

When Religion Makes the News

Christianity in Wales 2016

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National Assembly Policy Officer



Produced by Cytûn at the request of NUJ Training Wales, the training arm of the National Union of Journalists in Wales (funded by Welsh Government) as a companion resource for [When Religion Makes the News](#), Cardiff, 8th November 2016.

Media Contacts for the denominations are on pages 13-15.

Religion is a key element in many headline stories. The aim of this workshop was to provide training and resources for journalists working on mainstream stories that have religious elements.

Introduction

This paper presents some background information on Christianity in Wales in 2016, using statistical and other information. Its aim is to provide some starting points for journalistic research and enquiry; it is not by any means an exhaustive account.

Religion in Wales

The best statistical base for measuring the prevalence of religion in Wales is the 2011 census. Statistics Wales has produced an excellent summary here: <http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2015/151027-statistical-focus-religion-2011-census-en.pdf>, which is essential reading. It shows that 57.6% of the population of Wales (about 1.8 million people)¹ self-declared as Christian in answering the 2011 census questions – a fall from 71.9% 10 years previously. 32.1% said they had ‘no religion’ (almost a million people).

These statistics are, however, limited in their usefulness, for the following reasons:

- They are now five years old. More recent estimates based on survey evidence are difficult to compare directly with the census data, as they ask a different question, and are answered in different circumstances. Many UK surveys fail to separate out data relating to Wales, or the Welsh sample size is too small to be reliable.
- The statistics are based entirely on self-description. Far fewer than 57.6% of the Welsh population are church-goers, even on an occasional basis, and although the rise of the ‘No religion’ self-descriptor suggests that the use of ‘Christianity’ as a ‘default option’ in answer to this question is probably in decline, there is no doubt that some people are making a cultural statement in this answer, rather than a religious one.
- The census provides no option to differentiate between different forms of Christianity. The principal aim of this paper is to provide a very brief introduction to the many variations between even active Christians, which journalists may need to take into account when dealing with a particular story.

¹ <http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2015/151027-statistical-focus-religion-2011-census-en.pdf> p. 12

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The most reliable more recent data source is the British Election Study, and I am grateful to Dr Carys Moseley for analysing the post-election survey of May 2015² and providing the following figures:

- Marginally over 50% of respondents living in Wales said they had 'no religion'.
- A little over 5% of respondents claimed to attend a place of worship once a week or more – 5% of those born in Wales and 5.9% of those born in England. If extrapolated to the population as a whole, this equates to about 180,000 weekly worshippers of all religious faiths in Wales.

The Christian traditions of Wales

The complex history of division (and a few re-unions) in Christianity has produced a patchwork quilt of Christian groupings in Wales. The older groupings are often referred to as 'denominations' – each represents a particular type, style or historical period of Christianity. Some are named after their organisational style, others after an aspect of their theology (understanding of God), others after a historical event. Their own members are often hard pressed to explain the distinctions. This paper cannot cover in full the relevant history, but the links provided give starting points.

The Church in Wales (yr Eglwys yng Nghymru)

The largest denomination in Wales. www.churchinwales.org.uk. This results from the disestablishment of the greater part of the Church of England in Wales in 1920 (a small number of parishes along the Welsh side of the Wales-England border remain part of the Church of England).

The Church in Wales is part of the 'Anglican Communion' of churches that have a historic link with the Church of England, and from 2001-2011 the Welsh bishop, the Most Revd Dr Rowan Williams, was Archbishop of Canterbury.

Unlike the Church of England, its bishops have no reserved seats in the House of Lords and it has no right to participate in UK wide state occasions such as the coronation of a monarch. However, it does retain some legal rights and duties with regard to the marriage of opposite-sex couples who live within Wales. Every part of Wales is divided into parishes, so every citizen – whatever religion they espouse – is a 'parishioner' of the Church in Wales (or, along the border, the Church of England). [The common use of the word 'parishioner' to mean specifically a worshipping member of a church congregation is not technically correct].

The Church in Wales publishes annual statistics showing its current attendance and financial situation. The latest figures (2015) can be accessed here: http://cinw.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Ag19-MembershipFinance_en.pdf These show that 46,604 adults have signed on to the Electoral Roll of parishes (giving them a vote on some key decisions within the Church). Around 50,000 people attend a Church in Wales service at Christmas and Easter, 29,000 adults and 5,800 under 18s on an average Sunday and an additional 4,000 or so on another day of an average week. Many

² <http://www.britishelectionstudy.com/data-object/post-election-wave-6-of-the-2014-2017-british-election-study-internet-panel/>

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churches will also have contact with significant additional numbers of people through baptisms, weddings and funerals and many community events. Still more people will use church buildings which are often let out to other organisations.

The Church is presided over by the Archbishop of Wales. The current incumbent, Most Revd Dr Barry Morgan, has been a conspicuous public figure during his tenure, but retires in January 2017. There are six dioceses (geographical areas), each with its own bishop.

The largest diocese (Llandaf – which covers Cardiff and the Vale and many of the valleys) has two bishops – the Archbishop and an Assistant Bishop. This arrangement is currently being reviewed. The priests and lay members of the Church play a large role in developing its policies and governance through regional Synods and a national Governing Body.

The title Archbishop of Wales may inadvertently create the impression that the Archbishop is in a position to speak for all Christians in Wales. However, other Christians are often keen to point out that he is in fact Archbishop of the Church in Wales, and has no authority over other Christian traditions, and is not in a position to speak for Christian churches other than his own.

Cytûn

The Church in Wales is a founder member of **Cytûn** (Churches Together in Wales), which brings together the main traditional church denominations of Wales. It is also a founder member of the **Covenant for Christian Unity in Wales**, seeking full unity with its other member churches. Cytûn's website (www.cytun.org.uk) is a useful resource for links to the work of its members. Cytûn itself provides its member churches' main liaison with the **National Assembly for Wales** through its Policy Officer (currently Revd Gethin Rhys). It publishes a regular *Policy Bulletin* detailing the churches' engagement with public affairs, especially the devolved sphere. Bulletins can be accessed here: <http://www.cytun.org.uk/churchandsociety.html> (see the section on the ecumenical movement on page 7).

Roman Catholic Church (yr Eglwys Gatholig Rufeinig)

Having been illegal in the period 1534-1791, it has grown to become the second largest church in the country. It is part of the worldwide Roman Catholic Church, presided over by the Bishop of Rome (Pope). In Wales, it is divided into three dioceses, each presided over by a Bishop –

- Cardiff (which includes south-east Wales and also Herefordshire), presided over by an Archbishop (currently the Most Revd George Stack) <http://rcadc.org/> ;
- Menevia (south-west and mid Wales) <http://dioceseofmenevia.org/parishes/parishes.htm>
- Wrexham (north Wales) <http://www.wrexhamdiocese.org.uk/>.

Each diocese is divided into parishes, which cover all of Wales. Each diocese has a media officer. However, unlike the Church in Wales, the Roman Catholic Church has no legal obligations to its parishioners with regard to marriage or other matters. Unlike the Church in Wales, the bishops and (at local

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level) clergy govern the church; committees including lay people are consultative only, and statements by the bishops can be taken as authoritative on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church in Wales – although for many purposes England and Wales are treated as a single unit – www.catholic-ew.org.uk .

Obtaining church attendance figures for the Roman Catholic Church is not easy. The latest figures available (at <http://www.prct.org.uk/component/edocman/?task=document.viewdoc&id=9&Itemid=>) show 29,600 as the average attendance at Sunday Mass in 2012 – not far short of average attendance in the Church in Wales, but the Catholic figure includes Herefordshire. The total Catholic population (those who have been baptised within the Catholic Church, even if lapsed) is put at 140,500 – again including Herefordshire.

The Roman Catholic Church officially regards itself as the one, single, Church of Jesus Christ. In practice, however, recognition of and co-operation with other Christian churches in Wales is well developed at a local level, although other Christians cannot receive the bread and wine at Mass and need to ‘convert’ to become fully active members of the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church is a member of Cytûn (see above). It seeks union with other churches to re-create a single Catholic church, but does not participate in church union talks on the Protestant model of seeking organisational unity with other churches.

Orthodox Churches (Eglwysi Uniongred)

The churches that, like the Roman Catholic Church, trace their historic origins back to Jesus Christ and his disciples, are small in Wales, composed mainly (but not exclusively) of people whose origins lie in the countries after which they are named. Greek, Ukrainian, Serbian, Russian, Romanian, Indian and Ethiopian Orthodox congregations can be found in Wales, part of larger dioceses covering the UK or even much of Europe. There are 12 or more congregations meeting in Wales, many monthly rather than weekly. Numbers of worshippers are not easy to find, but are hundreds rather than thousands. The Ethiopian and Indian Orthodox churches are members of Cytûn. They do not normally speak out on public issues unless they directly affect their members.

Church and Chapel

In many parts of Wales, popular culture distinguishes between ‘Church’ (*eglwys*) and ‘Chapel’ (*capel*). The term ‘Church’ may refer to the Church in Wales only, or to all the above denominations. The remaining denominations are referred to as ‘chapels’.

More formally, church historians will refer to ‘Protestant Nonconformity’ – Protestant meaning neither Catholic nor Orthodox; Nonconformist meaning not Anglican.

From the rupture between Welsh Methodism and the Church of England in 1811 until the 1950s, Protestant Nonconformity represented the majority religious tradition of Wales. However, it has always been divided into various groups, and by language, so each individual denomination is relatively small.

Chapel architecture has substantially influenced the appearance of Welsh towns and villages, and maintaining the large number of such buildings which are protected by statutory listing has become a substantial burden on the remaining congregations and denominations. Stories about threats to particular chapel buildings often reach the media.

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Nonconformity

The largest Protestant Nonconformist denomination is the **Presbyterian (or Calvinistic Methodist) Church of Wales (Eglwys Bresbyteraidd Cymru neu Eglwys Methodistiaid Calfinaidd Cymru)**. It grew out of the Methodist revival begun by the conversions of Howell Harris and Daniel Rowland in 1735 – three years before the better known Methodist revival associated with the brothers John and Charles Wesley in England.

It is well known for its hymns, notably Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah, written by William Williams of Pantycelyn. It has congregations worshipping in English and/or Welsh in most parts of Wales – and in some areas of England. More can be found on its website: www.ebcpcw.org.uk Statistics presented to its 2016 General Assembly (not yet online) show 21,597 members in 604 churches across Wales in June 2015. Fewer than 20% of its members are aged under 50, and 6.3% are resident in care homes.

As with the Church in Wales and other denominations, however, many churches will have contact with substantial additional numbers of people through children's and youth work, midweek activities and other users of church premises. The PCW is a member of Cytûn and of the Covenanted Churches in Wales (see above).

The Church maintains a significant presence in the public square by taking stances on social issues (it was the only Christian church officially to support the change to 'opt-out' organ donation in Wales, for example), and by running two residential centres – Coleg y Bala, which is the base for a Wales-wide network of youth workers, and Coleg Trefeca, the historic home of Howell Harris (see above). Trefeca houses a museum which tells the story and is used as a base for training ministers and lay workers.

The other Christian church to grow out of the 18th century Methodist Revival was the **Methodist Church (Yr Eglwys Fethodistaidd)**. This Church is organised across England, Wales and Scotland, its governing body being the annual Methodist Conference. In Wales, a Wales Synod includes most of its English-speaking congregations in Wales (although some in Powys are part of the Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury District), and Synod Cymru includes its Welsh-speaking congregations. While the Methodist Church is the largest Protestant Nonconformist denomination in England, in Wales it is comparatively smaller, with fewer than 8000 members in Wales in 2015. The church maintains a detailed website: <http://www.methodist.org.uk/>. Like the larger Calvinistic Methodist Church, it is a member of Cytûn and of the Covenanted Churches in Wales (see above).

A number of other Protestant Nonconformist churches are older than Methodism, having grown out of the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, and in their current form from the Act of Uniformity of 1662 which required clergy to use only the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England in public worship. Those who refused were 'ejected', and established nonconformist churches which were free to worship as they wished. Those who continued the Catholic and Anglican practice of baptising infants became **Congregationalists** or **Independents**, and those who believed in baptising adult believers only became known as **Baptists**.

The Union of Welsh Independents (Undeb yr Annibynwyr Cymraeg) is a mainly Welsh-language denomination. Each of its local congregations is independent (hence the name), so the central organisation

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is small and cannot speak authoritatively on behalf of its member churches. However, its (non-binding) annual assembly has traditionally taken stances on many public issues, being strongly pro-devolution, pacifist and radical in social policy.

In December 2015 its churches had a total of 20,327 members and 2,558 children and young people spread over 401 congregations. 8 of these churches (about 200 members) are in England. There are also around Wales a number of Independent congregations which have allowed their membership of the Union to lapse. They are usually small in membership. The Union is an active member of Cytûn, but has consistently voted against seeking formal union with other Christian traditions. Its website (with English translation) can be found here: <http://annibynwyr.org/>

Some of the Union of Welsh independents' churches now worship wholly or mainly in English. As each local church is self-governing, it is a local decision whether to remain in the Welsh Union or to join an English speaking denomination. In addition, there are Congregational churches founded in the English language. Due to changes over the years, these are now grouped in a number of different denominations.

- The **United Reformed Church (URC)** was founded in 1972 as a union of the former Congregational Union of England and Wales and the Presbyterian Church of England (PCE). (NB the Union of Welsh Independents and the Presbyterian Church of Wales were not part of this union process and remain separate). At the time, there were only 3 PCE churches in Wales; the other churches which joined were from the Congregational tradition. It currently has 2135 members in Wales in 98 churches. Further details at: <http://www.urc-wales.org.uk/> The URC is a member of Cytûn and of the Covenanted Churches in Wales.
- Most of the local churches which decided against joining the URC instead joined the **Congregational Federation**. It currently has 561 members in 28 churches in Wales. The Federation is a member of Cytûn. See <http://www.cfwales.org.uk/> and <http://www.congregational.org.uk/>
- 10 other Congregational Churches in Wales are members of the **Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches** (<http://efccorg.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/home>) and others decided not to affiliate to any larger body, but to become entirely independent. Membership figures are difficult to come by. The EFCC is a member of Affinity (see p. 6 below).

The Baptist Union of Wales (Undeb Bedyddwyr Cymru) is one of the so-called *pedwar enwad* – the four Protestant Nonconformist denominations with substantial work in the Welsh language (the others being the Presbyterian Church of Wales, Methodist Church and Union of Welsh Independents). Its 380 churches had a membership of 10,886 people in 2014, with 1,876 children in its Sunday Schools. 82 new Christians were baptised in 2014. The Union is a member of Cytûn, but its member churches are self-governing. More information can be found at: <http://www.buw.org.uk/en/>

The Baptist tradition is represented also in Wales by member churches of the **Baptist Union of Great Britain**, grouped in the South Wales Baptist Association (5352 members in 140 churches - <http://www.southwalesbaptistassociation.org.uk/>) and the North Wales English Baptist Union (12 churches). The South Wales Association is a member of both the Evangelical Alliance and of Cytûn, and some of its local churches are members of the Covenanted Churches in Wales (see above). There are also

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independent Baptist churches, not part of either Union, which are entirely self-governing. Some choose to join other groups or networks (Associating Evangelical Churches of Wales, the Evangelical Movement of Wales and Affinity. See page 7).

Ecumenical Movement

All of the above denominational groups engage to a greater or lesser extent in the **ecumenical movement**. This stems from attempts during the 20th century to encourage previously separate and sometimes hostile Christian traditions to work together or even to unite. This led in 1990 to the formation of Cytûn (see above) to bring these churches together across Wales to engage in common mission and to keep one another informed. There are equivalent bodies in Wales, Scotland and across Britain and Ireland.

Denominations also co-operate in many and varied groupings on particular areas of work. From a media point of view, the most notable is the **Joint Public Issues Team** of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, Methodist Church, United Reformed Church and the Church of Scotland – www.jointpublicissues.org.uk

At a local level, there are many examples of local congregations coming together across denominational lines. These churches may have words such as '**Ecumenical**' '**United**' or '**Uniting**' in their local church names, and it is not always easy for the outsider to work out which traditions they represent. These locally united churches belong to two or more of the denominations listed above. Every effort has been made to avoid double-counting in the membership statistics quoted, but this is not always easy.

Examples of locally united churches are: [Llanfair Uniting Church Penrhys](#) (8 denominations); [Pontprennau Community Church](#) (5 denominations); [Eglwys Unedig Seilo Llandudno](#) (4 Welsh speaking denominations); [Dan-y-Graig United Church, Risca](#) (3 denominations).

Some traditional Nonconformist churches believe that ecumenism involves unacceptable compromises on matters of principle. Some congregations have left their traditional parent bodies and either become totally independent or joined the **Associating Evangelical Churches in Wales**. There are 71 such churches across Wales, with a total of 3050 members. A few are also affiliated to other groupings.

The Associating Evangelical Churches are part of the **Evangelical Movement of Wales (Mudiad Efengylaidd Cymru)**, which also includes churches within the traditional denominations who choose to affiliate additionally to the Movement, and individual members. <https://www.emw.org.uk/>

The EMW is in turn affiliated to a similar Britain-wide organisation, **Affinity**, <http://www.affinity.org.uk/> This also includes the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches (see above), the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (www.fiec.org.uk - 32 in Wales, some also affiliated to other bodies) and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England & Wales (3 churches in Wales), as well as the Apostolic Church (see below).

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'Quakers' and The Salvation Army

There are two other denominations which relate to the ecumenical movement, whose histories have diverged from the church families out of which they grew.

- The first is the **Religious Society of Friends or Quakers (Cymdeithas y Cyfeillion neu'r Crynwyr)**, which grew out of 17th century Nonconformity in Wales and England. They are now associated with informal worship including long periods of silence, and with social radicalism – being pacifist, strongly in favour of LGBTI+ rights and taking public stances on many contemporary political issues. They have no formal statement of belief – believing that spiritual experience is beyond words – and no clergy or formal leadership, but their small groups of members are often very active and influential. There are 33 meetings of Friends in Wales (they do not use the word 'church'), with 527 members and another 430 attenders³ – see <http://quakersinwales.org.uk/welcome/> . The Society is a member of Cytûn.
- **The Salvation Army** is a movement originating in the 19th century associated with energetic evangelism and committed social action. They have become especially associated with working with homeless people, as at Tŷ Gobaith in Cardiff. Their leadership is organised on military principles, and their officers all wear a distinctive uniform, although they have no formal association with the armed forces. There are 35 corps (rather than 'churches') meeting in citadels in Mid and South Wales and 6 in North Wales. Worshippers include 1,240 'senior soldiers' (in uniform), 486 non-uniformed members and 134 Junior Soldiers⁴. The Salvation Army is a member of both Cytûn and the Evangelical Alliance. More details can be found at www.salvationarmy.org.uk .

Pentecostal and newer Evangelical churches

Christianity in Wales has always been in a state of development and change. As the older denominations listed above have tended to decline numerically (although this is not true in every local instance), newer churches have sprung up.

The **Seventh Day Adventist Church** grew out of religious revivals in the mid 19th century, which expected the imminent second coming (Advent) of Jesus to earth. This expectation has waned, but the denomination continues to work with missionary zeal, and has 13 churches in Wales with 388 members (figures from the website: <http://adventist.org.uk/who-we-are/church-finder>). It is distinctive in that worship is on Saturday (the seventh day) rather than Sunday, but it co-operates well with other churches and is a member of Cytûn. Many of its congregations share a building with another Christian church which meets on Sundays.

The **Great Welsh Revival of 1904-5**, often associated with Evan Roberts, took place within the then existing Welsh Nonconformist denominations (especially the Calvinistic Methodist Church). However, it led to the formation of the **Pentecostal** tradition. The three main denominations are:

³ Figures as at January 2016 provided by the Clerk of the Meeting of Friends in Wales, Christine Trevett.

⁴ Figures provided by the Salvation Army regional offices in South Wales and North West & North Wales, 18.08.16

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- The **Elim Pentecostal Church**, founded by Welshman George Jeffreys, currently has 31 churches in Wales, and its affiliate the Church of Pentecost UK has a congregation in Cardiff. More information can be found at: http://www.elim.org.uk/Groups/243049/Welcome_to_Elim.aspx The name Pentecostal refers to the prevalence in its worship of the 'Pentecostal' gifts such as speaking in tongues, and worship is often very lively. In some local areas, Elim churches are co-operative with other local churches, especially in social action, and they may be members of their local Cytûn group. At a national level, however, they are not part of the ecumenical movement.
- The **Apostolic Church** has 32 congregations in Wales, mainly in the south where its origins lie. <http://apostolic-church.org/>
- The **Assemblies of God** – the largest Pentecostal network worldwide - have 37 congregations in Wales <http://www.aog.org.uk/>

Requests for membership figures from these bodies have proved fruitless. Individual congregations vary in size from many hundreds (as at City Church, Cardiff – www.citytemple.info) to a tiny handful as in the Elim Church in Trealaw, Rhondda. For the calculations in this paper, I have estimated that the total adult membership of the three groups in Wales might be 8,000.

Evangelical Alliance

The three Pentecostal groupings listed above, and a number of independent congregations, are part of the **Evangelical Alliance** which brings together many of the newer evangelical churches in the UK - <http://www.eauk.org/wales/>. EA in Wales also sponsors **Gweini** - <http://www.gweini.org.uk/> - which serves the Christian voluntary sector in Wales, especially the projects associated with evangelical churches. Gweini has produced a number of reports on the influence of faith on public life in Wales.

The Salvation Army and the South Wales Baptist Association are members of the Alliance, along with individual churches from the Presbyterian, Methodist and Church in Wales traditions. It also has in membership churches from a range of other networks and denominations which have a presence in Wales, and 30 or so **individual churches** with no denominational or network affiliation.

Most – but not all - stand in the Pentecostal tradition. Some of these churches are very large and influential in their neighbourhoods. Examples include Antioch Church, Llanelli (<http://antiochchurch.co.uk/>); Highfields Church, Monthermer Road, Cardiff (<http://www.highfieldschurch.org.uk/>); Cornerstone Church, Swansea (<http://cornerstonechurch.co.uk/>). These churches often seek to plant (open) new churches elsewhere, which may in due course become independent churches in their own right. Some are involved in local and international social action (such as promoting Fair trade goods or racial justice; Antioch Llanelli has on its website a blog indicating support for the Occupy Movement), others concentrate on evangelism and seeking new converts. Not all organisations of this kind are based in large urban centres – for example International Gospel Outreach is based at Dwygyfylchi in Conwy - <http://www.igo.org.uk/index.html>

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More recent arrivals

Communities who have arrived in Wales during the past 50 years have often brought their own Christian traditions with them, and in Cardiff, Swansea and Newport especially there are congregations founded originally by new arrivals from particular overseas countries. Some worship in the native language concerned; some in a mixture of that language and English (e.g. Cardiff Chinese Christian Church - <http://cardiffcccc.org/>); others are from English speaking countries and now attract people from all backgrounds. Few make formal use of the Welsh language. Those which are part of structured groupings include the Redeemed Christian Church of God (originating from Ghana) <http://www.rccguk.church/> and the New Testament Church of God (originating from the West Indies) <https://ntcg.org.uk/about/>, each with congregations in Cardiff and Newport. However, many have no formal affiliations, and rent premises from other churches or from secular bodies. Discovering statistical evidence of any reliability for these churches is extremely difficult.

Brethren Communities

Mention must finally be made of the **Brethren** assemblies (usually preferred to the word 'church'). These originated in a 19th century movement to purify the Church of England. Most no longer use the word 'Brethren' in their title. Some are known as **Gospel Halls**. Some are now virtually indistinguishable from other evangelical churches (for example Bethesda Church, Rhiwbina, Cardiff - <http://www.bethesdacardiff.org/>), and are members of the Evangelical Alliance or other groupings. Others remain substantially closed communities who seek little or no contact with other churches or the wider community, emphasising the purity of the Gospel. The Wikipedia article on this tradition provides a useful summary - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plymouth_Brethren. Establishing numbers in Wales is very difficult.

Other religious groups deriving from the Christian tradition

The Census question relies on a self-definition of Christian. The Christian churches listed above, and the umbrella bodies to which many belong, have a Trinitarian understanding of Christianity – God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and a belief that Jesus is the Son of God and the Bible is the inspired Word of God. While the outworking of these beliefs will vary between churches – and the Society of Friends on principle rejects attempts to put these beliefs into a set of words – these core beliefs are common to all churches at an official level (if not to every individual worshipper).

However, there are other groups that believe themselves to be Christian which are not recognised as such by the main churches. Three in particular are of significance in Wales.

1. The **Unitarian Church (Undodwyr)** grew out of 17th century Protestantism, but concluded that belief that Jesus is Son of God is not essential to Christian faith. They share much in common with Welsh Nonconformity in other ways, however, and have a historic strength in the 'smotyn du' of North Carmarthenshire and South Ceredigion. They are known for liberal views on many moral and theological issues. There are 20 congregations in Wales, worshipping in Welsh and English – www.unitarian.org.uk – as well as a reconstructed chapel at the Museum of Welsh Life in St

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Fagan's, which is used for worship by many Christian groups visiting the site. A fairly accurate estimation of membership is 950 adults.⁵

2. The **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints** (Mormons) stem from the visions of Joseph Smith in the USA in the 19th century, and were important in encouraging Welsh emigration to the USA. They now have a significant presence in Wales. Once associated primarily with door to door evangelism, they now engage with the community through family tree research, inter-faith activity and community involvement. The Book of Mormon recounts Smith's visions and is regarded as Scripture in addition to the standard Christian Bible. See www.mormon.org.uk In 2014 there were 9,343 members in 26 congregations in Wales⁶.
3. The **Jehovah's Witnesses** are noted for door to door evangelism with their magazine *The Watchtower*, and for an emphasis on the coming judgement – www.jw.org . They meet in **Kingdom Halls**, with 42 currently in Wales, and a membership of approximately 6000.⁷ A number worship in the Welsh language, and also in other languages such as Polish and Portuguese as well as English.

Those reporting religious affairs should be aware that other Christian groups do not recognise the claims of these three groups to be regarded as Christian, and so should be sensitive in how they are described.

Membership of Christian churches in Wales

The absence of membership figures for many individual churches, and the different understandings of membership between different traditions, make establishing the number of active Christians in Wales very difficult. The figures given in this paper suggest that approximately 194,000 adults in Wales claim a formal link with a Christian place of worship⁸. About 50,000 of these will be Anglicans, and another 50,000 Catholic or Orthodox, the remaining 94,000 being Protestant Nonconformists of one kind or another. In addition, a further 16,200 people are members of 'Christian' groups outside the mainstream (see preceding sections – Unitarians, Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses).

This number is larger than the figure of 180,000 regular worshippers extrapolated from the British Election Survey 2015 (see note 2, page 1). While the BES figure includes adherents of other faiths and people of all ages, the membership figure in this paper relates to adult Christians only. This paper arrives at a larger number of Christians than the BES figure because it includes those who are members of a place of worship but do not worship weekly. This includes housebound people and those in residential care (such as the

⁵ Personal information.

⁶ Figure provided by Julie Jones, representative of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on the Inter-faith Council for Wales.

⁷ The Jehovah's Witnesses do not publish membership figures, and the number 6000 is an approximation supplied by the Jehovah's Witnesses office in London by telephone on 18.08.2016.

⁸ This is based on the membership figures quoted above, making the – unverifiable – assumption that for the Roman Catholic Church in Wales, as for the Church in Wales, an average Sunday attendance of 30,000 represents a Christmas and Easter attendance and therefore 'membership' of about 50,000 people. The Catholic Church has no equivalent of an 'electoral roll' to establish a commitment to a particular parish. I have added a further 10,000 people to cover the churches on pages 9-10 (Evangelical Alliance, more recent arrivals and Brethren Communities) for which no membership figure or approximation was available.

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6.3% of Presbyterian Church of Wales members in residential homes – the only denomination to report these figures), younger families who worship only sporadically during school term time, and others who for various reasons do not attend weekly.

Wider Christian presence in Welsh society

The significance of Christianity in Wales does not rest entirely – or even mainly – in membership or attendance figures. In addition to formal members there will be many more who attend activities of various kinds in a local church, or whose children or other members of the family do so, and will regard that church as ‘their’ church. Likewise, many people who have been baptised as infants in a place of worship will regard themselves as in some sense ‘belonging’ to that church community. Aside from the Roman Catholic Church’s estimate of 140,500 ‘Catholics’ in Wales and Herefordshire, compared to a weekly attendance figure of under 30,000, figures for this wider ‘church community’ are not available.

Many churches are also influential in their local neighbourhood, providing services to the community (such as Foodbanks and debt counselling, lunch clubs and activities for the elderly, carers and toddlers groups, children’s and youth clubs, etc.) and a voice for local people. In some areas the church’s minister or other employees will be the only professional people living as well as working in the neighbourhood, and they will fulfil many functions beyond the purely religious. Church leaders are often the chairs of Communities First or Regeneration Partnerships and involved in many other community organisations.

The Roman Catholic Church and the Church in Wales are substantial providers of education within the state system, and other churches are often involved in LEA schools as governors and as contributors to the provision of statutory Religious Education and collective worship. This includes organised educational provision through (for example) impact Schools Team in Powys (<http://www.impactschoolsteam.org/>) or Sporting Marvels in the Rhondda (<http://www.sportingmarvels.com/>), or the Bible Society’s Open the Book project (<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/latest/news/open-the-book-reaches-2000-schools/>) (in Welsh – Agor y Llyfr - http://ysgolsul.com/?page_id=261), as well as myriad patterns of informal involvement. Church youth and children’s work provision is substantial, and in some communities is the only formal provision, and in others the only provision through the medium of the Welsh language.

At a national level, the work of Gweini (see page 9) and of Cytûn (www.cytun.org.uk) in promoting Christian social engagement and in dialogue with Government at all levels provides a distinctive Christian voice on many matters of concern and are frequently quoted in the media, both Welsh and English language.

Health warning

There is no restriction on who may use the term ‘Christian’ in public discourse. A number of organisations do so in order to express views that most Christians would repudiate. These include Christian Voice and Britain First, amongst many others. These organisations are not sponsored, or in most cases supported, by Christian congregations of any denomination within Wales. The press, media and public affairs contacts of the churches which are present in Wales are listed on the following pages and will be able to give guidance regarding other groups which claim a Christian presence in Wales.

Gethin Rhys, Cytûn – Churches Together in Wales/Eglwysi Ynghyd yng Nghymru
23.09.2016

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Media contact points for Wales-wide church bodies (based in Wales unless otherwise stated)

Not all the church bodies referred to in this paper have press and media capacity. Those that do are listed below in the order in which they are mentioned in the body of the paper.

Contact details for local independent churches will need to be obtained locally. The larger independent churches each have a website with contact details.

Cytûn (Churches Together in Wales) + the Covenanted Churches in Wales – Tel: 029 2046 4204.
Chief Executive: Revd Canon Aled Edwards. E-mail: post@cytun.cymru
National Assembly Policy Officer: Revd Gethin Rhys. E-mail: gethin@cytun.cymru

Church in Wales – Tel. 029 2034 8200.

Communications and media officer: Anna Morrell communications@churchinwales.org.uk.
Church and society adviser: Revd Canon Carol Wardman CarolWardman@churchinwales.org.uk

Roman Catholic Church –

Each diocese has a media officer. An annual directory of the Catholic Province of Cardiff, Wales and Herefordshire is published annually.

Archdiocese of Cardiff – Tel. 029 2037 4148 www.rcadc.org reardon.robert @rcadc.org.uk 01656 652034
Diocese of Menevia —Tel. 01792 644017 www.dioceseofmenevia.org michael.flook@gmail.com
Diocese of Wrexham - Tel. 01978 262726 www.wrexhamdiocese.org.uk David Tarbrook
communications@wrexhamdiocese.org.uk
Media enquiries (based in London) - Catholic Communications Network (CCN) Phone: 020 7901 4800
Email: ccn@cbcew.org.uk

Presbyterian Church of Wales – Tel. 029 2062 7465

Church & Society Liaison Officer (including press and media enquiries) – Dr Carys Moseley
carys@ebcpcw.org.uk

Methodist Church – Wales Synod Tel. 029 2076 1515 www.methodistwales.org.uk

Media officer (based in London) - Michael Ivatt Tel: 020 7467 5191
E-mail: ivattm@methodistchurch.org.uk

Union of Welsh Independents – Tel. 01792 795888

Public Relations and Press Officer: Alun Lenny alunlenny@hotmail.co.uk

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United Reformed Church – National Synod of Wales Tel. 029 2019 5729 www.urcwales.org.uk
Communications officer (based in London) – Gill Nichol Tel. 020 7691 9865 E-mail: gill.nichol@urc.org.uk
Media team out of hours: 07976 753 950

Congregational Federation (based in Nottingham) –
General Secretary: Yvonne Campbell Tel 0115 911 1460 E-mail: yvonne.campbell@congregational.org.uk

Baptist Union of Wales - Tel: 01267 245660
General Secretary: Revd Judith Morris email: mennajones@ubc.cymru

South Wales Baptist Association – Tel. 029 2049 1366 E-mail: jackie@swabugb.org.uk
Baptist Union of Great Britain – Press and media support (based in Didcot) – Tel. 01235 517709
E-mail: media@baptist.org.uk

Joint Public Issues Team of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and the Church of Scotland (based in London) - Tel: 020 7916 8632
Email: enquiries@jointpublicissues.org.uk

Evangelical Movement of Wales – Tel: 01656 655886 Email: office@emw.org.uk

Religious Society of Friends – Press officer (based in London): Anne van Staveren Tel: 020 7663 1048
Mobile: 07958 009703 Email: annev@quaker.org.uk

Salvation Army (South and Mid Wales) - Email: southmidwales@salvationarmy.org.uk
Tel: 02920 440600
Media enquiries - Salvation Army Great Britain (based in London) – Tel. 020 7367 4700 or out of hours 020 3657 7555 (Journalists only). Email: media@salvationarmy.org.uk
Communications Officer, Wales rebecca.morgan@salvationarmy.org.uk (0) 7918 560 703

Elim Pentecostal Church (based in Malvern) – Tel. 0345 302 6750

Apostolic Church (based in London) - Tel: 020 7587 1802 E-mail: admin@apostolic-church.org

Assemblies of God (based in Doncaster) – Tel: 017 7781 7663 E-mail: info@aog.org.uk

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Evangelical Alliance Wales + Gweini – Tel: 029 2022 9822 E-mail: wales@eauk.org or cymru@eauk.org
National Director: Elfed Godding. Public Affairs and Advocacy Officer: Jim Stewart
Evangelical Alliance press enquiries (based in London) - Danny Webster 07766 444650 E-mail: d.webster@eauk.org

Unitarian and Free Christian Churches (based in London) – Tel: 020 7240 2384
E-mail: info@unitarian.org.uk

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (based in Solihull) – Europe Area Assistant Director, Public Affairs (for working journalists) - Malcolm Adcock Tel: 0121 712 1161 E-mail: adcockmp@ldschurch.org.
National Director Public Affairs GB - Martin Cook / Judith Cook Mobile: 07799 265 293
E-mail: mcook@ldschurch.org

Jehovah's Witnesses (based in London) – Tel. 020 8906 2211

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