



Archbishop Charles Riley, Theological Education and the Foundation of the University of Western Australia, 1903–c.1929

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ABSTRACT

This paper critically examines the role of Charles Riley, Bishop of Perth, in the foundation of the University of Western Australia in 1913. Riley advocated a modern university devoted to applied science, which would also include a humanities/arts component that would be able to deliver a liberal education. It goes on to explore what a 'liberal education' meant to Riley in connection with a theological education for clergy. It argues that Riley, and his successor Archbishop Le Fanu, desired a theological education for clergy connected with the university as productive of such a liberal education. Such an education would enable clergy to be leaders in society, capable of understanding modern issues in the context of faith, and able, by virtue of their education, to engage sympathetically with people of diverse backgrounds and views.

KEYWORDS: theological education, clergy, university, University of Western Australia, Western Australia, Archbishop Charles Riley, liberal education

It took nearly a century of European settlement in Western Australia before that struggling and undesirable colonial backwater was rich and populous enough to found a university in 1913. New South Wales had done it in just over sixty years; Victoria, unhampered by penal settlement and boosted by gold, did it in just twenty. Notwithstanding

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its richer economic outlook following settlement in 1836, it took nearly thirty years until South Australia established the University of Adelaide in 1874. Queensland, which separated from New South Wales in 1859, only developed a university in 1909 but even then it was just fifty years from its proclamation as a colony. For much of its nineteenth-century history there were more horses than people travelling to and from Western Australia, as the impoverished and undesirable colony found that provision of horses for the British army was one of the few things that paid well. Since its foundation in 1829 Western Australia had been the short straw of British settler colonies. It was poor, underpopulated because anyone with sense or money went elsewhere, and the colony produced virtually nothing anyone else wanted. One of the few groups who came in any numbers were those who had no say in it, after the colonists volunteered to accept Britain's convicts from 1850 to 1868. But gold, in extensive, accessible deposits changed everything. This was not the story of the New Zealand goldfields with their quickly exhausted alluvial deposits, but long-term sustainable goldfields that brought migrants in increasing numbers. Large-scale mechanized mining later saw the colony transformed from ugly duckling to swan. There was still the isolation, sand and flies of the state's huge landmass, and farming remained hard work with little to show for it, but now that land was no longer a deterrent to people and riches. One indication Western Australia was becoming a more normal place to live in was the perceived need for a university within two decades of the discovery of gold. Gold had brought a population increase of nearly 300,000 by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, but the nearest university was in Adelaide, some 1300 miles from Perth and only accessible by an often difficult sea voyage around the wind-swept Cape Leeuwin in the south-western corner of the continent.

A tertiary education institution became a real possibility in 1903 with the establishment of the University Endowment Act in 1904, and the formation of a Graduates Union in 1906 which acted as a ginger group for the promotion of that end.² It is apparent that Bishop Charles Riley of Perth was one of the most proactive drivers of the campaign for the establishment of a university, along with John Winthrop Hackett. But Riley was not the only churchman to be involved in tertiary education in

2. Fred Alexander, *Campus at Crawley: A Narrative and Critical Appreciation of the First Fifty Years of the University of Western Australia* (Melbourne: The University of Western Australia Press, 1963), pp. 11-12.

Western Australia at this time. The Roman Catholic Vicar General was also a member of the University Extension Committee, which oversaw courses offered in the state by the University of Adelaide. However, the Roman Catholic diocese under successive bishops Matthew Gibney and Patrick Clune was preoccupied with the retention and extension of its primary and secondary schools after the loss of state aid in 1895. But, assisted by the warm and respectful relationship that existed between Riley and his Roman Catholic episcopal counterparts, there was a remarkable lack of sectarian feeling among the Churches around the university issue prior to its foundation.³

Riley was prominent with Hackett in public meetings to promote the cause.⁴ It was the Extension Committee that moved the motion in 1907 for the government to appoint a Royal Commission into the foundation of a university. The Commission eventuated in 1909, with Hackett as chairman and Riley his deputy. The relationship between the two men was built on their common Anglicanism, with one the ecclesiastical leader in the Diocese of Perth and the other its lay leader. Hackett was not just the editor of *The West Australian* newspaper and a member of the Legislative Assembly, but also registrar of the diocese and chancellor of its cathedral. Both men represented a major Christian input into the founding of one of Australia's principal universities.

Both Riley and Hackett used overseas trips to look at recently founded universities in Britain. Hackett's investigation and report to the Royal Commission was more exhaustive than Riley's, but the bishop did take in the universities of Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham. However, being a Cambridge graduate he could not also resist including that university in his survey also. In his report to the Commission he drew a general conclusion from his examination of these institutions. He proposed that a university must contribute to the prosperity and welfare of its society, particularly by attention to science and its application to the industries of that community. This would mean that a Western Australian university would be particularly focused on mining, agriculture, viticulture and forestry. In Riley's view, as he expressed it to the synod of his Church, a university was needed if Western Australia was not to 'fall behind in the industrial struggle'.⁵ However, what Riley called 'a School of General Culture' should also be a feature of any future university.

3. Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 24 n. 97, pp. 36–37.

4. Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, pp. 12–13, p. 24.

5. Charles Riley, Charge to Synod (1909), p. 26, Diocese of Perth Archives.

But, regarding the governance of the proposed university, Riley reported that the British universities he visited were so 'intricate and cumbersome' in this area that they had nothing to offer as models.⁶ In the end it was to be the Australian eastern states universities that provided the constitutional models for the commission, with a Senate as the primary chamber, and a Convocation of all graduate members plus representatives of various relevant bodies and societies in the community. The glaring omission was any input from the academic staff, and any means of resolving deadlocks between the two chambers.⁷

This constitutional set-up became significant in Riley's life almost immediately when he failed to gain a place on the first Senate. The historian of the University of Western Australia, Fred Alexander, argued that this exclusion was deliberate by the government, despite Riley being, after Hackett, the most prominent advocate of the university. The problem lay in increasing uneasiness among other Protestant Churches that Riley was being automatically regarded as the *de facto* representative for all of them. The Methodists particularly felt shut out of various committees and events by the bishop and made representations to the government accordingly. The government of Labor Premier Scaddan took the path of least resistance towards the prospect of sectarian conflict over the fledgling university and avoided appointing the Anglican bishop.⁸ In the event, none of the initial senators represented a religious denomination or body.⁹

Riley did not take his exclusion lightly, and his irritation and disappointment was only mollified when he was appointed the second chancellor in 1916, serving until 1922. After failing to reverse the decision by using his contacts with the government, he justified it to himself by reasoning it was simple anti-clericalism 'aimed at the clergy' and not at him personally. This justification later morphed into a discourse that the growing institution was 'a heathen university', a view later taken up by Riley's son, C. L. Riley, Bishop of Bendigo.¹⁰ The rejection also coloured Riley's view of the Senate, causing him to

6. *Report of the Royal Commission on the Establishment of a University (8 September 1910) Western Australia. Minutes and Votes and Proceedings of the Parliament, 1910-1911, Vol. II (Perth, 1911), pp. 42-44.*

7. Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, pp. 28-29, p. 40.

8. Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, pp. 48-49.

9. Jenny Gregory, *Seeking Wisdom: A Centenary History of the University of Western Australia* (Crawley, WA: UWA Publishing, 2013), p. 8.

10. Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, pp. 48-49, p. 488.

emphasize the importance of Convocation where he did have a role. Riley had been unanimously elected the first warden of Convocation at its inaugural meeting on 4 March 1913.¹¹ At a subsequent meeting on 6 December 1913 Riley took the opportunity of taking aim at the Senate and the government. He suggested archly that the members of the Senate were mere political appointees who could therefore too easily become agents for curtailing academic freedom. Convocation, on the other hand, was more independent and would keep the university in touch with modern ideas because its members were increasingly drawn from young graduates. 'Members of the Senate', asserted Riley, were 'as a rule old fogies . . . and nearly all Senates in all Universities became very conservative'. 'The reason for having a Convocation was that there should be an electorate from which to draw members of the Senate, because some of them thought that it would be very bad indeed to have the university entirely under political influence, because then their professors would have to do their work according to the ideas of the party in power.'¹²

This was sour grapes from a man who was thoroughly identified with the Perth political and social establishment. Born in 1854, the son of a Birmingham clergyman of the Church of England who had to supplement his income by school teaching, Charles Owen Leaver Riley developed as a boy with an aptitude for mathematics. This took him first to Owen's College, the precursor to the University of Manchester, and then to Cambridge. At that delightful university, Riley, a brilliant mathematician, could spare time from his studies to become an accomplished and popular oarsman, and was an enthusiastic part-time military officer. Ordained deacon then priest in 1878 and 1879, he became senior curate at Lancaster, then an industrial town producing spun yarn in the diocese of Manchester. In 1885 he broke through the barrier between curate and incumbent when he was appointed to the living of St Paul's, Preston; a virile bachelor of thirty. That enhancement of his material fortunes allowed him to be married the following year to Elizabeth Merriman, whose father was a surgeon and she a niece of the Bishop of Grahamstown in South Africa. In the textile town of Preston Riley was a keen advocate of temperance, missions and education. Alexander notes he was also radical enough in his views to be interested in socialism, and to publicly press for a redistribution of power between labour and capital

11. *The West Australian*, 5 March 1913, p. 4.

12. *The West Australian*, 6 December 1913, p. 4.

in society. By 1893 there were four children in the Riley household, and two more would be born later in Perth. Notwithstanding that a link between Christianity and socialism was, in the 1880s, largely an Anglo-Catholic initiative, Riley was in many ways the epitome of Victorian muscular Christianity. This was of a piece with Riley's enthusiasm for military chaplaincy which saw him become Chaplain-General of the Australian Army in World War I. Chaplains became involved in a number of initiatives to promote a godly masculinity among the ranks, including temperance societies, organized sport and dry canteens. This military work was a mirror of that of their Anglican colleagues in the parishes of the Church of England, for this was a time in Victorian Britain when 'muscular Christianity' was seen to be the way forward to engage the attentions and involvement of men in the Church, and when quasi-military boys' organizations like the Boy Scouts and the Boys' Brigade were founded.¹³ In 1894 Riley was appointed to the living of Morecambe, northern Lancashire, one of the archetypal Victorian seaside towns catering for new mass tourism. But at almost the same time he was offered the bishopric of Perth. The offer came through the diocese choosing three English bishops to nominate the successor to Henry Parry, and one of them was James Moorhouse, then Bishop of Manchester, but who had been the second Bishop of Melbourne from 1877 to 1886.¹⁴

Compared with the gentility of Morecambe, Perth in 1894 when Riley was consecrated its third bishop was frontier Anglicanism. The income of the diocese was severely inadequate, particularly for responding to the unprecedented growth from the 1890s created by the discovery of gold. There were too few clergy (only 25), and a good proportion of them were uninspiring or living in conditions of extreme isolation and deprivation in remote areas. Riley's comments on his priests after he had travelled to meet all of them are revealing. At Albany the priest was 'very lazy'; Bunbury 'in debt'; Guildford, 'there too long'; Beverley 'so sharp he almost landed himself in gaol'; at Northam the priest was described as hard-working, but also 'abrupt and quarrelsome'; others were elderly and infirm. Only two priests were praiseworthy: Archdeacon Glyn Watkins, and Edward Collick in the goldfields. Back in Perth the bishop's house was not finished; and

13. Michael Snape, *The Royal Army Chaplains' Department: Clergy under Fire* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), pp. 103–11; Hugh MacLeod, *Religion and Society in England 1850–1915* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 151–56.

14. P.J. Boyce, 'The First Archbishop: Charles Owen Leaver Riley', in Fred Alexander (ed.), *Four Bishops and their See: Perth, Western Australia 1857–1957* (Nedlands, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 1957), pp. 48–52.

government funding of denominational schools was under threat. Anglicanism in the colony, while exceeding the numbers of all other denominations put together, was over-represented in the small elite families that had run the state since its colonial days. Riley's only biographer points out that there was a sense of complacency in the Anglican establishment that had produced a culture of stagnation. This Anglican disengagement contrasted poorly with the vitality and innovation of the growing Roman Catholic Church in Western Australia in education and missions, and Methodist engagement with the burgeoning goldfields population.¹⁵

The poor quality of his clergy noted by Riley to himself, and the reliance of bishops on British and Irish imports, had been a long-standing situation in Australia. However, some disparaging episcopal sentiments were driven by an assessment based on the conditions of England, and rather underestimated the tough physical conditions of Australian ministry, and the endurance needed by clergymen of any denomination outside the urban areas of colonial Australia.¹⁶ Particularly, the lack of adequate theological training among the clergy was something that some among the Australian episcopate commented on. To some extent this was attributed to a lack of proper theological institutions. One of the problems in overcoming that deficiency was the constitutional prohibition within all the six original universities founded in Australia on teaching theology. It was a consequence partly of anxieties about importing sectarianism from the Churches, fostering social divisions, and also of ideologically opposed secularists on university councils.¹⁷ James Moorhouse had been to the fore in lamenting this situation. He had no doubt briefed Riley on the situation before the bishop-elect left the Diocese of Manchester for Perth as Moorhouse's solution of theological learning in connection with university studies was the model that Riley used both for St John's College in Perth and for the later St George's. As Bishop of Melbourne Moorhouse had been discontented with the narrow evangelical churchmanship of Moore College in Sydney. Moore College, founded in 1856, was the only dedicated theological college

15. Boyce, 'First Archbishop', pp. 52–57.

16. Ian Breward, *A History of the Churches in Australasia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 16.

17. Breward, *Churches in Australasia*, pp. 138–39; Brian Dickey, 'Secular Advance and Diocesan Response 1861–1900', in Bruce Kaye *et al.* (eds.), *Anglicanism in Australia: A History* (Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2002), p. 59.

in the country until Moorhouse founded in 1877 his theological institution within Trinity College, an Anglican college attached to the University of Melbourne.¹⁸ Moorhouse's contemporary, Alfred Barry of Sydney, had attempted a similar connection between the University of Sydney and theology by proposing that Moore College students attend lectures both at the university and at St Paul's College. The latter was a residential college of the university founded in the 1850s by Anglican laity against the wishes of Bishop Broughton (who opposed the secular constitution of the university). Consequently, it was an institution without provision for episcopal oversight and therefore quite different in its accountability to either Moorhouse's Trinity College, or Riley's St John's or St George's. However, Barry's initiative was part of his attempt to broaden the churchmanship of his diocese, and was rescinded by the evangelical establishment after his short episcopate ended in 1889.¹⁹

By the time the University of Western Australia had emerged as a serious proposition, Riley had become well-connected to the political establishment of the former colony, whose responsible government only went back as far as 1890. One major source of this political influence was Riley's entrenchment in Freemasonry. Almost immediately on his arrival he was made grand chaplain for Western Australia, subsequently founding lodges himself. Freemasonry had been connected with the colonial elite since Governor John Hutt had introduced it in 1843. For many it offered relief from the crude and restricted social environment of one of the British Empire's least desirable colonies. For Riley, Freemasonry upheld many of the social and civic virtues he espoused, such as temperance and responsibility, as well as an escape from his ecclesiastical duties.²⁰ Through the Lodge and his Church Riley was friends with Hackett, whose *West Australian* newspaper gave the bishop extensive and generally supportive coverage, and with Sir John Forrest, the initial Premier of the colony following the grant of responsible government in 1890. Other close influential supporters included the attorney-general Septimus Burt, the wealthy philanthropists Walter Padbury and William Loton, Chief Justice Sir Edward Stone, Sir James Lee-Steere Speaker of the legislative assembly, Sir Henry Lefroy minister for mines and briefly premier, and Cecil Andrews director of Education.

18. Dickey, 'Secular Advance and Diocesan Response', p. 60.

19. Stephen Judd and Kenneth Cable, *Sydney Anglicans* (Sydney: Anglican Information Office, 1987), pp. 57–61, 132–35.

20. Boyce, 'First Archbishop', p. 65.

Most of the governors were Anglican and Riley exercised influence with them. His biographer comments dryly, 'These close personal associations with influential and wealthy laymen were sometimes maintained at the expense of the bishop's popularity with his clergy'.²¹ Riley's almost indecent haste in drafting in 1911 the formation of an Anglican Province of Western Australia (officially constituted in 1915), based on two other dioceses inadequately endowed and resourced, with himself as archbishop;²² and his readiness to hold for such a long time the position of grand master in Western Australian Freemasonry, suggest a man who, for all his hard work, was disposed to cut a figure in society. Consequently, Riley took the rebuff of not being one of the inaugural university senators hard, and to compensate he was determined to find fault with them and theirs until he became one of them.

However, one particular project that the bishop and establishment Anglicans shared was a diocesan theological college. Riley from the first hoped to associate his existing impoverished and peripatetic clergy college with the university by creating a residential university institution to educate and form aspirants for the ministry. He explained his motivations to his synod in 1912 when the university was about to be founded.

One of the reasons why I have for so many years urged the establishment of the University has been in order that the Theological College may be affiliated, so that our candidates for the ministry might have the advantage of a University education. It is certainly an advantage both to the people and to the clergy that their education should be as liberal as possible. If we had our College near the University it might be made like Trinity College, Melbourne, a hostel for churchmen who are students at the University.²³

Riley's views on the importance of a university-educated clergy are interesting for such a practical man who warmly upheld the need for the university to be devoted to applied science that would be beneficial to the state's economy. But he also believed that clergy should be leaders of thought, and they could not do this without a liberal education. So he felt a great advantage would be gained when 'we can insist on every candidate for Holy Orders having a University Degree, which will at least be a guarantee of a liberal education'.²⁴

21. Boyce, 'First Archbishop', p. 74.

22. C.L.M. Hawtrey, *The Availing Struggle: A Record of the Planting and Development of the Church of England in Western Australia 1829-1947* (Perth, 1949), chs. 12, 13.

23. Riley, Charge to Synod (1912), p. 18, Diocese of Perth Archives.

24. Riley, Charge to Synod (1909), p. 26, Diocese of Perth Archives.

A university education would train men's minds in their youth to think, to study, and be capable of tackling theology.

Riley went on in his 1909 synod charge to cite the views of John Mott, the American Methodist who was founder and secretary of the World's Student Christian Federation. In a recent book, according to Riley, Mott argued that some degree of struggle for their education was necessary in those training for the ministry because personal struggle would build moral character. Riley was perhaps thinking here principally of intellectual struggle, because he and the other Royal Commissioners did want to make the university accessible to children from poor families, though they dodged the issue by passing the question of fees over to the senate to decide upon.²⁵ But struggle was, thought Riley, the self-help stuff of heroes. 'Mr Mott maintains', the bishop told the synod, 'that we need to appeal to the heroic in young men more than we have in the past. The call to heroism will be met with an heroic response.'²⁶ This was the Victorian reverence for heroes, a masculine roll-call of inspiring examples from which women were entirely absent.²⁷ But it also fitted nicely with the entire inability of the diocese to pay its prospective clergy well, or to provide an adequate education for them. It was a mould for heroes made out of straw.

At the next year's synod Riley encapsulated his views on university education for clergy more pithily. 'The wider the outlook and the greater the intellectual vigour of the Clergy, the better it is for the people.'²⁸ Returning to this call for a clergy with a depth and breadth of cultural learning, Riley, the following year, stated his hopes for such an outcome not just for his own future clergy at the diocese's struggling St John's Clergy College but also for clergy from all the state's denominations.

I believe the University will be of great assistance. It will enable the Students of St John's College to obtain a more liberal education than they can derive from a purely Theological College, and it will enable us, I hope, to enlist the services in the ministry of some of those young men who have passed through the University and obtained their degree. It is an advantage to the State that every Christian body working in it, should have as well educated a Ministry as possible.²⁹

25. Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, pp. 29–30.

26. Riley, Charge to Synod (1909), p. 26.

27. David Newsome, *The Victorian World Picture: Perceptions and Introspections in an Age of Change* (London: John Murray, 1997), pp. 157–58.

28. Riley, Charge to Synod (1910), p. 20, Diocese of Perth Archives.

29. Riley, Charge to Synod (1911), pp. 5–16, Diocese of Perth Archives.

Riley was not alone in his advocacy of a liberal university education for his clergy. Moorhouse of Melbourne before him was also keen on it, and became chancellor of the University of Melbourne.³⁰ The two men were close when Riley was one of Moorhouse's priests in the Diocese of Manchester. As early as Riley's time as priest at Preston he was singled out by Moorhouse to be the bishop's surrogate, deputizing for the bishop at meetings in Moorhouse's absence. Both men went to Cambridge; Moorhouse to St John's College in the early 1850s, and Riley to Gonville and Caius, which was his father's old college.³¹ Both men had connections with Brooke Foss Westcott. Westcott was Regius Professor of Divinity when Riley was at Cambridge, and was the examiner for Riley's theology exam set by his ordaining bishop's examining chaplain.³²

But what did Riley mean by his emphasis on a liberal education which he felt a university alone could supply; and what of his hopes for the intellectual and physical proximity of theological college and university? I have not been able to find anything directly from Riley spelling out more clearly what he meant, but we can draw some conclusions from the wider context of his life. A liberal education to a man who had been an accomplished mathematics student, and exemplar of practical muscular Christianity, meant surely an education to some extent in contrast to that of the purely classical education of the great English public schools. Riley himself never attended one of these prestigious seminaries of imperial service, being schooled at his father's parish school, then at Heversham Grammar School, which in his day could only aspire to public school status.³³

Riley was not, unlike Moorhouse, a natural scholar and rarely identified sources in his preaching and other addresses. But his reference in his 1909 synod charge to a book by John Mott gives us a direction to explore what sort of education Riley desired for his clergy that the university could provide. The book of Mott's that Riley quoted from was *The Future Leadership of the Church*, published just that year. The words Riley quoted there as coming from Mott are actually those of Bishop Phillips Brooks, who became Bishop of

30. Boyce, 'First Archbishop', p. 102.

31. Boyce, 'First Archbishop', p. 48, p. 97.

32. Boyce, 'First Archbishop', p. 49.

33. Peter Boyce, 'Riley, Charles Owen Leaver (1854-1929)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/riley-charles-owen-leaver-8213/text14371>, accessed 12 September 2013.

Massachusetts in the Episcopal Church of the United States in 1891 and was the most controversial preacher of his generation. Brook's words used by Riley to advocate self-sacrifice in those preparing for ordination were these. 'I am convinced that the ministry can never have its true dignity or power till it is cut aloof from mendicancy – till young men whose hearts are set on preaching make their way to the pulpit by the same energy and through the same difficulties which meet countless young men on their way to business and the bar.'³⁴

John Mott was a pioneer of the ecumenical movement, and his little book therefore demonstrates for his time a remarkable inter-denominational breadth, holding up leaders as diverse as John Calvin and the Anglo-Catholic Fr Herbert Kelly. It was based on hundreds of interviews with church leaders of all denominations across the world that Mott had conducted in previous years. According to his latest biographer, Mott was calling for men of ability in the ordained ministry of the Churches, by which he meant people with recognizable intellectual, physical and spiritual qualities, which were coupled with an ethical commitment that could give 'effective expression to their passion for Christ and for men'. When highlighting personal character in these ways, Mott cited the phrase of President Woodrow Wilson to the effect that the Christian ministry was 'the only profession which consists in being something'.³⁵

So what part does a university education play in this formation of an appropriate intellectual, moral and spiritual character for church leaders? Mott with his emphasis on the social gospel, asserted the Church needed leaders of insight capable of studying and understanding social conditions by applying to them the insights of the gospel and the teaching of the Church. A liberal education in the sense of one that encompassed intellectual breadth and was not outdated was therefore essential to this task.

While a young man looking toward the ministry is at a marked disadvantage if he has not had the proper start in the study of Greek and philosophy, there are great advantages in his having had thorough preparation in science. The attitude of mind acquired in the study of science is an invaluable asset to the Christian minister. The habits of accuracy, reserve in statement, and freedom from exaggeration which should be the result of careful scientific studies, are of the first importance

34. John R. Mott, *The Future Leadership of the Church* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1909), p. 75.

35. C. Howard Hopkins, *John R. Mott 1865–1955: A Biography* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), pp. 325–26.

to the teacher. Besides this, ministers should understand the scientific spirit which characterises so many of the best minds of this age.³⁶

Mott cited with approval a leader who was also connected to Riley's own life, Bishop Foss Westcott of Durham. Westcott, Mott noted, urged that not only was individual conversion necessary, but also the social applications of Christianity in any generation. Mott also commended the bishop for having four sons who had gone out from Britain to serve the Church in India.³⁷ Westcott himself saw universities as 'schools of sympathy and enthusiasm', and therefore the right context for ordinands' theological training.³⁸ He was later involved in founding a theological college in Cambridge separate from the university colleges, due to the need to have the prayer, devotional life and pastoral training of ordinands nurtured rather better than could be provided for in university colleges. However, Westcott House students continued to undertake their academic studies at the university. As Westcott concluded in a small book on universities in 1873, it would be 'a disastrous day for England, and for Christendom, if the candidates for the ministry of our Church were withdrawn in any large numbers from the chastening influences of wide and liberal discipline in a society as free and varied as that in which they will be called to exercise their ministry'.³⁹

So we may infer from Riley's use of Mott, and through him, of Westcott, that a liberal education for clergy meant for the Western Australian bishop the formation of clergy as leaders in the Church able to address the society in which the Church was set, and able by way of their education to serve with intellectual credibility. In addition, encountering through their university studies both a broad suite of academic disciplines and a wide variety of outlooks, clergy would be stimulated, challenged and enriched to engage with what Bishop Westcott called 'the chastening influences' of a free and variegated society.

Beyond the years surrounding the foundation of the University of Western Australia, it seems evident that in laying the foundation stone at St George's College in 1929, on the new university site at Crawley, that the now Archbishop Riley thought his dream for clergy theological education had come true. The bequest in the will of

36. Mott, *Future Leadership*, p. 65.

37. Mott, *Future Leadership*, p. 38, p. 112.

38. Graham A. Patrick, *The Miners' Bishop: Brooke Foss Westcott* (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2nd edn, 2004), p. 75.

39. Quoted in Patrick, *The Miners' Bishop*, p. 205.

Sir John Hackett of £138,000, specifically for the establishment of a 'Church College in connection with the said University', would realize the archbishop's hopes for a residential theological college connected to the university.⁴⁰ The Anglicans had already provided the first university residential hostel, St John's, at 204 St George's Terrace, only ten minutes from the initial ramshackle university buildings in Irwin Street. It formed one half of the building later known as 'the Cloisters', originally built as Bishop Hale's School for boys in the late 1850s. From 1901 the western half of that building had housed Bishop Riley's Clergy Training College, and it was this institution that was turned into the university hostel. It was the departure of most of the theological students for the war from 1914, and the increasing use of the rooms by university students, that brought about the transformation of the building from church to university use.⁴¹

So while the location of St John's hostel put in place Riley's hopes for his Church to have an institution close to the university, it was at the cost of its theological purpose. The new Crawley location for the University of Australia, and Hackett's bequest, could see once again the implementation of both these aims of the archbishop. It was not without opposition. One Labor senator rejected the whole idea of a church residential college as smacking of the old British hierarchical society and of clergy domination, a view echoed among Labor ranks in state parliament.⁴² But it was achieved, with a chapel, and with its government under the control of the diocese as Hackett clearly envisaged. But what happened to Riley's hopes of incorporating a university residential hostel with a theological college?

St John's Clergy College had died the death of a thousand cuts in the 1920s from the smallness of its diocesan subsidy; and lack of money kept theological training in Western Australia a remote possibility until the building of the John Wollaston Theological College in Perth in 1957.⁴³ Despite the commitment of Riley to it, there were simply not enough ordinands to justify St John's existence as a theological institution against the competing pressures for limited funds faced by the diocesan council. While Riley died in June 1929, just months after laying the foundation stone of St George's College in March that year, his vision for the college was carried over into the episcopate of his successor, Archbishop Henry Frewen Le Fanu. At the

40. Boyce, 'First Archbishop', pp. 96–97; Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 512.

41. Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, pp. 506–507.

42. Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, pp. 513–15.

43. Boyce, 'First Archbishop', p. 104, pp. 184–85.

new archbishop's first synod the following year he spoke at some length about plans for St George's College.

Le Fanu stated to his synod members that he hoped all ordination students under 20 years of age would go to the University of Western Australia as part of their training, enabled by the existence of St George's College and Hackett bursaries. Older men would go to theological college in other Australian states or to England. However, he anticipated that all local candidates, regardless of age, would undertake part of their theological training at St George's. As part of this anticipated programme, Archbishop Le Fanu intended to have a sub-warden at St George's who would be a priest able to teach the first year of theology.

The dream of Riley's for a university college teaching theology to the ordination candidates of the Diocese of Perth, that Le Fanu clearly picked up and ran with almost immediately into his own episcopate, was so near, and yet ultimately unfulfilled. It seemed to have had everything going for it. Support from the top of the diocesan leadership, a splendid college modelled on those of Oxford and Cambridge, a college whose government was controlled by the Church, and the recruitment of priests to teach the introductory basics of theology. The hopes for a diocesan priesthood in Western Australia receiving a liberal education seemed rosy. Indeed, the percentage of graduate clergy in the diocese rose from 23 to 34 per cent during Le Fanu's episcopate.⁴⁴ But the fact remains that despite Le Fanu hiring the requisitely qualified priest as St George's sub-warden in Christopher Storrs, the editor of the history of the college has put to me a convincing case that theology was never taught there.⁴⁵ The most

44. Alexander, *Campus at Crawley*, p. 520.

45. See the following email to me from the editor of the history of St George's: 'Riley and Le Fanu did not intend that St George's would become a theological college, taking up where St John's had left off many years before. They would have been well aware of the requirement in the University Colleges Act 1926 that the College had to provide for University students only (though there was always a possibility of approaching the Senate for approval for "other classes of students" ... Warden Law states clearly [in the 1932 college magazine]: "It is not a theological college, though we have, and it is to be hoped often will have, ordinands among our members, nor is there any special theological instruction given." The reasons for not offering theological instruction remain a puzzle. Storrs, by this time installed as Sub-Warden, had been hand-picked by Le Fanu as "a priest qualified to teach the first year of theology." It would seem Le Fanu had intended, in 1930, for this to happen at St George's, but if it were a full-time course it could well have been abandoned as contrary to the University Colleges Act'

probable cause was that ordination students at St George's were required by university statute to be undertaking a full-time course of study for their degree, and this left no room for additional learning in the form of theology.

For all his personal vanities, and the struggling and inadequate resources of his diocese, Archbishop Charles Riley maintained a large vision for university and Church in Western Australia. A more than capable mathematician, Riley argued for a university whose teaching and research had scientific and technological capacities able to directly enhance the economy of the state of Western Australia. But, at the same time, Riley spoke to convocation of his hopes that graduates would be men of 'new ideas', and to his synod that students graduating from the university would be men of 'intellectual vigour'. These graduates would embody the university structure Riley argued for in his submission to the Royal Commission; for a university with both schools of pure and applied science and a 'School of General Culture'. In this way Riley, by advocating an institution of modern science, technology and humanities was presenting and updating the foundational idea of a university in Western cultural history. From its Western beginnings in the twelfth century the university was called after the Latin word *universitas* for wholeness, as an institution that would study and teach the whole of human knowledge rather than just a part of it.

With such a vision embracing interconnectedness between the university and the wider society it served, Riley naturally envisioned the education of the clergy as integrally connected to university learning. It would make them leaders of intellectual capacity, broad understanding, and engagement with modern knowledge, and develop their ethical capacity to treat people who were diverse and different to themselves with appreciation and integrity. Riley was hoping for these outcomes, by the connection between the broad modern thought and disciplines of the university and the theology of the Church embodied in clergy training. In that respect I think it is not going too far to say he hoped to inaugurate in Western Australia a capacity for a theological education able to critically harness contemporary life and thought that was a revisiting of the great schools of Christian history. He never expressed his aspirations in this way, though Bishop Westcott did in his hopes for Christianity in India.

(*F*note continued)

(quoted with sender's permission; Brian Wills-Johnson to Rowan Strong, email of 25 September 2103, in author's possession).

Westcott anticipated that India, with its ancient culture and religion, would produce new insights into the Gospel and produce a school of theology that would be a 'new Alexandria' for the global Church. This hope was much of the inspiration behind his involvement in the founding of the brotherhood for the Cambridge Mission to Delhi in 1877, although the brotherhood's education mission became the familiar and imperialistic one of westernizing its students.⁴⁶ At its best, Christian theology has engaged rather than fled from the contemporary world, seeking both to understand and critique society in the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. In this way, Riley's hopes for Church and university in Western Australia are ideologically connected to the Christian scholarship in Alexandria of Clement and Origen in the second and third centuries CE; the school of Nisibis and Edessa from the fourth to the sixth centuries teaching theology, philosophy and medicine in Christian Syria; and the University of Paris in the thirteenth century where students sat at the feet of Thomas Aquinas to imbibe the integration of recently discovered Aristotle and theology.

The vision was not realized in Riley's episcopate, nor in that of his successor, Le Fanu. Nor has it been accomplished in either St George's College, or the University of Western Australia to this day. There are a number of explanations for this failure, which may still be relevant today in an equally hard-pressed Church – either in the West due to a continually falling adherence; or in the expanding global South with expanding adherence creating too many demands. Riley faced a resource-weak diocese throughout his episcopate; and his successor had to deal with the Great Depression of the 1930s. There was never enough money and resources to go around, and the expenditure on quality education and formation for clergy was continually sent down the diocesan agenda by other diocesan leaders not as committed to quality formation as he was. Church leadership is often caught up in reactive decision-making, and the dispersed nature of Anglican diocesan authority could make long-term planning by the bishop difficult to achieve. Quality leadership, appropriately educated for the task, costs a great deal of money and time from an institution and Riley's diocese was never prepared to invest sufficiently to achieve those outcomes.

46. Paul M. Hedges, 'Architecture, Inculturation and Christian Mission: The Buildings of the Cambridge Mission to Delhi and their Meaning for the Church Today', *International Review of Missions*, 89 (2000), pp. 180–81.

However, even had the diocese been unquestioningly on-side with Riley's theological agenda, the diocese was never united enough, or powerful enough on its own to overcome wider opposition. Riley's hopes for theology connected with broader learning at the university faced continual opposition from groups in the wider society, such as the Labor party, opposed to what they saw as Church privilege, and sectarian divisions. One option for success that would later be available was not extant in Riley's day – of forming a more ecumenical consensus to provide a sufficiently powerful lobby in approaching the university, and adequate numbers of students and resources to provide for the quality institution that Riley sought. We have seen that Riley had good relations with his Roman Catholic counterpart but that could not translate into common theological training, even to a degree, in the early to mid-twentieth century. His relations with Protestants were not free from rivalries either; witness the Methodist lobbying that impeded his election to the inaugural university senate, caused in part by Riley's Anglican assumptions of social position and prestige for his Church. Riley was in many respects faced with an insoluble mix in attempting to provide a quality Anglican-only theological institution in early twentieth-century Western Australia. His Church was the most prominent in Western Australian society, but not sufficiently wealthy, or unanimous enough, to provide the ongoing resources, or students, on the scale required; yet there was no possibility of wider Christian cooperation to achieve those outcomes, or to overcome opposition from circles in wider society opposed to university theology.

But the vision that Riley saw for the Christian Church in the foundation of both the University of Western Australia and of St George's College perhaps came closest to being realized with the advent of a faculty of theology at the second public university of Perth, Murdoch University, in 1994. But for large parts of the Christian Church today the vision of these two Western Australian bishops remains a tantalizing hope: that there could be a great and influential school of theology, for the training not just of clergy but of lay leaders in Christian Churches which, by its connection to university learning, would have the capacity to bring forward a Christian faith and church leaders able to harness modern thought and culture to the centuries of faith; a theological capacity that would, by its resources and learning, be able, in John Mott's words quoted by Riley in support of university learning for his clergy, to give 'effective expression to their passion for Christ and for people'.