

**Sustaining churchgoing young
Anglicans in England and Wales:
Assessing influence of the home**

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Structure

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Method
- Results
- Discussion

ABSTRACT

Abstract

Building on a fruitful stream of research within Australia and the UK, the present study drew on two samples of young Anglicans: 2,019 9- to 11-year-old students attending church primary schools in Wales, and 2,323 11- to 16-year-old students attending church secondary schools mainly in England.

Abstract

The data demonstrated that young Anglicans who practised their Anglican identity by attending church did so primarily because their parents were Anglican churchgoers. Moreover, young Anglican churchgoers were most likely to keep going to church if their churchgoing parents (especially mother) talked with them about their faith.

Abstract

The implications from these findings, for an Anglican Church strategy for ministry among children and young people, is that alongside resourcing local churches and promoting deeply Christian schools, it may also be wise for the Church to invest in the education and formation of churchgoing Anglican parents.

INTRODUCTION

- **Challenge**
- **Following the statistics**
 - **Theory**
 - **Research results**

Facing the challenge

From Anecdote to Evidence (2014)

The church is declining because generations of churchgoers are not being replaced and because the church is not keeping young people in their teens and into adulthood. (p. 23)

From Anecdote to Evidence (2014)

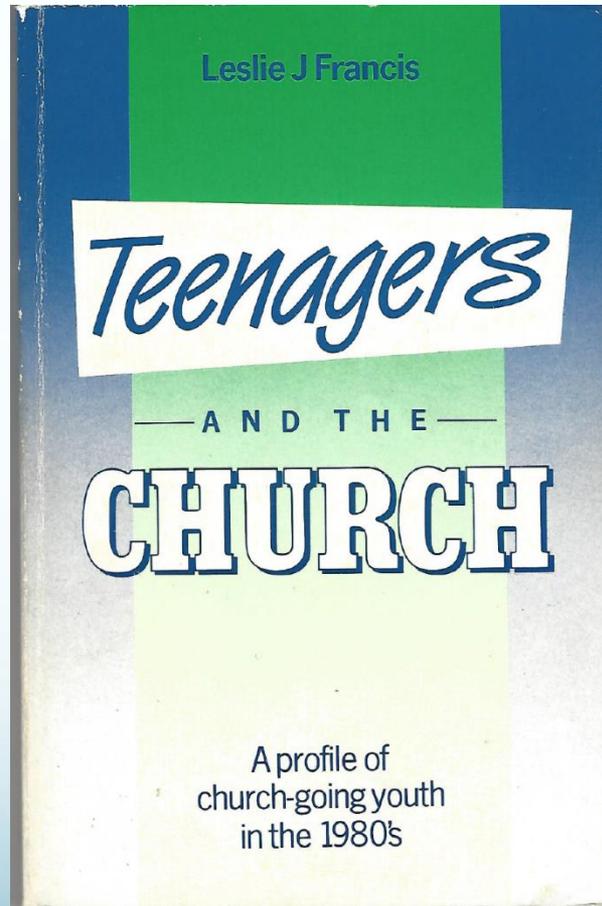
This conclusion was supported by data drawn from the UK household longitudinal study 'Understanding Society'. These data appear to show that 1.4% of those aged between 20 and 24, and 1.7% of those aged between 25 and 29 regard themselves as self-identified Anglicans who attend church at least monthly, compared with 10.6% of those aged between 70 and 79.

From Anecdote to Evidence: Recommendation

There is an urgent need to focus on children, young people and their parents and a challenge to identify how the church can best invest in people, programmes and strategies which will encourage young people actively to continue exploring faith. (p. 24)

Following the statistics

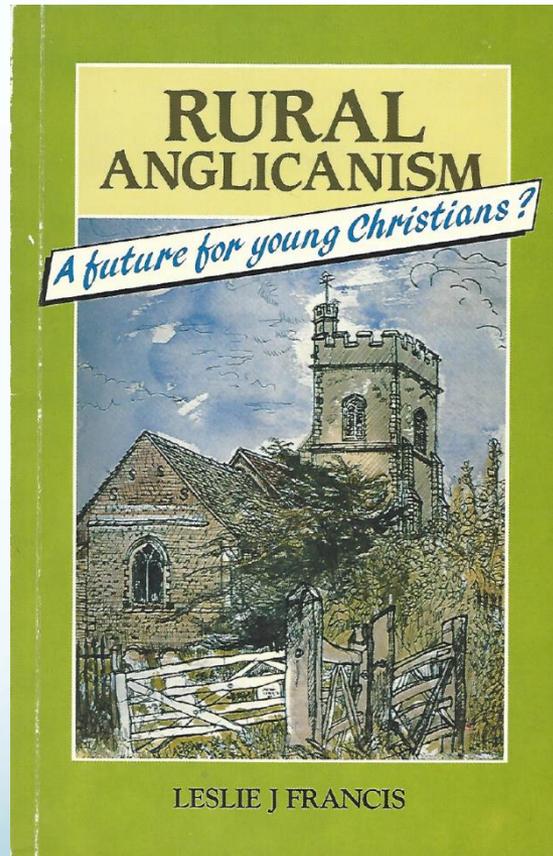
Teenagers and the Church (1984)



Teenagers and the Church

- British Council of Churches
- Survey of 1,328 teenage churchgoers
- The drift away
- The Anglican Church has greatest loss

Rural Anglicanism (1985)



Rural Anglicanism: A future for young Christians?

- An anonymous rural diocese
- The obvious gaps
- Children
- Young people
- Parents
- Resources

Continuing in the Way (1991)

CONTINUING IN THE WAY

Children, Young People and the Church

by Leslie J Francis and David W Lankshear



THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

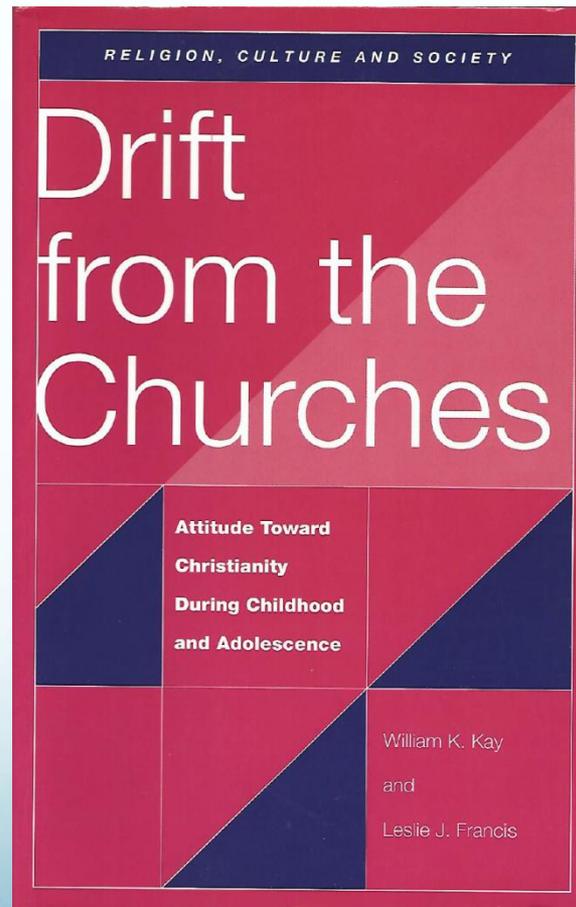
Continuing in the Way

- 7,157 churches
- 24 dioceses and one archdeaconry

Counting young people

- 2-5 3.1%
- 6-9 6.8%
- 10-13 5.9%
- 14-17 3.2%
- 18-21 1.7%

Drift from the Churches (1996)



Drift from the Churches

- Five surveys
- 1974
- 1978
- 1982
- 1986
- 1990

Exploring theory

The three agencies

The Catholic Church has consistently spoken of the partnership among three primary agencies in the Christian education and the Christian formation of the young. In this partnership, home, church and school stand side-by-side. The priority among these three primary agencies may emerge differently in different social and educational contexts.

Pope John Paul the Second

In our own time, in a world often alien and even hostile to faith, believing families are of primary importance as centres of living, radiant faith. For this reason, the Second Vatican Council, using an ancient expression, calls the family the *Ecclesia domestica*. It is in the bosom of the family that parents are ‘by word and example ... the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children’. (*Familiaris Consortio* 1656)

Care for the Family (2016)

To encourage parents to nurture their children in the faith within the home is a new concept and the churches need to help to understand why this is necessary and why it is their responsibility. (p. 16)

Passing on Faith (2016)

‘research reveals that high-quality relationships in the home are key to successful faith formation’ (p. 12), the faith commitment of both parents matters, that grandparents play an important part too, and that modelling is key in the sense that parents need to be people of faith as well as to practise faith.

Church of England responds

- *Rooted in the Church* (2016)
- Explores the congregation

Church of England responds

- *Deeply Christian, serving the common good* (2016)
- Explores church schools

Church of England responds

- *Growing faith: Churches, schools and households* (2019)
- ‘research shows that parents have the largest influence on their children in matters of faith (para 11)

Recent research

Bellamy, Mou, and Castle (2005)

- NCLS 2001
- 10,101 attenders between 10 and 14
- Parents do more than churchgoing
- Family prayer time
- Encourage devotional life for children
- Talk with children

Francis and Craig (2006)

- CIM 2001
- 10,153 attenders between 8 and 14
- Parental support by conversation and example at home
- Peer group

Francis, Penny, and Powell (2018)

- NCLS 2011
- 6,256 attenders between 8 and 14
- Both parents attend
- Parents discuss faith
- Parents do not force attendance

Francis (2019)

- Religious Diversity Project
- 645 Anglicans between 13 and 15
- Parents are churchgoers
- Parents talk about faith at home

METHOD

Study 1: Primary schools

Study 2: Secondary schools

Procedure 1

- 88 Church in Wales primary schools
- 3,142 students, year 5 and year 6
- 2,019 self-identified as Anglican

Procedure 2

- 10 Christian ethos secondary schools
- 6,749 students, year 7 through year 11
- 2,223 self-identified as Anglicans

Measures

- Church attendance
- Parental church attendance
- Home engagement
- Personality

Analysis

- Step-wise regression
- Personal factors
- Psychological factors
- Parental practice
- Home engagement

RESULTS

Core findings

- Sex*
- Age*
- Personality*
- Mother's attendance*
- Father's attendance*
- Conservation with mother*
- Conversation with father
- Conversation with grandparents

DISCUSSION

How does this change our thinking?

- Parents need to be in the driving seat
- Parents need to influence congregations
- Parents need to influence church school

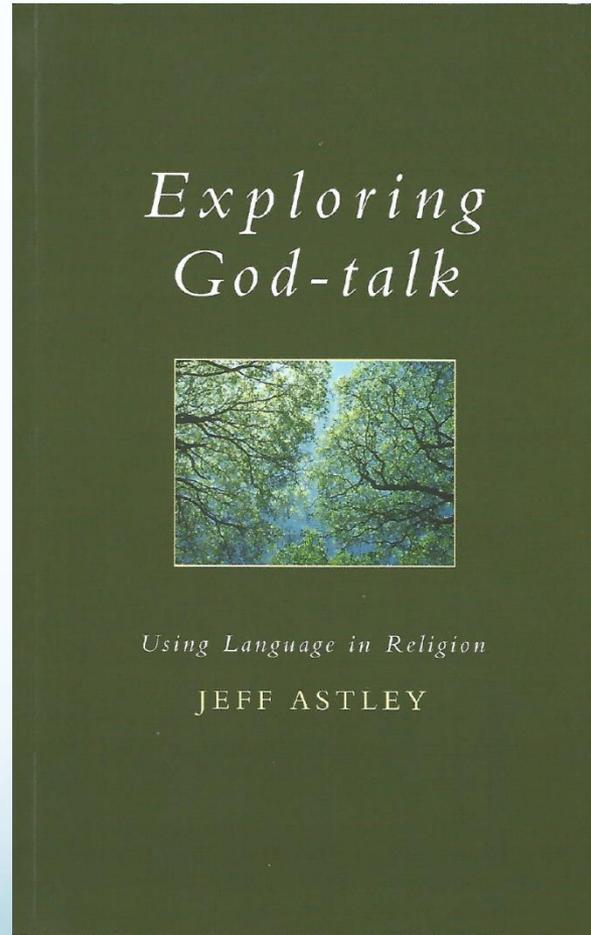
How can parents be empowered?

- Church needs to work effectively with parents who want to make this a priority
- Not a ministry with the 5,000, but with the 12

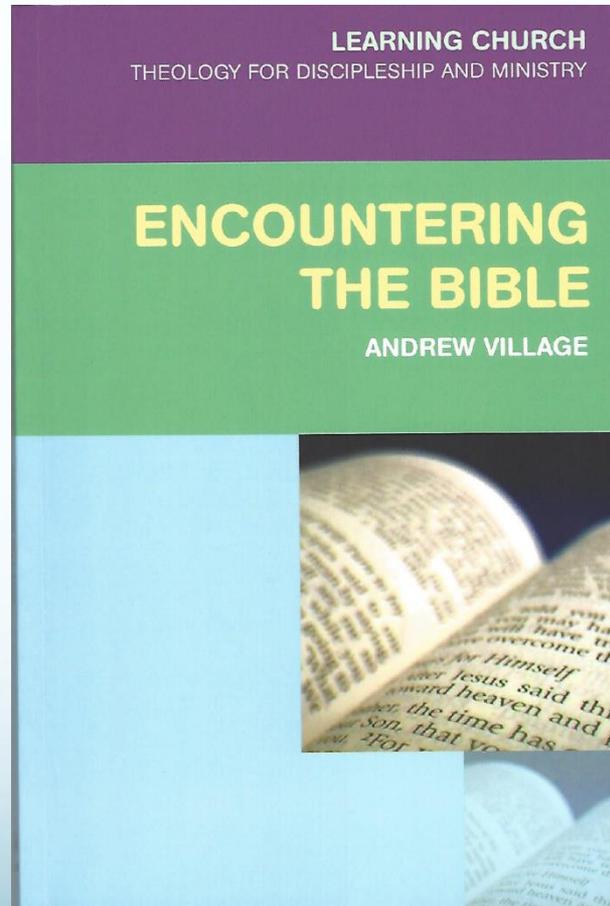
How can parents engage with discipleship learning?

- An experiment in Newfoundland
- An experiment in Cyprus and the Gulf

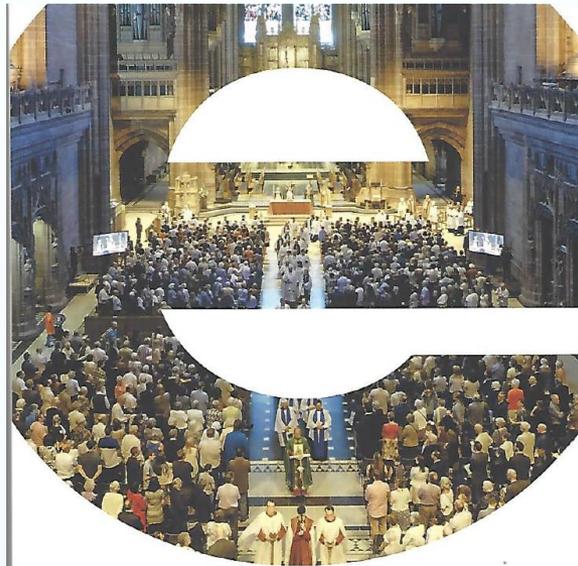
Resources for Exploring Faith



Resources for a Learning Church



Resources for Ordinary Theology



**everyday
public worship**

susan h. jones

Resources for connecting with local churches

- Resources for transforming households from being spectators at the Parish Eucharist into active participants

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