

What the People Said: Survey Report

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LICC
2003

Introduction

'What the People Said' is the report of questionnaire research linked to the 2003 LICC publication *Imagine how we can reach the UK*. *Imagine* was intended as a catalyst for a conversation about mission in today's context. Its intention was to develop a shared diagnosis of the Church and society in order to move towards developing a shared strategy for reaching the UK.

Readers of the 2003 article were asked to give their reactions to the essay and relate it to their own experiences. Over 800 people responded.

They were asked to describe the issues they had faced over the last year

- at home
- at work
- at church
- in their personal spiritual lives

and to think about how the ministries of their church had equipped them to live through these challenges as followers of Christ. This report details the survey findings.

Imagine how we can reach the UK is the launch publication of LICC's Imagine Project. The Imagine Project's vision is to recover the central task of whole-life disciple-making in our church communities - in ways that connect authentically to contemporary UK culture. To find out more about the project visit our web site www.licc.org.uk/imagine or call LICC (020 7399 9555) for a copy of the 'Imagine Project Overview'.

What the People said

One of the purposes of engaging people in the Imagine conversation was to gain a wider perspective on the challenges of living as a Christian in today's world. What are the issues that people face - at home, at work, at church, in their personal spiritual lives? And, importantly, in what way has their belonging to a local church been helpful or prepared them to deal with those issues?

The questionnaire went on to probe what opportunities these respondents saw for helping Christians grow in their effectiveness for Christ in the contexts of daily life.

Amongst a majority of over 25 year old, fairly committed, mainly evangelical Christians there are clearly some key issues of living for which they feel inadequately equipped to make a difference for Christ.

Only human: it's obvious really

Day by day Christians face the range of life issues that are the experience of millions in the western world, believers or not. Those issues are clearly shaped by their lifestage - whether they have young families, or are retired empty-nesters, and so on. And they are heavily influenced by their particular circumstances - whether or not they are employed, whether they are single or not, healthy or not.

But essentially, the key characteristic of the lives that these Christians were describing is that they are - human!

As human beings in a fallen world Christians are not immune to the daily challenges of life that shape us as people. This is the backdrop for Christians to live out their faith and hope in the Creator God who loved, redeemed and is renewing them. Life today in our rapidly changing, radically changed world is, for many people, bewildering.

So there is an enormous opportunity to connect to the needs and aspirations of non-yet-believers, merely by the fact that Christians themselves both feel and experience them.

The question we all face

Both believers and non-yet-believers face the same question: how are they going to live well through the challenges they face?

Christians, however, face a supplementary question. It's the one posed by 1Peter 3:15. How are they going to live through the challenges they face **with hope**, so that they have an answer to everyone who asks them to give a reason for the hope that they have?

In God's economy there is a wealth of hope available to his people (Rom 15:13). But it grows through the experiences of the reality of life (Rom 5:3,4) - the joy and the pain of being human, in Christ.

Experiences in church

To what degree has the life and ministries of the church helped and prepared people to face the challenges in different areas of their lives? Asking the question about the quality of preaching in these people's churches is misleading. 56% say it's 'very' or 'quite helpful'. 79% say it's 'OK' or better.

To dig deeper we need to probe specific areas of life - home, work, church, personal spiritual lives. Then we find that, on average, 60% do not consider the life and ministries of their church to be significantly helping them to handle the issues of life. It varies by question. 42% felt the church helped in their personal spiritual life; 40% with the issues at home; 37% with issues at church. But only 27% experienced significant help and support in their work issues - the context where they have most relationships with non-Christians.

Yet what people are looking for isn't 'rocket science'. A bit of Bible knowledge and application, a prayer partner, maybe some pastoral care.

Whole-life discipleship

All Christians, individually, and as a body, face the challenge of working out authentic, whole-life, Spirit-filled living amongst the pressures and dynamics of a rapidly changing, post-Christian culture. In this, it seems that the help and equipping they receive through the life and ministries of their churches falls short of the mark.

At its heart this points to the need for a shift in church culture, a shift to become a learning community, a community which wrestles openly and learns together about life, faith, God, uncertainty, joy and pain. It's a community that can be real, whilst being rooted in hope and while building one another up in a profound confidence in God's goodness, faithfulness and love.

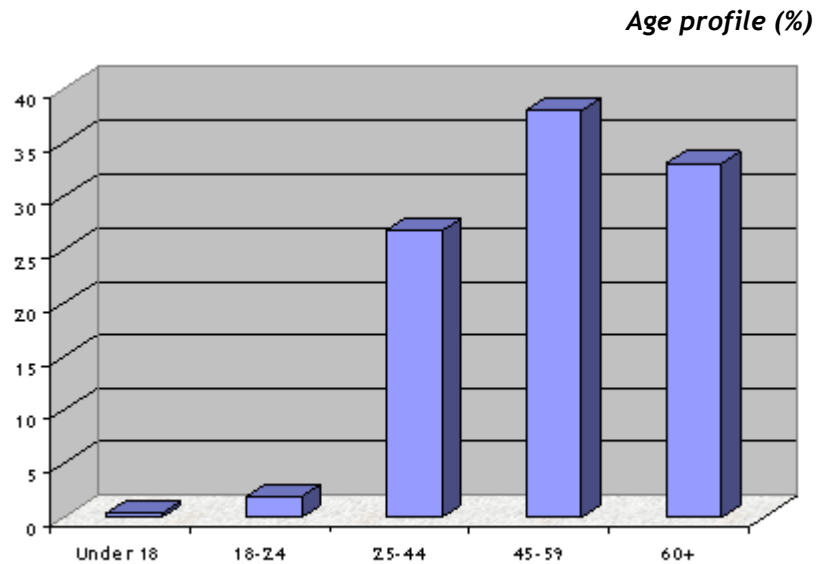
It points to the need for churches to regenerate dynamic disciple-making at the heart of their church life, to prepare people to live Christianly in a radically changing world.

It's a long-term, demanding and daunting task.

In the short-term, and on a practical level there are some helpful pointers in this survey which could shape a church's preaching and teaching ministries. They could be used to develop the pastoral care of a community, identify material for small groups to tackle together, stimulate prayer, engage thinkers on a quest for wisdom. If nothing else they provide a checklist for a church leadership to ask of their own communities - what issues are my people facing?

Sample: the people in the survey

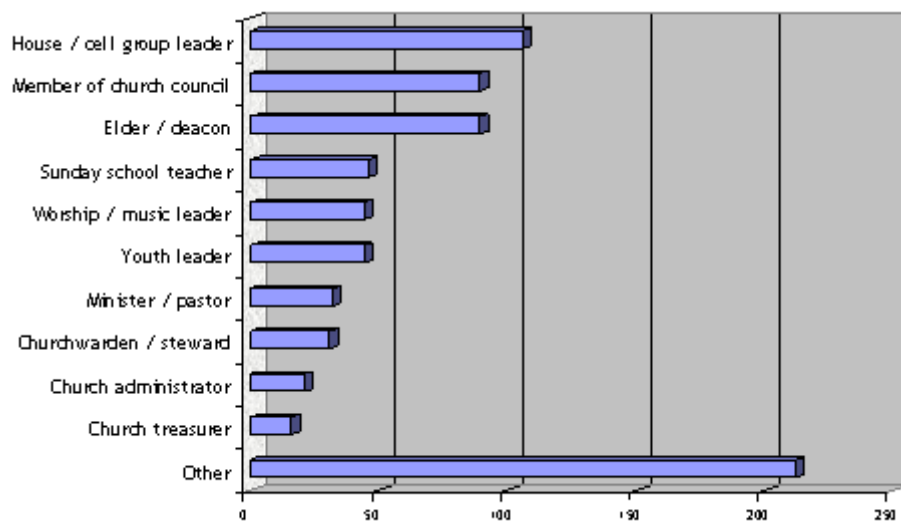
LICC received over 800 self-completion questionnaires from readers of *Imagine how we can reach the UK*. The essay had been mailed out to the LICC database and had been published in the Evangelical Alliance's magazine *idea*. The sample reflects those mailing lists. Respondents were split fairly evenly between men and women, but were mainly from people aged over 25.



Source: LICC Imagine research, 2003

This means that the sample size is solid, but slightly under-representative of younger people. This doesn't undermine the conclusions of the survey but probably indicates that certain issues particularly pertinent to the under 25 year olds have not been highlighted. Responses were, of course, from those concerned enough to complete the questionnaire - people motivated enough to respond without an incentive, to find a stamp and a post-box. However, this sample does not reflect the views of a disaffected minority. The majority of respondents were people who were fully engaged with their churches, committed to serve.

Church responsibility (numbers)

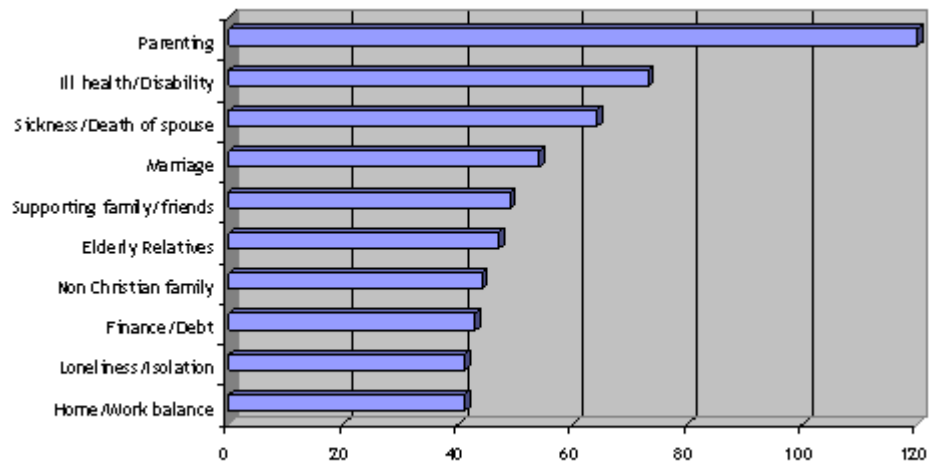


Source: LICC Imagine research, 2003

People @ home

Asked about the issues they had faced at home in the last year, people were anxious about being parents, concerned about their marriages, struggling with singleness, death, illness and disability. They cared about their wider family.

What issues have you faced at home in the last year? (numbers)



Source: LIOC Imagine research, 2003

Top 5 Issues @ Home:

1. Parenting
2. Ill health/disability
3. Sickness/Death of Spouse
4. Marriage
5. Supporting family/friends

"Family pressures of two active children and home responsibilities shared with working husband. Tiredness. Guilt at not doing more."

"Family dispersing. Failed relationships in wider family."

"Loss of mother ... parenting a toddler ... tiredness ... lack of time ... almost non-existent sex life ... some poor health"

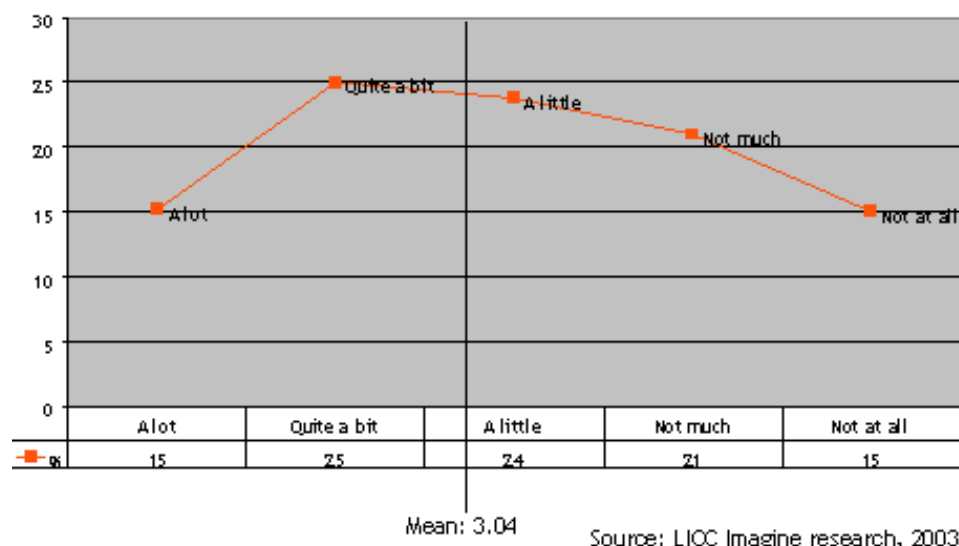
"Death of parent. Disposal of large family home of 40 years. Relocation of remaining parent. Marriage relationship. Teenage children."

"Relationship with girlfriend. Temptation. Failing to keep up with study."

Read more about home 'in their own words' on page 7.

When asked about the extent to which the life and ministry of their church had equipped them to deal with these issues at home for around 60% of respondents their church was not significantly helping or preparing them to do so. On average, the church had equipped them 'a little' to deal with the issues they face at home.

To what extent has the overall ministry of your church helped or prepared you to deal with these issues at home?



Home: in their own words

In their own words, these are some issues that the 'What the People Said' survey respondents had faced at home in the last year. And the extent to which the overall ministry of the church helped and prepared them to deal with them.

A general sample of the home issues

"How to manage finances. How to be a female breadwinner and maintain marital relationship. How to cope with childlessness and the possibility of fertility treatment. When is it OK to have a rest or just have fun."

Helped or prepared? - Not at all
Female, 25-44

"Concerns of any parent as we watch our children grow up, make decisions and tumble into love, and debt; happiness and depression."

Helped or prepared? - Not much
Female, 45-59

"I'm sure everyone thinks we have a perfect marriage, we are 'high profile' members, but it's often a struggle."

Helped or prepared? - Not much
Female, 25-44

"Family pressures of two active children and home responsibilities shared with working husband. Tiredness. Guilt at not doing more."

Helped or prepared? - Not much
Female, 25-44

"Relationship with girlfriend. Temptation. Failing to keep up with study."
Helped or prepared? - Not much
Male, 25-44

"As a full-time carer I am physically attacked and abused each day by the person [family member] I care for, yet have to remain caring and patient. I try to show him God's love through me but frequently fail and find coping with the stress tough. Also have a son with many problems. How do I balance a wish for church life with a desperate need for caring for family members and still have a life of my own?"
Helped or prepared? - Not much
Female, 45-59

"As a retired couple we live simply and the Lord's presence and guidance is real."
Helped or prepared? - Quite a bit
Male, over 60

"Loneliness - being single."
Helped or prepared? - A little
Male, 25-44

Parenting

"Problems over many years with son with drug problems, alcohol and mental health breakdown."
Helped or prepared? - Not at all
Female, 45-59

"Bringing up 2 teenage children - one with OCD. Work/life balance. Guilt!! Oh, lots of guilt!"
Helped or prepared? - Quite a bit
Female, 45-59

"At church I am reminded of God's love and His perspective which keep me going as a single parent and sole wage earner."
Helped or prepared? - A lot
Female, 45-59

"Some years ago my wife and I faced the news that our younger son was gay."
Helped or prepared? - Not at all
Male, over 60

"Pregnancy of my teenage daughter."
Helped or prepared? - Not much
Female, 45-59

"Teenagers growing up ... sexually dysfunctional ...exhaustion ... depression ... low thyroid gland"
Helped or prepared? - Not at all
Male, 45-59

"Devastating news about a child - now adult - who was abused as a child. Youngest adult child finally leaving home. Grieving a dead parent. Staying friends with siblings who fight each other. Staying in communication with a sibling who has turned to the occult." Helped or prepared? - Not at all
Female, 45-59

"Supporting a son who chose to 'drop out' of the conventional education system."
Helped or prepared? - Not at all
Female, 45-59

Ill-health and disability

"Living daily with multiple sclerosis and a young family. Disease is regressive and debilitating physically. Bringing up 3 young children."

Helped or prepared? - Not much

Female, 45-59

"Imminent birth of a grandchild likely to be disabled."

Helped or prepared? - A lot

Male, over 60

"Depression." Helped or prepared? - Not much

Female, 25-44

Death

"My wife died last year so I am now on my own. During this time the church has been very helpful spiritually and practically."

Helped or prepared? - A lot

Male, over 60

"Death of parent. Disposal of large family home of 40 years. Relocation of remaining parent. Marriage relationship. Teenage children."

Helped or prepared? - Not at all

Female, 45-59

Marriage and family

1. *First year of living alone since death of my beloved husband*

2. *Sister diagnosed with cancer*

3. *Army son in Gulf war*

Helped or prepared? - A lot

Female, over 60

"Family dispersing. Failed relationships in wider family."

Helped or prepared? - Quite a bit

Female, 45-59

"Communication. Child rearing. Depression. Marital problems."

Helped or prepared? - Not much

Male, 25-44

"Wife's HRT problems/mood swings

2. *Graduate son long-term unemployed*

3. *Daughter's marriage to a man whom we find 'difficult'*

4. *Ageing and infirm mother-in-law"*

Helped or prepared? - Not much

Male 45-59

1. *Stress of being married to an overworked, overstressed secondary school teacher □ knock on effects of lack of family time, exhausted husband.*

2. *Child-rearing - work/life balance, mum and part-time work issues."*

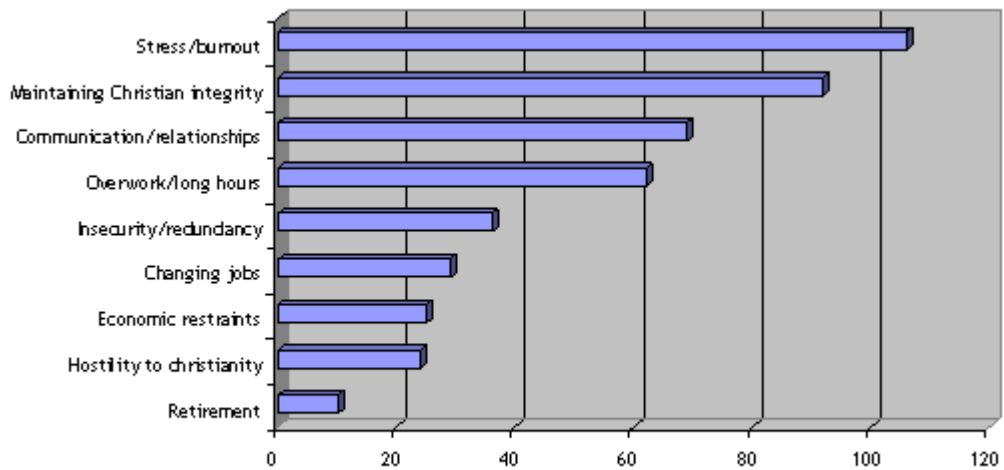
Helped or prepared? - Not much

Female, 25-44

People @ Work

At work people are confronted with the consequences of our contemporary workplace in terms of stress and burnout, overwork and long hours, insecurity and redundancy. As at home, communication and relationship issues also dominate. And they also care about their integrity as Christians at work.

What issues have you faced at work in the last year? (numbers excl. retirees)



Source: LIOC Imagine research, 2003

Top 5 issues @ Work:

1. Stress/burnout
2. Maintaining Christian integrity
3. Relationships
4. Overwork
5. Insecurity/Redundancy

"Steadily rising work-load. Increasing public expectations. Limited resources (human/financial).Externally imposed targets (government). Not enough time in the day. Demoralised work force. Stress!!!!"

"I am a housewife/mum working in that role quite long hours, but it is almost invisible as a role."

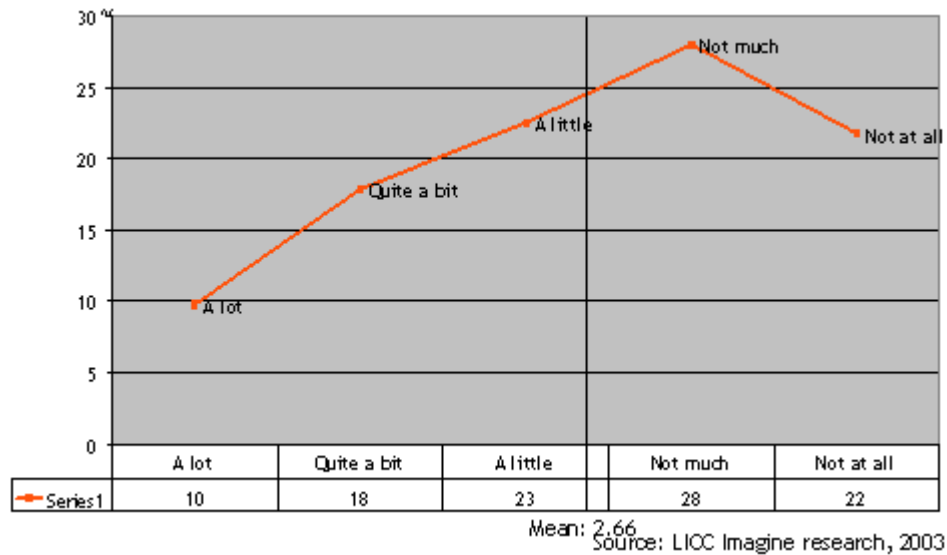
"Difficulty balancing the time spent working part-time with financial targets. Feelings of inadequacy of Christian witness at work."

"Dismissal, followed by fruitless job-hunting - only a small number (2!) made any effort to encourage and assist. Most simply asked "Have you got a job yet?" That hurts."

Read more about work 'in their own words' on page 12.

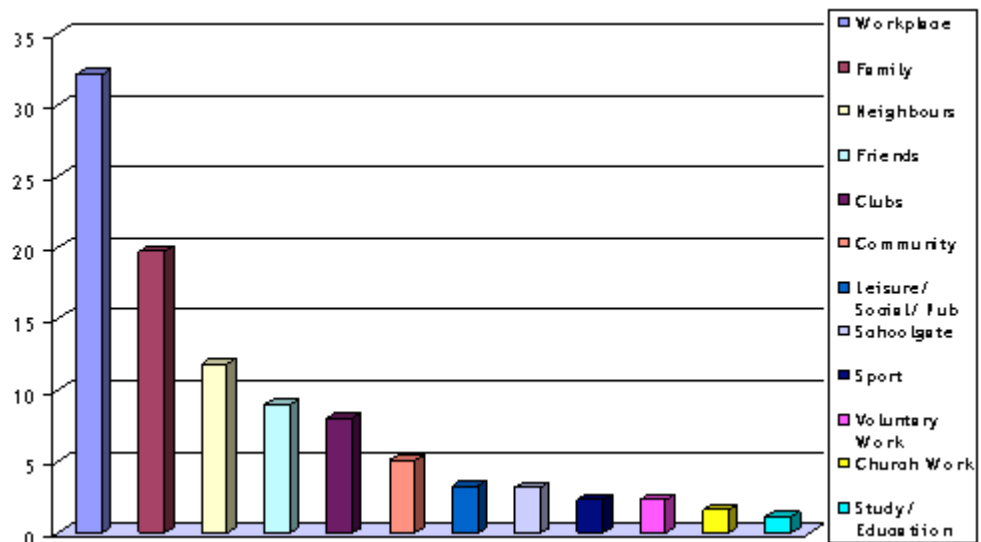
On average, churches had not equipped these people very much to deal with these issues. 73% of committed church members did not consider their church to be helping them significantly with their work lives.

To what extent has the overall ministry of your church helped or prepared you to deal with these issues at work?



The lack of equipping for the workplace is particularly acute because, as this survey confirms, it is in the workplace where those who work outside the home have the most relationships with not-yet-believers

Primary relational contexts with non-Christians



Source: :LICC Imagine Reseach 2003

Work: in their own words

In their own words, these are some issues that the 'What the People Said' survey respondents had faced at work in the last year. And the extent to which the overall ministry of the church helped and prepared them to deal with them.

Stress/burnout

"Stress and anxiety, even anger, especially when there is a prospect of losing my employment in the company's new structure planning."

Helped or prepared? - Not much

Male, 25-44

"Sickness and having to quit work."

Helped or prepared? - A little

Female, 25-44

"How to cope with workload of teaching, helping in community and dealing with husband and three 18+ children. A class of unhelpful and disrespectful Y10 students finally caused me to resign."

Helped or prepared? - Not much

Female, 45-59

"A feeling of inadequacy. Stress."

Helped or prepared? - Not much

Male, 45-59

"Isolation - work from home. Failing to give my best. Jealousy."

Helped or prepared? - Not at all

Male, 25-44

"Mergers/acquisitions. Performance management/disciplinary issues. Attempted suicide of staff member."

Helped or prepared? - Not at all

Male, 25-44

"Looking after disabled mother-in-law at home is 'work', so ... resentment is a huge problem for me, plus financial difficulty due to lack of earnings - husband is disabled and does not work too. Rest of family (on their side) are no help in any way."

Helped or prepared? - A little

Female, 45-59

"1. Inner city comprehensive in Liverpool 2. Attacked, stoned 3. Difficult colleagues; head-lack of support 4. Changing job - IT, Ofsted, pressures"

Helped or prepared? - A lot

Male, 45-59

Maintaining Christian integrity

"Ethics - truth in business when it affects your profit and viability."

Helped or prepared? - Not at all

Female, 45-59

"Expanding and developing my role at work. Taking on more responsibilities and doing more training. I am planning to do a nurse prescribing course then I'd be able to prescribe post-coital contraception. So what will I do about that?"

Helped or prepared - not at all

Female, 45-59

"Criticism from clients, pressure of workload, unethical demands, misunderstandings with colleagues."

Helped or prepared? - Quite a bit

Male, 45-59

"Dealing with daily temptations to abuse my integrity."

Helped or prepared? - Not much

Male, 25-44

"A Christian colleague underwent gender realignment surgery - male to female. Quite a major issue for me to get my head around. As a social worker/probation officer I work in an environment within which sexuality is high on the agenda. Again, how as a Christian do I work within that environment? Issues of trade unionism and workers - management relations, fairness."

Helped or prepared? - A little

Male, 25-44

"Pressure to work Sunday. Expected as a manager to cheat the staff."

Helped or prepared? - Not much

Male, 45-59

Relationships

"Unfair treatment by managers. My small cell church have provided a shoulder to cry on, practical advice, encouragement."

Helped or prepared? - A lot

Male, 25-44

"Finding the courage to take the initiative in conversations."

Helped or prepared? - A little

Male, 25-44

Overwork

"Too much to do and not enough time to do it in."

Helped or prepared? - A little

Female, 25-44

"Long hours at work (self-employed) and increasing employment at church = Depression for the first time in life - unable to face leaving house for several weeks."

Helped or prepared? - Quite a bit

Male, 45-59

"Pressure on my time. Church helped by releasing me from my committee roles, so I've been able to fulfil my vocation roles!"

Helped or prepared? - Quite a bit

Female, over 60

"Work/Life Balance. How to balance 'going the extra mile' with maintaining health and home life. How to encourage young people to protect their sexual health without either preaching at them or condoning sexual promiscuity. How to work hard and maintain high standards but not make work God."

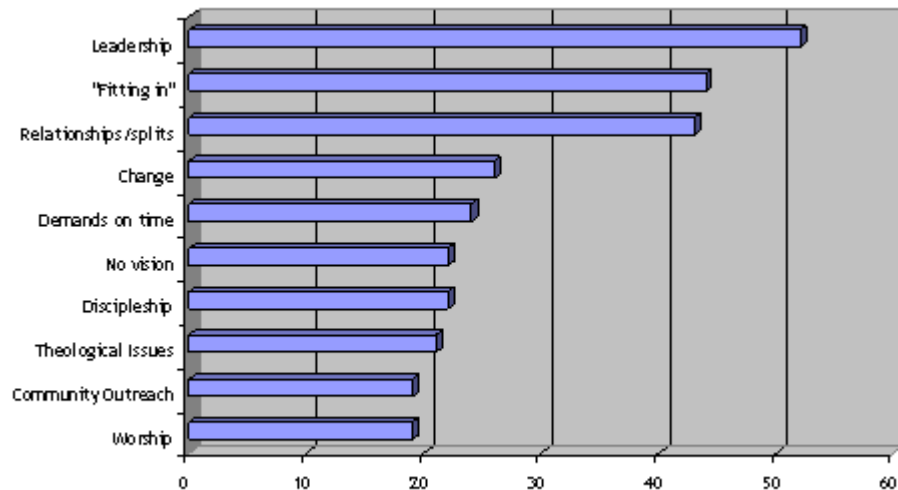
Helped or prepared? - Not much

Female, 25-44

People @ church

At church, relationships are core, with people struggling with issues of leadership, or feeling that they don't 'fit in'. Leadership problems range widely from overbearing, heavy-handed leadership to non-existent, 'fuzzy' leadership, sometimes due to interregnums. 'Fitting in' would cover issues such as a lack of fellowship, misuse of abilities, or a general lack of mutual pastoral support.

What issues have you faced at church in the last year? (numbers)



Source: LIOC Imagine research, 2003

Top 5 issues @ Church:

1. Leadership
2. Fitting In
3. Relationships/Splits
4. Change
5. Demands on time

"Sense of frustration with lack of direction and vision. Feeling of disconnection from church. Disagreement with some actions of leaders."

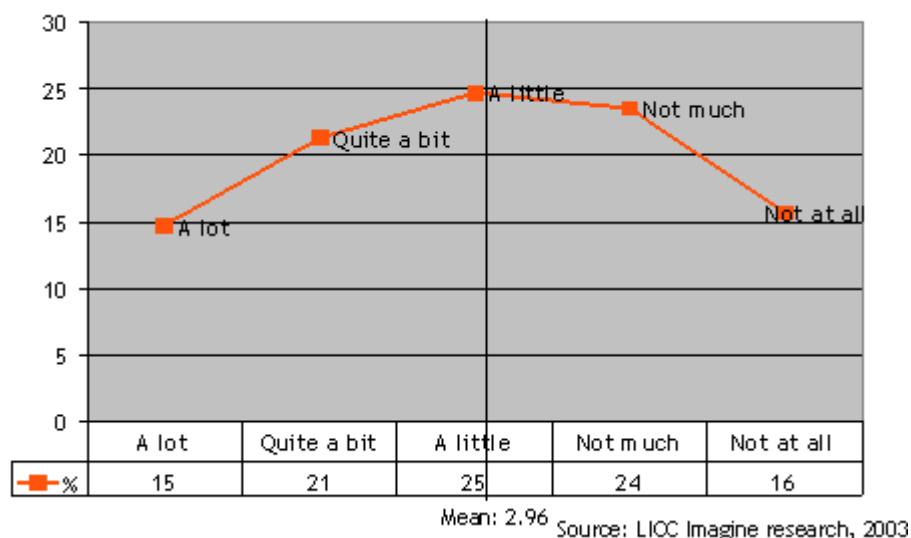
"Constantly being asked to do more. A new initiative every fortnight - LITERALLY!"

"Very traditional, rural, small church Could travel to a more lively church but feel we should be part of community. No children's work at all Our children are all switched off by the traditional services."

Read more about work 'in their own words' on page 15.

On average, the church has equipped them 'a little' to deal with the issues they face at church. However, two thirds of these respondents felt that their churches were not significantly helping them to deal with the issues they were facing there.

To what extent has the overall ministry of your church helped or prepared you to deal with these issues at church?



Church: in their own words

In their own words, these are some issues that the 'What the People Said' survey respondents had faced at church in the last year. And the extent to which the overall ministry of the church helped and prepared them to deal with them.

Leadership

"Too much top down leadership. Lack of encouragement. An over emphasis on "worship" and very little discipleship."

Helped or prepared? - Not much
Male, 45-59

"Interregnum. Lack of openness to the Holy Spirit."

Helped or prepared? - Not much
Female, 25-44

"3 years of dominating leadership which created a worn out church membership and desire to leave church; the stress of whether church lays more on you in addition to work / home and family and our obligation to work out 'ministry' inside church as opposed to the world."

Helped or prepared? - Not much
Male, 45-59

"Control freak' pastors. 'Only one way is right' attitudes."

Helped or prepared? - Not much
Male, 45-59

"Conflicting views between leadership team and new vicar."
Helped or prepared? - A little
Female, 25-44

"Living in the gap between being a significant player at work but having no leadership role within the church because of gender."
Helped or prepared? - A little
Female, 25-44

Fitting in

"No-one really wants to know when you're chronically ill. They want you to be positive, to pretend everything is OK when it's not."
Helped or prepared? - Not much
Female, 45-59

"Lack of involvement in church life. Unable to find somewhere to serve others with my talents and gifts."
Helped or prepared? - Not at all
Male, 45-59

"Lack of real welcome at new church. Lack of recognition of ability to contribute to ministry."
Helped or prepared? - Not at all
Male, 45-59

"Lack of fellowship."
Helped or prepared? - Not at all
Male, 25-44

"Conservatism about women's ministry."
Helped or prepared? - A little
Female, 25-44

"Boredom, sense of unreality worsened by church services, many songs and sermons."
Helped or prepared? - A little
Female, 45-59

"Boredom ... Embarrassed bringing friends to church."
Helped or prepared? - A little
Male, 25-44

"Lack of relevancy and application in ministry."
Helped or prepared? - Not much
Male, 45-59

"Christians do not welcome the mentally disabled - so how do I fit me and my family in? 'Oh you're so good', people say - but never offer to help."
Helped or prepared? - Not much
Female, 45-59

"I have been a Christian for many many years. I need to be challenged - it is easy to coast along. I have no one who is interested in my spiritual life. I'm sure if I asked the senior pastor he would seek to help."
Helped or prepared? - Not much
Female, 45-59

"Overcoming the problem of being single in the church. Overcoming the fact that church is totally boring."
Helped or prepared? - Not at all
Male, 25-44

"Cannot/have not been able to find my place. Superficiality. See people come off Alpha with little follow-up discipleship. Leaders appear to consider me rather irrelevant."
Helped or prepared? - Not much
Male, 45-59

Relationships/splits

"Helping new Christians in homegroup in relationships with non-Christian spouses."
Helped or prepared? - Quite a bit
Male, 45-59

"A leadership split; consequent congregation split."
Helped or prepared? - Not at all
Male, 25-44

"Increasing number of children in church causing conflict in services."
Helped or prepared? - A little
Female, 45-59

"What to do with the youth."
Helped or prepared? - Not much
Male, 25-44

"Handling disagreement/conflict."
Helped or prepared? - Not much
Female, 45-59

"Acceptance by church of divorced friend."
Helped or prepared? - Not much
Female, 25-44

Change

"I would say that the last five years of my 25 years at the same church has changed and they now listen to real issues and the reality in people's lives. We are a cell church and work within the community more. Change has been a struggle."
Helped or prepared? - Quite a bit
Female 45-59

"Changes in leadership and organisation leaving us feeling out on a limb."
Helped or prepared? - Not much
Male, 45-59

"Major change in structure (transitioning to cell church)" Helped or prepared? - A lot
Female, 45-59

"Change from house group to cell group. Need to be more outward-looking."
Helped or prepared? – Quite a bit
Female, 25-44

Demands on time

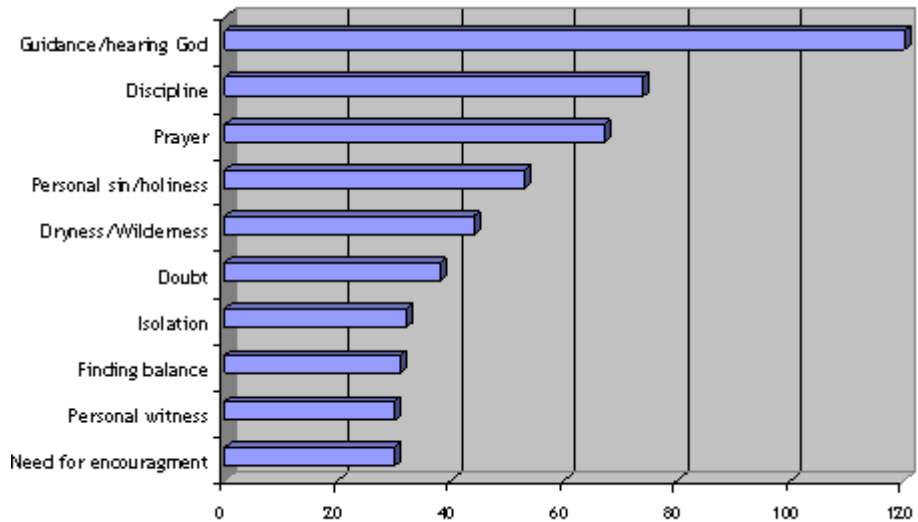
"Doing too much at church - expectations to 'do' but little support or recognition when you say no or take a break."
Helped or prepared? - Not much
Female, 25-44

"Why do I feel excluded? Many demands and little support."
Helped or prepared? - Not at all
Male 25-44

People's personal spiritual lives

Needs within people's personal spiritual lives were dominated by three Ds. Firstly, there was direction. Nearly 120 people, one the biggest single responses, recognised that 'hearing from God' and 'receiving guidance' were their major issues. Secondly, there was discipline: learning to live out their faith in the context of busyness and a non-Christian culture, to develop disciplines such as prayer that would make a difference to their lives. Thirdly, there was doubt, which came up in many forms - dryness, being in the wilderness, sensing isolation.

What issues have you faced in your personal spiritual life in the last year? (numbers)



Source: LICC Imagine research, 2003

Top 5 issues in their personal spiritual lives:

1. Guidance
2. Discipline
3. Prayer
4. Personal holiness
5. Dryness

"A hunger to know God better and a desire to have a deeper personal relationship with him. I'm tired of sermons telling me how to be a Christian and focussing on me and what I do or don't do."

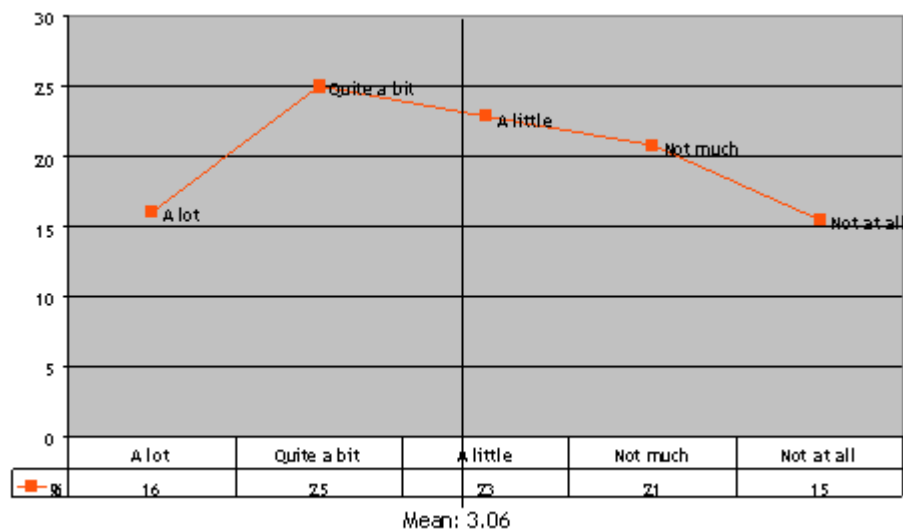
"Prayerlessness. Lack of guidance. Need to be a Christian father and family leader."

"Mid-life crisis - do our lives count? Ran a Y course for all our non-church friends and no-one got 'saved'. Hard work!"

Read more about work 'in their own words' on page 17.

On average, the church has equipped them 'a little' to deal with the issues they face in their personal spiritual lives. Still 60% felt that their churches were not significantly helping them or preparing them to deal with their issues.

To what extent has the overall ministry of your church helped or prepared you to deal with these issues?



Personal spiritual life: in their own words

In their own words, these are some issues that the 'What the People Said' survey respondents had faced in their personal spiritual lives in the last year. And the extent to which the overall ministry of the church helped and prepared them to deal with them.

Guidance

"How to hear from the Holy Spirit. How to find time to read the Bible and pray. Guidance. How to handle stress and failure."

Helped or prepared? - Quite a bit

Male, 25-44

"Dealing with fear and anxiety about the future - trusting God."

Helped or prepared? - A little

Female, 25-44

"I am a Christian who came to God at a mature age. No one in church leadership seems to have time or inclination to answer the unanswerable questions so I work out my own salvation."

Helped or prepared? - Not much

Male, 25-44

Learning to trust God completely for the future. Accepting now that I'll never have a child."

Helped or prepared? - Not at all

Female, 45-59

"Spiritual direction - God's guidance - where do I fit?"

Helped or prepared? - Not much

Female, 25-44

"Learning to trust God more fully as health and mobility fails."

Helped or prepared? - Quite a bit

Female, over 60

Prayer

"How to pray. Struggling with pornography."

Helped or prepared? - A lot

Male, 25-44

"Doubt. Unable to pray."

Helped or prepared? - A little

Female, 25-44

"Listening to God in prayer and Bible study. Meditating on God's word."

Helped or prepared? - A lot

Male, 25-44

"Being effective consistent prayer warrior. Maintain purity. Concern for others."

Helped or prepared? - Not much

Male, 45-59

Personal holiness

"Battle of sexuality."

Helped or prepared? - Not at all

Male, 45-59

"Sexual temptation - spiritual emptiness - lack of faith - indifference."

Helped or prepared? - Not at all

Male, 25-44

"Life in a sex-mad world."

Helped or prepared? - Not at all

Male, 45-59

"Inability to apply Bible to my life directly, little prayer, pressure to conform, dealing with temptation and sin."

Helped or prepared? - Not at all

Male, 25-44

"A crisis! At age 60 and, for various reasons feel that I have failed both God and my family."

Helped or prepared? - Not at all

Female, over 60

"Homosexuality."

Helped or prepared? - Not at all.

Male, 18-24

"Doubt due to grief, isolation and loneliness."

Helped or prepared? - Not at all

Female, 25-44

1. *Loneliness/ sense of failure/rejection*
2. *Doubts of faith about God*
3. *My increasing awareness of my homosexual tendencies"*

Helped or prepared? - Not much

Male, 45-59

"Dealing with immoral, impure heart especially sexual lust."

Helped or prepared? - A lot

Male, over 60

"Crisis of faith following the terminal illness of a young woman in the church - a sense of 'where is God in this?'"

Helped or prepared? - Not at all

Female, 25-44

"Recovery from trauma of broken marriage. Depression/guilt/worthlessness to God - total failure and fear that God could not accept me."

Helped or prepared? - A lot

Male, over 60

Dryness

"Disillusionment after YEARS of very active work and deeply held beliefs and practice."

Helped or prepared? - Not much

Female, 45-59

*"Spiritual isolation. Loss of spiritual direction. Withering of prayer life
Loss of joy in worship and bible study. 'Gone is my expectation from the Lord.'"*

Helped or prepared? - Not at all

Male, 45-59

"Why after 30 years as a Christian do I still have no assurance of salvation? I struggle daily with doubts and feel that if I was truly saved, God would have let me know by now - so am I excluded by him also?"

Helped or prepared? - Not at all

Female, 45-59

"Not as close to Christ as I used to be. No mid-week fellowship (shift work). Finished counselling and 'Get real' course - feel post course blues. Feel like I'm taking a 'shopping list' to God in prayer life."

Helped or prepared? - A little

Male, 45-59

"Spiritual dryness. Trying to go deeper in intercession. Jealousy of contemporaries."

Helped or prepared? - Quite a bit

Male, 45-59

"Wanting my faith to be more real."

Helped or prepared? - A lot

Female, 25-44

"The last 15 years exposure to Charismatic Church and the constant desire for God to be a God of miracles in our midst with all the expectations of the many and the gradual disillusionment of many. My own current reappraisal of who God is and what we may expect from him."

Helped or prepared? - Not much

Male, 45-59

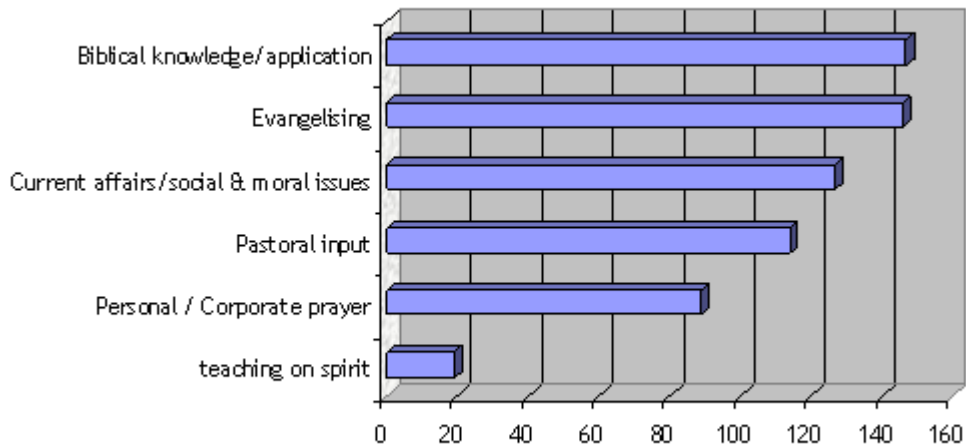
Perceptions of knowledge/support needed

Respondents were asked to think about what knowledge and support they thought would help them to make a difference for Christ in the contexts where they have ongoing relationships with non-Christians. The responses indicate fairly basic needs. As one leader of a theological college commented, 'It's not rocket science'!

Knowledge

Many said that it would be helpful to know the Bible better, and particularly how to apply it into their own context. They wanted easily-accessible facilities, events and tools to help them develop the skills they need.

What knowledge/information would help you be more effective for Christ?
(numbers not %)



Top 3 Knowledge Needs

1. Bible knowledge/application
2. Evangelising
3. Current affairs/moral issues

"[Church shows a] lack of relevance to daily life. Preaching largely pietistic - almost always concerning salvation and not how the gospel is to be worked out in every sphere of life."

"I suppose I doubt whether God has something essential and exhilarating to say about how to live in this world."

Support

The primary support mechanism looked for was a prayer partner or group. Given the fact that almost all respondents were involved in their churches, often in some kind of leadership role, it is surprising that this remains an overwhelming need. This is indicative, perhaps, of the nature of the prayer support that people are looking for. They are likely to be praying with people in the context of their church ministry, but they are not necessarily getting the opportunity to pray in a real way about some of the nitty gritty issues they face on a day-to-day basis.

Top 5 Support Needs

1. Prayer group/partner
2. Encouragement
3. Pastoral Support
4. Work related
5. Special Needs

"I have been a Christian for many years. I need to be challenged - it is easy to coast along. I have no one who is interested in my spiritual life."

"I know I should have a daily quiet time but with no one encouraging or checking up on me I'm lazy."

"Too much top-down leadership. Lack of encouragement. An over emphasis on 'worship' and very little discipleship."