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“The English Church” Revisited
Issues of Expansion and Identity in a Settler Church:
The Anglican Church in New Zealand
1891-1945

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in History at Massey University**

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Notes on Sources

The nature of the statistics included in this thesis is such that recourse has been made to a number of sources. It would be impractical to give a reference for each piece of information used. Accordingly, reference is made here to the various sources and the nature of the material extracted.

Census results

Population statistics from the regular censuses have been extracted from official census reports and especially the volumes relating to the Census of Population and Religious Professions. In the period under review, a census was held every five years between 1891 and 1926. Because of the depression, no census was conducted in 1931, but one took place in 1936. Because of the war, the 1941 census was deferred and took place in 1945.

Maori were not included in the general census until 1951 although similar data was extracted and published separately. Because this thesis deals with the Pakeha section of the community, the published general census figures have been used unless indicated otherwise.

The reports of the Census of places of worship, conducted up to 1926, has been used to prepare tables relating to church seating and attendance. The Official Year Book section on marriage has provided data relating to officiating ministers.

Other statistical indicators

Considerable use has been made of statistics collected by G.T. Bloomfield in his *New Zealand: A Handbook of Historical Statistics*, Boston, Mass.: G.K. Hall, not dated but probably c.1977. Much of the data relating to gender and age distribution, arrivals and departures, assisted immigration, and urban/rural population has been extracted from this source.

Anglican Church statistics

Proceedings of General Synod

Considerable use has been made of statistics from the Proceedings of General Synod. This source is referenced as 'PGS', followed by the year. For example, 'PGS 1925, p.34'. The material in Appendix 5 has been drawn from this source.

Diocesan Year Books and Synod Proceedings

Considerable use has also been made of material from the various diocesan year books and synod proceedings, notably bishop's charges to their annual synods. Much of the material in Appendix 1 has been drawn from this source.

This source is referenced as '[Diocese] SP'. For example, 'Auckland SP 1895, p. 32'.

Biographical Directory of Anglican Clergy

Considerable use has been made of this on-line resource, especially in relation to extracting details of year and country of birth of clergy.

Clerical Directory

Considerable use has been made of the Clerical Directory (first published 1940) and the Lists of Clergy included in the Proceedings of General Synod before that date. This has provided most of the detail relating to dates of ordination and years of service of the clergy.

Other Abbreviations

DNZB The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography

ENZ An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand

Preface and Acknowledgments

This thesis surveys the growth of the 'settler church' in the dioceses of the Anglican Church in New Zealand and, in particular, the development of the Church at local parish level. It examines the formation of parishes, the appointment of clergy, the construction of church buildings and the provision of finance – in other words, all that was required for the provision of ministry in local communities.

It is less concerned with the administration of dioceses, the accomplishments of bishops, the activities of General Synod, and constitutional issues, except where these had a bearing on the core issue. Similarly, it does not concern itself with the development of social services, the establishment of schools, and the building of cathedrals. In the same way, it does not give attention to the issue of provision of ministry to and by Maori. That history is too important to be absorbed into this topic. It demands serious treatment from someone with the necessary skills and background. The present writer lacks that competence.

Settler Anglicanism ministered to 40 per cent of the population and did so in every town and suburb, and virtually every rural area in the land. No other social institution had such wide coverage. It is not a story of triumph but of dedication and difficulty, of frustration and exasperation, and of challenges and lost opportunities. There was never enough money to meet every need, there were never enough clergy to provide adequate staffing, and often never enough adequate buildings. External forces (including two world wars, a major economic depression and natural disasters) upset carefully laid plans.

It was a Church that was 'in the midst'. It rarely sought to escape from the world; more often its endeavour was to be there with its people, sharing their sorrows and joys, providing the ministrations for the big events of their lives, and nurturing them in regular worship, Sunday schools and women's groups, and building a sense of community. This was the church of an important section of the community, a community that was at the same time at the heart of New Zealand society and yet aware of its English origins and residual loyalties. On the whole, church members acquiesced in this dilemma for no strong revolutionary spirit was alive in them. The call for a distinctive New Zealand version of Anglicanism was a muted one. They were no less loyal to New Zealand; it was simply that it was a New Zealand that was proud to be part of the British Empire, and a Church that was proud to be part of a Church of England. If any common thread emerges, it is the continuing plea to the members of this Church to raise up from among themselves men who would minister to their own

people in their own land – ‘sound, adaptable, missionary-hearted men, who are not afraid to tackle hard problems and difficulties of many kinds’.¹

Ideally, this thesis would have traced the development of the settler church from its beginnings in the 1840s (and, to some small extent, before then) to the present day but, fortunately, wiser counsel prevailed and the scope of the topic and the prescribed limitations of this exercise resulted in a more manageable and limited focus. The result is a survey of New Zealand Pakeha Anglicanism between the colonial, frontier period and the emergence of a more conscious nationalism and identity after the Second World War. The starting point is 1891, arguably the beginning of ‘modern New Zealand’, politically, at least. The story could have concluded in 1939 or 1941, but 1945 was chosen because Anglicanism during the Second World War had more in common with the pre-war experience than with the Church that began to emerge after the war.

Coincidentally and conveniently, 1891 and 1945 were both years in which a census took place and, given the high reliance on census material, that was helpful. As mentioned above, these points of demarcation coincide with various censuses. Within the period of this exercise, a national census was held at five-yearly intervals from 1891 to 1926 but, as an economy measure, the 1931 census was cancelled while that scheduled for 1941 was deferred for the duration of the war. In the latter period, therefore, censuses were undertaken in 1926, 1936 and 1945. It seemed right not to interrupt periods of war and economic calamity and so chapters have been built to negotiate these.

Also, coincidentally, the political history of New Zealand suggested three periods – the Liberal years (1891-1912), the conservative Reform years (1912-25), and the turbulent years before, during and after the Depression (1925-45).

Given the stance outlined above, it was not necessary to construct chapters around bishops but, very conveniently, their years of office seemed to fit the structure that was being assembled.

Two other events helped to bring structure. In 1910, a large group of clergy came from the Church of England (at the invitation of the Church in New Zealand) to undertake a ‘Mission of Help’ in every diocese. Little has been written about this but it can be argued that it came at a time of unease or uncertainty and lack of confidence. It serves as a symbol of the

¹ The Revd J.C. Hawksworth, in *Occasional Papers from St Augustine’s College*, No. 351, April 4, 1924, pp.38-9.

Church's concerns that it was not meeting people's needs, that it should be speaking with a stronger voice, and that the lives of its people should be warmed. At any rate, a number of things did happen after 1910. The year 1926 suggests another chapter break as it was in that year that the new Diocese of Waikato was created out of the large and cumbersome Auckland diocese. In itself that could be viewed as an administrative convenience but the date is helpful more for what was to happen to New Zealand. In a very short time, the country would be plunged into depression and for the Church this meant that, in the two decades that followed, there would be much less growth than had been experienced during the previous thirty five years of this period.

The four chapters that emerged therefore survey the Church as it had become and was in 1891; the period between 1891 and 1910; the period between 1911 and 1925; and the final period from 1926 to 1945.

These chapters are supplemented by detailed appendices relating to parishes, clergy, church buildings, and church statistics.

A considerable amount of time was put into the collection of data required for this research. This was necessary because much of the information was not readily available in accessible form. Although population statistics are readily available, they had to be collated on a diocesan basis, since many of the published figures had been based on estimates. It was necessary to assemble a considerable amount of data relating to clergy. Some of this was available from the *Clerical Directory* (published since 1940) and in the *Proceedings of General Synod* (prior to that date). Those sources, together with information available in Diocesan Year Books, provided useful information relating to appointments held and year and diocese of ordination. However, to assemble a profile of the clergy it was necessary to ascertain details relating to age and country of birth. As age details were not included in the *Clerical Directory* until 1969, they had to be obtained from other sources. Fortunately, such a source exists in the form of the *Biographical Directory of Anglican Clergy* compiled by Fr Michael Blain and available on the John Kinder Theological Library website. I take this opportunity of thanking and congratulating Michael on this Herculean task. Without this resource it would have been impossible to assemble comprehensive details relating to clergy over such a long period. Gathering information relating to parishes and clergy succession has meant detailed research in diocesan year books, the *Clerical Directory* and its forerunners, diocesan histories, and occasional forays into parish histories. There can be no guarantee of complete accuracy but I am reasonably certain that the substance of this detail has been reported. Collating details of ordinations in New Zealand meant careful scrutiny of year

books and other sources. Assembling data relating to church buildings required many hours of work scanning diocesan and parish histories, year books, literature relating to church architecture, and occasionally physical inspection. Once again there can be no guarantee of complete accuracy but one hopes that, with information relating to at least 700 church buildings, it has been possible to offer a reasonable picture of churches built or in use over this 54 year period. The presidential addresses given by bishops at their annual synods (and printed in the *Proceedings*) have been a valuable resource as these have often been prepared as a journal of record.

I am immensely grateful to the staff of the various archival collections for their willingness to be helpful, their unfailing patience and courtesy, and their personal interest in the subject. In particular, I acknowledge the assistance given by the staff of the John Kinder Theological Library at St John's College (especially Judith Bright, Helen Greenwood and Eddie Sun), the Auckland Diocesan Archives (notably Janet Foster and Judy Pickett), the Christchurch Diocesan Archives (with thanks to Jane Teal for an entertaining day's visit and also prompt responses to inquiries), the Diocese of Waikato (especially Valarie Langley and Judy Entwistle), and to the staff of the Alexander Turnbull Library, the New Zealand Room of the Auckland Central Library, and the Massey University Library (at Albany and Palmerston North).

I thank my supervisor, Associate Professor Peter Lineham, for his personal interest in this research, for his cheerful encouragement at times when the burden seemed oppressive, and for his gentle 'Have you thought of ...' nudgings. He has been generous of his time, especially in the weeks leading up to the completion of this exercise. I acknowledge that his supervision of my research has coincided with the added responsibilities associated with his appointment as Head of the School of Social and Cultural Studies at the Massey-Albany Campus. I also thank the University for the grant made from its Graduate Research Fund.

I acknowledge the financial assistance provided by the St John's College Trust Board and the support given by the Right Reverend John Paterson, Bishop of Auckland. During the course of my research I entered official retirement although I continue to serve the Diocese in a number of ways and have even gathered some additional responsibilities, including those associated with the Archdeaconry of Manukau. Without the flexibility these changes permitted it would not have been possible to complete this research within the prescribed time.

I thank my son, Tim Derbyshire, for his willingness to apply his skills in constructing the maps which enhance the written content of this thesis. I thank my old friend, former

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Finally, I acknowledge the inspiration I have drawn on from forty years of ministry (or formal preparation for it) in four of the seven New Zealand dioceses and significant contact with the other three. I reflect on precious years of ministry in a number of parishes – St John’s, Invercargill, Riverton, Taieri, Gore, and Cambridge – and a good deal of time spent on various diocesan committees. All these experiences have contributed to my desire to reflect on the development of ministry in the parishes in this country. I remember, too, the clergy of my childhood and youth, the congregation (Holy Trinity, Port Chalmers) which nurtured me and gave me opportunities as a server, Sunday School teacher, youth leader, and Vestry member. I honour the Bishops under whom I have worked, notably the Bishop who ordained me – Allen Howard Johnston, the first Bishop to be born, trained, and ordained in New Zealand, and to spend his entire ministry in this Church.

Noel Derbyshire

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The Stages of Church Life in Colonial New Zealand¹

The earliest stage of church-life in colonial New Zealand may be called the *Eucalyptus* or Blue Gum period. These dark-foliaged trees mark from afar the lonely sheep-station, and are often the only guide thereto. It is in the station-house or in the adjoining woolshed that the service is held. Seldom is it conducted by an ordained minister, for the number of such is small, and each priest has a large territory to visit. His arrival on horseback is not always known beforehand, but in the evening the 'squatter' assembles his family and dependants, the men of the station, and perhaps a few neighbours. Everyone is glad of the opportunity. The dining-room or woolshed is made to look as devotional as possible. The old prayer books brought out from England are produced. There may be no musical instrument available, but some well-known hymn is raised by the lady of the house. The priest, in his long surplice, preaches a practical sermon, for he understands his people and knows their lives. The service revives old memories in the worshippers, and carries them back in thought to ancient churches and devout congregations in the land from which they came.

This early stage merges gradually into what may be called the Pine period. The large sheep run is broken up into farms, each marked by its sheltering plantations of *pinus insignis*. The typical place of worship is now the school. To it the worshippers drive on Sunday, in buggies or gigs. The services are carried on with some regularity: different Christian denominations generally use the building on successive Sundays of the month, and the same congregation gathers on each occasion. The arrangements are awkward, the seats are comfortless, but the singing is hearty and the feeling good. Memories of the old land are less vivid: the young men and maidens are mostly native-born. There is not the deep feeling of devotion, nor is there the old sense of the overwhelming importance of divine things. Fewer of the labouring men are present than were seen in the old woolshed services.

Years pass by, and a village springs up amidst the farms. Small church-buildings rise almost side by side. The attendants of the schoolroom no longer worship together. It is the Cypress or *Macrocarpa* period, when trim hedges divide the gardens – and often the people – from one another. But the little church, with its cross and other sacred emblems, grows dear to some. The choir learns to chant and to sing an anthem on a high festival. Perhaps now there is a vicarage beside the church. Classes and guilds are carried on. 'Church work' begins.

Such is the history of the Church in New Zealand during the latter period of our hundred years. The frame of the picture is that supplied by the originally treeless plains and valleys of the South Island. But the picture itself, in its essential points, would represent other regions as well – whether mining, maritime, or forest. As a picture, it is not as bright as we should like it to be; but its shadows as well as its brightness are but extensions of the phenomena of the religious world outside. The divisions of Christendom did not originate in New Zealand.

¹ H.T. Purchas, *The English Church in New Zealand*, Christchurch: Simpson & Williams, 1914, from Chapter XVII: 'The Church of Today' (1878-1914), pp.220-22.