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KNOWLEDGE AND VITAL PIETY:
METHODIST MINISTRY EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND
FROM THE 1840s TO 1988

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Theology
The University of Auckland
2002

Abstract

This thesis examines the history of Methodist clergy training in New Zealand from the 1840s, particularly as it was carried out at Trinity College between 1929 and 1988. It explores the way Methodist theological educators struggled with the tensions between a focus on active piety and practical training on the one hand, and intellectual and academic scholarship on the other.

The thesis gives a chronological account of the work of Trinity College and the training ventures that preceded it, and reflects upon the main emphases of ministry education throughout the period. Changes in the relationship between academic, practical and spiritual aspects of preparation are discussed in detail through a study of the curriculum, skill development opportunities and community life of the theological institutions.

In considering the interweaving forces that shaped Methodist training, the thesis notes the critical influence of the aims and vision of the college's principals, and of the needs and concerns of New Zealand Methodism as a whole. It explores the implications for ministry education of internal tensions and shifts in emphasis within the denomination, which produced among Methodists differing priorities for church life and ministry. These factors are viewed within the context of world-wide trends in ministry training, and of social, political and economic changes often arising out of the New Zealand setting. The interaction between such imported and local forces points towards aspects of Methodism's sense of self-understanding as a church with a New Zealand ethos.

The thesis reflects upon some of the outcomes of Methodist preparation, both in terms of the kind of ministry it produced, and in the way training emphases helped to shape the direction and identity of the denomination. It explores the creative, yet sometimes divisive, effects of college initiatives in such areas as biblical scholarship, worship, and pastoral understanding. The thesis also examines the particular impact of ministry education upon Methodism's Maori, women and Pacific Island students, arguing that the theological institution often struggled to acknowledge the distinctive needs of these groups.

The thesis concludes that the history of Methodist ministry education from the 1840s to 1988 has been one of shifting emphases and varying combinations of priorities as, in each period, Methodists have struggled to embody in training programmes just what it means to reflect a Methodist identity.

Acknowledgments

After reading a draft of Jack Lewis's book, *The Trinity College Story*, Eric Hames declared the work to be an impressive document which the Methodist Church would be lucky to have. Writing to Lewis, he stated, "It will never need to be done again."¹ In venturing to disagree with Eric Hames, I have been aware of a debt to Dr Lewis, who laid the groundwork for any study of Methodist theological education in New Zealand. I was also deeply grateful for his willingness to share in a series of interviews about his own time at Trinity. These were marked by his courtesy, discretion, honesty and perceptiveness.

I would like to thank the former Trinity College Council for giving me access to the records of the Methodist college, and past and present members of the Methodist community at Meadowbank for their help over the last four years. I am particularly grateful to all of the former students, faculty, domestic staff and hostel residents of the Methodist college for sharing their memories of, and thoughts about, Methodist ministry training in conversation, letter or taped interview. Listening to their stories was a privilege. I am also indebted to Jock Hosking, Derek Laws, Frank Hanson, John Mabon, Jack Penman and Terry Wall for the loan of lecture notes and personal files relating to ministry education.

This thesis could not have been written without the financial aid of the Methodist Bradley Trust, the Tidd Foundation, and the New Zealand Federation of Graduate Women, and I wish to acknowledge their trust and support.

I have received enormous help from Judith Bright, the librarian at St John's and Trinity Colleges, and all of her staff with books, archive material and printing facilities. The coffee and encouragement was also appreciated. I am grateful to Marcia Baker at the Christchurch Methodist Archives, Verna Mossong at the Auckland Methodist Archives and all of their workers for their generous and friendly assistance. Librarians at the Auckland Public Library and the University of Auckland Library also answered many enquiries.

¹ [E.W. Hames] to Jack [Lewis], n.d., TC Papers, TC, Met 089/1/6, p.1.

Thank you to Denise Wellm and Helen Greenwood for solving with good humour and tolerance my computer and formatting problems, and to Charles Grinter who proof read the thesis with considerable attention to detail.

I am extremely indebted to my supervisors, Dr Allan Davidson and Dr John Salmon, for their guidance and friendship. They have offered inspiration, feedback, helpful criticism and a listening ear, and, while final responsibility for the text is mine, the thesis would have been far poorer without their input.

Contents

Abstract.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Abbreviations.....	viii
1. ISSUES IN METHODIST MINISTRY EDUCATION	1
2. TRAINING ON THE MOVE, 1840s-1928	17
The Grafton Institution, 1845-1848	17
Textbooks and Saddlebags.....	30
Three Kings and Prince Albert College, 1876-1906.....	44
Maori Training, 1876-1928.....	61
Pukekawa and Dunholme Colleges, 1907-1928	74
Conclusion	91
3. ENGAGING IN “REVERENT MODERN SCHOLARSHIP”, 1929-1940	94
The Opening of Trinity College.....	94
Training Aims in the 1930s.....	102
A New Level of Scholarship	107
Theology in the New Zealand Context	128
Maori Ministry Education	136
Ministry Formation	140
Conclusion	156
4. BEING A PRACTICAL WESLEYAN, 1941-1962	158
The College in War-Time	158
Changes in the Post-War Context	164
Academic Teaching.....	177
New Pastoral Directions.....	201
Maori Students in the 1950s.....	216
Conclusion	221
5. SHAPING A THERAPEUTIC MINISTRY, 1963-1970.....	223
Responding to the World’s Impatience.....	223
“Exploring the Personal”	229
Maori Ministry Education	246
The Academic Programme.....	254
Conclusion	277

6.	BECOMING ECUMENISTS, 1971-1979	280
	Training Aims in the 1970s.....	280
	From the City to the Suburbs	283
	Options, Assessment and Accountability.....	304
	Training Minita-a-Iwi.....	317
	New Waves of Protest.....	324
	Conclusion	339
7.	TRAINING "FIELD THEOLOGIANS", 1980-1988	341
	An "Uncertain and Challenging Future".....	341
	In the Home Setting	347
	Contextual Theology.....	354
	Partnership at Meadowbank.....	368
	A Theology Degree.....	376
	The Challenge of Diversity	392
	Conclusion	403
	CONCLUSION	405
	APPENDICES	412
	Principals of the Methodist Theological College.....	412
	Wardens of St John's College during the partnership of the two colleges	413
	Teaching Staff of the Methodist Theological College	413
	TABLES	414
	Table 1 Methodist Students in Training 1876-1988.....	414
	Table 2 Maori Trainees Who Prepared for Ministry 1840-1929.....	415
	Table 3 Students in Training 1876-1988.....	416
	Table 4 Methodist Students in Training 1964-1988.....	420
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	421

List of Abbreviations

ACTE.....	Auckland Consortium for Theological Education
BS	Board of Studies
CH.....	Church History
CM.....	Committee on Ministry
CRM	Common Room Meeting
EC	Examination Committee
JBTS	Joint Board of Theological Studies
LN.....	Lecture Notes
MAC.....	<i>Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church</i>
MCA	Methodist Church Archives
MCD	Melbourne College of Divinity
NC.....	<i>New Citizen</i>
NT.....	New Testament
NZM.....	<i>New Zealand Methodist</i>
NZMT.....	<i>New Zealand Methodist Times</i>
NZW.....	<i>New Zealand Wesleyan</i>
PAC	Prince Albert College
PT	Pastoral Theology
PP.....	Pamphlets and Publications
SA	Students' Association
SJC.....	St John's College
ST	Systematic Theology
TC	Trinity College
TCC	Trinity College Council
TCOH	Trinity College Oral History
TK.....	Three Kings