

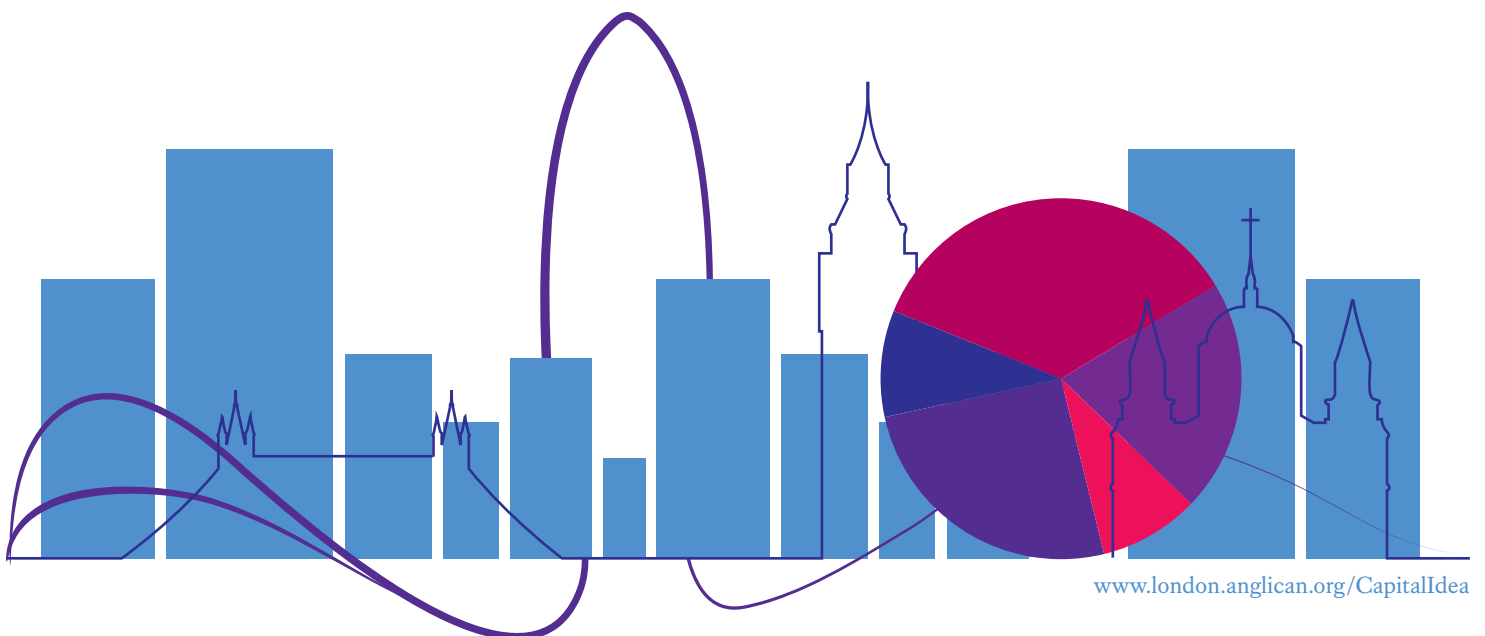
ANOTHER CAPITAL IDEA

A Report For The Diocese Of London

CHURCH GROWTH IN
THE DIOCESE OF LONDON
2003–2010

*Statistics, Patterns,
Causes & Future Strategies*

AUTHORS
Bob Jackson & Alan Piggot



Foreword from the Bishop of London

The Senior Staff and I asked Bob Jackson to revisit his helpful piece of research, *A Capital Idea*. This highlighted the success – on some measures – of the Church of England in our part of London. Bob's other work shows that this picture of the Diocese of London and growth is now far from unique within the Church of England.

There is a saying that you do not fatten a cow by weighing it. Research does not do mission for us. However, it is crucial to confront the situation as it is – not as we might like it to be – and set strategy in the light of that. This is timely as we draw towards the close of our current London Challenge programme and begin to look to the next five years. I am very grateful for the diligence and insight of Bob Jackson and Alan Piggot in drawing out and analysing the data, complemented by rich case studies of individual churches across the capital.

The report helps us to understand better our activities, and will aid us – both the Diocesan Senior Staff team and for you in your local situation – in deciding how to most effectively use our resources and honour Christ in London.

Many features of the report stand out: though our electoral rolls continue to grow, we have also seen a change in the pattern of attendance; it appears that the faithful are attending less frequently. The demographic and environmental influences in which we operate present particular challenges and opportunities for our shared endeavour in the Gospel.

The report also highlights some of the important, practical things we undertake as the Church: our ministry to children, how we welcome people and how interregna are managed.

The heartbeat of the Church is the local community gathered at prayer. The primary responsibility for responding to Bob's suggestions is at parish level. As you know we are deliberately light on top-down initiatives – the Diocese does not grow through central diktat. However my senior team and I are reflecting on our responsibility to build on Bob's work in the way in which we support you.

Another Capital Idea gives us encouragement that our work here for Christ is generating good fruit among the people of London. It also demonstrates that our work is far from complete. I am challenged by that; I hope you will be likewise.

I therefore whole-heartedly commend *Another Capital Idea* to you and look forward to shaping the next London Challenge with you.



Richard Longin

ANOTHER CAPITAL IDEA

Church Growth in the Diocese of London 2003-2010

Statistics, Patterns, Causes and Future Strategies

Authors

The Ven Bob Jackson, Church Growth Consultant

The Revd Dr Alan Piggot, Consultant Mission Researcher

Contents		Page
	Executive summary	4
Part 1	Background	6
Part 2	Has there been numerical growth since 2003?	8
Part 3	What are the patterns of growth and change?	24
Part 4	What can be done to encourage growth?	40
Part 5	Church visits	65
	St Paul Shadwell	65
	St Paul Hammersmith	68
	St Saviour Sunbury	70
	St Ann Tottenham	73
	St Michael Camden Town	75
	St Gabriel Cricklewood	78
	St Paul Ealing	81
	St John Southall	83
	St Nicholas Hayes	85
	St Martin Ruislip	87
Appendix A	List of recommendations arising from the report	90
Appendix B	Leicester Diocese 'Statistics for Mission' Form	95
Appendix C	Table of fast-growing parishes with a high proportion of children	99

Executive summary

The report A Capital Idea (2003) examined the exceptional growth of church membership and attendance in the Diocese of London, and suggested how it might continue. This report updates the progress and patterns of growth up to 2010, and makes further suggestions for the future growth and flourishing of the churches.

Has church growth continued since 2003?

The answer depends on which measure you look at. The Electoral Roll (membership) measure has continued to rise strongly at around 2.5% a year. However, the 'Usual Sunday' attendance measure grew very little, peaking in 2007. In 2009 it was 2% less than in 2007. The 'October Count' measure (including weekday attendance) peaked in 2006, with 2009 4% lower, back down to the 2003 level.

So the attendance measures have begun to fall slightly while the membership measure continues to grow. It is likely that the Electoral Roll measure has exaggerated the growth in genuine affiliation; that the attendance measures may be missing some real growth; and that committed people are coming to church less often.

What are the main patterns of growth and decline?

1. Inner London churches continue to show a much better growth trend than outer London churches.
2. The small and very large churches have continued to grow but those with a Usual Sunday Attendance of between 125 and 900 have, on average, been shrinking.
3. Churches with a large percentage of children, especially those with well-resourced strategies for children's ministry, have grown much better than the average.
4. Churches with an incumbent in place continue to grow, but there have been sharp falls in attendance for those churches experiencing vacancies of over six months.
5. Continuing congregations have, overall, been shrinking but there has been a lot of compensating growth through the planting of new congregations and through transplanting from large churches to struggling ones.

What are the forces of decline and how can they be combated?

1. **Declining frequency of attendance.** This is partly inevitable but can be combated with stronger service patterns that offer weekly worship to all, and weekday options to those busy at weekends.
2. **Long vacancies.** Sometimes difficult situations or failure to appoint first time round make lengthy vacancies inevitable, but some vacancies can be shortened through

organisational change, and many can be improved missionally through lay leadership training and preparation.

3. **Rapid turnover and poor welcome.** Fluid populations can be turned from a problem for church growth into an opportunity through good welcome and integration of newcomers plus a proper referral system.
4. **Glass ceilings.** Churches can be guided to work together to find ways round the size-related barriers to growth that kick in at around a Usual Sunday Attendance of 125.
5. **Aimlessness and disconnectedness.** The Mission Action Plan (MAP) process should keep on renewing vision and strategy, while strong networking is needed to equip churches with the knowledge, motivation and vision for growth.
6. **Fossilisation.** All churches should review their service patterns and be ready to plant new congregations and fresh expressions, especially on weekdays. Transplanting should move up a gear from opportunism to strategy.

Is future church growth possible?

The favourable social and cultural climate, combined with the enormous strengths of London Diocese, mean that major future growth will come naturally providing that these countervailing decline forces are kept in check.

I will build my church and the powers of death will not prevail against it.

Part 1

Background

The report *A Capital Idea* (2003) attempted to understand and explain church growth in the Diocese of London since the early 1990s. Such growth was unique among Church of England dioceses and it was thought there might be lessons to be learned for the rest of the church as well as for stimulating future growth in London.

A Capital Idea followed a three-pronged approach attempting to answer three questions:

Three approaches:

1. Statistical and data base examination
2. Church visits
3. Conversations with diocesan leaders for overviews

Three questions:

1. Has there been overall church growth?
2. What are the patterns and sources of church growth and decline?
3. How might growth be further stimulated?

The report found that there had indeed been significant growth, identified various patterns and sources of it, and made a number of suggestions. Although initially made for the leadership of the diocese, the findings were of some interest and use to individual churches and the report has remained in the public domain on the Diocese of London website ever since.

The current report is called *Another Capital Idea* because it essentially repeats the processes of the first report and attempts to answer the same three questions in relation to the period since 2003. Once more, the report is made for the bishops and senior management of the Diocese of London but in the hope that at least the bulk of it might helpfully be made public. The report might also be of interest to other dioceses.

Six church visits were made in early 2003 for *A Capital Idea*. Five of these churches plus five new ones were visited in early 2011 for *Another Capital Idea*. Summaries of the stories of these churches since 2003 have been agreed with the incumbents and are included as appendices to this report. Five bishops and archdeacons have also been interviewed individually in order to help piece the story together and distil lessons for the future. Much work has also been done to develop the database into a more user-friendly form in the spirit of providing statistics to inform the mission of the church.

The suggestions scattered through the report are couched in phrases directed at an undefined 'diocese'. This is because the report was commissioned by the diocese centrally. However, many of the implications are best picked up locally by churches, deaneries and

clergy. So it is hoped that many will read the report and act upon those suggestions that seem, under God, to be most relevant to them.

Part 2

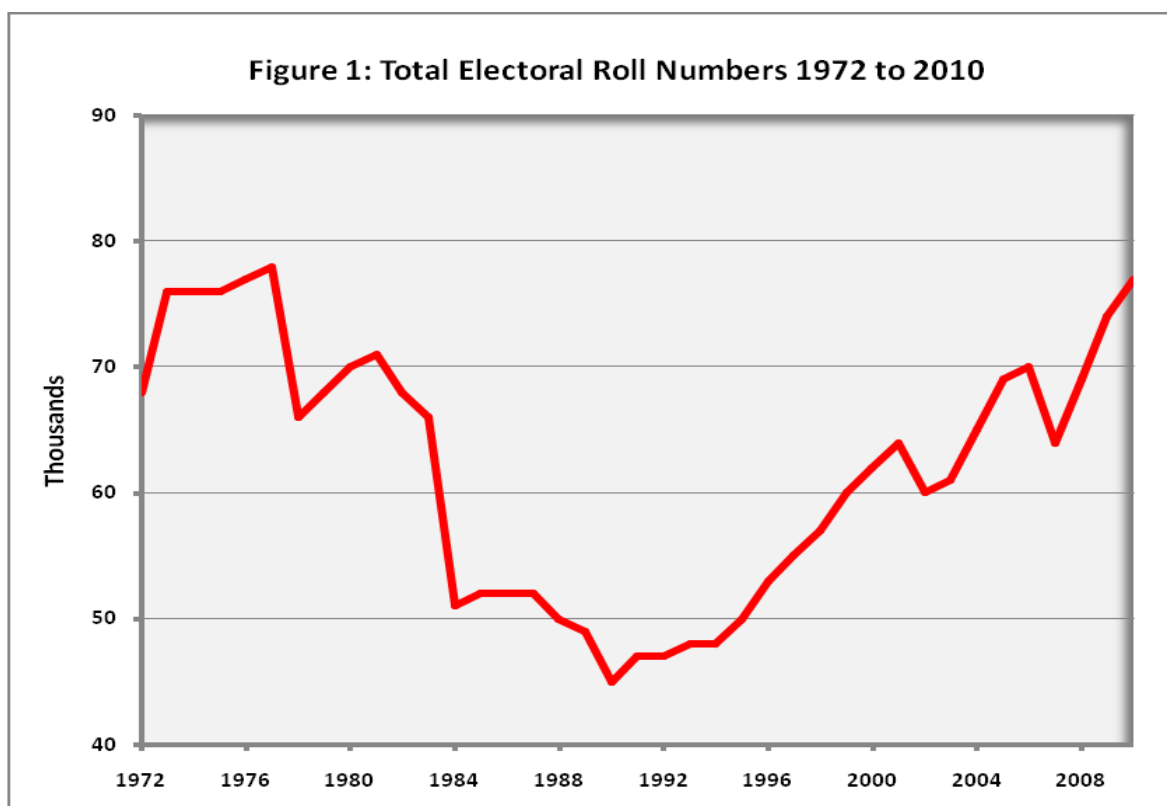
Has there been numerical growth since 2003?

The answer to this question depends on the measure that is used.

2-1 Electoral Roll (ER)

The Electoral Roll can go up either because there are more church members or because the church makes a greater effort to persuade those who already attend to join the roll. Until a re-signing year it can also go up simply because the names of people who have left the church, or only joined the roll to get married in it, remain on the roll. As the roll is restarted only every six years (except in 2007, five years after 2002) it tends to rise most years then fall sharply in the re-signing year. Growing Electoral Rolls, therefore, have to be interpreted carefully.

Figure 1 below shows the long-term trend of ER numbers since 1972, showing the turnaround after 1990. Although the 2010 figure has not yet been published by the Church of England, we have estimated it from the diocesan database. The ER clearly continues to grow strongly.



The official ER figures compiled by the National Church include the Electoral Rolls of cathedrals. They also include one or two glitches, for example, a figure of 63,800 ER for 2006, whereas the much more believable figure, extrapolated from the diocesan database, is around 70,000. This figure is used in the graph above.

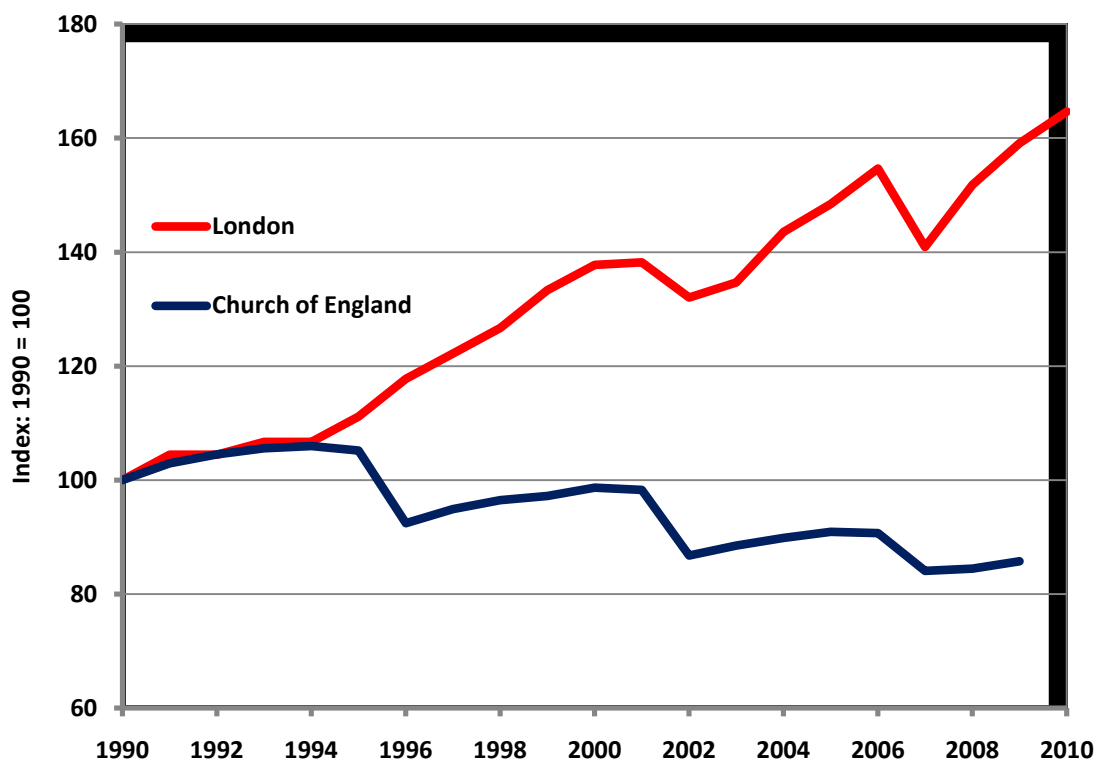
For assessing the ER growth from 2003 to 2010 we have looked afresh at the database, using interpolation to fill in the gaps (ie if ER is not given for a church for one year the average is taken of the year before and the year after. If there is a gap in the start or end year, the nearest year's figure is used). The figures below are slightly lower than the ones on the Church of England's website because they do not include cathedrals. They are also slightly different and hopefully more accurate owing to the interpolation method and the ironing out of a number of detailed statistical issues.

Table 1: Electoral Roll Numbers 2001 to 2010

Year	Total Electoral Roll	Annual Change	Notes
2001	62,600		
2002	59,400	-3,200	Re-signing Year
2003	60,600	+1,200	
2004	64,600	+4,000	
2005	66,800	+2,200	
2006	69,600	+2,800	
2007	63,400	-6,200	Re-signing Year
2008	68,300	+4,900	
2009	70,900	+2,600	2003 - 2010
2010	74,100	+3,200	+13,500 (22%)

However, 2010 is two years further on in the cycle than is 2003. The re-signing drop in 2007 was 6,200, thus requiring an annual increase of around 1,550 in the other years just to stand still. If there is a similar drop in 2013 then around 3,100 of the growth in 2009 and 2010 is required simply to stand still. So the 'real' increase from 2003 to 2010 may be around 10,400, or 17%. Over a seven-year period this averages out at around 2.5% a year. However, ER growth appears to have accelerated through the period, with growth since 2007 averaging out at 3% a year. As shown in Figure 2 below, this continues to be a much better trend than in the Church of England as a whole.

Figure 2: Electoral Roll Numbers 1990 to 2010 - London of C of E



The 'real' increase during the previous seven-year period 1996-2003 was around 13%, indicating an average annual rise of around 2%.

So, ER growth has continued in the last seven years, and has slightly increased in its rate from 2% to 2.5% a year with the most recent years seeing growth of 3%.

2-2 Are the Electoral Roll statistics trustworthy?

There are few gaps in the record and there is little doubt that these numbers represent the sum of the genuine electoral rolls. The main question relates to the causes of ER growth and decline, for adherents have no necessity to join the roll, and members of the roll do not need to attend or belong meaningfully to the church community.

The church visits suggest that part of the ER growth is the result of some churches becoming more diligent in signing their people up. St Paul Ealing generated a very large increase in its roll (from 359 in 2003 to 784 in 2009) simply for this reason. Due to more careful compilation, St Gabriel Cricklewood recorded an increase in its ER 2003-2009 from 216 to 255 even though Usual Sunday Attendance dropped from 251 to 199. In 2008 St Paul Hammersmith took a decision, now that they had become well established as a church

transplant, to get people on the ER in a systematic rather than haphazard way. This is mainly why their roll has gone up from 524 to 643 while attendance has stayed around the same. We cannot generalise from just three churches, but their ER growth from better compilation accounts for around half the overall growth in ER among the ten churches visited. Other churches may have become more diligent at removing old names, or else less diligent at adding new ones, so we cannot know for certain that ER growth overall is partly caused by fuller compilation, but the local church evidence certainly suggests this.

It is nearly twenty years since ER ceased to be a factor in Common Fund calculations and churches were urged to keep rolls up to date simply for mission purposes as the preferred measure of the size of the diocese. However, the Church of England always did have the reaction time of a brontosaurus, and it looks as though ER numbers may still, in part, be responding to this change. So the real number of adherents has probably not grown as fast as the headline rate.

However accurate the ER numbers are, 'membership' will always be a problematic concept in Anglican churches, which tend to blend into the local community with fluid boundaries rather than be a clearly defined group of members separate from it. A further point is that, in London, the local community itself may be demographically fluid. For example: across the diocese, total population is estimated to have risen from 3.49 million in 2003 to 3.68 million in 2009 – an increase of more than 5%. This is mainly due to 'natural change' (live births less deaths) rather than to net migration. However, London also has significantly above-average flows of arrivals and leavers which, while cancelling each other out overall, can heavily affect individual neighbourhoods. More research is needed to measure the impact of such movements (if any) on local church membership, especially given that there is some anecdotal and other evidence linking denominational church growth with the expansion of particular ethnic communities.

The overall conclusion on membership is that not all of the growth in ER may result from a genuine increase in church community size. But we cannot be sure of exactly what proportion is genuine. It is also theoretically possible that a greater number of recent adherents had not yet joined the roll in 2010 than in 2003, so leading to an underestimate of ER growth. We have simply found no examples of this.

2-3 Usual Sunday Attendance (USuA)

This is the traditional attendance measure. Churches are asked to estimate attendance of adults and children on an average 'usual' Sunday when nothing special is happening. It therefore omits festivals, baptisms and other special services as well as weekday attendance. At the time of writing the latest year for which attendance data exists is 2009. As with the ER figures, we have checked anomalies and interpolated for non-returns to produce totals that are as accurate as possible. Again, they omit cathedrals. The diocesan totals are:

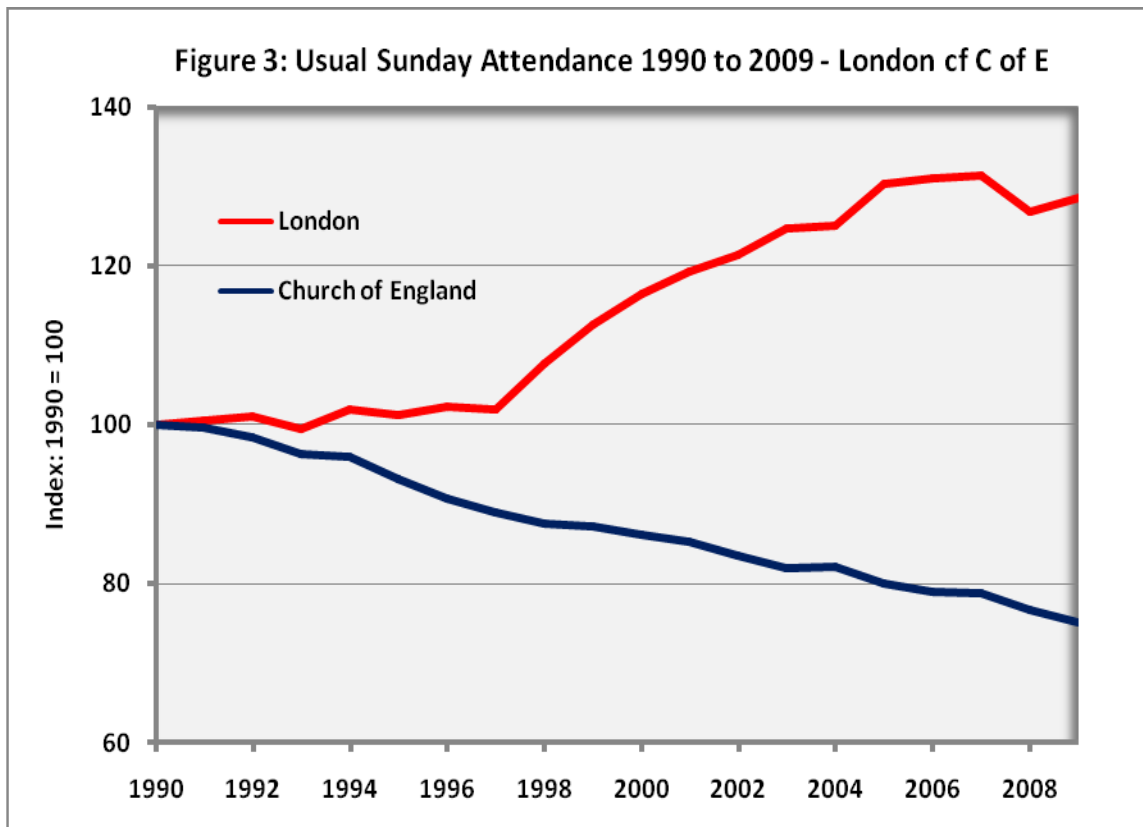
Table 2: Usual Sunday Attendance 2001 to 2009

Year	Adults	Children	Total	Annual Change
2001	41,500	10,500	52,000	
2002	42,200	10,600	52,800	+ 800
2003	43,400	10,900	54,300	+1,500
2004	43,500	11,000	54,500	+ 200
2005	45,500	11,200	56,700	+2,200
2006	46,100	11,000	57,100	+ 400
2007	46,300	10,900	57,200	+ 100
2008	44,200	11,000	55,200	- 2,000
2009	45,300	10,700	56,000	+ 800

From 2003 to 2007 adult USuA continued to rise, by a total of 2,900 (7%) over four years, an average of around 1.7% a year. Child USuA remained static. However, in 2008 adult USuA dropped by 2,100 (4.5%), recovering around half of that loss in 2009. Whether the growth trend has been stopped or merely interrupted is too early to tell – the 2010 figures should give a good guide to this. Possibly the recession had an impact on attendance, although 2008 was a very good year for ER growth. But also there were some spectacular adult USuA drops reported by a handful of large churches. Just three churches were responsible for 42% of the 2008 drop in reported adult USuA, and eleven churches for 70%. So it is likely that at least some of the drop in 2008 was due to special factors, perhaps including reporting errors.

Overall, we can say that adult USuA in 2009 was 1,900 (4.4%) higher than in 2003, but child USuA was 200 (1.8%) lower. This growth is much less than with ER, and it seemed to come to an end in 2008.

This is, of course, still a far better trend than the Church of England as a whole, as shown in Figure 3 below.



2-4 October Count

Introduced in 2001 this attendance measure asks churches to count everyone attending services on Sundays and weekdays for four weeks in October. The measure is subject to some volatility depending on half term, harvests and weather and one-off school events.

There was not time in this exercise to revisit the data and make the corrections and interpolations made in the cases of ER and USuA. So the figures used below are the official figures produced nationally, and do include cathedrals. One major correction has, however, been made to the published statistics in the earlier years for one major church misread the guidance notes and included events that were not church services. These have now been removed.

Recommendation:

Although the October Count numbers have not been checked, corrected and interpolated for this report simply due to lack of time, it is still important that this be done. The October Count is now the preferred measure of attendance for the national church and has the advantages over USuA of being an actual count and including weekday attendance (A.1).

The figures in Table 3 below refer to the average of the four weeks. Adult Sunday attendance averaged 49,200 in 2003 and 49,900 in 2009, an increase of only 700, or 1%. Attendance peaked at 51,200 in 2007, with slight falls in both 2008 and 2009.

Child Sunday attendance was 11,200 in 2003 and 10,700 in 2009, a drop of 500.

Overall, Sunday church attendance in October 2009 was almost exactly the same as it was in October 2003.

Across the country as a whole there has been an increase in weekday attendance that has partially compensated for declining Sunday attendance. However, weekday church attendance of adults in London fell from 11,700 in 2003 to 11,300 in 2009, a fall of 2,400, or 3%. This compares with a 5% increase in the rest of the country.

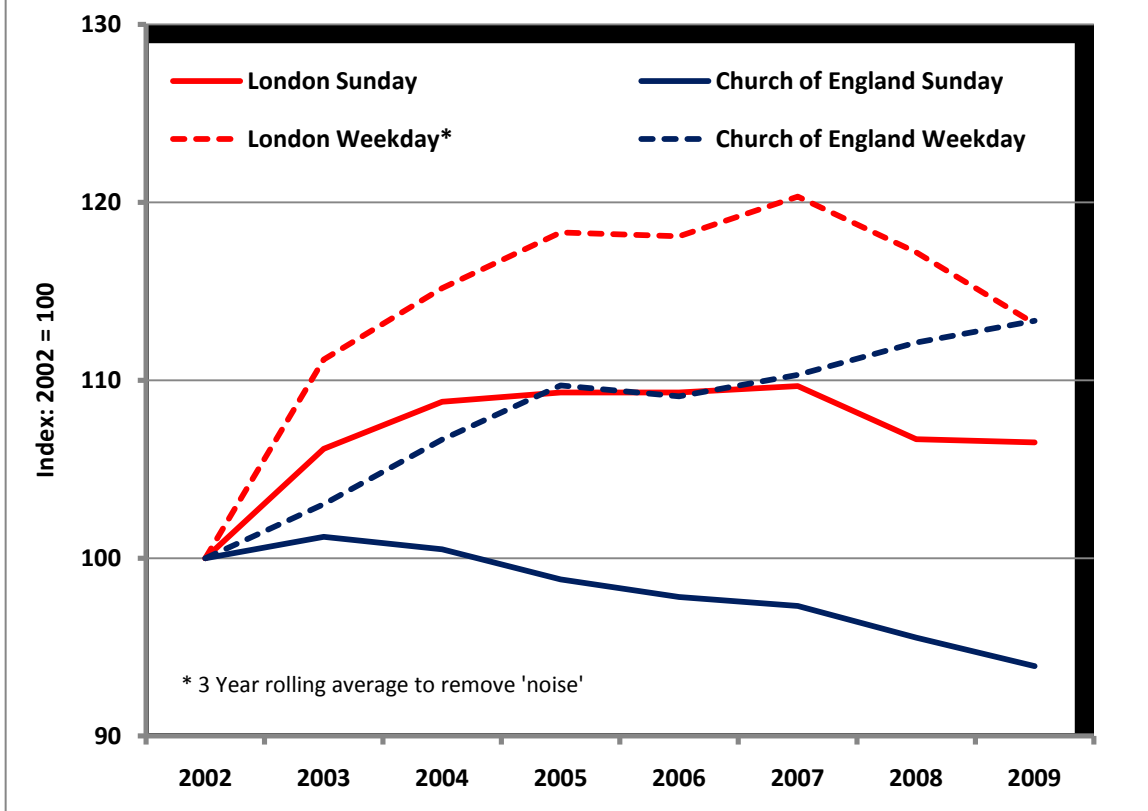
Weekday church attendance of children is heavily influenced by one-off school services. For what it is worth, however, child weekday attendance in London was 5,200 in 2003 and 5,600 in 2009.

Table 3: Average Weekly Attendance ('The October Count') 2001 to 2009

Year	Adult Sunday	<16 Sunday	Adult Weekday	<16 Weekday	Total
2001	46,000	11,000	8,500	4,000	69,500
2002	46,700	10,200	9,600	5,800	72,300
2003	49,200	11,200	11,700	5,200	77,300
2004	50,000	11,900	11,600	5,900	79,400
2005	50,700	11,500	11,300	5,900	79,400
2006	51,000	11,200	11,900	6,400	80,500
2007	51,200	11,200	12,100	5,300	79,800
2008	49,600	11,100	11,800	6,400	78,900
2009	49,900	10,700	11,300	5,600	77,500

Overall, therefore, attendance in October rose in the early years of the decade, was steady in the middle years and has fallen slightly for each of the last three recorded years – 2007, 2008 and 2009. This applies both to Sunday and weekday attendance, whereas the national picture was for Sunday attendance to continue to fall and weekday attendance to continue to grow. Figure 4 below refers.

Figure 4: Average Weekly Attendance 2002 to 2009 - London cf C of E



2-5 Are the attendance statistics trustworthy?

A number of factors suggest a degree of caution:

1. Not every church fills in a form every year, so estimates have to be made for non-returns.
2. Natural volatility means it is important to look at a run of years, not placing too much emphasis on just one year's total.
3. Weekday attendances are affected by one-off school services, which can vary greatly from year to year.
4. It is clear that a number of churches do not make accurate assessments each year. This can be seen both from the very round numbers put in by some churches and also from anecdotal evidence. Two of the ten surveyed churches demonstrated that the 2009 USuA totals held on the diocesan database greatly underestimated actual attendance. At one church it looked as though the wardens for some years had omitted one whole congregation from the total. All-age USuA attendance in 2009 was actually around 220, compared with 172 given on the form.

5. It is clear from visits to churches that some were still reluctant to fill in the full number of attendees for fear of pressure being put on them at 'Common Fund' meetings to pay more to the diocese.
6. Some churches with new fresh expression style services (mainly on weekdays) are not yet including these in their 'Statistics for Mission' forms. This is for a mix of reasons – fear of Common Fund, not entering them in the service register as they do not happen in church, uncertainty about whether they classify as 'church' or not, fear that they might not last very long, or simple habit.
7. A small number of newly opened or reopened churches (mainly transplants in the Stepney area) have been missed off the database altogether. It is intended to put this right for 2010.

In one church visited, the warden had filled in a figure of '400' for adult USuA in 2009 – a large drop over 2008. The vicar, however, had independently conducted an accurate count from the service register for his annual report, and his figure was 525. In addition, weekday attendance in October was given as 73 adults and 40 children. But a count up of the four weekday worship events on the ground added up to about 112 adults and 135 children – it would seem that one or two of the services had been omitted on the form.

These factors together suggest that the attendance measures are probably hiding some church growth. However, the possible extent of this is not enough to allow for complacency. If there has been overall attendance growth in recent years, it has probably been modest and the official statistics have not succeeded in finding it.

Recommendation:

Renewed effort should be made to motivate wardens and clergy to get accurate figures (including all services and fresh expressions) on to the 'Statistics for Mission' form and also to ensure that church size measures are not used as levers for arguments in Common Fund discussions (A.2).

On-line systems of data collection currently being introduced both by the diocese and (as a pilot study) by the National Church should potentially make the annual statistical returns round quicker and easier. But they will require to be carefully monitored so that processes are not duplicated, and the benefits of real-time data capture can be exploited.

Recommendations:

The introduction of on-line data-collection systems should be monitored and reviewed so that the way forward is mapped, communicated and agreed on by all parties concerned (A.3).

Consideration should be given to separating off the October Count, Easter and Christmas questions on attendance, and sending them out at the end of December,

in advance of the remaining questions, which relate primarily to church officers and finance (A.4).

2-6 Can we reconcile growing membership with stagnant attendance?

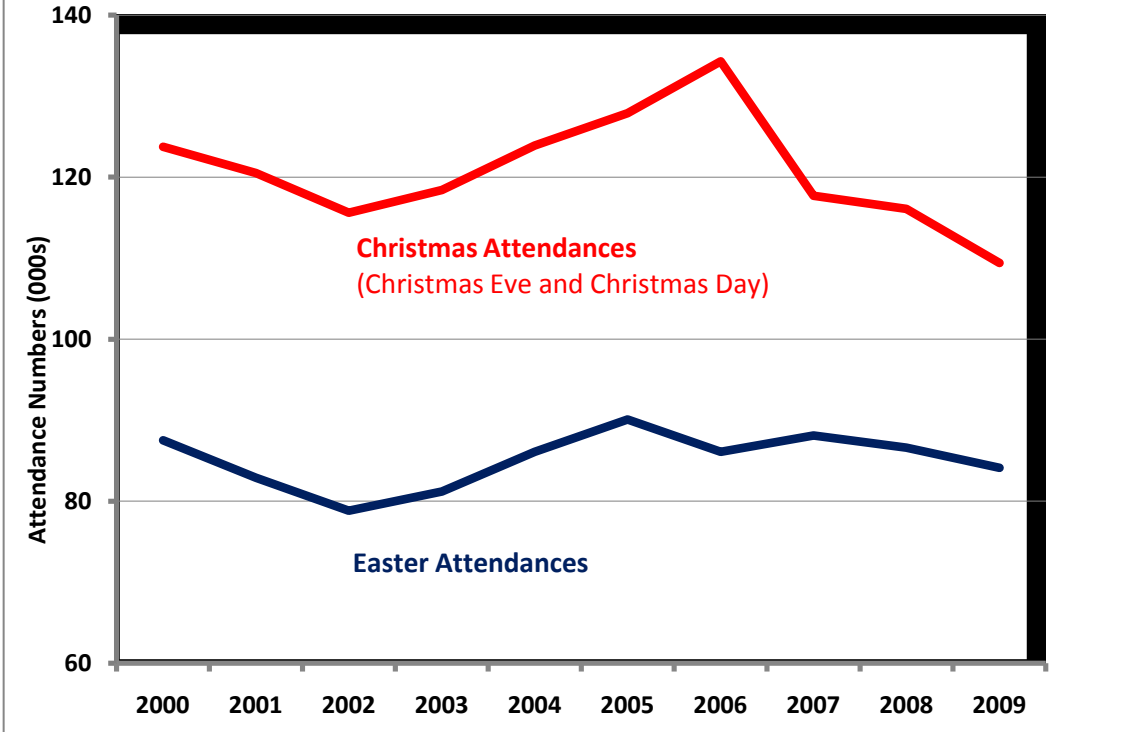
The large gap between growing 'membership' and static or even declining 'attendance' may be explained in part by the possibility that the ER has exaggerated membership growth while USuA and October Counts have been too pessimistic with the attendance trend.

It is likely that the remaining gap is due to declining attendance frequency. Leaders in every church visited in this study thought that attendance frequency was still coming down. For example, when St Paul Hammersmith first began as a transplant from Holy Trinity Brompton, the level of excitement and commitment in the pioneer days meant that most people attended more or less every week. Now that the church has become established, and the times are more ordinary, members are attending on average about three weeks in five. Instead of requiring perhaps around 120 members for every 100 average weekly attendance in 2003, this church now requires 160.

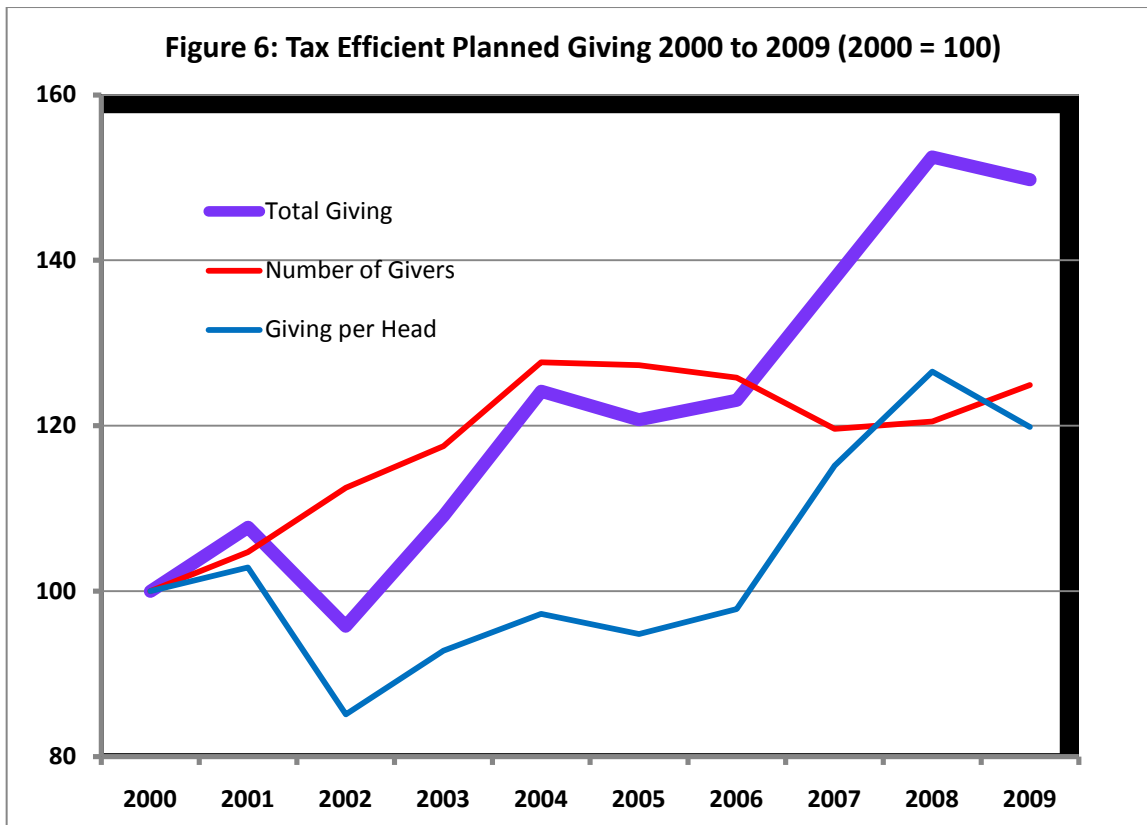
2-7 What about other indicators?

Other indicators of changes to the size of the church are also worth keeping an eye on. These include Easter and Christmas attendance, as shown in Figure 5 below. Attendance at major festivals bears some relation to broader movements in membership and attendance. For instance: numbers at Easter services rose by between 6 and 7% from 2002 to 2009, in line with reported rises in USuA and October Count numbers over the same period, and in ER numbers between the re-signing years 2003 and 2007. But attendances at major festivals also have their own dynamic, especially at Christmas, which may attract exceptionally large numbers of occasional worshippers, and where factors such as the weather and the day of the week come into play. London Christmas attendance numbers recently peaked in 2005 and 2006, when Christmas Day fell on Sunday and Monday respectively, thus not 'competing' with services on the First Sunday of Christmas.

Figure 5: Christmas and Easter Attendances 2000 to 2009



There are also a range of indicators which link numerical growth to churches' financial health and levels of giving. In recent years, the National Church has been tracking the number of tax efficient planned givers, as a proxy for core committed members who financially support the church. In London, this has risen from 21,000 in 2000 to 26,300 in 2009. But, as Figure 6 below suggests, *numbers* are only half the story. The *average amount given by each subscriber* has also risen significantly, especially in the latter part of the decade, when growth in the number of givers effectively stalled. The overall picture on tax efficient planned giving, which is up 50% over the decade, fits better with the conclusion drawn from attendance data that numerical growth has tailed off in recent years, as opposed to the conclusion from ER data that it is still rising fast.



Recommendation:

Attendance and other measures should be looked at alongside ER when trying to measure church growth and decline. The October Count, Usual Sunday Attendance, Easter and Christmas attendance, and the number of tax efficient planned givers are all worth noting (A.5).

2-8 Is there a better way of measuring ‘church’?

Each of the indicators discussed measures one aspect of church presence or activity, but no single measure is sufficient to serve as an overall index of ‘performance’ or ‘health’. The ‘size’ of a church cannot simply be equated with attendance at certain designated events, nor by amounts of planned giving, nor by membership of an Electoral Roll (denied to children and inaccessible to some members of plants and fresh expressions). Arguably, the best indicator is the number of people who count as part of each church community, including children, the housebound, and those who so far are on the margins. But we have to accept that at present we have no measure which keeps tracks of all such people on a consistent and comprehensive basis. Some churches keep up to date ‘prayer lists’ of all those who are accepted into an individual church family. Many churches might benefit from setting up and maintaining an all-age ‘adherence’ or ‘membership’ list, not only for pastoral and prayer reasons but also to keep abreast of developments within the wider community.

Following on from this, a number of dioceses have begun to look more closely at how church communities continually evolve through individual 'joiners and leavers'. In 2009, the Diocese of Leicester asked its parishes to record, for the previous year, how many people joined and left in the following broad categories: Joining: 'started churchgoing for first time', 're-started churchgoing after a gap', 'moved house' and 'transferred from another local church'. Leaving: 'died', 'moved house', 'transferred to another local church' and 'no longer attending a church'. Leicester also asked for a full attendance record rather than just a USuA estimate. A copy of their 'Statistics for Mission' proforma is at Appendix B of this report.

Recommendation:

The 'leavers and joiners' question pioneered by Leicester and being picked up by one or two other dioceses should be considered as a way of measuring changes in the size of individual church communities and charting the flows of people in and out (A.6).

Elsewhere, a number of parishes have conducted an eight- or ten-week census in order to compile a full list of those who come to church on an occasional basis, and to ascertain their patterns of attendance. Such an initiative, together with those suggested above, could usefully supplement the established, nationally-employed attendance and membership measures to ascertain the effective size of church communities at the individual and local level.

Recommendation:

A range of church 'prayer lists' or 'membership lists' should be sought and examined as possible templates for fresh ways of measuring church at the local and community level. A cross section of churches, or a single deanery, should be asked to conduct a two-month census to check patterns and frequency of attendance, and establish a relationship between attendance, ER membership and the total size of the church community (A.7).

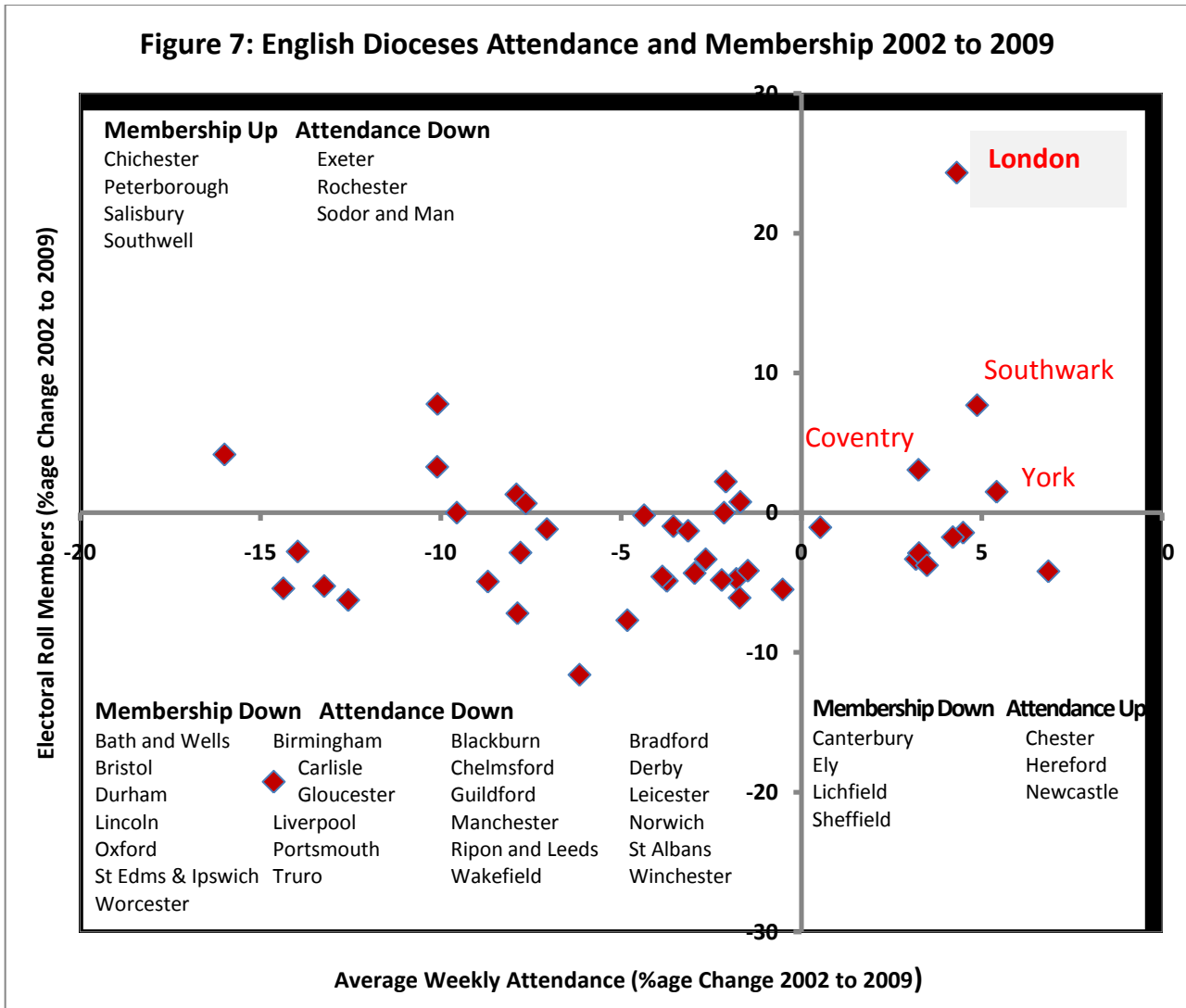
2-9 Are there other dioceses like London?

Between 1990 and 2002, London was the only English diocese reporting ER growth (and significant growth at that). Between 1993 and 2003, it was one of only two dioceses reporting growth in Usual Sunday Attendance, the other being Leicester (up less than 1%, compared with London – up 7% over the decade).

Figure 7 shows the picture since then to 2009 – the latest year for which figures are available for all English dioceses. It shows that on both membership and attendance measures, growth in London – if no longer unique – is still impressive. London is one of only four dioceses in which attendance *and* membership have been growing over the

period. Of the 43 English dioceses, 25 have seen a decline in both measures. And London still maintains a comfortable lead over all other dioceses in terms of ER growth.

Figure 7: English Dioceses Attendance and Membership 2002 to 2009

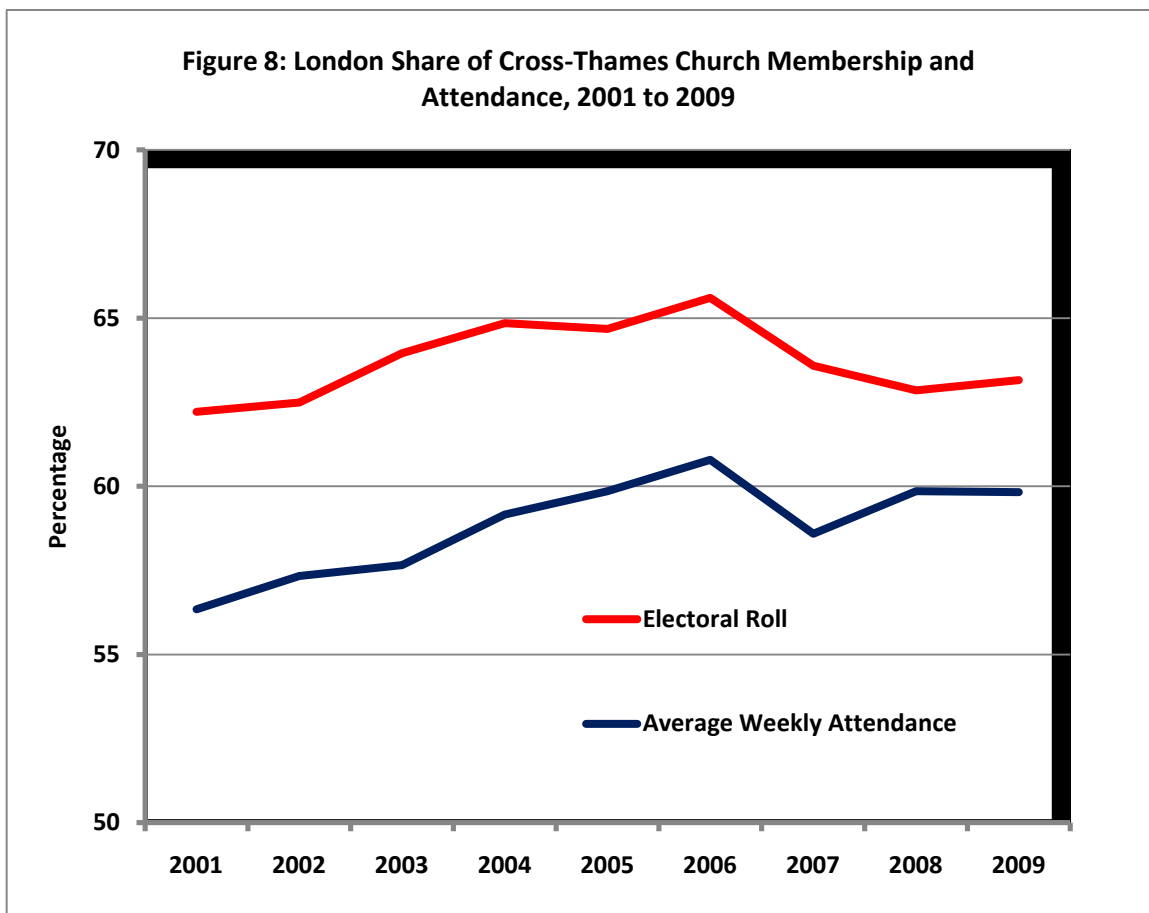


Arguably the most similar diocese to London is Southwark. Apart from the fact that they lie next door to each other on opposite sides of the Thames:

- they both have high (urban) population densities and relatively few but populous parishes, making them the only two English dioceses with more full-time stipendiary clergy than there are parishes;
- they have similar profiles in terms of socio-economic deprivation, both having some of the most and least deprived neighbourhoods in the country;

- they have roughly similar distributions of small and large church congregations: 19% of London’s churches and 23% of Southwark’s accounted for half the Usual Sunday Attendance in their respective diocese;
- they would both appear still to be growing, with weekly attendance up between 4% and 5% from 2002 to 2009, although London’s ER growth over the period is three times that of Southwark’s.

By way of comparison; in 1990, 49% of all Electoral Roll members across the two dioceses – taken as a whole – came from London (ie Southwark’s ER total was greater than London’s). By 2001, reflecting London’s relatively stronger ER growth rate during the 1990s, this proportion had risen to 62%. As shown in Figure 8 below, London’s proportion in terms both of membership and attendance continued to rise until around 2006. From 2008, the two dioceses’ relative shares of attendance and membership appear to have stabilised, suggesting that they are now growing (or declining!) at roughly the same rate. It will be instructive to track whether this relationship continues.



2-10 The overall picture

Whether the Diocese of London is still showing exceptional growth or not seems entirely to depend on which measure of size is adopted. There has continued to be significant and exceptional growth in Electoral Rolls, but not in attendance. The main explanations for this are that church members are attending less often, Electoral Rolls are still catching up with reality, and the official statistics may be missing some attendance growth.

Part 3

What are the patterns of growth and change?

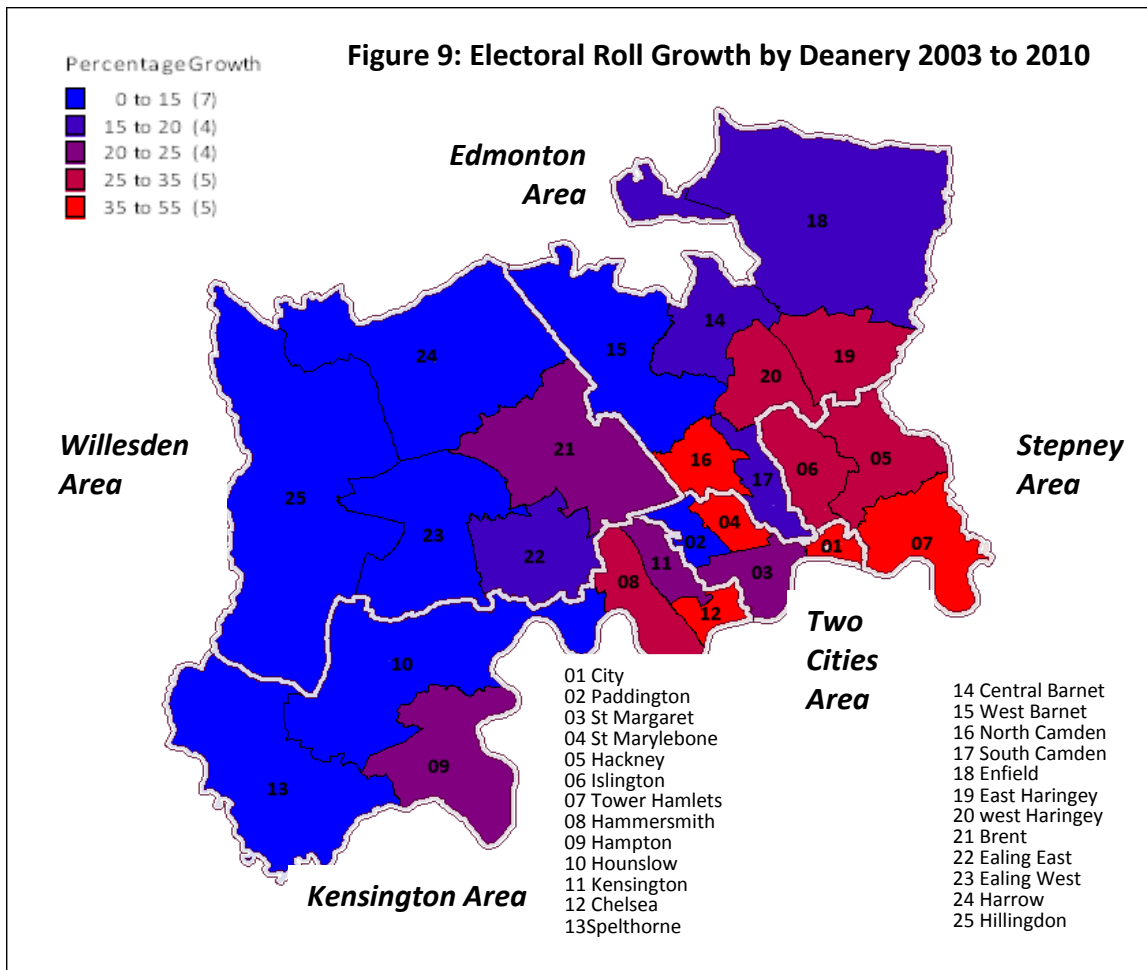
3-1 Geographical

Table 4 below shows ER change from 2003 to 2010 in each of the five Episcopal Areas into which the Diocese of London is divided.

Table 4: 2003 to 2010 Increases in Electoral Roll Numbers by Episcopal Area

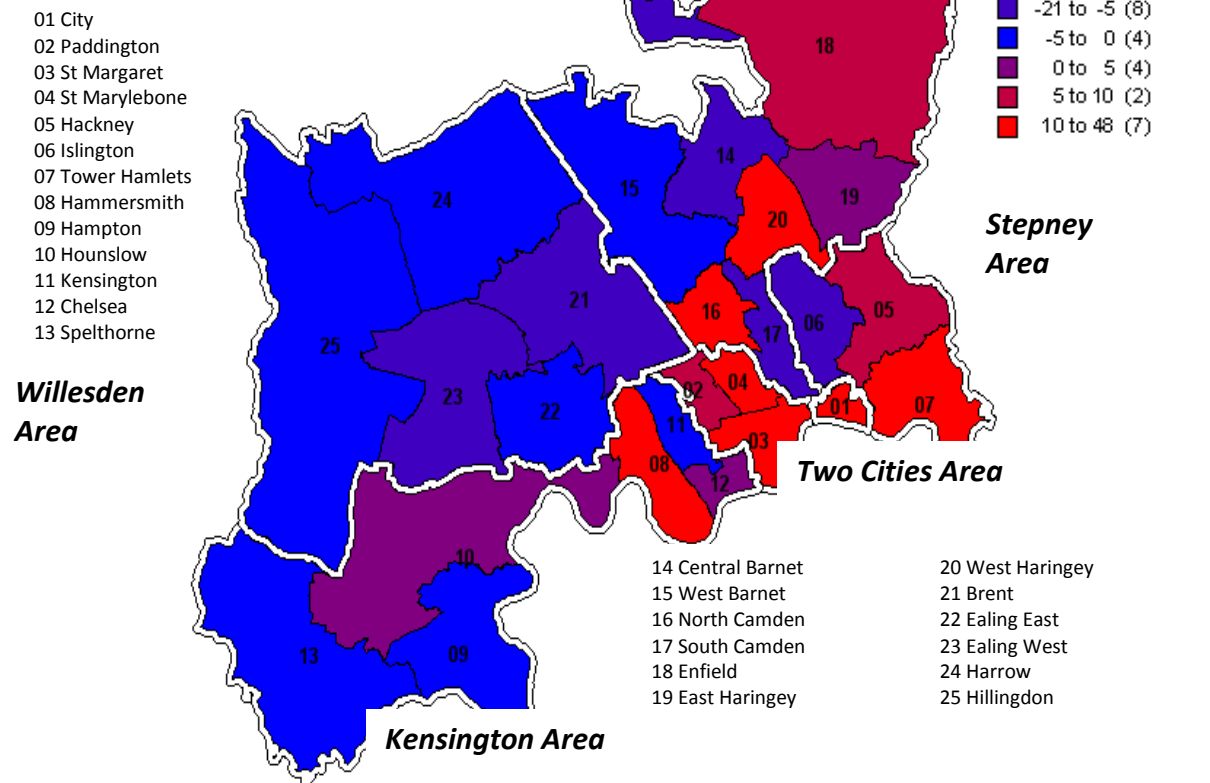
Area	Net Increase	Percentage Increase	1996 to 2003 (for comparison)
Two Cities	2,664	32%	20%
Stepney	1,854	30%	11%
Kensington	4,293	25%	21%
Edmonton	2,934	21%	6%
Willesden	1,716	11%	4%
DIOCESE	13,461	22%	12%

As 2010 is later in the re-signing sequence than 2003 a 'standstill' increase of around 4% would be needed. So, with a diocesan average of around 22%, there has clearly been a 'real' increase in all areas, even in Willesden. It is likely that Willesden's exceptionally small increase is due largely to sociological factors: Willesden's constituent deaneries are mainly suburban or 'Outer London' in character, and it is these deaneries which have experienced much slower rates of growth than the central, 'Inner London' deaneries. This is illustrated in Figure 9 below, which shows that, by and large, growth in ER numbers is concentrated in the smaller deaneries in the south and east of the diocese, but tails off in the larger deaneries to the north and the west. It is significant that the pattern appears to build on the trend previously reported in *A Capital Idea*, except that Stepney has now overtaken the Kensington Episcopal Areas in terms of percentage growth.



In respect of attendance figures, as opposed to membership, the same concentration of growth in the inner London deaneries is illustrated in Figure 10 below. It might be more accurate to say that it is the inner London deaneries which are growing in terms of attendance while those on the outer periphery are declining. What is also observable is that variation in attendance figures is spread over a far greater range than variation in ER membership over a comparable period: St Marylebone in the Two Cities Episcopal Area saw attendance rise by 48% from 2003 to 2010 while attendance in the West Barnet deanery fell by 21%. However, these percentages are heavily influenced by significant year-on-year swings in attendance numbers, so that the picture from 2002 to 2009, for example, would look rather different from that shown in Figure 9 – not enough, however, to challenge the basic conclusion that it is the smaller, Inner City deaneries that are growing while the outer, suburban deaneries are static or in decline.

Figure 10: Usual Sunday Attendance Growth by Deanery 2003 to 2009



3-2 Church size

Table 5 below shows Electoral Roll growth between 2005 and 2010, both of which are years after a re-signing year and therefore directly comparable. The extent of growth is analysed by 'starting size', that is, by the number on each church's Electoral Roll in 2005. The table suggests that the significant rates of growth are associated with small churches; that growth rates tail off the larger the church, to the point where Electoral Roll numbers actually decline; and that growth is only recovered where churches are very large (around 400 on the Electoral Roll). These findings are similar to those that were reported in *A Capital Idea* which showed Electoral Roll growth concentrated in the smallest and largest churches.

Table 5: Electoral Roll Numbers 2005 to 2010 analysed by Church Size

Start Size	No.	Grew	Same	Shrank	2005 ER	2010 ER	Change	%age
Under 50	37	29	1	7	1,159	1,958	799	+69
50 to 99	105	66	7	32	8,123	9,510	1,387	+17
100 to 149	99	57	2	40	12,113	13,276	1,163	+10
150 to 199	66	31	0	35	11,185	11,802	617	+6
200 to 299	60	31	0	29	13,858	14,219	361	+3
300 to 399	13	6	0	7	4,328	4,304	-24	-1
400 to 1999	22	16	0	6	11,003	12,496	1,493	+14
Over 2000	1	1	0	0	2,043	3,151	1,108	+54
TOTAL	403	237	10	156	63,812	70,716	6,904	+11

The same pattern is seen in Usual Sunday Attendance, where the period taken is 2003-2009. The larger churches have been losing ground, increasing in vulnerability up to around the 400 mark. After that, the benefits of huge size and a strong, well-known brand appear to kick in, and the very largest have actually grown their attendance over the period. In stark contrast, small churches with a USuA of under 50 grew on average by 35%. Even churches just under 100 in 2003 grew on average by 11%. It is not clear whether the slower growth of churches with 50-74 USuA in 2003 was because of an objective factor holding them back or was a statistical freak – in other samples this size group tends to grow just as well as those in the 75-99 group.

Table 6: Usual Sunday Attendance 2003 to 2009 analysed by Church Size (A total of 311 churches with attendance returns in both years)

Start Size	No.	Grew	Same	Shrank	2003 USuA	2009 USuA	Change	%age
Under 50	40	30	1	9	1,398	1,892	494	+35
50 to 74	55	22	1	32	3,491	3,691	200	+6
75 to 99	58	29	2	27	4,954	5,498	544	+11
100 to 124	42	23	0	19	4,568	4,643	75	+2
125 to 199	71	36	1	34	11,111	10,870	-241	-2
200 to 299	24	9	0	15	5,680	5,344	-336	-6
300 to 399	8	1	0	7	2,720	2,422	-298	-11
400 to 899	10	3	0	7	5,995	5,595	-400	-7
Over 900	3	2	0	1	6,285	6,735	+450	+7

3-3 Adults and children

Although Electoral Roll figures do not include children, attendance figures do. There is more significance in the child figures than the simple numbers suggest both because the proportion of children in congregations is a good proxy for the age structure of the adults and because child numbers today are a major determinant of long-term future trends.

Although adult USuA rose slightly from 2003 to 2010, USuA for under 16s fell slightly, dropping from 20% to 19% of the total. The Sunday October Count tells a similar story. This slight reduction in the proportion of children is a worrying signal for the future. In most dioceses it would indicate that the average age of adult congregations has risen slightly as most children come accompanied by adults of child-rearing age. However, in London there are also significant numbers of young adults in the churches who have yet to start a family so this inference is not quite so automatic (according to the English Church Census, over 50% of churchgoers in England in their 20s go to church in London).

It is normally the case that younger congregations grow better than older ones. This is partly because a smaller proportion of the congregation dies or grows incapacitated each year and partly because there tends to be greater energy, capacity for change, and contemporary relevance in younger congregations. So have the churches in London with a high percentage of children grown significantly faster than the others?

Table 7 below shows that those with more children do indeed have a better attendance growth trend, but only when the proportion of children gets quite high – around 25%.

Table 7: 2003 to 2008 Percentage Change in All-Age Usual Sunday Attendance analysed by Proportion of Under 16s in Congregation

Proportion of Under 16s (%)	No. of Churches	USuA Percentage Change
Under 5*	20	-2.1
5 and over but under 10*	31	-1.5
10 and over but under 15*	54	-0.4
15 and over but under 20*	88	-3.5
20 and over but under 25*	110	-3.9
25 and over but under 30*	58	7.6
30 and over but under 35*	26	12.7
Over 35*	11	19.0
HTB family (12.4% under 16)	9	17.8

*Excluding HTB family of Churches

A close look at 16 churches with more than 25% children and more than 30% growth in all age USuA (Appendix C) reveals that all of them have active, intentional, and targeted children's ministries, often with professional leadership. As shown in the appendix, these are churches with a clear strategy and a significant budget for children, youth and families ministry. Half of these churches did not have a church school, suggesting that it is the intentional strategy rather than the church school link which is the main factor.

It is also worth noting that there does appear to be a different dynamic in the HTB family of churches, where the proportion of children is quite low but growth is relatively high. This is likely to be because, in contrast to most churches, the small proportion of children arises not because the average age of the adults is high but because it is very low.

But the main general conclusion is that in just under a quarter of the churches children make up at least 25% of the congregation and it is only in this group of churches that all-age attendance growth has occurred. In churches with fewer children there has been overall attendance decline.

Recommendations:

Bearing in mind the far better growth trend in churches where children make up at least 25% of attendance, churches should review the priority and resources they devote to growing among children and families. Churches should look at recent developments that appear to be working, principally Messy Church and Sunday teatime services (B.1).

The attempt to find extra resources from the Bishop of London's Mission Fund for children's ministry should be pursued as vigorously as possible, and the grant conditions reviewed in order to prioritise and target applications intended to grow the church among the younger generations (B.2).

3-4 Sundays and weekdays

In the Church of England nationally, growth in weekday attendance has partly offset the drop in Sunday attendance. In London, however, the opposite is the case. Although adult attendance on an average Sunday in October grew from 49,200 in 2003 to 49,900 in 2009, extra attendance on weekdays fell from 11,700 to 11,300.

In the rest of the country the pattern has been for shrinking traditional weekday services (the Wednesday morning Prayer Book communion) to be more than offset by the starting of new style services and fresh expressions. London, however, would appear, from the failure of weekday attendance to rise, to have seen fewer weekday fresh expressions and congregation plants. The records of Messy Church suggest that there has been a lower level of Messy Church planting in London than in the provinces. Perhaps this is because Sunday services have been thriving better than elsewhere and so the search for alternatives has been less intense.

Child weekday attendance has fluctuated a lot. This is mainly because school assembly and harvest services comprise a high proportion of the total and these vary greatly from year to year – a service may happen one year and not another, or else one year it is in the survey period and another year just out of it, or else one year the church decides it is a service that should be entered into the 'Statistics for Mission' form, and the next year a

different person decides it should not be. However, it looks as though, once these are stripped away, there is in other dioceses a rising trend of regular child attendance at weekday services. Much of this growth is at Messy Church style services. It may be that attendance has failed to rise in London because there are fewer of these fresh expressions than elsewhere.

So, in general, the pattern in London has been the opposite of the rest of the country – there has been no weekday attendance growth to compensate for any Sunday attendance decline.

3-5 Vacancies

There is no systematic national data on the length of vacancies between incumbent clergy retiring and the appointment of their successors (interregna). There have been a number of suggestions that vacancy lengths have been extending due to a variety of reasons, including the increasing complexity of the process, a shortage of clergy, the difficulty of finding candidates for some posts, and deliberate diocesan policy. There has been some concern that this may be having a negative impact on church growth. A body of research has drawn attention to sharply falling attendance figures in churches where there have been vacancies lasting more than six months, suggesting that, without such instances, national church attendance would otherwise have grown.¹

Where the vacancy stretches to between nine and twelve months, the research found that the average USuA at the end of this period was between 10% and 15% lower than that at the start. But the research also found that USuA at these churches grew on average by around 2% to 4% within the first twelve months of the vacancy ending, leaving a 'permanent' net loss of about 10%.

Attendance trends were traced for 58 London parishes with recently ended vacancies across three Episcopal Areas (time constraints prevented the survey being extended across all five areas); 46 of the parishes had had vacancies of over six months:

Table 8: Usual Sunday Attendance in Churches with >6month Vacancies

Area	No. of churches	USuA before Vacancy	Min. USuA in Vacancy	Change	%age
Kensington	20	3,332	2,949	-383	-13
Two Cities	8	630	515	-115	-18
Edmonton	18	2,111	1,893	-218	-10
WHOLE SAMPLE	46	6,073	5,357	-716	-12

¹ See Bob Jackson *The Road to Growth* (Church House Publishing), chapters 10 and 11.

The parishes in the sample showed a similar pattern to that found in the broader research. Attendance during long vacancies was down 12% overall. Attendance fell in 38 of the 46 churches surveyed, was steady in 2, and rose in 6.

By contrast, the remaining 12 parishes where the vacancy was less than six months saw overall attendance rise during that time:

Table 9: Usual Sunday Attendance in Churches with <6month Vacancies

Area	No. of churches	USuA before Vacancy	Min. USuA in Vacancy	Change	%age
Kensington	3	510	523	13	+3
Edmonton	9	1,335	1,468	133	+10
WHOLE SAMPLE	12	1,845	1,991	146	+8

But what happens in the first full year of the new incumbent, once the vacancy has come to an end? Fewer churches could be surveyed here, because some of the vacancies ended too late for a full twelve month's attendance figures under the new incumbent to be available. Firstly, the parishes which had experienced 'long' vacancies (over six months):

Table 10: Usual Sunday Attendance in Churches with a New (<12month) Incumbent appointed after a Long (>6month) Vacancy

Area	No. of churches	Min. USuA in Vacancy	USuA in 1 st yr New Incumbent	Change	%age
Kensington	17	2,211	2,242	33	+1
Two Cities	8	515	595	80	+16
Edmonton	14	1,737	1,964	227	+13
WHOLE SAMPLE	39	4,463	4,801	340	+8

These parishes saw overall attendance rise by 8% in the course of a year, significantly higher than the post-vacancy attendance bounce back found in the wider national research. The net effect on attendance in this group of 39 churches was a fall of 6% compared with the pre-vacancy figure.

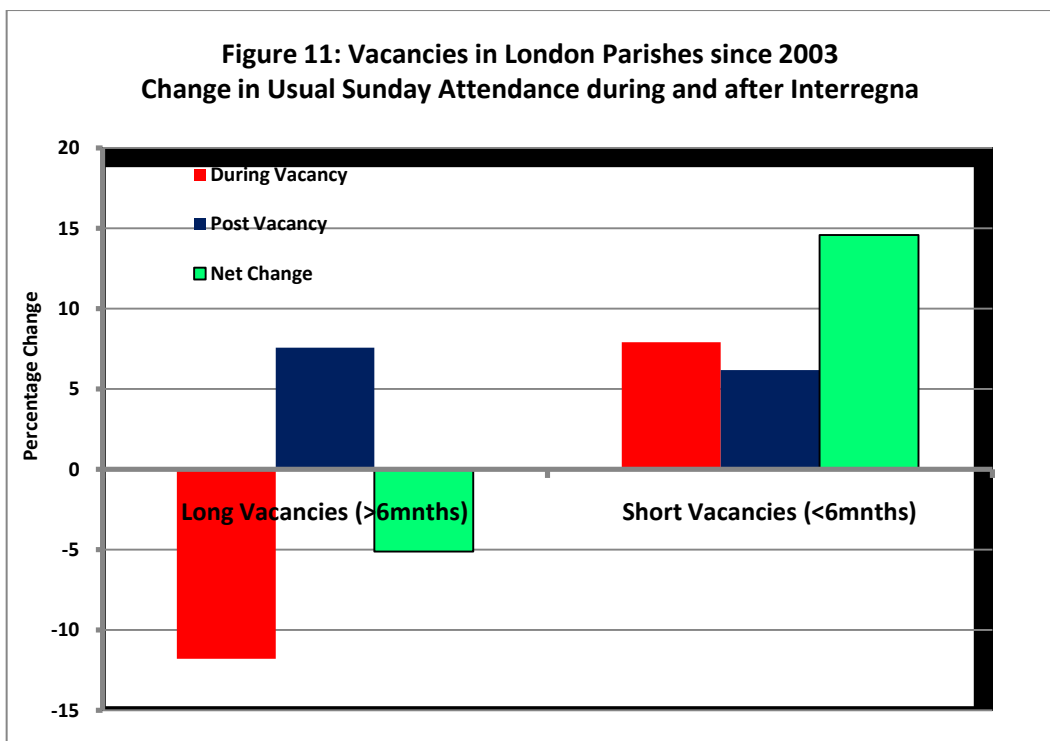
What about the parishes with 'short' vacancies, in the first full year of the new incumbent?

Table 11: Usual Sunday Attendance in Churches with a New (<12month) Incumbent appointed after a Short (<6month) Vacancy

Archdeaconry	No. of churches	Min. USuA in Vacancy	USuA in 1 st yr New Incumbent	Change	%age
Kensington	3	523	578	55	+11
Edmonton	9	1,468	1,536	68	+5
WHOLE SAMPLE	12	1,991	2,114	123	+6

Overall, these churches continued to grow after the appointment of the new incumbent, adding 6% attendance in the year after the vacancy to the 8% attendance growth during the vacancy itself.

Putting these findings together, as shown in Figure 11, this limited survey suggests that short (<6 month) vacancies assist church growth and long (>6 month) vacancies retard it, *all other things being equal*. With an average incumbency length of around seven to eight years, the net 6% attendance loss from 'long' vacancies would imply that churches with an incumbent in place have to grow by 1% a year simply to stay still. This would indeed be asking them to walk up a downwards escalator.



But the *all other things being equal* qualification must be borne in mind:

- The survey found that, in a few cases, attendance promptly dropped significantly in the *second* full year after the appointment of a new incumbent: congregations may be lost just as easily as gained.
- Against the need to fill a vacancy in a timely manner must be set the need to recruit and appoint, not just anyone, but someone who can grow the church: it can be counterproductive to sacrifice quality for speed.

The variation in the experience of different Episcopal Areas is also worth noting. As shown in Tables 8 and 9, Edmonton had a far higher ratio of 'short' vacancies to 'long' vacancies

than did Kensington. Kensington actually enjoyed a greater bounce-back effect on its few (three) parishes with 'short' vacancies, but not enough to offset the significant attendance losses suffered by the majority of its parishes during their 'long' vacancies. Measured from a point twelve months into the new incumbency, Edmonton parishes grew overall, both those with 'short' and 'long' vacancies. It would be helpful to take a closer look at the differences between the areas in order to clarify whether the Edmonton processes are indeed avoiding the attendance losses elsewhere or whether this result is affected by random fluctuations.

3-6 Planting and transplanting

For two thousand years all over the world the Christian Church has grown mainly through the planting of new churches or worshipping communities. How much of the church growth in London has been in the form of more people belonging to or attending existing congregations and how much has been composed of new congregations?

Transplants or grafts?

By 'transplants' is meant the process by which a group from a large church has transferred membership to a small, struggling, dying or redundant church in order to renew its life and ministry. Very often the group will bring its own leadership with it. Most transplants originate with a request from a bishop or archdeacon. This is the most visible and distinctive form of planting in London Diocese, and it has clearly evolved and multiplied in the eight years since *A Capital Idea*.

Straightforward planting of new congregations can take one of two main forms. One is the planting of a brand new independent church or fresh expression, say in a new housing area or aimed at an unreached people-group. These have been rare in London in recent years, though very common in the nineteenth century. The other is the, much more common, planting of a new congregation, church service or fresh expression by an existing church that stays within accountability to its PCC.

Nobody holds a list of all the transplants within the diocese. It has been impossible in the confines of this report to compile a full list of transplants, let alone one of all church plants and fresh expressions in the diocese. The scene is very active, complex and fast changing and central diocesan record keeping has unsurprisingly failed fully to keep up with what is happening on the ground.

Planting new congregations or fresh expressions

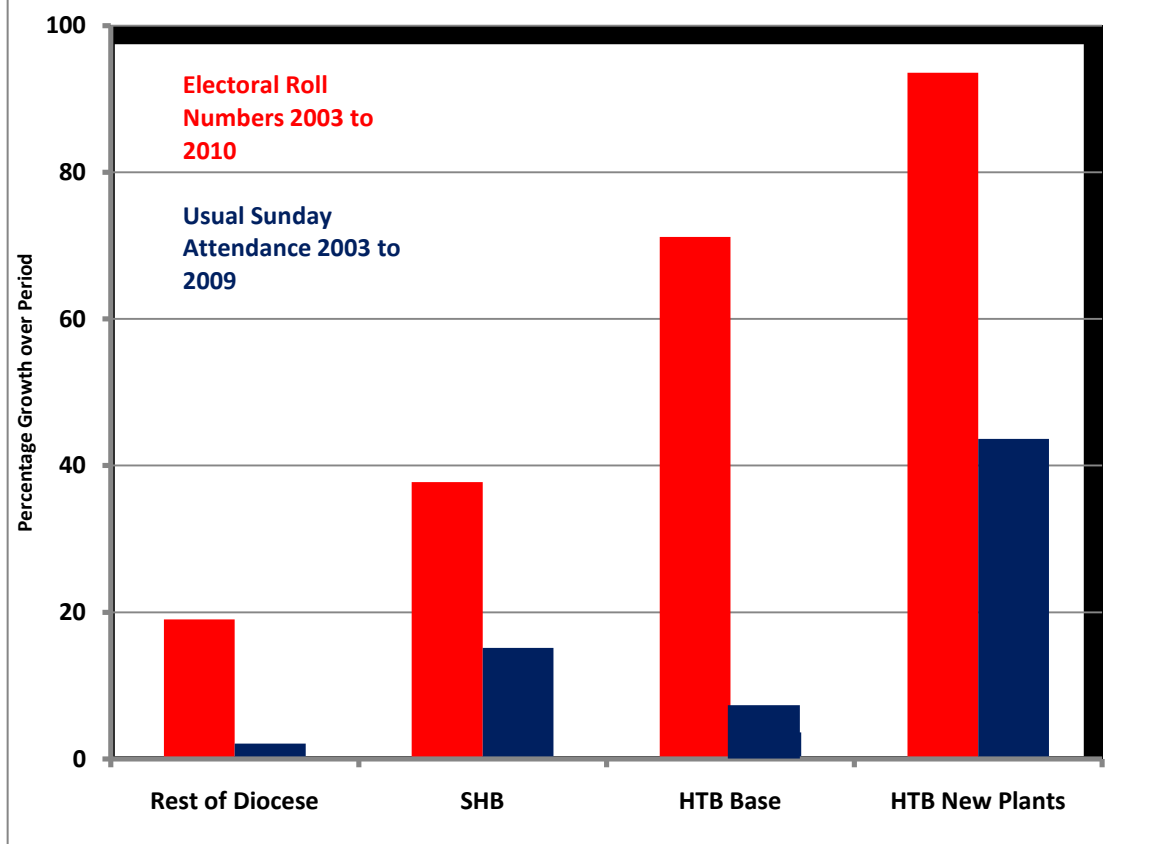
Three of the ten churches surveyed for this report were themselves the subject of recent transplants. St Paul Shadwell in 2010 itself grafted into two neighbouring churches – St Peter Bethnal Green and All Hallows Bromley by Bow. New growth is now appearing in these two churches. St Paul Hammersmith transplanted into the redundant St Alban Fulham in 2010 with a team of 50-60 and numbers have already doubled. It is planning a

new 4pm Families Service from this once the new building work is completed. Former members have also planted new fellowships in Sydney and Los Angeles. St Saviour Sunbury started a new evening service in 2010 for teens and 20s, and this is now growing. They are hoping to begin a fresh expression locally in 2012. These churches all have 'planting DNA' within them and see this as a normal church-growth route.

St Ann Tottenham had one congregation and an attendance of 80 in 1994. The original service has grown to 200 but two new services in the church plus two plants on local estates now have a combined attendance of another 200, making a total of up to 400 on a Sunday. Of the increased attendance of 320, 120 are coming to the existing service that has grown, and 200 to newly planted services. St Martin Ruislip, having suffered a dip in attendance, started a new Saturday teatime mass which attracts an average of 35 people, and attendance has grown since 2007 from 340 to 375. St Paul Ealing has seen numbers level off or fall at existing services but has also started two fresh expressions. A café style in a coffee shop attracts 12-40 people weekly, and a 'semi Messy Church' style fortnightly service in the church building on a Wednesday morning is attracting around 260 people. St Nicholas Hayes tried a Messy Church that did not flourish but are planning to try again at a different time of the week. St John Southall is just starting its own Messy Church and sees it as a major vehicle for future growth.

All in all, the four churches that have not planted a new congregation since 2003 have lost around 70 from their usual Sunday attendance figures. The six churches that have planted a new congregation since 2003 have gained 174. But some of the new congregations meet on weekdays. The combined October Count of the four non-planters fell by 65 from 2003-2009 whereas the six planters rose by 308, with further growth in 2010 from further plants. In total these six churches have planted eleven new worship events in the last seven years. Two more are planned by these churches this year, and two by the remaining churches visited. This makes a total of fifteen new worship events in eight years between ten churches.

Figure 12: Saint Helen's Bishopsgate and Holy Trinity Brompton Usual Sunday Attendance and Electoral Roll Growth



Church transplanting is classically associated with Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB), several of whose original plants are now planting in their turn. St Helen's Bishopsgate (SHB) provides an alternative model of growth, expanding through networks of worshippers who meet in a variety of church and non-church settings. Figure 12 above shows how growth in these two churches outstrips that in the rest of the diocese, using both membership (ER) and attendance (USuA) measures. Attendance growth in HTB congregations planted after 2003, over 40% on aggregate, is significantly higher than growth in the HTB 'base' congregations established prior to 2003. This may well be due to growing numbers in the 'base' physically relocating to the new plants. By contrast, HTB Electoral Roll membership has risen strongly across new plants *and* 'base', which may suggest that some transplanting worshippers retain – even if temporarily – membership of their sending congregations once they have made the move.

Across the diocese as a whole, HTB and SHB families of congregations now account for 9% of membership and 12% of Sunday attendance. Of the post-2003 increase in Electoral Roll numbers, 28% is attributable to these two families of churches, as is 38% of the (much smaller) increase in Usual Sunday Attendance. However, these figures risk understating the overall proportion of growth that has resulted from church planting, which has been sponsored by PCCs across the diocese, not just HTB and SHB. Irrespective of the limited numbers of formal transplants, dozens, even hundreds, of churches have the capacity to

start something new in any given year, usually within their existing premises, sometimes outside. The evidence strongly suggests that, were it not for planting activity, overall attendance figures within the diocese would have fallen since 2003, and – using the Average Weekly Attendance figures – would have significantly fallen. The growth has been coming from planting and from transplanting.

3-7 Other patterns

A number of patterns were identified in *A Capital Idea* but have been beyond the scope of this current enquiry to follow up on. The 2003 conclusions included:

1. The impact of church tradition was much weaker than other factors, with evangelical churches having only a slightly better numbers trend than other traditions.
2. Evidence of greater church growth in churches using process evangelism courses was mixed. Perhaps the courses were only positively correlated with growth when they were part of an overall strategy. There has been no opportunity this time to look at this again.
3. The 2003 enquiry failed to find any evidence that churches using MAPs were growing better than those without them. These enquires have not been followed up this time not only because of lack of time and resources but also because there are now very few churches left in the 'control groups' not using MAPs.
4. A broad brush estimate was made of the impact of the immigration of Christians into London, suggesting that immigration was a significant factor in church growth but not the dominant factor. And it also relied on a good culture of welcome in the churches.
5. Population growth would not normally be expected to be a major factor in church growth because Anglican congregations do not appear generally to rise with parish population above a population of around 3,000.

Recommendation:

A diocesan-wide review of the MAP process should now be carried out, for which comparative attendance and membership trends should be plotted for those parishes not using MAPs (B.3).

There was, however, some opportunity to follow up on two conclusions provisionally suggested in *A Capital Idea*.

Fewer funerals: higher growth?

The 2003 report found that clergy conducting a lot of funerals appeared less likely to have growing churches, arguably because of the amount of time, focus and energy needed to sustain a large funerals ministry at the expense of the ministry of growing the gathered community (this finding should never be taken by clergy as a signal unhesitatingly to neglect funeral-ministry). Research for the present report found that the number of funerals per stipendiary clergy in London, already the lowest in the country by some margin, has declined even further since then. In 2001 there were 14 funerals per stipendiary and in 2008 only 9. The national average in 2008 was around 26, rising to 38 in the diocese with the most funerals. Reasons for London's continuing decline might include a falling death rate, a rise in secular and other-religion funerals, and a rise in the number of retained funeral takers so that undertakers no longer automatically get in touch with the parish priest.

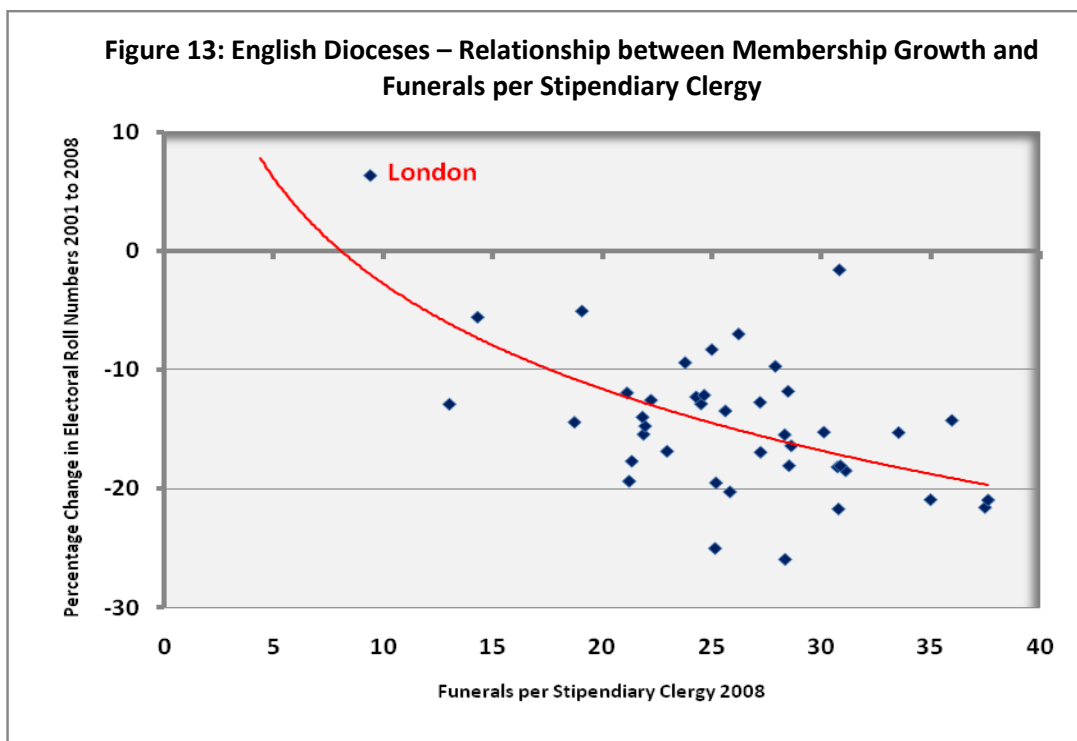
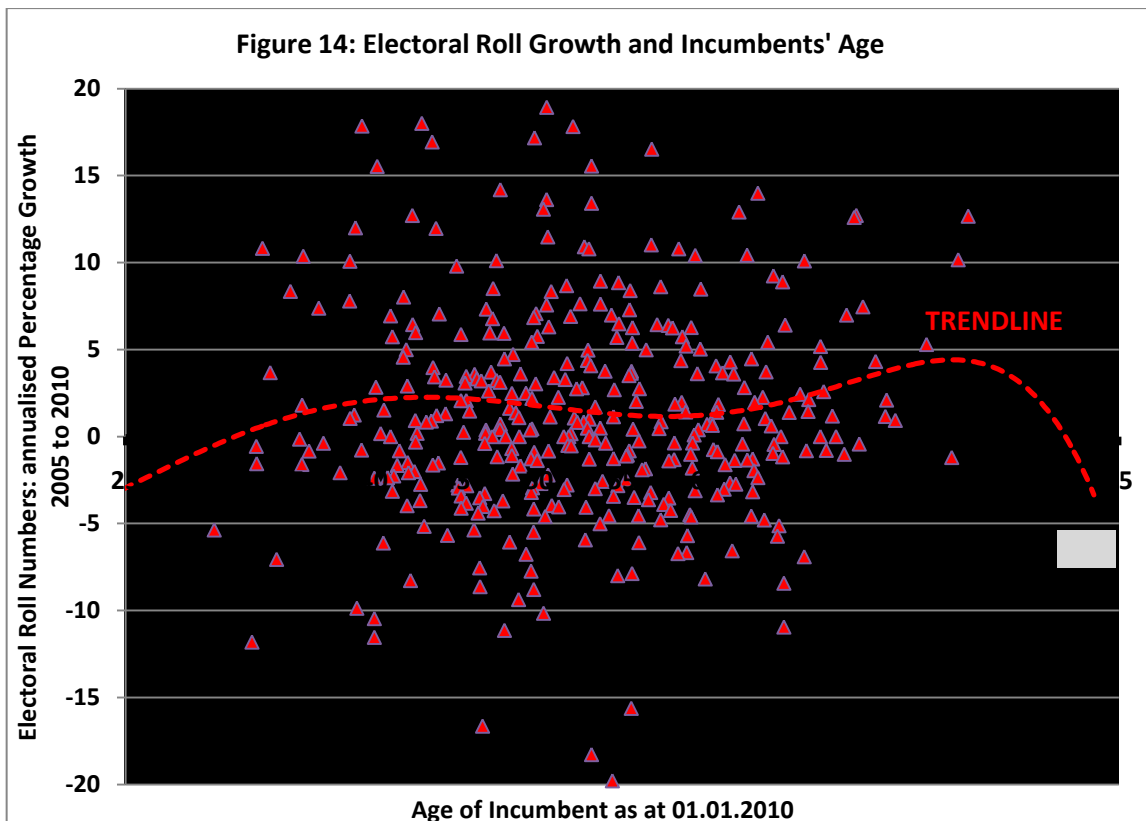


Figure 13 above shows how London stands out in the national picture, as being the only diocese to record an increase in ER numbers over the period in question, as well as being the diocese with the fewest funerals per clergy. There is some indication of negative ER trends in dioceses with larger numbers of funerals per clergy, reinforcing the suggestion in *A Capital Idea* that freedom from a large funerals ministry enables at least some clergy to focus better on building the gathered community. However, further research at the level of individual parishes, including research into numbers of baptisms and weddings, would be needed to determine whether the 'loss of Christendom' effect of fewer occasional offices really has helped the growth of the gathered community in London.

Younger clergy: higher growth?

The age profile of clergy in the churches visited for the 2003 report suggested that younger clergy and clergy in post between five and ten years were more likely to see church growth. For the present report, the ages of all serving incumbents as at 1 January 2010 was plotted against the annualised percentage change in their parishes' ER numbers between 2005 and 2010, or (for incumbents of less than five years' standing) between the date of their appointment and 2010. The results are shown in Figure 14 below.



At first sight there would appear to be no clear correlation between incumbents' age and growth in parishes' membership. If a correlation has to be forced, by means of statistical analysis, a weak trend line can be drawn on the graph as shown. This suggests that slightly lower levels of growth might be associated with incumbents in their mid-forties to late-fifties. A similar exercise associated slightly lower levels of growth with parish clergy of between 15 and 30 years experience. However, to build conclusively on such findings would require much fuller and deeper research, including research into whether incumbents served in single-vicar parishes or headed up ministry teams.

3-8 Putting the patterns together

A small church in inner London without a vacancy but which has started a new congregation, perhaps on a weekday, and invested in children's and families' ministry is highly likely to have grown in recent years. A larger church in outer London with a vacancy, a constant service pattern and a small or average proportion of children is highly likely to have shrunk.

Part 4

What can be done to encourage growth?

Evidence and experience suggest that, in the climate of contemporary London, healthy churches that move with the times tend to grow naturally without having to be forced. The incumbent at St Michael Camden Town, for example, said that all he had to do was make sure the building was open each day, with some displays and refreshments inside. Lots of people, feeling their community and spirituality needs in a large impersonal city, will call in on their way to Sainsbury, and a proportion will be motivated to come back on Sunday. When moribund churches receive a transplanting team and reopen for business they tend to attract quite a lot of new adherents fairly quickly.

It is also in the culture of the Diocese of London to seek, train and appoint good- quality incumbents and other church leaders. Many vacant posts attract large numbers of applicants from which a choice can be made. Clergy and congregations are usually well motivated in terms of mission and growth. The diocesan culture is to give people their head, back the entrepreneurs, not try to control, but rather to bless and harness whatever generates missional growth. The MAP process is embedded into regular church life, and the clergy are seen as leaders in mission rather than simply 'pastor-teachers' with a personal ministry. This enlightened diocesan culture underlies the growth performance of diocesan churches over the last twenty years.

The favourableness of the international London climate to church growth is underlined by the growth of other churches and denominations in the capital, especially black-majority and overseas-rooted churches.

Healthy, well-led and supported churches in a favourable environment should grow naturally once any constraints that hinder them are removed.

But the statistical enquiry and church visits suggest that there are in fact a number of strong factors hindering, eliminating or even reversing this natural growth. The business of helping the churches grow can be understood as being about removing constraints and obstacles so that their natural, God-given growth potential can be allowed free rein. The most effective things the diocese, areas and individual churches can do now is to tackle these forces of decline so that God can be free to grow His church.

If a healthy shrub is not growing in the garden as it should, the remedy may lie in tackling the pests, uprooting the weeds and improving the soil rather than trying either to change the climate or conduct surgery on the shrub. We believe in London that the climate is conducive and the church shrubbery is comparatively healthy. In 1 Corinthians chapter 3, St Paul likens the role of church leaders to being gardeners who trust God to give growth. Trusting in such natural, God-given growth, we make our 'stimulating growth' suggestions primarily to identify and tackle the major forces of decline so that the shrubbery can grow anew. Or, to change the metaphor, so that churches are less likely to be trying to climb up downward-

moving escalators. Find the levers to stop the escalators and trust God to give the growth and the churches to climb the stairs.

THE FORCES OF DECLINE

We here identify seven factors operating in London to drive the escalator downwards each of which can be tackled by parish and diocese working together.

4-1 Declining frequency of attendance

We do not know for sure how rapidly attendance frequency is going down, or even if it really is going down at all, because we have no conclusive systematic evidence, only lots of anecdotes. In fact the best systematic evidence we have is the fact that adult Usual Sunday Attendance keeps going down as a proportion of Electoral Rolls. In 1990 adult USuA was 92% of the Electoral Roll, in 1996 it was 81%, in 2002 74% and in 2009 64%. We know that by no means all of this dramatic shift is due to less frequent attendance, but it is likely that some of it is.

Some anecdotes are to be found in the church reports in Part 5. **St Gabriel Cricklewood** has a growing service for younger adults with an average attendance of one week in two. The youth service at **St Ann Tottenham** can attract 40, but some weeks there are only 15. **St John Southall** has grown through developing a much bigger fringe, who, almost by definition, do not attend very often. At **St Saviour Sunbury** the Electoral Roll has grown since 2005 from 185 to 233 but average attendance has stayed the same. **St Paul Hammersmith** estimate that average attendance frequency has gone down to six weeks in ten from an initially much higher level. **St Paul Ealing** estimate average frequency on Sundays is still quite high – eight weeks in ten. However, the large new ‘Semi-Messy’ style service on Wednesday mornings is only fortnightly. The young congregation at **St Paul Shadwell** attend on average five weeks in ten. Normally there are just a handful of Equadorians at the mass at **St Michael Camden Town**, but if they all came there would be 40 of them.

Nationally, putting a number of anecdotes and small-scale surveys together, with the ER evidence, it is likely that, over the last thirty years, the average attendance frequency has gone down from eight or nine weeks in ten to around six. Probably a good half of national church attendance decline is because people come less often rather than there being fewer churchgoers in total.

The way to get frequency evidence is for individual churches to conduct a census every week for around two months collecting the names of everyone who attends each service and so finding out how many people come one week in eight, two in eight and so on. This census should then be repeated maybe two or three years later and the two patterns compared.

Recommendation:

A survey should be conducted among a selected sample of churches across the diocese to gain fuller and more up-to-date details on attendance patterns and compared with the results of any similar initiatives conducted in other dioceses or by the National Church (A.8).

Does declining frequency matter?

Many clergy, looking at leavers' patterns, see that coming less and less often is the way many people gradually and almost accidentally detach themselves from church life. Infrequent attendance is also how some new attenders fail to attach themselves into church life. Many people seem to attend a church for a little while then gradually and quietly drift away. As people become gradually more detached, nobody seems to notice or bother, their lives go on okay, and eventually it becomes rather embarrassing to turn up after such a long absence. It is much harder to keep a pastoral eye on people who do not attend reliably, so they are liable to pass through the pastoral care net when they have a problem, and then feel unloved. It is also much harder to build Christian community, to grow effective disciples, and to teach systematically. When people will not commit on a weekly basis, rotas get ever longer and more difficult to sustain and the whole work of sustaining weekly worship and other activities gets harder. When people do turn up they may find the atmosphere a little flat because there are a lot of gaps in the pews. A newcomer will meet one lot of regulars the first week and a different group the second. It is much harder to start making friends and join such a diffused community. When average attendance keeps going down, the media are able to perpetuate the self-fulfilling story of the shrinking church even though, in terms of membership, it might be growing.

Why has frequency gone down?

Many of the causes are not about lack of Christian commitment but about a busier world. Far more people now work on at least some Sundays. School and sporting activities have transferred to Sundays and take away many of the children each week. For others, Sunday has become 'Dad's day'. With increasing affluence, Londoners have become more likely to go away for the weekend. Holidays have got longer and now frequently begin and end on Sundays. Stress and busyness sometimes drive even committed Christians into Sunday shopping.

But also, motivations for churchgoing have changed over time. Fewer people now come out of habit, duty and loyalty. More have consumer attitudes to church with no feelings of guilt if they miss a week or two.

And sometimes the churches have encouraged infrequent attendance with their service patterns. Some offer weekly traditional style worship mainly for older people, and monthly contemporary style worship suited to families. Some fresh expressions, such as Messy Church, tend to be monthly rather than weekly events. Other churches offer such a diversity of styles through the month that people self-select which services to avoid according to taste.

Is it possible to tackle infrequent attendance and its consequences?

Evidence from a number of individual churches and from a survey questionnaire used with around 1,000 Anglican churches suggests some ways of ameliorating infrequent attendance.

The service pattern most likely to hold people into coming every week they possibly can is one where each given service time offers worship in roughly the same reliable culture each week. Different cultures are offered by each different service time having its own culture and central target group. There is emphasis on the worship as event, each week being not a mechanical repeat of every other week, but a unique opportunity to meet the Living God afresh, and nobody wants to miss out on it. The service times are chosen for their contemporary, not historic, suitability. For example, some churches are finding Sunday teatime a better timing for attracting regular all-age congregations than Sunday mornings because people are less often busy with other things at teatime.

Monthly worship events are fine as an interim measure, but the aim should normally be to find ways of offering weekly community and worship. For those who are working, busy or go away at weekends some churches could offer a midweek evening 'main' service, perhaps even a repeat of Sunday, so that people do not need to miss out just because they are working or visiting grandparents on Sunday morning. People are more likely to come regularly if they have a close identity with the church, often brought about by being given a role or responsibility. Churches where a lot of people have service-connected roles, or that bring people in from the fringe to the centre quickly, are likely to have higher attendance frequency.

Weaknesses to church community brought about by infrequent attendance can be tackled through a strong small-group network so that people connect in with church midweek even if they are away on Sunday. And it is important to develop a strong pastoral care net to keep a pastoral eye on infrequent as well as reliable attenders. Rather than church life being only structured around weekly events, for some people it is better to devise a series of short-term offers such as discipleship or other courses which they are able to commit to and so grow in short bursts.

Recommendation:

Several churches should be asked to experiment with a midweek evening 'main' service to see if they can attract both new members and those unable to make it on Sunday. Such experiments would be seen as being 'on behalf of the diocese' with the results disseminated around for others to learn from. If there are churches that already do this, then they should be asked how things are going and what lessons have been learned (C.1).

4-2 Losing the clergy

Stipendiary clergy numbers have continued to reduce each year since 2003 across the country as a whole. However, uniquely, the number in London has remained steady. Could this be a major contributing factor to the comparatively good attendance and membership trend in London? A number of dioceses have felt, at least for a while, that their best anti-decline mission strategy is to hold the line on clergy numbers. There is an issue of cause and effect here – London has been able to keep its clergy numbers because attendance, membership and giving have risen over the years. In addition, thriving churches have produced a large supply of good ordinands to keep the benign cycle of growth going.

In the book *The Road to Growth* (Bob Jackson, CHP 2005) a comparison was made of attendance trends in dioceses that held on to clergy numbers and those that were shedding them fast between 1997 and 2002. Adult Usual Sunday Attendance dropped 8% in the dioceses shedding clergy and 10% in those holding on to them. This suggests that holding on to clergy numbers may not be the anti-decline strategy that some assumed it must be. But what of more recent years? Between 2001 and 2008 the October Count in non-London dioceses fell on average by 7%. Dividing the dioceses up into three groups (one where clergy numbers fell by only around 5%, one group with average falls of around 13%, and one with large drops in numbers averaging around 20%) reveals that attendance loss was exactly the same in all three groups – 7%.

The seeming lack of correlation between trends in clergy numbers and church attendance suggests that fewer clergy may not be a key factor in attendance decline, at least not in any simple way. Rather it is the quality of the stipendiary clergy, how they are deployed, and how lay and unpaid leadership and ministry are developed that appear to be more important than the number of stipendiaries. It is hard to argue that retaining stipendiary numbers in London is a major factor in the membership and attendance trends. There is no present need to look at clergy reductions in London but, if there ever were, we do not need to imagine that attendance will inevitably reduce in its wake.

London currently has around 164 ER members per stipendiary compared with a national average of 182, around 171 weekly attendances per stipendiary compared with 171 nationally, and a population of around 7,700 per stipendiary compared with the national average of around 8,100. So the ratio of clergy to congregations and populations in London is roughly the average for the country as a whole.

However, the statistical evidence reviewed in Part 3 section 5 does suggest that lengthier vacancies do lead to shrinking churches. It is entirely possible to re-organise church life to take account of a permanent loss of clergy, and perhaps the creation of a multi-church benefice. But it is not possible to make a satisfactory adjustment to a temporary situation that will be reversed.

Why should longer vacancies shrink the church?

In the days when the clergy role was that of teacher-pastor, and church and community life seemed more stable, vacancies were not the challenge they can be now. In any case, they mostly lasted under six months. Even today, they can be accommodated in many rural areas where churches share a vicar, and where church life is not centred on the person of the incumbent. However, in many, if not most, London churches, the incumbent's role is as leader in mission and enabler of the ministries of others. She or he is the 'visionary CEO' of the church, the focal point of its dynamically changing life. Remove that CEO for a long period of time and things begin to fall apart missionally. Necessary change is put on hold. Newcomers are not picked up as well as they were when the vicar was there. Newer people with shallower roots, together with those brought in by the personal ministry of the last vicar, drift away. Lay leaders become preoccupied and start to burn out. New tensions arise within the community.

It is heartbreaking to see years of good work strengthening parishes undone through avoidably long or ill-planned vacancies. Equally, however, it is encouraging to report action in hand to minimise this risk. Working closely with parishes to organise for shorter and 'better' vacancies, the Diocese of Lichfield has halved attendance losses during interregna in recent years. In London, a fifth of the sample of 60 churches examined in section 5 of Part 3 of this study had a vacancy of six months or less, and diocesan processes are capable of being used in a way that makes this routine. A comparison of how the diocesan processes work in the different Episcopal Areas might be a fruitful way of honing best practice.

Can vacancies be shortened?

This looks like the simplest and most obvious answer to vacancy losses as they start to kick in from the six-month point. The key to shortening the standard process from nine to six months is to start it as soon as an incumbent puts in his or her notice. Parish Profiles can be kept updated with the parish MAP. Pastoral reorganisation possibilities and changes to clergy job descriptions can be thought through before vacancies occur to avoid long periods of uncertainty. Adverts can be placed as the retiring incumbent is leaving. A 'six-month vacancy timetable', similar to the one adopted by Lichfield can be used to enable area offices to keep a check on progress in each case.

In view of the scale of losses generated by longer vacancies, they clearly cost the church far more in lost income over the long term than is saved on stipends in the short term. Many churches find they fall into financial difficulties by the end of a vacancy. Tackling vacancy losses is a good financial move as well as a good missional one.

Recommendation:

A study should be made of the complexities of attendance change through vacancies, and an experiment conducted in a group of churches or one Episcopal Area to prioritise short (under six month) vacancies. The experience and attendance changes in these short vacancy churches should be compared with those in similar

churches with longer vacancies and the results used to fix future diocesan policy (B.4).

Can vacancy losses for a given vacancy length be reduced?

It is important that clergy prepare their churches for when they are no longer there. This involves the general process of distributing decision-making responsibility for areas of church life to a wide range of people so that the church can function well as missional community in the absence of an incumbent. Lay leaders will benefit from preparation and training, not just in the nuts and bolts of vacancies but in missional leadership through them. And churches will benefit from good, clear leadership structures and coordination that are put in place under the leadership of the outgoing incumbent. Clergy may benefit from training not only in how to prepare a church for a vacancy but also in how to pick up on those who have drifted away when they are new in their next post.

The use of 'interim ministers' is to be considered in this context. Interim ministers can protect churches from attendance loss even in long and difficult vacancies, but their very success in doing so may lessen the incentive for a vacancy to be quickly filled. There may be special problems recruiting interim ministers in London, where there are relatively few retired clergy, but transport links are good so they would usually be able to remain living in their own homes.

Recommendation:

The diocese should cooperate with CPAS and two Midlands dioceses currently addressing the issue of how churches are supported during interregna, with a view to engaging in the fieldwork needed to produce training resources on how churches can grow as missional communities through vacancies (B.5).

4-3 Losing people through rapid turnover

London churches appear to be losing attendance (and ultimately membership) through less frequent attendance and through lengthy vacancies. In these two aspects they may be pretty similar to other dioceses. The problem of rapid membership turnover, however, is extreme in parts of London, largely due to population movements and short-term living arrangements.

From 2009, parishes have been asked, through their Electoral Roll Officers, to report not just on the total number on their Electoral Roll but also on how many new members joined during the year between annual meetings. This allows membership turnover, or the 'rate of churn', to be calculated. In London, in 2009, 4.2% of members on the 2008 ER left but an additional 5% joined. In 2010, 5% left and 8.5% joined. As neither is a re-signing year, we would expect joiners to exceed leavers, as there is normally a bumper crop of leavers in the

re-signing year. The 'average' London church, therefore, would seem to have to find at least one new ER member in every twenty, every year, simply to stay the same size.

However, there is a lot of variation between churches. Figure 15 below combines the two years together and shows that, irrespective of new joiners, 80% of reporting churches lost between 0% and 10% of their existing ER membership over the course of a year (2008 to 2009). The remaining 20% of churches lost between a tenth and a third of their members. The graph also shows that the percentage of members leaving in any one year is not necessarily a guide to how many will leave in the following year, but there were some churches which had lost over 30% and even 40% of their original membership over the course of two years. Theoretically, this would mean that a church could completely turn over an existing congregation in the space of five years.

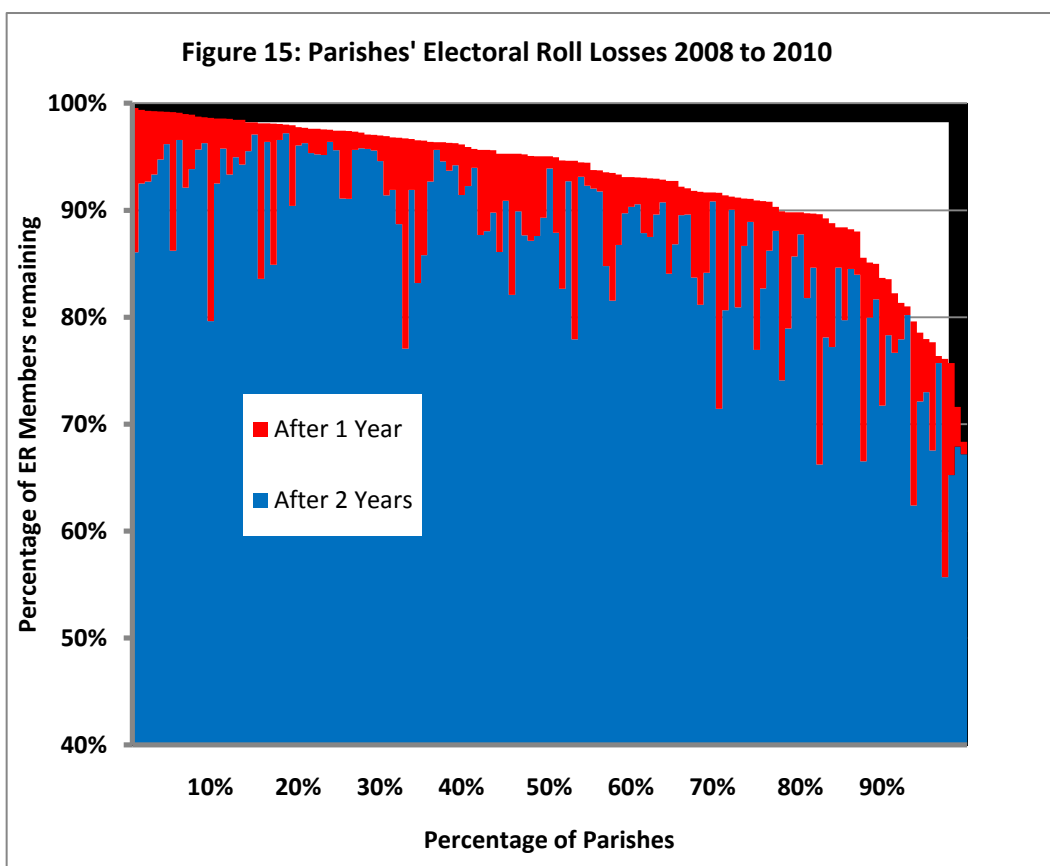
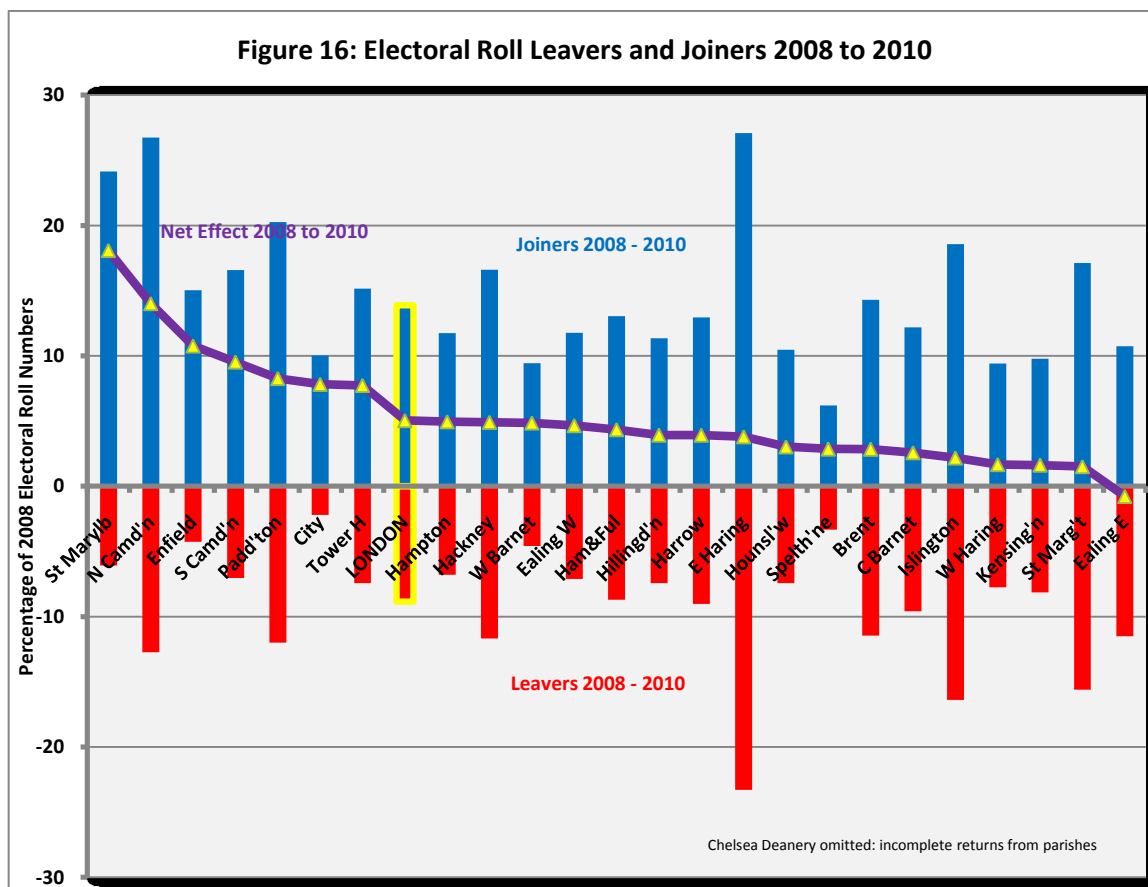


Figure 16 below analyses the churn effect by deanery and shows that some deaneries achieved high rates of net growth by retaining most of their original members (Enfield, City). Others (Islington, St Margaret's) gained proportionately more new members but their net growth was smaller because of the numbers of old members lost. Paddington, on the other hand, saw a large net gain despite losing more people than average because many more new members joined. Spelthorne lost fewer old members than any deanery except City yet had a very small net gain as there were also very few new members joining. On the whole,

churn rates were higher in the inner deaneries and lower in the more settled, suburban deaneries such as Spelthorne.



The following anecdotes give a flavour of how high churn rates feel in practice.

St Michael Camden Town for a while lost 40% of its congregation a year to house moves and the progression of asylum-seeker cases, though this has now moderated to 30%. The main trigger for moving away from Hammersmith is a growing family. Three years ago during the summer the morning congregation at **St Paul Hammersmith** lost 160 people moving away to find larger houses. At **St Paul Ealing** 17% of the congregation move away in an average year, though it was a lot more in 2008. **St John Southall** had an Electoral Roll of 225 in 2003. Over ten years 5 have simply left, 21 have died and 65 have moved away. The majority of the planting team at **St Saviour Sunbury** have now moved away. Only 30 remain out of the 2005 planting team of 100 at **St Paul Shadwell**. At **St Nicholas Hayes**, people tend to move away to other parts of the country as they retire. Over 10% of the congregation has left in this way in the last 18 months, including the warden. **St Gabriel Cricklewood** loses just under 10% a year to house moves. At **St Martin Ruislip** between 5% and 8% of the congregation move away or die each year.

Turnover clearly tends to be lower in the outer suburbs where the churches are less likely to grow. The converse of rapid loss of existing members is a constant flow of new people

looking for a church. If a church is well geared up to receive and absorb new people it can still grow overall. However, it is normally considered that moving house is the main occasion at which people cease churchgoing, so not everyone leaving a London church will find another one. And even leavers with continuing jobs in London frequently move out beyond the diocesan boundary into St Albans or Oxford or Guildford dioceses. Churches with high turnover have to put enormous effort into meeting, welcoming and integrating new members. Just as people grow in their faith, become effective disciples, and take on church responsibilities they tend to move away. Finding stable leadership becomes a big problem. And churches that are highly successful evangelistically can miss out on the joys of experiencing overall growth.

At a number of churches some movers will still drive back on Sundays, but they are no longer part of the local community and that may reduce their effectiveness missionally both where they live and where they worship.

What can be done about rapid turnover?

One reason why turnover has slowed at St Michael Camden Town is that a few members able and ready to move to better off areas further out have stayed in Camden simply through attachment to the church. The planting team at St Paul Shadwell were largely highly mobile young professionals. The church has begun to attract some existing local residents who are less likely to move away. Focussing on the indigenous population of the parish as well as or rather than mobile young professionals should slow down turnover rates in a number of churches. However, high turnover is largely a fact of life in London and churches must adapt to it rather than try to change it.

Recommendation:

The diocese should consider a web-based referral system for people moving house, which churches can access to invite their new local church to visit house-movers or which the movers themselves can refer to. Ultimately a national system would be better than a diocesan one (B.6).

4-4 Not incorporating newcomers through inadequate welcome and integration

In a high-turnover world it is vital for churches to focus attention on their welcome and integration of newcomers. Across the country it looks as though little more than 10% of the people who try out a church succeed in joining it. A survey of churches that had attracted interest through 'Back to Church Sunday' found that only 12% of those who came as genuinely interested guests on the day were still attending at least monthly six months later.

London churches have a constant trickle, or even stream, sometimes even a flood, of people trying them out. The key to growth, especially in the high- turnover areas, lies in

increasing the proportion who stay. The growing churches tend to be those that are good at attracting, welcoming and integrating newcomers.

In the fast-moving London world, these processes need to happen quickly. Churches that are able to pick up on people the first time they attend, invite them to an initial event, encourage them into a small group and find them some new friends in the first few weeks are likely to grow numerically. Those without good processes, or who are slow off the mark, are likely to shrink.

The high turnover context is one reason why the larger churches are shrinking while the smaller ones are growing. Churches tend to have limited absorptive capacities when it comes to new members. If people need to develop some sort of relationship with the vicar, or other senior leaders, in order to develop a sense of belonging, or if integration is dependent on a small group of welcomers noticing people and introducing them to regular members, then large churches are in trouble. A church of 400 members with 15% moving on each year needs to attract 60 new people a year just to stand still. A similar church of only 100 people needs to integrate only 15 new people.

A total of 422 London churches surveyed in 2010 found 5,713 new ER members between them, an average of 13.6 each. However, a large proportion of the new members were to be found in only a few churches:

Table 12: New Electoral Roll Members 2010 – Distribution across Churches

Number of New ER Members	Number of Churches	Total Number of New ER Members in each Category
None	72	0
Fewer than 9	156	714
10 to 19	108	1,600
20 to 49	69	2,007
Over 50	17	1,392

Seventeen churches welcomed around 25% of all new ER members in the diocese, and 86 churches welcomed around 60%.

228 churches (54%) each had fewer than 10 new ER members, accounting for only 13% of the total.

It is quite clear that a few churches are succeeding in welcoming and integrating large numbers of new ER members, and their very success shows up the problem with the majority.

Can welcome and integration be improved?

The above statistics suggest that some churches are outstandingly good at this, but many churches are not. So there is enormous scope for improving the general level of welcome

and integration across the diocese. Many churches need alerting to the issue and inviting to review their practices. Networking for the sharing of good practice can be very productive. Many churches would benefit from using the training course 'Everybody Welcome' (CHP), designed to enable each church to self-train to improve their whole process, from advertising their presence to welcoming people on the door, to offering friendship not just friendliness, through to enabling newcomers to take on roles and feel ownership.

Leicester Diocese is running a series of training courses using these materials, attempting to cover every cluster of churches in the diocese in turn. This is also one area in which greater connectedness (see below) bears fruit through the inspiration of the sharing of local good practice and good news.

Churches that take part in 'Back to Church Sunday' on average receive 18 invitees on the day, but six months later only about 2 are still coming at least monthly. However, good practice leading up to the day is able to increase the number of guests, and a good welcome and integration strategy is able to increase the retention rate significantly. Churches which invest their time and resources in improving their welcome then stand a chance of using 'Back to Church Sunday' to kick-start a new growth cycle.

Recommendations:

Every church should be encouraged to review its welcome and integration of newcomers in the high turnover London world. Churches should consider using the course 'Everybody Welcome' (CHP 2009) www.everybodywelcome.org.uk (B.7).

The diocese should consider how to encourage a universal full-hearted adoption of 'Back to Church Sunday'. B2CS is most effective once good welcome and integration processes are in place (B.8).

4-5 Churches can't grow because they have hit a glass ceiling

Attendance has been shrinking in churches with between 125 and 400 all-age attendance per Sunday. This is about one third of the total number. Some of the reasons for this have already been mentioned. A fuller discussion of this phenomenon can be found in the book *Hope for the Church*, ch 11 (CHP 2002). Churches grow until they hit a ceiling (usually that they do not see clearly, hence the idea of a 'glass' ceiling). The ceiling may be the point at which the existing model of church (perhaps a 'pastor-flock family style church') can no longer function effectively. Or it may be generated by the group dynamics of a congregation that has reached the point where members cannot all know each other and the gathering becomes more anonymous. Or the building may be getting full. Or the organisational capacity of the incumbent and church office is no longer adequate. Or the number of newcomers needed each year to replace people moving out starts to exceed the church's absorptive capacity. Or there is a vacancy. Or there is complacency because the church feels quite large and comfortable, and inertia sets in.

Many churches stay around the same size for many years, despite the fact that large numbers are for ever joining and leaving. These are churches that are pushing against a 'group dynamics', leadership capacity and organisational glass ceiling. The ceiling is usually dictated by the size of the community, not by the level of attendance. This is why such 'glass-ceiling' churches tend to have steady Electoral Rolls but declining average attendance as members come less and less often each year. Other 'glass ceiling' churches actually bump their heads and shrink in terms of membership, perhaps because the 'feel good' factor disappears and conflict rears its head as church life becomes mysteriously more difficult.

This glass-ceiling understanding also explains why a large church sending a significant group of people to transplant in another church often finds its own numbers are replenished in a matter of months. The sending church has shrunk itself enough to enable new growth – back up to its ceiling size, where it gets stuck once again.

At Table 13 below are some examples of churches from one suburban deanery (Harrow) that have an ER 'membership' somewhere around the most common ceiling size of an 'all know all' pastoral model of church. Beyond this size, a more organisational or programme model of church is normally needed to get to the next level, and churches find it difficult or impossible to make the switch:

Table 13: Comparison of Electoral Roll Numbers and Usual Sunday Attendance – Sample of Churches in Harrow Deanery (ER <200)

Electoral Roll 2004	Electoral Roll 2009	USuA 2004	USuA 2009
161	165	107	94
153	142	159	108
153	148	143	124
158	171	120	110
138	138	78	60
125	130	80	74
TOTALS 888	894 1% increase	687	570 17% decrease

This group of six churches, resting against a glass ceiling, have maintained but not increased their ER membership. But, in an era of declining attendance frequency, they have lost 17% of their Sunday attendance over the same five year period.

Three larger churches in the same deanery had a similar experience:

Table 14: Comparison of Electoral Roll Numbers and Usual Sunday Attendance – Sample of Churches in Harrow Deanery (ER >200)

Electoral Roll 2004	Electoral Roll 2009	USuA 2004	USuA 2009
261	269	309	215
400	433	520	486
361	339	330	210
TOTALS 1,022	1,041 2% increase	1,159	911 21% decrease

This same point was made in *A Capital Idea* and, as a result, the Kensington Area did run one or two events for ‘glass-ceiling’ incumbents to help them plan a way through. However, with limited management time it may be that this initiative was not followed through with a strong enough process to make a difference. It may be that diocesan senior staff should have a stronger focus on this very large group of attendance-shrinking churches. A recommendation will be made in the section on church planting (below) that may enable this refocus to happen.

What can be done to help the medium and larger ‘ceiling’ churches to grow?

In general terms, these churches usually need structuring for growth in terms of spreading and deepening lay leadership, growing staff teams and evolving job descriptions for incumbents. They are more likely to grow through starting new congregations, services and fresh expressions than through more people coming to existing events. Growth is likely to be led through revitalised ministry with families, children, young people and younger adults. They should prioritise small-group networks, pastoral care systems, and welcome strategy in order to hold and draw people in with relational glue. They should be offering high-quality worship experience focussed on encounter with the Living God, and in a variety of styles in a multi-congregational model of church. They should offer regular nurture and discipleship groups, have an intentional mission strategy and be upgrading their buildings. Their community and worship should be characterised by joy rather than solemnity. They should have an outward-looking focus, engaging with the local community and meeting its needs.

However, the specific changes needed in each situation will be different, and are best worked out with some outside help or alongside other churches in a similar situation. In terms of process, two interrelated processes appear to make a difference:

1. A series of day conferences for incumbents and PCCs of similarly sized churches at which causes and remedies for glass ceilings and attendance decline in ‘larger churches’ can be considered, the churches network with each other, and begin to incorporate fresh thinking into their MAPs. A one-off event may be of some help but it is a long-term process that appears to make the real difference.
2. A network of small groups of similar and similarly-sized churches (say six to eight churches per group) is established for mutual support and encouragement and the exploration of good practice. In the Diocese of Lichfield each such group is

facilitated by an outside convenor. Local initiative is currently establishing one or two such groups around Ealing, and also in the New Wine network, though without an outside facilitator. Groups may meet several times a year, either incumbents only or whole staff teams or whole PCCs.

Every 18-24 months the small groups can come together in a large day conference, thus bringing the two processes into one. Also, such a process should be seen as part of each church's ongoing MAP review and implementation, not as a separate enterprise.

Another approach would be to encourage large church leadership teams to attend the four-day 'Leading your Church into Growth' course. Over the last 15 years 10% of the clergy of the Church of England across the whole tradition spectrum have attended this course. Two courses a year are publicly available, and dioceses can also book their own course given enough notice.

Recommendation:

Each episcopal area should develop ways of supporting and encouraging the 'larger' churches that appear to be shrinking or hitting glass ceilings. This will probably involve a combination of occasional conferences, regular small-group opportunities, and the publication of initiatives that have worked in practice (C.2).

4-6 Aimlessness and disconnectedness rob the churches of their power to grow

'Where there is no vision, the people perish.' The whole MAP process is designed to help churches develop missional aims by connecting them up to a diocesan-wide network and strategy. However, it is all too easy to drift back into aimlessness in practice. Part 3-3 showed that churches with a high proportion of children that were growing overall were doing so through intentional, well-resourced ministry to children, families and young people. Churches without that aim and intentionality were not faring so well.

Part 3-3 also suggested that churches only seem to be growing overall attendance where they have a fairly high proportion of children. This suggests a priority church-growth aim of focussing on children, young people and families. In 2009 40% of the children of the diocese attended 1 of the 46 churches with a child USuA of 50+. There would appear to be enormous scope for helping and encouraging the majority of churches to grow through focussing on the aim of developing their children's ministry.

All of the significantly growing churches visited for this report and its predecessor, and the majority of growing churches elsewhere, have had an incumbents, and usually a whole church leadership, who are well connected with a wider church world. The majority of leaders of static or shrinking churches are not nearly so well connected. The disconnectedness they suffer from is a contributor to their decline because they have little or no outside source of inspiration, fresh ideas, renewed confidence, accountability, and people in similar situations to talk and pray with. Isolated churches and clergy, even though

at one level they may feel comfortable in their familiar isolation, are unlikely to thrive in today's complex, confusing, changing and often hostile social setting.

Churches that are part of the HTB family or are part of the New Wine network testify that belonging to such a grouping is key to their flourishing. But catholic clergy also say similar things, whether it is connectedness through something like Walsingham, or through 'Catholics for Growth' or informal groups.

We have already suggested that facilitating greater connectedness may be the best way to help glass-ceiling churches. Also, the best way to help churches struggling with welcome and integration is probably to help them see themselves as part of a general pattern and so to learn from the experience of others through the 'Everybody Welcome' course. Churches can be helped to thrive through vacancies by learning, via training materials or small- group meetings, from similar churches that have had a good vacancy.

Deaneries

The natural or official connectedness system in the Church of England is the deanery – the chapter and the synod. But there is a strongly and widely held view among the clergy interviewed for this study (and most other groups of clergy you might care to talk to around the country) that deaneries do not work. 'Strategy and inspiration from our deanery chapter? Going to our deanery chapter is like walking into a funeral.'

So it may be that it is informal partnerships and alternative connections that have to be encouraged if church growth is the aim. However, perhaps a twin-track approach is better as even dysfunctional deaneries must be redeemable. The MAP system acknowledges that mission strategy is best built up from the local to the diocesan. The job of the diocese is to provide a good framework within which the churches can flourish, not to tell them what to do. But there is also a level too big for most individual churches to tackle but still requiring greater local knowledge and connectedness than diocesan leaders can have. Who are the unreached people-groups in this part of London? How can we deploy our scarce resources most effectively in this local area? Can we make sure we are offering the full range of appropriate worship styles and opportunities in this borough? How can the local churches support and pray for each other as a coherent team? How can we work together to achieve the things the individual churches do not have the resources for by themselves?

These are appropriate deanery questions and it may be right to continue seeking to develop area deans (and lay chairs) as strategic thinkers and leaders in mission for their local areas.

The statistical work for this report enables us to offer a new resource not only to diocesan leaders but also to area deans and their chapters and synods. The 'Statistics for Mission' database has been manipulated into deanery format so that each deanery can be supplied with its own statistical record over recent years, updated each year. A sample of attendance measures in one deanery (Spelthorne) is given at Table 15 below. The complete range of measures tracked from the database could include:

- All Baptisms (infant, child and adult)
- Weddings
- All Funerals (church and crematorium)
- Easter Attendance
- Christmas Attendance
- Average Weekly Attendance (Sunday and weekday; adult and child; aggregate – five measures in all)
- Usual Sunday Attendance (adult, child, aggregate – three measures in all)
- Electoral Roll

Such a set of tables ought to enable fruitful discussion of trends and opportunities in the deanery, perhaps at area deans' meetings or once a year at chapter and synod. They should also enable locals to check the database figures for accuracy and encourage them to submit prompt, accurate returns in the future, knowing that their figures will come back to the deanery as information helping to formulate mission strategy.

Recommendation:

Deanery sheets of the main indicators should be routinely given out to enable deanery chapters and synods to examine their own trends and patterns and learn lessons from them (B.9).

Table 15: Extract from 'Statistics for Mission' Database

LDF Reference	CCPD Reference
---------------	----------------

Numbers blocked in yellow indicate a non-return where the number has been interpolated from surrounding years

			2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
AVERAGE WEEKLY ATTENDANCE												
St Matthew Ashford	1301	623271	308	356	295	281	267	334	424	271	356	0
St Hilda Ashford	1302	623270	285	245	231	216	264	202	183	197	192	0
All Saints` Laleham	1303	623272	230	211	221	248	273	260	268	199	159	0
St Mary Mag Littleton	1304	623273	102	109	103	86	73	117	108	117	131	0
St Nicholas Shepperton	1305	623274	209	151	183	94	188	198	474	0	267	0
The Parish of Staines	1307	623277	244	325	255	185	180	276	308	445	346	0
ChristChurchStaines	1308	623275	132	115	109	94	97	0	0	0	0	0
St Mary the Virgin Stanwell	1309	623278	105	114	136	134	188	126	239	101	118	0
St Mary Sunbury-on-Thames	1310	623279	157	205	159	244	208	233	228	208	237	0
St Saviour Upper Sunbury	1311	623280	0	70	213	179	204	230	273	209	239	0
TOTALS			1771	1900	1904	1761	1940	1975	2504	1747	2043	0
USUAL CHILD SUNDAY ATTENDANCE												
St Matthew Ashford	1301	623271	35	15	23	15	11	18	20	12	26	0
St Hilda Ashford	1302	623270	82	63	65	40	54	30	50	63	30	0
All Saints` Laleham	1303	623272	60	50	55	64	55	63	25	20	10	0
St Mary Mag Littleton	1304	623273	7	5	5	5	5	8	10	5	10	0
St Nicholas Shepperton	1305	623274	27	24	27	15	18	24	28	31	35	0
The Parish of Staines	1307	623277	70	37	28	20	53	52	23	53	49	0
ChristChurchStaines	1308	623275	9	8	7	6	8	0	0	0	0	0
St Mary the Virgin Stanwell	1309	623278	5	20	16	16	16	15	32	27	22	0
St Mary Sunbury-on-Thames	1310	623279	38	79	45	37	30	26	33	32	36	0
St Saviour Upper Sunbury	1311	623280	35	35	40	40	47	35	57	45	42	0
TOTALS			368	336	311	258	297	271	278	288	260	0
USUAL ADULT SUNDAY ATTENDANCE												
St Matthew Ashford	1301	623271	165	140	129	122	120	140	142	120	129	0
St Hilda Ashford	1302	623270	146	114	128	148	111	100	107	110	85	0
All Saints` Laleham	1303	623272	175	160	170	185	180	195	210	140	165	0
St Mary Mag Littleton	1304	623273	80	80	80	80	60	50	60	55	73	0
St Nicholas Shepperton	1305	623274	140	136	128	140	160	140	135	136	137	0
The Parish of Staines	1307	623277	224	136	145	115	144	204	66	178	95	0
ChristChurchStaines	1308	623275	76	75	70	63	62	0	0	0	0	0
St Mary the Virgin Stanwell	1309	623278	45	50	70	70	70	80	69	60	76	0
St Mary Sunbury-on-Thames	1310	623279	110	61	120	128	137	149	147	137	173	0
St Saviour Upper Sunbury	1311	623280	100	100	130	130	129	135	160	135	136	0
TOTALS			1261	1052	1170	1181	1173	1193	1096	1071	1069	0
USUAL SUNDAY ATTENDANCE												
St Matthew Ashford	1301	623271	200	155	152	137	131	158	162	132	155	0
St Hilda Ashford	1302	623270	228	177	193	188	165	130	157	173	115	0
All Saints` Laleham	1303	623272	235	210	225	249	235	258	235	160	175	0
St Mary Mag Littleton	1304	623273	87	85	85	85	65	58	70	60	83	0
St Nicholas Shepperton	1305	623274	167	160	155	155	178	164	163	167	172	0
The Parish of Staines	1307	623277	294	173	173	135	197	256	89	231	144	0
ChristChurchStaines	1308	623275	85	83	77	69	70	0	0	0	0	0
St Mary the Virgin Stanwell	1309	623278	50	70	86	86	86	95	101	87	98	0
St Mary Sunbury-on-Thames	1310	623279	148	140	165	165	167	175	180	169	209	0
St Saviour Upper Sunbury	1311	623280	135	135	170	170	176	170	217	180	178	0
TOTALS			1629	1388	1481	1439	1470	1464	1374	1359	1329	0
ELECTORAL ROLL												
St Matthew Ashford	1301	623271	186	204	182	187	186	196	205	205	206	206
St Hilda Ashford	1302	623270	229	172	175	182	187	179	171	177	177	177
All Saints` Laleham	1303	623272	202	198	201	197	208	206	223	225	229	215
St Mary Mag Littleton	1304	623273	112	112	125	126	121	122	97	94	115	140
St Nicholas Shepperton	1305	623274	249	249	244	240	237	235	200	235	248	245
The Parish of Staines	1307	623277	440	205	222	255	269	301	321	358	361	365
ChristChurchStaines	1308	623275	142	130	147	139	130	0	0	0	0	0
St Mary the Virgin Stanwell	1309	623278	103	57	56	102	131	133	122	126	127	149
St Mary Sunbury-on-Thames	1310	623279	243	198	205	203	220	234	199	212	209	211
St Saviour Upper Sunbury	1311	623280	82	142	142	183	185	186	217	233	233	233
TOTALS			1988	1667	1699	1814	1874	1792	1755	1865	1905	1941

The number of clergy as well as paid lay staff and ministers has, if anything, been on the increase in London. In contrast, stipendiary numbers are plummeting in many other dioceses, where, as a result, there is a much greater emphasis on lay ministry. Just relying on the small professional army of paid clergy to deliver growth would be a self-limiting strategy. Getting lay church members connected in to the riches the church has to offer in terms of personal, spiritual and discipleship development has the potential to transform growth-potential. There is scope for growing the numbers of lay leaders through personal mentoring, through the use of the CPAS 'Growing Leaders' course, and through helping every church member to articulate their own faith-experience. Training of whole churches together in how to be missional communities should increasingly be the preferred model. 'Everybody Welcome' is an example of such a course, and 'Back to Church Sunday' is an example of a missional initiative the whole community joins in with together. Messy Church is an example of church planting that is normally best done by a large team of unpaid lay people. Small outward-looking missional communities may be better for church-growth than the traditional home-group system.

So the connectedness agenda is as much about church members as church leaders. It is about exposing the whole people of God to the life of the whole church of God in order to empower whole congregations to grow vision and do mission.

Recommendation:

Clergy and churches should be encouraged to increase their connectedness in a wide variety of ways. The diocese could facilitate the development of small groups for leaders of similar churches. Area deans and lay chairs could be supplied with deanery statistics to enable them to develop deanery mission strategy with their colleagues. Missional discipleship training for the whole people of God should be encouraged (C.3).

It would seem that a large and growing number of London parish churches are acting as hosts to tenant churches, usually from a particular national or ethnic background. Very often there is no connectedness between the two congregations, even leaderships. This is to miss an opportunity not only to offer friendship to fellow Christians but also to learn and gain from them. In certain cases a more formal link may become appropriate.

Recommendation:

A survey should be made of guest congregations to establish approximate numbers and the patterns and then to assist with a feasibility study on offering associate or membership status to appropriate guest congregations already worshipping in the diocese's buildings (C.4).

A fairly universal feature of the growing churches featured in the appendices is their connectedness to their local communities. Community ministry is key to the kingdom

ministry of the churches anyway, but is also a significant factor in their numerical growth through the contacts made and the positive local image built up over years of service to the local community. It may be that this 'Community ministry' model is actually more effective at growing the church than the 'Christendom ministry' model it seems to be replacing – which focusses on the occasional offices, chaplaincies, civic involvement, annual services for community groups, etc. For example, *A Capital Idea* pointed out that churches conducting few funerals were actually growing better than those still conducting many, because the clergy were freer to concentrate on growing the gathered community. One reason why the community ministry model may be more effective at growing the church than the Christendom ministry model is that community ministry is largely done by church members but Christendom ministry by the clergy. This also means that connectedness to the local community now depends more on the strength of the church than the ability or inclination of the vicar.

However, there are losses in this changing ministry context. For example, funerals and bereavement ministry has always been one of the most valuable ministries of the church simply for its own sake. And every so often a bereaved person will join the church and come to faith. The trend towards London clergy conducting ever fewer funerals has continued apace. Part 3-7 of this report showed that the average number of funerals per stipendiary clergy shrank from 14 to 9 per annum between 2001 and 2008. This is an enormous contrast with clergy in almost every other diocese. There may be church growth (as well as simply ministry) possibilities in attempting to reconnect with communities at these key crisis moments of people's lives.

The old model of clergy waiting for a phone call from the undertaker is failing in many places because the clergy have increasingly busy diaries and undertakers find it hard to get hold of them and persuade them to fall in with their timings and arrangements. Some clergy are reluctant to take on funerals because of the impact on their main ministry focus. Other undertakers have 'tame' clergy they call upon, and there has been a rise in secular and other religion funerals and a fall in the death rate.

But a different model of bereavement ministry might reverse this trend. Deaneries or other groups of churches could work together to provide a central first point of contact phone number always manned at certain hours. Bereavement ministry specialists (ordained or readers or retireds) could be sought and trained, enabling incumbents to offer funeral ministry without their having to be the funeral taker every time. Bereavement groups and counselling would be a standard part of the funerals ministry package offered by the churches. Close contact with Christians in a bereavement group or counselling situation is much more likely to enable transitions into the faith-community than the simple after-funeral visit by the vicar. Area bishops, archdeacons and area deans would visit all undertakers to commend the new arrangements to them. In such a way the church might reconnect with the bereaved in a better way than before and with positive rather than negative church-growth implications.

4-7 Fossilised service patterns leave churches stranded in a fast-changing environment

In 2003, the Diocese of London had one church for every 7,500 people in the population. This compares with the average for the Church of England nationally of 3,100. It is interesting that, around the country, attendance hardly rises with parish population beyond a population of 3,000. In other words, aggregate Anglican church attendance varies not with the population of the area but with the number of churches in it, up to the level of one church per 3,000 people. With only one church per 7,500 the Diocese of London has a long way to go before it exhausts the potential of new churches, congregations and fresh expressions to draw more people into the worshipping community.

How important are service times?

The church was built over a century ago, with two great pillars either side of a grand main entrance. On one of the pillars the stonemason etched the eternal words: 'Our service times are 10.30am and 6.30pm'. The building was designed to last a thousand years, and so were the service times.

A London vicar, sensing that the morning service was becoming full and it was time to double up, asked his PCC, 'Why does the morning service start at 10.45?' They replied, 'We changed it to 10.45 about fifteen years ago to fit in with the bus timetable.' The vicar homed in for the kill. 'But the buses stopped running five years ago.' However, he had underestimated the PCC, who replied, 'That doesn't matter, we've got used to 10.45 now and don't want to change all over again.'

Eventually the vicar did get his way, the times were moved and a second morning service begun for the sake of people who did not yet come, and this, too, filled up. A few years later, at the same church, it became increasingly difficult to attract families with boys to the morning family service because they were all playing rugby on Sunday mornings. So the church started a new teatime family-style service, which quickly grew to 150 people. If the PCC's initial instinct to fossilise the service times had prevailed, this church would have lost its growth opportunities.

A survey of almost 1,000 Anglican churches conducted for a number of dioceses showed that most of the attendance loss in the churches in recent years has been from Sunday evening services, and also from early communions. Today, those evening services that flourish tend to be geared at the remaining natural Sunday evening churchgoing groups – teenagers, young adults without children, and that rather narrow age group of older adults whose children have grown up but are not yet too old to be afraid to go out after dark. The key thought process in successful congregation-plants and service-pattern shake-ups appears to be identifying the people-groups that it is desired to reach, then choosing a service time and style that suits their needs today rather than one that resonates with the past.

It is clear, not only from the national scene, but also from the recent history of the ten featured churches in the appendices, that the planting of new congregations is the main

way in which the churches are growing today. This does not necessarily mean that all a church has to do to grow is to start a new service. There has to be some growth-energy, spiritual vitality, and mission strategy at the heart of the church to begin with. But planting is clearly the main way in which broadly healthy churches are growing.

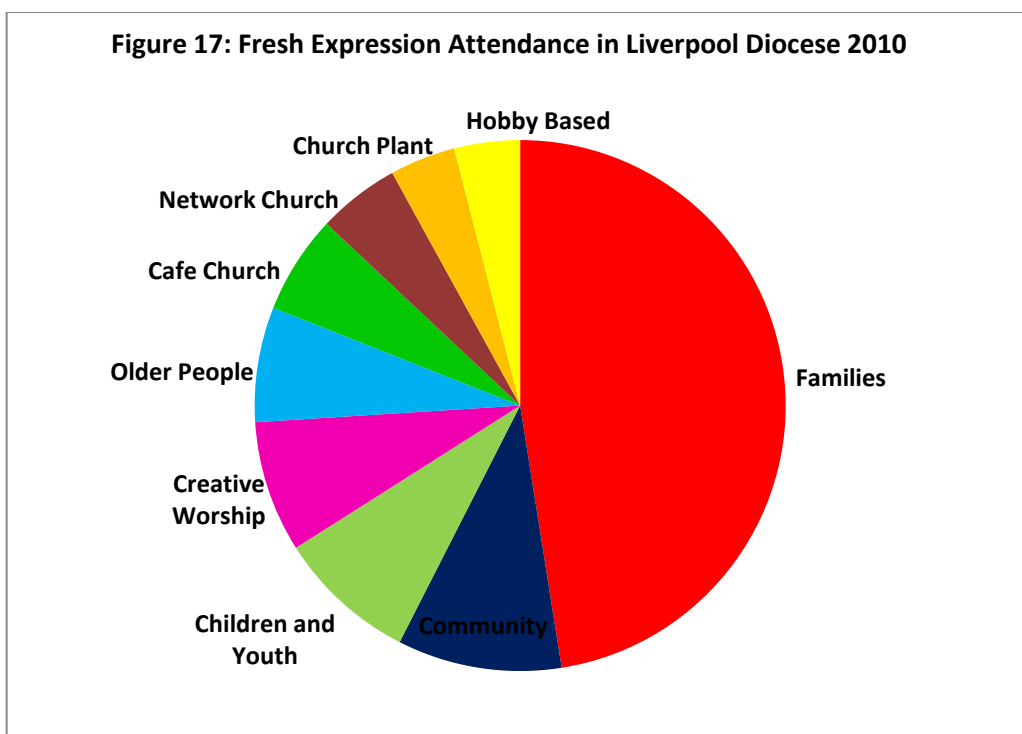
Recommendation:

Those who work with churches on their MAPs might challenge every church to conduct a thorough review of their service patterns with a view to finding the optimal timings and most promising new worship events for the world of today. Such a review should be a fundamental ingredient in every church’s MAP (C.5).

Weekdays and fresh expressions

Perhaps because Sundays have continued to be more productive in London than elsewhere it looks as though London churches are starting to lag behind other dioceses in weekday church provision. Weekday attendance in the country as a whole is rising, mainly through fresh expressions, but in the Diocese of London it is falling. In a 24-7 city like London where large numbers of people work on Sundays, or go away for weekends, or are tied up with family activities, or are too tired to come out, or are out shopping and socialising, it is logical to suppose that a large slice of potential future church growth will be found in weekday services.

The pie chart at Figure 17 below shows the spread of fresh expressions in the Diocese of Liverpool. 80% of these initiatives come from within parish churches and 80% meet on weekdays. Membership of these fresh expressions, at 3,410 people, is now the equivalent of 17% of USuA in the diocese:



Recommendation:

Each deanery could be asked to survey its own recent plants and fresh expressions on both weekdays and Sundays to chart progress but also to identify and share good ideas and practice. Deanery data should be put together to provide area and diocesan-wide information that would build capacity to help and advise churches with their congregation-planting (C.6).

Transplanting – from opportunism to strategy?

Although the widest scope for growth through planting comes from existing churches starting their own new events, transplanting in London has been very successful, as discussed in Part 3-6 of this report. To date, the pattern has been that somebody (a bishop, archdeacon, or leader of a large church) sees an opportunity and takes it. This era of opportunism has worked well, but its future scope will inevitably be limited as the most obvious opportunities get taken up. All involved believe there are still a lot of opportunities coming up, especially as older clergy retire, but the gains may well be maximised by moving from an era of opportunity to an era of strategy.

By strategy is not meant some diocesan Napoleon pouring over a map of London and sticking pins in places he wishes to conquer with fresh troops from mega churches. Rather it is about asking all the players involved – area staff teams, large churches, small churches that might appreciate receiving a transplant, and area deans with good local knowledge, to identify the range of opportunities that may arise in the future and some sort of priority list. The legal and other processes for retrieving redundant churches and bringing them back into worshipping use currently being tested, need developing.

The financial costs (which are considerable) of this sort of planting need comparing with the benefits. And a strategy would be about developing good practice guidelines for all to work with. It will be important that at least some of the transplants will be catholic in style. There are now a couple of examples of catholic style churches receiving HTB style transplants that are maintaining the worship style at one service. St Augustine Queensgate see the transplant they have received from Christians of a different tradition but willing to learn not as a takeover but as a new partnership. This is a promising development as transplanting becomes more mature, but also needed are more genuine catholic style plants such as The Good Shepherd Tottenham.

Recommendation:

A new senior appointment should be made of a replanting officer with a remit to lead on strategy, to coordinate with all the stakeholders, push through the processes and accelerate the number of transplants achieved each year. The strategy would need to be overseen episcopally, but such an appointment might release some existing senior management time to focus on growing the ceiling-bound churches and encouraging other forms of planting. It would also facilitate the transition from the opportunist to the strategic phase of the replanting process (C.7).

Other forms of planting

A few free-standing relational or network fresh expressions are getting under way, though so far they have not been widely noticed. One is at Kings Cross, another is focussing on missional communities in cafes, and a missional community church is about to start in Acton Vale. Several more should be encouraged and time taken to monitor their progress carefully so as to learn lessons and work out how to use scarce diocesan resources most efficiently. St Helen's Bishopsgate – longer established and better known – effectively links its base congregations to discipleship and study groups in the City, West End and Docklands.

The building of brand new church buildings in London would usually be too expensive. But premises rentals are not always prohibitive, particularly in local community halls or coffee shops or pubs or care homes. Worship events in such 'neutral' venues can attract people for whom the 'threshold' barrier of an ecclesiastical building is too high, or for whom the church building is in the wrong place. A major resource not yet used very much for worship is the collection of church schools of which London has around 150, with five new city academies so far. As long as the head is supportive, congregations can easily be welcomed into other schools as well. The Dearing Report said that church schools 'are at the centre of the church's mission' but this well-accepted phrase is still more of an aspiration than a reality. Many newer forms of worship are well suited to schools premises. These have the potential to house and enable a whole new church-planting movement in London at reasonable cost.

Recommendation:

A list should be built up of church worship events in non-ecclesiastical buildings, including schools. Examples of good practice should be publicised and some churches be encouraged and supported to try out new plants in schools and other buildings as experiments from which the whole diocese would hope to learn (C.8).

Recommendation B.2 in relation to focussing funds on growing the church among younger generations could be extended to include the planting of new congregations and worship events by and within existing parish churches, because most of these are aimed at families or younger generations. These might meet in the church building or the hall, or a school or community centre, or pub.

Financing staff costs restricts the number of schemes that can be helped. The most productive use of scarce planting-resources is probably to encourage a wide range of small-scale lay volunteer-led planting. This is normally the best course, for example, with Messy Church. So, backed by an extensive marketing campaign and suggestions for MAPs, such a fund would offer comparatively modest amounts to help cover equipment, publicity and other start-up costs and rentals in the early years. This might stimulate new planting activity among smaller and medium sized churches.

Most London models of planting, and other major new ventures, involve new staff appointments. In a time-poor money-rich city this is a natural tendency. However, such a mindset limits the perceived opportunities for new projects, and restricts opportunities to the wealthier churches. The development of planting strategy and volunteer lay ministry should go hand in hand. St Ann Tottenham has a number of volunteer or very part-time staff members, and so has grown numerically and planted new congregations on a modest budget. This may be a more replicable model than an HTB transplant with a paid staff team and a major building-restoration budget.

The future growth of the diocese will be critically dependent on the strength and width of a planting-movement in which a thousand flowers are encouraged to bloom in the back garden of every church in the diocese.

4-8 Overview

The post-modern international environment of London, the general health, vision and vitality of the churches, and the high quality of church and diocesan leadership, all suggest enormous scope for future church growth.

However, various constraints, or forces of decline, or down escalators, are currently causing the diocese to under-perform when compared with the growth potential. These include declining attendance frequency, vacancy losses, rapid turnover, inadequate welcome and integration, glass ceilings, disconnectedness and fossilisation.

Positive strategies are available to combat the forces of decline and generate new growth in the twenty-first century. The most powerful of these include better welcome, better vacancies, removing glass ceilings, encouraging connectedness groups, new service times, planting new worship events and transplanting from the large into the small.

I will build my church and the powers of death will not prevail against it.

Part 5

Church visits

5-1 St Paul Shadwell

Revd Ric Thorpe and team

The building was constructed in 1656 under the Puritans, becoming C of E with the Restoration. Traditionally it has been a mission church to seafarers and there are 70 sea captains buried in the churchyard. The building was rebuilt in 1820 as a classic preaching box, refurbished by Butterfield mid-century as an Anglo-Catholic shrine, most of the furniture of which was taken out in the 1930s, by which time it had become pretty middle of the road. The congregation began to dwindle after the war, accelerated by the closure of the docks in the 1980s. Latterly the congregation had shrunk to around 15 people on a Sunday, led by a part-time curate. This is a church that has become used over the centuries to a series of significant changes and rebirths.

The Bishop and Archdeacon invited HTB to look at the church for a possible transplant in 2004 while the deanery was recommending closure. There were already 80 people commuting to HTB from the surrounding area, which had started to see young professionals moving in. Other HTB members were prepared to move house in order to join in the transplant, which began with 100 people from HTB in January 2005. Ric (curate at HTB) became priest-in-charge.

The existing 9.30am service was continued, with some ex-HTB members joining the existing congregation, most of whom are still members of the church today. Others joined the new 11am service with its more contemporary style. At first there were hardly any children, but child numbers have grown as congregation members started their families. There has been a high turnover rate in the congregation with no more than about 30 of the original team of 100 still involved, as many have moved away following career and house moves. Others have moved in to the area in order to be part of the church; others found the church through the website. There are also a number of previously de-churched people who have started to attend, and there is a trickle of people from HTB who discover St Paul's existence while at HTB and realise it is not far from where they live. There are some 'friends of friends' who have come along. Finally, there are a number of existing local people who have found faith and joined the church, including a few from the local Bangladeshi community, who make up 44% of the population of the parish. Now about half the church members live within a mile of the church building.

Table 16: St Paul Shadwell Usual Sunday Attendance

Year	Adult USuA	Child USuA
2004	14	0
2005	160	10
2006	170	35
2009	150	50

Table 17: St Paul Shadwell Electoral Roll

Year	Electoral Roll
2005	22
2009	167
2010	221

Factors helping to grow the church

1. Channels exist through the HTB church family by which people can move into membership at St Paul's Shadwell.
2. The existence of a church website (recently improved).
3. An entrepreneurial culture – the church will try anything to see if it works – failure is okay.
4. The initial big increase in numbers was associated with the start of the 11am service, and there was a further boost in 2007 when the 6pm service started, attracting young adults without children.
5. The church functions well as community and some people move to it from larger churches such as Hillsong where the sheer scale makes it harder to find a way into community and belonging.
6. Alpha courses are held regularly, usually with 10-20 people. So the groups are of a size that gives people an immediate community to which they can start belonging.
7. There are ten strong midweek groups (now called 'Connect Groups') which are the focus for community and pastoral care but which also are missional communities with an outward focus. For example, one group focusses on links with the local Bangladeshi community.
8. St Paul's Shadwell is the only church in the parish. Only 2% attend church at the moment, so there is a large mission-field.
9. The church values high-quality Sunday worship, with a worship leader on the staff team.
10. Sacrificial giving from a congregation on reasonable but not enormous incomes (teachers are typical). Income in 2010 was £370,000.
11. An emphasis on integration and stickability, so they are pretty good at helping new people to find their belonging in the community fairly quickly.
12. 'Natural' church growth through the birth of many children to a young congregation.
13. Very few deaths, owing to the young age profile.

On the other hand, the mobile nature of the congregation means that many people are likely to move on each year, making it hard to grow much beyond the present level as quite a number of new people are needed each year just to keep attendance the same, and there is a limit to the absorptive capacity of the community. Also, the demographic means that

committed members are likely to attend only one week in two or three due to other commitments in busy lives.

Encouraged by the Bishop and Archdeacon, the church has recently planted into two nearby existing churches to strengthen them. A curate and 30 members moved to St Peter Bethnal Green in summer 2010. St Paul's are giving St Peter's a substantial gift of money over 2011 to cover Common Fund payments. St Peter's is Anglo-Catholic in style and the intention is to maintain this tradition at the existing service but to add another less formal service. This is therefore an important possible prototype for cross-tradition transplants that respect and maintain the receiving tradition.

All Hallows Bromley-by-Bow had shrunk to a USuA of 12 adults and 4 children in 2009. In September 2010, the transplant was made from SPS including an ordained minister and a team of five. On the most recent Sunday in mid January 2011 there were 38 in the congregation, a record for modern times. An 'Eden' mission team is due to arrive in March, doing mission on the local estate.

St Paul's has found that the 35 or so people sent out in the two transplants have somehow been replaced in their own congregation within a few months. This mirrors the experience of some other sending churches. Some room had been created in the existing congregation and at the fairly full 11am service. This may be suggestive that the community dynamic of the church at present means that it is now close to its natural ceiling size.

I suggest that, though there may be some limited scope for growth at 9.30 and 6, the step changes in affiliation will continue only to come through planting and transplanting.

For existing services the best new initiative in an area and church with such a high throughput of people might be to work further at the welcome and integration of the newcomers who will keep on trying the church out. This could be done through accessing the 'Everybody Welcome' materials and training programme (Google 'everybodywelcome').

In relation to planting at St Paul's it may be worth having a radical look at service times and styles, surveying both those who come now and who might come, with an eye on Saturday or Sunday teatimes or after-school times for young families. Lessons might be learned from the Messy Church style. The venue does not have to be the church – a local school might be suitable for a plant. The demographic being aimed at here would primarily be the younger local residents, those with children.

In relation to transplanting into other churches, the priority for the next year or two should be to establish the two existing plants. The leadership teams of the three churches are working together where they can and meeting together for staff meetings and prayer. Areas of cooperation include publicity and design, HR policy, and training – and they are looking at shared buying. This sort of chosen collaboration is a much better alternative to legal, structural schemes that absorb endless management time and achieve little. As the two transplants continue to bed in (and a successful trans-tradition plant can be demonstrated), St Paul's will maintain ongoing dialogue with the diocese with a view to offering further

transplant teams if there are suitable receiving churches. In this way the story of the rebirth and growth of St Paul's and its new family of churches may have only just begun.

5-2 St Paul Hammersmith

Revd Simon Downham

Table 18: St Paul Hammersmith Electoral Roll

Year	Electoral Roll
2003	424
2010	643

Table 19: St Paul Hammersmith Usual Sunday Attendance

Year	USuA
2003	556
2009	551

The initial history of St Paul's as a plant from HTB was mentioned in *A Capital Idea*. After the initial period of rapid growth, overall attendance has been relatively stable. In the pioneer days of high energy and excitement the committed core tended to come every week. Attendance frequency is now more normal, with the core probably attending on average about three Sundays in five. With a membership core of around 800, total attendance one recent Sunday was 630. The church has also become more systematic in adding its members to the Electoral Roll. These two factors together explain the divergence in trend between ER and USuA.

A decision was made early on to bed down into the locality, to be present for the long term and to grow the institutional presence of the church in the parish. But there is also a city-wide dimension to the church, set as it is in the heart of Hammersmith, into which 40,000 people come every day to work. It sees its strategic function as being to nurture city-shapers – 'St Paul Hammersmith shaped by God to shape the city'. The congregation contains a large number of nationalities, including both local and eclectic members and there is a very wide socio-economic spread.

There is now no connection with HTB, but there is a family likeness and links are maintained, for example, with meetings and retreats for staff teams across the HTB family. Networking with similar churches is seen as important to maintaining vision (for example, for mission to the whole of London), sharing ideas, and mutual support and prayer.

A major problem with the roof a few years ago threatened the church's very future but the church is now coming towards the end of a £10m project that includes a west-end extension to be opened in October 2011.

The church has seen a 50% turnover of membership in the last five years. The local housing stock contains social housing for the less well off, and expensive housing for the well-off, but little in between. When the second or third child arrives many families move out to larger houses in cheaper housing areas. Over one summer three years ago the church lost 160 people from its morning congregation for this reason. At a recent evening service there were only 9 original planters among a congregation of 250, though the proportion is rather greater in the morning service. So there is a certain inherent fragility in the church, needing as it does to attract large numbers of new members every year to avoid going into numerical decline.

A range of social initiatives has become established since 2003. These include help with parenting, especially focussing on preventing relationship-breakdown when the first child arrives. 'Torch' is a Thursday evening group for young people not in employment or training, and with a faith as well as a community agenda. The church has 40 full-time staff members, many of whom are employed in the various social enterprises. These enterprises are not only valuable in themselves but also lend a deeper plausibility to the church itself and its role in the community. The church is about transforming community in Hammersmith and then beyond, about being resilient and influential in the urban environment.

As such initiatives expand and develop the church is anxious to resist the inevitable secularising tendencies and to enable people to come to faith through them. As many initiatives as possible will be rehoused in the new church meeting space, with its café and hospitality hub, when it is opened so that they happen on church premises and people can get used to being in the church building.

The church continues with the traditional service pattern of early communion, a later morning and an evening service. The core congregation includes around 600 adults, 200 children and a growing number of teenagers. An office-workers' lunchtime ministry was tried but did not take off. However, two new services are planned for when the extension is completed in September 2011 – a weekday lunchtime communion service in the new multi-function space and a Sunday 4pm families-based congregation.

Three years ago a number of Australian members all returned to Australia at about the same time and, partnering with a Baptist church, started a new fellowship in Sydney which began with 40 people and now has 350. A second plant is currently happening in Sydney and a similar plant is being undertaken in Los Angeles. Nearer to home, Simon was made priest-in-charge of St Alban Fulham as it ceased to function as a church. After a few false starts St Alban's was relaunched in September 2010 with four families and ten single people from St Paul's and a curate and small team from HTB, 50-60 people in total. After five months Usual Sunday Attendance is already up to around 110. St Alban also houses Korean and Spanish guest congregations. In due course the curate will take over as priest-in-charge, but there is a significant cost to St Paul's as the curate is housed in the associate minister's house and a new one is likely to cost of the order of £1m. The church is open to other planting opportunities, perhaps in areas that congregation members tend to live in.

St Paul's has wide ethnic and social diversity, including Afro-Caribbeans, Poles, Iraqis, Iranians, Mongolians, and Swedes. Given its high rate of turnover, the welcome and integration process is key to the future of the church. The January 2011 welcome course had 38 members, and the autumn 2010 had 60. The welcome course runs three times a year on three Monday nights. The aim is for the church to learn about its new members as well as the members about the church, and church leaders come along to make contact. Church staff, led by an administrator in this specialist role, work hard at the next stage of integration after the course, helping people into friendships, and tracking them for a year

with a traffic-light system with follow-up calls and letters. It is only through investment and intentionality that the church is able to retain and integrate a high proportion of those who try it out.

Over the last eight years St Paul's has grown up from the 'new plant' phase into an established parish church with deep roots in its local community and a reputation as a strategic church for London and beyond. Rapid population turnover is both its main threat and opportunity. It must not lose its parish heart to a grander city-wide eclectic vision. Future growth will come through planting new congregations in the newly enhanced building and through further planting into other churches and community centres. Further enhancement of the welcome and integration system (more frequent but smaller welcome courses?) might also bear church-growth fruit as the flow of people trying out the church continues unabated.

5-3 St Saviour Sunbury

Revd David McDougall

A Genesis but no Exodus

In 2002 the Bishop of Kensington asked David, associate vicar of St Stephen East Twickenham, whether he was up for a challenge. The vicar of St Saviour Sunbury had retired. The weekly service had been a Latin mass and the congregation had shrunk to 15. There were plans to close the church and redevelop the site just next to the Sunbury Cross roundabout at the end of the M3, for an office block. But the Bishop said he would like David to take some people with him from St Stephen and see if the church could be resurrected.

About 50 people joined David in autumn 2002 but he and his wife also visited the 15 existing members and listened to the stories of their faith journeys. A communion service at 10am on Wednesdays, including the offer of healing ministry, met their needs and they stayed. This service has now grown to an average attendance of around 35 with an active social and community life based around it.

Factors in the Growth Story

1. The planting team had prayer-walked the local streets and put a glossy invitation card through every letter box. They organised a clean-up campaign in local streets and a high profile music gig. They also removed the church pews in order to create a large and flexible space for multi-use throughout the week, there being no church hall. This immediately enabled the start of a pre-school drop-in and an older people's fellowship. The pre-school groups are led by Christians building friendships and community that draw people into the faith and life of the church. The 'Coffee and Chat' group, that has grown to over 50 people, is a two-hour midweek café with a thriving social life at other times, and many members have started attending church, done an Alpha course, etc. The new Sunday morning service quickly grew from 50 to 100 people.
2. From the beginning there was a desire to serve the local community through identifying felt needs and meeting them. The local community's trust in the church has been restored and there are always many contacts. The church office is over shop premises at Sunbury Cross, and the shop is used for a toy library, food store, pregnancy advice centre, and by Age Concern. The current motto or vision statement of the church, expressed on a banner overlooking the bus stop at the front of the church building, is 'Growing the church through living faith, authentic worship and practical love'. The contacts tend to be followed up evangelistically, informally or through Alpha courses, so there is usually a good trickle of people contacted who are coming to faith. St Saviour's has become a significant community resource and focus of regeneration and, perhaps as a result, the vandalism has now stopped.
3. A staff team has grown with the church and now consists of a curate, a second 'pioneer' curate, children's worker, voluntary part-time youth worker, office manager, part-time operations manager, part-time community worker, voluntary senior people's worker and voluntary maintenance manager. David also has a part-time PA for his work as area dean. The team is key to the ministries of the church and so to its growth and development.
4. Sunbury is, by London standards, a settled and stable area with many multi-generation families. It is more typical of the rest of the country than some parishes nearer to the centre. Ministry through baptisms, dedications, weddings and funerals has been important missionally as well as pastorally. David explains this in a chapter of the book *More Ways than One – Evangelism in the Post-modern World* (Philo Trust 2009). Adult baptisms tend to be by full immersion and three or four services are needed each year.
5. The main morning service has grown to include around 200 adults and 65 children and teenagers. The church building is fairly full. An evening service was started in autumn 2010 aimed at the 20s and 30s age groups. This is beginning to grow. There is also a separate teens worship event on Sunday evenings. The teens join the new congregation once a month.

6. There is a Church of England secondary school in Sunbury (Bishop Wand) and the church ran a mission in the school a couple of years ago. The staff team also has strong links with several primary schools.
7. Around 2008 the church had begun to plateau and lose some vision – the initial vision had been accomplished but a new one had not replaced it. There was a degree of conflict and also exhaustion after what had been achieved over six years. Some of the original planting team moved away. But by 2010 a new vision had been found (summarised in the banner over the front of the church) and there is now a fresh energy and zeal, and growth is returning.
8. David summarises the lessons learned for local church evangelism in the book *More Ways than One* as follows:
 - a. Be incarnational – in a relational, long-term way
 - b. Look to respond to felt needs – for example for parent & toddler groups
 - c. Be there in the moments that matter – occasional offices
 - d. Use the liturgical calendar – making the most of Christmas, Easter, etc
 - e. Serve your immediate community, including schools
 - f. Invite people on a journey, using a course like Alpha

The future

Sixty per cent of the congregation are also members of the small groups (Life Groups). The Wednesday service has grown in numbers. As people's lives at weekends get more crowded attendance frequency on Sundays tends to go down. David sees that future growth may need to be on weekdays, and I suspect he is right. Could an existing event take on more of the characteristics of church worship so that it becomes church for those who go?

Because of the schools links and the groups meeting in church midweek, I especially see scope for growth among children and families. In many areas today Saturday or Sunday teatime is becoming a better time for many families than Sunday mornings. Could the church look at a teatime service in a different style, including some food?

It is expected that the pioneer curate will start a new church plant of some description with perhaps 20-30 members of the existing congregation in around January 2012. A prophetic picture was given a few years ago of five fires around a central fire, which was St Saviour's. So the main story of church growth in the future may well be one of planting. Clearly this is a church with planting in its DNA and the case for it does not really need to be made. The planting may be a combination of new events within the building or orbit of St Saviour's itself or of new churches or fresh expressions – a wide range.

Table 20: St Saviour Sunbury Usual Sunday Attendance

Year	Adult USuA	Child USuA
2001	15	3
2002	100	35
2003	130	40
2004	130	40
2005	129	47
2006	135	35
2007	160	57
2008	135	45
2009	136	42
2010	160	62

Table 21: St Saviour Sunbury Electoral Roll

Year	Electoral Roll
2001	82
2005	185
2010	233

5-4 St Ann Tottenham

Revd John Wood

Table 22: St Ann Tottenham Electoral Roll

Year	Electoral Roll
1994	60
2001	150
2005	241
2009	332
2010	355

The church grew right from the beginning of John's incumbency in 1994. The starting attendance of 90+ doubled in the first year, was then steady for a while, then grew again. Average Sunday attendance in 2010 was 410, with 550 on Easter Sunday. The number of congregations has risen from one to six (including the children's church), the budget (including social action projects) from £30,000 to £630,000 (2010), and the number of staff has risen to 40, including those employed by the social enterprise projects. The ingredients of this growth illustrate a number of general principles and include:

1. **Leadership style and shared responsibility.** John was ill for the first two years. He gave responsibilities away and assembled a lay leadership team. Although too ill to preach, he was able to develop relationships, invite people to the vicarage, and make the atmosphere more relaxed and joyful. A number of former members rejoined in John's first few months.

2. **Indigenous leadership.** Most leaders and paid staff are locals, and many current leaders were already church members in 1994. Costs are kept modest through part-time and unpaid positions. John has been careful to discern what people could do and so bring them on in leadership. The majority of the staff team are from Black/Ethnic Minority backgrounds. The leadership team come out of the local community and embody the truth that the church is for the local community; it has not been taken over by outsiders.
3. **Buildings.** In 1994 the buildings were in poor condition. The hall was boarded up and full of graffiti. Drug dealers and prostitutes operated in the church car park. The church owned a house across the road that had become a ruin. The derelict state of the buildings engendered a feeling of depression among the surviving church members. £750,000 has been spent to sort out the buildings, which are now in a good state and well used. All this was an enormous help to church morale.
4. **Ethnic and language mix.** There are a number of language groups including those from Nigeria, Uganda, Ghana, Sierra Leone, West Indies, Poland and Eastern Europe. The mix represents the area and is represented in the leadership, so all the main groups feel a sense of ownership and belonging.
5. **Worship style.** An initial move was to offer refreshments after the service every week, helping promote Christian community. The style is quite Pentecostal in feel with serious Bible teaching applied to real life. This helps make the church attractive to those who have dropped out of local Pentecostal churches. The informal style is natural and appropriate to the main local cultures. The original 11am service can feel fairly chaotic, with many children. A recent emphasis on pastoral care for the children, including regular home visits has helped to build total numbers further to around 200.
6. **Planting.** The 9.30am service is the same as 11am, but rather quieter and more intimate. It began with around 40 people and has now grown to 90 or so on an average Sunday. About eight years ago a congregation was planted on the Tiverton estate, initially in a pub but now in a community centre, with the help of the London City Mission. The style is accessible, relational, and family based with café style worship with dialogue. Over 80 people may come to weekday events in the centre, with 50-60 for special services. The plant on the Broadwater Farm estate took off when the leadership was indigenised with an ex-gang member as evangelist and a security manager as part-time unpaid pastor. A youth service has recently started in the church at 5.30, including 'youth Alpha' and food. Numbers vary from 15-40. The original 11am congregation has grown by around 150 but there are another nearly 200 at the new services and plants. Now the church is looking to work more intensively on two more estates with a view to possible planting. So planting remains a major key to growth, but the way the planting has happened with local leadership has also been critical.
7. **Children.** The resumption of the key relationship with the church school plus the more family-friendly worship atmosphere led to a growth in the number of families in the church. Children's groups began with a crèche, then a group for 3s-7s, then 7s-11s, then teens.

8. **Social ministries.** The church's welcome card contains the church community's slogan or strap line – 'Belong, Believe, Be out there'. The social ministries have been developed simply for their own sake, but it is also spiritually healthy for the church to behave Christianly as a community. Church members learn that they belong in order to serve not to consume. But also, experience has shown that such outreach does feed into the church services. A counselling service has developed, centred on St Ann's, that is now running in 33 local schools. There are youth clubs and Christian clubs in several schools. Families in need of practical support may be visited with clothes or toys for the children and an invitation to something. Other ministries include work with people with mental health issues, and a nightshelter for the homeless. The hall is part-occupied by 'Christian Action and Responsibility in Society' Haringey – CARIS). This offers support such as legal advice, English teaching and child care to people living in temporary accommodation.
9. **Open church.** Some of the staff of the social projects have their desks in the church building itself. So it is warm and unlocked all day. People wander in, some to pray and some to share their problems.
10. **Welcome and Integration.** The church has grown despite a fairly rapid population turnover. It is quite normal for the church not to know where or why someone has suddenly left. It may also be that they will reappear equally unexpectedly from, say, Nigeria, several months later. So the church has learned to do welcome and integration well. Newcomers are encouraged immediately to fill in a welcome card with their contact details on. They will then be rung with invitations to an appropriate group. For example, John regularly rings about 60 men to invite them to the monthly men's group. Newcomers may well also be visited early on.

Future growth

The church has reached the size and complexity where it would benefit from investment in its administration, probably in a high-level operations manager. Such a person would take on much of the day-to-day running of the church, leaving the vicar with more time for leadership and innovation.

5-5 St Michael Camden Town

Fr Philip North

Recent history

By 1996 the church had suffered a prolonged near-death experience with a congregation down to single figures and the buildings almost in ruins. How the church was revived under the new rector, Nicholas Wheeler, was described in *A Capital Idea*.

Fr Nicholas left in 2008, Fr Philip arriving after about a seven-month vacancy in November. Fr Philip saw that there was a big risk of losing people in a vacancy in a church that had

grown fast under the pioneer ministry of one person in a very transient area. Numbers did go down a little in the vacancy, but not nearly as much as they might have done as the church was part of a properly functioning team ministry so there was some continuity of pastoral care from team clergy who were already known at St Michael's. Fr Philip also shared the same sort of vision as Fr Nicholas so there was a smoothness of continuity as he arrived.

With many postgraduate students, often from abroad, recent graduates who quickly move to houses in the suburbs, and asylum seekers who might move on at any time, congregation turnover could be as much as 40% a year.

This meant the church had to attract a lot of new people every year just to stay the same size, and also that its resurgence had a certain fragility about it. However, in the last couple of years the settled core has increased in size and turnover has gone down somewhat, so there is a more permanent feel. Some people are staying in the area mainly because of their sense of belonging to the church – the sense of fragility is turning into solidity.

A major key to attracting new people is having the building open during the week. The main advantage of the church building is its High Street location. A typical story is that someone popped in on their way to Sainsbury next door, had some sort of welcome and invitation, and tried the church the next Sunday. Attention has also been paid to the quality of the Sunday worship, followed by extended fellowship immediately afterwards, so many first timers had a good experience and came again.

Attendance rose somewhat when an NSM joined the church, perhaps through the improved quality of the worship and pastoral care on Sundays. With its eclectic congregation, St Michael's offers a 'Big Sunday one-stop church' with people staying a long time after the service, and this time is key to the development of the community. Now there are two NSMs. The church also has a pastoral assistant doing community ministry and some administration.

Part of the 'Big Sunday' approach is 'Sundays at 12' – a sort of grown up Sunday school. So each Sunday includes learning as well as worship and fellowship. New and fringe people often feel able to stay on for these learning opportunities on a Sunday.

The MAP, revised in 2010, has been important to the story as it expresses and enables the transition from pioneer to corporate leadership.

Current Situation

A large banner at the front of the church proclaims the strap line: 'Making a family out of strangers'. Around 30 nationalities are represented in the highly diverse church community of around 300 people, including many Europeans. The church employs a Spanish outreach worker a few hours a week. The biggest group are probably Ecuadorians, though many work or are busy most Sundays. If all the Ecuadorians came to the Sunday mass there

would be 40 of them, but often there are only 3 or 4. Average Sunday attendance, however, is only around 100, only one third of the people who see St Michael's as their church.

Fr Philip gets an email address for every new person and emails them every Friday with some major church notices and a helpful thought. The feel is that of a friend emailing and is one of the ways of making family out of a group of strangers. There are different email lists for different church groups such as the Men's Group and 'Enquiring Minds' (young adult discussion group).

There are various weekday masses, but only the 10.30 on Sundays as the whole event is the heart of the church's community life. Average attendance at the moment is around 95, including 12 children. There is now a working toilet, and there have been some other building improvements, but the heating is still woefully inadequate and the interior of the building is in poor shape. Yet good location, liturgy and community have enabled the church to grow in numbers despite the cold.

The future

So far, the more the building has been opened up and developed, the more the congregation has grown. Future strategy is to fully exploit the potential of the building and its site. If the building can be fully restored and developed it can be used non-stop by the local community, and the church community should grow further. A business plan has been drawn up and work on the porch and hospitality space has just begun. The plan is to work in partnership with a charity working with people with mental health problems, getting them back into work. It is hoped to build on land in the church's back garden to create a café as a social enterprise staffed by the mental health charity but also a catering wing for the church. The church building will be structurally stabilised, relit, heated with under-floor heating, and rewired, hopefully in the next two years.

A further challenge within the team is presented by St Paul, Camden Square, now in a run-down condition with a small congregation at a 5.30pm mass. Rebuilding plans include a new housing scheme to pay the costs. Then perhaps there will be an opportunity for a planting team and some local growth.

One threat to the future is that posed by the introduction of women bishops, which some would find difficult, and another is posed by cuts in housing benefits forcing up local rents and forcing out church members into cheaper housing areas elsewhere. Partner organisations and statutory services may also be under threat from Government cuts.

Future growth?

That St Michael's has developed so far without any form of heating in the church building is a modern miracle, testimony to the power of the church's position, the church's community life and the church's head, Jesus Christ. Once the building has become warm, attractive and well used throughout the week, and once the café is up and running, there will be enormous potential for future growth. The congregation will need to worship elsewhere for a

few months while the building work is done, but they should not fear that experience – often congregations grow in such circumstances.

The strap line perfectly captures what St Michael’s has to offer, and the strength of that should not be diluted as the church grows. However, once the building is reopened there will soon need to be further changes to accommodate all the new people. The church will shortly become the proud owner of 280 new chairs, which it hopes to fill. But if this vision is to be realised it will need continuity of good leadership willing to carry on amidst apparently threatening changes and the vulnerability of inner-city ministry where congregational size can waver radically for no apparent reason. ‘Success’ cannot only be measured in numeric terms.

5-6 St Gabriel Cricklewood

Revd Jane Morris

The vacancy and the numbers Trend

The story of the growth of average attendance from 50 to 200 adults plus 60 children and young people between 1994 and 2002 was summarised in *A Capital Idea*. What has happened since?

Table 23: St Gabriel Cricklewood Attendance and Membership

Year	Adult USuA	Child USuA	Electoral Roll
2003	201	50	211
2004	160	40	220
2005	168	34	204
2009	164	35	255

Mark Aldridge left in August 2004 and Jane arrived, after a nine-month vacancy, in May 2005. My research elsewhere suggests that the drop of 20% in attendance in a nine-month vacancy is not unusual. St Gabriel was probably especially vulnerable to vacancy loss as it was quite large by 2004, with a high proportion of newer people without deep roots in the church, in a high turnover area and without strong leadership structures. It is also entirely normal that there was no bounce back in average attendance when the new vicar arrived, and attendance numbers have remained fairly constant since.

It is likely that the ER has risen since 2005 mainly because greater care has been taken to register members – it is now a more accurate reflection of affiliation than it used to be. The ER is updated each year and the turnover averages 7-9%. The majority of joiners are new to churchgoing and the majority who leave have moved house and changed church. So the

life and ministry of St Gabriel's is contributing to the growth of the whole church even if its own numbers have been fairly static.

In order to show even very slight attendance growth, St Gabriel's would seem to need around 10% to be added to its membership each year. Including children this is around 30 people. This is quite a lot of people to attract and absorb year in year out. In addition, attendance frequency, reflecting the national trend, has probably been going down since 2003. The ER increase reflects a genuine rise in affiliation. Certainly, the number of regular givers has gone up. So the number of new people required to cause an increase in USuA would be slightly more than 30.

The story since 2004

1. Attendance numbers may have been fairly steady, but there has still been a strong story of church development since 2004. Mark's leadership style (personal, pushing through a revolution in church life, being an evangelist) enabled the initial growth. Under Jane's leadership, however, the next stage of development has needed collaborative leadership, shared vision, stronger organisational structures and evolution rather than revolution. The development of lay leadership teams should make the church somewhat less vulnerable to future vacancies and in general means that its health and development is more secure, more self-sustaining and less dependent on one leader.
2. The number of nationalities in the congregation has continued to rise, with over 60 different countries of heritage. One third of ER members live in the parish, one third close by and one third further away. The ethnic mix in the parish has also evolved, now including a large number of young adults from Eastern Europe. Jane has travelled to Barbados and Uganda, finding out where church members have come from and enabling her to understand and, if necessary, challenge the thought forms of the congregation.
3. The plant and buildings have been continually improved since 2003. At first the church was the priority – an extension with new kitchen and toilets, then work on the roof, gutters, clock, disabled access and grounds. Then the flat above the hall was refurbished; now the hall is being done step by step. This building work (and the financial work to enable it) are seen as enabling future mission. The new café in church is a clear example of this philosophy.
4. The paid staff team has evolved. In 2003 the team consisted of vicar, curate, youth minister, housekeeper and caretaker. Now there is a vicar, curate (post currently vacant), 0.6 church manager, café manager, finance assistant, 0.5 worship minister, CAP (Christians Against Poverty) centre manager, housekeeper and caretaker. The next appointment will be a full-time children, youth and families minister. So paid leadership is becoming more spread and corporate with a more solid base. (Although from time to time some of the staff team choose to give their time.)
5. The café began in 2008, but has only had a host/manager since summer 2010. Since then it has started to make better contacts with people during the week, some of whom have then started attending on Sundays. This year there is a plan to try out

a worship event on a Thursday connected with the café. Rather than the café simply being a stepping stone into Sunday church in this way it could become church for those who already go to it. 'Little Angels' on Mondays is already developing aspects of church, with Christian songs, prayers and termly services. This too could either be seen as a way into Sunday church via the monthly all-age morning service, or as developing church in its own right.

6. The church has a very positive attitude to the diocese in response to its positive vision and leadership. The PCC pays slightly more into the Common Fund than is needed to cover their own costs, contributing to other churches around, and may be able to give more in the future. Its Common Fund payments have risen from £25,500 in 2001 to £68,000 this year. In many other dioceses the Share for a church the size of St Gabriel's would be double this amount. The modest size of the Share and the way it is negotiated clearly contributes both to good relationships with the diocese and the church's ability to pay assistant staff.
7. The church has been working at developing stronger links with the local community, for example, with the residents association. Far more local people are now coming to special church services and other church events and a few are starting to come to the all age service. People continue to come to Alpha.
8. The church has a good web site, notice boards and welcome materials with good quality graphic design. The plan is that a newcomer expressing interest receives a letter from Jane within a few days and someone gets in touch by phone. There is a welcome lunch four times a year.
9. The evening service aimed at young adults declined after 2003 down to about 20 people in 2008. Then a group started meeting once a month to pray for the service and numbers turned round from that moment. Now around 30-40 people attend an average service, with perhaps 65-70 service members.
10. The difficulty of developing lay leaders is a major restraint on growth, despite using the CPAS 'Growing Leaders' course. The Welcome programme is under-resourced and those leading it have moved away. It is not clear that there would be the people to resource an extra service if one were started. It has proven especially hard to draw men into leadership, and also to have a wide ethnic mix. Leaders have a habit of moving house.

The Future

Some future growth may come from existing initiatives such as the café, enabled by the practical work on buildings and finances, and the stronger staff team.

There are currently quite a large number of very small children coming on Sundays. These should form a good core group for the new children, youth and families minister to work with. It will be important for the minister to focus on growing a team to work with children and families rather than on doing it all herself.

With the constant need to absorb new people into congregations with high rates of turnover, and problems with finding and resourcing people to take the lead in this, it may be worthwhile for the whole church to do the 'Everybody Welcome' training course.

As the local community ministry develops, it may well be that future growth in numbers at worship events will best come on weekdays. The projected new service on Thursdays may demonstrate what the future potential might be, so giving it every chance of success should be a major priority.

5-7 St Paul Ealing

Revd Mark Melluish

In the years prior to the 2003 visit church attendance had grown rapidly. Since then the ER has continued to grow but attendance has been more fluctuating.

Table 24: St Paul Ealing Membership and Attendance

Year	Electoral Roll	USuA (all age)
2001	369	450
2002	359	650
2003	359	850
2004	503	700
2005	416	660
2006	626	700
2007	702	801
2008	628	902
2009	784	745
2010	802	

Moreover, there are some question marks over the consistency and accuracy of the attendance figures. The ER has grown mainly because a more concerted effort has been made to persuade members to join the ER. There has been significant growth in attendance at church worship events on weekdays.

On average 17% of church members move away each year, but it was a lot more in 2008. The downturn in the economy meant that many people could no longer afford to buy a larger house to accommodate a growing family locally. With greater job insecurity others were forced to relocate by their employers. The church lost 15 families and a lot of single professionals during the summer of 2008, as well as £60,000 a year in planned giving. A trickle of people also leaves for wider Christian ministry, including an average of one ordinand a year.

St Paul's is in a suburban setting without the large eclectic potential of some of the bigger churches in central London. Most of its members live locally and average attendance is

probably still around 75% of effective membership. Maintaining its large size, let alone growing to the next level, is therefore a particular challenge. In addition to factors mentioned in *A Capital Idea* here are some critical features of church growth and development since 2003:

1. **Staff team.** The church pays two curates direct in addition to its Parish Share of £88,000. Including the clergy, there are six full-time paid staff and five part-time. In addition the church has had some success in recruiting unpaid volunteer staff, and this may be an increasing feature in the future. Administration absorbs three staff members. The scale of the church and the range of its activities can only be maintained through a strong staff team. I suggest that, in the future, the church could benefit from a high level 'operations manager' who would be responsible for the day-to-day running of the church, while the vicar retained responsibility for leading it. It is very easy for leaders in large churches to burn out. St Paul's uses a chart to keep a record of the involvement of volunteers. Their names are colour-coded green if they have one responsibility, blue if two, and so on. When someone acquires four responsibilities they are visited! Staff team contracts all include a day a month just to pray and regular retreats. One day a month they are encouraged to cancel all appointments and recuperate.
2. **Children.** Much of the church's growth has been among children and families. Child Usual Sunday Attendance has gone up from 150 in 2006 to 220 in 2009. There is a Tuesday evening outreach group for children, with about 70 coming each week, and the Friday evening youth work attracts 50-60. 'Great and Small' on Wednesday mornings can attract as many as 150 small children with their carers. The lack of liturgy and formal prayers in church life today can mean the children have a more fluid base for their faith – so there is a clear challenge to help young Christians become clear and strongly rooted in their faith.
3. **Planting.** New growth has mainly come from planting new worship events.
 - a. A fresh expression meets weekly in a local coffee shop on Tuesday evenings. Up to 40 people will turn up to eat and discuss the theme of the week together. There is background music but no singing and up to 10 minutes' Bible-based input from a speaker. The group fund their own ministry projects together. Several families have become Christians through it. This fresh expression is not yet included in the October Count figures, though perhaps it should be as it appears to be 'church' theologically even though some might find it hard to classify it as church culturally.
 - b. 'Great and Small' meets on alternate Wednesday mornings in the church led by the children's pastor with a team of 15-20 helpers. This now attracts an average of around 260 people each time, so it feels like a rather wonderful nightmare! It is craft and drawing-based so is a semi- Messy Church in style, with songs, and a talk. There is an admission fee of £2 a head rather than a collection. Challenges include helping people to move on in personal faith, discipleship and giving.

- c. The Tuesday evening event for around 70 younger teens includes games but also a talk, prayer tent, Bible story, etc.
 - d. The church is now seeking to partner with another local church with a view to grafting a group from St Paul's into it and supporting its growth and development for the next five years. I suggest that developing partnerships with other churches, together with persevering with existing and new plants within the parish, is perhaps the best strategy for future church growth.
4. **Ethnic mix.** The church has become much more racially mixed in recent years. Important to this development has been bringing people from minority ethnic backgrounds into leadership – one as a warden, one as a service-leader.
 5. **Connectedness.** Mark suggests that the church has only grown and thrived because people from outside the church have encouraged and mentored him and the church leadership. It is vital to see the local church as part of a bigger movement of the kingdom of God, of the story of God at work in the world. Without having a wider context from which to draw, it is hard to see how a local church can know how to flourish and grow. Deaneries may not provide the connectedness needed because of the wide breadth of the Church of England and the defensive culture of many deaneries. Three times a year Mark organises a networking meeting for 50-80 church leaders across churches within a five-mile radius with an inspiring speaker, a good lunch, and good Bible input. There is opportunity for participants to tell their stories, hear other stories, be prayed with and encouraged in their own faith. Such events create effective connectedness and such a model could be replicated elsewhere, either within one small area ecumenically, or within an Anglican area.

5-8 St John Southall

Revd Mark Poulson

The recent story of St John's is bound up with the area's population changes. The church shrank in the 1960s as the previous white population began to move out as Asians moved in. Mark arrived in 2003 following a lengthy vacancy. The congregation under his predecessor had become ethnically mixed, just over 50% Asian, with African-Caribbean and white minorities. This process had been assisted by an Asian and an African curate.

Since 2003, 91 people have left the church, 65 because they moved away, 21 died and 5 simply stopped coming. A number of Asian Christians have moved away as they became more prosperous. Moreover, there were no further curates or other paid workers until recently. There is also now a self-supporting minister. The service pattern has remained unchanged. And yet Usual Sunday Attendance has risen since 2003 from around 150 to 220, of whom 50 are children. The main morning service attracts around 150, the afternoon Punjabi-language service 45 or so, and the traditional evening service a further 20.

Growth has come through an evolutionary approach aimed at doing things well in a multi-ethnic context. The process of articulating vision ('from every tribe and nation worshipping the Lamb') and reordering took five years. The curacy house, which was unfit for purpose, was sold and the money used to reorder the church. The screen, choir stall and pews were removed to be replaced by a stage and different sorts of screens. There is a choir and a music group at the multi-ethnic Sunday morning service, all ages worshipping together but splitting into adult, teens and children's groups for the ministry of the word. Afterwards there is food and extended fellowship, which can last to the early afternoon. New members have come from the full range of religious backgrounds, both Christian and non-Christian.

The Punjabi service had an ambiguous status but is now fully incorporated into the church, in what may be a model for many churches hosting separate or semi-independent congregations. The quieter evening service has survived and even grown slightly, as the only evening service left in Southall.

Since 2008 the emphasis has been on revitalising worship and discipleship, and looking outwards. The reordering was done with mission in mind, for example, including an antechamber at the back of the church, allowing Muslims to come into the building for English classes. There is now a part-time administrator and also a youth worker, reaching young people through 'The Vibe' café. Monthly prayer meetings, a renewal of the home-group network and nurture courses have helped strengthen the church to the point where it is strong enough to start planting new congregations. Alpha did not draw in people from outside the church but the START course has worked well in the culture of Southall.

Ethnic mix continues to change. Over half the congregation are Punjabi Indians but there are also smaller groups from other Indian states, Pakistan, Grenada, Jamaica, Trinidad, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Poland, Lithuania and the Ukraine. Some East Europeans have attended to get married and then stayed on. There are now many Somali and Afghan Muslims living on local estates. Only 10% of the children in Southall schools speak English as their parent tongue. The church centre is filled with language classes every morning.

The planting plan is to use a local school or community centre for a 'Messy-style' multi-ethnic event including extended food and community time, contacts mainly coming through local schools. The church already does an Easter holiday Bible club plus Christmas events away from the church building to allow members of other faith communities to attend. The vision is for the Messy Church to become a congregation in its own right in a multi-congregation church, using START as the discipleship vehicle for adults. Someone will need to be employed to do pastoral care leadership of such a community, which would very likely include Somalis and Afghans.

St John's illustrates the potential that exists in a world city like London for building church with people from many nations, some of whom may one day return to their own countries. It would be good to find means for church members, and former church members, to make contact with others who share in this vision, disseminating and receiving both encouragement and expertise. The proposed Messy-style plant has considerable potential

and would merit both resourcing and monitoring for the lessons that can be learned for this style of church, which is taking off all over the country, in a London context.

5-9 St Nicholas Hayes

Fr Andrew Evans

Numbers and recent history

The parish of St Nicholas is mainly composed of fairly modest private and (former) council houses mostly dating from the 1930s. The Sunday congregation (one service at 10am) has in fact shrunk a little over the last ten years. The number of adults has fluctuated, though it looks as though there may have been a drop off in the vacancy in 2008-9. But the number of children has dropped significantly and the average age of the congregation has gone up. The local demographic, however, has been getting younger as the original generations are being replaced by new young families. This is a church with more baptisms than funerals.

The church began as a tin hut in the 1930s, the present building dating from around 1960. It is not ideally situated, being a long way from the shops, firmly in the private housing away from the Charville (council) estate. The style is clearly catholic, but also with charismatic elements in music and healing ministry, and an evangelical approach to the Bible. Groups go to Spring Harvest. As well as the Sunday service there is a mass at 9.30am on Wednesdays with a Bible study in the middle of it. The congregation is a mix of White and Afro-Caribbean, and there is also a significant Sikh presence in the population, plus some asylum-seeker accommodation.

Table 25: St Nicholas Hayes Usual Sunday Attendance

Year	Adult USuA	Child USuA
2001	50	19
2005	42	15
2008	50	11
2009	No Return made	
2010	40	5

Table 26: St Nicholas Hayes Electoral Roll

Year	Electoral Roll
2001	74
2005	76
2009	68
2010	71

Problems with growing the church

Many long-term church members and leaders tend to move away when they retire. At least 10% of the congregation have retired to different parts of the country since Fr Andrew arrived.

Younger people can be very transient, with some of those who book a baptism actually moving away before it takes place. Many have complicated lives making it hard to develop consistent patterns.

It has been hard to find, develop and keep church leaders. Many initiatives are wholly dependent on one person. For example, the mums and toddler group closed down when the person running it moved away.

It is not straightforward for new people to break into belonging to a close and settled church community.

What the church is trying to do

1. The congregation really wants to grow. There is openness to change and a desire to attract and nurture young families. With tiny numbers of children currently they are looking at creating an open area that is more family-friendly by removing some pews and allowing children to remain in the service.
2. The church has recently taken a new look at their MAP priorities and come up with three – ‘Children’, ‘Healing Ministry’ and ‘Community Action’.
3. A Messy Church style of event after school was tried in the autumn of 2010, but it was not very successful. They are thinking of trying again in the spring on a Saturday. This is seen as a feeder into the Sunday service.
4. A Wednesday night youth group has recently been started with some success.
5. A friendship club for the elderly (The Vine) has recently been started.
6. Fr Andrew visits two large local primary schools for assemblies and festivals.

New people have replaced those who have moved away, though overall numbers have perhaps just grown a little.

St Nicholas is just the sort of smaller London church that needs to grow significantly if there is to be solid overall growth across the diocese. Focus on these ‘bread and butter’ parishes should not be lost through concentrating on flagship projects. The church is right to focus on children and families as the way forward. Small churches should aim to do a very few things but to do them well. The priority this year should be the relaunch of the Messy-style Church, probably on Saturday teatime. All contacts through hall user-groups, schools, baptisms, church members’ friends and neighbours, etc should be cultivated and attractive invitations issued. The prayer life of the church should focus on the relaunch. It is vital that the first three events be of high quality. Rather than see this form of church as a stepping stone to Sundays the church might seek to develop it as a full form of church in its own right.

Finally, the local Baptist church is trying out a community church on the Charville estate. Is there a way St Nicholas can work with them?

5-10 St Martin Ruislip

Fr Simon Evans

St Martin is a large, catholic style, suburban church that had seen significant growth leading up to my first visit in 2003. Since then the ER has grown further but average attendance is somewhat less than the peak in 2003:

Table 27: St Martin Ruislip Membership and Attendance

Year	Electoral Roll	USuA (all age)
2001	539	363
2002	568	406
2003	568	470
2004	585	380
2005	608	375
2006	619	355
2007	555	340
2008	607	375
2009	620	375
2010	649	

Turnover in this outer suburb is a lot lower than in inner London – between 5% and 8% leave or die each year. Being an aspirational area, people tend to come to raise a family and to stay put until they die – so the average age of the population is higher than in many areas of London. However, it is noticeable that a smaller proportion of those new to the area now have a church background, so there is less ‘automatic’ church growth from people moving in. And in this large church the ‘low’ turnover still means the church needs to find 30-50 new members each year just to stay the same size.

Attendance patterns, however, have become much less regular. This is the main reason why membership has grown but attendance has not. Average attendance frequency is now about three weeks in five, with those coming monthly balancing those coming most weeks. The busyness of life means that some people now do on Sundays what they used to do on Saturdays (eg shopping), others are too tired on Sundays to make the effort to come to church every week.

Nevertheless, new people do turn up on most Sundays. The problem is that, not wishing to be intrusive, the church does not have a very developed way of learning their names and contact details and befriending them quickly. When people have come a few times then an effort will be made, but many newcomers do not persevere to that point. Partly it may be that the two main morning congregations are just too large for new people to be picked out easily, and there is less motivation to be proactive with newcomers in what appears already to be a large and successful congregation.

The glass ceiling created by this and other group dynamics is not especially high – around 130 communicants at 9.15 and 90 at 11.15. But a service with, say 180 people in it,

including children, where people come on average three weeks in five represents a community of 300. Also, many people are mobile between different services, so increasing the pool of people attending any one service yet again.

The church would benefit from going through the course on welcome and integration, 'Everybody Welcome'. This should alert and train the church to be more proactive in welcoming newcomers quickly and effectively, and offer structures for ensuring welcome happens well.

Although it is feared that some people are lost right at the beginning, the congregation generally are good at befriending the people they do notice – for example, those who don't take communion because they are not yet confirmed. The Lay Pastoral Visiting team continues to grow so there is a good lay pastoral care structure once people have been included.

The annual adult confirmation group (eight this year) also acts as a 'getting to know you' social group. It is part of a 'big' Wednesday evening for six months of the year around a Eucharist to which sponsors and families are also invited. This can be a route into faith and membership for some wedding couples. Other routes include the all-age choir, which attracts families, the Friday morning parent and toddler group, and the drop-in lunch club linked to the bereavement ministry.

The number of children on Sunday mornings has gone down a little. The church primary school moved from a 1.5 entry to a 2 form entry, easing the competition for places, especially as all the local primary schools are of a high standard. So families are no longer coming with a schools motive. But sports activities have also hit Sunday numbers – it was recently found that most of the boys in the confirmation group play football on Sunday mornings. Fr Simon can see the argument for a 4pm service on Sundays, but that would probably require a bigger staff team.

What was done in response to the increased difficulties of regular Sunday morning churchgoing was to start a Saturday evening service. This is conducted as a full Sunday service and included in the USuA numbers on the 'Statistics for Mission' form. It is done in relaxed style round a nave altar with modern songs but with incense, acolytes and the Sunday morning readings and sermon. This service can attract 40 communicants, perhaps 25 of whom are extra to the Sunday congregations and the others are 'Sunday' people who will be busy the next day. So it has been one way of stemming the decline in attendance frequency. It is the planting of this service that explains the slight rise in attendance in the most recent years.

Further church growth may best be enabled by the planting of a Sunday teatime service and of a main service on a weekday evening. A Saturday evening alternative is fine for those who will be busy just on Sunday, but is no use to those going away for the weekend or busy all through it. However, such developments would require a larger staff team.

The only paid assistant staff are the organist, curate and half-time administrator. The training curate has recently moved on so the church is currently without one. The church pays a large Common Fund (£120,000), but after a recent deficit, it is now back in surplus. I suggest the church might look at a long-term appointment of an associate priest to enable planting, and also invest in more administration hours.

In part the lack of paid staff is a deliberate policy, fearing that a powerful staff team disenfranchises and demotivates the congregation. There are now three unpaid lay readers, three lay pastoral assistants and a lay evangelist. There is a team of lay people who run the youth ministry as well as the children's ministry. It is probably getting harder to keep this going without a paid children's or youth minister, so the day may come when such a post is created but, if it is, the post should be about supporting and enabling the lay leaders to work with the children, not doing the work on their behalf.

The principal aim for the immediate future is to keep increasing the numbers involved in leadership and to have clear lay leadership structures for each major aspect of church life with a more definite and coherent ministry leadership team.

Fr Simon helped found a group in 2006 called 'Catholics for Growth'. This involved getting clergy together, working through seminar groups to develop programmes for the renewal of parish life based on renewing the laity and empowering them for ministry. This has been an uphill struggle in a priest-dependent culture. Some clergy are only really comfortable when there are relatively few people dependent on them. Some congregations are unwilling to take on responsibility in order to grow. So everyone colludes. This is not a general 'catholic' problem as there are many RC churches renewed and buzzing through lay leadership, but it can be an Anglo-Catholic problem.

Part of the problem may be traceable to training – with minimal missiology and church growth on the curriculum – as well as to the dependency culture. But, whatever the reason, Fr Simon sees the need for more missional catholic clergy prepared to invest and trust in lay leadership if the catholic wing of the church is not to contract further.

Appendix A

List of recommendations arising from the report

A. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

- A.1** *Although the October Count numbers have not been checked, corrected and interpolated for this report simply due to lack of time, it is still important that this be done. The October count is now the preferred measure of attendance for the national church and has the advantages over USuA of being an actual count and including weekday attendance (Section 2-4, page 13)*
- A.2** *Renewed effort should be made to motivate wardens and clergy to get accurate figures (including all services and fresh expressions) on to the 'Statistics for Mission' form and also to ensure that church size measures are not used as levers for arguments in Common Fund discussions (Section 2-5, page 16).*
- A.3** *The introduction of on-line data-collection systems should be monitored and reviewed so that the way forward is mapped, communicated and agreed on by all parties concerned (Section 2-5, page 16).*
- A.4** *Consideration should be given to separating off the October Count, Easter and Christmas questions on attendance, and sending them out at the end of December, in advance of the remaining questions, which relate primarily to church officers and finance (Section 2-5, page 16)*
- A.5** *Attendance and other measures should be looked at alongside ER when trying to measure church growth and decline. The October Count, Usual Sunday Attendance, Easter and Christmas Attendance, and the number of tax efficient planned givers are all worth noting (Section 2-7, page 19).*
- A.6** *The 'leavers and joiners' question pioneered by Leicester and being picked up by one or two other dioceses should be considered as a way of measuring changes in the size of individual church communities and charting the flows of people in and out (Section 2-8, page 20).*
- A.7** *A range of church 'prayer lists' or 'membership lists' should be sought and examined as possible templates for fresh ways of measuring church at the local and community level. A cross section of churches, or a single deanery, should be asked to conduct a two-month census to check patterns and frequency of attendance, and establish a relationship between attendance, ER membership and the total size of the church community (Section 2-8, page 20).*
- A.8** *A survey should be conducted among a selected sample of churches across the diocese to gain fuller and more up-to-date details on attendance patterns and*

compared with the results of any similar initiatives conducted in other dioceses or by the National Church (Section 4-1, page 42).

B. SUPPORTING AND RESOURCING EXISTING MINISTRIES

- B.1** *Bearing in mind the far better growth trend in churches where children make up at least 25% of attendance, churches should review the priority and resources they devote to growing among children and families. Churches should look at recent developments that appear to be working, principally Messy Church and Sunday teatime services (Section 3.3, page 29).*
- B.2** *The attempt to find extra resources from the Bishop of London's Mission Fund for children's ministry should be pursued as vigorously as possible, and the grant conditions reviewed in order to prioritise and target applications intended to grow the church among the younger generations (Section 3.3, page 29).*
- B.3** *A diocesan-wide review of the MAP process should now be carried out, for which comparative attendance and membership trends should be plotted for those parishes not using MAPs (Section 3.7, page 36).*
- B.4** *A study should be made of the complexities of attendance change through vacancies, and an experiment conducted in a group of churches or one Episcopal Area to prioritise short (under six month) vacancies. The experience and attendance changes in these short vacancy churches should be compared with those in similar churches with longer vacancies and the results used to fix future diocesan policy (Section 4.2, page 45).*
- B.5** *The diocese should cooperate with CPAS and two Midlands dioceses currently addressing the issue of how churches are supported during interregna, with a view to engaging in the fieldwork needed to produce training resources on how churches can grow as missional communities through vacancies (Section 4-2, page 46).*
- B.6** *The diocese should consider a web-based referral system for people moving house, which churches can access to invite their new local church to visit house-movers or which the movers themselves can refer to. Ultimately a national system would be better than a diocesan one (Section 4-3, page 49).*
- B.7** *Every church should be encouraged to review its welcome and integration of newcomers in the high turnover London world. Churches should consider using the course 'Everybody Welcome' (CHP 2009) www.everybodywelcome.org.uk (Section 4-4, page 51).*

B.8 The diocese should consider how to encourage a universal full-hearted adoption of 'Back to Church Sunday'. B2CS is most effective once good welcome and integration processes are in place (Section 4-4, page 51).

B.9 Deanery sheets of the main indicators should be routinely given out to enable deanery chapters and synods to examine their own trends and patterns and learn lessons from them (Section 4-6, page 56).

C. EXPLORING AND EVOLVING NEW MINISTRIES

C.1 Several churches should be asked to experiment with a midweek evening 'main' service to see if they can attract both new members and those unable to make it on Sunday. Such experiments would be seen as being 'on behalf of the diocese' with the results disseminated around for others to learn from. If there are churches that already do this, then they should be asked how things are going and what lessons have been learned (Section 4-1, page 43)

C.2 Each Episcopal Area should develop ways of supporting and encouraging the 'larger' churches that appear to be shrinking or hitting glass ceilings. This will probably involve a combination of occasional conferences, regular small-group opportunities, and the publication of initiatives that have worked in practice (Section 4-5, page 54).

C.3 Clergy and churches should be encouraged to increase their connectedness in a wide variety of ways. The diocese could facilitate the development of small groups for leaders of similar churches. Area deans and lay chairs could be supplied with deanery statistics to enable them to develop deanery mission strategy with their colleagues. Missional discipleship training for the whole people of God should be encouraged (Section 4-6, page 58).

C.4 A survey should be made of guest congregations to establish approximate numbers and the patterns and then to assist with a feasibility study on offering associate or membership status to appropriate guest congregations already worshipping in the diocese's buildings (Section 4-6, page 58).

C.5 Those who work with churches on their MAPs might challenge every church to conduct a thorough review of their service patterns with a view to finding the optimal timings and most promising new worship events for the world of today. Such a review should be a fundamental ingredient in every church's MAP (Section 4-7, page 61).

C.6 Each deanery could be asked to survey its own recent plants and fresh expressions on both weekdays and Sundays to chart progress but also to identify and share good ideas and practice. Deanery data should be put together

to provide area and diocesan-wide information that would build capacity to help and advise churches with their congregation-planting (Section 4-7, page 62).

C.7 A new senior appointment should be made of a replanting officer with a remit to lead on strategy, to coordinate with all the stakeholders, push through the processes and accelerate the number of transplants achieved each year. The strategy would need to be overseen episcopally, but such an appointment might release some existing senior management time to focus on growing the ceiling-bound churches and encouraging other forms of planting. It would also facilitate the transition from the opportunist to the strategic phase of the replanting process (Section 4.7, page 62).

C.8 A list should be built up of church worship events in non-ecclesiastical buildings, including schools. Examples of good practice should be publicised and some churches be encouraged and supported to try out new plants in schools and other buildings as experiments from which the whole diocese would hope to learn (Section 4.7, page 63).

Fresh Expressions of Church

The Church of England is moving intentionally towards becoming a mixed economy church: many different fresh expressions of church alongside the parish system. It is important that this developing aspect of our common life is included on this annual form.

A fresh expression is any venture that works mainly with non-churchgoers and aims to become church. It is:

- Missional – it works mainly with non-churchgoers
- Contextual – it seeks to fit the context
- Formational – it aims to form disciples
- Ecclesial – it intends to become church (i.e. not just help people feed into existing 'inherited' church)

To find out whether or not your venture is a fresh expression please visit the fresh expressions (www.freshexpressions.org.uk) website which is full of stories that will help you understand what a fresh expression of church is.

Those attending established fresh expressions of church should be included alongside the normal returns for Sunday and weekday services and weekday activities. If you are uncertain as to whether an activity or service in your church counts as a Fresh Expression, Barry Hill would be happy to chat on 0116 261 5335.

Is your church actively involved in any Fresh Expressions of Church? Yes No Not yet, but hope to be in next 12 months

If yes, please give the names and a short description of each Fresh Expression below:

BAPTISM - Number of persons baptised (note 1) _____

Under 1 yr Age 1-12 Age 13+

Thanksgiving for the gift of a child - Number of children for whom a thanksgiving service for the gift of a child was held (note 1) _____

Under 1 yr Age 1+

MARRIAGE - Number of couples married in church (note 2) _____

Blessings of marriage - Number of couples for whom a service of blessing (after civil marriage) was held in church (note 2) _____

FUNERALS - Number of deceased for whom a funeral service was held in church (note 3) _____

Number of deceased for whom a full funeral service was conducted (on behalf of this church/parish) at crematorium/cemetery (note 3) _____

EASTER AND CHRISTMAS - 2010

Number of communicants on Easter Day including vigil services (note 4) _____

Number attending worship on Easter Day including vigil services (note 4) _____

Number of communicants on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (note 4) _____

Number attending worship on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (note 4) _____

OCTOBER 2010 - CHURCH ATTENDANCE

(Please use the salmon shaded area for the attendance at Inherited/Traditional church – i.e. most of what we do and the people base for Fresh Expressions of Church (FECh) as explained at the top of the page)

Week commencing:

Sunday October 3rd 2010

Sunday October 10th 2010

Sunday October 17th 2010

Sunday October 24th 2010

Adults (note 5)				Children and young people (note 5)			
Adults (16+) at worship on Sunday (note 5)		Additional adults attending weekday services & worship activities (note 5)		Number attending worship or visit for children's activities on Sunday (note 5)		Additional number attending weekday services and worship activities (note 5)	
Church	FECh	Church	FECh	Church	FECh	Church	FECh

Please indicate if any of these attendance figures are unusual for any reason, e.g. Harvest Festival or half-term.

ADDITIONAL 'ONE-OFF' QUESTION FOR 2011

1. How many different activities involving the wider community / neighbourhood take place on your church premises over an average month? (enter number)
2. a) Do you host a specific community/ neighbourhood activity in partnership with another organisation (eg community shop/ post office/ debt advice/ nursery)? YES / NO (delete as appropriate)
- b) Please describe
3. What facilities are on your church premises? (tick ✓) T toilets Kitchen Separate meeting space

Total Church Attendance on a 'normal' Sunday

For the purposes of this return a 'normal' Sunday is one which is not a major festival or contained in a peak holiday period. If attendance fluctuates a weekly 'average' should be given. Sundays when no services are provided should be excluded. Persons attending more than one service on the same day should, wherever possible, be counted only once.

Children and young people (age under 16 years)

Adults (all people of 16 years of age or over including those leading services.)

Electoral Roll 2010

Please state the number of persons on the Electoral Roll as presented to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held within the period 1 January to 30 April 2010.

Note 1. Baptisms & Thanksgiving for the gift of a child

Please state the numbers of people in each age group baptised between 1st Jan 2010 and 31st Dec 2010 or for whom a thanksgiving service for the gift (birth or adoption) of a child was held and registered.

Note 2. Marriages and Blessings of marriage

Please state the total numbers of couples married in church and of couples for whom a blessing service after civil marriage was held in the church.

Note 3. Funerals

In the top box please state the number of deceased for whom a funeral service was held in the church. In the bottom box please state the number of deceased for whom a full funeral service was conducted on behalf of the church/parish at a crematorium or cemetery i.e. excluding committal only. In each case include all funerals conducted on behalf of the church/parish by any minister including readers, stipendiary clergy, non-stipendiary clergy and retired clergy. For benefices, please ensure funerals in the crem are only recorded once.

Note 4. Easter and Christmas

In the communicant boxes please enter the number of communicants on Easter Day (including those at vigil services held on Easter Eve) and at any service (day or evening) on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Clergy and other ministers who took communion should be included. Each person should only be counted once even if they took communion at two separate services. In the attending worship boxes please enter the total number of people that attended worship over the same periods. Please include all people: communicants and those that did not take communion; adults, children and young people; clergy and laity. However, as far as is possible, each person should only be counted once even if they attended more than one service.

Note 5. Church attendance (including fresh expressions) in October 2010

In order for consistent data to be collected from all churches/parishes/fresh expressions please use the following definitions. They are intended to ensure that, as far as possible, each individual is counted only once each week irrespective of the number of times they attend church during the week:

Adults: All people of 16 years of age or over including those leading services.

Children and young people: All those under 16 years of age.

Number attending worship on Sunday: Please enter separately the number of adults and children attending fresh expressions of church which meet on Sundays (see top left of this page for more definitions) alongside the number attending Sunday services and Sunday schools or equivalent activities including the administration of the Eucharist outside the church e.g. at home/in prison/in hospital. All people should be counted only once each Sunday no matter how many times they attend. All people should be counted whether or not they are regular members of the congregation. For example, all people attending a baptism service should be included.

Additional number attending weekday services and worship activities: Please enter separately the number of additional adults and children attending weekday fresh expressions of church (see note 1 above) alongside those attending weekday services, administration of the Eucharist outside the church and other worship activities.

Worship activities include any activity in which worship is the prime purpose and predominant feature. Activities with only some worship element, such as some para-church group meetings, house groups, some prayer groups, Lent groups, mother and toddler groups, some school assemblies and Alpha courses, etc. would not fall into this category if they were a supplement to Sunday worship. However they should be included if they are, in effect, church for that group of people (and therefore a fresh expression of church as defined above). All people should be counted whether or not they are regular members of the congregation but wedding and funeral services should be excluded. People should only be counted once in each week beginning with the specified Sunday. Thus those attending on Sunday should not be counted in this category and those attending more than one midweek service should only be counted once in any week.

We turn now to think of numerical Church growth...

Thinking about the attendance statistics recorded on the last page, please can you give a rough indication of the following (approximate numbers are fine, although the more accurate they are the more helpful they will be in providing further opportunities for resourcing, encouraging and training). In the question below, regular is defined as at least once a month. Fresh Expressions (as previously defined and noted) should also be included). Adult and children/young people are as previously defined (16 years and over, and under 16's respectively). Those who don't attend church services but do receive Eucharist in their homes, residential homes or hospitals should not be counted as having left the worshipping community.

In terms of regular worshippers how many people (during 2010).... <i>(please use your discretion, but we suggest 'regular' is once a month or more)</i>	Adults	Children and Young People
Joined the worshipping community, for the first time		
Joined the worshipping community, transferring from another church		
Joined the worshipping community, returning after a break from church		
Left the worshipping community, through death or ill health		
Left the worshipping community, through relocation or joining another church		
Left the worshipping community and are no longer part of any church (to the best of your knowledge)		

Sunday Attendance Record 2010

Finally, the following record of Adult attendance is used as one factor, amongst many, in calculating parish share. However, in recognition that new members to a church often take some time to start giving financially, and especially in a tax efficient way, a time lag is built into the system, such that a three year rolling average is used, with 2010 figures not even being included in that until 2012. Please use the previously given definition for Adults (i.e. 16 years or over). All those involved in service leading should be included in the total number given (e.g. all clergy, lay readers, those in choirs, music groups, etc.) and those attending baptisms or other festivals should also be included (even if a baptism or similar is held in a separate service on a Sunday), as should those who attend any Fresh Expression which meets on a Sunday. The Parish Share calculation takes into account special occasions and churches without weekly services so they are not penalised. No person should be counted more than once per Sunday. Where no service was held please enter "--" in the relevant box. If this is not returned, it is impossible to accurately calculate Parish Share and so an additional levy is added.

Month	Sunday date	Adult Attendance
January	3 rd	
	10 th	
	17 th	
	24 th	
	31 st	
February	7 th	
	14 th	
	21 st	
	28 th	
March	7 th	
	14 th	
	21 st	
	28 th	
April	4 th	
	11 th	
	18 th	
	25 th	
May	2 nd	
	9 th	
	16 th	
	23 rd	
	30 th	
June	6 th	
	13 th	
	20 th	
	27 th	

Month	Sunday date	Adult Attendance
July	4 th	
	11 th	
	18 th	
	25 th	
August	1 st	
	8 th	
	15 th	
	22 nd	
	29 th	
September	5 th	
	12 th	
	19 th	
	26 th	
October	3 rd	
	10 th	
	17 th	
	24 th	
	31 st	
November	7 th	
	14 th	
	21 st	
	28 th	
December	5 th	
	12 th	
	19 th	
	26 th	

Appendix C

List of all Parishes with both (1) over 30% Growth in Usual Sunday Attendance 2003 to 2008 and (2) over 25% Usual Sunday Attendance under 16 years old in period 2003 to 2008

Parish	Code	Under 16 Average Sunday Attendance	All Age Average Sunday Attendance	% Average Sunday Attendance under 16	Change in Average Sunday Attendance 2003 to 2008	Tradition	Ordained Ministry	Church School	Children's Ministry (from parish website)
Emmanuel Northwood	2413	150	467	32.1%	+143.55%	Evangelical	V (55), AV, AV, C, SSM, SSM	None	Children's and Families Minister, Youth Minister and Toy Library Manager integrated into 17-strong Staff Team
All Souls Margaret on Thames	1024	55	126	43.8%	+98.6%	Evangelical	V (31), C	None	Active Sunday and weekday Clubs. Children's Coordinator integrated into 7-strong Staff Team
Emmanuel West Hampstead	1605	31	102	30.0%	+62%	Liberal Catholic	PIC (44), C, HnC, HnC	Primary	MAP focus on Children's Church and expansion of youth provision
St Mary with All Souls Kilburn	1608	34	137	25.0%	+60.3%	Liberal Catholic	V (47), C, SSM, HnC	None	Family Cohesion Worker and Sunday School Coordinator integrated into 6-strong Staff Team
Kensal Rise Team Ministry	2112	82	285	28.8%	+57.8%	Evangelical/Charismatic	PIC (35), TV, SSM, SSM, HnC	None	Active Creche and Sunday School. Two Youth Groups. Parent and Toddler Group
Holy Trinity Twickenham	0907	52	155	33.8%	+51.4%	Evangelical	V (40), SSM	None	Two Sunday School Coordinators and Infant Coordinator integrated into 7-strong Pastoral Leadership Team
St Michael Gordon Hill	1819	30	81	37.4%	+49.1%	Central	PIC (45)	Primary	Active Sunday School

Parish	Code	Under 16 Average Sunday Attendance	All Age Average Sunday Attendance	% Average Sunday Attendance under 16	Change in Average Sunday Attendance 2003 to 2008	Tradition	Ordained Ministry	Church School	Children's Ministry (from parish website)
St John at Hackney	0501	34	137	25.1%	+46.9%	Liberal Catholic/Central	V (38), SSM	Primary	Active Sunday School, Youth Club, Film Club
St John Walham Green	0807	34	85	39.7%	+46.6%	Liberal Catholic	PIC (44)	Primary	Dedicated Children's Coordinator and Youth Worker
St Luke West Holloway	0616	45	154	28.9%	+45.8%	Accepting Evangelical	V (62), SSM	None	Active Sunday School, Youth Group and Children's Choir
St Andrew Southgate	1808	43	134	31.8%	+45.2%	Central	V (26)	Primary	Active Sunday Club. Daily termtime children's groups
St Olave Woodberry Down	0519	27	102	26.0%	+42.3%	BME (West African)/Central	V (55)	None	Active Sunday School and Youth Group
Holy Trinity with All Saints Dalston	0506	31	118	+38.2%	+38.2%	BME (Caribbean)/Liberal Catholic	V (50)	Primary	Active Youth Group
St Mary with St John Edmonton	1810	17	63	27.5%	+33.8%	Anglo-Catholic	V (43), SSM	None	Active Sunday School
St Peter Black Lion Lane	0819	70	215	32.7%	+32.7%	Moderate Catholic	PIC (45)	Primary	Two dedicated Community Youth Groups (oversubscribed)
St Peter and St Paul Teddington	0914	34	96	35.6%	+30.5%	Liberal Catholic	V (53)	Primary (shared)	Active Sunday School