

## The Global South Anglican: its origins and development

Michael Nai Chiu Poon

The Centre for the Study of Christianity in Asia, Singapore

*Abstract: This essay examines the rise and development of “Global South Anglican”, and explores its ramifications for the Anglican Communion. The exploration sets its rise in the context of internal ecclesiastical conflicts within the Episcopal Church and the Church of England. Disaffected clerics were instrumental in introducing “global South” geopolitics into the Communion debates. The essay calls into question the perceptions of churches in the South by Western interpreters, Philip Jenkins included. It ends by setting out the responsibilities facing Anglican churches in the Southern Hemisphere if they were to chart independently their own long-term welfare.*

My aim in this exploration is to understand the rise and development of the idea “Global South Anglican”. This designation only emerged following the Red Sea Third Global South Encounter in October 2005. The terms “global South”, “Global South”, and “Global South Primates” often appear in popular discussions on the Communion crisis, not only between the “Global South” and its supposed antagonist The Episcopal Church, but also in conversations among Anglicans in the Southern Hemisphere. For some, it may remain unclear what “Global South” and its cluster of related terms stand for, and which churches it represents. Is it a movement, a power-bloc, a lobby, or an ultra-conservative group that centres on certain personalities? The Global South Anglican website poignantly focused this concern in a posting on 26 February 2008. The posting includes a picture of Archbishop Peter Akinola, Primate of Nigeria, and Archbishop John Chew, Primate of South East Asia in Dubai, with an accompanying editorial note. In it are these highly nuanced phrases:<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> “An Editorial Update - 26th February 2008,” Global South Anglican, [http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/comments/an\\_editorial\\_update\\_26th\\_february\\_2008/](http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/comments/an_editorial_update_26th_february_2008/) (accessed 8 March 2008).

Given the recent tensions and reports in the media about Gafcon, Global South and Lambeth or Communion-wide issues, both these brothers in ministry met to renew again their commitment to each other, Global South work and our beloved Church.

This conciliatory comment at the same time focuses the issue at stake. What does commitment to “Global South work” mean for two iconic primates from Africa and Asia? Such clarification is necessary. Without which Anglicans across the Southern Hemisphere do not have a shared platform on which they can discuss how to support one another in promoting the common good.

In what follows, I shall chart the emergence of “Global South Anglican”, and place its rise within the broader historical developments of churches in the Southern Hemisphere. I shall end with some broader questions for the future of the Communion.

### **Global South Christians: An unexamined category?**

Philip Jenkins’s 2006 book *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing in the Global South* provides an illuminating introduction to our exploration.<sup>2</sup> It built on his earlier discussions in *The Next Christendom: the Coming of Global Christianity* published in 2002,<sup>3</sup> The change from “Global Christianity” in 2002 to “Global South” in 2006 is important. To be sure, Jenkins already alluded to the “global South” in the 2002 book. Yet, it became a controlling category in his analysis of the “Southern churches” in his 2006 work.<sup>4</sup> From the start, the Anglican crisis provided the prism through which he analyses global South Christianity.<sup>5</sup> He depicted “global South Christians” in these terms:<sup>6</sup>

Biblical and theological conservatism clearly represent the Christian mainstream across Africa and Asia, while ideas of supernatural warfare and healing need not the slightest explanation, and certainly no apology. They are rather at the heart of lived Christianity.

Surprisingly, Jenkins did not discuss directly why he uses the term “global South Christians” as shorthand for the various forms of Christianity in the Southern Hemisphere. Nor did he see any need to justify why he isolates the biblical conservative and supernaturalist strands

---

<sup>2</sup> Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> See Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity*, ix.

<sup>5</sup> See *Ibid.*, 2-4. See also his summary article, Philip Jenkins, "Believing in the Global South," *First things*, no. 168 (2006): 12-18.

<sup>6</sup> Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity*, 7.

to be the DNA of global South Christians. He probably saw this as self-evident. This represents a significant conceptual shift from the earlier missiological discussions on the southward movement of Christianity from the 1990s.<sup>7</sup> The geopolitics of the “global South” is now thrust to the fore. *The New Faces of Christianity* has in fact introduced the term “global South” into mainstream missiological discussion on the Christianities in Latin America, Africa and Asia. It becomes equivalent to “global Christianity”.<sup>8</sup> However it is perplexing that exponents of “global South Christianity” have not examined the grounds for using of such designation.<sup>9</sup>

### **Global South Christianity: an Anglican invention?**

Let me clarify. The term “global South” first emerged in the early 1990s in the discussions on the post Cold-war world. The Center for the Global South at American University, Washington, D.C. was founded in 1992, with the expressed aim

to studying the challenges facing the global South and advancing strategies to address them. How do we promote sustainable development and lasting peace, particularly in regions with acute economic problems, long-term patterns of political and social dislocation, and civil conflict? The center brings these questions to the forefront and seeks answers to them.<sup>10</sup>

The global South – as defined by the Center – includes “nearly 157 of a total of 184 recognized states in the world, and many have less developed or severely limited resources: in Latin America, Africa and most of Asia.”<sup>11</sup> From the early 1990s, “global South” began to appear as

---

<sup>7</sup> See Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> The numerous review of *The New Faces of Christianity* in scholarly journals testifies to this. Remarkably, the theology of the “Anglican bishops of the Global South of the Anglican Communion” becomes for a Ugandan scholar the lens through which he interprets a chapter of early 20<sup>th</sup> century mission history! See Christopher Byaruhanga, “The Legacy of Bishop Frank Weston of Zanzibar 1871-1924 in the Global South Anglicanism,” *Exchange* 35, no. 3 (2006): 255-269.

<sup>9</sup> See e.g. Francis Anekwe Oborji, *Concepts of Mission: The Evolution of Contemporary Missiology* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2006); Amy Plantinga Pauw, “What Is a Christian? Answers from the Global South,” *Word & World* 27, no. 3 (2007). For them, the designation “global South” is self-evident.

<sup>10</sup> “The Center,” The Center for the Global South, <http://www.american.edu/academic.depts/acainst/cgs/index.html> (accessed 8 March 2008).

<sup>11</sup> “Global South,” The Center for the Global South, <http://www.american.edu/academic.depts/acainst/cgs/about.html> (accessed 8 March 2008).

a casual descriptive term of the “Third World”, and then later as an organising concept in geopolitical and socio-economical discussions, among policy makers and political activists alike.<sup>12</sup>

There is scant reference to “global South” in Christian literature. In 2000, an Episcopalian priest, Titus Presler reflected on his Zimbabwe’s experience in an article that appeared in the *Anglican Theological Review*. It was perhaps was one of the earliest instances that the term “Global South” and “Global North” were used in Christian context. In this article “Old and New in Worship and Community: Culture's Pressure in Global Anglicanism”, he reminded his Episcopalian readers Andrew Walls observations on the Southward shifts in Christianity. Then he

---

<sup>12</sup> “Global South” appears in major reference works, but so far has not been included as an independent entry. See e.g. *The Oxford Companion to the Politics of the World*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Joel Krieger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), s.v., “International Systems”, “Reproductive Politics”, “Sustainable Development”; *Science, Technology, and Society: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Sal Restivo (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005), s.v., “Economy, the, and technology”, “gender and globalization”.

The “global South” description appeared in academic journals from early 1990s in geopolitical, socio-economical, and gender issues. It only gained currency as a subject of academic inquiry from the 2000s. See e.g. “Southern Women's Networks,” *Focus on Gender* 2, no. 3 (1994): 34-36; Bahgat Korany, “End of History, or Its Continuation and Accentuation? The Global South and the ‘New Transformation’ Literature,” *Third World Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (1994): 7-15; Timothy M. Shaw, “The South in the ‘New World (Dis)Order’: Towards a Political Economy of Third World Foreign Policy in the 1990s,” *Third World Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (1994): 17-30; Robin Broad and John Cavanagh, “Don’t Neglect the Impoverished South,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 101 (1995): 18-35; Jeffrey A. Hart, “Global Dreams: Imperial Corporations and the New World Order,” *Third World Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (1995): 147-148; Edward W. Said, “Orientalism, an Afterword,” *Raritan* 14, no. 3 (1995): 32-59; Katherine M. Metres, “Maksoud Calls for Unified Arab Diplomacy to Thwart Netanyahu,” *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* XVI, no. 1 (1997): 57; Anita Chan and J. S. Ross Robert, “Racing to the Bottom: International Trade without a Social Clause,” *Third World Quarterly* 24, no. 6 (2003): 1011-1028; Deborah Meacham, “Women’s Health in the Global South: Three Views,” *The Women’s Health Activist* 29, no. 2 (2004): 1; Rajeev Patel and McMichael Philip, “Third Worldism and the Lineages of Global Fascism: The Regrouping of the Global South in the Neoliberal Era,” *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (2004): 231-254; Richard Saull, “Locating the Global South in the Theorisation of the Cold War: Capitalist Development, Social Revolution and Geopolitical Conflict,” *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (2005): 253-280; James T. Murphy, “Representing the Economic Geographies of Others? Reconsidering the Global South,” *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 30 (2006): 439-448.

Full-length books on the global South appeared from the end of the 1990s. N. Patrick Peritore, *Third World Environmentalism: Case Studies from the Global South* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999); Jacqueline Anne Braveboy-Wagner, *The Foreign Policies of the Global South: Rethinking Conceptual Frameworks* (Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2003); Paul R. Greenough and Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Nature in the Global South: Environmental Projects in South and Southeast Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Barbara Thomas-Slayter, *Southern Exposure: International Development and the Global South in the Twenty-First Century* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, Inc., 2003); Susanne Soederberg, *The Politics of the New International Financial Architecture: Reimposing Neoliberal Domination in the Global South* (London: Zed Books, 2004); Judith M. Brown, *Global South Asians: Introducing the Modern Diaspora*, *New Approaches to Asian History* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Ray Bush, *Poverty and Neoliberalism: Persistence and Reproduction in the Global South* (London ; Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto, 2007); François Polet, *The State of Resistance: Popular Struggles in the Global South* (London: Zed Books 2007).

proceeded to commend to Global North Anglicans the vitality and growth in the Global South.<sup>13</sup> But that was a singular reference. The turn of the century study on the Communion produced by the Centre for Anglican Communion included over eighty contributors from across the Communion. The term “global South” never appeared in any of the essays. Kevin Ward’s editorial article “The development of Anglicanism as a global communion” surely did not.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, “global South” (relating to Christianity) made its first appearances only around 2003. Most importantly, it was used in public media as a lobby against the episcopal consecration of practising homosexuals in both the Church of England and in the Episcopal Church of the United States of America. Increasingly, it becomes a target used by disaffected Church of England clerics for canvassing worldwide Anglican rebellion against Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams.<sup>15</sup>

But how did such idea of the “global South” constituency arise in the Communion crisis? To do this we need to retrace how Anglican churches in the Southern Hemisphere established their networks. The MISSIO Report helpfully documented the beginnings.<sup>16</sup> The 1986 Brisbane mission agencies conference gave rise to the “South-South Movement”. The first two “South to South Encounters” of “Anglican churches in the South” took place in Nairobi in 1994 and in Kuala Lumpur in 1997. The conference aims were as follows:

To meet, to know and to encourage one another in our faith and mission as Christians of the ‘South’.

To listen to God and to listen to one another.

To share our stories, our needs, our resources, our vision.

To explore and encourage ways of offering ourselves and our unique gifts as Christians of the South for the enrichment of the whole Church and for world mission.

To discover our unique identity as Anglican Christians of the non-western world.

---

<sup>13</sup> Titus Presler, "Old and New in Worship and Community: Culture's Pressure in Global Anglicanism," *Anglican Theological Review* 82, no. 4 (2000): 709-723.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew Wingate and others, *Anglicanism: A Global Communion* (London: Mowbray, 1998).

<sup>15</sup> "Global South Primates Decry Consecration, 'Impaired' Unity," *National Catholic Reporter* 40, no. 4 (2003): 5; "Archbishop Major," *Economist* 368, no. 8337 (2003): 50; Linda Kulman, Ulrich Boser, and Gillian Sandford, "A Church's Continental Divide," *U.S. News & World Report* 135, no. 14 (2003): 64; Honor Moore, "Letter from London," *Nation* 277, no. 17 (2003): 7. See "Press Release, 19 February 2008: An Open Letter to the Primates and faithful Anglicans of the Global South," Church Society, [http://www.churchsociety.org/press/pr\\_2008-02\\_OpenLetter.htm](http://www.churchsociety.org/press/pr_2008-02_OpenLetter.htm) (accessed 8 March 2008).

<sup>16</sup> MISSIO, *Anglicans in Mission: A Transforming Journey; Report of MISSIO, the Mission Commission of the Anglican Communion, to the Anglican Consultative Council, Meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland, September 1999* (London: SPCK, 2000), 72-74.

To encourage qualitative and relevant leadership development for our rapidly growing churches so as to secure the future of the Church in the South and worldwide. To enable partnership, both South to South and South to North on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

To explore ways of being authentically Christian in our cultural milieu while remaining universally connected to the global Anglican Communion.

The aims had in view the fostering of partnership between Anglican churches in the South. Even at the Kuala Lumpur Encounter, where issues on Scriptural authority and human sexuality were discussed, the gathering continued to refer themselves as “Anglican Churches of the South”. Of the six people in the coordinating committee charged for follow-up, only two were archbishops. The rest were lay and clergy.<sup>17</sup>

In other words, up to the contentious debates on human sexuality in Lambeth 1998, churches in the South have neither regarded themselves as a “Global South” constituency, nor have they identified themselves as “Global South Anglican”. When and how did the “Anglican Churches in the South” transform into “Global South Anglican”? The Anglican Communion News Service archive perhaps provides a convenient way in charting this development.

The term “Global South” first appeared in official Anglican documents in 2002. The Report of the Meeting of Primates of the Anglican Communion referred to “[the HIV/AIDS pandemic that is] a problem of increasing seriousness across the Global South, in many countries of Asia and the Pacific, Africa and Latin America”.<sup>18</sup> Such reference was in line with how the term was used in public discourses. Ironically, it was the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission that first recognised a theological nuance to the “global South” in 2002. That took place even before the Communion crisis intensified:<sup>19</sup>

The Commission is committed to continuing its task in conversation with the Anglican Communion as a whole, and especially with *churches of the global South*. In a second stage of consultation, responses are being sought to a series of about the nature of conflict in the church; the role of Scripture; the proper integration of doctrine and ethics; the way in which local, contextual questions are addressed and how far the interdependence of Anglican provinces can be a source of strength in this responsibility, along with the need to

---

<sup>17</sup> See “Trumpet II the Encounter Statement,” Global South Anglican, [http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/weblog/comments/second\\_trumpet\\_from\\_2nd\\_anglican\\_encounter\\_in\\_the\\_south\\_kuala\\_lumpur\\_10\\_15/](http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/weblog/comments/second_trumpet_from_2nd_anglican_encounter_in_the_south_kuala_lumpur_10_15/) (accessed 8 March 2008). The coordinating committee Archbishop Joseph A Adetiloye, Archbishop Ghais Abdel Malik, Canon Dr James Wong, Canon Dr Sebastian Bakare, Mr Rolando Dalmas; and Canon Dr Cyril Okorochoa.

<sup>18</sup> “Report of the Meeting of Primates of the Anglican Communion: Appendix III Statement of Anglican Primates on HIV/AIDS (16 April 2002),” ACNS, <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2002/4/17/ACNS2961>.

<sup>19</sup> “Inter Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission Communiqué,” ACNS, <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2002/10/23/ACNS3175>.

find structures of ‘testing, reconciliation and restraint’ which are appropriate to an Anglican understanding of authority in the Church. (italics mine)

IATDC’s reference the “global South” was significant. It was probably unaware of the geopolitical nuances of the term. In singling out “churches of the *global South*” as a discussion partner on a series of potentially divisive matters (on conflicts in the Communion, Scripture, ethics, and interdependence of provinces), it opened the way for “global South” to group themselves as a constituency to negotiate terms with the wider Communion. The Commission lent itself to recognise a “global South” entity with its own set of theologies and policies.<sup>20</sup> Such tacit recognition from a high-level Communion-wide commission in 2002 would lead to devastating results.

The “global South” did become organised. In 2003, for the first time conservative leaders adopted the entity “primates of the Global South”. ACNS 3522 reported:<sup>21</sup>

The Archbishops Peter Akinola of Nigeria, Bernard Malango of Central Africa, Emmanuel Kolini of Rwanda, Yong Ping Chung of South East Asia and Peter Jensen of Sydney, Australia, wrote a letter to the *Primates of the Global South* asking that they confirm their agreement with a statement that they had drafted. The text of the statement read: “We, *primates of the global south* of the Anglican Communion wish to indicate to the General Convention of the Episcopal Church of the USA that, should the Convention decide to confirm the election of Canon Gene Robinson as bishop or approve the blessing of same-sex unions or both, then we will convene within three months to confirm our view that ECUSA has thereby placed itself outside the boundaries of the Anglican Communion and that appropriate action will follow. (italics mine)”

In the event, on 2 November 2003 (the day of the consecration of Gene Robinson), Archbishop Peter Akinola of Nigeria issued the “Statement of the Primates of the Global South in the Communion” on behalf of the “working committee for the Primates of the Global South.”<sup>22</sup> The

---

<sup>20</sup> Note here the casual references to the “global South” in Archbishop Robin Eames’ 2006 lectures at Virginia Theological Seminary. “The Anglican Communion: A Growing Reality,” ANCS, <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2005/10/5/ACNS4041>; “The Anglican Communion: What Communion?” ANCS, <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2005/10/6/ACNS4045>.

<sup>21</sup> “Anglican leaders raise concerns regarding human sexuality; Archbishop of Cape Town responds,” ANCS, <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2003/7/24/ACNS3522>.

<sup>22</sup> See “Statement of the Primates of the Global South in the Communion,” Global South Anglican, [http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/comments/statement\\_of\\_the\\_primates\\_of\\_the\\_global\\_south\\_in\\_the\\_anglican\\_communion\\_2\\_n/](http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/comments/statement_of_the_primates_of_the_global_south_in_the_anglican_communion_2_n/).

curtains are drawn for “Primates of the Global South” to become a force to be reckoned in ensuing acrimonious Communion quarrels.<sup>23</sup>

The stage was set for the transformation in the third “South to South Encounter” at Red Sea in October 2005. True to its original aims, the gathering included church representatives from Anglican churches in the South. In the words of the communiqué released after the Encounter, “103 delegates of 20 provinces in the Global South (comprising Africa, South and South East Asia, West Indies and South America)” were present. Surely included among them – e.g. those from Hong Kong and perhaps Singapore with their high-living standards – were those who strictly-speaking did not belong to the “global South” in the original meaning of the term (as it was first used in the early 1990s). However, by the Red Sea the Encounter was rebaptised “Anglican *Global South Anglican Encounter*”.<sup>24</sup> Shortly after the Encounter, the “Global South Anglican” was born with the launch of a website bearing its namesake.<sup>25</sup> The coordinating group for the Encounter became the “Global South Anglican Primates Steering Committee”. It held its first meeting in Singapore on 6 February 2008 with the following brief:<sup>26</sup>

We have met as the Global South Primates Steering Committee to implement the decisions reached during the third South South Encounter held in October 2005 in Ein al Sukhna by the Red Sea, Egypt. In particular, working committees have been formed to plan and organize the proposed Consultations on Economic Empowerment and Theological thinking and training.

---

<sup>23</sup> "International reaction to Gene Robinson's consecration in New Hampshire mixed," ACNS, <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2003/11/6/ACNS3665>; "Anglican provinces declare 'impaired' or 'broken' relationship with ECUSA," ACNS, <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2003/12/9/ACNS3703>; "North American conservatives and global South Anglicans seek discipline of ECUSA," ANCS, <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2004/1/13/ACNS3737>; "Statement of the Global South Primates," ACNS, <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2004/5/19/ACNS3829>; "Thirteen Global Primates state 'ECUSA has separated itself'," ANCS, <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2004/5/19/ACNS3829>.

<sup>24</sup> “The Third Anglican Global South Encounter,” ANCS, <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2005/10/31/ACNS4061>. Astonishingly, Archbishop Rowan Williams (and the editors at ANCS) tacitly accepted to this subtle change in his address at the Encounter. See “Archbishop Williams – Church’s hope ‘only in Christ’,” ANCS, <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2005/10/31/ACNS4063>.

<sup>25</sup> “About this Global South Anglican Website,” *Global South Anglican*, [http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/comments/first\\_entry/](http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/comments/first_entry/) (accessed 8 March 2008).

<sup>26</sup> “Communiqué from the Global South Primates Steering Committee meeting at Singapore, 6 Feb 06,” *Global South Anglican*, [http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/weblog/comments/gsp\\_sc\\_communique\\_6\\_feb\\_06/](http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/weblog/comments/gsp_sc_communique_6_feb_06/) (accessed 8 March 2008).

### **Global South Anglican: a global South undertaking?**

In retracing the rise of the “Global South Anglican”, my aims are not to suggest any mischief among church leaders in the Southern churches. The “Global South Anglican” has become a *de facto* “instrument” that is given tacit recognition by all parties towards resolving the Communion crisis. It is therefore important, especially for Anglicans in the South who now suddenly find themselves labeled as “Global South Anglican”, to understand the processes and resources in fostering this Global South Anglican identity. Only in uncovering these dynamics could Anglicans across the “divides” be able to come to more informed decisions on the Communion’s future.

The above narrative of the rise of the Global South Anglican left answered the processes and resources involved in the birth of this identity. The global South is geographically spread across different time zones with vastly different information-technological infrastructural capacities, and with contrasting geopolitical and socio-economic settings. Leaving aside questions on the skills required to compose communiqués and media responses in English in short notices (for church leaders whose English is a second or third language), how is the Global South able to organise itself and come to consensus so efficiently in the Communion crisis? The Anglican Communion Primates’ Meetings provide the occasion for the Global South Primates Anglican Steering Committee to discuss strategies on Communion matters before meeting other primates. However this alone cannot fully explain how “Global South Anglican” was able to emerge as a powerful constituency within the Communion.

Miranda Katherine Hassett’s anthological studies on Anglican communities in Uganda and America perhaps provide a clue. Her 2004 doctoral thesis “Episcopal dissidents, African allies: The Anglican communion and the globalization of dissent” draws the following conclusion:<sup>27</sup>

In recent years, conservative dissidents within the Episcopal Church in the United States have felt alienated by that church's liberal policies, especially its acceptance of homosexuality. In response, these Episcopal dissidents have increasingly sought help and support from Anglican bishops in the global South (Africa, Asia, and Latin America). . . . Supporters and critics often explain these transnational alliances through narratives of increased global religious conflict between liberal Northern Christianity and conservative Southern Christianity, with which Northern conservatives seek to align themselves. This work questions such narratives. . . . I demonstrate that these alliances result from cooperative globalizing endeavors undertaken by Episcopal dissidents and sympathetic Southern leaders since the mid-1990s. These allies have globalized Episcopal conflicts by

---

<sup>27</sup> Miranda Katherine Hassett, “Episcopal dissidents, African allies: The Anglican communion and the globalization of dissent,” (Ph.D., The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2004), v-vi. The thesis was published as *Anglican Communion in crisis: how Episcopal dissidents and their African allies are reshaping Anglicanism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

framing them in global language, and pursuing projects of global intervention in the Episcopal Church, such as placing Episcopal parishes under African bishops. . . . I chronicle the meetings at which conservative Episcopalians and Southern Anglicans developed relationships and strategies in preparation for the 1998 conference of all Anglican bishops, and the impact of these relationships at that conference. Subsequent chapters document the development of a conservative globalist vision of the Anglican Communion united through networks of moral accountability, and the increase in relationships linking disaffected American conservatives with Southern bishops. I analyze discourses concerning the characteristics of Northern and Southern Christianity, and accusations about the role of money in these alliances. In conclusion, I question the growing currency in public discourse of ideas about North/South Christian conflict, in light of the evidence presented in this work.

This 700-page thesis highlighted the role of disaffected American conservatives in globalising conflicts in The Episcopal Church “by framing [the issues] in global language, and pursuing projects of global intervention”. Chapter Four was devoted to understanding the events surrounding Lambeth 1998. The chapter title astonishingly was “Lambeth 1998: Global South Rising”.<sup>28</sup> But as we discussed earlier, the term “global South” was only used in Anglican discussions from 2003! Why did Hassett interpret Lambeth 1998 as such? The most likely answer came from the thesis statement itself. The idea of “global South” is the very “global language” that disaffected Americans introduced to their African and Asian sympathizers. This suggests that American dissidents were instrumental in guiding the underlying processes and in providing the infrastructural support for such transnational alliances.

It is revealing that Hassett’s research took her to Uganda Christianity University, the home of the “*Global South* Institute for Mission, Leadership and Public Policy”. The Global South Institute was founded in 2003 by Stephen Noll to serve “the Anglican churches of the African Great Lakes Region and the worldwide Anglican communion as a conservative, evangelical, Christian think-tank in Africa, facilitating research and education opportunities in Mission, Leadership, Public Policy, and Anglican Studies.”<sup>29</sup> As its 2003 brochure pointed up, it was inspired by Philip Jenkins’ *The Next Christendom*.<sup>30</sup> The parallels with the Centre for the Global South in Washington were obvious. The Washington Centre was set up in 1992 to free the global South from capitalist encroachment in the West; now the Global South Institute at Mukono seeks

---

<sup>28</sup> “Episcopal dissidents, African allies,” 183-256,

<sup>29</sup> “Global South Institute,” Uganda Christian University, <http://www.ucu.ac.ug/content/blogcategory/102/95/> (accessed 8 March 2008). See also “Our missionaries: Stephen and Peggy Noll,” Global Team, <http://www.global-teams.org/missionaries/noll.htm> (accessed 8 March 2008).

<sup>30</sup> “See “Global South Institute for Mission, Leadership and Public Policy,” Uganda Partners, <http://www.ugandapartners.org/news> and [http://www.ugandapartners.org/downloads/gsi/gsi\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.ugandapartners.org/downloads/gsi/gsi_brochure.pdf) (accessed 8 March 2008).

to liberate the global South from liberal theologies in America by stamping on it a brand of theology that has proved intrinsically divisive in its historical trajectories!

### **Global South Anglican: at the crossroad**

“Global South Anglican” introduces a new geopolitical grammar to the discussions on the present Communion crisis. It provides a new vision for the Communion. The Communion as a whole and the Global South Anglican leadership in particular needs to be alert to this. Greater vigilance should be given against hasty adoption of new IT-driven definitions and entities. Two central issues follow.

In the first place, how do Anglican churches across the oceans order themselves as part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church of Jesus Christ?

Significantly, the Third Global South Encounter in 2005 moved away from the issue-centered approaches at Kuala Lumpur, and put this ecclesial question to the fore. Part of this impetus came from the spiritual journey of North East Asian “Anglicans” in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Chinese Anglicans and missionaries wrestled for decades with proper terminologies of ecclesial terms in Prayer book translation projects. In finally settling with the name “Sheng Kung Hui (Holy Catholic Church)” to be the equivalence for “Anglican Church” in 1909, the Chinese Anglicans (alongside Korean and Japanese Anglicans) disclosed a new vision for the Anglican Communion.<sup>31</sup>

The Red Sea Encounter was surprisingly non-polemical. It embraced the Windsor processes and placed high hopes on the Anglican Covenant. It further shied away from defining orthodoxy in narrower terms. The historic faith and formularies provided the sufficient conditions for faith and order in the Communion:

We in the Global South endorse the concept of an Anglican Covenant (rooted in the Windsor Report) and commit ourselves as full partners in the process of its formulation. We are seeking a Covenant that is rooted in historic faith and formularies, and that provides a biblical foundation for our life, ministry and mission as a Communion. (Communiqué, 22)

The conciliatory tone of the Communiqué provided broad-based support from African, Asian, West Indian, and South American delegates who came from vastly different contexts. It had in view the long-term tasks for the maturing the churches in the South. The immediate Communion crisis, important though it was, was put within such overall vision of the “one, holy, catholic and apostolic church”. Two instruments were set up to further such purposes. As the

---

<sup>31</sup> See my series of articles “Gongdaoshu de fanyi yu Shenggonghui mingming de lishi guanxi [= Prayer Book Translation and the Birth of “Sheng Kung Hui”],” *Jiao Sheng, Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui*, no. 1514-1522 (2005). The full article, in Chinese, is available at “Articles on the Anglican Communion by Michael Poon,” the Centre for the Study of Christianity in Asia, <http://www.ttc.edu.sg/csca/poon/index.htm>.

Global South Primates Steering Committee underlined in their first meeting after the Encounter, they put in place task forces on “economic empowerment and theological thinking and training”.<sup>32</sup>

In this sense, the ‘Global South Anglican’ furthers the original aims of the South to South Encounter (as outlined in the MISSIO Report). Churches in the South are able draw on their own resources in pursuing intra-South collaborative projects.

There is however a persistent undercurrent within “Global South Anglican” that defines itself doctrinally against the wider Anglican Communion, and posits itself against “liberal leadership” in the Church of England and the Episcopal Church. The primates of Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda are at the centre stage of the transatlantic conflicts in the Communion. Strictly speaking, they are true to the “global South” spirit (and methodologies). The GAFCON movement that suddenly erupted in late December 2007 brought this undercurrent to the surface. Doctrinal matters are not central to GAFCON. It is telling that Archbishop Peter Jensen did not clarify what “Biblical Anglican Christianity” entails. (He was silent on whether such biblical Anglican beliefs, for example, include particular views on ordination of women and lay presidency at the Holy Communion.) The central issue is in fact the restructuring of the Communion. It would be reconfigured by the geopolitics of globalisation and of the “global South”. Transnational alliances – with the aim in expanding interests through border crossing – replace geographical dioceses and historic ties as the building blocks of the Communion, and with the same stroke dethrone Canterbury as the focus of unity.<sup>33</sup> This of course is in line with Hassett’s earlier analysis.<sup>34</sup>

GAFCON holds before the Communion a new and unfamiliar utopia that is post-modern to its core. Webmasters and web bloggers render synodical processes irrelevant. They preside over web blogs in the virtual worlds of their own fabrication. Its power in shaping public opinion on ecclesiastical authorities simply cannot be ignored. A communion that is no longer dependent on patient face-to-face encounters and governed by geographical proximity: it is a Gnostic gospel that renders the Cross in vain.

Secondly, Anglican churches in the South need to reconnect their “lived Christianity” with the spiritual and intellectual traditions in their parts of the world.

---

<sup>32</sup> See my earlier comments posted on 1 December 2005: “Revisiting the Global South Communiqué – Focusing on Fundamentals,” *Global South Anglican*, [http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/comments/revisiting\\_the\\_global\\_south\\_communiqueacutemdashfocusing\\_on\\_fundamentals/](http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/comments/revisiting_the_global_south_communiqueacutemdashfocusing_on_fundamentals/) (accessed 8 March 2008).

<sup>33</sup> See Peter Jensen, “The Global Anglican Future Conference,” *Sydney Anglican Network*, [http://your.sydneyanglicans.net/senior\\_clergy/archbishop\\_jensen/articles/the\\_global\\_anglican\\_fuiture\\_conference/](http://your.sydneyanglicans.net/senior_clergy/archbishop_jensen/articles/the_global_anglican_fuiture_conference/) (accessed 8 March 2008); Stephen Noll, “The Global Anglican Communion and the Anglican Orthodoxy,” *GAFCON*, [http://www.gafcon.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=22&Itemid=15](http://www.gafcon.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=22&Itemid=15) (accessed 8 March 2008).

<sup>34</sup> See also the discussion on “transregional fluidities” in globalization geopolitics in Pramod K. Mishra, “Black, white, and brown: Coloniality, national forms, and the emergence of the global South,” (Ph.D., Duke University, 2003).

Jenkins attributed the biblical and theological conservative and supernaturalist character of global South Christians as congenial to the social and political realities in which they find themselves. For Jenkins, this “lived Christianity” is more authentic than the “liberal” and Northern style gender theologies that are also present in the global South.<sup>35</sup> Yet, is this all that is to “lived Christianity”? More importantly, must our homes in the Southern Hemisphere continue to be at the mercy of repressive regimes and natural disasters, and are consigned to poverty and power traps? What contribution should Anglicans in the South make towards world Christianity and their societies? Jenkins had no answer. He remained as an interested observer in the West. He wrote:<sup>36</sup>

[I]t is extremely difficult to envisage the future trajectory of the faith [in the global South]. . . . [W]e see promising signs of growth as southern Christians begin evangelizing the North, in the process changing many familiar aspects of belief and practice and exporting cultural traits presently only in Africa or Latin America. We can only speculate what this future synthesis. . . . When we look at today’s new faces of Christianity, we are seeing the shape of the Christian future.

Whereas Jenkins can remain a distant observer, this simply cannot do for Anglicans whose build their homes (and raise their children) in the South. Christian intellectuals in the Southern Hemisphere have a particular duty to remain in the South in these critical times in the twenty-first century.

Those in the West have not understood this. The “global Christianity” that the West imagine is ethnic- rather than geographically-based. It misunderstands that a gathering of peoples of different skin colours in itself constitutes a global community. It is not critical to the power structures that continue to deprive the South by systematically recruiting Third World elites to the West. The global and multicultural futures that the West formulates are outworking of Orientalism-projects that Edward Said rightly unmasked. So indeed, the demographic centre of gravity of Christianity has moved southwards. What is important in the South is then the sheer size of numbers. “How much does the global South worth?”, I asked in an earlier essay. What is of worth in the vernacular and local are redefined – no longer in terms of the intellectual histories, art, poetry, and cultural aspirations of the local, but in their raw and teeming masses that provides a convenient leverage in power plays!

Anglicans in the South need to broaden their horizons of “lived Christianity”. Africa, Central, South America, and Asia have histories prior to the European expansion and long before organised religions arrived. Our forebears lived and co-existed in multi-racial and multi-religious regions. Living along others with different religious beliefs was a lived reality. Our pasts were also shaped by histories of suffering brought about by oppressive domination and natural disasters. The stories of how lives touched and transformed one another through centuries and millennia

---

<sup>35</sup> *The New Face of Christianity*, 6-7.

<sup>36</sup> “Believing in the Global South,” 18.

provide the fertile settings for Christian reflections. Our Christian forebears had laid such ground-works for us. They read and interpreted the gospel in their living contexts. In South Asia, they left behind annals and liturgy in Syriac and Malayam from the fourth century. In Central and Asia and China, Chaldean Christianity left its traces in Sogdian, Uighur, Mongolian and Chinese languages. Taking a leap to the twentieth century, we have Bishop Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah of India and Zhao Zichen of China, two towering Anglican intellectuals whose work cried out for follow-up by present-day Anglicans.<sup>37</sup> Anglicans in the expansive African continent can similarly connect with their own spiritual roots.

The Pacific War in the mid twentieth century resulted in vast infrastructural destructions across East Asia. The loss of China (and to a great extent India through church union) to the Anglican world in the late 1940s have further weakened Anglican presence in Asia. After all, India and China – the two cultural giants in Asia – provided intellectual leadership for the rest of the region. For most of the past three decades, Anglicans in Asia have devoted their energy in ecclesiastical realignments. The transfer of metropolitan authority from Canterbury or from the Episcopal Church to churches in the new nation-states had not been straight-forward matters. The region is now more settled. It is important for Anglicans today to put a fresh emphasis on intellectual work. Without this underpinning, Anglican churches are exposed to ideological shaping from within and without.<sup>38</sup>

To end, global South Anglicans are at a crossroad in 2008. Whither it goes should not be left to the primates. It is a matter of prime concern for all Anglicans in the Southern Hemisphere. Our homes are at stake; our Communion is at stake.

There is grace enough for thousands  
Of new worlds as great as this;  
There is room for fresh creations  
In that upper home of bliss.

For the love of God is broader  
Than the measure of our mind;  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind.

But we make His love too narrow  
By false limits of our own;  
And we magnify His strictness  
With a zeal He will not own.

---

<sup>37</sup> See John C. England and others, *Asian Christian theologies: a research guide to authors, movements, sources*, 3 vols. (Delhi: ISPCK, 2002).

<sup>38</sup> For a fuller treatment on this, see my article “Anglican Clerical Formation in South East Asia: Structured for Mission?” to appear in *Trinity Theological Journal*, Singapore.

Was there ever kinder shepherd  
Half so gentle, half so sweet,  
As the Savior who would have us  
Come and gather at His feet? (Frederick Faber)

10 March 2008, Singapore