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978-0-521-85345-3 - An Introduction to World Anglicanism

Bruce Kaye

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WORLD ANGLICANISM

What is the nature of world Anglicanism in a postcolonial, global age? With talk of fragmentation constantly in the media, what does it mean to be 'Anglican'? This book presents Anglicanism as a conversation over time amongst a community of people held together by sets of practices and beliefs.

The first part describes the emergence of Anglicanism and its foundations in older Christian traditions. The second looks at Anglican practices within the framework of changing understandings of mission, and focuses on liturgy, patterns of engagement with others, organisation and power in the church, and ministerial offices. There are two separate chapters on the ordination of women and homosexuality in the public life of the church. The third part, on beliefs, addresses the central question of knowledge and authority in Anglicanism, as well as ecclesiology, the nature of the church itself. A final chapter looks to the future.

BRUCE KAYE was General Secretary of the Anglican Church of Australia from 1994 to 2004. He is a cosmopolitan scholar and priest who, after studying in Sydney and taking his doctorate in Basel, held a post in the Theology Department at the University of Durham in the UK for twelve years before returning to the University of New South Wales in Australia. His visiting fellowships include periods in Freiburg-im-Breisgau, Cambridge and Seattle, and he is a regular visitor to North America. He is the author of eight books, editor of ten further volumes, and has written some sixty journal articles as well as contributing to newspapers, radio and TV. He is also the foundation editor of *The Journal of Anglican Studies*.

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Acknowledgements

Writing a book of this kind presents enormous challenges. The material is so vast, the scope so indeterminate and the interested parties amongst potential readers almost infinitely varied. Having been general secretary of the Anglican Church of Australia for ten years and a member of a number of Anglican Communion bodies is a partial preparation. Having been a life-long theologian with an interest in history, and editing the international *Journal of Anglican Studies*, was also a help. But the sheer magnitude of the material encompassed by world Anglicanism renders it completely impossible to be aware of, let alone cover, everything. More than that, the material demands an interpretative standpoint. Simple definitions are bound to be inadequate. I have taken the view that it is best understood as an ongoing story of a tradition of Christian faith. Some may find such a category of explanation too vague, and others may think it antiquarian. But it seems to me to best fit what is a very distinctive form of Christianity that has survived a number of significant crises. As a good historian I have tried to view my subject with an eye of compassion, and as a theologian with what Michael Ramsey once referred to as one foot on the ground and one foot in the kingdom of heaven. How far these ambitions have been achieved is for others to judge.

Whatever an author proposes as an interpretation of something in which most of his readers will be directly involved will never commend itself to all. Therefore I invite my readers to be co-workers in understanding the life of the scattered, curious and extraordinary community of worldwide Anglicans. Here I acknowledge those co-workers. A friend told me that to undertake such a task at this point in time was a sure-fire way of pleasing no one and probably losing your friends. But I think this is overdramatic. One of the consolations of working on the book has been to confirm many friendships around the world and to make new ones. Despite the fractious tribalism that is currently on such dispiriting display in world Anglicanism, I have found face-to-face encounters with fellow Anglicans from all corners

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of the globe to be not just civil, but encouraging and in the totality inspiring. It has been one of the privileges of my life to have placed my foot on every continent on earth, and furthermore to have friends and colleagues on all of those continents. It is this far-flung community of Anglican believers, and the nearer and more intimately connected community of my own parish church, that I wish to acknowledge as the foundation of this book. It has been written for them and their communities. The nearest, most immediate and important of these people is my wife Louise, who has borne the brunt of this project while maintaining her own ministry in medicine and community service, and to whom I express my profound gratitude. Our children, who are grown-up and wise, initially thought the project to be a bit of Dad's hubris, but I hope that in the event they will see it for what it has been – a midlife education for their father.

Special thanks are due to the librarians and archivists, too numerous to mention, who have been sources of generous goodwill and assistance, and to various friends who have had meals overgarnished by conversation about some obscure aspect of world Anglicanism, or read things on subjects which at first they did not think would be interesting. For my part I have found the journey endlessly fascinating. Anglican Christianity never ceases to amaze me by its capacity to get so many things wrong while still being able to confront us with the face of the crucified Christ. It is truly crooked timber being broken into the shape of a cross, no matter what silly things we might have done or might do in the future.

Abbreviations and sources

ACC	Anglican Consultative Council
ACO	Anglican Communion Office
ARCIC	Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission
Bede EH	Bede, <i>A History of the English Church and People</i> (London: Penguin, 1968). References are given by book and chapter followed by the page in this edition.
CCEA	Council of the Churches of East Asia
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CSI	Church of South India
Eames	Anglican Consultative Council, <i>Women in the Anglican Episcopate: Theology, Guidelines and Practice: The Eames Commission and the Monitoring Group Reports</i> (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1998)
ECUSA	Episcopal Church of the United States of America. Its name changed in 2006 to the Episcopal Church (TEC).
ELCA	Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
IASCOME	Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Mission and Evangelism
IATDC	Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission
LC	Lambeth Conference
MISAG	Mission Issues and Strategy Advisory Group
MISSIO	Anglican Communion Standing Commission on Mission
NIFCON	Network for Inter-Faith Concerns
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
WCC	World Council of Churches

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Lambeth Conference and Anglican Consultative Council resolutions are indicated according to the year and the resolution number, e.g. Resolution 16 of the Lambeth Conference of 1988 is LC.1988,16. In general the text of these resolutions is taken from the electronic version provided on the official website of the Lambeth Conference. Reports such as the Eames Commission Report are given by the short title and the paragraph number.