Change and Decay in all around I see

Changing patterns of religious faith and practice in Ireland, 1981 -2008

Michael Breen & Caillín Reynolds, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, IRELAND
96.3% of Irish people who belong to a religious denomination are Roman Catholic.

3.9% belong to the Church of Ireland.

Others make up just 2% of those belonging a religious denomination.
% Within age group not belonging to a Religious Denomination

European Values Study
Self-definition as religious or atheistic

- A religious person
- Not a religious person
- A convinced atheist

European Values Study
% Within age group who Pray Everyday or Often

European Values Study
% Within age group who attend service once a week or more

European Values Study
% Within age group who do not believe in God

European Values Study
% Within age group who do not believe in Life after Death

European Values Study
% Within age group who do not believe in Hell

European Values Study
% Within age group who do not believe in Heaven

European Values Study
Morality

European Values Study
% Within Age: A Great Deal of Confidence in Church

18-29
30-44
45-60
61+

European Values Study
A Great Deal of Confidence

- Education system
- Armed forces
- The Church
- The police
- United nations organisation
- Environmental organizations
- European union
- NATO
- Trade unions
- Civil service
- Social security system
- Justice system
- The press
- Health care system
- Parliament
- Government
- Major companies
- Political parties

% A Great Deal Confidence

European Values Study
Conclusions 1

- Religious practice has decreased
- Spirituality remains strong
- Significant age differences have become more marked
- The importance of the institutional churches is diminished/diminishing
- There are important implications for society
Conclusions 2

- Health, educational and social care institutions were often run by the institutional churches on a voluntary basis. The future is unclear.
- There are social ramifications to a loss of religiosity in society
- What are the alternatives to religious practice and religious faith?
- Where does spirituality fit in
Conclusions 3

- Morality and ethics?
- Religion as private?
- Relationship of faith to public policy, if any?
- Implications for education