



# **Outside in: Part I: Why the Church Needs to Wake Up and Smell the Coffee. Part II: Research Into Perceptions of the Church**

*Will Bissett*

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A must-read for anyone seeking to truly understand the relationship between the Christian faith and UK society. Outside In explores the perceptions of the Christian faith by those who do not regularly attend church. Based on postgraduate research conducted during 2013 (extracts of which were published on the Willow Creek UK website), the book is split into two parts. One part provides the methodology and detailed analysis for those who wish to fully understand the actual research and findings, whilst the other part explores the key findings and implications in an easily digestible format, and offers some suggestions for consideration.

In the UK, a majority (albeit declining) of the population identify as Christian, but a relatively small proportion are engaged in regular church-going. Why is this? Rather than rely on assumptions, the research asked the participants many questions, such as, what do they really think of the church? Why might they not find it helpful for their spiritual journey and daily life? What are the predominant perceptions, of church, Christianity, Christians, God, Jesus? Is the Christian message of grace being perceived in any significant way? The book explores what the participants thought of church, and outlines the range of opinions found from those who see it as a faith community through to others who simply view it as a foreboding building or institution. It also explores how perceptions vary across the generations.

Part sociological and part theological; Outside In offers significant insight into how the church and the Christian faith are really viewed by those who do not regularly attend. This book provides a fantastic opportunity for churches to better understand how they are truly perceived, and therefore has significant implications for how they could better relate to, and communicate with, their local communities, as well as wider UK society.

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