



## Attending to Translocal Identities: How Congolese Anglicans Talk about their Church

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### ABSTRACT

In the perennial discussions about Anglican identity some voices predominate more than others. *L'Eglise Anglicane du Congo* is a small province with a modest voice in the Anglican Communion. This article looks at Congolese Anglican identity as articulated by its members and examines the way in which the formation of that identity emerges from local concerns as well as wider networks. It uses interviews with members to focus on the majority appreciation of 'order', as expressed in governance and ritual, and recent shifts in the discourses surrounding 'order' to engage with changes in the country. The article borrows the terms 'translocal' and 'transnational' from the social sciences to explore the overlapping relational identities that emerge and the multi-directional dynamics of Congolese Anglicans. It suggests that this approach may have wider implications for understanding Anglicanism.

**KEYWORDS:** Anglican, Congolese, governance, identity, order, ritual, translocal, transnational

### *Introduction*

Anglicans ... are proud to belong to an international church. They know that their church is found throughout the world ... Secondly, they are proud of their episcopal system ... the liturgical rite ... their church does not know much conflict or dissidence....<sup>2</sup>

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2. Interview with Isingoma Kahwa, Edinburgh, 7 June 2000: 'Les anglicans ... ont la fierté d'appartenir d'une église qui est internationale. Ils savent que leur

This article briefly introduces a province that is less well known than others in the Anglican Communion through examining the Anglican identity expressed by its members. Using interviews with members of *L'Eglise Anglicane du Congo* (EAC) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo), it analyses their attachment to Episcopal governance and prayer book liturgies and seeks to understand the meanings, events and relationships through which a particular Anglican identity is developed. In doing so, it intends to further the study of Anglicanism from a non-metropolitan perspective,<sup>3</sup> and to provide a way of analysing relationships and meanings within a Province. It shows that Anglican unity is a messy business, emerging from a variety of sources which weave in and out of each other over time.<sup>4</sup>

Anglican Studies has often been concerned with the nature of 'Anglicanism' or how parts of the Communion relate to the entire Communion or its other parts. In this endeavour transnational relationships and identities have been identified and explored. It is my contention that attention must also be given to the fluid and complex translocal flows of meaning and of relationships that occur within a province. It seems helpful to study the identity of the EAC (and other provinces of the Anglican Communion) as a web of actions, meanings and relationships between local congregations, dioceses and the Anglican Communion, all interacting with their complex social contexts. One of the reasons for this approach is to recognize the variations of meaning that are often masked by the adoption of similar structures, forms of worship, and a common ecclesial language. The exploration of the translocal is a useful way to question assumptions of universality, or internationality, and to argue that familiar features of Anglicanism flourish to the extent that they resonate with contextual

*(Footnote continued)*

église se trouve partout dans le monde. ... deuxièmement, ils sont fières de leur système épiscopal ... le rite liturgique ... leur église ne connaît pas beaucoup de conflit ou bien de dissidence.'

3. See for example, Andrew Wingate, Kevin Ward, Carrie Pemberton and Wilson Sitshebo (eds.), *Anglicanism: A Global Communion* (London: Mowbray, 1998); Kevin Ward, *A History of Global Anglicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Bruce Kaye, *An Introduction to World Anglicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

4. Stephen Spencer (after Michael Ramsey), 'The *Missio Dei* and Unity: A Case Study of Anglicanism', *British and Irish Association for Mission Studies Bulletin* 334 (April, 2010), p. 6.

concerns, forms and expectations. 'Translocality' has been used to mean 'not being part of a geographically fixed community', and while I do not use it in this sense, there is no doubt that the growth of the EAC through migration ensures that the flows of relations are influenced by geographical relocation.<sup>5</sup> The word has also been defined as 'orientation towards extra community forces', or 'cosmopolitanism',<sup>6</sup> an attribute which is in evidence to varying degrees in members of the EAC, influenced by migration and their desire to belong to a worldwide communion. Following Arjun Appadurai, I use the term in connection with a 'relational and contextual' understanding of 'locality' as a sense of 'social immediacy',<sup>7</sup> or a 'sense of place or community'.<sup>8</sup> Thus 'translocality' arises from groups with some mobility, operating in one locale but with allegiances and relationships beyond that locale which inform their activity and influence their identity.<sup>9</sup> Thus, in constructing their identity individual EAC members may choose to focus on their immediate sense of community. Or they may emphasize the translocal community formed through relationships with other parishes, dioceses or denominations, in which influences from nearby urban centres, neighbouring security concerns, the experiences of migrant labour, the practices of a Pentecostal choir, different discourses on the merits of traditional healing and bio medicine and so on all impact on their Anglican adherence. Or individual members may choose to highlight the transnational sense of belonging to a global organization.<sup>10</sup> These three sets of foci are not mutually exclusive, members move between them as they articulate their sense of belonging.

5. Rijk A. Van Dijk, 'From Camp to Encompassment: Discourses of Trans-subjectivity in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 27.2 (1997), pp. 135-59 (137).

6. Don Martindale and R. Galen Hanson, *Small Town and the Nation: The Conflict of Local and Translocal Forces* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1969), p. xv.

7. Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 179.

8. J. Copeland-Carson. *Creating Africa in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 19.

9. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, p. 192.

10. 'Transnational' and to a lesser extent 'translocal' entities have been explored in studies of migration and in the development of transnational or diaspora Pentecostal churches; see, for example, David Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the Rise of a Zimbabwean Transnational Religious Movement* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006) and Afe Adogame, Roswith Gerloff and K. Hock (eds.), *Christianity in Africa and the African Diaspora: The Appropriation of a Scattered Heritage* (London: Continuum, 2008).

The EAC is involved in the formal, transnational networks that facilitate communication between provinces of the Anglican Communion such as the Lambeth Conference, the Mother's Union and the Anglican Consultative Council. Yet its relationship to these networks is informed by translocal networks and identities emerging within its congregations, parishes and dioceses. Complex institutions like Anglican provinces engage both translocally and transnationally as members and constituent parts interact in different spheres. To understand the engagement of any Anglican province within the Anglican Communion (which I do not attempt to do here), it is important to comprehend the internal concerns arising from intersecting local identities and the translocality that emerges.

### *Background*

The EAC developed from 1896 in the north-east of the country through the itineration of Ugandan evangelists connected with the Church Missionary Society (CMS), most notably the Revd Canon Apolo Kivebulaya. From 1934 to 1960 and from 1972 until the present it has received mission partners from CMS UK, Australia and New Zealand. The first diocese was formed in 1972 and the church has been a province in the Anglican Communion since 1992. It now has nine dioceses and about half a million members, the majority of whom live in the east of the country where this research was carried out. Nationally, the EAC operates as a *communauté* within the *Eglise du Christ au Congo*, the Protestant umbrella organization recognized by the state along with the Kimbanguist and Roman Catholic churches. A francophone province, the EAC also operates in Swahili – the trade language of the east – and other local languages. As it spreads westwards, it is also beginning to work in Lingala, Kongo and Chiluba. The EAC grew rapidly after Independence in 1960. Anglicans migrated from the rural heartlands of the church on the Semeliki escarpment around the village of Boga to growing urban centres, and they migrated into Congo from Uganda, Sudan, Zambia, Ruanda and Burundi, establishing their Anglican churches in their new locations.<sup>11</sup> Lay people were instrumental in this development, preferring to plant Anglican churches rather than continue to worship in other Protestant

11. In Katanga and Kindu some independent churches chose to join the EAC in the 1970s when all Christian expression was legally confined to those denominations recognized by the state, through membership of the *Eglise du Christ au Congo*.

denominations. Both rural-to-urban and cross-border migration are important factors in the spread of the EAC in the country and underline the pertinence of analysing translocal flows in the construction of Congolese Anglican identity. Most recently migration has included forced displacement caused by the brutal internal wars in the country from 1996. The EAC provides schools and health centres in the areas where it is numerically strong, and has aimed to care for victims of war by working with child soldiers and survivors of rape, by critically examining the rebuilding of society and by being a conduit of aid. The EAC operates within the assumption that an Anglican province is a single ecclesiastical unit<sup>12</sup> and it receives outside support from bodies like the Congo Church Association<sup>13</sup> and Anglican dioceses in other provinces in order to function in this way. However, lack of resources, poor infrastructure and years of political turmoil stretch to its limits the capacity of the church to develop this ecclesiological position in practical ways. These challenges further reinforce the local appreciation of their church expressed by many ordinary church members, whose engagement may be limited to 'chapel' or parish. Members are proud of the church's national and international aspects but the interpretation and the perceived usefulness of these wider aspects is formed at a local and translocal level.

The interpretation of Church of England practices within the EAC, which by 1896 were already being adapted in Uganda, represented a particular local religious response that engaged with other social, religious and historical factors. Anglicans in north-east DR Congo shaped governance and ritual in their own image as a way of articulating their identity. From interviews with EAC members, a number of key words were identified as identity signifiers in this process.<sup>14</sup> Here I examine three of them; *utaratibu* (order), *uhuru* (freedom) – both, in this instance, referring to church governance and ritual – and *umoja* (unity), indicating a discourse which allows for difference.

### *Utaratibu*

Almost all Anglican members interviewed spoke of *utaratibu* as the single most valuable characteristic of the EAC, by which they inferred

12. Kaye, *Introduction to World Anglicanism*, p. 3.

13. [www.congochurchassn.org.uk/](http://www.congochurchassn.org.uk/)

14. For further information on informants, methodology and on the history of the EAC, see Emma Wild-Wood, *Migration and Christian Identity in Congo (DRC)* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

two things familiar to Anglicanism and understood to be closely related: the stratified order of authority and episcopal governance within the EAC, and the liturgy of *The Book of Common Prayer*, followed in acts of public worship. The interpretation and place of *utaratibu* was, however, contested. These two aspects of *utaratibu* provided a unifying structure and, thus, the basis for Anglican identity in Congo. The two PhD theses written by Congolese Anglicans reflect on the liturgy and governance of the EAC: 'Liturgie anglicane et Inculturation, Hier, Aujourd'hui et Demain: Regard sur la Célébration eucharistique en République Démocratique du Congo', by Dirokpa Balufuga<sup>15</sup> and 'Authority in the Anglican Church of Congo: The Influence of Political Models of Authority and the Potential of "Life-Community Ecclesiology" for Good Governance', by Titre Ande.<sup>16</sup> Both works agree that the Anglicanism on the escarpment pre-Independence was a hybrid of various influences, including English, Ugandan and Hema (the people of Boga). Both critique present practice before presenting a theological framework for reform along biblical and African lines. The Prayer Book and the episcopal system remain integral to their understanding of Anglicanism. Rather than take up their theological assessments I analyse what is meant by *utaratibu*, why it is important for EAC identity and how it developed over time. Notwithstanding the weaknesses highlighted by Dirokpa and Titre, I conclude that a broadly consensual view of *utaratibu* was, over several decades, able to unite diverse histories and interests within one denomination and provide it with a coherent identity. While a variety of interpretations of *utaratibu* will be explored, including those influenced by the rise of Pentecostalism in the last twenty years, Anglican members continue to use *utaratibu* as a way of describing what they appreciate about their church.

#### *Utaratibu of Episcopal Governance*

The hierarchical structure of the EAC was appreciated by members from all areas of north-east Congo. It both provided an appropriate way of operating locally and it linked Congolese Anglicans with the Anglican Communion. As one member said, 'I see that the structure is

15. PhD thesis, Université Laval, 2001. Dirokpa was until recently the archbishop.

16. PhD thesis, Birmingham University, 2003. Now published as *Leadership and Authority, Bula Matari and Life-Community Ecclesiology in Congo* (Oxford: Regnum, 2010). Titre is now bishop of Aru.

good. It gives hierarchy which gives mutual respect. It is firstly a positive thing. When you are in a hierarchy you understand each other easily.<sup>17</sup>

Although the structural framework of Anglican governance is similar throughout the communion, it is fleshed out in different locations with a variety of culturally specific interpretations. The EAC, like other Anglican provinces, adheres to a stratified system of ecclesiastical governance which is meant to be primarily conciliar rather than individual.<sup>18</sup> Many African Anglican churches have a highly hierarchical organization, a legacy of the reluctance to ordain those with limited education combined with a need to have leaders of many small, local chapels. In the EAC a structure similar to that in other African provinces prevails; additional strata of teachers/catechists responsible for one chapel and evangelists for a sub-parish of several chapels compliments the work of 'pastors' (priests), archdeacons and bishops. The bishops and the archbishop are also perceived to give status to the EAC within the wider society and are seen by members as patrons who bestow good things upon their clients.<sup>19</sup> Church workers operate translocally, moving to work in different parts of the diocese and disseminating the practices of various locales.

At each level there is a council whose authority is intended to uphold the church canons and supersede that of the individual leader. However, this constitutional and conciliar governance, based on written documents, is often observed in the breach. More often members of the EAC understand that the individual holder of rank possesses authority: the one who holds the authority *is* the authority.<sup>20</sup> Most Congolese Anglican members appreciate the structural *utaratibu* (order) apparent in this form of governance, admiring the progression of power embodied in individuals and perceiving themselves as belonging to a well-ordered organization led by people with different roles and ranks. For many interviewees the episcopacy itself played

17. Interview with Tabu Abembe, Bwakadi, 6 October 2000: 'Pour la structure je vois que c'est bon. Ça donne l'hierarchie, ça donne le respect mutuel. C'est un côté positif d'abord. Quand on est hiérarchisé on se comprend facilement'.

18. Philip Thomas, 'A Family Affair: The Pattern of Constitutional Authority in the Anglican Communion', in Stephen Sykes (ed.), *Authority in the Anglican Communion* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1987), pp. 119–43.

19. See Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works Disorder as a Political Instrument* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999), pp. 38–39, for a description of the kind of political situation that informs church structures in Congo.

20. Titre, 'Authority in the Anglican Church of Congo', pp. 152–53.



such a distant and occasional role in their church life that they did not explicitly mention it. The structural *utaratibu* members admired was the progression of power embodied in individuals designated for oversight of specific ecclesiastical divisions. EAC members perceived themselves as belonging to a well-ordered organization led by people who had different roles and ranks. They expressed satisfaction at the unambiguous structure and the ability to know the place of each member, because identifying the rank of a church worker appeared to be important for members of the EAC.

Well, through the clothes you can understand who is *mwalimu*, who is *mwangalizi*, who is the pastor, who is the archdeacon because the clothes are different ... So you can identify who is low ... who is in the middle and who is above, until you reach the Bishop.<sup>21</sup>

Vestments indicate the hierarchical position of church workers and demonstrate unambiguously what function they perform and how they belong to the larger order.

Titre argues that this personalized authority is influenced by dominant models available in society. Church governance in the EAC reflects local structures which, in turn, are combined with colonial and postcolonial forms of secular governance:<sup>22</sup> a governance which, in contemporary African states, has been described as one where power is 'weakly institutionalized and remains essentially personalized and particularistic'.<sup>23</sup> It is within this personalized hierarchical structure that effective socio-religious power in the EAC lies, and its identity as a socially credible institution is strengthened because of it. It is precisely this inculturation which concerns theologians like Titre who fear that the EAC aped many less appealing traits of state governance and offered a 'political[ly] manipulative interpretation of the culture and biblical passages'.<sup>24</sup> It is also this inculturation that explains why Anglican members understand the system, are generally content to operate within it, and articulate their sense of religious identity in relation to it. They uphold the value of a system of which they consider themselves a part, and which they view as greater than the actions of particular individuals within it.

21. Interview with Janette Sinziri, Kumuru, 18 August 2000: 'Bon, pale namna ya mavazi we utafhamu mwalimu iko nani, mwangalizi iko nani, pasteur iko nani, Archidiacre iko nani, kwani mavazi iko mbalimbali... Njo we utatambua ile iko chini... ile iko katikati, ile iko juu hivi, kufika mpaka kufika kwa Askofu'.

22. Titre, 'Authority in the Anglican Church of Congo', p. 2.

23. Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*, p. 31.

24. Titre, 'Authority in the Anglican Church of Congo', p. 203.



*Ritual Utaratibu*

The *utaratibu* of governance is intertwined with the ritual *utaratibu* of the *Book of Common Prayer*, considered the essential basis of EAC ritual. One member articulated her appreciation thus, ‘There is an excellent programme of prayers .. I have found in this part all the things of the Christian rite/custom. Following it affirms [my] faith.’<sup>25</sup>

Within the Prayer Book, Morning Prayer (usually in Swahili) and the lectionary are most often used – for public services on Sundays, for special occasions and for private and family use.<sup>26</sup> Communion, available only occasionally because of the lack of priests, has an irregular role in liturgical ritual but is understood to be an indicator of belonging to the wider Christian faith with other denominations. Those in the hierarchy of church governance are responsible for proper observance of rites according to the Prayer Book.<sup>27</sup> The liturgy performs a ritualistic function within worship, allowing access to the Almighty and ‘express[ing] symbolically important social values’<sup>28</sup> thus providing the central, corporal act of belonging through which identity is reaffirmed. Dirokpa in his thesis on EAC liturgy considers that ‘for Anglicans, liturgy expresses faith’,<sup>29</sup> and so it should be written and performed in ways appropriate to those using it. Thus his assessment that the Runyoro Prayer Book, as used in the Boga area, remained an ‘imported product’ which, nevertheless, contained ‘Hema culture’ makes him consider it an inappropriate vehicle for Congolese Christianity because it was too specific to an alien culture to be of general use.<sup>30</sup> He is also critical of the rewriting of the Swahili Prayer Book, published in 1998 after wide consultation throughout the EAC, believing that it did not go far enough to contextualize Christian worship.<sup>31</sup> Here, however, we concern ourselves with the way in which a cross-section of EAC members responded to the weekly use of the Prayer Book. Most Anglican members were unaware of the issues

25. Interview with Kiko Dudu, Kumuru, 17 August 2000: ‘Inakuwa programme lazima ya maombi... nilipata ndani ya sehemu hii mambo yote ya kawaida ya kikristo, na ikafuatwa inaimarisha imani’.

26. Interview with Lucy Ridsdale, Cambridge, 15 January 1999.

27. Most widely used in Swahili but available in Alur, Kakwa, Lingala, Lugbara, Runyoro and French.

28. John Beattie, *The Nyoro State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 121.

29. Dirokpa, “Liturgie anglicane”, p. 37.

30. Dirokpa, “Liturgie anglicane”, p. 112.

31. Dirokpa, “Liturgie anglicane”, pp. 114–15.

of liturgical contextualization and usually spoke favourably of the Prayer Book they had inherited:

... I like to go to the Anglican [church] because in our Prayer Book, before listening to the Word of God, first you hear prayers and confess sins. Here is what I like about it because we pray for all the churches, or the world, or for all governments of for other small things in the world.<sup>32</sup>

Regular participants knew the Morning Prayer service even if they did not possess a Prayer Book, or could not read. Regular participants believe that its content links them with God, the Bible and the world and provides support to their Christian faith. Furthermore, it is understood to link local congregations together, all following the rite in different localities, connecting Anglicans across time and space, and bringing a sense of familiarity in an unfamiliar place. Another reason for the appreciation of the Prayer Book was its perceived link with different congregations, in different villages and towns, who were all following the same words and the same lectionary: '... with us here you read [the readings for] Trinity week, this is what they will read in Bwakadi, [and] they will read in Boga – this is *utaratibu*'.<sup>33</sup>

Liturgical order was not simply a question of following the Prayer Book but the fact that this was done in every chapel. This order was considered a great advantage by those who had lived or travelled in other countries, as Damali Sabiti has done. She claimed, 'So the system is always the same, only that using [*sic*] different languages ... I feel comfortably [*sic*] in all the countries where I always move ... because it is like uniform. The liturgy's the same, there is no problem.'<sup>34</sup>

In using the word 'uniform', Damali, who travelled in Africa and to the UK on Mother's Union business, is equating liturgy with an outward identity signifier which is a point of great pride for Congolese who delight in the opportunities to wear attire which visibly declares their belonging together. Uniform is not considered a 'sameness' or conformity but an emblem of pride in demonstrating corporate

32. Interview with Kusika Kenyi, Aru, 11 August 2000: '...ninapenda kutembea kwa Anglicane kwa sababu ndani ya Kitabu chetu cha Sala, mbele ya kusikia Neno la Mungu kwanza munasikia maombi, na kutubu zambi. Hapa ndiyo ninapenda ye kwa sababu tunaomba kwa makanisa yote, ao duniani, ao kwa gouvernements yote ao kwa mambo mengine ndogo ndogo ndani ya dunia'.

33. Interview with Musubaho Ndaghaliwa, Kainama, 5 October 2000: '...kwetu unasomea hapa juma ya Utatu, ni hili watasoma kwa Bwakadi, watasoma kwa Boga – ile ni *utaratibu*'.

34. Interview with Damali Sabiti, Mukono, 20 October 2000.

belonging and unity (*umoja*). When Christians in north-east Congo recite the liturgy during Sunday services they consider that they are keeping the faith and connecting with people who are not physically present in that particular geographical location.<sup>35</sup> Bénézet Bujo, a Roman Catholic theologian from north-east Congo, considers that for Africans 'rituals are a way of remembering and re-enacting the past, and their repetition constitutes a guarantee of prosperity for future generations.'<sup>36</sup> Proper performance of a rite is an activity of connection beyond physical limitations, linking people across time and space. In the perception of participants the Prayer Book has a translocal function, sustaining faith and community beyond what was immediately visible.

Through the *utaratibu* of the Prayer Book every member participates in and belongs to the EAC. While clergy understand it as helping them to perform their perceived task of Christian education the liturgical rite provides the way in which *all* members of the EAC could become part of *utaratibu*. The Church hierarchy requires the presence of a congregation of people whose social and religious life is sustained through the orderly repetition of familiar, spiritual words and actions. Because ritual *utaratibu* enabled this sort of participative unity there was less emphasis on a strict moral code of behaviour for defining active membership as was found in other Protestant denominations. The disciplined repetition of correct attitude and practice within worship was paramount to a code of social behaviour outside worship. The basis for Anglican identity, as articulated through the narration of worship events by EAC members, was therefore more closely linked with the proper performance of community ritual than the observance of codes of individual moral behaviour.

#### *Translocal Meanings for Transnational Forms of Governance and Liturgy*

Through a process of mutual influence, Anglican *utaratibu* coheres with a dominant understanding of societal order and mediation of power. It is this indigenization which explains why Anglican members are content to operate and articulate their sense of religious identity within what was an imported ecclesiastical system. Not only

35. The Prayer Book functioned as the ritual of a denomination which considered proper spiritual behaviour to be the performance of the correct rite in worship according to Christian custom.

36. Bénézet Bujo, *African Theology in its Social Context* (Nairobi: St Paul Publications, 1992), pp. 29–30.

does *utaratibu* permit belonging it also resonates with ideas of God's nature and being which in turn feed into ideas about society. Anglican elements which appear broadly universal have a signification which has developed through translocal exchange.

*Divine Order.* 'God is a God of *utaratibu*' was regularly pronounced in sermons and in expressions of faith by EAC members. It was the reflexive, first statement made of God's nature from which assertions about other divine characteristics like omnipotence and love emanated. *Utaratibu* was seen as a primary characteristic of the divinity. From God's first act in creation, bringing *utaratibu* out of chaos, the divine will was seen as providing order. Redemption was regarded as God's ordered plan for the world, a world which had fallen short of the *utaratibu* ordained by God. A God of *utaratibu* expected orderly systems through which to manifest his power. Anglican *utaratibu* was considered one way of responding to this orderliness. Through the *utaratibu* of rites properly performed Anglicans could communicate with God. Many EAC members gave credence to the view that order was effectively a hierarchical transference of power through which God's will could be carried out.<sup>37</sup> Bujo claims this is part of Bantu philosophy; 'God then is the dispenser of life... Life is a participation in God, but is always mediated by one standing above the recipient in the hierarchy of being.'<sup>38</sup> The source of life mediates life through others which means that some people have greater power and influence. Through the *utaratibu* of rites properly performed Anglicans could communicate with God.

*Power.* God's power is accessed by EAC members through liturgical worship performed by those who had ecclesiastical authority. An active participation in church order was expected by the laity through ritual repetition of the liturgy. EAC members knew that a hierarchy of power could be misused and could find the *utaratibu* through which power was mediated oppressive and constraining. Most, however, spoke of it in terms of providing meaning, direction, purpose, and a sense of belonging to an entity larger and more powerful than oneself or one's family. For migrants this was particularly useful. By belonging to the EAC they were adhering to an *utaratibu* which had legitimacy in the eyes of the state and which had global connections

37. Titre, 'Authority in the Anglican Church of Congo', p. 152.

38. Bujo, *African Theology in its Social Context*, p. 20.

more influential than their size or infrastructure in Congo would suggest. Transnational Anglican links were proudly asserted in the articulation of translocal identities. They indicated that the EAC was more influential than simply a local gathering of Christians in a new place. Anglicanism provided them with an identity which linked them to forms of power when they felt most powerless. Most members were proudly aware that they were part of an international movement, that they had connections more influential than their size or infrastructure in Congo would suggest.

*Security.* Divine order and power was particularly important in a social situation of disorder, whether that be disruption as the result of migration, or the fear and unease of living in a disordered state. *Utaratibu* offered to migrants continuity with the locations from which they had migrated and security in a strange and disordered present. The institutionalization of religious movements has been criticized for losing popular appeal, becoming bureaucratized and misusing power,<sup>39</sup> yet the migrant laity involved in planting Anglican churches wanted an institution. When faced with settlement in a new place, with the need to flee war or with the actions of state organizations which seemed at best arbitrary and at worst cruel, belonging to an ordered, recognized institution provided some form of protection (however slight in practice) and a sense of safety. Relations within the Province and within the Anglican Communion mitigated the local actions of predatory state bodies or warring factions. Thus translocal and transnational connections provided a source of comfort and support in troubled times.

#### *Contested Identity in Multiple Localities*

While the above generalizations can be made in attempting for a province-wide understanding of governance and liturgy within the EAC, the interpretation of *utaratibu* is contested in multiple localities as the EAC grows. *Utaratibu* remained a key identity signifier for almost all Anglicans, order was socially and religiously important, but other values emerged to change that order in church governance and ritual. Here are examples of two different areas in the east of the country where a particular form of translocal Anglican identity was

39. David Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe: A Social History of the Hwesa People, c. 1870s–1990s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 97–100.

being formed and where the connection between them further influenced their identity.<sup>40</sup>

*Rural–urban Migrants.* Anglican *utaratibu* was developed in Congo among the peoples living on the Semeliki escarpment through the stratification of local politico-religious systems and the incorporation of the Anglo-Ugandan ‘hybridisation of Christian authority’.<sup>41</sup> It mirrored to some degree, even if it were a distorting mirror, indigenous socio-religious order. Isingoma Kakwa said ‘...there was a sort of traditional structural organisation ... pastors and bishops are regarded sort of like chiefs, they are regarded as chiefs in social rank.’<sup>42</sup> Already a translocal identity had emerged through the interaction with a dimension of traditional religious power and it moulded Anglicanism in its image, abandoning grassroots expressions of religion in which the ruling classes were rarely involved. Client relations between Hema and their neighbours influenced the developing form of *utaratibu*. Indigenous forms of governance were further affected by colonial forms of rule which manipulated hereditary, hierarchical rule and compromised the consensus and participation which had usually marked traditional authority. By the 1970s, when large numbers of rural inhabitants migrated to the towns, *utaratibu* was linked to social seniority. Older men, often from the higher echelons of rural society held positions of influence within the EAC and were treated with proper respect befitting their socio-religious rank as those who had a special relationship with the divine. A solemn and formal use of the Prayer Book maintained the continuity the migrants sought – an affirmation of familial and ethnic belonging. Their ethnic and religious identity coalesced in ritual *utaratibu* providing something of the comfort and familiarity of home. It was this local form of Anglicanism that rural–urban migrants wanted to protect. These migrants experienced significant, largely voluntary change which they attempted to mediate through discourses of continuity surrounding church governance and ritual; a continuity which was ultimately unsustainable. Second-generation migrants drawing on influences from other locales would

40. Amos Kasibante’s examination of ethnicity, Anglicanism and migration suggests a similar translocality taking place in the making of, what he terms as ‘religious ethnicity’. See ‘The Ugandan Diaspora in Britain and Their Quest for Cultural Expression within the Church of England’, *Journal of Anglican Studies* 7.1 (2009), pp. 79–86.

41. Titre, ‘Authority in the Anglican Church of Congo’, pp. 127–39.

42. Interview with Isingoma Kakwa, Edinburgh, 7 June 2000.

challenge this particular understanding of *utaratibu*. It was also challenged by another group of migrants who became members of the EAC.

*Transborder Migrants.* Migrants fleeing into the most north-easterly corner of Congo from West Nile in Uganda after Idi Amin developed a different interpretation of *utaratibu* to the EAC from 1979 onwards; one which saw in the Anglican order the potential for change and improvement rather than the preservation of tradition. They attempted to introduce the Anglicanism they had known in Uganda, although the machinery of a large quasi-established church could not easily be transposed to a minority position. They desired freedom (*uhuru*) to perform their own religious rites rather than conforming to the standards of the villages to which they had returned, many of which had adopted a form of Protestantism with which the migrants were not entirely comfortable. They also put in place institutions for social development which would ameliorate their refugee status. The dislocation of rapid, return-migration to Congo combined with an emphasis on evangelism (influenced by the East African revival) ensured that church planting preceded the introduction of hierarchical *utaratibu*. The plotting of *utaratibu* with narratives of development and liberty made for a different imagining of the central basis of EAC identity that challenged the assumption that social seniority and ecclesiastical rank were closely linked. Young men could potentially rise quickly at least to the rank of pastor, an opportunity they considered to be personal 'development' and 'freedom' from the social constraints of those who did not have the social connections often expected of church leaders. Transborder migrant women were more likely to take a public role in ritual *utaratibu* than others by acting as unofficial teachers in charge of chapels.<sup>43</sup> Transborder migrants' use of the Prayer Book differed too: they possessed translations in three local vernaculars and encouraged the use of local forms of worship. Morning Prayer was often accompanied by lively dancing and singing; 'doing it in our way to get alive in the service' said one pastor because, he thought, the people, 'shouldn't be suppressed'.<sup>44</sup> Worship was intentionally more spontaneous and egalitarian and this was understood to relate to traditional forms of worship. This approach challenged the solemn and formal Prayer Book ritual of other EAC members and brought innovative practice

43. The first women were ordained in Congo in 2003.

44. Interview with Alio Samweli, Arua, 3 September 2000.



to Anglican worship. In this location *utaratibu* was understood as a framework for opportunity rather than conformity.

### *Umoja*

Widespread migration and the resultant church growth had forced apart the pre-Independence coalition of the EAC with the rural culture that first formed it. There was a real possibility that rifts would be too great to sustain institutional unity. Tensions might have been much more severe had attempted centralization by the diocesan centre been more successful. It could not effectively impose its identity on areas where the EAC had recently been introduced because it did not have the resources of clergy, communication or infrastructure to do so. Instead Congolese Anglicanism became increasingly hybrid as a result of members' mobility and an interpretative discourse acceptable to all was developed to prevent contested elements causing structural division. This discourse centred on *umoja* (unity) in which the EAC portrayed itself as an inclusive church which united different groups of people. Clergy, who most often articulated an awareness of Anglican heritage and strove to maintain the liturgical and hierarchical order as necessary characteristics of Anglicanism, had recourse to transnational discourses on Anglican identity in which the slogans 'unity in diversity' and *via media*<sup>45</sup> appeared frequently. The intention of Anglicanism to maintain a broad spectrum of Christian belief and practice within a single church while situating itself in the centre of the ecclesiastical spectrum provided clergy in the EAC with justification for the changes which were taking place in the 1980s and 1990s. The characteristics of the EAC presented as Anglican virtues of diversity and moderation were its ability to allow certain Anglican groups a degree of *uhuru* to worship as they wished and its willingness to improve relationships with local denominations. Participation in the Anglican Communion gave clergy a discourse with which to manage rapid change within the province, yet it was in responding to a range of local interpretations that diversity became acceptable. The discourse of *umoja* within the EAC was seen to fit with global Anglican aims and vice versa, thus demonstrating fluidity between transnational and translocal expressions of identity.

45. For an explanation of these terms see William Sachs, *The Transformation of Anglicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) pp. 8–10, 125–26; and Stephen Sykes and John Booty (eds.), *The Study of Anglicanism* (London: SPCK, 1988), especially, John Pobee, 'Newer Dioceses of the Anglican Communion', pp. 393–405 (399–400).

Hierarchical and liturgical *utaratibu* was the basis of EAC *umoja* but it developed an increasingly wide set of meanings. The particular historical and social circumstances which weakened centralized authority, challenged prior assumptions about Anglican identity, and encouraged negotiation and compromise rather than division; both sustained and altered the EAC. Institutional discourse on *umoja* paved the way for negotiation and compromise with other groups who were to challenge EAC identity from within. The change in EAC understanding of its identity also influenced its relation with other denominations. By the 1990s, the effects of urbanization and the influence of marginal groups encouraged other *communautés* in the *Eglise du Christ au Congo* increasingly to perceive EAC members as Protestant companions who shared the same ultimate objectives. Although relationships with other denominations did not become totally harmonious, in the narration of interviewees events stressing *umoja* were more likely to be emphasized than those stressing tension and strife. By 2000 EAC members were interpreting grassroots relationships with Protestant and Catholic churches as increasingly unified and of mutual benefit.

### *Uhuru*

On the cusp of the twenty-first century the already contested interpretations of *utaratibu* were further challenged by the rise of Pentecostalism in north-east Congo which brought with it *uhuru*, seen as freedom from governance and ritual. Young people in EAC, many of them second generation migrants, learnt from the practice of other denominations adopting some of their approaches to socio-religious expression and introducing a greater emphasis on the Holy Spirit in worship and pastoral care. Many young people looked askance at their parents' loyalty to the EAC in the 1970s and 1980s and they changed the EAC using the influences around them, influences which can be described as both translocal and transnational.<sup>46</sup> Sunday service observance changed in many churches; rather than sustained and solemn ritual, moments of quiet and orderly liturgy are glimpsed between participatory preaching and rhythmic music and dance. Pentecostal elements are contested within the EAC, some consider

46. Mathews A. Ojo, 'Transnational Religious Networks and Indigenous Pentecostal Missionary Enterprises in the West African Coastal Region', in Adogame *et al.* (eds.), *Christianity in Africa and the African Diaspora*, pp. 168–79, makes clear the transnational networks at play in the Pentecostal movement in Africa.

them 'unAnglican' or a return to pre-Christian practices, others welcome them as signs of great inculturation, a return to grassroots spirituality and a recognition of the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>47</sup> The significant changes within the liturgical practice which have taken place impact upon the form of governance. Choirs have become increasingly important in worship, bringing the music of the capital city, Kinshasa, and its language, Lingala, to small towns and villages. The growth of choirs challenged the EAC's internal structures of authority. Choirs are often consciously homogeneous (children, youth, women, men), largely autonomous and very popular, they appoint their own leaders (often because of their ability to compose) who develop a significant role in the spiritual and communal formation of members. The choirs are recognized as influential in many parishes because they enliven worship, carry out evangelism and attract others to the EAC. Technically a ritual, hierarchical institution the rigidity of the Anglican structure has loosened at a local level to accommodate changes in religious culture. While centrally appointed evangelists and pastors remain figures of *utaratibu* they are no longer in charge of all church activities.

The EAC has developed an increased informality in worship, adopting musical styles of modern Congo while retaining the missionary hymn book and accepting limited charismatic activity yet still following the Anglican liturgy. The hierarchical structure of the EAC has not altered but power within it has shifted to include contributions from those not previously considered part of it. Church leaders accepted new influences from youth leaders, choir directors and the Mothers' Union. The *utaratibu* of hierarchy and liturgy was interpreted with *uhuru*. Identity was shaped by the contemporary concerns of urbanized second-generation migrant youth. Effective power was shared more widely and thus internal *umoja* was maintained. The EAC, while still retaining pride in its historic roots has introduced Pentecostal elements, of a contemporary, translocal and transnational nature, in order to thrive in its local situation of economic decline, political disorder and ecclesiastical choice. Pentecostal *uhuru* did not immediately threaten the EAC because it was able to adapt. By 2010, however, there is a sense among some Anglicans that it has not adapted far enough. Like other churches on the African continent the EAC is beginning to see people leave its congregations for the popular

47. Buyana Mulungula, 'Etude théologique du boom charismatique de la Paroisse anglicane de Bunia', Diplôme de Graduat, ISThA, 1994.

new Pentecostal churches.<sup>48</sup> The extent to which these changes are taking place depends on the dynamics of individual parishes and congregations and the way in which they mediate the variety translocal influences. Nevertheless, young people have been emissaries of particular forms of contemporary translocal identity within the EAC.

### Conclusion

I have sketched a process by which features common to many Anglican provinces assume a translocal identity. While the Anglican Communion operates as a transnational fellowship of Anglican churches, each province, diocese and parish also operates at a translocal level. Governance and ritual may simulate a widely used template but the meanings and form given to them are local, hybrid and changing. Adhering to Anglican patterns of liturgy and hierarchy understood as an appreciation of *utaratibu* remains a central characteristic of Anglican identity in Congo, yet its interpretation is neither static nor monolithic. *Utaratibu* operates as a translocal signifier of identity being both sufficiently understood by all EAC members that it provides a focus for unity and sufficiently open to various interpretations that disparate groups of people can assimilate it to their own identity needs. Central to these needs is a desire to belong to each other in worship of God. *Utaratibu* provides a relational identity that creates belonging across and beyond locales.

The use of translocality not only aids understanding of the relations within provinces and between provinces and the communion, it can also facilitate discussions of inculturation. The recognition of the importance of expressions of Christianity that are deeply rooted in particular cultural locations has sometimes caused an over-emphasis on the local as authentic and runs the risk of essentializing a particular, often conservative, cultural form. The concern in some quarters about whether, where and how Anglicanism can be an authentic vehicle for Christianity illustrates an overly static understanding of culture. Identifying flows of translocality permits the imagination of fluid, mobile cultures, influencing and being influenced by others. Recognizing the importance of different

48. Bisoke Balikenya (personal communication, 20 March 2010) suggested that new Pentecostal churches in north-east Congo 'give people what they want'. He identified this as freedom in worship and leadership. He noted that members give a lot of money to these churches and they hold popular, well-attended workshops to train their congregations in leadership roles.

elements being brought to bear on the sense of Christian identity in any given place suggests new models for understanding unity and universality.

Anglicanism is described by Bruce Kaye as 'having a story which provides a framework within which Anglicans understand and experience their practices and beliefs'; a story with 'prominent markers' and 'local expression'.<sup>49</sup> This article has attempted to show that, like many other good stories, as Anglicanism's story is retold by other narrators and performed by new actors, different concerns are highlighted, new meanings emerge and the loci of the story become legion and interlinked.

49. Kaye, *An Introduction to World Anglicanism*, p. 3.