

# Idols of Yesteryears and Today

Over each issue of *FutureFirst* in 2011 we have looked at an idol, with commentary by Dr Rod Wood of the City Temple and drawings by Chris Radley, to both of whom we are most grateful. A similar series was run 20 years ago in a forerunner of *FutureFirst*, then called *LandMARC*. The two series are compared below:

	1991	2011
1	Individualism	Materialism
2	Economism	Sexual Expression
3	Relativism	Individualism
4	Newness	Technology
5	Fanaticism	Gratification
6	Historicism	Celebrity

It is obvious that some of our descriptions and their relative importance have changed somewhat in this period, but Individualism is common to the two lists as is Materialism (= Economism). Newness and Technology are also very similar, as are Fanaticism and Celebrity. Relativism, related to the slide in morality whereby truth was no longer fashionable, and Historicism, reflecting the desire to take the past, make it accessible (like the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam) because its values then were somehow important for the present, are less obvious today. Some might argue, though, that these are now expressed in the idol of Tolerance (anything is acceptable regardless of the absolutes of truth or historicity).

These latter two idols have been replaced in the current list by Sexual Expression and Gratification, both personal expressions of the need for satisfaction in relationships and possessions. They show two major changes in our culture over the past two decades, both in part arising from technology which allows porn to be so readily available, and facilitates the purchase of almost anything on line. Both are centred on self, not others.

In the past 15 months others have written or spoken about idols. Chris Wright, the successor to John Stott at the Langham International Partnership, gave three idols of the day when speaking at the Lausanne Congress in Cape Town in October 2010: (a) Power and Pride, (b) Popularity and Success, and (c) Wealth and Greed. He said these were "especially seductive" for evangelical Christians.

The (non-Christian) book *Gods Behaving Badly* by Pete Ward focussed on the issues of Success and Celebrity, and asks if these are the new religion. Dr Alan Storkey, author of *Jesus and Politics*, quoting the fact that the richest 10% of people in the UK own 44% of its personal wealth, while the poorest 40% own just 7%, indicates that money and ownership of goods has become our god – and the root of our economic problems.

St Paul wrote many years ago that "the love of money is the root of all evil," as true today as it was then. Enabling Christians to recognise these issues, think through them and realise their tenacity to sap our Christian integrity and witness becomes all the more important for the decades ahead. What idols will we be worshipping 20 years hence?

**SOURCES:** Six issues of *FutureFirst* in 2011; article by Alan Storkey in *Church Times* 23rd December 2011; article in the *Baptist Times* 29th October 2010; *Society Now*, Spring 2011, Page 31.

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## The Future as seen in 2012 contd...

However, some 35,000 babies will be conceived by this age-group, of which 16,000 will be aborted. Some churches already see this as an area for ministry and are involved in counselling, mother and baby homes/groups, etc.

The challenge to Christian families is the transmission of their faith to the next generation. "Family remains one of the dominant influences in people's lives," writes George Barna, because of the values and moral decisions that are made, many of which will have been absorbed by children by the time they are 13 and influence them for life. How Christian families handle issues of belief, preservation of life, giving to others, what to watch on TV and community interest are therefore crucial.

Fifthly, *leisure pursuits will alter*. Gaming (or gamification) is becoming extremely important with millions now involved, literally connecting worldwide on a regular basis (such as every week). Games will also be used increasingly for research purposes. Half a billion people worldwide play computer and video games for at least an hour a day, and five million in the US spend 50 hours a week playing! Games cause people to strive for success (80% of the time they fail), and promote curiosity, optimism and the capacity for collaboration. Where are the Christian games? Games are used to teach children maths, Nike inspires runners to reach new personal bests, others promote saving the environment (like *World without Oil*), or starting new businesses. However, games can also encourage cheating and other mal behaviour.

When asked if he felt optimistic about the future of media, 84-year old David Attenborough said, "The problem is as networks and audiences get smaller, one is worried that there won't be finances to produce the big-scale natural history programmes which I've been involved in over the past 50-odd years. The temptation to make programmes quicker, faster, cheaper is a strong one if your income is going down."

In the world of leisure, low-carbon pursuits are being encouraged. Boris Johnson (will he be re-elected this year?) will continue to cycle to work and encourage others to do so. People are borrowing books less (although nearly 40% visited a public library last year), buying and reading printed books less (but e-books more, 25% of all books bought), and visiting bookshops less – what future for the 400+ Christian bookshops in the UK? Fiction remains very popular, however.

Sixthly, *technology will continue to have the supremacy* it already has. Boeing's 787 Dreamliner has already had its maiden commercial flight, and will now have many more. Mobile wallets, like Google Wallet launched with Citigroup, will make cash less useful (your mobile and the sales terminal talk to each other); banks will continue to downplay cheques. Cable viewing will come under more strain; porn will become even easier to watch. Genetics, Robotics, Information and Nanotechnology [GRIN] are all elements worth watching. More hybrid and electric cars will be manufactured. The new HS2 High-Speed train to Birmingham, will be opening by the time those born this year are 14 years old. Even more instore technology will be operating – some Sainsbury's stores already monitor customer trolley movements, and customers will trust their analysis of the data, whereas the use of data by banks and government is suspect.

Seventhly, *belief matters*. While total Sunday church attendance continues to decline, spirituality and religiosity are increasing. So the *content* of what we believe matters all the more. There are signs that some are growing tired of teaching courses, but relational engagements like "Back to Church Sunday" or "Messy Church" remain popular – and are growing. So is midweek ministry and attendance at Cathedrals (and many larger churches – one in 7 attenders go to a church with at least 500 in the congregation). The unusual and sporadic is becoming the norm. Disbelief in global warming and climate change is growing, so the *credence* of belief matters hugely also. How do we know that the Bible is reliable? Immigration is likely to continue at the high level of recent years. Black churches will almost certainly continue to be started, especially in London. At a European level, a broad range of religious bodies have now set up offices in Brussels.

In the UK world of 2012 we must not overlook the Queen's Diamond Jubilee (and the faith in Christ which so strongly supports her) and the London Olympics. Before you move on to another item, please ask yourself two questions: (a) Which of these likely trends are most important for you, your ministry or your church? (b) What other key factors have been left out (for example, medical breakthroughs, increasing unemployment, further economic stringency, etc.)?

**SOURCES:** Article "The end of email?" in *The Week*, 14th January 2012, and also Page 15; *Time* 19th December 2011, Page 64 and 9th January, 2012; *Research magazine* October 2011 and 2012, December 2011; *Performance Preview*, Ernst and Young, May 2011, Page 28; *Britain in 2012*, ESRC, December 2011; *Futurecast*, George Barna, Tyndale, 2011.

## Risky Conversions?

Recent research on brains shows that between the ages of 12 and 25 most of us undergo a change in our brains likened to "extensive remodelling, resembling a network and wiring upgrade." Our long nerve fibres grow greater insulation enabling faster internal signalling, and they grow "twiggy" which means they have many more connections, with the ones we use most re-inforced and those we use little withering. "These changes make the entire brain a much faster and more sophisticated organ," was the conclusion of the study.

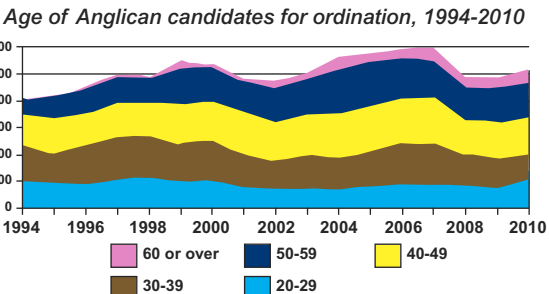
The research suggests that these changes in part help prepare people for leaving the safety of a parental home to the riskier world of living independently. In the process the thrill of independence can express itself in various ways, of which extreme sports, or skydiving, or bungee jumping, or tongue (or other facial parts) piercing, or smoking, or unprotected sex, or simply just a love of novelty are frequent examples. The pleasure of undertaking such activities is more important to those participating than the costs of possible consequences.

When measured, the appeal of the risk factor increases quite dramatically between the ages of 11 and 17,

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## CANDIDATES FOR ORDINATION

The Church of England is the only denomination to publish the ages of those who are under training, having been recommended by their bishop, for ordination. How typical these are of all ordination students is therefore unknown, but as their numbers are relatively large it may well be that they are at least average.



In 2010 there were 515 candidates, an increase of 5% on the 2009 total of 491, but still quite a way short of the peak in recent years of 595 in 2007. The graph shows the numbers at different ages.

The total numbers are curious, seemingly going in cycles of 6 years, building up over this period and then dropping after the sixth year. The years 2008-2010 would appear to be the start of a new cycle. It is obvious that the number of candidates aged 60 or over has been increasing in this period, and amounts to 5%, or 1 in 20, of all candidates over these 16 years. Those under 30 account for one-sixth, 18%, of the total.

The average age of those under training is 42 years of age, but this has varied from 38 in 1994 to a peak of 45 in 2004. The average age of a serving vicar (who had been in post on average for 7 years) in 2005 was 54. As there are 12 years between start of training and the time of the survey, that would suggest that 5 years are spent from the start of training to first appointment as a leader of a congregation, time spent in training and in one or more curacies.

**SOURCES:** Pulling out of the Nosedive, What the 2005 English Church Census revealed, Christian Research, 2006, Chapter 8; *Church Statistics* 2009/10, Church of England website December 2011.

## CHURCH SCHOOLS

The number of schools of all kinds in England has decreased! There were 20,800 primary and secondary schools in 2007, but only 20,200 in 2011, 600 fewer schools. The decrease is partly due to the decreasing number of pupils, a demographic outcome of fewer babies being born in the 1990s, but this will change in the coming decade as there has been a baby-boom the last 10 years (partly a result of the number of immigrant mothers). So one presumes either schools will get larger or new ones will be opened.

Two-thirds (66%) of schools have no denominational or religious element. The other third does, although this varies between 37% for primary schools and 19% for secondary schools. Secondary schools are almost four times larger than primary schools on average (990 pupils to 250). The change by denominational status is shown in the Table:

Religious Character of Primary and Secondary Schools, 2007 and 2011

Denomination/ Religion	No of Primary Schools			No of Secondary Schools		
	2007	2011	Change	2007	2011	Change
Church of England	4,441	4,400	-41	205	205	0
Roman Catholic	1,696	1,673	-23	343	328	-15
Methodist	26	26	0	0	0	0
Other Christian	58	64	+6	41	80	+39
Jewish	28	29	+1	9	10	+1
Muslim	4	6	+2	3	5	+2
Sikh	1	3	+2	1	1	0
Other religions	1	2	+1	1	2	+1
No religious character	11,106	10,681	-425	2,796	2,679	-117
TOTAL All Schools	17,361	16,884	-477	3,399	3,310	-89

and then drops off, becoming much less in the early 20s. This age-range coincides with the years spent at secondary school, with the turbulent behaviour also continuing into the university student age-range.

As many parents will know, this is the time when their teenagers often rebel in terms of churchgoing. Equally, however, it is also the period in which significant proportions of those who become Christians take that step. Some years ago, in one research project looking at the age of conversion, 17% of (over 4,000) respondents found faith before they were 12, 59% between 12 and 20, and 24% when 20 or older. Sometimes evangelists say that "Faith is spelt R-I-S-K". Perhaps the "risk willingness" so often apparent in teenagers has a spiritual impact too in some taking the "step of faith" of Christian commitment.

If true, and if our changing brain structure makes it easier to commit to the unknown by the power of the Holy Spirit, how much more does this emphasise the importance of reaching people while they are still young. If three-quarters (76%) of Christians find their faith before they are 20, how much more should we invest in reaching those still in school and college or university?

**SOURCES:** Article "Beautiful Brains" by David Dobbs in *National Geographic* magazine, October 2011, Page 36; *Background to the Task*, Scripture Union, 1968, Table 7.

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## e-books and Bookshops

Five people in six (85%) in 2011 said they had read at least one book or journal digitally, up from 79% in 2010. The e-book revolution has already begun, whether it is through Amazon's Kindle, Google's e-bookstore, or Apple's popular iPad and iPhone devices. Amazon had 70% of the market in 2011. Half of Kindle owners (48%) use it for reading books, as do two-fifths (39%) of tablet owners (up from 22% in 2010), and two-fifths (38%) of smart phone owners (up from 32% in 2010).

Some studies have suggested that we are less likely to evaluate what we read on-line or on a screen than when we are holding the printed page.

Over three-fifths of e-readers (63%) in the UK are owned by women, a fifth (19%) of these having been given it in the past year. Three-fifths of owners (62%) are 45 or over. One person in 16 (6%) in the UK own a tablet, half of these sharing it with other members of their household. More than half (53%) of tablet owners are men, and more than half (56%) are under 45.

Does this mean that printed books have a limited future? Unlikely. Two-thirds (65%) of those surveyed with professional links to the publishing industry have bought at least one e-book (up from 47% in 2010). Virtually all publishers (92%) have issued at least one book in e-format (against 85% in 2010), and only a third (33%) reckon that e-sales will account for less than 3% of their turnover (against 46% in 2010). One in seven (15%) publishers said e-books accounted for more than half their total turnover.

This simply points to the wealth of e-book material available, well over 2 million titles in total, and some suggest nearly 4 million. Is this how students will study in future at both school and college? Perhaps more so in colleges than schools in the next few years. What does this mean for churchgoers? The increasing use of electronic Bibles in services has already been noticed by many ministers, as is the use of platters or other electronic devices for reading prayers, orders of service, and so on. Are publishers of Christian material producing e-material? Yes they are, but perhaps less than general publishers owing to the smaller take-up of electronic readers by elderly people (despite the 62% mentioned above), with half (48%) of English churchgoers 55 or over in 2010.

What does it mean for Christian Bookshops, already the fastest group among all Christian agencies in the UK to have closed in the past decade? They will have to compete with some libraries offering e-book lending (when publishers allow their books to be used in this way), as well as pirated versions of e-books with which half (47%) of publishers expect to contend. A quarter (26%) of the general publishers surveyed thought that sales of e-books would overtake sales of printed books before 2020.

Half (55%) of general booksellers sell books in at least one digital format (up from 37% in 2010), and a third (32%) expect digital books to be at least 10% of their sales by 2020. This suggests that Christian bookshops will increasingly need to follow suit and that many more Christian e-books will be both published and bought. However, one respondent said that "people will still want the physical book – in their hand, bookcase, to give, lend, pass on and treasure." "Entrepreneurial bookshop owners will manage to survive," said another. Let us hope that a sufficient number of the UK's 400+ remaining Christian bookshops are of this ilk!

**SOURCES:** Articles "The e-book year" and "Nielsen grows digital insight" extracting details of The Digital Census report of 2011 in *The Bookseller*, 2nd December, 2011; article in the *Daily Telegraph*, 7th December, 2011; Email: Rose Dowsett.

## SNOWFLAKES

**Catholic changes.** In one of the heartlands of Catholicism in the UK, the Diocese of Lancaster had to merge 22 parishes in 2010 since the number of priests has dropped 40% over the past decade (and only one person was ordained in 2011). Following the boom church building period after World War II, there are now too many buildings, often in the wrong places, with too few priests to serve them.

**SOURCE:** *The Tablet*, 29th October 2011.

**Pentecostals less popular.** Another study, this time of Brazilian Catholics, has found that many middle-class Catholics are leaving Catholicism – the proportion has dropped from 73% in 2003 to 67% in 2009. Many of those leaving are women, and rather than joining Pentecostalism, which often has firm views on abortion, they are joining the Methodist and Presbyterian churches which have more liberal views.

**SOURCE:** *Religion Watch*, Nov/Dec 2011, Page 4.

**UK prisons** hold, on average, about 600 prisoners each, as the Table shows. They are slightly smaller in N Ireland. About half of all prisoners have a reading age of 11, two-fifths lack basic literacy skills, and four-fifths basic numeracy skills. The re-offending rate is three-fifths, 59%, within 2 years. Two-fifths of women going to prison have previously attempted suicide. Please pray for vital prison ministries and chaplains.

Country	Number	Number of	Prisoners
2011 figures	of prisons	prisoners	per prison
England & Wales	140	84,500	600
Scotland	15	7,800	520
N Ireland	3	1,500	500
Total	158	93,800	590

**SOURCE:** *Prison ministry leaflet*, Day One, 2011.

**Motherhood.** The 2011 results of a survey of mothers showed that on average they spent 18 hours a week in "active involvement" with their children – 2½ hours a day – though this ranged from 32 hours for a third of them to under 8 for another third. Older mothers spent less time. Most reckoned they spent more time with their children than their mother had spent with them. They also reckoned that on average they only had 45 minutes a day which they could call "me time", probably less than their mothers due to the pressure of having to



go out to work (64%) and children having more freedom and thus requiring less supervision (68%), a situation which may well be true of Christian mothers also.

**SOURCE:** *The Changing Face of Motherhood*, Social Issues Research Centre, Oxford, 2011.

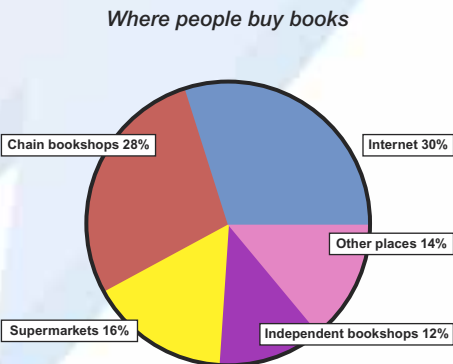
**Why attend an African church?** An American survey asked black immigrants why they attended African churches in their country. The reasons are likely to be very similar in the UK. The key reasons stated were:

75%	Lively worship
65%	Solid preaching/teaching
58%	Spiritual needs were being met
54%	Pastor's leadership
52%	Members care for each other

Although they would be in a different order of priority, these are the reasons usually given for why churches grow generally, especially larger churches. So what is different in black churches apart from the emphasis on exuberant worship? When asked two-fifths, 41%, said having "formal outreach".

**SOURCE:** *Beyond Christendom*, by Jehu Hanciles, Orbis Books, New York, 200, Pages 358 and 367.

**Book purchases.** Different sources yield slightly different percentages, but two recent studies of where people buy books show similar results, captured as an average of the two in the pie-chart:



One study gives trends over the last 3 years. These show that sales via the internet and chain bookshops have both dropped, sales in supermarkets and elsewhere have remained stable, and it is the sales in the independent bookshops which have grown. Since many find it hard to compete with the massive discounts offered elsewhere this must be good news, and perhaps hope for the Christian book trade also.

**SOURCES:** *The Bookseller*, 30th December 2011; *The Economist*, 10th September, 2011, Page 66.

**Poor employment prospects.** One of the questions in a recent EU-wide Eurobarometer survey was "How would you judge the employment situation in your country?" Five out of six, 84%, of respondents said, "Bad" or "Very bad." Women judged it slightly worse than men (87% to 83%), and older people worse than younger (88% for those 55 or over to 79% for those 15 to 24, with those 25 to 54 in between).

**SOURCE:** *Social Climate*, Special Eurobarometer 315/Wave 71.2, European Opinion Research Group, Jan 2010, Q42.14.





## REFLECTIONS

Galatians Chapter 4, Verse 4 has the interesting phrase, "When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman ...". What is "the fullness of time" which today we mark as 0 AD, even if Jesus may actually have been born a few years earlier?

During its 1100+ years (753 BC to 410 AD), Rome had gradually conquered what today we know as Italy and Sicily, expanding also to Africa and beyond. The real explosion into the whole Mediterranean area and western and northern Europe only began in earnest in the 100 years or so before Christ, under brilliant generals like Pompey, Crassus and Sulla, and then consolidated and expanded further by Julius Caesar and his successors.

By the time Christ was born, the broad footprint of the Roman Empire was fixed, although there was always fighting on the perimeters. Hence there was a degree of stability – the message of the new religion was not impeded by massive social or political upheaval. Roman creative technology had led to the making of quality roads (the foundations of routes of some still being evident in Britain today), so communicating and spreading the good news of a risen Christ was much easier than it would have been a century before.

There was also order in the Empire. Though Roman rule was resisted and often hated, there was firm political regulation and control, sufficient to allow a peace – "pax Romana" – in which new ideas (and a new religion) could flourish so long as it didn't interfere with the State. The seed could be widely sown, and was by the early Christians. The Jews might oppose it but pagan parts of the Empire were not always so minded. However, some Emperors blamed Christians for mal practice and disaster, and many paid the price of martyrdom in the first 3 centuries after Christ, mostly on trumped up charges of subversion by their opponents.

There were also many trade routes at that time; overseas commercial links were encouraged and often prospered. Transport was available to enable movement of goods – and people – fairly efficiently. Family life by and large flourished, and the opportunity to meet in homes was readily available. Naturally, the news of the resurrection took time to spread in an era without today's satellites, but by the time of the conversion of Emperor Constantine in 313 AD Christianity had reached most, if not all, of the Roman world.

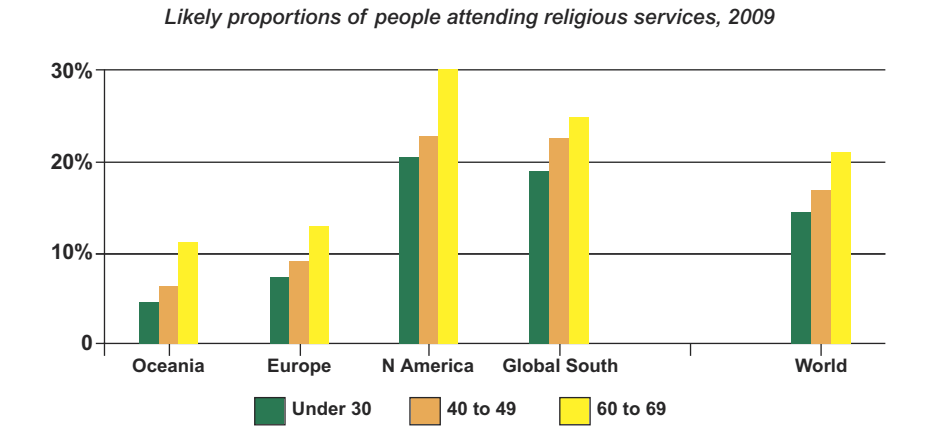
Rome began to fall apart in the 4th century (and the seeds were sown earlier). Middle class mutiny at the taxes being imposed, disloyalty among the armies, much moral defilement through open pornography, the people against the State, infighting and crass selfishness all took their toll, and while Rome staggered on after 410 AD, it was then but a microcosm of what it had been. 0AD was the perfect time, as is all God's timing, to launch the fulfilment of God's Eden promise to mankind. In the fullness of time, God did indeed send His Son, and His timing will be no less perfect in the coming again of His Son in power and glory.

**SOURCES:** *Rome in the Ancient World*, by David Potter, Thames & Hudson, 2009; *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, Michael Grant, Annenberg School Press, 1976.

## WORLDWIDE CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Figures measuring church attendance across the world are relatively rare, especially when broken down by age. However, the International Social Survey in 2009 asked people in 42 countries, about a fifth of all countries, how frequently they attended church. As over half the countries were located in Europe, and the others excluded India and China, this is not a reasonable selection, especially as only South Africa was included out of all the African countries. The three continents in the Global South (Asia, Latin America and Africa) have therefore been added together.

The results are still of some interest, however. As it is almost certain that, in most Western countries at least, people will tend to exaggerate their attendance, the percentages have been halved since several pieces of research indicate this is the approximate proportion that people overestimate their attendance. On this basis, 14% of those in their 20s said they attended at least once a month, 17% of those in their 40s and 21% of those in their 60s.



It comes as no great surprise that the percentage attending increases with age, something true across the world. Those in Oceania (Australia and New Zealand especially) attend even less than those in Europe. While church attendance in North America has held up much longer than in Europe, it is still proportionately greater than the other areas surveyed. Attendance in the Global South is relatively high but would be reduced if India and China with their enormous populations were included.

Worldwide overall perhaps a sixth attend a religious service at least once a month, a percentage which is slightly smaller than when measured by the World Values Survey of 2004 (when it was a fifth). Since some 33% of the world's population would call themselves Christian, this attendance proportion suggests a reasonable degree of commitment – and one much better than in the UK where the ratio is closer to one-seventh of those calling themselves Christian.

The chart also shows that the difference in the three continents of the Global North between those under 30 and those in their 40s is smaller than between those in their 40s and those in their 60s. This is true in the UK also, but it is not true in the Global South where the difference is smaller. Does this suggest that it is the next generation in the Global South that will be less committed to worship than their parents?

The chart also indicates that the broad age problem that afflicts British churchgoing is not unique to Britain, or, indeed, to Europe. This is a worldwide problem. It isn't just in the UK that the worldviews of younger people are different from those of older people! The last 50 years or so have seen a global cultural change, not just an English or a Western one. Passing on the faith has become a universal challenge!

**SOURCES:** Basic data taken from Table 1 in *Painters*, Volume 21, no 3, September 2011, bulletin of the Christian Research Association, Australia, in article by Rev Dr Philip Hughes; international comparisons from *Young people: are they less religious than older people?*, Marion Burkishmer, University of Geneva, Switzerland, April 2008.

## Teachers and Pupils

Teacher: Glenn, how do you spell "crocodile"?  
Glenn: K-R-O-K-O-D-I-A-L  
Teacher: No, that's wrong.  
Glenn: Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it.

Teacher: Winnie, name one important thing we have today that we didn't have 10 years ago.  
Winnie: Me!

Teacher: Millie, give me a sentence starting with "I."  
Millie: I is ...  
Teacher: No, Millie. Always say, "I am ..."  
Millie: All right. I am the ninth letter of the alphabet.

**SOURCE:** *Grove Jokes*, November 2011.

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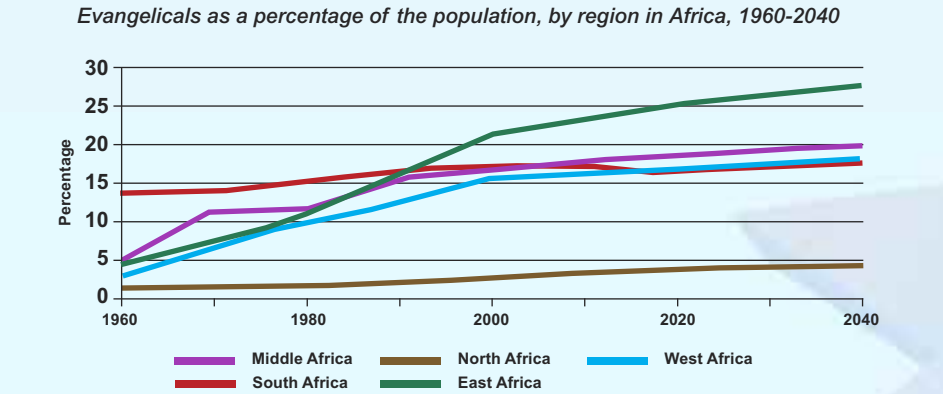
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## African Church Growth

The *Atlas of Global Christianity* helpfully broke down projected world Christian growth between 2010 and 2050 by the 21 UN Regions of the world, and not just by continent, and thereby highlighted five regions where the Christian proportion is expected to grow by at least 4% in this period. These are: (a) Eastern Europe where the Orthodox church is declining less fast than the general population, and thus increases its percentage of the population, (b) Eastern Asia which encompasses China, (c) South-eastern Asia focussing on the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia, (d) Eastern Africa, including especially the countries of Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, and (e) Middle Africa looking especially at the Democratic Republic of the Congo [DRC] and Angola.

Patrick Johnstone, in his new book *The Future of the Global Church*, looks at why there is growth in Africa (as well as elsewhere). The chart below gives the regional evangelical growth rates in Africa from 1960 to 2010 and forecast to 2040, based on the figures in *Operation World*, which defines "evangelical" more broadly than does the *Atlas*. While non-evangelicals may also be growing in Africa, the very large majority both of church life and church growth are in the evangelical sector, and the reasons for their growth will apply across the board.



In the more Muslim North Africa, evangelical Christians are relatively few. In West and Middle Africa there was much growth between 1960 and 2000, but this has slowed down and likely to continue that way. In South Africa, the proportion has increased a little, but is projected to stay much the same or even decline a little between 2010 and 2040. Only in East Africa has there been growth over the first 40-year half of this period which is forecast to continue into the second half although at only about half the previous rate.

The growth pattern in Johnstone's book for Middle Africa is thus less optimistic than in the *Atlas*, but he explains why: "Strong evangelical missions' effort leading to the planting of many different churches, which became the most stable component of societies reduced to chaos by war, economic collapse and political failure." He also explains the considerable growth in East Africa: "Massive growth as a result of revival; limited opposition from the Muslim minority."

Part of the growth comes through large families – in Uganda the average woman had 6.4 children in 2010, in DRC 6.1 and in Rwanda 4.6, for example (against a world average of 2.5). Life expectancy though is low – respectively 54, 49 and 55 for these 3 countries, with DRC especially low because of its poverty. Average income per person per annum was, respectively, £720, £180 and £690.

Generally, across the whole of Africa, the Christian percentage is set to move from 48% in 2010 to 53% by 2040, while the Muslim percentage remains about 40%. The percentage who belong to other religions or who are non-religious is thus very small, indeed the smallest proportion across all continents. Partly this is why African Christian leaders have so great a confidence in their churches, and in the message they proclaim, though recognising that persecution will come. A Malawian church leader put it thus in a sermon,

"We are now living in injury time, like in a football match. Any time from now, brethren, Jesus is coming to take His faithful with Him to God's Kingdom." As ever, we in the West need to capture this pragmatic adventurous proclamation.

**SOURCES:** *Atlas of Global Christianity*, edited by Todd Johnson and Kenneth Ross, Edinburgh University Press, 2009; excerpt from *The Future of the Global Church*, by Patrick Johnstone, in *Mission Frontiers*, Jan/Feb 2012, Page 17; article in *National Geographic* magazine, Nov 2011; quote from Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity*, OUP, 2006, Page 153.

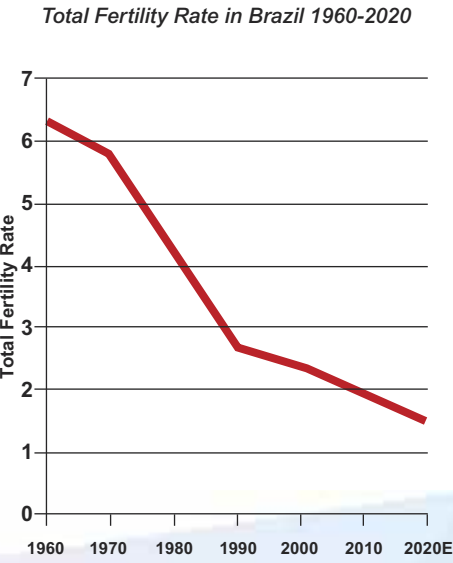
## Fertility Rates

Across the world fertility rates are falling. This is partly due to improved health availability, thus reducing infant and child mortality rates. If women in developing countries realise that more than half their children will survive beyond 5 years of age, they have fewer. Women are also becoming better educated, with more and more having attended school. As a consequence more wish to work, perhaps find a career, and, as a consequence, are less interested in starting a family.

Whereas in the developing world, the overall or total fertility rate (TFR) in 2010 was 2.73, by 2050 it is predicted to become 2.05. The TFR represents the number of children on average a woman has, with a stable replacement level figure taken as 2.1. In the developed world the TFR was 1.64 in 2010, well below replacement level, but forecast to become 1.81 by 2050, the increase being mainly due to the higher TFR seen among immigrants. In the UK, where the average is 2.0, for female immigrants the TFR is 2.5 whereas for white British women it is 1.9.

Brazil is an example of a country where the TFR has fallen rapidly, as the graph shows. By 2009 it was already below replacement level and may become much lower over the next decade. Many Brazilian women are quite clear that even in their

20s they do not want to have more children. "The factory is closed," one woman said! This drop in TFR is not unique to Brazil; half the world's population lives in countries where the TFR is below replacement level.



As the number of years a woman spends at school increases, a corresponding fall in the TFR results. In Brazil in 1960 a woman had, on average, just 2 years of schooling. That had increased to 3.5 years in 1980 and to 8.6 years by the turn of the century. Today 85% of teenage girls are in high school.

In 1980 women over 15 were 39% of Brazilian's workforce; by 2000 they were over half, 54%. With increasing economic benefits, other facilities become more widely used as well: in 1960 only 19% of Brazilian homes had electricity, but by 2000 95% had it. As a consequence, 90% of households were able to watch television, and in the Brazilian very popular soap operas, called novelas, 90% of female characters have only one child.

Brazil typifies the change that is taking place in many other developing countries. This change is taking place without political compulsion (unlike China with its one-child policy), but because many women prefer to work and earn money rather than stay at home bringing up a family, they often choose sterilization after having one or two children. They want "freedom," they say. Enter 21st century post-modernity!

It is because the TFR is falling that the world population, while still increasing, is increasing more slowly: between 1990 and 2000 global population increased by 15%; between 2000 and 2010 it increased 13%; and between 2010 and 2020 it is projected to increase only 9%. As a consequence of fewer children being born, the world's population is ageing – 11% of the population were over 60 in 2010, projected to double to 22% by 2050.

The church impact is that even fewer numbers of young people will be around to attend church and to balance increasing numbers of older people. While the Global South has more young people in church than the Global North, around the world a greater proportion of older people attend church than younger people. Globally the church is getting older too. Perhaps larger families were a good idea after all!

**SOURCES:** Article "Machisms" in *National Geographic* magazine, September 2011, Page 96; relevant website: *Operation World*, Jason Mandryck, WEC, 2010.



## Providing Facts for Forward Planning

### SNIPPETS

1) When the RMS Titanic sank on April 15th 1912, there was a loss of 68% of the 2,223 passengers on board.

2) Over the 20 years 1985 to 2005, 70% of those aged 0 to 9 in 1985 had left the church by the time they were aged 20 to 29 in 2005, greater than the loss of Titanic passengers.

3) A fifth, 20%, of the 35,000 non-denominational churches in the USA started between 2000 and 2010.

4) Seven in eight (88%) of those with a non-Christian faith in the UK agree that parents have a basic right to choose their child's school (and 75% Roman Catholics, 70% Church of England).

5) A 2011 survey found that more than half of the Orthodox Christians in Russia only attend church at Easter and Christmas, and never pray.

6) If those registering with Facebook (800 million worldwide) all lived in a single country it would be the third largest in the world.

7) 55% who were privately educated have a professional or managerial job compared with 29% who were state educated.

**SOURCES:** 1) [www.wikipedia](http://www.wikipedia); 2) *Pulling out of the Nosediver*, Christian Research, Page 121, Table 6.5; 3) and 5) *Religion Watch*, Nov/Dec 2011, Pages 2 and 5 respectively; 4) and 7) *British Social Attitudes Survey*, No 28, edited by Alison Park et al, 2011/12 edition, Sage and NatCen, Pages 68 and 40 respectively; 6) Market Research Society seminar, December 2011.

## The Future as seen in 2012

A number of journals and magazines have issued special editions featuring what the coming year might look like. What are the main features that they highlight?

Firstly, the **changing communication scene**. In 2011, 59% of American teenagers aged 12 to 17 used emails less than the year before, along with 18% of those aged 25 to 35, and 8% of those aged 35 to 44. This trend is expected to continue and to be seen in other parts of the western world, including the UK. Three-quarters of all emails, 73%, in 2011 were spam. Facebook (membership will reach 1 billion in 2012) and Twitter, being simpler, quicker and more responsive, are being used instead of emails. IM, or "instant messaging", allows people to stay in touch with each other much more easily. Half of UK 18-25s said they wanted to use their mobiles for social networking – personal space which they want to keep that way. Can individual Christians make electronic friendships which may give openings to share their faith? Global connectivity will extend yet further.

Secondly, **continuing political power struggles** in the Middle East, much of it including religious or ethnic conflict, seen as especially true in Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey, where some of the tension will be between different Shi'ite and Sunni Muslim groups. The continued use of more powerful, accurate and smaller drones, especially by the US, will not necessarily help. China's activities will ensure that world power shifts more eastwards, and with that the increasing loss of more of our Judaeo-Christian heritage.

In the UK, reported crime is decreasing, but will the riots of August 2011 re-appear in 2012? What will the Occupy Movement become?

Thirdly, demographically **we will continue to age**. The world is growing older; 12% will be over 60 in 2012. One person in six, 18%, of British people will be 65 or over in 2012, and 35% of all churchgoers. A greater proportion of older people means more living alone. Elderly single people are much more likely than families to shop locally than at out-of-town supermarkets, and to do so more frequently with smaller spends. Increasing localisation may well give local churches opportunities, while the increasing age of congregations has not yet resulted in decreased giving. Around 550,000 people will die in the UK this year, a fifth of them regular churchgoers; in England a third of the funerals will be taken by Anglican clergy (down from a half 20 years ago).

About 410,000 boys will be born in the UK in 2012, and on average they can expect to live till 2090. The 390,000 girls to be born can expect to live to 2094, and one in every 80 is likely to be a centenarian, living to 2112. Of these 800,000 births, just over 10,000 will die in their first year (half as many would have died 30 years ago), and more than a quarter of a million will be baptised (across all denominations). Probably 320,000 will have joined a church before they are 15 in 2027, but less than 100,000 of these will still be attending church by the time they are 30 in 2042. We have more deaths and people leaving the church for other reasons than long-term joiners.

About two-fifths of the girls will not have children themselves as adults, even though perhaps half will be married by the time they are 30, with at least a quarter cohabiting, and 10% lone parents. Their first marriage will last 11 years on average, and of those who cohabit, half will have married after 5 years, a fifth will still be cohabiting, and 30% will have separated. Those who do become parents will usually have just two children. By 2040 only about a quarter of the population will be living in a rural, coastal or developing area, while half will live in an urban area.

Fourthly, **family life will continue to change**. While the number getting married in the UK is likely to continue at around the 260-270,000 mark (down from the 314,000 recent peak in 2004), the number seeing marriage as the natural way to live together is decreasing among both young people and (if American research is valid in the UK) among those who do not go to University. In the States 45% of those without degrees declared "marriage obsolete" compared with 27% of those with degrees. This "gap" between the haves and the have-nots is likely to increase as children raised in a stable, two-parent married household are more likely to marry themselves, achieve educationally and go to Uni. George Barna puts it well: "Marriage no longer signifies the commencement of adult life; it is now a middle step in that journey, experimented with multiple lovers ... and perhaps even had a child or two."

Within this context, the number of children born outside marriage will inevitably rise – it is already 58% in Wales, 50% in Scotland, 47% in England (lower because of the number of births to the non-white community, many of which take place within a married relationship) and 40% in N Ireland. Births to those under 18 will probably total under 19,000 (less than 10 years ago but still high).

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