

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN A  
PLURALIST SOCIETY

Edited by

McCLELLAND, ALAN

GAY, J. D.

THE CHURCHES AND THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS  
IN ENGLAND AND WALES

ROUTLEDGE  
1988



## Chapter Eleven

### THE CHURCHES AND THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

John D. Gay

#### INTRODUCTION

An assessment of the churches' role in teacher education in England and Wales must take full account of the different principles motivating the three main religious groups in this area of education. The Roman Catholic Church has always been clear that the task of its colleges is to train Catholic teachers for Catholic schools and this principle has dominated its thought and actions. The Church of England, as the established church, has operated on a more complex and changing set of interrelated principles and motives which have been closely linked with the national development of an educational system in this country. The Free Churches, or as they were known at the height of the controversies over who should control education in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Nonconformists, have never really wished to provide their own educational system, but saw the development of a state system as the most effective way of countering the power of the Church of England.

#### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The English teacher training college, in the form we have come to know it, was very much a product of the 1840s. Before that however, there were systematic attempts by the church to undertake some form of training for teachers in its schools. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), founded in 1699, established a number of charity

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

schools to provide religious instruction among the poor. Lack of funds in the eighteenth century forced SPCK to abandon the foundation of a training college, but it kept alive the idea of teacher training which was done largely through the apprenticeship method.

The beginning of systematic teacher training in the early nineteenth century was closely allied to the establishment and development of the school system (see Dent, 1977). This system had two main initiators, Joseph Lancaster who attempted to develop a non-denominational style and Andrew Bell who was determined to create an Anglican pattern of education. As early as 1808 Bell was concerned with the training of teachers and established a scheme for a school at Bishop Auckland which would have attached to it a training centre. Bell's scheme attracted much support and culminated in 1811 in the foundation of the 'National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church throughout England and Wales'. At Bell's insistence the National Society adopted a serious line on teacher training and in 1812 opened a school in central London, Baldwin's Gardens, which became the Society's main training centre. Other centres were developed in schools throughout the country. Prior to the 1840s there were no training colleges in the accepted sense of the word and most teachers were trained in centres attached to schools.

The 1840s saw the development of new residential institutions for the training of teachers. Although these institutions took over many of the features of the old centres, they were founded on the residential principle and so were in practice the first of the teacher training colleges. The reasons behind the development of the colleges were complex but the fundamental cause was a political battle between the Church of England and the state for control over the emerging educational system. If the schools were to be largely church schools the training of teachers should similarly be in the hands of the church. Indeed, this link between the control of the school system and the provision of teachers was one that dominated much of the subsequent discussion on who should be responsible for teacher training. In the 1830s the issue had been decided, at least for the immediate future, largely in favour of the Church of England. Plans discussed during the 1830s for the foundation of a state controlled 'normal school' for training elementary school teachers were eventually shelved.

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

in 1839. Both the Anglicans and the Nonconformists objected to the role that the other was likely to play in the area of religious instruction in the normal school. As a result of this the government agreed that a grant of £10,000 which had been voted in 1835 for government of normal schools should be divided equally between the two voluntary societies, the National Society and the British and Foreign Society. This placed on both societies an urgent obligation to provide for teacher training.

Whether the churches were right to prevent the state from entering the educational arena is a debatable point. Rose (1981, p. 1) argues that although the churches were wanting fundamental educational reform in the 1830s their divisions and antagonisms stemmed progress and resulted in the dual system of schools and colleges which he describes as 'a precarious, uneasy and divisive arrangement'. Bitter antagonism there certainly was between the Nonconformists and the established church over the provision of education but there was no guarantee that the government's scheme for a unitary national system would have been any more successful than the dual provision arrangements. Following defeat of the government on this issue it was then up to the churches to take initiatives in the teacher training area. The Archbishop of Canterbury, as President of the National Society, exhorted diocesan bishops to investigate ways in which training institutions might be established under the direction of the church for training teachers to teach children of the poor in church schools in the dioceses.

The Secretary of the Committee of Council on Education, Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth as he was later known, on the collapse of the normal school plan, obtained government grants for the building of colleges. With a friend, he founded his own college at St John's in Battersea in 1840. Although the influence of Kay-Shuttleworth on the future pattern of teacher training is generally acknowledged, Dent (1977) argues that his reputation for creating the residential pattern as the norm is perhaps over-emphasised. Dent believes that Kay-Shuttleworth's main influence was to underscore the primacy of religion in the whole training and teaching enterprise.

Kay-Shuttleworth shared both the Nonconformist and the Church of England view that elementary teachers were first and foremost Christian missionaries. Of the other influences on the emerging college scene the greatest importance undoubtedly attaches to St Mark's, Chelsea,

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

founded in 1841 and which was led for twenty-three years by the Reverend Derwent Coleridge, son of the famous poet. Although he shared many of Kay-Shuttleworth's ideals, including the need for a tight Christian residential community, he believed that the prime aim was to develop cultured all-rounders:

to this end Coleridge erected for his college elegant buildings, and created within them a community life designed to inspire and refine. Central to his concept was the college chapel whose architectural beauty he enhanced by services of great dignity embellished by music of rare quality (Dent, 1977, p. 14).

Foundation dates of colleges always need treating with some caution for it is often not clear at what precise point in time a college came into being and there is considerable difference of interpretation in some of the histories. McGregor (1981, p. 28) lists Chester and Exeter as the first two Anglican colleges with Chichester coming a close third 'all three date their foundations from 1839 and actually began to train teachers early in 1840. Durham, York and Winchester have all been credited with 1839 foundation dates, but did not admit students until late 1840 or early 1841'. By 1945 the Minutes of the Committee of Council list twenty Anglican colleges in England and Wales which had admitted their first students. There was also the Home and Colonial and Borough Road colleges and the National Society's central school in Westminster. By 1850 the number had reached around thirty (1) the overwhelming majority of which were associated with the Church of England. The Roman Catholics had opened the College of St Mary's in Hammersmith in 1850. In the same year the Methodists opened Westminster College and two years later the two small Congregational colleges in London merged to form Homerton College in Cambridge which was supported also by the Baptists and Wesleyans. All but Llandaff were residential and apart from Borough Road and the Home and Colonial none exceeded seventy-five in student numbers.

Prior to the 1870 Education Act many Roman Catholics were trained in Church of England colleges and also Church of England students were admitted to British Society training institutions. Thus although institutions had clear denominational labels, in practice the student bodies were frequently much broader in their composition. The 1860s

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

was a time of hardship for the colleges and many were hit by the reduction of government grants. Interestingly it was the women's colleges which suffered less as they were cheaper to run and there was a strong demand for women teachers as they were paid less than men.

With the passing of the 1870 Education Act there was a growing need for more teachers and the churches did what they could to meet this challenge: during the following decade the Church of England opened three further colleges and the Roman Catholics one. However the churches could barely meet the needs of their own schools let alone those of the new Board schools and the gradual decline of the Church of England's dominant position in teacher education can be dated from this time. Between 1870 and 1876 the school population virtually doubled and the efforts of the churches and other voluntary bodies were clearly insufficient. As a result of the Cross Commission's investigation into the training of teachers, state training colleges run in association with universities were proposed. There was to be no religious instruction in these colleges and they were to be on a non-residential basis and so the seminary ideal of teacher training was effectively challenged. By 1900 the universities were training one third of all teachers in sixteen colleges and so the dual system was extended into teacher training. At this time, of the residential teacher training places, 69% were in Church of England colleges, 6% in Roman Catholic colleges and the other 25% in colleges which admitted Nonconformists. The new day training colleges did in fact extend the opportunities available to Nonconformists to become teachers although of course these colleges also admitted Anglicans and this had the effect of reducing the places for others (Murphy, 1971, pp. 88 and 89).

The second challenge to the churches came in 1902 when the local education authorities entered the teacher training sphere as a consequence of the 1902 Education Act and by 1914 the local education authorities had established twenty of their own colleges. A further challenge came in 1908 when the church colleges were obliged to take up to half their students on merit irrespective of any religious background. Many churchmen disliked this as it was felt that properly Anglican colleges were essential for the Christian future of the country. This regulation had little effect on the Roman Catholic colleges for few non-Roman Catholics wished to attend such colleges.

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

Perhaps the most serious challenge, however, to the churches came during the two World Wars and the intervening period when the colleges were having to grapple with financial survival (for a fuller account of this see Boyd, 1984 and Lofthouse, 1983). Throughout this period closures were an ever present possibility and in 1938 the Church of England did in fact close three women's colleges at Truro, Peterborough and Brighton. At the outbreak of war in 1939 many of the colleges had obsolete buildings that were in urgent need of repair or replacement and virtually all of the colleges were facing financial difficulties. There was relatively little central government help for them. Most of the church colleges remained enclosed, single sex and small with less than 200 students.

The immediate post-war years were characterised by rapid expansion in the overall teacher training area but within this general expansion there was a major shift in balance from church to state. In 1945 the government gave grants of 50% to all existing voluntary colleges for improvements and extensions of their accommodation and facilities but nothing at all was available for the building of new colleges. Thus between 1946 and 1948 nineteen new local education authority colleges were built and overall between 1939 and 1951, while the number of voluntary colleges declined from sixty-three to fifty-six, the number of local education authority colleges increased from twenty-eight to seventy-six.

At the end of the Second World War the Church of England, centrally through its Church Assembly, decided to make a commitment to the future of its colleges. It was hoped that this commitment would encourage a more corporate feeling among the colleges and that they would abandon their earlier individualistic modes of operating. However, as Boyd (1984, p. 62) notes, the Church of England colleges' Board of Supervision did not have the same authority as the Catholic Education Council to engage in strategic planning and the individualistic mode was to continue.

Gedge (1974 and 1981) traces the post-war growth of the Anglican college system and relates it clearly to forces both in church and state which influenced developments, for development it was. An internal Anglican report in 1958 was very optimistic about the future and argued that the colleges were of great importance to the church as they provided Anglican teachers for schools, influenced parishes

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

through their Christian teacher products and gave the church a key role in an expanding area of higher education. The following year the Church of England extended three of its colleges and provided for a new college in Canterbury which was opened in 1961. Between 1958 and 1961 the Anglican colleges had added nearly 3,000 places to their existing 5,000 and in 1960 there was a plan to double this number, although the enthusiasm for such rapid growth was beginning to wane in the church's central councils. Although there was agreement in 1962 to build a new college at Lancaster, some had doubts about the wisdom of such a venture. In 1963 the government announced that it wished to extend its teacher training numbers from 50,000 to 80,000 by 1970 and at this point the Church Assembly decided it was not willing to provide any further central funds for college extension. If colleges wished to expand any further they would have to raise their own funds. This was precisely what many did and between 1963 and 1970 the number of students in the twenty-seven Anglican colleges doubled to 19,000 representing a numerical high point for the colleges.

The 1960s was a crucial time for the colleges. The freedom and permissiveness characteristic of that decade so coloured educational thinking and action that the church colleges felt obliged to modify their own images in order to stay within the mainstream of higher education. The tightly regulated forms of communal life had to be slackened and the religious dimension increasingly phased down (see Gay, 1979, pp. 8-13). If anyone was tempted by all this to question the continuing *raison d'être* of the colleges they were quickly silenced by the overwhelming manpower needs and the Herculean efforts of the colleges to produce more teachers for the hard pressed schools which more than justified their existence.

The harsher climate of the 1970s brought changes on several fronts. First, monotechnics became suspect on educational, professional and administrative planning grounds. There was a growing feeling, highlighted by the James Report, that teachers ought to be educated within mainstream higher education and alongside students of other subjects. This, it was believed, would raise the level of academic education and also give students a wider perspective on life through the greater range of contacts available to them. In planning terms, larger, diversified institutions would be able to cope with the ebbs and flows of the teacher training requirements. As a result, many

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

colleges embarked on large scale diversification programmes as colleges of higher education and some achieved considerable success.

A second and related change was the rapid decline in the need for new teachers from the colleges. Several factors contributed to this, the most significant being falling pupil numbers in schools and a continuing bleak economic climate. Furthermore, there was a shift in emphasis away from the professional degree which the colleges were equipped to provide, towards an academic qualification topped up with a professional diploma. The resourcing of higher education led to further question marks over the colleges. Even if small institutions could be justified on other grounds, there was a strong feeling that in terms of acceptably quantifiable factors small was expensive.

The consequence of all these contextual changes was a severe reduction in the number of Anglican institutions in the 1970s. At the beginning of the decade there were twenty-five such colleges in England and two in Wales. By the end of the decade the number had dropped to twelve in England and one in Wales and of these thirteen only nine were fully autonomous and free-standing colleges of higher education, two were federated with other voluntary colleges, one with a local education authority college and the fourth all but disappeared in a much larger college which may in the near future become a polytechnic. Of the remaining fourteen colleges, four were closed outright, eight were amalgamated with secular institutions and have in effect disappeared as church colleges and two were merged with other Anglican colleges. The work of these closed colleges continues at a much reduced level and in slightly different areas through the Church College Trusts which were formed as a result of the sale of the institutions.

The historical context affecting the Church of England was also the one in which the Roman Catholic church has had to operate. However, the principles upon which the Roman Catholic church based its teacher training activities were markedly different. The Roman Catholic church has always seen a clear and tight manpower link between the functions of its colleges and the needs of its schools. The dominant purpose of the Catholic colleges has been to train Catholic teachers in a Catholic environment to teach Catholic pupils in Catholic schools. Despite the diversified courses of recent years, the *raison d'être* of its colleges remains as it always has been.

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

It was not just the principles behind the Roman Catholic involvement in teacher education that were different: the structures also showed little similarity with the Church of England's. There was little direct diocesan initiative but instead local needs were met either through the Catholic Education Council or by one of the Religious Orders. As colleges were expensive both to found and to maintain, the resources of the largely immigrant nineteenth century Catholic communities could barely stretch to cover the colleges and so it was to the independent Religious Orders that many looked for help. The role of the Religious Orders was crucial in the development of the Catholic college system and without their initiative and resources the history of Catholic teacher education would have looked very different (Battersby, 1950 and Kennedy, 1977).

The foundations of the Catholic colleges fall conveniently into three sections. There were the five nineteenth century foundations in Liverpool, London and Hastings (although this college only survived a few years), a group of six colleges founded in the first decade of this century and a further seven colleges founded after the Second World War of which five were established during the height of the need for teachers in the 1960s. During this latter period the number of teacher training students in the Catholic colleges grew from 4,500 in 1963 to 11,000 in 1970. It was estimated that of these students only 15% were non-Catholic.

Of the original sixteen Catholic colleges which were in existence at the beginning of the 1970s only eight survived the decade. Since then, St Mary's, Fenham has closed and the college in Manchester will close in the near future. Thus of the sixteen colleges only six will go through into the future and of these only three, St Mary's Strawberry Hill, Trinity and All Saints Leeds, and La Sainte Union Southampton will remain as free standing Catholic colleges. Of the other three, Digby Stuart is a federal college in the Roehampton Institute in which staff are appointed by the Institute and then assigned to a college. The Liverpool college of Christ's and Notre Dame is in a federation of two with an Anglican college and here both the religious dimension of the institute and the Catholic dimension of the college is stronger. Although at this stage Newman College in Birmingham is autonomous, it is working in growing association with Westhill College. Despite the broadening of the mission of the Catholic colleges by the advent of

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

diversified degree programmes in the colleges, the purposes of the teacher education courses remain similar to those operating in the past, namely to provide Catholic teachers for Catholic schools. The balance of management in the colleges remains roughly as before, a mixed economy between the Catholic Education Council and the Religious Orders.

The role of the Free Churches is somewhat different to that of the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches in that historically, as has been shown, they were aligned with a movement to establish state involvement in education. However, the Wesleyans did have a number of schools, especially in the north west, and so there was a certain manpower impetus behind the foundation of the two Methodist colleges of Westminster in 1852 and of Southlands some twenty years later, both in London. The former moved to Oxford in 1959 and the latter is now a federal college within the Roehampton Institute. The Congregational connection with Homerton is now only an historical one. Westhill, founded by a consortium of Free Churches in 1907, has survived the ravages of the 1970s and is now in an interesting academic association with the Roman Catholic Newman College.

### THE PRESENT STRUCTURE AND NATURE OF THE CHURCH COLLEGES

Each of the three main denominational groups has a co-ordinating structure for its colleges. In the case of the Roman Catholic church this is the Catholic Education Council which has been able to exercise something of a strategic planning role for its colleges although this role has been somewhat weakened by the power of the independent Religious Orders. The Church of England's central Board of Education operates at a less direct level, historically explained by the decentralised nature of the Church of England, although its influence and advice has been strong. The Methodist church also has a structure within its education department for its two colleges. Both Catholic and Anglican principals meet regularly on a separate basis and the Association of Voluntary Colleges brings together principals and governors on an ecumenical basis. The move to bring all non-university sector higher education under one umbrella through the National Advisory Body (NAB) has

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

encouraged the voluntary colleges into a closer association with the local education authority colleges. This has been achieved through the device of the Voluntary Sector Consultative Council (VSCC) which links into the NAB structures but at the same time enables the colleges to maintain something of their independent status and close link with the DES as direct grant institutions.

The extent to which relatively small institutions can remain autonomous and free-standing is a subject of some current debate. All colleges have been encouraged to look at associations with other institutions at a local level although there is inevitably some concern as to whether such associations might weaken the church relatedness of the colleges. Particularly within the Anglican group there has been a recurrent theme of some style of closer federation among the colleges at a national level, although to date nothing very definite has emerged.

One of the major difficulties in attempting to assess the future potential of the church college sector is the relative lack of research information and evidence about the colleges themselves. When the Anglican college sector was being restructured in the mid 1970s as a consequence of the closures, mergers and federations, those in the system were very conscious of this slender research base. As the dust began to settle, the author undertook a research study on the colleges and the resultant report (Gay, 1979) highlighted the lack of contemporary research evidence about the British scene and much of its work on college processes had to draw from American sources such as the Carnegie Commission. Discussion of this report encouraged action to be taken on assembling evidence on the English scene and eventually a major new initiative was launched in 1981 looking at the future role and validity of the Anglican college system. The Church Colleges Research Project, as it came to be known, was undertaken by Culham, an independent research institute founded out of the closure of an old church college with the role of investigating the issues surrounding the church's involvement in statutory education.

To what extent are the results of this work of interest beyond the Anglican colleges? A pre-publication presentation of the results was given at the residential meeting of the principals of the Association of Voluntary Colleges in March 1986 which was attended by Roman Catholic and Free Church principals and members of their

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

sponsoring organisations. The emergent consensus was that while inevitably the details reflected the particular composition of the Anglican colleges, the general results and conclusions were extremely pertinent to the situations and needs of the other colleges. This was echoed by McClelland (1986) in a review of the report in *The Tablet*, the Roman Catholic weekly journal, when he concluded 'one suspects that some of the major issues thus presented are not exclusively problems for the Church of England'. In the light of this feeling that the results are of more generalisable interest to the other colleges, and given the relative lack of other evidence about the present nature of the colleges, it is proposed to summarise and amplify some of the results and their implications.

The research project was designed as a policy-oriented one and took as its central question 'what justifications can validly be put forward for the retention of the Anglican colleges in the 1980s and beyond?' The approaches adopted are set out in some detail in the Final Report and Interim Papers (Gay et al., 1986). Is there a future for the Anglican colleges? The very fact that the question could be seriously posed underlines the possibility that there might not be a future for them. Throughout its history the church has taken initiatives in many fields which it has subsequently handed over to be run by others. As has been illustrated earlier, the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches established training institutions in order to provide teachers for their growing number of day schools. But only the Roman Catholic church still retains a straightforward manpower link: the Church of England has moved away from such a link very substantially and the Free Church colleges never really had it there as a dominant motivator in the first place. Might not, therefore, teacher education be another of the fields that the church hands over to secular agencies? Answers differ, but inevitably and understandably there is major pressure for the colleges to continue.

One key element in the survival of the remaining church colleges must be their ability to demonstrate that they are comparable to similar sizes and styles of institution on issues such as academic and professional quality and value for money. There are already many agencies concerned with assessing these elements such as the validating bodies, the DES and HM Inspectorate. The Culham project focused squarely on the nature and characteristics of the Anglican colleges as church colleges.

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

The original distinctiveness of the church colleges lay in their foundation. Although secular institutions may contain many devout Christian staff and students, and many have thriving chaplaincies, it is in the church colleges that this religious dimension has been institutionalised. The extent to which the charter elements of the colleges continue to have visible and practical effects on their day-to-day life and work is a fundamental question and this was the one that the Culham project has attempted to investigate.

It was recognised that the research question could not be answered solely in empirical terms: any discussion about the future validity of the colleges involves a theological component as well. Consequently, as part of the research a theological critique group was formed in order to develop work in this area and its initial results were published in Gay and Francis (1985). What became rapidly apparent was that there appeared to be little development within either the Anglican colleges or the Roman Catholic and Free Church colleges of a coherent and sustained theology of education. Indeed, among a substantial number of college staff there was a grave suspicion of any theological attempts to influence the curriculum and nearly a third of them felt there was no place for the application of Christian insights in the curriculum. It is likely that the general educational philosophy prevalent in this country at present, as exemplified by exponents such as Paul Hirst, is so entrenched in the colleges that alternative world views become difficult to sustain. Waddington (1984) strongly criticises the colleges for accepting and using in an uncritical way in their teacher education courses the neo-marxist type of sociology of education which has been so successfully marketed through agencies such as the Open University. He asks why the Anglican colleges have not undertaken a theological critique of this work.

Whatever the reasons for staff reluctance to acknowledge the possibility that Christian insights might have relevance outside of the conventional religious domain, the fact that the reluctance exists is a major constraint on the ability of the colleges to develop a distinctive contribution based on their Christian foundations to teacher education in the future. It is hoped that the highlighting of this finding in the report will encourage the colleges to give serious attention to this and perhaps develop a critique on an ecumenical basis.

Although the report could find little evidence of

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

explicit theological critique of the work and contribution of the colleges, nevertheless at a more implicit level there was a very powerful and practical theological critique contained in the replies given in the questionnaires by large numbers of theologically competent lay people, clergy and bishops. In considering their answers to a variety of questions, they used a theological yardstick as one of their measures. Although one must be cautious about putting too much emphasis on it, the fact that the large majority of bishops, clergy and laity in the General Synod felt there was a continuing validity for the church colleges is inevitably in part a theological statement.

Eleven of the thirteen remaining Anglican colleges in England and Wales were included in the empirical study. It was decided to adopt a cross-sectional approach to the work and in all the views and perceptions of over 7,500 people were sought. These included all members of the General Synod of the Church of England, head teachers of church aided schools, head teachers of the colleges' teaching practice schools, the staff and students of the colleges themselves and a number of other significant groups. Much of the work was done using questionnaires and overall a very satisfactory response rate of 69% was obtained. The questionnaires were supplemented by interviews, visits and other methods. As a result of the research, a detailed picture has emerged of the Anglican colleges as they are at present.

All the colleges are small institutions as compared with universities or polytechnics; they range in size from about 600 to about 1,700 students. The larger ones tend to retain smaller community units within them, generally based on what, before amalgamation, were independent colleges. Each has a good proportion of student accommodation on site offering residence for at least the first year students and in many cases for some second and third year students as well.

Whilst originally all the colleges were founded for the education and training of teachers, most have diversified over the last twenty years by providing training for other caring services beside teaching and more generally by offering degree courses in a range of subjects mostly on the arts side. The proportion of full-time students following first degree courses other than the BEd degree varies greatly from college to college but overall is about 50%. All the colleges additionally have a substantial programme of

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

in-service training for teachers, mostly part-time, which in some cases takes up as much as a fifth of the total teaching load. The education and training of teachers, therefore, represents the major workload and concern of the colleges in quantitative terms.

Students drawn to the colleges tend to be predominantly female, well over twice as many women as men, and middle class, over half of them being from social groups one or two. For most of their families the present generation represents their first experience of higher education. The great majority are aged twenty or less when they come to college. The academic level of undergraduate students on entry is fairly modest, although as far as can be judged from other recent research this is no different from other students entering polytechnics and colleges of higher education in general, but much lower than university entrants. All the colleges recruit nationally and most show little obvious regional bias. While half the students are engaged in degrees other than BEd, about four-fifths of them in their first year in college are considering teaching either as their chosen profession or as one of the options to which they are giving serious thought.

In their responses to questionnaires the first year students showed themselves as somewhat immature and lacking in confidence: nearly three-quarters had some anxieties about coping with their course and about two-thirds felt some concern about homesickness, whilst almost as many were worried about failing to make friends in college. For such students the security of a relatively small, resident society is important, and it is significant that many of them specifically linked the friendliness of the college with its size. The colleges certainly seem to be providing a supportive environment in which such students can develop.

The third year student group was very similar in most respects to the first year students - for example in the proportion of women students, the age pattern, the proportion who came straight from school to college and the numbers following BA and BEd courses. PGCE students are rather a different group from either of the undergraduate groups in the survey. The sexes are rather more evenly balanced, more are older and they appear to be more able academically - their A level qualifications are much higher and the levels of their degree are comparable with those of PGCE students in university departments of education.

The colleges share a number of features which mark

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

them out as Christian institutions. The nature of their foundations is, in most cases, obvious from their name and it is made clear in the prospectuses. The chapel is in nearly all cases a feature and in some a central feature of their complex of buildings. While in many ways the colleges appear to be more secular institutions than they were thirty or forty years ago, this may be more a difference in the degree of outward observance than of actuality: there is some evidence that even in the past the students in church colleges were frequently not people with very profound beliefs.

The level of religious commitment of staff and students remains high in comparison with similar groups of people in other walks of life. Three-quarters of the students describe themselves as members of one of the main Christian denominations, not far short of one in three say they attend church services regularly 'most weeks' and a slightly lower proportion overall describe themselves as having 'strong' or 'total' commitment to Christianity (22% of the first year, 30% of the third year and 34% of the PGCE students). Well over half profess at least 'moderate' commitment to Christianity. The same is true, to an even greater extent, of the academic staff. Again three-quarters describe themselves as members of the Anglican, Roman Catholic or Free Churches, 44% claim 'strong' or 'total' commitment to Christianity and a further 24% 'moderate' commitment. 41% attend church services weekly and a further 13% at least once a month. Only one in five describe themselves as having no commitment to Christianity and a mere 1% as being hostile.

A major part of the research was to identify those objectives to which various groups thought the colleges ought to be assigning priority. Where the expectations of all or most of the different groups consulted tend to converge it is possible to assert with some confidence that these are essential characteristics of the church colleges. From the responses to this section of the inquiry, three major expectations emerge. The first is that the great majority see the colleges' role as being pre-eminently concerned with their traditional task of educating teachers. All groups see teacher education - the original *raison d'être* of church colleges - as of prime importance. This finding is perhaps not surprising considering that the bulk of the work in most colleges, when their heavy involvement in in-service training is included, is in the teacher education field. Their

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

education departments, in almost every case, are substantial in size when compared with those in universities and polytechnics and collectively their contribution to the national requirement for trained teachers is large and indispensable. It is no wonder, therefore, that this is seen as their major role. They could survive without much of their diversified work: they could barely do so without their involvement in the education of teachers.

The second major expectation to emerge is that the colleges should be recognisably Christian institutions with worship at their centre and a concern to create communities based on Christian principles and to communicate Christian values. Considering the poor press that worship often receives, it is interesting to note the almost universal importance attached to a worshipping dimension of college life by groups both within and outside of the colleges.

The third major expectation to emerge is that the colleges should have an important role in religious education and also in relating Christian insights to their curriculum. This expectation is shared by all the outside church-based groups, but not so much by the college groups themselves. In both of these areas major mismatches of expectation arise.

Given the importance of the manpower issue in the past, it is interesting to note that the training of teachers for Anglican schools is among the objectives least frequently identified by the groups within the colleges with about a third of the staff, students and heads of teaching practice schools feeling it should be given no priority whatsoever. The role of the Anglican colleges is thus seen to be very different from that of the Roman Catholic colleges in this aspect. Even the heads of Anglican aided schools, who might be expected to take a particular interest in the products of church colleges, do not expect this to be a major part of the colleges' role.

Over the years the colleges have undoubtedly become more secular although caution needs to be exercised in any interpretations of the situation. It would appear that more recently the process of secularisation may have been checked and in some cases reversed. Some colleges have begun to reaffirm their Christian foundation more strongly and sought to fulfil a more specific Christian role in higher education. The fact that the majority of interested groups both within and outside the colleges believe they should have such a role may well reinforce such a tendency. While the principal justification for church colleges, as for any

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

institution of higher education, is that they are fully effective places providing higher education of quality, the fact that they are attempting to do this within a Christian context is a further and unique qualification that should not be lightly discarded.

Although there is this major expectation that the Anglican colleges should be recognisably Christian institutions with worship at their centre and a genuine concern to create Christian communities and to communicate Christian values it is much more difficult to show whether they are in fact distinctive, especially when the possibility of direct comparison with other secular colleges was not available to us. This study of the Anglican colleges shows them as having marked individuality, but they also appear to have many characteristics in common, some of which set them apart from most other colleges. They are mostly fairly small, have a substantial residential element and a major involvement in teacher education although these are all characteristics shared by many other institutions. What initially appears to differentiate them from most other colleges is the nature of their foundation and the expectation that they should display certain Christian qualities and fulfil a Christian role.

In order to judge whether the colleges are distinctive in fact and not simply in the expectations people have of them, five particular aspects of the study were drawn upon. These are firstly the basic characteristics of the colleges themselves; secondly, the degree to which various objectives relating to the priorities of the colleges are being pursued; thirdly, the extent to which the objectives are being successfully achieved; fourthly, responses of various groups to a number of questions directly raising the issue of college distinctiveness; and fifthly, the subjective impressions of the colleges by members of the research team as a result of their visits to them.

It was concluded that no one of the characteristics discussed is in any way unique to the Anglican colleges. Thus, one could point to a polytechnic with an active and effective chaplaincy working among its students, or to an LEA college with a Christian principal and a high proportion of Christians among its staff whose beliefs and attitudes influence the ethos of the college. In few other institutions, however, is the range of characteristics identified combined within a single institution. The Anglican colleges do share a group of characteristics sufficiently marked for them to be

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

seen as a coherent group standing, to some extent, apart from other higher education institutions and not simply as a random collection of individual colleges. Moreover the group of characteristics identified is not a haphazard or accidental occurrence, but one which is purposeful and the outcome of a deliberate policy. It is in respect of the overall profile of these characteristics rather than one or two single factors that the church colleges stand out as distinctive.

The really difficult question to answer is the extent to which the distinctiveness of the colleges affects their impact upon their student population. Although it is not possible to identify special characteristics of former students which can be directly attributed to their time at college, it is likely that institutions with a clear sense of purpose shared by a high proportion of staff and students and with a range of characteristics which cumulatively distinguish them from other colleges of higher education will have an impact on students who spend three or four years in them at an important stage in their developing maturity. The report concludes that this expectation derives some support from the empirical evidence available.

All those taking part in the study were asked whether they thought the church colleges had a future and the overwhelming majority felt they did. Two main reasons for this positive answer emerged. First, was because many felt the colleges are doing a good job and especially they are judged by many to be providing the appropriate context for teacher education which is viewed as their prime purpose. They are seen as the right size and style of community for the students who come to them and for the tasks that they are attempting. The second reason for the strong support is because the colleges are seen as distinctive. Evidence such as the religious commitment of staff and students, college worship, the expectations and perceptions of various groups and the styles of community that the colleges try to create form a cumulative basis for asserting that the colleges are offering a distinctive and valued contribution to British higher education and that this contribution is underpinned by their Christian foundations.

However, there is much in the research study to challenge the colleges particularly in the area of their distinctive role. Their work in religious education, in relating Christian insights to the curriculum and their links with church schools are all areas of potential weakness which need much greater attention. The apparent inability

## *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

of the colleges to evolve a Christian theology of education and curriculum is serious and this is identified as one of the main issues that the colleges should consider deeply over the next few years when planning their future. Conversely, the church itself is challenged to become more aware of and work more closely with its colleges. A key finding from the project was the considerable lack of awareness of the current situation within the colleges and also of their purposes among crucial groups outside the colleges, such as members of the General Synod; the head teachers of church schools and diocesan directors of education. One reviewer of the report has suggested that the colleges are suffering a crisis of identity and that this crisis is not confined just to the Anglican colleges. The extent to which the church colleges remain recognisably Christian institutions in the future is at this stage an open question. The report both illustrates great weaknesses and sounds notes of warning and yet at the same time points to areas of strength, both potential and actual, and ends on a note of hope.

## CONCLUSION

While many individual colleges have been closed, and in recent years all colleges have felt at risk, nevertheless there has been no concerted threat to the sector as a whole. The churches' role in teacher education, through their colleges, looks as if it will remain for some years to come. As long as the churches continue to have institutional involvement in state maintained schooling then it is likely that their colleges will be seen as a necessary part of the teacher education pattern. Although the manpower links between the Church of England's schools and colleges are not strong, nevertheless the fact that 8% of all primary pupils are in Church of England aided schools and 10% in Church of England controlled schools is likely to be sufficient cause for the Church of England to have a continuing opportunity to be involved in teacher education in the years ahead. At a political level it is unlikely that the small Free Church involvement could be completely eliminated unless such a desire was expressed by the Free Churches themselves. In the case of the Roman Catholic church, however, the manpower link is tight and it is difficult to visualise how the Roman Catholic sector of schooling, which educates 10% of the nation's primary

### *Churches and the Training of Teachers*

children, could be supplied with appropriate teachers without the existence of the Roman Catholic colleges.

Whether the diversification of the colleges into other areas of work has helped either the colleges themselves in the long term or their teacher education role is a debatable point. Certainly the diversified courses have added a new dimension to the colleges but teacher education remains their primary and dominant function. Whilst the churches could continue to have some residual involvement in teacher education without their colleges, such involvement would be a pale reflection of the present position; as in many spheres there tends to be no substitute for an institutional presence. However, institutional involvement in itself is no guarantee that the purposes which institutions are assumed to be fulfilling are in practice being achieved: it is the nature of what goes on in institutions which is crucial. As well as tracing the historical evolution of the churches' institutional presence, this study has attempted to look at what is happening inside one group of colleges. The extent to which the colleges can offer a distinctive contribution to teacher education based on their Christian foundations is likely to determine their long term future.

### NOTES

1. The author has experienced considerable difficulty in reconciling the numbers of colleges quoted by different authors at different dates with the lists of colleges in existence according to their foundation dates. There is scope here for further historical investigation on the early history of each college, but such investigation is beyond the brief of this chapter. Hence, in certain instances, use is made of approximate numbers,

## APPENDIX

### THE CHURCH COLLEGES OF H.E. IN ENGLAND AND WALES IN 1987

#### Roman Catholic

Christ's and Notre Dame, Liverpool (Liverpool Institute)  
De la Salle, Manchester (about to close)  
Digby Stuart, London (Roehampton Institute)  
La Sainte Union, Southampton  
Newman, Birmingham  
St Mary's, Strawberry Hill, London  
Trinity and All Saints, Leeds

#### Church of England/Wales

Bishop Grosseteste, Lincoln  
Bishop Otter, Chichester (West Sussex Institute)  
Christ Church, Canterbury  
The College, Chester  
King Alfred's, Winchester  
Ripon and York St John  
St Katharine's, Liverpool (Liverpool Institute)  
St Mark and St John, Plymouth  
St Martin's, Lancaster  
St Paul and St Mary, Cheltenham  
Trinity, Carmarthen  
Whitelands, London (Roehampton Institute)  
(Derbyshire College remains in a special relationship with the Church of England)

## *Appendix*

### Methodist

Southlands, London (Roehampton Institute)  
Westminster, Oxford

### Free Church

Westhill, Birmingham

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adelman, C. and Gibbs, I. (1979). A Study of Student Choice in the Context of Institutional Change, Bulmershe College, Reading
- Alves, C. (1979). The Church Colleges into the 1990s, The College of Ripon and York St John, Occasional Paper No. 2
- Ball, C. (1985). Fitness for Purpose: Essays in Higher Education, S.R.H.E., Guildford, Surrey
- Battersby, W.J. (1950) 'Educational Work of the Religious Orders of Women' in Beck, G.A. (ed.) The English Catholics 1850-1950, Burns and Oates, London
- Bereday, G. and Lauwerys, J. (1966). Church and State in Education, World Yearbook in Education
- Berry, M. (1973). Teacher Training Institutions in England and Wales, a Bibliographical Guide to their History, S.R.H.E., Guildford, Surrey
- Boyd, M.V. (1984). The Church of England Colleges 1890-1944: an Administrative Study, Educational Administration and History Monograph No. 14, University of Leeds
- Bradbury, J.L. (1975). Chester College and the Training of Teachers 1839-1975, Chester College
- Catholic Education Council for England and Wales, Annual Reports
- Chadwick, O. (1966, 1970). The Victorian Church, Pts. 1 and 2, A. and C. Black
- Collier, K.G. (1959). 'Religion in a Church College' in Education for Teaching, November 1959, pp. 28-9
- Cruickshank, M. (1963). Church and State in English Education, Macmillan

## Bibliography

- Dent, H.C. (1977). The Training of Teachers in England and Wales 1800-1975, Hodder and Stoughton
- Department of Education and Science (1972). Education: A Framework for Expansion, Cmnd. 5174, H.M.S.O.
- Durham Commission (1970). The Fourth R: The Report of the Commission on Religious Education in Schools, S.P.C.K.
- Gay, J.D. (1979). The Christian Campus? The Role of the English Churches in Higher Education, Culham College Institute, Abingdon
- Gay, J.D. (1981). 'Religious bias in British higher education' in Warren-Piper, D. (ed.), Is Higher Education Fair?, pp. 140-59, S.R.H.E., Guildford, Surrey
- Gay, J.D. (1983). Chaplaincy in Church Colleges, Culham Occasional Paper No. 3, Culham College Institute, Abingdon
- Gay, J.D. and Francis, L.J. (1985). The Future of the Anglican Colleges: A Preliminary Theological Critique, Interim Paper No. 3, Culham College Institute, Abingdon
- Gay, J.D. et al. (1986). The Future of the Anglican Colleges: Final Report of the Church Colleges Research Project, Culham College Institute, Abingdon
- Gedge, P.S. (1974). The Role of a Church of England College of Education, M.Ed. Thesis, University of Birmingham
- Gedge, P.S. (1981). 'The Church of England Colleges of Education since 1944' in Journal of Educational Administration and History, pp. 33-42
- General Synod Board of Education, (1977). The Camberwell Papers, G.S. Misc. 60, Church House, Westminster
- General Synod Board of Education, (1980). The Church Colleges of Higher Education: the Financial Involvement of the General Synod, G.S. 417, Church House, Westminster
- General Synod Board of Education, (1980). Partners in Understanding: An Account of Church of England Chaplaincy in Higher Education, Church House, Westminster
- Gibbs, I. and Harland, J. (1984). The Diversified Colleges: Student and Graduate Experience, A report from the Combined Colleges Research Group, College of Ripon and York St John
- Hornsby-Smith, M.P. (1978). Catholic Education: The Unobtrusive Partner, Sheed and Ward, London
- Jebb, P. (1968). Religious Education: Drift or Decision?

## Bibliography

- D.L.T., London
- Jones-Davies, C. (1986). 'The Anglican Colleges of Higher Education', in Yates, J. (ed.), Faith for the Future, National Society, Westminster
- Kennedy, S. (1977). An Examination of Catholic Education and the Work of the Catholic Poor Schools Committee 1800-1888, private publication made available by the Catholic Education Council
- Locke, M., Pratt, J. and Burgess, T. (1985). The Colleges of Higher Education 1972 to 1982: The Central Management of Organic Change, Critical Press, Croydon
- Lofthouse, M.T. (1983). Teacher Training - the Church Colleges 1890-1944, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Leicester
- Lynch, J. (1979). The Reform of Teacher Education in the United Kingdom, S.R.H.E., Guildford, Surrey
- McClelland, V.A. (1973). English Roman Catholics and Higher Education 1830-1903, Oxford University Press
- McClelland, V.A. (1986). 'A Crisis of Identity', in The Tablet, 14.6.86
- McGregor, G.P. (1981). Bishop Otter College and Policy for Teacher Education 1839-1980, Pembroke Press, London
- Murphy, J. (1971). Church, State and Schools in Britain, 1800-1970, R.K.P.
- Niblett, W.R. (1976). The Church's Colleges of Higher Education, Independent Publication, Church Information Office, Westminster
- Powell, R.N. (1978). Tradition and Change in Church of England Teacher Training Colleges 1944-1974, M.Ed. Thesis, University of Manchester
- Pye, M. (1977). The Language of the Church in Higher and Further Education: An Account of the Bradwell Consultation, Church House, Westminster
- Rich, R.W. (1933). The Training of Teachers in England and Wales during the Nineteenth Century, Cambridge University Press
- Robertson, J.S. (1971). 'Voluntary Colleges', in Hewett, S., The Training of Teachers: A Factual Survey, University of London Press, pp. 42-50
- Rose, M. (1981). A History of King Alfred's College, Winchester, 1840-1980, Phillimore, Chichester
- Seaman, R.D.H. (1978). St Peter's College, Saltley, 1944-1978, St Peter's College, Saltley, Birmingham
- Spencer, A.E.C.W. (1971). The Future of Catholic Education

### *Bibliography*

- in England and Wales, Catholic Renewal Movement
- Thatcher, A. (1986). 'Questions of faith in the light of experience' in Times Higher Education Supplement, 11.4.86, p. 14
- Waddington, R. (1984). A Future in Partnership, The National Society, Church House, Westminster
- Working Party on Christian Involvement in Higher and Further Education, (1978). Christian Involvement in Higher Education, National Society, Church House, Westminster
- Wyatt, J.F. (1977). 'The Idea of "Community" in Institutions of Higher Education' in Studies in Higher Education, pp. 125-35
- Wyatt, J.F. (1977). 'Collegiality during a period of rapid change in higher education: an examination of a distinctive feature claimed by a group of colleges of education in the 1960s and 1970s' in Oxford Review of Education, pp. 147-55
- Wyatt, J.F. and Gay, J.D. (1984). 'The Educational Effects of Different Sizes and Types of Academic Organisation', in Oxford Review of Education, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 211-23

