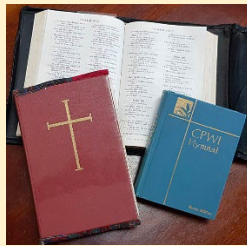




ANGLICAN IDENTITY



Anglican Identity

Preface

There are many Anglicans who make bold to say that they are “Christians who happen to be Anglican”. Such a statement often begs the question as to what is the intention and motivation of the individual in making such an assertion. At best it may be perceived as an affirmation of one's identity as a Christian, as distinct from any other religious identity or atheism. At the same time, it is premised on an assertion that to be Anglican is to be not intrinsically Christian, but something which is tangentially related and not in conflict with one's profession of the Christian faith.

On the other hand, there is the reality of those who would claim with all earnestness the fact that they are “cradle Anglicans” but are unable to offer any clear statement of what it means to be an Anglican, apart from the fact that they worship in the Anglican Church and have no intention of ever leaving.

The assertion “Christian who happens to be Anglican”, betrays a lack of understanding of what it means to be Anglican and is often a way of pandering to a prevailing dominant religious culture which alleges that Anglicans are not “saved” and as such are not Christians, as we do not speak of our faith in the same language and tones as they do, neither is our liturgical way of worship consistent with their worship expressions. To that extent, the assertion of being “Christian who happens to be Anglican” may be either a reflection of naivety in relation to what it means to be Anglican, or succumbing to the definitions of others regarding our approach to our commitment to Christ, and how

our discipleship finds expression in terms of our belonging to a community of faith with whom we can journey on the pilgrimage of life.

This brochure seeks to clarify for Anglicans in fairly simple language our identity as Anglicans and the fundamental expressions and formulations of the Christian faith that define who we are. It is therefore the hope that this material will be used for the purpose of individual or group study and reflection, thereby enabling and further undergirding our commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord, and as faithful members of the worldwide fellowship of Churches known as the Anglican Communion.

++Howard

Introduction

Anglicans around the world are united in a common bond of fellowship through baptism, belief in Christ and a commitment to social justice for the sake of testifying to our relationship with God. It is a worldwide fellowship, facing numerous challenges, yet spurred on especially since the first meeting of Bishops of the Communion in the 19th century, which later became known as the Lambeth Conference. Since then, renewed efforts to face difficulties have been made towards healing and reconciliation, without compromising the essential teachings of this worldwide body of faithful Christians.

This brochure on Anglican identity is for all Anglicans, and though it is written with an adult audience in mind, it has material that may be used as resource to be adopted and adapted for children of all ages. It is also a useful companion to the bookmark that is on the Diocese's website and is an expansion of the ten points of Anglican identity, with details designed to inform, educate and expand the horizon of those who identify as Anglican.

Anglican identity, as readers will discover, addresses itself to a wide range of issues to include spirituality, Church community, places where congregations, dioceses and provinces are located, and the mission of the Church. These four areas, adapted from the book, ***Being Anglican Part 1: Learning from our history*** (2021), are discussed in detail in this brochure with

subheadings designed to assist the reader to identify key areas of Anglican identity and how these relate to the overall structure of this worldwide fellowship.

Spirituality

Anglican identity is shaped by a long history which goes back to the first century of the church and is therefore spiritual in that we are:

□ Saved by grace

Anglicans believe that we are saved, are being saved daily, and will be saved. As scripture says, "For by grace you have been saved..." (Eph 2:8-9). To be saved is to be set free from sin with the ability to serve God, not because of works, but by the unconditional love of God revealed through Jesus Christ. We believe that sacraments given by Jesus, that is, Baptism and Holy Communion, along with other sacramental rites, such as marriage and ordination, are symbolic recognition and spiritually focused means by which the grace of God is given or mediated to us.

□ Formed by Scripture

Often referred to as the Word of God, Anglicans believe Scripture reveals the Word, Jesus, to us. We believe the Word of God, spelt with a capital 'W,' describes the incarnation (John 1:14), that is, God becoming flesh in Jesus. It is this Jesus whom we affirm as the

Christ/Messiah, (the anointed of God) and whom we encounter in the public reading of Scripture; hence the announcement in Church, 'A reading from the Word of God...' Both private/personal and public readings of Scripture reveal Jesus as the incarnate Word or Son of God, and this applies to the Old and New Testaments. Another collection of scripture known as the Apocrypha, though not treated with the same value, is nevertheless accepted as useful for teaching good morals and principles, and when read in worship is able to reveal Jesus as the Word of God (BCP p.400).

□ **Centred on Sacraments**

A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace (Book of Common Prayer, p 409). Seven sacraments, namely Baptism, Holy Communion, Confirmation, Marriage, Ordination, Reconciliation, and Anointing of the sick (healing) are generally accepted as normative; however, some Anglicans affirm the two ordained by Christ, that is, Baptism and Holy Communion and speak of the other five as sacramental rites.

□ **Guided by Reason**

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your **mind** and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these" (Mk 12:30-31).

From as far back as the 16th century, especially through the work of Richard Hooker, a priest and teacher in the Church of England and the author of the book, *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, (who emphasized the three pillars of the Church: scripture, tradition, and reason), recognized that scripture does not have all the answers to the questions and challenges we face on a daily basis. With the advent of modern scientific developments, reason is used to help us make sense of the responses required in living out the call to follow Christ as disciples.

□ **Experienced God in the heart**

'If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved' (Rom 10:9); "I felt my heart strangely warmed" (John Wesley).

Rev John Wesley, a priest in the Church of England in the 17th century, who was trained at Cambridge University, describes his experience of conversion as "I felt my heart strangely warmed." This was in response to the preaching of the gospel by Moravians at an open-air meeting at which Wesley was present. He testifies to feeling the power of God at work in his heart and that the experience was overwhelming.

Christian life is an experience of the heart, which is the human response to the love of God poured out in and through Jesus Christ. This response is seen in the Prophet Isaiah (1: 6), Jeremiah (20:9), the Psalmist (Psalm 51), St Paul (road to Damascus), Wesley and others. The Holy Spirit continues to prompt the hearts of

people and initiates encounters with God which are felt in worship, some charismatic movements, and other contexts as well.

□ **Inspired by the imagination**

“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people; your sons and daughters will prophesy, your **young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams**” (Joel 2:28-32). One cannot overlook the Pentecost experience seen in Acts 2:17 as prophesied by Joel. The popular song “Daniel’s God surely will deliver” by Christine and the Marvetts is one of the many songs which highlight ways by which people are inspired by the Spirit. Poems, hymns, and choruses are some of the other ways Christians have expressed how God has been revealed to them. Humans also respond in the Spirit by using images to express their experiences of God. Just as reason is used to describe our encounters with God, in the same way the imagination, through the media of art, craft, drama, hymns, poems, etc, often composed in local languages, are used to give glory to God who worked to deliver in the past (Exodus 15) and is working in similar ways in the present.

Church Community

Anglicans are members of the worldwide Anglican Communion with 85 million members and over 40 Provinces. Anglicans are therefore:

□ catholic

Anglicans remain faithful to the historic traditions of the church which date back to the Early Church. These traditions include the ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, the creeds, the sacraments, order of worship and worship on the Lord's day (Sunday). Whereas Catholic spelt with a capital 'C' is associated with the Roman Catholic Church, when spelt with a common 'c' it means universal. In other words, when we say we are a part of the holy catholic church, it does not mean that we are Roman Catholics (whose head of the Church is the Pope who resides in Rome), but that we see ourselves as a part of the body of Christians, and continue to associate ourselves with the practices and teachings of the Church before it was split between East and West in 1054 AD.

Additionally, we are guided annually by a liturgical calendar, which is founded on the birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension of Jesus, Pentecost and other major events of our salvation history. This includes daily readings for common worship; the Eucharist; and Daily Offices (Morning and Evening Prayer). Anglicans also continue to remember and are inspired by the lives of the saints, faithful Christians of the past (universal and indigenous) in its liturgical life.

□ Self-governing

Anglican churches are made up of congregations or parishes, cures, deaneries, ecclesiastical regions (supervised by Suffragan bishops), Dioceses (supervised by Diocesan Bishops) and Provinces (supervised by Archbishops/Primates). Each Province

and Diocese is independent and governed by rules known as Canons. General meetings or synods of Provinces and Dioceses are held on a regular basis, usually annually, at which reports are presented, including audited financial statements, policies developed and strategies for implementation, designed for specific contexts, cultures and languages.

□ **Associated with their respective locations**

Anglican Churches are associated with the places in which they are located, and by so doing follow the references in the New Testament as to how churches are named, such as the Church in Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, etc. To this end, Churches in the Caribbean are associated with Barbados (Diocese of Barbados), Jamaica (Diocese of Jamaica & the Cayman Islands), Trinidad and Tobago (Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago. In other instances territories are grouped such as Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands, Windward Islands and North Eastern Caribbean and Aruba.

Canterbury is another specific example of a place where Anglican Churches are located. That Diocese is supervised by the Archbishop of Canterbury who is the senior bishop and principal leader of the Church of England and is also the ceremonial head of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

□ **Inclusive**

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor” (Lk 4)

Ministry is offered to all people, including those who do not believe

in God, those of various religions, denominations, age, status, gender, class or citizenship.

Anglicans follow the example of Jesus who reached out to those excluded and marginalized by society such as the poor, widows, lepers and children. This example was popular in the late 18th and 19th century in England where, with the advent of the industrial revolution which saw children working in factories, the church was at the forefront advocating for an end to child labour, the establishment of trade unions and improved working conditions.

It was advocacy for human dignity and healthy lifestyle for the majority black people enslaved in the Caribbean and elsewhere which led to the abolitionist movement led by Anglicans such as Thomas Buxton (1786-1845) and William Wilberforce (1759-1833). Buxton joined forces with Wilberforce and other abolitionists to include women. The most famous of these women include Mary Wollstonecraft, Hannah More, Mary Morris Knowles, Elizabeth Heyrick and Lucy Townsend who deserve to be remembered for their advocacy and boldness in standing up for justice, truth, rights and dignity of all persons.

Christian social justice, a movement geared towards advocacy for workers' rights, was spearheaded by John Keble and other Tractarians. Writings of the Tractarians denounced activities which undermined the value of workers and instead affirmed equality of all persons, with the need for the rich to leave their superiority at the church door and the poor to be viewed as equal members of the Church. Keble, Newman, and Pusey, Anglican priests in that

period, were strong advocates for affirming the roots of the Anglican Church going back to the Early Church. Along with other advocates, most of whom later became Roman Catholics, they wrote about the evils of a capitalist system; hence, they were known as Tractarians or writers on various issues relating to the life of the Church. These were published between 1833 and 1844.

Other ways Anglicans engaged in social justice were the creation of Church schools and children's homes in which the Anglican Church continued to engage society, as well as actively participated in the formation of credit unions, trade unions and building societies, thereby including in advocacy for social justice a better life for persons who were otherwise excluded from society.

□ **A worldwide movement**

Anglicans are part of a worldwide movement which spread with the expansion of the British Empire, especially beginning in the 16th century. Later, in 1888, the bishops at Lambeth, a gathering of Anglican bishops in England every ten years, agreed to four marks or identity labels, known as the Lambeth Quadrilateral. These are common to the independent churches of the Anglican Communion irrespective of where we are in the world. These are:

1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God (see also the discussion above on scripture) and "containing all things necessary to salvation."
2. The Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as the sufficient statement of

the Christian Faith.

3. The two Sacraments, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord or Eucharist, ministered with the unfailing use of Christ's words of institution and of the elements of bread without yeast and wine ordained by Him.
4. The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called by God into the unity of His Church.
5. Theological reflection informed by the application of scripture, tradition and reason.
6. Part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.
7. Corporate worship characterized by a Book of Common Prayer.
8. Part of the worldwide Anglican Communion.
9. A catholic, evangelical and ecumenical Communion.
10. Resurrection faith informs our observance.

Anglicans are therefore catholic (being a part of the universal Church/body of Christians), orthodox (having views that are regarded as true and correct, especially as it relates to our Christian tradition and the beliefs held by the Early Church) and evangelical (proclaiming the Gospel in a manner which helps to bring about personal and social transformation in the lives of others).

Within this worldwide movement is a number of networks designed to uphold the independence of each member church

yet affirming the interdependence which we share in Christ and with each other. Some of these networks include the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), Anglican Alliance (AA), colleges and universities of the Anglican Communion (CUAC), Anglican indigenous peoples' network (AIPN), Anglican Communion Environment Network (ACEN), among others.

- **Has a global structure**

Instruments of Communion is the term used to describe the structure of the Anglican Communion. There are four instruments of the Anglican Communion. These include:

(1) Archbishop of Canterbury

(2) the Lambeth Conference

(3) The Anglican Consultative Committee (ACC)

(4) the Primates Meeting.

First among these instruments is the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, though not functioning as a “pope” with ultimate legal, canonical or ecclesiastical authority, nonetheless provides leadership as “first among equals” with all bishops of the Anglican Communion. Second, the Lambeth Conference which began its meetings in 1867, meets every ten years in Canterbury and is based on invitations issued by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Third, the ACC, created at the 1968 Lambeth Conference, was established to coordinate international mission and ecumenical work across the Communion and monitor activities. Meetings of the ACC are held every three years and comprise representatives

of clergy and laity from various Provinces across the Communion. Fourth, the Primates meeting, was established in 1979 with the Archbishop of Canterbury inviting all the Primates to meet with him to deliberate on issues affecting the Communion and to pray, reflect and discern the best ways to respond collectively.

In more recent times the four instruments have determined that there is the need to establish and coalesce around the five marks of mission as a means of focusing on faithfulness discipleship.

Anglican Mission

□ **Five Marks of Mission**

A mission to plant churches around the world is a central focus of mission in the Anglican Communion, and while it has taken various forms over the years, such as a decade of evangelism, its current focus on the five marks of mission is designed to put this life together into practice and by so doing adopt the discipline of the five marks of mission:

1. Proclaim the good news (TELL),
2. Teach, baptize and nurture new believers (TEACH),
3. Respond to human need by loving service (TEND),
4. Transform unjust structures of society, challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation (TRANSFORM),

5. Safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth (TREASURE).

Jesus' teaching on mission in Matt 4:17, Mk. 1:14-15, Lk. 4:18, Lk. 7:22 and John 3:14-17, points to not five different foci of mission but describes ways in which Anglicans and all Christians participate in the coming kingdom of God. Five ways in which the mission of Jesus may be carried out are:

□ *Evangelism*

Evangelism is sharing the good news of Christ with others. John Wesley, an Anglican priest who is credited as the founder of Methodism, is a good example of practicing evangelism, as he chose to do ministry among the poor of London who came into the city seeking a better life. Numerous others, before and after, including Wilson Carlisle of the Church Army, continued to do ministry among the poor and marginalized as a means of affirming the principle of Matt 25, that is, Jesus is still interested and attentive to those on the margins of society. Anglicans are just as interested and responsive to those who are in need, and we do so through the practices of evangelism and nurturing discipleship.

□ *Nurturing discipleship*

In 2016, the ACC launched the season of intentional discipleship. Designed to last for ten years, its focus was on small group meetings and discussions, along with prayer and discernment, with a view to highlight conversion as an ongoing activity of the Holy Spirit and an invitation to grow in the life of Christ. Bible study,

spiritual reading and other practices are means of deepening commitment to intentional discipleship and these enable members to nurture new disciples, especially through encouragement of men, women, boys and girls.

□ *Empowering men, women, boys and girls*

Anglicans focus on the health of the family as one means of living out the reality of the kingdom of God in the world. The Mothers Union (MU), founded in 1876 by Mary Sumner, focuses on healthy family life with the recognition of the different family forms which exist across the Anglican Communion. Steps are taken to uphold the sanctity of marriage and encourage all mothers and fathers to take responsibility for the training of their children. Parents are also encouraged to pray for their children and strive to live a wholesome family life. In this way Anglicans prioritize respect for women, men, boys and girls and take steps to foster Christian education designed to bring out the best in them.

□ Safeguarding

In 2022 the Lambeth Conference put out a statement, referred to as a Call, on the value of safeguarding, which is the affirmation that institutions within the Anglican Communion are safe spaces for everyone. With this in mind, a Safe Church Commission was created to spearhead the development of material, policies and guidelines to facilitate best practices in Dioceses and Provinces across the Anglican Communion. Prior to the establishment of the Commission, the Diocese of Jamaica

and the Cayman Islands promulgated a Code of Conduct for clergy and church workers designed to foster and facilitate safeguarding.

With the establishing of the Safe Church Commission and the integral involvement of the Diocese and Province of the West Indies, steps are being taken to integrate safeguarding into ministry and mission practices, especially through the promotion of safe culture in which the welfare of every person, particularly the most vulnerable, is prioritized. As such, the Diocese embraces the policies, procedures and guidelines developed by the Safe Church Commission (<https://www.anglicancommunion.org/community/commissions/the-anglican-communion-safe-church-commission.aspx>) and is committed to putting these into practice, with the goal of creating an enabling environment where women, men, girls and boys are able to feel safe to participate in all aspects of church life.

□ *Christian Education*

Sunday School was founded by Anglicans and other Christians in England in the 18th century. It has been and continues to be the context in which Christian education and formation take place and is a space where children learn how to follow Christ as Saviour and Lord. Sunday School, as one means of Christian education, was first a context for teaching children to read and write, using the Bible as a text. Over the years it has grown throughout the world and is a context where children learn bible stories and

engage in other activities in order to foster maturity and growth in their relationship with Christ. Over time, a more comprehensive approach to Christian education was required and hence Anglicans moved to establish schools for a more holistic approach to education, moral development and safeguarding creation.

□ **Safeguarding creation**

In 2022 the Archbishop of Canterbury launched the Anglican Communion Forrest with the idea that Anglicans around the world will adopt the practice of safeguarding creation, including the planting of trees, and everything possible to protect and preserve the environment. This is in keeping with the fifth mark of mission, in which we are encouraged “to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.” Other safeguarding practices include reduce, reuse and recycle in order to prevent further rise in the earth's temperatures, flooding and other natural disasters. These are just some of the issues which the church must grapple with as part of our responsibility as stewards of God's creation.

Anglican identity is therefore grounded in a spirituality which takes seriously the power of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives. It is informed by a church life rooted in catholic, orthodox and evangelical traditions and committed to a mission, marked by the five marks of mission, while taking seriously the call to be stewards as part of the practice of discipleship and nurturing new disciples.

Conclusion

Anglicans therefore constitute a diverse group of people around the world who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. He is God present with us and, by virtue of his death, resurrection and ascension, calls all humanity into a relationship of love characterized by trust and a commitment to making life worth living in the world. Anglican identity is therefore grounded in a spirituality rooted in Old Testament tradition and practiced by Christians since the first century. Our church life takes into account our global reach and the various structures which make us function effectively for the sake of witnessing to the love of God. We are to be found in various places where congregations, Dioceses and provinces are located and our mission is summed up in the five marks of mission. In this way we remain focused, relevant and resolute in our commitment as noted in one of the post Communion prayers "...send us now into the world in peace and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you, and all persons in you, with gladness and singleness of heart, through Jesus Christ our Lord..." (BCP, p.148).