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### **The views of Church in Wales clergy on Christian initiation : 1993-2003**

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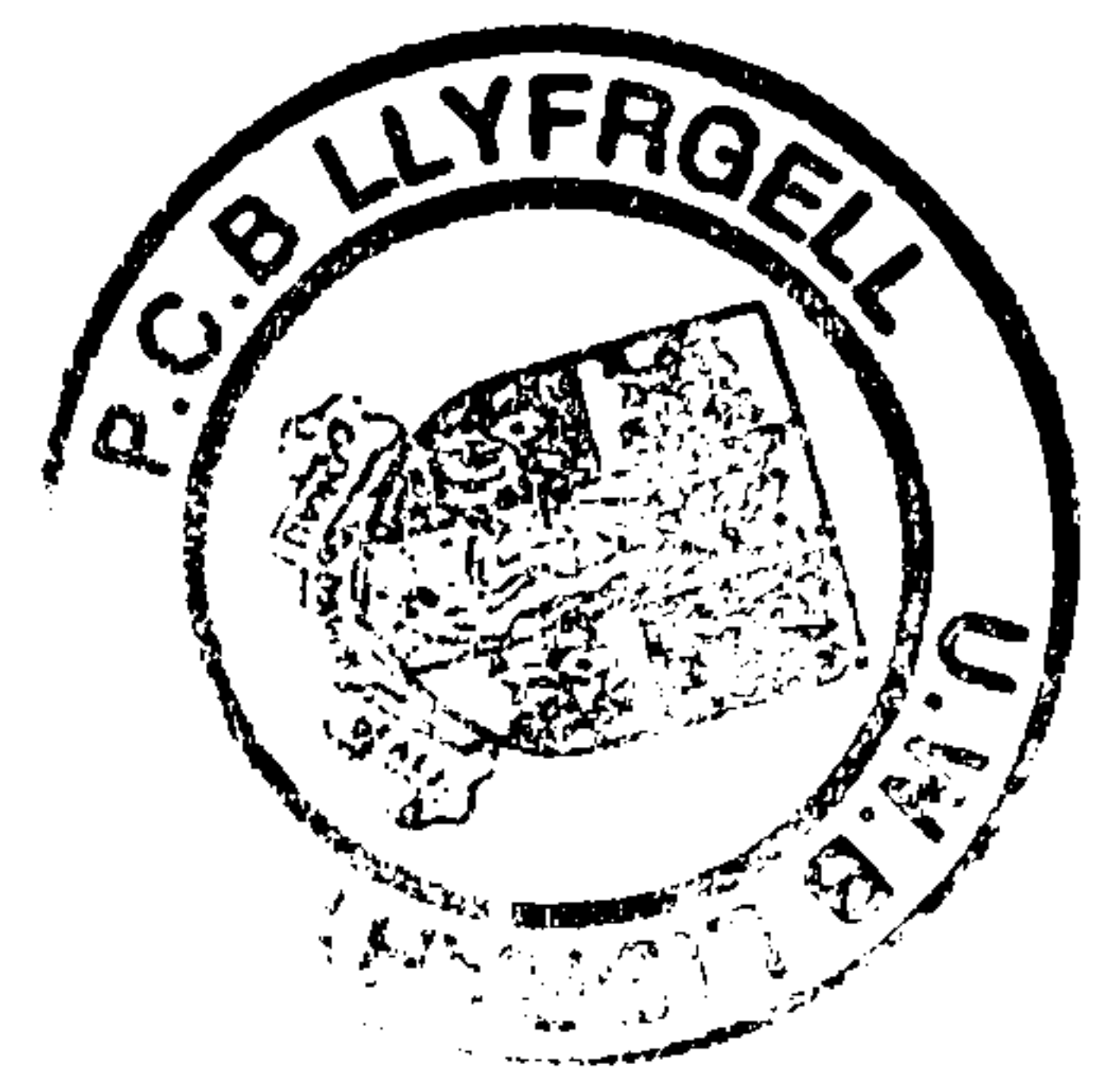
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**THE VIEWS OF CHURCH IN WALES CLERGY  
ON CHRISTIAN INITIATION: 1993 – 2003**



Revd Dr Keith Trevor Littler  
Master of Theology (with Distinction)  
University of Oxford, 1999

# **THE VIEWS OF CHURCH IN WALES CLERGY ON CHRISTIAN INITIATION: 1993 – 2003**

## **SUMMARY**

In 2003, Church in Wales clergy were surveyed in order to ascertain their views on Christian initiation. The resulting data are compared with data collected from a fifty percent sample of Church in Wales clergy carried out in 1993. Analysis shows that significant changes have taken place in respect of some of the views of clergy on initiation over the decade. In particular, the evidence suggests that while a high percentage of clergy supported an open baptismal policy in 1993, an even higher percentage support such a policy in 2003. The data also suggest that a higher percentage of clergy in 2003 are supportive of both children and adults being admitted to Holy Communion without prior confirmation but not without preparation. There is little evidence to suggest that these views are either age-related or sex-related. There is, however, evidence to suggest that the views of clergy are influenced by their rural or urban location while many of the views of clerics would appear to differ according to their church orientation and/or theological persuasion. Most notably, evangelical clergy tend to express many significant points of difference in viewpoint to catholic clergy and the differences between evangelical and catholic clergy have widened between 1993 and 2003. These changes may be indicative of a fragmentation taking place in the Church in Wales but they could be evidence of God speaking to his Church at a time of change. Either way, they need to be monitored and examined.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE**

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## **INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE**

The prime directive of the present research project is to complement and bring up to date, previous studies of initiation into the Christian Church, especially as witnessed by ordained clergy of the Church in Wales.

In 1993, a sample of 224 stipendiary parochial clergy from the Church in Wales were surveyed regarding their views on baptism and confirmation (Thomas, 1994). Views about baptism were requested in respect of open baptism policy, restrictive baptism policy, infant and adult baptism, baptism and pastoral care, baptism liturgy and baptism theology. Views about confirmation were requested concerning the admission of children to Communion prior to confirmation and a number of related matters. The sample were also requested to complete the short-form Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, together with an index of mystical orientation and the Francis Psychological Type Scales.

Subsequent discussion of Thomas' work concluded that the findings were sufficiently important, and initiation so vital to the life of the Church, that practical benefit would accrue from the study being replicated after a delay of a decade (Francis, Littler and Thomas, 2000). The present study is a faithful response to this recommendation. At the same time, an opportunity is provided to consider the views of Church in Wales parochial stipendiary clergy on initiation into the Christian Church against a backcloth of change in many aspects of the life of the Christian Church.

The Right Reverend Michael Bourke (2004) urges us to go behind exclusive theological positions to try to understand the concerns of those with whom we may disagree. He is, in fact, writing in relation to



inter-faith concerns but the point holds good within the more restricted confines of the Church in Wales where not all clergy agree on such matters as baptismal policy and access to Communion. The importance of such matters is stressed by Avis (2003a) who goes so far as to say that, "Strict baptismal policies ... are a chief culprit of pastoral damage ..." (p 116). The widespread alienation from churchgoing that may result from such pastoral damage is fully discussed by Richter and Francis (1998) and reiterated by Billings (2005). Avis (2003c) claims that several research studies help us to build up a picture of what unchurched people believe and think but little research evidence is available on what they think the Church believes and teaches. There is, Avis claims, "... an issue about the general invisibility and inaudibility of clergy" (Avis, 2003c, p xii). The present study attempts to look behind the stated theological policies of the Church in Wales, in respect of initiation, to consider what clergy actually believe and teach and make their views more audible. To this extent it is hoped that the findings may prove of value to ordained clergy and of interest to the unchurched, while providing an incentive to those engaged in research who may wish to pursue these, and related matters, further.

The questionnaire employed in the present study largely replicates the questionnaire distributed by Thomas a decade earlier. A substantial quantity and range of information has in consequence been collected. A considerable amount of the resulting data is, however, omitted from the following discussion in order to concentrate on issues of central importance. These central issues are deemed to be the beliefs and practices of Church in Wales clerics towards baptism and confirmation at the present time together with an assessment of the extent of change in the views held by clerics in respect of these issues over the period from 1993 to 2003.

To this end, Chapter Two sets the backcloth to the discussion by reviewing the relevant literature. The literature is thus reviewed in so far as it throws light on the changes that have taken place in public-



attitudes towards Christian religion over the last decade; on the history, development and biblical basis of initiation into the Christian Church; and on previous research studies concerned with initiation into the Anglican faith. Chapter Three is designed to get to know the respondents to the present study. It therefore examines the methodology employed in obtaining data and shows something of the personal circumstances of respondents. This is important because it establishes and details the nature of the survey population from which the data on baptism and confirmation is deduced. Chapters Four and Five set out and assess Church in Wales clerics' understanding of baptism and confirmation respectively. Chapter Six extends further the discussion of cleric's understanding of initiation today by analysing clerics' responses by sex, age, parish location, church orientation and theological persuasion. An important conclusion arising from the findings about clerics' views on initiation is summarised in Chapter Seven.

The present study represents a response, more than 60 years on, to Vidler's concern that detailed discussion on initiation into the Christian Church has been neglected precisely because of an unavowed and maybe unconscious fear of the embarrassing consequences that might ensue from close examination of it (Vidler, 1940). While Vidler's comments would appear to have triggered a notable response in the following decades, it is by no means clear that the force of his words has lessened with time. Indeed, it may well be claimed that it is now more vital than ever that the Church in Wales, its bishops, clerics and laity, should be open to, and aware of, the views of those clerics who currently exercise the practical application of initiating new members into the family and faith of the Church.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

## CHAPTER TWO

### BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

Avis (2003a) has suggested that Anglican clergy need pastoral antennae sensitive to unspoken messages of parishioners' happiness or unhappiness and the ability to explain, with simple clarity and unwearied patience, the reason for the church's policy on a given matter. While clergy might well agree with the need to possess sensitive pastoral antennae, they might, however, suggest that the business of explaining, with simple clarity, the Church's policy on (say) initiation into the Anglican Church, suffers from more than one problem. First, it is by no means the case that the Church's policy on baptism and confirmation is constant and open to be explained with simple clarity. Second, it would appear from research studies that clergy do not, in all instances, either support or apply the Church's policy. Third, notable and searching changes have taken place in society in recent decades, and these changes serve to exert a fundamental influence on the place of religion in society and not least on the way in which initiation is perceived by the Church, by clergy and by parishioners.

Something of the difficulty of approaching these problems was summarized by Archbishop Robert Runcie in his retiring Presidential Address to the General Synod of the Church of England in 1990:

Confronted by the wistful, half believing and the seeking, we know what it is to minister to those who relate to the faith of Christ in unexpected ways. We do not write off hesitant and inadequate responses to the gospel. Ours is a church of the smoking flax, of the mixture of wheat and tares. Critics may say that we blunt the edge of the gospel and become Laodician (Runcie, 1990, p 1042).



Robert Runcie's successor, Dr George Carey, would appear to carry this sentiment further, when reflecting on the national response to the death of the Princess of Wales in August 1997. In a public lecture he advocated a way forward for the Church which made available the beauty of its buildings and liturgy, in order to build bridges between peoples' innate spiritual needs and the life of the Church (Carey, 1997). George Carey's successor, Dr Rowan Williams, apparently is obliged to continue in the same broad vein through his efforts to placate catholic and evangelical clerics on the matter of homosexuality and liberal and conservative clerics on the matter of whether Muslims can go to heaven (Williams, 2004). Indeed, Conrad (2005) describes Rowan Williams' *The Truce of God* (Williams, 2005), as an endless attempt at reconciling seemingly opposing contradictions. Successive Archbishops, it would appear, have for some considerable time been engaged in a process of coming to terms with an identifiable cleft between the formalized teaching of the Christian Church and the faith of the populace.

The Dean of Southwark Cathedral continues the debate in his introduction to a collection of papers which attempt to assess the relevance of John Robinson's *Honest to God*, forty years on (Slee, 2004a). This new work seeks to ask how far the issues raised in *Honest to God* (Robinson, 1963) have impacted on the Church in 2004 and raises the fundamental question of how far religion has been reduced to ethics (Hart, 2004).

Riggs (2003), takes up the theme and strives to find common ground between Christianity and the moral issues of the day. For Riggs, Christianity and secularization must learn from each other, without complete acceptance or rejection of one or the other.

It is probably logical to attempt to tread this middle-road and a number of authors currently endeavour to make a similar point. Grainger (2004), for example, maintains that the way forward for the Anglican



Church is to embrace the secular world, not by surrendering to its values but by working creatively with it and by responding to it with love. Page (2004) makes a similar point by projecting us forty years into the future and forecasts the devastating outcome resulting from the present day unwillingness to embrace with the challenges of contemporary culture. Hobson (2005) insists that Protestantism has a unique ability to reconcile Christianity and secular values and cites this as a fundamental difference between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches.

In an earlier study of secularization, Gilbert (1980) argued that churches as social organizations are effective only when their own structures mirror those of the societies they seek to serve. He maintains that for churches to thrive, “They must adapt themselves to the basic social divisions and settlement patterns of their constituencies” (p 80). Gilbert castigates the churches for failing to respond adequately to a changing and increasingly secular society and he summarises his conclusion in the title of his book, *The Making of Post-Christian Britain*.

Newbigin (1991) presumably supports the essence of Gilbert’s comment and expresses the view that there is nothing sacred to society today. He maintains that religion is no longer seen as a source of knowledge about reality and is regarded rather as a mere agency of beneficial values alongside other such agencies. For Newbigin, Christian beliefs are no longer part of universally accepted truth. Avis (1999), while appreciating the relevance of the point, maintains that Newbigin failed to do justice to more subtle and elusive elements in the expression of Christian belief. In his later work (Avis, 2003a), Avis insists that the sacred persists strongly, and that it comes to focus mainly in family and group activities which rehearse the significant stories that give meaning to human life and it enacts these in significant ceremonial activity. He cites, as a key manifestation of this sense of the sacred, the great milestones of life; those transformations



of being that are sanctified and celebrated sacramentally in the occasional offices in their role as rites of passage. When such actions are affirmed in the Church's public discourse, in liturgy, in preaching and in teaching, so they play a vital role in promoting a more Christian vision of society.

If Avis is right, and there is no reason to suggest otherwise, then the liturgical practices that support and accompany the occasional offices associated with the rites of passage, most notably the sacrament of initiation into the Christian Church, warrant detailed and careful study at any time but most particularly in an age of change and against the background of a society described as post-Christian. Billings (2005) gives further emphasis to the point by suggesting that the present tendency for fewer people to be married in church means that the Christian baptism service has, for many couples, become the main public acknowledgement of their commitment to each other. Viewed this way, initiation may be seen as an increasingly significant rite within the structure of the Anglican Church.

Norman (2004) would appear to agree and stresses the importance, at this time, of studying the formal structures of the Anglican Church so as to seek out the sacred values and practices that remain evident in what he calls a godless world. The present study, and the study of Thomas (1994) of a decade previous, endeavour to undertake just such a study. In order to appreciate the significance of any comparisons that may be drawn between these two studies, it is, however, first necessary to consider the changes that have occurred during that same decade in social attitudes toward religion. It is also necessary to consider the historical basis from which the present position regarding initiation has emerged as well as recent research findings concerning initiation into the Christian Church. These issues will be discussed broadly but with special reference, where relevant, to the Church in Wales.



## Changing attitudes toward religion

The decade from 1993 to 2003 has been marked by a debate concerning the relationship between theology and post-modernity. Three main areas of distinctive literature have emerged, which may be labelled as the American, the French and the British reflections upon this debate. The American contribution tends to be a complex mixture varying from a liberal acceptance of post-modernity to an opposition by those who feel that post-modernity should be held at bay. The French contribution would appear to represent a more philosophical response to the questions posed by post-modernity. The British literature, by contrast, is typified by that which is indicative of a stronger radical orthodoxy and which sees the secular world as 'failed theology'.

There is a generalized view that organized religion in England and Wales has severely declined to the point where it is largely overlooked and ignored. It would seem that a cultural attachment to Christianity lives on, but Monica Furlong (1997) in her comprehensive review of the state of religion in Britain summarises the situation in the same way as Grace Davie (1994) by saying that many people profess belief but do not take part in organized religion. A similar picture was produced by the *Soul of Britain Survey*, carried out for the BBC in 2000 (Meyrick, 2000), which concluded that two out of every three people in Britain still believe in God, despite the fact of a decline in the numbers who say they actually belong to a religion. Billings (2005), describes those who profess belief but do not regularly attend church, as 'cultural' Christians. Richmond (2005) is less sure that the term 'Christian' is a relevant label for such people. She draws attention to the extent to which our society has become increasingly characterized by a pluralistic 'pick and mix' blend of belief systems, values and lifestyles. She goes on to make the point that, "The second most frequently visited web sites (after porn) are those concerned with the mystical and spiritual" (p 8). Heelas and Woodhead (2005) draw a similar



conclusion from their empirical study of Kendal. Sacks (2005) writes from a Jewish perspective, but comments more generally, when he maintains that the 'social' dimension of religion, that is the 'giving' aspect of religion, is being eclipsed by a rising interest in New Age Spirituality. Pecklers (2003b) writes as a Roman Catholic in commenting on the breakdown of the stable parish community. Voas (2003) puts it this way, "Britain, in short, may still be Christian in some sense but its identity is increasingly secular" (p 103).

Cowling (2001) traces the deliquescence of the Anglican regime created at the reformation and shows a slow irregular but definite erosion of English Christianity ever since. He describes the transformation of England and Wales into a secular state guided by a public doctrine which expresses an egalitarian post-Christian consensus. The notion of a post-Christian Britain, is it seems, nothing new. Neither is it necessarily a notion specific to Britain or to Anglicanism. In 1975, in a letter to Roman Catholics world-wide, Pope Paul VI made reference to a rupture between the Gospel message and the prevailing culture (Pope Paul VI, 1975). Brown (2000), however, disputes the notion of a long and gradual decline to secularization in Britain and suggests that the starting point can really be traced to the swinging sixties. Martin (2003) is inclined to agree, at least to the extent of suggesting that the sixties gave a boost to the migration of the sacred outside the churches and into a whole new set of often private, non-institutional contexts.

In any event, through the title of his book, *The Making of Post-Christian Britain*, Gilbert (1980) coins a phrase that is descriptive of changing attitudes towards religion. The phrase is reiterated in the title of two books by Stuart Murray, *Post-Christendom* (Murray, 2004) and *Church after Christendom* (Murray, 2005) just as it was repeated in the sub-title of Avis' book, *A Church Drawing Near: spirituality and mission in post-christian culture* (Avis, 2003a). It may be supposed that Avis was influenced in determining this sub-title by the results of the 1990



*European Values Survey* (Timms, 1992) which concluded that only about 43% of people trust the Christian Church, giving the Church the same rating as the civil service and somewhat less than the educational system (47%). Avis describes this statistic as, "...one of the most disturbing I have come across..." (Avis, 2003b, p 135).

Trust is not the same thing as belief, of course, and despite the subtitle of Avis' book (Avis, 2003a), his views are positive and optimistic in all he sees and recommends concerning the place of the Christian Church in a post-modern, secular and post-christian culture. This does not, however, prevent the media from latching on to a 'catchy phrase' and using the term 'post-christian' almost as an aside, to describe the present time. By way of example, on twenty-seventh March 2004, a Radio Wales programme concluded a discussion about the state of the political parties in Wales, by describing the 'present day' as the post-christian era, implying that Christianity in Wales is past tense (Radio Wales 2004). By contrast, only a few days after this particular Radio Wales broadcast, the Times (Riddell and Gledhill 2004) reported the results of a Populus Poll, conducted by telephone between second and fourth April 2004 specifically for the Times, in which 63% of the 1,045 people interviewed claimed Britain to be a Christian country. There is a correlation in the Populus findings, between age and the perception of whether or not Britain remains a Christian country. It would seem that 48% of those aged 18-24 years take this view while the figure for 55-64 year olds is 72% and for those aged over 65 years the figure is even higher at 75%.

The conclusions of the Populus poll concerning the total number of people who describe themselves as Christian is broadly in line with the report of the findings of the 2001 *Home Office Citizenship Survey* (O'Beirne, 2004). The report provides for the first time insights into identity and religion, experiences of religious discrimination and religion as a driver of social and civic participation and attitudes. To this extent, it is, therefore, a source of key information to inform policy



on government-faith relations. Using data from over 15,000 interviews with people in England and Wales, the report shows that 74% of people described themselves as Christians. This is actually slightly higher than the 72% shown following the 2001 population census (Census Office, 2003). Hunt (2002) questions the assumption that this necessarily implies a resulting social cohesion and points out that groups can be divided on the basis of religious affiliation as well as united.

The question of whether the views and actions of people who are religious result in greater social and civic participation is a controversial one. Certainly Halman and Pettersson (2001) felt that religion and social participation are related. Putnam (1993) on the other hand denied such a relationship and concluded that religion can actually provide an alternative to community and civic participation.

*The Home Office Citizenship Survey* found no statistical significance to either support or deny Putnam's conclusion. In general, however, the report of the survey (O'Beirne, 2004) does appear to confirm that religion has relevance for the personal lives of people in England and Wales today and while this is more true of some non-Christian faiths than the Christian faith, it remains that Christian belief is held to be sufficiently significant in shaping present day society that the government needs to be aware of its relevance in policy making matters. The study is being repeated at two yearly intervals with this in mind.

The Populus Survey (Riddell and Gledhill, 2004) supports other statistical analysis (Brierley, 2003, p 2.3) in claiming that the percentage of those who describe themselves as Christians does not translate into church attendance. The Populus Survey found that 37% of respondents said that they would go to church at some point over the Easter weekend of 2004. If anything, this figure is almost certainly an exaggeration. Bruce (1996) cites sources and comprehensive



studies that suggest that when people are asked, 'how often do you go to church', they tend to give a result suggesting twice as many as actually can be counted entering church for any given event. Furlong (1997) would clearly agree and makes a similar point (p 216). It has to be said, however, that other studies, especially those from the United States, are even more unreliable in this respect and Hadaway, Marler and Chaves (1993) have shown that the gap between people's claimed and actual levels of church attendance is probably greater in the USA than in Britain. It would seem that studies of attendance based on the comments of individual members of the public do not provide reliable statistics of the number of churchgoers let alone of religious belief. Even so, they continue to be presented as a guide to religious activity in society.

Brierley (2003, p 2.24) claims that in the year 2000 it is reported that 7.7% of the population of Wales attended church on Sundays. The comparative figures for the rest of the United Kingdom were 7.3% for England, 11.9% for Scotland and 7.7% for the UK as a whole. These figures are, of course, for all Christian denominations and they represent a decrease of 1,100 people a week for the period commencing in 1980 and projected to 2005 for the United Kingdom.

Statistics of attendance released by the Church of England tend to be more optimistic. In January 2004 the Church of England reported that monthly attendance by children and young persons showed an increase of 1% in 2002 compared with 2001 (Church of England, 2004a). More detailed statistics released in September 2004 (Church of England, 2004b), confirmed an over-all decline in attendance in 2002 but at a lower rate than previously supposed. Indeed, if attendance at occasional offices, such as weddings, is included, the report estimates that 86% of adults in England attended a service in church in 2002. Unfortunately, the method used by the Church of England for the collection of attendance statistics is probably seriously flawed and the report's reference to an increase of 1.7% in the number



of confirmations is probably more revealing than the reported 3.7% decrease in the average Sunday attendance.

Barley (2005) reports that for the first time in living memory there is evidence of an increase in churchgoing in some dioceses in England. Most significantly, she makes the point that attendance seems to increase where churches reach out to their communities and she cites baptism as one important aspect of outreach. The question of outreach through initiation and its relation to church attendance is, therefore, clearly important. Francis and Lankshear (1997) found that rural churches which confirm adults witness increase in the number of adults who attend Sunday services. More recently, an extensive United Kingdom research project (Let the People Speak, 2005), concluded that the reported decline in home visiting by some Anglican clergy is a significant causative factor in reduced church attendance. Making the arrangements for baptisms and confirmations tends to generate the sort of home visiting and pastoral care by clergy which many respondents to the *Let the People Speak Survey* feel is currently lacking. The survey reports a strong support for the notion that, "... one of the best ways to get the Church back on its feet (is) to get the clergy back on theirs" (Let the People Speak, 2005, p 36).

Statistics of attendance released by the Church in Wales in 2004 are guardedly optimistic and show a significantly lower rate of decrease in 2002-2003 than figures recorded for the previous seven years. While average Sunday attendance fell by 30% between 1990 and 2002, the average Sunday attendance figure for 2003 shows a 1% decrease between 2002 and 2003 (Looking Forward, 2004).

A poll of almost 1000 adults, commissioned by the Welsh television channel S4C was also optimistic in its conclusions (Beaufort Research, 2004). The survey was designed to coincide with a television series on the centenary of the *Welsh Revival* and found that both belief in God and attendance at places of worship in Wales, especially among Welsh



speakers, were stronger than expected. The survey concluded that overall 60% of women in Wales claim to believe in God compared with 47% of men, but that the figure rises to 75% for women aged over 45 years. The survey further found that when both sexes and all adult ages are taken together, 57% of Welsh speaking adults claim to believe in God, compared with 53% of non-Welsh speaking adults while 28% of Welsh speaking adults claim to attend a place of worship regularly compared with 17% of non-Welsh speaking adults.

Although statistics of church attendance are questionable, church attendance, as we have seen, is rightly or wrongly perceived as a marker of the state of Christianity in England and Wales, and its decline as an indicator of the decline in Christianity. It is understandable, therefore, that the media should feel able to use the term 'post-christian era' as an acceptable and realistic description of the present time, despite the more encouraging statistics recently released by both the Church of England and the Church in Wales.

The Archbishop of Wales in his Presidential Address to the Governing Body of the Church of Wales (Duggan 2004) drew attention to the dangers inherent both in real terms and in the resulting public perception of declining attendance figures, by reporting that the attendance figure for the Church in Wales is as low as 1.5% of the population of Wales: that is 43,000 from a population of 2,903,000. These figures are no doubt a matter of acute concern for church leaders. The reaction of the Archbishop of Wales and his stress on the need for radical changes in the structure of the Church is understandable and no doubt necessary and wise (Duggan, 2004). But yet, as the Right Reverend Nigel McCulloch, Bishop of Manchester, reminds us (McCulloch, 2003), it would be unwise to either assume that the Christian Church in England and Wales is undergoing a gentle demise and quiet retreat into a 'post-christian era', or assume that the census figures (Census Office 2003) which claim seven out of ten people to be Christians, indicate a continuing health.



Another Anglican Bishop, the Right Reverend Richard Harries, suggests that, for many people, the fundamental problem is that they see so little sign of God (Harries, 2002). We take his point. Even so, the 2001 Population Census, which included a voluntary question on 'religious membership' for the first time in 150 years, produced the finding that 71.74% of the population of England and 71.90% of the population of Wales said they were Christians: a total of 37 million people in England and Wales (Census Office, 2003). Brierley (2003) claims that the majority of these 37 million Christian people in England and Wales have been baptized into the Christian Church (p 2.2). An analysis of the available statistics of births to those parents who would be eligible and the number of baptisms recorded in 2003 by the Church in Wales, supports the contention that approximately 72% of all persons who could logically be baptised into the Church in Wales are baptised into the Church in Wales (Social Trends, 2004; Population Trends, 2004).

Francis (2003) has found the assumptions underlying the inclusion of a question on religion in the 2001 population census to be seriously flawed. It would be unwise, therefore, to draw conclusions from the relevant results of the 2001 Census. Francis exercised a significant role in persuading the Office for National Statistics to include a 'religious question' in the 2001 Census. He expresses considerable disappointment, however, at the lost opportunity resulting from the refusal of the Office for National Statistics to subdivide the Christian category in the census for England and Wales. Francis has also presented arguments for the significance for social research of religious affiliation, with particular reference to the concept of 'social capital' and its markers (Francis, 2003, p 50).

There is the further point that many people are brought up, as part of their family, to say that they are Christian despite only having a precursory knowledge of Christ and only a vague belief in God. It is frequently the case that only a single parent-figure has any interest in



the church, but yet they insist that the household each calls themselves as Christians and this may continue for generations. Wilkins (2003) draws attention to a culture in which people claim to be spiritual and not religious and that this culture in Britain is alarmingly ignorant about the Christian faith itself. Furlong (1997) insists that many people think that if they believe in God it follows that they are Christians. Such thinking may well muddy the waters of understanding about the state of Christian belief in Britain in the twenty first century. Avis (2003b) adds the additional factor that questions asked in many surveys, including some of those cited above, lack theological depth and may lead us to superficial conclusions. Even so, the individual who responded to the *Let the People Speak Survey* with the statement, "It is a myth to say that (the United Kingdom) has rejected Christianity, they simply haven't been told enough about it to either accept or reject it" (Let the People Speak, 2005, p 14) is probably indicating something sufficiently profound to warrant further exploration. Croft (2005) suggests that many people are asking questions but there is a significant mismatch between these questions and the kinds of answers the Church is perceived to be offering. Again, the comment is sufficiently profound to warrant further exploration.

None of this, however, alters the fact that there is most likely a greater proportion of baptised persons among the population of Wales than generally supposed and that initiation into the Church in Wales may well be a more credible criterion of Christian faith in Wales than Church attendance. This is despite the fact that figures issued by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales show that over the decade from 1993 to 2003, the total number of baptisms for the Church in Wales fell from 12,017 to 8,529 (Church in Wales, 2004b). In any event, the evolution of Christian initiation rites over time, changes in the function and place of such rites in contemporary society and the changing attitude of clerics towards baptism and confirmation, warrant detailed study.



## What is baptism?

While the number of people in both England and Wales who describe themselves as Christian is considerable and may be above most peoples' expectations, and while a substantial proportion of these people are baptised into the Christian faith, the question of what this actually means to the people concerned is questionable.

Parents who have their small children baptised often have an idea that baptism means introducing the baby into the Church, but few have any grasp of the Christological meaning of the Church as the mystical body of Christ (Avis 2003a). As Green (1987b) points out, parents often present themselves at the vicarage with an opening remark along the lines of 'we've come to see if you'll do our baby'. They are not looking for instruction about the theology of baptism, nor are they prepared to accept any stipulation that they should necessarily attend church regularly. Baptism and regular church attendance are viewed as unrelated issues and frequently justified by the contention that 'we are better Christians than some of those who go to church every week'. Such statements, Knight (1996) claims, reveal an entirely different understanding of initiation into the Christian Church than that of the clergy whom they ask to conduct the baptism.

Few contemporary parents are likely to quote from a different author of similar name (Knight 1995) who records how historically the rites of passage were deemed to do you good and bring good luck, although Saward (2004a) records equally superstitious views being held even up to the 1960s. Many would, however, report a surge of emotion and spiritual feeling on such occasions (Avis 2003a). They would also be inclined to be fully familiar with the premise of Dalby (1989), an advocate of open baptism, who commented that open baptism is the traditional practice of the Anglican Church and it should be the practice today. The comparative merits of 'fenced fonts or open doors'



(Francis, Littler and Thomas, 2000) will be discussed in a subsequent section. It is first necessary to examine a little more fully the historic context of initiation into the Christian Church in order to determine what is being enacted or acquired through baptism.

Although the baptism of Jesus as the inauguration of his messianic ministry was obviously unique yet from the time of the resurrection, as Noakes (1989) reminds us, it seems that baptism was the mark of becoming a Christian. As Noakes points out, it is reasonable to suppose that Christian baptism derived from the baptism of John. The content of the Christian rite was more significant, however, since it was not merely a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, as it was in John's case, but was also a means of sharing in Christ; of dying with him; of being baptised into him; of becoming a member of his body and receiving his spirit. In short, of becoming a Christian (Baker, 1967). Mark Speeks puts it perhaps over simplistically but nevertheless succinctly when he says that, "No matter what the theology of the different Churches, the vast majority baptise their members in exactly the same way ... In baptism we are all joined to Christ, and in some mystical but real way, joined to him for ever" (Speeks, 2005, p 14).

Baptism is thus the frontier between two entirely different modes of life. In baptism believers confess Christ as Saviour (Eaton, 1989). Certainly, this is the way Paul saw baptism (Romans, 10.9). Alongside his references to baptism into Christ Jesus (Romans, 6.3; Galatians, 3.27), Paul also speaks of baptism in the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians, 12.13). In Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, he describes Christians as those sealed with the promised Holy Spirit for the day of redemption (Ephesians, 1.13; Ephesians, 4.30). Presumably Paul is referring here to a 'sealing' through initiation into the Christian community. The point is discussed at some length by Porter and Cross (1999) in their tribute to R.E.O. White and his detailed studies of baptism and the New Testament.



It has been suggested by Cross (1954) that the First Letter of Peter is a baptismal homily and certainly there is a wealth of allusion in this epistle to the quality of Christian life made possible by the redemption achieved by Christ and made effective through baptism. Dunn (1970) goes further to say that it is likely that the author of Acts intends the imperative of the first letter of Peter to establish the pattern and norm for entry into the Christian Church: after his Pentecost sermon, the hearers said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts, 2.38). There are in fact, some inconsistencies in the accounts of initiation in Acts but yet underlying the ambiguities is the consistent theme that it is the reception of the gift of the Spirit which is the decisive mark of the Christian (Dunn, 1970; Packer, 1984).

Lazareth (1982) presumably agrees and maintains that those who are baptised are, "Pardoned, cleansed and sanctified by Christ and given, as part of their baptismal experience, a new ethical orientation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit" (p 18).

While Ellul (1989) refrains from providing a specific definition of baptism, he nevertheless opens his work on *The Presence of the Kingdom*, by describing what it means to be a Christian. The Bible, he claims, tells us that the Christian is *in* the world but not *of* it. This means that his or her thought, their life, their heart, are not controlled by the world and do not depend upon it, for they belong to the 'master'. The Christian is free from the fatality of the world, Ellul tells us, and as a result of this liberation by grace, can fight against the spiritual realities of the world. Ellul's profound description of what it means to be a Christian is a most adequate explanation of that which is expected of an individual as a result of their baptism into the Christian faith.



## **The baptism rite in the apostolic age**

Beasley-Murray (1972) has suggested that the early form of baptism rite will probably have consisted of three components: preparation, dipping in water and possibly anointing or the laying on of hands. With regard to preparation, it is difficult to determine how much elementary instruction was given the candidate before baptism. Carrington (1940) suggests that the ethical instruction in several of the Pauline epistles derives from baptismal catechisms and that 'preparation' was therefore probably quite considerable. Burnish (1999) is inclined to agree and sees instruction and preparation well established from an early date.

Certainly profession of belief was important and Kelly (1971) suggests that this was generally made by the candidates in direct response to a question put to them. Lampe (1967) on the other hand is less sure about the thoroughness of preparation and of the profession of belief and is inclined to suggest that the initiation rite originally consisted simply of water baptism and that laying on of hands came later. Dunn (1970), however, reminds us that the New Testament evidence strongly suggests that in some congregations at least, laying on of hands was an element and was the way whereby the Holy Spirit was conferred. Mitchell (1996) is persuasive in the case he presents for his conclusion that the evidence for laying on of hands as an integral part of the rite of initiation in the earliest period is much stronger than the evidence of anointing.

Johnson (2001), however, is also persuasive in drawing extensively on McDonnell (1999) to argue that the initiation rite for the first disciples was the fellowship meal they shared with Jesus, rather than a baptism rite, and it was only after this that the developing Church decided to institute initiation rites. It is a fair point to make and highlights the difficulty of making categorical statements concerning the transition in

the apostolic age from John's baptism of Jesus with water (Matthew, 3.13) to a rite of baptism associated with the notion that, "... he who comes after me ... will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Matthew, 3.11).

Neither is the matter made easier by the many references to the importance of 'faith' in the earliest baptismal rite. Lazareth (1982), for example, comments that baptism upon the personal profession of faith is the most clearly attested pattern of the New Testament documents. Indeed, the *World Council of Churches Faith and Order Paper No 84* (1977), maintained that Christian Churches are agreed that baptism cannot be conceived apart from faith, personal commitment and lifelong growth. More recently, the Church of England General Synod Report, *Common Worship: Initiation Services, Rites on the Way and Reconciliation and Restoration*, states:

Baptism is the sacramental beginning of the Christian life. The baptism of Jesus made visible the presence of God among us and revealed the coming Kingdom of God. For Jesus, his baptism represented not simply a beginning; it was a consecration to God's way of salvation. Therefore, for Christians today, baptism is more than a beginning; it is a mark of ownership and a sign of our calling, a sign to be recalled at each stage of our journey of faith (Church of England, 2004c, p 10).

The problem is that not only do such statements fail to contribute to the empirical analysis of baptism in the apostolic age, they raise important questions about what is meant by 'faith' and especially by the notion of 'journeys' or 'stages of faith' (Moseley, Jarvis and Fowler, 1992).

## **Christian initiation rites evolve**

By the first century AD, numerous allusions to initiation into the Christian Church and its effects are recorded but only two notable descriptions of the initiation rite are available; that in the Didache (the



teaching of the Apostles, dating from about 95 AD) and that of Justin (an early Christian Apologist of c100-c165 AD).

No doubt the details of the initiation rite varied from place to place but from the evidence provided by the Didache (Connolly, 1929) and that of Justin (Barnard, 1967; Staniforth, 1968) it is possible to note a number of interesting developments from the primitive rite: preparation for baptism had become more formally organised; the 'three-fold' baptism interrogation had become the norm and as the candidate assented to each question so they were dipped in water; baptism lead into the Eucharist. According to the Didache, "The procedure for baptizing, is as follows. After rehearsing all the preliminaries, immerse in running water...If no running water is available, immerse in ordinary (static) water. This should be cold, if possible, otherwise warm. If neither is practicable, then sprinkle three times on the head" (Connolly, 1929, pp 146-7).

The reference to 'sprinkling' does not appear to be repeated in the Bible (except in Ezekiel, 36.25) and may have meant to refer to 'pouring', although Doe (1998, p 243) makes it clear that pouring, sprinkling, immersion and submersion, are all lawful. Certainly the rubric in the 'Publick Baptism of Infants (Church of England, 1662) reads, "Then the priest shall dip (the child) in the water discreetly and warily...But if they certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon it." Haffner (2004) cites an Act of 1711, for the building of churches in London and which prescribes that fonts should be large enough for 'dipping', as evidence that such a practice was clearly recommended in preference to 'pouring'.

In neither the Didache nor Justin are we told who is the minister at the baptism and neither do either of these authorities mention the question of unction or the imposition of hands for imparting the Holy Spirit. Ratcliffe (1948) is of the view that the failure to mention this, at least in Justin's case, is no indication of its absence. On the question of the



minister at the rite, Whitaker (2003) suggests that irrespective of the views of the Didache or Justin, by the third century it had become increasingly the prerogative of the bishop and that by this time, in the west, the clear pattern of initiation, indicated by Hippolytus (Dix, 1968; Cumming, 1976) and Tertullian (Barnes, 1985; Rankin, 1995) had emerged. This involved the establishment of a catechumenate and detailed preparation for baptism: blessing the water, three-fold renunciation of the devil, three-fold dipping at a three-fold interrogation, anointing, laying-on of hands by the bishop, signing the cross, Eucharist.

Johnson (2002) claims that the catechumenate emerges most clearly in the fourth century, which is when Christianity had become established as the official religion of the Roman Empire. He maintains that we now suspect that it was a response to a system of Christian initiation that was breaking down. As it became fashionable to become a Christian, and actually advantageous to one's career and professional development, the Church must have noticed a decline in the spiritual fervour of those professing to be Christians. There seem to be, Johnson suggests, indications that the establishing of a more formal catechumenate was an invention aimed at addressing this particular problem rather than a long-standing institution in its own right. He asks, if our present day experiments with the catechumenate are a sign of modern desperation in an age with a similar problem?

Richards (1987) maintains that the initiation rite is a unity and one can see within the elements those actions which in time became a separate rite of confirmation. The situation was, however, always clouded by the question of whether infant baptism was justifiable or whether only adults should be baptized (Harmon, 1986). Baxter (1653) famously, but not necessarily convincingly, publicly argued a scriptural 'proof' of the occurrence of infant baptism and church membership.



Infant baptism, however, is criticized by Barth (2004) and criticized for several reasons: first, because, he claims, it is without biblical foundation; second, because it has led to the disastrous assumption that individuals are Christians by birth; third, because it weakens the link between baptism and discipleship, and thus its theological meaning is obscured.

Barth's criticisms of infant baptism are reminiscent of Bonhoeffer's notion of 'cheap grace' (Bonhoeffer, 1995). "Cheap grace", says Bonhoeffer, "is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance; baptism without discipleship" (p 44).

Bonhoeffer stresses the extent to which in baptism we become Christ's own possession and it is this that contrasts Christian baptism with the baptism of John and which, therefore, can never be repeated. This element of finality in baptism throws significant light on the question of infant baptism. The problem for Bonhoeffer is not whether infant baptism is baptism at all, but that the final and unrepeatable character of infant baptism necessitates certain restrictions in its use.

Presumably Bonhoeffer would agree that it was not a sign of a healthy church life in the second and third centuries when believing Christians deferred their baptism until they reached old age or were on their deathbeds, but all the same it shows a clear insight into the nature of baptismal grace. It is less clear that baptismal grace, in the true sense of the term, is evident in all infant baptisms today.

As McGrath (2001) rightly reminds us, the New Testament has no specific reference to infant baptism and suggests that the practice may well have been a response to a number of pressures. It is possible, he maintains, that the parallel with the Jewish rite of circumcision led Christians to devise an equivalent rite of passage for Christian infants. More generally, McGrath suggests that infant baptism seems to have been a response to the pastoral need to celebrate birth. Certainly,

however, he argues that by the third century, infant baptism had become normal practice.

Wright (1987) reports research that shows that the movement to infant baptism was all about the baptising of those who were in danger of death. The trend to infant baptism was not the same everywhere in the ancient world and some places with high infant mortality rates moved more quickly towards infant baptism. Wright makes the point that in an age when baptism was often delayed until the person was near death, an adult who was terminally ill and unable to speak for himself might seek others to vouch for his faith. It is but a short step to see the present day statements made by godparents on behalf of an infant in the same light.

Although the New Testament offers no guidance on the question of children at the Communion, it seems likely, as Murrie and Pearce (1997) point out, that children were present in the earliest Christian communities and were initiated into the faith along with adults. Matthew (14.21), for example, remarks that at the conclusion of the feeding of the five thousand, some five thousand men shared in the meal, not counting women and children. While the more publicly visible participants in the miracle are clearly men, it is equally apparent that both women and children were recipients in this 'eucharistic-like' meal. Indeed, it is a young boy who actually provides the loaves and fishes.

Strange (1996) draws attention to the *Apostolic Constitutions*, a work that deals with church order from fourth-century Syria and which makes clear the custom of the Syrian Church in admitting children to Communion. *Apostolic Constitutions* stipulates the order in which the Church is to receive Communion; first bishops, then presbyters, deacons, sub-deacons, readers, singers and ascetics and after them come their female counterparts, virgins and widows, and then the



children are to come to receive Communion before the main body of adults.

Even so, Jeremias (1960) presents evidence to suggest that by the fourth century, infant baptism had become the exception. The reasons for the delay are given as: little children are sinless and do not need it; a person should be allowed time in which to sin before baptism; initiation should be delayed until the person is ready for total conversion of life - a concept which gives substance to Bonhoeffer's use of the term 'costly grace'.

Hence, if initiation is to be put off until later in life, so a need arises for an earlier ceremony which will establish a person in some looser and less privileged association within the church. We see, therefore, as Cramer (1993) points out, the separation of the initiation process into two distinctive rites of baptism and confirmation.

Argenti (1983) prefers the term 'chrismation' to confirmation, since he argues that the term confirmation only appears in church history after the Gallic Councils of Riez (439 AD) and Orange (441 AD) and it was only in 458 AD that Pope Leo the Great became the first to speak of confirmation. Holeton (1983) quotes Faustus, the bishop of Riez, as using the term about this time and commenting, "What good can it do to me after the mystery of baptism, to have the ministration of confirmation? So far as I can see, we have not obtained everything from the font, if after the font we still need something new" (Holeton, 1983, p 68). Faustus is, however, reported to have gone on to state that as regards innocence baptism is complete, but as regards grace there is in confirmation an increase (Mason, 1893, p 68; Fisher and Yarnold, 1989, p 115). It would seem that through such comments, Faustus' teaching on the relation of confirmation to baptism was to become standard doctrine in the west in the Middle Ages, essentially because it was quoted by the author of the *False Decretals* (Papal decrees later found to be forgeries), which were read by leading

authorities including St Thomas Aquinas and Gratian, the great compiler of canon law (Fisher, 1965).

Skublics (2004) is, therefore, right to remind us that those who recommend a return to an earlier rite of Christian initiation tend to confuse the 'primitive' rite of chrismation with the later Roman rite of confirmation. The latter, he argues, has since become little more than a Christian coming-of-age ritual. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Hopton (1983) suggests that ever since the fifth century, confirmation has been a rite in search of a theology.

## **Current trends in initiation liturgy**

Although various changes in wording and terminologies have occurred as time has passed, and despite variations between different Christian churches in the west, the term 'baptism' has come to refer exclusively to the first part of christian initiation, administered generally in infancy with later confirmation, in the case of the Anglican Church, normally considered as a precondition for admission to Communion. The idea that this later rite of confirmation is chiefly an opportunity for the candidate to renew the baptismal promises on their own account once they had reached the age of discretion, has tended to overshadow any sacramental theology about the gift of the Holy Spirit (Jagger, 1970).

The two-stage view of initiation, maintained by Mason (1893) and Dix (1946) stresses that baptism requires completion in confirmation. On the other hand, Lampe (1967) writes on a theme to be later supported by the Ely Report (1971) and argues that Christian initiation is complete in baptism. Infant baptism has, however, received much criticism. As we have seen, Barth (1948) subjects it to intense negative scrutiny in arguing that it is without biblical foundation. McGrath (1993) shows how each of these criticisms may be countered, but they remain as a significant witness to a continuing unease within



the main stream churches over the potential abuse of the practice of infant baptism.

Adolescent confirmation has been criticized on more pragmatic grounds and Westerhoff (1990), clearly has a point when he says that adolescents are not psychologically nor socially ready for all that confirmation entails. It is no doubt with this in mind that Turner (1995) was led to describe the confirmation of adolescents in the following terms: "...what began as a fairly simple ritual...has mushroomed into a sacramental declaration of independence by teenagers" (p 255).

In any case, Westerhoff argues that baptism constitutes full initiation into the church and the bond established in baptism is indissoluble and unrepeatable. Confirmation is thus best understood as simply the first time, at whatever age, a person renews their baptism covenant.

Richards (1987) maintains that the once-and-for-all celebration of baptism, recapitulates the history of salvation, identifies the individual Christian with Christ in his life, death and resurrection and so enables each of us to embark upon our own history, aware of our place within the purpose of God. Confirmation, on the other hand, gives us our personal mission in the world, within that overall mission that makes the word of God fully known.

Not all agree, however, and this is the dilemma. Bourgeois (1993), for example, shows that the long established practice in the Orthodox Church of celebrating baptism and confirmation together, has proven an important basis for the breakdown in dialogue between the Orthodox and Western Christian Churches. As Macquarrie reminds us, in the Eastern churches, baptism, confirmation and first communion are all given together as parts of a single service, and there is some pressure from Anglicans to move in this direction (Macquarrie, 1987). The Church in Wales diocesan bishop, writing in his spring 2005 newsletter, knowingly or otherwise, may have been making a point of



some significance, therefore, in advising diocesan clergy that, “Where candidates for confirmation are not baptized, it is theologically and ecclesiologically appropriate that they be baptized and confirmed by the Bishop in the same ceremony. An unnecessary separation of the rite of initiation does not make sense.” On the other hand, the Bishop of Rochester, has argued that the Anglican Church needs to get away from seeing baptism as an initiation, especially where children are concerned. He expresses the view that we begin with baptism and continue through confirmation and beyond (Nazir-Ali, 2005).

Not surprisingly, the history of attempts to develop a theology of Christian initiation, represents a battleground of controversy. Cramer (1993) discusses the controversy in some detail and makes reference to a number of studies of different interpretations of baptism. He uses this as a way of showing how the force of the sacrament of baptism comes less from its formal authority than from the understanding it calls upon. It is probably true to say that since the Second World War, the Anglican Church has moved towards a greater understanding of baptism as the sacrament of initiation. The report, *Doctrine in the Church of England* (1938) states that:

Baptism, standing at the beginning of Christian life ... signifies a state of salvation which is fully reached only through the whole process of life, and...affects forthwith, the necessary first stage of the life (p 137).

This is significant because it avoids the argument presented earlier by Mason (1893) and reiterated in some detail by MacDonald (1937), that it was confirmation that conferred the gift of the Holy Spirit for the first time. Rather, the 1938 report saw confirmation as, “The rite which expresses the completeness of church membership and its obligations” (Doctrine in the Church of England, 1938, p 189).

Even so, as we have seen Dix (1946) and also Thornton (1954), remained unconvinced and maintained that confirmation was, if



anything, more important than baptism. Flemington (1953) responded with the obvious question and asked what New Testament support is there to support such a claim? He answered his own query by insisting that there is very little. Fisher (2005) is, however, less inclined to take such a dogmatic stance and advises us that, "... the New Testament evidence about confirmation is plainly patient of more than one interpretation" (p 2). He goes on to say that, "The evidence (for confirmation) both from scripture and from the second century is of such a nature that each point of view is likely to have its staunch advocates throughout the foreseeable future" (p 34).

A theologically significant debate continues but the writers of the earlier 1938 report on *Doctrine in the Church of England* were probably influenced less by theological considerations and more by the sort of views to be subsequently expressed by Barth (1948), that despite the theological objections, any movement away from an acceptance of infant baptism as the normal mark of the beginning of the christian life, would cause the Anglican Church to no longer be seen as a state church or as a church of the masses.

The line of thinking presented by the 1938 Report was developed in the reports of the Joint Committees of the two convocations, *Confirmation Today* (1944), and *Baptism Today* (1949), which stressed that baptism and confirmation belonged together as two parts of a single act.

*The Archbishop's Commission on Christian Initiation* (Ely Report, 1971), however, saw baptism in terms of a sincere desire to join the Church and did not accept that it needed to be completed, since it is the one and complete sacrament of Christian Initiation:

Baptism is...initiation, not a sacrament of progress in Christian faith and life, still less a reward for spiritual achievement. ...The individual, who enters ...progressively

appropriates its faith, hope and love, so as to make these his own (p 52).

As Buchanan (1989) points out, the term 'initiation', as used in this context, is only applicable sacramentally to water-baptism, which echoes the teaching of the *Thirty Nine Articles* and the 1662 *Prayer Book and Catechism*.

The word baptism, means literally 'to wash' (Schmemmann, 1976), and baptism therefore, incorporates a symbolic use of water for this purpose. The baptised person is washed or cleansed of some impurity and as a result becomes distinguished from the uncleansed, being in the process made more acceptable as a member of a washed community (Truemper and Niedner, 1981). Even so, when John the Baptist confessed to his accusers that he baptised with water, while one comes, "...who baptizes with the Holy Spirit..." (John, 1.26 & 33), he makes it abundantly clear that the process of baptism through water, symbolizes an act of much greater significance than simply the cleansing and forgiveness of sins.

Thus the message is presented to us that water and the Holy Spirit initiate the believer into the life of the Christian community, in which the gospel has already been practiced, presumably by an ordained minister. It has to be said, of course, that the ultimate source of the celebration is not the ordained minister, but Christ acting through His Church. Indeed, it may be maintained that every liturgical act is always the action of Christ. Hence, the act of baptism becomes, simplistically, Christ acting through His Church to bring non-Christians to the fellowship of a new life in Christ (Dunn, 1970).

None of this touches on the question of preparation for baptism. Barth (1969), has written about the need for pre-baptism teaching, so that the candidate may not be overtaken and surprised by baptism. Francis and Lankshear (1993) report a growing emphasis on the development



of resources to help parents and godparents prepare for the baptism service. Tudge (1988), on the other hand, does not see any grounds for delaying baptism until there is true Christian formation but nevertheless reminds us that there is evidence for preparation both in Acts (2.40) and in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch.

The doctrinal position of the Church in Wales is firmly in favour of instruction for the parents and godparents of infant candidates but this is rarely willingly undertaken by the recipients. Many parents will try to seek a neighbouring parish rather than submit to instruction, or else grudgingly go through the motions with no benefit to anyone (Green, 1987b).

The historic evidence for a form of baptism including preparation, proceeding from scriptural writings, is considered in some detail by Kavanagh (1983), who shows how the pattern of baptism, separate from later confirmation, has emerged within the Western Church.

The western tradition of baptism came under serious debate in the sixteenth century and while the Anabaptists denied the validity of baptising infants, the Council of Trent reiterated the earlier Roman tradition. In accordance with this view, infant baptism was made the principal exception to the concept that cognitive faith, in terms of a degree of understanding of the significance of the experience, is a precondition to receiving the sacraments (Küng, 1995). The fact that infants cannot yet profess personal faith, it is argued, does not prevent the Church from conferring baptism upon them, since in reality, it is in the Church's own faith that they are baptised (Green, 1988). As St Augustine put it, when children are presented to be given spiritual grace, it is not so much those holding them in their arms that present them, as the whole company of the Saints and faithful Christians (Augustine St, 1992). In other words, presentation, as Doe (1998) states, is done by the whole company of Mother Church. Holton (1998) highlights the point by emphasising the extent to which baptism

has become a public act of the gathered church, rather than a private act in the midst of a small group of family and friends.

*Faith and Order Paper No 73* (1977) put it this way:

The practice of infant baptism occurs in the context in which stress is laid upon corporate faith rather than upon the explicit decision of the recipient of baptism. Here the whole community affirms its faith in God and pledges itself to provide such an environment of faith, in the home and in worship, instruction and witness of the Church (p 14).

Wright (2000) does not disagree but proffers a word of warning about shifting the focus of faith to the congregation in cases where the parents of a child being baptised cannot credibly be themselves received as believing Christians. In such circumstances, he argues, baptism may be seen as the setting out on a journey, instead of the enlisting to be Christ's soldiers and servants.

Within the Protestant Church, it is noteworthy that the baptismal interrogations of faith are addressed to the child. The question remains, however, who is actually bound by them and some dispute regarding this matter has continued since the Reformation. The interrogations in *Hermann's Consultations* (Barkley, 1972) are clearly designed to bind the godparents, rather than the child. Similarly, the puritan faction in 1660 argued that promises should be made by godparents on their own account, hence the introduction of the phrase, "...in the name of the child...", in the 1662 *Prayer Book* (Brockett, 1971).

It is the experience of many clergy that parents choose godparents less on the basis of competent and conscientious instructors and more to serve in emergency as substitute parents. This raises an important question, for if the godparents fail in their duties, then initiation is presumably incomplete (Hardwick, 2004; Hartley, 2004b; Henig, 2004).



Whether a person to be baptised is a child or adult, the basic tenet remains that the act of baptism is a form of covenant between God and the person who is baptised. God's blessings are bestowed in the sacramental act, while man's part in the covenant is declared in the credal interrogations. As Crichton (1989) puts it, an exchange between God and candidate is implied, with godparents articulating for the candidate if this is necessary. As indicated previously, the implied opportunity for the development of faith to take place, is not always forthcoming.

The notion of a 'covenant' between God and the person who is baptised gave rise to considerable debate on the theology of baptism in the 1980s and early 1990s. Buchanan (1992; 1993) and Owen (1990), weighed in with a spate of relevant booklets, as also did Green (1987a) and Kurt (1987). To a considerable degree it may be said that all of these rest on the work of Marcel (2002), for they all take as their baseline Marcel's argument for covenant theology – a notion virtually ignored by the otherwise influential *Lima Report* (1982). Covenant theology relates to an acceptance that we need to ground everything in the promise to Abraham, emphasized by Paul in his letter to Romans (4.1-24). Although the concept was apparently not appreciated by the *Lima Report* (1982), the report added notably to the debates of the 1980s, if for no other reason than by virtue of the statement in the report that churches which practice infant baptism must guard themselves against indiscriminate baptism. This statement was to serve as the *raison d'être* of heated debate at the Church of England Synod in 1989 (Church of England, 1989).

Macquarrie (1987) insists that baptism validates admission to the other sacraments. Green (1987b) agrees and goes so far as to say that it is very doubtful whether there is any theological argument for the rite of confirmation at all, although he concedes that its continuation may be condoned on purely practical grounds. This is, indeed, the stance of the Church in Wales at the present time, which does nothing to help



harmonious relationships with those young people who happen to move from England to Wales (Gay and Williams, 1995). Jenkins (1990) supports the freer Church of England stance by stressing that if we are baptised, we are not only made part of the community of Jesus Christ and the pattern of the life of Jesus, but also provided with the strength to face the demands of life.

It is not clear how this strength is maintained unless the child is retained as part of an instructing community. For many parents, the concept of community membership is best illustrated by the post-baptism party rather than by membership of a Christian community. This may, of course, be the same thing and in any case may serve a valuable role in granting public recognition to an important rite of passage. More commonly, the recognition of the rite of passage is not maintained beyond the end of the post-baptism party in any sense of continuing instruction, but yet most parents would maintain that faith, to some degree or another, has come with the baptism. They would, for the most part, agree with Owen (1990), that just as we are called to faith, so we are called to baptism, and *vice versa*. Nunn (2004) goes a step further when she suggests that a baby is an outward and visible sign of parental love and could be said to be a sacrament in itself. The implications of such a viewpoint on how theologians, priests and parents see baptism is probably profound.

Wright (2000) has pursued the significance to baptism of the context of the family by likening the 'microhabitat' of infant baptism to the manner in which unsuitable habitats in nature tend to distort growth. He makes the point that if the Christian identity of the family or the integrity of the family itself is insecure, infant baptism will not thrive as it ought. Wright reminds us of the changes taking place in the structure of families; of the eroding of the two-married-parents family; of the apparent aversion to marriage in modern British society; of a sense that 'christening' is not for the unmarried mother or for living together partners. He suggests that reflection on the parental habitat and a child-centred



policy on baptism may lead to a change in the way in which both clergy and parents view the baptismal rite.

It would seem that whatever stance is taken, parents and clergy alike would agree that baptism is central to being a Christian. Who should be baptised and by what specific method, is more debatable. Yet, there is surely common acceptance that the Gospel and Epistle writers make it abundantly clear that Jesus demands a complete commitment from any one who wants to be a disciple of his. It is not sufficient to merely say that a person must believe in Jesus to receive eternal life. Something more than intellectual consent is necessary. There must be a rebirth; an experience that involves a deep spiritual response, such that a person's whole relationship with God is changed. The sort of change that allows Jesus and the Father to make their home within us (Stott, 1975; 1998).

It is helpful in this context that Stevenson (1989) reminds us that we need to learn again what it is to see baptism not as something that the Church does to someone, but rather as a way of life in which we are all constantly growing. While it is appropriate to see baptism as dying to self and a washing away of sins, it is necessary to see it as the process of putting on Christ (Dix, 1945). If the notion of repentance and cleansing of sin was the central tenet of baptism, then clearly the person's baptism would need to be repeated. Its root idea is, however, initiation into a community, as Clarke (1932) says. This helps us to understand why, in the Church, the baptism that grew out of John's baptism, is never repeated. As indicated previously, had forgiveness been the fundamental thought, then repetition would have been natural, but initiation is once and for all.

Baptism both incorporates a person into the body of the Church and at the same time makes him or her a living member of that body. As Truemper and Niedner (1981) put it, baptism is not a form of magic, nor is it something like a vaccination, which once administered in

infancy, can be put out of mind because the disease it immunizes us against is not any longer a threat.

Looked at this way, any individual baptism offers the greatest challenge of all to the clergy person who performs it, for it offers an opportunity for the clergy to retain contact with both parent and child. Indeed, each baptism is a significant aspect of the whole process of parish life, with implications for the wider role of the minister to provide pastoral guidance beyond the confines of the church building and its services. Hall (1991) has said that baptism grants access to the Eucharist but it does far more than this because it grants access to the religious life of the community.

It would seem then, that the most appropriate way to speak of one's baptism is not to say, '...I was baptised', but rather, '...I am baptised', and as a result to recognise each and every day that the spirit by which one has been reborn, recalls the baptised person to trust in Christ and to do his will. Thus to be baptised is to have a plot for one's life. To be baptised is to live with the promise that the spirit by which rebirth was given, will never desert one. To be baptised is to be brought to a trust that not even death can end. Trigg (1994) in his analysis of baptism in the theology of Martin Luther, describes baptism as, "The abiding force in the Christian life, ever available for an encounter with God" (p 159).

It must surely follow that it is precisely the parish priest's role and function to bring the community to this position, through example and teaching. Indeed, could it not be said that this is the very criterion by which the parish priest must be judged?

## **Relevant research on initiation**

Francis, Littler and Thomas (2000) suggest that in recent years, two strands of empirical research have begun to examine the implications



of changing theological perspectives on baptism. The first strand, they claim, has concentrated on the views of churchgoers and of people outside the church and they go on to cite five studies.

First, a survey of 811 churchgoers from fifteen Anglican congregations in the Durham diocese (Astley and Pickering, 1986) in which it was found that well over three-quarters of those responding to the survey thought it right for babies to be baptised in Anglican churches, whether or not their parents attended church regularly.

Second, a survey of 207 residents on the Longhill Estate in Kingston-upon-Hull (Forster, 1989) in which it was found that 90% of the respondents deemed it to be acceptable and appropriate for people who do not have a regular contact with their parish church to nevertheless have their children baptised in the local church.

Third, a survey of 539 people living in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (Francis and Lankshear, 1993) in which it was found that two-thirds of the adults who believed in God but who did not attend church, believed open baptism to be right, while only one quarter of the sample thought that the church should restrict baptism to churchgoing families.

Fourth, a survey of over 13,000 teenagers (Francis and Kay, 1995) in which it was found that 43% of young people who never attended church still expressed the view that they would want their children to be baptised in church. This percentage was even higher for young people who attend church occasionally (69%) and higher still for young people who attend church regularly (82%).

Fifth, a survey of 409 churchgoers in an urban town centre of a town in the north-west of England (Francis, 2000) in which it was found that only 7% of churchgoing Anglicans felt that churches should only baptise babies if they came from regular churchgoing families. By

comparison 14% of Roman Catholics and 12 % of Methodists felt this way.

These five studies are spread over a decade and they include a wide cross-section of different population samples. The fact that they each show support for an open baptism policy on the part of the Anglican Church is persuasive evidence that this point of view may reflect the attitude of society at large.

The second strand of research referred to by Francis, Littler and Thomas (2000) has tended to concentrate on mapping the relationship between the baptismal policy exercised in different churches and the pattern of church growth and decline. They cite two major studies which taken together support the view that Anglican churches which operate an open baptism policy make a greater impact on their local community.

The first of these studies is that of Francis, Jones and Lankshear (1996) in which they employed a multiple regression analysis to examine the comparative strength of Anglican churches in England which operate an open or a restrictive baptismal policy in three different geographical contexts, involving a sample of 1,553 churches in villages and rural communities; a sample of 983 churches in urban communities and a sample of 584 churches in suburban communities. The resulting data showed that, while baptismal policy is irrelevant to the number of adults who attend services on a normal Sunday in urban and suburban churches, a restrictive baptismal policy is reflected in smaller Sunday congregations in rural areas. It would seem that in all three geographical areas, an open baptismal policy is a significant predictor of wider contact with people on the fringe of church membership and also leads to more young people and more adults seeking confirmation.



The second study is that of Bronnert (1999) who prepared a detailed statistical profile of churches within the dioceses of Chester and Liverpool, together with details of each church's current baptismal policy. The resulting data showed clearer correlates of baptismal policy in the Liverpool diocese than in the Chester diocese. In Liverpool, the restrictive approach to baptism, identified by Bronnert, was associated with more people being involved in house groups. Bronnert also found that the restrictive policy was associated with fewer communicants at Christmas.

These two strands of empirical research are revealing but do not provide any information regarding the attitude of Anglican clergy toward the different stances on infant baptism. It is illuminating, therefore, to note the results of a survey conducted among Church of England parochial clergy in one diocese (Aldridge, 1986) which concluded that, "many respondents draw back from rigorist, exclusive policies: 50.6% were against confining infant baptism to the children of regular churchgoers" (p 359). It is yet more illuminating to note that in his report on a survey conducted among Church in Wales parochial clergy, Thomas (1994) found that 75% of the respondents agreed with the statement that baptism should be available to all.

Much of the relevant detail of Thomas' study is incorporated into the present study and need not, therefore, be considered further here. The main conclusions of his research are, however, most significant and provide an important insight into the attitudes of Church in Wales parochial clergy toward the baptism of infants. Four main conclusions emerge.

First, it would appear that Thomas has identified three different perspectives on infant baptism prevalent among Church in Wales clergy. A small minority of clergy reject infant baptism altogether. A larger minority favour a restrictive baptismal policy. The majority support an open baptismal policy.

Second, the study confirms the impression that the majority view of clergy in the Church in Wales continues to favour the liturgical traditions of Anglicanism: a tradition that incorporates an open approach to infant baptism; a tradition that is consistent with the view of the Church in Wales as a parochial church of the people.

Third, the study confirms that Church in Wales clergy are supportive of preparation for baptism and see the importance of pastoral care after baptism.

Fourth, the study demonstrates the willingness of Church in Wales clergy to take on board further revisions of the baptismal liturgy with a view to responding to those families who find difficulty in associating in a personal way with the traditional language and imagery of the present service of baptism.

It is of interest to see how far these conclusions are supported by the present study.

## **The present position of the Church in Wales on Communion before confirmation**

In March 1997, the Church of England House of Bishops, issued *Guidelines on the Admission of Baptised Persons to Holy Communion before Confirmation* (Church of England, 1997), which had previously been approved by General Synod in November 1996. Prior to these guidelines, only the dioceses of Peterborough, Southwark and Manchester were officially admitting the unconfirmed to Holy Communion, having been given permission as an experiment in 1991. In 1993, the then National Children's Advisers' Panel, discovered that unconfirmed children were receiving Communion in every Church of England diocese, either from their parents or officiating clergy. There was also a recognition that children who were not receiving



Communion were sometimes given alternatives, such as Smarties or other sweets. It was reported that the practice in one church was to give children their Sunday school stamp at the altar rail and that a visiting child consumed his (Gay and Williams, 1995).

It is against this backcloth that it was felt necessary to issue the 1997 guidelines (Church of England, 1997). These guidelines made it clear that since Communion before confirmation is a departure from the inherited norm, it requires special permission and that, after consultation, every diocesan bishop would have the discretion to make a general policy whether or not to entertain new applications for Communion before confirmation.

In November 2000, the Church of England General Synod debated a motion from the diocese of Bristol requesting the House to initiate change in Canon Law so that Synod could decide whether Communion before confirmation should be the nationally agreed common practice, rather than leaving the decision to individual dioceses and parishes. The motion was amended to read:

That this Synod request the House of Bishops to continue to monitor the implementation in dioceses of its 1997 guidelines on Communion before Confirmation and to *report back to the Synod by 2005*, with a recommendation as to whether any changes in canon law are required as a result of developing practice and understanding in the Church (Church of England, 2001).

The report to Synod in 2005 (Church of England, 2005a) indicated that 1,650 churches, roughly 10% of all Church of England churches, are admitting the non-confirmed to Communion. The report goes on to recommend that children who have been baptized but who have not yet been confirmed and who are not yet ready or desirous to be confirmed, as required by paragraph 1(a) of Canon B15A, may be admitted to Holy Communion, subject to regulations which essentially require the approval of the diocesan bishop. The Board of Education,



at its meeting in May 2005, considered the draft regulation, prepared by the Legal Office on the basis of the Board's discussion, and agreed that they should be laid before Synod for general discussion. At its meeting in July 2005, Synod took note of the report with a view to its return to Synod for final approval in 2006 (Church of England, 2005b).

It may be anticipated that these developments within the Church of England will, in due course, have serious implications for the Church in Wales. It remains, however, that at the present time the Church in Wales service of baptism of infants specifically requires the parents and godparents to see that the child is taught the creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments and is instructed in the catechism. Also, that it is the duty of the parents and godparents to ensure that the child is brought to the bishop to be confirmed. At the point of confirmation, the bishop requests an assurance that such instruction has been carried out. Furthermore, the regulations clearly state that except with the permission of the bishop, no one shall receive Holy Communion until such time as he or she is confirmed, or ready and desirous to be confirmed (Church in Wales, 1984a).

Despite such prescriptions Thomas (1994) presents data which show that Church in Wales clergy are clearly in favour of admitting baptised children to Communion prior to confirmation.

Littler, Francis and Thomas (2002) have assessed Thomas' research and draw attention to a number of important conclusions relating to Church in Wales clergy's views on confirmation. It would seem that younger clergy are even more in favour of children taking Communion before confirmation than older clergy but that all ages of clergy believe that children who are to be given Communion should also be encouraged to attend nurture groups. While clergy are in favour of nurture groups, they are not in favour of children having to learn the catechism as a specific requirement of entry to Communion, nor are



they supportive of any other obstacles being placed in the path of children approaching the altar.

Littler, Francis and Thomas (2002) note that it is an interesting aspect of Thomas' data that there is no significant difference between the views of clergy who describe themselves as catholic, middleway or evangelical on this matter, although the catholic group do tend to be more inclined to support the view that Communion be withheld from children until after confirmation. Similarly, they note that no significant difference is evident between the views of clergy in rural ministries and the views of clergy in more urbanized parishes. There is, however, reference to significant difference between the dioceses of the Church in Wales regarding the age of admission to Communion. It is not clear why this should be so and it will be interesting to see if the issue is supported by subsequent studies.

Littler, Francis and Thomas (2002) conclude that there is, perhaps, at the heart of the matter, a growing appreciation by Church in Wales clergy of the meaning of baptism as the child's personal incorporation into the body of Christ and as initiation into a life-long process of growth in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Clearly, such a view on behalf of the clergy of the Church in Wales demands serious consideration being given to any revision of the rules for confirmation.

The position does not seem to be made any clearer by the introduction within the Church of Wales of an *Additional Order for the Holy Eucharist* (Church in Wales, 2004e). The *Additional Order for the Holy Eucharist* is incorporated into the existing *Book of Common Prayer* and includes in its introduction, '*Guidelines for the Celebration of the Eucharist with Children*'. When the 'Bill' was presented to the Church in Wales Governing Body for approval in April 2004, previously proposed Guidelines for the celebration of the Eucharist with children were changed to incorporate the following amendments.



Guideline number one, which previously stated that, 'it is essential that the worshipping community should not be fragmented', was changed to become, 'every celebration of the Eucharist should be an expression of the unity of the whole body of Christ'. Guideline number four, which previously stated that, 'the Nicene or Apostles' Creed may be replaced on these occasions by the Baptismal Creed', was changed to become, 'the Nicene or Apostles' Creed may be replaced on these occasions by the alternative (brief) confession contained in (an) appendix'. Also, an additional guideline was included, stating that, 'while it is of the greatest importance that all communicants should prepare themselves properly before receiving Communion, special care should be devoted to helping children in this respect'.

These references to children in relation to the Eucharist represent significant theological departures from the instructions concerning the preparation of young people for the Eucharist through confirmation and contained in the same *Book of Common Prayer*. This may well lead to some confusion and ultimately may serve to have a marked impact on the nature of confirmation and the numbers confirmed. Furthermore, official Church in Wales statistics of pre-confirmation communicants show that in all dioceses of the Church in Wales a considerable number of people are granted access to Communion without previous confirmation (see Appendix Three). From 2001, the Representative Body of the Church in Wales has collected total figures for pre-confirmation communicants and from 2003 has collated these figures separately for persons under eighteen years of age and eighteen years and over, in respect of each diocese. The results are tabulated in Appendix Three, and while it is not clear how far these figures influence the statistics of Easter Communicants, they certainly imply a 'formal' recognition of access to Communion without (or prior to) confirmation, throughout the Church in Wales.

The Church of England, *Common Worship: Initiation Services Rites on the Way and Reconciliation and Restoration* (Church of England,



2004c), includes a rite of *Admission of the Baptized to Communion* (pp 44-48), together with the reminder that the rite is intended for use in the circumstances covered by the guidelines agreed by the House of Bishops on the *Admission of Baptized Persons to Holy Communion before Confirmation* (Church of England, 1997). It should be noted, however, that these guidelines were determined as being intended for use with children in families regular in worship while the 2004 rite clearly states that, "Individual parishes must seek the agreement of the diocesan bishop before introducing communion before confirmation" (Church of England, 2004c, Note 1, p 44).

In 2004 two Bills were presented to the Governing Body of the Church in Wales which could sustain a trend towards acceptance of access to Communion without (or prior to) confirmation. One of these Bills is concerned to support relations with other churches and permits a minister from another church, holding the *Trinitarian Faith*, to conduct services of Holy Communion and baptism, in Church in Wales churches (Church in Wales, 2004f). The other Bill permits the establishment and support of local ecumenical partnerships and indicates that, "It shall be lawful ... for clerics ... of the Church in Wales ... to officiate at or perform any duty assigned to him or her in an ecumenical service or a service of another participating denomination" (Church in Wales, 2004g, para 6). Thus, a pathway may seem to have been prepared for a baptised individual to ultimately be granted access to Communion, both within the Church in Wales and by Church in Wales clergy officiating in other establishments. It is just possible that recent comments by the Head of the Roman Catholic Church may herald even more significant change:

The (Roman Catholic) Church recognizes that in many ways she is linked with those who, being baptized, are honoured with the name of Christian ... For there are many who honour sacred scripture, taking it as a norm of belief and action and who show a true religious zeal (Pope John Paul II, 2003, p10).



It is of further interest to see if changing views on the access of children to the Eucharist of the Church in Wales are shared by the laity. To this end, a valuable insight is provided by Smitham (2004). Smitham studied the attitudes of churchwardens in two Church in Wales dioceses to children receiving Communion before confirmation. Her most significant finding is the difference between the views of the clergy and the laity on the subject of children being admitted to Communion. Whereas the majority of the clergy surveyed by Thomas in 1993 were in favour of admitting baptised churchgoing children to Communion from the age of seven and above, a minority of the laity agree with this practice. Similarly, Smitham concludes that while the majority of the laity believe that churches should not admit children to Communion until they have been confirmed or were desirous of being confirmed, a minority of clergy are of this view.

Smitham found no difference in these respects between the two dioceses of her study nor did she find any significant difference between the views of those church wardens who described themselves as catholic compared with those who described themselves as evangelical. She did, however, identify a notable difference between the views of men and women. A significantly higher proportion of men rather than women agreed that children cannot take a full part in the Communion service unless they receive Communion.

It is noteworthy that Smitham's study of the views of laity on the access of baptized children to Communion, was carried out in 2003 and drew comparisons with the views of clergy researched by Thomas in 1993. Given the changes referred to in the preceding pages, it may be expected that clergy views could also have changed between 1993 and 2003. Indeed, just mid-way between the 1993 and 2003 studies, Stransky (1998) highlighted both the difficulty involved in researching the views of clergy and the importance of repeating empirical studies, when he made the point that the whirlpool of modern Christian religiosity is such that its waters refuse to lie still for careful analysis.



The present chapter recognises the complexity of the whirlpool of Christian religiosity while the ensuing chapters offer a snapshot of the views of Church in Wales clergy on Christian initiation, at a given moment in time. It is recognised, of course, that 'snapshots' have limitations and it is hoped that others might share with van der Ven (1993) an appreciation of the importance of empirical research and follow the present study with further investigation.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **GETTING TO KNOW THE RESPONDENTS**



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#### **The questionnaire – numerical data**

In September 2003, a detailed questionnaire was mailed to all stipendiary parochial clergy in the Church in Wales (see Appendix One). The respondents were generally representative of stipendiary parochial clergy within the Church in Wales, as shown by table A1, Appendix Two, which compares details of respondents with known details of Church in Wales clergy.

Part One of the questionnaire is concerned with the collection of personal information about the respondent together with additional numerical data and consists of multi-choice questions relating to the respondent's sex, age group, marital status, length of time engaged in stipendiary ministry, order of deacon or priest, present position, length of time served in present parish, population of parish, classification of parish according to rural/urban, diocese, number of infants, children and adults baptised in the preceding year of 2002 and the number of services for the birth of a child carried out in 2002. Data are also collected in this section about the respondents' judgement of how far they see themselves as catholic or evangelical and how far they see themselves as liberal or conservative. A further question was added to the questionnaire, not included on Thomas' 1993 questionnaire, to collect datum on whether the respondent's parish admitted children to Communion before confirmation.

The first question requested the respondent to indicate their sex. The results are shown in table 3.1

**Table 3.1      Sex of respondents**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Frequency	311	66	377
%	82	18	100

There are 7 missing cases

The relative proportions of men and women responding to the present survey (82% and 18% respectively), are very similar to the proportions of male and female stipendiary parochial clergy in the Church in Wales (84% and 16% respectively), (see table A1, Appendix Two).

The slightly smaller percentage of men and higher percentage of women responding to the present study, compared with the official sex composition of the Church in Wales as provided by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales (Representative Body, 2004), may be due to the time difference between the two sets of statistics but could confirm the findings of Smitham (2004), that women are more likely to respond than men. Smitham's study is concerned with churchwardens but it is possible that the same conclusion about the disproportionate response rates of men and women might hold good for clergy.

Certainly, Musson (2001), achieved a higher response rate from women than men in his study of Anglican clergy in England.

Thomas (1994) recorded the percentages of men and women responding to his survey as 93% and 7% respectively. The marked changed in this respect between Thomas' 1993 findings and the present study is most likely to be explained by the decision of the Governing Body of the Church in Wales (Church in Wales, 1996) to ordain women to the priesthood. The number of stipendiary parochial women clergy in the Church in Wales has increased over the decade in question and the percentage of women increased accordingly.



The second question required respondents to indicate their age on a ten point scale, in five-yearly divisions, from under 30 years to 70 years or over. Table 3.2 lists the results.

**Table 3.2      Age of respondents**

Age in years	<30	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70 <	Total
Frequency	12	15	15	35	48	75	94	62	17	3	376
%	3	4	4	9	13	20	25	16	5	1	100

There are 8 missing cases

It is noteworthy that over two-thirds of respondents are over the age of 50 years (67%). The accuracy of the figure is closely supported by official figures for the Church in Wales which suggest that 66% of clergy are over 50 years of age (see Appendix Six). The response would seem to be in keeping with the conclusion of Randall and Francis (1996) that chronological age does not affect response rates and does not, on the face of it, therefore, confirm the findings of Francis and Lankshear (1994) that older clergy show a lower response rate to surveys, nor that of Gannon, Northern and Carroll (1971), who maintain that older people are more reluctant than younger people to return postal questionnaires. If Thomas' 1993 survey accurately reflects the number of stipendiary parochial clergy in specific age groups in the Church in Wales at that time, then data resulting from the present survey would suggest an aging clergy over the last ten years. In 1993, only 58% of stipendiary parochial clergy were found to be over the age of 50 years.

The third question asked for the respondents' marital status and the resulting data are shown in table 3.3

**Table 3.3      Marital status of respondents**

	Single	Married	Widowed	Total
Frequency	76	282	14	372
%	20	76	4	100

There are 12 missing cases

Clearly, the greater majority of stipendiary parochial clergy in the Church in Wales are married (76%) but it is noteworthy that almost a quarter (24%) are single or widowed. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they were single, married or widowed and no category was included for divorced clergy who had not remarried. One respondent commented on this and it is not known how many stipendiary parochial clergy fall into this category. It may be that the large number of missing cases (12) is significant in this respect and further study would be of interest in clarifying the point.

The fourth question asked respondents to indicate how long they had been engaged in stipendiary ministry. Table 3.4 lists the results.

**Table 3.4      Length of time engaged in stipendiary ministry**

Age in years	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45 <	Total
Frequency	50	60	58	58	31	33	41	39	6	1	377
%	13	16	15	15	8	9	11	10	2	1	100

There are 7 missing cases

While it is to be expected that the percentage of clergy in stipendiary parochial ministry in the Church of Wales will decline after clerics have served for 30 years, it is perhaps surprising that so many clergy have less than 20 years experience in stipendiary parochial ministry (59%). This is not wholly consistent with the conclusion drawn from the data in



table 3.2 that the Church in Wales has an ageing work force of clerics unless other variables are applicable. Such variables could include the possibility of clergy leaving the Church in Wales at a relatively early age and before reaching retirement age, and/or ordinations tending to include older entrants into the ranks of the stipendiary parochial ministry. Official figures provided by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales (Church in Wales, 2004b) suggest that 57% of ordinands in training in 2003 are over the age of 40 years (see Appendix Five). Other possibilities would, however, warrant further study.

The fifth question asked respondents to indicate their ‘order’ of deacon or priest. Table 3.5 lists the results.

**Table 3.5      Order of deacon or priest**

	Deacon	Priest	Total
Frequency	5	373	378
%	1	99	100

There are 6 missing cases

The number of deacons is smaller than expected but given that the questionnaires were distributed in early September, that is to say, shortly after the summer ordinations, it is just possible that more priests were ordained than new deacons, thereby ‘skewing’ the proportions to priests. More probably, however, the low response rate for curates incorporates a low response from deacons. The questionnaire is, of course, less relevant to deacons in any case.

The sixth question asked respondents to indicate their status according to whether their ‘official’ position was incumbent, priest in charge, assistant curate, team rector or team vicar. The outcome is listed in table 3.6.

**Table 3.6      Status of respondents**

	<b>Incumbent</b>	<b>Priest in Charge</b>	<b>Assistant Curate</b>	<b>Team Rector</b>	<b>Team Vicar</b>	<b>Total</b>
Frequency	256	32	38	17	33	376
%	68	8	10	5	9	100

There are 8 missing cases

The percentage of clergy in each category is largely confirmed by statistics provided by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales in June 2004 and by the earlier study of Thomas in 1993 (see table A1, Appendix Two). Those differences which are evident between the three sets of datum of table A1, Appendix Two, may be explained as follows:

- A poor response rate for curates (10%) is noted in the present study, when compared with a higher expected percentage (13%) indicated by the official figures provided by the Representative Body of the Church of Wales and a substantially higher percentage (17%) noted by Thomas in 1993.
- A higher percentage of team rectors (5%) and team vicars (9%) in the present study, compared with the data provided by Thomas for team rectors (1%) and team vicars (4%) in 1993, is almost certainly a mark of a change in Church in Wales policy with regard to the deployment of clergy.

The seventh question asked how long respondents had served in their present parish. Table 3.7 lists the results.



**Table 3.7      Length of service in present parish**

Years	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20<	Total
Frequency	199	88	46	27	20	380
%	53	23	12	7	5	100

There are 4 missing cases

Clearly, over half of stipendiary parochial clergy (53%) have been in their present parish for less than five years. The category will, however, be inflated by the fact that most, if not all, of the curates, who constitute 10% of respondents in the present survey, are included in this category. It is worth noting that, according to the data presented, less than a quarter (24%) of stipendiary parochial clergy in the Church in Wales remain in the same parish for more than 10 years while more than three quarters (76%) move on to another parish within 10 years.

The eighth question asked for the population of the parish(es) in which the respondent served. Table 3.8 lists the results.

**Table 3.8      Population of parish**

	<1000	1000 to 1999	2000 to 2999	3000 to 3999	4000 to 4999	5000 to 9999	10,000 to 14,999	15,000 <	Total
Frequency	40	51	55	42	33	83	46	27	377
%	11	14	15	11	9	22	12	6	100

There are 7 missing cases

It would appear that over half (51%) of stipendiary parochial clergy in the Church of Wales minister in parishes of less than 4,000 people, while only a relatively small percentage (18%) minister in parishes of over 10,000 people.

The ninth question asked the respondent to classify the area served by his or her parish. Table 3.9 lists the results.

**Table 3.9      Classification of area served by the respondents' parish**

	<b>City Centre</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Suburban</b>	<b>Market Town</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Total</b>
Frequency	6	79	70	63	158	376
%	2	21	18	17	42	100

There are 8 missing cases

The data generally confirm the data of table 3.8. It is, however, difficult to analyse the figures with accuracy since some stipendiary parochial clergy will have responsibility for more than one parish, not all of which will necessarily fall within the same classificatory category. Even in the case of a single parish, its boundary may extend from (say), a market town into an area which may legitimately be described as rural, or from (say) urban into suburban.

When allowance is made for any resulting discrepancies, it remains notable that a substantial number of stipendiary parochial clergy in the Church in Wales minister to rural congregations while only a very small percentage minister to city centre or urban congregations.

Although factors designed to identify 'rurality' were presented by Francis (1985) and further developed by Lankshear (2001), no official figures are available for the designation of Church in Wales parishes according to whether they are deemed rural or urban. The similarity in responses between the 2003 and 1993 surveys in table A1 is most notable, although it is accepted that the distinction between 'rural' and 'urban' remains vague and imprecise (Lankshear, 2004). With this in mind, an attempt is made by the present writer to produce a working



definition of the ‘rurality’ of each Church in Wales diocese, using figures provided by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales for population per diocese and the number of parishes per diocese. The relevant data are tabulated in table A4.1 and discussed in detail in Appendix Four.

The tenth and eleventh questions asked respondents to judge how catholic/evangelical and how liberal/conservative they are. The results are listed in tables 3.10 and 3.11.

**Table 3.10 Catholic/Evangelical**

	Very Very Catholic	Very Catholic	Catholic	Neutral	Evangelical	Very Evangelical	Very Very Evangelical	Total
Frequency	46	101	68	64	27	36	28	370
%	13	27	18	17	7	10	8	100

There are 14 missing cases

Some clergy found difficulty in completing this question and maintained that the terms ‘catholic’ and ‘evangelical’ are not necessarily contrary terms. Even so, it is noteworthy that over half (58%) of Church in Wales stipendiary parochial clergy judge themselves to be catholic while only a quarter (25%) judge themselves to be evangelical.

**Table 3.11 Liberal/Conservative**

	Very Very Liberal	Very Liberal	Liberal	Neutral	Conservative	Very Conservative	Very Very Conservative	Total
Frequency	28	83	59	52	53	60	36	371
%	8	22	16	14	14	16	10	100

There are 13 missing cases.

As with table 3.10, the number of missing cases in the data presented in table 3.11 is, perhaps, indicative of the difficulty some clerics experienced in placing themselves accurately on the scale. The small

difference between the number of stipendiary parochial clergy who judge themselves to be either very very liberal, very liberal or liberal (46%) and the number of clergy who judge themselves to be either very very conservative, very conservative or conservative (40%) is worthy of note. It remains that the number of clergy who judge themselves to be very liberal (22%) is the largest single category.

Question twelve asked respondents to indicate the diocese in which they served. Table 3.12 lists the results.

**Table 3.12    Diocese**

	Bangor	Llandaff	Monmouth	St Asaph	St Davids	Swansea and Brecon	Total
Frequency	42	68	60	66	97	47	380
%	11	18	16	17	26	12	100

There are 4 missing cases

The data presented in table 3.12 are largely confirmed for the dioceses of Bangor, St Asaph, Monmouth and Swansea and Brecon, by official figures provided by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales (see table A1). The figure for St Davids (26%) is higher than suggested by the official figures (20%) and this may be the result of clergy from the more rural diocese of St Davids producing a higher response rate than clergy from more urban dioceses. Fowler (1993) suggests that rural response rates tend to be higher. Kanuk and Berenson (1975) and also Harvey (1987), give support to the same suggestion in their respective reviews of the literature pertaining to mailed questionnaires. The figure for Llandaff (18%) is lower than suggested by the official figures (25%). It is suspected that this may be the result of, or at least is influenced by, a known orchestrated effort in that diocese to restrain stipendiary parochial clergy from submitting a completed questionnaire. If this is so, it can only be regretted.



From an analysis of the percentages of respondents in the present study, sub-divided by age, sex, diocese, location of parish and status of respondent, and compared with similar sub-divisions of the respondents to Thomas' 1993 survey of a 50% sample of clergy, and compared also with official figures provided by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales in June 2004, it is reasonable to conclude that the clergy responding to the present survey represent a valid cross-section of the Church in Wales stipendiary parochial clergy. Rothwell (2005) suggests that external validity, or 'generalisability', is often poor in clinical and medical studies with serious consequences. It is reasonable to suggest that Rothwell's critical comments have been fully met in the present study. Indeed, given that the population under review in the present study comprises all parochial stipendiary clergy in the Church in Wales, and that the sample of clerics who responded can be claimed to be representative of that population, 'external validity', according to Fuller and Lury (1977) should be sound. Since subsequent discussion will demonstrate close replication of the findings of the present study compared with numerous aspects of Thomas' 1993 study, it is reasonable to cite Bowen and Weinberg (1977) in concluding that 'internal validity' has been maintained. It will be of interest to see if other studies, currently being undertaken and using the same questionnaire, produce comparable results.

## **Questions about baptism and thanksgiving services**

The next few questions of Part One of the questionnaire seek answers to specific questions about numbers of baptisms and services of thanksgiving for the birth of a child, undertaken by the respondent. A further question asks if the respondent's parish admits children to Communion before confirmation.

Question 13 asks how many infants the respondent baptised in 2002. Question 14 asks how many children and young persons under the

age of 11 years the respondent baptised in 2002. Question 15 asks how many adults the respondent baptised in 2002. The resulting data are summarised in tables 3.13, 3.14 and 3.15.

**Table 3.13    Infant baptisms**

Number of Baptisms	0	1 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 20	21 – 40	40+	Total
Frequency	46	104	97	79	41	14	381
%	12	27	25	21	11	4	100

There are 3 missing cases.

**Table 3.14    Baptisms of children and young persons under age 11 years**

Number of Baptisms	0	1 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 20	21 – 40	40+	Total
Frequency	139	164	42	21	11	3	380
%	37	43	11	5	3	1	100

There are 4 missing cases

**Table 3.15    Adult baptisms**

Number of Baptisms	0	1 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 20	21 – 40	40+	Total
Frequency	179	185	12	3	1	0	380
%	47	49	3	0.7	0.3	0	100

There are 4 missing cases

It is notable that 12% of stipendiary parochial clergy had no baptisms at all in 2002, while 37% had no baptisms of children and young persons under the age of eleven years and 47% had no adult



baptisms. Doe (2002, p 239) reminds us that whereas Canon 68 of the *Canons Ecclesiastical* of 1603 impose a duty on clergy to administer the baptism of infants, no such obligation is applicable in respect of adults. Nevertheless, the total number of baptisms for 2002 is sufficiently high to warrant further analysis.

The data for baptisms collected for table 3.13 indicate that 4,408 infants were baptised in the single year of 2002. The data for baptisms collected for table 3.14 indicate that 1,531 children and young people under the age of 11 years were baptised in 2002. The data for baptisms collected for table 3.15 indicate that 571 adults were baptised in 2002.

Thus the total number of baptisms indicated to have been undertaken by the 65% of stipendiary parochial clergy who responded to the present survey may be estimated at 6,510 for the year 2002. It is reasonable, therefore, to project a figure of approximately 10,000 baptisms for the Church in Wales as a whole, including approximately 6,800 infant baptisms, for the one selected single year of 2002. Significantly, in the year 2002 Wales returned the lowest recorded level of live births at 30,200 (Digest of Welsh Statistics, 2002). Not all of these 30,200 live births are to Christian families. Indeed, the 2001 Population Census indicates that 71.9% of people in Wales who answered the optional question on religious affiliation, claimed that they are Christian (Francis, 2003; Brierley, 2003). Even then, only 900,000 people of the 2,100,000 who claimed to be Christian in the 2001 Census, indicate their 'affiliation' to be to the Anglican Church, as opposed to other Christian Churches (Brierley, 2003; Population Trends, 2003). A reasonable estimate of live births in 2002 to families who describe themselves as Anglican, may, therefore, be as low as 9,300 live births in Wales. Assuming the terms 'Anglican' and 'Church in Wales' to be co-terminous in this context, it may be concluded that in the year of 2002, infant baptisms in the Church in Wales approached a figure close to three quarters (73%) of all 'relevant' births. Given that

tables 3.14 and 3.15 indicate that a substantial number of persons are baptised as children and young persons, or as adults, it would seem that the vast majority of children born to those families in Wales who describe themselves as 'Anglicans', sooner or later support their claim for affiliation through the act of baptism. This does not appear to support the widely held belief of a church in decline in a secular and faithless society and warrants further, serious investigation.

Question 16 asked respondents to state how many services of thanksgiving for the birth of a child they had conducted during the preceding year of 2002. The following table 3.16 lists the results.

**Table 3.16 Services of thanksgiving**

	0	1	2	3	Total
Frequency	339	29	6	6	380
%	89	7	2	2	100

There are 4 missing cases.

Clearly, few respondents conducted services of thanksgiving for the birth of a child (11%) and of these, most conducted only one service (7%) and no-one conducted more than 3 such services in 2002. By contrast, there is some evidence to suggest that services of thanksgiving are gaining in popularity within the Church of England (Hartley, 2004a) and certainly there is provision for such a service in *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* (Church of England, 2003, pp 337-343). Not all agree, however, that growth in the popularity of services of thanksgiving is desirable (Tremlett, 2004).



## Access to Communion before confirmation

The final question in Part One of the questionnaire was new to the questionnaire and did not replicate a question on Thomas' 1993 questionnaire. It requested the respondent to indicate whether or not the respondent's parish admitted children to Communion before confirmation. The results are shown in table 3.17

**Table 3.17    Does your parish admit children to Communion before confirmation?**

	No	Yes	Total
Frequency	294	85	379
%	78	22	100

There are 5 missing cases

The question was included in the knowledge that some parishes in the Church in Wales have been granted approval for experimental purposes by the relevant diocesan bishop to offer Communion before confirmation (Church in Wales, 1984c).

According to the information provided by respondents and shown in table 3.17, 22% of parishes are now participating in the scheme and offering Communion to children prior to confirmation. If all of these parishes are indeed 'approved' for experimental purposes by the relevant diocesan bishop, then the number seems quite high and a detailed report on the experiment seems to be over-due. Indeed, Smitham (2004) found that only 7 parishes in the Church in Wales were 'officially' admitting children to Communion in 1998 and that this had risen to 29 in 2002, with a further 7 parishes planning to implement the scheme in 2003/4. This falls well short of the 85 recorded in the present study. The 2001 guidelines for the admission of baptised children to Holy Communion (Church in Wales, 2001) state that before

a scheme is introduced in a parish, it is desirable that as many parishioners as possible understand the reasons for the practice. The guidelines also state that the Church in Wales should collate and publish the numbers of children admitted to Holy Communion in the same way as figures are published concerning baptism and confirmation. Relevant total figures of pre-confirmation communicants have, in consequence, been published in respect of each Church in Wales diocese since 2001 and separately for those aged under eighteen years of age and those aged eighteen years and over, since 2003 (see Appendix Three).

### **Clerics' views on initiation**

In Part Two of the questionnaire, which embodies 150 questions relating to a range of the respondents' views on baptism and confirmation, the scaling method originally proposed by Likert (1932) is adopted. According to this method each question is presented as a brief, crisp statement, embodying a single idea. Respondents are then requested to scale their level of agreement or disagreement in respect of each statement. In the present study a five point scale is employed which acknowledges the legitimacy of permitting the respondent a middle or neutral category. The five points of the scale are, therefore, anchored by the descriptions: agree strongly, agree, not certain, disagree, disagree strongly.

### **The questionnaire - parts three, four and five**

Part Three consists of the forty-eight item form of the Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Eysenck, Eysenck and Barrett, 1985). Each item is assessed on a dichotomous scale of yes or no.

Part Four consists of a sixty-four item instrument concerned with different aspects of religious experience and which includes a nine-



item index of mystical orientation. Respondents rated the importance of each item on a five point scale, ranging from: very low importance, through low importance, medium importance and high importance to very high importance (Francis and Thomas, 1996b).

Part Five is designed to assess respondents by psychological type and for this purpose utilises the forty-item Francis Psychological Type Scales in which a forced-choice format indicates preference between extraversion and introversion, sensing and intuition, thinking and feeling, judging and perceiving (Francis, 2004b).

Parts Three, Four and Five, are not yet analysed nor included in the present study but it is anticipated that the resulting data will be the subject of subsequent publications.

The data arising from Parts One and Two, were analysed at the University of Wales, Bangor, by means of the SPSS statistical package (SPSS 1988), in order to provide a simple analysis of all data.

Additionally, a chi-square test of statistical significance was computed in order to compare cleric's views on baptism and confirmation in 1993 and 2003. A chi-square test of significance has also been computed in order to permit the cross tabulation of responses in Part Two of the 2003 data with the numerical data of Part One of the 2003 questionnaire, relating to the sex of the respondent, age group of cleric, classification of parish according to rural or urban, whether self-classified as catholic or evangelical, whether self-classified as liberal or conservative. Given that the chi-square test is most robust in examining dichotomised categorical data, it was deemed acceptable to reduce each of the Likert-scaled items to the two categories of those clerics who agree with the statement and those who do not agree.

## Response to the questionnaire

Louden and Francis (2003) experienced some critical reaction to their survey of Roman Catholic priests. They found that non-respondents variously commented that they found the survey pointless and refused to complete a questionnaire because it had not been officially sanctioned. The researchers noted that it was rumoured that one diocesan bishop took the trouble to write to all clergy in his diocese instructing them not to participate. It would seem that such a reaction is not the province of the Roman Catholic Church alone and some not dissimilar findings typified the present study of Church in Wales clergy. Certainly, orchestrated attempts were made to deter participation at both deanery and archdeaconry levels and comment made that the Bench of Bishops had not approved the survey. Several clerics commented that they could not see any point in the study and questioned the practical value of its likely findings. Others remarked that they had little doubt that the purpose of the survey originated from a hidden and unsupported motive of seeking unacceptable change.

Altogether, 91 further comments, some lengthy, were added by respondents to their questionnaire while ten letters were also sent by non-responding clerics. All individual letters, telephone calls and emails were dealt with by a personal reply, some of which have led to a valuable continuing dialogue. One questionnaire was returned uncompleted with the comment, "I do not do questionnaires" and another with the comment, "I do not wish to take part in this project". One cleric took considerable time and went to great effort to destroy the value of his or her response by completing almost every possible option, including all choices on each Likert Scale question. A number of clerics clearly found sections three, four and five of the questionnaire 'intrusive' and others made the point that they had been 'Myers Briggsed' (quote) too frequently (see Myers and McCauley, 1985). Only one non-respondent complained that the questionnaire



should have been presented bilingually but it is suggested that the absence of a Welsh version of the questionnaire may well have deterred some Welsh-speaking clerics from responding. It is not known whether an English only questionnaire may have been adversely received, thereby influencing the response rate. A number of further comments were more supportive and one respondent expressed the view, "I hope this is part of an on-going process within the Church in Wales - to move us out of the dark ages and speak to people in language and gestures *they* understand. I welcome and applaud the initiative".

I am grateful to all those clergy who responded to the survey and who returned complete questionnaires despite genuine concerns by some that they are becoming 'over-surveyed', and I am especially grateful to those who took the extra trouble to include valuable additional insights into their views on initiation into the Church in Wales and added their good wishes. Loudon and Francis (2003) conclude their analysis of the response by clergy to their study of Roman Catholic priests with a strengthened impression of an ingrained official culture within the Roman Catholic Church that is anxious to preserve the Church's image at all costs. There are no grounds on which to draw the same conclusion from the present study regarding the Church in Wales. Even so, there is evidence of a desire among some clerics in the Church in Wales, including some senior clerics, to preserve their image and the response to the present study does give some degree of an impression of a church hostile, at least in part, to academic endeavour and debate. It is not irrelevant that two Anglican priests who responded to the United-Kingdom-wide *Let the People Speak Survey*, complained about the dangers of empowering people to speak for themselves and added that conducting 'this' type of research, "would only cause trouble" (Let the People Speak, 2005, p 11).

## Response rate

The questionnaire was designed so as to permit comparison to be made with the study of Thomas (1994). It was decided, however, that whereas the Thomas survey was distributed to a 50% sample of stipendiary parochial clergy in the Church in Wales, the present questionnaire would be dispatched to all stipendiary parochial clergy in the Church in Wales, including curates.

A list of 628 stipendiary clergy was provided by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales and the questionnaire was sent by post to the home address of each named cleric, together with an explanatory letter and a stamped and addressed reply envelope. Each questionnaire was numbered and the number retained against a copy of the name and address to whom the questionnaire was sent. The purpose of the number was explained in the accompanying letter so as to identify those who had responded in order that a gentle reminder might be sent to those who had not responded. The accompanying letter assured clerics that the number-key would be destroyed once the questionnaire had been returned and no attempt would be made to identify individual respondents. Clerics were also given the option of removing the number before returning the questionnaire, if they so wished. The assurance of confidentiality was not accepted by everyone and some clerics clearly felt anxious that their completed questionnaire might be traced.

Of the 628 questionnaires dispatched to named stipendiary parochial clergy, it was subsequently evident that 35 had not been received, or could not be completed because the cleric in question had recently died, was seriously ill, had moved out of the Church in Wales, had stopped being a parochial stipendiary cleric to become a full-time chaplain, or for other good reason could not be traced. Thus, the resulting population of parochial stipendiary clergy numbered 593.



This figure is confirmed by the Church in Wales as the official number of stipendiary parochial clergy serving in the Church in Wales at December 2003 (Church in Wales, 2004c). With follow-up, 289 questionnaires were returned. A number of these, together with correspondence from non-respondents, included the complaint that sections three, four and five were 'intrusive' and this was deemed to be a significant reason for non-response. As a result, a further follow-up was undertaken by distributing a shortened questionnaire, with sections three, four and five removed, to all clerics who had not yet returned a completed questionnaire.

Seventy eight completed shortened questionnaires were returned providing an over-all response of 394. A further late return was received increasing the response to 395 but was too late to be included in the present analysis. The response rate is, therefore, 66%. On analysis, ten of the returned questionnaires proved of questionable value and were excluded, thereby reducing the sample to 384 and the effective response rate to 65%. As previously indicated, however, the response rate is, adversely affected by the especially low rate of response by curates. A case could be made, on purely academic grounds, for excluding curates from the study. If curates were removed from the calculation of the response rate of parochial stipendiary clergy, the response rate rises to 69%.

Which ever of these rates is used in connection with the current study it remains disappointing compared with some other studies of Anglican clergy. For example, Jones' survey conducted among 672 Anglican clergy in Wales, achieved a response rate of 82% (Jones and Francis, 1997). Compared with a number of surveys, however, the response rate of the present study is reasonably compatible. Thomas' survey of Church in Wales clergy achieved a response rate of 64% (Francis and Thomas, 1996a); Rutledge's survey conducted among 1476 Anglican clergy in England achieved a response rate of 73% (Francis and Rutledge, 2000); Robbins' survey conducted among 1698 Anglican

clergy women in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, achieved a response rate of 73% (Robbins, 1998); Musson's survey conducted among 583 Anglican clergy men and 404 Anglican clergy women in England, achieved a response rate of 60% among the men and 64% among the women (Musson, 2001); Turton's survey conducted among 1967 Anglican clergy men in England achieved a response rate of 65% (Francis and Turton, 2002); Francis' survey conducted among all clergy ordained into the Anglican Church in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, in the individual years 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996, achieved response rates of 62%, 68%, 62%, 72% and 62% respectively (Francis, Jones, Jackson and Robbins, 2001).

While there is no agreed standard for a minimum acceptable response rate (Fowler, 1993), the response rates for the various research studies cited demonstrate a fairly common degree of similarity for responses by clergy to postal questionnaires. It is worthy of note, that the questionnaire employed in the present study was deemed by many respondents to be very long while Moser and Kalton (1971) have pointed out that shorter questionnaires are more likely to elicit a higher response rate than longer questionnaires.

Although the various studies outlined above are not in all respects directly comparable, the broad similarity in response rates between these surveys and the present study serve to support the contention that the response rate achieved by the present study is sufficiently credible for valid conclusions to be drawn from the responses provided.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **CHURCH IN WALES CLERGY'S UNDERSTANDING OF BAPTISM**

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### **CHURCH IN WALES CLERGY'S UNDERSTANDING OF BAPTISM**

#### **Introduction**

Owen (1990) sets out an attempt to categorise the range of baptismal policies that can be found across the Anglican Church. In summarised form they may be stated as six differing categories.

First, an open policy, which Owen sees as the traditional policy of the Anglican Church. According to this policy, baptism is never refused or delayed to anyone who requests it, parents are unlikely to be communicants or in regular worship and subsequent children are baptised even if little response is shown after the baptism of the first child.

Second, an open policy, but with preparation and perhaps some requirement for attendance at services of worship.

Third, an open policy, but with strict and formal preparation and the possibility of an alternative service of thanksgiving for the birth of a child being offered to parents who show no real desire of commitment.

Fourth, a more restricted policy, wherein practicing communicant status is required on the part of at least one of the parents.

Fifth, a policy of only baptising children of established Church families, where there is evidence of Christian faith and commitment.

Sixth, a restrictive policy of only baptising those who are able to answer for themselves.



It is within this range of policies that clerics in the Church in Wales continue to debate where they see their loyalties lie. It is, therefore, pertinent to seek the views of clerics in the Church in Wales by asking them direct questions concerning those aspects of baptism to which they attribute importance.

## **An open policy on baptism**

Dalby (1989), an advocate of an open policy on baptism, claims this to be the traditional practice of the Anglican Church and goes on to insist that it should remain so. In support of his argument, he quotes two key figures from the Anglican Reformation, John Whitgift (1530 – 1604) and Richard Hooker (1554 – 1600). John Whitgift, in an attack on the Puritan idea of confining baptism to children of the faith, enquired:

What scripture have you that the parent at the baptizing of the child should make rehearsal of his faith and ... what if the parents be of evil behaviour? What if the parents be Papist? What if they be heretics? ... and shall not their children be baptized?

Richard Hooker was equally firm:

A wrong conceit that none may receive the sacrament of baptism but they whose parents, at the least the one of them, are by the soundness of their religion and by their virtuous demeanour known to be men of God, hath caused some to repel children.

Buchanan (1989) has described Dalby's support for the continuance of an open baptism policy as 'canute-like', but it is evident that Dalby has the support of others, (Osborne, 1972; Carr, 1985; Green, 1987a), when he claims that to simply refuse baptism, or impose conditions that effectively amount to refusal, means that what is often the first contact between young parents and the local church is almost totally negative. The comment, 'the vicar would not christen my baby' is a familiar outcome, and although it may well not be what the vicar actually said that is being quoted, it still is taken as a rejection of the family by the Church, with

lasting consequences. Practising clerics continue to claim to be painfully aware of the feelings of rejection suffered by parishioners when a baptism is refused (Spencer, 2003). Some clerics, however, feel that to assist parents and godparents to commit what Wright (1990) calls 'perjury in church', is not the answer, and no doubt Buchanan (1973) would agree. Certainly, the response of the Church in Wales to the *Faith and Order Paper No. III* (Lima Report, 1982), while supportive of its recommendation for an open baptismal policy, nevertheless expressed concern that Question Three of the Paper implied indiscriminate baptism and argued that the Church in Wales should pay more attention to the faith of the parents who bring an infant for baptism (Church in Wales, 1985). It is important, therefore, to know how clerics in the Church in Wales are inclined to respond to this thorny debate.

Table 4.1 shows that when, in the present study, Church in Wales clerics were asked for their views on various aspects of baptism, they would appear to have been influenced by the considerations indicated by Dalby, for certainly a strong preference for an open baptismal policy is discernible. In addition, more clerics apparently feel this way in 2003 than was the case in 1993 when Thomas (1994) conducted his study of Church in Wales clergy. Table 4.1 shows the extent of these changes and their statistical significance according to Pearson's chi-square probability. The relevance of the chi-square statistic is discussed further in Chapter Six.

A statistical indication of change is shown in respect of each of the statements contained in the following tables, 4.1 to 4.7, but it is only deemed significant if  $<0.01$ . This is considered to be the lowest level of indication that relevant change has taken place between 1993 and 2003 and the data should be viewed accordingly.



**Table 4.1      The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to an open policy on baptism, 1993 and 2003 compared**

	<b>1993 % Agree</b>	<b>2003 % Agree</b>	<b>Chi- square probability</b>
I would baptise a baby if neither parent was a regular churchgoer	85	91	.02434
I would accept for godparents those who were not regular churchgoers	63	85	.00000
Baptism should be regarded as generally available to all	75	81	.02931
I would baptise a baby if neither parent was a baptised Anglican	62	73	.00617
I would accept for godparents those who were not baptised Anglicans	59	66	.09665
Making more stringent requirements for infant baptism presents a real danger to the Church	45	57	.00593

It is evident from table 4.1, that when clerics were asked if they would baptise a baby if neither parent was a regular churchgoer, a very high percentage (91%) said that they would. This represents a small increase over the percentage of clerics who agreed when presented with the same statement in 1993 (85%). A high percentage agree that they would accept for godparents those who were not regular churchgoers (85%). This compares with 63% of clerics who agreed with the statement in 1993 and is a change of statistical significance over the decade at <0.00001. Again, a high percentage of clerics in 2003 agree that baptism should be regarded as generally available to all (81%), compared with 75% of clerics who agreed with this statement in 1993. Nearly three-quarters of clerics (73%) agree that they would baptise a baby if neither parent was a baptised Anglican, compared with 62% of clerics who agreed with this statement in 1993. This is a statistically significant change at <0.01 and is particularly notable considering that Crowe (1980) was not alone in claiming that the baptism of the children of unbaptised parents is an abuse of the sacrament. Brown (1990), it seems, supports this point of



view, as do Buchanan (1993), and *Baptism Integrity* generally (formerly MORIB) (Saward, 2004a). Two thirds of clerics (66%) agree that they would accept for godparents those who were not baptised Anglicans, compared with 59% of clerics who agreed with this statement in 1993. Well over half of clerics (57%) agree that making more stringent requirements for infant baptism would represent a real danger to the Church. This compares with less than half of clerics (45%) who agreed with this statement in 1993 and represents a statistically significant change at  $<0.01$  over the decade. Clearly, clerics in general have become more resistant to any restriction being placed upon their growing support for an open policy on baptism.

Increasing support for an open policy may or may not be a response to the decline in the numbers of baptisms in 2003 compared with 1993. Certainly all dioceses of the Church in Wales record a notable percentage decrease over the decade. In 2003, the total number of recorded baptisms in the St Asaph diocese was 79% of the 1993 figure; in Bangor 78% of the 1993 figure; in St Davids 74% of the 1993 figure; in Llandaff 63% of the 1993 figure; in Monmouth 75% of the 1993 figure and in Swansea and Brecon 68% of the 1993 figure (Representative Body, 2004).

While it is evident from table 4.1 that there is strong support among clerics for an open baptismal policy and that this support is more notable in 2003 than ten years previous, (especially in respect of those statements where the change over time is statistically significant at  $<0.00001$  and  $<0.01$ ), it remains that not all clerics are in agreement. It is important, therefore, to consider clerics' responses to the present survey further and to ascertain which specific aspects of baptism policy and practice they consider to be of particular importance. It is pertinent to ask how far clerics attribute importance to symbolism in baptism; how far they attribute importance to revision of the liturgy; the importance clerics attribute to the Church's teaching on baptism; how far clerics' views are consistent with the Church's teaching; how far clerics attribute importance



to popular beliefs about baptism; and what safeguards and checks they feel should be retained to ensure that an open baptismal policy and practice does not simply become the 'cheap grace' described by Bonhoeffer (1995). Each of these facets of baptismal policy and practice will be discussed in turn.

## **The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to symbolism in baptism**

Brabant (1932) has suggested that all symbolic religious acts, whether they make use of words or actions, have a double function. On the one hand, they are directed toward God and express, in outward form, the thoughts and feelings of the worshippers. On the other hand, they are directed toward mankind and teach the worshipper how they ought to think and feel, by setting before them the Church's standard of worship.

Harvey (1999), in similar vein, claims that:

In word and deed, the rite of baptism succinctly reveals the Christian story biblically, theologically, and doctrinally. Indeed the rite's power and importance are revealed in the manner in which the symbol gives rise to a people formed and transformed through grace. This is why corruption of the rite or its meaning threatens not merely an ancient ritual of the Church, but more importantly how Christians understand and live out their faith (p 103).

Looked at this way, symbolism in baptism is clearly important.

The Church in Wales *Book of Common Prayer* (Church in Wales, 1984a) and the *Alternative Order of Baptism* (Church in Wales, 1990a) retain an act of baptismal symbolism, through words and actions, through reference to when a cleric takes an infant in their arms and three times pours water over the child's head with the words, 'I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'. Carr (1985) has, however, issued a word of warning on the over-use of religious

symbolism. Around every symbol, he claims, is a heap of association, some natural and primitive, and some conditioned by Christian culture. He warns clerics against rushing into using symbolism before considering whether the meaning the cleric believes lies behind the symbolism is the same as that which the worshipper has in mind or understands by it. The much greater popularity of anointing with oil among clerics in 2003, compared with 1993, as illustrated in the following table 4.2, may be a case in point. It is noteworthy that the process of anointing with chrism was included in the 1990 *Alternative Order of Baptism* but was not part of the baptism service contained in the 1984 *Book of Common Prayer*. It may well be that anointing with oil has a sound Biblical foundation. Certainly, Nunn (2004) would suggest that this is the case while Mitchell (1996) has argued that 2 Corinthians (1. 21f), is more than merely metaphorical, for here God is said to have anointed us, sealed us, and given us the earnest of spirit in our hearts. It is less clear that when a cleric anoints a child on the crown of the child's head with the oil of chrism saying, 'God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has set you free from sin...' (Church in Wales, 1990) that the symbolism is meaningful to the child's parents, godparents and a substantial proportion of the congregation. Pecklers (2003a) reminds us that, "Something is wrong if symbols fail to communicate or function liturgically" (p 181).

The responses of clerics to questions on symbolism are shown in table 4.2, together with the comparative responses recorded in 1993 and the statistical significance of the extent of any change between 1993 and 2003.



**Table 4.2      The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to symbolism in baptism, 1993 and 2003 compared**

	1993 % Agree	2003 % Agree	Chi- square probability
In infant baptism signing with the cross is important	88	90	.29374
In infant baptism blessing the water is important	79	85	.03883
In infant baptism the threefold administration of the water is important	88	84	.17528
In infant baptism giving a lighted candle is important	68	80	.00026
In infant baptism anointing with oil is important	37	50	.00148

Green (1987b) gives Christians the assurance that they are the rightful heirs of symbolism. It would appear from table 4.2 that Church in Wales clerics are inclined to agree. It is evident from the table that signing with the cross is important to a large majority of clerics (90%) and that blessing the water is deemed important, with 85% of clerics agreeing, while 84% also agree that the threefold administration of the water is important. In the first two instances the percentage of clerics who agree is larger than the percentage recorded in 1993. Rather surprisingly the percentage of clerics who deem the threefold administration of water to be important is smaller in 2003 than 1993. The difference is, however, small and the percentage remains high at 84%, compared with the 1993 figure of 88%. The difference may not, therefore, be relevant. Of greater significance is the notable rise between 1993 and 2003 in the importance clerics attribute to giving a lighted candle (68% and 80% respectively) and the even greater rise in the importance attributed to anointing with oil, where 50% of clerics deem this to be important in 2003, compared with only 37% in 1993. The difference between the 1993 and 2003 percentages in the former case is statistically significant at <0.001 and in

the latter case at  $<0.01$ . Symbolism in the baptism service, it seems, is important to clerics and generally more important than a decade ago, especially in so far as giving a lighted candle and of anointing with oil is concerned.

## **The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to revision of the liturgy**

Taft (2003) reminds us that underlying the liturgy must be a sound theology of the Church as the mystical body of Christ. Liturgy, he argues, must be a sign of God's Kingdom in our world today. Johnson and Phillips (2004) refer to Paul Bradshaw's work on the place of initiation liturgy and show the difficulties of drawing conclusions about initiation liturgy from the early Church. Nevertheless, they clearly reflect the view of Johnson (1999) and other liturgists (Crichton, 1989; Yarnold, 1994; Kavanagh, 1994; Earey, 2003) that initiation liturgy involves giving glory to God through the lives of those who worship God. Generally, it would seem, this line of thinking has been taken to imply that the purpose of any change or revision of the baptismal service is to communicate the meaning of the service in a language that can be understood by as wide a range of people as possible. In Wales, this has necessitated the baptism service, as it appears in the *Book of Common Prayer* (Church in Wales, 1984a), to be printed bilingually. Similarly, the *Alternative Order* (Church in Wales, 1990a) has parallel texts in English and Welsh plus a revised wording. The revisions approved by the Synod of the Church of England in 2000 make alternative liturgical texts available in the Church of England baptismal service, thereby permitting the minister an element of choice. Green (1987b) gives support for a trend for revision in the following words:

Liturgy, which is the vehicle through which worship is expressed, needs to develop, so that it can be true, both to our intimations about God and our own changing self-awareness. Without growth, liturgy will quickly become archaic. It will fossilise (p 21).



It is a similar line of thinking that leads Avis (2003a) to express disappointment that *Common Worship* (Church of England, 2000) does not go far enough in reflecting contemporary life in its revised liturgy. This line of thinking does not, however, appear to be reflected in table 4.3 below. As far as table 4.3 is concerned, there is but limited evidence of change over the decade from 1993 to 2003. There is little to show that there is growth in the notion that liturgy should develop so as to communicate more clearly the meaning of the baptism service, in a language that can be easily responded to by as wide a range of people as possible.

**Table 4.3      The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to revision of baptismal liturgy, 1993 and 2003 compared**

	1993 % Agree	2003 % Agree	Chi- square probability
The baptismal liturgy should be more easily understood by the occasional worshipper	85	83	.50315
The baptismal liturgy should be restated in contemporary images and language	65	71	.09099
The baptismal liturgy should permit more participation by the regular congregation	77	71	.09631
The baptismal liturgy should involve active participation from parents and godparents	71	70	.78992
Liturgical language like ‘an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven’ is readily understood by parents and godparents	15	9	.01763

It is of interest that table 4.3 shows clerics in 1993 to be a small amount less supportive than in 2003 of the statement that the baptismal liturgy should be restated in contemporary images and language. In respect of the statements, ‘the baptismal liturgy should be more easily understood by the occasional worshipper’ and ‘the baptismal liturgy should permit more participation by the regular congregation’ and ‘the baptismal liturgy should involve active participation from parents and godparents’, clerics

in 2003 show but small difference to the proportion of clerics who agreed with the statement in 1993. Despite this trend, clerics in 1993, and even more so in 2003, strongly disagree that liturgical language like ‘an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven’, is readily understood by the parents and godparents of children presented for baptism. In respect of none of the statements is the percentage change in viewpoint between 1993 and 2003 statistically significant at  $<0.01$

Among the many respondents who added their own personal comments to the questionnaire, were several who felt strongly that the present baptismal liturgy seriously failed to adapt to the changes taking place in the community and the community’s view of the Church. One cleric commented most forcefully, “I hope this (survey) is part of an on-going process within the Church in Wales (to help us) move out of the dark ages and speak to people in language and gestures *they* understand...”. That such statements may appear contradictory to the results shown in table 4.3 is probably explained by more than one respondent who added a personal comment to the questionnaire indicating a conflict in their own thinking with that of the Church’s teaching. One respondent made the further point that a priest’s choice is limited because their position is enshrined in the *The Cure of Souls*. Another respondent questioned how far the priest’s position on baptismal policy is restrained by Canonical Law. In fact, little attention is given to baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist in the constitution and canons of the Church in Wales. Instead, they tend to be regulated by liturgical rubrics and directions, by ecclesiastical quasi-legislation and by a substantial body of pre-1920 ecclesiastical law (Doe, 2002). The Cure of Souls (1996) is rather more specific in stating that, “The parish priest is specifically charged with bringing new members into the Church by baptism” (p 8). It remains that clerics in the Church in Wales may well find some difficulty in equating their own beliefs with the Church’s teaching and this warrants further investigation.



## **The importance Church in Wales clerics attribute to the Church's teaching on baptism**

“The Church teaches that baptism, where it may be had, is necessary to salvation” (Church in Wales, 1984a, p 654). So begins the introduction to the instructions to the service of the public baptism of infants in the Church in Wales. The sentence is retained for the introduction of the *Alternative Order for Baptism* (Church in Wales, 1990a). Both the *Book of Common Prayer* (Church in Wales, 1984a) and the 1990 *Alternative Order*, go on to state that it is the duty of Christians to bring their children to Holy Baptism and that it is also the duty of Christians to see that their children are instructed in the catechism and brought to the bishop to be confirmed.

The Church's teaching has its basis in scripture. Paul teaches that baptism is the celebration of Christ's death and resurrection and through it, the person to be baptised, (symbolically) dies with Jesus in the water, only to be raised up from the water to a new life of which the risen Lord is the source (Romans, 6.3-4; Colossians, 2.12). The assurance that at baptism a child is grafted into the Body of Christ is reiterated in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* and in the 1984 *Book of Common Prayer* and is incorporated into the 1990 *Alternative Order of Baptism*, albeit in simplistic terms.

The 1662 service of baptism, and the later revisions, require that baptism shall be administered on Sundays or on other Holy days and in the presence of the congregation. The rubric to the 1662 service makes it clear that it is important that the congregation shall be present so that ‘every man present may be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God in his baptism’ (Church of England, 1662). *The Report of the Inter-Church Enquiry into Baptismal Practice* (1970), outlined the differing practices of the main Christian churches and concluded that baptism is not solely a matter of individual concern but is intimately



connected with the corporate worship of the Church. The report maintains, therefore, that baptism should normally be administered during a public service of worship so that members of the local congregation may be reminded of their own baptism (p 37). The 1662 rubric and that of the subsequent revisions all make mention of a requirement that godparents be appointed, although the insistence in the 1662 service that for every male child there shall be two godfathers and one godmother, and *vice-versa* for female children, is not evident in the 1984 *Book of Common Prayer*, or the 1990 *Alternative Service* which simply require a minimum of one godmother and one godfather.

The more recent revisions for use by the Church in Wales retain the requirement that parents and godparents are themselves baptised Christians and desirably that they should be regular communicants of the Church in Wales or of a Church in communion with it (Church in Wales, 1984a; Church in Wales, 1990a). These recent revisions do however, place less emphasis (at least overtly) on the notion of original sin, which is stressed in the opening statement of the 1662 service. Bicknell (1923) reminds us that original sin is not a scriptural phrase and denotes neither an act nor a habit but rather a condition of human nature. Nevertheless, both the 1984 *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Alternative Order* of 1990 retain the notion that the infant to be baptised needs to be cleansed and delivered from sin (Church in Wales, 1990a) and be baptised in water sanctified for the mystical washing away of sin (Church in Wales, 1984a).

The Church's teaching on baptism, therefore, seems clear enough and is well documented. There is, however, evidence to suggest that clerics do not necessarily always strictly adhere to the Church's teaching on baptism. Stockwood (1982) tells of a Bristol parson, who in the 1940s baptised on demand for the price of a sixpenny registration card, and who had a notice outside his church reading, "The church with a thousand baptisms a year" (p 47). The Bristol parson may not have a counterpart in the present day Church in Wales but the cleric who responded to the present survey with the additional comment, "What a priest says and



does at a baptism is more important than the liturgical words,” raises some doubt about whether the Church’s teaching on baptism is in all cases adhered to. It is, therefore, appropriate to ask clerics for their views on a number of statements relating to the importance attributed to the Church’s teaching on baptism. The results are shown in table 4.4 together with the comparative responses recorded in 1993.

**Table 4.4     The importance Church in Wales clerics attribute to the Church’s teaching on baptism, 1993 and 2003 compared**

	1993 % Agree	2003 % Agree	Chi- square probability
A main purpose of infant baptism is to incorporate the baby into the Body of Christ	96	92	.03769
A main purpose of infant baptism is to convey a special gift of the Holy Spirit	82	80	.54149
A main purpose of infant baptism is to wash away original sin	44	43	.87746
In infant baptism promises made by the parents are important	94	95	.79207
In infant baptism promises made by the godparents are important	95	95	.75243
In infant baptism the presence of the congregation is important	81	77	.18738

It is evident from table 4.4 that 95% of clerics in 2003 base importance on the baptism promises of the parents and 95% base importance on the promises of the godparents. There is virtually no change in these percentages over the decade form 1993 to 2003. It is further evident that while 92% of clerics in 2003 agree that a main purpose of baptism is to incorporate the baby into the Body of Christ, this is a marginally smaller percentage than the 96% of clerics who deemed this to be important in 1993. Although the 80% who agree in 2003 that a main purpose of infant baptism is to convey a special gift of the Holy Spirit is a substantial

majority of clerics, given the teaching of the Church on the matter, it is a smaller majority than might have been expected. It is possible, of course, that some clerics follow Bruner (1971) in questioning whether Acts (19.2) implies that the receipt of the Holy Spirit should be considered as unrelated to baptism. This is not, however, the position held by the Anglican Church generally and Bruner himself subsequently stepped back from this particular theological position. The 77% of clerics who deemed that in infant baptism, the presence of the congregation is important is probably also smaller than might have been expected, given the Church's teaching that baptisms, where possible, should be conducted in the context of a 'normal' service. The importance of the point is stressed by Holeton (1998). Less than half of the clerics responding to the enquiry in 2003 (43%) and similarly less than half in 1993 (44%) felt that a main purpose of infant baptism is to wash away original sin. This is despite the Church's teaching, included in the 1984 *Book of Common Prayer*, "Hear, therefore, the prayers of Thy Church; sanctify this water for the mystical washing away of sin..." (p 660). It is a notable feature of table 4.4 that none of the percentage differences between 1993 and 2003 are significant at  $<0.01$ .

### **The importance Church in Wales clerics attribute to conflicting views with Church teaching on baptism**

The issue of baptism, and especially infant baptism, has considerable divisive potential precisely because it was deemed of such little importance for the early Christian Church. As Strange (1996) so aptly reminds us, had more attention been given to this matter in the writings of the early church, a great deal of subsequent debate could have been avoided.

In recent decades, Jeremias (1963) and Green (1987a) among others, have presented a forceful case in support of the New Testament origins of infant baptism. Others, like Aland (1963) and Beasley-Murray (1972)



have equally persuasively argued that infant baptism was a more recent construct. Despite the attempts of Yates (1993), and others, to weigh the argument and produce a consensus, the issue remains fundamentally unresolved. We see this only too clearly in recent exchanges on the *World Wide Web* between such authorities on baptism as Colin Buchanan, Michael Saward and Roger Godin. Buchanan (2004) suggested that the earliest actual 'camera shot' evidence that infants were being baptised in New Testament times is, admittedly, not in the New Testament, but in the writings of Tertullian in North Africa around 190-200 AD, where he is trying to change what was then current practice. In other words, as early as 200AD, Tertullian urged that infants should not be baptised. For Buchanan, this is a crucial basis from which to develop a case for infant baptism. Saward clearly does not agree and was swift to stress Buchanan's failure to include the patristic evidence (Saward, 2004b). Godin weighed in with an immediate reply (Godin, 2004a), claiming that neither Buchanan nor Saward had, in fact, proven their case.

It is hardly surprising that present day Church in Wales clerics when finding themselves faced with such conflicting views on infant baptism, experience difficulty in translating into practice the Church's teaching on baptism. The extent of the difficulty has been exposed by Owen (1990) who describes in some detail the reaction he received from clerics to his recommendation that Anglican priests should have the right to refuse baptism where it was clearly pastorally inappropriate. The responses from clerics exposed deep divisions of opinion and while some clerics gave unquestioning support to the proposal, others saw any move to tighten up the open baptismal policy of the Anglican Church as an unwarranted restriction upon the Grace of God.

It is against this backcloth that clerics were asked if they agree that a service of thanksgiving should be offered to some parents who request a service of baptism; if they agree that a confession of faith in Jesus Christ by the parents is sufficient ground for infant baptism; if they have doubts

about the theology of baptism; whether or not they feel that adult baptism and confirmation should be the only service of initiation; whether they feel that refusing infant baptism restricts the work of the Holy Spirit; whether a priest should have the right to refuse baptism on assessment of the suitability of the parents and godparents; and for their view on whether churches should or should not baptise babies at all. The results are shown in table 4.5 where clerics' responses are compared with the response of clerics to the same issues in 1993.

**Table 4.5      The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to conflicting views with Church teaching, 1993 and 2003 compared**

	1993 % Agree	2003 % Agree	Chi- square probability
I would offer a service of thanksgiving to some parents who request a service of baptism	46	46	.98142
A confession of faith in Jesus Christ by the parents is sufficient ground for infant baptism	66	67	.76271
I have doubts about the theology of infant baptism	26	25	.77895
Adult baptism and confirmation should be the only service of initiation	21	19	.68115
Refusing infant baptism restricts the work of the Holy Spirit	59	60	.83034
A priest should have the right to refuse baptism on assessment of the suitability of the parents or godparents	44	40	.26605
Churches should not baptise babies at all	6	6	.94755

The fact that in both 1993 and 2003, 46% of clerics agreed that they would offer a service of thanksgiving to some parents who request a service of baptism, is a little surprising when the organization *Baptismal Integrity* (formerly MORIB) has claimed that such services are gaining in popularity (Baptism Integrity, 2004). The case put forward for an increase



in the popularity of thanksgiving services by Hartley (2004a) is logical enough. It avoids the more negative stance of turning people away; it does not require the same preparation as baptism; it does not make unrealistic demands on godparents and to this extent is, in many cases, a more honest church service. What is more, it could be claimed that it follows the Bible more closely than infant baptism by welcoming little children in the way that Jesus did.

Not everyone agrees, however, and Tremlett (2004) sees little cause for celebration at any possible increase in thanksgiving services. Indeed, she makes the point that Jesus commanded baptism not thanksgiving. In any case, if such services represent a singular growth factor in Church of England statistics, as *Baptism Integrity* claim, then it may be specific to the Church of England and is not reflected as an important area of growth by Church in Wales clergy in table 4.5

Given the considerable controversy that surrounds infant baptism, it is perhaps surprising that so few clerics in both 2003 and previously in 1993, have doubts about the theology of infant baptism (25% and 26% respectively); or should assert that adult baptism and confirmation should be the only service of initiation (19% and 21% respectively). Clearly clerics express a very strong support for infant baptism, as indicated by their response in both 2003 and 1993. When it was put to them that churches should not baptise babies at all only 6% of clerics in 2003 and 6% in 1993, attributed importance to the statement. While 60% of clerics in 2003 (and 59% in 1993) felt that refusing infant baptisms restricts the work of the Holy Spirit, only 40 % of clerics in 2003 (and 44% in 1993) felt that a priest should have the right to refuse baptism on assessment of the suitability of parents and godparents.

The general trend toward an open baptismal policy is confirmed in the statement that a confession of faith in Jesus Christ by the parents is sufficient ground for infant baptism, where 67% of clerics give their support. Interestingly, this is only one of two statements in table 4.5 in



respect of which clerics show stronger support in 2003 than in 1993, albeit, a marginal increase in support from 66% in 1993 to 67% in 2003. None of the percentage differences between the statements made in 1993 and 2003, are statistically significant at  $<0.01$ .

## **The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to popular beliefs about baptism**

George Herbert's country priest (Charles, 1977) believed baptism, 'a blessing that the world hath not the like'. He baptised only in the presence of the whole congregation and constantly reminded them of the vocation to which baptism had called them (Tobin, 1991). Crichton (1989) gives us a concise view of what that vocation involves when he claims that through the celebration of baptism, we are able to participate in the death and resurrection of Christ. We are, Crichton maintains, able to make the mystery our own and it is our vocation to live by what we have received. In short, by the making of the anamnesis of the death and resurrection of Christ, by water and word, we can be incorporated into the body of Christ. The *Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order* (1963), put it this way:

Our baptism unites us with Christ who took upon himself our sins and those of the whole world that they might be forgiven and blotted out and opens us to newness of life (p 72).

The Church in Wales would appear to hold the same position and in recommending a baptismal liturgy, not only for the Church in Wales but for all covenanted churches, laid emphasis upon the link pronounced by John the Baptist between baptism and repentance and cleansing from sin (Church in Wales, 1990b). This same report goes on to say, "Repentance is the necessary prelude to baptism through which sins are washed away and forgiveness affected" (Church in Wales, 1990b, p 29).



This is all very well but as Hinton (1994) reminds us, many a cleric has been guilty of falling into a folk religion approach to baptism, while many a parent has seen the baptism service as primarily a naming ceremony rather than a participation in the death and resurrection of Christ. Even the more 'churched' parent may question the notion of a tiny baby needing to be cleansed of sin, let alone that they may be destined for hell if they are not baptised. Buchanan (1990) has attempted to reassure parents by telling them not to think of their child requiring to be baptised in order to ensure that should the child die, he or she will go to heaven rather than hell. Such thoughts, Buchanan insists, are but superstitious beliefs. Baptism, he says, is not some sort of magic trick that allows God's love to be switched on or off just because a baby dies, it is constant, irrespective of baptism.

Even so, some people may argue that any removal of the notion of hell is just one more example of a liberal rejection of the teaching of Jesus (Woodward, 1989). Bertrand Russell gave as one of his reasons for not being a Christian the fact that Jesus had taught the doctrine of hell (Russell, 2004, p 14). It could be argued that by rejecting the concept of hell for the unbaptised, the Church is simply giving in to such a view.

On the other hand, as Bernstein (1996) has shown, the imagery that is popularly used to depict hell is largely borrowed from Greek and Persian sources and had no basis in the New Testament. As a result, Thomas (2003) speaks from the experience of a long serving cleric when he argues that if the word 'hell' is to remain in our Church vocabulary, it would be better to relate it to man-made hells. The concept of protecting the child at baptism from man-made hells may well prove more acceptable to both parents and clerics, than the notion of saving the child's soul from damnation and fire. Coppen (2004) reports that the Pope has asked senior Roman Catholic theologians to find a more coherent and enlightened way of describing the fate of babies who die without baptism.

It is against the backcloth of such considerations as these that clerics were asked for their views on whether the Church should clearly refute the idea that children go to hell if they die unbaptised; whether they believe that at baptism a child’s spiritual future is changed in some way; whether they feel that an unbaptised child is spiritually disadvantaged in some way; whether infant baptism may encourage people to think they are Christians when they do not profess any faith; whether a main purpose of infant baptism is to welcome the baby into Church membership; how far they see a main purpose of infant baptism to give thanks for the birth of the baby. The results are shown in table 4.6 where they are compared with the responses of clerics to the same statements in 1993.

**Table 4.6      The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to popular beliefs about baptism, 1993 and 2003 compared**

	1993 % Agree	2003 % Agree	Chi- square probability
The Church should clearly refute the idea that children go to hell if they die unbaptised	92	93	.75599
I believe that at baptism a child's spiritual future is changed in some way	68	68	.98811
An unbaptised child is spiritually disadvantaged in some way	47	36	.00677
Infant baptism may encourage people to think they are Christians when they do not profess any faith	53	54	.76905
A main purpose of infant baptism is to welcome the baby into Church membership	75	81	.07171
A main purpose of infant baptism is to give thanks for the birth of the baby	32	39	.07998

For the most part, it is evident form table 4.6 that there is considerable agreement between the responses of clerics in 2003 and those given by



clerics a decade previous. One notable exception is in clerics' responses to the statement, 'an unbaptised child is disadvantaged in some way', where a considerably smaller level of agreement is expressed in 2003 (36%) than in 1993 (47%). Indeed the difference is statistically significant at  $<0.01$ . A smaller change is evident in respect of clerics' responses to the statement that, 'a main purpose of infant baptism is to welcome the baby into Church membership', with 81% of clerics agreeing with the statement in 2003 compared with 75% in 1993. Similarly a small increase is evident in the percentage of clerics who agree with the statement that, 'a main purpose of infant baptism is to give thanks for the birth of the baby', when in 2003 some 39% of clerics give their support compared with 32% in 1993. Even so, it remains that almost two thirds of clerics still reject the notion. It is interesting to note that over two thirds of clerics (68%) believe that at baptism a child's spiritual future is changed in some way and that this percentage of agreement was similarly recorded in 1993. It is also interesting to note that just over a half of clerics (54%) feel that infant baptism may encourage people to think they are Christians when they do not profess any faith. A closely similar result was recorded in 1993 when 53% of clerics agreed with the statement. Most notable of all, a large majority of clerics in both 2003 and 1993 (93% and 92% respectively) maintain that the idea that unbaptised children go to hell, should be clearly refuted by the Church.

## **Safeguards and checks deemed important by Church in Wales clerics**

One cleric added a personal response to the present survey by admitting that the questionnaire had exposed contradictions in his/her own theology and practice of baptism. He/she clearly felt that this was primarily due to inconsistencies in what the Church believes and what it has always practiced. As a result, he/she maintained that, "We have allowed Christian initiation to become absorbed into folk religion and are left with a choice of rejecting those who come seeking something of God, without



necessarily having any Christian understanding, or undermining our own theology". It is a problem that other clerics may share. Few clerics are prepared to go so far as the cleric who commented that, "We might as well go round with a bucket. Splash! In the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit", and most clerics would expect some level of commitment on behalf of the parents and godparents of those babies presented for baptism.

Macdonald (1937) colourfully records Bishop Westcott's confirmation sermon notes, in which he addresses his remarks to both congregation and parents. The congregation, he reminds, must act as a church that believes that they are 'their brother's keeper', with continuing responsibilities to support the newly confirmed young people. The parents, he reminds, must continue the responsibilities required of them when their child was baptised, to go home and pray with the child and make sure that the child leads the rest of his or her life, according to their baptised beginning.

This is, of course, in keeping with the demands placed upon parents, and also the godparents, within the baptism service. Such demands have a long established pedigree. Whitaker (2003) cites the Sarum rite, in use on the eve of the Reformation and which was the basis of Cranmer's revision of the office of baptism:

If he is an infant, let the father and mother be enjoined to preserve their child from fire and water and all other dangers until the age of seven; and if they do it not, the godfathers and godmothers are held responsible. Likewise the godmothers should be enjoined to teach the infant the Our Father and Hail Mary and I Believe in God, or cause them to be taught ...  
(Whitaker, 2003, p 248).

It is but a small step to the Church in Wales service of the public baptism of infants, wherein the priest requires parents and godparents to ensure that the child is brought up to worship with the Church, taught the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, and is instructed in



Church Catechism and brought to the bishop for confirmation. The parents and godparents are asked to pray for the child and help him or her to keep the promises the parents and godparents have made on the child's behalf (Church in Wales, 1984a).

*The Alternative Order* of 1990 uses more general terminology but yet, in a sense, makes the demands upon parents and godparents more profound in the phrase, "In asking for this child to be baptised you accept the responsibility to care for the child in every way as God gives you opportunity" (Church in Wales, 1990a, part 2). Not surprisingly, therefore, Legood and Markham (1997), in their handbook for godparents, advise the parents of children presented for baptism, not to choose godparents in haste. Such a decision, they insist, should be the result of thought and reflection for the obligations placed upon the godparents are obligations for life. Against this, Harden (2004a), quotes the head of research and statistics for the Church of England as claiming that the onerous demands placed on godparents by the new *Common Worship Service*, is one reason why fewer parents come forward to request baptism and ask for a thanksgiving service for the child instead. In any event, it is possible that many clerics throughout both the Church of England and the Church in Wales would be able to identify instances in which the godparents could be described as mere liturgical accessories on a child's baptism day (Hartley, 2004b; Henig, 2004; Godin, 2004b).

Against this backcloth clerics may feel that some safeguards and checks are necessary to ensure that support for an open policy on baptism does not become such 'cheap grace' that its meaning and significance are placed in question.

It is, thus, relevant to ask clerics what they deem to be important in respect of the effect of frequent baptisms in Sunday Eucharists; whether parents should be required to undertake a number of church attendances; whether believing parents are a necessary pre-requisite; whether only the babies of churchgoers should be baptised; whether parents should be

required to attend preparation courses and whether such courses should be run by the clergy or by members of the congregation. Table 4.7 shows the results and compares clerics' responses with those recorded in 1993.

**Table 4.7      Safeguards and checks deemed important by Church in Wales clerics, 1993 and 2003 compared**

	1993 % Agree	2003 % Agree	Chi- square probability
Frequent baptisms in Sunday Eucharists hinder the worship of regular churchgoers	51	54	.55287
A statutory number of church attendances are required before baptism	23	13	.00131
Believing parents are a necessary pre-requisite for baptism	33	29	.25975
Churches should only baptise babies of regular churchgoers	12	11	.69606
Churches should require parents to attend a preparation course before their babies are baptised	64	62	.73101
Baptism preparation courses should be run by members of the congregation	52	56	.26120
Baptism preparation courses should be run by clergy	51	48	.39479

It is evident from table 4.7 that although a notable majority of Church in Wales clerics support an open policy on baptism, this does not necessarily mean that clerics are prepared to undertake baptisms on demand. Table 4.7 shows that almost two thirds of clerics (62%) deem it to be important that parents should attend a preparation course before their babies are baptised. It is noteworthy that when the same statement was presented to clerics in 1993, a higher percentage was recorded (64%) although the difference is small. When clerics were asked whether the clergy or the congregation should run such courses the results are ambivalent, with 56% of clerics saying it is important for courses to be run



by the congregation (the percentage agreeing in 1993 being 52%) and 48% of clerics saying it is important that clergy should run these courses (the percentage agreeing in 1993 being 51%). Several respondents in the present study indicated a preference for preparation courses to be run partially by clergy and partially by members of the congregation. Whether preparation courses are used simply to instruct parents on the 'process' of the baptism or as a step to 'conversion' is not part of the present study but would warrant further investigation.

The point has been made previously (see table 4.4) that clerics deem the baptismal promises of parents to be important. It is perhaps surprising, therefore, that when asked if they deemed believing parents a necessary pre-requisite for baptism, less than a third (29%) of clerics agree. This is even smaller than the 33% of clerics who agreed with the same statement in 1993. In the light of the small and declining percentage of clerics who maintain that believing parents are a necessary pre-requisite for baptism, it is perhaps not too surprising that such a small minority deem it important for the baptism of babies to be restricted to the children of regular church attenders (11% in 2003 and 12% in 1993); or that a statutory number of church attendances should be required before baptism (13% in 2003 and 23% in 1993). The decline in the latter instance, from 23% in 1993 to 13% in 2003, is statistically significant at  $<0.01$  and would seem to confirm the extent to which fewer restrictions are placed upon baptism in the Church in Wales at the present time. The response of clerics to the statement that 'frequent baptisms in Sunday Eucharists hinder the worship of regular churchgoers', probably has a pragmatic explanation rather than a theological one. It may be, of course, that some clerics have a large number of baptisms and that the worship of regular churchgoers is hindered. For other clerics, the number of churches for which they are responsible, and the timing of services, can mean that baptisms are impractical at early morning or evening Eucharists. The fact that just over half (54%) of clerics deem the point to be important, therefore, tells us little.



What table 4.7 does tell us, however, is that while a majority of Church in Wales clerics support an open baptismal policy, and while there is evidence to suggest that this is even more so in 2003 than was the case in 1993, a majority of clergy deem it important that parents do not bring their children to the font without at least the opportunity to provide them with some degree of instruction and preparation. Even so, the fact that less than two-thirds (62%) of clerics consider it to be important that parents attend a course of preparation before their babies are baptised means that well over a third of Church in Wales clergy apparently do not feel that even this 'safeguard' is necessary.

Phan (2003) maintains that one of the thorniest challenges facing the Church at the present time, is inculturation. This term, he claims, refers to the complex process of merging the message of the Gospels and the teaching of the Church into a particular culture, such that both the Church and the culture are challenged and enriched. Phan directs his comments at the Roman Catholic Church and draws upon earlier Roman Catholic encyclicals (Zago, 1993). Even so, the data of tables 4.1 to 4.7 may well exemplify this very process. Certainly the data and related discussion, would seem to show something of the complexity of the task with which Church in Wales clerics are faced in implementing biblical truths, Church teaching and personal beliefs, against the backcloth of the changes in social expectations, outlined in Chapter Two.

In fact, the nature and extent of the changes between 1993 and 2003, in the views of clerics on baptism, in so far as these changes are summarised in tables 4.1 to 4.7, are probably less than might have been expected. Godin (1990), writing at the beginning of the *Decade of Evangelism*, most certainly anticipated (or at least hoped for) accelerated reform in Church of England baptismal policy. Whether the data of tables 4.1 to 4.7 may be described as displaying 'reform' is probably a matter of opinion. In any event, six key points may be emphasised.



First, the data obtained by Thomas in 1993 demonstrated that Church in Wales clerics showed a notable preference for an open policy on baptism.

Second, the data collected in 2003 confirms this position and in specific areas shows statistically significant further movement toward support for an open policy on baptism.

Third, a majority of clergy continue to believe that parents should attend a preparation course before their babies are baptised.

Fourth, a suspicion remains that those respondents who added personal comments to their completed questionnaire, may well speak for many more of their colleagues, when expressing difficulty in equating the sometimes contradictory requirements of scripture, the Church's teaching, the demands of parishioners and their own conscience, on matters relating to baptism policy and practice. It would, indeed be hazardous to attempt to draw conclusions from the possible influence of such complex interrelations on clergy responses to the questions posed in tables 4.1 to 4.7. The matter does, however, warrant further study.

Fifth, the data included in tables 4.1 to 4.7 are a sample of the data collected in 1993 and 2003, purposely selected because in the personal view of the present writer, these items represent matters of practical interest to serving clerics in the Church in Wales. It would be of interest to analyse all of the data on baptism collected in 1993 and 2003, in a fuller and more detailed subsequent study.

Sixth, given the present teaching of the Church in Wales on initiation, it is inappropriate to consider clerics' views on baptism independently from their views on confirmation. Clerics' views on confirmation are, therefore, discussed in the ensuing chapter.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CHURCH IN WALES CLERGY'S UNDERSTANDING OF CONFIRMATION**



## CHAPTER FIVE

# CHURCH IN WALES CLERGY'S UNDERSTANDING OF CONFIRMATION

### Introduction

Lowther Clarke (1932) comments that confirmation differs from baptism, which is based on the words of Christ, in that, "Though from the first it has been distinct from baptism, in the sequel it has not remained identical with itself; it has been transformed, it has evolved. In the Anglican Communion it is administered by the Bishop only, normally to adolescents ..." (p 443). More than fifty years on, the guidelines to the order of confirmation in the *Church in Wales Book of Common Prayer* (Church in Wales, 1984a), state that, "Except with the permission of the Bishop, no-one shall receive Holy Communion until he is confirmed, or is ready and desirous to be confirmed" (p 704). The introduction of the term, "Except with the permission of the Bishop", made it possible to part company with the regulations prescribed by the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, which permitted access to Holy Communion only to those who are confirmed or desirous of being confirmed.

In the same year as the *Church in Wales Book of Common Prayer* became available, a questionnaire concerning the issue of children and communion was distributed to clerics throughout the Church in Wales (Church in Wales, 1984c). Following the circulation of this questionnaire, one Cardiff parish was persuaded to seek permission for the admission of children to Communion prior to confirmation. A pilot scheme for admitting baptised children to Communion before confirmation was launched in the Cardiff Parish of Gabalfa in 1991 and the Church in Wales established a working group to consider the question of the admission of baptised children to Communion prior to confirmation. The early 1990s was thus a time of renewed questioning

about the place of confirmation in the process of initiation into the Church in Wales. It was, therefore, most pertinent to ask clerics in 1993 about their understanding of confirmation (Thomas, 1994).

## **Admitting children to Communion**

The New Testament is not particularly helpful in providing information about children and Communion. Certainly there is evidence that children were present at worship from the earliest times and this may well have included the Eucharist. Strange (1996) has suggested that if the earliest Christians saw some similarities between the Eucharist which commemorated the sacrifice of Christ, whom Paul described as 'our Passover Lamb' (1 Corinthians, 5.7), and the Passover celebration already familiar to them, then we might expect that children would partake of the Christian meal as they had done of the Jewish one (Exodus, 12.21-27). It is a fair point but lacks the support of solid evidence.

More revealing is the effect that another New Testament reference (John, 6.53) would seem to have had upon St Augustine. John's Gospel comment that, 'unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you can have no life in you', appears to have persuaded St Augustine that there could be no halfway house between the unbaptised and the communicant. From this axiom, St Augustine built a powerful case for the admission of children to Communion (Strange, 1996).

The admission of children to Communion in the Eastern Church became defined from this time onwards and remains so. In the west, however, the situation has been less straightforward and despite Augustine's weighty support, a combination of custom and theology have worked together against the acceptance of child Communion.



By the late Middle Ages, a growing reverence for the sacrament of Holy Communion meant that the Eucharist had become virtually a privilege for the priesthood. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that children were debarred from participation in the sacrament. Indeed, the place of children in the theme of things was prescribed in a detailed way when in 1215 AD the Fourth Lateran Council linked the taking of Holy Communion with the child's arrival at years of discretion (Lowther Clarke, 1932). Thus the Council ruled that a child should not be permitted to Communion until they had arrived at an age which would allow them to clearly distinguish the elements of the Communion from ordinary food. The appropriate age was initially thought to be around seven years but was later pushed back to between ten and fourteen years. This was the first time that a specific age was set on receiving Communion.

Despite a good deal of subsequent repudiation of the theology of the Fourth Lateran Council, and despite sporadic efforts since to revive the primitive practice of child Communion, described by Holeyton (1981), the resulting pattern which has emerged for the Anglican Church, remains one of baptism in infancy, and confirmation in adolescence, followed by Communion (Fisher and Yarnold, 1989). Binfield (1994), through his persuasive summary of an experiment in the involvement of children at the Eucharist, asks why, if children are baptised, they should be refused Communion. Fraser (2004), responds supportively, ten years later, when he condemns the practice of presenting children with Smarties at the Communion rail; an act he describes as patronising and one which trivialises the Communion. He maintains that children can enhance the worshipping community with more conviction in the taking of bread and wine than the many adults who display a casual approach to Communion. Certainly, there is evidence of children being welcomed to the Communion table in most Church of England dioceses (Harden, 2004b). Craven (2005) advises us that since 1974, children from the age of seven have been welcome to receive the bread and wine at the altar alongside adults, in the diocese of Southwark. Similarly, the



dioceses of Peterborough and Manchester were officially admitting children to Communion from an early date (Church of England, 1997) while by 2004 most Church of England dioceses were doing so (Church of England, 2005a). Jackson (2004) suggests that children will not accept the discrimination of exclusion from Communion and sees such actions as one reason why young people leave the Church before they are old enough for confirmation. It is most unlikely that the reason young people leave the Church is this simple, as Kay and Francis (1996) point out. Even so, it would seem that this was a line of thinking inherent within the Ely Report (1971). The report's main recommendation was that baptism should become the complete and full initiatory rite of the church, followed by admission to Communion. The Bishop of Ely, in introducing the report to the Church of England Synod, pressed for an early decision (Church of England, 1971). Had the report been fully accepted by Synod, it would have represented a radical change in the accepted pattern of initiation and a major break with the catholic past.

It is within this context that the *Report of the Doctrinal Commission of the Church in Wales on Christian Initiation* (Church in Wales, 1971) was published and which argued that it is possible to meet the legitimate desire of some of the clergy to introduce baptised children to the communicant life at a pastorally appropriate age. No question arises as to their qualifications to receive the sacrament. Such children are recognised as members of the church in a formal sense (Holeton, 1998). Avery (1992) is categorical in the statement, "All grace for a Christian is given in his or her baptism. There is no need to add anything to baptism" (p 129).

The Doctrinal Commission report was very much to the forefront of thinking in the Church in Wales on the issue of Christian initiation, when Thomas (1994) undertook his survey of Church in Wales clerics in 1993. The extension of experimental schemes approved by diocesan bishops for non-confirmed children to receive Communion, coupled with the



changing place of children in society as a whole, makes the issue no less a significant aspect of thinking in Wales in 2003, when the present survey of clerics was undertaken.

As indicated previously, for 2003, for the first time, the Representative Body of the Church in Wales began to collect details from each of the dioceses, concerning numbers of pre-confirmation communicants, for two key age categories, having previously commenced the collection of simple totals of pre-confirmation communicants for 2001 and 2002. For 2003, details are published showing the number of under eighteen year old pre-confirmation communicants and the number of eighteen year old and over pre-confirmation communicants for each diocese of the Church in Wales. The relevant table is shown as table A3.1, Appendix Three, from which it can be seen that, while the numbers of pre-confirmation communicants has increased in respect of each diocese since 2001, the rate of increase is not in all cases the same. Moreover, the proportion of under eighteen year old pre-confirmation communicants compared with eighteen year old and over pre-confirmation communicants, differs considerably between one diocese and another.

It remains, therefore, as pertinent in 2003, as it was in 1993, to ask Church in Wales clerics what they think about adopting a policy of admitting children to Holy Communion. Table 5.1 shows the results of seeking clerics' views in 1993 and again in 2003, on whether or not they agree that children should be welcome to receive Communion; and if so, then what is an acceptable age? Should children admitted to Communion at least be old enough to understand what is happening? Again, should churches seek to deepen the spiritual nature of children by requiring them to attend a preparation group prior to being permitted to receive Communion? Should children be admitted to Holy Communion if they are not confirmed, or desirous of being confirmed. Table 5.1 permits any changes in clerics' views on these matters between 1993 and 2003 to be compared and examined. A chi-square

probability statistic is also shown in each case in tables 5.1 to 5.6, but the extent of change in the data between 1993 and 2003, is only deemed minimally significant where the chi-square statistic is <0.01.

**Table 5.1      The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to adopting a policy of admitting children to Communion, 1993 and 2003 compared**

	1993 % Agree	2003 % Agree	Chi- square probability
Children who have been baptised should be welcome to receive Communion	34	45	.00615
Churchgoing seven year olds who have been baptised should be welcome to receive Communion before confirmation	54	54	.79989
Churchgoing nine year olds who have been baptised should be welcome to receive Communion before confirmation	56	56	.68245
Churchgoing eleven year olds who have been baptised should be welcome to receive Communion before confirmation	60	62	.45870
Churches should not give Communion to children until they have been confirmed	31	27	.18914
Churches should not give Communion to children until they are desirous of being confirmed	38	30	.02691
Churches should not give Communion to children until they are old enough to understand what is happening	43	47	.26723
Churches should not give Communion to children until they have attended a preparation group	67	77	.00394

It is evident from table 5.1 that while a minority of clerics in both 1993 and 2003 are of the view that children who have been baptised should be welcome to receive Communion, the proportion of clerics who agree in 2003 is notably larger than the proportion of clerics who agreed in 1993. Indeed the difference is statistically significant at <0.01. When clerics were presented with the different statement, ‘Churches should



not give Communion to children until they have been confirmed', less than a third (31%) agreed in 1993 and even fewer (27%) in 2003. When clerics were presented with the related statement, 'Churches should not give Communion to children until they are desirous of being confirmed', only 38% of clerics agreed in 1993 and still fewer (30%) agree in 2003. Taking these three sets of responses together, it is clear that a considerable number of Church in Wales clerics in 1993 attributed importance to adopting a policy of admitting children to Communion and that this was even more the case in 2003. This is somewhat surprising, given the guidelines to the order of confirmation in the 1984 *Church of Wales Book of Common Prayer*, which state that, "Except with the permission of the Bishop, no one shall receive Holy Communion until he (or she) is confirmed, or is ready and desirous to be confirmed" (p 704).

Table 5.1 offers confirmation of the inclination of clerics to support a policy of admitting children to Communion, in so far as a majority of respondents in both 1993 and 2003 agree that churchgoing seven-year-olds who have been baptised, nine-year-olds who have been baptised and eleven-year-olds who have been baptised, should be welcome to receive Communion before confirmation. Almost no change, however, is evident in the percentages of clerics who agreed in 1993 compared with the percentages of clerics who agree in 2003.

Table 5.1 further shows that while an appreciable number of clerics support a policy of admitting children to Communion, there is also evidence to suggest that not all restrictions on access to Communion should be lifted. When clerics were asked if they agreed that churches should not give Communion to children until they are old enough to understand what is happening, 43% agreed in 1993 and the slightly higher percentage of 47% agree in 2003. Again, when clerics were asked if they agreed that churches should not give Communion to children until they have attended a preparation group, 67% agreed in 1993 and 77% agree in 2003. The extent of the latter change is statistically significant at  $<0.01$ . This is, perhaps, an important proviso



in the trend of offering Communion to baptised but non-confirmed children. On the other hand, as Hagger (2004) reminds us, a trend towards the practice of Communion before confirmation but after preparation, is theologically dubious, as it attaches the giving of the sacrament to intellectual ability and takes us down the road to receptionism (see Coventry, 1997). The fact that a statistically significant change to a larger percentage of clergy who agree in 2003 that preparation prior to Communion is necessary may, therefore, be seen as a noteworthy development.

Although the trend is towards increased support for a policy of admitting children to Communion, the amount of change between 1993 and 2003 is for the most part relatively small. What is more, acceptance of admitting children to Communion is by no means unanimous especially when it is noted that specific questions in table 5.1 relate to 'churchgoing children'. It would seem that Bentley (2004) and Brazier (2004) may speak for other Church in Wales and Church of England clerics, when they advocate the value and significance of offering children a blessing at the altar rail, until such time as they have been prepared through confirmation for Holy Communion.

### **The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to the admission of adults to Communion**

It is of interest to note that the Church of England document *Common Worship: Initiation Services, Rites on the Way and Reconciliation and Restoration*, presented to the Church of England Synod in 2004, makes reference to adult initiation as part of the mainstream thinking (Church of England, 2004c). In fact, this document draws on the Roman Catholic rite for the Christian initiation of adults but with adaptations, since the Roman Catholic rite makes provision only for unbaptised candidates (Klein 2005a; 2005b). Nevertheless, it is evident from what has been stated previously that the essential thrust of the debate within



the Church in Wales concerning admission to Communion, has centred around access to Communion by children. Discussion has, therefore, tended to either ignore direct reference to adults or pursue the assumption that what applies to children also applies to adults. For example, the *Report of the Doctrinal Commission of the Church in Wales on Christian Initiation* recommended that:

The status of the baptised child as potentially a child communicant is not meant to depend upon the 'completion' of his initiation by the administration of Episcopal 'confirmation' (Church in Wales, 1971 para 62).

It is perfectly clear that in making this recommendation, the Doctrinal Commission was advocating that baptism is the full and complete rite of Christian initiation and as such permitted all baptised persons, whether child or adult, to be admitted to Communion.

Even so, as stated previously, the rubric to the order of confirmation of the 1984 *Church in Wales Book of Common Prayer*, reads, "Except with the permission of the Bishop, no-one shall receive Holy Communion until he is confirmed, or is ready and desirous to be confirmed" (Regulation 6, p 704).

When in April 1984 the Bench of Bishops presented to the Governing Body of the Church in Wales *The Holy Eucharist in Modern Language* for authorisation for experimental use, an explanatory note gave this pledge :

The Bench of Bishops intends to bring to the Governing Body in due course other modern language forms of service for experimental use ... After appropriate periods of experiment and further changes which may be required, it will invite the Governing Body to approve new definitive forms for inclusion in a Volume 3 of the Prayer Book (Church in Wales, 1984b).

It might have been supposed that a recommendation to implement the 1971 *Report of the Doctrinal Commission* would follow. This was,



however, not to be the case and the rubric to the *Alternative Order for Baptism with Communion* (Church in Wales, 1990a) reads, "Baptism is the universal sign of admission to the Church in Christ. The Church in Wales provides appropriate regulations for admission to Holy Communion". These regulations are, of course, those set out in the *Book of Common Prayer* (Church in Wales, 1984a, p 704).

While this remains the official position of the Church in Wales, it is noteworthy that the Guidelines to the celebration of *Eucharist with Children: An Order for the Holy Eucharist* (Church in Wales, 2004e, p 5), opens with the underlined statement, "Every celebration of the Eucharist should be an expression of the unity of the whole body of Christ". The same list of regulations concludes with the underlined statement, "While it is of the greatest importance that all communicants should prepare themselves properly before receiving Communion, special care should be devoted to helping children in this respect".

The two statements appear to pave the way for access to Communion by baptised children without the impediment of confirmation. If this is the case, then there is little reason to suppose that baptised adults should not similarly be permitted access to Communion. But yet, the official situation remains unclear and it is, therefore, of interest to learn of the views of parish priests and to assess the importance they attach to the admission of adults to Communion. This was, no doubt, decided to be important in 1993 when the initial survey was undertaken (Thomas, 1994). Given the comments made above, it is probably still more relevant in 2003 when the present survey was initiated. The present survey put the same statements to clerics as those presented to clerics in 1993, so that direct comparisons can be drawn from the responses. The questions presented to clerics asked if they agree that only people who have been baptised should be welcome to receive Communion; if they agree that only people who have been confirmed should be welcome to receive Communion; if they agree that only people who have been confirmed (or expressed a wish for confirmation)



should be welcome to receive Communion; if they agree that communicant members of other denominations should be welcome to receive Communion in Anglican churches; and if they agree that people who are at odds with their neighbours should not receive Communion. The responses of clerics in both 1993 and 2003 are shown in table 5.2, together with a chi-square probability statistic, denoting the extent of change in the percentage of clerics who agreed with the statement in 1993 and 2003.

**Table 5.2      The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to the admission of adults to Communion, 1993 and 2003 compared**

	1993 % Agree	2003 % Agree	Chi- square probability
Only people who have been baptised should be welcome to receive Communion	77	64	.00040
Only people who have been confirmed should be welcome to receive Communion	37	28	.01952
Only people who have been confirmed (or expressed a wish for confirmation) should be welcome to receive Communion	37	33	.24322
Communicant members of other denominations should be welcome to receive Communion in Anglican churches	81	92	.00011
People who are at odds with their neighbours should not receive Communion	45	40	.21419

It is immediately apparent from table 5.2, that notable changes have taken place in respect of several of the statements, over the ten years from 1993 to 2003. When in 1993 clerics were asked if they agreed that only people who have been baptised should be welcome to Communion, 77% agreed. When asked the same question in 2003, 64% agree; a statistically significant difference at <0.001. The general impression in 1993 was that clerics in the Church in Wales were in

favour of relaxing the stringent Anglican requirements of confirmation before Communion and 77% of clerics agreed that baptism rather than confirmation should be the criterion for judging who should be admitted to Communion. The lower percentage of 64% of clerics who express agreement in 2003 is, perhaps, surprising and may suggest that fewer clerics in 2003 are prepared to give Communion to those who are baptised but not confirmed without examining a coherent theology of Christian initiation. This is, however, a matter of conjecture and would require further examination. In any event, fewer agree with the statement in 2003.

The next statement is more straightforward. When in 1993 clerics were asked if they agreed that only people who have been confirmed should be welcome to receive Communion, only 37% agreed. In 2003, the percentage of clerics who agree is much smaller at 28%. Clearly, support for confirmation prior to Communion declined over the decade with a very large majority of clerics apparently believing that adults should be admitted to Communion without the need for confirmation.

Given the Church in Wales rubric that people who have expressed a wish for Communion may be permitted access to 'the bread and wine' prior to confirmation, it is interesting to see if clerics claim to be influenced by this regulation. When in 1993, clerics were asked if they agreed that only people who have been confirmed, or expressed a wish for confirmation, should be welcome to receive Communion, 37% agreed while in 2003, only 33% agree. It seems that by 2003, a majority of clerics (67%) view confirmation, and the wish for confirmation, as an irrelevance for access to Communion.

When clerics were asked in 1993 and again in 2003 if they agree that communicant members of other denominations should be welcome to receive Communion in Anglican churches, it is perhaps surprising that the response is not even more supportive than that shown in table 5.2. It has to be accepted, however, that the journey towards acceptance of



other denominations to Communion by both the Church in Wales and the Church of England, has been marked by considerable hesitancy. The Church in Wales response to *Faith and Order Paper No. III* (Lima Report, 1982) was one of welcoming the basic bond of unity involved in a common rite of baptism but of expressing considerable concern that admitting members of other churches to full membership of the Church in Wales would require a complete revaluation of the existing practice of Episcopal confirmation (Church in Wales, 1985). More recently, the *Commission of the Covenanted Churches in Wales* has stated that:

We anticipate that our member churches will continue for the time being to practice confirmation ... but we hope that there will be occasions when they explore the alternative way we advanced (of a service of affirmation and reaffirmation of faith) as a pointer to an emerging united Church in which tradition is a living and therefore a developing feature of its life (Church in Wales, 1990b, p 30).

It is noteworthy that for the Church of England, the Synod of July 2004 determined that the question of whether, following the *Anglican Methodist Covenant*, the requirement of episcopal confirmation should be waived in the case of members of the Methodist Church who wish to join the Church of England, should be considered by the Joint Implementation Commission in 2005 (Church of England, 2004c, p 12). In fact, a clear statement on the matter was side-stepped in the 2005 report (Joint Implementation Commission, 2005).

Inter-communion between the Church in Wales and other churches has been established from an early date. In 1971 the *Doctrinal Commission of the Church in Wales on Christian Initiation* reported in the following terms:

The Church in Wales resolved (1969) to admit to its altars on certain conditions baptised members of other churches holding the faith. The implication of this decision is that such persons, though lacking 'confirmation' are nevertheless members of Christ ... or our contention is that what is already accepted as the minimum rite (viz baptism) should



henceforward be regarded as the agreed norm of Christian initiation (Church in Wales, 1971, para 63).

Subsequently, full Communion had been established with a number of world wide churches and denominations. Indeed, a service of Holy Communion for the covenanted churches in Wales was prepared as early as 1981 (Enfys, 1981). More recently the *Porvoo Declaration* (promulgated on 28 September 1995), the *Remilly Agreement* (promulgated on 27 April 2000) and the (defeated) proposal to the Governing Body of the Church in Wales for the establishment of an ecumenical Bishop, placed the matter very much in the forefront of discussion. These matters came to a head when, on 7 April 2005, a *Canon to Support Relations with Other Churches* (Church in Wales, 2005a) and a *Local Ecumenical Partnership Canon* (Church in Wales, 2005b), were approved by the Governing Body, under which services of Holy Communion may be taken by Church in Wales priests in other covenanted churches and by ministers from covenanted churches in Church in Wales churches. Needless to say, no mention of a requirement for confirmation is made in either Canon. What is more, clerics have indicated in table 5.4 of the present study, their preparedness to discuss the need for the involvement in confirmation by a bishop as an unnecessary requirement for access to Communion. Thus, some clerics would apparently wish to remove a key obstacle in the way of most non-conformist denominations agreeing to inter-communion. In these circumstances it might have been expected that when clerics were presented with a question which asked them if communicant members of other denominations should be welcome to receive Communion in Anglican churches, an even higher percentage of clerics would express agreement. In the event, table 5.2 shows that in 1993, 81% of clerics agreed. It is not surprising that the percentage was yet more 'positive' in 2003, with 92% of clerics expressing agreement; a statistically significant difference at  $<0.001$ .



When clerics were asked in 1993 and again in 2003, if they agreed that people who were at odds with their neighbours should not receive Communion, it might have been expected that even fewer would agree. Presumably, clerics are influenced in their responses by the general rubrics for the order for the celebration of Holy Eucharist (Church in Wales, 1984a, p 3). The third rubric states that the priest shall, therefore, warn any communicants who by their public conduct bring the Church into disrepute that they ought not to receive the Holy Mysteries until they amend their way of life. The rubric goes on to say that if they do not heed the warning, the priest shall report the matter to the bishop and proceed as he directs.

It would not, therefore, seem that the priest is given *carte blanche* to refuse Communion to a person at odds with their neighbour without the direction of the bishop. Yet a substantial number of clerics would appear to be prepared to refuse Communion to people for this reason. In 1993, 45% of clerics agreed that people at odds with their neighbours should not receive Communion. In 2003, 40% of clerics agree with the statement. Given the rubric outlined above, it is surprising that so many clerics should agree that Communion should be refused to people at odds with their neighbours, although it is notable that the percentage is lower in 2003 than in 1993.

### **The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to the purpose of confirmation**

Crichton (1989) maintains that every sacramental and liturgical act is a participation in the paschal mystery of Christ and if confirmation cannot so easily be seen as a celebration of the paschal mystery that is, no doubt, because it is so totally dependent on baptism. But, Crichton argues, the paschal mystery of Christ issued into the giving of the Spirit of the Church so that it could bear witness to the risen Christ. If confirmation is understood as the establishing of the Holy Spirit in the



baptised individual, then we can see that it 'confirms' that person's relationship to Christ and enables the person to bear witness to Christ in his passion and resurrection, as Thornton (1954) has suggested.

When Lampe (1967) published his *Seal of the Spirit*, the fifth chapter carried the heading, "*Confirmation in the Apostolic Age?*" The question mark is, no doubt, introduced as an indication of the debate about whether a rite now known as confirmation can be traced to the *New Testament*. Fisher (2005) most eloquently contributes to this debate by asking by what means those who responded to the missionary preaching of the apostolic Church received the Holy Spirit? Was it, he asks, normally imparted by means of a rite? And if so, in what did the rite consist? Did it include a simple confession of faith in Jesus as Lord, followed by a dipping in water? Or did it include further ceremonies, directly connected with the giving of the spirit, namely, hand-laying and anointing, such as are attested by Tertullian at the end of the second century and by Hippolytus about twenty years later? Fisher (2005) insists that it is out of this hand-laying and anointing that the rite called confirmation has sprung.

From patristic times onward, certain post-baptismal ceremonies in the Western Church, notably the imposition of hands and the anointing of the forehead, were reserved, especially under Roman influences, to the bishop as the guardian of the Church's unity (Pocknee, 1979). With the growth of the Church in numbers and the increased pre-occupation of bishops with civil affairs, it could happen that years might elapse between the baptism of an infant by the local cleric and the visit of the bishop. In the light of this delay in the process of the bishop 'confirming' the baptism, a separate sacrament of confirmation emerged. Certainly, the separate sacrament of confirmation was listed as one of seven sacraments by the Second Council of Lyons, in 1274 AD (Wiles, 1967). Once established in the medieval service-books as a separate service, it acquired a recognised liturgical structure. Confirmation had thus come to be seen and practised as something quite different from that



which its origins would suggest. For the Protestant Church, 'confirmation' was to become the occasion, following catechesis, when a personal and public profession of faith was made by an adult individual who had generally been baptised in infancy (Wainwright, 1969). The separation of confirmation from baptism as a distinct liturgical act, was discussed more fully in Chapter Two and need not be repeated here.

A tendency in recent decades to seek the biblical basis of liturgical practices no doubt motivated the *Report of the Commission on Christian Initiation* (Ely Report, 1971) to comment that the Anglican Church had arrived at a point where some radical thinking about confirmation was necessary. The report proceeded in a double-handed way, however, by simultaneously supporting confirmation as part of an on-going ministry of training while at the same time sowing the seeds of doubt about the previously held acceptance of confirmation as a way forward to Communion. Paragraph 108 states:

Confirmation has often been regarded in the past as in some sense the completion of Christian initiation. We believe that confirmation signifies far more than an isolated rite, important though it is; it is also the focal point in an on-going ministry of training. We propose, therefore, that this vital element of training should now receive the widest possible recognition and thus restore to confirmation its true function of fostering the spiritual growth of an individual Christian. This on-going ministry should include admission to Communion where the circumstances warrant this at an earlier age than is now considered normal (Ely Report, 1971, para 108).

*The Doctrinal Commission of the Church in Wales* (Church in Wales, 1971) took a bolder approach. In the opinion of the Commission, an examination of the early practices of the Christian Church gave no grounds for retaining the service of confirmation in its present form. The Report of the Commission commented:

The New Testament gives no grounds for maintaining that additional ceremonies, (such as hand laying-on, or



chrismation) necessarily or invariably followed baptism in water during the Apostolic Age (Report of Doctrinal Commission, 1971, para 54).

Buchanan (1990) has maintained that few people any longer believe that confirmation is necessary as a requirement to follow baptism before people can be received for Communion but instead of biting the bullet, we procrastinate. Indeed, Perry (2004) suggests that he speaks for many clerics in the Anglican Church in expressing both confusion and disappointment over the summary at the end of the Church of England *Common Worship: Initiation Services* (Church of England, 2004c). The woolliness about confirmation and the candid admission by the compilers that they had simply devised a text based on traditional Anglican practice, would seem to many clerics to be an opportunity missed.

*Common Worship: Initiation Services* (Church of England, 2004c) comprises the services and prayers for baptism and confirmation which are available for use by the Church of England alongside the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. An important part of the preparation work for these services was undertaken by a working party drawn from the Church of England Board of Mission, Board of Education and the Liturgical Commission which, in 1995, produced a report to the House of Bishops (Church of England, 1995). The report recognises the manner in which the western Church has used the term 'confirmation' in different and overlapping senses and the extent to which it has been applied to different aspects of the process of incorporation into Christ. But yet the confirmation service authorised in the resulting *Common Worship* makes no attempt to resolve the difficult questions identified by the report. It remains, therefore, that the Church of England, like the Church in Wales, continues to reiterate the view that the baptism promises require that a person be brought to the bishop to be confirmed, after being taught the Catechism, the Creed, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer (Church in Wales, Children and Holy Communion, 1989). This line of thought argues a concern for the



Christian formation of children and demands that every planned learning experience, including acts of worship, should make a meaningful contribution to their growth and maturity in Christ within the fellowship of the Church (Langdon, 1988).

Yet, as Littler, Francis and Thomas (2002) point out, there remains a continuing and perhaps increasing distress among some clergy that the practice of confirming in the early and mid-teens is but a prelude to a very disappointing fall-out rate, post-confirmation and which occurs even in those parishes where preparation has been most carefully undertaken. Johnson (1999) suggests that the whole question of admission to Communion and its biblical and theological basis, should be re-examined from first principles and in the light of church history.

It is against the backcloth of these considerations that a survey of clerics' views on the matter was undertaken in 1993 and it is against the backcloth of the same continuing and unresolved considerations that similar questions were put to clerics in 2003. It was, therefore, deemed pertinent to ask clerics for their views on the importance attributed to the purpose of confirmation. Clerics were asked if they agree that a main purpose of confirmation is to open the gateway to Communion; if they agree that a main purpose of confirmation is to make sure that Church members know about their faith; if they agree that a main purpose of confirmation is to enable people to complete their baptismal promises; if they agree that a main purpose of confirmation is to enable people to re-affirm their baptismal promises; if they agree that a main purpose of confirmation is to make a public commitment to Christ; if they agree that a main purpose of confirmation is to convey a special gift of the Holy Spirit.

Clerics' responses to these questions are summarised in table 5.3, where the responses to the survey conducted in 2003 are compared with the responses of clerics to the survey conducted in 1993.

**TABLE 5.3    The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to the purpose of confirmation, 1993 and 2003 compared**

	1993 % Agree	2003 % Agree	Chi- square probability
A main purpose of confirmation is to open the gateway to communion	39	38	.90188
A main purpose of confirmation is to make sure that church members know about their faith	66	64	.57157
A main purpose of confirmation is to enable people to complete their baptismal promises	76	79	.46500
A main purpose of confirmation is to enable people to reaffirm their baptismal promises	90	91	.85027
A main purpose of confirmation is to enable people to make a public commitment to Christ	85	88	.29164
A main purpose of confirmation is to convey a special gift of the Holy Spirit	81	80	.71978

It is a feature of table 5.3 that little change is evident in the percentages of clerics who agree with each of the statements in 2003 compared with 1993. It would seem that clerics’ views on the importance attributed to the purpose of confirmation have not been influenced in any significant way by the debate and discussion on the subject of the intervening years.

Thus, table 5.3 shows that in response to the suggestion that the main purpose of confirmation is to open the gateway to Communion, 38% of clerics agree in 2003, compared with 39% in 1993. Given that the Church in Wales’ regulations for the admission of both children and adults to Communion still requires that the person be first confirmed, many people would surely see their own confirmation as a gateway to Communion for them personally. It is, therefore, perhaps surprising that so few clerics see it that way.



Again, table 5.3 shows that in response to the suggestion that a main purpose of confirmation is to make sure that Church members know about their faith, marginally fewer clerics agree in 2003 than in 1993 (64% compared with 66%). Although the responses of clerics in 2003 are only a little different from those expressed by clerics in 1993, it is difficult to explain why there should be a movement, over the decade to a greater disagreement by clerics on this issue.

The responses of clerics to the suggestion that a main purpose of confirmation is to enable people to complete their baptismal promises, are also a little surprising. In 2003, 79% of clerics agree with the statement (compared with 76% in 1993). Given that the very term 'confirmation' derives from the provision within the *Service of Confirmation* for the person to reiterate and confirm their baptism promises, it is a little surprising that as many as 76% of clerics in 1993 should feel that they are not complete at the moment of baptism. It is even more surprising that this percentage rose to 79% in 2003. It is possible, however, that some respondents were confused by the term 'complete' and did not take the statement to imply that baptismal promises were 'incomplete'.

In the light of what has been said above, it is not surprising that when clerics were presented with the suggestion that a main purpose of confirmation is to enable people to re-affirm their baptismal promises, the greater majority agreed, both in 1993 and 2003, with almost no change over time. In 1993, 90% of clerics agreed while in 2003, 91% of clerics agree.

When clerics were presented in 1993 with the suggestion that a main purpose of confirmation is to enable people to make a public commitment to Christ, 85% agreed. When clerics were presented with the same suggestion in 2003, 88% agree. Thus a small change is evident in respect of the higher percentage of clerics who agree in 2003.

Given that much attention has been given by theologians to the notion that it is at baptism that a person receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, (Dunn, 1970; Lampe, 1967; Schmemmann, 1976), it is perhaps surprising that so many clerics, in both 1993 and 2003 agree with the suggestion that a main purpose of confirmation is to convey a special gift of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, as table 5.3 shows, 81% of clerics agreed with the suggestion in 1993, and 80% of clerics agree in 2003. The movement over the decade is towards a greater percentage disagreeing but the movement is too slight to be significant.

### **The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to the component parts of confirmation services**

The order of confirmation of the Church in Wales sets out clear regulations regarding the preparation of candidates before they are brought to the bishop to be confirmed. Similarly, the confirmation service itself is clearly prescribed. Both the service laid down in the *Book of Common Prayer* (Church in Wales, 1984a) and the *Alternative Order for Confirmation* (Church in Wales, 1993) set out clear roles for the bishop, the parish priest and the candidate.

So long as confirmation remains an essential part of initiation into the Anglican Church, then it presumably remains necessary that all of the parties concerned know what is expected of them. This is despite the fact that some options are granted regarding whether or not the *Alternative Order* is used; whether or not the bishop uses the oil of Chrism for anointment; whether or not Communion follows immediately upon confirmation.

The importance of the presence of the bishop at services of confirmation has long been accepted. Haffner (2005) maintains that since confirmation derives from apostolic action and bishops are seen as equivalent in authority to the apostles, it is logical that the rite of



confirmation is reserved for bishops. Buchanan (2002) reminds us that Puritans raised the question of the need for the involvement of bishops at the *Savoy Conference* in 1661. It would seem that the bishops responded by stressing the dignity of bishops above presbyters, who are not allowed to confirm. It is noteworthy, however, that the bishops did not make a similar claim for 'excellency' in the rite of confirmation itself but rather they maintained that baptism is of the greater value (Cardwell, 1840).

As we have seen, many Anglican clerics would happily dispense with the service of confirmation, either altogether or to be retained as a service of commitment and commissioning, at a suitable stage in adult life, with perhaps, the laying on of hands by the bishop or a priest appointed by the bishop for this purpose. The pattern of such a service would, no doubt, differ from the present confirmation service. This raises the question of what should be the structure of such a service and whether or not certain component parts of the existing service are sufficiently important to be retained.

Lankshear and Francis (1991) have recommended that teenage confirmation be discouraged and the service instead promoted as an adult ceremony of commitment, which may serve to revitalise what they saw as an increasingly undervalued ceremony.

As a result of these considerations it was felt pertinent in 1993 to ask clerics in the Church of Wales to which component parts of the confirmation service did they attribute importance. In the light of the developments previously discussed, it is probably even more pertinent to ask clerics in the Church in Wales the same series of questions in 2003. Thus clerics were asked if they deem the presence of the bishop to be important; if they deem the laying-on of hands to be important; if they deem the anointing with oil to be important; if it is considered important for the candidates' godparents to be present; if it is considered important for the candidates' family to be present; if it is

considered important for the Eucharist to be part of the service. These questions are listed as statements in table 5.4 and the table compares the percentage of clerics who agreed with the statement in 1993 and in 2003.

**TABLE 5.4    The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to the component parts of confirmation services, 1993 and 2003 compared**

	1993 % Agree	2003 % Agree	Chi- square probability
In confirmation services, the presence of the bishop is important	79	72	.07055
In confirmation services, the laying-on of hands is important	91	96	.02215
In confirmation services, the presence of the candidates' godparents is important	77	71	.06008
In confirmation services, the presence of the candidates' family is important	87	84	.24376
In confirmation services, the anointing with oil is important	32	56	.00000
In confirmation services, the Eucharist is important	77	87	.00209

Given that the involvement of the bishop is central to the Church in Wales' service of confirmation, it is perhaps surprising that when clerics were asked in 1993 if they agreed that the presence of the bishop is important, as few as 79% agreed. It is interesting that in 2003 only 72% of clerics agree. Clearly, in 1993 some clerics felt that any revision of the confirmation service could, perhaps should, exclude the necessity for the bishop to be present and by 2003 an even larger percentage of clerics felt this way. Bray (1999) reminds us that (given the extensive developments described previously), a late sixteenth century worshipper would find themselves very much at sea in most parish churches today but would have very little difficulty in recognizing the episcopate. It is



possible that Church in Wales clergy feel that change in the role of the episcopate is also due. Brown (2005) goes so far as to describe the episcopacy as the most redundant office in the Church.

Uncertainty in the minds of clergy about the importance of the presence of the bishop in confirmation services is not helped by recent Anglican publications. The Church of England document *Common Worship: Initiation Services* (Church of England, 2004c) for example, clearly gives the impression that while the bishop is required to be present for a service of confirmation, the real essence of initiation lies in what has gone before and the confirmation service is little short of being a 'tack-on'. The text of *Common Worship: Initiation Services* thus seems to fly in the face of the commentary's assertion that, "In an episcopally-ordered Church the bishop is the chief minister of the whole process of Christian initiation and is integral to its practice" (p 187).

It is evident from table 5.4 that a greater percentage of clerics base importance on 'the laying-on of hands' in confirmation services, than on the presence of the bishop, despite a 'normal' acceptance of the association of the former with the latter. The laying-on of hands is not, however, the exclusive province of bishops and Wainwright (1989) reminds us that the practice is one of the 'culture constants' in the structure of Christian worship, with a sound biblical basis. Nevertheless he similarly reminds us that the gesture is most generally translated as the transmission of power and when used in the context of the service of confirmation is normally accompanied by the words, 'Defend O Lord, this thy child (or servant) with they heavenly grace, that he/she may continue thine for ever, and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more, until he/she come into thy everlasting Kingdom'. Yet, as Bishop John Cosin commented over 300 years ago (Parker, 1843) this prayer seems to be rather a prayer that may be said by any minister rather than a prayer that was reserved only to the bishop. Table 5.4 shows that in 1993, 91% of clerics felt the laying-on of hands to be important while in 2003, even more agree (96%). It would appear that at least some



clerics are inclined to agree that the laying-on of hands is not necessarily the sole prerogative of the bishop. What is more, they display this view even more forcefully in 2003 than in 1993.

When in 1993 clerics were asked if they agreed that the presence of the candidate's godparents is important at the confirmation service, 77% of clerics agreed and when presented with the same question in 2003, 71% agree. It would seem that not all clerics felt that the presence of Godparents was important in 1993 and an even smaller percentage deem the point to be important a decade later. It should be said, however, that clerics may well be influenced by sheer pragmatic considerations.

Rather more clerics in 1993 felt that the presence of the candidate's family is important at a service of confirmation. Indeed, 87% felt that they were important. As in the case of the question regarding godparents, when clerics were asked the same question in 2003, rather fewer clerics (84%) feel that the presence of family members is important.

There are two questions noted in table 5.4 in respect of which notable change is evident over the decade from 1993 to 2003. First, in 1993, 77% of clerics agreed that the Eucharist is important in the confirmation service. In 2003, the percentage of clerics who agree is much larger at 87%; a difference that is statistically significant at  $<0.01$ . It seems that the percentage of clerics who see confirmation as inextricably linked to Communion has significantly increased over the decade, which is surprising in the light of all that has gone before. Second, in response to the suggestion that the anointing with oil is important as a component part of the confirmation service, only 32% of clerics agreed in 1993. In 2003, the percentage of clerics who deem the anointing with oil to be important, is much greater at 56%; a statistically significant difference at  $<0.00001$ . This rise from less than a third of clerics who agreed with this optional component of confirmation services in 1993 to over a half



of clerics who agree a decade later, is a notable change and it will be interesting to ask, in Chapter Six, if this would appear to be influenced in any way by other related changes in the composition of Church in Wales clergy, such as the church orientation or theological persuasion of clerics.

### **The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to the requirements of confirmees**

As stated previously, the regulations pertaining to the Church in Wales Order of Confirmation are laid out in the *Book of Common Prayer* (Church in Wales, 1984a). The regulations state that:

All who are brought to be confirmed must have been baptized and have worshipped regularly with the church. They must also have been instructed in the catechism and be able to say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments...(p 704).

Indeed, on presentation of the candidates for confirmation, the bishop asks the minister for an assurance that proper instruction has taken place. The popular confirmation preparation material, widely circulated by the Church in Wales and updated in 2002 (Church in Wales, 2002), extends well beyond the above minimum regulations for the instruction and preparation of candidates for confirmation. The course anticipates that candidates will be encouraged to read the Bible and that they will attend church regularly, but above all will know the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed and the Ten Commandments. This can, however, prove a tall order for clerics when there is evidence to suggest that young people generally have little knowledge of the Ten Commandments. A National Opinion Poll of 1,000 people, commissioned by a group of nearly 200 London churches and carried out in September 2004 (Gledhill, 2004) found that 7% of people aged 15 years to 24 years, claimed to have never heard of the Ten Commandments. The survey further found that while 93% of people in



this age group had actually heard of the Ten Commandments, 44% could not cite a single commandment. Although the survey found that older age groups are slightly more knowledgeable about the Ten Commandments, the results demonstrate the daunting tasks often facing clerics when preparing young people for confirmation, in accordance with the requirements of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Module thirteen of the Church in Wales confirmation preparation material (Church in Wales, 2002) urges those undergoing preparation to attend the service of Holy Eucharist in Church. It goes on to say that they should be coming regularly to the Eucharist service and should be looking carefully at what is taking place in the service. The Church in Wales confirmation course goes further to instruct the candidates how they should prepare for Communion in silence before the service.

Since candidates are required by the regulations and encouraged by the Church in Wales course of preparation to know the catechism, they will presumably also be advised that preparation for the Eucharist begins before they even set foot in Church. Under the heading of what is required when we come to the Eucharist, the catechism directs that,

It is required that, having a little faith in God's mercy, we should examine our lives, repent of our sins, and be in love and charity with all people (Catechism, Para 55).

It may be expected, therefore, that by the time candidates arrive at confirmation, a range of requirements has been imposed upon them. Some of these requirements are summarised in table 5.5. Given, however, the tendency for clerics to increasingly challenge the need for confirmation as a rite of passage to Communion, it might be expected that clerics will challenge the need for these requirements to continue to be imposed on candidates. Lankshear and Francis (1991), for example, considered the implementation of the *Church of England Revised Catechism* (Church of England, 1962) in specified dioceses in England and found apparent contradictions between the underlying requirements



of Canon Law, which reiterate the continued prominence of the catechism in the preparation of candidates for confirmation, the changing emphasis in catechetical theory and the Church's self-understanding. It is understandable, in such circumstances, if Anglican clerics express uncertainty about the place of the catechism in the preparation of candidates for confirmation. It was thus pertinent to ask clerics in 1993, and again in 2003, if they agree that candidates presented for confirmation should know each of the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed, the Ten Commandments and the Catechism. Also, if they agree that candidates should read the Bible regularly and come to church regularly. Clerics' responses to these questions are shown in table 5.5.

**TABLE 5.5    The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to the requirements of confirmees, 1993 and 2003 compared**

	1993 % Agree	2003 % Agree	Chi- square probability
Candidates presented for confirmation should know the Lord's Prayer	98	96	.24968
Candidates presented for confirmation should know the Apostle's Creed	94	84	.00030
Candidates presented for confirmation should know the Ten Commandments	88	80	.00853
Candidates presented for confirmation should know the Catechism	62	38	.00000
Candidates presented for confirmation should read the Bible regularly	95	87	.00152
Churches should only confirm adults if they come to church regularly	76	67	.01746
Churches should only confirm young people if they come to church regularly	67	60	.06020

The first four statements in table 5.5 refer directly to the requirements of the Church in Wales regulations for the preparation of candidates for confirmation and it is interesting that in each case a smaller percentage of clerics in 2003 deem the statement to be important than was the case in 1993. On the question of the Lord's Prayer, 96% of clerics agree its importance in 2003 compared with 98% in 1993. On the question of the Apostle's Creed, only 84% of clerics agree its importance in 2003 compared with 94% in 1993; statistically significant at  $<0.001$ . On the question of the Ten Commandments, 80% agree its importance in 2003 compared with 88% in 1993; statistically significant at  $<0.01$ . On the matter of knowing the Catechism there is a huge change to 38% of clerics who agree its importance in 2003 when 62% had felt it to be important in 1993; statistically significant at  $<0.00001$ . It is possible, of course, that clerics have become content that candidates for confirmation 'know of' the Catechism rather than have to learn it 'by heart'. Nevertheless, the difference in the recorded views of clerics in 2003 compared with 1993 is most significant.

When clerics were asked if they felt it to be important that candidates for confirmation read the Bible regularly, 87% of clerics in 2003 believe that this is important, compared with 95% in 1993; a statistically significant difference at  $<0.01$ . It is worthy of note that one Anglican bishop (Forster, 2005), has insisted that the neglect of the Bible is leaving the modern church impotent and puts part of the blame on the inadequacy of clergy training.

When clerics were asked if they deemed it important that adults should only be confirmed if they come to church regularly, fewer clerics agree in 2003 than in 1993. Table 5.5 shows that in 2003, 67% of clerics agree compared with 76% in 1993. Clearly, over the decade, clerics have come to base less importance on regular church attendance as a requirement for access to confirmation.



The same can be said in respect of clerics' views on the importance of young people coming to church regularly prior to confirmation. Support for the notion came from only 67% of clerics in 1993 and even fewer (60%) in 2003. Whether these decisions are founded on theological considerations or simply questions of living with reality, is open to debate.

Writing in the context of another era, Coleridge (1880) described how Keble helped his father to prepare candidates for confirmation in his country parish, in the following terms:

The preparation of his candidates for confirmation was extended over a long time...The children whom he prepared came to him either in classes or singly every week for about a year before their confirmation...He usually went through the Baptismal, Confirmation and Communion Services, taking a little bit each time and illustrating it largely, especially from Holy Scripture. ...His rule as to refusing to recommend for confirmation those who would not pledge themselves to communicate became stricter as years passed on (p 593).

It is a very different contemporary world which Avis (2003a) describes as marked by individualism, consumerism, instantaneous communication, high mobility and the breakdown of conventional forms of community. He goes on to say:

These aspects of late modernity (which are not of course the whole picture) go hand in hand with the erosion of traditional patterns of overt, public religious practice, particularly of regular churchgoing. Conventional religious practice has been giving way to a range of self-selected, privatized and experimental responses to a rather nebulous sense of the sacred (p vii).

One outcome within the Church of England would seem to be that, "...around half of the parishes...have virtually no engagement with young people" (Church of England, 2005b, para. 2.7). Indeed, Brierley (2005) has presented data to suggest that unless the situation changes,

by 2040 children will virtually disappear from the Church in the Church of England.

This is the dilemma facing Church in Wales clerics when preparing people for confirmation at the present time. It is possible that table 5.5 reflects the fact that some clerics regret the tendency to give less support to the importance of teaching the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed, the Ten Commandments and most notably the Catechism. Others may well be increasingly influenced by Ward's concept of a more 'liquid church' (Ward, 2003) and perhaps still more by Gilbert's fundamental belief that churches as social organisations are effective only when their structures mirror those of the societies they seek to serve (Gilbert, 1980).

### **The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to the correct age for confirmation**

Bishop Westcott of Durham is reported to have commented that if confirmation had been always properly understood, many of the controversies about baptism would never have arisen (Chase, 1909). Clearly, Westcott saw confirmation as a vital aspect of initiation into the Anglican Church. More recently, Harvey (1999) insists that baptism, properly defined, positively demands confirmation, "... for the sign of our being truly the covenant community of God is an undivided heart and faith in Christ" (p 103). By contrast, Smitham (2004) instructs us that the guidelines for admitting baptised, but unconfirmed children to Communion, once regarded as experimental, are now considered to be part of mainstream church life and practice. Smitham maintains that despite the fact that all the bishops of the Church in Wales and a majority of clergy are in favour of the admission of children to Communion without prior confirmation, there remains a general opposition on the part of the laity. The source of her information for concluding that all the bishops give such support is unclear. If,



however, she is correct, then the question of the appropriate age for confirmation may soon become an irrelevant issue. What is more, there has long since been a serious move in a number of Anglican Provinces to consider the adoption of a reintegrated rite of Christian initiation (Fisher, 2005).

In the meantime the *Church in Wales Book of Common Prayer* (Church in Wales, 1984a) stipulates that except with the permission of the bishop, no one shall receive Holy Communion until they are confirmed, or are ready and desirous to be confirmed. The correct age for confirmation thus remains an important consideration.

Crichton (1989) argues that confirmation may be understood as the establishing of the Holy Spirit in the baptised individual and to this extent it 'confirms' the individual's relationship to Christ and enables him or her to bear witness to Christ in his passion and resurrection. It presumably follows that a minimum age for confirmation must be that age when the individual is ready to appreciate what it means to bear witness to Christ in his passion and resurrection.

This might suggest that the appropriate age would be, for many young people, their early or mid-teens. Thomas (1994) is insistent, however, that there is a growing awareness that adolescence is the wrong age for confirmation for it is not an age for young people to make life-long commitments to anything. It is the time, Thomas argues, for questioning and stock-taking. Young people, Thomas maintains, are no longer willing to accept passively everything they are told. There is a tendency to ignore authority, both in the intellectual and in the moral sphere, and to reject the pattern of established behaviour. Howe (1931) summarised this viewpoint colourfully by indicating that, "The adolescent knight is often more interested in the gorgeousness of his armour ... than in the distant goal of the Holy Grail ..." (p 127).

This throws open the question of the correct age for confirmation and it is relevant to seek the views of practicing clerics on the subject. It is

thus pertinent to ask clerics if they deem the age of nine years, or eleven years, or thirteen years, or fifteen years or eighteen years, as the most appropriate age for confirmation; if they feel that young people should be confirmed before they drop away during adolescence; if they feel that confirming young people encourages them to stay in the church, and if they feel that confirming young people helps them to find their way back into the church later in life. The responses of clerics to these questions, both in 1993 and 2003, are shown in table 5.6.

**TABLE 5.6    The importance attributed by Church in Wales clerics to the correct age for confirmation, 1993 and 2003 compared**

	1993 % Agree	2003 % Agree	Chi- square probability
Churches should not confirm anyone under the age of nine	65	57	.05649
Churches should not confirm anyone under the age of eleven	45	35	.01818
Churches should not confirm anyone under the age of thirteen	18	11	.01762
Churches should not confirm anyone under the age of fifteen	10	5	.05733
Churches should not confirm anyone under the age of eighteen	6	2	.01402
Churches should confirm young people before they drop away during adolescence	50	44	.12800
Confirming young people encourages them to stay in the Church	52	43	.02637
Confirming young people encourages them to return to the Church in later life	70	68	.43331

The first and most obvious feature of table 5.6 is the extent to which every response in 2003 shows that a smaller percentage of clerics agree with the statement than was the case in 1993.



It is perhaps not surprising that the level of agreement decreases, as indicated by clerics in both 1993 and 2003, as the statements proceed from suggesting that churches should not confirm anyone under age nine, through eleven, thirteen and fifteen to eighteen. In 1993, a majority of clerics (65%) felt that nine years of age was too young for confirmation and in 2003 a smaller percentage (57%) agree. In 1993, a smaller percentage (45%) felt that eleven years of age was too young and in 2003 even fewer (35%) agree. In 1993, again a smaller percentage (18%) felt that thirteen years of age was too young and in 2003 even fewer (11%) agree. In 1993, again a smaller percentage (10%) felt that fifteen years of age was too young and in 2003 even fewer (5%) agree. In 1993, yet again a smaller percentage (6%) felt that eighteen was too young and in 2003 even fewer again (2%) agree.

Table 5.6 shows that clerics are ambivalent about whether churches should confirm young people before they drop away during adolescence. In 1993, half of clerics (50%) agreed and in 2003 rather fewer clerics (44%) agree.

Given the practical experience of many clerics (Kay and Francis, 1996) that young people tend to 'drift from the churches' after confirmation, even though the reasons may be complex, it is perhaps surprising that a majority of clerics (52%) in 1993 agreed that confirming young people encourages them to stay in the church. It is noteworthy, however, that although the percentage of clerics who agree in 2003 is smaller (43%) it still represents a sizeable minority.

Certainly, a majority of clerics agree that confirming young people helps them to find their way back to the church later in life. In 1993, as many as 70% of clerics agreed with this statement. Although the percentage who agree is smaller in 2003, the decline in the percentage of clerics' views over the decade is very small, with 68% of clerics agreeing.



It is less clear that other available evidence supports the optimism of clerics that young people will return to church in later life. Indeed most churches are by no means unaware of the way in which they lose contact with children and young people (Richter and Francis, 1998). As Kay and Francis (1996) point out, the challenge facing churches is not one of simply being concerned to change young people's behaviour, in this respect, but one of fundamentally influencing attitudes. If Jamieson (2002) is correct in his assessment of the problems faced by young people in retaining a Christian faith in a post-Christian society, then the challenge facing the churches today is one of making the Christian message heard by young people in a radically alien environment. Perhaps this is one reason why, despite the suggestion arising from several of the preceding tables that many clerics are happy to permit baptised persons, of any age, to proceed to communion, support for the retention of confirmation as an initiation rite remains in evidence. As one respondent to the present survey commented, "Personally, I agree with admitting children to Holy Communion but I believe it must go hand in hand with a policy of keeping confirmation. There is a strong tradition in this parish of parents requesting confirmation for their children when they are about twelve. They would not be content with 'admission to Holy Communion'; I would merely be accused of refusing to have them confirmed. Even the parents of the few children who do come to Communion said they preferred to wait. This parish is not ready for change." It is at this point we are reminded of Jeff Astley's comment that, "... those engaged in Christian communication, pastoral care and worship must acknowledge that the people who receive their ministrations also have a theology" (Astley, 2004, p 126).

As indicated at the end of Chapter Four, the difficulty of teasing out the problems faced by clerics in trying to satisfy the sometimes contradictory demands of parishioners and church teaching; of serving a non-attending community while remaining faithful to catholic beliefs; of satisfying the demands of the *Cure of Souls* against the backcloth of a changing social context, are complex and demand further analysis. In



the meantime, it has to be reiterated that the responses of clerics to the present survey, may well be influenced by the increasingly complex situation within which Church in Wales clergy find themselves.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CHURCH IN WALES CLERGY'S UNDERSTANDING OF INITIATION, CROSS-TABULATED BY SEX, AGE, PARISH LOCATION, CHURCH ORIENTATION AND THEOLOGICAL PERSUASION**



## **CHAPTER SIX**

# **CHURCH IN WALES CLERGY'S UNDERSTANDING OF INITIATION, CROSS-TABULATED BY SEX, AGE, PARISH LOCATION, CHURCH ORIENTATION AND THEOLOGICAL PERSUASION**

### **Introduction**

The Archbishop of Wales has commented:

As I understand it, the Anglican Church has from its inception been a broad and comprehensive church. It has often been called the Church of the Via Media, the middle way. That certainly doesn't mean that it is halfway between Roman Catholicism on the one hand and the Protestant Reformed tradition on the other, but rather a church which draws its insights from all kinds of places and is not too anxious about pinning people down too precisely (Morgan, 2004b, p 7).

He goes on to make the point that the Church in Wales grounds itself on the Bible and the traditional Creeds but also recognises that these truths have to be interpreted afresh to each generation, and that this is where the problem begins.

Something of this problem is evident in the preceding discussion of Church in Wales clerics' responses to the questions put to them concerning their views on initiation. It is of further interest to see if clerics' responses show differences according to the age group of the clerics, their sex, whether they minister in a rural or an urban parish, their church orientation and their theological persuasion. It is also of interest to see if some of these differences have become more pronounced over the decade from 1993 to 2003. A certain amount of change over this period was, of course, inevitable. The decision of the Governing Body of the Church in Wales in 1996 to ordain women to the

priesthood (Church in Wales, 1996), and the resulting deployment of women priests as parish incumbents, for example, is a major change in itself. Certainly, the present study shows that the views of female priests and male priests on initiation differ in a number of respects.

It would appear that in 2005 the Church of England expects to ordain more women than men for the first time (Morgan, 2004c). If this is reflected in the Church of Wales, then it may be expected that the views of women incumbents will be increasingly influential in a range of matters, including aspects of initiation. At the present time, however, table A1 confirms that female stipendiary parochial clergy of the Church in Wales represent only 16% of the stipendiary parochial clergy of the Church in Wales while table 3.1 states that only 18% of the respondents to the present study were women. In order to show if male and female clerics differ significantly in their views on initiation it is, therefore, necessary to compare them statistically and the method employed in the ensuing tables, as in the tables in Chapters Four and Five, uses the chi-square measure of statistical difference. The Pearson chi-square probability statistic is a useful measure of difference in the present situation where the populations being compared are of unequal size.

It has been stated above that female clerics represent only approximately 18% of the survey population compared with 82% of male clerics. Again, table 3.2 shows that clerics aged under 45 years represents only approximately 20% of the survey population compared with 80% of clerics aged 45 years and over. Again, table 3.9 shows that clerics in rural parishes represent 42% of the survey population compared with 58% in more urban parishes. In similar vein, table 3.10 shows that only 25% of clerics describe themselves as evangelical compared with 58% of clerics who describe themselves as catholic, while 17% describe themselves as neutral. And again, table 3.11 shows that 40% of clerics describe themselves as conservative compared with 46% of clerics who describe themselves as liberal, while 14% describe themselves as neutral.



In these circumstances, the chi-square statistic permits the measurement of the discrepancy between what is observed and what might be expected (Ehrenberg, 1975). The chi-square test hypothesizes that there is no relationship between the variables and tests whether any relationship is due to chance. It is the result of the sum of the square of the difference between that which is observed and that which is expected. The resulting chi-square values are not shown in the tables in Chapters Four and Five, nor in the ensuing tables in this chapter and in Appendix Seven. The associated Pearson probability statistic is shown in each table.

The general assumption throughout the relevant tables is that only when the Pearson probability statistic is more significant than 0.01 ( $<0.01$ ) is reasonable doubt removed that the relationship between the dichotomous variables may be due to chance. The number of statements in respect of which the difference in viewpoint of catholic and evangelical clerics, and of liberal and conservative clerics, is more significant than 0.01 ( $<0.01$ ), is considerable and shown in full in tables A7.1 and A7.2. Table 6.4 shows only those statements in respect of which the difference in viewpoint of catholic and evangelical clerics is more significant than 0.00001 ( $<0.00001$ ) and table 6.5 shows only those statements in respect of which the difference in viewpoint of liberal and conservative clerics is more significant than 0.001 ( $<0.001$ ). This permits attention to be directed in tables 6.4 and 6.5 to those areas in which the difference between catholics and evangelicals and between liberals and conservatives, concerning initiation into the Church in Wales, is most notable.

The division between catholic and evangelical and between liberal and conservative has been made on the basis of responses to the seven-point semantic scale, as indicated in tables 3.10 and 3.11. Clergy who checked the three values at the catholic end of the continuum have been regarded as catholic while clergy who checked the three values at

the evangelical end of the continuum have been regarded as evangelical and similarly for liberal and conservative clerics.

In calculating the statistical significance between the responses of the two groups of clergy in all tables in Chapter Six and Appendix Seven, the dichotomised data have been prepared from the five-point Likert Scales by making the division between those who agree or agree strongly with the question on the one hand, and with those who check the disagree, disagree strongly or uncertain categories on the other hand.

### **The views of female and male clerics**

Although the views of male and female clerics may be shown to differ in respect of many of the 150 responses to requests for their views on various aspects of initiation into the Church in Wales, the occasions on which the difference is statistically significant at  $<0.01$ , are relatively few and the occasions on which the difference is statistically significant at  $<0.001$ , even fewer. Table 6.1 lists the occasions.



**Table 6.1      Differences in the views expressed by male and female clerics at <0.01**

	Agree %		Chi-square probability
	Male	Female	
Parents who bring their children to be baptised should provide evidence of their own Christian faith	30	12	.00391
Churchgoing seven year olds who have been baptised should be welcome to receive Communion before confirmation	51	72	.00226
Churchgoing nine year olds who have been baptised should be welcome to receive Communion before confirmation	54	73	.00473
Only people who have been confirmed should be welcome to receive Communion	31	12	.00195
People who are at odds with their neighbours should not receive Communion	44	19	.00014
A main purpose of confirmation is to open the gateway to Communion	42	21	.00166
Candidates presented for confirmation should contribute to church finances regularly	44	24	.00268
Candidates presented for confirmation should lead godly lives	93	80	.00143
Churches should confirm young people before they drop away during adolescence	46	29	.00948

Although only a limited number of the differences in the viewpoint of male and female clerics is statistically significant, the occasions when this is the case support the contention that, generally, women clerics are more supportive of an open baptism policy than are men, and women are more supportive of access to Communion by unconfirmed but baptised young people, than are men.

It is also possible to see support here for a point made by Francis, Loudon, Robbins and Rutledge (2000), who found that male clerics may be more inclined than their female counterparts to wish to protect a clerical persona of integrity and stability. It is suggested that the greater

inclination of male clerics to support a more restrictive baptism and confirmation policy, may be consistent with such a view. If this is so, then it may perhaps follow that the recorded difference between male and female clerics, in respect of their views on initiation are, in some part, as much the result of a sex-driven perception as a practice-supported difference of viewpoint. Certainly, Astley (2002), maintains that men generally tend to be more distanced than women in their God-talk; that men are more analytic, speculative, 'cool' and detached. Men, Astley argues, are perhaps more at ease talking about God, therefore, because they are more ready in this mode to debate, to argue, and to clarify and defend a position. "Many of them (men) seem to find conceptual analysis and sparring over intellectual positions more in keeping with their natural way of speaking, and perhaps of living" (Astley, 2002, p 80). Slee (2004b) has examined women's faith development in some detail and her study similarly suggests important differences which may characterise women specifically.

There is little in table 6.1 to throw further light on such matters and Astley (2004) reminds us that many of the distinctions between men and women cited above may be better characterised not as rigid markers between the sexes, but rather as differences between 'masculine' and 'feminine' outlooks, attitudes, orientations or viewpoints. Francis, Jones, Robbins and Jackson (2003) draw a similar conclusion from their study of the personality profiles of female Anglican clergy in Britain and Ireland.

Table 6.1 shows that only on one occasion do the views of men and women clerics differ by a degree that is statistically significant at  $<0.001$ . This relates to the statement that 'people who are at odds with their neighbours should not receive Communion'. The point was made previously (see Chapter Five) that clerics do not have a *carte blanche* freedom to withhold Communion from neighbours who are at odds with one another, without the approval of the bishop. Table 6.1 suggests that female clerics are more mindful of the matter than are men.



Certainly, Francis and Wilcox (1996; 1998) have confirmed that women are more religious than men, which may account for a gender difference in this instance.

The fact that only seven statistically significant differences in the views of male and female clerics are listed in table 6.1 is perhaps surprising. Indeed, in a number of responses to the 150 questions seeking the views of clerics on initiation, women and men show closely similar responses and in some instances identical responses. The popular view of extensive differences in the views of men and women is not borne out by table 6.1. It is possible that the popular view results from some degree of stereotyping of the views of female clergy arising from the role aspirations displayed by some women immediately before and during training for ministry. It has been shown by Francis and Robbins (1999) and Robbins and Francis (2000) that church tradition and personality tend to exercise a greater influence over the role aspirations of women clerics at the time of initial training rather than are evidenced in their ministry priorities.

### **The views of clerics according to age**

A number of studies have recorded that age is a predictor of the views of the clergy on baptism. Reidy and White (1977) found that among Roman Catholic priests in a New Zealand diocese, 'traditionalism' in the attitude of clerics increased with age, in respect of a range of aspects of their ministry. Ranson, Bryman and Hinings (1977), in their study of Anglican, Catholic and Methodist clergy in England, found a clear association between age and conservatism in all three denominations. An association between age and conservatism is similarly reported by Aldridge (1986); Davies, Watkins and Winter (1991); Young and Schoenherr (1992); and Hoge, Shields and Verdieck (1992). As Francis (2004a) says:

Against this background it would be reasonable to hypothesise that older clergy might tend to remain more faithful to the historic Anglican position on baptism, while younger clergy might be more likely to reject this historic position in favour of a more restrictive baptism policy (p 25).

It is possible that the division of clerics in the present study into the very broad categories of under 45 years and 45 years and over, is too crude to provide an adequate analysis of the difference in viewpoint between ‘younger’ and ‘older’ clerics. Certainly table 6.2 shows that there are few occasions when the difference is statistically significant.

**Table 6.2      Differences in the views expressed by clerics aged under 45 years and clerics aged 45 years and over at <0.01**

	Agree %		Chi-square probability
	Under 45	45 and over	
Making more stringent requirements for infant baptism presents a real danger to the church	43	61	.00543
In infant baptism the presence of the congregation is important	90	73	.00201
Refusing infant baptism restricts the work of the Holy Spirit	47	64	.00718
A main purpose of confirmation is to enable people to complete their baptismal promises	69	82	.00907
Confirmation courses should be run by the congregation	70	52	.00518
Churches should confirm young people before they drop away during adolescence	28	47	.00206
In confirmation services the presence of the candidate’s family is important	74	87	.00664

It is evident from table 6.2 that only seven of the 150 questionnaire responses show a statistical difference at <0.01 and none at <0.001, when the views of clerics under the age of 45 years are compared with the views of clerics aged 45 years and over. Even then, the seven



instances cited tend to be idiosyncratic and lack any clear notion of trend or categorisation. Analysis of other non-statistically significant differences suggests that 'younger' clerics are more likely than 'older' clerics to refute the idea that unbaptised children may go to hell and that baptism preparation courses should be run by members of the congregation, while 'older' clerics are more likely to feel strongly about those areas of instruction which are important in the preparation of candidates for confirmation. Again, further analysis supports the notion of a trend that shows clerics aged 45 years and over to be marginally more inclined to support those same statements that are supported by catholic clerics and for clerics aged under 45 years to be more inclined to support those same statements supported by evangelical clerics. This supports a conclusion of De Jong and Donovan (1988) as well as the range of studies previously cited in support of Francis' (2004a) hypothesis. Indeed, table 6.2 shows that when presented with the statement, 'Making more stringent requirements for infant baptism presents a real danger to the church', the younger group of clergy imply significantly greater support for a restrictive baptism policy, than do the older group, just as Francis (2004a) suggests. Nevertheless, a more sophisticated division of clergy into concise age groups would be necessary before detailed comparisons could be drawn with other studies.

The issue of seeking evidence of difference in the views of clerics according to age is complicated in respect of the Church in Wales by the fact that the age structure of the Church in Wales is changing and by the tendency for 'older' persons to be ordained (see Appendix Five). It may be, therefore, that the above reference to differences in the views of 'older' and 'young' clerics, is confused with reference to the differences between newly ordained clerics, who happen to be 'older' and more experienced clerics, who may be 'younger' or 'older'.



## The views of clerics according to parish location

Osborne (2004) reminds us that while all clerics, urban or rural, have to face a clash of myth and reality concerning their role in the community, this is probably more pronounced in respect of the country vicar. Since the television series, *The Vicar of Dibley*, entered the national psyche it is now widely accepted that the country vicar might be a woman. *The Archers* has had a woman vicar and the 2004 documentary *A Seaside Parish* followed the work of the Reverend Christine Musser, a woman priest in Cornwall (Garrow, 2005). Yet many of the expectations of the country vicar are based not so much on the reality of the countryside or the church of the twenty first century but on the rural countryside of people's imaginations. Richards (2004) draws on her own experience to show how the public perception of rural life can be idyllic. She concludes that there is no such thing as the rural idyll except as life lived and experienced. Indeed, something of this was witnessed by viewers of the 2003 BBC documentary, *A Country Parson*, which showed the Reverend Jamie Allen attempting, not always successfully, to work to the model of the country parson described by Herbert (1991) and updated by Blythe (2003). Emison introduces a collection of essays on rural ministry by Anglican bishops by claiming that, "They (the bishops' viewpoints) challenge the Christian community in Britain, to understand more deeply, to respond more effectively and above all else, to grasp the challenge of maintaining an effective Christian presence and exercising an effective ministry in rural areas" (Emison, 2004, p viii). Certainly, the comments of the thirteen bishops concerned show something of the extent to which rural life has changed in recent years and continues to change.

Francis and Rutledge (2000) have considered how far the country vicar may experience more stress than their urban counterpart. Francis and Rutledge's detailed analysis of the components of stress in relation to a sample of over 1,000 full-time stipendiary male parochial Anglican



clergy, concluded with the suggestion that rural clergy have a lower sense of personal accomplishment than comparable clergy working in other types of parishes but that they suffer no higher levels of emotional exhaustion than urban clerics. There is no evidence resulting from the responses of clerics to the present enquiry to support these differences, one way or the other although it remains possible that clerics' responses were influenced by such considerations.

The point was made previously that any attempt to divide Church in Wales clergy into clear categories according to whether they minister in a rural or an urban parish is fraught with difficulty and imprecision. In the first place, some clerics responding to the present study will no doubt have responsibility for more than one parish, such that one or more parish may be defined as rural while one or more parish may be defined as urban. In the second place, Russell (1986) and Lankshear (2004) among others, have shown, the terms 'rural' and 'urban' lack precision.

Again, Burton (2004) reminds us that:

A number of studies have sought to categorise churches according to their location in situations which can be said to be rural or urban, or some mix of each...Such categorisation has uncertainties, and the attempts to refine systems sometimes give rise to debate about the criteria to be used, and to contradictions between the resulting scales suggested by different studies (p 41).

No attempt has been made in the present study, beyond that outlined in Appendix Four, to make use of the defining scales, whereby dioceses are placed on a continuum from most rural to most urban, using factors first used by Francis (1985) and subsequently developed by Lankshear (2001). Even so, analysis of clerics' responses to the present survey suggests that it is possible to highlight aspects of initiation policy and practice, of which clerics who minister in (broadly) rural parishes differ in viewpoint from those who minister in (broadly) urban parishes. It is



suggested that these differences are less to do with whether a cleric is male or female, young or old, catholic or evangelical, liberal or conservative and more to do with the nature of the physical environment in which the cleric finds himself or herself. Although Francis and Lankshear (1998) and also Francis and Littler (2001) report evidence of personality differences between clergy in rural parishes compared with clergy in urban parishes, these differences are more likely to explain a cleric's preference for rural ministry rather than their response to it. Certainly, many of the differences in viewpoint between rural and urban clerics can be explained by the differing nature of the environment. The day to day relationship between incumbent and parishioner tends to be closer and more personalised in the rural community than in the urban environment (Osborne, 2004). Indeed, Francis, Smith and Robbins (2004) found rural clergy more 'socially conforming' than clergy in non-rural parishes. The difference between 'gemeinschaft' and 'gesellschaft' locations is well documented (Tonnies and Harris, 2001), while Francis and Lankshear (1997) have noted the greater closeness in type of the rural community to the former than the latter. Again, Langrish (2004) writes from extensive experience of rural parish ministry in stressing the significance of 'community'. Such matters may well fundamentally influence a rural cleric's response to (say) requests for baptism from non-churchgoers. Similarly, the smaller size of church buildings and their dispersal may well influence the rural cleric in his or her views on such matters as holding baptisms in the scheduled Sunday Services. In short, it is possible to offer pragmatic explanations for much of the difference in viewpoint between clerics in rural parishes and clerics in urban parishes on matters relating to initiation.

Whatever the explanation for such differences, Clay (2003), writing from a Roman Catholic perspective, insists that different needs must be recognised in respect of preparing people, especially adults, for confirmation in rural parishes and small town parishes, as opposed to urban parishes. Table 6.3 shows that eleven of the 150 statements



presented to clerics produced responses that show statistically significant difference in the views of ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ clerics.

**Table 6.3      Differences in the views of clerics in urban parishes and clerics in rural parishes at <0.01**

	Agree %		Chi-square probability
	Urban	Rural	
Churches should only baptise babies of regular churchgoers	15	5	.00316
Baptism preparation courses should be run by members of the congregation	62	48	.00725
Generally requests for baptism outside the main services should be granted	64	51	.00948
I would baptise a baby if the parents confessed no faith but the grandparents were regular communicant members of my church	57	73	.00259
Churches should baptise all babies whose parents request it	48	64	.00230
Churches have a responsibility for the continuing Christian education of babies they baptise	94	86	.00840
Infant baptism may lull people into a state of false security about their position before God	54	34	.00013
In infant baptism the naming of the baby is important	61	74	.00780
Confirming young people helps them find their way back into church in later life	61	77	.00127
Churches should not confirm anyone under the age of 13 years	16	6	.00432
Churches should only confirm young people if they come to church regularly	66	51	.00384

The data of table 6.3 tend to confirm what has been stated above concerning the manner in which clerics in rural parishes are influenced in their views on initiation by the close relationship that they are able to build with members of the community, compared to their more urban counterparts. One could imagine, for example, that it is more difficult for the cleric in a rural parish to deny baptism to all but regular churchgoers, given that they may see the parents of children presented for baptism in a whole range of contexts outside of the church congregation. Similarly, it is understandable, for the same reason, that



clerics in rural parishes should be more inclined than clerics in urban parishes, to baptise a baby if the parents confessed no faith but the grandparents were regular communicant members of that cleric's church. And again, that they should support the suggestion that churches should baptise all babies whose parents request it. Indeed, this general argument that clerics in rural parishes are influenced more generally by personal relationships, than are clerics in urban parishes, would seem to explain much of the statistically significant difference in the views of rural and urban clergy, as shown in table 6.3.

Thus, in 2003 only 5% of rural clergy agree that churches should only baptise babies of regular churchgoers, compared with 15% of urban clergy who agree; 48% of rural clergy agree that baptism preparation courses should be run by members of the congregation, compared with 62% of urban clergy; 51% of rural clergy agree that generally requests for baptism outside the main services should be granted, compared with 64% of urban clergy; 73% of rural clergy agree that they would baptise a baby if the parents confessed no faith but the grandparents were regular communicants, compared with 57% of urban clergy. In each of these instances the different practices of rural clergy compared with urban clergy could be accounted for by the close personal contact between cleric and parishioner in a rural parish environment. This remains equally the case in respect of the other statements listed in table 6.3, where 64% of rural clergy agree that churches should baptise all babies whose parents request it, compared with only 48% of urban clergy who agree; 86% of rural clergy agree that churches have a responsibility for the continuing Christian education of babies they baptise, compared with 94% of urban clergy; only 34% of rural clergy agree that infant baptism may lull people into a state of false security, about their position before God, compared with 54% of urban clergy; 74% of rural clergy agree that in infant baptism the naming of the baby is important, compared with 61% of urban clergy; 77% of rural clergy agree that confirming young people helps them find their way back into church in later life, compared with 61% of urban clergy; just 6% of rural clergy feel



that churches should not confirm anyone under the age of thirteen years, while 16% of urban clergy support this view; 51% of rural clergy agree that churches should only confirm young people if they come to church regularly, while 66% of urban clergy agree.

Roberts (2003) reminds us that any attempt to display data that compares baptism trends in rural and urban parishes, suffers from a number of limitations. First, baptism figures are not provided by gender, and such information could be of use to the mission of the church. This is especially so with regard to baptisms of persons aged twelve years and over since baptism by gender may tell us something of importance about the rural church compared with the urban church. Second, while confirmation figures are provided by gender they are not shown by age group. A comparison of confirmation numbers by age might provide useful data when analysing the differences in policy and practice between rural and urban parishes, as well as help to inform clerics on strategies for mission.

In future, it may be important for the Church in Wales, and for the Church of England, as Lankshear (2004) indicates, to develop a more sophisticated model of the distinctiveness of 'rural' and 'urban' when seeking to use statistical methods to inform the debate about policy and practice in ministry and mission.

### **The views of clerics according to whether they describe themselves as catholic or evangelical and liberal or conservative**

The distinctiveness within the Anglican Church of church orientation and theological persuasion can be traced, in the main, to two important nineteenth century movements which have shaped the Church in opposing directions. The Tractarian Movement stressed the place of the Catholic roots of Anglicanism and remains evident in the Catholic



wing of the Anglican Church (Pickering, 1991) and (Skinner, 2004). The Evangelical movement stressed the place of the Reformation roots of Anglicanism and remains evident in the Evangelical wing of the Anglican Church (Bebbington, 1993; Tidball, 1994 and Oden and Packer, 2004). A number of studies show the continuing relevance of these distinctivenesses. Francis and Lankshear (1995a; 1995b) have drawn attention to the distinctive profile of Anglo-Catholic and Evangelical churches, and the way in which Evangelical churches develop differently in urban and rural environments (Francis, Lankshear and Jones, 1998). Francis, Robbins and Astley (2005) examine in some detail the potential fault-line within the Church of England resulting from the way in which the beliefs, attitudes and values of clergy are shaped by such distinctions. Francis (2004a) postulates that it is not unreasonable, against the backcloth of the available data, to hypothesise that Evangelical clergy may be more likely to espouse a restrictive baptism policy and Catholic clergy may be more likely to espouse an open baptism policy. Francis' hypothesis is supported by the data shown in table 6.4. It should be noted, however, that the respective 'labels' of catholic or evangelical and liberal or conservative in the present study result from the survey respondents' own description of themselves. It should also be noted that a substantial proportion of clerics describe themselves as neither catholic nor evangelical and neither liberal nor conservative. In some instances the percentage of 'neutral' clerics who support a particular statement is higher than their more polarised colleagues. In other cases the difference between catholic and evangelical, and between liberal and conservative, is sufficiently large to justify further comment.

Of the 150 questions requesting the views of clerics on initiation into the Church in Wales, 55 of the questions produced responses which indicate a statistically significant difference in the views of catholic and evangelical clerics and 31 of the questions produced responses which indicate a statistically significant difference in the views of liberal and conservative clerics. As indicated previously, the full tables are shown



in Appendix Seven. Table 6.4 shows only those differences in the viewpoint of catholic and evangelical clerics that are significantly different at <0.00001. Table 6.5 shows only those differences in the viewpoint of liberal and conservative clerics that are significantly different at <0.001.

**Table 6.4      Statements in respect of which the difference in viewpoint of Catholic and Evangelical clerics is statistically significant at <0.00001**

	Agree %		Chi-square probability
	Catholic	Evangelical	
The Church is right in making the requirements for baptism far more stringent	16	44	.00000
Churches should only baptise babies of regular churchgoers	6	26	.00000
I would baptise a baby if neither parent was a regular churchgoer	96	78	.00000
Baptism should be regarded as generally available to all	88	59	.00000
I would baptise a baby if the parents confessed no faith but the godparents were regular communicants at my church	80	53	.00000
Churches should baptise all babies whose parents request it	62	32	.00000
Refusing infant baptism restricts the work of the Holy Spirit	69	32	.00000
Churches should not give Communion to children until they have committed themselves to the Lord Jesus	24	61	.00000
In confirmation services, the anointing with oil is important	72	30	.00000
In confirmation services, the Eucharist is important	94	70	.00000
Everyone who loves the Lord Jesus should be welcome to receive Communion	37	78	.00000
In infant baptism, signing with the cross is important	95	74	.00000

In infant baptism, giving a lighted candle is important	87	59	.00000
In infant baptism, the blessing of the water is important	93	62	.00000
In infant baptism, the three-fold administration of the water is important	91	63	.00000
I believe that at baptism a child's spiritual future is changed in some way	79	43	.00000
Infant baptism may lull people into a state of false security about their position before God	33	81	.00000
Infant baptism may encourage people to think they are Christians when they do not profess a faith	47	83	.00000
A main purpose of infant baptism is to incorporate the baby into the body of Christ	99	74	.00000
A main purpose of infant baptism is to convey a special gift of the Holy Spirit	90	50	.00000
A main purpose of infant baptism is to wash away original sin	54	23	.00000
In infant baptism, anointing with oil is important	70	19	.00000
Confirming young people helps them to find their way back into the Church in later life	74	46	.00000

Analysis of the data indicated in tables 6.4 and A7.1 suggest that a number of broad conclusions may be stated in respect of the differences in the views held by catholic and evangelical clerics.

First, catholic clerics support a series of statements that relate to an open policy on baptism while evangelical clerics are more inclined to support those statements that relate to a restrictive policy on baptism and this confirms the findings of Francis (2004a).

Second, catholic clerics are more inclined than evangelical clerics to support aspects of symbolism in baptism.



Third, evangelical clerics are more inclined than catholic clerics to support revision of the baptism liturgy.

Fourth, catholic clerics are more inclined than evangelical clerics to have faith in the notion that baptism changes a child spiritually.

Fifth, catholic clerics are more inclined to support the teaching of the Church regarding baptism. Evangelical clerics, on the other hand are more inclined to question the theology of baptism.

Sixth, catholic clerics are more inclined than evangelical clerics to support the notion of confirmation preceding access to Communion and also to support existing practices associated with the service of confirmation.

Seventh, comparison of the data of tables 6.4 and A7.1 with that of Thomas (1994) shows that differences in the viewpoints of catholic and evangelical clergy have, in many cases, grown over the last decade. For example, when the statement was put to Church in Wales clergy that 'only people who have been confirmed should be welcome to receive Communion', in 1993, 37% of catholic clergy agreed, 40% of neutral clergy agreed and 30% of evangelical clergy agreed. When presented with the same statement in 2003, 33% of catholic clergy agree, 29% of neutral clergy agree and only 16% of evangelical clergy agree. In several instances, there is evidence of the difference in the viewpoints of catholic and evangelical clergy polarising. For example, when the statement was put to clergy that 'a priest should have the right to refuse baptism on assessment of the suitability of parents', in 1993, 41% of catholic clergy agreed, 44% of neutral clergy agreed and 58% of evangelical clergy agreed. When presented with the same statement in 2003, the support of catholic clergy had declined (34%), the support of neutral clergy had declined (32%) and the support of evangelical clergy had increased (62%). Such trends may be significant for the future of

Church in Wales’ policy and practice in respect of initiation and demand detailed further analysis.

**Table 6.5      Statements in respect of which the difference in viewpoint of Liberal and Conservative clerics is statistically significant at <0.001**

	Agree %		Chi-square probability
	Liberal	Conservative	
Believing parents are a necessary pre-requisite for baptism	19	40	.00029
Parents who bring children to be baptised should provide evidence of their own Christian faith	15	39	.00001
I would baptise a baby if neither parent was a regular churchgoer	96	85	.00086
I would baptise a baby if neither parent was a baptised Anglican	85	64	.00003
I would baptise a baby if the parents confessed no faith but the grandparents were regular communicants at my church	74	54	.00082
Churches should baptise all babies whose parents request it	67	44	.00026
A priest should have the right to refuse baptism on assessment of the suitability of parents and godparents	27	52	.00002
Infants who have been baptised should be welcome to receive Communion	56	34	.00038
Churchgoing nine year olds who have been baptised should be welcome to receive Communion before confirmation	68	44	.00009
Churchgoing eleven year olds who have been baptised should be welcome to receive Communion before confirmation	73	51	.00046
Churches should not give Communion to children until they are confirmed	17	37	.00017
Churches should not give Communion to children until they have committed themselves to the Lord Jesus	21	43	.00030
Only people who have been confirmed should be welcome to receive Communion	17	38	.00013



It is possible to draw several broad conclusions from tables 6.5 and A7.2.

First, conservative clerics are more inclined than liberal clerics to support a restrictive policy on baptism. In respect of all statements concerned with the importance attributed to either a restrictive or an open policy on baptism, liberal clerics show support for an open policy and conservative clerics show support for a restrictive policy.

Second, liberal clerics show a greater inclination to base importance on symbolism in baptism than do conservative clerics.

Third, liberal clerics show a greater inclination to support ecumenical factors than do conservative clerics.

Fourth, conservative clerics show a greater support for the right to refuse baptism to the children of parents they deem unsuitable while liberal clerics put much less stress on having such a right.

Fifth, liberal clerics show a greater inclination for young baptised children to be welcomed to Communion compared with conservative clerics.

Sixth, conservative clerics are much more inclined to support the practice and process of confirmation preceding Communion while liberal clerics are much more inclined to support direct access to Communion by those who are baptised.

Seventh, a comparison of the data of tables 6.5 and A7.2 with that of Thomas (1994) shows that differences in the viewpoints of liberal and conservative clerics have been maintained and in some cases have grown. For example, when the statement was put to clergy that 'a main purpose of confirmation is to open the gateway to Communion', in 1993, 41% of liberal clergy agreed, 37% of neutral clergy agreed and 41% of

conservative clergy agreed. In short, liberal, neutral and conservative clerics were more or less in agreement with each other. When, however, the same statement was put to clergy in 2003, only 29% of liberal clergy express agreement, 41% of neutral clergy express agreement and the number of conservative clergy who agree has risen to 47%. Although the differences, over time, between liberals and conservatives, as found by the 1993 and 2003 enquiries, are not as great as those in respect of catholics and evangelicals, the differences may still be sufficient to impact notably on future Church in Wales initiation policy and practice. To this extent, this area of comparison between the data of the present study and that of Thomas (1994) needs to be pursued further and tabulated fully.

Although it would be spurious to suggest that tables 6.4 and A7.1, together with tables 6.5 and A7.2, define the differences between catholic and evangelical clerics and between liberal and conservative clerics, these tables do offer a summary statement of what, in terms of initiation belief and practice, distinguishes catholic clerics from evangelical clerics and what distinguishes liberal clerics from conservative clerics. Much has been written in recent years on what evangelicalism is and what evangelicals believe (Abraham, 1989; Allan, 1989; Skillen, 1990; Dayton and Johnston, 1991; Brueggemann, 1993; Tomlin, 1993; Stransky, 1998; Brock, 2002; Hilborn, 2003; Sung Wook Chung, 2003; Lewis, 2004; Torry, 2004) and others. Stott (1998) has endeavoured to set out a specifically evangelical doctrine of baptism, swiftly responded to by Harvey (1999). A number of academic journals are devoted to an evangelical orientation (Anvil; Journal of the Evangelical Society; Evangelical Review of Theology; Magazine of the Evangelical Movement of Wales; Evangel) as well as detailed Evangelical web sites. Despite this wealth of material, there is less evidence of empirical work beyond that of Francis and colleagues, that attempts to show the different views of evangelicals and catholics on the specific theological area of initiation. Even less is it clear that recent empirical studies have been undertaken to tabulate the specific



differences in the view points of liberal and conservative clerics on the matter of initiation.

In the absence of such studies there is a danger that emotion may prevail over informed debate (Pridmore, 2005). Furthermore, Comblin (2002) makes a significant point when he claims that, "... in a pluralistic religious society, the church that markets its 'products' best will triumph in this modern era" (p 44). Comblin refers specifically to the situation in North and South America but his proposition may well be extended to comment on a possible relationship between the trend indicated in tables 6.4 and A7.1, on the one hand, and the impact of Alpha courses, coupled with the recent move to establish an associated theological college (Carey, 2005a), on the other.

Given that parts three, four and five of the questionnaire employed in the present study (see Appendix One) were not discussed in the present work, it remains reasonable to subsequently use this information to show the personality-type associated with those clerics, who in the present study have described themselves as catholic, neutral or evangelical, or as liberal, neutral or conservative. Such additional analysis would add to existing knowledge and understanding about the composition and thinking of those clerics who are the stipendiary parochial clergy of the Church in Wales and would contribute to existing empirical study in this field, notably that of Francis (1999; 2002) and (Robbins and Francis, 2000; Francis and Payne, 2002; Francis and Robbins, 2004; Francis, Jackson and Jones, 2005).

**CHAPTER SEVEN**

**CONCLUSIONS**



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSIONS

The preceding chapters show that important changes have taken place in the views of Church in Wales clergy in respect of Christian initiation between 1993 and 2003.

The present study provides evidence to show that the support for an open baptismal policy, displayed in 1993, is even stronger in 2003. Again, the present study confirms that the support for access to Holy Communion for children and non-confirmed adults, already evident in 1993, is more clearly supported in 2003. There is only limited evidence to suggest that the views of Church in Wales clergy on initiation are either sex related or age related. It would, however, appear that significant differences in the viewpoint of clergy are associated with whether they minister in a rural parish or an urban parish. Whether such differences are associated with different personality types being attracted to rural ministry, as Francis and Lankshear (1998) and Francis, Smith and Robbins (2004) suggest, or are as much the result of the practical experiences encountered within the parish, as the present writer implies in Chapter Six, is a matter for other investigations. It would seem that the most notable differences in the views of Church in Wales clergy on initiation result from the church orientation and theological persuasion of clergy. Chapter Six and the tables of Appendix Seven show these differences to be most marked.

In his challenging book, *The Secular City*, Harvey Cox wrote forty years ago that the real ecumenical crisis today is not between Roman Catholics and Protestants but between traditional and experimental forms of church life. He goes on to say, "If church leaders do not recognise this, within a few decades we shall see a cleavage in the Church that will be comparable

to the one that appeared in the sixteenth century" (Cox, 1965, p 160).

Cox's view would be recognised by many respondents to the present survey, for as we have seen, notable differences are evident in the stated beliefs of catholic as opposed to evangelical clerics and of liberal as opposed to conservative clerics. Furthermore, discussion in the preceding chapters shows that many of these points of difference are much greater now than they were ten years ago. As McGrath (1993) convincingly puts it, Anglicanism is changing and certainly this would seem to be the case in respect of the views of Church in Wales clergy on initiation into the Christian Church.

These changes are important and should be of interest to church leaders, clergy, lay readers and parishioners alike. Most especially, they are relevant to Church in Wales' bishops who must of necessity make decisions concerning the appropriate location of clergy and a range of related issues. The implications for short term planning are, therefore, clear enough. What is less clear is where these changes are taking the Church in Wales in the longer term.

Chapter Two of the present work discusses the way in which initiation rites have been adapted and changed over many generations. These adaptations and changes are well documented and yet the greater emphasis in recent theological writing seems to be more on ministry styles, of which Thwaites (2000), Edmondson (2002), Hendra (2004) and McCullum (2004) are typical examples, or on church structures, of which Gill (2003), Tomlin (2004), Brewin (2004), Morgan (2004a) and Moynagh (2004) are typical examples, rather than on an analysis of the development of our beliefs, and especially of the development of our beliefs about baptism and confirmation.



Mynors (2005) has argued that we might do better to concern ourselves more with whether our beliefs and church life should be allowed to develop. He makes the point that biblical studies suggest that 'movement', with its notion of direction, development and purpose, is a useful alternative to the term 'change'. McGrath (1993) travels in the same direction. For McGrath, the notion of change is translated rather as 'adaptation', which he maintains should rightly be seen as a sign of life. McGrath condemns those who would wish to petrify Anglicanism, preserving like a fly trapped in amber, the particular religious ethos of a by-gone age. Crockett (2005) makes the point that, "Many of us are convinced that the God in whom Anglicans believe is not a static God nor a narrow God" (p viii). The respondent to the present survey who welcomed the study and expressed the wish that it might lead to movement of the Church in Wales out of the dark ages, would presumably agree.

These points, taken together, serve to raise the thought that the 'changes' in the views of Church in Wales clergy, outlined in the preceding chapters, might perhaps be better presented as 'purposeful movements'. Purposeful movements, that is, that could lead to an 'adaptation' of the way in which initiation is viewed in the twenty first century. Hemming (2005) maintains that contemporary change in society is forcing a rethinking of everything and from this rethinking a new understanding of the world emerges together with a new understanding of God. Are we, in such circumstances, being invited to question the significance and relevance of some liturgical practices in so far as they relate to initiation policy and practice? Are we, being invited to ask what God is teaching us through the changes taking place around us? Is it perhaps *required* of us to ask what God wants of us? A Welsh respondent to the *Let the People Speak Survey* (2005), commented, "On Sunday I listened to a sermon on the subject of Elijah being fed by ravens. The sermon was good in explaining what happened but failed to point out why this should be significant to me in my everyday



walk with Jesus” (p 26). The poet Dylan Thomas, in his long prose poem, *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, recalls that one Christmas he received a book which told him everything about the spider but 'why' (Thomas, 1968). Are we permitted to note the changing views of Church in Wales clergy on initiation policy and practice and ask 'why'?

It is beyond the scope of the present dissertation to attempt to respond in detail to such a question but yet the responses of clerics to the present survey would seem to invite us to take up the challenge. The challenge appears to propose a choice between two distinct lines of approach, according to whether the differences in the views of Church in Wales clerics on initiation in 1993 and those of the present 2003 survey, are seen in terms of 'change' or 'movement'. One respondent to the present study expressed in some detail his or her concern that the questionnaire was underpinned by a hidden agenda designed to seek support for unwarranted and undesirable change in initiation policy and practice. Those who view the data of the preceding chapters in terms of change, might possibly agree. Still more, they might draw attention to the tables of Chapters Four and Five and see the statistically significant differences between the views of clerics in 1993 and 2003 as evidence of disinterest in the Church's teaching; of questioning the authority of bishops; of too many clerics simply doing their own thing. They might possibly point to the expressions of grief and loss, universally displayed at the death of a Pope who had 'resisted the onslaught of secularisation on traditional Christian beliefs and values' (Burnham, 2005). They might see in Chapter Six the marked differences in the views of catholics and evangelicals, and of liberals and conservatives, as an indication that the Church in Wales is fragmenting into separate cells, each with its separate belief system. They might analyse the empirical data presented by Francis, Robbins and Astley (2005) and express concern at the evidence of possible fragmentation in the Church of England. Jayne Ozanne (2004) would, no doubt, recognise



such a trend. Ozanne, a former senior adviser to the Archbishop of Canterbury, has commented as follows:

... the established Church will continue to implode and self-destruct, fragmenting into various divisions over a range of internal issues. ...A new church will begin to arise ... It will take the form of many single cell groups across the land, united in a common bond founded on grace and truth ...Rather than demanding a 'king' to be appointed over them (as with Saul), this new church will discern the God-appointed leaders who have naturally risen to positions of prominence (p 3).

More than one respondent to the present survey claimed that they ignored the prescribed Church in Wales baptism service, either in part or whole, in favour of constructing their own liturgy. It would indeed appear that some clerics at least, are inclined to mirror the biblical acclamation, "Because there was no king in Israel everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges, 17.6). The trouble is, of course, as Rodd (1995) reminds us, "When it comes to looking for ethical guidance from the Bible we all pick and choose" (p 5). Even so, Danneels (2003), in common with many liturgists, would insist that it is precisely protection from such criticism that established liturgies provide. Danneels advises us that:

... liturgy is only understandable through its repetitiveness. Profound realities only gradually yield their full significance. This is why we have the phenomenon of 'ritual' in the liturgy; and who ever speaks of 'ritual' speaks of repetition. Many changes in the liturgy in order to make it understandable have been inefficient because they focused on the immediate, cognitive, informative aspects of understanding. They wanted to explain everything, to provide commentary, to analyse. They never lead to familiarity with the liturgy (pp 13-14).

It is not surprising, therefore, that those who see the data of Chapters Four, Five and Six in terms of 'change' might respond with concern and regret.

Those who see the results of the preceding chapters more in terms of

'movement' than 'change' might argue things differently. They are, perhaps, more likely to agree with Glendhill (2003) who makes the point that sheep do not necessarily turn into shepherds; the Spirit is needed to bring about this transformation. Glendhill goes on to maintain that, "The powers need confronting, the comfortable need challenging and the love in the community needs releasing" (p 106). Or as Holloway (2005) puts it, perhaps contemporary questioning of our religious policies and practices is simply freeing us from the worship of idols.

It is essentially this line of thinking that led Ellul (1991) to welcome the decline of the western Christian Church. He argues that those who drift away from the Christian Church probably never really belonged to it. He goes on to insist that by God's grace, it is no longer useful to be a Christian and this very fact forces Christians to live in risk, insecurity and contradiction; to challenge the world around them; to move on; to set about destroying the deified and sacralized idols of technicism.

This is broadly the path that Mynors (2005) is treading when he reminds us that we only have to compare the opening of Luke's Gospel with the close of the Acts of the Apostles, to sense 'movement'. He recounts that:

... the infancy narratives start the Christian story in a situation marginal to the Roman empire and embedded in the Jewish faith. Fifty two chapters on, Paul is in Rome with the gentile mission in full swing (p 47).

Mynors poses the question, could this be a parable of the Church today? Opponents might, of course, argue with Fletcher (2004) that if we try to gain insight into the Will of God, then as Christians, we have a theological responsibility to make sure that we do not neglect Mosaic law. This, he maintains, is so because Mosaic law was never intended exclusively for Israel: Jesus does not abolish Mosaic law but authoritatively reveals its



underlying intent, while Paul, although critical of the misuse and powerlessness of the law, also affirms its abiding authority (Romans, 7.12-14). Wright (2004) claims that, "Surely wherever we responsibly uncover the ethical intention of the Torah we authentically encounter the Will of God" (p 288).

What ever source we look to in order to discern God's will, it remains that:

All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy, 3.16).

The source is, however, immaterial unless we are able to listen and act when we hear the word of God. Gray (1986) has quoted the words of St Teresa of Avila to stress the active role of Christ in the world:

Christ has no body now in earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion is to look out into the world. Yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good. Yours are the hands with which He is to bless men now (p 226).

We are reminded that Christ can only speak to us through the hands and minds of we who walk the earth and this includes Church in Wales parochial stipendiary clergy as much as any one else.

All of this stresses the extent to which we must 'listen' if we are to learn what God is saying to the Church. It is not possible to learn the mind of God unless we listen and we are reminded of the words of St Teresa of Avila as we listen to the views of Church in Wales parochial stipendiary clergy. If we listen to the differing, and sometimes challenging, views of active clerics, do we learn something of what God is saying to the Church? Do we learn what 'movement' God wishes us to respond to? Littler and

Francis (2005) draw upon the concept of *Ordinary Theology* discussed by Astley (2003) to show the practical application of this listening process. In his fuller and more detailed work on *Ordinary Theology*, Astley (2002) brings meaning and understanding to the concept by showing that the theological views and expressions held by individuals are essentially *contextual*. That is to say, they are always set in some context, rooted in some life experience or issue. Astley's attention is especially directed to 'ordinary' individuals who have not undergone formal theological training. It is, perhaps, feasible, however, to test the application of Astley's concept to typical Church in Wales parochial stipendiary clerics who comprise the research population of the present survey. Although we should expect clerics to be knowledgeable in theological matters considerably beyond the experience of the ordinary people to whom Astley's concept is logically applied, the *contextual* learning environment holds good as much for clergy as laity.

Astley likens the learning context to the setting of a dialogue and a dance and sees it as analogous to the conversation that takes place during the embrace between the dancers of present, contextualised, experienced practice and their partners from the dancing school of past tradition. The analogy is revealing and we could imagine the parochial stipendiary cleric on the dance floor of the parish, having learned and continuing to learn the steps from their theological instructors but yet obliged to respect the other (non-theologically educated) dancers in the room, who are in turn, notably responsive to culturally determined music and setting. In such circumstances we may expect theologically educated clerics, like 'ordinary' men and women, to learn and to change. Astley, in common with a number of educationalists maintains that change in ourselves, "... always involves transformation" (Astley, 2002 p 21). McGrath (1993) prefers the term 'adaptation' and Mynors (2005) the term 'movement'. Which ever term is used, change becomes positive and purposeful rather than



threatening and destructive.

We are invited to ask with Francis Thompson, if perhaps we are being pursued by the, "Hound of heaven" (Thompson, 1893, p 9): or by C.S. Lewis', "Pack of hounds that aim to dislodge us from the Hegelian Wood" (Lewis, 1955, pp 179-180).

We are left to ponder the possibility that through the data discussed in the preceding chapters we hear the Will of God, transforming, adapting and moving the Church to a new position regarding initiation into the Church in Wales. We are left to ponder the suggestion that we should welcome the decline in the social significance of the Christian Church (Ellul, 1991). We are left to ponder the view of Jane Williams that the work of the Holy Spirit involves a willingness to be broken so that the fragments gathered can feed the 5,000. She puts it this way, "We have lost a great deal over the past 2,000 years through fear of finding God the Holy Spirit at work without our authorisation" (Carey, 2005b, p 4).

Whether the data of the preceding pages is viewed as 'change', 'transformation' or 'movement' still leaves us with the dilemma of having to attempt to assess how far this change or movement or transformation is acceptable to church members. It has been stated previously that Smitham (2004) found notable differences between clergy and laity in respect of their views on initiation policy. It has similarly been stated previously that Grainger (2004) urges the Church to embrace the secular world, while twenty five years earlier, Gilbert (1980) argued that churches as social organizations are effective only when their own structures mirror those of the societies they seek to serve. Neither is the message pertinent only to the Anglican Church. In 1999 the head of the Roman Catholic Church commented that there is, "... a need for our preaching to be impregnated with the culture of the people" (Pope John Paul II, 1999,

Section 70). As Paul puts it in his letter to Romans, "Each of us must consider his neighbour and think what is for his good and what will build up the common good" (Romans, 15.2). Barclay (1975) reminds us that the beginning of Chapter Fifteen of Paul's Letter to Romans is a quotation from Psalm 69 and it is significant that when Paul speaks of bearing the weaknesses of others, he uses the same word (*bastazein*) as used to describe Christ bearing the cross.

Spencer (2003) reports recent research which reveals that as an institution the Church's reputation in British society is largely a negative one, creating a real barrier to effective proclamation of the Christian message. Many parents who have been denied the baptism of their child, no matter how sound the theological justification for such action, would share this negative view point. McIlroy (2004) reminds us that while the Christian Church and its members are not to be concerned about reputation for their own sake or as an end in itself, they should seek to protect their reputation where the honour of God is at stake. This does not mean, however, that we can afford to be patronizing or to rewrite people's experience in terms we find more comfortable. Often, as Richards (2003) says, we use our research and statistics to support the idea that our view of the world still somehow prevails without seeing how that view is being dismantled and reconstructed outside our city walls. If we want to engage with it effectively, we have to leave our safe haven and risk the challenges to our comfortable faith (Richards, 2003, p 90).

It may be concluded that the data resulting from the present survey carried out in 2003, and the comparison of these data with the results of a similar survey carried out in 1993, provide important information about difference over time in the views of Church in Wales clerics on initiation policy. It also shows notable differences in the views of catholic clerics as opposed to evangelical clerics and between liberal clerics as opposed to conservative



clerics. Also, that some of these differences according to church orientation and theological persuasion have polarised over the last ten years. These are important considerations and it is hoped that the results will give guidance to church leaders. This much is clear enough. When, however, we attempt to explain these developments; when like Dylan Thomas we begin to ask 'why'; then matters become more difficult to determine. The passage of time, together with further empirical study may throw a little more light on how far the preceding analysis of Church in Wales parochial stipendiary clerics' views on initiation into the Church in Wales, may be described in terms of evidence of change or in the more positive light of a purposeful response to the Will of God.

If the preceding pages do indeed provide us with an insight into God's Will for the Christian Church, then, in the language of Ellul (1991), we are called to question all that society calls progress, discovery and success; we must assess existing Church policies and practices, including those concerned with initiation and ask why? We are invited to ask if the rich diversity of clerics' views, examined in the preceding chapters, may prove to be consistent with the fragile fault-lines along which Francis, Robbins and Astley (2005) claim the Church of England may be pulled apart. We are invited to pose the question, is God speaking to us through the medium of the views expressed by clerics in the present study, in that same way that Wolterstorff (1995) felt that God may speak by means of the words and writings of others?

In listening to the words and writings of others, we must of course, remain ever mindful of what Gadamer (2004) has called our own legitimate prejudices or pre-understandings. Indeed, the Archbishop of Canterbury has reminded us that we all, "... speak of god with a marked local accent" (Williams, 2001, p 9). There is no other way in which we can listen and comprehend. This does not alter the fact, as Astley (2004) indicates, "Most

(if not perhaps all?) who speak of and to God need to be encouraged to say more, and so to say it better” (p 128).

Jayne Ozanne maintains that the Anglican hierarchy has become too intellectual in its form and she calls for more open debate and consultation with all parts of the Church (Pepinster, 2004). John Stott writes as an experienced cleric when he advises us that, “If we step down from our lofty platform and humble ourselves before God; if we confess our inability to find him by ourselves; ... God reveals himself to such” (Stott, 2003, p 129). He goes on to say that what is required of us is not that we close our minds but that we open them; not that we stifle them, but that we humble them.

The present study is offered as a humble attempt to open minds and not to stifle them; to listen to what the Church in Wales clergy have to say about initiation into the Church in Wales in 1993 and 2003; and through analysis of the views of clergy, to consider the possibility that God is revealed to us. It is hoped that open debate and consultation may follow and that further empirical study of initiation policy and practice may help to ensure the implementation of God’s Will. If God’s people are on the move, then we must remain mindful that unless we travel the path of God’s Will, we shall surely perish along the way.



# APPENDICES

# **APPENDIX ONE**

## **The Questionnaire**



# CHRISTIAN INITIATION TODAY



This survey has been designed to make known the views of clergy today. Please help by answering the questions as you really think. Your answers will be confidential. You do not need to write your name on the leaflet. The number at the top of this questionnaire is there only to help us identify those who do not send a questionnaire back.

The Revd Dr Keith Littler  
*Christian Initiation Today*  
University of Wales, Bangor (Meirion)  
FREEPOST BG35  
Bangor  
Gwynedd  
LL57 2BR

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

Part one asks some factual questions about yourself and your parish.  
Please tick (✓) the appropriate boxes.

male	1
female	2

What is your sex?

under 30	0
30 - 34	1
35 - 39	2
40 - 44	3
45 - 49	4
50 - 54	5
55 - 59	6
60 - 64	7
65 - 69	8
70 or over	9

What is your age?

single	1
married	2
widowed	3

What is your current marital status?

less than 5 years	0
5 - 9 years	1
10 - 14 years	2
15 - 19 years	3
20 - 24 years	4
25 - 29 years	5
30 - 34 years	6
35 - 39 years	7
40 - 44 years	8
45 years or more	9

How long have you been engaged in  
'stipendiary' ministry?

© The Revd Professor Leslie J Francis and The Revd Dr Keith Littler

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on behalf of  
Leslie J Francis and Keith Littler  
Centre for Ministry Studies  
University of Wales, Bangor  
LL57 2PX



What 'order' are you in?

deacon	1	
priest	3	

What is your present position?

incumbent	1	
priest in charge	2	
assistant ourate	3	
team rector	4	
team vicar	5	

How long have you been in your parish?

less than 5 years	1	
5 - 9 years	2	
10 - 14 years	3	
15 - 19 years	4	
20 years or more	5	

What is the population of your parish(es)?  
NOTE In the case of Team Ministries please give total of all parishes you are primarily responsible for.

less than 1,000	1	
1,000 - 1,999	2	
2,000 - 2,999	3	
3,000 - 3,999	4	
4,000 - 4,999	5	
5,000 - 9,999	6	
10,000 - 14,999	7	
15,000 or more	8	

How would you classify the area served by your parish?

city centre	1	
urban	2	
suburban	3	
market town	4	
rural	5	

Please judge how Catholic/Evangelical and how Liberal/Conservative you are now by drawing a circle round one number on each of these two lines.

catholic	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	evangelical
liberal	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	conservative

In which diocese are you currently serving?

Bangor	1	
Llandaff	2	
Monmouth	3	
St Asaph	4	
St Davids	5	
Swansea and Brecon	6	

During 2002 approximately how many infants did you baptise?

During 2002 approximately how many children and young people under the age of 11 years did you baptise?

During 2002 approximately how many adults did you baptise?

During 2002 approximately how many services of thanksgiving for the birth of a child did you conduct?

Does your parish admit children to communion before confirmation?

yes	2	
no	1	



Part two explores your views on Christian Initiation. Please read each sentence carefully and think, 'Do I agree with it?'  
 If you Agree Strongly, put a ring around AS A NC D DS  
 If you Agree, put a ring around AS A NC D DS  
 If you are Not Certain, put a ring around AS A NC D DS  
 If you Disagree, put a ring around AS A NC D DS  
 If you Disagree Strongly, put a ring around AS A NC D DS

### INFANT BAPTISM

I would baptise a baby if neither parent was a regular churchgoer ..... AS A NC D DS  
 I would baptise a baby if neither parent was a baptised Anglican ..... AS A NC D DS  
 I would accept for godparents those who were not regular churchgoers ..... AS A NC D DS  
 I would accept for godparents those who were not baptised Anglicans ..... AS A NC D DS  
 I think liturgical language, like 'an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven', is readily understood by parents and godparents .. AS A NC D DS  
 I believe that at baptism a child's spiritual future is changed in some way ..... AS A NC D DS  
 The baptismal liturgy should be re-stated in contemporary images and language ..... AS A NC D DS  
 The baptismal liturgy should be more easily understood by the occasional worshipper ..... AS A NC D DS  
 The baptismal liturgy should permit more participation by the regular congregation ..... AS A NC D DS  
 More rubrics should be included to make the service more meaningful to the family ..... AS A NC D DS  
 Revisions of the baptismal liturgy should preserve the primitive practices of the early church ..... AS A NC D DS  
 Revisions of the baptismal liturgy should retain the account of Jesus' baptism ..... AS A NC D DS  
 Revisions of the baptismal liturgy should include unifying factors which will help, not hinder, ecumenism ..... AS A NC D DS

There should be a common rite of baptism within covenanted churches ..... AS A NC D DS  
 Baptism should be regarded as generally available to all ..... AS A NC D DS  
 The baptismal liturgy should involve more active participation from parents and godparents ..... AS A NC D DS  
 Generally requests for a baptism outside the main services should be granted ..... AS A NC D DS  
 Infant baptism may lull people into a state of false security about their position before God ..... AS A NC D DS  
 The church should clearly refute the idea that children go to hell if they die unbaptised ..... AS A NC D DS  
 An unbaptised child is spiritually disadvantaged in some way ... AS A NC D DS  
 I would baptise a baby if neither parent could profess the Christian faith ..... AS A NC D DS  
 I would baptise babies from non-Christian homes ..... AS A NC D DS  
 I have doubts about the theology of infant baptism ..... AS A NC D DS  
 Infant baptism may encourage people to think they are Christians when they do not profess any faith ..... AS A NC D DS  
 A confession of faith in Jesus Christ by the parents is sufficient ground for infant baptism ..... AS A NC D DS  
 Making more stringent requirements for infant baptism presents a real danger to the church ..... AS A NC D DS  
 A statutory number of church attendances should be required before baptism ..... AS A NC D DS  
 I would baptise a baby if the parents confessed no faith but the godparents were regular communicant members of my church .... AS A NC D DS  
 I would baptise a baby if the parents confessed no faith but the grandparents were regular communicant members of my church ... AS A NC D DS  
 Revisions of the baptismal liturgy should retain the story of Jesus and the children ..... AS A NC D DS  
 Believing parents are a necessary pre-requisite for baptism ... AS A NC D DS  
 The Anglican church should a definite Anglican view on baptism, regardless of other denominations ..... AS A NC D DS  
 Adult baptism and confirmation should be the only services of initiation ..... AS A NC D DS



A main purpose of infant baptism is to give the baby a Christian name . . . . . AS A NC D DS

A main purpose of infant baptism is to welcome the baby into church membership . . . . . AS A NC D DS

A main purpose of infant baptism is to incorporate the baby into the body of Christ . . . . . AS A NC D DS

A main purpose of infant baptism is to give thanks for the birth of a baby . . . . . AS A NC D DS

A main purpose of infant baptism is to convey a special gift of the Holy Spirit . . . . . AS A NC D DS

A main purpose of infant baptism is to wash away original sin . AS A NC D DS

In infant baptism signing with the cross is important . . . . . AS A NC D DS

In infant baptism giving the lighted candle is important . . . . . AS A NC D DS

In infant baptism blessing the water is important . . . . . AS A NC D DS

In infant baptism anointing with oil is important . . . . . AS A NC D DS

In infant baptism three-fold administration of water is important AS A NC D DS

In infant baptism promises made by the parents are important . AS A NC D DS

In infant baptism presence of the baby's family is important . . . AS A NC D DS

In infant baptism presence of the congregation is important . . . AS A NC D DS

In infant baptism the naming of the baby is important . . . . . AS A NC D DS

In infant baptism promises made by the godparents are important . . . . . AS A NC D DS

# ADMISSION TO COMMUNION OF CHILDREN

Children cannot take a full part in communion services unless they receive communion . . . . . AS A NC D DS

Infants who have been baptised should be welcome to receive communion . . . . . AS A NC D DS

Churchgoing seven year olds who have been baptised should be welcome to receive communion before confirmation . . . . . AS A NC D DS

Churchgoing nine year olds who have been baptised should be welcome to receive communion before confirmation . . . . . AS A NC D DS

Churchgoing eleven year olds who have been baptised should be welcome to receive communion before confirmation . . . . . AS A NC D DS

The church is right in making the requirements for baptism far more stringent . . . . . AS A NC D DS

I would offer a service of thanksgiving to some parents who request a service of baptism . . . . . AS A NC D DS

In emphasising the importance of the faith of parents and godparents, the faithfulness of God may be overlooked . . . . . AS A NC D DS

I would baptise a baby even if the parents, although confessing Christians, were known to live a corrupt life . . . . . AS A NC D DS

Refusing infant baptism restricts the work of the Holy Spirit . . . AS A NC D DS

After baptism, a child of active Christian parents will remain more faithful than a child of non-churchgoers . . . . . AS A NC D DS

Frequent baptisms in Sunday Eucharists hinder the worship of regular churchgoers . . . . . AS A NC D DS

A priest should have the right to refuse baptism on assessment of the suitability of the parents or godparents . . . . . AS A NC D DS

Parents who bring children to be baptised should provide evidence of their own Christian faith . . . . . AS A NC D DS

Many parents wishing to have their baby baptised are unaware of denominational differences . . . . . AS A NC D DS

I would refuse to baptise the next child if the parents failed to keep the promises they made at an earlier baptism . . . . . AS A NC D DS

Churches should not baptise babies at all . . . . . AS A NC D DS

Churches should only baptise babies of regular churchgoers . . AS A NC D DS

Churches should baptise all babies whose parents request it . . AS A NC D DS

Churches should require parents to attend a preparation course before their babies are baptised . . . . . AS A NC D DS

Baptism preparation courses should be run by members of the congregation . . . . . AS A NC D DS

Baptism preparation courses should be run by the clergy . . . . . AS A NC D DS

Churches should try to keep contact with babies they baptised . AS A NC D DS

Churches have a responsibility for the continuing Christian education of babies they baptised . . . . . AS A NC D DS

Parents have a responsibility for the continuing Christian education of babies they presented for baptism . . . . . AS A NC D DS

Godparents have a responsibility for the continuing Christian education of their godchildren . . . . . AS A NC D DS



Churches should not give communion to children until they have been confirmed ..... AS A NC D DS

Churches should not give communion to children until they are desirous of being confirmed ..... AS A NC D DS

Churches should not give communion to children until they are old enough to understand what is happening ..... AS A NC D DS

Churches should not give communion to children until they have committed themselves to the Lord Jesus ..... AS A NC D DS

Churches should not give communion to children until they know the catechism ..... AS A NC D DS

Churches should not give communion to children until they have attended a preparation programme ..... AS A NC D DS

Churches should not give communion to children unless they are part of a Christian nurture group ..... AS A NC D DS

There should be a special service of admission to first communion ..... AS A NC D DS

Churches which admit children to communion should also encourage them to attend nurture groups ..... AS A NC D DS

Children should be admitted to communion because it is a meal for the whole family ..... AS A NC D DS

Children should be admitted to communion because it is a means of grace ..... AS A NC D DS

ADMISSION TO COMMUNION OF ADULTS

Only people who have been baptised should be welcome to receive communion ..... AS A NC D DS

Only people who have been confirmed should be welcome to receive communion ..... AS A NC D DS

Only people who have been confirmed (or expressed a wish for confirmation) should be welcome to receive communion ..... AS A NC D DS

Everyone who loves the Lord Jesus should be welcome to receive communion ..... AS A NC D DS

Communicant members of other denominations should be welcome to receive communion in Anglican churches ..... AS A NC D DS

People who are at odds with their neighbours should not receive communion ..... AS A NC D DS

People who are divorced and remarried should not receive communion ..... AS A NC D DS

Sinners should not receive communion ..... AS A NC D DS

CONFIRMATION

A main purpose of confirmation is to open the gateway to communion ..... AS A NC D DS

A main purpose of confirmation is to make sure that church members know about their faith ..... AS A NC D DS

A main purpose of confirmation is to enable people to complete their baptismal promises ..... AS A NC D DS

A main purpose of confirmation is to enable people to reaffirm their baptismal promises ..... AS A NC D DS

A main purpose of confirmation is to enable people to make a public commitment to Christ ..... AS A NC D DS

A main purpose of confirmation is to commission people for Christian service and witness ..... AS A NC D DS

A main purpose of confirmation is to enrol people onto the church membership list ..... AS A NC D DS

A main purpose of confirmation is to convey a special gift of the Holy Spirit ..... AS A NC D DS

A main purpose of confirmation is to enable the candidates to meet with the bishop ..... AS A NC D DS

A main purpose of confirmation is to enable local congregations to meet with the bishop ..... AS A NC D DS

In confirmation services the presence of the bishop is important ..... AS A NC D DS

In confirmation services the promises made by the candidates are important ..... AS A NC D DS

In confirmation services the laying on of hands is important ... AS A NC D DS

In confirmation services the presence of the candidate's godparents is important ..... AS A NC D DS

In confirmation services the presence of the candidate's family is important ..... AS A NC D DS

In confirmation services the presence of the local congregation is important ..... AS A NC D DS

In confirmation services the gifts of the Holy Spirit are important ..... AS A NC D DS

In confirmation services the sermon is important ..... AS A NC D DS

In confirmation services the party afterwards is important ..... AS A NC D DS



In confirmation services the prayers for the candidates are important ..... AS A NC D DS

In confirmation services the anointing with oil is important ..... AS A NC D DS

In confirmation services the eucharist is important ..... AS A NC D DS

Preferably people should be confirmed in their own parish church ..... AS A NC D DS

Preferably confirmation services should be held in the cathedral ..... AS A NC D DS

Preferably separate confirmation services should be held in every parish church ..... AS A NC D DS

Preferably one confirmation service should be held for the whole deanery ..... AS A NC D DS

Candidates presented for confirmation should know the Lord's prayer ..... AS A NC D DS

Candidates presented for confirmation should know the Apostles' creed ..... AS A NC D DS

Candidates presented for confirmation should know the Ten Commandments ..... AS A NC D DS

Candidates presented for confirmation should know the catechism ..... AS A NC D DS

Candidates presented for confirmation should read the bible regularly ..... AS A NC D DS

Candidates presented for confirmation should know about the life of Jesus ..... AS A NC D DS

Candidates presented for confirmation should know about the worship of the church ..... AS A NC D DS

Candidates presented for confirmation should know Jesus as their personal saviour ..... AS A NC D DS

Candidates presented for confirmation should contribute to church finances regularly ..... AS A NC D DS

Candidates presented for confirmation should pray regularly .. AS A NC D DS

Candidates presented for confirmation should live Godly lives ..... AS A NC D DS

Churches should only confirm adults if they come to church regularly ..... AS A NC D DS

Churches should provide courses for adults before presenting them for confirmation ..... AS A NC D DS

Churches should provide post-confirmation courses for adults whom they have presented for confirmation ..... AS A NC D DS

All adult confirmation candidates should be required to attend a course of preparation ..... AS A NC D DS

Churches should not confirm anyone under the age of nine .... AS A NC D DS

Churches should not confirm anyone under the age of eleven . AS A NC D DS

Churches should not confirm anyone under the age of thirteen . AS A NC D DS

Churches should not confirm anyone under the age of fifteen... AS A NC D DS

Churches should not confirm anyone under the age of eighteen ..... AS A NC D DS

Churches should confirm young people before they drop away during adolescence ..... AS A NC D DS

Churches should only confirm young people if they come to church regularly ..... AS A NC D DS

Churches should provide courses for young people before presenting them for confirmation ..... AS A NC D DS

Churches should provide post-confirmation courses for young people whom they have presented for confirmation ..... AS A NC D DS

All young confirmation candidates should be required to attend a course of preparation ..... AS A NC D DS

Confirming young people encourages them to stay in the church ..... AS A NC D DS

Confirming young people helps them find their way back into the church later in life ..... AS A NC D DS

Confirming young people strengthens them against temptations ..... AS A NC D DS

Confirmation preparation courses should be run by members of the congregation ..... AS A NC D DS

Confirmation preparation courses should be run by the clergy . AS A NC D DS



Part three explores some of your personal attitudes to life. Please answer each question by putting a circle around the 'YES' or the 'NO' following the question. Work quickly and do not think too long about the exact meaning of the questions.

Does your mood often go up and down? ..... YES NO  
Do you take much notice of what people think? ..... YES NO  
Are you a talkative person? ..... YES NO  
If you say you will do something, do you always keep your promise no matter how inconvenient it might be? ..... YES NO  
Do you feel 'just miserable' for no reason? ..... YES NO  
Would being in debt worry you? ..... YES NO  
Are you rather lively? ..... YES NO  
Were you ever greedy by helping yourself to more than your share of anything? ..... YES NO  
Are you an irritable person? ..... YES NO  
Would you take drugs which may have strange or dangerous effects? ... YES NO  
Do you enjoy meeting new people? ..... YES NO  
Have you ever blamed someone for doing something you knew was really your fault? ..... YES NO  
Are your feelings easily hurt? ..... YES NO  
Do you prefer to go your own way rather than act by the rules? ..... YES NO  
Can you usually let yourself go and enjoy yourself at a lively party? ..... YES NO  
Are all your habits good and desirable ones? ..... YES NO  
Do you often feel 'fed-up'? ..... YES NO  
Do good manners and cleanliness matter much to you? ..... YES NO  
Do you usually take the initiative in making new friends? ..... YES NO  
Have you ever taken anything (even a pin or button) that belonged to someone else? ..... YES NO  
Would you call yourself a nervous person? ..... YES NO  
Do you think marriage is old-fashioned and should be done away with? .. YES NO

Can you easily get some life into a rather dull party? ..... YES NO  
Have you ever broken or lost something belonging to someone else? ... YES NO  
Are you a worrier? ..... YES NO  
Do you enjoy cooperating with others? ..... YES NO  
Do you tend to keep in the background on social occasions? ..... YES NO  
Does it worry you if you know there are mistakes in your work? ..... YES NO  
Have you ever said anything bad or nasty about anyone? ..... YES NO  
Would you call yourself tense or 'highly-strung'? ..... YES NO  
Do you think people spend too much time safeguarding their future with savings and insurances? ..... YES NO  
Do you like mixing with people? ..... YES NO  
As a child were you ever cheeky to your parents? ..... YES NO  
Do you worry too long after an embarrassing experience? ..... YES NO  
Do you try not to be rude to people? ..... YES NO  
Do you like plenty of bustle and excitement around you? ..... YES NO  
Have you ever cheated at a game? ..... YES NO  
Do you suffer from 'nerves'? ..... YES NO  
Would you like other people to be afraid of you? ..... YES NO  
Have you ever taken advantage of someone? ..... YES NO  
Are you mostly quiet when you are with other people? ..... YES NO  
Do you often feel lonely? ..... YES NO  
Is it better to follow society's rules than go your own way? ..... YES NO  
Do other people think of you as being very lively? ..... YES NO  
Do you always practice what you preach? ..... YES NO  
Are you often troubled about feelings of guilt? ..... YES NO  
Do you sometimes put off until tomorrow what you ought to do today? ... YES NO  
Can you get a party going? ..... YES NO



Part four is concerned with religious belief and practice. Please indicate how important each experience is to your own faith by circling a number between 1 and 5.

1= low Importance      3= medium Importance      5= high Importance

genuflecting before the Blessed Sacrament .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
having a conversion experience .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
using incense in worship .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
experiencing something I could not put into words .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
feeling moved by a power beyond description .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
praying in tongues .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
making pilgrimages to holy shrines .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
experiencing the healing work of the Holy Spirit .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
being aware of more than I could ever describe .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
attending charismatic prayer-group meetings .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
use of vestments by the priest .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
sensing God in the beauty of nature .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
calling the priest 'Father' .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
making the Stations of the Cross .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
hearing God speak through a dream or vision .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
knowing I was surrounded by a presence .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
seeing statues in church .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
feeling God's Spirit within me .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
receiving absolution from a priest .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
hearing God speak to me .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
being born again .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
venerating the Saints .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
prophesying .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
praying for the dead .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
receiving the Blessed Sacrament .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
interpreting tongues .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
brief glimpses into the heart of things .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
signing myself with the sign of the cross .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high

giving a public utterance in tongues .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
laying hands on someone for healing .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
transient visions of the transcendental .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
saying the Rosary .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
sharing in open and informal worship .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
passing moments of divine revelation .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
being prayed over .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
receiving the imposition of ashes .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
being overwhelmed by a sense of wonder .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
receiving 'a word of knowledge' .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
fasting before receiving the Blessed Sacrament .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
being in a state of mystery outside my body .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
being 'slain in the Spirit' .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
attending Mass .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
singing in the Spirit .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
being grasped by a power beyond my control .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
using holy water .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
seeing healings happen .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
feeling at one with the universe .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
witnessing ceremonial ritual in worship .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
being absorbed within the divine .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
praying in the Spirit .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
the merging of past, present and future .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
feeling at one with all living beings .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
losing my everyday self in a greater being .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
saying the Angelus .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
being conscious only of timelessness and eternity .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
singing in tongues .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
feeling my everyday self absorbed in the depths of being ..	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
receiving the Blessed Sacrament without touching it ...	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
losing a sense of time, place and person .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
lighting votive candles .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
sensing the unity in all things .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
feeling led by God to perform a specific action .....	low	1	2	3	4	5	high



Part five contains pairs of characteristics. For each pair tick (✓) ONE box next to that characteristic which is closer to the real you, even if you feel both characteristics apply to you. Tick the characteristic that reflects the real you, even if other people see you differently.

PLEASE COMPLETE EVERY QUESTION

Do you tend to be more... Active	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reflective
Do you tend to be more... Interested in facts	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Interested in theories
Do you tend to be more... Concerned for harmony	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Concerned for justice
Do you tend to be more... Happy with routine	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unhappy with routine
Are you more... Private	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sociable
Are you more... Inspirational	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Practical
Are you more... Analytic	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sympathetic
Are you more... Structured	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Open-ended
Do you prefer... Having many friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	A few deep friendships
Do you prefer... The concrete	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	The abstract
Do you prefer... Feeling	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thinking
Do you prefer... To act on impulse	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	To act on decisions
Do you... Dislike parties	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Like parties
Do you... Prefer to design	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer to make
Do you... Tend to be firm	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to be gentle
Do you... Like to be in control	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Like to be adaptable
Are you... Energised by others	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drained by too many people
Are you... Conventional	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inventive

Are you...	<input type="checkbox"/>	Critical	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Affirming
Are you... Happier working alone	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Happier working in groups
Do you tend to be more... Socially detached	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Socially involved
Do you tend to be more... Concerned for meaning	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Concerned about detail
Do you tend to be more... Logical	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Humane
Do you tend to be more... Orderly	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Easygoing
Are you more... Talkative	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reserved
Are you more... Sensible	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Imaginative
Are you more... Tactful	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Truthful
Are you more... Spontaneous	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Organised
Are you mostly... An introvert	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	An extravert
Are you mostly focused on... Present realities	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Future possibilities
Are you mostly... Trusting	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sceptical
Are you mostly... Leisurely	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Punctual
Do you... Speak before thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Think before speaking
Do you prefer to... Improve things	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep things as they are
Do you... Seek for truth	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seek for peace
Do you... Dislike detailed planning	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Like detailed planning
Are you... Happy with uncertainty	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Happier with certainty
Are you... Up in the air	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Down to earth
Are you... Warm-hearted	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fair-minded
Are you... Systematic	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>	Casual



## **APPENDIX TWO**

**Comparative Data Relating to the Present Survey (2003),  
Thomas' Survey (1993) and Figures provided by the  
Representative Body of the Church in Wales (2004)**

APPENDIX TWO

Comparative Data Relating to the Present Survey (2003), Thomas’ Survey (1993) and Figures provided by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales (2004)

Table A2.1 compares data obtained by Thomas in 1993, with data from the present study and with information provided by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales.

**Table A2.1    A comparison of the percentages by age, sex, diocese, location of parish and status of respondents, between the 2003 survey, the 1993 survey and official figures provided by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales for June 2004**

	2003 survey %	1993 survey %	R.B. figures 2004 %
Age:			
under 30 yrs	3	5	2
30 – 39 yrs	8	16	9
40 – 49 yrs	22	31	23
50 – 59 yrs	45	36	43
60 – 70 yrs	22	12	23
Sex:			
male	82	93	84
female	18	7	16
Diocese:			
St Asaph	17	19	17
Bangor	11	11	10
St Davids	26	17	20
Llandaff	18	22	25
Monmouth	16	19	15
Swansea & Brecon	12	12	13
Location:			
rural	42	41	no figures available
market town	17	14	
suburban	18	15	
urban	21	28	
city centre	2	2	
Status:			
vicar/rector	68	73	63
priest in charge	8	5	7
curate	10	17	13
team vicar	9	4	7
team rector	5	1	4
others	-	-	6



## **APPENDIX THREE**

### **Pre-confirmation Communicants**

# APPENDIX THREE

## Pre-confirmation Communicants

Table A3.1 shows the pre-confirmation communicants for each Church in Wales diocese, officially recorded by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales, for 2001 to 2003, together with an indication of the ‘urban/rural factor’ discussed in Appendix Four.

**Table A3.1 Church in Wales pre-confirmation Communicants for 2001-2003**

Diocese	Year	Under 18 years	18 years and over	Total	Urban/Rural Factor
St Asaph	2001	-	-	25	M
	2002	-	-	38	
	2003	52	42	94	
Bangor	2001	-	-	28	R2
	2002	-	-	36	
	2003	56	29	85	
St Davids	2001	-	-	47	R1
	2002	-	-	85	
	2003	39	180	219	
Llandaff	2001	-	-	71	U1
	2002	-	-	147	
	2003	124	57	181	
Monmouth	2001	-	-	52	U2
	2002	-	-	52	
	2003	71	21	92	
Swansea and Brecon	2001	-	-	20	M
	2002	-	-	33	
	2003	14	17	31	



## **APPENDIX FOUR**

### **A Note on Rural/Urban Comparisons of Confirmation Statistics**

APPENDIX FOUR

A Note on Rural/Urban Comparisons of Confirmation Statistics

There are two main problems in considering Church in Wales confirmation statistics when attempting to draw rural/urban comparisons. First, the parish data are aggregated into diocesan units and no further data are published separating the data into rural and urban parishes within each diocese. Second, it is not easy to fully distinguish between rural and urban dioceses; some are predominantly rural in nature, some are predominantly urban, and others comprise a mixture of urban, suburban and rural elements. It is, however, possible to arrive at a crude ‘rurality’ factor for dioceses of the Church in Wales by taking the population of each diocese and comparing this with the number of parishes in the diocese. Table A4.1 shows the population averages per parish of each diocese of the Church in Wales in 2002.

Table A4.1 Church in Wales population per parish for each Diocese – 2002

Diocese	Population (000s)	No. of Parishes	Pop. Per Parish
St Asaph	504	193	2611
Bangor	198	126	1571
St Davids	356	299	1191
Llandaff	1020	160	6375
Monmouth	506	138	3667
Swansea & Brecon	361	154	2344
Total	2945	1070	Average 2752

Comparing the population per parish with the average parish population of 2752 provides a crude rural/urban factor, as follows:



St Asaph @ 95% of average = Mixed Diocese (M)

Bangor @ 57% of average = Rural Diocese No. 2 (R2)

St Davids @ 43% of average = Rural Diocese No. 1 (R1)

Llandaff @ 232% of average = Urban Diocese No. 1 (U1)

Monmouth @ 133% of average = Urban Diocese No. 2 (U2)

Swansea and Brecon @ 85% of average = Mixed Diocese (M)

Utilising a ‘rurality factor’ derived in this way, Llandaff may be deemed to be the most urban and St Davids the most rural of Church in Wales dioceses. It would seem that Monmouth is the second most urban and Bangor the second most rural, with St Asaph and Swansea and Brecon being mixed dioceses. While accepting the lack of detailed precision embodied in such a ‘rurality factor’, it is possible to use the concept as a general guideline when considering the statistics of confirmations for each diocese.

**Table A4.2      Confirmations for Church in Wales Dioceses – 1993 and 2003 compared**

Diocese	Confirmations 1993	Confirmations 2003	% 2003 of 1993	Rurality Factor
St Asaph	746	449	60%	M
Bangor	325	211	65%	R2
St Davids	614	400	65%	R1
Llandaff	1246	788	63%	U1
Monmouth	482	279	58%	U2
Swansea & Brecon	388	225	58%	M

Table A4.2 shows that the number of confirmations has declined in every one of the dioceses over the decade from 1993 to 2003. It would appear, however, that the extent of the decline has been less in the two more rural dioceses than in the urban and mixed dioceses. This does not confirm the conclusion of Lankshear (2004) who maintains that the rate of decline in confirmations is similar in rural and urban areas. Lankshear is, however, looking at a different time frame and what is

more, he goes on to suggest that it is relevant to take into account the number of confirmations in relation to population, parish electoral roll membership and Easter Day communicants.

Table A4.3 compares confirmations in 1993 as a percentage of Easter communicants with confirmations in 2003 as a percentage of Easter Day communicants.

**Table A4.3      Confirmations as a percentage of Easter Day Communicants –  
1993 and 2003 Church in Wales Dioceses compared**

Diocese	1993 %	2003 %	Rurality Factor
St Asaph	4.1	3.4	M
Bangor	3.0	2.5	R2
St Davids	3.0	2.5	R1
Llandaff	5.0	4.3	U1
Monmouth	3.8	3.0	U2
Swansea & Brecon	3.0	2.4	M

Although table A4.2 showed that the percentage of confirmations in the two more rural dioceses has declined less than in the case of the urban and mixed dioceses, when in table A4.3 confirmations are compared with Easter Day communicants, the two more rural dioceses, together with mixed diocese of Swansea and Brecon, are seen to confirm a smaller proportionate number of candidates in both 1993 and in 2003.

This is of particular significance since the number of Easter Day communicants is normally taken as a mark of the strength of the Church and a decline in confirmations may indicate a subsequent decline in Easter Day communicants. Alternatively, the trend towards a more open access to Communion may simply indicate that a greater number of baptised persons are being admitted directly to Communion without confirmation. The data of Appendix Three supports this contention. It



is, therefore, relevant to see if there is evidence of a decline in Easter Day communicants and confirmations when compared with baptisms, over the period from 1993 to 2003. Table A4.4 displays the results.

**Table A4.4      Confirmations, Baptisms and Easter Day Communicants in 2003, shown as a percentage of 1993 data**

2003 as percentage of 1993				
Diocese	Easter Day Communicants	Confirmations	Baptisms	Rurality Factor
St Asaph	74%	60%	79%	M
Bangor	78%	65%	78%	R2
St Davids	76%	65%	74%	R1
Llandaff	73%	63%	63%	U1
Monmouth	75%	58%	75%	U2
Swansea & Brecon	74%	58%	68%	M

It is evident from table A4.4 that while confirmations have declined more than Easter Day communicants in all Church in Wales dioceses, baptisms have declined more than Easter Day communicants in some but not all dioceses. The relative decline in confirmations is least noticeable in respect of the two rural dioceses and the relative decline in baptisms is most notable in the case of the most urban diocese, at the same time, table A4.4 reiterates the notion that the smallest decline in Easter Day communicants between 1993 and 2003 is in respect of the two most rural dioceses.

It is of further interest to consider any possible difference between the dioceses when Easter Day communicants are considered as a percentage of the population of each diocese; when confirmations are considered as a percentage of the population of each diocese; and when confirmations are considered as a percentage of the electoral roll of each diocese. Tables A4.5, A4.6 and A4.7 show the results.

**Table A4.5      Easter Day Communicants as a percentage of the population for Church in Wales Dioceses (population at 2002) 1993 and 2003 compared**

Diocese	1993 %	2003 %	Rurality Factor
St Asaph	1.5	0.9	M
Bangor	1.6	1.1	R2
St Davids	1.7	1.1	R1
Llandaff	1.2	0.8	U1
Monmouth	0.9	0.6	U2
Swansea & Brecon	0.6	0.6	M

**Table A4.6      Confirmations as a percentage of the population for Church in Wales Dioceses (population at 2002) 1993 and 2003 compared**

Diocese	1993 %	2003 %	Rurality Factor
St Asaph	0.15	0.09	M
Bangor	0.16	0.11	R2
St Davids	0.17	0.11	R1
Llandaff	0.12	0.08	U1
Monmouth	0.10	0.06	U2
Swansea & Brecon	0.10	0.06	M

**Table A4.7      Confirmations as a percentage of Electoral Roll Members for Church in Wales Dioceses 1993 and 2003 compared**

Diocese	1993 %	2003 %	Rurality Factor
St Asaph	4.7	3.5	M
Bangor	3.5	2.7	R2
St Davids	2.5	2.1	R1
Llandaff	5.5	4.4	U1
Monmouth	4.0	2.7	U2
Swansea & Brecon	3.1	2.2	M



It is evident from table A4.5 that the two most rural dioceses exhibit the largest percentage of Easter Day communicants when compared with the population of the diocese and that this is the case in both 1993 and 2003. It is similarly evident from table A4.6 that the two most rural dioceses exhibit the largest percentage of confirmations when compared with the population of the diocese and that this is the case in both 1993 and 2003. This is, however, not supported when confirmations are compared with the electoral roll membership in table A4.7. It would appear from table A4.7 that the most rural diocese (St Davids) had the lowest percentage of confirmations to electoral roll members in both 1993 and 2003 while the most urban diocese (Llandaff) had the highest percentage of confirmations to electoral roll members in both 1993 and 2003.

Although the criterion of a 'rurality factor' remains crude and may not be replicable in the Church of England or other Anglican communities, it is reasonable to conclude from table A4.1 to A4.7, that the rural dioceses of the Church in Wales display a less marked decline in the numbers confirmed between 1993 and 2003 but confirm a smaller number of people in relation to the number of Easter Day communicants in those dioceses. At the same time, the rural dioceses had a higher number of Easter Day communicants as a percentage of the population of the diocese in 1993 and 2003, and confirmed a higher percentage of the population in 1993 and again in 2003. When, therefore, population and Easter Day communicants are taken into account in considering the significance of confirmations in each diocese of the Church in Wales, the rural dioceses look stronger than the urban and mixed dioceses, but in respect of the key statistic relating to the replacement of Easter Day communicants or electoral roll members, then the rural dioceses appear less strong.

It has been shown in Appendix Three that more baptised but unconfirmed people are being admitted to Communion in the most rural parish (St Davids) but this does not appear to be the case in the other

rural parish (Bangor). It remains unclear that even in respect of St Davids diocese that this process is likely to replace the decline in Easter Day communicants unless the number of baptisms is also increasing. Table A4.8 shows this not to be the case.

**Table A4.8        Baptisms as a percentage of the population for Church in Wales Dioceses (population at 2002) 1993 and 2003 compared**

Diocese	1993 %	2003 %	Rurality Factor
St Asaph	0.55	0.43	M
Bangor	0.43	0.34	R2
St Davids	0.47	0.34	R1
Llandaff	0.35	0.22	U1
Monmouth	0.40	0.30	U2
Swansea & Brecon	0.33	0.23	M

Lankshear (2004) has suggested a number of reasons why confirmations in rural dioceses are failing to replace Easter Day communicants. The first relates to a changing age profile in rural communities and proposes that a growing proportion of more mature people in rural areas means that it is less likely that many of them will be seeking confirmation. The second, suggests that the rural church may be failing to engage commuters and new arrivals to the countryside and remains too rigidly wedded to traditional ways of life. The third, relates to the fact that the loyalties of young people often lie outside of their residential rural parishes and with sports clubs and schools in regional and suburban centres. A fourth, suggests that the cause of decline is associated with the challenges that face rural clergy who serve a number of rural villages but live in only one of them (Francis and Lankshear, 1998).

These explanations, and the whole nature of the decline in confirmations, as well as changing views of clerics concerning the rite of confirmation, demand further study and it will be interesting to consider



changes that might be reflected in a further replication of the present study of the views of Church in Wales clergy on Christian initiation, in yet another decade.

# **APPENDIX FIVE**

## **Age Profile of Church in Wales Ordinands in Training at December 2003**



# APPENDIX FIVE

## Age Profile of Church in Wales Ordinands in Training at December 2003

Table A5.1 shows the age profile of Church in Wales ordinands in training at December 2003.

**Table A5.1     Age profile of Church in Wales ordinands (December 2003)**

Age Group (years)	Percentage of Ordinands in Training
20-25	7%
26-30	12%
31-35	14%
36-40	10%
41-45	12%
46-50	19%
51-55	9%
56-60	17%

Source:            Annual Report of the Church in Wales  
                         Council for Mission and Ministry,  
                         2003 – 2004, (Church in Wales, 2004c).

**APPENDIX SIX**

**Age Structure of all Active Church in Wales Clerics  
at December 2003**



# APPENDIX SIX

## Age Structure of all Active Church in Wales Clerics at December 2003

Table A6.1 shows the age structure of Church in Wales clergy, and includes all active clergy at December 2003, not just stipendiary parochial clergy.

**Table A6.1     Age structure of all active Church in Wales clerics  
(December 2003)**

Age Group (years)	Percentage of Active Clerics
20-25	0%
26-30	2%
31-35	4%
36-40	6%
41-45	11%
46-50	12%
51-55	18%
56-60	24%
61-65	17%
66-70	6%

Source:            Annual Report of the Church in Wales  
                        Council for Mission and Ministry,  
                        2003 – 2004, (Church in Wales, 2004c).

**APPENDIX SEVEN**

**Tables showing all Statements by Respondents on aspects of Baptism and Confirmation in respect of which the differences between Catholics and Evangelicals and between Liberals and Conservatives are Statistically Significant at <0.01**



APPENDIX SEVEN

Tables showing all Statements by Respondents on aspects of Baptism and Confirmation in respect of which the differences between Catholics and Evangelicals and between Liberals and Conservatives are Statistically Significant at <0.01

Table A7.1 Statements in respect of which the difference in viewpoint of Catholic and Evangelical clerics is statistically significant at <0.01

	Agree %		Chi-square probability
	Catholic	Evangelical	
A statutory number of church attendances are required before baptism	10	26	.00013
Believing parents are a necessary pre-requisite for baptism	24	44	.00096
Parents who bring children to be baptised should provide evidence of their own Christian faith	21	44	.00005
The Church is right in making the requirements for baptism far more stringent	16	44	.00000
I would refuse to baptise the next child if the parents failed to keep the promises they made at an earlier baptism	7	22	.00008
Churches should only baptise babies of regular churchgoers	6	26	.00000
I would baptise a baby if neither parent was a regular churchgoer	96	78	.00000
I would baptise a baby if neither parent was a baptised Anglican	79	60	.00347
Baptism should be regarded as generally available to all	88	59	.00000
I would baptise a baby if neither parent could profess the Christian faith	50	29	.00379
I would baptise a baby if the parents confessed no faith but the godparents were regular communicants at my church	80	53	.00000

I would baptise a baby if the parents confessed no faith but the grandparents were regular communicants at my church	68	46	.00013
I would baptise a baby even if the parents, although confessing Christians, were known to live a corrupt life	80	60	.00088
Churches should baptise all babies whose parents request it	62	32	.00000
Refusing infant baptism restricts the work of the Holy Spirit	69	32	.00000
A priest should have the right to refuse baptism on assessment of the suitability of parents and godparents	34	62	.00001
Churches should not baptise babies at all	2	17	.00001
Children should be admitted to Communion because it is a meal for the whole family	50	67	.00768
Churches should not give Communion to children until they have committed themselves to the Lord Jesus	24	61	.00000
Churches should not give Communion to children until they know the catechism	17	6	.00675
There should be a special service of admission to first Communion	71	49	.00097
Only people who have been confirmed should be welcome to receive Communion	33	16	.00894
Communicant members of other denominations should be welcome to receive Communion in Anglican churches	87	99	.00111
A main purpose of confirmation is to convey a special gift of the Holy Spirit	86	65	.00020
In confirmation services, the presence of the bishop is important	80	57	.00023
In confirmation services, the presence of the candidate's godparents is important	77	60	.00679
In confirmation services, the anointing with oil is important	72	30	.00000
In confirmation services, the Eucharist is important	94	70	.00000
Candidates presented for confirmation should know the Lord's Prayer	99	89	.00010



Candidates presented for confirmation should know the catechism	46	21	.00033
Candidates presented for confirmation should know Jesus as their personal saviour	67	90	.00003
Everyone who loves the Lord Jesus should be welcome to receive Communion	37	78	.00000
Making more stringent requirements for baptism presents a real danger to the Church	61	41	.00107
In infant baptism, signing with the cross is important	95	74	.00000
In infant baptism, giving a lighted candle is important	87	59	.00000
In infant baptism, the blessing of the water is important	93	62	.00000
In infant baptism, the three-fold administration of the water is important	91	63	.00000
The baptism liturgy should be re-stated in contemporary images and language	64	88	.00018
The baptism liturgy should be more easily understood by the occasional worshipper	78	93	.00691
Revisions of the baptismal liturgy should preserve the primitive practices of the early Church	63	44	.00931
I believe that at baptism a child's spiritual future is changed in some way	79	43	.00000
Infant baptism may lull people into a state of false security about their position before God	33	81	.00000
Infant baptism may encourage people to think they are Christians when they do not profess a faith	47	83	.00000
A main purpose of infant baptism is to incorporate the baby into the body of Christ	99	74	.00000
A main purpose of infant baptism is to convey a special gift of the Holy Spirit	90	50	.00000
A main purpose of infant baptism is to wash away original sin	54	23	.00000
In infant baptism the naming of the baby is important	74	48	.00009
I would offer a service of thanksgiving to some parents who requested a service of baptism	40	68	.00001

I have doubts about the theology of infant baptism	19	43	.00003
Churches should require parents to attend a preparatory course before the baby is baptised	58	81	.00006
In emphasising the importance of the faith of parents and godparents, the faithfulness of God may be overlooked	68	42	.00001
In infant baptism, anointing with oil is important	70	19	.00000
Churches should only confirm young people if they come to church regularly	59	71	.00598
Churches should confirm young people before they drop away during adolescence	48	27	.00152
Confirming young people helps them to find their way back into the Church in later life	74	46	.00000



**Table A7.2 Statements in respect of which the difference in viewpoint of Liberal and Conservative clerics is statistically significant at <0.01**

	Agree %		Chi-square probability
	Liberal	Conservative	
Believing parents are a necessary pre-requisite for baptism	19	40	.00029
Parents who bring children to be baptised should provide evidence of their own Christian faith	15	39	.00001
The Church is right in making the requirements for baptism far more stringent	15	31	.00141
Churches should only baptise babies of regular churchgoers	5	17	.00354
I would baptise a baby if neither parent was a regular churchgoer	96	85	.00086
I would baptise a baby if neither parent was a baptised Anglican	85	64	.00003
I would accept for godparents those who are not regular churchgoers	91	77	.00151
Baptism should be regarded as generally available to all	89	74	.00136
I would baptise babies from non-Christian homes	66	47	.00183
I would baptise a baby if the parents confessed no faith but the godparents were regular communicants at my church	82	66	.00755
I would baptise a baby if the parents confessed no faith but the grandparents were regular communicants at my church	74	54	.00082
Churches should baptise all babies whose parents request it	67	44	.00026
In infant baptism, giving a lighted candle is important	85	72	.00269
In infant baptism, the blessing of the water is important	91	78	.00678
Infant baptism may lull people into a sense of false security about their position before God	36	56	.00162
There should be a common rite of baptism within covenanted churches	62	46	.00779

The baptism liturgy should involve active participation from parents and godparents	78	61	.00506
A main purpose of infant baptism is to incorporate the baby into the body of Christ	96	86	.00302
Frequent baptisms in Sunday Eucharists hinder the worship of regular churchgoers	44	61	.00292
A priest should have the right to refuse baptism on assessment of the suitability of parents and godparents	27	52	.00002
Infants who have been baptised should be welcome to receive Communion	56	34	.00038
Churchgoing seven year olds who have been baptised should be welcome to receive Communion before confirmation	63	43	.00136
Churchgoing nine year olds who have been baptised should be welcome to receive Communion before confirmation	68	44	.00009
Churchgoing eleven year olds who have been baptised should be welcome to receive Communion before confirmation	73	51	.00046
Churches should not give Communion to children until they are confirmed	17	37	.00017
Churches should not give Communion to children until they have committed themselves to the Lord Jesus	21	43	.00030
Only people who have been confirmed should be welcome to receive Communion	17	38	.00013
Only people who have been confirmed (or expressed a wish for confirmation) should be welcome to receive Communion	23	42	.00119
A main purpose of confirmation is to open the gateway to Communion	29	47	.00398
In confirmation services, the Eucharist is important	92	80	.00307



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