



## North to South: A Reappraisal of Anglican Communion Membership Figures

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### ABSTRACT

In recent decades Anglicans have developed a largely unquestioned and unchallenged narrative of global growth and decline. This narrative tells a story of Anglicanism's success being largely due to growth in developing, postcolonial nations which, according to the narrators, is ongoing and unstoppable. At the same time, first-world, mostly postmodern nations have seen a steep decline in church membership and attendance. Numeric growth and strength have been used to define ecclesial identity and to legitimate understandings of 'Anglican orthodoxy'. This article offers an up-to-date reappraisal of Anglican Communion membership and, in that process, challenges many of the premises of such a narrative.

**KEYWORDS:** Anglican Church of Kenya, Anglican Communion, Anglican Communion membership, church growth, Church of Nigeria, Global South

In 2005, the conservative Anglican network 'Global South' held one of their meetings in Egypt. The opening words of their press communiqué affirmed that '103 delegates of 20 provinces in the Global South (comprising Africa, South East Asia, West Indies and South America), representing approximately two-thirds of the Anglican Communion, met for the 3rd Global South to South Encounter'.<sup>2</sup> A significant feature in this statement was its reference to their numeric strength, a recurring feature in

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2. [http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/blog/comments/third\\_trumpet\\_communique\\_from\\_3rd\\_south\\_to\\_south\\_encounter](http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/blog/comments/third_trumpet_communique_from_3rd_south_to_south_encounter) (accessed 5 May 2014).

their communications.<sup>3</sup> Five years later, at the GSE4 gathering, held in Singapore, the reference to numeric significance took a new and bolder dimension. The second paragraph of the communiqué affirmed:

Grateful for the gracious guidance of the Holy Spirit a total of 130 delegates from 20 provinces in the Global South (comprising Africa, West Indies, Asia and South America) gathered together. We represented the *vast majority* of the *active membership* of the Anglican Communion.<sup>4</sup>

This statement is significant for at least three reasons. First, because it lists South America as a homogeneous unit, ignoring the fact that the numerically largest South American Anglican province, Brazil, is not part of the Global South.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, because it no longer affirmed that they represented a percentage of the Communion, but rather 'the vast majority'. And thirdly, because it made a reference to 'active membership' of the Anglican Communion, in contrast to 'nominal' Anglicans. The latter point was directed toward the Church of England, which claims a membership of 26 million Anglicans, about a third of the Communion. In 2013, the Nairobi Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON), opened its communiqué with a similar reference to numbers:

We, the participants in the second Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) – 1358 delegates, including 331 bishops, 482 other clergy and 545 laity from 38 countries representing tens of millions of faithful Anglicans worldwide – send you greetings from East Africa, a place of revival in the last century and of growth in the Anglican Church today.<sup>6</sup>

Here, in addition to a reference to numeric strength, there is a reference to current numeric growth. The message is clear: Global South Anglicans represent not just the *majority* of Anglicans in the world, but also the *growing* churches of the Communion. These two elements have become a central part of conservative Anglican discourse. One of the implications of this emphasis is that there has been a demographic shift from North to South.

3. See the communiqués of: 1994 GSE1 Limuru-Kenya Statement; 1997 GSE2 Kuala-Lumpur Statement; 2013 GAFCON Nairobi Conference. Available at: [www.globalsouthanglican.org](http://www.globalsouthanglican.org) (accessed 5 May 2014).

4. [http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/blog/comments/fourth\\_trumpet\\_from\\_the\\_fourth\\_anglican\\_global\\_south\\_to\\_south\\_encounter](http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/blog/comments/fourth_trumpet_from_the_fourth_anglican_global_south_to_south_encounter) (accessed 5 May 2014; my italics).

5. Nor is TEC's Ninth Province, which comprises Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Puerto Rico and Venezuela.

6. <http://gafcon.org/news/nairobi-communique-and-commitment> (accessed 5 May 2014).

This focus on numbers has another dimension. There is a widespread interest, especially among some conservative American and British Anglicans, to offer an alternative reading of the Anglican Communion membership.<sup>7</sup> In this alternative reading, the official Church of England figures are dismissed as overinflated, the membership numbers offered by other putative liberal churches (like TEC or Brazil) are questioned, and the rest of the figures from the Anglican Communion, especially those from Africa, are accepted uncritically and unquestioningly. The figures resulting from their 'recounting' of the Anglican Communion deserve no serious attention. They are neither methodologically consistent nor statistically rigorous. The significant thing here is that numbers are used, at least on a global scale, as a key element in identity definition.<sup>8</sup> One might argue that numbers take a more prominent role than theology or even ecclesiology. In this rhetoric, numeric growth becomes a measurable scale of success for self-identified 'orthodox Anglicans' that, in turn, serves to reinforce and to validate their views.

#### *Painting by Numbers*

It seems that one cannot paint an accurate and up-to-date picture of the Anglican Communion without a reference to numbers. According to official Anglican Communion figures the estimated number of Anglicans in the world today is about 80 million. However, this figure needs to be qualified. The actual number of Anglicans is extremely difficult to know for a number of reasons. There are problems in accessing the data, in the reliability of the figures and in the sources. For instance, the Anglican Communion Office only has up-to-date

7. See the recounting of the Anglican Communion by members of the Anglican Church of North America: <http://diocny.blogspot.co.uk/2007/07/membership-of-anglican-communication.html>; the American Episcopal splinter diocese of Fort Worth: <http://www.fwepiscopal.org/downloads/howmanyanglicans.pdf>; and the English conservative group Church Society: [http://churchsociety.org/issues\\_new/communion/iss\\_communion\\_howbig.asp](http://churchsociety.org/issues_new/communion/iss_communion_howbig.asp) (accessed 5 May 2014).

8. In other geographical contexts, like North America, where conservative Anglicans are in the minority, the identity is defined around being a 'moral minority' or a 'persecuted minority'. For instance, Geoff Chapman, an American Anglican Council priest affirmed: 'We ask for a new jurisdiction on American soil, under the temporary oversight of an overseas province. We believe that such a jurisdiction would provide the best hope for supporting those who are being persecuted for biblical faith and values...' Quoted by Miranda K. Hassett, *Anglican Communion in Crisis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 103.

statistical information from 6 of the 38 provinces.<sup>9</sup> And the membership details in official provincial websites are patchy.

In addition to the difficulties raised above, there are more complex issues to do with how Anglicans count their membership and who gets counted. Whereas in the Roman Catholic Church, membership is consistently counted by the numbers of baptized members, Anglicans around the world, as David Hamid points out, 'do not even have a common understanding of what constitutes membership'.<sup>10</sup> For some it is baptism or confirmation, for others, as in North America, it is communicants in good standing or being registered in the parish electoral rolls. In Africa, membership is often connected with tribal affiliation.<sup>11</sup>

The other difficult question is 'who gets counted'. Of the 38 Anglican Communion provinces, 4 are 'United Churches'. That is, ecumenical provinces in which different Protestant denominations, including Anglicans, joined together to become a single or united Church. This is the case of the United Churches of South India, North India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, which together have an estimated joint membership of over 4 million. Anglicans tend to include these 4 million in their figures; however, these churches are also affiliated to other international bodies, such as the World Methodist Council and the World Communion of Reformed Churches. The overt danger here of double, or even triple counting, is obvious.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, as pointed out above, there is the issue of a new, broadly accepted, and generally unquestioned narrative of global growth/decline.<sup>13</sup> This narrative tells a story of Anglicanism's success being

9. The following provinces are listed with membership information: Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia, Australia, Burundi, Central Africa, Indian Ocean, and the USA.

10. David Hamid, 'The Nature and Shape of the Contemporary Anglican Communion', in Ian T. Douglas and Kwok Pui-Lan (eds.), *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism* (New York: Church Publishing, 2001), pp. 71-98 (73).

11. Benjamin Shikwati, Director of Programs, Africa Institute for Contemporary Missions and Research (AICMAR), in a 2014 article on the Anglican Church of Kenya, affirms that the Church 'has unfortunately become a typical example of tribal alignments'. In [http://www.africanexecutive.com/modules/magazine/article\\_print.php?article=4341](http://www.africanexecutive.com/modules/magazine/article_print.php?article=4341) (accessed 10 May 2014).

12. Hamid, 'Nature and Shape', p. 75.

13. See Steve Bruce, *God Is Dead: Secularization in the West* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); Mark Chapman, *Anglicanism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 9; and Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 235-50.

largely due to its growth in developing, postcolonial nations. According to this story, Anglicans in Africa, Asia, and to a lesser extent Latin America, have experienced dramatic growth over the last few decades. A growth that, according to the narrators, is ongoing and unstoppable. At the same time, first-world, mostly postmodern nations have seen a steep decline in church membership and attendance. There has therefore been a shift of perceived 'presence', that is, a shift in the number of Anglicans present in each part of the world. This, in turn, has led to questions of who defines identity, how identity is defined and who decides what is Anglican and what is not.<sup>14</sup> The implications of this narrative for contemporary Anglican identity are clear. This perceived shift of presence has naturally led to a shift of power in the Communion, from the historic Anglo-Saxon 'founding members' present at the first Lambeth Conference of 1867, to the new putative majority of current members from the 'Global South'. According to this narrative, numbers play a key role as identity shapers, and give Global South members a new moral authority in the Communion. Michael Doe warned about the challenges posed by this postcolonial dynamic when he affirmed that:

There is a disturbing tone in some of the statements from churches [from the Global South], which, partly because they are growing at a time when religion in the North may be more in decline, claim some superior authority to truth and to leadership of the Communion.<sup>15</sup>

For every narrative, however, there is a counter-narrative. The counter-narrative I propose here is based on doctoral research into contemporary Anglican identity.<sup>16</sup> This counter-narrative accepts the overall story, but it qualifies it. It says that whilst it is true that most of the growth of recent decades has taken place in parts of Africa and Asia, there is anecdotal evidence that this growth has reached a plateau and in some cases has turned into decline, in certain parts of Africa.

In the case of Kenya, a recent survey on church attendance in the country<sup>17</sup> has shown that the trend among Protestant churches is of a

14. See Marites N. Sison, 'Who's Anglican and Who's Not? "Ties with Canterbury are Historic"', *Anglican Journal* 132.1 (2006) at <http://vlex.com/vid/who-not-ties-canterbury-historic-55068859> (accessed 10 May 2015).

15. Michael Doe, 'From Colonialism to Communion', *Journal of Anglican Studies* 7.2 (2009), pp. 213-20 (219).

16. Daniel Muñoz, 'Contemporary Anglican Identity: Cultural Contextuality and Relational Catholicity in a *Mestizaje* Ecclesiology', PhD thesis, University Complutense of Madrid, Spain, 2015.

17. Cf. *The Unfinished Task, A National Survey of Churches in Kenya* (ACM FTT Afriserve, 2004).

steady decline, especially among young people (under 24). The survey had the remit to 'establish the number, size and location of existing Protestant churches in Kenya',<sup>18</sup> including Anglicans. The findings showed that while in the capital city, Nairobi, the average church attendance was 16 per cent of the self-identified Protestant population, the national average was only 7 per cent.

In Uganda, too, the national trend among Anglican churches, based on anecdotal evidence, seems to be one of decline, rather than growth. This was pointed out by Archbishop Orombi at his installation as archbishop of the province of Uganda in 2004, when he recognized as one of the challenges facing Ugandan Anglicans, 'the loss of spiritual direction'. For Orombi, among the signs of this loss of spiritual direction were that 'many of our Christians have gone away from practical Christianity', and that there has been a growth in 'church attendance by convenience, i.e. Christmas, Easter, Funerals, Weddings only'.<sup>19</sup> This is also echoed by the bishop of the diocese of West Buganda, who affirms that, '[c]urrently the population of the Diocese is over 2 million people, of whom about 35% are baptized Anglicans. The sprouting Pentecostal churches, however, have greatly encroached on our congregational numbers.'<sup>20</sup> This reference is particularly interesting for it explains decline, not on the basis of social change, but on the grounds of inter-denominational competition.

The other part of this narrative comes from the West. While it is true that Anglican churches in Western nations have experienced a steady decline during the second half of the twentieth century, there are signs that this trend may have changed in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Decline has slowed significantly and in some cases, like England, it has reached a plateau in the last decade. According to research commissioned by the Archbishops' Council, 73 per cent of churches in England have either remained stable or grown in the decade leading to 2010, with 27 per cent of churches declining.<sup>21</sup>

18. <http://www.religionnewsblog.com/9537/godless-young-generation-worries-kenyan-churches> (accessed 5 August 2014).

19. Archbishop's charge at his enthronement in 2004. See: <http://churchofuganda.org/news/archbishop/archbishops-charge-at-his-enthronement-2004> (accessed 5 August 2014).

20. <http://westbugandadiocese.org/pages/population.html> (accessed 30 May 2014).

21. 'From Anecdote to Evidence: Findings from the Church Growth Research Programme 2011–2013', published by the Church Commissioners for England, 2014, p. 13. Available at: [www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk](http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk) (accessed 17 June 2015).

Despite the above, the more fundamental question remains unanswered: how many Anglicans are there in the world today? Apart from the official figure of 80 million Anglicans, which remains largely unchallenged, very few people have offered alternative numbers. In 1997, Peter Brierly offered a figure of just over 53 million Anglicans, at a time when the widely accepted membership of the Communion was thought to be 70 million.<sup>22</sup> David Hamid, in his essay on 'The Nature and Shape of the Contemporary Anglican Communion', drew from official figures in 2001, and concluded that there were about 76 million Anglicans worldwide.<sup>23</sup> In both cases, the methodology employed for data gathering did not differentiate between methods of counting in the official figures. The end results were always mixed, and gave an inconsistent view of the membership of the Communion.

In order to clarify the above, in 2014, I carried out research into the membership of the Anglican Communion, distinguishing between two types of membership: outer and inner circles. I followed here Peter Brierly, the leading statistician of the British organization Christian Research. Brierly's distinction between these two types of membership is a helpful way to analyze current demographics of the Anglican Communion.<sup>24</sup> The two types of membership are defined as follows:

- *Outer circle membership*: those who identify themselves as Anglican, either through national census or general affiliation. This group includes both, those who are active church members and those who are not actively involved in their local churches.
- *Inner circle membership*: those who are active church members. Brierly distinguishes between two distinct yet overlapping inner circles: one formed by those who are church *members* and one representing church *attendees*.<sup>25</sup> For clarity and simplicity, I have merged these two into one single inner circle group that includes both membership criteria: (a) regular church attendance,<sup>26</sup> that is, not those who only attend occasional offices (e.g. baptisms,

22. Peter Brierly, *The World Churches Handbook* (London: Christian Research, 1997).

23. Hamid, 'Nature and Shape', p. 81.

24. Peter Brierly, *Painting by Numbers: An Introduction to Church Statistics* (London: Christian Research, 2005), p. 22.

25. Brierly, *Painting by Numbers*, p. 29.

26. What constitutes 'regular church attendance' varies from church to church. In some churches, like the Church of Nigeria, this notion is not defined. In the Church of England, it refers to those attending at least 'once a month'. I have taken here each national church's definition of 'regular attendance' at face value. Likewise,

weddings and funerals) and/or 'high days' (e.g. Christmas and Easter); and (b) registration in a local church electoral roll.<sup>27</sup>

The research, therefore, tried to disentangle the mixed methods of counting across the Communion, by homogenizing the data into these two measurable categories. The outcome, however, remains an estimate. An informed approximation based on the latest available data and on the research methodology explained below. To my knowledge this is the first attempt to organize the data following this approach. The results paint two very different pictures with multi-layered implications.

### *Methodology*

The research and data collection took place between May and August of 2014. All websites accessed as part of the research were active at the end of August that year, the date of completion of this research. The data gathering methodology employed would be best described as a 'hybrid quantitative research method'. The following tools were used for data gathering and analysis:

- (a) Enquiries directed to National Statistics/Census Bureaus in the countries where the Anglican Communion is present, to establish the overall number of self-identified Anglicans or the percentage of Anglicans in the population (outer circle membership).
- (b) Enquiries directed to National/Provincial church offices, to establish up-to-date official membership figures and method of counting.
- (c) Website data gathering and analysis (content-based), researching national, provincial, and diocesan websites to obtain official membership figures and method of counting.
- (d) Website data gathering and analysis (photographic-based), researching diocesan and parish websites through photographic numeric analysis to establish average parish church membership.

Where it was not possible to establish reliable inner and outer circle membership data from official sources, a contextualized projection method was used. Based on the data extracted from the above (especially [c] and [d]), I made a series of projections to estimate inner

(F) note continued

within this criterion, I have included TEC's classification of 'communicants in good standing'.

27. The following provinces use this membership criterion: Canada, Wales and West Indies.



circle membership. The projections were estimated applying one of the following two methods:

- (a) Hybrid quantitative national projections, based on the results obtained from the case studies described below. These projections were the result of multiplying the estimated average size local church ( $X$ ) by the number of local churches (parishes) in a country/province ( $Y$ ), resulting in an estimated inner circle membership for that national/provincial church ( $Z$ ). So,  $X * Y = Z$ .
- (b) Average attendance national projection: this projection is established by multiplying the outer circle membership of the national church ( $A$ ), by the average percentage of national church attendance ( $B$ ), resulting in an estimated inner circle membership for that national/provincial church ( $C$ ). So,  $A * B\% = C$ .

#### *Research Summary*

The research focused on 34 of the 38 provinces. Given the numerical complexities, the four united churches from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh were not included.<sup>28</sup> Table 1 shows a summary of the national census offices contacted and the responses received.

The following countries responded with the requested data (positive responses): Australia, Canada, Eire (Republic of Ireland), Jamaica, Mauritius, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Philippines, Scotland, Seychelles and the USA. The following countries responded but were not able to offer the information requested: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, England, Ghana, Hong Kong, Japan, Jordan, Korea, Malaysia, Rwanda, Singapore, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia.

The following countries did not respond: Angola, Barbados, Bahamas, Botswana, Burundi, Congo, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Madagascar, Malawi, Israel, Melanesia, Mexico, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nigeria, Panama, Papua New Guinea, El Salvador, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Trinidad and Tobago, Wales, Zimbabwe.

Table 2 shows a summary of the provincial/national church offices contacted and the responses received.<sup>29</sup>

28. The extra-provincial dioceses of Portugal and Spain were not included due to their numerical insignificance.

29. Where the province had no central contact information, electronic communications were sent to diocesan offices, hence the higher number of communications.

**Table 1.** National census offices contacted and responses

	Numbers	%
Offices contacted	54	100
Positive responses	11	20
Negative responses	16	30
No responses	27	50

**Table 2.** National church offices contacted and responses

	Numbers	%
Offices contacted	40	100
Positive responses	8	20.0
Negative responses	5	12.5
No responses	27	67.5

The following national/provincial churches responded with the requested data (positive responses): Church of Ireland, Church of England, Scottish Episcopal Church, The Episcopal Church (USA), Anglican Church of Canada, Anglican Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia, Anglican Province of Southern Africa, and Igreja Anglicana Episcopal do Brasil. The following national/provincial churches responded but were unable or unwilling to offer the data requested: Bolivia (Southern Cone), Congo, Kenya, South Sudan, Trinidad and Tobago (West Indies). The rest of the provinces did not respond.

In addition to the provinces, I contacted the Lambeth-based Anglican Communion Office. They responded: 'I'm afraid there are very few statistics regarding the Anglican Communion. Membership figures are almost impossible to pin down because Churches measure them in different ways.'<sup>30</sup>

Table 3 shows a summary of four case studies of provincial churches, including the total number of websites analysed per church, and how many of these were provincial, diocesan, or congregational.

The website analysis sought to establish estimated inner circle membership figures for both local and national churches, through (a) content analysis and (b) photographic analysis. The content analysis focused on the statistical information provided by dioceses and official

30. Jan Butter, Director of Communications, Anglican Communion Office to author via email, 7 July 2014.

**Table 3.** Summary of web-based church membership analysis

Province	Total			
	websites	Provincial	Diocesan	Congregational
Kenya	11	1	4	6
Nigeria	11	1	6	4
Uganda	11	1	8	2
Papua New Guinea	10	0	1	9

provincial sources. Of the four case studies, the three African churches provided sufficient membership data in their diocesan websites. This data, however, was not always easily accessible and, in most cases, required extensive and time-consuming digging in archival and synod reports. In the case of Papua New Guinea, official membership information was only available from the Anglican Communion website.

The photographic analysis was used as a contrasting and/or corroborating tool, alongside the web-content analysis. It focused on counting numbers of people attending services using the photographic galleries available. This type of analysis has some significant limitations. First of all, they are limited by the quality and resolution of the pictures, which can make the counting difficult. Secondly, in some cases the pictures only offer partial views of the churches, leaving sections of the congregation outside the photograph. Thirdly, they only provide, literally, snapshots of the life of an actual congregation at particular events. Fourthly, very often these pictures are not representative of their regular congregation size because they reflect 'big events' (baptisms, confirmations, mothers' union celebrations, etc.). In this respect, the estimated figures may be overinflated. Finally, in the African context, only successful urban churches possess the resources to have an active website. These tend to be larger and wealthier churches, very different from the smaller rural counterparts. Again, these may not be representative of the whole. In all cases, I have offered a generous rather than conservative estimate.

Despite these limitations, in three of the four cases, the photographic analysis corroborated the web-content analysis results (Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda). In one case, the photographic analysis showed serious discrepancies with the official figures (Papua New Guinea). In order to illustrate how case studies were conducted, I offer a summary of the three African churches analysed.

*Kenya*

The official membership figures of the Anglican Church of Kenya are difficult to ascertain. In their provincial website they state over 5 million members in the country.<sup>31</sup> There is, however, no description of how membership is counted. When asked for this information, the central office of the Anglican Church of Kenya responded with a short email, requesting further clarification about the research, and showing reluctance to offer any information. I received no response to my follow-up clarification response.

If you carry out a diocese by diocese membership count, official figures look very different. All 31 dioceses listed on the Anglican Church of Kenya website provide the number of parishes within each diocese. Eighteen of them provide, in addition, diocesan membership figures.<sup>32</sup> See Table 4.

The figures in Table 4 give us the following average results:

- Average membership per diocese: 55,366
- Average membership of each parish: 1,333

If we were to extrapolate these official figures to the rest of the Anglican Church of Kenya, we would obtain the following results:

- Total membership extrapolating diocesan average ( $55,366 \times 31$ ) = 1,627,591
- Total membership extrapolating parish size average ( $1,333 \times 1,339$ ) = 1,772,125

Whichever extrapolation criteria we use, the discrepancy between the official figures is significant. The projected estimates drawn from the diocesan data provided show an overall membership of about a third of the official 5 million given by the province. If compared with the official figure given by the 2004 Church of England Year Book of 2.5 million Anglicans in Kenya,<sup>33</sup> the current estimate is about 800,000 lower.

The second stage of the research was to ascertain whether the average parish size figure (1,333), resulting from dividing the overall number of Anglicans into the number of parishes, reflected the inner or the outer circle membership of the local church. A photographic analysis of ten parish and diocesan websites was carried out, estimating

31. <http://www.ackenya.org/ack/history.html> (accessed 15 August 2014).

32. [www.ackenya.org/dioceses/index.html](http://www.ackenya.org/dioceses/index.html) (accessed 15 August 2014).

33. *Church of England Year Book 2004* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004).

**Table 4.** Summary of Anglican Church of Kenya membership

Diocese	Members	No. parishes	Av. parish size
All Saints		8	
Bondo	192,000	21	9,143
Bungoma	149,400	50	2,988
Butere		43	
Eldoret	24,490	46	532
Embu	45,000	44	1,023
Kajiado	8,000	20	400
Katakwa		31	
Kericho	5,846	10	585
Kirinyaga	70,000	102	686
Kitale	20,000	38	526
Kitui	13,600	57	239
Machakos	13,600	48	283
Makueni	13,600	48	283
Maseno North	12,000	42	286
Maseno South	60,000	35	1,714
Maseno West	81,000	43	1,884
Mbeere	50,000	30	1,667
Meru	45,000	44	1,023
Mombasa		47	
Mount Kenya Central	96,720	107	904
Mount Kenya South	90,000	115	783
Mount Kenya West			
Mumias		33	
Nairobi		35	
Nakuru		44	
Nambale		33	
Nyahururu		31	
Southern Nyanza		20	
TaitaTaveta		50	
Thika	20,900	54	387
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,011,156</b>	<b>1,329</b>	<b>1,333</b>

congregational attendance from the images provided. Table 5 shows the results.

When contrasting the average parish membership figure (1,333) with the photographic evidence analysed above (292), at a first glance, it would seem reasonable to assume that (1) the higher official figure refers to the outer circle membership, and (2) the lower estimated figure is likely to reflect the inner circle. Both assumptions carry their own set of difficulties.

In the case of the official parish membership (1,333), this average figure is the result of what appears to be mixed inner and outer circle data. For example, some dioceses, like Kitui, Machakos, Makueni and Maseno North, all declare average parish membership of between 238 and 285, all of which are likely to be inner circle figures. In contrast, other dioceses, like Bungoma or Bondo, show figures of 3,000 and 9,000

**Table 5.** Summary of web-based photographic analysis of Anglican Church of Kenya

Diocesan/Parish website	Estimated cong. size
<a href="http://www.allsaintsnairobi.org/">http://www.allsaintsnairobi.org/</a>	500
<a href="http://ackthikadiocese.org/">http://ackthikadiocese.org/</a>	300
<a href="http://www.ackkodioc.org/">http://www.ackkodioc.org/</a>	120
<a href="http://www.ackmasenowest.org/">http://www.ackmasenowest.org/</a>	250
<a href="http://readychurchwebs.com/katakwa/photos">http://readychurchwebs.com/katakwa/photos</a>	300
<a href="http://ackstlukesitale.org/about-us">http://ackstlukesitale.org/about-us</a>	300
<a href="http://ststephenscathedral.com/">http://ststephenscathedral.com/</a>	400
<a href="http://allsaintslimuru.org">http://allsaintslimuru.org</a> < underline > / < /underline >	300
<a href="http://ack-mtkenyasouth.org/diocese/saints_kiambaa">http://ack-mtkenyasouth.org/diocese/saints_kiambaa</a>	200
<a href="http://ack-mtkenyasouth.org/diocese/emmanuel_kiambaa">http://ack-mtkenyasouth.org/diocese/emmanuel_kiambaa</a>	250
<i>Estimated average congregation size</i>	<b>292</b>

average parish memberships respectively, more consistent with general outer circle statistics.<sup>34</sup> That there is no consistency in the method and criteria for counting membership should not surprise us. This is not unique to Kenya, but a systematic difficulty across the Anglican Communion. So, given that the estimated outer circle figure is based on a mixture of inner and outer circle counting methods, I propose here to take into account both sets of official figures, and to establish the average of the two as the outer circle estimate. Based on this formula the Anglican Church of Kenya would have an outer circle membership of  $([1.7 + 5]/2 = )$  3.3 million people.

On the other hand, the average figure resulting from the photographic analysis (292) is the best estimation based on a very limited sample. An initial projection of the inner circle membership, based on this figure, would result in an estimated 388,000 active Anglicans in Kenya, that is, just under 12 per cent of the estimated outer circle figure. This percentage, however, does not seem to reflect actual trends in the country.

As pointed out above, a recent survey on church attendance in Kenya has shown that the trend among Protestant churches is of a steady decline, with the national average reaching 7 per cent of the self-identified Christian population.<sup>35</sup> If we were to apply this figure to the outer circle estimate (3.3 million \* 7%), the result would be of just under 231,000 active Anglicans. The average size of an Anglican parish

34. Even if one allows for the fact that certain parishes may contain multiple satellite congregations, the figures seem more likely to refer to outer circle membership.

35. *The Unfinished Task*, p. xii.

in Kenya would be of 173 members. For the sake of methodological consistency, and to do justice to both sets of data, I will use both average size figures ( $[292 + 173]/2 =$ ) 233, as the best average parish estimate. On the basis of this estimate, the inner circle membership of the Anglican Church of Kenya would be of just under 310,000 Anglicans, 9.3 per cent of the outer circle membership.

### *Nigeria*

The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) officially states 18 million members within the 14 provinces and 161 dioceses that form the national church.<sup>36</sup> There is no reference in the official national church website as to how the membership is counted and the national office of the Archbishop of all Nigeria did not respond to the request for clarification on this or any other point.

With the exception of the missionary diocese of Damaturu, which is not representative of the national church, Jos is the only diocese with publicly available membership data at the time of this research. According to the Jos Diocesan Synod report,<sup>37</sup> the total number of parishes across their nine archdeaconries was 52, with an average of just over five parishes per archdeaconry. Four of the nine archdeaconries provided valuable statistical data concerning the inner circle membership of each of its parishes based on the criteria of regular attendance. The results are shown in Table 6.

Although the above data is incomplete – only four of the nine archdeaconries have provided accurate membership information – it is possible to extrapolate the available data to estimate the average size of a parish church in the diocese. The figure resulting from dividing the available membership figure (3,186) by the number of churches who have provided this information (26), is 123. Therefore, the average size of a parish (inner circle) in the Jos diocese is 123 members.

If the Jos Diocese inner circle membership was representative of the entire country, the Church of Nigeria would have an estimated inner circle membership of ( $123 * 5,768 =$ ) 709,464 Anglicans. The average regular church attendance of the Nigerian Anglican population would be approximately 4 per cent. However, extrapolating one set of diocesan statistics to all 161 dioceses in the country, on its own, is neither rigorous nor convincing. An added difficulty with Jos is that,

36. [www.anglican-nig.org](http://www.anglican-nig.org) (accessed 18 February 2014).

37. 12th Diocesan Synod, May–June 2013. See: <http://anglicandioceseofjos.com/new/index.php/blog/> (accessed 30 July 2014).

**Table 6.** Summary of Diocese of Jos (Nigeria) membership

Archdeaconry	No. parishes	Total members
Cathedral	6	873
Bassa	7	392
Jos North	6	
Jos South	8	
Jos East	4	
Jos Central	4	1,443
Fobur	5	
Rock Haven	9	478
Rantya	3	
Total	52	3,186

although it is an established diocese in a largely Christian part of the country, the city has a history of recurring conflicts between Christians and Muslims. It is hard to know how much impact their social and religious context has on church membership. It is certainly much higher than the average size congregation of the missionary diocese of Damaturu, which is barely 35 members per church.<sup>38</sup>

The photographic analysis conducted for Nigeria, based on 11 websites, showed an average congregation size of 272. This figure is about double the average congregational size of the Jos Diocese. If one were to use this estimate as a base of the total inner circle membership of the Church of Nigeria, the overall figure would be 1,568,896 Anglicans.

For the purpose of this study, and in order to do justice to both sets of data, I propose to use an average between the two ( $[123 + 272]/2 =$ ) 197. This figure constitutes the estimated inner circle parish church membership in an average Nigerian Anglican church. When extrapolated to the whole country, the total inner circle membership of the national church is of 1,136,296 Anglicans, or 6.3 per cent of the outer circle.

### *Uganda*

According to the National Census Bureau about 8 million Ugandans consider themselves Anglican. This represents about 20 per cent of the total population. It also reflects the outer circle membership of the church. To establish the inner circle membership I analysed both

38. The Damaturu Diocese has 38 churches and a total membership of 1,328 Anglicans. The average church size is 35 members. This is due, according to them, to the fact that they are in a Muslim area with Sharia Law that condemns conversions of Muslims. See: [www.anglicandiocesedamaturu.com](http://www.anglicandiocesedamaturu.com) (accessed 2 August 2014).



the data provided by diocesan websites,<sup>39</sup> regarding actual church attendance, and a random selection of ten diocesan and parish websites from across the country.

The result of this particular analysis is an average congregation size of 200 members. If we were to extrapolate this to estimate the inner circle membership of the national church, the following would be the result:  $200 * 3,978$  (parishes in the country)<sup>40</sup> = 795,600 members. This figure represents 9.9 per cent of the outer circle membership, a very similar percentage to the Church of Kenya (9.3 per cent) and slightly higher than the Church of Nigeria (6.3 per cent).

### *African Projections*

In order to establish outer and inner circle figures across the rest of the African countries I used the following criteria. For the outer circle, I assumed that official figures provided by the national churches reflected this extended membership. This assumption was based on the fact that all of these figures, when divided by the number of churches, resulted in disproportionately high and unrealistic parish memberships of thousands rather than hundreds. These figures were also inconsistent with the inner circle averages estimated for the three African countries analysed above. Given that there is no way to contrast or verify the accuracy of the outer circle figures, I took these at face value, as in the rest of the Anglican Communion. I estimated the inner circle membership using the outer circle official figure as the starting point, and applying an 'African Average Church Attendance' (AACA) of 8.5 per cent.<sup>41</sup> The resulting projections yielded average congregation sizes consistent with the three analysed nations.

### *How Many Anglicans or the Myth of Numbers*

Table 7 summarizes the estimated inner and outer circle membership figures in the Anglican Communion drawn from this research. For outer circle statistics, where the official church figures are different from

39. The best statistical data was provided by the diocese of Central Buganda.

40. There is no official figure given by the provincial website of the number of parishes/congregations in the country. 3,978 is a projected estimate based on data from four dioceses: Central Buganda (240), Ankole (84), Namirembe (60) and West Buganda (87). The average number of parishes of these four dioceses (117) has been extrapolated to the 34 dioceses in the country:  $34 * 117 = 3,978$ .

41. This percentage is the average drawn from the three case studies above (Kenya: 9.3 per cent; Nigeria: 6.3 per cent; Uganda: 9.9 per cent).

**Table 7.** Summary of Anglican Communion inner and outer circle membership<sup>a</sup>

Province/National Church	Inner circle	IC source	Outer circle	OC source
Aotearoa N. Zealand and P.	220,659	CEYB	459,711	NC2013
Australia	437,880	NCLS2001	4,865,328	NC2001
Brasil	45,000	PC CM1995	120,000	WCC
Burundi	36,125	AACA	425,000	ACO
Canada	545,957	PC ER2007	1,447,080	NC2011
Central Africa	51,000	AACA	600,000	ACO
Central America	35,000	WCC	35,000	WCC
Congo	25,500	AACA	300,000	CEYB
England	1,700,000	PC RA2013	26,000,000	CEYB
Hong Kong	29,000	CEYB	29,000	CEYB
Indian Ocean <sup>b</sup>	1,499	AACA	17,640	NC2010
Ireland (Eire & N. Ireland)	58,000	PC RA2013	384,176	NC2011
Japan	57,273	CEYB	57,273	CEYB
Jerusalem & Middle East	10,000	CEYB	10,000	CEYB
Kenya	310,000	CSE	1,700,000	CSE
Korea	14,558	CEYB	14,558	CEYB
Melanesia	163,884	CEYB	200,000	PC2013
Mexico	21,000	CEYB	21,000	CEYB
Myanmar (Burma)	59,266	CEYB	59,266	CEYB
Nigeria	1,136,286	CSE	18,000,000	PC2014
Papua New Guinea	10,266	CSE	166,046	CEYB
Philippines	121,000	CEYB	162,468	NC2010
Rwanda	85,000	AACA	1,000,000	CEYB
Scotland	34,119	PC RA2013	53,553	NC2011
South East Asia	168,079	CEYB	168,079	CEYB
Southern Africa	255,000	AACA	3,000,000	PC2014
Southern Cone	22,490	CEYB	22,490	CEYB
Sudan	382,500	AACA	4,500,000	WCC
Tanzania	170,000	AACA	2,000,000	WCC
Uganda	795,600	CSE	8,000,000	NC2014
USA	1,588,057	PC GS2012	2,405,000	NC2008
Wales	56,549	PC ER2011	84,000	CEYB
West Africa	85,000	AACA	1,000,000	CEYB
West Indies <sup>c</sup>	63,878	PC ER2008	134,496	NC2007
<b>TOTAL Anglicans</b>	<b>8,795,425</b>		<b>77,427,201</b>	

<sup>a</sup> The sources listed here are: AACA: 'African Average Church Attendance' Projection; ACO: Anglican Communion Office (<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/>); CEYB: Church of England Year Book 2004 (London: Church House Publishing, 2004); CSE: Case Study Estimate based on the conclusions of this research paper; NC (Year): National Census (Year); NCLS: Survey conducted by Australia's National Church Life Survey in 2001 (<http://www.ncls.org.au/default.aspx?sitemapid=131>); PC (Year): Provincial Church (Year); PC CM (Year): Provincial Church Confirmed Members (Year); PC ER (Year): Provincial Church Electoral Role (Year); PC RA (Year): Provincial Church Regular Church Attendance (Year); PC GS (Year): Provincial Church Communicants in Good Standing (Year); WCC: World Council of Churches (<http://www.oikoumene.org/en>).

<sup>b</sup> Outer circle figures are estimated based on the national census data provided by Mauritius (3,102) and the Seychelles (5,585), and extrapolated to the whole province.

<sup>c</sup> Both inner and outer circle figures are estimates based on Jamaica census and diocesan statistics, projected to the rest of the province on a population basis, where Jamaica represents 51 per cent of all the West Indies. See: <http://www.anglicandiocesejamaica.com/content/aboutus/history.html> (accessed 15 August 2014).

those provided by government census bureaus, the higher of the two has been adopted. For inner circle estimates, the criteria used were as follows: (a) official 'active membership' figures provided by national/provincial churches; and (b) projections based on outer circle figures and percentage estimates of average church attendance drawn from this research. In some cases, when the only available figure is inner circle, the same figure is used for the outer circle.<sup>42</sup>

The first observation from the data in Table 7 is that the inner circle constitutes about 11 per cent of the outer circle membership. In other words, about one in ten Anglicans is an active member in their local church. What follows is an analysis of the data per continent, by culture and by alignment.

### *Membership Statistics by Continent*

Table 8 shows both outer and inner circle membership by continents.

The proportion in the relationship between outer and inner circle is not the same in all continents. Europe and Africa represent the highest contrast between the two figures. In Europe, where the predominant national church is the Church of England, the inner circle represents 7 per cent of the outer membership. In Africa, the figure is similar, with just over 8 per cent of the outer circle membership being active members. In Asia the inner circle is about 90 per cent of the outer circle. This shows that their method of counting members is based on active membership. In North America and Latin America, the inner circle represents just over 50 per cent of the outer circle. Finally, in Oceania about 14 per cent of the outer circle are active members of the church.

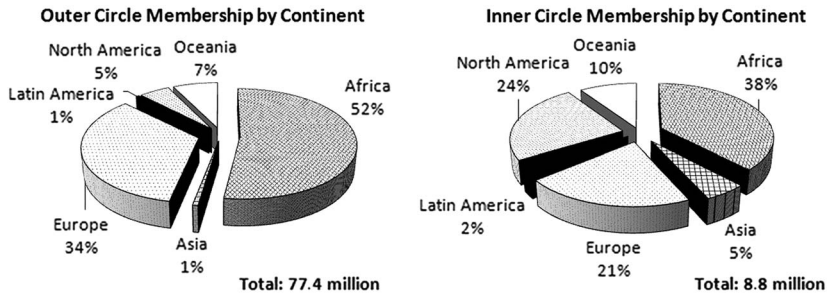
The differences between outer and inner circle membership in a cross-continent comparative analysis are clearly depicted in Figure 1. The most striking difference in both graphs is the membership percentage of Africa in relation to the wider Communion. In the inner circle, Africa, while being the largest single group of Anglicans, loses its

42. The sources listed here are: AACA: 'African Average Church Attendance' Projection; ACO: Anglican Communion Office (<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/>); CEYB: Church of England Year Book 2004 (London: Church House Publishing, 2004); CSE: Case Study Estimate based on the conclusions of this research paper; NC (Year): National Census (Year); NCLS: Survey conducted by Australia's National Church Life Survey in 2001 (<http://www.ncls.org.au/default.aspx?sitemapid=131>); PC (Year): Provincial Church (Year); PC CM (Year): Provincial Church Confirmed Members (Year); PC ER (Year): Provincial Church Electoral Role (Year); PC RA (Year): Provincial Church Regular Church Attendance (Year); PC GS (Year): Provincial Church Communicants in Good Standing (Year); WCC: World Council of Churches (<http://www.oikoumene.org/en>).

**Table 8.** Summary of Anglican Communion membership by continent

Continent	Outer circle	Inner circle
Africa	40,542,640	3,333,510
Asia	500,644	469,442
Europe	26,521,729	1,848,668
Latin America	355,139	187,368
North America <sup>a</sup>	3,852,080	2,134,014
Oceania	5,654,969	822,423
<b>Total result</b>	<b>77,427,201</b>	<b>8,795,425</b>

<sup>a</sup> USA and Canada. It does not include Mexico, which is integrated into Latin America.

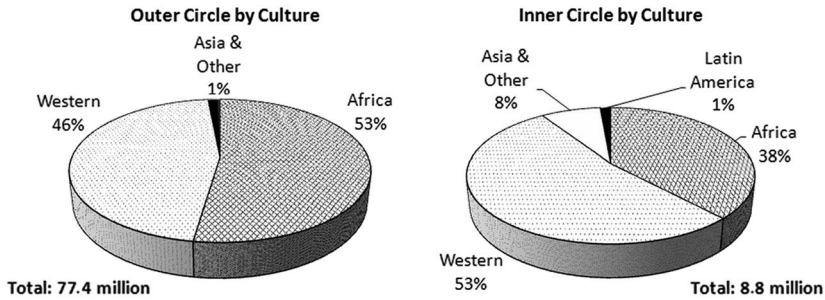
**Figure 1** Outer and inner circle membership by continent

predominance. The second most striking element is the place of North America in each chart. While in the outer circle its numeric and proportional significance is very low, in the inner circle it represents a quarter of Anglicans worldwide.

#### *Membership Statistics by Culture*

Figure 2 shows the outer and inner circle membership classified into 'cultures'. For the sake of simplicity, four cultural groups have been identified: (1) Africa; (2) Western (Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand); (3) Asia and non-Western Oceania; and (4) Latin America.

According to the outer circle membership, there is a general split between Africa and the Western world, with the Africans representing just over half of the Communion, while Western Anglicans represent just under half. Asia and Latin America are numerically insignificant in the outer circle membership. In the inner circle the picture is



**Figure 2** Outer and inner circles by culture

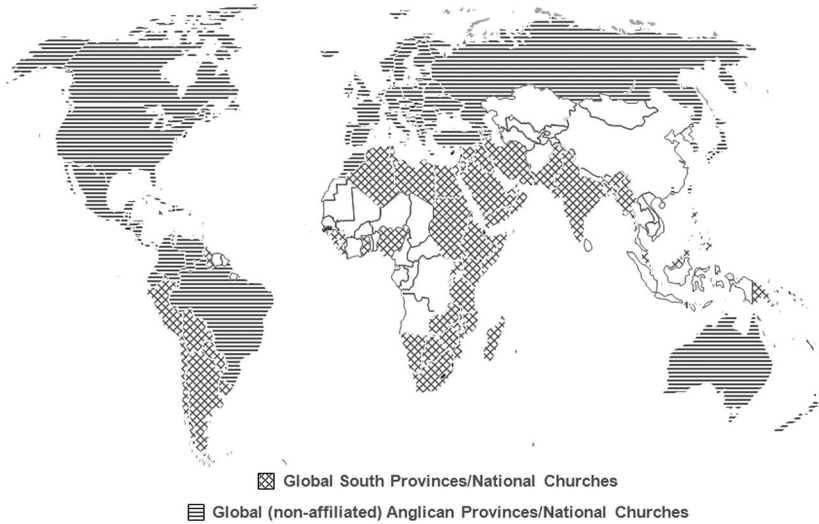
very different. The Western section is by far the largest of the four, with more than half of the total. Africa is still a significant section, with over a third of the overall inner circle membership, and Asia and Latin America combined are nearly a tenth of the Anglican Communion.

#### *Membership Statistics by Alignment*

This is one of the most difficult exercises of this research. For the sake of simplicity I have distinguished here between Global South and Global (non-affiliated) Anglicanism. This is an artificial distinction that describes two distinct groups of Anglican Provinces around the debate on sexuality.

- (1) Global South: those predominantly conservative provinces which have aligned together under the GAFCON umbrella to stand for what they describe as 'orthodox Anglicanism'.
- (2) Global (non-affiliated) Anglicanism: those provinces which are not aligned with the Global South. They often represent the full breadth of Anglican theological and ecclesiological diversity. While the Global South is an actual name adopted by the conservative provinces, Global (n.a.) Anglicanism does not exist as such, and it is not a homogeneous or organized group with a particular agenda. Figure 3 illustrates the geography of contemporary Anglicanism.

Figure 3 shows the provincial/national churches ecclesiological alignments. In the American continent, it includes the dioceses of the 9th Province of the USA Episcopal Church (Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Puerto Rico and Venezuela). In Europe, it includes the Church of England Diocese in Europe, which covers from Morocco to Vladivostok, and from Scandinavian countries to Turkey. In Asia, I have also included the United Churches of North India, South India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, which are not included in the statistical research.

**Anglican Communion World Map by Alignment**

**Figure 3** Anglican Communion world map by alignment

Because the criteria here is ‘provinces’ or ‘national churches’, the map does not show those dioceses within a particular province which are not aligned with their province. The two most representative examples are Sydney diocese in Australia, firmly aligned with the Global South, and the diocese of Uruguay in the Southern Cone, theologically aligned to Global (n.a.) Anglicans. Neither does it show the North American groups that have aligned themselves with the GAFCON.

The case of South Africa is also significant, for although historically it has been theologically diverse and in some instances a liberal church, it chose, nevertheless, to align itself with the Global South. Table 9 shows the outer and inner circle memberships of the Anglican Communion by national church and alignment.

The figures in Table 9 are illustrated visually in Figure 4. They are analysed per continent and per culture. The figure shows the inner circle Global South and Global (n.a.) Anglican cross-continent distribution, by percentage.

The most striking thing here is that, statistically and proportionately, the Global South is not a particularly global phenomenon. The overwhelming majority of its members are in Africa, with a small minority present in Asia, Oceania and Latin America. No provinces are represented from Europe and North America. In the case of Global (n.a.) Anglicanism, the predominant group is formed by the North American churches, followed

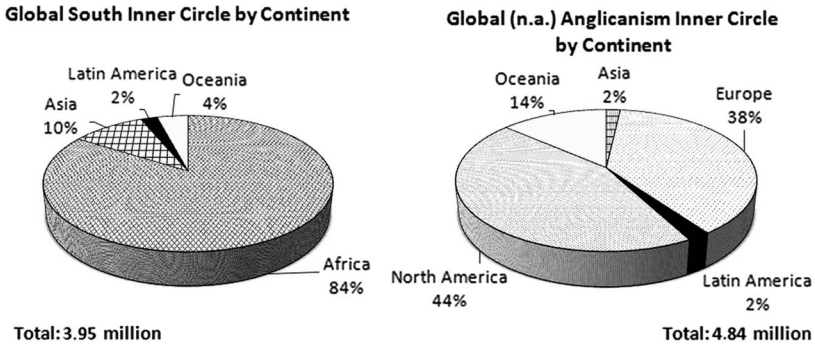
**Table 9.** Summary of Anglican Communion membership by alignment

Alignment	National Church	Outer circle	Inner circle
<b>Global South</b>	Anglican Church of Southern Africa	3,000,000	255,000
	Church of the Province of South East Asia	168,079	168,079
	Iglesia Anglicana del Cono Sur de America	22,490	22,490
	Province de L'Eglise Anglicane au Rwanda	1,000,000	85,000
	Province de L'Eglise Anglicane Du Congo	300,000	25,500
	Anglican Church of Burundi	425,000	36,125
	Anglican Church of Kenya	1,700,000	310,000
	Anglican Church of Melanesia	163,884	163,884
	Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea	166,046	10,266
	Anglican Church of Tanzania	2,000,000	170,000
	Province of the West Indies	156,649	63,878
	Church of Nigeria (Anglican Com.)	18,000,000	1,136,286
	Province of Central Africa	600,000	51,000
	Province of Myanmar (Burma)	59,266	59,266
	Province of the Indian Ocean	17,640	1,499
	Church of the Province of Uganda	8,000,000	795,600
	Church of the Province of West Africa	1,000,000	85,000
Episcopal Church in Jerusalem & M.E.	10,000	10,000	
Episcopal Church in the Philippines	162,468	121,000	
Episcopal Church of the Sudan	4,500,000	382,500	
<b>Sub-total</b>		<b>41,451,522</b>	<b>3,952,373</b>
<b>Global non-affiliated Anglicans</b>	Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui	29,000	29,000
	Iglesia Anglicana Region Central América	35,000	35,000
	Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil	120,000	45,000
	Iglesia Anglicana de Mexico	21,000	21,000
	Anglican Church Aotearoa N. Zealand & P.	459,711	220,659
	Anglican Church of Australia	4,865,328	437,880
	Anglican Church of Canada	1,447,080	545,957
	Anglican Church of Korea	14,558	14,558
	Church in Wales	84,000	56,549
	Church of England	26,000,000	1,700,000
	Church of Ireland*	384,176	58,000
	The Episcopal Church	2,405,000	1,588,057
	Nippon SeiKo Kai (Japan)	57,273	57,273
	Scottish Episcopal Church	53,553	34,119
<b>Sub-total</b>		<b>35,975,679</b>	<b>4,843,052</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>77,427,201</b>	<b>8,795,425</b>

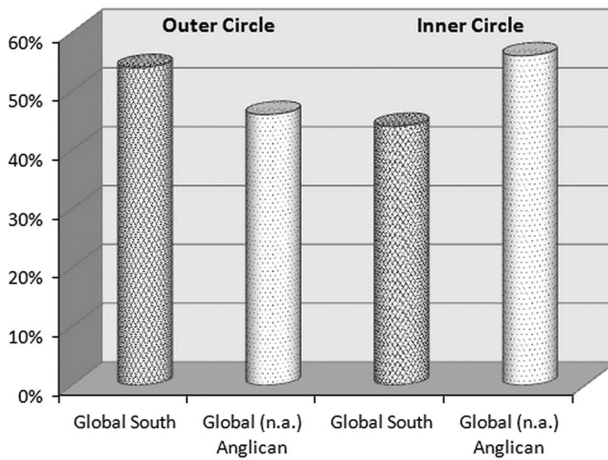
by the European ones, Oceania and, in a small proportion, Asia and Latin America. Global (n.a.) Anglicanism is therefore overwhelmingly Western.

The total membership differences between Global South and Global (n.a.) Anglicanism are particularly noticeable when contrasting outer and inner circle statistics side by side. Figure 5 is based on the two sets of membership data by percentage (on left column).

It is clear from the data in Figure 5 that (a) in the outer circle the Global South appears to be slightly larger; (b) in the inner circle the reverse is true, Global (n.a.) Anglicanism is the larger group; and (c) that in both cases, the percentage figures are reasonably close.



**Figure 4** Inner circle by continent and alignment



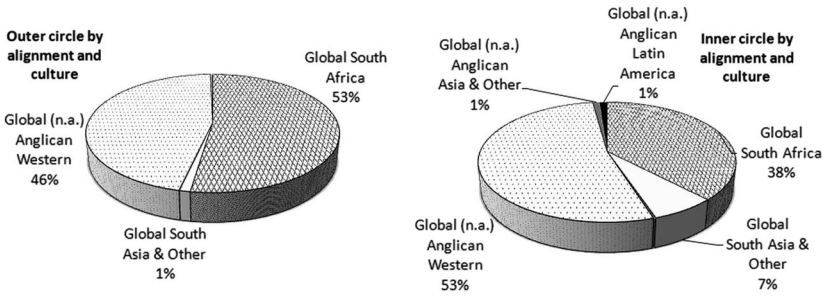
**Figure 5** Outer and inner circle by alignment

Whichever membership counting method we use, the divide is real but also fairly even.

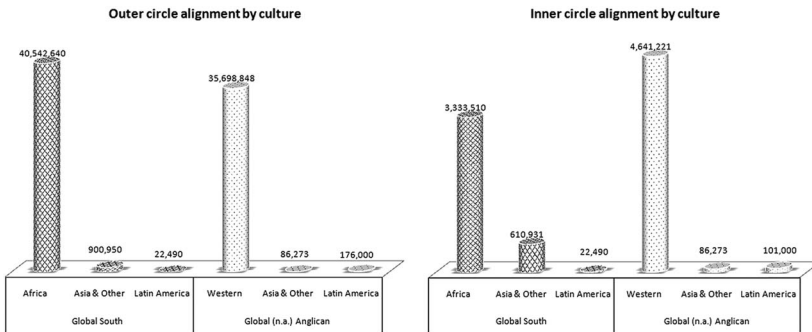
When we take into account the culture dimension, the results show that the most significant division in the Communion is between two principal cultural contexts: Western and African. The other cultures, while playing their part, numerically can only be described as minor players. The following graph shows both outer and inner circle results by alignment and culture groups, by percentage.

In Figure 6, whereas the outer circle figures seem to be fairly evenly divided between the two cultural groups, the inner circle offers a mixed picture. The overwhelmingly predominant culture in Global (n.a.) Anglicanism is Western, with only 2 per cent of members being in Latin





**Figure 6** Outer and inner circles by alignment and culture (in percentages)



**Figure 7** Outer and inner circles by alignment and culture (in numbers)

America and Asia. In the Global South, the predominant cultural group is African with a small, but not insignificant percentage of Asian and non-Western Oceania Anglicans. Figure 7 shows the same data with absolute membership figures.

### Conclusions

The statistical data shown in this paper seeks to offer an updated estimate of the membership of the Anglican Communion, based on a fundamental distinction between outer and inner circles' memberships. The research has tried to disentangle the mixed methods of counting across the Communion, in order to homogenize the data into these two categories. The results show that, although the general direction in recent decades has been of a North to South demographic shift, currently the narrative is more accurately described as one of North *and* South. The demographic weight of both groups challenges the commonly accepted growth/decline narrative, and raises significant questions concerning how Anglicans can affirm both unity and diversity.