



Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

Pastoral Research Office



Pastoral Research Online

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How much do Mass attenders give?

In this edition of Pastoral Research Online we take a look into the 2011 National Church Life Survey to find out how much Mass attenders give financially to the parish or priest(s). Which attenders give the most? Do young attenders give more than older attenders? Do the types of school attended or level of education have a significant difference on levels of giving to the parish? Turn to page 2 and 3 to find the answers to these and other questions.

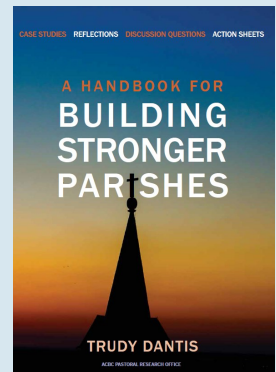
FORTHCOMING RELEASE:

A HANDBOOK FOR BUILDING STRONGER PARISHES

In this new book, Dr Trudy Dantis draws on her ground-breaking research into factors that lead to parish vitality to provide Australian case studies with down-to-earth examples of what can be achieved in eight key areas that lead to stronger parishes: planning, spirituality and faith formation, liturgy, community building, welcoming and hospitality, outreach, evangelisation and leadership.

This work is supported by the ACBC Pastoral Research Office Director Robert Dixon's helpful introductory articles enabling parishes to build up a comprehensive parish profile from readily available information.

A Handbook for Building Stronger Parishes provides excellent case studies, reflection questions, worksheets and action plans to support you and your parish team.



Trudy Dantis and Garratt Publishing have my sincere gratitude for presenting us with a book that has so much to offer, a book that is gentle, practical, nourishing, constructive, Australian and, above all, deeply Catholic. I recommend it particularly to priests, pastoral associates and members of parish pastoral councils. It's a valuable resource for all who are interested in making sure that Australia's Catholic parishes are vital centres of Christian life and faith.

+ Julian Porteous, Archbishop of Hobart and Chair, Australian Catholic Council for Pastoral Research

A Handbook for Building Stronger Parishes is to be officially launched by Archbishop Porteous on Thursday 1 September at **Proclaim 2016** (proclaimconference.com.au)

About the author

Trudy Dantis was the coordinator of the Building Stronger Parishes Project at the Pastoral Research Office from 2010 until 2015. Her role included managing all aspects of the project and being a senior member of the research team. We were sad to lose her when she returned to Mumbai in 2015, but we have been blessed with her continuing involvement in projects such as this book and her work on the Building Stronger Parishes website (www.buildingstrongerparishes.catholic.org.au). She is now an Honorary Fellow of the Pastoral Research Office, and also acts as a research consultant for Snehalaya Family Service Centre in the Archdiocese of Bombay.



“PAUSE & MAKE A DIFFERENCE” DON’T FORGET Census night is almost here!!



The next “snapshot” of Australia will be taken on the evening of **Tuesday 9 August 2016**.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS),

The aim of the Census is to collect accurate data on the key characteristics of the people in Australia on Census night, and the dwellings in which they live. The information collected in the Census helps estimate Australia’s population and this information is used to distribute government funds and plan services for the community - housing, transport, education, industry, hospitals and the environment. Census data is also used by individuals and organisations in the public and private sectors to make informed decisions on policy and planning issues that affect the lives of all Australians.

National Catholic Census Project

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, through the Pastoral Research Office, will again obtain Census data on Australian Catholics, for all parishes and dioceses. The ABS generally releases the first round of data in June of the year following the Census. The PRO will be working with the ABS to obtain data on the Catholic population as soon as possible after June 2017. Because of the extent of the work involved, it will take until about mid-2018 for the Parish and Diocesan Social Profiles to be available.

Financial Giving by Mass Attenders

The table below shows the response of a random sample of 2,610 Mass attenders across Australia to the question “About how much do you or your family give each week, in total, to the support of the parish and the priest(s) in this parish?”. Three per cent say they give nothing, and a further four per cent say they don’t know. (This is actually a

About how much do you or your family give each week, in total, to the support of the parish and the priest(s) in this parish?

Amount	Per cent of Mass attenders
None	3
Less than \$5	13
\$5 to less than \$10	33
\$10 to less than \$20	28
\$20 to less than \$40	15
\$40 or more	4
Don't know	4
Total	100

N = 2,610

Source of data: 2011 National Church Life Survey, Questionnaire S3

Table prepared by the ACBC Pastoral Research Office: www.pro.catholic.org.au

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perfectly sensible answer given that the question asks about ‘your family’. A teenager, for example, is unlikely to know how much his/her parents give.) Almost half (46%) say they give something, but less than \$10 per week. About the same percentage (47%) say they give more than \$10 per week, including 4 per cent who say they give \$40 or more.

How much people say they (or their family) give is strongly related to age. Older people are much more likely to give more than younger people. As well, Mass attenders with a university degree are more

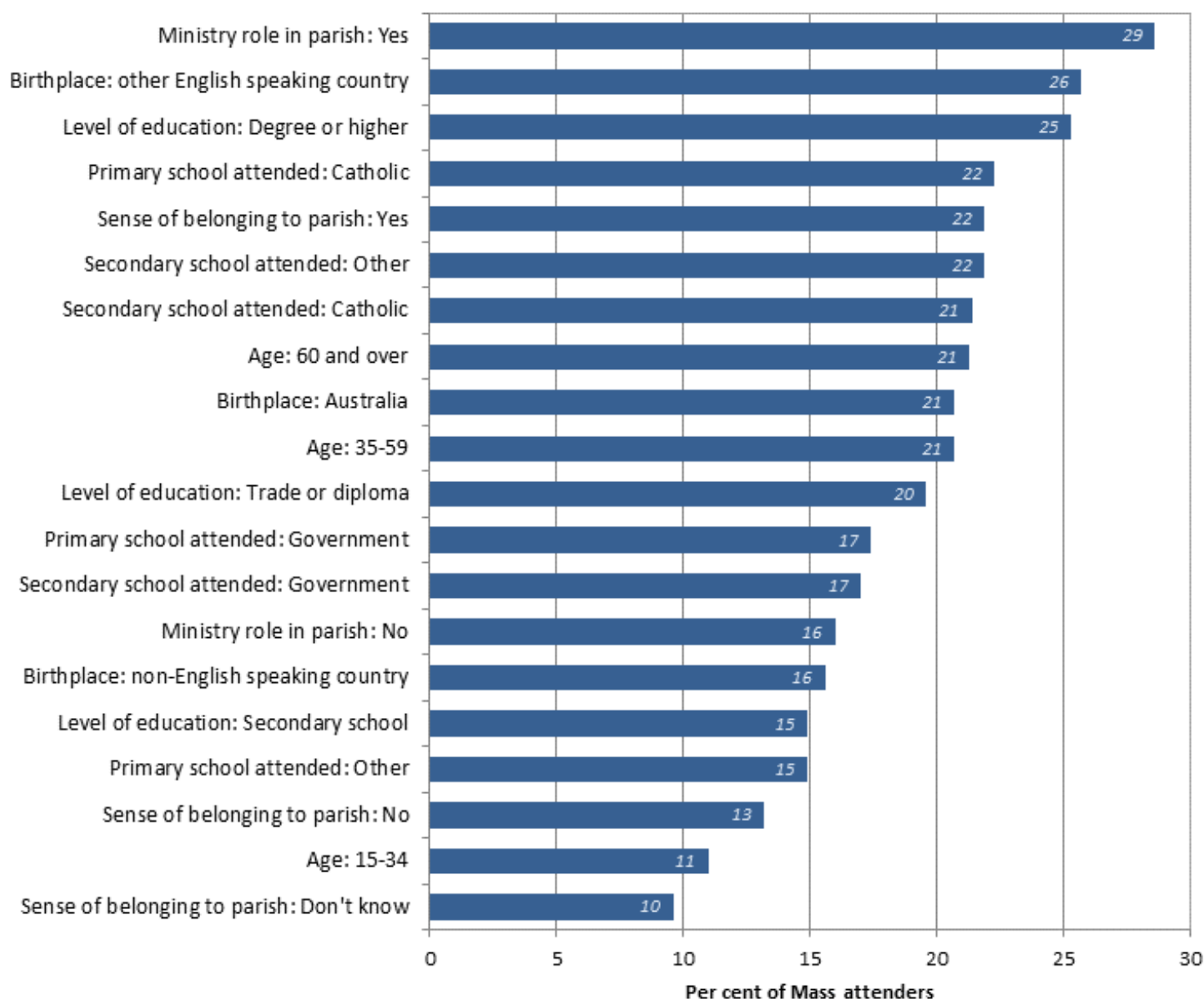
likely to give more than people with a trade qualification, and they in turn are more likely to give more than people with no post-school education. Attenders born in Australia give more than attenders born in non-English speaking countries. In relation to education and birthplace, the differences may well be because the better-educated and the Australian-born are better off, financially speaking. Also, and not surprisingly, Mass attenders who have a

leadership or ministry role in the parish, or who feel a strong sense of belonging to the parish, are more likely to say they give more to the parish each week than attenders who do not have a leadership or ministry role or who do not feel a strong sense of belonging to their parish. All these differences are highly significant, statistically speaking; for each of the differences mentioned, there is less than a one in a thousand chance that it could have arisen purely by chance. In other words, the data indicate real differences.

One thing that makes no difference is sex: there is no significant difference in the level of giving between men and women. Again, this is not surprising given that the question asks about family giving. Another factor that makes no difference is the type of secondary school attended by respondents: there is little or no difference in giving patterns between Mass attenders who attended Catholic, Government or other types of *secondary* school. Intriguingly, however, the type of *primary* school that Mass attenders went to *does* make a big difference. This is surprising, given that the average age of the 2,610 respondents is 56 years, so primary school was a long time ago for most of them. Yet those who went to a Catholic primary school are considerably more likely to say they give more to their parish (22%) than attenders who went to Government (17%) or other (15%) primary schools. Perhaps this reflects a strong culture of fundraising practised and learnt in Catholic primary schools.

Weekly financial support of the parish and the priest(s)

Attenders giving \$20 or more each week, 2011



Source of data: 2011 National Church Life Survey, Questionnaire S3.

Graph prepared by the ACBC Pastoral Research Office: www.pro.catholic.org.au Copyright © Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

The material for this edition of *Pastoral Research Online* was prepared by the following PRO staff:

Bob Dixon
Director

r.dixon@pro.catholic.org.au
(03) 9953 3456

Stephen Reid
Research Officer

s.reid@pro.catholic.org.au
(03) 9953 3457

For more information about the office, or how we can assist you, please contact:

ACBC Pastoral Research Office,
Australian Catholic University,
Locked Bag 4115
Fitzroy VIC 3065
P: (03) 9953 3459
E: office@pro.catholic.org.au
W: www.pro.catholic.org.au

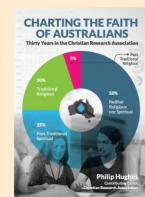
For what it's worth . . .

If you were to answer the religion question on the 2016 Census as 'Marxism', then your response would be coded as 'Inadequately described', as Marxism is generally regarded as a political philosophy based on a coherent set of beliefs, without any supernatural or spiritual component, according to the Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups (2016). Other responses excluded from the religious classification would include 'Alien', 'Hippy', 'Football', 'Child of the Universe', 'Pirate', 'Vegetarian', 'Heathen', 'Nullafidian' or . . . 'Jedi'.

On the other hand, if you responded with 'Compassionism', 'ANZAC', 'Green Pagan' or 'One Humanity', then your response would be coded as 'Other spiritual beliefs'. The Australian Bureau of Statistics states that such grouping of secular beliefs, other spiritual beliefs and no religious beliefs are included for practical reasons and to make the classification structure more useful for statistical and administrative applications.

Source: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1266.0>

NEW BOOK: *Charting the Faith of Australians:* *Thirty Years in the Christian Research Association* by Philip Hughes, contributing editor



Over the past 30 years, the Christian Research Association (CRA) has charted the rapid changes which have occurred in Australian society. It has done so through the examination of census and survey data and through interviews with thousands of individuals. It has examined these changes in youth culture and rural culture and has explored the impact of migration and the rise of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements. It has suggested ways in which churches and schools might respond to these changes.

The story told in this book is a personal story for Rev Dr Philip Hughes, the senior research officer of the Christian Research Association from 1985 to 2016. But it is also a story of global significance as Christian and other religious institutions grapple with changes to their place in society and their roles in changing perceptions of life.

To order contact the CRA on (03) 8819 0123, or go to: www.cra.org.au/products-page

With thanks to Rev Dr Philip Hughes

After 31 years leading the Christian Research Association (CRA), Rev Dr Philip Hughes retired on 30 June this year. During those years, Philip became probably Australia's foremost source of knowledge about all things religious, frequently being quoted in the media and producing a prodigious output of books and other publications, and especially *Pointers*, CRA's quarterly journal. He's the only person I know who can write a whole book chapter, or even two, in the course of an international flight!



The Catholic Church in Australia has much to thank Philip for. Both through general CRA projects and projects specially commissioned by Catholic agencies, Philip has produced or contributed to research on building stronger parishes, rural parishes, youth ministry and parish youth groups, lay ministry, the spirituality of students and teachers at Catholics schools, and more. He is the editor of my book *The Catholic Community in Australia* (2005) and also the originator, editor and principal contributor to the encyclopaedic CD-ROM publication *Australia's Religious Communities – A Multimedia Exploration*.

I have had the honour of working closely with Philip for many years, primarily through my membership of the CRA Board since 1992, firstly as a co-opted member and then, since the retirement from the Board of Fr Michael Mason CSsR in 2004, as the Bishops Conference's representative. The CRA and the PRO have developed a close working relationship, not least through the sharing of staff – Stephen Reid currently works part-time for both organisations, as did previous staff members Audra Kuncinuas and Sharon Bond.

Philip is now free to exercise his Uniting Church ministry, and his role as husband, father and grand-father in other ways, although he told me the other day that he has had only four days off since he 'retired'. He is still working almost full-time at CRA, as his replacement, Dr Wilma Gallet, doesn't commence until October. Philip also remains Director of Research at Harvest Bible College, an Honorary Senior Fellow at the PRO and, above all, a close friend. We wish him well for a long and happy retirement – when he eventually gets around to it!

- Bob Dixon