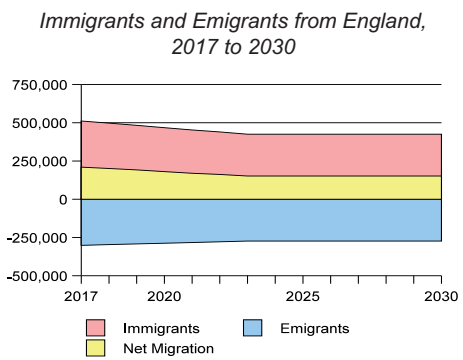


Fewer Future Immigrants?

In order to assess correctly the population of England, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has to take into account the number of immigrants coming into the country. The other components, like births and deaths, are measured carefully, and can be forecast ahead fairly accurately. Assessing the number of immigrants, especially with the various complexities of political statements, legislation and Brexit, is much more difficult.

For some years, the ONS took the net migration figure from countries outside the UK to be 130,000, but in the light of experience over the last 10 years, when the figure was much higher (over 250,000 between 2014 and 2017 for the UK), they have now assumed that the net figure after Brexit will reduce to about 152,000 annually, and that is the figure they forecast ahead (the yellow bar in the chart).



The chart shows they are keeping that figure for England as fixed until 2030, while the actual number of immigrants coming into the country is taken as 425,000, with 273,000 people leaving on average. This latter figure excludes the 106,000 who move from England to Wales, Scotland or N Ireland each year and the 98,000 who move in the opposite direction.

The natural change to the population (births less deaths) is expected to be about 160,000 per year, adding a total of 1½ million to the English population in the 2020s. Births are expected to fall slightly (-2.6% in the decade) and deaths are expected to rise (+9.4%) reflecting the increasing ageing of the population – those 75 or over moving from 9% of the population in 2020 to 11% by 2030.

It would be interesting to know whether the Christian migrants, in or out, are in the same proportions as the overall total. The UK Christian scene has gained hugely from the immigrants who have moved to the UK in recent years, especially in the last 25.

SOURCE: Tables released of 2016-based Subnational Population Projections, ONS, April 2019.

Christian Brethren

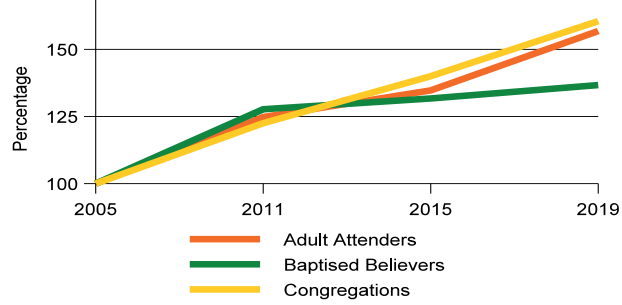
For its quadrennial conference the International Brethren Conference on Mission collects summary information, including data, on the work of the worldwide (Christian or Open) Brethren movement. In 2018 their total globally was over 40,000 congregations with an adult attendance in excess of 2.7 million, up by just 16% in 4 years, a much faster growth than in the four years previously. One adult in every 2,100 in the world attends a Brethren Assembly!

As previously, the growth has focussed especially on Asia and Africa, in that order, with the Global West (North America, Oceania and Europe) actually declining by -5%. The star growth country in Asia is India, and in Africa, the key country is Angola. The Table gives the detail:

Christian Brethren Worldwide, 2018							
Continent	Congregations			Adult attendance			No Per Congregation
	2014	2018	% change	2014 Millions	2018 Millions	% change	
Asia	8,500	12,400	+46	0.26	0.41	+60	33
Africa	12,700	14,400	+14	1.23	1.47	+19	102
America, South	3,800	3,700	-2	0.26	0.28	+7	76
America, North	5,700	5,600	-1	0.30	0.29	-2	45
Europe	3,700	3,600	-4	0.20	0.18	-12	50
Oceania	1,000	900	-5	0.04	0.04	-6	45
WORLD	35,400	40,600	+15	2.29	2.67	+16	66

The top three lines in the Table reflect Christianity in the Global South, and are four-fifths (81%) of global Brethren, but only three-quarters (75%) of total congregations. For every 3 congregations there is an extra preaching point which is included here as a congregation.

Congregations are remaining about the same average size, but enthusiasm to start new churches, especially in the developing world, continues unabated. However, getting more people to commit themselves (that is, being baptised) is proving more difficult as baptised believers increased by +4%, while general adult members of the congregations increased by +16%. This is not a problem confined to the Christian Brethren, but what their figures show is that it is not just in the Western world that people are more reluctant to commit themselves. On the other hand, it takes time for new attenders to reach the stage of desiring baptism, and the difference may be more of a timing adjustment. The change in the percentages is readily seen in the graph.



Of the 16% increase in total attendance, 4% is due just to the increase in numbers attending in India, where numbers have increased from 155,000 in 2014 to 235,000 four years later, an annual growth rate of 11%! Their congregations have increased from 6,000 to 10,000 in the same period, averaging roughly the same size of about 25 people in each.

Globally there is one full-time worker for every 3 congregations on average, and a further worker (such as an itinerant Bible teacher) for every 2 full-time workers. As a consequence, most of the growth is lay led and local, consistent with the ecclesiology of the movement.

The (Open) Christian Brethren are established in 140 countries, which is indeed a global resource. They are almost 1% of all the Evangelicals in the world, and are growing at a faster rate (+3.1% per annum to +2.5%) than is the collective body.

SOURCE: *The Brethren Movement Worldwide: Key Information*, edited by Ken and Jeanette Newton, IBCM and OPAL Trust (forthcoming), via Dr Neil Summerton. The source data is provided by national contacts in response to a questionnaire and it is difficult to be sure of accuracy and consistency

Fewer Teenagers Having Children

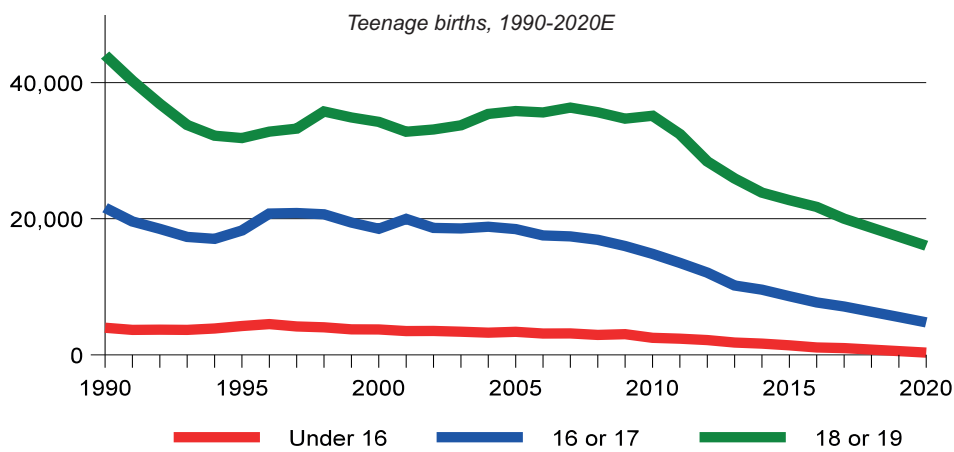
The average population of girls aged 13 to 15 over the 25 years 1990 to 2015 in England and Wales was 970,000, and because abortions as well as births are recorded by age of mother, the actual number of babies conceived in this period is known.

The Table shows that the percentage of girls aged 13 to 15 (shown as “under 16”) becoming pregnant between 1990 and 1999 was 0.9%, or 1 woman in every 115 (which includes a very small number of children born to mothers under 13). In the next ten years, 2000 to 2009, conceptions dropped to 0.8% (one woman in every 130), and between 2010 and 2017, the conception rate dropped very greatly to just 0.5% (one woman in every 215). The same significant changes have also occurred to women aged between 16 and 19 as the Table shows.

Teenage conceptions and abortions, 1990-2017				
Item	Year range	Under 16 %	16 or 17 %	18 or 19 %
Conceptions as percentage of population	1990 to 1999	0.9	4.5	6.3
	2000 to 2009	0.8	4.2	6.0
	2010 to 2017	0.5	2.5	4.1
Average percentage aborted	1990 to 1999	50	40	36
	2000 to 2009	58	47	41
	2010 to 2017	61	50	44

In 2017, 93% of all the 655,000 births in England and Wales were to mothers between the ages of 20 and 40. Of the 7% outside that age range, 4% were to those under 20, and 3% to those over 40. The number of mums under the age 18 is decreasing – from 22,000 in 2007 to 8,000 in 2017. As the diagram indicates the numbers born to teenagers have fallen quite sharply since 2009 but not greatly before then.

The government’s policy of the 2000s, deliberately aiming to reduce teenage pregnancies, has worked, helped perhaps by the media. In a 2014 article, *The Economist* suggested a key reason for the decline then observed (from 2008 to 2013) was the reality TV show on MTV “Teen Mom”. It showed “young mothers suffering sleepless nights, howling brats, money worries and the incomprehension of their still-partying childless contemporaries.” Such seems to deter teenagers from “at risk” sexual activity.



The number of teenagers contracting sexually transmitted infections has fallen from 3.0% in 2013 to 2.4% in 2017. Over two-thirds, 70%, of these infections were among females. The most common infection, two-thirds (69%), is chlamydia.

The older a girl the greater the proportion of conceptions. In 2017, one 16-year old girl in every 63 (1.6%) became pregnant, almost one for every two classes in an average school. Half, 52%, of these were aborted. In general, fewer babies are being conceived but more are being aborted among teenagers. Both trends result in fewer births, though the latter trend is heart-creakingly unwelcome, an example of tackling the consequences rather than the cause.

SOURCES: Office for National Statistics website for teenage conceptions accessed May 2017; article in *The Economist*, 18th January 2014, Page 41.

Continued from page 5

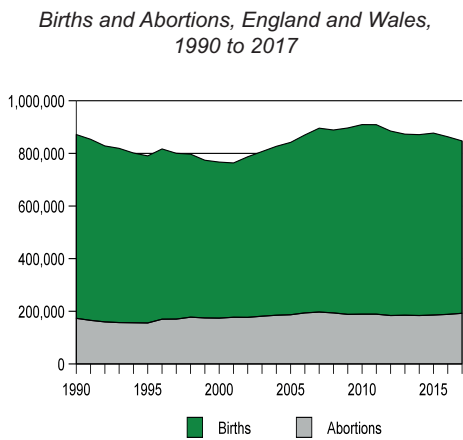
They won’t feel they need help – they’re usually very satisfied with their choice! They won’t want to be identified, singled out and treated as special cases. The research focussed on their generally unstructured lifestyle, so they tend not to follow a routine. In a church situation, therefore, they might be willing to help on an ad hoc basis, filling in as need arises, for example, acting as a welcome, coffee server, etc. when a regular is on holiday or unwell. Alternatively, some might feel their freedom from family responsibilities enables them to take on a more specific role such as choir/music group, house group leader, etc. This fits with half, 47%, feeling insecure in making long-term decisions.

SOURCE: Article by Nathalie Gill, Bamm, in *Impact*, Market Research Society, January 2019, Pages 10,11.

Abortions in England and Wales

Since 1990 nearly 24 million children have been conceived in England and Wales, measured by the total number of births and abortions. Miscarriages are not counted, but still births are. Of that total, just over a fifth, 21%, were aborted, a loss of 4.8 million lives over the 28 years 1990 to 2017.

The ratio of abortions to births, 1 to 4, has remained fairly constant through this period as the chart indicates, though when the number of births increased between 2007 and 2012, the percentage of abortions was slightly lower.



The younger the woman having the baby, the greater the likelihood of an abortion. Three-fifths, 61%, of conceptions to those under 16 in 2017 were aborted, 52% of those under 18, but 33% of those aged 20 to 24. The least likely to have an abortion are pregnant women between 30 and 34 (15%) and between 35 and 39 years of age (18%). Of those becoming pregnant after the age of 40, 29% had an abortion in 2017, a much lower rate than in 1990 when 43% of conceptions in women of this age were aborted.

By 1990 the total number of abortions in England and Wales since the 1967 Act was 2,722,000, while the total at the end of 2017 was 7,530,000, and will be over 8 million by the end of 2020 if present rates continue. That’s about equivalent to the total number of children alive who are under 12, or virtually double the entire population of all the Primary Schools in England. Or, to put it another way, had they all been born our population would be 68 million today instead of 60 million, 13% larger!

The rates of abortion are increasing in all age groups, from 36% in 1990 for those under 20 to 47% in 2017, from 22% to 33% for those aged 20 to 24, from 14% to 20% for those aged 25 to 29, but have remained the same for those aged 30 to 34 (14% to 15%), and have reduced for those aged 35 to 39 (23% to 18%) and for those aged 40 and over (from 43% to 29%), simply reflecting the fact that more babies are being born to older women.

Some of those who have had an abortion will be churchgoers, though that may never emerge in their fellowship.

SOURCES: Office for National Statistics website figures accessed May 2019; *Religious Trends* No 2, 2000/2001, Christian Research, Table 4.4.1.

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FUTURE FIRST

FACTS FOR FORWARD PLANNING

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THE GROWING LAOS CHURCH

Rev Ian D Bowley, Overseas Missionary Fellowship

The south-east Asian country of Laos has a population of only six and a half million, but in recent years, the Church there has been growing at a rate of 6% per year. What has contributed to this growth?

The first church in Laos was founded by Dr Daniel McGilvary in the late 19th Century, when he came across by elephant from Chieng Mai in north Thailand. The first missionaries to come and live in Laos arrived in 1902 and faced an up-hill task from the unresponsive Buddhists and from disease which killed four of the first intrepid Swiss missionaries. Other missions joined the work, but in 1975, the Communist forces overcame the pro-American royal government and established the Lao People’s Democratic Republic. All foreign missionaries had to leave and the national church experienced great opposition.

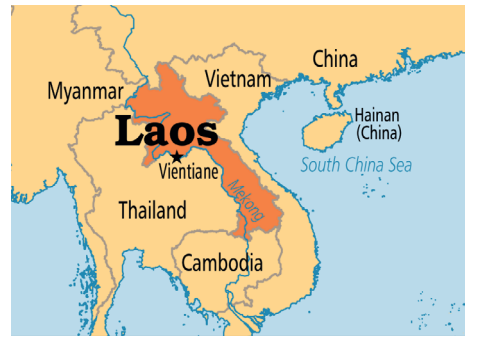
However, in recent years, the protestant Church has experienced considerable growth and now numbers about 150,000 members. There are Churches in all of the 18 provinces of the country and a well organised programme is training new pastors and local leaders. I have made several visits to collect statistics of the number of Christians, the number of churches and which ethnic groups the various Christians belong to. In each case, I have asked Christian leaders what factors have contributed to the growth of the Church.

Altogether, I have been given four reasons, but always the first is because of the lives of Lao Christians and the change they experience when they become Christians.

Consumption of alcohol in Laos is the highest per member of the population of all the countries in south-east Asia. Lao people love parties and almost any excuse is good enough: the birth of a new child, an engagement or marriage, success in exams or promotion at work. A party means: tables and chairs set out in front of the house and out into the road (which is closed for the party), loud music with speakers set up on bamboo poles, plenty of food and plenty of beer. (Lao beer has twice been awarded a gold quality award by the first International Quality Institute founded in Belgium.) Unfortunately, Lao people don’t understand the concept of ‘drinking in moderation’, so when they get drunk, they argue and fight, and later, at home, take it out on their wives and children.

So it is not unusual for a Non-Christian to ask a Lao Christian: “What is it that makes you different? You don’t get drunk and fight your neighbours, or beat your wife. I wish I could be like you.” The Christian will explain that God teaches that we should not get drunk, but rather love and respect others, and this is possible when Jesus lives in our hearts. Very close to this is the fact that Christians frequently experience opposition and persecution. Non-Christians will say: “The Christian message must be true; no one would experience all that you Christians go through and not give up, unless what you believe is true.”

The second reason for the growth of the Church is that non-Christians will often ask their Christian neighbours to pray for sick members of their family. Many Church buildings have a prayer room, not just for occasional use, but for families to come and stay so that they can be prayed for over a number of days. Imagine people living in a remote area of Laos, where the nearest hospital or doctor is 50 or more miles away. They will try using traditional remedies made from local plants or roots; they will ask the local spirit medium to help, and when none of these produce any improvement, they will turn to the nearest Church. When the relatives see their family member healed or set free from spirit control, they want to believe and follow the Christian faith.



The third factor contributing for the growth of the Church is the Gospel broadcasts from the Far East Broadcasting Company or messages recorded on MP3 and other devices. The largest group of Christians in Laos come from the Khmu ethnic group, who speak a different language from the Lao majority. The Khmu broadcasters claim that more than 30,000 people have come to faith through their broadcasts or via their messages, recorded and listened to by other villagers. Regular broadcasts from the Philippines are beamed in seven of the languages spoken in Laos and have made a considerable impact on those who listen. Christian Facebook pages with a simple message, updated daily, are now available in both Lao and Khmu. The Lao page currently has some 90,000 people viewing it on their mobile phones.

The fourth reason for the growth of the Church is the training that the Christians have received in recent years. A programme that has been very successful in India is being taught in Laos. The basic concept is that when Christians witness to their faith and lead another person to Christ, they commit

Continued on page 4

Otherhood

Bamm is a “global insight agency based in New York and London” according to its website. Recently it researched those who had voluntarily decided not to have children, and named such women as in a state of “otherhood.” They are a fifth of the childless population, according to Bamm, which, if true, suggests that there are 400,000 such women in the UK population, and perhaps as many as 20,000 of these may attend church – one in every 150 for congregations that size.

The reasons for their choice vary according to their lifestyle or environment. Three-fifths say their choice is misunderstood. Bamm found that such people tend to be more flexible in their career (they are not saving up for a family), so they can be more spontaneous, less likely to commit to making long-term decisions. Half of them, 48%, bequeath money to charity while only 12% of their parents did so.

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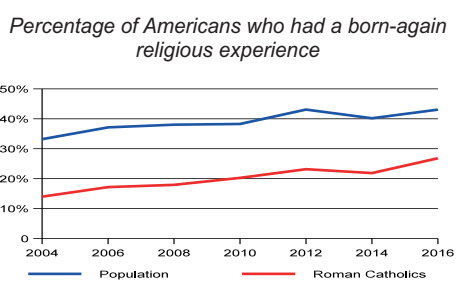
EVANGELICAL CATHOLICS

Most Roman Catholics when asked their churchmanship simply say they are “Catholic”. That is very understandable, although perhaps they are not always aware that the word “Catholic” in churchmanship terms is akin to the word as used in the Creed where it says “We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church” where “catholic” here means “universal”.

So in the Scottish Church Census of 2016, the very large majority of Roman Catholics in Scotland described themselves as having Catholic churchmanship (89%), while a small number (nearly 3%) described themselves as Evangelical, figures very similar to the results of the 2005 English Church Census which were respectively 87% and also nearly 3%. In both countries the actual number of Evangelical Roman Catholics was slowly growing, from 2,800 in 1994 in Scotland to 3,600 in 2016 (up a quarter, 28%, in 22 years) and a much larger increase in England from 6,700 in 1989 to 35,400 by 2005.

The Scottish Census form did not ask Evangelicals whether they were part of a group with charismatic gifts. In June 2016 a letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome, entitled “The Church Rejuvenates” (*Juvenescit Ecclesia*), sought to include such groups as “more mainstream in the life of the Church,” according to the Bishop of Limerick (Brendan Leahy). Whether the Evangelical Catholics would be included is not known.

There was no significant difference in Scotland between the age structure of Evangelical Catholics and that of congregations generally, though they did attract more families as their proportions of those aged 35-44 were higher (11% compared to 8% overall) and they also had more children aged 5 to 11 (again 11% compared to 8% overall). The Evangelical Roman Catholic congregations are larger than the average, but fall below the largest Roman Catholic congregations. All the Evangelical Catholic churches had run an Alpha Course at some stage.



The same factor of an increasing number of Evangelical Catholics appears to be happening in the United States also. This comes from the government’s biennial General Social Survey (GSS) which asks for a person’s religion and also if they have had a “born-again experience” which, while very similar to being described as an “evangelical,” is not necessarily deemed the same by those answering the question. As the graph shows between 2004 and 2016 the percentage has doubled (14% to 27%), a faster rate of increase than among those claiming to be born-again generally.

Looking at other factors in the GSS, one question asked if they were “evangelical at age 16”. There were fewer Evangelical Catholics at this age compared to 16-year olds in the general population (34% to 44%), which suggests they became evangelical later, perhaps in their 20s or 30s as the result of an Alpha course.

 SOURCES: Article “Understanding the Rise of Born-Again Catholics in the US” in *Review of Religious Research*, Vol 60, No 4, December 2018, Page 555; Report in *The Tablet*, 25th June 2016, Page 12; *Religious Trends* No 6, Christian Research, 2006, Table 5.15; *Growth Amidst Decline*, Peter Brierley, ADBC Publishing, Tonbridge, 2017, Pages 104-105.

Counting the Children

In the UK 19% of the population are children under 16, virtually a fifth, a percentage which is changing very little at the present time – it was 19.0% in 2006 and will be 19.1% in 2021. That is roughly one child to every 4 adults. The percentage varies, however, across the UK, from 19% in England, to 18% in Wales, 17% in Scotland and 21% in N Ireland.

Anglican Dioceses

Among all those attending services on an average Sunday in the Church of England, however, the percentage of children is much lower. The most recent Church of England figures, for 2017, gives the percentage 13%, that is, one child for every 7 adults. This percentage varies from a low of 6% in the Dioceses of Norwich and Truro to 21% in the Dioceses of Manchester and Southwark. The only other high percentage (above 17%) is London with 19%.

There are 12 Dioceses where the percentage is under 10%, all rural Dioceses, or Dioceses with a substantial rural component: Bath and Wells, Carlisle, Exeter, Hereford, Norwich, Portsmouth, St Edmundsbury & Ipswich, Salisbury, Sodor & Man, Truro, Worcester and York. There are therefore 26 Dioceses where the percentage of children attending on a usual Sunday is between 10 and 16% (excluding Europe).

Early Motherhood

The teenage pregnancy rate in the UK has dropped rapidly in the last 10 years – from 6.3% in 2008 to 2.3% in 2018, but this has not happened in other parts of the world, especially in Africa and Latin America. Across the world in 2016 the rate was 4.5%, which means 1 in 22 teenagers aged 15 to 19 became pregnant, down from 6.5% in 1990.

It varies greatly by continent, however, being 1.7% in Europe, 6.2% in Latin America and 10.2% in Africa, the highest continent but in which Niger was 20.3%! What are the problems with early motherhood? They include:

- Curtailed education
- Greater rate of mortality (4 times higher than for those in their 20s)
- Less likely to have prenatal care (which may cause learning problems for their children)
- More likely to be single and without adequate support
- Reduces likelihood of employment for mothers
- Mother and child more likely to be poor, and living in a rural area
- Contraceptives few and expensive

Why do some teens get pregnant in Latin America especially?

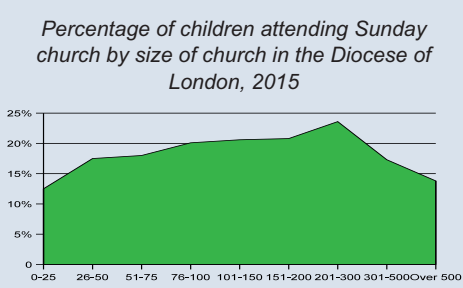
- Seen as a fast track to adulthood, and consequential status
- Improves personal safety (can move in with boyfriend if in an abusive home)
- Lack of sex education at school
- Catholic churches do not discuss sexuality
- Evangelical churches in Latin America oppose sex-education textbooks



The percentage of children in church obviously reflects the size and environment of the church. For example, in those Dioceses where child attendance is over 17%, the average congregation is 90 and the location more urban, but where child attendance is under 10%, the average congregation is under 28 and the environment more rural, with the remaining Dioceses in between with an average congregation of 52.

Size of church

The variations by size of congregation may be illustrated from the Diocese of London 2015 figures as the graph shows. Up to about 300 in the congregation, the larger the church the higher the percentage of children attending. Why did the very largest churches (over 300) have fewer pro rata attending on Sunday? Almost certainly because they have high numbers of both visitors and students attending on a Sunday (mostly without children), and usually thriving midweek activities.



Other Denominations

Across all the English denominations, the overall child attendance percentage in 2015 was 18% but likely to be only16% by 2020, that is, one child for every 5 adults. In 1980 it was 28% (one child for every 3 adults), showing just how many children the church has lost. The highest percentage was seen in the Pentecostal group of churches where it was 30% in 2015, followed by the New Churches taken as a group (like the Vineyard, Newfrontiers, etc) where it was 26%. The denominations with the lowest percentage are the Methodists with 12% and the United Reformed Church with 13%.

This all suggests that the child attendance “problem” is probably more a paucity of families problem, with the consequential lack of enough volunteers to help run a successful youth programme. If so then the question is, “How do we reach families?” Some will say, “Reach the men” who, if converted, will bring their families, but that can be a little facile as women will want to bring their children also. Midweek activities frequently work better for children who often have other activities on a Sunday.

 SOURCES: *Statistics for Mission* 2017, Research and Statistics Dept., Archbishops’ Council; *UK Church Statistics* No 3, 2018 Edition, ADBC Publishers, Table 13.4.1.

Australian Religion

The Australians have a Census every five years not 10 as in many countries, including the UK. They also ask about religion in more detail than we do. An analysis of the results of their 2016 Census has shown two interesting things.

Firstly about Australian children. In 2006, of those under 15 three-fifths, 58%, identified as Christian (or were so identified by whoever completed the Census form on their behalf, presumably one of their parents). In 2011, 56% did so, but in 2016 only 48% did so, a much bigger drop than in the previous five years. The sharpness of the decline was largely because the two largest denominations also had a larger decline between 2011 and 2016 than between 2006 and 2011. The Roman Catholic children went from 28% of the total in 2006, then to 27%, and to 24% by 2016, while the Anglicans went from 14% to 13% to 9%.

Those of other faiths went in the opposite direction, increasing from 6% in 2006 to 8% and to 9% in 2016, mainly because of the increased numbers of Hindu and Muslim children coming into Australia because of immigration. The overall number of children in Australia increased from 3.9 million in 2006 to 4.4 million by 2016, an 11% increase. Children were 18% of the Australian population in 2011.

In the UK, the percentage of children in the 2011 Census who were Christian was 50%, that is, half of the total of 11.3 million in the total population. This is a combination of 50% for England, 46% for Wales, 40% in Scotland and 80% in N Ireland. Children were 18% of the UK population in 2011 (19% in 2001).

The second factor which emerged from the Australian analysis was the percentage of Christians who did not tick one of the various denominational boxes but simply ticked

THE AGE WHEN LEADERS ARE APPOINTED

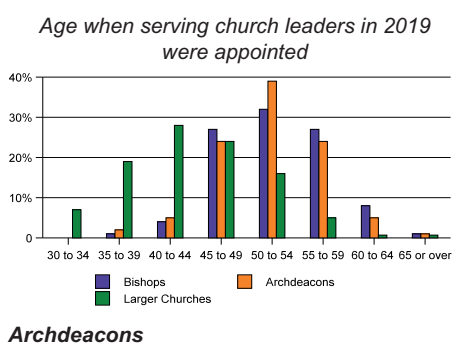
There are myriads of facets to consider when appointing the next leader for a certain position. This analysis considers just one – the age on appointment, but also looks at current age and length of service.

Bishops

Most Anglican Bishops in England are appointed between the ages of 50 and 54 – 32% (31% for men and 37% for women). The actual average age of consecration is 52 for male Bishops and 54 for female, an overall average of 53 years. However, a smaller but equal percentage (27%) are also appointed between the ages of 45 and 49 and between 55 and 59. The first female bishop was appointed in 2015.

The average age of serving Bishops is slightly increasing – in 2007 their average age was 59, in 2012 it was 60 and now in 2019 it is 61. This would seem to be because more are continuing in office until the later retirement age of 70 (and one or two going just beyond their 70th birthday). The average current age is just over 61 for men and 56 for women.

The average length of service of Bishops in 2019 is 8.3 years (9.5 for male bishops and 2.4 for female). The average is an increase from 6.6 years in 2015, lower than in previous years because almost half (46%) of the bishops serving in 2015 had been appointed in the previous 5 years!



Archdeacons

Archdeacons in the Church of England, unlike the Bishops, are getting slightly younger—in 2012 their average age was 59, in 2015 it was 58 and now in 2019 it is 57. This is mainly because more female Archdeacons are being appointed (18% of Archdeacons were female in 2012, 27% in 2019) and while the male average age has stayed at 58, the female average age has dropped from 57 in 2012 to 55 in 2019. In Wales, the average age of Archdeacons was 58 in 2019, and in N Ireland it was 57.

Like the Bishops, most Archdeacons are appointed between the ages of 50 and 54 – 37% of male Archdeacons and 44% of female. The

“Christian”, some 2.6% of the population in 2016 but double the number who ticked likewise in 2006. Does this suggest that Australians are moving away from strict denominationalism? The actual percentage was higher for those under 45.

We have no real equivalent in the English Census since the only write-in part on the English and Welsh forms is to answer “Other Religion”, whereas the Scottish and N Irish forms have “Other Christian.” In 2011 in N Ireland, for example, while 77% of the population ticked Catholic, Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Church of Ireland or Methodist Church in Ireland an additional 6% ticked “Other Christian” (a similar percentage to 2001, and down from 9% in 1991). Many of the entries for “Other Christian” included other long-recognised denominations like Baptists, Pentecostals, Brethren and Salvation Army. There were in addition over 60 other names including many smaller denominations, but also entries like “Protestant,” “Non-denominational” and “Independent.”

 SOURCES: Articles by Philip Hughes in *Pointers*, CRA, Vol 20, No 1, March 2019, Pages 2 and 10.

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actual average age of collation, however, is 49 for male Archdeacons and 46 for female, an overall average of 48 years. In Wales, the average age of collation is 54 and in N Ireland it is 50. Like the Bishops, however, a smaller but equal proportions (24%) have been appointed between 45 and 49 and between 55 and 59.

The average length of service of currently serving Archdeacons in 2019 is 5 years, unchanged over the last 5 years, although male service is increasing in length (from 5 years to 6 on average) and female has reduced from 5 years to 4 years, again because more women are being made Archdeacons (38% of their total have been collated in the last 3 years, but only 27% of male Archdeacons).

Larger Churches

The leaders of larger churches (those with a regular Sunday attendance of at least 350, including children) are different from Archdeacons and Bishops in that they tend to be appointed to their new responsibilities at a much younger age, as the bar chart shows. Over a quarter, 28%, are appointed between 40 and 44, and almost the same proportion, 27%, before they are 40. Their average age of appointment is 44. All except 4 (3%) are male.

A Springboard survey some years ago found that the age of incumbents of growing churches was most likely to be between 40 and 45, and this fits as many of the largest churches are growing, if only slowly. Larger church leaders usually stay longer in their posts than other incumbents, and their average length in 2019 was 11 years, even though 53% have been appointed in the last 10 years. There are a few (3%) who have stayed over 30 years.



The strains of ‘Happy Bishopsday’ crept into George’s mind as he statistically celebrated his ‘window of opportunity’ at 50

 SOURCE: *Crockford’s Directory*, 2017-2018, notices in the church press and diocesan websites, list of larger churches held by CPAS and Brierley Consultancy.

SNOWFLAKES

Housing. After more than a decade of decline, the proportion of 35 - 44 year olds in owner- occupied housing increased slightly in 2017/18. However, “age integration” in housing, which means the likelihood of younger people sharing the same neighbourhood as older people, is declining, thus potentially reducing the scope for intergenerational interaction.

Explaining Chaos. Do these figures help explain the chaos Parliament has with Brexit? They come from the 2016 EU Referendum results.

Count	Leave	Remain
By votes	17.4 mn	16.1 mn
By Constituency		
Conservative	247	80
Labour	148	84
Other	11	78
TOTAL	406	242
By Region	9	3
By MP	160	486

SOURCE: Anon, but email from David Longley.

 SOURCE: *The Bookseller*, 15th February, 2019.

London’s Churches. Of all the Church of England churches in England with between 25 and 49 children attending on a Sunday, one-eighth, 13%, are in the Diocese of London. A fifth, 21%, of those with between 50 and 99 children are also in the Diocese, as are 37% of those with more than 100 children, affirming the dominance of London and its many larger churches.

SOURCE: Personal communication.

The Number *π* is what you multiply the diameter of a circle by to get the length of its circumference, and is normally abbreviated to 3.14. Apparently to measure the breadth of the universe with the exactitude of the diameter of an atom, you would need *π* to 30 decimal places. It is good to know that this irrational number has now been calculated to 31,400,000,000 decimal places by Emma Iwao, an employee of Google – in the first week of March, 2019.

 SOURCE: Article in *The Daily Telegraph*, 18th March, 2019, Page 11.

Creation Conversion. The grandfather of Lt Gen Sir William Dobbie, Governor of Malta during WWII, Lt Col Robert Dobbie “had been brought to faith in Christ in India through a Swisserman missionary called Samuel Hebich who only knew about 550 words of English and yet he was used to win this officer for Christ on Genesis 1 v 1-3!”

 SOURCE: *Sovereign Service*, Brigadier Ian Dobbie, OBE, *Soldiers’ and Airmen’s Scripture Readers Association*, second edition, 2013, Page 127.

Charitable Giving. On average each person in the UK gave £231 to charity in 2018. This varied by age: £246 for those aged under 35, £265 for those 35 to 54, and £168 for those 55 and over. It also varied by location: £309 for those in London and South East; £441 for those in the East, £260 for those in the Midlands, £177 for those in the South West and £182 for those in Scotland. Why did those who didn’t support not support? Half, 53%, said because they couldn’t afford to, even though 36% wanted to do so. Over a third, 37%, said they didn’t give because they didn’t know how their donations were used,

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another third, 34%, said there were too many charities, and another third, 32%, because they didn’t trust charities.

 SOURCE: *CAF Report*, 2018 as given by speaker at March 2018 Conference.

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Three year extra wait. The average age at which single men married in 2000 was 30.5; in 2018 it was 33.2 – an extra 2.7 years. The average age at which single women got married in 2000 was 28.2 years and in 2018 it was 31.2 years – an extra 3.0 years, probably because of the trend of women wanting to become more established in their careers before becoming wives and mothers, or because so many delay marriage in favour of the co-habiting experiment.

SOURCE: Office for National Statistics website, 13th September, 2018.

Global population. The United Nations reckons the global population is most likely to be 11.2 billion by 2100 if present trends continue. It is currently (2019) 7.7 billion and could reach 9.7 billion by 2050. The rate of increase is slowing down slightly. However, if too few people receive an education, the Wittgenstein Centre reckon the world could have 12.5 billion by 2100.

 SOURCES: Article in *The Economist*, 2nd February, 2019, Page 57; websites accessed May 2019.

These may be helpful

Books and reports received

The Re-Evangelisation of Europe, The greatest missionary task in this generation, Amnos Ministries, Rev Dr Daniel Chae, 2018 booklet.

An Infographic on Hinduism, from the Lausanne Movement at: communications@lausanne.org.

The Persuasion of Love, John Blakely, which examines the implications of believing that ‘the meaning of the universe is love.’ “The most life-affirming book ... about the problem of pain” (Church Times). Circle-books.com, paperback, £10.99.

The Bible and Digital Millennials, David Ford, Joshua Mann and Peter Phillips, Routledge Focus on Religion, 2019, ISBN 978-1-138-35068-7.

themselves to teach and disciple that new Christian and train them how to witness and lead others to faith. The programme is called T4T, “Training for Trainers”. (See www.t4tonline.org) After being introduced to Laos in early 2017, trainers have now run courses in every province of Laos and the Christians are responding to it enthusiastically. More than one thousand new Christians were baptised in 2018.

Clearly Laos has a different culture and religious history from Britain, but there are lessons from the growth of the Church in Laos from which we can benefit. When Christians live out their faith in a way that is clearly different, their friends and neighbours will surely take note. In his book *Finding Faith Today* John Finney describes research conducted on over 600 people in 1992. When asked what factors contributed to their coming to faith, over two-thirds gave “the friendship of a Christian they knew, whose life they admired” as the main or a contributory factor. Building friendships to the extent that we can offer to pray for the needs of our friends can be a way that impacts positively on their lives. Good discipleship training in our local Churches would contribute to the confidence that individual Christians have in their ability to share their faith.

Humour

“Eckersley told us how after the concert hall at Broadcasting House was built there was doubt whether the door would admit a concert grand. “Try it,” said somebody. But the musical director objected on the ground that if his beautiful Bechstein got stuck it would be damaged. So they instructed the carpenter to take measurements and make an exact replica in plywood. This was done, and then they found they couldn’t get the model out of the carpenter’s shop” (Alexander Donald).

“I was intrigued to discover a bottle of natural water claiming to come from a source ‘fully protected from the environment.’” (Emma Coleman)

“Should we be surprised to read today in your guide to degree course vacancies that the place to study Artificial Intelligence is at Westminster?” (P C Holderness)

““The 1991 census ... missed a million people” (Report January 6). How do they know?” (L J Manley).

 SOURCE: Letters to *The Times* 1995.

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