

Today's Class: Challenges for the Modern Church

- Some charts and statistics
 - Church declines overseas
 - Views of God
 - Christian attitudes and activities
- The challenges we face
 - Personal challenges
 - Challenges to Christians generally
 - Challenges to the churches (generally)

Decline in Church Participation in the United Kingdom

Sunday School Scholars in the United Kingdom

By Denomination

'000s of scholars

Source: P. Brierley, *Religious Trends 2000/200*, CRA (UK), p.2.15.

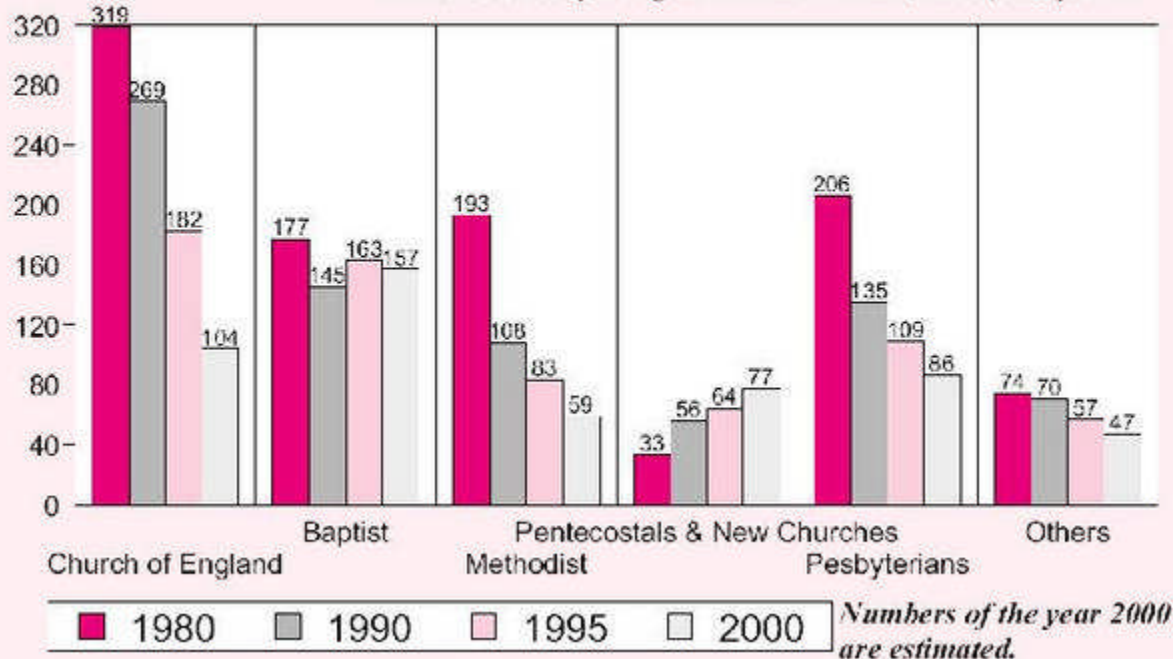


Table 1. Attendance in Various Denominational Groups in England, 1979 and 1998

Denomination	1979 attendance	1998 attendance	Change (numbers)	Change (percent)
Roman Catholics	1,991,000	1,230,100	-761,000	-40%
Anglicans	1,671,000	980,600	-690,400	-41%
Methodists	621,000	379,700	-241,300	-39%
Baptists	290,000	277,600	-12,400	-4%
Pentecostals	228,000	214,600	-13,400	-6%
New Churches	64,000	230,500	166,500	260%
Other	576,000	401,600	-174,400	-30%
Total	5,441,000	3,714,700	-1,726,300	-32%

Differing Views of God

Type A: Authoritarian God: Individuals who believe in the Authoritarian God tend to think that God is highly involved in their daily lives and world affairs. They tend to believe that God helps them in their decision-making and is also responsible for global events such as economic upturns or tsunamis. They also tend to feel that God is quite angry and is capable of meting out punishment to those who are unfaithful or ungodly.

Type B: Benevolent God: Like believers in the Authoritarian God, believers in a Benevolent God tend to think that God is very active in our daily lives. But these individuals are less likely to believe that God is angry and acts in wrathful ways. Instead, the Benevolent God is mainly a force of positive influence in the world and is less willing to condemn or punish individuals.

Type C: Critical God: Believers in a Critical God feel that God really does not interact with the world. Nevertheless, God still observes the world and views the current state of the world unfavorably. These individuals feel that God's displeasure will be felt in another life and that divine justice may not be of this world.

Type D: Distant God: Believers in a Distant God think that God is not active in the world and not especially angry either. These individuals tend towards thinking about God as a cosmic force which set the laws of nature in motion. As such, God does not "do" things in the world and does not hold clear opinions about our activities or world events.

Atheists: Atheists are certain that God does not exist. Nevertheless, atheists may still hold very strong perspectives concerning the morality of human behavior and ideals of social order but have no place for the

Figure 13: Categories of America's Four Gods

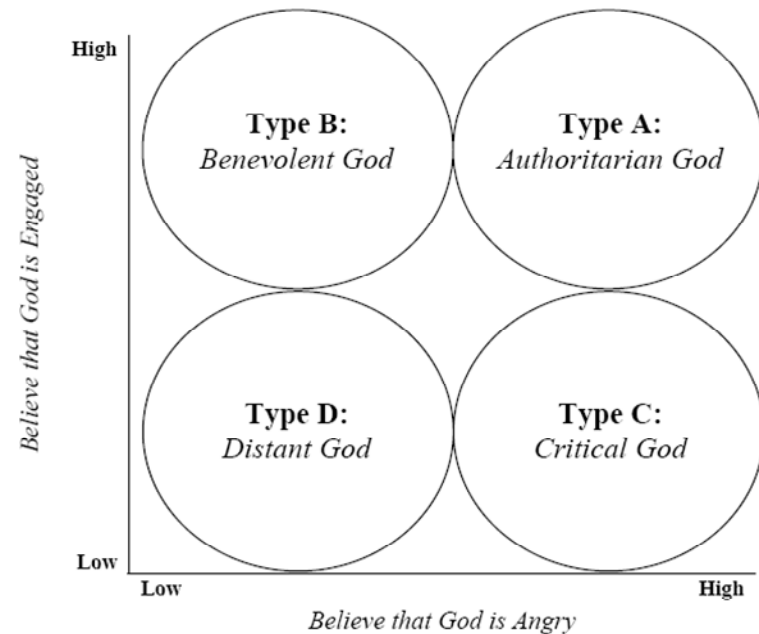
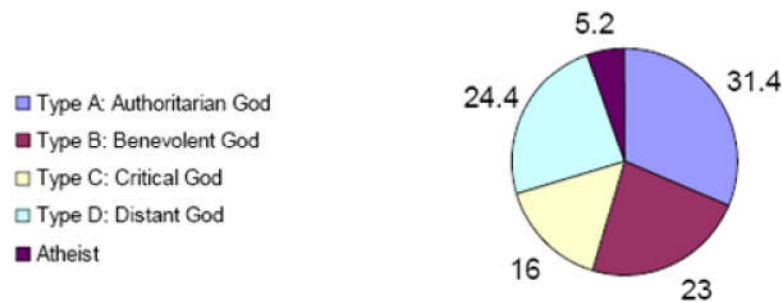


Figure 14: Percent of American Population which believes in each Type of God



From: *American Piety in the 21st Century: new Insights to the Depth and Complexity of Religion in the US*. Selected findings from the Baylor Religion Survey

Why does it matter how you view God? →

Figure 15: The Four Gods and Abortion Attitudes

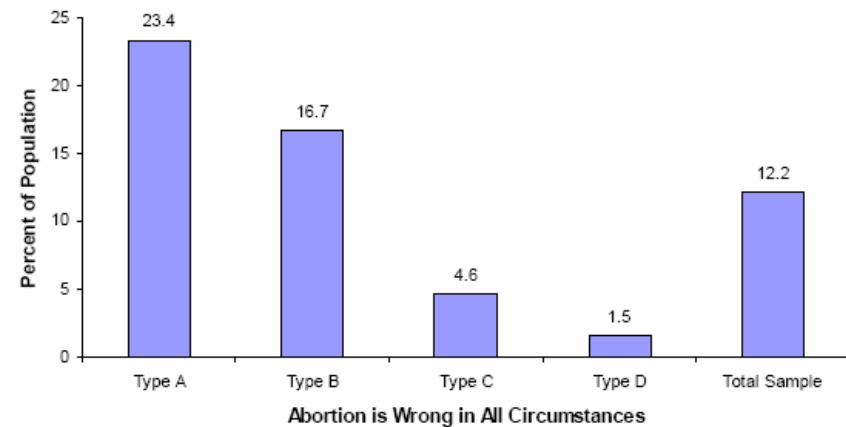


Table 8: America's Four Gods and Religiosity

	Type A Authoritarian God	Type B Benevolent God	Type C Critical God	Type D Distant God	Atheist
Total Sample	31.4%	23.0%	16.0%	24.4%	5.2%
Church Attendance					
Attends Weekly	50.9%	31.5%	9.8%	7.8%	0.0%
Never Attends	13.5%	8.2%	16.7%	41.5%	20.2%
Prayer					
Prays several times a day	54.8%	31.7%	6.5%	7.0%	0.0%
Never Prays	1.8%	2.5%	18.4%	38.7%	38.7%
Religious Tradition					
Catholic	22.6%	28.2%	18.6%	29.2%	1.3%
Black Protestant	68.0%	12.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Evangelical Protestant	52.3%	23.6%	12.8%	10.8%	0.5%
Mainline Protestant	23.7%	26.6%	19.7%	29.3%	0.7%
Jewish	19.4%	13.9%	16.7%	41.7%	8.3%
Unaffiliated	2.9%	5.0%	15.7%	35.7%	40.7%

From: *American Piety in the 21st Century: new Insights to the Depth and Complexity of Religion in the US*. Selected findings from the Baylor Religion Survey

Americans generally claim to be Christians, but are they committed?

How many believe the Bible?

From: *The State of the Church 2006: A Report by George Barna.*

How many are “evangelical”?

From: *The State of the Church 2006: A Report by George Barna.*

How many do “Christian activities”?

From: *The State of the Church
2006: A Report by George Barna.*

Why do churches have money problems?

From: *The State of the Church 2006: A Report by George Barna.*

What are our personal challenges?

What are the challenges for
Christians generally?

What are the challenges for the churches?

Next two weeks

- Next week, 19 November
 - “The present and future of EGCC.” Led by the EGCC elders (Doug and others)
- Thanksgiving week, 26 November
 - No class. Join Larry and Dan’s class as they wrap up the 3-month series.