

United Theological College, Bangalore 1910—1960

GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

1960 is an important year for the Christian Church. It marks the 50th anniversary of the inauguration of the modern Ecumenical Movement with the International Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910. This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the starting of advanced theological training by the Protestant Churches in India. The founding of the United Theological College and the reorganization of the theological department of Serampore College for advanced theological studies took place in 1910. The United Theological College, having been founded a few months earlier, is the oldest graduate-level Protestant theological college in India. From the beginning it has been a union institution, an excellent example of co-operation among the missionary organs of several churches. In sending his greetings to the College for its Golden Jubilee Celebrations, Dr. Visser t'Hooft of the World Council of Churches observes: 'It is significant that the United Theological College came into existence a few months before the modern ecumenical movement was born. This fact symbolizes how closely the life of the College and the life of the ecumenical movement are related to each other'.

A GREAT EXPERIMENT IN CO-OPERATION

The initiative for the founding of the College came from Dr. J. H. Wyckoff of the American Arcot Mission and Dr. James Duthie of the London Missionary Society. From the early years of the college it had the support of five important Mission Boards, namely the United Free Church of Scotland (now the Church of Scotland) Mission, Wesleyan Methodist (now Methodist Missionary) Society, the American Arcot Mission, the American Board and the London Missionary Society. During the early years the College also had the support of the Danish Church and Dr. L. P. Larsen of Denmark was the Principal of the College for many years. After the inauguration of the Church of South India the

two Anglican Missionary Societies, namely the C.M.S. and the S.P.G., have become participating Missions of the College. Now, the Danish Missionary Society and the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society also have come in as supporting bodies. The part played by the College in the Church Union Movement is well known. Many members of the Faculty and old students of the College took part in the Church Union conversations and negotiations. Even after the inauguration of the Church of South India the College continues as a United College and serves many churches outside the C.S.I. This provides the College a continued opportunity to serve the cause of Church Union. During recent years the College has also drawn students from outside India and Ceylon. Students have come from Iran, Thailand, Philippines, Germany, Northern Rhodesia, United Kingdom, Canada and the United States.

THE ALUMNI

All through the years of its history the College has stood for high standards of scholarship and devoted service for the growth and extension of the Church. Out of a total of 481 candidates so far trained in the College, 394 were trained for the ministry. 196 took the Serampore B.D. degree. Many of the old students of the College have distinguished themselves in the fields of theological scholarship, ecumenical leadership and special types of Christian work like Ashrams, Missions to Gypsies, Overseas Missions, Christian Literature, etc. as well as in the pastoral ministry.

TRAINING FOR LAYMEN

The College has been concerned with the mission of the laity and has been offering special one year courses for lay leaders. Plans are also being made for shorter courses for laymen. Another important contribution to the mission of the laity is the Y.M.C.A. Training School in the College.

A CENTRE OF HIGHER THEOLOGICAL LEARNING

But the primary purpose of a higher Theological College is not only to train the pastors and lay leaders of the Church, but to produce a community of scholars committed to the word of God who through their intellectual training as well as spiritual preparation will help the Church to break through the World's objections to Christ. Towards this end the College has been developing facilities for post-graduate studies. While celebrating its Golden Jubilee it seeks to equip itself for greater usefulness in the Church's Mission. New opportunities for improving the post-graduate department are opening up. The close co-operation with the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society is proving to be a great advantage. The decision of the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies to move its library and headquarters to the College premises is also to be warmly welcomed.

The College is also fortunate in getting some outstanding scholars from abroad as Visiting Professors who have helped to strengthen the post-graduate department.

JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

The celebration of the Golden Jubilee year of the College was inaugurated by some special meetings at the College in January, 1960. On 23rd January there was a Public Meeting at which representatives of the supporting churches, old students, and representatives from sister theological institutions spoke conveying their greetings and good wishes. The main speaker was the Rev. Dr. Erik Neilsen of the Danish Missionary Society. He spoke on 'The Church of the Wayfarers'. On Sunday, the 24th, a Thanksgiving Service was held at which the preacher was the Rev. W. Stewart of Serampore College. In honour of the Golden Jubilee of the College the Serampore Senate met in Bangalore and held their Convocation also at the College on 30th January.

GOLDEN JUBILEE PROFESSORSHIP

To mark the Golden Jubilee it has been decided that enough funds be raised in India and Ceylon to support one full-time professor at the College. The College is appealing to the churches in India and Ceylon and also to individual friends of the College to send regular annual contributions towards this purpose.

JUBILEE SOUVENIR

A souvenir volume has been published in connection with the celebrations. This contains some valuable articles on the History of Theological Education, History of Theological Training in India, the History of the College and other related themes by eminent Christian leaders like Bishop Stephen Neill, Dr. M. H. Harrison, Dr. P. D. Devanandan, Bishop A. M. Hollis and others. The articles are of interest not only for those associated with the College but also for the general Christian reader. It is our hope that the book will be widely circulated throughout India and Ceylon. Copies can be had from the Principal, United Theological College, 17 Miller's Road, Bangalore 1 (Rs.3/50 per copy).

'Jesus is at all times assailed by false witnesses, and while wickedness remains in the world is ever exposed to accusation. And yet even now He continues silent before these things, and makes no audible answer, but places His defence in the lives of His genuine disciples.'

ORIGEN