Church Growth Research Programme

Strand 3: Structures

Cranmer Hall, St Johns College, Durham

Report on Strand 3a

Cathedrals,

Greater Churches and

the Growth of the Church

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INTRODUCTION

Cathedrals are Growing

In the midst of several decades of declining church attendance, there is good news for the Church of England: cathedrals are growing!

The headline cathedral statistics for 2012 reported that the rising number of cathedral worshippers is 'continuing the growing trend seen since the Millennium.'

Recent cathedral growth is but one indicator among many thatlong-held assumptions about the possibilities church life in the social and religious culture of modern Englandmay need to be reconsidered. From the perspective of those who assume the grand narrative of the secularisation of British society, thriving cathedrals are seen as anomalies. The unexpected vibrancy of cathedrals gives reason to pause and reconsider the possibility that circumstances might be more complicated than they appear.

In 2012, Theos and the Grubb Institute published a landmark report entitled, *Spiritual Capital: The Present and Future of English Cathedrals*, which demonstrates the significant role that cathedrals continue to play in British society. The report argues that far from becoming obsolete in a rapidly changing world, cathedrals have proven to be remarkably well-positioned and fit for purpose to respond to profound cultural changes in the spiritual landscape of England.[1]

Whereas *Spiritual Capital* focuses on growing presence of cathedral ministry and mission within contemporary society as a whole, further work is needed to understand the nature of the growth experienced within cathedral congregations themselves. Data published by Research and Statistics suggests that growth in the number of cathedral worshippers has continued unabated for over a decade. However, these figures alone do not describe the finer texture of this growth. As Leslie Francis and Emyr Williams observe, 'While research among visitors and tourists is able to focus on the transient community that passes through the cathedral, it is research on the Sunday (and weekday) congregations that is needed to explore why cathedral congregations are growing at a time when congregations in so many parish churches are declining.'[2]

This research strand seeks to complement and supplement the work of *Spiritual Capital* by heeding Francis & Williams' call to further explore growth trends in greaterdepth. In the context of the Church Growth Research Programme as a whole, this strand focuses on exploring areas of growth, health and vitality within the context of cathedrals and greater churchesin order to share and encourage good practice. We hope that lessons can be learned, which will be applicable across the church community.

The Research Brief

Aims

This research strand aimed to 'clarify attendance trends between different acts of cathedral worship, between different types of cathedral and between different parts of England.' A combination of statistical analysis of attendance figures and qualitative work has been used to build a profile of cathedral congregations and gain an understanding of their growth in recent years.

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[1] Theos & Grubb. *Spiritual Capital: The Present and Future of English Cathedrals* (London: Theos & Grubb, 2012).
[2] Francis, Leslie J. & Williams, Emyr. "Not All Cathedral Congregations Look Alike: Two Case Studies in Rural England," *Rural Theology* 8.1 (2010), p. 38.

Our purpose was firstly to better understand the reported growth and to tease out why this growth is happening and then to see what lessons can be learned that might equip the cathedrals in their ministry and ultimately resource the mission of the wider church.

Comparative work with greater churches has provided an opportunity to evaluate cathedral growth in light of other churches with a cathedral-like ministry to identify whether there are unique facets of cathedral ministry, which are facilitating this recognised growth.

Limitations

Cathedrals and greater churches are complex, multifaceted entities. This report is limited to exploring cathedral service attendance, the make-up of cathedral congregations and what draws worshippers in. While it is beyond the scope of this report to attend to the full breadth of cathedral life, our intention is to locate this modest research agenda within the wider context of cathedral ministry andmission.

It is important to acknowledge that cathedrals and greater churches are about much more than just attendance statistics and their cultural and civic roles offer the church as a whole a great opportunity for mission. To reduce the perceived success or failure of a given cathedral's mission to the criteria of service attendance alone, would be to misrepresent what a cathedral – or indeed 'cathedral-like' – ministry is all about.

Methodology

This strand has necessitated data collection from a range of sources. Initial work focused on exploring data from Research and Statistics regarding cathedral attendance. An impression of the scope of cathedral ministry and a broad understanding of the range of worship services offered and their popularity as well as the challenges of cathedral ministry was gained through a questionnaire sent to the deans of all 42 English cathedrals. This evidence was further explored through qualitative consultation days with clergy and lay members of 23 cathedrals.

To complement the evidence gathered from cathedrals, corresponding data was gained through a questionnaire and follow up consultation day for churches within the Greater Churches Network as well.

Finally to better understand the cathedral congregations, worshipper surveys were performed at 4 English cathedrals.

Further methodological details are included within the body of our report.

Overview

This report comprises four sections.

The first section lays the groundwork by locating current trends within the wider narrative of cathedral growth. It then explores the nature of cathedral ministry and mission, and thus what it might mean to speak about cathedral church growth.

The second section provides an analysis of recent growth trends in cathedrals based on Research and Statistics data before moving on to consider the results of the worshipper survey. We then consider why this growth has happened based on qualitative data from the research days.

The third section turns to the greater churches. It explores what greater churches are and their unique and changing ministry within the Church of England. We then present an analysis of growth trends in the greater churches as a comparison with the cathedrals.

The final section evaluates the relationship between cathedrals and greater churches. It explores what these contexts teach us about the challenges and opportunities for growth and argues for a non-competitive strategic approach to mission.

Reflection

It is our conviction that cathedrals and greater churches offer a complementary ministry, which can strategically promote the mission and work of their dioceses in proclaiming the gospel, worshipping God, and engaging with others. The challenge and the opportunity is to heed the wisdom, experience and good practices that have positioned cathedrals and greater churches for growth and explore new ways in which these habits might be offered as gifts and resources to one another.

Section 1.1
THE NARRATIVE OF CATHEDRAL GROWTH

Introduction

'Church decline is neither inevitable nor accurate in retrospect. This book reviews the accuracy of what is happening in Christian religious practice in the U.K. As such it comes at a crucial time, when the Church of England appears to be gathering the will to change and when an accurate and reasoned understanding of what is happening . . . is essential.' The words are those of Justin Welby, when Bishop of Durham, not long before being appointed Archbishop of Canterbury. The book referred to is *'Church Growth in Britain 1980 to the Present'* edited by David Goodhew and published in 2012.

The book consists of several studies charting the growth of the Christian community in the U.K. since 1980. *'Baptist growth in England', The Rise of the Black Churches', 'Anglican Resurgence: The Church of England in London', 'A History of Fresh Expressions and Church Plants'* are some of the subjects covered. A rich and illuminating picture emerges. In this story there is, for some, a surprising inclusion *'Stirrings in Barchester: Cathedrals and Church Growth'* by Lynda Barley, from 2000 – 2011 Head of Research and Statistics for the Archbishops' Council of the Church of England. She reports,

'The statistics collected across recent years suggest a dramatic rise in attendance at worship across the last decade and reveal a changing role for cathedrals which is of increasing interest to researchers.'(p.79)

It is that reported growth in cathedral attendance that this report seeks to examine and understand – and our study will focus on the years since the millennium and the recent years in particular.

When did this growth first appear? What were the changes in the social context that contributed to this picture of growth? How far back do we need to go before we see the narrative of cathedral growth?

White Elephants?

Certainly not to the 19th century. *'The 19th century picture of English cathedrals was one of moribund white elephants collapsing in upon themselves through the weight of tradition and inertia,'* writes Stephen Platten in the introduction to *Dreaming Spires . . . Cathedrals in a New Age.* He continues, *'One and a half centuries on, and cathedrals are found to be in a better state of conservation, and visited by more people, than ever before!'*

So what has changed in this perception of cathedrals which has led to the growth of so many visitors?

Recent decades have witnessed profound social and cultural changes. Yet paradoxically, for some, cathedrals have been well positioned to respond to these social changes.

'Despite apparent external appearances English Cathedrals are in many respects in tune with our changing English society. Their attitude towards their public has altered in recent years towards a willingness to respond meaningfully to the religious needs of contemporary individualized spirituality.' (Barley, p. 89)

Pilgrims and Tourists: Growth of Cathedral Visitors

The fruits of this responsiveness are evident first of all in the dramatic rise of visitors and tourists.

Since the 1960s, tourism has been on the rise. There has been strong growth in the number of tourists with increased mobility and transportation. Today cathedrals routinely rank among the most visited sites in Britain.

This growth has posed complex questions for cathedrals and how they will practice their public witness in society.

The '*Heritage and Renewal*' report of 1994 emphasized cathedral reforms with a heart on mission. The rich ministry of cathedrals was recognised and affirmed. They were places of prayer and worship, welcome and hospitality, historical significance, home for art and culture, for debate and engagement with questions of faith and the social good. Undergirding all that was the particular spiritual vocation of cathedrals to the many visitors who come.

'The challenge of tourism raises for cathedrals the question of what its call to hospitality means. To provide a ministry of service to tourists is not to offer hospitality in its more usual sense. […] It is a commonplace to observe that those who enter a cathedral as tourists are sometimes beguiled by place, mood, and size into a mode of wonder. They can acknowledge a desire to understand, to question, even to confront the God whose inspiration has made possible both the building and the moment. In this way, the tourist may indeed be transformed into a pilgrim. But if such transformations are to take place, if we are to have a theology of tourism which sustains us in our vocation to service, then we need wisdom to see how best we can prepare a building to speak, how best we can prepare people to be guides and servants of need, how best we can encourage every visitor to experience our ministry as a reflection of God's concern for people, people who are always on the move.' (H & R, p. 36)

The brief encounters many people had with cathedrals were recognised and valued, the clear distinction between tourist and pilgrim began to be blurred and all the while the cathedrals' impact on wider society was growing, as evidenced in the ECOTEC Report on *'The Economic and Social Impact of Cathedrals in England'* (June 2004).

Whereas visitor numbers have remained fairly high for some years, growth in attendance at cathedral worship has not followed quite the same trajectory.

Lynda Barley describes how *'in the 1980s the impact of cathedrals on attendance at worship was waning. Sunday worship levels were steadily declining alongside those of local parish churches. Between 1986 and 1987, for example, adult attendanceat cathedral worship on a typical Sunday dropped by nearly 5% to13,700 and the numbers of children and young people attending decreased by almost 14% to just 2,300. This patterncontinued alongside declines in the traditional counts of cathedral communicant numbers, baptism and electoral roll figures. Although there were some successes in individual cathedrals for individual years the general picture of decreasing cathedral congregations mirrored that in local parishes across England in the 1980s and into the 1990s.'*

Social change and church attendance

Social changes have impacted attendance patterns in churches in general across the country.

The Sunday trading laws of 1994 and their impact on growing changes in working, shopping and leisure patterns have been well documented and there was a discernible impact on church services on Sunday. A survey undertaken in Almondbury deanery in West Yorkshire with all 17 of the churches of the deanery revealed the impact clearly over the 9 years from 1997 to 2006. Usual **Sunday** attendance fell by 17%. At the same time weekday services in the churches that held them showed growth. In 1997 across the deanery 51 people had worshipped only on a weekday. The number had risen by 2006 to 89, a 75% increase. Overall there was still substantial decline. Nationally the picture was of decline too overall with Sunday attendance in those years declining by 12% and incomplete figures for weekday which while showing growth do not change the overall picture of decline.

With cathedrals though, a different picture begins to emerge. As cathedral reforms began to take root, more and more cathedrals began to implement new ways of responding to their local contexts.

Lynda Barley observes that cathedral congregations witnessed growth from the 1990s.

Growing signs

A retiring dean in 1989 spoke of *'the enormous opportunities for the proclamation of the gospel which cathedrals provide . . .it is an exciting time for cathedrals'.* But it was not until 1996 that the first statistical signs of a renewal in fortune appeared as adult attendance at cathedral Sunday services grew by 1%, and in 1999 there was clear evidence of attendance by children and young people growing too. No one foresaw though the subsequent and most significant statistics that would emerge with the introduction of counting across the week, from Monday to Saturday.

> *'At the turn of the millennium, Sunday congregation sizes in cathedrals were recorded at a high of 16,200. Many people were attracted to church services over the course of this special, for some more 'spiritual' year but the figures dropped to a recorded level of 15,500 in 2001 and are now registered a little higher in 2010 at just 15,800. There appears to be little relationship between these trends and those that have emerged from monitoring attendance at services over the remainder of the week. This has increased at such a surprising rate that in the ten years over which they have been monitored congregational attendance is recorded as more than doubling from 4,900 in 2000 to 11,600 in 2010. For adults, children and young people, attendance at services held between Mondays and Saturdays now adds 85% to Sunday attendance levels (nearly a doubling of attendance levels) and forms an increasingly medium sized tourist attraction. The availability of accessible worship in open cathedrals throughout the week is attracting spiritual pilgrims at times that are more convenient to contemporary lifestyles.'*(Lynda Barley)

Spiritual Capital

It was the sociologist Grace Davie who first helped us recognise '*a gradual shift away from an understanding of religion as a form of obligation towards an increasing emphasis on consumption'* personal choice. She also saw this reflected in the relative popularity of conservative evangelical churches on the one hand and cathedrals and some city centre churches on the other.[3]

Then a report was published which explored more thoroughly the spiritual climate in our nation particularly as if effected the standing and ministry of our cathedrals.
Theos and the Grubb Institutes' landmark report published in October 2012 is entitled *'Spiritual Capital – the Present and Future of English Cathedrals'.* Their research provides a detailed analysis of the social significance of cathedrals in England.

Chapter headings reveal the extent of the report:

- Tourist Destinations or Places of Pilgrimage?
- Emergent Spiritualties
- Significance in the Community
- Creative Tensions: Relations with the Diocese and Wider Church
- Appreciating Spiritual Capital

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[3] Davie, Grace. *The Future of the Parish System* (2006), pp. 41-44.

Of particular significance to our research were the Report's findings that *'cathedrals can convey a sense of the spiritual and sacred even to thoseon the margins of the Christian faith, or who stand some way beyond'*.

'Spiritual Capital' found for example that cathedrals are seen locally and nationally as

'Both

sacred places *which offer God, even to those who don't believe (one third nationally and two thirds locally)*

and
as **reaching out** *to the general public(nearly half nationally and three quarters locally) and*

welcome *to those of all faiths and none*.'

While the focus of our research is on the regular attendance at cathedral services it is important to see the spiritual context – with all it ambiguities – for the public ministry cathedrals exercise.

Latest statistics

Cathedral Statistics 2012 which was published in August 2013 continues the story of growth. The current head of research at the Archbishops' Council, Dr Bev Botting, said *'The statistics show people of all ages are increasingly drawn to cathedrals for worship, to attend educational and civic events, and to volunteerto ensure our cathedrals are open to all those who are drawn to visit and worship.'*

But what is the detail lying behind this general picture of recent continuing growth?

Section 1.2
WHAT ARE CATHEDRALS FOR?
CATHEDRAL MINISTRY AND MISSION IN CONTEXT

Introduction

'This is the place where I first encountered God. This place allowed me to explore my faith without pressure or judgement.'

'After a long time "on the fence" it has helped confirm me in a faith which now feels very secure again. This is a wonderful thing, for which I am truly grateful. My daughter has been baptised and confirmed, and this is also a positive thing.'

'It inspires me and so does the worship and clergy. An important beacon in the city centre. It's a church any fallen away seeker will come to – a refuge for lost sheep.'

'As a non-Christian I visited to hear the choir perform, but was very impressed not only with them but the building and staff also.'

All these positive responses to the four cathedrals of our worshipper surveys from within and beyond the Christian community match the widely admired position our cathedrals hold in English society.

Not everyone though is as warm and appreciative. Myths and misunderstandings abound. Pillars of a fading establishment and a declining religion are still the view of some. Even some regular worshippers in our cathedral surveys were critical, particularly after changes in staff and policy.
Before we examine the statistics of cathedral growth and seek to understand what is happening and why, we need to ask the basic question. What are cathedrals for? How best can we describe their ministry and mission?

The ancient definition recorded in the 1994 'Heritage and Renewal' Report of the Archbishops, Commission is the best starting point for our reflection on Cathedral ministry and mission in context: *'The Cathedral is the seat of the bishop and a centre for worship and mission'*.

The Bishop's seat

The unique ministry of the Cathedral in the diocese is defined by this. From the early centuries of the Christian church the cathedral was seen to be the meeting place where the Bishop could teach from his chair. The cathedral was and is the bishop's church and the 'mother church' of the diocese.

The Bishop's seat has two very important components. It reminds us of the Bishop's teaching office and thereby of the vital importance too of the place of education and nurture in the life of the Cathedral.

The Bishop's seat also reminds us that the life of the Cathedral is inevitably bound up with the life of the diocese as a whole. *'The Spiritual Capital'* Report (2012) commented that that worked best when there was good mutual understanding between Bishop and Cathedral and that the Cathedral saw its contribution to diocesan life in various ways.

A Centre of worship

At the centre of the life of the cathedral is the daily offering of worship and praise. The rhythm of morning and evening prayer – said or sung – undergirds everything and is a public ministry in which Scripture is read, psalms are said or sung and prayers are offered. This public worship is also a means of

grace. Michael Turnbull, once Archbishop's Chaplain, parish priest and university chaplain, Chief Secretary of the Church Army before becoming a canon at Rochester and archdeacon said to the Dean:

> *'Now in middle life I have rediscovered grace. Everywhere else I was expected to take the lead, to achieve something, to work wonders. Here I step onto a moving travellator of matins and evensongand the faith I need, I do not have to make for myself. It is the faith of the Church'.*

The daily celebration of Holy Communionis part of this beating heart of Cathedral life too, whether Common Worship or Book of Common Prayer as increasingly more people are attending Holy Communion when there are lunchtime celebrations alongside those earlier in the day.

The public and corporate nature of its worshipping life is a daily proclamation of the gospel and part of the mission of the Cathedral. The many services that take place in cathedrals – weekday and Sunday – are a reminder to the enormous number of visitors that the cathedral is a place of living faith, pointing with other great churches to the presence and reality of God.

The *'Mission Shaped Church'* report of 2004 refers to 'some evidence of an increase at cathedral and other churches offering *traditional styles of worship'* and then goes on to affirm '*People now as always are looking for mystery, beauty, stability and a sense of God's presence. For some this will be most easily foundin contemporary styles and approaches. For others this will be discovered in forms and styles that reflect more strongly the Church's heritage in liturgy and spirituality, and a sense of sacred stability in a fast-changing world'*.

One noteworthy feature of some cathedral worship in recent years is the emergence of *'contemporary styles and approaches'.* These creative developments are taking place within the givenness and stability of the daily offering – *'the central pillar of the church's prayer and praise down the centuries and the spiritual heartbeat not only of the cathedral but of the diocese and the wider community.' (Heritage and Renewal p.18)*

A centre of mission

'Cathedrals are about mission. To miss this is to misunderstand the task. Both traditional and new aspects of cathedral ministry are missional', so said Stephen Lake, the Dean of Gloucester to us. Mission is discovering what God is doing and trying to do it with him. In cathedral life the chief ingredients of mission – worship, teaching, service, evangelism and witness – all have vital parts to play, in the public ministry of cathedrals to the large and growing numbers of people who visit them.

In addition to these unique aspects of cathedral ministry, the Heritage and Renewal report also identifies five essential marks of that ministry in practice:

1. Worship

The statistics we present in this report are those of regular cathedral services and not special services. But special services do have a message for our research. The Dean of Wakefield Jonathan Greener told us

> *'a very important part of our life and ministry focuses on diocesan, civic and other services for all sorts of voluntary and community groups. These people may not affect your statistics but many thousands of people each year come here to worship, to sing and to pray. They know they are in the presence of God, they know his Word is read and preached and we believe they go out changed, renewed, challenged, encouraged. This is a ministry cathedrals offer on behalf of the whole church. It is difficult to quantify, but vitally important for the spiritual health of the nation. It is as much about serving the nation as about church growth. But growth does certainly come as a result of these services.'*

The worshipping life of the cathedral – in all its forms – is an important dimension of the cathedral's mission.

2. Teaching

Teaching has long held a key part in the cathedral's mission, whether in the proclamation of the gospel around the key festivals of the Christian calendar, lecture series of key Christian themes or the growing opportunities for study groups of various kinds. Alongside the role of ordained staff in their teaching ministry, lay cathedral guides play a vital role too with individuals and groups exploring the Christian significance of the cathedral and its artefacts.

3. Service

The growing engagement of cathedrals with the civic authorities, inter-faith work and special projects among the most vulnerable members of the wider community have been an important aspect of cathedral mission in recent years. Urban regeneration in Gloucester, the homeless project in Wakefield, the inter-faith context in Birmingham and the strong commitment of Southwell Minster to its local community – were all aspects of service we saw at first hand in our research.

4. Evangelism

In 'Heritage and Renewal' report each cathedral department was asked to consider the question, *'In what ways is our work an invitation to people to consider the calling of Jesus Christ?'* The appointment of a Canon Evangelist in a northern cathedral, Canon Missioners and others with a comparable brief has been an indication of some cathedrals developing a stronger evangelistic emphasis to their mission, with growing opportunities coming from the growing number of visitors.

5. Witness

Across the centuries cathedrals have borne witness to the Christian faith. In an increasingly secular age, the task of making explicit the living purpose of the cathedral becomes more and more important. Hence the generous hospitality and volunteer ministry of many welcomers, guides and stewards to the visitors who come, some with only time for a 'brief encounter'. This witness is expressed too in the growing numbers of cathedral visitor centres, bookshops, refectories and the life of the cathedral community itself reflected in the service and welcome offered.

'Cathedrals are not just tourist destinations but places that can convey a sense of the spiritual and sacred even to those on the margins of Christian faith, or who stand some way beyond … This presents cathedrals with enormous potential. (Spiritual Capital' 8.1 p11)

Here is the central calling of the English cathedral in contemporary society – enabling those large numbers of people visiting our cathedrals to begin to explore – or explore further the meaning of their lives and their relationship to God. Here are called forth all the gifts of Christian ministry, in pastoral care, listening, spiritual direction and the gentle articulation – where sought – of the Christian faith at the heart of cathedral life.

Such a ministry which can be exemplified by cathedrals can also seed and encourage similar ministry elsewhere, wherever a church has open doors, a spirituality rooted in the daily life of worship and prayer and a large engagement with visitors. We will examine some greater churches and minsters with a similar ministry later in this report. There are lessons here though for many other churches seeking to share the gospel with confidence and sensitivity in our plural, consumer society; a society which would prefer at times to forget God altogether, but finds time and again that it cannot.

In the next section of this report we will examine statistics of cathedral attendance at regular services in recent years. We will do so mindful of the different types of cathedrals and their particular contexts, which vary enormously.

Then in the light of that quantitative assessment of cathedral congregational growth – or decline where we see it – we will explore some hypotheses about cathedral growth and why it is happening, wherever it is. The Report will list the hypotheses and in the concluding section of our study will reveal what their lessons are for cathedral and their development.

As we undertook this research – and listened to the stories behind the statistics we began to develop some hypotheses about cathedral growth and why it is happening, wherever it is. We tested these in the light of our experience of cathedral ministry and mission, and will examine them fully later in the report. They will take different shape in the unique context of each cathedral.

Characteristics of growing cathedrals include:

- cultivating mission intentionality
- initiating new services and congregations
- enriching the quality of worship
- improving welcome and hospitality
- engaging culture and the arts
- promoting spiritual openness, inclusivity and diversity in worship, membership and outreach
- increasing the civic profile
- developing educational programmes
- prioritising discipleship and Christian nurture

With all these hypotheses, there needs to be a proper humility and caution. In his first letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul also addresses the issue of growth, *'I planted the seed and Apollos watered it: but God made it grow'* (1 Cor. 3:6). As we have already observed, the ways of God are not always easy to fathom or chart, least of all predict. On the television quiz show 'Q.I.' there is one answer that appears in every show 'Nobody knows!' Any wise student of church growth should always acknowledge the mystery of God's loving action in the world and the church and admit there are times we really don't know why this cathedral or church has grown in this way at this time. But then God is God and we are not.

Section 2.1
WHERE IS CATHEDRAL GROWTH HAPPENING?

Introduction

Having sketched the broader narrative of cathedral growth and the distinctive role English cathedrals play in the Church of England and contemporary British society, we will consider the central questions of this research strand: What is the nature of cathedral growth? Where has it taken place? What factors have encouraged the flourishing of diverse cathedrals across the country?

This section of the report explores these questions in greater detail and attempts to better understandthetrajectory of cathedral growth over the past decade. The first part evaluates the statistical evidence for growth, exploring the strengths and limitations of the data. The second part seeks to lift the bonnet of recent headline statistics of cathedral growth (2007-2012) by analysing growth trends for Sunday and weekday services by province, region and cathedral type. Having contextualised where cathedral growth is happening more broadly, the third part then assesses the particular hotspots of Sunday and weekday growth through an analysis of the cathedral dean questionnaires.

The Statistical Evidence for Cathedral Growth

On 5 December 2001, the Research and Statistics department of the Archbishops' Council issued a press release revealing the first results of a new data collection system for church statistics, implemented at the turn of the Millennium in an effort to assess the life and health of the Church of England. The first and most poignant revelation of this new research sounded loudly in the release's headline: 'Cathedral statistics for the year 2000 show growth.'

> Comparative figures from1995 to 2000 show both Sunday attendance and the number of communicants at major festivals gradually increasing in the cathedrals. Over that period, Sunday attendance has steadily risen from 16,470 to 18,600, including an increase in the number of those under 16 from 2,080 to 2,310. Easter Day communicants increased from 26,640 to 28,280 and Christmas Day communicants from 32,590 to 36,450 (30,040 in 1999).[4]

While Research and Statistics has been monitoring cathedral statistics for 30 years, the release states that these initialfindings wouldprovide the 'baseline figures' that would be used to evaluate the growth or decline of cathedrals in future years. Over time, evidence would be gathered in order to build 'a picture of the impact of the cathedrals on people's lives' in the hope that such statistics would 'provide the Church of England with a more accurate picture of its impact on the whole community than has been available for many years.'

After more than a decade of data collection, the annual release published on 12 August 2013 reported that:

> The number of worshippers at Church of England cathedrals increased in 2012, *continuing the growing trend seen since the Millennium*. Total weekly attendance at the 42 cathedrals grew to 35,800, according to Cathedral Statistics 2012, an *increase of 35% since 2002*.[5]

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[4] Church of England, 'Cathedral statistics for the year 2000 show growth' (5 December 2001). Available at http://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2001/12/cathedral_statistics_for_the_year_2000_show_growth.aspx.
[5] Church of England, 'Growing decade for cathedral congregations, show latest stats'(12August 2013). Available at http://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2013/08/growing-decade-for-cathedral-congregations,-show-latest-stats.aspx. Emphasis added.

The data suggests substantial growth in attendance at cathedral worship over the last decade. Thepublished figures depict a clear and unambiguous pattern of growth across the cathedrals as a whole, as depicted in the bar chart below.
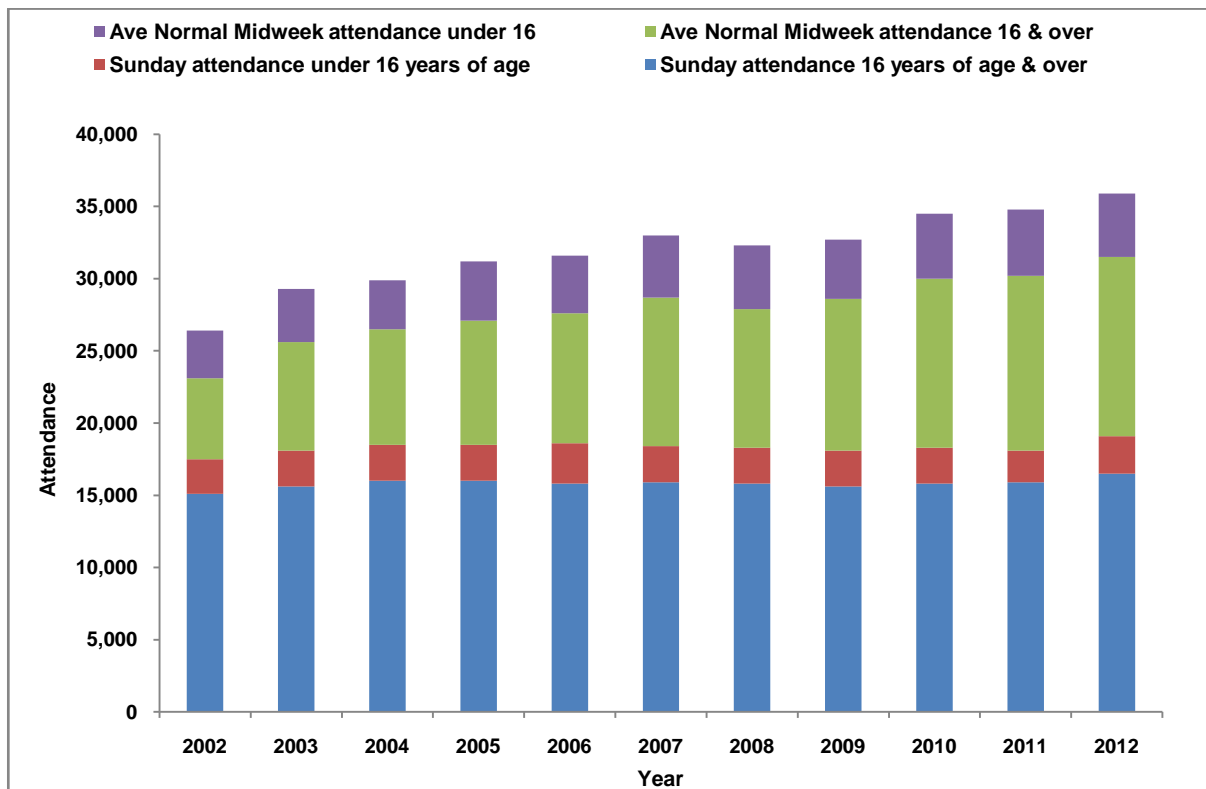
Reviewing the chart above, attendance at Sunday services appears to have remained static over the last decade. When one considers the substantial decline in church attendance experienced by many dioceses, this stability in and of itself may well be a good news story. From the chart it is evident that it is attendance at weekday services which has led to overall growth.

Lynda Barley, former head of Research and Statistics, observes that weekday services have 'increased at such a surprising rate that in the 10 years over which they have been monitored congregational attendance is recorded as more than doubling, from 4,900 in 2000 to 11,600 in 2010. For adults, children and young people, attendance at services held between Mondays and Saturdays now adds 85% to Sunday attendance levels (nearly a doubling of attendance levels) and forms an increasingly significant aspect of cathedral ministry among the working population and visitors.'[6]

The Church Growth Research Programmehas taken this narrative of weekday growth as the point of departure for this investigation. While the headline statistics suggest that cathedrals are growing, they do not tell us very much about the finer texture of this growth. The headlines alone do not demonstrate how growth is distributed across the cathedrals, each with its own unique social context. Whilst published dataindicates that weekday services in general are increasing innumber, we know far less about which weekday services are thriving and which are struggling, or about which habits and practices promote and encourage growth and which ones may stifle it. The picture presented by Research and Statistics is significant, but on its own it cannot fully account for why many English cathedrals are flourishing, even against the odds.

Analysing the Data

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[6] Barley, Lynda. "Stirrings in Barchester: Cathedrals and Church Growth," in*Church Growth in Britain: 1980 to the Present,* ed. David Goodhew (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 83-84.

Before conducting a detailed evaluation of the cathedral statistics, it is important to begin with a few qualifications about what the data may and may not reveal about the reality of cathedral congregations on the ground.

While 'statistics for mission' data offers a valuable window into the long term attendance trends in cathedrals, the apparent smoothness of the annual headline cathedral statistics masks many of the rougher inconsistencies and incongruities lying underneath. It is important to understand how these hidden complexities impact the data if we are to read the figures accurately and make appropriate judgements about the story they tell.

Strengths of the data

Statistics play a crucial role in deepening the church's self-understanding and resourcing the church for strategic mission. As all strands of this research programme attest, there are many challenges inherent in any large-scale data collection system of a non-centralised organisation which is fundamentally conducted on a *voluntary* basis. For many years, Research and Statistics has endeavoured to improve the quality and reliability of its cathedral figures. This data has many unique strengths that set it apart from general statistics gathered at the parish level.

First of all, the cathedrals comprise a relatively small sample (42 cathedrals compared with over 16,000 parish churches). As such, they are easier to monitor and review. In recent years, Research and Statistics has sought to strengthen its directrelationship with the cathedral personnel, providing resources and training for staff and volunteers and cross-checking and amending suspicious statistical returns.

Second, the cathedral statistics boast a very high annual return rate.Each year, Research and Statistics actively encourages every cathedral to submit its figures. In contrast to parish statistics which can be compromised by insufficient or missing data, there are very few gaps in the cathedral database. In the few instances where a cathedral has neglected to submit its return, Research and Statistics 'cleans' the database by interpolating missing values from the previous year – a method that has proven impractical to implement for parish level figures.

Since the Millennium, Research and Statistics has also sought to improve the intelligibility of the data by working with the cathedrals to amend and refine the 'statistics for mission' form itself. Four versions of the form have been introduced thus far (2000, 2001,2010 and 2012). Significantly, for the first 10 years the database was operational, there were no official 'guidance notes' to accompany the 'stats for mission' forms. This was introduced in 2011 and has enabled as now all cathedrals to follow standard set of definitions and criteria for evaluating categories. This has helped to clarify key terms such as what exactly is meant by 'usual weekday attendance,'[7] which services should be listed as 'regular services' or 'fresh expressions' or 'specially arranged services' and so forth.

However, these necessary changes do compromise our ability to interpret data collected thus far. The fact that common guidelines were needed at all suggests that not all cathedrals were interpreting the categories in the same way during the first decade of data collection. Therefore, when anomalies did occur it is difficult to know if they were an accurate depiction of what was occurring or whether they reflected tabulation errors or simply category mistakes based on differing interpretations of the rubric. Research and Statistics has rightly attempted to mitigate this confusion by introducing new and improved forms. However, each time key definitions are changed or clarified, new biases are introduced

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[7] The 2011 guidelines for normal attendance figures is as follows: 'Please enter separately the number of adults and children attending Sunday and mid-week services, Sunday schools or activities involving worship. If possible, 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. Please note the Midweek count excludes Sunday services. Adults can be classified as all people of 16 years of age or over including those leading services. Children and young people can be classified as all those under 16 years of age.'

into the data itself. Changing the definitions midstream compromises one's ability to compare like with like across the time sequence. When asked whether they noticed any dramatic changes in the figures in the years immediately after the guideline notes were introduced, Research and Statistics acknowledged that this had been their experience, with the most 'drastic changes particularly in "average attendances"; "regular services"; "specially arranged services" and "other public events".'[8] Unfortunately, the impact of these changes on the database does not appear to have been taken into account in the reporting of the annual headline statistics.

In conjunction with the improvements implemented by Research and Statistics, many of the cathedrals have themselves become more proactive about improving the quality of their own data collection. In terms of cathedral ministry, many of the deans reflected a growing awareness that such figures play an essential role in strategic planning for mission. Attending to relative health of their congregations has empowered many deans to respond to changing and challenging circumstances in a proactive manner.Commenting on statistical evidence of decline in particular Sunday services at his cathedral, one dean observed that as a result of this analysis, 'Chapter is addressing as a matter of urgency what steps it might take to secure future and sustainable growth across all these services.'Those who recognise the value of statistics *for mission* are far more likely to prioritise accurate data collection. Another dean from a small urban cathedral admitted that its 'record keeping of statistics has not been consistent or reliable' but that 'this is a priority for this year.'

On a pragmatic level, several cathedrals commented that accurate attendance data has been increasingly required to satisfy the grant making bodies to which they appeal.

Limitations of the data

There are several significant limitations to the cathedral statistics that should be taken into account before any firm conclusions are made on the basis of the evidence they provide.

A basic limitation is that the data collection proforma is open to subjective interpretation, both between individual data collectors and between different cathedrals. In October 2012, Research and Statistics conducted an informal audit of the cathedrals in an effort to 'understand the robustness of our statistics, and to identify different ways to ask the questions which would result in more accurate statistics.'[9] Over half the cathedrals participated in the research. The audit demonstrated that 'questions that were interpreted in the greatest variety of ways were "average attendance", "regular services", "specially arranged services" and, to a lesser extent, "other events".'[10]

In terms of methods of calculating attendance at regular services, the audit revealed that 'Counting is mainly done by headcounts, clickers, or by the head verger and a team proficient at estimating how many seats are filled/empty. Average attendance, in the main, is calculated by adding all the services together and dividing by 52. Four cathedrals that use this method exclude festivals and special services. However, four cathedrals use different methods, such as taking several "normal" weeks/Sundays to calculate an average.'[11]

The task of accurately assessing cathedral attendance across 20 to 25 regular weekly services in an environment in which the boundary between tourists and worshippers, visitors and regulars is perpetually blurred is a tall order.[12] Despite the challenges, the audit notes that 'Most, with the

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[8] Research and Statistics, email correspondence (26 July 2013).
[9] Research and Statistics. "Survey of Cathedral Statistics," (unpublished report 2012).
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Cathedral congregations are communities in constant flux. Some aspects of a congregation may be growing, whilst others may be struggling.One cathedral described their Sunday services and the practical challenges of measuring growth trends in 'normal attendance' as follows: 'We have a stable core of regular worshippers which

exception of the very large cathedrals, believe the attendance counts are accurate to within 10%. The number of communicants is the most accurate as either a headcount or wafer count takes place.'

A careful analysis of the data reveals that there is an uncomfortable amount of 'statistical noise' – especially for the earlier years – which risks obfuscating rather than clarifying the nature of the growth and/or decline in the cathedrals. Some of this statistical noise can be detected in the occasional submission of undetected figures. For example, one county-town cathedral in the North West reports the following all-age weekday attendance figures:

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
246	53	68	305	280	40	40	962	312	313	373	378	378

The typical attendance for most years is somewhere between 250 and 380. For reasons unknown, 2001-02 and 2005-06 show unexpected sharp 'decline'; whereas weekday attendance in 2007 suddenly spikes to 962. It is unlikely that these troughs or spikes actually represent real growth or decline. Yet if one were to bracket the outliers, this cathedral does seem to be showing growth over the last five years.

Another example is from a large, international cathedral. Its all-age weekday figures are as follows:

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
90	95	173	173	474	1174	534	577	581	589	646	697	579

The change from around 95 worshippers in 2000-01 to 1,174 five years later is unlikely to be genuine 'growth' (of 92%), as an uncritical reading of the figures might imply. Rather, it appears that some shift in understanding has taken place between the early years compared with the more recent ones. Again, once the figures seem to settle in 2006 one can detect real, albeit more modest growth over the last six years. Indeed, this claim resonates with a comment from the dean of this cathedral that the number of people who attend for worship at least monthly has 'grown a little' over the last five years. The unusual spike in 2005, however, remains more difficult to interpret either way.

In additional to erratic data, statistical noise also takes the form of interpretive 'category mistakes'. For example, one medium-sized, county town cathedral reported the following normal adult Sunday attendance figures:

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
425	300	300	290	40	40

The cathedral was showing some decline between 2007 and 2010. However, the sudden drop to 40 in 2011 and 2012 seems questionable. On the questionnaire the dean notes that four of the five Sunday services have been stable over the last five years and that the cathedral Eucharist has actually shown some modest signs of growth. It is difficult to interpret these figures in light of these observations, but it is possible that this apparent decreasemay reflect the introduction of the new 'statistics for mission form' which went into effect in 2010.

Another cathedral provided the following weekday attendance figures for children and young people under 16 years old:

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
22	0	0	0	0	22	7	552	800	600	600	600	600

replenishes itself and possibly grows a little. In addition we have two groups of intermittent worshipers – those from within the diocese who join us spontaneously – seasonal visitors who worship with us. As a result our congregation numbers on a Sunday fluctuate and whilst they are always healthy, they are also complex to analyse.'

In a cathedral with a strong choral tradition and history of ground breaking ministry with education and children's spirituality, it would be unlikely that no children attended weekday services between 2002-2004.Equally, the gap between the 7 children listed in 2006 and the 552 in 2007 does not represents genuine growth in attendance figures. These figures do highlight another form of statistical noise. The recent figures are more likely to reflect the actual status of weekday attendance. However, the fact that 2009-2012 report the same number illustrates a further limitation to the data. It is difficult to assess the actual variations on the ground when a single figureis supplied for a substantial run of years.

Much of this noise appears to be more concentrated in the earlier years of the dataset. The impact of this noise can be most clearly seen in the 10 year comparisons of all-age weekday attendance.By comparing the percentage change between 2002 and 2011, nearly a third (12 of 42) of the cathedrals appear to have grown by over 300%, and in five cases by over 600%.

Cathedrals indicating highest % change between 2002-2011

All-Age Usual Weekday Attendance	2002	2011	Raw Change	% Change
Chester Cathedral	68	378	310	456%
Chichester Cathedral	64	1055	991	1548%
Durham Cathedral	173	697	524	303%
Ely Cathedral	8	650	642	8025%
Liverpool Cathedral	66	265	199	302%
St Paul's Cathedral, London	271	2502	2231	823%
Manchester Cathedral	80	614	534	668%
Norwich Cathedral	46	675	629	1367%
Ripon Cathedral	68	297	229	337%
Southwell Minster	70	290	220	314%
St Edmundsbury Cathedral	46	236	190	413%
Winchester Cathedral	93	386	293	315%

At the beginning of this section, we quoted the Research and Statistics headline from this year which announced that 'Total weekly attendance at the 42 cathedrals grew to 35,800, according to Cathedral Statistics 2012, *an increase of 35% since 2002*.' This evidence of serious statistical noise in the early years suggests that such long term projections made on the basis of this data alone are likely to be misleading. The 'category mistakes' listed above are of a sufficient magnitude to heavily bias such projections.

The reason for highlighting these incongruities in the data is in no way to dispute cathedral growth. On the contrary, substantial evidence gathered through our research indicates that this growth – especially at weekday services – is real and significant across a diverse range of cathedrals. What complicates the picture is that we have insufficient information to confidently declare the nature of cathedral growth for the whole decade. It could be that these limitations should be taken to mean that cathedral growth is less dramatic than initial projections lead us to believe. Equally, it could mean that there is a tendency in the data to undercount attendance figures and that the actual rates of involvement in cathedral worship are even higher than the figures suggest. Substantiating either assumption would require further work and a consistent database over a substantial time period. The primary reason for discussing the limitations of the statistics at such length is to underscore the point that while the figures themselves have an important story to tell, they should always be taken as *indicators* of growth and/or decline rather than *definitive proof* one way or the other.

Any conclusions made solely on the basis of this data alone should be made tentatively, acknowledging the limitations of the database and recognising that congregational growth is never simply a matter of numerical calculation. As a recent editorial in the *Church Times* writes, 'the cathedral success story cries out for the kind of research that is far more than a matter of statistics.'[13] The objective of this report is to do both tasks justice: to interrogate the numerical evidence available and, more importantly, to explore the finer textures of the complex cathedral communities they attempt to describe through a more layered analysis of the qualitative data.

Unpacking the Headline Statistics

Having flagged some of the statistical noise imbedded in the cathedral growth figures, we are now in a better position to explore these growth trends in greater detail. On balance, cathedral statistics tend to be reported for all the cathedrals taken together as a single group. However, this way of viewing the matter risks giving the impression that there is only one narrative of cathedral growth – namely, stable Sunday attendance accompanied by a continuous and steady rise in weekday participation. For many cathedrals such trajectories of unabated growth may well be the pattern. However, it is unlikely that this narrative applies equally to all cathedrals irrespective of size, type, location or social context. This section explores growth trends by province, region and cathedral type. In view of the limitations associated with the early years of the data, the following analysis is based on 2007-2012 data. Growth has been calculated by taking the percentage change between the average of 2007-2008 and the average of 2011-2012. As suggestive gestures, these growth trends give us some important clues about the shifting patterns of cathedral attendance across the UK.

Attendance Statistics by Province

There are 29 cathedrals located in the Southern Province of Canterbury and 13 cathedrals in the Northern Province of York. As such, total attendance figures for Canterbury are proportionally higher than in York. In both provinces, Sunday attendance appears fairly static. Weekday attendance for children and adults, however, has increased by 13% in Canterbury since 2007 and by 19% in York. Interestingly, both Provinces show an overall growth rate of 8% over the last 6 years, which resonates with many comments made by many cathedral deans about their experiences of quiet yet persistent growth.
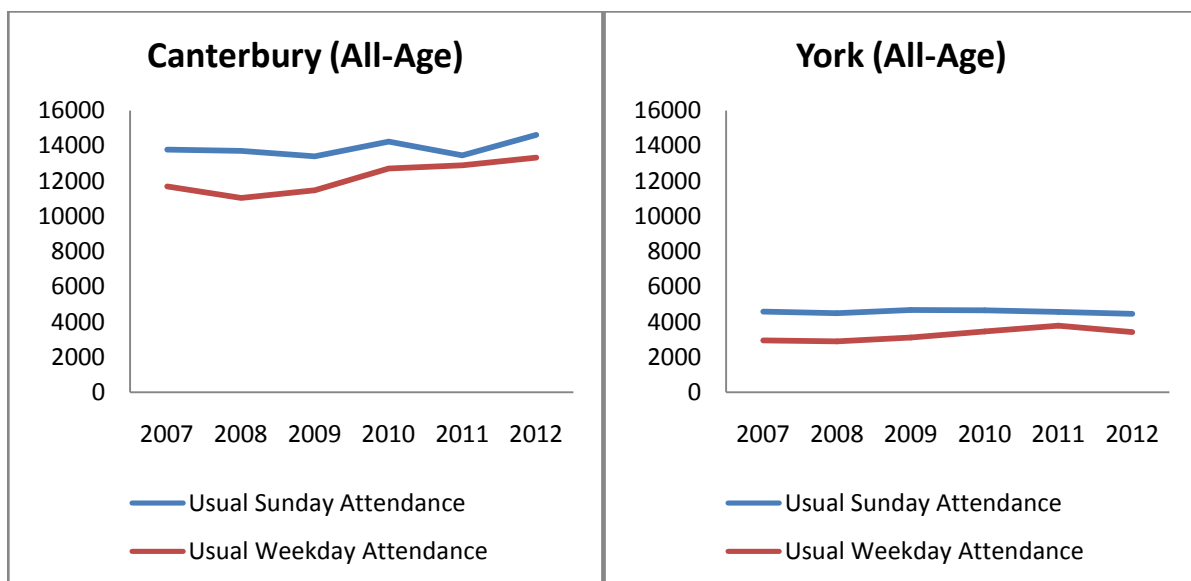
Attendance Statistics by Region

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[13]*The Church Times*. "Beyond the West Front" (16 August 2013).

For the sake of this research, the cathedrals were divided according to the nine regions of England.

- **North West**: Blackburn, Carlisle, Chester, Liverpool & Manchester
- **Yorkshire and the Humber**: Bradford, Ripon, Sheffield, Wakefield & York
- **North East**: Durham & Newcastle
- **West Midlands**: Birmingham, Coventry, Hereford, Lichfield & Worcester
- **East Midlands**: Derby, Leicester, Lincoln & Southwell
- **East of England**: Chelmsford, Ely, Norwich, Peterborough, St Albans & St Edmundsbury
- **South West**: Bristol, Exeter, Gloucester, Salisbury, Truro & Wells
- **London**: St Paul's & Southwark
- **South East**: Canterbury, Chichester, Guildford, Oxford, Portsmouth, Rochester & Winchester

Geographical differences highlight the fact that attendance trends in cathedrals differ widely. Cathedral growth trends are not evenly distributed across England. On balance the data suggests the majority of regions are seeing some signs of growth – especially for weekday attendance.

Attendance at Regular Services by Region	Usual Sunday Attendance			Usual Weekday Attendance			Combined Weekly Attendance		
	Avg 07-08	Avg 11-12	% Change	Avg 07-08	Avg 11-12	% Change	Avg 07-08	Avg 11-12	% Change
North West (n = 5)	1,705	1,509	-13	1,315	1,439	+9	3,020	2,948	-2
Yorkshire & the Humber (n = 5)	1,880	2,002	+6	859	1,090	+27	2,739	3,092	+13
North East (n = 2)	644	676	+5	626	783	+25	1,270	1,459	+15
West Midlands (n = 5)	1,860	1,485	-20	1,725	1,929	+12	3,585	3,414	-5
East Midlands (n = 4)	1,184	1,256	+6	475	611	+29	1,659	1,867	+13
East of England (n = 6)	2,821	2,462	-13	3,948	4,024	+2	6,769	6,486	-4
South West (n = 6)	2,629	2,577	-2	1,824	1,276	-30	4,453	3,853	-13
London (n = 2)	2,303	2,939	+28	1,900	3,132	+65	4,203	6,071	+44
South East (n = 7)	3,262	3,653	+12	1,622	2,431	+50	4,883	6,083	+25

In a recent study of church growth, David Goodhew highlights the importance of 'trade routes' for understanding the nature and trajectory of growth in the UK. He argues that 'church growth in contemporary Britain is most common in areas of migration, population growth and economic dynamism. Corridors of church growth have developed alongside major economic arteries such as the A1 and the east coast mainline and the growing cities to be found on those arteries […] Just as the early church grew most strongly along trade routes, so, *mutatis mutandis,* something similar is happening in modern Britain.'[14] The same could be said of English cathedrals. Cathedrals situated at the heart of lively, growing cities, or those located along a tourist throughway will have greater opportunities for growth than those cathedrals isolated from flourishing centres of population and economic development. In this light it is interesting to note that the two regions showing the strongest growth are London and the South East; whereas those regions which indicate some decline in cathedral attendance tend to be found on the geographical peripheries of the UK – the North West, West Midlands, South West and East of England.

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[14] Goodhew, David. *Church Growth in Modern Britain*, pp. 8-9.

Yet for all these differences, five out of nine regions nonetheless still show strong signs of growth. Indeed, three of the four regions not listed among the growing could be reasonably described as 'stable' (i.e. < 5% decline over 6 years). In eight out of nine regions, cathedral growth continues to be driven largely by increased attendance at regular weekday services.Only the South West has experienced sharp decline in weekday attendance (-30%).[15]

Further research exploring the complex relationship between cathedral growth, regional context and 'trade routes' would shed greater light on these questions.

Attendance Statistics by Cathedral Type

'Cathedrals are large, complex, multifaceted institutions, each shaped by its unique history and context. To generalise too readily or to attempt to fit every one into a one-size-fits-all shape would be a mistake. Each cathedral is different and needs to be respected as such.'[16] This observation from the*Spiritual Capital*report*highlights the fact that any honest assessment of cathedral ministry and mission needs to grapple with the reality that no two cathedrals are alike. Cathedral growth will not mean the same thing in all contexts.

Cathedrals vary widely from ancient minsters in rural towns, to modest parish church cathedrals in socially deprived urban neighbourhoods, to World Heritage Sites at the centre of vast metropolises. Recognising the significance of cathedral differences, researchers have found it useful to develop a typology of the various kinds of cathedral. In 2004 English Heritage joined with the Association of English Cathedrals (AEC) to commission a study to assess the economic and social impact of Anglican cathedrals in England. According to the report, 'the impacts generated by the cathedrals can be expected to vary according to a range of factors, including their location, size and profile as a visitor attraction.'[17]The report identified five main cathedral types:

- Large, international importance (n = 6)
- Medium-sized, historic (n = 18)
- Medium-sized, modern (n = 2)
- Parish church (n = 11)
- Urban (n = 5)

Commenting on this report, Lynda Barley writes, 'Cathedrals are places where large congregations are not unusual and [the ECOTEC] survey in 2004 revealed that congregation sizes at the main Sunday service were four to five times the numbers at the next best attended regular service […]. Not

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[15]Closer examination reveals that the statistical data, even in more recent years, is not without complications. Many of the cathedrals in the South West do show varying degrees of decline in weekday attendance. However, the apparent severity of the change (-30%) is largely indicative of an anomalous spike in the 2007 combined weekday figures of one medium-sized, county town cathedral:

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
60	60	50	50	90	708	45	21	30	39	60

Comparing 2007 with 2012, this simple category mistake registers as a decline of 92% in this cathedral, thus biasing the results of the region as a whole. When this cathedral is excluded from the results, the South West region shows declining weekday attending of only 15%.

[16] Theos & Grubb. *Spiritual Capital: The Present and Future of English Cathedrals* (London: Theos & Grubb, 2012), p. 55.

[17] English Heritage. *The Economic and Social Impacts of Cathedrals in England* (London: ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd., 2004), p. 1.

surprisingly, larger cathedrals attracted the largest congregations but all cathedrals regularly experience congregational sizes measured in the hundreds.'[18]

For the purposes of this report, a similar cathedral typology was needed to assess the growth trends indicated by the Research and Statistics data. In consultation with the AEC, we modified the ECOTEC typology to further reflect the diverse social contexts in which cathedrals are found. It was felt that the 'medium-sized' categories in particular required slightly greater nuance.

- Large, international importance (6)
- London commuter belt (4)
- Medium-sized, county town (11)
- Medium-sized, market town (7)
- Parish church (8)
- Urban (6)

While no typology is perfect, these distinctions enable us to cut the cathedral statistics from a different direction in order to better understand whether or not certain types of cathedral are more likely to be growing and/or declining.

Attendance at Regular Services by Cathedral Type	Usual Sunday Attendance			Usual Weekday Attendance			Combined Weekly Attendance		
	Avg 07-08	Avg 11-12	% Change	Avg 07-08	Avg 11-12	% Change	Avg 07-08	Avg 11-12	% Change
Large, International (n = 6)	4,920	5,744	+17	3,735	4,996	+34	8,655	10,739	+24
London Commuter Belt (n = 4)	2,136	2,160	+1	2,524	2,832	+12	4,660	4,992	+7
Medium-Sized, County Town (n = 11)	3,849	3,411	-11	2,888	3,362	+16	6,737	6,772	+1
Medium-Sized, Market Town (n = 7)	2,783	2,991	+7	2,715	2,947	+9	5,498	5,937	+8
Parish Church (n = 8)	2,265	2,141	-5	1,427	1,413	-1	3,692	3,554	-4
Urban (n = 6)	2,334	2,113	-9	1,004	1,165	+16	3,338	3,278	-2

From this perspective, the large, international importance cathedrals show the strongest growth in terms of both Sunday and weekday attendance (24%). The medium-sized, market town cathedrals are also growing throughout the whole week (8%). The four London commuter belt cathedrals have roughly the same overall growth as the market town types. However, by contrast this growth is almost entirely down to increasing weekday attendance. Interestingly, the three types showing marked decline are all on Sundays.

Whilst an honest assessment of the limitations of the cathedral statistics may render full scale projections problematic, this close analysis of the recent figures nonetheless reaffirms the basic point of departure for this strand of the research programme: cathedrals are indeed growing. Our analysis broadly supports Lynda Barley's contention that this cathedral growth 'is apparent in all types and locations of cathedral from north to south, inner city to medium sized tourist attraction. The availability of accessible worship in open cathedrals throughout the week is attracting spiritual pilgrims at times that are more convenient to contemporary lifestyles.'[19] Since 2007, 48% of cathedrals have grown by more

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[18] Barley, Lynda. "Stirrings in Barchester: Cathedrals and Church Growth," in *Church Growth in Britain: 1980 to the Present,* ed. David Goodhew (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), p. 84.

[19] Barley, Lynda. "Stirrings in Barchester: Cathedrals and Church Growth," in *Church Growth in Britain: 1980 to the Present,* ed. David Goodhew (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), p. 84.

than 10%. Twice as many cathedrals (23, 55%) are growing midweek compared with those showing growth at Sunday services (11, 26%). Taken together as a group, the 42 English cathedrals are stable on Sundays, growing strongly midweek and are thus growing modestly overall.

The 2004 ECOTEC report surveyed the cathedrals and found that 'almost 50% reported an upward trend in congregation size for main services and around the same number reported no significant change. Only one cathedral reported declining attendance at regular worship. This appears in marked contrast to the experience of churches across the country where decline in regular attendance is seen as a particular problem for larger churches.'[20] Nearly 10 years on from that report and the trend does not seem to have slowed. On the contrary, 75% of cathedral deans who responded to our questionnaire stated that the number of people who attend for worship at least monthly has grown during the last five years. Only two indicated that regular attendance has declined.

Church Growth and the Shifting Patterns of Cathedral Worship

> *'A cathedral – or at least this one – is not so much a community as a collection of communities; and has not so much a congregation as a multiplicity of congregations. For example, is the "Cathedral Congregation" those who attend the main Sunday services? Or the very different groups of people who come to matins on a weekday before work, but worship in their parishes on Sunday? Or the 2,000+ members of the congregation on Remembrance Sunday? Or the two dozen chorister parents at a Monday evensong? All of which makes statistics, let alone motivation, difficult to assess and quantify in a tick-box survey. Where one CAN sense from experience and observation is that the scale of engagement and activity at [the cathedral], with many sections of the Diocese and wider community, has grown so rapidly in recent years that it's difficult for the infrastructure to keep pace.'*

Having clarified attendance trends between different types of cathedral and between different parts of England, the final section seeks to identify the particular 'hotspots' for growth within the weekly pattern of cathedral worship. Because the Research and Statistics categories do not distinguish between different acts of cathedral worship, a questionnaire was designed to elicit an understanding of the range of acts of worship, their popularity and the factors which encourage and hinder growth in a cathedral context. It was sent to all English cathedral deans. The response rate was 86% (36/42).

Sunday Services

Sunday attendance at Cathedral worship *on the whole* has remained stable in recent years. However, this does not mean, therefore, that *all* Sunday services are static. Closer examination reveals that for many cathedrals *particular Sunday services* are in fact growing. Where are these 'hotspots' for growth and what are some of the factors that might begin to account for them?

	Growing	Stable	Declining	n
Choral Evensong	13	18	4	35
The Cathedral Eucharist	23	8	4	35
Holy Communion (BCP)	3	20	11	34
Matins / Morning Prayer (Sung)	5	5	7	17
Holy Communion (CW)	7	7	1	15
Matins / Morning Prayer (Said)	2	8	1	11
Alternative / Creative / Fresh Expression Worship	4	3	1	8

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[20] English Heritage. *The Economic and Social Impacts of Cathedrals in England* (London: ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd., 2004), p. 46.

Compline / Night Prayer	2	2	0	4
Said Evening Prayer	1	3	0	4

On average, English cathedrals offer at least four regular services every Sunday. The three most commonly occurring types of Sunday services are choral evensong, the cathedral Eucharist, and BCP Holy Communion.Despite the fact that Sunday services are generally static, 64% of respondents identified their Sunday cathedral Eucharist as growing. One southern dean observed, 'The most growth has been in the Choral Eucharist. This has doubled in the last ten years. There is a high degree of "churn." Many people have arrived in the last 3 years.' Another urban cathedral dean reflected, 'We are delighted that, of all services, the Cathedral Eucharist is growing.' Choral evensongs are also popular and well attended. By contrast, BCP HC services tend to be either stable (in 56% of cathedrals) or experiencing some decline (31%).

In additional to the traditional services listed above, nearly one out of three respondents identified alternative acts of worship that take place regularly on a Sunday. These include services of Benediction, Celtic services, student communions, 'service of light', Taize worship, wholeness and healing. For many cathedrals, such alternative service structures and styles has been a renewed source of growth. As one dean describes it, 'The "growth area"is a monthly service of healing. "The Evening Hour" began in 2009. It is informal and attracts 25-40 people. Many of them do not normally attend Cathedral services.' Another dean comments, 'The profile of those attending the Cathedral Eucharist has changed, with more families now compared to 5 years ago. We have introduced an Alternative worship […] within the last 5 years, explaining why this has grown substantially.'

When invited to identify main reasons contributing to growing Sunday services in particular, the deans' comments clustered around several key themes:

- **Quality of worship** – liturgy, tradition, symbolic action, user-friendly service sheets
- **Quality of music** – choir, evensong, congregational music in worship
- **Quality of preaching** – confidence in the gospel, teaching
- **Embodying Generous Hospitality**– welcome,friendly atmosphere, personal feel
- **Cultivating a sense of community** – fellowship, young families, students, dedicated leadership
- **Exploring new patterns** – new services, different styles, valuing diversity, greater informality, convenient service times, improving publicity
- **Providing spiritual openness** – inclusivity, intentionality, prayer, pastoral care, reflective space, anonymity

However, many cathedrals are not experiencing growth in all aspects of Sunday worship attendance. Perceived barriers to growth in Sunday services, as reported by the deans, included:

- **Social factors** – changing place of 'Sunday' in society, shopping and sport on Sunday, decreased frequency of attendance, increased gap between 'believing but not-belonging', unintelligibility of sacramental symbol in a de-Christianising culture, cultural consumerism, lack of public support, church seen as intolerant
- **Contextual factors** – size of the city, lack of a resident population, parking costs, perceived competition from new churches, insufficient 'critical mass' for growth
- **Attitudinal factors** – resistance to change, resistance to new music, unwillingness to experiment, insufficient flexibility, inbuilt conservatism, non-participative, complacency, not wanting to 'poach' from local parishes
- **Practical factors** – 8:00am services – especially BCP, lack of pastoral care and Christian nurture, inability to connect personally in a large congregation, use of the building, diary pressures, too many services, dominance of perpetual fundraising, volunteer training,insufficient inter-faith dialogue

- **Communal factors** – integrating young families, imbalance of demographics, ageing congregational profile, overstretched staff

Weekday Services

As the statistics attest, weekday services are central to cathedral growth. Again, this begs the question of which weekday services are growing and why? There are on average at least 20 regular services which take place every week in each cathedral in the country. The three most common weekday services in cathedrals are Holy Communion (Common Worship), Matins, and Choral Evensong. In all three cases, most cathedrals identify these services as growing. In the case of both Holy Communion and Choral Evensong, nearly 60% of cathedrals report these as growing services.

	Growing	Stable	Declining	n
Holy Communion (CW)	22	11	2	35
Matins / Morning Prayer (Said)	18	16	1	35
Choral Evensong	21	12	1	34
Said Evening Prayer	7	19	1	27
Holy Communion (BCP)	3	12	5	20
Wholeness & Healing	9	3	2	14
Taize	4	1	1	6
Compline / Night Prayer	3	1	0	4
Alternative / Creative / Fresh Expression Worship	2	2	0	4
Matins / Morning Prayer (Sung)	0	1	0	1

Not only wasChoral Evensonglisted as growing; it was identified as the most consistently well-attended weekday service in nearly half of the cathedrals in our survey. This enthusiasm reflects the popularity of cathedral music. Many cathedrals have actively sought to improve the accessibility and intelligibility of these services – ways by removing physical barriers and also by creating a climate of welcome and open invitation. Much care is often given to how Scripture readings are introduced, how sermons are preached, how the gospel is proclaimed and enacted within an inherently mixed assembly of believers and unbelievers, pilgrims and tourists, wanderers and seekers alike. Cathedrals are increasingly expanding their use of technology and social media to spread the word, advertise service times and special events, and generally invite people to explore worship available at 'their' cathedral.

In another third of the cathedrals the best attended weekday service was a celebration of Holy Communion.

Growing cathedrals have tended to respond to this shift towards weekday attendance in at least three ways:

1. Introduction of new services and worship styles

The introduction of new services and diversifying the pattern of regular worship through incorporating new styles have been a growing feature of cathedral weekday worship in recent years. There has been a growth in midweek Eucharistic worship and Choral Evensong and the introduction of new services of healing, contemplative worship and some providing for the needs of young people and young families. The extent of these additional and new acts of worship in the cathedrals in recent years is considerable and developing.Nine cathedrals present at the qualitative research days reported starting a fresh expression or welcoming such a congregation to make its home in cathedral life.

2. Altering service times

The second is through changing the times of services to more appropriately reflect the rhythms of the local communities in which they embedded. A cathedral in the Midlands reported how changing the times of daily worship had encouraged a growth in attendance and the same point was made at our cathedral qualitative consultations by others. Similarly, a cathedral in Yorkshire spoke of starting a new early midweek celebration of Holy Communion for people before going to work with significant success. A third cathedral began a daily lunchtime celebration (moving the time from early morning), adding an average of a dozen worshippers every day. The new provision of a daily lunchtime Eucharist has been a feature of several other cathedrals in recent years.

3. Emphasis on families and young people

Some cathedrals in recent years have increasingly come to recognise the importance of children for the growth of the church. Historically, cathedrals have typically engaged in with young people missionally through educational programmes. However, several cathedrals have reordered existing regular worship services andeven launchednew ones from scratch specifically designed for families with toddlers and young children. One southern cathedral commented, 'There is probably a limitless demand for mothers and toddlers weekday worship/meetings.'

Conclusion

One thing is clear that 'growth' in a cathedral context is not uniform or comprehensive. Rather, like the development of a dynamic and living organism, growth, stability and decline frequently move in a myriad of directions simultaneously. Evidence suggests that for most cathedrals it is particular service styles, particular days of the week or times of day that show signs of growth.

Having presented the available evidence showing that attendance numbers at cathedral services are continuing to increase and where that growth is taking place, two further questions need to be explored in greater detail: (1) Who is attending cathedral services? And (2) what factors are contributing their increasing growth in numbers?

Section 2.2
WHO IS ATTENDING CATHEDRAL SERVICES? THE WORSHIPPER SURVEY

Introduction

Spiritual Capital reports that in 2012, 'Over a quarter – (27%) – of England's adult population say that they have been to a Church of England cathedral in the last 12 months.'[21] The report describes a high correlation between levels of religious belief and practice and the likelihood of having recently visited a cathedral. The most likely group to visit a cathedral are active members of the Church of England. 41% of those who participate in religious services at least once a month said they have visited a cathedral in the last year. Around 20% of those who describe themselves as atheist/agnostics have visited in the last year.

Visitors come to cathedrals for a wide range of reasons. Some come for leisure purposes, others as pilgrims or worshippers, others still to find a quiet place to be still and reflect, or to seek out a listening ear in a moment of questioning or personal distress. The Spiritual Capital report considered the breadth of cathedral *visitors*. This work focuses specifically on cathedral *worshippers*.

Towards a New Research Strategy

This section seeks to explore the profile of cathedral worshippers, in particular studying:

- The balance between 'one off' and 'regular committed' worshippers
- The rate of 'congregational churn' (the percentage of joiners and leavers each year)
- The proportion of joiners who are previously 'churched' and 'non-churched'
- The balance between 'transfer' and 'genuine' growth
- The geographical spread of congregations

Our pilot questionnaires indicated that church leaders in both cathedrals and greater churches do not have access to the kind of data necessary to provide accurate comments on these areas. By definition the churches studied in this research strand are large, complex and fluid faith communities. Rather than having a single stable congregation constituted by a large core of regular committed members and a marginal periphery of occasional worshippers/visitors, cathedrals and greater churches are better understood as communities of communities. They are each made up of multiple congregations and welcome vast numbers of guests and visitors through their doors each day.

In order to better understand the nature of these multi-layered, dynamic communities, it was necessary to survey cathedral worshippers directly. This was done through the completion of a week-long surveying process at each of four selected cathedrals between May and July 2013. It was recognised that attempting to conduct an additional parallel worshipper survey in four greater churches was beyond the scope of available time and resources. The results of the cathedral worshipper survey enable us to respond to the core questions with regard to cathedralcongregations. However, without equivalent data for the greater churches, we were unable to conduct a comparative analysis of these research areas.

Worshipper Survey: Description

The four selected cathedrals were: Wakefield, Birmingham, Southwell and Gloucester. Each of these cathedrals is based in very different contexts and has a unique ministry in the diocese it serves. Wakefield and Southwell from the Northern Province are both parish church cathedrals.Wakefield is at an iconic building set in the heart of small Yorkshire city. Southwell is a historic minster in a scenic rural

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[21] Theos & Grubb. *Spiritual Capital: The Present and Future of English Cathedrals* (London: Theos & Grubb, 2012), p. 14.

town somewhat removed from major population 'trade routes'. In the Southern Province, Birmingham is a parish church cathedral at the heart of the second largest metropolitan region in the country and Gloucester is a sixteenth century cathedralserving a largely rural diocese and region. Two of these cathedrals have shown signs of congregational growth over 10 years, one remained relatively stable and one has experienced some decline in usual attendance. This broadlyreflects the overall picture of cathedral attendance since the Millennium.

	Church Growth Research Programme	ECOTEC Report	ORB National Visitor Survey	Historic Typology
Birmingham	Urban	Urban	Inner City	Parish Church Cathedral
Gloucester	Medium-Sized, County Town	Medium-Sized, Historic	Medium Tourist	New Foundation
Southwell	Medium-Sized, Market Town	Medium-Sized, Historic	Small Tourist	Parish Church Cathedral
Wakefield	Parish Church	Parish Church	Small City	Parish Church Cathedral

While no sample of cathedrals can ever claim to perfectly depict the situation of all English cathedrals, these four nonetheless can be taken as representative case studies of the majority of English cathedrals.

Worshipper Survey: Design and Procedure

During the one-week data collection phase for each cathedral, worshippers at every service with a usual attendance of more than 10 people were encouraged to complete a standardised worshipper survey proforma. Where appropriate, we also endeavoured to survey as many of the smaller services as possible. In summary, the full spectrum of service types and styles were included in this research. Members of the research team were present throughout to help distribute questionnaires and answer questions.

The worshipper survey (see Appendix No.5) sought to address questions of attendance, membership, participation, connection to the cathedral community and sense of belonging as well as basic demographics. Part of the survey used questions taken from the survey used by Frances & Williams in their 2010 work based at two rural cathedrals, which sought to identify reasons for attendance at cathedral services.[22] Doing so enabled us to complete a comparative analysis with a broader sample of cathedrals and greater diversity of services including weekday worship.

To accurately assess response rates and avoid the problem of 'double-counting', a separate '**repeat worshipper survey**' for worshippers attending multiple services was provided.

Though the primary focus of the survey was to profile adult worshippers, a short 'child worshipper survey' was also available for young people. The children who completed a survey were typically between the ages of 5 to 15.

Of note, in order to prevent the survey from disrupting the flow and pattern of worship itself, it was deemed inappropriate to survey either clergy, choir or lay people involved in leading and conducting the services. This decision not to survey staff and choristers does impact how to make sense of the data.By bracketing the choir from our investigation, the results do not reflect the demographic diversity that

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[22] Francis, Leslie J. & Williams, Emyr. "Not All Cathedral Congregations Look Alike: Two Case Studies in Rural England," *Rural Theology* 8.1 (2010): 37-50. Their findings on the reasons people attend cathedrals are significant. However, the authors acknowledge that 'the clear limitation with the present study is that the findings were based on (and limited to) just two cathedrals in England.' They 'readily commend' their research procedure to future researchers in the hope that initial evidence could be compared with a broader sample of cathedrals and a greater diversity of services – especially those which occur midweek.

choristers add to the regular ebb and flow of cathedral worship. This is especially true of the age profile. Of the four cathedrals included in this survey, 76% of children and young people present at all the services surveyed were choristers. In addition, many young people, students and young professionals are also involved in the cathedral music.

Worshipper Survey: Sample

In total, 61 regular services of worship were surveyed, including all 14 of the principal Sunday services and 47 weekday services. 32 services were not surveyed, as their usual attendance was less than 10 people. As recorded in the flowchart below, 1717 worshippers were offered a survey – those not offered the survey were involved in the running of the service.
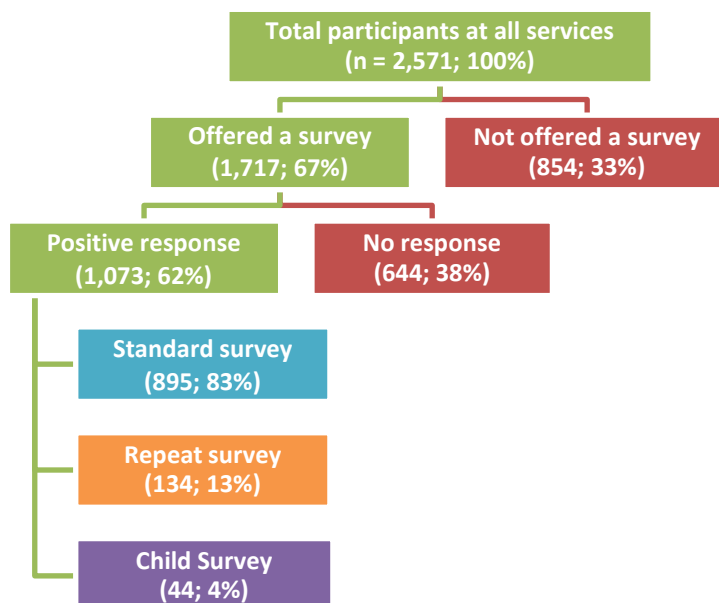
Number of Worship Services Surveyed					
	Sunday Services		**Weekday Services**		
	Services Surveyed	Standard Responses	Services Surveyed	Standard Responses	Total
Birmingham	3	125 (51%)	14	119 (49%)	**17**
Gloucester	4	123 (54%)	15	104 (46%)	**19**
Southwell	4	139 (50%)	11	137 (50%)	**15**
Wakefield	5	257 (79%)	5	69 (21%)	**10**
	15	**634 (59%)**	**46**	**439 (41%)**	**61**

Results and Discussion

Attendance Patterns at Regular Cathedral Services

We collected two basic kinds of data: (1) qualitative responses from worshippers willing to participate in the survey, and (2) a quantitative attendance count of everyonepresent at the service itself, including clergy and the choir. These statistics help to reconstruct a clearer picture of general attendance patterns in each cathedral.

Sunday Services

In contrast with the parish level statistics, the national cathedral database forSunday and weekday services does not include an 'average weekly attendance' (AWA) or 'October count' measure based on an actual headcount of all services during a set period of time. Instead, the cathedral statistics are based on'usual Sunday' and 'usual weekday' estimates, which are calculated variably amongst different cathedrals. In the previous section, the strengths and limitations of statistics were explored at length. In an effort to nuance these figures, the dean questionnaire asked the cathedrals to supply current attendance figures for 'normal' Sundays and weekdays. While helpful, these figures still reflect approximations.

The headcount figures from the worshipper survey provide hard evidence against which such estimates can be verified. AllSunday services were included in the survey. The research team took care to conduct a detailed attendance count each service, providing an accurate snapshot of what 'normal' attendance looks like on a given Sunday.

	Dean Questionnaire (uSa Estimation)	R&S Stats for Mission 2012 (uSa Estimation)	Worshipper Survey (Head Count)
Birmingham	215	196	243
Gloucester	200	285	315
Southwell	300	300	328
Wakefield	233	382	570*

This chart demonstrates that in all four cathedrals the combined Sunday attendance on the day of the worshipper survey was higher than both 'usual Sunday attendance' figures from Research and Statistics and the estimated figures reported by the deans. It would be unwise to draw too firm a conclusionon the basis of one typical week in the life of four cathedrals but they would suggest that the national statistics may well be an *under-count* of cathedral congregations.

*It is important to note that in Wakefield the largest single service was the 4:00pm choral evensong (269). Because this service also involved the licencing of four cathedral canons (and thus a large number of visitors), it would better be described as a special service embedded within a traditional one. Thus the overall figures may not reflect attendance patterns for 'usual' Sundays. Such special diocesan (and other) services are not anomalies for cathedrals, but are increasing becoming a standard component of thepattern of cathedral worship. The fact that such services can enfold large numbers of people into the rhythm of a cathedral's worship may itself be an important factor contributing to cathedral growth in general.

If we bracket the special service in Wakefield, the best attended service for the whole week in all four cathedrals was the principle Sunday morning Eucharist.

	Largest Single Service	Attendance
Birmingham	11:00am Sung Eucharist	172
Gloucester	10:15am Sung Eucharist with Sunday School	213
Southwell	09:30am Sung Family Eucharist	107
Wakefield	09:15am Sung Eucharist with Junior Church	180

While each of these services differed widely in style, formality and tone, all four had similar defining characteristics. First, they were all conducted in contemporary language. Second, they were accompanied by the cathedral choir. Third, each service intentionally incorporated a specific all-age or family dimension into the service, offering eithera separate children's programme elsewhere or providing special activities for children and young people near the gathered congregation.

Weekday Services

As demonstrated in the previous section, cathedral attendance statistics indicate that while Sunday services continue to attract the highest attendance numbers, most of the numerical growth experienced by cathedral congregations over recent years has taken place at weekday services.

The worshipper survey only profiled a proportion (58%) of allweekday services. The combined service headcount nonetheless revealed that in both Birmingham (where 93% of midweek services were surveyed) and in Gloucester (where 65% of services were surveyed), combined weekday attendance figures was *alreadyhigher* than the complete figures for Sunday services. In both these cathedrals, weekday attendance *more than doubled* overall attendance figures for the week.

	Sunday Attendance	Weekday Attendance	Total Attendance	% Weekday Surveyed	% Weekday Adds to Sunday Attendance
Birmingham	243	287	**530**	93%	**102%**
Gloucester	315	357	**672**	65%	**113%**
Southwell	328	257[23]	**585**	46%	78%
Wakefield	602[24]	182	**784**	29%	30%
	1,532	**1,039**	**2,571**		

Again, these findings suggest that the proportion of weekday attendance may be even stronger than the national data suggest. The (partial) worshipper service figures for weekday attendance in Birmingham is 31% higher than the 2012 Research and Statistics data (198). In Gloucester the weekday figures are 52% than Research and Statistics (170).

As with Sunday figures, much more research of this nature would be required to draw firm conclusions about this information. All evidence gathered alongside the worshipper survey indicates that a large amount of congregational activity may well currently be missed by the national statistics.

Worshipper Survey: Demographics

What follows are the basic demographics of the 895 respondents who completed a standard worshipper survey. Because important sections of the regular worshipping communities (such as the choir) were unable to participate in the research due to necessary methodological constraints, the results are best understood as a profile of worshippers sitting in the pews, rather than a full profile of the congregations themselves.

Worshipper Demographics: Sex

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[23] During the research week in Southwell, we were invited to survey three additional special weekday services. As this report primarily concerns attendance trends at *regular* services, we have not included the results of these special services in our worshipper survey figures. However, were we to do so, these three services alone would raise the combined weekday attendance to 590. This (partial) figure would not only match Sunday attendance; it would nearly double it.

[24] We were invited to survey a new Missa service, which had recently changed times from Saturday to Sunday evening. This included a total congregation of 32. In total, 25 of 28 'normal worshippers' at Missa completed a survey (89%).

	Birmingham		Gloucester		Southwell		Wakefield		Total	
Male	**95**	47%	**82**	41%	**68**	31%	**100**	37%	**345**	39%
Female	**79**	39%	**86**	43%	**126**	57%	**138**	50%	**429**	48%
Unspecified	**28**	14%	**31**	16%	**26**	12%	**36**	13%	**121**	14%
Total	**202**	100%	**199**	100%	**220**	100%	**274**	100%	**895**	100%

Worshipper Demographics: Age

	Birmingham		Gloucester		Southwell		Wakefield		Total	
Aged under 19	**1**	1%	**6**	6%	**3**	2%	7	3%	**17**	2%
Aged 20-29	**6**	3%	**9**	3%	**5**	2%	9	3%	**29**	3%
Aged 30-49	**50**	25%	**34**	5%	**16**	7%	59	22%	**159**	18%
Aged 50-64	**69**	34%	**50**	17%	**47**	22%	62	23%	**228**	25%
Aged 65+	**62**	30%	**88**	25%	**135**	61%	122	45%	**407**	45%
Not Stated	**14**	7%	**12**	44%	**14**	6%	15	4%	**55**	6%
Total	**202**	100%	**199**	100%	**220**	100%	**274**	100%	**895**	100%

Whilst these figures do not include the choir or the child survey, they do nonetheless demonstrate in these four cathedrals nearly half of adult respondents (45%) were older than 65.[25] Both Wakefield and Birmingham around a quarter of worshippers were in their thirties or forties, whereas this ratio is markedly smaller in Southwell. In Gloucester the disproportionately high number of worshippers who did not respond to this question makes it difficult to add much comment concerning the age profile of their worshippers.

Worshipper Demographics: Employment Status

	Birmingham		Gloucester		Southwell		Wakefield		Total	
Working/self-employed (f/t)	76	38%	44	22%	32	15%	67	24%	219	24%
Working/self-employed (p/t)	33	16%	31	16%	20	9%	30	11%	114	13%
Studying	4	2%	7	4%	4	2%	12	4%	27	3%
Unemployed	5	2%	1	1%	2	1%	9	3%	17	2%
Full-time homemaker, not otherwise employed	4	2%	2	1%	8	4%	13	5%	27	3%
Retired	71	35%	104	52%	148	67%	132	48%	455	51%
Non stated	9	4%	10	5%	6	3%	11	4%	36	4%
Total	202	100%	199	100%	220	100%	274	100%	895	100%

Overall 56% of respondents described themselves retired and 37% in full or part-time employment. In Southwell, a rural and fairly affluent market town, 67% of worshippers were retired, whereas in Birmingham, an urban cathedral in the midst of the vast city, only 35*%* of worshippers wereretired compared to 54% who were currently employed. The number of those studying, unemployed and full-time homemakers or not otherwise employed appears consistent and relatively low across all four cathedrals.

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[25] ECOTEC Research & Consulting Ltd. *The Economic and Social Impact of Cathedrals in England* (June 2004), p. 47. 'Several cathedrals commented that the average age of their congregation is over 50. However, in two cities where the cathedral is strongly linked to the university a high proportion of students were reported to make up the congregation. This is also in contrast to the majority of large parish churches which tend to contain a large proportion of children compared to smaller parish churches.'

There was no difference in the proportion of worshippers in employment and in retirement between Sunday and weekday services.
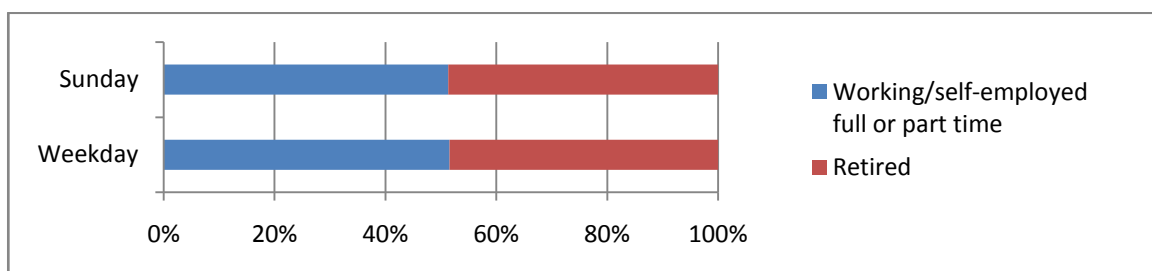
Worshipper Demographics: Ethnicity

	Birmingham		Gloucester		Southwell		Wakefield		Total	
White	**163**	85%	**184**	92%	**204**	93%	**253**	92%	**804**	90%
Mixed	**7**	3%	**0**	0%	**0**	0%	**3**	1%	**10**	1%
Asian or Asian British	**3**	1%	**0**	0%	**1**	0%	**4**	1%	**8**	1%
Black or Black British	**18**	9%	**2**	1%	**4**	2%	**3**	1%	**27**	3%
Other Ethnic Group	**4**	2%	**2**	1%	**1**	0%	**2**	1%	**9**	1%
Non stated	**7**	3%	**11**	6%	**10**	5%	**9**	3%	**37**	4%
Total	**202**	100%	**199**	100%	**220**	100%	**274**	100%	**895**	100%

Across all four cathedrals respondents to the worshipper were predominantly white, though respondents from Birmingham were slightly more ethnically diverse.

Worshipper Demographics: Country/Continent of Birth

Approximately 1 in 10 of those answering the worshipper survey were born outside the UK.

	Birmingham		Gloucester		Southwell		Wakefield		Total	
UK	**163**	81%	**163**	82%	**202**	92%	**247**	90%	**775**	87%
Other European Country	**7**	3%	**5**	3%	**3**	1%	**6**	2%	**21**	2%
Africa	**6**	3%	**1**	1%	**3**	1%	**7**	3%	**17**	2%
Asia	**4**	2%	**2**	1%	**2**	1%	**5**	2%	**13**	1%
North/South America	**2**	1%	**9**	5%	**1**	0%	**2**	1%	**14**	2%
Australia/New Zealand	**3**	1%	**0**	0%	**0**	0%	**1**	0%	**4**	0%
Other	**8**	4%	**8**	4%	**0**	0%	**0**	0%	**16**	2%
Not stated	**9**	4%	**11**	6%	**9**	4%	**6**	2%	**35**	4%
Total	**202**	100%	**199**	100%	**220**	100%	**274**	100%	**895**	100%

Birmingham Cathedral had the highest proportion of people born outside of the UK, which undoubtedly reflects the diversity of the city within which it is located.

Profiling the Cathedral Congregations

*(1) The balance between 'one off' and 'regular committed' worshippers*

Cathedral congregations are characterised by a ceaseless ebbing and flowing between regulars and visitors, joiners and leavers, tourists and pilgrims. For some, cathedrals are but a temporary station on a much longer journey of faith. For others, cathedral congregations have become a permanent home. At

the heart of cathedral ministry is the vocation to strive to be for all liminal sites of spiritual reorientation, encounter and transformation for every guest and stranger who crosses the threshold into the building.

According to *Heritage and Renewal*, a cathedral's worshipping community is drawn from a variety of different sources.First there is the dean and chapter, who are historicallyregarded as the 'formal congregation'. Then there are the gathered congregations of the regular worshippers.There are always casual visitors – those to whom the cathedral has a 'missionary purpose'. And also those working in the cathedral in a 'principally non-liturgical capacity, who occasionally or regularly worship in the place.' Finally there are those coming to the cathedral for diocesan or civic occasions or other special services whose church home is elsewhere.[26]

In order to assess the balance between 'one-off' and 'regular committed' worshippers, respondents were asked to describe their involvement in the cathedral. Those who described themselves as a *committed member of the congregation*, a *cathedral volunteer* or a *member of staff* were considered '**regular committed worshippers**'. Those who described themselves as an *occasional member* or a *frequent visitor* were considered '**infrequent worshippers**'. Those who described themselves as an *occasional visitor* or *having no involvement at the cathedral* were considered '**one-off worshippers**'.[27]

Across the four cathedrals, 52.3% were regular committed worshippers, 20.3% were infrequent worshippers, 25% were one-off worshippers and 2.3% did not specify. The distribution of one-off and infrequent visitors was fairly consistent between Sunday and weekday services. However, there was a markedly higher proportion of regular committed worshippers within Sunday congregations.
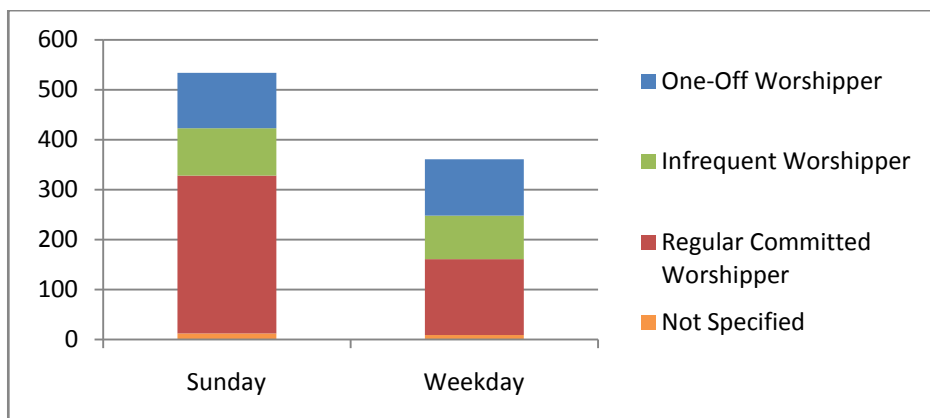
Heritage and Renewal rightly argues regular worshippers in a cathedral context often reflect something of the unique position of the cathedrals within which they gather. Regular worshippers are 'those whose loyalty and support link the cathedral with the local community; they should not see themselves, or be regarded by others, as refugees from surrounding churches, but as bridges between the cathedral and the rest of the diocese.'[28] The report goes on to note that casual visitors may indeed 'be a larger group than the regular worshippers' in some cathedrals.

(2) The rates of congregational churn – the percentage of joiners and leavers each year

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[26]*Heritage and Renewal: The Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Cathedrals* (London: Church House Publishing,1994), p. 12.

[27] Where respondents ticked multiple options including either 'I am a committed member' or 'I have no involvement', these were considered their 'dominant response'. Where individuals had given more than one response they were grouped into one of the three categories where possible, using responses to other questions (e.g. duration of attendance / frequency of attendance and qualitative response to 'other').

[28]*Heritage and Renewal: The Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Cathedrals* (London: Church House Publishing,1994), p. 12.

In 2012 Research and Statistics amended the parish 'statistics for mission' form to include a section for evaluating 'joiners' and 'leavers'. The rubric states that **joiners** can be understood as those who joined the worshipping community in a given year: (1) for the first time; (2) because they moved into the area; (3) because they have returned to church. **Leavers** are those who have left the worshipping community: (1) due to death or illness; (2) because they moved away; (3) because they left the church. Only after gathering such data over a series of years would it be possible to assess the *rate* of such 'congregational churn'.

Though the Research and Statistics also introduced a new form for the cathedrals in the same year, the new joiners and leavers measure was *not* included. There are sound reasons for this decision. Calculating congregational churn is much easier in smaller and relatively stable (or at least observable) ecclesial contexts. Cathedrals are typically neither. Each one is a complex community of communities. Their congregation(s) are in constant flux due to the ceaseless flow of visitors, pilgrims and seekers. In addition, seasonal variations and tourist cycles mean that in practice keeping track of new faces (let alone monitoring old ones) is a difficult task.

Without any available data documenting the number of joiners or leavers over a time sequence, we are unable to comment on the rate of congregational churn. Through the worshipper survey we did endeavour to generate some evidence on the proportions of recent joiners. Of the 206 respondents who started attending the cathedral for worship within the previous two years (including first time visitors), 49 (26%) were one-off visitors, 67 (36%) had become committed members and 69 (37%) remain infrequent members. Overall, 73% of those who began attending in the last two years claim to attend cathedral worship at least once a month.

However, as we could only survey those present at services (rather than those who have recently left the cathedral community), we are unable to clarify the answer to this question further.

(3) The proportion of joiners who are previously 'churched' & 'non-churched' and the balance between 'transfer' & 'genuine' growth

It is frequently argued that cathedrals are particularly well-equipped for reaching out to 'non-churched' and 'de-churched' people. As Lynda Barley writes,

> 'The commitment of cathedrals to bringing the treasures of inherited religion to the best of emerging expressions of Christianity offers a high quality shop window to the Church of England. They appeal to many churchgoers as well as to the considerable proportion of people who consider themselves to have drifted away from church (and Sunday School), '**the de-churched**'. At least one in two adults in Britain would place themselves in this category while a growing proportion of around three in ten, generally younger people ('**theun-churched**'), have no experience of church or Sunday School. The success of cathedrals in social connectivity and in fresh expressions of church reveals a further surprising confidence to embrace the challenges here too.'[29]

As indicated in the previous paragraphs, identifying (and indeed defining) 'joiners' in a cathedral context is a complex matter. We asked respondents who consider themselves to be a member of the cathedral community to describe their situation when they first joined:

- **Non-Churched** – *'joining a church community for the first time'*
- **De-Churched** – *'returning after a break from church in general'*

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[29] Barley, Lynda. "Stirrings in Barchester: Cathedrals and Church Growth," in*Church Growth in Britain: 1980 to the Present,* ed. David Goodhew (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), p. 89. See also ECOTEC Research & Consulting Ltd. *The Economic and Social Impact of Cathedrals in England* (June 2004), p. 47.

- **Churched** – *'transferring to the cathedral from another church'* or *'joining the cathedral whilst continuing to worship regularly at another church'*[30]

Looking at respondents who had begun attending cathedral worship within the last 5 years, 199 respondents now consider themselves members of the cathedral community (i.e. the joiners). Of these, 148 (74%) identified themselves as churched, 20 (10%) as non-churched and 31 (16%) as de-churched.

Non-Churched	20	10%
De-Churched	31	16%
Churched	148	74%
Total	**199**	**100%**

What does this reveal about the balance between 'transfer growth' and 'genuine growth'?[31] For the sake of this report, we assume that 'genuine growth' involves the increased participation of both non-churched *and* de-churched persons in the cathedral community. Because of the limited scope of the worshipper survey itself, we continue to take 'growth' to mean recent growth over the last five years. The worshipper survey reveals that three quarters of respondents who have recently joined and consider themselves members of a cathedral congregation represent 'transfer growth'.

Genuine Growth *(Non-Churched & De-Churched)*	51	26%
Transfer Growth *(Previously Churched)*	148	74%
Total	**199**	**100%**

What reasons did respondents offer for why they chose to transfer? Of those respondents who previously attended other churches in the past but now worship at the cathedral, 19% claimed to do so because they prefer cathedral worship, whereas only 6% claimed to so because they were not completely satisfied with their previous church (an additional 5% transferred for both reasons). By contrast 42% transferred to the cathedral for another reason entirely, the most common being: moving house, making some connection with the cathedral choir or another personal matter.

This resonates with the conclusions of *Spiritual Capital* that 'what attracts people to cathedrals, and their engagement with both cathedrals and their local parish church, are complex: simplistic interpretations may be misleading.'[32]

Overall, it should also be noted that the sample size for both of these questions is small and thus interpretation of it is limited. It is also important to recognise that there will be a degree of subjectivity in

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[30] Archbishops' Council.*Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context* (London: Church House, 2004), pp. 36-39. The *Mission-Shaped Church* report frames the question more broadly. It employs the language of 'regular attenders', 'fringe attenders', 'open de-churched', 'closed de-churched' and 'non-churched' categories. The slightly contradictory nature of the responses to several related questions on the worshipper survey suggests that framing the matter in terms of basic binary of 'churched' / 'non-churched' might be insufficiently nuanced to describe cathedral worshippers.

[31] Theos & Grubb. *Spiritual Capital: The Present and Future of English Cathedrals* (London: Theos & Grubb, 2012), pp. 50-52.The *Spiritual Capital* report suggests that individuals who participate in the worshipping life of cathedral congregations can be described in at least four ways: (1) those choosing to 'transfer' from a parish church because they find the quality of worship at the cathedral more 'life-giving'; (2) those whose experience in the cathedral has enabled them to recover a 'lost' or 'frozen' faith; (3) those for whom an encounter with the cathedral has resulted in them coming to faith for the first time; (4) finally, those who attend cathedral worship whilst continuing to participate in other churches – be they Anglican parish churches or otherwise.

[32]Theos & Grubb. *Spiritual Capital: The Present and Future of English Cathedrals* (London: Theos & Grubb, 2012), p. 51.

respondents' understanding of cathedral membership and the meaning of previous church experience, which may have influenced whether or not they chose to respond to this question.

(4) Geographical spread of congregations

Collection of postcode data aimed to enable us to gather details of the geographical spread of each cathedral congregation. Unfortunately, ambiguous responses rendered this level of analysis unattainable. Instead, in order to gain a basic understanding of each cathedral's sphere of influence, surveys were grouped according to whether they had a local postcode or were further afield. Taking all four cathedrals together:

- 69% of respondents reside within the same postcode area as their cathedral
- 16% live in another part of the UK
- 1% were overseas visitors
- 14% did not provide any postcode details

Of those who lived in the same area as their cathedral, nearly 50% have been attending the cathedral congregation for over 10 years and consider the cathedral their primary church home.
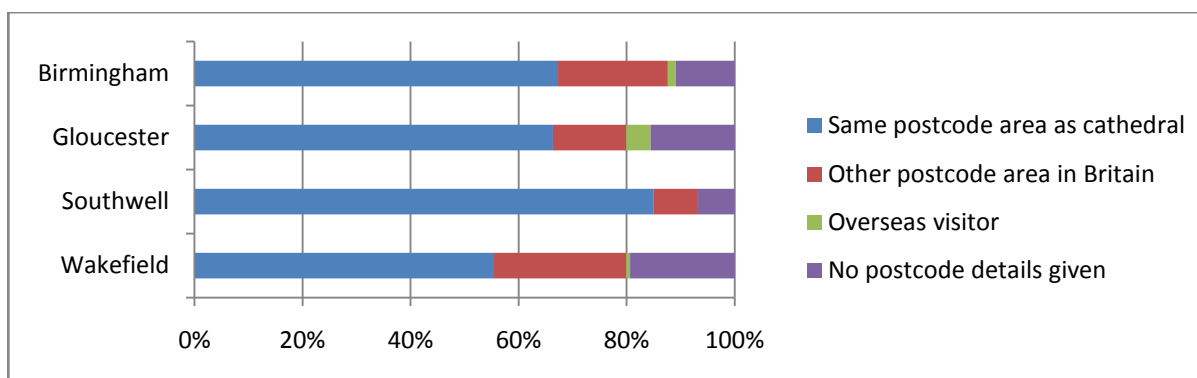
Unsurprisingly, Gloucester – an internationally renowned tourist site – received the highest proportion of overseas visitors attending services.

Motivations for attending worship

Having discussed the basic profile of cathedral worshippers, we now address the question of the why worshippers are attending regular cathedral services in the first place. Twenty years ago, *Heritage and Renewal* outlined many of these motivating factors which remain significant for cathedrals today:

> 'The time when regular worshippers were drawn to a church because it was their parish church seems […] in some places to have passed; people now choose their church – and it is often one at some distance form where they work or live (a consequence of near-universal personal transport) – because they like its liturgical practice, or its degree of formality, its level of activism, the sympathy of pastoral care, and perhaps even the beauty of the actual building. The modern growth of cathedral congregations additionally reflects the inclination of some for personal anonymity at worship; they do not want to be involved in the community atmosphere of parish churches. There are some others for whom the splendour of cathedral worship, which is beyond the resources of most local churches, is the determining consideration. Others are drawn to the cathedral because a son or daughters is in the choir, or they have links with educational facilities attached to the cathedral. For some others, again, worshipping in a cathedral represents a

distinct sense that cathedrals have a particular function in the ministry of the Church: their choice is explicitly vocational.'[33]

To what extent do regular cathedral worshippers hold such views? In their 2010 study of two rural English cathedrals, Leslie Francis and Emyr Williams provide a helpful framework for evaluating the motivations of cathedral worshippers, which we adaptedand incorporated into the worshipper survey.

Our research focused on two key aspects of Francis and Williams' research:
1. How do cathedral worshippers understand their connection and sense of belonging to their cathedral community?
2. What are the key factors that impact people's decision to worship at their cathedral?

The Cathedral Community

Francis and Williams profiled the principal Sunday service in two cathedrals anonymised as St Mary's (124 respondents) and St John's (199 respondents). They explore the ways in which cathedrals function as generators of 'social capital'. More specifically, the extent to which cathedrals cultivate **bonding social capital** – the sense of collective identity unified by a shared set of norms that help to maximize the solidarity of a group's members – and/or **bridging social capital** – the inclusive and heterogeneous broadening of group identity through interaction with the diverse membership of a group.[34] In other words, to what extent do worshippers feel a strong sense of belonging to the cathedral (bonding) and do they feel that being in the cathedral helps them to contribute to community life?

	Francis & Williams		Church Growth Research Programme			
	'Mary'	'John'	B'ham	Gloucester	Southwell	Wakefield
Bonding Social Capital	%	%	%	%	%	%
I feel a strong sense of belonging to the cathedral	47	48	62	63	67	61
I feel I am part of the cathedral congregation	18	41	63	65	65	57
I feel close to others in the cathedral congregation	26	40	47	50	56	51
I feel close to the cathedral clergy	36	33	44	49	55	48
Bridging Social Capital						
Being in the cathedral congregation helps me to contribute to community life	44	42	39	37	48	40
I help out with the community work undertaken by the cathedral	45	21	27	28	38	26

The four worshipper survey cathedrals showed higher levels of bonding social capital than St Mary and St John in every category. Over 60% of respondents stated that they feel a strong sense of belonging to their cathedral and that they feel part of the congregation. Likewise, approximately 50% of worshippers stated that they feel close to others worshippers and to the cathedral clergy.

These attitudes are strongly reflected in the qualitative comments of the worshipper surveys. When asked about what the cathedral means to them and why they chose to worship there, several worshippers responded:

- 'For the joy of being with the cathedral family.' (Wakefield)

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[33]*Heritage and Renewal: The Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Cathedrals* (London: Church House Publishing,1994), p. 11.
[34] Francis, Leslie J. & Williams, Emyr. "Not All Cathedral Congregations Look Alike: Two Case Studies in Rural England," *Rural Theology* 8.1 (2010), pp. 39-40

- 'Because I like coming and joining with so many friends.' (Wakefield)
- 'Wanted to connect to a church community today. Felt the need to pray and take communion amidst others.' (Wakefield)
- 'A spiritual place for reflection and wholeness. A worshipping community of which I am delighted to belong.' (Southwell)

Several others also spoke of their relationships with the cathedral clergy:

- 'A wonderful and peaceful place of worship with friendly, caring clergy.' (Birmingham)
- 'I feel comfortable and at home here, both with the clergy and the congregation.' (Gloucester)
- 'It inspires me and so does the worship and clergy. An important beacon in the city centre. It's a church any fallen away seeker will come to – a refuge for a lost sheep.' (Birmingham)

With regard to bridging social capital, over 40% of respondents from across the six cathedrals agreed being in the cathedral congregation helps them to contribute to community life. Nearly a third say that they personally help with community work undertaken by the cathedral.

In response to the question: 'how has worshipping at the cathedral positively helped you in your Christian life?' one worshipper observed, 'The Minster is not only a place of worship but is greatly involved in the local community' (Southwell). Another wrote that the cathedral 'Broadened my sphere of community involvement' (Birmingham). 'The weekly attendance re-charges and re-focusses me. It makes me think about what it means to be a Christian and often prompts me in practical ways to be better either in my prayer life or my interaction with my community' (Wakefield). The surveys were full of such reflections, reinforcing the general picture painted by the Francis and Williams' research method.

Choosing to Attend the Cathedral

The second question adapted from Francis and Williamssought to categorise significant motivations for attending cathedral worship. They evaluate four main themes: the place, the worship, the people and the anonymity. Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of the following factors in their choice of worshipping at the cathedral.

	Francis & Williams		Church Growth Research Programme			
	'Mary'	'John'	B'ham	Gloucester	Southwell	Wakefield
The place	%	%	%	%	%	%
Connection with history	75	56	53	66	65	51
Opportunity to worship in a grand building	47	39	43	54	48	41
Feeling of peace	89	88	79	79	82	71
Contemplative atmosphere	92	79	73	76	78	66
The worship						
Style of worship	71	75	71	72	80	72
Preaching	76	80	68	63	65	64
Music	86	87	70	76	80	69
Choir	86	85	69	74	77	66
Ritual	63	59	58	59	59	61
The people						
Friendly atmosphere	90	73	75	67	82	76
Friendship	27	56	57	60	70	64
Opportunity to connect w important people	30	9	17	14	6	17
Social status of worshipping in the cathedral	48	8	10	10	6	11
The anonymity						

Opportunity to be anonymous to other worshippers	19	23	22	22	17	15
Opportunity to be anonymous to the clergy	14	15	12	14	5	9
Not having to take part in parish activities	11	16	11	16	7	14

The worshipper survey data further evidences much of the initial research by Francis and Williams. Overall it revealed three broad motivating factors that appear to be common across the cathedrals studied.

(1) Peace and Contemplation

Peace and contemplation and the sense of cathedrals as a 'spiritual space' are recurrent themes that emerge throughout the worshipper surveys. Eight out of ten respondents identified a feeling of peace as an important reason for worshipping at their cathedral. Over 100 worshippers wrote additional comments, which spoke explicitly about the significance of peacefulness.

- 'Most peaceful time of the week.' (Wakefield)
- 'A place to drop in for contemplation and peace and to light a candle and sometimes music/choir.' (Birmingham)
- 'A place of peace to worship and pray after a busy day at work.' (Birmingham)
- 'The cathedral is a wonderfully peaceful place where I can go to relax and have all the stresses of the week fall away.' (Gloucester)
- 'Very important. A place of peace and sometimes a refuge from the working day where I can come to be refreshed by the spirit and continue to grow as a Christian.' (Birmingham)

This emphasis on peace and contemplation was particularly striking in Birmingham, where the cathedral has focused its attention to creating a haven of peace and quiet for contemplation or prayer in the middle of a bustling City. Wakefield scored a bit lower than the others, but this is likely due to recent disruptions due to the major reordering of the cathedral's fabric which was completed only 6 weeks before the worshipper survey was conducted.

(2) Worship and Music

'For me it is very important to be part of a large community of worship. It is the feeling of joy I get from the sounds, smells and fellowship. I need this. I understand that it is just as valid when one or two are gathered together but it doesn't do it for me like being part of a large worshipping congregation.' (Wakefield)

Worship and music are also important motivators with three quarters of worshippers from across all six cathedrals stating that the worship style, choir and music were significant for them. In terms of music, Francis and Williams' rural cathedrals were 10-15% higher than the worshipper survey.

(3) Friendly Atmosphere

The third highest motivating factor among the worshipper survey cathedrals was the friendly atmosphere. This is particularly evident in the parish church cathedrals: Birmingham (76%), Southwell (82%), and Wakefield (75%).

Many talked about their personal experience of the cathedral as a friendly community. 'A beautiful building which is not only a place for worship but also provides a centre for people of all denominations and none – a wonderfully welcoming atmosphere' (Southwell). 'I enjoy Wednesday morning 10:30 because it is friendly and the only service that is like a Parish Church. We all know one another' (Wakefield).

The Question of Anonymity and the Ministry of Cathedral Pillars

One of the most interesting findings of Francis and Williams research concerns the significance of 'anonymity' as a motivating factor underlying people's desire to seek out the cathedral as their ecclesial home. Mark Rylands, Bishop of Shrewsbury, describes cathedrals as 'religious railway stations where all sorts of people turn up to services with different destinations in mind. Big services offer a safe space and anonymity in that many people are there and no one is expected to talk to their neighbour; not being local is an advantage – unknown, it is possible to be lost in the crowd and to listen and respond without fear of being coerced into a commitment one is not ready to make.'[35] This view that cathedral congregations thrive on anonymity as a refuge from parish involvement is a common perception of cathedrals. However, it is a perspective that Francis and Williams' research has begun to call into question. Summarizing the survey data from St Mary and St John, they conclude:

> 'anonymity and escape from parish activities function as low motivators, and again there are no significant differences between the responses of those attending St Mary's and those attending St John's. In both cathedrals fewer than one in five of the worshippers were motivated by not having to take part in parish activities (11% and 16%) or by remaining anonymous to the clergy (14% and 15%), and only a few more were motivated by remaining anonymous to other worshippers (19% and 23%).'[36]

Francis and Williams acknowledge that striking though these initial findings may be compelling, further research would be needed to test their validity. Whereas the initial study involved two Sunday services in two cathedrals, the worshipper survey included 61 Sunday and weekday services. The findings of our survey strongly support the conclusions of Francis and Williams. Anonymity may be a motivating factor, but it is a low one in all six cathedrals. In Birmingham, Gloucester and Southwell approximately one in five worshippers say so. All of this raises a theological as well as a practical questions. What might it mean for anonymity to be part of the picture but not the whole story?

Here we want to suggest that one of the important charisms of cathedrals is what one cathedral canon called the '**ministry of cathedral pillars**.' When asked what he valued most about his cathedral, one senior clergy person at a large, international cathedral told us that it was the pillars. An unusual place to start, perhaps, but he was not referring to the finely hewn stone, nor slender Gothic vaults or sturdiness of Norman design. Rather 'our pillars are really important in all this because cathedrals create a place where you can safely hide.'

The point this canon was suggesting is not that cathedrals enable people to permanently hide away. Rather, they make room fora kind of spacious hospitality, a persistent yet unobtrusive invitation to come and take part in the worship of the living God. As one dean put it, a key factor underlying the growth of Sunday services in his cathedral is 'pastoral care including lack of pressure to have to carry responsibilities.' The pillars enable someone in a struggling or wounded place to sit and be, avoiding eye contact, if necessary, with those leading the service. But this hiding place exists not as a final resting place but as the possibility of a first step of a new journey. The *ministry* of cathedral pillars is that they are not the destination, but a means of grace. 'The number of people just over [the last] year that I've seen hiding behind the pillars and then gradually emerging […] I think that's a quality of cathedral worship that's really important.'

One respondent to the worshipper surveyindicated that he had been coming to Wakefield cathedral regularly for some time, returning after a break from church in general. He commented that he chose to

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[35] Ryland, Mark. "Mission-Shaped Cathedrals," in *Mission-Shaped Parish: Traditional Church in a Changing Context*, eds. Paul Bayes & Tim Sledge (London: Church House Publishing, 2006), p. 129.
[36] Francis, Leslie J. & Williams, Emyr. "Not All Cathedral Congregations Look Alike: Two Case Studies in Rural England," *Rural Theology* 8.1 (2010), p. 43.

worship at the cathedral because it: 'Offers a broad band of churchmanship where liberal views are tolerated.' On the form he stated that anonymity was an important aspect of cathedral worship for him. However, just above the anonymity tick box, he added a line in the margins: 'less than it was.' He is now finding himself more involved and considers himself a member of the cathedral community.

Anotherworshipper from Wakefield commented that the cathedral 'challenged my contemplation and beliefs, to feel peace and lead a more fulfilled Christian life.' And that it cultivated 'a desire to feed into the cathedral community (I started wishing to worship here anonymously).' One worshipper at Birmingham put the matter even simpler still: 'Gone from wanting to be anonymous to wanting to participate.'

The *Church Times* writes, 'The rise in volunteers suggests that the perception that cathedrals win out over parish churches because of the ease with which one can worship anonymously or without being "roped in" to help is probably part of, but not the whole, story. If you enter a cathedral for the first or second time, no one will ask whether you play the organ, or would mind taking up the collection. Nevertheless, the fulfilment to be found in volunteering is clearly an attraction. No doubt it helps that the opportunities are varied and likely to be well organised, and that volunteers are able to enjoy large congregations, prestigious associations, and competence in liturgy, music, and preaching.'[37]

The Child Worshipper Survey

44 young people completed a child survey, representing a range of ages from toddlers to teenagers. Three out of four children surveyed attend services at least once a month. Of these 60% say that they have a special role at the cathedral, such as acolyting, serving, assisting with children's/junior church or helping out with special events and holidays.

The results from adult survey indicate that cathedral congregations tend to have an older demographic. What kind of provision do these cathedrals provide for children and young people? If the worshipper survey gives us a snapshot of the general age demographic, the dean questionnaire provides a slightly wider perspective. The deans of Southwell and Wakefield commented that the age profile of their congregations has remained stable for some years.Both Birmingham and Gloucester say that over the last five years theircongregations have become younger.

Nationally, many deans identified ageing congregations among the more common challenges facing cathedrals. Of course, this is hardly a problem unique to cathedrals alone. Writing in the *Church Times*, Andrew Brown observes: 'Over the past 30 years, the average age of Anglican congregations, which used to be two years younger than the general population, has risen until it is now ten years older.'[38] In response to these trends, three of cathedrals involved in the worshipper survey have actively developed new strategies for engaging with children, young people and their families.

In 2012 **Wakefield** appointed a new 'community missioner' whose core responsibilities include:

- Establishing a programme of outreach and Christian nurture for young people and families
- Launching a weekly youth café operating in the Cathedral coffee shop
- Initiating a new after school worshipping community, sympathetic to the sacramental tradition of the Cathedral
- Delivering increased provision for young people and families, within and alongside our current Sunday provision
- Cultivating working relationships with various young peoples' organisations and those within the Cathedral who already work with children and young people.

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[37]*The Church Times*. "Beyond the West Front" (16 August 2013).
[38] Brown, Andrew. "Journalism: Nice and Nasty," *Church Times* (5 July 2013), p. 45.

Southwell has recently created a new post and appointed a new member of staff who will lead the Minster's education team and serve as the new chaplain to the large comprehensive cathedral school. For years, Southwell has engaged with children through its annual 'Time Travelling' educational pilgrimage programmes. This new post reflects a desire on behalf of the cathedral to integrate schools work with a growing emphasis on family services and better provision for young people both on Sundays and weekdays throughout the year.

Dean Stephen Lake of **Gloucester** attributes their recent shift towards a younger community to the re-introduction of children's work at Gloucester Cathedral, including the development of a weekly 'messy cathedral' and a monthly pre-school service. Gloucester's Vision and Strategy report for 2013-18 prioritises children and young people as a core missional objective for the cathedral. In addition to the work already undertaken in this area, the Cathedral is also seeking to:

- Develop a vibrant Children's Church
- Establish a new toddlers group
- Build stronger links with the city's schools, academies and colleges (e.g. via youth work, music, uniformed organisations)
- Expand the Cathedral's Education Centre so that its outreach includes the primary and secondary schools in the most challenged areas of the city
- Use the links with the neighbouring King's School to promote special projects with other schools in the city
- Encourage the use of the Cathedral for school, academy and college assemblies and special events[39]

Lynda Barley notes that 'Traditionally cathedrals have not sought to cater to any great extent for young people and children in their regular congregations but, alongside the positive focus on educational events, a number of cathedrals have associated schools and choirs which offer increasing opportunities for ministry among young people.'[40] Wakefield, Southwell and Gloucester, alongside many cathedrals across the country, have begun shifting this work right to heart of their understanding of mission and ministry.

When asked what the children enjoyed most about the cathedral, responses included:

- 'Everything. Children's church and everyone is friendly. Christingle, Christmas, harvest festival. I was christened here and it was amazing!' (age 6)
- 'The thing I love is the sense of community and if I need to have a quiet moment I can do that.' (age 15)
- 'The cathedral was warm – unlike our church.' (age 9 ¾)
- 'We get communion and get to see other friends and have drinks and biscuits.' (age 7)
- 'Walking around the cloisters and looking at the gargoyles.' (age 9)
- 'You get a chance to learn and discover new things and you can worship with others to be closer to God.' (age 12)

Conclusion

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[39] Gloucester Cathedral. *In Tune with Heaven, In Touch with Daily Life: Gloucester Cathedral's Vision and Strategy 2013-18* (2013), p. 13. Available:
http://www.gloucestercathedral.org.uk/uploads/File/Gloucester%20Cathedral%20Vision%20Pack_Low%20Res_IN DIVIDUAL%20PAGES.pdf.
[40] Barley, Lynda. "Stirrings in Barchester: Cathedrals and Church Growth," in*Church Growth in Britain: 1980 to the Present,* ed. David Goodhew (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), p. 84.

These four case studies provide a window through which we can begin to contextualise the ministry and mission of cathedrals and thus better understand the nature of the growth that so many have experienced in recent years.

The next section of the report focuses on the qualitative research conducted with clergy and lay representatives from diverse cathedrals from across the country.

Section 2.3
WHY ARE CATHEDRALS GROWING?

Introduction

We have reported that the growth in attendance at regular cathedral worship begins to reveal itself in the statistics in the middle to late 1990s. We have examined the growth across the English cathedrals since then and revealed in some cathedrals in particular. What are the underlying reasons for that growth which the cathedrals have been responsible for themselves? What practices in cathedral life lie behind this growth? What important challenges still need to be taken up to help provide for the potential of more cathedral congregational growth?

Statistics can only take you so far. Our research provided us with very good opportunities to hear the stories behind the statistics.

36 cathedrals completed a lengthy questionnaire (see Appendix No.6). The deans recorded their own analysis of the statistics of cathedral attendance and where growth was taking place. They also shared their understanding – based on a full experience of cathedral life – of the factors behind the growth.

We also arranged two qualitative consultations at York Minster, for the northern province, and St. Paul's Cathedral for the southern province. An ordained staff member and a lay leader represented each of the Cathedrals involved. Ten of the thirteen cathedrals in the northern conference shared in the York consultation and twelve from the southern province in the consultation at St. Paul's. Very different cathedrals and contexts were represented in the wide ranging discussions examining the opportunities and challenges of cathedrals experiencing growth or seeking to grow.

As we reflected on what we had heard, several key aspects of cathedral growth began to evidence the hypotheses we had been developing. These became nine growth factors which for all the uniqueness of each cathedral and its context still gave us some clear and broad answers to why there is growth in cathedral attendance – and in some cathedrals in particular.

Cultivating Missional intentionality

A mission mind-set, evidenced in cathedral leadership and increasingly in the DNA of the whole cathedral community/communities affecting priorities and practice.

A northern dean has told us *' in 5 years' time we hope we have modelled a highly intentional and (by God's grace) fruitful way of being a mission-shaped cathedral'* Another northern cathedral has appointed this year a Community Missioner to develop new work among young people, to start a new congregation and to strengthen the whole cathedral's programme of outreach. In the south-east another cathedral is seeking to move beyond the *'wait for people to come approach'* into an active missional stance, supporting struggling local parishes, acting as a *'Mobile Cathedral'* and developing a mission mind-set for every aspect of cathedral life.

Often cathedrals expressed their missional approach through emphasising in their particular context the growth of strategic partnerships, the emergence of a social mission focusing on issues of justice and poverty alongside their spiritual mission of drawing people closer to God. Another southern cathedral preferred to speak unashamedly of the pursuit of growth, rather than mission.

Practical steps can express this mission mind-set in practice, like a northern cathedral undertaking a thorough review of its whole life over a twelve month period and a large cathedral in the south developing an outreach business plan. Several cathedrals were taking hard looks at their cathedral diaries. Is there too much activity and too little space? To be missionally intentional should not be

confused with the pursuit of frenetic activity. To allow space to provide solace and provoke wonder lies at the heart of cathedral mission.

Initiating new services and congregations

The expansion of existing services at different times and sometimes styles too, and the new opportunities often seeding developments in the building.

In our research we discovered that more than half of cathedrals had reported significant development in their worshipping life in the last five years. A change in time from an early morning Eucharist to a regular midday one in one northern cathedral had helped develop a larger, regular midweek congregation. Other cathedrals had added a regular midweek lunchtime Eucharist. For others it was a change in style. A particularly well attended midweek Celtic Eucharist in a cathedral in the north west offered, as the Dean said, 'a different emphasis and opportunity for reflection during the working day'. A cathedral in the midlands began a City Service – a short service of the Word to, 'engage new people, especially ecumenically' as the Dean said. A cathedral in the south east had begun an all-age Eucharist with drama, participation and worship songs. The growth of services of healing, quiet reflection and worship for young families has been evident in several cathedrals. A cathedral in the south west described Explorations as a new service, 'using the spaces of the cathedral creatively, even seating (bean bags as well as chairs), new symbolic action and language, less participative music but lots of visual liturgies' – a new service designed to 'grow a new congregation and meet with the needs of younger and older people who want to explore'. When Dean of Liverpool, Justin Welby had proposed a new slogan, 'The Cathedral should be a safe place to do risky things'. Several cathedrals have seen significant growth through creative developments in their worshipping life.

Enriching the quality of worship

for both regular and special services in the music, liturgy and the preaching.

'I first came to get involved with the Cathedral because of the music. My son became a chorister and at that point I wasn't interested in the Cathedral. I wasn't interested at all in Church musicand I was simply blown away by what I heard. And then add to that the majesty of the Cathedral, the feeling that prayer has gone on there for centuries.'

We heard that comment from an active lay leader in a southern cathedral. What a cathedral canon at another cathedral described as *'the cocktail of the music and the building'* had drawn this father of a chorister into wonder, worship and eventually a committed faith.

In our cathedrals qualitative consultations we sought to identify why so many described cathedral worship as rich and life-giving and had been drawn to participate and belong.

A lay leader from a cathedral in East Anglia was clear in their experience

'I think the quality of sermons and the quality of the music is bringing people in. . . '. Another lay voice spoke of the attraction of *'worship being done properly'.* But what does this quality refer to?
There is a **rhythm** of worship and prayer in the daily life of the English cathedral and a **regularity** and **reliability** that gives confidence to the worshipper. This daily pattern of Matins and Evensong and Holy Communion in our cathedrals reminds us that worship is not just something you do for an hour on Sunday. As one dean said to us *'Worship is that which is going on all around us all the time and the cathedral worship is meant to be like a picture of heaven in order that you plug into it for a while but actually you are not doing it, you're enjoying it'.*

Another canon from a southern cathedral spoke of *'the depth of worship, the historical, cultural depth that people can tap into'.*

Yet in speaking of the attractive depth of cathedral worship it's also important to affirm its increasing **diversity**. One southern cathedral warden with 40 years of experience of worshipping there spoke of the different services meeting the different needs of different people. Unsurprisingly her cathedral had an obvious mission mind-set, which led her to recommend *'from outreach your congregation grows'.* The significant endeavour of some cathedrals to involve more young families in their life of worship is an obvious example of this. The Sunday services at the four cathedrals we surveyed for the worshipper surveys which had the largest congregations were all those with the most provision for young families in Sunday schools and crèches and for some greater levels of participation

Small is beautiful and the quality is seen there too in the informal and experimental as well as in the regular rhythm of cathedral daily worship which also has often smaller numbers of worshippers. A woman attending Tuesday Evensong at Wakefield Cathedral comments that she *'attends for quiet reflection at the end of a busy day. Also to support and encourage the choir boys. Much nicer for them to have a congregation, however small, to sing to. They do very well indeed after a day at school'.* Yet these small services carefully prepared for and presented not only form part of the daily offering of cathedral worship, but also as a lay leader from Coventry Cathedral with experience as a chorister reminds us enable the big regular, special and seasonal services to be as significant and effective as they can be. The time and effort and care and love put into the quality of cathedral worship – with of course resources to match – does bear fruit.

Improving welcome and hospitality

Welcome in the Benedictine tradition of hospitality is central to cathedral ministry in contemporary society.

'Welcome to your cathedral' is increasingly heard on the lips of cathedral deans, clergy and welcomers.

A lay person from a midlands cathedral and with a background in business and public relations defined this generous hospitality to us as *'customer orientation' that is thinking from the viewpoint of the visitors who come or the person standing outside'* recognizing it istheir cathedral too.

But cathedrals are not always Christ-like in their welcome. A lay leader from a cathedral in the north west told the story at one of our consultations of a visit thirty years ago of his wife and their three year old son to the cathedral. As they walked through the door they *'were greeted by a voice that shouted out, **'I've just mopped there, what do you want?'*** At whichpoint my son burst into tears and they went out.'* Things are very different now. *'We have a huge pool of volunteers who work at the welcome desk and at the shop'. 'The café and the shop are important parts of what we offer, part of our service, our hospitality'* a staff member added.

The growth of such facilities has much increased in recent years – refectories, bookshops, visitor centres have all been featuring in more of our cathedrals.

This hospitality is evidenced too in the increased use of the cathedral as a venue for secular events. We heard how a northern cathedral had opened its doors to be part of a weekend city rock festival, offering a venue, a bar and the *'sacred space'* that we were told *'many who came were surprised that they had connected with the sacred space in the way they had'.*

Behind such facilities and special events lie the personal ministry of generous hospitality exercised by growing numbers of welcomers, guides and chaplains. The Cathedral Statistics of 2012 from the Research and Statistics Department of the Church of England have reported that

*'Over the last ten years from 2001 -2011 the number of **volunteers** involved in the mission and ministry of cathedrals on a regular basis has increased by 24% to 14,500, an average of 345 volunteers for every cathedral (down slightly on the high point in 2009 when there were 15,040 volunteers).*

We found that over the last five years using the 2012 data the number of volunteers rose from 14,242 to 15,573, an increase of 9%, with the largest growth in the medium-sized, market town cathedrals.

This growing number of volunteers reflects a growing ministry of hospitality. Training has been developed to help people exercising this ministry in whatever capacity with sensitivity, open and non-judgemental. We were told the story of a large cathedral in the south east where *'a person came very regularly on weekdays who thought he was a cat. He'd go under the chairs and terrified everybody'.* But the vergers were patient with him and some months later this person turned up and said, *'Thank you for helping me to get through that!'* An extreme case but an example of the power of generous welcome.

Combined with this personal welcome, cathedrals are striving to be more accessible too. Two northern cathedrals have recently introduced glass doors so that people can see the interior of the cathedral and whatever is going on inside from outside. The dean at one of the cathedrals told us

'At Midnight Communion the Bishop and I were there at the end of the service and this guy came up and I wondered what he was going to say because he said to me "You don't know me but I know you very well indeed. I see you every morning!". He was one of the road sweepers that sweep the road outside and he's done that most of his working life. "Day after day I went past the cathedral" he said, "but it looked too forbidding! But now you've got these wonderful doors here and gradually I was able just to stand on the street side and have a look. Eventually I said to myself 'I've just got to go and find out what happens in there.'". So he came to Midnight Communion. And I said to him, "How have you found it?" And he said, "I'm absolutely blown away." And he has kept coming.' An exceptional story – that illustrates a lesson for us all.

Engaging culture and the arts

The aesthetic impact of the cathedral building and its artefacts – and the engagement with arts and culture – open many doors.

It was in the spring of 2003 that Graham Kendrick undertook his Cathedral Tour visiting Canterbury, Rochester, Liverpool, Wakefield and other cathedrals with his band and music. Part worship, part concert, the packed cathedrals on the Kendrick tour were a sign that cathedrals could be venues of popular culture as well as high culture. Rock concerts have followed in its wake.

The relationship between cathedrals and art and the impulse to draw visitors into a deeper spiritual connection with the place is shown for some in an initial approach to a great cathedral. The view of Ely Cathedral across the fens, Lincoln Cathedral towering over the city and the country around and the always breath taking view of Durham Cathedral when you arrive by rail from the South – are just three of many approaches to cathedrals which can arouse wonder and awe at stunning architecture. For Susan Howatch, the novelist, moving into the Close at Salisbury, the Cathedral began to draw her into a deeper meaning. She spoke in lectures later of the beginning of that process

'I looked out and saw this fantastic sight . . . the floodlit Cathedral, gorgeous, stunning, out of this world, certainly out of the world I'd been inhabiting. It was radiant, ravishing. I stopped dead and that was the moment when the scales fell from my eyes. I felt I had been presented with some extraordinary gift. I could now see and recognise the overpowering beauty of that Cathedral – which was the sign pointing beyond itself to the reality which was still hidden from my conscious mind.'

That led to what she called a monumental upheaval in her spiritual life.

In our worshipper survey those attending the services covered in the survey were asked about the importance of place and the significance of worshipping in that particular cathedral. At the end of the questionnaire they were asked to *'describe Birmingham, Southwell, Gloucester Cathedral and/or what it means to you'.* (Wakefield worshippers were asked a slightly different question).

At Southwell and Gloucester time and again there was a celebration of the significance and atmosphere of the building itself

'A beautiful, glorious place in which to connect with God', said a Southwell worshipper.

At Gloucester this was a similar response

'A truly beautiful place – the building and architecture, peace, wonderful music and spiritual "food"!'

Birmingham cathedral evoked a different response. A former parish church, it became the Cathedral when Bishop Charles Gore was the first bishop of the newly created diocese. It stands right in the centre of this our second city and is appreciated especially for its peaceful presence and the glorious art work of the four windows by the pre-Raphaelite artist Burne-Jones – the Nativity, Crucifixion, Ascension and Last Judgement.

'A place to come to in trouble and in joy, to draw inspiration especially from the windows and music.'

Like so many other cathedrals it is *'an important cultural and architectural site within the city'.*

Architecture, art, music are all celebrated in different ways in our cathedrals and form an important part of their lives. With art exhibitions, concerts and sometimes an artist in residence or a community poet they make a significant cultural contribution to local life. Can we though speak with confidence of their contribution to cathedral growth? Grace Davie has said that *'A visit to a cathedral is an aesthetic experience, sought after by a wide variety of people.'(Dreaming Spires p.148)*But how many of such visitors become worshippers, even if only occasionally? It is impossible to say on the basis of our research, though there is some anecdotal evidence that the aesthetic experience of a visit can have spiritual consequences. We noticed how often hearing music being practiced for cathedral worship drew some to extend their visit to include attendance at a service.

There is danger here as well as opportunity. One dean told us, *'a very easy temple theology that people get into – we come to God's holy place . . .And it's all about being sucked in, not about being commissioned. .'*And it's a lack of imagination. Some have spoken of the 'danger of cathedrals' at this point. As Gerard Manly Hopkins reminds us

'The world is charged with the grandeur of God.'

The invitation to explore the beauty of our cathedrals is in the end an invitation to explore the wonder of God.

Promoting spiritual openness, inclusivity and diversity in membership and outreach

Creating a climate for the enquirer and spiritual seeker and making inclusive provision for them with sacred space, candles, prayer cards and much more.

'As the south door of the cathedral was opened early on Wednesday, September 10th2001 someone came straight in and went to the candle stand half way down the side aisle. She was the first of hundreds of

visitors that day and many, many more in the days that followed.' That canon's experience in a northern city-centre cathedral was matched by clergy up and down the land in cathedrals and a great many parish churches too that were open for people to do the same, light a candle and say a prayer.

Of course that was a very particular day after an event that all who saw it unfold on their television screens will never forget. But day by day, cathedrals provide opportunity for prayer for very large numbers of people who come, as the Spiritual Capital Report put it (quoting the 76% in contact with a local cathedral) to *'experience God through the calm and quiet of the cathedral space*.' They report too that in 2011 Wells Cathedral sold over 50,000 votive candles. Some cathedrals don't mention a charge and have seen a steady rise in candles used for prayer (with no loss of income as a result!) We learnt too that the more candle stands there are, the more candles are used.

In our research we heard of particular examples of cathedrals being able to engage the spiritual longings and questions of people on the *'margins or who stand some way beyond the Christian faith'.*

A cathedral in the north east became involved in the *'Late Shows',* when the historic buildings of the city were open late at night. In 2012 they took part for the first time and 100 people stayed for Compline. This opened their eyes to the possibilities for 2013. As the dean told us, *'shortly before the "Late* S*hows"in May this year'* a survey has shown us

'that a lot of people that are coming in to the cathedral are coming in because they have got spiritual questions and so we're just in the process now of setting up a chaplaincy team so it's staffed with people who can be there, just dedicated to having these conversations'.

For this cathedral this is a direct engagement with many older young people who have never been in the cathedral before.

Another northern cathedral opened its doors for *'Night Church'*

'We opened the cathedral up and it began with Compline sung by the lay clerks at 10pm and we kept the cathedral open until 4am!'

There was a Eucharist at some point you could come to or drop in and out. There were laser displays highlighting some parts of the building. There was an opportunity for prayer and anointing. The four clergy involved were busy all night as queues for ministry developed. "It was absolutely amazing", the dean told us.

At Wakefield in their recent renovation a Labyrinth was installed on the floor of the nave near to the west door. As well as an opportunity for prayer and reflection whenever the cathedral is open, there is also now a monthly occasion on a Sunday evening at six called *'Illumine'* when the Labyrinth is given particular focus and direction.

The spiritual opportunities of a cathedral visit combined with the invitation to take part in (or just observe) the daily services and additional worship offered there is a profound resource for the Church. Many who worship in our cathedrals found a resource which nourished their own involvement in their home church, wherever that was, the other side of the city, a neighbouring town or far away. For others a visit became something more, an opportunity to taste and see – and for some to begin to savour afresh *'how good the Lord is'.*

Increasing the civic profile

The public ministry of cathedrals is engaging with the wider community, being 'our cathedral' for increasing numbers of people and opening unanticipated doors.

In her essay *stirrings in Barchester; Cathedral and Church Growth'* Lynda Barley tells the story of Bradford Cathedral.

> *'An example of church growth in a single cathedral can be found in Bradford Cathedral. This cathedral had some difficult years at the beginning of the millennium. The figures for the number of adults attending each week (including attendance at all services, Sunday and weekday and including one-off services) reflect this – but they also reflect substantial growth in recent years*

> *2000   314*
> *2001   320*
> *2002   311*
> *2003   308*
> *2004   232*
> *2005   214*
> *2006   224*
> *2007   484*
> *2008   457*
> *2009   494*
> *2010   610*

> *The main cause of the growth is the increase in attendance at one-off acts of worship. Sustained work in the city and diocese began to bring organizations into the cathedral for special services, such as 600 Scouts on St. George's Day, the creation of new carol services and so forth. There was a further jump in 2010 in the number of such one-off events, up to 51 services from 28 in 2009. The number of individual worshippers has not risen so strongly: a steady stream of newcomers has been balanced by older members who have died, moved away or become too frail to attend. Nonetheless the electoral roll has increased in the last five years from about 150 to 200. David Ison, then dean of Bradford, explained it this way:*

> > *"I think that this represents two things: one is the openness of organizations to having a spiritual dimension to, and affirmation of, their life together. The other is that more individuals are willing to come with a familiar group and to come to a cathedral where they have some relationship […]".'(p.86)*

As Lynda Barley points out, the growth in attendance at regular services was much more modest. Any small growth there was built upon a better and growing civic profile.

Across the country cathedrals are developing a higher public profile and are being sought out by voluntary organizations and secular bodies to hold special events and services. In our research we learned of key strategic partnerships being developed by cathedrals. As the dean commented, *'There is still an openness to the Church through our cathedrals being fully engaged in society in many places. That's something we cannot lose or take for granted'.* As was wisely said by Dr. Margaret Kane, *'the inevitable consequence of a view of mission which does not take seriously the Church's role in reshaping society must be that the Church will itself be shaped by society'.('Cathedrals Now' edited by Iain MacKenzie 1996 p.100)*

In some contexts there is a strong interfaith element to the civic profile of cathedrals. Spiritual Capital reported on the particular contribution of Leicester and Manchester cathedrals where, for example, in Leicester leaders of the different faith groups have come to see the cathedral as *'our cathedral'*. In our own research we heard of a significant inter-faith dimension to work at Blackburn, Bradford and Birmingham, which we visited in our worshipper survey. One worshipper commented on the significance of the cathedral's role, *'In the heart of a busy multicultural, multinational and multi-religious city centre'*.

The growth of specially arranged services and other civic events at cathedrals has been noticed in national statistics. According to the 2011 Statistics for Mission Headlines, over 3,040 specially arranged services were conducted by cathedrals in 2011, attracting 1 million people. An additional 1.84 million people attended 5,650 public/civic events arranged in cathedrals. The 2011 figures for specially arranged services represent a rise of 2% compared with 2007 and 5% over the course of the decade.

Over the last ten years both the numbers of public/civic events has almost doubled – from 2,981 in 2002 to 5,392 in 2011.

In the questionnaire we sent to the deans we asked, *'Cathedrals have many special services and events each year. What impact, if any, have such services had on regular congregations in your cathedral? Most answered little or no effect.* The particular context is vital – as always*. A number of deans commented further:

'There is some small congregational growth from people who encounter the cathedral and its worship, but these services have huge intrinsic value in helping people pray, worship, celebrate, mourn and surely unknown long term benefits.'

'For some people this is a first step in discovering God for the first time or afresh in the freedom, space and intelligence of cathedral life.'

'Difficult to assess. There are those who, having attended a special service, come for a while then return to their own parishes re-vitalized. And there are some (I can think of a few) who have stayed with us as a result. More pertinent, however, would be to research how many, having attended a special service in the cathedral, have actually re-committed themselves in their own locality.'

'The cathedral is used as a venue for many different groups in the life of the county. Many who come to secular events find their way into worshipping life – some occasionally, others more regularly.'

'The most important are those which draw people who might not know the place –e.g. the termly Sing Up concert for less-advantage schools; the big Pilgrimage in June; Walk-in Carol Services for Shoppers; The Cathedral Fireworks display; Abbey by Night tours; also Friends Social Events and Study Centre Events'

'The opportunities for the Church in cathedrals are enormous. People want a sense of awe, to be taken into something bigger than the mundane and these are inspiring places to be. The combination of the building and the centuries of prayer around it mean people come in and have a profound spiritual encounter. It's our job to try and root that in the love of God so they have somewhere to develop it.'

As we celebrate the opportunities offered by the cathedrals'substantial and growing civic profile, we have to ask at the same time – how well are cathedrals doing in meeting the challenge in Dean Osborne's words. To that we now turn as we examine the cathedrals' engagement with education and nurture.

Developing educational programmes

Work with schools and visitors and developing an educational programme across the ages

A midweek morning at a large, well visited southern cathedral in 2010. An hour long cathedral tour is about to take place for a mixed group of visitors. The 300 schoolchildren come in and sit down in the nave. The woman leading the school visit addresses them over the public address system, *'I want you to listen to the building!'* From the noise of young children's happy chatter there is complete silence! *'It is 1,000 years old. Just think how many millions of people have been here. The walls are soaked with*

people's prayers.' An awesome moment – and what an excellent introduction for children to catch the wonder of the place and what it stood for.

This one story from one cathedral is illustrative of major work with schools attending events at cathedrals across the country. In 2012 the number of children and young people involved was 306,800 an increase of 15% since 2002. In our worshipper surveys we visited Southwell where part of our visit coincided with one of their *'Time Travelling'* weeks, which this year were held in March and June. Commenting on this programme which seemed to fill almost every nook and cranny of the cathedral while the children and young people were there, the cathedral Education Department reported in the Minster summer magazine:

'Time Travelling in March saw the usual army of young children from Diocesan schools and beyond making a pilgrimage to their Cathedral. It's never boring; we never tire of seeing those small children at the start of their life's journey engaging with the ancient Minster – hearing its stories, touching its walls, enjoying the peace and experiencing a little of the faith for which it has stood over the centuries. Credit as ever must go to the amazing volunteers who give their time and energy to children in this way – guiding, leading activities, sweeping the floors and preparing resources to name but a few ways in which they support our work. We are looking forward to our next week of Time Travelling from 10th – 14th for the 5-7 age group as well as our other planned events for the term.'

The contribution of Education Officers – some full time, some part time in cathedral Education Departments with many volunteers is a substantial cathedral involvement in work with children and young people. There are a number of outstanding examples of this across the country. Such work touches the life of Church Schools and beyond and is a significant expression of cathedral mission and engagement with the wider community.

There is no direct correlation between this work and regular cathedral growth. That of course is not its purpose. But we did hear stories of how a child or young person's visit to the cathedral has had significant spiritual consequences.

From a northern cathedral we heard about a large funeral earlier this year:

'We had a massive funeral a couple of months ago, 500 people in for a young man who had been to the cathedral on a school visit and the family warmed to this place, it was the only church they had ever visited or had any connection with. And I suppose, who knows, it might not bring people into church at the time, but somehow lodged away in their memory is "that was a place I felt at home" or "I felt a sense of God" and they come back when they need to in tragic circumstances. So it might not affect weekly attendance but there might be something else.'

The impact of school visits and so much of the cathedral involvement with visitors and the wider community is inevitably hidden. One cathedral canon who had quite recently moved from parish ministry commented:

'It was quite a shock in some ways coming from a parish church where you get to know a limited number of people over a long period of time and you get to know the kids and the school and the context . . .and a cathedral where people sort of come in for an hour or two and then are gone. And I think there's an issue about actually learning to trust God for that and to trust the Holy Spirit and say we've just had a moment in their lives but maybe actually it might be a key moment that will make a significant difference that we will never know about.'

As well as children and young people, some cathedrals have an extensive programme of education for adults. A northern cathedral has recently launched a School of Theology and there is a Study Centre at a cathedral in the south which offers a Certificate in Christian Theology along with other courses of study.

They see this as part of a 'holistic' view of education which links into a long tradition of learning which cathedrals have had in the past and which is being revived in some cathedrals today. Forums, Lecture Courses, Life in Learning partnerships were among the examples of different cathedrals developing their opportunities for adult learning.

Prioritizing discipleship and Christian nurture

Providing opportunities for people to grow in their understanding and practice of the Christian faith and foster active discipleship

Nurturing faith in adults and young people has long been recognised as a key element in congregational growth. Cathedrals have been giving the opportunities for this much more attention in recent years. With many young people involved in cathedral choirs, some cathedrals have been keen too to develop with children and young people from the wider congregation. Six years ago a cathedral in the south introduced a Sunday school which was a controversial step for some. *'That's not what cathedrals are for'* some said, but now as one of the clergy said, *'With a roll of about 70 children and all their parents, it has had a dramatic effect on the size of the congregation and the age profile'.*

'I believe our cathedral growth is because we have become more family friendly over the last four years,' said a lay leader from a cathedral in the north east. Admission of young people to Communion before Confirmation has been a significant step too for some cathedrals, one with immediate effect.

One lay representative from a large cathedral in the south told us, *'One of the things that happened for us, actually just last Sunday, was when we finally admitted to Communion 24 of our young people – at our really quite staid and traditional Parish Cathedral Eucharist. The dynamic of the service was 24 kids sat cross legged in the front of the church and the talk was just from a chair in front of everybody and not from the Pulpit and some of the hymns and songs that were chosen totally invigorated the service'.*

As more cathedrals admit young people to Communion before confirmation it would be good to have a count of those figures alongside the baptism and confirmation statistics.

The recently published Cathedral statistics do reveal a small growth of 1.8% in the Confirmation statistics from 2007 to 2011 and a growth of 14.2% in the Baptism statistics in the same years.

These figures give us pause for thought as do the figures for Easter and Christmas attendance. Average attendance at Easter at each cathedral was 1,300 and 2,800 at Christmas. Attendance at Easter in 2012 was 54,700, the highest figure in the last decade. Services during Advent, the period leading up to Christmas, attracted an attendance in 2012 of 745,900 according to the Archbishops' Council Research and Statistics, *'Cathedral Statistics 2012'* They underscore the desire of an increasing number of people within the wider community as well as the regular cathedral worshippers to celebrate the great Christian festivals at a cathedral service.

The figures for communicants though tell a rather different story. The statistics tell us that there were approximately 30.000 communicants at Christmas and at Easter, representing 27% and 50% respectively of total attendance. The number of communicants varies much less than attendance from year to year and is less dependent on the day of the week that Christmas falls on.

In a largely positive reflection on Cathedral ministry in the light of *'Cathedral Statistics 2012'* the Church Times nonetheless raised a concern about the communicants being stable rather than growing, according to these Statistics, *'Cathedrals should ask why they do not generate more communicants: nurture in the sacramental life cannot be a peripheral matter'.* Our Cathedrals come from very different contexts, from large international cathedrals to some much smaller parish church cathedrals, but in

every cathedral there needs to be provision for Christian nurture and preparation for baptism and confirmation, not just for young people but for adult enquirers or those returning to church after a long time away and wanting to reflect on the meaning of the Christian faith and life afresh.

Standing at the south door of a northern cathedral after the service, a new member of staff was approached by a middle aged man. *'I would like to know more about the Christian faith.'* Unsure of just what provision there was for adult Christian nurture in the cathedral at that time, the new canon asked a colleague. *'Oh that's good! People only have to ask and we'll arrange something.'* Better practice surely would be intentionally providing nurture opportunities on a regular basis and having them available**before** an enquiry not **after** it.

Clearly some cathedrals are doing that. A northern cathedral – and one that has experienced significant growth in recent years – published widely a series of evening meetings exploring Christian life and timed to begin soon after the influx of new students to the city and for those moving into the area or back to church. Another northern cathedral reported significant growth in adults and young people being confirmed after a significant development in the Sunday morning Cathedral Eucharist featured a more informal, family-friendly style once a month. Gloucester Cathedral which we visited for one of our worshipper surveys reported a growth in their confirmation statistics. The Dean told us:

'Over the last forty years, the confirmation register for the cathedral (own confirmations not diocesan ones) shows 92 persons confirmed. Many of those were individual ones, probably out of some pastoral need and not directly linked to the cathedral congregation. Over the last two years, we have confirmed 36 persons, and I have candidates for the next service already.'

A cathedral in the North West was due to appoint a Canon for Discipleship this year. Wakefield Cathedral took a similar step. With a Canon Missioner, based at the cathedral, who is also the diocesan missioner, the Cathedral decided to find the funding to appoint alongside the extensive programme of restoration being undertaken a Community Missioner to focus on developing a new congregation and grow more disciples. By the grace of God and good missional practice, growth can continue – or start afresh.

Section 3.1
The Emerging Profile of the Greater Churches

'I am the Dean, Canon treasurer, Canon Chancellor and the Canon Precentor all rolled into one' said the Vicar of a town centre parish church in the north west of England at our qualitative consultation for greater churches.

'Large numbers of urban churches, like their rural cousins are struggling with small congregations and lack of resources. Full-time clergy numbers are in decline, parishes are being combined and curates are a rare luxury, whilst changing life-styles mean that there are fewer lay people available to run the churches. One answer to this is to create a central resource church which can provide support for surrounding parishes', David Lingwood in *'New Urban Minsters'* (2009).

Introduction

The main focus of this report is to analyse the reported growth of cathedral congregations and to examine whether and where that is taking place.

We were also bidden compare these findings with 'a selection of greater churches and other large city centre churches', in particular those that were seen to be 'comparable to cathedrals', with a similar context, ministry and mission.

So alongside a quantitative and qualitative study of 42 cathedrals we undertook to study some 46 other churches – 36 from the Greater Churches Network and some other churches with a similar cathedral type ministry, some of whom have become part of the Greater Churches Network during 2013.

We sent questionnaires to the incumbents of these churches, we undertook detailed examination of their statistics and we arranged a qualitative consultation for some 11 of these churches in London, bringing clergy from north, south, east and west, all with stories to share.

As we did so not only were we able to make comparisons with cathedrals, we also saw the emerging significance of these churches in the landscape of the Church of England and its mission to our nation and the particular contribution of (1) the Greater Churches Network, and (2) the emergence of new urban minsters.

The greater churches network

In our greater churches qualitative consultation one of the clergy attending told us, *'In 1991 a group of incumbents who shared common concerns about these mill stone churches around their necks and how they looked after staff and fabric and various things, simply got together as an association to support one another. What we've done over recent years is to broaden that out with less emphasis on fabric and more on mission and outreach and how we can serve our communities'.*

These churches display many of the characteristics of a cathedral. In recent years it has become the Greater Churches Network and has welcomed other churches with a similar context and ministry into the mutual support and help offered.

The churches of the Network share five defining criteria:

- The size of the church building
- The large number of visitors
- A wider ministry than an 'ordinary' parish church

- Paid staff in addition to clergy
- An open church on most days all day

In our greater churches questionnaire we described them in these words, drawing inspiration from a similar description of cathedrals in the *'Spiritual Capital'* report –

Greater churches are large, complex and multifaceted, each shaped by its own unique history and context. While displaying many of the characteristics of a cathedral, greater churches have the organisation and financial structure of a parish church. That presents them with particular opportunities and challenges for mission.

The Network has not yet developed an analogous typology of its members, though the churches that constitute it are very different. There are the historic churches, like Tewkesbury Abbey and Beverley Minster on the one hand, and also growing numbers of urban minsters on the other hand, like Leeds and Sunderland Minsters.

There are churches like St. Martin-the Bull Ring in Birmingham city centre with their mission statement *'Discover the heart of God in the heart of the city'* and a ministry of welcome and outreach supported by more than 130 volunteers. There are tourist destinations like Bolton Abbey, deep in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales, with *'no population immediately to hand'* but a very well attended BCP Eucharist every Sunday, a strong ministry in weddings and funerals and a new *'Liquid Church'*, an all-age service for younger families once a month, all helping - as the last incumbent put it - to *'give the national church a positive profile'.*

There are churches with a very diverse ministry like Great St. Mary's in Cambridge and 250,000 visitors like Holy Trinity Stratford.

In recent years, the network has expanded its scope, its profile and its inclusivity. As of the summer 2012, there were 36 official members of the network. In the last year alone, an additional 5 churches have been added to their numbers, including the first representatives from London diocese: St Martin in the Fields and Christ Church, Spitalfields.

The expanding interest in the Network itself attests to the rising profile of the greater churches as a whole.

New Urban minsters

A second aspect of this emerging profile of greater churches is the development of new urban minsters with a public, cathedral-like ministry at the heart of cities and towns.

> 'The urge to create minsters in cities and urban metropolitan areas is something the Church of England has been doing for 15 years. Dewsbury, Doncaster, Sunderland, Preston, Rotherham and Newport all now have minsters. Yet there have been no General Synod debates, no Church reports and no pronouncements from the House of Bishops. Although this movement has gone on mainly under the radar, it seems to be gathering momentum.' (David Lingwood)

Since the creation of Dewsbury Minster in 1993 – the first new minster established since the Reformation, it is claimed – there has been a steady wave of other churches which have been awarded 'minster status':

- Sunderland Minster (1998)
- Preston Minster (2003)
- Rotherham Minster (2004)

- Doncaster Minster (2004)
- Stoke Minster (2005)
- Newport Minster (2008)
- Halifax Minster (2009)
- Plymouth Minster (2009)
- Grimsby Minster (2010)
- Kings Lynn Minster (2011)
- Great Yarmouth Minster (2011)
- Croydon Minster (2011)
- Leeds Minster (2012)
- Cheltenham Minster (2013)

In case after case, new minsters comment on the opportunities this new status opens for mission and ministry in their local communities.

> 'St Peter at Leeds became Leeds Minster on 2nd September 2013. This is already impacting on the kinds of outside events we are being asked to host, the level of interest from the civic and business community in Leeds, and a more positive attitude to use of St Peter's for diocesan events and activities. We are also experiencing higher levels of school interest – including Abbey Grange C of E High School Carol Service from 2010 onwards. Also diocesan education team church schools events for Leeds schools (including leavers' service from 2011 onwards).'

At present, at least two other greater churches – Holy Trinity, Hull and Holy Trinity, Kendal – are actively seeking minster status as well. Many of these greater churches are a substantial physical distance away from their cathedral and thus are regularly called upon to perform a cathedral-like ministry in their communities. Our initial research into this emerging trend indicates that greater churches – as 'resource churches' within a diocese – may be postured to assume a significant role as hubs of ministry and mission.

As Michael Sadgrove, the Dean of Durham has observed that the growth of greater churches and the establishment of new minster churches in the past twenty years is an encouraging sign. It demonstrates the church's commitment to public faith in our large towns and cities, and while our cathedral and town-centre churches have always taken this seriously, minsters are a welcome sign of new thinking that recognises that the specific opportunities presented by large conurbations call for new ways of shaping the church's life.'

Towards a 'Cathedral-Like' Ministry: Locating Greater Churches in the wider ministry of the Church

Without being cathedrals with their unique position as 'mother church of the diocese', greater churches do practice a 'cathedral-like' ministry and play a significant role in their dioceses, maintain a strong public and civic profile, and regularly welcome large volumes of visitors through their doors. More significantly, these churches are recognised has being centres of worship and mission in their dioceses and localities.

One factor that makes greater churches difficult to accurately depict as a group is their sheer diversity. Some are in struggling contexts. Others are in grand buildings. Some are isolated and far from traffic flows. Others are in the midst of the bustle of activity and even more strategically located than their diocesan cathedrals.

Whether they bear the title formally, it can be argued that in general terms the greater church function as strategic 'minsters' within their dioceses.

In a paper presented at this year's 'Urban Minster Conference,' the Michael Sadgrove – Dean of Durham Cathedral and former Rector at Sunderland Minster – frames the question succinctly: 'what *is* a "greater

church" and is it the same as a minster, whether urban like those represented here today, or rural, the ancient churches at the heart of the market towns like Hexham, Romsey, Christchurch, Selby or Beverly?' He goes on to write, 'These questions are largely transferable: is a minster a "big church", an important church, a kind of shadow-cathedral, a parish church with a specialist ministry, a church that stands for public faith as opposed merely to congregational life, a church through whose doors the wider public regularly flows, be they visitors or people who see it as a focus of their public service and civic engagement, or those in genuine need?' In response to these questions, Sadgrove offers the following formal definition: a minister – and by extension a greater church – is '*a diocesan church that functions as an historic representative focus of public faith in its locality*.'

Thus to be a minster is to be:

Historic – It carries the memories and aspirations of an entire community over time. It is a familiar presence in a particular place. It is a tradition that is handed on. It is a communal foundation stone of collective identity.

A church – It is an ecclesial community of word and sacrament. Sadgrove observes that 'a minster is not a chaplaincy to its town or city, even if it provides chaplaincy services or they are berthed there to help strengthen the sense of mission-in-community […]. By definition, a church is a visible manifestation of the household of God, a society that lives out its vocation to bear witness to the coming of God's kingdom. A minster, like any church or cathedral, is this before anything else.'

Diocesan – It is an aspect of the mission of the diocese. It has been set up as a minster for by the diocese for specific purposes. He notes that 'like a cathedral, it belongs to the mainstream of a diocese's life and is not separate from it, even if it is distinctive.'

A representative focus – They transcend traditional parish boundaries by being a church for the wider community. Their role is speak 'into the wider community for the church and for the wider community into the church.' Seeking to avoid the trappings of triumphalism, Sadgrove nonetheless maintains that minsters have a certain vocation to 'to sacralise the life of its community, visibly to represent and offer it before God and represent back to it the God who cares about the community and desires it to become more just, more reconciled, more peaceable and more loving. In this, minsters have a good deal in common with cathedrals.'

Represents public faith – It is a public church and thus not one whose centre of gravity is primarily the core congregation. Sadgrove argues that it 'is definitely not a congregational or gathered church, even though the congregation, or as I prefer to call it, the minster community, has a special vocation […].'Its representative functions are carried out before the watching world, out in the community itself. This demands open doors and welcome hospitality. 'In practice, it would be odd to find a minster that was not open to the public seven days a week, and home to a variety of activities that expressed its commitment to the world of daily human life.'

Exercises its mission and holds influence in its locality –This is about local community, about the significance of space and place. Sadgrove concludes that 'even if a minster is not a cathedral, there are affinities here: perhaps minsters are positioned between parish churches and cathedrals, or even that **cathedrals are special cases of minsters, episcopal minsters with a mission specifically related to the diocese but within which are embedded many if not all of the other functions of a minster as well.'**

Greater Churches face challenges and opportunities similar to cathedrals

Greater churches do offer a useful comparison with cathedrals. They too face great challenges and have considerable opportunities. Many of the greater churches have grand buildings with all the challenges of upkeep and maintenance. Many of them welcome large numbers of tourists. They often are civic and

cultural centres in their communities. They often are – and could be seen as – resourcing communities, serving other churches and parishes nearby.

Cathedral growth has been carefully analysed and though not universal in every cathedral and region is real. What do we know about the comparative growth – or decline – of greater churches?

Section 3.2
TOWARDS A STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE GREATER CHURCHES

Introduction

While the narrative of cathedral growth has been widely discussed in recent years, comparatively little is known about growth trends in the greater churches. By contrast with the Association of English Cathedrals, Greater Churches Network does not gather its own statistics nor has it commissioned external research. Rather the Network provides a platform for mutual resourcing, encouragement, creative exchange and collaboration amongst its members. Speaking more broadly no full-scale empirical research – to our knowledge – has been undertaken on the greater churches.

Since the Millennium, Research and Statistics has been collecting detailed attendance figures for every parish in the Church of England, including the greater churches. This section represents the first attempt to profile attendance trends in the greater churches using the 'statistics for mission' figures. The intention of this research was that such a statistical profile would (1) greatly improve our understanding of growth in churches practising a 'cathedral-like ministry', and (2) act as a control group for comparing growth trends with the cathedrals. It was hoped at the outset that the data from the 'statistics for mission' database would be sufficient for this task but, over the course of our research, we encountered substantial problems with the greater church statistics which limited the extent to which they can be used to identify and measure congregational growth over time.

This section first explores the strengths and limitations of the Research and Statistics database. Secondly itoutlines what the available statistics reveal (and conceal) about the profile of the greater churches. In light of these limitations, the third part offers a tentative comparative analysis of growth trends between greater churches and cathedrals. The section concludes with a brief discussion of Sunday and weekday attendance patterns in light of the greater churches questionnaire.

Research and Statistics on the Greater Churches: The Strengths and Limitations of the Data

Sample size

As of September 2012, the Greater Churches Network was constituted by 36 member churches from 23 dioceses. As the greater churches were to function primarily as a control group for the cathedrals, it was decided that the sample needed to be expanded to include a similar number of churches as cathedrals and that they should represent as many dioceses as possible. Therefore an additional 10 churches were included in the research:

- **Chelmsford**: Holy Cross & St Lawrence, Waltham Abbey
- **Derby**: St Mary & All Saints, Chesterfield
- **Exeter**: Plymouth Minster
- **Leicester**: St James the Greater, Leicester
- **Lincoln**: Grimsby Minster
- **Manchester**: Bolton Parish Church
- **Oxford**: Reading Minster
- **Portsmouth**: Newport Minster
- **Southwark**: Croydon Minster
- **Wakefield**: Dewsbury Minster

Though not formally part of the Greater Churches Network, these churches all satisfy the basic membership criteria. Together they provided a working sample of 46 greater churches from 31 dioceses, which was used as the basis for the questionnaires and for the qualitative research consultation.

Over the last year, an additional five churches have joined the Network (St Mary's, Nantwich; St Martin in the Fields; Christ Church, Spitalfields; All Saints, Hertford; and All Saints, Kingston Upon Thames). As these churches became Network members prior to our final analysis of the 2011 'statistics for mission' returns, they were included in our research, thus providing a total sample of **51 greater churches** from **34 dioceses**.[41]

Strengths of the data

The national Research and Statistics database includes detailed statistics for every parish church in the country. The database includes returns for years between 2000 and 2011. Returns include both 'usual Sunday attendance' (USA) measures for adults and children and also 'average Sunday attendance' (ASA) and 'average weekday attendance' (AWA) measures for adults and children. The average weekly attendance figures are based on averaging actual attendance counts for all services, usually across the four weeks in October. In theory, these measures provide complementary means of assessing growth trends across all regular services.

Another significant feature of the database is that it identifies the formal benefice and parish structures that particular churches operate within. As many greater churches belong to benefices structures involving several churches (and indeed multiple parishes), interpreting the statistics in light of these structures is essential as the growth and/or decline of a particular church will often reflect and impact the wider organisation of which it is a part.

Limitations of the data

Section 1.3 explored at length the relative strengths and the limitations of the cathedral statistics. For all the challenges it was concluded that data from more recent years is more reliable and that they have an important story to tell, albeit one tempered by an appropriate degree of interpretive modesty. With the greater churches, however, the problems our research has uncovered in the data are much more serious.

Measuring Weekday Attendance: 'Usual' Attendance or 'Average' Attendance?

The first limitation with the greater church statistics concerns the way attendance is measured throughout the week. As described earlier in the report, the cathedral 'stats for mission' form employs a 'usual' or 'normal' weekdayattendance measure that reflects a typical week in the life of a given cathedral. The parish 'statistics for mission' form, however, only gathers 'usual' attendance statistics for Sundays. The only available measure of weekday attendance for the greater churches is the 'average weekday attendance' figures based on the October count. This poses a few difficulties.

First evidence from strand one and strand 3c of this research programme demonstrates that of all available attendance measures, average weekly attendance is the least consistent and most vulnerable to large fluctuations. This is especially true of the weekday child figures, which can be impacted by the school assemblies, harvest festivals, half-term dates and so forth.

Second because cathedral growth is primarily taking place during the week, the most interesting comparative analysis with the greater church would be about attendance at weekday services. It is important to acknowledge that the different methodologies used to calculate weekday attendance is likely to affect the results.

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[41] Dioceses therefore not represented by a greater church include Canterbury, Chichester, Guildford, Liverpool, Peterborough, Rochester, St Eds & Ipswich, and Truro.

That being said, these figures from the cathedrals and the greater churches are all we have to go by. While it is not exactly comparing like with like, exploring the relationship between *usual*weekday attendance trends in cathedrals and *average*weekday trends in greater churches makes basic comparisons possible.

Missing data

By contrast with the cathedrals, the greater church statistics contain a high proportion of **missing data**. This is particularly true of the first half of the decade, where 16% of the sample is missing at least half of its data between 2001-2005. In total only 14 greater churches (27%) submitted data for each year between 2001-2011. This number increased to 27 greater churches (53%) between 2007-2011.

Over the decade, nine greater churches (18%) submitted attendance records for less than 50% of theyears. These churches were thus excluded from the sample on the basis of insufficient data.[42]The average return rate for the remaining greater churches was 85%. To account for the remaining 15% of missing data, missing values were imputed using the average of the year before and the year after. As similar methodsare already employed by Research and Statistics to 'clean' the cathedral statistics, this was deemed to be appropriate.

Partial returns

An analysis of the statistics revealed thatthe deeper problem with the data was not gaps due to *missing* returns so much as distortions introduced through*partial* returns. Each year dioceses submit the 'statistics for mission' returns from their parishes to Research and Statistics in London. Data is then assessed and entered into the database with one figure for each parish. If a single church parish submits its attendance data in a given year that data will be entered as a full return for the whole parish. If that parish fails to submit its form, no data will be entered and the database will flag that year as missing data.

Multi-church parishes, on the other hand, are much more complicated. In a multi-church parish of, say, three churches, a full return would be recorded when all three churches submitted their figures to Research and Statistics. If the churches submit separate forms, the figures for the individual churches would be amalgamated and entered into the database as a single parish return. If none of the churches submitted figures, then no data will be entered and the database will flag as missing data for that year. The difficulty arises when a parish submits a *partial* return that includes figures from some, but not all, of its churches. If two of these churches returned their form but the third did not, the received forms would still be amalgamated and submitted as if it was the parish total. In other words, according to the database partial returns appear as if they were full returns, despite the fact that they are actually missing out an entire church community. What this means in practice is that any time a multi-church parish submits a partial return, its attendance figures flag in the database as *decline.*

For example, the database includes the following all-age usual Sunday attendance figures for a greater church belonging to a three church parish:

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
125	125	20	170	199	127	46	185	133	140	*140*

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[42] Excluded greater churches include: St Mary, Nantwich; St Mary Warwick; Sunderland Minster; Tewkesbury Abbey; St Mary the Virgin, Nottingham; St Mary the Virgin, Redcliffe Way; Holy Trinity, Stratford-on-Avon; Reading Minster; and St James the Greater, Leicester.

It would appear that in 2003 and in 2007 this parish experienced sharp decline. However, it is far more likely that this discrepancy is the result of a partial return in which one of the three churches – possibly even the greater church itself – was not included.

In another greater church parish with four churches, all-age usual Sunday attendance fluctuates erratically year by year.

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
251	251	263	136	*127*	118	114	200	207	162	236

Again, evidence suggests that these figures are not telling the full story. The problem is that the partial story they do tell is very difficult to interpret. Growth analysis is particularly challenging as these spikes and troughs are due to database errors which manifest as *artificial decline*. Without detailed information about precisely which churches submitted data in each year, it is impossible to know which of these figures represents a full return, and therefore a fixed point against which the other figures can be assessed.

In effect this means that all data from multi-church parishes must be excluded from the sample. Across the national database as a whole, multi-church parishes represent a relatively small percentage of all parishes. Thus it might be possible to exclude these parishes without overtly biasing the results. However, the problem for our research lies in the fact that the majority of greater churches in our sample – 28 (55%) – belong to multi-church parishes.

Greater Church Structures	n	%
Single Church Parish	23	45
Two Church Parish	16	31
Three + Church Parish	12	24
Total	**51**	**100**

As indicated above, 9 greater churches were already excluded from the sample due to insufficient data. Of the remaining 42 churches, 25 belong to multi-church units. Once these have been excluded as well, only 17 greater churches (33%) remain. Such a small sample cannot adequately reflect the growth trends of the greater churches as a whole; neither are they sufficient for a robust comparative analysis with the cathedrals. It is therefore not possible to offer a full analysis as indicated in the research brief.

Comparing Attendance Trends: Greater Churches and English Cathedrals

The pervasiveness of partial returns in the database may prohibit us from conducting a thorough comparative growth analysis of greater churches and cathedrals. However, if handled with care, key insights can still be gleaned from the data.

Partial returns problematize growth analysis by introducing noise into the data in the form of erratic troughs and spikes. While this will distort the *trajectory* of growth or decline in either Sunday or weekday services, it has less of an effect on the overall ratio of Sunday to weekday attendance. The cathedral statistics suggest that weekday attendance has been growing for some time. This is evidenced by the annual rate of growth, but also by the increasing proportion of weekday attendance compared with Sunday attendance. As the worshipper survey data illustrated, in some cathedrals weekday attendance is actually higher than attendance on Sundays. Bracketing the question of the trajectory of 'growth' and 'decline', what do the statistics reveal about the general Sunday and weekday attendance patterns in thegreater churches?

The all-age average attendance statistics from the 42 greater churches with sufficient data (including those from multi-church parishes), suggests that a strong majority of worshippers attend Sunday services. The ratio between Sunday and weekday services appears to be fairly similar across the decade.

Greater Churches (Combined All-Age)
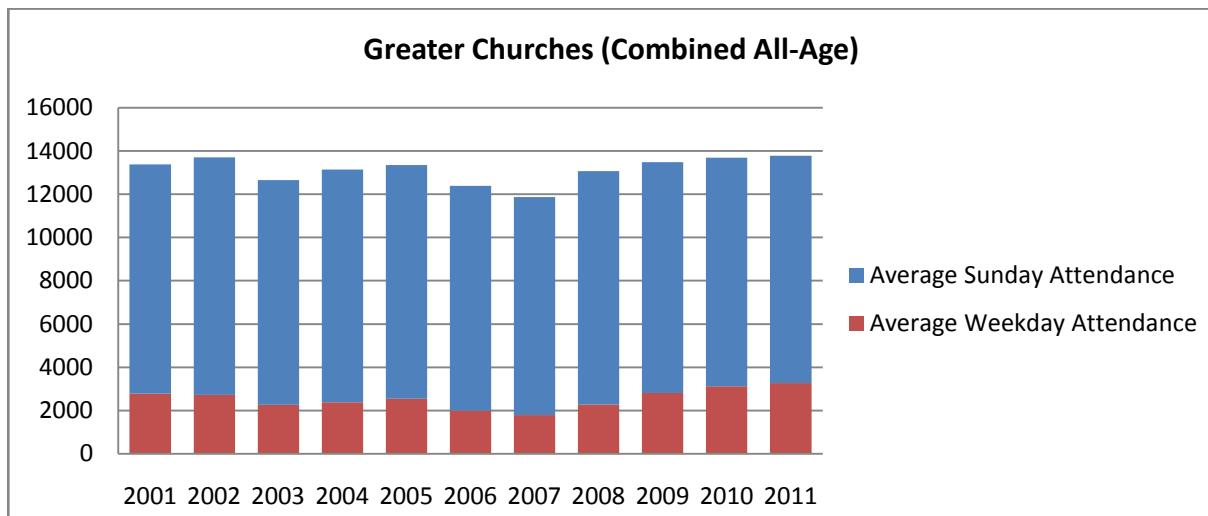
The figures in this chart indicate that weekday attendance has been steadily growing in the greater churches since 2007. However, the statistical problems listed above could well mean that these trajectories reflect the ratio of 'partial' to 'full' return rates rather than genuine growth or decline. Without more reliable data, strong claims cannot be made about growth trends one way or the other.

Separating the greater churches according to provinceshows similar results. Over the last five years, weekday services account for approximately 20% of total weekly attendance in both the 30 churches in Canterbury and the 12 churches in York.

Canterbury (All-Age)   **York (All-Age)**
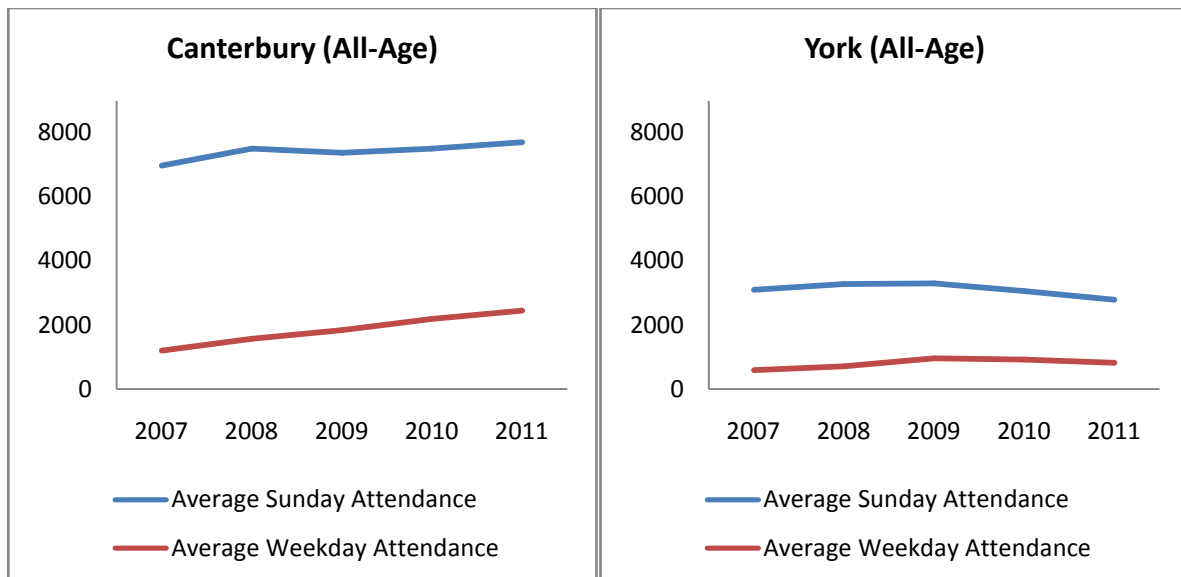
How then do these attendance patterns compare with the cathedrals? Attendance patterns appear fairly very similar on Sundays. Because the statistical noise that most affects the greater churches manifests as artificial decline, the figures listed below most likely represent an undercounting of attendance. It is safe to conclude, therefore, that these 42 greater churches alone welcome well over 10,000 worshippers every Sunday. The weekday figures are more striking still. What they reveal about the fundamental difference between the cathedrals and the greater churches is that weekday services in cathedrals contribute far more to the total attendance figures than they do in greater churches.

Sunday Attendance (All-Age) — Cathedrals (USA), Greater Churches (ASA); 2007–2011

Weekday Attendance (All-Age) — Cathedrals (UMA), Greater Churches (AMA); 2007–2011
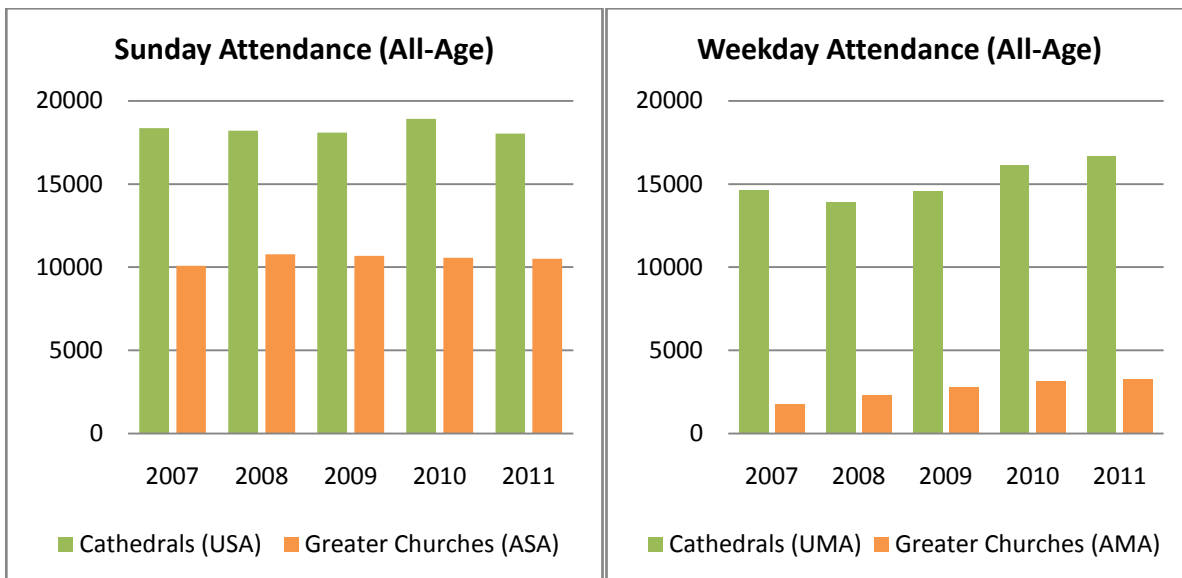
Attendance Patterns in the Greater Churches

While the Research and Statistics figures are only of limited use in profiling growth trends in the great churches, data generated from the greater churches research questionnaire does sketch a rough picture. The response rate among the greater churches was lower than hoped for (52%) and should be taken as indicative rather than representative. Comments from 24 vicars who completed the questionnaire paint a picture of overall stability within the greater churches, with some new shoots of growth emerging in various contexts: 12 (48%) reported that the number of regular worshippers has grown over the last five years, compared with only 2 (8%) whose services have experienced decline and 10 (40%) which have stayed about the same.

The questionnaire provides some additional evidence of general stability and instances of growth with regard to weekday services.

	Growing	Stable	Declining	n
Matins / Morning Prayer (Said)	7	12	0	19
Holy Communion (BCP)	3	10	3	16
Holy Communion (CW)	6	7	2	15
Said Evening Prayer	1	7	1	9
Wholeness & Healing	2	4	3	9
Alternative / Creative / Fresh Expression Worship	5	3	0	8
Choral Evensong	2	3	0	5
Compline / Night Prayer	3	2	0	5
Taize	1	2	0	3
Matins / Morning Prayer (Sung)	0	1	0	1

Of the three most common weekday services – matins, BCP and Common Worship Holy Communion – most of the greater churches identified them as either stable or having grown over the last five years. Significantly, comparatively few described their weekday services as declining.

The vicar from a large urban greater church described weekday services as stable: 'Our midweek services have existed in their current format for many years and remain constant in their attendance. New people come but others leave.'

Another noted that his had experienced some decline: 'These [weekday] services are steady/slightly declining. We don't have parking. We don't publicise them. The pastoral element is not the responsibility of any one of the team. Style of recent presidents have not encouraged growth (that is a specific problem which we now realise!).'

However, many others spoke of new growth in these services. One vicar from a southern market town observed, 'Undoubtedly the number of weekly communicants has risen significantly. Some people have work/family commitments on a Sunday. Some prefer the anonymity of a weekly service. Some combine attendance with a visit to [the town] to do other things. Members of non-Anglican churches have made Friday attendance part of their ecumenical commitment.'

Overall, the data seems to indicate that weekday services at cathedral play a more significant role than they do in greater church, though many greater churches are working hard to increase the impact of their daily ministry. Undoubtedly, numerous factors contribute to these differing levels of weekday attendance. However, one significant factor is the fact that the cathedrals have the staff, volunteers and resources to provide a full schedule of regular services each week in different styles and at different times of day. On average, the cathedrals provide four services on Sundays and over 20 weekday services. Taken together, we estimate that on average nearly 1,000 regular services of worship take place in English cathedrals every single week. The high volume of weekday services is consistent across the cathedrals irrespective of size or context, which attests to the fact that worship, the habitual rhythms of morning and evening prayer, is irreducibly foundational to cathedral ministry.

Reponses to the questionnaire indicate that the greater churches also offer a wide range of regular weekday services as well – though not quite at the scale of the cathedrals. On average there four regular services take place on Sundays and eight throughout the week in each greater church.

Representatives from the greater churches suggested several reasons for this distinction. On the one hand, the greater churches themselvesare an incredibly diverse collection of churches – far more so than the cathedrals. They differ widely in tradition, style, structure and context. Some adopt patterns of prayer and worship that mirror the cathedrals. But for many others– especially those of a less catholic churchmanship – offering a full schedule of daily services may not be seen as appropriate or even desirable. As a group the greater churches are divided on this matter. Twenty (39%) put on over 10 weekday services a week, whereas 19 (37%) offer less than 5. For some fewer weekday services is a matter of choice; for others it is a regrettable matter of practical necessity.

Which brings us to the second point. Most greater churches lack sufficient staff and resources to sustain a full pattern of 15 to 20 regular weekday services per week. Of course there are some greater churches which have a pattern of worship as extensive as most cathedrals – such as Romsey Abbey, Christchurch Priory, St Peter's Harrogate and Hexham Abbey. However, this tends to be the exception rather than the rule. Where such extensive worship patterns exist, they are often sustained through the combined leadership and participation of clergy and laypeople alike.

Third, complex benefice structures to which many greater churches belong can also impact their capacity to expand weekday activity. As noted above, most greater churches live and work in direct relationship to other local parishes – and their clergy are often responsible for several other churches in the area. These arrangements can take several forms: a mother church/daughter church, a central 'minster' with a cluster of smaller surrounding village parishes, several large inner city churches working in mutual partnership (as with St Mary and St Peter, Nottingham), and so forth. Some such arrangements allow for diversity and specialisation across the benefice, with different churches offering different styles and times of worship. Some vicars rotate service times across the benefice. As one vicar of a rural greater church in the South West observes,

'A Greater Church does not always "stand alone" like most cathedrals. Ours is the largest in a 5-church benefice. A benefice-wide strategy means that not everything is focused on the Abbey. Our fastest growing Sunday congregation and Sunday school meets in our local C of E Comprehensive School, where there is a half-time chaplain working exclusively in the school, married to the half-time associate vicar working largely in our "Fresh Expressions" […] church.'

He argues that any attempt to study his greater church that does not take the activity of these wider relationships into account is bound to create a 'lopsided view.' For example, he notes that 'At least another 150 adults and 25 children attend church every Sunday at my other two town churches.' The nature of these benefice structures makes simple comparisons with cathedrals more complex.

A fourth factor is what one might call 'missional sustainability'. With more limited time and resources, there are circumstances when less done well can be more effective than simply doing more at an increasingly frenetic pace. Many greater churches describe the tension between sustaining their calling as parishes, as communities of faith gather for regular worship, and their emerging vocation to resource local parishes for mission and to publically serve their local communities. The layering of commitments, the busyness of the diary, the demands of the building, and the new opportunities for ministry can make it difficult to sustain a pattern of 20 weekday services every week.

Rather than simply proliferating the number of services, many greater churches taken this opportunity for growth as a creative challenge and have begun to implement so very innovative and exciting activities.

In other words, despite the significant challenges facing the greater churches, many do see weekday services as a central horizon for mission and ministry. As one vicar put it, 'we need to find other opportunities for those for whom "Sunday" cannot be on Sunday.' The weekday growth experienced by many greater churches over the last five years indicates that this task is being taken seriously.

Conclusion

Several structural problems with the Research and Statistics database have necessarily limited the scope of this research. Amending these methods of data entry and improving the quality and rate of return of statistics submitted by the greater churches themselves will enable further research to be conducted in the future.

The section that follows will explore in greater detail some of the key growth factors that have encouraged the thriving of particular greater churches in recent years. In addition it will also evaluate some of the ways in which the greater churches have sought to grow into a 'cathedral-like' ministry despite the many challenges they face.

Section 3.3
Growth Factors in Greater Churches

'We reflected on this at our staff meeting. There is no doubt we have seen growth – numerically from 30 per Sunday to 600 per week. Our feeling was that what we worked hard to achieve was not any one thing, but rather to create a culture which enables growth. So to have a lack of boundaries/definitions/sacred and secular – trying to work in a church which belongs to all – visitors, townspeople, members of congregations etc.' (a Vicar from a greater church in Yorkshire)

Introduction

The growth in attendance at regular services at greater churches overall varies as does that in cathedrals. Cathedrals show more weekday growth than greater churches so their overall statistics point to more growth than greater churches.

From our examination of the questionnaires returned from greater churches, six growth factors emerged that were of particular significance. All these factors reflect good practice in the ministry of some greater churches – with examples for others to learn from.

Some growth factors lie beyond the particular policies, programmes and actions of the greater churches but in the particular context and social culture. With more local churches kept locked through the week for fear of theft and vandalism, the open doors and staffed premises of greater churches, like cathedrals, greatly expands the opportunities for ministry and growth.

The following growth factors emerged from the greater churches qualitative consultations:

- initiating new services and congregations
- increasing civic profile
- improving welcome and hospitality
- developing educational programmes
- cultivating mission intentionality
- promoting inclusion and diversity in worship, membership and outreach

1. Initiating new services and congregations

Though greater churches generally have not done this as much as many cathedrals, it is nonetheless a marked feature of greater churches that had experienced most growth over the years.

One greater church in the south has developed new congregations over the last five years – two on Sunday, one in the afternoon, one in the evening and toddler worship during the week. A weekday fresh expression for a needy neighbourhood had been started by a well-attended greater church in the west country. A greater church in the north east has made changes to one of their Sunday services with *'15 regulars becoming 50-60 with something more informal'*. Another church reported the successful reintroduction of the Book of Common Prayer to their Thursday morning Eucharist creating the largest congregation of the week.

2. Increasing civic profile

New urban minsters in particular have seen great opportunities arise as their wider ministry has developed. There is the regular opportunity for civic engagement – in special services and the like including the blessing of a skate park in one town. But then tragedy strikes – and suddenly public ministry has very significant pastoral effects.

On March 6 2013 six British soldiers were killed in Afghanistan, five were from the Yorkshire Regiment whose colours are in Halifax Minster and many came to the minster to sign a book of condolence and pray. One of the soldiers had gone to school in Dewsbury and as we heard from a lay leader, one of the relatives came to mourn and having seen the Minster said, *'Can any friends come?'* and we just said, *'Just put it on Facebook'*. They took over one of the chapels and filled it with flowers and mementoes . . . and the school came and the church was full of these young people for a fortnight. We helped the mother and later on they asked for a memorial service in the Minster!

3. Improving welcome and hospitality

The Benedictine tradition of hospitality in many cathedrals is seen in good numbers of greater churches too, the welcoming and open space and in some also cafes and bookshops. *'We're open seven days a week'* the Vicar of a Minster church in Yorkshire told us *'and it's the opportunities to have those involved in conversations.'* 60 lay volunteers keep that church open and welcoming. *'What we're saying'* said a priest from a greater church in the south, *'is that you can come in, you don't have to make any commitment but when you're there you can explore commitment.'* Glass doors help too.' *We had a major refurbishment of our buildings'*, a lay leader from a flourishing greater church in a northern town told us, *'and we put glass in and when we were doing it a lady stopped to talk to one of our community, "What's in there?" she asked. "I thought it might be derelict and was being knocked down for flats!".'* What a difference glass can make to the visible welcome of a church.

4. Developing educational programmes

Some greater churches have picked up on the great opportunities they have for both work with young people and adults. The appointment of part time education officers opened many doors for two greater churches in the north of England. An adult part time education officer helped a church in the south of England develop an extensive education programme encouraging particularly an intelligent and well-informed faith, reflected too in the church's preaching ministry with significant ecumenical implications.

'We were fortunate to get some funding through the BBC Committee Arts Fund for a major commission', said a priest from a greater church in the south of England. *'There were 100 children from two local middle schools. The project enhanced the choir and junior choir and probably the families of 100 children who would not otherwise have come into the Minster now have.'* A fruitful partnership project and a positive expression of the public ministry of the church.

5. Cultivating mission intentionality

A priest reflecting on a lengthy and fruitful ministry in a greater church in the north of England said over *'over my lifetime we haven't focused enough on building up the church. So a lot of us arebrilliant at going out meeting the shops, the bosses and laying on meetings for business people all this kind of thing, but we haven't thought strategically about the church base. And certainly in our own diocese, numbers have plummeted over my time here.'* Against that background of diocesan decline, that priest's church has in fact seen considerable growth born of clear sighted and intentional missional leadership – and a mission mind-set reflected in the staff and church as a whole.

The intention to invest in growth, rather than manage decline was seen as a vital growth factor. For another priest that commitment to growth was recognition that a growing church – certainly a growing greater church should have misted edges. *'Perhaps all churches should be thinking more along the lines of **not** saying "This is a set box, you're in or you're out" **but** "it's got misted edges to it" with room to engage and explore at your own pace.'*.

6. Promoting inclusion and diversity in worship, membership and outreach

At a city centre minster in the north of England *'What growth has occurred'* the Vicar told us, *'has largely been with people for whom English is not their first language or may even be their third language. And so my colleague on Pentecost Sunday was able to find seven people easily in the congregation to lead intercessions in their own language.'* Fostering inclusivity and diversity and celebrating is a key growth factor to some of the more flourishing greater churches. *'Thou has set my feet in a large room'* says the Psalmist 31:9 as one greater church reminded us. This should be the vision for the Church of England. Too often we offer people a *'one size fits all'* and wonder why they don't respond. *'We have several different congregations in the same church',* a lay leader told us. *'If people want to play rock music at 7 o'clock at the Saturday evening service, that's fine. But if they actually want to come to a real traditional one at 11 o'clock on a Sunday morning, that's also fine.'* Inclusive diversity embraces differences of class, race and taste but always reflects the loving invitation of God. As Martyn Percy has said, *'The offering of an open building and an outward-looking community remain dominant signs on the cultural landscape, pointing to nothing less than the deep generosity and openness of God, who promises his people that "there are many rooms in my father's house".'*

Conclusion

So as we turn to the final section of our report we look to future opportunities and challenges for cathedrals and greater churches and the implications for their place and development and the growth of the church.

Section 4
CATHEDRALS, GREATER CHURCHES AND THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

Introduction

In our quantitative and qualitative analysis of cathedrals and greater churches we have seen the similarity of their ministries while recognising differences in structure and context.

In this final section of our report we will focus on their

- opportunities
- challenges
- mutual resourcing beyond competitiveness

Opportunities

Cathedrals and greater churches hold a special place in the mixed economy of church.

In the foreword to the Mission-Shaped Church Report (2004) Dr. Rowan Williams, then Archbishop of Canterbury wrote of *'the fact that we have begun to recognise that there are many ways in which the reality of "church" can exist. "Church" as a map of territorial division(parishes and diocese) is one – one that still has a remarkable vigour in all sorts of contexts and which relates to a central conviction about the vocation of Anglicanism. But there are more and more others, of the kind this report describes and examines.'*

It was while he was Archbishop of Wales that Rowan Williams adopted the phrase, *'the mixed economy'* as a way of affirming that, *'in order that we might participate effectively in God's mission, we need to consider seriously the possibilities that there are ways of being Church alongside the inherited parochial patterns.'* (Good News in Wales 1999)

It was Robert Warren, as National Officer for Evangelism, who started using the phrase 'inherited and emerging' modes of church life. At first sight cathedrals and greater churches with their cathedral-like ministry appear to represent just 'inherited modes' of church life. As the Mission Shaped Church Report said, *'There is some evidence of an increase in attendance at cathedrals and other churches offering traditional styles of worship with forms and styles that reflect more strongly the Church's heritage in liturgy and spirituality and a sense of sacred stability in a fast changing world'* (p.73,74).

Our research though has thrown up a much more diverse picture, in many cathedrals and some greater churches, examples of which appear in our paper. Transcendence, Missa, Zone Z, Explorations, Sunday at 4, Sunday at 8, FIEG, Critical Mass, Liquid Church and many more are reported in the cathedral and greater church questionnaire and were spoken of in our qualitative consultations. Some are avowedly fresh expressions of church, others are fresh expressions of worship in a contemporary style.

Justin Welby, when Dean of Liverpool, saw clearly this increasing diversity in cathedral staff and life was all part of the vocation of being a cathedral. *'The Cathedral is the mother church, the unifier, we cannot have a single style, a single destination sign . . . so we have clergy from all traditions and they bring in skills in different sorts of worship, from chasubles and incense to bands and informality, but always seeking excellence.'* (Liverpool Cathedral Annual Review 2009 p.11)

Some greater churches would affirm their own vocation as 'resource churches' are bound to reflect a similar diversity.

Yet there is more. For cathedrals and greater churches are called not only to embrace both 'inherited' and 'emerging' modes of being church but to do so from a particular place in the 'mixed' economy. For the primary focus of their ministry is not the gathered congregation of traditional church nor the emerging community beyond traditional church of fresh expression. The primary focus of their ministry is the **general public**, represented by the 11million adults (27% of the resident adult population of England) who visited a Church of England cathedral in the last 12 months. Greater churches too – some especially – also attract large numbers of visitors. It is this engagement with the general public on such a significant scale which helps clarify the particular place cathedrals and greater churches hold within the mixed economy of church. Cathedrals and greater churches with a cathedral type ministry offer public ministry. Each of them is in Michael Sadgrove's definition: **'a diocesan church that functions as a historic representative focus of public faith in its locality'.**

At their heart will be a rhythm of praise and worship that maintains a long held Anglican tradition and undergirds the whole of the life and work of the cathedral and greater church.

As they seek to minister to all who come within their doors and in the partnerships they build beyond their doors they endeavour to engage – in familiar and new ways – in sharing the Christian life and gospel and fostering Christian discipleship.

The opportunities are enormous. The Spiritual Capital Report revealed the considerable extent of that with cathedrals' *'particular capacity to connect spiritually with those who are on or beyond the Christian periphery. .. for example well over half (59%) of church non-attenders within the local survey sample agreed that "the cathedral gives me a greater sense of the sacred than I get elsewhere"'.* Many greater churches too share in this capacity to connect spiritually with the general public.

Here is a shared opportunity, and while there is real progress in fulfilling this vocation of public ministry, there is still much more to be done in contemporary society if cathedrals and greater churches are to contribute significantly to the growth of the Church in our land.

Challenges

The challenges to cathedrals and greater churches are enormous. In particular we focus on: (1) finance and resourcing, (2) staffing and (3) the care of historic fabric.

Finance

'What's the biggest constraint to cathedral growth?' Money was the first response to the question at one of the cathedral qualitative consultations and echoed by other cathedral voices and later by some greater churches too. For cathedrals and many greater churches with such historical and cultural significance and a public ministry that touches the lives of very many people, the financial challenges before them are considerable. They are part of a continuous struggle which, as one dean from the northern province explains, *'For smaller cathedrals. . . grappling with finance and actually demanding moreand more from our staff and volunteers'*

The part of our brief which asked us *'to throw further light . . .on the comparative financial regimes and situations of cathedrals, greater and other large churches'* was particularly challenging to address. So we have described the process of research we undertook and the recommendations we make in Appendix No.3.

Staffing

'In the two cathedrals I served in there were three stipendiary clergy paid for by the Commissioners to do the work and whilst I think for cathedrals that is probably a bare minimum and they probably want more

resource as well, I think that the expectation in some greater churches is similar even if of a smaller scale. How much does the church want the ministry of greater churches?', a priest with experience in both cathedral and greater church ministry told us.

A Vicar of a large and thriving greater church in the north of England wrote of particular challenges. *'In some ways only a fool would be an incumbent of a Greater Church! They need to be good generalists across a range of areas – liturgy, business development, staffing and HR, PR, fabric, evangelism, preaching, visiting etc. whereas cathedral clergy can be full time in a particular role and there are lay staff who cover some of these areas, I think there is still the need for the incumbent to have a degree of oversight. The difficulty comes when a clergy colleague (or other staff member) moves on* as *then there can be real gaps resulting in huge stresses. Recruitment to clergy colleagues roles, in my view, attracts a number of candidates who either want to strut around in a big place, spend their time doing a further degree, or are wounded and need carrying – it can be hard finding someone with the right set of skills and experience and them being comfortable not being an incumbent.'*

Of course many cathedrals would say they struggle to cope with demands with the staff they have, and some smaller cathedrals will have fewer volunteers to call on than some of the greater churches. Moreover a few greater churches have built up good staff teams including ordained clergy but usually that has happened after a reasonable length of time, good diocesan support and sometimes the help of particular funding streams.

While cathedrals across the country see the present support they receive for their staffing as 'a bare minimum', there is a real issue of funding staff at greater churches.

When undertaking a review of Sunderland Minster in 2004 the Dean of Durham recommended some additional help for the Minster with provision for *'a full time associate priest for the life of the Minster church itself'.*In 2007 Sunderland Minster became *'an extra-parochial place within the parish of St. Nicholas'* focussing its ministry not on the geographical parish but on the entire city,with a Provost and a Minster priest as two of their staff.

This particular approach taken in Durham was the way that diocese answered the question asked about *'How much does the Church want the ministry of greater churches?*

As the number and significance of these churches is growing on the national landscape of the Church of England, this question is likely to become more urgent at both diocesan and national level.

Fabric

The challenge of the care and maintenance of outstanding historic buildings is clear. Some argue that as far as possible many of our historic buildings should be handed over to cultural or historic groups. Indeed many churches – in the wrong location in today's world or without a living Christian community to worship in them – have been closed and put in the care of the Redundant Church Uses Committee or other local bodies or put to other purposes.

That is not, however, either a realistic or desirable policy for our 42 cathedrals or many of the emerging greater churches. It is not **realistic** because these historic Christian churches are highly regarded in society as a whole or in their local region or county and are much visited. As the Bishop of Birmingham said in a debate on cathedrals in the House of Lords, speaking from a diocese with one of the smallest cathedrals in the country, *'Cathedrals' role in the life of our nation's cities is immeasurable: civic, cultural and spiritual'.*

The spiritual opportunities our cathedrals and greater churches offer daily to so many – with their open doors, generous hospitality, sacred space and beautiful architecture and art work remind us why it is

desirable that the Christian community with the help of national and local government and others should continue to take seriously the vital task of their care and maintenance.

Such care will also entail their development. Our cathedrals are not ancient monuments, but living homes of Christian worship and welcome. They have always adapted themselves to contemporary requirements and must continue to do so. The balance between necessary preservation and adaptation is a difficult one that needs to be maintained if cathedrals are to continue to be signs of the gospel of God, open and accessible to all in contemporary society.

Baroness Andrews, a former Labour politician and the first woman chair of English Heritage has spoken of *'the challenges cathedrals face and the ambitions they hold for the future'.* The renovation of the nave of Wakefield Cathedral is but a recent example of how with much commitment and support the challenges can be met and ambitions for the future can be realised.

The story of challenge and ambition for our cathedrals and greater churches will continue and deserves to do so as long as they hold a significant place in English society and exercise an important ministry there.

Mutual Resourcing Beyond Competitiveness

If there is a biblical text for this report it would be 1 Cor. 3:6 *'I planted the seed and Apollos watered it: but God made it grow'.*

Early in the report we quoted it and made the point that *'There needs to be a proper humility and caution'* when trying to discern particular factors in why there is church growth. *'The ways of God are not always easy to fathom or chart, least of all predict.'* Few would have predicted towards the end of the twentieth century that cathedral congregations would be growing in the early years of the new millennium. With all the care and caution we have displayed in examining the statistics we can affirm that there has been overall growth in attendance at regular cathedral services and in some cathedrals in particular. We have seen too that in some of the greater churches with a cathedral-like ministry there has been a measure of growth too.

St. Paul's words to the Christian community in Corinth have another application which is important as we conclude our report. Paul is addressing a Christian community where there is a competitive spirit. *'There are those who say, "I belong to Paul" and others who say "I belong to Apollos". What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered but God gave the growth.'* (1 Cor. 3:6)

Paul and Apollos are not in competition but working together, though in different ways, in the service of God. God is the one who is growing the Church, Paul says, and he asks us to work collaboratively not competitively. *'We are God's servants, working together.'* (1 Cor. 3:9a)

This is a vital insight for today's Church just as it was for the Corinthians. Cathedrals, greater churches, fresh expressions and other forms of church are not in competition. They are all in their diversity part of the mixed economy that is today's Church. As such they are called to honour one another and recognise the valued place they hold – different as they are – in the common service of God and the growth of his Church.

In particular for cathedrals and greater churches with their significant public ministry there is a need for mutual resourcing beyond competitiveness and an exchange of gifts for the good of all, and the life and growth of the Church as a whole.

What does this mean in practice?

(1) Cathedrals have learnt much from each other through the Association of English Cathedrals and in other ways. Similarly the Greater Churches Network and the mutual support of new urban minsters have been important ways for the sharing of good practice and practical help. Now is the time for a wider exchange between cathedrals with their long and valued tradition of public ministry and greater churches who have managed to develop a significant   ministry often with the barest resources to hand. Mutual understanding and support can be a real benefit to all.

(2) The relationship between cathedrals and their diocese is crucial. The cathedral is the Bishop's seat but what in practice does that mean in the particular context of each diocese? In the section of the report dealing with the cathedrals' relationship with the diocese and the wider church, the authors of 'Spiritual Capital' refer to three ways in which the relationship can work to mutual benefit – and the good of the whole Church.

'One bishop suggested in conversation that the extent to which the working relationship between bishop and dean is productive is likely to be increased by:

- *The degree of alignment around mission between cathedral and diocese.*
- *The extent to which the bishop 'gets cathedrals' and what they are about, and feel comfortable in worshipping in the cathedral – as a worshipper not just in leading worship.*
- *The cathedral understanding that part of its role is to support the bishop in his work. This is its gift to the diocese.* (146 p.54)

In the challenging context the Church of England faces in contemporary society, it is vital for a close working relationship between cathedral and diocese if the mission of the whole Church is to go forward. That is much easier to achieve when those three conditions exist, but even when they don't there needs to be honouring of different approaches, mutual response and attentive listening. Only good can come from that.

(3) The relationship between greater churches and their diocese is crucial too. Here too there is much difference of practice and understanding across the country. We heard of some greater churches effectively acting as 'pro-cathedrals' in a diocese where geography has placed the cathedral at one end of the diocese and the greater church at the other. We heard of other greater churches whose particular public ministry seemed barely on the diocesan radar. If the emergence of greater churches and among them the growth of new urban minsters is one of the significant facts on the landscape of the Church of England then a closer relationship between diocese and greater church seems not only desirable but necessary.

At the heart of a theology of growth is the triune God whose unity in diversity calls us to work cooperatively not competitively, interdependently not independently in his service. Cathedrals and greater churches, like all churches, are works in progress. There are failings, weaknesses with plenty of room for fresh development and greater effectiveness. But the picture of modest growth, where it is clear, speaks to us that cathedrals and greater churches in their public ministry are a blessing to be celebrated and a sign of God's loving invitation to all to enter the life of his kingdom.

Appendix 1
Cathedral Typology

Diocese Name	Prov	Cathedral Name	AEC & CGRP Typology	ECOTEC Typology	ORB National Visitor Survey
Bath & Wells	C	Wells Cathedral	Medium-Sized, Market Town	Medium-Sized, Historic	Medium Tourist
Birmingham	C	Birmingham Cathedral	Urban	Urban	Inner City
Blackburn	Y	Blackburn Cathedral	Parish Church	Parish Church	Small City
Bradford	Y	Bradford Cathedral	Parish Church	Parish Church	Inner City
Bristol	C	Bristol Cathedral	Urban	Urban	Inner City
Canterbury	C	Canterbury Cathedral	Large, International Importance	Large, International Importance	Large Tourist
Carlisle	Y	Carlisle Cathedral	Medium-Sized, County Town	Medium-Sized, Historic	Medium Tourist
Chelmsford	C	Chelmsford Cathedral	London Commuter Belt	Parish Church	Small City
Chester	Y	Chester Cathedral	Medium-Sized, County Town	Medium-Sized, Historic	Medium Tourist
Chichester	C	Chichester Cathedral	Medium-Sized, Market Town	Medium-Sized, Historic	Medium Tourist
Coventry	C	Coventry Cathedral	Parish Church	Parish Church	Medium Tourist
Derby	C	Derby Cathedral	Parish Church	Parish Church	Small City
Durham	Y	Durham Cathedral	Large, International Importance	Large, International Importance	Large Tourist
Ely	C	Ely Cathedral	Medium-Sized, Market Town	Medium-Sized, Historic	Medium Tourist
Exeter	C	Exeter Cathedral	Medium-Sized, County Town	Medium-Sized, Historic	Medium Tourist
Gloucester	C	Gloucester Cathedral	Medium-Sized, County Town	Medium-Sized, Historic	Medium Tourist
Guildford	C	Guildford Cathedral	London Commuter Belt	Medium-Sized, Modern	Small City
Hereford	C	Hereford Cathedral	Medium-Sized, County Town	Medium-Sized, Historic	Medium Tourist
Leicester	C	Leicester Cathedral	Parish Church	Parish Church	Small City
Lichfield	C	Lichfield Cathedral	Medium-Sized, Market Town	Medium-Sized, Historic	Medium Tourist
Lincoln	C	Lincoln Cathedral	Medium-Sized, County Town	Medium-Sized, Historic	Medium Tourist
Liverpool	Y	Liverpool Cathedral	Urban	Urban	Large Tourist
London	C	St Paul's Cathedral	Large, International Importance	Large, International Importance	Large Tourist
Manchester	Y	Manchester Cathedral	Urban	Urban	Inner City
Newcastle	Y	Newcastle Cathedral	Parish Church	Parish Church	Inner City
Norwich	C	Norwich Cathedral	Medium-Sized, County Town	Medium-Sized, Historic	Medium Tourist
Oxford	C	Christ Church	Medium-Sized,	Medium-Sized,	Medium Tourist

		Cathedral	County Town	Historic	
Peterborough	C	Peterborough Cathedral	Medium-Sized, Market Town	Medium-Sized, Historic	Small Tourist
Portsmouth	C	Portsmouth Cathedral	Urban	Parish Church	Small City
Ripon & Leeds	Y	Ripon Cathedral	Medium-Sized, Market Town	Medium-Sized, Historic	Small Tourist
Rochester	C	Rochester Cathedral	London Commuter Belt	Medium-Sized, Historic	Small Tourist
Salisbury	C	St Albans Cathedral	London Commuter Belt	Medium-Sized, Historic	Medium Tourist
Sheffield	C	St Edmundsbury Cathedral	Medium-Sized, County Town	Parish Church	Small Tourist
Southwark	C	Salisbury Cathedral	Large, International Importance	Large, International Importance	Medium Tourist
Southwell	Y	Sheffield Cathedral	Parish Church	Parish Church	Inner City
St Albans	C	Southwark Cathedral	Urban	Urban	Inner City
St Eds & Ipswich	Y	Southwell Minster	Medium-Sized, Market Town	Medium-Sized, Historic	Small Tourist
Truro	C	Truro Cathedral	Medium-Sized, County Town	Medium-Sized, Modern	Medium Tourist
Wakefield	Y	Wakefield Cathedral	Parish Church	Parish Church	Small City
Winchester	C	Winchester Cathedral	Large, International Importance	Large, International Importance	Medium Tourist
Worcester	C	Worcester Cathedral	Medium-Sized, County Town	Medium-Sized, Historic	Small Tourist
York	Y	York Minster	Large, International Importance	Large, International Importance	Large Tourist

Appendix 2
Greater Churches

Diocese Name	Prov	Greater Church Name	GCNetwork	MCU	MCP
Bath & Wells	C	Bath Abbey	Yes	SCB (1)	1
Birmingham	C	St Martin in the Bull Ring	Yes	SCB (1)	1
Blackburn	Y	Lancaster Priory	Yes	MCB (3)	3
Bradford	Y	Bolton Abbey	Yes	SCB (1)	1
Bristol	C	St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol	Yes	SCB (1)	1
Carlisle	Y	Holy Trinity, Kendal	Yes	MCB (2)	2
Coventry	C	Holy Trinity, Stratford-upon-Avon	Yes	MCB (4-6)	4
Coventry	C	St Mary's, Warwick	Yes	MCB (4-6)	2
Durham	Y	Sunderland Minster	Yes	EPP (1)	1
Ely	C	Great St Mary, Cambridge	Yes	MCB (2)	2
Gloucester	C	Tewkesbury Abbey	Yes	MCB (2)	1
Hereford	C	St Laurence, Ludlow	Yes	MCB (7+)	2
Lichfield	C	Collegiate Church of St Peter, Wolverhampton	Yes	MCB (4-6)	4
Lichfield	C	Shrewsbury Abbey, Shrewsbury	Yes	MCB (2)	2
Lichfield	C	St Chad's, Shrewsbury	Yes	MCB (2)	1
Lincoln	C	St Wulfram's, Grantham	Yes	SCB (1)	1
Lincoln	C	St Botolph w St Christopher, Boston	Yes	MCB (3)	3
Newcastle	Y	Hexham Abbey	Yes	MCB (2)	2
Norwich	C	Great Yarmouth Minster (St Nicholas)	Yes	MCB (4-6)	6
Norwich	C	St Peter Mancroft, Norwich	Yes	SCB (1)	1
Norwich	C	St Margaret, King's Lynn	Yes	SCB (1)	1
Ripon & Leeds	Y	Leeds Minster	Yes	MCB (2)	2
Ripon & Leeds	Y	St Peter's Harrogate	Yes	SCB (1)	1
Salisbury	C	Sherborne Abbey	Yes	MCB (4-6)	3
Salisbury	C	Wimborne Minster	Yes	SCB (1)	1
Sheffield	Y	Rotherham Minster	Yes	MCB (2)	2
Sheffield	Y	Doncaster Minster	Yes	SCB (1)	1
Southwell	Y	St Mary Magdalene, Newark	Yes	MCB (4-6)	4
Southwell	Y	St Mary's, Nottingham	Yes	MCB (3)	3
Wakefield	C	Halifax Minster	Yes	SCB (1)	1
Winchester	Y	Christchurch Priory	Yes	MCB (4-6)	4
Winchester	Y	Romsey Abbey	Yes	MCB (2)	2
Worcester	C	Malvern Priory	Yes	SCB (1)	1
York	C	Selby Abbey	Yes	MCB (2)	2
York	C	Beverley Minster	Yes	MCB (4-6)	4
York	C	Holy Trinity, Hull	Yes	MCB (2)	2
Chester	Y	St Mary's, Nantwich	New	SCB (1)	1
London	C	St Martin in the Fields	New	MCB (2)	2
London	C	Christ Church, Spitalfields	New	SCB (1)	1
St. Albans	C	All Saints, Hertford	New	MCB (4-6)	1
Southwark	C	All Saints, Kingston Upon Thames	New	MCB (2)	2
Chelmsford	C	Holy Cross & St Lawrence, Waltham Abbey	No	MCB (4-6)	2
Derby	C	St Mary & All Saints, Chesterfield	No	MCB (2)	2

Exeter	C	Plymouth Minster	**No**	MCB (2)	1
Leicester	C	St James the Greater, Leicester	**No**	SCB (1)	1
Lincoln	C	Grimsby Minster	**No**	MCB (4-6)	4
Manchester	Y	Bolton Parish Church	**No**	SCB (1)	1
Oxford	C	Reading Minster of St Mary the Virgin	**No**	MCB (2)	1
Portsmouth	C	Newport Minster	**No**	SCB (1)	1
Southwark	C	Croydon Minster	**No**	MCB (2)	2
Wakefield	C	Dewsbury Minster	**No**	MCB (4-6)	4

Appendix 3
Finance

Our brief urges us to shed further light on *'the comparative financial regimes and situations of cathedrals, greater and other large churches including access to grant making bodies, clergy funding and other wider support, parish share liability and congregational giving'.*

As finance was placed under the qualitative part of our brief we focused our initial research on the questionnaire returns and the qualitative consultations.

Qualitative Consultations of cathedrals and greater churches

The considerable challenges both cathedrals and greater churches face with resourcing their ministry was strongly affirmed. Finance or rather the lack of it, in many cathedrals and greater church contexts was seen as a major constraint to growth.

Participants in the consultations discussed particular aspects of this
- different financial regimes
- charging for admission
- parish share and contribution to diocesan life
- congregational giving
- staffing – the discussions on that are in the Report 3.2

Different financial regimes

The growing numbers of visitors to cathedrals and many greater churches poses both an opportunity and a challenge. The spiritual opportunity is considerable but the challenge comes when the cathedral or church is so busy that the space to pray and light a candle, to reflect and be still is constrained or even prevented by other activity in the cathedral/church at the same time.

That raises two important issues

- diary management of cathedral/church life to ensure some balance between activity and space so that the spiritual vocation can be fulfilled
- income generation since so often it is the busyness and activity of the cathedral through all sorts of income generating events which is such a significant contribution to cathedral/church income.

Charging for admission

This remains a difficult issue in cathedral life. Most cathedrals don't charge and don't want to. As one canon from a northern cathedral put it, *'It's part of our unique calling to be there – to be open, to be hospitable and to open a variety of pathways and stepping stones. . . without any charge'.* Realistically in some contexts it wasn't an option anyway if visitors were still to be encouraged in large numbers.

One cathedral had recently stopped charging an admission fee and had seen a huge increase in visitors – 400% over the first few months since the change. Income too had held up and slightly increased. Voluntary donations from the many more visitors were greater than the income from admission charges before the change.

Other cathedrals, particularly our very largest, see charging for admission as an effective way of preserving the sacred space of the building, still attracting large numbers of visitors but without overwhelming the space. Before a charge was instituted at a large southern cathedral, people remembered it, *'being packed all the time'.* The tension in cathedrals between quiet space and busyness

was lost and charging went some way to restoring it. For some though charging was introduced purely from a financial motive, as the main source of revenue for a historic cathedral set in a small market town where visitors came principally to see the cathedral.

At another cathedral the charge was introduced to help with the financial challenges of maintaining both the fabric and the ministry there. It was also felt to be a good way to help visitor make more of their visit with more information about the cathedral's history and particular mission.

Parish share and contribution to diocesan life

Practice varies across the country

some cathedrals pay a share to the diocese and many others make a significant contribution in other ways

some greater churches have reduced parish shares (e.g. Doncaster Minster (12k) and others pay much larger shares (e.g. Bath Abbey (195k).)

As soon as examples are given, the particular context becomes a key factor.

The parish share issue is doubtless a source of tension in some dioceses, as one canon from a southern cathedral admitted.

Particular ways forward have been found though in particular dioceses, where there has been good consultation and collaboration between the diocese and the cathedral or the diocese and the greater church.

Congregational giving

Members of cathedral congregations and those of larger churches too are used to regular appeals for funds for particular projects. In recent decades too the encouragement of regular giving has taken a much higher profile in cathedral life. We heard of successful stewardship at cathedrals north and south, and the advocacy of the *'Liverpool Cathedral'* model for that.

'Heritage and Renewal' Report

To get a fuller grasp of all the financial worries facing cathedrals (with many parallels with greater churches too) we studied the financial section of the Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Cathedrals of 1994.

We noted first that only Mission had a longer section in it. In fact if you add the finance Appendix it forms the largest part of the report. That illustrates for us both the breadth and the depth of the issues involved, as did our examination of the subject matter: overall results, balance sheet, income and expenditure, forward projections, balance of payments with dioceses, friends' accounts, funding and recommendations.

The recommendations were
- Each cathedral should forecast its future financial position and draw up appropriate plans to ensure that income and expenditure are balanced.
- Cathedrals should exercise the highest standards of financial management both in terms of their own housekeeping and of investment management.
- The AEC should encourage cathedrals to exchange financial information to assist in the improvement of efficiency, effectiveness and economy.

- Each cathedral and the rest of the diocese should prepare and agree each year a 'balance of payments' statement and n the light of that, a decision should be taken on what contribution in lieu of quota should be made.

Financial Advice

We then sought the help of a financial consultant with considerable experience of diocesan and cathedral financial administration and an intimate understanding of the issues involved in a northern diocese.

Our plan was to ask for particular assistance in relation to the issue of the parish share, the comparative position of cathedrals and greater churches and other cathedral contributions to the dioceses and clergy funding. We also hoped to see a clearer picture overall of planned giving in cathedrals and greater churches. We had to hand the latest accounts.

Our consultant reported that they could do the work but they now would need considerable time and the help of others in an expert group working together to produce results that were both comprehensive and substantial. Anything less, in the consultant's opinion, would be superficial and unhelpful. The consultant was willing to be part of this exercise if it was properly funded and resourced.

Much has happened in the world of cathedral finance and the wider church since the 4 Recommendations of the 'Heritage and Renewal' Report. Our consultant felt that though much progress had been made on them, they were still live issues and worthy of further study and reflection, with the position of greater churches examined too.

Appendix 4
Incremental steps for growth in cathedrals and greater churches

'That small step has made such a difference', one of the clergy at the qualitative consultations said to us. So often that's the case.

Dave Brailsford the manager of the successful British Olympic cycling team and the winning Sky teams in the Tour de France speaks of the, *'aggregate of marginal gains'*, those small incremental steps that can make such a difference. In the world of competitive cycling those marginal gains, small steps, are about diet, good pillows for sleep, tweaks to cycle design and more.

As we listened to the experiences of clergy and lay leaders from cathedrals and greater churches we heard of many such small steps that had been significant. We began to list them and decided to complete our report by listing just a few of them as good practice worth sharing not only among the cathedrals and greater churches but with the wider church.

The list below grew out of the qualitative consultations of cathedrals and that of some of the greater churches with some additional contributions from the Greater Churches Network annual conference in Leeds in October 2013.

They come from many different contexts reflecting in small but important ways the growth factors that lie at the heart of our research.

Initiating new services and congregations
- Start a daily lunchtime Eucharist
- Plan a Messy Church
- Change the service time to suit your context
- Begin an evening reflective/contemplative service
- Start Tots' Praise

Improving welcome and hospitality
- Display 'Church Open' signs
- Appoint a Visitors' Officer
- Put out more candle stands
- Plan a Marriage Fair
- Arrange a 'Discover ____ Minster/Abbey/ Cathedral Day'

Increasing civic profile
- Install glass doors in at the West End
- Do a SWOT analysis of your engagement with the wider community
- Encourage regular congregation members to see the opportunity of civic services and participate in them
- Host a breakfast for leading figures in the local community
- Start a Food Bank

Engage culture and the arts
- Arrange tea and coffee at organ recitals
- Host or share in a local music festival
- Hold an art exhibition
- Plan a Rock Mass
- Keep your doors open during a major local cultural event

Mission intentionality
- Plan a Mission Audit
- Develop an outreach business plan
- Pause to share a joke
- Explore appointing a Pioneer Minister
- Take a hard look at the diary
    - too much activity?
    - too little space?

Promoting spiritual openness, inclusivity and diversity
- Make better use of social media to advertise special services/events
- Create a culture of 'Yes!'
- Announce Choral Evensong/Lunchtime Eucharist over the public address system 20 minutes before
- 'Welcome to **your** cathedral/minster/abbey'
- Ask the question – How can we develop a more inclusive/diverse community here?

Developing educational programmes
- Encourage School Visits
- Appoint an Education Officer
- Develop a lunchtime programme of talks in Lent or Advent
- Start some small groups
- Develop godly play

Enrich the quality of worship
- Value your musicians and care for them
- Use modern technology more to enhance sacred space/reflective worship
- Arrange training for readers/intercessors
- Make good use of movement and silence
- Have a social for the Sunday stewards/sidespeople/welcomers and celebrate their vital work

Prioritise discipleship and Christian nurture
- Start a new nurture course
- Start a 'school of theology'
- Offer a Lent spiritual MOT opportunity – one to one with a staff member
- Develop diverse opportunities for people to grow in discipleship through study/prayer/conversation
- Start a Peace and Justice group.

CHURCH GROWTH RESEARCH PROGRAMME

CATHEDRAL WORSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

Across the UK cathedrals are growing. To understand this growth and to develop the ministry and mission of Gloucester Cathedral, we hope to learn more about your re-lationship to the cathedral and why you have chosen to attend this worship service.

We would be grateful if you could spend a few moments answering these questions. Your responses are confidential and will remain anonymous.

ATTENDANCE, MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

Please state the title of this service and today's date:

Service title: _____ **Date:** _____

(1) When did you first attend this worship service at Gloucester Cathedral?

(please tick one) □ **less than 1 year ago** □ **1-2 years ago**

□ **3-5 years ago** □ **6-10 years ago** □ **over 10 years ago**

(2) How frequently do you attend cathedral worship? *(please tick one)*

□ **most weeks** □ **once a month** □ **every 2-6 months** □ **every 7-12 months**

□ **first visit** If this is your *FIRST VISIT*, are you likely to attend this service again?

YES / NO / NOT SURE *(circle as appropriate)*

(3) Are there other worship services you attend at Gloucester Cathedral during a given month?

YES / NO *(if YES, please state which)*

(a) _____ b) _____

(c) _____ d) _____

(4) Do you consider the cathedral to be your primary 'home church'?

YES / NO / NOT SURE *(circle as appropriate)*

(5) Which of the following statements best describes your involvement at the cathedral? *(tick any that apply)*

□ **I am a committed member of the congregation**   □ **I am a member (paid or unpaid) of the cathedral staff**

□ **I am an occasional member**   □ **I have no involvement at the cathedral**

□ **I am a frequent visitor**   □ **Other:** _____

□ **I am an occasional visitor**   _____

□ **I am a cathedral volunteer**   _____

6) Have you regularly attended other churches **besides** the cathedral in the past?
    YES / NO   (circle as appropriate)

    If **YES**, were they: (tick any that apply)

    ☐ **your parish church**   ☐ **another Anglican church**   ☐ **a non-Anglican church**

(7) If you consider yourself a member of this cathedral community, how would you best describe your situation when you first joined?   (please select ONE option)

    ☐ **joining a church community for the first time**

    ☐ **transferring to the cathedral from another church**

    ☐ **returning after a break from church in general**

    ☐ **joining the cathedral whilst continuing to worship regularly at another church**

(8) If you continue to attend worship in another church as well as the cathedral, is that church:

    ☐ **your parish church**   ☐ **another Anglican church**   ☐ **a non-Anglican church**

(9) Do you attend that church: ☐ **most weeks**   ☐ **once a month**

                                      ☐ **every 2-6 months**   ☐ **every 7-12 months**

(10) If you attended other churches in the past, but now regard the cathedral as your primary place of worship, did you do so:

    ☐ **because you prefer the worship**   ☐ **another reason** (please state)

    ☐ **because you were not completely satisfied with your previous church**

    _____

    _____

THE CATHEDRAL COMMUNITY

(11) How would you describe your connection to the cathedral? In general …

TICK ONE ON EACH OF THE FOLLOWING LINES	strongly agree	agree	not certain	disagree	strongly disagree
I feel a strong sense of belonging to the cathedral	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
I feel I am part of the cathedral congregation	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
I feel close to others in the cathedral congregation	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
I feel close to the cathedral clergy	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
being in the cathedral congregation helps me to contribute to community life	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
I help out with the community work undertaken by the cathedral	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅

(12) How important are the following factors in your decision to worship in Gloucester Cathedral?

TICK ONE ON EACH OF THE FOLLOWING LINES	very important	important	Not sure	Un-important	very un-important
The Place					
Connection with history	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Opportunity to worship in a grand building	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Feeling of peace	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Contemplative atmosphere	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
The Worship					
Style of worship	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Preaching	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Music	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Choir	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Ritual	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
The People					
Friendly atmosphere	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Friendship	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Opportunity to connect with important people	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Social status of worshipping in the cathedral	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
The Anonymity					
Opportunity to be anonymous to other worshippers	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Opportunity to be anonymous to the clergy	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Not having to take part in parish activities	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅

(13) How has worshipping at the cathedral positively helped you in your Christian life?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOU ...

(14) Can you tell us a little bit about yourself *(please tick as appropriate)*

Gender: ☐ *Male*   ☐ *Female*

Age: ☐ *Under 19*   ☐ *19-29*   ☐ *30-49*   ☐ *50-64*   ☐ *65+*

(15) What is your ethnic group? *(choose ONE)*

☐ White   ☐ Black or Black British

☐ Mixed   ☐ Other ethnic group   *(please write in)*

☐ Asian or Asian British

_____

(16) What is your country/ continent of birth?   *(please tick one box)*

☐ UK   ☐ Asia

☐ Other European country   ☐ North/ South America

☐ Africa   ☐ Australia/ New Zealand

(17) At the moment are you?   *(please tick one box)*

☐ Working/ self-employed full-time   ☐ Unemployed

☐ Working/ self-employed part-time   ☐ Fulltime homemaker, not otherwise employed

☐ Studying   ☐ Retired

(18) Please state the first part of your postcode: ____ ____ ____ ____

A FINAL THOUGHT ABOUT GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

(19) Please describe Gloucester Cathedral and/or what it means to you.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU for completing this questionnaire

Please place your completed form in the box provided
Or hand it to a verger, sidesperson or steward

CHURCH GROWTH RESEARCH SURVEY 2012

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

This cathedral has been selected to participate in an important study commissioned by the Church at national level. Your responses are confidential and will help promote a better understanding of cathedrals' contribution to the mission and growth of the Church.

This form should be completed by the **cathedral dean** and, if needed, with the assistance of another member of staff.

Thank you for your willingness to be included.

Please state the name of your cathedral: _____

Your name: _____ *The year of your appointment:* _____

Cathedral Worship

Sunday Services

1. How many regular services of worship are held at your cathedral on a typical Sunday? _____

2. Please describe the normal Sunday services of worship held at your cathedral. Indicate the extent to which attendance has grown or declined over the last 5 years by ticking all that apply below.

✓ ONE ON EACH LINE	Grown substantially	Grown a little	Stable	Declined a little	Declined substantially	N/A
Holy Communion (BCP)...........................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Holy Communion (CW)...........................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Matins / Morning Prayer (Said)................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Matins / Morning Prayer (Sung)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
The Cathedral Eucharist.........................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Said Evening Prayer..............................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Choral Evensong.................................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Compline / Night Prayer.........................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Alternative / Creative / Fresh Expression Worship.......	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Other: _____	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Other: _____	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Other: _____	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6

Additional comments concerning Sunday services: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. What do you see as the main reasons contributing to this growth or decline?

☐1 _____

☐2 _____

☐3 _____

4. What are the most significant barriers preventing new growth in the future?

☐1 _____

☐2 _____

☐3 _____

5. On a typical Sunday, does your cathedral offer any of the following programmes or activities for children or young people? *If yes*, do they involve only a core of participants or do they attract new people to join?

✓ **ONE ON EACH LINE**	N/A	Yes	
		Core group	Popular more broadly
Cathedral crèche..	☐1	☐2	☐3
Sunday school or children's groups (in addition to choir)........................	☐1	☐2	☐3
Youth / young adult activities or programmes (in addition to choir)..........	☐1	☐2	☐3

Midweek Services

6. How many regular midweek services of worship take place at the cathedral during a typical week? _____

7. Please describe the regular midweek services of worship. Indicate the extent to which attendance has grown or declined over the last 5 years by ticking all that apply below.

✓ **ONE ON EACH LINE**	Grown substantially	Grown a little	Stable	Declined a little	Declined substantially	N/A
Holy Communion (BCP)................................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Holy Communion (CW)................................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Matins / Morning Prayer (Said)................................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Matins / Morning Prayer (Sung)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Said Evening Prayer................................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Choral Evensong................................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Compline / Night Prayer................................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Wholeness & Healing................................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Taize................................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Alternative / Creative / Fresh Expression Worship.........	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Other: _____	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Other: _____	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Other: _____	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6

8. Does your cathedral offer any midweek services of worship specifically for children or young people (*in addition to school visits and choir*)? *If so*, please expand: _____

_____

_____

_____

9. Increased midweek attendance in many cathedrals has been widely reported in recent years. Has this been your experience? Why, in your opinion, do you think new growth is/isn't taking place in your cathedral?

Please expand: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. What do you see as the main reasons for *either* the growth or decline of midweek attendance?

☐1 _____

☐2 _____

☐3 _____

2

11. What are the most significant barriers preventing future growth at midweek services?

☐₁ _____

☐₂ _____

☐₃ _____

12. What is the most consistently well-attended midweek service or event held at your cathedral at least once a month? _____

13. In your view, what is the main reason for its popularity? _____

_____

_____

_____

14. During the past 5 years, has your cathedral substantially *changed the style* of <u>any</u> of its regular services or added a new service in a different style? Please tick all that apply:

☐₁ No change in style
☐₂ Changed style a little
☐₃ Changed style somewhat or a lot   *If so*, how? _____
☐₄ Added a new service in a different style

15. If a new style of worship service has been added, please describe what make it distinctive:

☐₁ _____

_____

_____

In what year was this service initiated? _____   How often does it take place? _____

What was the primary reason for its introduction?   _____

_____

Average normal attendance during the first year: Adults _____   Children _____

over the previous year: Adults _____   Children _____

☐₂ _____

_____

_____

In what year was this service initiated? _____   How often does it take place? _____

What was the primary reason for its introduction?   _____

_____

Average normal attendance during the first year: Adults _____   Children _____

over the previous year: Adults _____   Children _____

☐₃ _____

_____

_____

In what year was this service initiated? _____   How often does it take place? _____

What was the primary reason for its introduction?   _____

_____

Average normal attendance during the first year: Adults _____   Children _____

over the previous year: Adults _____   Children _____

16. Are any of these new services considered a Fresh Expression? *If yes*, which ones: ☐₁   ☐₂   ☐₃

17. What percentage of participants considers one of these Fresh Expressions their primary church community?

☐₁ _____   ☐₂ _____   ☐₃ _____

3

Cathedral Mission

'Cathedrals are large, complex, multifaceted institutions, each shaped by its unique history and context. To generalize too readily or to attempt to fit every one into a one-size-fits-all shape would be a mistake. Each cathedral is different and needs to be recognized and respected' ('Spiritual Capital – The Present and Future of English Cathedrals', p. 55).

18. Do you have any initial comments concerning your cathedral's approach to mission? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

19. Appreciating the complexity and diversity of your own context, what aspects of *cathedral mission* do you think have most impacted the growth and vitality of your cathedral community in each of the following areas:

☐₁ **Welcome Ministry** _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

☐₂ **Education** _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

☐₃ **Prayer & Spirituality** _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

☐₄ **Civic & Community Engagement** _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4

Cathedral Ministry

20. As the seat of the Bishop and a centre of worship and mission, cathedrals play a unique role in the life of the Church. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your cathedral's ministry to the wider Church?

✓ ONE ON EACH LINE

Our cathedral:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral/ Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Is considered an exemplary model in worship............................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Is considered an exemplary model in welcome...........................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Is a shared centre of resource and teaching for the diocese..........	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Is in active partnership with the diocese and/or local parishes........	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Is regularly used as gathering place for local parishes...................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Is looked to as a leader in mission in the diocese........................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Has little formal contact with local churches.............................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Has directly seeded developments in local parishes.....................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

21. Does your cathedral put on any of the following programmes or activities as a resource *for the diocese and/or local parishes*? *If yes*, has participation in these events grown or declined over the last 5 years?

✓ ONE ON EACH LINE

	Grown substantially	Grown a little	Stable	Declined a little	Declined substantially	N/A
Adult education courses..	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Lent courses..	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Faith exploration courses (e.g. Alpha, Emmaus, etc.)..............	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Music courses (e.g. singing training etc.)...........................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
One-off prayer / worship events................................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Ecumenical services / events....................................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Cathedral choir tours around parishes.........................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Pilgrimages...	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Spiritual tours...	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Art / performance..	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Music festivals...	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Public lectures..	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Other: _____	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Other: _____	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Other: _____	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6

22. Does your cathedral provide any of the following children's or youth activities as a resource *for the diocese and/or local parishes*? *If yes*, has participation in these events grown or declined over the last 5 years?

✓ ONE ON EACH LINE

	Grown substantially	Grown a little	Stable	Declined a little	Declined substantially	N/A
Worship services designed for children / youth..............	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Special activities (such as sport, craft, art, drama, etc.)......	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Youth Bible study groups....................|....................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Youth discipleship courses......................................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Confirmation preparation..	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Youth conferences and/or camps..............................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Holiday clubs..	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Other: _____	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Other: _____	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Other: _____	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6

5

23. Of all the cathedral ministry programmes, events or activities designed to resource the diocese and/or surrounding parishes, which are consistently among the most widely attended?

☐₁ _____

☐₂ _____

☐₃ _____

24. What about these events / programmes has made them particularly successful?

_____

_____

_____

Cathedral Community

Congregations

25. How many people attend the cathedral for worship on a normal Sunday?

Adults _____   Children (aged under 16) _____

26. Roughly how many people attend the cathedral for worship during the week (excluding school / education visits, specially arranged services and other occasional events)?

Adults _____   Children (aged under 16) _____

27. During the past five years, has the number of people who attend for worship at least monthly …

☐₁ Grown substantially   ☐₄ Declined a little
☐₂ Grown a little   ☐₅ Declined substantially
☐₃ Stayed about the same

28. Roughly what proportion of people attending regular services in the last 12 months are:

	Adults	Children
Regular worshippers		
Occasional worshippers		
Visitors		
Total:	100%	100%

29. What percentage of regular worshippers would consider the cathedral congregation to be their primary church community? _____

30. Compared with 5 years ago, has this number of regular worshippers …

☐₁ Grown substantially   ☐₄ Declined a little
☐₂ Grown a little   ☐₅ Declined substantially
☐₃ Stayed about the same

31. Of your regular adult worshippers, estimate the proportion who are:

| Women | | Men |
| White British | | Black, Asian & Other Ethnic Minorities |

32. How has the cathedral community as a whole changed over the past five years?

AGE PROFILE		ETHNICITY	
☐₁	Older	☐₁	Many more ethnic minority attenders
☐₂	About the same	☐₂	Some more ethnic minority attenders
☐₃	Younger	☐₃	About the same
		☐₄	Fewer ethnic minority attenders

If your cathedral community has become markedly more diverse, in what way has it done so? _____

_____

_____

6

33. To the best of your knowledge, please list the number of confirmations from within the cathedral community for each of the previous five years:

	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Adult (over 16).............................					
Child (under 16)...........................					

Choir

34. What is the current size of your cathedral choir?

Men's _____   Boys' _____   Girls' _____

35. How many choir family members regularly attended cathedral services of worship last year? _____

36. Approximately what percentage of choir family members who currently worship at the cathedral ...

Were already a part of the cathedral community	
Previously attended another church elsewhere	
Previously had little to no participation in church life	
Total:	100%

37. Does the cathedral provide any special events specifically for choir families?

☐₁ No
☐₁ Yes ➜ On average, how many per year? _____

If yes, has participation in these events grown or declined over the last 5 years?

☐₁ Grown substantially   ☐₄ Declined a little
☐₂ Grown a little   ☐₅ Declined substantially
☐₃ Stayed about the same

Staff & Volunteers

38. To the best of your knowledge, please indicate the current number of cathedral staff and volunteers:

☐₁ Stipendiary clergy (whose primary ministry is at the cathedral)
☐₂ Stipendiary lay staff (employed by the cathedral)
☐₃ Volunteer clergy
☐₄ Active lay volunteers

39. Approximately what percentage of the worshipping congregation is paid/unpaid cathedral staff or volunteers? _____

Other

40. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

✓ ONE ON EACH LINE

Our cathedral:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral/ Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Is an open and welcoming community.......................	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Has a clear mission and purpose	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Is willing to change to meet new challenges	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Wants to grow in membership.................................	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Wants to be racially and culturally diverse	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅
Is working for social justice.....................................	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄	☐₅

41. Cathedrals have many special services and events each year. What impact, if any, have such services had on regular congregation growth at your cathedral? *Please explain:* _____

_____
_____
_____
_____

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99

42. Does your cathedral collect any of its own statistical data concerning attendance growth or decline? *If so*, would you be willing to share this information with researchers at the Church Growth Programme?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Any final comments, questions or concerns: _____

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Thank you for completing the survey. Please return this form in the enclosed envelope to:
Church Growth Research Programme, 10 Forsythia Gardens, Lenton, Nottingham, NG7 2LW.

If you have any questions, please contact Ben Kautzer (b.a.kautzer@durham.ac.uk or 0115 978 0856) or Canon John Holmes (canon.john@sky.com or 0113 264 2667).

CHURCH GROWTH RESEARCH SURVEY 2013

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

The Greater Churches Network has been selected to participate in an important study commissioned by the Church at national level. Your responses are confidential and will help promote a better understanding of Greater Churches and their contribution to the mission and growth of the wider Church.

This form should be completed by the **parish priest** and, if needed, with the assistance of another member of staff.

Thank you for your willingness to be included.

Please state the name of your church(es): _____

Your name: _____ The year of your appointment: _____

Worship

Sunday Services

1. How many regular services of worship are held at your church on a typical Sunday? _____

2. Please describe the normal Sunday services of worship held at your church. Indicate the extent to which attendance has grown or declined over the last 5 years by ticking all that apply below.

✓ ONE ON EACH LINE	Grown substantially	Grown a little	Stable	Declined a little	Declined substantially	N/A
Holy Communion (BCP)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Holy Communion (CW)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Matins / Morning Prayer (Said)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Matins / Morning Prayer (Sung)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
The Parish Eucharist	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Said Evening Prayer	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Choral Evensong	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Compline / Night Prayer	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Alternative / Creative / Fresh Expression Worship	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Other: _____	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Other: _____	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Other: _____	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6

Additional comments concerning Sunday services: _____

_____

_____

_____

3. What do you see as the main reasons contributing to this growth or decline?

☐1 _____

☐2 _____

☐3 _____

4. What are the most significant barriers preventing new growth in the future?

☐1 _____

☐2 _____

☐3 _____

5. On a typical Sunday, does your church offer any of the following programmes or activities for children or young people? *If yes*, do they involve only a core of participants or do they attract new people to join?

✓ ONE ON EACH LINE	N/A	Yes	
		Core group	Popular more broadly
Crèche..	☐1	☐2	☐3
Sunday school or children's groups (in addition to choir)......................	☐1	☐2	☐3
Youth / young adult activities or programmes (in addition to choir)..........	☐1	☐2	☐3

Midweek Services

6. How many regular midweek services of worship take place at your church during a typical week? _____

7. Please describe the regular midweek services of worship. Indicate the extent to which attendance has grown or declined over the last 5 years by ticking all that apply below.

✓ ONE ON EACH LINE	Grown substantially	Grown a little	Stable	Declined a little	Declined substantially	N/A
Holy Communion (BCP)..	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Holy Communion (CW)...	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Matins / Morning Prayer (Said)...............................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Matins / Morning Prayer (Sung)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Said Evening Prayer..	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Choral Evensong..	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Compline / Night Prayer.......................................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Wholeness & Healing...	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Taize..	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Alternative / Creative / Fresh Expression Worship.........	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Other: _____	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Other: _____	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
Other: _____	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6

8. Does your church offer any midweek services of worship specifically for children or young people (*in addition to school visits and choir*)? *If so*, please expand: _____

_____

_____

_____

9. Increased midweek attendance in many parishes has been widely reported in recent years. Has this been your experience? Why, in your opinion, do you think new growth is/isn't taking place in your church?

Please expand: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. What do you see as the main reasons for *either* the growth or decline of midweek attendance?

☐1 _____

☐2 _____

☐3 _____

2

11. What are the most significant barriers preventing future growth at midweek services?

$\square_1$ _____

$\square_2$ _____

$\square_3$ _____

12. What is the most consistently well-attended midweek service or event held at your church at least once a month? _____

13. In your view, what is the main reason for its popularity? _____

_____

_____

_____

14. During the past 5 years, has your church substantially *changed the style* of <u>any</u> of its regular services or added a new service in a different style? Please tick all that apply:

$\square_1$ No change in style
$\square_2$ Changed style a little
$\square_3$ Changed style somewhat or a lot   *If so*, how? _____
$\square_4$ Added a new service in a different style

15. If a new style of worship service has been added, please describe what make it distinctive:

$\square_1$ _____

_____

_____

In what year was this service initiated? _____   How often does it take place? _____

What was the primary reason for its introduction?   _____

Average normal attendance during the first year: Adults _____   Children _____
over the previous year: Adults _____   Children _____

$\square_2$ _____

_____

_____

In what year was this service initiated? _____   How often does it take place? _____

What was the primary reason for its introduction?   _____

Average normal attendance during the first year: Adults _____   Children _____
over the previous year: Adults _____   Children _____

$\square_3$ _____

_____

_____

In what year was this service initiated? _____   How often does it take place? _____

What was the primary reason for its introduction?   _____

Average normal attendance during the first year: Adults _____   Children _____
over the previous year: Adults _____   Children _____

16. Are any of these new services considered a Fresh Expression? *If yes*, which ones: $\square_1$ $\square_2$ $\square_3$

17. What percentage of participants considers one of these Fresh Expressions their primary church community?

$\square_1$ _____ $\square_2$ _____ $\square_3$ _____

3

Mission

Greater churches are large, complex and multifaceted, each shaped by their own unique history and context. While displaying many of the characteristics of a cathedral, greater churches have the organisation and financial structure of a parish church. That presents them with particular opportunities and challenges for mission.

18. Do you have any initial comments concerning your church's approach to mission? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

19. Appreciating the complexity and diversity of your own context, what aspects of mission do you think have most impacted the growth and vitality of your parish community in each of the following areas:

☐1 **Welcome Ministry** _____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

☐2 **Education** _____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

☐3 **Prayer & Spirituality** _____

_____

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☐4 **Civic & Community Engagement** _____

_____

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4

Ministry

20. Greater churches have an important role in the wider Church, because of the part they play in their local communities, their region and the diocese. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your church's ministry to the wider Church?

✓ **ONE ON EACH LINE**

Our church:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral/ Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Is considered an exemplary model in worship...........................	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
Is considered an exemplary model in welcome.........................	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
Is a shared centre of resource and teaching for the diocese..........	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
Is in active partnership with the diocese and/or local parishes........	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
Is regularly used as gathering place for local parishes...................	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
Is looked to as a leader in mission in the diocese......................	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
Has little formal contact with other local churches....................	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
Has directly seeded developments in local parishes....................	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$

21. Does your church put on any of the following programmes or activities as a resource *for the diocese and/or local parishes*? *If yes*, has participation in these events grown or declined over the last 5 years?

✓ **ONE ON EACH LINE**

	Grown substantially	Grown a little	Stable	Declined a little	Declined substantially	N/A
Adult education courses...	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Lent courses...	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Faith exploration courses (e.g. Alpha, Emmaus, etc.)...............	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Music courses (e.g. singing training etc.)...........................	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
One-off prayer / worship events....................................	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Ecumenical services / events.......................................	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Choir tours around parishes..	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Pilgrimages..	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Spiritual tours...	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Art / performance...	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Music festivals...	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Public lectures...	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Other: _____	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Other: _____	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Other: _____	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$

22. Does your church provide any of the following children's or youth activities as a resource *for the diocese and/or local parishes*? *If yes*, has participation in these events grown or declined over the last 5 years?

✓ **ONE ON EACH LINE**

	Grown substantially	Grown a little	Stable	Declined a little	Declined substantially	N/A
Worship services designed for children / youth..............	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Special activities (such as sport, craft, art, drama, etc.).......	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Youth Bible study groups..	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Youth discipleship courses..	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Confirmation preparation..	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Youth conferences and/or camps.................................	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Holiday clubs...	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Other: _____	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Other: _____	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$
Other: _____	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$	$\square_6$

5

23. Of all your ministry programmes, events or activities designed to resource the diocese and/or surrounding parishes, which are consistently among the most widely attended?

☐₁ _____

☐₂ _____

☐₃ _____

24. What about these events / programmes has made them particularly successful?

_____

_____

_____

Community

Congregations

25. How many people attend your church for worship on a normal Sunday?

Adults _____   Children (aged under 16) _____

26. Roughly how many people attend your church for worship during the week (excluding school / education visits, specially arranged services and other occasional events)?

Adults _____   Children (aged under 16) _____

27. During the past five years, has the number of people who attend for worship at least monthly ...

☐₁ Grown substantially   ☐₄ Declined a little
☐₂ Grown a little   ☐₅ Declined substantially
☐₃ Stayed about the same

28. Roughly what proportion of people attending regular services in the last 12 months are:

	Adults	Children
Regular worshippers		
Occasional worshippers		
Visitors		
Total:	100%	100%

29. What percentage of regular worshippers would consider your congregation to be their primary church community? _____

30. Compared with 5 years ago, has this number of regular worshippers ...

☐₁ Grown substantially   ☐₄ Declined a little
☐₂ Grown a little   ☐₅ Declined substantially
☐₃ Stayed about the same

31. Of your regular adult worshippers, estimate the proportion who are:

Women		Men
White British		Black, Asian & Other Ethnic Minorities

32. How has your community as a whole changed over the past five years?

AGE PROFILE		ETHNICITY	
☐₁	Older	☐₁	Many more ethnic minority attenders
☐₂	About the same	☐₂	Some more ethnic minority attenders
☐₃	Younger	☐₃	About the same
		☐₄	Fewer ethnic minority attenders

If your church community has become markedly more diverse, in what way has it done so? _____

_____

_____

6

33. To the best of your knowledge, please list the number of confirmations from **within** your church community for each of the previous five years:

	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Adult (over 16)............................					
Child (under 16)...........................					

34. Does your church offer any midweek small groups (e.g. house groups, prayer or study groups, faith exploration, etc.)? If so, please indicate:

☐₁ The number of active small groups (meeting at least fortnightly) _____

☐₂ The number of regular participants (to the best of your knowledge) _____

Any additional comments concerning small groups: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Choir

35. Do you have a choral tradition at your church? Yes _____   No _____

If so, what is the current size of your choir?

Adults' _____   Boys' _____   Girls' _____

36. How many choir family members regularly attended services of worship at your church last year? _____

37. Approximately what percentage of choir family members who currently worship at your church ...

Were already a part of the congregation	
Previously attended another church elsewhere	
Previously had little to no participation in church life	
Total:	100%

38. Does your church provide any special events specifically for choir families?

☐₁ No

☐₁ Yes ➜ On average, how many per year? _____

If yes, has participation in these events grown or declined over the last 5 years?

☐₁ Grown substantially   ☐₄ Declined a little
☐₂ Grown a little   ☐₅ Declined substantially
☐₃ Stayed about the same

Staff & Volunteers

39. Please describe your church staff team: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

40. To the best of your knowledge, please indicate the current number of church staff and volunteers:

☐₁ Stipendiary clergy

☐₂ Stipendiary lay staff

☐₃ Volunteer clergy

☐₄ Readers

☐₅ Volunteer lay staff

7

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41. Greater churches have many special services and events each year. What impact, if any, have such services had on regular congregation growth at your church? *Please explain:* _____

_____

_____

_____

42. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

   ✓ **ONE ON EACH LINE**

Our church:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral/ Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Is an open and welcoming community	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Has a clear mission and purpose	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Is willing to change to meet new challenges	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Wants to grow in membership.................................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Wants to be racially and culturally diverse	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Is working for social justice....................................	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

Statistics for Mission

Cathedrals and Greater Churches

Every year, parishes are required to submit 'Statistics for Mission' forms. Despite having similar mission and ministry, the cathedrals are asked a different set of questions than those sent to greater churches. In order to make a robust comparison, we have included the following questions from the cathedral form. Where precise figures are unavailable, please estimate as best you can.

43. To the best of your knowledge, please list the total number of attendances/visits (adult & child) to your church during the <u>previous year</u> for **specially arranged services of worship** (excluding memorials):

   ☐1 Total attendances: _____

   ☐2 Number of specially arranged services: _____

44. To the best of your knowledge, please list the total number of attendances/visits (adult & child) to your church during the <u>previous year</u> for **other key events** (public or civic events, conferences, concerts, meetings, etc.):

   ☐1 Total attendances: _____

   ☐2 Number of other events hosted by your church: _____

45. If possible, please estimate the number of total visitors (adult & child) to your church during the <u>previous year</u>: _____

46. To the best of your knowledge please state the number of children and/or students attending organised educational events at your church over the last <u>5 years</u>:

	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
☐1 Nursery/PrePrep/KS1.....................					
☐2 Primary/Prep/KS2........................ .					
☐3 Secondary/Senior/KS3/KS4...............					
☐4 16-18 yrs......................................					
☐5 18+..					

8

Additional Information

47. Does your church collect any of its own statistical data concerning attendance growth or decline? *If so*, would you be willing to share this information with researchers at the Church Growth Programme?

    ☐₁ Yes
    ☐₁ No

48. If you are willing to talk further on a confidential basis by telephone about growth in your church, please provide your telephone contact details: _____

    Any final comments, questions or concerns: _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

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Thank you for completing the survey. Please return this form in the enclosed envelope to:
Church Growth Research Programme, 10 Forsythia Gardens, Lenton, Nottingham, NG7 2LW.

If you have any questions, please contact Ben Kautzer (b.a.kautzer@durham.ac.uk or 0115 978 0856) or Canon John Holmes (canon.john@sky.com or 0113 264 2667).