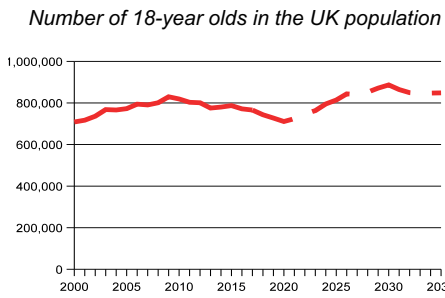


BEING 18 IN 2018

Being 18 in 2018 means a birth date in the millennium year 2000. In those 18 years since, radical changes have affected all generations, not least 18 year olds. In the year 2000 some 39,000 18-year olds went to church on a Sunday, 20,200 young women and 19,000 young men. By the year 2018 that number had halved to just 18,000, 8,900 young women and 8,900 young men, the men not falling off quite as much as the women (53% drop to 56%).

Other significant demographic and occupational changes have also taken place, not just in church attendance, one of the largest being the actual number of 18-year olds in the UK population, as the graph shows:



The number varies partly because of the different number of children being born in any particular year and also by the number of immigrants each year. The 18-year population figure for 2035 is based on a projection of the fertility rate for 2017 from earlier figures. However, other aspects of life at 18 have also

No	Item re 18-year olds	Number in 2000	Number in 2018	Change 2000-2018
1	Time spent playing games & computer games	11 mins/day	41.7 mins/day*	+395%
2	Time spent computing	12 mins/day	28.8 mins/day*	+168%
3	Time spent playing sport	20.3 mins/day	28.1 mins/day*	+46%
4	Number (18-year olds) employed	420,000	350,000^	-18%
	Number unemployed	69,000	80,000^	+17%
	Number not seeking employment	210,000	330,000^	+61%
5	Number of 18-year olds in population	708,500	743,194	+5%
6	Expected age at death	85.1 men	87.7 men	+3.1%
		88.3 women	90.5 women	+2.5%
7	Time spent watching media including TV	165.1 mins/day	139.3 mins/day*	-18%
8	Percentage baptised by age of 13	48% across all denominations	34%	-29%
9	Percentage aged 18-24 who are cigarette smokers	35%	23%^	-36%
10	Time spent socialising	88.3 mins/day	61.6 mins/day*	-36%
11	Percentage who are parents	1.07% men 4.48% women	0.63% men** 1.90% women**	-45% -62%
12	Number of 18-year olds attending church in England	39,000	18,000 England	-54%
13	Teenage births (total before age 19)	39,519	17,790*	-62%
14	Number of 18-year olds attending church in Scotland	5,900	2,200 Scotland	-63%
15	Number getting married at 18	3,693	683*	-87%

* 2015 figures ** 2016 figures ^ 2017 figures

These may be helpful

Books and reports received

The UK Church in Action, Perceptions of social justice and mission in a changing world, A Barna report produced in partnership with World Vision UK, Barna Global, 2018, ISBN 978-1-945269-23-3.

Onnuri Community Church, The First 30 Years, Editor-in-Chief Chang-geuk Moon, Dec 2017, Unnuri Community Church. The story of a fast-growing major church in South Korea, describing in detail the many programmes of the church and how it sustained its growth.

The Dream of an Acts-like Church, Rev Yong-jo Ha, the founder and first Senior Pastor of the Church. Describes his strategies and reasons for them, his spiritual exercises, and the dynamics of maintaining relevant programmes. ISBN 978-89-531-3007-4 03230.

People Disrupted. Doing Mission Responsibly among Refugees and Migrants, edited by Jinbong Kim, Dwight Baker, Jonathan Bonk, Nelson Jennings and Jae Hoon Lee. Published by William Carey Library, 2018. ISBN 978-0-878080-76-2.

Reading the Bible Outside the Church, by David G Ford, a PhD qualitative case study of how mainly non-religious men might read the Bible. Published July 2018 @ £23 paperback by Wipf and Stock, ISBN 978-1-5326-3681-3.

Religion and Worldviews: The Way Forward, A national plan for RE, Commission on Religious Education, Very Rev Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster Abbey and Chair of the RE Commission, report drafted by Amira Tharani, September 2018. Recommendations for changing RE in schools.

The Deseccularisation of the City, London's Churches, 1980 to the present, Edited by David Goodhew and Anthony-Paul Cooper, Routledge, London, 2018, 384 pages, £115 hardcover.

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varied in this period as shown in the Table. Where there is a sign * or ^ the figure relates to an earlier year, but the percentage change is calculated as if it were an 18 year difference.:

Unfortunately people can die at every age, but the number who die in the first 18 years of life is fairly small. Applying the Life Table rate of death to the number of children born in 2000 (679,000) would suggest that about a total of 6,100 would have died by 2018 (three-fifths in their first year of life), meaning that between 2000 and 2018 there was a net influx of 35,600 immigrants in this age-group.

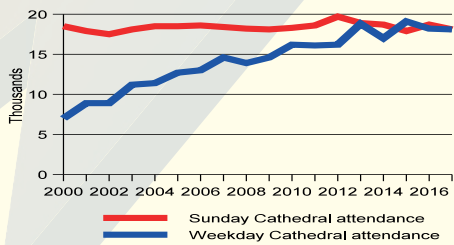
Very few people marry when they are 18 years of age – about 1 in every 200 in the year 2000 and 1 in every 1,100 in the year 2018. Since same-sex marriages became legal, none have occurred for those aged 18.

Of these various demographic, social and other changes, numbers going to church have changed almost the most, except for teenage births and those getting married, many of whom will probably start cohabiting instead. Time-using technology has increased by far the most.

SOURCES: All rows except Nos 8, 12 and 13 Office for National Statistics (ONS) website *Being 18 in 2018* issued 13th September 2018; No 13 another ONS website; Nos 8 and 12 *UK Church Statistics* No 3 2018 Edition, ADBC Publishers, Tonbridge, Tables 14.4 and 13.2.1.

Cathedral attendance in 2017. The 2017 attendance figures for Church of England Cathedrals show that Sunday attendance continues to be much the same as in previous years, while midweek attendance which has been increasing over the last decade would appear to be levelling off at about 18,000 people per week.

Average Weekday and Sunday Attendances in Cathedrals, in thousands, 2000-2017



SOURCE: *Cathedral Statistics 2017*, Research and Statistics Dept., Archbishops' Council, October 2017.

GETTING TO CHURCH

How do you get to church? Do you walk, go by car, get a taxi, or jump on your buggy? People get to church in all sorts of way, and a survey was undertaken not so much by how they got there but how far they had to go to get there.

How far is the usual distance people travel to reach the church they attend? It depends on where the church is, but even so, many will walk (the most popular) and many will travel by car. Some will come by bus or train, and a few by buggy, bike or taxi.

Is the size of the car park a factor in the growth of a church? Is the church near a bus stop? While such mundane factors have mostly not been measured in surveys or collected in general church statistics, a large survey in 2002 proved quite clearly that car park size and church growth were NOT significantly related, and nor did it matter whether there was a bus stop nearby.

The Nigerian Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), which has planted some 850 churches in the UK in the last 20 years, has as its basic guide: "Starting a church within 10 minutes walking distance of where people live," a guide taken from its rural origins where invariably people walk to church. Ten minutes walking distance is roughly half a mile, and a circle with a half mile radius is about 500 acres (or 200 hectares), not a small area. The RCCG call the area around their churches "parishes" like the Anglicans and Roman Catholics.

Many rural Church of England churches are in the centre of their village or small town. Many who attend will either walk or come by car in 2018, but a few come in other ways. Anglicans average just under two miles away from their church, but this was measured in urban or suburban areas, and might be different in rural areas.

There have been three studies in the last six years asking people how far they live from the church they attend – the London Church Census in 2012, the Grace Baptist Church Census in 2014 and the Scottish Church Census in 2016. The collective average answer from these is that 30% live under half a mile away, almost half, 46%, live between half a mile and 3 miles away, and a quarter, 24%, live more than 3 miles away.

Does the distance vary by the **age** of the person going to church? Yes. Those aged 16 to 24 tended to live closest to the church they attended, presumably because they could walk or cycle, or perhaps were less bothered which denomination they attended if studying or particularly busy. Likewise those 85 or over were less likely to live more than 3 miles away (though some did), almost certainly because of travel difficulties.

Going to a church of a particular **denomination** is important, especially if you are Orthodox, Methodist or Pentecostal (the three groups with most travelling from furthest away in descending order). Closest were the Roman Catholics, Baptists, United Reformed Churches and the Anglican (in ascending order). Those who attended Independent churches, including New churches, were in between. Other denominations tended to be in the first (furthest away) group.

Frequency of Attendance

How often do churchgoers actually attend church? The expected frequency is weekly, and most church programmes are built around this. However, even those whom one would term "deeply committed" do not necessarily go every week. Illness, family circumstances, unexpected happenings come to us all, but some actually plan to go, say, fortnightly or monthly. Those who come less than once a month are usually termed "occasional", but of the regulars, when measured in 2005 across half a million churchgoers, four-fifths, 83%, said they went weekly, 11% every two weeks, and 6% monthly.

These percentages varied with **age** as shown in the chart. Many churches provide midweek meetings, such as Bible studies or communion services, as well as morning and evening services, so going twice a week might mean twice on a Sunday or on a weekday plus once on a Sunday.

Did **churchmanship** cause any significant variations? Yes, Evangelicals tended to travel further to go to a church of similar persuasion, and so did those who were Liberal. Others, those who are Broad, Catholic or Anglo-Catholic and Low Church all lived closer on average. Family life is important and many wish to worship in a theological environment with which they are familiar and at ease.

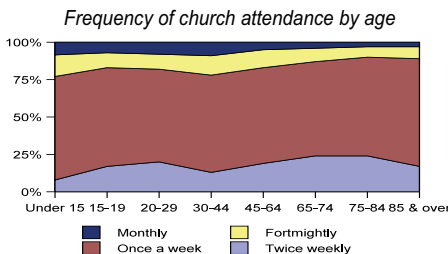
Was the **size** of a church important? Interestingly both the largest and the smallest churches drew more people from over three miles than churches in between (that is, with between 26 and 200 in their congregations). The smaller churches tend to be rural churches and people are naturally more spread out in the countryside, but the popularity of larger churches (which is presumably why they are larger) draws people from a greater distance, showing the eclectic nature of their congregations.

In Greater London, it is interesting that three Boroughs draw two fifths, 40%, or more of their congregation from over 3 miles away. They are the innermost Boroughs – the City of London (76%), the City of Westminster (47%) and Tower Hamlets (41%), where some of the largest churches in the capital are to be found. Churches in other Boroughs also draw significant numbers from over three miles – Greenwich (38%) in Outer London, Islington (34%), and Camden, Haringey and Waltham Forest (all 33% and the last also in Outer London). In some Boroughs, like Havering and Hillingdon comparatively few (12% in each) come from a long distance. See the map on Page 1.

Why does distance matter? It could affect times at which a service begins or ends and whether evening services are held. Providing suitable facilities for bikes, buggies, umbrellas and walking sticks may be relevant. In very busy areas, having someone to help with parking might be appreciated. Providing a mug of tea or cup of water might also be much liked if people have come some way or have to walk up a hill. In a church's publicity, it might also be helpful to include succinct travel directions by road or public transport. Even just thanking the congregation in travelling when it is pouring with rain goes down well!

SOURCES: *Growth Amidst Decline, Capital Growth and Growing Churches* (Grace Baptist Church Census), all by Peter Brierley, published respectively in 2013, 2015, and 2017 by ADBC Publishers, Tonbridge, Kent.

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It may be seen that those under 15 were the most likely to go less frequently, with very few going twice. Those between 30 and 44 – the age when many people have young families – were also least likely to attend weekly. Older people clearly value the fellowship and community of church attendance and only tend to drop off after reaching the age of 85.

Church attendance frequency varies by **denomination** in that those in Independent, Pentecostal and New Churches are mostly likely to go twice weekly and those in Anglican, Methodist, Orthodox and United Reformed Churches least likely. A sixth, 17%, of Orthodox attenders go monthly, as do 10% of Anglicans. In the 1998 English Church Attendance Survey some 61% of Orthodox churchgoers said they only went twice a year, as did a fifth, 22%, of both Anglicans and Roman Catholics!

Churchgoers in **rural** areas are much less likely to go twice on a Sunday simply because many of the rural churches only have one service and sometimes only one service in two weeks or less. A tenth, 10%, of those in rural areas attend once a month.

In **churchmanship terms**, Liberal churchgoers tend to go least frequently (10% just monthly), while Charismatics attend most often with a quarter, 25%, attending twice a week, which correlates with the frequent attendance of Pentecostals.

There is no difference in frequency by **gender**, but of those going twice between the ages of 15 and 29 there were more women than men, and three-quarters, 72%, of those aged 30 to 44 were also women.

Overall, the 2005 English Church Census found that 18% of churchgoers went twice a week, but in some **areas** this was significantly higher: it was 38% in the Isle of Man, 25% in Merseyside, 21% in Durham, the West Midlands and Worcestershire and 20% in Derbyshire and Herefordshire.

Is the frequency with which committed people attend church increasing or decreasing? No new national survey measuring this in the same way has been undertaken since 2005 but in London in 2012, 12% attended twice a week, 70% weekly, 12% fortnightly and 6% monthly. In Scotland in 2016 the figures were 15% twice a week, 69% weekly, 9% fortnightly and 7% monthly. The trend in these figures shows a decline in attending twice a week, partly because many churches no longer hold an evening service on a Sunday.

However, contemporary anecdotal observations would suggest that more spasmodic attendances are increasing, with regular weekly attendance dropping. If true, then why might this be so? A survey in the Diocese of Oxford some years ago suggested (a) the busy-ness of modern life, (b) services were uninviting, (c) sermons did not teach enough basic Christianity, (d) there was not enough involvement with the community, and (e) non-churchgoers no longer "trying church out." Some of these are actionable!

SOURCE OF BOTH ITEMS: Newsheet from DeepWhite, "People centred data science", Aaron MacAleese, www.deepwhite.com.au/ christianjobs, 31st July 2018.

SOURCES: *Religious Trends* No 6, 2006/2007, Christian Research, Page 5.11; *The Tide is Running Out*, Christian Research, 2000, Pages 80 and 87; *Capital Growth*, ADBC Publishing, 2013, Page 103; *Growth Amidst Decline*, ADBC Publishing, 2017, Page 80; article in *Church Times*, 20th July 2018, Page 6.

SNOWFLAKES

Opening envelopes. In a Bible Society survey of nearly 4,200 ministers some 40 years ago, half were posted by franked mail and half by stamped mail, and the number opened and read recorded. Of those posted by franked mail, 54% were opened and read, 15% were not opened, and the other 31% being opened but not completely read. Of those stamped, 78% were opened and read, 8% were not opened, and 14% only partially read. It would be interesting to repeat such a study today.

SOURCE: Bible Society survey, 1979.

UK Church in action. Barna Group undertook a research study for World Vision by using two ComRes public surveys and interviewing some 300 ministers. What does the general public think of the Church? It was good for the community (26%), focussed on community needs (14%), offered hope for the future (14%), was a positive presence in schools (11%), helped needy people (11%) and was relevant (9%) and generous (7%). On the other hand it was hypocritical (24%), judgmental (23%), not compatible with science (20%), simplistic (17%) and too involved politically (12%).

SOURCE: *UK Church in Action*, Barna Group, 2018, ISBN 978-1-945269-23-3.

Watching TV. A secular survey by a company called ClickZ asked people born between 1995 and 2010 (so aged 8 to 23 in 2018, the "Gen Z" generation) in four English-speaking Western countries how they watched shows, sports and movies. 43% in the UK said they used a laptop, 37% a TV set, 11% a tablet and 10% a mobile. In New Zealand 70% used a laptop! US use was similar to the UK's. Only 1% in the US didn't watch TV.

SOURCE: Paper "Three common misconceptions marketers have about Gen Z" in *ClickZ Knowledge*, http://www.clickz.com, accessed 28th August, 2018.

Christian employees. The Australian Census identifies both a person's occupation and their religion, and their Census Bureau published a cross-analysis of these two factors from their 2016 Census. In which occupations are Christians most represented, given that the overall average is 53%? The top three were (a) Farmers and farm managers (of whom 73% also ticked they were Christian), Personal assistants and secretaries (64%) and Education professionals (59%). The three bottom categories were: (a) Information and computing technology (33%), (b) Professionals not categorised elsewhere (35%) and (c) Arts and media professionals (36%).

Gender of ministers. In Australia, 29% of ministers are female; in the UK, counting those leading Messy Churches, the percentage is 20%. The Australians can break down their figures further – 76% of their male ministers are full-time, but only 44% of their female ministers. Full-time ministers worked 49 hours per week or more, and earned on average £32,000 per annum in 2016. The Salvation Army had the highest percentage of female ministers, 54%, as in the UK (49%).

SOURCE OF BOTH ITEMS: Newsheet from DeepWhite, "People centred data science", Aaron MacAleese, www.deepwhite.com.au/ christianjobs, 31st July 2018.

Grandparental support. It was reported (by David Cameron) that in 2014 in the UK some 6 million grandparents regularly looked after their grandchildren, a figure estimated at 9 million in 2017!

On average they looked after their grandchildren for 8 hours a week, and two-thirds made financial contributions to their grandchildren's upbringing. 96% of grandparents received no payment for their care. This trend of increasing grandparent involvement is not limited to the UK, but is found across Europe and China also (other countries not evaluated).

SOURCE: Paper "Twenty-first century grandparents" by Ann Buchanan and Anna Rotkirch in *Journal of the Academy of Social Sciences*, Vol 13, Issue 2, 2018.

Counties is an important agency supporting over 30 evangelists throughout England and Wales often across rural areas mostly from a Christian Brethren background. In May 2018 members were asked to count how they used their time, and Counties found that in this one month, presumably an average month, each Evangelist preached 6 times to an average audience of 49 people, helped train 22 people, visited 5 schools speaking to 220 students each time, visited 23 homes, and between them saw a total of 102 confessions of salvation and 5 baptisms.

SOURCE: *Connections*, Counties Newsletter September 2018, Page 1.

Women in church. The proportion of women in English congregations of Anglican churches declined between 1980 and 2010 from 45% to 40%, and in Methodist churches from 40% to 36%. On the other hand it grew in Pentecostal churches from 44% to 49%, and in New Church streams from 47% to 50%. Overall the proportion dropped from 45% to 43%.

SOURCE: The 1979, 1989, 998, and 2005 English Church Censuses adjusted with subsequent firm denominational figures, and the 2012 London Church Census.

Ordination training. 169 people have been recommended for Church of England ordination training in 2018, a fifth, 19%, of whom are under 32. In 2016 the total number recommended was 128.

SOURCE: Research and Statistics Dept., Archbishops' Council.

Marrying later. Single women marry earlier than single men, that is, on average, men marry someone younger than they are, by an average of 2 years. In 2000, single men married on average when 30.5 years of age, and women at 28.2, a difference of 2.3 years. In 2015, the latest year for data being available, single men married when 33.2 and women at 31.2, a difference of just 2.0 years. So women are closing the gap but getting older in the process!

SOURCE: Office for National Statistics website.

More older people. The proportion of older people in the population has increased by a sixth in the last 18 years. In the year 2000 15.9% of the UK population were 65 or older; by 2018 it had become 18.5%, a sixth more.

SOURCE: Office for National Statistics website.

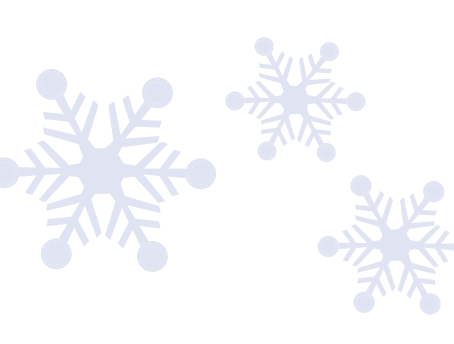
FutureFirst is a bimonthly bulletin for those concerned with the future of the church published by Brierley Consultancy Editorial board: Rosemary Dowsett, Anne Coomes and Peter Brierley. The acceptance and publication of copy does not indicate editorial endorsement. Readers are welcome to quote items provided they give the source.

Established 2009. UK subscriptions £20 per annum; overseas £32 per annum. Make cheque out to 'Peter Brierley', or contact for BACS details and send to Brierley Consultancy, The Old Post Office, 1 Thorpe Avenue, Tonbridge, Kent TN10 4PW. Email:peter@brierleyres.com www.brierleyconsultancy.com

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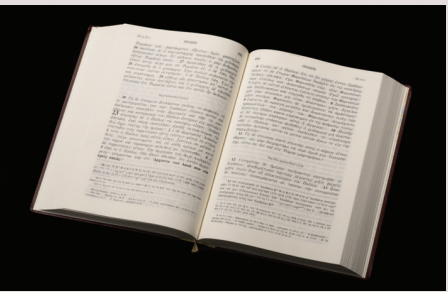
The Diocese of London has far fewer small churches (50 or under) compared with the Church of England as a whole (25% to 64%), but far more churches with between 51 and 200 people (62% to 31%), and more than twice as many larger churches with over 200 people (13% to 5%). It is the general size of these congregations which makes the Diocese of London quite different from other Dioceses, a unique advantage of being in a capital city of world-class status. The average size of a London Diocese church is 134 people, almost three times the usual Anglican figure (48 in 2015).

Children (those under 16) are 18% of London's church attendance. It is a percentage which has remained remarkably uniform across the last ten years. However, it varies considerably by size of church. There are very few children in the smallest churches, those with congregations of 25 or under. But churches with between 76 and 300 have more children, on average 21%. The largest churches (over 300) average only 13%, however. Clearly adults without children tend to go to the largest churches, including many students who have yet to marry or start their families.

When those attending larger churches were asked why they went they replied, "The quality of the teaching" (91%), while only 55% of those in smaller churches said the same. The preaching is also the highest factor in why people attend Cathedrals (77%), although in general terms Cathedrals attract a similar percentage of children as other churches (19%). In the Diocese of London, it so happens that the 32 churches between 201 and 300 on a Sunday on average attract a specially high percentage of children (24%).

Capital city churches, therefore, and especially those in Central London, are in a unique position to provide quality preaching and teaching to somewhat fluid congregations who, as in Pauline strategy, should be equipped to disperse to "regions beyond."

SOURCES: Diocese of London statistics; *Statistics of Mission* 2016, Research and Statistics Dept, Archbishops' Council; *Religious Trends* No 5 2005/2006, Christian Research, Table 8.12.3; *UK Church Statistics* No 2 2010-2020, ADBC Publishers, 2014, *London's Churches are Growing*, Brierley Consultancy, 2013.



REFLECTION

"Fearfully and wonderfully made" is how the Scriptures put it (Psa 139: 24), where the underlying Hebrew word for "wonderfully" means being "distinguished." The description is one of knitting us together showing that God is with us in the darkness of the womb (as well as the darkness of the tomb). "I formed you in the womb," the Lord tells Jeremiah (1:5), "... I appointed you." The whole of our life is before Him, seen perhaps as a single piece of a vast jigsaw, for the Lord looks on the heart (1 Sam 16:7) and places us where He wishes.

There is ultimately one flock of sheep following one shepherd (John 10:6), represented initially by a man like David, but ultimately by the Christ. Jeremiah gives a powerful picture of how the Lord is framing His people (18:4). The ingredients are chosen, are carefully worked on, fashioned as seems best, but then if it doesn't work out as hoped, the potter reworks the vessel he is making, re-forms the clay on his wheel, enabling this part to be stronger, this part to be smaller, this part to be shorter. No wonder we most focus on God's priorities. Why are here?

In a 2012 survey for the Langham Trust, church congregations were asked what it was about Jesus that attracted them to Him. Half said it was the way He helped people, listened to them, touched them. A quarter said it was the way the Holy Spirit shone through Him, and a quarter said it was because of His sense of purpose – He knew why He had come and resolutely fulfilled that outcome. We need to reflect all three elements in our lives – our relationships, our reliance and our resolution.

Paul indicates that we have His treasure in our clay jars (2 Cor 4:7), but need to make it clear that any "extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us." So we take reverses, but keep going; contradictions, but make a restatement of the truth; failure, but seek restoration; contempt, but proclaim peace; attack, but practice forgiveness; always seeking to honour the Lord so that the glory belongs to Him.

Eric Liddell at one stage said, "God made me devout – and He made me fast." As he won his 1924 Olympic Gold Medal he clutched a piece of paper given to him by a spectator, "Those who honour me I will honour" (1 Sam 2:30). We may not be "devout" or "fast" but undeniably God has made us a vessel for His purposes.

James points out that envy and selfish ambition do not come from heavenly wisdom, which is primarily peaceful, merciful, pure and gentle (Jas 3:17), properties not easily acquired, but will reflect God's work in us, enabling us "both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Phil 2:13). We have to become more than ourselves can ever be by ourself.

Leaving your Church

Sadly, leaving the Church is an inescapable contribution to the current decline in church attendance and membership. The officially recorded reasons, death or moving away to another area, are obvious and unavoidable to which might be added ill health, ageing, transport problems, retirement to a Care Home, etc. "Other" reasons, that is, for leaving voluntarily, have been more difficult to ascertain.

That there are many who have left is witnessed by Steve Aisthorpe's research suggesting 44% of the population in the Scottish Highlands had stopped attending church but still "believed" and his research explored what this meant in practice (a 2014 percentage). Patrick Johnstone in his *Operation World* has always counted churchgoers-who-no-longer-attend, and his successor Jason Mandryck reckons the number could be as high as 8.8% of the UK population for Evangelicals alone (a 2010 figure). This has been grossed up to 17% when estimating for other churchmanships.

These figures are estimates and they do not give the reasons why people are leaving church. Issachar Ministries and Prophecy Today decided to undertake a small survey of those who had left church so that they could strategise to help and received 153 responses, although this is on-going. Given the difficulty of being able to contact those in this particular situation, that is a very credible response.

They found that just over three-fifths, 63%, had left on grounds of conscience. Some had more than one reason, but of those surveyed:

- 48%, half, had left out of "spiritual concern" such as unbiblical influences in their fellowship
- 37%, almost two-fifths, had left through "pastoral disagreement" such as with the actions of the leadership
- 34%, a third, had left over "disagreement" with fundamental doctrine
- 18%, a sixth, had left because of changes to leadership style or style of worship
- 18%, a sixth, had left because of a relationship breakdown.

A third, 34%, had left in the last two years, a quarter, 25%, between 2 and 5 years ago, and another quarter, 24%, over 5 years ago. The remainder had not yet strictly "left" but were on the fringes of their church life, unhappy and attending only occasionally.

Had those who had left ceased all kinds of Christian fellowship? No, half (52%) were part of a prayer group, two-fifths (43%), were part of a Home Bible study or fellowship group, while a quarter, 27%, relied on occasional meetings. Three-fifths, 58%, said they worshipped and prayed with friends in a less organised way. Three-quarters, 74%, said they would like to be connected with like-minded believers in their area.

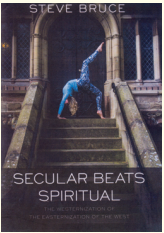
Some had taken the initiative in setting up new groups, meeting in their homes on a weekly or more occasional basis. Others felt they had been wounded by their experience, but found completing the survey helpful. Some felt the church – maybe all churches – were to be rejected, but found release in being "free" of unsatisfactory meetings or boring events, but were lonely as a consequence. Some of these tie in with the reasons Steve Aisthorpe found, though he also found that the longer people were out of church the greater the tendency to leave previous clear doctrinal positions behind.

There is a clear danger here which the author to the book of Hebrews recognised when he wrote, "Do not ... abandon that confidence of yours" (10:35).

SOURCES: *The Invisible Church*, Learning from the Experiences of Churchless Christians, Dr Steve Aisthorpe, Church of Scotland, 2014; *Operation World*, 7th Edition, The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation, Jason Mandryk, WEC International and Biblical, 2010, Page 852; *Nominal Christians*, Brierley Consultancy, Feb 2018; private email from *Prophecy Today*.

Book Review

SECULARISM BEATS SPIRITUAL
The Westernisation of the Easternisation of the West
by Professor Steve Bruce, Aberdeen University
ISBN 978-0-19-880568-7;
216 pages; £22.50 Hardback;
Published by Oxford University Press, 2017



Steve Bruce is well known as a champion of secularisation. In this superbly argued book of 7 chapters he tackles a variety of religious-cum-spiritual issues and is not just looking at the Christian case.

His starting point is seeking reasons why the church is declining. There are doubtless many reasons, but some are arguing that the decline is not so much in the Christian *religion* but rather a change in people's *spirituality*. In other words, we have moved from a monolithic faith to a variety of alternative expressions of understanding the supernatural.

The book looks in detail at the various expressions of such spirituality, thinking through the different aspects of New Age therapies, and various other spiritual innovations since the 1970s. The impact of Eastern religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism is examined, and while a religion like Islam has numerically increased this is more due to the growth of immigrants rather than a general absorption of its tenets by the existing population.

Bruce concludes that the "not-decline-but-change" view is unsustainable. Serious interest in spirituality has grown far more slowly than the numbers who now profess little or low spiritual interest. Some of the longer lasting spiritual "movements", like Yoga, have survived simply because they have become less religious and more secular or worldly. The eastern concepts have, as it were, been westernised.

Bruce gives much statistical evidence for his comments, is essentially looking at the various derivatives of "religion," but the alternatives do not fill the gap left by a declining Christianity. It is well argued, reads well, and gives a fascinating overview of contemporary religiosity in the UK.



"I've based today's hymns on last month's attendance figures."

Why use Statistics?

What is the purpose of collecting statistics? In interesting research for his PhD, Rev Dr Allan Vint asked a sample of Church of Scotland ministers what statistics they kept, the sources of statistics which they used, and what they used them for. The same replies might well be true of ministers in other denominations also.

The statistics that were most likely to be kept related to youth work, communion and adult groups, in that decreasing order of likelihood. Least likely was Sunday attendance, even though the annual Church of Scotland return asked for such! (as does the Church of England and Methodist returns, and maybe others also).

Where did the Church of Scotland get their statistics from? Its own denominational handbook (supplied free every year to every minister), other denominational sources, but after these came the figures about the church's own Local Authority, the national Population Census, and data reported on television or the local/national press.

What was the data thus obtained used for?

- 50% said for planning purposes
- 35% said to follow trends and make comparisons,
- 16% said for writing reports,

with another 15% giving additional minor reasons. Some thus used their data for more than one purpose.

In answer to another question two-fifths, 40%, said local demographic information would be useful for them, but while half, 47%, found statistics a useful tool, a third, 33%, felt they were inadequate, and almost as many, 29%, disliked statistics, saying that it was "people not numbers" that mattered (22%), wanting qualitative information rather than quantitative.

In 2014, the Statistics for Mission Group within the Church of Scotland released online data for every Church of Scotland congregation, based on the information from the 2011 Population Census. Dr Vint conducted a further survey ascertaining how far this new resource was used. He found 94% of ministers knew of it, 92% had viewed or downloaded the information, 85% found it to be useful, two-thirds (67%) used it with their congregation or church leaders and three-fifths (62%) used it for their own planning.

Ministers were also asked which parts of the information were most useful, scoring between 1 and 5 where 1 was low and 5 was high. Average answers were:

- 4.3 Population breakdown (= age and gender)
- 4.1 Religious affiliation (given in more detail in Scotland than in England)
- 4.0 Map of their parish
- 3.9 Household composition
- 3.8 General health information
- 3.7 Provision of unpaid care
- 3.7 Economic activity
- 3.6 Hours worked and occupation
- 3.6 Household tenure
- 3.5 Ethnicity and language use
- 3.4 Educational qualifications

How had ministers used this information? The main ways were:

- 51% Understanding the make-up and needs of the community and its lifestyle
- 43% Background for planning outreach
- 29% Helping the church and its leadership reflect on the position it held
- 22% Useful for funding applications

"Was there any other information which you wished had been available?" ministers were asked, for which the main answer (55%) was "Deprivation indicators" (such as the Index of Multiple Deprivation).

Dr Vint concludes, "Data was now largely being viewed as a useful tool for ministry and ... attempts were being made to make strategic plans and decisions, guided, at least in part, by the numbers." It was recognised, however, that the local data needed to be updated at frequent intervals.

Dr Vint's thesis included reactions to the 2016 Scottish Church Census; some 92% of Church of Scotland ministers saying they had received information about it, with three-fifths, 61%, saying they had responded, confirming the actual response received by the organisers (60%). Four-fifths, 79%, of ministers believed the Census would be helpful for them; a few were too busy or gave the form to someone else to complete.

Why would it be helpful? Primarily because it "provided context" and allowed "trends" to be noted. The Census was undertaken in May 2016, and a year later, May 2017, the initial results were published online. Within a month over half the ministers surveyed, 56%, had read these. How much did they trust them? Three-quarters (74%) of those who participated in the Census, and half (50%) of those who didn't, a weighted average of 69%, almost as high as for the Parish Profiles produced earlier by the Church of Scotland (72%), reported that they felt the results were reliable.

The Census results showed a massive decline in Church of Scotland attendance. Some felt challenged by such information, others that the details should never have been collected. Others felt the data was only part of the story, others felt it was useful, and not necessarily something which hit their personal morale. In a separate question, half (53%) felt such data should be gathered every 5 or 10 years, and a quarter (24%) annually, while the remainder had no interest in the results or felt they were unhelpful. While ministers were generally positive to such surveys, they also made it clear that numerical data is only part of the story, and only part of the data could be used for strategic thinking – something with which most researchers would agree.

SOURCES: *Statistics, Planning and the Mission of the Church of Scotland*, PhD Thesis of Rev Allan Vint, submitted to the School of Critical Studies, College of Arts, University of Glasgow, September 2017; *Growth Amidst Decline*, What the 2016 Scottish Church Census reveals, ADCB Publishers, Tonbridge, Kent, September 2017.

Humour

A pun o' care winna pay an ounce o' debt (= Worrying doesn't pay the bills)

Nae sweat, nae sweet (= Good things only come from hard work)

Hae a guid whittle at yer belt (= It pays to have a ready answer)

Ye could gang faur and' fare ware (= You could travel a lot further and do worse than your present situation)

Dimna fash yersel (= Don't worry)

Wi' an empty haun nae man can hawks lure (= You get nothing for nothing in this world)

The day hae e'en; the night hae lugs (= Days have eyes, nights have ears: You cannot escape notice in this life)

SOURCE: Selected from "Haud Yer Wheesht!" (= Your Scottish Granny's Favourite Sayings), Allan Morrison, Neil Wilson Publishing, Glasgow, 1997.

A MATTER OF DOCTRINE

Does doctrine, that is, the theology you believe, matter? (Belief affects behaviour). Most would say, "Absolutely, yes!" A recent survey by an American organisation, Ligonier Ministries, asked a small number, just 132, UK Christians about what they believed, the results of which were published in Christianity magazine. The respondents did not say they were Evangelical, just assumed to be so by the answers given to questions. Also part of professional survey technique is to lead up gently to difficult questions rather than throw them immediately at the respondent. This survey, however, asked some quite hard questions, such as "Do you agree or disagree that 'Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God'?" with no preparatory lead-in questions.

Some of the answers were clear: all 100% agreed that "Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Saviour receive God's free gift of eternal salvation," 95% agreed that the Bible is 100% accurate in what it teaches, and nearly 90% thought sex outside traditional marriage is a sin. Most Evangelicals would support these statements.

Other answers were more controversial and appeared to contradict previous answers. Over 50% said they agreed that "God will always reward true faith with material blessings in this life," 36% said that religious belief is a matter of personal opinion, not objective truth, and a third, 33%, agreed that "God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism and Islam."

That there are theological tensions among believers at this time is indisputable. Bishop Peter Broadbent of Willesden gave a short list when speaking to the Evangelical Alliance some years ago:

The tension between creationism and science (which has strong advocates on both sides arguing that the world was created in 6 days as in Genesis 1 or it evolved over millions of years).

- The tension in the gender of leadership with some allowing women (such as women bishops) and others feeling this is contrary to Paul's teaching in some of his epistles.
- The ministry of the Holy Spirit – is it cessational or charismatic?
- What does "mission" mean in practice? Should "community" be a priority in this area? Is this a modern version of the "faith v works" debate?
- The doctrine of the atonement – did Christ die a substitutionary death or not?
- Eschatology, which has been a point of discussion for centuries! One part of it, universalism, continues to be adopted by some.
- Should one leave an unbiblical denomination or an unbiblical church? (The Martyn Lloyd-Jones v John Stott debate which began in 1966).

Today we should undoubtedly add the question of sexuality and whether same-sex marriages and behaviours should be accepted or condoned or not. The list isn't comprehensive but in evaluating them there is the consequential question on how to resolve such issues. Three sources are usually cited – what the last two millennia of Christian leaders have taught, what reason and clear thinking should indicate, and what the Bible says. Today, a fourth might be added – modern culture and political correctness. Most Evangelicals would say the Bible alone should be our final authority on matters of faith and conduct.

In spite of its inadequacies, this survey does indicate the undoubted truth that many churchgoers today are not grounded in the basic doctrines of Scripture, nor the application of such to life today. Teaching Christian doctrine is perhaps thought to be "too advanced" or "too unpalatable" or "too indigestible" or "too uninteresting" or "above the head of" the average person in the pew. But are the glorious doctrines of the Christian faith more effective in the long run than a more popular Sunday morning homily?

SOURCES: Ligonier Ministries website www.ligonier.org; article in *Christianity magazine*, Nov 2018, Page 10; Bishop P Broadbent to EA Council, October 2010.



Providing Facts for Forward Planning

SNIPPETS

1) Over 60% of people believe miracles are possible today, 13% like those Jesus performed. 20% have prayed for a miracle and their prayer was answered.

2) In 2017 there were 14,300 religious marriages in Scotland (50% of the total), of which 3,200 (11%) were Church of Scotland. There were also 14,200 civil marriages of which 3,300 (11%) were Humanist Society marriages.

3) Countries with the most charitable giving behaviours (helping a stranger, donating money, volunteering time) in 2017 were Myanmar, Indonesia and Kenya. The UK was 11th behind Australia, Canada and the Netherlands.

4) The October 2018 CRE exhibition drew 3,710 visitors over its 3 days and 671 staff (4,381 total), 5% fewer, as had been expected, than in 2017 when there were 4,061 and 551 staff (4,612 total).

5) Over half, 54%, of this year's Church of England candidates recommended for ordination training are female.

6) According to a 2018 *Saudi Gazette* survey, 82% of Saudis support freedom of belief, 8% of Saudi Arabia's 34 million population are expatriate non-Muslims.

7) There were 1.2 million viewings of Scripture Union's *Guardians of Ancora* digital Bible game in 2017/18. It is now also available in Welsh and Serbian.

SOURCES: 1) BBC survey, *Church of England Newspaper*, 5th October, 2018, Page 4; 2) *The Scotsman*, 1st August 2018, National Records of Scotland (NRS) website; 3) *World Giving Index* 2017, Charities Aid Foundation in Sharpe, *Stewardship magazine*, Issue 40, Page 4; 4) CRE email of 24th October 2018, www.sales@creonline.co.uk; 5) *Transforming Church*, Diocese of Guildford magazine, Issue 2, Autumn 2018, Page 27; 6) *Connected*, The Frontiers UK Magazine, Issue 6, Sept-Dec 2018, Pages 7, 8; 7) *Mission Report* Scripture Union, year ending 2018, Page 5.

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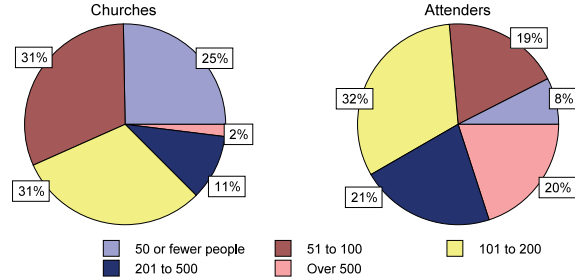
THE DIOCESE OF LONDON

The Anglican Diocese of London has the 11th largest number of churches (492) of any Church of England Diocese but the largest number of benefices (livings) and the highest population (8,700) per church of any Diocese (average is 3,600). In 2016 the Usual Sunday Attendance (USA), which includes both children and adults, was 57,500 people, the highest of any Diocese. The next highest was the Diocese of Oxford with 41,100.

As in every Diocese, the total fluctuates from year to year, being 59,100 in 2007 (the highest) and 54,700 in both 1998 and 2002 (the lowest over the last 20 years), fluctuations of between +3% and -5% of the 2016 total. Over the last 10 years, however, the number has grown. It is one of only two Dioceses which has seen their USA number growing over the years, the other growing Diocese being the Diocese of Norwich.

A quarter, 25%, of the churches in 2015 had 50 or fewer people attending, accounting for just 8% of all those attending. A further third, 31%, of the churches had between 51 and 100 people, forming nearly a fifth, 19%, of all attenders. Another third, 31%, had between 101 and 200 people on a Sunday accounting for a third, 32%, of all churchgoers. These percentages are shown in the piechart. This disparity between the number of churches and the attendance they experience is common across all the churches in England, not just London, and not just the Church of England.

Percentage of churches and Sunday churchgoers in the Diocese of London, 2015



The Diocese of London is unusual in having 14 larger churches (those with 350 or over attending on a Sunday) – more than in any other Diocese (the next largest being the Diocese of Oxford with 12). Half of these, seven (just 2% of all the churches in the Diocese), had more than 500 attending on a Sunday. These 2%, however, brought in 20% of the total attendance.

Four of the seven largest Diocese of London churches had Sunday attendance in four figures – Holy Trinity Brompton (3,700), St Paul's Cathedral (2,400), All Souls, Langham Place (2,050) and St Helen's, Bishopsgate (1,200). The other three large churches are St Barnabas, Woodside Park (700), St Paul's, West Ealing (530) and St Stephen's, Twickenham (520).

Most of these largest churches are in the central Boroughs of London, and they each attract good proportions of students. The green coloured Boroughs in the two maps below show, respectively, the percentage of attenders aged 20 to 29 attending in each Borough, and the distance people travel to get to their church in each Borough. The overlap is obvious.

Percentage of churchgoers aged 20 to 29

Percentage of churchgoers travelling 3 miles or more to church

