

Continued from page 1  
also help make businesses and even government successful.

"There are times as a manager when you need to understand all the detail, but a lot of the time it's important to be strategic; to stay above it; to think about the big picture; and not be deterred by one day's headlines. You've got to think for the long term," said Lord O'Donnell who was Secretary to the Cabinet between 2005 to 2011, re-inforcing numbers 3 and 10.

In an article for the *Church Times* Adrian Newman, Bishop of Stepney, in part commenting on Archbishop's Justin Welby's comment on Radio 4 that "growing churches have good vicars", said

- that "Good growth will have these marks:
- A priority for the poor (empowering, not paternalistic)
  - A tendency for heterogeneity (communities of difference, not similarity)
  - Emphasis on the radical (free, but not cheap, grace)
  - Affirm the indigenous (local, not dislocated)
  - Wired for longevity (deep, not shallow roots)."

The Church of England survey found that

churchmanship was not a major factor relating to growth, though evangelical, conservative and charismatic churches were seeing growth. However, in summarising all the above factors, it was found through multi-variance analysis that collectively they only explained 29% of the observed growth. Other factors, however, are clearly at work – the Lordship of the Holy Spirit was not factored in in this research! Ultimately true and lasting growth is linked to the power of the message in the Biblical preaching of the Gospel.

SOURCES: From *Anecdote to Evidence*, Findings from the Church Growth Research Programme 2011-2013, Church of England, Jan 2014, Pages 7-11; *Religious Trends* No 7, 2007/2008, Christian Research, Table 5.14.2; article in *Church Times*, 10th January, 2014.

## Religion by Age

The 2011 Population Census breaks down those of different religion by age. Alarm stories in the press that a tenth of all those under 5 in Britain are Muslim should be weighed up against the fact that most Muslims came to the UK before they had reached middle age, have been here a relatively short time, have much larger families and so therefore many more children. However, many of these children will remain Muslim as they grow up and they will go on to produce more Muslim children, and so on.

The average age of a Muslim in England was 27 in 2011 against an overall population average of 40. Christians averaged 45, those of Other Religions averaged 37, those of No Religion averaged 32, and those not stating their religion averaged 40.

However, the broad mix of religion by age illustrates our present multicultural society, and the chart shows the Census findings, ignoring those not stating their religion. The youthfulness of Muslims is easily seen with more than 75% of them under 40, against 50% of Christians. Those of No Religion similarly out-percentage Christians, where two-thirds, 66%, are under 40.

The official website also breaks these figures down by gender, and these are shown in the second chart. There are more female Christians than male in the population (54% to 46%), but more men have No Religion than women (55% to 45%). There are also slightly more male Muslims (52%), perhaps because there are more male Muslim immigrants yet to be joined by their families.

SOURCES: Office for National Statistics website, [www.ons.gov.uk/ons/datasets-and-tables/](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/datasets-and-tables/); article in the *Daily Telegraph*, 10th January, 2014.

## INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT

According to the World Christian Database, Independent Christians were about one-sixth, 16%, of the total number of Christians worldwide in 2010, a proportion which has grown over recent years (it was 10% in 1996, for example, although still 16% in 2014).

"Independents" are defined as those who do not have centralised denominational headquarters organising churches and missions, and are independent of historic Christianity. In practice when those churches in this group are listed, the overwhelming majority are Charismatic and Pentecostal.

A new analysis of their global dispersion has been published and is summarised in the Table, showing where these primarily originated and were located in 2010, that is, the extent of their migration. Asia includes Oceania. The overall total of 100% represents 377 million people.

The Table may be read as follows. The total of the 5 shaded boxes is 90.4%, that is, 90% of all the Independent (Pentecostal) Christians in the world, are currently living in their continent of birth. That obviously means that nearly 10% have moved.

The total of the numbers above the shaded boxes, 8.9%, shows the proportions which have migrated into other continents. African Independents (Pentecostals) account for 28.8% of the world total and, of these, the large majority, 25.4%, are in Africa. But 2.3% of them are in Europe – giving some kind of measure of the extent of "reverse mission" that has occurred. So, for example, members of an African Independent Church in the UK are counted as part of this 2.3%.

		Current Location					Total
		Africa	Asia	Europe	L America	N America	
Continent of origin	Africa %	25.4	-	2.3	-	1.1	28.8
	Asia %	-	34.2	0.6	-	0.8	35.6
	Europe %	-	0.1	2.6	0.2	1.0	3.9
	L America %	-	-	0.2	10.2	2.9	13.3
	N America %	-	0.2	-	0.2	18.0	18.4
Total		25.4	34.5	5.7	10.6	23.8	100.0

SOURCE: Article "Independent Christianity" in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol 38, No 1, Page 28.

## MARITAL STATUS

Marriage week is 7 to 14 February 2014, and publication of the marital status of a sample of Anglican clergy in a rural Diocese allows a comparison of this with churchgoers and population generally, which is given in the Table. "Singleness" is technically defined by the Office for National Statistics as those not married or no longer married, but rather curiously includes those who are cohabiting or who are single parents. Married people include the 0.2% of the population who are in a civil partnership.

The churchgoing percentages in the bottom line arise from a 2012 survey of those attending 7 congregations of various denominations and locations. This showed that a sixth, 18½%, of churchgoers are technically single, virtually half the 35% in the population generally.

Single clergy, however, are rarer still, just 4% of the whole, if this sample is typical. There are almost certainly very few clergy who are cohabiting or who are single parents, so these percentages are presumed to be zero.

There are more single female clergy proportionately than single women in the population. Does this reflect their sense of call to service, akin to the 1960s when it was said that a third of mission workers were single women (and two-thirds married couples)? In contrast only 1% of Anglican male clergy are single, and presumably many of these will be Anglo-Catholic.

The population includes many more widowed women than are reflected in female clergy, but this will be because the population includes women of all ages whereas the clergy figures are of working clergy not yet retired.

The Table shows that there are many more divorced or separated people in the population than either among the clergy or churchgoers, but women are more likely to be divorced than men.

The big contrast is between the numbers who are cohabiting or are single

parents in the general population and Christian people. In a recent survey, only 24% of those cohabiting saw it as a stepping stone to marriage. The proportion of male single parents is growing, and in 2011 was two-fifths, 38%, of all single parents.

Female churchgoers in their twenties often say that there are not enough Christian men to go round. In the general population, however, there are almost three times as many single men as single women (18% to 7%), so for this reason alone the Table underlines the need to see more men reached for the gospel.

Marital status of clergy, churchgoers and population, by gender, 2012

Group	Technically single			Currently	No longer married	
	Single %	Cohab- iting %	Single Parent %	Married %	Divorced/ Sep'd %	Widowed %
English Population	14	10	11	47	11	7
Population broken down by gender						
Male	18	11	9	49	10	3
Female	7	10	14	45	13	11
Anglican clergy	4	0	0	88	4	4
Anglican clergy broken down by gender						
Male	1	0	0	93	3	3
Female	11	0	0	77	6	6
Churchgoers	17	1	½	71	4½	6

SOURCES: *Living the Christian Life* survey for Langham International Partnership; Office for National Statistics website; nomis website Table DC1109EW; article in *Rural Theology*, Vol 11, No 2, 2013, Page 107; article in the *Daily Telegraph*, 10th January, 2014.

Report on *Ecumenical Activity at Congregational Level*, Church of Scotland Committee on Ecumenical Relations and the Ministries Council, Rev Dr Fiona Tweedie and others, June 2013.

*What do they think of Christianity?* Perceptions of British people not attending church regularly or who have no association with the Christian faith, Will Bissett, MA in Theology, Southern Theological Education & Training Scheme, University of Winchester, May 2013.

*The reuse of redundant and at risk churches and chapels in London:* Principles, Process and Practice, Sarah Earney, Conservation Architect, MSc in Historic Conservation, Oxford Brookes University, Sept 2013.

*The World in 2014*, Daniel Franklin, Editor, *The Economist*, Dec 2013, but unfortunately has virtually nothing on religion or faith.

## Clergy and Laity

The number of full-time clergy in the two largest denominations, Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, is in decline. The average age of Roman Catholic priests is over 65 and many are in their mid-70s. Their number has dropped about a fifth in the last decade and, while more deacons are being appointed, there is only about one deacon for every 6 priests. With a small number of new vocations, the Catholic Church is responding to having fewer priests by merging several parishes into one. Its theology of priesthood means that lay people cannot readily undertake the functions of priests, although baptisms and weddings can sometimes take place in a priest's absence.

The consequence is that a number of Catholic churches are closing. For instance, 240 closed between 2005 and 2010 in the UK. Churches in other denominations are closing also, but the large number of new churches, especially Pentecostal, New Churches and Independent (in that order), means that the overall number is actually increasing! In London, for example, 1,900 churches have opened in the last 23 years against 700 closing, but London is exceptional. In the UK as a whole 6,000 churches closed between 1989 and 2010, while 5,500 have opened. Add in the number of new churches in London in the last 4 years and the overall number of churches has increased!

The number of male priests in the Church of England has also decreased over the past decade, while the number of female priests has increased from 12% of the total in 2000 to 23% in 2012. The Church of England, however, also uses unpaid, or non-stipendiary ministers (NSMs) as they were called, those able to support themselves, sometimes from past savings, or a pension from past employment, or through help from their (working) spouse. Their number has increased by over 50% in the years 2000 to 2012, and in 2012 there were 3 NSMs to every 8 parochial clergy. NSMs are now, more positively, called self-supporting clergy (SSC).

However, research shows that SSCs are not imitations of stipendiary clergy. Christopher Rutledge of Glyndwr University writes, "The non-stipendiary clergy are considerably older than stipendiary. Academically there are more graduates among the stipendiary clergy and they have received their theological training residentially. The stipendiary clergy are more likely to be 'evangelical', 'charismatic' and 'conservative' than their non-stipendiary colleagues. The stipendiary clergy are more likely to hold conservative views on the Bible and on basic Christian belief. In terms of personality, the stipendiary clergy are more likely to record higher scores of the psycholism scale than the non-stipendiary clergy. ... The non-stipendiary clergy are more likely to adopt traditional practices of robing to officiate at services and saying the daily office than their stipendiary colleagues."

Linked with this is the question of how young Church of England clergy will cope with multiple churches and benefices (as the C of E will probably not follow the Catholic Church of merging several churches in a neighbourhood so that all may attend the one left). Research some years ago (across both Methodist and Anglican churches) found that a vicar/incumbent can look effectively after a maximum of 4 churches, and some would say even that is too many, though it is easier if there is a combined PCC for the group of churches.

The only alternative to the need for more leaders is, as the Church Growth survey found, to let laity have more responsibility for their church. Three elderly ladies in a small Lancashire village 10 years ago refused to let their Methodist church die, found enough financial resources to build a modern new church on the car park, turned their existing church

into the church hall, established room specifically for young people, and included a shop in the new building and public toilets. Many people started coming to the church premises as a consequence, and the congregation grew. Such stories could be multiplied. "Where there's a will, there's a way," and where there's prayer, there's both a will and a way!

SOURCES: Article "Stipendiary and Non-stipendiary clergy", C Rutledge, in *Rural Theology*, Vol 11, No 2, Nov 2013, Page 103; UK Church Statistics, ADBC Publishers, Tonbridge, 2011, Tables 1.1.2, 2.7, and 4.4.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL TYPE

Prof Leslie Francis has been researching psychological type of churchgoers and church leaders for many years. Recently he completed an analysis of psychological type of bishops. The results, broken down by the four groups used in the Church of England church growth analysis, are:

	A	B	C	D	E	F
EN	28%	18%	23%	23%	15%	
IS	21%	26%	23%	29%	41%	
IN	25%	23%	24%	28%	12%	
ES	26%	33%	30%	20%	32%	
Base (=100%)	72	70	168	1,461	934	

A = Type  
B = Diocesan Bishops  
C = Suffragan Bishops  
D = All Bishops  
E = Male Clergy  
F = General Population

where EN = Talking through ideas; Visionary thinking; Energy for change

IS = Insistence on information; Careful, calm listening; Understands tradition

IN = Independent observation; Uses theoretical ideas; Allows people space

ES = Sociable and step by step; Sticks with what works; Enthusiasm with peers

It is clear that clergy and bishops are much stronger in "Intuition" (N) than the general population and weaker in "Sensing" (S)..

Suffragan Bishops are stronger in Sensing than Diocesan Bishops (both ES and IS), while clergy tend to be stronger in Intuition (IS and IN) than Bishops but weaker in being the ES types.

SOURCES: *Religious Trends* No 7, 2007/2008, Christian Research, Table 5.14.2 which is merged with the clergy Table in article "Who is called to be a bishop?" by Leslie Francis et al., *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, Vol 34, No 2, October 2013, Page 138; descriptions based on definitions in *Sixteen Personality Types*, Jenny Rogers, Management Futures Ltd., 1997.

Australian Megachurches. It is estimated that in 2012 in Australia there were 21 Megachurches, that is, churches with more than 2,000 people in attendance on an average Sunday, including adults and children across all services. In his published doctoral thesis, Sam Hey says 10 of these grew out of the Assemblies of God, 8 are "neo-Pentecostal", growing outside traditional denominations but spawning new ones, one is Baptist and two are Church of Christ, denominations attracting respectively 15%, 8% and 3% of total Australian attendance. One reason for their growth is seen in people choosing which church best meets their needs rather than going to either a local church or one of their denomination, so they grow by attracting existing Christians rather than through conversion..

SOURCES: *Pointers*, Christian Research Association, Vol 23, No 4, Dec 2013, Page 7; *Australian Megachurches*, Sam Hey, Mosaic Press, Melbourne, 2013.

## SNOWFLAKES

Availability of Bibles. The 2012 Scripture Access Statistics from the Wycliffe Global Alliance gives the following figures about world languages:

- 518 have the complete Bible
- 1,275 have the New Testament (and some portions)
- 1,005 have portions of Scripture
- 2,075 translation projects are currently underway, and
- 1,967 languages have a need for translation to begin.

This is a total of 6,840 languages in a 2012 world of 7,052 million people. This is a considerable increase over the 2005 figures respectively for the first four numbers, of 414, 1,068, 873 and 1,717 (increases of 25%, 19%, 15% and 21%). The 2005 position meant that the percentage of the global population with Scripture availability was, respectively, 78%, 1%, 15% and 4%, leaving 2% yet to have a translation. In the last 7 years translation projects have started in 770 languages.

SOURCES: *Spheres*, Global Connections, Nov 2013, Page 15; *Religious Trends* No 3, 2005/2006, Christian Research, Eltham, London, Table 3.8.

Premier Christian Media's audience is two-thirds, 65%, female, two-thirds, 71%, of whom have children, according to a recent survey. Half, 52%, are between 40 and 60 years of age. Half, 56%, are in employment, two-thirds (70%) own two or more cars, a third (36%) have a degree. A quarter, 28%, read the *Daily Mail*, and another quarter, 24%, the *Metro*. Virtually all, 96%, attend church regularly, and half (53%) tithe their income to their church. A quarter, 25%, give to Christian Aid, followed by 21% supporting Tearfund. Top denomination is Church of England (24%), followed by Baptists (17%), compared with 12% and 6% respectively of actual churchgoers in the Capital.

SOURCE: Premier Lifestyle e-survey, January 2012, Pages 1,2; *Capital Growth*, ADBC Publishers, Tonbridge, 2013, Table 3.8.

Home schooling. How much do Christian families in the UK engage in home schooling for their children? This question was asked in an Evangelical Alliance survey in 2012 which found the answer was 1% of teenagers were initially home schooled, although this percentage increased slightly as teenagers got older to perhaps 3%, with an overall average of 2%. The number home schooled in the country is not actually known but a Department of Education, Science and Skills survey in 2007 found between 7,000 and 34,000 children were being home schooled and, taking the average of these, this is about 1% of children at school in England, suggesting Christian families engage more in home schooling than others.

SOURCE: *Do we value Education?*, 21st Century Evangelical series, Evangelical Alliance, 2012; DESS website.

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## REFLECTIONS

Both groups collectively had the courage to take the risk. Two small groups of people, one for whom the risk was small, and one for whom the risk was great. The "small-risk" group was probably no more than 5 or 8 people and they lived a short distance away. What they were told, and the way in which they were told it, seemed unbelievable.

Why them? They were at the lower end of the social scale. They had a recognised job and were grateful for that, but the night time work was not always congenial. "Shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night" is how Luke describes them (2:8), but shepherds need sleep, and so do sheep. Active watching therefore is not always an accurate description. Available, wakeable, ready to act if disturbed, yes, but often unconscious and dozing. And the light was so intense and so great ("all around them") that they became instantly awake, terrified and stunned by angelic beings with an audible message.

Should they risk leaving their sheep in order to obey the angel, who, while not actually telling them to go to Bethlehem, averted them with the promise of finding the baby Messiah, Saviour and Lord? The heavenly choir opened eternity to their wondering eyes. A very unusual (and unique) circumstance, something totally out of the ordinary, completely unexpected, helped them to decide to take the risk and go looking for a baby. Even if they didn't find Him, all it really meant was a sleepless night. But of course their search was successful, they were staggered at the consequences and became active messengers that very day and doubtless for many subsequent months and years. God honoured their leaving their existing situation in ways beyond their imagining. He often still does today, two thousand years later.

The "big-risk" group comprised perhaps three people, fairly wealthy or at least with access to good financial resources. Almost certainly they were not Jews, but God-seeking literate men of wisdom and understanding, thought of as deeply devotional and spiritual people. These three men saw a light that they knew was exceptional and portended something extraordinary. Their background knowledge gave them an insight not everyone in their community would have had. Did they take the risk of taking considerable time out of their lives, doubtless at significant monetary cost, with the latent publicity that others would know they had gone – to follow the star in search of their vision?

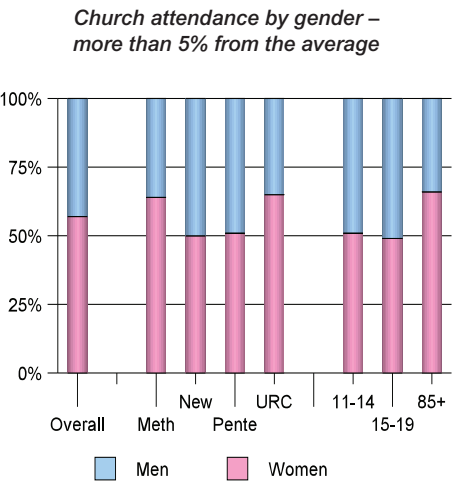
After probably many months of travel, was their vision shaken by the evil Jewish monarch or confirmed by Herod's Jewish advisors? Reassured by the guiding star, they worshipped the baby Son of God with kingly gifts, returning east with a new awareness and experience of God in human history.

Are we ready to be risk-takers in 2014? We have to recognise the call, be willing to respond, travel wherever He wishes (our own land or afar), recognising that there will be a cost in time, money and publicity, and that not all will necessarily understand what we are doing or why. His call may come through a special circumstance, perhaps through tragedy or an unexpected opportunity, often without us knowing the why or the wherefore. Whether "small-risk" takers or "big-risk" takers, obedience will lead to encountering Him who "made Himself of no reputation" and sharing in His incarnate purposes.

### GENDER VARIATIONS

Information on overall church attendance largely comes from the various church censuses. More women were attending church than men in England in 2005: 57% to 43%, which is almost 3 women for every 2 men. It was exactly 3 women to 2 men in Scotland in 2002. A very small part of the reason for this will be that women live longer than men, although the average life span today is very similar (79 for men and 83 for women). These churchgoing percentages have only changed marginally over the past 30 years, with the English percentage of women increasing slightly and the Scottish percentage decreasing slightly.

Gender attendance can be measured alongside the other variables asked in each census. The greatest variations come through denomination and age of attendee; the chart shows where these were more than 5% from the average of 57% of women and 43% of men in 2005 in England. In particular, the relative paucity of girls aged 11 to 19 should be noted.



Variation by churchmanship is small – slightly more men are charismatic than women, rather more women are liberal than men. Where a church is located, that is, its environment, makes no difference in attendance gender – there are not more women attending church on average in rural areas than in urban, for example.

Overall frequency of churchgoing did not differ by gender in England in 2005, nor in London in 2012, but in both cases frequency did differ by age. In England those aged 30 to 44 attended least frequently, and in London in 2012 those aged 45 to 64, both with men and women attending less often.

Length of attendance varies by denomination, but the evidence of whether it also varies by gender is mixed. The London Church Census suggested that women were more likely to stay slightly longer at a church than men, whereas the "Living the Christian Life" study, also in 2012, across a number of English evangelical congregations suggested there was no difference by gender.

Women did not live closer to the church they attended than did men. Thus gender variations are most seen by denomination and age, rather than other factors measured by specific church censuses, or over time.

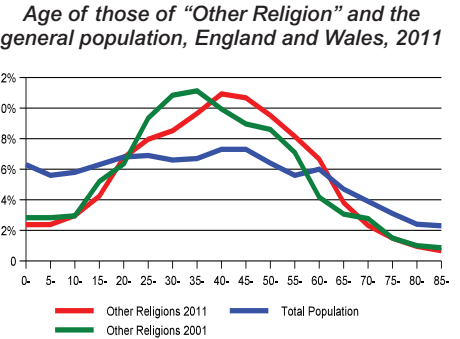
**SOURCES:** The results from the various Church Censuses given in *Religious Trends* Nos 4 and 6, *Christian Research and Capital Growth*, ADCB Publishers; Office for National Statistics website.

### Witches in Britain?

The 2011 Population Census asked people to state their religion. There were boxes for the main religions like Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Jew, Sikh and a further box simply labelled "Other Religion". In England and Wales almost a quarter of a million people ticked "Other Religion", just 0.4% of the entire population. The Office for National Statistics published the full range of answers given under this heading (as respondents were invited to answer "Please state \_\_\_\_"), and two of these answers directly refer to witchcraft.

One person in twenty, 5%, of those ticking "Other Religion" said they were Wicca (some 12,000 people) and a further 1,300 said they were witches. What is Wicca? Wikipedia says it was developed in England in the first half of the 20th century and introduced by a retired civil servant called Gerald Gardner in 1954. It is a "modern pagan, witchcraft religion" drawing upon ancient pagan practices as well as having modern motifs for its rituals and theological constructs. It has no central authority and is divided into various traditions (or denominations) each with its own administration.

Counting all those indicating they were Wicca or witches then we could say that there are a maximum of 13,000 people in the country willing to identify themselves either as witches or associated with witchcraft.



The ages of these people do not seem to be given separately in the Census details, but those of "Other Religion" are. The graph shows the percentage of each age-group in the general population in 2011 in blue. The red line shows the percentage of each age-group saying they had another religion, which includes wicca and witches; there are more of these aged 25 to 55 than in the general population. The green line shows the percentage in "Other Religions" by age-group from the 2001 Census, and has a very similar shape to the 2011 line but shifted to the left. That shift represents about 10 years, and shows that the numbers in other religions in 2001 did not change much over the subsequent 10 years.

If that is true of Wicca and witches then it suggests that their age profile hasn't altered greatly except by everyone getting older. In 2001 49% in Other Religions were under 40; in 2011 only 42%.

A report last year from the United States suggested that witchcraft was appealing to a new generation of teenage girls, judging by the books being sold to young adults. It is not obvious from the British data that this example is necessarily being followed (yet), although *The Guardian*, reporting the story last October, suggested that there might be interest. There is at least one website dedicated to teenage witches, but the 2011 Census would suggest a maximum of about 700 teenagers (13 to 19) would identify themselves as such, one teenager in every 7,000.

**SOURCES:** Website of Office for National Statistics 2001 and 2011 Population Census; *Religion Watch*, November 2013, Vol 29, No 1, Page 4.

## YOUNG ADULTS AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

ANDY FROST, DIRECTOR, SHARE JESUS INTERNATIONAL

There is a growing consensus that the British Church has a real problem both retaining and reaching young adults.<sup>1</sup> Today's young adults have been given various tags by demographers such as the Net Gen, the Millennials, the DotComs and most commonly Generation Y. Huntley, a leading writer on this age demographic, believes that this generation, comprising those born between 1975 and 1994, is very different from previous generations because of the technological and communication advances.

Sara Savage writes, "Generation Y appears to be quite a self-reliant, confident and upbeat generation. They also seem to be tolerant and community minded, a generation of young people who value their family and friends, and on the whole intend to marry and have a family of their own."<sup>2</sup> So why are this generation missing from the Church?

In part, it may be because of changing life stages, particularly rapid transitions in career, location and relationship status. In part, it may be because church going is no longer the default. People's moral thinking is developed within the family and people are more wary of institutions. In part, it may be because of a new generational paradigm, devoid of absolutes, where truth is relative and "whatever works for you" is the mantra held dear.

I believe all these things are true but that on top of this, a key reason for the Church's failure to engage with this demographic is due to a lack of understanding of the felt needs of this generation. My MA dissertation involved conducting 10 semi-structured interviews with unchurched 20somethings to explore their felt needs and in particular their desire to explore faith and spirituality. The hope was to explore how the Church could better reach out to this age profile.

When asked whether or not they had a desire to explore faith and spirituality, four of the people interviewed responded with a resounding "no". Even though these same four people spoke of positive experiences with Christians and the Christian faith, they had no desire to explore it or any other spirituality further.

Another four of the interviewees were open to some exploration of faith and spirituality. Three of them spoke of a very passive and cerebral exploration which involved watching TV programmes about religion and reading articles about Christianity. One of the four was open to going back to church one day, when life got less busy.

The final two interviewees expressed a strong desire to explore faith and spirituality. One explained that, "Often I feel a bit lost. ... I don't have anything else to fall back on." She had explored Wicca, Christianity and Buddhism mainly through friendships and was open to further exploration.

The other interviewee believed that the church helped provide structure for his children. Although not yet a Christian, he had already attended an Alpha course. This interviewee who was in the process of exploring faith was very much the anomaly. His actions may well have

been a result of the fact that his wife is a committed Christian.

With this exception, four of the respondents had no desire to explore faith and spirituality and of the other five, who had some desire, they all seemed very passive, having done very little about it. From these 10 interviews, although a limited sample, but if typical, I would suggest Gen Yers have very little desire to explore faith and spirituality.

This apathy toward exploring faith is a challenge for the Church. I believe it stems from the purpose that underpins the interviewee's lives. When asked about their personal framework for meaning, eight of the interviewees specifically expressed the ultimate aim as being happy. This was often unpacked in terms of work, finance and most importantly family and friends. Although two of the interviewees did not specifically mention happiness, they both hinted at it. One said, "I would like to have a successful career, ... and kids eventually, ... to have a comfortable life."

Before conducting my research I had expected to find that many Gen Yers had a passion for justice. However, this just was not the case. When I asked one of them specifically, she replied, "Some of the things that happen in poorer parts of the world are terrible, ... but I can't do anything about them."



If one of the main felt needs of Gen Yers is happiness, then this also poses a challenge to the Church. On the one hand, the Gospel message is not about personal happiness, but about dying to ourselves. But on the other, the fruit of the Spirit includes joy and understanding our purpose in the world helps us understand how to be content. The Church needs to grapple with how to articulate this paradox to this generation.

The starting point needs to be a response to the predominant happiness mid-narrative the Gen Yers hold dear before we present anything. Perhaps we may need to start by exploring this predominant worldview that everything is relative, with a robust rediscovery of the art of apologetics. Or perhaps we need to confront the happiness worldview by showing the mess the world is in and relating it to the selfishness and apathy of this generation.

One of the key opportunities for the Church to explore is how we can share the Christian faith

when happiness fades. The interviewees mentioned the importance of family and friends and several of them shared how the death of a loved one had been pivotal. Although many of the interviewees would look to friends during these times, some of them recognised the Church may have some role to play.

In contemporary culture there is little space to express pain, disappointment and isolation. There may be an opportunity for the Church here. Funerals have always traditionally been an occasion by which the church can serve people going through grief. If this is a possible moment of connection with Gen Yers, then perhaps further work should be done to explore how these difficult times can be used to share a greater purpose in life.

These interviews have shown me that ultimately we face the necessity of inspiring Gen Yers to explore faith and spirituality. We need a new language and framework relevant to the prevailing culture and for presenting the message of Jesus. But ultimately, we do not need more strategies but a move of God, if we are ever going to see a generation transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Peter Brierley, *Pulling out of the Noesdive*, Christian Research, 2006, Page 118; TearFund, "Churchgoing in the UK", 2007; The Evangelical Alliance Council Symposium Executive Summary, "The 16-30 Mission: the missing generation", 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Sara Savage et al, *Making sense of Generation Y: the worldview of 15 to 25-year olds*, London: Church House Publishing, 2006, Page 7.

**Free Church of Scotland Growth**  
Rev Fergus MacDonald, former Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland, commented on the Free Church of Scotland article in the December 2013 issue of *FutureFirst*:

"Free Church growth can be partly accounted for by the emergence of a stronger missional outlook over the past decade which has prompted congregations to serve the community where they are located, and has also created a sense that decline is not inevitable. Having said that, Free Church growth is concentrated in about 15% of congregations that are witnessing significantly increased attendance and membership. ... The ethos of the denomination today is more mission-oriented than at any time in my 50+ years in the Free Church ministry."

### HUMOUR

He got hooked on obituary writing when he retired. Eventually he ran out of subjects and submitted his own obit to the *Telegraph* together with an invoice. ... They returned it stamped "Pay on Publication."

"A waitress in Tesco asked if I wanted anything on my Burger, so I had £5 each way!"

"Let's face it – English is a crazy language. There is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger; Neither apple nor pine in pineapple. English muffins weren't invented in England. ... Quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square, And a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor it is a pig. If Father is Pop, how come Mother is not Mop???"

**SOURCES:** Russell Twisk on L. Marsland Garder in *The Oldie*, 2013; Grove Jokes; Wink Creations.



Providing Facts for Forward Planning

### SNIPPETS

**1) The number of successful visits to Mars has been 3 in the 1960s, 3 in the 1970s, 0 in the 1980s, 2 in the 1990s, 6 in the 2000s, and 1 since 2010. This is out of 43 attempts, a 35% success rate.**

**2) Three companies in 2012 published between them more than a third, 36%, of all UK books – Random House 12.6% (which has now joined with Penguin to become Penguin Random House), Hachette 11.9% and Penguin 11.6%.**

**3) The UN says that the most dangerous place in the world for a girl or woman to live is India; it trafficks 1.2 million child prostitutes annually.**

**4) 200,000 children are sold into slavery each year in India, for an average price of £10 (but in terms of purchasing power parity, £1,900).**

**5) Nigerian mission agencies were deploying 5,200 workers in 56 countries in 2012, either creating branches of Nigerian denominations or starting independent congregations ("reverse mission").**

**6) In the year 1909 two-fifths, 41%, of unmarried women in the UK got married, whereas a century later in 2009, only a fifth, 19%, of unmarried women did so, but a further 11% were cohabiting.**

**7) Nine out of 10 Britons admit that they regularly go through a whole day without performing a simple (or single) act of kindness for someone.**

**SOURCES:** 1) Article in *The Economist*, 16th November 2013, Page 85; 2) *The Bookseller*, 20th November 2013, Page 33; 3) and 4) [www.focusnews.com/origin/2013/07/22/human-trafficking-will-not-end-until-it-ends-in-india](http://www.focusnews.com/origin/2013/07/22/human-trafficking-will-not-end-until-it-ends-in-india); quoted in *India Church Growth Quarterly*, Oct-Dec 2013, Vol 20, No 3, Page 15; 5) *Religion Watch*, November 2013, Page 8; 6) Office for National Statistics, quoted in *Idem*, Jan/Feb 2014, Page 13; 7) Survey by Friends of the Elderly, quoted in *Third Way*, Vol 37, No 1, Jan/Feb 2014, Page 5.

## ANGLICAN CHURCH GROWTH

**The big 18-month Church Growth Research Programme undertaken by the Church of England through the Church Commissioners has published a summary of the initial findings and held a day's conference to explain them. The research had been undertaken to find practical evidence to support mission, and to bring clarity to issues around church growth.**

Prof David Voas of the University of Essex was the main speaker and emphasised some key points initially:

- Once people start going to church they are likely to continue going throughout their life-time.

- If young people do not start going to church when young it will be very hard to bring them in subsequently.

- Many say they are too busy to go to church. If, despite their busyness, they make no priority of going to church, that of itself tells us something.
- Parents are failing to pass on religion to their children. When presented with a list of 11 items, which parents might wish their children to follow, only 11% ticked "religious belief." It was ticked by 28% who were active Anglicans, but only by 36% who said religion was very important to them.

- Churches with youth workers are most likely to be associated with growth.

David Voas had analysed the results of a large parish church survey across 1,700 churches which had shown that there was "no single recipe" for growth, but that certain factors were linked with growth. These were, in no special order:

**1) Area or environment.** Middle class suburbs had good potential for growth, as were those geographical urban locations in which younger people and those from ethnic minorities lived. Rural villages had a good share of attendance but little growth. Towns and cities with a struggling white British population had also seen little growth.

**2) Leadership.** Growth comes from (a) having specific qualities and skills and (b) an intention to grow. What specifically are the needed qualities

likely to lead to growth? Those who motivate, envision and innovate. Only 13% of clergy said they had an intention to grow numerically. Longer lengths of tenure were found to be associated with growth. Younger clergy were more likely to report growth.

One of the factors included in (a) was clergy's psychological type. Those strong in extroversion (E), drawing energy from activities and people, and in intuition (N), who liked the big picture and took in information through a sixth sense, were especially equipped for growth. Leslie Francis's research has shown that a quarter, 23%, of Anglican male clergy are EN types. Those strong in introversion (I), drawing energy internally and perceiving or sensing (S), who liked concrete and practical thinking, were much less likely to see growth. More than a quarter, 29%, of clergy are IS types. (To complete the picture 28% of male clergy are IN types and 20% are ES types).

**3) Having a clear mission and purpose.** Of those who said they had such, 64% had grown, and 25% had declined (the remaining 11% being static), but of those who said they did not have a clear mission, 26% had grown and 52% had declined. (This follows the advice of Mike Starkey in his 2012 book *Ministry Rediscovered*).

**4) Being willing to change and adapt.** This was as true of congregations as clergy. Churches taking different initiatives, for example, with worship, were more likely to grow.

**5) Assigning roles to lay people** as well as ordained clergy. One question asked "Do the same people tend to serve in volunteer roles year after year or does your church rotate volunteer service among a larger number of people?" Of those who reported that the same people tend to serve, 8% reported growth; of those who said there was some rotation, 19% reported growth; of those who said there was a lot of rotation, 47% reported growth.

**6) Actively engaging children and teenagers.** Growth was found when there was a high ratio of children to adults. Three quarters of churches offering retreats, conferences or camps for youth reported growth against half

among those which did not do so.

**7) Actively engaging with those who might not go to church** or who are outside the existing community. A third of the churches surveyed said they used Facebook or other social media, and of these two-thirds reported growth, but this was almost certainly because they reflected a young and dynamic leadership rather than technology per se.



**8) Good welcoming and follow up for visitors.** Growth mostly came from members inviting family, friends and acquaintances. Making contact with new people after they had attended a service was important and associated with growth.

**9) Committed to nurturing new and existing Christians.** Two-thirds of churches which offered encouragement through specific discipleship courses had seen growth. Less than half of the churches without this emphasis or which simply said there was "some emphasis through preaching" had grown.

**10) Vision.** "Vision for growth" was mentioned as a general reason for growth – growth is not mechanical but comes from deep reflection and commitment.

It was not suggested that these were revolutionary findings in what makes churches grow, but rather they had now been measured and could be proved to be successful, with some more successful than others. Nor are these emphases unique to church life – they

*Continued on page 2*