

Continued from page 1

church. They want to be treated as real members with real faith, not as a growing sapling, and given real not token roles. Certainly they need safe space to ask questions, and youth leaders are vital for this process. Other research would add that parents are a key part in that process also.

Research data is, therefore, only useful if it is specifically applied and worked out in particular situations. What are the priorities, the ultimate vision, the values to be planted and demonstrated, the resources needed, and the intended future? How do we do that? Coleridge's poem tells us: "He prayeth best, who loveth best/ All things both great and small;/ For the dear God who loveth us,/ He made and loveth all." It is Christ Who is our wisdom, and it is to Him alone that we must turn in prayer and discussion with others in determining our response to research data.

SOURCES: *The Insight Economy*, Raconteur, 1st September 2016; *Statistics for Mission 2014*, Cathedral Statistics 2015, Ministry Statistics 2012-2015, and *Rooted in the Church of England: Understanding Faithfulness*, all Research and Statistics Dept., Archbishops' Council, May to September 2016; *Winning Them Back*, Eddie Gibbs, MARC Publications, Monarch, 1993; "Finding Faith" articles in *Quadrant*, Christian Research, March 1998.

These may be helpful Books and reports received



Outside In by Will Bissett is in two parts (both under the same cover). The first is entitled "Why the church needs to wake up and smell the coffee", and elaborates more on the findings of his postgraduate research into "Perceptions of the church in the UK, what these mean, and how churches might respond." The second part, entitled "Research into perceptions of the church" contains the facts, figures and the academic research. Published by Westbow Press, ISBN 978-1-51274-199-5 (paperback) or ...-200-8 (hardback).

CORRECTION

In the October 2016 *FutureFirst* the article on railways may have unwittingly given the impression that the rail industry was happy to support the Railway Mission in sharing the Christian faith. They do support the chaplaincy work of the Railway Mission in its compassionate and supportive roles, but not for sharing the faith. We apologise for any misunderstanding which may have occurred.

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www.brierleyconsultancy.com

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SNOWFLAKES

Birthdays. "Every year on my birthday I assume this is going to be the last year of my life." Rev Canon Chris Russell, Adviser for Evangelism to the Archbishop of Canterbury since June 2013.

Fruit. "The fruit of Silence is Prayer
The fruit of Prayer is Faith
The fruit of Faith is Love
The fruit of Love is Service."

Source: Mother Teresa's visiting card, quoted in *The Tablet*, 3rd September 2016, Page 8.

Marital Status. The latest government statistics show that in 2014 51% of the population in England was married, 8% divorced, 7% widowed and 34% single. The married percentage includes 0.25% who had civil partnerships. The latest American figures show very similar results – respectively, 50% married, 14% divorced/separated, 6% widowed, and 30% single. The English figures include the separated with the single. The single in both countries includes the cohabiting. In English churches the proportions are 71% married, 4% divorced, 6% widowed and 19% single.

The Americans also asked, "Who is still in their first marriage at age 46?" Answer was 69% of college graduates, 54% of white people, 47% of blacks.

Sources: Office for National Statistics website, Birth Summary Tables; article in *The Economist* 24th January 2015, Page 27; British Social Attitude Surveys 2016.

The Jesuits, or Society of Jesus, is the largest male religious order in the world with, in 2016, 11,800 priests, 1,200 brothers, 2,700 scholastics and 700 novices. It was started in 1540, so in its 476th year (2016) held its 36th General Conference to elect its new Superior General, Fr Dermot Mulroney. Like the rest of the Christian world it has "moved South", with nearly three-fifths, 58%, of electors from South Asia (21%), Latin America (16%), Asia-Pacific (11%) and Africa (10%). In 2008 these areas comprised 54%.

Source: *The Tablet*, 1st October 2016, Page 4.

Clergy Training. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) allows candidates to train as a second career for ordination under a "Theological Education for Emerging Ministries" (TEEM) programme. A comparison of the two paths (Career and TEEM) showed that:

- Both were equally attractive to men and women
- Non-whites were much more likely to choose the TEEM route (96% to 48% for first career ordinands)
- The average age of ordination via ELCA was 37 while for TEEM it was 52
- Only 4% of ordination candidates came through the TEEM approach (240 compared with 6,400).

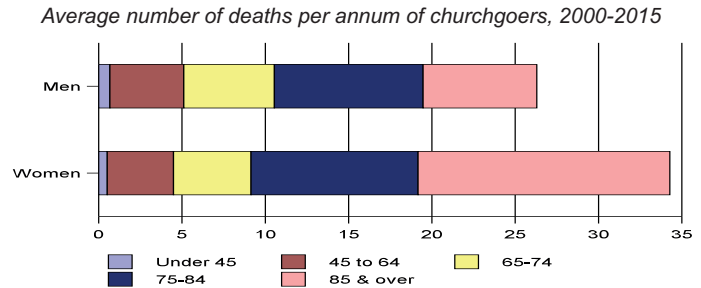
SOURCE: Article by Nathaniel Porter in *Religious Review of Research*, Vol 58, No 2, June 2016, Page 327.

Moving Home. In the 20 years 1991 to 2011, three-fifths of the population, 62%, did not move at all, a fifth, 20%, moved of necessity once and the remaining fifth, 18%, moved of necessity twice or more (8% three or more times). Two-thirds, 65%, of those aged 18 to 34 moved once as did 72% of those aged 35 to 54. But 35% and 28% respectively of these two age-groups thus moved of necessity twice or more, half (53%) of which involved a couple with children.

Moving out of necessity maybe because of divorce or separation, problems in the neighbourhood, eviction or repossession, job related or the home is

year, which means that in a church of say 250, there will be at least 5 funerals, and since many churches will also be asked to take funerals for those in their community or parish, the average per church will likely be higher than this.

The number of deaths among churchgoers has been calculated as shown in the second chart:



The chart shows more women dying than men, but as women live longer, this is natural. It also indicates that relatively very small numbers of those under 45 die, and not many in the twenty year age-group 45 to 64.

The chart shows as well that relatively few churchgoers aged 65 to 74 die, though they number some 520,000 or one-sixth, 18%, of congregations overall. Those in this age-group often still have reasonable health, plenty of energy and are willing to either lead or support leadership in its various roles. Predictably, rather more of those 75 and over die each year.

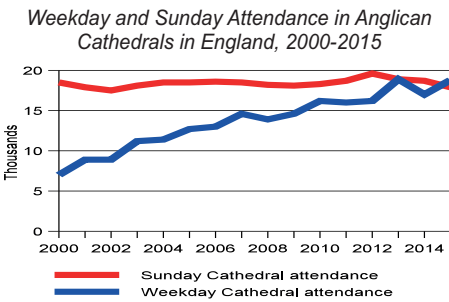
The pastoral issue comes not just in supporting the terminally ill and bereaved families but also in enabling those getting older to serve meaningfully in the general work of the church and the community.

SOURCES: *UK Church Statistics* No 2, 2010-2020, ADBC Publishers, Tonbridge, 2014; *English Life Tables*; Office for National Statistics website.

CATHEDRAL STATISTICS

There are 42 Anglican Cathedrals in England, 8 Episcopal Church of Scotland, 6 Churches in Wales, 6 Church of Ireland, 34 Roman Catholic ones (20 in England including a new one – the Syro Malabar Cathedral in Preston whose first Bishop was ordained in October 2016, 8 in Scotland, 4 in N Ireland and 3 in Wales), 12 Orthodox (Antiochan, Greek and Russian) and 1 Ukrainian Catholic, a total of 110 altogether. Some people take a delight in visiting all the Church of England ones, but has anybody ever tried visiting all those plus those of the other denominations?

Records are kept of attendance both on Sunday and at Midweek in Church of England Cathedral services, broken down by whether attenders are child or adult. Total Anglican Cathedral attendance has been increasing steadily since 2000, when records began of numbers attending. However, while Sunday attendance has been fairly static, weekday services have been drawing more and more people, numbers almost tripling in the 15 years since 2000 (when it was 7,000) to 2015 (when it was 19,000). The graph illustrates these numbers and shows that weekday worshippers just exceeded total Sunday worshippers in 2016.



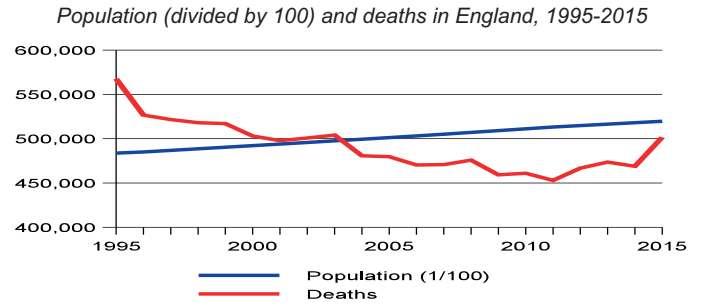
A breakdown by age shows that adult attendance has been steadily increasing over these 15 years, but child attendance which was 4,400 in 2000 increased by 50% to 6,600 in 2005, but has largely remained static in the past 10 years, being just 7,000 in 2015. Reasons for the increase 10 years ago are not known, nor the reason for the surge of adults coming midweek in 2013, an increase that year of almost a fifth, 18%.

Most Cathedrals have a Friends' Association, the five largest of which are at Canterbury, Exeter (both with Prince Charles as Royal Patron), Peterborough and Winchester (both with the Queen) and St Paul's, London (with the Duchess of Gloucester), all with an annual income of about £300,000 in 2009 and about 3,000 members).

SOURCES: *Cathedral Statistics* 2015, Research and Statistics Dept., Archbishops' Council, Sept 2015; *The Tablet*, 15th October 2016, Page 28; *Rural Theology*, Vol 9.1, 2011, Page 17.

Church Deaths and Funerals

Roughly just under 1% of the population die every year, a percentage which has been slightly decreasing between 1995 and 2010 (but rising since) because of the influx of large numbers of immigrants, many in their 20s and 30s, far fewer of whom die than those 50 years older. In 1995 the percentage was 1.2%, in 2015 1.0%. The first graph shows the variation, with population divided by 100 so that both lines can be on the same chart:



Of the funerals resulting from these deaths, the Church of England took almost a third, 31% in 2014, rather more in church than in crematoria (a reversal of the situation 7 years earlier and before 2007). Roman Catholics took about 9% of funerals, and Methodists about 4%, with unknown percentages for the other denominations, but collectively estimated at 9%. All the rest, virtually half, 47%, are secular.

The number of deaths among churchgoers, however, is greater than the population percentage simply because the proportion of those 65 and over, 33% across all denominations, is almost double the proportion in the general population, 18%. So probably about 2% of churchgoers die every

to *The Tablet*, wrote about cohabiting couples, "It should not be beyond the pastoral wisdom of the Catholic Church to find some way of welcoming such couples who are Catholic into the broader Catholic family – perhaps by reviving the status of "betrothed". He notes, however, that one reason people cohabit instead of marrying is that they simply cannot afford to marry in the traditional way, something very true in many African countries.

Children

Respondents were asked if they would want their children to cohabit before getting married. Just over two-fifths, 44%, said YES, and another two-fifths, 40%, said NO, with the remaining 16% undecided.

The Table shows the proportions with children by type of family, the number of civil partnerships/same-sex cohabiting couples with children being too few to give accurate

general population. The proportion who cohabit is 2%, but probably rising slowly, while lone parent families are about 1%, and probably not growing so fast. Both cohabiting couples and lone parent families are more likely to attend larger churches and meet others in similar marital situations. Church family life therefore is very different from the general population where 16.5% were cohabiting in 2015 and 16.2% were single-parent families.

A Barna survey found that two-thirds of Americans, 65%, feel that cohabitation is a good idea, although for practising Christians it was only two-fifths, 41%. Both percentages vary with age, being higher for younger people. Why was cohabiting thought desirable? Five-sixths, 84%, replied, "to test compatibility." Others said, "It was convenient" (9%), or "allowed cheaper rent" (5%) or gave other reasons (2%).

Those who opposed cohabitation did so for religious reasons (34%), a belief that one should

Family types and whether they have children, in thousands, UK

Family type	1996			Base (=100%)	2015			Base (=100%)
	A %	B %	C %		A %	B %	C %	
Married couple families	46	41	13	12,641	49	38	13	12,465
Cohabiting families	60	37	3	1,459	55	40	5	3,087
Lone parent families	0	67	33	2,445	0	65	35	3,022

A = No children B = With dependent children C = Non-dependent children only

not have sex before marriage (28%), that it wasn't convenient (16%), it was against family tradition (12%), or gave other reasons (10%). Three-fifths, 62%, of respondents felt that cohabitation did not change the pressure on wanting to get married, while a fifth, 19%, felt it increased that pressure and another fifth, 19%, felt it reduced it.

While cohabitation is common, not only in the UK but also other Western countries like Australia, Sweden, Ireland, Spain and Portugal, it has also become popular in China where over two-fifths, 44%, were cohabiting in 2012 (up from 30% in 2009 and 10% in 1999). Cohabitation has not generally reduced the desire for marriage, and nor is the stigma against adultery weakening. Many of those who cohabit do marry – after 2 years together 56% are still cohabiting, but after 5 years only 23% are and after 10 years only 6%. Those no longer cohabiting with their original partner are either now living as a single, married or cohabiting with someone else!

Journalist Clifford Longley, a contributing editor

Family Life

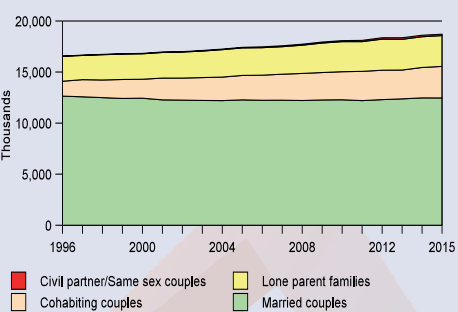
Family life in the UK changed over the 20th century, but especially perhaps in the years since the turn of the century. In 1996 three-quarters, 76%, of families were a married Mum and Dad with or without children. In 2015 only two-thirds, 67%, of families were thus constituted. A few percentage points different maybe, but the number of families has grown 12% in this period, to 19 million families in the UK in 2015 (up from 17 million), but the number of married families, according to the definition just used, has actually decreased by 180,000 families. In that period the Government has created civil partnerships and same-sex families, which in 2015 numbered in total some 140,000 families.

Also in these years other types of families have grown – lone parent families are up by nearly 600,000 and (opposite sex) cohabiting couples up by 1.6 million. These 2.2 million account for some 5 million people. So the differences are not small. The new type of families – civil partnerships and same sex cohabiting (0.7% of all families in 2015) – will doubtless grow in time, but the two other types (lone parent and opposite sex cohabiting couples) make up the difference of the 24% in 1996 and 33% in 2015.

Cohabitation

Cohabiting is now common. In 1996 9% of UK families were cohabiting couples, but 20 years later the percentage had almost doubled to 16%. In 2015, the number exceeded the number of lone parent families for the first time. As the chart shows the number of married couple families has remained about the same since 1996 while other types of living together have increased.

Families by family type, UK, 1996-2015



The large majority of those attending church are married in the traditional/Biblical sense, some 71% in a 2013 study, rather more than in the

Christmas 2016

The Clinton card retailer found that over the years 1995 to 2015, the percentage of Christmas cards depicting:

- Snowflakes increased by + 14%
- Father Christmas's hat was up by + 13%
- Christmas trees were up by + 7%
- Father Christmas himself declined by - 6%
- Snowmen dropped by - 17%
- Robins were down by - 23%

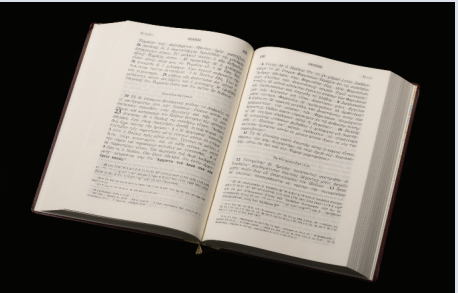
They also found that demand for religious cards had not declined, neither had traditional scenes of Victorian streets, holly bushes and bells. The use of glitter was much more common, up + 35%. They also found that Father Christmas was probably 2 stone lighter than formerly, and his cheeks had become pinkier, and his costume redder.

Lauren Davidson of the *Daily Telegraph* reckoned that if there were 1.9 billion children in the world under 15 needing a visit from Father Christmas each year, and he gave two presents to each child, that would mean 1.8 million miles of wrapping paper (assuming almost 3 feet per present), and if each present took 8 seconds to wrap that would take 1,000 people working 24 hours a day 49 weeks to get them all ready – just about enough time for the annual event.

Father Christmas has 32 hours to deliver his gifts due to the different time zones around the world. If each child has on average one sibling, that means he has to visit 8,000 homes per second. No wonder he gets exhausted! If each home visited leaves him a 200ml glass of semi-skimmed milk, Lauren calculates he would drink enough milk to fill 60 Olympic-size swimming pools! She says, "In the festive spirit, this is all to be taken with a pinch of snow."

SOURCES: Articles in *The Daily Telegraph*, 24th December 2014, and the *Church Times*, December 2015.





REFLECTIONS

The woman was desperate and anxious. She wanted to find someone and was looking all over. Where she had expected to find him, he was not there. Then she saw someone whom she thought might be able to help her, and approached him. "Sir," she said, "if you've moved him tell me where you've put him," only able to think in physical terms. Then Jesus simply said her name, "Mary," and her world was never the same again.

They were not desperate but they were anxious. They were wanting to find someone and were on what they were sure was the right track. So they came to someone whom they thought might be able to help them, and approached him through all the razzmatazz of officialdom. Herod consulted his religious experts who told them, "Go to Bethlehem," and so they did, leaving Herod and his colleagues deeply worried. But the Wise Men found Jesus, and their world was never the same again.

He was desperate and anxious – would they catch him? A young man newly married escaping from his father-in-law in the middle of the night, courtesy of his wife. He would go to someone whom he was sure would help him, having anointed him perhaps just 3 years before, and he did. David went to Samuel at his home in Ramah, and he took him to nearby Naioth where there was a school of prophets. David would be reasonably safe in this crowd from Saul and his men since anyone approaching them broke down into an ecstasy of prophesying! David's world was never the same again.

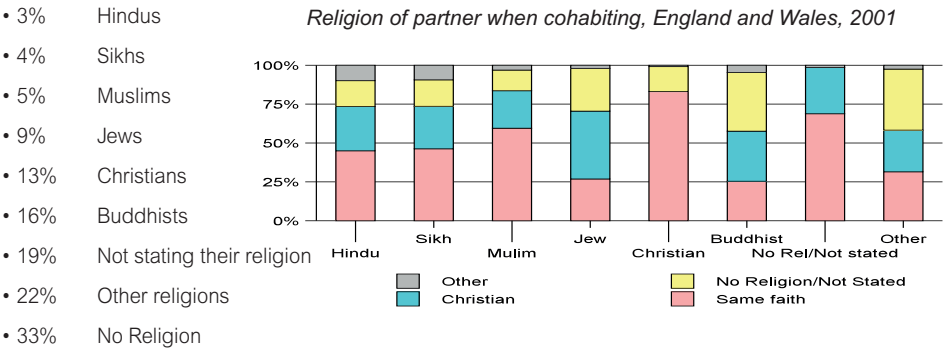
Many today are desperate and anxious. Where will the next meal come from? How will I be able to pay the rent? How can I make myself look attractive? If only I had a car! What I need is a new smartphone. I do hope I can get a job. As a refugee, how can I find security? All looking for something, not someone. Others are looking for someone – a stunning girl, a good-looking man – whom they can trust, but are not always successful. Very few are searching for someone who can give peace, assurance and forgiveness – they don't know where to look.

The message of Christmas is of people searching for someone. The shepherds found Him in a stable directed by the angels. The Wise Men found Him led by a star; Herod was unable to find Him, seeking Him only for his own evil purposes. Many churches will be full of people, perhaps as many as 20% of the population, over the next few weeks. May we help them find not just mulled wine, mince pies and popular carols, but a real Person who offers such a transforming relationship that their world will never be the same again.

Interfaith Cohabitation

Professor David Voas asked what is now the Office for National Statistics for a special analysis of data obtained through the 2001 Population Census. He wanted to know what proportion of those belonging to each main UK religion were cohabiting. The percentages of men and women cohabiting were not great, but the differences by religion were considerable.

If a similar request was made of the 2011 Census data, doubtless these percentages would all be higher, since numbers cohabiting increased by 37% between the two Census years. Voas also asked if someone was cohabiting, was their partner of a different religion? The bar-chart gives the various proportions, averaging the percentages for men and women, the columns in the same order as the list.



This shows that when cohabiting those nominally Christian and those of No Religion (or Not Stated) would generally (about three-quarters) partner with someone of like belief. However, almost half of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims would also partner with someone similar, and about a quarter of Jews, Buddhists and those in Other Religions. About a quarter of those of any faith would cohabit with a Christian, though over two-fifths, 44%, of Jews. Buddhists and those in Other Religions were most likely to partner with someone of No Religion.

Although the gender differences are not shown, women were more likely to partner with someone in the same faith group, unless they were Christian when they were more likely to cohabit with someone of No Religion (or Not Stated).

SOURCE: Articles "The Maintenance and Transformation of Ethnicity" in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, David Voas, Vol 35, No 9, November 2009, Page 1497.

Attracting Talent

How does one attract and engage talented individuals to work for your organisation? Samantha Bond of Northstar, an award-winning creative agency, believes the following ingredients are important:

- Company mission.* What is the purpose of your organisation? Does it invigorate and inspire people?
- Inspirational CEO.* The company's vision and values must be embodied by a passionate but accessible leading officer, who can speak with authenticity and conviction.
- Community collaboration.* The company must be a place which offers not just a job but a way of life, full of compassion and willingness to work together.
- Recruitment.* Human relationships need to be central, with teams of both old and young working together loyally. This encourages others to join.
- Entrepreneurialism.* A willingness to take risks and do something different. Progression is based on merit, not age. Younger people must be given the opportunity to establish themselves, providing new thinking and driving change.
- Autonomy.* A trusting of people to accomplish a project on time even if their methods and timetable are different from what is anticipated. This can be difficult for older people, but often younger people thrive on such affirmation.
- Transparency.* Sharing with everyone, not just the leadership team, helps people involved feel trusted and valued and they become more emotionally invested.

These are essentially secular evaluations, but they also fit with spiritual aims. Just substitute "church" for "organisation" and "company" and "senior minister" for "CEO". How far does your church match up to these key areas?

Source: *International Journal of Market Research*, Vol 58, Issue 3, 2016, Page 351.

Australian Challenge

Since 1985, the Australian Christian Research Association (CRA) has been led by Rev Dr Philip Hughes. The UK CRA began in 1993 but was preceded by MARC Europe doing similar work, which began in 1983. Both CRAs have worked closely with each other for the last 30 years, but since 1st October the Australian CRA Philip Hughes has retired and Dr Wilma Gallet has become Executive Director in his place. We welcome Wilma and wish her much joy in her work, praying for insight and tenacity as she follows research through all its byways.

Anglican Provincial Membership

One of the thousands of items on Wikipedia describes the Provincial membership of the worldwide Anglican church. There are 38 Provinces each with a "Primate" or Archbishop, and a further 6 Extra-provincial churches, five of which come under the Archbishop of Canterbury (Bermuda, Sri Lanka, Falkland Islands, Spain and Portugal) with the sixth being the church in Cuba.

Total membership of the Anglican Communion is 87.5 million people, of which seven-eighths (88%) are in just 10 of the 38 Provinces. The numbers in these ten are shown in the Table. Scotland, Wales and the Church in Ireland all count as separate Provinces.

Membership of the Anglican Communion, 1996-2016				
Province	1996 mn	2006 mn	2016 mn	2016 Pop %
England	26.0	25.0	26.0	47
Nigeria	17.5	19.5	18.0	10
Uganda	7.3	8.1	8.0	20
Kenya	2.5	5.0	5.0	11
Sudan	2.0	4.5	4.5	11
Australia	3.9	3.9	3.9	16
South India	1.7	3.5	4.0	2
Southern Africa	2.0	2.3	3.5	6
United States	2.4	2.3	2.0	0.6
Tanzania	1.4	2.0	2.0	4
TOTAL AC-10	66.8	76.1	76.9	8
All other groups	8.9	10.0	10.6	~
TOTAL AC-38	75.7	86.1	87.5	

The accuracy of these figures is questionable, since few Provinces have a reliable method of counting. "Membership" is taken as broad adherents and should not be equated with church attendance or electoral roll. The 1996 figures come from the 1998 *Lambeth Directory*, produced for the Lambeth Conference that year, and the 2006 figures from the World Council of Churches website. The 2016 figures, as given above, come from Wikipedia, updated for September 2016, are very similar to those for 2006, showing how difficult it is to get meaningful updates. Many of the relevant Provincial websites do not give numbers.

The English figures, for example, do not really correspond to any figures currently produced by the Church of England. They were originally taken as the number of people living in England who had been baptised in an Anglican church, last officially published in 1979 as 27 million, and assumed to have decreased since.

The United States figure is based on a known, counted, number of its official baptised membership which was given as 2.2 million in 2006 (the 2.3 million figure quoted as for 2006 in the Table was the 2003 total). The 2016 US figure is not yet available but in 2014 it was 1.8 million, so almost certainly will be less than the 2.0 million number given by Wikipedia.

Is it worth collecting such detail when in many cases it is obviously somewhat erroneous? The numbers do give a useful order of magnitude, and the final column gives the 2016 number as a percentage of the population. What the Table shows is:

- The Anglican Communion is mostly concentrated in 10 key countries or Provinces, and 2 Provinces, England and Nigeria, account for half the membership.

- Of the top 10 Provinces, 6 are in Africa, with almost half, 47%, of total worldwide Anglican membership.
- The total numbers, if at all accurate, show very slight growth – an average rate of +0.6% per annum over the years 1996 to 2016.
- Anglicans represent about 1.2% of the world's population, along with 33% other Christians also measured in a similar fairly approximate way.

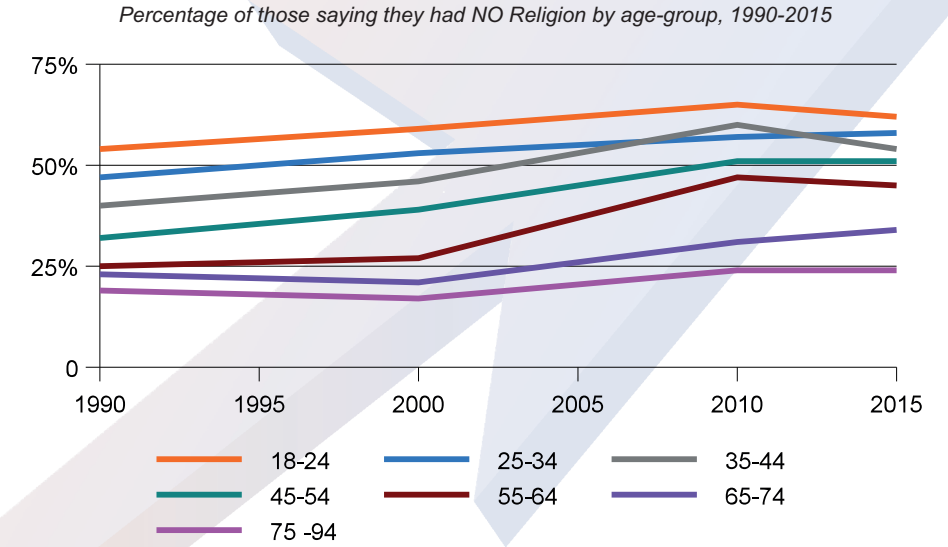
In 2006 the Anglican Communion had a total of 796 Bishops of which 542, or two-thirds, 68%, were in the top 10 Provinces. The United States had 145, followed by England with 114 and Nigeria with 101.

SOURCES: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican_Communion#Provinces; *Lambeth Directory* 1998, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, ed George Conger, 1998.

No Religion by Age

The British Social Attitudes annual survey has over the last 30 years shown a steady increase in the percentage of the adults in Great Britain who say they have No Religion. In 1983 overall the percentage was 31%, and in their latest study, 2015, it is 48%. In that same period the proportion who have said they are Anglican has decreased from 40% to 17%, while the percentage saying they are Roman Catholic has changed by only 1%, and those belonging to other Christian groups has remained at 17%. The number of those in other religions has increased from 2% to 8%.

The usual conclusion drawn is that it is the Anglicans which have been replaced by those of No Religion, but this is not the whole picture. Age-group also plays some part in the increasing numbers of those declaring themselves of No Religion as can be seen in the graph for the period 1990 to 2015.



The graph shows that over this period, the last 25 years, the younger a person the more likely they are to say they have No Religion – the lines by age-group are broadly parallel, and do not overlap except for the single time of those aged 35-44 in 2010. The percentages saying they have No Religion do increase over this period but in most age-bands relatively slightly, except those aged 55 to 64, who almost double from 27% in 2000 to 47% in 2010.

Those in the youngest and oldest age-groups actually change very little. When they were surveyed in 1990, those aged 18 to 24 were born between 1966 and 1972; in the 2015 survey the 18-24 age group was born between 1991 and 1997. The first group would especially remember the Thatcher years, the second group would be familiar with the tragedy of 9/11 in 2001 and its aftermath of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Both groups score high with No Religion (54% to 62%).

For the older group, those surveyed in 1990 would have been born between 1896 and 1915 and in 2015 those between 75 and 94 between 1921 to 1940, both growing up in the midst of World Wars. They score low on No Religion, despite having their world views (usually taken as by the age of about 20) influenced by incredible carnage.

All the other age-groups come between these two age-groups, and show that the historical circumstances in which one grew up almost certainly helped frame the personal and cultural understanding into which religion would play a part. What the graph shows is that increasingly religion played less and less part in people's lives, which is perhaps reflected more among a State Church than anything else. In other words, traditional religion as typified in the UK by the State Church as well as to some extent by other denominations, is seen as irrelevant to modern culture and behaviour. The rise of No Religion reflects more of a cultural statement of honesty about their position rather than a pretence to belong to something to which they were uncommitted. Conversely, it might be argued that previous generations were perhaps less honest, equating being British with being Christian/Anglican, while in practice they were of "No Religion". Other denominations or religions counted for something and if you belonged to one of these, you signed up with a commitment to them. Belonging to these was never a social obligation.

SOURCE: British Social Attitudes surveys, www.natcen.ac.uk/



Providing Facts for Forward Planning

SNIPPETS

1) A third, 33.4%, of the public visited a public library in the year ending March 2016, down from 33.9% a year earlier, and half, 48.2%, in 2005/2006.

2) In a 2016 survey of 800 people, the best word in the English Dictionary was chosen as "love".

3) McDonald's has 1.7 million workers worldwide; the Church has only 400,000 mission workers – one for every 16,000 unreached people.

4) 46,200 students at British Universities attended Christian Union Mission Weeks in 2016, with 860 seekers at follow-up courses. 30,000 students attended CU Carol Services in December 2015.

5) 270,000 people attended an Alpha Course in the UK in 2015. This was a record number according to the Alpha Office.

6) Soul Survivor held five events in the summer of 2016 in Scotland, Staffordshire and Somerset. 26,000 people attended these and 1,500, or one person in every 17, became a Christian.

7) In a survey of over 30,000 funerals conducted by Co-operative Funeralcare, seven of the top ten pieces of funeral music in 2016 were secular, the chart being headed by Frank Sinatra's *My Way*. The other three were hymns with *The Lord's My Shepherd* fifth.

SOURCES: 1) Department for Culture, Media and Sport, quoted in *The Bookseller*, 2nd September, 2016, Page 9; 2) *Raconteur* report, 20th July 2016; 3) *Directors' Update*, CM International, May 2016, Page 1; 4) *Annual Report*, UCCF 2015/16, Pages 8,9; 5) and 6) *Christianity* magazine, October 2016, Page 13; 7) *religionwatch* com October 2016.

DATA, DATA EVERYWHERE!

Coleridge's Ancient Mariner poem contains the famous lines, "Water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink", and it could easily be true in the 21st century if we substitute the word "data" for "water". Today data is collected on almost everything we do. CCTV cameras monitor our steps outside, special TVs record what we watch and when and for long. The shops know what we buy and how often and, in the simple few-second process of paying our bill with our credit card at the supermarket, the computer works out suitable tempting offers for us personally, given to us with the receipt.

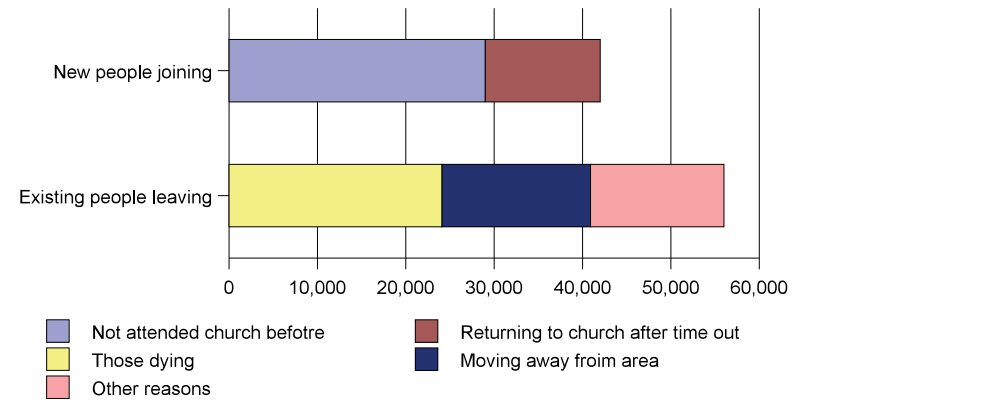
"Big data" as it is called is now routinely collected and analysed. A recent Raconteur report says, "Data is the 21st century's currency, and yet the value of the coin depends greatly on how organisations mine, sift, interpret and act on the massive amounts of information hitting them from all angles." The same is true for church leaders, bombarded with global information on what is happening, scrutinising local happenings in their parish or town, trying to understand the twists and turns of ministry aided by yet another piece of research. Data, data everywhere, but none that seems to help practically (not a drop to drink).

Are there any clues as to how to find the way through the floods of information? The answer is YES, there are. Many leaders rely on experience and intuition, and both are important. However, increasingly leaders are realising their need to base decisions on data and the implications of it. Such, presumably, is part of the special training currently being given to all Bishops and Deans and those deemed likely to be promoted to such positions by the Church of England.

What are the clues for interpretation? The latest offerings from their Research and Statistics Department for example are interesting. "Mission Statistics" have given the basic state-of-play in all usual measurements, "Cathedral Statistics" have shown where cathedral numbers are growing (how accurate these really are is not clear), and "Ministry Statistics" have given a forecast of how clergy numbers are likely to vary over time. Looking ahead always has to be part of a leader's strategy.

Initially it's the big, basic numbers which are key. Some years ago, the author of a detailed survey of the Armed Forces, which ran to a 300 page report, was asked by the Defence Under Secretary, "What one thing came out of the study?" He primarily wanted to focus on the key finding. Mission Statistics, for example, included the fact that the Church of England is losing 14,000 people per annum (based on the change in numbers of Usual Sunday Attendance between 2000 and 2015), made up of 42,000 people who joined each year but offset by 56,000 who left. So it was losing 4 for every 3 gained. That's the nub of why attendance is declining – not that nothing is being done in their mission work and that some churches aren't growing, but that more are lost than are gained.

Average annual change in usual Sunday attendance, Church of England, 2000-2015



So why? Two-thirds of the new 42,000 are fresh people joining the church for whatever reason and in whatever way, and the other third are those returning to church after a time out (so "Back to Church" Sundays are worth while). Surveys in the 1990s exploring the same theme found that the time out averaged 8-10 years. And why do people leave? About half die (43%). With twice as many worshippers 65 or over as that proportion in the population (17%) that high figure is not surprising – and it's likely to grow. A third of leavers move and although this particular report doesn't say so, other research shows that movers often find it hard to find a suitable church and thus stop going.

But the big picture has to be localised. How many people have joined your church in the last year? How many have left? What is the difference in the broad age brackets of both groups (say the under 25s, those 25 to 60, and the over 60s)? Almost certainly there's a deficit among the younger age group. So we need to focus on youth. But everyone is saying that, and we've known that for years. That's why many churches are employing a Youth Worker and/or a Children's Worker. Are there other clues?

That's where the recently released report on the preliminary findings from the Church of England's Faith in Research conference held in May 2016 are important. They are trying to understand the rootedness process in worship, and the focus spreads beyond young people to the relationship between youth and their parents. Both groups were extensively interviewed and researched. Their key finding was that young people value age-specific activity, but do not want to be artificially separated from the main

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