

REFLECTIONS

Of Averages and Individuals

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Billboards across Switzerland depict a very tall woman ballroom dancing with a very short man. Pasted over this humorously uncomfortable scene are the words:

“On average, Swiss are 1.71 metres tall.”

The insurance company behind the ads certainly knows about “averages” – its business is based on actuarial mathematics. It also knows that nobody buys an insurance policy because of actuaries. The billboard’s tagline puts the dancers in perspective:

“We don’t care about the average; we care about you.”

Church- and mission-related research often draws on “averages” (although researchers use more statistically-sophisticated words and methods). Such approaches help us predict where populations are heading and nuance projections about whether churches are likely to grow or decline. Moving beyond generalizations (“Germans are precise; Italians are romantic”), an “averages” approach helps us describe typical values and behaviour. And it can help us know when most people are likely to listen to our broadcast or what will generate the most views of our webpage.

Did Jesus – who was anything but “average” – use an “averages” approach? He did speak to big crowds using appealing images and illustrations most would understand (Matthew 13:2). He saw the big picture of them as shepherdless sheep in need of compassion, or a harvest waiting to be gathered (Matthew 9:36–38). But the growing numbers were also a “wicked generation” (Luke 11:29). He was cautious even among those who had believed, because he knew their hearts (John 2:23–25).

Jesus clearly knew the crowds. If I were an artist depicting Jesus among the crowds, though, they would be a backdrop, not the centre. I would focus on Jesus and the boy as he handed over his lunch; on the woman admitting she had touched Jesus’ hem (worried Jairus, just to the side, looking at his watch); or Zaccheus up a tree and Jesus, inviting himself to dinner. And while my picture might include dozens of seeing blind and leaping lame, my focus would be on Jesus touching them one by one.

“In this way God loved the world,” John 3:16 tells us. “He gave his only Son.” Though people might come to faith in Jesus with encouragement from their social networks or even as a family decision, the promise of eternal life is to “each one believing” in the Son.

God knows the world. God loves the world. More than the best researchers, He knows what we are like, how many we are, where we are headed, and what we need. He knows these things collectively as He is sovereignly at work among the nations.

And yet – far more than a Swiss insurance company – His concern is not for the “average”. “He cares about you.”

What about us? Whom do we care for?

UK Religion

When the National Records of Scotland [NRS] released the Scottish counts by religion of the 2011 Population Census in September 2013 (several months after those from the Office for National Statistics [ONS] which covered England and Wales and the Northern Ireland Information Service), it became possible to put together figures for the whole of the UK.

The NRS results showed that in 2011 the Scottish population was 5.3 million people, up 5% on the 2001 total of 5.1 million. Of these 5.3 million, 54% said they were Christian, in contrast to 65% in 2001. These compare with 72% and 59% for the respective years in England and Wales.

The overall UK results are shown in the Table.

Religions in the UK, 2001 to 2021											
Religion	2001					2011					2021E
	Eng-land %	Wales %	Scot-land %	N Ire-land %	UK %	Eng-land %	Wales %	Scot-land %	N Ire-land %	UK %	UK %
Christian	72	72	65	86	72	59	58	54	82	60	48
Muslim	3	1	1	0	3	5	1	1	½	4	5
Other religions	3	1	1	0	2	4	1	1	½	3	4
No Religion	14	18	28	8	16	25	32	37	10	26	36
Not stated	8	8	5	6	7	7	8	7	7	7	7
Base (=100%)	49.1 m	2.9 m	5.1 m	1.7 m	58.8	53.0 m	3.1 m	5.3 m	1.8 m	63.2 m	68 m ?

The “Christian” proportion of the population has dropped from nearly three-quarters to three-fifths in these 10 years, largely because so many people who would have ticked “Christian” on the Census form have died in this decade. Such a rate of death is likely to continue and the expected 2021 figure for “Christians” in the UK is likely to be under 50%. There is a much higher percentage of Christians in Northern Ireland, and fewer in Scotland.

The proportion of those in other religions has increased, with Muslims being both the largest group and one of the fastest growing. Even with the new restrictions on immigration, this Muslim growth is likely to continue as many immigrants presumably will still come from Pakistan. Also the birth rate within Muslim families is much higher than in Christian families (on average 3.5 children to 2.1).

The main “other religion” is the Hindus, about half of the total shown. They also are increasing quite rapidly, but mainly through immigration from India. Sikhs and Buddhists are likely to continue to grow slowly, but the Jewish population has remained fairly static, and is likely to remain so. The catch-all category of “other religions,” which includes a vast number of very small groups, is likely to increase marginally. Non-Christian religions could well be 9% of the 2021 population, up from 7% in 2011 and 5% in 2001. The majority of adherents in these religions have settled in England, but numbers are likely to grow in the other countries also.

The numbers indicating they had No Religion have grown very greatly in the inter-censal decade, mainly because many young people say they have No Religion, and many of the ethnic community also (55% of the Chinese have No Religion, as do 32% of those from a Mixed background). The quarter of the population in this category in 2011 could well become a third, 36%, by 2021.

Should there be a 2021 Census, which is currently under discussion, one presumes the percentage not giving their religion, as this is an optional question, will remain the same.

Not only is the religious base within the UK changing but also of course the ethnicity and culture associated with that. Gradually our Judaeo-Christian heritage is passing away, and the values and vision associated with that in the process. This generation has not been here before, but our predecessors two millennia ago, fighting for the survival of Christianity in a violently non-Christian world, took their stand and laid a foundation which has not only lasted for 2,000 years but also travelled around the globe. We need to take a bolder stand before this generation carelessly discards it.

Denominations

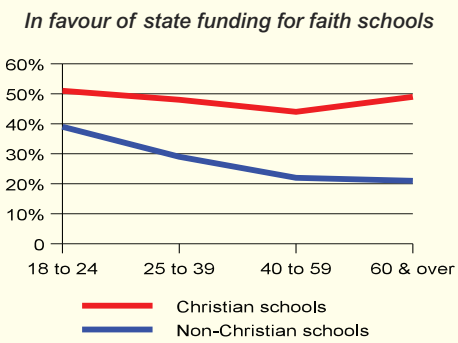
It is also possible to construct a Table of the main denominations in the UK, as Scotland and N Ireland ask for the denomination in their Census. These are given in the second Table:

Christianity by denomination in the UK, 2001 and 2011											
Religion	2001					2011					UK %
	England %	Wales %	Scotlan-d %	N Ire-land %	UK %	England %	Wales %	Scotlan-d %	N Ire-land %	UK %	
Roman Catholic	14	10	16	40	15	14	8	16	40	15	
Presbyterian	3	11	42	21	7	2	8	33	19	5	
Anglican	26	21	3	15	24	19	16	2	14	18	
Other denoms	29	29	4	10	26	24	26	3	9	22	
Christian	72	72	65	86	72	59	58	54	82	60	

The Anglican figures are the total of Church of England, Episcopalian, Scottish Episcopal Church, Anglican, Church of Ireland and Church in Wales in the different countries. The Scottish Presbyterian figures include the Church of Scotland, Free Church of Scotland, Presbyterian, United Free Church of Scotland, Free Presbyterian, Reformed Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Dutch Reformed Church, Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Reformed Presbyterian Church, Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster, Scottish Presbyterianism and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (after the Church of Scotland the total of these others was 0.4% in 2011).

This Table is very difficult to construct. The Scottish and N Ireland figures come from their respective Censuses. But there no equivalent breakdowns of “Christian” for England and Wales. We have taken the proportion of Presbyterians and Anglicans out of the total membership in each year and applied that proportion to the Census total, except for the Roman Catholic figures where we have taken the British Social Attitudes percentages. Essentially if this Table is approximately correct it shows the Roman Catholics have retained their proportion of the total, largely because of the influx of Polish people into Scotland and other Catholic immigrants in England. All other groups have declined numerically and proportionately.

SOURCE: Web sites for each National Statistics Office, 2013.



Faith Schools

Professor Linda Woodhead of Lancaster University has organised a series of surveys focussing on religious issues, which have been the backdrop to the 2013 Westminster Debates. The surveys are undertaken by YouGov using an electronic panel of just over 4,000 people, appropriately weighted. The September 2013 survey concerned faith schools.

The basic question explained that about a third of State-supported schools in Britain were faith schools, the majority of which were Church of England or Roman Catholic, but a few (1%) were owned by non-Christians religions such as Jewish or Muslim schools. Did respondents think that the Government should provide funding for such schools?

About a quarter said they didn’t know, but of those expressing an opinion one way or the other two-fifths (42%) were in favour while three-fifths (58%) were not. However this varied according to the school’s denomination or religion. Those in favour of state funding for different types were:

53%	Church of England schools
46%	Roman Catholic schools
44%	Other Christian schools
29%	Jewish schools
24%	Muslim schools
24%	Hindu schools

When the results were split between Christian and non-Christian schools, men were 41% to 22%, respectively, in favour of such funding, while women were 55% and 29% respectively. The results also varied by age as the graph shows, with older people in favour of state funding for Christian schools but not non-Christian schools.

What was the attraction of a particular school? Eight choices were suggested and respondents could choose their top two or three. Two-fifths of respondents (40%) had no children which might explain why almost a tenth (9%) couldn’t answer the

question on key influences. Only 5% said “grounding pupils in a faith tradition” and 3% “transmission of belief about God,” showing that the faith element was not dominant. The top 5 answers were:

77%	Academic standards
58%	Location of the school
41%	Discipline records of the school
23%	Ethical values
19%	Prestige of the school

There was little gender variation in these answers, women giving slightly more preference to academic standards and men to the prestige of the school. Nor did they vary much by age, except that the percentage wanting good discipline rose with age (27% for those 18 to 24 but 52% for those 60 or over), and prestige was more important for younger people (35% for those 18 to 24 but 15% for those 60 or over).

How likely then were parents to choose a faith school? Omitting the sixth (16%) who didn’t know, over a quarter (29%) said “very likely” or “fairly likely”. Women were again more likely to be in favour than men (32% to 25%). Of those in the middle aged-bands (25 to 59), three-fifths of whom had at least one child (58%), a quarter (27%) were likely to choose a faith school, while a third (34%) of those 60 or over, many of whom would probably be grandparents, would prefer a faith school.

So how important are faith schools? Given that a third (33%) of British schools are such, with a relatively high minority (42%) favouring state funding for them, and over a quarter (29%) likely to choose one for their children, the answer is very positive. The survey did not distinguish between primary and secondary schools, but as there are many more faith primary schools than secondary (37% to 18%), this study probably suggests a vote in favour of allowing young children (5 to 11) to have a specific religious environment – the age of the majority of children in church Sunday Schools.

SOURCE: Press release by Lancaster University 19th September 2013, and private correspondence.

OLDER PEOPLE

The average length of life creeps ever upwards – more people are simply living longer! In the last 10 years, government statistics show that in England the average length of life for a man born in 2001 was 76 has increased by 3 years to 79 for a man born in 2010. That’s a large increase in a short period, and suggests the average length of life for a man could be 82 if born in 2020!

The average length of a female life is also increasing, from 81 for those born in 2001 to 83 for births in 2010, and while women have (from past available statistics) always lived longer than men, men are now slowly catching up!

This also means that a man aged 65 in 2010 can expect on average to live another 18 years, till he is 83, and a woman aged 65 in 2010 for another 21 years, till she is 86. In 2011 there were 11,400 female centenarians in the UK, and 1,400 males 100 or over.

The consequence is that there are more people 65 and older in the population, 10.4 million in the UK or 16% of the total in 2011, which is a million more since 2001, ten years ago.

Many older people are grandparents, and grandparents are now the most common providers of childcare for young children, with 36% of parents leaving their children in their care. Some of these grandparent carers are below retirement age (40% were aged between 55 and 64), and a third, 35%, are still working so they juggle employment and caring. Most grandparent care is while parents are working and after school (42% of carers).

Older people are also continuing to work. The proportion of those 65 and over in work between 2005 and 2012 increased 60%, while, for comparison, those employed aged 16 to 24 fell 15% in the same period.

Older people also want to socialise more. Just 7% of those over 65 say they lack confidence to be socially active, compared with almost a quarter of those aged 18 to 24.



So more older people, living longer, active and capable of taking responsibility, often still working, with social confidence – how is your church best providing for and involving its more senior citizens?

SOURCES: Articles in *Third Age Matters*, Summer 2012, Page 7, Winter 2012, Page 7; *The Economist*, 4th August, 2012, Page 25; Office for National Statistics website; *Population Statistics*, No 96, Page 11.

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SNOWFLAKES

Gay discrimination. Another of the surveys by Lancaster University asked whether Bed and Breakfast owners should be allowed to refuse accommodation to people on the grounds of their sexuality. This follows the case of the Bulls in Cornwall which went to the Supreme Court. Of the 89% of the 4,000 approached who gave an answer, almost two-thirds (64%) felt they should not be allowed to refuse, and 36% thought they should. Far more younger people felt they not be allowed to refuse than older people. More Anglicans (45%), Muslims (44%) and Roman Catholics (41%) felt they should be allowed to refuse.

SOURCE: Press Release from Prof. Linda Woodhead, Lancaster University, 8th October, 2013.

State-funded schools. Almost a quarter, 23%, of state schools in 2010 were Church of England (mostly primary), with a small number of combined C of E and Methodists (0.2%) and combined C of E and Roman Catholics (0.1%). There were also Roman Catholic schools (10%), Christian schools (0.2%), Methodist schools (0.1%), and just a single Greek Orthodox, Quaker, Seventh-Day Adventist and URC School, making a grand total of 34% of all 20,100 schools in the country. There were also 11 Muslim schools, 4 Sikh and 1 Hindu school. In addition, there were 203 Academies, of which 25 (12%) are Christian, 20 C of E (10%) and 2 Roman Catholic (0.1%).

SOURCE: Web site of Department for Education, April 2012.

The 9/11 terrorist attack made people turn back to God, say two-fifths of Americans in a recent survey. Two-thirds, 64%, said their faith gave them comfort when such things happen, a percentage which went up to 89% for born-again Christians.

SOURCE: Barna web alert September 2013.

Female technology. Over half, 55%, of all video games are played by women, yet only 4% of the game designers are female. Two-fifths, 40%, of technology products are bought by women, but only 17% of the workforce is female, and of the professionals in the workforce only 18% were women in 2010. There is an obvious gender disparity here, but as the use of technology grows in churches, now perhaps more of the “Tech Teams” could involve and include women and more men could help in the crèche and Sunday School!

SOURCE: *Raconteur* magazine, 23rd March, 2013, Page 22.

Global theological training was surveyed by the World Council of Churches in 2011 when it contacted more than 1,600 colleges. Its June 2013 report showed:

- There are not enough colleges in areas where Christianity is growing fastest (Africa and Latin America).
- Funding for such training is unstable.
- Growth is mainly in Evangelical and Charismatic education.
- Online training is not favoured by many of the teachers.
- Cross-cultural studies and practical skills are the extra topics most would like.
- The integrity of the senior leader is seen as key in determining quality.
- Theological education is seen as having strategic significance for the future of world Christianity.

SOURCE: *Global Survey on Theological Education* at www.globethics.net web/gt/research/global-survey-for-WCC 10th Assembly 30th Oct 2013.

Complexity. Two-thirds of Americans feel that modern life is accelerating and becoming more complex. That high percentage is no surprise and would probably be true in the UK, but what did a survey exploring this find were the consequences of living in a complex world?

- Looking for ways to live a meaningful life (75%)
- The need to have information on culture and trends (71%)
- Wanting to know how spirituality applies to the issues they face (56%)
- Enjoyment of reading, but most books too long (35%)

This suggests that the importance of relevance and trying to understand the totality of experience are key issues for many – areas in which the church should be able to help par excellence.

Perhaps the call for “Big Society”, now seemingly dropped by David Cameron, was a British reflection on this. A demand for more engagement, citizens having greater control of their lives, a valuing of human resources and relationships, an implication of greater flexibility in local government, which was how some defined the “Big Society”, could be argued are Christian values.

SOURCE: Trends redefining the information age. Barna Research report, 25th October 2013, www.barna.org/barna-update/culture; talk by Anna Coole, New Economic Foundation, at Social Research Association event, 5th July, 2011.

Poverty priorities. “How useful can a mobile phone be to someone living on less than \$2.50 a day, the World Bank’s standard benchmark of poverty? Researchers in Kenya have given a partial answer. They find that people will skip a meal or choose to walk instead of paying a bus fare so that they can keep their phone in credit. ... discretionary spending by the poor is now influenced greatly by their expenditure on mobile phones.”

SOURCE: Report in *The Economist*, 10th November, 2012, Page 57

300,000 mothers, sometimes dubbed “mumpreneurs”, run their own business in the UK and a further 80% would like to have the chance! Working mothers contributed £7.4 billion to the economy in 2012, but 32,000 had to give up work because of rising child care costs. How can the church better provide for working mums?

SOURCE: *Raconteur* magazine, 23rd March, 2013, Page 12.

Continued from page 1

D) Apart from dealing with crises, most believe that having a clear sense of **control and intentionality** around the diary and having defined key priorities is vital for good morale.

E) Being able to see the big picture of ministry and articulate the **positive impact** that it is making matters in order to maintain purpose and energy. Appropriate professional development contributes to this.

Many Christian leaders have to take responsibility for their own sense of achievement and sense of well-being. They are not unmoved by the circumstances around them, but neither are they victims of them. There are steps that can be taken to improve morale. More are available on the CPAS website, www.cpas.org.uk.

Fresh Expressions

As part of his research work for the Church Commissioners, Rev Dr George Lings of The Sheffield Centre, the Church Army's research unit, has been evaluating the impact of Fresh Expressions in a number of Church of England Dioceses, which have been published on the web. Six so far have been given – Canterbury, Chelmsford, Derby, Leicester, Liverpool and Norwich – with huge amounts of interesting detail. This brief article but summarises the total of the more statistical parts, which naturally vary from one Diocese to another.

Fresh Expressions are informal regular groups started by churches to reach outsiders with the ultimate long-term aim of becoming an established church; they are mostly all-age, very relaxed gatherings, with much fun and fellowship. They include what some call “Messy Church”, Mission-minded churches, Pub Cafés, Church Without Walls (in Scotland), and so on.

These six Dioceses have seen some 360 Fresh Expressions start in the last 20 years, 1992 to 2012. Of these, 10% failed within 2 years of starting, a much lower proportion than for church plants generally (where the average seems to be nearer a quarter, except in London where it was 7% between 2005 and 2012). On average they were started with 9 adults and 2 children, but have grown to an average now of 26 adults and 17 children, an overall four fold increase.

One in 14, 7%, started between 1992 and 1998 (on average 17 years ago), 18% between 1999 and 2005 (10 years), and the remaining three-quarters, 75%, between 2006 and 2012 (3 years ago), making the average start in 2007, five years ago. A four-fold growth on average in 5 years is a very rapid rate of increase!

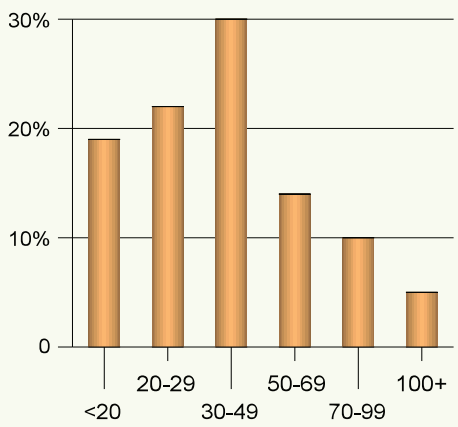
Almost half, 48%, meet every week, a few, 8%, fortnightly, and the remainder, again almost half, 45%, every month. Two-fifths, 42%, meet on a Sunday, half, 51%, during the week, and the remaining 7% on a Saturday. Half, 52%, of the leadership is ordained, the other half, 48%, lay.

The expectancy in the starting of these Fresh Expressions was that half, 53%, who came would be un-churched, a third, 34%, de-churched (that is, they were coming back to church), and the remaining 13% would be Christians (which would include those coming initially). In practice, however, it was found that rather fewer un-churched came, 42%, and rather more Christians, 23%, with the de-churched about a third, 35%. While some of the Christians might be new converts, it is also likely that some switched from other churches to join the Fresh Expression – perhaps it was more convenient for them, or they preferred the ambience of informality, or other reasons.

Two-fifths, 42%, met in a church, a fifth, 20%,

in a church hall, but two-fifths, 38%, met in a secular venue such as a village or community hall or school. While the average size was 43 people, this varied as shown in the chart, with 5% having over 100, and a fifth under 20. Roughly a third are under 30 in size, a third 50 or over, and a third in between. Size, however will also depend on length of time that a Fresh Expression has been established. How many were attending after, say, 5 years, was not asked.

Size of Fresh Expression Churches in 2012



Where are the Fresh Express Churches mostly located? About 13% are in city centres or other urban areas, 13% in suburban areas, 16% in towns or new towns, but 28% are on Council or private estates, and 30% in rural areas.

This brief summary shows that Fresh Expressions can start almost anywhere, meet almost anywhere, on any day of the week, as often as wanted. However, they do need a small but dedicated team to make it happen – and mostly such “churches” work, and work spectacularly! No wonder they are growing fast, and proliferating all across the UK – they are proving a very real way of helping people become Christians, and bringing back those who had formerly drifted away. They are also mostly small enough to be thoroughly relational – people are missed if they go missing.

SOURCE: Church Army web site: www.churcharmy.org.uk



CAROL SERVICES

When parents and children were asked about their knowledge of the Christmas story in a poll of 2000 people last year, 98% said that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, 89% that Mary laid Jesus in a manger, 83% that the angel Gabriel told Mary she would have a son, 77% that Herod was king at that time and 63% that the angels were the first to announce the news. But others showed some confusion – 60% said Mary and Joseph were married, and 2% that Father Christmas was their first visitor! About half of primary school parents will go to a nativity play this Christmas.

Two years ago, at a Worcester Cathedral service of Nine Lessons and Carols, a quarter of the congregation (26%) completed a survey form. Their answers were compared with those answering similar questions on an ordinary Sunday morning service. The greatest differences were with those for whom “religion is their life,” something much more likely to be true of Sunday worshippers than once-a-year Carol Service attenders.

Thus, half (52%) of Sunday worshippers agreed with the statement, “I allow almost nothing to prevent me from going to church on Sundays,” which was agreed by only 17% of those at the Carol Service. Sunday worshippers “pray at home because it helps me to be aware of God's presence” and “often read books about prayer and the spiritual life” (72% and 49% respectively), whereas those at the Carol Service agreed only 42% and 20%.

Two-thirds of Sunday worshippers “pray chiefly because it deepens my relationship with God”, but only two-fifths agreed this who went to the Carol Service (69% and 38% respectively. Likewise Sunday worshippers agreed “the church is most important to me as a place to share fellowship with other Christians” (69% compared with 40% at the Carol Service). In addition, Sunday people agreed “my religious beliefs really shape my whole approach to life” while far fewer Carol Service people did so (69% to 47%).

What thus emerges shows that Cathedral Sunday attenders are, on the whole, firmly committed to their faith, to prayer, to Christian fellowship and to living their lives in the light of their beliefs. Carol Service attenders are much less likely to agree – in the statements mentioned there is an average difference of 29%. But Carol Services are nonetheless popular.

Church of England attendance over Christmas in 2011 (the most recent year for which numbers are available) was over 2.6 million (up 14% on 2010). Cathedral attendance midweek is likewise popular – numbers have doubled over the last 10 years. So Christmas Carol Services, whether in Cathedrals or Churches, provide huge opportunities to reach people who might perhaps be better classified as “de-churched” rather than “unchurched”, but still in need of a living faith and a real relational fellowship.

SOURCES: Article by David Walker in *Rural Theology*, Volume 10, No 1, 2012; article by Paul Wilkinson in the *Church Times*, 21st December 2012; Church of England website.

Free Church of Scotland

The Free Church of Scotland is one of the smaller Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, started in 1843 when a substantial number left the Church of Scotland. In 1900 many then joined the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland to form the United Free Church of Scotland, most of whom re-joined the Church of Scotland in 1929. Those who did not join the United Presbyterians in 1900 continued as the Free Church of Scotland, and remain so to this day. They are sometimes called the “Wee Frees”.

In 2005 they represented 2% of the total Presbyterian presence in Scotland but, unlike the Church of Scotland (95% of all Scottish Presbyterians), they are slowly growing. Between 2008 and 2012, for example, the Free Church has seen a 4% growth while the Church of Scotland has seen a massive 35% decline.

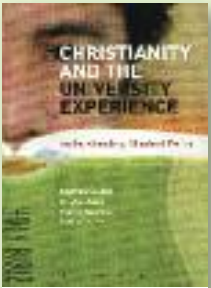
About two-fifths, 42%, of the Free Church of Scotland participate in their communion services, and the ages of those who do so are recorded in three age groups. Numbers over the past five years are shown in the diagram. While overall numbers have increased by +4% between 2008 and 2012, the percentage under 30, a seventh (14%) of the total, has increased by +18%. At a time when numbers of young people in the church are generally declining, such an increase is significant.

Communicants in the Free Church of Scotland



In the same period, Free Church total attendance has increased by +4% and the number of baptisms by +37%! While many other denominations see numbers of young people dropping, the Wee Frees also have maintained their Sunday School numbers. The obvious question is, “Why are they being relatively successful?” Suggestions welcome!

SOURCE: Schedule of Statistics 2008 to 2012, Free Church of Scotland, 2013.

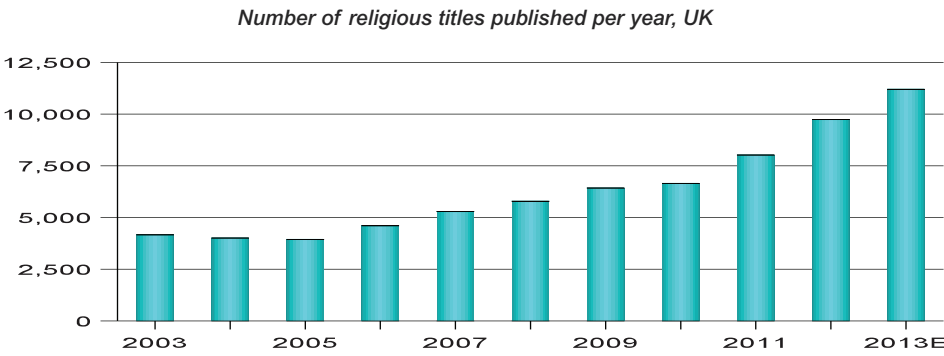


Mathew Guest, Kristin Aune, Sonya Sharma and Rob Warner
Bloomsbury, London,

2013
256 pages,
ISBN 978-1-78093-784-7
£21.99

More Books, Fewer Sales

The number of religious books published each year in the UK has been growing over the past 8 years as the graph shows, after a slight fall between 2003 and 2005. Figures are supplied by Nielsen.



Despite this increase in titles, however, the actual sales of religious books fell slightly between 2011 and 2012, from £16.6m to £16.2m. This may be because 2011 was the 400th anniversary of the Authorised Version of the Bible when exceptionally large numbers of Bibles and related books were sold. Also the “religious” book which sold most copies in 2012 was Richard Dawkins The God Delusion!

Which types of religious books are selling most? Sales of books on Christian history, including denominational history, increased 17% in 2012 over 2011, and books on non-Christian religions by 6%. Textbooks on religion increased 1%, but reference books, books on theology, the Bible, personal testimonies all decreased. Some publishers, like LionHudson, have launched a number of Christian fiction titles which, given the huge popularity of fiction as a genre, may help sales increase to match the number being published.

However, ultimately producing more products and selling less can only be counter-productive. Perhaps there is a need to curb the many American titles being imported.

The rise of e-books may also be a factor. Statistics on these are only just being published but, in a survey by Bowker Market Research, no student in 2011 said that e-books were a main resource. In 2012 21% said they were, and a huge 67% said they were in 2013.

SOURCES: Articles in *The Bookseller*, 8th and 22nd March, 2013, Pages 26 and 6 respectively, and direct communication with Nielsen.

These may be helpful Books and reports received

Article “Celebrity Worship and Religion Revisited”, by Lynn McCutcheon, Robert Lowinger, Maria Wong and William Jenkins, *Implicit Religion*, forthcoming in 2014.

Evangelism in State Schools, The role of external visitors in publicly funded education, National Secular Society, October 2013. Critiques input, seen as evangelism, from Christian groups.

Long Term Decline in the Church of England 2001-2011; mathematical analysis by Dr John Hayward, University of South Wales, www.churchmodel.org.uk/LongDecline3.html.

How do attractional and missional models of church relate to un-churched 20somethings? Andy Frost, Moorlands College, MA in Applied Theology, June 2012, andy@sharejesusinternational.com.

“What do they think of Christianity?” Exploring perceptions among people in Britain who do not

attend church regularly or have no affiliation with the Christian faith, Will Bissett, Southern Theological Education & Training Scheme, MA in Theology for Christian Ministry and Mission, May 2013, mail@willbissett.com.

NEW YEAR THOUGHTS

Youth is when you're allowed to stay up late on New Year's Eve. Middle age is when you are forced to. (Bill Vaughan)

Many people look forward to the New Year for a new start on old habits. (Anon)

Many years ago I resolved never to bother with New Year's resolutions, and I've stuck with it ever since. (Dave Beard)

A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other. (Anon)

SOURCE: The web via Peter Goodridge in *Perspectives*, Parish magazine of St Peter and St Paul, December 2012.

BOOK REVIEW Christianity and the University Experience

This is a book of 8 chapters, “the major public outcome of the ‘Christianity and University Experience in Contemporary England’ project”. It gives the results of a major study among students across 5 different types of university, with some 4,300 responses to their questionnaire, of which just over half identified themselves as Christian. Is the university experience a secularising one? For Christian students the answer is NO, but university does provide many social and cultural challenges, and two chapters are devoted to exploring these. There is also an excellent chapter on organised Christianity, and a final chapter looking at the outcomes. It is a book of breadth and therefore essential reading for all who wish to grapple with religious student life; it is also a book of depth and asks awkward questions; it is also a book of thoroughness in both the research and its evaluation. Not to be missed for those engaged in “understanding student faith” – the book's sub-title.



Providing Facts for Forward Planning

SNIPPETS

1) A million people 65 or over had continued working past state pension age in 2012. 40% in 2012 opted to continue working past 65, and 57% plan to do so in 2013.

2) 66% of the public would support a ban on women wearing the niqab (a veil covering the face of Muslim women except the eyes), while 24% would oppose it.

3) Out of the of 340,000 people answering a government question about their sexual orientation, 98.1% described themselves as heterosexual, 1.2% as gay/lesbian, 0.4% as bisexual and 0.3% as “other”.

4) One in four friendships is entirely digital, with friends conversing at least once a week via Facebook, Twitter etc. On average they last 6 years before meeting face to face.

5) Three-fifths, 63%, of evangelicals work for under 40 hours a week, a third, 30%, for between 40 and 60 hours, and 7% for more than 60 hours. In addition a third, 35%, regularly bring work home.

6) 81% of UK households had a land-line phone in 2012, but 93% did in 2000. 92% have a mobile phone; 74% have home internet access.

7) Out of 24,500 registered religious associations in Russia, 4,400 are Protestant, including 1,700 Pentecostal, 800 Baptist, 600 Seventh-Day Adventists, 200 Lutheran and 1,100 others.

SOURCES: 1) Office for National Statistics and survey by Prudential Insurance, both quoted in *Third Age Matters*, Autumn 2013, Page 19; 2) *The Week*, 28th September 2013, Page 8; 3) Office of National Statistics survey and 4) Survey by Goodfella's Pizza, both reported in *The Daily Telegraph*, 4th October 2013; 5) Evangelical Alliance survey reported in the *Church Times* 18th October 2013; 6) *Impact*, Market Research Society, Issue 3, 20-13, Page 83; 7) *Keston Newsletter*, No 18, 2013, Page 3, quoting the Russian Ministry of Justice in September 2012.

KEEPING UP CLERGY MORALE

REVD CANON GRAHAM ARCHER, DIRECTOR OF MINISTRY, CPAS

How do church and Christian leaders know if they are doing OK? Many of them don't have real line management or stated success criteria. In the absence of clear external reference points, most ministers have more of an inner gauge detecting whether they are sinking or swimming, failing or flourishing. The concept of morale gives a good handle with which to explore this. Morale is not just how we feel on a particular day, it is more the kind of resilience that enables us to respond well to the ups and downs of life; it is related to work but influenced by every aspect of life. It connects with emotions but is influenced by very practical things too.

Linda MacDermott, also working with CPAS, and I asked 420 Anglican clergy to give us some quantitative and qualitative responses via an anonymous questionnaire to help us analyse the following three areas.

- What, for leaders, are the key indicators of positive and negative morale?
- What things positively and negatively impact morale?
- What do leaders do to improve their morale?

Half, 47%, responded. The following graph indicates their initial response to the first main question. This graph appears very positive, but nearly every respondent added qualitative comments suggesting that keeping morale up is far from easy.

To understand the key indicators of morale we asked what good and poor

morale looks like, and whether there was anything else they would like to say about morale. Using coding and constant comparison, the following indicators emerged. Apart from the first they are in no particular order.

1) Top of the list was a spiritual indicator. Being able to describe a close walk with God, a clear sense of God being at work in their lives or a positive sense of God's presence in their church or community was a primary reference point for good morale. Some said it trumped everything else – that they could cope with the tough stuff if they knew that God was at work. This was the most positive indicator of good morale.

2) Mood at the beginning and end of the day. Feeling ready to face the day, dreading the day ahead, or ending the day with a sense of achievement or regrets, for many is a sign of their resilience or lack of it. Everyone has good and bad days but **regularly** waking up with a spring in the step or a sense of dread are indicators of good or bad morale.

3) Time off and a sense of life being in balance or under control was the third indicator. Those who felt that they were managing the range of demands, were taking time off and generally more in control than being controlled, spoke of better morale than those who were out of balance feeling pushed around by their circumstances and not getting time off.

4) The sense of vision for their work. Those who felt as if they had been drifting without a sense of purpose saw

that as an indicator of low morale as opposed to those who had a greater sense of clarity about their direction of life and work.

5) A general sense of joy and happiness. This is not the same as mood at the beginning and end of the day. Respondents recognised that there are times in life where the same things we do bring joy and pleasure but at other times they fail to do so. This lack of deriving joy even from normally pleasurable things is an indicator that morale is low.

6) A sense of being supported or cared for emerged as a key indicator. Some by personality might want more support than others, but the presence of the right amount of support promotes a sense of good morale whereas its absence is indicative of the opposite.

Understanding the key indicators of good and low morale then gave the participants the opportunity to express a whole range of things that they chose to do in order to improve their morale. Five key areas naturally follow from the observations above.

A) Working in such a way that **time is given to prayer and Bible study**. No one said they thought that a close walk with God is ever detrimental to morale! Life patterns that give time for prayer, alone and with others, and regular times of retreat were all mentioned.

B) **Having boundaries in place** that protect the leader's energy. Being able to recognise where resources are being drained and not replenished for many requires appropriate boundaries to safeguard time for positive investment in others and themselves. Running on empty drains morale, time for friends and hobbies etc. deal with it.

C) **Supportive relationships** with “professional” figures that invest in us are significant. Whether this is peer support, a work consultant, mentor or spiritual director, having resourceful people around is vital to most who responded. Access to, and pro-active interest from senior leaders has particular impact.

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