

ANOTHER CAPITAL IDEA

CHURCH GROWTH IN THE DIOCESE OF LONDON 2003–2010
Statistics, Patterns, Causes & Future Strategies

The Diocese of London is looking forward to the next phase of its shared life in 2012 and beyond as it seeks to honour Jesus Christ in the capital. Key to this will be reviewing its long-term strategic framework, the *London Challenge*. As part of this process, Bishop Richard asked Bob Jackson and Alan Piggot to re-examine the themes of the 2003 report *A Capital Idea*, which noted exceptional church growth within the diocese.

Their report, entitled *Another Capital Idea*, updates the progress and patterns of growth up to 2010, and makes further suggestions for the future growth and flourishing of the churches. This paper summarises the findings and recommendations of *Another Capital Idea*.

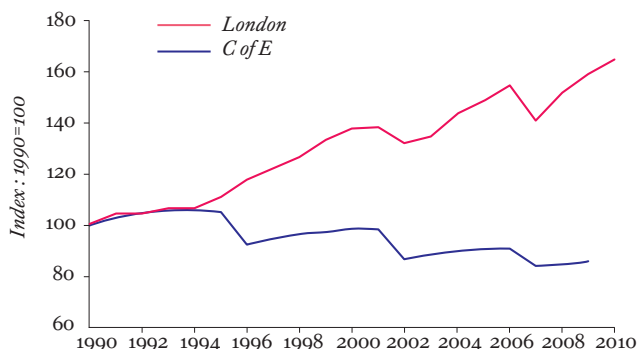
The full report may be viewed on the Diocese of London website www.london.anglican.org/CapitalIdea.

IS THE CHURCH IN LONDON STILL GROWING?

In a word 'Yes', but it depends what you look at.

MEMBERSHIP

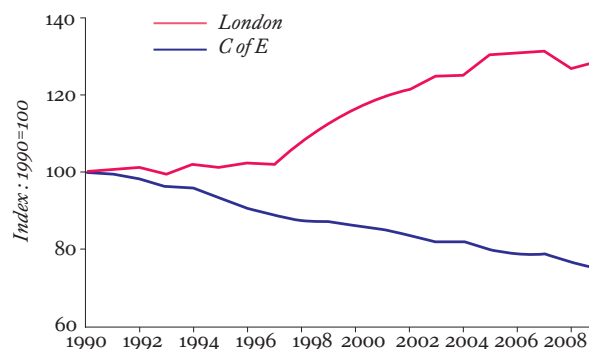
ELECTORAL ROLL NUMBERS 1990–2010
London of Church of England



Membership numbers continue to rise strongly. Numbers recorded on churches' Electoral Rolls are growing on average by around 2.5% each year.

ATTENDANCE

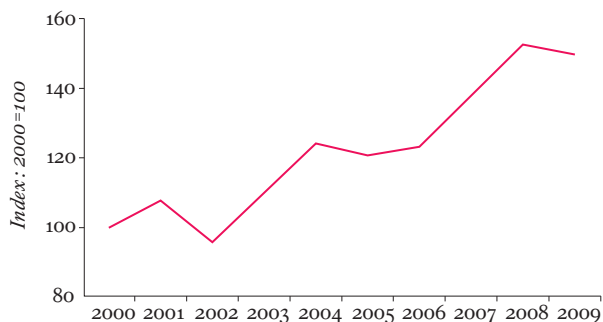
USUAL SUNDAY ATTENDANCE 1990–2009
London of Church of England



Numbers actually attending church services have risen since 2003, but by a much smaller amount. The 'Usual Sunday Attendance' measure peaked in 2007, since when it has fallen back by 2%. The 'October Count' measure (which includes attendance at weekday services) peaked in 2006. It has fallen back by 4% since then.

GIVING

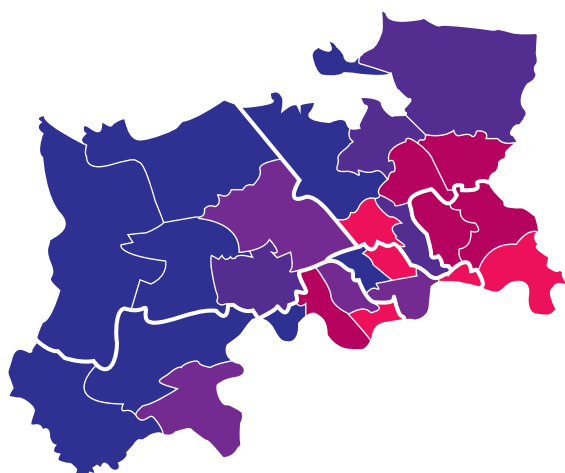
TAX EFFICIENT PLANNED GIVING 2000–2009



Giving to the church has risen, in real terms, by more than 50% over the decade, though with a slight tailing off since 2008. This reflects an increase in both the number of signed-up givers and in the amount given per head.

With membership continuing to grow strongly while attendance has begun to fall slightly, committed people may be coming to church less often. It will be important to explore this trend more fully over the coming years.

PATTERNS OF GROWTH



INNER

ELECTORAL ROLL GROWTH BY DEANERY
2003-2010

Percentage Growth

- 0-15 (7)
- 15-20 (4)
- 20-25 (4)
- 25-35 (5)
- 35-55 (5)

Churches in the inner-London deaneries continue to show a much better growth trend (red on the map) than churches in the outer deaneries.

START SIZE

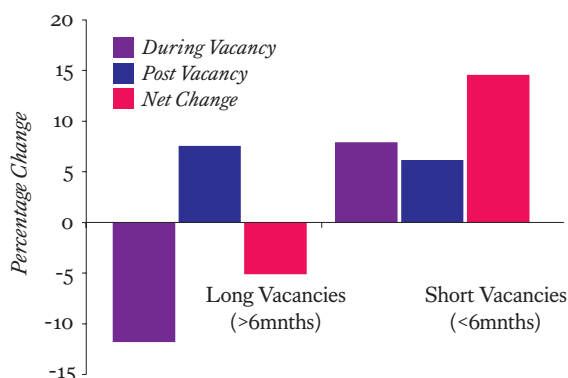
USUAL SUNDAY ATTENDANCE 2003-2009
ANALYSED BY CHURCH SIZE

Start Size	No.	Grew	Same	Shrank	% Change
Under 50	40	30	1	9	+35
50-74	55	22	1	32	+6
75-99	58	29	2	27	+11
100-124	42	23	0	19	+2
125-199	71	36	1	34	-2
200-299	24	9	0	15	-6
300-399	8	1	0	7	-11
400-899	10	3	0	7	-7
Over 900	3	2	0	1	+7

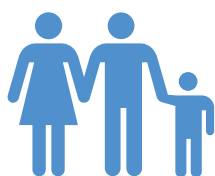
Churches with small congregations to start with generally grow the fastest. The rate of growth slows the bigger the church: churches with Sunday attendances of over 125 show an overall decline in numbers. Only with the very biggest churches is the upward pattern resumed.

VACANCIES

VACANCIES IN LONDON PARISHES SINCE 2003
Change in Usual Sunday Attendance during and after Interregna



Churches between ministers appear to keep growing if the vacancy is six months or shorter. Longer than six months then numbers fall off, although all churches can expect some recovery in numbers once a new incumbent arrives.



CHILDREN

Churches grow fastest when they have a high proportion of children—25% or more is best. To achieve this, a high priority and realistic resources need to be devoted to high-quality children's and families' ministry.



NEW CONGREGATIONS

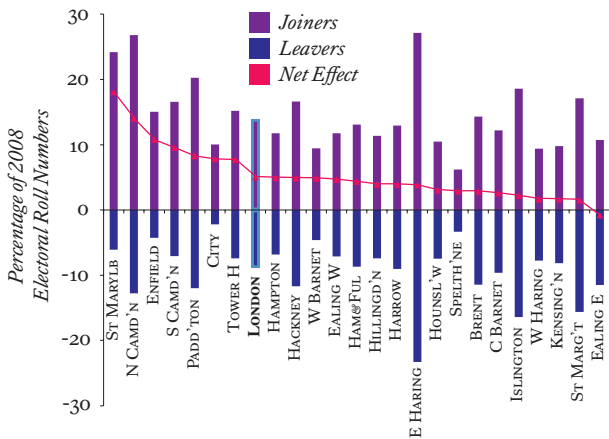
Churches which plant or start new congregations are more likely to be growing; those which don't show overall numbers flat or declining.

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.

ENCOURAGING GROWTH

TURNOVER

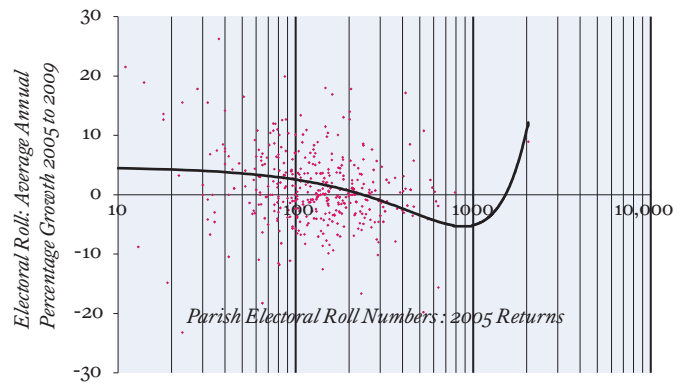
ELECTORAL ROLL LEAVERS & JOINERS 2008–2010



In a changing and fast-moving urban environment, the church must cope quickly and effectively when people move on. This applies equally to both parishioners and ministers. Strategies must be devised to counter losses from long clergy vacancies as well as congregational turnover.

GLASS CEILINGS

GROWTH RATES & STARTING SIZE



Assistance must be given to help medium and larger sized churches grow through the glass ceiling of congregational size. Through small group networks for both clergy and laity, church leaders should be encouraged to learn from each other and share experience of pastoral care systems and welcome strategy.



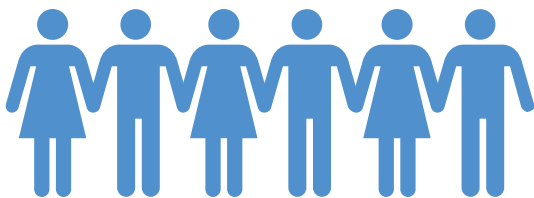
WELCOME

In 2010, a quarter of new church members were signed up by just 17 parishes. The experience of churches which successfully attract and retain new members needs to be shared more widely, and good practice established and reviewed.



VARIETY

The variety and potential of church life in the diocese should be fully explored. For example: fresh expression activities should be surveyed; service times reviewed; experiments conducted with midweek main services; church planting initiatives supported. Lessons learned as well as successes should be shared within deaneries and the diocese at large.



CONNECTED

All congregations should be linked into the wider mission and work of the church across London. Aimlessness and disconnectedness should be challenged through networking and Mission Action Planning.

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.

NEXT STEPS

The report has collected and presented information and key perspectives on the mission and ministry of the church in London. It will be an important resource for planning the next stage of the *London Challenge* – the diocese’s strategic framework for its life and work together. It also gives rise to new questions and potential areas of research. In taking forward these themes, diocesan senior staff have endorsed the Action Plan in the full report (Appendix A).

Key points from the Action Plan are as follows:

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

PAINTING THE PICTURE

Through selecting an authoritative range of measures relating to membership, attendance, finance, giving, personnel, demographics and community outreach and reporting these at parish, deanery, area and diocesan level.

Diocesan Response: Immediate action

CAPTURING DATA

Through review and refining of the diocese’s online data capture system based on parishes’ annual returns.

Diocesan Response: Immediate action

ASSISTING MISSION PLANNING & REVIEW

By trialling early return of October count and annual attendance figures from the parishes, bringing this forward to the period immediately after the end of the calendar year.

*Diocesan Response:
To be addressed in the coming year*

INVESTIGATING ATTENDANCE PATTERNS

Through a detailed survey of selected churches across the diocese.

Diocesan Response: Medium term aspiration

SUPPORTING & RESOURCING EXISTING MINISTRIES

SUPPORTING CHILDREN’S MINISTRY

Through reviewing resources available at both parish and diocesan level, including a review of grant conditions for projects involving young people and children.

Diocesan Response: Immediate action

EXPEDITING PARISHES THROUGH VACANCIES

Through trialling the prioritisation of short (under six month) vacancies in a selected Episcopal Area and building up a fuller picture of attendance change through vacancies in the diocese at large.

*Diocesan Response:
To be addressed in the coming year*

ENCOURAGING WELCOME & INTEGRATION OF NEWCOMERS

Through promoting resources such as ‘Everybody Welcome’ and encouraging parishes to review existing provision, particularly those challenged by a ‘glass ceiling’ effect.

*Diocesan Response:
To be addressed in the coming year*

EXPLORING & EVOLVING NEW MINISTRIES

EXPERIMENTING WITH MIDWEEK EVENING MAIN SERVICES

Through sponsoring these in selected parishes and disseminating results and lessons learned within the diocese.

*Diocesan Response:
Medium term aspiration*

PROMOTING CHURCH PLANTING & TRANSPLANTING

By appointing a replanting officer with a remit to lead on strategy and coordinate with stakeholders across the diocese.

Diocesan Response: Immediate action

SURVEYING FRESH EXPRESSIONS

Through deanery-led research and information sharing, to build up a comprehensive picture of activity across London as a whole.

*Diocesan Response:
Medium term aspiration*

Most of the suggested actions set out above are focussed on the parish and are offered for consideration and response by them. In addition, the diocesan leadership, as part of its desire to encourage each and every parish to thrive, has begun to consider how best to respond to the insights of the report. To contribute to this discussion, please contact your Area Bishop, your Archdeacon or Andy Brookes, the diocese’s General Secretary andy.brookes@london.anglican.org.

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