

*Setting up a School of Preaching - Briefing Document for Consultation
Simon Vibert June 2010*

Vision & Profile

Teaching Homiletics has not been a major part of seminary/bible college training in the UK. Plenty of good models exist: John Stott (and the Langham Partnership); Dick Lucas (and the Proclamation Trust) etc. but the emergence of these para-church structures (in the 1980's) were in part a reflection of the poor provision in many of our Evangelical Education establishments.

Wycliffe has self-consciously tried to bring the training of preachers into the core business of the theological education of our ministerial students. Prior to my arrival it was decided that the appointment of the Vice Principal should be linked to the post of Director of School of Preaching with the intention of sending out a clear message about the priority of preacher training at Wycliffe Hall.

We describe the threefold task with which Wycliffe Hall is engaged as:

- Academic Learning
- Practical Training
- Spiritual Formation

These three things are just as important in the training of preachers. We are all aware that good preaching is a divine gifting; we are also aware that it is "taught and caught". We have tried to bring these things together in the way we have gone about establishing the School of Preaching. The academic, practical and spiritual aspects of our role are considered.

Integration/interdisciplinary

Teaching homiletics is perhaps the most interdisciplinary of all the subjects taught at Wycliffe bringing together all three elements of Wycliffe's threefold task (as mentioned above).

Full time ministerial students will

1. Attend 2 core lecture series (one in the first year and one in the second year)
 - The first set of classes cover: A Vision for Preaching and an overview of standard Homiletical Form. Students will write papers for formal assessment in the areas of Worship, Christian Witness, and Biblical Interpretation.

- A second set of lectures cover issues to do with the preacher's sensitivity to biblical genres and adaptation of standard Homiletical Form.

2. Weekly Preaching Classes

These are led by Tutors and consist of work on a biblical passage and preaching a short sermon before a group of about a dozen students.

3. Chapel Preaching & Opportunities to hear good preachers

All ministerial students will preach once or twice in chapel during their time at Wycliffe. They have a regular opportunity to hear good quality outside preachers at our weekly Holy Communion Service.

4. Preaching placements

Students will preach in local churches. In the first year this will include some feedback from their tutors, interaction with peers in preaching teams, and critique from our voice and communication coach.

5. Integrated Study Weeks

A week of integrated teaching on preaching happens at the end of their first year (this year, this is being led by David Cook).

6. Consultations/Conferences

We held a consultation two years ago to consider the best way in which Wycliffe might serve local, national and international churches. The result of this was that we feel that we are best placed to provide local training to clergy/pastors within a 50 mile radius of Oxford (such as the conference on Evangelism led by Greg Haslam last year), and, international training, consultation and support (such as the Consultation this year).

For the future

- Online/web-based resources
- A place to consult and establish best practice for homileticians
- A centre for preacher training and refreshment