BRITAIN IS NO LONGER A CHRISTIAN COUNTRY

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Category: Church: UK

The Daily Telegraph has another of the 'decline of Christian Britain' articles which seem to be a part of its stock in trade. The interesting thing is that the current article is written by the assistant bishop of Newcastle.

> *If recent trends are any guide, many Church of England parishes will have been cheered by higher attendances at Easter services. The last published statistics for 2006/7 show rises of 7 and 5 per cent in church going at Christmas and Easter.*
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> *But these figures are just about the only signs of hope for the church and certainly not the first green shoots of a revival. Other statistics make for gloomy reading.*
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> *Annual decline in Sunday attendance is running at around 1 per cent. At this rate it is hard to see the church surviving for more than 30 years though few of its leaders are prepared to face that possibility.*
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> *In the short term we are likely to see more closures of buildings as the church battles to meet a big pension bill, pay clergy, and maintain a large bureaucracy.*
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> *To its credit, the church has been successful at getting members to give, but larger donations cannot offset the fall in numbers. At present the church is struggling to maintain 16,200 buildings, many of them old and listed with 4,200 listed Grade I.*
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> *If decline continues, Christian Research has estimated that in five years' time church closures will accelerate from their present rate of 30 a year to 200 a year as dwindling congregations find the cost of keeping them open too great. (Read more)*

The article goes on to make some interesting points about the way in which the Church of England can adapt to these changes. However, there is a basic problem with the article in that it only talks about the established Church.Â I'm not sure that the concept ofÂ 'a Christian country' is a helpful one to start with, but there are many expressions of the Christian faith in the UK apart from Anglicanism. This is highlighted by the fact that the article is headlined *Britain* but it only talks about the *Church of England.*