

# **RELEASED FOR MISSION**

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**Growing the rural church**

# Church numbers...

	No.	%
Churches	10199	65
Parishes	8394	66
Benefices	3523	48
Deaneries	467	67
Clergy	4372	42

# Attendance...

<b>%</b>	<b>Parishes</b>	<b>Electoral Roll</b>	<b>Average Weekly Attendance</b>	<b>Christmas</b>
Rural	66	46	40	49
Urban	34	54	60	51

# Growth...

<b>%</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Inconclusive</b>
Rural	25	18	54
Urban	29	18	49
All parishes	26	18	52
Total	3339	2294	6682

# Growth or decline over 10 years in multi-church groups with varying numbers of parishes

Parishes / benefice	% Negative	% Positive	% Inconclusive
1	27	20	51
2	29	16	52
3	26	17	55
4	25	17	56
5-10	24	18	55
11+	14	13	35
Total	26	18	52

Released for Mission



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

Growing the  
Rural Church

[www.germinate.net](http://www.germinate.net)

## Congregations embedded in community

*“So when you look at the rural church you may think ‘well there are very few people in the pews’ but when you look at what the church is actually involved in, in the community it puts the whole thing into perspective and you realize the church is actually very much more active than it first appears.”*



# Sharing and working together...

*“... with the reduced resource we’ve got it’s encouraging people to pool resources and work together so we can try to be more effective.”*

## Starting something new...

*“New initiatives are much easier to start up at the group level, but much harder to maintain, because the level of ownership at early stages is much less.”*



# A ministry of oversight and support

*“the role of the priest is to support the ministry of the church not to do it.”*

## Changing perceptions

*“The dream ticket would be if you had active, committed, mature Christians in each place who had the time and energy to share the leadership with me. We don’t have anywhere near enough of those people I am trying to train them and have just run a lay worship leaders’ course, but if I’m doing training, something else has to go.”*



# Recommendations... 1

- Mission and growth are possible where time and space is created for them to happen
- Need to free up time and energy of clergy and lay people
- Culture of discipleship and nurture essential
- Enable, envision and equip the ministry of lay people
- High quality local training

# Recommendations... 2

- Lift burdens of:
  - Administration
  - Finance
  - Governance
  - Decision making
  - Office holders
- Address congregationism, improve collegiality, co-operation
- Ecumenical working should be priority



# Recommendations... 3

- Training for clergy, IME Phases 1 and 2, CMD
- Development of the ministry of lay people
- Buildings....



# Implications 1

1. Be confident about the things you are already doing.
2. Develop the spirituality and discipleship of rural congregations
3. Quality of worship is important – no matter what the style of the service
4. Different churches in multi-church groups need to work together for mutual benefit
5. The mixed economy is the way forward
6. Creative partnership with other churches, groups and denominations is important

# Implications 2

7. Sharing faith is the responsibility of everyone
8. Lay people are essential for the life of the rural church
9. Relationships with local schools are very important
10. Creative activities with children and young people are possible by working together
11. Recognise the value of working ecumenically for an effective Christian presence
12. The further development of the ministry of lay people is crucial

# Implications 3

- 13. Leadership needs to be envisioning, enabling and equipping
- 14. Proper training and support needed for clergy
- 15. Administrators can help lift burdens
- 16. Do your structures and governance bodies facilitate mission?
- 17. Do your church buildings speak of God to others?

