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Some challenging data about Christianity in New Zealand

It has been interesting over the last month or so to hear numerous important statistics being articulated about Christianity in New Zealand.

In this issue we highlight some of the data shared with the recent New Zealand Christian Leaders' Congress by Associate Professor Geoff Troughton of Victoria University. His presentation, **"A Snapshot of Christianity and the Churches in New Zealand"**, can be watched here.



From the 2018 Census (the 2023 data is not yet available), Dr Troughton noted that 37% of New Zealand census respondents identify as "Christian" (in 2013 it

was 49.1%, in 2006 it was 54.2%, and back in the 1960s it was over 80%).

The substantial decline of Christian affiliation was matched by a new high of 48.2% of New Zealanders identifying with “no religion” (up from 41.9% in 2013).

In both categories (Christian and “no religion”), Maori and NZ European percentages were the same, and growth in “no religion” is strongest among young people.

Dr Troughton commented that Christianity remains “by a long way the largest religion in New Zealand”, that other religions were only 8%), and that the growth in other religions is largely fuelled by immigration. Nevertheless 27% of Asian people in New Zealand identify as Christian. Auckland is both more diverse and more Christian than other major New Zealand cities.

From the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (a longitudinal survey-based study begun in 2009), Dr Troughton reported that in 2019 about 14.4% of New Zealanders attended church at least monthly (down from 20–25% in 2009), but the largest proportion of those attended weekly.

In response to all that, we might ask ourselves: what is behind all these changes? Clearly, the church is being buffeted by many ideological moods that pervade western society, not least scepticism, post-modernism, consumerism, individualism, and hedonism.

How can the Church stand, in the face of such powerful tides? Not by complacency, not by complicity, not by just doing just what we have always done.

These are times that call the Church to a more robust faith in Christ, to greater love, to more prayer, to more power of the Holy Spirit, to more authentic Christian living, to more effective discipleship, and to more passion for sharing our faith with people around us in a way that respects and connects.

In the next NZCN News we will reflect on some findings of the 2023 Faith and Belief Study and the 2023 Church Life Survey

Mā te Atua koutou e tiaki e manaaki i ngā wa katoa

May the Lord bless and keep you at all times



Dr Stuart Lange

National Director

and the NZCN team



Gayann Phillips

General Manager



Congress videos available online!

A fantastic opportunity to catch up on what many of the speakers shared at Congress.

[Watch videos here](#)

Videos are added to the website as soon as they are available

- **Re-gearing and renewing our churches for our current and future contexts**
Rev Dr Maja Whitaker, Rev Dr Clint Ussher, Tim Hodge, Ps James and Viv Anson, Dr Christa L McKirland, Dong-Bin Kim, Dr John Tucker, Alan Vink
- **Aotearoa Earth (Revelation 7:9-17)**
Dr Paul Windsor
- **Global Church Update: The Growing Edges of the Global Church**
Dr Jay Mātenga
- **Māori, Te Rongopai, Te Tiriti, and New Zealand church and society**
Bradford Haami, Jade Hohaia, Dr Malcolm Falloon, Dr Alistair Reese, Rev Keri-Ann Hokianga, and Hana Seddon
- **How can Christians speak well in our current context?**
Tim Wilson, Sophia Sinclair, Phil Guyan, Maryanne Spurdle
- **Threats to freedoms of Christian belief, practice, and speech**
Prof Paul Moon, Jonathan Ayling, Alex Penk, and Stephanie Johnston
- **Unity of the Church**
Ps Jonathan Dove, Ps Phil Coates, and Dr Stuart Lange
- **Reaching Aotearoa New Zealand with the Gospel today**
Panel led by Dr Mark Keown
- **Reviving the Church**
Tak Bhana
- **Confidence in the Gospel, in our current context**
Panel led by Professor Paul Trebilco
- **Ideas/Ideologies helping re-shape New Zealand society and church**
Dr Roshan Allpress & Rev Mark Maney
- **The spiritual renewal of the church in New Zealand**
Bishop Steve Maina
- **The Big Picture**
Dr Stuart Lange
- **A snapshot of Christianity and the Churches in NZ**
Associate Professor Geoff Troughton
- **Issues facing the New Zealand church**
Panel of 18 Christian leaders



Help spread the news...

New Zealand society is in a period of significant change, much of it away from the Christian faith and values. Christian voices in society are either ignored or scorned.

We need Christian voices which are positive, sensible, reasoned, well-informed, and clear.

Forward to a friend

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