

Christian Youth Work in Newham

A Report on the Newham Youth for Christ Survey 1986

by Shirley Jackson

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank all the church leaders and youth workers who co-operated by taking part in this survey, Pat Diggins for typing the original draft of the report and Greg Smith for his help in questionnaire design and analysis and in the production of the report.

INTRODUCTION

The London Borough of Newham stretches from Forest Gate in the North to the Thames at North Woolwich, and from Manor Park in the East to Stratford in the West. There are approximately 209,500 people living in this six square miles, with about 27% from New Commonwealth and Pakistan origin ethnic groups.

Christianity is a minority religion. Out of every 100 people, it is unlikely that more than four go to church on Sunday. Over half of these will be Roman Catholics. Probably a half of the one to two percent Protestant church-goers, are associated with black led or other newly planted churches. In Newham, churches face a poor response to evangelistic efforts, a great number of pastoral and social needs and often have inadequate resources in terms of money, people and buildings.

At the Newham Youth for Christ (NYFC) Committee day retreat in January 1985, Terry Diggins (chairman) and Vikki Neal (full-time worker) began to consider doing a survey into church work with youth in Newham. As far as they knew, no similar study had been undertaken in this area. They were aware that NYFC was not in touch with the youth work in all local churches and that to provide help to the churches, it was necessary to be better informed.

This survey attempts to collate basic information about the youth who are being contacted by churches in Newham and to provide information which will help NYFC to offer a good service to the local churches.

METHOD

After the initial inspiration for the survey, Vikki and Terry contacted Greg Smith (London ECUM) for help in drafting a questionnaire. This would provide the basic information for the survey from the church and youth leaders (see Appendix A for the text of the questionnaire).

We used the list of churches and Christian Organisations in Newham compiled by the Renewal Programme and London ECUM as our contact list. (See Table 1) From this we identified 91 churches excluding Catholic, Orthodox and Seventh Day Adventists and divided the task of contacting and interviewing between us. For shorthand in this report we are referring to these churches which were within the scope of the survey as the Protestant churches of Newham.

After a few months, it became clear that it would be necessary for one person to take on the project to ensure adequate work time would be allocated to it, so I became responsible for ensuring the questionnaires were completed.

The initial contact to each church was by telephone to the church leader. If possible or appropriate an appointment was set up. When answers to initial questions showed that there was little or no children's and youth

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work at the church the questionnaire was completed over the telephone, to save visiting time. If the church leader felt unqualified to complete the questionnaire he usually gave the youth leaders' names and they were contacted and either visited or asked the questions over the telephone. At the interview, each question was asked in turn and where inappropriate, questions were missed out e.g. if there was no youth work with over 11's, questions relating to these were not completed. - This policy also excluded some of the latter questions relating to church involvement.

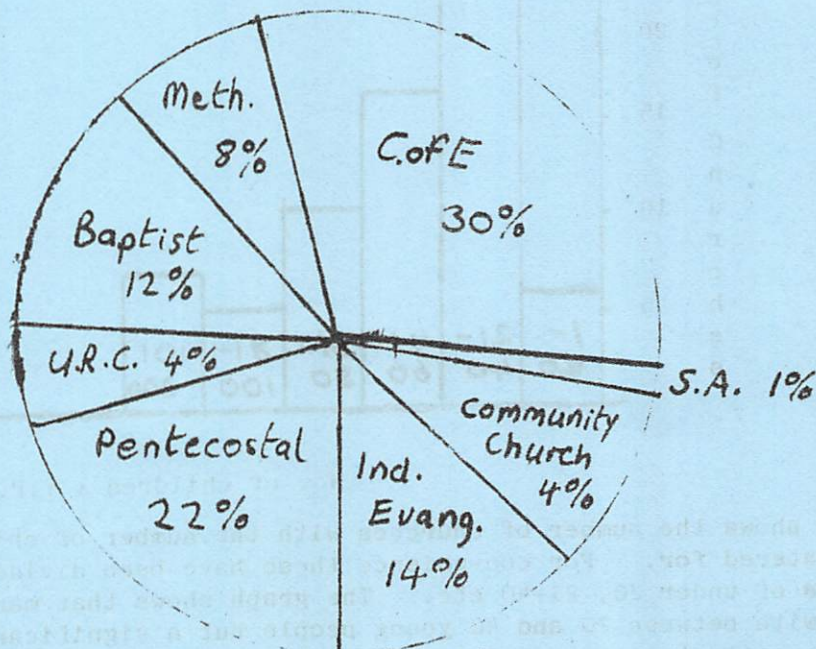
The interview procedure began in September 1985 and was completed by June 1986. The data was then transferred onto computer and the statistical analyses presented below were made.

RESULTS

Denomination

Of the 91 Protestant churches in the borough, data from 81 were included in the survey analysis. Of the returned questionnaires 35 were the results of personal interviews, 19 were answered over the telephone, 20 were written after the questionnaire had been handed out personally and then collected, 5 were postal returns and 2 indicated refusals to answer the questions. The ten churches for whom we have no information were generally unobtainable by telephone and questionnaires were sent by post and not returned.

FIGURE 1: PIE CHART SHOWING THE DENOMINATIONS OF CHURCHES INCLUDED IN THE SURVEY



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Denominationally the 81 interviewed were divided into 25 Anglicans, 7 Methodists, 10 Baptists, 4 URC's, 18 Pentecostals, 12 Independent Evangelicals, 4 Community Churches and 1 Salvation Army Corps. It was often difficult to categorize the churches as there were strong similarities between churches of different denominations especially several of the churches belonging to the 'Celebration Group', some of which also belong to mainline denominations. As you can see from Figure 1, which illustrates the breakdown of the churches into denominations, one third of the churches included are Anglican. Of course this does not necessarily correspond with the proportion of church attenders in the borough.

Numbers of children and young people

Of the 81 churches completing the survey, 9 had no contacts with children or young people at all and 13 had no contact with young people over 11 years. Two churches had contact with over 200 children and young people.

FIGURE 2: BAR CHART SHOWING THE NUMBER OF CHURCHES CATERING FOR DIFFERENT NUMBERS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

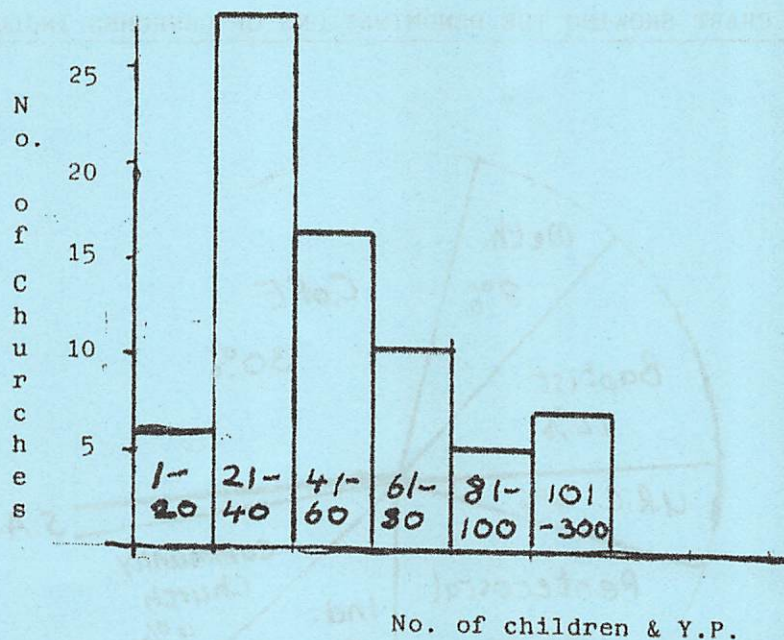


Figure 2 shows the number of churches with the number of children and young people catered for. For convenience these have been divided into groupings of under 20, 21-40 etc. The graph shows that many churches have contact with between 20 and 40 young people but a significant number (8 = 10%) have contact with over 100 children and young people.

Table B (see Appendix B) shows the number of children and young people

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contacted by churches of each denomination. It can be seen from this table that 8 churches have contact with over 100 children and young people. 5 of these are Anglican, and 2 are Baptist. The other is (African) Pentecostal and incorporates many young people from outside the borough. We can see also that Anglican, Baptist and United Reformed churches vary considerably in the number of young people they are in touch with, but Independent Evangelicals, Pentecostal and Community churches are generally in touch with fewer young people. In fact only one church in these three denominations has contact with over 60 children and young people. This could be due to several factors. Firstly it is probably an indication of the relatively small size of the congregations of these churches; secondly many Pentecostal and Community churches have no permanent buildings and therefore no base for youth work. Also some of these churches have an evangelical (separatist) standpoint which may limit their natural contact with children from non-christian families.

Age Group

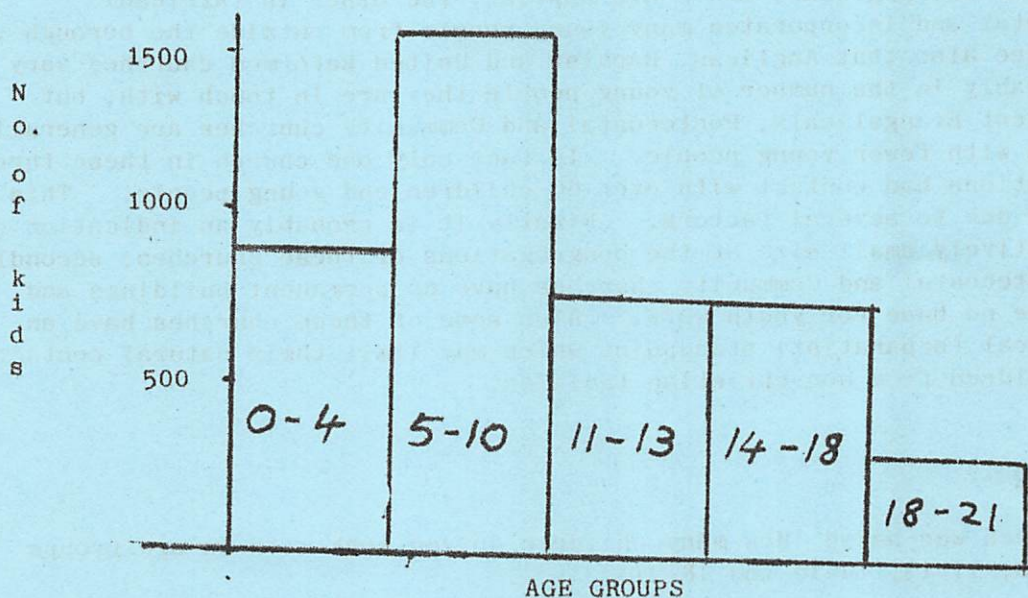
Each church was asked 'How many children do you work with in age groups 0-4, 5-10, 11-13, 14-18 and 18-21?'

The answers were generally estimates from memory and therefore any figures given are approximations based on this. However the total number of children and young people reached by churches in Newham as deduced by this question was approximately 4300. We have attempted to express this as a percentage of the borough's population of young people, but this is by no means a simple task, since the age groups in our questionnaire and those in the census taken five years ago do not exactly match. As the 0-4 age group numbers are unobtainable from the Borough Census (i.e. they were not born when the 1981 Census was taken!) and Newham Youth for Christ is predominantly interested in youth, most of the rest of the survey does not include this pre-school age group.

The number of children and young people reached by the churches between ages 5 and 21 as deduced from this survey is approximately 3400. The 1981 Census (projected 5 years on) shows that there are 44,700 young people between ages 5 and 19 in Newham. Therefore the percentage reached by the church is at most 7.6%. This is an inflated proportion as the survey is for ages 5-21 but it is only possible to obtain census statistics for ages 5-19. The true proportion may be around 7.0%. This suggests that churches have contact with a significantly higher proportion of under 21's than of 21-91'S (the estimates of church attendance in Protestant churches in Newham range from 1-4%). However it is clear that over 90% of young people are totally unreached by Protestant churches.

Figure 3 shows the number of young people in each age group which the churches in Newham has contact with. There would appear at first glance to be a lot more children in the 5-10 age group. However the age bands are unequal, so the graph gives an exaggerated impression of the number of young people at this age reached by the church.

FIGURE 3: BAR CHART TO SHOW THE NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN EACH AGE GROUP CATERED FOR BY THE CHURCHES



However it would seem that churches do have contact with more young people at this stage of their lives than later on, as in the six years of 5-10 age group, there are approximately as many primary school children (1500) in contact with the church as in the 8 years of the 11-18 age group (11-13 and 14-18 figures added together).

It is interesting too to look at the proportions of the different age groups of the borough's population who have contact with the church. Again it is exceptionally difficult to make comparisons as the census statistics were for 1981 - 5 years prior to our own. To compensate for the time lag between the census and our survey, the figures for the 0-4 age group in the census are used for today's 5-9's age group, and the 5-14's age group in the census is used for today's 10-19's age group. Secondly because the age groupings in the census and our survey categories did not match exactly, the only realistic comparisons we can make (by pooling our younger categories) are for two age groups only; 5-13's and 14-18's. Even then the figure for 14-18's is slightly low as the census figures are for 14-19's. However we have also estimated the borough figure for 14-18's by subtracting a sixth of the total. Our conclusion is that there would seem to be proportionally fewer young people reached by the church between 14-18 than between 5 and 13.

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Figure 4: To show the percentage of young people reached by Newham churches.

Age group survey	No. reached	Age Census	Newham Pop.	% reached
5-13	2325	5-13	28500	8.2%
14-18	760	14-19	16200	4.7%
		14-18	13500 *	5.6%

* our estimate

It is also possible from the information collected to look at various denominational breakdowns in terms of age group. Therefore tables C-E (see Appendix B) show the number of churches in each denomination catering for different numbers of young people in each age group. From table C, we can see that again Anglican and Baptist churches vary considerably in the number of primary school children reached but almost all Pentecostal and Community churches reach 40 or less. In table D we see that only the Anglican church has more than one church catering for 20 or more 11-13 year olds and in the 14-18 age group (table E) no denomination has more than one church catering for more than 20 young people.

Overall the number of churches catering for 20 or less young people in the 5-10's is 59%, in the 11-13's 85%, and in the 14-18's 88%.

Activity Groups.

From the questions about activities available to young people across the churches, it became clear that there were several types of groups run by the churches. I have divided them into the following five categories. Firstly Sunday School, which is a broad category incorporating formal Sunday School classes, Sunday Family Worship in churches where all ages worship together and other Sunday activities e.g. Junior Christian Endeavour. Secondly uniformed organisations including Scouts, Guides, Cubs, Brownies and the Brigades. Thirdly a group which can be broadly called a Young People's Fellowship Group. This group would generally cater for Christians or young people whose parents belong to the church, or their friends. The fourth group is the open youth club, or open children's club, where members with no family connection or personal commitment to the church are welcome. The fifth is a miscellaneous one which includes sports groups and choirs.

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FIGURE 5 NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE CATERED FOR IN DIFFERENT ACTIVITY GROUPS

TYPE OF GROUP	NO OF BOYS	NO OF GIRLS	TOTAL
Sunday School	422	543	965
Uniformed Organisations	369	527	896
Young People's Fellowships	255	292	547
Open Youth Clubs	525	259	784
Miscellaneous	35	15	50
TOTAL	1606	1636	3242

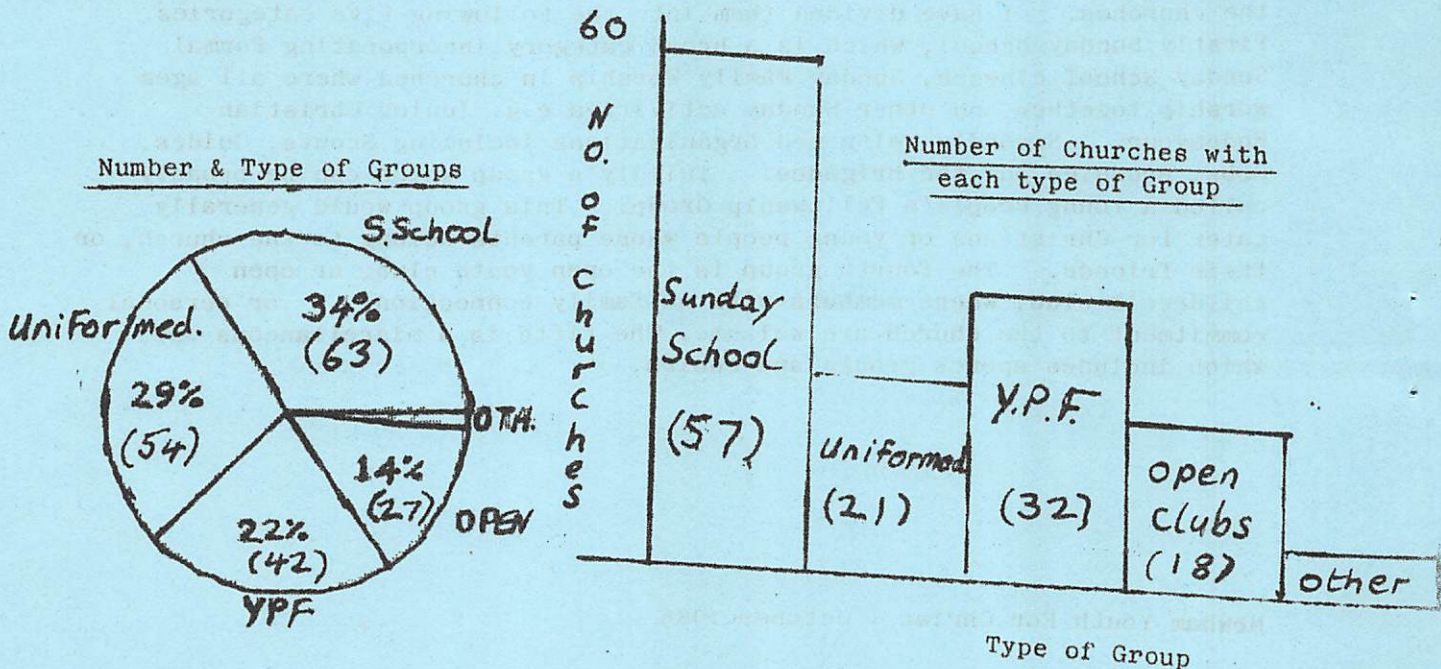
FIGURE 5 shows the number of young people catered for by the churches in each of these activity groups. The few groups mentioned by churches for the under 5's have been excluded.

It is interesting to note that, contrary to popular opinion, there are almost as many boys as girls in contact with the churches. However the nature of this contact is often different and will be discussed later.

The survey shows approximately 3250 young people catered for in 195 activity groups. Although some children may be counted twice (or more) if they belong to two groups within one church, this total does correspond well with the estimated number of young people (3400 between 5 & 21) as obtained from the previous question on the questionnaire (see Appendix A).

In Figure 6 we have a comparison between the number of youth groups of each type and the number of churches this involves.

FIGURE 6 : Pie charts



It is notable that although there are 54 uniformed groups in the borough, these are located in only 21 churches.

Although 18 Churches said they had a total of 27 groups which we categorised as open youth work, at least half of these were actually open clubs for primary age children. This means that only eight or so churches in Newham are actually engaged on a regular basis in "Frontier" youth work with unchurched teenagers.

Race

In this survey we were interested to look at the proportion of white, black and Asian young people of each age group, reached by the church. This has been tremendously difficult to calculate as respondents were only asked to give proportions of each race and we had to calculate back from this to estimate the original numbers. On top of this the ethnic and age categories we used and those appearing in the Census are not identical.

The term "white" for the census refers to young people living in families with English or Irish born heads of household, "black" to families with African, or Caribbean born head of household and "Asian" to families with a Bangladeshi, Indian or Pakistani head of household.

There are further difficulties with the data as the age groups in the census and this survey are unequal. As it is not possible to get data from the census for the present 0-4 age group (who were not then born), the figures for the present 0-9 age group were estimated from the 1981 figures by doubling the totals for the 0-4s (who are 5-9s in 1986). Therefore proportions are not entirely accurate but the comparisons between the races are very interesting.

Figure 7 a

Table to show by race and age the proportion of young people reached by the church.

Race	Age in survey	No's contacted by church	Age in Population census		%
White	0-10	1187 *	0-9	17706	6.5%
	11-21	824	10-19	18099	4.6%
Black	0-10	704 *	0-9	4404	16.0%
	11-21	607 *	10-19	4922	12.3%
Asian	0-10	130	0-9	7586	1.3%
	11-21	62	10-19	5946	1.0%

(*These figures are inflated by two churches; one has a large number of both white and black under 5's and the other has a large number of black young people of all ages, some of whom do not live in the Borough.)

We can see that proportionately many more black young people of both ages have church contact than do their white contemporaries and very few Asian young people have contact with the church.

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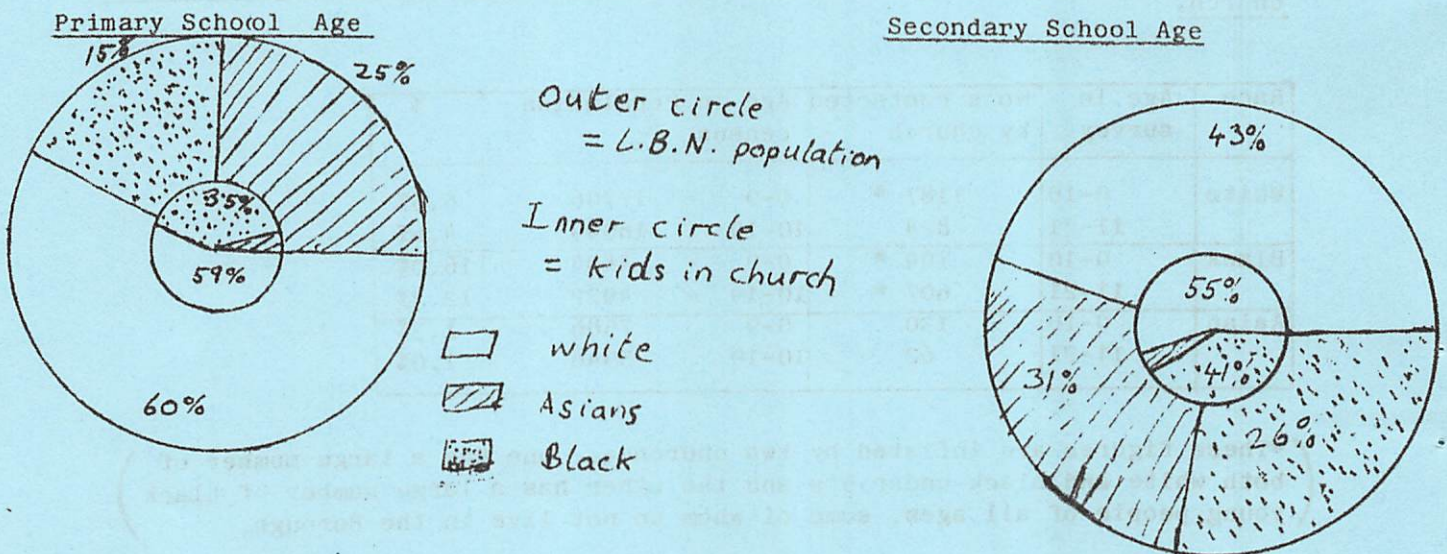
Figure 7b shows the same data from the point of view of the ethnic breakdown of young people of age group in the Borough (based on the 1981 Census) and in the church.

FIGURE 7b : Table to show the percentage of kids of each age and race contacted by the church as opposed to the % in the Borough.

% of kids	White	Black	Asian
Contacted by church 0-10	58.5%	35%	6.5%
In LBN 1981 Census 0-9	60%	15%	25%
Contacted by church 11-21	55%	41%	4%
In LBN 1981 Census 10-19	43%	26%	31%

As can be seen from Figure 7 b) the proportion of white young people contacted by the church is slightly lower in the 0-10 age range and slightly higher in the 11-21 age ranges than the proportion in the Newham population. However there are proportionally many more black young people in both age ranges and far fewer Asian young people contacted by the church than there are in the population as a whole.

Figure 7c : Pie Charts to illustrate Figure 7b



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This is shown diagrammatically in Figure 7 c) where it becomes clear that the numbers involved in the church are a small proportion of the population as a whole.

FIGURE 8

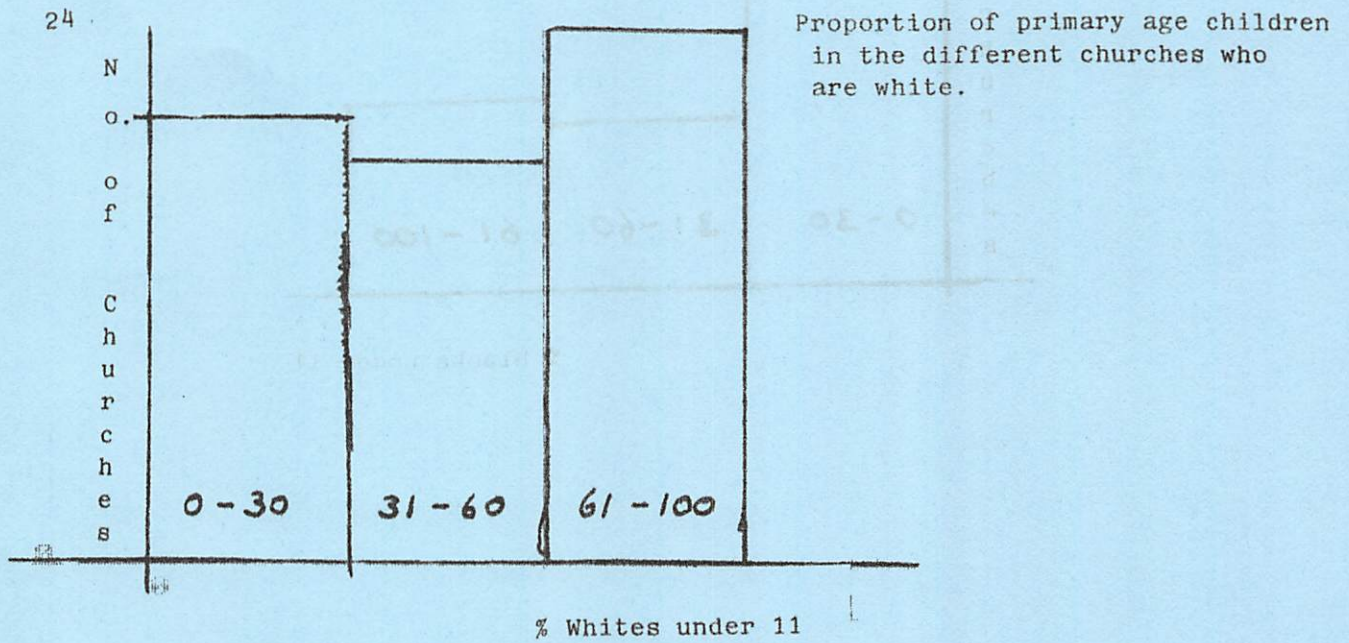


FIGURE 9

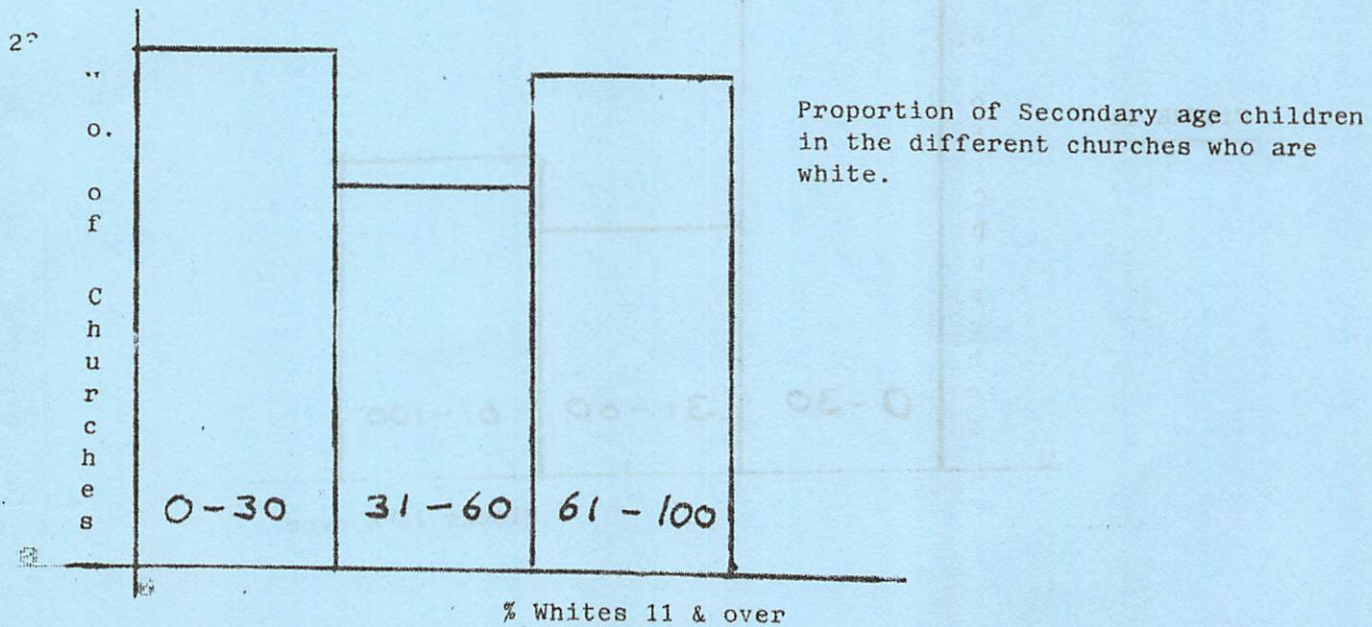


FIGURE 10

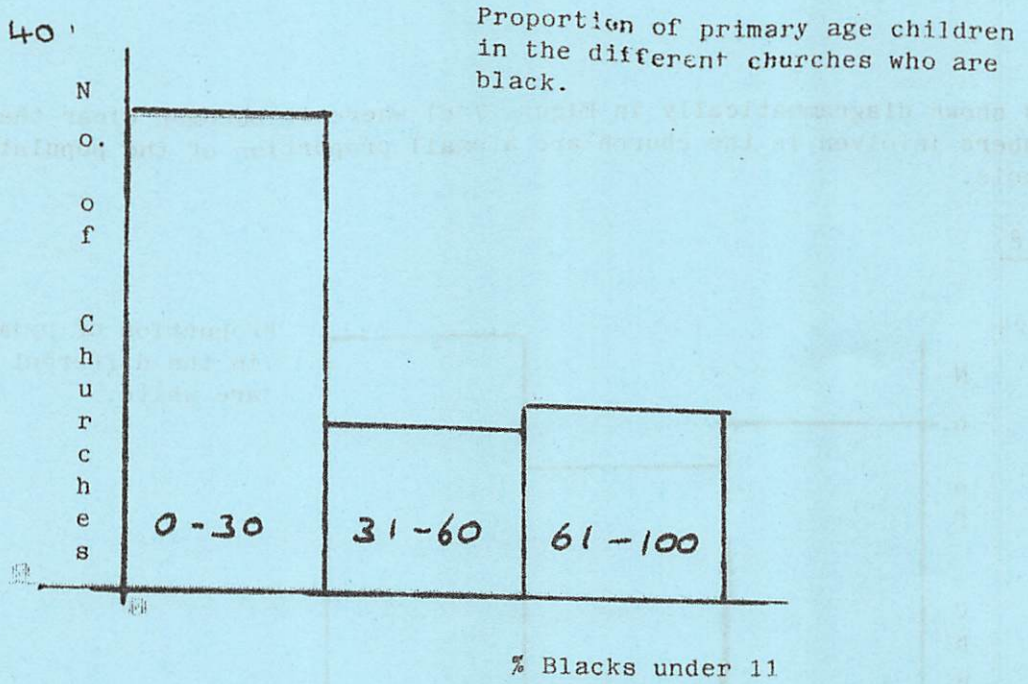
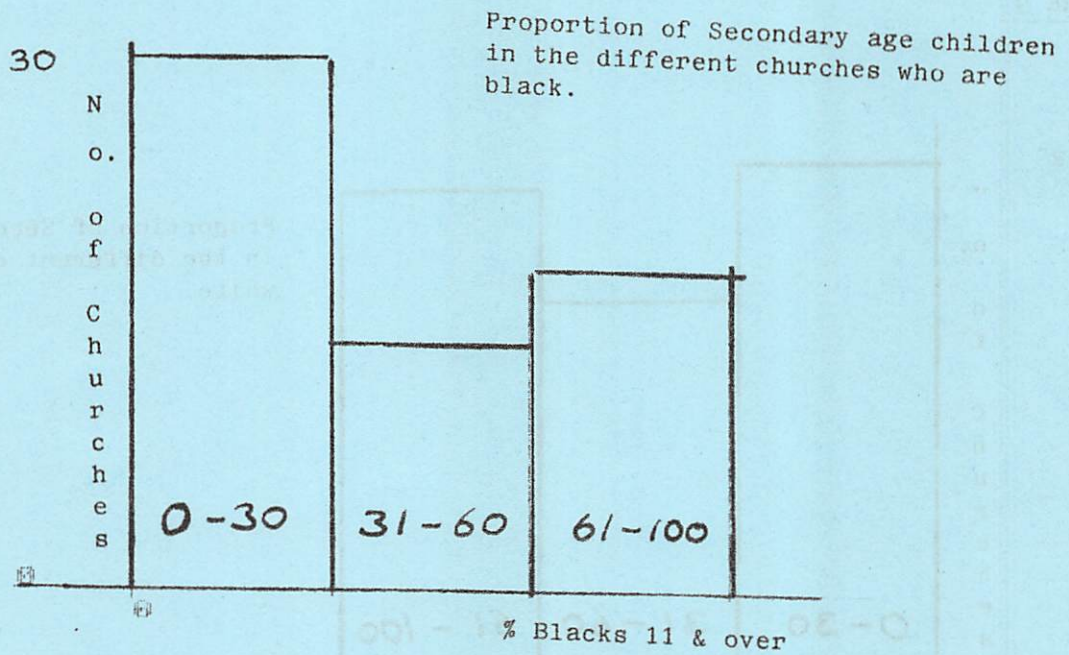


FIGURE 11



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FIGURE 12

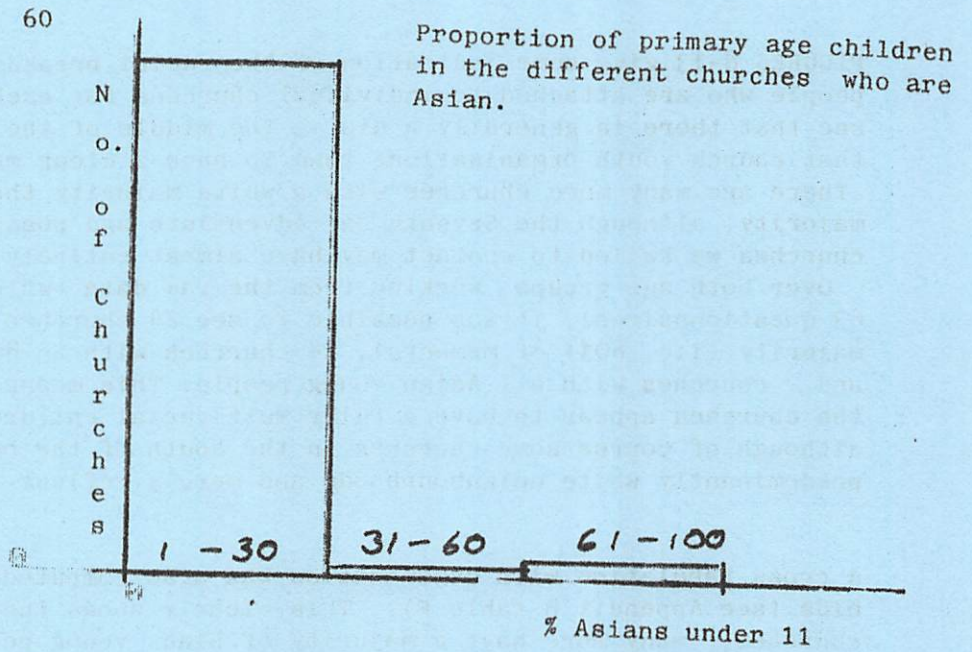
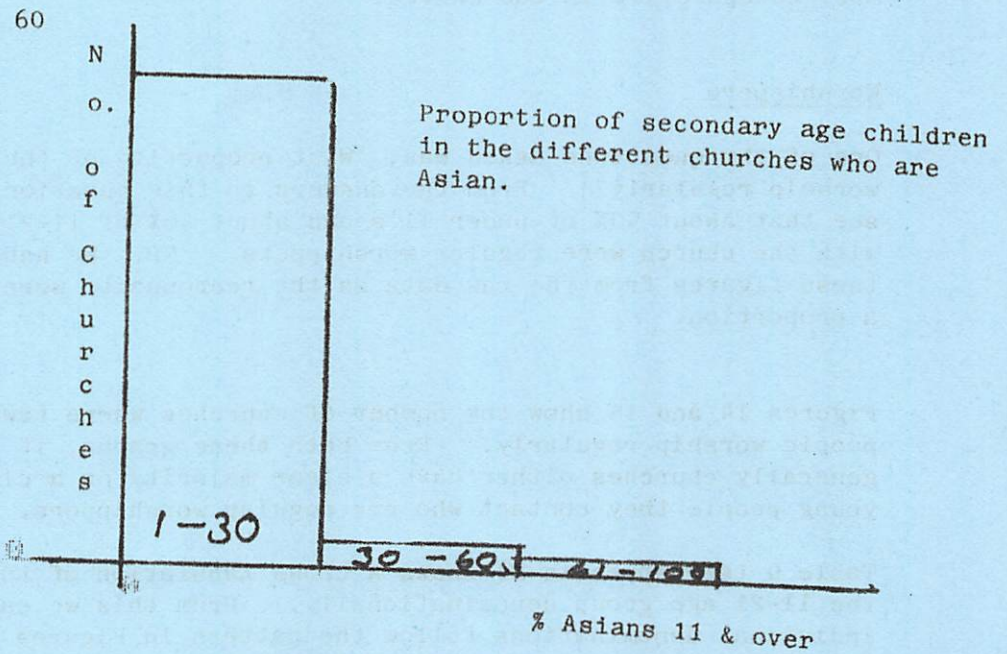


FIGURE 13



FIGURES 8-13 give some indication of the racial breakdown of the young people who are attached to individual churches for each age group. We can see that there is generally a dip in the middle of the graph, indicating that church youth organisations tend to have a clear majority of one race.

There are many more churches with a white majority than a black or Asian majority, although the Seventh Day Adventists and possibly some of the churches we failed to contact may have almost entirely black congregations.

Over both age groups, working from the raw data (which was given in only 63 questionnaires), it was possible to see 24 churches with a clear white majority (i.e. 80%+ of members), 14 churches with an 80%+ black majority and 2 churches with all Asian young people. This means that only a third of the churches appear to have a fully multiracial children's and youth work, although of course some churches in the South of the borough are in predominantly white neighbourhoods and merely reflect the local population.

A cross tabulation with denomination was also computed for Black 11-21 year olds (see Appendix B table F). This clearly shows that for Pentecostal churches, many more have a majority of black young people, unsurprisingly since many of these churches have all black congregations.

The number of churches used for this information on race is fewer than for the main survey. Only 63 out of 81 churches gave information on the racial breakdown of young people in their churches. Obviously for those with no youth, the question was irrelevant and others felt unable to give the information for various reasons. Generally the churches from which the information is taken had work with young people of both ages and were the most co-operative in the survey.

Worshippers

One of the questions asked was, 'What proportion of the children and youth worship regularly?' From the answers to this question, it was possible to see that about 50% of under 11's and about 40% of 11-21's who had contact with the church were regular worshippers. NB. We had to reconstruct these figures from the raw data as the respondents were only asked to give a proportion.

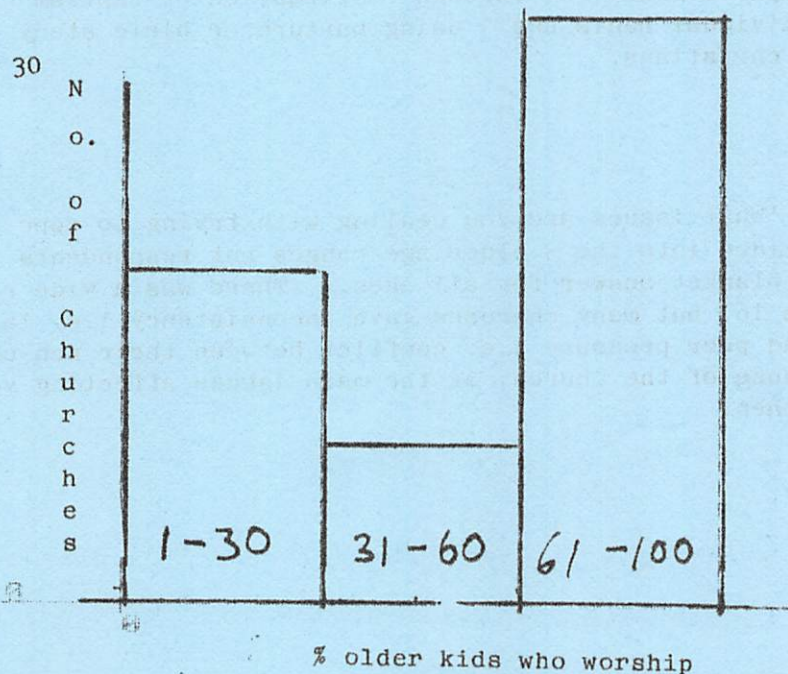
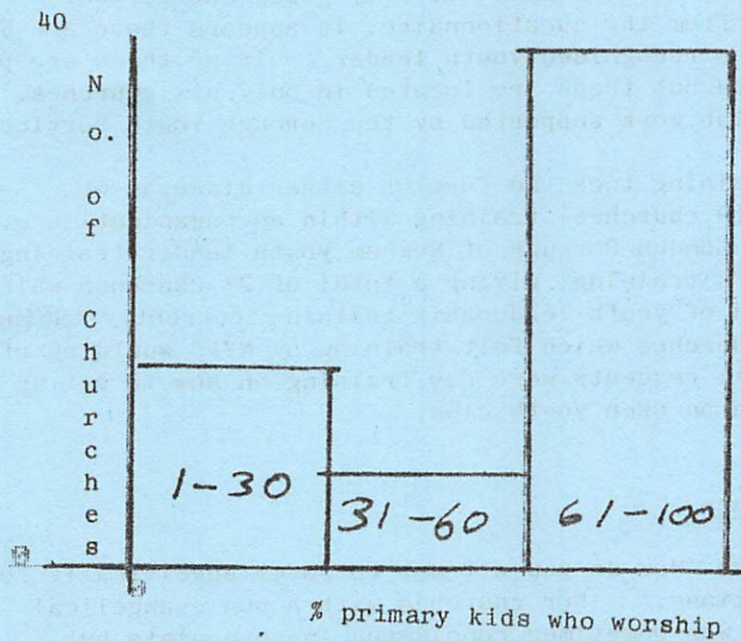
Figures 14 and 15 show the number of churches where few, some or most young people worship regularly. From both these graphs, it is evident that generally churches either have a clear majority or a clear minority of young people they contact who are regular worshippers.

Table G (see Appendix B) shows a cross tabulation of this information for the 11-21 age group denominationally. From this we can see that several individual denominations follow the pattern in Figures 14 and 15 but the Pentecostal churches have only one church out of 14 where less than 60% of the young people are regular worshippers. This pattern also draws in the community churches although figures are very small for this group of churches.

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FIGS 14 & 15

Proportion of children contacted by each church who take part in Sunday worship.



Youth Leaders

There were various questions relating to youth leadership in the questionnaire. Names of most main youth leaders in the church were obtained but it is often unclear how to define a youth leader. For the purposes of this survey, a youth leader was generally seen as a person running the work of one of the four main activity group categories. From the information obtained from the questionnaire, it appears there are 53 churches with at least one recognised youth leader. 18 of these are paid and professionally trained but these are located in only six churches. (Mostly in senior open club work supported by the borough Youth Service).

Existing youth leader training took the form of either diocesan or denominational training (9 churches) training within an organisation e.g. Brigades (7 churches) or London Borough of Newham youth leader training (4 churches), as well as NYFC training, giving a total of 27 churches which indicated using some kind of youth leadership training currently taking place. There were 13 churches which felt training by NYFC would be of value to them and specific requests were for training on how to set up a youth work and how to run an open youth club.

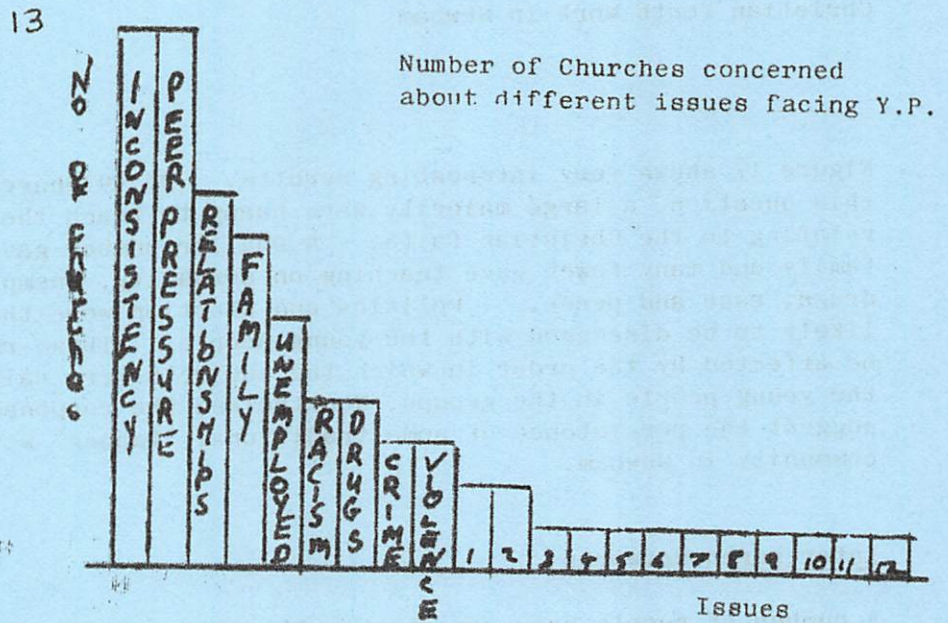
Nurture of Young Christians

Another question asked was 'How do you attempt to cater specifically for the needs of young Christians.' For churches with a non-evangelical viewpoint, this question was sometimes considered inappropriate but information was gained from several churches of which 47 said they attempted to offer something for new young Christians. 24 did this by their usual young people's group, 11 through confirmation or baptism classes, 10 on an individual basis and 3 using nurture or bible study groups for new young Christians.

Issues

Churches were asked, 'What issues are you dealing with/trying to cope with?' This was divided into the 3 older age ranges but respondents almost always gave a blanket answer for all ages. There was a wide range of issues (see Figure 16) but many churches gave inconsistency i.e. lack of regular attendance and peer pressure i.e. conflict between their non-church friends values and those of the church, as the main issues affecting young people in their churches.

FIGURE 16



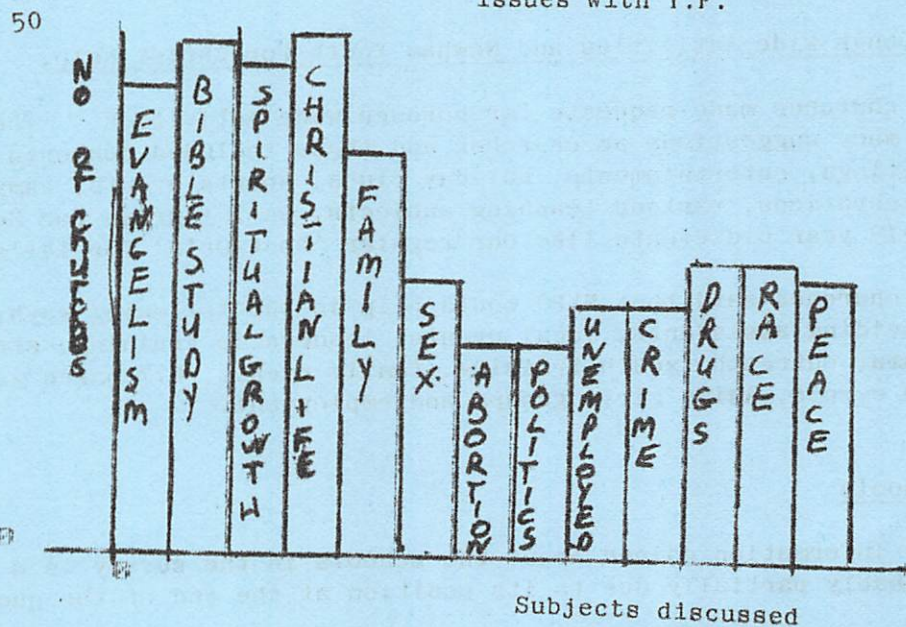
- 1) Sexism
- 2) Lack of youth leaders
- 3) wide age range
- 4) police
- 5) low self-esteem
- 6) other faith upbringing
- 7) social education
- 8) Trust
- 9) Language
- 10) Discipline
- 11) understanding
- 12) Building.

Teaching Topics

Interviewees were given a checklist of topics which may be taught to their young people and were asked to indicate whether or not these were, or might be, taught or discussed.

FIGURE 17

Number of churches who discuss issues with Y.P.



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Figure 17 shows very interesting results. Of 49 churches which attempted this question, a large majority were happy to teach the first four topics relating to the Christian faith. A smaller number gave teaching on the family and many fewer gave teaching on sexuality, unemployment, crime, drugs, race and peace. Politics and abortion were the two subjects least likely to be discussed with the young people. These results may however be affected by the order in which the subjects were raised and the ages of the young people in the groups. Nonetheless the responses do tend to suggest the persistence of some traditional "taboos" within the Christian community in Newham.

Interchurch Networks

A number of people have remarked on the strength and growing importance of relationships between the different churches in Newham. But how far is this so for young people in the churches?

Therefore, 'What contacts do your young people have with other churches and youth groups', was another question asked. The responses included denominational links (15) which were mostly Anglican, Methodist and Black Pentecostal churches. Contacts in their locality accounted for 8 churches and intra-organisation (9) such as Cubs or Pathfinder rallies. 12 churches indicated the chief contacts were through NYFC; 2 through interclub sports activities, 4 at Borough prayer meetings organised by the 'celebration' group of ministers and 5 meeting with other black or Asian churches. A number of churches listed more than one type of contact. However, many respondents said that their young people did not have contact with other churches or groups and the reason given was often linked with the territorial nature of the young people.

Borough-wide Activities and Newham Youth for Christ help.

26 churches made requests for borough-wide activities. There were almost as many suggestions as churches and these included concerts, open-air meetings, entertainments, holiday clubs, sports events, camping, all-age celebrations, various teaching subjects, an 18+ group for South Newham and 11-13 year old events like our regular 'Spot-On's' for 14+'s.

32 churches said that NYFC could help in the following ways; by prayer, providing assistants, local events, leadership training, streetwork and drama, outreach, youth training, family events, E.7 based work, 11-13 year old events, Asian girls groups and employment.

Schools

The information gained about the schools in the survey is a bit sketchy, probably partially due to its position at the end of the questionnaire.

All the secondary schools had some pupils who had church links. Forest Gate, Brampton, Langdon, Sarah Bonnell and Plashet were mentioned most as

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schools where young people attended.

Of the contacts with schools mentioned, a few church leaders had input in assemblies and Christian Union meetings and 4 churches had leaders or members who are school governors.

Our intention to build up a comprehensive list of Christian school teachers in the Borough connected with churches in Newham was difficult to complete.

Many churches had primary school teachers and many had teachers who worked outside the Borough. Also the respondents were often not fully aware of the number of teachers and their schools in the church.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NEWHAM'S CHURCHES

Numbers

Although the 7% of young people mentioned by the churches in Newham is probably more than the number of adult members, it is still a poor reflection on the infiltration of the church into the community. The Protestant churches' involvement in work with children and young people still fails to touch nine out of ten youngsters in the borough.

Although there are 8 (10%) churches which have contact with 100+ children and young people, we can see from the results that most churches have contact with a small number of young people, in most cases between 20 and 40 per church. Although this gives no indication of the quality of the work with these few, the small scale nature of this work tends to suggest that one of the main tasks is to provide a meeting place for young people from different churches, as in their own church there are unlikely to be many young people of their own age. Several denominations and organisations are doing this included NYFC and the Methodist churches with their 'Something Different' meetings.

However, perhaps we should ask what is the best method for attracting more young people to the church? Is it better to leave the work to those few churches which have a 'successful' group and to enlarge these? Are some young people put off by larger groups, or do some prefer anonymous large gatherings? Or would it be better to enlarge the number of existing smaller groups within a church to cater better for the (many diverse) needs of the young people, so far not being reached? However probably one of the main reasons why this is not done more often is the lack of available leadership in the adult church membership.

Age Groups

As can be seen from the results, the numbers in the age groups are unlikely to be totally accurate. They were usually obtained from memory and rarely were accurate records kept, plus with inconsistency and an ever-changing population, it is difficult to draw any hard and fast conclusions.

The results of the answers to the questions into different age groups do show some surprising results. Often the church leaders visited showed concern at the number of young people who 'fall away' from the church aged 11+. Although the percentages in Figure 4 show some differences between under 14's and over 14's, they do not show the dramatic differences between the age groups which may have been expected. At least the differences are not dramatic when set against the very small proportion of primary age children who are reached by the churches in the first place.

However, for individual churches and for individual children as they grow up, the 'fall off' may be a correct interpretation. We can see that the percentage of churches catering for under 20 children show a clear distinction between the 5-10 age group where 59% of churches have 20 or less children and the 11-13 and 14-18 age groups (85% and 88% respectively). Therefore some churches clearly do have a much larger number of under 14's than 14's - 18's.

From the information collated in the next section about different activity groups, it would seem likely that the type of contact 11-21's have with the church is different than the under 11's. Under 11 contact is more likely to be with a Sunday School or uniformed organisation, but over 11 it may be with a uniformed organisation, a YPF or an open youth club, all of which have fairly distinct client groups. Of the 8 churches with contact with 100+ young people, one had its main contact through a nursery so is not so relevant to NYFC, but 5 got most of their numbers from open youth club work which had little or no contact with the church congregation, or through uniformed organisations. Only two gave large figures for young people attending YPF groups. Therefore perhaps the work with large numbers of over 11's generally has a less direct Christian message content than work with under 11's, although it is difficult to make generalisations from churches with very different approaches and where little information is available on content and quality of work.

The 'falling away' often discerned by church leaders is probably between the Sunday School (often for under 11's only) and the YPF (often for over 11's only) and the numbers in Figure 5 would seem to lend some weight to this opinion.

Activity Groups

From Figure 5 in the results, we can compare the number of young people attending each activity and perhaps draw some conclusions from these. It is clear that many more children attend Sunday School than a YPF. This may be due to the younger age group catered for by Sunday School or may reflect the sometimes compulsory nature of Sunday School for children whose parents attend church.

There are also more children who attend a uniformed organisation or an Open Youth club than who attend a YPF. The former two groups are probably more activity-based and demand less commitment to the Christian faith or knowledge of it. However no clear cut reasons can be given for the greater numbers involved.

Christian Youth Work in Newham

It is interesting that although more young people attend an open youth club or uniformed organisation than go to a YPF, there are almost twice as many YPF groups. This would seem to indicate that YPF groups tend to be smaller and are probably more intimate, demanding a greater personal commitment to them which may discourage some young people from trying them.

Perhaps if several groups joined together for events, the young people who are threatened by the nature of these smaller groups may attend. However for some the cliqueiness of some YPF style groups makes them reluctant to attend. Perhaps an additional group more appropriate to needs of young people, who are at present alienated by the existing YPF groups may be a solution for some churches with 'fringe' young people or a desire to bring in more young people. However again the lack of appropriate people to lead these groups is often a problem.

As seen from Figure 6 in the results, there is a great difference between the number of churches involved with uniformed groups and number of groups.

It would seem reasonable to assume that relatively few churches (21) are committed to uniformed work but those which are, usually have comparatively thriving groups.

There are also a few notable churches which have an open youth club programme, employing paid and trained youth workers and provide groups for different ages and this is their main youth work.

Boys & Girls

While almost equal numbers of boys and girls appear to be in contact with the churches they tend to favour different types of groups. Girls outnumber boys significantly in Sunday School and uniformed organisations, and to a lesser extent in the YPFs. However there are twice as many boys as girls to be found in the Open Club work. This suggests either that young people are well acquainted with the local idea that religion is mainly for women and children, or that Open Club activities with their emphasis on sports and other "boys" activities are still a male dominated environment.

Race

It is difficult to draw many firm conclusions from the information in the survey as comparisons with official figures are so imprecise.

However it would appear that proportionally many more black young people are likely to have a 'church' background than are their white contemporaries and Asian young people are unlikely to have had contact with church - most of the Asian numbers come from the two Asian churches.

This may affect the way we approach and attempt to cater for the needs of the young people although obviously each person's needs have to be individually catered for.

In terms of the churches, we can see that there is a polarisation; 40 out of 63 churches were in contact with youth of predominantly one race (80%).

Thus interchurch activities to mix young people from different backgrounds would seem useful. Interestingly, one black Pastor was keen to mix his young people with white Christian young people as he was surprised there were any white Christian young people! There is clearly a need for more contacts between churches which have predominantly one race.

Christian Youth Work in Newham

Worshippers

As at least 50% of those who have contact with a church do not worship regularly, we need to be cautious in assuming Christian understanding and/or commitment with young people who have church contact. It would be necessary to know the particular church a young person is connected with to be clear what that contact means but it would seem from the results that a young person associated with a pentecostal or community church would usually be a regular attender.

Issues

It is interesting to note the frequency of occurrence of certain issues and problems in the church's youth work. The most common ones are non-attendance or inconsistency, and peer pressure or culture/generational conflict. This would seem to be the crucial issue at this time when the divide between the world's and churches' standards is growing (and the world seems to have the "big battallions" of advertising, media and schooling on its side). The young people are faced with a difficult choice. Is there anything as a church we can be doing to make this choice easier and to increase their commitment to the church?

The second main area of problem is in personal relationships, and in the family. In view of this, perhaps we need more guidance and teaching for young people which is relevant to them in these areas.

Nurture and Teaching

Of 81 churches approached, only 47 attempted to answer this question. Of these only 24 provided a specific group or way of discipling new young Christians. Perhaps we need to ask if there is more which can be done in this area.

As the results in Figure 16 show there is a clear difference between the number of churches which teach the basic Christian faith and those which are prepared to teach a wider range of subjects. Maybe one of the questions we need to ask, particularly in the light of concerns raised in the issues section above, is 'Will this basic teaching be sufficient to equip them for this world or do they need a Christian perspective on a broader range of issues?'

Interchurch Activities

From the results, we can see that many of the inter church links are across denomination or intra-organisational groups which often serve just one denomination. Perhaps it is time to make the effort to forge links across the denominations.

As young people are often territorial, why not get together with other churches in your locality?

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Schools

Although some churches are represented in all local secondary schools actual contact with school is sparse. Because of the lack of information gleaned it is hard to draw any clear conclusions about the links between churches and schools.

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APPENDIX A

NEWHAM YOUTH FOR CHRIST QUESTIONNAIRE

No of Questionnaire

DATE

Name of person interviewed

NAME OF CHURCH

ADDRESS

CHURCH LEADER'S NAME

TEL.

YOUTH LEADERS	NAMES	RESPONSIBILITIES	TEL.
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No of Children in each age group who you work with.

- A) Pre School children
- B) Junior School children 5-10
- C) Secondary 11-13
- D) Secondary 14-18
- E) Post School 18-21

LIST OF CLUBS, ACTIVITIES ETC.

(Include uniformed organisations, clubs, family worship, Sunday School etc.)

Please give day and time of each meeting?

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NUMBERS OF BOYS AND GIRLS INVOLVED IN EACH ACTIVITY.

	BOYS	GIRLS
1)		
2)		
3)		
4)		
5)		
6)		
7)		
8)		

What proportion of the children and youth are

Up to 11 years 11-21

white
black
Asian
other

What proportion of the children and youth worship regularly

Up to 11 years 11-21

How do you attempt to cater specifically for the needs of young Christians?

How many of your youth childrens leaders are a) paid
b) professionally trained

Please give details

What issues are you dealing with/ trying to cope with in

a) the 11-13s

b) the 14-18s

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c) 18 plus

Do you have teaching or discussion on any of the following with your young people

CHECK LIST

Christian faith

- a) evangelism
- b) Bible study
- c) spiritual growth

- d) Christian lifestyle

family life
sexuality
abortion
politics
unemployment
crime
drugs
race
peace

What training provision is available for the leaders of different groups?

What other forms of training would be helpful?

What contacts do your young people have with other churches and youth groups?

What activities on a borough wide level would interest or help your young people?

Are there any ways that Newham Youth For Christ can help support your work amongst young people?

Which secondary schools do your young people attend?

Do you have any contacts with Christian teachers there, or positive input into schools (e.g. assemblies, parent governors) ?

Please give details.

Are there any school teachers in your Church membership?

Christian Youth Work in Newham

APPENDIX B: TABLES

TABLE A : LIST OF CHURCHES IN NEWHAM

The following table illustrates the variety of Church life to be found in the London Borough of Newham in 1986.

There were 133 entries on the original contact list.

8 of these entries were for Christian Community centres which with only one exception, had no regularly worshipping congregation under the management of the centre.

2 of the entries referred to churches which are now evidently closed.

17 referred to pastors who lived in Newham but whose congregations met outside the borough.

The denominational breakdowns of the remaining 106 were as follows.

	On list	Responding to Survey
RC	9	0
CofE	26	25
Methodist	7	7
URC	4	4
Baptist (incl Strict Bap.)	11	10
Salvation Army	2	1
White led Pentecostal	6	6
Black Led Pentecostal	16	12
Community Church	4	4
Independent Evangelical	13	12
Greek Orthodox	1	0
Adventist	5	0

Included in the Independent Evangelical category were two Asian Language groups, a Chinese Pentecostal group, an African non-pentecostal group, Moravians, Brethren, and other evangelical churches.

Sects such as JWs and Mormons and other faith groups were not included.

TABLE B: Number of kids (all ages) catered for by churches of different denominations

DENOMINATION	CofE	Methodist	Baptist	URC	Pentecostal	Ind.	Evang.	Com.Ch.	S.A	Total
No of Kids										
1-20	4	2	1	1	6	6	3	0	0	23
21-40	5	2	3	0	6	2	1	1	1	20
41-60	3	0	3	1	1	3	0	0	0	11
61-80	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
81-100	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
over 100	4	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	7
Total	25	7	10	4	18	12	4	1	1	71

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TABLE D: Number of children aged 11-13 catered for by churches of different denominations

DENOMINATION	CofE	Methodist	Baptist	URC	Pentecostal	Ind.	Evang.	Com.Ch.	S.A	
No of Kids										
1-20	13	5	7	3	12	11	4	4	1	56
21-40	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
41-60	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
61-80	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	19	5	9	4	12	11	4	4	1	65

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TABLE E Number of young people aged 14-18 catered for by churches of different denominations

DENOMINATION	CofE	Methodist	Baptist	URC	Pentecostal	Ind. Evang.	Com.Ch.	S.A	
No of Kids									
1-20	16	4	6	7	11	9	4	0	57
21-40	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	3
41-60	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
61-80	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
81-100	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	19	4	8	8	12	9	4	0	64

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TABLE F: Denominations catering for different proportion of Black 11-21 year olds

DENOMINATION	CofE	Methodist	Baptist	URC	Pentecostal	Ind. Evang.	Com.Ch.	S.A	
% of Kids									
1-30	11	3	2	3	3	6	2	0	30
31-60	4	1	2	1	1	3	2	0	14
60+	4	1	2	0	9	2	0	0	18
Total	19	5	6	4	13	11	4	0	62

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TABLE G Denominations with % of 11-21 year olds who worship

DENOMINATION	CofE	Methodist	Baptist	URC	Pentecostal	Ind. Evang.	Com.Ch.	S.A
% of Kids who worship								
1-30	7	2	3	3	0	4	0	19
31-60	3	1	1	0	1	2	1	9
60+	8	1	3	1	13	5	2	33
Totals	18	4	7	4	14	11	3	61

RESOURCES

Newham Youth for Christ (NYFC)
Plashet URC, Chester Road, Forest Gate, London E7.
01 470 8047.

British Youth For Christ (BYFC)
Cleobury Place, Cleobury Mortimer, Kidderminster, Worcs.
0299 270260.

North East London Religious Education Centre (NELREC)
The Methodist Church, Ilford Lane, Ilford Essex.
01 478 5630.

Scripture Union (S.U.)
130 City Road, London EC1V 2 NJ
01 250 1966.

Newham Community Renewal Programme
Harold Road Centre, Harold Road, E13.
01 471 1024.

Newham Borough Youth Office.
379 High Street, Stratford, E15.
01 534 4545

Mayflower Youth Centre.
Vincent Street, Canning Town E16.
01 474 3798.

Frontier Youth Trust (FYT).
130 City Road, London EC1V 2NJ
01 250 1966.
Newham Office - 476 3651