

# Religious Community Profiles

Peter Bentley

During 1995 and 1996 the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research commissioned the Christian Research Association through a steering committee to produce a series of Religious Community Profiles which would complement the various ethnic profiles produced by the Bureau. Twelve profiles were produced, one in 1995 and eleven in 1996. The profiles provide some background material on such areas as history, beliefs, government and customs, and a comprehensive statistical analysis of the religious community using data from the 1991 Census, the 1993 National Social Science Survey and where appropriate the 1991 National Church Life Survey. The communities chosen were the 8 largest Christian groups: Catholic, Anglican, Uniting, Presbyterian, (Eastern) Orthodox, Baptist, Lutheran and Pentecostal, and the five largest other faiths in Australia: Judaism, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and Sikhs (in one volume). Philip Hughes of the Christian Research Association took overall responsibility for editing the series and in searching down the scholars and religious community members who contributed to the works.

The following notes provide a basic comment on each report, chiefly focused on the statistical material. It is necessarily brief, the purpose being to point people to the actual reports for more extensive comment. Regrettably, the Bureau has now been closed by the recent Federal Government cutbacks and its research function (in a seriously depleted form) transferred to the Federal Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. Scholars of religion in Australia should applaud the insight of then research director, Trevor Batrouney, in developing this series.

Copies of individual reports at \$13 or the complete set at \$120 are available from the Christian Research Association, Locked Bag 23 , Kew 3101.

## **The Anglicans in Australia by 'Tricia Blombery.**

In 1991 the Anglicans were ranked second in terms of religious groups. In numbers this was just over 4 million (23.9%). For nearly two hundred years, the Anglican church (or Church of England) was the largest religious group in Australia. In 1881 they recorded a Census affiliation of 54.9 per cent. In 1947, there were almost twice as many Anglicans as Roman Catholics. However, 40 years later, in 1986, the Census recorded for the first time that Catholics were slightly ahead in actual numbers.

Immigration has had a most lasting and significant effect on the Anglicans in Australia. Whereas other groups have benefited from immigration, Anglicans have experienced a decline. From 1966-1981, their Census affiliation decreased to one third, and from 1981-1991 it fell further to about one quarter.

In terms of distribution compared to their 1991 national average, there are higher percentage numbers of Anglicans in Tasmania, NSW, Queensland and WA. Tasmania recorded the highest rate: 37 per cent, with the capital Hobart: 38.2 per cent. South Australia had the lowest proportion of Anglicans: 18 per cent.

In terms of age, the Census reveals some over-representation in the 40 plus group, reflecting the immigration patterns of the second half of this century. There are also slightly more females than male.

Looking at birthplace, 84 per cent of Anglicans were born in Australia (cf. 73% non-Anglican), with the next largest group being somewhat predictably the UK: 12 per cent, and then New Zealand: 1.5 per cent. The proportion of non-Anglo Celts is very low, but it should be noted that there are established ethnic communities, especially among the Chinese, Tamil and Maori peoples.

The majority of Anglicans born outside Australia arrived before 1971: 54 per cent. Tasmania recorded the highest rate of Australian born-Anglicans: 92 per cent. Most Anglicans speak only English at home: 98 per cent, compared to the general population: 83 per cent. The Anglo-Celtic orientation is of course linked to the foundational British history of Australia. Interestingly there is a significant group speaking one of a number of Aboriginal languages, reflecting Anglican missionary and colonial history.

Compared to the general population, Anglicans are slightly more likely to be married. If married they are more likely to have an Anglican as their spouse: 63 per cent. The next largest group for a partner is Catholic: 17 per cent and then Uniting/Presbyterian: 10 per cent.

Overall, Anglicans have higher incomes than non-Anglicans. They have slightly less educational qualifications. In employment, men are over-represented in managerial, administrative, wholesale/retail and trades. Women are over-represented in the clerically based employment category.

In the active community (regular church attenders), a projection based on the National Church Life Survey estimated that about 195 000 attend church on at least a regular basis. This is about 5 per cent of their Census affiliation. The National Social Science Survey indicated a higher attendance, also noting that actual attenders were more likely to be weekly: 77 per cent. In actual attendance statistics, the Anglicans are well behind the Catholics, but probably just ahead of Baptists and Uniting. Attenders are spread throughout 3300 worship centres, served by about 1600 active clergy. About one third of the regular attenders are located in the Diocese of Sydney (there are now 23 dioceses).

In terms of their age and gender profile, Anglican attenders are much older than their Census record. A particularly striking comparison is in the 20-29 age

bracket which accounts for only 10 per cent of attending Anglicans compared with 18 per cent of those claiming affiliation. Two thirds of Anglican attenders are women, compared to their Census record: 52 per cent. Attending Anglicans also have much higher incomes and are four times more likely to hold a university degree than non-attenders. These are all significant differences.

The report comments on the slow decline in actual attendance, noting that though at present it may not be large, it does indicate a less than positive long-term future.

## **The Baptists in Australia** by Philip Hughes

According to the 1991 Census, the Baptist Community was ranked sixth in size among religious groups. There were about 280 000 Baptists (1.66% of the population).

Baptists include a variety of independent and union-based groups, mostly having in common a strong form of local autonomy. The various state Baptist Unions are the largest Baptist communities and most Baptists would have a link to a Baptist Union church. The last Census recorded a significant growth in the numbers of Baptists (up from 1.2 per cent), but like other groups, it is thought that the Baptists benefited from the 'mark the box' arrangement on the Census form (rather than write in the whole name of your religion).

The Northern Territory, Tasmania, South Australia and Queensland all record higher Census percentage numbers of Baptists than the national average, though the largest Baptist populations are in NSW and Victoria.

About 80 per cent of Baptists were born in Australia, with the UK claiming the next largest group, 7 per cent. Small communities are found among the Chinese (particularly from Hong Kong and Malaysia), and among people from Vietnam, New Zealand and various European states. There are also several Aboriginal communities, reflecting Baptist missionary work and history.

Baptists are over-represented in management, administration and skilled-trade occupational categories, often reflecting a small (independent) business orientation. In age and gender Baptists record a similar demographic pattern to the general population. Of special note is the higher numbers of younger adults in the 20-40 years age range compared to most other mainstream churches. Some researchers believe that the large number of young adults is related partly to the style of 'modern' worship in many Baptist churches, including the use of contemporary music.

In the active community (regular church attenders), the National Church Life Survey found that about 132 000 Baptists attended church on at least a monthly basis. This is about 47 per cent of their Census affiliation, and places them above the Presbyterian and Orthodox groups, who are actually larger in Census terms, but still behind the Catholics, Pentecostals (as a group), and probably the Anglican and

Uniting Churches. It will be interesting to compare numbers for 1996, as this could see the Baptists jump another couple of places in attendance statistics.

Of Baptist attenders, it appears that only about half are actual members. This is mainly due to the strict definition and practice of membership within Baptist circles, including in most cases, the necessity for baptism by immersion as an adult. Comparing relevant 1986 and 1991 statistics, it is evident that attendance at Baptist churches grew at four times the rate of membership. A key feature of being a Baptist is identification with and commitment to a local congregation, so it is not surprise to find that Baptists recorded the second highest level of weekly attendance - about 46 per cent.

## **The Catholics in Australia** **by Robert E. Dixon**

According to the 1991 Census, the Catholics recorded an affiliation of 27.3 per cent, over 4 600 000 people. This was their highest percentage since 1971: 27 per cent, and it confirmed their place as the largest religious group in Australia, with nearly all belonging to the Catholic Church in Australia (part of the worldwide Roman Catholic Church). The period 1986-1991 saw a growth of 13 per cent (27% in the Northern Territory, and 18% in WA), compared to the population increase of 8 per cent

Most Catholics are found in NSW, the ACT and Victoria. Over 65.5 per cent compared to the general population of 58.7 per cent. These two states and one territory also record a higher than national average of Catholic population. The states with the lowest affiliation are Tasmania: 19.8 per cent and SA: 21 per cent. There are nearly as many Catholics in the ACT as in Tasmania, partly reflecting the low number of migrants. Overall, the large increase between 1981-1991 was mainly due to immigration, either directly or indirectly (children of immigrants).

The Catholic population is slightly younger than the general population, and it has a young religious profile (second only to the Pentecostals among Christian groups). There are about 2 per cent more women than men, reflecting the age profile for women and the likelihood that men may not indicate their religion as Catholic.

In 1991, one quarter had been born overseas, slightly above the general population (23%). Catholics had the largest range of birthplaces, with the main countries being Italy : 5 per cent, the UK: 3 per cent, Yugoslavia: 1.6 per cent, Philippines: 1.3 per cent, and Poland and Malta about 1 per cent. Similarly with language, about 23 per cent did not speak English at home, with Italian providing the largest group: 8.4 per cent.

In terms of marital status, Catholic women are still more likely to marry than men. In the majority of cases, the partner is a Catholic: 68 per cent, though two other groups record significant numbers, Anglicans: 17 per cent and Uniting/Presbyterian: 7.1 per cent.

Families “still tend to be larger, ... though the difference is less marked than in the past”, and according to Mol’s comparative fertility record, “Catholic fertility has decreased to about the same level as that of non-Catholics”.

Catholics are slightly more likely to be wage and salary earners, with men in manufacturing, construction, wholesale/retail and women in community services (perhaps reflecting Catholic social welfare and community service work) and wholesale/retail. They have similar unemployment rates to the general population (though less for the 15-24 age group).

Catholics have a slightly lower formal educational rate compared to the general population, but have a higher number with university and higher degrees. The well established system of Catholic schools provides for the educational needs of over 600 000 students in 1700 schools (75% Primary), with 36 000 teachers. Religious staff now only represent about 3 per cent of teaching staff.

While it is difficult to quantify the active community, it is evident that there has been a decline in mass attendance over the last few decades. It is estimated that current regular attendance is 18-19 per cent, varying from 15-25 per cent in individual dioceses and 10-35 per cent in individual parishes (of which there are over 1400). From casual observation and reports, women attend in larger numbers than men. The report uses extensive data from the Archdiocese of Melbourne to comment on specific aspects.

In terms of religious staff, the priest population (about 4400, including religious) has witnessed a slow decline, which it is predicted will increase swiftly due to low recruitment and increasing age. Similar declines are expected for Sisters (about 8000, with the Sisters of Mercy and Josphites the largest groups) and Brothers (1200, Christian Brothers and Marists the two largest groups). The report also examines lay pastoral work and other initiatives within the Church as it attempts to grapple with changing circumstances in Australia.

## **The Lutherans in Australia**

**by Revd Dr Philip Hughes (Christian Research Association)  
and Dr Maurice Schild (Luther Seminary).**

In the 1991 Census the Lutherans were ranked seventh as a religious group, numbering about 250 000 (1.5%). This was just behind the Baptists (1.7%), and about one-third of the recorded Presbyterian affiliation.

Lutherans in Australia are primarily affiliated with the Lutheran Church of Australia, a union of the two main Australian Lutheran bodies in 1966. The congregations of the Lutheran Church of New Zealand are included as a district of the L.C.A., though they have effective autonomy. There are several ethnic Lutheran congregations, most of which are in fellowship with the L.C.A. There are also several Lutheran groups which have split off from the L.C.A. and remain independent.

The Lutheran Church of Australia is a strongly confessional body with

substantial organisational arrangements, including a school network with 20 000 students. Its headquarters are in Adelaide, SA, the location of its National Training Centre, Luther Campus. Unlike many other Lutheran Churches in the world, the Australian church does not allow women to be pastors, though a document on the ordination of women has been discussed within the church in recent years. The Lutheran Church of Australia has become increasingly interested in the ecumenical movement, exploring membership of the National Council of Churches in Australia, and recently it became an associate member church of the Lutheran World Federation. It has been involved in dialogues with the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the Reformed Church and has maintained a longstanding dialogue with the Uniting Church in Australia.

Lutherans have recorded a consistent Census percentage over the last 30 years, but in the Census period 1986 - 1991, they recorded a 20 per cent increase (compared to the general population of 8%). Like other mainstream groups it is likely that the Lutheran category benefited from being listed as one of the 'cross the box' denominations. Previously people had to write the actual name of their religious body for it to be recorded properly.

Over 70 per cent of Lutherans were born in Australia, with the next largest group coming from Germany (14%). While the numbers of German born Lutherans may now be small, many Lutherans would still trace their heritage to Germany. There are also significant communities from Latvia, Estonia, Finland and other small European countries. Like the Baptists they also have a number of affiliated Aboriginal communities, again reflecting their significant historical missionary work.

It is generally well known that South Australia has a large Lutheran population, associated with the level of German migration in the nineteenth century. They record a level of 5.1 per cent affiliation in that state (some 72 000), over three times their national figure. The next largest percentage base is found in the Northern Territory (4.1%) and then Queensland (2.4%). Interestingly in terms of actual Census numbers, there are only about 2000 more Lutherans in SA than Queensland. Most Lutherans are found in rural areas, keeping with their occupational profile which shows over-representation in rural industries, for example the wine industry. They are a much older group than many other religious groups, with a smaller than the general population number among the 20 -40 year old group. They do have a comparatively large number of teenagers which is related to the most recent large wave of immigration from Germany in the 1960s.

Looking at the active community it appears that Lutheran attendance could be around 50 000 on a regular basis (about 20% of their Census affiliation). Overall attendance and membership figures point to a trend away from active church involvement, a consistent factor among most older mainstream denominations.

## **The Eastern Orthodox in Australia** **by Stephen Godley and Philip J. Hughes**

It is important to note that this profile covers only the Eastern Orthodox churches, which in the 1991 Census was the fifth largest religious group, with over twenty-five coded individual group responses. Some of these groups in Australia are: Antiochian, Greek, Macedonian, Russian, Serbian, Ukrainian, Yugoslav. There is brief comment on other Eastern churches and other Orthodox churches (oriental).

Before 1947 the Orthodox in Australia represented less than 0.2 per cent. By 1954 this had risen to 0.8 per cent, and by 1971 to 2.6 per cent. In 1991 the Orthodox percentage was 2.8 per cent, or approximately 474 000 people. (It should be noted that these are Census figures and differ quite substantially from internal estimates of Orthodox faithful in Australia).

Of the Orthodox group, most indicated they were Greek Orthodox (over 357 000), though like other groups, the Greek Orthodox were one of the groups which benefited from the 'mark the box' category on the religion question on the form. The next largest group was the Macedonian Orthodox with over 43 000, then the Serbian with 22 000.

Small numbers of Orthodox arrived before World War I, and up to World War II there were about 17 000 Orthodox people. Two-thirds of these were Greek, with smaller numbers of Lebanese and also some Russian Orthodox who had been born in China (and later particularly from Manchuria). The largest group were located in NSW (42%), with the remainder spread mainly in the Eastern states, with Victoria 16 per cent.

In 1952, the Australian government introduced assisted immigration. This had a dramatic effect, as is evidenced by the percentage increases outlined above. Immigration also caused the make-up of the states to change. By 1966, Victoria had become the largest Orthodox state with 40 per cent, while NSW had fallen slightly to 38 per cent. In 1991, the distribution was very similar, with Victoria 42 per cent and NSW 38 per cent. It should be noted that in both NSW and Victoria, most Orthodox are in the capital city, 86 per cent and 95 per cent respectively. Some local areas had significant Orthodox populations, with Port Kembla, Earlwood and Belmore in NSW, Thomastown and Lalor in Victoria, and Torrensville in SA all recording over 20 per cent Orthodox population.

Overall in 1991, three states had a higher than national average Orthodox percentage, with Victoria 4.7 per cent, NSW 3.1 per cent and SA 2.9 per cent. Tasmania had the lowest percentage with 0.5 per cent, then Queensland 0.8 per cent and WA with 1.2 per cent.

The Orthodox have a high percentage of members born overseas, 54.5 per cent, and a low percentage of people born in Australia with Australian born parents (4.6% compared to 59.1% general population). Two-thirds of the Orthodox arrived before 1971 (67.5%), with the birthplace for most of these Orthodox being Greece,

reflecting the second wave of immigration in the 1950s. More recent groups have included Lebanese Orthodox and Serbian Orthodox from the former Yugoslavia. The most common language used at home is Greek (57%), with Macedonian the next (13%) and then English (12%), with Serbian (4.5%), and Arabic (4%).

The age profile is similar to the general population, though there is a large group in the 50-59 age bracket, reflecting the immigration pattern, with fewer recent immigrants under 40. Orthodox have a slightly higher marriage rate than the general population, reflecting the slightly older age profile, but they have a significantly lower rate of defacto relationships, especially among the younger Orthodox. Orthodox have strong intermarriage rates, with the Macedonian being the highest (92%), Antiochian (84%), and Greek (81%). The Russian Orthodox is the main group with a similar rate to other Australian churches (52%).

Educationally, the overall levels are lower than the general population, but this reflects the history of immigration and immigrants' social background, mainly from rural areas and trade, labouring groups. On examination of the different Orthodox immigration patterns it is evident that this has changed, with recent immigrants and second generation Orthodox having over three times the educational qualifications of the overall Orthodox picture.

Turning to the active community, it is difficult to provide a picture, because the Orthodox did not participate in the National Church Life Survey and the number in the National Social Science Survey was very small. It is difficult to ascertain attendance: it is thought that between 30 000 and 45 000 Orthodox attend on a regular basis. Probably between 30-50 per cent of the regular attenders are Greek Orthodox. Also about two-thirds of the total number of priests (over 160) are Greek Orthodox and 50 per cent of the Orthodox parishes (total over 220). It should also be noted that there are much larger Orthodox attendances at the major festivals, eg. Easter. Among the regular attenders, most are older and are women. This factor indicates that the Orthodox churches will face some major issues of long-term support.

From the National Social Science Survey it is evident that the Orthodox churches have had a significant role in maintaining language, culture, faith and worship practices in Australia. There is little evidence of switching religion, with 92 per cent claiming to have been born Orthodox and still Orthodox at the time of the survey. Also only a small percentage now claim no religion (3%), a much lower rate than other denominations in Australia.

## **The Pentecostals in Australia**

### **by Philip Hughes**

This profile covers a broad range of groups under the general heading of Pentecostal. These groups all have in common several characteristics, notably ecstatic gifts associated with the Holy Spirit. Modern-day Pentecostalism emanates

from the holiness tradition, which has an emphasis on the praise of God, salvation, personal holiness and often locates authority in people rather than institutions. Many Pentecostal churches participate in formal or informal associations or unions, with the autonomy and integrity of the local congregation a fundamental component. This profile provides some background material on the larger groups, including the more established groups like the Assemblies of God, Church of the Four Square Gospel, Apostolic Church and the Christian Revival Crusade, and the newer churches, eg., Christian Outreach Centres and Christian City Church. A very helpful summary table is provided of over 25 different groups. This is particularly helpful in reminding the reader that the Census material relates to a large religious grouping, rather than a monolithic Pentecostal denomination.

The 1991 Census found just over 150 000 Pentecostal affiliates. However, the Census did not allow Pentecostals the privilege of being able to 'mark a box'. Instead they had to write in their actual denominational or church name. This meant that a large number of names had to be the separately coded to the Pentecostal category. This final coding was based around ten denominational or church groups. Unfortunately significant coding mistakes occurred with the Pentecostals, including the major one of coding those who indicated they were 'Pentecostal' (some 56 000) to the 'United Pentecostal', a small Pentecostal body. It is likely that most of these people belonged to the Assemblies of God or one of the other larger bodies. It is thus difficult to examine individual statistics in the Census and more profitable to examine the body as a whole.

In 1961 Pentecostals recorded an affiliation rate of 0.2 per cent. Fifteen years later this was 0.3 per cent (forty-one thousand). Fifteen years further on it was 0.9 per cent (150 000). This represented phenomenal growth, particularly in the period 1986-1991 (41%), where they were second in the Christian groups (Baptists - 47%, though the Buddhists recorded 74%).

There are more Pentecostals in Queensland than in any other state (45 317, or 30% of all Pentecostals), a significant feature given Queensland's size. NSW recorded 37 563 (25%) and Victoria 19% (28 712 Pentecostals). Both Queensland (1.54%) and SA (1.39%) record a higher than national average affiliation rate.

Most Pentecostals were born in Australia (76.4%), with UK (6.4%) and New Zealand (3.4%). The profile is overwhelmingly Anglo-Celtic, but there are significant groups of ethnic Pentecostal churches. This is indicated in the language profile (87% English at home), but over a dozen other language groups with around 0.5 per cent, eg., Chinese languages, Italian. Though the major growth of Pentecostalism has been through conversion of Anglo-Celtic Australians (and switching from other religious groups), the Census reveals that a higher percentage of second-generation immigrants are Pentecostal, indicating that there could be further ethnic growth.

The majority of Pentecostals live in the capital cities (58%), but significant groups live in major country centres and smaller towns (many towns now have one or more Pentecostal groups), particularly in Queensland and Victoria. The most

distinguished feature is their age profile. They have higher than average numbers in the 30-39 and 5-9 age groups (the latter being the children of the former). Only 28 per cent are over the age of 40, compared with 54 per cent of Presbyterians or 36 per cent of the general population. In terms of gender, women 53.3 per cent to men 46.7 per cent is particularly related to the larger number of young women. Pentecostals are more likely to be married and they have a much lower defacto rate (one-third of the general population). Their spouses are also more likely to be Pentecostal (86%), reflecting deliberate choice or perhaps conversion.

In terms of education, Pentecostals are slightly below the general population of average, but they attract people of all educational levels. Men are more likely to be in trades, professional, or labouring, while women are in clerical and personal service.

The active community statistics are more revealing, as unlike other religious groups, they indicate that the active community is larger than the affiliates counted by the Census, some 186 000 according to the National Church Life Survey or up to 236 000 according to membership estimates. The higher estimate places the Pentecostal active community as second only to the Catholics. In terms of age, the active community profile is significant in that it is very similar to the affiliate community (in other groups atters are older). They have a much higher educational level, but still slightly lower than established churches like the Baptists and Uniting. The active community also records high levels of involvement and participation in times outside of the regular worship services. Worship services are distinctive in themselves, reflecting a contemporary experience, particularly in the style of music. Open display of emotions and feelings are very much part of the whole Pentecostal worship experience; a significant contrast to many other religious groups. National Church Life Survey and National Social Science Survey statistics all point to the fact that Pentecostal churches attract more people from non-Pentecostal denominations than they lose (over twice the number). Given that another five years has elapsed since the 1991 Census and coding should be more established for the results of the 1996 Census, it will be interesting to examine in more detail the continued growth of the Pentecostals in Australia.

## **The Presbyterians in Australia by David Burke and Philip Hughes**

This profile also contains a short section on other Presbyterian and reformed churches in Australia, particularly the denomination, the Reformed Churches in Australia.

The 1991 Census recorded the Presbyterian population at 4.3 per cent or about 723 000. It should be noted that this includes a broad grouping, but the substantial majority would have a nominal affiliation with the Presbyterian Church of Australia. The 1991 Census recorded an increase, up from 3.6 per cent in 1986, returning to

1981: 4.3 per cent. Like other denominations it is thought that the Presbyterians would have benefited significantly from being in one of the 'mark the box' groups, saving people the worry of spelling or including a full name. The most significant change for the Presbyterian church occurred in the seventies with the union between Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists. By 1977 the Presbyterian census record was steadily declining (reaching 6.4% in 1976), but it suffered a significant fall after 1977 because of the numbers of Presbyterians who went into the Uniting Church. Approximately two thirds of their churches went into union, varying from 46 per cent in NSW to 76 per cent in Victoria., with overall approximately 69 per cent of the membership.

In 1991 the Presbyterians were mainly located in NSW and Victoria, with these states and Queensland having above average Presbyterian affiliation rates, while South Australia had the lowest census rate with 2 per cent. There are more Presbyterians outside the capital cities, reflecting a rural base. This is especially true for attenders, where the number of farm/rural occupations represents 12 per cent of occupations.

Most Presbyterians are born in Australia (80%), with another 10 per cent in the UK and 4 per cent in New Zealand (where the Presbyterian Church is the second largest, after the Anglicans). English is the dominant language, with 96 per cent speaking English at home. Together Dutch and Korean make up about one percent. It is well known that the Presbyterian community has strong Scottish links, reflected in the UK immigration, but as most Scottish immigrants are at least third generation, these do not appear in the comparative statistics for overseas (or parents) born. There has been a change in immigration over the last twenty years. Prior to 1971, Presbyterians were more likely to come from Scotland or the Netherlands (Reformed churches), while recent immigrants come from Chinese speaking countries and Korea, the latter particularly reflecting Presbyterian missionary work. Nevertheless, among the names of actual members, Scottish names are very prominent, particularly among the older members.

In terms of age, it is evident that the affiliate community is older on average than the general population, with 54 per cent over the age of 40 compared to 36 per cent in the general population.

Presbyterians are also more likely to be married, but this is partly related to age. Forty-three per cent of Presbyterians are married to Presbyterians, while 20 per cent to Anglicans and 18 per cent to Catholics.

Looking at occupation, Presbyterians are over-represented in professional and managerial categories and grazing/farming. They are under-represented in community services and for women, in the professions.

While it is difficult to compare statistics in the active community, it is evident that the active church community is significantly less than the Census record. Estimates vary between 5 and 13 per cent of Presbyterians attending church on a weekly basis. The National Church Life Survey estimated that about 55 000

Presbyterians would be in church on a typical Sunday among 320 church centres. Like the Uniting Church its demographic profile ages with the degree of involvement. About 55 per cent of Presbyterians attenders are over 50 years, and there are as many attenders over 60 as for under 60 years. They consequently have a low number in the 20-39 age bracket. Presbyterian attenders also record higher percentages than Presbyterian affiliates for educational levels and professional categories and are more likely to be married.

Communicant numbers are also lower than attendance estimates. In 1995 there were 38 122 members, representing a decline of about 10 per cent since the Uniting Church union. This decline is partly due to the fact that younger members are not taking on formal membership. It is postulated that the future Presbyterian Church will be smaller, but will have a higher level of commitment among its members.

## **The Uniting Church in Australia**

### **by Peter Bentley and Philip Hughes**

It may sound unusual to say the 'Unitings', but this profile examines the basic demographic characteristics of people who identified as affiliates of the Uniting Church.

The Uniting Church is the newest religious body in Australia, celebrating its 20th Anniversary in 1997. It brought together Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists, (the Methodists providing approximately 59 per cent of members and the Presbyterians 36 per cent). It has been the third largest denomination since union.

In 1991, 8.2 per cent of the population indicated an affiliation with the Uniting Church (approx. 1 388 000). The Uniting Church records above its national average in three states Tasmania (8.5%), South Australia (14.3%) and Queensland (10.4%). South Australia reflects the continuing Methodist base, which peaked at around 25 per cent. WA records the lowest Uniting rate: 5.9 per cent, with NSW: 6.5 per cent. Interestingly because the whole of the Methodist Church went into union, Methodist members outnumbered all other members (on a percentage basis) in all states other than Victoria, which had slightly more Presbyterian foundation members. NSW had the lowest proportion of Presbyterians enter the Uniting Church.

The Uniting Church has stronger affiliation rates in rural areas, particularly in SA and Queensland, though most of its affiliates are actually located in the main capital cities, as is the majority of Australia's population.

While it is difficult to compare statistics over the twenty years, it is evident that overall the Uniting Church has experienced a decline in affiliation since union, particularly when combined figures for Presbyterian and Congregational affiliates are examined (in 1966 this group represented 20 per cent of the Australian population, in 1991 13 per cent). The decline was partly offset by the arrangement for the 1991 Census which allowed for a 'mark the box' for several denominations,

including Uniting. This made it easier for nominal Unitings to indicate (or even interpret) their denomination.

This is especially helpful for (ex) Methodists - in 1981 nearly half a million people indicated they were Methodist in the Census. 'Methodists' are now coded to the Uniting Church (unless a specific Methodist denomination is indicated).

In terms of aging, only the Presbyterians have a higher overall age profile (mainly in the proportion over 70 years). Unitings are however weaker in the 20-29 age group than another denomination.

The majority of Uniting affiliates were born in Australia (91%), a much higher figure compared to the general population, with about 4 per cent born in the UK. Nevertheless, there are still a large number of immigrant groups, often reflecting missionary work in the Pacific and Korea. Looking at the second-generation it is significant that 84 per cent of the Unitings had both parents born here, indicating a long tradition within Australia. Language use is also mainly English, with a few significant small communities providing a broader picture, including Aboriginal (again related to missionary history).

Marriage rates are higher than the general population and Unitings are less likely to be in defacto relationships. They are more likely to be married to other Unitings (61%), Anglicans (15%) and Catholics (12%). Industry sectors most over-represented include agriculture and community services, both reflecting the occupational orientation of members of the antecedent churches and in particular the institutional church's significant social and community work. Unitings are more likely to be in employment and in 1991 had a lower unemployment rate: 5.4 per cent to 8.4 per cent. Educationally the Uniting profile is very established, with a particular orientation to skilled or basic vocational training. The gender ratio for affiliates is 53.8 per cent female: 46.2 per cent male. It is worth noting that over 50 per cent of Uniting women aged over 65 are widowed. This has a significant impact on the active community.

For the active community it is again difficult to provide a definitive figure on attendance. Surveys have placed estimates at between 160 000 and 360 000 on a weekly basis (spread throughout nearly 3000 congregations, of which 60 per cent are located in rural areas). The National Church Life Survey (1991 survey) estimated that about 252 000 people were regular attenders. There are about 294 000 members according to the records (20% of the Census record). The Victorian Church is the largest Synod (state body). All the features of the Census community are accentuated in the active community. There has been a decline in church membership, but it appears to have stabilised in the last few years. Given the age profile of the Uniting Church, this could be seen as a temporary pause. The age profile is greatly increased in the active community and the gender ratio (men to women) moves to 1:2. Like other mainstream churches, the active community has a higher educational profile, attenders are more likely to be married, and are employed or retired (the unemployment rate is even lower). Overall, the demographics are similar to the

Presbyterian Church, which indicates significant challenges in the short-term future, with the likely result being a much smaller, but more committed active community.

## **The Buddhists in Australia** **by Enid Adam and Philip Hughes.**

The profile provides a picture of Buddhism in Australia, including the major traditions as represented in Australia, Mahayana (from China, Korea and Japan, Tibet and Vietnam), Theravada (particularly from Thailand, Laos, and Sri Lanka), and the Vajrayana (from Tibet) as well as details of common beliefs and practices. Details of Buddhist history are provided, leading into the demographic profile of the contemporary community.

The report highlights the recent period of growth for Buddhism in Australia (namely the last twenty years), but in particular the period for which Census records are available. Between the 1981 Population Census and the 1991 Census, the number of Buddhists in Australia increased from 35 073 to 139 795, some 300 per cent. It is worth noting however, that in the late nineteenth century there were a significant number of Buddhists in Australia, mainly ethnic Chinese working in the Victorian goldfields. From around 30 000 however, their numbers declined steadily, to record a nominal affiliation of only 411 in the 1947 Census.

Most Buddhists in Australia are immigrants mostly from Asia (about 113,000), reflecting the distribution of Buddhism in the world - approximately 99 per cent of the world's Buddhists live in Asia. The largest region represented is South East Asia. Of the immigrant groups in this region, the main ones are Vietnamese (34%), Cambodia (7.5%), Laos (5%), Malaysia (9%), Thailand (5%). In terms of immigrant group make-up, Laos had the highest Buddhist proportion followed, by Thailand, then Cambodia, and Vietnam. The Vietnamese have the largest Buddhist numbers because they are the largest single country immigrant group from South East Asia.

The next largest region is North East Asia, with the main countries of birth being China (4.5%), Taiwan (2.2%), Japan (3.6%), with a small number of Koreans. Again, in terms of immigrant group make-up, the order is Taiwan, Japan and China. There are also significant numbers from Sri Lanka (4.5%).

In terms of location, the majority of Buddhists are found in NSW, (42%) and Victoria (30%), mainly in the capital cities, with WA (9.6%) having a higher proportion than Queensland (8.3%), followed by SA (6%), then the ACT, Northern Territory and Tasmania.

While immigration has been the main reason for the rapid growth of Buddhism, Buddhism in Australia has also grown through conversion. It is worth noting that Australian born Buddhists form the second largest group (about 14%) compared to the Vietnamese born, but only about half of the Australian born group come from an Anglo-celtic background. It is difficult to determine the actual number of 'converts', perhaps because many people may practice elements of Buddhism, but would not

identify themselves as Buddhist.

The report postulates a number of reasons for the interest in Buddhism among the Australian born group, including dissatisfaction with churches, the style of meditation and religious practice and the nature of Buddhist morals and philosophy.

Over the last two decades, Buddhists have established over 150 centres and societies in Australia, including the largest temple in the Southern Hemisphere, Nan Tien. This temple is located near Wollongong, NSW, and was built by a Mahayanist Taiwanese order, the International Buddhist Association (Fo Kuan Shan) which interestingly is one of the smaller groups in Australia. With increased growth, the Census to be conducted later this year should reveal the Buddhist population to be around 200,000, well over one percent of the population.

## **The Hindus and Sikhs in Australia by Purushottama Bilimoria**

The profile provides a picture of Hinduism and Sikh practice, including their historical development, major traditions, as well as details of major beliefs and a helpful outline of their organisational development, including the various temples and political associations. The early chapters set the scene for the demographic profile of the contemporary community in Australia.

Hinduism is defined as a “religious philosophy and a social system or way of living within society”.

Hindu is a term used to describe a variety of practices and followers. There is no monolithic Hindu system, variety is the key.

The Sikh religion is a more tightly defined religious system of beliefs, and though a separate and independent faith, is seen to be historically related to the Hindu-bhakti movement and to Islamic heritage in terms of the oneness of God

Hindu origins in Australia have been explored with wide ranging theories, but most concrete evidence points toward trading ship contact in the nineteenth century and the use of Indian labourers to work cotton and sugar plantations, particularly in Queensland. It is difficult to determine how many Hindus and Sikhs were in Australia before post-World War II because of inadequate classification, but it would only have been in the low thousands. It appears though that numbers declined steadily with time after the passing of the Immigration Restriction Act in 1901. A handful of groups remained in Australia, with several keeping their faith and practices alive, notably the Sikhs in Northern New South Wales, who built a shrine in Woolgoolgain the late nineteenth century.

In the 1960s Hindus started to arrive to teach and promote alternate lifestyles and practices. These gurus and swamis included teachers of yoga. A number of retreat centres were formed. After the end of restricted immigration a number of people from Hindu areas started to arrive. By 1991 there were about 100,000 from India and Sri Lanka alone. Most Hindus have come from the Indian sub-continent or from

countries related to English colonial rule.

In 1991, the Census recorded 43,500 Hindus, about 0.3% of the Australian population. About 26 per cent (11,000) come from India, 25 per cent from Fiji, 13 per cent from Sri Lanka, 4.4 per cent from Malaysia and 3 per cent from South Africa. Many came to escape turbulent political environments, particularly those from Sri Lanka and South Africa. Interestingly because of the coups in Fiji and the resultant political instability, large numbers have arrived from Fiji, among them many Fijian Indians. While many indigenous Fijians are Methodist, a significant percentage are Hindu. Of the Fijians in Australia in 1991, about 37 per cent were Hindu.

Overall, like the Buddhists, most Hindus have arrived in the last two decades. Of the Hindus born outside Australia, approximately 83 per cent arrived between 1981 and 1991, with most arriving since 1986.

About 17 per cent of Hindus are Australian born, but again only 35 per cent of these (about 2000) had parents born in Australia. It is thought that some would be converts, but the majority would be the children of the older historical Hindu families.

Like the Hindus, the Sikhs are mainly a new group in Australia. Of the present community only 7 per cent arrived before 1971, with 52 per cent coming in the period 1986 - 1991. Of the 7719 Sikhs recorded in the Census year 1991, about 50 per cent were born in India, with 13 per cent in Malaysia. The next largest group to the Indian born was the Australian born (22%), but 85 per cent of this group had one or both parents born in India.

Distribution of Hindus and Sikhs in Australia is very similar with the majority living in two states and mainly in the capital cities. For Hindus, 50 per cent are in NSW and a further 25 per cent in Victoria. Ninety-one per cent of all Hindus are located in the capital cities, with just under half (20,000) in Sydney. About 43 per cent of Sikhs live in NSW, and again a smaller number of Sikhs are located in the capital cities (76%), reflecting the fact that historically a number of Sikhs have been settled in coastal areas of Northern NSW.

Among other demographic characteristics examined are: language use, family type, marital status, age, education and employment. On average both the Hindu and Sikh populations are much younger than the general Australian population. They tend to have higher incomes and higher educational attainments, but also an unemployment rate about double the national average. This reflects the newness of the community and its professional orientation.

## **Judaism in Australia** **by Professor William Rubinstein**

The first Jews arrived with the first fleet, with some immigration throughout the 19th century, particularly from Britain. The actual Census percentage for Jews has been relatively stable since 1881, about 0.4 per cent, with the highest percentage being recorded in 1961 (0.56%). There were significant periods of immigration in

the twentieth century, notably the 1930s with refugees from Germany and Austria and post World War II, with the Holocaust survivors, particularly from the countries of Poland and Hungary.

According to the 1991 Census there were about 74 000 Jews in Australia (0.44%), though Rubinstein also examines other sources for numbers (estimates vary between 85 000 and 120 000). He arrives at the conclusion that a figure of about 100 000 would be more reasonable. Rubinstein notes that part of the difficulty in the arrival at basic statistics occurs because of the difficulty in defining or categorising Jewish identity (in particular whether people see themselves as Jewish by ethnicity or by religion).

While the Census may not count all Jews in Australia it does provide the basis for a descriptive profile. Certain factors are very clear. The majority of Jews live in two states: NSW (40%) and Victoria (45.5%). Of these two states, most Jews actually live in the capital cities of Sydney (96%) and Melbourne (98%). Forty-four per cent of Jews live in four suburbs, Caulfield and St Kilda in Melbourne and Waverley and Woollahra in Sydney. Overall 93 per cent of Jews live in the state capital cities. Brisbane has the lowest percentage, with only 28 per cent of Queensland Jews living in the capital.

According to birthplace statistics 13 countries account for 93 per cent, with the Australian born category being the largest at 46 per cent (compared to 78% for the general population). South Africa was the next largest group with 8 per cent, then Poland (7.9%) and other former USSR countries (7.45%).

It is worth comparing the 1961 figures which revealed that 39 per cent were Australian born and the next largest group then was from Poland (18%), mainly Holocaust survivors.

The largest numbers of Jews arrived pre-1970, but a significant percentage arrived post 1980 (17%). The larger South African percentage reflects increased immigration during the late 1970s and 1980s, many of whom settled in Perth. The Other USSR group reflects the arrival of post 1970 Soviet Jewish refugees. Overall, more recent immigrants settle in NSW, reflecting the fact that it has a lower percentage of Australian born Jews than Victoria.

Jews tend to marry later, but are also more likely to marry and are significantly less likely to be in defacto relationships. In terms of education 29 per cent of men and 20 per cent of women have a bachelor or higher degree, a significantly higher record compared to the general population (8.4%: 6.7% respectively). Jews in Australia record a lower unemployment rate than the general population and tend to be over-represented in higher status occupational categories, particularly business, retail, finance and community service and consequently have higher incomes on average than the general population.

In 1991, the majority of Jews spoke only English at home (68%), with this percentage increasing for younger Jews. The major language spoken other than English was Yiddish (12%), with Russian the next (7%). Unfortunately the Census did not

record the use of Modern Hebrew, which Rubinstein notes has increasing popular use.

Several synagogues were founded in Sydney in the early 19th century, with the number steadily increasing through to the early 20th century. The study estimates that there are over 80 synagogues at present, including small independent groups. The majority are Strictly Orthodox, Orthodox or non-Liberal. In a limited survey of Melbourne Jews conducted in 1993, 22 per cent indicated they attended monthly and 94 per cent attended at least once per year. In contrast to many Christian denominations, more men are likely to be weekly attenders than women, mainly at Strictly Orthodox synagogues. There are about 100 rabbis, with perhaps half being mainstream, 35 per cent Strictly Orthodox and 15 per cent Liberal. During the 1940s Judaism in Australiatook on a more formal relation to the wider community with the formation of 'roof' Jewish community organisations, including the Executive Council of Australian Jewry in 1944. There are also organisational bodies/contacts in all states (for addresses see *A Yearbook of Australian Religious Organisations*).

## **The Muslims in Australia by Wafia Omar and Kirsty Allen**

This profile outlines the early migration of Muslims (Afghan camel drivers) in the 19th century, but concentrates on the main period of immigration, post 1968. In 1911 the Census recorded a Muslim population of about 4 000 (0.09%). (Note: there was a break in the counting of Muslims 1947-1971). From 1971 there has been a steady increase, with the population reaching nearly 1 per cent in 1991, about 147 000: 0.9%.

The 1991 Census revealed that the majority of Muslims were immigrants (35% have been born in Australia). Only 9.2 per cent of Muslims arrived before 1971, with 21.4 per cent arriving between 1971-1981 and 32 per cent between 1981-1991. While Australian born Muslims form the largest group, 17 per cent are from Lebanon, 15 per cent from Turkey. Recently more Muslims are coming from Africa, particularly Somalia and Ethiopia, and from Europe, eg., Bosnia. With over 60 countries represented, about 31 per cent come from Arabic speaking countries, with 38 per cent speaking Arabic at home and 25 per cent. Over 50 language groups are recorded in this profile of the Muslims in Australia. The Muslim profile is distinguished by the numbers of overseas born. In the category of parents plus self born in Australia, only 1.8 per cent of Muslims, compared to 59.1 per cent of the general population.

Most Muslims in Australia belong to one of the two main branches, Sunni (63%) or Shi'a (37%). Muslims are also mainly concentrated in capital cities, especially in Sydney (Canterbury, Bankstown, Auburn, Rockdale, Parramatta) and Melbourne (Broadmeadows, Coburg, Sunshine). Many of these areas provide opportunity for small independent businesses, as well as factory and labouring work.

Another distinguishing feature of the Muslim population is youthfulness, 72 per cent are 35 or under (total Australia: 54%) and only 2 per cent are over 60 (Australia: 14%).

In general higher numbers are married and they are less likely to be in defacto relationships. They mainly marry within their own group (77% is the highest rate for religious groups recorded). The Census records a small number of marriages between Christian (6% Catholic/Anglican) and Muslims, which the profile assumes would be between Muslim men and Christian women because Muslim men are able to marry other 'people of the book', but women cannot. The Census does not record any marriage between Jews and Muslims.

There are about 60 mosques, usually connected to an Islamic Society. Most mosques are in NSW and Victoria, either based on ethnicity (eg., Turkish) or locality. Many Islamic societies and community groups have been formed to help local Muslims. While there is a range of management, the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils provide an overall role in Muslim society, particularly on religious matters.

In education, Muslims overall have less formal training, but a higher rate of higher degrees (often related to country of origin). A number of Islamic schools have been established (11 at present). Men are more likely to work in manufacturing and labouring/plant employment, and both men and women have a higher unemployment rate (again sometimes reflecting acceptance of overseas educational qualifications). Women in particular have a low work force participation rate, which the profile relates to various factors, including traditional customs and practice and perceived and experienced non-acceptance of dress and religion.

While there has been much dispute about the actual number of Muslims in Australia, most researchers believe the Census provides an accurate guide. The 1996 Census should help to identify and provide a continuing picture.