

Religion at Work

The 2019 Annual Population Survey [APS] in the UK asked questions about employment and broke the answers down by the religion of respondents (as measured in the Population Census, so not by attendance or membership, just adherence). Six religions were used, plus “none” and “other.” Answers are shown in the following Table, and indicate changes between 2012 when the APS was first held and 2018.

Religion	Christian %		Muslim %		Hindu %		Buddhist %		Jew %		Sikh %		Other Religion %		No Religion %		Overall %	
	2012	2018	2012	2018	2012	2018	2012	2018	2012	2018	2012	2018	2012	2018	2012	2018	2012	2018
Years	2012	2018	2012	2018	2012	2018	2012	2018	2012	2018	2012	2018	2012	2018	2012	2018	2012	2018
YES, employed?	72	76	47	55	69	76	66	69	72	74	68	74	68	73	72	77	71	75
Unemployed?	5	3	10	6	8	4	7	3	6	2	9	4	6	3	7	4	6	4
Employed as a manager?	26	25	17	15	24	25	21	26	45	40	21	21	31	27	26	25	26	24
Employed in high skilled occupation?	26	28	21	21	38	41	27	28	50	46	22	30	31	34	28	29	27	28
Employed in upper- middle- skilled occupation?	27	27	22	21	20	22	25	27	27	31	26	22	28	26	30	30	27	28
Employed in lower- middle- skilled occupation?	36	34	42	43	33	28	29	28	20	21	41	35	31	31	32	31	35	33
Employed in low skilled occupation?	11	11	15	14	9	9	19	17	3	2	11	13	10	9	10	10	11	11
Median hourly pay	£10	£12	£9	£10	£12	£14	£10	£11	£15	£19	£10	£12	£11	£13	£11	£12	£10	£12
% of pop. 2018	51.6		6.0		1.7		0.5		0.5		0.8		0.5		31.5		93.1	

Those neither employed nor unemployed were not active in the employment market. Median hourly pay means that half those asked earned less than this figure, and half more. The four rows describing type of occupation (coloured in blue) add up to 100% in each column. The overall percentage of the population figures are based on those answering the question in the 2011 Population Census, and projected to the 2018 published total. The 6.9% missing in the final row is the percentage not answering the question.

The number employed was 4% higher in 2018 than in 2012 (75% to 71%), the greatest increases being the Muslims (up 8%), Hindus (up 7%), and those in Other Religions or No Religion (both up 5%). Although employment in high-skilled and upper middle-skilled both increased slightly over these 6 years, employment as a manager dropped, especially for Jews (down 5%, but who have the highest proportion as managers) and those in Other Religions (down 4%), while increasing for Buddhists (up 5%).

High-skilled employment increased most for Sikhs (up 8%) and for Hindus and those in Other Religions (both up 3%), while it fell for the Jews (down 4%). These changes for the Jews and Sikhs were compensated for by declines in Upper-middle-skilled employment.

Christians are about average in all types of employment. Buddhists are significantly above average in both years in Low-skilled occupations, while Jews in both years are significantly below. That Jews are doing much better than those in other religions is reflected by their having the highest hourly earnings in both years, and the highest increase between 2012 and 2018.

Does religion and employment have any significance? The two are clearly linked for Jews (well above the average in skill-set and earnings), as they are for Muslims, but in the opposite direction. There is little to choose between the two largest groups – Christian and No Religion – in terms of skill-level employment and earning rate, and both have similar levels of employment, proving that Christians are in all types of employment.

SOURCE: Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics, November 2019.

Duns and District Parishes

Just as the Church of England combines parishes into benefices, and the Roman Catholics merge several congregations into a single more central congregation, so does the Church of Scotland combine various churches into a single whole, served usually by a single minister. Thus between 2014 and 2016 the congregations in Duns, Bonkyl, Edrom, Langton and Lammermuir Kirk were united into a single administrative congregation of “Duns and District” in the town of Duns in Berwickshire in the Scottish Borders in south-east Scotland.

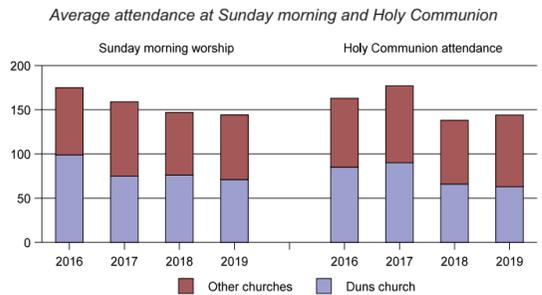
The Session Clerk, Kenneth McLean, has records of the entire District since 2014 and produced a summary of his statistics for their Kirk Session, kindly sending me a copy. There were 772 members of these various churches in 2014, but only 575 in 2019, a decline averaging - 5.7% per annum. During those years some 17 new members joined, but 197 had left, over half (52%) accounted for by death. 100 funerals were conducted between 2016 and 2019, but also 35 weddings and 39 baptisms.

While Sunday morning numbers are dropping slightly, that is less true for Holy Communion where numbers vary. Christmas attendance, however, is very different – almost four times as many across all the participating churches (eight in total), making it about 12% of the population attending, and twice as many if the various school services were included. Messy Church at Duns and at Cranshaw Church is popular, and growing (60 total in 2016, 110 in 2019).

Of course the situation is very different from a century ago, when some 17 churches could be counted with 15 ministers, against 5 churches now and 1 minister. The population has increased by a sixth in this period, from 6,400 to 7,500. The decline is real, however. Mr McLean says there were

some “3,300 attending in the late 1800s ... 2,300 after WWII ... 800 to 1,000 in 1990/2000s” against the nearly 600 now. The population percentage attending is lower than across Scottish Borders as a whole where it was 6% in 2016 (but likely to be under 5% by 2025).

The number attending is about 3% of the relevant population, and if the Episcopal and Roman Catholic churches are included then the attending percentage would be about 4.5%. The overall numbers are shown in the chart:



“We in Duns & District are dealing with decline but are trying to arrest it with hopefulness,” says Mr McLean, as he with others engages in imaginative enterprises, especially with children, seeking to encourage more to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ.

SOURCE: Personal letter from Mr McLean, January 2020; Duns & District Parishes 2019 Statistical Synopsis.

Immigrants are Important

Many churches feel it is part of their ministry to welcome immigrants to the UK, although nationally they have had a mixed reception over the years. Some come from Christian backgrounds and the Roman Catholic Church has made a special point of welcoming them by setting up a number of churches for overseas nationals, which now are called “Chaplaincies.” They cater for a wide variety of nationalities.

Fifty years ago, for example, in the 1970s, there were Catholic churches for Croats, Germans, Hungarians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Slovenes, Ukrainians and others. With the expansion of the EU and the agreement to open borders to all members, the number of such churches has increased. In Westminster Diocese for example there are now 35 different nationalities who are specially catered for.

In addition to those just mentioned there are Roman Catholic churches now for those from Albania, the Caribbean, Congo, Czech, France, Ghana, Goa, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latin America, Malaysia, Malta, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Travellers (Gypsy and Roma), Vietnam, Zambia, Zimbabwe and others.

The value of such churches is great. If you come from Croatia, for example, and struggle with English from Monday to Saturday as you settle into living in the UK, if only temporarily, you will be attracted to the Croatian Church on Sunday where they speak your own language – even if you were not a regular churchgoer when you lived in Croatia! Thus do the Catholics gradually extend their outreach.

The numbers attending Mass across most of the 20th century have not varied greatly across these various groups. Perhaps 10,000 in total attended in the year 1900, which had increased, with ups and downs, slowly to about 14,000 by the year 2000. Most of these churches are therefore quite small, and not all meet every week. This, however, has changed in the 21st century, especially with the coming of the Poles.

Interestingly, with the enlargement of the EU and the “open door” policy, numbers attending Mass across the entire spectrum of Chaplaincies has increased eight-fold, from about 14,000 in 2000 to 108,000 in 2017, an enormous increase. This has centred in Westminster as so many come, at least initially, and live in London, and transport into the centre is easy, since buses and tubes run on Sunday just as they do the rest of the week.

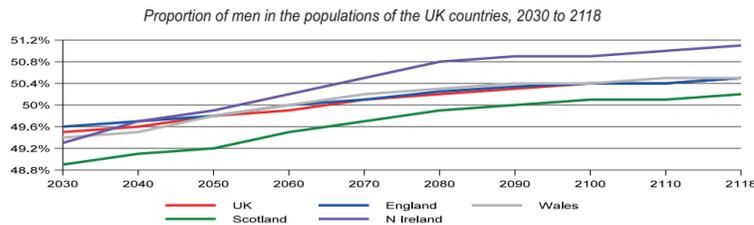
Much of this increase is due to the large number of Poles coming to Britain. Of the 108,000 overseas nationals going to Mass in 2017, 85% were Polish (92,000). The graph shows the number of Polish people coming to the UK in thousands since 2005. While it is obvious that the vast majority, five-sixths of the total, are living in England, just under a tenth are living in Scotland.

A Majority of Men

Worldwide, more men are born than women, normally in the proportion of 106 men to every 100 women, or a ratio of 52.1% to 47.9%. This is a global phenomenon unless a country has a birth-control policy (such as the one-child policy in China, although this has been rescinded since 2015) in which case many female foetuses were aborted making the male percentage much higher.

However, male mortality is slightly higher than female mortality and the proportions of the two sexes becomes more even usually when people are in their thirties. Due to women usually living longer than men, the proportion of men in the populations can drop to 40% or lower by the time people reach their 80s. The actual percentages vary from country to country. The overall national ratio in the UK across all ages is usually 49:51 men to women.

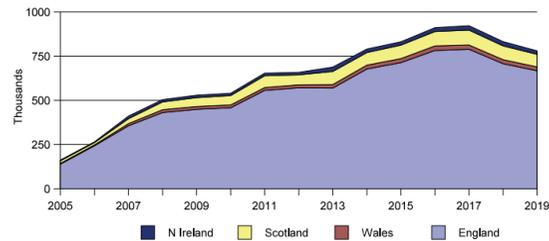
The latest figures from the Office for National Statistics show that in the UK the men are slowly catching up and, if present trends continue, then by 2064 the numbers in the UK will be exactly 50:50 men to women! Thereafter the men continue to grow marginally faster than the women reaching 50.5% of the total some 50 years later in 2118. This transition is not the same for each of the four UK countries as the chart shows.



It may be seen that N Ireland reaches a balance of men and women by 2055, while Scotland has to wait till 2090! But all four countries have a majority of men by the turn of the next century. Does this mean that the balance in the churches will be equal by then? It may well mean a few more men in church but there are so many more women now that it does seem unlikely the balance is restored over the next half century or so. It may also be that the seemingly greater vulnerability of men than women to the present coronavirus pandemic may have some effect on current and possibly future men/women ratios!

SOURCE: Office for National Statistics Population Projections, 2018-based, October 2019.

Polish people living in the UK, in thousands, 2005 to 2019



Those in Scotland are especially concentrated in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire where they work on the oil platforms in the North Sea and in the military establishments in that area also. So many of these wished to attend Mass that the Roman Catholics have set up 27 Polish-speaking Catholic Churches in Scotland, 25 in Aberdeen City or in the postcodes immediately to the west of the actual city in the suburban areas in Aberdeenshire, one in Dundee, one in Edinburgh with a Polish service in one of the churches in Glasgow.

Poland is a country of nearly 40 million people, about three-fifths the size of the UK. The third World Christian Encyclopaedia says that over the last 50 years it has seen 88-90% of its population notionally Roman Catholic. The relevant website indicates that about 10% of those working in the UK will wish to attend Sunday Mass. With a peak of 920,000 Poles in the UK in 2017 that’s a lot of people at Mass.

These extra Polish Mass attendees who have increased rapidly over the last 15 years have helped swell the number of active Roman Catholics in the UK. Total numbers of Catholics attending Mass have been dropping since their highest number of 2.8 million in the early 1960s to around 1.7 million in the year 2000, and now about 1.3 million in 2020. However such was the number of Poles wanting to attend Mass between 2006 and 2008 that the overall Catholic attendance rose from 1.606 million in 2006 to 1.612 million in 2008, a relatively small rise, with the Poles increasing from 31 thousand in 2006 to almost double that, 59 thousand, two years later, set against an otherwise overall Mass attendance decline in each of the 4 UK countries over that period.

A huge amount of administrative work goes on behind this cluster of Catholic Chaplaincies which exist in other cities besides London. Smaller clusters like the Hungarians or Tamil Sri Lankans have a dozen or more churches throughout England. Details of all those in the Westminster Diocese are on the website https://rcdow.org.uk/diocese/directory/ethnic-chaplaincies/.

SOURCE: Office for National Statistics Population Projections, 2018-based, October 2019, UK Church Statistics No 4, 2021 Edition, Brierley Consultancy, forthcoming, Table 4.4; web-site as indicated.

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FACTS FOR FORWARD PLANNING

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FUTURE FIRST

SNIPPETS

1) 44% of those attending Church of England churches who are under 16 are attending just 6.4% of all their churches. That means 94,205 young people are in 903 churches, an average of 104 each.

2) In the year 2000, 0.14% of 17 year-olds (one in 700) and 0.49% of 18 year-olds (one in 200) got married. Twenty years later the proportion in the same age groups were respectively 0.02% and 0.05% (1 in 5000 and 2000).

3) Of the 28 million households in the UK, one-third, 32%, have someone in them 65 or over. Only a fifth, 22%, of the UK population lived in these households, 1.7 people in each. It’s 2.7 people in all the others.

4) 90% of American preachers mentioned a New Testament book of the Bible when preaching in April or May 2019, and 60% an Old Testament book (analysis of 50,000 sermons put on the web).

5) Three-fifths of Millennials have no questions about or interest in the Bible; those who do engage with it on average once every 5 days.

6) One prediction for the future is that in 2040 “church leaders will spend as much money on programmes for the elderly as their predecessors did for the young.”

7) “Most of the 1 million UK’s unauthorised immigrant population is likely to be people who have overstayed their visas or asylum seekers who have remained in the UK after not seeing their cases approved.”

SOURCES: 1) Children and Young People in the Church of England, Evangelism and Discipleship Group, January 2020; 2) Marriage Registrations, and 3) Labour Force Survey, both Demographic Analysis Unit, Office for National Statistics, April 2020; 4) The Digital Pulpit, Pew Research Centre survey, December 2019, Page 3; 5) The Bible and Digital Millennials, David Ford et al., Routledge, 2019, Pages 25 & 33; 6) Article by Mal Fletcher in Christianity January 2020, Page 45; 7) Report on Europe’s unauthorised immigrant population, Pew Research Centre, November 2019.

CORONAVIRUS AND THE CHURCH

Like every other part of Europe and indeed most other countries, the UK has seen almost a complete lockdown, except for essential workers such as the many medical teams. Church services are now being transmitted via YouTube or other social media. These services usually contain a song, a hymn or two, a brief sermon of about 10 minutes, a few prayers and a Bible reading. They last about 45 minutes on average, about half the length of a normal Sunday church service. The BBC is also transmitting a pre-recorded Sunday morning service as well as a number of radio stations.

Some churches have introduced a daily prayer slot, or are providing a children’s programme on line once or twice a week. All such seem to be popular and attract those who may well not have visited the relevant church for years! It is, however, mostly all one-way; by and large, it involves only the presenter(s) and a passive audience.

Positives for the media use

Many non-regular church people watching. It would seem that many people in isolation are watching these streamed services at home, many more than usually attend the church in question. While comprehensive statistics are not available, many churches are reporting increases from viewing of 20%, 50% or even 100%. Reports of such come from Catholic, Anglican and Evangelical churches. Numbers tripled in Catholic churches over Easter in Wrexham, Wales, for example.

Advantages of social media viewing. It allows avoidance of unfavourable weather, is much easier for the elderly or disabled to be involved, and you can have a cup of tea alongside you if you wish! Armchairs at home are probably more comfortable than pews. And there are no collections!

Popularity of format. Some say they like the “personal” approach with the preacher as he/she seems just a couple of feet away which means the sermon is more likely to be listened to! It’s usually shorter also. It may help bring calm to worried people. Some may be seeking answers from the Christian faith as to why God has sent or allowed this worldwide plague.

Negatives for the media use

Context is very different. This is not, however, a return to the pre-Constantinian era before 300 AD! The situation is of course very different; then people gathered under threat of persecution; today we worship within our own four walls because of governmental decree to stay in our homes. Then they gathered with other families often in secret; today we watch the service openly in our home as a single family or one or two people on their own.

Primacy within the preaching is not known. How far the Gospel is actually being preached is unknown; how many people are coming to faith is unknown; how much this will lead to an increase in congregations when we are allowed to re-gather is unknown.

Middle-class and/or resource dominance. However, huge numbers of churchgoing people, particularly the elderly and less well-off, do not have a smart phone, a tablet or computer. As one person said, “Having been a Christian for 75 years without YouTube, I can probably survive without it a bit longer.” Not everyone can afford iPhones or understand the intricacies of modern technology.

Long-term impact uncertain. This doesn’t replace the connectedness of face-to-face interaction, nor the theological imperative for it, though it might suggest a wider and simpler framework for the future. Nor does it replace loneliness. Nor does everyone have a comfortable home to watch in, or a sympathetic family. Neither does the minister have the opportunity to get to know any of the new people who are engaging with the church through online services.

Usefulness of church buildings. Many people use a church building for private prayer either in a busy city or quiet rural village. The government have ordered all churches, mosques, temples, synagogues, etc. to be closed. Will some people consequently stop their habit of praying in such buildings? Church buildings are also widely used for mid-week meetings and activities both Christian and secular, most of which cannot be replicated on line. For instance, one church before lockdown provided mid-week morning activities for the elderly (usually about 100) followed by a communal cooked lunch, and sometimes a talk after lunch.

Long-term implications

Helpful service supports faith image. Churches which are currently involved in serving their local community, especially with meals, food banks, and other like services, are building an image of love and care. Finance for such is often being donated and volunteers are coming forward. Those which do the most are likely to emerge the stronger, or at least more respected than they were. Catholic priests are much appreciated for being allowed to give end-of-life care while other denominations face internal restrictions.

Subsequent denominational infrastructure. Such ways of working with social media may be helpful when the pandemic is over. Church meetings via Zoom might be shorter and save travel time and some costs, but the vertical component can be fragmented. Equally though, it is unlikely the church will totally swing back to “normal” when the panic is over.

Unanswerable questions abound. How many “regulars” will fail to return to their churches? How many will “change” churches after “discovering” others? How many churches, particularly rural ones, without suitable tech facilities during the pandemic, will find it hard to resume again?

Internationally, some will have noted that (at the time of writing), with only 208 deaths by the end of April and 15,000 cases in a population of 8 million, the Jewish state appears to have weathered the coronavirus far better than other Middle Eastern nations. In addition to practical considerations, is there any spiritual implication in this situation?

God and the Virus

God's intention. Is the virus a punishment or warning sent from God? We can be confident that God is in control. When a worldwide (as far as “worldwide” was understood) famine calamity occurred millennia ago, the pre-Israel family of Jacob was preserved in Egypt by the “lost” member of their family, Joseph, who after being sold into slavery by his hard-hearted brothers had become leader of all Egypt. “You meant it for evil, but God intended it for good,” said Joseph.

Lament or repent? Is the pandemic God's voice urging us to repent before Jesus comes? Former Bishop Tom Wright feels it is more “a call to lament,” a response to the unanswered question “Why?” In the Bible, the Spirit groans, Jesus weeps and God grieves for His creation. The miracle of Dunkirk when King George VI led the nation in a Day of Prayer was based on national repentance and a humble cry for mercy. Only the Presidents of Kenya and Brazil have thus far publicly sought a national Day of Prayer (and Fasting in Brazil) for Covid-19. Has the increasing secularisation of Europe and the UK, their dismissal of God, and rejection of Biblical truth on such issues as same-sex marriage and abortion had any part to play in the severity of Covid-19 across the continent?

Financial implications. Some charities will fail as well as businesses; many will become unemployed. One survey has shown this as a top concern among Americans. We'll need to learn to look at things other than money and “success.” Some of the largest organisations may fail, including major airlines. The impact on the market is impossible to predict. Government's assistance will, of necessity, be limited. “After the disease, the debt,” was one headline.

Especially hard for some. Among the hardest hit will be the dependent young, the elderly and the vulnerable. This is especially true of the many orphans in Africa and other non-Western areas. The impact of the loss of education for say 6 months in lockdown is unknown. Limitation of disabled provision and Care Homes equipment will hit families. Will it provide more fuel for the pro-abortionists? Will it lead to fresh calls for euthanasia? Will people become more conscious of death and the need to prepare for it?

Virus Statistics

Unconvincing interpretations. Statistics are being pumped out in virtually every news bulletin and daily newspaper in a non-normal intensity. Their reception varies between two extremes – obsessively seeking to absorb and relate to each new statistical revelation (sometimes placing more reliance on, and giving reaction to, than the figures warrant) or totally ignoring each assessment (as either too hard to understand or too depressing). Though aware of statistical uncertainty among the experts, most people seem willing to accept curves and peaks and troughs as reasonable representations of the daily situation.

Not totally universal. As of 14th May 2020, out of 215 countries in the world, only 12 nations had not had (or not reported) a single case: North Korea, Turkmenistan, and the majority of the smaller Pacific Island countries – Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. That's about 5% of world countries with NO coronavirus.

A second peak? The death tally from this pandemic has been horrendous whether in China, Iran, Spain, Italy, the United States or the UK. The rate of deaths seems to follow a clear pattern; relatively few in the first 2 weeks, and then numbers begin to multiply upwards, stay at a high level, and then begin to fall. In a few countries, like Singapore (so far), the numbers stay low for some while and then begin to rise again (the so-called “second peak”).

Need for reliable comparative data. A steady increase to a peak and then a dropping away (a “bell curve”) is familiar from many aspects of life; a second phase is much less so. Country comparisons are not always valid as the same criteria are not used for measurement. “Cases per million population” takes into account the varying size of populations, but not their relative dispersal within their geographical area (so urban areas can show as worse than rural areas).

Total picture please. At the same time other factors need to be measured also. Covid-19 affects men more than women; older people more than young, black people more than white, obese more than non-obese, and so on. Statistics can paint a situation; much wisdom is needed to explain them!

SOURCES: Niall McCarthy, *Statistica*, 30th March 2020; Wikipedia; *The Tablet*, 18th and 25th April 2020, both Page 29; *Church Times*, 24th April 2020, Page 20; *Daily Telegraph*, 29th April 2020; *Time*, 20th April 2020, Page 17; George Barna, personal email, 30th April, 2020; many person conversations.

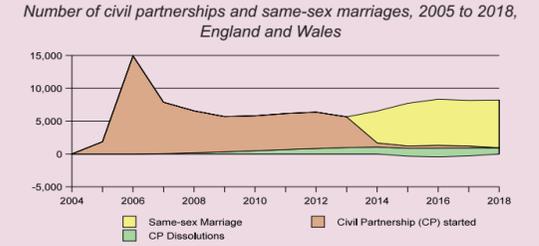
SAME-SEX FALLOUT

Civil Partnerships were first legalised from 21st December 2005, and although they recognised two unrelated people living together in the same household, they were not regarded as marriage. Then came same-sex marriages as from 29th March 2014, which were of course counted as marriages, recorded separately as male partnerships or female. Subsequently existing civil partnerships were also able to convert their relationship into a marriage.

The statistics behind these changes are interesting. In the four years 2014 to 2017 (later information is not yet available) some 25,300 same-sex marriages have taken place, some 560 per month on average. Just over two-fifths of these, 44%, were male marriages, and the remaining 56% were female. Very few, just 11%, took place in a Registry Office; virtually all the rest, 88%, were in Approved Premises, and just 1% (actually 0.7%) were in a Church.

The 171 which took place in a Church are too few to provide a realistic sample by sex or denomination, so details have not been released. Same-sex marriages are 2.6% of all marriages (or 1 in every 40), and religious same-sex marriages are 0.07% of them, one in every 1,400 opposite-sex. The rarity of religious same-sex marriages reflects the fact that many churches are uncomfortable with same-sex marriage even if allowed by the law of the land, as well as the inference that same-sex couples prefer a civil ceremony or wouldn't want a church ceremony.

One of the differences between civil partnerships and same-sex marriages is that if the relationship breaks down, the partnership is dissolved, whereas in a marriage the parties are divorced. There is a third type of relationship for couples – co-habiting, again which can be same-sex or opposite-sex. When these breakdown, the couple just separate.



The negative numbers in the chart reflect the fact that in the years 2015 to 2017 there were more dissolutions than new civil partnerships being established! To put civil partnerships into perspective, in 2006, their most numerous year, there were 14,900 started, while 248,000 other couples got married. The first figure is 6% of the second. Numbers of same-sex marriage divorces have yet to be published.

SOURCE: *Office for National Statistics*, October 2019.

This may be helpful - Book received

Their Master's Voice, Chris Woodall, Wipf and Stock, Eugene, OR, 2021. A book from an experienced author showing how the Major Prophets of the Old Testament can help equip Christians in the 21st century. Price £15.

Humour

A small boy on his return from Sunday School said, “Mother, teacher asked all those who wanted to go to heaven to raise their hands.” “Well, I'm sure you did,” said his mother. “No,” said her son, “you told me to come straight home.”

A little boy had been to Sunday School for the first time and was asked by his mother how it compared with Day School. “Oh, I like it much better,” he replied, “There are no exams there, and at the end you go to heaven instead of the High School.”

The children in Sunday School had been told the Old Testament story about Lot's wife, who had looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt. One little boy's arm shot up. “Yes, Jeremy,” said the teacher. “Please, Miss,” said Jeremy, “My Mum looked back once when she was driving home – and she turned into a lamp post.”

SOURCE: *Humour, Clerical and General*, John Barnes

Australian Gen Y

In the 2016 Australian Population Census, two-fifths, 39%, of those aged 18 to 34 (their “Gen Y” generation) said they had No Religion, against 30% of the population as a whole. A survey by a Doctor of Ministry student, Mark Bohr, in 2017 explored the current religion of those of Gen Y age and how it had altered in their life-time. The survey found that there was a movement away from traditional and evangelical churches but a considerable increase towards Pentecostal churches and the No Religion position.

However, he also found a movement away from a specific (denominational) identity to a middle, more neutral, ground of uncertain belief systems. So there was a large increase in the “Christian, not further defined” category. When those in the No Religion cohort were asked how they identified, their replies were: 37% Atheist, 37% Agnostic and 26% Spiritual.

What had put this generation off the church? There were four main answers:

(1) *Beliefs and morals.* The value system of the church was not theirs, especially regarding same-sex issues and a lack of tolerance for different lifestyles; they found a much greater tolerance among their non-church friends. Gender per se was not an issue; it was caught up in the same-sex debate. Another key difference related to science, with Gen Y finding church beliefs too rigid.

(2) *Bad experiences of church.* As a consequence GenY folk found that they lacked confidence in the church (or Christian organisations). Church leaders were “too dogmatic”; their belief system “too narrow”; they were not “open to dialogue.” GenY wanted to be individualistic believers.

(3) *Religious people.* Gen Y wished to be open-minded, who could relate to Muslims, to gay people, etc. The negative media cover arising from terrorist attacks was a problem for some as well.

(4) *Feeling judged.* Many of the Gen Y who were interviewed said they wished to be in a position where they did not have to answer to church leadership. They did not wish to identify with particular churches, although they still believed in Jesus and the Bible.

It seemed to the researcher that those spoken to had been put off by the church not recognising individuality and differences. There was no “safe place” in which to communicate, and the church's position was seen as confrontational rather than open and listening.



SOURCE: Article “Gen Y and the Church” by Mark Bohr, in *Pointers*, Christian Research Association, Vol 29, No 4, December 2019, Pages 1-6.

Evangelical “Tribes”

Whether liked or not, the word “tribe” is being used for various groups of church people. It is of course a Biblical word, but it was applied to 21st century denominational groups by George Barna in his 2011 book *The Seven Faith Tribes*. Use of the word in a faith context has subsequently become more common, and in an article by Euan Dodds, of the Holyrood Evangelical Church in Edinburgh, in the March 2020 issue of *Evangelicals Now* it was used to describe the Evangelical Tribes in particular.

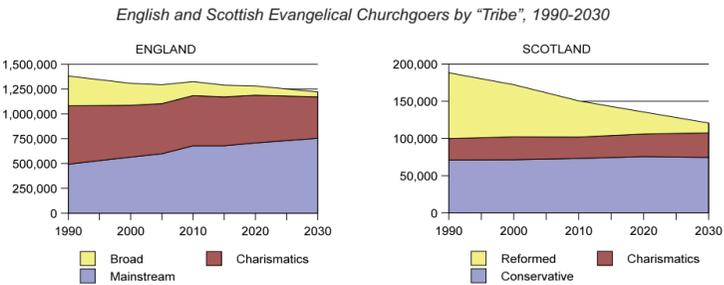
He described three groups which, under different names, have been applied to Evangelicals ever since the English Church Census first measured churchmanship in 1989. The Census offered three choices for Evangelicals completing the form – the Broad, the Mainstream and the Charismatic.

- (a) Those ticking both “Broad” and “Evangelical” were called Broad Evangelical;
- (b) Those ticking both “Charismatic” and “Evangelical” were called Charismatic Evangelical;
- (c) Those ticking just the Evangelical box and nothing else were called Mainstream Evangelical.

The inclusion of the word “Mainstream” was added simply to avoid confusion with the other two groups. This terminology was first published in 1990, well before the designations “Mainstream Anglicans” or “Mainstream Baptists” for groupings came into existence.

The first graph illustrates the numbers in each of these three groupings in England, from 1990 to an estimated 2030. This shows that (a) the Broad Evangelicals are declining (at an average rate of -1.2% per annum), and (b) so are the Charismatic Evangelicals, but at -0.9% per annum; (c) the Mainstream are growing at +1.1% however. While the English Charismatic experience is different from that in Scotland, it is often because many of the Mainstream Evangelical churches were formerly designated Charismatic but have so integrated the charismatic outlook and way of worship into their Mainstream Evangelical position that they no longer feel it necessary to call themselves “Charismatic”!

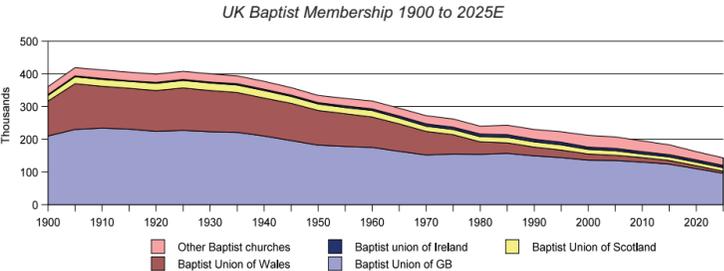
The “hiccup” of growth between 2005 and 2010 among Mainstream Evangelicals was largely due to the growth in that period of many Pentecostal churches, not all of whom are Charismatic. Anglicans also saw a significant growth in that period, with many churches experimenting with Fresh Expressions. The “hiccups” for Charismatic and Broad simply reflect that for Mainstream. However, the overall number of Evangelicals is declining.



In Scotland the word “Reformed” has been used in the Scottish Church Censuses instead of the word “Broad,” and, through these surveys, “tribal” numbers can be measured, and projected, as shown in the second graph – note the vertical scale is different.

In his article Euan describes these three groups as “(a) Broad (or Reformed) (who tend to be part of the Liberal grouping), (b) Charismatic/Pentecostal and (c) Conservative” respectively, using “Conservative” for “Mainstream.” It may be seen that the Charismatics are growing very slightly (including the Pentecostal element within them) at +0.3% per annum, and so are the Conservatives (or Mainstream) at +0.1%, while the Reformed or Broad are declining at -4.6% per annum. Notice that despite Conservative and Charismatic growth, the number of Evangelicals in Scotland is also declining. Will the coronavirus accelerate or reverse these declines?

SOURCE: *Does the Future have a Church?*, Peter Brierley, AD&C Publishers, Tonbridge. 2019, Tables 3.7 and A6.



Fewer Older People

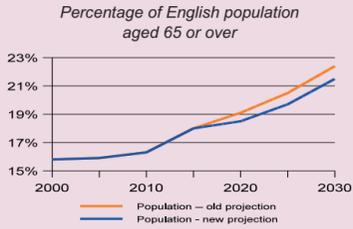
Every two years the Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes projections of the UK population, broken down by the UK's four countries, for up to 100 years ahead. The latest edition, for 2018, was based on population estimates made in 2016, while the previous edition in 2016 was based on 2014 estimates. At that time (in 2014) the expectancy of life had been increasing slowly but steadily for the previous 40 or 50 years and the projection was that it would continue.

But it hasn't. Over the last four years life expectancy has flattened although still increasing very slightly, both for men and women. This lesser rate is thought to be mainly due to health conditions associated with increasing obesity. As a consequence the number of people living to older ages has declined, so when ONS published its latest, 2018-based, projections, the numbers had changed.

In the 2016 edition it was thought that in 2020 the number of people in England 65 and over would be 10.9 million, in 2030 13.5 million, and in 2040 15.4 million. Revised calculations published in the 2018 edition now put the number in 2020 at 10.5 million, in 2030 at 12.7 million and in 2040 at 14.5 million with, of course, greater reductions at later dates. Thus the number of centenarians expected to be living in 2050 in the 2016 edition was given as 200,000, but the 2018 edition reduces that number to “only” 50,000.

This makes virtually no difference as far as churchgoers are concerned, as their projected numbers are broadly the same; it just means they become a slightly higher proportion of their generation.

The population difference is graphed below:



Another interesting facet of the new projections is that they are showing that men are gradually living longer than women, so that by the year 2070 there will be more men in the UK than women! The difference is very slight – 160,000 – 37,880,000 women and 38,040,000 men, or 49.9% to 50.1%.

One consequence of the general ageing of the population is that the numbers of women of child-bearing age reduces as a proportion of the



SNOWFLAKES

Spirituality. Robert Dixon, author of *Australia's Original Languages* (2019), was asked if there was any word in Aboriginal languages or dialects for “spirituality.” His reply was: “Sorry, I don't know of such a word. This is a very European concept.” Aboriginals sense that we are all already spiritual and do not need to take up a Western concept of “add-on spirituality or even Christianity or Christ.”

SOURCE: Essay “Being Aboriginal is Enough” in *Zadok Perspectives*, by Glenn Loughrey, No 145, Summer 2019, Pages 5-6.

Smoking. It has long been known that churchgoers tend to smoke less than others. Now the Office for National Statistics has proved it! Figures recently issued showed that 18% of those who have no religion smoked, while for Muslims and Christians it was only 11%, 5% for Hindus, 4% for Jews, 2% for Sikhs and 9% for those in other religions. This confirms what actuaries found among clergy in 2013 that they tend to live longer than others in the general population, on average 4 years, partly for this reason.

SOURCE: Office for National Statistics, *Religion and Health*, February 2020.

Children's Reading. Children who read for themselves for pleasure fare better in school attainment, social mobility and emotional well-being, research has shown. Other children are read to by their parents or others.

Age	Daily reading for pleasure	Being read to
5-7 2018	35%	39%
5-7 2019	41%	44%
6-11 2019	40%	25%
11-13 2018	32%	~
11-13 2019	23%	~

SOURCE: Research by Egmont, given in article in *The Bookseller*, 28th February, 2020, Page 9.

Sexuality Unchanged. The latest survey of UK sexuality shows that designations have changed little over the five years 2014 to 2018, although there is a trend for greater variations from heterosexual. The base figure is in millions. Age-wise, 96.7% of those aged 16 to 24 were heterosexual in 2014, 94.4% in 2018, and 99.0% and 98.8% respectively for those aged 65 or over.

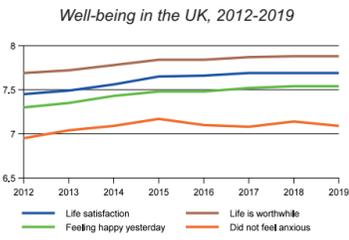
Sexuality	Men		Women	
	2014	2018	2014	2018
Heterosexual	97.7	96.9	98.5	97.3
Gay or Lesbian	1.6	1.9	0.7	0.9
Bisexuals	0.4	0.6	0.8	1.1
Others	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.7
Base (=100%)	24.491	25.263	25.740	26.412

SOURCE: *Annual Population Survey*, Office for National Statistics, 2014-2018, October 2019.

population, and with that a reduction in the number of babies being born. As a consequence the size of the population begins to reduce – in Wales it peaks in 2025, in Scotland in 2043 and in N Ireland in 2050. It doesn't peak in England (or at least not before 2118, the limit of the 2018 projection), because of the increasing number of new migrants coming into the country at present, many of whom are women of child-bearing years, though this may change as Government policies change. The other 3 countries receive insufficient numbers of such migrants to offset the general losses from deaths.

SOURCE: *Population Projections*, Office for National Statistics, Principal Projection, 2018-based, 2019.

Life Satisfaction. Every year since 2012 the Office for National Statistics has been required by the Government to undertake a “Well-being” survey. The average results of asking the question, “How satisfied are you with your life nowadays?” (where 0 = not at all satisfied, and 10 = completely satisfied) are shown in the graph, along with answers to the questions, “To what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?”, “How happy did you feel yesterday?” and “How anxious did you feel yesterday?” (scores taken away from 10 = completely anxious):



The graphs show a slight increase in well-being, as judged by these questions over the last 8 years, but slightly raised numbers of people feeling anxious. How these vary by religion is measured, but unfortunately not published.

SOURCE: *Annual Population Survey*, Office for National Statistics, November 2019.

Life Satisfaction and Coronavirus. The Office for National Statistics undertook extra surveys to assess the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. As might be expected they found that satisfaction with life in the three weeks between 20th March and 13th April 2020 had gone down 4% for those under 70, and 3% for those 70 and over. “Is your life worthwhile?” had increased by 1% and decreased 2% for young and old; “Were you happy yesterday?” had increased by 5% and decreased by 4% for young and old; and “Are you anxious?” had decreased by 7% and increased by 4% for young and old respectively.

SOURCE: *Opinions and Lifestyle Survey* (COVID-19 module), Office for National Statistics, 4th May 2020.

The longest sermons. An analysis of 49,700 sermons from 6,400 American churches delivered in April and May 2019 which were recorded and available through the web were analysed for length. Catholic homilies were shortest (14 minutes on average), followed by mainline Protestants (25 minutes), then Evangelical Protestants (39 minutes), with the longest Black Protestant churches (54 minutes). The churches are not a typical sample – larger than most, and more likely to be in an urban area.

SOURCE: *The Digital Pulpit*, Report by the Pew Research Centre, December 2019, Page 2.

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