

37. Statistics for Mission

Contact Name and Details	Alan Piggot, Research Officer (Statistics and Mapping) piggota@methodistchurch.org.uk
Resolution	37/1. The Conference receives the Report.

Summary of Content and Impact

Subject and Aims	The report presents the results of ongoing statistical survey of Methodist membership, attendance, community and outreach activity, over an extended timeframe covering the ten year period to 2013. From this, it lays out analysis and reporting priorities for the future.
Main Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Collecting and Statistical Reporting • Methodist Church: Statistical Overview and Analysis 2003/2013 • New Data Analysis and Reporting Priorities • An emerging Research Community
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	SO 358; 644(8); 054 <i>Statistics for Mission 2008 – 2010</i> (2011 Conference Agenda, pp 643 – 684).
Consultations	<i>Statistics for Mission</i> 2013 annual returns round, with input from circuit administrators, church members, Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network (DMLN) research groups, Archbishops' Council Statistics Team; Fresh Expressions Team. Strategic Development: Methodist Council; Senior Leadership Group; Connexional Leaders' Forum
Impact	Potentially high, as informing mission and ministry perspectives

1. Introduction

1.1 "The Methodist Church of Great Britain has always been one of the most numerate of the Christian denominations in this country."¹ Regular collection of church statistics began in 1766 when membership numbers were reported. The mapping of Methodist church statistics goes back to Edwin Tindall's *Wesleyan Methodist Atlas* (1878); while the first comparison of church statistics and national census statistics was undertaken in 1910. The late twentieth century saw significant advances in the comparative analysis of Methodist statistics – for example, through the work of the Methodist Sociological Group established in 1968.

1.2 Scepticism about the use and abuse of statistics is as long established as data collecting itself. "Numerical values are insufficient where spiritual values are to be estimated", wrote the Revd Henry Carter in 1911,² aware that statistics cannot tell the whole story. Nevertheless, Methodists have generally recognised the usefulness of statistics to the Church's mission and

¹ Clive Field for *British Religion in Numbers* 25/09/10. <http://www.brin.ac.uk/news/2010/methodist-statistics-for-mission-report/>

² Henry Carter *The Church and the New Age* (London 1911), p. 14.

ministry, while acknowledging its limitations. As the last statistical report to the Conference put it, statistics enable us to “find out something about what we are, who we are, where we are, how we have changed and are changing, and, to a certain extent, what we are doing.”³ On a practical level, statistics help to contextualise and evaluate both connexional and local projects, inform strategic decisions, and map the activity and reach of the Church.

- 1.3 At the present time, there is a case for more, rather than less, engagement with church statistics. Headline figures reported by and through the media focus on a limited range of measures which feed into a generalised narrative of contraction and retreat. “It is a truth almost universally acknowledged that Christianity in Britain is in decline”, observes one commentator, before going on to add that “not all universally acknowledged truths are actually true.”⁴ For Methodists, focusing on falling membership numbers and the rising tally of church closures, simply aggregated across the Connexion, illustrates the point. In reality, the picture is far more nuanced than this: there are areas of growth as well as contraction; variation between Circuits, and even churches within the same Circuit, is significant; and ‘growth’ itself can mean different things in different places. Fuller and further information is needed to grapple with some of this detail, and reconstruct a narrative that does justice to the facts on the ground.
- 1.4 In this context, Standing Order 358(2) directs the Connexional Team to “prepare every three years a report on the annual membership returns for presentation to the Conference.” The Standing Order recognises the fundamental importance of membership to the Methodist tradition, but has been used to platform a range of additional statistical measures to build up a composite report on the Church. Attendance patterns, Community Roll numbers, baptism and confirmation figures, children’s and youth group activity and fresh expressions surveys have all featured in recent triennial reports to the Conference. As well as this, the reports have been used to inform the Conference of developments in the statistical collection process, and to set out priorities and plans for the future.
- 1.5 Building on these foundations, the present report therefore aims to:
 - update the Conference on developments in the statistical collection and reporting process since 2011;
 - provide a statistical overview and analysis of contemporary Methodism based on a range of recently collected data;
 - outline new data analysis and reporting priorities in the light of recent statistical evidence; and
 - locate these developments in the context of the emerging research community, both within Methodism and among ecumenical partners.

2. Data Collection and Statistical Reporting

- 2.1 The present system of data collection and statistical reporting is known as *Statistics for Mission* and dates back to 2002, when annual returns from each church were first collated in a single electronic database. Since then, electronic data capture has been introduced for the collection process itself, through the use of a password-protected web-based pro forma. The range of data asked for, and the level of detail required, has in recent years been reviewed and revised to strike a balance between comprehensiveness and administrative effort. One significant development was the introduction, in 2012, of the “refresh” facility for reporting

³ *Statistics for Mission 2008 – 10*, para. 2.2. <http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/stats-statsformission-confreport2011-0511.pdf>

⁴ David Goodhew *Church Growth in Britain: 1980 to the Present* (Farnham 2012), p. 3.

church-based groups and community activities: these no longer have to be entered afresh every year but are carried over from prior year entries to be updated or corrected as required.

- 2.2 That said, the amount of data asked for – and received – is considerable. Filling in a pro forma for a church with a single church-based group requires 108 separate pieces of information to be entered, checked or verified: many more if a church has multiple groups or community activities. There are still almost 5,000 Local Churches to report. This has generated, since the inception of the present system, 188,905 separate data records (entries with strings of data attached). There are now over 20.4 million individual data items in the database. These, of course, relate only to *Statistics for Mission*.
- 2.3 Return rates and response times have progressively improved. In 2008, returns were received from 85% of Local Churches; by 2010 this had risen to 96%; for the 2013 annual returns round, 99% was achieved. This was despite the window for data reporting being brought forward to close at the end of January following the close of the reporting year on 31 October. Thus nearly all returns were received within three months of the period to which they relate. This is a remarkable achievement and represents dedicated effort on the part of District Secretaries, Circuit Administrators and ministers and volunteer staff in Local Churches. They have been thanked personally and collectively by email, but it is worth reiterating appreciation of them here.
- 2.4 With such volumes of data being received so efficiently, the task now turns to making best use of it. Methodism has traditionally been very good at *collecting* data, but it is another thing to *analyse, collate and report* it. The most significant development over the course of the past triennium has been the launch of the Methodist webmap. The standard version, now downloadable in app or tablet format, serves primarily as a *Find a Church* facility. This year (2014) it will be updated to show all places where Methodists actually meet for worship rather than just a primary location for each Local Church. The advanced version of the webmap links into ten-year membership and attendance statistics for each Local church, and to a range of contextual data such as local census and deprivation data. Locations and statistics for other Methodist institutions such as schools and care homes are also shown.
- 2.5 The *Find a Church* facility attracts around 21,200 site visits a year, compared with some 2.4 million for the Methodist website. The advanced webmap (which has now been updated with 2011 census figures) attracts around 7,000 site visits, some of considerable duration. These are respectable figures for a relatively new facility, but there is obviously potential to expand usage through better promotion, and attention will be given to this during the forthcoming review of the *Statistics for Mission* website.
- 2.6 Two other areas are also being addressed to improve the data reporting process:
 - Local Ecumenical Partnerships, where there is still confusion apportioning membership in churches with single congregations; and
 - Church closures and society cessations: most of the 1% non-returns in the 2013 data collection round relate to churches which may have closed or become a class of another Local Church.Consultations are underway to resolve these issues for 2014.
- 2.7 In planning ongoing and future improvements, the *Statistics for Mission* team builds on what has now become a bedded-down system. The returns process is part of circuit life; there is two-way communication between the team and contacts at church, circuit and district level;

annual enhancements are incorporated into the data entry system; reporting is kept under review. It may rightly be said that *Statistics for Mission* has come of age.

- 2.8 During the past triennium, the ten-year mark was reached since the system first starting. This allows the opportunity for the present report to look back not just over the triennium period 2010 /2013, but also over the past decade 2003 to 2013. The advantage of this additional perspective is that it puts year-to-year variations into context and helps determine whether they are blips or part of a broader underlying trend. A more accurate picture of the overall development can thus be reported. It is also more reliable to data-cleanse (filling in gaps and correcting anomalies) over an extended rather than a limited period. Considerable effort has been put into reviewing prior year entries for completeness and reasonableness so that a ten-year numerical survey of Methodism may be reported with confidence.

3. Overview and Analysis: Period to 2013

- 3.1 Methodist 'numbers' traditionally comprise three main measures. Each relate to a different aspect of the Church and its work and it is important not to focus on a single measure to the exclusion of the others: they must be viewed in combination.

Membership

- 3.2 This is a 'people' measure, counting those who have made and sustained a formal commitment to a particular Local Church.
- 3.3 As at 31 October 2013, the membership count across the Connexion stood at 208,738. This compares with 232,734 in 2010 and 304,971 in 2003.
- 3.4 The annual reduction in membership numbers averaged 8,000 for the 2010 /2013 triennium, compared with 10,040 for the 2007/ 2010 triennium and 9,550 for the 2004/ 2007 triennium. The overall pattern follows close to a 3.7% year on year reduction in numbers over the course of the decade.

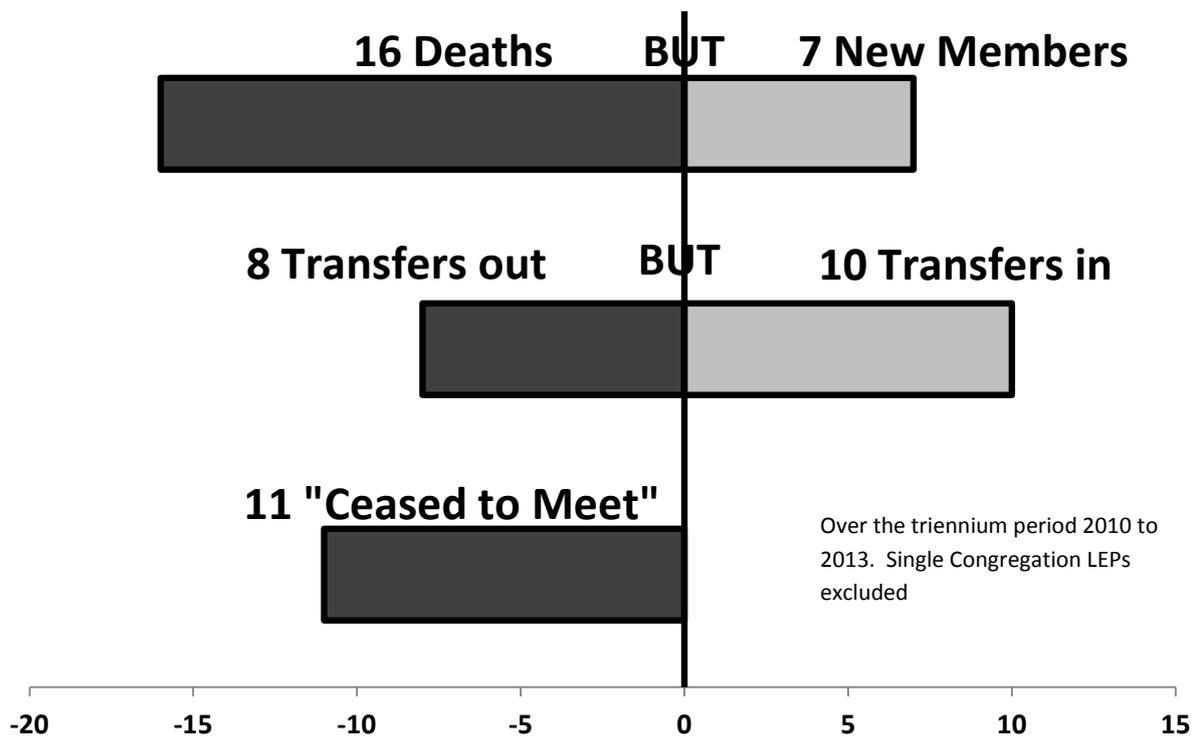
TABLE 1: Methodist Membership – Movement over the Triennium and Decade

Figures in 000s		Triennium		Decade	
		Members in 2010	233	Members in 2003	305
Add	New members received*		8		29
	Transfers in*		11		44
Less	Deaths*		(18)		(65)
	Transfers out*		(9)		(36)
	"Ceased to meet"*		(12)		(53)
			<hr/> 213		<hr/> 224
Less	Movement on LEPs		(4)		(15)
		Members in 2013	<hr/> 209	Members in 2013	<hr/> 209
			down 10.3%		down 31.6%

*Excluding Single Congregation LEPs

Figure 1 shows how this plays out in the day-to-day story of the church.

FIGURE 1: Every day, on average



(These numbers could reasonably apply to *yearly* movement in a Circuit of some 500 members, although there are, of course, no 'average' Circuits.)

- 3.4 The key dynamic is the ratio of deaths to new members, which has increased from around 2 to 1 at the beginning of the decade to around 2.5 to 1 in 2013. Confirmations and receptions into membership must rise if overall membership numbers are to be sustained. There were 2,496 recorded confirmations in 2013.
- 3.5 The "Ceased to Meet" category has been falling in recent years. In the 2004 /2007 triennium, around 6,500 names were removed from the rolls each year, relating to members who had been lost track of, whose address was unknown, or who had stopped coming to church. By 2010 /2013, this figure had fallen to around 4,000. This may indicate that fewer former members are drifting away from church, but may also mean that rigorous pruning of the rolls during that earlier period has now worked its way through, leaving cleaner and more realistic membership records.
- 3.7 The surplus of transfers in over transfers out has long been a feature of the annual returns and may relate to arrivals from overseas and/or members failing to be recorded when they move on from a Local Church.

Attendance

- 3.8 This is an 'event' measure, or to be more precise, a 'person-in-event' measure. A person who attends a Sunday service and a service in the week scores twice on a weekly attendance measure. A congregation of 20 which meets every other week scores 10 on a weekly attendance measure.

- 3.9 Across the Connexion, weekly attendance in October 2013 was around 224,500. This compares with around 244,000 in 2010 and 326,400 in 2003.
- 3.10 The annual reduction in attendance numbers averaged 6,510 for the 2010/2013 triennium, compared with 10,570 for the 2007 /2010 triennium and 13,270 for the 2004 /2007 triennium. The overall pattern follows fairly close to a 3.7% year on year reduction in numbers over the course of the decade (same figures as for membership), but with proportionately more of the decline concentrated in the two earlier triennial periods, suggesting the situation may be slightly improving.
- 3.11 Attendance at Methodist services remains a predominantly Sunday phenomenon. During the course of the 2010/13 triennium, 86% of all attendances were for Sunday services. This percentage is in fact slightly up on the figures for 2007/2010 (85%) and 2004/2007 (84%).
- 3.12 Proportions are age related:
- 89% of adult attendances are for Sunday services; compared with
 - 77% of secondary school and college age attendances (13 through 19);
 - 66% of primary school age attendances (5 through 12); and
 - 75% of pre-school age attendances (0 through 4).
- 3.13 The figures for the school age groups will be affected by attendance at school assemblies, and may arguably be over-stated by not taking into account weekday assemblies at Methodist schools. There are 81 Methodist schools in Britain – 65 in the Maintained sector⁵ and 16 independent. In September 2013, they had a pupil roll of:
- Maintained schools: 14,283
 - Independent schools: 10,214, totalling 24,497
- 3.14 These numbers represent a significant constituency, equal in size to 11.7% of Methodist membership (some older pupils will indeed be Methodist members), and generating attendances which supplement services taking place at, or from locally-based Methodist churches.

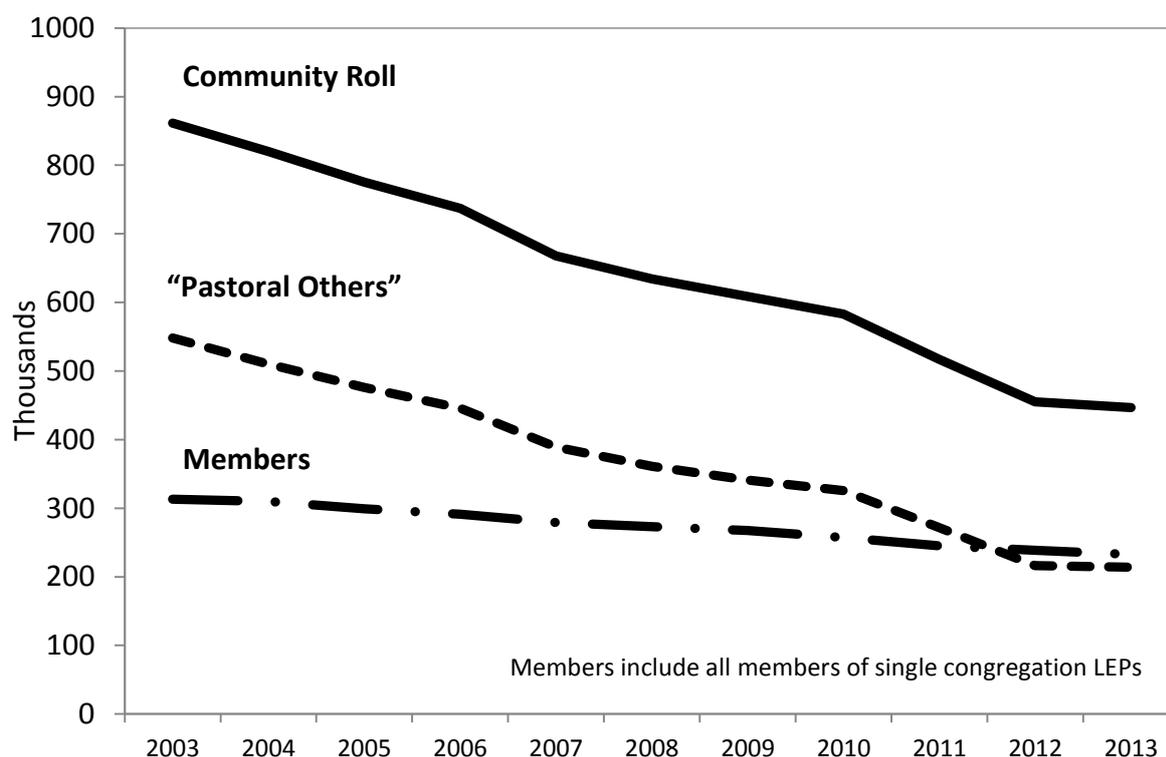
Community Roll

- 3.15 This is a 'people' measure, comprising named individuals "who are within the pastoral care of the Local Church" (SO 054(7)). This obviously includes members, but also those who are not members yet have meaningful links with the church. It has sometimes been used as a proxy measure of the church's wider reach.
- 3.16 As at 31 October 2013, numbers recorded on churches' Community Rolls totalled 446,600. This compares with 583,000 in 2010 and 861,600 in 2003.
- 3.17 If used as a measure of the church's wider reach, the figures indicate that in 2013 Methodism involved 0.7% of the population of Great Britain compared with around 1.0% in 2010 and 1.5% in 2003.⁶ The population of Great Britain is estimated to have risen 7.5% in the decade to 2013.

⁵ Of the 65 Maintained schools 23 are joint Methodist/Church of England primary schools.

⁶ Using ONS mid-year population estimates for 2003 and 2010 and population projections for 2013. Population of Great Britain mid-2003: 57,932,000; mid-2013: 62,255,000

FIGURE 2: Total Community Roll numbers 2003 to 2013



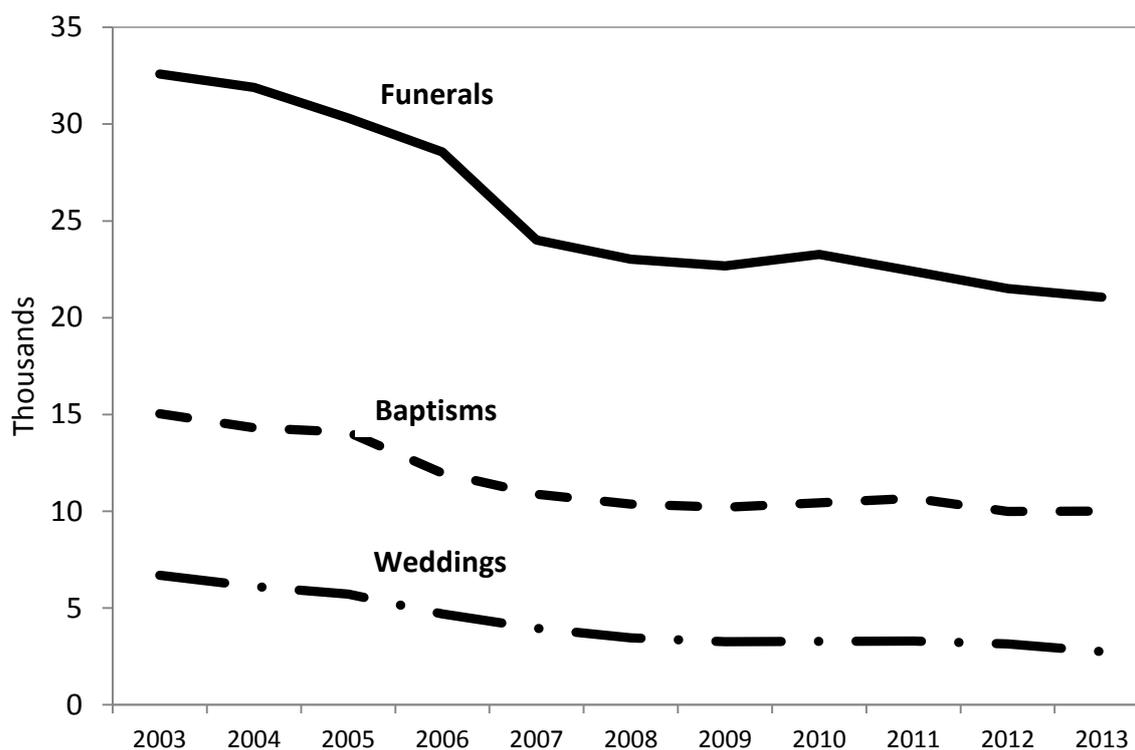
3.18 Figure 2 accounts for the 48% contraction in the Community Roll over the course of the decade and shows that, while some of it relates to the 32% drop in membership, the main cause has been the 60% drop in those who are non-members – the so-called 'pastoral others'.

3.19 Unfortunately, without further research into how Community Rolls are compiled, it is by no means clear who these people actually are. Their links with the Local Church may range from strong (eg young children of committed members) to purely nominal (eg former members who have "ceased to meet"). There is also a wide variation in the ratio of members to 'pastoral others' among individual churches. In 2013, 24% of churches failed to report any 'pastoral others'; 39% had fewer 'pastoral others' than members; 21% had up to twice as many 'pastoral others' than members; 13% had between two to five as many 'pastoral others' than members; and 3% had between five and as many as 27 times as many 'pastoral others' than members.

3.20 If Community Roll figures are compared with movements in the numbers of baptisms, weddings and funerals reported over the course of the decade (Figure 3), we find a larger percentage drop in the annual number of weddings (58.9%) but smaller percentage drops for baptisms (33.5%) and funerals (35.4%). Most of these drops occurred in the period 2003 to 2007. In the year to 31 October 2013, there were 2,751 Methodist weddings⁷, 10,043 baptisms and 21,057 funerals.

⁷ This figure was significantly down on the figures for 2010 (3,271), 2011 (3,302) and 2012 (3,149). It remains to be seen whether it is a 'one-off'.

FIGURE 3: Weddings, Baptism and Funerals 2003 to 2013



3.21 It is therefore difficult to interpret what these downward trends indicate. Rather than suggesting Methodism to be losing touch with wider society, or failing to reach young children, the fall-off in Community Roll numbers could mean that churches are experiencing difficulty in maintaining their rolls, or have purged them of extraneous names. It should also be borne in mind that, however uncertain their present usage, the Community Rolls' original purpose was pastoral rather than statistical.

New Methodist Statistics

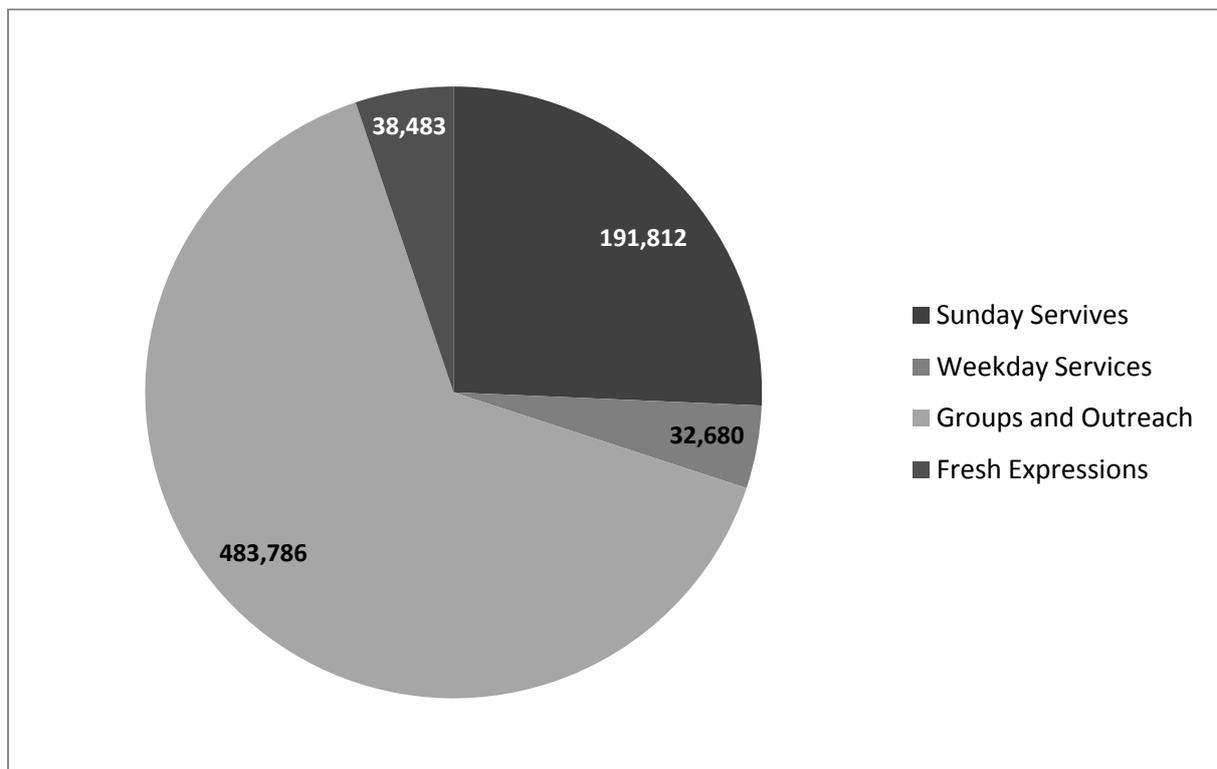
3.22 *Statistics for Mission* has always included information on church groups and community activities, but it was only in 2011 that a comprehensive listing of groups and activities began to be compiled. This followed pioneering work piloted by eight Districts to achieve the right balance between system friendliness and level of detail⁸.

3.23 The numbers of groups being reported has risen year on year, from 19,517 in 2011 to 24,258 in 2013. This may reflect the reporting system bedding down rather than, or as well as, a real increase in group activity. Most groups record the number of volunteers who regularly help to run and support them. 52% of these groups are served by three or fewer volunteers, but 12% have ten or more. A community centre or church cafe may have a rota of as many as 80 volunteers organised around separate activities or shifts.

⁸ Manchester & Stockport; Bedfordshire, Essex & Hertfordshire; Bolton & Rochdale; Cornwall; Cumbria; Lancashire; Liverpool; Sheffield.

- 3.24 Instead of being used simply to provide incidental illustrations of the variety of Methodist life, this kind of detailed information ought properly to be brought to account. Combining it with 'traditional' measures, which tend to focus on public worship and church congregations, would help build up a more rounded picture of Methodism – one which does not privilege 'congregation' against 'small group' and which recognises how both have contributed, and continue to contribute, to the ongoing life of the church. As the Secretary of the Conference has previously observed, "in terms of enabling better discipleship the sum of 'congregation and cell' is greater than the parts", and "belonging to both is best, as early Methodists knew."⁹
- 3.25 One way to combine statistical information on church groups with more traditional standardised data is by adopting a 'standardised weekly attendance' measure. On the *Statistics for Mission* returns form, each individual group reports how regularly it meets and how many (on average) attend. This works for established prayer and fellowship meetings as it does for fresh expressions. A group of 10 meeting twice a week scores 20 on a weekly attendance measure; 5 if it meets every other week. As congregational attendances are reported in a similar way, a top-level view can be formed of how Methodist attendances are distributed among the main category types (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4: Standardised Weekly Attendances in year to 31 October 2013



- 3.26 These figures could be used to suggest that only a quarter of Methodism is about Sunday services, and that the great majority of the other three quarters is about groups and outreach activities. Care will be needed, as these figures are developed over the next few years, to ensure that group numbers are not over-reported; that variations in meeting-by-meeting

⁹ Martyn Atkins *Discipleship... and the People called Methodists* (Methodist Publishing House 2010), p. 28. Atkins goes on to observe that "if a choice really had to be made between the two, the patterns of early Methodism would suggest that 'small group' precedes 'congregation' in terms of effective disciple-making."

attendances are taken into account; and that some consideration is given to the relative amounts of time and commitment involved in individual attendances.

Analysis by Activity

3.27 Table 2 shows how Methodist activity may be broken down, using the standardised weekly attendance measure. “Activity” here refers to purposeful meeting in congregations or groups, so will not include the considerable amount of work carried out through one-on-one visits and pastoral encounters: thought will need to be given to how to incorporate this in an overall survey of Methodist presence and reach. There is also discussion to be had on how much of this reported activity may be properly regarded as ‘church’: does counting the clientele of a church café, for instance, score towards numbers of attendances at church-sponsored activities? The *Statistics for Mission* team is engaging with these issues jointly with the Chaplaincy Development team and the Fresh Expressions Connexional Missioner, who is part of the ecumenically focused Fresh Expressions team.

TABLE 2: Weekly Attendances reported in the year to 31 October 2013

Activity	Weekly Attendances (standardised)	Number of Societies/ Groups	Average Weekly Attendances per Group	Average Years running	Percentage of Groups	
					Ordained Leadership	Meeting in Church Premises
Sunday Services	191,812	4,486	43			
Café & Luncheon Groups	85,294	1,993	43	10	18%	90%
Prayer & Fellowship	71,061	7,278	10	17	20%	68%
Support Groups	66,084	1,303	51	7	35%	52%
Children & Youth	59,487	3,158	19	16	16%	87%
Parent & Toddler	44,483	1,672	27	13	29%	94%
Uniformed Organisations	41,781	1,938	22	31	4%	96%
Shops & Stalls	36,409	150	243	11	8%	64%
Weekday Services	32,680	1,400	23			
Arts & Music	17,886	1,244	14	11	8%	90%
Discipleship & Learning	10,587	1,437	7	10	41%	51%
Wellbeing & Sport	10,068	540	19	8	4%	80%
Life Skills	4,253	127	33	5	13%	76%
Other unclassified	74,876	3,418	22	12	26%	70%
Total	746,761					

3.28 The table gives an idea of how the three quarters of a million weekly Methodist attendances are distributed and effectively serves as a ‘map’ of contemporary Methodism. The variety of Methodist activity may be gauged by comparing, say, discipleship and learning groups with average weekly attendances of around seven with shops, stalls and charity events which may attract attendances in their hundreds. It also suggests there are both ‘newer’ (eg life skills courses, covering areas such as parenting and debt management, which have been running for an average of five years) and more ‘established’ (eg uniformed organisations such as cubs and brownies, running on average for over thirty years) types of Methodist or Methodist-sponsored activity. It shows that, outside of church services, lay people lead in running groups or activities (although many discipleship and learning courses and support groups – especially those in schools and care homes – are run by deacons and presbyters). And it indicates that

the great majority of all types of Methodist or Methodist sponsored activity still take place in churches or church premises.

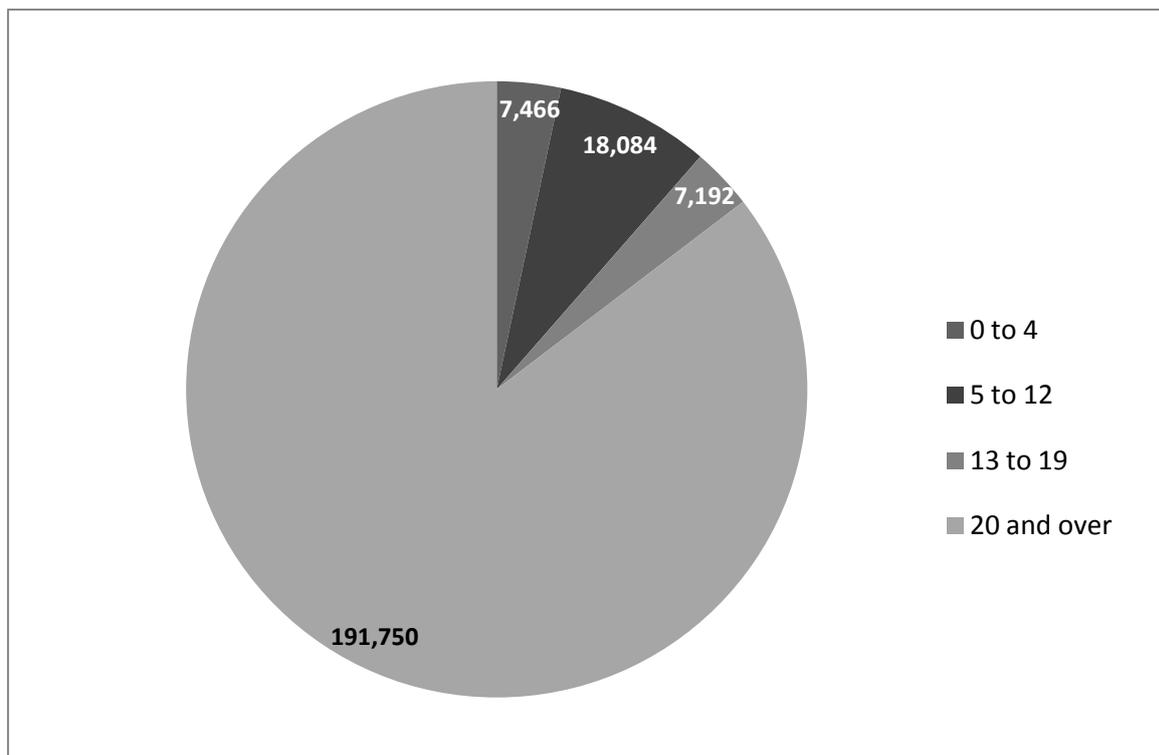
Analysis by Age

3.29 At church services, children's and adults' attendances are recorded separately and children's attendance broken down into 0 to 4 year olds; 5 to 12 year olds and 13 to 19 year olds. Adult attendances make up 85% of the total: this percentage has been rising steadily since 2003, when it was 76%.

3.30 Children's attendances have fallen considerably – from 77,900 in 2003 to 32,700 in 2013, a reduction of around 58%. This equates to an eight percent year-on-year fall over the course of the decade. The reduction over the course of the 2010/ 2013 triennium, around 13,100, accounts for just under three tenths of the overall loss.

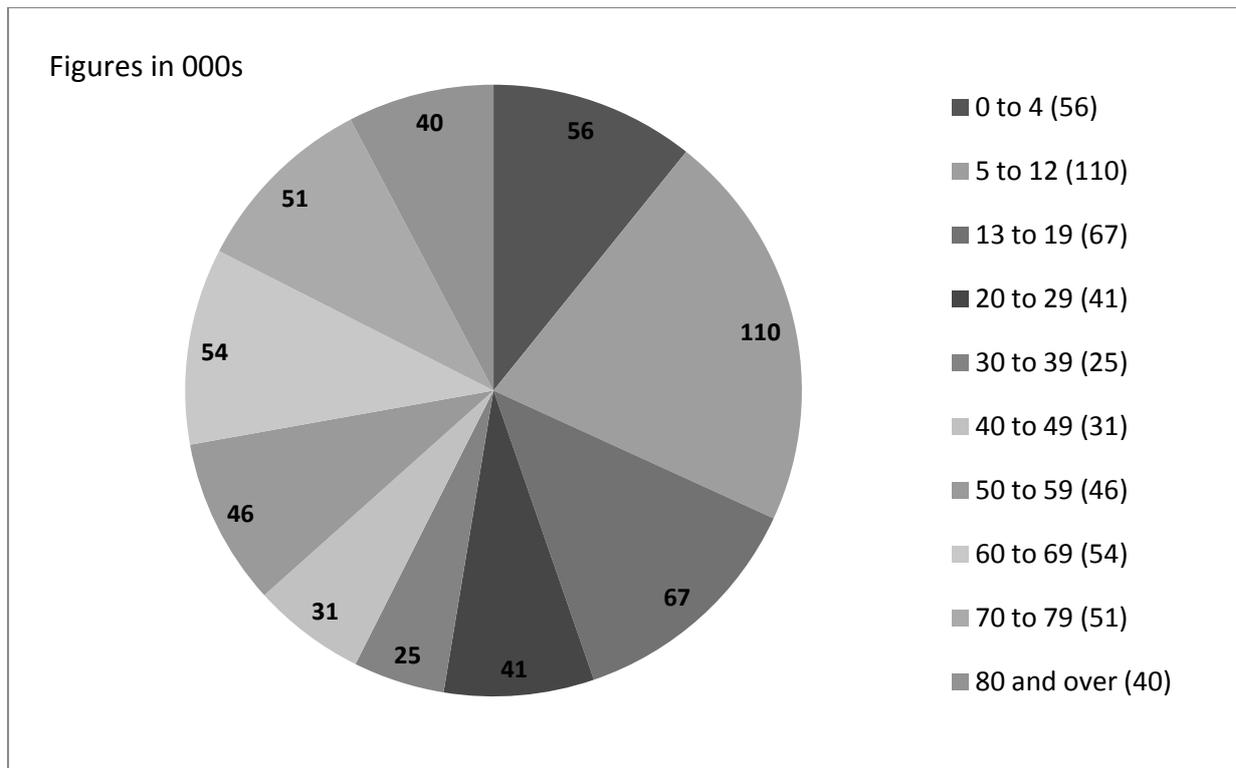
Figure 5 shows the breakdown for 2013.

FIGURE 5: Average Weekly Attendances at Church Services, October 2013



3.31 For group and outreach activities, the age breakdown may be very different. It is not possible to report exact numbers, but broad-brush estimates may be calculated by using the attendee age-bandings noted for each individual group and activity (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6: Weekly Attendances at Groups and Outreach Activities, by Age Band (year to 31 October 2013)



3.32 Children and youth here account for around 45% of all attendances – three times the proportion reported for church services. Over 60s account for 28% of all attendances. That leaves slightly over a quarter of attendances accounted for by people of working age.

Analysis by Church

3.33 The Methodist Church is organised into societies, or Local Churches, of which there were 4,812 to report as at 31 October 2013. This compares with 5,112 in 2010¹⁰ and 6,286 in 2003. Work is continuing to establish more accurately when individual societies closed or merged, but there is some evidence to suggest that the rate of closures – which averages around 150 a year over the course of the decade – may have slowed over the past triennium, with fewer than a hundred for the years ending in 2012 and 2013.

3.34 Across the Connexion there are a large number of small churches and a small number of large churches. Table 3 uses Average Weekly Attendance as a measure of the “size” of a church and divides total attendance into five equal fifths – the top fifth accounted for by the largest churches and the bottom fifth by the smallest. 5% of churches by number – the largest churches – account for 20% of total attendance (10% of total attendance is accounted for by 83 churches (1.7% of the total number) alone). On the other hand, there are over 2,600 churches in the bottom fifth with attendances of 36 or under. Of this latter group, there are 954 churches with attendances of 21 or over, 964 with attendances of between 11 and 20 and 728 with attendances of ten or less.

¹⁰ This figures excludes 50 churches with no reported membership as at 31 October 2010.

TABLE 3: Local Churches grouped by Average Weekly Attendance, 2013

				Smallest	Average	Largest
Top Fifth	222 churches	(5% of total)	“Programme” Size ¹¹	142	202	616
Second Fifth	397 churches	(8% of total)	“Pastoral” Size	92	113	142
Third Fifth	598 churches	(12% of total)	“Larger Family” Size	62	75	92
Fourth Fifth	949 churches	(20% of total)	“Smaller Family” Size	36	47	62
Fifth Fifth	2,646 churches	(55% of total)	“Fellowship” Size	0 ¹²	17	36

3.35 The larger the church, the more likely it is to have grown numerically over the course of the last three years. The converse is also true, with smallest churches being the least likely to have grown numerically. In the period 2010 to 2013:

- 68% of “Programme” size churches grew; 32% saw a reduction in attendance numbers;
- 52% of “Pastoral” size churches grew; 48% saw a reduction in attendance numbers;
- 51% of “Larger Family” size churches grew; 49% saw a reduction in attendance numbers;
- 47% of “Smaller Family” size churches grew; 53% saw a reduction in attendance numbers;
- 35% of “Fellowship” size churches grew; 65% saw a reduction in attendance numbers.

3.36 Across the Connexion as a whole, 2,037 out of 4,812 churches (42%) had seen increases in weekly attendances, compared with 2,775 (58%) where numbers had declined.

Analysis by Church Type

3.37 The Methodist Church usefully classifies Local Churches into six generic types, characterised by the neighbourhood or community they serve (Table 4).

TABLE 4: Local Churches grouped by characteristic type, 2013

			Weekly Attendances		Average per church
“City Centre”	109 churches	(2% of total)	12,309	(5% of total)	113
“Inner City”	274 churches	(6% of total)	14,680	(6% of total)	54
“Council Estate”	236 churches	(5% of total)	10,200	(5% of total)	43
“Suburban”	1,135 churches	(24% of total)	76,805	(34% of total)	68
“Small Town”	990 churches	(20% of total)	64,069	(29% of total)	65
“Village Rural”	2,068 churches	(43% of total)	46,429	(21% of total)	22

¹¹ This and the other tags used here are loosely based on categories devised Arlin Rothauge to examine congregational development. See the discussion by Robert A. Gallagher *Parish Size: Categories, Dynamics and Issues*, 2002, 2006

¹² Some congregations meet seasonally, so report no October attendance.

3.38 The three 'big' categories are "Suburban", "Small Town" and "Village Rural". 84% of Methodist weekly attendances are at one of those three types of church. In terms of attendance figures, the characteristic size of "Suburban" and "Small Town" churches is that of a "Larger Family" congregation. "Inner City" and "Council Estate" churches tend to the "Smaller Family" size, while "City Centre" churches may be "Pastoral" size or larger.¹³ "Village Rural" churches are characteristically "Fellowship" size, and 602 out of 2,068 have reported weekly attendances of 10 or under.

3.39 All the category types have seen total attendance numbers reduce over the course of the last three years, but while "Council Estate" attendance has seen a 16% reduction, numbers have fallen by only 4% in "Small Town" churches. Over the course of the decade, however, it is in "City Centre" churches where attendance has fallen the least, as shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5: Change in Average Weekly Attendance 2003 to 2013, by Church Type

	Overall Percentage Change	Equivalent Year-on-Year Percentage Change
"City Centre"	-21.4%	-2.4%
"Inner City"	-37.8%	-4.6%
"Council Estate"	-38.4%	-4.7%
"Suburban"	-32.1%	-3.8%
"Small Town"	-27.8%	-3.2%
"Village Rural"	-32.5%	-3.9%

Analysis by District

3.40 There are currently 31 Districts covering Great Britain and the Islands. While varying greatly in size and population, and not corresponding with regional administrative boundaries, the Districts allow for a degree of analysis by area, complementing the analyses made by size and type of Local Church.

3.41 Summary details are shown at Appendix 1, which gives a District-by-District breakdown of (a) membership and Community Roll numbers; (b) weekly attendances at church services; (c) standardised weekly attendances for groups and outreach activities; and (d) numbers of baptisms, weddings and funerals. Where the analysis reports the position for a single year (2013), some caution should be applied: the year may not be typical, or there may be figures which have slipped over from the previous year, or need to be re-assigned to the next year.

3.42 The figures give an indication of the variety of Methodist life and of the contrasting stories of Methodism within the Connexion as a whole. By way of illustration, the ratio of deaths to new members in one District may be over four times what it is in another: there is similar variation in the ratio of Methodist full members to "pastoral others". In terms of groups and activities, there are some Districts where outreach and fellowship would appear to be focused in

¹³ 27 of the 222 reported "Programme" size churches, with weekly attendances of 142 or above, are found in City Centres, although the majority are in fact Suburban (88) or Small Town (80).

particular areas. There are six Districts where over 25% of standardised weekly attendance is accounted for either by cafés or lunch clubs, or by charity shops and stalls. In another District, support groups for schools, asylum seekers, refugees, homeless people and other people in need account for over a quarter of attendances.

- 3.43 The figures for weekly attendances at church services also present a contrasting picture. There are four Districts where attendance has reportedly grown from 2010 to 2013. There are a further fifteen which, while reporting a fall in attendance, show that the rate of fall slowed down during the course of the triennium compared with the decade as a whole, five where it appeared to accelerate, and seven where it stayed roughly the same.
- 3.44 These variations will conceal even more significant differences between Circuits and individual churches, even within the same District.

4. New Data Analysis and Reporting Priorities

- 4.1 Building on the baseline collection and reporting methods now established, it is important to take these forward so that they become – as the words suggest that they should be – truly *Statistics for Mission*. That is: that they help the Methodist Church to understand the effectiveness of its ministry; feed into connexional programmes, projects, decisions and policy recommendations; and lend context to the work involved in evangelism and nurturing disciples.
- 4.2 A fundamental part of how to do this lies in getting the statistics to talk to each other, just as Methodists effectively talk to each other in churches, Circuits, and across the Connexion. New information is thereby generated; new perspectives gleaned; questions and challenges raised; and local experience put into context. The process helps determine whether insights remain at the level of anecdote or can be supported by evidence.

Within *Statistics for Mission*

- 4.3 From the data already collected through the *Statistics for Mission* process, there are opportunities for this to take place. For example: by exploring the relationship between attendance figures at Methodist services and numbers of Methodist members. At an aggregate level, this relationship appears close. Across the Connexion as a whole, weekly attendance and membership numbers are of a broadly similar order, are distributed in similar patterns, and move in the same direction. This could suggest that – perhaps more than any other mainstream denomination – Methodism is about members-who-attend on the one hand, and attending to its members on the other.¹⁴
- 4.4 Closer analysis suggests, however, that at local level the relationship may not be entirely straightforward. In terms of movement, while a majority of Local Churches report membership and attendance moving in the same direction – either up or down – there are a significant number where either attendance is growing while membership is falling, or vice versa. Table 6 shows the position for the triennial period 2010 to 2013.

¹⁴ In theory, of course, members and attenders could be entirely different sets of people. Statistically, however, the correlation between these populations is high, even at local level. Plotting October membership against October attendance for each Local Church for the triennial period 2010 to 2013 gives an R-squared value of 0.676, rising to 0.792 if attendance is confined to Sunday.

TABLE 6: Local Churches: Movements in Membership Numbers and Average Weekly Attendance 2010 to 2013

Attendance Up Membership Down 1,227 Churches 29% of total*	Attendance Up Membership Up 593 churches 14% of total*
Attendance Down Membership Down 1,985 Churches 47% of total*	Attendance Down Membership Up 448 churches 10% of total*

Out of 4,253 Local Churches, excluding those closing in the period 2010 to 2013 or where membership figures were unchanged

4.5 The point of this analysis is not to brand churches into categories but to stimulate questions locally as to why a particular church lies in the category which it does. For churches with falling membership but rising attendance, is it that people are coming from outside – perhaps for short periods or on an occasional basis – but not committing themselves to formal membership? For churches with rising membership but falling attendance, is it that existing members are not coming to church as regularly as they used to? Following through these questions stimulates engagement with churches’ mission and ministry activity at the local level, and encourages experiences to be shared and priorities to be reviewed within and between Circuits. It also goes to the heart of emerging connexional research on the challenging issue of ‘church growth’, which will be informed by, as well as bring together, experiences locally.

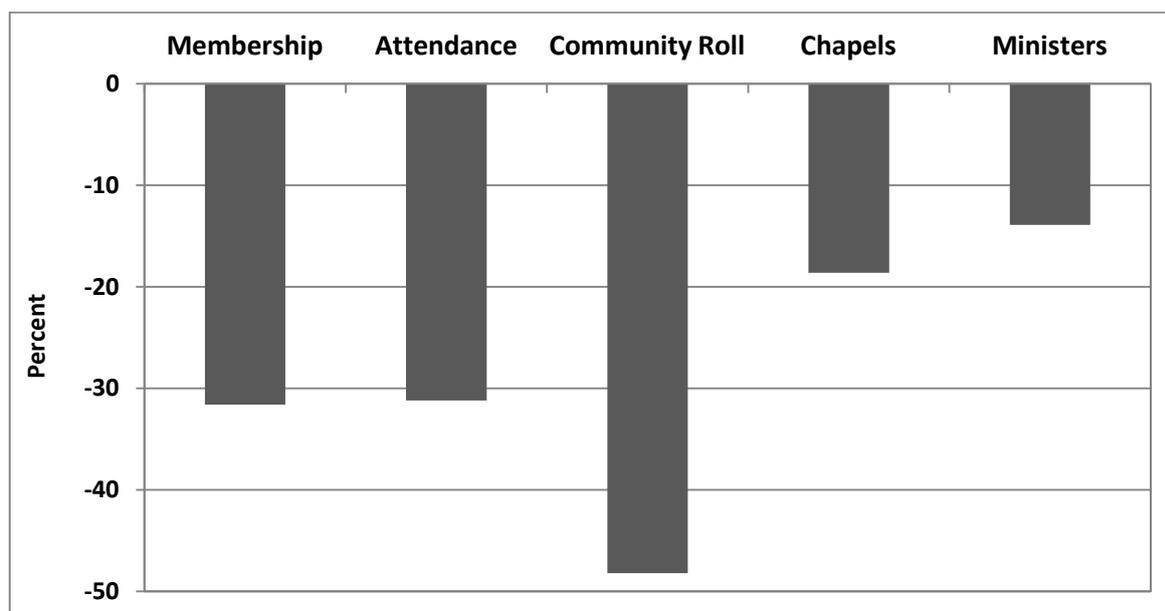
More widely within the Connexion

4.6 Connections can also be made between data collected through the *Statistics for Mission* process and data held elsewhere by the Connexional Team. Over the course of the past few years, the Team has been looking to consolidate its data holdings by means of a relational database (“The Connexional Database”) which can potentially bring together ‘traditional’ church statistics with a range of other measures not previously reported in this context. Information on the number, status and stationing of presbyters and deacons, and on local preachers and worship leaders (“Minister Statistics”), is the most obvious data category which could usefully expand and supplement what is known about congregations, church groups and membership. The Connexional Database also holds extensive information on church property, including the status and location of churches. Potentially it could be linked to records of data from churches’ financial returns.

4.7 Figure 7 shows how high level data on a range of different measures may be brought together to give additional perspective to Methodism’s story over the past ten years. The movements in membership numbers and attendances at church services could suggest a ‘headline’ decline

in the order of 30% over the course of the decade: this percentage is exceeded by the even greater decline in Community Roll numbers, as previously discussed, but the reduction in church buildings (19%) and in minister numbers (14%) is proportionately much smaller than this. Interpreting and explaining these differences stimulates additional discussion and engagement with mission and ministry activity, such as has taken place around the recent report discussed by the Council *The Releasing of Buildings for God's Mission* (MC/14/35).

FIGURE 7: Movements over the Decade to 31 October 2013



“Chapels” here refer to church buildings where public services have not been discontinued: 5,071 in 2013 of 6,229 in 2003; “Ministers” to those with status and in Full Connexion: 1,815 in 2013 of 2,108 in 2003.

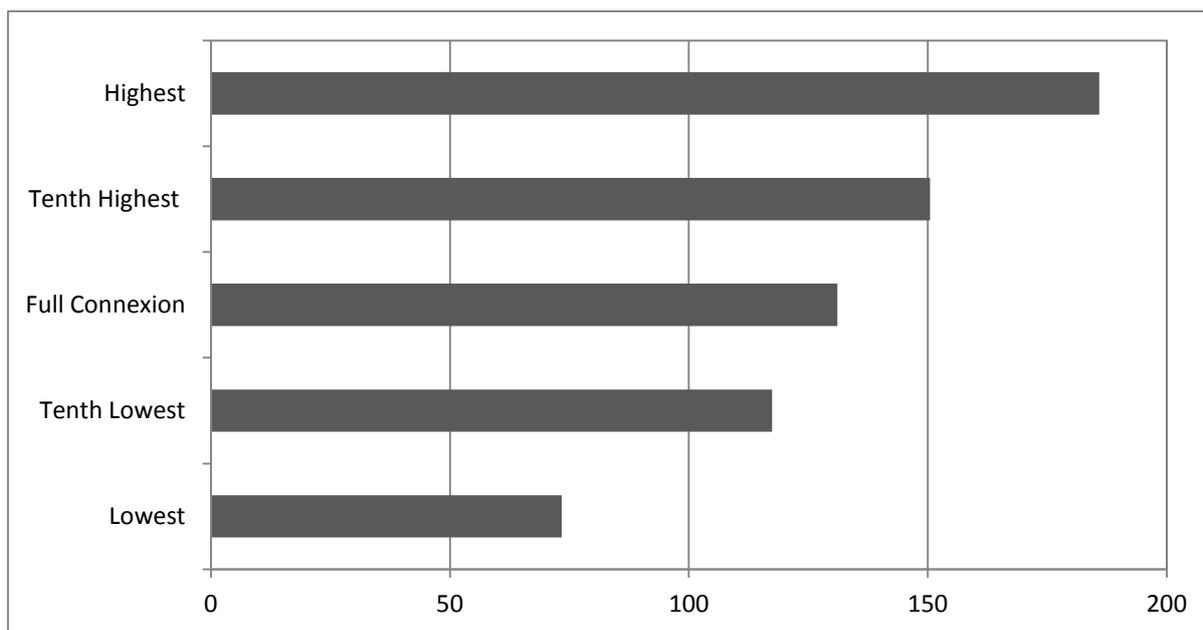
4.8 Similar practical use could be made from comparing attendance and membership numbers with numbers of ministers in each District or Circuit. As Figure 8 indicates, the attendance-to-minister ratio varies considerably from District to District, being over twice as high in one District (186) than in another (73). These ratios will be affected by distances from church, size of congregation, patterns of attendance, workload and deployment criteria – all of which are factors for consideration by the Stationing Committee and District Synods.

Relating to wider Society

4.9 The next step will be to combine Methodist statistics with the expanding range of publicly available information on demographics and social trends. Downloadable data sources – many of them from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) – relate to measures such as:

- age; gender; ethnicity; marital status;
- religion; language; country of origin;
- employment status; qualifications; occupation; hours worked;
- household type; household tenure;
- population turnover; length of residence;
- health; disability; incapacity;
- deprivation.

FIGURE 8: Weekly Attendance per Active Minister – Analysis by District (October 2013)



- 4.10 Each of these datasets is relevant to evangelism and pastoral care. “Hours worked”, for example, helps to quantify and locate the difficult-to-reach work-orientated constituency which is arguably under-represented in contemporary Methodism and yet needful of support and involvement. “Population turnover” gives an insight into fast-moving or “escalator” communities whose outlook and habits may present a challenge for institutional religious commitment.
- 4.11 Additionally, there is a pressing need to resolve how far Methodist demographics are (as often reported) out of kilter with both the national and local environments. In 2011, a one-off survey of Methodist members suggested that 7% were aged between 20 and 40; 24% between 41 and 65; 51% between 66 and 80; and 18% 81 or over. Across Great Britain, the split between these age-groups was 37%; 42%; 15% and 6% respectively, while the male: female ratio in these age groups is 49% to 51%, for Methodist members it was reportedly 31% to 69%.
- 4.12 Consideration is currently being given to how Methodists’ age, gender and ethnicity might be monitored on a periodic basis, say every five years – not just for membership but also for attendance at church services and outreach activities.

5. An emerging Research Community

- 5.1 It is not intended that this and other research be concentrated in any one part of the Methodist Connexion. Rather, statistics takes its place as contributing to the wider research community now being formed as part of the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network. It is a resource for, and to an extent dependent upon, the work of the Learning Network Regions established in 2013, within which there is a considerable amount of expertise in collecting and analysing data and progressing research. A coordinating function is provided by the newly appointed Director of Scholarship, Research and Innovation, whose role includes “working with Research and Statistics colleagues in the Connexional Team to help shape their strategic priorities and ensure complete coordination of activities.”

5.2 Within this framework, the *Statistics for Mission* Team aims to:

- continue to maintain and develop a connexional level 'map' of the Methodist Church, as a strategic resource for the Connexion as a whole and to provide context for local initiatives and policy decisions;
- disseminate the data holdings, collected primarily through the annual returns process, as a readily accessible research resource for Local Churches, Circuits, Districts and Learning Network Regions, online and via the Methodist webmap. Work is in hand to upload cleaned annual returns figures for the period 2002 /2013 onto the Methodist website;
- contribute statistical or mapping perspective to projects and research initiatives at both connexional, regional and local level: for instance in collating Methodist data with ONS *Neighbourhood Statistics* relating to particular areas or locations;
- involve the Methodist Church in the expanding ecumenical statistical community, building on close collaboration with the Church of England's Research and Statistics Department in analysing and reporting *Statistics for Mission* data.

5.3 The overarching aim is a Methodist statistics geared to serve the Church, linked to a Methodist geography (and, potentially, to a revived Methodist sociology) that reflects the facts on the ground. The connexional nature of Methodism lends itself to the achievement of these aims in what is necessarily a collaborative process linking up older and newer elements of Methodism, as well as the whole range of people collecting, reporting, researching, analysing, using and, of course, *generating* Methodist data.

*****RESOLUTION**

37/1. The Conference received the Report.

Appendix 1: District Summary Tables

A. Membership and Community Roll

District	As at 31/10/13	Year to 31/10/13		<i>Deaths per</i>	As at 31/10/13	<i>Pastoral Others</i>
	Members	New Members	Deaths	<i>New Member</i>	Pastoral Others	<i>per Member</i>
1 Synod Cymru	1,379	12	33	2.8	317	0.2
2 Wales Synod	7,401	83	263	3.2	7,294	1.0
5 Birmingham	8,478	104	234	2.3	10,053	1.2
6 Bolton and Rochdale	5,311	65	154	2.4	6,424	1.2
7 Bristol	7,711	69	239	3.5	7,348	1.0
9 Cumbria	3,424	18	111	6.2	3,279	1.0
10 Channel Isles	1,211	11	26	2.4	1,746	1.4
11 Chester & Stoke-on-Trent	7,847	94	215	2.3	7,712	1.0
12 Cornwall	6,192	93	209	2.2	4,652	0.8
13 Darlington	5,760	31	205	6.6	6,377	1.1
14 East Anglia	6,921	103	225	2.2	6,907	1.0
15 Isle of Man	969	23	34	1.5	735	0.8
16 Leeds	6,328	78	179	2.3	8,430	1.3
17 Lincoln & Grimsby	5,249	61	184	3.0	5,184	1.0
18 Liverpool	5,343	49	186	3.8	5,570	1.0
19 Manchester & Stockport	7,986	62	253	4.1	9,945	1.2
20 Newcastle upon Tyne	7,805	72	257	3.6	6,958	0.9
21 Lancashire	7,370	76	189	2.5	6,318	0.9
22 Nottingham & Derby	8,781	133	256	1.9	12,980	1.5
23 Northampton	10,538	142	312	2.2	9,115	0.9
24 Plymouth & Exeter	7,996	99	196	2.0	6,914	0.9
25 Sheffield	7,115	86	227	2.6	8,901	1.3
26 Southampton	8,770	99	273	2.8	10,087	1.2
27 West Yorkshire	6,339	51	213	4.2	5,191	0.8

28	Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury	8,463	74	284	3.8	7,337	0.9
29	York & Hull	8,512	76	265	3.5	9,518	1.1
31	Scotland	2,208	*	83		1,804	0.8
32	Shetland	217	*	*		259	1.2
	Bedfordshire, Essex &						
34	Hertfordshire	8,095	87	256	2.9	10,635	1.3
35	London	18,453	435	334	0.8	13,705	0.7
36	South East	10,566	101	278	2.8	12,199	1.2
	Connexion	208,738	2,496	6,181	2.5	213,894	1.0

* Low numbers not reported for confidentiality reasons

B. Average Weekly Attendance 2013 (Church Services)

District	Weekly Attendance	Year-on-year change		Breakdown by Age			Percentage	
		2010 to 13	2003 to 13	20 and over	13 to 19	5 to 12	0 to 4	20 and over
1 Synod Cymru	830	-1.6%	-5.8%	760	10	40	20	92%
2 Wales Synod	7,400	-4.8%	-4.7%	6,490	170	500	230	88%
5 Birmingham	8,740	-0.4%	-3.6%	7,440	280	760	250	85%
6 Bolton and Rochdale	5,370	-5.0%	-2.9%	4,320	170	580	290	80%
7 Bristol	9,750	-3.4%	-4.3%	8,320	270	840	320	85%
9 Cumbria	3,390	-4.6%	-3.3%	3,020	90	210	70	89%
10 Channel Isles	1,260	-2.8%	-5.0%	1,010	50	140	60	80%
11 Chester & Stoke-on-Trent	8,490	-1.1%	-3.6%	7,360	270	580	290	87%
12 Cornwall	6,810	0.1%	-2.9%	6,110	150	410	140	90%
13 Darlington	5,650	-2.8%	-4.4%	4,930	110	450	160	87%
14 East Anglia	8,520	-1.7%	-3.5%	7,610	240	470	200	89%
15 Isle of Man	1,120	2.3%	-0.1%	930	50	100	50	83%
16 Leeds	6,160	-2.2%	-3.8%	5,160	180	620	210	84%
17 Lincoln & Grimsby	5,370	-1.9%	-4.7%	4,880	100	300	100	91%
18 Liverpool	6,220	3.4%	-3.8%	4,890	190	850	290	79%
19 Manchester & Stockport	7,310	-5.2%	-4.5%	6,380	170	520	240	87%
20 Newcastle upon Tyne	8,810	-2.5%	-2.8%	7,470	280	740	310	85%
21 Lancashire	7,390	-3.5%	-3.6%	5,990	270	840	290	81%
22 Nottingham & Derby	9,780	-1.1%	-3.5%	8,290	290	860	340	85%
23 Northampton	11,750	-3.6%	-3.4%	10,300	330	740	380	88%
24 Plymouth & Exeter	8,940	-2.0%	-2.9%	7,870	350	450	270	88%
25 Sheffield	8,530	-5.9%	-4.2%	7,190	270	710	360	84%
26 Southampton	10,580	-2.6%	-3.5%	9,320	280	650	330	88%
27 West Yorkshire	6,400	-4.4%	-4.3%	5,470	130	480	320	85%
28 Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury	9,840	-3.4%	-3.8%	8,490	290	770	290	86%
29 York & Hull	9,370	0.0%	-3.7%	7,920	310	960	180	85%

31	Scotland	1,760	-10.3%	-5.2%	1,600	40	80	40	91%
32	Shetland	290	3.1%	-2.1%	220	10	60	10	76%
	Bedfordshire, Essex &								
34	Hertfordshire	10,150	-0.8%	-3.5%	8,140	640	1,010	370	80%
35	London	16,640	-3.8%	-3.2%	13,690	870	1,440	650	82%
36	South East	11,850	-4.4%	-3.5%	10,210	340	910	400	86%
	Connexion	224,490	-2.7%	-3.7%	191,750	7,190	18,080	7,470	85%

Note: Age-breakdown figures in some rows may not sum to total because of rounding

C. Standardised Weekly Attendances 2013 (Groups and Outreach Activities)

		Prayer & Fellowship	Discipleship & Learning	Life Skills	Support Groups	Parent & Toddler	Children & Youth	Uniformed Organisations	Wellbeing & Sport	Arts & Music	Cafe & Luncheon Groups	Shops & Stalls	Other unclassified	Total
1	Synod Cymru	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	10	20
2	Wales Synod	2,190	390	140	1,860	1,160	1,450	900	120	580	6,570	70	2,090	17,510
5	Birmingham	2,640	440	20	2,600	2,160	2,030	2,760	590	760	2,090	110	5,920	22,120
6	Bolton and Rochdale	2,400	250	80	6,840	1,090	2,230	1,450	730	970	2,390	7,770	950	27,160
7	Bristol	3,190	860	100	2,380	1,960	4,540	980	140	370	8,000	460	3,500	26,480
9	Cumbria	1,030	90	100	220	680	900	550	110	240	380	40	750	5,100
10	Channel Isles	170	30	0	90	310	170	350	10	50	330	0	40	1,570
11	Chester & Stoke-on-Trent	2,170	690	10	1,520	1,630	2,420	760	100	860	2,490	60	1,280	14,000
12	Cornwall	2,190	180	20	1,850	810	1,620	120	660	740	1,810	1,000	4,120	15,120
13	Darlington	1,660	130	20	610	860	1,540	660	110	340	990	0	1,100	8,020
14	East Anglia	2,260	470	20	1,180	1,170	1,730	700	300	490	2,740	460	2,040	13,560
15	Isle of Man	340	0	0	30	150	360	30	0	20	30	0	200	1,170
16	Leeds	1,880	270	0	940	1,120	1,250	2,120	210	510	2,700	150	1,230	12,400
17	Lincoln & Grimsby	1,810	70	10	590	490	950	790	80	100	650	30	740	6,300
18	Liverpool	1,880	380	150	3,870	1,310	2,420	1,270	500	720	3,270	5,070	1,920	22,740
19	Manchester & Stockport	4,840	490	360	5,120	3,690	3,320	2,610	1,890	1,720	5,950	1,050	940	31,980
20	Newcastle upon Tyne	2,790	300	860	780	1,170	1,690	1,630	470	1,100	2,710	30	1,310	14,830
21	Lancashire	2,400	580	60	2,510	910	1,400	1,330	190	770	2,640	470	2,000	15,260
22	Nottingham & Derby	2,890	580	20	1,430	2,030	2,550	1,630	140	890	3,280	5,020	4,260	24,720
23	Northampton	3,550	330	30	4,700	2,060	2,570	1,960	430	750	3,190	10,030	4,120	33,740
24	Plymouth & Exeter	2,120	470	50	1,480	2,020	2,010	740	210	410	3,820	290	3,810	17,450

25	Sheffield	2,730	230	70	2,300	1,210	2,710	1,660	430	860	4,700	1,540	1,600	20,030
26	Southampton	3,250	460	10	3,680	2,380	3,940	1,280	370	1,250	3,370	400	7,590	27,980
27	West Yorkshire Wolverhampton &	2,110	390	100	1,720	1,020	2,440	1,660	230	340	3,560	1,050	1,710	16,310
28	Shrewsbury	3,080	100	110	890	1,290	1,320	2,080	320	390	1,580	110	2,840	14,120
29	York & Hull	2,540	310	420	1,170	1,220	1,710	1,850	150	400	8,280	10	2,000	20,050
31	Scotland	390	60	10	440	90	500	450	20	40	480	0	340	2,830
32	Shetland	50	10	0	0	20	50	0	0	10	120	0	10	270
34	Bedfordshire, Essex & Hertfordshire	3,760	430	1,230	5,450	3,160	2,850	2,820	350	670	2,770	290	3,320	27,110
35	London	5,070	580	210	7,830	3,840	4,170	4,080	800	740	2,120	900	8,110	38,440
36	South East	3,690	1,000	60	1,990	3,470	2,600	2,560	420	780	2,290	0	5,010	23,870
Connexion		71,060	10,590	4,250	66,080	44,480	59,490	41,780	10,070	17,890	85,290	36,410	74,880	522,270

Note: Activity-breakdown figures in some rows may not sum to total because of rounding

D. Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals: Year to 31 October 2013

		Baptisms			Marriage Celebrations			Funerals	
		Infant	1 to 12	13 or older	Weddings	Blessings	Thanksgivings	In Church	Elsewhere
1	Synod Cymru	14	9	0	29	0	0	69	13
2	Wales Synod	154	134	17	104	4	7	515	611
5	Birmingham	222	139	18	93	21	8	350	375
6	Bolton and Rochdale	133	83	16	41	8	21	225	190
7	Bristol	184	130	27	106	11	13	444	338
9	Cumbria	81	32	1	26	4	5	182	109
10	Channel Isles	9	11	2	15	2	4	63	75
11	Chester & Stoke-on-Trent	266	142	28	102	15	22	594	406
12	Cornwall	170	53	11	91	9	14	439	174
13	Darlington	307	318	11	88	9	2	514	466
14	East Anglia	219	136	26	159	16	24	435	409
15	Isle of Man	28	9	1	12	0	0	50	102
16	Leeds	160	103	18	57	12	10	346	254
17	Lincoln & Grimsby	157	54	18	72	8	5	309	253
18	Liverpool	208	116	20	81	17	6	355	271
19	Manchester & Stockport	241	84	10	64	7	12	425	298
20	Newcastle upon Tyne	464	221	32	165	7	39	559	478
21	Lancashire	148	70	19	78	15	20	314	299
22	Nottingham & Derby	204	115	48	105	13	8	538	393
23	Northampton	291	177	62	210	25	60	606	454
24	Plymouth & Exeter	155	89	29	85	9	13	365	278
25	Sheffield	300	170	48	112	22	26	471	394
26	Southampton	181	81	21	117	19	41	396	388
27	West Yorkshire	176	67	10	87	7	14	363	286
28	Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury	329	179	24	110	11	20	564	597

29	York & Hull	299	119	20	107	3	20	403	347
31	Scotland	18	4	8	14	0	3	78	145
32	Shetland	5	1	0	4	0	4	21	4
34	Bedfordshire, Essex & Hertfordshire	228	159	22	113	13	16	435	399
35	London	302	310	85	133	43	53	452	543
36	South East	243	146	34	171	20	30	361	467
		5,896	3,461	686	2,751	350	520	11,241	9,816
		Total Baptisms: 10,043						Total Funerals: 21,057	

Appendix 2: Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs)

For the 2013 annual returns round, 508 out of 4,812 Methodist churches (10.6%) were reportedly in Local Ecumenical Partnerships. 58 were where Methodist churches had entered into Churches in Covenanted Partnerships and 450 were Single Congregation LEPs.

Where a Single Congregation LEP has been formally constituted, invitation to membership of the Methodist Church is often extended to all who are duly recognised as members of the other partner churches. However, many churches report Methodist membership as comprising those who were Methodists before the church entered into ecumenical partnership, or transferred to the church as Methodists from another congregation.

Recognising that invitation to membership is in many instances extended by all participating denominations in an ecumenical partnership, some or all members of an LEP may be accounted as belonging to these denominations jointly rather than only to any single one.

Statistics for Mission reports Methodist membership on the basis of each individual church's return, without attempting to apportion total membership between respective denominations. On this basis, the 9,211 Methodists in single congregation LEPs constitute 4.4% of total Methodist membership. Attendance figures are reported in total. Average weekly attendance of 30,910 constitutes 13.8% of that across Methodist churches. Table 7 refers.

TABLE 7: Membership and Attendance in Single Congregation Local Ecumenical Partnerships (2013)

Number of Churches	Membership						Average Weekly Attendance
	Methodist	Baptist	CofE	URC	Other	Joint	
82	-	-	-	-	-	6,781	6,303
64	3,435	-	-	1,691	-	-	4,219
63	2,078	-	-	858	-	2,122	4,240
63	815	-	2,812	-	-	-	3,159
39	472	-	1,606	-	-	1,189	3,878
12	369	-	-	225	120	-	730
10	152	-	279	-	172	-	546
10	142	94	462	19	180	-	1,456
9	192	42	237	-	121	-	505
8	218	-	-	-	179	-	341
8	192	-	181	41	-	275	721
7	142	-	235	111	-	-	370
6	101	-	-	-	-	510	452
5	41	43	-	-	188	-	196
4	154	89	-	-	-	-	237
4	106	75	-	108	-	-	273
4	74	41	-	55	-	99	254
4	67	74	119	60	-	-	329
4	41	-	96	18	43	265	489
3	52	10	169	-	12	81	347
3	51	32	209	24	-	66	333
3	41	19	200	9	34	30	269
3	22	23	17	-	-	117	191
2	70	30	-	-	-	81	173
2	41	-	-	53	53	12	155
2	33	-	-	-	15	19	54
2	19	24	134	-	-	-	127
2	13	-	29	-	4	55	114
23*	78	18	120	167	30	169	454
450	9,211	614	6,905	3,439	1,151	11,871	30,912
	Total Single Congregation LEP Membership:					33,191	

*In combinations other than those listed above