

## The Church in 2050?

The recent publication of the results of the religion questions in the 2011 Population Census allows the future to be assessed. The number of Christian adherents in England dropped by 3.8 million people between 2001 and 2011, but during these 10 years some 4.3 million church funerals have taken place. Many churches have been active in proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ and perhaps 1 million have joined the church in this decade, suggesting 0.5 million left for other reasons.

As the majority of the decline in the number of Christian people was because of deaths, that process is likely to continue as a third of churchgoers today are 65 or over. The Church of England actuaries have predicted that their attendance will have dropped 58% by 2030 and 90% by 2057. If those figures become true and if the current trends continue this way for the next 37 years, then by 2050:

1) The number of people ticking the “Christian” box on the Census form would be just a quarter of the then population, instead of three-fifths today, and most still elderly. Some will still want to get married in church and/or have their baby baptised.

2) If Muslims continue to increase at their present rate, then by 2050 they will be as numerous as Christians in Britain.

3) Church attendance will have dropped to 1½% of the 70 million people then in Britain.

4) The number of congregations (30,000) will be three-fifths as many as in 2010 (51,000), and their average size 35 people instead of the current 70 people.

5) News coverage of Christian activity will be minimal, and Christian satellite broadcasting largely Asian and African. Secular and multi-faith schools will most likely have replaced Christian schools, and the number of Christian organisations will have declined perhaps to only a fifth of today’s 5,000.

6) The Archbishop of Canterbury will have lost her seat in the House of Lords, after the Church of England became disestablished. Denominations will have become far less important.

7) On the other hand, immigrant churches will continue to flourish; much of the social work of churches will be done by those of non-British backgrounds.

8) Perhaps half of today’s larger (500+) churches will have survived, attracting up to 50% of all those going to church. 10% of churchgoers will go mid-week (as now).

9) Evangelism will continue as a low priority; Alpha courses will be obsolete. The number of leaders will be fewer than now, but many more will be part-timers.

10) The Lord will still be building His church and the gates of hell will not have conquered it even if many of its members have “gone to glory.”

## Black Churches in London

Less than half (45%) of London’s population are white British people according to the latest Population Census, and a further 15% are white people born elsewhere. A fifth (19%) are Asian, 13% are Black, 5% are mixed and 3% are others, including 1% Arab.



LONDON CHURCH CENSUS

...getting the bigger picture in 2012

However, people of different backgrounds are not uniformly spread across the capital. The Boroughs of Bexley, Bromley and Havering have under 15% of their populations who are immigrant, while Brent, Kensington & Chelsea, Newham and Westminster all have over 50%.

Black people, both Africans and Caribbeans, tend to be concentrated in just a few Boroughs, especially Hackney, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark, as illustrated by Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1: Where Africans live in London



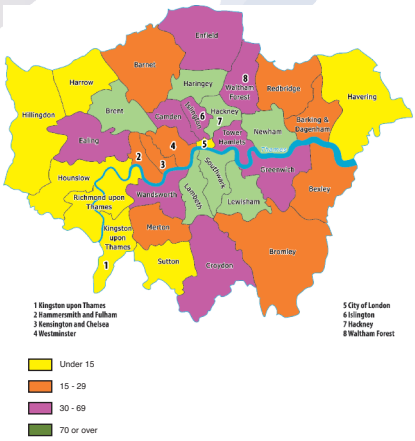
Figure 2: Where Caribbeans live in London



As black people have the highest percentage who are churchgoers, it is interesting to compare these maps with the third which shows where the Pentecostal churches are located. Not all such churches are Black Majority Churches [BMCs] but many will be.

As one might expect, there is a reasonably close correspondence between Figures 1 and 2 with Figure 3, but the correspondence is not total. More than 11% of the population of Barking and Dagenham are Africans, for example, but the number of Pentecostal churches in the Borough is relatively small by comparison with, say, neighbouring Newham. This suggests that absence of church proximity to where people live is not a complete bar to attendance – much travel on a Sunday also takes place, especially as London transport links are reasonably good. Again, between 4 and 6% of the populations of Hillingdon and Hounslow Boroughs are Africans, but the number of Pentecostal churches in those Boroughs is very few, and this implies that some or many churchgoing Africans, for whom such is often the norm, travel to attend their particular denomination outside their Boroughs.

Figure 3: Number of Pentecostal Churches in London, 2012



Many BMCs, especially in Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark, are being started in close proximity to each other. In 2005 there were 262 Pentecostal churches in these three Boroughs; seven years later in 2012 there were half as many again, a total of 391! This but reflects the broad immigration pattern and where many black people live, as these are often the ones starting new churches. It simply confirms the vision of BMCs to church-plant within a short distance of where possible attenders live. It is out of real experience that one of the principles behind the churches planted by the Redeemed Christian Church of God is to establish a church “within ten minutes walking distance” of those it expects to attend.

Thus the BMCs show that both proximity and a particular culture and language will draw people and that church-planters of whatever hue should strategise both area and peoples as focal points of possible response.

SOURCES: ONS website December 2012 census database; London Church Census report, Chapter 1, forthcoming.

Church demographics, as is well known, show that there many elderly people in our churches. A third of churchgoers, 33%, will be 65 or over in 2015 if present trends continue, almost twice the proportion over 65 in our population. Many of these will still be married, while others will be widowed, and some divorced. Others will never have married but will be living by themselves or with relatives or perhaps in a care home.

A 2011 YouGov survey of 24,000 adults found that a fifth, 20%, of today’s relationships started online, and in fact online dating is almost as popular a way of meeting as being introduced through friends. The researchers interviewed men and women between 1997 and 2009 – 2,000 a year – and found that more older people had found their partner online than younger people. Over a third, 36%, of those aged 40 to 69 had found their current partner online compared with just under a quarter, 23%, of those aged 18 to 40.

“Finding a partner” does not equate to marriage, since many today cohabit, something which more and more older people are doing, but to nothing

## Dating Elderlies

like the extent of those in the 20s and 30s. So for many older people it will mean marrying. Some of these will be church people. When asked, a lady in a Shetland church quite happily said she had met her husband through the web and was very glad to have done so!



Why is online dating popular? “Partly because of its accessibility,” said Professor William Dutton, co-author of the research report, “and partly because people have become more comfortable disclosing personal details in what seems a pseudo-anonymous online setting.” Many elderly people are lonely – only a third with families get a visit from their children once a fortnight, and a fifth from their grandchildren once a month, a recent report

indicated. It may well be therefore that more are taking to online dating than before, and the number (and profitability) of online dating services is increasing (so much so that their cost is now part of the Government’s calculations for the cost of living!).

Increasing too are the number of “Christian-based” dating services (such as Christian Connection) which may appeal to elderly churchgoers rather than secular ones such as Saga.

Two-fifths, 42%, of marriages end with a divorce (average length being 11½ years), and two-thirds (67%) of second marriages also end with a divorce. Though the divorce rate is lower among church people, for those who want to remarry “Christian” dating services are now reducing the dichotomy between those who feel it “unspiritual” to search for a partner and those who feel God will guide them in being “pro-active” in seeking a partner.



SOURCES: Article in the Daily Telegraph, 28th January 2012; article in Saga Magazine, February 2012, Page 51; personal conversation; Religious Trends No 6, 2006/2007, Christian Research, Eltham, London.

## YEARS OF RELIGIOUS CHANGE

Item	1973	2013
UK church membership	8,600,000 (15% of pop)	5,300,000 (8% of pop)
Congregations in the UK	52,000 (3% of world total)	51,000 (1% of world total)
Church ministers in UK	38,000 (of whom 1% female)	37,000 (of whom 18% female)
Christian adherents in the world	1.3 billion (33.2% of pop)	2.4 billion (33.0% of pop)
Muslim adherents in the world	0.6 billion (16% of pop)	1.6 billion (23% of pop)
Urban dwellers in the world	1.4 billion (37% of world pop)	4.6 billion (52% of world pop)
Denominations in the world	20,000	44,000
Congregations in the world	1,600,000	4,600,000

SOURCES: UK information from Religious Trends No 2, 2000/2001, Christian Research, Eltham, London, 1999, Table 2.12 and UK Church Statistics, ADBC Publishers, Tonbridge, 2011, Table 1.1; world info from International Bulletin of Missionary Research, OMSIC, January 2013, Page 33.

## CHARITABLE GIVING

The Charities Aid Foundation [CAF] published a “World Giving Index” in 2010, and then repeated it in 2011, essentially in order to show how much the global recession of 2008 had affected charitable giving. It measured giving across people in general in three ways over 153 countries, and then averaged each country’s response according to the answers from those asked. Over 150,000 people were approached, almost a thousand in every country.

The questions asked respondents if they had made a charitable donation, whether they had volunteered time to help or had helped a stranger all within the last month. Across the world the overall percentage in 2011 was 32.4%, almost 1% up from the 31.6% in 2010. The 32.4% was an average of:

- 47% who had helped a stranger (45% in 2010)
- 29% who had made a donation (30%)
- 21% who had volunteered time (20%).

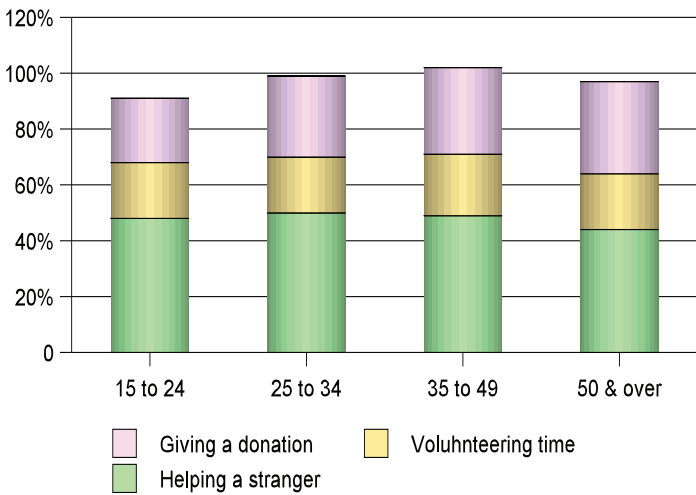
The numbers donating were thus slightly down on the previous year. The country with the highest overall percentage was the United States with 60% (55% in 2010), followed by Ireland (59%), Australia (58%) and New Zealand and the United Kingdom (both with 57%). The UK was 53% in 2010.

The figures are analysed by gender and age. The gender differences in all three areas were relatively small, but age differences are as shown in the bar-chart. Those aged 35-49 gave marginally more to charitable endeavour because slightly more made a financial donation and gave more volunteering time than those younger.

In the UK, 79% made a financial donation, the second highest percentage in the world – only topped by Thailand (85%). Women gave more than men (85% to 73%), and those 35 and over more than those 15 to 24 (83% to 60%).

28% in the UK volunteered time, 32nd in the World Table and well behind

Charitable giving globally by age



Turkmenistan, which had the highest percentage, where 61% volunteered their time. Women gave more of their time than men (30% to 26%), similar to the findings in another (American) study. Young people (15 to 24) volunteered much more than those aged 25 to 34 (33% to 21%).

Britain was 17th in helping a stranger while Liberia came top with 81%. Men did this slightly more than women (65% to 60%), but those aged 15 to 24 were much more helpful than those who were 50 or over (75% to 54%).

In total, those aged 35 to 49 gave most in the UK, in a pattern similar to the global pattern shown in the chart. It may well be that it is this age group which also gives most, in the CAF definition of “giving,” in our churches as well.

SOURCES: World Giving Index 2011, CAF, East Malling, Kent, 2011 and article in Review of Religious Research, Vol 54, No 4, Dec 2012, Page 481.

## Finding a New Church

How people find a new church is an intriguing question. George Barna wrote a book after researching this 20 years ago, and found there were many factors – a church’s theology, its worship practice, its leadership, its existing members, its activities, opportunities for service, its friendliness, size, nearness to where one is living, its denomination and so on, but didn’t score these in any order of importance. Another American researcher, Philip Schwadel, has now done this.

He found that word of mouth – by a friend or relative – was the key reason (37%) and that finding a church of the same denomination was next (26%), these two accounting for over three-fifths of the reasons given. The other reasons given were closeness to one’s home (11%), previous knowledge of the church (8%), meeting someone from the church (6%) and its activities (2%). Philip found that 10% of his respondents could not remember why they had joined their present church!

These reasons are very different from research in Focus Groups among those who had newly started in a church, undertaken in 2001 in England. In that study, the dominating factor was nearness (28%), followed by the church’s activities (26%), then “trying it and liking it” (18%), and then word of mouth and “going through a list of possible churches” (both 14%).



The nearness factor is one of the key reasons why the Redeemed Christian Church of God is starting so many churches near where Africans in the UK live. Their desire is to have a church “within 10 minutes’ walk” of a person’s house, something that echoes from the rural areas of Nigeria. It is certainly a factor in church planting. A study of where the new black churches are being started in London shows that two of the top Boroughs, Lewisham and Southwark, where many new churches have started in the last 10 years, is also where most Africans live. However, the London Church Census has also shown another factor is at play – a number of new churches have started in Boroughs where the density of black people is relatively low, meaning that many will travel to these churches. Why? Because the worship language and culture of these churches is the same as their tribe or nationality.

What made people initially come to your church? Is it possible to build on this to attract even more people? One church leader emailed to say that he was getting more people coming because of the church’s website than any other reason!

SOURCES: How to Find Your Church, George Barna, Worldwide Publications, Minneapolis, 1989; article in Review of Religious Research, Vol 54, No 4, Dec 2012, Page 546; Larger Churches Report, Christian Research, July 2001; London Church Census report, Chapter 1, forthcoming.

## SNOWFLAKES



Going to the movies. The average American watched 1.7 films in a cinema in 2012, but evangelicals watched 2.7 on average while those with “no faith” watched 3.0. However, there were some films that evangelicals watched much less – James Bond’s Skyfall was seen by 12% evangelicals, 16% other Christians and 23% of those with no faith. On the other hand, 36% of evangelicals went to see The Hunger Games.

SOURCE: Barna Group, 21st February, 2013, www.barna.org/culture-articles.

Muslim converts. Research from the University of South Wales suggests 10,000 people convert to Islam in Britain every year. Many of these are young women marrying Muslim men, and converting when they do so (something also happening in sub-Saharan Africa). Why? Partly because they genuinely fall in love, partly because a Muslim migrant can thereby get a visa to stay, sometimes because the woman believes the man has become a Christian (and then find he hasn’t), sometimes because the Islamic emphasis on community and morality is attractive, sometimes because the differences between Christianity and Islam seem very small, and sometimes because women believe Islam is the right way to God.

SOURCE: Insert in Barnabas Aid magazine, Jan/Feb 2013.

Too many immigrants. A third of respondents to an Evangelical Alliance survey over-estimated the percentage of immigrants in this country. While the 2011 Census showed that 14% of the population in England and Wales were non-white, many thought it was over a quarter! Irrespective of this, many (18% of respondents) are involved in personal outreach to ethnic groups. Half (46%) said they had prayed for persecuted Christians within the last week.

SOURCE: The World on our doorstep? Summary of research by the EA, Summer 2012.

Majority Christian. Roughly a third of the planet’s population are “Christian.” 87% of these live in countries where the Christian population is counted as at least half, so that Christians are in the majority. However, 97% of Hindus, who are far less well spread across the globe, live in countries where they are in majority (mostly India), something true for 73% of Muslims, but only true for 41% of Jews and 28% of Buddhists.

SOURCE: Pew Forum, Washington, survey of religion summarised in Third Way, March 2013, Page 5.

Age of mothers. British women are increasingly having children when they are older. In 1970 half of mothers were under 25; in 2011 only a quarter were, the lowest proportion since age began to be recorded in 1938. A fifth of all babies were born to mothers 35 or over, a four-fold increase. In 2011, 1,800 mothers were over 45, three times the number in 2000. This reflects that more women are having a career before starting a family, the impact of fertility treatment, and a greater instability in relationships. Only 53% were born within marriage.

SOURCE: Office of National Statistics report on births, summarised in the Daily Telegraph 25th January 2013.

Four centuries of change. A book published 5 years ago suggests we will become more mind-workers in the future. Daniel Pink believes “right-brainers” will rule the future, and characterises history as shown in the Table:

18th century Agricultural Age Farmers  
19th century Industrial Age Factory workers  
20th century Information Age Knowledge workers  
21st century Conceptual Age Concept workers

Such thinking might jar with the Christian faith in at least two ways: (a) all “strata” of workers are equal and precious to God, and (b) the Gospel is in terms of faith and truth, not concepts.

SOURCE: A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers will rule the Future, Daniel Pink, Marshall Cavendish, 2008, Page 49.

Less white than it was. In the year 2000, 31% of the population of the United States was non-white; their 2010 Census showed 36% were non-white. As in England, there is a close relationship between immigrant numbers and numbers of births. Immigrants are younger than the general population and have (many) more children. The number of white children (under 18) in the US fell 10% between 2000 and 2010, while the number of non-white children grew by 29%. Run those numbers forward 10 to 20 years and which group will be having the most children? This is one reason why the Black Majority Churches in Britain are growing, as immigrant churches are in the States.

SOURCE: American Census Bureau, reported in The Economist, 2nd April, 2011.

Atheistic beliefs. Recent surveys have indicated that 17% of atheists in the UK visited a Cathedral in 2011, while 11% believe in God or a Higher Power. A quarter (24%) of the non-religious believe in heaven, and of those who never attend church 23% believe in the human soul, 21% in angels and 15% in life after death. The actual proportion of the population who don’t believe in God, angels, life after death or souls, and who never go to church is only 9%. “Most people in Britain have some sort of belief,” said Nick Spencer behind this Theos research.

SOURCES: Survey by the Grubb Institute for the Association of English Cathedrals and by the Theos Thinktank, 2012, as reported in the Church Times, 19th October, 7th December 2012.

Redundancies. Many managers are expecting to make further people redundant in 2013, having already made some redundant in 2012 as the Table shows, an important area of ministry for the churches.

Employment sector	No employed 2012, millions	% of organisations making people redundant 2012	2013
Public	5.8	96%	80%
Private	23.9	41%	26%
Voluntary	0.8	47%	44%

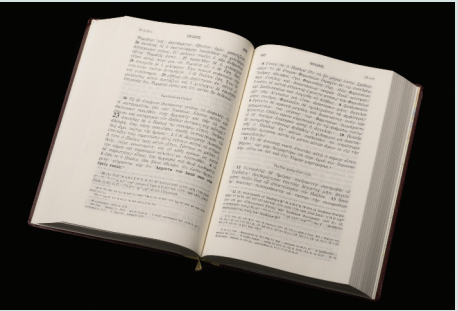
SOURCE: Professional Manager, Feb/March 2013, Page 11.

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## GENERATION LOSS

Joshua succeeded Moses as the leader of the Israelites. Initially a soldier, he became a spy, then a servant or assistant to Moses, then second-in-command, and finally Moses' successor. An outstanding leader, who was visited by the "Commander of the Army of the Lord," probably the pre-incarnate Christ.

Joshua understood succession and knowing that, after all the battles that lay ahead, people would settle down into much more routine living and farming, wanted to ensure that the memory of what they were about to do would be retained. So he told each tribal leader to bring a rock, or "stone," out of the River Jordan as they crossed, and then used it to build a memorial in Gilgal (Josh 4:20) with the explicit purpose that when their children asked what the pile of stones was for, the parents could say, "This is where we crossed over the River Jordan on dry ground."

Hopefully an element of faith would thus be transmitted. The transmission of faith today, however, is not always given such importance. David Voas' research has shown that Christian parents today seem less concerned that their offspring should follow them in their faith. It is visibly true that in many churches not all the children of the leaders, ordained or lay, either come to church with them, or follow them in their commitment to Christ. If Paul's injunction to Timothy about the appointment of "bishops" ("keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way" 1 Tim 3:4) was strictly followed, some church leaders today would never have been appointed.

What is true of leadership is also true across the many other church families who worship on a Sunday. The Langham Survey found that only two-fifths of Christian parents regularly pray with their children. Sunday football, music practice, family outings, peer pressure all combine to tear young people away from church. Numbers in Sunday School have been declining over the past 50 years, although perhaps not as drastically over the past five years. The percentage under 15 in church on a Sunday dropped from 26% in 1979 to 19% in 2005.

How long does it take to lose a generation? Just one generation. "That whole generation [Joshua's and the elders' who outlived him] was gathered to their ancestors, and another generation grew up after them, who did not know the Lord or the work He had done for Israel," (Judges 2:10) is one of the saddest verses in Scripture. The appalling chaos, rivalry, idolatry and cynicism that followed in the century or two of the Judges is vividly recorded. Believers then became few and isolated and brave to hold fast to the old traditions. As Archbishop Carey said in 1999, "the church is always one generation away from extinction."

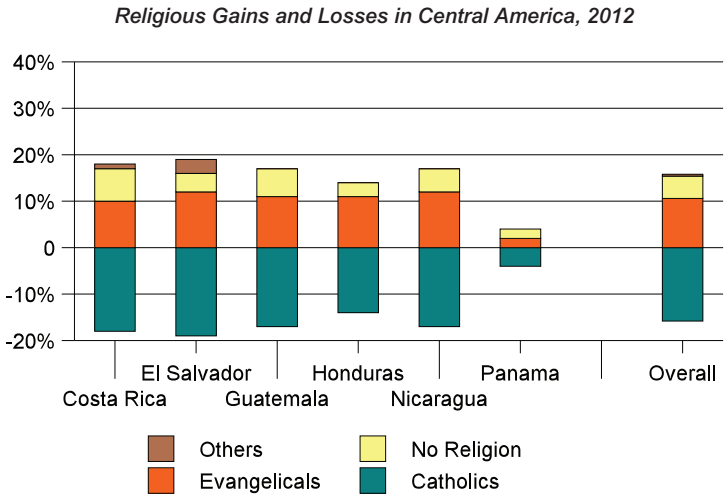
We too are fast losing – some would say have already lost – the next generation. The consequences are longitudinal – fewer Christian children, likely means fewer Christian teenagers, which likely means fewer Christian students, which likely means fewer Christians in their twenties, and, ultimately, fewer Christian families, with thus fewer Christian children. The cycle repeats and quickly deteriorates. Internal transmission within the family is a key priority today, but we are in danger of parents blaming the church for not doing enough to keep children, and the church blaming the parents for the low level of commitment in family life?

Matt Summerfield, the leader of Urban Saints (previously called Crusaders) often says, "I want to reach as many young people today as we can for Christ, so that in 20 years' time they will be producing Christian children for the next generation." Few seem to have that vision.

## Central American Religion

It is often said by missiologists looking at the religious scene in Central and Southern America that the Roman Catholics are losing numbers and the Evangelicals are gaining, but there are very few measurements to substantiate this or to give any idea of the scale of such changes. In September 2012, the Gallup Poll subsidiary in Costa Rica, called CID, undertook a fascinating study across six of the Central American countries looking at this issue.

It asked respondents not only their current religion, but also the religion in which they had been brought up. It did find that people had left the Catholic Church, and that many had become Protestant Evangelicals, but that this was not the entire story. The bar chart shows the major changes.



The chart shows that across the six countries, on average, the Catholics have lost 16% of the population, from being two-thirds (67%) of the population to just over half (51%). They are much stronger currently in Panama (67% of the population), Costa Rica (63%) and Nicaragua (57%) than Guatemala (48%) or El Salvador and Honduras (44% each).

It also shows that the Evangelicals have gained, on average 11%, rising from 24% of the population in the religion in which they were brought up to a third (35%) of the population now. They have fewer members in the three countries where the Catholics are stronger and more where the Catholics are weaker, and are of equal strength to the Catholics in Honduras (44%).

However, the chart also indicates that some of those who have been Catholics currently have no religion at all. In fact, the proportion of "no religionists" has doubled, from 5% in the home in which they were brought up to 10% now. Those who have no religion are least in El Salvador (6% of the population) and most in Guatemala (11%).

Costa Rica saw a slight gain in the number of Mormons and/or Jehovah's Witnesses (up 1% to 2% of the population), while in El Salvador these gained 2% (up from 8% to 10%), and the Jews gained 1% (up 1% to 2%). The changes in Panama were only about a quarter of the scale of changes in the other Central American countries. It has the smallest population of the 6 (3.3 million out of 47 million), but this is unlikely to be the entire reason, if indeed at all.

It is clear that when people leave a particular denomination (or religion) they do not necessarily switch to another. In the Central American example, a third of the losses are to religion, and presumably to faith as well.

The "gains" and "losses" figures look neat, as if a person just switched from one religion to another, and that was it. In fact that is not so. The CID asked a third question to all except in El Salvador: "If you are not now an Evangelical, have you ever been an Evangelical?" and found that on average 12% answered affirmatively. In other words, had all who at one stage attended an Evangelical church stayed, the Evangelicals would be 47% of the population, not 35%. They started with 24% in the religion of their initial family home and almost doubled in the numbers who came to their churches, but lost a quarter of them. That is a substantial loss.

It would be interesting to know if the 12% who left the Evangelicals went back to Catholicism, joined one of the smaller religions or stopped believing altogether. Research by Jorge Gómez back in 1995 in Costa Rica found that it depended on the length of time they had spent in an Evangelical church. Too short a time (under 2 years), a person left and stopped believing, between 2 and 5 years they would most likely go to another religion; after 5 years they would revert to Catholicism. How far that is still true today and whether it applies to other Central American countries is not known.

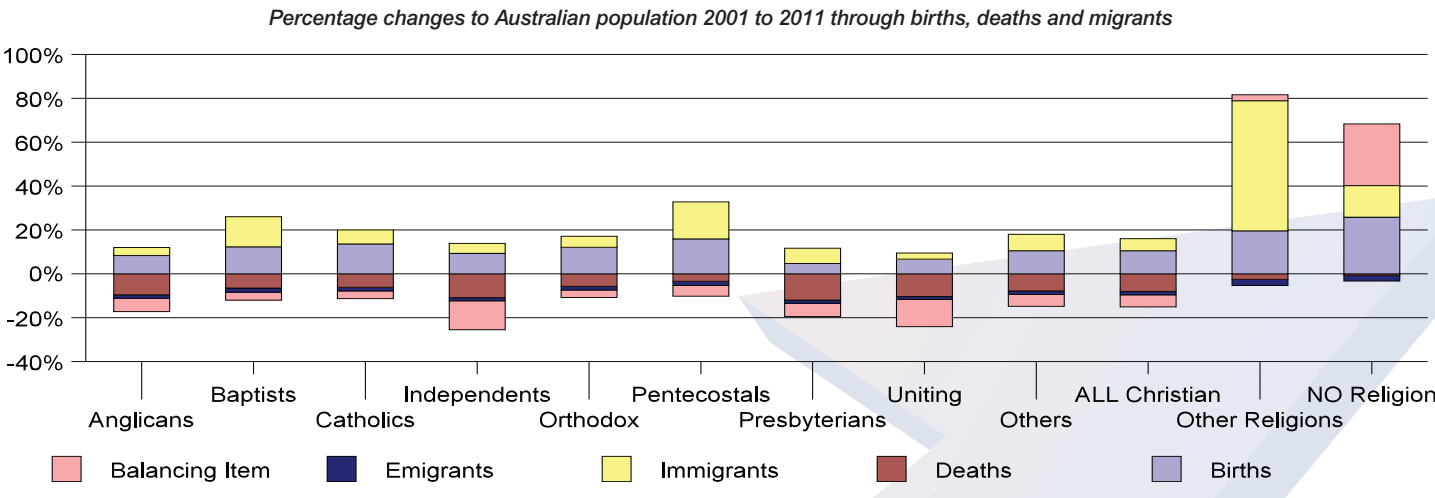
SOURCES: Email from John Kessler giving detailed results, 17th January 2013; World Christian Encyclopaedia, OUP 2001 for population figures; Protestant Growth and Desertion in Costa Rica, Jorge Gómez, Thesis, Columbia Biblical Seminary, 12/95.

## Australian Population Census

The Australians undertook a Population Census in 2011 just as the UK did. However, the Australians not only ask questions about religion in denominational detail (unlike the UK) but also collect as a matter of course the denomination affiliation of births and deaths, and also of immigrants and emigrants, although the death and emigrant numbers are estimated. This allows some very interesting data to be put together which the Australian Christian Research Association (CRA) has done.

It has taken the number of people identifying with a particular denomination in 2001, the year of the previous census, and compared it with the number in 2011. It has also added in the number of births in that denomination and subtracted the number of deaths. Furthermore, it has added in the number of immigrants coming into Australia and subtracted the number of emigrants. The resulting number shows how that denomination has expanded or contracted in the past 10 years.

Of course these are net figures. A particular group may have lost 4,000 people but gained 5,000 converts. The CRA figure would simply show the result as 1,000, without knowing the background figures (which could have been -40,000 and +41,000 instead). The figures also relate to those identifying with a specific denomination, which means they may well not be members or even attenders of the denomination or religious group in question, so the church or religion figures, where available, might well be different. Nevertheless the results give an overview of denominational, and indeed religious, life which is almost unprecedented.



This looks a complicated chart but certain features are clear, bearing in mind that this gives percentages not numerical changes. The Christian total is just over 12 million people; the Other Religions (Bahá'is, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Nature religions and Sikhs) just under a million, and the NO Religion just under 5 million. The remainder to make the total up to 22 million in 2011 are half "no stated religion" and half others (including non-Trinitarian groups). The "Balancing Item" is the percentage needed to balance the figures to ensure the total number is that actually counted in 2011 after the various changes have been made to the 2001 total for each relevant denomination or group (on which the percentages are based).

It may be seen that some groups had an exceptional number of births – Baptists, Pentecostals, Other Religions and especially No Religion – presumably because they all have a greater proportion of women aged 20 to 45 than other groups, that is, as a group they are younger than others.

Anglicans, Independents, Presbyterians and the Uniting Church had a larger proportion of deaths than other groups because their congregations are more elderly. All groups had about the same proportion of emigrants, but Baptists, Pentecostals and especially Other Religions had a large percentage of immigrants in the past decade which helped to boost their numbers.

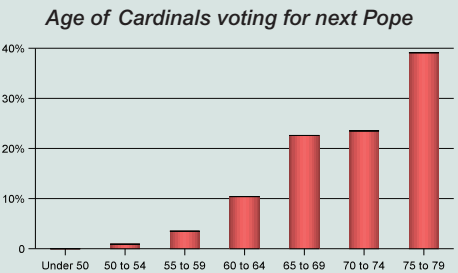
Overall, each of the Christian denominational groups shown dropped slightly in numbers, reflected in the negative "balancing item" shown in the chart, while Other Religions and No Religion both gained, especially No Religion. The very large "balancing item" for the Australian No Religion group is explained "as it is estimated that at least 525,000 people who had identified with a Christian denomination in 2001 ticked the 'no religion' box in the 2011 Census."

The value of a chart like this is to show the ailing denominations, and those which are growing, which are very similar to those in the UK, and the increasing significance of migrants in assessing the strength of different groups. That also is true in the UK, especially for religions other than Christianity.

SOURCES: Australia's Religious Communities, Facts and Figures, Philip Hughes et al, Christian Research Association, Australia, 2012, Table 1; article in Pointers by Philip Hughes, CRA bulletin, Vol 23 No 1 March 2013, Page 4.

## Voting for a Pope

After Pope Benedict's resignation, a new conclave had to be convened to vote for the new Pope. Some 115 existing Cardinals had the right to participate, all being under 80 years of age. Those over 80 and those like Cardinal Keith O'Brien from Scotland did not participate. The age distribution of these 115 Cardinals is shown in the bar chart.



While any Catholic, not necessarily an existing Cardinal, can be elected Pope, invariably they elect one of their existing number. More than three-fifths (63%) are over 70, and only 5 (4%) are under 60. The average age of existing Cardinals is 71. Pope Francis, from Argentina, when elected Pope on 13th March 2013, was 76 years old.

Over half (52%) came from Europe, of whom nearly half (24%) were from Italy. A sixth (17%) came from Latin America, and 12% from North America. Just a tenth (10%) came from Africa, and the remaining 9% from Asia. Many will be praying that the Lord will strongly enable the new leader for all the challenges ahead.

SOURCE: Based on details in The Tablet, 9th March 2013, Pages 14-16.

## Briefly

I start a new job in Seoul next week. I thought it was a good Korea move.

On holiday recently in Spain I saw a sign that said "English speaking Doctor." I thought, "What a good idea, why don't we have them in our country?"

My daughter asked me for a pet spider for her birthday, so I went to our local pet shop and they were £70! "Blow this," I thought, "I can get them cheaper off the web."

A mate of mine recently admitted to being addicted to brake fluid. When I quizzed him on it he reckoned he could stop at any time.

Paddy says, "Mick, I'm thinking of buying a Labrador." "Really, ..." says Mick, "have you seen how many of their owners go blind?"

SOURCE: Grove Jokes, 2012



## Providing Facts for Forward Planning

### SNIPPETS

1) In 1989 there were 110 churches in Greater London with more than 800 people attending, 3% of the total London church attendance. In 2012 there were 230 such churches, 5% of the total, showing a huge growth both in number and in influence.

2) Of the world's 4.4 billion adults, 12% are obese and a further 23% are overweight.

3) An American study estimated that in 1980 there were 1.2 public relations jobs for every one journalist. By 2010 it was 4:1.

4) One in four people in the UK aged 65 to 74 are still in paid work.

5) In a poll asking British people whom they thought was the best American President, 31% said Abraham Lincoln, 23% Franklin D Roosevelt and 15% Bill Clinton.

6) The updated game of Monopoly (in view of inflation) means you can now collect £200,000 as you pass "Go" instead of £200. The game is available in 111 countries and has been translated into 47 languages.

7) 57% of England's Jews live in London, as do 51% of its Hindus, and 38% of its Muslims.

SOURCES: 1) London Church Census Report, Table 3.5, forthcoming; 2) The World in 2013, The Economist, London, 2012, Page 28; 3) Management Today, January 2013, Page 33; 4) Aviva study from The Independent, quoted in The Week, 12th January 2013, Page 19; 5) The Economist, Intelligent Life, Jan/Feb 2013, Page 23; 6) Saga Magazine, December 2012, Page 14; 7) Office for National Statistics, 2011 Population Census.

## Church v Non-Church Young People

### Dr Alex Owen, Award Leader and Senior Lecturer, Oasis College

As a Church-based Youth Minister I knew that youth ministry could have a positive effect upon the lives of young people. I had seen a significant number of young people's lives supported, enriched and changed through the effective nurture of a youth ministry. Over recent years we have seen the church in the United Kingdom invest significantly in youth ministry in terms of finance, time and, ultimately, in terms of hope for the future of the Church.

In this respect just knowing that the work we do with young people is effective isn't sufficient. Therefore I wanted to explore this notion further and arrived at the title of my PhD research, "An investigation into the impact of church-based discipleship groups upon the identity formation of young people."

As I explored the literature associated with my area of interest I discovered the work of the Christian philosopher, John Macmurray.<sup>2</sup> Macmurray asserts that there are two key issues associated with identity formation. He maintains that it is the relationships that we engage with that encourage our understanding of the self and then it this understanding that causes us to employ certain behaviours. Namely, relationships lead to identity formation and the understanding of identity is manifest through actions. Although Macmurray's work has a number of criticisms, I decided broadly to use his thinking as a theoretical basis for my exploration.

The research involved two case-study groups of young people, each group containing 300 individuals. One group comprised young people, aged 11-14 years, with no link to the church while the other group comprised young people, aged 11-14 years, who attended some form of church discipleship group. The aim was to discover, through quantitative and qualitative research methods, if attendance at a Church group impacted the identity development of a young person. The young people from each case-study group completed a questionnaire regarding this issue and, in addition, a sample from each group was interviewed to understand further the people behind the statistics generated.

Based on Macmurray's work, I sought to research a significant range of relationships that the young people, of both case-study groups, could be involved in. These broadly fitted into three main categories:

- The young people's view of themselves as relational beings,
- The young people's experience of relationship with family members, and
- The young people's experience of relationship with the wider world.

The results from the research showed an important difference between the quality of relationship that the church-based young people enjoyed in contrast to that experienced by the young people with no link to the church. For example, when asked the question, "Do you have a good relationship with the members of your church or other group?" the results were significantly different as the first pair of pie-charts show (Figure 1).

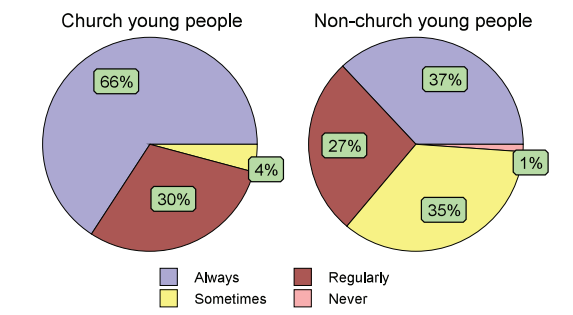
Macmurray asserts that these positive expressions of relationship would provide an environment for the young people to construct a healthy understanding of their identity,

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which is then manifest through their actions. I therefore sought to research a significant range of actions that the young people, of both case-study groups, might manifest. These again broadly fit into three categories:

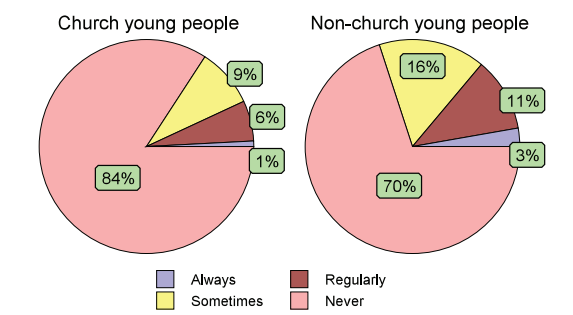
- Actions in reference to the young people's personal beings,
- Actions in reference to the young people's lives, and
- Actions in reference to the world.

Figure 1: Do you have a good relationship with your group members?



Results from the two groups again differed, shown for example in a question about drinking, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Do you ever drink alcohol to make yourself purposely drunk?



There were a few anomalies to the clear picture that emerged through the research outcomes. For example, a young person's attendance at a church discipleship group had no impact on whether a young person deemed themselves to be a caring friend. However, overall, the conclusion from my study revealed that attendance at a church discipleship group had an extremely positive impact upon the quality of relationships that the young people were involved in, influencing identity formation and constructive actions.

The young people linked with the church vocalised clearly the value of attending a discipleship group and the positive effect these groups had on their fundamental understanding of self. This tangible evidence clearly supports the Church's investment in youth ministry and should be a positive encouragement to those involved in this worthwhile work.

1) A Owen (2011), PhD Thesis.  
2) J Macmurray (1953), Self as Agent, and J Macmurray (1961), Persons in Relation, both London: Faber and Faber Ltd.