

How Commuters Experience Journeys

Although most ministers will thankfully avoid the daily rush-hour commute to work, for many in their congregations it will be a regular experience. About 8% of all passenger journeys are by train (and 83% by car), but three-fifths (61%) of the distance covered by travellers in their journeying is by train, so how passengers feel on their train journeys and daily commute is an integral part of their day-to-day living.

In an enterprising research project, 360 commuters were asked their reactions when travelling across a total of some 13,500 journeys. They were able to record their varying emotions at different stages of their journey. The rail journeys were all in the southeast of England where rail travel dominates (580,000 people travel into London each day, whereas only 42,000 do so in the next largest travel city, Birmingham).

The most common reactions were that people felt relaxed (23%) and happy (19%). A fifth (22%) were indifferent as to how they felt. But for one journey in seven, the overriding emotion was frustration

THE UK BY 2030

Following the Brexit Referendum vote last year, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) undertook research to ascertain what Britain might look like in the 2020s. It found a number of factors, some of which are relevant to church leaders.

There is an inbuilt demographic tipping mechanism as the UK is set to age sharply. Between 2015 and 2030 the number of people aged between 20 and 64 is set to increase by 2%, that is, the numbers are virtually static. However, over the same period, the number of those aged 65 to 74 is expected to increase by 21%, the number between 75 and 84 by 45% and the number aged 75 and over by 75%! This will impact the church also. Whereas in 2015 33% of those coming to church were aged 65 and over, 45% will be by 2030. The UK will be the fastest growing country in Europe. This is not a new understanding but one which will increasingly impinge on our church activities. With it comes an increasing intergenerational strain, as more and more millennials will be less likely to own their own home (fewer than their parents). Some 77% of college graduates are expected to be unable to pay off their university debts, even after 30 years.

It is expected that urbanisation will increase, immigration will reduce, and living standards will fall. This could affect church finances if it applies equally to the elderly as is expected. The impact of so many elderly will lead to a crisis in social and health care. The 2020s will also be the “decarbonisation decade” as the country produces the energy it needs in very different ways from today, which it is committed to do. We are likely to become a more divided society, with the rich growing richer, and differences in living standards in differing parts of the country becoming more acute (London and the South East being so much wealthier than the rest of the UK). This locational imbalance is true of the church also; for example, a quarter (26%) of all churchgoers in 2012 went to a church in London! Political differences could also become more accentuated, and there is the continued uncertainty of how the Brexit consequences will take shape.

By far the biggest change, however, is expected to be in the technological area. The way we work, the way we communicate, and the way in which we consume will all profoundly change. As part of this the way we collect data will also change. “Big data” is already transforming our society in terms of the way businesses work and commercial ventures are undertaken. This is likely to continue. Could that affect church life? Most likely, but the importance of face-to-face socialisation, rather than just by smart phone (or whatever the next generation of these may be called), will continue, and churches could be important in providing real inter-personal opportunities to meet, think, pray and plan. At

(7%) or anger (7%). Frustration was caused by poor punctuality or not being able to get a seat, while delays and overcrowding were the main cause of anger. A seventh (15%) said they were bored by their journey, 3% worried about it, and 4% indicated they were stressed because of the travel problems experienced.

There is no reason to think that Christian travellers will be exempt from such reactions, though they may pray more! Perhaps this is just one more facet to add to a minister’s pastoral understanding of the experiences of some of his/her congregation.



Source: Article on “Emotional Intelligence” in relation to rail travel in *International Journal of Market Research*, Vo. 58 Issue 5, 2016, Page 753.

heart the Christian faith involves relationships – with God and with each other for which social media is no substitute.

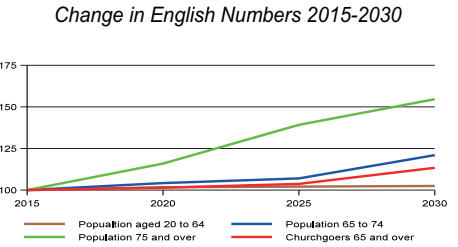
We will also begin to move into the “internet of things” (especially with 3D printing) adding to the economy but showing growing differences between the “haves” and “have-nots”. Robots will become increasingly common over the next decade, threatening literally millions of jobs (the Bank of England estimates two-thirds or 15 million!). By 2020 “the average desktop PC will have the processing speed of a single human brain,” says the IPPP report.

In other words, we face an almost totally different way of living, working and interacting. This is not necessarily all negative although inevitably some parts of it will be. Churches will continue to be one of the largest “membership” organisations in the country, even if our numbers shrink from the current 5% of the population to probably 4% by then, still a relatively high number (2.4 million) simply because of so many elderly in our congregations.

Globally, climate change seems set to continue, along with biodiversity loss and resources loss (especially the lack of adequate supplies of water to perhaps two-fifths of humanity). China’s huge population may be overtaken by that in India by mid-century but its influence will be far greater, likely to exceed that of America. With that comes the reduction in the Judeo-Christian tradition with its loss of values for decision-making, a re-interpretation of moral character (which is already happening), and an absence of a shared vision for the future. For the church will come the increasing challenge of Islam. The influence of Africa will be growing, however, even by 2030, as it has the world’s youngest population and the highest fertility rate. Britain is likely to find itself on the periphery.

The richest parts of Europe are likely to be (in order) Inner London, Luxembourg and Brussels and the poorest (again in order) West Wales, Cornwall and Durham and the Tees Valley. This inequality will be especially related to technological change.

Will globalization trends in the next 20 years usher in an antichrist figure, a syncretistic one, world faith and intense persecution as many foresee in Scripture?



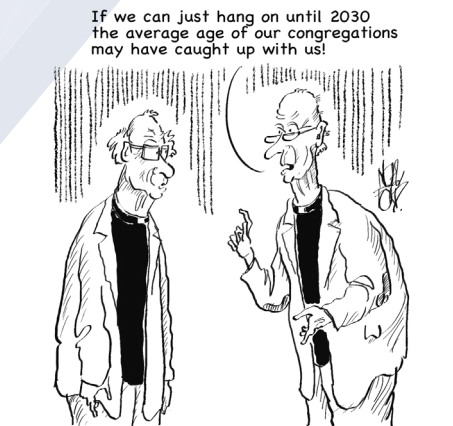
Help! We’re Parents

From Adam and Eve to present day royalty, parenting has always had its problems! Most of the values by which teenagers and we ourselves subsequently live by are caught (rather than taught) from parents. A number of Christian agencies are clearly concerned about modern-day parenting judging by the amount of research into family life and children in recent months and years.

One of the main issues on which they focus is how parents **pass on their faith**. One key Anglican project in 2014 found that only 28% of active Anglicans would put this as one of their top family priorities. A large New Wine survey in 2015 sent to those on their database found that of the 2000 responding 51% had believing fathers, 67% believing mothers and 30% believing grandparents, the latter percentage echoed by a 2002 survey. Children were more likely to follow their parents’ faith if the children were involved in ministry of some kind. It was also important that they enjoyed their church experience, something naturally varying for different traditions and denominations.

A Youth for Christ 2016 survey among those aged 11 to 18 generally found that for only 2% of young people was a youth club their favourite place to socialise. Spending time with friends outside (32%) or inside the home (31%) was how they would prefer to spend their spare time. Peer groups did not appear to be a significant factor for faith in the New Wine survey even though 77% of the children in the families of respondents had Christian peers. Friends (92%) and family (91%) are key for feeling good about yourself, while social media is most likely to do the opposite (67%). Time with friends face-to-face is only a small part of their social activity – social media is used by 94% of young people on a daily basis.

A third (32%) of the young people approached by Youth for Christ said they **believed in a God**, and 59% of these (that is, 19%) said they followed Jesus. A 2017 ComRes survey put that percentage as 51%. But half, 47%, of those who believe say they never pray. What therefore does “belief” mean in practice? Not, for example, going to church – only 5% of those under 15 and 3% of those aged



It is clear that a time of radical change and pressure will progressively develop, and the church will be one key factor in society for it will continue to value interpersonal relationships, standards set by higher-than-government sources, and with a framework of service to the community not exploitation of it. Of course, there will be others who inspire commitment also, but there is an implicit opportunity for proclamation of an eternal message of greater durability than the change seen in most other compartments of life. Also we have the assurance of a God who says, “I know what I am doing,” as change impacts us in so many ways.

SOURCES: Future Proof, Britain in the 2020s, Matthew Lawrence, Institute for Public Policy Research, December 2016; report in the *Daily Telegraph* quoting the Institute for Fiscal Policy on student loans 5th July 2017; church numbers from *UK Church Statistics* No 3, forthcoming 2017.

15 to 19 actually attended church in England in 2015.

A 2016 Care for the Family (CFF)/HOPE study based on CFF’s data base helpfully listed some **key data**:

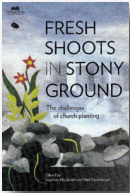
- The majority, 72%, of those who come to faith do so by the age of 19, 16% between 19 and 25, and 12% after the age of 25.
- Only about 50% of children brought up in Christian homes follow the faith as adults (both Christian and secular surveys [like British Social Attitudes] agree with this).
- A quarter, 28%, of church-attending Christians say they do not mind if their children do not accept their beliefs.
- While 85% of parents believe they are primarily responsible for their child’s spiritual development, they also believe the church can do it better than they can.

The 72% of conversions by the age of 19 is very similar to the 1966 survey asking 4,080 people where the percentage was 76%, showing that this percentage hasn’t varied much over time. This survey found that 17% were converted under the age of 12 (22% if from a Christian home), while a later (American) survey would put this percentage much larger. The average age of conversion by British young people in the 1960s was 15 years of age, a 1994 survey finding it slightly older.

There is no question, though, that parents play a key role in **influencing the faith** of their children. “Quality relationships are central to successful faith transmission,” wrote Olwyn Mark in an article in *Transmission*. What are the factors important in that process? At least the following (also in the CFF/HOPE report):

- Children feeling close to their parents, especially the father, and growing up in a warm family.
- Children seeing their parents have an authentic (not perfect) faith.
- Parents seeking to develop and nurture their children’s faith.
- Children receiving multi-generational input from wider family and church.

What then might the responsibilities be for **church leadership**? The 2016 Church of England report suggests:



Book Review

Fresh Shoots in Stony Ground

The Challenges of Church Planting - Edited by Stephen McQuoid and Dr Neil Summerton
ISBN 978-0-9570177-1-9; 304 pages; £9.99 paperback
Published by Partnership and Church Planting Initiative, 2012

This is a first-class book on the many aspects of starting a new congregation. It covers the whole ground thoroughly, comprehensively and professionally, clearly speaking with the voices of considerable experience. The book is in two parts – the first explaining what church planting is all about, and the second giving ten “case histories” of church plants which have been made, not always successfully. A number of different leaders have written the various chapters.

The first part explores the issue of whether one should plant at all, do you plant or build the existing congregation, who should plant a new church, what does planting a “church” actually mean, how can it be done, is it best undertaken by a single enthusiastic or a team, various models which have been tried, the issue of cross-cultural planting, building an “authentic community”, discipling new converts, should one seek to have a building, how to (and how not to) develop and appoint leaders, what size plant should be aimed for, should one take over a decaying church, etc. amidst a wealth of practical explanations and proven knowledge.

The case histories are also interesting, with clear conclusions emerging to help any considering seriously the well- being of congregations, new or historic. What changes should be made, and when, and how? Is the long-term vision sustainable? These are short, readable and elucidating stories.

Whilst written from an evangelical viewpoint, and from a Christian Brethren perspective on the most part, the experience and advice given are clearly valid outside these circles, and would be useful for anyone who is considering whether or not to start a new church. The style is readable, the chapters mostly short, and the experience is contemporary. A MUST book not just for those thinking of starting a new church but also for those wanting to build up their existing congregation.

- Helping young people to contribute to society outside of the church.
- Providing leadership opportunities for young people, especially for those aged 16 to 19.

One young man testified that organising youth services helped a lot as it made him feel part of the church. Treating young people maturely, not as “token youth”, is also key. It is also clear that young people **need to progress** – from confirmation (if Anglican), from a choir, to ... what? Significant relationships with peers and between the generations are also vital. **Youth workers** can be a crucial part of the whole need to provide training, relevance and support for young people.

Not mentioned in that Church of England report but worth noting is the rapid popularity of “gap years” in the last 20 or so years. From the escalation of temporary overseas opportunities for service for young people (provided by both secular and Christian organisations) and the testimonies of those who participate, such experiences often prove transformative for young people.



SOURCES: From *Anecdote to Evidence*, Church Growth Research Programme, Church of England, 2014; New Wine survey 2015, Mark Griffiths, reported *FutureFirst* April 2016, Page 1; *Reaching and Keeping Teenagers*, Peter Brierley, MARC, 1993; *Reaching and Keeping Teenagers*, Peter Brierley, Christian Research, Eltham, London, 2002; *Gen Z Rethinking Culture*, Laura Hancock, Youth for Christ, 2016; *Passing on Faith*, Olwyn Mark, Theos report 2016; *UK Church Statistics* No 2, Table 16.8.3; *Finding Faith* in 1994, Report in *Quadrant*, March 1998, Page 5; *Background to the Task*, Scripture Union, 1968, Table 7; *Faith in our Families*, HOPE and Care for the Family based on research by ABC, 2016; *British Social Attitudes in Religious Trends* No 7, Table 2.3; *Rooted in the Church* Summary Report, Church of England Education Office, 2016; article “Passing on faith in the home” in *Transmission*, Bible Society, Spring 2017, Page 23.

Where has Christian Theology gone?

What do Christians believe? Barna in the United States asked practising Christians about different aspects of alternative worldviews and found that in general:

- Those under 45 were coming of age in a less Christianised context (an asterisk* after a percentage in the list below meaning those under 45 had a much higher percentage than those 45 or over)
- Men were more likely, some twice as likely, to embrace them than women
- Those living in cities were more likely to agree with them than those in suburban or rural areas.

Some 1,500 people were interviewed in March 2017 about how much they agreed with the following statements:

New Spirituality: Overall, 61% strongly agreed with at least one of the following:

- 32% If you do good, you will receive good. If you do bad you will receive bad
- 28% All people pray to the same god or spirit, no matter what name they use for that spiritual being
- 27% Meaning and purpose come from becoming one with all that is

Postmodernism: Overall, 54% strongly agreed with at least one statement:

- 23% What is morally right or wrong depends on what an individual believes
- 19% No one can know for certain what meaning and purpose there is to life
- 15%* If your beliefs offend someone or hurt their feelings, it is wrong

Marxism: Overall, 36% strongly agreed with one or other of:

- 15% If the government leaves them alone, businesses will mostly do what’s right
- 14%* The government, rather than individuals, should control as much of the resources as necessary to ensure that everyone gets their share
- 11%* Private property encourages greed and envy

Secularism: Overall, 29% strongly agreed with at least one of these:

- 20%* Meaning and purpose come from working hard to earn as much as possible so you can make the most of life
- 13%* A person’s life is valuable only if society sees it as valuable
- 10%* A belief has to be proven by science to know it is true

These results suggest an ongoing shift away from basic Christian truths if these are the world views of contemporary practising Christians, people who go to church at least every month and who would consider their faith very important in their life. The biggest differences are seen in the age variations especially for Marxism and Secularism.

It is not known how far UK churchgoers would agree these different statements, but it is already evident that a deep theological underpinning of beliefs today is becoming a much greater rarity among Christian people.

SOURCE: *Competing Worldviews influence today’s Christians*, Barna Research, May 2017. More information on this study on Twitter @barnagroup.

SNOWFLAKES

Researchers’ Conference

The next Lausanne International Researchers’ Conference will take place DV between Monday 30th April and Friday 4th May 2018 at the Dimesse Retreat Centre at Karen, Nairobi, Kenya. All researchers of whatever type – mission, church, academic or other – are invited to attend, and can present a paper if they wish. More details are to be had from the Chair, Dr Larry Kraft, on larrysteph@worksmail.net.

Young people’s stress. Bishop Philip North identifies several sources of stress for young people today:

- 1) Educational stress – too many tests and pressures.
- 2) Relationship stress, especially through social media which creates only virtual friendships and “are devoid of genuine social interaction.”
- 3) Body image and personal identity anxiety.
- 4) Mental stress because celebrity culture makes them feel ugly and educational culture makes them fear failure.
- 5) Terrorism threats such as the recent Manchester atrocity, “fragile minds feel these things deeply.”

He asks the question, while urging us to pray, “What quality of life are we offering them?”

SOURCE: Article in the *Church of England Newspaper*, 2nd June 2017, Page 7.

Conversions to and from by religion. An interesting evaluation was made from the American General Social Survey. What was the percentage of those changing their religion, either converting to it or defecting from it? The Table gives details, measured between 1998 and 2012 in the United States:

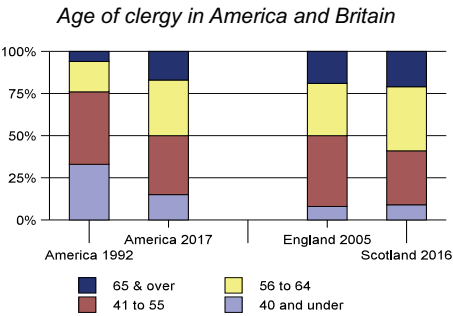
Religion	Conversions to %	Defecting from %
Buddhists	58%	40%
Muslims	29%	27%
Jews	14%	17%
Protestants	13%	16%
Catholics	9%	27%
No Religion	72%	35%

SOURCE: *Review of Religious Research*, Vol 59, No 2, June 2017, Page 255.

Young people converting. The ComRes research suggesting that 21% of 11-18 year-olds describe themselves as active followers of Jesus and 13% saying they attend church regularly is probably another example when interviewees express what they would like to do rather than actually practise (in a usual ratio of 2:1), a phenomenon observed on many previous occasions. The research is interesting, however, in showing that 92% said they had become Christian before the age of 11, and mostly because they were brought up in a Christian family. Also Black teenagers were three times more likely to say they were Christian than white teenagers.

SOURCE: ComRes survey released 24th May www.comresglobal.com/; comment by Andrew Brown in *Church Times* 23rd June 2017, Page 31.

Age of Pastors. Recent research looking at the age of pastors shows their average age is increasing, as reflected in the chart. The average ages are, respectively, 48, 54, 55 and 57 showing that currently in both the United States and Britain clergy on average have a similar age spread.



SOURCES: The Ageing of America’s Pastors, Barna Research, March 2017, *English Church Census in Religious Trends*, No 6, Christian Research, London; *Scottish Church Census in Growth Amidst Decline*, Table 7.3, ADBC Publishers, 2017.

Growing up. A survey by Nationwide found that millennials feel that they have finally grown up by the time they reach the age of 27. By that age many in older generations will have been married with children and a mortgage. Not so most of today’s millennials, where the average age for first-time marriage for women is 34 and 36 for men (not the average age when cohabitation begins). How to measure “being grown up”? Being able to cope with a crisis alone, looking after yourself and setting your own goals would be three markers. And the ultimate mark of self-sufficiency? Coping without social media and 4G for a few hours! Two-fifths of millennials interact more with social media than actual humans. These criteria may apply less to Christian millennials but they are still “children of their age” who need to “grow up in Him.”

SOURCE: Article in the *Daily Telegraph*, 25th April 2017.

Support in old age. One ratio which social commentators like to use is the ratio of those aged 20 to 64 compared with those 65 or over, because economically the former have to support the latter. While the concept of “support” is not true in all countries, the ratios generated are nevertheless interesting. The following figures from the United Nations give the number aged 20 to 64 for every one 65 or over:

Continent	2015	2030
Europe	3.5	2.4
North America	4.0	2.6
Oceania	4.8	3.5
Latin America	7.6	5.0
Asia	8.0	5.1
Africa	12.9	11.7
World	8.0	5.8

This shows not only that the Western World of Europe, North America and Oceania has a much greater age problem with respect to its population than the Southern World, but also the incredible youthfulness of Africa’s population, partly driven by having so many deaths from HIV which means fewer live to 65. That youth dominance is likely to be a continuing pressure in the drive to get meaningful employment for millions of Africans. Lack of job opportunity also motivates the stream of immigrants to other continents, enamoured by what they perceive in terms of life style on social media.

SOURCE: *The World in 2017*, by *The Economist*, 2016, Page 24.

These may be helpful Books and reports received

Time for a financial reformation? By David McIlroy, Cambridge Paper Volume 26, No 2, June 2017, Jubilee Centre, Cambridge.

Questions Jesus asks, Where divinity meets humanity, Israel Wayne, New Leaf Press, March 2015, \$12.99.

Wisdom

A young lady confidently walked around the room while leading and explaining stress management with a raised glass of water. Everyone knew she was going to ask the ultimate question, “Half empty or half full?” She fooled them all. “How heavy is this glass of water?” she inquired with a smile. Answers ranged from 100 gms to 250 gms.

She replied, “The absolute weight doesn’t matter. It depends on how long I hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that’s not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I’ll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you’ll have to call an ambulance. In each case it’s the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes.”

She continued, “That’s the way it is with stress. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won’t be able to carry on.” So she added, “As with the glass of water, you have to put it down again for a while and rest before holding it again. When we’re refreshed, we can carry on with the burden, holding stress longer and better each time practised.” (For Christians, there is another way!)

SOURCE: Personal email from Heather Wright.

Continued from page 1

There are at least 4,000 Pentecostal churches in the UK and some, like Bishop Joe Aldred, the Pentecostal and Multicultural Relationship Officer at Churches Together in England, consider the number could be at least double this! Even on the carefully researched number behind the 4,000 (taking many hours of searching the web for information), the fact that fewer churches are being started (300 in the 5 years 2012-2017 compared with 700 in the previous five years) indicates a slowing down in the Pentecostal momentum across the country.

Perhaps future Pentecostal energy will be expressed in growing their individual congregations as well as planting new churches, although their average size of 120 each already exceeds that of the 85 across all UK churches (excluding the Roman Catholics).

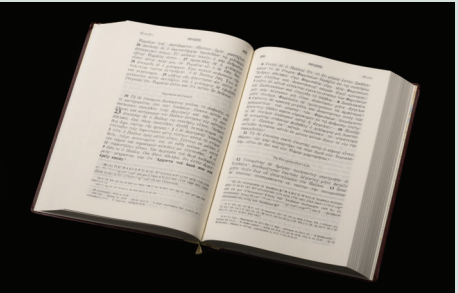
SOURCES: Latest information from *UK Church Statistics* No 3, 2018 Edition, ADBC Publishers, forthcoming 2017; personal emails.

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REFLECTIONS

Jeremiah had a very tough job. As a prophet, he had the task of telling the nation of Judah that God was deeply angered by their constant disobedience to His commands and their continued worship of false gods and, as a consequence, punishment was coming. Not just a time of austerity but the actual removal of them from their own country in which they were living to become immigrant slaves in another land. Nor would they quickly return – not until their grandchildren were old enough to make the 1,000 mile-trek back.

That was quite a message! Jeremiah's listeners were indifferent and contemptuous, and he was told his interpretation of events was incorrect. In other words, "Shut up!" Despite God's promises of assurance and help, some of that ill-feeling got under Jeremiah's skin. Not only was Jeremiah fearful for himself and deeply distressed by the horrendous events that were to overtake his own people and land, but he was also aghast at his nation's rejection of their covenant God and filled with a burning jealousy for the honour of God's Name.

In the middle of his very long book (52 chapters) in the Old Testament are key chapters where God, as it were, helps him see the wider picture. Eugene Peterson in *The Message* translates Jer 27:5 as, "I'm the one who made the earth, man and woman, and all the animals in the world. I did it on my own without asking anyone's help and I hand it out to whomever I will." You can't get a bigger perspective than that!

The God of the Universe, of Eternity, and of the Detail - and He is actually in charge. That's good to know when one sees the current political mess and crises in so many countries, observes the enormous population movements taking place at the present time, the disregard for law and order, the fragility of international agreements, and misplacement of financial activity as the centre of global focus.

It is here that the oft-quoted verse may be found (Jer 29:11), "I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out – plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for." There is huge consolation here for those who believe.

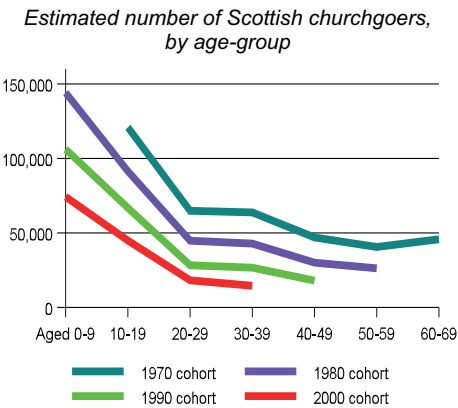
There is also a wonderful promise (Jer 33:2), "Call to me and I will answer you. I'll tell you marvellous and wondrous things that you could never figure out on your own." While we can fervently pray that the world's leaders might "call to God," the promise is also personal to us, in our own lives, our churches, our families, our jobs, and every aspect of our Kingdom service. The hand of God may sometimes be invisible, but His fingers are still writing history.

Scottish Loss by Age

The number of people going to church in Scotland, as shown in a special edition of *FutureFirst* in April, is declining. As numbers have been measured ever since 1984 it is possible to construct estimates of how many were attending in 1980, 1990, 2000 etc. As the numbers have also been counted by age, it is also possible to estimate how many in each of these years were aged 0-9, 10-19, 20-29, etc.

The value of such double estimates is that various traces can be made, for example, of how many children aged 0 to 9 attending church in 1980 were still left in church, now aged 10 to 19, in 1990, and how many of these, aged 20 to 29, were still coming in 2000, and so on. The numbers are necessarily approximate because some people of these ages will join the church in these periods as well.

The resulting trends, however, are interesting. They are given in the graph which shows the number attending in each age-group as each 10-year period passes, with estimates up to 2030.



The graph may be read as follows, for say the 1980 cohort, with its purple line. In 1980 there were

Mainline Denominations in the USA

The American General Social Survey (GSS) is akin to the annual UK British Social Attitudes Survey except that it doesn't ask religious questions quite as often. Perhaps partly because there are more very large denominations in the United States than in Britain its coverage is necessarily different. The 2016 GSS study focussed on the eight "mainline (Protestant) denominations" in the US – Baptists, Disciples of Christ, Episcopal Church, Lutheran Church, Presbyterian Church, Reformed Church, United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church.

Analysis of the trends in their combined membership gives very similar findings to that which has occurred in Britain – a high peak (30 million members in total) in 1966, up from 21 million in 1935, followed by a general decline to almost half that number (17 million) in 2015. Five of the eight major denominations (Disciples, Lutherans, Episcopal, Presbyterian and United Churches) have lost more members than others because of policy disagreements, resulting in entire congregations disestablishing from their denomination, something which rarely happens in England, but is much more common in Scotland. All of these 5 had seen major differences over gay and lesbian-related issues.

The congregational loss as given by two of these five groups (Lutherans and Presbyterians) was 5% of churches but 16% or 12% (respectively) of their membership, indicating these were the larger congregations on the whole. The remainder of the five denominations, taken together, declined at a rate of -3% per annum while the other three only dropped at -1%.

Another element of "loss", however, again common in the UK, was a falling number of new people joining

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about 144,000 children under 10 going to church in Scotland. In 1990, when they were aged 10 to 19, there were 91,000 of them attending, and by the year 2000 when they were aged 20 to 29 there were 45,000. Ten years later in 2010, now aged 30 to 39, there were 43,000 attending and by 2020 when they will be between 40 and 49 there will likely be 30,000 attending, and 26,000 still attending when aged 50 to 59 in 2030.

The numbers show the huge drop in attending between the ages of children and teenagers, and also the enormous drop in the teenage years – only half of those going in 1990 were still attending in 2000. Then numbers stabilise and while still decreasing the decline is much slower. Whereas two-thirds. 69% of those attending in 1980 had dropped out 20 years later by 2000, just two-fifths, 41%, of those attending in 2000 are likely to drop out by 2030, a longer period.

In a sense this simply tells us what we already know – the loss of people in church occurs mostly when young people are in their first 20 years. It also tells us that when people "settle down" as the phrase is sometimes used and begin married life, church attendance is fairly constant (even if the demands of family life may make it somewhat irregular). Then when family grows up, Mum and Dad move, downsizing perhaps, and probably join another church elsewhere (not all do, about a third, 30%, stop attending in their 40s).

What the graph shows is that this pattern repeats itself on each successive cohort, although starting numbers are smaller each time. It also shows, from the 1970 cohort, that older people are remarkably committed if they are churchgoers. As Prof David Voas once said, "Win someone at 25 and they'll likely still be coming to church at 75." That's true.

The pattern is likely to be very similar for English churchgoers, although the many calculations required for such simple graphs have yet to be done.

SOURCE: Extrapolations from Scottish Church Censuses, as shown in *UK Church Statistics* No 3, Page 12.23, ADBC Publishers, forthcoming in 2017.

individual congregations. Unlike Britain, however, is the fact that transfers into a congregation are only about half of the professions of faith from within a congregation – in the UK, where this has been measured, proportions are usually the reverse, with over half of the congregations consisting of transfers from other churches or denominations.

If fewer people are joining the American mainline denominations, why is this? Research by Stark and Glock in 1968 showed that transfers then were mainly due to theological conviction. Today the lesser number of transfers is due to people claiming no religious preference, that is, a lack of theological clarity. That change would resonate among many British churchgoers also; many leaders having observed a declining level of theological understanding among today's churchgoers.

But another factor observed in the recent research is interesting – and not readily measured as such in the UK. The declining numbers joining the mainline denominations are partly due to the lower fertility level of their members. The most logical reason for this, however, is not so much the absence of youthful couples waiting to start families, but rather the general ageing of the mainline denominations, something certainly true in the UK.

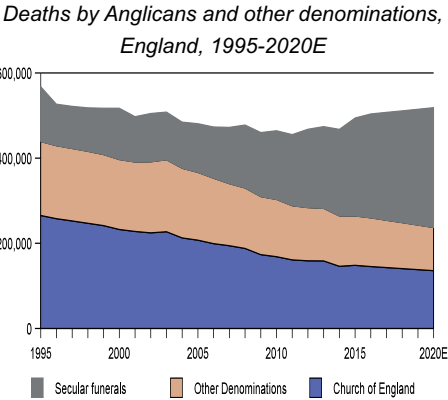
The conclusion drawn from the American research is the same as for the British – mainline denominations have to compete for members in the general anti-religious social-milieu that exists in today's population, who probably have a less religious background than their parents. It would seem, perhaps, that denominationalism is regarded as less important today and that nominalism has been replaced by a profession of No Religion, trends that appear unlikely to be reversed.

SOURCE: Opening lecture by the incoming President of the Religious Research Association in the USA entitled "Whither the Mainline? Trends and Prospects" and published in *Review of Religious Research*, Vol 59, No 2, June 2017, Pages 119f.

Church Funerals

Only three denominations publish details of funerals that their clergy take – the Church of England (since 2000), the Roman Catholics (up to 2005) and the Methodist Church in Great Britain (since 2002). These do not give exactly the most regular of series, but numbers can be estimated. The Church of England and Methodists give details separating those taken at a church and at a crematorium, the Catholics just give the number of deaths.

While of course people may die at any age, the very large majority of deaths, 85%, occur among those aged 65 or over. The number of people attending church by age allows a reasonable estimate to be made for the mortality of those 65 and over, bearing in mind the fact that churchgoers tend to live on average 4 years longer than non-churchgoers, as they tend to smoke and drink less.



In this chart, the Church of England figures are largely those published with estimates for the years prior to 2000 and after 2015. The Other Denominations figures include the Roman Catholics and Methodist actual figures (with estimates where necessary) but also estimates for all the other denominations based on their membership proportion of total church membership. The total of these two broad groups is subtracted from the actual number of deaths published by the Office of National Statistics, and is labelled "Secular funerals." This number broadly remained about the same between 1995 and 2007 (averaging about 120,000 per annum), but has doubled since then, reaching probably some 280,000 by 2020.

The chart raises the question of, "What is a church funeral if taken at a crematorium?" Is it one taken by a church minister or which has an order of service with obvious Christian components? Are those thus cremated church members, or those who rarely attended church services but are (as Prof Linda Woodhead calls them) "cradle Christians", baptised when young? The numbers shown are simply those collected by the respective church authorities who may not be working to any common definition. Of the 9,100 crematorium figures for the Methodists in 2016, 2,300 (26%) were funerals taken by Methodist ministers at the request of funeral directors or hospitals.

Alan Piggot, who handles the Methodist statistics, comments that what are labelled here "Secular funerals" ... "doesn't necessarily mean that such funerals are 'not religious', or that they're not led by a minister of religion. It's simply that a 'religious service' is an offer [made] from the funeral director rather than the authorised rite of a particular church. Where a minister of religion is involved, it is as an agent or contractor of the funeral director rather than a denominational representative paid according to a fixed fee structure."

It is very likely that some of the so-called secular funerals could be deemed to be religious; there is no data on this, apart from the one 2016 Methodist figure. Nevertheless there is no question that the

number has substantially increased since about 2007, and this is in keeping with the occasional press comments about people preferring to "send off" their relatives in less obviously religious ways, preferring, for example, secular music rather than hymns, poetic readings rather than Scripture, etc. Some also prefer a "committal" for family only and have a separate "thanksgiving service."

The top line of the chart gives the number of deaths between 1995 and as estimated for 2020. There were 570,000 deaths in 1995 (1.2% of the population), dropping with spasmodic increases partly due to the harshness of the weather, to 450,000 in 2011 (0.9% of a larger population), the smallest number in this period, but are likely to increase to 520,000 by 2020 (also 0.9% of a larger population). The death rate has declined in this period because of better healthcare and therefore people living longer.

About three-quarters of people dying are cremated, the rest being buried in a secular or church burial ground. Most cremations and burials are accompanied by a service, and the Church of England has been foremost in conducting these services, either in a crematorium or a church. However, the number of funerals taken by their clergy has declined over this period from 46% of all deaths in 2000 to 30% in 2015 and to an estimated 26% in 2020.

In 1995 the number of Church of England crematorium services, at about 150,000, exceeded the number of church funerals, at 110,000. By 2008 the number of church funerals was greater than the number at the crematorium for the first time, a trend which has continued (84,000 church in 2015 to 65,000 at the crem). The number of crematoria funerals taken by clergy dropped by half, -51%, between 2000 and 2015, but Church funerals declined by only a fifth, -21%.

Why the increase in secular funerals? Partly because many people are specifically asking for a non-religious funeral. It is also true that most funerals are expensive, and space for burials in churchyards is running out. However, funerals still represent a huge opportunity to help hurting hearts and to provide "a religious evaluation of a person (which) may be very different from the utilitarian assessment of human lives of a secular culture" (as Canon Alan Billings puts it). He has also written, "Even people who live quite 'secular' lives might still turn to the Church in certain circumstances" (such as for funerals).

SOURCES: UK *Church Statistics* No 3 2018 Edition, ADBC Publishers forthcoming; *Secular Lives, Sacred Hearts*, by Alan Billings, SPCK, 2004; personal email; death statistics from ONS.

CHRISTMAS ATTENDANCE

The Church of England has been measuring attendance at Christmas services since the year 2000 and, before that, numbers taking Communion since 1960. One of the interesting things is the numbers coming according to the day of the week on which Christmas falls (another is the weather). An analysis of numbers coming for Communion between 1960 and 2000 showed that numbers were greatest when Christmas Day was a Sunday, next best when it was a Friday, and least when it fell on a Thursday.



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In terms of services attendance since the year 2000, the average attendance by day of the week on which Christmas Day falls have been:

Sunday (2 years)	2,714,000	2
Monday (2 years)	2,923,000	1
Tuesday (3 years)	2,570,000	3=
Wednesday (2 years)	2,488,000	5=
Thursday (3 years)	2,568,000	3=
Friday (2 years)	2,486,000	5=
Saturday (2 years)	2,479,000	5=

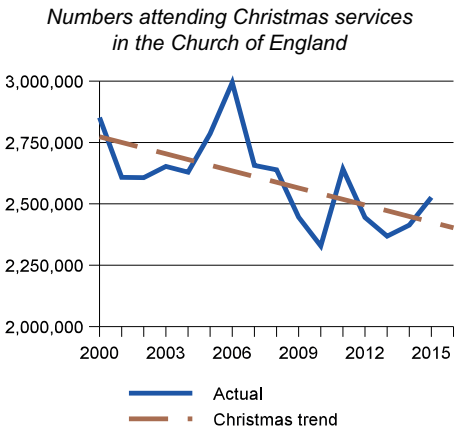
These show (on a much smaller number of years) that Christmas Day on a Monday is best, followed by Sundays, with Fridays, Wednesdays and

Saturdays being the worst days, but very little difference between them. The overall average for the first 15 years of the 21st century is 2.6 million people each Christmas.

Of more interest is the overall pattern of numbers, shown in the graph. Although the weather was very poor in 2009, it was actually the following year, 2010 (a Saturday), that attendance was lowest in this period.

While the numbers clearly fluctuate, with 2006 (a Monday) being the best year so far this century, with just 6,000 under 3 million people attending that year, 5.9% of the then population, the overall trend is one of decline, shown by the brown dotted line. While the trend is downwards, it is in fact only a fairly gentle slope, declining at an average rate of -0.9% per annum. Normal Sunday attendance, however, is declining faster than this, at a rate of -1.6% per annum, almost twice as fast as Christmas. In other words, Christmas continues to draw people to church much more than normal Sunday services.

Why? Is it the singing of familiar carols? The fun of Christingle services? (That is, does the *type* or the *time* of services make a difference?) Is this special to the Church of England? The Scottish National Church, the Church of Scotland, draws more people at its Christmas services also. Do other denominations see their Christmas numbers increase in similar proportions? How often do the "strangers" at Christmas services come at other times of the year, if at all? There are a lot of questions where researching the answers would be really useful.



However, the importance of making the Christmas services as attractive as possible is obvious. Christmas Day in 2017 falls on a Monday – the best day for numbers! This gives plenty of time for planning and praying for this pivotal opportunity.

SOURCES: Figures published each year by the Research and Statistics Dept, Archbishops' Council, and its forebears; emails from Lucinda Murphy, Durham University.



Providing Facts for Forward Planning

SNIPPETS

1) The most popular social media for those aged 18 to 34 are: Snapchat (53%), Tumblr (50%), Instagram (46%), Twitter (40%), Pinterest (38%) with Facebook and LinkedIn on 36% each.

2) For US users in general the respective percentages are: 25%, 18%, 32%, 30%, 25%, 70% and 17%, showing that one of the oldest, Facebook, starting in 2004, is the most popular generally.

3) The percentage of Britain's rural parishes which have no daily bus service is 75%.

4) In a 2016 study of African Children's Homes, 28% of those under 13 had lost both parents, 47% of those aged 13 and 14, and 63% of those aged 15 and over.

5) "We look forward to the day when everyone will receive more than the average wage."

6) The expected number of churchgoers in England in 2025 is likely to be about 2.5 million (4.3% of the population) and 0.3 million in Scotland (5.3%). Assuming 4% for Wales, that gives a total of 3.0 million churchgoers in Britain in 8 years' time.

7) Outside Greater London, there were 6 areas where church attendance was 10% or higher in 2012: Alderney & Sark 20.5%, Isles of Scilly UA 17.9%, Wirral, Merseyside 10.8%, Sevenoaks, Kent 10.5%, Ribbles Valley, Lancs. 10.1% and Guildford, Surrey 10.0%.

SOURCES: 1) and 2) *Time* magazine, Vol 189, No 9, 13th March, 2017, Page 41; 3) *Numbertland*, Mitchell Simons, Michael O'Mara, 2013, Page 36; 4) *Children's Home in Kisumu*, Cherry Brenley Children's Homes, 2016, Page 11; 5) Australian Minister of Labour, 1973 in *Quotes, Damned Quotes, and ...* John Bibby, 1986; 6) UK Church Statistics No 3 2018 Edition, Tables 12.5 and 16.8; 7) UK Church Statistics No 2 2010-2020, Pages 14.16f.

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PENTECOSTAL GROWTH SLOWING DOWN

Over the last 50 years with every measurement of church membership or attendance showing declining numbers, the only significant exception to the trend has been the growth in the number of Pentecostals.

In the 1970s their growth was at +3.2% per annum, against a general decline of -1.9% per annum. In the 1980s their annual growth averaged +2.7% against -1.3%. In the 1990s it was +3.8% against -1.0%, all these being much-of-a-muchness. But in the 2000s it was a staggering +5.8% per annum with the huge increase of escalating black churches and rampant immigration growth (against -0.7%, less than before because partly offset by the Pentecostal growth).

In the latest estimates for the current decade the estimated growth of Pentecostals has fallen to +2.1% per annum against a continuing decline of -1.1% per annum. The Pentecostal growth rate is therefore slowing down, and is less than in the last 30 years of the 20th century. In many situations an era of rapid expansion can rarely be sustained and a period of consolidation is necessary.

This would seem to be what is happening, but the Pentecostal story is a mixture of many changes occurring simultaneously. A number of the smaller groups have actually closed down. The Charity Commission's register of annual returns makes sad reading when one sees the number of Pentecostal groups that have made no return over the last five years, because they have discontinued their activities. Also, one of the larger Pentecostal denominations is actually registering a decline in membership.

Redeemed Christian Church of God

The fastest growing group, the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), whose attendance growth over the last 20 years has been huge and between 2005 and 2015 phenomenal (at an average rate of +10% per annum), is continuing to grow but at a much lesser pace (+3.4%, which is still large by comparison with most other growing groups). The RCCG is especially important because it is one of the largest Pentecostal denominations in the UK.

Number of RCCG Churches by County in 2017

The map shows the number of RCCG Pentecostal churches in 2017 by English county. It reveals almost 200 churches in London (188 more exactly from their website), or 4% of London's total (1 in every 25 churches!), but also quite large numbers in the Home Counties, especially on the Eastern side (8% of all the churches in Essex, and 6% of all the churches in Kent).

The RCCG has deliberately targeted the areas where Nigerian immigrants live, which is mostly the urban parts of England, wanting to place a church "within ten minutes walking distance" of where people live (which is about half a mile).

It has also started a large number of churches in Scotland; there is a total of 50 RCCG churches there in 2017, some 1.4% of the total. That 50, however, is almost double the 28 that they had in Scotland five years ago in 2012.

Why the increase? Scotland has had an exceptional number of immigrants arrive over the last decade, not just those from Nigeria, but all parts of Europe (and indeed the world). There has been an especially large influx of Polish labourers coming into Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire to help with the offshore oil industry and the military bases in that area. (Aberdeenshire is one of the few places in Scotland where the Roman Catholics have seen growth as well as the Pentecostals). Fourteen of RCCG's 50 churches in Scotland, 28%, are in Aberdeenshire.

Other Pentecostal Churches

The largest single Pentecostal church is Elim, which had over 67,500 members in 2017, 18%, or one-sixth, of all Pentecostals. The next largest are the Assemblies of God and the RCCG, 13% and 8% respectively of all UK Pentecostals. These 3 denominations account for almost two-fifths of all the Pentecostals.

The remaining three-fifths, 61%, however, comprises literally hundreds of small groups, or denominations. Some of the largest of these can be traced on their website, and some like the Church of Pentecost (132 churches in 2017), Potters House Christian Fellowship (100 churches), the Apostolic Church (98 churches), Mountain of Fire Ministries (97 churches) and the Church of God of Prophecy (80 churches) give their church locations – these five accounting for a further 6% of all Pentecostals.

Continued on page 4