

## THE LOCAL AND THE UNIVERSAL

### Anglican appreciations of the Saints and Mary MacKillop<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** This paper provides a critical explanation of the shifting means by which the Anglican Communion has recognized saints. It is seen that there is a proximity between the practice of the Anglican Communion and that of the Orthodox Church, with particular accent on the esteem in which local practice is held and the overarching power of the liturgical calendar to bring recognition. In the light of this practice, an assessment is given of how the sainthood of Mary MacKillop might be appreciated within the Anglican Church, especially in Australia.

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#### A. ANGLICAN APPRECIATIONS OF THE SAINTS

Early in the twentieth century, one Archbishop of Canterbury, Cosmo Gordon Lang, wrote that "'Beatification' ... is not a word in the vocabulary of the Anglican Church." "Canonisation" has received a similar de-listing. The reformed side of the Anglican Church is suspicious of any compromise of honour to be accorded the Saviour, the Son of God. It is also suspicious of aggrandisement of some over others in the communion of saints. Concern surrounds the suspected purpose(s) behind the recognition of some persons as "Saints". In times long past these scruples motivated the Anglican Church to contrast itself from certain practices of the Church of Rome. Thus for some though not all Anglicans, the notion of purgatory, and the practice of prayers to those who have

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died is expressly and completely denied Anglicans through Article 22 of the Thirty-nine Articles. These Articles of Religion are one of the key foundational documents of Anglicanism. Article 22 states:

The Romish Doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration, as well as of images as of relicks, and also invocation of Saints, is a fond thing vainly invented and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture but rather repugnant to the Word of God.

It is little wonder then that a recent dictionary of spirituality makes no mention of an Anglican understanding of Saints nor of their place within Anglican practice. Somehow Anglicanism slips between Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism on the one hand and Protestantism and Puritanism on the other, only to disappear from view. A midway position does indicate some truth about the Anglicans, but not when interpreted as contributing nothing to the wider Church.

The Anglican Church in its highest aspirations seeks to be both catholic and reformed, and to hold within itself the riches of both eastern and western Christianity. It is the period of the undivided Church that provides much of the spirit, inspiration and direction for Anglican thought and practice. Moreover, in spite of the reality of divided Christianity, the universal church remains a dominant vision, not envisaged by a reversion to the past but held as a hope for a future which influences the way the present is assessed and lived.

### **Anglican Recognition of Saints**

A casual glance at the externals of Anglican practice reveals a considerable presence of Saints. Very few Anglican churches exist without a dedication. In a survey I conducted more than a decade ago of the 2862 Anglican churches (then) in Australia, 450 were dedicated to God and aspects of God's own saving work amongst humanity, 2412 were dedicated to one or more saints. A total of 161 different dedications were recorded for these churches, of which 129 were given to Saints and

heroes of the faith.<sup>2</sup> For many congregations of these churches, the celebration of patronal festivals is an important annual event in their worshipping life. Dedications to Saints also characterise schools, university and theological colleges, religious houses, chapels, agencies and institutions. Even house churches and areas within a parish for lay pastoral care have been known to take a Saint as patron. Church art and adornment (whether stained-glass windows, hymnody or more recently statues and icons) similarly present Saints to the people of God. Various models of faith are portrayed through literature — Anglicans have considerable interest in biographies, whether of bishops, missionaries, teachers, or other holy people. Not all such writings were intended to establish a claim for additional recognition (such as in a liturgical calendar), but a perception that God's sanctifying work continues in and through the lives of individuals is found here.

But it is the pre-eminent place given to worship in Anglican spirituality that is decisive. In the daily office of Morning and Evening Prayer and in the Holy Communion we find regular and public provision made for "Saints". *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662) is another document for understanding Anglican foundations. The Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia expressly privileges it (§4). There is dispute about the nature and extent of the authority of the *BCP* but in it we find what some see as unique amongst the reformed churches — a calendar of saints.

"The calendar of the Prayer Book is the necessary skeleton on which the greater part of the rest depends"<sup>3</sup> and the greater part provides focused prayers ("Collects") and pertinent Bible readings that attach to various special holy days and holy people. This book adopted from a previous Prayer Book (1552) a novel distinction between Red Letter Days and Black Letter Days (the colours used in the *BCP* print). The observance of holy days and the remembrance of saints valued in England was retained but

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<sup>2</sup> See my "Australian Anglican Church dedications and the calendar of saints" *Australian Journal of Liturgy* 5 (1995): 15-32.

in a way that asserted a distinction from the perceived abuses in Roman Catholic practice portrayed as an accumulation of saints' days at the expense of the Jesus cycle. The accent was that both sets of days were to be few in number. The seasonal cycle of the Church's year was not to be disrupted and greatest honour was reserved for the holy days of the Lord and of significant followers writ in Scripture. These Red Letter Days were given collects and readings "proper" to the festivals, for both the daily office of Morning and Evening Prayer and the Holy Communion. Black Letter Days (for the remembrance of significant persons of the past) had no such provision. However, the practice began (influenced by university colleges, law days and general local customs) to provide collects for the Black Letter Days as a "memorial". These were said as a second collect at the Eucharist and the Morning and Evening Offices on the day itself. Some Black Letter Days had readings provided for the Eucharist, especially when (mid-week) celebrations multiplied. Thus, *by custom*, came the three-tiered calendar — Red, Black with a memorial and Black with a calendar entry only. This has been generally influential across the Anglican Communion. The current Australian Anglican prayer book (*A Prayer Book for Australia*) calls them Principal Festivals, Festivals and Lesser Festivals, thereby retaining the three-tiered calendar built up by custom. However, the last (Lesser Festivals) is effectively subdivided into those with provision in the lectionary and those in the calendar alone.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Prayer Book Calendars and "Saints"**

The formal content of the *BCP* calendar was conservative, mainly including those long acknowledged as "Saints". A lack of clarity however developed throughout the Anglican Communion. A 1957 Report commissioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury constantly referred to "saints" in the calendar, albeit some being described as "lesser". On the other hand, recent calendar revisions omit "Saint" as a prefix to names except for those

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<sup>3</sup> W.H. Frere, *Some Principles of Liturgical Reform: A Contribution towards the Revision of the Book of Common Prayer* (London: Jn Murray, 1914), 16.

<sup>4</sup> The New Zealand Prayer Book and The (U.S.) Book of Common Prayer have even more subdivisions.

granted Red Letter status. Early canonisation by the undivided Church makes no difference. This indicates Anglican deference to Scripture and asserts the recognition of saints and heroes as not contrary to Scripture. But reference to the Black Letter "saints" in writings adjunct to the calendar has created an ambiguity, sometimes further compounded by an abnegation (abdication?) of the ability of the Anglican Church to canonise.

This narrowing of "Saint" to biblical holy people cultivated certain difficulties however. It may have sought to adhere scrupulously if not casuistically to Article 22. But it severely qualified the often expressed belief that God's sanctifying work continues unabated through the centuries of human life. As the 1957 Report stated, "the extension from the redemptive work of Christ to the fruits of his Spirit in history should reinforce not weaken our treasury of grace." (p. 73). Privileging the biblical period implies a nostalgia for the first century and gradations in the operations of God's grace such as to intimate that God's work is in decline. Indeed the new Anglican calendar removes any person outside Scripture from the "top" two tiers and splits the third tier to accommodate those deemed important enough to obtain prayer book lectionary provision. Non-biblical saints appeared to have suffered a decline from their status (in the second tier) in the earlier *An Australian Prayer Book*. Conversely, that prayer book (only supplanted in 1995) sought to overcome such problems by removing the prefix "saint" altogether. By contrast, the gathering of Anglican bishops in 1988 (the Lambeth Conference, held approximately every ten years), responded to overtures from the Church in Africa by passing a telling resolution (§60): it used the title "saint" for more recent holy men and women and indicated that such be recognised by calendrical inclusion.

Accordingly, either by recognising a local cult at a more universal level or by cultivating cultic recognition, (especially through the provision of prayers and bible readings so that the calendar finds actual expression in the liturgy and the offices) the calendar is a significant component in the commemoration, even the canonisation of saints. After all, "canonising" at base means simply the placing on a list. Lambeth Conference resolutions

(which have persuasive but not binding effect), such as that in 1958 (§78), expressly linked commemoration of the saints with the calendar and with the revision of the prayer book in general.

What remains somewhat ill-defined is both the procedure for recognising "saints" so as to include them in the calendar and the status to be accorded those who have been included. One of the tasks assigned to the Anglican Consultative Council, an administrative, networking and policy development body of the Anglican Communion, has been to produce a means or range of means to bring some clarity into Anglican process. Little has been done however, except for the circulation of a working paper for discussion by Paul Gibson, which, surprisingly, appears to have exercised an influence beyond its self-assessment of being "the beginning of a draft" (p. 1).

### **Does the Anglican Church Canonise?**

Canonisation has not in the history of the Church been limited to one particular method, notably the juridical model currently utilised by the Church of Rome. Ruth Macrides for example, points out that in Orthodoxy there are different elements and emphases in the use of the term "Canonisation". For some, 'canonisation' can only refer to cases in which there was a synodal decision on the matter; for others canonisation describes the recognition of sanctity, be it by a local community through its veneration and writing of an office and *vita*, or by the ecclesiastical hierarchy through its issue of a formal statement.<sup>5</sup>

Many of these elements were recognised and taken up in the Anglican Report on the Saints in 1957. It acknowledged that the autocephalous churches of Orthodoxy were in fact closer to Anglican values, as reflected in its practices about the Saints. What was regarded as important for the composers of the report was that "the cult of a true saint should be

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<sup>5</sup> R. Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood in the Early Palaiologan Period" in S. Hackel (Ed.), *The Byzantine Saint* (London: Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1981), 84.

spontaneous, springing from the devotion of the people among whom he [sic!] lived and worked; second, that a bishop or a synod — provincial, national or general — is the proper authority to control the cult."(p. 29). This was substantially vindicated in the formal resolution of the subsequent Lambeth Conference. It has been reiterated in reports in individual Anglican provinces. Some dioceses and provinces of Australia have based actions for the recognition of saints and holy people on just such a principle.

Whilst the seed of the 1957 Report was sown by a request from an African bishop, the issue had previously found expression with the instance of Charles I of England (executed 1648), who early was called "King and martyr".<sup>6</sup> Martyrdom is often held to be the basis for the cult of the saints, qualified by reference to orthodoxy of belief and teaching, sanctity of life, and, of course, a community to practice the veneration. Hence substantial debate has ensued as to whether the inclusion of Charles I in the *BCP* calendar (January 30th) amounted to a canonisation. Certainly there was a tide of popular veneration, even claims for miracles<sup>7</sup> (never of great moment for Anglicans seeking the commemoration of saints — sanctity of life is regarded as sufficient evidence of the presence of the supernatural at work). Certainly also, the close ties of the Church of England to a State which defended its ecclesial claims and privileges, nurtured the recognition of Charles as a *saintly* defender of the faith even unto death.

The turn of the twentieth century saw a desire for the title "Saint" to be applied to Charles I, though this was absent from the 1662 calendar. A leading Anglican liturgiologist, Michael Perham, doubted whether

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<sup>6</sup> See, for one example among many, E. Langford, *A Sermon Preach'd before the Honourable House of Commons, on the Anniversary Fast for the Martyrdom of King Charles I* (London: Thomas Bennet 1698).

<sup>7</sup> Anon. *A Miracle of Miracles Wrought by the Blood of King Charles the First, of Happy Memory, upon a Mayd at Detford, foure miles from London, who by the violence of the Disease called the Kings Evill was blinde one whole yeere; but by making use of a piece of Handkircher dipped in the Kings blood is recovered of her sight*. London: 1649.

canonisation was in fact intended.<sup>8</sup> Conversely, the 1957 Report had no such doubts (p. 35). And in Australia, two Anglican churches have his dedication, one which claims the patronage of "St. Charles" (West Mackay in Queensland).

Uncertainty attends the designation of a day in more recent calendars for the "saints, martyrs, missionaries and teachers of the Anglican Communion" (8 November). The current Australian Anglican calendar retains this group commemoration, and yet in a number of ways fosters a perception of uncertainty or ambivalence. On the one hand it has dropped the title "Saint" from its calendar and lectionary, and yet it has retained the term in the group commemoration. The reference to the plainly limited categories martyrs, missionaries and teachers implies a parallel narrowing of the reference to saints.

Moreover, the etymology of "saint" has been disregarded with the retention of the adjective "Holy" for the Innocents' Day (28th December *cf.* "blessed" of the Virgin Mary for a number of feasts). Similarly, it has retained the ancient practice of drawing attention to the date of the *deaths* of the saints, described by the pre-eminent theologian of Anglicanism, Richard Hooker, as "the days of whose departure out of the world are to the Church of Christ as the birth and coronation days of kings or emperors."<sup>9</sup> The practice of noting the dates of the death of saints has a long history of connection with canonisation. It provides most of the dates for saints' entries in the calendar.

By deleting the "Saint" of saints, and yet retaining other uses traditionally signifiatory of "Saint", mixed messages are delivered to the people of God. In part it reflects the struggle of Anglicans to affirm what it can in the actions of Roman Catholicism, but without losing an identity distinct from its sibling. Thus, in the early days of Australian Anglican liturgical

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<sup>8</sup> M. Perham, *The Communion of Saints* (London: SPCK, 1980), 74-75.

<sup>9</sup> R. Hooker *Of The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity The Fifth Book* (London: MacMillan and Co. 1902), §lxx.8

revision it was observed that "care must be taken to observe changes elsewhere (for example, Rome) in view of possible future re-union."<sup>10</sup> *The Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy* of Vatican II has also exercised considerable influence on Anglican thinking about the calendar.

Conversely a desire for Anglican distinctiveness is evident. The current dominant notion is to distance Anglicans from "canonisation". However, this reaction is framed according to Roman Catholic understandings and practices. It fails to appreciate the undivided Church's different methods of canonisation (which Anglicans have, by practice and inheritance, utilised and occasionally acknowledged). Further it undercuts the Anglican emphasis on the continuing providential sanctifying work of God.

### **The Quest(ion) of Holiness**

There is a danger then that the perception and appreciation of holiness — that quality of integrated simplicity and purity of life — is being lost. One can understand a youthful nation (in terms of its colonial and Christian past), desiring to recall pioneers who have built Church and Nation, as is done in the new Anglican calendar. Nevertheless, does pioneering constitute holiness? It is true that holiness is not a static or passive attribute but expresses and finds itself in a dynamism of attentiveness to a God who shares a desire for things to be better. And so, new directions in Church and Nation are spawned from a present which is critiqued by a future dimly anticipated. Ignoring attention to the winsome appeal of a holiness which is formed through an anchor in the Holy One may justify dropping the title "Saint". However, it encourages the removal of the very call of God to the whole Church from a church's memory — to be a holy priesthood, a holy nation.

Quite apart from pioneers, pioneering events have begun to be included in the calendar — Australia Day, ANZAC Day, and United Nations Day. The

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<sup>10</sup> Australian Church Union (an Anglican organisation) meeting at St. Peter's Eastern Hill, 27/6/1964, (Conference Report Findings 4 - the brackets in the quotation are original).

first two receive lectionary support, included in a section with other "Lesser Festivals" granted collects and readings. The impression is thereby conveyed that they are in line with the pattern of Christ. Indeed, Australia Day might be thought to be privileged above other Lesser Festivals (including, now, Transfiguration<sup>11</sup>) by receiving three sets of readings instead of the usual one. (It is not however given a scriptural sentence for the liturgy). This development in calendars follows a trend reflecting the influence of the Episcopal (Anglican) Church in the U.S.A. Its calendar includes Thanksgiving Day in bold type (at one stage even in red letters), thereby, at a formalist level, equating it with the major holy days of the Church Year. By contrast, the 1662 *BCP* expects the observance of the day of the (English) monarch's accession to the throne but it does not muddy the testimony to sanctity that a calendar purports to render by including the date *in* the calendar.

Increasingly, the placing of Australia Day in the Church's calendar is open to serious question. For many aboriginal Australians, Christian and non-Christian, the day is a day for protest. The collect and readings set for this day on the Church's calendar attempt to address issues of division, colonisation and aggression, although making no mention of the long recognised original occupants of "this ancient and beautiful land" (as the prayer goes). Even this effort is open to collation with many other Church proposals for indigenous concerns. That is, it provides a salve to pained white Australian consciences at the same time as preserving the status quo of unhealed, salted wounds and empty postures of reconciliation. Australia Day has become a point of *division* between black and white Australians.

This comment is not about patriotism but rather the confusion that such entries cause to a sense of the purpose of a calendar. Saintliness is rightly centered on the Holy Days of our Lord. The value of such Red Letter Days

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<sup>11</sup> Transfiguration has been made part of the Sunday cycle for Epiphany season, with a continued option for the second Sunday of Lent. This is but an adjustment to the lectionary cycle and, given the diminution of its calendrical status, has in

is, *inter alia*, the provision of a bench-mark for the nature and parameters of holiness that are expressed in those individual lives which might be considered for commemoration and listing on a Church calendar.

### **Culture, Local Autonomy and the Provisionality of Anglican Commemorations**

Nevertheless, the 1957 Report saw quite clearly that Saints and days could come and go from calendars. They might no longer fill popular esteem, or had become no longer culturally or geographically relevant, were historically challengeable either as to existence or as to sanctity, or, through overcrowding or misplaced focus, threaten the seasonal observance of the work of God. For Anglicans, calendrical change is not seen as a problem both because of its avowed deference to local practice and also because it does not presume upon an eternal veracity to its own judgments. Cultural mutability is seen as the proper province for the church's response. Article 34 expresses this sentiment:

It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one or utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times and men's manners so that nothing be ordained against God's Word ...

Culture is not regarded as an unfortunate complication of devotion to God but as part of the earthly fullness (across space and time) that proclaims the glory of God and needs to be recognised and harnessed for that proclamation in every time and place. Thus in more recent calendars, four significant developments have occurred. First, there has been an attempt to allow more centuries to bear witness to the presence of God as reflecting a sanctifying and liberating movement within it. Secondly, there has been an attempt to affirm this presence across each continent of the world. Thirdly, there has also been a preparedness to "superannuate" saints from the calendar. And fourthly, there has been concern to broaden the range and type of entries.

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fact lost the ground that was granted to it in the 1928 English revision to the prayer book.

All this is held to be divinely sanctioned. The eminent sixteenth century theologian, Richard Hooker, grounds his defense of the place of saints in Anglican worship by the divine and human ordering of special moments of time. And just as such moments, both naturally and by divine approval, are given temporal expression in the liturgy, so also the same notion of special attention applies to places and persons. The Church is vindicated by God for its recognition of holy people for whom the Church offers its public thankfulness.<sup>12</sup> The Church is authorised by God to make decisions about its special days and people and places — it is part of the Church's own mirroring of God's activity of setting apart special days and people and places. And this is so for the Church in each new age and place. One of the drafters of *An Australian Prayer Book* (1978), Gilbert Sinden SSM, saw the defense of diversity not merely required by the enormous range of Anglican expressions, but, more significantly, the diversity itself was graciously endowed in reflection of God's life.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, local practice from religious house to individual diocese authorises modifications of the calendar.

Now it must be admitted that Colonial and Missionary Anglicanism has displayed greater concern to preserve the English export than to affirm the distinctive elements of new lands. A now retired Anglican Bishop, Clyde Wood, has written critically of the assumption that the *BCP* would and should be the prayer book of aboriginal Christians.<sup>14</sup> The same applies to calendars and liturgical provisions that accent the English background. This is not to deny how liberating the English Prayer Book calendars were *in their time*, especially as they witnessed to the sanctifying and missionary work of the Spirit of God in England. But other

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<sup>12</sup> Hooker, *Ecclesiastical Polity V*, §lxx.1,2,9.

<sup>13</sup> G. Sinden, *When We Meet for Worship* (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1978), 186-87.

<sup>14</sup> He saw it as contravening one of the important foundations of Anglicanism, — of worship in one's own tongue. See C. Wood "Anglican Episcopacy and Indigenous Australians" in A.H. Cadwallader & D. Richardson (Eds) *Episcopacy: Views from the Antipodes* (Adelaide: ABCE, 1994), 131-143.

missionary bishops and their congregations began to discern a longing for the recognition of the work of the Holy Spirit in new places and different times. Such a move was defended in these terms:

the gap of centuries that divides even the latest of saints from the present day is a real obstacle in the way of presenting sanctity as a permanent possibility of the Christian life.<sup>15</sup>

The deft appeal to moral virtue was not lost on the English and led to the Commission Report of 1957. What was veiled in this correspondence was the cultural element, an aspect of African spirituality to which the English may not have been expected to be as sensitive. As John V. Taylor wrote when General Secretary of one Anglican mission agency, the Church Missionary Society, "the African family is a single, continuing unit, conscious of no radical distinction of being between the living and the dead."<sup>16</sup> It indicates what Michael Perham has called a slow recovery in awareness amongst western Christians of the "communion of saints" wherein all are linked in Christ; too long dominant has been the distinction between the church of earth and the church of heaven.<sup>17</sup>

It is the revival in appreciation of this communion which has supported earlier caveats on a thorough-going ban that draws its rationale from Article 22's reference to the invocation of saints. There is no doubt that Anglicans continue to reject the calling upon the saints for the provision of benefits that are God's privilege to share. At the same time, the continued reference back to the undivided Church by some Anglican theologians has led to a more nuanced reading of this Article. Subtle distinctions have sometimes been made, into Comprecation (prayer to God for the intercessions of the saints), Direct Invocation (a request to the saints to pray for us), and Requests for Benefits. Anglicans generally accept the first, allow but not require the second and reject the third. Of course in

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<sup>15</sup> Bishop of Nyasaland to Archbishop Lang December 1937, quoted in *Lambeth Conference Report 1958*, (London: SPCK, 1958), 2.94.

<sup>16</sup> J.V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision* (London: SCM, 1963), 155.

<sup>17</sup> M. Perham, *Liturgy, Pastoral and Parochial* (London: SPCK, 1984), 207f.

the breadth of Anglican opinion even this interpretation would be disputed both in the direction of a more blanket rejection and of greater leniency.

Moreover, in many quarters there remains real dis-ease about any distinction between the states of those who have died (as, for example, between Saints and ordinary Christians). This does not preclude opinions that some form of purification of the person occurs after death. But neither the development of a full-blown schema of purgatory (which appears to be the meaning of "Romish doctrine" in Article 22)<sup>18</sup> nor a distinction between "paradise" and "heaven" is warranted. Such a tension is reflected in the variety of Anglican attitudes towards the observance of All Souls' Day.

### **The Critique of Certainty**

In Anglican understanding, the future is held within God's knowledge; the Church's participation in that future, while assured in Christ, does not delegate to the Church absolute surety of knowledge. Thus, there is always a reticence about something as particular as canonisation. Anglicans shy away from too much certainty about who is or will be in the blessed company of the saints in heaven. Thus an unequivocal and eternal statement by a temporal and finite authority is seen as presumptuous, not merely confusing the distinction between God and God's Church, but failing to live in full embrace of the limitations of being a human society in space and time. Incompleteness and provisionality are the essential qualifications of catholic truth. And this is regarded as held and required by the presence of the Spirit of God in the world. Memorials therefore are generated by a taste of the future rather than a belly full of the final banquet.

### **Local veneration, historical perspective and ecclesial control**

Occasionally an aversion to the lack of neatness in such provisionality arises. One example is the requirement that there be a gap of years

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<sup>18</sup> That is, the refined doctrine(s) of a particular period in the Roman Catholic Church, rather than a blanket repudiation of all things Roman.

before someone is allocated a place in the calendar. The 1958 Lambeth Conference Report stated 30-50 years. Michael Perham has disputed this requirement arguing that it is precisely the gap in years that may serve to remove someone from affective memory.<sup>19</sup> There is always the danger that the controlling authority will see itself rather than "the spontaneous devotion of people" (Gibson ACC paper, p. 7) as the fountain-head of the calendar.

The present calendar draft before the Anglican Church of Australia appears to follow the fifty year rule — although significantly it has waived it in retaining John XXIII<sup>20</sup> and adding some of the twentieth century martyrs, such as Oscar Romero — apparently with no concern at his appropriation by the "political left". The earliest Australian calendar redraft, individually proposed by the then Melbourne Assistant Bishop, Felix Arnott, for the Prayer Book Revision Commission of 1963-66,<sup>21</sup> actually failed to include the New Guinea Martyrs (then but two decades past), although whether this was due to considerations of the passage of time or the more general avowal of reducing calendrical entries is unknown.

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<sup>19</sup> Perham, *Communion*, 138.

<sup>20</sup> See L. Mitchell, "Sanctifying Time: The Calendar" in C.C. Hefling, and C.L. Shattuck (eds), *The Oxford guide to the Book of Common Prayer: a worldwide survey* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), 482. John XXIII was included in the AAPB Calendar of 1978. It is tempting to see some irony if not political statement in the honouring of John XXIII in an Anglican calendar, precisely at a time when the reforms of the Second Vatican Council had slowed. Perhaps combining this commemoration with the Ugandan Martyrs' Day (June 3) where both Anglicans and Roman Catholics died for the faith was designed to soften objections to the inclusion as well as indicate the worth of this reforming pope to some Anglicans. On the other hand, for the current calendar, there may simply be the desire to disrupt previous calendars as little as possible — a principle sometimes upheld elsewhere in the Anglican Communion.

<sup>21</sup> The Report acknowledged that an individual produced the calendar, but declined to identify the composer, preferring simply to offer the proposal to the Church. I am grateful to Bishop Donald Robinson and his quite brilliant memory — he served on this commission — for the clue to follow. This was subsequently confirmed by a search in the General Synod archives, for which access I am grateful to the former General Synod Secretary, the Rev'd Dr. Bruce Kaye and the staff at St. Andrew's House, Sydney.

The move to calendrical inclusion of the New Guinea Martyrs had begun some years previously. The Bishop of New Guinea, at the request of his synod, had appointed September 2nd as "Martyrs' Day" in which the deaths of three priests, five overseas and two Papuan missionaries were killed by Japanese invaders. At that stage, New Guinea was accounted as a diocese of the Church in Australia (Province of Queensland), and the Archbishop of Brisbane took up the cause. He expressed little doubt to the 1957 Lambeth Commission that at least the Australian if not the wider Church would follow this local recognition.

However, Felix Arnott's 1966 proposed calendar omitted the day. A sharp response followed. It is not without significance that it was a letter expressing "disquiet" from the Primate<sup>22</sup> of the Anglican Church of Australia on behalf of the Australian Board of Missions and the Bishop of North Queensland<sup>23</sup> that won a reversal. Accounts of the martyrs, the naming of a school and a dedication of a church have since followed. The Episcopalian Liturgical Commission in the United States in 1970 recommended calendrical inclusion, even then noting the day's observation in "several Australian dioceses" (*Prayer Book Study 19*, 68). Subsequent Australian and New Zealand calendars include it, even providing propers.

This episode is instructive. It demonstrates that the notion of a half century delay before inclusion is a cautiousness that will not be followed when popular veneration is strong enough. It highlights that part of the promotion of commemoration is more than the outward manifestations of remembrance and veneration; there must be the means, the ability and the personnel to carry forward or sustain the case for inclusion before those authorities that have the power to decide or at least authenticate

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<sup>22</sup> One of the Metropolitan Bishops is designated "Primate" of the Anglican Church of Australia as a means of expressing the national church and facilitating its operations (such as the revision of the prayer book). See more generally, G. Evans "The Anglican Doctrine of Primacy" *ATR* LXXII (1990): 363-378.

<sup>23</sup> Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Standing Liturgical Commission held at Trinity College, November 20-24, 1967, §13.

through recognition. However, no formal procedures akin to those in the Roman Catholic Church exist, such as would legitimise and rationalise such lobbying. Anglican processes tend to be more oblique and *ad hoc*.

Accordingly, the long-standing efforts by a broad Anglican clergyman in the Diocese of Sydney, the Rev'd John Reynolds Bunyan, to have a much more inclusive calendar adopted, went unrewarded. Oblique processes sometimes run across the principles formally stated to govern inclusion. Such may include an assessment of the standing of the proponents.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, the end of the 1957 Report brought a reminder of order and deference:

the younger communions with their fine enthusiasms can gain nothing but profit from the long disciplines of history in which the older are nursed. (p. 73)

It is the claims to authority and control that are often screened in a commemorative process touting formal principles and remaining obscured under such mystifying expressions as "has been given to us". This area of enquiry however can clarify and challenge motivations for commemoration and perhaps restore authority to the devotion of the ordinary people of God.

### **The calendar and history**

It is no coincidence that past calendars which have been given by male clerics are so full of ordained men. Indeed Bishop Arnott endeavored to reduce the number of commemorations, in accordance with a long-standing Anglican aversion to "overstocking". His solution was to expand the use of general-commemorations-with-a-single-exemplar. Women warranted just one day in his calendar, with the comment that some saint should be taken as "typical of holy women". The Virgin Mary had secured her own days, so his qualified choice was the abbess, Hilda of Whitby.

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<sup>24</sup> A similar point is made from a Roman Catholic perspective by Pierre Delooz "The Social Function of the Canonisation of Saints" *Concilium* 129 (1979): 22-24.

Subsuming all women under one religious type left many with no point of identification in the calendar.<sup>25</sup>

By contrast, in promotion of self-identity, authority and survival, men or more particularly those graced with some form of apostolic succession or divine right, predominated. Hence, the calendar, like the lectionary, is one of the tangible indicators of what the Church values and asks its members at the formal or phenomenal level to value; it draws attention not necessarily to holiness as such *but to the very offices, functions and status of the ones who produce that indicator*. Mary Magdalene might be thought to provide an exception, but she nonetheless had enjoyed a chequered career at the hands of the men who produce the calendars.<sup>26</sup>

There has been an avowed effort to overcome the male bias of the calendar in a recent proposal of the Liturgical Commission of the Anglican Church. 27 entries now commemorate women plus three connected with the Blessed Virgin Mary (representing 16% [18%] of the total number of entries other than holy days of the cycle of the Lord's work of salvation). This compares with 16 entries with six for the BVM (representing 10% [13%]) in the 1978 prayer book.

Commission members indicated a concern to attend to the voice and claims of women in the church beyond that of previous commissions. Yet

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<sup>25</sup> Frere at the turn of this century saw the need for different typ(ologi)es of women saints to be included in the calendar (*Liturgical Reform*, 61). See, more recently, the effort of Richard Symonds, *Far Above Rubies* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1993).

<sup>26</sup> She was granted a Black Letter day in the BCP of 1662, upgraded to Red in 1928 and has survived thus since. Whatever may have been the reasons for her exclusion from the red in the BCP (see the 1957 Report 32-33, and Frere 41 for the speculations), one has yet to question *the reasons for her inclusion* since (though not the fact of inclusion). John Watson's final note to her entry (July 22) is telling: "Mary Magdalen traditionally represents the true penitent." It is as if this is what allows her (as a woman) to be honoured. There is not one shred of biblical warrant for the accent on penitence, as Frere, *Liturgical Reform*, 41 had long ago noted. By contrast, Perham *Communion* 150 wishes to see her counted as the first witness of the resurrection and the feast day moved into Eastertide. See generally, E. Moltmann-Wendel *The Women Around Jesus* (trans J. Bowden) (London: SCM, 1982), 61-90 for a study of the "construction" of the type of Mary Magdalen by men.

a reticence to reconstruct is manifest. The percentage of the 1978 and 1995 calendars given to men remains identical (73%); the new calendar in fact made way for a few more women not so much by deleting entries for men or making the few many, as by reducing Marian and general commemorations.

But the conservatism goes further, resisting recent biblical and early church scholarship. Scholars have demonstrated how extensively the position of women has been lost, and their voices silenced in the literary remains of the first few centuries of the Church. John's Gospel provides a legacy of insight into women's leadership in some early Christian communities. Apostolic confession, commissioning and community as reflected in John's Gospel at least, are focused upon women rather than men,<sup>27</sup> though these traditions seem early to have lost out to other traditions.

The conservatism of most calendars is shown in the unwillingness to allow the title of "apostle" to extend beyond the twelve (as including Matthias), Barnabas and Paul (*cf.* Acts 14:4, 14). By contrast, *A New Zealand Prayer Book* includes a bold description for Samuel Marsden (12 May) acknowledging him as "the Apostle of New Zealand". However, neither the Australian nor New Zealand prayer books are willing to advance Martha and Mary (29 July) beyond a memorial (an ordinary Black Letter Day or "lesser festival"), and this, in the case of Martha at least, for one who carries a mark of apostolicity equal to Peter (Jn 11:27 *cf.* Matt 16:16). Women have been included for good works, pioneering achievements and the like, but there is a danger that women receive such commemoration simply as a bolster to the church as it is (and under threat at that) rather than as a challenge both to the received history and the received structures. With the slight expansion in the proposed new calendar for January 24, "Companions of Paul, *including* Timothy, Titus and Silas", the

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<sup>27</sup> See my "Enscribing Peter as Follower, Listener and Friend" in *Episcopacy* especially 325-326. Compare also E. Schüssler-Fiorenza "A Feminist Critical Interpretation for Liberation: Martha and Mary: Lk 10:38-42" *Religion and Intellectual Life* 3 (1986): 21-36.

invitation was open to add or substitute Phoebe, Euodia, Syntyche and the like but it went unanswered.

This comment upon history shows the limits to the demand for historical veracity. The principle of historicity affecting the construction of calendars has operated in a negative fashion, that is, to remove a saint for whom little if any historical demonstration can be provided. Even this is qualified however, for where a significant number of church dedications to a particular saint exist (St. George for example), historical nervousness is waived. The principle has not generally operated in a positive fashion, that is, to include someone (or raise the level of the honour granted to them) on the basis of new insights granted by historical research. The current Australian Anglican calendar however, marks the beginning of what may prove to be a significant shift — Australian church historians were consulted as to women who might be considered for inclusion. Nevertheless the irregularity of operation of this principle questions whether other principles are granted greater weight, or even whether they are named at all.

For some in the Anglican Communion, this demand for historicity borders on a concession to a secular atheistic model anyway. What is important is "the deeper significance of the life or event commemorated."<sup>28</sup> In any case, biographies of and apologias for people carry the mark of authorial values and intent, as well as a recognition that an audience may need to be persuaded if not "uplifted" by piety and virtue.<sup>29</sup>

An Anglican compromise welcomes the need for constant critique and reassessment as this allows both the retention of a saint AND a criticism of the manner in which that saint has been portrayed. This exposes the range of ideological concerns constructing Saints' "Lives", and the

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<sup>28</sup> Foreword by Archbishop Geoffrey Sambell to J. Watson, *All These Died in Faith* (WA: Westbooks, 1978).

<sup>29</sup> A valuable example of this is provided by Bernard Plonger on "Concerning Mother Agnes of Jesus: Theme and Variations in Hagiography (1665-1963)" *Concilium* 129 (1979): 25-35.

deficiencies in gospel values that result. As Sergei Hackel suggests, the study of a saint is a study of the saint's clientele.<sup>30</sup>

### **A call for evangelical counsel**

An old principle has largely fallen out of sight regarding the observation of saints' days. When Richard Hooker defended the festival and liturgical practice of the Church of England, he argued that it was important that the observation of seasons and days be public.<sup>31</sup> No doubt the traumas of his age where private observations were connected with plots and subversion prompted the articulation. But it also indicates his commitment to the corporate or "common" nature of prayer and the worship of God, an ordered commonality that bound people together in their thankfulness to God rather than fragmenting community by private whims — "it doth not suffice that we keep a secret calendar."

There was also an evangelical edge in the public observation of festival days, providing "to children and novices in religion ...whose first assays and offers towards virtue must needs be raw...the first occasions to ask and inquire of God." One wonders whether the loss of this evangelical principle — which is not the same as the principle called by Hooker, "iteration", that is, the repeated observation of a feast day which refines virtue towards perfection — has come because the calendar and its practice have failed to speak of "good news", precisely because certain people have been unable to find a model for themselves in it.

The lack of justice alone in the disproportionate representation given to men and the narrow prescriptions of what acceptably warrants a woman's inclusion, quenches the fire of good news before it has a chance to ignite. If the Church has come to hold that testimony to the sanctifying work of God in recent times and new places is important, then so too is it important that individuals receive the witness that people such as themselves can also be participants in this gracious activity of God —

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<sup>30</sup> Hackel, "Introduction" to *The Byzantine Saint*, 2.

<sup>31</sup> Hooker, *Ecclesiastical Polity V*, (§§lxx.1, lxxi.2).

without regard for gender, or rather in full regard of gender, or whatever category is mutated into an exclusionary device that proscribes the evangelical attraction of commemorating the saints. One wonders for example what children make of a calendar whose primary inclusion of children is reduced to birth (December 25) followed by slaughter (December 28). The Church would be foolish to think that its calendars and festival observance do not have a negative, exclusionary, anti-gospel consequence for some, nor that they fail to indicate the reality of its faith — "they which cannot be drawn to hearken unto that we teach, may only by looking upon that we do, in a manner read whatsoever we believe," wrote Hooker of "these religious and sacred days."<sup>32</sup> But what do they "read" now? It was precisely this evangelical concern that justified the claimed radical reconstruction of the U.S. calendar by the Standing Liturgical Commission of the Episcopal Church in 1970 (p. 13). But this is a rare admission of the gospel claims and witness of the calendar.

### **The witness to the local and the universal**

Of course, the Anglican Communion holds the embrace of distinctiveness and diversity awkwardly — after all it is part of that aspiration for the future that implies a judgment on the present (*i.e.* we have *not* arrived). On the one hand, it can appear that Anglican practice has nothing of depth to offer. On the other, it can appear that it is filled with contentious groups all trying to conquer the whole for its own particular ethos/belief structure. But these distortions refract a deeply valued freedom of Anglicanism which means that authority within the Anglican communion is diffuse and subtle. Thus Anglicans are shy of a universality or unity that demands uniformity, but rather see universality as embracing temporal and spatial distinctions, distinctions which inevitably involve critique and criticism as the embrace occurs in honesty and integrity. No one person can pronounce for all and each part has a particular contribution to make. Anglican calendars need constant assessment against this value but the willingness to include Anglicans of evangelical and Anglo-Catholic emphasis and saints of other Christian communions illustrates its deep

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, §lxxi.11.

aspiration for a universality which can be both pluralistic and truly catholic.

## **B. TOWARDS AN ANGLICAN APPRECIATION OF MARY MACKILLOP**

To this point Mary MacKillop has remained somewhat in the background, but it has been necessary to provide a basis by which an Anglican appreciation might be voiced. In the juxtaposition of both a universal aspiration and a local sanctity, Anglicans have demonstrated a desire to affirm within itself the history and hopes of the whole Church. At one level this has meant an active interaction with other church provinces within the world-wide Anglican communion, sometimes resulting in the recognition of people otherwise but locally remembered. At another level, there has been a marked ecumenicity about its calendars.<sup>33</sup> And whilst there has been both an eye towards Rome and a reaction against practices guiding some Roman Catholic thinking, this ecumenicity has been so bold as to include, for example, (Saint) Thomas More — a salutary reminder of the less than virtuous practices that one's own church can engage in, just as the remembrance of Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley as martyrs reminds other communions. Moreover, such offers a concrete expression of reconciliation and hope. In such a way, a saint or holy person stands as a testimony to God's gracious work in *human life* rather than in one particular denomination.<sup>34</sup> A saint is so, in and for the (whole) Church, whether that be locally expressed (thus not demeaning particular space and time) or universally acclaimed. This is precisely the understanding that has been reflected in some appreciations of Mary MacKillop, not the least being the study booklet published by the National

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<sup>33</sup> One might even hope that the occasional inclusion of the Maccabean martyrs as a separate feast day in Anglican calendars might become regular, since these are one of the few "martyr-saints" shared with Jews.

<sup>34</sup> The German Lutheran pastor, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, is one important twentieth century example.

Council of Churches, subtitled "An Australian for Australians ... and for the World".

However, for many in the Church it is Mary MacKillop's gender which is a significant factor contributing to the potential for appreciation and remembrance beyond the boundaries of simply the Roman Catholic Church. This is not to perpetuate remembrance of the penitent sinner type but rather of a woman who carved her identity apart from unity/conformity with pre-determined even imposed models.

Of course, in Mary MacKillop's case this is somewhat ambiguous, given that she was a religious and a celibate. This might run the danger of affirming that the only permitted straying from the norm of (penitent) womanhood is when celibacy (=purity) is embraced. And this latter has seen much accent in the more official promotions. One reviewer of the authorised biography lamented that "the real woman and her work have been buried beneath her promoter's determination to stress the virtue, humility and obedience considered proper to a Roman Catholic saint."<sup>35</sup>

Nevertheless perhaps it is precisely the ambiguity which will confer a vitality to her remembrance. Certainly, it is the ambiguity which lurks as gelignite amid a too saccharine domestication of God's Spirit in human life. The irony of male decision-makers beatifying and canonising one who challenged their institution's representatives has not been lost on many people. Although there is a calculated wisdom in preserving one's position by embracing potential threats, I think the *Australian* characteristic attitude towards authority will not allow Mary MacKillop's pacification, and this in spite of what Hans Küng describes as the general concern of the Roman Curia "to turn a 'hierarchy of truths' into a 'truth of the hierarchy'".<sup>36</sup> Anglican sensibilities, always finely tuned to a universalism

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<sup>35</sup> P. Foulkes review of P. Gardiner *An Extraordinary Australian: Mary MacKillop* in the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne's journal, *The Melbourne Anglican* Feb. 1995, 12.

<sup>36</sup> "A World Catechism?" *Concilium* 1993/3: 122. Küng sees the new catechism as but one attempt to make uniform, legitimate Catholic plurality.

that is repressive of local freedom, would echo such a concern, with greater volume. This is most pointedly demonstrated in the calendrical observation of the Ugandan Martyrs (June 3). Australian Anglicans explicitly recognise that both Anglican and Roman Catholics were martyred for the faith.<sup>37</sup> The Roman Catholic calendar on the other hand celebrates only St. Charles Lwanga and his companions. One Roman Catholic commentator has noted the anomaly between canonising only Roman Catholics yet not so restricting the Kingdom of God.<sup>38</sup> Whilst the claim of an Australian for all Australians can quite reasonably be asserted at the local level of Australia, it is more difficult to substantiate this at the level of the Roman Catholic calendar of saints.

It is possibly something of this unease that lies behind the absence of Mary MacKillop in the recent calendar for the Anglican Church of Australia. The Anglican Church's reticence about the demand for miracles might be thought an argument in favour of her inclusion, just as the *novelty* of her appeal to non-Roman Catholics would argue against it. The Anglican and Roman Catholic dialogue group, AUSTARC welcomed the beatification and anticipated the canonisation.

But what is being sought is an assurance that the universal or even Australian recognition of Mary MacKillop is not simply a screen for the purposes of one or other group within the Roman Catholic Church. This may be too much to hope for, given the clamour of a variety of sectional interests to set parameters for the significance of her life. Not only would this be a disservice to Mary MacKillop herself, as her own life becomes increasingly taken from her by a variety of groups each with their own particular agendas. It would also misrepresent the nature of the universality or catholicity which is of the nature of the Church as a whole

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<sup>37</sup> The proposed new calendar simply speaks of "the Ugandan martyrs". The argument for this change is that such martyrs are witnesses to Christ not to a denomination; on the other hand, given that they appear in an Anglican calendar, the noting of the martyrdom of Christians from both communions would be the more striking for Anglican observers, reminding them of the yearning of Anglicans for the undivided Church.

<sup>38</sup> C. Duquoc "Editorial" *Concilium* 129 (1979): vii.

and the proper aspiration of each denomination seeking to present that catholicity. This does not prevent Anglicans sharing with their Roman Catholic brothers and sisters the joy that comes with the recognition of the sanctifying work of God within our midst, but it retains a reserve about the variety of claims attaching to her. Perhaps it will be enough that the largeness of her life be able to withstand such abrogations. Such would indeed be a testimony to her perseverance!

In all the concern about the making of a saint, whether it be in Rome or whether it be in Anglican efforts to forge a distinctive practice over against Rome in a search for a further expression of the undivided Church, there is a very great danger that attention will be diverted from the call and work of God amongst all God's people to make them saints, holy ones. The Saints, Mary MacKillop and one or two life travellers known to few other than ourselves, stand before us as testimonies to our vocation. They are recognised in varying degrees not so as to be set apart by themselves but to be signs of *our* calling. They are our companions in the great communion of saints, encouraging us and praying that we too will find our true humanity in Christ. It is meanness and self-deception of the highest order to assert that our common vocation as saints is the only reality and hence, to repudiate the recognition of particular individuals or groups. But as R.S. Ward, one of the great spiritual directors in the Anglican Communion last century, put it: "Ah! If we Christians only had more spiritual ambition there would be no room left vacant in the heavenly calendar."<sup>39</sup>

On the other hand, the Saints equally provide an ongoing witness that the sanctifying word of God *has* been enfleshed amongst us, taking our flesh and our bone. Saints are made from such as us. The holy one lives in and through the life of the very community which at times bears witness to her or him just as the Saint bears witness to us. One of the great

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<sup>39</sup> R.S. Ward, *To Jerusalem: Devotional Studies in Mystical Religion* (London: Mowbray, 1994), 177.

struggles of Christianity in today's age is to hold the truth of particular and general sanctity together, the local and the universal, neither one obliterating the other, and with each one finding the (w)holiness aspired for, in connection with one another as each is in Christ. And in the end it is this which counts, for it is the Jesus of the Gospel who provides (for) the criteria for holiness, not the canonising Church.

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