



QUADRANT

Your bi-monthly bulletin of research-based information

Featuring *Religious Trends No 7*

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UK CHRISTIANITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The new edition of *Religious Trends* gives details of all the 275 denominations now constituting the Christian scene in the UK. It lists the number of members, churches and ministers for each for the years 2000, 2002-2006 with an estimate for 2010. The information was provided by each denomination, or estimated on their behalf. It also forecasts the overall figures ahead for 40 years to 2050. The basic figures are shown in the Table at the bottom of the page and are more interesting than they might look at first glance!

More buoyant: more people!

The number of UK church members in 2005 was 5.8 million, estimated to fall to 5.5 million in 2010. The figures published previously for 2005 were 5.6 million for the UK and 5.2 million for 2010. What has happened to cause these previous estimates to change so much? In a single word, immigration!

We all know that thousands upon thousands of immigrants are coming to the UK at this time, the majority from the EU. Unlike other countries in the EU, the UK allowed citizens from Poland and other countries which joined in 2005 to be eligible for entrance to the UK immediately. Many of these immigrants came from Christian countries, both Protestant and Catholic, and have joined local churches wherever they have settled

in the UK. More seem to have settled in England and Scotland than Wales and N Ireland.

The consequence is that the membership figures need to be revised upwards. The changes are seen especially in the Catholic, Orthodox, Presbyterian, Pentecostal and the Protestant Overseas Nationals churches - many of which are small but which collectively add up!

More in their Third Age

There is, however, another feature which emerges from the 2005 English Church Census. As England accounts for almost two-thirds of church members, what happens in England is heavily reflected in the UK figures. The Census broke down those attending church who were 65 and over into three groups: those aged 65 to 74 (which the Government calls the "Third Age"), 75 to 84 and 85 and over. Previously these had just been counted as "65 and over" and the average age of these older people was estimated from the general population figures.

The Census showed that the proportion of churchgoers 65 and over had increased from 25% in 1998 to 29% in 2005. This 29% was broken down in the proportions 59:34:7 respectively for those aged 65 to 74, 75 to 84 and 85 and over. Compared with the population proportions the church has more people aged 65-74 than might be expected but fewer 85 and over in attendance. As a consequence the average age of churchgoers 65 and over becomes lower, meaning they are counted as staying in church for longer, and will thus increase the number of elderly attenders.

The ethnic factor

There is, a third and key positive factor which has emerged especially in the last few years, which some people are calling the "noughties". This is the growth of the many ethnic churches, especially the black churches in London. Although some of this growth, especially the

non-black, is fueled by immigration as described above, this is less true of the black churches. Some of these are being started by people coming especially from Ghana and Nigeria, in what they call "reverse mission", that is, to start churches here in order to help bring back the UK to the Christianity from which they benefitted a century or two ago. Some of these black churches are seeing spectacular growth and are now the largest churches in the country.



It is important to point out that it is not just the black churches which are growing. The Census showed that 34% of churches in England grew between 1998 and 2005, a considerable improvement on the 21% which grew in the previous period. While some of that growth is due to transfers rather than conversions, some 150,000 people came to faith through Alpha and other similar courses between 1998 and 2005. Many churches are also experimenting with "Fresh Expressions", of which there are some 5,000 examples in the Church of England alone. At least some, though almost certainly not all, of these people will be new to church attendance or membership, so their numbers are very likely to have a significant impact on overall numbers, especially in the years ahead.

So what?

The consequence of these various changes is that the rate of decline has slowed. The decline previously estimated to occur over the next 30 years has now stretched to 40 years. The result of more immigrants, continued church growth

| Membership | England | Wales | Scotland | N Ireland | TOTAL |
|------------|-----------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 2000 | 3,764,000 | 285,000 | 1,014,000 | 946,000 | 6,009,000 |
| 2005 | 3,653,000 | 241,000 | 951,000 | 947,000 | 5,792,000 |
| 2006 | 3,667,000 | 239,000 | 881,000 | 947,000 | 5,734,000 |
| 2010 | 3,525,000 | 211,000 | 841,000 | 943,000 | 5,520,000 |
| 2050 | 1,898,000 | 40,000 | 212,000 | 890,000 | 3,040,000 |

continued on page 5



OTHER FEATURES OF RELIGIOUS TRENDS NO 7

The 2007/2008 edition of *Religious Trends* has many other elements forming the picture of church life in the 21st century other than membership and attendance (see page 1). Here are a few of them.

Mission Workers

The number of mission workers serving in the UK or overseas was 5,900 in 2006, 700 in the UK and 5,200 overseas, down from a total of 6,500 in 2004. Those from interdenominational organisations are the largest component, forming three-fifths, 60%, of the total. More left during 2006 than previously because they had come to the end of their contract. Almost a third, 31%, of those joining an agency in 2006 were working as a short-term worker or gap year student.

Almost half of those serving overseas were male, 45%, but fewer of those serving in the UK, 38%. Average length of service was 7.6 years (7.4 years for men, 7.9 years for women). Five mission workers in six, 83%, are serving with a society which is a member of Global Connections.

Baptisms of Children

Despite increasing numbers of Roman Catholic baptisms (because of immigrants especially from Poland), overall the total number of baptisms has dropped 13% from 2000 to 2006, to a total of 290,000 in 2006. However, this still represents two-fifths, 39%, of all the babies born in the UK that year. It is expected to stay at this proportion till 2010 at least.

Offsetting this are the number of abortions, a figure which continues to rise. In 2005 and 2006 the average number in England and Wales was just over 190,000 each year, which was over a fifth, 22%, of all conceptions.

Types of families

There were 21 million households in England in 2004, the latest year for which figures were available. Almost a third of these, 31%, were one person households, the biggest increase in which were among those aged 45 to 64. Previous figures had suggested that the number of lone parent households was rapidly increasing, but in recent years these have tended to increase less rapidly than the number of cohabiting couples which are forecast to increase from 9% of all households in 2004 to 12% by 2016.

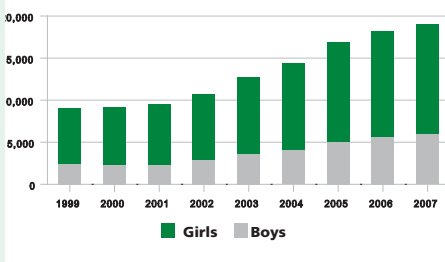
Surveys of Christian congregations have found that some 2% of attenders are cohabiting,

but this percentage seems likely to increase in the days ahead. The proportions cohabiting in the general population in England and Wales more than doubled between 1998 (8%) and 2003 (19%). Over a third, 36%, of those aged 25 to 34, male and female, were cohabiting in 2003. These very rapid increases are graphed in the chart.

About two-fifths, 41%, of families had no children (or no children yet), and just over another two-fifths, 44%, had dependent children in the UK in 2001. This leaves 15% of families with non-dependent children.

A-Level Religious Studies

Pupils taking A-Level RS Studies, by Gender, UK,

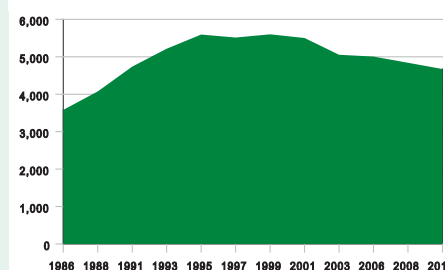


The percentage of children taking Religious Studies at A Level has increased significantly since 1999, in both genders, as may be seen in this figure. The number taking A Level in 2005 was three-fifths of the number of 18 year-olds attending church, but presumably not all were churchgoers. Likewise there has been a surge in the numbers taking Religious Studies at GCSE, and as again not all will be attending church at this age, this shows a huge level of interest in RS by children not reflected in church attendance.

Number of Christian organisations

Some of the data published in *Religious Trends* comes from successive editions of the *UK Christian Handbook*. One such piece is the number of Christian organisations working in the UK. Their numbers grew rapidly in the "Exciting Eighties" as the graph makes clear, were much more static during the 1990s, but have begun to decline in the "noughties" as the period from 2000 is sometimes called. Decline is often seen among groups started 20 or 25 years ago, which suggests that either the ministry was primarily the vision of one or two people and closed when they retired, or charity trustees have found it difficult to find a suitable successor when the initiating CEO came to retire.

Number of Christian organisations, 1986-2010

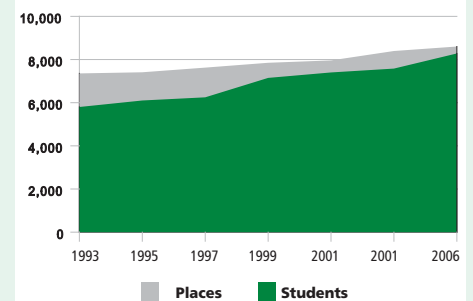


Theological students

Some of the trends to be found in *Religious Trends* run counter to the overall picture of church decline, and must therefore give some degree of hope for the future. The number of children studying Religious Studies is one such, but so is the increasing number of theological students. In 2006 there were 105 residential Theological Colleges and Bible Schools in the UK (listed in the *UK Christian Handbook*), an increase of 7 since 1991, offering some 8,600 places (up from 7,200 in 1991). In 2006 96% of these places were filled.

The graph shows the increase since 1993 (actual students were not counted in 1991). In 2006, the average course lasted 2.5 years, and accommodation and tuition fees averaged £5,500 a year.

Places and students at Theological Colleges, UK, 1993-2006



BOOKS & REPORTS

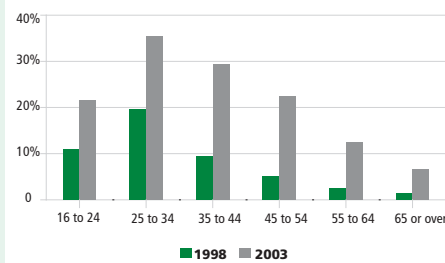
The Cult of Celebrity, A review of the impact of celebrities on wider consumer behaviour, Vision, November 2007. Contact: clares@futurefoundation.net

The Effects of Marriage on Health, ASPE Research Brief, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Jerry Regier, US Dept of Health and Human Services, Washington DC 20201, June 2007

"Rendering unto Caesar? The Politics of Church of England Clergy since 1980", Dr Clive D Field, *Journal of Anglican Studies*, Volume 5 Number 1, 2007, SAGE Publication. Contact: c.d.field@bham.ac.uk

"Islamophobia in Contemporary Britain": The Evidence of the Opinion Polls 1988-2006, Clive Field, *Islam & Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol 18, No 4, 10/07. Contact: c.d.field@bham.ac.uk

% cohabiting, England and Wales, 1998 and 2003



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A CHURCH 'PUB QUIZ'

10 Random Facts from RT7

Do you want questions for a quiz at a Church party? Here are 10 further facts taken randomly from the next *Religious Trends*:

- 1 How many fires occurred in buildings of worship in 2005 in the UK?
A) 18 B) 180 C) 1,800
- 2 What was the total membership of Christian youth organisations in the UK in 2006?
A) 440,000 B) 340,000 C) 240,000
- 3 How many UK Christian Conference Centres can offer accommodation for more than 200 people?
A) Twelve B) Five C) One
- 4 What percentage of Christian leaders have leadership gifts as defined by Belbin?
A) 51 B) 31% C) 11%
- 5 79% of people said they grew up in a Christian family; what percentage were still Christian in 2004?
A) 51% B) 41% C) 31%
- 6 There were 208 denominations in the UK in 1992, and 275 by 2006. How many might there be by 2020?
A) 260 B) 360 C) 460
- 7 In 2005 in England and Wales there were 240,000 marriages. What percentage of these were religious?
A) 15% B) 25% C) 35%
- 8 720,000 children were born in the UK in 2005. What percentage of these were baptised?
A) 41% B) 31% C) 21%
- 9 The average household in Great Britain contained 2.4 people in 2001. How large were Muslim households?
A) 1.8 B) 2.8 C) 3.8
- 10 By the end of 2007 the estimated total number of Alpha courses held worldwide (1992-2007) was:
A) 155,000 B) 255,000 C) 355,000

Answers:
1) B: the actual number was 178 (Table 5.12.1)
2) C: the actual number was 241,000 (Table 5.6.1)
3) A: 9 can offer between 200 and 299 spaces and 3 over 400 (Table 5.3.3)
4) B: 17% would be Director-leaders and 14% Shaper-leaders (Table 2.2.4)
5) A: 45½% grew up Anglican; 29½% still are; 13½% grew up Catholic; 9½% still are; 20% grew up in other denominations; 12% still are (Table 2.3.1)
6) B: 360 fit present trends continue (Table 2.2.3)
7) C: 35% of which two-thirds, 69% were Anglican (Tables 4.8.2 and 3)
8) A: 41% of which over half, 56% were Anglican (Table 4.2.1)
9) C: 3.8 which is the largest for any religious group (Table 4.6)
10) B: 255,273, with a total attendance estimated at 10.57 million people (Table 5.16.1)

YOUTH & HAPPINESS

Happiness is very important to young people these days so MTV surveyed American young people aged between 13 and 24 to find out what makes them happy. An overwhelming 97% said it was important to be happy with life. Two-thirds (66%) were generally very happy or somewhat happy with how their lives were going, and almost as many (63%) were feeling happy the day they answered the questions. What immediately stands out is how vital relationships are to their feelings. When asked to name the one thing in life which makes them most happy half (46%) mentioned family, friends or spouse. The factors involved in happiness were explored in some depth and this list shows what made more than half the young people very or somewhat happy:

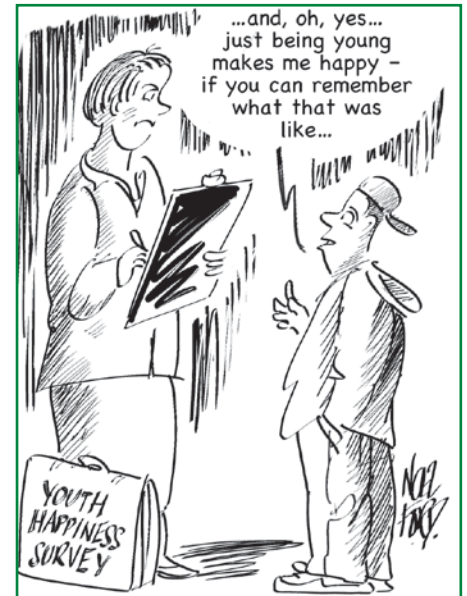
| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Listening to music | 88% |
| Relationships with friends | 84% |
| Spare time activities | 82% |
| Relationships with family | 76% |
| Relationships with parents | 72% |
| 'Stuff' they have | 70% |
| Exercising / sport | 67% |
| Personal appearance | 59% |
| Watching TV | 59% |
| Playing video games | 54% |
| Where they live | 53% |
| Grades they get | 52% |
| Religious or spiritual life | 51% |

Factors which made less than half of them happy were their school (43%), socializing online (42%), boy/girlfriend (39%), the amount of money they have (36%), their job (35%), following professional sport (31%), their sex life (29%), drinking (25%), the way things are going in the world (15% - though this had the largest percentage which made them unhappy, 58%) and drugs (7%). A further analysis of surveys of young people in school years 9 and 10 (14-15 year olds) in England and Wales found that 13% considered they were not worth much as people, while a Australian survey of young people (quoted in several recent editions of *Quadrant*) found 19% often felt they were failures and another 15% said they were hurting deep inside and nothing seemed to help. These are presumably unhappy youngsters.

Family and friends

After music, friends and family are key to American young people's happiness, as they seem to be in England and Wales and Australia. Half the students in England and Wales (50%) felt it was helpful to talk with their mothers about problems and a third (32%) would talk with their fathers compared to three-quarters (75%) in Australia who would talk to their parents. Friends would be talked to by two-thirds (64%) of the British young people compared with 81% in Australia.


The opposite to happiness, in the MTV survey anyway, was stress. Concerns about the future contribute to stress for four out of five (80%) of American young people, along with the aspects



of their lives which made fewer of them happy: school (64% of those at school) and work (38% of those at work). However, family issues (72%) and friends (50%) also created stress. They rely hugely on technology, and while half of them say they couldn't live without a computer, the internet, TV or a cell phone, 82% of them couldn't live without an iPod - indeed nearly one-third (31%) feel more stressed if they unplug their technology!

Religious involvement

The percentages of those in this age group who claim to attend a church service or other place or worship in the USA are similar to those found by George Barna, 32% saying they are a member of a church or religious group, and 42% saying they attend at least once a month. Religion or spirituality is the single most important thing in life for 11% and is important for another 54% - so at least 12% say religion or spirituality is important but don't express that in attendance on a regular basis. The England and Wales (E&W) and Australian surveys asked quite different questions about the religious dimension of life, but did explore what the students believed. Belief in God was affirmed by almost half (43% E&W, 50% Australia), and life after death by slightly more especially in Australia (45% E&W, 60% Australia). In contrast fewer Australian young people believed in astrology and horoscopes (35% E&W, 25% Australia) or in communication with the dead (31% E&W, 23% Australia).

In an increasingly complex world, working with young people raises a wide variety of challenges. One raised for churches by these surveys is how to help young people make sense of life, and whether they are seeking to put their beliefs into practice. 

Sources: The Associated Press MTV Poll, Knowledge Networks, 2007, surveys.ap.org/data/KnowledgeNetworks/2007_08_20%20AP_MTV%20Youth%20Happiness.pdf; Pointers, Christian Research Association, Australia, a) "Spiritual Health of Young People: England, Wales and Australia", March 2007, Volume 17, Number 1, b) "Chewing the fat: implications of youth spirituality research", June 2007, Volume 17, Number 2.



BITS FROM BARNA From Barna Update www.barna.org

Belief

George Barna has asked Americans whether or not they believe various Bible stories are factually accurate. There were significant differences in levels of belief between those who described themselves as 'born again' and those who did not, between Catholics and Protestants, and between blacks, whites and Hispanics. The following are the overall percentages who believed they are fact.

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Virgin birth | 75% |
| Jesus' resurrection | 75% |
| Turning water into wine | 69% |
| Feeding the 5,000 | 68% |
| Daniel in the lion's den | 65% |
| Parting of Red Sea | 64% |
| World created in six days | 60% |
| Peter walking on water | 60% |
| Eve tempted by the serpent | 56% |
| Samson's strength | 49% |

A survey which specifically compared Catholics with non-Catholics on a range of behaviours and attitudes found that Catholics were less likely to be 'absolutely committed' to their Christian faith (44% of Catholics, 54% of adult population). This was illustrated by Catholics being 38% less likely to read the Bible, 24% less likely to say their faith had transformed their life, and giving 17% less money to their church. They scored better on some behaviours, being less likely to speak about someone behind their back, and more likely to recycle.

Family life

Many Americans claim some sort of Christian faith, but passing it on to their children is not seen as a big personal challenge by the large majority. The most commonly mentioned parenting challenge was to raise moral children or youngsters strong in their faith, but only 14%

of parents gave this response. Only one other spiritual challenge was shared by more than 10% of parents, the need to invest more time in activities such as reading the Bible or praying.

Mothers are much more likely to be involved in spiritual activity and to take a lead in the spiritual welfare of their children. However, younger mothers (aged 23-41) are less committed to Christianity, 53%, compared to the generation above them (aged 42-60), 67%.

With Presidential elections looming in the US, Barna presented people with 11 changes which could be addressed in the next 10 years. The top two both focused on children, ahead of a topic which is talked about much more, national security. The items which more than half of adults considered 'absolutely necessary' are:

| | |
|--|-----|
| Care of resources devoted to children | 82% |
| Quality of public school education | 82% |
| National security | 72% |
| Poor and disadvantaged people | 69% |
| Reliability, honesty of news reporting | 63% |
| Environmental protection | 60% |
| Marriage and families | 60% |
| Spiritual state of the country | 53% |

The views of evangelical Christians were sometimes significantly different from other people, for example addressing the state of marriage and families was deemed 'absolutely necessary' by 91% of evangelicals but only 30% of those who do not take the Bible literally. Similarly the moral content of entertainment was selected by 73% of evangelicals compared to 16% of atheists and agnostics.

This latter concern is reflected in another survey which found that 26% of Christian parents were uncomfortable with a DVD, movie or TV programme which they had bought for their child, even though 78% had bought them. Almost 60% of parents had bought music CDs for their children, but 33% had concerns about the content. The majority of those who had bought video games, magazines or computer software

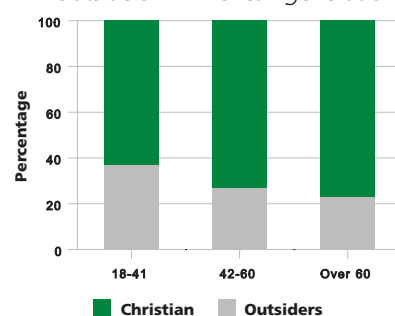
for their children were concerned about the items, while three quarters of those who had bought internet downloads were uneasy. Parents of teenagers were more likely to be concerned than those of younger children.

Young people and church

Young adult Americans are more critical of the Christian faith and the church than previous generations. Those aged 16-29 overwhelmingly do not have a good impression of Christianity: only 16% are positive overall, and only 3% positive towards evangelicals. From the other perspective, 91% of evangelicals believe that Americans are becoming more hostile and negative towards Christianity. Common negative perceptions among late teens and twenties include a perception that Christianity is judgmental (87%), hypocritical (85%), old-fashioned (78%) and too involved with politics (75%). Half of young churchgoers shared most of these perceptions. The most common positive views were that Christianity teaches the same basic ideas as other religions (82%), has good values and principles (76%), is friendly (71%) and they respect it (55%).

A major reason for these perceptions is that the proportion of those whom Barna terms 'outsiders' (non- or de-churched) is increasing with each generation.

Outsiders in American generations



'Outsiders' are not formed in a vacuum: the typical young outsider has five Christian friends and has attended a Christian church for a period of at least six months at some time in the past

RELIGION AND ENVIRONMENT

American Protestants' view of the environment is different from that of Catholics and those of other religions, if the results of one survey in the USA asking agreement with 10 statements are typical. The results are given in the Table:

| Statement | Protestant % | Catholic % | Jew % | Muslim % | Other religion % | No religion % | Overall % |
|--|--------------|------------|-------|----------|------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Plants and animals have as much right to exist as humans | 79 | 89 | 83 | 94 | 91 | 90 | 87 |
| Humans are severely abusing the environment | 76 | 85 | 82 | 84 | 85 | 88 | 83 |
| When humans interfere with nature it often produces disastrous consequences | 75 | 78 | 75 | 81 | 81 | 83 | 79 |
| If things continue on their present course, we will soon experience a major ecological catastrophe | 54 | 66 | 64 | 68 | 72 | 74 | 66 |
| We are approaching the limit of the number of people the Earth can support | 52 | 54 | 53 | 47 | 60 | 68 | 59 |
| The Earth has plenty of natural resources if we just learn how to develop them | 59 | 66 | 50 | 76 | 58 | 52 | 58 |
| Human ingenuity will ensure that we do NOT make the Earth unlivable | 27 | 31 | 19 | 38 | 23 | 19 | 25 |
| Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs | 34 | 24 | 25 | 25 | 21 | 16 | 24 |
| Humans were meant to rule over the rest of nature | 33 | 17 | 11 | 32 | 17 | 7 | 18 |
| The so-called "ecological crisis" facing humankind has been greatly exaggerated | 20 | 15 | 6 | 16 | 12 | 9 | 14 |
| Base (=100%) | 2,143 | 1,835 | 234 | 81 | 1,385 | 2,391 | 8,069 |

Protestants generally are in less agreement with the statements in the first half of the Table, and more in agreement with the bottom half, Catholics and those of other religions are more likely to be average, while Jews, Muslims and those of no religion are likely to have the greatest variations from the average. However, it may be that some of the Protestant percentages in this table reflect American political thinking rather than Protestants in other parts of the world.

Source: "Expanding the use of the Internet in religious research" by William Bainbridge in *Review of Religious Research*, Volume 49, Number 1, September 2007, p7, based on the results of US General Social Survey 2001.



Cohort analysis is always important if there is sufficient data. "Cohort analysis" means looking at how the number of, say, churchgoers in a certain age-group fared over a given period. Often 10 year groupings are chosen for convenience of ages, and then looked at over a 10-year interval. So 15 to 24 year olds in 1996 become 25 to 34 year olds by 2006. While in that period the net change can be relatively easily calculated, the real interest would be in the gross figures – how many joined of that age-group and how many left, but this detail is very

Percentage change in numbers attending church by age-band over 10 years

| Age-band | Uniting Church Australia % | Pentecostal, Australia % | All English churchgoers % |
|-----------|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 5 to 14 | -73 | +11 | -47 |
| 15 to 24 | -37 | +5 | -43 |
| 25 to 34 | -10 | +23 | -17 |
| 35 to 44 | -10 | +8 | -19 |
| 45 to 54 | -9 | 0 | -9 |
| 55 to 64 | -11 | -11 | -10 |
| 65 to 74 | -24 | -37 | -41 |
| 75 & over | -60 | -42 | -66 |
| Overall | -13 | +7 | -22 |

continued from page 1

and continuing experimentation is changing the religious landscape for the better. *Religious Trends No 7* shows therefore that we continue to be *Pulling out of the Nosedive* as the 2005 Census book was called. There is no question of having *pulled* out of the nosedive – the numbers continue to decrease – but the rate of decline has lessened, and the same phenomenon can also be seen in the changing numbers of churches and ministers – both of these are also declining less quickly than before.

The ageing of churchgoers

We may well not pull out of the nosedive unless we can solve one key issue. It may be true that we have more people in their Third Age than we thought previously. It is also true that the church has more people aged 65 and over as a whole than might be expected – 29% against 17% in the population.

The consequence is that the average age of churchgoers rapidly increases. It was 47 for congregations in Great Britain in 2005, but is

difficult to obtain without actually measuring individual behaviours.

The basic figures for two denominations in Australia have been published, as well as the total for all churchgoers in England, and the Table compares the percentage changes that have taken place over the 10 years 1996-2006 for the Australian denominations and 1995-2005 for English churchgoers.

The data falls into three broad groups. The changes for those 65 and over are similar for all 3 groups and are essentially measuring changes due to mortality (whose rates are similar in Australia and England). The middle band, for those now aged 25 to 64 shows losses for the Australian Uniting Church and England which, while real, are less than the overall declines. In other words people in these middle ages, once in church, are either less likely to leave or perhaps have their numbers swelled by others joining. For the Australian Pentecostals, those now aged 25 to 44 have grown, that is, those aged 15 to 34 10 years ago have stayed and increased – something few other denominations have been able to achieve. In the top band, the youngest people have left in relatively high proportions, unless they are Pentecostal.

Sources: "What do the 2006 Census figures about religion mean?", Philip Hughes, *Pointers*, Christian Research Association, Australia, Volume 17, Number 3, Pages 4 and 6; English figures from *Pulling out of the Nosedive*, Peter Brierley, Christian Research, London, 2006.

Complicated lives. A survey of 1,000 adults in the UK included an interesting question on what number-one-wish people would like to see personally fulfilled. Answers were:

- 30% To fulfil yourself
- 28% To be able to afford something
- 18% To have more friendship
- 15% To have less fear
- 9% To be more highly esteemed

There are obvious spiritual analogies in each of these; how can churches provide more friendship

likely to be 67 by 2050 if present trends continue. That is simply disastrous, both for services, community activity, church fellowship and virtually everything that church stands for.

It means that the key strategic priority which emerges from all this analysis is the crucial need to engage with young people and children now. That need was already known, but with 33% of churchgoers under 30 in 2000 reducing to just 11% by 2025 and 3% by 2050 it sounds the death-knell of the church more effectively than just giving numbers of those still attending in 2050. We dare not wait till we wake up in 2025 and wonder where our youth work has got to; action to change future trends needs to begin in 2008! The Table (right) is reproduced from *Religious Trends*.

Perhaps initiatives like Hope '08, with over 150 Christian organizations and thousands of churches signed up at the time of writing, can help the long process of enabling young people in this our land to hear and respond to the Gospel

(not simply friendliness) and enable people to have more confidence rather than fear?

Source: *Marketing for Complicated Lives*, The Future Foundation, November 2007, Page 11.

American marriages. The number of divorces in the United States remains high. This is evidenced by the fact that while 79% of those who married in the late 1950s celebrated their 15th anniversary, only 57% of those married in the late 1980s did so. The silver (25th) anniversary of those married in the 1970s was reached by less than half.

Source: *Time* magazine, 8th October 2007

Racial violence. In the first 11 months of 2007 some 72 racial murders occurred in Britain, the youngest being an 11-year old boy in Croxteth, Liverpool and the oldest an 84-year old man in Wembley.

- Of these, 5 were under 15, 8 were 15, 10 were 16, 12 were 17, 14 were 18, 4 were 19, 11 were aged between 20 and 24 and 8 were 25 or over.
- 8 were female; 64 were male.
- 41 were stabbed to death; 20 were shot, 8 were clubbed to death, 1 was drowned, 1 died from a heart attack after being confronted by 3 teenagers demanding his money, and 1 was found dead in a street in Canning Town, London.

By any standard, this is a horrific number of deaths – three every two weeks. We need to pray for the victim's parents, siblings and other relatives and that the cycle of violence may lessen not increase. Forgiving those who commit such crimes is hugely difficult, but equally very important if the legacy of outrage is not to continue.

Source: *Keep the Faith* magazine, December 2007.

QUOTE QUOTE QUOTE QUOTE QUOTE
 £35 million was spent on Easter eggs in 2006 in Britain.
 Source: *British Retail Consortium*
UNQUOTE UNQUOTE UNQUOTE UNQUOTE

of our Lord Jesus Christ. The need has never been greater! In effect, the numbers going to church in 2050 will be decided by what happens between now and 2018. It is the next 10 years which are key.

| Proportions of churchgoers in each age-group, Great Britain, 2000-2050 | | | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
| Age-group | 2000 % | 2025 % | 2050 % |
| Under 15 | 19 | 5 | 1 |
| 15-19 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| 20-29 | 9 | 5 | 2 |
| 30-44 | 17 | 12 | 7 |
| 45-64 | 25 | 25 | 18 |
| 65 & over | 25 | 53 | 72 |
| Base (= 100%) | 4.4mn | 2.3mn | 0.9mn |
| Average Age | 47 | 59 | 67 |
| Population average | 40 | 42 | 44 |



PERSPECTIVES

“ Growing the kingdom is ... by our personal witness to work colleagues

Our churches have no clue about how to support us on active duty ”

Richard Meryon, Executive Director, Christian Vision for Men
www.CVMen.org.uk

GETTING GOD TO WORK

Put 100 people in a church who go out to work; ask them “Who knows other Christians at work?” and 62% will. Now ask “How many of you meet up regularly with these Christians?” and just 25% do. Finally ask them “So how many of you arrange things at work that challenge your peers with the claims of Christ?” and you’ll rarely find it’s more than 1%.

So ask yourself: “How much of my church’s programme is focused on people in their leisure time, and how much are we equipping people to be Christians out at work?” Almost all church activity is involved with the people who live and sleep near the church, not those who commute to work near the church; it all happens in people’s leisure time. Yet we may spend 42 hours a week at work, that’s 25% of our total time! And assuming we are sure God is happy with us being at work, we need to ask what He wants us to achieve out at work.

In his recent book, *Walk Across the Room*, Bill Hybels has a graph that shows that within 6 years of becoming a Christian most of us have no leisure time friends outside our church circles. Mark Greene of LICC points out, “whereas we fish in shallow puddles at home, we fish in deeply stocked lakes at work”. Inadequate though each of us feels, maybe we are the only voice of the Gospel where we work.

Here are the stories of two men who stand up for the Lord at work.

At the office

At Wessex Water’s Regional Operational Centre in Bath, the active Christian Fellowship is eager to share the Good News of Jesus with work colleagues. The office has about 550 staff and approximately 20 Christians. The Christians@work group has two sections. One has the aim of explaining the gospel: we use *Christianity Explored* as a resource. The course provides a thoughtful, structured, challenging and fun walk through Mark’s gospel with the aim of tackling the fundamental questions of ‘Who was Jesus?’ and ‘Why did he come?’. The other part of the group is aimed at those who are already Christians and seeks to provide good teaching and debate on life’s issues from a Christian perspective. We use the great pre-prepared resources from the TransformWork UK website, and ask local clergy to come in and speak on a topic of our choice. We recently ran a series of talks on apologetics issues such as ‘Why does

God allow suffering?’ and ‘The church is full of hypocrites!’. These encourage people to think about the bigger questions in life, with the hope that they will be interested in finding out about the answer to life through the next ‘Christianity Explored’ course.

We advertise on notice boards and on the company intranet site but in reality find that non-Christians generally only come along to anything as a result of a personal invitation. The advertising creates awareness, but unless we Christians actually develop relationships at work to a level where inviting people to hear the good news can be done, then the ‘outreach events’ are meaningless. We are often reminded and challenged that growing the kingdom is not through the application of formulas, but by our personal witness to our work colleagues through the relationships we have with them.

My local church is now great at supporting us with prayer and practical support such as speakers for our events. But it took several years to recognize that when we who fill pews on a Sunday go out into the world Monday to Friday, we need to be resourced and supported. What the church is developing is:

- Teaching men and women about work - target Bible teaching at every day work issues
- Interviewing ‘workers’ in church Sunday by Sunday, and pray for them
- Organising an early morning weekday prayer hot-line for especial work place issues of the day
- Church staff visiting members of the congregation at work
- Helping at ‘inreach’ and ‘outreach’ events at work eg speak at Alpha@Work
- Standing with workers facing opposition at work.

In the Royal Navy

Life as a Christian in the working environment of the Royal Navy is exciting, challenging and really not easy at all.

My recent experiences onboard a warship were not all good. I spent nearly half my time on there (about 4 years) not honouring God or serving Him properly. Although I knew I had a responsibility to accept my sin as my fault, the major contributing factor was a lack of consistent fellowship. Once another Christian joined my ship, we started having fellowship and things

turned around. The two of us plodded on for God as best we could for a year or so. Then a doctor who is a Christian joined the ship for the Caribbean deployment so now there were 3 of us. We had regular prayer times and Bible study. God is good! People came to faith. Through God’s grace the doctor brought a male Lieutenant to faith and they are now married! Another officer who was hovering on the edge of faith in Christ was brought to full faith, as was an engineer. We were all keen to keep up the momentum of this work, so through prayer and seeking God’s guidance, we started using the Alpha course onboard. God blessed this endeavour and saved 12 guys while we were on a deployment in the South Atlantic.

Life onboard a warship as a Christian is hard, but it is made easier by having other Christians with you. The impact of us meeting together for Bible study and prayer was amazing. It drew in others to want to know more about the Bible, and to ask for prayer. Fellowship is so important, but so is consistency in service to God, which is made easier through fellowship.

Many of us sailors find our churches have no clue about how to support us on active duty military missions - not surprisingly. We need good support while we are away, and our families need lots of TLC too as things always go wrong at home very soon after we leave. Fortunately my church has plenty of Naval families so they understand the loneliness of long deployments. Despite being thousands of miles away from my local church, they prayed, wrote occasional letters, sent me Christian tapes and CDs; still better if I can be sent the weekly bulletin and a weekly sermon as that also keeps me rooted in Christ and my local church. Every bit of help is great, but there’s no substitute to actual fellowship at the place where you work!

So whether you are a church leader or someone out in the Wild West of Work, then

1. Engage your church in the world of work for your congregation
2. Pray for everyone at work
3. Resource them: heaps of ideas at www.transformworkuk.org
4. Interview them in church
5. Offer practical, realistic support for their fellowship at work
6. Encourage them to reach out to everyone who is not yet a believer at work.

