

# Growth and Decline in the Anglican Communion

1980 to the Present

Edited by David Goodhew



# Commendations

This is a truly valuable book. In a collection of outstanding essays, the contributors seek to find firm ground for statements about growth and decline in the Anglican Communion, one of the world's largest religious institutions. At every stage, what they find repeatedly challenges conventional assumptions, and also raises fundamental questions that demand to be applied to other global churches. This is truly eye-opening. I cannot speak too highly of this excellent volume.

**Philip Jenkins**, *Distinguished Professor of History, Baylor University, USA*

This volume is a veritable goldmine. It contains a huge amount of mostly numerical information on the Anglican Communion in all its fullness. Quite rightly it eschews easy generalizations, probing instead the complex and evolving mosaic that constitutes modern Anglicanism. Almost every reader will be surprised about something. I recommend this book very warmly.

**Grace Davie**, *Professor emeritus of Sociology, University of Exeter, UK*

To be 'Anglican' once meant to be Christian in a peculiarly Church of England fashion, and the extent of 'Anglicanism' could be neatly mapped onto the boundaries of the British Empire or Commonwealth. This timely and wide-ranging volume demonstrates that, happily, neither of these generalisations any longer applies. It shows how the Anglican Communion since 1980 displays a complex narrative of rise and fall in its different parts, and now exhibits a fascinating range of variations on the historic theme of what it means to be Anglican.

**Brian Stanley**, *Professor of World Christianity, University of Edinburgh, UK*

Numerical church growth and bolstering congregational numbers continues to preoccupy many mainline denominations in the developed world. As this important study shows, church growth is a complex and nuanced phenomena, and needs to be studied with care if it is to be understood. David Goodhew's continued work in this field offers new perspectives in an arena that is inherently complicated – and he brings to this a clear-sighted vision. For all who research church growth – as theoreticians or practitioners – this major study makes a valuable contribution to a burgeoning field of enquiry that sits between missiology and ecclesiology.

**Martyn Percy**, *Dean of Christ Church, Oxford University, UK*

This deepening of the analysis of global Anglicanism is refreshing and welcome for its challenge to the popular presentation of declining North versus growing South. This nuanced approach starts outside the North/West and exhibits the range of geo-political contexts and diversity of growth patterns. In so doing it reconfigures and complicates the picture, challenges conceptions of growth and decline, questions projections of secularization, and re-shapes the future Communion.

**Kirsteen Kim**, *Professor of Theology and World Christianity, Leeds Trinity University, UK*

The Essays in this book invite readers to further discourse on 'growth' and 'decline' within the respective 'Provinces' of Anglicanism in particular, and within Christianity in general. The book is worth reading as a whole, and informative in its wide range of contributions.

**Jesse N.K. Mugambi**, *Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Nairobi, Kenya*

David Goodhew and his diverse team of collaborators have produced a timely, illuminating and comprehensive collection of essays. This landmark volume represents an essential text for students of global Christianity, as well as worldwide Anglicanism, at the turn of the twenty-first century.

**Michael Snape**, *Michael Ramsey Professor of Anglican Studies, Durham University, UK*

# Growth and Decline in the Anglican Communion

The Anglican Communion is one of the largest Christian denominations in the world. *Growth and Decline in the Anglican Communion* is the first comprehensive study of its dramatic growth and decline in the years since 1980. An international team of leading researchers based across five continents provides a global overview of Anglicanism alongside twelve detailed case studies. The case studies stretch from Singapore to England, Nigeria to the USA and mostly focus on non-western Anglicanism. This book is a critical resource for students and scholars seeking an understanding of the past, present and future of the Anglican Church. More broadly, the study offers insight into debates surrounding secularisation in the contemporary world.

**Rev. Dr. David Goodhew** is Director of Ministerial Practice, Cranmer Hall, St John's College, Durham University, UK. Prior to Cranmer, he was a parish priest in York and before that, Chaplain and Fellow of St Catharine's College, Cambridge. He has published widely in the fields of modern British and South African history. He edited the controversial study *Church Growth in Britain: 1980 to the Present* (Ashgate 2012) and the volume *Towards a Theology of Church Growth* (Ashgate 2015).

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1980 to the Present

*Edited by David Goodhew*

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1980 to the Present

**Edited by David Goodhew**

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This is the third volume I have edited. And as I look back I am most grateful to my wife, Lindsey, who has provided vast amounts of support, encouragement and good sense to her often distracted husband.

David Goodhew



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# Introduction



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# 1 Growth and decline in the Anglican Communion, 1980 to the present

*David Goodhew*

## **Introduction**

The Anglican Communion is one of the largest Christian denominations worldwide. This volume shows how it has grown and declined since 1980, based on the work of an international team of researchers, with the emphasis on the world outside the west. Overall, the Anglican Communion has experienced marked growth in recent decades. In 1970 there were around 47 million Anglicans and by 2010, there were around 86 million.<sup>1</sup> That figure has almost certainly increased since 2010, meaning that the Anglican Communion has roughly doubled in size between 1970 and the present.

But evidence of overall growth needs to be balanced by evidence of decline in parts of Anglicanism. Alongside growth, the Communion has experienced serious divisions and other difficulties in recent years. An understanding of its patterns of growth and decline is crucial to understanding the current and future trajectories of global Anglicanism. As one of the main Christian denominations, an understanding of Anglicanism's growth and decline in recent decades is also significant for wider debates concerning secularisation in the modern world.

This volume starts with this introductory chapter that sets the scene and summarises the conclusions of the work. Then follows chapter 2, an overall survey of global Anglicanism by leading religious demographers, Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo. Chapters 3 to 14 provide 12 case studies drawn from across the world; five are from Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, Congo, Kenya and South Africa), four from Asia (India, Singapore, South Korea and Australia), two from the Americas (one on the USA and one on parts of South America) and one is from Europe, the Church of England itself. The volume concludes with an afterword by Bishop Graham Kings, Mission Theologian in the Anglican Communion.

Beneath the overall picture are dramatic variations. Different areas have seen growth, decline or have been broadly stable. Some countries have seen a mix of all three. Since 1980 there has been marked decline in areas of previous strength such as England and the USA. There has been major expansion, notably in parts of west and east Africa, but also in areas where Anglicanism had little presence until very recently – such as the Congo, South America and Singapore. Alongside this has occurred the plateauing of areas previously significant, such as South

Africa. The growth and decline which has happened across the Communion since 1980 is as significant as any other time in the Communion's history.

Many assumptions have been made about growth and decline in the global Anglican Communion, despite limited research on the subject. It is widely and rightly stated that Anglicanism has shifted during the last 50 years to being a church predominantly found in the developing world. But it is less recognised that there is great variation *between* different parts of the developing world. There is a right recognition that Anglicanism in many parts of the west has declined, but, again, the variation *within* the west is less well understood. Some parts of western Anglicanism have declined dramatically, some modestly, and in a few areas western Anglicanism has grown. This volume offers detailed research which brings greater clarity to discussions about Anglican growth and decline.

Serious divisions have opened up in recent years between and within parts of the Anglican Communion, which have led to a widening range of ecclesial groups which see themselves as 'Anglican'. This volume focuses only on those churches in full communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury as of 2012.<sup>2</sup> It is alert to other churches which see themselves as Anglican. Such churches deserve research, but that task lies beyond the scope of this volume. The advent of such divisions makes the need for accurate assessments of growth and decline all the more necessary. *Growth and Decline* explores diverse areas and offers a wide-ranging picture of the complexity within contemporary Anglicanism, from Nigeria to the USA, from England to Singapore. It provides encouragement and challenges for all strands of Anglican opinion. The pattern of growth and decline on the ground is often not what has been assumed.

It is widely – and rightly – recognised that the centre of gravity of global Anglicanism has moved decisively towards the developing world in the last 100 years. This process has accelerated since 1980. Consequently the bulk of the book concerns Anglicanism outside of England and outside of the western world, but in a way that is, broadly, representative of the Anglican Communion as a whole. *Growth and Decline* omits many places that deserve consideration. Johnson and Zurlo's chapter offers insights on provinces not covered in this volume, but comprehensive coverage of the entire Communion was not feasible within this project. The volume as a whole seeks, to echo the admirable strapline of Grove Books, not to be the last word on the subject but, in some ways, the first.

The year 1980 has been used as the starting point for the project for the following reasons: first, it allows the survey to look across a substantial period of time, but keeps the focus on the recent past; and second, whilst it would have been helpful to have extended the study back to 1960, the point when many studies see secularisation as taking a marked step forward, this would have been a much larger undertaking and would have produced too unwieldy a volume. It should be noted that the date of 1980 is used flexibly in this volume; the historical context is summarised and where significant developments happened before 1980, these are discussed.

This introductory chapter has four sections.

- The first section explores a series of questions which frame the project: what is church growth and decline and why does it matter? What are the current assumptions within the existing literature and where do they need questioning? How do you measure growth/decline – and what do you do when data does not exist or is of limited quality?
- The second section summarises the overall findings of the book. Whilst all readers are encouraged to read the book in its entirety, those seeking an overview of the volume should read this section.
- The third section discusses how growth and decline within global Anglicanism relates to debates about secularisation.
- The fourth section of this introductory chapter considers what these findings suggest for ecclesiology, how the Anglican Communion ‘does church’.

## **Section one: questioning growth and decline in the Anglican Communion**

### *What is church growth/decline and why does it matter?*

The growth and decline of Anglicanism is of as much interest to people who are not Anglicans or, indeed, members of any Christian church as to those who regard themselves as Anglicans. For the former, this volume can be read as a study of the recent history of a major Christian tradition. As such, it contributes both to an understanding of global Anglicanism and to debates about secularisation across the world. For those who see themselves as Anglican, the above questions are important. But there are additional, more theologically based questions which arise. What is the true nature of ‘church growth’ and ‘church decline’? To what extent does the numerical trajectory of a church matter, compared to other aspects of the Christian life such as service to the wider community or the quality of an individual Christian’s life?

The Church of England has tended in recent years to describe ‘growth’ as having three dimensions: growth in service to the community, growth in an individual’s holiness and the numerical growth of congregations.<sup>3</sup> This volume focuses on the last of these three aspects of growth – the numerical growth of congregations – but it does so in a way that calls attention to how the three aspects of growth are intertwined and how the growth of congregations *per se* would be of limited significance without parallel growth in service to the community and growth in the lives of individual believers.

Within the developing world, numerical church growth is widely and often enthusiastically sought. However, there is a need to examine the extent and nature of church growth. It is sometimes said that faith can be a mile wide but an inch deep. This needs consideration. But the parallel tendency to see this as a particular problem for Christianity outside the west is highly problematic; there is plenty of inch-deep faith (and unbelief) in the west.

Within the western world, church growth is debated in different terms. Some parts of the western church see it as both desirable and achievable. But in many parts of the western church, where Anglicanism has faced profound secularisation, church growth has been depicted as impossible, unnecessary or even dubious.<sup>4</sup> Some western commentators argue that the greater religiosity of the non-western world is a temporary phenomenon, which will lessen as such areas modernise and ‘catch up’ with west, or see non-western religiosity as an overstatement of what is a much smaller phenomenon than is often assumed.<sup>5</sup>

More broadly, a significant number of western theologians, church leaders and congregations have asked whether numerical growth is suspect theologically, seeing it as lacking a mandate from the Bible, doctrine or Christian tradition and dangerously close to buying into a secular idolisation of ‘success’.<sup>6</sup> Whilst there are dangers, theologically, in a focus on numerical growth, such concerns need to be balanced by a range of theologians from varying traditions who argue that the Bible, the central Christian doctrines and a wide range of Christian traditions view growing churches as a legitimate and desirable goal and that experientially, there is much evidence that being part of a congregation impacts positively on various indicators of well-being.<sup>7</sup>

This more empirical study of patterns of growth and decline since 1980 in world Anglicanism will assist evaluation of such theological debates by offering greater clarity regarding what is happening. No one floats free from their context. The experience of growth or decline within a particular area colours the theology coming from that area. Churches which have historically experienced growth need to question whether such growth comes as much from socio-economic factors as spiritual factors. But churches which have historically experienced decline need to ask whether they have internalised that decline and have assumed that churches cannot, or even should not, grow. Such ecclesiastical pessimism may, on occasion, have less to do with theology than an internalisation of the secularisation thesis. Being theologically supportive of or hostile to congregational growth has an impact. There is substantial evidence that churches that intend to grow tend to grow and churches that do not intend to grow tend not to grow.<sup>8</sup>

***What are the current assumptions within the existing literature and where do they need questioning?***

The work of William Jacob covers the history of the Communion up to 1960. What is most striking from Jacob’s account is the extent to which the leadership of the Communion was dominated by Church of England personnel and culture, even in 1960.<sup>9</sup> This had begun to shift in the postwar period, but the shift only gathered pace in the 1960s and 1970s. This volume shows how the shift away from English hegemony deepened and has been largely completed in the decades after 1980 and how the indigenisation of Anglicanism has impacted on patterns of growth and decline in recent decades.

A range of studies of world Anglicanism have appeared in the last 20 years.<sup>10</sup> Such studies contain much valuable material, but have limitations regarding depiction of patterns of growth and decline. There is awareness of the growth happening in Africa, but little recognition that different parts of African Anglicanism are growing at different rates.<sup>11</sup> Portraits of Anglicanism in South Africa stress, rightly, its many positive elements – especially its resistance to apartheid. One study goes so far as to see it as ‘the crucible for Anglicanism in a new century’. But such portraits pass over long-standing evidence of the relative decline of South African Anglicanism.<sup>12</sup>

There is a general awareness of the lack of growth in much of western Anglicanism, but little recognition of the marked variation within western Anglicanism.<sup>13</sup> Conversely, other parts of the Communion deserve greater consideration. Using a quotation from a South American bishop, Ward likens Anglicanism in Latin America to “a bus desperately needing to be filled”, but parts of Anglicanism on this continent have seen marked growth since 1980.<sup>14</sup> The observations above underline the need for a detailed picture of growth and decline in contemporary Anglicanism.

A recent contribution to debates about Anglican growth and decline is an article by Daniel Muñoz in the *Journal of Anglican Studies*.<sup>15</sup> This article rightly questions the reliability of Anglican data, asking how robust are figures given for the number of Anglicans and asking whether conflicts within contemporary Anglicanism can warp assessment of such figures. But, alongside good questions, this research offers alternative data sources which are themselves problematic. The article concludes that some western provinces of Anglicanism are not declining and that non-western churches are much smaller than is often assumed. A wide range of researchers, including the team behind this volume, offer substantial evidence to the contrary.<sup>16</sup>

### ***How do you measure growth/decline?***

I found (to my horror) in \*\*\*\*\* diocese, a proper data collection has not been undertaken since its creation. They have simply added 10% every two years to the numbers.

This startling comment was made by one of the authors in this volume, who, for obvious reasons, must remain anonymous. But the researcher then added, ‘My assessment was that they [the diocesan figures] are not far from the target, but not accurate.’ This anecdote flags a crucial question for this volume: the quality of the data. There are two key issues: first, there is the issue of what constitutes a valid measure of growth or decline; second, there is the issue of the quality of such data as is available. Beyond this, David Voas points to problems with all religious surveys. Voas coins ‘Voas’ first law’, that a quarter of all responses to any question on religion are unreliable and adds ‘Voas’ second law’, that a quarter of all responses to any question on religion do not mean what they appear to mean.<sup>17</sup> Each chapter in this volume addresses the sobering challenges thrown

up by data quality and, at times, conclusions are limited by the limitations of the data. However, it would be a mistake to assume that, when data is problematic, nothing can be said. There *is* a wide range of data available, both quantitative and qualitative and, handled carefully, it can tell us much.<sup>18</sup>

The main quantitative measures are attendance, membership and affiliation. Such measures assess different things and produce different figures. Each of these is needed to make a global assessment of growth and decline in Anglicanism. Attendance is a measure of the number of people at worship, often defined as Sunday worship and is calculated in a variety of ways. Membership is a measure of those who see themselves as church members, however frequently they attend, meaning the membership of a church is usually larger than its attendance.

Affiliation means those who self-identify as Anglicans. Johnson and Zurlo provide an extended discussion of how Anglican affiliation is calculated in chapter 2.<sup>19</sup> Figures on Anglican affiliation come from a range of sources, most importantly: censuses and surveys, polls and statistics from religious communities themselves. The large number of the population of England who have been baptised by the Church of England increases the figure for Anglican affiliation in England in a way not seen in any other province, where nationality and faith do not overlap to the same degree. There is evidence that such vague affiliation to the Church of England is 'softening', with some surveys suggesting that a significant number of those who once called themselves 'CofE' now tick the box marked 'no religion' – although the data is too recent to be secure.<sup>20</sup> Affiliation, being the most general and vague of the measures, is necessarily most problematic. It is therefore important to note that the researchers for each chapter in this volume worked independently. It is striking how, in all but one case, the conclusions of demographers Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo chime with the detailed work of the individual case studies.<sup>21</sup> This gives added weight to the figures in chapter 2 produced by Johnson and Zurlo, who have many years of research experience in this field. Whilst calculating religious affiliation is not a precise science, the data in chapter 2 is the best currently available.

Many developing countries do not possess detailed data on attendance, membership and affiliation. In some cases, such as Barbara Bompani's chapter on South Africa, the paucity of the data significantly limited what could be said. Joseph D. Galgalo, speaking of Kenyan Anglicanism, comments wryly that 'available statistics are terribly confusing but not completely useless'. But, his chapter also shows how the dataset can, to a degree, be 'cleaned' and evaluated using a range of metrics.<sup>22</sup> Chapters on Nigeria, Congo and Ghana show how attendance or membership data can be combined with data on the number of dioceses and parishes to test the value of the data.

Moreover, some of the *developed* world data is far from robust. Anglican provinces in the developed world tend to have the more detailed records and to have experimented with a range of measures of growth and decline. Some areas – notably the USA and Singapore – have strong systems of data collection and the chapters on these areas are able to explore the ecclesial landscape in great detail, but this is not true everywhere in the developed world.

This can be illustrated by a discussion of the Church of England itself. This is doubly important as its measures have had considerable influence on other provinces and offer a guide to the possibilities and pitfalls in this area. The Church of England currently has three main measures of congregational growth/decline: electoral roll, usual Sunday attendance and average weekly attendance. For much of the 20th century the main congregational metric was the ‘electoral roll’, a rough list of adult members. In recent decades, this was supplemented by collection of usual Sunday attendance (uSa), an estimate by leaders of the usual number of people who attend Sunday worship. Around 15 years ago, an additional measure began to be collected: all-age Average Weekly Attendance (aWa). The aWa measure sought to measure more precisely attendance at worship on all days of the week, not just Sundays. It was an average of recorded figures across four weeks – i.e. it was not the estimate of a leader. A fourth measure has been used in recent years, the calculation of the ‘worshipping community’, meaning all those who worship with some degree of regularity, but thus far it has proved unreliable.<sup>23</sup>

Those who collect this data do excellent work, but these three measures have significant limitations. The ‘noise’ in all three of the Church of England’s measures is sufficient that none of them are reliable when detailed questions are asked of them.<sup>24</sup> For broad-brush issues they have value. It is, for example, certain that all Church of England dioceses have seen net decline since 1980 with the exception of the diocese of London, which shrank in the 1980s but has grown steadily since the early 1990s. It is also clear that the rate of decline varies substantially between dioceses. But the three measures are so flawed that, with specific exceptions (such as the dioceses of London and Lichfield, which have taken particular care over data collection), they are often unreliable when used to answer detailed questions.<sup>25</sup> All religious data has its limitations. The best way forward is to use multiple measures and a wide mix of metrics, testing whether data on membership/attendance/affiliation chimes with other metrics (such as the number of clergy, churches, dioceses and baptisms) and with more qualitative data. A wide mix of measures leads to the most solid conclusions.

## **Section two: key findings**

The research team behind this volume show that the Anglican Communion overall has experienced substantial growth since 1980, but within the Communion there are dramatic variations. The provinces of the Communion stand anywhere on a continuum between rapid growth and rapid decline. This section summarises the main points on that line.

In chapter 2 Johnson and Zurlo provide an overview of Anglican affiliation worldwide, showing how swift and dramatically the centre of gravity has moved towards the non-western world in recent decades. They estimate that in 1970, 62% of all Anglicans were found in Europe. By 2010 this had dropped to 31%. During the same period, African Anglicans grew from 16% of all Anglicans worldwide in 1970 to 58% in 2010. Anglicanism within Asia has also grown

rapidly, even though it remains small compared to the rest of the Communion. Anglicanism in South America and Oceania is growing more slowly. But within these vast areas Anglicanism is experiencing both decline and growth. North American Anglicans have shrunk as a proportion of global Anglicanism, constituting 9% of Anglicans worldwide in 1970, but 3% in 2010.<sup>26</sup> It should be remembered that in the early centuries of Christianity it was predominantly a religion of the area sometimes known as the ‘Global South’, with adherents in the ‘Global North’ in the minority. So, the recent shift in Anglicanism (mirrored in the rest of Christianity) could be seen, less as a novel development, but, in some ways, as a return to an earlier pattern.<sup>27</sup>

Johnson and Zurlo’s chapter offers a means of judging the trends of growth and decline across the Communion and between its member provinces. It should be read alongside the other chapters, which offer more detailed portraits. Yet, whilst these case studies offer more nuance, they are themselves surveys. A province experiencing significant growth may contain dioceses which are experiencing decline. Conversely, a province which is experiencing significant decline may include dioceses which are growing.

### **Growth**

Chapters 4, 5, 6, 9 and 13 depict areas experiencing rapid church growth.

In chapter 4 Richard Burgess shows how the number of Nigerian dioceses rose from 16 in 1979 to 164 in 2011 and the new dioceses have been at the forefront of growth. The diocese of Lagos West, created in 1999, grew from 161 to 240 churches by 2010.<sup>28</sup> Nigeria has seen a high-octane mix of rapidly rising population levels, deep poverty, patchy economic development, erratic governance and much civil strife. In parts of central and northern Nigeria, severe violence has made dioceses shrink rather than grow.<sup>29</sup> But the overall trend is strongly upward. There is some uncertainty as to the size of Nigerian Anglicanism, but the best figures suggest that, in terms of Anglican affiliation, it has grown from under 3 million to around 20 million between 1970 and 2010.<sup>30</sup> A key aspect of Nigerian Anglicanism is its ‘pentecostalisation’. Such ‘pentecostalisation’ is widespread in Nigerian society and has had a significant effect on Anglicanism in the country.<sup>31</sup>

Yossa Way explores in chapter 5 the growth of the francophone province of the Congo, whose socio-economic conditions are similar or worse than much of Nigeria and which has seen greater civil strife. The first Anglican diocese in the Congo came into being in 1972. Then it had 30 clergymen, 25 parishes and 30 churches. As of 2015, Anglicanism in Congo had 545 clergy working in 424 parishes in 9 dioceses. Membership is estimated at around 237,000. Congo became a separate Anglican province in 1992. This happened amidst a backdrop of rapidly rising population levels, deep poverty and frequent warfare. Such turbulence has heavily affected the life of the Church, which struggles to live Christianly amidst huge pressures. The Church itself can be caught up in ethnic strife, as well as engaging in heroic humanitarian work. Civil disorder

has led to expansion in unintended ways, as with the extension of Anglicanism from Congo into the neighbouring state of Congo-Brazzaville, partly as a result of the movement of refugees to escape conflicts elsewhere.<sup>32</sup>

Kenya has seen greater political stability than Congo, but similar patterns of demographic expansion. Longer-established than Congolese Anglicanism, Kenyan Anglicanism too has seen rapid expansion since 1980. In chapter 6 Joseph D. Galgalo sifts a range of data and a range of data sources, concluding that Kenyan Anglicanism has expanded by around 400% since 1980, from under one million adherents to around four million. Population growth is undoubtedly a significant motor, but far from the only consideration.<sup>33</sup>

Michael Green, in an earlier work, had flagged the growth happening in Singapore<sup>34</sup> and in chapter 9 Daniel Wee, using a highly detailed dataset, shows how Singaporean Anglicanism grew from an average weekly attendance of 4,100 in 1980 to one of 20,200 in 2012 – a rise of around 500%. This is similar to the growth of some other denominations in that state. The pace of growth has slowed somewhat in recent years, but the Church continues to expand markedly. The diocese of Singapore is also acting as a launch-pad for the planting of Anglican congregations across a wide swathe of South East Asia and beyond – including the nations of Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia and Nepal. Long known as a key junction for multiple trade routes, Singapore is becoming similarly strategic as a centre for the expansion of Anglicanism across Asia.<sup>35</sup>

South American Anglicanism looks very different to the Anglicanism of Africa and Asia, but parts of the continent have seen similar levels of growth in recent decades, albeit from a much smaller base. Chapter 13, by Maurice Sinclair and John Corrie, covers Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile which together form the Anglican Province of South America. Across these countries there were around 150 congregations in 1980 and around 400 in 2015. In most of these countries the Anglican Church barely existed in 1980 and the total Anglican community in these countries remains relatively small, but in parts it has grown fast. Peru's first bishop was appointed in 1977, at which point the country had two congregations. In 2015 there were 40. There was no Anglican church in Bolivia in 1979. There are now five congregations with c. 500 worshippers. The first woman priest in South America was ordained in Bolivia in 2015. The globalising nature of the Communion is reflected in Bolivia's three Anglican bishops who have come from the UK, the USA and most recently from Singapore.<sup>36</sup> However, South American Anglicanism is increasingly led by indigenous leaders and is increasingly Spanish speaking. South American, Congolese and Singaporean Anglicanism show the potential for substantial growth in areas where Anglicanism has, historically, been a small force or even entirely absent.

The rapid growth in these areas is echoed in a range of other parts of Anglicanism. Had chapters been written on Anglicanism in, amongst other places, Sudan or Uganda, a similar picture would have been shown. Such growth represents a profound shift. The growth of African Anglicanism has been known for many years, but is now reaching a stage where the largest African church (Nigeria) will be larger than the Church of England in the next few years (or

may already be so). A different question is that of strategic shifts within Anglicanism. The marked growth, for example, of the diocese of Singapore, alongside the growth of the province of South East Asia is significant in itself and because it is located at the heart of one of the most globally significant cities. Just as it would have been difficult to predict the growth of African Anglicanism in the century after 1900, so it would be unwise to ignore the potential for Asian Anglicanism to grow in the coming century. To say this is not to suggest that there are no other strategically significant areas of Anglican growth. Rather, it is to emphasise that Anglicanism's dynamism is multi-faceted and diffuse. Conversely, church growth in the past is no guarantee of church growth in the future. What has hitherto gone up could come back down.

Some provinces are not seeing the rapid growth outlined above, but are growing. One example is Ghana, detailed in chapter 3 by Daniel Eshun. Ghana's population has risen dramatically from 8.6 million in 1970 to 24.7 million in 2010. Johnson and Zurlo estimate that the Ghanaian church has grown from around 100,000 to around 269,000.<sup>37</sup> However, such growth is very uneven. The long-established diocese of Accra has grown little, whilst one new diocese, Sefwi-Wiawso, created in 2006, is growing rapidly.<sup>38</sup> Overall, Ghanaian Anglicanism has grown in recent decades, but markedly less than many other African countries and markedly less than many other denominations in Ghana.<sup>39</sup> A range of other countries such as Malawi and Zambia appear to have a similar trajectory to Ghana.<sup>40</sup>

The Church of South India (CSI) came into being in 1947 as India achieved independence. In one sense it is not purely 'Anglican', but an amalgam of several denominations. But it is included in this study as a reflection on an Anglican trajectory on the Indian sub-continent. Chapter 8 by Dr. Anderson Jeremiah shows how the Church then grew from around one million members to around 4.25 million members in the present day.<sup>41</sup> The chapter then focuses on a single diocese, Vellore. This diocese came into being in 1976, when it was estimated to have around 35,000 members. Its current membership is almost treble this figure at 106,320 people. Significant numbers are continuing to join the Church and new congregations are being formed.<sup>42</sup> However, as with Ghana, it is unclear whether, given the rapid rise in the overall population and the rapid rise of other denominations in the area, the growth of Vellore and CSI may be more modest than the numbers suggest at first sight.<sup>43</sup>

### ***Holding steady***

Some parts of Anglicanism appear to be holding steady overall, whilst seeing both growth and decline in particular areas. Evidence on South African Anglicanism is limited and does all not point in the same direction.<sup>44</sup> Using a wide range of data, Barbara Bompani concludes that South African Anglicanism has neither markedly grown nor shrunk since 1980. Some newer dioceses have seen a growth in the number of congregations, but the number of new congregations is markedly smaller than in many other African countries.<sup>45</sup> Some rural areas

appear to be holding up. Alongside this, with the end of apartheid, there has been a decline in funding from abroad after 1994 and in many areas a considerable sense of stagnation and even decline, with the feeling that the Anglican Church has not discovered a role after the fall of apartheid, in which churches formed a significant strand of opposition.<sup>46</sup> South Africa has seen similar demographic growth to other parts of Africa, but markedly less Anglican expansion compared to countries such as Congo, Kenya and Nigeria. Such comparative lack of growth is echoed in some other Southern African states such as Botswana and Lesotho, although not in all Southern African states.<sup>47</sup> In chapter 10, Andrew Kim explores the recent history of Anglicanism in South Korea. Some strands of Christianity in Korea have seen dramatic growth in recent decades, but Anglicanism stands aside from this – although it has not markedly declined either.<sup>48</sup> South Africa and Korea appear similar to a number of other provinces within Anglicanism such as Japan, Brazil, Hong Kong and the Gambia which are neither markedly growing or declining.<sup>49</sup> Underlying issues vary amongst such diverse areas, but they collectively show that a significant section of the Communion is holding more or less steady.

### ***Decline***

Chapters 11, 12 and 14 explore areas which have seen decline in recent decades. Ruth Powell in chapter 11 uses the rich dataset of the National Church Life Survey to show how the Anglican Church in Australia has seen decline, but the picture is varied. There has been dramatic decline in many rural areas, but less decline and some growth in Sydney and other urban areas. The result is moderate decline overall.<sup>50</sup> One diocese which has grown consistently is the diocese of Sydney – although it should be noted that some Australian dioceses, such as the diocese of Canberra and Goulburn, have seen some growth.<sup>51</sup> However, it is harder to form generalisations from Sydney, given the unique dynamics between it and the rest of the Anglican Church in Australia; Sydney being markedly more conservative theologically than the rest of Australian Anglicanism, against which, to a degree, it defines itself.<sup>52</sup>

Anglican congregations in Australia have been aging in recent decades.<sup>53</sup> With high population growth predicted for Australia in coming decades, Anglicanism has a significant opportunity for growth but also faces the possibility of slipping further behind as a proportion of the total population.<sup>54</sup> Other parts of the Communion which appear to share Australia's trajectory of moderate decline include parts of the Caribbean such as Jamaica, Bermuda and Barbados.<sup>55</sup>

Australian Anglicanism faces challenges, but not as great as the challenges faced by a number of other churches in the west. David Voas, in chapter 14, outlines how the Church of England, like Australia, is seeing marked variation between different dioceses, but the balance is more towards decline. Although the diocese of London has seen significant growth across 25 years, the Church of England overall has seen significant decline – shown by the metrics of attendance, membership and occasional offices. The result is that the period between

1980 and 2013 has seen a decline in full-time stipendiary clergy (30%), members on the electoral roll (41%) and usual Sunday attendance (37%).<sup>56</sup> The number of infants being baptised remains large, but is now decidedly a minority of the birth cohort (20%).<sup>57</sup> Like Australia, the dioceses furthest from the largest cities tend to be declining fastest. To a degree there is a 'golden triangle' in England composed of the dioceses of London, Oxford and Ely where growth is more noticeable and decline less pronounced. In the case of the diocese of London, its membership has risen by 70% between 1990 and 2010.<sup>58</sup> But it is unclear to what extent London is an outlier or a harbinger of the future.<sup>59</sup>

The Church of England, due to its deep historical connections with wider English society, has a unique position within the Anglican Communion. Over a third of the English population are baptised as Anglicans (although the great bulk of such members do not attend worship more than occasionally) and the Anglican Church retains a presence within many areas of English society, politics and culture. Nonetheless, such connections are diminishing in general and, in some parts of Britain, have now largely disappeared. There is evidence that vague affiliation to the Church of England is softening, meaning that, whilst rates of Church of England attendance have long been low, now even nominal identification as 'CofE' may be dropping below 50% of the population.<sup>60</sup> At the same time, the dramatic diversification of English society has seen a marked rise in the number of black, Asian and minority ethnic people who identify as Christian. If significant numbers of such Christians were to join the Church of England, that would make a marked difference, but it is, as yet, unclear whether this is happening.<sup>61</sup>

A further, related, question is the wider decline of communal involvement in English society or reluctance to join community groups. Membership of institutions such as political parties and trade unions has declined as much or even more than that of church congregations. To a degree, churches are suffering from a wider decline of communal engagement in English society.<sup>62</sup> To say this is not to airbrush out the reality of congregational decline in the Church of England, but it does indicate that the Church needs to be seen alongside wider societal processes as well as processes specific to Christianity.

In chapter 12 Jeremy Bonner explores the trajectory of the Episcopal Church of the USA. Anglicanism in the USA has seen severe decline, complicated by deep divisions in recent years. The Episcopal Church lost almost a quarter of its members, 1986 to 2011, within the context of a rapidly rising population. However, decline was slower in the 1980s and 1990s and has become much more pronounced since the start of this century, with a number of rural dioceses now barely viable. There has been a wide regional variation. The South grew slightly in this period overall, whilst the East and Mid-West did much worse. That said, all areas have declined in recent years.<sup>63</sup> There has been a steep drop in baptisms, which halved for children and adults between 1980 and 2010. Marriages dropped by over two-thirds from 1980 to 2010.<sup>64</sup> In comparison with other American denominations, the United Church and the Presbyterians

are doing worse, but most denominations are doing better and in the case of Roman Catholicism, Baptists and the Assembly of God much better.<sup>65</sup> There is marked variation between dioceses, although most Episcopalian dioceses are now in decline.<sup>66</sup>

It should be noted that similarly severe decline is happening in a number of other churches. The Anglican Church in Canada has seen decline which is similar to or greater than that of the Episcopal Church. Canadian Anglicanism's membership in 1981 was 922,000, but in 2001 was 642,000 and Johnson and Zurlo estimate affiliation alone to have fallen to 590,000 by 2010.<sup>67</sup> Canadian decline is varied. For example, the diocese of Toronto appears to be broadly stable,<sup>68</sup> whereas two-thirds of the parishes of the diocese of Quebec expect to close or amalgamate with others in the next five years.<sup>69</sup> A similar pattern is to be found in Wales. Membership in the Church of Wales has dropped from c. 100,000 in 1990 to 53,000 in 2013.<sup>70</sup>

The chronology of growth and decline varies. The current trajectories in Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, England and South Africa are a continuation of long-term trends visible well before 1980, though it should be noted that there are exceptions within such areas, whose trajectory has markedly shifted since 1980. Other areas (such as Congo, Singapore, Latin America, the USA). have seen dramatic shifts (whether of growth or decline) since 1980. In every case there are a complex mix of factors at work.

### **Section three: growth and decline in the Anglican Communion and theories of secularisation**

#### *Secularisation theories and contemporary Anglicanism*

The findings of this book have significance for more than just Anglicans and offer a contribution to debates about the contemporary history of Christianity and of religion in general. Debates about secularisation frame much discussion of faith in the west and beyond. A significant strand of scholarship sees secularisation as the dominant development of modern religion, with the assumption that it is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Implicit or explicit in this narrative is the assumption that the secularisation of the west is likely to be the forerunner of global secularisation.<sup>71</sup> The data from this book supports the secularisation thesis – to a degree. In significant parts of the west the decline of Anglicanism chimes with wider evidence that such areas are secularising. The diminution of Christianity's (and Anglicanism's) role in countries such as Canada and Wales is clear.<sup>72</sup> The decline of American Anglicanism mirrors how the USA, often previously seen as a counterweight to the greater secularity of western Europe, is becoming less religious – albeit from a position of far greater religiosity than Europe.<sup>73</sup>

However, the traditional version of the secularisation theory needs to be qualified by an awareness that Anglican decline is not universal across the west<sup>74</sup> and a

recognition that, in some parts of the west, many denominations are performing markedly better than Anglicanism.<sup>75</sup> At a different level, Nancy Ammermann's work on American religion points to the ways in which faith continues to weave through daily life in diverse ways.<sup>76</sup> Most importantly, this volume's chapters on Africa, Asia and South America show that non-western Anglicanism is seeing significant growth and usually growing faster than population growth, as is the case for many other denominations.<sup>77</sup> In all this, it is crucial to recognise the agency of those laying hold of faith. As Lamin Sanneh stresses, what people at street level do with Christian faith is often not what educated opinion expects them to do.<sup>78</sup>

A related strand of scholarship argues that greater modernisation leads to greater material security and thus to greater secularity.<sup>79</sup> From this standpoint, the burgeoning church growth in some developing countries in South America and Africa could be the precursor to future decline as those societies modernise. Anglicanism contains some data to support this viewpoint,<sup>80</sup> but the sheer variety of global Anglicanism makes it an insecure generalisation. If, as Davie argues, there are 'modernities' rather than 'modernity' and if the context in which modernisation happens seriously affects the nature of the 'modernisation', then African, Asian and western Anglicanisms will neither 'modernise' nor, necessarily, secularise in the same manner as Europe or the USA.<sup>81</sup>

A different question raised by scholars is the extent to which more conservative forms of religion are able to survive and even thrive in the late modern world. Some researchers have pointed to conservative religion's considerable powers of resilience in parts of the west.<sup>82</sup> An influential strand of thought is 'rational choice theory', which argues that religions which have some measure of monopoly (usually via some form of establishment) are more likely to decline and religions which operate in a pluralist context in which they have no choice but to compete are more likely to be vigorous. Rational choice theory has significant weaknesses as a theory, but some value in discussions of Anglicanism.<sup>83</sup> There is some correlation between establishment and Anglican decline. This is so for England, but US Anglicanism has strong connections with American elites and this may have made some contribution to its decline. A number of the provinces seeing significant growth have stood outside the established order and, sometimes, faced constraints from the state – such as Congo or Singapore. However, it is crucial to note that correlation does not amount to causation. Conversely, the role of the Anglican diocese of London, which, though 'established', works in one of the most pluralist contexts on the planet, is intriguing in this debate, given that it has one of the best records for growth in western Anglicanism. What does matter is to recognise that rational choice theory, which has not been applied to Anglicanism, may have something to offer, if applied with care.

A contrasting line of argument argues that some aspects of modern western society may encourage religious belief, rather than erode it. Affluence has value, but does not invariably lead to a greater sense of well-being.<sup>84</sup> There is substantial