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South Africa

By Barbara Bompani

1. Introduction

The Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA) presents an interesting narrative that reflects many interconnections with the religious and socio-political history of South Africa and the way Christianity developed, expanded and transformed across several decades due to the influence of international and global trends as well as national and local specificities.

The chapter provides an analysis of the Anglican Church in South Africa from the final years of the apartheid regime in the mid 80s to the present day with the intention of highlighting trends and changes in growth and decline of its membership over the last thirty years. Following a brief historical account on the origin of the Church in the country in the next section (section 2), the chapter will turn to investigate data on Anglican members (section 3) and it will then offer an explanation (section 4) of changes within its own membership and the institutional reactions to them. These shifts will be investigated through an analysis of broader economic, political, social and religious changes that are transforming the country. Findings for this work are based on research conducted on archival sources (Historical Papers archive, the University of the Witwatersrand¹) and material collected in parishes and through interviews with Anglican clergy in the country especially in Johannesburg and in Pietermaritzburg between February and March 2014.²

It is necessary to acknowledge a relevant limitation that influenced the research process for this chapter and that is the lack of detailed records on members kept by Anglican parishes.³ Until 2001 religious membership data could be understood and

¹ Especially Archbishop Njongonkulu (Winston) Ndungane's collection, AB2582; Anglican Consultative Council, AB1106; Anglican Missionary Association, AB1679. Available at History Papers, Cullen Library, the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (consulted in February 2014).

² Fieldwork research in Johannesburg and Pietermaritzburg between February and March 2014 would have not been possible without the generous contribution of the Carnegie Trust through the Small Grant scheme.

³ As Church data is only available for the last decade, the author must acknowledge that figures are not completely precise but that nonetheless are confident enough when coupled with interviews to provide

analyzed in comparison with data collected by Statistics South Africa for the national census (then published and made available in 2004), however, in the latest national census in 2011 (then published in 2014) the question on religious belonging was, for the first time, not included in the questionnaire.⁴ While informal discussions with religious leaders seemed to indicate a perception that the question on religious belonging was intentionally omitted from the questionnaire with the precise top-down intent to further separate public matters from religious ones in light of a reaffirmation of the secularity of the South African state,⁵ the website Stats South Africa provided a different explanation affirming that “in 2008, Stats South Africa embarked on a series of user consultations, to get advice as to what questions should be asked in the questionnaire. The question on religion was low on the list of priorities as informed by the users of census data, and it therefore did not make it onto the final list of data items for the 2011 census” (FAQ, question n. 31, Stats South Africa website, available at <http://www.statssa.gov.za/census2011/faq.asp>).

In the parishes under analysis and from interview data, it emerged that the membership figures collected exhibit a large discrepancy between the official statistics reported by the Church nationally (data from Cape Town Bishop’s Office) and the statistics recorded by the dioceses and local parishes. This is mainly due to the fact that at a national level the Church reports numbers based on actual registers collected from parishes while at a local level the idea of membership is interpreted differently and with a more inclusive understanding. Many local parishes would consider churchgoer numbers in attendance on a weekly basis and in weekly activities and not just those recorded in the parish register. In urban churches it is quite

an understanding of national trends and shifts within the Anglican Church (that nonetheless uses and reconfirms those numbers in its own projections and publications).

⁴ Categories used in the national censuses changed across years and they are not consistent; furthermore political and administrative changes deeply influenced data representation and data collection. As Goodhew (2000, p.345) noted “during the 1970s South Africa granted a spurious independence to various parcels of its territory, such as Transkei. Consequently, the 1980 and 1991 censuses do not include the people in these areas. The 1991 census was also affected by the fact that the South African state was convulsed by internal conflict, making the collection of data especially difficult. All this means that figures need to be treated with considerable care”. National censuses data still provide a valuable source in understanding trends and changes over time.

⁵ For example “in my opinion after 1994 the ANC isolated all the organisations that were not the ANC; like IFP, PAC etc. and now we see the marginalisation of churches. At their core they were very Marxist ... they see that they cannot have moral regeneration without churches because South Africa is a religious country. But the state perceives itself as secular; it is distant from religions and they are more and more marginalized” interview with Dr X, Pietermaritzburg, 16 February 2014.

common, for example, to report membership of people who are also recorded as members in their rural birthplace parishes: “Have you heard of ploughing back? It means bringing back to the community and this is what many Anglicans coming from townships or the rural areas do. They attend service in the urban church but then they would send money to the birthplace church. Their sense of membership lies there” (interview with Bishop X, nearby Johannesburg, 19/02/2014). Similarly: “It is very frustrating for the clergy when a lot of the community is loyal to the township. Their contributions go to their township church where they only go a couple of times a year” (interview with Rev X, Pietermaritzburg, 16/02/2014).

The issue of accuracy in parish questionnaires and data collected has also been questioned in interviews. A reverend for example stated that “it is well known that people filling the questionnaire tend to exaggerate; numbers are more or less accurate. We [Anglican priests] are supposed to keep records of people attending but not all the parishes do that. Some dioceses do not even produce return on their income!” (interview, Rev Y, Pietermaritzburg, 16 February 2014). Most of the clergy also lamented the lack of administrative capacity in collecting precise information about their membership for scarce resources and limited time available (fieldwork notes, February 2014). As this chapter will show, the issue of poor record keeping in a certain way reflects the overall Church’s lack of a centralised strategy, that has been typical of South African, and by extension Southern African, Anglicanism and a lack of administrative capacity which has been and still is an issue for the Church in the face of new competition or changing contexts ACSA struggles to respond to.

2. An overview of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA)

Until 2006 the Anglican Province was known as the *Church of the Province of Southern Africa* (CPSA) but the name was changed to ‘ACSA’ by the Southern African Provincial Synod held on 8 and 9 September 2006 with the intent to better highlight the regional scope and define a stronger presence within the World Wide Anglican Communion (ACSA website, <http://www.anglicanchurchsa.org/>). ACSA is extremely widespread and it comprises six countries of Southern Africa and an island. The six countries are Namibia, Swaziland, Lesotho, Angola, Mozambique and South Africa, along with the islands of St Helena and Tristan Da Cuna. The Episcopal area

is divided into twenty-eight dioceses with a Bishop at the head of each diocese. The head of the church is the Archbishop of Cape Town who is also the Metropolitan of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa. The number of Anglican parishes in the Southern African area, recorded by the Church is 1,404 with an estimated 3,000 congregations in the region. There are more than two thousands trained clergy, including Bishops listed in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa's clerical directory (ACSA website, www.anglican churchsa.org.za). From an analysis of the clerical directory of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa, in which all the clergy and parishes in the country are represented, it is possible to verify that every single municipality in South Africa (226 local municipalities in total according to The Local Government Handbook, <http://www.localgovernment.co.za>) has an Anglican presence, with certain areas having more than one parish and at least three fulltime priests (Mark, 2008, unpublished dissertation).⁶

ACSA is not the only form of Anglicanism in South Africa where we can also find the Church of England in South Africa (CESA) that represents a more evangelical and biblically conservative Anglicanism (Ward, 2006, p. 141). CESA is amongst the most theologically conservative evangelical denominations in the country. In the South African context this is somewhat ironic because its origins are associated with John William Colenso, first Church of England Bishop of Natal, theologian and mathematician known for his liberal views of the Bible and radical views of politics who was supportive of the Zulu cause during the Anglo-Zulu war in 1879. Because of his unconventional theological views, he was tried for heresy and excommunicated from the Anglican Church. CESA was established by his supporters. Yet CESA and its biggest congregation, St James Church Kenilworth, could not be more theologically and politically distant from Colenso. According to Balcomb's analysis (2004), members and clergy of the Church describe the beginnings of CESA as a 'struggle for survival'. Through the myth of this struggle the denomination ultimately emerged as a locus of conservative theological and political convictions. As the ex Presiding Bishop Frank Retief has said, it started 'as a small group of people . . . committed to the evangelical, Reformed and Protestant convictions of its forbears' (Balcomb, 2004, p.11) As Balcomb puts it, CESA has profound significance for at

⁶ Retired clergy continue to perform pastoral functions; this allows them to generate an income in addition to their pensions provided by the church (data from ACSA website, diocesan websites, and diocesan offices, consulted in February and March 2014).

least three reasons: (1) it adopts a theological position opposed to that of its more 'liberal' counterpart, the Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA) or the 'Anglican' Church; (2) it has its own history of 'struggle' centered on issues of theology and political practice; (3) when the white community felt alienated by the Anglican Church political involvement during apartheid (especially in the 70s and in the 80s) and in the transition to democracy period (1990 to 1994) (Ward, 2006, p.153) CESA started to attract dissatisfied white members uneasy with black leadership in the CPSA. CESA became an island for conservative whites opposing the 'liberal' positions of Desmond Tutu and others in the CPSA and the vocal South African Council of Churches (SACC) (Balcomb, 2004 p. 11). The denomination is not as large as the Anglican Church in South Africa but indications are that it is growing faster. It extends from South Africa to Namibia, Zimbabwe and Malawi. Its membership is around 100,000 members (figures from CESA website available at: <http://cesa.org.za/>) with an overall average Sunday morning attendance of 1,800 and an average Sunday evening attendance of 1,000. Mid-week Bible studies attract about 600 people. Membership is roughly 70 percent white and 30 percent Colored⁷, with a very small number of black people. The high income of the Church (probably around 3 million rand a year, or about \$300,000) makes it the richest church in the denomination (Balcomb, 2004, p.14). Official Anglicanism in South Africa has been, historically and in the present, associated with ACSA. CESA is not part of the Anglican Communion as confirmed by the fact that it does not take part in the Lambeth Conference although there have been several attempts from the CESA side to be included in the international conference of the Communion (see correspondence between CPSA Cape Town Office and CESA Bishop's office in: Archbishop Njongonkulu (Winston) Ndungane's collection, AB2582, Wits Historical Papers Archive).

The Anglican Church came to the Cape and was originally established in South Africa to minister to the army and the first British settlers. The first Anglican ministry in Southern Africa was initiated to deal with the needs of the British militia at Cape Town during the second British occupation in 1806 (Lee, 2005). However, it is until

⁷ Racial classification created by the Apartheid regime remain of common use in the current democratic context where, now deprived of any negative connotation, is used to define ethnic belonging. Therefore, this chapter utilizes White, Colored, Black and Indian or Asian to indicate various South African ethnic groups.

1848 with the appointment of Robert Gray as Bishop of Cape Town that a proper institutional Church was established in the region. In 1848, when Robert Gray arrived in South Africa, there were 10 churches, 16 priests and no more than 10,000 churchgoers but at the time of his death in 1872 there was a whole province 5 dioceses a synodical structure and a strong corporate identity (the Church of the Province of Southern Africa – CPSA). At the time of his appointment as the first Bishop of Cape Town, the Anglican church was not a very visible Church, had little prestige compared to the Reformed Church and could not even claim a majority of the English settlers who were based in the Eastern Cape. For example in the first half of the 19th century Methodists had a much stronger presence across English speaking settlers (Ward, 2006, p. 137). “From their arrival English-speaking communities reproduced the parochial life of Great Britain. Anglican Parish churches coexisted with Baptist, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian congregations as did their emerging denominational structures” (Elphick, 1997, p.3). Presbyterians, suspicious of the Anglican episcopacy because of the historic conflicts in Scotland, found more affinity with the Dutch Reformed churches, aligned by their common Calvinist theology (de Gruchy, 1997, p. 155).

With Robert Gray as Bishop of Cape Town first attempt to give the Anglican Church an administrative system; until then Anglican buildings and churches were built by joint stock corporations of shareholders – this include St. George’s Church in Cape Town. Unlike free churches, the Anglican Church in South Africa was ruled and organized by the clergy and this can be explained not only by theological reasons, but also by the ambition of using the Cape as the starting point of expansion of Anglicanism in Southern Africa, where in fact between 1848 and 1924 expanded from the Eastern Cape, to Rodhesia, St’ Helena and Damaraland (Davenport, 1997).

Links with the motherland remained strong and this was evident in the liturgy, religious architecture, music and hymns and the fact that the great majority of the ministers were trained in Britain. Overall, English-speaking churches were united in their loyalty to the British Empire and their missionary societies, consciously or not, were embedded into the colonial project and the consolidation of the British empire and declaration of loyalty to the crown were regularly sent to the British monarch’s representative in South Africa, the Governor-General, until 1948 (and perhaps even a

bit later) when the National Party came to power and the regime of apartheid was formally established in the country (de Gruchy, 1997, p. 156). The constant complaint from the South African government was that the Anglican Church leadership represented discredited imperial British values; this was linked to the fact that clearly and particularly its leaders were predominantly of British origins. The first South African-born bishop was Bill Burnett proclaimed in 1974. The clergy of the Anglican Church were overwhelmingly expatriate and ministered primarily to English-speaking white congregations composed of European settlers (Lee, 2005 p.14). The Anglicans treasured episcopacy and the Book of Common Prayer and eventually produced their own South African revision only in 1954 and again in 1989⁸. The first provincial Missionary Conference of the CPSA was held in October 1892 in Queenstown in the Eastern Cape.

Christian missionary activities have been extremely active in South Africa in the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century. Associated with each denomination were missionary societies who sought to evangelize the indigenous peoples of the sub-continent (Elphick 1997). Missionary churches grew constantly in the first half of the twentieth century and they kept growing in the 1960s and in the 1970s at a lower rate and with differences between ethnic groups, but from the 80s mainline Christianity⁹ started to suffer a considerable decline.¹⁰ The literature on the growth and development of the Anglican Church from the arrival of Bishop Robert Gray, indicates that the early understandings of “mission and welfare” for the Anglican Church in Southern Africa, was an intervention that sought to care for the needs of the English first, conversion of the indigenous people second and social outreach to indigenous people third (Mark, 2008, unpublished dissertation). While in its initial life the Church mainly concentrated on administering the interests of British settlers, through the years and up to this stage there was a significant African membership (in 1970 there were 982,000 African Anglicans; in 1980 there were 815,000; in 1991 646,00; in 2011 there were 1,007.808). By the 1970s there was a significant sized

⁸ Already in 1975 the Anglican Church had produced an experimental ‘Liturgy 75’ but only in 1989 the official South African Prayer Book was published and used in all the languages.

⁹ With mainline churches it is intended the group of missionary historical churches that in South African includes reformed churches, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches and the United Congregational Church of South Africa.

¹⁰ The Catholic Church is the mainline denomination that lost the least number of members after the end of apartheid.

Anglican Church in Southern Africa, which had by this stage contributed to the development of the country through the creation of schools, hospitals and missions stations. With the election of Desmond Tutu as Archbishop of Cape Town in 1986,¹¹ the Anglican Church became increasingly perceived as a 'black church' that in South African terms would translate into a Church careful to the needs and aspirations of the African population.

3. Anglican presence in South Africa from 1984 to 2014

The wider context for the South African Church has changed hugely in the past two decades with the passage from Apartheid to democracy. Transition to democracy in South Africa has meant different things for various religious communities and the Christian spectrum has varied dramatically in the past thirty years.

While the African Independent movement has experienced a constant level of growth in membership since the end of the eighties, mainline churches went through the opposite process (Walsh, 1991). Mainline denominations kept growing until the 1960s, then started to shrink or remained static in the 1970s, after that they started a steady decline (from Goodhew, 2000 and StatsSA data) with a marked drop between the 1996 and 2001 censuses when mainline churches increased their share from 36.5% to 32.6% of the entire South African population (StatsSA, Report No. 03-02-04 2001). The decline in mainline churches' membership since the 1970s reflects a global and continental trend framed in the success of less institutionalized religions with more vibrant expressions of spirituality (Gifford, 1998); even though in South Africa that was the time in which mainline Christianity was particularly active in the public sphere and a time in which mainline Christianity played a very significant role in the democratization of South Africa (Balcomb, 2004 p. 5, Gifford, 1995)¹².

Even the ecumenical movement that brought together Christian denominations and other religions and whose identity was closely knit to the anti-apartheid era, has emerged considerably weaker. This has happened in part because senior leadership

¹¹ Desmond Tutu was enthroned in February 1985 and elected to Cape Town in April the following year, starting his ministry as bishop in September. This followed the first unsuccessful attempt in 1974 when for the very first time the Anglican Church nominated a black candidate as bishop (Lee, 2005, p. 319).

¹² For more information on the influence of Christianity on politics see David Chidester (1994) annotated bibliography of Christianity in South Africa.

was lost to new institutions of State or other secular organisations including business, in part because the shift from the register of resistance to the key of cooperation with government has proven very difficult, and in part because the identity of these organisations (once the apartheid regime had been defeated) could not remain the same and their reason for existence was no longer obvious, such as was the case of the South African Council of Churches (SACC). Cuts in funding, especially from abroad, also contributed to the weakening of interfaith and ecumenical synergies (Bompani, 2006). As an Anglican reverend articulated “the post-apartheid affected churches and our theologians were caught in the government and aligned with it. In the last 20 years the Anglican Church did not have a public voice, a prophetic voice, and people are wondering why they should stay in the Church” (interview with Rev K, Johannesburg, 11/02/2014).

Mainline churches grew constantly in the first half of the twentieth century and they were uncontestedly dominant in the Christian landscape. They kept growing in the 1960s and in the 1970s at a lower rate and with differences within different ethnic groups, but in the 1980s protestant Christianity started to suffer a considerable decline.¹³ Statistics from 1911 until 2001 indicates that Christianity increased from 45.7% of the population in 1911 to 79.8% in 2001 while affiliation to ‘no religion’ decreased from 50.7% to 16.4% in 2001 (StatsSA, various censuses). Figures from the 1980s onwards suggested that the long-term proportional decline among white mainline Christians was now becoming an absolute decline. This is confirmed by examining the denominations as a proportion, not of the total white population, but of those who expressed a religious affiliation (Goodhew, 2000). Thus, the proportion of Anglicans amongst whites who expressed a religious preference dropped from 10% in 1980 to 7% in 1991 (Goodhew, 2000, p. 357). As Kritzinger (1994) explained the 1991 census forms stated explicitly that the furnishing of information on religious affiliation was voluntary while no other information was classified as such. The regulation of confidentiality may have been in force at the time of the previous censuses, but the voluntary nature of the survey was never stated so clearly, with the result that only 3% of the people did not provide this information in the 1980 census. A large number of people (almost 30% of the total) in 1991 decided not to furnish any

¹³ The Catholic Church is the historical denomination that lost the least number of members after the end of apartheid.

information on their religious affiliation and there is no information available on this percentage of the population.

In the decades between 1970 and 1990 mainline Protestantism suffered a serious decline but overall Christianity was not in retreat. Catholicism for example experienced growth. Though, the most striking data across the Christian spectrum in these years was the fact that African Independent Churches and charismatic forms of Christianity were re-emerging (Goodhew, 2000, p.344). By the 1991 census this trend affected the Catholic Church as well – it registered a marked drop as per the other protestant mainline churches (StatsSA, 1991 census) passing from 12.3% in the 1980 census to 11.4% in 1991 (Prozesky and de Gruchy, 1995, p.237) and down again to 8.9% by the 2001 census (StatsSA, 2001).

White Catholics decreased from 388,000 in 1980 to 315,000, but for the white Anglicans was even worse with a drop from 462,000 to 292,000 (StatsSA, 1980 and StatsSA, 1991). To put this in context, in 1996 approximately 30 million people were classified as belonging to a Christian religious group of one kind or another, compared to 35.8 million in 2001. Approximately 4.6 million people reported having no religious affiliation in 1996, compared to 6.8 million at the time of census 2001. In both censuses (last two census with the ‘religious affiliation’ category) approximately one-third of the population indicated that they belonged to conventional or mainline Christian churches. In 2001, a further third of the population indicated that they belonged to one of the independent churches. Amongst those for whom the question was answered, 11.7% stated that they did not belong to any religious group at the time of census 1996, compared to 15.1% at the time of Census 2001.

According to the 2001 edition of the World Christian Encyclopedia (Barrett, 2001) in 2000 there were 83 million African Independents and 126 million Pentecostal-charismatics in Africa. Although some of these categories partially overlap (Meyer, 2004), it is possible to define a general clear trend in the continent that differs from South Africa’s trends. While Pentecostalism thrives around Africa, especially in West Africa, in South Africa Zionist-Apostolic churches still have a strong mass appeal. In 2001 the overall South African population was 44,819,774 (StatsSA, 2001) and of

those 37.93% belonged to mainline churches.¹⁴ According to Census 2001 Anglicans at the beginning of the New Millennium represented 4.8% of the entire population, Methodist 9.2%; Reformed Church 9.0%, Roman Catholic 8.9%, Lutheran 3.2%; PCC 7.6%; AICs 40.8% 'Other Christian' 12.00% and Congregationalist/Presbyterian and Baptist (together) were 4.7% (StatsSA, 2001). Differently from the rest of the continent in which AICs experienced a growth during end of colonization in the 50s and in the 60s, in South Africa African Independent Christianity at the beginning of the New Millennium established itself as the biggest Christian denomination while Pentecostal Charismatic Christianity started to overtake several mainline denominations.

A succession of national censuses maps a decline in Anglicanism in relation to the total South African population. Anglicans in 1960 were 12%; in 1970 were 10.4%; in 1980 were 9.0%; in 1991 5.7%; in 2001 were 3.8% (various censuses data from SAStats and literature).¹⁵ In the 2001 census the proportions of Anglican in relation to the national population across ethnic groups were: black Anglicans 3.1%; white Anglicans 5.8%; Coloured Anglicans 9% and Asian Anglicans 0.5%. From a reading of the Church material (online material and ACSA parishes documents) and from the interviews it emerged that more or less in the ten/thirteen years between the last census with data on religion (2001) and the present days, the percentage of Anglicans in South Africa did not experience an additional dramatic decrease and membership remained between 3 and 4% of the entire population (fieldwork notes, February and March 2014).

The Anglican Church of Southern Africa reached its highest peak in membership in the 1920s, representing 20% of the South African population, and started to decrease steadily between 1920s and the 1990s¹⁶ with an arrest between 1991 and 2001 (but still with a slight decreased taking place). In total Anglicans in 2001 registered 3.8% of the population. On the contrary, the Roman Catholic Church experienced a slow but consistent increased from 1920s until the 1980s and then decrease between the 1996 census and the 2001 census. AICs and Pentecostals increased, AICs especially

¹⁴ Please note that affiliation data includes infants, who were assigned to their mother's belief.

¹⁵ According to data provided by the Anglican Church of Southern Africa there are approximately between 3 and 4,000,000 Anglicans in the Southern Africa province (<http://www.anglicanchurchsa.org>)

¹⁶ Please note, this is the time in which the black population started to increase steadily

between the 80s and 2001 while PCCs are going through a steady growth in the last 20 years.

Through an analysis of ACSA's documents and interviews, several internal voices have expressed the opinion that the membership decline in the Church had started to reverse and that Anglicanism was experiencing a re-growth of sorts in South Africa. However, this understanding has not been substantiated with solid detailed datasets and it has not been analyzed in relation to the national population growth and growth of other Christian denominations.

At the Provincial Missionary Conference that we hold once a year they would say that the membership within the Anglican Church in the region has been growing since the 90s because we have more congregations. But we need to understand those data. For example people are moving to urban areas and although the dioceses of Johannesburg has been divided into 4 in 1990 when it experienced a big growth, this does not mean that membership grew at a national level. The country went through changes and the population has moved and changed. While the Anglican membership experience some growth in Johannesburg for example Sharpeville has lost considerable numbers. Bishop X, nearby Johannesburg, 19/02/2014.

Existing data remove any doubt on the fact that the Anglican Church went through a big decline in the past thirty years. Unlike its European counterparts, though, in South Africa this was not due to a process of secularization (Bruce, 2002) but due to a shift from mainline Christianity to more charismatic forms of religious expression. This shift can be understood in relation to global trends that affected the African continent but also in relation to the specificities of the South African Anglicanism that in a certain way struggled to regain a proper identity in the post-apartheid context and did not develop a strategy to regain its members in the new political dispensation.

4. One Church, two directions

This section presents and investigates the challenges that Anglicanism faces in contemporary South Africa and it offers an assessment of internal trends that are significantly changing the nature of the institutional approach to membership decline. From an analysis of the Church's documents (especially from the Provincial Synods and Dioceses Synods¹⁷ in the past 40 years) and interviews, it emerged that although the Anglican Church feared the decreased numbers in membership, nonetheless they

¹⁷ The focus has been in particular on Acts and Resolutions of the Synods of Johannesburg and Cape Town dioceses. Material collected in the Ndungane's collection at Wits Historical Papers and in parishes.

adopted a politics of maintenance more than expansion. In most of the official Synods documents in the past three decades, there are very limited mentions to membership and issues of growth and decline. As articulated by an Anglican reverend with a strong focus on evangelization “We are experiencing a decline because we are not evangelizing but embracing the ‘politics of maintaining’” (interview with Rev. Z, poor area nearby Johannesburg, 14/02/2014). The politics of maintenance was for example articulated by the ex Archbishop Ndungane on the 7th of July 1997 in a conversation with Rev Canon Cyril Okorochat, Director for Mission and Evangelism in the Anglican Consultative Council in London while preparing ACSA’s contributions to the Lambeth Conference (1998) (Wits, Historical Papers, AB3347/A, file 2, records 1994-1999). Through decades the Church in the Province seems to have maintain the attitude of the origins when Anglicanism was planted in the Cape. Over the years the dominant approach came from the influence of the High Church that did not pose so much emphasis on growing the membership but more on supporting British settlers first and then on promoting social development and justice.

The Anglo-Catholics in Southern Africa have always been loose on the issue of evangelism. It is part of the history of the church and it is part of the British understanding that you do not talk about religion and politics in public circles. We inherited that understanding that Anglo-Catholicism in Southern Africa but it is not the same in other contexts. You are there to teach your children, you are not there to challenge your neighbor. When you look at [the Church’s] documents you won’t find anything or very little about growing. Deep down there is a kind of hostility towards evangelism. In fact when we were teaching at the seminary during the 80s, students if they wanted to insult another student, they would call him an evangelist [...] Still today you can talk of growing the Church but we are [Anglicans in general] not comfortable with the term evangelism. Rev. Dr. X, Pietermaritzburg, 16/02/2014

Nonetheless, South Africa experienced charismatic revivals that called for a more active role in growing the membership and evangelization. Along with other revival movements within mainline churches that were happening with vary degrees of hostility and acceptance in the USA, in the UK and in various ex-British colonies during the 1950s and the 1960s (Lee, 2005, pp. 349-350), South Africa produced its own charismatic revival in 1970s especially under the leadership of Bill Burnett, Archbishop of Cape Town and Primate of Anglican Church of Southern Africa (1974-1981). As Anderson said “the presence of Charismatic in South Africa is almost as old as the Charismatic movement itself, which began in Western countries in the 1960s” (Anderson, 2005, p. 68). The influence of this revival was mainly felt across the white Anglican population and had a limited impact on the overall Church’s

institutional apparatus and action between the 1970s and the end of the 20th century. As mentioned above, charismatic elements and evangelical attitudes have always been seen with suspicion by the Church's establishment where the focus has been on social change, development and justice with the leadership of the following Anglican Archbishops Philip Russell (1981-86), Desmond Tutu (1986-1996), Njongonkulu Winston Hugh Ndungane (1996-2007) Thabo Cecil Makgoba (2007 - present).

Stephen Hayes (1990: xi) lamented that the charismatic renewal amongst black South African Anglicans has widely been ignored by the literature and by the Anglican Church establishment (Hayes in Hexhema and Poewe, 1994). The Iviyo movement, still active in South Africa, is an example of black South African revival. *Iviyo lofakazi baka Kristu*, a Zulu expression that means the Legion of Christ's Witnesses, is a charismatic renewal movement within the Anglican Church of the Province of Southern Africa that started in the 50s and then spread beyond its place of origins. Like many renewal movements Iviyo started by individuals responding to local concerns in rural Zululand. The founders were Alpheus Zulu (later Bishop of Zululand) and Philip Mbatha who initiated the movement following their concerns with the lack of power, energy and enthusiasm in the life of the Church and the institutional incapacity to affect people's life. Iviyo members are committed to recruit at least one new disciple each year.

Changes across the South African Christian spectrum that marked the success of Pentecostal-charismatic churches (PCCs) and other forms of charismatic expressions along with the fear of a less active membership could impact of the overall Church and changes within the clergy and the leadership (like for example more women, younger leaders etc.) impacted upon more recent trends within ACSA. Trevor Pearce, director of 'Growing the Church' network, said in an interview that "Archbishop Thabo Makgoba is an Anglo-Catholic but he is behind us and he is supporting the 'Growing the Church' initiative" (interview with Rev. Trevor Pierce, Johannesburg, 18/02/2014). Overall the sense of a negative attitude and suspicious towards ideas of expansion and evangelization within the Anglican Church in Southern Africa partially changed in the last ten years. Although the evangelical side in the Anglican community in Southern Africa is still a minority, their initiatives are starting to have a sort of impact that in a few years could influence Church's membership.

These changes have been initiated from the bottom as well as from the top. For example several priests started to differentiate services according to the needs and perceptions of the multiple audiences living in the community:

A huge number of people in the Anglican Church are embracing the charismatic approach and parishes are adapting. Here in St. Mike and All Angels for example we offer three kinds of different services from the High Church style to the more evangelical one. We need to mix up services for not disappointing different communities and expectations. Synods are very traditional and changes start in parishes first. Rev. Dr. K, Johannesburg, 11/02/2014.

From a top-down level, in 2003 the discussion around ‘Growing the Church’ was initiated by the then Archbishop Ndungane at the Synod of Bishops. Ndungane recognized the need to bring several Anglican organizations and synergies together in order to develop a defined and effective strategy for expansion. In June 2005 a report entitled ‘Growing the Church’ was presented to Provincial Synod that adopted the resolution of initiating a ‘Growing the Church Network’. ‘Growing the Church’ was officially launched at the beginning of 2007 and reverend Trevor Pearce was appointed as director. ‘Growing the Church’ is a network of organisations that engage with Southern African as well as international organization within the Anglican Communion like Anglican Witness and SOMA (Sharing of Ministries Abroad).¹⁸ Their focus is on expanding the Anglican membership in the Province through the involvement of local leaders and the laity. According to Rev. Trevor Pierce, director of ‘Growing the Church’ the “beginning of the network has not been easy but things are changing. Still, many leaders do not understand why we have to go where people are, to a taxi rank or to a coffee shop we want the Church to growth. But it is changing and there is evidence that the Church membership is growing in the Province”. Rev. Pierce highlighted the numerous challenges that the organization is facing, along with still existing suspicions from parts of the clergy to financial limitations (only 30% of their activities is funded by ACSA while the rest through fundraising activities), the vastness of the provincial territory and the difficulties of reaching certain rural areas and keep in contact through the use of technology, language in Lusophone countries and so on. But overall the network had a rich agenda, including the second conference of Anglican Ablaze (Johannesburg, 2-5 July

¹⁸ For more information, see: Anglican Witness’ website at: <http://www.anglicanwitness.org/> and SOMA’s website at: <http://www.anglicanjoburg.org.za/soma/SharingofMinistriesAbroad.aspx>

2014), an international conference focusing on Church growth that in its first gathering in 2012 attracted 1,400 people while 3,500 have been registered for the second gathering taking place in July 2014.

Researchers will need more data and an in-depth analysis of a longer period of time in order to understand and assess whether those changes, adopted to increase the Anglican membership in the Province, and in particular in South Africa, are having a successful impact.

5. A few concluding remarks

A study on the membership of a Christian denomination cannot be detached from an interrogation of the meaning of that membership itself; what does a sense of belonging to a church mean and how has this meaning has changed over time?

If, in Alan Anderson's words, it is possible to state "we cannot understand African Christianity today without also understanding this latest movement of revival and renewal" (Anderson, 2005, p. 68); it is also true that to describe a meaningful pattern of religion in South Africa we need to understand issues taking place in the post-apartheid context such as a more mobile Christian membership that shops around and rationally choose new churches, new political and economic challenges, a more flexible sense of belonging and different spiritualities.

According to many parish reverends defining membership and sense of belonging is becoming more and more difficult. They lamented the difficulties of documenting and registering members as well as the 'competition' of the dual (or multiple) sense of belonging and loyalty to different churches and different Christian denominations that many congregants experienced. It is not uncommon to see churchgoers attending alternate services and events accordingly to their changing needs. "It is an issue of dual spirituality. If they want entrainment they go to a Pentecostal church but if they need a sacrament they go to mainline church. You have people thinking 'this will look good with my friends, with my family'" (Rev W, Johannesburg, 14/02/2014). And again:

There is no sense of contrast to belong to different churches. Some times you have people coming to service in the morning, going to another church' service in the afternoon and to a bible study in the night in a different church. Yes, it is frustrating.

Urban areas have two kinds of churchgoers: church hoppers, that move around different churches; and then you have those ones that remain loyal to the township and their finance remain there too. Rev. Dr. X, Pietermaritzburg, 16/02/2014

If the apartheid era has been defined by Terence Ranger (1986, p.156) as a time of 'frozen' identities (White, Coloured, Black, Indian but also Zulu, Venda etc.), when people could not choose what space to occupy, where to move to and where to live, the post-apartheid situation has brought mobility (internal and external with migrants), flexibility and pluralism. And with this plural and mobile society a 'market' of Christian 'of churches has started to develop and become more competitive (Stark and Iannaccone, 1993) while membership has started to become a looser and more complex concept not simply identifiable with the 'Church of your parents' as in the past:

One of our member was sick at the hospital, when I went to visit I saw Pentecostal pastors at the door and the wife told me they called them because they believed they were more powerful in healing. I found it interesting. As an Anglican, I do not have the same view of leadership as perhaps a Pentecostal pastor. I grew up as an Anglican and when I grew up there was no relation with other denominations. Today there is more fluidity and tendency for pastors to talk to each other that would not happen by then. People were not moving around churches. Rev. Y , Pietermaritzburg, 16/02/2014

In the current scenario people can choose accordingly to their needs and vocation (an analogy with analyses produced by the Sociology of Religion on religious pluralism in the US can be made here), but additionally South Africa experiences something very peculiar to its own context, something very 'South African'. That is the lack of division and contrast between different Christian denominations; an attitude that perhaps can be traced in the strong ecumenical movement developed during the struggle against apartheid (Bompani, 2006). In the same family it is possible to find members who belong to different churches, who move from one denomination to another in the course of their life without tension from within but also from without, with no personal perception of a negative contrast or duality and without reprimand from the religious community or the social context. Ironically, the political system build on racial boundaries eroded denominational boundaries.

The natural process of secularization that was expected in South Africa with the advent of democracy (and for some with the entrenchment of the 'secular' African National Congress in power), as well as in other African contexts with the end of colonization, did not take place and what we are observing today is not a secularized

continent but, on the contrary, a very religious one shaped in part by the many changes in the way religion is expressed and lived and spirituality perceived in everyday life (Ellis and Ter Haar, 2004, p.2). Mainline churches seem to have struggled to reinvent and recreate a space and a voice in this complex Christian context to the detriment of their membership. This has been particularly true in the case of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa since the 1970s but nonetheless new techniques, reflections and approaches are starting to be developed in order to find new answers to contemporary challenges. The coming years and decades pose challenges and opportunities.

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