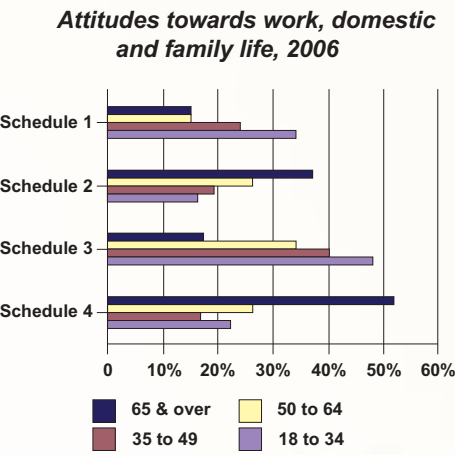


Family Life Today

With the number of marriages in England and Wales in 2007 at 230,000, the smallest number for over a century since 1895 when the population was only about half its present level, what of family life? The most recent British Social Attitudes Report has a chapter exploring views broken down by age-group.

It will come as no surprise that those agreeing with pro-work values tend to be younger, and those with pro-domestic values are older, as illustrated in the chart.



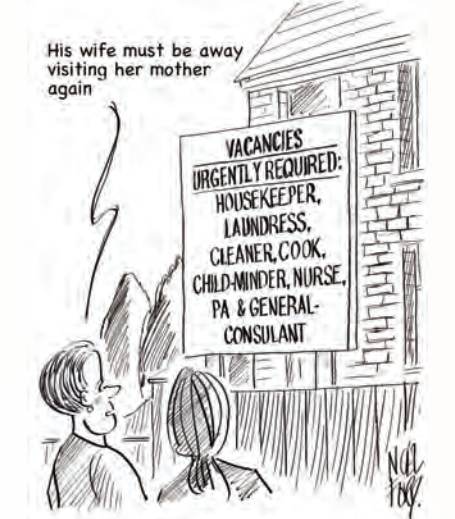
Statement 1 [pro-work values]: “Women should work outside the home full-time after the youngest child starts school”.

Statement 2 [pro-domestic values]: “If a couple divorce, the children should normally live with the mother most of the time”.

Statement 3 [pro-choice, new family values]: “Children could be brought up just as well by their mother and her new partner as they could by their mother and father”.

Statement 4 [pro-marriage, traditional values]: “Married couples make better parents than unmarried ones”.

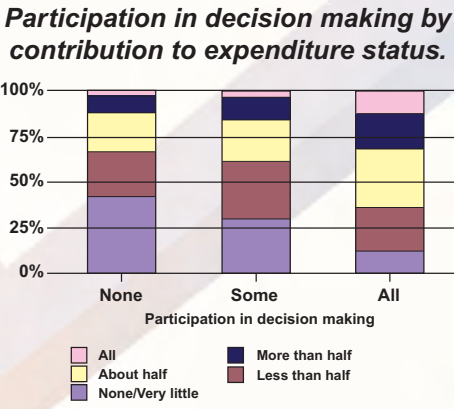
There is a difference in these proportions according to whether a person was actually a parent or whether they were childless. The latter were inclined to be more pro-work and more pro-choice, new family values, suggesting



that becoming a parent causes a re-think of some values.

The proportion of women having no children is gradually increasing. For those born in 1920, 21% had had no child by the time they were 45, for those born in 1930 it was 12%, for those born in 1940 it was 10%, for those born in 1950 it was 13% and for those born in 1960 it was 18%.

In a fascinating Ghanaian study women were asked how much they participated in decisions about household expenditure. A third, 33%, said “none”, a quarter, 26%, said “some”, and the remaining two-fifths, 41%, said “all”. However, these percentages varied considerably by how much these women contributed to the overall household expenditure, as shown in the second diagram. The more they contributed, the more they expected to be part of the decision-making process. One imagines that similar results would be true in Britain, and perhaps participating in more than decisions about expenditure, giving another dimension to the stresses in family life today.



A birthday card for a 14-year old had on the outside “Do you know the best way to shock your parents?” and gave the answer inside – “Tidy your room!” A survey by the Rowntree Foundation found that as children got older, parents’ confidence in looking after them decreased. They were more likely to perceive a lack of time for themselves and to dislike the mess surrounding their children. It also found that parent-child relationships were more affected by parental health than changing marital status.

Another Rowntree study found that young people recognised that a religious way of life impacted family values. Parents felt passing on their faith an important part of parenting, though most young people felt they should not be forced to attend public worship. Some young people and parents claimed religious authority for strict views on issues like sex outside marriage and

Migration Studies

One of the features of the late 20th and 21st century Christianity in Europe is the impact of migration. The total number of immigrants is growing rapidly in the UK – in 2004 there were 5.2 million non-UK born residents in the country and by 2007 that had increased to 6.3 million, an increase of 370,000 people each year. That is a lot of people! The 2007 number is just over 10% of the total population.

There are about 420,000 Irish people living in the UK (that is, those from the Republic of Ireland), 7% of all the immigrants, and a further 1.4 million, 22%, come from other countries in the EU (of which the Poles at 405,000 were the largest single nation – many have now returned – followed by Germans at 266,000). The majority of immigrants therefore, over two-thirds, 71%, come from a variety of other countries, the two largest of which are India with 610,000 (who mainly live in the Midlands and the South-East) and Pakistan with 380,000 (who mainly live in Yorkshire and the North-West). There are about a million Africans in the UK in total, of which the largest contingent from any one country is South Africans with 170,000.

That still leaves 2½ million others – Americans, Australians, Jamaicans, Turkish, Brazilians, Bangladeshis ... name the country and we almost certainly can find some in the UK! Two-fifths, 40%, of those born outside the UK, 2.5 million, live in London (forming a third of the capital’s population) and a further sixth, 16%, 1 million, live in Birmingham.

This huge cosmopolitan mixture is seen also in church life, especially in London where there are perhaps congregations meeting speaking 40 or 50 different languages. Seven new Croatian congregations have started in the last 10 years (Roman Catholic), the number of Tamil churches has doubled to 36 in the same time (Protestant), but the numbers of French, Spanish, Greek (Orthodox) and especially black churches have grown enormously.

homosexuality, though parents were often more tolerant than young people anticipated. Parents differed about the age at which young people could make informed choices on faith-related matters.

All this suggests is that while church’s “getting married” courses are important, running “parenting classes” is equally important and probably more strategic in keeping both parents and children in church.

SOURCES: Chapter “Exploring parents’ views” by Geoff Dench in *British Social Attitudes*, 25th Report, Alison Park et al, 2008/2009 edition, Sage and National Centre for Social Research, 2009; article “The relationship between women’s contribution to household expenditures and their participation in conjugal decision-making in Ghana” by Hannah Warren, *Radical Statistics*, Issue 98, 2009; report in *The Daily Telegraph*, 13th February, 2009, Page 6; *Population Trends*, No 134, Winter 2008, Office for National Statistics, Page 13; *Diversity, complexity and change in parenting*, Andrea Weylen and Sarah Stewart-Brown, Joseph Rowntree, July 2008; *Religion, beliefs and practices*, Joseph Rowntree, November 2008.

A quarter of London’s 4,100 churches are Pentecostal, equal in number to the quarter which are Anglican.

The opportunities presented are many. If you as an immigrant have to struggle with English from Monday to Saturday, you are very likely to join a congregation speaking your language on the Sunday even if you didn’t regularly go to church before! While this is true for many immigrants from Christian countries, the same phenomenon is seen among Muslims, Hindus and those of other faiths. The proportion of people attending church in Inner London who were black was 44% in 2005 and 14% were from other non-white ethnic groups, easily outnumbering the 42% whites. Collectively these churches are growing – between 1998 and 2005 when the general Sunday attendance figures dropped 15%, the numbers of black people attending black churches increased 44%. When asked why this growth, the then-deputy Director of ACEA said, “We put mission before justice.”

The African scholar, Jehu Hanciles, studied why Africans worshipped at black churches. Three-quarters, 75%, said it was because of the lively worship, 64% the solid preaching /teaching, 58% because their spiritual needs were being met, 53% their pastor’s leadership and 52% because the “members care for each other”.

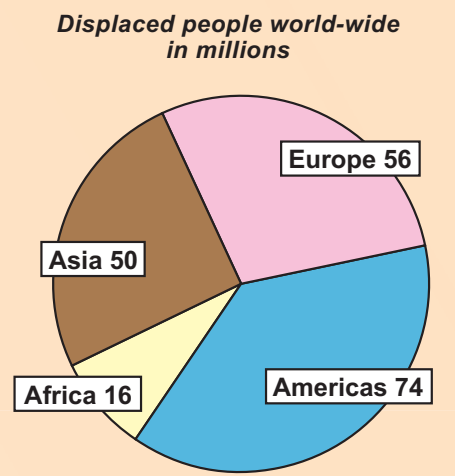
The age of immigrants is different from the general population in that many are between 16 and 30 (54% of the Poles, for example, against 18% of the population) as they come looking for work or as students. More are between 30 and 64 than the long-term resident population also. One (as yet unpublished) study found the average age of Muslims coming to western Europe was 39, 41% female, 47% of whom were employed full-time with an average income of £17,500 per annum, who had been living in their adopted country for 14 years, 63% of whom did not use English in their home.

However, as Grace Davie points out, migrants who settle and become part of the national population as it were are prone to be victimised when there is an economic downturn and the native population feels threatened by those whom they see as having taken their jobs. Racial violence has broken out a number of times especially in Paris and Merseyside, for example. One person in six, 17%, living in Europe do not want a Muslim as a neighbour and 15% a migrant.

One fascinating feature of migration is the number of African missionaries coming to the UK (primarily) but also other parts of Europe in “reverse mission” – “The mission of The Church of the Lord (Aladura) in Europe is to win all new, lukewarm and lost souls for

Christ. The mission has been reversed because those to whom Christ was once preached are now back on the territory of the former preachers to preach Christ Jesus to them in all His goodness,” said the Aladuran Primate. Philip Jenkins estimates there are 1,500 missionaries from 50 nations working in the UK. Some of the churches thus founded in this way have come to have impressive numbers after several years, like the 12,000+ strong (Nigerian) Kingsway International Christian Centre in Hackney which started with 300 in 1992, or the 133+ congregations of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in the UK, which is Aladuran and hence emphasizing the power of praying and belief in faith-healing, the largest of which is Jesus House in London (2,500 people).

The migrant issue, however, is far wider than the UK or Europe. Throughout the world there are some 200 million “displaced persons” as they are officially called (equivalent to the population of Brazil), spread as shown in the pie-chart. That means that 1 person in every 33 in the world is a migrant! Some of these are “economic migrants” – people searching for a more dignified or prosperous life through work, some are “forced migrants” or refugees – people who flee a country because of the fear of war or persecution due to race, religion or social membership, some are internally displaced people, and others (especially women) are trafficked people.



What all this says is that there are tremendous opportunities arising from the migration taking place – to evangelise migrants, to benefit from their Christianity, to show compassion and help, to learn from other’s experiences, and to realise that the family of God really does encompass those of every tongue and tribe and nation.

SOURCES: *Population Trends*, Office for National Statistics, No 135, Spring 2009, Pages 22f; *Religious Trends* No 6, 2006/2007; Christian Research, Table 12.46.5; Pulling out of the Nosedive, Peter Brierley, Christian Research, 2006; Muslims in Western Europe, Ethnic and Racial Studies; Beyond Christendom, Globalization, African Migration and the Transformation of the West, Jehu Hanciles, Orbis Books, 2008; God’s Continent, Christianity, Islam and Europe’s Religious Crisis, Philip Jenkins, OUP, 2007; Religious America, Secular Europe?, Peter Berger, Grace Davie and Office for Social Research, 2008; Mapping Migration, Darrell Jackson and Alessia Passarelli, Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe (World Council of Churches) and Nova Research Centre, Brussels, 2008.

implication of these figures is that the large majority of working age women was employed at least part-time.

York’s out-of-town shopping mall is in the parish, reflected in the fact that 20% of people worked in wholesale and retail trade. With shops in the mall open until 8.00pm and on Sundays, it cannot be assumed, for example, that Mum will be home when the children come in from school. There are still two major manufacturers locally and the regional hospital is also on this side of town, so that 17% work in manufacturing, and 13% in health and social work – many of them working shifts.

When are local people available for church, even if they want to come? What is the best time of the day or week for them? Can worship services or other church activities be provided at suitable times?

Ethnicity / religion

Almost all, 99%, of the population in 2001 was ethnically white, nearly all British. Four out of five, 79%, described themselves as ‘Christian’, above the national average of 72%. Only 2% are of other religions, with the largest number, 84 people, 1%, Muslim. There is therefore no significant need in the parish for multicultural outreach or outreach to those of other faiths, although clearly they won’t be excluded from any programmes.

There are at least three sources of such data:

Government statistics, especially population census data. This is available at www.statistics.gov.uk and is analysed down to local ward level. In this case the local ward corresponds fairly well with the parish boundaries and there have been no large-scale changes since 2001.

Local authorities gather a wide range of information which is available from their Economic Development Unit.

Regional bodies, which in the York area include Yorkshire Forward, the regional development agency, and Yorkshire Futures, the Regional Intelligence Network.

The parish mission statement is “Knowing Jesus and making Him known in our community and beyond.” An audit of the mid-week activities already happening was done at the same time as this analysis of census data, and together they showed clearly where the gaps are in the church’s mission. Now the need is to develop a programme which addresses those gaps so as to be effective for God in the area.

SNOWFLAKES



Back to Church. All 44 Dioceses in the Church of England, including the Diocese of Europe, as well as other denominations, are taking part in the “Back to Church” campaign on Sunday 27th September, with perhaps as many as half a million people participating. The slogan on the invitation card is “Come as you are”. If 25% of those who accept invitations to come back for a Sunday remain in church (roughly the percentage of the last couple of years) then that is a further 125,000 people to add to the 1.5 million in church on a Sunday who are 45 or over (the age of the majority who come back) – a challenging goal!

SOURCE: News story in the *Church of England Newspaper*, 16th May 2009.

Teenage abortions. The number of girls under 18 having abortions increased to 21,000 in 2007, the latest year for statistics. This represents 51% of the pregnancies in this group (up from 49% in 2006), the 40,300 pregnancies averaging 42 per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 17. Of girls under 16, the number of pregnancies was 7,700, up from 7,300 in 2006, equivalent to 8 for every 1,000 girls aged 13 to 15; 62% of these were aborted. In commenting on these figures, Elaine Storkey said “We may need to ask why so many young people have little real sense of self-worth; why there is a deep, unmet need for affection; why many experience ‘skin hunger’ and sadness.”

SOURCE: Press Release, Office for National Statistics and Teenage Pregnancy Unit, February 2009; article in the *Church Times*, 6th March 2009.

UK Christian Handbook

The 2009/2010 edition of the *UK Christian Handbook* was published in May 2009, although its name has been amended to the *UK Christian Resources Handbook*, doubtless because the new publisher, the Bible Society, is also responsible for the *Christian Resources Exhibitions*. The new volume contains details of just under 5,000 Christian organisations, marginally down from the 2006 figure (4,982 compared with 5,005).

However, it also contains details of about 400 new organisations showing that the Christian world is still very much alive and creative, although it also means that about 400 organisations have either closed or merged with others (as the previous publisher Christian Research merged with Bible Society). The number of residential and nursing homes for elderly people has increased because the many homes in The Orders of St John Care Trust are included for the first time

SOURCE: Article “Church schools struggle to find new heads” by John Howson in the *Church Times*, 6th February 2009.

as are such useful additions as Solicitors and Legal Services (a total of 138 organisations). A comparison with numbers in the previous edition would indicate that numbers have dropped by a total of 221 organisations in the 53 sections which have declined, offset by additions of 60 in the 21 sections which have increased. 7 have shown no change.



That gives a like-for-like comparison of 161 fewer organisations, although of course this is a net figure – a new

Health and income. Those with the highest fifth of income are more likely to eat processed fruit products and fresh fruit and fresh vegetables than those in the lowest fifth who tend to eat more processed potato products and fresh potatoes. However, this seems to make no difference to men’s weight but there are almost twice as many obese women in the lowest fifth than the highest fifth (32% to 19%).

SOURCE: *Society Now*, ESRC, Spring 2009.

Inflation. The rate of inflation had fallen to -1.2% as this edition of *FutureFirst* went to press, but it has been much lower before. In 1930, towards the end of the Great Depression years, it was -2.8%, although it hit -14% in 1922 at the start of those years. In 1750, when it was first measured, inflation was -3.1%, but hit +22% in 1757 at the start of the Seven Years War (1756-63). Its lowest, however, was in 1802 when it fell to -23% after the Treaty of Amiens and a lull in the war with France.

SOURCE: Article in *ManagementToday*, September 2008.

Dirtiest city. London has been voted Europe’s dirtiest city by a poll of 2,400 travellers, despite all the work done in cleaning things up by Hope08 last year! Copenhagen was voted the cleanest, Paris the most expensive, Venice the most romantic, Dublin the friendliest, Prague the best bargain, and Brussels the most boring. Barcelona had the best architecture and Warsaw the worst. Holidaying in Europe this year? Take your pick!

SOURCE: Reuters Press Release, survey by TripAdvisor, 6th May 2009.

organisation in any category offsets one that has closed. That represents a 3% decline over the last 2 years and continues the trend of fewer Christian agencies seen since the peak of 5,600 in 1999.

Three-fifths of the organisations listed are registered charities. On a like-for-like basis, the total number of full-time staff has dropped by 1% to just over 74,000 people, which excludes serving ministers, mission workers and Care Trust staff. The proportion with no full-time staff has increased from 19% in 2006 to 25% in 2008, mainly due to an increase in part-timers in the accommodation sector.

The new editor, Karen Wilson, has done a brilliant job in co-ordinating the many details required, and those familiar with previous editions will recognise all its usual features, but now with a new type-face. This edition promises to be even more widely useful than its forerunners and will be a vital reference tool in the service of God.



REFLECTIONS

You could say the question God asked Adam “Where are you?” was a needless question, as God knew the answer before He called – Adam was hiding behind the bushes in the garden out of embarrassment and guilt. Nevertheless it was an important question, because it had to be answered.

The question was put to Adam because he had sinned by eating fruit from the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the centre of the Garden of Eden. Adam was attempting to hide from God because he knew he was naked, a realisation which had only come about after eating the fruit. God, of course, knew where Adam was. Furthermore, if you'd asked Adam, he knew that God knew where he was. You can't hide from God. All our ways are open to Him. Nevertheless, the question, “Where are you?” (Genesis 3:9), is a relevant, searching, even haunting question, which in our need for strategic ways forward is an excellent place to start. If we do not know where we are, we cannot easily move forward to get to where we would like or ought to be.

There is a complementary factor also to the question. Adam had to face up to its answer. He was where he was because he was trying to hide, shamed at the consequences of his sin. This question should help us, too, to face up to reality. “Our church is growing,” we may proclaim. Good news! How many people have found faith through the ministry of your church as opposed to transferring from another church or moving into your district? The impression we want to give to others may not truly be where we are. Not every Christian family is a happy family – can we face up to this? Not every child in a churchgoing family goes to church – can we look at why that may be? Not every leader is as secure as they like to show – is there an inner honesty about personal depression and frustration?

“Where are you?” requires an articulated answer, which allows third parties into the conversation and the possibility of evaluating supportive or corrective action. The question “Where are you?” therefore carries a corollary. Having found an answer, are you willing to move from that position?

Where are we? In a very challenging situation at a most strategic time. Sufficient change is taking place for us to know that, with the movement of God's power, it can be altered. Adam didn't find it easy facing up to his failure, but out of it sprang God's glorious promise of redemption.

Books & Churchgoers

A recent piece of research for the book trade has implications for church leaders also. Research undertaken by HarperCollins, the Trade Publishers' Council and the National Year of Reading found that up to some 20 million people in Britain “don't have literacy problems but [who] just don't read”.

Their findings suggested there were mainly people “in the C2DE socio-economic group, characterised as lower income, non-professional [but] good solid families”. These people were found to buy TVs, DVDs, CDs and computers and many leisure products, and spend money on entertainment, but simply did not buy books.

Other research showed that the parents in the 30-44 age-group would read books to their children every day, and encourage them to become library members (7 out of 10 children are such), but the parents did not read books themselves. Some 44% of children aged 7 to 10 read a book every day, but once they start secondary school the percentage drops to 20%.

Few studies have attempted to measure the socio-economic (s-e) status of churchgoers since it means asking individual churchgoers questions such as their occupation, using these answers as a proxy for s-e status. A series of Deaneary reviews at the turn of the century in the Anglican Diocese of Rochester did glean such information, however, which showed that perhaps a quarter, 24%, of churchgoers in those Deaneries were in the C2DE group. This means, if generally true, and if churchgoers are similar to the general public in this regard, that one in four of those attending church rarely read books, presumably including the Bible itself. Are there ways of encouraging them discover some of the riches of Christian teaching other than in the printed format?

SOURCES: Articles in *The Bookseller*, 23rd January 2009, Page 7 and 27th March 2009, Pages 7 and 23; Deaneary Strategic Reviews for Erith, Orpington and Sidcup, 2000-2002, based on over 2,600 completed Congregational Attitudes and Belief Survey forms. The book trade research was based on 2,000 interviews with children and parents, and Department for Children, Schools and Families research.

Anglican Trends

Every year since 2000 the Research and Statistics' Department within the Archbishops' Council of the Church of England has published details of the numbers attending on Sundays and weekdays broken down by adults and children (taken as those under 17 years of age).

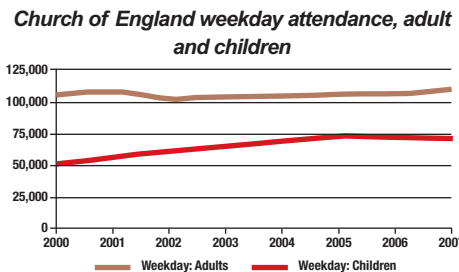
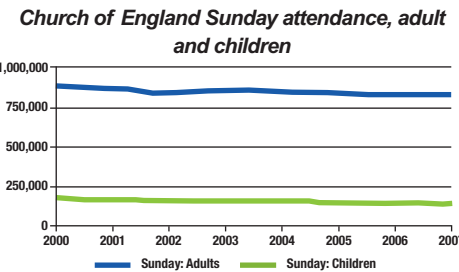
Overall the numbers have slightly declined, but at a rate of only -0.7% per annum which is very small. The Sunday adult attendance has dropped at -0.8% per annum. This is not new news, but what is interesting is that weekday attendance has marginally increased over this period, at +0.5% per annum, positive although not sufficient to counter the Sunday decline, so that adult attendance overall is down.

Sunday child attendance has declined much faster than adult attendance, -2.8% per annum on average. Weekday child attendance has increased much faster than adult attendance also, at +4.5% per annum on average, even if the initial growth has not continued over the last couple of years, but again numbers coming midweek are not sufficient to overturn the Sunday decline.

The figures are shown on the graphs (note the scales are quite different), and they suggest that the pattern of church attendance is changing. In 2000, 87% of total attendance was on a Sunday, in 2007 that was down to 84%. This is not a

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SOURCE: www.cofs.anglican.org/info/statistics. The weekday 2000 figures are estimated as when these were published they originally included average marriage and funeral attendance as well. Cp also article "Teens turn off churchgoing" by Matt Cresswell in *Church of England Newspaper* 10th February, 2009.

Women's Statistics!

The old saying “a woman's work is never done” may still be true according to the latest statistics on what men and women do in the time not occupied by employment, sleeping and eating. 75% of women do the shopping against only 52% of men, but 82% of women spend time with family and friends against 75% of men. On the other hand, 58% of men play sport or have exercise against 43% of women, but they both do an equal share of the gardening (or so they say!).

Attitudes vary by age, however, as might be expected. While 34% of those aged 18 to 34 agree that women should work outside the home full-time after the youngest child starts school, only 15% of those 65 and over agree.

Women like reading! 76% read in their free time, against only 56% of men. They also buy more books than men – professional women bought 104 million books in 2008 against 85 million by professional men. Women in the C2DE social-economic category bought 83 million books last year against only 49 million by men.

A recent study looked at violence against women. How acceptable is it for a man to hit or slap his wife or girlfriend if she is constantly moaning or nagging at him?

One in six, 16%, of men said it was acceptable or acceptable in some circumstances. And if she dresses in sexy or revealing clothes in public? 20% said it was acceptable, and 13% said it was acceptable if she flirted with other men. On the other hand, 93% of men would be likely to take action if their partner was a victim of violent abuse. What action? Over half, 54%, would contact the police and 44% would offer help and advice.

That instinct to help was slightly less if the woman was a friend rather than family (87%) or a neighbour (82%), although actions taken would be similar. Those not helping would refrain because they mostly felt “it was none of their business”.

Women are also playing a more reprehensible part in society. A quarter, 26%, of teenage drinking violence and attacks include women taking the initiative or being part of the gang that does.

Women continue to live longer than men, though the gap is narrowing slightly. Girls born in 2009 can expect to live on average till they are 81, boys till they are 77. The last 11 years of a woman's life are likely to be in poor health against only 9 years for men.

SOURCES: Social Trends, No 39, 2009 edition, Office for National Statistics, Figure 13.1 and Table 7.2; Ipsos MORI poll of 915 adults in February 2009; report in the *Daily Telegraph*, 26th May 2009; article in *The Bookseller* 10th April 2009.



BOOK REVIEW

Dr Roger Grainger (holder of 6 PhDs!), actor and author, said “Chaos gets a bad press. But in my life, all the best things come out of chaos – so I thought I'd write a book about it!” He could have been talking to Nassim Taleb, whose book *The Black Swan* has become identified in the English with the unusual. In fact, Taleb would say Black Swans are the unknown unknowns, as you may see one.

The book is all about the random events that underlie our lives. Who could have predicted Pompeii, the Wall Street crash, or the Harry Potter phenomenon? Or that mould growing in a saucer over a weekend would lead to the discovery of penicillin? The impact of such events is huge, and they are virtually impossible to predict.

Taleb takes issue with the routine predictions of economists, statisticians and the like because the events that really matter are not predictable. We may like the phrase “if present trends continue” but he argues that present trends never continue. We should stop trying to predict everything and take advantage of uncertainty instead. His analyses of models, systems and randomness are powerful for a complex world – his previous book was *Fooled by Randomness*.

Highly provocative, humorous and quoting a huge number of sources this is book to make you think, pause and wonder. It is not religious at all, but surely some of the implications apply to the church. How do we listen to what God is saying? How do we understand and live in a world which is not ultimately driven by technology or key leaders but by the sovereign, omnipotent, but unrecognised by the world, God?

This book is worth reading if you want to be challenged to think differently, focussing on the things that don't happen, the things that happen only once in a lifetime (or less frequently), and the unforeseeables that are all around us.

Witnessing to the Faith

In a central town in Texas in 2007, 63 Baptists were asked in detail about their evangelical faith. It is a very small sample, but the results are interesting. One of the questions asked how frequently they had witnessed to their faith in the previous month. One in 9, 11%, said they had not talked about their faith to their friends at all, while nearly half, 48%, said they had not done so with strangers they had met.



On the other hand, half, 47%, said they had had faith conversations with their friends at least once or twice, and almost as many, 41%, said the same about strangers they'd seen. Overall these Baptists spoke on average 2.5 times to their friends, and 1.2 times (half as much) to strangers about their faith. Is the UK so very different from the US in this respect?

Another report about the witnessing of members of the Family, formerly known as the Children of God, says they get “one new convert per 7,620 hours of street evangelism”. If they work continuously for 10 hours every day of the week including Sunday that's more than 2 years of labour for one convert.

How effective is our witnessing to our faith? The composition of the Christian community in Singapore in 1990, for example, was interesting – 49% were born into a Christian family, but 25% were converted from Taoism, 24% from Buddhism, and 2% from Hinduism or Islam. In Britain, some 80,000 people join the church each year, mostly new converts, although perhaps three-quarters will have been to church as a child. On the other hand perhaps 5,000 British people convert to Islam in the course of a year, perhaps half through marriage, twice the 2,400 Germans who converted to Islam in 2007.

SOURCES: Article “Religious Diversity in a Conservative Baptist Congregation” by Kevin Dougherty et al. *Review of Religious Research*, Vol 50, No 3, March 2009, Page 325; *Religion Watch*, Sept-Oct 2008, Vol 23, No 7, Page 6 and Jan-Feb 2009, Vol 24, No 2, Page 3; *Pointers*, Christian Research Association, Australia, Vol 18, No 4, Dec 2008, Page 10; *Pulling out of the Nose Dive*, Peter Brierley, Christian Research, 2006.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY

“What did one hat say to the other hat?”
“You wait here and I'll go on a head!”

Obesity is a good lot of fat that is not a fat lot of good.

In any argument, the woman always has the last word. Anything a man says after that is simply the start of a new argument.

SOURCE: *Nearside Lane*, Issue 4, Tonbridge Baptist Church, April 2009.

“There are two educations. One should teach us how to make a living and the other how to live.”
John Adams.

THESE MAY BE HELPFUL

Books and reports received

A Biblical Basis for Project Evaluation, Johan P Veleta, Crowther Centre Monographs No 5, March 2009, Church Mission Society, Oxford.

Christian Mission in a Pluralist Context: On the Margins and in Competition? Tim Dakin, Crowther Centre Monographs No 6, March 2009, Church Mission Society, Oxford.

No purse, no bag, no sandals, A profile of Mennonite church planters, 1990-2005, Conrad Kanagy, MissioDei, Number 17, 2008, Mennonite Mission Network, Indiana.



Providing Facts for Forward Planning

SNIPPETS

1) British people eat on average 2.2 curries every week.

2) More than half of executives in the US say Tuesday is their most productive day.

3) 35% of men and 62% of women 75 and over were living alone in Great Britain in 2007, both figures increasing, and by far the highest for any age-group.

4) 8 books with “Angel” in the title each sold more than 7,000 copies in the UK in 2008.

5) In Germany parents must seek approval from local authorities before they can officially name their children.

6) There were 109 air accidents worldwide in 2008 against 100 in 2007, but 502 fatalities against 692.

7) 25% of UK organisations insure against the risk of being hit by bad weather (eg flood), and 5% by fire.

SOURCES: 1) *Oakhouse News*, Issue 16, May 2009, Page 2; 2) Article “Your route to the top” in *Management Today*, May 2009, Page 19; 3) *Social Trends*, Office for National Statistics, No 39, 2009 edition, Figure 2.7; 4) *Bookseller*, 6th May 2009, Page 31; 5) *Time* magazine, 18th May 2009, Page 11; 6) *First Class*, IAPA magazine, Issue 2, 2-009, Page 1; 7) *Professional Manager*, Vol 18, Issue 3, May 2009, Page 25.

Who is our Neighbour?

by Heather Wraight, former Deputy Director, Christian Research

There are various ways to discern how a local church can move forward. One is to look at data which is available about the area and see how it compares with the church. This is a case study of what this revealed for a Church of England parish in a suburb of the city of York.

The population in 2001 was just over 12,000 and has perhaps grown by another 500 since then. The majority are working age adults and their children: roughly half are between 20 and 65, a quarter are younger and a quarter older. The spread across the generations is remarkably even. However, this is not true in the church, where those aged between 20 and 65 are seriously under represented compared with the local population. How can they be reached?

Marriage and families

Over three-quarters of local adults are either in their first marriage (40%), or are single and have never been married (37%). Nearly two-thirds of the single person households were pensioners, meaning that there were nearly 900 pensioners living alone in the parish. How is the church meeting their needs?

The parish has a full-time Youth and Children's Worker and a significant programme of activities, both on church premises and in the five local schools (three Junior and two Secondary). What kind of homes do the youngsters come from? In 2001, 40% of houses were married couples, with or without children and 12% of households had children living either with co-habiting or single parents. The proportion of people co-habiting has risen nationally in the last eight years, so that now perhaps one in four households with children have children who are not living with both their natural, married parents. Does the staffing of, and teaching in, youth and children's activities take account of this?

Housing

Only a quarter of local houses are detached; three in five, 61%, are semi-detached and the remainder are terraces or flats. This means that three-quarters of



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Social class

The parish is predominantly lower middle and upper working class (class C1 26%, C2 21%) and has a comparatively small proportion of people in senior roles at work (class AB 17%). Therefore the church is likely to have a smaller pool than it needs of people who are already exercising leadership skills at work. This is nowhere near as big a problem as it is in the huge Local Authority estate in the neighbouring parish, but it requires creative thinking about how to find and train leaders for new mission activities.

Employment

In 2001 the unemployment rate in the area was very low, 2%, and there were very few working age people who were not employed but could be, 7%.

There have been no major redundancy programmes from the main employers in the parish (yet), so these facts are likely still to be broadly true overall. The