

Preaching

(This report was received by the Synod of the Diocese of Sydney in October 1987.)

Introduction

1. This report has been prepared in response to a request for a report on preaching in the Diocese of Sydney. It combines information supplied by Archdeacon B. W. Richardson and the Rev Dr D. G. Peterson.

College of Preachers

2. The Council arranges one College each year. This year the College met at Gilbulla from 15 to 17 June and the programme covered the following topics.

The Preacher and his God

The Preacher and his Planning

The Preacher and the World

The Preacher and his Preparation

The Preacher in Action

Teaching through Preaching

Making Sermons Relevant

Use and Abuse of the Voice

3. The speakers included Bishops Reid and Cameron, the Rev John McCallum, Mrs T. Kirkpatrick and the Rev Alan Blanch. Among other participants, the members of the Post-Ordination II Group were present.

In Service Training of Clergy Committee

4. This year the Committee has not arranged any conferences which directly relate to preaching because a great deal of time and study has been given to deciding how best to provide appropriate in-service training resources for clergy.

5. However, in other years, from time to time arrangements have been made with a member of the Moore College Faculty to lead a series of discussions/workshops on a major book of the Bible, both from a theological and expository viewpoint.

6. Many conferences which are held are of assistance indirectly, in that they reflect on community attitudes and their causes - giving increased insight into the thinking of people in congregations.

Post Ordination Training

7. As already indicated, the Post-Ordination II Group, consisting of some twenty men, attended the College of Preachers.

8. Nothing else in the programme for 1987 has been arranged specifically with regard to preaching skills, but again many of the sessions do indirectly impinge upon it. For example, in the recent P.O.T. I Session time was given to the concepts of communication and understanding the non-literary interests of many people in the community.

9. With the reshaping of the administration of Post-Ordination Training planned for 1988, it would be possible to give more specific attention to preaching skills.

Moore Theological College

10. In the first year, the students are given an introduction to the theology and practice of preaching in a half semester course which prepares them for preaching seminars in the second half of the year. In these preaching seminars the class divides into small groups where students preach twice and are assessed by a lecturer and fellow students.

11. In the second year, the principles of communication are examined as they apply to preaching and a number of sermons by preachers from outside the College context are viewed on videotape. The critiquing of students' sermons continues to some extent, focused particularly on the problems of preaching from the Gospels and the Old Testament. This is a one hour per week course throughout the year.

12. In association with this, Clifford Warne takes students for one hour a week for one semester in second year, dealing with speech communication as it applies to the reading of the Bible and preaching.

2 Preaching (1987)

The climax of this course is a week of theory and practice at Anglican Television learning about the different communication media and how they apply to parish ministry.

13. The question of preaching is often before the students in various classes, such as New Testament and Evangelism, and students who are leaving the College either in third or fourth year have an opportunity of preaching in chapel and of being assessed by two lecturers and a group of students. Furthermore, these chapel sermons are recorded and videotaped with comments and assessments.

14. Lecturers sometimes attend churches where students are preaching, in order to assess their methods. It is also intended that staff sermons in the College Chapel provide a regular and varied example for students to follow.

15. An essential part of training in preaching is the catechist experience that students have. Ministers are expected to provide good models and informed criticism of students, ideally in conjunction with lay people in their congregations. However, it seems that ministers need more help in providing useful assessments of student preaching and this is seen as a serious weakness in the diocesan training programme as it now exists. As in other matters, the College would be happy to receive comments and advice from those who are interested in this vital area of ministry preparation.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee

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Diocesan Secretary