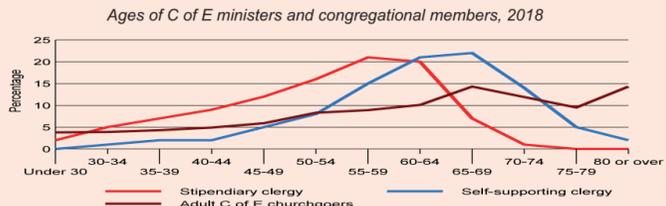


Age of C of E Clergy

In 2018 there were some 7,700 full-time Church of England paid clergy serving in parishes plus a further 2,920 who serve in a self-supporting capacity. A fifth of these, 22%, serve as curates or assistant ministers while the rest are incumbents or of incumbent status. That works out as 1 minister for every 66 who attend on a usual Sunday.

The age of these ministers is shown in the graph, along with the ages of adults in the church.

It may be seen that there's a greater proportion of ministers between 55 and 70 than churchgoers, but many more churchgoers than ministers past 75. More churches are appointing "Ministers for the Elderly" or some similar title.



Over a quarter, 29%, of stipendiary (paid) clergy are female, but half, 50%, of those who are self-supporting, making an overall average of 35%. Why are there more female self-supporting clergy? Perhaps because they are married to non-clergy husbands and can manage on their husband's income. Among C of E churchgoers 60% are female.

Three-fifths, 61%, of all stipendiary posts are in urban areas, and three-quarters of these are filled by men, meaning that more women serve in rural areas pro rata (34% to 66%). Rural clergy are on average three years older than urban clergy.

In 2018 590 people started ordination training, which continues the general increase since 2014, when there were 470. Of the 590, 46% were male, 54% female which, when they are all ordained, will slightly alter the current male/female balance. 44% of the ordinands in 2018 were under 40 (in 2014 47% were), 39% were between 40 and 54 and 17% were 55 or over (80% of the last group are self-supporting clergy). As the graph shows many of the self-supporting clergy continue working until they are 80 or over.

How does the age of the full-time stipendiary clergy compare with other professionals? They are simply much older, but have a similar proportion of women as Police Officers.

Full-time	Under 30	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 & over	Aver -age age	% female
Teachers	19	29	26	23	3	41	72%
Nurses	12	24	32	30	2	43	89%
Police Officers	14	28	44	13	1	40	25%
Clergy	2	12	21	37	28	51	29%

SOURCES: Ministry Statistics 2018, Research and Statistics Dept, Church of England for clergy information; UK Church Statistics No 3, Brierley Consultancy, Tables 13.4.1 and 13.9.2 for churchgoing data; Teacher Retention and Turnover Research, Nuffield Foundation, 2016, Page 5.

Favourite Hymns

Viewers of the BBC 1 programme Songs of Praise were asked to select their favourite hymns from those which have been on the programme over the last 5 years. They were as follows:

- 1) Jerusalem
- 2) How Great Thou Art
- 3) In Christ Alone
- 4) Dear Lord and Father of Mankind
- 5) Abide With Me
- 6) I Vow to Thee My Country
- 7) Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah (Redeemer)
- 8) Amazing Grace
- 9) Be Still for the Presence of the Lord
- 10) I, the Lord of Sea and Sky

The competition was last held in 2013, and "Jerusalem" did not feature in the top 10 at all.

SOURCE: BBC, but given in the Church of England Newspaper, 4th October 2019, Page 1.

Some larger Churches Struggling

In the odd-numbered years the National Larger Anglican Churches' Consultations take place. They began in 2005 and the eighth was held in 2019. It was attended by nearly 100 leaders from some of the largest Anglican churches, "large" in this context being defined as churches with normal Sunday attendance, adults and children, in excess of 350 people. This is not to decry the sterling work of churches with less than this attendance size, whether in single, double or triple digits, but because each group of churches, small, middle and large, has its own specific attendance problems and needs and opportunities.

There are some 163 such larger churches in England (1% of all churches) with a collective attendance of some 88,000 people, almost an eighth (12%) of total Church of England attendance in 2019. Representatives from about a third of these churches attended the 2019 event.

Those attending these Conferences are asked to complete an evaluation form, the results from which are used in the thinking and strategising for the following Consultation (in this case ready for 2021). Many of those who attend have come to previous Consultations and have also completed evaluation forms for these as well.

One of the questions on the form is the approximate size of Sunday congregations. Not everyone answers this question, and not every larger church attends each Consultation, and the number of churches who answered this question in both 2017 and 2019 was just 20, a small but significant sample of the total. In 2017 these same 20 churches collectively had 14,500 people attending them, but in 2019 that had reduced to 11,750.

Of those 20 churches only three had seen their attendance increase in the period 2017 to 2019 and that by an average of +5% per year. The remaining 17 churches all experienced a decline in attendance, seeing their attendances drop from an average of 600 per church to 530, or a drop of -6%.

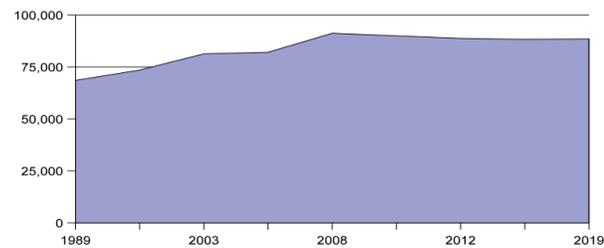
There is no reason to think these churches are anything other than typical of all the larger churches, meaning that while a few are growing, the majority are finding it very hard to maintain the numbers they once had. The graph shows how attendance at larger churches grew in the 1990s and 2000s, but has struggled to grow during the last decade since 2008, overall numbers remaining largely static.

This does not necessarily mean though that the membership or attendance of any particular church is declining, but probably rather that those attending are doing so less often. This is something borne out by the experience of numerous smaller churches, and this is just one small piece of possible statistical evidence to support that.

In the latest edition of *Statistics for Mission* 2018, the Research and Statistics Department of the

Church of England report that "the Worshipping Community of regular worshippers at Church of England churches has been almost unchanged from 2014 to 2018, falling by 2% over this period," a very small annual rate. In other words, while Sunday attendance overall is definitely declining, overall congregational allegiance is not.

Numbers attending the largest Anglican churches



So while the work of the church is reaching out to those who do not yet attend, part of that work is retaining those who do come and another part is encouraging those who attend to do so more regularly. "Regularly" used to be considered as at least "once a month", but perhaps frequency needs to be measured more rigorously now.

SOURCES: Evaluation forms from the National Larger Anglican Churches Consultations, 2017 and 2019; Statistics for Mission, 2018 edition, published 2019, Pages 3 and 23.

Age of English Churchgoers

The numbers of churchgoers in England who are under 45 shrinks from 51% in the year 2000 to 44% by 2010 to 38% by 2020 and to 31% by 2030, if present trends continue. In England in 2005, 39% of churches had no-one attending under 11 years of age, 49% no-one attending between the ages of 11 and 14, and 59% no-one attending between the ages of 15 to 19. "Half the Church of England parishes had no work among young people in 2005," said an official Anglican publication. These figures are for Sunday attendance, so mid-week numbers are excluded.

The key issue is whether present trends will continue. How far is the fall in total attendance due to the absence of young people on Sundays? Many teenagers left the church in the 1980s and many children under 15 in the 1990s. Twenty and thirty years later there is a dire absence of those in their 30s and 40s, and little sign of younger replacements. Unless this circle can be broken the church will survive only as a group of increasingly elderly people, both living longer and, because of their generational habit, continuing to go to church regularly, usually every week, whereas their younger counterparts only attend perhaps once a fortnight or once a month. The graph compares these age proportions with those of the population:

Age-groups in the British population and in the church, 2000 to 2030



While the proportions of those under 30 in the general population drop between 2010 and 2020, that is far, far smaller than the decline seen in this age-group in the churches. The need to reach out to young people is obvious and something that the church is increasingly taking on board in such initiatives as the young family orientated "Messy Church," the employment of Youth and Children's Workers, etc.

Notice also that the percentage fall in those aged 30-44 in 2020 and 2030 is very slight; some numbers are coming back here, partly because of the growth of immigrant, black and new churches being started.

SOURCES: Pulling out of the Nosediver, Peter Brierley, Christian Research, Eltham, London, 2006, Page 118; Resourcing Mission within the Church of England, GS 1580B, 2005; UK Church Statistics, Brierley Consultancy, Table 13.2.2.

The new Archbishop of York

The Rt Rev Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Chelmsford, has his final day as that Bishop on Easter Day, 2020, and thence moves to York, taking up his new responsibilities in time for the Lambeth Conference in July.

In 2016 he went on the Camino de Santiago Pilgrimage writing a poem/sonnet each day. These have since been published by Canterbury Press under the title *Striking Out*. Here is one of them:

Pearl of Great Price

His eye is on the pearl whose price is more than all the wealth you're storing for tomorrow. His alchemy brings joy from hurt and sorrow. He can mend damaged hearts, open locked doors.

His work is restoration and relieve: each person valued, every splinter sought. His aim is beauty. He doesn't squander thought on cost or blame. He works, and grieves

for the possibilities rejected, the wonder that was broken and blemished. He knows his labour cannot be finished until all the pieces are connected.

His work is revelation and release. His way is hope and his end is peace.



Humour

In his early days in politics, Conservative Michael Portillo was sometimes a bit too enthusiastic. On one occasion, he hurried up a garden path without noticing that it was covered in wet concrete; only when he'd knocked on the front door did he realise that he'd left a trail of deep footprints. Luckily, he recovered his presence of mind before the door opened. "Good morning, sir," he said brightly. "I am your Labour Party candidate."

SOURCE: The Week, 9th November, 2019, Page 24.

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FUTURE FIRST

FACTS FOR FORWARD PLANNING

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HAPPY WIFE, HAPPY LIFE

Harry Benson, Research Director, Marriage Foundation

A few years ago, I was about to write a new book on marriage. As her Christmas present to me, my wife Kate sent me away for a few days on a silent retreat to hear what Jesus thought about it!

Well, the retreat was all very nice. I was encouraged to spend my days as if Jesus was actually right there next to me. I opened doors for him. I made sure there was a seat for him next to me at meals. I maintained my composure even when somebody inadvertently sat on Jesus. But after two days of niceness, I needed to hear something more meaty and specific.

As we walked together down a path outside on my final day, I turned in mild frustration to the space next to me and said out loud, "OK Jesus, what's the deal about marriage?"

As clear as day came the reply, "Well Harry, it's like you and me. Put your arm in mine and let's walk. In that moment I knew. He was showing me the picture of marriage that I have carried around in my head ever since.

5) The top three selling books in the UK in the 2010s (2010 to 2019) were all by the same author – E L James (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, *Fifty Shades Darker* and *Fifty Shades Freed*), a total of 11.2 million books!

6) 70% of current (post-December) election Conservative Members of Parliament were elected after 2010.

7) After a huge decline in the number of pubs in Britain (25% fewer since 2008), the number increased by 320 in 2019, mostly by making them food establishments as well as drinking venues.

SOURCES: 1) Report in *Time*, 18th November, 2019, Page 9; 2) World Bank, quoted in *The Economist*, 16th November, 2019, Page 3 of Migration report; 3) Report in the *Church Times*, 15th November 2019; 4) Felix Richter, *statista.com*, 2nd December 2019; 5) Report in *The Bookseller*, 6th December 2019, Page 6; 6) *Daily Telegraph*, 14th December 2019, Page 8; 7) Report in *The Week*, 28th December 2019, Page 62.

To paraphrase Paul, husband love your wife as Jesus loves me. With kindness, humility, love, intent, sacrifice and forgiveness. When I do that, I get loved in return. As husband, it's my job to take responsibility for my marriage. And it's Kate's job to let me take that responsibility.

This is how I now think of the words head and submit. They have nothing to do with power or control or decisions or roles. Quite the opposite. They describe how we should treat one another and who should have ultimate responsibility for making sure our relationship stays on track. Just like with Jesus and me.

I think this is an incredibly attractive picture of a deeply secure, committed and contented relationship that works well for both of us.

If God made us, it shouldn't matter whether we believe in God or not. The principles within this picture of marriage should apply to all loving relationships, believer and non-believer alike.

This insight inspired our book *What Mums Want and Dads Need to Know*, written for a secular audience hungry for ideas on how to make a marriage work and how to bring it back when it goes wrong.

Christians – indeed all of us – can remain confident that these principles help us understand the key social trends of our time.

1) We all want a relationship of reliable love

Lifelong singleness as a deliberate choice is rare. Just 6% of women and 9% of men have reached their 60s without ever cohabiting or getting married. Some of these may never have found the right person. Most of today's teenagers still aspire to marriage. Several recent surveys find that fewer

than 5% of teenagers reject marriage outright. Eight out of 10 say they want to get married. However, for many, marriage has been replaced by cohabitation.

Having fallen two thirds from their 1970 UK peak, marriage rates have levelled off. Nonetheless we project that 55% of today's teens and 20-somethings will get married at some stage, compared to 90% of women and 80% of men in their 60s who have ever married.

So we pursue the dream of "happily ever after." But we are increasingly conflating cohabiting with "living together as if married."

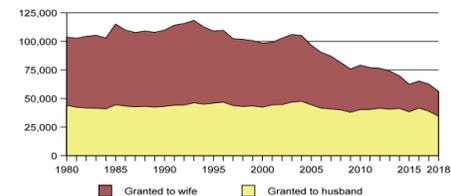
2) Cohabiting is not marriage

Reliable love means having somebody on your side, loving you through thick and thin, putting up with your inevitable human failings, being there for the long haul.

The biggest barriers to "happily ever after" are in cohabiting ambiguity – either of you assuming but not knowing where the other stands – and asymmetry – each of you having different plans and levels of commitment.

In order to shift the odds in your favour, you need clarity from both of you about your plans for the future, you need a decision to commit to the plan from both of you, and you both need to see evidence or signals from each other that show you are serious.

Number of opposite-sex couples divorcing by party to whom granted, England and Wales



You can do that without getting married. But only a minority manage it. Even among parents who cohabit but don't marry, just 30% are still together as a couple when their child sits GCSEs.

But whereas stability is the exception for unmarried parents, it is the norm for married parents of whom 75% remain together.

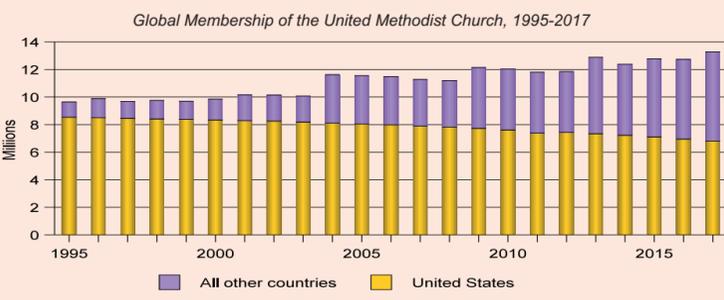
Think about the ingredients of marriage:

Marriage starts with the question "Will you spend the rest of your life with me?" The answer "yes" signals that both have made a decision and signed up for the same plan for the future. The plan is then publicly declared and affirmed in front of family and friends.

Global United Methodists

"**Methodism, also known as the Methodist Movement, is a group of historically related denominations of Protestant Christianity which derive their practice and belief from the life and teachings of John Wesley. George Whitefield and John's brother Charles Wesley were also significant early leaders in the movement.**" Thus does Wikipedia introduce Methodism as a global branch of Christianity, rather inaccurately as Whitefield always indentified as an Anglican!

In 1995 the *World Christian Encyclopaedia* put the number of professing worldwide Christians at 1.7 billion, or 31% of the then total population. The Roman Catholics were the largest block at 46%, Independents at 20%, Protestants at 18%, Orthodox at 12% and the Anglicans at 4%. Within the Protestant group, 7% were the Methodists, which in 1995 had a total of 89,500 congregations, 13.9 million adult members, and a worshipping community of 22.9 million, making them 1.3% of global Christians. The Methodists have spawned a number of related denominations and some would say the total global impact of Methodism is closer to 80 million people.



In the 21st century Methodism remains one of the major branches of Christianity, and the largest single component today is the United Methodist Church (UMC) which was founded in 1968 in Dallas, Texas, by the merger of The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church in America. In 1995 it had branches in at least a dozen countries around the world (though not as such in the UK, although the Methodist Church of Great Britain is of course part of the worldwide Methodist movement).

In 1995, the American part of the UMC accounted for about 85% of the global community, but whereas the UMC as a whole grew in subsequent years (somewhat spasmodically) as the graph shows, the US component has become much less dominant over the years, from 89% in 1995 to only just over half, 51% in 2017.

The decline of the UMC in the US only follows the decline of many other major denominations in America. For example, the Episcopal Church of America has seen its baptised membership fall from 1.95 million in 2010 to 1.75 million in 2017, following the European pattern 20 years before.

The "other countries" are those in seven different countries or groups of countries. In 2016 these countries or groups of countries (called Central Conferences) totalled 5.8 million members, of which Congo was largest, with just over half, 52%, followed by West Africa (31%), Central Africa (13%), Philippines (3.5%), Germany (0.5%), Central and Southern Europe (0.2%) and Northern Europe and Eurasia (0.2%). The jumps in membership shown in the graph are when some of the Central Conferences were included for the first time.

Where are all these numbers heading? If present trends continue then by 2020 the global membership of the UMC is likely to be 13.3 million people, just a little greater than it was in 2017 (+0.2%). However, the American numbers are likely to continue to decrease to 6.4 million, -6% less than in 2017, making their contribution to the overall total just 48%.

It is also possible it may split over differences in belief on LGBTQ clergy and marriage equality, according to a proposal announced on 3rd January 2020. Currently, "practising" members of the LGBTQ community cannot become pastors, and pastors are barred from performing same-sex marriages. A vote on the proposal is scheduled for May 2020.

In the UK, the Methodist Church of Great Britain had just under 190,000 members in 2016, which was 92% of total UK Methodist members. If present trends continue they could be perhaps just over 160,000 in 2020, a decrease of nearly -4% per annum.

SOURCES: World Christian Encyclopaedia, edited David Barrett, George Kurian and Todd Johnson, OUP, 2001, Table 1.5; World Churches Handbook, Christian Research, London, 1997; Wikipedia accessed November 2019; personal emails from Vicki Wallace at the UMC 12th November 2019; UK Church Statistics No 3, 2018 Edition, Table 15.15.4; report in Time magazine 20th January, 2020, Page 9.

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These may be helpful

Books and reports received

Learning to Share the Good News, Evangelism and the Local Church, Stephen McQuoid, Opal and Partnership, Tiverton, Devon, ISBN 978-0-9570177-7-1 in 2019. Full of practical suggestions on making the most of opportunities for Christians in western society to spread the gospel and develop evangelism strategies.

The Brethren Movement Worldwide, edited by Ken and Jeanette Newton, OPAL and IBCM, Lockerbie, Scotland is the fifth edition of a book giving international information about the Christian Brethren on a country by country basis, with statistics cumulating all the numerical data. ISBN 978-1-907098-42-0 in 2019.

Sunday Assemblies Declining



'...that's clearly not a laughing matter!'

Sunday Assembly is the name given to Atheist “Churches.” They were started by two atheist stand-up comedians, Sanderson Jones and Pippa Evans, with the first being held on 6th January 2013. In their second week they had 300 attending, subsequently averaging 600 people.

Initially they were very popular and spread quickly. By June 2014 they had 38 meetings in 13 countries, 10 of which were in England, one in Scotland, N Ireland, the Irish Republic, 6 in Australia, 12 in the United States, 3 in different Asian countries and one each in Germany, France, Canada and Brazil.

Sunday Assemblies aimed to provide “the best bits of church, with no religion, and awesome pop songs.” A prominent one at Chapel Hill in North Carolina has its motto as “Live better. Help often. Wonder more.” It runs the equivalent of home groups but now only meets centrally once a month.

Originally Sunday Assemblies hoped to conduct rites of passage like weddings and funerals. Other functions include a book club and discussion groups. The Sunday Assembly in London meets in Holborn twice a month, and says it is a “secular community that celebrates life,” with everyone welcome. People come to chat with friends, sing pop songs and listen to a motivational speaker.

In 2016 the New York Chapter averaged some 5,000 people attending in 70 different congregations across the city. In 2019 they were down to 3,500 people in just 40 congregations. Why the decline? Essentially it would seem lack of commitment to the cause – making a congregation worthwhile “basically meant putting on a big show on a regular basis. Somebody needed to book bands, find speakers, set up chairs, and pick up snacks,” according to a New York Chapter board member.

Some Christians might see “Sunday Assembly” as the devil’s attempt to ape God’s Church and bolster and encourage the cause of atheism. Linda Woodhead, Professor of Sociology and Religion at Lancaster University, believes “community is not enough to keep people coming.” It is the Lord who gives regular meetings, such as Sunday Church, purpose – gathering to glorify God and have fellowship with a family of believers.

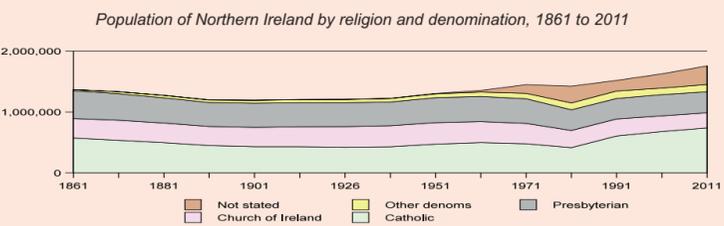
SOURCES: Articles in Answers, Nov/Dec 2019, Page 40; Religion Watch, Vol 29, No 1, November 2013, Page 11; Sunday Assembly and associated website accessed November 2019.

The Church of Ireland is one of the four main Anglican churches in the British Isles (the others being the Church in Wales, the Church of England and the Scottish Episcopal Church). Like many of the denominations in Ireland it covers the whole of the island, that is, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, though it keeps separate statistical estimates for both countries.

In terms of UK Anglican membership, defined differently by each of these four denominations, N Ireland represents 19% (their Population Census figure), the Church of England (Electoral Roll) 76%, the Church in Wales 3% and the Scottish Episcopal Church 2%. But these percentages are virtually meaningless since the Church of England no longer regards its Electoral Roll as an indicator of membership, and the Church of Ireland knew many years ago that the Population Census gave at best an indication of adherents but never an indication of active membership.

Nevertheless having the number of adherents counted as accurately as the national population Census allows is an advantage, especially as the Republic of Ireland collects religious adherence in a similar fashion in its Census. On that basis the total Anglican presence in Ireland in 2011, the year of the last Census, was 380,000 people, some 6% of the combined population of 6.4 million people. This 6% is made up of 14% in N Ireland and 3% in the Republic. Of the Anglicans themselves, two-thirds, 66%, are in N Ireland, the remaining third in the Republic.

The proportion of Anglicans in N Ireland has declined over the 50 years for which Census data is available, from 22% in 1861 to the 14% in 2011, as the graph shows. The dip in 1981 was because a number of Catholics feared to identify themselves amidst the Troubles, and the later censuses included “No Religion” as an option, included in the graph with “Not stated”:



The Church of Ireland organised an internal church Census which was presented to their General Synod in 2015. It showed that actual attendance was about a sixth, 16%, of the Population Census, some 38,000 people or some 2.0% of the entire population, above the 1.4% of the Church of England, and higher than the 0.9% of the Church in Wales and the 0.3% of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

Their internal Census measured the percentage of women of those attending church – it was 57% against 59% in the Scottish Episcopal Church and 60% in the Church of England.

Age-wise their proportions are as shown in the Table, with Church of Ireland for 2013, Church of England for 2015 and the Scottish Episcopal Church for 2016. The Church of Ireland churchgoers are younger than their counterparts in Great Britain.

	<i>Age of attenders in 3 Anglican denominations</i>									
Age-group	Under 12	12 to 18	19 to 30	31 to 45	46 to 60	61-74	75 & over	Base (= 100%)	Average age	
Church of Ireland	15	7	6	14	19	24	15	38,567	48	
Church of England	10	6	4	12	20	28	20	753,500	54	
Scottish Episcopal Church	8	3	6	12	18	31	22	13,380	56	

There were 3,700 Church of Ireland baptisms in 2013, 1 for every 10 people attending, 90% of which were infants. The Church of England that year had 132,000 baptisms, one for every 6 people attending, 60% of which were infants.

The Church of Ireland also had 2,300 confirmations that year, 92% for young people, which was four-fifths, 78%, of those attending aged 12 to 18. The Church of England had 19,500 confirmations that year, two-fifths, 43%, of those attending aged 12 to 18.

The Church of Ireland in 2013 undertook 3,500 funerals, so a little fewer (95%) than the number of baptisms. The Church of England that year undertook 159,000 funerals, a figure 20% higher than the number of baptisms. The Church of Ireland had 108,000 people attend church over Christmas in 2012, 1.7% of the population. The Church of England that year had 2.4 million people attend at Christmas, 4.6% of the population.

These different comparisons show that while these independent denominations have a common Anglican allegiance, the way this works out in practice is often quite distinct. The Church of Ireland has more younger people attending, with a higher proportion of commitments (as measured by confirmations), but less impact on the overall community (as measured by Christmas attendance). The Church of England has a greater proportion of older people, and thus more funerals, but it also had more adult baptisms pro rata. The Scottish Episcopal Church also has more older people.

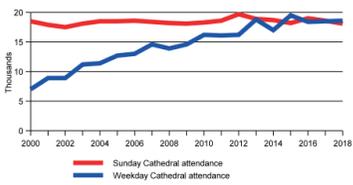
SOURCES: Church in Wales; Scottish Church Census 2016; Church of Ireland Census 2013; data from the Research and Statistics Dept. Archbishops' Council.

The Church in Ireland

Cathedral Attendance

Numbers attending Church of England Cathedrals have levelled off over the last three years as the graph shows, both in terms of Sunday attendance and Weekday attendance. The two are broadly equal, some 18,000 people in total each week at both, of the order of an average of 420 people per cathedral both Weekday and Sunday, so thus a total of about 850 people per week.

Sunday and Weekday attendance at English C of E Cathedrals 2000-2018



While Sunday attendance has hardly varied since it began to be measured at the beginning of the century, mid-week attendance has tripled over this period, but seems to have reached its own peak.

Child attendance on Sundays is just over 2,300 in total, or 13% of Sunday goers, while midweek the numbers double to 4,600 to 25% of the total. Child attendance proportions of Church of England churches on a Sunday also average 14%, but the weekday attendance in churches is much lower than in Cathedrals as it is only 17%.

So the Cathedrals attract more young people during the week than churches do pro rata, presumably because of the many exhibitions they display attended by school parties, as well as miniature golf (as in Rochester Cathedral) or a helter-skelter (as in Norwich Cathedral) in 2019! Cathedrals also hold many special services for schools, graduation ceremonies and the like, many of which will be well attended by children.

A YouGov survey by Ecclesiastical Insurance found that those aged 18 to 24 were most likely to attend a church or cathedral over the December 2018 Christmas period. Two-fifths, 38%, said they were planning to attend either on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Christmas attendance at Cathedrals (= Christmas Eve + Christmas Day) was a total of 133,000 people in 2018, over 3,000 on average per Cathedral, or seven times the usual Sunday numbers. Church Christmas numbers are on average about three to four times usual weekly numbers. Christmas Cathedral attendance has grown +9% in the last decade.

In 2018 English Cathedrals attracted almost 9.8 million visitors, excluding Westminster Abbey's 1.1 million. Two-thirds, 70%, of these did not have to pay to visit the Cathedral they were visiting.

SOURCES: Cathedral Statistics 2018, Research and Statistics Dept., Church of England; report in the Church of England Newspaper, 3rd January, 2020, Page 3.

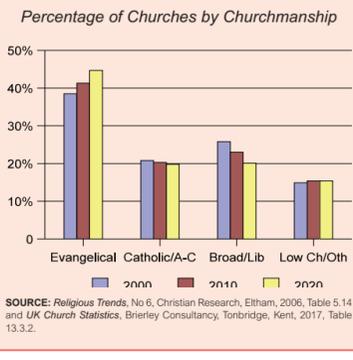
Congregational Size

The average size of a congregation is not measured very often across a wide spectrum of churches, but an analysis of English churches broken down by attendance and number of churches by churchmanship has recently been completed, and allowed size to be calculated.

It shows that the average congregation across all denominations in England in 2020 is likely to be around 77 people. This is relatively large because of the Catholic churches which are twice that size on average. Exclude the Catholics and the average size becomes 67 people. After the Catholics, the largest churches are the Charismatics with an average of 98 people. The churches with the smallest congregations are the Low Churches, which average 35 people.

Congregations have declined in size over the years. In 1990 average size across all groups was 105, by the year 2000 it was 93 and by 2010 it was 83. The number of people attending Sunday church services is declining at a much faster rate than the number of churches, with people declining at the rate of -1.3% per annum, and churches at -0.2% per annum.

The Evangelical percentage of churches is increasing while the Broad/Liberal group is decreasing, while the others are holding their own. Within the Evangelical group it is the Mainstream/Conservatives which are growing, and the Broad Evangelicals declining, the Charismatics remaining steady at about a third of the total.



Giving increases. One of the extraordinary things about the Church of England is that while its attendance numbers decline, the total giving through its churches increases from year to year. This is the overall story for the last 25 years although occasionally (as in 2009) the amount received for “total income” drops slightly from the previous year. Nor does it always increase in line with inflation, but dividing total income by Average Sunday Attendance gives the following average amount per person per week:

Year	ASA/wk	Year	ASA/wk
2008	£19.40	2013	£21.71
2009	£18.91	2014	£22.08
2010	£19.62	2015	£24.22
2011	£20.44	2016	£25.84
2012	£20.67	2017	£27.21

Don't always believe what you see! In the 10 years in the Table the amount has increased by 40%, but actual total income has only increased by 17%. The amount given per week goes up simply because the ASA figures are reducing so fast in comparison!

SOURCE: Parish Finance Statistics 2017, Research and Statistics Dept., Church of England and UK Church Statistics, Brierley Consultancy Table 2.4.

SNOWFLAKES

Marriage Benefits. Is there any extra value to being married than just living together? A large Pew Research Centre survey of 10,000 Americans came to the conclusion, YES, and the same would probably be true of English people. What are those values? Hopefully, the answers from Christian couples, in whichever category, would be higher!

	Issue	Married	Cohabiting
	Does your partner tell the truth?	67%	50%
	Does your partner act in your best interest?	75%	60%
	Can you trust your partner to handle money responsibly?	56%	40%
	Are you content with the sex in your life? YES	36%	34%

Fastest growing jobs in the United States are those installing solar panels and servicing wind turbines, both likely to increase by over 50% in the next decade if current trends continue. Also growing fast are home health carers, personal carers, and occupational therapy assistants, all three likely to increase by a third – but all being paid less than the median wage.

SOURCE: Infographics Bulletin, Statista, 24th September, 2019, www.sarah.feldman@statista.com

Students in Church. The Church of England asked 54 college chapels at Oxford, Cambridge and Durham universities how many usually attended on a Sunday or mid-week. Three-quarters, 74%, replied, with a combined attendance total of 1,500 adults, 1,400 students and 100 children on a Sunday and 1,900 adults, 1,100 students and 200 children mid-week, totalling 3,000 and 3,200 respectively.

SOURCE: Chapel Statistics, 2018, Research and Statistics Dept., Church of England, 2019.

Living alone. Only 3% of British people aged 16 to 24 lived alone in 2018, 9% of those aged 25 to 44, 17% of those aged 45 to 64, but 28% of those aged 65 to 74 and 45% of those 75 or over. That's a total of 8 million people altogether, 15% of the relevant population. How are these percentages distributed? There were 750,000 overcrowded houses last year, but 8.6 million houses with at least 2 spare bedrooms.

SOURCE: Office for National Statistics website, 2019.

Audio Books are selling in increasing numbers. Nearly 17 million were sold in the UK in 2018 and 2019 sales are expected to be 15% higher. Crime, thriller and adventure books account for just over a quarter of these (27%) and science fiction, fantasy, and horror for 22%. A quarter of the population (26%) listen to one at least once a week, and one in eight (13%) every day. An audio book costs on average about £5.40 (2018), up from £5.20 in 2017, about 5% of the total book market.

SOURCE: The Bookseller, 15th November, 2019 Page 7.

Migration. Nearly two-thirds of skilled migrants move to either America, Britain, Canada or Australia. 15% of the population of both the US and Germany and 14% of the British population were foreign-born in 2019, but 22% of Canadians and 28% of Australians. Where do migrants most desire to live? In 2018, 21% said the US, 6% Canada, 6% Germany, 5% France, 5% Australia, and 4% the UK.

SOURCE: The Economist, 16th November, 2019, Page 4 of Migration report.

2020 to 2030. Perhaps some will fly to church in 2030! An Israeli firm is manufacturing a plane to fly up to 9 people 650 miles which may be available by 2022 at a cost of £9 per 100 miles! Meanwhile, while 1% of smart phones have a 5G subscription in 2020, it is reckoned 30% will by 2025. While 22 million devices were connected to the internet in 2018, probably 50 million will be by 2030, along with 28 million electric vehicles.

SOURCES: Report in the Daily Telegraph, Page 2; Niall McCarthy, Statista, both 3rd January 2020.

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No ambiguity. No asymmetry.

People often say that living together and having a baby together are signs of commitment. But on their own they aren't. It's easy to live together and have a baby without making any kind of plan. Our research shows that 70% of births to married parents are planned compared to 45% of births to unmarried parents.

While these differences aren't absolute, they do explain why people who marry are a whole lot more likely to stay together, irrespective of other important factors like education, happiness, age and ethnicity.

3) Men's attitudes are key to marriage

Several studies now show that commitment for men is particularly dependent on decisions made and willingness to sacrifice.

For example, men who move in before getting engaged (making that decision about the future) tend to have lower quality marriages. The theory is that men who “slide” into cohabiting then get married out of sheer inertia. What they may not have done is “decide.”

And divorce rates are falling so much today almost entirely because fewer wives, but not husbands, are filing for divorce. The most plausible explanation is that fewer men now “slide” into marriage due to social or family pressure to marry. So those men who do marry are more committed and their wives happier as a result.

Men's, but not women's, commitment is also linked to willingness to sacrifice and the perceived cost of sacrifice.

This is all chiming rather well with the Jesus/me model of marriage. Jesus doesn't get into a relationship with us accidentally. And it is Jesus who makes the sacrifice for us.

But the success of the family ultimately depends on how happy the woman is with her relationship. Our research finds that women's happiness is a far better predictor than men's happiness of their subsequent stability as a couple and their children's subsequent mental health.

“Happy wife, happy life” is real, suggesting that when a husband takes responsibility for the relationship, his wife is happier and the whole family benefits.

In other words, husband love your wife, in that order.