

Faith Guides for
Higher Education

Christianity



A Guide to Christianity

Gregory A. Barker



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PREFACE TO THE FAITH GUIDE SERIES

In the 2001 National Census, over 70% of the UK population identified themselves as belonging to a religious community; and the issue of religion is rarely out of the news, often being discussed in relation to highly-charged controversy and emotion. There is often a lack of understanding as to what a religion is, and what it means to be a member (or not) of a specific faith group. Confusion can result in all walks of life and higher education (HE) is not exempt from this. Indeed, institutions are increasingly, and with varying degrees and different levels of success, seeking to respond to and understand specific faith requirements, as they relate (or not) to particular areas of higher education, in continually changing contexts. This series of *Faith Guides* from the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies will not necessarily solve all the controversies or confusion, but may bring some answers to some of these basic questions, through providing individuals, departments, and institutions with resource information on issues relating to teaching people of faith in a higher education environment.

The introduction of the *Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003* suggested a broader social commitment in the UK to the creation of culturally inclusive places of work. Following their introduction, not only is there an ethical and moral duty to consciously avoid discrimination on the basis of religion and belief, but there is now a statutory duty. Both the Home Office and the Department for International Development have expressed their commitment towards working more closely with faith communities and encouraging interfaith dialogue. All these developments suggest a need for staff in UK higher education institutions to develop the skills and knowledge that reflect this growing concern for cultural and religious literacy in British society. This series offers an accessible route into this area of knowledge. By providing concise guides, all those involved in the higher education academic process have an opportunity to quickly acquire a basic awareness of issues, in a format as free from jargon as possible.

The Subject Centre has brought together a broad range of subject specialists who can draw upon their personal experiences of and interactions with specific faith groups and individuals, acquired through their own academic work, and in some cases utilising personal experiences as members of a particular tradition. The guides detail students' feelings about modern life on campus; information obtained through the authors' longstanding teaching experience and, in some cases, informal focus groups set up to garner student opinion.

The rich variety of issues contained in this series of guides acknowledges substantial diversity within and between faith groups, in particular in relation to identity issues and ideas about what it means to be religious. The format for each guide has some stress on a commonality of themes, but has allowed authors the opportunity to explore themes that are individual and specific to a particular world view. Editing this series has

raised some interesting issues, and it is acknowledged that it is not possible to accommodate perspectives as varied as Buddhism, Islam and New Age in the same format—and that there are disparate (and occasionally conflicting) perspectives within diverse faiths, not all of which can be referred to within a series of concise guides. This series is not intended to be a ‘politically correct’ tool, but seeks instead to support the enrichment of the teaching and learning experience for all those engaged within the higher education sector. It is based on the idea of encouraging awareness and understanding of the cultural and religious dynamics of student experience in higher education, with a view to supporting the development and sharing of good practice.

In tackling these concerns, the guides seek to provide a basic introduction to religious world views, before tackling some general issues associated with students and staff from specific faith backgrounds, and their interactions in the higher education sector. It also provides advice on where to go for further information. The series will thereby save the reader time and effort in locating significant source material and advice on higher education issues associated with faith communities and individuals.

This series will be expanded to accommodate further religious (and other) world views, including some of those related to the religions contained in the initial set of titles, and updates to the present volumes will also be provided in due course—so feedback to the present series would be particularly welcomed. The editor is grateful for the input of all the authors in the evolution of this series, and to members of the Subject Centre and its Advisory Board who provided significant contributions at every stage of the production process.

All web links listed in this guide were correct and verified at the time of publication.

Further information and resources on issues relating to diversity can be found on our website at:

<http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/diversity>

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NOTES ON THE AUTHOR

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I. INTRODUCING CHRISTIANITY



Cloister with statue of St. Jerome, Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem

Two people may call themselves Christians, yet differ so widely from one another in their views that they appear to belong to different faiths. One feels strongly that abortion or homosexual behaviour is wrong; the other campaigns for acceptance of these practices. One attends church regularly, orienting his or her life around carefully prescribed rituals, the other has no use for these rituals and instead seeks spiritual insights gained through Bible reading or ecstatic experiences. Is there anything that unites this diverse group? Indeed there is: Christians share the belief that Jesus was more than a man—he is the meeting place between God and humanity.

ORIGINS

Who was the historical Jesus of Nazareth? A Jewish rabbi? A sage? A wandering revolutionary? This question is a source of lively controversy amongst scholars. But there is no fundamental controversy amongst most Christians: Jesus is the incarnation of God. In other words, he is more than a historical figure accessible only through scholarly analysis—Jesus is a living presence in the church and the life of the believer.

The first disciples of Jesus probably did not have an elaborate theology of how Jesus was related to God. Rather, they had a life-changing encounter with a charismatic Jewish teacher who they viewed as miraculous. After his crucifixion they scattered, afraid of persecution by the Roman authorities. They then claimed to have had the dramatic experience of knowing Jesus as resurrected from the dead. This conviction gave them the courage to proclaim that Jesus was alive and still to be followed.

CHRISTIANITY

'Christ' comes from the Jewish word Messiah meaning 'anointed one', a reference to how Jewish kings were consecrated. Many Jews in the time of Jesus believed that a 'Christ' would come and deliver them from bondage to Rome. Jesus was one of many whose followers were convinced he was this Christ.

The Gospels, written some 30-60 years after Jesus' crucifixion, are lively accounts of Jesus' words and deeds.



A Nativity scene, St Martin-in-the-Fields

Some scholars have suggested that Matthew, Mark and Luke present the religion *of* Jesus while the Gospel of John and the letters of Paul present a religion *about* Jesus. This is an exaggerated claim, but it does underline the fact that some Christians emphasise living as Jesus lived (the religion of Jesus) and others emphasise the inner, spiritual encounter with Jesus himself as the source of one's actions (a religion about Jesus).

KEY DIVISIONS AND TURNING POINTS IN CHURCH HISTORY

THE APOSTLE PAUL

The missionary activity of the apostle Paul has irrevocably shaped the history of the Christian church. Paul was a Jewish convert to Christianity after the crucifixion, claiming to have had a spiritual encounter with the resurrected Christ. Paul founded churches throughout the Roman Empire; the letters he wrote to these churches comprise a large part of the New Testament. The central theme of Paul's message was his experience of grace, a concept that refers to the reception of an unearned gift. According to Paul, one doesn't work one's way to God (this would lead to self righteousness and pride); God comes to humanity with forgiveness and the possibility of a new beginning. For Paul, Jesus was the 'Lord', the one to be followed—though, in fact, Paul's many letters contain little reference to Jesus' teachings. The reason for this is that the Jesus to be followed is present in each believer through the spiritual power of the resurrection.

A CHRISTIAN EMPIRE?

With the coming of Constantine to the throne (312 CE) came also the declaration that Christianity was to become the state religion of the Roman Empire. Christians have interpreted this dramatic turn of events as both the best and the worst moment in the history of the Church. It can be seen as a negative event because institutionalised religion is always destined to dilute the original impact of the founders and establish an 'official' version of the religion which stamps out other, equally valid, interpretations (not to mention giving rise to forced conversions and persecution of those unwilling to convert). This change has also been seen positively because it ended centuries of persecution and led to a flowering of Christian art, architecture and theology.

It was in this era that details of Christian belief were worked out. The topic of greatest controversy was the exact nature of Jesus' relation to God. Those who contended that Jesus was both fully divine and fully human, a full member of the Godhead, prevailed. It was in this era that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity reached its full expression: that God is three (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) but at the same time One.

A selection from The Nicene Creed, 325 CE, affirmed by Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic and most Protestant Churches.¹

**... Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
He came down from heaven...**

EAST VS WEST

The flourishing of theology that began under Constantine can be said to have been a major contributory factor to the split between what would later be known as the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox sections of the church. At the heart of the debate lay what may now appear to be a minor disagreement about the exact relationship of Jesus to the Spirit of God within the Trinity. However, in addition to political and social factors, it led to a complete split by 1054. The Orthodox Church is often called Eastern-Orthodox, Greek Orthodox or Greco-Roman Orthodox. These churches recognize the primacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople and differ widely from the western church in worship practice, organisation and in some theological details.

¹ The Church of England website:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/liturgy/commonworship/texts/word/creeds.html>

DIVERSITY

Even with an established church hierarchy in Rome, the western church should be not seen as a uniform entity. There existed through the centuries a wide variety of ways to relate to God, including mysticism, scholasticism, simple piety, loving devotion and ecstatic experience. Commitment to Christianity could range from superficial cultural orientation to monastic commitment. The wide variety of images of Jesus from medieval art alone is enough to convince anyone of the many ways theology could be approached.²

‘Please don’t lump all Christians into one massive group—there is just so much diversity.’

David, 22

THE CRY FOR REFORM

Typically, the Reformation is associated with Martin Luther (1483-1546), though there were many who preceded Luther who were united in their conviction that certain practices of the church were in need of reform. These reformers were concerned about worship and Bible reading being taken away from the people (ie the Bible only being available in Latin), fundraising tactics that involved the purchasing of forgiveness for the living and the dead, and papal claims to supremacy. Luther and his predecessors did not at first envision a break from the Catholic Church, but issues soon became polarised and this was in fact what happened: the creation of the Protestant church (‘protest’). It is an interesting fact of history that many of the reforms that Luther and others called for were instituted by the Roman Catholic Church at the Council of Trent (1545-63).

In England the Reformation was less about theological protest—at least as far as King Henry VIII (1491-1547) was concerned. The Pope refused to grant King Henry the divorce he needed in order to remarry and attempt to father a male heir. So Henry created his own church, overthrowing the Catholic Church, confiscating land and emptying monasteries. However, there were those in the English church with similar concerns to European reformers. The resulting church (The Anglican Church) is a broad organisation including everyone from evangelicals, who are strong in their commitment to a literal interpretation of the Bible, to charismatics who emphasise individual personal experiences, to Anglo-Catholics, who centre their lives on traditional worship rituals. Some church members describe this church as both Protestant and Catholic.

² Pelikan, Jaroslav *Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (London & New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), xvi+270pp.

UK CALENDAR OF CHRISTIAN FESTIVALS

It may appear that Christian holidays are only an incidental part of our secular calendar. Most people know, for example, when it is Christmas and Easter—yet the majority of our days are known as either ‘work days’ or ‘weekends’. This secularisation of our calendar is a relatively recent phenomenon. For centuries Christians oriented their lives around a sacred calendar celebrating the life of Jesus, the saints and the birth of the church.

The Christian calendar encompasses not four seasons but six. Each season has its own colours, its own distinctive scripture readings and its own festivals and commemorations.

ADVENT

This is the first season of the Christian calendar, beginning in late November or early December. Advent is a Latin word meaning ‘coming’ and the theme that marks this season is the coming of Jesus, both at his birth and at the end of the world. The colour of this season is either blue or purple to signify royalty. Traditional churches will often refuse to sing Christmas hymns during this period (there are a wide range of Advent hymns including ‘O Come O come Emmanuel’) waiting until the end of this season (midnight on the 24th December) to celebrate Christmas.

CHRISTMAS

In the traditional calendar Christmas is a ‘season’ lasting 12 days. The colours are white and gold and throughout this period the birth of Jesus as the entry of God into the world is the central theme.

EPIPHANY

This word means ‘manifestation’ and is a time of reflection lasting several weeks, during which Christ’s manifestation as Messiah is explored in relation to the wise men, John the Baptist and at the marriage feast in Cana. The colours of Christmas usually remain for this season.

LENT



This term comes from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning ‘spring’ and is a period of penitence, remembering how Jesus called people to follow him. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, a time when Christians throughout the world receive ashes on their forehead in the form of the cross as a reminder of their

mortality. Lent lasts for 40 days, which is symbolic of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness. It is a custom among many Christians to practice a discipline of fasting or giving up something during this period.

Lent includes what many Christians would identify as the most important week of the year; Holy Week, the seven days prior to Easter. Holy Week begins with 'Passion' or 'Palm Sunday', during which it is remembered that Jesus' dramatic entrance to Jerusalem was followed quickly by his betrayal, 'Maundy Thursday', which commemorates the founding of the Lord's Supper, and 'Good Friday', which dwells on the last hours and words of Christ. The colours of this season are purple or red, though some traditional churches display no colours at all (churches being stripped bare of any decorations on Good Friday) in order to more effectively signify the suffering of Jesus.

EASTER

Like Christmas, Easter is a season rather than just a day. Easter commemorates the disciples' experience of Jesus as having defeated death, rising from the dead on the first day of the week. The term 'Easter' is actually the name of the Anglo-Saxon fertility goddess of spring ('Oestre')—this fact points to the adaptation of pagan festivities into the Christian calendar in the early centuries of Christendom. Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon following 21st March. The colour of this season is white and it lasts for 50 days.

PENTECOST

In the biblical book of Acts, the Holy Spirit is reported to have descended on the disciples on the Jewish holiday of Pentecost (the term refers to 50 days). The season of Pentecost thus celebrates the birth of the church and the miracles and missionary activity of its early days. This season lasts for several months and ends on the day before advent. The colour of this season is green (red on the first Sunday of Pentecost), signifying both the growth of the church and the spiritual growth of its members.

Do Christians today live by this calendar?

On the university campus there is likely to be a small group of students and staff associated with the Anglican chaplain or the Roman Catholic Church for whom remembering these seasons is important. Christian students from Non-conformist or evangelical churches are likely to only emphasise Christmas, Holy Week and Easter in their calendar, with the mainstay of their commitment being Sundays or other days when they have a Bible study or prayer meeting. A small number of Christian groups (such as Quakers) are likely to have little in the way of seasonal celebrations as their emphasis is on one's inner spiritual state rather than on external worship practices.

UK PRESENCE AND DIVERSITY



York Minster

Is the United Kingdom a Christian country? Those who argue ‘yes’ might cite the 2001 census showing that 72% of the population identify themselves as Christians (the next largest religion, Islam, is at 3%).³ They might also point to the strong presence of the Church of England in Government, civic ceremonies and the media. Those who disagree might remind us that actual church attendance is only 7% and has been decreasing dramatically each year. There has been a steady rise in ethnic and religious diversity as well as among those who declare adherence to no religion (15.5% in 2001).

Either way, the physical presence of the church in the UK is undeniable, with villages, towns and cities dotted

with many different types of church. Some of the most common denominations are listed here.

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

The Anglican Church is the name of the UK’s established church, dating back to the time of Henry the VIII. The Church of England, the Church of Ireland, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church of Wales are each a part of the Anglican communion, congregations which recognise the leadership of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Church of England ensures that an Anglican chaplain is available to every university and most higher education colleges in England.

NON-CONFORMIST CHURCHES

The word non-conformist in this case refers to a refusal to conform to the doctrines, policy or discipline of the established church. This term is commonly applied to Presbyterian, United Reformed, Methodist and Baptist churches. These churches typically have less formal worship, an emphasis on hymn singing, more simplicity in architecture and decor, and more egalitarian decision-making structures.

³ National Statistics Online—Census 2001
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/SearchRes.asp?term=religion&x=7&y=12>

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Sometimes called the 'The Church of Rome' or simply 'The Catholic Church' (Catholic means 'universal'), Catholics believe that the gospel of Christ as recorded in the Bible and interpreted by Bishops in union with the Pope is authoritative. After centuries of persecution in this country, there is now a lively Catholic presence.

EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

The word 'evangelical' is shared by all churches; it is a reference to the 'good news' (from the Greek: 'euangelion') about God's coming, through Jesus, proclaimed by the Gospels. However, churches that use 'evangelical' in their title (eg the Evangelical Fellowship Church) often adopt a fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible and a literal interpretation of miracles (eg the virgin birth) and look forward to the return of Jesus at the end of the world. Evangelical churches ought not to be thought of solely as bastions of conservative theology. The Salvation Army, for example, is widely recognised for its initiatives in the area of social welfare.

PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

These churches believe that they are the recipients of the same miraculous gifts that were poured out on the church in Acts chapter two—healings, speaking in prophecy and the ability to speak in strange tongues. In short, these churches focus on one's experience while worshipping. Some more traditional churches (eg the Church of England) have 'charismatic renewal movements' emphasising similar worship experiences.

QUAKER MEETING HOUSES

More properly known as the Society of Friends, the Quaker movement dates from the 17th century and emphasises the immediacy of Christ's teaching in each person's soul (therefore no need for ordained ministers), silence, personal sharing in worship and strong commitment to social justice.

UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONS

So named because of their denial of the doctrine of the Trinity (God is a unity). Jesus is viewed as a human brother rather than as a divine part of the Godhead. Generally, Unitarian churches use Christian scripture and hymnody while emphasising what they hold in common with all religions. Theologically, this is the most liberal of Christian churches, with many Christians seeing it as outside the fold of Christianity.

OTHER CHURCHES

There are, of course, a number of church denominations present in the UK but not included in the above list. Some, like the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (or Coptic Church) are long established churches with millions of adherents elsewhere in the world, but have only a small representation in the UK. Others, like the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints (Mormons) or the Jehovah's Witnesses (also with a small UK presence) are thought of by many Christians to lie outside of Christianity. This is because they elevate texts other than the Bible to sacred status and/or interpret traditional Christian doctrine in a radically different way than can be found

in the 2,000 year history of the Christian Church. See the **Resources** section for websites that show other listings of churches.

HOW LARGE ARE THESE VARIOUS CHURCH BODIES?

Over 40% of UK citizens have some affiliation with the Anglican Church, about 10% identify themselves with the Catholic Church and 10% with all other churches.⁴ These figures don't reflect actual church attendance, however. Only 7.4 % of the UK population actually attend church services.⁵

DEBUNKING COMMON STEREOTYPES

Students active in on-campus Christian groups have identified a number of stereotypes they feel are unfair:

'CHRISTIANS ARE MORAL PRUDES—THEY HAVE NO SENSE OF FUN'

One student pointed out, 'Campus Magazines will often run satires on theological students and the Christian Union portraying them as cliquy, naive, uptight and preachy—but would these magazines portray Muslims or other faith groups in this way?'

I'm tired of being called, 'Little Miss Righteous.'

Laura, 22

It is true that some Christians take a stance on issues of courtship, sexuality, alcohol and drug consumption and feminism that might easily be labelled conservative in today's social climate. However, each Christian surveyed reported having no trouble maintaining friendships with those who lived by different moral standards. In addition to this many Christians active in on-campus Christian groups reported having no

trouble attending most events at the Student's Union and no difficulty having a drink at a bar.

Some Christians have suggested that popular culture's preoccupation with drinking and sex actually limit the number of ways fun can be had.

'CHRISTIANS HAVE COMMITTED INTELLECTUAL SUICIDE'

Christian students are often apprehensive that their beliefs may be thought of as silly by university lecturers.

Are Christian beliefs outmoded? First, not all Christian students would centre their faith on a series of propositions that can be subject to debate; rather, these Christians find hope and renewal through communal gatherings and participating in worship rituals with ancient roots. Christian

⁴ Brierley, Peter and Sanger, Georgina *UK Christian handbook: Religious Trends No. 2 2000/01 Millennium Edition* (London, HarperCollins/Christian Research: 1999), 2.7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.14.

students who can clearly identify a set of beliefs could make a strong case that a thorough-going rationalism which denies the possibilities of miracles and the existence of God may take just as much faith as their own.

In defence of the credibility of their faith, some Christian students might point to Professor Keith Ward (Oxford) whose debate with the biologist Richard Dawkins (author of *The Selfish Gene*) was able to provide a coherent and persuasive world-view based on belief in a personal God. Keith Ward would be but one example in the rich tradition of theological study that exists in the U.K.⁶

'CHRISTIANS DO WHATEVER THEIR PRIESTS TELL THEM TO DO'

Whether or not a person decides to do everything their priest tells them is an issue that certainly transcends Christianity. Atheists, Muslims, Agnostics and Buddhists might decide or not decide to exercise their personal autonomy in the face of their own authority figures. Many Christian students would not be ashamed to receive guidance from a variety of sources, including their spiritual leaders.

In traditional churches priests preside at the rituals deemed to be the most significant in relating people to divine reality. In addition to this priests teach, preach, and sometimes offer counselling. In non-conformist traditions pastors or lay ministers offer many of the same roles described above. Many priests, pastors and church workers have received professional training in counselling and offer their services free of charge.

⁶ Confronting Scientism: http://www.signals2000.freemove.co.uk/Glass/Scientism/Scientific_cosmology.htm

2. SPECIFIC ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

KEY SENSITIVITIES

All Christians interviewed for this Guide expressed anxiety about being type cast as naive or puritanical. Finding other Christians on campus with whom they can share their faith is seen as highly desirable. Also, finding a church or chapel in the community where they can feel comfortable is a high priority among Christians active in Christian groups on campus.

There are a number of areas where adherents of other religions might have strong sensitivities but where Christian students generally do not. Students interviewed did not have strong feelings about offensive language or dress codes. One student remarked, ‘Some people do dress too provocatively, I feel, but I don’t find it offensive.’

International students who are Christians may vary from the more broadly tolerant characterisation of UK Christianity that permeates this section—especially if in their country of origin Christianity is a more prominent and influential social force and/or is characterised by more charismatic and fundamentalist expressions than those found where the church has been long established.

MORAL, ETHICAL AND SPIRITUAL ISSUES

ABORTION

The current Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, speaks for a large number of Christians when he says, ‘I accept that the termination of a pregnancy is not necessarily in all circumstances the worst possible moral option, even though I consider this to be the termination of a human life.’⁷ Generally Christian churches are against or discourage abortion—though they are not as militantly against abortion as their US counterparts. One Catholic student expressed regret that her campus was promoting the morning after pill, as, for her, this was a violation of the sanctity of life.

CREATION AND EVOLUTION

While there are occasional news stories about small groups of Christians who oppose the teaching of evolution in favour of the belief of a literal six day creation period, this attitude is relatively rare among British Christians. A little more common would be the objection by some Christians that the educational system is dominated by only one type of evolutionary theory

⁷ Elizabeth Day, ‘Archbishop [Anglican, UK] gives his ‘full backing’ to pro-life campaigner’ 23rd of November 2003 <http://209.157.64.200/focus/f-news/1027434/posts>

(Darwinian) to the exclusion of alternate theories on the origins of life, including the possibility of several different models of creation.⁸ Some Christians would even call themselves ‘theistic evolutionists’, adhering both to what they believe can actually be proven by science (an old earth and evolution on a micro scale) alongside the belief in a creator. Many Christians would view the opening chapters of Genesis not as a scientific account of origins but as a testimony to the reality that there is meaning, purpose and direction in life.

HOMOSEXUALITY

The Worldwide Communion of the Anglican Church voted strongly in 1998 to reject homosexual intercourse as incompatible with Scripture.⁹ For some Christians, this does not go far enough, as it implies an acceptance of the homosexual orientation. Other

On many social issues there just isn't a black and white way to describe Christians. There is an ultra liberal viewpoint, an ultra conservative—and everything in between.'

David, 22

Christian students might echo the voices of those in the Church calling for a full acceptance of homosexuality and for same sex marriages. This is an issue that currently divides churches deeply.

INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE AND PROSELYTISING

Interfaith presentations and dialogues are likely to prompt a variety of responses among Christian students. Some, a minority, would value such events only if they were a part of a larger programme of seeking to convince others of the truth of the Christian faith—to the exclusion of truths being found in any other faith. Most Christians, however, would welcome such events, able to find some truth in faiths other than their own, yet believing that their faith holds the ‘final’ or ‘complete’ truth. Other Christians are pluralists (it could be argued that Christian pluralism was born in the UK), believing that their faith is simply their chosen path and making no claim for its finality for others. This same range of attitudes can be found about proselytising. Only a small minority of Christians would actually pursue the conversion of others. Most Christians would see as their mandate to simply ‘love their neighbour’, though would be happy if someone wanted to become a Christian. Some Christians would actively disassociate themselves from those who wanted to proselytise.

⁸ ‘Creation Scientists Answer Back’:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/1979840.stm>

⁹ ‘Issues-Sexuality’:

http://www.churchsociety.org/issues/misc/documents/Text_LambethI_10.pdf

SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

There is a strong view among many practicing Christians on campus that sexual activity is to be reserved for marriage. This can translate into a reservation towards some of the more sexually explicit activities sponsored by the Student's Union (eg mud wrestling) and a concern that overnight HE field trips offer separate sleeping quarters for women and men.

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

1994 saw the ordination of the first woman to the priesthood of the Church of England—today there are nearly 1,000.¹⁰ Most Christian students accept this decision, though some reported that there might be hesitancy in accepting a woman chaplain.

PARTICIPATION

FIELD TRIPS

There were few objections among Christian students to the way field trips had been conducted by their higher education institution. Some students reported they would be more comfortable with separate sleeping quarters for women and men on overnight trips. Some students wanted the freedom to attend church on a Sunday morning, though none insisted on this. There was some concern if the only planned leisure activity involved drinking alcohol; however, many Christian students would have no difficulty spending some time in a pub.

USE OF MEDIA

There were also few objections to the use of media in the classroom. One student remarked, 'Perhaps a film which displayed a blatant disregard for the Bible and its message, like 'The Last Temptation of Christ', might be offensive to some Christians—though it wouldn't be a problem for me.'

PROHIBITIVE ACTIVITIES

Only two types of activities were named as possibly being offensive to Christian students: the more rowdy evenings in the Students' Union which involved an abundance of drinking, and Religious Studies field trips that asked students to participate in the worship of a non-Christian religion. (Simply observing or learning about another religion would be acceptable to nearly all Christian students).

Amongst certain students there is an expectation that sex and drugs and lots of drinking will happen at university. If you come from a sheltered background you can be shocked.

Andy, 20

¹⁰ 'Women Priests Bullied and Picked On: 6th of March 2000'
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/667488.stm>

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Christian students were able to point to several ways their university or college could help them adjust to life in their new surroundings.

PROVISION OF A LIST OF AREA CHURCHES

Many students active in campus Christian groups are also eager to find a church in the community in which to worship on Sundays. Lots of these students are eager to ‘church-shop’, having never had the opportunity to attend different denominations. Others will prefer to find the type of church in which they were raised. Many churches in a university town sponsor regular events for students—their ministers acting as part time chaplains when a full time higher education chaplain for their denomination is not available on campus. A list of area churches complete with contact phone numbers and a listing of events for students will help many Christian students make the types of contacts necessary for a rewarding time of life and study.

ADVERTISING CHAPLAINCY SERVICES

Many students, particularly mature students, will wish to contact the campus chaplain for counselling and guidance. Contact information with the chaplain’s phone number and a map of where to find her or his office should be a part of the university’s welcome package for new students. The campus chaplain will also sponsor the university’s Christian group (sometimes called ‘The Chapel Group’, or the ‘Anglican Student’s Group’). The time and place of meeting of this group should also be visible.

THE CHRISTIAN UNION AND OTHER CHURCH GROUPS

Some Christian students who are uncomfortable with the Anglican Church—or who want to join several Christian groups available—will want to know about the university’s Christian Union group or any other Christian student organisation on campus. These students may also want to make use of websites that coordinate Christian students across the UK (see the **Resources** section).

EMPLOYABILITY ISSUES

Christians involved in higher education that were surveyed for this guide were hard pressed to name any issues that might affect their employability. Some suggested that working on a Sunday might be difficult for some Christians (though not all). Others knew of Christians who would refuse to serve alcohol, but these same people also knew of Christians who worked in bars. For some Christians exposure to swearing, particularly using God's name in vain, would detract from their experience in the work place—though the majority of Christians surveyed for this guide did not raise this as an issue.



St. David's University Chapel, Lampeter

3. RESOURCES

<http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/themes/diversity/index.html>

This area of our website contains further information and resources on issues relating to diversity.

CHRISTIAN BODIES IN THE UK

The websites listed below cover the largest denominations in the UK. To include the multitude of small church bodies that exist in the UK would stretch the limits of this guide. For a more complete listing of Christian groups you can consult the UK Christian Handbook (see below), type 'Denominations UK' into your favourite search engine, or see 'Church Net UK' on <http://www.churchnet.org.uk> or the BBC website on <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/subdivisions/index.shtml>.

Those sites listed below which have pages or links referring to higher education are noted with a * and the specific page address is listed.

THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION*

<http://www.anglicancommunion.org>

For the Anglican Communion in higher education see 'Colleges and Universities of the Anglican Communion' on <http://www.cuac.org>

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND*

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org>

For the Church of England's own higher education institutions see 'Theological Colleges' on

http://www.blackburn.anglican.org/yellow_pages/c0316.htm

For the Church of England's presence in higher education institutions see 'Further Education (Learning and Skills) and the Church of England' on

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/education/hefe>

THE CHURCH IN WALES*

<http://www.churchinwales.org.uk>

For the Church in Wales' role in higher education see 'Colleges and Chaplaincies in the Church of Wales' on

<http://www.churchinwales.org.uk/links/chaplain.html>

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

<http://www.ireland.anglican.org/home.html>

This is a part of the Anglican Communion.

THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

<http://www.scotland.anglican.org>

BAPTIST UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN

<http://www.baptist.org.uk>

For Baptists in higher education see 'Baptist Colleges'.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ENGLAND AND WALES*

<http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk>

See 'The presence of the Church in the university culture of England and Wales'.

This site also contains links to the Catholic Church in Ireland and Scotland.

CHRISTIAN BRETHERN

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/2394/assemblies.html>

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND*

<http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk>

FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

<http://www.fpchurch.org.uk>

ELIM PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

<http://www.elim.org.uk/index.htm>

This is a network of over 500 UK Pentecostal churches.

FELLOWSHIP OF INDEPENDENT EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

<http://www.fiec.co.uk>

THE METHODIST CHURCH*

<http://methodist.org.uk>

For Methodists in higher education see 'Get Involved, Training and Vocations, Schools and Colleges'.

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (OR QUAKERS) IN BRITAIN

<http://www.quaker.org.uk>

THE SALVATION ARMY

<http://www.salvationarmy.org>

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH

<http://www.unitarian.org.uk>

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH*

<http://www.urc.org.uk>

This is a church body formed by the union of the Congregational Church in Wales, the Presbyterian Church in England, Reformed Churches of Christ and the Congregational Union of Scotland.

For the United Reformed Church's presence at UK universities see 'Student Link-Up Scheme' on

http://www.urc.org.uk/our_work/committees/ministries/lay_preaching/student_linkup_scheme_2003.htm

SOME WEBSITES POPULAR AMONGST CHRISTIAN STUDENTS

THE TAIZE COMMUNITY

<http://www.taize.fr>

This website introduces students to a creative Catholic community in France known for its innovative worship and opportunities for retreats.

THE IONA COMMUNITY

<http://www.iona.org.uk/index.htm>

This ecumenical community and centre for Celtic Christianity attracts students from all over the world.

GREENBELT

<http://www.greenbelt.org.uk/aboutus>

Greenbelt is an annual ecumenical Christian gathering popular among youth of an evangelical Christian persuasion.

THE CHRISTIAN UNION MOVEMENT

<http://www.uccf.org.uk>

This website seeks to coordinate Christian Unions at higher education providers throughout the UK.

CHRISTIANITY IN THE UK

Brierley, Peter and Sanger, Georgina, *UK Christian handbook: Religious Trends No. 2 2000/01 Millennium Edition* (London, HarperCollins/Christian Research: 1999).

The Christian Union Movement: <http://www.uccf.org.uk>

Further Education (Learning and Skills) and the Church of England:
<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/education/index.html>

National Statistics Online—Census 2001:
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001>

'Religion in Britain' can be found at
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=293&Pos=1&ColRank=1&Rank=176>

Wraight, Heather and Brierley, Peter *UK Christian Handbook 2000/01 Millennium Edition* (London, HarperCollins/Christian Research: 1999).

The UK Christian Handbook Online:
<http://www.ukchristianhandbook.org.uk>

INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY: BOOKS AND WEBSITES

Borg, Marcus J., *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time: The Historical Jesus and the Heart of Contemporary Faith* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), ix+150pp.

Borg, Marcus J. and Wright, N. T., *The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions* (New York: Harper San Francisco: 1999), xi+288pp.

Cross, F. L. and Livingstone, E.A. eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* 3rd Edition (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Ford, David F. and Higton, Mike eds., *Jesus: An Oxford Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), xix+572pp.

Pelikan, Jaroslav *Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (London & New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), xvi+270pp.

'Religion and Ethics: Christianity':
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity>

Wessels, Anton *Images of Jesus: How Jesus is Perceived and Portrayed in Non-European Cultures* (Grand Rapids, Mi: Eerdmans, 1990), ix+195pp.