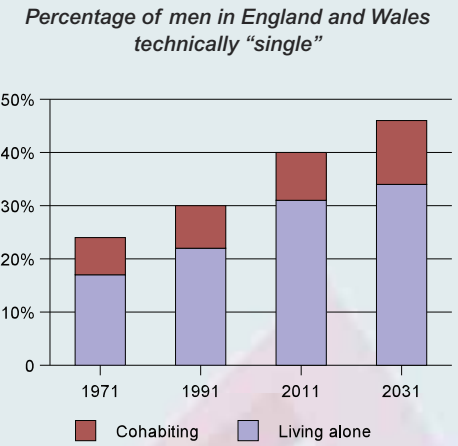


Single People

The number of single people (aged 16 and over) in the English and Welsh population is increasing. In 1971 the percentage of single men was 24% and the percentage of single women was 19%. In 1991 these percentages were respectively 30% and 23%, in 2011 they were respectively 40% and 33%, and are projected to become 46% and 40% respectively by 2031.

During this period the concept of "single" has changed. It is now defined as "never married" which can include cohabitation and single parenthood as well as actually living alone, that is, by yourself. Of the 40% never married males in 2011, a fifth (9%) were cohabiting, indicating that under the old definition of "single" 31% of men were single in 2011, a percentage likely to become 34% by 2031.

The chart shows that both the proportions cohabiting and living alone are increasing. The same is true for women, but the cohabiting percentages are higher than for men (especially for women under 24 years of age) and the percentage living alone is lower than for men. Women are also much more likely than men to be single parents. Cohabitation is increasingly likely to lead to parenthood. In 1991 16% of all births were among cohabiting couples; in 2008, that had almost doubled to 30%.



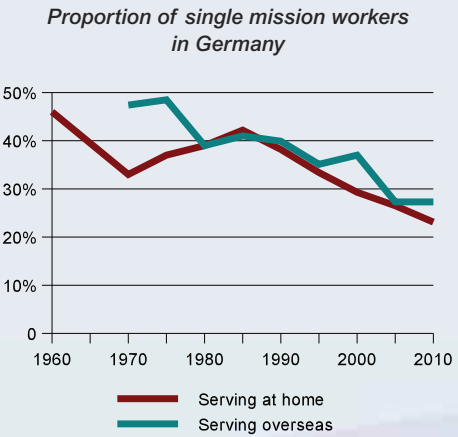
Singleness in the more usually understood concept of living alone is not just increasing in Britain. It is increasing throughout Western Europe (25% of the population in 1980 forecast to rise to 32% by 2010), and, indeed, across the entire world, although Europe has the highest percentage. Although this is a global phenomenon the reasons vary.

More are disinclined to marry at all as in many countries the social and economic advantages of marriage (financial security, sexual relations, a stable relationship) can now be found outside the nuptial bed. Many more women are preferring to establish their career either before or instead of matrimony. Also, with higher longevity, bereaved spouses are often living longer than previously. The decline of marriage is also seen in a lowering of the birth rate, especially so in Asia.

Christian experience (as seen among active churchgoers) is usually very different from the non-Christian world. Far fewer Christian couples cohabit than in the general population; very few single parents attend church (unless they are single because of bereavement). Single people, mostly single women, often have served as mission

workers in church or Christian agencies. In the 1960s in the UK it was often assumed that about a third of mission workers were single, the other two-thirds married couples, but this was never measured. A study of AOG missionaries in 1999 found 16% were single.

German mission agencies have kept details of marital status and the graph shows the percentage who were single by both those serving overseas and at home. It can be seen that both sets of percentages vary, but the overseas proportion is frequently higher than the home proportion (their averages being 37% and 33% respectively). In both cases, though, the proportion of single people serving has declined since 1985, the proportions in 2010 being closer to a quarter than a third.



Is service alone out of choice or out of necessity? John Stott said it was because he could serve the Lord more undividedly. Some are single because they cannot find a suitable (Christian) partner, and there are more women than men in this position. In some societies, being unmarried still incurs a social stigma but in the Christian context, the dedicated service of a considerable number of single men and women has played a vital part in the worldwide extension of God's Kingdom.

SOURCES: Website of the Office for National Statistics; articles in *The Economist*, 11th and 25th August, 2012, Pages 67 and 50; article in *Evangelikale Missiologie*, 2nd quarter, 2012, Page 69; *Religious Trends* No 3, 2002/2003, Christian Research, Table 3.8.4.

Marital Status of Churchgoers and Population								
Sample Group	Year	Single %	Single Parent %	Married %	Cohab- iting %	Divorced/ Separated %	Widowed %	Base (=100%)
Anglicans in Kent	2000	<- 15%	>-	63	2	4	16	2,656
Evangelicals in Eng	2012	17	½	71	1	4½	6	811
Population E & W	2008	22	5	49	10	8	6	47 mn

As a consequence, the church's ministry lacks comprehensiveness, as several sizeable groups in the general population are severely under-represented among those who attend church. As these groups (young singles, single parents and cohabiting couples) are growing in the general population, the church is increasingly less relevant to a significant proportion of the population. One Anglican church in Cheshire uses baptism to reach some of these – it celebrates with the cohabiting couple the birth of their first child and suggests they invite their friends that particular Sunday. Most do so, and some join the church subsequently.

SOURCES: *Living the Christian Life*, Langham International Partnership, 2012; Deanery Reviews of Erith, Sidcup and Orpington, Diocese of Rochester, Christian Research, 1999-2001; Office of National Statistics web-site accessed October 2012.

Books and reports received	Quotation
<i>Manse Children:</i> Some Indicators towards their Adult Faith, Ken Sykes, June 2000, revkensykes@netscape.net	Everything can change in a blink of an eye. But don't worry, God never blinks.
<i>The Rebirth of the Church</i> , Eddie Gibbs, Applying Paul's Vision for Ministry in our Post-Christian World.	It's OK to be angry with God. He can take it.
"... Psychological Type Scales among Canadian Baptist Youth," Bruce Fawcett et al, <i>Pastoral Psychology</i> , Vol 60, 2011.	Friends are the family we choose for ourselves.
	God loves you because of who God is, not because of anything you did or didn't do.
	SOURCE: Extract from <i>45 Lessons in Life</i> , He Yan, Norvegija-Siauvės pašvaistė, November 2009.

MARITAL STATUS OF CHURCHGOERS

The marital status of churchgoers is not often measured. A series of studies among Anglican churchgoers in the Diocese of Rochester 12 or so years ago gives one useful comprehensive measure of nearly 2,700 people, and another study of over 800 evangelical churchgoers has just become available. The Table gives details of both studies and also gives the figures for the general population, all data being for those aged 16 and upwards. The Anglican congregations had a far higher percentage of widowed people than did the evangelical churches studied.

The proportion of the adult population in England and Wales who are married has been declining for some years, becoming just under half (49%) for the first time in 2008, and is projected (by the Office of National Statistics (ONS)) to continue to decrease slightly to 42% over the next 25 years. This is the first time married people have become a minority since records began in 1837.

A tenth, 10%, of the population cohabit (which is not counted as marriage by ONS), but twice as many are single and have never been married (27%), though of this 27%, 5% are single parents. Others in the population have been married, but are now divorced (8%) or widowed (6%). The handful of people in civil partnerships (less than 0.1%) are included in the 27%.

The percentage of married people in the population, 49%, is massively different from the percentage of married people among those who attend church in Britain, which in the 2012 survey sample was over two-thirds of the total, 71%. Those no longer married who are divorced (4½%) are fewer, but the proportion of widows (6%) is the same as the general population. Single parents in church account for only ½% of the total, and those cohabiting just 1%.

The church is therefore generally strong in married couples, but has far fewer single people, cohabiting couples or single parents. Of the singles who are churchgoers, many are older unmarried women rather than younger people in their 20s. In the general population half (52%) of all the single people are those aged 16 to 24, an age-group markedly absent from many churches.

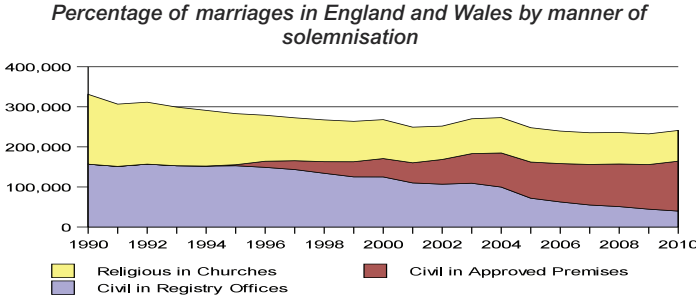
Married Cohabiting Divorced/ Widowed Base				
%	%	Separated	%	(=100%)
63	2	4	16	2,656
71	1	4½	6	811
49	10	8	6	47 mn

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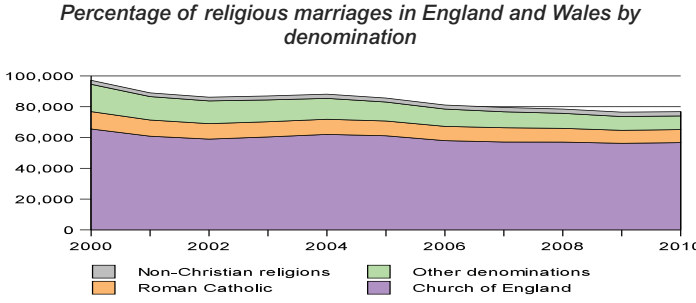
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	SOURCE: Extract from <i>45 Lessons in Life</i> , He Yan, Norvegija-Siauvės pašvaistė, November 2009.

Religious Marriages

It was in 1992 that the number of Registry Office weddings first exceeded the number in a Church, and it was in 2005 when the number in Approved Premises first exceeded both the number in Registry Offices and Churches. In that year, the number of marriages in Church again exceeded the number in Registry Offices. In 2010, the most recent year for firm figures, a sixth, 16%, of marriages were in Registry Offices, a third, 32%, in Churches, and just over half, 52%, in Approved Premises. The graph shows how much, and how quickly, the latter have gained popularity.



The Office for National Statistics (ONS), responsible for the marriage numbers, breaks the figures down by Church denomination. The proportion of religious marriages being held in Church of England and Church in Wales churches has increased from two-thirds, 66%, in 1990 to nearly three-quarters, 74%, in 2010. The second chart shows the breakdown by denomination. There was a slight resurgence in the number of religious marriages in 2003 and 2004, but although the number has declined since then, it has held steady the last few years.



It has been estimated that perhaps only one in 10 of marriages solemnised in churches is between regular churchgoers, which suggests that the beauty of many Anglican church buildings as well as traditionalism continue to draw couples who choose that rather than go to an Approved Premise. This presents an opportunity, and research on mid-week ministry suggests perhaps 25% may start churchgoing as a consequence of their wedding.

There is a key difference between religious and civil ceremonies. Four-fifths, 81%, of religious marriages were between those marrying for the first time (in 2008, the latest figure), against only 54% of civil ceremonies. An eighth, 12%, of religious marriages are where it is the first marriage for one party, against a quarter, 24%, of civil ceremonies. This leaves the percentage where it is remarriage for both parties at 7% in religious ceremonies and 22% in civil ceremonies.

SOURCES: Office of National Statistics web-site, accessed October 2012; *UK Church Statistics*, Page 13.6.

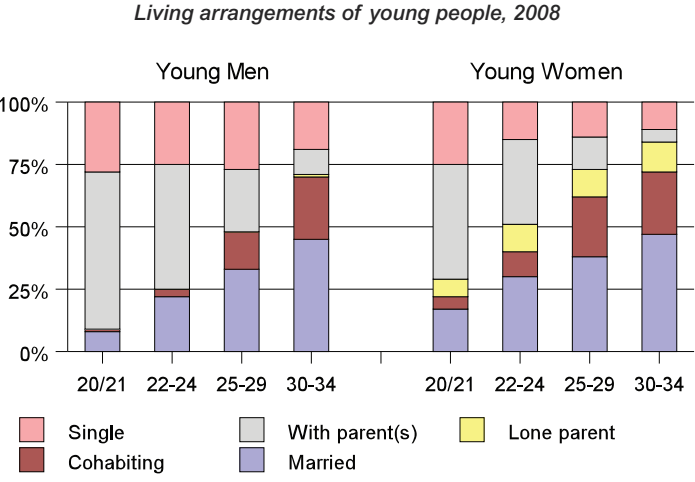


Home for Christmas

In one of Bodi Thoene's stories, set in Germany during the Second World War, a pastor is arrested and imprisoned for preaching against the Nazi regime. He is tortured, kept in solitary, but in one final instance meets with other prisoners when they are told they will be executed the following day, 25th December. The Pastor looks at another inmate, and simply says, "Home for Christmas."

Many people who have long since left home to set up their own families, or because of their job, will often seek to come "home for Christmas" or at least make some kind of personal contact with parents, relatives and others. This is part of what Christmas is all about.

It is perhaps worth remembering, however, that there are an increasing number who may well be "home for Christmas" when they might prefer not to be! These are those, aged 20 to 34, who have not yet been able to obtain affordable housing, or a relevant occupation, and so are still living with their parents. The number has increased 28% in the last 15 years in the UK, to a total of 3.2 million in 2012. The increase is not due to more people in this age bracket – the size of that part of the population has stayed static in this period. It is partly due to increasing unemployment (20% of those aged 18-24 were unemployed in 2012, up from 13% in 2008). High rents and very tight mortgage criteria are also causing even employed young people still to live at home, two-thirds, 68%, of young adults still at home being in employment.



While the proportion still living at home diminishes as young people get older, some 10% of men aged 30 to 34 were living with their parents in 2008, and 5% of women in the same age bracket. Those with university degrees are more likely to stay at home longer, an Essex researcher has found. Opinion polls indicate that while being "home for Christmas" is very special for some, for others, family relationships are the most stressful part of the Christmas celebrations!

SOURCES: *UK Church Statistics*, 2011, Page 13.5, quoting *Population Trends* No 139; Office of National Statistics website; article in *The Economist*, 13th October, 2012, Page 36.

Continued from page 1	
Although our use of the EVS data and our summation of it in the NISE tends to obscure national variations across Europe, these nevertheless are a crucial element in representing more accurately the nuances and variances in levels of secularity across Europe. It is probably accurate to describe contemporary Europe as simultaneously experiencing "pre-secularity," secularity, and "post-secularity."	
While Europe as a whole may be seen as increasingly secular, there are a surprising number of mentions of God, the church and religion in the constitutions of individual countries. Denmark, Greece, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Malta all have constitutional state churches, while others such as Sweden, Finland and Spain have formally separated (or are in the process of doing so) although some recognition of the relationships remain. France, Kosovo and Serbia & Montenegro define themselves as a "secular state" whereas some countries compromise – for example while Albania has no "official religion," it references instead "faith in God and/or other universal values." Ireland, the Ukraine and Poland have the most overtly "Christian" preambles to their constitutions, with mentions of the Trinity (Ireland) and "our culture rooted in the Christian heritage" (Poland).	
Our work has added to the debate implied by the question in the title to this brief article. Whilst it points to the widespread impact of secularising policies and programmes, it allows some space for exploring minority reports and resists the prevailing tendency to paint the future as a secular future. God does indeed hold the future!	
Darrell Jackson can be contacted at darrell.jackson@virgin.net	

Keeping People in Church

An Anglican minister in a town in the south of England helped to build his congregation to about 200 before he retired. A new, younger, minister took his place. As often happens, a number left to go elsewhere but over the next ten years the new man saw the remaining numbers double to 300 people. At one stage it was "the fastest growing church" in the area.

However, a congregational survey showed that, of the extra 150 attendees, just 20 came because they had been converted through the church's ministry. The remainder, some 85%, had transferred from other local churches mainly because of the extensive children's work which had been started. While of course they were made most welcome, in fact the gain for the Kingdom was actually quite small. This raises the issue of how to engage in successful evangelism, but it also, as far as the other churches were concerned, showed that keeping people today is almost as important as reaching people.



Some research has been undertaken on what helps keep people attached to a particular congregation. These are:

- The opportunity to grow spiritually (especially women)
- A regular sense of God's presence in worship (especially young people)
- Helpful teaching (especially men)
- A caring congregation (especially women)
- Strategic interests outside the church (especially men).

American research looking especially at those aged 18 to 29 asked those with a Christian background which of the following had been true for them:

- 33% Had a close adult friend in the church
- 28% Learned how Christians can positively contribute to society
- 26% Learned to view my gifts and passions as part of God's calling
- 24% Better understood my purpose in life through the church
- 22% Found ways of serving the poor through the church

None of these percentages is very high, the average being only 27%. They might be summed up as "becoming a better disciple." Obviously, these statements show some of the reasons why young adults leave the church. It means that nearly three-quarters of the vital group of those in their 20s did not find the church challenging them in their discipleship – and it left them feeling dissatisfied. The earlier (British) research showed that knowing God's presence was important for young people; the later research shows that knowing God's purpose is also critical.

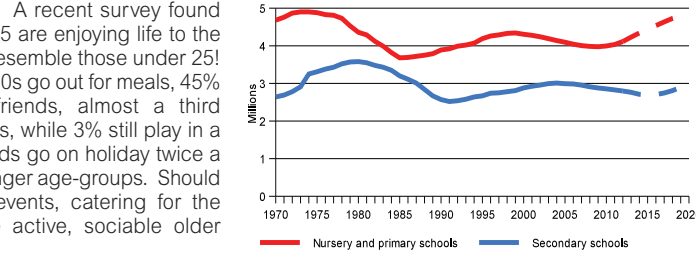
In another town in southern England, a minister is finding that helping people to be part of a regular discipleship group is key to their involvement in the church, growth in the faith and outreach to others. In a recent conversation he said to me, "We all need to be disciplined, and have someone who checks on our spiritual walk. I meet with someone every two weeks." His congregation is also growing, and it includes both those finding Christ and those maturing in Christ.

SOURCES: *Larger Churches*, Christian Research Report, July 2001; *You Lost Me*, David Cinnamon, Baker Books, 2011, Page 119; personal conversations with individual ministers.

SNOWFLAKES

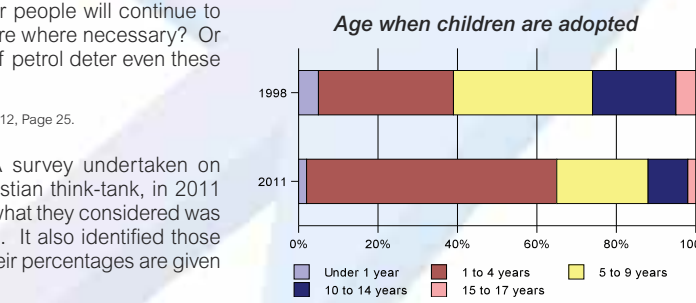
Women more religious. The Mexican Census confirms that women are more likely to be religious. Only 4% of the population say they have no religion, and of these just 40% are women. The majority of the adult population, 88%, are Catholic, and of these 52% are women. Of the remaining 8%, covering all other religious groups, 55% are women. While the average family size was 3, Mormons and non-Christians had an average of 5 children, while Traditional Protestants and Seventh Day Adventists averaged 2.

SOURCE: Article in *Review of Religious Research*, Vol 54 No 3, Sept 2012, Page 320.



SOURCE: *Saga Magazine*, October 2012, Page 113.

Older people driving more. In 1997 those in their 60s drove an average of 3,100 miles per year. In 2010 they were driving an average of 3,900 miles a year, a 26% increase. In 1997 those aged 70 or over drove an average of 1,100 miles per annum, but in 2010 they were driving an average of 1,800 miles, an increase of 60%. These figures should be compared with the average mileage in 1997 across all groups of 3,600 miles, which has reduced to 3,400 miles in 2010, a drop of 6%. Does that mean that older people will continue to attend church, driving there where necessary? Or will the increasing price of petrol deter even these committed drivers?



SOURCE: *Adoptions in England and Wales, 2011*, Office for National Statistics, August 2012.

"Sex" on the web. Such is the dominance of sex on the web that, if 100 people accessed a different reference to it every minute, working non-stop day and night, it would take them 59 years to get through the 3.1 billion entries! In one recent abuse scandal, half of the culprits said that watching pornography had influenced them. Is your church teaching or acting in any way to expose, denounce and safeguard, especially young people, from the influence of such degrading material?

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REFLECTIONS

This story comes from a black township in South Africa, where the weary parish priest found that he had to attend the final part of a school play during the last week of Advent.

After the Wise Men had come and gone, I noticed the arrival of three more strange characters – one was dressed in rags, hobbling along with the aid of a stick. The second was naked except for a tattered pair of shorts, and was bound in chains. The third was the most weird – he had a whitened face, an unkempt grey wig and sported an Afro shirt.

As they approached, a chorus of men and women cried out: “Close the door, Joseph, they are thieves and vagabonds coming to steal all we have.”

But Joseph said: “Everyone has a right to this child – the poor, the rich, the unhappy, the untrustworthy. We cannot keep this child to ourselves. Let them enter.”

The men entered and stood staring at the child. Joseph picked up the gifts that the Wise Men had left. To the first strange man, he said, “You are poor: take this gold and buy what you need. We will not go hungry.”

To the second he said, “You are in chains and I don’t know how to release you. Take this myrrh – it will heal your wounds on your wrists and ankles.”

And to the third, he said: “Your mind is in anguish. I cannot heal you. Maybe the aroma of this frankincense will soothe your troubled soul.”

Then the first man spoke to Joseph. “Do not give me this gift. Anyone who finds me with gold will think that I’ve stolen it. And sadly in a few years, this child will end up as a criminal, too.”

The second man said, “Do not give me this ointment. Keep it for the child. One day he will be wearing chains like these.”

And the third man said, “I am lost, I have no faith at all. In the country of my mind there is no God. Let the child keep the incense. He will lose his faith in his father, too.”

While Mary and Joseph covered their faces, the three men addressed the child. “Little one you are not from the land of gold and frankincense. You belong to the country of want and disease. You belong to our world. Let us share our things with you.”

The first man took off his ragged shirt. “Take these rags. One day, you will need them when they tear the garments off your back and you walk naked.”

The second man said: “When I remove these chains, I will put them at your side. One day you will wear them, and then you will really know the pain of humanity.”

The third man said: “I give you my depression, my loss of faith in God, and in everything else. I can’t carry it any longer. Carry my grief and loss with your own.”

The three men then walked back out into the night. But the darkness was different. Something had happened in the stable. Their blind pain was diminishing. There had been a kind of epiphany.

They were noticing the stars now.

This is an extract from *Unmasking God* by Daniel J O’Leary, Columba, 2011.

World Christian Trends

In a wide-ranging review of World Christian trends, Prof Todd Johnson, who is responsible for the World Christian Database [WCD] at Gordon-Conwell University, predicts that by 2025 there could be 55,000 denominations worldwide, instead of the 41,000 in existence now. Some have no more than 100 members, while others have millions; all are listed on the WCD. Most of the denominations are classified as either Independent or Protestant.

In 2010, he estimated the number of Christians worldwide as 2,293 million, up from 2,265 million a year previous. This increase of 28 million was made up of:

- 45 million births
- 16 million conversions
- less 22 million deaths
- less 11 million who left the faith.

As the number of deaths in the church worldwide exceed the number of conversions (a situation which is also true in the UK), the increasing number is due to those being born as Christians, something not included in the usual British statistics. (Determining the number of “Christian” births in Britain would in any case be difficult, and it might be better to take the number who are christened – 267,000 in 2010, or 34% of all births).

The language spoken by the most Christian native speakers worldwide is Spanish, followed by English and Portuguese. While much evangelism takes place, recent research suggests 86% of Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists do not personally know a single Christian.

Reaching those of other faiths needs to take account of the sub-groups (or denominations) within each religion, and Todd Johnson would say that greater global co-operation is needed to reach them and the many minority non-Christian religions which are often overlooked (like the Baha’is and Zoroastrians).

It is also increasingly important to focus on urban evangelism, as more than half of the world’s population now lives in cities. He would also say that it is important to deepen the knowledge of world religions in church congregations. A 2009 UK survey found that only half of churches regularly had any external mission input during a year’s teaching. Todd would say that “many Christians seem to fear religiously diverse communities,” and this may well also be true in the UK. Another recent UK survey highlighted the loss of confidence among British churchgoers in explaining their faith to others.

Todd also exposes many Christians’ lack of Biblical knowledge and quotes an American survey by George Barna which showed that “most churchgoing adults reject the accuracy of the Bible, the existence of Satan, claim that Jesus sinned, see no need to evangelise and believe that good works are a key way of persuading God to forgive their sins”! British surveys suggest we are moving in a similar direction.

SOURCES: Article by Todd Johnson and Albert Hickman “Religious Demography and Mission Strategy” in *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*, Vol 29, No 1, Spring 2012, Pages 13f; *Mission Workers* in the UK, Brierley Consultancy, 2009; *Living the Christian Life*, Brierley Consultancy, 2012.

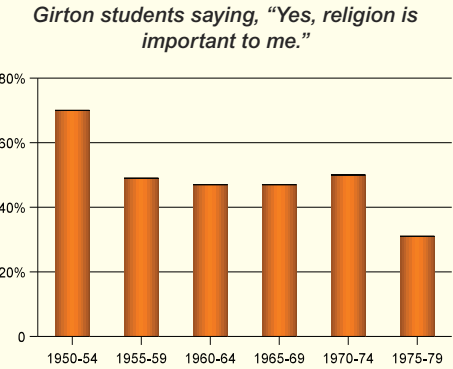
University Challenge

In his encyclopaedic book, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*, Hugh McLeod, Professor of Church History at the University of Birmingham, gives an account of the decline in churchgoing which started in earnest that decade. It is a fascinating read, and in it he quotes from various surveys of university students. One of these, carried out in the 1990s, was of 750 former students at Girton College, Cambridge.

He suggests three reasons from this study why churchgoing numbers dropped in the second half of the 20th century. The first was the rise in pre-marital sex by students attending church. Between 1950 and 1954 24% who said religion was important to them had had pre-marital sex against 57% for whom religion was not important (average 33%). In 1961/62 these percentages were, respectively, 30% and 82% (average 57%), and in 1971/72 50% and 75% (average 63%). Prof McLeod says that those with no church involvement had “fewer inhibitions” and quotes some with church involvement who felt “guilty” about having such sex.

The second reason was the competition that church had with new free-time activities, especially sport. Marriage also played its part if a woman married a non-Christian man. Sunday was often their only free day, and “a chance to go out on the motor-cycle.”

The third reason which Prof McLeod traces is the decline in religious upbringing. Between 1950 and 1954, 58% of Girton entrants had attended church right through their teenage years. By 1971/72 it was only 32%, and in 1975-78 it was 37%. The “gradually diminishing” church attendance was due, he says, to the “rapid changes in socialisation in the 1970s.” One other aspect is the decreasing importance that now-adult ex-students attached to religion when they started at Girton, which is shown in the graph. A study of Sheffield students shows a similar trend.



All three reasons continue to be true in the 21st century. The first two are effectively outside the church’s control, but unlocking the importance of the Christian faith in the home can still occupy a major place in church teaching today. Of the 70% in 1950-54 saying religion was important to them, shown in the graph, 46% said (now as adults in their 60s) that they were still involved with religion and church when interviewed in the late 1990s. The Proverb, “Train up a child in the way he should go ...” [Prov 22:6] has timeless application.

SOURCE: *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*, Hugh McLeod, OUP, 2010, various pages.

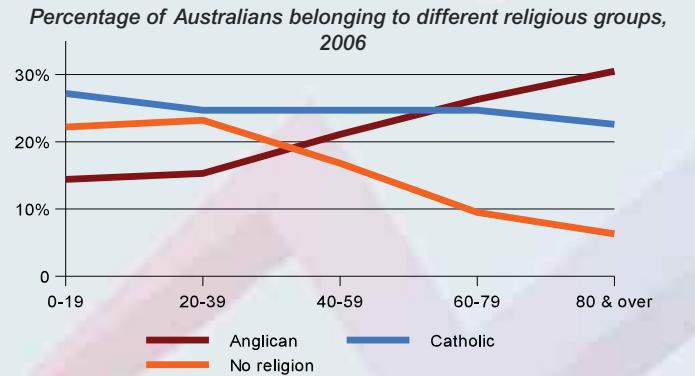
Religious Diversity in Australia

Unlike the British population censuses, the Australian censuses have included a question about religion for many years. The consequence is that it is possible to track the proportions belonging to a given religion or denomination over time. A recent publication by the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], taking “Baby Boomers” as those aged 50 to 59 in 2006, looked at the percentage of them who were Anglican, Catholic or of No religion over the previous 30 years, obviously taking into account that they were only 20 to 29 in 1976.

The result is interesting. 28% of those in their 20s in 1976 were Anglican, 22% Catholic and 12% had no religion. Thirty years later, 27% were Anglican, 23% Catholic and 16% had no religion, percentages which had varied only marginally across those 30 years. The result is significant as it suggests that the religious worldview this generation had in their twenties has remained with them all their life (or life so far). That replicates pioneer research by the European Values Survey [EVS] in the 1980s in this area which asked relevant questions across many countries.

It underlines the key, and lasting, importance of the values taught by youth workers among young people in our churches, and the political worry of the implications of those who hold low religious values in their 20s when they reach leadership in different areas of society.

The ABS analysis also looked at the question another way. It noted the percentage affiliating with the same 3 groups by different generations as at 2006. The result is shown in the graph, and indicates that older Australians in 2006 affirmed Anglicanism much more than did younger Australians (30% for those 80+ to 15% those aged 0-19), whereas the percentage accepting Catholicism hardly varied. Older people were much less likely to embrace No religion than younger people (6% to 22%).



This indicates that over time Australian religious views have changed with those currently in their 20s (or younger) diverging from the views of their parents or grandparents. This also was something verified by the EVS, and while in some ways the conclusion might seem obvious, in this case it is supported by factual evidence.

The Australian analysis is also important in showing that one religious commitment at least (Catholicism) has not significantly changed over the different generations. What makes Catholicism different from Anglicanism and those holding no religion? A possible answer lies in the “authority” of the church in all matters of faith and action, though this may well be called into question on such issues as contraception and abortion.

SOURCES: *Religious Affiliation Statistics*, ABS, circulated by the National Alliance of Christian Leaders, June 2012; *Contrasting Values in Western Europe*, Unity, Diversity and Change, Stephen Harding et al, Macmillan and EVS, 1986.

Charity Shops prosper

There are over 9,000 charity shops in Britain which in 2011 had a combined sales of £974 mn, up from £940 mn in 2010. They get an 80% rates discount, most do not pay for the majority of their stock, and staffing costs are lower, as many use volunteers. Four of the largest chains are detailed in the Table.

SOURCE: Article in *Management Today*, September 2012, Page 56f.

African Evangelicals

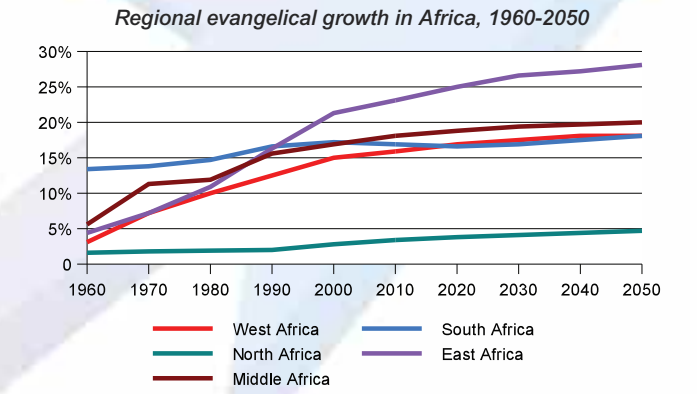
Africa’s land mass is much larger than is commonly realised. One could lay on top of it all of Europe, the United States and Mexico, the Indian sub-continent, China and Japan and still have some room to spare! In spite of its size, it is the poorest continent but is the continent where the church is growing fastest.

This is largely due to the explosive growth of Evangelical Christianity, especially since 1960 when the European colonial powers relinquished their empires and Christianity became indigenous.

Much of this growth is south of a line stretching from Liberia on the west coast through Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, Ethiopia to Somalia on the east coast. North of this rough line the large majority of the respective populations are Muslim (90%+), fused with traces of ethnic religions which are still strong in a few countries including South Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya especially.

However, evangelical growth is traceable across all the five UN-designated regions of Africa as shown in the graph projected to continue in the future.

In North Africa the growth comes from Berber peoples coming to Christ and from northward migrations. South Africa, unlike the rest of the continent, has seen very little growth since 1960. In Middle Africa, many missions planted strong evangelical churches which became the most stable component of societies reduced to chaos by war, economic collapse and political failure.



West Africa has seen slower growth as a result of French colonial and, later, Muslim-majority opposition, but boosted through revivals in Ghana and Nigeria.

In East Africa (21 countries of which Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania are the largest) there has been massive growth as a result of revival and limited opposition from Muslim minorities. Such growth is likely to continue in the future although at a slower rate. Some Christians are being targeted by Islamists in N E Kenya.

Many of Africa’s problems can be related to the colonial carve-up of its land 130-150 years ago by colonial powers, which in post-colonial Cold War politics supported dictators, condoned corruption, promoted unfair trade policies and provided inappropriate aid. Amidst this chaos the evangelical churches have continued to grow; such may differ from the rigid colonial models originally established but their vibrancy now needs to be challenged and channelled into reaching the areas north of that imaginary line from Liberia to Somalia.

SOURCES: Article in *The Economist*, 20th October, 2012, Page 49; *The Future of the Global Church*, Patrick Johnstone, WEC and Authentic, 2011, Pages 146/7.



Providing Facts for Forward Planning

SNIPPETS

1) “The lowest estimate for the total number of stars in the visible universe is a ‘mere’ 10 billion trillion and it could be much more.”

2) 50% of American women say they struggle with disorganisation and 42% with inefficiency, but only 13% with envy and 8% with lust.

3) Top selling book in the last 14 years, when records began, is Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code*, with 5.2 million copies (£28m). Top selling author is J K Rowling (£238m). Fastest selling book is *Fifty Shades of Grey* by E L James (outsold Harry Potter in speed of sales, not number).

4) A single Jay can collect 3,000 acorns in a month, said an observer in Eltham Palace Gardens, S E London.

5) Migrating Red Admiral butterflies can travel 250 miles a day.

6) A third of UK night-clubs have closed in the last 5 years, partly because pubs can now sell alcohol after 11.00pm, and partly because young people have less money to spend.

7) The number of e-books sold will overtake the number of hardbacks by 2014 and paperbacks by 2016 according to a survey presented at the 2012 London Book Fair (estimated respectively 41%, 19% and 40% in 2016).

SOURCES: 1) Prof Tony Lane, Historical Theology, Brunel University, in *LST Insight*, Vol 2, Issue 2, Page 11; 2) *Barna Update*, www.barna.org/culture-articles, downloaded 28th August, 2012; 3) *The Bookseller*, 7th September 2012, Pages 19,21; 4 & 5) Article in *USA Sources*, Sept 2012, No 47, Page 12; 6) Article in *The Economist*, 27th October, Page 26; 7) *The Bookseller* magazine, 20th April 2012, Page 8.

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Is Europe secular or Christian?

Rev Dr Darrell Jackson, Senior Lecturer in Missiology, Morling College, Sydney, and Melbourne University, Australia

During 2009 and 2010, the UK Nova Research Centre (where I served as founding Director between 2007 and 2011) began to identify ways of measuring secularity across Europe. We selected six items from the European Values Survey [EVS], first conducted in 1980 and repeated in 1989, 1999 and 2008. The items selected included responses to these questions:

- 1) Do you believe in God?
- 2) How important is religion in your life?
- 3) Are you religious, non-religious or atheist?
- 4) How often do you attend religious services?
- 5) How often do you pray?
- 6) How much confidence do you have in the church?

Responses were available from between 1,000 to 2,000 people for each of the 47 countries surveyed. The scope of the questions provided a high level of confidence that this could be considered a comprehensive measure of secularity across Europe. A summary version of these responses enabled us to construct a “Nova Index of Secularity in Europe” (or NISE!).

It was also important for us to be able to make crucial distinctions between the way that we were using various closely related terms. We took the view that we should distinguish between the philosophy or ideology (secularism), its associated socio-cultural phenomenon (secularity) and the social conditions (secularization) that are the result of constant and consistent secular policies and politics.

From the NISE measures we believe that the 2008 data points to a “developing post-Christendom identity”, characteristic

Our primary interest was in trying to illustrate the varying levels of secularity across Europe. It’s certainly true that the historical development of ideological and philosophical secularism in Europe has been welcomed by relatively few of its theologians and Christian leaders. Many tend to see it as the antithesis, even as corrosive, of historic Christian faith. A number of western theologians in the 1960s and 1970s accepted the view that the shifting social context pointed to a secular future and attempted to re-frame an understanding of Christian faith and theology accordingly.

So, John Robinson’s *Honest to God* (1963), Harvey Cox’s *The Secular City* (1965), and Peter Berger’s *The Sacred Canopy* (1967) each dealt in a similar way with the sense that western Europe was increasingly secular. Other theologians, including Lesslie Newbigin, attempted to articulate a more critical response (for example, his *Honest Religion for Secular Man* (1996)) although even Newbigin left unchallenged the basic assumption that secularization was the future of western societies.

Interestingly, the missionary engagements of faith with the futures of secularism was a challenge that Newbigin left for others, following his death in 1998. One of the best examples of this has been Andrew Kirk’s work, most importantly in his 2007 book *The Future of Reason, Science and Faith*. Following Modernity and Postmodernity (which is a very demanding read).

Nova Index of Secularity in Europe

Rank	Country	NISE value
1	Czech Rep.	3.61
2	Germany	3.39
3	France	3.27
4	UK	3.21
5=	Belgium	3.16
5=	Finland	3.16
7	Spain	3.05
8	Hungary	3.04
9	Netherlands	2.98
10	Denmark	2.93
11	Bulgaria	2.79
12	Albania	2.72
13	Russian Fed.	2.65
14	Croatia	2.51
15	Ireland	2.30
16	Italy	2.28
17	Portugal	2.26
18	Greece	2.13
19	Poland	2.03
20	Romania	1.84

of people who have previously been, or who remain, “Christian” but who presently have no institutional affiliation (or a very diluted form of it). This is a shift from religiosity towards spirituality, not a shift from non-religiosity towards spirituality. The newly “spiritual” are not on a journey towards faith but are more likely to be on a journey away from church affiliation. Whether this data represents a deepening of secularity or a mutation of religiosity deserves closer and more rigorous attention and debate.

From the EVS data we have identified a markedly irreligious generation of 50-59 year olds, best characterised as “ideologically hostile” to religiosity. This generation is now beginning to retire from influential roles in the media, politics, education, and the arts. The havoc that these “lost generations” have wreaked – in constructing a narrative of hard secularism – may finally be waning. In contrast there is some evidence to suggest that the current generation of 20-29 year olds is less hostile to religion and religiosity, a generation that is best characterised as “benignly indifferent.” This more “open generation” may prove to be more amenable to creating the space necessary for a discussion of religion and religiosity within the media, politics, education, and the arts.

Continued on page 3