

Recent Immigrants

The population of the UK in 2017 is officially given as 65,648,000. Of these 9,343,000 were born overseas, 14%, or one person in 7. This may seem a high percentage, but of these just over two-fifths, 43%, were those coming to join an already-resident UK citizen as a spouse or dependent, one third, 30%, came for employment reasons, 13% were students who would (presumably) leave again after their courses were concluded perhaps in 3 or 4 years' time, and the remaining 14% were immigrants seeking asylum, or were long-staying visitors, a few to get married, or other reasons.

Two-fifths, 40%, of these came from one of the other 27 countries in the EU, 4% from non-EU European countries, a third, 31% from Asia, 15% from Africa, mostly Sub-Saharan Africa, and the remaining tenth, 10%, from the Americas (8%) and Oceania (2%). How these all break down is shown in Table 1.

A lot of family reunions are seen among those from Asia and the Americas and fewer in the EU

Table 1: Countries of origin of overseas-born UK population

Country/ Area of origin	Joining someone in UK %	Work related %	Formal study %	Seeking asylum and other reasons %	Base (=100%)
European Union	34	47	10	9	3,690,000
Other European countries	42	25	13	20	356,000
Middle East & Central Asia	43	7	15	35	395,000
East Asia (= China mostly)	34	14	43	9	328,000
South Asia (= Indian sub-continent)	61	19	11	9	1,819,000
South East Asia (= Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, etc.)	51	23	16	10	385,000
Sub-Saharan Africa	42	17	13	28	1,267,000
North Africa	46	19	15	20	152,000
North America	57	22	12	9	294,000
Central, South America & Oceania	46	27	11	16	656,000
TOTAL All areas of origin	43	30	13	14	9,345,000

Table 2: Notional religions of immigrants from the largest numbers of overseas-born people in the UK

Country	No in UK	% Christian	% Muslim	% Other	Region
Poland	922,000	2% Prot 93% RC 3% Orth	0%	2% Other	EU
India	829,000	6% Prot 2% RC 0% Orth	12%	73% Hindu 7% Other	South Asia
Pakistan	522,000	2% Prot 1% RC 0% Orth	93%	1% Hindu 3% Other	South Asia
Romania	390,000	10% Prot 12% RC 69% Orth	2%	7% Other	EU
Irish Republic	390,000	6% Prot 83% RC 0% Orth	0%	11% Other	EU
Germany	318,000	36% Prot 33% RC 1% Orth	6%	24% Other	EU
Bangladesh	263,000	1% Prot 0% RC 0% Orth	87%	11% Hindu 1% Other	South Asia
Italy	232,000	3% Prot 77% RC 0% Orth	2%	18% Other	EU
South Africa	228,000	73% Prot 8% RC 0% Orth	2%	17% Other	S-S Africa
China	216,000	8% Prot 1% RC 0% Orth	2%	89% Other	East Asia
TOTAL	4,310,000	10% Prot 36% RC 7% Orth	20%	27% Other	~

because most will return home after a few years – the work related percentage is highest for EU countries. A huge proportion of our Chinese visitors are students (12% of all the overseas students who come to Britain).

The final column shows from where most of our refugees and asylum seekers come – Europe outside the EU, the Middle East, Central Asia, Sub-Saharan and Northern Africa. One of the questions for UK Christians is how many of those coming from these countries are likely to be Christian and have a personal faith.

The ONS press release also shows where some of the newcomers to Britain are locating, with Boston in Lincolnshire seeing the biggest rise in foreign-born residents, up from 3% in 2007 to 29% in 2017! In Harlow, Essex, the proportion rose 17% from 4% to 21% and in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham it was up 14% to 38%. East Staffordshire saw the percentage rise by 13%, and in both Northampton and Southampton the percentage was by +12%.

Some of the 9 million people who are foreign-born

living in the UK are in fact British nationals despite being born abroad, and this is especially so for those coming from India (470,000), Pakistan (330,000), Germany (200,000), Bangladesh (170,000), South Africa (150,000) and Kenya (110,000), the six countries with the most. The number of non-British nationals living in the UK in 2017 was 6.2 million, 3.8 million of whom come from the EU.

Those from the top 10 countries in Table 1 in Britain have notional religions as shown in the second Table. The Christian figures come from the *World Christian Encyclopaedia's* forward estimates and may be several percentage points in error now, given the mass of recent immigrants into Britain. Nevertheless they give an insight into the broad religious affiliation of immigrants which is very rarely counted. These figures are for the top 10 countries only and the broad percentages may not hold overall.

Nevertheless they show that over half of the immigrants, 53%, would register themselves as nominally Christian, and a further fifth, 20%, as nominally Muslim. Of the Christians the largest proportion are Catholic which helps explain the opportunity taken by the Roman Catholic Church to start so many foreign language churches especially in London but in other cities as well. In addition 27 Polish Catholic churches have been started in and around Aberdeen in Scotland.

One of the Eastern Orthodox churches in the UK is the Romanian Orthodox which has more than doubled in membership over the last 5 years (44,000 in 2012 and 96,000 in 2017), helped almost certainly by some of the Romanian immigrants. If one-sixth of the Romanians coming to the UK subsequently attend an Orthodox church here that would account for this increase.

Likewise also the increase in number of Muslims. The Gatestone Institute estimates that in 2017 there were 4.1 million Muslims in the UK, up from 2.8 million in the 2011 Population Census. If 20% of the 4.3 million overseas-born people are Muslim that of itself is 0.9 million people, showing the growth is coming from immigration as well as new births, and mostly joining family members in the UK.

The Hindu community in London grew by 115,000 between 2001 and 2011 to reach over 400,000 in 2011, and almost certainly will be larger now. The Table indicates that a substantial number from some countries, especially India and Bangladesh, are Hindu.

What does all this say? There are huge numbers of people from dozens of countries all round the world coming to live in the UK, some hoping to stay permanently and others for short periods to go to university or for a work contract. Such presents an incredible opportunity to reach virtually every corner of the world with the good news of Jesus Christ. Many who come are already religious, even if notional in their allegiance. Coming to a church where they are welcomed and perhaps where their language is spoken likewise presents a huge opportunity to challenge folk to make a real commitment to their erstwhile faith. Awareness of such opportunities is one thing; utilising them is another. How can we rekindle the urgency of proclamation in our worship centres is a question many are seeking to answer!

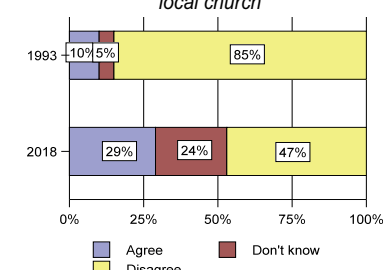
SOURCES: Migration Statistics, Office for National Statistics, 24th May 2018; World Christian Encyclopaedia, David Barrett and Todd Johnson, OUP, 2001; Gatestone Institute website 1st January 2018; UK Church Statistics No 2, 2014; article in the *Daily Telegraph*, 25th May 2018, Page 11.

Sharing Our Faith

In 2018 the American Barna Research organisation repeated a study it had first undertaken 25 years previously, in 1993. It asked Christians if they had ever had a conversation about their faith. Of those who answered affirmatively, two special further questions were asked.

These took the form of two statements, and respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with them. Their answers are shown in the bar charts:

Converting people to Christianity is the job of the local church

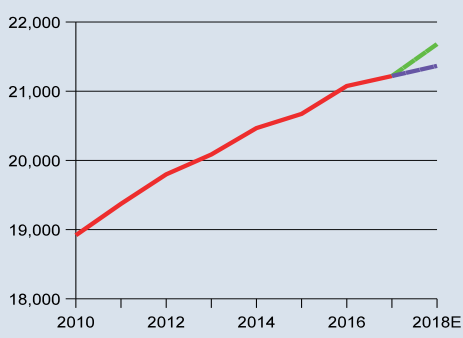


The jump, virtually tripling from 10% to 29%, agreeing that the church is the prime mechanism for converting people, could be the result of many factors, suggests Barna, including poor ecclesiology (believing "the local church" is somehow separate from the people who are a part of it) or personal and cultural barriers to sharing faith.

South Korean Mission Workers

The number of South Korean missionaries is carefully monitored each year by Steve Sang-Cheol Moon in the Korea Research Institute for Mission based in Seoul in South Korea. He tracks the number sent out by the South Korean churches, their gender, age, length of service and so on, and the number of mission agencies and the number of countries in which they work. Such information used to be compiled for the UK also but agencies have not been surveyed since 2006.

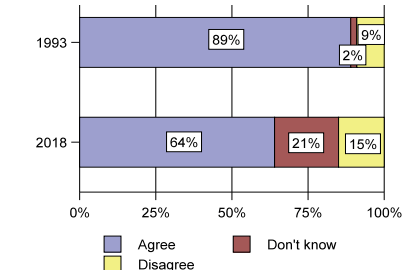
Number of South Korean Missionaries



Mr Moon is concerned because while the numbers continue to increase, the rate of growth has considerably slowed down. The purple line in the graph shows what the 2018 total might be if the rate of change from 2016 to 2017 continued (when it would be 21,366 against a 2017 figure of 21,220), and the green line what it might be if the rate of growth since 2010 continued (when it would be 21,681).

The South Korean mission movement is sustained by 159 mission agencies, a number which has dropped from 168 in 2011. The South Korean missionaries worked in 159 countries in 2017, down from 177 countries in 2011. So there is a small contraction in outreach even if the total numbers continue to increase slightly.

Every Christian has a responsibility to share their faith



The most dramatic divergence over time, however, is on the second statement. In 1993, nine out of 10 Christians who had shared their faith agreed that every Christian should share their faith (89%). In 2018, 25 years later, just two-thirds say so (64%) – a 25-point drop. The rise in "don't knows" is worrying also.

"The most common approaches in sharing their faith, [said] a majority of those approached, was in asking questions about the other person's beliefs and experiences (70%) and sharing their faith in the way they live rather than by speaking about it (65%). These were common among Christians in 1993 as well, but a majority of Christians 25 years ago also reported emphasizing the beneficial aspects of accepting Jesus (78%) – a strategy that today is less common (50%). Also less favoured now is quoting passages from the Bible (59% in 1993 v 37% today) and challenging the other person to defend their beliefs (43% v 24%)," were further findings of the Barna Group from their research.

"Christians today, more than 25 years ago, perceive social barriers to sharing their faith," Barna suggests. "They are more likely to agree that faith-sharing is only effective when they already have a relationship with the other person (47% v 37% in 1993) and to admit they would avoid a spiritual conversation if they knew their non-Christian friend would reject them (44% v 33%). They are also more likely than Christians in 1993 to say they are unsure whether 'most non-Christians have no interest in hearing about Jesus' (28% v 5%)".

"So what's happening here? Why are Christians so reluctant to talk about their faith? The overarching cultural trends of secularism, relativism, pluralism and the digital age are contributing to a society that is less interested in religion and that has marginalized the place of spirituality in everyday life," continues Roxanne Stone, Editor-in-Chief of the Barna Group. "As a result, Christians in America today have to live in the tension between Jesus' commands to tell others the good news and growing cultural taboos against proselytizing – a core part of Christianity from its origins and, many practising Christians believe, is essential for the salvation of their listeners."

In the UK, "political correctness" threatens to drown all other considerations, challenging believers with the apostle Peter's testimony when faced with official restrictions about obeying God rather than men that "we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).

"As pastors and leaders, we must invest the resources of our churches toward coming alongside fellow

These may be helpful

Books and reports received

Observations on Nominalism, Martin Robinson, January 2018, Second Lausanne Consultation on Nominalism, Rome, March 2018.

Dying Well, Dying Faithfully, A pastorally orientated book for believers approaching death, Prof John Wyatt, IVP, April 2018.

Cash or Carry? Fathers combining work and care in the UK, Adrienne Burgess and Jeremy Davies, Fatherhood Institute, Nuffield Foundation, December 2017.

Complex Catholicism, Discovering the reality of young Catholics, Danny Curtin & Stephen Davies, CYMFed and Camino House, 2018.

Secular Beats Spiritual, The Westernisation of the Easternisation of the West, Steve Bruce, OUP, 2017.

British Social Attitudes No 35, National Centre for Social Research, downloadable from web. Chapters on Scotland, Europe, Voting, Social Trust, Work & Welfare, Climate Change and Gender, July 2018.

Humour

Sir Ken Dodd, the comedian, died on 11th March 2018, aged 90. Some more of his jokes:

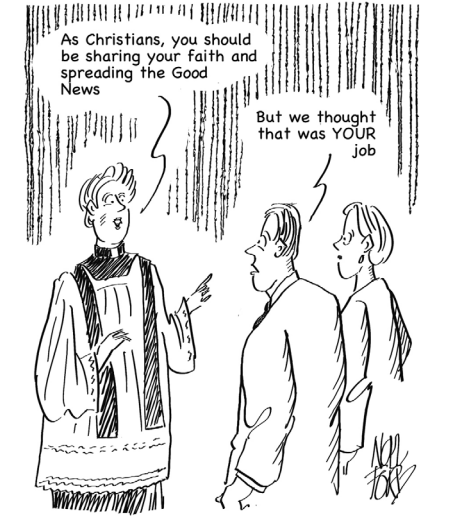
"On Friday there was a tap on the door. Funny sense of humour, that plumber."

Mothers-in-law: "I haven't spoken to mine for 18 months. I don't like to interrupt her."

Himself: "I do exercises every day in front of the television. Up, down, up, down, up, down. Then the other eyelid."

SOURCE: Obituary in *The Economist*, 30th March 2018, Page 90.

believers and empowering them with confidence to talk about their faith despite the obvious barriers. We ought to help Christians begin to make the connections between their everyday, ordinary life – their sleeping, eating, going-to-work and walking-around life – and the faith that sustains them," concludes Stone.



SOURCES: *Sharing Faith is Increasingly Optional to Christians*, Barna Group Research, 15th May 2018, transcript taken from <http://www.barna.com/research/>

SNOWFLAKES

Bishop Curry's sermon. The research company ComRes asked a sample of 2007 people if they would be more likely to go to church if the preaching was more like that of Bishop Curry at the marriage service of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex in May. Answers were:

- 6% Strongly agreed
- 11% Tended to agree
- 45% Didn't know
- 11% Tended to disagree
- 27% Strongly disagreed

Among existing churchgoers (8% of the sample), 29% agreed and 25% disagreed; 46% didn't know. Younger people liked the sermon more than older people. This suggests that the sermon, however lively, isn't likely to be the key in drawing people back to church, though it may help to some extent.

SOURCE: ComRes study for think-tank Theos, details in the *Church Times*, 22nd June 2018, Page 2.

Gay and Christian. An American May 2018 poll of 880 members nationwide of the LGBTQ community found that while 39% had no religious affiliation, over half said they were regularly involved with a faith organisation (23% Protestant, 18% Catholic, 8% non-Christian religions and 8% "other religious" affiliation). The remaining 4% were "unsure".

SOURCE: *Religion Watch*, Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion, July 2018.

Travel times. The average time taken to access services from where people live was 18 minutes walking in 2016, 15 minutes by bicycle and 11 minutes by car. In rural areas it could be over 45 minutes walking. Getting to a hospital took longest (roughly double these times), getting to a primary school or a food store was shortest (roughly half as long).

SOURCE: *Journey Time Statistics 2016*, Department for Transport, 24th May 2018.

Youth work problems. A survey of youth and children's work across more than 2000 churches in Great Britain found that:

- Churches, especially smaller ones, do more children's work than youth work.
- Churches are failing to talk about the topics young people want to discuss.
- Churches know they are struggling with their youth and children's work but don't know how to fix it.

The topics that tend not to be discussed are (50% or more of churches): discipleship, drugs and addiction, other world faiths, same sex attraction, pornography. Two topics were not discussed by 49% of churches: mental health and self-esteem, and sex and relationships.

How fix the problem? Some answers were key: "Getting the young people into the church in the first place" and "To have children to work with." It's almost as if we are saying, "You can only buy this at Waitrose, and the nearest Waitrose [= church with active youth work] is at ..."

SOURCE: *Losing Heart*, How churches have lost confidence in their work with children and young people, The Youthscape Centre for Research and One Hope, December 2016.

Largest Churches. The five largest American churches are:

- Lakewood Church, Houston, Texas. Pastor: Joel Steen with 43,500 weekly.
- North Point Community Church, Alpharetta, Georgia. Pastor: Andy Stanley with 30,700 weekly.
- Life.Church, Edmond, Oklahoma. Pastor: Craig Groeschel with 30,000 weekly.
- Gateway Church, Southlake, Texas. Pastor: Robert Morris with 28,000 weekly.
- Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, Illinois. Pastors: Steve Carter and Heather Larson with 25,750 weekly.

However, the pastors feel that while existing megachurches will continue the trend now is for simpler, more traditional expressions of worship with smaller congregations.

SOURCE: Hartford Institute for Religion Research, quoted in *Christianity*, May 2018, Page 36.

Abuse of women. Some 8% of all women are victims of domestic abuse in any year, as measured by the latest Crime Survey. Single, separated and divorced people and those in mixed ethnic groups were more likely to suffer abuse (both 14%). Those under 20 were more likely to be victims (10%), while those over 55 less likely (6%). Those with No Religion, Buddhists and Other religions were more likely to be victims (9%) but all other religions, including Christian, were less likely (7%).

SOURCE: *Crime Survey*, Office for National Statistics, year ending March 2017, released June 2018.

Closing Churches. An interesting piece of research was undertaken in the Diocese of Worcester by the Team Rector of Dudley. He tracked over a period of four years the size of congregations each Sunday in rural village churches at each church service and where attenders came from. On some Sundays in some villages there was no church service at all. Did villagers travel to another village to attend? Mostly, NO.

Two-thirds of attenders, 68% on average, came from the village in which the service was held, some of the other third, 32%, being visitors, not local residents. While on average 3.5% of the overall population of the village attended church when held in their local church, just 1% attended when there was no local service. This is not an unexpected result but one which has been rarely measured.

SOURCE: Article in *Rural Theology*, Rev Dr Robert Barlow (Team Rector), Vol 16, No 1, 2018, Page 6.

The Story. This is an occasional series of small, easy to read, A5 "booklets" which open to an A2 size poster, giving statistics, trends and research for youth work. They are available from Youthscape, Bute Mills, 74, Blue Street, Luton, Hertfordshire LU1 2EY, phone 01582 877220, or hello@youthscape.co.uk.

CORRECTION. In the "Marriage and Staying Together" article in the June issue it was stated that millennials were "mostly in their 30s". This should have been, of course, "mostly in their 20s". Apologies.

Continued from page 1

Growing churches in Australia creatively adapt church services and community to different Millennial groups. Research from the National Church Life Survey (NCLS) shows that younger Millennials relatively value Bible teaching (40% consider very important), contemporary worship (27%) and small groups (25%). Preferences are low for Communion (23%) and traditional worship (23%). These figures vary within Millennial groups but commonality is towards informal and group-led church. These findings are reflected in the Table showing high attrition particularly in Uniting and Anglican denominations (perceived as old-fashioned). The less structured Pentecostals relatively succeed, with the National Church Life Survey (NCLS) estimating 20-30% of church-going Millennials attend such churches. Another phenomenon is the growing number of young Christians who do not identify with any denomination.

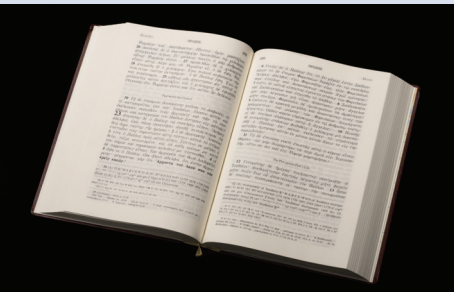
Promisingly the Faith and Belief in Australia work reports, despite high attrition, Millennials are not closed to religion. A fifth, 20%, are open to changing their views and 65% open to talking about spirituality, more than any other generation. Of all generations they know the least about Christianity although this indeed can be an opportunity.

To engage with Millennials churches must understand them, both individually and within their cohorts. Only then can bridges be built to connect with them whilst recognising Christianity is no longer the default option. It has been shown that by adapting to the needs, passions and lifestyles of different Millennial groups, churches can flourish and grow as a depiction of all generations. A beautiful mosaic indeed.

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REFLECTION

"No eye has seen nor ear heard ...what God has prepared" Paul says in Corinthians (1 Cor 2:9), quoting Isaiah, indicating that God is in charge of our futures and, while we cannot know them in detail, we should be prepared for surprises!

Joseph, the twelfth son of a rural farmer, had a fairly lowly task in looking after his father's flock of sheep, but it was a real job and it gave him plenty of time for reflection. He had an active dream life also, on one occasion seeing the sun, moon and eleven stars come bowing to him. His brothers thought that was distinctly over-the-top! They didn't like his bragging and one day in a vengeful mood sold him as a slave. He was bought by an Egyptian army captain but that didn't work out either and he went to prison for a crime he hadn't committed. There he helped two other prisoners with their dreams.

Two years later this led him to being summoned to Pharaoh to explain the ruler's dream and, totally to his surprise, was instantly made Prime Minister of Egypt, where he had the job of saving the nation from starvation and ruin in the years to come. He coped incredibly well with this new task and, when drought reached his father Jacob's family, his brothers came to Egypt to beg food, eventually bringing his father too. Genesis 41:57 also says "all the countries" came to buy food, so Joseph saw not just the sun, moon and stars but also the planets bowing to him! Much more than he could ever have imagined.

David was another shepherd boy, the eighth in his family, who used his idle time to discover a relationship with God. He was enabled to serve God "with all his heart," and became famous through his audacity to challenge "an uncircumcised Philistine who defied the armies of the living God" (1 Sam 17:26). Defeating Goliath led to him defeating many other surrounding armies, and eventually becoming first King of Judah and then King of Israel for 40 years. Much more than he could ever have imagined, but it came with an incredible bonus promise also – of a dynasty – "your throne shall be established for ever" (2 Sam 7:16). Beyond David's deepest imagination!

Upset, deeply puzzled, the two disciples walked along the road and were joined by a stranger who upbraided them for their slowness to believe all that the prophets had said (Luke 24:25). When they realised it was Jesus Himself, with eyes now really opened, they hurried back to Jerusalem. Maybe they were among those who were later bidden to make disciples "of all nations," something beyond their ken and their wildest imagination.

The task all these people faced was not just totally unexpected, and outside their experience hitherto, but, in each case, international in scope. God can lead us beyond our understanding, overarching our expectations, both now and in the eternal future He has promised. The past may be disappointingly ordinary; the present may be deeply puzzling; the immediate future may be highly uncertain; the distant future, however, will be incredibly glorious, much, much more than we can ever imagine.

Gen Z

Gen Z is the name given to the generation coming after the Millennials (or Gen Y). In America the latter are taken as those born between 1984 and 1998, whereas in the UK the band is those born between 1983 and 2001, so we have an 18-year "generation" instead of the States' 14 years. Gen Z are those born 2002 to 2020 in the UK but between 1999 and 2015 in America and between 1995 and 2009 in Australia. It would be helpful to get these age-bands standardised!

Barna Research undertook an interesting piece of research in 2017 in the US evaluating what those aged 13 to 18 in the Gen Z band wanted to accomplish by the time they were 30 and compared that with what the Millennials said when a similar study was asked of them in 2013. The differences are shown in the Table:

Item	Gen Z %	Millennials %	Difference %
Follow my dreams	55	31	-24
Start a career	66	51	-15
Finish my education	66	52	-14
Enjoy life before you have adult responsibilities	38	24	-14
Become financially independent	65	59	-6
Try to become famous or influential	9	5	-4
Travel to other countries	21	20	-1
Care for the poor and needy	9	9	0
Get married	20	28	+8
Become a parent	12	21	+9
Find out who you really are	31	40	+9
Become more mature spiritually	16	29	+13

It so happens that the results fall into three groups of four. Gen Z want to follow their dreams, start a career, finish their education and enjoy life first much more than the Millennials 5 years ago. On the other hand the Millennials wanted to get married, become a parent, find out who they were and become more spiritually mature. Just five years and the decline in wanting to get married, and in having anything to do with religion is already apparent. Barna also asked what respondents considered was the primary mark of adulthood. Half, 49%, of the Millennials said "Emotional maturity" against only a quarter, 23%, of Gen Z.

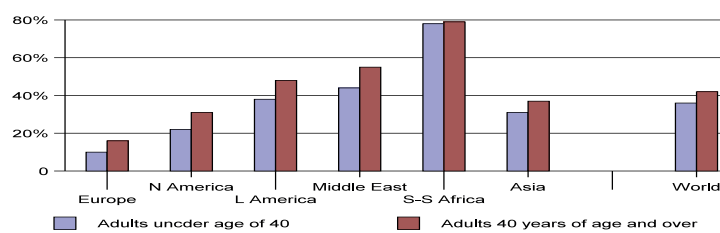
This would suggest that social mores are changing, and changing rapidly, almost certainly because of the near universality of social media. When Gallup undertook similar surveys in 1970 and 1980 in the UK they found hardly any change by age-group, suggesting that the values held at about 20 would be held for many years. This seems not the case now, but if some items can change in so short a period, it also means that others, perhaps more positive, could also perhaps change. So the question might be, "How can social media be used to awaken a search for the one true God and lead to caring for and service to others?"

SOURCE: "Is Gen Z the Most Success-Oriented Generation?", Barna Research 28th December 2017.

GLOBAL COMMITMENT

Global religious commitment (that is, Christian and other religions) varies by continent and age-group. In a recent major study, Pew Research Centre summarised their findings by continent (though it should be noted that their averages are calculated by number of countries not weighted by the relevant population).

Percentage of population attending religious service weekly in 2017



The graph shows that European attendance is the lowest globally, and Sub-Saharan Africa is the highest, figures which are supported by religious affiliation, percentages who pray every day, and the proportion who feel religion is "very important" for them. In that sense the results are not new but they emphasise how great is the difference between Europe, the lowest on all scores, and Sub-Saharan Africa, way ahead of the rest of the world in most religious assessments.

Sub-Saharan Africa also has the lowest difference in the age-groups measured which suggests that the dominance shown in the graph for 2017 is likely to continue for at least another generation, whereas in Europe (and the rest of the world) numbers are likely to fall quite considerably as older religious adherents die.

SOURCE: The Age Gap in Religion around the World Report, Pew Research Centre, May, 2018, Appendix B.

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Gender Paradox

It is well known that in most churches women outnumber men. It is also well known that women generally live longer than men, so in some ways one might expect more women than men in church. What is not so well known is that for every 100 girls born, there are 106 boys born, a ratio which occurs worldwide except when politics determine a "one-child policy" when many female foetuses are consequently aborted, many families preferring a son as their single child.

In Britain, however, the 106:100 ratio applies, and has applied for many decades. The mortality rate for males is greater than that for females, but the birth advantage of more males means that numbers don't even out until people are in their 30s. Up to then just over half the population is male and from about 40 onwards more than half is female, increasing to about two-thirds by the time people reach 80.

The 106:100 ratio is equivalent to saying that 51.2% of births are male. That percentage can be worked out from the official population figures published by the Office for National Statistics, and are given by age-group in the Table in Column 2. The Table also gives the

English Churchgoers by Gender, 2015

Age-group	Percentage of men	Male church-goers	Female church-goers	Pro-rata Females	% Col 4 is > Col 5
Column No 1	2	3	4	5	6
Under 15	51.2%	228,800	274,100	218,100	+26
15 to 19	51.3%	51,700	51,200	49,100	+4
20 to 29	50.9%	77,000	97,900	74,300	+32
30 to 44	49.9%	191,500	248,800	192,300	+29
45 to 64	49.3%	310,000	455,500	318,800	+43
65 to 74	48.3%	213,700	314,400	228,700	+37
75 to 84	45.0%	120,900	193,500	147,800	+31
85 & over	35.5%	45,700	86,900	83,000	+5
TOTAL	49.4%	1,239,300	1,722,300	1,312,100	+31

Rural Churches ... and Mosques

The latest issue of the Statistical Digest of Rural England divides England into rural and urban areas, where Rural accounts for one-sixth, 17%, of the population (9% in towns and their fringe and 8% in villages and hamlets) and Urban the remaining five-sixths, 83%. Of these urban settings, cities have 43% of the population, major conurbations 36% and minor conurbations just 4%. These figures are all for the year 2016.

In terms of churchgoers, ministers were asked to evaluate their environment using different terminology in Church Censuses, so the geographical comparisons will not be precise. However, the estimated church attendance in 2016 is mostly very close to these population percentages, differences being down mainly to varying definitions of particular areas. There are fewer churchgoers in cities and more in suburban areas and towns according to the Church Census definitions.

The situation with regard to churches, however, is very different. Some two-fifths, 40%, of England's 39,500 churches are in rural areas, a further fifth, 20%, in city areas (which includes city centres, inner city areas and council estates), a quarter, 24%, in suburban areas, and the remaining 16% in separate towns.

The average age of churchgoers, as with the general population, is higher in rural areas. In the population it is 44 against an urban population average of 39; in churchgoing terms there is a similar difference of 4 or 5 years (52 against 48). There are fewer children in rural areas and fewer people aged between 30 and 44.

The "green-shifting" phenomenon, as it is called, of people moving from urban to rural areas is continuing. Between 2015 and 2016, some 105,000 people left London, and 71,000 moved into rural areas, the remainder into mixed urban/rural areas. Those moving split into three broadly equal age-groups: Up to 30, 30 to 44, and 45 and over.

The challenge for churches is taking positive steps to welcome newcomers into their area, and helping them find faith and appropriate opportunities to serve.

While rural Christians may be getting fewer and older, a new phenomenon is emerging. Most of Britain's 2.8 million Muslims (as measured in the 2011 Population Census) live in cities. There were 12,512 Church of England parishes in England in 2011, and in 4,781 of them (38%) there was not a single Muslim, and in 1,130 of them (9%) there was just one Muslim. In the Dioceses of London, Birmingham and the city of Bradford there are 627 parishes (5%), but in these three urban cities live the other half, 53%, of the UK Muslims.

The number of Muslims is increasing, however, because of continuing immigration and children being born. Increasingly Muslims are beginning to move into rural areas, mostly Pakistanis and Bangladeshis who came to Britain after WWII. This increasing rurality has even reached the Isle of Lewis off the north-west coast of Scotland where in 2018 some 60 Muslims now live. Why are they going into rural areas? Partly because of the government's resettlement schemes, some of the more recent rural arrivals being Syrian Muslims. They keep in touch with other – and teach their children to read the Koran – through apps, web sites and social media. On Lewis the Muslims have now opened their first mosque. A similar story could be told in dozens of other rural areas.

A challenge to the churches?

SOURCES: Statistical Digest of Rural England, Dept for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, April 2018 edition, Government Statistical Service; Religious Trends No 6, Christian Research, 2006; article in The Economist, 19th May 2018, Page 26.

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The obvious question when faced with such figures is "Why?" The question has been posed many times before based purely on observed numbers in most churches, or when the actual numbers are published (as in Columns 3 and 4). A forthcoming book by Annabel Clarke, a chartered psychologist who is co-chair of The Engage Network, tries to gather up the answers given to this question from a research perspective.

Are women naturally more spiritual than men? While there are obvious differences between the genders this is probably not one of them. Annabel shows that "there is much larger within-gender variation than between-gender variation." Age, background, personality and other social factors are much more likely to be important.

Another way of looking at the numbers in the Table is instead of saying, "Why so many more women?" is to simply say "Why not more men?" Is that seeming lack of spirituality due to greater emotional and social well-being? Not really. Annabel explores this issue also, and gives the answers found from different pieces of research. She also explores how these issues work out particularly with male leadership. Her book is one to be read for those interested in this topic. It is likely to be published in 2019.

Suffice to say that although this broad issue of gender differences has been studied many times in general, definitive answers in relation to the specific area of church attendance have failed to emerge. That there is an imbalance is undoubted. The basic data is reinforced worldwide across nearly all denominations, churchmanships, different parts of a country, ethnicities, environments and periods of time. Such has many implications for the well-being of those who attend, both men and women, and across all ages, where some of the differences in numbers form acute problems. It is equally clear from the Scriptures that in Christ there is no male or female and that both genders have significant roles to play in the nurture and growth of God's church.

SOURCES: Basic numbers are given in UK Church Statistics No 3, 2018 Edition, Tables 13.9.1 and 14.9.2; Annabel Clarke chapter "Men and church: The Why" in forthcoming book.



Providing Facts for Forward Planning

SNIPPETS

1) There were 510,000 pupils attending single-sex schools in England in 2017, 6% of the total, across 889 schools, an average of 574 each.

2) More than half of American churchgoers attend one of the 1,600 megachurches (each with at least 2,000 in attendance).

3) In 2012, 48% of the churchgoers in Inner London were Black. That percentage was estimated at 54% in 2017, more than half the total.

4) The Mormon Newsroom reported that in 2017 the Church of Latter-Day Saints had 187,000 members in the UK spread across 330 congregations, an average of 570 each. Trinitarian churches averaged 100 each.

5) Between 2010 and 2016, the number of pupils at schools in England increased by 7.5%, while the number of teachers increased by 3.5% and the number of schools increased by only 1.5%.

6) A third, 32%, of the population report hardly ever feeling lonely (33% men, 31% women) and a fifth, 22%, never feeling lonely (26% men, 18% women).

7) The Church of England's website prayers at critical moments received more than 1.3 million viewers in 2016, the latest year published, and its social media channels reach 1.2 million each month.

SOURCES: 1) Report in The Economist, 28th April, 2018, Page 25; 2) Article by Justin Briery in Christianity, May 2018, Page 32; 3) UK Church Statistics, No 3, 2018 Edition, ADSC Publishers, Fig 13.10.2; 4) http://www.mormonnewsroom.org.uk/facts-and-statistics; UK Church Statistics, 2018 Edition, Table 1.1.1; 5) School Leadership in England 2010 to 2016, Dept for Education, April 2018, Page 15; 6) Loneliness, 2017 Community Life Survey, E Pyle et al, Office for National Statistics, 10th April 2018, Page 8; 7) Statistics for Mission 2017, Research and Statistics Dept., Archbishops' Council, 2017.

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CONTENTS

Millennial Mosaic	P1
Recent Immigrants	P2
Sharing Our Faith	P3
South Korean Mission Workers	P3
Snowflakes	P4
Gen Z	P5
Global Commitment	P5
Gender Paradox	P6
Rural Churches ... and Mosques	P6

MILLENNIAL MOSAIC

Aaron McAleese, Melbourne Data Analytics Specialist

Millennials are lazy. Millennials lack focus. Millennials are not having sex. Millennials, no matter how hard you try, cannot be prised from their smart phones. Whether you are in Australia or anywhere else in the western world Millennials have this unshakable reputation. Though easy to believe, such generalisations are unhelpful. Millennials are bright, creative and adaptable people who bring a distinct colour to our communities and churches. But they are not all the same. There are distinct mini-generations among Millennials. This is unsurprising in a world changing so fast. Each is a different shade in what is a Millennial Mosaic.

Looking deeper into other data we can begin to understand this. Political alignment firstly reveals a lot. The under 25 population are strong supporters of the Green party (30% compared to 10% over all ages). Strong support also for the Labour party suggests at least two-thirds of the group are left leaning. This has swayed into big Australian issues over the last year; same-sex marriage and euthanasia. Many Millennials perceive their views are counter to what is seen as a "homogenous" church view. The Faith and Belief in Australia report (McCrindle) shows these issues are strong barriers to Christianity. The church has recognised it needs to communicate balanced and understanding views on these issues.

The church in Australia faces hard times. Church attendances are falling year on year. Disturbingly it is among young people where these drops are most severe. The 2016 national census reinforced this with 52% claiming their religion to be Christianity (be it active or passive). This is down from 61% just five years earlier. This figure drops to below 38% for some Millennial groups. The church no longer has the luxury to rely on these groups to "come back later." It must engage now. A deeper understanding is needed to form strategies to effectively stem this flow.

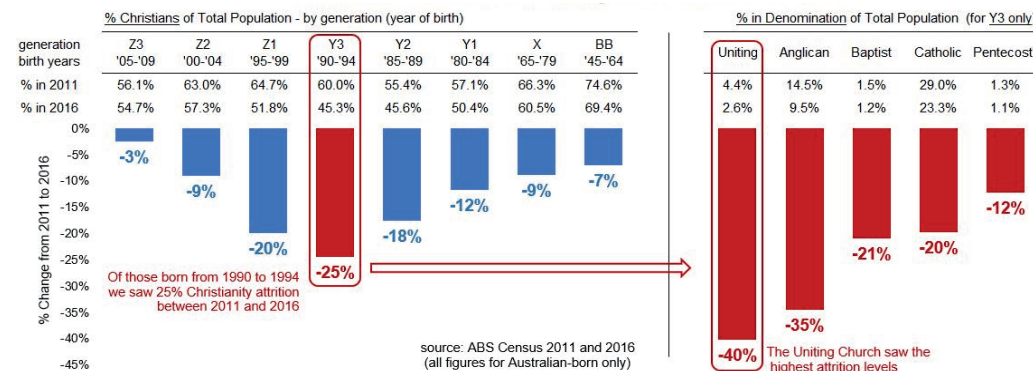
Although well discussed, the economic issues Millennials face can't be dismissed. They are the most educated group ever but many are unemployed or can't buy a house. This is especially so among those born in the nineties (Y3,Z1). This drives inequality and geographical concentration around high rental areas. Millennials will on average have 5 occupations and 22 jobs so there is also a lot of transition. Churches must adapt their communities around this.

For the purpose of this article Millennials have been split into tranches of five years (as seen in the table). The lines between these are of course blurred. Focus will be on young adults born in the 1980s and 1990s (Gen Y [Y1,Y2,Y3] and early Gen Z [Z1]). The chart shows identification with Christianity in the 2011 and 2016 censuses. To allow cohort groups to be tracked census-on-census only Australian born residents are considered.

Countering this young Millennials have very high volunteer rates. The Z1 group has a rate of 21% (Census 2016), well above similar age groups in years past. But research has shown over half (51%) of this group fear not being able to live out their dreams (mostly due to financial and time constraints). Some churches have latched onto this predicament by offering fulfilling ways to help younger groups serve. This means taking on a "right task for the person" approach as opposed to the "right person for the task." This results in people serving in areas they are passionate about and skilled in, vital for Millennials and empowering for the church.

The Millennial group Y3 (born 1990-94) had the lowest Christian percentage in 2016 (45%). Strikingly this is a drop from 60% just five years earlier. A quarter have fallen away. The move is mostly to the No Religion category. It is not unusual to see those in their early twenties move away from religion. In tracking such groups it is thus vital to distinguish between generational factors and life stage factors. We see the equivalent age group (born 1985-89) only dropped 16% from five years earlier (from 2006 to 2011). Perhaps of bigger concern is Z1 group having a 20% drop with much of this group still in their late teens. Attrition from Christianity is accelerating for younger Millennials.

Attrition in Australian Christianity Rate from 2011 to 2016



Continued on page 4