

- 71% said that they were likely to reduce staff hours
- 72% said their organisation needed access to emergency funds⁸

63% of 290 youth workers surveyed by London Youth said that their youth organisation was moving to some form of digital provision, rather than suspending services and support entirely. However, 31% said that they don't have the infrastructure to provide digital youth services, and 65% identified an urgent need for this.⁹ Lots of services will have found a way to move online, but for many young people this will not have been able to replace the level of support that has been lost.

How can we help?

Some of the recommendations emerging from evidence can be acted on by churches and parents, as well as youth workers.

- Signpost to quality information
- Facilitate young people helping others
- Target support to those with known mental health challenges

- Promote time outdoors
- Celebrate new skills and coping mechanisms
- Help young people learn how to manage uncertainty

If you're looking for more help, Youthscape is launching a new website with lots of resources for young people to support their mental health and wellbeing. It's called Headstrong and you can find it at: www.beheadstrong.uk.

- 1) *The Children's Society - Life on Hold: Children's Well-being and COVID-19*, July 2020. N = 2000, weighted to be representative of the UK.
- 2) Levita, L. (2020) COVID-19 psychological research consortium (C19PRC). Initial research findings on the impact of COVID-19 on the well-being of young people aged 13 to 24 in the UK. N = 2002 13-24 year olds. Survey ran 21st-29th April 2020.
- 3) *Young People in Lockdown: A report by The Prince's Trust and YouGov*. N = 1,022 16 to 25-year-olds.
- 4) Op cit Footnote (1).
- 5) *Barnardo's Big Conversation Survey* – YouGov, May 2020. N = 4,283, weighted to be representative of the UK.
- 6) *Out of Sight* – National Youth Agency.
- 7) Young Minds (summer 2020) Coronavirus: *Impact on young people with mental health needs*. Survey 1: N = 2,111 13-25 year olds and Survey 2: N = 2036 13-25 year olds.
- 8) *Impact of COVID-19 on London Youth Members*, UK Youth Survey, April 2020.
- 9) Ibid.

Gender of Churchgoers

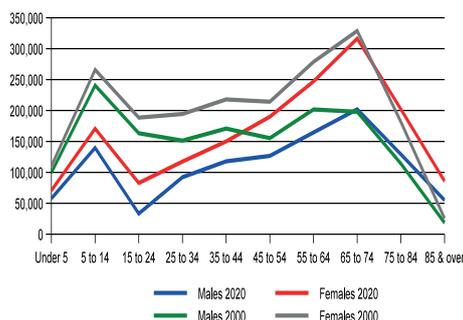
The graph shows the results of an analysis of English churchgoers in the years 2000 and 2020 by age-group and gender. The age-groups have been evened out so that they are all 10 years in length, except for the youngest and oldest groups. Those under 15 are treated as being 29% under 5, and 71% aged 5 to 14 (proportions emerging from the 2016 Scottish Church Census for both males and females).

The broad pattern of change is, however, readily discernible. Numbers in church in the year 2000 (the top two lines of the graph) were broadly similar from about 20 years to about 50 or 55. Both genders then increase as people move into their 60s and 70s, though the numerical gap between them widens, and reduce subsequently in their 70s and 80s due to normal mortality, showing no significant difference between the genders by age 85.

The numbers in 2020 follow a similar pattern except that they gradually increase from about 25 to 55, and then, like their older companions, increase on retirement and then die off. The reduction in numbers between 15 and 24 in both 2000 and 2020 is very clear. There is no broad difference in trend between male and female for these two years, although there are substantially more women than men in church between 65 and 74 in both of these years.

There are also considerably more older people, 85 and over, in church in 2020 than there were in 2000, men and women, reflecting the general population trend of increasing numbers of older people.

Number of English Churchgoers by Age and Gender, 2000 and 2020



SOURCE: UK Church Statistics, No 4, 2021 Edition, ADBC Publishers, forthcoming, Page 13.7.

Church Online

Among the number of new concepts introduced to us by the coronavirus pandemic is the idea of “church online,” both among the Christian population and those less familiar with “church.” Many ministers have commented that, while they may initially have struggled, the new format has worked, and has drawn in people who would not normally go to church, theirs or anyone else's.

One Diocese carried out a survey across its various benefices, receiving some 180 replies to its questions. Five-sixths, 84%, had made some kind of online provision for its work, with three-quarters, 76%, providing worship services. Over half did such more than once a week!

In total the online church respondents had almost 1,300 participants on a Sunday, but these were augmented by a further almost 800 who tuned in subsequently. Normally if you aren't at a church service, you've missed it! Not now! To have so many who followed the service subsequently, an increase of over three-fifths, 62%, of the original Sunday watchers, must say something about the usefulness of this format, popularity, and the convenience of being able to worship at an alternative time.

Do online services “work”? For many, the overall answer is positive. “Although online services have (a number) of limitations, people can meet with God. Two people have come to faith through online services,” wrote one minister. It enables the church to re-connect with those who have moved away, and not found another church to attend. “It's easier for people to come than to walk through a church door,” said another.

“We have overcome being a physically dispersed rural church. We are now a church built on a praying community across 30 different people praying together morning and evening,” was the testimony of another. Housebound people, providing they have the necessary facilities and technological “know-how,” can also participate..

Some of the other facts the survey ascertained are useful too. Of the 1,300 Sunday watchers, 500 used Zoom and 800 other platforms like Facebook. Of the churches participating in the survey, 45% were providing worship services and other online events, 32% worship services only, 7% other events only, and just 16% (one church in 6) nothing on-line at all. There is no question that “you need people with technical skills,” commented one minister – “it's been a steep learning curve, and you need to keep the format fresh.”

Is it worth all the bother? Evidently so, as over half, 55%, of the churches aim to continue online services once lockdown is over. Only 7% said they wouldn't with the remaining 38% uncertain. Two-fifths of the churches, 41%, found that their numbers watching the service had increased over the weeks of lockdown, but this was offset by the 45% who found their numbers decreased. The remaining 14% said they had stayed the same.

In at least one church “75% of usual attendees do not have internet so they need to be able to join by telephone,” a provision that many churches made (as well as the central Church of England HQ).

Overall, therefore, have online services been beneficial? In the technical sense, yes, as “we are more capable than we thought at first,” said one respondent, but spoke for many. So new technical skills have been learned. “Planning online is very different – it needs to be engaging and concise,” said one person, so teaching skills presumably need to be sharpened also.

Faith-wise, as mentioned above, some have come to faith. Some have “come back” to church. Many have watched for the first time. Some have watched services from other churches. Others, though, will have been put off by the format. “Online services are no substitute for a church service,” wrote one leader.

Overall, the experience in this Diocese was probably positive, worth continuing in some way as new people were being reached, but as one minister summed it up, “There is opportunity to reach wider, but more difficult to go deeper.”

SOURCE: Survey of Church Online, summary sheet of results received August 2020, courtesy Heather Wraight.

Churchgoing Environment

One of the questions in the 1989 English Church Census was to ask in which kind of environment the church was located, with eight options given. 90% of the 27,000 churches answering that Census answered this question. One huge advantage of such information is that a church's environment for the most part does not change, though, of course, it is unknown for new churches which have sprung up since that date (which are assumed to be spread pro rata to existing churches, but still able to project with reasonable accuracy).

The Table shows the proportion of churchgoers in various years in the 21st century:

Percentage of English churchgoers by church environment, 2000-2030E

Environment	2000 %	2005 %	2010 %	2020 %	2030E %	% change per annum
City Centre	5.1	5.2	5.2	5.5	5.7	-0.8
Inner City	11.0	11.8	12.1	13.4	15.0	-0.2
Council Estate	7.6	7.1	7.0	6.4	6.1	-1.9
Suburban	35.0	35.5	35.8	36.5	36.4	-1.1
Separate Town	16.4	17.4	17.0	17.3	17.1	-1.1
Other built-up	4.4	4.4	4.1	3.6	3.3	-2.1
Commuter Rural	11.0	10.5	10.6	10.2	10.0	-1.5
Remoter Rural	9.5	8.1	8.2	7.1	6.4	-2.5
Base (=100%)	3,519,500	3,236,100	3,068,300	2,791,300	2,448,700	-1.2

Average congregational size by church environment, 2000-2030E

Environment	2000	2005	2010	2020	2030E	% change per annum
City Centre	106	99	93	97	89	-0.6
Inner City	125	119	115	120	115	-0.3
Council Estate	107	90	84	75	64	-1.7
Suburban	140	130	124	122	110	-0.8
Separate Town	121	114	105	100	87	-1.1
Other built-up	103	92	81	68	57	-2.0
Commuter Rural	62	54	51	48	44	-1.1
Remoter Rural	33	27	26	23	21	-1.5
Overall	93	86	83	77	71	-0.8

The Table shows that the proportion of churchgoers in the Inner City is increasing, consequent upon the growing numbers of Pentecostal and Diaspora congregations. Over these 30 years the Inner City is the one environmental group which has come closest to maintaining its turn-of-the-century numbers. Council Estate attendance is declining quite rapidly, partly because of the influx of refugees where many of them end up settling, many of whom are Muslim or other non-Christian religions.

Suburban and Town numbers keep up relatively well; the church by and large is middle class which is where many of such live. The areas of real concern, however, are the rural areas, whether Commuter or Remoter Rural. Both are declining fast, and especially the Remoter Rural.

The first Table looks at churchgoers. The number of churches or congregations is much more stable and while the numbers do change because some churches close and others open, the shift between different environments is actually minimal, even over a thirty year period. What is more interesting, however, is to divide the number of churchgoers by the number of congregations to get the average church size by environment, and these figures are shown in the second Table.

The second Table shows that numbers have generally declined in each environment across these 30 years. The worse affected (in order) are the Other Built-up areas, Council Estates, Remoter Rural and the Commuter Rural. All have declined more than the average.

The average congregation rose between 2010 and 2020 for City Centre churches and those in the Inner City. This corresponds to the growth (and church planting) of many larger churches in the middle of many English cities, such as those supported by Holy Trinity Brampton (a total of 52 plants in 2020), and the already mentioned growth of Pentecostal and Diaspora churches in the Inner City especially.

If the average congregation in 2020 is 77 people, one needs to ask how financially viable is it likely to be, and if numbers shrink further, which is likely, at what stage does the supporting structure of the church need to be changed? Such questions will not be new for those in rural areas but a congregation of 48 in Commuter Rural areas and only 23 in Remoter Rural areas simply indicates the huge amount of support needed for these ministries. Where does that support come from? Should congregations seriously think of merging as a number are being made to do so in some Roman Catholic Dioceses (due mainly to a shortage of priests) and encouraged in some Church of Scotland Presbyteries?

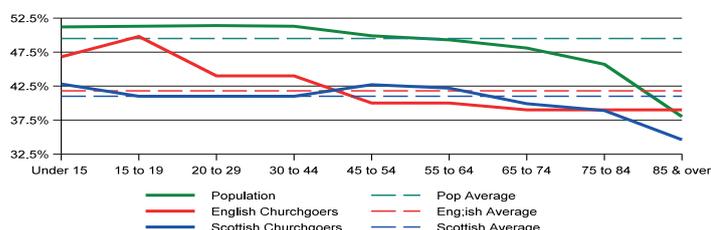
If these figures turn out to be only approximately correct, it is obvious the church is in a very perilous situation. If survival becomes a worry, how can energy be given to proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, which ultimately is the function of the church? The problem is the remedy; the church can only survive if it grows.

SOURCE: UK Church Statistics, No 4, 2021 Edition, ADBC Publishers, forthcoming, Page 13.19.

THE MALE GAP

Another article looks at the age of male churchgoers, but there's an alternative way of approaching the data. Simplistically, most of us assume the world is half male and half female, although we know that women live longer than men, so there's more women as you get older. The actual percentage of men in England, according to the latest projection of the Office for National Statistics is, to one decimal place, in England 49.5% men to 50.5% women. This varies, however by age, as the graph shows (the green line, where the dashed line is the overall average, 49.5%).

Percentage of men in the Population and in Church, 2020, England and Scotland



The graph also shows similar lines for both English and Scottish Churchgoers, in red and blue respectively, with their overall averages also shown by dashed lines. The graph shows the following:

- Those who are 70 or more in the population are a long way from the overall average, because there are many men in the population between 20 and 70 (63%).
- The average proportion of men among English and Scottish churchgoers is very close, with England slightly more, but both being far short of the population average.
- Many younger English churchgoers are much more likely to be male than Scottish ones (under 30).
- Like the population as whole, elderly Scottish churchgoers are a long way from the average, meaning many more women than men in these older ages.

Does such an analysis help us to reach more men? Maybe not, but it does show where there are more or fewer men in certain age bands. Another approach is given in a recent book by the American Barna Group which looks at five characteristics of men – their identity, their vocation, their well-being, their relationships, and their church attendance. Written by Tom Wilson, the CEO of an organisation called BetterMan, it can be downloaded from the Barna website, its purpose being to strengthen ministry among men. It shows that the key differences between Christian and non-Christian men are that the former can offer the latter (a) peace, (b) rest and (c) hope, these being key needs that churches are well-positioned to meet.

SOURCE: UK Church Statistics, No 4, 2021 Edition, ADBC Publishers, forthcoming, Pages 13.9, 13.10 and 14.21; Five Essentials to Engage Today's Men, by Tom Wilson, available through barna.com or betterman.com.

Lockdown Survey

Lockdown began in the UK on March 23rd 2020, and included the closure of churches for services and other functions. A survey to evaluate its impact across Anglican churches, in conjunction with 10 Bishops who promoted the research across their Dioceses, was launched by the *Church Times* in May and in six weeks saw some 6,000 replies from laity and clergy, rather more from laity.

It was answered by more lay women than men (65% to 35%) with about half the answers coming from those aged between 50 and 69 (lay and clergy). Not all the answers were Church of England – some came from the Church in Wales and the Episcopal Church of Scotland as well as other denominations. Andrew Village and Leslie Francis gave an initial evaluation of the answers from 4,600 Church of England respondents in the *Church Times* on 26th June.

A third, 34%, had personally self-isolated for various reasons, and half, 47%, knew someone who had suffered from the virus. Had lockdown been a positive or negative experience? Five areas were asked about.

Stress. The survey found that people were more fatigued rather than less fatigued (44% to 18%, a difference of 26%), more anxious (38% to 19%), more exhausted (35% to 22%) and more stressed (34% to 23%). Other (Government) surveys would support that many felt more tired. Clergy, young people and Anglo-Catholics tended to be more stressed.

Frustration. The survey found that a large number were likely to be more frustrated (43% to 11%), less excited (34% to 9%), more bored (25% to 17%) and unhappier (24% to 16%). The dominant feeling emerging was one of frustration.

Neighbourliness. The survey pinpointed some key positive effects such as a greater neighbourliness (61% to 5%), greater thankfulness (57% to 4%), and a sense of being more hopeful (28% to 18%) and trusting (21% to 11%). Resilience was higher among women, the elderly, clergy and Evangelicals.

Relationships. In terms of relating to other people, rather more felt further away from church (40% to 22%), further from others (40% to 25%) and further from family (36% to 30%). That the last was so close showed that, for many, families were supportive. Relationships were less well sustained by men, younger people and laity.

Spirituality. The survey showed that many felt more prayerful (48% to 13%), and closer to God (41% to 9%), reactions that are broadly common with reactions in other times of national crisis. The impact was stronger among women, the elderly and Evangelicals.

The survey also asked other questions. Of the clergy responses, 84%, were praying for people. 63% supporting core members and 62% supporting the elderly and lonely. Most days many were praying with people (35%), supporting the bereaved (30%) or sick (26%), which included delivering food (19%) or medicine (14%).

On the whole, lay people felt well supported by their clergy (51%) or church members (49%). In this survey, a high proportion said their accessed services on line (91%) – but this was an online survey so a high percentage is not surprising! During these services two fifths (40%) said they prayed, 36% followed the liturgy, and 27% sang. In terms of communion, two-fifths of laity (43%) felt it was right for people to use their own bread and wine when sharing a communion service, but this varied between 23% of Anglo-Catholics to 55% of Evangelicals.

Four-fifths (80%) of clergy and 76% of laity felt the reaction to lockdown helped the church move forward into the digital age, support being stronger among women and among Evangelicals. On-line worship was a great tool (54% clergy, 60% laity), and social media was a great pastoral tool (46% clergy, 43% laity). So,

SNOWFLAKES

Prompts for serious talking. An Australian all-age survey sought to ascertain what were the prompts for thinking about spiritual, religious or metaphysical things. The results were as follows; ages given as for 2020; pink boxes top item, green second top:

Prompt	Gen Z Under 19	Millennials Gen Y 19 to 37	Busters Gen X 38 to 56	Boomers 57 to 75	Builders 76 & above	Average
Conversation with people	39%	39%	27%	24%	28%	31%
Reading a book or article	24%	25%	19%	22%	15%	21%
A major crisis	27%	20%	21%	16%	-	17%
Global and national issues	-	20%	19%	26%	22%	17%
Death in family, health issues	-	-	19%	24%	33%	15%
Social media, Mainstream media	62%	-	-	-	-	12%
Personal unhappiness	-	22%	-	-	-	4%

The best way for instigating a serious conversation is just to start with an ordinary conversation! Then asking someone to read a book or article, but both of these varied with age, although the first was top or second choice for all ages. Major life crises and/or national or global issues were two other starts to a serious conversation for those of most ages. For the youngest group though social or mainstream media was by far the best method.

SOURCE: Article "Aussies admire people who live out a genuine faith", *Eternity* magazine press release, 9th May 2017, Page 5.

Virus Church Attendance. American research by the Barna organisation shows that during lockdown, 35% of regular churchgoing Christians who say their faith is important in their lives have streamed their church's service online, 33% have streamed a service from a different church (with half of these viewing several churches in a month!) and 32% have done neither and not watched a service at all – in effect stopped going to church. Older people are more likely to stay with their own church (40%), younger people more likely to stop altogether (50%). Those who have switched churches are especially looking for prayer and emotional support (68%).

SOURCE: *State of the Church*, Barna organisation, July 2020.

Humour

There were no national examinations in 2020, but some answers from previous ones:

Q: Name the four seasons

A: Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

Q: How is dew formed?

A: The sun shines down on the leaves and makes them perspire.

Q: How can you delay milk turning sour?

A: Keep it in the cow.

Q: What is a terminal illness?

A: When you are sick at the airport.

Q: What does the word "benign" mean?

A: Benign is what you will be after you be eight.

SOURCE: Email from Margaret Price, New Zealand.

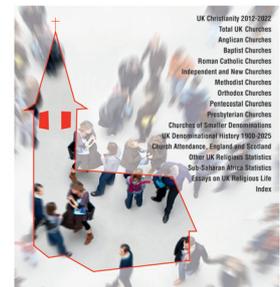
will this be the end for the traditional church? Oh, no, as only 9% of clergy and 6% of laity felt church buildings were an unnecessary burden, felt more strongly by men than women and Anglo-Catholics than Evangelicals.

On the other hand 34% of clergy, 11% of laity felt financial giving to the Church would decline after lockdown, and, as a consequence, 23% clergy and 18% laity felt their church building would no longer be financially viable. Also a quarter (clergy 24%, laity 23%) felt key people would step down after lockdown and be difficult to replace. Three-fifths (63%) said now was a great time to rethink the Church's future.

The authors indicated this was a but a first glance as it were at the survey results. There was more detail to be explored, between denominations, between countries, between men and women, different ages, different churchmanships, between clergy and laity and so on. Thus a fuller report can be expected sometime.

SOURCE: *Church Times*, 26th June, 2020, Page 7.

UK Church Statistics No 4: 2021 Edition



The new No 4, 2021 edition, should be published by the end of 2020. While containing updates on tables previously included it contains new details, including a history of membership, number of churches and ministers for the major denominations from 1900 onwards, more detailed analyses of church attendance and more information on church schools and pupils, religious marriages, etc. Details will be included with the December issue of *FutureFirst*.

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

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

01732 369 303

ISSN 2040-0268

Marriages in Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has managed to compile the number of people being married, broken down by their denomination, in the area now covered by what is the country of Northern Ireland before the country's borders were agreed in 1921. They have been able to go back to 1887. A graph showing the number of marriages year by year by denomination since then is shown below.

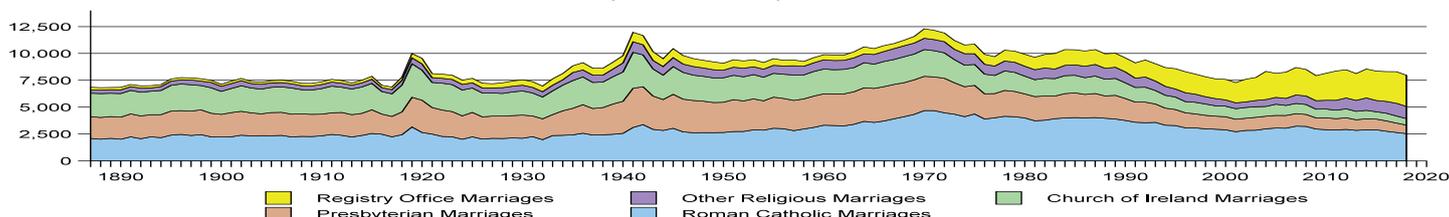
married and starting families had by that time moved to become rather later in life. The 2005 peaks do also show very slightly in the graphs of the other countries, but it is much more pronounced in N Ireland suggesting that having younger families, and maybe larger families, might still be characteristic there.

The N Ireland Population Census asks for numbers who are Christian broken down

Of the religious marriages, the Roman Catholics have nearly always had more than either the Presbyterians or the Church of Ireland Anglicans. In 1887 their 2,100 were exactly a third, 33%, of the total. By 1970, when they had their greatest number of marriages (4,700), they were 45% of the total.

In 2018 their 2,500 was two-thirds, 64%, of the total. The number of Presbyterian and Anglican

Number of marriages in N Ireland by method of celebration, 1887 to 2018



It is an interesting graph. The broad outline shows peaks about the year 1919 and the years 1940 and 1945, all World War years. Similar graphs of marriages in England and Wales, and in Scotland (which were circulated to *FutureFirst* readers last year) also have peaks in these two areas. What is interesting in the N Ireland graph is that it looks as though many people got married before WWII started rather than waiting till the war was over (as they did in the other countries). Perhaps many in N Ireland married at the start of the war in case the man got killed in action.

There is also a further peak around the year 1970, much greater in N Ireland than in any of the other three UK countries. Almost certainly this reflects that the babies born in 1940 had grown up and were themselves getting married about 30 years later. The subsequent peak around 2005, 35 years later, is almost certainly due to the same happening, although getting

by four denominations – Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Church of Ireland (Anglican) and Methodist, though there are, of course, many other smaller denominations present in N Ireland. The graph shows that while the number of marriages in the first three of these has formed a large percentage of the total up to about 1980 (92% of all marriages in 1887, and 76% a century later, but only 49% in 2018), the number of Other Religious marriages (of which Methodist marriages are a part) has been much smaller.

In the few years shown for the 19th century the number of non-religious marriages (Registry Office marriages) was very small – 3% or less for the years 1891 to 1906. That number has grown quite rapidly especially in the 21st century. In 2000, three-quarters, 75%, of all marriages were religious; by 2018, the latest year for which figures are available, it was under two-thirds, 64%.

marriages has plummeted in the last 30 years along with the numbers attending these denominations, especially younger people in their twenties and thirties. Not many in their sixties get married!

The purple bar in the graph combines both Methodist marriages and those of Other Denominations. Up to the 1970s, the Methodist numbers were always the majority. But it may just be seen that in the 21st century the numbers of Other Religious marriages have increased, from 590 in 2000 to 1,140 in 2018, mainly because of the growth in the number of marriages in non-Methodist denominations.

There were 69 different denominations in 2019 in N Ireland (along with 104 in Scotland, 92 in Wales and 209 in England, with a considerable overlap as there were a total of only 228 in the UK that year).

SOURCE: Website of Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, Marriages by Method of Celebration, accessed August 2020.

These may be helpful - Books/papers received

Lessons in Ministry, Reflections after 50 years in ministry, Rev Dr Paul Beasley-Murray. "These lessons are very good," Most Rev Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York. Available September 2020 through paulbeasleymurray@gmail.com. Amazon price £12.99.

Tracks of Trustworthiness, Biblical and contemporary insights for church or charity trustees, by Heather Wraight (editor of six editions of the *UK Christian Handbook*), Instant Apostle, 2020, ISBN 978-1-912726-29-5. Available from: heather.wraight@gmail.com. Price £10.99 including p & p.

We do God, recent research report from Youthscape, by Dr Lucie Shuker, Director Research. Highlights the way that Christian practice can help young people encounter God and develop faith of their own. Further details from www.youthscape.co.uk/store/product/we-do-god.

Reverse Mission

"Reverse Mission" was a term especially applied to the many immigrants from West Africa to the EU and UK, when Pentecostal churches were deliberately sending missionaries from Africa to Europe. One writer, Paul Freston, summarised it as not an attempt so much to "reverse the direction of missionary-sending" but to "reverse the direction of colonisation." But he laments the results of researching these movements, "The wish is not the reality as numerous researchers have found."

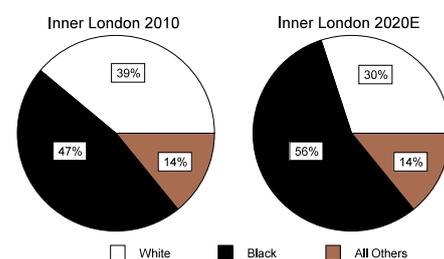
Evaluating the impact of migrant churches in the Netherlands, for example, researcher Van Der Laan found that "The majority of the migrant churches are ... missionary active ... (but) limited

to their own language or culture group. While others consciously try to convert the secularised west ... the native Dutch ... do not respond to their evangelistic efforts."

It has been similar in the UK. Britain has welcomed thousands of Pentecostal Africans over past decades, and while not initially appreciated by white churches, they now made their way into every part of the UK Christian scene. Some large Pentecostal churches, such as Kensington Temple in London, have seen thousands from many backgrounds, cultures and races worshipping together. The intermixing, however, is not confined to larger churches, nor just to Pentecostal churchgoers. In an estimate made for 2020, two-fifths, 43%, of English churches were taken as being composed of white people only, but a quarter, 23%, had between 1% and 5% of their

congregation who were non-White, and a further 12% with between 6 and 10% non-White. Indeed, in Inner London in 2020 it is likely that 56% of churchgoers are Black, as the pie-chart indicates.

Churchgoers in Inner London



SOURCES: Article "How European is Pentecostalism?" by William Atkinson in the *International Bulletin of Mission Research*, Overseas Mission Studies Centre, Vol 44, Issue 3, July 2020, Page 251; *UK Church Statistics*, No 4, 2021 Edition, ADPC Publishers, forthcoming, Pages 13,22 and 24.

The Multiplicity of Denominations

Church leaders often talk about new churches and church planting but probably talk less about new denominations. Yet new denominations are also being started. In the UK the number has grown from the 97 listed when they were first counted in 1977 to 250 by the year 2000, although the number is now reckoned to be 230 in 2020 – so denominations can close as well as open. The number can be broken down in relation to each UK country and by denomination (both given in UK Church Statistics No 4).

The number of denominations has grown worldwide also, and such are listed in the *World Christian Encyclopaedia* (WCE) in both its second and third editions. When they were first counted globally in 1970 the total number was 16,100, reaching 33,100 by 1995 and in 2020 the number is reckoned to be 44,800. These numbers can also be broken down by geography (in this case, continent) and by denomination.

In the UK the definition used of a denomination is that made by the management guru, John Adair, in his 1977 SPCK book *The Becoming Church*: “a Christian organisation uniting a number of local congregations.” As the WCE says the UK had 820 denominations in 2020, definitions may differ! The first Table shows how the WCE numbers vary by continent.

Denominations by Continent, 1970, 1995 and 2020

Continent	1970	1995	2020	Percentage of total			Cong /Den 2020
				1970	1995	2020	
Africa	5,600	11,500	18,600	35	35	46	60
Asia	2,900	5,300	7,100	18	16	16	200
Latin America	2,800	5,300	7,100	17	16	14	90
Europe	2,700	5,100	5,800	17	15	10	70
North America	1,600	5,000	5,200	10	15	12	90
Oceania	500	900	1,000	3	3	2	60
TOTAL	16,100	33,100	44,800	100	100	100	90

The Table shows that denominations have been growing across all continents between 1970 and 1995 and in the next 25 years, between 1995 and 2020. In the first period 1970 to 1995, the number globally grew at +3% per annum; in the second period they grew at +1% per annum, about a third of the earlier rate. This means that as the number of congregations globally has increased across these 50 years (1970 to 2020), in general denominations are getting bigger (more congregations) rather than new

ones being started, even if nearly 12,000 have in fact been started.

The final column shows the number of congregations per denomination in each continent. This is of course a very rough and ready guide, but it shows that on average a denomination embraces 90 churches. The only wide variations of the average size of a denomination are in Africa and Oceania where the number is 60 and in Asia where it is 200. Asia has very large numbers of essentially independent congregations, especially in China, and these hesitate to join together to form any type of organisation. This might be considered a weakness, as this means less central guidance over leadership, which, in fact, could also be a strength, but the nature of the Communist culture in which many operate does not sensibly allow alternatives apart from state control.

The reverse is true in Africa and Oceania where denominations are much smaller than in other countries. While overall church growth in Oceania is small, the number of Christians in Melanesia, a key part of it, has grown at a huge rate between 1970 and 2020 (3 million to 10 million). If that rate of growth continues, and Australian numbers continue to decline, by 2050 the number of Christians in Melanesia could be close to the number in the whole of Australia and New Zealand!

Likewise the huge growth in Africa where 140 million Christians in 1970 has become 670 million fifty years later. In both Africa and Melanesia the church is more concerned to start new congregations than new denominations. This follows a major principle enunciated by the famous mission writer Roland Allen in his key book *Missionary Methods*: “The first and most striking difference between [Paul’s] actions and ours is that he founded ‘churches’ whilst we found ‘Missions’ ” ... or denominations. What is our priority?

The third edition of the WCE recognises only four main groups of Christians – the Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant and Independent churches. Pentecostals are counted but are known to be spread across the four specific Christian groups. It suggests there are 30,300 “renewal” denominations (with an average of 130 churches in each) and just 14,500 “non-renewal” denominations with only 20 churches in each, emphasising the dominance of denominationalism rather than its congregationalism as identified in Roland Allen’s statement.

That “renewal” denominations have six times as many congregations suggests individual churches are given much more freedom to develop as they believe the Lord is leading them, free from the rules and disciplines which others might impose on them. While this is happening in some of the UK networks, in others growth is stifled by bureaucracy and rigid structures.

SOURCES: Article “Pentecost and the World” by Rev Mark Oxbrow in the *International Bulletin of Mission Research*, Overseas Mission Studies Centre, Vol 44, Issue 3, July 2020, Page 225; *World Christian Encyclopaedia*, Third Edition, edited by Todd Johnson and Gina Zurlo, Edinburgh University Press, 2020; *UK Church Statistics*, No 4, 2021 Edition, ADBC Publishers, forthcoming, Table 1.1.3.

Mission Work is Changing

The American Barna Group produced a report in partnership with their International Mission Board and identified three ways in which “mission work is shifting.” These were:

- 1) The definition of success for a missionary has changed. Over and above evangelism (44%) and discipleship (40%), the largest plurality of churchgoing young adults, nearly half (47%), said they wanted missionaries “to save lives.”
- 2) Donations are losing their appeal. Those under 35 are almost twice as likely as older Christians to judge that missionaries should never use donations as their source of income (27% young adults; 25% teens v 14% adults 35 or over).
- 3) The job of the missionary is being re-defined. The blending of business and social good has become culturally commonplace, even expected, especially among younger generations. There is significant enthusiasm among Millennial Christians for non-traditional missionary roles like entrepreneurs, artists and business leaders.

This is a summary of the Barna’s book *The Future of Missions* which may be purchased for \$39 from their website www.barna.group. The concept of such changes, however, will not be new to the mission community in the UK, having been researched and noted a decade or so ago, or longer.

SOURCE: Barna email.



...so, by the year 2097, there will be an individual denomination for every man, woman and child living on the planet!

We have also been asked to include the following notice from Thomas Hastings, CEO of OMSC:

Because of the global pandemic and restrictions on international travel, in place of our regular Residential Study Program seminars, the (now) Yale-based Overseas Mission Study Centre (OMSC) has arranged a series of online seminars, author interviews, and webinars for 2020–2021 that will be of interest to pastors, scholars, students, and laypeople. (See www.omsc.org/seminars for Fall 2020 Options).

Note: In an effort to capture the energy of future leaders and provide a forum for them to “meet” each other during this global pandemic, doctoral or postdoctoral students in Mission Studies, World Christianity, or Intercultural Theology are invited to participate free of charge in all OMSC online offerings. OMSC’s one requirement is that participants commit to the full event (1-hour author interview, 2-hour webinar, or 6-hour, 3-day seminar). Please register by contacting us and specifying the event(s) in which you plan to participate. OMSC will send the Zoom link a week before each event.

CONTENTS

The impact of COVID-19 on young people	P1
Gender of Churchgoers	P2
Church Online	P2
Churchgoing Environment	P3
The Male Gap	P3
Lockdown Survey	P4
Marriages in Northern Ireland	P5
Reverse Mission	P5
The Multiplicity of Denominations	P6
Mission Work is Changing	P6



FUTURE FIRST

FACTS FOR FORWARD PLANNING

ISSN 2040-0268 | Number 71, October 2020

SNIPPETS

1) In the first half of 2020, 6.2% of female adolescents (aged 10 to 19) in Kenya reported being pregnant at health clinics in the country – that's one in every 16, and not taking in the full impact of lockdown.

2) In 2019, SAT-7 (which broadcasts Christian programmes across 25 countries in the Middle East with over 25 million viewers) saw 320 Bibles downloaded by Persian viewers, and 100,000 people subscribing to their Arabic YouTube Channel.

3) What will the church look like in 2040? Futurist Mal Fletcher said, "Holographic projection (replacing video screens), automation of skills, and digital debt (from a cashless society)."

4) The average household globally has 4.9 members. Muslim households have 6.4 people on average; Hindus 5.7; Christians 4.5; Buddhists 3.9 and Jews 3.7.

5) What was the key influence in becoming a Christian? A survey of 1,000 churchgoing millennials saw three-quarters (76%) say, "Growing up in a Christian family."

6) In the last five years, 880 new congregations have started in the UK, but 1,900 have closed, giving an overall total of 45,400 congregations in 2020.

7) In 2010, 210 million books were sold in the UK at an average discounted price of 32%; in 2019 180 million books were sold but at an average discount of only 23%.

SOURCES: 1) AFIDEP news service, 26th June 2020; 2) SAT-7 2019 summary leaflet; 3) Article in *Christianity*, Jan 2020, Page 40; 4) Pew Research Centre based on Census returns 2010 to 2018 from 130 countries, Dec 12th, 2019, Page 2; 5) *The Bible and Digital Millennials*, David Ford, et al, Routledge Focus, Page 71; 6) and 7) *UK Church Statistics*, No 4, 2021 Edition, Tables 1.1.1.2 and 7) Table 14.2.1 and Page 14.2.

The impact of COVID-19 on young people

Dr Lucie Shuker, Director of Research, Youthscape

A large number of surveys have been conducted since lockdown that explore young people's experience of the pandemic and focus particularly on their well-being and mental health. This short article highlights some of the main findings so far, though these should be interpreted cautiously given how quickly conditions have been and are changing.

The majority are coping

Recent years have seen growing public awareness of worrying trends around teenagers' mental health. It has not been surprising then, to hear concerns raised about the impact of COVID-19 on young people, many of whom are already struggling with anxiety, depression and lack the support to manage the pressures they face. In this context we might be encouraged to find that a representative survey by The Children's Society reported that overall 84% of children and young people said they were coping well during lockdown. However, when asked about specific aspects of their experience, 86% said they were coping well with increased handwashing and 78% with social distancing. These figures dropped when it came to coping with not being able to see friends (49%) and family (54%).¹

Some of the benefits of lockdown reported by young people in these surveys include time with family, greater resilience, more gratitude and time for hobbies. In a survey of two thousand 13-24 year olds, most young people reported enjoying time with parents as much or more than before, though they also worried about parents and the family more than before.² More than one in three 16-24 year olds surveyed by The Prince's Trust (37%) believe they have gained coping skills or emotional resilience since the outbreak of coronavirus,³ and a consultation with 150 children and young people found they have valued time to reflect, learn new hobbies or restart old ones, and have experienced a greater sense of gratitude.⁴

Many have struggled

Although many young people have coped well, a significant minority have struggled with their mental health and wellbeing. A representative survey of four thousand 8-24 year olds in Great Britain by Barnardo's found a rise in issues related to mental health and well-being for at least one in three of the participating children and young people.⁵

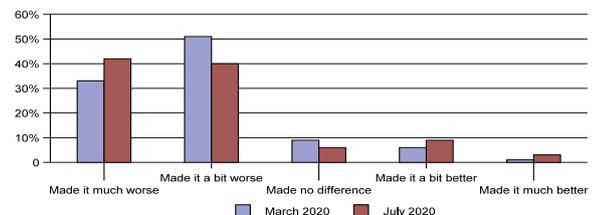
- 41% said they feel more lonely than before lockdown
- 38% said they feel more worried
- 37% said they feel more sad
- 34% said they feel more stressed
- 33% said they have more trouble sleeping

This is to be expected when we consider the numbers of young people who were already known to be vulnerable in different ways. The National Youth Agency (NYA) report that over one million young people have known needs that have been amplified by the pandemic, including those affected by the "toxic trio" of addiction, poor mental health, and domestic

abuse. This includes 336,000 who receive formal support, 411,000 who receive some support, but the extent is not known, and 448,000 that are estimated to be in vulnerable families but not known to statutory services. The NYA go further to estimate that an additional 2 million young people will find themselves with "emerging needs" because of COVID-19.⁶

Those with "amplified needs" include young people with existing mental health needs, some of whom were surveyed by Young Minds in the week after lockdown began. In their survey, 84% reported worse mental health following school closures, and 26% said they could no longer access mental health support. They repeated the question in June to a similar cohort and found that the percentage of young people experiencing poor mental health who agree that coronavirus crisis had made things worse increased from 32% to 41% (see chart). Half of these respondents (50%) did not feel confident about talking to someone about their mental health if they needed to, while more than a quarter (29%) did not agree that there was someone in their life they were able to talk to.⁷

Self-reported impact of corona virus crisis on mental health of 13-25 year olds already accessing support



There are also groups of young people that seem to be struggling more. Across surveys published to date there is some evidence to suggest that older teenagers, girls, those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, those not in education, employment or training and those already struggling with poorer mental health are impacted in particular ways by the pandemic. Although we need more robust data, we should expect that social inequality of various kinds will be exacerbated by current circumstances.

Youth workers are struggling to respond

Youth work organisations play an important role in supporting young people's mental health but rely on young people's voluntary engagement. They have had reduced contact with teenagers, and many are struggling to keep going. UK Youth surveyed youth workers and organisations at the start of lockdown, with many youth workers having been furloughed since.

- 88% of respondents indicated that they were likely or very likely to reduce service provision to young people
- 31% of respondents said that staff redundancies were likely
- 18% said permanent closure was likely - nearly one in five may not re-open