## THE NIGHT THE DIOCESE, THE COLLEGE, AND THE ACL ALL ALMOST IMPLODED



Everard Digges La Touche

As the apostle Paul penned what may well have been his final advice to his protégé Timothy, in the letter we know as 2 Timothy, he has something very interesting to say that remains intensely relevant to us today, and especially to the life and work of the Anglican Church League (ACL). Hear these words from the middle of the first chapter of that letter.

But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you. (2 Timothy 1:12–14)

I don't think we often pay as much attention to these words as they deserve. They speak of something that has been entrusted to Paul and entrusted also to Timothy. It is a treasure of utmost value, "the good deposit" as Paul calls it. This paragraph concludes with Paul's urging of Timothy to guard this good deposit, which presupposes it *needs* to be guarded because it will be, will always be, under attack. But perhaps the most interesting thing about these two sentences is that just as Paul is aware of his own responsibility, and now of Timothy's too, to guard this good deposit, Paul is even more aware that ultimately it is Jesus himself who guards it. Paul and Timothy may well have been given the privilege of being the means by which God will do that, but however shaky it may seem, and really be, at various points in Christian history, the gospel is never in any real danger of being snuffed out or lost forever. Because Jesus stands guard over it. Jesus is building his church, on the great confession of himself as the Christ, the Son of the living God, and not even the gates of death and hell will prevail against it. We pray and keep praying because we know that when everything else is boiled down, God is the one who guards his gospel and he gives us the enormous privilege of being the instruments by

which he does this. Our confidence is in God, not ourselves, our strategic foresight, or our political influence. But that doesn't mean we sit on our hands. As the apostle Jude made clear, we are called upon "to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

And as much as anything else, that is why the modern ACL exists. We know we need to be vigilant and proactive in keeping gospel priorities in place in our Diocese and that our particular role is to work to have clear biblically-minded, gospel-hearted leadership in each of our organisations. That is what we are all about. We cannot afford to slacken off on that, thinking that the evangelical character of our diocese is impregnable or so deeply embedded it could never be lost. And yet, as Paul reminds us, our confidence is not in our skill or influence, but in our triumphant Lord Jesus Christ.

About 40 years ago now, I remember the then recently retired Archbishop of Sydney, **Sir Marcus Loane** (9<sup>th</sup> Principal of Moore College, 1953–1958) telling a group of us that this generation has very little idea of the great cost at which the Diocese was won for evangelicalism and how easily it could be lost. He was right. Most of us, I suspect, cannot conceive of a non-evangelical or even liberal-evangelical Diocese of Sydney. We tend to assume it has always been this way, right from the beginning, from Richard Johnson and the First Fleet. We assume the evangelical dream of Newton, Wilberforce and others was realized in New South Wales and never seriously challenged. But that is very far from the truth. There have been serious challenges over the past 240 years and there are many points at which the current evangelical ascendancy looks quite fragile. Which is all to say that a strong, robust and proactive ACL is as necessary today as it has ever been. And given certain trends, of which many of us are all too aware, even more necessary.

It should not really come as a shock to us that since the middle of the nineteenth century the health of the diocese has been intertwined with the health of its theological college, Moore College. This connection is not unique to us, of course. One of my most enduring memories from more than fifteen years of involvement with the GAFCON movement, is a line that kept being repeated by one speaker after another in one of the conferences in 2011. Reflecting on the dire state of churches in their dioceses they quietly commented "it all began twenty or thirty years ago in our seminary". As goes the training of the clergy, so goes the churches within twenty to thirty years. Which is one of the reasons why the ACL has always had strong links with our College and always paid close attention to who should sit on Committee/Council/Governing Board. And tonight very briefly I want to speak with you about one period in our history in which we almost lost both the College and the Diocese, and the ACL almost tore apart as well.

In the years just prior to the First World War the ministries of two very significant leaders in our diocese came to an end. On 18 April 1909 **Archbishop William Saumarez Smith** died of a cerebral haemorrhage. I think it is fair to say that Saumarez Smith was not one of our strongest Archbishops. He was clearly evangelical, and his Christian life reflected the interior piety of Keswick movement, but he had also been influenced by his teacher and mentor at Cambridge, J. B. Lightfoot. Through Lightfoot he gained an appreciation for some of the critical biblical scholarship on the Continent. He sought to be as inclusive as possible, resisting ritualism but refusing to forbid eucharistic vestments. He was, by the way, the first bishop of Sydney to be styled "Archbishop" and he was the man who reopened Moore College in Newtown after the cuffuffle in Liverpool in the late 1880s. But he had also appointed a traditional high churchman as its Principal in 1891, Bernard Schleicher (5<sup>th</sup> Principal of Moore College 1891–1897).

Then a little over two years after Saumarez Smith died, on 29 June 1911, **Nathaniel Jones** (6<sup>th</sup> Principal of Moore College 1897–1911), Schleicher's successor, also died. Jones was both clear in his theological convictions, a strong evangelical who mentored a number of future leaders of the diocese, an evangelist who undertook tent missions in various parts of Sydney, and while retreating to the Blue Mountains for his health, the man who the led Bible Studies which were to blossom into very significant gatherings of Christians in the future. The loss of both these men in just over two years was a significant blow to the Diocese.

Saumarez Smith was succeeded by a man whose evangelicalism was far less conservative, John Charles Wright. He had been a member of the Group Brotherhood in England, a fraternity within the Church of England almost masonic in character, interested in social questions and adopting a softer, more nuanced, evangelical theology with room for modernist views on biblical authority and other matters. In time he appointed two like-minded men, both also members of the Group Brotherhood, to important positions in Sydney. He appointed David John Davies as the 7<sup>th</sup> Principal of Moore College in 1911 and Albert Edward Talbot as Dean of Sydney in 1912. So in the years immediately prior to World War One, three senior positions in the Diocese of Sydney were held by men who shared what we might call a liberal-evangelical position. Inevitably this would eventually raise concerns with the emerging clerical leaders who had been trained by Nathaniel Jones the decade before.

Surprisingly, though—at least surprising to us today, it was not so surprising then when the ACL had a somewhat broader complexion—both Dean Talbot and Principal Davies became

members of the ACL. At that time two such significant leaders within the diocese were welcomed into the League, but before too long their common theological differences from the evangelicalism of Nathaniel Jones and William Macquarie Cowper (the previous Dean) would generate considerable tension *within* the League itself. It was difficult for the League to be clear and robust in the protection and promotion of an evangelicalism anchored in biblical authority, when this involved challenging three of the most important leaders in the diocese, two of which were members!

Which brings us to the fascinating figure of **Everard Digges La Touche** and the night the League (and consequently the College and the Diocese) was nearly torn apart. Digges La Touche—yes all of that is his surname—was an Irishman of Huguenot descent, converted while he studied at Trinity College, Dublin under the ministry of the curate at nearby St Kevin's Church, Camden Row: one **Thomas Chatterton Hammond** (8<sup>th</sup> Principal of Moore College, 1936–53). By all accounts, Everard was a brilliant academic, taking out his BA in 1901 and receiving a number of academic prizes (including the Ryan Prize in Church Formularies and the Gold Medal in History and Political Science in 1905). In the second half of 1906 he visited Australia, where he delivered controversial public lectures from a Unionist perspective in response to a campaign then being conducted by visiting members of the Irish National Party (Joseph Devlin and J. T. Donovan) to raise support for Home Rule for Ireland. On his return he was ordained by Bishop Handley Moule of Durham in September 1907. He served as a curate in St Mary's Church in Dublin (an Irish Church Mission Church also associated with T. C. Hammond). In 1909 he married Eva King, the daughter of an Irish clergyman and then, after his priesting, he served as the curate at St John's Bradford in the Diocese of Ripon.

While in Bradford he completed his first book, *Christian Certitude: Its Intellectual Basis*, for which he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Letters by Trinity College in 1910. He was the youngest person to that point to have been awarded this degree (he was 27 at the time). This first book was very interestingly dedicated to "two eminent Australians": Simon Fraser and William McCulloch. Fraser was a Victorian senator, Patron of the Gaelic Society of Victoria, Grand Master of the Loyal Orange Lodge of Port Phillip, and grandfather of future Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser. McCulloch was a member of the Victorian Legislative Council and Fraser's business partner in the construction industry (so also, presumably, a member of the Lodge). Digges La Touche apparently had come to know them through their involvement in the Australian anti-Home Rule movement.<sup>2</sup> *Christian Certitude* contained a Preface by Handley

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> "Home Rule: What it will do for Ireland. Address by Mr E. D. La Touche", *The Age* (24 July 1906): 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Samuel G. Beckton, "No Surrender from Down Under: The Australian Anti-Irish Home Rule Movement, 1911–14", *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 71/1 (2024):

Moule, the evangelical Bishop of Durham, and an Author's Preface, in which he mentioned **Mr Lukyn Williams** (3<sup>rd.</sup> Principal of MTC, 1878–1884). In 1911/12 Everard delivered the Donellan Lectures at Trinity—again the youngest ever person to do so—which became his second book, *The Person of Christ in Modern Thought* in 1912. This time the dedication of this book was to his friend and mentor T. C. Hammond. All of this is to say that he had a very impressive academic record and was personally connected with the leaders of the Irish and English evangelicalism of the day. It is worth noting that the Donellan Lectures are usually delivered in two blocks, over two successive years. However, acute ill-health made it impossible for Everard to deliver the second block of lectures.

It is this ill-health that is the most likely explanation of Everard's decision to travel to Australia in 1912. Perhaps he saw this as just a temporary move in order to recuperate, which might explain why he left Ireland without his wife and two sons. (I cannot find the slightest hint of marital disharmony, but there is a complete silence in the sources.) Everard obviously had some Australian connections before this time given the dedication of his first book.<sup>3</sup> Upon arrival he travelled to rural New South Wales to serve a brief stint as Vicar of Emmaville (4 July–7 October). While there he gave an address in the Cathedral in Armidale entitled "The Imbecility of Unbelief", and was Honorary Lecturer in Evidences at St John's Theological College (later known as St John's Morpeth). These undoubtedly drew him to the attention of Archbishop Wright, who wasted no time in appointing him Diocesan Missioner in Sydney and Lecturer in Dogmatic Theology at Moore College under Principal Davies.

Now what has all this to do with guarding the gospel in Sydney at a time when there were some tremors particularly surrounding the theology of the Moore College principal? Well, it appears that early on Everard joined Davies and Talbot as a member of **the ACL**. He spoke in synod and gained a bit of a reputation as a firebrand. Principal Davies commissioned him to deliver the address at the beginning of the academic year of 1912/13. He reported back to the Trustees that Dr Digges La Touche had delivered "helpful and outspoken messages at the opening services of the term.<sup>6</sup> It is around this time that Everard produced a third book, entitled *Is Christianity Scientific?* In it he argued that Christian faith is necessary for modern scientific endeavour, since such an endeavour presupposes the omnipotence and omniscience of the Creator of an orderly universe and the human capacity for knowledge.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Nigel Hubbard, "Almost a Martyr's Fire": Everard Digges La Touche 1883–1915 (Sydney: N. Hubbard, 1984), 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> "Events and Rumours", *The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser* (Friday 20 Sept. 1912): 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> "Letters to the Editor", Church Standard (June 27, 1913): 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> John A. McIntosh, *Anglican Evangelicalism in Sydney 1897–1953: Nathaniel Jones, D. J. Davies and T. C. Hammond* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018), 147.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> McIntosh, 157.

Meanwhile theological tension was brewing in the Diocese. On 22 May 1913, British Admiral Sir George King-Hall, then Commander of the Royal Navy, chaired the annual Moore College Commemoration. "He spoke strongly on the accuracy of the Bible and held forth ... showing how ignorant 'were some of the so-called Higher Critics'". Apparently there was strong applause from the students present but both Dean Talbot and Principal Davies were visibly taken back. A division was emerging within the diocese along theological lines.

By early 1913, less than a year after his arrival, Everard was openly disagreeing with Principal Davies. In the second half of 1913 he chaired a committee concerned about "the present intellectual atmosphere" and organised a series of parochial conferences to address key questions. One such conference, on the subject of "Progressive Revelation", was held on 7 and 8 August 1913 at St Andrew's Summer Hill. Principal Davies delivered a paper at that conference entitled "The Certainty of Christ" in which he defended "modern constructive criticism" and argued "an increasing number of men of learning ... are criticising the Church, the Bible, our Lord Himself in a spirit of reverent yet searching inquiry". As you could imagine, statements like these just confirmed the fears of "the Jones boys" and others. Davies' paper stood somewhat in tension with the others presented that day, those of Mervyn Archdall ("The Authority of Christ") and of Samuel Johnstone ("The Authority of the Bible").

In early 1914 Everard published his next book, *The Need for an Evangelical Revival*, warning about the dilution of evangelical theology by modernist thinking. The gloves were off. The committee behind the conferences the year before submitted a series of questions to Principal Davies, with whom they met on 21 May 1914. The questions in Langford Smith's letter to the Principal concerned the inerrancy of Christ (both before and after his resurrection), the inspiration and truthfulness of Scripture for the knowledge of God's will and for saving faith, and the absolute and final authority of Scripture in matters of faith and practice. Now I'm taking a little time on this because it is important to realise there really was a widely recognised issue with what the Principal was teaching, and that, despite his reputation for being volatile, what happened in 1914 was not just a quirk of Everard's personality. There was a very real danger that the College, the Diocese and even the ACL could turn from classic, authentic evangelical theology.

<sup>8</sup> McIntosh, 147.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> The members of the committee were: **Canon Mervyn Archdall** (the scholarly and fiercely Protestant elder statesman of evangelicals in the Diocese and recently retired as rector of St Stephen's Penrith); **Herbert S. Begbie**, (Rector of All Souls, Leichardt); **Samuel M. Johnstone** (Rector of St John's Parramatta); **Sydney E. Langford Smith** (Rector of St Paul's Wahroonga); and **Everard Digges La Touche** (Diocesan Missioner and Lecturer at Moore College).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> McIntosh, 148.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> McIntosh, 151.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Judd and Cable describe him as "a quixotic Irishman with a sharp intellectual mind, an uncompromising Protestant outlook and a hair-trigger temper". Stephen Judd & Kenneth Cable, Sydney Anglicans: A History of the *Diocese* (Sydney: AIO, 1987), 176.

At the same time, throughout the first half of 1914, Digges La-Touche contributed a series of articles to the newly reconstituted The Church Record, entitled "Problems and Principles". In these we get a glimpse of the type of threat to theological orthodoxy and faithful Christian living he believed Anglicans were facing, not just in the wider world but, more pointedly, here in Sydney as well. 13 He spoke of the opposing dangers of mediævalism (pre-Reformation ideas and practice) and rationalism (in which the individual conscience and reason are the final arbiters of truth). He complained about "boned preaching", by which he meant "preaching which lacks the backbone of doctrine". 14 He drew attention to a refusal to accept the inerrancy, not just of Scripture, but of the incarnate Christ. The question being addressed was, "was Jesus without error in all he taught both before and after his resurrection?" Everard made his own position clear. He regularly wrote of "the inerrant Christ of God". The Virgin Birth was being denied. The historicity of Christ's resurrection was being doubted, as was the centrality of the Cross of Christ. So too was the final authority of the inspired Word of God. Instead, he bemoaned the fact that "the individual conscience and reason" are presented as "the seat of religious truth". 20 Frequently, he denounced those who teach in contradiction to the oaths they have taken or the official teaching of their denomination.21 He was concerned that a preoccupation with social reform was displacing the preaching of the apostolic gospel.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, It is not at all difficult throughout this series of articles to find echoes of Principal Davies' liberal doctrine of Scripture, his appeal to reason and rationality, and his social agenda.

There are not any official records of the 1914 meetings I spoke of a moment ago, at least none that I can find, so we are reliant on the recollections of those who were present (such as **Canon R. B. Robinson**, Archbishop Robinson's father). But the crisis apparently came to a head at another meeting—another ACL function—held at St Andrews Summer Hill a month or so later. At that meeting, at which both the Principal and the Dean were present, Everard Digges La Touche publicly expressed his concern about the Principal's doctrine of Scripture, apparently

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> "X. They have taken away my Lord", *The Church Record*, April 24, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> "V. Positive Teaching", *The Church Record*, February 13, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> E.g., "II. The Lordship of Christ", *The Church Record*, January 9, 1914, p. 12; "III. The Student Christian Conference at Tweed Heads", *The Church Record*, January 16, 1914, p. 12; "V. Positive Teaching", *The Church Record*, February 13, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> "IX. Crucifying the Lord Christ Afresh", *The Church Record*, April 9, 1914, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> "VI. Honesty, Intellectual and Otherwise", *The Church Record*, February 27, 1914, p. 3; "IX. Crucifying the Lord Christ Afresh", *The Church Record*, April 9, 1914, p. 6; "X. They have taken away my Lord", *The Church Record*, April 24, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> "Wanted — A Policy", *The Church Record*, January 30, 1914, p. 11; "X. They have taken away my Lord", *The Church Record*, April 24, 1914, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> "III. The Student Christian Conference at Tweed Heads", *The Church Record*, January 16, 1914, p. 12; "Wanted — A Policy", *The Church Record*, January 30, 1914, p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> "V. Positive Teaching", *The Church Record*, February 13, 1914, p. 4; "VI. Honesty, Intellectual and Otherwise", *The Church Record*, February 27, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> "VI. Honesty, Intellectual and Otherwise", *The Church Record*, February 27, 1914, p. 2–3; "IX. Crucifying the Lord Christ Afresh", *The Church Record*, April 9, 1914, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> "The Church and Social Problems", *The Church Record*, May 22, 1914, pp. 2–3, published the day after he, along with others had met with Principal Davies.

in quite strong terms, and as a result resigned at that moment from the College faculty. It was, as they say, a gutsy move. Others would describe it as reckless. But Everard was convinced this was not a minor matter and that the College and the Diocese were in danger if the Principal's views were to spread. But with such a public denunciation of the Principal, and by implication the Archbishop and Dean with whom he was closely aligned, this was the night the diocese, the College, and the ACL almost imploded. It certainly lived on in the memories of those who were there.

Everard left the College and moved in with his relative William Digges La Touche in Essex Street, Epping, but remained the Diocesan Missioner. Then, when war was declared on 4 August, he enlisted at the military depot in Liverpool. As recorded by Stephen Judd, Everard "believed that German aggression was basically a theological problem: liberal Protestantism had weakened the fibre of the German people and made German belligerence possible". He was quickly given a medical discharge (22 November) on account of what some at the time describe as "varicose veins", but just as quickly underwent surgery and re-enlisted on 27 December. He was appointed second lieutenant in the 6<sup>th</sup> rifles of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion on 10 May 1915, embarked for Egypt on 16 June, and arrived at Gallipoli on the night of the Battle of Lone Pine. On 6 August he led a charge on Lone Pine and was mortally wounded. As one contemporary report put it,

He went before his men as we all knew he would, without fear except for them. He carried only his cane and revolver and soon he was shot down with two bullets in the groin and the lower part of the abdomen. They managed to get him into the trench where he had to lie for some twenty hours. Through all this, his one thought was for his men — the wounded, were they as comfortable as possible, had they water?<sup>25</sup>

One of those who saw him after he had fallen was a chaplain at Gallipoli, a man who would himself be wounded at Lone Pine, none other than Dean Talbot. Digges La Touche's war grave contains the inscription "Faithful Unto Death *Quis Separabit*".

The story of Everard Digges La Touche is fascinating and there is a great deal more that could be said. But the more important thing than his death at Gallipoli, believing himself to be a military martyr, or even his spectacular resignation at St Andrews Summer Hill, is his defence of the truth and authority of Scripture in the light of departures from that position by Principal Davies and others. Digges thought the gospel was at stake and the Diocese was in peril. Yet Davies remained Principal for another 21 years and Talbot remained Dean for another 22 years. After the war, the College was in a very precarious position, it was pumping out ordinands of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Judd & Cable, 176.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Hubbard, 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Hubbard, 5.

broad churchmanship and soft liberal-evangelical theology, which in turn threatened the diocese. But while the Archbishop and the Dean looked with favour upon Davies and the likeminded men he had employed on the College faculty, concern for the College's orthodoxy grew and stretched even to the assistant bishops: **Gerard D'Arcy-Irvine**, who had studied under **Arthur Lukyn Williams** at Moore College in the early 1880s, and **Sydney Kirby**, who had studied at Moore under **Nathaniel Jones**.

This same theological tension would find a renewed focus in the experience of one student in the early 1930s, Stephen Bradley, later CESA bishop in South Africa. In his autobiography he recorded how, although he had already completed two years study in the Melbourne Bible Institute, he was asked by Bishop Kirkby,

to go to Moore Theological College for a year [since] its principal and staff were definitely liberal and not at all in tune with the Sydney Diocese and he wanted someone to resist from inside ... My mandate at Moore College was simply to take a stand for the doctrines set out in the Thirtynine Articles and to question any deviations.<sup>26</sup>

So the situation was even worse than it had been in 1914. Bradley struggled on disliked by many students, detested by some of the Faculty, but always treated kindly by the Principal. In his second term, though, things became immeasurably easier, when he was joined by another first year student, as he put it, "with a far better brain and manner than mine — his name, Marcus Loane". It was their prayer meeting, in which Bradley regularly prayed that either the Principal would "change his attitude towards the 'faith once committed to the saints', or he should resign" that provoked the newspaper headline "Students Pray for Death of Principal". 28

It is an interesting footnote to all this that Principal Davies and Dean Talbot remained members and office holders in the ACL until the election of **Howard Mowll** as Archbishop in April 1933, following which they promptly resigned. That means they remained in place for almost twenty years after Digges La-Touche's dramatic resignation. The recovery of the diocese would really have to wait until Mowll's election, and the recovery of the College until his appointment of the new principal, **T. C. Hammond**, in 1936.

Undoubtedly it is stories like these that led Marcus Loane to lament a lack of knowledge of the cost of winning the Diocese for evangelicalism and how easily it could be lost. It hasn't always been easy sailing and there were occasions when the Diocese, its College and the ACL sailed dangerously close to the rocks. But these stories also point to the importance of the defending,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Stephen Bradley, *The Great Adventure* (Clarinch, South Africa: Church of England in South Africa, n.d.), 30, 31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Bradlev. 32.

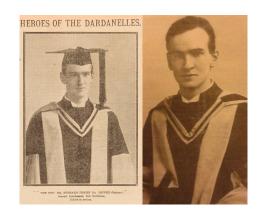
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Bradley, 33.

guarding and contending for "the faith once for all delivered to the saints". Most importantly, though, they remind us that through all the machinations, failures and betrayals of his weak servants, God is guarding his gospel.

From time to time the fragility of our evangelical witness is all too apparent. What were once very clear theological convictions are broadened into spectrums which allow people to say they do still belong in the evangelical fold, can still identify with the descriptor, while really letting go of things that many of us still see as core. That has happened with the word 'evangelical' of course. We now have soft-evangelicals, broad-evangelicals, generousevangelicals, hard-line evangelicals, in this talk I've used the label liberal-evangelical a couple of times. It has happened more recently with the word 'complementarian'. We now have soft complementarians and hard complementarians, and I think we are in considerable danger of growing defection from biblical teaching on this issue just at the moment. It happened quite some time ago with biblical authority, with people lining up along the spectrum from inerrantist to infallibilist to evangelical critic. And it even happens with the word "orthodoxy", from generous orthodoxy to radical orthodoxy, from biblical orthodoxy to the orthodoxy of the great theological tradition. But at every point, the broader a label gets, the less it means. And so every so often we need an Everard Digges La Touche (warts and all) to wake us up to what is happening. The ACL is as important today as it ever was. Speaking up and being counted are as important as they ever were. Nevertheless, we can never afford to think that all is lost, or that it depends on us, our clever strategizing, or our political nous. We can and must be proactive, but ultimately, remember, whether in 1914, 1932 or 2025, it is God who guards his gospel and that is something he is very good at doing.

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13<sup>th</sup> Principal of Moore College



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