

Continued from page 1

than one device simultaneously, is common. Keeping people's attention has become harder, and concentration on one item can be limited to only a few minutes.

11) Twenties' use technology especially to maintain relationships

Twitter, Facebook and other like services allow social networking on a vast scale. In addition, communicating by email is the norm. Many of the percentages given of usage by those in their Twenties contradict each other, but it is clear that a very high percentage have accounts, many more than one, in these services. In 2009, the Office for National Statistics said 78% of those aged 16 to 24 used technology every day, a percentage almost certainly much higher in 2014, the majority of use being to talk to family and friends. The use of Skype, connecting via a computer with a webcam is increasingly popular. Two-fifths (43%) of those aged 18-24 depend on satnav's when driving (against 17% in the general population)

12) Texting is also very common

Sending a message through words rather than actual speech is very common, and easier than phoning since the person contacted may not be available but a text message can await their convenience. Taking a photo and sending that electronically is now a very frequent occurrence. "Sexting", or sending a nude photo, is also widespread, usually beginning as a teenage activity. Probably up to nine-tenths of those in their Twenties have either sent or received one.

13) Many Twenties frequently watch pornography

A huge amount of web content and downloads is of a pornographic nature. According to which source is used, up to 13%, one in eight, websites have erotic content, and a third of downloads are pornographic. 70% of men aged 18 to 34 view pornography at least once a month. However, watching endless pornography can be boring, so some are making sexually explicit videos themselves instead. A willingness to share one's naked body with others in order to make a piece of publicity, or simply to while away the time, is not seen as being non-normal. Relationships deteriorate into sexual expression, with such intimacy often removing the link between an emotional relationship and a physical act. The progression is first nakedness, then sexual intimacy, and then pornography.

14) Many Twenties enjoy frequent gaming

Electronic games are mostly bought by men aged 15 to 35. Many Twenties will spend at least one evening/night per week playing games with international teams from, say, Russia, Australia or Peru, communicating with each other online by messaging. Games offer the challenge of goals, rules and little accountability, and are a means of "connecting daily actions to something bigger than ourselves."

15) Many Twenties are also locked in debt and addictions

The average student leaving university in 2015 will have a debt of £53,000. Tattooing is becoming more popular (22% of those aged 20-24, 30% of those aged 25-29). A quarter (26%) smoke. A third drink more than 4 units of alcohol every week, a fifth more than 8 units. The first age of using opiates averages 22, cocaine 23; one sixth of all drug deaths are those in their Twenties. Some will also be "internet addicts", unable to keep away from gaming, social networking or email, struggling to control their time online.

16) Younger Twenties can find it hard to get employment

A fifth (19%) of those aged 18 to 24 are

unemployed against 7% of those in their late 20s. Coping without a job is difficult; many of this "boomerang" generation return to live with their parents (two-fifths, 43%, of those aged 20 to 24 do so). A quarter (27%) of those who are employed are working part-time. Some are fortunate to get an apprenticeship, the number of which is growing, but two-thirds of those available for 19-24 year olds are in London. For Christian Twenties, finding God's plan for your life in such circumstances can be discouraging. A quarter of unemployed young people find the internet gives them community and friendship, but a third, 31%, of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) had no one to talk to about their problems when they were growing up. However, the Twenties generation are looking for a partner, house and job and often do so in that order!

17) Being employed in their Twenties brings its own problems

There are often generational differences – many bosses of those in Generation Y will be Generation X, and their employer likely to be a Baby Boomer. Expectations of workplace attire, leadership style, loyalty, likes and dislikes will all be very different. Not all employment is at a workplace – working from home is increasing, but adds to the general work/life balance problem. Some jobs now require BYOD – Bring Your Own Device. For those in their Twenties, becoming one of the UK's 14% who are self-employed can be very attractive, allowing freedom and initiative and working in a team of one's choice.

18) Twenties' leisure time is full

The top three leisure interests of those in their Twenties are watching television (86%), spending time with friends and family (also 86%), and listening to music (84%). TV shows, user-generated programmes and movies are the most popular categories of TV which are watched. In a 2012 Ypulse survey, 83% of Millennials said they couldn't imagine their life without music. Twenties continue to refer to family when such works well, as a place of connection, acceptance and belonging.

19) Twenties enjoy many types of activity

As well as TV, friends and music, Twenties spend time on emailing (78%), shopping (72%), eating out (68%), going to the cinema (67%), sport and exercise (63%), going to pubs and clubs (61%), having a day out (60%) and reading (58%). This leads to a full life, although technology is gradually taking over some of these – for instance 91% of Twenties shop online and half, 45%, spend an hour a day looking at retail websites. While men may list gaming as a hobby, many will read books also, and 62% of young adults prefer printed books (their "warmth, durability and personality") to e-books. Almost half, 46%, will eat out weekly with friends or family and a quarter, 25%, do so a number of times each week. Millennials like taking time out and will often extend a business trip into a personal holiday (56% of Twenties have done so).

20) Can the Twenties be reached with the Gospel?

YES, and many are! Pete Hughes, who with his wife Bea started a church reaching out to those in their 20s called KXC, argues, "There's only one resource that has a hope of turning the tide. That is the 20s and 30s we already have in church. They may represent only 5% of the church, but that 5% is the hope for the future. God has always used the few to reach the many." Using social media, producing relevant literature and websites, and working with other like-minded organisations are also key mechanisms for the way ahead.

Peter Brierley

PRACTICAL HELP

How significant is the day-to-day practical contribution of churches and Christian communities to society outside Sunday worship? For example:

- In the Yorkshire and Humber region, a count was made in 2008 of 6,500 social projects by churches and charities, amounting in value to about £800 mn per annum.

- Another count in London enumerated about 7,000 projects which were employing 10,000 people and using the help of 40,000 volunteers which benefitted 390,000 people.

- Yet another in the North West showed 5,000 social projects run by 45,000 volunteers which generated £80 million in welfare.

These are not trivial engagement amounts and the list could be replicated in many other placers. Similar research in other parts of the UK can be found on the website www.fbrn.org.uk/research-and-evidence-faith-based-social-action.

Alternatively, one may look to evidence from the 2013 survey of readers of the *Church Times*, which found that a fifth, 19%, of its readers were involved in educational community action, 18% in local community work, another 18% in cultural activities, and so on.

In the last printed edition of the *UK Christian (Resources) Handbook*, some 5,000 UK Christian charities were listed in 8 main categories and 81 sub-categories. A sixth, 16%, of these related to charities giving accommodation of some kind – conference centres, residential homes, Christian hostels and so on. It listed over 700 Christian bookshops, publishers or others providing literature. 5% were evangelistic agencies, 10% were working overseas or supporting those doing so, 8% provided training including nearly 100 theological colleges of various kinds, including part-time ones. A fifth, 20%, provided a whole range of practical and benevolent services.

Should the dire predictions of church decline come true, there will be an enormous gap in the voluntary social provision in this country. Since research has shown this is much more likely to be given by religious people than non-religious, it will simply mean closure and failure of compassionate and practical help on a significant scale. Social involvement by the church is not only following in the footsteps of the Master but is also an expression of the church's inner health and is, moreover, as essential contribution to the well-being of society.

SOURCES: Website quoted above, notes of a talk by Heather Wright; article in the *Church Times*, 14th February, 2014; Page 3, *UK Christian Resources Handbook*, 2009 edition, Bible Society, Swindon.

AMNESIA

Do not ask me to remember,
Don't try to make me understand.
Let me rest and know you're with me,
Pray for me and hold my hand.

I'm confused beyond your concept,
I am sad and sick and lost.
All I know is that I need you,
To be with me at all cost.

Do not lose your patience with me,
Jesus cares and hears my cry.
I can't help the way I'm acting,
I can't be different though I try.

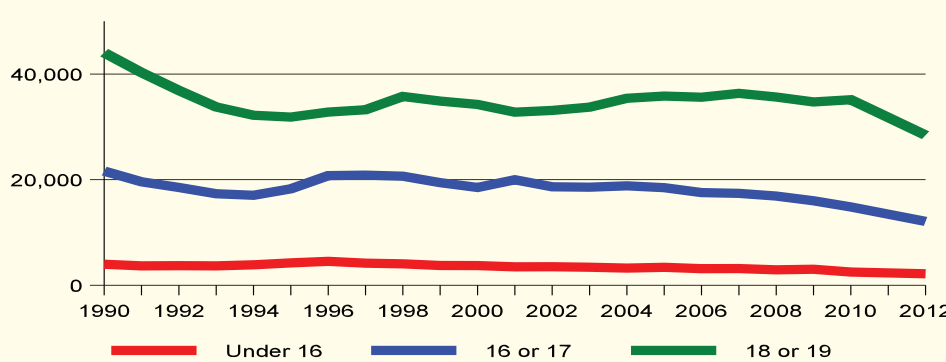
Just remember that I love you,
Though the best of me is past.
Please don't fail to stand beside me,
'Til I meet my Lord at last.

SOURCE: 2013 family Christmas letter of Revd Peter Liddell.

Fewer Kids having Kids

In 2012 88% of all the 885,000 births in England and Wales were to mothers between the ages of 20 and 40. Of the 12% outside that age range, 9% were to those under 20, and 3% to those over 40. Both these latter percentages are decreasing (11% and 4% respectively in 2008, for example). That still means that 2,200 babies were born to mums under the age of 16, 12,000 to mums aged 16 or 17, and 28,000 to mothers of 18 or 19.

Numbers of children born by age of mother, England and Wales, 1990-2012



As the graph indicates the numbers born to teenagers have fallen quite sharply in the last six years, but not greatly before then. As the Table indicates there was a slight increase between 2000 and 2006. The government's policy of deliberately aiming to reduce teenage pregnancies appears to be working.

Number of births by age of mother in 2000, 2006 and 2012

Year	Under 14	14	15	16	17	18	19	Total
2000	160	790	2,780	7,210	12,060	16,530	19,620	59,150
2006	110	610	2,430	6,720	11,660	17,350	21,070	59,950
2012	70	450	1,660	4,290	7,800	12,080	16,340	42,690
Con	0.1%	0.5%	1.2%	2.6%	4.2%	5.9%	7.6%	-
Ab	72%	65%	57%	49%	44%	41%	39%	-



However, births and conceptions are not the same, and both are counted (conceptions being the total of births and the number aborted). The penultimate line of the Table, labelled "Con", shows the number of conceptions, not births, as a percentage of the number of women in the relevant age group. Thus the 0.1% for those under 14 means that one girl aged 13 or less in 1000 became pregnant in 2012. The bottom line, labelled "Ab", shows the percentage of those that were aborted, in this case almost three-quarters or 72%. The older a girl the greater the proportion of conceptions, so one 16-year old girl in every 38 (2.6%) got pregnant, almost one per class in an average school. Half, 49%, of these were aborted.

The conception rates are decreasing. In 2000 4% of 16-year olds became pregnant, but the abortion rate was slightly lower, 46%. So there are in general fewer babies being conceived but rather more being aborted among teenagers. Both trends result in fewer births. *The Economist* suggests a key reason for this is the reality TV show on MTV "Teen Mom". It showed "young mothers suffering sleepless nights, howling brats, money worries and the incomprehension of their still-partying childless contemporaries." Such deters potential young mothers-to-be. An American study found that a similar programme "16 and Pregnant" helped to reduce teenage births by 6% in the 18 months following its release.

It is possible to get married in the UK, with parental consent, at age 16, and at 18 this condition no longer applies. The large majority of births to teenagers, however, take place outside marriage. In 2012 only 2% of these births were within marriage, a percentage which is steadily decreasing, whether a mother is under 20 or in her twenties.

With so many unmarried births, it is likely that the father will not always be present subsequently, and even if present the couple may struggle with being parents. Some schools in their sixth forms are teaching parenting in order to help some of those in this situation. It is likely that the large majority of these teenagers with children will be outside the church, a small but significant number needing to be reached. At present, they neither fit in with their non-parent teenage contemporaries nor with the twenty and thirty young parents' groups and yet are particularly vulnerable. They and the next generation they have started are open to help!

Sources: Office for National Statistics website on teenage conceptions; article in *The Economist*, 18th January 2014, Page 41.

Orthodox Churches are Growing

The Orthodox Churches collectively continue to grow. The number of the "active members" of the various Orthodox branches will probably exceed half a million in a few years' time – bigger than the Methodists (which are declining) and larger than the combined numbers in the New (or House) Churches which are also growing. However, they will be less than the total numbers of Pentecostals in 2020, who are now the third largest denominational group in the UK (after the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans).

Both the Orthodox, which have increased by a half since the year 2000, and the Pentecostals, which have increased two-and-a-half times in the same period, have increased for the same reason – large numbers of Christian immigrants, or at least immigrants coming from nominally Christian countries. The Pentecostals have grown mainly because of the large numbers coming from Africa, especially Nigeria and Ghana. Others, like the Roman Catholics, have also been especially welcoming to immigrants from certain countries. For example, the Catholics have started over 35 chaplaincies in the last few years in the Diocese of Westminster alone, each ministering to a particular language, nationality or ethnic group.

The Orthodox growth is also mostly due to immigration but has been more mixed. There are three broad groups of Orthodox Christians, the Eastern, the Oriental and the Others, which in 2013 were respectively, 91%, 8% and 1% of the total of 460,000 UK Orthodox members. Of these, over five-sixths, 86%, are located in England, 9% in Scotland, 3% in Wales and 2% in N Ireland. The biggest denomination by far is the Greek Orthodox Church, accounting for just over half, 51%, of the overall total. The increase shown in the graph between 2010 and 2015 is partly because of those coming especially from Armenia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Russia and especially Romania (50,000 alone).

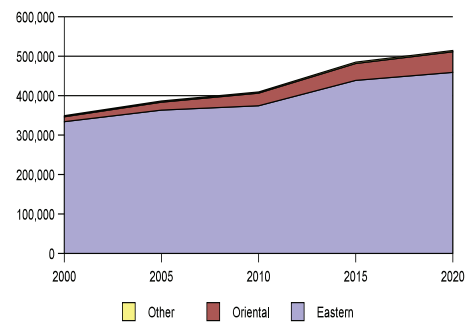
Greeks have been coming to this country for many years. In 2009, the Office for National Statistics estimated that some 290,000 people of the UK population were Greek-born, about one person in every 200. About two-thirds of these are notional members of the Greek Orthodox church. Relatively few Orthodox, of whatever denomination, attend church – and perhaps 7% of these Greek Orthodox do so at least once a month. It is very different at Easter, however, when many thousands of Orthodox attend special services affirming "Christ is Risen! Hallelujah!" The British Greek Orthodox are part of the Diocese of Thyateira and Great Britain, in turn part of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

The next largest group are the Russian Orthodox, difficult to count precisely because of the various splits and mergers that have occurred in recent years, but they are roughly a third the size of the UK Greek Orthodox. In June 2006 the Russian Orthodox Church leader in Britain, Bishop Basil, caused a split by starting a parallel European Diocese centred in Paris; in 2007 two Russian Orthodox Churches united.

There are also many smaller Orthodox Churches, such as the Romanian (60,000 members in the UK in 2013), the Armenian (23,000), the Ethiopian (6,000), the Antiochan (also 6,000), the Bulgarian (5,000), the Ukrainian (also 5,000), the Eritrean (4,000), the Serbian and the Georgian (each 4,000), the Coptic (3,000), the Byelorussian and the Syrian (both 2,000) and several smaller groups. There is also the Coptic Orthodox Church

of Wales, and a special English branch of the Coptic Church. So the Orthodox are a very mixed group of (mostly) European nations, growing in the UK because of migration. For example, there were 5,000 Bulgarians in England in 2001 but 46,000 in 2011; 12,000 Ukrainians in 2001 but 21,000 ten years later; less than a thousand from Eritrea in 2001 but 5,000 in 2011.

Growth of different branches of the Orthodox Church in the UK, 2000-2020E



So what can we learn from such growth?

1) The importance of befriending those of other nationalities. It isn't just a question of giving a warm welcome, but actively initiating places, such as a church hall, where they can meet others from the same community and speak their language.

2) The Orthodox growth has been across many different nationalities without anyone seeking to co-ordinate the whole. In other words, there is less central administration but more people doing whatever is necessary locally, allowing the initiative and entrepreneurship vital for encouraging local community action.

For example, some churches join together in an area to provide a regular afternoon of English language teaching, with a crèche, especially for immigrants' wives who have little opportunity to acquire English language skills or meet young English mothers.

Such a welcome is not to be confined to those of other nationalities. People of different culture, class, social standing all need to be reached and welcomed in an appropriate way whoever and wherever they are.

SOURCES: UK Church Statistics 2010-2020, ADPC Publishers (forthcoming).

SNOWFLAKES

Influence of locality on immigrants. One interesting aspect of an analysis of the Australian 2011 Census showed that some rural areas of white settlement in the 19th century still retain high concentrations of particular religious groups. For example, 2% of Australian churchgoers are Presbyterian and Reformed, but in some places in what is now South Australia or Victoria, the proportion of the population still following their Scottish immigrant forefathers is as high as 12%.

SOURCE: Pointers, Christian Research Association, Vol 23, No 4, Dec 2013, Pages 2 and 3.

Middle-sized churches decreasing. An American survey has found that the number of middle-sized churches is bottoming out, with churches tending to become very large or small in attendance. The same is broadly true in England in terms of numbers of churches (half, 52%, were between 50 and 200 in 1989 but only a third, 35%, in 2010), but the percentage decline in numbers of churchgoers in churches this size was less rapid – from 44% in 1989 to 39% in 2010, although the average size has dropped from 96 in 1989 to 89 in 2010. The Table gives details.

Size of congregation	% of Churches			% of Churchgoers		
	50 or under %	51 to 200 %	Over 200 %	50 or under %	51 to 200 %	Over 200 %
1989	32	52	16	7	44	49
1998	43	42	15	8	40	52
2010	54	35	11	12	39	49

SOURCES: Article in *Religion Watch*, December 2013, Page 4, *Religious Trends*, No 5, 2005/2006, Christian Research, Page 8.12.

Road carnage. Two of the "big killers", TB and Malaria, are decreasing worldwide, and while deaths from HIV/AIDS are likely to continue, one huge cause of death is set to increase enormously over the next 20 years – road traffic accidents in poor and middle income countries (but not in rich countries). The main reasons are the inadequate spending on infrastructure, inadequate attention given to maintenance, poor quality of repairs when carried out, infrequent repairs meaning often leaving gaping holes on the main roadways, insufficient tarmacking of roads, the placement of often unmarked "sleeping policemen" humps, cars unfit to travel, and transport speeding far too fast for the particular road conditions. All this is especially true in Kenya, for example. Increasing use of motorbikes, often carrying whole families, simply increases fatalities. The World Health Organisation reckons traffic accidents will be the main cause of death globally in 2030, some 2 million people every year, virtually doubling from 1.2 million per annum in 2011.

SOURCE: Article in *The Economist*, 25th January 2014, Page 53.

World Youth Day is held every 3 years and organised by the Roman Catholic Church of the country in which it is held. In 2013 it was held in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, with some 3 million in attendance at the beach service where Pope Francis took Mass. 1,500 school-aged Australians attended and were asked about its impact. Five out of six, 84%, replied it was "one of the best experiences of my life", and four-fifths, 80%, enjoyed "meeting so many new people from around the world." Two-thirds, 66%, said it "was a powerful spiritual experience". The "Day" is not just a 24-hour span but a mission or pilgrimage lasting several days which includes outreach work, and support of local communities.

SOURCE: Pointers, Christian Research Association, Vol 23, No 4, Dec 2013, Page 11.

THE AGEING OF ENGLISH CHURCHGOERS

In 1990 there were some 4.1 million people in church on an average Sunday, with an average age of 39. Twenty years later in 2010 the number at church had reduced to 3.1 million with an average age of 45. Projections for 2025 suggest that the number of churchgoers then will be 2.6 million (not quite such a decline as before since some denominations are growing) but their average age then will be 53.

This trend of getting older is reflected in the general population. In 1990 the average age of people in England was 38, in 2010 it was 40 and by 2025 it is officially estimated by the Office for National Statistics that it will be 41. More people are living longer than children are being born, so the average age increases.

Churchgoers are ageing much faster than the general population, however. Many are living longer as in the general population, but there is an acute shortage of younger people, and hence the many attempts to reach them. The overall proportions by age group are shown in the Table, which also gives the percentage of churchgoers in the general population in each age group.

This shows quite dramatically the decline in younger people. In 1990 11% of those under 15 went to church as did 9% of those aged 15 to 19, both percentages above the overall average of 8% (shown in the "total in millions" column). By 2025 if present trends continue these percentages will be 3% and 2% respectively, both below the overall average of 4%. Those in their 20s shrink sharply also. It is expected that by 2025 more than two-fifths (43%) of churchgoers will be 65 or over. As they die in the subsequent decade or so overall numbers will drop quite steeply, as has already been forecast by Church of England actuaries.

Proportion of English churchgoers are in relation to the population in 1990, 2010 and 2025

Year	Group	Under 15 %	15-19 %	20-29 %	30-44 %	45-64 %	65+ %	Total in millions	Average age
1990	Churchgoers	24	7	10	17	22	20	4.07	39
	Population	19	6	16	21	22	16	48.21	38
	% Ch of Pop	11%	9%	5%	7%	9%	11%	8%	~
2010	Churchgoers	18	4	7	15	26	30	3.07	45
	Population	17	6	14	20	26	17	51.97	40
	% Ch of Pop	6%	4%	3%	4%	6%	11%	6%	~
2025	Churchgoers	13	2	5	13	24	43	2.55	53
	Population	18	6	12	20	24	20	58.43	41
	% Ch of Pop	3%	2%	2%	3%	4%	9%	4%	~

SOURCES: UK Church Statistics 2010-2020, ADPC Publishers (forthcoming); Office of National Statistics website projected population.



REFLECTIONS

A teacher gives his class a test; will they pass? Jesus was a teacher. His immediate "class" was His 12 disciples. Would they pass His test? The final results are now known, but on one occasion at least, we are presented with the test question. There were 5,000 people on the slopes who had been listening to Him and watching Him heal all day, and then Jesus says to Philip (only in the gospel of John, 6:5), "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" Such hospitality was a natural gesture arising out of the day's work undergirded by the Saviour's deep compassion for those in physical need. The question was not about finance, but about supply. It didn't seem to occur to the disciples that although they couldn't do anything about the situation, Jesus could.

The Scripture specifically says that Jesus asked Philip the question to test him. Philip doesn't answer the question directly, but replies with an obvious concern about the financial cost. "Six months' wages to feed this crowd!" Does Jesus sometimes allow us to experience an awkward situation to test us? And do we often look at the finance of the situation before anything else?

The founder of what is now the OMF, formerly the China Inland Mission, Hudson Taylor, expressed his guiding truth as "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply." In other words, if we are doing the Lord's work in His will, worrying about resources should not be a major concern. For some this may be through faith alone; for others His way may be through seeking to raise money responsibly for the projects to which He has led us.

Jesus "knew what He was going to do" (John 6:6). So He had a solution to the problem, but He didn't tell Philip what it was. He may not immediately share His solution to our problems either. Then came an interruption, reported in all four Gospels. A small boy was brought to Jesus offering his lunch of five loaves and two fish. When you need a million what use is a penny? But Jesus didn't despise the penny, nor the widow's mite on a different occasion.

Rather He uses the spirit of the boy's generosity and multiplies it as many times as necessary, but not more times than necessary. The solution fits the problem, and fits it abundantly.

Both as individuals and as Christian churches or organisations we may face His test today. Perhaps we will find a superabundance of the ordinary which bit by bit enables, say, a church extension to be paid off, or the totally unexpected amazing solution which can only come from God. No wonder when the crowd saw what had happened, they declared, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world." (John 6:14). The solution is not given primarily for subsistence or our comfort but for us to recognise and glorify the Person behind it all.

Great-grandparents

There were an estimated 750,000 grandparents going to church in 2005, and a 2002 survey found that 3% of children going to Sunday School were taken by their grandparents. But how many great-grandparents are there? That's not easy to answer.

It's a well established fact that people are living longer. In 2000 the average Englishman could expect to live till he was 76, but just 10 years later the average life expectancy for a man was 79. Figures for women are 81 and 83 respectively. The Office for National Statistics said that in 2010 8% of the population were 75 and over with 13,000 centenarians. By 2020 the percentage over 75 will be 9% and 19,000 will be 100 or over.

However, at the same time the average age of starting a family is getting later. The average age of starting a family in 1966 was 24; now it is 30. As a consequence fewer people are likely to live long enough to see their fourth generation. It may be that the current generation is the one in post Old Testament history which has the most four-generation families.



Does it matter? Aren't great-grandparents much the same as grandparents? "No," said Simon Rogers in *The Guardian*. "They provide a link with the past, making history real and giving kids a sense of family continuity." In 2007 it was reported that people were spending an average of 35 years as a grandparent, 22 years as a parent with children living at home, and a further 14 years on average as an adult with no children at home ... and 5 or 10 years as a great-grandparent?

The Future Foundation think-tank estimates that by 2020 there will be 17 million grandparents in Britain – almost a fifth of the population! Given an average generation size of 25 years that would mean 3 million great-grandparents then. Professor Rotkirch, director of the Finnish Population Research Institute, guesses that around 10% of young children in western societies have one great-grandparent. A survey by Saga found that of great-grandparents:

- 68% saw great-grandchildren as a source for joy
- 41% looked after their great-grandchildren when needed
- 30% worried about their great-grandchildren's future
- 18% spent active time with them each week
- 15% read to them on a weekly basis
- 2% found them a source of exhaustion!

How many of the UK's great-grandparents are churchgoers? Perhaps as many as 200,000 – a fifth of a million – about 7% of all churchgoers, but very likely to increase to perhaps 250,000 by 2020, about 10% of all churchgoers then, on present trends! How can church leaders best work with both grandparents and great-grandparents in reaching their third and fourth generation family members?

SOURCES: *Reaching and Keeping Teenagers*, Christian Research, 2002; *Grandparents*, Christian Research, 2007; Office for National Statistics website; cartoon from the *Church Times*, 24th April 2009; *The Guardian*, 16th June, 2007 website; report on *The Telegraph* website 21st September 2007; article in *Saga* magazine February 2014, Page 44.

These may be helpful Books and reports received

Gender and Career Progression in *Theology and Religious Studies*, Mathew Guest et al, Durham University, 2013.

The Maintenance and Transformation of Ethnicity: Evidence on Mixed Partnerships in Britain, David Voas, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol 35, No 9, November 2009.

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On sale in the NASA Tuck Shop: Mars Bars, Galaxy, Milky Way.

An old lady was sending the family Bible to her brother who lived in another part of the country.

"Anything breakable in here?" asked the postal clerk.

"Only the Ten Commandments," answered the lady.

SOURCES: *The Oldie Book of Cartoons*, 2013; email from Kim Tainio.

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Young people, youth work and church – a convoluted relationship?

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My recent research explored young people's engagement with churches. In total 34 young people and 8 youth workers were interviewed from across the denominations. Just over a third of the young people interviewed were from non-churchgoing families; of these, half were regular attendees at church services at the time of interview. Of those that did regularly attend church, both from churchgoing and non-churchgoing families, many attended closer to monthly than weekly. Around one third of those from churchgoing families were from families where only one parent attended church regularly.

Domains and purposes of Christian youth work

Both young people and youth workers in the study cited problems in the relationships between young people, youth work and the wider church. These tensions between youth workers and their churches tend to emerge where their conceptions of the purposes of Christian youth work are not the same. Churches often see the purpose of youth work as retaining young people from church families. Youth workers view their work as having multiple purposes – social, spiritual and institutional. The social purpose involves meeting a community need for open access youth provision. The spiritual purpose involves providing a space for young people to reflect on and develop their faith. The institutional purpose involves integrating young people with the wider church.

Youth workers manage the tensions by separating their work into different domains. Most of the youth workers in my study provided youth clubs, cell groups and support for young people to integrate with church services. However, the youth workers also recognise the relationship between the domains. For example, a young person from a non-church background is far more likely to engage with a faith community if they have first been accepted into a social community.

The social domain

The social domain usually consists of an open access youth club attended by church young people as well as those from the local community. Many young people accessed only this domain and did so long-term. This provision was not seen by the wider church as having value because it did not contain explicit Christian teaching and did not directly translate into young people attending church services. The youth workers viewed this provision as having value in its own right – meeting a social purpose or community need – and could also see how it connected young people with the church, however loosely.

Being part of this social provision was highly significant in the young people's narratives. Young people from non-church backgrounds cited social and relational reasons for their engagement with these youth activities.

"I've got a lot of friends here and I enjoy what we do" (Connor).

"I've got a very good friend here. It's really good here. And it just gives you something to do, like on a Friday. ... Instead of going out and getting drunk you can come here instead and have a laugh" (Annette).

For both churchgoing and non-churchgoing young people, social belonging was key to their continued engagement in the youth activities as well as crucial to them becoming more involved in Christianity.

The spiritual domain

This domain consisted of informal "cell" or Bible study groups where young people could discuss issues related to Christianity. While I term this the spiritual domain, it did also involve informal social interaction between young people who were either already Christians or interested in finding out more. Its primary purpose, however, was as a space for young people to explore their developing faith.

One of the key factors young people highlighted about their cell groups, though not often about their experience of church in general, was the room to question and discuss Christianity and how it applied in their lives.

"We read the Bible reading for that particular day and we just say how did that make you feel, what did you notice? Because then you're allowing the Bible to actually speak into your experience of the day or the week" (Mark).

Several of the young people explained how they could ask questions or reflect on controversial topics in their youth groups without feeling 'stupid' yet would not be able to do the same in church services. For the young people who were Christians, this domain was often the space in which they felt they developed spiritually.

The institutional domain

It might seem a little over-simplistic to label church services as the institutional domain and, in reality, this domain contributes to the social, spiritual and institutional purposes of youth work. For young people, however, this is the most problematic domain and often because of the institutional traditions that make it inflexible – for example, long established customs for when and how services run. For the youth workers, the primary purpose of this domain was to encourage integration with the wider church as the young people tended more easily to meet their social and spiritual needs in the other domains.

As has already been discussed, a sense of social belonging was important in the young people's narratives. This social belonging is more important than the methods employed in church services. Lucy, who attended a traditional church, had tried different churches where she preferred the methods but did not feel as included as in her home church. Nancy explained how she feels accepted in her congregation, despite facing difficulties in other social contexts.

"Autism is very, very isolating. I've also had eating disorders as well and that's been isolating, so really I'm just a social mess at the moment, but I'm getting help with that. ... If I've had a difficult day at college or I get bullied or something, then I can just come in here and know that no one's going to treat me differently because there are people who have been in prison and they admit that, and they know they won't get judged here and it's just the faith and just the Christian family, in general, here is just so strong" (Nancy).

However, for many young people, their experience of this domain is negative. These experiences ranged from a general feeling of a "divide" between old and young to outright rejection. Tracey, for example, was told she might be charged when she tried to book a room for her youth group to meet. Around two thirds of the young people interviewed who attend church regularly identified some negativity in how they were treated by the wider church. Those that had previously attended regularly and ceased to do so largely blamed how they were treated in adult church.

A model of Christian youth work

The three domains come together in a model of Christian youth work that emphasises the separate purposes as well as the connections between them. Some young people access only one domain; for others, engagement with one domain facilitates movement through the model.

Young people from churchgoing families initiate their engagement in domain 3. Young people from non-churchgoing families tend to engage first with domain 1. For churchgoing young people, the presence of domains 1 and 2 may support their continued engagement with domain 3. In some cases, domains 1 and 2 allow young people who have disengaged from church services to continue involvement with their church and even to develop their faith.

The tree-dimensional model of Christian youth work



When I first interviewed Danni, she explained that she had previously attended church with her mother but had stopped going when it conflicted with her hockey commitments. She explained that her mother was a Christian and her father an atheist, describing herself somewhat confusedly as "midway between a Christian and an atheist". Six months later, she confidently described herself as a Christian and identified how her engagement with her youth group nurtured her faith. Other young people engage for the first time with a church through accessing domain 1 and become more involved from there. Matthew, for example, started attending the youth club before being invited to the Bible study group. He decided to go along and later became a Christian. He now attends church services and was recently baptised. This demonstrates how the different domains of youth work support each other and come together to form an integrated model of how churches engage young people.

1. The model of Christian youth work was originally published in the *Journal of Beliefs and Values* in December, 2012 (Stanton, N. 2012. "Christian youthwork: teaching faith, filling churches or response to social need?" *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 33 (3), pp. 385-403).



Providing Facts for Forward Planning

SNIPPETS

1) When American Christians were asked what was the current temptation they most faced, 44% said "spending too much time on the media". 4% said they would fast from technology for Lent.

2) In the year 2000, 93% of UK households had a fixed-line telephone access; by 2010 that percentage had fallen to 81%.

3) 57% of Americans believe God can heal patients even if the doctors have declared further medical treatment pointless.

4) 70% of parents stop reading to their children before they are 12 years old; 9% stop because their children want to do other things; 4% stop because their children can read better than they can.

5) 22% of adults say they do not read for pleasure, and 37% of those aged 18 to 24.

6) More than half the country take part in the National Lottery (55%), but for three-fifths (59%) this is the only form of gambling they participate in. Horse racing is the next most common (11%).

7) 84% of evangelicals feel valued for the work they do, but only 59% of civil servants feel the same.

SOURCES: 1) Email from Barna Group, 24th January 2014, Page 8; 2) Article in *IMPACT*, Market Research Society, Issue 3, 2013, Page 83; 3) Report in *Time* magazine 20th January, 2014, Page 47-48 and 5) *The Bookseller*, 7th February, 2014, Page 7; 6) Article in the *International Journal of Market Research* Vol 56, Issue 1, Page 116; 7) *Working faithfully?* Survey by Evangelical Alliance, 2013, Page 16.

TWENTY TRUTHS ABOUT TWENTIES

The following is a summary of a recent report about those aged 20 to 29 in the UK:

1) They are the second largest decadal cohort in the UK population

This is mainly because there are many non-British born students in this demographic, most of whom will return home after completing their studies. As a consequence there is an above average proportion of Twenties in university towns and cities. There were 7.6 million people in their Twenties, 14% of the total population, in 2011.

2) There are many immigrants in their Twenties

Two-fifths (41%) of all immigrants are in their Twenties, twice as many as the next highest age-group, 30 to 44 (19%). Some 12% of all those in their Twenties are Asian, and only 80% are white (against 8% Asians overall in England, and 86% white). Three-fifths (58%) of the Asians in their Twenties live in London (where the general population includes 31% of Asians, against only 8% across the rest of England).

3) They have a special name and character

Those in their Twenties are often called the Millennials or Generation Y. Many have been brought up with numerous electronic devices. They tend to be independent, risk-takers, liberal, often from a broken family, accepting of homosexuality and willing to work in teams as peer pressure is important to them. Sceptical of authority, they respect most professionals, but many have only the vaguest spiritual notions.

4) They are the smallest decadal cohort attending church

Only 3% of the Twenties attend church, against 6% of people in the overall population. Only 7% of those now in their Twenties ever went to Sunday School, and of these half dropped out of church in their teenage years. However, the percentage going to church in Inner London is higher (6%). They are attracted to larger churches and to those giving quality teaching about Christianity. Many of the churchgoing Twenties go to Independent, New (House) or Pentecostal Churches; many are Evangelical, especially in London.

5) Churchgoing Twenties are good at volunteering and leading

Many of these Twenties go to small independent Christian groups, often meeting in non-ecclesiastical buildings, which are "youth church grown up", "deconstructed" or "churches on the margins", to give these meetings some names or descriptions. These meetings focus especially on contemporary moral issues, family and other relationships, and trying to make sense of life. Twenties want to delve deeply into Christian teaching and the Bible, and as they wish to be useful in any way they can they often volunteer.

6) Churchgoing students fall into different groups

About a quarter of contemporary students say they are active in their churchgoing, both at home and college, and another quarter attend occasionally, maybe going more frequently when at home. Active churchgoers want to know what they stand for and why, while the more occasional churchgoers are not usually angry at the church but just want to feel free of its constraints. Having an active relationship with an older Christian can be critical for keeping students in church – relationships matter hugely to them.

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7) Today's Twenties have experienced a variety of family forms

The Twenties are the decade when young people move from living with parents (63% men, 46% women at 20), often to married life (33% men, 38% women at 29), nowadays usually via a period of cohabitation (lasting up to 5 years on average). Christian Twenties are more likely to go straight to marriage, but not all. A small proportion, 11%, of female Twenties reach 30 as a single parent. "Family" has come to mean "those who love and care for me" rather than "blood relationships". At least a quarter of those in their Twenties have seen their parents' divorce, a tenth have been brought up by one parent, and 1% by their grandparents.

8) Cohabitation or "living together" is commonly accepted by the Twenties

Two-fifths, 39%, of those aged 25 to 29 live in a cohabiting relationship; very, very few are in civil partnerships. After being together for up to 5 years, half will get married, almost a quarter remain cohabiting, and the other quarter have separated (a much higher percentage than divorces of married people over the same length of time). Increasingly, cohabitees are starting a family (two-fifths in 2012 had done so, with an average of 1.6 children). Hence more babies are being born "out of wedlock" (46% in UK in 2010). Some 2% of all churchgoers were cohabiting in 2012, mostly in their Twenties.

9) Early sexual experience has been usual for many in their Twenties

A 2005 survey of school children found 17% of boys and 26% of girls had had intercourse by 17. A Soul Survivor 2010 study found 27% of 18-20 year olds and 35% of 21-24 year olds had had full sex. Three-fifths (58%) of people diagnosed with chlamydia in 2007 were between 16 and 24. Masturbation is common among young people aged between 10 and 15 (81% men, 55% women); it is frequent among the Twenties (men 8 times a month, women 3 times). Multiple partners are also common – 14% of those under 25 had had more than 10 partners in 2010, as had 9% of women. In 2014, oral sex is almost as common as vaginal sex. Gay and lesbian sex is small but increasing (8% women, 5% men in 2010).

10) Those now in their Twenties have always lived with technology

The technology of the web is part of their lives whether through ipads, smartphones, touch screens, multi-screening, Kindle tablets, laptops, superfast connectivity and the like. They have



never consciously been without it. It has exploded in the last few years reaching to "Generation 5" in 2013. The Apple AppStore alone has produced more than 50 billion apps in the five years after its launch in 2008. "Multi-tasking", using more

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