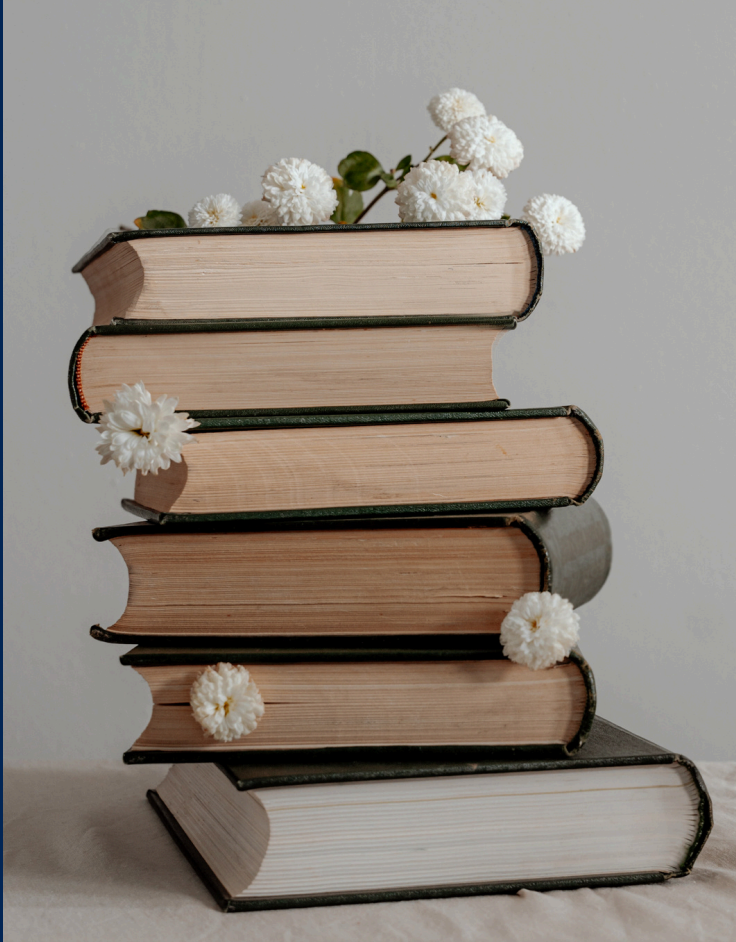


RIVERSIDE QUARTERly



Issue

17.

Autumn 2026

IS
CHRISTIANITY
COMING
BACK?

Page 4

WHO IS
BUYING
BIBLES?

Page 8



Welcome

Welcome to this edition of the Riverside Quarterly, our theme this time being the Uniqueness of Christianity. Rising Bible sales and an increase in young people attending church has been called 'the Quiet Revival'. It is far from a mass returning to Christianity in the West, but it is another example of the historical attraction and resilience of core Christian teaching. Read on as we explore this theme.

What we believe about... the Uniqueness of Christianity:

- **A Unique Perspective on Humanity:** at the heart of the Christian message is a view of men and women as made in the image of God. The inherent dignity and value this confers on all humanity underpins so much of the human rights we cherish in the West. No other religious message or philosophical scheme starts from this perspective.
- **A Unique Hope for Humanity:** the message of the bible stands out from all other messages of religious hope because it is not based upon our achievements or merit. Very few would argue that there isn't something fundamentally wrong with humanity. The issue of sin (as the bible calls it) is clear everywhere we look. But religious messages call on people to work and perform religious acts as the answer. Only biblical Christianity points us only to the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, dying for sinners, as enough to save and forgive sins when received by faith.
- **A Unique Reach to Humanity:** 90% of Muslims live in the arc of countries from SE Asia, through the Middle East and North Africa, 95% of Hindus live around India, 90% of Buddhists live in SE Asia. But those professing Christianity are c.25% in Europe, c.25% in Africa, c.33% in the Americas and c.15% in Asia. No other religion or philosophical message can even come close to the global reach of Christianity.

Whats on?

SUNDAY

- **9:30am** Breaking of Bread
Coffee @11:15am

**BIBLE
FOR
ALL**

11:30am

Creche available

- 4:00pm Bible Teaching
- 4:00pm Sunday School
(both Term Time)

MONDAY

- 10.00am Toddlers (Term Time)
- 8:00pm Prayer Meeting

WEDNESDAY

- 6:30pm Kids Club (P1-6)
- 6:30pm Youth Club (P7-S2)
(both Term Time)
- 8:00pm Bible Teaching

Special!

**5 SESSIONS BASED
AROUND THE THEME OF
THIS ISSUE:**

27th Sept - 1st Oct
See page 11 for details

JESUS CHRIST

— is the —

same

yesterday,
today and

forever

— Hebrews 13 v 8 —



Is Christianity making a Comeback?

AN EVANGELISTIC PERSPECTIVE ON RENEWED INTEREST IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

written by Stephen Jackson, Riverside Christian Assembly

For decades, we have been told that Christianity is dying in the West.

Churches have closed. Congregations have grown older. Bible knowledge has declined. Generation after generation has appeared less interested in the Christian faith than the one before it.

Some argued it was inevitable that Christianity would eventually become little more than a relic of the past. But something is happening that challenges that assumption. People are beginning to come back.

There are genuine signs of renewed Christian interest across parts of the West.

The Church of England reported that regular worshippers across its congregations reached over 1 million in 2024, an increase for the fourth consecutive year.

More significantly, adult baptisms rose from 7,800 in 2023 to 8,700 in 2024, while baptisms among 11–17-year-olds rose from 2,100 to 2,400. [1]

The evidence is not confined to Anglicanism. Britain's Baptist churches reported 2,854 baptisms in 2024, an increase of 853 on the previous year. Their reported worship attendance then increased by around 3% in 2025, with particular growth among adults aged 18–35.[2]

These figures are especially encouraging because baptism represents something more significant than simply attending a service: it is a public profession of Christian faith.

There are also striking signs of evangelical Protestant growth elsewhere in Europe

France, long regarded as one of Europe's most secular nations, has seen remarkable expansion in evangelical Christianity.

Research and reporting on the French evangelical movement point to hundreds of new congregations being established over recent decades, with the number of evangelical Christians

now approaching or exceeding one million according to different estimates[3]. France's evangelical movement is not simply a matter of Christians moving between denominations; it includes people coming to Christian faith from Catholic, non-religious and other backgrounds.

So what is going on?

Perhaps part of the answer is that the promises of secular culture have failed to satisfy.

We have extraordinary technology, but widespread loneliness.



We have unprecedented personal freedom, yet many people struggle to know what life is for. We have more information than any generation in history, yet people are still searching for truth.

And increasingly, people are asking questions that secularism cannot easily answer.

Why am I here? Does my life have meaning? Is there such a thing as truth? What happens when I die? Is there a God?

Christianity has never been afraid of those questions.

The Bible says that human beings were created by God and for God. We were made to know Him, love Him and live under His authority. But we have rejected our Creator. The result is a world marked by sin, suffering, injustice and death.

Our deepest problem, therefore, is not merely political or social. It is spiritual.

Yet the extraordinary message of Christianity is that God has not abandoned us. He came into this world in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus lived the perfect life that we have failed to live. He willingly went to the cross, where He bore the judgment that sinners deserve. And three days later He rose physically from the dead.

The resurrection changes everything. Jesus is not simply a great moral teacher from the past. He is alive. He is Lord. And He calls every person to repent of their sin and put their trust in Him.

Perhaps that is why Christianity is attracting renewed attention. Beneath all the noise of modern life, people are discovering that the Christian message speaks to the deepest needs of the human heart.

But there is something important to understand.

The answer is not simply to become “more religious”. It is not about returning to traditional British culture or filling empty church buildings. Christianity is not ultimately about preserving a civilisation.

It is about Jesus Christ.

The real question is not whether Christianity is making a comeback. The real question is whether you will come to Christ.

The Bible says that God offers forgiveness and eternal life to those who turn from their sin and trust in Jesus Christ. You do not need to clean yourself up first. You do not need to become religious enough. You need to come to Him.

Perhaps the renewed interest in Christianity we are seeing across the West is a reminder that the gospel has never become irrelevant.

People still need forgiveness.
People still need hope.
People still need truth.
And, above all, people still need Jesus Christ.

Christianity may have seemed to be disappearing. But the message of Christ has never disappeared—and it never will.

[1] <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/attendance-church-england-churches-rises-fourth-year-row>

[2] <https://www.christiantoday.com/news/god-at-work-baptist-leaders-report-signs-of-growth-across-churches-amid-ministry-challenges>

[3] <https://www.france24.com/en/video/2025-1006-evangelicalism-continues-to-grow-in-france>;
<https://www.ecmbritain.org/k/n709/news/view/34354/26381/three-new-evangelical-churches-open-in-france-every-month.html>

[4] <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/news-and-press-releases/new-report-explores-young-adult-journeys-faith-church-england>



WHY CHRISTIANITY IS The Air We Breathe

A SUMMARY OF THE BOOK BY GLEN SCRIVENER



Glen Scrivener argues that Christianity profoundly shaped Western moral instincts, especially ideas of universal dignity, equality, compassion, forgiveness and care for the vulnerable, even when society no longer recognises their Christian origins.



The book argues not that Christianity invented everything good in Western civilisation, but that it shaped moral assumptions that became widespread and were later detached from their theological foundations.

7 CENTRAL VALUES TO THE WESTERN WORLD VIEW



1. **EQUALITY:** Every person has inherent worth



2. **COMPASSION:** The vulnerable and suffering matter



3. **CONSENT:** Human dignity includes agency and choice



4. **ENLIGHTENMENT:** Truth and reason are worth pursuing



5. **SCIENCE:** The world is intelligible and worth investigating



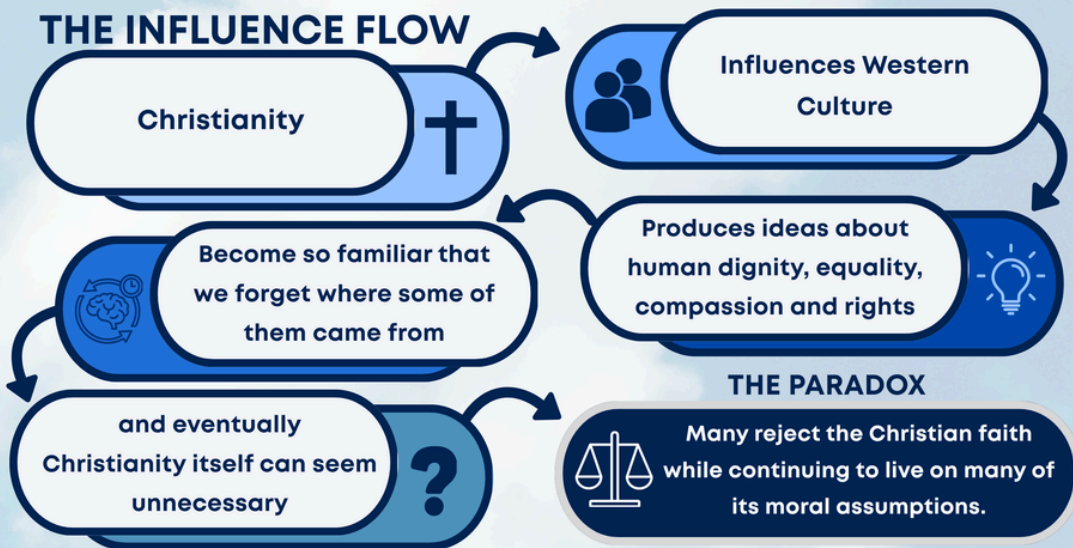
6. **FREEDOM:** People are not merely tools of rulers or systems



7. **PROGRESS:** History can move toward a better future

‘The Air We Breathe’ by Glen Scrivener is available

THE INFLUENCE FLOW



These were not seen consistently in the ancient world and through most of history.

They are **WEIRD** (Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich and Democratic) values according to Joseph Henrich.

Christianity created a moral framework in which these things could rightly flourish as it deepened and filled out the Old Testament moral underpinnings of right and wrong.

With 'goodness' grounded in something beyond us the Western worldview has been able to develop.

Some of the Radical Biblical Roots of Western Values

Genesis 1:27: "So God created mankind in His own image"

Leviticus 19:18: "Love your neighbour as yourself."

Matthew 5:44: "Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you."

Matthew 5:9: "Blessed are the peacemakers, they will be called children of God."

Matthew 5:44: "...pray for those who persecute you."

Matthew 23:11: "The greatest among you will be your servant"

Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

to purchase online or contact us for a **FREE COPY!**

WHO IS BUYING BIBLES?

Bible sales in both the UK and the United States have reached record levels, according to research conducted by Christian publisher SPCK Group.[1] The study analysed data from Nielsen BookScan, which tracks book sales across global markets.



Here are some of the numbers:

In the UK, Bible sales rose to £6.3 million in 2025, up from £2.7 million in 2019. This represents a 134% increase in value and a 106% rise in volume over six years, with the sharpest annual growth occurring in the past year.

Between 2024 and 2025, revenue increased by 25%, while the number of copies sold rose by 28%. The research also indicates that religion is among the fastest-growing non-fiction genres, with sales up 11% in 2025, compared with a 6% increase the previous year.

SPCK chief executive Sam Richardson described the trend as evidence of a broader cultural shift, pointing to a growing curiosity about faith, particularly among 18-28 year olds.

He suggested that their openness to spiritual questions may reflect the context in which they have come of age; the Covid-19 pandemic, artificial intelligence and increasing pressures on mental health.

The comments of the sales director at the Church House bookshop in London contained in the Guardian's article[2] is interesting. "We've seen an increase in people coming to the Bible from scratch . . . They have no Christian background whatsoever. They have no grounding from their parents or from their school. Whereas most people in prior generations would have."

Many young people appear to be choosing to explore the Bible for themselves rather than adopting the assumptions of earlier generations. Social media has amplified this interest, with platforms such as TikTok featuring young adults sharing first-time Bible purchases, personal reflections on faith, and plans to attend church. Perhaps the long form podcasts of Joe Rogan, Wes Huff and others who seriously discuss the Bible are having an effect.

This article was written by Stephen Grant and published on the website
www.understandingthegospel.org

[1]<https://spckpublishing.co.uk/blog/why-people-are-turning-back-to-the-bible.html>

[2]<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/jan/10/its-younger-people-seeking-some-sort-of-spirituality-the-rise-of-uk-bible-sales>

Publishers report particularly strong demand for study Bibles, children's editions, and accessible formats for new readers, suggesting that buyers are engaging seriously with the text rather than acquiring it merely as a cultural artefact. HarperCollins Christian Publishing chief executive Mark Schoenwald noted that sales of the NIV Study Bible have now surpassed 10 million copies, indicating sustained and thoughtful engagement. "People are not just buying Bibles," he said. "They're trying to read them, understand them, and apply them to their lives."

Long may it continue.

When the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, he reminded him of the great privilege of his upbringing, "and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 3:15). May the increasing number of Bibles purchased be read and many people discover the Lord Jesus Christ and trust Him as their Saviour and Lord.



Q&A

with our newly weds

Luke & Joanna

Daniel & Sophia

Can you tell us how you met?

We met at new year, Daniel **had** to message Sophia to check her car made it back to Aberdeen ok... The rest is history!

What values do you hope define your marriage?

Love for Christ. We believe that growing in love for Christ helps us love and put each other first, strengthening our marriage. We also hope to serve God together and show kindness to each other and others, bringing glory to God through our marriage.

What does putting Christ at the centre of your marriage mean to you?

It means letting our faith guide our decisions and seeking to reflect Christ's design for marriage, with the husband loving his wife and the wife submitting to her husband. Though counter-cultural, we believe this reflects God's intended order.

In line with this issue's theme: Why do you think your generation is seeking God now?

We believe people are increasingly searching for truth in a 'post COVID', 'post truth' era. They are willing to consider the Bible with an open mind, creating a more balanced public debate.

Tell us a Bible verse that is meaningful to you.

"A threefold cord is not quickly broken."

Eccl. 4:9-12

With Christ at the centre, our love is grounded in

His perfect, unconditional love rather than temporary feelings or circumstances.

Can you tell us how you met?

We met at a church service but it took Luke over 2 years to eventually build up the courage to ask for a date!

How do you hope your marriage can be a blessing to others?

Our faith in Jesus Christ is the most important thing to us, and we love sharing it with others. We pray that we can reflect God's love through practical ways wherever we are.

What kind of home do you plan to build together?

We hope to build a God-centred home where He is honoured, and where others always feel welcome and at home.

In line with this issue's theme: Why do you think your generation is seeking God now?

Throughout University and our workplaces, we've met many people searching for meaning, purpose, and hope. In a broken and chaotic world, we long for answers and peace, yet looking to ourselves or the world leaves us empty. Christianity offers hope and answers to life's biggest questions. The Bible shows us that we cannot earn our way to God through good works, but need the grace, forgiveness, and wholeness found in Christ. In Him, we find true life and a peace found nowhere else.

Tell us a Bible verse that is meaningful to you.

"I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber."

Psalm 121 v 1-3

These words have been a precious reminder of God's help and love through seasons of loss. As Christians, we know we don't face life's highs and lows alone or without purpose.



WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

Get in touch if you would like

- a free Bible
- a study course
- to find out more

WWW.THERIVERSIDE.CHURCH

Visit our website where you can



Contact us



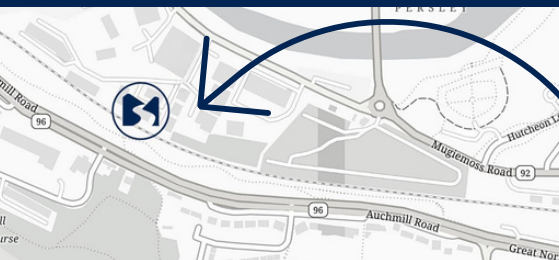
Find out more about us and what we believe



Learn more about what's on



View previous Quarterlys and sign up to our mailing list



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Assembly



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Sunday 27th September : 8pm

WHY IS CHRISTIANITY THE ONLY WAY TO GOD?

Join us for this interactive informal
presentation with audience Q&A....

...and our special 'Bible for All' church services
Monday - Thursday based on the following themes:

Monday 28th September : 8pm

How our **LONGING** for **LOVE**
points us to Christianity

Tuesday 29th September : 8pm

How our **DEMAND** for **JUSTICE**
points us to Christianity

Wednesday 30th September : 8pm

How our **NEED** for **MEANING**
points us to Christianity

Thursday 1st October : 8pm

How our **FEELINGS** of **SHAME**
point us to Christianity

Refreshments served after each session.