

# Anglican Ritualism in Colonial South Africa



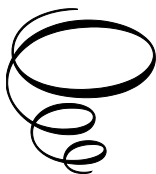
# Anglican Ritualism in Colonial South Africa:

*Exploring Local Developments  
and Practice 1848-1884*

By

Andrew-John Bethke

**Cambridge  
Scholars  
Publishing**



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This book first published 2023

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-1517-6

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-1517-8

... If you indeed cry out for insight,  
And raise your voice for understanding;  
If you seek it like silver,  
And search for it as for hidden treasures ...  
Then you will find the knowledge of God.

Proverbs 2: 3-5 (NRSV)

Earlier versions of Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 have been published previously as journal articles. Parts of their contents is used with kind permission from the publishers (UNISA Press and Cambridge University Press respectively).

Andrew-John Bethke, “Fledgling South African Anglicanism and the Roots of Ritualism”, *Studia Historiae Ecclesasticae*, vol. 46, no. 3 (2020): 1-18.

Andrew-John Bethke, “Examples of Anglican Ritualism in Victorian South Africa: Towards an Understanding of Local Developments and Practice”, *Journal of Anglican Studies*, vol.18, no. 2 (2020): 162-179.

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## ABSTRACT

This book examines South Africa's colonial contribution to the spread of what is known in popular and academic literature as "ritualism" during the mid-nineteenth century. It also seeks to add a South African voice to the growing contemporary scholarship in this area. Three considerations shape the study: definitions (high churchmanship, Tractarianism, ecclesiology, ritualism and Anglo-Catholicism); perceptions of what was often termed ritualism by clergy and laity; and portrayals of ritualism in public discourse. To understand these considerations in context, the study examines the role of South Africa's first Anglican bishop, and his creation of an independent local church, in fostering a climate conducive to ritualism. This is followed by an examination of the protests against some of the early developments which were considered ritualist by colonial congregations. Then a few examples of advanced ritualism are analysed. Three distinct waves of ritualism are identified: early (1848 through to the mid-1850s), characterised by architecture and symbolism; middle (mid-1850s through to about 1870), characterised by lay opposition to recognised Anglican ceremonial; and late (mid-1860s through to the end of the century), characterised by the introduction of the "six points" of ritualism not sanctioned in the Anglican prayer book tradition. The author finds that after the middle period of fairly robust antagonism towards ritualism, a general movement towards ritualist practices began to emerge. The sources consulted include letters, newspaper and periodical articles, reports, archival material and several unpublished theses.



## INTRODUCTION

The search for Anglican identity has been a hallmark of Anglican studies for several decades.<sup>1</sup> Disagreements over the ordination of women and homosexuality have tested the bounds of Anglican belief and practice to their breaking point in the recent past. Shifts in power dynamics have meant that decisions regarding theology and churchmanship are no longer the exclusive domain of Western white men, but rather of a much wider variety of voices, including those from the developing world. Contesting identities are nothing new in the Anglican Communion. Indeed, the birth of the Communion was initiated because of an identity crisis perpetuated by Bishop John William Colenso's challenge to traditional mid-nineteenth century biblical interpretations. In reality, Anglican identity has been in flux from its birth during the English Reformation.

Long before the idea of an Anglican Communion was ever conceived,<sup>2</sup> factions within the established Church of England resulted in two polarised camps, namely evangelicals<sup>3</sup> and high churchmen. In the

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<sup>1</sup> Authors such as Paul Avis have made the study of Anglican identity their primary endeavour. Others, such as erstwhile Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, have also contributed to the dialogue.

<sup>2</sup> Colin Podmore claims that the first time the term "Anglican Communion" with its modern meaning was used was in 1847. See Colin Podmore, "The Anglican Communion: Idea, Name and Identity", *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2004): 42.

<sup>3</sup> Anglican Evangelicalism is not discussed in depth in this book, but a brief historical and theological note is necessary here. Historically, in Anglicanism there have been waves of Evangelicalism: the advent of Methodism (sometimes considered an Evangelical breakaway of Anglicanism); the influence of William Wilberforce (1759-1833) and the anti-slavery movement; the Clapham Sect (founded in 1780); and the nineteenth century revival of Evangelical zeal in relation to mission work (the Church Missionary Society, in particular, was strongly supported by Anglican Evangelicals). For the most part, Evangelicals focused on atoning sanctification and were often characterised as "enthusiastic". For a detailed description of Evangelicalism in Anglicanism during the nineteenth century, see Andrew Atherstone, "Anglican Evangelicalism", in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism: Partisan Anglicanism and*

sixteenth century, these two camps were the Reformed-minded on the one side, and those who wanted to keep the church broadly Catholic, but without the Pope, on the other. Those on the more Protestant side contested a number of issues from the beginning, namely the retention of aspects of the Latin liturgy (some parts simply translated into English – the *Book of Common Prayer 1549* in some sections stuck quite closely to the Sarum Rite), ceremonial, celebrations of certain saints' days and vestments. Some radicals left the Anglican Church altogether and developed what has been called the Puritan Movement. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these two camps gradually evolved into distinct strands of theological thought and worship practice. By the early nineteenth century, crises in politics and church administration prompted a call for reform from a splinter group of the high church faction. This group came to be called the Tractarians.

“Tractarianism” was a movement of both reform and revival within in the Church of England related to a much older strand of Anglican practice, which focused on making Anglicans aware of the Catholicity of their church. As a movement it has been characterised as a scholarly and theological phenomenon, but its practical outworking has also received more attention recently. This movement, and others related to it, will be clearly defined for the purposes of this book in Chapter One. Successive generations of Tractarians pushed the idea of Catholicity further than just theological concepts and began looking to Rome for models of architecture, liturgy, ceremonial and music.

The outer vesture of Catholicity within Anglicanism has often been termed “ritualism” in both popular and academic literature. Indeed, for some early critics, discussed in Chapter Three, ritualism embraced doctrine and symbolism as well. In this study, ritual refers to an oral recitation, series of actions, or set of symbols which informs some kind of regular performance related to religious worship.<sup>4</sup> In Anglican history, though, ritualism

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*its Global Expansion, 1829-c.1914*, edited by Rowan Strong (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Ritual forms the basis of a modern scientific field called ritual studies which examines human behaviour. Its findings are particularly useful to anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists. Ritual has three main characteristics: patterns; repetition; and function. Ritual, in this definition, is not limited to Christian or

generally refers to the ceremonial practices which were used to augment and underpin the theology of a rite (mostly Baptism and the Eucharist). Thus, ritualism can include vestments, manual acts such as crossing oneself, genuflection, dressing the altar, and can extend to architecture and the symbolic nature of worship. This study is an exploration of ritualism within the colonial South African Anglican context. As in Nigel Yates' work, in this book "the word 'ritualism' [covers] those ceremonial developments in the Church of England [and colonial Anglicanism in South Africa] that were considered at the time to be making its services approximate more closely the services of the Roman Catholic Church ..."<sup>5</sup>

### **Background to this book**

There is a fair amount of published scholarship on this topic related to the Church of England and, more recently, about other autonomous churches in the Anglican Communion, but almost nothing about the South African development and interpretation of ritualism. Given that the local church has been influenced so strongly by ritualism, this book seeks to provide some international context to the movement and an analysis of some archival material concerning ritualism as it unfolded and developed in South Africa.

The timeframe for the book is from the official beginning of the Anglican Church in South Africa (1848 is when the first Bishop of Cape Town arrived to take office in his see) to the 1880s when published material concerning extreme ritualist parishes begins to emerge fairly regularly. As the book seeks to demonstrate, this time period reflects a natural development of ritualism, broadly concomitant with trends in the wider Anglican Communion, but slightly later than similar developments and protests in England; that is, the periphery was slightly behind the metropolitan.

This is a historical study which relies on archival material drawn from a number of South African libraries and archives. The material is limited to the Anglican Dioceses of Cape Town, Grahamstown, the Orange

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religious activity. Rituals form an integral part of society in general. See James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 19.  
<sup>5</sup> Nigel Yates, *Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain, 1830-1910* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1.

Free State and Natal (according to their boundaries during the mid- to late nineteenth century). The study examines published materials, reports and letters only.

## Historical approach

The majority of historians in this particular field do not employ an explicit theory through which to analyse their data, although one could argue that many are intuitively using hermeneutical tools. William Pickering is alone when he specifies his theoretical framework.<sup>6</sup> He addresses ritualism (which he calls “Anglo-Catholicism”) using sociological theories. However, he does not claim to provide a historical account of ritualists, but only a sociological analysis *based on historical sources*. My aim is not to propose a sociological question, but rather to uncover perceptions of ritualism by analysing what clergy and laity wrote about it. My main approach is to review historical archival material through comparison with similar contemporary international contexts documented through recent historical research. Comparisons with similar colonial situations may shed light on whether there were cultural biases and trends which emerged through contact with Anglican ritualism. Like George Herring, I will try to allow the historical material to speak for itself by providing as much contextual background as possible.<sup>7</sup> However, I do not assume that an *urtext* can ever fully reveal its meaning, especially at a distance of nearly 150 years, nor through a single researcher’s prejudiced lenses. Thus, I am more clearly allied to processes and theories of projective hermeneutics, in which the researcher seeks to discern historical meaning by providing extensive historical contextual background, and “that the interpreter plays an active role in creating the interpretation.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> W. S. F. Pickering, *Anglo-Catholicism: A Study in Religious Ambiguity* (London: SPCK, 1991), 1-3.

<sup>7</sup> George Herring, *The Oxford Movement in Practice: The Tractarian Parochial World from the 1830s to the 1870s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), viii.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Patterson and Daniel Williams, *Collecting and Analysing Qualitative Data: Hermeneutic Principles, Methods, and Case Examples* (Champaign: Sagamore, 2002), 12.

## Structure and historical period

My approach in this book is to provide a broad Anglican context within the wider culture of British imperialism in order to analyse specific local case studies of anti-ritualism and ritualism. The book is divided into two parts. The first part investigates the historical context of ritualism in Chapters One and Two; while the second part examines selected South African cases of opposition to ritualism in Chapter Three and examples of advanced ritualism in Chapter Four.

At first, an introduction to the history of high churchmanship, Tractarianism, ecclesiology and ritualism is presented as a general guide to the theology and practices of each movement, and how they originated. Then the South African context before the arrival of Bishop Robert Gray is presented. A significant part of the story of the success of ritualism in South Africa is the role of Gray. It was his general toleration of Tractarianism and his determination to create an independent church free of state interference which proved foundational to the development of ritualism. As will become apparent in Chapter Two, Gray was not a supporter of rituals which did not conform to the *Book of Common Prayer 1662*. Yet, the constitution of the local independent church allowed for review *and* revision of the liturgy – ultimately a catalyst for far-reaching changes in the twentieth century.<sup>9</sup>

Chapter Three examines cases of opposition to ritualism and briefly compares them with similar situations elsewhere in the local church and the Anglican Communion to offer a clearer idea of South Africa's position globally. To understand local responses to ritualism, an understanding of how clergy and laity defined it is necessary. Evidence of reactions to ritualism for this book has been found mostly in church newspapers, personal letters and secular newspapers (as well as in some secondary sources) which are housed in archives around the country – primarily the College of the Transfiguration and Cory Library (Grahamstown); Wits University (Johannesburg) and the National Archives (Cape Town).

One focus of my study, which runs through chapters three and four, is how the approaches to and protests against ritualism changed over time.

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<sup>9</sup> Andrew-John Bethke, "A Brief History of Anglican Liturgy in Southern Africa: Liturgical Developments from 1908-2010", *Journal of Anglican Studies*, vol. 51, no. 1 (2017): 58-87.

In the late 1840s and early 1850s, the interpretation of ritualism in South Africa seems to have changed quite dramatically. However, in the later 1870s, and going forward, ritualism took on a much more advanced and Catholic meaning both for laity and clergy. This significant shift may be related to the formal foundation of the Church of the Province of South Africa in 1870 as an autonomous entity, legally detached from the Church of England, and thus not answerable to the secular courts in England.

Chapter Four focuses on several cases of advanced ritualism in South African parishes, comparing their ideas of progression with similar Anglican contexts elsewhere in the world. As in the cases of opposition to ritualism, most of the evidence of advanced ritualism appears in church newspapers, personal letters and secular newspapers. Again, the comparisons will help to situate South Africa within the overall discourses on Anglican ritualism.

This book focuses on colonial parishes and clergy rather than ritualism in the mission context. The approach to ritualism in colonial congregations was quite different from those in mission stations. In missions, ritualism could be introduced as a norm, whereas in colonial congregations, existing expectations negated sudden changes. An aggressive ritualistic push seems only to have taken off in the last decade of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when, for example, the ritualistically influenced Society of St John the Evangelist (also known as the Cowley Fathers) sent missionaries to South Africa.<sup>10</sup> The date of their arrival, however, falls beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, Tractarianism and ritualism did influence mission work in South Africa before the 1890s. There is a significant gap in the literature relating to mission and ritualism in global Anglicanism which this book does not attempt to fill.

Analysis of historical archival material is usually provisional in nature because there is often no way to thoroughly verify the veracity of opinions and assumptions of remaining documents/pictures, etc. For

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<sup>10</sup> For a brief introduction to the ethos and early missions of the Society of St John the Evangelist (even though these do not related to South Africa specifically), see Rowan Strong, "Origins of Anglo-Catholic Missions: Fr Richard Benson and the Initial Missions of the Society of St John the Evangelist, 1869-1882", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 66, no. 1 (2015): 90-115.

example, some voices may not be represented because their opinions have not been recorded in writing. While historians can never fully escape such difficulties, they can provide thorough contextual analysis and comparisons with similar situations, where these are documented, or they can retrieve the oral memories of the communities. These analyses help to nuance the existing documents which are recorded in archives. Another important point is to acknowledge any personal biases which may affect interpretations of the text. My approach is to provide both international and local context, allowing contrasting voices to co-exist in order to provide nuanced meanings to developments and specific situations; to offer the views of the enthusiasts *and* detractors of ritualism where these exist; and to compare local situations with similar international situations to see if what occurred in South Africa mirrored or prompted international currents. In this way, the history I document and analyse will contribute to a wider conversation which is always open to debate, correction and augmentation.

The study confines itself to the earliest waves of ritualism in South Africa, i.e. 1848 to the 1880s. Limiting the time period obviously limits the number of primary sources, but there is enough to make some provisional conclusions, especially in relation to international currents of the same period.

## **Literature relating to ritualism in the Anglican Communion**

In the past few decades, there have been a number of substantial studies of the phenomenon of Tractarianism and the ritualist movement which followed in its wake.

The earliest study which is relevant to this book is Pickering's.<sup>11</sup> He provides a sociological analysis of what he calls Anglo-Catholicism by unpicking some of the inherent ambiguities of the proponents and practices of this movement in England. His analysis stretches from the movement's beginnings in the 1830s through to its modern incarnations in the late twentieth century. His focus is on the behaviour and traits of Anglo-Catholic clergy and their supporting laity. He also offers interesting insights as to why ritualism may have come to the fore in the first place. In relation to my

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<sup>11</sup> Pickering, *Anglo-Catholicism*.

work, his findings concerning the training and context of English clergy form a helpful basis, primarily because most clergy in early South African Anglicanism were born and trained in England.

Peter Nockles followed soon after Pickering with a historically-based contextual review of Tractarianism built on a thorough analysis of existing archival sources.<sup>12</sup> Of particular value to my work is his section on the various names the movement has accumulated in its history. He defines each name and shows how it is historically more accurate to consider Tractarianism as a movement within the context of numerous closely related movements of similar aims. What is important to note is that Tractarianism was not necessarily the progenitor of ritualism or, more specifically, advanced ritualism.<sup>13</sup>

Another important work is John Reed's analysis of the cultural politics which surrounded Tractarianism and ritualism.<sup>14</sup> The work of Reed and Nockles provides a thorough contextual basis for the development of Catholic thought within Anglicanism. What is notable about Reed is that he begins to question the long-held belief that ritualism was a natural outgrowth of Tractarianism – although, sadly, he does not pursue this at great length. A much more recent monograph by Herring on this topic provides convincing evidence that Reed is correct, essentially undermining a great many previous historical assumptions.<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, these assumptions even emerge in the historical sources in South Africa, i.e. the linking of Edward Pusey's name with so-called ritual innovations – Pusey was one of the leaders of the Tractarian movement (discussed in Chapter One). Herring's work is based on a PhD thesis he completed several decades ago, but his work has clearly been augmented over years of continuous and focused research on this one topic. His book appears to be his only publication and represents a vast resource of accumulated and related knowledge. Neither Reed nor Herring is without critics, and their conclusions are sometimes controversial. In terms of my work, what is

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<sup>12</sup> Peter Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>13</sup> Herring, *The Oxford Movement in Practice*, viii-ix.

<sup>14</sup> John Shelton Reed, *Glorious Battle: The Cultural Politics of Victorian Anglo-Catholicism* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1996).

<sup>15</sup> Herring, *The Oxford Movement in Practice*, 192.



interesting is that their conclusions appear to hold true for the South African context; a context which was not so encumbered by English religious establishment norms nor national legislation regarding ritual and liturgy.

Yates has often been considered the leading scholar in the field of British Tractarianism, ritualism and the related fields of church architecture and liturgy. He has written extensively about these topics, but his most relevant books for this study revolve around Victorian Anglo-Catholicism.<sup>16</sup> Yates' attention to the sources is of importance, because he goes to great lengths to prove his conclusions through various means, amongst others using census details to ascertain the true demographics of ritualist activity. However, Herring somewhat trumps him by going one step further. He investigates the clergy with Tractarian credentials to see if the success of the movement was as great as it purported to be.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, Yates does offer great insight into the religious ferment in England at the time of the Victorian Tractarians and ritualists, and this is helpful for comparison with Reed and Nockles.

Focused case studies which impact this research relate to the essence of Tractarian practice; class and churchmanship; and movements against ritualism. William Franklin offers fascinating insight into the mind of Edward Pusey.<sup>18</sup> He argues that Pusey's main aim was to centre entire communities around their parish church, which itself would offer numerous outlets for Christian worship, work and charity. Franklin shows that this ideal was inspired by Pusey's time in Germany and his experience of communal Catholicism. Experimental parishes in Leeds and Wantage, which Pusey financed, are contrasted in Franklin's study to demonstrate Pusey's yearning to fulfil these aspirations (discussed more fully in Chapter One).<sup>19</sup> However, he concludes that Pusey's long-term legacy was not the community-based approach to Christian life, but rather his contribution to

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<sup>16</sup> See Yates, *Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain*.

<sup>17</sup> Herring, *The Oxford Movement in Practice*, ix-x.

<sup>18</sup> See R. William Franklin, "The Impact of Germany on the Anglican Catholic Revival in Nineteenth-Century Britain", *Anglican and Episcopal History*, vol. 61, no. 4 (1992): 433-448; and R. William Franklin, "Puseyism in the Parishes: Leeds and Wantage Contrasted", *Anglican and Episcopal History*, vol. 62, no. 3 (1993): 377-395.

<sup>19</sup> Franklin, "Puseyism in the Parishes: Leeds and Wantage Contrasted".

the *Tracts for the Times*.<sup>20</sup> Sadly, he also concludes that Pusey always played second fiddle to John Henry Newman. Comparing Pusey's practical work with the mission and diocesan work of several early South African clergy definitely shows significant correlations and the possible strong influence of Pusey, rather than the more radical ritualists.<sup>21</sup>

The social class of clergy and the laity played an important role in the growth and acceptance of Tractarianism and ritualism. In 1851, when the English government commissioned a census of religious worship, the commissioners found that class was a significant determinant of religious affiliation. Towns and cities with large "genteel" populations tended to garner more Anglican support, whereas those which had greater working-class populations tended to prefer non-conformist worship.<sup>22</sup> Thus, Anglicanism tended to cater to the needs of the upper and middle classes in England itself. This phenomenon seems to have travelled along with Anglicanism as it moved out into the colonies. Joseph Hardwick is an authority on this particular aspect of Anglican history.

The reforms towards Catholicism in Anglican theology and practice began in the two major English universities, namely Oxford and Cambridge. It was, likewise, the men who went to these institutions who were most influenced by the ferment of ideas which surrounded Catholicity. University education was largely a privilege of the upper and middle classes; most lower-class clergy were trained in colleges.<sup>23</sup> Hardwick shows that in the initial waves of church expansion in the British Empire during the mid-nineteenth century, recruiting clergy with a university education (and thus, a high social standing) proved difficult. He also shows that the bishops of these new areas of expansion lamented the low society of the

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<sup>20</sup> The *Tracts for the Times* was a series of ninety essays, some as short as a page, others resembling full scale treatises. They were written by the founding theologians of the Tractarian movement, mainly John Keble, Edward Pusey and John Newman. Their subject matter was mostly related to doctrine (see Chapter One).

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Leighton Frappel, "'Science' in the Service of Orthodoxy: The Early Intellectual Development of E.B. Pusey", in *Pusey Rediscovered*, edited by Perry Butler (London: SPCK, 1983), 1-33.

<sup>22</sup> Bruce I. Coleman, *The Church of England in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: A Social History* (London: Historical Association, 1980), 34-36.

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Hardwick, "Anglican Church Expansion and the Recruitment of Colonial Clergy for New South Wales and the Cape Colony, c. 1790-1850," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 37, no. 3 (2009): 361-381.

clergy serving in the colonies.<sup>24</sup> Most colonial bishops appointed after the 1840s were funded by the Colonial Bishops Fund, a movement supported by a number of high churchmen and laity.<sup>25</sup> There were three consequences related to this movement and its support of colonial bishops. Firstly, the conception of mission they adopted tended to be grounded in high church and Tractarian doctrine, i.e., the bishop represents the unity of spiritual authority and thus establishes the church wherever he is present.<sup>26</sup> Secondly, the church played an educational role as the bearer of English culture.<sup>27</sup> Thirdly, the selected colonial bishops were likely to have been university educated with high church leanings and sometimes Tractarian sympathies. The resulting social standoff between the predominantly lower-class clergy active in the colonies and newly appointed high-class clergy was, at times, heated.

Important analyses in this book relate to the backlash against ritualism; what actually constituted ritualism in the minds of ordinary people; and why congregations reacted so strongly against the introduction of “ritual”. James Whisenat’s study on anti-ritualism in England in the 1870s is a yardstick against which some of my own findings can be measured.<sup>28</sup> Another recent study, which examines popular opposition to ritualism in Newfoundland, especially during the tenure of Bishop Edward Feild, provides further material for comparison.<sup>29</sup> In Calvin Hollett’s assessment, the tension between social classes (the ordinary people as opposed to the bishop and factions of the clergy) seems to have driven most of the strife; that alongside a strong pro-Methodist and equally robust anti-Roman-Catholic ethos, both related to the social and racial make-up of the colony (many of the Irish immigrants, for example, being Roman Catholic).

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<sup>24</sup> Hardwick, “Anglican Church Expansion and the Recruitment of Colonial Clergy for New South Wales and the Cape Colony”, 371.

<sup>25</sup> Howard Le Couteur, “Anglican High Churchman and the Expansion of Empire”, *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 32, no. 2 (2008): 193-215.

<sup>26</sup> Le Couteur, “Anglican High Churchman and the Expansion of Empire”, 196.

<sup>27</sup> Le Couteur, “Anglican High Churchman and the Expansion of Empire”, 199.

<sup>28</sup> James Whisenat, “Anti-Ritualism and the Moderation of Evangelical Opinion in England in the Mid-1870s”, *Anglican and Episcopal History*, vol. 70, no. 4 (2001): 451-477.

<sup>29</sup> Calvin Hollett, *Beating Against the Wind: Popular Opposition to Bishop Feild and Tractarianism in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1844-1876* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press), 2016.

Perhaps most strikingly, Hollett concludes that the leadership model of the brand of Tractarianism which Feild espoused was at odds with the more democratic nature of colonial life.<sup>30</sup> Hardwick has termed the colonial penchant for democratisation “informal Presbyterianism”<sup>31</sup> – a phenomenon which was certainly alive in South Africa at the time too.

Victorian anti-ritualism was, undoubtedly, related to anti-Catholicism. John Wolffe investigates “organised, explicit anti-Catholicism, a phenomenon primarily apparent in white settler colonies.”<sup>32</sup> He attributes some of the reaction against Roman Catholicism to the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829 and the rise of Protestant evangelicalism.<sup>33</sup> In other words, at least some of the reaction was rooted as much in politics as religion. Imperial aspirations, and their theological underpinnings, also played a part. There were those, for example, who believed that the rise of the British Empire was a sign of the triumph of Protestantism over Catholicism.<sup>34</sup> Interestingly, anti-Catholicism was also associated with the liberties of English society, i.e., the perceived tyranny of Catholicism and, in particular, the papacy, went against the hard-won independence of English politics and religion. It is not difficult to see how, in the popular mind, Catholicism and a sense of enslavement, or at the very least dependence, were intertwined. Such sentiments travelled to the colonies and were already being disseminated in pamphlets in the Cape Colony in 1823.<sup>35</sup> As late as 1868, Wolffe demonstrates that Grahamstown (the second oldest Anglican see in South Africa) witnessed a strong anti-Catholic surge in the local press, led by an Anglican clergyman.<sup>36</sup> However, the strength of ultra-Protestantism did not last in South Africa. By the turn of the century, beyond

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<sup>30</sup> Hollett, *Beating Against the Wind*, 294.

<sup>31</sup> Joseph Hardwick, *An Anglican British World: The Church of England and the Expansion of the Settler Empire, c. 1790-1860* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 8.

<sup>32</sup> John Wolffe, “Anti-Catholicism and the British Empire, 1815-1915” in *Empires of Religion* edited by Hilary Carey (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 44.

<sup>33</sup> Wolffe, “Anti-Catholicism and the British Empire”, 45.

<sup>34</sup> Wolffe, “Anti-Catholicism and the British Empire”, 45.

<sup>35</sup> Wolffe, “Anti-Catholicism and the British Empire”, 46. Wolffe’s account of Parker (Protestant) and Bird (Catholic) in the Cape is revealing (46-47). Bird was eventually relieved of his colonial position because he refused to make an anti-Catholic oath.

<sup>36</sup> Wolffe, “Anti-Catholicism and the British Empire”, 47.

the ambit of this study, the Imperial Protestant Federation (an English body established to maintain the Protestant ethos of the British Empire) was “concerned ... with High Church tendencies in the (Anglican) Church of the Province of South Africa.”<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately the Imperial Protestant Federation did not go on to clarify exactly what they meant by “High Church” in this context, so it is not certain if they were targeting ritualism *per se*, but they do seem to be focusing on movements in Anglicanism towards Roman Catholicism, either theologically or ritually.

Most of the literature above relates directly to Tractarianism and ritualism in Victorian England. However, there is a growing body of scholarship which documents the movement’s work around the Anglican Communion.

The most recent is a collection of essays edited by Steward Brown and Nockles.<sup>38</sup> In it, they and their fellow historians trace the advancement of Tractarianism in Wales, Scotland, Europe, Australia and the USA. Significantly, though, there is no chapter on South Africa, or indeed on Zanzibar (another strong-hold of Anglican ritualism in Africa). What is of help with this collection is that it provides an international context for the developments which occurred in South Africa. Ritualism did not occur in a vacuum, but “flourished” because of international conditions and figures which promoted it. There are case studies in this volume which link well with material I discuss in ensuing chapters.

A case study of advanced ritualism outside of England has also been particularly important. Warren Platt’s detailed history of Rev. Thomas McKee Brown’s influence on advanced ritualism in New York City reveals a similar context which became increasingly the norm in South Africa: a sympathetic bishop, considerable media interest, and sufficient lay support.<sup>39</sup> There are several studies concerning ritualism in the Anglican Church in Canada which are of interest and which mirror aspects of the

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<sup>37</sup> Wolffe, “Anti-Catholicism and the British Empire”, 55.

<sup>38</sup> Steward J. Brown and Peter B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement: Europe and the Wider World 1830-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2012.

<sup>39</sup> Warren C. Platt, “The Rise of Advanced Ritualism in New York City: The Rev. Thomas McKee Brown and the Founding of the Church of St Mary the Virgin”, *Anglican and Episcopal History*, vol. 85, no. 3 (2016): 331-369.

South African context, including Christopher Headon<sup>40</sup> and Laura Morgan's<sup>41</sup> work.

What was the aim of the colonial Anglican Church and how did this inform ritualism? Hardwick suggests that one primary motivation of the church was "to keep existing believers within the Christian fold"<sup>42</sup> rather than focus on overt mission work. In other words, "by fostering closer ties between colonial institutions and their English counterparts, as well as emphasising the idea of a pan-global 'Christian Commonwealth' through the auspices of the established church, it was believed that the loyalty of settlers throughout Britain's empire could be secured."<sup>43</sup> An equally important goal was to cement and perpetuate British (more accurately English) culture within the colonies. Alex Bremner's work on British colonial gothic architecture is just one study which examines the far-reaching impact of English culture on the world. It also highlights the extent to which a culture of cathedrals, and their concomitant hierarchical strata of status, dominated Anglican colonial activity.<sup>44</sup> The Gothic revival which Bremner examines had a far wider ambit than Tractarian and ritualist Anglicanism, but the class of bishops which ministered in the colonies certainly influenced the type of British culture which was exported abroad.

The South African contributions to the study of Anglican history all consider the influence of Tractarianism. Peter Hinchliff's history of the Anglican Church of South Africa sometimes reads like a defence of Tractarianism through some selective readings of the sources.<sup>45</sup> However, his work still stands as the basis from which much can be gained and

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<sup>40</sup> Christopher Headon, "Developments in Canadian Anglican worship in eastern and central Canada, 1840-1868", *Journal of Canadian Church Historical Society*, vol. 17 (1975): 26-36.

<sup>41</sup> Laura Morgan, *Class and Congregation: Social Relations in Two St John's, Newfoundland, Anglican Parishes, 1877-1909* (Memorial University of Newfoundland MA thesis, 1996).

<sup>42</sup> Hardwick, *An Anglican British World*, 3.

<sup>43</sup> G. Alex Bremner, *Imperial Gothic: Religious Architecture and High Anglican Culture in the British Empire c. 1840-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 3.

<sup>44</sup> Bremner, *Imperial Gothic*.

<sup>45</sup> Peter Hinchliff, *The Anglican Church in South Africa: An Account of the History and Development of the Church of the Province of South Africa* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963).

compared. Ian Darby challenges Hinchliff on a number of points regarding ritualism, and indeed, Darby's consistency to the existing sources paints a much more balanced picture of emerging Anglicanism in South Africa (particularly in Natal).<sup>46</sup> Another important collection of essays, edited by Frank England and Torquil Paterson, offers some insight into aspects of South African Anglicanism's ethos.<sup>47</sup> In particular, England discusses the Tractarian impact on South African Anglicanism and shows some of the most important legacies of this influence. Some of his insights have been helpful in relating to the flourishing of ritualism in particular areas of South Africa. While there are a number of further important historical studies which detail historical events and documents,<sup>48</sup> they do not focus specifically on ritualism. John Suggit and Mandy Goedhals include important insights into the character of Robert Gray (the first Anglican bishop in South Africa) which is an important aspect of the context of this book.<sup>49</sup> For my work on ritualism in the Diocese of Natal, Jeff Guy's biography of Colenso proved helpful as it discussed a number of incidents related directly to ritualism.<sup>50</sup>

In summary, this book provides an examination of a particular identity of colonial Anglicanism as it unfolded in South Africa, and as reflected in existing archival material. While the literature review is not exhaustive, it does address work by the most representative scholars, especially Yates, Nockles, Reed, Pickering and Herring. Other literature related to anti-Catholicism, Anglicanism and classism, and Anglicanism and British imperial ambitions has also been included.

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<sup>46</sup> Ian Darby, *Anglican Worship in Victorian Natal* (University of Natal MA thesis, 1977).

<sup>47</sup> Frank England, "Tracing South African Anglicanism" in *Bounty in Bondage: The Anglican Church in Southern Africa*, edited by Frank England and Torquil Paterson (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1989), 14-29.

<sup>48</sup> Cecil Lewis and G. E. Edwards, *Historical Records of the Church of the Province of South Africa* (London: SPCK, 1934); John Suggit and Mandy Goedhals (eds.), *Change and Challenge: Essays Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Arrival of Robert Gray as First Bishop of Cape Town (20 February 1848)* (Cape Town: CPSA, 1998); Olga Muriel Suberg, *The Anglican Tradition in South Africa: A Historical Overview* (Pretoria: UNISA Press, 1999).

<sup>49</sup> Suggit and Goedhals, *Change and Challenge*, 7-25.

<sup>50</sup> For example, see Jeff Guy, *The Heretic: A Study of the Life of John William Colenso 1814-1883* (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1983), 56-61.





# **PART ONE**

## CHAPTER ONE

# ANGLICAN RITUALISM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In everyday Anglican speech, the terms “high churchmanship”, “Tractarianism”, “Anglo-Catholicism” and “ritualism” are often used interchangeably. For the most part, too, “high church” tends to be a multipurpose expression for theology or worship which in some way tends towards perceived notions of Catholicism. Despite their varied popular use, these terms often have very specific meanings in context and in this book will carry particular nuances which require explanation. This chapter provides historical context for high churchmanship, Tractarianism, the Ecclesiological movement, ritualism and Anglo-Catholicism, and introduces some of the reasons for opposition towards these movements.

Early Anglicanism has been described as adopting “Calvinist theology whilst at the same time maintaining an almost completely pre-Reformation administrative structure and a liturgy that tried ... to offer a bridge between the two.”<sup>51</sup> Calvinist influences are discernible in church architecture, worship and music in England until the mid-nineteenth century. However, experiments with and waves of revival of pre-Reformation ceremonial rose to prominence occasionally within high church ranks before the nineteenth century. For example, despite the relatively narrow guidelines proscribed in the revisions of the *Book of Common Prayer* (1559 and 1604), and Archbishop Matthew Parker’s (1504-1575) *Advertisements*, bishops and clergy were able to revive a number of rather advanced ceremonies<sup>52</sup> in the decades immediately preceding the English Civil War (1642-1651).<sup>53</sup> These bishops and clergy

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<sup>51</sup> Yates, *Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain*, 12.

<sup>52</sup> East-facing altars, candles on the altar, incense, bowing and crossing, some vestments and even an elaborate celebration of Candlemas. See Yates, *Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain*, 18-21.

<sup>53</sup> Yates, *Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain*, 17-20.

became known as Laudians, after their leader, the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud (1573-1645). Importantly, though, they were not *introducing* these innovations, but *reviving* them. In essence, they were reminding the church of its past connection with the Christian traditions of Catholicism, while maintaining its Protestant ethos.

In the eighteenth century, non-juror<sup>54</sup> bishops created their own liturgies, which allowed for a ritualistic interpretation, particularly because they assumed the doctrine of the real presence at the Eucharist.<sup>55</sup> But these liturgies were not officially used in the mainstream Church of England, although they influenced the Scottish Episcopal Church. There is evidence that pockets of ritualist activity continued throughout the eighteenth century, and that pastoral activity and faithful worship were sustained.<sup>56</sup> Thus, as Reed suggests, it was probably exaggeration when Tractarians, ecclesiologists and ritualists claimed that the church was lethargic and negligent during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>57</sup> Likewise, it cannot be claimed that the work of the Tractarians and ritualists in reinterpreting its theological and ritual ethos refashioned Anglicanism. It is probably more accurate to say, as Herring suggests, that “the real historical significance [lies] in viewing the Tractarian clergy as part of a broader picture of reform and revival evident within the Church of England from at least the 1830s.”<sup>58</sup> However, as this book will show, ordinary people and clergy alike interpreted the changes taking place in the church as ritualist or Romanist, even if the developments were not necessarily partisan.<sup>59</sup> In that sense, at least, it may have seemed to nineteenth century Anglicans that there was an imminent threat that the Church of England was making moves towards Roman Catholicism or papal tyranny. For this reason, and within this broad understanding of nineteenth century reform and revival, I briefly

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<sup>54</sup> Non-jurors in England were those who, having sworn an oath of allegiance to James II, felt compelled to maintain that oath after the sitting king had been deposed and replace by William III.

<sup>55</sup> Yates, *Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain*, 25.

<sup>56</sup> Yates, *Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain*, 27-38.

<sup>57</sup> Reed, *Glorious Battle*, 8.

<sup>58</sup> Herring, *The Oxford Movement in Practice*, 8.

<sup>59</sup> For example, Reed claims that lay people, in particular, could use the accusation of “ritualism” against a priest in an attempt to settle scores. See Reed, *Glorious Battle*, 35.

examine the historical context of high churchmanship, Tractarianism, ecclesiology and ritualism so that the full range of theological ideas and practices which were often termed “ritualist” can be understood in later chapters.

## High Church

Two distinct and historic factions existed in mainstream Anglicanism in the opening decades of the nineteenth century, namely the high church camp on the one extreme, and the evangelical on the other. The high church party had been a consistent feature of Anglicanism from its birth. One of its characteristics was an emphasis on beauty in worship, which sometimes included the incorporation of candles on the altar, use of incense and Eucharistic vestments and so forth. Clerics such as Laud in the early seventeenth century were of this mould. Strongholds of this type of high churchmanship seem to have existed well into the eighteenth century. Yet high churchmanship was not confined by these characteristics. Indeed, as is shown below, it took on an intellectual character related to doctrine more than to the externals of worship. Thus, when Tractarians, “ecclesiologists” and ritualists emerged, they were not reinventing Anglicanism. They were, in reality, reviving aspects of its character which had been active for much of its history, but which were, for the most part, periphery in nature. Indeed, even high churchmen were allied to aspects of a Catholic revival, particularly in terms of liturgy and decorum, but not necessarily ceremonial.

“High church” has accumulated shades of meaning since its first use in Anglicanism during the seventeenth century.<sup>60</sup> By the early nineteenth century, a proponent of high church ideals was usually someone who valued the apostolic succession and its expression through the traditional three-fold ordained ministry (deacon, priest and bishop); the inherited liturgy and sacraments of the church; the supremacy of the bible, along with the accepted creeds; the importance of the Early Church and its witness; sacramental grace and its outworking in good works, embodied in self-denial and charity (as opposed to the evangelical focus on individual spiritual conversion); and a belief in the divine right of a royal line of rulers,

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<sup>60</sup> Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context*, 27.

exemplified in a strong bond between church and state.<sup>61</sup> In short, they were theological and spiritual conservatives willing to accept and perpetuate the received *status quo*. Their conservative stance earned them the title “orthodox” in some literature.<sup>62</sup>

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, there appears to have been a fair amount of fluidity and contact between different strands of Anglican thought which broadly held many or all of the above-mentioned ideals. Such conservative schools of thought tended to be characterised by serious intellectual discourse on matters of faith, but did not lead into Unitarian or Dissenting positions. Any scholars, for example, who challenged the doctrine of the Trinity would not have been considered orthodox high churchmen. Likewise, anyone who tended towards Dissenting views of church polity would not have been accepted.

By the mid-nineteenth century, high churchmen continued to hold the ideals described above, but in an effort to negate the effects of liberalism on the one hand and burgeoning ritualism on the other, their beliefs about liturgy, ritual and theology became more rigidly conservative, so that not all orthodox “thinkers” could be accommodated under the umbrella term of “high church”. Because of their traditional tendencies and reluctance to rock the political boat, high churchmen were sometimes nick-named “high and dry”. Yet, while they tended not to be “pioneers, exploring and expanding the limits of acceptable belief and ceremonial ... they often sheltered those who were, and they were responsible for many of the most significant changes brought about in the course of the Church revival ...”<sup>63</sup>

## Tractarianism

The two historic and polarised camps of Anglicanism could not contain the wide variety of thought which began to ferment in the established church as responses to the high-tide of Romanticism, the staggering growth of the British Empire, and the Industrial Revolution. Numerous efforts to address these fermenting currents arose in what historians generally agree were

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<sup>61</sup> See Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context*, 25-26 and Platt, “The Rise of Advanced Ritualism in New York City”, 332.

<sup>62</sup> Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context*, 28-31.

<sup>63</sup> Reed, *Glorious Battle*, 112.

multifaceted waves of ecclesiastical transformation, each with specific priorities.<sup>64</sup>

One of these broader movements sought to revive an awareness of the Catholicity of Anglicanism. It centred around three theologians at Oxford University (hence the “Oxford Movement”) – John Keble (1792-1866), Edward Pusey (1800-1882), and John Newman (1801-1890) – and emerged in the 1830s around the time of John Keble’s assize sermon.<sup>65</sup> Several sympathetic groups sprang up soon afterwards with what at first glance appeared to be similar aims. While these groups generally traced their geneses to the influential group of Oxford theologians, they tended to advance new, more specifically Catholic teachings, seldom looking to the triumvirate for acceptance or guidance. For that matter, Keble, Pusey and Newman did not always view developments made in response to their teachings favourably.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, it was with these three scholars that much of the serious nineteenth century Catholic ferment took shape and gradually entered mainstream English thought.

The term “Oxford Movement” is not the only descriptor of this initial influential group of priest-dons. In academic literature, the term “Tractarianism” seems to be preferred, perhaps because it refers to the published tracts which cemented the theology and beliefs of the movement in the popular imagination. Nockles says, “There were theological, literary and cultural precursors [to Tractarianism] elsewhere, parallel awakenings on the European continent, but at heart, it was the University of Oxford and its colleges, and in particular, though by no means exclusively, one college, Oriel, which provided the *genius loci* for its birth, growth, early struggles and its denouement.”<sup>67</sup> Indeed, a fair number of the early Tractarian enthusiasts had been students at Oriel, and had been tutored by Keble, Pusey or Newman. The significance of this academic genesis is that the movement

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<sup>64</sup> See Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context*, 25-43; Pickering, *Anglo-Catholicism*, 17-23; and Reed, *Glorious Battle*, 3-28.

<sup>65</sup> Assizes were courts which heard criminal cases presided over by a judge from London and assisted by a local jury. They met twice a year. A sermon was often preached before the court began sitting.

<sup>66</sup> See Reed, *Glorious Battle*, 16-21.

<sup>67</sup> Peter Nockles, “The Oxford Movement on a Oxford College”, in *The Oxford Movement: Europe and the Wider World 1830-1930*, Stewart J. Brown and Peter B. Nockles (eds) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 12.