



University of Warwick institutional repository: <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap>

This paper is made available online in accordance with publisher policies. Please scroll down to view the document itself. Please refer to the repository record for this item and our policy information available from the repository home page for further information.

To see the final version of this paper please visit the publisher's website. Access to the published version may require a subscription.

Author(s): Leslie J. Francis

Article Title: Family, Denomination, and the Adolescent World View: An Empirical Enquiry Among 13- to 15-Year-Old Girls in England and Wales

Year of publication: 2008

Link to published version:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01494920802072413>

Publisher statement: 'This is an electronic version of an article published in Francis, L. (2008). Family, Denomination, and the Adolescent World View: An Empirical Enquiry Among 13- to 15-Year-Old Girls in England and Wales. *Marriage & Family Review*, Vol. 43, pp. 185-204. *Marriage & Family Review* is available online at:.

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a903701863?words=francis&hash=1338413939>

Running head: Family, denomination and the adolescent worldview

Family, denomination and the adolescent worldview: an empirical enquiry  
among 13- to 15-year-old females in England and Wales

The Revd Canon Professor Leslie J. Francis\*

\*Author: telephone 024 7652 2539  
e-mail: [leslie.francis@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:leslie.francis@warwick.ac.uk)

st\c\articles\ljjfamily

### **Summary**

The present study draws on a large survey of 16,581 13- to 15-year-old females representative of the school population in England and Wales in order to examine the power of family denominational affiliation to predict the adolescent worldview. Worldview was illustrated by reference to nine areas: personal wellbeing, worries, counselling, school, social concern, religious beliefs, paranormal beliefs, sexual morality, and attitudes toward substances. Comparisons were made between those who claimed no religious affiliation and those who claimed affiliation as Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Pentecostals and Jehovah's Witnesses. The data demonstrated that each of these seven denominational groups offered a distinctive profile in areas of personal and social importance. These findings were interpreted as offering support for views advanced in Canada by Bibby, in Australia by Bouma, and in the United Kingdom by Fane regarding the continuing social significance of religious and denominational affiliation, and as offering critique of the British Government's decision not to include denominational subdivision of the Christian category within the 2001 census conducted in England and Wales.

**Family, denomination and the adolescent worldview: an empirical enquiry  
among 13- to 15-year-old females in England and Wales**

Religious denomination has been a relatively neglected variable within research intended to identify sources of individual differences within the adolescent worldview in England and Wales. No reference has been made to this factor by a number of recent studies (see, for example, Barry, 2001). Two main reasons underpin this neglect. The first reason reflects the more general influence of the secularisation thesis that assumes the marginality of religion in personal and social life and consequently eclipses dimensions of religiosity from research concerned with contemporary worldviews. Other studies have clearly indicated the erroneous nature of this judgement by demonstrating the continuing influence of a number of dimensions of religiosity on aspects of adolescent development in England and Wales, including prayer (Francis, 2005), bible reading (Francis, 2000), church attendance (Kay & Francis, 2006), God images (Robbins, Francis, & Kerr, 2006), and attitude (Francis, 2006).

The second reason underpinning the neglect of religious denomination in empirical research in England and Wales concerns uncertainty regarding what it is that is being accessed by the straightforward denominational question. There are both theological and empirical bases for this uncertainty. The theological argument is based on an examination of what properly counts as 'religion'. True religion, some might argue, is reflected in what people believe (say, claim Jesus as their personal saviour), in what people do (say, attend church) and in how people behave (say, display love for their neighbour), not in self-assigned labels of affiliation. The empirical argument is based on an examination of the general evidence for a lack of clear association between self-assigned religious affiliation and those other indicators of religiosity generally included in social surveys (belief, practice, and behaviour).

The debate about the usefulness or uselessness of religious affiliation as an indicator in social research was brought into particular prominence in England and Wales in the six year period prior to the 2001 national census, when the introduction of a religious affiliation question within the census was seriously debated for the first time (Francis, 2003; Weller, 2004).

The major argument against accepting religious affiliation as a useful variable in the census in England and Wales is based on a failure to understand affiliation as a serious social indicator in its own right, but to see it as a poor predictor of other religious dimensions. The same problem was voiced in other countries. For example, an information paper produced in preparation for the 2001 Census of Population and Dwellings in New Zealand argued as follows.

The practical value of census information on religion is questionable, particularly in view of the fact that it does not provide an accurate indication of either the churchgoing practices of the population or the depth of a person's commitment to their specified religions (Statistics New Zealand, 1998).

A number of empirical studies in England draw attention to the way in which affiliation is a poor predictor of practice and to how the relationship varies from denomination to denomination (Francis, 1982). For example, while the majority of self-assigned Baptists may well be regular churchgoers, the majority of self-assigned Anglicans appear never to consider going to church. Herein is the problem of 'religions nominalism'.

For a question on religious affiliation to be included as a valid social indicator in the national census, affiliation needed to be understood in its own right and not merely as a poor approximation for other dimensions of religion. An important and powerful attempt to rehabilitate self-assigned religious affiliation as a theoretically coherent and socially significant indicator has been advanced by Fane (1999), drawing on Bouma's (1992, p. 110)

sociological theory of religious identification, according to which religious affiliation is defined as a “useful social category giving some indication of the cultural background and general orientating values of a person”. Then Bouma (1992) posits a process through which cultural background and general orientating values are acquired. Importantly this process of acquisition is exactly the same for religious identity as it is for political or sporting or philosophical identities, and consists of meaning systems and plausibility structures. Bouma (1992) describes meaning systems as “a set or collection of answers to question about the meaning and purpose of life” (p. 106), and plausibility structures (borrowed from Berger, 1967, 1971) as “social arrangements which serve to inculcate, celebrate, perpetuate and apply a meaning system” (p. 107). He maintains that people possess meaning systems from which they derive their existential purpose. He cites a living church as being one example of a plausibility structure through which a meaning system is made plausible and then disseminated. Although a self-assigned religious identity might also imply commitment to a plausibility structure (practice) and adherence to its relating meaning system (belief), Bouma (1992) suggests that it might be equally, perhaps more, significant in terms of the exposure to the particular cultural background that it represents. Crucially, this alternative conceptualization avoids the difficult terrain of religious affiliation as proxy for practice and belief by recognizing that even non-churchgoers and non-believers “may still show the effect of the meaning system and plausibility structure with which they identify” (Bouma, 1992, p. 108).

The value of Bouma’s (1992) sociological theory of religious identification is that it allows self-assigned religious affiliation to be perceived, and thus analysed, as a key component of social identity, in a way similar to age, gender, class location, political persuasion, nationality, ethnic group and others (Zavalloni, 1975). Religious affiliation informs our attitudes and, in turn, our modes of behaviour by contributing to our self-

definition both regarding who we are, but equally importantly, regarding who we are not. This type of analysis is especially advantageous when interpreting census data, because it is inclusive of all those who claim a religious affiliation, not only of the minority who also attend church.

Alongside Bouma's (1992) theory of religious identification, Fane also draws on Bibby's (1985, 1987) theory of 'encasement' developed from his empirical surveys in Canada. Bibby argues that Canadian Christians are 'encased' within the Christian tradition. In other words, this tradition has a strong influential hold over both its active and latent members from which affiliates find it extremely difficult to extricate themselves. Contrary to the claims of secularization theorists that low levels of church attendance are indicative of the erosion of religion's social significance (Wallis & Bruce, 1992), Bibby (1985, 1987) would argue that this trend is actually a manifestation of the re-packaging of religion in the context of late twentieth century consumer-orientated society. Consumers are free to select 'fragments' of faith, and they are encouraged to do this by the way in which the churches have simulated the marketing strategies of the wider society.

The central point to glean from Bibby's (1985, 1987) analysis is that the potential for religion, in this case Christianity, to be a socially significant attitudinal and behavioural determinant has not necessarily disappeared. If anything, the Christian 'casing' may have been strengthened, because the accommodationist stance adopted by the Christian churches has, according to Bibby (1985, 1987), reduced the need for affiliates to look elsewhere.

The flaw in the question eventually introduced to the 2001 census in England and Wales was that religious affiliation was conceptualised only in terms of the major faith traditions (Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh). The Government at Westminster remained unconvinced that any further relevant information would be generated by subdividing the Christian category into the component denominations. The aim of the

present study is to expose the fallacy of this flaw, specifically in respect of the worldview of young people. Building on Fane's development of Bibby's encasement theory the thesis of the present study is that information about religious denomination provides key access to the nature of the *family* influences that mould the attitudes and values of the young. At this stage in life religious denomination and family identity remain closely associated.

In another part of the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland) denominational influence has been and remains a powerful predictor of the worldview adopted by young people. Empirical evidence for the key difference between young people shaped by Protestant families and by Catholic families has been well-documented by the research tradition pioneered by John Greer (see Francis, 1996). For example, in 1984 Greer administered a broad ranging questionnaire throughout ten Protestant and ten Catholic schools, to samples of 14- to 17-year-old pupils. A total of 1,177 pupils participated (606 attending Protestant schools and 571 attending Catholic schools). The findings from this study reported by Greer and Francis (1990) indicated significant difference in the profiles of the two denominational groups.

In a subsequent study in 1998, Francis, Robbins, Barnes, and Lewis (2006) administered a similar and somewhat extended questionnaire throughout seven Protestant and nine Catholic schools, to a sample of 16- to 18-year-old pupils. A total of 2,369 pupils participated (1,099 attending Protestant schools and 1,270 attending Catholic schools). The findings demonstrated just how much the young people educated within the segregated system of Protestant and Catholic schools maintained different religious and ethical profiles. Reflecting on their data Francis, Robbins, Barnes, and Lewis (2006:199) concluded that:

Protestant and Catholics seem to inhabit somewhat different moral universes, which in turn may reflect somewhat different understandings of the moral values espoused by their God. The God of the Protestant community seems to be more against gambling,



drunkenness, smoking, lying, stealing and sexual intercourse before marriage. The God of the Catholic community seems to be more against capital punishment, war, the use of nuclear weapons, colour prejudice and religious discrimination.

While the two studies reported by Greer and Francis (1990) and by Francis, Robbins, Barnes, and Lewis (2006), were relatively restricted in terms of the range of issues employed, a much more broadly-based study comparing the worldviews of pupils educated in Protestant and Catholic schools in Northern Ireland is reported by Robbins and Francis (in press). Drawing on a sample of 1,585 13- to 15-year-old male pupils, this study highlighted the significant differences in worldviews between adolescents educated within the two school systems across eight domains defined as: religious beliefs, paranormal beliefs, church-related attitudes, attitudes toward sex and family life, law-related attitudes, school-related attitudes, locality-related attitudes, and personal anxiety and depression.

The cultural context of England and Wales is so different from Northern Ireland, that generalisations cannot be made from the one community to the other. A couple of studies by Francis (2001a) and Francis (2001b), however, have provided some relatively recent evidence that Christian denomination may be far from irrelevant in predicting individual differences in the worldviews of adolescents living in England and Wales. These two studies profiled differences according to the categorisation of four Christian groups: Anglican, Catholic, Protestant, and sects. For example, drawing on a sample of 29,124 13- to 15-year-old pupils, Francis (2001a) gave particular attention to ways in which affiliation to these four Christian groups predicted individual differences in moral values. Interesting patterns emerged. Thus, 44% of young people affiliated to Christian sects maintained that it is wrong to become drunk, compared with 26% of Protestants, 19% of Anglicans, and 18% of Catholics; 57% of young people affiliated to Christian sects maintained that it is wrong to have sexual intercourse outside marriage, compared with 19% of Protestants, 15% of Catholics and 13% of

Anglicans; 65% of young people affiliated to Christian sects maintained that abortion is wrong and so did 50% of Catholics, compared with 38% of Protestants and 31% of Anglicans.

Against this background the aim of the present study is to build on the initial findings presented by Francis (2001a, 2001b), delineating a fuller profile of the adolescent worldview and distinguishing between individual denominations rather than by groups of denominations. These new analyses draw on the Religion and Values Today database thoroughly reported and described by Francis (2001c). The database provides a reliable and representative sample of nearly 34,000 year-nine and year-ten pupils (13- to 15-year-olds) across England and Wales. In view of space restrictions, the analyses will concentrate on the female pupils only, obviating the need to take sex differences into account.

## **Method**

### ***Sample***

A sample of 33,982 year-nine and year-ten pupils (between the ages of 13 and 15 years) participated in the project from schools throughout England and Wales, including a proper mix of urban and rural schools, and independent and state-maintained schools. Within the state-maintained sector, a correct balance between non-denominational, Anglican voluntary and Roman Catholic voluntary schools was included. The project was set up in 1990 and progressed at a consistent pace throughout the 1990s. Pupils were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Although all pupils were given the choice not to participate, very few decided not to take part in the survey, probably in light of the interest of the subject matter.

### ***Instrument***

In addition to a number of background questions, the questionnaire included 128 well-focused and easily-understood statements, to which the pupils responded on a five-point Likert-type scale (Likert, 1932): *agree strongly*, *agree*, *not certain*, *disagree*, and *disagree strongly*. Although presented in a thoroughly randomised fashion, the items were designed to profile the adolescent worldview through 15 themes defined as: personal wellbeing, worries, counselling, school, work, religious beliefs, church and society, paranormal beliefs, politics, social concerns, sexual morality, substance use, right and wrong, leisure, and the local area.

### ***Analysis***

In order to simply clarify the analysis, this study is based on the responses of the 16,581 females. Religious affiliation was assessed by the question “Do you belong to a church or other religious group?” followed by a list beginning with “no”, identifying the major Christian denominations and the major world faiths, and ending with “other (please specify)”. Responses to this question then allowed eight groups to be identified useful for comparison in their analysis of family denomination, namely those who self-identified as: no religious affiliation (7,132), Baptist (438), Anglican (4,996), Jehovah’s Witnesses (91), Methodist (480), Pentecostal (102), Presbyterian (119), and Roman Catholic (1,698). A number of other established Christian denominations were represented by insufficient pupils to sustain independent analysis, including Quaker, Orthodox, Salvation Army, and Seventh-day Adventist. Many New Churches were also represented by small numbers of pupils. Overall, these figures provide a fair indication of the relative strength of denominational affiliation in England and Wales given the persistence of Anglicanism as the Established Church in England (although not in Wales).

From the large quantity of information within the database the relationship between denominational identity and the adolescent worldview will be tested and illustrated by

selecting just two items each from five themes (personal wellbeing, worries, counselling, school and social concerns) and five items each from four themes which will be examined in greater detail (religious beliefs, paranormal beliefs, sex and morality, and substance use). In the following tables the responses of the eight groups of young people will be presented in the following order: those who self-identified as having no religious affiliation (None), Anglicans (Ang), Roman Catholics (RC), Methodists (Meth), Baptists (Bapt), Pentecostals (Pent), Presbyterians (Pres), and Jehovah's Witnesses (JW). Multiple chi square tests have been employed to test the statistical significance of the difference between the endorsement of the non-affiliates and the endorsement of each denominational group in turn. Endorsement has been calculated as the produce of the agree strongly and agree responses compared with the product of the disagree strongly, disagree and not certain responses on the five-point Likert scale. In view of the complexity of the data, statistical significance tests have not been employed to compare the responses of the seven denominational groups. In interpreting the levels of probability, it needs to be recognised that statistical significance is highly dependent on the sample size and that, in the present study, there is a wide discrepancy between the strength of the different groups, from the two extremes of 4,996 Anglicans to 91 Jehovah's Witnesses.

### **Results and discussion**

Table 1 presents the item endorsement for the eight groups of young females in respect of five aspects of personal and social life (personal wellbeing, worries, counselling, school, and social concern). Two items have been selected to illustrate each of these five areas).

In terms of personal wellbeing, Christian affiliation tends to be associated with an enhanced sense of purpose in life and with lower levels of suicidal ideation. Both findings are

consistent with the broader research literature which associated religiosity with purpose in life (as summarised by Francis & Robbins, 2006) and which associated religiosity with lower levels of suicidal ideation (as summarised by Kay & Francis, 2006).

In terms of worries, Christian affiliation is associated with greater anxiety about attractiveness to the opposite sex (except in the case of Jehovah's Witnesses). Anxiety about AIDS is lower among Methodists, Pentecostals, and Jehovah's Witnesses, but not among Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Baptists, or Presbyterians. These differences suggest that teaching on sexuality may vary significantly from one Christian group to another.

In terms of counselling, Christian affiliation is, overall, associated with the experience of greater support from both mothers and fathers. In other words, young females whose family background includes the sense of Christian affiliation, feel a significantly closer bond with their parents, in the sense that they are more likely to find it helpful to talk about their problems with their mother or with their father.

In terms of attitude toward school, Christian affiliation is, overall, associated with a more positive experience and a more positive response. Generally, young females who identify with a Christian denomination are less likely to find school boring and more likely to rate teachers as doing a good job. These findings are consistent with the broader research literature which finds an association between religiosity and school related attitudes (see for example, Francis, 1992; Montgomery & Francis, 1996).

In terms of social concern, Christian affiliation is, overall, associated with a greater commitment to environmental matters and to world development. Young females who identify with a Christian denomination are more likely to be concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment and more likely to be concerned about the poverty of the Third World. The positive association between religiosity and environmental concern is consistent with earlier research among young people in the United Kingdom reported by Francis (1997).

Table 2 presents the item endorsement for the eight groups of young females in respect of views on religion and the paranormal. Five items have been selected to illustrate each of these two areas.

In respect of views on religion, it is not surprising that those young people who claim affiliation with a Christian denomination display higher levels of belief than the non-affiliates. What is of greater interest, however, is the way in which levels of belief vary so greatly between the different denominational groups. Belief in God may provide a broad indication of the level of nominalism within the denominational categories, with Anglicanism (the established religion in England, although not in Wales) carrying the highest level of nominalism. Thus, in ascending order, belief in God was expressed by 50% of Anglicans, 58% of Methodists, 66% of Presbyterians, 71% of Baptists, 73% of Roman Catholics, 88% of Pentecostals, and 95% of Jehovah's Witnesses. An almost identical pattern emerges concerning belief that Jesus really rose from the dead, with just Roman Catholics and Baptists swapping positions. A somewhat different pattern emerges, however, in respect of an item intended to gauge conservatism in belief. The belief that God made the world in six days and rested on the seventh was expressed, in ascending order, by 16% of Roman Catholics, 22% of Anglicans, 33% of Methodists, 37% of Presbyterians, 49% of Baptists, 67% of Jehovah's Witnesses, and 83% of Pentecostals.

In respect of views on the paranormal, the situation is somewhat more complex. Different Christian groups seem to vary in the extent to which they tend to steer their young affiliates away from the paranormal and the occult (Boyd, 1996). Overall, however, young females affiliated to a Christian denomination are less inclined than non-affiliated young females to believe in their horoscope, but it is the Pentecostals and Jehovah's Witnesses who are least likely to accept such beliefs. Belief in their horoscopes was expressed, in descending order, by 47% of Roman Catholics, 45% of Anglicans, 42% of Methodists, 41% of

Presbyterians, 36% of Baptists, 16% of Pentecostals, and 14% of Jehovah's Witnesses. Belief in the possibility of contacting the spirits of the dead is also lowest among Jehovah's Witnesses. This belief was expressed, in descending order, by 33% of Anglicans, 33% of Roman Catholics, 30% of Methodists, 30% of Pentecostals, 27% of Baptists, 25% of Presbyterians, and 21% of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Table 3 presents the item endorsement for the eight groups of young females in respect of views on sexual morality and substances. Five items have been selected to illustrate each of these two areas.

In respect of views on sexual morality, some very clear delineations take place along denominational lines. Anglicans, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics and Methodists are slightly more conservative in their approach to sexual intercourse outside marriage than young people who claim no religious affiliation. While 9% of the non-affiliates believed that it is wrong to have sexual intercourse outside marriage, the proportions rose to 12% among Anglicans, 12% among Presbyterians, 14% among Roman Catholics, and 16% among Methodists. The proportions rose further to 23% among Baptists, 54% among Pentecostals, and 70% among Jehovah's Witnesses. Similar contours are followed in respect of attitude toward homosexuality. The view that homosexuality is wrong was taken by 20% of non-affiliates, 18% of Presbyterians, 19% of Anglicans, 20% of Roman Catholics, and 21% of Methodists. The proportions rose, however, to 27% among Baptists, 59% among Pentecostals, and 81% among Jehovah's Witnesses. A somewhat different pattern emerges in respect of attitude toward abortion in light of the clear stance of the Roman Catholic Church on this issue. The view that abortion is wrong was taken by 38% of non-affiliates, 34% of Anglicans, 36% of Presbyterians and 37% of Methodists. The proportions rose, however, to 45% among Baptists, 53% among Roman Catholics, 68% among Pentecostals, and 82% among Jehovah's Witnesses.

In respect of views on substances, once again some very clear delineations take place along denominational lines. A more liberal position was generally taken by Roman Catholics, and a more conservative position was generally taken by Jehovah's Witnesses. In terms of tobacco use, 35% of non-affiliates believed that it is wrong to smoke cigarettes, and so did 35% of the Roman Catholics. Then, in ascending order, this view was taken by 40% of Anglicans, 43% of Baptists, 47% of Methodists, 52% of Presbyterians, 54% of Pentecostals, and 78% of Jehovah's Witnesses. In terms of alcohol use, 15% of non-affiliates believed that it is wrong to become drunk. The proportion rose marginally to 17% among Roman Catholics and 18% among Anglicans. The proportion rose further to 24% among Methodists, 29% among Baptists, 32% among Presbyterians, 47% among Pentecostals, and 59% among Jehovah's Witnesses.

### **Conclusion**

Drawing on a large dataset of 16,581 female secondary school pupils, between and ages of 13 and 15 years, the present paper set out to test two hypotheses: that young people whose families identify with a Christian denomination differ in significant ways in terms of their worldview from young people whose families identify with no religious group; and that the nature of this difference varies greatly from one Christian denomination to another. Both hypotheses have been supported by the data. The considerable variations between the different Christian denominations clearly highlight the inadequacy of the religious operationalisations included in the national census for England and Wales in 2001. In terms of a range of socially significant aspects of the young person's worldview, knowledge about denominational affiliation is of considerably greater use than the broad-brush grouping of all Christian denominations together.

Considering the seven denominational groups together, there is broad evidence that,



compared with young females whose families hold no religious affiliation, those who claim Christian affiliation (in whatever form) tend to enjoy a greater sense of purpose in life and are less likely to entertain suicidal ideation. They are likely to receive greater support from their parents, hold a more positive attitude toward school, and espouse a higher level of social commitment. They are more likely to hold traditional religious beliefs and less likely to hold paranormal beliefs. They are more likely to take a conservative stance on issues concerning sexual morality and on issues concerning the use and abuse of substances. Behind this global summary, however, there are considerable variations from one denomination to another. Each denomination will be reviewed in turn to highlight distinctive features.

On many issues young Anglicans stand closer to the non-affiliates than young people belonging to other denominations. Nonetheless, there are clear distances between the young Anglicans and the young non-affiliates. Twice as many Anglicans believe in God (50% compared with 27%). Anglicans are less likely to believe in their horoscope or in the possibility of contacting the spirits of the dead. Anglicans are likely to take a slightly more conservative view on sex outside marriage, on getting drunk, and on smoking cigarettes.

In many ways young Methodists stand quite close to the young Anglicans. They are slightly more likely than Anglicans to believe in God and slightly less likely to believe in their horoscope. On the other hand, young Methodists take a more conservative stand than young Anglicans on alcohol and on tobacco, positions consistent with the historic roots of Methodism. Young Methodists also display greater concern than young Anglicans for environmental issues, a position consistent with current national programmes in the Methodist Church in the United Kingdom.

Young Presbyterians stand a little further away from the non-affiliates than either Anglicans or Methodists. They are slightly more inclined to believe in God and less inclined to believe in their horoscope. They take a somewhat more conservative view on substances,

but not on sexual morality. They show a higher level of social concern, but not a higher sense of purpose in life.

Compared with the three mainline reformed denominations (Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterians), the young Catholics project a distinctive profile. They are more inclined to believe in God, but much less inclined to believe in a God who made the world in six days and rested on the seventh. They are also more inclined to believe in their horoscope and in other paranormal phenomena. In terms of the use of alcohol and tobacco, young Catholics take a more permissive view than young Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterians. In terms of sexual morality, young Catholics are no more likely to reject contraception, but they are much more likely than Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterians to reject abortion. Young Catholics are clearly selective regarding the aspect of their denominational teaching which they choose to adopt. In terms of social concerns, young Catholics show more concern than young Anglicans and Methodists for world development issues, but less concern for environmental issues.

Young Baptists seem to occupy a position midway between the mainline reformed denominations (Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterians) and the more sectarian groups (Pentecostal and Jehovah's Witnesses). Compared with the mainline reformed denominations, young Baptists are more inclined to believe in God, more inclined to believe the Genesis account of creation, and less inclined to believe in paranormal phenomena. They are more inclined to take a conservative view on areas of sexual morality (sex outside marriage, homosexuality, abortion, and divorce) and on the use and abuse of alcohol.

Young Pentecostals appear to be inhabiting a very different worldview from that adopted by Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians and Catholics. Young Pentecostals are much more likely to believe in the Genesis account of creation, to believe in a God who punishes people who do wrong, and to believe that Christianity is the only true religion. They

are much less likely to believe in their horoscope. Young Pentecostals are much more likely to take a conservative view on areas of sexual morality (sex outside marriage, homosexuality, abortion, and divorce) and on the use and abuse of substances (tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and heroin). They benefit from a much higher sense of purpose in life and are significantly less likely to be worried about getting AIDS, since their lifestyle seems to protect them from the transmission of such diseases.

Like young Pentecostals, young Jehovah's Witnesses inhabit a highly distinctive worldview. Among young Jehovah's Witnesses there is a high level of belief in God and a low level of paranormal belief. Their worldview is highly committed to moral absolutes. The vast majority of young Jehovah's Witnesses reject sex outside marriage, homosexuality, abortion, and divorce. The vast majority of young Jehovah's Witnesses reject tobacco and alcohol as well as other substances. For young Jehovah's Witnesses there seems comparatively little fear from AIDS. For young Jehovah's Witnesses there is a significantly higher level of support from talking through problems with their parents.

The findings generated by the present study provide important new data that support the overall contention advanced by Fane (1999), drawing on ideas formulated by Bibby (1985, 1987) and Bouma (1992). Fane (1999, p. 122) summarised her conclusion as follows.

Self-assigned religious affiliation may also be useful as a predictor of social attitudes and behaviours, particularly when sub-divided by denomination . . . . In analyses of census data, it may prove helpful to conceptualise self-assigned religious affiliation as a component of social identity, rather than as an inadequate indicator of religious practice and belief.

In terms of the present study, this conclusion is consistent with the view that for adolescents self-assigned religious affiliation conveys really important information about the context in which their family life is nurturing their worldview, with or without additional information

about their religious beliefs and their religious practices.

Because of restrictions on space the present analyses have concentrated specifically and only on young females. A similar set of analyses are now needed to replicate this study among young males in order to test whether the findings are in any ways gender specific.

### References

- Barry, M. (2001). *Challenging transitions: Young people's views and experiences of growing up*. London: Save the Children.
- Berger, P. (1967). *The sacred canopy: Elements of a sociology of religion*. New York: Doubleday.
- Berger, P. (1971). *A Rumour of angels: Modern society and the rediscovery of the supernatural*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Bibby, R. W. (1985). Religious encasement in Canada: An argument for Protestant and Catholic entrenchment. *Social Compass*, 16, 287-303.
- Bibby, R. W. (1987). *Fragmented Gods: The poverty and potential of religion in Canada*. Toronto: Irwin Publishing.
- Bouma, G. D. (1992). *Religion: Meaning, transcendence and community in Australia*. Melbourne: Longman Cheshire.
- Boyd, A. (1996). *Dangerous obsessions: Teenagers and the occult*. London: Marshal Pickering.
- Fane, R. S. (1999). Is self-assigned religious affiliation socially significant? In L. J. Francis (Ed.), *Sociology, theology and the curriculum* (pp. 113-124). London: Cassell.
- Francis, L. J. (1982). *Youth in transit: A profile of 16-25 year olds*. Aldershot: Gower.
- Francis, L. J. (1992). The influence of religion, gender and social class on attitudes toward school among eleven year olds in England. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 60, 339-348.
- Francis, L. J. (1996). John E Greer: Research pioneer in religious education. In L. J. Francis, W. K. Kay, & W. S. Campbell (Eds), *Research in religious education*. (pp. 11-30). Leominster: Fowler Wright Books.
- Francis, L. J. (1997). Christianity, personality and concern about environmental pollution

- among 13-to 15-year olds. *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, 18, 7-16.
- Francis, L. J. (2000). The relationship between bible reading and purpose in life among 13-15 year olds. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, 3, 27-36.
- Francis, L. J. (2001a). Religion and values: A quantitative perspective. In L. J. Francis, J. Astley, & M. Robbins (Eds), *The fourth R for the third millennium: Education in religion and values for the global future* (pp. 47-78). Dublin: Lindisfarne Books.
- Francis, L. J. (2001b). The social significance of religious affiliation among adolescents in England and Wales. In H.-G. Ziebertz (Ed.), *Religious individualisation and Christian religious semantics* (pp. 115-138). Münster: Lit Verlag.
- Francis, L.J. (2001c). *The values debate: A voice from the pupils*. London: Woburn Press.
- Francis, L. J. (2003). Religion and social capital: The flaw in the 2001 census in England and Wales. In P. Avis (Ed.), *Public faith: The state of religious belief and practice in Britain* (pp. 45-64). London: SPCK.
- Francis, L. J. (2005). Prayer, personality and purpose in life among churchgoing and non-churchgoing adolescents. In L. J. Francis, M. Robbins, & J. Astley (Eds), *Religion, education and adolescence: International empirical perspectives* (pp. 15-38). Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Francis, L. J. (2006). Attitude toward Christianity and premarital sex. *Psychological Reports*, 98, 140.
- Francis, L. J., & Robbins, M. (2006). Prayer, purpose in life, personality and social attitudes among non-churchgoing 13- to 15-year-olds in England and Wales. *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*, 17, 123-155.
- Francis, L. J., Robbins, M., Barnes, L. P., & Lewis, C. A. (2006). Religiously affiliated schools in Northern Ireland: The persistence of denominational differences in pupils' religious and moral values. *Journal of Empirical Theology*, 19, 182-202.

- Greer, J. E., & Francis, L. J. (1990). The religious profile of pupils in Northern Ireland: A comparative study of pupils attending Catholic and Protestant secondary schools. *Journal of Empirical Theology*, 3(2), 35-50.
- Kay, W. K., & Francis, L. J. (2006). Suicidal ideation among young people in the UK: Churchgoing as an inhibitory influence? *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, 9, 127-140.
- Likert, R. (1932). A technique for the measurement of attitudes. *Archives of Psychology*, 140, 1-55.
- Montgomery, A., & Francis, L. J. (1996). Relationship between personal prayer and school-related attitudes among 11-16 year old girls. *Psychological Reports*, 78, 787-793.
- Robbins, M., & Francis, L.J. (in press). Still worlds apart: the worldviews of adolescent males attending Protestant and Catholic secondary schools in Northern Ireland, *Research in Education*.
- Robbins, M., Francis, L. J., & Kerr, S. (2006). God images and empathy among a group of secondary school pupils in South Africa. *Religion and Theology: A journal of contemporary religious discourse*, 13, 175-194.
- Statistics New Zealand (1998). *2001 Census of population and dwellings: Preliminary views on content*. Wellington: Statistics New Zealand.
- Wallis, R., & Bruce, S. (1992). Secularization: the orthodox model. In S. Bruce (Ed.), *Religion and modernization: Sociologists and historians debate the secularization thesis* (pp. 8-30). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Weller, P. (2004). Identity, politics, and the future(s) of religion in the UK: The case of the religious question in the 2001 decennial census, *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 19, 3-21.
- Zavalloni, M. (1975). Social identity and the recording of reality: Its relevance for cross-

cultural psychology. *International Journal of Psychology*, 10, 197-217.



**Table 1: Views on personal and social life by denomination**

	None %	Ang %	RC %	Meth %	Bapt %	Pent %	Pres %	JW %
<i>personal wellbeing</i>								
I feel my life has a sense of purpose	50	58***	63***	64***	65***	75***	59	73***
I have sometimes considered taking my own life	32	28***	29*	27*	28	28	17***	24
<i>worries</i>								
I am worried about my attractiveness to the opposite sex	39	41**	43**	47***	44*	44	44	31
I am worried about getting AIDS	63	64	64	54***	59	41***	62	33***
<i>counselling</i>								
I find it helpful to talk about my problem with my mother	55	61***	58*	60*	57	63	54	72**
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my father	23	26***	26**	25	28*	31*	31*	46***
<i>school</i>								
school is boring	37	28***	35	26***	28***	30	33	32
teachers do a good job	40	48***	48***	55***	53***	60***	55***	56**
<i>social concern</i>								
I am concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment	63	71***	67**	78***	72***	71	83***	80**
I am concerned about the poverty of the Third World	60	71***	77***	73***	75**	75**	79***	74**

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\* =  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* =  $p < .001$

**Table 2: Views on religion and the paranormal by denomination**

	None %	Ang %	RC %	Meth %	Bapt %	Pent %	Pres %	JW %
<i>religious beliefs</i>								
I believe in God	27	50***	73***	58***	71***	88***	66***	95***
I believe that Jesus really rose from the dead	17	37***	57***	47***	61***	84***	51***	91***
I believe that God punishes people who do wrong	14	21***	21***	24***	33***	50***	23*	44***
I think Christianity is the only true religion	8	16***	21***	20***	35***	68***	22***	33***
I believe that God made the world in six days and rested on the seventh	10	22***	16***	33***	49***	83***	37***	67**
<i>paranormal beliefs</i>								
I believe in my horoscope	50	45***	47*	42***	36***	16***	41	14***
I believe in ghosts	41	40	43	35*	36*	31*	28**	29*
I believe in black magic	19	16***	16*	15	11***	15	8**	13
I believe that fortune-tellers can tell the future	27	27	27	22*	22*	19	14**	13**
I believe that it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead	35	33**	33	30**	27**	30	25*	21**

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\* =  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* =  $p < .001$

**Table 3: Views on sex and substances by denomination**

	None %	Ang %	RC %	Meth %	Bapt %	Pent %	Pres %	JW %
<i>sex</i>								
It is wrong to have sexual intercourse outside marriage	9	12***	14***	16***	23***	54***	12	70***
Homosexuality is wrong	20	19	20	21	27***	59***	18	81***
Contraception is wrong	3	2***	4	2	5	3	3	9**
Abortion is wrong	38	34***	53***	37	45**	68***	36	82***
Divorce is wrong	13	14*	19***	17**	24***	40***	11	61***
<i>substances</i>								
It is wrong to smoke cigarettes	35	40***	35	47***	43***	54***	52***	78***
It is wrong to become drunk	15	18***	17	24***	29***	47***	32***	59***
It is wrong to use marijuana	49	58***	52*	59***	54*	69***	69***	76***
It is wrong to use heroin	74	79***	77*	82***	75	89***	87**	87**
It is wrong to sniff glue	79	82***	80	85**	79	83	89**	88*

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\* =  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* =  $p < .001$