

Continued from page 1

religious body, though they may have certain religious beliefs of their own.

Some of those ticking “No Religion,” as well as some of those not answering the question at all, might still say they were “spiritual,” even if the meaning of such is indeterminate, since other research has shown that more people identify themselves as “spiritual” rather than “religious.” The increase seen in “No Religion” might suggest a more secular population, but only because “secular,” “spiritual” and “religion” lack any clear definition.

What does this mean?

What are the implications of these statistics for the church in the immediate future?

- The figures show how many deaths have occurred in the Christian community because of ageing and these will continue at a high level for a while as churchgoing generations of yesteryear die out. The proportion of churchgoers 65 and over is twice the proportion of this age-group in the population at large. Numbers of members and attenders therefore will continue to drop for the foreseeable future.
- The numbers converting to Christianity are far too small to match the number of deaths. Evangelistic efforts therefore need to increase very greatly if the enormous drop in numbers is to be rectified. Such, however, is hardly the right motive! We have the Great Commission to take the Gospel to the whole world, and this, and the future destiny of the millions in Britain, must surely be our deepest concern.

Peter Brierley

SOURCES: ONS Census releases on their website, 11th December 2012; various tables in *UK Church Statistics*, Brierley Consultancy, ADCB Publishers, Tonbridge, 2011; *Pulling out of the Nosedive*, Peter Brierley, Christian Research, London, 2006; website of Church of England statistics; article “Faith that won’t fit the mould” by Linda Woodhead in *The Tablet*, 15th December 2012; article “C of E forecast to shrink”, *FutureFirst*, October 2012.

See extra analysis enclosed with this issue of *FutureFirst*. If not enclosed, please email peter@brierleyres.com for a copy.

The Future in 2013

At the beginning of each year *The Economist* usually publishes a book with articles by experts in various fields foretelling developments, trends and events in the year ahead. There is a page given over to religious affairs and its summary for the coming year 2013 is as follows.

Much attention will focus on the enthronement of the 105th Archbishop of Canterbury, the Rt Rev Justin Welby, on 21st March. He knows he faces three key issues before he takes up the job – getting legislation for women bishops through the General Synod, coping with the government’s expected legislation on same-sex marriage, and trying to improve the church’s demographic image so that the problem of ageing becomes less acute.

The difficulties are widespread within England. The author of the piece, Edward Lucas, the International Editor of *The Economist*, writes “The typical Anglican parish will be older, smaller, shabbier and more female in 2013, with fewer services, less cash and an over-stretched ministry.” He writes of the Church of England, but much the same is true of the other denominations. Though



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“the evangelical (Anglican) parishes will remain lively and wealthy,” this may not be true of all evangelical non-Anglican ministries.

Catholics face the problem of a “remorseless decline” in the number of priests and parishioners, although not in Asia or Africa. This means that funerals may need to be taken by lay people. More abuse scandals, especially in N America, are expected.

Mr Lucas sees the greatest problems for Christians in 2013 arising in the Middle East where the exodus of Christians from Palestine, Iran, Syria and Egypt will continue. On the other hand, he is upbeat about the new Protestant churches in South Korea, China and Taiwan with their message of “self-improvement and prosperity.”

All this makes sad reading. The picture in the UK is statistically accurate, even though the Anglicans and Catholics are together only half of all the churchgoers in Great Britain. Special efforts to reach those under 40 will continue, Alpha and like courses will continue to be held with some success, and literally thousands will find a new faith in Christ. But the church is facing new challenges, in terms of communication, adherence to its Biblical morality, and facing an increasing hostility to its principles (and privileges). Leadership needs exceptional wisdom from the Lord to know how best to act Biblically, especially Justin Welby, but also all called to be “overseers of the flock.”

SOURCE: *The World in 2013*, *The Economist*, London, 2012.

Immigrant Churches in London

The London Church Census took place on Sunday, 14th October, 2012. Its detailed results are due to be published during the latter half of 2013. In order to send a form to all the churches in London, a database had to be established, which took many months of work. While addresses of churches of some denominations can be fairly easily obtained, some publishing yearbooks listing them all, those of black churches in particular are much more difficult and require much web-searching time.

The result, however, is interesting. The number of churches in London in 2012 was very close to 4,800, an increase in 700 over the published figure of 4,087 at the time of the 2005 English Church Census. That is an average net increase at the rate of two new churches every week for at least 7 years! Naturally one asks where the significant increases have been made. They are in two broad areas – the black, and mostly Pentecostal, churches which account for two-thirds of this increase, and the many immigrant churches in the capital, which have more than doubled in number to 500.

Churches have opened and closed in all denominations and in all Boroughs (except Havering where the number dropped from 94 to 92). The largest increases were seen in the Inner London Boroughs, with Southwark increasing 76 from 199 to 275, followed by Lambeth with a gain of 59 from 211 to 270, and Newham going up by 58 from 198 to 256. This reflects there being more black churches in Inner London than Outer London.

Immigrant churches are more evenly spread, and may be found across all denominations. There is an Urdu Methodist church, a Ghanaian Seventh-Day Adventist, a South African Anglican, a Polish Lutheran, a Chinese United Reformed, two Spanish Baptist churches, even a Catholic Goan church, and so on. Churches in at least 54 different languages are somewhere in the capital!



Some denominations like the Lutherans and the Orthodox have dozens of churches, mostly serving those who have come from different countries within Europe, even if all nationalities are welcome at them. Likewise more than 200 of the black churches serve those from Ghana, Nigeria and other African countries as well as over 400 West Indian churches. But there are many whose precise national focus is blurred, welcoming people from anywhere. There are many “International” or “All Nations” churches in London.

Some nationalities have a long history in London. The Chinese and Korean churches, for example, have been in London for several decades, as have Spanish and Portuguese. The Spanish have the largest number of churches, at least 26, followed by 24 Greek (mostly Orthodox), 13 Portuguese, 10 French, 10 Tamil, 9 Italian, 9 Korean, 8 Chinese, 8 Congolese, 8 Ethiopian and 8 German.

Identification of such churches is not easy, usually by the language used in their name, or the specific mention of a particular country, so it is likely that a number will have been missed, especially African churches which tend to use a Pentecostal or Bible name rather than a country. Some of the languages are shown in the Table to illustrate the diversity within London. Many of these churches are evangelical; if an immigrant has to struggle with English from Monday to Saturday, they will often gladly go to a church speaking their language on a Sunday, whether they are used to churchgoing or not, simply to be able to converse in their own tongue! Thus does the Lord build His church despite (or because of) the upheaval of international relocation.

Albanian	French	Polish
Antiochian	German	Portuguese
American	Ghanaian	Romanian
Armenian	Goan	Russian
Assyrian	Greek	South African
Belarus	Gujarati	Slovak
Brazilian	Hungarian	Spanish
Chinese	Icelandic	Swahili
Congolese	Indian	Swedish
Coptic	Iranian	Swiss
Croatian	Irish	Syrian
Czech	Japanese	Tamil
Dutch	Korean	Thai
Eritrean	Latvian	Ukrainian
Estonian	Lithuanian	Urdu
Ethiopian	Maltese	Vietnamese
Filipino	Nigerian	Zambian
Finnish	Norwegian	Zimbabwean

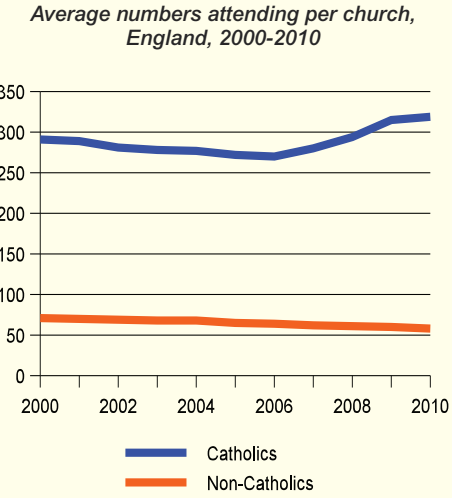
Changes in Roman Catholic Numbers

The 2011 Pew Forum report, *Global Christianity*, indicated that the Roman Catholic church had 1.1 billion adherents in 2010, representing half of the global Christian population. The latest World Christian Database [WCD] summary suggests it has marginally increased further to 51% by 2013 (1.2 billion adherents), but expects it to drop to 49% by 2025.

The slight decline over the next few years is because the WCD does not see the Catholics growing worldwide as a proportion of the total population as fast as non-Catholics. It projects Catholic future growth on the outcome of changes so far this century. There has been an increase of +15% in the number of Catholics, but Independents (which include Pentecostals) have grown +36%, Anglicans +22% and other Protestants +25%, all greater than Catholic growth. Only the Orthodox growth is smaller, at +9%.

In the UK, and especially Great Britain, the numbers of adherents – the Catholic Population – has declined, though only slowly, buoyed in part by the large number of immigrants. The same is true of numbers attending Mass. These have fallen slightly, even in the two RC Provinces where most recent Catholic immigrants have settled – Westminster Province (London and north of London) has dropped from 288,000 in 2000 to 284,000 in 2010 and Southwark Province (SE England) from 195,000 to 190,000 in the same period. The other 3 Catholic Provinces in England and Wales (Liverpool in the North, Birmingham in the Midlands and Wales) have dropped more, so that the total in England and Wales does decline from 1,001,000 to 885,000 across these ten years.

This is further illustrated by the number of churches and chapels which the Catholics have been closing over the past decade. This means the average number attending Mass per church has risen, especially since 2008, partly because of immigrants but partly because of the drastic number of church closures in the last few years, 10% of the total, causing a re-location of a number of Catholics into fewer churches. This is illustrated in the graph which also shows the average congregation for non-Catholics, which is not only much smaller, but, unlike the Catholics, is declining, the impact of immigrants being much less (except in London where many immigrants are non-Catholic).

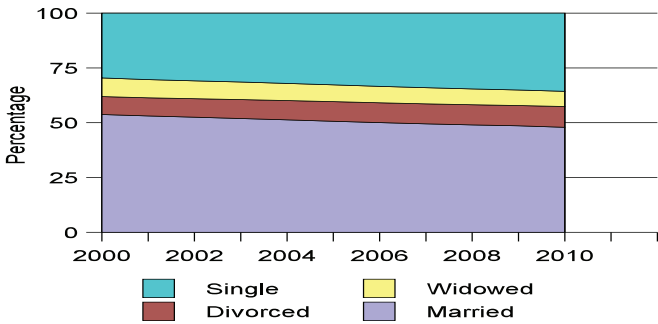


SOURCES: *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, OMSIC, Connecticut, Vol 37, No 1, Jan 2013, Page 33; *UK Church Statistics*, ADCB Publishers, 2011; *Catholic Directory for England and Wales*, Universe Media Group Ltd, 2011 and 2012, Pages 888 and 863 respectively.

Marriage in Decline

Population Censuses have been taken every decade since 1801 apart from 1941 during WWII. It was the 2011 Census that, for the first time, showed that less than half the people in England and Wales were married, although the Office for National Statistics had estimated this proportion actually began in 2007. In 2011 just 47% were married, down from 51% of the population in 2001. The percentage is projected to continue decreasing slowly over the next 20 years, perhaps to 43% by 2031. Figure 1 shows the downward trend in the inter-censal period. In this context, “married” includes those who are separated, as legally they are still married, and the handful of civil partnerships (0.2% in the Census).

Figure 1: Marital status of population in England and Wales, 2000-2010



Being single

“Single” includes those who are cohabiting as well as single parents and those who are living alone.

Figure 2: Number of men cohabiting in 2012, England and Wales

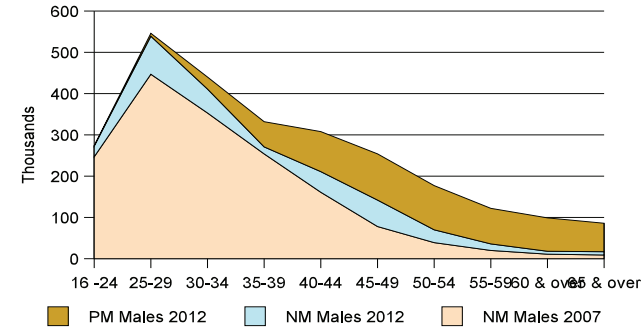


Figure 2 is more complicated, where NM = Never married and PM = Previously married. The outline of the chart shows the number of male cohabitantes in 2012 by age. The peak is between the ages of 25 and 29, but the overall numbers are substantial – 10% of households are formed of cohabiting couples, most of whom in days gone by would probably have been married. These cohabitantes are made up of three groups – those who were cohabiting five years previously, the pale brown colour of the majority at the bottom of the chart. The number cohabiting aged 30 to 34, while still substantial, is less than it was a few years ago as roughly half of cohabitantes get married after cohabiting for 5 years (and a further 10% in the next 5 years) .

The second group are shown by the light blue band indicating the additional numbers cohabiting in 2012 compared with 2007, and reflects the popularity of this type of household for those between 16 and 34, and also for those, not married before (although they could have had a previous cohabiting relationship) in their 40s. The top brown layer shows those now cohabiting who had been previously married. It is clear that if a person’s marriage breaks down (and the median length of marriage in 2011 was 11.5 years) that many then resort to cohabiting rather than remarrying.

Many of these cohabiting couples will have children. However, of the 310,000 children under 11 attending Sunday School or the equivalent in English churches in 2012, only an estimated 4,000 will be from cohabiting households, when, had the number been pro rata, it would have been nearer 54,000! Very few cohabiting parents ever go to church. With the growing normalisation of cohabitation, it is vital churches find ways of including them without compromising the Biblical teaching and stance on marriage.

Single people thus comprise different groups. Not all are living by themselves. It is estimated that perhaps 29% of these are cohabiting, 16% are lone parents, 16% are lone widows who are not living with children or in-laws or in institutional care, 10% are divorced not in a cohabiting relationship, 14% are young but adult people still living with their parents, and 15% are other single never married people living alone. Thus 71% of “singles” are currently in, or have been in, a de-facto or actual married/sexual relationship, and just 29% have not.

As legally defined, single (never married) people are a third, 35%, of the population, but this percentage is almost double the proportion of single people in the church (18½%). A very few of these churchgoers who have never married or are living alone will be cohabiting or single parents (5%), others will be widows by themselves (21%), or divorced people not cohabiting (15%). Of the remaining 59%, the large majority, probably 50%, will be older, never married, people who have been churchgoers all their lives. Very few young people living alone are churchgoers – so the opportunity for Christian marriage is relatively small. No wonder some young people in their 20s leave the church. Two-thirds of current adult churchgoers are married people over 30.

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Other factors

The number of unmarried parents is increasing, and only 27% agreed in 2006 (down from 33% in 1998) that it is better for a child if their parents are married (45% disagreed and 28% didn’t know), though this percentage is higher in the States, especially for ethnic groups. Two-fifths (39%) of parents agree that one parent can bring up a child as well as two (lone parents 57%). One imagines that Christian responses to these issues would be greater in agreeing the former and less in agreeing the latter.

The stability of a family home is inevitably reflected in family life. In 2011, two-thirds (64%) of the population owned their home, down from 68% in 2001. Almost half, 31%, of these were owned outright, the rest (33%) with a mortgage. In 2001 (the 2011 analysis has not yet been released) more Christians owned their homes outright than non-Christians.



Family life is also influenced by parents working. In 2011, 62% of men worked full-time, 8% part-time, and 18% were self-employed. In 2001, Christians were as much employed as non-Christians.

SOURCES: Office for National Statistics, basic data sets from the web for 2001 and 2011 Censuses; article in *Metro*, 12th December 2012, Page 5; British Social Attitudes 25th and 26th Reports, Sage and NatCen Tables 5.6 and 6.5 respectively; *Population Trends*, No 144, Palgrave Macmillan, Summer 2011, Pages 64 and 68; *UK Church Statistics*, ADCB Publishers, 2011, Pages 13.5, 6; *Living the Christian Life* survey, Brierley Consultancy, 2012, Page 12; article in the *Daily Telegraph*, 2nd November 2012, Page 4; Barna Group, article 20th Nov 2012.

THE ENGLISH PLURAL AND OTHER ANOMALIES

We’ll begin with a box, and the plural is boxes. But the plural of ox becomes oxen, not oxes. One fowl is a goose, but two are called geese. Yet the plural of moose should never be meese. You may find a lone mouse or a nest full of mice. Yet the plural of house is houses, not hices. If the plural of man is always called men, Why shouldn’t the plural of pan be called pen? If I speak of my foot and show you my feet, And I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet? If one is a tooth and a whole set are teeth, Why shouldn’t the plural of tooth be called beeth?...

We speak of a brother and also of brethren, But though we say mother, we never say methren. Then the masculine pronouns are he, his and him, But imagine the feminine: she, shis and shim! Let’s face it – English is crazy language...

We take English for granted, but if we explore its paradoxes, We find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square, And a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig. And why is it that writers write, but fingers don’t fing, Grocers don’t groce and hammers don’t ham?

And in closing ...

If teachers taught, why didn’t preachers praught?

SOURCE: Wink Creations, via email from Dawn Moor.

SNOWFLAKES

Digital devices are spreading rapidly in the United States, and it is expected that the UK will follow similar trends. In the 12 months July 2011 to June 2012 the percentages of US households owning various devices increased as shown in the Table. More than two-thirds now have a laptop and half a smartphone.

Digital device	2011	2012	Change
Tablet	11%	26%	+15%
Smartphone	37%	48%	+11%
eReader	15%	22%	+7%
Laptops	67%	70%	+3%
Netbooks	10%	12%	+2%
Portable media player	19%	15%	-4%

Some 98% of American students are said to own an eReader.

SOURCE: Futurebook Conference supplement to *The Bookseller*, 23rd November 2012, Pages 6 and 12.

Growing Churches. Expounding Acts 20:28, Rev David Bracewell, late of St Saviour’s, Guildford, said leaders need to build churches that are:

- Homes of generous hospitality
- Places of challenging reconciliation
- Centres of attentiveness to the living God.

The key elements of a good leader, he said, are their Character, Competence and Chemistry (in that order).

SOURCE: Bible Reading at the *New Leaders in Larger Churches* Conference, High Leigh, Nov 2012.

Muslim converts. A study by the multi-faith group Faith Matters found the number of Muslim converts in Britain has now passed 100,000, doubling in 10 years. Previous estimates, based on the 2001 results from the Scottish Population Census which asked for the religion the respondent was brought up in as well as present religion, suggested the rate of increase was 5,000 a year.

SOURCE: Article by Christopher Howse, quoting the *Daily Mail*, in *The Tablet*, 3rd November 2012, Page 13.

Libraries closed. 201 mobile and static libraries closed in England and Wales in the 12 months ending March 2012, compared with 33 in the previous year. This went with a decline of 5% in library budgets, an 8% reduction in staff, along with 2.4% fewer visits, and fewer book loans except for children’s fiction, which has been rising year on year for 8 years. There was, however, an 9% rise in volunteers. The president of the Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals, Phil Bradley, said closures were continuing to destroy communities, and forecast 300 libraries would close during 2013.

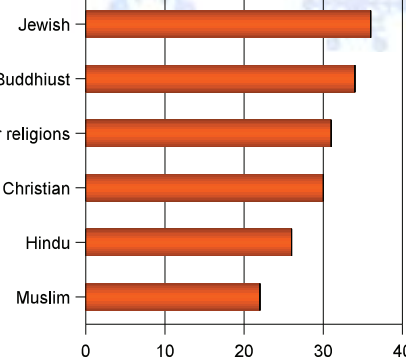
SOURCE: Statistics from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, quoted in *The Bookseller*, 14th December 2012, Page 13, and 9th January 2013, Page 16.

Lack of confidence. The latest Evangelical Alliance survey confirms previous research about Christian people’s lack of confidence in sharing their faith. Half, 48%, said they were “too scared to talk about their faith to non-Christians” and 85% said they were uneasy (in our multi-faith society) to say that “Jesus is the only way.” On the other hand, two-thirds, 67%, had spoken about their faith to a non-Christian in the previous few months, and three-fifths, 60%, had been asked questions about their faith.

SOURCE: *21st Century Evangelicals: Confidently sharing the Gospel?*, Evangelical Alliance, from *Idea* magazine, December 2012, Page 16, www.eauk.org.

The Median age, that is, the age at which there are as many more as many less of people in different religions, is shown in the chart. It shows that Muslims have the youngest median age, Jews are oldest with Christians somewhere between.

World median age by religion, 2010



SOURCE: Pew Research Centre, quoted in *The Economist*, December 2012.

The Return of Jesus. The rather ambiguous question “How would you react if a genuine news article about Jesus returning was on the news?” was asked of at least 500 people in each of four countries by a research agency after the release of the film *A Second Son* in December 2012. Half, 51%, of Americans said they would believe it, as would 42% of Italians, 39% of Russians, but only a third, 31%, of British people.

SOURCE: News release by Populus Survey, 11th December 2012.

Travelodge guests. Sometimes those staying at Travelodges in the UK leave something behind. In 2011, 20,000 of their 13 million guests left a book behind, 7,000 of which had the same title – *Fifty Shades of Grey!* Since this was only published on 11th June 2011, there must be a lot of quick curious discriminating readers who evidently didn’t think the book worth keeping!

SOURCE: Travelodge website accessed 12th January, 2013, and *The Week*, 12th January 2013, Page 6.

A different context. Some of the differences in the British and American church worlds are itemised in the Table below. While it is tempting to assume that American methods will work in Britain, or vice versa, this does not necessarily follow. The crucial difference is in size of congregation, since size to some extent determines resources available, and resources to some extent determines number and type of leadership. Currently American congregations on average are more than double the size of a British church.

Item, 2011	UK	USA
Population, millions	63	311
% attending church	6%	20%
Average congregation	75	185
% attending churches of over 350	30%	50%
Mega churches (over 2,000 people)	20	1210
Mega churches with satellite churches	10%	37%

SOURCES: *UK Church Statistics*, ADCB Publishers, Page 13.8; *Christianity*, October 2009, Page 27.

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REFLECTIONS

The American comedian George Carlin (1937-2008) once sent this email to someone (edited):

The paradox of our time in history is that:

*We have taller buildings but shorter tempers,
Wider motorways, but narrower viewpoints.
We spend more, but have less, we buy more,
but enjoy less.
We have bigger houses and smaller families,
more conveniences, but less time.
We have more degrees but less sense, more
knowledge, but less judgment, more
experts, yet more problems, more medicine,
but less wellness.*

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.

*We have multiplied our possessions, but
reduced our values.
We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate
too often.
We've learned how to make a living, but not a
life.
We've added years to life not life to years.
We've been all the way to the moon and back,
but have trouble crossing the street to meet
a new neighbour.
We conquered outer space but not inner
space.
We've done larger things, but not better things.

We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul.
We've conquered the atom, but not our
prejudice.
We write more, but learn less.
We plan more, but accomplish less.
We've learned to rush, but not to wait.
We build more computers to hold more
information, to produce more copies than
ever, but we communicate less and less.*

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion, big men and small character, steep profits and shallow relationships. These are the days of two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses, but broken homes. These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throwaway morality, one night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill. It is a time when there is much in the showroom window and nothing in the stockroom.

A time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to share this insight, or to just hit delete....

Remember, spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever. **Remember**, say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your side. **Remember**, to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart and it doesn't cost a penny. **Remember**, to say, "I love you" to your partner and your loved ones, but most of all mean it. A kiss and an embrace will mend hurt when it comes from deep inside of you. **Remember** to hold hands and cherish the moment for someday that person will not be there again.

Give time to love, give time to speak! And give time to share the precious thoughts in your mind, and always remember: **Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.**

ACROSS THE CONTINENTS: FOUR CHURCHES

In a fascinating article on the tacit theology of church life, Prof Perry Shaw of the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Beirut compares 4 churches in different continents purely by looking at how they spend their income. These are four individual churches, not therefore representative, and using data in what some may feel is a dubious way, but maybe illustrative as to how you could analyse your church's expenditure. The Table gives the basic data he cites, and his commentary is then quoted as given.

Church	A: Middle East	B: Australia	C: United States	D: West Africa
	%	%	%	%
Salaries & benefits	30	45	30	25
Office expenses	12	5	8	4
Utilities	2	4	3	2
Building – debt	~	10	5	~
Building – maintenance	15	8	2	4
Building – developments	35	15	3	3
Educational ministries	1	3	4	19
Social services	5	1	2	13
Local outreach	~	1	9	16
Missions	~	3	32	14
Denominational charges	~	5	2	~
Annual income (=100%)	£65,000	£325,000	£3.1 mn	£16,000

"For church A the disproportionate share of the church's expenditure devoted to the building indicates a tacit ecclesiology that the church is a building, and the purpose of the church is to maintain and develop the building. For church B the focus is more on people, but the lack of any meaningful missional component to the budget reflects a tacit ecclesiology that the church is a business or club, and the purpose of the church is to serve its members, with little interest in reaching out beyond itself. For both churches A and B there is a clear institutional understanding of the church that runs counter to the consistent New Testament teaching of the church as an organic community called to live and proclaim the gospel.

"For church C there is a greater spread of the budget with a laudably large proportion devoted to overseas mission. The tacit ecclesiology of church C is that the church is an agency for sending missionaries to the ends of the earth, and the primary purpose of the church is cross-cultural evangelistic mission. While the tacit ecclesiology for this church is more in tune with the missional mandate evident in the New Testament, it nonetheless falls short in its tacit promotion of a distinction between 'super-Christians' (the missionaries) who are the 'professionals' who do the work of mission, and ordinary Christians (the church members) whose role it is to finance the professionals as they get on with the business of mission. Church C has many strengths, but it is better seen as a 'missionary church' rather than a 'missional church.'

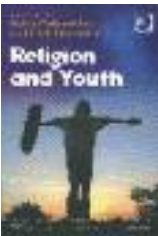
"Church D has a broader understanding of the community of faith, with a serious appreciation of the need for a balance between worship and education, mission and social service. The church's budget has a clear tacit understanding of the church as the people of God called to service, the purpose of the church being to serve the whole person, making disciples of Jesus Christ through whatever means best serve the Kingdom of God."

Readers may like to ponder whether this is a valid interpretation of a church's theology, as there may well be other powerful circumstances which may play a significant part. For instance, Church A is likely to be in a Muslim country, possibly persecuted, certainly restricted, with little opportunity for outreach and mission. Consequently the church building IS their main, if not only, means of maintaining presence and interest.

Likewise, it is very sweeping to imply for Church C that missionaries are the "professionals" and "ordinary" Christians are there to finance them. There is the well-known Disraeli quote of "Lies, damned lies and statistics," and here is an example of theological interpretation through statistics. How far do you agree with Prof Shaw? Please write and let us know!

SOURCE: Article by Dr Perry Shaw, Professor of Christian Education and Director of the Educational Ministries Resource Centre, Arab Baptist Theological Seminary, Beirut, in *International Congregational Journal*, Volume 11, No 1, Summer 2012, Page 35.

BOOK REVIEW Religion and Youth



Edited by Sylvia Collins-Mayo and Pink Dandelion
Ashgate, Farnham, Surrey, 2010
304 pages, ISBN 978-0-7546-6768-1, £17.99

This is a book of 27 essays evaluating a whole range of research projects covering differing aspects relating to young people. It is divided into six broad areas – generations

and their legacy, the big picture of belief and practice, expression, identity, transmission and

researching youth religion. Not all the "religion" is about Christianity, although the majority is. There are 41 contributors, all academics, ranging from PhD students to full professors, including many well-known religious researchers.

The essays are largely well written, clear in style and making salient points about their area of interest. The research covers both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Such information would be helpful to leadership, but is not applied practically as such, simply stating the facts as they have been observed, so that one must draw one's own conclusions and applications. The value of the book is the breadth of its approach, and convenience in having a single (large) Bibliography as well as an index. Very useful if you wish to broaden your understanding of youth spirituality – in its widest sense.

Soft Drinks

A number of Christian people, especially older Christians, prefer non-alcoholic drinks to alcoholic. An international research company ascertained what kind of soft drinks were drunk across the world, not of course just by Christians, and the results are shown in the following Table:

Drink type	Central Europe %	Latin America %	North America %	Western Europe %	Other Markets %	Developed Asia %	Developing Asia %	Unweighted Average %
Milk	70	82	73	77	73	59	66	71
Tea	89	40	48	58	87	73	69	66
Coffee	76	71	64	76	68	71	27	65
Bottled water	78	68	68	73	55	40	51	62
Fruit Juice	60	74	60	59	53	33	30	53
Carbonated drinks	47	60	62	52	38	30	25	45
Iced tea	11	21	38	12	9	14	15	17
Energy drinks	16	20	21	13	9	22	13	16
Average	56	55	54	53	49	43	37	43

Developed Asia = Australia, Japan, Taiwan and Korea; Developing Asia = China, India, Indonesia, Thailand
Other Markets = Russia, South Africa, Egypt, Turkey
Energy drinks includes Sports drinks; Fruit Juice includes 100%, Fresh and Concentrate
Bottled water includes Plain and Carbonated

SOURCE: Research, Dec/Jan 2013, Page 8, by GfK Consumer Trends Roper Reports Worldwide 2012.

Temptations

Towards the end of last year, the American Barna Research Group did an interesting study of what temptations people feel they face. The seven deadly sins got modernised in the process! The top 13 were, with the ancient equivalents in brackets:

- 60% Procrastinating [sloth]
- 60% Worrying
- 55% Eating too much [gluttony]
- 44% Spending too much time on the media
- 36% Spending too much money [greed]
- 41% Not working as hard as I should/being lazy [sloth]
- 26% Gossiping or saying mean things about others
- 24% Feeling jealous [envy]
- 18% Viewing pornography [lust]
- 12% Lying or cheating
- 11% Abusing alcohol or drugs
- 11% "Going off" on someone via text or email [wrath]
- 9% Doing something sexually inappropriate [lust]

Of the old seven, pride seems to have got missed out, whereas sloth and lust manage to get double measure. There were only two major gender differences – men were much more likely to view pornography or do something sexually inappropriate (28% to 8% of women), while women were more likely to worry than men (68% to 50% of men).

By and large the younger a person the more likely they were to admit to a particular "sin," perhaps indicating a greater willingness to be transparent or a greater objectivity of the way they lived their life. The first four had the smallest differences between young and old, with "eating too much" something that the older were more prone to indicate than younger people. The biggest differences, however, were in being lazy and being jealous of others which the young were much more likely to do than older people. Gossiping and abusing alcohol were also two which especially divided the generations. In general terms, being religious – Protestant or Catholic – tended to mean you succumbed to temptation less than if you were non-religious. Perhaps this was why when asked how they resisted temptation, the most common answer was "prayer." However, in some areas Protestants were more likely to face temptation than Catholics, especially in "eating too much" but also in showing their anger a little more by "going off" in a text or email.

Christians were less likely to view pornography or engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour than non-Christians. Nor were they anywhere as likely to abuse alcohol. But they were more likely to lie or cheat than non-Christians! Catholics were less likely than Protestants, and both much less likely to procrastinate or to be lazy, but even so, there is little sign of the Protestant work ethic here.

Yes, we are all tempted whatever our age or religion/no religion. It is how we handle those temptations that is important. When asked why they gave in to temptation, respondents said it was "to escape or get away from 'real life'" or "because I enjoy it." Sadly, succumbing to these temptations is just seen as "undesirable" and rarely as "sin" while, in its attempts to be "tolerant," the church has all too often fudged these issues with its woolly thinking.

SOURCE: Barna Update, www.barna.org/culture-articles, accessed 7/1/13.



There were, however, considerable differences by age and religion, as the Table shows:

Temptation	Overall %	18 to 27 %	28 to 46 %	47 to 65 %	Over 65 %	Protest't %	Catholic %	Not Cian %
Procrastination	60	66	64	60	48	57	51	77
Worrying	60	62	64	59	48	58	57	68
Eating too much	55	44	52	62	53	66	44	40
Too much time on media	44	53	50	36	38	42	38	55
Being lazy	41	56	43	38	30	40	28	58
Spending too much money	36	41	39	36	21	34	30	47
Gossiping	26	37	29	24	13	22	29	33
Being jealous of others	24	41	29	19	15	20	24	34
Viewing pornography	18	27	22	15	8	14	16	30
Lying or cheating	12	22	14	9	3	12	15	9
Abusing alcohol or drugs	11	28	12	6	5	3	9	33
Expressing anger by text	11	25	12	7	5	12	10	10
Sexually wrong behaviour	9	21	11	5	3	5	6	22
Average	31	40	35	29	22	30	27	40



Providing Facts for Forward Planning

SNIPPETS

1) Numbers attending 2012 Christmas services have yet to be officially counted, but based on the last few years, they were probably well in excess of 5 million people, 10% of the entire English population.

2) The 380,000 people living without a home in the UK (1 in every 180 people) are 34 times more likely to have TB and 50 times more likely to have hepatitis C infection than the general population.

3) Which country is estimated to provide the best opportunities for a healthy, safe and prosperous life? Switzerland comes top, Australia second, Norway third – and Britain 27th out of 80.

4) Publishers' digital sales of total sales have doubled in 2 years. The average was 12% in 2010 and 23% in 2012.

5) Birmingham had 33,500,000 visitors in 2011, 33 times its total population!

6) Of the 4,149 Roman Catholic priests in England and Wales in 2010, 45% are estimated to be over 70. That compares with 8% of Church of England clergy in 2011.

7) 59% of UK school leavers live in fear of being unemployable.

SOURCES 1) Based on figures in UK Church Statistics; 2) Wellcome News, Issue 72; Autumn/Winter 2012, Page 9-3; 3) The World in 2013, The Economist, London, 2012, Page 91; 4) The Bookseller, 23rd November 2012, Futurebook supplement Page 4; 5) Association Event Planner, Winter 2012, Page 30-6; 6) The Tablet, 12th January 2013, Page 32; Church Statistics 2010/11, Research and Statistics Dept.; 7) Young Enterprise advert in Management Today, January 2013, Page 39.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) published further details about the 2011 Population Census just before Christmas 2012, which included information on religion for England and Wales. The number of people calling themselves Christian in England alone declined from 35.3 million in 2001 to 31.5 million in 2011, a drop of 3.8 million people, and as a percentage of the population a decline from 72% to 59%.

Funerals

Most commentators seem to assume that this reflects a falling away of belief in a secular age, and, while that is bound to be part of the explanation, it may not be the major reason. In the 10 years between 2001 and 2011, Church of England clergy have conducted 2.2 million funerals, roughly half (49%) church funerals and half (51%) crematoria funerals. It is perhaps reasonable to assume that those wishing to have an Anglican minister conducting their funeral would probably have ticked "Christian" on their Census form had they been alive at the time of the Census. In the same period there have been 4.8 million deaths in England, so the Church of England has presided at almost half (46%) of the country's funerals.

Few other denominations publish the number of funerals taken by their clergy or deaths of their members. The Roman Catholic Church, however, is one which does, and in this 10-year period 0.4 million Catholics have died, and, again, one presumes that all these would have said they were Christian (irrespective of whether they regularly attended Mass) had they been alive to tick the Census form. In membership terms, Anglicans and Catholics accounted for 56% of (alive) church members in England in 2010. If the death rate in other denominations is similar to that of Anglicans and Catholics, then if 2.2 + 0.4 = 2.6 million deaths represent 56% of church deaths, total church deaths in the Census decade could have been some 4.6 million people, much greater than the actual drop in Christian adherents recorded by the Census, but perhaps more likely to be 4.3 million (90% of those who died), as some denominations, like the Pentecostals, are much younger and have fewer deaths.

Those joining

Offsetting the decline in the number of Christians is the number who have joined the church in this period. This is more difficult to evaluate but in the period 1998 to 2005 it was estimated (in the book *Pulling out of the Nosedive*) that 850,000 people joined the church in England. That rate of joining over those 7 years might not be as great in the period 2005 to 2011, so that perhaps between 2001 and 2011 say a million people (rather than 1.2 million which is the pro rata figure) joined the church. The overall equation then becomes, in millions:

+ 1.0 who joined – 4.3 who died – 0.5 other leavers = – 3.8 decrease.

If this equation is approximately true, it shows that the large bulk of the decline in the number of Christians between 2001 and 2011 is because of the number who died, rather than a dropping away for other reasons. The equation also explains the catastrophic forecast by the Church of England that their attendance will decline almost 60% by 2030, since the number joining the C of E is so very much smaller than the large number who are dying. It also puts the church's total evangelistic work into context, and highlights the enormous urgency to increase it, in fact, to quadruplicate or even quintuplicate it.

What is "Christian"?

In a very helpful article about the Census results, Linda Woodhead, Professor of Sociology of Religion at Lancaster University, suggests the simple range of answers to the Census question does not really indicate religious identity. She refers to recent publications which break down the "Christian" category into:

- Moral Christians, who admire Christian ethics and aspire to live by them
- Faithful Christians, who do orthodox things such as go to church and read the Bible
- Cradle Christians, who tick the box because they were baptised and brought up Christian, and
- Ethnic Christians who say they are Christian because they are British.

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