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FUTURE FIRST

FACTS FOR FORWARD PLANNING

SNIPPETS

1) It is reported that an average of 150 negative stories about the UK church, across all denominations, were published by the media every month in 2021, from historic child abuse, bullying, suicide bombers attending church, etc.

2) Presenting a report to the February 2022 General Synod on reforming the church's diocesan structure, the Archbishop of Canterbury said 27 out of the current 42 Dioceses were running on deficit budgets.

3) 86% of refugees are hosted by developing countries that are economically and socially unable to absorb them.

4) Cardinal Marc Ouellet, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, told the National Catholic Reporter that "around 30% of priests when asked to become bishops turn[ing] down the offer" was about correct.

5) Women make 51% of the UK population, 54% of the civil service, 49% of the BBC, 35% of MPs, 34% of judges, 32% of police officers, 27% of the Cabinet, 23% of senior Anglican clergy and 11% of the Armed Forces.

6) Petrol selling at 1.649p per litre in the UK because of the Ukraine war is equivalent to £7.50 a gallon!

7) Islamophobia is not associated with Anglican identity, belief in God or practising a religion, a YouGov poll of 1,667 adults in July 2021 found.

SOURCES: 1) Kantar and Jersey Road Public Relations, via email from Mary Hammond, 24th January 2022; 2) *Church Times* report, 4th February 2022, Page 3; 3) UNHCR, June 2021 published in *GO*, Interserve magazine, Issue 1, February 2022, Page 5; 4) Article in *The Tablet*, 26th February, 2022, Page 27; 5) From *The Independent*, quoted in *The Week*, 12th March, 2022, Page 23 (Anglican clergy item added); 6) Personal fuel station observation; 7) *The Dinner Table Prejudice* report by Stephen Jones and Amy Unsworth, University of Birmingham, February 2022.

Another Year in the Life of the United Reformed Church By Rev. Martin Camroux, URC Researcher

The United Reformed Church (URC) was formed in 1972 by a union of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches with 200,000 members, 2,080 churches and 1,841 ministers. It expected to exist only for a few years before joining a wider united church. This never occurred and today, in its 50th Anniversary year, the Church is in a state of near collapse.

Every year the URC Yearbook offers comprehensive church statistics. This year they are grim. Membership is down over the last year by over 7% to 40,024 – the worst decline ever. Projected forward this would mean a membership of around 19,000 in ten years' time. The number of churches fell by 47 and this is only a foretaste of what is to come. In 1975 Chandler's Ford had around 220 members, 130 children and 17 junior church teachers, and was growing so fast they had to extend the building. Last year it closed. Many others will follow.

It is true that this year's returns are based on statistics returned last January in the midst of the Covid pandemic. The drop of 14% in the average congregation and 70% in the number of children in worship clearly reflects this. But the 7% decline is not totally out of line with the 5% recorded 3 years ago and the trend is unmistakable, though it may be too soon to be sure how far Covid has really damaged church life.

A survey for the Evangelical Alliance found average attendance 32% down, a drop in financial support and in children's and youth work. Some churches are worse than that and not all of those who have dropped off will come back. On the positive side we might note that the URC now has an average digital congregation of over 20,000. This is a real extension to its ministry, and a church like Woking has a digital congregation of over 400. But this cannot be a substitute for personal contact, and some of those who worship digitally will be existing church members and/or may visit more than one church website.

To get a real sense of what has happened to us we might compare the memberships of our 6 largest churches in the year I was ordained with today.

Church	1975	2022
Cheam, St Andrews	915	83
Bournemouth, Richmond Hill (now merged with St Andrew's)	647	156 476
Chelmsford, Christ Church	630	93
Monkseaton, Whitley Bay, St Andrews	551	113
Eastbourne, St Andrews	528	60 ¹
Coventry, Warwick Road	515	Closed
¹ In 2019, now part of a wider church union		

Or one might compare the 180+ children Cheam had then with the 6 they have today. In the 12 churches in Newcastle now, the largest URC membership is 64. St James, Newcastle has gone down from 239 to 20.

This year the largest churches are given in Table 1 on the attached (or enclosed) sheet. Table 2 gives Synod Membership for the last four years, and Table 3 General Statistics for the last four years. These Tables clearly raise the question of how viable some of the synods are? The Synod of Wales actually has more synod staff than serving stipendiary ministers.

Bleak as all this is, it is not a problem peculiar to the URC. One of the URC's problems is a lack of identity, but this has not helped the Church of Scotland where between 1966 and 2018, the number of members fell from over 1,230,000 to 325,695. Methodist membership is down from 304,971 in 2003 to 164,024 in 2021. In the Church of England, attendance at Sunday services fell to 690,000 in 2019 from almost 1.2 million in 1986 despite spending £240 million since 2017 in trying to "plant" new churches and attract younger worshippers. Secularization is a complex debate, but it is the reality which all churches have to face.

The URC's dilemma is now acute. Writing in the *Journal of the Congregational History Society* last year Alan Argent wrote: "Fifty years on, both the URC and its smaller neighbour, the Congregational Federation, seem to have something of a marooned quality to them. They are beached whales (admittedly of small dimensions), no longer swimming in the waters that once were natural to them, both responses to the enthusiasms of long ago. The world has moved on, but they are left, seeking a role and seemingly without a solid identity."

The URC is declining fast, with a badly over-stretched ministry, an unproductive structure with no medium-term future, and a theology deficit. It has always been easier to put off doing anything radical in the hope that one of our dead in the water national programmes would revitalise the church. It's a little late now. Is it too late?

Christianity in Ukraine

Ukraine has dominated the news since the Russian invasion on 24th February 2022. Millions have left the country as refugees or because forcibly moved to Russia. Intense fighting has been the order of the day, and much of the world has reacted by supporting the Ukrainians with humanitarian aid, arms and by imposing sanctions on the Russians as they fight to survive. What of the church in Ukraine?

Ukraine, before this war, was a country of some 44 million people, roughly two-thirds the number in the UK in a land area 2½ times the size. It has therefore huge amounts of rural areas where 10% of the world's wheat harvest is grown, and 50% of the sunflower oil used in fertiliser. It is also a major exporter of barley and maize. The war's impact on exports will be especially severe for many African countries, particularly Kenya, as a large proportion of their wheat supply comes from the Ukraine.

Ukraine is a highly religious country, with some 86% of the population being Christian adherents, 84% of whom are Orthodox. The Table shows the strength of the various groups; the *World Christian Encyclopedia* does not list any Anglican or Methodist churches in the country. "Protestant" includes Baptist, Reformed and other like churches. "%" in the Table gives the percentage that year of the total population, and "%pa" the average annual change between 2000 and 2020.

The main church in Ukraine is Orthodox. In 2015 a process began to make the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Autocephalous (= independent) of the Russian Orthodox Church. A Ukrainian Orthodox Church had been started by Patriarch Filaret in Kiev in 1992, and in 2016 the Ukrainian Parliament voted to appeal for its independence, which, despite the opposition of the Russian Orthodox Church, was granted by Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople in 2019, to Metropolitan Epiphany, Filaret's "right arm," elected as Metropolitan in December 2018. President Putin uses the Russian Orthodox Church to bolster his historical linking of church and state in the past Russian expression of empire.

There has been a Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) in Great Britain since before the second World War, and some 15 priests have served the Ukrainian Orthodox community (of between 6,000 and 12,000 pre-2022) in the UK each year between 1947 and 2016. In 2016 about 300 attended on a typical Sunday, half of whom were in London, rising to "several thousand on major feast days in London, and 260 elsewhere."

Composition of Ukrainian Christians, 2000 and 2020

Denomination	2000	%	2020	%	%pa
R Catholic	4,046,000	8.3	4,304,000	9.9	+0.3
Orthodox	33,646,000	68.9	31,715,000	72.8	-0.3
Independent	607,000	1.2	800,000	1.8	+1.4
Protestant	764,600	1.6	840,000	1.9	+0.5
Total Cian	39,063,600	80.0	37,659,000	86.4	-0.2
Non-Cian	9,776,400	20.0	5,920,000	13.6	-2.5
Population	48,840,000	100.0	43,579,000	100.0	-0.6
Pentecostal	1,215,000	2.5	1,400,000	3.2	+0.7
Evangelical	408,000	0.8	520,000	1.2	+1.2

The Table shows that the Ukrainian population has declined by 10% since the turn of the century, some 5 million people, but that the proportion who affirm their Christian belief has grown, from 80% 20 years ago to 86% now. The attack on Ukraine could thus almost be counted as Christian persecution.

Where has this growth taken place? Among the Roman Catholics and Protestants a little, but mainly among the Independents. Both the Pentecostals and the Evangelicals have grown, especially the latter, and it will be here that the bulk of the Independent growth will also be found.

Why have the Evangelicals in Ukraine grown so much in the last 20 years? This is largely due to the many campaigns which evangelist David Hathaway of Eurovision has conducted in the country. Ninety this year, David has been involved for over 70 years of ministry starting in 1950. He has had a special burden for Ukraine and has been able to hold large-scale evangelistic meetings with many thousands present, where both many healings and conversions have taken place.

He has also stimulated united National Days of Prayer in Ukraine for all denominations, which some see answered in Ukraine's extraordinary resilience and resistance. His Eurovision website has this message:

God is our comfort. He can lift the depression; He can lift the fears; He will replace it with a sense of peace and joy. I want to speak peace over all who are watching I want you to lift up your eyes and see that God will bring good out of evil.

May it be so.

SOURCES: *World Christian Encyclopedia*, edited by Gina Zurlo and Todd Johnson, on Ukraine, Page 824; Eurovision website accessed 21st March 2022; "Africa's Major Reliance on Russian and Ukrainian Wheat," by Martin Sarmström, *Statista*, March 9th, 2022; *UK Church Statistics*, Table 8.2 Note 10.



Quotes

- 1) "We have forgotten God; His gracious hand which preserves us in peace and multiplies us and enriches us and strengthens us; ... We have become self-sufficient ... and too proud to pray to the God that made us."
- 2) "There are two kinds of people, those who do the work and those who take the credit. Try to be in the first group; there is less competition there."
- 3) "Your position never gives you the right to command. It only imposes on you the duty of so living your life that others can receive your orders without being humiliated."
- 4) "It's not enough to hope our sons will become good men. We need them to be good at being sons."
- 5) "I still remember one challenging quote, from one of [Archbishop Tutu's] talks: 'You are a child of God, so start behaving like one!'"

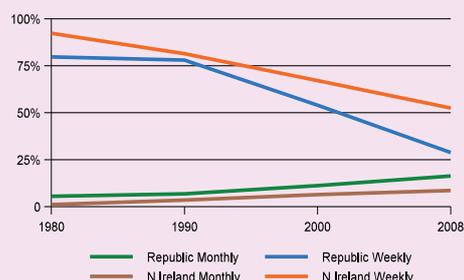
SOURCES: (1) Abraham Lincoln, Thanksgiving Message, 1863; (2) Indira Gandhi; (3) Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, Faber, 1966, Page 96; (4) Jon Tyson, *The Intentional Father*, Barna Books, August 2021; (5) From a reader of the February 2022 *FutureFirst*.

Roman Catholics in the British Isles

A PhD student has been helping prepare statistical data for the forthcoming *Oxford History of British and Irish Catholicism*, edited by Dr Alana Harris at King's College London, and has found some details not often put together.

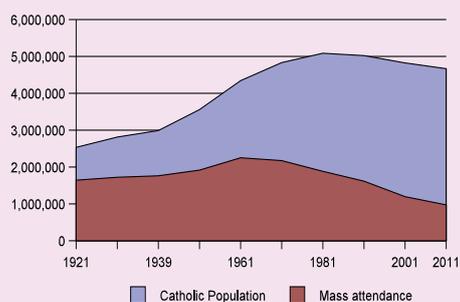
One of these was the frequency of attendance at Mass in both N Ireland and the Republic of Ireland over 30 years, and the figures found are shown in the graph (the N Ireland monthly figure for 2000 is estimated). It shows weekly attendance very clearly declining, faster in the Republic than in N Ireland, while monthly attendance increases but nowhere near enough to compensate, so in other words a significant proportion are not now attending at all – of the order of 40% in the Republic and 30% in N Ireland in 2008, and almost certainly higher now.

Frequency of Mass attendance



Other figures give the opportunity to compare the Catholic population (usually estimated by each priest for his parish) and weekly Mass attendance. In 1921 for both England/Wales and Scotland the proportion was about two-thirds, 65%, attending Mass. but reducing to a third of that, 21%, by 2011. The two began severely differentiating 60 years ago in 1961, when attendance numbers began dropping generally.

Catholic Population and Mass Attendance, Great Britain, 1921 to 2011



The above graphs tell a sad story of decline, which but mirrors what is happening in other denominations. The Catholics record, however, the number of conversions they gain each year, and this makes interesting reading, even if the overall shape of a graph would be much the same. In 1920 England and Wales saw 12,600 new people join the church, which dropped slowly to their 1950 total of 11,000. However, in 1960 they saw 14,500 new receptions, reflecting the increase in numbers during the 1950s, mainly because of the drought in the Irish Republic and the large number of Irish people who came to Britain during those years, and have stayed. What this shows is that drawing a straight line trend is never very safe, as the future depends on many things, few of which may be predictable, as the past two years of Covid have amply illustrated.

SOURCES: *Oxford History* as given in the text, statistical supplement by Tim Kinnear, PhD student, via email 14th February, 2021.

American Reactions to Covid

A webinar hosted by the Religious Research Association (based in South Hamilton, Massachusetts, United States) drew some 47 participants in March 2022 to discuss, "Exploring the pandemic impact on congregations." The broad out-turn was interesting. One speaker, Scott Thumma, Professor of Sociology of Religion at Hartford International University, found from preliminary results of a 5 year programme of surveys into Covid impact that people in church congregations had, over the restrictions of the last two years:

- 38% Requested spiritual guidance
- 31% Needed extra food because of lockdown
- 31% Would have liked counselling because of anxiety
- 25% Required financial assistance because of job loss

He also found that only 15% of congregational attenders were now (post-Covid) willing to volunteer to help against some 33% pre-Covid. The survey also found that 27% of congregations had no problems or conflicts with wearing masks in church, 52% had some mild reservations, but 15% had moderate apprehensions, and 7% had severe reactions to having to wear masks.

He asked, "Did they feel their church's existence was threatened by Covid?" and found the answer varied by size of church, with 60% feeling it was if they had up to 50 in their congregation, but 72% if their church had between 51 and 100 people, and 79% in larger churches – perhaps the reverse of what might have been expected. The larger the church the greater the apprehension in ever returning to "normal."

While virtually everyone accepted that their congregation would become smaller, they also saw that their congregation would need to change, especially involving greater racial diversity. This impacted the larger evangelical congregations the most.

In a smaller study over 38 churches in several denominations in November 2021, but part of the same broad research programme, the questions asked about outreach in a time of crisis, and found that, among these churches, members had either increased existing work or started it in the areas of:

- (a) Social support of congregational members, 28%
- (b) Wider use of the church building, 25%
- (c) Food distribution to the needy, 22%
- (d) Financial assistance, 21%, and
- (e) Helping with needed medical requirements, 20%

This list of results is very similar to the wider study given above. Congregational members were also asked if they were willing to change actively their church life (86% agreeing) and particularly in relation to greater involvement with the local community (82% agreeing).

Another participant in the webinar, Dr Tim Snyder, an Assistant Professor of Practical Theology at Wesley Theological Seminary confirmed similar finds in a study of 50 mainline Protestant congregations, which had also seen an increasing use of their church building for stocking supplies, help with food, etc. which for them had resulted in an increase of volunteers wanting to help, important because it was all "lay led."

The value of Covid was seen as helping congregations move into broadcasting what they did, and doing this helped put people into virtual communities which could interact with each other.

The Religious Research Association is a lively organisation whose activities can be ascertained through their website www.rraweb.org. Its Executive Officer, Gina Zurlo, was co-editor of the third edition of the *World Christian Encyclopaedia*, published in 2020.

Book Reviews

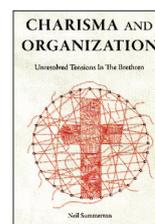


THE BATTLE FOR CHRISTIAN BRITAIN, sub-titled "Sex, Humanists and Secularisation, 1945-1980" by Callum Brown, Professor of Late Modern European Histories, in the School of Humanities at the University of Glasgow, was published by the Cambridge University Press in 2019. It is 342 pages long, with ISBN 978-1-108-43161-3, and the University website lists this as his 13th book.

With an enormous bibliography of publications and websites consulted, this book tells the sad story of British religion in the mid-twentieth century. After the war, Christian religion, and the morality that goes with it, flourished, especially through the vigilance of the Public Morality Council, focussing largely on sex and the film culture and on the stage, where nudity of any kind was strongly frowned upon.

The book highlights the very different attitudes by authorities in London, Blackpool, Sheffield, Glasgow and the Isle of Lewis, and the tensions and arguments within the BBC, but shows that after the mid-1960s attitudes began to radically change and the role of religion took an ever diminishing part in public and entertaining output. The Billy Graham Crusades affected many people but not the culture of society. As congregations declined, areas of key importance such as abortion, divorce and homosexuality began increasingly to take centre stage, and the dominance of conservative Christianity (as he calls it) collapsed. The essential culture of Britain (its law, social organisation, licensing and management) was "not replaced by a dominant liberal Christianity." The rise of Humanist thinking and its actions are emphasised throughout.

Why is all this important? Although the exact years for the birth of Gen X can vary, they are usually taken as about between 1964 and 1982, so that this generation, many in leadership positions today, have a very different cultural background, and their children, the Millennials, will accept that background as their base. Hence the battle today for Christian thinking and practice. This book tells the story in much, almost exhaustive, detail.



CHARISMA AND ORGANISATION, subtitled "Unresolved Tensions in the Brethren," is by Dr Neil Summerton CB, a military historian, long-serving policy maker in the civil service, and currently editor of *Partnership Perspectives*, a quarterly Christian Brethren magazine. The book is 136 pages long, with ISBN 978-1-9160130-3-2, not yet available on Amazon. Published by the Brethren Archivists and Historians Network (BAHN) in 2021.

This is a fascinating book giving some of the history of the Christian Brethren movement since its beginnings in the 19th century and growth throughout the 20th. Should local churches be independent or work together? Should Christian organisations be formed? Should the development of Echoes of Service, a key organisation supporting Brethren missionaries overseas, be considered scriptural?

The doctrinal beliefs of different groups of Brethren Christians are explained and detailed, and the underlying theological contentions exposed. The Open Brethren are against institutions, believing that the spiritual leading of the local church is supreme. On the other hand there are many organisations in the UK formed through the Open Brethren! The final chapter looks at some of the unresolved tensions among this group of Christian people. Are organisms confused with organisations? The book is well written, the arguments clearly articulated, and gives useful background to those interested in this key group of British Christians.

Persecuted Christians

Open Doors International, who support persecuted Christians around the globe, publish a list every January of how severe the persecution is in each country. They do this by making a variety of assessments in each country based on the private lives of citizens and their family life, community life, national life, church life and the general level of violence against Christians, scoring each of these out of a maximum of 16.7 points, giving an overall worst total of 100. The latest World Watch List (WWL) was published in January 2022. In 2022 violence against Christians received the highest score in Nigeria and Pakistan.

The most severe country for persecution for some years has been North Korea, though in the 2022 WWL list Afghanistan replaced it as No 1. In third and fourth positions for the past three years have been Somalia and Libya. Fifth this time was Yemen, taking Pakistan's place in 2021 and 2020, which moved to No 8 in 2022. Sixth (as previously) was Eritrea, and seventh was Nigeria (formerly No 9 in 2021 and No 12 in 2020 and indicating increasing persecution). In ninth position was Iran, 8th in 2022 but 9th in 2020. India has been in 10th position for the last three years. All these countries have scores of between 80 and 98. The worst five countries each year with their scores are illustrated in the Table below.

The overall list shows an increasing level of persecution generally. For instance the average score of the top 10 worst countries in 2020 was 87.7, but this was 88.9 in 2021 and 89.3 in 2022, an increase reflected similarly across the whole list. The countries where the situation has steadily worsened over the last three years are Afghanistan (scores going from 95 to 98), North Korea, Yemen, Nigeria, Myanmar, China, Qatar, Mali, Morocco, Indonesia and Columbia in the top 30 countries. Only in Somalia and Syria has the situation steadily eased in this period.

For the other 18 countries in the top 30 the situation has varied between 2020 and 2022, sometimes staying the same ranking (but not the same score) as in Somalia (3), Libya (4) and India (10), but otherwise the scores, and rank, vary from year to year. Those not mentioned in the top 30 are, in order of highest score: Eritrea, Iran, Sudan, Iraq, Maldives, Vietnam, Egypt, Uzbekistan, Algeria, Mauritania, Turkmenistan, Laos and Bangladesh.

The list of the top 30 countries (out of 229 listed by the United Nations) includes 19 out of 49 Asian countries (39%), 10 out of 56 African countries (18%), and 1 in South America's 14 countries (7%), and none from Europe's 46, North (and Central) America's 37 or Oceania's 27 countries.

While such lists may be of academic interest, what the information does do is to remind us to pray for those suffering harm, being ostracised by society, in prison, under harassment, uncertain as to the way forward, often arrested for no obvious reason, ignored, passed over for promotion, not having well-being as they should, in forced debt (as in the Indian brick-kilns), and many other ways. We are bidden to help them as we can and surround them with prayer, love, encouragement, and aid.

Position	2022	2021	2020
Worst = 1st	98 Afghanistan	94= North Korea	95 Afghanistan
2nd worst	96 North Korea	94= Afghanistan	94 North Korea
3rd worst	91= Somalia	92= Somalia	92 Somalia
4th worst	91= Libya	92= Libya	90 Libya
5th worst	88 Yemen	88 Eritrea	88 Pakistan

SOURCE: World Watch Research, Open Doors Analytical, January 2022 Round-up.

SNOWFLAKES

Another denomination. The Israel United In Christ (IUIIC) seems to be largely a denomination of black churches which was founded in 2003 by a man called Bishop Nathaniel, and is based in Newburgh, New York. It is NOT linked to any other Israelite organisation or group. However, it runs a number of schools, two of which are in England, one in Birmingham, and the other in London.

SOURCE: Website via Gabriella, BBC reporter accessed February 2022.

Lowest fertility rate. The latest published total fertility rate for 2020 for England and Wales is 1.58, the lowest figure since it began to be published annually in 1938. Why are fewer women preferring to be childless (the main reason, although number per child-bearing women is also decreasing)? An article by Holly Williams in *The Guardian* suggests the reasons are: (a) parenthood is hard, (b) expensive when jobs are uncertain, (c) housing is expensive also, so those on lower incomes have fewer births, (d) is a choice, and (e) dissatisfaction with maternity is seen in some films and on Facebook ["I regret having children" has 43,000 followers], (f) pressure on parenthood is high.

SOURCE: Article in *The Week* 5th February, 2022, Page 18.

Covid and religion. The number of UK Covid cases in Waves 2 and 3, Sept 2020 to Dec 2021, have been published. There were 2.4 million in Wave 2 and 3.4 million in Wave 3. Combining these gave the following result, where "% = proportion of the total cases in that group, and "Rate" = average rate per 100,000 population. Sikhs, Muslims and Christians had the highest rates, Buddhist and other religions the lowest. If the same rate applied for the first wave, an overall rate of 270 per wave means 1 person in every 125 had Covid. Out of churchgoers, the Christian rate would be equivalent to 2 people in every 3 churches (average congregation was 78 in 2020).

Group	%	Rate
Christian	57.2	280
No Religion	26.9	270
Muslim	6.3	290
Not stated	5.8	240
Hindu	1.6	250
Sikh	1.1	310
Jewish	0.4	240
Other religion	0.3	210
Buddhist	0.3	180
Total (5.8 mn)	100.0	270

SOURCE: Office for National Statistics, 14th February, 2022.

Freedom of Religion. A Eurobarometer survey of EU countries in 2020 published November 2021 which asked 27,000 people if they thought everyone should have the freedom of thought, expression and religion, scoring on a scale from 0 (= totally disagree) to 10 (= totally agree) had the overall average score across Europe of 8.4. Highest was Denmark with 9.1, followed by Cyprus with 9.0 and Spain with 8.9; lowest was Romania with 7.1 and Italy with 7.4.

SOURCE: Eurobarometer survey November 2020 on the Values and Identities of EU citizens; accessed February 2022.

Church Planters. A November 2021 survey across 20 lay leaders who had started a church found several things of key importance:

- Prayer by all those involved, including differing patterns of prayer
- The leadership experience of the key planter
- The mentor/coach role in providing support
- The role of the team was critically important
- Clear need for new pathways and structures in the Church of England

New kinds of comprehensive training, in context, emerged as did recognising new ways of recognising Lay Planter Ministry. Full details can be found at: <http://ccx.org.uk/visual/listening-lay/>.

SOURCE: John McKinley, Executive Director, Myriad, CCX, Centre for Church Multiplication, *Executive Summary*, January 2022.

Covid and churchgoing. There are going to be a number of uncertainties in the post-Covid assessment of church attendance. While the number of live-streamers is readily shown, this is of the number of homes not watchers, and some homes may have several watchers. And in this context, what does "watch" mean? "A key factor in church closure is not so much they have run out of money, but they have run out of people to take on leadership roles," writes Martin Camroux in a letter to URC friends. "Ministerial overstretch continues to be a real problem, ... thus reducing the effectiveness of pastoral care."

SOURCE: Letter of findings about the annual *Yearbook* of the United Reformed Church, Martin Camroux, February 2022.

Anglican Provinces. The Anglican Communion is the third largest Christian communion after the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. The latest addition, the 42nd Province of Mozambique and Angola was approved by the Anglican Consultative Council in 2020. In total the Communion says it has 85,524,380 members, of which the largest is the Church of England with 26,000,000 (the number of baptised Anglicans in England), followed by Nigeria with 18,000,000. Take these two out of the total and the average size of a Province is a million people, although 21 have less than half this number.

SOURCE: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican_Communion; *World Christian Encyclopedia*, edited by Todd Johnson and Gina Zurlo, EUP, 2020.

Same-sex and Anglicans. According to YouGov polls, those self-identifying as Anglicans in the UK show increasing support for same-sex marriage. It is "right" according to 38% asked in 2013, 48% in 2020 and 55% in 2022, and it is "wrong" said 47% in 2013 and 29% in 2022, suggesting 15% didn't know in 2013 and 16% in 2022. Women were more likely to support same-sex than men. The YouGov surveyed 5,120 people in Great Britain, 1,165 of whom were Anglican.

SOURCE: Church of England Newspaper article, 4th March 2022, Page 3.



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UK Church Attendance

While the pre-Covid attendance numbers can be estimated for parts of the UK, an overall view of the entire country's attendance is often requested. Some denominations can readily give that information but others have to be guesstimated. Such information as existed for the year 2020 is shown in the Table, updated where possible from that which is given in *UK Church Statistics No 4, 2021 Edition*. The largest difference is the Mass attendance figure for the Roman Catholics in N Ireland.

Estimated Sunday church attendance in UK by denomination 2020

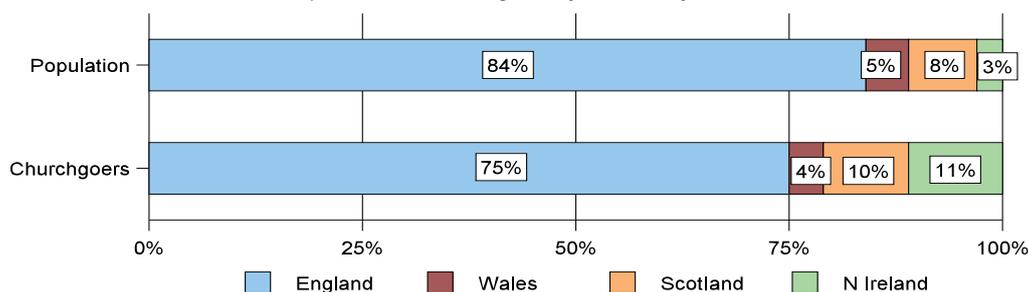
2020	England	Scotland	Wales	N Ireland	TOTAL	% of total
Anglican	682,000	11,833	24,416	37,600	755,849	20.5
Baptist Union of GB	132,957	170	8,652	0	141,779	3.8
Baptists, Other	105,243	16,900	1,148	9,540	132,831	3.6
R Catholic	709,435	132,310	23,725	213,775	1,079,245	29.3
Independent: FIEC	35,940	1,310	2,710	40	40,000	1.1
Independent, Other	126,460	18,640	7,000	10,740	162,840	4.4
New Churches	166,300	8,970	3,570	3,670	182,510	4.9
Methodist	171,500	1,680	10,600	6,560	190,340	5.2
Orthodox	36,100	1,080	630	405	38,215	1.0
Pentecostal	446,600	19,380	10,800	12,100	488,880	13.3
Presbyterian (CofS)	100	118,340	0	0	118,440	3.2
Presbyterian, Other	0	17,860	10,900	110,610	139,370	3.8
United Reformed	44,500	1,820	2,250	0	48,570	1.3
Salvation Army	21,715	1,832	1,344	714	25,605	0.7
Smaller Denominations	101,995	12,570	26,336	2,120	143,021	3.9
TOTAL	2,780,845	364,695	134,081	407,874	3,687,495	100.0
As published in CS4	2,791,300	363,970	134,100	~	~	
Population, thousands	56,990	5,476	3,155	1,911	67,531	
Attendance as % of pop	4.9%	6.7%	4.3%	21.3%	5.5%	
% each country is of total	75.4%	9.9%	3.6%	11.1%	100%	

GB = Great Britain FIEC = Fellowship of Independent Churches CofS = Church of Scotland CS4 = *UK Church Statistics No 4, 2021 Edition*
 SOURCES: CS4 and Office for National Statistics

This is a VERY approximate table, with a huge number of estimates, but using the data as supplied for the Brierley Consultancy latest denominational survey in 2020.

It is readily seen that the largest denominations in the UK are, respectively, the Roman Catholic Church (29%), the Anglican Church (21%), and the Pentecostals (13%). The Independent sector is next with 11%, then comes the Presbyterians with 8%, the Baptists with 7%, the Methodists and the Smaller Denominations, both with 5%, with the Orthodox just 1% (though in membership terms it is much larger).

Population and churchgoers by UK country, 2020



The disparity between each country's population share of the UK and their proportion of churchgoers is shown in the chart.

Overall the Table shows that 5.5% of the population was attending church before the Covid restrictions; how many will still be attending physically post-Covid has yet to be determined, how many are live-streaming is unknown, and how many new people have been drawn in by all that the churches have been doing during lockdown remains to be discovered.

What have they been doing? "In church buildings and school halls, in warehouses and homes, on playing fields and over garden fences, Christians all over the nation are innovating, gathering to worship together, sharing their faith, feeding the poor and caring for the stranger," is how Gavin Calver, CEO of the Evangelical Alliance, put it in an article in *The Times* on 29th January 2022.

He argues that because during lockdown, "churches served their neighbourhood by providing food banks, caring for the elderly, supporting underprivileged children and much more," the future church will continue "to connect and attract people across our country, but in more diverse ways to match the increasingly varied lives we are living." He reckons "there's a fresh wave of creativity and innovation as to what it means to be the church, and it's incredible to see this all over the UK."

As *The Times* headed his article, "Don't write off the church just yet!"

Mapping Migration and its impact on the Churches of Europe: 'Being Church Together'

Rev Associate Professor Darrell Jackson,
Whitley College, University of Divinity, Melbourne.

Three editions

Three editions of church responses to Mapping Migration in Europe currently sit on my desk, spanning the years 2007-2020. I've co-authored each of them with an Italian Baptist, Dr Alessia Passarelli. I'm a missiologist, Alessia is a sociologist. It's a perfect combination for a European study of migration that explores how migrant faith impacts our churches and our European societies.

From the beginning, we've tried to offer a one-stop shop for church leaders by providing migration statistics for 44 European countries, hoping that these help them to understand some of our findings' implications for their churches and organisations.

In the first edition we introduced migration from a theological and a sociological perspective, with a focus on the movement of people into Europe. We adopted an A4 format which continues to offer maximum flexibility of presentation and we've stuck with this.

Our second edition included migrant voices and featured responses from migrant church members. We conducted a small-scale, pan-European denominational survey, focussing our research and analysis on the themes of 'belonging, community, and identity.' The inclusion of infographics in the second edition was widely welcomed, making statistical data appear less daunting.

The current, third, edition, *Being Church Together*, looks at the variety of ways that churches in Europe are working to be more inclusive of migrants and non-migrants.

Measuring migration

Collecting migrant data is a fraught exercise! Some European countries don't make migration data available. For some governments, data is not reliable; it's susceptible to political interference in the way it is collected and reported. Official data may remain unpublished, intentionally over-estimated or underestimated, and it commonly omits religious data. Most national agencies (ONS, for example), regional (Eurostat), and international agencies (UNDESA) also review and update their demographic data collections periodically.

The most recent national data is often 12-18 months "old" before it is reliably reportable and the processing of that national data by a regional or international organisation often produces different estimated counts of the same population. Without understanding this, the novice user of statistical data can be easily tripped up; I speak from personal experience!

For denominational offices, the challenge is greater still. Relatively few have the necessary resources for statistical research among migrant congregations or members in their churches. Too few National Councils of Churches or Alliances seem able or willing to commit resources for national surveys of migrant Christians and their congregations, and there are many obstacles to overcome. Hence, Europe's churches (both migrant and non-migrant) are forced to establish their policies and practices upon a rather fragmentary evidence-base.

"Being church together"

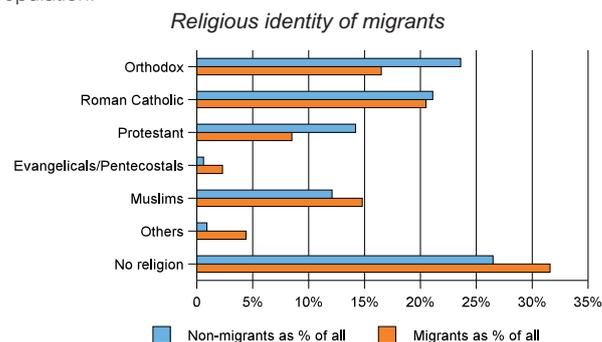
A 42-item survey was circulated for our 3rd edition, and completed by representatives of 74 denominations located in 22 countries across Europe; a response rate that more than doubled the response rate we had for our 2nd Edition in 2015.

The report is available for free download, avoiding the need to summarise the survey findings here, but what's worth noting is that the findings underscore the earlier work of Dr Passarelli, whose study of migrant Christian leaders, the MIRACLE project, made ten recommendations for improving the integration and participation of migrants in the non-migrant churches of Europe.

- I. Understand that integration is a two-way process.
- II. Encourage a welcoming attitude.
- III. Introduce intercultural elements into church activities.
- IV. Improve social relations among members.
- V. Reflect on the way that church structures, aspects and attitudes influence active participation.
- VI. Meet others on their terms – go where they are.
- VII. Establish dialogue around core issues.
- VIII. Address conflicts in the church as they arise.
- IX. Create and nurture relations between migrant-led churches and traditional churches with an exchange of good practices.
- X. Collect data regarding migrant participation in churches.

These continue to be important findings and recommendations, confirmed by our survey.

Statistical data is compiled and reported individually for each of the 44 European countries, and comparisons are possible. For example, the country with most migrants as a percentage of the population is Luxembourg (48% of its population are internal EU migrants who have moved there for economic reasons) whilst migrants in Bosnia-Herzegovina make up only 1.1% of the population.



For reasons of space, no pan-European summary of data is offered in our 3rd edition, unlike the first two editions. However, I was interested to find out more about the religious identity of migrants in Europe. Happily, the 2017 European Values Survey (EVS) provides useful and comparable data, and responses were extracted from the small sample of EVS respondents who declared themselves "born overseas," shown in the diagram. This shows the religious identity of migrants as a percentage of the total migrant population of Europe, which is shown alongside similar data of the religious identity of non-migrants as a percentage of the non-migrant population of Europe. It's a fairly raw count and requires further refinement and research, but it reveals some interesting trends.

For example, Evangelicals/Pentecostals and Muslims are more likely to be present among migrants, in percentage terms, than they are among the indigenous populations of Europe. A migrant is three times more likely to be an evangelical Christian than is a non-migrant. This has significant implications for the Evangelical communities of Europe, with the need to anticipate and prepare for greater ethnic diversity among members and leaders. Equally interesting is the fact that a migrant is slightly more likely to be a Muslim than is a non-migrant. This continues to highlight the opportunities for Christian witness and service to newly resident Muslims in Europe.

And... a final thought



During the 17-year period that co-researching and authoring Mapping Migration in Europe has been undertaken, I've remained convinced that "non-European migrants to Europe represent not the de-Christianisation of Europe but a de-Europeanisation of Christianity." A similar move happened in the first century congregations of Antioch. Non-Jewish, African migrants from Libya and Greeks from Cyprus, arrived in Antioch and transformed the early Jewish messianic movement which, in the good purposes of God, might point to the possibility of a similar transformation of European Christianity by migrant believers.

SOURCES: Mapping Migration, 2008; a free copy of the 150page 2020 edition of *Mapping Migration in Europe: Mapping Church Responses "Being Church Together"* can be downloaded from: https://ccme.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2021-05-20_Mapping-Migration3-2020-PDF-FINAL.pdf.

These may be helpful - Books/papers received

An excellent summary of the leadership of Rev Dr Joel Edwards CBE is given in the *Lausanne Global Analysis*, January 2022, Volume 11, issue by Las Newman, Global Associate Director for Regions of the Lausanne Movement, <http://lausanne.org/content/lga/2022-01/>.

Insiders and Alongsiders, An invitation to the conversation, by Kevin Higgins, General Director of Frontier Ventures, 2021, William Carey Publishing, ISBN 978-1-64508-306-1. An exploration of how "we handle our cultural, ethnic and religious traditions." A short, small and fascinating book.

O come all ye thinking types?, Leslie Francis et al, *Theological Studies*, Vol 77 No 4, Sept 2021, showing that Liverpool (and other) cathedral services are reaching some thinking types of people not otherwise being reached, <http://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i4.6747>.

How one Church grew through the Covid Lockdown

Rev Michael Hodgson is a minister of two United Reformed Churches (URC) in Surrey, and this is his encouraging story of how these churches coped with the Covid lockdowns. What he did could perhaps encourage other churches to attempt something similar in other URC churches or denominations.

In a nutshell, our story in the Walton and Weybridge pastorate is that when the first Covid Lockdown began we soon realised that we had to adapt or die! Right from the start a weekly “Thought for the Day and Prayer” sheet was circulated by email and by post to every member and adherent. (I thought it might be for a month or so – actually it went out from mid March, 2020 to Pentecost 2021!) It was quickly realised though that this wasn’t enough and that we had to go “online” if we going to try to meet people’s spiritual needs in a time of crisis. Our First “Zoom Service” was on Easter Day 2020 and we continue to Zoom services on a Sunday to this day.

A number of our folk are older and initially their “children” and grandchildren helped them get used to going online and onto Zoom. We also formed a “Tech Team” from people within the pastorate who were more tech-savvy and so we too were able to support and help people in those early days, when worshipping online was so new and so scary, enabling them to participate.

Following each service we had “zoom chat and coffee” (vastly improved coffee!) and this was facilitated by a member of the congregation who was brilliant at it and who really came to the fore. In the chat time, by the way, we didn’t allow people to “whinge”. We asked people to share nice things that had happened, to share things to lift the spirits, and we sometimes had a “topic” for the day, such as “where we you on VE Day?” on the 75th anniversary of it – or a sharing of favourite Burns’ poems. The chat soon became a much looked-forward to event and did so much good.

So, with visitors we were soon running at up to about 70 connections each week during the first lockdown and the Zoom Chat time afterwards played a massive part in people’s well-being. We also began to be joined by people in different countries who had a connection with one of the churches. During this time the 2 congregations grew close.

Following a further period of closure over Christmas 2020 both church buildings re-opened at Pentecost, 2021. It was immediately clear that the congregations weren’t mentally in the same place that they’d been 18 months earlier. People in both congregations said that it didn’t feel right worshipping separately. Effectively they’d come together as one congregation during the pandemic and going back to old ways was felt to be a very backward step. They didn’t like it.

From Pentecost 2021 we continued a weekly Zoom service, zooming our Sunday service from St Andrews (not possible from Weybridge URC for a number of reasons) thus giving people the option of “in person” or “zoom”. Initially a number of people preferred to remain online but the balance has now changed with most now back “in person”. We continue zooming though because ...

Ever since we started a Zoom Service on Easter Day, 2020 we started being joined by some of our housebound members each week. They could “come to church” again. They could be a part of church online when they couldn’t come in person any more. That’s been great and sometimes they read lessons etc for us in their home. We can see and hear them in church, no problems.

Then came our rather curved ball. For many years St Andrew’s has had a link with a community of impoverished artists in Zimbabwe. When their church was closed for Covid reasons we realised that the internet allowed us to share worship with them. With low internet speed and old devices it quickly became obvious that Zoom wasn’t going to work – but audio recordings using Whatsapp get through – so that’s what we do.

Today, we are very much a hybrid church. Walton and Weybridge URCs have united and now meet each week on the St Andrew’s, Walton site where the church’s IT system has been upgraded to allow it to connect to the internet. We have 40-60 physically in the building most Sundays. We have about 10 who regularly join us on Zoom. We have about 120 in Zimbabwe using Whatapp and the

service is also used by a local school there to provide a weekly a school assembly. Members of Artpeace also forward the services to other members of their family. On a Sunday we have lessons being read in church – or from people at home/nursing home, or pre-recorded in Zimbabwe and then played in church using “share screen.” We have had funeral services too which have been joined by people in up to 5 different countries at the same time, and with tributes being given in those services by people not even in the same continent as us.

It's all a bit mind-boggling but had we not embraced the internet opportunities, and had we not supported our folk in getting confident with it I truly believe that both churches would have closed, or else been on the cusp of closing by now. We may not know what we are doing. Our efforts may not be polished but I believe that we are being obedient to the Gospel call. I may often feel a bit like Laurel and Hardy, “That’s another fine mess you gotten me into, Lord!” but I am certain that it was thanks to the internet that when we were able to re-open there was actually still something left to re-open. It goes further than that though.

Today we are numerically in a stronger position. Pre-pandemic I might have had up to 50 in worship between the 2 churches. Today, even with deaths, people unable to come any more, people moving away and a few “taking the hump,” I’ve more in the old St Andrew’s building than I did in the two together pre March 2020. I am now leading Sunday worship for around 200 (if not more) plus the school assembly – but only 1/3 will be in the church building. We don’t fit the traditional pattern of church now and I am trying to work out where this all goes next. The Holy Spirit has rather grabbed us by the scruff of the neck and put us down in a totally different place. It’s exciting, it’s scary, it’s weird but it seems to be working – even if I haven’t got the foggiest idea as to “how.”

Little of this will show up in statistics. They will show one less church and I yet have to see how the returns will want to collect attendance figures. In any case, I no longer know how many people are sharing in our services; with files being forwarded there’s no way of knowing. All I do know is that having grasped the internet opportunity as best we could this pastorate is now much stronger and much larger than it was before the first lockdown started.

Rev Michael Hodgson
Email: michael.mah@btinternet.com

Table 1: Largest URC Churches in 2022 and their membership 2019 to 2022

<u>Church</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Woking, Surrey	234	226	237	231
Cambridge, Downing Place	200	199	203	196
Orpington, St John's	191	185	183	176
Nottingham, St Andrews	182	180	173	171
Shrewsbury, Shropshire	189	184	188	170
Nairn, Highland, Scotland	190	172	180	169
Reigate Park, Surrey	200	192	173	165
London, American International	182	163	163	163
London, Wimbledon	185	168	163	163
Bournemouth, St Andrew's/RH	163	171	166	156
TOTAL	1,916	1,840	1,829	1,760

Table 2: Synod membership 2019 to 2022

<u>Synod</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>Change %</u>	<u>2022</u>
Northern	2,176	2,035	1,938	-10.0	1,735
North Western	4,642	4,204	3,958	-6.0	3,729
Mersey	2,814	2,700	2,520	-9.2	2,288
Yorkshire	2,823	2,706	2,607	-7.9	2,400
East Midlands	3,234	3,168	3,197	-10.8	2,852
West Midlands	3,827	3,949	3,612	-4.7	3,439
Eastern	4,096	3,839	3,729	-6.2	3,496
South Western	2,845	2,762	2,615	-7.5	2,418
Wessex	5,259	5,020	4,798	-5.9	4,513
Thames North	4,551	4,292	4,146	-7.6	3,829
Southern	6,434	6,074	6,221	-6.4	5,818
Wales	1,844	1,778	1,714	-7.2	1,589
Scotland	2,336	2,270	2,153	-10.9	1,918
TOTAL	46,881	44,797	43,208	-7.4	40,024

Table 3: General statistics 2019 to 2022

<u>Synod</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>Change %</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Change %</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>Change %</u>	<u>2022</u>
Number of churches	1,383	-2.1	1,354	-1.7	1,331	-3.5	1,284
Membership	46,881	-4.5	44,788	-3.5	43,208	-7.4	40,024
Average congregation	50,587	-1.0	50,035	-2.3	48,594	-14.4	41,577
Digital congregation	~	~	~	~	~	~	20,252
Children at worship	14,789	+122.0	32,844	-60.0	13,108	-70.0	3,882
Stipendiary Ministers	398	-5.3	377	-3.6	364	-8.9	334
Non-Stipendiary Ministers	58	0.0	58	+6.9	62	-9.7	56
Retired ministers	885	-1.8	874	-1.9	857	-1.5	844

Persecuted Christians

Based on the *Whole World List* of Open Doors, measuring private, family, community, national and church life and also violence, each marked out of a total of 16.7 points, and the six numbers added together. The list gives both the rank order of countries and their total score.

Country	2022	2022	2021	2021	2020	2020
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
Afghanistan	1	98	2	94	1	95
North Korea	2	96	1	94	2	94
Somalia	3	91	3	92	3	92
Libya	4	91	4	92	4	90
Yemen	5	88	7	87	8	85
Eritrea	6	88	5	88	6	87
Nigeria	7	87	9	85	12	80
Pakistan	8	87	5	88	5	88
Iran	9	85	8	86	9	85
India	10	82	10	83	10	83
Saudi Arabia	11	81	14	78	13	79
Myanmar	12	79	18	74	19	73
Sudan	13	79	13	79	7	85
Iraq	14	78	11	82	15	76
Syria	15	78	12	81	11	82
Maldives	16	77	15	77	14	78
China	17	76	17	74	23	70
Qatar	18	74	29	67	27	66
Vietnam	19	71	19	72	21	72
Egypt	20	71	16	75	18	75
Uzbekistan	21	71	22	71	18	73
Algeria	22	71	24	70	17	73
Mauritania	23	70	20	75	24	68
Mali	24	70	29	67	29	66
Turkmenistan	25	69	23	79	22	70
Laos	26	69	22	73	20	72
Morocco	27	69	26	77	26	66
Indonesia	28	68	47	63	49	60
Bangladesh	29	68	31	67	38	68
Columbia	30	68	30	67	41	62