

# SNOWFLAKES

**Growth of Messianic Jews.** In 1998 there were 3,500 Jewish believers in Jesus in Israel across 80 congregations. Ten years later the number had grown to between 10 and 15,000 believers across 120 congregations. One group in Jerusalem, the Shemen Sasson congregation, has seen its attendance triple in the 5 years to 2008, now standing at 300 people.

**SOURCE:** Article "Messianic Jews in Israel: A Real Miracle" in *CWR Today*, Issue 12, Feb to May, 2009, from CBN News.

**Changing religion by 24.** A 2008 American survey of people who have changed their denomination or religion finds on the one hand that 44% of the population have done so, and that those who do change are most likely to do so before they reach the age of 24. Interestingly, 9% have switched twice to return to the denomination in which they were raised.

**SOURCE:** *Religion Watch*, Volume 24 Number 4, May/June 2009, Page 5.

**Newspaper advertising.** In 2003, 40% of the total expenditure on advertising in the UK was in the newspapers; by 2007 that had dropped to 31%. In 2003, the share of national advertising in the UK which was online was 3%; by 2007 that had jumped to 19%, the highest in the world. Part of this may be explained by the fact that in 2003 only 50% of the population read a daily newspaper, and that had dropped to 44% by 2008 (with a consequential cutback in copies printed). The only other country with figures comparable to the UK is Norway (in 2007 42% of advertising was in newspapers and 17% online). In the USA, for example, newspaper advertising was only 28% of the total and just 9% was online.

**SOURCES:** Time magazine article 2nd March 2009, *Social Trends*, Office for National Statistics, No 39, 2009 edition, Table 13.6.

**Larger American churches.** At an April 2009 Conference, Scott Thumma, megachurch researcher and author of *Beyond Megachurch Myths*, said that the average age of attenders at larger churches was 40, compared with 50 for smaller churches, based on a survey of 24,000 churchgoers. 52% of attenders at larger churches were college graduates against 41% in smaller churches. A third of those in larger churches were single, compared with 10% in smaller churches. He also found that one key reason for people attending larger churches was so that their faith could be deepened. These findings would probably be similar if the study was repeated in the UK.

**SOURCES:** *Religion Watch*, Volume 24 Number 4, May/June 2009, Page 4; *Church Times*, 19th June 2009.



**Mobile browsing.** 25% of people say they browse on their mobile phone at least once a week, 12% less often but at least once a month, 28% less frequently and 35% never. Why don't people browse more often or at all? Too expensive say 58%, and a further 36% can't see the point of doing so!

**SOURCE:** *Research magazine*, June 2009.

**Women put career first.** A survey of 12,700 women born between 1956 and 1960 by the Office for National Statistics showed that cohabiting women are twice as likely to stay childless as married women, and those who are better educated or had no siblings are also more likely to remain childless. As childlessness is increasing among healthy females living with a husband/partner who are sexually active, it is likely that it is a deliberate choice. Previously it was because women were poor, had poor nutrition or were not married. More women who were in management roles were without children. One observer said, "These women are marrying their careers." One wonders how far such findings would be replicated among churchgoing women.

**SOURCE:** Article "Women put careers before raising a family" in *The Daily Telegraph*, 26th June, 2009.

## Church of England Giving

Over 1.7 million donors gave nearly £400 million to the Church of England in 2006 according to the report *Giving for Life*, mentioned in a *Church Times* article. The figures given suggest the following Table showing the huge importance of what are called "proportionate" givers (who give between 1 and 25% of their income), who are 10% of all donors but who provide

Donors in 2006				Money received	
Type of donor	Number	% of total	£ per week	£ million	% of total
Proportionate	175,000	10	£14.92	135.8	35
Standing Order	837,000	49	£5.04	219.4	57
Unplanned	700,000	41	£0.84	30.6	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,712,000</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>£4.33</b>	<b>385.8</b>	<b>100</b>

The Table is misleading, however, since although the average of £4.33 is correctly derived from the figures given, the actual overall average (of total income received divided by total Electoral Roll) works out at twice this amount – £8.63 per week, a figure which increases each year beyond the rate of inflation.

**SOURCE:** Article by Bill Bowdler "Church relies on most generous ten per cent" in the *Church Times*, 26th June 2009.

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At the Grandparents and Mission Seminar hosted by the Church Army in Sheffield in May 2009, Steve Hollinghurst prepared a presentation on grandparenting and social change, which included the following data, put for convenience as a Table:

Generational Change					
Age-group	Claims to be Christian %	Raised in church %	Current Sunday attendance %	Believe in a personal God %	Believe in a life force %
65 & over	82	65	12	34	33
45 to 64	77	50	7	30	40
25 to 44	58	35	5	27	41
Under 25	33	17	5	15	45

He also reminded everyone of the often forgotten fact (coming originally from *Finding Faith Today*) that 76% of new Christians come from the 30% of the population who are de-churched.

Effectively this divides the population of Britain into four generations. Much has been written of the young and middle-aged; this article focuses on the older group about which there is an increasing amount being produced. A cartoon in the *Church Times* of two old men looking after toddlers in prams has one saying to the other, "I'm his great-grandad. I look after him when his grandad goes out to work"!

### More older people

There were 61 million people living in the UK in 2007, a figure that is projected to rise by 450,000 people a year, half of whom are

## Four Generations

immigrants. That means that the population in 2009 is close to 62 million. In 2007, 8.3% of the population was between 65 and 74 (what the Government calls "The Third Age") and a further 7.7% were 75 or over, making a total of 16% entitled to draw a state pension.

By 2031, just 22 years time, the population will have risen to 71 million, and the proportion of people 65 to 74 will be 10.6% and those 75 and over 11.6%, a total 22.2% of the population 65 or over.

These are big increases. By comparison, the proportion of churchgoers in 2005 who were aged 65 to 74 was 17%, and 75 and over was 12%, a total of 29%, almost double the population proportion. If present trends continue, by 2030 the proportion of churchgoers 65 and over could be 57%, more than double the population proportion.



Number of households by age of head of household, England

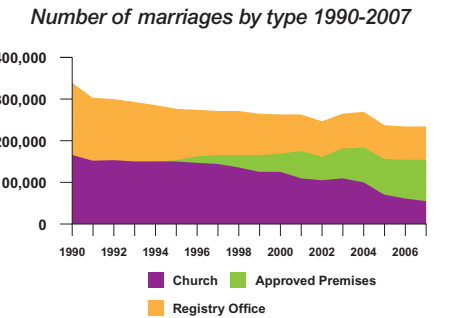
Age-group of head of household	Millions of households		Increase 2006-2031 %
	2006	2031	
75 and over	2.8	4.8	71
65 to 74	2.8	4.1	46
45 to 64	7.4	8.9	20
25 to 44	7.7	9.0	17
Under 25	0.8	1.0	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>29</b>

## RELIGIOUS MARRIAGES

The numbers of Registry Office and Church marriages have both been impacted by the decision taken in 1995 to allow marriages to take place in "Approved Premises". As the graph shows, these have become increasingly popular over the last 12 years, 2007 being the latest year for such numbers.

It was in 1992 that the number of Registry Office weddings first exceeded the number in a Church, and it was in 2005 when the number in Approved Premises exceeded both the number in Registry Offices and Churches. In that year, the number of marriages in Church again exceeded the number in Registry Offices. In 2007, a quarter, 23%, of marriages were in Registry Offices, a third, 34%, in Churches, and the remaining two-fifths, 43%, in Approved Premises.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS), responsible for the marriage numbers, breaks the figures down by Church denomination. The proportion of marriages being held in Church of England and Church in Wales churches has increased from two-thirds, 66%, in 1990 to nearly three-quarters, 72%, in



2007. It has been estimated that perhaps only one in 10 of marriages solemnised in churches is between regular churchgoers, which suggests that the beauty of many Anglican church buildings continues to draw couples who choose that rather than go to an Approved Premise. This presents an opportunity, and research on mid-week ministry suggests perhaps 25% may start occasional churchgoing as a consequence of the preparations for their church wedding.

In 2007, of the 77,500 religious marriages, 55,900 were Anglican (72%), 8,750 were Roman Catholic (11%), 6,700 (9%) were Methodist, URC, Congregational or Baptist, 3,400 (4%) were other denominations, and the remaining 2,750 (4%) were Jews, Muslims or Sikhs.

number is expected to increase by 29%, the percentage is much higher for those 65 and over. This suggests that churches could usefully be more active in helping older people cope with being an ageing single person householder.

Of the 27.8 million households envisaged in 2031, 10.9 million or two-fifths, 39%, will be one person households. Of that 10.9 million, again two-fifths, 41%, will be where the head of household is 65 or over. The importance therefore of caring for elderly people living alone will increase in the days ahead – and we don't have to wait till we get to 2031. The need is already being felt in 2009 with some 3 million people in England 65 or over who are in single person households, that is, living alone. Ascertaining who they are in our area, finding means of help in such areas as transport, financial advice perhaps, social service needs, meals on wheels maybe, or other forms of care are key now to working in most local communities. How can the church show the love of Christ to these folk, one important part of the population?

Some of the other organisations working in this area as well as articles in the press are given below.

**SOURCES OF DATA AND FURTHER INFORMATION:** *Population Trends*, No 135, Spring 2009, Office for National Statistics, Pages 51-51; *Religious Trends*, No 7, 2007/2008, edited Peter Brierley, Christian Research, Swindon, Table 12.7.1; *Household Projections to 2031*, England, Communities and Local Government, Housing Statistical Release, 11th March 2009, Tables 1-3; *www.pilgrimhomes.org.uk*; *www.churcharmy.org.uk*; *Managing resources in later life*, by Katherine Hill et al, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, February 2009; Article "Grandparents are an influence for good" in *Society Now*, Spring 2009, ESRC; Article "Some thoughts on growing old gracefully" by John Hallford in *Plain Truth*, Spring 2009, Page 6; Article "Why the churches have to value our older people" by Matt Gresswell in *The Church of England Newspaper*, 1st May, 2009, Page 16.

There is one significant difference between the figures for Church marriages and Civil marriages. The proportion of marriages which are the first marriage for both parties represents some 80% of all religious marriages but only about 50% for civil marriages. These proportions have not changed in the last five years, and they indicate that those marrying for the second or subsequent times are much more likely to go down the secular route (for understandable reasons).

The graph shows that the overall number of weddings is steadily dropping – marriage, like churchgoing, is becoming increasingly less popular. Yet it remains one of the areas in which the church can offer a service today to the community at large, and can, in a modest way, provide an opportunity to introduce people to the Kingdom of God.

**SOURCE:** *Population Trends*, No 135, Spring 2009, Office for National Statistics, Palgrave Macmillan, Pages 64 and 66.



# The Psychological Type of Churchgoers

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is an evaluation of an individual's personality initially designed by the two ladies whose name it bears (Isabel Myers was Katherine Briggs's daughter) stemming originally from the work of the Swiss psychiatrist, Carl Jung. It is widely used in the church, as elsewhere, "as an aid to individual self-understanding and spiritual formation". Professor Leslie Francis of Warwick University has undertaken a huge amount of research into the psychological type of churchgoers and church leaders using the MBTI which has a proven track record worldwide as a reliable tool for enabling people to understand better some aspects of their personality, "psychological type".

The MBTI focuses on four aspects of personality – on "energising" (Extraversion E and Introversion I), on "perceiving" (Sensing S and Intuition N), on "decision making" (Thinking T and Feeling F), and on "living" (Judging J and Perceiving P). Each of these four is evaluated and a person is assigned one of each of the four pairs of letters. Their order is not important. Thus in the Table below, for example, ISTJ means Introversion/Sensing/Thinking/Judging.

Often when this research is published the results simply focus on the particular group studied. Some of these different pieces of research were collated and published in 2008, and at the 32nd Denton Conference in May 2009 a paper was presented describing such an overview. The results are based on a total of 3,600 churchgoers, and over 800 male clergy and are measured against population norms of more than 1,600 people. The overall results are shown in the Table.

While detailed comparisons between these groups show that the Extroversion/

General Population and Churchgoers across all MBTI Groups								
Group	ISTJ %	ISFJ %	INFJ %	INTJ %	ISTP %	ISFP %	INFP %	INTP %
Population	15	12	2	2	7	5	3	3
Churchgoers	11	17	6	6	2	3	6	3
Difference	+4	-5	-4	-4	+5	+2	-3	0
Group	ESTJ %	ESFJ %	ENFJ %	ENTJ %	ESTP %	ESFP %	ENFP %	ENTP %
Population	11	11	2	3	6	8	6	4
Churchgoers	8	13	6	3	2	4	7	3
Difference	+3	-2	-4	0	+4	+4	-1	+1

The meaning of the letters is explained in the text.

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### Other variations

- 1) Male churchgoers are more likely to emphasise truth and fairness while female churchgoers and male clergy focus more on people's needs.
- 2) Male clergy more than male churchgoers put a greater emphasis on personal values.

Others have looked at the spiritual dimensions of Myers-Briggs (such as Reginald Johnson's book), and John Lloyd, Emeritus Professor of Pharmacy at the University of Sunderland. In a recent paper the latter argues that unease in using the MBTI by Christian people is unnecessarily negative, but agrees that psychological type is but one mechanism for measuring a complex identity, and that personality is a broader concept that Myers-Briggs, however helpful it may be. In the year he first became a Bishop (1992), an article by Archbishop Rowan Williams acknowledged the "great practical usefulness" of the MBTI Indicator but was concerned at the "mechanical and fixed ways in which personality types are sometimes presented."

Behind all such research which seeks to show the results in various psychological differences lurks a major question: If these psychological differences are already evident in some people, could that predispose them to embracing the Christian faith? Alternatively, having embraced the Christian faith, has such made a difference to their personality type? No-one seems to have answered these yet!

**SOURCES:** *Religious Trends* No 7, 2007/2008, edited Peter Brierley, Christian Research, Swindon, Pages 5.14 and 15, which lists individually the papers cited from Leslie Francis; *Your Personality and the Spiritual Life*, Reginald Johnson, Monarch, Crowborough, 1995; Article "Know Thyself": What kind of injunction? in *Philosophy, religion and the spiritual life*, CUP 1982; Article "Opposition from Christians to Myers-Briggs personality typing: an analysis and evaluation" by Prof John B Lloyd in *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, Vol 28, No 2, August 2007.

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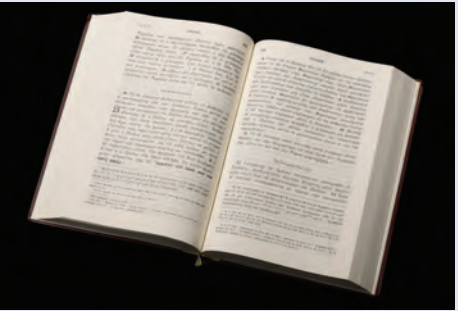
increasing -- 45% of young people coming to a church-run youth event mid-week came also on a Sunday in 2005, a proportion which is 51% in 2009.

There is always a need for more, but new activities need to be planned carefully so that once the initial enthusiasm has stalled, there will still be enough voluntary help to continue. Both spiritual and community services are increasing, as is their impact both internally and externally. When Sunday numbers are declining, here is one firm piece of positive news!

**SOURCES:** *Pulling out of the Nosedive*, Peter Brierley, Christian Research, 2006; *Safeguarding the Church's Children*, Brierley Consultancy, 2009; *The Significance of Larger Churches*, Brierley Consultancy, 2008.

A short paper elaborating this article is enclosed with this issue of *FutureFirst*. In not with your copy for some reason, please email peter@brierleyres.com if you would like it.





## REFLECTIONS

It was a strange family in some ways. The grandfather was a believer in the one true God, the father was not. He himself was a believer, his son and grandson (who died in his 20s) were not, but his great-grandson was. How come faith seems to skip a generation? Do grandparental and great-grandparental values somehow penetrate more deeply than parental?

His faith was very real. Given the privilege of a very responsible position, he was reformist in style. His father had built all sorts of idolatrous monuments in his search for an easy reality; he knocked them all down. Even one precious monument made almost 600 years before, in the form of a snake, was destroyed as it was leading people astray.

In fact his father had introduced practices that went totally beyond the bounds of all human values – when the murder of innocent children was perpetrated on the pretext it would help in some way. The new regime abolished this evil. This man was different – “no one like him”, before or after, which makes him unique.

He had a very strong faith. When an enemy attacked with a vicious army, brutal in its destruction of people and property, and simply engulfed the surrounding villages, he was challenged to the depth of his being.

Fortunately King Hezekiah had a colleague and supporter who was God’s mouthpiece, Isaiah. He counselled the King to refuse the tempting offers that Sennacherib was making if he were to surrender, and to stay firm. The King told his people not to reply to the taunts being made against him, his city and his God, but in his personal stress he talked to the Lord – and to Isaiah.

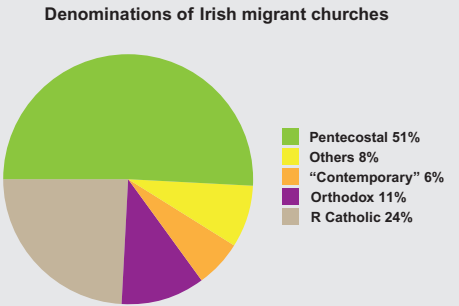
Isaiah also sought the Lord and then told Hezekiah that, after weeks and months of mounting tension from watching a hitherto invincible and colossal array of force, “the king of Assyria shall not come into this city”. How vital is the ministry of counsellors who are in touch with God and can discern His purposes beyond the chaos of the moment. Sennacherib’s Assyrian army, 185,000 soldiers strong, was wiped out in one night and in the remaining 20 years of his rule he did not once attempt to challenge again the God of Hezekiah. Grandparents and great-grandparents take heart – Hezekiah’s legacy of faith through testing and triumph surfaced again 57 years after he died – in his godly great-grandson King Josiah.

## Irish Migrant Churches

An interesting *Directory of Migrant-led Churches and Chaplaincies* was published early in 2009 by the All-Ireland Churches’ Consultative Meeting on Racism (AICCMR). It lists details of some 362 churches or chaplaincies which have either total migrant populations (some with headquarters outside of Ireland, usually Africa, and others started within Ireland), or churches whose leaders include Irish nationals but where the congregation is composed primarily of migrants. Details given include name and address of the minister, phone, email, and times and language of migrant services.

“Chaplaincies” are congregations within traditional churches where a non-migrant national serves a national grouping in a language other than English, or where a migrant leads services in the main language of that migrant group (Polish being by far the most common). The large majority of these chaplaincies are either Roman Catholic or Orthodox (of which many are Syrian).

The 2006 Irish Census (Republic only) recorded 8,000 who were members of Apostolic or Pentecostal groups, but, as the Introduction points out, that number is already likely to be much greater even just 2 years later, as some 12,000 people attended a Redeemed Christian Church of God conference in 2008. The pie-chart shows the denominational breakdown of those listed.



## THE WORLD’S RELIGIONS

The recently published *Encyclopedia Britannica Book of the Year* gave details, based on the data collected by Dr David Barrett and his team, of the numbers in various religious groups broken down by continent. The key data are given in the Table.

Religion	Africa %	Asia %	Latin Am %	Europe %	North Am %	Oceania %	World %
Christians	46	9	93	78	81	80	33
Muslims	40	24	0	5	2	1	21
Hindus	0	22	0	0	0	1	13
Chinese Religions	0	10	0	0	0	0	6
Buddhists	0	9	0	0	1	2	6
Tribal Religions	12	4	0	0	0	1	4
All others	1	4	4	1	4	2	3
Non-religious	1	18	3	16	12	13	14
Population (100%)	945mn	3,996mn	576mn	728mn	337mn	34mn	6,616mn

SOURCE: Article within the Religion section by Dr David Barrett, Todd Johnson and Peter Crossing, in *Encyclopedia Britannica Book of the Year*, 2007.

“Other” denominations include 13 non-denominational churches, 5 Chinese churches, 1 Korean, 3 Lutheran, 4 Seventh-Day Adventist, 1 Anglican and 1 Baptist.

The dominant Pentecostal group are the 73 Redeemed Christian Church of God congregations (up from 17 in 2002), forming two-fifths, 39%, of the 187 Pentecostal churches. (This denomination is also growing rapidly throughout the whole of the UK with 230 churches in 2006 and an estimated 280 in 2009).

The Directory gives the details by Irish county. Migrant churches are especially seen in Dublin which accounts for a third, 32%, of all the migrant churches in Ireland. Most of the counties close to Dublin (Louth, Meath and Kildare) and Wexford in the south-east have large numbers also, these four counties accounting for a further fifth, 19%. Limerick, Cork and Galway, western counties, account for another 17%. Only Antrim in Northern Ireland (which includes Belfast) has a comparable number, 5%, to these. Roscommon, in the centre of Ireland, has no such churches.

All this shows that in Ireland, as in the UK, migrant churches are flourishing, and forming a key part of church life in these countries. Can new migrant churches be planted in this age of secularism? The migrants would say YES! Can churches grow? The migrants would say YES! Why? Partly the attraction is of others attending who speak their language, partly because of the churchgoing culture many migrants bring with them, partly because their services are exuberant and attractive, and partly because the migrants themselves enthusiastically encourage others to come. Non-migrant, white, often static or declining churches, can learn much from the Christianity of these, our new neighbours.

SOURCES: As given, [www.irishchurches.org](http://www.irishchurches.org), and *Religious Trends* No 7, 2007/2008, Christian Research, Swindon, Table 9.16.1.

## Theological Colleges Full-up!

The latest edition of the *UK Christian Resources Handbook* lists some 101 Theological Colleges and Bible Schools in the UK. This is four fewer than 2 years ago, but is still a very substantial number. They cover Anglican, Roman Catholic, Church of Scotland, Baptist, Pentecostal, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Salvation Army, Seventh-day Adventist, United Reformed and a large number of interdenominational places of learning.

Collectively these institutions had 8,300 places available in 2008, and 8,200 of them were taken – 99% full! The number of places and students were marginally down (due to there being slightly fewer Colleges) from 2 years ago, but the occupancy rate was higher than in 2006, when it was 96%, itself an increase over the 90% in 2003.

The majority of these Colleges, 61%, offer places regardless of gender, but 23% of places available are only for men, and 16% are for women, percentages which have not changed significantly since 2006,

but have since 2001 when 44% of places were for men or women.

Fees have increased since 2006 at 6% per annum, making the average total cost of tuition and accommodation £6,200, of which £3,400 is for tuition and £2,800 for accommodation. These are the costs per annum in 2008, and the average course lasts 2½ years. A 3 year degree course would thus cost not much under £20,000.

Details are shown in the Table, illustrated by the chart which gives a 15-year range.

Year	Number of colleges		Residential Student Places					Total number of students				Tuition and Accommodation Fees		Average length of course (years)
	Total	% replying	Male	Female	Mixed	Total	Ratio	Male	Female	Total	% of places	Average £	% increase p.a.	
2001	101	85	2,556	1,920	3,483	7,959	3224:44	4,400	3,000	7,400	93	4,936	+9	2.5
2003	104	94	2,282	1,440	4,674	8,396	27:17:56	4,460	3,120	7,580	90	5,360	+4	2.4
2006	105	94	2,073	1,397	5,132	8,602	24:16:60	4,810	3,470	8,280	96	5,518	+1	2.5
2008	101	89	1,911	1,348	5,063	8,322	23:16:61	4,770	3,430	8,200	99	6,164	+6	2.5

<sup>1</sup> Revised figure

SOURCE: *UK Christian Handbook*, 2007/2008 edition for 2001 to 2006 figures; 2009/2010 edition for 2008 figures.

## BOOK REVIEW



**THE NEW CREATIONISM:** Building scientific theories on a biblical foundation, by Paul Garner, Evangelical Press, Darlington, 2009. 304 pages, £8.99, 978-0-85324-692-1

It seems appropriate in the bi-centenary year of Darwin’s birth to include a review of a book on the broad subject of evolution. This book is, however, unlike many which have been published this year to celebrate the event. It focuses on the possibility of the earth being formed several thousand years ago rather than several million.

In this context it looks at a wide variety of evidence – biological, geological and chemical, as well as taking a careful look at fossil and dating data – and puts them all into a scriptural context. It is written by a man who is an environmental scientist and describes an astonishingly wide phalanx of detailed scientific work in a range of different fields. It looks comprehensively at the creationist scene and justifies it as a serious contender for our origins.

In the process it faces objectively the differing points of view on this topic, the evidence for evolution, the data behind the often-quoted date of the origin of earth 4.7 million years ago, and quotes up-to-date

research and thinking which suggests some (most!) of this “evidence” could be mistaken.

However, a further commendation for this well written book is not just its comprehensiveness, and the usefulness of having in one volume the varying viewpoints of the interpretations of Genesis chapters 1-11, but its style. Unlike the arrogance of some writers from a creationist viewpoint, this book is written humbly, positively commending the beauty and detail of God’s creation, and pointing very simply to the awesome purposes of an inscrutable but wonderful Creator.

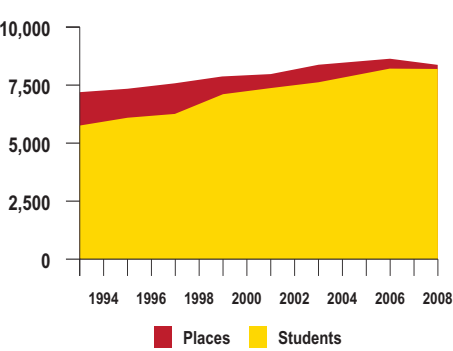
### THESE MAY BE HELPFUL Books and reports received

*A Church of England approach to the unique significance of Jesus Christ*, Dr Martin Davie, Theological Consultant to the House of Bishops, Crowther Centre Monograph No 7, CMS, Oxford, May 2009.

*The Rabbit and the Elephant, Why Small is the new Big for Today’s Church*, Tony & Felicity Dale and George Barna, Tyndale House Publishers, Illinois, 2009. “[i]f you put two elephants in a room together and close the door, if you’re lucky, in 3 years you may have one baby elephant. But when you put two rabbits together for the same amount of time ...”]

*‘Sleepwalking to Segregation’?, Challenging myths about race and migration*, Nissa Finney and Ludi Simpson, Polity Press, Bristol, 2009. “[i]f you really want to know ... how many ghettos exist ... this is the book to read” Professor Dorling, Sheffield]

Places and students at Theological Colleges, UK, 1993 - 2008



### Providing Facts for Forward Planning

## SNIPPETS

1) One in 6 children in the UK, 15%, live in a household where no-one is working; 23% in London.

2) A quarter, 25%, of families with children are headed by a lone parent; 31% in London.

3) 14% of Britons (and 25% of Londoners) believe that life on earth was created by God, and has always existed in its present form.

4) One in 4 children in the UK are living in poverty.

5) By the time you get to 38 you will have had between 10 and 14 jobs.

6) Over 80% of all credit card debt in Europe is held in the UK.

7) Fingernails grow nearly four times faster than toe nails.

SOURCES: 1) and 2) *Regional Trends*, 2009 edition, Office for National Statistics, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, quoted in *The Week*, 4th July 2009, Page 19; 3) Ipsos/MORI Poll by *The Times*, quoted in *The Week*, 4th July 2009, Page 4; 4) Dr Barnardo’s leaflet quoting Dept for Work and Pensions, April 2009; 5) Sony video “Do you know?”, 6/2008, [www.release.thepatform.com](http://www.release.thepatform.com); 6) Article by John Kirkby in *Plain Truth*, December 2008, Page 17; 7) *Index* magazine, May 2009, Page 7.

## More Mid-week Ministry!

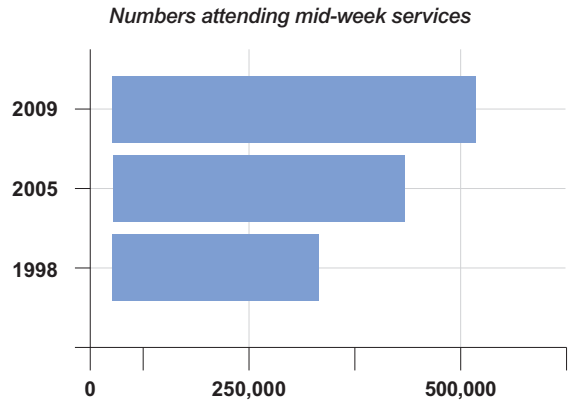
Mid-week services are relatively new, apart from Roman Catholic and Anglican churches, but since the 1990s they have grown in popularity. In 1998 42% of churches had some kind of mid-week service or meeting for worship, a percentage which has stayed the same in the 21st century. However, numbers attending these services have grown.

In 1998 some 335,000 people attended these services, which by 2005 had increased to 460,000. This was an average congregation of 29 people mid-week (compared with 21 in 1998). How many of these also attended on Sunday? This information isn’t available for 1998, but 73% did so in 2005.

### Data for 2009

A large study in early 2009 of Safeguarding issues asked questions about mid-week attendance, although this was to any mid-week activity and not just services. However, the services element was estimated at 519,000, an increase of 13% over 2005. Of these, three-quarters, 77%, also came on a Sunday. So more people are coming to church mid-week than they used to, a trend from 1998 at least, and more of those people, both children and adult, are also attending on a Sunday.

The *rate of* increase between 2005 and 2009 is lower than the rate between 1998 and 2005 which suggests that the increasing mid-week numbers for services could slow down further in the years ahead. Should churches take this seriously into account when planning their future work?



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### Huge variety of ministry

Services are but one form of popular mid-week ministry. There is an enormous variety of ways in which churches work with the local community, which is why when large scale studies are undertaken on the value of faith communities, the results always show a huge volume of work, both in number of volunteers and hours of work. A survey of larger churches in 2008 showed that 65% ran discipleship type activities mid-week, 82% had some kind of outreach activity and 97% ran Home Groups.

In addition, 95% ran community activities which included *social events* (such as wine tasting, dinner jazz, plays, community choir, social evenings, arts projects, music events, civic services, concerts, curry evenings, card-making evenings, readers’ groups), *family events* (such as walks, sailing, pantomime, fun day), activities for *specific age-groups* (young, old, 20s and 30s), for *specific groups* of people (parents, singles, retired, men, women, prisoners, football players, business people, those just bereaved, etc.), *courses or services* on such subjects as divorce and recovery, marriage preparation, emergency pregnancy, debt counselling, counselling services, pastoral care, legal clinic, employment skilling, mediation service, etc. One Kent Baptist church has 72 meetings or activities every week!

### Value of mid-week ministry

How important is mid-week ministry? For churches anxious to grow their fringe (and subsequently their main congregation) it is crucial. How effective is mid-week ministry? That depends on how it is planned. When it simply takes place because space is available, or it would be a useful help for church funds, its value for the church is relatively small. When mid-week ministry is integrated with the entire vision of the church it becomes much more focussed and relevant.

Without question, the most important, as well as the most strategic for the long-term, is some kind of youth work. Only 27% of churches have a mid-week youth programme and yet this is one of the secrets of seeing more young people come to church. Churches find that many who come mid-week will often come on a Sunday as well, a trend which is