

Editorial

Crisis Management and Continuity

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It is truly the case that we live in interesting times, not just for the global human community, but also for Anglicans who seek to fulfil their vocation in that global community. There are crises in abundance and the Anglican Communion has not been exempt from this experience, nor should it expect to be. Yet crisis management takes a lot of energy and resources, and it also creates a quite particular tension for those involved. As they struggle to deal with the immediately present it is very easy for the longer term, the far horizon, to fade from view. This is true not just in the eschatological sense, but in the ordinary sense of losing sight of the longer-term issues that a historical tradition such as Anglicanism both inherits and is in the process of creating.

The present crises arise from the synodical action of a diocese in Canada and the General Convention in the United States of America. These matters have affected not just global relations in the Communion, but they have also deeply engaged the church communities in those two countries. It is not part of the vocation of the *Journal of Anglican Studies* to comment on these immediate crises, but it is our role to engage with the longer-term underlying issues. Indeed, so to engage is itself a contribution to the immediate. It is in that spirit that I have taken a particular step in contributing an article to this issue of the Journal. It is included through the usual processes as an article on power, order and plurality.

This issue of the Journal also contains two groups of articles which similarly relate to the matters currently before us. Philip Thomas re-examines the agreement between Seabury and the Scottish bishops. That Seabury was ordained a bishop in Scotland is well known. What Philip Thomas draws out is the nature of the agreement that went with that ordination. Ephraim Radner, writing from within the Episcopal Church of the United States of America also reaches back to post-revolutionary eighteenth-century America with his example of Samuel Johnson, in

order to develop an argument about anti-pluralism in Anglicanism. Robert Withycombe also deals with the question of continuity with England. Just a decade after the founding of the Commonwealth of Australia, Australian Anglicans asked themselves, and some English lawyers, if the Church of England in Australia was in fact still legally part of the Church of England. Americans clearly perceived that after the revolutionary war they were in a new and legally independent situation. Australians, even with a new Commonwealth constitution, were not so clear, and it seemed to their advisers that they were not legally separated from the Church of England. The two examples show up how diverse are the relations between the various parts of the Anglican Communion. That diversity is part of the furniture in the present troubles.

The second group of articles concerns the working of authority in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Timothy Yates brings his well-established reputation as a missiologist to bear on the hitherto inadequately examined question of the use and meaning of 'missionary bishop'. Josiah Idowu-Fearon reminds us of the history and challenges of engaging with Islam in the largest province in the Communion, Nigeria.

Legal matters stand to the fore in the comprehensive article by Norman Doe in our occasional series on church-state relations in different parts of the Communion.

Our focus on these longer view matters are offered as part of our commitment to the study of the Anglican tradition. They are also offered as a contribution to the present stress of crisis management. We wish the Commission set up by the Archbishop of Canterbury every blessing in their work and pray for imagination and vision in what they do.