



Many readers will know Rev Dr Eddie Gibbs from his ministry in the UK, both before he left to become Professor of Church Growth at Fuller, and during his many subsequent visits to the UK, or through the many books he has authored. For our **REFLECTION** piece this issue he has very kindly written on parenting.

Parenting for Life

Eddie Gibbs

Professor Emeritus, Fuller Seminary

Any couple parenting four grown and married children and eight grandchildren understandably is reticent to write on the subject of parenting! For we ourselves have made so many mistakes along the way. It would be much simpler to confine our comments to grandparenting, which is parenting without pain and exhaustion! At least that is how it should be. However an increasing number of grandparents, now find themselves returning to their former challenges when they have to step in to help out in emergency situations. When their children find themselves single parenting due to separation and divorce, or the chronic sickness or death of their partner they turn to their own parents for support.

As many parents have commented the challenge of parenting is that babies do not come with an instruction manual. Furthermore, parenting consists of a life-long learning process as our children grow and the challenges multiply. Having spent many sleepless nights feeding and consoling crying babies we mistakenly imagine that it will be much easier once they can handle their own physical needs, and are off to school. But that's when the ferrying service begins getting our kids to their various activities and to their social events. A number of parents I know have exchanged their 7-seater SUV for a 4- seater family car in order to withdraw their taxi service from the pool!

Family situations are so diverse that we must confine ourselves to approaching the topic from a personal point of view. The reader must decide to what extent our experiences are either applicable or helpful to their own situation. We have regarded the birth of each baby as a gift from God, which has brought unspeakable joy to our lives and drawn us near to our Creator, renewing our sense of gratitude and wonder. On three occasions it also brought disappointment and grief following two miscarriages and one stillbirth. The last of these came about as the baby died in the womb a few days before the due date. My wife had the devastating experience of knowing she was giving birth to a dead child in a hospital ward of expectant mothers. After the birth we named the stillborn child Allison before handing her back to the hospital. Renee's Bible is heavily marked with the verses of comfort from the Psalms that the Lord gave her at that time. Subsequently, she has been able to provide support and comfort to other mothers who have undergone similar experiences, as well as advising relatives and friends who were uncertain as to how to respond in offering support.

Throughout our married lives we have taken time to pray together each day, and to pray with the children. We tried to give age-appropriate answers to the questions they raised. Mindful of the fact that we were in full-time Christian ministry, beginning in a busy Anglican Parish in England, then serving in South America for five years, followed by thirteen years working with mission organizations we avoided creating a "super-spiritual" atmosphere at home, which might cause the kids to rebel as they exerted their independence.

Twenty-eight years ago we came as a family to California, where Eddie had been invited to teach at Fuller Seminary. As this move would impact every member of the family in different ways, after a month's visit while Eddie taught an intensive course, we asked each of our four children (who were then aged between 10-21) if they would be happy to move. If any one had serious objections then we would take it as a sign from the Lord that we were not to move. They all responded enthusiastically – which was possibly helped by a visit to Disneyland! Moving is something that so many families have to face with job changes or other considerations, but we feel it is important for the whole family to share in the discussion and final decision, whether the move is across town or across continents.

With their increasing independence parents have to watch their children make important decisions that will impact their lives long term. We have to learn to change our parental role from controlling to counseling. This sometimes entails allowing them to make what we consider to be the wrong decision. Some of our children go through a period of parental rebellion with dire consequences, which they had not foreseen. Then we are like the anxiously waiting father in Jesus' story, ensuring that the welcome mat is always there, with the door open and a homecoming celebration. Sometimes we must be prepared for an agonizingly long wait.

We must recognize the distinct personalities, interests, skills and calling of each of our offspring. They are not simply our clones, but are new creations of God. Therefore we must not impose our expectations on them in terms of their education, career, and life-partner. Respectful counseling must be our stance in order for respect to be reciprocated and for our life experience to be valued.

A word must be added on the subject of the sexual orientation of our children. In our pastoral situation in West Los Angeles we have listened to the life experiences of many gay and lesbian individuals who are struggling with their sexual identity as they seek to follow Christ. As we have listened to their painful experiences, including abuse from childhood, loneliness and rejection we have tried to show understanding, and provide community support, without condoning the life style. This led to continuing ministry among them, such that they would tell us when they were HIV positive, and welcomed us to their bedside when they developed full-blown AIDS, and then ministering to their family and friends in heart-rending memorial services. Fortunately, this is not an issue with which we have had to deal in our own family.

The world has changed dramatically from the one in which we grew up, where everyone else looked like us. Now we live in an increasingly multicultural society, with great diversity represented in our extended family. We have a Japanese daughter-in-law whom my son met in Tokyo. Our oldest daughter met a Korean/African American who was adopted from Seoul when he was either three or five whom she later married. Our middle daughter's husband is Mexican American, and our youngest daughter is married to a Caucasian American who claims he has Cherokee ancestry somewhere in the family tree. Inter-racial marriage makes for wonderful grandchildren.

Our youngest daughter and son-in-law, had no children for the first fifteen years of their marriage and so adopted a cute African-American baby. Then, immediately after, our daughter became pregnant giving birth to a blond haired baby. When people peered into their pushchair the appropriate response was "Surprise!" It is important to talk through the social and psychological implications of multi-cultural relationships. But we rejoice at our family diversity and race is never an issue when we get together to enjoy each other's company, which we are able to do as a Christian family.

As someone who has been involved in itinerant ministry for most of the past 35 years, my one regret is that I did not spend enough time with the family. The fact that each of our children and their spouses are following Christ today, humanly speaking, is due to Renee who made it her primary ministry to raise a Christian family. We have now been married for 50 years and rejoice at God's grace and patience during our many decades as parents and grandparents in training!

SINGLES

A survey by the online dating agency Christian Connection confirms the church profile of a much smaller proportion of single people in its attendees than in the population as a whole. Single people are counted as the total of (a) those living by themselves who have never been married, (b) those who are cohabiting, and (c) single parents. In the Table therefore single people are legally a total of 35% of the population, virtually double the Christian total percentage. Married people in the Table include the 0.2% of the population who are in a civil partnership.

The churchgoing percentages arise from a 2012 Langham International Partnership survey of everyone in 7 different evangelical congregations across various denominations and locations. This showed that a sixth (18½%) of churchgoers is single. Those who are widowed or divorced (that is, they have been married) may be living alone, especially if they are over 60, but they are not legally counted as "single."

Many of the churchgoing singles are those under 40 and, presumably, would like to be married were they to meet the right partner. It is the lack of suitable men of this age in church that is the concern for those who are female. In the London Church Census, five-sixths of those who joined the church across London in the last 10 years were women!

Whereas 10,000 women in their 20s joined the church between 2005 and 2012 in London, only 5,000 men of the same age did so. 11,000 women in their 30s joined the London churches in the same period, but numbers of men in their 30s dropped by 1,000. While these proportions may not be representative of the rest of the country they do tell their own story, especially as London accounts for a third of all those going to church in England in their 20s.

The huge difference between the general population and churchgoers is that a fifth (21%) of the population is either cohabiting or single parents, neither strictly "single" in the old definition of the word. Less than a tenth of that percentage (1½%) is either cohabiting or single parents in the church.

The comparison with the population and church re singles is probably also different in another way. Some, perhaps many, of the church singles who have never been married will be older ladies, whereas many of the unmarried singles in the population will be under 40, and mostly under 30, although an increasing number of women are choosing not to marry.

The Christian Connection survey of 3,000 people (mentioned above) found that single people in the church feel they are often ignored, excluded, marginalised or simply "invisible" to others in the church, especially leaders, as they get older and especially after they have turned 30. "What would Christian singles like the church to do for them?"

Marital status of English churchgoers and population, 2012

England, 2012	Married %	Single %	Cohabiting %	Single Parent %	Divorced/Sep'd %	Widowed %
Population	47	14	10	11	11	7
Churchgoers	71	17	1	½	4½	6
Churchgoers broken down by age-group						
Aged 18 to 39	50	46	3	~	1	~
40 to 59	86	6	1	1	5	1
60 or over	70	7	~	~	6	17

the survey asked. "Talks on relationships, the organisation of social events, hospitality such as invitations to Sunday lunch, providing models of Christian singleness," were the answers. However, such needs to be met in a way that "affirms them and doesn't pigeonhole them."

The survey found that those in evangelical churches especially agreed that singleness was not a positive choice for them, and although they were taught the importance of avoiding sex they were not given great guidance on singleness and relationships. Singleness seems to preclude people being considered for leadership positions, and single people feel this is a slight. Some give up on the church as a consequence. This is a matter of pastoral significance as well as emphasising the importance of outreach to men in general and younger men in particular.

SOURCES: Living the Christian Life survey for Langham International Partnership; Christian Connection web-site; articles in the Church Times 3rd May 2013, Page 5 and Third Way May 2013, Page 4; Office for National Statistics website.



CHURCH OF ENGLAND

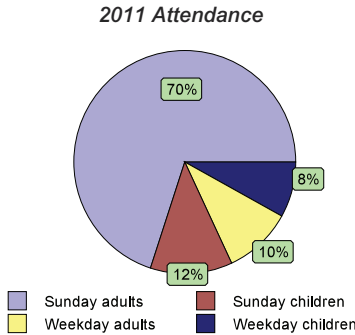
The latest Church of England attendance figures, for the year 2011, have now been published. A different method of grossing up for non-replying parishes has been used which has amended slightly the figures for 2010. The Table gives the basic figures over the last 10 years; the numbers are all in thousands but the noughts are left off for easier reading.

Year	Adults '000		Children '000		Total '000
	Sunday	Weekday	Sunday	Weekday	
2001	868	108	173	56	1,205
2006	828	109	155	73	1,165
2011	763	112	135	82	1,092
% chg 01-11	-12	+4	-22	+46	-9

While Sunday adult attendance has dropped by 100,000 between 2001 and 2011, adult weekday attendance has slightly increased. A similar pattern is true of child attendance, Sunday down but weekday up. The same trend is also true of Cathedral worship, not shown here. In 2001 weekday attendance was 16% of Sunday attendance, but in 2011 it was 22%.

Child attendance is one-fifth (20%) of the whole, but is only 15% of Sunday attendance though 38% of weekday attendance. While this is good news, it must also be remembered that many churches have no children attending at all (a 2005 report said 50% of Anglican churches).

SOURCE: Church of England Statistics website, www.churchofengland.org/media..

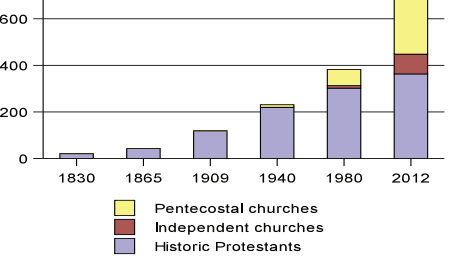


Church Growth in Belgium

The 1990 European Values' Survey scored Belgium as one of the more secularised European societies, since Catholic Mass attendance had drastically fallen in the 1970s and 1980s. The various Protestant churches, however, grew, largely because many new churches were started, even though their total membership figures are small, going from perhaps 1% of the population in 1990 to 2% in 2012.

The historic Protestant churches in Belgium, which became independent from France in 1830, grew ten-fold from 21 then to 220 by 1940 just over a century later. Since then Independent and especially Pentecostal churches have started.

Protestant Churches in Belgium, 1830-2012



While the historic churches have grown in number, they have been outstripped by the more rapid growth of both Independent churches and Pentecostal churches. Pentecostal churches have tripled in number (from 69 to 242) between 1980 and 2012. Part of this growth has come because of immigrants or other foreigners living in Belgium, and some of the new churches use non-Belgian languages.

Three-quarters (74%) of the Protestant churches use one of the three main languages – French (49%), Dutch (24%) or German (1%) – while the other quarter (26%) use a variety of over 14 different languages. The most popular of these is English (12% of churches – half the 26% using foreign languages), followed by Portuguese (4%), Italian (2%), and Spanish (2%). Russian, Rwandan and Romanian account for a further 1% each. The English speaking congregations are not solely in the 60 Anglican churches in Belgium, but in all the main denominations.

Rwandan churches are not the only African churches in Belgium – there are several Ghanaian and Congolese churches also, and those from these countries tend to start their own congregations rather than go to an existing church using a different language. However, these churches do not see themselves as national churches from some part of Africa but rather as mission stations seeking to reach all people and all nations.

These same trends have been seen elsewhere, especially in London, which also has many "fall nations" churches, immigrants coming in sufficient numbers to enable them to start their own churches, with many of these being of Pentecostal origin rather than of Reformed Christianity. The growth of these new churches has been especially rapid in the last 30 years.

Not all Belgian growth, however, is in new Pentecostal churches. Some of the traditional historic churches are also much more charismatic than they used to be, as many Belgians are drawn to Pentecostalism. It remains to be seen whether many of the Catholic churches will embrace this also.

SOURCES: Article by Colin Godwin in the International Bulletin of Missionary Research, OMSC, Connecticut, USA, Vol 37, No 2, Page 90.

SNOWFLAKES

Trust Index. "Please tell me if you would generally trust ... to tell the truth," asked Ipsos MORI in its 2013 Veracity Index last February. Results were:

89% Doctors
86% Teachers
83% Scientists
82% Judges

69% TV newsreaders
66% Clergy/priests
65% Police
53% Civil servants
41% Trade Union officials
34% Business leaders

24% Estate agents
23% MPs in general
21% Journalists
21% Bankers
18% Politicians generally

SOURCE: Article in The Tablet, 6th April, 2013, Page 7.

Reading habits. 54% of children aged between 5 and 7 read every day at school, but only 16% of boys in this age-group and 29% of girls also read every day for pleasure. Half, 52%, of parents feel that teaching their children to read is a joint responsibility of teachers and parents, while 12% of parents feel it is solely the teachers' responsibility. When Robert Raikes started the Sunday School Movement in 1780, the church helped to teach children to read.

SOURCE: Survey by Egmont in 2012, reported in The Bookseller, 12th April 2013, Page 9.

Generational change. Latin American Catholics emigrating to the United States experience a generational shift in their religious allegiance. The first generation may be only 69% affiliated to a Catholic church, but this reduces to 59% for the second generation and 40% for the third generation. They move into either Evangelicalism (13% first generation, 21% third) or become totally unaffiliated (9% first generation, 24% third). Two-thirds, 70%, of the Evangelical group attend services every week, and 92% say that religion is very important in their lives, compared with 47% (attending services) and 66% (religion important) of Catholics.

SOURCE: Report in Time magazine, 15th April, 2013, Pages 22,23.

Sunday competition. Interviews with clergy and congregation members in declining North American congregations showed that both were convinced that the most important single explanation for the decline in attendance was the secularisation of Sunday. Time reserved for church activities now competes with secular

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activities (such as school sports, working or shopping on Sundays). "Sunday is no longer sacred; it is 'just another day of the week'."

SOURCE: Article "The Secularisation of Sunday" by Steve McMullin in Review of Religious Research, Vol 55, No 1, March 2013, Page 49.

Perceptions of Islam. An American study has identified some of the characteristics of those who view Islam favourably (= Fav) and unfavourably (= Unfav), as shown in the Table:

Factor	Fav %	Unfav %
Evangelicals	25	75
Protestant clergy	28	72
Those with no faith	42	58
Politically conservative	29	71
Politically liberal	70	30
Adults 67 or over	16	84
Mosaics, aged 18 to 28	45	55

SOURCE: Bulletin, Barna Group, April 2013.

Lesbians. The Prime Minister of Iceland, Johanna Sigurdardottir, paid an official visit to China in April 2013, being received by President Xi, Premier Li and others. She was accompanied by her wife Jonina Leosdottir, making this the first visit of a practising lesbian couple to enjoy a state reception by another nation.

SOURCE: Great Commission Center International release, April 2013.

Part-timers increase. In the five years 2007 to 2012, full time employment in the UK fell by 340,000, while unemployment rose by 850,000, many of whom are young people. However, part-time employment increased by 660,000 (including probably a few black church leaders), suggesting this may be initially a better way forward. The median salary in 2012 was £25,000 (that is, half earning a full-time wage received up to this amount).

SOURCE: Office for National Statistics, quoted in Society Now, Issue 15, Spring 2013, Page 21.

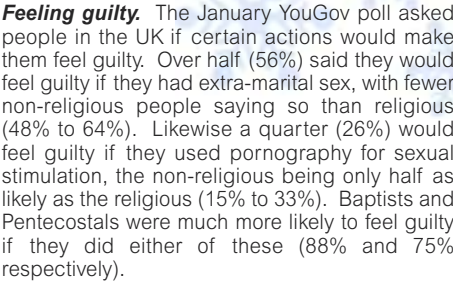
Most Catholic country. The 2012 Pew Forum report put Poland as the most Catholic country in the world, with 92% of its population supposedly Catholic, but Poland's Statistical Institute of the Catholic Church says Mass attendance has dropped from 53% in 1987 to under 40% in 2011. Enthusiasm was at a high when John Paul II was Pope – 13 million people, a third of the population, came to greet him when he visited Poland – but has abated since his death. Still 99% of babies are christened in the Catholic Church.

SOURCES: The Cara Report, Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2012; NBC News 5th March 2013 on www.worldnews.

doubled in the Anglican and New Churches. Leaders stay slightly longer in their role in London than elsewhere. Far fewer look after more than one church (7% to 32% generally), so are able to focus more on a single congregation. Three-fifths (63%) of London's churches hold a mid-week service (against 42% elsewhere), and half (45%) a mid-week youth activity (against 27% elsewhere). Half (54%) hold teaching courses, a third (34%) undertake neighbourhood visitation and street evangelism. One in seven leaders (15%) had started another church in recent years, delegating such to a leader on average 8 years younger (with half seeing numbers at least double within 5 years). Enabling leaders to have undivided responsibility for a single congregation (with clear targets) has almost certainly helped the incredible growth seen across London.

The focal challenges of the London Church Census involve location, leadership, culture, ethnicity, gender and age. Above all, these require clear thinking, impassioned praying, and strategic action. The study will have failed if it only results in academic agreement (or disagreement!). It will have succeeded only if churches are driven to prayer and then to such actions as exploring the possibility of a church plant, considering an evangelism teaching course, developing a Bible-based teaching ministry, freeing leadership solely for the task in hand, providing for a youth worker, and expanding outreach among professionals, students, men, immigrants, the elderly, disabled, singles, those living on Council Estates, those of alternative faiths and other specialist groups. The fields ARE ready for harvest.

Peter Brierley



Feeling guilty. The January YouGov poll asked people in the UK if certain actions would make them feel guilty. Over half (56%) said they would feel guilty if they had extra-marital sex, with fewer non-religious people saying so than religious (48% to 64%). Likewise a quarter (26%) would feel guilty if they used pornography for sexual stimulation, the non-religious being only half as likely as the religious (15% to 33%). Baptists and Pentecostals were much more likely to feel guilty if they did either of these (88% and 75% respectively).

SOURCE: Press Release for Westminster Faith Debates, April 2013, from Prof Linda Woodhead, Lancaster University.

Canada in 2050. What will Canadian religion look like in 2050? That is the fascinating question that Professor Reginald Bibby, Research Chair at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada, has been asked by the Canadian Government. What will UK religion look like in 2050? Not many have given researched forecasts, but in July 2012 at the Church of England Synod it was revealed that, if present trends continue, actuaries estimate that attendance could be decimated by then.

SOURCES: Personal conversation; Church Times report of Synod meeting July 2012.

Continued from page 1

stereotype into a warm, all-embracing New Testament fellowship?

6) Key Age and Gender Focus

Sixthly, perhaps the biggest challenge arising from the Census, is the need to attract back into our congregations especially the young marrieds or those living together, their teenagers and children, particularly the men of such families. At present, London's churches are attracting women far more than men. However, in reaching those of young-family age (30s and 40s) churches are, in their own way, also providing for the next generation. Many churches in Outer London find they have fewer young people attending, having lost the vital "Sunday School years" to football and other sports, shopping, socialising and so on. Recent Inner London experience would suggest that quality teaching of the faith is a key draw, together with imaginative provision for the children of young families.

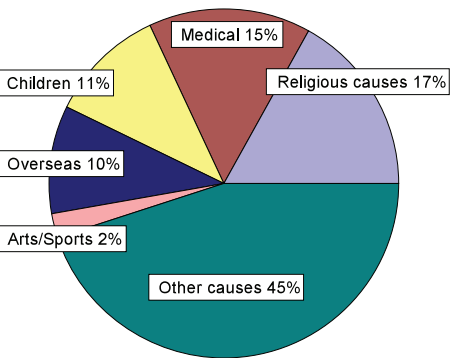
7) Focussed Leadership

Lastly, only two-thirds (67%) of London churches have a paid ordained leader, while a fifth (22%) have a paid non-ordained leader. Half (49%) employ someone part-time. Many leaders, especially Pentecostal ministers, have a full- or part-time paid job and serve their church unpaid in their spare time. One church in 8 has a full- or part-time youth worker, although this ratio is

Charitable Donations

Every 3 years the Office for National Statistics conducts a household survey on giving to charity, the most recent being for 2012. Some £9,300 million was given that year to charity by the 55% of the British population who give something each month. This amount was 20% down on charitable giving in 2011.

Charitable donations by money given, 2012



Medical causes received the most donations (33% of the total), while religious causes had 14% of all donations. However, religious causes received the most money, with the average donation in 2012 of £20, up from £15 in 2011. The average amount donated by religious people across the whole year, however, was £580, compared with £240 by non-religious people.

SOURCE: UK Giving, CAF and NCVO, as reported in the *Church Times* 19th April, 2013.

Insight and Foresight

Mr David Smith, the CEO of Global Futures and Foresight research agency has given an interesting definition of these two words: “In the commercial world, insight is the raw material you gather about today, and foresight is what you make of those insights.”

An article in the new magazine *Impact* went on to give some dos and don'ts about foresight:

- 1) **Don't** claim to predict the future precisely – too much can go wrong!
- 2) **Do** offer a range in a forecast as this helps decision-makers accept uncertainty.
- 3) **Do** offer evidence that will help understanding of the decision-making context.
- 4) **Don't** get carried away by Black Swans and chaos theory. You can't see the unknown coming!
- 5) **Do** construct credible scenarios as decision-makers are more likely to think about believable futures.
- 6) **Don't** allow foresight to take precedence over agility. It's better to react fast than see problems early.
- 7) **Don't** get swept away by high-level analysis, which is useful but we still need human interpreters.

Some of this wisdom might be appropriate for church leaders also.

SOURCE: *Impact, Using Evidence & Insight to make a Difference*, Issue 1, 2013, Market Research Society, Pages 19, 20.

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

At the end of April 2013 the Overseas Missionary Studies Centre in New Haven, Connecticut, United States, held a mission leaders' conference on Trafficking. President Obama has defined trafficking as “an outrage ... which must be called by its true name – modern slavery.”

There are different types of trafficking. Sex trafficking is “The recruitment, harbouring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a person for a commercial sex act.” Labour trafficking is “The recruitment, harbouring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a person for labour or services.” Both types can come about “through the use of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery,” and especially for sex.

Force can include physical or sexual assault, kidnapping, isolation or confinement. Fraud includes false employment offers or false promises about wages, work or living conditions. Coercion includes threats to the life or safety of the person concerned, or to family members, blackmail, threats of deportation, debt bondage, psychological manipulation and so on.

The International Labour Office (ILO) says trafficking victims must be foreign nationals, who have to cross an international border, which ignores the huge numbers of internal trafficked people. According to the ILO, there were 21 million people trafficked in 2012 – a third of the population of the UK – of which a fifth (22%) was for sex, two-thirds (68%) for labour and 10% was government-imposed forced labour. The sex percentage has increased over the last few years. There are now twice as many people enslaved in the world as there were in the 350 years of the Transatlantic slave trade.

It is estimated that 2 million children or minors are also being exploited for sexual purposes, and these are a further category of trafficking. There are in addition very large numbers of children, often aged 4 to 14, who are forced into manual labour, in conditions akin to slavery, working up to 18 hours a day. Some estimate that the true overall trafficked total in 2012 was closer to 27 million.

A “trafficker” is a person who exploits others. Such can be owners of brothels, pimps, strip-club owners, employers wanting cheap labour, householders looking for domestic helpers, or those wanting commercial sex. The demand is probably also fed by a culture of easily accessible pornography on the web. Some of the labour trafficking is in agriculture, construction or domestic work, but can include drug trafficking also. Those caught up in trafficking have no freedom to move or freedom to leave and may be kept in horrendous conditions.

The number of trafficked people was first estimated by the ILO in 2005, which put the total that year at 12 million. 55% of forced labour victims are women and girls, as are 98% of sex trafficking victims. Slavery today is driven by the same political, technological and economic forces as globalisation itself, and generates perhaps £30 billion to the global economy each year.

Some 33 countries fully comply with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, and in these countries there were a total of 7,200 prosecutions in 2011, all bar 500 for sex trafficking. There were 4,200 convictions (59%). Some 41,000 victims were identified, just 0.2% of the worldwide total. A further 134 countries are taking steps to make the necessary counts, including India and Russia, of which 42 are of special concern because of the high numbers of trafficked people coming from them.

Of the 21 million measured by the ILO as trafficked in 2012, 56% were in India, Asia and the Pacific, 18% in Africa, 8% in each of Latin America, and Central and Southern Europe, including Russia, 7% in the European Union and 3% in the Middle East.

This is an appalling trade and just as international pressure seeks to get accurate information it is also wanting to provide protective services for the victims. “Modern slavery takes many forms that require caregivers to provide services reflecting the unique experiences of each survivor. Even if two people endure identical abuse, they may have very different needs.” Scotland Yard detective Roddy Llewellyn is one of the leading people concerned with sex trafficking in the UK. The BBC World Service is also building grassroots capacity to prevent bonded labour in countries like India.

Does it happen in the UK? Yes, sadly it does. Saeeda, a deaf Pakistani woman, was 10 when she left Pakistan for a job as a domestic worker in Manchester. For nearly a decade, she was abused, raped, beaten by her employers, a Pakistani couple, and confined to a cellar. Uta was 7 when she came from Romania to the UK, her parents thinking she could thus escape poverty. When rescued by the police, her teeth were so rotten they had to be removed. She had never been to school and could not count up to 10 in her own language. The Romanian couple in charge were sentenced to 14 years in prison.

Further details may be found in the Trafficking in Persons Report from the US Dept of State, www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt, www.polarisproject.org/human-trafficking and www.uncjin.org for the UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking..

SOURCES: OMSC Conference papers (obtainable via jennings@omsc.org) and the *Trafficking in Persons* Report 2012.

TRANSHUMANISM

The World Transhumanist Association, founded in 2002 and now called Humanity +, abbreviated to H+, imagines “the possibility of broadening the human condition by overcoming ageing, cognitive shortcomings, involuntary suffering, and our confinement to planet Earth.” It is looking for a new kind of existence. This is not written as a religious statement as if to define Heaven, but rather what their members see as an inevitable result of continued technological revolution and adaptation. The actual word “transhuman” comes from Julian Huxley's 1957 book *New Bottles for New Wine*, and what he calls “the capability of the human species to ‘transcend itself’.”

Transhumanists see the world as dominated by technology and believe this trend will only continue and expand. They see technology as more than a tool to progress, more as a “symbolic system acquiring a meaning.” They see no limit to technology's ability to enhance humanity's “intellectual, physical and psychological capacities and to overcome its biological limits.”

There is a demonic implication in this: “The fact that technological means can improve the human condition is seen as a sufficient reason why these technologies should be used.” This has implications for embryo development, gene manipulation, relaxation techniques and much else. Some transhumanists see this as enabling immortality, and some pay large sums (£150,000) for a cryonic suspension contract in liquid nitrogen when they die, awaiting the day for someone to bring them back to life.

Is this a form of pseudo-religion? Some scientists criticise it for its implicit religiosity and the aping of Christian theology on its world view. Others see it as a dualistic vision and its alleged disdain for the body as a Gnostic influence. The key to this is that the devil will use any and every means to distort the truth and lure men into worshipping and idolising technology instead of the true and living God.

Science fiction has shown a yearning by many for technological improvement, and some transhumanists believe that a “Singularity” will come, that is, technology will produce a machine with greater-than-human intelligence that will then build others machines with even greater intelligence. Some say this borrows directly from the apocalyptic vision of Christianity.

Transhumanism is thus the capacity to exceed humanity's limits, perhaps through a chip implanted in one's brain, allowing perhaps humanity to “become like a single, transcendent nervous system.” In doing so, it is seeking to give meaning to human existence as the universe develops.

What relevance is all this to church leaders? Simply to underline that the search for the meaning of life can be widespread and deep, and that some see the enormous advances in technology as a kind of “saviour,” perniciously parodying, perhaps unconsciously, some elements of Christian doctrine.

SOURCE: Based in most part on a paper by Oliver Masson, University of Quebec. “Turning into Gods: Transhumanist insight on tomorrow's religiosity” given at the May 2013 Denton Conference on Implicit Religion.

SNIPPETS

1) Almost 100,000 people joined the church in Greater London between 2005 and 2012. Five-sixths (82%) of these new people were women.

2) A third of these total newcomers (32%) were between the ages of 20 and 44. Normally this age-group is only about a quarter (23%) of those attending.

3) Gallup asked half a million people in 154 countries where they would like to live if they could. 13% would like to live elsewhere: 22% in the United States and 7% in the UK, the top 2 countries.

4) Toy and games' sales fell 1% in 2012, but adult jigsaws increased by 11%, with more than 6 million sold. Gibsons, a major producer, said the majority of its customers were women over 50.

5) 140 million women in the world have had FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) of which 92 million are in Africa. 3,000 women are cut every year in Britain.

6) Stephen Covey's classic *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* has sold 25 million copies worldwide in the 24 years since publication.

7) One in three European parents use filtering tools for their child's computer, according to a survey of 25,000 teenagers (aged 9 to 16). What content is being filtered, however, is less obvious.

SOURCES: 1) and 2) London Church Census Report, Table A2.12, forthcoming; 3) *Time* magazine 8th April 2013, Page 8; 4) Report in the *Daily Telegraph*, 1st May, 2013; 5) Article in *Third Way*, April 2013, Page 23; 6) *Management Today*, May 2013, Page 39; 7) *SRA News*, December 2012, Page 5 (an EU Kids Online survey).

THE LONDON CHURCH CENSUS

The essential motivation of the 2012 London Church Census commissioned by the London City Mission (LCM) was to “look on the fields, white already to harvest.” How could the LCM best deploy its workers in the days ahead, and where were the neediest unevangelised parts of London? The question is relevant to other cities, to denominations and organisations apart from the LCM, and for evangelism generally.

motivated by the clear Biblical teaching of some of the leaders of the very large black churches – Jesus House, Ruach Ministries, Glory House or House of Praise. Added to this is key strategic leadership enthusing others to go and take a risk for the sake of the Kingdom, often in a specific location. Imagine the impact on London and the rest of the country if most of our churches were able to start a new church plant!

2) Specialist Churches

Secondly, there is growth around churches which offer a special outreach to particular groups of people, in this case often immigrants who welcome services in their own language. Many of these are Evangelical, but not all, and some are Catholic (ministering especially to those from Catholic countries). These are often located in Inner London where good and easy travel facilities on a Sunday already exist. Not all of these are focussed to meet the need of newcomers, as some, like Hillsong, offer a different type of worship. Others, more in Outer London, offer what is often called “Messy Church.” The key here is starting an outreach focussed on particular groups of certain individuals, based on a social, ethnic, or age-related concern. For those who feel their present local church situation does not meet their needs, this type of ministry could re-vitalise areas where the church seems to be stagnating or irrelevant.

3) Growth in Larger Churches

Thirdly, many of the larger churches (of all ethnicities) are seeing substantial growth within their own congregations. This is especially true in Inner London, and particularly so among those aged 20 to 44. A third (35%) of Inner London's attenders are in this age-group, almost double the 20% across England generally. What attracts these young or middle-aged people? Many, but not all, of these churches are Evangelical, providing clear Bible-based expository teaching, often supported by Alpha or Christianity Explored teaching courses, which draw hundreds of those in their 20s. Some are Charismatic, like Holy Trinity, Brompton, while others are Reformed, like St Helen's, Bishopsgate. With poor transmission of faith in Christian households, and often



declining youth work in churches, many of those in their late teens or 20s who are finding faith lack the basic clarity on how to live out their Christian life, and the essential doctrines behind their belief. These churches are giving them that teaching, seen also in other larger churches across the country.

4) Unique Opportunities

Fourthly, London has an almost unique advantage and therefore challenge – it is where so many young people come for employment. The larger London churches are able to take advantage of a sociological and job-seeking phenomenon of, in many cases, relatively mobile people. Also people of a similar sociological or educational background coming together regularly can be very inductive for fellowship, friendship, and regular attendance (London worshippers come more frequently to church than those elsewhere). Here again is an opportunity for each local church to assess the sociological, employment and educational mix (or unique features) in their area and make their church and worship “user-friendly,” for example, for students.

5) A Diverse Ethnicity

Fifthly, there is no doubt that London is special because of its ethnic make-up. A third (31%) of its population is Asian or Black compared with just 8% in the rest of England. That brings its own cultural challenge. There is also a religious divide – 12% of London's population is Muslim compared with 3% across the rest of England, and a further 10% are in other religions against 2% in the rest of England. Also 6% of congregations in new churches were reckoned to come from other religions, almost certainly a figure much higher than elsewhere. Other UK cities also attract many from alternative ethnicities. Is there a place for those of other cultures in our traditional London and UK churches as they are or is one of the challenges of the London Census to transform a middle-class, white only

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Same-sex Marriage

A series of debates has been held in central London over the first few months of 2013 called the “Westminster Faith Debates”, organised by Prof Linda Woodhead and Charles Clarke of Lancaster University, and designed to bring high-quality academic research on religion into public debate. Linda is Director of the £12m national “Religion and Society Programme.” In preparation for this, YouGov undertook online polls in January 2013 among 4,400 people, weighted to be representative of all adults in Britain. One of these studies was on the issue of Same-sex Marriage.

Overall the survey found that people who identified with a religion were evenly divided on whether same-sex couples should be allowed to get married – 43% were in favour and 43% were against with 16% who didn't know. Those who had no religion were 69% in favour and only 20% were against.

Did people with a religion think same-sex marriage was right or wrong? 37% felt it was right, 43% felt it was wrong, with 20% not knowing. For those with no religion, 63% said it was right, and 20% that it was wrong, with 17% not knowing.

These various percentages varied by denomination or religion, as shown in the Table, where the answers are for those answering YES to the first question and RIGHT to the second:

Question	Anglicans %	Catholics %	Other Christian %	Other religions %	All religious %	Non-religious %	Overall %
Same-sex marriage should be allowed	44	44	40	42	43	69	52
Same-sex marriage is right	38	36	30	35	37	63	46

The Table shows that Anglicans and Catholics are more permissive in this area than those of other denominations (Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists), and that Christian adherents overall are more permissive than those of non-Christian religions. The non-religious are far more in favour.

Post-modernity allows one to attach what meaning one likes to the words used, so “same-sex marriage” becomes a convenient way of handling or talking about one aspect of gay-ness if someone is not religious. Those who do believe in God are unlikely to change their definitions, so “marriage” for them remains a heterosex business even if everyone else wants to call “marriage” a mix of heterosexuality and homosexuality. “Marriage” then becomes yet another in-word for Christian or God-fearing people. This kind of re-definition is seen elsewhere, such as in the 2011 Population Census where 177,000 people described their religion as a Jedi Knight!



Much energy is being taken up by those saying defining same-sex partnerships as “marriage” in this way “changes the concept of marriage for ever.” While recognising differing sexual orientations, personal views are generally based on one's source of authority, whether religious or non-religious. This may well be true for Bible-believing Christians for whom marriage is a lifelong God-ordained union between one man and one woman. For those of other persuasions, however, marriage is legally whatever the law dictates it should be. The “Same-Sex Marriage” study merely confirms the level of disagreement over this issue and highlights the differences between denominations, the religious and non-religious.

If the UK passes same-sex marriage as a law in 2013, it will become the 15th country in the world to do so. The following nations have already passed it: The Netherlands in 2000, Belgium 2003, Spain 2005, Canada 2005, South Africa 2006, Norway 2008, Sweden 2009, Portugal 2010, Iceland 2010, Argentina 2010, Denmark 2012, France 2013, New Zealand 2013 and Uruguay 2013 (9 of these 14 are in Europe). Some states in the United States have been passing it since 2003, Mexico City did so in 2009, and some jurisdictions in Brazil in 2011.

SOURCES: Press Release, Prof Linda Woodhead, University of Lancaster, YouGov poll, April 2013; list in *Prophetic Vision*, David Hathaway, No 68, Summer 2013, Page 6.

Questions

“What's the difference between God and the Bill Gates Foundation?”
“I don't know; tell me.”
“God doesn't think He's Bill Gates!”

Attorney: Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?

Witness: Did you actually pass the bar exam?

Attorney: This *myasthenia gravis*, does it affect your memory at all?
Witness: Yes.
Attorney: And in what ways does it affect your memory?
Witness: I forget...
Attorney: You forgot? Can you give us an example of something you forgot?

Attorney: Were you present when your picture was taken?

SOURCE: *Grove Jokes* email 30th April 2013.