wars, the trend in 1902 toward higher degrees being taken overseas, the challenges of the 1960s, and the addition of women candidates are all considered. After taking into consideration the restructuring of theological education that took place in the 1970s it concludes that those with the original vision for ministerial education in the Victoria and Tasmania Conference would be likely to agree that candidates a century later were being adequately equipped to fulfil a ministry equal to the times.

I. The Collegiate Experience

The Methodist Church in Australasia (Australia and New Zealand) began as various Conferences of the parent Churches in England, namely the Wesleyan Methodist, Primitive Methodist, Bible Christian, Methodist New Connexion (which had united with Wesleyans in 1888) and United Methodist Free Church, and they united in 1902 as the Methodist Church of Australasia. To begin with, therefore, all ministers of the Methodist denominations came from England and received their ministerial education there. When Australian-born ministers began to be ordained, their education was primarily as probationary ministers working in circuits under the direction of a superintendent minister, sometimes supplemented with instruction in secular subjects at a secondary school.

In 1861 the Wesleyan Methodist Conference in Australia determined to provide theological education at tertiary level for its ministerial candidates, maintaining that since these had 'expressed a desire to spend some time at a theological college…let us follow in

the footsteps of the parent church in England.'[1] That parent church had a number of seminary-style theological colleges, but partly because an appeal for funds to establish such an Australia-wide institution failed, this proposal was abandoned.

Instead a different pattern developed in Victoria, and later in Queensland and Western Australia. In the State of Victoria, the Wesleyan Methodist Church accepted a grant of land from the University of Melbourne and agreed to build a residential College on the condition that this could also be the centre for educating candidates for the ministry. As with the Colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, this would be affiliated with the University. It would have its own Master and tutors, and students would be enrolled in the various faculties at the University. Since the University of Melbourne, unlike those of Oxford and Cambridge, excluded, by founding charter, a Faculty of Divinity, these courses would be taught within the College. Ministerial candidates were then enrolled, along with students of other faculties, as members of the College, taking studies at the University towards the Arts degree and professors were appointed by the Conference to the College to teach the additional theological subjects the ministerial candidates needed for ordination.

So Queen's College was founded in 1888 with the dual purpose of being an affiliated residential College of the University, at the same time having within it, as an integral part, a community of theological students and teachers. Over the decades this proved an excellent way of preparing people for the ordained ministry, providing them with an education in the humanities and in theology while living in a community that is a microcosm of society as a whole – men (and nine decades later, women) involved in various professions and diverse activities within which the community of faith lives and witnesses.

The first Master of Queen's College, Dr. Edward H. Sugden, was ideally placed to hold together the two streams in the College. Wesleyan scholar as he was (editor of a standard edition of Wesley's sermons, evangelical preacher, Hebrew and Old Testament scholar) he was also a fine musician, producer of plays, Shakespeare scholar and, for good measure, added a BSc to his higher degrees in Arts and Theology.[2] Writing in 1901 for the British Methodist Church from

[1] Quoted in the *Wesleyan Chronicle,* 1861.

[2] See Renate Howe, ed. *The Master: The Life and Work of Edward H. Sugden* (Melbourne: Uniting Academic Press, 2009) for a collection of biographical essays.

which he came, he reported on the advantages of the kind of theological education that had been pioneered in Melbourne. First were the academic benefits of lectures from professors 'equal to any similar body in the world.' But this, he said, was of small gain compared to the second benefit, namely the daily interaction with other students:

> There can be no surer way toward clearing the mind of cant, towards the sympathetic understanding of the difficulties and temptations of their fellows, towards the ability to view all sorts of questions in a catholic and not sectarian spirit…This system produces a stronger, more human minister, broader in sympathy and charity, and not, so far as I can judge, less spiritual [than that from]…the purely theological institutions that are in England.[3]

The Presbyterian Church in Victoria adopted the same pattern in its Ormond College, and later the Methodist Church in Queensland and Western Australia established similar 'dual-purpose' Colleges. While not expressing the benefits in quite the same phraseology as Sugden did, of those who prepared for ministry within this system (with College years followed by at least one as probationers in a circuit prior to ordination), the large majority would wholeheartedly endorse its advantages.

There were, of course, disadvantages. Since the College was founded as a residence for single men, married candidates for the ministry were excluded from this way of preparing for ordination, instead spending six years as Probationers in Circuits, subject to annual written and oral examination. Soon after its founding the University required all College residents to be matriculated, thus excluding those with lesser educational qualifications. Nor could women candidates be resident in Queen's, which did not become co-educational until 1973, although that did not become an issue until General Conference in 1966 resolved that women could be accepted as candidates. As years passed, the age of those offering as candidates steadily increased, making life in a largely undergraduate community less congenial, and leading to problems of providing housing and appropriate theological education for married candidates. There were also the recurring problems of funding the enterprise and striking the right balance between academic studies and practical training, but these will be dealt with in more detail in

[3] E. H. Sugden, 'Our Methodist University College in Australia.' *Methodist Magazine* Dec., 1901.

the account that follows of ministerial education in the Victoria-Tasmania Conference, from 1874 to 1976. This account will rely almost exclusively on reports and references in the Minutes of Annual Conference.

II. Recurring Themes

A reading of the Minutes of Annual Conference from the establishing of the Victoria and Tasmania Conference of the Methodist Church from its beginning in 1874 to Church union in 1977 reveals a number of recurring themes. Three major ones will be dealt with here, viz. the curriculum, funding and ecumenical co-operation.

1. The Curriculum

(a) Academic and practical. From the beginning there were those critical of locating the Theological Hall within the University College, claiming that this over-emphasised the academic dimension. One of the most persistent and influential of these was Dr. William H. Fitchett, Principal of Methodist Ladies' College and President of Conference who, as late as 1892, was still maintaining the view that the work of ministry was to save souls, not to satisfy minds. Certainly Sugden's proposed three-year course was academically demanding: *First year*: Systematic Theology I, Biblical Exegesis, Church History (ancient and modern), and Deductive Logic. *Second year:* Systematic Theology II, Greek New Testament, Church History and Inductive Logic. *Third year:* Apologetics, Greek New Testament II, Hebrew, Ethics, Homiletics and Pastoral Theology. In order to redress any perceived imbalance, from time to time the Conference indicated that the curriculum should include methods of pastoral work, management of a circuit, Methodist Laws, church architecture, church music, sociology, the 'new psychology,' Sunday School organization, Christian education, and elocution - all this within what was, until the mid-1950s, three years at most in College. In some years one or more of these were included in the curriculum, but at no time all of them. In the 1950s, for example, those undertaking an Arts course at the University of Melbourne also studied within the Theological Hall (Systematic Theology and Pastoral Theology) were instructed on the Book of Laws, went to elocution lessons, and were involved in weekly Worship and

Preaching class. The few students who received a fourth year in College after graduating in Arts usually undertook the first year of the Melbourne College of Divinity Bachelor of Divinity course.

In addition, students regularly undertook ten day evangelistic missions (in my time as a student, to Bendigo and Geelong) and spent long vacations in Circuit appointments (mine were to Newtown Circuit in Hobart, Noradjuha in the Wimmera, and Belmont, Geelong). Candidates also regularly conducted services of worship in local churches. Records show that in 1956, for example, candidates conducted 668 services.

1968 saw an addition to the curriculum which changed significantly the academic/practical balance, *viz.* the introduction of Field Education as a necessary component, to be undertaken each year. Every candidate was assigned to an area of ministerial work, usually in a Circuit but sometimes in Chaplaincy, and this was supervised and evaluated by appropriately trained supervisors, in conjunction with the Faculty member appointed as Field Education Director. How this work was undertaken varied; in 1974 for example ten days were spent in appointment during the first term vacation. But in following years the component increased, until by the time of Church Union this was to take a quarter of the students' time, and was not limited to vacations.

(b) Length of course. Sugden's ideal of a three year course, four if including a University degree, was not realized for all students until the mid nineteen-fifties. The balance of five, later six years between candidature and ordination included studying, while in a circuit appointment, for annual probationers' examinations, in earlier years set and examined at Annual Conference, later prescribed and examined by General Conference committee.

(c) Educational level of candidates. Minutes of Conference record recurring concern that candidates were not able to take full advantage of the courses offered because they lacked the appropriate educational background. Only matriculated candidates were able to enter College and thus benefit from the education offered there. The rest spent five or six years in circuits, preparing for probationers' examinations as best they could. Matriculation was not required of candidates until 1933, and even then exceptions were allowed. In the 1960s matriculation itself was not sufficient to ensure entry to the University of Melbourne, and thus to Queen's College, because of the introduction of a University Faculty quota. As a result, some

Victorian matriculated candidates went to Kingswood College in Perth for their undergraduate education, returning to Melbourne to begin B.D. studies.

All those offering as candidates for ministry, whether matriculated and able to enter Queen's or not, had first to be fully accredited Local Preachers. If then recommended by the local Circuit they were subsequently examined, both at Synod and Conference level, in theology, biblical studies and church history, and their capacity to lead worship and to preach was also assessed. With these results to hand, the Conference examining committee made its recommendation to a Ministerial session of Annual Conference, and acceptance was decided by vote of all ministers present.

2. Funding

From the beginning there was a chronic shortage of funds to meet the needs of educating candidates within Queen's College. Conference reports repeatedly noted that Circuits and Districts were not meeting requests made to them. Candidates undertaking University courses were required to pay their own fees (some could not) and all were asked to contribute as much to the cost of their College residence as they were able. If they resigned within ten years they were required to repay what had been expended on their behalf. This lack of funding led, from time to time, to restricting the number of candidates accepted by Conference. A resolution of 1890 is typical of several such in the early years: 'In view of the large number of young men now on probation or on the President's list of reserve and present difficulties in funding…Conference urges utmost caution in bringing out any more candidates during the ensuing year.'[4] Similarly in 1906, 'The number of students sent for training shall not be greater than the income of the [Theological] Institute for that year.'[5]

The funding situation improved significantly from 1914 when Conference agreed to impose a levy on all circuits to fund theological education. Initially set at 1% of circuit income, the amount was to vary as need arose. The inhibiting effect on ministerial numbers of earlier restrictions is seen by 1915, when Conference recommended a

[4] Minutes of Conference, 1890.
[5] Minutes of Conference, 1906.

kind of recruiting drive, including the resolve to address young men and 'direct their attention and that of their parents to the propriety of their considering whether God does not call them to the ministry of the Church.'[6]

As time went on and funding became more secure due to the compulsory levy on circuit finances, candidates' fees, both for University courses and College residence, were paid in full by the Church, and those resigning within ten years were no longer asked to repay. From the mid 1960s when candidates were permitted to marry in the later part of their course, an allowance to enable living off campus was provided. The same applied to married candidates who were permitted to study in the Theological Hall rather than spending all six years on Probation. Were these more generous provisions beneficial for those in training? In the view of some in the Conference, not necessarily, as we shall see later.

3. Ecumenical co-operation

As early as 1876 the Wesleyan Conference extolled the virtues, if not the necessity, of union with the other Methodist Churches, which was finally effected in 1901. Preparation for this union included the appointment, in 1899, of a joint committee for the examination of candidates. In 1902, at the first Annual Victoria and Tasmania Conference of the Methodist Church of Australasia, it was noted that there were two ordinands, nine students in the Theological Institution and ten on Probation. The union saw no change to the way Wesleyan candidates had previously been prepared for ministry, although further co-operation with the Congregational College was recommended. In the years 1904, 1905 and 1906 the Victorian Council of Churches recommended that its member Churches should set up a United Board of Examiners in theology. Conference endorsed the proposal, but it did not come to fruition.

In 1912, following another failed attempt to have the Charter of the University of Melbourne amended to include a Faculty of Divinity, the Melbourne College of Divinity (MCD) was established by Act of Parliament. The College Board comprised representatives from the Church of England, Baptist, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, with the Churches of Christ a co-opted

[6] Minutes of Conference, 1915.

member. The College had no Faculty and did not itself undertake teaching. Its primary function was as an examining body, offering a post-graduate Bachelor of Divinity degree to those who met the requirements of the prescribed and examined curriculum, and a Licentiate in Theology to those without a primary degree. At the time this did not bring about significant change to courses taught to candidates at Queen's, but as time went on these became more closely aligned to MCD examination requirements. Since this gradual re-alignment was also occurring in the theological colleges of other churches, this paved the way in later years for more closely integrated teaching. Conference minutes of the 1920s and 30s record some combined Methodist-Congregational and Methodist-Baptist teaching, but this was sporadic.

In the 1950s, after the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches began formal negotiations toward union, more combined classes were held, and by the mid-60s all the classes for Queen's and Ormond College theological students were combined. Congregationalists and Trinity College theological faculties followed suit, and a Joint Senatus was formed in 1967. Soon after, following the decision post-Vatican II that Catholic ordinands could take post-graduate studies in an ecumenical context, the Jesuits moved their theological college from Sydney to property adjacent to the University of Melbourne, and joined what then became the United Faculty of Theology in 1970. Just prior to this the Melbourne College of Divinity made three decisions that have led to Melbourne's becoming a pre-eminent centre for theological studies in Australia, perhaps in the Southern Hemisphere. First, the application from the Catholic Church to become a full member of the College was met with enthusiastic support, thus widening its ecumenical scope. Second, the College determined to offer a primary degree (Bachelor of Theology) which enabled many more candidates to prepare for MCD degrees. Third, the College moved to recognize the theological colleges of its constituent churches as Teaching Institutions of the MCD, thus aligning the teaching in these colleges more closely and allowing students enrolled in one Institution to take courses for degree credit in another.

III. Some Definitive Events

1. The Location of the Theological Hall.

Two decades after Queen's College was founded with its dual purpose there were still some in the Conference uneasy about having ministerial candidates as members of the University College, and in 1915 the advisability of separating the Theological Hall from the College was again formally canvassed. Debate was precipitated by the recognition that the dual role of Master of Queen's and Theological tutor, which Dr. Sugden had been fulfilling from the beginning, had, with the increased numbers of students, become too onerous. A committee was set up to advise the Conference on whether the Hall should continue at Queen's, with the appointment of an additional tutor, or whether a theological institution should be set up in another location and with its own staff. The report of the committee received at the following Conference recommended the former course, and Conference agreed. The appointment of a theological tutor to oversee work in the Hall was postponed because of the 1914-18 war, and it was not until 1921 that the Revd. A. E. Albiston was appointed Professor of Theology and Principal of the Theological Hall. From that time the roles of Principal of the Hall and Master of the College remained separate. Theological students were to remain responsible to the Master in matters regarding 'the internal discipline of the College,' while the Theological Professor would direct their studies within the Hall.

2. The Impact of the World Wars.

Work in the Theological Hall, as might be expected, was not exempt from the upheaval in the nation at large caused by World War I. A resolution of the Annual Conference of 1916 reflected the view generally held in the Church, that 'Great Britain and her allies are fighting for a cause that is pre-eminently a righteous one, as it is being waged against forces which are inimical to the liberties and welfare of the world at large.'[7] Theological students were granted permission to suspend their studies in order to enlist (five did so in 1916). The minutes of 1917 record that six candidates were serving in the AIF, two of whom were later killed, and no candidates were received for training. In his report to Conference, the Master of the

[7] Minutes of Annual Conference, 1916.

College stated that the work of the Theological Hall had been practically suspended, with only two candidates resident in College. The 1919 minutes record that fifty past and present theological students had been on active service, ten of whom had given their lives. Activities in College and Hall were getting back to normal by 1920 and in 1921 nine candidates were received, bringing the total number in training to seventeen.

It does not appear, from Conference minutes of the period, that World War II had the same drastic effects on ministerial training as World War I, although some candidates did enlist, the 1941 Conference recording in language typical of the period that two of these had 'heard the bugles of England calling and could not stay in College beyond the first term.'[8] The war did result in a shortage of ministers in circuits, and some candidates had their studies in College curtailed in order to meet the shortfall. In 1942 there were sixteen candidates resident in Queen's, but only one of these in the fourth year that Conference had mandated a few years earlier. The Professor of Theology at the time (Revd. Dr. Calvert Barber) repeatedly pleaded with Conference to safeguard this fourth year when, following University study for the BA degree, candidates could give full attention to their theological studies. One incidental effect of the war was that soon after it ended two married candidates were permitted to reside at Queen's and study in the Theological Hall. They were ex-servicemen living in College during the week and at home on the weekends.

2. Postgraduate Study Overseas.

Since no tertiary institution in Australia offered post-graduate courses in theological studies, those very few Victorian ministers who went overseas to study did so at British universities. This changed in the 1940s. In 1941 Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, Dean of the Divinity School at Drew University in New Jersey, USA, came to Australia to deliver the Cato Lecture, a lecture given at the triennial meeting of General Conference.[9] Impressed by the undergraduate courses given at Queen's, but noting the dearth of opportunities for post-graduate study, he offered to make available a tuition

[8] Minutes of Conference, 1941.

[9] The title of his lecture, and its later expanded published version was *Adventures in Understanding* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1941). As was customary at the time for Cato Lecturers, Hough also gave addresses in other centres in Australia.

scholarship at Drew 'to one of our graduate students' as Conference minutes noted, and the offer was received with gratitude. The first graduate selected, John Westerman, was ready to sail to the US to take up the scholarship when Pearl Harbor intervened, and so the arrangement could not proceed. Colin Williams was the first to benefit from the scheme, travelling to Drew in 1948 and returning to Australia four years later. I was the next to benefit, beginning in 1954 with study for BD and then for a PhD, returning in 1959. A number of Methodist candidates or ordained ministers from Victoria and other states followed, many themselves returning to take up positions in theological education, and this paved the way for many more to study in other Universities in the USA, while others continued to go to Britain, to Cambridge in particular.

3. The Challenges of the 1960s.

At the beginning of the decade the future seemed bright. Candidate numbers were at an all-time high. There were more than a hundred preparing for ordination, of whom forty-seven were probationers in circuit appointments, sixty-four were students in the Hall, and eight were undertaking further study overseas. With the Conference levy set at 9% the perennial problem of under-funding seemed a thing of the past. With negotiations for Church union proceeding, the Conference opened the way to closer integration of courses taught with Ormond College by extending years in the Hall from four to five, and later to six, and by 1964 all courses were taught in combined classes. The six year course enabled all students to complete three years of theological study after their three years at University. Because of the extended length of the Hall course, students in their later years were permitted to marry, and residences for married students were provided off-campus.

Just when the hopes for theological education expressed in former years – a fully funded University course followed by three years theological study in an ecumenical context – it seemed were being fulfilled, problems were becoming apparent. Those candidates who had to travel interstate for their University study (due to quota restrictions at the University of Melbourne) were not finding it easy, on their return to Melbourne, to integrate well into the existing Hall community. Because of the Arts quota and the higher age of those offering as candidates and others permitted to marry, fewer students were living in Queen's.

Most critical was the upheaval in society as a whole, when many traditional attitudes and beliefs were being radically challenged. The church began to reflect these changes, especially the challenges to customary ways of doing and seeing things, the shift in attitude toward authority, and the polarization of the people and loss of confidence in elected representatives caused by continuing participation in the war in Vietnam.[10] Within the church the change could be seen particularly in a questioning of the traditional role and place of the ordained ministry. The 1966 Conference Minutes record that 'Contemporary theological issues such as the nature and relevance of the ordained ministry, the place of local congregations in relation to the Church's mission and the challenge to traditional beliefs have naturally had their impact.'[11] With the call to the church to be in the world, 'where the action is,' the traditional ministerial role of leading the gathered congregation in worship and ministering to their needs was downgraded. Consequently many ministers tried to reinterpret their role by being effective in areas other than preaching and pastoring – as educators, counsellors, managers, enablers or social activists. Many resigned to fulfil precisely one or other of these roles within the community at large, believing that there they could give full attention to these roles, unfettered by what they saw as ecclesiastical restraints.

Worse was to come, namely a radical challenge not just to ministry but to the place of the church itself, and indeed to the validity of faith. Under the heading of 'secularization' the argument was advanced that God's gift of freedom to humankind included human independence that came when the Creator cut loose the parental ties, allowing humankind to operate within a secular society without religious restraints. Thus would humans develop to the full their potential given by the Creator. That argument, coupled with the prevailing challenge to authority in the community at large, was enough to unsettle a great many candidates and younger ministers, leading to wholesale resignations. In the three years at the end of the decade about half the candidates and probationers in the Victoria and Tasmania Conference resigned, coinciding with a marked decline in church membership among the under-forties. So this

[10] This paragraph and the following are a revised version of observations I made in a 1999 lecture *Queen's College and its Theologs* Friends of the Library, Occasional Paper No. 8, March 1999.
[11] Minutes of Conference, 1966.

irony – just as theological education at Queen's came closest to realizing its ideal, even such excellent preparation was not proof against this most serious and complex of challenges.

As well, the benefits of fully funding candidates for their six years of training were seriously questioned, and the negative effects of dependence were being registered. Minutes of the 1967 Conference recorded the question, 'What can it do to a student to have the Church fund, house and teach throughout training?' The answer - encourage irresponsibility, obscure the relevance of the idea of sacrifice, cause insensitivity to the needs of others, and foster a culture of dependence and the view that the church 'owes candidates a living.' It was further noted that 'examples of all of these can be cited from within the Victorian/Tasmanian Theological Hall,' and consequently 'it would seem advantageous if candidates gained as much of their education as possible at their own expense, and if the period of total support were kept to a minimum.'[12]

4. Women Candidates.

Another feature of the 1960s was far more positive. In 1966, following a report from a committee set up three years earlier, the General Conference determined that women should be accepted as candidates for the ordained ministry, and that the process of candidature and training should be just the same as for men.[13] Soon afterwards the Victoria and Tasmania Conference received its first women candidates, and they began training within the Hall. Some had already been attending classes, along with their contemporary Presbyterians, as Deaconess candidates. Residence at Queen's was not at this time possible as the College did not admit women students until 1973, but at least one candidate was resident in the adjacent St. Hilda's College.

IV. Final Restructuring

In response to the critical years at the end of the sixties, but also building on positive developments of earlier years (e.g. ecumenical co-operation, MCD first degree course (B.Theol), supervised field

[12] Minutes of Conference, 1967.

[13] In 1936 the General Conference had declined to move in this direction, instead noting that while there were no theological objections to having women ministers, there were 'practical reasons.' What these were was never spelled out, and the issue was not formally addressed again until the 1960s.

education, full three year theological studies course) a significant restructuring occurred, and in 1973 a pattern of training was agreed which continued, with only minor modification, until union. Major features of this pattern were:

- All accepted candidates were required to undertake a course of at least three years, comprising biblical studies, theology, church history and field education.
- Those who already had a University degree would undertake the course preparing them for the MCD degree of Bachelor of Divinity.
- Those without a degree, but having matriculated, would have a four year course leading to the degree of Bachelor of Theology.
- Those who had not matriculated would undertake a four year 'Hall course,' with content substantially the same as for the BTheol.
- Accepted candidates would pay no fees for the courses taught within the Theological Hall, now a constituent member of the United Faculty of Theology.
- No finance would be available for pre-candidates or candidates who chose to undertake a University degree course. Government decision to provide 'free' University education made this latter provision less onerous than would have been the case in previous years.

In 1974, of the thirty-one candidates studying within the Hall, only one was resident in Queen's because most candidates were 'mature age', many married, and very few undertaking University studies, making residence in Queen's either impossible or not appropriate. So by the time of union, ministerial education in the Victoria and Tasmania Conference was in 'Collegiate context' only to the extent that classes were taught within Queen's and Methodist Professors lived on campus and were Senior Members of the College.

V. Conclusion

In 1975, at what was expected to be the final meeting of Annual Conference before union, the Principal of the Theological Hall, Dr. L.D. Fullerton, included in his report a section entitled *Looking*

Ahead.[14] It is worth quoting some relevant sections:

- 'It is unwise to assume the role of the prophet. However, there are some indications of developments that will probably influence the future shape of theological education in Melbourne.'
- 'The Theological Hall will become much more concerned with the theological education of the whole people of God. The days are past when theological colleges accepted only candidates studying for ordination. Implied in this is a recognition that ministry will become much more diversified.' Since 1970 there had been people taking courses in the United Faculty of Theology who were not candidates. Now, in 2012, those preparing for ordination are in the minority.

- 'The Theological Hall must become more directly involved in continuing education for ministry. This will obviously include a particular responsibility for post-ordination study.' Continuing education is now an integral function of the Theological College, co-ordinated by a full-time staff member.

- 'Our relation to the Third World will become more important. The Revd. I. S. Tuwere, Principal of the Methodist Theological College, Davuilevi, Fiji, has been enrolled to do postgraduate work in the United Faculty. There will be similar opportunities open to us.' Sevate Tuwere completed a successful course and received an MCD doctorate. Some years later he was appointed to teach in the Methodist College in Auckland. In succeeding years a number of candidates from the Third World have studied in the Hall, some returning to their countries of origin, some having already migrated to Australia and have become Methodist, now Uniting Church ministers.

In March 1888 an article in *The Spectator* reflected the hopes of those advocating a Theological Hall within Queen's College: 'In the

[14] In fact union was delayed until 1977 due to a Presbyterian request for minor modifications to be made to the Basis of Union.

future our ministers will be a better prepared and furnished ministry, a ministry equal to the times, i.e. equal to any demand which, in these days of education and science, shall be made upon it by an educated and exacting public.'[15]

Had they lived to the time of union, would they have seen their hopes fulfilled? Certainly they would have been disappointed to find no theological student resident in Queen's. Nevertheless they would have been encouraged to find that candidates for ordination, women among them were studying, not only in a thoroughly ecumenical faculty, but in a diverse community in which lay people, to whom candidates in the course of things would be ministering, were increasingly present. And although being older and usually married made it impossible for candidates to live in Queen's, some of the value of engagement with students of other faculties that residence had provided in previous years was already built in to these older students, most of whom had served many years in the workplace. So, would those with the original vision for ministerial education in the Victoria and Tasmania Conference have agreed that candidates a century later were being adequately equipped to fulfil a ministry 'equal to the times'? All things considered, I believe they would.

[15] *The Spectator*, March 1888.