

A Critical Evaluation and Theological  
Reflection on 'Worshipping Community', As  
Used By the Church of England Statistics For  
Mission Form (2012 and 2013), As a Measure  
of Church Size and Its Implications For  
Mission With Particular Reference to the  
Diocese of Sheffield.

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This dissertation is the product of my own work,  
and the work of others has been properly acknowledged throughout.

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## **Abbreviations used in the dissertation**

*aRiE* – *A Reader in Ecclesiology*<sup>1</sup>

aWa – Average Weekly Attendance

ER – Electoral Roll

*SaTM* - *Statistics a Tool for Mission*<sup>2</sup>

SfM – Statistics for Mission

uSa – Usual Sunday Attendance

WC –Worshipping Community

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<sup>1</sup> Bryan P. Stone, *A Reader in Ecclesiology* (Farnham: Ashgate , 2012) Kindle edition.

<sup>2</sup> Nigel McCulloch, *Statistics a Tool for Mission: A report by the Statistics Review Group* (London: Church House Publishing, 2000).

## **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

Some are writers, others musicians or artists; I have always had an interest in numbers exploring and using them to gain a greater understanding or tell a story. Early in my curacy I discovered that the back of the Diocesan yearbook included numbers for each parish: the population; income; average attendance per week and communicants at Easter and Christmas.<sup>3</sup> I began to use the numbers to compare parishes and also look at trends year on year. In part, this was motivated by that interest in numbers, but it was also motivated by a desire to understand the church and its mission – ‘Was the church growing and if so where?’ My curacy church was growing slowly but I soon discovered this was not universally true.

My interest prompted questions about Parish Share formulae that led to involvement in the Diocesan Parish Share committee and access to more data. This closer contact made me aware of the inadequacies in the data that was being gathered. In 2002 I was incumbent of a different parish and two publications *Counting Sheep*<sup>4</sup> and *Hope for the Church*<sup>5</sup> prompted closer attention to the attendance patterns and I began to consider the missional implications of those patterns. This confirmed my subjective impression that the church was growing, more people were involved and attending worship, even though the numbers attending on a particular Sunday appeared to be either holding steady or slightly declining. In 2011, within months of my appointment as Director of Mission and Pioneer Ministry in the Diocese of Sheffield, I attended two meetings that highlighted some of the issues with the data but also the value of using statistics as a tool for mission and strategic thinking.<sup>6</sup>

The second meeting introduced the ideas of Worshipping Community (capitalised throughout when not using the abbreviation WC) and of counting those who joined and left during the year as additional measures of church life. This was one of the stages that led to the addition of new Worshipping Community questions on the

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<sup>3</sup> Diocese of Sheffield, *Year Book 1993* (Liverpool: Mersey Mirror Ltd, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> Paddy Benson and John Roberts, *Counting Sheep: Attendance Patterns and Pastoral Strategy*, Grove Pastoral Series P92 (Cambridge: Grove Books Limited, 2002).

<sup>5</sup> Jackson, Bob, *Hope for the Church: Contemporary Strategies of Growth* (London: Church House Publishing, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> The meetings were a presentation from the Diocese of Toronto on Resource Reallocation given to Missioners at Church House, Westminster in February 2011 and a ‘Statistics for Mission Day’ in Leicester in March 2011.

national Statistics for Mission form. Data from the 2012 and 2013 questions is now available for analysis.

The wider context for this work is the on going debate about the status of Christianity in England as sociologists such as Brown<sup>7</sup> and Bruce<sup>8</sup> see the death, or a decline to insignificance, of the Church as an inevitable consequence of secularisation. At the same time within the church there is a debate about whether or not numerical growth is possible or even if it is important.<sup>9</sup> The evidence of decline and change cannot be denied but the inevitability of inexorable decline is challenged by those who suggest that church growth is not only possible but is happening in some places.<sup>10</sup> The recent Church Growth Research Project that led to the publication of *From Anecdote to Evidence*<sup>11</sup> supports this. There is also a move within the Church of England, not least from the Bishop of Sheffield, who says that this decline is not inevitable, that church growth is possible and that churches in his Diocese should be aspiring to grow by 20% in a ten year period.<sup>12</sup> In order that the debate is informed, and the effectiveness of growth strategies are assessed it is important to be able to collect data to measure.

The underlying research model used in the dissertation is an adaption of Green's pastoral spiral that begins with experience leading into exploration, theological reflection and then response.<sup>13</sup> An advantage the spiral brings is recognition of the temporal progress of a research and reflection cycle.<sup>14</sup> It is adapted because at each stage of the research process it is impossible to separate out the separate phases as each informs and interacts with the other. Green's spiral recognises this to some

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<sup>7</sup> Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2009).

<sup>8</sup> Steve Bruce, *God is Dead: Secularization in the West* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 43.

<sup>9</sup> Martyn Percy, 'It's Not Just About the Numbers' in Malcolm Doney (ed.), *How Healthy is the CofE? The Church Times Health Check* (Norwich, Canterbury Press, 2014) 127-131, 127.

<sup>10</sup> Goodhew, David and Bob Jackson 'Can We Grow? Yes We Can.' in Malcolm Doney (ed.), *How Healthy is the CofE? The Church Times Health Check* (Norwich, Canterbury Press, 2014) 122-126, 122.

<sup>11</sup> Church of England, *From Anecdote to Evidence: Findings from the Church Growth Research Programme 2011-2013* (London: 2014).

<sup>12</sup> Steven Croft, *Growing the Body of Christ – A Strategy for Growth for the Diocese of Sheffield, 2011-2021* (Sheffield: The Diocese of Sheffield, 2011), 7.

<sup>13</sup> Laurie Green, *Let's Do Theology: a Pastoral Cycle Resource Book* (London: Mowbray, 1990), 30.

<sup>14</sup> Judith Thompson with Stephen Pattison and Ross Thompson, *SCM Study Guide to Theological Reflection* (London: SCM Press, 2008).

extent by the introduction of a secondary cycle of theological reflection,<sup>15</sup> but that doesn't fully recognise the on going interactions between each of the stages. Each exploration highlights issues to reflect upon and each reflection highlights issues to explore and both influence the response. At the same time the literature that is being reviewed and the journey that led to the situation being researched are also the results of exploration and reflection. Looking back in time, these are additional spirals that converge to provide the starting point for the research.

The exploration, and reflection for this project journeyed around the cycle twice as one cycle set up questions for a second. The first stage and the major part of the research looked at the journey that led to the introduction of this new statistic along with a theological reflection considering the concept of Worshipping Community as a metric for church membership and using that measure to assess the vitality of a church and its mission. This was followed by an analysis of the data gathered for the Diocese of Sheffield. Analysis of the data had been the intended focus of the dissertation, however the initial investigation highlighted underlying problems with the data which led first to comparative analysis with data from the Diocese of Leicester and then to a second journey around the pastoral cycle as the spiral moved on. In this second stage the process of gathering the data was reviewed qualitatively through the use of a simple questionnaire in an attempt to understand the problems with the data. This stage also prompted further theological reflection on counting and knowing the members of the church.

In presenting the research Chapter 2 reviews the membership and attendance statistics that have been used by the Church of England and gives the background to the introduction of the Worshipping Community statistics. Chapter 3 then brings together theological reflection from both stages round the cycle. Chapter 4 describes the quantitative exploration of the WC data. Chapter 5 describes the consequential qualitative exploration. Finally, Chapter 6 is used to bring the various stages together and present conclusions and suggested responses.

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<sup>15</sup> Green, *Let's Do Theology*, 95.

## **Chapter 2 – A Review of Recent Church Membership and Attendance Measures of the Church of England**

### **Introduction**

When reviewing churches' health and vitality data relating to both 'Membership' and 'Attendance' have been used. Church membership 'is often considered a relatively unambiguous, if rather limited, measurement of religiosity' meaning 'different things for different people' and is not the same as attendance.<sup>16</sup> Brierley observes that the meaning varies from denomination to denomination and suggests that Electoral Roll (ER) is used by the Church of England to define membership.<sup>17</sup> It is used when looking at membership trends but is not a comprehensive measure of church life. Attendance has been measured through censuses of attendance on a particular day and through various counts submitted by churches. Since the 1850s the Church of England has counted the numbers of Communicants at Easter and Christmas.<sup>18</sup> In 1964 the number of Adults on 'a normal Sunday' or Usual Sunday Attendance (uSa) began to be recorded. Since 1976 the number of children has also been recorded.<sup>19</sup>

Following a request from the Archbishop of Canterbury for 'a review of the statistics-gathering processes within the central Church structures.'<sup>20</sup> *Statistics a Tool for Mission*<sup>21</sup> was presented to the General Synod in July 2000. This led to the introduction of more detailed count for each week of October from which Average Weekly Attendance (aWa) could be calculated. The next sections look at each of these measures in more detail.

### **Membership and Electoral Roll (ER)**

The Electoral Roll is an indication of membership used for various legal purposes in relation to elections that also confers various rights. ER determines who can attend

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<sup>16</sup> Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain Since 1945: Believing Without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1994), 45.

<sup>17</sup> Peter Brierley, *UK Church Statistics, 2005-2015* (Tonbridge: ADBC Publishers, 2011), 1.

<sup>18</sup> Benson and Roberts, *Counting Sheep*, 3.

<sup>19</sup> *SaTM*, 17.

<sup>20</sup> *SaTM*, v.

<sup>21</sup> *SaTM*.



and vote at Annual Church meetings and be elected to the various synods.<sup>22</sup> Being on the ER allows people who don't live in the parish to marry in the church,<sup>23</sup> have their children baptized in the church and be buried in the Churchyard.<sup>24</sup>

ER membership has provided a measure of church affiliation. It is 'the nearest thing that the Church of England has got to a list of its active members.'<sup>25</sup> This doesn't mean that it is a good list of active members. The ER can be distorted in various ways as people might join it for a variety of reasons. In addition to the rights it carries it might help gain admission of children to a church school. In some areas membership of ER shows support for the local or family church, even if people do not regularly worship. Whilst in other areas being on the ER is not seen as being particularly relevant for many of those who worship in the church. ER, like other measures, can also be distorted if used to calculate Parish Share.<sup>26</sup> In Sheffield Diocese the ER to uSa ratio ranges from ER being a quarter of uSa for a large urban evangelical church to as high as five and a half times uSa in rural parishes where attendance is perhaps less important than affiliation and support.<sup>27</sup>

Another problem with ER is that it excludes children. People must be aged over 16 to be on the Roll.<sup>28</sup> One conclusion of the Church Growth Research Program was that growth is more likely to be found where churches have a high ratio of children to adults.<sup>29</sup> ER does not help assess this aspect of churches' membership or mission.

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<sup>22</sup> Church of England, *Church Representation Rules 2011* (London: Church House Publishing, 2011 – Kindle edition).

<sup>23</sup> Church of England, *Church of England Marriage Measure 2008: Guidance from the House of Bishops*  
<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1733211/marriage%20measure%202008%20guidance.pdf> (23 July 2014).

<sup>24</sup> Church of England, *Canons of the Church of England Section B*,  
[www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/churchlawlegis/canons/section-b.aspx](http://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/churchlawlegis/canons/section-b.aspx) (23 July 2014).

<sup>25</sup> Malcolm Torry, 'An Interim Measure: The Parish in Its Context', in Malcolm Torry (ed.) *The Parish: People, Place and Ministry a Theological and Practical Exploration* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2004), 7.

<sup>26</sup> Davie, *Religion in Britain*, 45.

<sup>27</sup> Calculated using SfM data 2008-2013.

<sup>28</sup> Church of England, *Church Representation Rules*, loc 199.

<sup>29</sup> David Voas and Laura Watt, *Numerical Change in Church Attendance: National, Local and Individual Factors*, The Church Growth Research Programme Report on Strands 1 and 2 (Church Growth Research Programme, 2014)  
[http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Reports/Report\\_Strands\\_1\\_2\\_rev2.pdf](http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Reports/Report_Strands_1_2_rev2.pdf) (26 March 2014), 20.

ER is not the only possible definition of membership for the Church of England. The cure of souls for the parish and being the established Church have contributed to a situation in which different factors can signify membership. The rites of Baptism and Confirmation both mark entry into membership and are qualifying factors for ER. Ticking a box on a census form or survey can also indicate membership. Living in the parish carries the rights to baptism, marriage and burial that ER gives and so could be considered to indicate membership. An extreme expression of this is found in Torry's statement: 'The Church of England often regards even those who actively dissociate themselves from the Church of England by belonging to some other Christian denomination or some other religion as somehow belonging to the Church of England.'<sup>30</sup> 'There is no definitive legal answer to what makes someone a member of the Church of England.'<sup>31</sup>

The complexities around defining membership, and the changing nature of society and religious affiliation in which membership is a matter of choice and the default 'CofE' is no longer assumed has led to attendance being used as an alternative way of assessing the vitality of the Church of England. Churchgoing statistics are to be preferred<sup>32</sup> as they are an indication of presence and participation, though not of the level of engagement.

### **Usual Sunday Attendance (uSa)**

The uSa count requires the counter to estimate 'Attendance on a "normal" Sunday' defined as 'one which is not a major festival or contained in a peak holiday period' with additional guidance that 'if attendance fluctuates a weekly "average" should be taken.'<sup>33</sup> Both adults (16+) and younger people are counted.

uSa, by definition, only counts how many people are in church on normal Sundays. It does not count individuals, but the size of the congregation. If two people each attend on alternate weeks they will only be counted as one. uSa does not count

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<sup>30</sup> Torry, 'An Interim Measure', 10.

<sup>31</sup> *SaTM*, 13.

<sup>32</sup> Robin Gill, *The Empty Church Revisited* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

<sup>33</sup> See sample form from 1999 in *SaTM*, 41. The same definition though without reference to fluctuation still appears, see the 2012 and 2013 forms in the appendices.

people regularly attend a mid week service, or a service that is not in church. One advantage of uSa is that it is similar to attendance data collected by other denominations and so is useful for larger scale comparisons and trends.<sup>34</sup>

A problem, that has concerned those seeking a realistic measure of the number of people who are a part of the life of the church, is that uSa doesn't take account of infrequent attendance.<sup>35</sup> There is some disagreement about the extent to which infrequent attendance is a growing phenomenon. In 2002 Jackson suggested that whilst studies and simple observation indicate that people appear in church with various frequencies it was not clear that the ratios of attendance were getting greater. He noted a count in the Alconbury [*sic*]<sup>36</sup> deanery conducted in 1997 and repeated in 2000 that showed attendances were more frequent not less.<sup>37</sup> In 2011, however, he suggests that over 30 years attendance frequency had dropped from 4 weeks in 5 to less than 3 in 5.<sup>38</sup> Barley reports that 'modern churchgoers are actually attending church less frequently than in the past, often for very legitimate reasons.'<sup>39</sup> Yet, from the British Social Attitudes Survey the proportion of self reporting Anglicans attending at least weekly was slightly higher between 2008 and 11 (8.6%) than between 1983 and 86 (7.3%).<sup>40</sup> Whether or not the frequencies are changing there is clear evidence that many people attend infrequently.

A detailed attendance survey across a deanery over an eight week period in 2001 found a fairly even spread of attendance frequencies from people attending every week through to only twice in the eight week period.

Attendances	8/8	7/8	6/8	5/8	4/8	3/8	2/8
Percentage	11%	15%	13.5%	14%	14.5%	15%	17%

Table 1: Frequency patterns of returning survey attenders in Wirral North Deanery<sup>41</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Peter Brierley, *Pulling Out of the Nosedive: A Contemporary Picture of Churchgoing: What the 2005 English Church Census Reveals* (London: Christian Research, 2006).

<sup>35</sup> *SaTM* 19.

<sup>36</sup> This is almost certainly the 1997 Almondbury Deanery count referred to in *SaTM*, 19.

<sup>37</sup> Bob Jackson, *Hope for the Church: Contemporary Strategies of Growth* (London: Church House Publishing, 2002), 7.

<sup>38</sup> Bob Jackson, *What is Church and How do you Measure it?* – Paper delivered to Midi Churches Conference in the Diocese of Lichfield as a plenary address 2012, copy provided by George Fisher Diocese of Lichfield, 3.

<sup>39</sup> Barley, Lynda, *Churchgoing today* (London: Church House Publishing, 2006), 9.

<sup>40</sup> Voas and Watt, *Numerical Change*, 12,13.

<sup>41</sup> Benson and Roberts, *Counting Sheep*, 5.

uSa only counts a small proportion of these people. Over the eight week period one church counted 610 named individuals (880 if baptism guests and visitors were included) yet the average was only 289.<sup>42</sup> *Churchgoing in the UK* concluded ‘Given the competing demands for time it is reasonable to equate monthly attendance with a commitment to regular church going.’<sup>43</sup> Whilst uSa counts the number of people who attend on average Sundays it seriously undercounts individual involvement over a period of time.

The calculation, or estimation, of uSa is also problematic. The form is often completed just after the unusual month of December when Sundays are rarely ‘normal’. There is no clear guidance about how uSa should be estimated. Is it the situation towards the end of the year or an average over the year? Some people make an educated guess others perform careful calculations.<sup>44</sup> These problems are exacerbated when the person counting changes and a new understanding or calculation is introduced.

### **October Count and Average Weekly Attendance (aWa)**

*SaTM* noted many of these shortcomings in uSa.<sup>45</sup> It argued that

counts of attendance should be as inclusive as possible, not only to enable and inform the decisions which are an integral part of local mission strategies, but most of all because these inclusive counts honour and respect the attendance which makes the person a member of the worshipping community.<sup>46</sup>

Note the use here of the term ‘Worshipping Community’ which came into formal use twelve years later. *SaTM* concluded that uSa was not an effective tool for mission<sup>47</sup> and proposed some new measures. These included four counts, during each week in October, of adults and children attending services and worship activities on Sundays and during the week, each individual to be counted only once each week.<sup>48</sup> From

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<sup>42</sup> Benson and Roberts, *Counting Sheep*, 5.

<sup>43</sup> Jacinta Ashworth and Ian Farthing, *Churchgoing in the UK: A Research Report from Tearfund on Church Attendance in the UK* (Teddington: Tearfund, 2007), 6.

<sup>44</sup> This observation is based on many conversations with colleagues over the years about SfM.

<sup>45</sup> *SaTM*, 17-21.

<sup>46</sup> *SaTM*, 25.

<sup>47</sup> *SaTM*, 22.

<sup>48</sup> *SaTM*, 24.

these counts new statistics could be calculated including average Weekly attendance (aWa).<sup>49</sup> In 2000 this new data together with information about baptisms, weddings and funerals began to be collected on what were now called Statistics for Mission (SfM) forms. Apart from a minor refinement to explicitly and separately count Fresh Expressions of church the forms changed little over the next 11 years.

aWa and the October count have provided additional insights about church attendance but they too have their short comings. The General Synod debate at which *SaTM* was presented confirmed many of the problems with uSa and also identified a few shortcomings in the new proposals.<sup>50</sup> It was pointed out that ‘It is very easy for statistics collected by parishes to go wrong.’ An idiot’s guide was called for.<sup>51</sup> I cannot now find the reference but believe that the month of October was chosen to avoid holidays (as uSa did) and festivals yet it always includes half terms and may include Harvest Festivals. These and other factors can produce wide variations. Where I was vicar the aWa figure for 2002 was 258, compared with 82 the year before and 76 the year afterwards.

*SaTM* noted the problems of infrequent attendance<sup>52</sup> but aWa still fails to capture the size of the Worshipping Community. Just as uSa indicates average attendance on a normal Sunday aWa measures average attendance on Sundays and weekdays in October. It does not count how many different people attend over that month. The two people who attend on alternate Sundays and count as one under uSa would still be counted as one. Barley notes that uSa ‘consistently underestimates the number of worshippers in comparison with’ aWa.<sup>53</sup> She doesn’t note that aWa also consistently underestimates the number of worshippers associated with the life and mission of the church.

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<sup>49</sup> *SaTM*, 24, 25.

<sup>50</sup> General Synod, *July Group of Sessions 2000 Report of Proceedings vol 31 no. 2* (London: Church House Publishing, 2000).

<sup>51</sup> General Synod, *July 2000*, 389-391.

<sup>52</sup> *SaTM*, 18-20.

<sup>53</sup> Lynda Barley, *Churchgoing Today*, 10-13.

## **The Introduction of ‘Worshipping Community’.**

The publication of *SaTM* and the introduction of the new methods of counting coincided with, and almost certainly stimulated, a greater awareness of and attention to the importance of gathered attendance statistics both as a tool for seeing what was happening in the church and also, as the title stated, as a tool for mission.

Examples of this increasing use and awareness of these statistics include Brierley’s on going analyses of UK church statistics and trends,<sup>54</sup> *Hope for the Church*<sup>55</sup> which made use of Statistics gathered over a number of years to identify factors that hinder and encourage church growth, and *Counting Sheep*<sup>56</sup> looking at attendance patterns. The *Mission Shaped Church* report<sup>57</sup> helped highlight the changing nature of the church and society and developed work by Richter and Francis looking at people who have left the church<sup>58</sup> and introduced the terms ‘open de-churched’, ‘closed de-churched’ and ‘non-churched’.<sup>59</sup>

The central structures of the Church of England also appear to have been taking a more proactive role. *Church Going Today*<sup>60</sup> was written by Lynda Barley, the then head of Research and Statistics for the Church of England. It noted many of the issues already covered and included the missionary challenge to look beyond regular Sunday attendance.<sup>61</sup> Barley also wrote the introduction to *Churchgoing in the UK*<sup>62</sup> a significant representative poll of 7,000 adults commissioned by Tearfund.<sup>63</sup> This included analysis of frequency of church attendance and investigated the de-churched.<sup>64</sup> Between 2011 and 2013 the Church Commissioners funded the highly significant Church Growth Research Programme that led to the publication of *From*

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<sup>54</sup> See Bibliography for details of a number of Brierley’s reports.

<sup>55</sup> Bob Jackson, *Hope for the Church: Contemporary Strategies of Growth* (London: Church House Publishing, 2002).

<sup>56</sup> Benson and Roberts, *Counting Sheep*.

<sup>57</sup> Graham Cray, *Mission Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004).

<sup>58</sup> Philip Richter and Leslie J. Francis, *Gone But Not Forgotten: Church Leaving and Returning* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1988).

<sup>59</sup> Cray, *Mission Shaped Church*, 36,37.

<sup>60</sup> Barley, *Churchgoing Today*.

<sup>61</sup> Barley, *Churchgoing Today*, 37.

<sup>62</sup> Ashworth and Farthing, *Churchgoing in the UK*, 1,2.

<sup>63</sup> Ashworth and Farthing, *Churchgoing in the UK*, executive summary.

<sup>64</sup> Ashworth and Farthing, *Churchgoing in the UK*, 6.

*Anecdote to Evidence*<sup>65</sup> together with underlying research papers.<sup>66</sup> This has raised the profile of the statistical understanding of the church and its mission. It has also raised awareness of some of the inadequacies of the established counting methods.

Strands 1 and 2 report the variability of the various indicators available to them<sup>67</sup> and the unreliability of some of the data.<sup>68</sup> Strand 3a looked at an equivalent, but much smaller, data set for Cathedrals. They also found inconsistencies in their data and comment on the high levels of subjectivity in interpreting the questions asked by the Cathedrals' SfM forms. They do include the positive note that the Research and Statistics Department has been actively trying to improve the quality of the data collection process over recent years.<sup>69</sup> Strand 2 encountered problems with the variability of the SfM data they were analysing.<sup>70</sup> Strand 3c identified spikes and troughs in the data and particular problems when a parish return relates to more than one church.<sup>71</sup>

Diocesan missionaries were also interested in the statistics as a tool to measure their effectiveness and inform the life and mission of the church. In March 2011, a group of missionaries met with some of those who processed the data including the Head of the (Resource) Strategy & Development Unit.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Church of England, *From Anecdote to Evidence*.

<sup>66</sup> Copies of presentations given at the 'From Anecdote to Evidence' conference in January 2014 and the research papers are all listed in the bibliography.

<sup>67</sup> Voas and Watt, *Numerical Change*, 5.

<sup>68</sup> Voas and Watt, *Numerical Change*, 74.

<sup>69</sup> John Holmes, and Ben Kautzer, *Cathedrals, Greater Churches and the Growth of the Church*, The Church Growth Research Programme Report on Strand 3a (Church Growth Research Programme, 2013)

[http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Reports/Publication\\_edition\\_Strand\\_3a.pdf](http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Reports/Publication_edition_Strand_3a.pdf) (26 March 2014), 18, 19.

<sup>70</sup> Church Army's Research Unit, *An Analysis of Fresh Expressions of Church and Church Plants Begun in the Period 1992-2012*, The Church Growth Research Programme Report on Strand 3b (Church Growth Research Programme, 2013)

[http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Reports/churchgrowthresearch\\_fresh\\_expressions.pdf](http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Reports/churchgrowthresearch_fresh_expressions.pdf) (26 March 2014), 33,34.

<sup>71</sup> David Goodhew with Ben Kautzer and Joe Moffatt, *Amalgamations, Team Ministries and the Growth of the Church*, The Church Growth Research Programme Report on Strand 3c (Church Growth Research Programme, 2013)

<http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Reports/AmalgamationsandTeamsReportFINAL130214.pdf> (26 March 2014), 11.

<sup>72</sup> From notes of the meeting.

A common view was that the existing counts did not provide a true measure of church membership or participation nor did they make it easy to measure the effectiveness of the churches' mission including church growth initiatives. Barry Hill (Leicester Diocese) presented additional questions that he had added to Leicester's 2009 *SfM* form. These asked for the numbers of regular worshippers who had joined or left the Worshipping Community.<sup>73</sup> The inspiration for this came from a personal desire to see evidence for the effectiveness of mission and other missioners who had said that statistics were gold dust for understanding and assessing the life of the Diocese.<sup>74</sup> A report summarizing Leicester's 2009 Statistics also highlights the introduction of a more proactive process for gathering the data.<sup>75</sup>

The Dioceses of Bath and Wells and Lichfield picked up the Joiner and Leaver ideas, and developed it by also asking for the total number in the WC (Lichfield called them participants.)<sup>76</sup> Lichfield's pilot was supported by a paper, *What is Church*,<sup>77</sup> that was presented by Bob Jackson to a conference of midi-churches in 2012. In the paper he says if the growth of the church is to be measured then new ways of counting are needed both because of changing frequency of attendance and also because recent developments such as Cell Church and various Fresh Expressions of church often fall outside the usual counts.<sup>78</sup> Mark Ireland, a member of the Archbishop's council, was at the conference and within a few days Jackson's paper was being circulated at Church House Westminster. Not long afterwards the 2012 *SfM* Form<sup>79</sup> introduced the collection of Worshipping Community data across the Church of England.<sup>80</sup>

A downloadable Information Sheet explained that the Worshipping Community questions were included because of the failures of existing measures to accurately

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<sup>73</sup> Diocese of Leicester, 'Our Church is Growing': A Summary of Statistics for Mission returns from 2009. <http://sbg.dioceseofleicester.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Report-on-Statistics-for-Mission2.pdf> (23 July 2014), 5.

<sup>74</sup> Personal email from Barry Hill 1 August 2014. See also Diocese of Leicester, 'Our Church is Growing': A Summary of Statistics for Mission returns from 2009. <http://sbg.dioceseofleicester.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Report-on-Statistics-for-Mission2.pdf> (23 July 2014), 2.

<sup>75</sup> Diocese of Leicester, 'Our Church is Growing', 2, 3.

<sup>76</sup> Jackson, *What is Church?* 6, 7.

<sup>77</sup> Jackson, *What is Church?*

<sup>78</sup> Jackson, *What is Church?* 1, 3.

<sup>79</sup> Church of England, *2012 Statistics for Mission Form* - See Appendix 2.

<sup>80</sup> This story was related by both Bob Jackson and George Fisher in separate conversations.



‘reflect the shape and size of the church.’ It defined Worshipping Community as including:

anyone within your parish who attends any of your churches, including fresh expressions, regularly, for example at least once a month, or would do so if not prevented by illness, infirmity or temporary absence. This includes all ages but it is useful to count separately from adults (18+) those under 11 (primary) and those 11-18 (secondary). It includes activities such as fellowship groups and other activities which have a distinct act of worship or prayer. It also includes activities not on church premises (e.g. school or community centre).

This is followed by further examples of what to include and exclude.<sup>81</sup>

The WC count is subdivided by age groups. Joiners and Leavers are subdivided as Under 18 and 18plus. Joiners were further subdivided into those who had joined ‘For the 1<sup>st</sup> time’, ‘Moved into the Area’ and ‘Returned to Church’. Leavers were categorised as leaving because of ‘Death/ill’, having ‘Moved away’ or ‘Left Church.’<sup>82</sup> In response to feedback the 2013 form added a new category, those who had moved from or to a local church. It also suggested that a total figure would be acceptable if ages or reasons were not known.<sup>83</sup> Advice that was present in the information sheet but not on the 2012 form. The information sheet included suggestions about how to conduct the count including suggestions about using existing lists or creating new ones starting from Electoral Roll or prayer diaries.<sup>84</sup>

The new ‘Worshipping Community’ questions represent a significant change of emphasis. Whilst ER is made up of a list of names it is one to which people subscribe and a major revision only takes place every six years. uSa and the October count both primarily involve head counts, though they do have the complexity of trying to count individuals only once each week. The WC statistics require a greater awareness of individual worshippers. It asks for information about people’s age group, and awareness of when, and why, people join and leave the worshipping community. This requires both a somewhat subjective decision about when to

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<sup>81</sup> Church of England, *Statistics for Mission Information Sheet: Worshipping Community* <http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1529895/worshippingcommunityinfo.pdf> (30 July 2014) see Appendix 5.

<sup>82</sup> *2012 Statistics for Mission Form*.

<sup>83</sup> Church of England, *2013 Statistics for Mission Form* – See Appendix 4.

<sup>84</sup> *SfM Information Sheet: Worshipping Community*.

include or exclude them and also knowledge of who was included in the previous count. It is a significantly more complex task for the people who are asked to complete the returns something confirmed in the questionnaire. Those counted will include some, but not all, of those counted by ER, uSa and aWa. It should count those who are infrequent attenders and so it can be expected that it will be higher than uSa and aWa. The Joiners and Leavers statistics provide a more dynamic view of the life of the church that will enable the identification of those churches that are attracting and keeping worshippers, those that have a high level of churn and those where numbers are relatively stable.

The hope expressed by the gathering of missionaries in Leicester, in Jackson's paper and in the Worshipping Community information sheet is that this measure will provide a tool that helps to measure the size and shape of the church and the effectiveness of growth initiatives. The investigations of Chapters four and five will look at the data and the process of collecting the data to see if this has been achieved.

## **Chapter 3 – Theological Reflections on Worshipping Community, Membership and Counting**

The introduction of the Worshipping Community questions presents a particular way of considering what it means to be a part of the church. Statistical returns also prompt questions about should be counted, so this is also considered. Some of these issues have been highlighted from a practical point of view in chapter 2. This chapter reflects theologically on the description of church as worshipping community and ideas of membership and belonging in the church. It also considers the acts of counting and suggests that knowing the community is an important pastoral and missional task.

### **Church as Community**

There is a long tradition of understanding church as community. In his study of New Testament ecclesiology Giles includes two insightful excursuses that explore the translation of *Ekklesia* in the Old and New Testaments. This includes two Hebrew words *qahal* and *edah* that continue to be problematic and divide scholars. He concludes by suggesting that the best modern English word to use is ‘community’ which depending on context can allude to ‘the whole Christian community’, ‘the Christian community in a particular location’ or ‘a community of Christian people who meet together.’<sup>85</sup> *Edah* is used to describe the people, ‘the whole community of Israel’, who were counted in the Census of Numbers 1.<sup>86</sup> Budd suggests that the phrase is common in the Priestly tradition and is used to depict the people of Israel as a worshipping community.<sup>87</sup>

The communal life of the church is depicted in Acts in the descriptions of the early church in Jerusalem<sup>88</sup> with conversion and communal life closely linked.<sup>89</sup> For Rowe, the story of the church in Acts is about creating counter cultural life-giving

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<sup>85</sup> Kevin Giles, *What on Earth is the Church?: An Exploration in New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1995), 243.

<sup>86</sup> Num. 1.2.

<sup>87</sup> Philip J. Budd, *Numbers*, Word Biblical Commentary 5 (Dallas, TX: Word Books 1983) (Electronic version), in comment on Num. 1.2.

<sup>88</sup> Acts 2.42, 44-47, and 4.32-37,

<sup>89</sup> Giles, *What on Earth is the Church?*, 77.

communities.<sup>90</sup> These communities are called to keep alive the distinction between church and world as a community that lives ‘under the lordship of the Lord of all.’<sup>91</sup> Paul’s image of the church as the body of Christ is another demonstration of community in the emphasis on mutual dependence and interconnectedness.<sup>92</sup>

The communities of the Early Church had very strict requirements for those who wanted to be involved. Hippolytus provides instructions for checking on ‘those who come to hear the word for the first time’ including questions about the state of their life and a list of professions from which people must desist or be rejected including pimps, makers of idols, actors and even teachers of children!<sup>93</sup> This strictness didn’t prevent problems with people absenting themselves from worship. The Didascalia Apostolorum includes instruction about the importance of regular attendance at worship and not allowing things to distract from it ‘Be constant, therefore, in assembling with those faithful who are being saved, in your mother, the church.’<sup>94</sup> Membership, belief and attendance are all closely bound together. Though there wasn’t necessarily uniformity between churches Davidson notes that ‘Historians do not agree on how to define “Christians”, or their “communities” ... in the early centuries’ and commenting on the diversity of early churches says that there would have been those who saw themselves as Christian but ‘might have regarded [their] neighbour otherwise.’<sup>95</sup> By the time of Augustine the church was becoming inculturated, the empire was officially Christian and the fuzzy edges of belonging and believing that the church wrestles with today were present. This led to the development of the idea of visible and invisible church with both sinners and saints in the visible church, but only the elect in the invisible.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Christopher Kavin Rowe, *World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) Kindle Edition, 6.

<sup>91</sup> Christopher Kavin Rowe, ‘The Ecclesiology of Acts’, *Interpretation*, 66 (2012), 259-269 <http://int.sagepub.com/content/66/3/259> Version of Record - Jun 12,2102 DOI: 10.117/0020964312443192, 269.

<sup>92</sup> James D. G. Dunn, ‘Is There Evidence for Fresh Expressions of Church in the New Testament?’ in Steven Croft (ed.), *Mission Shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today’s Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2008), 54-65, 63.

<sup>93</sup> Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition (c. 215)* in *aRiE*, 29-30.

<sup>94</sup> *The Didascalia Apostolorum (c. 200-250)* in *aRiE*, 31-33 quote from p 33.

<sup>95</sup> Ivor J. Davidson, *Church Growth in the Early Church*, (Pre-publication paper for ‘Theology of Church Growth’, provided by D. Goodhew March 2014).

<sup>96</sup> *aRiE*, 43.

In the twentieth century this idea has been developed both by Protestant Theologians, such as Tillich, and Roman Catholics, such as Kung, as they reflected on the tension between the churches' sociological and theological realities.<sup>97</sup> For Newbigin, community is a powerful description of the church. The Church of Christ is 'true God given community.'<sup>98</sup> The 'divine-human fellowship is a real visible community' in the world, with a secret invisible reality beyond history<sup>99</sup> made of people gathered by God<sup>100</sup> 'most clearly seen in the life of worship, witness, mutual love and service, and prayer, of a Christian congregation.'<sup>101</sup> Dulles revisited his influential exploration of ecclesiology, *Models of the Church*, in 1986 to add a harmonizing 6<sup>th</sup> model, church as community of disciples, to his original 5.<sup>102</sup> One of the challenges that any attendance or membership measure faces is how does it assess the church as community of disciples? Jackson ended his paper with the challenge of going beyond growing widening but possibly shallow circle of worshippers and growing disciples.<sup>103</sup> The Diocese of Leicester's reports have also highlighted this issue.<sup>104</sup>

Moltmann (or perhaps his translator) uses congregation, rather than community, to describe the church and looks for a generous definition of its edges.

'Congregation , then, is no longer the sum of all those who are registered as members on the church rolls. Congregation is rather a new kind of living together for human beings'<sup>105</sup>

In the foreword to *Mission Shaped Church* Rowan Williams suggests that ' "church" is what happens when people encounter the risen Jesus and commit themselves to deepening that encounter in their encounter with each other.' This definition leaves

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<sup>97</sup> Giles, *What on Earth is the Church?* 190-193.

<sup>98</sup> J. E. Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of the Church* (London: SCM Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1963). Pdf download <http://newbigin.net/assets/pdf/53hg.pdf> (18 August 2014), 13.

<sup>99</sup> Newbigin, *The Household of God*, 57.

<sup>100</sup> Newbigin, *The Household of God*, 28.

<sup>101</sup> Newbigin, *The Household of God*, 106.

<sup>102</sup> Avery Cardinal Dulles, *Models of the church: Expanded Edition* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2002), 198.

<sup>103</sup> Jackson, *What is Church*, 8.

<sup>104</sup> Diocese of Leicester, *Growing Together: 2013*, 7.

<sup>105</sup> Jurgen Moltmann, *The Open Church: Invitation to a Messianic Lifestyle*, trans. M. Douglas Meeks (London; SPCK, 1978), 33.

room for diversity of expression.<sup>106</sup> ‘Encounter with Jesus’ is one description of worship and ‘encounter with each other’ is a definition of community. Research on healthy and growing churches also identifies community as an important factor. A healthy church operates as a community.<sup>107</sup> Fresh Expressions that are effective in connecting with young adults with no church experience embody transformational and sacramental community.<sup>108</sup>

‘Church as community’ appears not to have been a key element in Strands 1 and 2 of the Church Growth Research programme but it is briefly mentioned in the context of their key finding that retaining youth and children is critical.<sup>109</sup> ‘The best programmes are likely to involve new ways of building community with and among the young.’<sup>110</sup> Whilst Church as community is not specifically mentioned in *From Anecdote to Evidence* one factor associated with growing churches is ‘good welcoming and follow up’ which includes ‘belonging and caring’, characteristics of a community.<sup>111</sup>

Worshipping Community is not a definition of church, but it does provide a window that is consistent with fuller understandings of church through which the church can be observed.

### **Membership and Belonging**

The collection of data used to measure Church attendance and membership provokes questions about what are we counting. What do we mean by ‘membership’ of the church? Some argue for quite tight definitions,<sup>112</sup> whilst others have a generous view and recognise that many consider themselves to belong even though they do not

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<sup>106</sup> Cray, *Mission Shaped Church*, vii.

<sup>107</sup> Warren, Robert, *The Healthy Churches’ Handbook: A Process for Revitalizing your Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004), 36-40.

<sup>108</sup> Keith, Beth, *Authentic Faith: Fresh Expressions of Church Amongst Young Adults* (Fresh Expressions, 2013), 34.

<sup>109</sup> Voas and Watt, *Numerical Change*, 2.

<sup>110</sup> Voas and Watt, *Numerical Change*, 23.

<sup>111</sup> Church of England, *From Anecdote to Evidence*, 11.

<sup>112</sup> One respondent to the questionnaire said members of the Stewardship scheme should be counted. See Also Peter Brierley (ed.), *UK Church Statistics 2: 2010-2020* (Tonbridge: ADBC Publishers, 2014) 17.2, 1.

attend.<sup>113</sup> Theologians and sociologists have proposed various ways of categorising membership and belief, which would overlap in a Venn diagram.

When discussing the problematic gap between the numbers of those who declare themselves Christian in the national census and the much smaller number who regularly attend church Brierley subdivides Christians into regular and non-regular attenders. These are further subdivided: regulars could be active church members or not church members; non-regular attenders could be nominal church members or notional Christians. Billings, who calls for a broad and generous recognition of the boundaries of the church, proposes three overlapping categories for considering membership: belonging, believing and attending.<sup>114</sup> Some people will fall into all three categories others will only be in one.

Day offers four categories of Christian: ‘faithful’ Christians, whose faith is ‘integrated into their lives as an active, engaged, emotional and intellectual experience’; ‘ethnic’ nominalists, Christianity is their culture; ‘natal’ nominalists, were baptised as babies and raised as Christians; and ‘aspirational’ nominalists, who aspire to being good.<sup>115</sup>

Thomas explores two different ideas of membership, participant membership and associate membership.

To be a participant member is to take part in the structural, or institutional, life of the organization. It is to have signed up; it is to give time and energy, and usually money, to the support of the institution or organization that embodies the beliefs.<sup>116</sup>

Participant members will be fairly regular attenders at worship and possibly involved in house groups and perhaps on the PCC. He suggests that it is their participation that informs their faith and that they are the ones who appear in the membership statistics and who also bear the financial and practical load of maintaining the

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<sup>113</sup> Alan Billings, *Lost Church: Why We Must Find It Again* (London: SPCK, 2013), 128.

<sup>114</sup> Billings, *Lost Church*, xiv.

<sup>115</sup> Abby Day, ‘Nominal Christian Adherence: Ethnic, Natal, Aspirational’, *Implicit Religion*, 15.4 (2012), 439-456. DOI: [10.1558/imre.v15i4.439](https://doi.org/10.1558/imre.v15i4.439), 449, 450.

<sup>116</sup> Richard Thomas, *Counting People In: Changing the Way We Think About Membership and the Church*, (London: SPCK, 2003), 7.

church.<sup>117</sup> They would be in all three of Billing's categories and be classified by Day as faithful Christians.

Associate members are those who may never come to worship but would still say they were Christian and even belong to a particular denomination. Associates still hold to Christian beliefs but do not have the additional burdens of maintaining the institution of the church.<sup>118</sup> In Billing's model they would believe but not belong and rarely if ever attend.

The definitions of Brierley, Billings, Thomas and Day provide different perspectives on the extent of engagement in the life of the church. Associate members may well be faithful Christians who have become disengaged from the church, and who may or may not be in transition to becoming nominal Christians. There can be transition from participant to associate membership and vice-versa.<sup>119</sup>

Some who attend church services will fall into the nominalist and or associate categories. Those who choose the anonymity of a Cathedral or large parish church may well be associate members.<sup>120</sup> Similarly, are those who attend fairly regularly but only put a few pence in the offering participants or associates? For Thomas both may be associate members but others might say that through their regular involvement in worship they are participant members.

The picture is complicated further by those who do not believe but do attend. In a radio phone in, one caller said they were atheist but regularly attended Choral Evensong at Sheffield Cathedral for the experience and the language. Another atheist said they went to church because it was life affirming and the non judgemental teachings of Jesus were sound and relevant.<sup>121</sup> Rogaly interviewed

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<sup>117</sup> Thomas, *Counting People In*, 14.

<sup>118</sup> Thomas, *Counting People In*, 7.

<sup>119</sup> Thomas, *Counting People In*, 143-144.

<sup>120</sup> Thomas entitles one chapter, 'Cathedrals as Centres of Association' *Counting People In*, 98-105.

<sup>121</sup> From contemporaneous notes made by me from Radio 4 *You and Yours* on May 7th 2013.



someone who does not believe in God but attends a church where they find a focus of community and support.<sup>122</sup>

Most church counts primarily identify participant, rather than associate members and faithful rather than nominal Christians. uSa is unlikely to include associate members, unless they regularly attend in which case they are more probably participants. The October count will pick up the occasional visit from associates and nominalists especially if a service that attracts visitors is included. When a church counts its members it is mainly counting participant members, though Electoral Rolls may include associate and nominalist members<sup>123</sup> who are supporting the church but are not active worshippers. The majority of those who are recorded in the ‘Worshipping Community’ will be faithful Christians, and participant members rather than nominalists or associate members though it would include the atheist who regularly attends evensong.

Cameron seeks to look to the future (2050) and tries to predict ‘what might happen to “membership of” and “attendance at” the local church as the key measures of church affiliation.’<sup>124</sup> She suggests that a small proportion of those affiliated to the church will do so as members (Thomas’ participants), others who still affiliate to the church may attend worship but will not engage in the work of the church (associates). Amongst her predictions she suggests that ‘The number of people affiliated to the Church will continue to decline but denominations will start to encourage and count other forms of affiliation.’<sup>125</sup> Worshipping Community has perhaps brought that closer though it is primarily widening the participant count.

### **Joining and Leaving: Counting, Naming and Knowing.**

Even a casual reader of the Bible will notice that numbers and names appear frequently. From the first chapters of Genesis, where first all the creatures, possible

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<sup>122</sup> Abby Day & Ben Rogaly ‘Sacred Communities: Contestations and Connections’, *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 29:1, (2014), 75-88. DOI: [10.1080/13537903.2014.864806](https://doi.org/10.1080/13537903.2014.864806), 78.

<sup>123</sup> Thomas, *Counting People In*, 15.

<sup>124</sup> Helen Cameron, ‘The Decline of the Church in England as a Local Membership Organization: Predicting the Nature of Civil Society in 2050’, in Davie, Grace, Linda Woodhead and Paul Heelas (eds), *Predicting Religion: Christian, Secular and Alternative Futures* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 109-119, 112.

<sup>125</sup> Cameron, ‘The Decline of the Church in England’, 118.

companions for the man (Adam), and then Eve are named<sup>126</sup> to the book of Revelation where the numbers of people marked with the seal are recorded and an uncountable throng was before the Throne.<sup>127</sup> Names and numbers are important in helping to tell the story, the mission, of God's people. Names help to draw people in to the story but they also demonstrate a level of relationship and of knowing the people involved. I suggest that names, numbers and knowing still have an important place in the continuing, unfolding of that story in the mission of the church today.

The book of Numbers provides many lists of names and numbers and also includes the motivation for counting, a command from God. 'The Lord spoke to Moses in the Tent of meeting... He said 'Make a census of the whole community ... recording the name of every male person aged twenty years and upwards fit for military service.'<sup>128</sup> This census was a taking stock to prepare for settlement in the Promised Land and possibly for war<sup>129</sup> other lists associated with battle are found elsewhere.<sup>130</sup> The genealogies at the beginning of 1 Chronicles, 'All Israel were registered and recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.'<sup>131</sup>, demonstrate legitimacy, inheritance and place in the story and journey of the people of God.<sup>132</sup> Later, the rediscovery of genealogies<sup>133</sup> prompts Nehemiah to take a census to help organise where different groups of people would live on return from exile.<sup>134</sup>

Census taking is also associated with taxation. In Exodus 30 each person counted also made a payment 'for the service of the tent of meeting.'<sup>135</sup> When Solomon built the temple he imposed a levy on the whole of Israel<sup>136</sup> this would have required knowing who they were. Budd suggests that there is no reference to a census because of the tragic end to David's census at the end of 2 Samuel. David's census

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<sup>126</sup> Gen. 1.20 and 2.20.

<sup>127</sup> Rev. 7.4-9.

<sup>128</sup> Num. 1.1-3 (REB).

<sup>129</sup> Budd, *Numbers*, Explanation, Numbers 1.

<sup>130</sup> For example 1 Chron 12.23-37, 2 Chron. 25.5.

<sup>131</sup> 1 Chron. 9.1.

<sup>132</sup> Roddy Braun, *1 Chronicles*, Word Biblical Commentary 14 (Dallas, TX: Word Books 1984) (Electronic version), Genealogical Prologue – The Purpose of Genealogies.

<sup>133</sup> Neh. 7.5.

<sup>134</sup> H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, Word Biblical Commentary 16 (Dallas, TX: Word Books 1984) (Electronic version) Comment, Nehemia 7.5.

<sup>135</sup> Exod. 30.13-17.

<sup>136</sup> 1 Kgs. 5.13.

is associated with subsequent punishment.<sup>137</sup> Some suggest this is because David was putting strength and confidence in numbers not God.<sup>138</sup> Croft, arguing for growing the church, uses it to remind Sheffield Diocese not to become too focussed on numbers and numerical growth.<sup>139</sup>

Together these examples demonstrate an important strategic role for census as a taking stock and in relation to inheritance and place in the story of God's people. At the same time the tragic end to David's census is a reminder that ultimately strategic decisions should focus on God.

In the New Testament numbers are frequently used in the telling of the story. The gospel uses numbers to record stages of Jesus's popularity, the various groups from the twelve<sup>140</sup> and seventy-two<sup>141</sup> to the crowds of four, five and many thousands<sup>142</sup> and then down to the few who are left at the crucifixion and during the resurrection appearances. The book of Acts has a strong theology of church growth and of measuring that growth<sup>143</sup> which is reflected in a structure built around Jesus' commission to be 'bear witness for me in Jerusalem, and throughout all Judea and Samaria, and even in the farthest corners of the earth.'<sup>144</sup> The first number that is used records the size of the original group (120)<sup>145</sup> there is another reference to absolute size when 'the number of man had grown to about 5,000'<sup>146</sup> subsequent numbers and references to growth refer not to the size of the group but to the numbers who were added<sup>147</sup>.

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<sup>137</sup> 2 Sam. 24., and 1 Chron. 21.

<sup>138</sup> A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, Word Biblical Commentary 11 (Dallas, TX: Word Books 1988) (Electronic version) Comment on Chapter 24.

<sup>139</sup> Steven Croft, *Growing the Body of Christ – A Strategy for Growth for the Diocese of Sheffield, 2011-2021*,

[http://www.sheffield.anglican.org/attachments/3604\\_Growing%20the%20Body%20of%20Christ%20-%20Post%20Synod.doc](http://www.sheffield.anglican.org/attachments/3604_Growing%20the%20Body%20of%20Christ%20-%20Post%20Synod.doc) (19 August 2014), 8.

<sup>140</sup> Lk. 9.1.

<sup>141</sup> Lk. 10.1.

<sup>142</sup> Mk 15.38, Lk 9.14, 12.1.

<sup>143</sup> Mark Bonnington, *The Kingdom of God and Church Growth in the New Testament* (Pre-publication Paper for 'Theology of Church Growth', provided by D. Goodhew March 2014), 7.

<sup>144</sup> Acts 1.8.

<sup>145</sup> Acts 1.15.

<sup>146</sup> Acts 4.4.

<sup>147</sup> Acts 2.41, 2.47, and 5.14 cf Jackson, *What is Church*, 7.

## Knowing the Community.

Reflecting on the first stage of research led to a realisation that one of the key differences about the Worshipping Community Statistic is that it requires a deeper knowledge of that community than ER, uSa or the October Count. This realisation prompted a reflection on knowing the community. I subsequently discovered that Leicester Diocese's response to the variations they had observed between the 2012 and the 2013 WC data had been to produce *Knowing Your Worshipping Community*.<sup>148</sup> Their paper is a set of practical guidelines rather than a theological treatise but I was encouraged to discover a similar train of thought.

The metaphor of a shepherd as leader of the church is intrinsic to the very use of the words pastor and pastoral when describing leaders and their ministry since they are derived from the Latin for shepherd.<sup>149</sup> This in turn comes from Jesus' self reference as the good shepherd<sup>150</sup> and also Paul's parting injunction to the elders of the Ephesian church gathered at Miletus 'Keep guard over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has given you charge, as shepherds of the church of the Lord which he obtained with his own blood.'<sup>151</sup> To which can be added the parable of the lost sheep<sup>152</sup> along with much Old Testament imagery including the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. When describing himself as the good shepherd Jesus went on to say 'I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father'<sup>153</sup> here he was developing the imagery from a few verses earlier where the shepherd comes to the gatekeeper and calls his sheep by name.<sup>154</sup> There are also perhaps hints of the Psalmist's picture of God who knows his people intimately.<sup>155</sup> This knowledge of his people and his church is also shown in the book of Revelation where each of the seven letters to the churches begins with the words 'I know'.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Diocese of Leicester, *Knowing Your Worshipping Community* (Leicester: Diocese of Leicester, 2013) <http://www.leicester.anglican.org/site-includes/uploads/wygwam/Worshipping%20community.pdf> (26 March 2014)

<sup>149</sup> Della Thompson (ed.), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. 1995), 999.

<sup>150</sup> Jn 10.14.

<sup>151</sup> Acts 20.28.

<sup>152</sup> Mt. 18.12-14.

<sup>153</sup> Jn 10.14, 15.

<sup>154</sup> Jn 10.3.

<sup>155</sup> Psa 139.

<sup>156</sup> Rev. 2.2, 9, 13, 19, 3.1,15.

The imagery of knowing and being known that Jesus describes reflects the nature of God – ‘as the Father knows me, and I know the Father’ an understanding that was developed by the early church, with the inclusion of the Holy Spirit, into the Trinitarian understanding of God. Over time this led to the idea of Perichoresis, the dance of the Trinity as a ‘community of being’.<sup>157</sup> One of the tasks of the church is to reflect the communal nature of the Trinity in its own community that is called both to proclaim and embody the gospel.<sup>158</sup>

The ideas of community and of knowing (and being known) are intrinsic to the nature of God and so also to the pastoral, ministerial and missionary task that the community of the church is invited into. Part of the pastoral (ministerial) task is to know the flock, in order to care for them and to know when one is missing. ‘Is it not the care of the shepherd, when any sheep have left the flock... to bring them back to the fold of his master when he has found them.’<sup>159</sup>

Jackson uses some simple equations to help focus the missionary task of growing the Church on knowing the flock, and in particular of being just as aware of Leavers as Joiners and thus increasing retention rate.<sup>160</sup> A church will grow if there are more Joiners than Leavers. Paying attention to those who are making their way towards the backdoor of the church, being aware of the Leavers, is as important as working for more Joiners.

For a small church/flock, up to say 100, it is possible, though not ideal, for one person to know, keep track of and care for the whole flock. As the flock gets larger in order to maintain levels of knowing, and being known,<sup>161</sup> it becomes important to introduce additional leaders with this pastoral responsibility in a similar manner to

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<sup>157</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought* (Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 64,65.

<sup>158</sup> Giles, *What on Earth is the Church?* 229.

<sup>159</sup> Augustine of Hippo, ‘Concerning the Correction of Donatists’ in *ARiE*, 45.

<sup>160</sup> Jackson, Bob and George Fisher, *Everybody Welcome: the Course Where Everybody Helps the Church to Grow Leaders Manual*, (London: Church House Publishing, 2009), 138-143.

<sup>161</sup> Steven Croft, *Ministry in Three Dimensions: Ordination and Leadership in the Local Church* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2008), 212-217.

Moses' appointing of judges in the wilderness.<sup>162</sup> Thus when a minister says I cannot know everyone, which is a true and fair comment, a question back might be 'but who does know the ones who aren't known by you?'

In situations where a minister is responsible for multiple congregations, and may not be with each congregation each week, they may know the people, but won't always be aware of them, or their attendance patterns. Here the introduction of local leaders, sometimes called focal ministers, with pastoral responsibility helps ensure all are known.<sup>163</sup> Clergy and focal ministers are most likely to know, and be aware of the participant members. A challenge for those who are seeking to know their flock, and for those collecting the WC statistics, is to be aware of, and know the associate members, the ones who perhaps choose to belong on the edge. When people attend infrequently it becomes more difficult to be aware of when that infrequency increases and eventually attendance stops. This is particularly the case when the shepherd themselves are infrequent attenders.

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<sup>162</sup> Exod. 18.

<sup>163</sup> Goodhew, Amalgamations, 136.

## **Chapter 4 – Stage 1: Analysis and Review of the Worshipping Community Data.**

In this chapter background information about the collection of the data is followed by a description of the first stage of the research, which entailed a check and analysis of the 2012 and 2013 data from Sheffield Diocese and a cross check using similar data from Leicester. The results of these checks prompted the qualitative research cycle described in chapter 5.

### **Background information – Collection of the data.**

The major conclusion of this chapter is that there is a high level of inconsistency in the WC data returned on the SfM forms. So this chapter begins with a brief description of the process used to request the data in Sheffield with some additional notes about Leicester's process.

Since 2000 Statistics for Mission data has been collected centrally by Diocesan Offices. Most use a standard form produced by the National Research and Statistics team. 2012 the year WC was added also saw the introduction of an on-line system that could be used to submit SfM data directly into the databases used for analysis. For the first time in 2012 accompanying notes included a section stating why the data was collected and listing some of the ways the data was used.<sup>164</sup>

In September 2012 the Sheffield's statistics request was sent to parishes in a letter from the Diocesan Secretary that included a request for the data from the Bishop.<sup>165</sup> Copies of the 2012 SfM form<sup>166</sup> and the nationally produced documents 'Why we are asking for your help'<sup>167</sup> and the 'Worshipping Community information' download<sup>168</sup> were also sent. In September 2013 the SfM form was sent to parishes with a shorter accompanying letter that did not include comments from the Bishop,<sup>169</sup> supporting

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<sup>164</sup> Appendix 3.

<sup>165</sup> See Appendix 6.

<sup>166</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>167</sup> See Appendix 3.

<sup>168</sup> See Appendix 4.

<sup>169</sup> See Appendix 7.

information sheets were not included. Parishes were given the option of entering their data onto the online system or, as in previous years, completing a paper return and sending it to the Diocesan Office where the Statistics for Mission data was then entered onto the online system. This was done as a transcription exercise and no checks of the data were performed.

Since 2009 Leicester has made use of bespoke forms that have included explanations of the questions being asked. They were returned to the Diocesan Office where the data was both entered and checked.<sup>170</sup> In 2013 a more rigorous process for checking was introduced that included making contact by telephone with the sender if the data was ambiguous or unusual.

*SaTM* highlighted the importance of the data providers owning the data and the need to help people interpret and use the data as a tool for mission.<sup>171</sup> Despite their recommendations, many of the problems that they identified continued to be true in Sheffield throughout the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. There was no encouragement to parishes to own, interpret or use SfM as a tool for mission. The year book, which had included some statistics for each parish, stopped including them in in 2003 (the 2002 book had included some figures from the 2000 SfM forms). By way of contrast, since 2009 the Leicester has produced a detailed report and their Diocesan data is available on-line. The detailed report only provides aggregated Diocesan information. Some Dioceses such as London and Liverpool provide each parish with graphical representations, often called Dashboards, of their data over a period of years. A Dashboard with data up to 2011 was produced in Sheffield. In the spring of 2013 these were sent to each parish with a letter from the Bishop encouraging them to use them as a tool for reflecting on their mission. Unfortunately by the time the data reached the m it was over a year old and it did not include, or reference, the new Worshipping Community information.

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<sup>170</sup> Diocese of Leicester, *Growing Together: A Summary of Statistics for Mission Returns from 2013* (Leicester: Diocese of Leicester, 2014) <http://www.leicester.anglican.org/site-includes/uploads/wygwam/Statistics%20for%20Mission%20Summary%202013.pdf> (26 March 2014), 3.

<sup>171</sup> *SaTM*, Chapter 7, *Using the Information*, 33-35.



## **Initial analysis of 2012 and 2013 Statistics for Mission Returns**

Data for analysis from churches in Sheffield Diocese was downloaded from the national online system.<sup>172</sup>

### **Problems with the data**

The raw data includes noisy, or hard to analyse data:

- Not every parish, or church, submits a return each year.
- Where returns are submitted not every piece of information requested is provided.
- Missing data is not clearly indicated. If a data field is left blank this might be because no data has been entered that year, or it might be because the number that could be entered is zero.
- Responses from a parish may include some but not all services or churches. Those included may vary from year to year.<sup>173</sup>
- There will be transcription errors and misunderstanding of some questions.

These problems have been highlighted nationally.<sup>174</sup> The 2013 forms specifically requested information from individual churches and the explicit use of zero rather than blank to try to eliminate some of these difficulties.

National data analysis looks at Diocesan trends and so attempts to deal with problems in the data by providing estimates where data is missing.<sup>175</sup> This research is looking at data from specific churches and not for a Diocesan total or trend and so churches have been excluded where problems with the data have been identified. A significant part of the analysis task was taken up with recognising the various problems and cleaning the data returns.

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<sup>172</sup> 2012 data was downloaded on 20 September 2013. 2013 data was downloaded on 20 June 2014.

<sup>173</sup> This particular problem is noted for one of Sheffield's multi church benefices. In Goodhew, Kautzer and Moffatt, *Amalgamations*, 11,12.

<sup>174</sup> *Statistics for Mission 2012*, 11,12.

<sup>175</sup> *Statistics for Mission 2012*, Methodological Annex, 60-62.

## **Cleaning the 2012 and 2013 Worshipping Community Data**

Nil returns, aggregated returns and returns with gaps in the WC data for either or both of the two years were all excluded. This reduced a potential list of 204 churches to 144 with useable data from 2012, 166 with useable data from 2013 and 130 with useable data from both of the two years.<sup>176</sup>

### **Consistency Checks**

The forms request totals and subtotals, for WC and Joiner and Leaver data. Where people were unable, or didn't choose to provide the sub data they were encouraged to provide totals. Where both totals and subtotals were provided consistency checks are possible. Where totals and sub data were provided in the Sheffield data the numbers added up correctly, this was not the case for all Leicester churches.

### **Comparison Between Years**

If the worshipping data has been provided correctly and thoroughly for both 2012 and 2013 then the WC Total recorded for 2013 (WC13) should be equal to a calculated WC Total (WC13c) the recorded WC for 2012 (WC12) plus the number of Joiners in 2013 (J13) minus the number of Leavers in 2013 (L13).

$$WC13c = WC12 + J13 - L13.$$

To do this check each of the 4 sets of data needs to be present. This is true for 119 out of the 130 Churches.<sup>177</sup> When the recorded (WC13) and calculated (WC13c) values were compared the numbers were equal for only 11 (9.2%) of 119 churches. Of the 108 churches that were not consistent:-

- For 7 churches the difference was +/- 1 (5.9%).
- For 5 churches the difference was +/- 2 (4.2%).
- For 96 churches the difference was more than +/- 2 (80.7%).

The scale of the differences is illustrated by the totals across all 119 churches:-

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<sup>176</sup> See Appendix 8 for more detail.

<sup>177</sup> See Appendix 8 for more detail.

- The recorded WC Total (2012) was 10,409.
- The recorded WC Total (2013) was 9,716, a reduction of 693.
- The calculated 2013 WC Total was 10,756, an increase of 347.
- A total difference between recorded and calculated totals of 1,040 (11%).
- The average difference per church is +8.7.

The WC recorded total shows a decline whilst the calculated total shows growth.

Because such a low number of churches in the Sheffield Diocesan data set had passed the 2012 to 2013 consistency check I decided to do a similar check with another data set. I contacted the Research and Statistics team in London to see if they had done similar checks. They hadn't considered this check and so couldn't offer any comparative data but did suggest consulting the Diocese of Leicester.<sup>178</sup>

### **Cross Check against Leicester Diocese**

Leicester Diocese has been collecting Joiners and Leavers data since 2009 and churches there are more used to the concept than most other Dioceses although the collection of Worshipping Community totals was only introduced in Leicester in 2012. A spreadsheet of their data is published online along with a detailed analysis.<sup>179</sup> This offered an ideal dataset to compare the Sheffield results against though they had not included a year to year consistency check either.

Their spreadsheets made it possible to perform similar calculations to the ones done for Sheffield. As with the Sheffield data the Leicester data needed to be cross checked and cleaned to enable a simple calculation and comparison.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> email conversation with Bev Botting, Head of Research and Statistics, Archbishop's Council, March 2014.

<sup>179</sup> Diocese of Leicester Spreadsheet - 2013 Leicester stats for mission for publication all replies as of 10<sup>th</sup> Feb 2014.xls <http://www.leicester.anglican.org/site-includes/uploads/wygwam/2013%20Leicester%20stats%20for%20mission%20for%20publication%20-%20all%20replies%20as%20of%2010th%20Feb%202014.xls> (26 March 2014) also Diocese of Leicester, *Growing Together: 2013*.

<sup>180</sup> See Appendix 9 for more detail.

### **Comparison between Years – Leicester Data**

Having excluded nil returns and Sub total queries 179 church data remained for further analysis. I used these to calculate inter year comparisons for the all age data.

- 12 churches (6.7%) gave matching totals (Sheffield 9.2%).
- 15 churches (8.4%) were within +/- 1 (Sheffield 5.9%).
- 8 churches (4.5%) were within +/- 2 (Sheffield 4.2%).
- 144 churches (80.4%) were different by more than +/- 2 (Sheffield 80.7%).

Despite extra years of familiarity with Joiners and Leavers, a bespoke form and more support to parishes the data was no more consistent than Sheffield's.

I also repeated the Worshipping Community Totals checks. From the 179 churches

- The recorded WC Total (2012) was 15,353.
- The recorded WC Total (2013) was 14,791, a reduction of 562.
- The calculated WC Total (2013) was 16,103, an increase of 750.
- A total difference between recorded and calculated totals of 1,312 (9%).
- The average difference is +7.3 per church.

Just as with the Sheffield data the recorded total showed a reduction whilst the calculated total showed growth.

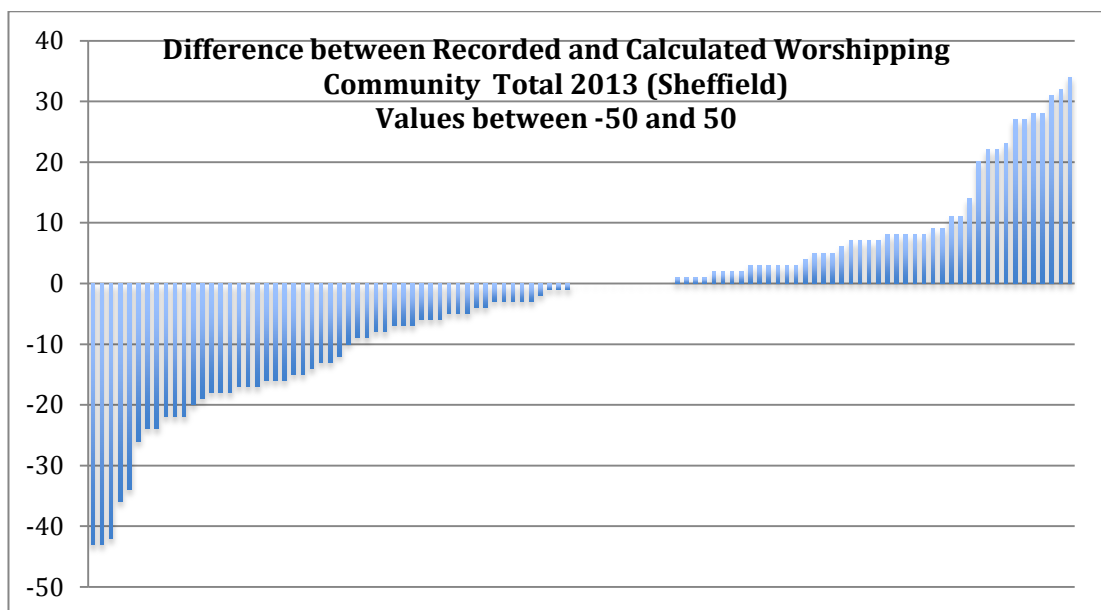
### **The inconsistencies Sheffield and Leicester**

A review of the underlying data highlights some inconsistent changes between the 2012 and 2013 entries. The two most extreme examples for the Diocese of Sheffield are a small country church and a large suburban church. The country church recorded a WC total of 449 in 2012 (I estimate that this is almost the population of the whole village) and only 30 in 2013, the recorded change (J – L) was -1. The uSa for this church was 19 in 2012 and 17 in 2013 and ER was 30 in each year. This suggests that they had misunderstood the WC question in 2012. In this case the change figure and the 2013 WC totals are probably correct. The response to my stage two questionnaire reveals that the parish had a new incumbent in 2013 who helped complete the 2013 return. The large, suburban church recorded a WC total of

175 in 2012 and 402 in 2013 but a recorded change of only 12. The uSa for this church was 174 in 2012 and 140 in 2013 ER was 277 (2012) and 211 (2013).

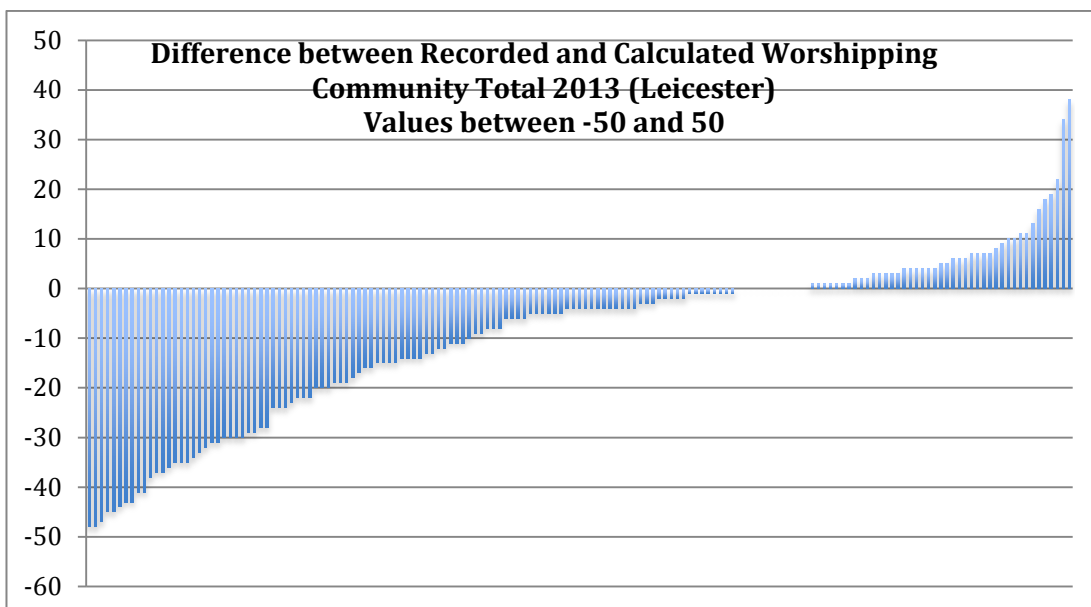
A review of the Leicester data extremes also highlighted variations in individual parish data between 2012 and 2013 that were similar to those in the Sheffield data. St. Mary, Melton Mowbray, recorded a WC total of 253 in 2012 and 1,057 in 2013 but a net change of only 8. The uSa was 171 and ER 173 in 2013. St. Andrew, Kegworth, recorded a WC total of 524 in 2012 and 130 in 2013 but a net change of 0 the uSa was 42 and ER 85. When reviewing the Melton Mowbray figures with Barry Hill he suggested that the 2013 figure for Melton Mowbray is more likely to be realistic than might be imagined because of the nature of the community and some of the missional, non Sunday, worship initiatives the church is taking. The variation will have been checked through a conversation between his assistant and the parish and the change since 2012 probably reflects a clearer understanding of WC.<sup>181</sup> Considering the variation between uSa and eight week attendance mentioned in Chapter two<sup>182</sup> the variation noted here becomes more plausible, if extraordinary.

The following charts and table demonstrate the range of the variation between recorded and calculated WC totals for both Dioceses:



<sup>181</sup> Telephone conversation with Barry Hill 9/9/14.

<sup>182</sup> Benson and Roberts, *Counting Sheep*, 5.



Recorded WC - Calculated	Sheffield		Leicester	
	No of Churches	Percentage	No of Churches	Percentage
<-50	9	8%	12	7%
<-40	3	3%	10	6%
<-30	2	2%	12	7%
<-20	6	5%	15	8%
<-10	17	14%	25	14%
<-5	11	9%	10	6%
<0	14	12%	34	19%
=0	11	9%	12	7%
<5	15	13%	21	12%
<10	15	13%	11	6%
<20	3	3%	8	4%
<30	8	7%	1	1%
<40	3	3%	2	1%
<50	0	0%	0	0%
>50	2	2%	6	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>		<b>179</b>	

**Table: Showing range of variation between Recorded and Calculated WC**

A very generous variation would be +/- 10. 30% of Sheffield's returns and 36% of Leicester's are outside this range.

These analyses highlight two related and key issues of inconsistencies within the Worshipping Community totals from year to year and also between the ‘Worshipping Community total’ data and the ‘Joiner and Leaver’ data.

For those completing the forms in Sheffield both of these pieces of information represented new ways of thinking about the church requiring the identification and tracking of individuals rather than a head count done previously. In Leicester people have had three more years of gathering the numbers of those joining or leaving the community but they hadn’t had to enumerate the size of the community until 2012. They were provided with more detailed background information and support during the collection phase<sup>183</sup> yet their data appears to be no better than the Sheffield data. It might be thought that large variations could be avoided by providing clear instructions, by doing consistency checks at the Diocesan Office and by making the previous year’s data easily available. Leicester did all three though the extent of the consistency checks seems to be limited as my analysis found some striking anomalies and previous data had to be extracted from spreadsheets downloaded from the website, which I suspect few people will have chosen to do.

Leicester’s 2013 report notes the decline in the Diocesan Worshipping Community total from 21,665 (2012) to 20,013 (2013) a reduction of 1,652. Despite the net Joiners – Leavers change being an increase of 824 a total difference between the two figures of 2,476. A side note, based on ‘dozens of conversations with churches’, suggests that this is because the idea of Worshipping Community was not fully understood in 2012. They anticipate that it will take three years for the measure to bed down and produce useful data for measuring growth.<sup>184</sup>

The national guidance suggested making use of existing lists of those who come regularly to worship, or possibly starting a new one. If this is being done then it can be hoped that after an initial settling down period the quality of the data will

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<sup>183</sup> Diocese of Leicester, *Growing Together: A summary of Statistics for Mission Returns from 2012* (Leicester: Diocese of Leicester, 2013) <http://www.leicester.anglican.org/site-includes/uploads/wygwam/Statistics%20for%20Mission%20Summary%202012.pdf> (26 March 2014), 17.

<sup>184</sup> Diocese of Leicester, *Growing Together: 2013*, 5-7.

improve. In response to the problems they noted with their data Leicester produced additional guidance that recommends the production of a list that is regularly reviewed.<sup>185</sup>

### **Joiner and Leaver Analysis**

Despite the problems noted above it is still possible to do some further analysis of the data. For example, because the Joiner and Leaver data is independent from the Worshipping Community totals and will generally record individuals joining and leaving the Worshipping Community it can be considered separately from the totals to give a picture of decline or growth.

The following table shows the number of cases with reliable data in the particular year where the Worshipping Community change (Joiners - Leavers) shows growth, is stable, or shows decline. The percentages in Sheffield and Leicester Diocese are remarkably similar. With three fifths of churches showing growth, less than a tenth stable and around a third showing decline:-

	Sheffield			Leicester		
	2012	2013	Across 12 & 13	2012	2013	Across 12 & 13
Change = Joiners - Leavers						
Growth (Change >0)	80 (62%)	78 (60%)	71 (68%)	134 (64%)	113 (57%)	114 (64%)
Stable (Change = 0)	5 (4%)	12 (9%)	4 (4%)	13 (6%)	14 (7%)	18 (10%)
Decline (Change <0)	45 (36%)	39 (30%)	30 (29%)	63 (30%)	72 (36%)	47 (26%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>179</b>

**Table: Showing the numbers of churches with reliable data that shows either growth, no change or decline in 2012, 2013 and across both years.**

<sup>185</sup> Diocese of Leicester, *Knowing Your Worshipping Community*.



	Sheffield		Leicester	
	2012	2013	2012	2013
Net Change (Joiners – Leavers)	+519	+542	+836	+745
Change as Percentage of WC Recorded Total	+4.6%	+4.5%	+4.7%	+4.7%
WC Recorded Total	11,355	11,930	17,790	15,830

**Table: Showing Total Net Change for all churches with reliable data.**

To provide Joiners and Leavers data it is necessary to be aware of each of the individuals who are part of the Worshipping Community throughout the year. In addition there are nuanced decisions to make. How many times must they attend before they are considered to have joined? At what point is it acknowledged that they have left – if they haven't formally said so to someone? It is likely that there will be an optimistic view taken about Joiners, and reluctance to record people as Leavers. This view suggested by the national research team,<sup>186</sup> and supported by Barry Hill,<sup>187</sup> also arose during the period of research in various conversations with people who have completed SfM. These factors might lead to an exaggerated reporting of growth but even allowing for this the data suggests that Joiner and Leaver data shows measurable growth in each of the Dioceses.

Leicester is one of the few growing Dioceses in the Church of England. Looking at ER between 2000 and 2012 and uSa and aWa between 2008 and 2012 London is the only other Diocese showing growth in all three figures.<sup>188</sup> With this to support it the growth shown by the Joiner and Leaver data is certainly credible for Leicester. Sheffield shows growth in aWa but not the ER or uSa. Given that there is greatest overlap between aWa and WC these figures do support each other the growth claim would be stronger if supported by other measures. This research adds a certain amount of caution to the extent of the growth and there is certainly more work to be done before WC and Joiner and Leaver data can be used with confidence as a measure of growth.

<sup>186</sup> Research and Statistics Department Archbishop's Council, *Statistics for Mission 2012* (London: Archbishop's Council, 2014) <http://churchofengland.org/media/1936517/statistics-for-mission-2012.pdf> (25 March 2014), 5.

<sup>187</sup> Telephone conversation.

<sup>188</sup> Brierley, *UK Church Statistics 2*, 2.5.

## **Chapter 5 – Stage 2: Review of the Data Gathering Process**

Chapter four represents the bulk of the research, however the surprisingly high levels of variation in the data prompted a second excursion around the research cycle to try and shed some light on the issues that led to this.

Four reasons why there might be problems with the data can be considered.

Those responsible for the data:

1. Don't understand what they are being asked for,
2. Don't care about the data, and perhaps can't be bothered,
3. Don't have the information they are being asked for,
4. Are not good at adding up, perhaps because they don't do numbers.

Looking at the fourth of these first. This is tongue in cheek, but it recognises that not everyone does do numbers. It is clear that there are cases where the numbers don't add up correctly, even within a single year of data. However, the sums are not complicated and no one mentioned this in their responses. It is more likely that when numbers don't add up it is a symptom of the other three causes, perhaps confusion or a lack of care. The bigger problem with the numbers is between years. Again, this is most likely to be a symptom of the other three, but may also reflect the fact because numbers are 'not done'; and as the information from previous years was not available, no attempt was made to do any checks.

Timings of the research and external pressures meant that a simple questionnaire<sup>189</sup> was the only practical way of conducting the research. It was composed not long after the data problems had been noted, before the detailed analysis was completed, and before the four possible reasons were fully composed. So the questions were not as clearly directed as they might have been.

Questions were composed that could be answered relatively easily without needing to refer back to the original forms. The focus was the process of completing the Worshipping Community section of the SfM form. To aid analysis mainly multiple

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<sup>189</sup> See Appendix 1.

choice answers were used, with the option of adding extra information. Leading questions such as ‘did you compare the 2012 and 2013 totals?’ and ‘Why didn’t your numbers add up?’ were excluded but open ended questions about the usefulness of the SfM forms and the Worshipping Community section in particular were included.

Unfortunately, near the end of the formatting process, two questions were corrupted. Question 10 no longer made sense; the first respondent noticed this so a correcting email was sent within an hour of sending the questionnaires. However, an error in question 6b was not noticed until much later. The question should have asked ‘How did you decide about Joiners and Leavers’ but instead repeated the similar question about Worshipping Community (5b). Although a few respondents answered the intended question it was excluded from analysis. The completed questionnaires were collated and uploaded into the SPSS<sup>190</sup> statistics program to assist initial analysis. The program was only used in a very simple manner as I did not have the knowledge or time to make use of its statistical measuring tools nor access to any assistance.

### **Questionnaire responses**

195 emails were sent to people who had completed the 2013 SfM forms and to incumbents if they hadn’t filled the form in themselves. Of the seventy-six respondents forty-five were clergy and thirty-one laity; including fifteen churchwardens, eight PCC secretaries, four parish administrators, three treasurers, and one PCC vice chair. Apart from eight clergy, the rest had been involved in completing the SfM forms. Thirty-four had completed the form on their own, thirty-four with others.

There were no significant correlations between the answers and the gap between recorded and calculated WC Total apart from question 10. This showed a slight correlation. Cross tab analysis of responses from each question failed to reveal anything significant.

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<sup>190</sup> IBM SPSS Statistics Version 22.

Question 10, 'Did you compare the 2012 and 2013 Worshipping Community answers?'

Where answers were compared with the previous year it was more likely that the gap would be smaller. Where the gap was between 0 and 10 approximately two thirds had compared their 2012 and 2013 answers whilst one third had not. Where the gap was greater than 10, one third of churches had compared their answers and two thirds had not.<sup>191</sup> This confirms what common sense would say that comparing information with previous years will improve the data. It is not possible to draw a strong conclusion, as the question did not ask when the comparison was done. It could have been whilst the SfM forms were being completed or it could have been after they had been submitted. One respondent explicitly said that they did the comparison in order to complete the 2013 form. Their Recorded and Calculated totals were the same.

Questions 5 and 7 asked about how decisions were made and how easy the task was.

Question 5b, 'How did you decide who was in the Worshipping Community?'

70% of those who answered this question made use of an existing or new list composed from a variety of sources such as Electoral Roll, an Attendance List, a Prayer diary, or even a journal. Of those using a list, in four out of thirty-three cases the Calculated and Recorded totals were the same but in fourteen of the cases the gap was more than 10. Even some churches that described a careful process had significant gaps. One clergy person said they 'made two lists: those leaving and those joining and updated an old list.' The recorded Worshipping Community grew from 87 to 113 but there were only 2 more Joiners than Leavers a gap of 24. The church that used an attendance list had a gap of 3.

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<sup>191</sup> Appendix 10, Table 1.

Question 7, 'How easy did you find it to complete the Worshipping Community questions?'

70% of respondents reported that it took at least 'some thought and effort',<sup>192</sup> though that does not mean they did not find it a useful exercise. Despite the difficulties three fifths of respondents found the WC sections useful or very useful, of the two fifths who did not, those who found it most difficult also found it least useful.<sup>193</sup> Several respondents mentioned the difficulties caused by unfamiliarity with the questions or from not having good records to work from. One explicitly said that it took thought and effort because they wanted to get it right, their Recorded and Calculated WC totals agreed.

Questions 11 to 14 asked about the impact of the questionnaire in various ways.

Thirty-nine out of seventy-six replies indicated a positive benefit from the process including greater awareness of the size and age profile of the Worshipping Community and of changes over the twelve-month period. Six said, 'nothing new' and nineteen didn't answer the question. For one church it highlighted impending crisis. Twenty-one out of seventy-six respondents said completing the questionnaire had affected the way they do things in church (Q12). Most of the changes reported had a mission focus including the church in crisis who wrote 'mission is now our priority.' Eight wrote about keeping better records and being more aware of newcomers and leavers. Nearly three quarters said it did not affected things.

Three quarters of those who answered the question (three fifths of all replies) found the SfM form useful or very useful, though one fifth of answers described the task as 'a chore', 'an admin task', or 'something for the Diocese'. Two or three were particularly negative about the process. Three fifths of those who answered (half of all replies) found the WC section useful. A small number didn't find it useful because they already had their own data.

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<sup>192</sup> Appendix 10, Table 4.

<sup>193</sup> Appendix 10, Table 5.

Returning to look at the possible reasons that were suggested. The questionnaires and analyses weren't able to provide definitive evidence for or against these positions, especially when measured against the WC gap. It is often difficult to prove a negative, however a few tentative responses can be made.

1 – Don't Understand: A small number of the responses did imply that the person didn't fully understand what was being asked for, this reason is strongly supported by the responses to the many phone calls in Leicester.<sup>194</sup>

2 – Don't Care: There is evidence that some people do care about the data and want to do a good job. However few showed that level of concern. It is probable that some of those who consider it a burden, or difficult, and not useful, along with some who didn't respond to the questionnaire don't care.

3 – Don't have the information: A number of respondents said that they didn't have access to all of the information they thought was required and so didn't answer. Others said they didn't have the previous year available.

The questionnaire failed to identify any systematic explanations for the problems with the data. It did confirm that collecting the data required a degree of thought and effort for many but also that many found it useful and it made some more aware of their congregations and the missional task.

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<sup>194</sup> Diocese of Leicester, *Growing Together: 2013, 7* and conversation with Barry Hill.

## **Chapter 6 - Conclusions**

The 'Worshipping Community' and 'Joiners and Leavers' counts were introduced to provide an improved measure for assessing the vitality of the church and its mission. The review of the recent membership and attendance measures demonstrated some of the inadequacies of those measures and some of the advantages that it is hoped the Worshipping Community statistic could bring. The theological reflection has shown that Worshipping Community is a valid way of considering and describing the church. It has shown that being aware of the extent of the community, through counting and paying attention to numbers has a biblical warrant. Thinking about church as community and knowing that community as the Good Shepherd knows his sheep, including being aware of Joiners and Leavers, are important pastoral and missional characteristics of a healthy and growing church.

This research has highlighted significant problems with the data collected in two Dioceses; there is no reason to think this is not typical. One response could be to say that collection and analysis of this data should be abandoned especially since over half of the respondents to the questionnaire highlighted difficulties gathering the data and answering the questions.

However, three fifths of the respondents including many who found it difficult have highlighted the usefulness of the questions in giving them a greater insight into the life of their church and encouraging them to be more mission focussed. It has encouraged them to be more aware of the full extent of the community that makes up the life of the church including its age profile. Through the Joiners and Leavers questions a greater awareness of individuals has already been encouraged and, once thinking about Worshipping Communities becomes established, it has the potential to stimulate greater missional effectiveness. Churches can be encouraged to help Joiners to find a place in the community and grow as disciples. They can also be encouraged to have a greater pastoral awareness of those who are getting closer to the back-door and who may become Leavers. At the same time the two measures can become a valuable tool with which the effectiveness of growth initiatives can be assessed both locally and at the wider Diocesan and National levels.

### **Recommendations for future action**

A radically new way of measuring the church will need time to bed in. This can be assisted by providing more help and guidance, to support the gathering, interpretation and use of the data. This support could do worse than listen again to the aspiration expressed in *SaTM* ‘Information should be collected in such a way that is useful to those collecting it at a local level before it is processed into any other format.’<sup>195</sup> Help should also be given with interpreting and using the data.<sup>196</sup>

There is an educational task to be performed to help churches discover the potential value for their own situation of the data that is requested. This might include:

- A clear and simple rationale for collecting the information.
- Clear guidance about how and who to count.
- Assistance with checking the data.
- Timely return of data to the parishes in a form they can easily interpret.
- Guidance on interpreting and using that data as a tool for mission.
- Strong promotion and recommendation for the use of a regularly reviewed list of members of the Worshipping Community maintained by focal pastoral leaders.<sup>197</sup>

Leicester has already gone a long way towards providing much of this support. Sheffield still has a long way to travel.

### **Areas for further research**

Time, space, and doubts about the data did not allow for an exploration of the relationships between WC and the different attendance measures. This is a task for a future piece of work when the WC data is more reliable.

The questionnaire was added to the research at a late stage and could have been a research project of its own. Consequently the analysis was not as extensive as it

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<sup>195</sup> *SaTM*, 36.

<sup>196</sup> *SaTM*, 34.

<sup>197</sup> Jackson, *What is Church?* 6.



might have been. Follow up questions could have provided valuable insight into the process of completing the SfM forms that could then inform the ways in which the data gathering is supported. Given the problems that the Church Growth Project also found with much of their data this could be a very fruitful area for research.

### **Closing Thoughts**

Membership of the church cannot easily be defined. The church we see gathered from Sunday, to mid-week meeting, to Sunday, as Worshipping Community could be defined, is a reasonable place to start. Many will not yet be disciples who live their lives ‘under the lordship of the Lord of all’, to return to Rowe’s definition, and Worshipping Community will inevitably include people who are at different stages in their journey to or from God. Worshipping Community recognizes something of the breadth and richness of the Anglican Church, just as uSa and aWa do, but it brings the added dimension of highlighting the fact that the community is made up of individuals and offers a valuable tool for mission.

The research has prompted the question: ‘How well do those leading a church, whether ordained or lay, know those who are a part of their worshipping community and how aware are they of their involvement?’ The rather poor data that has been provided suggests that they are not as well known as might be hoped. How will the sheep be missed if no-one knows if there should be 99 or 100 in the flock, especially when the whole flock is rarely, if ever, all gathered together?

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[http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Presentations/CGRP\\_Voas\\_Methodology.pdf](http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Presentations/CGRP_Voas_Methodology.pdf) (26 March 2014)
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Ziesler, John, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, TPI New Testament Commentaries (London: SCM Press, 1989)

#### Journals

Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion

Journal of Contemporary Religion

#### Websites

NCLS Research Australia - <http://www.ncls.org.au>

Diocese of Leicester Statistics for Mission -

<http://www.leicester.anglican.org/shaped-by-God/statistics-for-mission/>

The Methodist Church in Britain Statistics for Mission -

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/statistics-for-mission>

The Church of England Research and Statistics -

<http://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/facts-stats/research-statistics.aspx>

Church Growth Research Programme - <http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk>

Bible Lexicon <http://biblehub.com/lexicon/>

#### Data Sets

Diocese of Sheffield Statistics for Mission Returns 2000 to 2013 from my time in the Diocese.

Diocese of Leicester Statistics for Mission Returns 2009 to 2013

<http://www.leicester.anglican.org/site->

[includes/uploads/wygwam/2013%20Leicester%20stats%20for%20mission%20for%20publication%20-](http://www.leicester.anglican.org/site-)

[%20all%20replies%20as%20of%2010th%20Feb%202014.xls](http://www.leicester.anglican.org/site-) (26 March 2014)

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 - The Research Questionnaire including consent form.

The personalised questionnaires were sent by email as follows:-

Dear *personal name*,

I am writing to you because I would like your help. I am currently doing some research for an MA dissertation in which I am trying to discover what we can learn about the church's mission from the new Worshipping Community questions that have been included on the last two National Statistics for Mission Forms. It shouldn't take more than five minutes to answer the questions about how you filled the Statistics for Mission form in and how you may have used what you learned from the process. You won't need to look anything up to answer the questions. I would be very grateful if you would spare me that time.

If you are willing to help me the rest of this email is an introduction to my questions and then the questions themselves which I have included in the body of the email in order to try and make the process relatively easy and quick. I would suggest that you respond by replying to the email to [mark.dmpm@gmail.com](mailto:mark.dmpm@gmail.com), including a copy of my email and that you type the answers into next to the questions.

If you have any questions about the research please feel free to contact me before responding by email or telephone.

Thanks you for your help

Mark Wigglesworth –  
Mission Development Adviser, Diocese of Sheffield Parish Support Team.  
Mobile - 07818 416424, Home – 01302 707815.

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#### **A Brief introduction to my research**

In 2012 the Central Statistics Unit of the Church of England added some new questions to their annual 'Statistics for Mission' form. Many people have reported that church attendance patterns seem to be changing with people attending less regularly than they used to or on days other than Sundays. The questions that have been asked about Usual Sunday Attendance, the October Counts and the Electoral Roll figures don't properly reflect this change. In response questions were added about what has been called the Worshipping Community to try and record all those who are regularly a part of the church life and to provide a broader understanding of the numbers of people who attend our churches.

The Worshipping Community questions have been on the forms for two years now and in my research I am looking at the returns for the Diocese of

Sheffield in order to try and discover what we can learn from them about our churches and whether there are implications for mission in the Diocese.

When I have been looking at the returns for 2013 and comparing them with 2012 I have noticed that in some cases the numbers are not consistent. I am hoping that your responses to my questions will help me to understand why that sometimes happens. The other thing that I am interested to know about is whether or not the process of responding to the questions has affected the life of your church(es).

+++++

**CONSENT FORM**

Because I am doing this as a piece of University research I need your formal consent to being involved in the research and so the first few questions are about that consent. For my analysis your answers will be linked to the return from your church(es) but in the final report all data will be anonymised and no individuals or churches will be identified.

**Title - Statistics for Mission - Worshipping Community research by Mark Wigglesworth.**

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and to discuss the study?  
**Yes or No ->**

Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?  
**Yes or No ->**

Have you received enough information about the study?  
**Yes or No - >**

If you needed to contact anyone about the study who have you contacted?  
**->**

Do you consent to participate in the study?  
**Yes or No ->**

Do you understand you are free to withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason and without prejudice. This includes asking for your responses to be deleted and removed from the study?  
**Yes or No ->**

**Your Name ->**

**Date ->**

+++++

**THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

There are 14 questions, 5 of them have 2 or three parts. Feel free to answer simply or to expand the answers with any additional thoughts you think might

help me either for the MA or in my Diocesan role.

} 1 – Your role:-

**Are you a Church Warden, PCC Secretary, Clergy, other :-**

} 2 – Did you complete, or help complete, the form yourself?

**Yes or No :-**

If No skip questions 3 to 8 and go to question 9

} 3 – Did you complete the form on your own or with others?

**:-**

} 3a – If with others who?

**Church Wardens, Clergy, PCC Secretary, Others? :-**

} 4 – Which Church(es) did you complete the form for :-

} 5 – Did you complete the Worshipping Community questions?

**Yes or No :-**

} 5a – If not why not? :-

} 5b – How did you decide who was in the Worshipping Community?

**Used an existing list; Made a new list; Made a rough estimate; Other. :-**

} 6 – Did you answer the "Joiners" and "Leavers" questions?

**Yes or No :-**

} 6a – If not why not? :-

} 6b – How did you decide who was in the Worshipping Community?<sup>198</sup>

**Used an existing list; Made a new list; Made a rough estimate; Other. :-**

} 7 – How easy did you find it to complete the Worshipping Community questions?

**Very easy; Quite easy; It took some thought and effort; Difficult; Impossible :-**

} 8 – Did you also complete the 2012 return?

**Yes or No :-**

} 9 – Did you discuss the results of the Statistics for Mission Questions with others?

**Yes or No :-**

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<sup>198</sup> Question 6b should have asked 'How did you decide about "Joiners" and "Leavers"? Some respondents noticed this was the same as 5b and asked about it others did not seem to notice.

} 9a – Who did you discuss the results with?  
**Clergy; Church Wardens; Standing Committee; PCC; Wider Group;  
Others. :-**

} 10 – Did you compare the 2012 and 2013 Worshipping Community answers  
?<sup>199</sup>

**Yes or No :-**

} 11 – What did you learn from the process? :-

} 12 – Has completing the questions affect the way you do things as a  
church?

**Yes or No :-**

} 12a – if yes how has it affected things. :-

} 13 – How useful do you find the returns as a whole? :-

} 14 – How useful do you find the Worshipping Community section? :-

Thank you for taking the time to help me, I do appreciate it

Mark

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<sup>199</sup> In the emailed questionnaire Q10 asked “Did you compare the 2012 and 2013 Worshipping Community answers the Statistics for Mission Questions with others?” this was pointed out in the first response and a correction was emailed out.



**STATISTICS FOR MISSION: JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2012**

Deanery \_\_\_\_\_ Diocese \_\_\_\_\_

Parish \_\_\_\_\_

Please read the notes to help you to fill in the form and ensure consistent data are collected from all parishes

**1. Names of all Churches included in this return:**

In general, one form should be filled in for each parish. Please list ALL churches included in this return.

**2. Electoral Roll 2012**

Please state the number of persons on the Electoral Roll as presented to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held within the period 1 January to 30 April 2012.

**3. Baptisms and Thanksgiving for the gift of a child**

If separate services of thanksgiving and baptism were held for any individual, both should be included.

**Baptism** - Number of persons baptised between 1 Jan 2012 and 31 Dec 2012

**Thanksgiving for the gift of a child** - Number of children for whom a thanksgiving service for the gift (birth or adoption) of a child was held between 1 Jan 2012 and 31 Dec 2012

Under 1 yr	Age 1-12	Age 13+
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**4. Marriages and Services of prayer and dedication after civil marriage**

Please record all events which took place between 1 January 2012 and 31 December 2012.

**Prayer and dedication (after civil marriage)** - Number of couples for whom a service was held in church

**5. Funerals**

In the first box please state the number of deceased for whom a funeral service was held in the church. In the second box please state the number of deceased for whom a full funeral service was conducted on behalf of the church/parish at a crematorium or cemetery, excluding committal only and burial of ashes only. In each case include all funerals conducted on behalf of the church/parish by any minister including readers, stipendiary clergy, non-stipendiary clergy and retired clergy.

**Marriage** - Number of couples married in church

**Funeral service held in church**

**Full funeral service conducted (on behalf of this church/parish) at crematorium/cemetery**

**6. Easter and Christmas 2012**

Clergy and other ministers who received communion/attended services should be included. In the attendance box please include all people: communicants and those that did not receive communion; adults, children and young people; clergy and laity. Each person should only be counted once even if they attended more than one service and communicants should only be counted once even if they received communion at two separate services.

**Number of communicants at any service on Easter Day including vigil services on Easter Eve**

**Number attending worship at any service on Easter Day including vigil services on Easter Eve**

**Number of communicants on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day**

**Number attending worship at any service on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day**

**7. All regular Fresh Expressions of church. Please attach more if necessary.**

A fresh expression is a form of church for our changing society, established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet "members" of any church. Do not include activities such as Alpha, Lent groups, school carol services, and annual events or services such as Crib services, memorial services and Harvest Supper etc. If you are uncertain as to whether an activity or service counts as a Fresh Expression please list it. For more information on FX visit

Name of Fresh Expression	Where it is held Church/ church hall/ other venue - please describe	How often? Weekly/ fortnightly/ monthly/ quarterly	Age group aimed at: All ages/ 0-4/ 5-10/ 11-17/ 18-39/ 40-64/ 65+/ family	Are attendees also worshippers at other services in your parish? Regular/ Irregular/ Previous attendees/ Never	Description of activity

THIS FORM IS DOUBLE-SIDED. PLEASE COMPLETE SECTIONS 8 - 11 OVERLEAF.



**8. OCTOBER 2012 - CHURCH ATTENDANCE Number at worship on Sunday and Additional number attending weekday services and worship activities**

People should only be counted once in each week beginning with the specified Sunday regardless of how many services they attend through the week. Include all visitors at services for example, those attending baptisms. However, do not include wedding or funeral services.

For Sundays, give separately the number of adults and children attending Sunday services and Sunday schools or equivalent activities including the celebration of the Eucharist outside the church e.g. at home/ in prison/ in hospital. Alongside, give the numbers of additional people attending **Sunday fresh expressions of church** (section 7).

For weekdays, give the number of additional adults and children attending weekday services, celebration of the Eucharist outside the church and other activities in which worship is the prime purpose and predominant feature. Exclude activities with only some worship element, such as some para-church group meetings, house groups, some prayer groups, mother and toddler groups, some school assemblies and Alpha courses, etc. Services that are, in effect, church for that group of people are included under **midweek fresh expression of church**.

**9. Church Attendance on a 'normal' Sunday**

Please state how many people attend a church in your parish on a normal Sunday when there is a service. For the purposes of this return a 'normal' Sunday is one which is not a major festival or contained in a peak holiday period.

Children and young people (up to age 15)

Adults (age 16+ )

**10. Worshipping Community**

It would be very helpful if you could please complete as much of this new question as possible. See [www.explanationofwhy.com](http://www.explanationofwhy.com) for further information on this question.

The worshipping community includes any person who attends church regularly, for example at least once a month, or would do so if not prevented by illness, infirmity or temporary absence. Please do include all congregations including Fresh Expressions. Please do not include those who are visitors - holidaymakers, baptism parties etc. or those who consider their 'home' church to be another church.

**Worshipping Community as at December 2012**

Children (Age 0-10)	<input type="text"/>
Young People (Age 11-17)	<input type="text"/>
Adults (Age 18-69)	<input type="text"/>
Aged Over 70	<input type="text"/>
<b>Total</b>	<input type="text"/>

**Joined Worshipping Community in 2012**

Excess time	<input type="text"/>
Moved into area	<input type="text"/>
Returned to church	<input type="text"/>
<b>Total joined</b>	<input type="text"/>

**Left Worshipping Community in 2012**

Death/ Ill	<input type="text"/>
Moved away	<input type="text"/>
Left church	<input type="text"/>
<b>Total left</b>	<input type="text"/>

(Please use shaded area for the attendance at the Fresh Expressions of church (FExp) listed in section 7)

NO of service (✓)	Adults (All those of 16 years of age or over including those leading services.)		Children and young people (All those under 16 years of age.)	
	Church	FExp	Church	FExp

**Week commencing:**  
 Sunday Oct 7<sup>th</sup> 2012  
 Sunday Oct 14<sup>th</sup> 2012  
 Sunday Oct 21<sup>st</sup> 2012  
 Sunday Oct 28<sup>th</sup> 2012

Please describe below if any of these attendance figures are unusual for any reason (e.g. Harvest Festival or half-term) and the impact on figures:

**11. ADDITIONAL 'ONE-OFF' QUESTION**

1. Example activities include youth groups or retreats, confirmation classes, choir, worship for youths or youth counselling.  
 2. Include those working with groups included in part 1.1.

**1. How many young people attended other activities connected to the church during the month of October?**

i) ages 11-17 years	<input type="text"/>
ii) ages 18-25 years	<input type="text"/>

**2. How many adults excluding clergy are currently working (through the church/parish) with young people aged 11-17?**

i) in a voluntary capacity	<input type="text"/>
ii) employed	<input type="text"/>

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for completing this form. PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR DIOCESAN OFFICE

## Appendix 3 - 2012 Statistics for Mission Form Accompanying Notes

### **WHY ARE WE ASKING FOR YOUR HELP?**

Statistics for mission (membership and attendance) and church finances



#### **Who uses the returns and the information from them?**

Some parishes find the completion of the parochial returns useful for their own purposes; the information, when collected over a period of years, can give a useful insight into the continuing life of the parish. Many diocesan offices regularly use information extracted from the returns. The figures, usually aggregated as diocesan totals, are used extensively by central church organisations and ecumenical bodies; and are largely published in *Church Statistics*\*

They are used annually to assess emerging mission opportunities, for clergy deployment; allocations of new deacons; stipend support allocations; to monitor charitable giving; and to present a broad picture of the Church's finances. For example, it is recognised that parishes are facing increased financial pressures, and if the Church nationally is to argue the case for government help (e.g. VAT relief on repairs) then a clear picture of how the expenditure is split over the various categories is needed. Figures for giving (e.g. tax-efficient planned giving by gift aid; collections; legacies/bequests; and special appeals) are always very important, especially in the context of how the Church stewards its resources.

#### **Why have the returns changed?**

The Statistics for Mission form now reflects the growing incidence of fresh expressions of church and other developing mission opportunities. The finance return was revised in 2007, which had remained largely unchanged for the previous seven years or more, to simplify the form and its completion, whilst ensuring consistency with SORP 2005. This year the new form, which is appropriate for both Receipts & Payments accounts and Accruals accounts, remains largely unchanged, but reflects feedback received.

#### **Are they used for parish share/common fund purposes?**

In some dioceses particular items are used to help calculate the parish share. For all dioceses, figures are

extracted from the Returns to help determine the contribution each diocese will be invited to pay towards the cost of training for the ministry and for national church activities.

#### **Surely, on the finance side, a set of PCC accounts should suffice?**

The use of standard format returns means that we can process the information much more efficiently with fewer staff. The effect of the Charities Act 1993 was that the Church had to ask its parishes to review the way in which they present their accounts. *The Charities Act 1993 and the PCC 3<sup>rd</sup> edition\** provides a guide to the workings of the act as it applies to PCC accounts. Chapter 6 identifies the various items of expenditure and income and categorises them under certain headings. The finance form has been designed to be consistent with the language and the format set out in the guidelines. Parishes are asked to identify separately the restricted and unrestricted income as these figures have to be shown separately in accounts.

#### **How confidential is the information?**

Whilst we treat the parish information as confidential and only publish diocesan figures, any member of the public has a right to ask the PCC for a copy of its annual accounts.

#### **Do I need to bother making a return when I did one last year?**

YES please! Failure to receive completed returns every year delays the production of the results and detracts from their reliability and accuracy.

#### **THANK YOU for completing these forms**

\*The annual publication *Church Statistics* and publication *The Charities Act 1993 and the PCC 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 2006* (£8.99 plus p+p) may be obtained from Church House Bookshop - visit: [www.chbookshop.co.uk](http://www.chbookshop.co.uk) or call telephone number 020 7799 4064. Church Statistics may also be downloaded from the Church of England website at: <http://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/facts-stats/research-statistics.aspx>

## Appendix 4 - 2013 Statistics for Mission Form

**STATISTICS FOR MISSION: JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2013**

Please note this year we are collecting CHURCH statistics rather than parish statistics. If there is more than one church in your parish a separate form should be completed for each church. Please include fresh expressions of Church unless they prefer to complete a separate return.

Church Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Church Code: 6

Parish Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Deanery: \_\_\_\_\_ Diocese: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE COMPLETE ALL BOXES. EMPTY BOXES WILL BE TREATED AS UNKNOWN (Don't Know)

Please state the number of people on your electoral roll as reported at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in 2013.

Number on Electoral Roll  Church  Parish

**Who comes to church?** The following set of questions are all about the people who worship regularly in your church community.

**Church Attendance on a 'normal' Sunday - 2013**

Please state how many people attend your church on a normal Sunday when there is a service.

For the purposes of this return a 'normal' Sunday is one which is not a major festival or contained in a peak holiday period.

Adults (age 16+)

Children and young people (up to age 15)

**Worshipping Community 2013**

Please complete as much of this question as possible. For further information please [click here](http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1029897/worshippingcommunity2013.pdf) or see <http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1029897/worshippingcommunity2013.pdf>

- Include:
- Any person who attends church regularly, for example at least once a month, or would do so if not prevented by illness, infirmity or temporary absence.
  - All congregations in your church including fresh expressions of Church.
- Do not include:
- Those who are visitors - holidaymakers, baptism parties etc.
  - Those who consider their 'home' church to be another church.

**Worshipping Community as at December 2013**

Please tell us about your regular worshipping community at the end of 2013, do not include people that have left the church earlier in the year.

If the ages of the worshipping community are unknown enter the total figure only.

Children (Age 0-10)  Adults (Age 18-69)

Young People (Age 11-17)  Adults (Age 70+)  Total

Please tell us how your Worshipping Community has changed during 2013.

Worshipping Community 2013: Joiners		Worshipping Community in 2013: Leavers			
How many adults and children have joined your church during 2013?		How many adults and children have left your church during 2013?			
If the reason for joining is unknown enter the total figure only.		If the reason for leaving is unknown enter the total figure only.			
	Children & Young people (<18)	Adults (18+)	Children & Young people (<18)	Adults (18+)	
Worshipping for the first time	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Death / illness	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Moved into the area	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Moved away	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Moved from a local church	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Moved to a local church	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Returned to church	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Not worshipping anywhere	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Total joining</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<b>Total leaving</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**How does the church support children and young people? - One off question**

The following set of questions seeks to measure the provision of support and activities for children, young people and families.

**How many people work with children and young people on behalf of your church? (excluding stipendiary clergy)**

Number of staff paid by your church  Number of volunteers

**How many hours are worked with children and young people on behalf of your church? (excluding stipendiary clergy)**

Please tell us the total number of hours per week that are regularly worked with children and young people on behalf of your church, by whether the worker(s) is (are) employed or voluntary.

- If more than one person is employed or volunteers in any role please give the combined number of hours.
- Where groups are mixed ages the number of hours should be split between them.
- Do not include hours worked when employed by other organisations or volunteering for other organisations

Working with / in	Total number of hours		Working with	Total number of hours	
	Paid	Voluntary		Paid	Voluntary
Sunday pre-school groups			Primary school based clubs		
Sunday primary school groups			Secondary school based clubs		
Sunday secondary school groups			Primary schools (e.g. Supporting RE)		
Parent / carer and toddler groups			Secondary schools (e.g. Supporting RE)		
Church led children's activity groups			Supporting / developing families		
Church led youth groups			Other weekday / Saturday groups		
			Other.....		



**How many people come to church?** - The following set of questions are based on the number of people attending services.

**Include:**

- The number of adults and children attending services and Sunday schools or equivalent activities.
- Clergy and other ministers who received communion/attended services.
- All visitors at services for example, those attending baptisms.
- Those celebrating the Eucharist outside the church e.g. at home/ in prison/ in hospital.
- Any other activities (in church or elsewhere) in which worship is the prime purpose and predominant feature.

**Do not include:**

- Anyone who has attended a service held by the church earlier in the week and thus has been counted (where possible do not double count).
- Wedding or funeral services.
- Activities with only some worship element, such as some para-church group meetings, house groups, some prayer groups, mother and toddler groups, school assemblies and Alpha courses, social events such as harvest supper etc.

**OCTOBER COUNT (CHURCH ATTENDANCE) Number at worship on Sunday and weekday services and worship activities**

Please give the number of people attending all services and acts of worship during the month of October 2013, including fresh expressions of Church which are supported by your church. For help in identifying fresh expressions of Church please visit <http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1839845/freshexpressionschoicetree.pdf> or visit <http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk>

Week commencing:	Num. service	Sunday				Num. service	Weekdays							
		Adults <small>(All those of 16 years of age or over including those leading services.)</small>		Children and young people <small>(All those under 16 years of age.)</small>			Additional adults <small>(All those of 16 years of age or over including those leading services.)</small>			Additional children and young people <small>(All those under 16 years of age.)</small>				
		Church	Fresh expressions	Church	Fresh expressions		Church	School Services	Fresh expressions	Church	School Services	Fresh expressions		
Sunday 6- October														
Sunday 13- October														
Sunday 20- October														
Sunday 27- October														

Please describe below if any of these attendance figures are unusual for any reason (e.g. Harvest Festival or half-term) and the impact on figures.

**Easter 2013**

Number of communicants at any service on Easter Day including vigil services on Easter Eve  Total number attending worship at any service on Easter Day including vigil services on Easter Eve

**Christmas 2013**

Number of communicants on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day  Total number attending worship at any service on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day

Total number attending special services run by the church during advent from Monday after advent Sunday until 23rd December.

E.g. carols on village green, nativities, school carol services etc. For the congregation and local community  Specifically for Civic / School / Organisation

Churches play a special role in the community at times of celebration and sadness. This section asks about the number of baptisms, marriages and funerals.

**Baptisms and thanksgiving for the gift of a child 1 Jan 2013 to 31 Dec 2013**

If separate services of thanksgiving and baptism were held for any individual, both should be included.

Number of persons baptised Infants (<1yr)  Children (1-4)  Children (5-12)  Youth / Adults (13+)

Number of children for whom a thanksgiving service for the gift (birth or adoption) of a child was held Infants (<1yr)  Children (1-12)  Youth (13+)

**Marriages and services of prayer and dedication after civil marriage 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013.**

Number of couples married in church  Number of couples for whom a service of Prayer and dedication was held in church (after civil marriage)

**Funerals**

In each case include all funerals conducted on behalf of the church/parish by any minister including Readers, stipendiary clergy, non-stipendiary clergy and retired clergy.

Number of deceased for whom a funeral service was held in the church  Number of deceased for whom a full funeral service was conducted (on behalf of this church) at a crematorium or cemetery, excluding committal only and burial of ashes only.

**Regular fresh expressions of Church**

A fresh expression of Church is a form of church established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet "members" of any church. Do not include activities such as Alpha or outreach activities which do not include worship. If you are uncertain as to whether an activity or service counts as a fresh expression of Church please list it. For more information on fresh expressions of Church visit [www.freshexpressions.org.uk](http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk)

Name of fresh expression of Church	Where it is held	How often?	Age group aimed at: <small>(tick all that apply)</small>	Who is the fresh expression aimed at? <small>(tick all that apply)</small>	Description of activity
	Church <input type="checkbox"/>	Weekly <input type="checkbox"/>	0-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 18-39 <input type="checkbox"/>	Regular attendees <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Church hall <input type="checkbox"/>	Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/>	5-10 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-64 <input type="checkbox"/>	Irregular attendees <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Monthly <input type="checkbox"/>	11-17 <input type="checkbox"/> 65+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Previous attendees <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Quarterly <input type="checkbox"/>	All age <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/>	New to church <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Church <input type="checkbox"/>	Weekly <input type="checkbox"/>	0-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 18-39 <input type="checkbox"/>	Regular attendees <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Church hall <input type="checkbox"/>	Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/>	5-10 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-64 <input type="checkbox"/>	Irregular attendees <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Monthly <input type="checkbox"/>	11-17 <input type="checkbox"/> 65+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Previous attendees <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Quarterly <input type="checkbox"/>	All age <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/>	New to church <input type="checkbox"/>	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:  /  /  20  1

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact: (Phone or E-mail) \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 5 - Statistics for Mission Information Sheet:** **Worshipping Community**

Many of you recently told us about how you gather together the information about your parish for the annual 'Statistics for Mission' return. You also told us about extra information you collect and about the things we ask for which you find difficult to answer. This was all really helpful as we try to answer really important questions about the size of the Church of England and how it is changing.

Many of you have told us that any drop in average weekly attendance is actually reflecting a reduction in how often people come to church rather than a drop in the number of individuals who are regularly a part of the church. Whilst the electoral roll does include those individuals who are unable to attend services, for example because they are too ill, but are still a committed part of a church, there are a number of other problems with this figure and how accurately it reflects the shape and size of the church. We have therefore decided to try to measure the size of our church in a different way as it has become increasingly clear that electoral roll and attendance figures alone are not sufficient to give us a clear indication of how big the Church of England is and how it is changing. So, for the first time this year, the National Statistics for Mission form includes a question about your "worshipping community". We recognise that for some of you this idea will be completely new but others of you already give to your diocese information about the size of your parish based on the number of individuals who are a part of the church. Dioceses use a number of different terms to describe this including "participants", "Agreed membership figure", "members", "declared members", "regular worshipping community", "active members", "committed members".

We are defining the "worshipping community" to include anyone within your parish who attends any of your churches, including fresh expressions, regularly, for example at least once a month, or would do so if not prevented by illness, infirmity or temporary absence. This includes all ages but it is useful to count separately from adults (18+) those under 11 (primary) and those 11-18 (secondary). It includes activities such as fellowship groups and other activities which have a distinct act of worship or prayer. It also includes activities not on church premises (e.g. school or community centre).

We include those who:

- come to midweek services
- are ill and unable to come to church
- are away on holiday or business
- have home communions
- are part of a 'fresh expression' of church
- live in care or residential homes and would consider themselves to be full members of your church
- give regularly to the church
- lead worship (e.g. your clergy)

We do not include those who:

- are visitors - holidaymakers, baptism parties etc
- consider their 'home' church to be another church.

How do I accurately calculate my worshipping community? We know that many churches keep a list of those who come regularly and others of you who live in rural areas told us that you know each of your congregation well. If you do not have such a list you may start with your Electoral Roll as a base, in particular as a reminder of those unable to attend because of sickness or infirmity, then add other people to the figure if they attend regularly but are not on the roll. You may have a 'prayer diary' with current members, which is regularly updated and this might remind you of people who are unable to attend due to illness or who have recently died.

We would be very grateful if you could fill in as much as possible of this question. We realise it is sometimes difficult to know why people have left, so just use the "total left" box if you can't break it down and leave blank the individual parts. Thank you so much. With your help we will be able to give a more true picture of the size of our Church .

If you have any queries or would like to discuss this question further please email [statistics.unit@churchofengland.org](mailto:statistics.unit@churchofengland.org)

## Appendix 6 – 2012 Letter from Sheffield Diocesan Secretary



THE DIOCESE  
OF SHEFFIELD

Malcolm Fair  
[Diocesan Secretary](#)

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[www.sheffield.anglican.org](http://www.sheffield.anglican.org)

28 September 2012

TO: ALL PCC SECRETARIES

Dear Secretary

### STATISTICS FOR MISSION 2012

Once again we need your help with making sure that these forms gets to the right people in your parish and ensuring that the completed form is returned promptly. The following information has been sent by email to Churchwardens and Parish Clergy.

*"The Statistics for Mission forms for 2012 are available on the diocesan website under the key documents/key information section. They provide information on the format of the October attendance counts and the usual information regarding services across the year. In addition there are a couple of questions about activities including youth groups. It is now possible to enter the information online and last year your PCC Secretary was sent the passwords to allow this. Online entry allows you to see the trends in attendances, services and finances over recent years. We expect the 2012 forms to be available online from October 2012.*

*There are 3 documents attached. Firstly a general explanatory note 'Why we need your help' which discusses both the Statistics for Mission and the Finance Return; secondly the Statistics for Mission form itself and finally a set of notes which hopefully will answer any questions. The form cannot be fully completed until the end of the year at which point it should be sent to Diocesan Church House for my attention.*

*Bishop Steven has requested that the Statistics for Mission forms should be returned to Diocesan Church House by the 31st January 2013 as they form an important part of the planning for deployment of stipendiary and self supporting ministry which is involving so much thought, prayer and effort in the deaneries.*

*Previously some parishes have waited until their APCM to send in this information but that is not necessary, unlike the Finance forms which Mr Roger Finchbeck sends out separately. I look forward to receiving the Statistics forms as soon as possible in January. Thank you for your assistance with this important task in helping the National Church and the Diocese of Sheffield to understand the trends and needs of parishes."*

I enclose with this letter a printed copy of the 3 documents listed above. Many thanks for your continuing support to the parish and assisting in this annual exercise.

Yours sincerely  
MALCOLM FAIR  
Diocesan Secretary

Encs.

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Sheffield Diocesan Board of Finance is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England No. 198087 and a registered Charity No. 246881

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## Appendix 7 – 2013 Letter from Sheffield Diocesan Secretary



*Malcolm Fair  
Diocesan Secretary*

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30 September 2013

**To: All Churchwardens, PCC/DCC Secretaries and Incumbents**

Please find attached the 2013 Statistics for Mission Form. This will also be available on the Diocesan website and will be posted to all PCC/DCC Secretaries this week. Some notes regarding the new form can be found below.

For those who use the web-based system for submitting your Statistics for Mission forms, the system will be ready for data entry on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2013. If you have not used the web-based system before and would like to know your password please contact Elizabeth Lunt ([elizabeth.lunt@sheffield.anglican.org](mailto:elizabeth.lunt@sheffield.anglican.org)).

The key differences for the 2013 forms are as follows:

- The major change is to move to CHURCH based collection rather than PARISH based.
- In the October count, you will note that the mid-week counts have been separated into those held for schools (assemblies etc.) and those held for the community.
- There is a new question about numbers of people attending special services held in Advent. This question has been introduced following the Christmas Counts exercise in 2012, where some churches noted that their Christmas Day counts were very low but that this did not reflect the huge number of people who do not usually come to church but who want to share in the true message of Christmas so come along to the variety of carol services, nativity services etc. held through Advent.

The Statistics for Mission forms should be returned by **31 January 2014**.

Yours sincerely  
MALCOLM FAIR  
Diocesan Secretary

Enc.



## **Appendix 8 - Data Cleaning Diocese of Sheffield**

The full Sheffield database includes 216 churches. Some of the 216 are closed churches or other worship places and these along with the Cathedral contributed no data and so were excluded. This leaves 204 churches that might provide data.

### **Initial Data Cleaning**

The following checks were applied.

- 1 – exclude churches with no return from the year’s data set.
- 2 – exclude aggregated returns from the 2012 data set as there is a potential for some churches to be missing, and also because the 2013 return is church based, and so the aggregated check did not need to be performed.
- 3 – the final trim at this stage was to exclude return with no WC data. The table below shows the numbers excluded in each stage.

	2012		2013		Both Years	
		Total		Total		Total
No of Churches		216		216		216
First trim (closed & other)	-12	204	-12	204	-12	204
Nil return	-18	186	-27	177	-34	170
Aggregated returns	-27	159	0	177	-23	147
No WC data	-15	144	-11	166	-17	130

### **2012 Sheffield Data**

3 Churches didn’t provide WC data but did provide Joiner and Leaver data.

26 Churches didn’t provide Joiner or Leaver data (or there were none it is not possible to tell.)

69 / 130 reported under 18 Joiners

103 / 130 reported adult Joiners

All churches reporting u18 Joiners also reported adult joiners.

29 / 130 reported u18 Leavers.

112 / 130 reported adult Leavers.

28 of the 29 churches reporting u18 Leavers also reported adult Leavers

All sub data added up to the given totals.

### **2013 Sheffield Data**

2 Churches didn't provide WC data but did provide Joiner and Leaver data

17 Churches didn't provide age related subtotals for WC data

23 Churches didn't provide Joiner / Leaver data,

68/130 Churches reported u18 Joiners

107/130 Churches reported adult Joiners

66 Churches reported both u18 and adult Joiners

2 Churches reported u18 Joiners but no adult Joiners

5 Churches didn't provide u18 Leaver sub data

7 Churches didn't provide adult Leaver sub data

39/130 Churches reported u18 Leaver data

113/130 Churches reported adult leaver data

4 Churches reported u18 Leavers but no adult Leavers

## **Appendix 9 - Data Cleaning Diocese of Leicester**

The Leicester data set consists of records for 313 Churches.

285 Churches returned data in 2012, 284 in 2013.

267 Churches returned data in both years.

Of these not all provided Worshipping Community data.

16 Churches didn't provide a Worshipping Community Total in 2012, also 16 in 2013.

21 Churches didn't produce a WC Total in at least one of the two years.

Joiner & Leaver Totals were both zero for 57 Churches in 2012, 60 in 2013.

The 2012 Joiner and Leaver data does not affect the 2012 to 2013 cross check so 2012 churches with no Joiner or Leaver data have not been excluded.

Although it is possible that churches reported no Joiners or Leavers in 2013 because they had none this is unlikely and there is no way of knowing when this is the case and so I excluded all the cases where the Joiner and Leaver totals were both zero.

### **Sub total checks**

In the 2012 Leicester data there was a discrepancy between the recorded total and the sum of the sub totals in 16 cases, and in 25 cases for the 2013 data.

There was a discrepancy in either 2012 or 2013 or both in 36 cases. Quite a few of these looked as if they might be keying errors. It is not possible to tell which is the correct data so I excluded all of these cases.<sup>200</sup>

Having excluded each of the above categories 179 church data sets remained for further analysis.

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<sup>200</sup> Some of the church returns will be counted as excluded for more than one reason, hence the numbers of entries excluded don't quite match the totals.

## Appendix 10 – Questionnaire Analysis Tables

These tables present the results of analysis of the questionnaire that are referred to in Chapter 5.

<u>Recorded vs Calculated WC Gap</u>	<u>2012 and 2013 WC answers compared</u>	<u>2012 and 2013 WC answers NOT compared</u>	<u>Total</u>
Both the same	4 (57%)	3 (43%)	7
+/- 1 or 2	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	5
+/- 3 to 10	13 (65%)	7 (35%)	20
<b>Less than 11 sub total</b>	<b>20 (63%)</b>	<b>12 (38%)</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Greater than 10</b>	<b>7 (32%)</b>	<b>15 (68%)</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>27 (50%)</b>	<b>27 (50%)</b>	<b>54</b>

**Table 1: Cross Tab of Questions 10: ‘Did you compare the 2012 and 2013 Worshipping Community answers?’ against WC Gap.**

<u>Recorded vs Calculated WC Gap</u>	<u>Used an Existing List</u>	<u>Made a new list</u>	<u>Made a Rough Estimate</u>	<u>Other</u>
Both the same	1 ( 4%)	3 (27%)	2 (18%)	1 (33%)
+/- 1 or 2	4 (17%)	0 ( 0%)	1 ( 9%)	0 ( 0%)
+/- 3 to 10	8 (33%)	5 (45%)	3 (27%)	1 (33%)
<b>Less than 11 sub total</b>	<b>13 (54%)</b>	<b>8 (72%)</b>	<b>6 (55%)</b>	<b>2 (66%)</b>
<b>Greater than 10</b>	<b>11 (46%)</b>	<b>3 (27%)</b>	<b>5 (45%)</b>	<b>1 (33%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>

**Table 2: Cross Tab of Question 5b: ‘How did you decide who was in the Worshipping Community?’ against WC gap.**

<u>How Easy?</u>	<u>Total</u>
Impossible	4 ( 6%)
Difficult	7 (11%)
Took some thought and effort	34 (52%)
Quite easy	16 (24%)
Very easy	5 ( 7%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>

**Table 3: Frequency table of responses to Question 7: ‘How easy did you find it to complete the Worshipping Community questions?’**

<u>How Easy / Useful</u>	<u>Very Useful</u>	<u>Useful</u>	<u>Not Useful</u>	<u>Total</u>
Impossible	0	0	4 (100%)	4
Difficult	0	1 (17%)	5 ( 83%)	6
Took some thought and effort	5 (17%)	15 (50%)	10 ( 33%)	30
Quite easy	4 (27%)	8 (53%)	3 ( 20%)	15
Very easy	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	2 ( 40%)	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>11 (18%)</b>	<b>25 (42%)</b>	<b>24 ( 40%)</b>	<b>60</b>

**Table 4: Cross tab of difficulty completing WC section (Q7) against usefulness of the WC section (Q14)**

Mark Wigglesworth  
MA in Theology and Ministry  
DISSERTATION  
September 2014

Cranmer Hall, St John's College, Durham