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FUTURE FIRST

FACTS FOR FORWARD PLANNING

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SNIPPETS

1) A survey of UK authors found that 53% have a second job, that is, writing is a part-time occupation for them.

2) Half, 46%, of churches saw their donations decline during the pandemic.

3) One in four 18 to 34-year olds visited an online church during the pandemic.

4) Three-fifths, 62%, of young people have had some contact with a church, mostly for a formal occasion, such as a christening/marriage/funeral (33%) or through their school (20%).

5) Two-fifths, 38%, of non-Christian young people believe Jesus was a historical person.

6) Only half as many people in the Republic of Ireland married in 2020 as they did in 2019 (9,500 against 20,300). Just over half in 2020 were religious marriages (50.2%) – 22% in England & Wales.

7) 5% of the population in England and Wales were Muslim in 2015, and 7% of NHS doctors were Muslim that year.

SOURCES: 1) *The Bookseller*, 28th May, 2021, Page 7; 2) *Changing Church Survey*, 2021, Evangelical Alliance, and 3) Savanta ComRes survey commissioned by Your Neighbour and Prince's Trust Annual Survey, 2021, both in *Welcome back*, creonline.co.uk, July 2021, Pages 10 and 13; 4) and 5) *Z-A of Faith Spirituality*, Youth for Christ Report, 2020, Pages 35 and 30 respectively; 6) Central Statistics Office, Ireland website accessed August 2021; (7) From "Examining religion and Belief" series in RE Today Services, edited by Stephen Pett, published 2019, Page 17.

Thousands of New Churches!

If the prognostications can be believed, by the year 2030 the UK should have thousands of new churches – 20,000 in fact, taking the total from 43,000 to 63,000! As wonderful as this sounds, some questions immediately spring to mind – what kind of "churches" are envisaged? Will they be more of the same or something completely new or somewhere in the middle?

The Gregory Centre for Church Multiplication (X) [CCX] is led by the Rt Rev Ric Thorpe who was consecrated Bishop of Islington in 2015 in order to support the Diocese of London's goal of creating new worshipping communities across the capital. While it is a Church of England Centre, CCX works with all denominations and regional leaders in developing strategies for planting and growing churches.

Earlier this year it launched its "Myriad" initiative (from the Greek word *myrias*, meaning 10,000) under Canon John McKinley, national lead for the Gregory Centre. It is aiming to help lay-led churches start by releasing them from "limiting factors" such as having to meet for worship in a specifically *church* building, long and expensive training for leaders, and the discipleship of people (whatever this last may mean in practice). Such a release should mean more volunteers. "In church planting, there are no passengers," John would say.

At the Church of England Synod held in York this past July (2021), the Archbishop of York, Most Rev Stephen Cottrell, also talked of starting 10,000 new lay-led churches mostly, it would seem, by 2030. It arises from the Church of England's "emerging Vision and Strategy for the 2020s and beyond" and aims to create "new Christian communities across the four areas of home, work/ education, social and digital."

It may be these two events are descriptions of the same initiative, but even if not, one presumes that most of these two 10,000 blocks will overlap, and the actual number to be aimed for would be less in practice, perhaps, say, 12,000 between them. That is still an amazing amount of new churches. Are the lay people up to it? In 2020 there were an estimated 2.8 million churchgoers across all denominations. Of these, half, 46%, were evangelical, the main group from which the "lay-led" seem to be expected to come in both schemes. Of these two-thirds, 64%, are aged between 20 years and 74, since those over 75 are less likely to have the energy to build new churches.

That equates to 68 existing evangelical churchgoers aged 20 to 74 per each new church being started. How many will leave their existing church to start a new church? Answer is unknown, but if, say, 10%, that's 7 existing lay people per new church. Will that be enough? >From experience in London between 2005 and 2012 most new churches started with an average of about 25 people.

Has anything like this been done before? Well, the answer is, yes, though not quite planned in the way these new churches are being suggested. The regular publication of books like *Religious Trends* and *UK Church Statistics* allows numbers of new churches to be fairly accurately counted. These publications list the numbers of churches in each denomination, and all these volumes list 200

or more denominations so the coverage is reasonably comprehensive.

Suppose a particular denomination, XYZ, had 63 churches in its membership in 2012. By 2017 it had 68 churches. That means that between 2012 and 2017 it must have started at least 5 new churches. It might have started 8 and three had closed, one can't tell, but at least 5 more churches had been added to its overall total (68 less 63). Actually doing this across each denomination between 2012 and 2017 and adding all the numbers together comes to the total of 1,143 new churches being started between those years.

The following table summarises the number of new churches started as given in each recent edition:

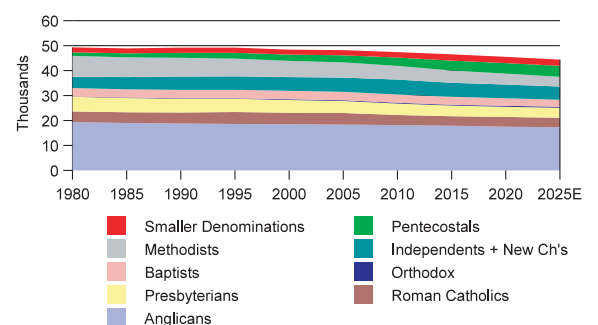
Source:	Dates	New churches
UKCS		
No 1	2005 to 2010	1,333
No 2	2008 to 2013	1,224
No 3	2012 to 2017	1,143
No 4	2015 to 2020	879

UKCS = *UK Church Statistics*

There is some obvious overlap between the years in the various editions; taking these out gives the number of new churches started in the UK between 2005 and 2020 as 2,933, or, say, 3,000 for ease of reference. So if 3,000 new churches have really started in 15 years, could 12,000 start in 10 years or a few more? A mammoth undertaking, but perhaps just possible. Even as a statistician, though, one is tempted to ask, "Is this merely numbers for numbers' sake?" and "What would the New Testament qualities of such new churches be?"

However, the meticulous work of counting the changing numbers for every denomination between 2005 and 2020 can also be extended by counting the numbers which have closed, without which the picture would be incomplete. That total for these years emerged as 4,902, or, say, 5,000 for ease of reference, that is, a loss of 2,000 over 15 years.

Number of UK Christian congregations by Denominational Group, 1980 to 2025E



The consequence of these changes when broken down by broad denominational group is that changes in church numbers in the last 40 years have taken place slowly, almost imperceptibly. The diagram shows the numbers in 9 groups over the last 40 years with a projection to 2025 which does

Continued on page 2

not take into account the intended growth of some 10-20,000 new churches, mostly by 2030. The only groups which have obviously changed greatly are the Methodists, which have closed many churches, and the Pentecostals which have started many congregations.

To put the scope of what the new initiatives described above are aiming



I remember when it was all fields around here.

Anglo-Catholics

The Anglo-Catholic tradition is one of the key components in the Church of England. When measured in the 2005 English Church Census Anglo-Catholics formed 15% of Church of England attenders, some 133,000 people. Although by 2020 their estimated number had declined to 124,000, their proportion of the whole had increased to 18%, simply because other parts of the Church of England caucus had declined faster, especially the Liberal group.

They have attracted recent research attention, especially in a report by Tim Thorsby from the Centre for Theology and Community in London in 2017 on Anglican Catholic Growth in London where he identified seven reasons for that growth across different churches:

- Messy Church brought new people in
- Non-church people attending a midweek service
- 4.00 pm Sunday afternoon service attracted new people
- Choristers Club attracted 20 children every week
- Restarting of midweek services
- A special monthly Choir Church service
- A meeting called "English, Prayer, Action" attracted new people

Another is one of the many research studies by Prof John Tomlinson of St John's College, Nottingham looking at Anglo-Catholic growth in the Province of York, but this is hard to trace on their website.

Yet another study is by Rev Rich Townsend, based in Bridlington, in 2021 as part of his work towards a degree looks at Anglo-Catholic worship, which was one of his assignments. He draws out the following challenges faced by declining congregations:

- The need for younger clergy "with a growth mind set, a pioneering spirit and a heart for mission."
- The need to build up leadership capacity at the local level, increasing "the skills of the congregation."
- Greater collaboration between churches of different traditions, and
- "Anglo-Catholic churches should return to their roots as church planters."

It is not just Anglo-Catholic churches that can learn from some of the experiences of churches in this tradition!

SOURCES: Mission and Apologetics assignment by Rich Townsend, revrichtea@gmail.com, *UK Church Statistics* No 4 2021 Edition, Table 13.17.

to do in context, therefore, is to see perhaps 12,000 new churches or congregations started in the next 10 or 15 years. Could the strain of fulfilling this vision at the same time mean the demise of some 20,000 existing fellowships? *That's* the question!

SOURCES: CCX website: <http://ccx.org.uk/>; *UK Church Statistics* Nos 1, 2, 3 and 4 Editions, 2011-2021, Table 1.1.2: No 4, Fig 12.19; *Capital Growth*, Peter Brierley, ADBC Publishers, Tonbridge, 2013.

Marriages in England & Wales

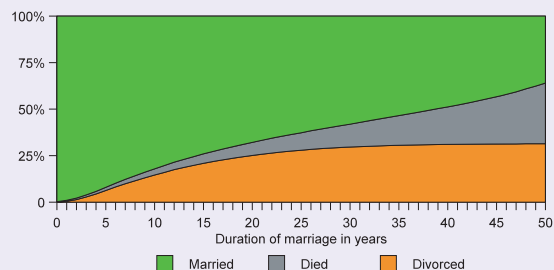
The number of marriages in England and Wales for 2018 was only recently (August, 2021) published by the Office for National Statistics, the latest year for which details are available. In England there were 222,000 marriages that year and in Wales 13,000. In Scotland there were 27,000 and N Ireland 8,000, making a grand total of 270,000.

These numbers include same-sex marriages (7,000 in England and Wales, 1,000 in Scotland and none in N Ireland, a total of 8,000 or 3% of the total). Some are religious marriages (48,000 in England and Wales, 7,000 in Scotland and 5,000 in N Ireland, making a total of 60,000 or just over a fifth, 22%, of the total).

The number of marriages has dropped considerably – fifty years ago, for example, there were 415,000 marriages in England and Wales, 43,000 in Scotland and 12,000 in N Ireland, making a grand total of 470,000, more by 200,000 than in 2018!

With Christian foundations, marriage is meant for life. "Till death us do part" is a spoken element of the covenant couples make. The diagram reflects figures not often collected by actuaries (or, perhaps, not often published), in this instance for 2017. Marriages end either by the death of one partner, or by divorce. The diagram shows the proportionate effect of these two elements over the 50 year period for those married in 1967, some 440,000 couples in the UK.

Dissolution of marriages 1967 to 2017



The diagram shows the percentage which have not ended, coloured in green, across time, as you move from left to right. On the left the number of marriages starts at 100%, but by the time you get to the right hand side, 50 years later, only 36% are left; in other words, roughly only one in three of those married in 1967 celebrated their golden anniversary. After 25 years, 63% of the original 100% were left, so almost two-thirds of the 100% celebrated their silver anniversary.

The orange "slab" in the diagram reflects the proportion who divorce, and while people can, and do, divorce even after 50 years, it is clear that the majority of divorces occur within the first 20 years of marriage. After 20 years, 25% have divorced (and 28% after 25 years), but within those first 20 years 7% of marriages have also ended because one party has died (and 9% after 25 years). However, it is after 25 years of marriage that the death rate increases, reaching 20% at 40 years, and 33% at 50 years. Similar figures beyond 50 years have not been published, partly because the numbers of people married for more than 50 years is relatively small and the numbers will be less reliable by actuarial standards.

Church congregations consist of single, married, widowed and divorced people, and in 2021, some will be cohabiting. A comprehensive survey across 7 English congregations (Anglican and others) in 2012 looked at the proportions living in different circumstances. It found the following:

- 17½% were single, with some 2% living with a child, so perhaps their partner had died, or perhaps just "moved out" or never "moved in" in the first place! ½% were single parents.
- 71% were married, half of whom still had 1 or more children at home. Some of the younger couples perhaps had yet to start families, while for the older ones all the children had left home. Half of those with children had just 2 children, a quarter 1 and a quarter 3 or more. A quarter of these households were augmented by having a further 1 or 2 adults living with them, presumably a parent or in-law.
- 1% were cohabiting, a percentage almost certain to have increased since 2012.
- 4½% were divorced, and the remaining
- 6% were widowed.

These percentages are very different from the households living in England and Wales who may (5%) or may not (95%) go to church. One can't compare a limited church survey with national figures 8 years later, but it is interesting to note that in 2020, 54% of the population was married (1% same-sex), 15% was cohabiting, 25% was single (half of these as single parents),

the remaining 6% being in multi-family units. In 1996 these percentages were respectively, 66%, 7%, 22%, and 5%.

Evangelism and pastoral care are key parts of church life, and these various figures show something of the complexity of the arrangements in which people are living, and in which the church is called to minister and witness. Some churches have appointed ministers with a particular responsibility for helping those in certain circumstances – the disabled, the elderly, young marrieds, families, and so on.

While the sanctity of marriage and family life are an essential part of the Christian ethos, nevertheless the Church must prayerfully seek to meet the needs of the complexities of our 21st century way of life but without compromising Biblical truth.

SOURCES: *Living the Christian Life*, Langham International Partnership, Brierley Consultancy, 2012 survey; *Marriage Works*, Selected Research and Other papers, 2012 to 2020, Marriage Foundation, Page 9 for the figures underlying the chart; *UK Church Statistics*, No 4 2021 Edition, Tables in Section 14; Office for National Statistics, Marriages to 2018, 10th August 2021.

Switching Denominations

With the advent of on-line streamed services during the pandemic, “church-hopping” has become, for some, an alternative form of worship, enabling them to overcome both geographical and denominational limitations to their usual church-going. Apart from the pandemic, however, and discounting occasional, such as holiday, visits to other denominations, how far and how frequently do regular churchgoers transfer their membership from one denomination to another?

Unlike Australia and some other countries, in the UK, so far as is known, this has not been researched frequently or systematically. The Australia National Church Life Surveys, carried out over a number of years 15 to 25 years or so ago, did include regular questions on this, and found sometimes quite substantial numbers “switching” (as they called it) to another denomination. Evidence in the UK is much more limited, and partial, than the Australian surveys, but from such results as are available “switching” would seem to be on a smaller scale.

Three Deanery Strategy Reviews were undertaken in the Diocese of Rochester across the turn of the century and one question answered by over 2,670 Anglican churchgoers in these reviews asked about the church they now attend. One in seven, 14%, said they had been in this particular church “all my life,” that is, they had never attended another church regularly, and had presumably grown up in their church, having begun when they were younger, perhaps children.

A quarter, 28%, said they had not been to any other church prior to coming to the one they now attended, that is, presumably they came to faith through its ministry. Three-fifths, 58%, however, had come from another church, so had either changed congregations locally or moved into the relevant parish. Of these 58%, 45% (almost four-fifths, 78%, of those changing church) had previously attended another Anglican church and 13% had changed denomination.

The 13% who had changed denomination had previously attended a Baptist church (3%), Methodist (3%), Roman Catholic (2%), an Independent Evangelical or United Reformed Church (1% each), a Pentecostal, Salvation Army or New Church (½% each) or another (now forgotten) denomination (2%).

A survey across the entire town of Scunthorpe in 1998, a town in North Lincolnshire, had some 4,700 people attending one of the 70 churches there, some 7.5% of the population. 745 of these completed a questionnaire, one question of which asked about their length of attendance at their particular church, this excluding the Roman Catholic churches which did not participate.

The results from the Anglican churches were very close to those already given for the Diocese of Rochester, but the main results from the non-Anglican churches are given below, with those from the Anglican Rochester survey put in brackets afterwards for ease of comparison:

- A) 11% Always attended this church (14%) (went there as a child?)
- B) 21% Never attended any other church (28%) (came to faith after leaving childhood?)
- C) 50% Anglicans who previously attended another Anglican church (45%)
- D) 40% Methodists who previously attended another Methodist church (-)
- E) 31% Baptists who previously attended another Baptist church (-)
- F) 17% Pentecostals who previously attended another Pentecostal church (-)
- G) 23% Who changed to a different denomination altogether (13%)

What these limited results suggest is that given the two entirely different samples, in years all close to the turn of the century, but in different parts of England, the first three answers give an approximate order of magnitude for people (A) growing up in their church, (B) starting attending church later in life, and (C) Anglicans switching to another Anglican church, but slightly more non-Anglicans switching to another denomination than Anglicans.

Given, presumably, a slight hesitation in actually changing denomination, it will be interesting to see not only how many people have visited another denomination when live-streaming on a Sunday during the pandemic lockdowns, but also if any actually change denomination after such live-stream visits. At least one well-known figure, David Suchet, renowned for playing Poirot in Agatha Christie’s plays, has said publicly how much he has enjoyed attending services he would never normally attend, such as in an Orthodox church.

So far in a survey in July 2020, 57% reported an enhanced personal faith from live-streaming services against 7% who said the opposite, but the statistics on denominational change will take longer to gather and assess..

SOURCES: Congregational Attitudes and Beliefs Surveys in Erith and Scunthorpe churches, 2000, Sidcup churches, 2001, Orpington churches, 2002, *Church Times* report, article by Prof Leslie Francis in *Church Times*, 2nd July, 2021, Page 14.

These may be helpful - Books/papers received

The Lord’s Prayer. FaithGiant is a website seeking to help guide people to live a life of faith, hope, and love. They have recently published a commentary on the Lord’s Prayer. <http://faithgiant.com/the-lords-prayer>.

There is Hope. Latest book by Rev Dr Paul Beasley-Murray or “Preaching at Funerals.” To be published by IVP @ £14.99 in December 2021.

Europe 2021, A Missiological Report, Jim Memory, June 2021. An excellent overview of the opportunities for and challenges in mission today in Europe, prepared for the European Christian Mission. Includes evaluation of impact of Covid-19, www.ecmi.org.

Youth Ministry in a Pandemic, The Story of 2020, Youthscape Centre for Research, Vol 18, Summer 2021, youthscape.co.uk/research. The need for paid and voluntary youth workers is huge; this report highlights its importance with 7 useful charts.

Full-time Christian Workers in the UK

We were asked, “How many full-time Christian workers are there in the UK?” The answer is unknown, but some estimates can be made towards a total. “Full-time” suggests such workers are paid, which would therefore exclude the many thousands of retired ministers, former overseas (and UK) mission workers, and others who spend huge amounts of time in voluntary Christian service. “Full-time” also suggests a total occupation of 8 hours per day 5 days a week or equivalent.

Some numbers are known. (A) The number of ministers in 2020 was 35,400 across all denominations. Only the Church of England break down their numbers between full-time and part-time and this number excludes part-time ministers.

(B) Many churches have others on their staff apart from their minister. Larger churches have several staff, most smaller churches have just the minister. Assume churches with 100 or fewer in their congregation have just their minister; that’s 70% of the total. A detailed survey was undertaken in 2009 of Anglican, Baptist and Independent churches with congregations of 350 or over. They each had on average 3.0 ordained staff, 3.7 non-ordained ministry staff and 2.8 administrative staff, or a total of 6.5 non-ordained staff (the ordained will be counted in (A)).

Churches with between 100 and 349 in their congregation (26% of the total in 2010) will have, say, 2.5 non-ordained staff on average, and the remaining 4% are the churches with 350 or more. Of the 45,500 congregations in 2020, and assuming the above percentages apply, the given proportions and numbers will total some 41,400 non-ministerial workers.

(C) In the year 2000 the number of Youth Workers in England was estimated at 7,500. Their numbers will have increased substantially since then as many churches have appointed Youth or Children’s Workers to help with their youth work. Some of these numbers will be included in the above, but probably not all, especially if shared across 2 or more churches, say 3,000 not included.

(D) In 2006, the latest figure available, there were 5,000 Christian organisations in the UK employing a total of 82,800 full-time staff.

This gives a total of 35,400 + 41,400 + 3,000 + 82,800 = 162,600 if one assumes these numbers are still correct today. However, there are fewer Christian organisations today (many Christian bookshops have closed, for example), so perhaps a total of 150,000 might be closer. There was an estimated total of 3,287,770 churchgoers in England, Scotland and Wales in 2020, and add in a possible 365,000 for N Ireland (19% of population), you have a UK total attendance of 3.65 million. That would mean full-time paid workers would be just over 4% of church attendance.

The large numbers are in the staff of larger churches (congregations over 100) and working with all the various types of Christian organisations (at least 80 different groups of them!). Would 4% of attenders be sufficient to help influence church culture? The percentage for changing culture has been reckoned as 5%, but the influence of large churches can be considerable, so maybe the “doom of decline” can yet be challenged successfully.

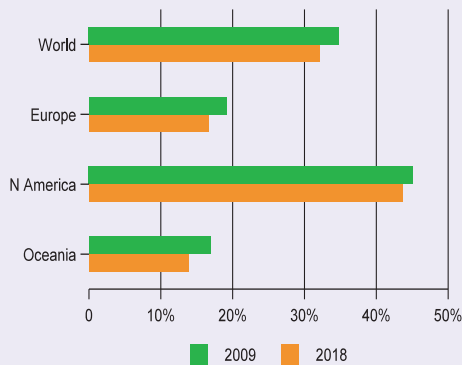
SOURCES: *UK Church Statistics* No 4, 2021 Edition, Table 1.1.1; *The Significance of Larger Churches*, Brierley Consultancy, 2009; Religious Trends No 5, Christian Research, 2006, Table 8.12.3; *UK Christian Handbook*, edited by Heather Wraight, Christian Research, 2006, Table 1; *Does the Future have a Church?*, ADBC Publishers, 2017, Table 3.2.

Global Social Survey

The so-called International Social Survey Programme is rather a misnomer since it only publishes results for 28 countries in the world, representing only a sixth, 18%, of the global population. With just one country counted in South America, and one country in Africa, some of its coverage is rather thin to say the least. However, it does cover three continents reasonably – North America (90% of population), Europe (73%) and Oceania (71%).

It measures the percentage of the adult population attending religious services at least monthly, and the results are shown in the graph.

Percentage of adults attending religious services at least monthly



The three continents which it measures with a reasonable degree of sampling error are effectively what used to be called "The West" or "First World", terms now (rightly) rejected because of their racial bias. The favoured alternative "Global North" includes just Europe and North America since Oceania belongs to the Global South.

All three continents are seeing attendance patterns decreasing, and this is reflected in the world percentages also. The picture can be confusing as the actual numbers attending are increasing, but the overall population is increasing faster so the proportion of attendees is reducing. In North America, for example, the population increased from 340 million in 2010 to 370 million in 2020, while the percentage of people saying they were Christians reduced from 76% to 73%. The graph includes attendance across all faiths, but church attendance will be the dominant feature and it can be seen that broadly speaking less than half of America's "Christians" attend church on a monthly basis. Some research in America on attendance has shown, however, that what people say they do and what they actually do differs, and that attendance may only be half the claimed amount.

In Australia and New Zealand (the part of Oceania actually measured by the survey) the population increased from 37 million in 2010 to 42 million in 2020, but the Christian proportion fell from 70% to 65%. Europe is similar although the differences are less – population rises from 737 million to 743 million in 2020, and the Christian percentage decreases from 77% to 76%. In both Australia and New Zealand and Europe, the actual attendance rate is perhaps a fifth of those saying they are Christian.

The problems seen in the UK on declining numbers are therefore not unique to this country but are similar across the Western world. Latin America percentages are similar – population increasing, Christian proportion declining. In Asia, dominated by China and India, the population is also increasing but the Christian percentage has been static between 2010 and 2020 (persecution), 8% in both countries, though projected to grow.

The only continent where numbers are different is Africa where the population increased from 1.08 billion in 2010 to 1.35 billion in 2020, and the Christian percentage increased from 48% to 49%, although in the one country measured by the Social Survey Programme, South Africa, attendance fell from 46% to 43%.

This actually highlights two issues – the declining number of people of faith in totality, which certainly includes declining numbers of Christians, except in Africa. It also indicates the problem of poor proportionate attendance at religious services. Belief and participation do not go hand in hand. Neither of these problems are new; the survey simply points to them being global.

SOURCES: 2009 and 2018 International Social Survey Programme, as given in an article in *Pointers*, Vol 31, No 2, June 2021, Page 2; *UK Church Statistics* No 4 2021 Edition, Table 15.3; Hadaway, C K, et al, Over-reporting Church Attendance in America, *American Sociological Review*, Vol 63, No 1, Page 122, 1998.

SNOWFLAKES

Belief in Aliens. The Director of National Intelligence in the US Pentagon published a report looking at 162 UFOs (Unidentified Flying Objects) which the US military re-term as UAPs (Unidentified Aerial Phenomena). Of the 162, the report could only identify one (a burst balloon), 18 as "unusual movements" and the rest were unexplained. In the process YouGov undertook a survey of 2,018 GB adults, partial results of which were:

- 22% believe aliens exist and have visited earth
- 28% believe aliens exist, but have not visited earth
- 25% themselves or someone they know have seen a UFO
- 49% think the Government knows something about UFOs which is not being made public

SOURCE: *UFO Report*, Niall McCarthy, Statistica, 28th June, 2021.

Papers on "Religion." The Office for National Statistics is responsible for a long-running Longitudinal Study based on 1% of the population taken from Census records in 1971, and kept up-to-date as people die. It includes a question on Religion, and the site lists 12 academic papers exploring various features (like stability, intermarriage, spatial distribution, etc) analysed by religion. The UK Household Longitudinal Study follows the lives of thousands of individuals within households over time. It provides evidence on the causes and consequences of deep-rooted social problems and its website lists 31 academic papers analysing its answers by religion. Search the website by name of the Study.

Global Digital Advertising. Global digital advertising on television was £115 billion in 2020, down from £145 billion in 2010, 10 years earlier, an average annual decline of -2.3% per annum. Global advertising in newspapers dropped from £70 bn to £22 bn in the same period, a decline averaging -10.8% per annum. But advertising in digital advertisements grew from £19 bn in 2010 to £127 bn in 2020, a growth rate averaging +21% per annum. Three-fifths, 58%, is taken by Google, a third, 34%, by Facebook, and the remaining 8% by Amazon.

SOURCE: Article in *Surveillance Capitalism*, a Cambridge Paper, Vol 30, No 2, June 2021, Page 2 from the Jubilee Centre, Cambridge.

Black Churches. An American survey asked the congregations of black churches what they most enjoyed about their church. Answers were (in order): (1) Leadership of the pastor; (2) Style of preaching; (3) Music style; (4) Friendliness of the congregation and (5) The topics preached on.

SOURCE: *Barna Highlight*, 12th July, 2021.

No Religion. It is well known that as church membership decreases, those with No Religion are increasing, but recent polls in America show a variation on this theme. The No Religion proportions are levelling out and a new sub-group, who are simply religiously unaffiliated, are increasing. They don't say they have no religion, they are not atheists or agnostics, just "nothing in particular." They tend to be middle-aged, men or women, and some will attend church sporadically. Only a fifth will have a degree and three-fifths will be towards the lower end of the pay scale. They are not political, just those who feel left out of society, are apathetic, revealing that perhaps they were never part of religion, and it's OK to say so. In America surveys suggest their numbers are growing fast.

SOURCE: Article in *The Economist*, 19th July 2021, Page 37.

Gen Z Teens are aged 13 to 18 according to the American Barna organisation. In a survey of over 1,300 of them, it was found that half, 53%, of them would define "evangelism" as "letting your actions speak rather than using words to explain your faith," and two-fifths, 44%, would say "inviting someone to attend a church service with you" was also an act of evangelism, or (41%) "attending a Christian youth event with you." Talking about their faith makes half of them, 52%, feel calm if speaking to a Christian, 47% if to a non-Christian.

SOURCE: *Barna Article*, issued 27th July, 2021 on <http://www.barna.com>.

Church Planting Preparation. A simple questionnaire used at a group of 30-strong black students studying to plant new churches asked their age: Under 35 (10%), 35 to 45 (30%) or 45 and over (60%). It also asked the key area of future focus: Families/parenting/children (67%), helping with food poverty (43%), meeting local financial needs (37%), and the elderly (13%). After 5 years three-quarters, 77%, hoped their congregation would be only 50% black.

SOURCE: Laura Treener, Frank Analysis Ltd.

Race an Advantage? The American Barna research group asked 2,900 Christian adults if their race had helped or hurt them. A third, 36%, of those who were white said being white had helped them, 5% that it had hurt them, the rest neither. A fifth, 22%, of those who were black said it had helped them, two-fifths, 39%, that it had hurt them. Hispanics were 32% to 28%, virtually equal as were the Asians, 23% to 21%.

SOURCE: *Barna Report* featuring data from the book *Beyond Diversity* by Dr Michael Emerson in the Racial Justice and Unity Centre, published 11th August 2021.

Death in 2020. In research for the Church of England, Benita Hewitt found that in her random but balanced sample of 2,008 English people aged 18 to 75, three-fifths, 62%, had experienced at least one death (where they would normally have gone to the funeral) in the months of April to December 2020, and 27% had experienced more than one such death. Two-fifths, 42%, had experienced the death of someone close to them, and a tenth, 10%, more than one such person.

SOURCE: *Funerals and Bereavement Research*, 9Dot Research, Kettering, Jan 2021.

Humour

Things I owe to my parents:

- (1) My parents taught me LOGIC: "Because I said so, that's why."
- (2) My parents taught me about HYPOCRISY: "If I've told you once, I've told you a million times. Don't exaggerate!"
- (3) My parents taught me WISDOM: "When you get to my age, you'll understand."

SOURCE: Email from Belisha Price, Feb 2014.

LOCKDOWN LEGACY

In a recent issue, an *Economist* editorial asked the burning question, “What might be the legacy of the pandemic?” and proceeded to suggest three answers. The first was a tightening of government control – over the past 18 months or so it has become the main channel for communication, has decided the rules of freedom, been a major source of cash and provided needed vaccines. Large sums of money have been involved (not just in the UK – compare the spending plans of the Biden administration). More activist bigger government has been the preferred solution.

Secondly, the editorial suggests “there is also evidence of a renewed search for meaning.” The Pew Research Centre found that a fifth of Italians and Dutch thought the pandemic had made their country more religious. Many UK churches have reported increased attendance via live-streaming; over 900 people watched an HTB service on Facebook one Sunday in July, 2021. There has been a huge increase in Christian online presence, across denominations and charitable activities.

Thirdly, the way people handle their leisure has changed. Half, 50%, of younger women have read a book for longer than before; literary agents are swamped with first novels; there could prove to be an “attention recession” on the media. People may decide to escape from the pre-pandemic drudgery of work; house prices have soared with people moving; many new businesses have started; medical school applications in Britain were up 21% on 2020. Many churches have seen dozens of volunteers helping with food banks, community feeding programmes and like activities of helping others; many fellowships have taken giant leaps in social media use.

All this indicates an acceleration of global changes, with other mega events contributing – the continued increase in China’s involvement in challenging the old Western-led order, the digital revolution of the last 20+ years, climate change, a renewed focus on space, and perhaps at micro-level, a deeper search for peace and security (ultimately a spiritual quest though not necessarily through the Christian faith).

How can the church encompass these trends? We have an incomparable, almighty, Creator God working out His purposes in the world He has made and jealous for the Bride of His Son, the Church (cp the 7 churches in Revelation). What will be the “Lockdown Legacy” of the Church?

SOURCES: *The Economist*, July 9th, 2021, Page 11; *Perspectives* No 71, Spring 2021, Page 4; Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB) 11.30 am service, 11th July, 2021; other reports.

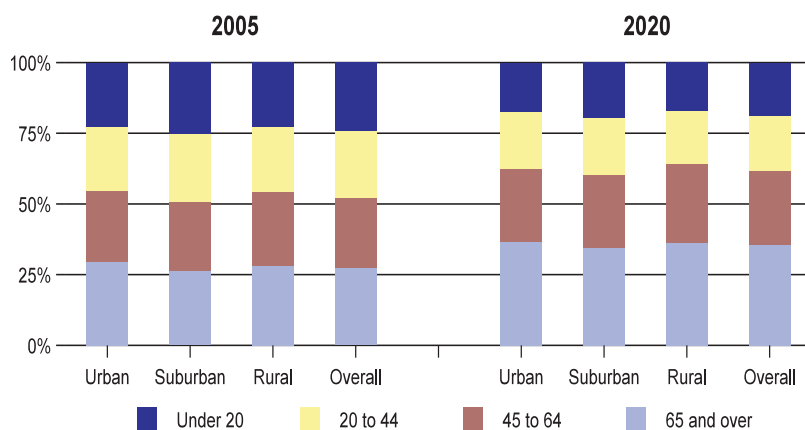
Age of Churchgoers by Environment

Rural congregations and older parishioners may be those churchgoers most affected by the pandemic, as is suggested by the survey still being analysed by Francis and Village for the *Church Times* in 2020 and 2021. That rural churches will become less viable post-Covid is supported by other, independent comments by various Anglican clergy.

The increasing significance of rural laity is reinforced by Archbishops’s Cottrell’s desire to see thousands of lay-led churches. In a number of rural villages when the church is threatened many non-churchgoers often come to the rescue. “That’s where my mother is buried,” or “That’s where I was baptised,” etc. So part of the “lay army” may well be those in villages who feel the Church belongs to them but rarely attend, perhaps only at Christmas or Easter.

The 2005 English Church Census measured the numbers attending church by the environment of the church, which included rural churches, and it also analysed those attending by their age. That year over a quarter, 27%, of all churchgoers were 65 or over, and in rural churches the percentage was about the same, 28%. Moving forwards to early 2020, and the percentage of churchgoers 65 or over generally had increased to 35%, and in rural churches the percentage was still virtually the same as the overall average, 36%. So the problems rural churches may have post-Covid will be much the same as those that churches may face in any other environment. That this is so is shown by the graph, where “urban” includes city centre, inner city and council estate churches, “suburban” includes congregations in separate towns and other built-up areas, and “rural” includes both commuter and remoter rural areas.

Age of churchgoers by church environment, 2005 and 2020



The main difference over these 15 years is the decline in the numbers under 20 and of those aged 20-44 and the increasing percentage of those aged 65 and over, characteristics which apply to all three broad environmental areas shown. Total churchgoers have declined -14% in these 15 years from 3.2 million to 2.8 million; of these, urban churchgoers have dropped -9%, suburban churchgoers -14% and rural churchgoers -20%.

The futures’ problem therefore is partly environmental – fewer rural churchgoers now than in 2005, but it is also in the age of churchgoers. The number of those under 20 has declined -34%, those aged 20 to 44 -27%, those aged 45 to 64 -9%, while those 65 and over have increased +11%. The larger percentage changes in this paragraph and the previous one relate to age rather than environment.

The questions then follow: “How can the spiritual needs of older people be met by increased lay leadership in a digital age?” If the clergy-dominated eucharistic culture of much Anglican rural worship withers, what type of replacement leadership is needed? Messy church, based on informality (food and fellowship), was popular; is that a model to follow? How can leaders prayerfully steer a way between structure and relevance, and spontaneity and reverence? How can leaders integrate Christian truth with practical concern and action and avoid just becoming another social service?

Leaders do not have to be older people. But Millennial leadership is likely to be very different. In what ways could older experience and youthful enthusiasm be integrated harmoniously? Ultimately successful leadership is about love and respect for a person, based on the template of Scripture. Age and gender are not over important. Above all, it is based on a leader’s deep and growing relationship with God.

SOURCE: Email question from Angus Crichton; article in *Quadrant* July 2007 giving the 2005 figures used above, Page 1; extrapolation for 2020 to be included in *UK Church Statistics* No 5, forthcoming.

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Anglican Clergy

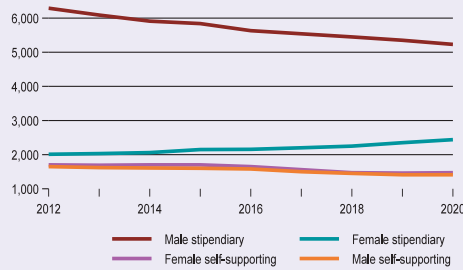
In 2020 the Church of England had some 12,300 parishes (a quarter with more than one church), which were served by a total of 19,800 ordained clergy. These were made up as follows:

- Two-fifths, 39%, of these were paid stipendiary clergy with a mandatory retirement age of 70.
- 15% were unpaid self-supporting clergy, with no mandatory retirement age, and hence many were serving in their 60s, 70s and even 80s.
- 36% were usually retired former clergy with Permission to continue Officiating (PTO) in services and ceremonies, many of whom were in their 70s and 80s.
- 5% were Chaplains serving in the Armed Forces, Prisons, Hospitals, Schools, Universities, Industry and other areas, mostly with a retirement age in their 60s.
- The majority (4%) of the remaining 5% were those serving as Brothers and Sisters in Recognised and Acknowledged Communities (with no retirement age).

Alongside these clergy were a small army of lay people helping in dozens of mostly unrecorded ways in their local church, but with 7,600 specifically recognised as licensed and trained Readers.

Most of the stipendiary clergy serve full-time, but over the last five years the percentage serving part-time has slightly increased from 1.9% for men to 2.1% in 2020, and from 2.1% to 2.4% for women, making an overall average of 2.2% in 2020 or 170 clergy in total.

Number of Church of England clergy serving as stipendiary or self-supporting, by gender



The graph shows the number of clergy by gender. Collectively, the number of stipendiary and self-supporting clergy are declining, from 11,650 in 2012 to 10,550 eight years later, an average rate of -1.2% per annum. The losses indicate that the number of new ordinations is not quite enough to match the outgoing clergy.

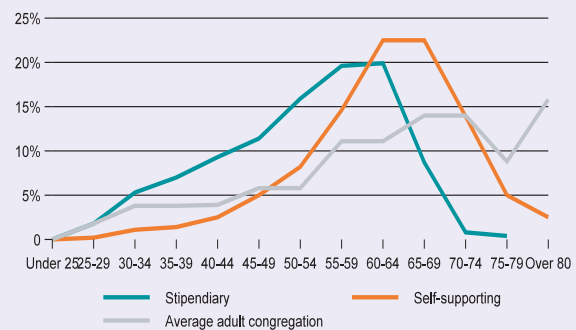
Of the four strata shown in the diagram the only one which is increasing is the number of female stipendiary clergy, from 2,010 in 2012 to 2,440 by 2020, an annual average increase of +2.5%. Male stipendiaries drop from 6,290 to 5,230, an annual average decline of -2.3%, and male self-supporting from 1,630 to 1,410, an average annual drop of -1.8%.

Self-supporting clergy are declining almost twice as fast as stipendiary clergy, -1.9% to -1.0%. They have been declining much faster in the last five years than the previous period – from 2012 to 2015 the average loss was 12 per year; between 2015 and 2020, the average loss was 84 per year.

Another factor measured is ethnicity but it seems the counting of these is difficult as numbers can vary quite widely from year to year! 2.7% of clergy were Black in 2018, 1.4% in 2019 but 5.3% in 2020! Nevertheless it is clear that the proportion of white clergy is decreasing while the number of Black and AME (Asian and Middle East) is increasing. Over the 8 years 2012 to 2020, Black numbers have increased four-fold, from 140 to 560, and AME numbers from 220 to 510.

By far the biggest factor in distinguishing paid and unpaid clergy is their age profile as the second graph makes clear:

Age of stipendiary and self-supporting clergy



Relatively few are able to be self-supporting under the age of 50, but many are willing to go past normal retirement age in order to help the church. For comparison the age of adults in an average Anglican congregation is shown in the grey line in the graph (though, of course, the clergy minister also to the young). The clergy are much older than those in the pew between 55 and 70, but there are more parishioners over 75!

SOURCES: Ministry Statistics 2020, Research and Statistics Dept., Archbishops' Council, July 2021, Tables 4, 7, 8, 16 and 19, and as issued in previous years 2012-2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019.

GLOBAL ANGLICANS

Seeking the global embrace of the Anglican Church is complicated as the Anglican Communion website gives a long list of the member churches but no indication of size. Other parts of the web like Wikipedia are, however, more helpful. The recent publication of the Third Edition of the World Christian Encyclopaedia gives an excellent alphabetical list of countries worldwide with their population, so putting the two lists of Anglican Churches by Province with the relevant population makes it possible to give a global overview.

The years do not quite tally so the percentages are only approximate, but they give a clear workable idea of relative strengths. The country which is missing from this Table is China with its 1.4 billion population, in which there are no Anglicans today as such according to the Encyclopaedia, although there were certainly Anglican missionaries within the China Inland Mission and other agencies working there in the first half of the last century.

Two-thirds of the world's Anglicans are in what is

called the Global South, the first four continents listed in the Table. Half the world's Anglicans are in Africa, where they are growing quite rapidly, especially in Eastern and Middle Africa. The other key parts of the Anglican world are the countries in the Pacific Ocean or Oceania, especially Australia, New Zealand and Melanesia.

What do these numbers mean? Essentially they are "adherents," that is, if asked on say a Census form what is their religion, these are those who would tick "Anglican" or "Church of England" or something similar. It does not mean that they necessarily are actual members of an Anglican church or even attend one frequently. They are those who are generally born into an Anglican background and accept Anglican values. In Africa, 35% of Christians are Pentecostal, in Oceania 16%, though the percentage of Christians who are practising Anglicans is not known.

The figures explain why the strength of GAFCON (the Global Anglican Future CONFerence) lie in Africa and Oceania. Of its Steering Committee of 9 Archbishops, five come from East Africa.

Anglicans by Continent, and Population proportion

Anglicans by Continent	Anglicans in 2015		Population 2020		% who are Anglican
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	
Africa	45,005,000	51	869,070,200	14	5.18
Asia (Excl. China)	6,492,000	8	3,256,691,000	52	0.20
Oceania/Pacific	4,848,000	6	42,009,500	1	11.54
South America	1,048,000	1	727,819,500	12	0.14
Global South	57,393,000	66	4,895,590,200	79	1.17
Europe	26,538,000	30	852,891,000	13	3.11
North America	3,600,000	4	529,736,700	8	0.68
Global North	30,138,000	34	1,382,627,700	21	2.18
Global TOTAL	87,531,000	100	6,278,217,900	100	1.39

SOURCES: Wikipedia, and World Christian Encyclopaedia, edited by Todd Johnson and Gina Zurlo, Edinburgh University Press, 2020, Pages 946-948.