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Book Reviews

Bruce Kaye (Gen. ed.) *Anglicanism in Australia: A History* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2002). Associate Editors: Tom Frame, Colin Holden, Geoff Treloar. ISBN 0 522 85003 0, pp. xxiii +408+ photos. RRP AU$69.95.

What is Anglicanism? It is neither a system (cf. capitalism) nor an ideology (cf. anarchism). Anglicanism is more than an ecclesial polity: it is also a 'religious tradition and community of people' which requires a social history to show how and what constitutes the identity of Anglicanism (Kaye, p. xi). It is partly because the broader public culture until recently embodied many values such as 'working for the collective good' that Anglicans themselves promoted or regarded as their own, that its history on a national scale has been uncharted—they may well have felt that outlining the history of the state in itself was a charting of some of the outworkings of Anglicanism. As late as 1960, Leicester Webb (Political philosophy, ANU) was able to remark that 'by the test of numbers, Australia is next to England the most Anglican country in the world' (in Fletcher, p. 296). That this is no longer true is not so much a diminution of aggregate numbers of Anglicans in Australia (still nearly 4 million) but of major shifts in the sources of migrant and refugee populations into Australia and the dramatic growth of Anglicanism in Africa during this 30-year period.

Anglicanism in Australia provides some of the resources for rethinking these and other issues. The book is divided in two: the first part is a chronological narrative, the second is organized by theme with chapters given over to questions of identity, theology, internationalism, indigenous peoples, the visual arts and architecture, gender, and the shaping of Australian society. Paradoxically, the 'Narrative' (Part I) nails the themes but it is the 'Themes' (Part II) that brings alive the narrative as an all too human and exciting venture, and sets before the reader the failures and achievements, challenges and opportunities of Anglicans in Australia.

Australian Anglicanism is the fruit of the transplantation of the Church of England as part of a colonial penal settlement. For the first 30 years, the church was a state dependency resented and resisted by convicts, commercial adventurers and the adherents of other Christian traditions. The Church of England at Sydney Cove is personified by one man appointed by the British state to be chaplain to its convicts (Fletcher, ch. 1). That the lasting image is not that of the comparatively gentle first appointee, Richard Johnson, but of Samuel Marsden, and as 'the flogging parson' rather than as an advocate of Maori rights, invites a probing that was not undertaken at this point. Church, state, empire were all deeply enmeshed in the English social imagination, and this has left its indelible mark on the Australian variant of Anglicanism, 'in sentiment and loyalty and religious tradition, English in form and imperial in conception' (Kaye, p. xiv). Yet it grew to be markedly different. In contrast to its parent Church of England which is 'nationally conceived, centrally organized, with particular and established relations with the institutions of nation-state government', Anglicanism in Australia is marked by its separation from the state, voluntarism, regionalism, pluralism and dispersed authoritative structures of self-governance (Kaye, p. 155). Most of these characteristics were in place by the end of the nineteenth century before the federation of the Australian Commonwealth. Following a short period of 'Anglican ascendancy' (Fletcher's term), over by the 1830s, the church was cut free from the state, succeeding in making the transition into an era of responsible elected governments and religious pluralism. As a non-established church in relatively poor colonies that suffered the tyranny of distance from the homeland, the Church of England sojourning in the antipodes had to reinvent itself as a voluntary religious association, and it set about its mission to 'consecrate Australian society' (Dickey, p. 52). Varying combinations of differing clerical personalities and churchmanship, allied with geographical and historical differences, led to a strongly plural regionalism that both reflected and animated inter-colonial conflicts and differences.

The Church of England in Australia both reflected and anticipated the pragmatic and democratic temper of Australian polity. It was the first Anglican church in the British Empire to establish parish councils and diocesan synods. In this move to collaborative and dispersed forms of authority and conciliar and synodical governance, the Anglicans in Australian colonies were ahead of the secular processes of political organization. Paradoxically, the church then remained locked into long struggles to establish an independent constitution from the Church of England and to establish a national church of Australia. Not until 60 years after Federation did the Church of England in Australia ratify its own Constitution (1962); it took another two decades to change its name to the 'Anglican Church of Australia' (1981).

Its loyalty to imperialist values created some positive outcomes. It sidestepped the narrower expressions of nationalism during the Federation period. The cosmopolitan Anglican of the first half of the twentieth century undoubtedly saw the world through Anglophile spectacles but this at least provided some critical distance on nation-state interests and perspectives, as well as a conservative resistance to the everyday attractions of Americanism. *Anglicanism in Australia* goes some way to show why this is the case; as Bishop Batty in Newcastle said many decades ago, '[the Anglican Church] is the most spacious spiritual home in Christendom, having made virtues of inclusiveness and diversity' (in Frame, p. 118). In this trumpet blowing and bomb blasting era of 'war against terror', 'jihads', and purported 'clash of the civilisations', there is a great need for such gracious asylum. This is not just a matter of demography but of vision and belief. Even though a social history cannot explain why this is the case, how this situation came about can be found between the covers of *Anglicanism in Australia*.

Australian antipodean public culture, ecclesial or secular, never simply replicates parent culture, and this is the case in the Anglican Church. Colin Holden in his chapter on the visual arts and architecture, for example, shows that motifs, ideas, inspirations and views when transported to another clime and setting are transformed by the process itself, and not only by the new critical horizon and material experience of the antipodes. Holden's careful and loving reproduction of examples of Anglican initiatives in the visual arts and architecture demonstrate the creativity of the many artisans and artists, and of the communities of believers who commissioned them. He also reveals a great array of variations across the regions of Australia, again underscoring that Australian history is better read for its plurality and differences across geography and history rather than through a national identity filter.

While it has embodied its values diversely and repeatedly across the national landscape (particularly between 1880 and 1960) in material forms such as church buildings and their art works, Anglicans have been far less prolific in doing so in theological writing and publication as such. This is a consequence of both the historic underdevelopment and sponsorship of theology in the university, with the church choosing to dedicate its resources exclusively to the formation of ordained ministers, and of the Federal Constitution's explicit exclusion of religious instruction in state education systems. To write about 'Australian Anglican Theology' is a daunting task, as Australian Anglican theologies have been largely the accumulation of performative acts of Anglican communities. It requires an author who can detect common themes and patterns of Anglican theology as practised and preached by its leaders in a variety of different settings and contexts and using eclectic media. Bill Lawton's chapter is worth the price of this book alone. It is an eccentric account that combines with some alacrity an admixture of the personal, the gossipy, the discursive and the performative dimensions of Anglican theologies in Australia. It is therefore an admirably (because quite unselfconsciously) Anglican historiography, a tradition of scholarship that has a long Oxbridge pedigree. Lawton chooses, as his two exemplary, controversial and articulate figures, the radical tory evangelical theology of Moore College's Broughton Knox, and the radical liberal theology of the former Archbishop of Perth and Primate, Peter Carnley. He is able to explain the difference of Sydney to the rest of the Anglican Communion and its compelling power to both attract and repel in equal measure. Lawton also shows the representative status of Carnley's thinking for contemporary Anglican communities who seek to combine the pre-eminently cosmological and world-affirming and inclusive Orthodox and Catholic doctrines of the Trinity, Creation, and Incarnation yet without sacrificing a more critical anthropological and rationalist Protestant emphasis on personal responsibility and autonomy as expressed in the doctrines of Atonement and the Cross.

At the onset of the 1960s, when weekly Anglican Church attendance was at its historic highpoint, we can now see that it was already 'in danger of becoming an affluent and ethnic church for those of British extraction' (Frame, p. 121). The tragic, sorry story of the church's relations with the indigenous peoples (related graphically by John Harris, pp. 223-46), and its largely Anglo participants in an age of multiculturalism, highlight this central challenge to the tradition's future existence and purpose. There were insufficient prophets in the desert or on the coastlines. One exception was Ernest Gribble who lamented in 1900 'Is this all the Church in Australia can do for these poor people whose country *we have taken?*' (emphasis in the original, in Dickey, p. 70). The incongruously named Bishop Gilbert White was the only Anglican Bishop to contest publicly the proclamation of the 'White Australia Policy' in the first substantive piece of Commonwealth legislation of 1901. Perhaps that was partly because his See was the Diocese of Carpentaria, which remains a genuinely multicultural region. Strangely enough, 'Anglicanism and the rise of Australia as a genuinely pluralist and multicultural society' is not an organizing theme of any chapter, a regrettable oversight.

If the Anglican response to matters of cultural and racial difference is marked by an ethnocentric and colonizing blindness only being partially rectified over the past three decades, questions of sex and gender have been central to the construction of public and familial culture of the church and society alike. Indeed, as shown by Anne O'Brien in her brilliant chapter 'Anglicanism and Gender Issues', the Anglican Church was a major purveyor of nineteenth-century high doctrine of womanhood as the fount of 'Domestic Christianity' whereby the strict sexual division of labour was enforced, so that women were associated with nature, privacy and the family home, and men were identified with culture, public life and paid work. Women were seen as central to promoting the central Christian virtues in society and these were best secured and practised in their vocation as mothers. As Archbishop Saumarez Smith proclaimed in 1902, the lures of intemperance, impunity and gambling that beset their men would be defeated by women's provision of 'home teaching, home discipline and home religion' (in O'Brien, p. 270). At the same time O'Brien is able to point to a positive legacy. The Anglican expression of 'Domestic Christianity' incorporated a greater liberalism on matters of family life, sexuality and gender (with the notable exception of Sydney) than any of the other traditions of Christianity, Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox. Most Anglican Dioceses and the General Synod accepted contraception, the remarriage of divorcees, and *defacto* relationships, and, in some cases, much earlier than other churches. The limits of 'Domestic Christianity' were breached by social movements emergent in the 1970s: as O'Brien aptly puts it: 'the most sustained challenge to Domestic Christianity came from the ordination debate, the most acute has come from the gay rights movement' (p. 272). Although the former has caused the greatest division known to date, Anglican polity in Australia has been able to accommodate the changes and hold communion across its 22 dioceses. The question of sexual difference will not go away, however; it is questionable whether communion will be sustained on sexual identities, preferences and expression.

No reviewer of a book of readings can resist the temptation to impute sins of omission. Many are recorded by Holden in his editorial introduction to Part II: he lists for example, education, social services, patronage of music, and intellectual and political liberalism and radicalism. Even on matters covered by this wide-ranging social history there is some unevenness between and in each chapter—especially in maintaining an even eye across the nation's diverse and plural regions and in covering the rapid changes of the past three decades. Harris, for example, in his 'Anglicanism and Indigenous Peoples' overlooks the raft of changes and initiatives by Anglicans in Victoria and Western Australia since the 1970s. Both Harris and Piggin underplay the important part of Anglican laypeople in the ecumenical movement. Piggin's discussion of 'Anglicanism in worldwide context' overlooks the role of Anglicans in the ecumenical movement. The role of Anglican clergy and bishops in Asian Anglican forums (e.g. Sambell, Appleby and Rayner) and the development of the Anglican Communion since 1970 are also not covered adequately. Missing in action altogether is any discussion of the growth of chaplaincy (other than military and schools) and the important innovations of Industrial Chaplaincy and Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) since the 1960s (especially in the hospital and prison systems).

Anglicanism in Australia is a book for three kinds of readers—Anglicans wanting to educate themselves about their own history and traditions, Australian historians wanting to understand religious and Anglican history as formative dimensions of Australian history, and Christians wanting to rethink Australian and Anglican ecclesiology in both socio-historical and theological terms. To Anglicans and Australian historians alike the book is essential reading.

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