

Juggling Priorities

Effective leadership in any sphere, including the church, is inevitably faced with the problem of juggling priorities. Sometimes viewing the larger picture – panoramic picture – may help to pinpoint the way ahead.

Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, has been declared the world's richest man 16 times by Forbes magazine in its annual survey. Responsibly seeking to use his money, he and his wife decided to focus on global public health, measuring their impact carefully. Within that broad panorama he has focussed especially on childhood deaths, and seen the number reduce from 12 million a year in 1990 to 5 million in 2017, and is aiming to more than halve that number by 2030.

That has required a vast amount of concentrated work, with governments, with specific programmes, with companies producing medical care, literally worldwide! Part of his focus has been seeking to reduce mother-to-child transmission of AIDS, but the initial prevention of that – getting people to change their behaviour, or getting the vaccine or drugs needed to protect them – has as yet to be universally successful.

Isn't the prevention or cure for AIDS the responsibility of various governments? Yes, but governments may be unable or unwilling to make such an issue a priority in their panoramic view. Bill Gates has the vision, the compassion and the means, and this enables his government's (American) foreign aid to be channelled into eliminating other scourges such as smallpox and polio. The Gates Foundation did a forecast showing that if it cut its HIV spending there would be 5 million more child deaths between 2017 and 2030.

Bill Gates didn't ask the question, "How can I save 5 million children dying?" but "What is the greatest issue of the day?" The answer will be different for each of us. Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow grew up in Argyll, Scotland. In 1983, he and his family went on a pilgrimage in Bosnia-Herzegovina; it renewed their faith; his father turned his house into a Retreat House for Prayer. Some years later, Magnus and his brother Fergus were having a pint in the pub when they saw the crisis in Bosnia on TV and decided to help. They bought a second-hand Landrover and took the goods donated to them to the Marian shrine of Medjugorje. But donated goods kept pouring in; Magnus gave up his job as a fish farmer, and the work expanded.

Meeting a lady dying of AIDS who simply asked that someone might care for her children, Magnus asked Edward, her eldest, the priority. "Enough food to eat, and maybe go to school one day." So what is now "Mary's Meals" was born. In 2017 providing 1.2 million impoverished school children worldwide with a nourishing meal every day.

"What do you see?" was the question God asked each of Zechariah, Jeremiah and Amos – and all replied with a concrete object – an almond branch (Jeremiah), a basket of summer fruit (Amos), and a flying scroll (Zechariah). What do you see? No children in the church? Only, ever, church decline? Have you got your panoramic lens screwed in firmly? The question is, "What do you see?" not "What don't you see?" But let the "what don't you see" motivate us to explore the panoramic picture and focus on the "what we do see."

SOURCE: Article in *Time* magazine, 19th January 2016, Page 40, www.nytimes.com.

Cathedral Visitors

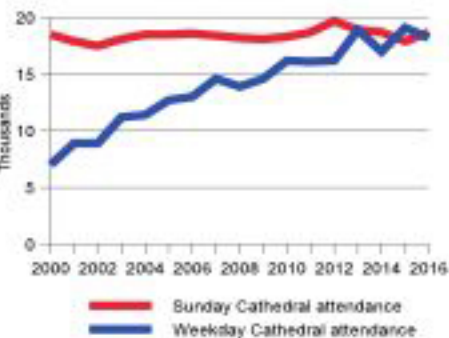
Each year the Research and Statistics Department of the Archbishops' Council asks all 42 Cathedrals in the Church of England (plus Westminster Abbey which is not technically a Cathedral but a Royal Peculiar) to complete a form giving attendance information. The latest data, published autumn 2017, gives details for 2016.

In 2016 total service attendance, adults and children, at these Cathedrals totalled 37,000 people, an average of 880 people per Cathedral per week. Of this total just over half, 19,000 were Sunday churchgoers. This was about 0.6% of total English Sunday church attendance in 2016 across all denominations, and 2.5% of total Church of England Sunday attendance.

The number has been growing slowly since it was first measured in the year 2000, when the total was 26,000. It grew steadily in the first 10 years of the 21st century, reaching 35,000 in 2010, but since then has increased more slowly.

As the graph shows, the number attending cathedral worship on a Sunday has been much the same since 2000, obviously varying somewhat from year to year. The increase in numbers has been almost entirely due to the increase in weekday service attendance, which grew from 7,000 in 2000 to 16,000 by 2010, thus more than doubling, but growth has slowed since then. The graph shows that over the last few years the proportion of cathedral attenders on a Sunday is much on a par with that on a weekday – Sunday accounted for 51% of attenders in 2016, 49% in 2015 and 52% in 2014.

Numbers attending Cathedral services Sunday and midweek



Cathedrals have "ordinary" services just as Parish Churches do – baptisms, thanksgivings, marriages, funeral services. Some hold memorial services also (140 in 2016), and many hold educational events for local children. 20 Cathedrals have Primary schools associated with them and 17 have Secondary schools.



In 2016 there were some 9 million visitors to English Cathedrals, 5% fewer than in 2015, plus a further 1.1 million to Westminster Abbey. Roughly half, 47%, of the visitors were paying visitors. Special services are often held in Cathedrals (as in ordinary churches also). In 2017 Worcester Cathedral celebrated Vale of Evesham asparagus (marking its EU protected name status) with local growers in colourful costume in a special service, for example.



Most Cathedrals are known for their music and the quality of their choristers and voluntary choir members which attracts many to their services. In 2016 a total of 850 choirs visited Cathedrals – an average of 20 choirs per Cathedral. There were some 2,000 regular Cathedral choristers in 2016, of whom three-quarters were child choristers (split 52% boys, 48% girls) and the remainder Lay Clerks or Choral Scholars (90% men, 10% women). These made up in total 40 male, 30 female and 80 mixed choirs in 2016.

In 2016 there were some 1,100 regular Cathedral musicians, 62% children (split 50:50 boy:girl) and 38% adult (74% male, 26% female). In addition some 660 occasional musicians performed in cathedrals, three-quarters, 74%, of whom were adult.

Cathedrals are clearly an important part of the overall Christian scene in Anglican worship in England, even if a relatively small part of the whole. Why do people go? A survey reported by Prof Leslie Francis in 2015 showed 77% went because of the preaching, 76% because of the music and 73% because of the choir. 89% liked the spiritual atmosphere in a cathedral, 87% the feeling of peace. Three-quarters, 76%, liked the friendly atmosphere and almost the same number, 72%, said there were people in the Cathedral they felt they could turn to for spiritual help. The Science of Cathedral Studies is now well established and more details can be obtained from leslie.francis@qwanwick.ac.uk.

SOURCES: Cathedral Statistics 2016, Archbishop's Council, 2017; Anglican Cathedrals in Modern Life, edited by Leslie Francis, 2015.

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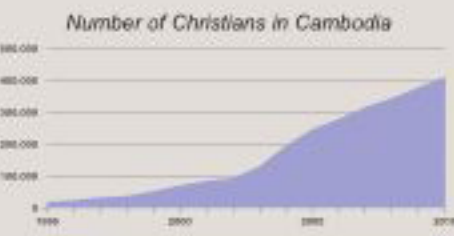
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Cambodian Christians

The Christian story of Cambodia over the last 50 years is one of intense suffering. Thousands, millions, died in the Pol Pot reign of terror after the United States withdrew from Saigon in 1975, and perhaps only one thousand Christians survived its genocide. Many fled to refugee camps in neighbouring countries, especially Thailand, and many found Christ in these environments.

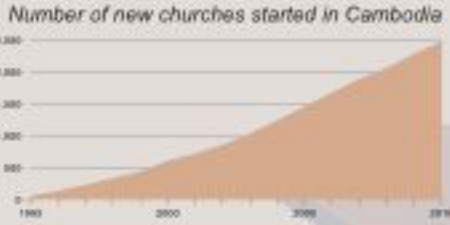
Numbers in the Cambodian church are very difficult to guesstimate but attempts have been made and the first graph looks at the number of Christians in Cambodia in the years 1995 to 2010. It is obvious the number grew substantially between 2003 and 2007 and almost certainly has continued growing since then.



Putting these into some kind of context is difficult. Estimates of Cambodia's total

population are uncertain, but it is thought that there were about 9.8 million people in Cambodia in 1990 and Wikipedia suggests there are 16.0 million in 2017 – a rapid rate of growth. If these figures are approximately correct, then in 1995 0.2% of the population were Christian, growing to 0.6% by 2000, 1.8% by 2005 and 2.8% by 2010 (one person in 35). Little additional information (such as on age or social status of Christians is available).

How do these figures compare with other countries in South East Asia? Well, Pentecostal and charismatic Christians were about 8.0% of the population of Singapore in 2000 and 8.7% in 2015; 6.7% of the population of Indonesia and 7.2%, and 3.6% and 4.2% of the population in Malaysia for the same years, so genuine increase is happening in nearby countries also. Not all Cambodian Christians will be Pentecostal, however, but the growth is real.



Why the growth? Partly because new churches have been continuously started in

Cambodia over this period, as shown by the second graph. The two graphs are similar but not totally parallel. Many churches were started between 1998 and 2003 before the "spurt" of growth in the church occurred. The rate of starting new churches has continued (although slowed very slightly since 2007) and the growth in the number of Christians has been maintained.

The author of the article from which this information is taken bases the growth unequivocally on the suffering that the church has had to experience. The Cambodian church sees suffering as part of the calling to follow Christ. Suffering has provided a pathway to learn more deeply of Christ. While this is true, building up the Cambodian church through the teaching and example of mission workers, such as those with OMF, has undoubtedly contributed also.

Cambodia experienced a revival in the early 1970s and a second revival in the refugee camps in the 1980s. These are the foundation of the church today. The danger of false teaching, especially the allurements of the "prosperity gospel," remains however. The challenge of living for Christ in an alien environment is always the bedrock of the church.

SOURCES: Article "Suffering and Mission" by Van Innamure in *Midwest Round Table*, published by OMF, vol. 12, No 3, Sept-Dec 2012, Page 41; Wikipedia; World Christian Database cited in article in *The Economist*, 18th January 2016, Page 35.

exist in such coastal areas as Frinton-on-Sea, Blackpool, Eastbourne, Brighton, Bournemouth, etc.

Single Hub industries are often highly successful – the impact of BAE in Lancashire, Rolls Royce in Derbyshire, Ford in Brentwood, Tata Steel in Port Talbot, or Airbus in Flintshire are examples. The same is true of churches – the impact of churches like All Souls or HTB (London), St Ebbe's (Oxford), Highfields (Cardiff), Glory House (East London), Greyfriars (Reading), Trinity (Cheltenham), Trinity Baptist (West Norwood), Kingsway International Christian Centre (Chatham), and many others could be invoked as being highly exceptional and effective churches meeting specific needs such as students, immigrants, and so on.

The article about industry concluded by looking at the UK's aggregative productivity and comparing it unfavourably with countries like Germany, but went on to say that with ongoing data collection and regular publication of something like "The State of British Industry" greater encouragement could be given. In a more restricted way the collection of key data, analysis of strategic issues, focussing clearly on the tasks to be done all have a part to play in the growth of the church. Unlike industry, though, the church is God-planted, God-protected and God-empowered.

SOURCE: Based on "The state of industry" by Anna Valley et al in *Society Now* Issue 26, Autumn 2017, Page 16; Grace Baptist Church, Brierley Consultancy, 2015.

These may be helpful - Books and reports received

Religion in Public Life: Levelling the Ground, Grace Davie, Theos, 2017

Knowing our Times, How British culture impacts our mission, John Stevens, FIEC and Affinity, 2017.

Statistics for Mission 2016, Research and Statistics Dept., Archbishops' Council, Church of England, 2017.

Cathedral Statistics, 2016, Research and Statistics Dept., Archbishops' Council, Church of England, 2017.

Ministry Statistics in Focus, Stipendiary clergy projections, 2015-2035, Research and Statistics Dept., Archbishops' Council, Church of England, 2017.

Religion and Welfare in Europe, Gendered and minority perspectives, edited by Lina Molokotos-Liederman, Policy Press, 2017.



Providing Facts for Forward Planning

SNIPPETS

1) There have been 1,400,000 American deaths on the field of battle since the US War of Independence began in 1775. There have been 1,520,000 gun-related deaths on US soil since Robert Kennedy was assassinated in 1968 up until 2015, not counting all those in the last 2 years.

2) The household wealth of the poorest half of the world was just under £2,700 per household in 2017. The wealthiest 1% own half of all global wealth – if averaged out it would be £42,500 per person. 2,300,000 people newly became millionaires in 2017, 1 person in every 3,300.

3) 6.5% of children in Central Asia are involved in child labour – that's one in every 15 young people.

4) Almost half of the children in Britain, 45%, have no siblings, which will include offspring from married and cohabiting couples, and lone parents.

5) Three-fifths, 63%, of American men with degrees were in their first marriage when aged 45 to 52, compared to a third, 34%, who held no degree. 11% and 15% respectively were in their second marriage.

6) Two-thirds, 70%, of Irish young people say they are Christians, but over a quarter, 29%, of Irish Christians say they "personally cannot live by the church's teaching on sexuality."

7) Over 14,000 students in the UK attended Christian Union Freshers' Week Events in October 2017. 100 Christian Unions were involved in campus carol services.

SOURCES: 1) *Raccoon* Report, 17th November 2017; 2) *Credit Suisse Research Institute* reported in *The Economist*, 18th November 2017, Page 71; 3) *Go, Interim*, Jan-Mar 2016, Page 5; 4) *The Week*, 29 December 2017, Page 20; 5) *The Economist*, 25th November 2017, Special Report on Marriage, Page 8; 6) *Finding Faith in Ireland*, Study by Barnardos, 2017; 7) *Impact*, Christian Union News from UCUP, The Christian Union, Winter 2016, Page 7.

WE DARE TO DREAM CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS FOR PAKISTAN'S POOR

Mike Wakely, Starfishasia

A look at the Home Office travel advice for Pakistan is sadly sufficient to deter many visitors from travelling to Pakistan. It is a country that has attracted a great deal of adverse publicity due to internal unrest, extremist religious violence and corruption. Our interest has focused on Pakistan's Christians, where we see a very different picture.

So where do Pakistan's Christian children go?

Pakistan's Christian community of about 3.5 million (2017 Government census) has equal rights in law, but Christians are often treated as second-class in society – known as a "sweeper" class and relegated to low-paid manual jobs with few rights and little respect. Unable to afford the private schools and unwilling to face discrimination in government schools, few Christian children are educated. Yet education is the key to their future in Pakistan. So where can they go?

We discovered Christian entrepreneurs

who had opened low-cost private schools with a Christian ethos to meet the need of their community. Some gave their schools elaborate names – Holy Shepherd, New Life, Morning Star. Although many were poorly managed, with few facilities and teachers with little or no training, they were filling a gap for their community.

Education in Pakistan is in crisis. A 2015 UN report stated: "About one third of primary school age children are out of school, and two-fifths, 42%, of the population over 10 is illiterate. Two thirds of women aged 15+ cannot read and write, and 35% of girls remain out of school. It is estimated that over 6.7 million children are out of school."

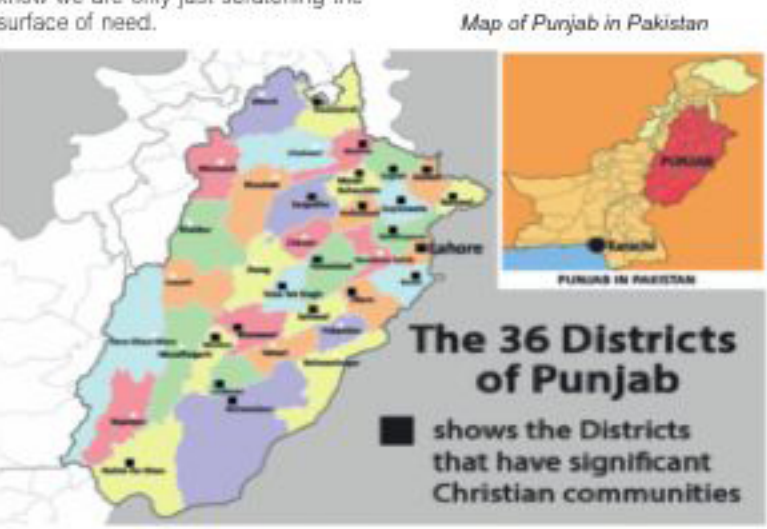
For Christians there are some excellent schools. Church schools, both Catholic and Protestant, have a fine reputation. However, being mostly run as businesses to cover their costs and make a profit, few Christians can afford their fees. The result? They do a great job educating middle and upper class Muslims. So what about the free Government schools? Some of them are excellent, though many are poorly managed with inadequate facilities. Due to their strong Islamic emphasis, both in the text books and curriculum, and the common treatment of Christians as second-class servants, few Christians attend. There are many stories of Christian children being exploited and abused – or enticed to convert.

The 2016 Survey "For a Better World"

In 2016 we launched a survey to discover the extent and state of accessible education for low-income Christian families. We set certain criteria – low or no fees, a majority of Christian students, etc. Survey teams of local Christian men set out to discover and collect details from whatever schools they could find. After three months of searching covering the main Christian population areas of Punjab Province and Karachi city, we had information on 604 schools. The results were truly disturbing, and inspiring.

Disturbing, because of the state of most of the schools:

- Of 85,000 students, 48% were absent on the day the survey team arrived
- 13% of schools had no toilets for children, 25% no drinking water
- 15% of students were without notebooks and writing implements in class 8 (top class)
- A quarter of the class 2 students (24%) had no textbooks
- 1 in 10 High Schools had no blackboard in the classroom



Presidential Election

The latest book by the American pollster George Barna (with a rather extravagant title!), *The Day Christians Changed America*, published November 2017, looks at why so many American Evangelicals voted for Donald Trump in November 2016. Essentially he claims it was for two main reasons.

The first was that many key Christian organisations realised that the values that Hillary Clinton stood for were antithetical to the Christian standpoint so urged their supporters to vote not for a particular candidate but for the party that most espoused Christian values and standards.

The second reason that emerged was that while few Christians agreed with Donald Trump's statements, behaviour or manners, they simply felt they could not trust the opposition and therefore voted more to keep Hillary Clinton out than put Donald Trump in.

Barna gives a breakdown of how the various Christian groups voted in this election. This is reproduced in the Table, where "Other Christians" are what Barna calls "Non-evangelical born again." Remember that in the American system voters elect representatives for the Electoral College who cast the definitive votes for the President. In 2016 Clinton (Democrat) received more votes than Trump (Republican) among the general populace but fewer in the Electoral College.

How different faith segments voted in the 2016 American Presidential Election					
Group	% of voters	Turnout	Trump	Clinton	Others
Conservative Evangelicals	10%	91%	93%	1%	6%
Other Evangelicals	7%	61%	79%	19%	3%
Other Christians	24%	58%	56%	35%	9%
Notional Christians	33%	59%	49%	47%	4%
Other faiths	5%	57%	20%	71%	9%
No faith	21%	57%	27%	60%	13%
Overall	100%	59%	46%	48%	6%

Mission Support

The Australian church benefits from a National Church Life Survey (NCLS) every five years which asks a wide sample of churches of all denominations questions deemed relevant by the Planning Committee. In 2016 one of the questions asked how many overseas mission workers were supported by individual churches, and whether that support was given directly to the individuals concerned or routed to them through their mission agency.

The overall answer was that Protestant churches on average supported 1.6 overseas workers, three-quarters being supported by gifts sent to their agency and a quarter, 25%, directly to the individual worker. This was based on replies from a sample of 2,900 churches, about one in 7 in Australia (Operation World gives 18,000 churches in Australia in 2010).

The number supported varied by denomination and the proportion supporting individual workers directly also varied. The number of workers per church supported was:

- 3.7 Baptists
- 2.7 Presbyterians
- 2.4 Pentecostals
- 1.6 Anglicans
- 0.4 Salvation Army, Uniting Church and Lutherans
- 1.6 Overall

The proportion of financial support given directly to individual workers was:

- 18% Baptists
- 14% Presbyterians
- 49% Pentecostals
- 14% Anglicans
- 42% Salvation Army, Uniting Church and Lutherans
- 25% Overall

Protestants and Catholics are spread across the various faith groups, but of the Protestants 58% voted for Trump and 36% for Clinton, while the Catholics were split equally 48% for each.

It may be seen that more Evangelicals turned out than those in other groups, and far more of them voted for Donald Trump than Hillary Clinton.

What were the issues that the Conservative Evangelicals especially considered either extremely or very important? The top seven were:

- 94% Abortion, and the right to life; adoption, unwed mothers
- 90% Religious persecution, government duty and global conditions
- 86% Poverty; Government and church roles, homelessness, dependency
- 86% Cultural restoration with appropriate morals, law and order, values, norms
- 86% Sexual identity, same-sex marriage, transgenderism, LGBTI
- 82% Israel's role in the world, US foreign policy towards Israel
- 82% Christian heritage; its historical role in American history and relevance today

The issues that Conservative Evangelicals especially disliked about Donald Trump were his plan to halt temporarily the flow of Muslim refugees until the vetting system improves and the insulting or derogatory names that Trump called his political opponents (61% each).

The key things that upset them about Hillary Clinton were her support comments about a woman having the right to abortion at any time in her pregnancy (89%), her use of a private computer for sending classified documents and her efforts to destroy those computers (80%), and the discovery of large contributions by foreign governments to the Clinton Foundation while she was US Secretary of State (75%).

It is clear that societal morals became a key issue in this election, and that stirring up the realisation of this, and what those morals might be, was a major matter about which many key evangelical organisations both agreed about, united in action, and then boldly publicised these values among their individual followers. Whatever one's political standpoint, perhaps we should be praying in greater depth for "those in authority over us."

SOURCE: The Day Christians Changed America, George Barna, Maltahamilton, 2017, ISBN 978-0-66602171-0-8, Pages 116, 118, 135, 139 and 141.

PS FUTURE FIRST 2018

PS FUTURE FIRST 2018

HARASSMENT

Hardly a day goes by without someone complaining about sexual harassment by a celebrity or employer. But exactly what is "sexual harassment"? The phrase apparently wasn't invented until the 1980s, and most university degree law courses do not teach it. YouGov undertook a survey to ascertain what it meant. According to their survey of 2,800 people, half of women, 53%, reported they had experienced harassment by a man.

This is influenced by age and time. Over the last five years, only a fifth, 18%, of women report harassment, but this varies between two-fifths, 41%, of those aged between 18 to 24, reducing to just 6% of those aged 55 or over.

The survey explored twelve types of harassment and asked each if that action was considered harassment. It was agreed some actions were harassment, whether the respondent was male or female, of whatever age – pinching a woman's bum, requesting a sexual favour taking a photo up a woman's skirt.

Other actions varied by age, with younger people (either gender) thinking this was harassment much more than older people – a man placing his hand on a woman's lower back, a man winking at a woman, a man commenting on a woman's attractiveness. The biggest difference here was wolf whistling with 65% of those aged 18-24 (men and women) saying it was harassment but only 33% of women 55 and over and 15% of men.

The biggest gender difference came with a man looking at a woman's breasts. Three-fifths, 60%, of both men and women aged 18-24 considered this harassment, as did 58% of women 25 and over, but only 40% of older men.

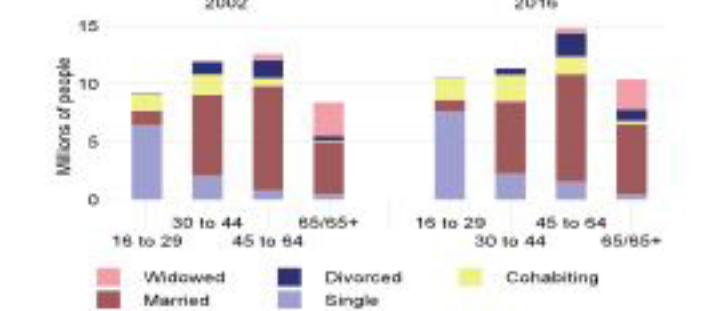
Presumably when Paul was teaching the Thessalonians about the need for sexual purity he might include such statistics if he was speaking today!

SOURCE: Sexual Harassment, Matthew Smith, Yougov survey, 1st November 2017, yougov.co.uk/news.

Changing Society

Demographically society is changing and not only in terms of an ageing population. We look at a few other changes also and ask which ones are most important for the Christian church?

The following diagram of the number of adults in England and Wales, broken down by age and marital status, illustrates some of the key changes:



This chart shows that, yes, British society is ageing (the trends in the chart will also be true of Scotland and N Ireland). In 2002 half, 50%, of all adults (16 and over) were under 45, but by 2016 that percentage had reduced to 46%. A fifth, 20% were 65 and over in 2002, but 22% were in that age-group by 2016. By 2030, 44% will be under 45, and 28% 65 and over, so the proportion above the old retirement age of 65 will be increasing rapidly.

Accompanying this change is the reducing proportions of those who are married. Half the population, 52%, were married in 2002, but just under half, 48%, were married in 2016, and likely to be fewer still, perhaps only 43%, by 2030. Fewer people are getting married, and those who are married are getting married later in life. In 2002, 39% of the population under 45 was married, but only 34% in 2016.

The reason for fewer marriages is the greater number of people who are cohabiting. 9% of the adult population were cohabiting in 2002 (4 million adults), 13% in 2016 (6 million) which the Office for National Statistics estimates will go up to 19% by 2030 (10 million adults), an increasing proportion. These are opposite-sex cohabiting people; same-sex cohabiters are too few currently to

Irish Belief

There have been many surveys asking fairly simplistic questions on belief, such as "Do you believe in God?", but few which probe what the respondents believe in some theological detail. Barna Group decided to do that with a sample of Irish young people aged 14 to 25 in February 2017. Selecting a group whose background would probably mean that the ideas of the Apostle's Creed would not be unknown, Barna asked questions broadly following the concepts of the Creed although in more modern words.

Some of their rephrased statements were agreed strongly or somewhat:

- 53% God is the all-powerful, all-knowing, perfect creator of the universe who rules the world today
- 52% There is only one God who exists in three distinct persons: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
- 47% Jesus was physically raised from the dead
- 36% Jesus was God in human form who lived among people in the first century
- 31% Jesus will actually return to Earth someday

count reliably (though could be as many as half a million by 2030).

Cohabiting couples increasingly are having children. Over half, 56%, had had at least one child in 2002, and three-fifths, 61%, in 2016, a percentage not expected to change much between 2016 and 2030. On the other hand, married couples are less likely to have children: two-thirds, 68%, had at least one child in 2002, but only 66% in 2016 and an expected 63% by 2030. Also the number of children is likely to be slightly more in cohabiting households than married households as we move towards 2030 (it was about the same number in 2016). It would be interesting to know why this might be so.

The number of divorces has remained roughly the same over the last 10 years, and the proportion of the population who are divorced, about 7.5%, likely to remain at about the same level. Cohabiting people, however, are more likely to break up when difficulties in their relationship arise. The proportion of single parents remains at about 12% of the adult population, one adult in every eight, with about 88% of these being single mothers and 12% single fathers.

The proportion of widows in the population, 8% in 2002 and 6% in 2016, is likely to fall further as people are living longer, with the average life of men growing slightly faster than that of women (although the latest 2017 estimated figures suggest a temporary change in this).

So what does all this say? More older people will progressively be in church, that is, a greater proportion of churchgoers will be elderly (33% in 2015 65 or over, rising to 45% by 2030). Of those who are under 45, fewer are likely to be married and more cohabiting (but four-fifths of couples will be still be married). Both married and cohabiting will likely have children in their family, with some having complicated parental backgrounds. There are likely to be slightly fewer children born, however, as the overall fertility rate is decreasing – 1.9 in 2007 and 1.8 in 2016. Pastoral care for relationships under stress will continue to be needed, and break-ups with one party stopping attending church will probably not change. Continued cohabiting but with a change of partner may become more common.

SOURCE: Office for National Statistics website, for People in Households and People in Families; UK Church Statistics, 2018 Edition, Pages 14.6, 16.8 and 14.9.

clear – the church (74%), Mum (73%), minister/priest (62%), Dad (52%) or other relative (46%). These were the top five influencers for non-practising Christians and non-Christians also.

Ruth Harvey-Williams, editor of Ireland's cross-denominational Christian Magazine Vox said, "There is a significant opportunity for older Christians to live out their faith with integrity and authenticity." That is not just for those in the Republic of Ireland!



SOURCE: The Faith Circle of Today's Irish Youth, Barna Group, Research Release, October 2017.

SNOWFLAKES

Central Asian countries have few evangelical believers. Nevertheless in a private study by one agency of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, over 150,000 were found, 0.14% of the overall population, one person in every 700. Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan have a smaller percentage.

Irish religion. Over a third, 36%, of Irish people attend church weekly (against 5% in England), 2% daily, 4% twice a week, and 30% once. In addition, another 14% attend monthly, 12% on special occasions like Easter and Christmas, but 36% do not attend, and 2% didn't answer the survey question. In Europe, only Poland has a higher weekly attendance, at 49% of the population, both primarily Roman Catholic countries.

SOURCE: European Social Survey reported in the Church Times, 19th November 2017, Page 5.

Orthodox expansion slowing. While the worldwide Orthodox Christian population has more than doubled in the last 100 years, nevertheless it accounts for a smaller proportion of global Christianity than it did (12% now rather than 20% a century ago). Three-quarters, 77%, of its 260 million live in Europe (101 million in Russia), along with 24% of world Catholics and 12% of Protestants. The smaller proportion reflects the demographic changes occurring in Europe (lower fertility and ageing).

SOURCE: Pew Research Center study reported in The Tablet, 18th November 2017, Page 26.

Isle of Wight visitors. In the 1960s summer visitors to the Island would swell church congregations, like those at Ventnor Baptist Church, by at least five times their usual winter numbers. A former minister of the church, still living on the Island, says that in 2017 they had no more than one visiting family at any time. Changing holiday patterns impact church life.

SOURCE: 2017 Newsletter from Rev Bryan Pinnoch, former minister of both Ventnor and Pella Wood Baptist Churches.

Library closures. Libraries continue to close. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy shows that the number of libraries in Great Britain has fallen from 4,194 in 2012 to 3,745 in 2017, a drop of -11%. There were 3,917 in 2015 and 3,850 in 2016. Funding has also dropped from £265 mn in 2015 to £243 mn in 2017, a drop of -8%, twice the percentage drop in library numbers between those two years.

SOURCE: The Bookmaker, 19th December 2017, Page 15.

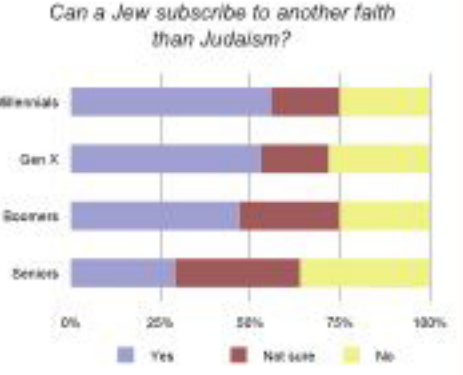
Muslims at Prayer

A survey across several years by the polling organisation Arab Barometer of the proportion of Muslims in Egypt praying every day between 2011 and 2016 showed that numbers had declined across all ages, even though older people generally prayed more than younger people. Whether "praying" meant being at the local mosque or praying privately at home or work was not clear.

- The proportion praying each day broadly increased with age
- The proportions praying decreased over these five years across all age-groups
- However, those aged between 45 and 54 in the 2013 and 2016 surveys showed they were praying slightly less, not more, than those aged 35 to 44

JEWISH IDENTITY

Jewish identity. Most Jewish Millennials subscribe to Judaism as their religious faith, but not necessarily exclusively (you can be a Jew + something else). Barna's research found this varied by age as shown below, with half, 49%, of Jews overall voting "Yes":



SOURCE: The Evolving Spiritual Identity of Jewish Millennials, David Kirsman, Barna Group, 19th October 2017.

Black congregations. It is well known that black congregations are often more vibrantly active than white ones. An American sociological study examined why this might be so, and found that Black people tend to have a deeper, "more secure", "attachment to God." That stronger faith leads to a more active participation in congregational life. While the sample was relatively small, the effect was very pronounced.

SOURCE: Article "Attachment to God... Race and Participation..." by Blake Kent in Review of Religious Research, Vol 50, No 3, Sept 2017, Page 319.

Why fewer people in church? In an interview with Nick Robinson on the Radio 4 Today programme on 14th December 2017, Archbishop Justin Welby said of the UK that "the country had moved from a sense of inherited faith to faith by choice, and that is a smaller group of people."

SOURCE: Church Times, 22nd/29th December 2017 issue, Page 7.

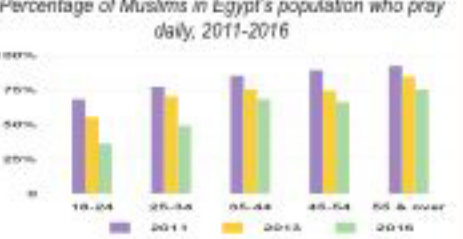
Humour

In the days before WWII phone calls cost two pence, "Can you lend me a tuppence to ring a friend?" a widely disliked MP once asked Winston Churchill. The great man scoured his pockets. "Here's four pence," he said. "Ring them all."

What do you do if you see a spaceman? You park your car in it, man.

SOURCES: Third Age Matters, Winter 2017, Issue 29, Page 64; Escape into History, Rotary Club of Huddersdon, Page 52.

- The decrease in numbers praying was greatest for those aged 18 to 24, almost halving (47%) in five years, from 68% to 36%
- The decline in numbers was least for those 55 and over, dropping by only a sixth, 18%.



It would be interesting to see similar percentages for Christians praying daily!

SOURCE: Article in The Economist, 4th November 2017, Page 55.

Continued from page 1

Inspiring, because of the dedication of teachers to serve their community with very little reward.

- Teacher attendance was 97% on the day of the survey

- Teacher salaries ranged from £15 to £54 a month – in contrast to the government's minimum wage for unskilled workers of £110

- Four out of every 5 teachers had no formal teacher training

Need or Opportunity?

The Survey uncovered a world of huge need – a hidden community eager to equip the next generation with the basics of an honourable future, providing an education with little or no help from outside sources. A Christian leader once said to us: "Only education can save and secure the future of our community." We add the need also for Christian values and truth to enable Christian witness to impact Pakistani society. It is a tragedy that the Government shows little concern and makes no provision for the minorities – and that the church is failing to provide for its own.

Yet it is a world of colossal opportunity. We now have a database of 700 schools and our small team is beginning to make direct contact with those schools, to offer what help we can provide to raise their standards and improve their facilities and their ambitions. Our aim is to turn failing and struggling schools into successful providers of education – an opportunity to transform a generation of Pakistani Christians.

So how should we respond to this survey?

Firstly, we formed the Pakistan Association of Christian Teachers and began to produce a quarterly magazine in Urdu especially for Christian teachers with advice on teaching practices, spiritual advice and encouragement for those who feel isolated as teachers in an Islamic environment. We have offered all the schools on our database free Bible curriculum books for primary school students. We have invited teachers for training workshops: 75 teachers responded and attended a 3-day workshop in the hills in the hot month of June.

We have launched a project to turn schools into "Model Schools", inducing a sense of responsibility while providing better salaries, school furniture, books, training and Bible materials to the extent that they can afford. We have recently adopted six "Survey" schools into the Model School programme.

We dare to dream that this simple survey has opened a door of opportunity that will change the future of the Christian community – its life and witness – in the future of Muslim Pakistan. A Pakistani Christian friend, who comes from a poor family and is now a Magistrate in Pakistan's third city, recently said to us, "I am an optimist. Our community has a bright future. When I was young, 25 years ago, things were very different. Today young people are beginning to realise the importance of education. I would encourage Starfish Pakistan also — our joint efforts are surely bringing about a change. My father was a sweeper. I am a Magistrate. One factor: education — and the right guidance. This will transform our society."