

The Church is still popular

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Despite decline in numbers of worshippers and increased secularisation the church is still valued and appreciated as an institution which protects and preserves common values in the public sphere. This has been shown by sociologist of religion Martha Middlemiss Lé Mon at Uppsala University, Sweden, in a study focusing on the Church of England.

Martha Middlemiss Lé Mon has mapped the contribution of the Church of England in the welfare area as well as interviewing both priests and local authority representatives in England. The results show that the church at local level does more of general benefit to society than is generally recognised. There is considerable desire for and acceptance of a church which can be a complement to public health care and public provision for children and the elderly in a welfare system which is felt to be increasingly fragile.

The study shows that both those who represent the church as organisation and those who rarely set foot in a church appreciate it when representatives of the church speak out in public for those who find it hard to make their own voice heard, such as the homeless, sick, elderly and asylum seekers.

The study which the thesis is based on was carried out in England, but is analysed in the thesis within a broader European context.

"The church remains an institution which stands for and protects common values in the [public](#) sphere. It stands in-between individual and society at large and is appreciated. People want it to continue to exist.

This does not, however, change the declining numbers of regular worshippers and does not mean that the church is about to reclaim its former position of power in society," she says.

"The question for everyone who sees value in the continued existence of the church is therefore: how long can the church as institution live up to the expectations which the study has shown exist, in an age of decreasing membership and weaker levels of affiliation to the core activities of the [church](#)?"

Provided by Uppsala University ([news](#) : [web](#))

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