

GEO-CULTURAL AND LEGAL INSIGHTS INTO THE ONGOING DEBATES WITHIN THE ROMAN AND ANGLICAN COMMUNIONS

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Abstract

Ongoing debate and conflict on various issues within both the Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. and the Church of England mirror some of the social debates playing out in society at large in the United States and Great Britain. Some of the differences in how this conflict is handled between the two churches has roots in the different historic social and legal structures within those two countries. Regional difference within the United States, some of which have their origins in the colonial era, present a further element contributing to difference in response to the debate and conflict. Even though American Anglicanism turned out quite different from Anglicanism in England, yet the Church of England is moving down the same road as the Episcopal Church several decades later. Meanwhile, the Roman Communion, the structure of which is far more in common with the Church of England than the Episcopal Church, is experiencing some (but certainly not all) of the same issues seen within the Episcopal Church. Indeed, the Roman Church has historically been at odds with the United States. Yet, many internal changes started occurring in the Roman Communion at the same time as in the Episcopal Church, but, like the Church of England, at a slower pace. Many of the changes in the Roman Communion and the Anglican Communion appear on surface to be quite different and even at odds with each other. However, they have many underlying similarities, even if the outward expression of those similarities is different. What is perhaps most intriguing is the modification of the Roman Communion stems from ideas popular in the United States for over two centuries that had, until recently, been thoroughly rejected by the Papacy. This study considers the social and legal frameworks of the United States and Great Britain, their origins, and their relationship to both the Anglican and Roman Communion to gain insight into the inner working of the Episcopal Church, the Church of England, and the Roman Communion in managing the conflict and tension of ongoing and often contentious internal debates.

Keywords: Geography, Culture, Religion, ArcMap, Socio-Legal Analysis

1. Introduction

The internal conflict and changes within the Episcopal Church of the United States of America (ECUSA), the Church of England, and the Roman Communion mirror similar debates ongoing in society at large in the United States and Great Britain. To understand these situations better, it is important to understand the underlying legal and social differences between the two countries. Those legal and social differences have their roots in antiquity. To understand the situation of today, it is necessary to journey to the time of the American colonies.

The structure of the Episcopal Church was heavily influenced by the social paradigm of the British-American Colonies, while the Church of England, especially as an official state church, was naturally a product of the environment of Great Britain. The former is more localized and decentralized, while the latter is more centralized and hierarchical, much like the Roman Catholic Church from whence it came.¹

This study seeks to investigate geo-cultural and legal differences between the United States and Great Britain in order to provide insight into the underlying background contributing to the crises facing the Anglican Communion and the Episcopal Church of the United States today. For comparison, this study also investigates similar situations taking place within the Roman Communion. The investigation is carried out primarily through the exploration of historical factors leading to differences between the modern American forms of Anglicanism and Catholicism and the variation in religious belief and action within the United States.

¹ Also, when the Church of England was part of the Roman Communion that founded it, it was the official state church of England at that time as well.

2. Background

The United States as it is known today consists of territories formerly belonging at one point or another to Great Britain, the Kingdom of France, the French Empire, the Spanish Empire, the Kingdom of Spain, and the Dutch Republic. Other ethnic groups, such as Italian and German, some of whom were in some way affiliated with one of the main colonial powers, were represented in the colonial territories as well. In some cases, borders changed hands at least once. For example, the area known as West Florida (the modern-day panhandle of Florida and the Gulf Coast areas of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana) were Spanish, French, and British. Of course, what first became the United States of America, the famed “Thirteen Colonies,” was British at the time of the War of Independence. Even though these were British colonies, there were definitely differences between them. New England colonies were built by religious communities seeking to build a new society built according to their religious beliefs. (Kang, 2009) The southern colonies tended to maintain a similar social structure to that in Great Britain, i.e., nobility/gentry, merchants, and peasants. Even in the South, though, there were differences between South Carolina, which was largely Anglican, and North Carolina, which had a large Quaker influence.

Far from the oft-told story that all Americans were commoners and peasants fleeing from oppression and religious persecution, life in the Colonies was probably more similar to life in Britain and Europe in terms of society and laws (Kulikoff, 2000). All kinds of people came to the Colonies, including noblemen and merchants. Indeed there were those who were fleeing religious persecution, such as the Huguenots. There were colonists of royal and noble lineage (often younger sons looking for new land and opportunity), and there were those of common lineage. Some of the colonies, such as the Carolinas, had their own native nobility. The Carolina system granted the titles of Landgrave and Cassique. The former consisted of 48,000 acres of land and ranked equivalent to a Feudal Earl in the British nobility system, while the latter ranked equivalent to a Feudal Baron (Coberly v. Reichenberg, 2014).

In New England, laws did not favor religious tolerance or freedom, but were heavily Puritan and strongly anti-Catholic. (Perhaps the one bit of truly common ground among the British-American colonies was anti-Catholicism.) The Salem Witch Trials demonstrated a religious fervor at least as great as anything seen in Europe (Purdy, 2007). As reported by the Catholic News Agency, one woman in particular hanged during the witch trials, Ann Glover, was executed for being a Catholic.

Given the great differences between the colonies, it is no surprise that, upon the withdrawal of Great Britain from the American War of Independence, each colony became its own sovereign state with its own government, currency, etc. The “first United States” was a loose federation of these states under the Articles of Confederation. That organization has its own President – not George Washington, but John Hanson. Later, the Constitution was drafted, and a new Union formed, with Washington as its President. Yet, the independence of the states persisted. One’s loyalty, at least until after the American Civil War, was principally to one’s state, not the Union. Each state had its own government, and it was the Federal government that mirrored the structure of the state governments, not the other way around. Even today, states have often widely-differing laws. From the beginning, the United States was a decentralized government – at least in philosophy – with an over-arching federal government to organize efforts among the states as a unified body.

The divergence of historical experience of Europeans in the British-American Colonies from that of people in Britain in terms of legal framework and social paradigm contributed to parallel differences in legal framework and social paradigm within the Episcopal Church of the United States of America (ECUSA) and the Church of England, and between the American segment of the Roman Communion and the Roman Communion as a whole (Johnson, 2015). That is not a unique scenario to the United States. It can potentially happen in other localities in which, for example, the Anglican Church goes, where there is some form of a difference between that location’s experience and structure and that of England (Colton, 2008). These differences led to somewhat of a different experience within the American churches and underlie much of the ongoing tension and conflict within the Anglican and Roman Communions today, as well as structural changes over the past fifty years. By extension, the differences in legal framework and social paradigm within American society influence the response of clergy and laity to conflict and proposed changes (Johnson, 2015). In the 1970s, for example, some bishops, clerics, and laymen from ECUSA left over disagreement to organizational changes within ECUSA and, in most cases, they formed new provincial governments under bishops unaffiliated with ECUSA.

Similarly, structural, liturgical, and theological modifications within the Roman Communion following the Second Vatican Council² resulted in traditional movements under bishops not administratively affiliated with the Roman Communion. Those traditional movements, both of Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism, were not and are not limited to the United States. One of the most prominent of the Roman jurisdictions, for example, the Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX), was founded in France by a French Catholic archbishop, Marcel Lefebvre. Indeed, in both the Anglican and Roman cases, it has been the contention of the traditional movements that they are maintaining an authentic form of the religion, where they also often believe that the majority bodies are not. That theological and ecclesiological question, however, is beyond the scope of this study. It is mentioned here merely to point out one of the key points underlying the present situation.

Where the Church of England is highly centralized, the Episcopal Church emphasizes more local governance. The split of some conservative Anglicans from ECUSA and then the many subsequent splits thereafter, forming Anglican jurisdictions that tended to be highly democratic in nature – even sometimes bordering on congregationalist. The traditional Roman jurisdictions outside the Roman Communion, however, tended to be more built on theology and liturgy and maintained more rigid hierarchy and centralized governance, just like the historic Roman Communion. Although some traditionalist Roman jurisdictions in the United States may employ American-style democracy, that appears to be the exception rather than the rule. Ironically, it seems to be the American branch of the majority Roman Communion that became more like the Episcopal Church in terms of attitude towards governance, the continued official administrative relationship with the Papacy notwithstanding.

Within the Roman Communion in 1899, Leo XIII coined the term “Americanism” to indicate the notion of local governance and regional differences as opposed to accord with central governance (in Rome) and common practices. That ecclesiastical “Americanism” could be said to be a natural extension of the prevalent belief that the United States was founded to establish religious freedom that supposedly did not exist in Europe.³ It could also be said to be an outgrowth of the American notion of individualism and the desire not to be directly governed by Europe that gained popularity even in the Colonial era. However, those beliefs and their environmental effects varied by geographical location in the Colonial era and continue to vary today. Motives of religious freedom played a part in the experience of the early settlers in parts of New England, though it was primarily seeking religious freedom not as a general concept, but for their own particular form of Christianity. They did, after all, prove quite hostile to those with religious beliefs other than their own. Even within the Puritan community there was dissent. Rhode Island, for example, was founded by Roger Williams, who, it could be said, simply did not see eye-to-eye with the religious authorities in Massachusetts (Barry, 2012). The notion of religious freedom as it is discussed in twenty-first century America is quite different from the notion of religious freedom in the Colonial era and early United States.

In colonies outside of New England, economic opportunity and a sense of adventure played a large role in the decision of people to cross the Atlantic. There were younger sons of noble families who were looking for their own lands and opportunity (Coberly, 2014). There were common people looking for a better life. As is typical in any such organized migration, there were people from all walks of life. Both the oft-heard “creation myth” story of the United States that all Colonists were commoners seeking freedom from religious and other persecution and the more recent theories proposed that most Colonials were of royal or noble ancestry simply fail the logic test. There were, however, certainly some who did come to areas outside New England for religious reasons. The French Huguenots, for example, came to the northeast and also established a settlement further south within the Virginia Colony (Lambert, 2010). Catholics had a haven in Maryland, but soon were in a literal war with Protestants who did not want them there (Mountford, 2010).

² The fact that changes temporally followed the Second Vatican Council does not automatically imply direct causal linkage with the official proclamations of said Council. Such questions, while worth mentioning for awareness, are beyond the scope of this study.

³ For more on the issue of religious freedom in the American colonies, see Lambert, Frank. *The Founding Fathers and the Place of Religion in America*. Princeton. 2003. However, one cannot simply assume that Europe lacked religious tolerance and that the Colonies were tolerant. Both religious tolerance and disputes existed within the British American Colonies and Europe. In Europe, for example, Britain provided a haven to the Huguenots and the Holy Roman Empire was tolerant towards Protestants.

To add to the complexity, areas other than the original thirteen Colonies taken by the British or later by the United States that had previously been Spanish and French colonies were clearly Roman Catholic. Their conquest or annexation by the British or United States resulted in an Anglican or Protestant element being introduced to the local religious mix. Such areas, when they came into the United States, had a different “flavor” to them than the areas that had always or primarily been settled by the British or Protestant Germans or Dutch.

Yet one cannot assume all Protestants to be alike or that they agree or even are particularly tolerant to each other. Differences among the various Protestants populations existed within the colonies, paralleling in their own way the religious differences that existed at that time in Europe.

That religious belief in the United States of America varies by location is as true now as it was in the Colonial era, though that geographical variation has undoubtedly changed in concentration and diversity over time. Those geographical differences can sometimes be quite dramatic. Historically Catholic Florida, for example, is adjacent to predominantly-Protestant Alabama. Then, within Alabama itself, Mobile and Baldwin Counties on the Gulf Coast were once in Spanish West Florida and hence are historically Catholic due to the French and Spanish in the Colonial era. Because many religious issues in the United States are geographical, it is a significant factor in political elections, which also often follow geographical patterns (Knickerbocker, 2014). It is essential to have a thorough understanding of the geographic distribution of church polity and socio-legal philosophy in order to understand the complex issues facing both the Anglican and Roman Communion today.

3. Religious Monopoly and Hierarchy

The medieval (Roman Catholic) Church was effectively a monopoly. It functioned accordingly and enjoyed both the advantages of being the only “supplier” and the benefits of official favor of the secular government (Ekelund et al., 1996). The Protestant Reformation began in earnest in the 16th century and provided a direct challenge to Rome’s monopoly. Of course, one could say the first real challenge to “monopoly” within Christian came in the form of the “Great Schism” (or the East-West Schism) in 1054 that resulted in the administrative split between the Western/Latin Church under Rome and the Eastern Church, which would become known as the various Orthodox Churches. Even before that, there were diverse notions within the Christian faith that eventually became branded as heresies. In fact, the use of the word “Catholic,” which means “universal,” in reference to the Church was to differentiate between the Catholic, or universal beliefs and those that were deemed heretical. That dissent notwithstanding, the first real change in monopoly status came with the Great Schism. Rome maintained a monopoly in the west, while the Orthodox churches had monopolies in the east within their respective territories. So, really what is being discussed in the context of the present study is the *Western* Church. In that context, then, it is the Protestant Reformation that was the first real challenge to monopoly status of the Western Church – or at least the first real challenge that gained a foothold and persisted to the present time.

Now, in the context of the present study, the *Protestant* Church of England, as opposed to its Catholic forebear, was the result of the Protestant Reformation. The first break with Rome came at the direction of Henry VIII, King of England, and was far more political than religious. The story is famous – the King wanted an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragón, but the Pope would not grant it. Once Henry established the Church of England to be independent of Papal control or loyalty, a move that understandably resulted in a mixed response from the people based on their allegiance and religious beliefs, the King established himself the head of the Church. That was more a question of control rather than spirituality, and it is not without some irony in that it was to Henry VIII that Pope Leo X granted the title of Defender of the Faith for his support of the Catholic Church. And, it differed from the majority of the Protestant Reformation in that it was not a new church founded by those who left the Catholic Church, but rather was the established Catholic Church within England that left the jurisdiction of the Pope and maintained Apostolic succession through their Bishops.⁴

⁴ Further Anglo-Roman tension resulted when, in 1897 Pope Leo XIII issued the bull *Apostolicae Curae*, in which he declared Anglican Holy Orders to be null and void. Prior to that, Anglican Holy Orders, like Eastern/Orthodox Holy Orders, were considered valid. The Anglican Archbishops of Canterbury and York responded to Rome with their own encyclical *Saepius officio* during the same year. The tension continues, and Anglican clerics joining the Roman Communion are ordained as if they had been laymen, not “sub-conditionally,” indicating a possible deficiency, or simply received without ordination, the latter indicating acceptance of the validity of the Holy Orders.

The outcome may have been principally political for Henry, but it certainly gave great encouragement to the Protestants in England. Under Queen Mary Tudor, however, who was not only a devout Catholic herself, but married to Philip II, King of Spain, the nation officially reverted back to Catholicism, and there was an attempt to purge and suppress Protestantism. When Mary, daughter of Henry VIII by Catherine of Aragón, who died childless, was succeeded by Elizabeth I, daughter of Henry VIII by Anne Boleyn, the transition of the Church of England from Catholic to Protestant was completed. It was a theological and doctrinal transmogrification. Yet, the origins of the Protestant Church of England in the Catholic Church of England, and the fact that both the political break with Rome and the institution of Protestant theology were both carried out at the hands of the monarch, the Church of England ended up retaining quite a bit of the hierarchical structure of the Church of Rome with which it broke ties.

This issue of hierarchy underlies a lot of the tensions in both the Anglican and Roman Communion and particularly helps to explain some of the differences between the experience in the United States vs. that in England and Europe. The newly-independent Church of England maintained virtually the same monopolistic advantages as the established church that it had before the separation (Podmore, 2008). After the changes of Elizabeth I, it was the Catholics that went on the run in the same way that it had previously been the Protestants who were in hiding. The independent Protestant Church of England also retained a hierarchical structure quite consistent with its pre-Reformation form (McClellan, 2008). Other churches that existed within Britain had varying levels of status. The Methodists, as a sect of the Church of England, for example, often were not viewed terribly well by the Anglican establishment. Presbyterianism, on the other hand, had far more acceptance in Scotland and was largely the preferred church there, as the Anglican Church was seen as too “English.” Roman Catholicism, though, remained banned for some time in Britain, and even when it was no longer criminalized, it had a highly inferior status compared to the Church of England and perhaps even to some of the Protestant denominations.

Within the British American Colonies, religious belief was far more diverse. The effective monopoly of the Church of England that existed in England did not universally exist in the colonies. For example, South Carolina and Virginia were heavily Anglican. In New England, Puritans and Pilgrims wanted to establish a new land in which their religion was the official, dominant one. The Puritans in New England and the Quakers in North Carolina and Pennsylvania were hostile to both Anglicans and Roman Catholics. Attempts by Colonial government authorities to regulate religion varied by time and geographical location.

In the Anglican Communion within the United States today, known as the Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. (ECUSA), the present situation began in earnest in the 1970s. Changes in liturgy, doctrine, and praxis within ECUSA at that time resulted in significant internal division. A number of bishops, clergy, and laity left ECUSA to form independent Anglican jurisdictions. Perhaps ironically, their leaving increased the percentage of those who wanted change, and so additional changes continue to occur up to the present as the process of some persons leaving to join existing or create new conservative Anglican jurisdictions repeated itself several times over. And, more recently, the formation of the Anglican Ordinariates within the Roman Communion by Pope Benedict XVI provided another option for conservative Anglicans wishing to leave ECUSA. Although some similar independent Anglican churches and the Anglican Ordinariate do exist in the United Kingdom, the independent jurisdictions are more prevalent in the United States. That outcome may have significant roots in the early history of Anglicanism in the Colonies.

While the Church of England retained much of the Roman Catholic sense of hierarchy, ECUSA is localized and less hierarchical. Bishops of the Episcopal Church ultimately answer to no higher ecclesiastical authority, even though they are part of the Anglican Communion.⁵ The Church of England has the offices of Primate, Metropolitan, and Archbishop, while the Episcopal Church has no such ecclesial offices. The Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, however, is considered equivalent to a Primate for the purposes of participation in the Primate's meetings and also uses various trappings of an archbishop. Nevertheless, the Presiding Bishop does not use the title of archbishop and also does not hold Metropolitan authority. This is not an astounding result, given that the structure of ECUSA, despite its origins in the Church of England, was principally born out of the American War of Independence and the resulting philosophies of the United States (Johnson, 2015).

⁵ The Anglican Communion is a worldwide organization of Anglican Churches that are all both in communion with each other and with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of All England.

This relates strongly to one of the most contentious issues between ECUSA and both parishes and dioceses seeking to leave ECUSA – real estate ownership. Quite a lot of money has been spent by both sides in legal action over ownership of property. This usually results when a parish decides *en masse* to leave ECUSA for either an independent Anglican jurisdiction or for the Anglican Ordinariate of the Roman Communion. How do the property disputes ensue? A diocese usually claims ownership of the building and property therein. Now, in a strictly hierarchical church, that is typically the case.⁶ However, ECUSA is not quite so hierarchical. Much debate has occurred over whether or not the local bishop has ownership of an individual parish, and there are certainly private arrangements that were made between individual parishes and the diocese over ownership of property. Even more debate has occurred over whether the Presiding Bishop of ECUSA has “ownership” of each diocese. This played out with great drama over the last several years in the American court system, especially between the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of West Texas. One American Episcopal priest and Dean of a Cathedral said “I am of the opinion that such desired hierarchies, or such fantasized hierarchies, are simply not there. Though our American Episcopal Church has recently tried to describe itself as an hierarchical church in certain legal situations, our beautiful and larger Anglican tradition is simply (and complex-ly) NOT hierarchical. The Episcopal Church is one of 38 global provinces who have a history and tradition and theology set in the gracious and generous elements of that Christianity which has roots in the British Isles. ... In short, we are not an hierarchical church! The primates do not run the parishes of The Episcopal Church. (In fact, our bishops don’t actually run them either! In times of controversy, it is not healthy simply to appeal to higher and higher perceived hierarchies. It is healthier to make principled and Christian stands within our own integrity.) (Candler 2016). That viewpoint, however, is not universally shared among Episcopalians. There are those, as Candler freely admits, that perceive the Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. as an hierarchical church, even if there is disagreement about what that hierarchy may be.

That the structure of the Episcopal Church differs from its parent Church and that there is disagreement over both in what way ECUSA is hierarchical and whether or not it is in fact hierarchical at all is not surprising. The European colonies in North America that became the United States had many different cultural frameworks, different social structures and ideas, varied forms of government and law, and assorted religious beliefs. These diverse social, legal, and religious structures were transmitted both to the New World and, perhaps more importantly, within the New World through migration. This migration resulted in the New World territories becoming something different altogether than a simple extension of the European homeland (Johnson, 2015). Of course, colonies often develop their own character simply because of the unique experience of a people moving from their homeland to a new area and the ways differing ideas meld together in the context of that experience (Kang, 2009). This is even seen among ex-patriates (Scott-Reid, 2015; Chang, 1997). The New World colonies, however, were something altogether different. Through the changes of territorial control and through interaction with both different European populations and with native populations, and through the particular circumstances of “frontier” life that was perhaps to the people of the era what a colony on the moon or Mars might be for society today, the New World territories were amalgamations. They were influenced by the land to which they came as much as they influenced it (Fernandez and Fogli, 2009). Diverse populations existed, and so it is not surprising that diverse opinions existed on virtually everything. Discontentment and disagreement were natural outcomes and could deepen over time due to emotional forces perpetuating the conflict (Abbinck et al., 2010; Guriev and Zhuravskaya, 2009). Disagreement and discontentment can lead to change of laws, customs, and even beliefs. This flavored religion in the colonies and imparted a character to American religion that persisted through the centuries to the present, even within the Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. and the Roman Communion within the U.S.

4. Geo-Spatial Structural Variation

This diversity of culture and opinion in the American colonies was a ripe environment for a diverse “marketplace” of Christian denominations. Religion in America transitioned early on from being a form of public utility to being effectively a market commodity (Davie, 2013). The structure, belief, and praxis of these denominations resulted in part due to the geographically-distributed cultural norms of the time (Johnson, 2015). Economic shifters were also factors that explained the nature of the various denominations (Ekelund et al., 2006).

⁶ The Code of Particular Canon Law of the Anglican Rite Roman Catholic Church 2015, for example, indicates that ownership of all parochial and diocesan property is ultimately vested in the Patriarchate, and ownership reverts to the Patriarchate in the case that a parish or diocese leaves the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate.

The post-Revolution disestablishment of religion caused an expansion of the marketplace of available churches, both overall and geographically variable (Bisen and Verdier, 2000). Within the new framework of the United States, the Episcopal Church, as successor to the Church of England in America, lost any status that it may have had as the favored church. In most areas, Roman Catholicism was seen as undesirable and viewed with suspicion (Farrelly, 2012). Of course, it had not been favored everywhere, such as in Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Hampshire, and others. In those areas it gained the opportunity to compete with the previously-favored denominations and has become quite prominent there. Consider how Boston is viewed now as much as a Catholic city as a Puritan one, though admittedly that depends in large part on ethnic background; e.g., the Protestant Anglo-Saxons and the Catholic Irish.

The individual religious choice could also vary by spatial location. In the Colonial period and even for a time after the War of Independence, those moving into frontier areas often did not have as many religious/denominational choices as they did in the more populated areas. For example, an Anglican in South Carolina might not find an Anglican church in certain parts of Georgia or Alabama, and so instead might join the Methodist church. As choices in those areas expanded over time, even to include the denomination certain individuals may have left due to lack of availability, there was not a particular trend of going back to those denominations when they become available, but rather staying with denomination to which they transferred. This becomes increasingly the case with increasing time, as longevity tends towards loyalty. It also can lead to partisanship against other religious organizations, including, ironically, the very denomination that they or their ancestors left earlier in time due to lack of availability, but which eventually became available in that area (Converse, 1969).

The variability of choice over geospatial location implies a difference in average belief that also varies geospatially.⁷ As a person moves around within the United States, which happened with frontier expansion and continues to be quite common today as people move for job opportunities, they may encounter a common local religious belief system that differs greatly from their own.⁸ Or, they may encounter a religious marketplace of denominations that differs from that of the area they left. Such changes in the religious marketplace may promote cognitive dissonance due to internal inconsistency between the available choices and/or the local religious culture and the individual's religious beliefs. In order to ease this discomfort, the individual may change personal belief to be consistent with the available religious choices and/or culture, thereby removing the inconsistency (Mullainathan and Washington, 2009). Insofar as the religious marketplace and religious local culture varies geographically, it can reasonably be taken to be a driving force in the change of belief as individuals change physical location.

This notion of adaptation to local environment is far more prevalent in Anglican custom than Roman Catholicism (Forster, 2005). That is not to say that the Roman Church is absolutely identical everywhere. Each area has its own unique "appearance," so to speak. However, while canon law may vary with location in Anglicanism, such is not the case in Roman custom (Hill, 2012). Those churches in the Roman tradition may have their own "particular" law, i.e., local canon law, but it must not conflict with the universal canon law unless exceptions or dispensations have been granted.

Furthermore, these choices produced by the Protestant Reformation provided an alternative to the Roman Church's preference for "product purity" and "product consistency" and also challenged the pre-Reformation Roman monopoly (Shue and Luttimer, 2009; Ekelund and Tollison, 2011). Interestingly, geographical areas with higher numbers of alternative church choices may experience a trend of some churches adopting the appearance of practice of other churches in order to compete (Shue and Luttimer, 2009). Even the Roman Communion somewhat adopted this trend with changes imposed after the Second Vatican Council, though many traditionalist Catholics continue to exist, both in and out of the Roman Communion.

⁷ That is not at all to say that all people in a particular area think or believe the same. However, there are typically religious trends. Some areas may be more Catholic, others may be more Baptist, yet others may be equally divided between Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, and atheist, and so on.

⁸ Remember that atheism is a religious choice as well. So is "religious, but not actively participating."

The marketplace notion of religion in the United States follows and exaggerates the philosophy of the Protestant Reformation. Both doctrine and church polity in America have been influenced by Protestantism – including the Roman Church in America (Doe, 2013). While Christianity traditionally promotes personal responsibility within the context of Christian doctrine and law, the American model of religion took on somewhat of a capitalist flavor and the associated assumption that the individual knows best (Weber, 1905)⁹. Indeed, although acting purely in individual self-interest is a foreign concept to traditional Christianity, American capitalism and American Protestantism are intertwined and blended together – a fact that manifests itself particularly at Presidential election time (Tanner, 2010). Neither the Episcopal Church nor even the Roman Communion have been completely immune from the influences of the American religious culture. Geography counts.

In addition, the “marketplace choice” in American religion is not a single-choice decision. It is very often quite individual and fluid. That applies whether one is leaving one or more denominations, or whether one is simply making the first choice of religion. For example, some who left the Episcopal Church for other Anglican churches subsequently left for the Roman Catholic Church, mainline Protestantism, Baptist/Evangelical, Old Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, or Orthodox. This marketplace choice is also not automatically uni-directional. Some, who left the Episcopal Church, for example, eventually returned to the very church that they left. Sometimes the process over time is a bit like a revolving door.

5. A Case of the Roman and Anglican Communions in the United States

In the United States, one of the most dramatic instances of mass religious migration from the Episcopal Church occurred recently. The resulting organization became known as the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). Not only did it involve recent individual and corporate separation from the Episcopal Church, but some of the earlier jurisdictions of the Continuing Anglican churches joined as well, in addition to individuals who transferred from other Continuing Anglican churches. While ACNA is considered schismatic by the Episcopal Church, it is seeking admission to the worldwide Anglican Communion as a separate province within North America. Because of its size and diversity of ecclesiastical polity, it is a good cross-sectional representor of the Continuing Anglican movement as a whole.

When considering the geo-spatial distribution of ACNA parishes within the United States, there are some interesting trends. Also of note is what is *not* a trend. The number of ACNA parishes in a particular state, for example, is not significantly spatially correlated with the conservativeness or liberalness of that state, as based on a conservativeness ranking derived from the results of a Gallup Poll conducted in 2014.¹⁰ This is interesting because the Continuing Anglican movement as a whole is typically considered to be conservative, at least in terms of religion, and is sometimes referred to as “conservative Anglicanism.” Because the Gallup Poll was general in scope, this result actually suggests, at least on the surface, a certain independence between religious belief and society’s definitions of conservativeness. Those who are conservative regarding religion may in fact be conservative, liberal, or moderate when it comes to society at large. Societal definitions of conservativeness are defined according to the norms of a particular society, a location within that society, and a particular time period. They may or may not correlate with religious belief, religious conservatism, or religious liberalism (Johnson, 2015).

Another factor that does not appear to be a trend is statistically significant predictability of geo-spatial distribution of ACNA parishes based on the numbers of Episcopal Church parishes at the state level. On one hand, it would appear to be logical that ACNA parishes would be more likely to be found where there are churches affiliated with ECUSA. This could be accounted for by “church splits,” i.e., one or more new ACNA parishes form by individuals who left an ECUSA parish, but the ECUSA parish remains. It could also be the case that some ACNA parishes are resulting from Continuing Anglican parishes, which left the Episcopal Church within the last four decades. Other possibilities exist (Johnson, 2015).

⁹ Left to itself, the ideal market is believed to be such that it will automatically achieve, without need of outside agency, the economically efficient outcome. Individuals acting in their own self-interest is a major driving force.

¹⁰ The Gallup Poll provided state-level percentages of those who self-identify as “Conservative,” “Moderate,” and “Liberal.”

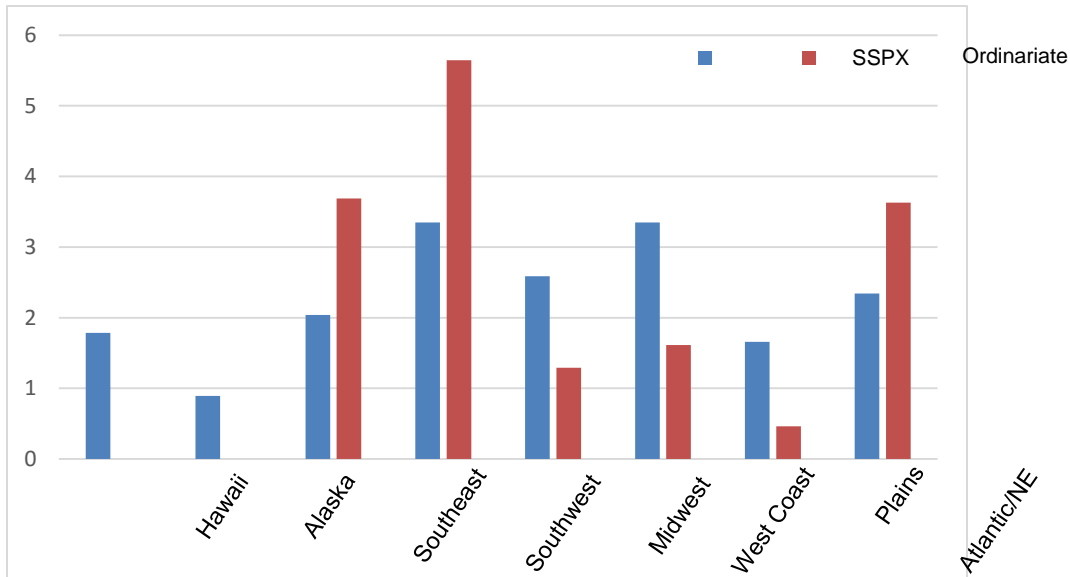


Figure 1. Average Regional Distribution of SSPX and Ordinariate Parishes (See Table 1 for description of Regions)

What is actually directly spatially correlated is the number of ACNA parishes with the number of Anglican Ordinariate parishes. While both could be seen as marketplace substitutes for the Episcopal Church, they are also substitutes for each other and are mutually exclusive outcomes. This suggests a difference in motivation between those who leave the Episcopal Church for ACNA and those who leave for the Ordinariate. There are, after all, plenty of fundamental differences between ACNA and the Ordinariate (Johnson, 2015).

Just as ACNA provides a relatively large and diverse cross-sectional proxy for the Continuing Anglican movement overall, the SSPX provides a relatively large proxy for the traditional Roman Catholic movement within the United States. One key difference between ACNA and the SSPX, though, is that, while ACNA has a wide range of ecclesiastical beliefs and practices contained within it based on the diversity of its members churches, SSPX is far less ecclesiastically diverse and, at least in terms of religion, could be thought of to be, in a sense, “uni-cultural.” While ACNA and SSPX represent quite different marketplace outcomes due to the variability of “product” within ACNA, the Ordinariate and SSPX are far more uniform. The Ordinariate and SSPX both have a strong Roman element. Both ultimately require acceptance of the Papacy and Roman Catholic doctrine (even though SSPX still remains outside the administrative structure of the Roman Communion). It could be the case that there are similarities between those who leave Protestant Anglicanism for the Anglican Ordinariate and those who leave the Roman Communion for the SSPX.

State	Region
Hawaii	<i>Hawaii</i>
Alaska	<i>Alaska</i>
Florida	<i>Southeast</i>
Georgia	
Louisiana	
North Carolina	
South Carolina	
Tennessee	
Alabama	
Texas	<i>Southwest</i>
Oklahoma	
New Mexico	
Arizona	
Ohio	<i>Midwest</i>
Michigan	
Wisconsin	
Minnesota	
Missouri	
Iowa	
Kentucky	
Illinois	
Indiana	
Arkansas	
Washington	<i>West Coast</i>
Oregon	
California	
Nevada	
Kansas	<i>Plains</i>
South Dakota	
North Dakota	
Montana	
Nebraska	
Colorado	
Idaho	
Maryland	<i>Atlantic/Northeast</i>
Connecticut	
Massachusetts	
New Jersey	
New York	
Pennsylvania	
Virginia	
West Virginia	

Table 1. Description of Regions

State	No. of SSPX Parishes	No. of Ordinariate Parishes	Part of total SSPX (%)	Part of total Ordinariate (%)
Hawaii	2	0	1.79	0.00
Alaska	1	0	0.89	0.00
Florida	7	3	6.25	9.68
Georgia	1	1	0.89	3.23
Louisiana	2	0	1.79	0.00
North Carolina	3	1	2.68	3.23
South Carolina	1	2	0.89	6.45
Tennessee	2	0	1.79	0.00
Alabama	0	1	0.00	3.23
Texas	9	6	8.04	19.35
Oklahoma	2	0	1.79	0.00
New Mexico	2	0	1.79	0.00
Arizona	2	1	1.79	3.23
Ohio	5	0	4.46	0.00
Michigan	5	0	4.46	0.00
Wisconsin	1	0	0.89	0.00
Minnesota	6	1	5.36	3.23
Missouri	4	2	3.57	6.45
Iowa	1	0	0.89	0.00
Kentucky	2	0	1.79	0.00
Illinois	1	0	0.89	0.00
Indiana	3	1	2.68	3.23
Arkansas	1	0	0.89	0.00
Washington	2	0	1.79	0.00
Oregon	2	0	1.79	0.00
California	9	2	8.04	6.45
Nevada	2	0	1.79	0.00
Kansas	2	0	1.79	0.00
South Dakota	2	0	1.79	0.00
North Dakota	2	0	1.79	0.00
Montana	2	0	1.79	0.00
Nebraska	0	1	0.00	3.23
Colorado	2	0	1.79	0.00
Idaho	3	0	2.68	0.00
Maryland	0	3	0.00	9.68
Connecticut	2	0	1.79	0.00
Massachusetts	1	1	0.89	3.23
New Jersey	1	0	0.89	0.00
New York	9	1	8.04	3.23
Pennsylvania	4	3	3.57	9.68
Virginia	3	1	2.68	3.23
West Virginia	1	0	0.89	0.00

Table 2. Distribution of SSPX and Anglican Ordinariate Parishes

In Fig. 1, the percentage of SSPX parishes in a given region out of the total number of SSPX parishes nationwide is compared with the percentage of Ordinariate parishes in a given region out of the total number of Ordinariate parishes nationwide. For SSPX, the highest concentration being in the Southwest and West Coast, and the second highest being in the Midwest and Atlantic/Northeast regions. The highest concentrations of Ordinariate parishes are in the Southeast, the Southwest, and the Atlantic/Northeast region. The lowest concentration are in the Midwest, the Plains states, and the West Coast. The high number in the Southwest for the Ordinariate is primarily driven by Texas. Consulting Fig. 2, it is easy to see that the regions that have a low percentage of total Ordinariate parishes do not have a state that is in the highest category of numbers of Episcopal parishes. The sole exception is the West Coast, which is a region of low Ordinariate concentrate, despite the fact that California is in the highest category of numbers of Episcopal Church parishes. However, the only state in the West Coast region with Ordinariate parishes is California.

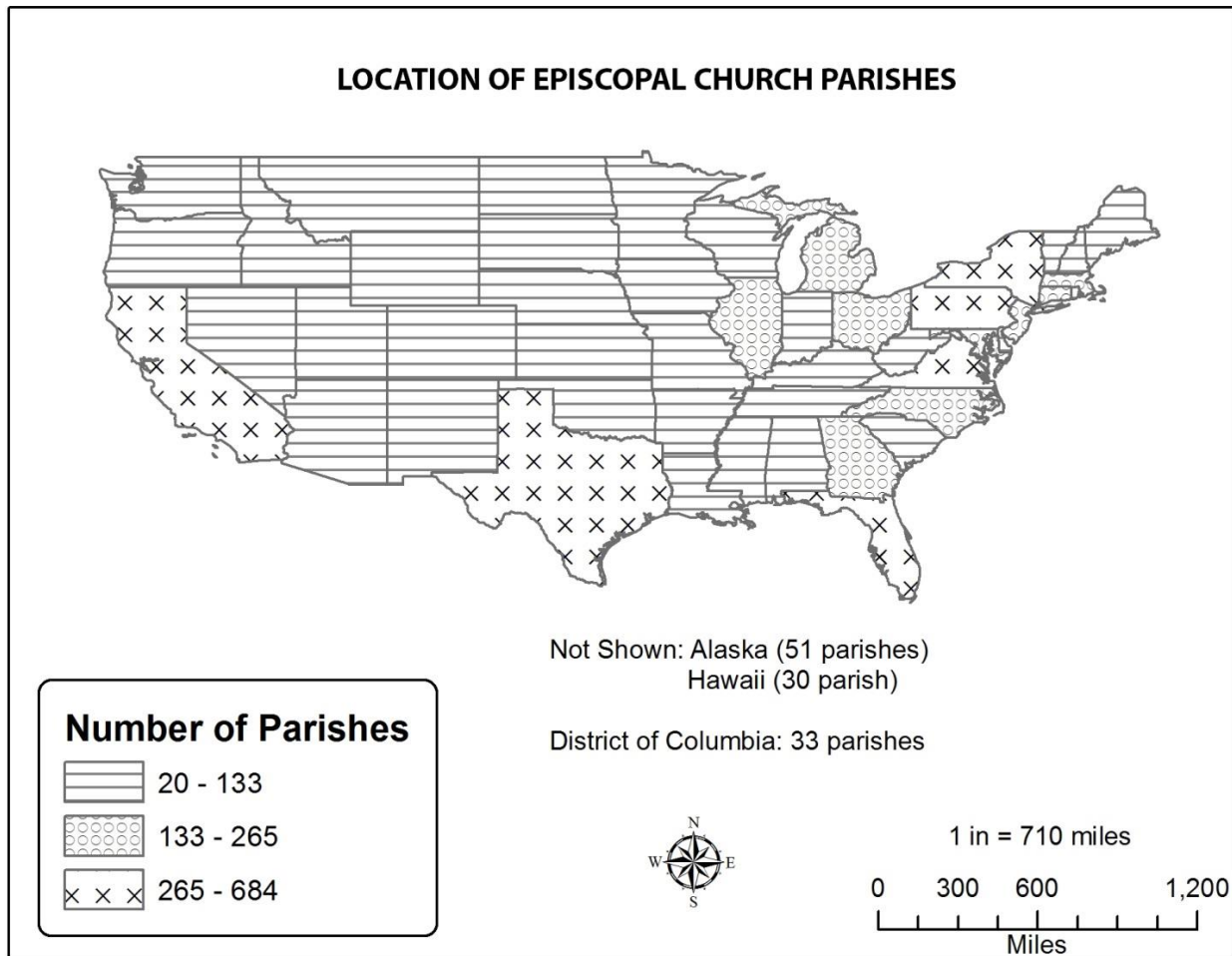


Figure 2. Distribution of Episcopal Church parishes in the United States

Of particular note regarding the distribution of SSPX parishes is that the concentration is roughly the same between the Southwest and the Southeast. The concentration of Ordinariate parishes is much higher than the concentration of SSPX parishes in those areas, with that in the Southeast being higher. How might this be explained? First, note in Table 2 that the majority of Ordinariate parishes in the Southwest are in Texas. There are six parishes in Texas, only one in Arizona, and none in any of the other states in that region. If not for Texas, the concentration of Ordinariate parishes would not just be lower than that in the Southeast, but vastly lower. Now consider the history of those two regions. First, most of the states in the Southeast region were far more affiliated with the Church of England in the Colonial period, as well as other British-based Protestant churches. States like Florida and Louisiana were primarily, but not exclusively Spanish and French respectively, and hence have a strong heritage in Roman Catholicism.

However, Florida has long been a location of migration from people from all over the United States. This could be said to have begun when Henry Flagler built the Ponce de Leon Hotel in Saint Augustine and made the town a winter destination for New York socialites, who tended not to be Roman Catholic, but were either Episcopalian or some other form of Protestant. So, the population mixture by the time of the introduction of the Ordinariate in Florida was quite diverse.

In the Southwest, where there is virtually no Ordinariate presence, Texas stands alone with a high number of parishes. Texas, having been part of Spain and then Mexico, was later settled before Texas independence by a diverse mix of Europeans, many of whom were not of a Catholic background. Anglicanism was thus brought to Texas, the Episcopal Diocese of Texas being established shortly after the Texas Revolution. Yet, the Catholic culture of Texas is so engrained that it cannot be ignored. It is an undeniable part of the history there. Perhaps that is why, long before the Ordinariate, so many of the “Anglican Use” parishes under the Pastoral Provision of John Paul II were located in Texas, and why not only the single largest concentration of Ordinariate parishes in the United States is in Texas, but the Ordinariate for North America is headquartered in Texas. Perhaps this is a manifestation of the English Church being brought to a Catholic area and, much like the Texans themselves, forming a new culture.

Also of note, looking purely at absolute number of parishes (see Table 1) is the similarity in concentration of SSPX parishes between the historically-Catholic Southeast and historically-Protestant Southwest. On the surface it is easy enough to explain this by saying that the Southeast also includes historically-Catholic Florida. By removing Florida from the calculation of the Southeast, the result is a considerably lower concentration in the Southeast than in the Southwest, thereby better reflecting the Colonial religious heritage of the two areas. However, if the largest concentrations are removed from each region (Florida and Texas), the concentrations in the remaining states are actually *higher* in the Southeast than in the Southwest (8% and 5.4% respectively). Those remaining states in the Southwest are more historically Catholic, while those remaining in the Southeast are more historically Protestant. One would, of course, expect to see far greater concentrations of SSPX parishes in historically-Catholic areas such as the Southwest. That trend follows in Texas, but then Texas also has the highest concentration of Ordinariate parishes as well. Yet, removing Florida and Texas from the mix, the concentrations of SSPX parishes is almost double in the Southeast what it is in the Southwest. It is easy enough to suggest that this is because there are more states included in the Southeast region than in the Southwest. However, when looking at the average concentration per state in each region, the values are 2.7% parishes per state (Southeast) and 1.8% parishes per state (Southwest). This is quite interesting since the average distribution, including Florida and Texas (see Fig. 1) is actually higher in the Southwest than in the Southeast. It is amazing the difference just one state can make. Of course, if Florida were to be moved to be grouped with the Southwest, that would continue to yield a higher distribution for the historically-Catholic Southwest. Then again, one should guard against such temptation, since Louisiana, also historically-Catholic, has a distribution much closer to that of the Protestant states of the Southeast. Again, the Southeast average concentration is approximately double that of the Southwest. One possible explanation for this is that the Southwest, except for Texas, was far more uni-religious for a longer period of time. Florida and Texas had an admixture of Protestantism through the English and others. The Southeast overall was far more religiously diverse. Thus the marketplace choice in the Southwest could be said to be far less robust than in the Southwest historically. (That speaks not to what is there now, but to the underlying culture dating back to the Colonial era.) Why would this potentially mean fewer Roman Catholics leave the Roman Communion for SSPX in the historically-Catholic Southwest? The act of leaving one jurisdiction for another, even when that is seen as an act to maintain the traditional faith, is perhaps far less a common thought in an area that did not historically have a lot of religious choice. Alternatively, it could be a cultural factor relating to the high population of ethnic Hispanics in the Southwest. However, that explanation does not account for the high numbers of SSPX parishes in Texas and Florida, both of which have high Hispanic populations.

Conclusions

The marketplace for religion among Christian denominations in the United States is highly variable by geographical location. These geo-spatial differences are influenced by the Colonial history of each area, the people that settled there, and the religious, social, and legal customs and frameworks that they brought with them. Though the face of America has changed greatly over the past four centuries, those early customs planted the seed for much of what we see and experience today.

As much as Americans perhaps may want to say “out with the old, in with the new,” still it is not quite so easy to obliterate the past. The ghosts and the shadows of bygone eras are still with us, influencing how we think and what we do.

Geographically-variable historical factors have contributed to differences between the American form of Anglicanism (both ECUSA and the Continuing Anglican movement), as well as to the American manifestation of Roman Catholicism, both in the Roman Communion and among traditional Catholics. Diversity of religious viewpoint in America not only varies geographically, but is often quite complex. American Anglicanism is different from its parent, the Church of England. Yet, there is often extreme variability within American Anglicanism, both within and without the Episcopal Church. In Roman Catholicism, the experience, viewpoints, and even values within the United States have long been different from that of Rome herself. Not only that, the experience, viewpoints, and values vary within the American component of the Roman Communion, often in complex ways. Further intricacy and diversity is added when the traditional Roman Catholic jurisdictions with which the Roman Communion is not directly affiliated are overlaid.

Knowledge of geo-spatially variable differences, both in current attitudes and in historical experience, is crucial to understanding the ongoing crisis within the Anglican Communion and the divisions and disputes in the Roman Communion. An intricate and multifaceted religious dynamic has resulted from situations of denominational diversity within the colonies that became the United States, an increase of diversity with the establishment of the United States, as well as varying degrees of inter-denominational tolerance. This dynamic is not a mere side issue, but had helped to shape the fabric of American society and law. In turn, it has influenced internal church structure within American denominations, creating institutions with their own unique identity, even if at odds with the foundational principles of their parent church. It is a fluid scenario that continues to evolve over time and with the migration of both people and ideas.

Author's Biography

Rutherford D. Johnson is an economics lecturer at the University of Minnesota Crookston specializing in consumer behavior and economic geography. As a consultant, he has provided marketing, economic, media, and design services for various businesses and non-profits around the world. An Old Roman Catholic priest, scientist, and author, his research includes work on ethics in business, finance, and economics; regional geographical economic analysis incorporating GIS; and improving economic analysis through the inclusion of cultural and religious-based analysis and consumer behavioral components.

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