

Richard Coombs

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of Baptist College - Victoria Ave days?

Friendships made developed and continued. 'Hobson House' which became an Embassy (Bolivia) and recently sold (2021) for just under \$20 million (it was the home of Grant Dalton of America's Cup fame).

What was the funniest thing that you remember?

A class led by Dr Bob on the Holy Spirit. He usually came in with a pile of books and on this occasion stated that he had 'left the Holy Spirit upstairs!'



What was the hardest thing about College or worst memory?

My worst memory – can't remember! I didn't have any bad experiences at College – I loved it! I suppose at times there were a host of assignments due around the same time that put pressure on.

What was most significant?

Being able to have time set aside to study God's Word; shared experiences and discussions with friends who were embarking on the same path for ministry; development of gifts and abilities.

What do you miss most or least?

Space and time for reading, writing and study. The busyness of ministry threatens to distract so often.



What thing about College has helped you most in last 50 years?

I suppose that it's a bit like 'eating' these days. I don't remember the detail of the meals I have had but 'together' they keep me healthy and strong. Taken overall, I thoroughly enjoyed my time at College and, compared to other places I have been and a number of pastors (trained in different Colleges), it prepared me well for preaching and pastoral ministry.

Conversations with graduates from other Theological Colleges would affirm that our 'field work/assignments' and the variety we were given were a 'cut above' others for preparation for ministry.

It may seem strange, but I have actually valued the preaching classes and speech (Ruth Pidwell) very much. The value of preaching seems to have taken a 'downward trend' and it's frustrating when speakers 'mumble' instead of speaking!

Short synopsis of the past 50 years of your life and ministry.

Married Margaret (1977). Three boys – Jon (Baptist pastor), Tim (salesman), Nick (Anglican pastor) – eight grandies!

Following theological study, I pastored at Wanganui East Baptist (1980-84) and Hamilton South Baptist (1984-88).

Came to Melbourne to pastor Beaumaris Baptist (1988- 93) and then North Balwyn Baptist (1993-2001).

2001 - Became Australia Director of a mission agency, MECO (Middle East Christian Outreach) and retired from this in December 2022. My role with MECO involved speaking at churches and

conferences in different parts of the world. The focus of MECO was on the Islamic and Arabic speaking world in the Middle East.

Adjunct lecturer in Church History at Melbourne School of Theology (2011-20).

October 2018 appointed Teaching Pastor at Wattle Park Chapel (Brethren) where I still pastor.

Involved in Sports Chaplaincy in Melbourne with NBL Basketball and also PGA Golf.

Served for ten years on Australia Baptist Missionary Society (ABMS) Board and currently Chair of Belgrave Heights Convention (2015 - present) – related to the Keswick Convention in England.



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