



Book Reviews

Michael P. Jensen, *Sydney Anglicanism: An Apology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012), pp. 185, ISBN 978-1-61097-465-3.
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The unique variant of Anglicanism practised in Sydney, Australia has been the target of severe criticism in recent years. In that context, Michael Jensen's book is a welcome explanation and defence of the Sydney Diocese from one who knows it well. But the book has a second purpose, in that it presents a programme for the future addressed to his fellow Sydney Anglicans. He writes well on both counts, but he is more likely to succeed on the latter count than the former.

Jensen, who until recently taught at Moore College, where the vast majority of Sydney clergy are trained, is the son of the recently-retired archbishop, Peter Jensen. This gives him a unique insight into the history and current dynamics of Sydney Anglicanism, as well as an acute awareness of some of the charges that have been levelled against the diocese in the past. These charges are well known: that the push for lay presidency threatens to take the diocese out of the Anglican Communion, that the firm opposition to the ordained ministry of women needs to change and, perhaps most significantly, that what Sydney Anglicans practise is not, in fact, Anglican. Jensen rebuts each of these charges – and many more besides – in turn.

His defence of lay presidency – more properly 'lay administration' – is perhaps most compelling. He sets it in the context of the 'lay revolution' which has taken place in the church since the 1960s. Lay people are now more involved in aspects of the service than ever before. Why not also let them preside at the Eucharist? This is particularly true if one has, as Sydney Anglicans do, a relatively low view of ordination. Jensen does not, however, answer why the church is right to accommodate itself to one set of rapid changes in the church – those around lay ministry – but stand firmly opposed to other such changes – those involving the ministry of women, for instance. Jensen bases his argument for lay presidency on Scripture's silence on the subject. That may explain the difference, but arguments from silence are difficult to sustain. Having defended the idea, Jensen concludes the chapter on lay administration by encouraging Sydney Anglicans to give up their advocacy of the issue. Few other Anglicans have adopted the cause and it threatens to cause division in the Anglican Communion. There are other, more important issues, and this is one on which they can 'show patient endurance for the sake of others' (p. 159).

The argument against the ordination of women, Jensen acknowledges, is likely the hardest task he has. Here his arguments are less persuasive. He frames the issue in terms of authority in the Bible and the complementary roles of men and women. But the arguments feel disconnected. The conclusions on authority are interesting but it is

harder to see how they apply to the question at hand. More significantly, Jensen is silent on the passages of Scripture which hold up women as leaders of the faith community. This is all the more surprising because elsewhere Jensen writes that the 'Spirit may come down on both sides of a question' (p. 172). Given the truth of that claim – and the mixed witness of the Bible – it is unclear why he is so firmly on one side.

From the outset, Jensen makes clear his desire to 'surmount the old pattern of tirade and counter-tirade' (p. 7) in writing about Sydney Anglicanism. His writing shows an evident desire to be even-handed in his treatment of his opponents. Even so, he trips up at points. In his discussion of the Reformed thread of the Anglican tradition, he calls historian Eamon Duffy 'revisionist' and Diarmaid MacCulloch 'renowned' (p. 94). Could the difference in adjectives be due to the fact that MacCulloch's work more closely supports the argument Jensen wants to make? Former Australian primate Peter Carnley, and liberal Anglicanism in general, become favourite targets. There are repeated digs at both that detract from the otherwise elevated tenor of the argument. The strongest part of his chapter on the Anglican tradition is the appeal he makes to his fellow Sydneysiders, that they 'relish' the rich legacy they are a part of and remain within that tradition, 'both to strengthen it and be strengthened by it' (p. 108).

The book's major silence is on the question of sexuality. Jensen may think the argument for excluding gay and lesbian people from ordination to be so clear that it hardly needs to be made. But this is a central issue in Anglican ethics and the silence is puzzling. Jensen is also largely silent on Sydney Diocese's relationship with the breakaway Church of England in South Africa. Jensen is committed to relationships within the Anglican Communion, so it is particularly confusing why he provides no explanation for this unusual inter-Anglican relationship.

Even those – such as this reviewer – who began with a disposition other than that dominant in Sydney will find in this book a reasoned, thoughtful defence of the kind of Anglicanism Jensen professes. They are unlikely to be persuaded by his arguments but they will certainly learn more about the reasons behind the practices. In a time of great misunderstanding in the Anglican Communion, the importance of such knowledge is not to be underestimated. But one hopes that Sydney Anglicans will benefit most from this book. Jensen laments the defensive posture from which his colleagues approach the world: 'If fear is the basis from which Sydney Anglicans speak then they will find themselves talking only to each other and becoming increasingly incomprehensible to those on the outside' (p. 124). Jensen's appraisal of the current state of Sydney Anglicanism and his articulation of the future direction of the diocese has the most to offer to Sydney Anglicans themselves.

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Andrew Goddard, *Rowan Williams – His Legacy* (Oxford: Lion Books, 2013), pp. 336.
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Don't be put off by the title. Andrew Goddard recognizes that Rowan Williams' 'Christ-centred, kenotic theology' negates the whole project of legacy-building (p. 313).